But There Was No Peace: Violence and Reconstruction Politics. (Volumes I and II).

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BUT THERE WAS NO PEACE:
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VOLUME I

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in
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by
George Calvin Rable
B.A., Bluffton College, 1972
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1973
December 1978
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ...................................... ii

ABSTRACT ............................................... vi

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES ............................ viii

CHAPTERS

VOLUME I

I. DEFEAT AND DEFIANCE ............................. 1

II. RACE: THE GREAT FEAR ............................. 66

III. THE SPECTER OF SAINT-DOMINGUE .............. 150

IV. MEMPHIS: THE FIRST MODERN RACE RIOT ........ 199

V. NEW ORLEANS AND THE FEAR OF AFRICANIZATION . 229

VI. MILITARY RECONSTRUCTION:
    THE TRIUMPH OF JACOBINISM ...................... 276

VII. THE TORTUOUS COURSE OF THE COUNTERREVOLUTION 347

VOLUME II

VII. THE TORTUOUS COURSE OF THE COUNTERREVOLUTION
    (CONTINUED) ........................................ 388

VIII. COUNTERREVOLUTION ABORTED:
      LOUISIANA, 1871-1875 ........................... 449

IX. MISSISSIPPI, 1873-1876:
    COUNTERREVOLUTION TRIUMPHANT .................. 534

X. 1876: THE YEAR OF THERMIDOR ..................... 594
    EPILOGUE: ON THE INEVITABLEITY OF TRAGEDY .... 681

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................. 691

VITA .................................................... 764
ABSTRACT

The defeated South in 1865 faced the future with a paradoxical combination of pessimism and blustering defiance. Southern leaders refused to make even minimum concessions to northern demands for political and social reform. More specifically, the white southerners never accepted the consequences of emancipation and stood fast in their determination to keep their land a white man's country. The problems arising in the aftermath of civil war and the death of slavery produced in the southern mind a paranoid fear of black insurrection and a gloomy outlook on the future. Under such conditions, the outbreak of violence was highly probable.

During Presidential Reconstruction, frequent outrages against loyal men and freedmen took place. At Memphis, Tennessee, a smoldering conflict between the Irish police and the city's black population erupted in bloody rioting. In New Orleans, Louisiana, the civil authorities and police brutally broke up a constitutional convention of questionable legality in order to forestall the mere discussion of Negro suffrage.

After the passage of the Reconstruction Acts in 1867, the white South again decided to resist northern demands
to the last extremity. A few moderates initially cooperated with the Republicans, but southerners put tremendous social and economic pressure on radicals of both races. The ultimate weapons of the counterrevolutionary forces became the rope and the gun. In many elections of the Reconstruction period, armed whites struck terror in the hearts of Republicans and murdered state and local officials.

The use of violence and other extra-legal devices soon proved successful as one southern state after another fell back under conservative control. In Louisiana where President Ulysses S. Grant firmly supported the Republican governor William Pitt Kellogg, the Republicans managed to hold onto the remnants of power, but by 1875 had for all practical purposes lost control of the state. Mississippi's carpetbag governor Adelbert Ames, in the absence of federal assistance, could not hold back the well-organized forces of the white line Democracy. By 1876, the remaining Republican governments in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina were about to collapse, and the settlement of the Presidential election dispute marked the completion of the struggle for home rule.

The successful and violent overthrow of these southern state governments demonstrated the white South's determination to restore as much of the old order as possible. The faltering northern commitment to a genuinely radical reconstruction made this result inevitable.
ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES

Manuscript Depositories:

Ala.  Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery
Dillard Amistad Research Center, Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana
Duke Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina
HML Rutherford B. Hayes Memorial Library, Fremont, Ohio
LC Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LSU Louisiana State University Department of Archives, Baton Rouge
MC Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart, Manhattanville, New York
Miss. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson
NCDAH North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh
NYPL New York Public Library
OHS Ohio Historical Society, Columbus
SCA South Carolina Archives, Columbia
SCL South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia
SHC Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill
Tenn. Tennessee State Library, Nashville
Tulane Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana
UGa. University of Georgia Library, Athens
UVa. University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville

National Archives:

AAAG Acting Assistant Adjutant General
AAG Assistant Adjutant General
AG Adjutant General
AGO Adjutant General's Office
Government Documents:

C.G.  Congressional Globe (e.g., C.G. 39-1, 234 means Congressional Globe, 39th Congress, First Session, page 234)

C.R.  Congressional Record (cited in same manner as Congressional Globe)


House Mis. Doc.  House Miscellaneous Document


Sen. Ex. Doc.  Senate Executive Document

Sen. Mis. Doc.  Senate Miscellaneous Document

Chapter I

DEFEAT AND DEFIANCE

Defeat. Catherine Edmondston of North Carolina carefully recorded in her diary the awful truth: "How can I write it!! How can I find words to tell what has befallen us? General Lee Has Surrendered!! Surrendered the remnant of his noble army to an overwhelming horde of Yankee knaves and foreigners."¹ Such news seemed utterly incongruous with the light breezes and warm sunshine of a southern spring. Some southerners refused to credit the first reports of Lee's surrender or even the later accounts of Joe Johnston's capitulation. But disbelief soon gave way to despair, and many asked with young Susan Eppes: "Will our losses ever be forgotten or forgiven? Can our people, North and South, ever be a united country with this bloody gulf yawning between us? The South did not want it this way. We fought for our rights, we resisted oppression and now we are crushed. . . ."²

¹Entry for April 1, 1865, Margaret Mackay Jones, ed., The Journal of Catherine Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866 (Mebane, North Carolina, n.d.), 102.

For southern soldier and civilian alike, the signs of defeat were all around. Returning veterans of Lee's army tramped through the seemingly endless desolation marking the track of Sherman's army in the Carolinas and Georgia. Ruins, lone chimneys and the absence of crops and livestock were the grim reminders of the Yankee triumph. Some soldiers, however, never came back to their parents, wives and families. The South lost a generation of young men, killed and wounded, many of whom had lost one or more limbs. In addition, the region found two-thirds of its railroad mileage destroyed, and the best estimates place property damage (excluding the loss in emancipated slaves) at one billion dollars. To illustrate this pervasive economic impact of the war, one sympathetic observer noted that in Charleston, South Carolina, the old aristocrats wore threadbare garments, no longer rode in carriages and could not even afford to pay their clergymen. Southerners, in many cases with the help of northern capital, could repair in Florida (New York, 1913), 325-26; Entry for April 19, 1865, Mary Boykin Chesnut, A Diary From Dixie. ed. by Ben Ames Williams (Boston, 1949), 520-21; Entry for April 17, 1865, Susan Bradford Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years (Macon, Georgia, 1926), 273.

the physical damage left by the war; the psychic wounds of defeat healed much more slowly. 4

The most common response of the white South to the failure of the Confederate cause was a blind and unreasoning fear of the future. Using hindsight, the historian's favorite two-edged sword, we can see that most of these fears were groundless. However, as the late David Potter so often warned, we should not allow hindsight to prevent us from seeing an historical era from its own perspective. Southerners in 1865, did not know how the story was to end. More importantly, they knew very little about what was going on in the rest of the country or for that matter in the South itself outside of their own locale. In the immediate aftermath of the war, mail service was either unreliable or non-existent. Newspapers printed shocking rumors which later proved to be unfounded. Even when communications and transportation facilities were restored, southerners received a great deal of inaccurate information about the policies of the federal government and virtually no adequate assessments of the drift of northern public opinion.

Under the sway of frightening and contradictory rumors, many southerners feared that the end of the war did not mean

4C. Vann Woodward has argued that the South's experience of defeat and military occupation separated her from the American myths of innocence and success. Yet no one has traced in detail either the short or long term effects of defeat on southern life. Woodward, The Burden of Southern History. Enlarged ed. (Baton Rouge, 1968), 187-211.
the end of the bloodshed. They envisioned a future full of reprisals and executions. Henry Ravenal, a planter in the South Carolina low country, worried that the war for southern independence had merely become an unsuccessful rebellion. Rather than sharing the accolades of the heroes of 1776, the southerners would face hanging as traitors. More depressing still was the great uncertainty of the future. What forms would northern vengeance take? Who would control the reconstruction policies of the federal government? The very precariousness of the South's future further fed already fevered imaginations.⁵

Other southerners, however, thought they saw the course of events more clearly. The former Confederate Vice President Alexander H. Stephens argued that the direction of American history was now toward "complete Centralism" in government under the guidance of the radical Republicans. Stephens' bitter political enemy Benjamin H. Hill agreed that the northern radicals were about to "fix upon the whole country, by repeated amendment,

a new Constitution suited to their fanatical vagaries." Such a despotism meant the end of democracy and the destruction of southern society.6

More terrifying than either the shrouded future or the increasingly radical direction of national policy was the utter powerlessness of the South. Unable to control the course of events, southerners had little choice but to wait for the victors to set the terms of the peace settlement. When President Andrew Johnson issued his Amnesty Proclamation on May 29, 1865, the southerners could finally take a positive step toward restoration of the Union. All across the South, men began to take the oath of future loyalty to the Union required by Johnson's proclamation or, in the case of individuals excepted from this general amnesty, apply for pardons. Although southerners in most cases eagerly took the oath, they did not always do so in a sincere or much less in a contrite manner. Northern observers doubted the sincerity of these promises of future loyalty, and strong evidence

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indicates that Andrew Johnson took these pledges much more seriously than did the oath-takers themselves.\(^7\)

Such was also the case with the pardon seekers. P. G. T. Beauregard told Robert E. Lee that: "it is hard to ask pardon of an adversary you despise." Many reluctantly submitted their applications for pardon out of a sense of duty to the country or as a way to smooth the restoration process. Yet these pardon petitions often contained eloquent defenses of the southern cause, and some petitioners apparently saw nothing improper about enclosing some advice on reconstruction for President Johnson in their letters. A few southerners in the excluded categories refused to apply for a pardon. Henry A. Wise felt that to apply for a pardon would be tantamount to an admission of wrongdoing, he wrote: "I was not a traitor to my country and cannot become a traitor to myself."

That prototype for the southern fire-eater, Robert Toombs, refused to take any oath of allegiance or apply for a pardon because he felt no loyalty toward the United States.\(^8\)

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When Andrew Johnson provided for setting up provisional governments in the South, southerners responded with alacrity and proceeded to elect delegates to constitutional conventions, draft new state constitutions, and establish state governments. However, the region's traditional political leaders followed a policy best described as "masterly inactivity." Governor Charles J. Jenkins of Georgia advised the people of his state to await the outcome of the struggle between northern political factions "with calm and resolute dignity." Lacking any real power, these conservative politicians could see no good in empty and useless discussion. Sectional agitation would only aid the northern radicals in their defamatory slurs on southern loyalty. As these leaders saw it, the only safe policy for the South was to rebuild her own fortunes and await the outcome of the contest between Johnson and Congress over control of the reconstruction process.\(^9\)


As for the southern people in general, most observers in the fall and winter of 1865 described them as "crushed and submissive." Northern travelers found the southerners acquiescent and in no way wishing to revive the rebellion. Many southerners told their Yankee visitors that they were thoroughly whipped and had had enough of war. Men and women quietly went about their business seeking to recoup the financial losses suffered during the conflict. Most seem to have heeded the advice of their leaders and to have shunned political discussion. The placid surface of southern society led some overly sanguine observers to assert (incorrectly) that the South was even ready to submit to black suffrage.10

Southerners in fact proclaimed loudly to all who would listen that they completely and sincerely accepted the results of the war. Newspaper editors and southern politicians alike called for quiet acceptance of the fortunes of battle and an end to needless strife. The time had come to bury the dead past and look to the future and the healing of sectional wounds. However, these promises of submission and forebearance were vague and often contained contradictory sentiments. On February 22, 1866, Alexander H. Stephens addressed a joint session of the Georgia General Assembly and defined more clearly the meaning of southern submission. Stephens admonished his listeners to forget the past discord and stop agitating the old questions of the war period. Both sections could now stand on a single platform: the Constitution. The South must abide by the results of the war in good faith and resume her loyalty to the government of the Union. Yet for all these statements of reconciliation and conservative statesmanship, Stephens spoke to his audience of an abiding faith in the restoration of the southern states to their former relations with the national government and argued that both sections must conquer their prejudices. In short, southern acquiescence did not mean submission to any terms set down by the victors.

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1967), 37-38; Coulter, South During Reconstruction, 23-25; Salmon P. Chase to Edwin M. Stanton, May 5, 1865, Stanton Papers, LC.
Southerners talked of the need for sectional compromise in the same breath with which they pledged acceptance of the results of the war. Even James Lusk Alcorn, who later became a Republican, believed that the South must have a voice in the terms of settlement even to the point of deciding how and when to abolish slavery.\(^{11}\)

A substantial number of southerners labored under the delusion that they could return to the Union and restore the status quo antebellum more or less intact. Robert E. Lee wrote to a northern copperhead that all the South had ever desired was to preserve the Union "as established by our forefathers." Moreover, many believed that such a settlement was entirely possible and saw no reason why the North should insist upon any further concessions. As southerners took the amnesty oath and applied for pardons, they made it quite evident that they both desired and expected a speedy restoration of the ancien régime. While many Confederate state governors attempted to convene their legislatures after the war as if nothing had changed, for sheer audacity, Joe Brown

of Georgia topped them all. Brown called a meeting of the Georgia legislature but Secretary of War Edwin Stanton forbade such an assemblage. Undaunted, Brown met with the local Union commander, cavalry hero James Harrison Wilson, and strongly argued for a rapid restoration of the Union. The general, however, stood by his orders. To Wilson, Brown seemed particularly worried about the loss of his former political prestige and influence.

Brown told the general that signing a parole would mean the end of his political career in Georgia. After some desultory discussion of state politics, Wilson bluntly asked Brown if he thought he faced any future in the country other than being hung. Somewhat taken aback by this statement, Brown replied that he had not really thought about it and finally agreed to sign the parole.  

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Brown's actions in many ways defined the limits of southern loyalty. Southerners vehemently proclaimed that they "accepted the situation" but still sought to turn events to their own advantage.\textsuperscript{13} Even the flamboyant newspaper accounts of southern disloyalty and the "bloody shirt" harangues of northern politicians charging the South with eagerly awaiting the opportunity to renew the rebellion were not entirely groundless. Many southerners continued to live in the past and hope that someday the sacred cause might triumph. Stephens described the unreconstructed Robert Toombs as a man who "talks of things as he would have them and not as they are."

Non-combatants, particularly women, felt anxious to renew the contest shortly after the surrender of the southern armies. They could sit back and wait for another chance (perhaps a foreign war) to strike for independence once again. In many ways, as Robert Penn Warren has noted, the southern Confederacy became a true nation only after Lee surrendered.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} Michael Perman has most clearly delineated southern goals after the war, and my own analysis owes much to Professor Perman's perceptive treatment of the problem. Perman, Reunion Without Compromise: The South and Reconstruction, 1865-1868 (Cambridge, England, 1973), 26-39.

\textsuperscript{14} Nation, II (January 18, 1866), 80; William DeSaussure to H. W. DeSaussure, July 23, 1865, DeSaussure Papers, Duke; Alexander H. Stephens to Linton Stephens, January 3, 1866, Stephens Papers, MC; Entry for April 23, 1865, Earl Schenck Miers, ed., When the World Ended: The Diary of Emma LeConte (New York, 1937), 95; "Julia" to ?, November 10, 1865, David Weeks Papers, LSU; Entry for May 15, 1865, Eliza Frances Andrews, The War-Time Journal of a Georgia Girl,
Expressions of bitter contempt fell on those southerners who sought to propitiate the victorious Yankees. One of Stephens' correspondents lashed out at those "vile spaniels" who kowtowed to the enemy and rushed to take the amnesty oath. The keynote was the preservation of both dignity and self-respect. There seemed no reason for honest men to whine and whimper at the feet of their oppressors or curry favor through acts of abject submission. The still fiery Jubal Early wrote from Cuba that: "the history of the world does not afford an instance in which a conquered people have submitted with good will to the rule of their conquerors." 15

For the South, surrender did not mean an admission of guilt. While conceding defeat on the battlefield, few southerners denied the justness of their cause. Repentance seemed inappropriate. What was there to repent for? Even the unprincipled Yankees could hardly expect the vanquished South to give up all her feelings of pride in southern nationalism. Georgia humorist Charles H. Smith ("Bill Arp") announced he would never apologize for his


participation in the war; his native land might be poor, but she was also proud. The South would submit to the force of arms but could never recognize the legitimacy of northern rule. Southern mothers would instill their sons with the sacredness of the "lost cause." Louisiana historian Charles Gayarre summarized well the feeling of many ex-Confederates: "We repudiate the idea that we ever ceased to be good Americans. We honestly believed that we were supporting the holiest of all causes, and we still think so." 16

Whatever the number of battle casualties and however severe the economic hardship caused by the war, the South had not lost everything. She still retained her deep sense of "southern honor." The concept of southern honor had been all pervasive in the writings and speeches of southern politicians during the sectional conflict. To dismiss this theme as mere campaign rhetoric or empty blow would be to miss an essential element of the southern character. Moreover, this strong emotional ballast in many instances buoyed up the southern spirit during

Reconstruction. Wade Hampton in a widely reported speech in September, 1866, exhorted his fellow citizens not to "cover ourselves with eternal infamy by branding as traitors the men who died for us" but to hang on to that most precious of all commodities, "our honor." "

This deep and abiding sense of honor made the southerners even more reluctant to make further concessions to their foes. Most southern editors and politicians saw capitulation to more radical demands as an ineffectual sign of weakness. More concessions would not only dissipate the South's remaining strength but would also encourage the northern radicals to demand even harsher conditions of settlement. Some southerners even raised objections to some of the conditions of Andrew Johnson's conservative restoration policy. A few Jesuitical conservatives raised constitutional objections to repealing the ordinances of secession, and others questioned the validity of the constitutions drafted by conventions set up under Lincoln's and Johnson's reconstruction proclamations. What seemed to the North brazen effrontery was

17 Stephen Dill Lee, "The South Since the War," in Clement A. Evans, ed., Confederate Military History (12 Vols., Atlanta, 1899), XII, 277; Entry for May 31, 1865, Myrta Lockett Avarry, ed., Recollections of Alexander H. Stephens (New York, 1910), 140; Entry for April 30, 1865, Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 230; Memphis Daily Avalanche, February 2, 1866; Tallahassee Florida Sentinel, June 2, 1866; Charleston Daily Courier, October 10, 1866.
to the South a legitimate defense of southern honor and an assertion of the South's rightful place in the American Union.\(^{18}\)

However, few southerners remained as adamant as Robert Toombs who insisted there was no difference between Johnson's policy and that of the radical Republicans in Congress. Toombs went so far as to assert that the quarrel between the President and Congress was a mere put-up job to throw sand in the eyes of the southern people. Other more rational observers saw Johnson as the South's best friend in Washington and probably their only hope for obtaining what they considered justice. Conservatives generally advocated a policy of standing by Johnson in quiet repose and meeting all of his requirements for restoration. As the conflict between the President and Congress heated up in the spring of 1866, southerners praised Johnson for standing alone to preserve the Constitution against radical usurpation.\(^{19}\)

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This is not to say that the South gave automatic approval to all the policies and actions of Andrew Johnson. Some southerners felt that the President had not gone nearly far enough in his battle with the radicals. Johnson seemed too lethargic in the face of radical demands, refusing to use his powers as President to defy his enemies. Southerners advised the President to issue a proclamation declaring the southern states back in the Union and entitled to representation in Congress. Those who favored firmer and more definite action from the chief executive began to doubt Johnson's political acumen. They attributed Johnson's lack of initiative to the backstage manipulations of those old political wirepullers William H. Seward and Thurlow Weed.  

Cooler heads sought to prevent the smoldering resentment in the South from boiling over in the 1865 state elections. Some conservatives advised that it was absolutely essential to send wise and prudent men to the constitutional conventions and state legislatures and thus give the North unequivocal evidence of restored southern loyalty. Although the evidence is fragmentary on many of these elections, it does appear that the voters selected

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a substantial number of ex-Whigs and original unionists for office.\textsuperscript{21} Still most of those elected, regardless of previous background, had sided with the Confederacy during the war. Historian John Hope Franklin has found that in elections to the Thirty-Ninth Congress scheduled to meet in December, 1865, the southern electorate chose the Vice President of the Confederacy, four Confederate generals, five Confederate colonels, six Confederate cabinet members and fifty-eight Confederate congressmen. Oblivious to any reaction in the North, the South could see nothing wrong in electing her "natural" leaders to state and national offices. Although even Johnson realized the negative impact these election results would have on northern opinion, southerners sincerely felt that they should choose their best men; these did not include that relatively small band of unionists who had never given any aid to the Confederacy and who could therefore take the ironclad oath. More importantly, Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase found during his tour of the South in the

spring of 1865 that the old political leaders were already eager to get back into office and wield their accustomed influence.\textsuperscript{22}

Those southern politicians who deviated from the straight and narrow path of southern orthodoxy on reconstruction questions paid a high price. Georgia's Joseph E. Brown traveled to Washington in late 1866 to assess the political situation and was disheartened to learn of growing radical strength in the North. He found that black suffrage for the South was no longer a debatable question and that if the South adopted the proposed Fourteenth Amendment and universal suffrage she might escape disfranchisement of her old leaders. When Brown published a letter advocating this course of action, he opened himself up to a fusillade of angry protest. Even less advanced positions could bring down the cries of "traitor" and "Judas" on one's head. John H. Reagan, the former Confederate Postmaster General, was imprisoned after the war in Fort Warren in Boston harbor. Reagan wrote a letter to the people of his native Texas on

August 11, 1865, urging them to conform to the conditions of the new order and accept the results of the war. The South, he cautioned, must realize that she is a conquered nation and that further resistance is useless. Reagan went on to warn his fellow citizens that they must adopt Negro suffrage (at least on a qualified basis) to mollify the North. After his release from prison and return to Texas, Reagan discovered that his "Fort Warren" letter had made him universally unpopular in his home state. Those southerners who counseled moderation or making even the smallest concessions often found themselves publicly reviled and privately scorned.23

When Congress refused to admit members from the former Confederate states in December 1865, southerners did not attribute this to their own intransigent attitudes. Rather, they accused the northern Republicans of bad faith. How could the Yankees tell the South all during the war that the Union was indissoluble and then refuse to admit the southern states back into the Union once the war was over? The South had met all of Johnson's requirements for restoration but had been betrayed by Congress. She had disbanded her armies in good faith and asked only that the North now abide by what she considered to be the "terms

of surrender." The South's minimal demand was readmission to the United States with no further requirements.  

It seemed axiomatic, however, that the northern politicians would not act in good faith. In the minds of many, the radical Republicans became red revolutionaries preparing to drown the American republic in a sea of blood and set up some new form of despotism. The most popular historical analogy was that of France under the rule of the Jacobins. Newspaper editors warned that any day the radicals would set up the guillotines and the reign of terror would begin. Would Charles Sumner or Thaddeus Stevens assume the role of an American Robespierre? That old veteran of the party battles of the Jackson period, Duff Green, suggested that radical Republicanism marked the culmination of a monarchist conspiracy dating back to the days of John Adams. One observer compared the reign of radicalism with mob rule in ancient Constantinople. A Richmond editorialist remarked


25 New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 25, 1867; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, April 26, August 21, 1866; Memphis Daily Appeal, January 13, 1867; Alexander W. Campbell to William B. Campbell, October 30, 1866, Campbell Family Papers, Duke.
that military rule in the South reminded him of the condition of England between the reigns of King John and Charles II. Some found a closer parallel between the condition of the southern states under northern rule and that of Ireland under British control. Randolph Shotwell angrily wrote from his prison cell in Fort Delaware:

"The South is no more a real partner in the so-called Union than Poland is a part of Russia, or India of England, or Cuba of Spain. Why then should this country be called a Union? The very term signifies equality of parts. Let it be called Yankeeland." 26

Though southern writers plumbed the depths of both historical comparison and partisan vituperation to describe Yankee oppression, they feared the radical Republicans more for their political opportunism than their dedication to the principles of Jacobinism. Stephens contended that radical plans for the South could only be explained by their desire to stay in power. Radicals North and South had but one fixed principle, self-interest. Under all circumstances the greed for office would win out over all other moral or political considerations. Herschel Johnson

forcefully asserted that the Republicans clearly intended to keep the South out of the Union until after the presidential election of 1868. Once a Republican partisan was safely ensconced in the executive mansion, the party could deal with the question of readmitting the southern states.27

Besides castigating the plans and impugning the motives of the radical Republicans, the South substantially underestimated their political strength in the North. Her political leaders believed the radicals to be a small and insignificant minority of the northern electorate who could be ignored in planning future political strategy. Many clung to the hope that most of the Republicans would follow the lead of President Johnson and leave the radical minority out in the political wilderness. One Memphis editor described most northern army veterans as anxious for sectional reconciliation while non-combatants remained fiercely vindictive.28 Even when the radical Republicans gained in strength and won a smashing victory in the 1866 elections in the North, southerners did not greatly alter their attitudes. A financial crisis might still


28 Perman, Reunion Without Compromise, 168-81; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, August 16, 1865; Memphis Daily Appeal, April 10, 1866.
prove fatal to the radicals. Some believed fervently in an eventual political reaction in the North and a renewal of the old political alliance between the South and West. 29

The ambivalent southern reaction to the National Union movement illustrates how this assessment of radical strength was applied to practical politics. The southerners were properly skeptical of Johnson's abortive effort to unite Democrats and moderate Republicans in a conservative coalition to defeat the radical Republicans in the 1866 elections. Linton Stephens pointed out to his brother that it was impossible for state rights Democrats to form an alliance with moderate Republicans who favored the test oath and other oppressive measures. Alexander H. Stephens objected to the published call for a National Union convention at Philadelphia because it did not coincide with his own views on the reserved rights of the states. Again the South was unwilling to make small concessions, even to defeat the northern radicals. 30

29 Charles Gayarre to James D. B. DeBow, July 4, 1866, DeBow Papers, Duke; Richmond Enquirer, January 4, 1867; New Orleans Daily Picayune, October 2, 1866.

Southern support for the Johnson party was therefore qualified at best. Herschel Johnson warned against the South becoming too closely allied with the Johnson movement. He believed that Ulysses S. Grant was the coming man in national politics and that the South should court this man who not only loved the South but was sure to be the next President. Still even the skeptics came to hope that some good might come out of the Philadelphia convention. Perhaps the radicals were after all a minority in northern politics, and the great reaction would take place. Supporters of the National Union movement in the South pleaded with their constituents to support the President against the radicals and warned in ominous tones of the consequences of a radical triumph at the polls. Salvation was yet possible for those who still believed.  

A deep gloom spread over the South as the radical victory became apparent. Herschel Johnson grieved that the country now was "at the mercy of the maddened tide of fanaticism and being drifted to irretrievable ruin." The South was completely powerless, and "we are undone and constitutional liberty gone forever." Still the South rejected all pleas for moderation. She was no more ready now to make concessions to the radicals than when she had full faith in the power and judgment of Andrew Johnson.

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31Johnson to Alexander H. Stephens, July 6, 16, 1866, Johnson Papers, Duke; Richmond Daily Dispatch, July 7, 1866; Tallahassee Florida Sentinel, August 14, September 1, 1866.
For a time a proposal circulated with the tacit support of the President calling for a compromise version of the proposed fourteenth amendment without the objectionable disfranchisement section. There was, however, little support for any such measure in the South. Mississippi's provisional governor William L. Sharkey told a group of southern politicians in Washington that nothing could be gained by compromise at this late hour and in any event the government had "gone to hell."\(^{32}\)

Those who saw the handwriting on the wall in the election results of 1866 advised the South to moderate her course. James Lusk Alcorn told a group of Mississippi leaders that their state had made a grave mistake in refusing to ratify the fourteenth amendment. Johnson was politically impotent, and the South had to act or have the amendment shoved down her throat. The South would have to swallow it regardless of her serious objections to specific sections of the amendment and hope that it would be the final settlement. Unionist Governor Isaac Murphey of Arkansas and the untrustworthy chief executive of Louisiana, James Madison Wells, advised their respective legislatures to ratify the amendment.

Murphey warned of the dire consequences which would surely follow southern rejection of the amendment. Wells told the people of Louisiana that the amendment was truly a final settlement and that the state could not be readmitted to the Union on more favorable terms.33

Alcorn, Wells and Murphey were, however, voices crying in the political wilderness. Few southerners seriously considered approving what they considered an abomination. They objected most vehemently to that section of the amendment which prohibited many ex-Confederates from holding office for the indefinite future. Others argued that ratification would eventually bring universal Negro suffrage. As would be expected, the most cogent argument against the amendment was a constitutional one. How could the South be in the Union for the purpose of ratifying this amendment but out of the Union when it came to representation in Congress? The very idea of submitting an amendment to unrepresented states was an absurdity. Moreover, southern acceptance of the amendment would not necessarily alter northern prejudice. There was no guarantee that Congress would admit southern representatives without imposing new conditions. A new concession might

33Frank A. Montgomery, Reminiscences of a Mississippian in Peace and War (Cincinnati, 1901), 267-68; Lillian A. Péraya, James Lusk Alcorn: Persistent Whig (Baton Rouge, 1966), 83-89; John M. Schofield, Forty-Six Years in the Army (New York, 1897), 394-95; Louisiana Legislative Documents (1866), 4; Arkansas Senate Journal (1866-1867), 50-51.
well be interpreted as a sign of weakness and become the occasion for the imposition of still harsher terms on the prostrate South.\textsuperscript{34}

The strongest objection to southern ratification originated, as did much of the South's resistance to northern reconstruction, in the idea of southern honor. Southerners drew a sharp distinction between submitting to necessity and assisting in their own degradation. It was unthinkable that the South would aid the northern radicals in foisting such an offensive measure upon her. South Carolina provisional governor Benjamin F. Perry informed the President that Congress might well impose worse measures on the southern states but that such conditions would never be "voluntarily accepted." If the leading men of the South were disfranchised, they would not be disfranchised with the approval of the South. The only reasonable course was for the South to go quietly

about her business, come what may. So the Southerners for the most part sat on their hands, repelling all suggestions of moderation or compromise. As a direct result of southern intransigence, Congress on March 2, 1867, passed the first of the military Reconstruction Acts.

The effects of defeat extended far beyond economic stagnation and political agitation. Defeat in many ways was the most bitter and galling result of the war, and its impact rippled through southern society. An Augusta, Georgia, paper lamented that some soreheads, who were braver after the shooting stopped, refused to admit that the South had lost the contest. Southerners mourned the surrender of the Confederacy by grumbling over their dinner tables. Northern travelers found seething resentment beneath a facade of loyalty. "Whipped by numbers," the Confederates asserted; southern society never fully accepted the surrender at Appomattox.

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35 Arkansas Senate Journal (1866-1867), 261-62; Florida House Journal (1866), 79-80; Coulter, South During Reconstruction, 43; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, October 17, 1866; Charleston Daily Courier, November 5, 1866; Benjamin F. Perry to Andrew Johnson, November 10, 1866, Johnson Papers, LC; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, December 6, 1866; Lillian Adele Kibler, Benjamin F. Perry; South Carolina Unionist (Durham, North Carolina, 1946), 446-48; Wilmington Daily Journal, October 13, 1866.

36 Francis Butler Simkins and Robert H. Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction (Chapel Hill, 1932), 19; Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, September 7, 1865; A. T. Morgan, Yazoo; Or, On the Picket Line of Freedom in the South (New York, 1968), 77-78; Perman, Reunion Without Compromise, 22-25.
The coming of peace intensified southern hatred of the Yankees. A woman in Savannah, Georgia, complained that she could hardly step outside her door for a breath of fresh air without seeing Union soldiers of both races parading about the streets. One citizen of Vicksburg, Mississippi, avowed to a British visitor that he liked the English people because they were not "damned Yankees" and that he looked forward one day to "cleaning out all Yankees from that section." The now familiar cry, "The South will rise again," emerged phoenix-like from the ashes of war. Southern mothers in the future would always teach their sons to fear God, to love the South and someday to avenge her honor.\(^{37}\)

The great horde of northern men who descended on the South after the war often received a cool reception. Passengers on railway cars and steamboats shunned contact with Yankee travelers and sometimes made loud and insulting remarks in their presence. These northerners seemed like

a tribe of foreign invaders set upon the South to revel in the humiliation of her proud people. One New Orleans hotel that refused to accommodate northern men or United States soldiers, as a result, became the most popular hotel in the city. Wade Hampton described his own feelings to General Lee: "I am not reconstructed yet, and in what I shall write every word will be dictated by Southern feelings and from a Southern heart." Jubal Early averred that "if my salvation depends on being able to love them [Yankees], I fear I shall be lost . . . . There is scarce a night of my life that I do not dream of being engaged in battle with the Yankees. I wish it was not all a dream."38

Those southerners who found adjustment to surrender impossible migrated to Europe or Latin America though many of these later returned. Most Confederate leaders decided to stay in the South to assist in the task of rebuilding their shattered society. Yet a deep pessimism often overcame the most determined efforts to boost sagging spirits. Governor Jonathan Worth of North Carolina lamented
that the South would never again return to a state of happiness and prosperity. Northerners feared and many southerners vowed that, if the opportunity offered, they would join France or Great Britain in a war against the United States, a threat northerners took seriously. Clement C. Clay in the midst of his own postwar suffering regretted ever surrendering to the hated Yankees.  

The assassination of Abraham Lincoln provided further occasion for venting sectional passions. Many southerners realized the dire consequences of this event and worried about the tenuous though damaging connection between John Wilkes Booth and the Confederacy. The temptation in the North to wreak vengeance on Jefferson Davis and other Confederate leaders might be too great to resist, not to mention the influence on postwar reconstruction policies.  

However some southerners could not help rejoicing at the news. Lincoln, the archetype Black

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Republican and oppressor of the South, had met his deserved end. Booth would hold a place of honor in the growing pantheon of southern heroes. One southern soldier remarked that he would be happy to share his last crust of bread with the assassin. In Huntsville, Alabama, a local Union commander issued an order forbidding any person from exalting over Lincoln's death. When two young ladies could not contain their elation, soldiers arrested them and hauled them to the local courthouse. There the commander gave the two miscreants a stern lecture and released them.\footnote{Chicago Tribune, April 22, 1865; Entry for April 26, 1865, Clift, ed., Private War of Lizzie Hardin, 234-35; Entry for April 28, 1865, Anderson, ed., Journal of Kate Stone, 333; Entry for April 22, 1865, Miers, ed., Diary of Emma LeConte, 91; Entry for April 11-15, 1865, "Diary of Robert E. Park," Southern Historical Society Papers, III (May-June, 1877), 245-46; Entries for April 16, 17, 1865, "Civil War Days in Huntsville, A Diary by Mrs. W. D. Chadick," Alabama Historical Quarterly, IX (Summer, 1947), 324-25.}

These two Huntsville women in many ways typified the attitude of their sex in the reconstruction South. On the whole, women seem to have been the most unreconstructed group in southern society. The suffering of southern women during the war had been extreme. The loss of family members and grinding poverty were everyday reminders of the past. One woman pledged to bring up her children hating Yankees as intensely as she did. Another taught her children never to use the word "Yankee" without attaching some "opprobrious epithet" in front of it such
as "hateful Yankee" or "thieving Yankee." Eliza Andrews felt that these phrases were not strong enough and in her usual exuberant way exclaimed, "I feel sometimes as if I would just like to come out with a good round 'Damn!'".\textsuperscript{42}

Many southern women bewailed the surrender and falsely accused their menfolk of weakness and cowardice. Catherine Edmondston worried about the lack of spirit in a people who seemed so ready to submit and take the degrading oath of allegiance. The present was a nightmare, but the future might be worse. What horrors would follow subjection to Yankee rule? Might even the sufferings of the war pale before the oppression of reconstruction? Southern women could only wring their hands in frustration and pour out the vials of their wrath onto the pages of their letters and diaries.\textsuperscript{43}

Minor irritations also reminded southern women of their changed condition. In Staunton, Virginia, an army sentinel was posted before one residence where the girls had allegedly "made mouths" and hissed at the Union band.


\textsuperscript{43}Entry for May 12, 1865, Mary Elizabeth Rives Diary, LSU; Entry for April 23, 1865, Jones, ed., \textit{Journal of Catherine Edmondston}, 105; Phillips Russel, \textit{The Woman Who Rang the Bell; The Story of Cornelia Phillips Spencer} (Chapel Hill, 1949), 78, 85; Entry for April 20, 1865, Miers, ed., \textit{Diary of Emma LeConte}, 90.
Making faces at Yankees or even failing to smile at the bluecoats could bring a young lady under surveillance. Postwar poverty and destitution forced many proud women to finally receive rations from their foes. However, southern women hated the hands that fed them though one Richmond lady pragmatically reasoned that it was only right to take from the Yankees who had seized all their possessions. Even the marriage ceremony became a symbol of southern defeat. Under military rule no one could marry who had not taken the oath of allegiance. Some young couples evaded the requirement while others took the oath at night or in their homes to avoid public disgrace. \(^4\)

By shunning all contact with Yankees, southern women revealed their true feelings to all beholders. On a train between Charleston and Orangeburg, South Carolina, Sidney Andrews talked to a young lady about sleeping accommodations.

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for the night. On finding out that he was from the North, she indignantly asked how he, a Yankee, could presume to speak to a southern lady. In Orangeburg a boarding house proprietor refused to put up Andrews for the night because he was from the North. The entrance of northerners into a local church frequently led to a rapid exodus of angry southern ladies. Mild treatment by the occupying troops impressed the men but could never quite overcome the passions of the women. They not only declined to join their husbands in fraternizing with Yankee soldiers but also refused to attend the military band concerts. The ladies much preferred being escorted about by men wearing the gray and would often treat the politest Union officer with cool disdain.45

When it came to intemperate words and actions, the southern clergy easily matched the women. Local preachers competed with each other in preaching disloyal sermons and denouncing the North. Many of the national denominations had divided into northern and southern wings during the agitation over the slavery question in the antebellum period. These schisms continued after the war, and many southern churchmen showed little desire to heal the breach.

Southern clergy branded their northern brethren as a band of radical abolitionists and denounced their proselytizing efforts in the South during the Reconstruction period. Southern church publications kept up a steady drumfire of attacks on the northern churches and accused Yankee missionaries of spreading scurrilous falsehoods about the South to the northern people. The Protestant Episcopal church reunited shortly after the war, but this did not mean that the church's southern ministers abandoned their sectional prejudices. Some insisted even after the surrender on including their customary prayer for Jefferson Davis in their worship services. In some areas, local military commanders ordered the Episcopal minister to include a prayer for the President of the United States as part of the liturgy. One bishop, who must have been something of a wag, remarked that he did not know anyone who needed the prayer more.

Richard Wilmer, the Episcopal bishop of Alabama, openly defied this edict. Wilmer discontinued the use of the traditional liturgical prayer for the President of the United States and all those in civil authority in

the summer of 1865. He issued a letter to his fellow clergymen informing them that the prescribed prayer was out of place so long as the South remained under military rule. When a Union general (probably Charles R. Woods) visited the bishop in Mobile, Wilmer unwisely told him that he had no authority over a bishop or his church and he hoped that the present government would have a very short life. Several days later Woods, under instructions from General George H. Thomas in Nashville, Tennessee, issued a general order describing the course of the controversy and characterizing Wilmer's actions as demonstrating a spirit of disloyalty. Furthermore, the general suspended Wilmer and forbade him to preach or perform worship services and applied like sanctions to the other Episcopal clergy in the state and also closed their churches. Faithful communicants, however, still managed to worship in private homes and in the few churches left unguarded by the military. Wilmer complained to President Johnson but to no avail. Finally, on December 22, 1865, General Thomas issued a new order revoking the earlier suspensions. Thomas, however, could not resist having the last word. He castigated the stubborn bishop for misleading his flock and gladly "left [him] to that remorse of conscience consequent to the exposure and failure of the diabolical schemes of designing and corrupt minds."47

47Richard H. Wilmer, The Recent Past from a Southern Standpoint (New York, 1900), 140-47; Walter C. Whitaker,
All across the South, military authorities closed Episcopal churches for omitting the prayer for the President. In some cases soldiers guarded the sanctuaries while the people bitterly complained about military interference with their religious lives. An elderly bishop in Tallahassee, Florida, conducted a service under military orders but while intoning the prayer suffered a (Freudian?) slip of the tongue and said "President of the Confederate States" instead of "President of the United States." He quickly corrected himself. In Wilmington, North Carolina, when a local minister omitted the prayer, General Joseph R. Hawley ordered the pews from the church thrown into the street and the building converted into a military hospital.

An old but feisty clergyman in Huntsville, Alabama, refused to say the mandatory prayer and found himself thrown in jail without a blanket in the middle of winter. Later soldiers took him away from town and threw him into an old chicken house where miraculously the poor fellow did not freeze to death. In the morning he was released and warned not to return to Huntsville. A more imaginative and sly preacher agreed to pray for the President with all his might. He begged the Lord to take out of the chief

executive and his friends the hearts of beasts and put
in them the hearts of men. This was hardly pleasing to
the military authorities, but it is not clear if they
took action against this recreant clergyman. 48

The public display of the American flag was also a
source of irritation to Southerners. The sight of the
stars and stripes in a southern town often elicited sullen
fury. Southerners took great pains to keep from walking
under the odious Union banner. An old woman and her
daughter, seeing an American flag flying in front of a
local army headquarters, stepped to the middle of the
street to avoid the dishonor of passing under it. The
local commandant had them arrested and forced the pair
to march back and forth under the flag while an army
band played the "Star Spangled Banner" and "Yankee Doodle."

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48 Entry for April 30, 1865, Virginia K. Jones, ed.,
"The Journal of Sarah G. Follansbee," Alabama Historical
Quarterly, XXVII (Fall and Winter, 1965), 239; Entry for
April 30, 1865, Diary of Joseph Waddell in Waddell, Annals
of Augusta County, 508; Lee, Memoirs of Pendleton, 422-23;
Wilson, Under the Old Flag, II, 357-58; Eppes, Through
Some Eventful Years, 341; W. McKee Evans, Ballots and
Fence Rails: Reconstruction on the Lower Cape Fear (Chapel
Hill, 1966), 48; John Witherspoon DuBose, Alabama's Tragic
Decade: Ten Years of Alabama, 1865-1874 (Birmingham,
Alabama, 1940), 9-10; Simon Peter Richardson, Lights and
Shadows of Itinerant Life (Nashville, 1901), 183-84.

The reasons for the southern women and clergy being so
unreconstructed are far from clear. Neither group had
experienced the shock of defeat on the battlefield or
learned to respect the Yankees as fighting men. These
facts may in some way explain their extreme and unrealistic
attitude toward postwar problems. See, Hilary A. Herbert,
"The Conditions of the Reconstruction Problem," in
Richard N. Current, ed., Reconstruction in Retrospect:
Views from the Turn of the Century (Baton Rouge, 1969), 33.
A theatre audience in Chattanooga, Tennessee, loudly hissed the appearance of the flag. Bolder citizens took special pleasure in waving the Confederate banner in front of Union troops and boisterously shouting rebel slogans.49

Even the commemoration of patriotic holidays was anathema to Southerners. The Fourth of July became a day of mourning rather than an occasion for celebration. One Independence Day in Austin, Texas, no American flags flew on public buildings, but Governor James W. Throckmorton had hung portraits of Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis in the executive mansion. There was evidently a bull market in Confederate memorabilia with likenesses of Lee and Stonewall Jackson adorning the walls of many southern homes. One enterprising Union veteran made a tidy sum of money selling such items but kept pictures of Lincoln, Grant, and Phil Sheridan in his own room. Local organizations regularly decorated Confederate graves, and the Arkansas General Assembly passed a law providing support for wounded soldiers and widows and artificial limbs for maimed veterans not taken care of under United States law (i.e., Confederate soldiers). The smooth-tongued

might talk of surrender and returning loyalty, but the signs of continued resistance were all around.  

More infuriating than the appearance of the American flag was the presence of the occupation troops, or those "blue coated dogs of despotism," as one woman described them. Echoing the Declaration of Independence, southerners bitterly complained that troops were being kept among them in a time of profound peace. Governor Perry of South Carolina wrote to Washington asking for the removal of all troops from the state except for those units in charge of maintaining order among the freedmen.  

The most widespread reaction to the troops was simply to ignore them as much as possible. Many soldiers stationed in the South met only cold stares or open contempt on the streets of the cities and towns. Southerners, and especially southern women, haughtily maintained that these  

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51 Jeanie Chew Young to Louisa Wharton, January 16, 1866, Edward C. Wharton Papers, LSU; Florida House Journal (1866), 9-10; Kibler, Perry, 436.
Yankee oppressors could hardly expect a warm welcome into the highest circles of southern society. Soldiers who sought the company of local belles found doors slammed in their faces. Southern women, on the other hand, protested that the Yankee soldiers were generally a bunch of ill-mannered louts compared to their dashing heroes in gray.52

The most common complaint against the federal soldiers was their arbitrary arrest methods. It is true that some soldiers, angered by the assassination of Lincoln and the openly disloyal actions of many southerners, wanted to punish the rebels further and crush out the last vestiges of rebellion. Still even the most scrupulously handled arrests seemed outrageous to a people unused to the rigors of martial law. A Charleston clergyman wrote of his horror at seeing former Confederate Treasury Secretary George A. Trenholm sent to jail under a Negro guard like a common felon. Citizens in Austin and Millican, Texas, expressed dismay at the confinement of leading citizens in large

circular stockades exposed to all the ravages of the weather. Yet southerners were not entirely helpless. A provost marshal in Lamar county, Texas, told congressional investigators that a mob of two to three hundred people had assaulted him during the military trial of a local desperado.53

Violent confrontations were not necessary to stir up local hostility. One of the most frequent sources of dissatisfaction was the infamous "button order" which forbade the wearing of uniforms or clothing with Confederate buttons on them. In some areas the military authorities prohibited the wearing of the Confederate gray altogether. Soldiers would cut the buttons off the jackets of even blacks found wearing the proscribed emblems of rebellion. Those southerners with an inventive turn of mind covered the offending buttons with crepe as a sign of mourning.54


54 Simkins and Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction, 31; George H. Gordon, A War Diary of Events in the War of the Great Rebellion, 1863-1865 (Boston, 1882), 415-16; Entry for July 2, 1865, Diary of Joseph Waddell in Waddell, Annals of Augusta County, 513; Avary, ed., Dixie After the War, 123-24.
Many aspects of the military occupation aroused the wrath of southerners. Troops occupied several buildings on the University of Georgia campus in Athens. The soldiers removed seats from the chapel, dumped their rubbish inside, and chipped the columns of the building in bayonet drills and rifle practice. Some of the troops stole civilians' horses, cattle, and even cash. One farmer in Mississippi reported that the local detachment made frequent raids on his melon patch. Soldiers in Macon, Georgia, shocked local residents by swimming one Sunday afternoon in a public park without bathing trunks.\footnote{E. Merton Coulter, "Slavery and Freedom in Athens, Georgia, 1860-1866," Georgia Historical Quarterly, XLIX (September, 1965), 285; Entry for May 1, 1865, David G. Harris Books, SHC; Avary, ed., Dixie After the War, 139-40; Ruth Watkins, "Reconstruction in Marshall County," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, XII (1912), 173-74; Sefton, Army and Reconstruction, 49-50.}

Although there is a certain comic opera flavor to many of these incidents, there was a serious side to military-civilian relations during Reconstruction, namely violence. When the troops got drunk, bloody clashes with citizens and local police regularly ensued. Attempts by local authorities to arrest rowdy soldiers usually proved futile. Once violence had occurred soldiers sometimes searched civilian homes and seized weapons. A typical row took place in Nashville during the Christmas holidays in 1866. Some soldiers had been drinking heavily in a local saloon (some witnesses claimed in the presence of "lewd women").
A policeman present at the time let out a cheer for Jefferson Davis, and a fight broke out. One soldier was shot to death but the policeman later received a promotion in rank.  

The most notable case of military misconduct occurred in Brenham, Texas, a turbulent railroad town halfway between Houston and Austin. On the night of September 7, 1866, the whites and blacks held separate balls in the town. A drunken group of soldiers from the 17th Infantry tried to crash the Negroes' party. The soldiers beat up several black men and pursued one of them up a set of stairs to where the whites were dancing. A small body of whites requested the soldiers to leave, but they refused, using obscene language and flourishing their pistols. Several scuffles followed and some shots were fired though it is not certain which party began the shooting. One or two soldiers were wounded in the exchange of gunfire and carried back to their camp outside of town. Some of the soldiers muttered threats about burning the town. At midnight the commanding officer, Major G. W. Smith, rode back into Brenham with a guard of men and

arrested two young boys to be held as hostages. The soldiers also broke into some local business establishments, including a saloon, and evidently set several buildings on fire. Local residents quickly brought the blaze under control before major damage took place. The soldiers involved deserted their unit, presumably fearing reprisals from the citizens. Later investigations showed that Major Smith had condoned the firing of the town if he had not ordered the act of arson himself. General Philip H. Sheridan, commanding the Department of the Gulf (which then embraced Florida, Louisiana and Texas), defended the actions of the troops. He maintained that a thorough investigation had failed to prove the soldiers guilty of setting the fire, and most of his report to General Grant detailed the insolent and menacing manner of the civil authorities after the riot and fire. On the whole, it seems that the United States troops were largely to blame for the trouble. A similar clash between soldiers and civilians occurred in Hempstead, Texas, although there the soldiers only threatened to fire the town.\(^7\)

There were also several reported incidents in which southerners murdered United States soldiers. In Edgefield, South Carolina, a young man shot a soldier to death for assaulting a crippled man. The young man and some other citizens left town. Former Confederate General Matthew C. Butler cautioned the local Army officer that five or six hundred ex-Confederates could no longer be restrained. The military authorities later arrested several persons including prominent Confederate General Martin W. Gary. All prisoners were later released without trial. In another town in South Carolina three Union soldiers were shot dead from ambush. No local jury would convict the guilty parties. Citizens warned the murderers of the approach of troops with warrants for their arrest, and they escaped. Reportedly a Negro witness against them was also killed, and threatening letters were sent to anyone cooperating with the military investigation. There were also reports of murders of Union soldiers in Texas, though in most cases it was difficult to determine whether political partisans or ordinary brigands were responsible. Citizens in Hempstead county, Texas in March, 1867, killed two Yankee soldiers for committing "nameless outrages" on a black woman; apparently the northern soldiers were more hated than the blacks in that area.  

58John S. Reynolds, Reconstruction in South Carolina (Columbia, South Carolina, 1905), 42-43; House Rep. 23, 39-2, 10-19; Andrews, South Since the War, 220-21; Richter, "Spread-Eagle Eccentricities," 313-15; Fred M. Spindler,
From the Army standpoint, occupation duty in the South was unpleasant at best. Officers and enlisted men alike preferred fighting Indians on the Great Plains to dealing with recalcitrant southerners. For one thing, the Army had virtually no precedents to follow in establishing military rule in the South. The brief occupation duty during the Mexican War and the limited wartime reconstruction experience marked the extent of the Army's preparation for the harrowing problems of governing a hostile civilian population in the ten former Confederate states. As the War Department reduced the number of men on duty in the South and President Johnson re-established civil government in the southern states, the military commanders became more dependent on local cooperation to maintain peace and carry out their assigned duties. As a result, many soldiers found it necessary to conciliate the southern people as much as possible. General Galusha Pennypacker so sympathized with the people of Mississippi that in several instances he dropped "kindly hints" to those about to be arrested by the military authorities so they could make good their escape.59


59 Onley Andrus to Mollie Andrus, May 1, 1865, Fred A. Shannon, ed., The Civil War Letters of Sergeant Onley Andrus (Urbana, Illinois, 1947), 131; Elizabeth Custer, Tenting on the Plains, 181-82, 229, 241-42; Kirkland, "Federal Troops in South Atlantic States," 63; New Orleans Times, August 31, 1865; Augusta Daily Chronicle and
In many places southerners appreciated the efforts of the United States troops to maintain order. Some people were surprised when the Yankee troops did not turn out to be the barbaric ogres portrayed in Confederate war propaganda. Elizabeth Custer (the wife of George Armstrong Custer) found that men of all political persuasions made frequent requests for troops to stamp out the lawlessness which was endemic to postwar Texas. Temperate men realized that the presence of troops would be necessary so long as there was disorder in their region. One Arkansan praised the local federal garrison for putting a stop to "Jayhawking" but also felt that the presence of troops "makes us feel more keenly our degradation as a conquered people."^60

Southerners applied their considerable political skills to pleasing their new masters. Local citizens wined and dined the officers while plying them with pathetic stories of their own suffering and the bad conduct of Negroes and "northern adventurers." Planters in Hempstead, Texas, took General Custer on hunting trips

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and offered him their most lavish hospitality. The dinners given by a Demopolis, Alabama, woman and her pretty daughters made quite a favorable impression on a local Union general. As a result of this "social influence," Army personnel in the South often adopted the views of native southerners. The "cake and wine influence," as one North Carolina Negro dubbed it, was no small factor in the cordial relations existing between soldiers and civilians in many areas of the South. Some officers successfully entered the upper echelons of southern social life, and a few even married rebel belles.61

All was not of course dancing and tea cakes for the troops stationed in the South. During Presidential Reconstruction, the major function of the Army in the southern states was to control violence and maintain order. The strains of defeat and the decision to resist most northern demands on reconstruction led to growing tension in southern society that eventually exploded in violence.

Most scholars have agreed that there was a substantial amount of violence in the South in the immediate aftermath of the war. William A. Dunning, however, long ago asserted that life and property in the South between 1865 and 1867

were as well protected as ever and that lawlessness did not markedly increase during the Reconstruction years. Was there then a continuous pattern of southern violence on which the Reconstruction experience had little or no effect? Allen Trelease in the preface to his massive study on the Ku Klux Klan argued that Reconstruction merely exacerbated the already existing southern predisposition to use force in social and political conflicts. 62

The South has had a long history of social and political violence ranging from dueling to slave insurrections. Why this has been so is not clear. The question of southern violence is inextricably linked with that perennial concern over the distinctiveness of the region vis-a-vis the rest of the nation. Crime statistics (particularly those for homicide) have shown in recent years that southerners do commit more violent crimes per capita than people in other section of the country. Such quantitative comparisons for the nineteenth century are not possible. Crime statistics for the period are either unavailable or totally unreliable. Impressionistic evidence indicates a great deal of violence in southern society long before the Civil War, but it is one thing to describe the South as a violent region and quite another

to explain the causes of this phenomenon. The South was in the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth a predominately rural society. In addition, much of the South at the end of the war was still in a frontier condition. Rural isolation combined with the violence of a frontier region to make law enforcement difficult. Wilbur Cash has pointed out that southern individualism created a strong streak of intolerance and made southerners impatient and willing to resort to violence to achieve their ends. Other scholars have maintained that the slavery controversy also contributed to an already established pattern of southern violence. Clement Eaton has shown how the South reacted to antislavery attacks by shutting off "outside" intellectual influences and using violence against heterodox individuals and groups within her own borders. Certainly this reaction to "outsiders" became even more pronounced during Reconstruction when northerners in larger numbers than ever before entered the region.63

Southerners themselves showed great concern during the early Reconstruction period about a wave of violent

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crime in their land. Generally politicians and newspaper editors attributed this increased social violence to the lingering effects of the war, which had loosened the moral bonds of society. Demobilization of the armies also released on society men accustomed to solving their problems by physical force. Southern leaders admonished the law-abiding people of the South to seize control of affairs again and hold back the new wave of lawlessness.\textsuperscript{64}

The frontier conditions in much of the South also contributed to the problem. Many northern and foreign visitors were surprised at the widespread practice of men going about armed. One federal soldier described Millican, Texas, as a "miserable cut throat hole. Everyone carries a large bowie knife and revolver strapped to him." Persons travelling on steamboats or by rail casually carried weapons. Young boys and men alike went about armed with revolvers bulging from beneath their coats. In Mississippi even prisoners often entered courtrooms heavily armed, which may give some indication of the quality of justice in that state.\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{64}New Orleans Times, August 11, 1865; Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, September 8, 1865; Montgomery Advertiser, August 30, 1865; Charleston Mercury, December 22, 1866.

\textsuperscript{65}Ray Granade, "Violence: An Instrument of Policy in Reconstruction Alabama," Alabama Historical Quarterly, XXX (Fall and Winter, 1968), 182-84; John C. Gill to Mary A. Gill, July 7, 1865, Harry F. Lupold, ed.,
In the aftermath of the war outlaws and bands of desperadoes of various descriptions infested many southern communities. Some of these characters were deserters from either the Union or Confederate armies. Others claimed to be "regulators" attempting to restore law and order but in fact exploiting the turbulent condition of postwar society for their own advantage. Livestock and agricultural produce were particular targets of these bands. In western areas such as Louisiana and Texas outlaws roamed at will because many communities lacked even a semblence of local government. Thieves and cutthroats in many places could attack or even kill law enforcement officials with impunity. Some people feared that southern society was drifting toward a state of lawless anarchy. 66

How much of this postwar violence arose out of political conflicts was then and is today the subject of

"A Union Officer Views the 'Texians,'" Southwestern Historical Quarterly, LXXVII (April, 1974), 485-86; Skinner, After the Storm, II, 33-34; Elizabeth Custer, Tenting on the Plains, 223; Vernon Lane Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890 (Chapel Hill, 1974), 216-18.

much controversy. Southern unionists bitterly complained that the rebels were resuming their former sway. These loyalists claimed they had no more freedom to express their views in public or even quietly go about their business than during the heyday of the rebellion. Unionists feared that the magnanimous policies of Andrew Johnson had produced a sense of security and assertiveness among the rebels. 67

Southern loyalists were most concerned about the return of ex-rebels to political power under Presidential Reconstruction. Even Andrew Johnson asked Governor Perry of South Carolina why disloyal men received appointments while union men waited in the cold. Perry replied that there were few genuine union men in his state though many claimed to be so in order to gain office. Perry said he preferred to appoint honest maimed Confederate veterans than many of these so-called union men. In point of fact, both loyalists and original secessionists were on the sidelines in most of these states. Original unionists who had followed their states into the Confederacy after secession held a preponderance of power in most of the provisional governments. However, union men protested

that rebel officeholders made it uncomfortable for them and in some cases drove them away from their homes or refused to protect them from bandits and marauders. Governor William G. "Parson" Brownlow of Tennessee wrote in a panic to Chief Justice Chase that Johnson clubs were organizing everywhere and that federal patronage was being used to crush union men and aid rebels. Some union men pleaded with northern politicians to reduce the southern states to the condition of territories and provide temporary governments for the immediate future. This would be their only salvation.

Many union men asserted that it was not safe for them to live in the South. Returning veterans from the federal army often received cool or angry receptions in their own communities. Bands of desperadoes robbed and occasionally

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murdered loyalists. Provisional Governor Andrew Jackson Hamilton of Texas reported that persecution was so fierce that: "human life in Texas is not to day worth as much, so far as law or protection can give value to it, as that of domestic cattle." A Florida minister told the Joint Committee on Reconstruction that there was a class of young boys who "would put a bowie-knife or a bullet through a northern man as soon as they would through a mad dog."

Many southern loyalists left their homes, and some congregated in Washington filling the ears of sympathetic congressmen with their gruesome tales of suffering and woe. But lodging complaints could be a dangerous practice.

In September, 1866, Albion W. Tourgee, an Ohio native who moved to North Carolina after the war, told a convention of southern loyalists that no union man was safe in North Carolina. He graphically told how the bodies of fifteen Negroes had been dragged from a pond in Guilford county. He also contended that twelve hundred Union soldiers had been forced to sell their property and flee the state for their lives. On his return to North Carolina, Tourgee found himself subject to torrents of abuse and threats against his life. 69

The state of Tennessee in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War served as a running battleground between union men and rebels. Armed bands of both parties patrolled various parts of the state. Violent clashes occurred frequently in East Tennessee, the seat of unionism in that state. Governor Brownlow warned that if the federal troops were withdrawn from Tennessee, no union man would be safe. For their part, unionists brought damage suits against ex-Confederates with Brownlow's encouragement, and in some cases ambushed and killed southern sympathizers. Brownlow sought to organize a state militia (later called the State Guard) to protect "loyal" men from "rebel" persecution. The Governor's opponents charged that the "Parson" intended to use this body to harass his political enemies.70


70 Memphs Daily Post, February 16, June 23, 1866, January 24, 1867; Captain Edward H. Leib to Lt. Col. Alfred L. Hough, December 20, 1866, House Ex. Doc. 1, 40-2, 200-202; Trowbridge, Desolated States, 284; Thomas B. Alexander, Political Reconstruction in Tennessee (Nashville,
The persistent cry of the southern unionist was for protection by United States troops. Some loyalists pleaded with federal officials to send more troops into the South. Many unionists blamed President Johnson's lenient reconstruction policy for encouraging ex-Confederates to wreak vengeance on them. What unionists most feared was the withdrawal of the troops and the restoration of civil government under rebel control. They warned their northern allies that in such a contingency, a bloodbath of loyal men would shortly follow. 71

The Johnson state governments in the South either were unwilling or unable to stop outrages against union men. There were few prosecutions of persons for crimes against union men outside of Tennessee. In most states disputes arose between state officials and the military over the extent of martial law; and the re-establishment

of civil courts in these states often left union men with no one to protect them. Local officials had even less power or inclination to arrest the perpetrators of outrages, particularly where well organized gangs preyed on a local community. Moreover, in Texas, many conservatives argued that troops were needed on the western frontier to protect the people against Indian raids rather than in the eastern part of the state protecting alleged loyalists from imaginary outrages.  

Troops by themselves, however, proved to be no panacea for the unionists' ills. Military and civilian officials frequently disagreed about the extent of the violence in a given area. Detachments would go into places where outrages had been reported, would find everything quiet, and then question the authenticity of the original information. Furthermore, infantry units could hardly be effective against mounted criminal bands. Nor was the mere presence of troops an effective deterrent to violence.

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In isolated instances, desperadoes fired on the soldiers
and drove them off. In many areas the soldiers sympathized
with the local rebels and gave little weight to unionists' petitions for protection from crime and violence.\(^73\)

Southern conservatives responded in a number of ways to reports of outrages against union men. They first of all pointed out that a certain amount of tension and violence naturally followed a period of war. No society could return to a state of perfect peace after a long and bloody civil conflict. Secondly, southerners maintained that crime and violence were no worse in the South than in the North and often pointed to the grisly crimes committed in the northern states. Finally, conservatives asserted that those crying out loudest for the protection of loyal men were doubtful loyalists and undoubted criminals seeking to escape justice.\(^74\)

Southerners denied that union men were unsafe in the South, claiming that northern men and unionists could go


\(^74\) Coulter, South During Reconstruction, 40-41; Montgomery Daily Advertiser, March 14, 1866; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, February 21, 1867; Jackson Daily Mississippi Clarion and Standard, June 10, 1866; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, September 1, 1866.
from Virginia to Texas without fear of molestation. The reaction of the North Carolina conservatives to these outrage charges was in many ways typical of the general southern response. They branded the stories of the persecution of union men in their state as total fabrications. They particularly attacked Tourgee's slanders against them, and even those willing to threaten the judge's life, unconscious of the irony in the situation, accused him of deliberate falsehood in his speech at Philadelphia. Those ready to tar and feather erstwhile unionists self-righteously labeled Tourgee a contemptible liar. Governor Jonathan Worth expressed indignation at Tourgee's charges and other stories of violence against North Carolina union men. Worth deplored the grist these accounts provided for radical outrage mills grinding out bloodcurdling propaganda to justify reducing the South to a territorial condition.75

Many conservatives charged that most "outrage" stories were deliberate fabrications designed to impugn

75 Annual Cyclopedia (1867), 15; Charleston Daily Courier, October 1, November 3, 1866; Charleston Mercury, December 7, 1866; Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, August 28, 1866; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, June 1, July 28, 1866; Anonymous to Albion W. Tourgee, September 24, 1866, Tourgee Papers, SHC; "The Friend of All Loyal People" to Mrs. Tourgee, October 16, 1866, ibid.; Jonathan Worth to Nereus Mendenhall, September 10, 1866, Worth to Editor of Greensboro Patriot, September 10, 1866, Worth to George Howard, January 12, 1867, Worth to W. T. Faircloth, January 12, 1867, Worth to Editors, Wilmington Journal, January 13, 1867, Worth to C. C. Clark, January 13, 1867, Hamilton, ed., Correspondence of Worth, II, 772-77, 867-72.
the southern character and lay the groundwork for radical reconstruction policies. They feared that the North would never hear the truth if her citizens relied on radical newspapers and periodicals such as the New York Tribune and Harper's Weekly. The war was over, peace had come, and yet the North continued to malign the South. The radicals were more interested in emotional new material for their stump speeches than in genuine law and order in the South. These vile hounds were engaged in a dark conspiracy to falsely show that the South was disloyal for their own base partisan purposes. The New Orleans Picayune estimated that only one in twenty of these southern outrage stories had any basis in fact and that one had been exaggerated all out of its true proportions.76

And so the end of war did not bring peace. The South in the early years of Reconstruction remained sullen and defiant. Her leaders angrily told the North that they had loyally met all the terms of surrender and were without doubt or cavil entitled to their former position in the Union. A North Carolina editor trumpeted that this must be a "union of equals" in which the South had rights which the rest of the country was bound to respect. Conservatives accused northerners of bad faith and hypocrisy in talking

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76 Perman, Reunion Without Compromise, 145-55; Entry for August 18, 1865, Andrews, Journal of a Georgia Girl, 371; Charleston Daily Courier, September 6, 1865; Richmond Daily Dispatch, January 13, June 11, 1866; Tallahassee Florida Sentinel, October 30, 1866; New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 9, 1866.
of the integrity of the Union and then doing all they could to prevent the restoration of the South to the national compact. Wade Hampton told President Johnson that the South had consistently acted in good faith and would abide by all the laws of the land and fulfill all the terms of restoration, but warned that she could not immediately declare that her cause had been unjust and that the North had been right all along. However many sacrifices the South might make, she would not disgrace herself by entering any "left-handed alliance" with the North in which she was distinctly an inferior partner. Hampton spoke for the majority of southerners who had never surrendered their belief in the holiness of the southern cause. The persecution and murder of southern union men showed that there was no genuine peace in the South. To alter Clausewitz' famous dictum, for the South, peace became war carried on by other means.

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Chapter II
RACE: THE GREAT FEAR

"Everyone talks about the negro, at all hours of the day, and under all circumstances. . . . Let the conversation begin where it will, it ends with Sambo." So wrote northern reporter Sidney Andrews while on a trip through the late Confederacy in the autumn of 1865. That the most pressing concern among southern whites was the future status of southern blacks should not have been surprising to anyone who knew the region. Long before the war, that prescient observer of all things American, Alexis de Tocqueville, had predicted that "the most formidable of all ills that threaten the future of the Union arises from the presence of a black population upon its territory. . . ."1 Slavery had dominated the thoughts, actions, and dreams of the antebellum South and had loomed like a colossus over southern politics. On this issue, southerners could brook no division in their ranks, no deviations from orthodoxy. The institution that had seemed immutable was gone in 1865, but the black people remained.

1Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (2 Vols., New York, 1945), I, 370; Sidney Andrews, The South Since the War, ed. by David Donald (Boston, 1971), 22.
The end of slavery marked the climax of a revolutionary epoch in United States history. For many white southerners their world was turned upside down. One man in Florida was so unhinged at the loss of his slaves that he committed suicide. An ex-slave later recalled that many whites became so distraught at the sight of their slaves' departure that they grieved themselves to death. Others sought to cling blindly to the last vestiges of the old regime. Thus, southerners after the war did not suddenly lose the habit of command over their former slaves. In Camden, South Carolina, Colonel John Chesnut, ninety-three years old, deaf, and blind, was the embodiment of the old South creed. The old man with his black giant of a man Scipio at his side, strolled around town reaching out with his walking stick, still every inch the proud scion of the old aristocracy. With her usual penchant for sharp observation, Mary Boykin Chesnut saw the old man as a striking and at the same time frightening anachronism: "Partly patriarch, partly grand seigneur, this old man is of a species that we will see no more; the last of the lordly planters who ruled this Southern world. His manners are

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unequaled still, but underneath this smooth exterior lies the grip of a tyrant whose will has never been crossed. 3

Like Chesnut, some slaveholders simply refused to let go. In many areas planters cherished the hope that slavery was not dead and they refused to tell their bondsmen of their freedom. This was particularly true in the interior sections of many states with transportation and communication in disarray and reliable news scarce. Others sought forcibly to prevent the blacks from leaving the plantations and even shot down those who tried to escape. A few persisted to the point where federal soldiers had to go into the countryside informing the blacks of their freedom and arresting those stubborn planters who refused to recognize this most important result of the war. 4

As could be expected, southerners denied the constitutionality of emancipation and firmly believed that the

3 Tocqueville, Democracy in America, I, 410-11; Entry for May 18, 1865, Mary Boykin Chesnut, A Diary from Dixie. ed. by Ben Ames Williams (Boston, 1949), 533-34.  

Supreme Court would overturn Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Some planters told their laborers that the death of Lincoln meant the restoration of slavery. Northern missionaries on the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina found the local blacks all in a panic after the assassination. Many feared that Lincoln's passing also marked the death of the government and the re-establishment of bondage. In many instances, white southerners continued to treat the blacks as slaves until the blacks themselves asserted their new status as free people. One elderly woman in South Carolina never could accept the fact that slavery was dead. Ten years after emancipation, she carefully drew up a will leaving a certain portion of her property to her "Negro slaves" that a "high-handed and confiscatory government" had tried to take from her.

Even when the fact of emancipation was clear for all to see, some southerners retained their delusional hopes and believed slavery would eventually be restored by the national government. At a minimum, they sought some form

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of compulsory labor or apprenticeship. If the Democrats regained power in the North, slavery might yet have a future in the United States.6

Other less sanguine observers hoped for a gradual transition to free labor. Some southerners embraced the old scheme of gradual emancipation that they had so haughtily spurned before the war. A long transition period would be necessary to avoid the revolutionary shock waves that immediate abolition would send through southern society. How long this period of transition should be no one stated. The mayor of Grenada, Mississippi, complained to Provisional Governor William Sharkey about depredations being committed by the free blacks and wondered if the old antebellum slave code would still apply to proceedings in such cases.7

Those who accepted the inevitability of emancipation did not, however, give up all hope of receiving some

6Henry Cleveland to Alexander H. Stephens, October 28, 1865, Stephens Papers, LC; William B. Hesseltine, Confederate Leaders in the New South (Baton Rouge, 1950), 12-13; Richardson, Negro in Reconstruction of Florida, 13-14; Andrews, South Since the War, 178, 324; Charles Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas (New York, 1910), 46-47; Chicago Tribune, October 10, 1865.

compensation for their great loss. Northern travelers found people all across the South who assumed that they would receive compensation from Congress for their slaves once southern representatives were admitted to that body. One overly optimistic North Carolinian wrote to ex-Governor William A. Graham that the South should have no trouble convincing Congress to appropriate $400 million to cover the loss of her slave property. Some old planters near Port Hudson, Louisiana as late as 1869 kept careful records of the number and value of their slaves lost in the war so as to be ready for the day when the government decided to pay off their claims. 8

Old habits changed very slowly if at all. Barnwell Rhett, son of the famous South Carolina fire-eater, paid a visit to General Oliver Otis Howard, head of the Freedmen's Bureau in Washington. Rhett politely asked that the Bureau furnish transportation for some of the "family's negroes" to return to their homes from Alabama where they had been sent during General Sherman's march through South Carolina. Howard, in a rare burst of temper, summoned a guard to escort Rhett from his office. One man in Petersburg,

Virginia, whom many of the local people considered a lunatic, paid ten dollars a head for the claim of ownership to able-bodied blacks in the hope that slavery would someday be restored. Northerners were amazed at how difficult southerners found getting used to the end of slavery. As one South Carolinian explained to his upset brother: "You must realize that negroes are free, free forever." But it was so much easier to say than to accept.

Of course not everyone threw up his hands in despair. Those who tried the free labor experiment with an open mind and in good faith often issued glowing reports of its success. Many surprised planters gave grudging praise to their black laborers, and most preferred them to white workers. Josiah Gorgas noted with amazement how planters near Eutaw, Alabama listened to advice from the local Freedmen's Bureau agent and made contracts with their former slaves. He marveled that this representative of the national government, who would have been strung up in that area just a few months before, was greeted with such equanimity.10

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10 Trowbridge, Desolated States, 430-31; Williamson, After Slavery, 121-25; Charleston Courier, July 17, 1865;
Boosters of the free labor system emulated the antebellum planters in pouring out advice on agricultural operations under the new system for the uninitiated. Most agreed that the management of free Negroes was a skill difficult to master, and those planters with several plantations generally found it difficult to find good overseers for all their places. In this sense, not much had changed since the war. Just as in the prewar years, those planters who built up the best personal relationship with their workers enjoyed the most success. Close contact with the black foremen was essential to a well-run operation. Moreover, the wise planter knew the importance of barbecues and holidays in the lives of his black workers and neglected these social affairs at his peril. William C. Jordan, a Bullock County, Alabama, farmer, advised treating blacks "kindly, firmly and honestly" but not associating with them on terms of social equality. Jordan allowed his workers to visit sick relatives and gave the family cook a $50 bonus at Christmas time. All in all, the more optimistic southerners concluded that free labor was working.

out better than they could ever have expected and that both blacks and whites were slowly adjusting to the new order. In fact, southerners loudly proclaimed to all who would listen that they welcomed the end of slavery with joyous hearts. Some maintained that slavery had always been a lot of trouble and that they had never had much use for the institution. Although much of this talk was self-deceiving if not insincere, many planters at least were relieved from the burden of feeding and clothing large numbers of blacks. Some commented that it would be cheaper to hire labor and thus eliminate the costs of caring for old or infirm Negroes. All things considered, perhaps emancipation was beneficial after all.

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11 John A. Cobb to Howell Cobb, April 27, 1866, R. P. Brooks, ed., "Howell Cobb Papers," Georgia Historical Quarterly, VII (December, 1922), 382; Trowbridge, Desolated States, 386; Heyward, Seed from Madagascar, 156-57; Benjamin C. Yancey to Mrs. Laura Hines Yancey, July 24, 1865, Benjamin Yancey Papers, SHC; Sterkx, "Jordan and Reconstruction," 66; Joshua Coffee to John Coffee, January 27, 1867, Coffee-Patton Papers, Tenn.; Henry M. Crydenwise to Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Crydenwise, April 3, 1866, Henry Crydenwise Papers, Duke.

Yet there were sharp limits to the southern acceptance of emancipation. However fervently some might applaud the result, many criticized the method. As good constitutional hairsplitters, southerners could not help but be appalled by the "arbitrary" and "unconstitutional" method of abolition. President Johnson had told the provisional governors in the southern states that the constitutional conventions in their states must, as a *sine qua non* for complete restoration, ratify the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery. The abolition question dominated state election campaigns in the summer of 1865 with many candidates arguing that the South should hold back on abolition in order to gain compensation for the loss of her slaves. More rational voices advised the full acceptance of emancipation including the Thirteenth Amendment. These politicians asserted that it was foolish to quibble over fine constitutional points when everyone knew that slavery was dead forever. Such nitpicking would only prolong military rule, lead to the garrisoning of the southern states with black troops, and perhaps drive the white men from the South as the Jews had been driven from Egypt. In discussing the necessity of taking action on the amendment and his own reservations on the issue, Alexander H. Stephens summed up the southern dilemma: "It seems to be a hard matter for our people to realize
that old things have passed away and that all things are new upon this subject.\textsuperscript{13}

The proposed amendment was objectionable to simon-pure constitutionalists on two counts. First, the amendment brought about emancipation by federal action while some preferred to have the states "voluntarily" end slavery within their borders without conceding the constitutional power of the federal government to abolish slavery in the states. More importantly, alarmists warned that ratification of the amendment could be the entering wedge for further interference in southern race relations. Some even feared that the federal government might be able to confer suffrage on the blacks using the enforcement section of the amendment as a constitutional basis. Several members of the Alabama constitutional convention advised waiting for a decision of the Supreme Court concerning the constitutionality of emancipation and a few even held out hopes for compensated emancipation. In the Mississippi convention, the debates were long and heated. Opponents of ratification said that abolition should come by state action and not by an illegally submitted constitutional amendment. The convention finally adopted a weakly worded report saying

that the state of Mississippi had abolished slavery of her own volition which was a way of declaring that the Thirteenth Amendment could have no practical application within the state. The politicians also feared that this proposed amendment could be used to establish social and political equality between the races.\textsuperscript{14}

These strident utterances indicated the direction of southern thinking on emancipation but also served to drown out more moderate voices. Provisional Governor Andrew Jackson Hamilton of Texas urged his fellow citizens to stop worshiping at the shrine of slavery and turn their attention to achieving economic prosperity using free labor. Many southern unionists argued that the Negro would work well given fair treatment. The southern people these men argued, could well afford to be generous with their former servants and protect them in their rights, without ever approaching the explosive issue of social or political equality with the race. The road to economic recovery in short la, in a genuine acceptance of free labor.\textsuperscript{15}


\textsuperscript{15} Austin \textit{Weekly State Gazette}, August 1, 8, 1865; Galveston \textit{Flake's Daily Bulletin}, September 19, 1865;
Free labor, however, did not mean the same thing in the South that it meant in the rest of the nation. The blacks must remain under the tutelage of southern whites in a new system of paternalism which would give the Negroes little more control over their own lives than under slavery. Southerners accepted as an article of faith that the blacks were utterly dependent on them for direction. Any elevation of the race in the scale of civilization must come through the agency of southern whites. In addition, southerners noted that the blacks had not freed themselves and were not responsible for overturning the South's social system. Postwar orators pointed with pride at the behavior of their faithful slaves during the war, often forgetting the alacrity with which many of their bondsmen had fled to the federal lines on the approach of Union armies. Alexander H. Stephens felt that the South now had an obligation to protect the freedmen by law and treat them with humanity and justice. As a practical application of his principles, Stephens counseled a local freedman about his rights and told the former slave that the eight dollars a month in wages paid to him by his former master was too low.16

This paternalistic protection of the freed blacks found its ideological underpinnings in the southerners' views of the nature of their own society. They rejected the idea of an irrepressible conflict between capital and labor in favor of an organic view of society reminiscent of that held by the great British political thinker Edmund Burke. Black labor and white capital shared a common interest in southern agriculture and whatever might be the initial difficulties, both groups remained dependent upon each other even under a free labor system. Both races lived in the same country, shared the same climate, language, religion and food, and worked in intimate daily contact with each other. To be sure, both parties would have to discard many of their old notions and make many adjustments to the demands of the new order. If the two races both acted decently, events would tend to create a harmonious social structure. In such a close relationship, James Lusk Alcorn maintained that the whites could ill afford to alienate the blacks from them. The whites had

to be careful to avoid any conflict between the races and do all they could to keep the paternalistic features of the slave system intact while modifying their ideas and practices to meet the requirements of free labor. This proved to be a delicate balancing of conflicting ideas and instincts which eventually collapsed under the weight of its own irreconcilable contradictions.  

It would be easy to dismiss many of these statements as self-serving cant, but most southerners truly believed that they were the black man's best friend. The southern people knew the Negro best from their intimate contact with the race extending over two centuries. Southerners asserted that northerners could never understand the complexities of southern race relations. Why should northern "philanthropists" then seek to meddle with the freedmen and upset the delicate balance of the southern social system?

White radicals might use the southern Negro for political ends, Freedmen's Bureau officers might see the southern blacks as a source of employment for themselves, and fanatical philanthropists might shed many crocodile tears over the sufferings of their black brothers. But only southern men, despite the bitter loss of slavery in both economic and social terms, were really prepared to aid the downtrodden freedmen. The best policy then for the federal government would be to leave the southerners of both races alone to work out their own destiny. The Wilmington Journal scoffed at the idea that northern do-gooders could deal with the "complex relations that had been rooted for centuries" and now have been torn up and "suddenly dissolved into their original elements." Only southerners could build a new society while preserving the best of the old order.18

Given the difficulty of the task, the best advice southern whites felt they could give the freedmen was to remain with their old masters. They cautioned the blacks that freedom did not mean idleness and that they must learn to work just as hard in freedom as they had in slavery. Many advisers urged the freedmen to marry, raise families

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and be sober, industrious and thrifty: in short, to adopt white social values and incidentally preserve white racial hegemony. Whites emphasized those virtues that would make the Negroes a stable laboring class; the only way in which most southerners believed the Negro might improve his present condition was by continued contact with southern whites. On a more pragmatic level, southerners realized how dependent their agricultural economy was on black labor. Indeed, the most common postwar complaint was about the shortage of reliable black laborers. Such a situation made "fair" dealing with the Negro absolutely essential. Of course the southern definition of "fairness" might vary considerably from that of the blacks themselves or of their northern friends.\(^{19}\)

The question of black adjustment to the free labor system raised the very important issue of education for the freedmen. Moderate spokesmen argued that southern whites had a very real interest in black education. An illiterate laboring class was a dangerous element in any society, and it was up to the best friends of the southern blacks

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(i.e., the southern whites) to aid the mental development of their former slaves. Moreover, some hoped that by educating the Negro, it might be possible to alter his allegedly criminal character and prevent the outbreak of racial violence. Yet this advocacy of black education ran counter to the persistent southern belief in black inferiority and the lingering effects of the pro-slavery argument on the southern mind. Many whites doubted the capacity of the blacks to benefit from even the most rudimentary forms of education and at the same time resented the new assertiveness of their former slaves who often showed a great eagerness for "book learning." In many cases, these doubts and qualifications overcame the paternalistic belief in the necessity for elevating the freedmen.20

Whatever their views of black education, southerners were united in their opposition to northern missionary activities among the blacks. Many southerners objected more to northern school teachers than to black education in and of itself. Nor should this seem surprising. Many of the missionary and Freedmen's Bureau teachers, full of New England's holy zeal, came south with their own peculiar

notions about the region and determined to uplift members of both races. Many of these teachers saw southern whites as great sinners who must be shown the error of their ways in order to stamp out the lingering effects of the barbarism of slavery. Southerners charged that these self-righteous fanatics were attempting to impose their own theoretical notions about the social and political equality of the races on the South. Moreover, whites often opposed the political instruction of the blacks in what contemporaries termed "reading, writing and Republicanism." They found equally repugnant the close social contact which many of these Yankee school marms had with their Negro pupils. The fact that the women teachers ate and roomed with blacks and in isolated instances married black men set local tongues wagging. 21

Of course, these northern teachers associated almost exclusively with black people more out of necessity than

choice. Yankee teachers reported great difficulty in finding room and board; some whites were willing to put up federal army officers but refused to take in "nigger teachers" at any price. A few landlords raised rents to exorbitant levels to discourage teachers seeking accommodations. Northern teachers never gained acceptance in what passed for polite society in the South. Southern women refused to mix socially with the hated school ma'ams and would either decline to speak to them or would hoot at them on the streets. The local people even shunned the teachers in churches and left the sanctuaries when they entered.  

Those who suffered mere social ostracism were fortunate because white hostility to black education in some areas broke out in violence. School houses were burned, teachers assaulted and intimidated. In Charleston, South Carolina, a new teacher met an angry mob at the train station who told him that Yankee preachers and teachers would be hung to the first available tree if they dared enter that area. In Assumption Parish, Louisiana, a gang of roughs forced a

frightened woman teacher at a Negro school to crawl out a window and then killed her. The man who committed the murder later claimed that it was an "accident." The best evidence indicates that extensive violence against northern teachers did not begin until after the passage of the Reconstruction Acts when black education became a much more explosive political issue.²³

Southerners' concern about black education was distinctly secondary to their interest in black labor. For the foreseeable future, southerners believed that the blacks should remain agricultural workers. They saw the key to southern economic recovery in the early re-establishment of a stable work force under the new free labor system, but the blacks had other ideas. Planters complained that their former slaves in leaving the plantations were depriving their former owners of the manpower necessary to plant and harvest a crop. Reports came in from all across the South of vagabond Negroes roaming about the countryside, and a group of planters

near Columbus, Mississippi requested the local military authorities to prevent the blacks from leaving the plantations. Many ex-slaves wandered about in a seemingly aimless fashion with no means of support and very uncertain prospects for the future.24

Many blacks associated freedom with the right to travel and therefore left their old masters for no particular reason. Some of the freedmen felt, with some justification, that they could not be truly free until they deserted the locale of their former servitude. To be able to travel about without a pass from "Old Massa" was a new and exciting experience for a people used to dealing with patrols and slave hounds. These poor people had seen little of the world beyond the confines of their owners' lands, and they now took the opportunity to do a little exploring of their suddenly expanded universe. Whites believed that blacks were by nature fond of change and did not really consider or calculate the consequences of suddenly picking up all their belongings and leaving their old homes. The whites were most galled that they could no longer control the

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movement of black people, and they grumbled over the total unreliability of Negro labor. One Richmond, Virginia, editor warned that if Negro house servants persisted in changing employers so regularly the whites might decide to dispense with their services altogether. 25

A substantial number of blacks headed for the nearest town or military garrison. This movement reflected the long held belief among the slaves that towns were centers of freedom and places to escape from under the watchful eye of their masters. Local residents naturally complained of this large influx of idle Negroes who filled the streets and byways. Whites maintained that the blacks equated freedom with idleness and the right to live off the fat of the land. Cities and towns throughout the South reported sizable increases in their black populations in 1865, and vagrancy arrests skyrocketed. Many blacks seemed to prefer

earning a few uncertain dollars in the towns and cities to
laboring in the fields for their former owners.  

This movement of blacks into southern towns and cities
created new social problems which most of these communities
were ill equipped to handle. Many of the freedmen congre­
gating in these municipalities were old or infirm blacks
driven from the countryside by their old masters who refused
to provide for them after the war as they had under the old
regime. Migrants huddled together in ramshackle dwellings
on the outskirts of southern towns and cities; they lacked
food, clothing and medical care and thus became a signifi­
cant burden on local government. Planters asserted that
blacks seemed more interested in fishing, hunting and
frolicking than in working. Many white southerners
contrasted the condition of the blacks in freedom with

the well-ordered and prosperous condition of the race under slavery.\textsuperscript{27}

The blacks often sought protection and sustenance from the local military authorities. Whites expressed growing alarm at the fact that some blacks expected to live off government handouts. Although the blacks saw the federal soldiers as their saviors and protectors, the soldiers seldom greeted the ex-slaves as men and brothers. Local commanders found blacks congregating around military posts troublesome and often sent them back to their rural homes. To be sure, both the military and the Freedmen's Bureau distributed rations to destitute members of both races for a time but this munificence was short-lived. Officials refused to issue food to those Negroes whom they considered able-bodied and capable of finding gainful employment. In Charlotte, North Carolina, the Yankee troops arrested idle blacks and put them to work cleaning the streets which encouraged many to leave town. So Charlotte and other

\textsuperscript{27}Annul Cyclopaedia (1865), 376; Willie Malvin Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana (Baton Rouge, 1938), 185; Entry for June 27, 1865, Eliza Frances Andrews, The War-Time Journal of a Georgia Girl, 1864-1865 (Macon, Georgia, 1960), 314-15; Entry for June 20, 1865, Diary of Joseph Waddell, in Waddel, Annals of August County, 513; Walter L. Fleming, Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama (New York, 1905), 271; Trowbridge, Desolated States, 461-62; Entry for January 20, 1866, Mary Elizabeth Rives Diary, LSU; Henry Deedes, Sketches of the South and West; or, Ten Months' Residence in the United States (Edinburgh, Scotland, 1869), 151; Memphis Daily Avalanche, January 25, 1866.
southern towns were not black Meccas; the freedmen began slowly to return to the countryside, sadder, wiser, and often poorer.28

Whites maintained that blacks had picked up many new and vicious habits as a result of emancipation and dislocation. One native of Alabama bitterly noted that the Negroes seemed more interested in stealing, having illicit sexual relationships, and going to funerals than settling down to work. Planters loudly protested that it was no longer possible to raise livestock of any kind with black thieves roaming about the land. The future appeared bleak to whites. What would happen to this displaced laboring class if they refused to leave the cities and became a permanent burden on the whites? More importantly, what would be the consequences for southern agriculture if blacks refused to work in the fields?29


Although many contemporary observers commented on blacks traveling about aimlessly and the large migration of Negroes into towns and cities, the magnitude of this movement is uncertain. Whites, unused to the free movement of black people, in many cases exaggerated its extent. Most of the freedmen remained in the rural areas, and a surprising number stayed on with their old masters as free laborers. Others moved about in search of their families whom they had been separated from under slavery; others left their homes seeking better terms of employment elsewhere. Of course all these factors were not readily apparent to whites at the time who could only see their former slaves wandering off and leaving them with barren fields.\footnote{John William De Forest, A Union Officer in the Reconstruction, ed. by James H. Croushore and David Morris Potter. (New Haven, 1948), 36-38; Wharton, Negro in Mississippi, 50-52; James Hamilton Eckenrode, The Political History of Virginia During Reconstruction (Baltimore, 1904), 55; William C. Harris, Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi (Baton Rouge, 1967), 80-82; Williamson, After Slavery, 39-44.}

The most persistent problem of the new system was the white conviction that the blacks would not work. Southerners told any available Yankee listener that Negroes would never make industrious citizens and would learn only slowly that freedom did not mean exemption from labor.

Although southerners believed in a social cosmology which, by divine edict, reduced black people to "hewers of wood" and "drawers of water," they had doubts about the continuance of this sacred order after the end of slavery. Given their labor problems and despite all their protests to the contrary, southerners did regret the loss of their slaves. Planters reported in 1865 that free blacks were of little use on farms and plantations, and some despaired of the South ever recovering its former agricultural prosperity. Whites argued that the Negroes must always work in the fields but they often expressed serious reservations that free labor would ever be productive labor.\(^{31}\)

Most southerners agreed that the missing element in free labor was compulsion. Carl Schurz, after touring the South for Andrew Johnson, estimated that nineteen out of twenty southerners told him that they could make the Negro

work only by physical force and northerners mistook completely the character of the black race if they thought otherwise. William M. Browne wrote to Howell Cobb that "moral elevation, social equality and political superiority do not increase the African’s capacity to weed a row."
Blacks many asserted, would work just hard enough to survive and purchase tobacco and whiskey. Charles Mitchell concluded on the basis of his observations of free labor in Texas that the blacks consumed all they made, stole from others, and thereby added nothing to the wealth of the country at all. However defective this might be as an economic analysis of free labor, it carried the force of unswerving conviction.  

The southern perception of the Negro character formed a firm foundation for this pessimistic assessment of black labor. One delegate to the South Carolina constitutional convention of 1865 told Sidney Andrews that the Negro was an animal, "a higher sort of animal, to be sure, than the dog or the horse, but, after all, an animal." Many argued that the black by nature was a lazy creature with exceedingly crude ideas about anything above the realm of mere physical comfort. Some writers questioned whether

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this distinctly inferior race could ever be assimilated into southern society, and a few put forward the old panacea of black colonization, either to Africa, Mexico or the desert regions of the United States. The incapacity of the black race seemed to raise a permanent barrier against adjustment to the novelty of freedom by both races.\(^33\)

Some neophyte planters from the North managed to lure black laborers away from the old planters, a practice that irked the southerners no end. They charged their northern competitors with treating the Negroes too kindly and associating with them on a basis of a most disgusting social intimacy. Yet some northern planters also grumbled about the inefficiency of black labor and the need for constant supervision by some white person. Even Yankees came to doubt that the generation of southern blacks which had grown up under slavery would ever work well under freedom.\(^34\)

\(^33\) Andrews, South Since the War, 87; Natchez Democrat, December 28, 1865; Henry B. Richardson to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Richardson, May 16, 1866, Henry B. Richardson Papers, LSU; Entry for March 4, 1865, Grace B. Elmore Diary, SHC; J. Fraser Mathewes to Benjamin F. Perry, August 21, 1865; Perry Papers, Ala.; P. Townsend to Captain H. L. Shields, February 5, 1866, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 26).

\(^34\) Willie Lee Rose, Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment (Indianapolis, 1964), 361-62; Morgan, Yazoo, 47-48; Leigh, Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation, 53; Bliss Perry, Life and Letters of Henry Lee Higginson (Boston, 1921), 256-58; Edward S. Philbrick to William C. Gannett, October 15, 1865, Pearson, ed., Letters from Port Royal, 317.
Those planters able to hire black laborers filled their diaries and letters with biting comments on their inefficiency. In passages reminiscent of Frederick Law Olmsted's savage critiques of slave labor, they castigated the slipshod and unreliable work habits of the freedmen. Few blacks, according to these "experts," would put in a full day's work. Many had extravagant expectations of the financial remuneration due for their limited and unsatisfactory efforts. James Mallory said that blacks in Talladega County, Alabama believed that an abundance of food would come to them with no great effort on their part. Negroes allegedly feigned illness to avoid work, and some found liquor more enticing than labor.\(^3\)

Repeating complaints about black labor at least two centuries old, a Hillsboro, North Carolina, observer recounted that blacks destroyed buildings, livestock, and equipment and consumed supplies with no thought for the morrow. A Freedmen's Bureau officer reported that blacks badly neglected the weeding and hoeing of their crops. Some planters obviously exaggerated the incompetence of

free blacks just as they had done with their slaves. Still some sincerely doubted that the freedmen would ever be good workers and saw no other course but continuous supervision by whites to get even a modicum of profitable labor out of the free Negroes.  

Planters claimed to have suffered as much from thieving blacks as lazy ones. Southerners had always believed that the Negro was by nature a thief, and most slaves quite naturally saw nothing wrong with appropriating their master's property for the benefit of master's slave. Who could profit more from the master's bacon than the master's field hand? After the war, southerners expressed great alarm at the increase in thefts of food and livestock by the freedmen. One woman perceptively observed that the blacks thought it no more wrong to steal from the whites than the children of Israel had from the Egyptians.  

Using arguments that were at the same time sincere and self-serving, southerners pointed out that emancipation

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36 Paul C. Cameron to Thomas Ruffin, May 11, October 4, 1865, Hamilton, ed., Ruffin Papers, III, 452, IV, 35; Entry for August 23, 1866, Flavellus G. Nicholson Diary-Journal, Miss.; Charleston Daily Courier, May 31, 1865; De Forest, Union Officer In Reconstruction, 96-97; John M. Grant to William Sharkey, July 7, 1865, Sharkey Papers, Miss.  

had had just as deleterious effects on the blacks as it had been troublesome for the whites. Refurbishing many of the old rationalizations of pro-slavery ideology, southerners maintained that of all men the free Negro was the most miserable. Freedom had proved a curse rather than a blessing to the once happy slaves. Blacks were like children who could not live and prosper without the paternal guidance of friendly whites. The Negro, according to this line of exposition, was utterly incapable of caring for his own needs in freedom and would either lapse into barbarism or sicken and die. Blacks, in this view, wandering from their homes, always searching for a more nearly utopian existence elsewhere became the unwitting victims of the abolitionists' unworkable social theories.  

However the whites might blame the blacks for the shortcomings of free labor, they too were at fault when they refused to deal fairly with the free Negroes. They thought the state and federal governments should leave them alone to manage the freedmen as best they could. In any  


38 Entry for May 29, 1865, Samuel A. Agnew Diary, typescript, SHC; Speech of Governor Benjamin F. Perry, July 3, 1865, Charleston Daily Courier, July 25, 1865; Latham, Black and White, 112-13; Entry for May 19, 1865, Edward Wasmuth Diary, SHC; Trowbridge, Desolated States, 332-33, 491; "Will the Negro Relapse into Barbarism?" DeBow's Review (After the War Series), III (February, 1867), 179.
event, the problem of the freedmen was the great conundrum of Reconstruction. With the collapse of the slave regime, the planters faced an uncertain future but still insisted on treating the blacks as they had under slavery, some openly admitting their preference for the old order. One black soldier noted that it hurt the whites greatly to treat the freedmen as men, draw up written labor contracts with them, and pay them for their labor. 39

Planters never completely adjusted to the idea of dealing with the blacks as free and autonomous individuals. Most expected the same humble obedience from the freedmen that they had demanded from their slaves. Used to having their slightest whim or request immediately acted on by their bondsmen, they could not get used to the "insolent" manner of the free blacks. A few hot-tempered whites shot Negroes who did not seem to show the proper degree of

subordination. Most southerners still expected the blacks to submit to harsh treatment and abuse without murmur, protest or resistance. One Freedmen's Bureau officer discovered that whites drafted labor contracts for the freedmen containing provisions for fines against blacks who were disrespectful or impolite and forbidding the freedmen to leave the fields without the owner's permission.  

Yet given the postwar labor shortage, southerners found to their great discomfort that their former slaves were in a much superior bargaining position to themselves. Neighbors quarreled over prime field hands and accused each other of luring away workers with exorbitant promises. This labor shortage also protected the Negroes from ill-treatment because they could easily find employment elsewhere when they were dissatisfied with a particular employer. Attempts at using white immigrant labor proved abortive. For example, William Battle discovered that his black laborers refused to live with his newly acquired

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40 John H. Kennaway, On Sherman's Track; or, The South After the War (London, 1867), 43; James A. Payne to Elizabeth Sterrett, June 10, 1866, Barnhart, ed., "Reconstruction on the Lower Mississippi," 393; Carl Schurz to the Boston Advertiser, July 25, 1865, Mahaffey, ed., "Schurz's Letters from the South," 239; Charles C. Soule to Major General Oliver Otis Howard, September 8, 1865, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 17); Lieutenant J. E. Quentin to Colonel T. W. Osborn, May 1, 1866, ibid., (roll 27); Lieutenant George W. Kingsbury to Superintendent, 2nd District, Petersburg, Virginia, June 30, 1866, ibid., (roll 36); Lieutenant F. E. Grossman to Lieutenant J. M. Sanno, July 1, 1866, "Removal of Hon. E. M. Stanton and Others," House Ex. Doc. 57, 40-2, 83; De Forest, Union Officer in Reconstruction, 28-29.
Irish servants. All in all, free labor, to most white southerners, was a curious and novel experiment with an infinite number of complications and difficulties. When economic reverses came, most whites blamed the Negroes for all their troubles and ignored their own reluctance to adapt their ways to the demands of the new era.  

A common grievance among whites was that blacks refused either to make contracts or abide by those already signed. Blacks in some areas would agree to labor contracts of a year's duration but would wander off after only a few weeks on the job. Planters generally found it easy to make contracts with the free blacks but almost impossible to enforce them. Time after time, whites regretted their lack of power to make the freedmen abide by their contracts, Varina Howell Davis describing a labor agreement with the freedmen as a "rope of sand."  

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41 Jackson Daily Clarion, November 26, 1865; Roark, Masters Without Slaves, 135-38; Colonel Samuel Thomas to Howard, March 13, 1866, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 28); Second Lieutenant W. S. Chase to Captain F. P. Crandon, February 28, 1866, ibid., (roll 30); Wilmer Shields to William N. Mercer, December 1, 1866, Mercer Papers, LSU; William H. Battle to Kemp P. Battle, December 4, 1865, Battle Family Papers, SHC; Entry for June 2, 1865, Josiah Gorgas Journal, typescript, SHC; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, First Days Amongst the Contrabands (Boston, 1893), 259-60.

42 George C. Rogers, Jr., The History of Georgetown, South Carolina (Columbia, South Carolina, 1970), 431-33; New York Times, February 15, 1867; Raymond Hinds County Gazette, January 6, 1866; James R. Sparkman to Benjamin Allston, November 23, 1866, Easterby, ed., South Carolina Rice Plantation, 224; Charleston Courier, May 31, 1865; Harriott Middleton to Susan Middleton, June 17, 1865, Isabella Middleton Leland, ed., "Middleton Correspondence,
The blacks themselves had perfectly good reasons for their reluctance to enter into contracts with their former masters or other whites. Many saw contracts as a shortcut to the re-establishment of servitude and certainly the terms of many of these labor agreements were more fitted to a system of peonage than to free labor. The Negroes too had ambitions to acquire their own lands and work for themselves which whites found appalling and intolerable. In addition, blacks quite naturally suspected that whites would take every opportunity to cheat them and take advantage of their illiteracy and lack of experience with legal documents. Reports from the Freedmen's Bureau confirmed these fears and detailed how the southerners sought to use labor contracts to restore the essence if not the substance of the old slave system. 43

Other criticisms of black labor were more indicative of postwar economic dislocations than of any shortcomings of the freedmen as workers. With the high demand for labor, blacks could readily change employers to seek better wages or working conditions, a practice which the former


slaveholders of course found exasperating. Freedmen left their old homes to strike out on their own despite the high odds against their success. Some blacks refused to work for a share of the crop and demanded wages in cash which the impoverished farmers and planters found impossible to give. As the supply of willing workers increased, however, blacks became much more tractable and willing to contract with their former masters. Much of what the whites considered laziness or insubordination were merely reactions to the uncertain market conditions in the southern economy. \(^44\)

With little preparation for independent action, many ex-slaves had only the vaguest notions of the privileges and responsibilities of a labor contract. Moreover, many had unreasonable expectations of high wages or large crop shares. Even those planters who tried at the end of each year to determine fairly how much was owed each hand found that their black workers were dissatisfied and convinced that their employers were cheating them. Howell Cobb concluded that it was impossible to please the freedmen and talked of ending his planting operations with them. \(^45\)


\(^{45}\) Entry for June 28, 1865, Andrews, Journal of a Georgia Girl, 319; G. P. Collins to Anne Collins,
With pain and reluctance, both races slowly made the transition to free labor. Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch have recently shown that blacks made substantial gains not only in income but also in a greater freedom to make their own consumer decisions. In addition, blacks had more leisure time than they had under slavery; when free blacks worked shorter hours than they had as slaves, whites mistakenly concluded that this was because of the inherent laziness of the race. However, slavery was a poor training ground for freedom, and most southern blacks in the Reconstruction years had only very restricted employment opportunities outside of agriculture. Racism also distorted the operations of the postbellum economy by allowing few blacks to own their own land, limiting black educational opportunities, and making lenders hesitant to deal with blacks as loan clients.46

The postwar labor settlement came as a result of a series of compromises that were not entirely satisfactory to either race and were certainly not favorable to black aspirations. Southern whites wanted to work the freedmen under the old gang system with the retention of corporal punishment and the use of the old slave quarters. They


favored this method because it gave them maximum control over their black workers and deviated very little from the patterns of the old regime. Blacks, on the other hand, preferred either to own or rent their own land or at least work for wages. Their goals were diametrically opposed to those of the whites: they sought most of all freedom from constant supervision by whites, whether overseers or the landowners themselves. These conflicting objectives led to various labor experiments after the war. When planters tried to retain the old gang system, blacks often successfully demanded more liberal working conditions and wages. Planters and farmers lacked the ready cash to pay wages, and they complained that blacks often left after being paid the first time. Eventually the difficulties of cash payments led to the adoption of the share system, which was in many ways a compromise between the blacks' desire for independence and the landlord's desire for control over his labor force. As Ransom and Sutch point out, the share system produced more income for the blacks and less risk for the whites. Of course, racism pervaded the cropping system just as it had all previous methods of southern labor organization. The legacy of this settlement in farm tenancy, the crop lien system, and southern rural poverty was a costly one.47

47Oscar Zeichner, "The Transition From Slave to Free Agricultural Labor in the Southern States," Agricultural History, XIII (January, 1939), 22-23; Ransom and Sutch, One Kind of Freedom, 56-80, 94-99; "Southern Agriculture," in
An unexpected result of all this ferment in southern agriculture, first discovered by Roger Shugg, was the retention and consolidation of the plantation. For sure, the postwar censuses showed both an increase in the number of southern landowners and a decrease in the average size of the holdings. However, the census takers counted each tenant or sharecropper on a given plantation as a "landowner," when in fact the planters still controlled both the use of his land and the activities of his workers. In some states the plantations not only remained intact but expanded their operations. There is also fragmentary evidence to indicate that the planter elite in these states, despite the effects of the war, managed to keep their lands and eventually recover their former wealth, power and social standing. Although a few southerners in the early Reconstruction period spoke hopefully of the eventual breakup of the plantations, such was not to be.


As a result of the problems involved in adapting to the new labor system, many southern whites developed a very pessimistic outlook on the future of the blacks in the South. Leading white spokesmen predicted that there would either be a violent conflict between the races or that the blacks would eventually become extinct. Southerners pointed to the allegedly sharp drop in black population following emancipation as a sure indication that the Negro race could not survive in freedom. Many writers argued that, separated from the paternal care of the whites, the blacks would neglect their own needs, sicken, and die. Sketchy evidence confirmed the common observation that disease was taking a much greater toll among the free blacks than it ever had among the slaves. Several southerners maintained that if the race did not die out completely, the Negroes would at least become as rare as Indians.\footnote{Myers, "Freedmen and Labor in Alabama," 29-32; Entry for June 22, 1865, Avary, ed., Recollections of Stephens, 250; Alexander H. Stephens to Montgomery Blair, February 5, 1867, Blair Family Papers, LC; Kennaway, On Sherman’s Track, 82-83; Joseph C. G. Kennedy to James R. Doolittle, March 9, 1866, Publications of the Southern Historical Association, VIII (September, 1904), 369-76; S. S. Baxter to William Pitt Fessenden, December 22, 1865, Fessenden Papers, LC; Chicago Tribune, May 3, 1865; Daily Memphis Avalanche, February 2, 1867; Harris, Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi, 31; Annual Cyclopedia (1866), 351-52; Edgefield Advertiser, September 13, 1865; Conway,
The effects of emancipation extended far beyond the narrow bounds of agricultural economics. Emancipation marked the beginning of a revolutionary upheaval in southern society and a breakdown in the structure of southern race relations. Whether there were, as C. Vann Woodward has argued, "forgotten alternatives" to racism and the proscription of the Negro, most southerners insisted that some new form of race control should be quickly established that would leave white hegemony intact. Northern demands for certain minimum guarantees of black rights greatly complicated the problem and also limited significantly, at least in the early years of Reconstruction, the South's alternatives. From the very outset, the establishment of a new structure of race relations promised to be difficult, painful, and violent.

Many seemingly inconsequential incidents spoke volumes about the chronic problem of race adjustment after the war. On a practical level, southerners used to having obedient slaves perform the most minor tasks suddenly found themselves faced with the necessity either of dealing with the blacks as free men or doing the work themselves. It was a strange sight in many southern fields to see formerly

Reconstruction in Georgia, 68; Entry for December 31, 1866, John Houston Bills Diary, Typescript, SHC; T. Harry Williams, Beauregard: Napoleon in Gray (Baton Rouge, 1954), 266.

aristocratic whites laboring beside their former slaves. Some southerners noted with approval a breakdown in social distinctions between the so-called "chivalry" and the common whites. For example, planters' sons, returning from the war, discovered that their military exploits would not grow cotton, and their knowledge of literature, music and fox hunting would not put food on their family's tables.51

As usual, women found the adjustment to free labor most difficult. Delicate hands whose most demanding task had been sewing suddenly found themselves milking cows, feeding livestock, splitting wood, and scrubbing floors. Some southern ladies still would not condescend to work at these menial chores, but most had no choice but to roll up their sleeves and pitch in. Many women achieved great satisfaction by successfully performing the simplest household chores and prided themselves on being able to get along without their usual bevy of servants. Cooking was a particularly difficult problem although some southern women had learned at least rudimentary culinary skills from watching their black cooks. The blacks themselves were greatly amused to observe the first stumbling efforts of these novice cooks. In Tallahassee, Florida, the family of

51 Roark, Masters Without Slaves, 149-50; Susan Dabney Smedes, Memorials of a Southern Planter (Baltimore, 1888), 241; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, January 24, 1866; Galveston Flake's Daily Bulletin, July 22, 1865; Cecil E. McNair, "Reconstruction in Bullock County," Alabama Historical Quarterly, XV (Spring, 1953), 81.
Susan Eppes suffered through a monotonous diet of boiled eggs and batter bread until the young lady expanded her kitchen repertoire.\(^{52}\)

Emancipation meant more than the loss of the slave's cooking prowess because slavery had always been more than a labor system. Slavery was a complex set of human relationships, built upon law and tradition, that transcended the mere association between employer and worker. As Eugene Genovese and other scholars of the antebellum South have shown, slavery was a paternalistic social order that placed strong emphasis on black subordination and dependence on whites in all areas of life. The relationship between master and slave, however unequal, was still between human beings. Despite the great cruelties of the slave regime, masters and slaves built up bonds of trust and sometimes affection that even civil war and emancipation could not entirely break. With the end of

\(^{52}\)Myrta Lockett Avary, ed., Dixie After the War: An Exposition of Social Conditions Existing in the South, During the Twelve Years Succeeding the Fall of Richmond (New York, 1906), 182-83, 189-97; James A. Payne to Elizabeth Sterrett, April 3, 1866, Barnhart, ed., "Reconstruction on the Lower Mississippi," 391-92; M. C. Dalton to "Dear Cousin Lucy," March 17, 1866, William Dunlap Simpson Papers, Duke; Sophia G. Witherspoon to William A. Graham, August 11, 1865, Williams, ed., Papers of Graham, VI, 341; Entry for August 22, 1865, Andrews, Journal of a Georgia Girl, 374; T. H. Ball, A Glance into the Great South-East or, Clarke County, Alabama, and Its Surroundings (Grove Hill, Alabama, 1882), 299-300; New York Herald, January 8, 1867; Cox, Military Reminiscences of the Civil War, II, 543-44; Entry for January 2, 1866, Susan Bradford Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years (Macon, Georgia, 1926), 310.
slavery, both races for better or worse faced a sudden and wrenching reordering of their personal lives.

The immediate act of emancipation itself was a severe blow to the complex and tragic web of human relationships built up under slavery. Although some masters refused to tell their bondsmen of their freedom, most summoned their slaves together for the fateful announcement. From the white perspective, these meetings with the newly freed slaves were at once poignant, sad, and exasperating. The grave nature of the changes and the gnawing doubts about the future showed itself on the somber faces of both races. The masters recounted in loving detail how they had fed, clothed, and cherished their slaves. They warned the freedmen that they were now on their own and would have to provide for their own needs and their own families. Most planters allowed their former slaves to work on their lands just as before, and a substantial number of freedmen decided to stay on for the time being. This seeming stability was, nevertheless, delusive; many of the slaves, as has been indicated, wandered away from their old homes. The statistics of comings and goings, even if such were available, would not adequately describe the human meaning of emancipation. Young Susan Eppes expressed it simply yet eloquently in her account of the departure of one of her family's slaves: "Tonight Lulu came as usual to see me safe in bed and when she had said 'gonight,' she came back and, leaning over me, she said, 'I'm always goin' to
love my child,' and then she was gone. It makes me feel queer; life has changed."53

Life had also changed for the newly freed slaves.

As they listened to their masters' announcement of the dawn of freedom, they reacted in various ways.54 Many slaves recalled years later in striking detail the summons from their old master to meet in front of the "big house." Once assembled, the slaves listened, often with bewilderment, as their master told them that they were now as free as himself. Most planters told their slaves they could


54 Between 1936 and 1938 members of the Federal Writers Project of the Works Projects Administration (WPA) interviewed ex-slaves, mostly in the former Confederate states. Scholars of slavery in the antebellum South have mined this newly published collection of "slave narratives" extensively. Historians of the Reconstruction period have thus far neglected this valuable source of the black reactions to emancipation. The limitations of this set of interviews in describing slavery in the South apply with equal force to the postwar period. Many of the persons interviewed were quite old and subject to the normal lapses of memory. In addition, most of the ex-slaves had been children during the Civil War and Reconstruction and thus had a much more favorable view of slavery and race relations than the slave
work in the fields as before, and many blacks did stay on, at least for the first year.55

That many of the blacks did not leave their old homes should not seem surprising. Although the day of jubilee had great significance in black religion and folklore, most slaves had little idea of what freedom might mean to their daily lives. Ex-slaves described emancipation as confusing and, in some ways, distressing. They saw no reason to leave men whom they termed "good masters" and venture out into an unknown world. Even those blacks wishing to leave had no place to go and only limited knowledge of even local geography. As the slaves asked what freedom meant, they often decided to hold on to their last vestige of stability in a changing world, their connection with their former owner. Some slaves, too, had been called "shiftless niggers" for so long that they believed they could not survive without the protection of their old masters.56

The freedmen also recognized the traumatic impact of emancipation on southern whites. Former slaves described population as a whole. Despite these limitations, these interviews remain the best available source to black reactions to emancipation in the early Reconstruction years.


how the whites had mourned and cried over the loss of their bondsmen and in a few cases had grieved themselves to death. If the blacks rejoiced in their freedom, this only made the whites more disconsolate. Whites might rail at and threaten their former slaves with corporal punishment, but they had lost them forever. 57

Many of the old blacks of course remembered their great elation on learning of their freedom. Some literally kicked up their heels and left their masters' places as quickly as possible. At first freedom meant no more chopping cotton, or rising early in the morning to go to the fields, or hearkening to every command of their master. Others feared the restoration of slavery and hesitated to travel about for fear of the old slave patrols. Freedom had its problems, but it also had advantages. As one ex-slave who had grown up in Alabama put it, it was better to be a hungry raccoon out in the wild than a fat dog at a master's fireside who was kicked every day. 58

Whites showered praise on those blacks who stayed by their side after the war and later built up a large body of legend about the loyalty of their former slaves. As in most myths, this one contains a substantial kernel of truth. There are documented instances of blacks staying

57 Ibid., IV, Pt. 1, 161-62; V, Pt. 3, 53; VII, 114; X, Pt. 6, 27-28; XI, Pt. 7, 71; XVIII, 62.
58 Ibid., II, Pt. 1, 12, 142-43, 334; IV, Pt. 2, 158; VII, 40-41, 133, 209; IX, Pt. 3, 86; XIII, Pt. 4, 238-39.
on with their old masters long after emancipation in humble and dutiful service. Mary Boykin Chesnut told of her former slave Ellen, who had kept some valuable diamonds safe from Yankee invaders and later returned them "with as little apparent interest as if they were garden peas." Of course, the stories of blacks hiding the white family's valuables from the invading federals became staples in the myth of the faithful slave. On many plantations the slaves initially remained respectful and quiescent, but those who gave long and faithful service after the war were exceptions to the general rule. Most freedmen eventually struck out on their own, even if it meant only working for a close neighbor of their former owner.  

Southerners cherished most those ex-slaves who seemed upset by the very idea of freedom. Some blacks, usually old house servants and white family "pets," refused to accept wages for their labor and considered the offer itself insulting. Myrta Lockett Avary told of one old black woman who received the news of emancipation with skepticism, indignantly denying that she was a "free nigger" and

strongly asserting that she still has a master and mistress. When Robert Brown, a former slave of Jefferson Davis, saw his white family in need while the ex-Confederate President was in prison, he paid their bills with money given him to replace his own clothes taken by Yankee soldiers. Varina Howell Davis called Brown to account and told him she did not want to take his money. Brown was deeply hurt and plaintively replied: "Mistress, then you do not consider me as one of the family; I am nothing but a hired nigger." To dismiss men like Brown as "Uncle Toms" is to greatly miss the mark. These ex-slaves saw a clear duty to perform for their old masters. They acted out of a deep sense of commitment to the values of the plantation South which had become a part of the heritage of both races.

Southerners also recalled how respectful the average blacks remained towards white people despite great temptations to act otherwise. Ex-slaves could not get used to the idea of moving about freely and would still come to their old masters requesting passes to leave the plantation. One Richmond Negro told a northern school teacher of his great fright at attending a meeting of Negroes in that city. His fear originated in an old law which forbade five or more blacks from assembling anywhere without a white man.

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60 Entry for December 25, 1865, Jones, ed., Journal of Catherine Edmondston, 110; Entry for July 10, 1865, Elizabeth W. Allston Pringle, Chronicles of Chicora Wood (Boston, 1940), 283-84; Avary, ed., Dixie After the War, 183; Varina Davis to Jefferson Davis, September 14, 1865, Strode, ed., Davis: Private Letters, 174.
being present. It was, in fact, quite easy for many ex-slaves to slip away from the etiquette of the new order. One South Carolina black pledged his undying devotion and protection to his former master. He told the white man that if he ever needed anything he should "call for Sambo," forgetting for an instant that his new name was "Mr. Samuel." 61

Paternalism in southern race relations survived the war in the minds of many southerners also. The whites expressed kindly feelings toward their old slaves, and most sympathized with rather than hated the freedmen. Those planters economically unable to keep all their former slaves with them suffered a deep sense of personal loss when they had to send their servants away. If planters complained of the behavior of the free Negroes, they cited as examples the actions of a neighbor's Negroes, seldom their own. In many ways this attitude carried over from the antebellum period when southerners suspected all the slaves of plotting insurrections except their own people. 62

61 Mrs. Roger A. Pryor, Reminiscences of Peace and War (New York, 1904), 413; Coulter, South During Reconstruction, 47-49; Rawick, ed., American Slave, IV, Pt. 2, 79; Sarah E. Chase to ?, April 18, 1865, Henry L. Swint, ed., Dear Ones at Home: Letters from Contraband Camps (Nashville, 1966), 155; Entry For May 9, 1865, Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 532.

Both whites and blacks were still sensitive about the rules and rituals of the old paternalistic system. Whites tried to watch over their former slaves, giving them often unsolicited advice on everything from work to marriage. At Christmas, whites continued to pick out carefully presents for their former slaves, trying to retain as much of the spirit of former days as possible. Frances Butler Leigh, on her sea island plantation off the Georgia coast, received visits one Sunday morning from nearly four hundred blacks who merely wanted to come up and shake her hand. When she told twenty strong black men that they were now free and were their own masters, they replied that they would belong to her for as long as they lived. New ways were hard to learn and old ways were hard to forget.

Despite the survivals of the old paternalism in many parts of the South, the times were changing. Even during the war, whites had experienced a great shock when some of their most pampered house servants had fled to the Union lines. Their cries of anguish and betrayal filled the diaries and letters of the period. Although some faithful

Through Some Eventful Years, 285; Memphis Daily Appeal, December 31, 1865; Leigh, Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation, 33-35; Trowbridge, Desolated States, 426.

Entries for May 14, 29, December 24, 25, 1865, Dolly Sumner Lunt, A Woman's Wartime Journal (Macon, Georgia, 1927), 62-65; Entry for June 29, 1865, Childs, ed., Journal of Henry Ravenal, 247-48; Mary Jones to Mary S. Mallard, November 7, 1865, Jones, ed., Children of Pride 1303; Petrie, "Samford," 479-80; Adele Petigru Allston to Benjamin Allston, June 26, 1866, Easterby, South Carolina
servants stayed with their masters, many more left to join the Yankees in pursuit of the great chimera of freedom. Even those who stayed on the plantations showed signs of unrest and a willingness to seek greener pastures elsewhere. Some blacks left their old homes at night very quietly to avoid painful or even violent scenes with their former owners. Others chose to leave in the middle of the day to impress the whites with their new independence. 64

Black-white relations also changed in more subtle ways. As previously described, the slaveholders had long ago acquired a swaggering air of command and were particularly sensitive to what they termed insults to their honor. A South Carolina minister returned to his home to find it guarded by a burly black soldier of the Freedmen's Bureau who denied his right to enter. The preacher told the soldier to give way or he would use force. The sentry scratched his head, scraped his feet, and said: "Yes, boss, go in." However, a bold insistence on abject submission did not always work. One Alabamian went riding through his fields one day, and all the blacks saluted him as "General." This led to the somber reflection that just a

Rice Plantation, 221; Leigh, Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation, 21.

64 Eugene D. Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll; The World the Slaves Made (New York, 1974), 97-112; Williamson, After Slavery, 34-39; Entry for June 1, 1865, Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 539; Wilmer Shields to William N. Mercer, January 6, 1867, Mercer Papers, LSU; Ball, Clarke County, 298-99.
short time ago they would have greeted him with: "Good morning, master." This same man hailed a freedman on the highway: "Howdy, uncle"; the black replied: "I ain't no 'uncle,' sah, I'se your ekal [equal]." So even the amenities of the old order were forgotten, and this infuriated many whites. In East Tennessee those blacks who resented being called "boy" or "Buck" had pistols shoved against their heads and were forced to assume a more submissive demeanor.65

Blacks also demonstrated their increasing independence of white control by their choice of surnames. New research by Herbert Gutman and others has shown that blacks had acquired surnames as slaves but these names often differed from those chosen for them by their masters. Some Negroes after the war took on the surnames of their recent masters, but others chose the names of old owners going back into the eighteenth century. Whites had some difficulty getting used to their former slaves having two names particularly when the blacks insisted on attaching such titles of respect as "mister" to their names.66

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65 Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll, 93-97; Porter, Led On, 192-93; John Witherspoon DuBose, Alabama's Tragic Decade; Ten Years of Alabama, 1865-1874. ed. by James K. Greer (Birmingham, Alabama, 1940), 33; Trowbridge, Desolated States, 239.

Along with their new names the blacks assumed an air of independence that whites found strange and annoying. Southerners frequently lamented the new and impudent "airs" put on by the freedmen. To northern visitors they explained why they could not treat the freedmen as well as they had their slaves. They could not tolerate hearing arguments and objections from a people who had so recently been in nearly complete submission to them. Southerners did gain some amusement out of watching the Negroes parade about in new and gaudy attire aping the fashions and manners of white ladies and gentlemen. Susan Eppes shamefacedly admitted that she had laid violent hands on a Negro for the first time when she heard a group of young blacks singing "We'll hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree" to the tune of "John Brown's Body." The young lady seized a brand new carriage whip and chased the lot of them into the night.67

The blacks also undermined a fundamental element of white paternalism: the Christian church. During slavery blacks had attended the white church without full membership privileges or equitable seating arrangements. When southern churchmen sought to retain their Negro members in their former inferior status after the war, many blacks left the
white churches to set up their own separate congregations. White preachers also resisted attempts by black ministers (particularly chaplains attached to the federal army) to preach to their congregations. All these hostile actions made separation inevitable. Although in some cases blacks claimed possession of white churches under military protection, the Negroes in general quietly left their old congregations to set up their own churches. The whites eventually conceded that this segregation of believers was best for both races. 68

Blacks showed new independence as free men in other ways. They celebrated the day of jubilee with singing and shouting, not only because it marked the end of slavery but because they now had the opportunity to control their own lives, to live securely with their families, and to pursue their own occupations. For every black still cowed by years of white domination, there were others eager to show that they deserved to be free not only as a matter of abstract justice but because of the positive contributions

that they as freedmen could make to the South. Black meetings and conventions in 1865 indicated the willingness of the freedmen to work hard, improve their economic status, and acquire an education. The blacks also demanded recognition of their manhood, equal rights, and the right of suffrage. Blacks set up self-help and benevolent organizations, sought as a group to regulate labor contracts, and in some places set up their own schools, churches and newspapers. All this activity was bound to generate hostility among whites who were hypersensitive and prone to react violently to the most insignificant changes in the pattern of southern race relations.\(^69\)

Some planters refused to recognize the legality of emancipation and were unwilling to allow their former slaves to leave the plantations. Freedmen attempting to flee from such masters were beaten, mutilated, and in a few instances killed. Some southerners refused to make contracts with blacks, threatened them with re-enslavement and forbade their departure from their employers' lands. Federal military and Freedmen's Bureau officials reported the

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kidnapping of black children, the use of Negroes in county chain gangs, and the arrest of blacks for trifling offenses so they could be sold out to white landowners for a specified period of time.\textsuperscript{70}

Many whites also sought to use the new labor contracts to keep the blacks as much in bondage to them as possible. Some of these agreements specified that the freedmen were to call their employers "master" and that the employer could use physical force, including whipping, to maintain labor discipline. In a few isolated cases, planters kept recalcitrant blacks in chains. A system of debt peonage also arose after the war by which both blacks and whites were eventually bound to the soil as effectively as the serfs of feudal Europe.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{70}Myers, "Alabama Freedmen," 17-18; John B. Myers, "Black Human Capital: The Freedmen and the Reconstruction of Labor in Alabama, 1860-1880.\textsuperscript{,} (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1973), 39-41; General George A. Custer to Zachariah Chandler, January 14, 1866, Chandler Papers, LC; Thomas W. Conway to O. O. Howard, August 1, 1865, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 14); Captain Thomas Leddy to Major S. L. McHenry, August 1, 1866, ibid., (roll 37); Jonathan Worth to Brevet Major General Jonathan Robinson, October 29, 1866, Robinson to Worth, October 30, 1866, ibid., (roll 43); O. O. Howard to Edwin M. Stanton, June 16, 1865, LS, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M742, roll 1); A. J. Hamilton to Andrew Johnson, July 24, 1865, Johnson Papers, LC; Lieutenant J. B. Rawles to Major O. D. Greene, November 21, 1866, LR, DT, 1863-1867, RG 393, NA; Bogue, "Violence and Oppression in North Carolina," 74-77; Major General Thomas J. Wood to Benjamin G. Humphreys, June 4, 1866, Humphreys Papers, Miss.

Southerners cheated the blacks with a frequency that belied many of their claims of paternalistic affection for the race. Some whites refused to pay the freedmen at all for their labor or reduced their wages and increased their hours in violation of the terms of their labor contracts. Sidney Andrews reported that one black who insisted on seeing his contract was cruelly beaten on his head and shoulders with a large club. Southerners drove blacks off their lands for minor offenses as an excuse not to pay their wages. Under sharecrop arrangements, whites sometimes dismissed freedmen at harvest time to avoid a division of the crop.72

The movement of blacks into towns and cities disturbed whites and invited violence. Southerners attributed any "insolent" act of these wandering freedmen to the evil effects of emancipation. Southerners claimed that they could no longer tolerate the unseemly behavior of their former servants. Some predicted an inevitable conflict of

the races if "saucy" Negroes continued to leave the plantations and become roaming thieves and vagrants.  

As noted previously, southerners seldom celebrated patriotic holidays such as the Fourth of July after the war. However, marching blacks carrying banners and musical instruments filled the streets of southern towns and cities on such occasions and in some areas excluded whites entirely from the festivities. Whites accused the Negroes of frightening women and children, firing off weapons, and behaving in a generally offensive manner.

Blacks also suddenly refused to yield the sidewalks to passing white people, an act of great symbolic importance in southern race relations. Some blacks took great delight in forcing their former masters and mistresses to walk in the streets. In Greenville, South Carolina, a conflict over the possession of a sidewalk led to a fight between blacks and whites in which a Negro was stabbed and a full


scale riot barely avoided. A North Carolinian forecast that if the blacks remained as "sassy" as they had been lately, they would surely be killed.75

The growing tension between blacks and whites, although often over seemingly minor matters, caused whites to qualify further the meaning of emancipation in terms of law and equity. Many southerners acknowledged that the Negro should have equal civil rights with whites, that is the right to make contracts, to marry, to sue and be sued, and others. Justice also dictated that the blacks as free men receive equal treatment under the law. Southerners believed that legal equality between the races was such a magnanimous concession that it would satisfy the demands of the most fastidious northern radical. In some states, however, the sticking point became the right of Negroes to testify in courts of law, particularly in cases involving white people. Traditionally southern courts had excluded Negro testimony entirely, and most southerners assumed that blacks lacked both the moral and intellectual capacity to serve as competent witnesses. This mental set, of course, did not

suddenly change in 1865. Southerners were deeply divided on this issue, and some states allowed black testimony, but others did not. In Alabama, the assistant commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, Wager Swayne, ordered the civil courts to receive black testimony because the Negroes were no longer slaves. The resulting protests by local officials indicated the limits of southern acceptance of even the most narrowly defined legal equality of the races.76

Above all else, southerners desired to control black labor. Some planters made local agreements setting wage rates and working conditions, but most favored a more comprehensive system of state regulation. This re-establishment of white control over black workers seemed the only way to guarantee a steady supply of docile black labor after emancipation. Federal officeholders and southern union men warned their northern friends that the rebels were trying to reduce the blacks to a condition worse than slavery by the passage of stringent vagrancy and apprenticeship laws. Southerners clearly favored

76 Georgia Senate Journal (1865-1866), 65-66; Charleston Daily Courier, October 28, December 2, 1865; Alexander H. Stephens to Andrew Johnson, March 23, 1866, Johnson Papers, LC; Entry for June 3, 1865, Joshua Burns Moore Diary, Ala.; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, March 5, 1866; Jefferson Davis to Varina Davis, October 11, 1865, Strode, ed., Davis: Private Letters, 188; Richard L. Zuber, Jonathan Worth: A Biography of a Southern Unionist (Chapel Hill, 1965) 216-17; Harris, Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi, 107-108; E. S. Dargan to Governor Lewis E. Parsons, August 29, 1865, Brigadier General Wager Swayne to Parsons, August 2, 1865, R. H. Stough to Parsons, August 11, 1865, Parsons Papers, Ala.
compulsory rather than voluntary labor as a solution to their economic problems.??

These racial and economic tangles form the backdrop for the passage of the notorious "black codes" by the southern state legislatures in 1865 and 1866. Southerners did not expect these laws to arouse uneasiness in the North, though that was their ultimate effect. Rather, the southern legislatures adopted the black codes to force the free blacks to work, to regulate the conditions of their employment, and to guarantee the freedmen certain fundamental legal rights. After all, few southerners believed that the free blacks would work without legal compulsion or the supreme sanction of corporal punishment. Southerners could only accept "free labor" under narrow restrictions that largely nullified the "freedom" of black workers. These shared beliefs explain why the codes in many states were passed quickly with little debate and also why the South never expected the sharp reaction which these laws produced in the North. The black codes marked the logical

??McConnell, Negroes in Virginia, 33-34, 45-46; Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, 100-101; Charleston South Carolina Leader, December 16, 1865; Olsen, Carpetbagger's Crusade, 32; Benjamin F. Flanders to Henry Clay Warmoth, November 23, 1865, Warmoth Papers, SHC; James L. Erskin to Thaddeus Stevens, December 29, 1865, Stevens Papers, LC; Brevet Major General Israel Voges to Salmon P. Chase, June 7, 1865, John Kirkwood to Chase, December 4, 1865, Chase Papers, LC; Sam S. Gardner to Major General O. O. Howard, July 28, 1865, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 15); Major General J. J. Reynolds to Howard, July 13, 1865, ibid., (roll 16); J. Fraser Mathewes to Benjamin F. Perry, August 21, 1865, F. H. Kennedy to Perry, August 25, 1865, Perry Papers, Ala.
culmination of years of pro-slavery agitation and southern paternalism, being designed to protect as well as control the freedmen. Southerners pointed out that the vagrancy sections of the black codes were little different from similar northern laws. They ignored, however, the very important fact that in the South these laws would be exclusively applied to the Negroes as a race with the clear purpose of limiting their freedom.78

More rational southerners feared that these laws would become a godsend to northern radicals looking for any sign of continued rebellion in the former Confederate states to justify their own proscriptive policies. This hesitation among conservatives accounts partly for the differences in the black codes of the various southern states. Both the Mississippi and South Carolina black codes contained detailed provisions concerning vagrancy and contracts that

forced blacks back into a state of virtual servitude to their white employers. Even in Florida, where more moderate sentiments prevailed, the legislature provided for fines, whippings, and the use of the pillory as punishments for blacks violating the code. The black codes were in many ways the clearest expression of postwar southern racial thought. Even the most stringent of the codes provided minimum legal rights for the blacks (e.g., legal recognition of black marriages, the right to make contracts and limited civil rights). Yet southerners agreed that black people must still occupy a distinctly inferior position in southern economic and social life. They were to remain submissive to whites of all classes under almost any circumstances.

The written law, though often a product of social consensus, has never been a completely accurate reflection of everyday life. Just as the old southern slave codes had established detailed regulations of the master-slave relationship that were often honored in the breach, so also the black codes did not always reflect the reality of southern race relations. Although only a few states

Hilary A. Herbert, "Reconstruction in Alabama," in Herbert, ed., Why the Solid South? or, Reconstruction and Its Results (Baltimore, 1890), 31-35.

79 Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, July 1, 1865; Jackson Daily Clarion, December 9, 1865; New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 5, 1866; Theodore Brantner Wilson, The Black Codes of the South (University, Alabama, 1965), 66-69, 71-75, 97-98. A good selection of excerpts from the black codes may be found in Edward McPherson, ed., Political History of the United States of America During the Period of Reconstruction (Washington, 1875), 29-44.
allowed even limited use of corporal punishment by employers, southern whites were loath to give up the lash as an instrument of labor discipline. In all parts of the South whites continued to flog unruly blacks with cowhide whips on their bare bodies. Other punishments included the use of chains, the pillory and hanging up the offender by his thumbs. In the interior of Louisiana black women were still being stripped naked and whipped by white men. Many southerners believed that physical punishment kept the blacks under control and were outraged when the freedmen complained about these incidents to federal provost marshals. 80

Local government officials likewise used corporal punishment against black criminals. In some communities local courts decreed a public whipping as the proper punishment for a black convicted of petty larceny. On the other hand, whites found guilty of the same offense had only to pay a small fine. Magistrates also sentenced blacks to work on local chain gangs, to be pilloried or to stand in a public square with a placard reading "thief"

hanging around the offender's neck. Blacks could expect little justice from the local courts, and the Freedmen's Bureau or the local military officers were often unwilling or unable to assist or protect them. In Wilmington, North Carolina, when a local court imposed a sentence of thirty lashes on five blacks convicted of a misdemeanor, an excited crowd of Negroes gathered near the whipping post to prevent execution of the sentence. Only the most strenuous efforts of the soldiers and Bureau men prevented the blacks from taking violent action. It is not known whether the whippings then took place or not. 

The policy adopted by the military authorities and the Freedmen's Bureau officers on corporal punishment was not always consistent. In general, both these agencies attempted to prohibit the use of the whipping post. However, the military and the Bureau clashed with local authorities and each other over jurisdiction. The military in Florida and North Carolina had contended with the governors of those states when they sought to prevent whippings sanctioned by state law. Southerners protested vigorously against interference in their local courts and

defended the use of corporal punishment. They charged
northern critics with a mawkish sentimentality and hypocrisy
in ignoring the horrible conditions in their own jails
and prisons.  

Corporal punishment was not the only blot on the
escutcheon of a system of southern justice which was long
on punishment and short on mercy to black people. In
addition to state laws, local communities passed various
ordinances that further restricted black labor and mobility.
Blacks felt with some justification that they would never
receive fair or equal treatment from white judges and
juries. Local attorneys refused to take blacks as clients,
and the preponderant force of public opinion militated
against justice for the freedmen.

In cases involving outrages by whites against blacks,
the scales of justice were even more weighted against the
freedmen. Local courts seldom heard cases concerning

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82 GO 2, First Military District, March 15, 1867,
McPherson, ed., History of Reconstruction, 200; O. O. Howard
to Colonel F. W. Osborn, January 12, 1866, Howard to Major
General T. H. Ruger, April 7, 1866, A. P. Ketchum to
General Davis Tillson, June 18, 1866, LS, BRFAL, 1865-1872,
RG 105, NA (M742, roll 2); AG E. D. Townsend to Major
General T. H. Ruger, April 9, 1866, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872,
RG 105, NA (M752, roll 26); Shofner, Nor Is It Over Yet,
55-56; Zuber, Worth, 243-45; J. Fraser Mathewes to
Benjamin F. Perry, August 21, 1865, Perry Papers, Ala.;
Montgomery Daily Advertiser, January 27, 1867; Edgefield
Advertiser, January 2, 1867.

83 Warmoth, War, Politics and Reconstruction, 273-77;
Myers, "Freedmen and Labor in Alabama," 62-69; Latham, Black
and White, 101; Brevet Captain G. W. Lord to Captain James A.
McDonnell, June 30, 1866, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA
(M752, roll 36); De Forest, Union Officer in Reconstruction,
white assaults on Negroes, or local authorities helped white defendants escape. Officials did little to stop the outbreak of murders committed on freedmen by roving bands of whites after the war. In many communities, the murder of a black person did not fall into the category of a serious crime. If arrests were made, white mobs released the guilty parties. In rare cases of the conviction of a white man for an assault on or murder of a freedman, the punishment was usually minimal or ludicrous. John Bate of Marianna, Florida, guilty of a vicious assault on a black woman, had to pay court costs and a fine of five cents! The combination of clandestine attacks, public apathy and inefficient or prejudiced local officials made prosecution of whites for outrages against blacks almost impossible. General Philip Sheridan summed up the situation well: "My own opinion is that the trial of a white man for the murder of a freedman in Texas would be a farce."

Although southerners railed against the passage of the Civil Rights act of 1866 by Congress, they knew that local

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1-14; Oliver Otis Howard, Autobiography of Oliver Otis Howard (2 Vols., New York, 1907), II, 285-92; J. P. Newsham to Henry Clay Warmoth, April 5, 1866, Warmoth Papers, SHC.

84 Major General Alfred H. Terry to Major General George G. Meade, August 5, 1866, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, LC; Samuel Thomas to O. O. Howard, July 12, 1865, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 18); Lieutenant C. M. Hamilton to Major S. L. McHenry, March 31, 1866, ibid., (roll 27); Colonel T. W. Osborne to O. O. Howard, May 8, 1866, ibid.; Trowbridge, Desolated States, 463; Carl Schurz to Andrew Johnson, August 29, 1865, Johnson Papers, LC; Shofner, Nor Is It Over Yet, 88-91; Report of J. R. Lewis, Assistant Commissioner of BRFAL for Tennessee,
opposition would make this measure largely unenforceable. Ex-Governor Benjamin F. Perry of South Carolina asserted that this act would be as much a "dead letter" as the old fugitive slave law. Perry was essentially correct: southerners disregarded the law, and federal enforcement efforts were halting and ineffective. During presidential reconstruction whites could abridge black civil rights with impunity.\(^8\)

The blacks received little protection from federal troops stationed in the South. Most soldiers disliked involvement in the continuous racial conflicts and preferred fighting Indians on the plains to duty in the southern states. The troops found themselves caught between whites who still wanted to keep the Negroes in slavery and blacks who tested their freedom by refusing to work. The racial attitudes of the soldiers themselves were similar to those held by southerners; they doubted the capacity of black people to become truly civilized. The primary mission of the Army in the South was not to reform southern society or to improve the freedman's lot but rather to maintain order in the transition from military to civilian rule.

General John M. Schofield spoke for many of his comrades in arms when he described the central problem of the military as being to "prevent the negro from becoming a huge elephant on our hands."

Local units and individual soldiers showed open hostility toward the Negroes. The Yankees resented the new independence and "insolence" of the freedmen nearly as much as the native southerners. The freedmen's friends accused the soldiers of being more interested in ingratiating themselves with southern whites than in protecting the rights of the blacks. Soldiers sometimes robbed and physically assaulted freedmen; when a grateful black in Richmond, Virginia, threw his arms around a Yankee general, the northerner shot the Negro dead, saying: "It was time to stop that damned nonsense." Drunken units attacked innocent blacks, and small riots ensued. A bloody contest took place between some Ohio troops and freedmen in Petersburg, Virginia, raged into the night, and strangely

ended when local whites dumped buckets of coal from second story windows on the howling mass of rioters.  

Army commanders counseled the newly freed blacks either to remain with their former masters or sign contracts with some other employer. They discouraged idleness and often sent vagrants back to their old masters. Officers also warned the freedmen that, because of the economic hard times caused by the war, they should expect only moderate wages. But officers also told planters not to drive off old or infirm Negroes and to treat their former slaves fairly, without admitting the whites were obliged to support the freedmen in idleness and vagrancy. The military encouraged both planters and freedmen to sign labor contracts but put much more emphasis on the establishment of a stable economic order than on a just one.


88 Elizabeth Custer, Tenting on the Plains, 111; Gibbon, Recollections, 356-57; William E. Highsmith, "Some Aspects of Reconstruction in the Heart of Louisiana," Journal of Southern History, XIII (November, 1947), 481; Harris,
Many northern soldiers either acquired or already shared southern views on the race question and went to great lengths to accommodate local prejudices. Military orders adopted to regulate ex-slaves immediately after the war were quite often as stringent as those later passed by southern legislatures. Southerners praised the soldiers for taking their side in disputes with the Negroes and aiding in the adjustment to emancipation. In cities and towns the Army established strict vagrancy regulations, put idle blacks to work on the streets, and sent many freedmen back to the plantations. In the spring and summer of 1865 the Army in some areas adopted a pass system for the freedmen similar to that of the antebellum slave codes. On orders from Washington this practice was discontinued. Local commanders also decreed punishments for black miscreants that were every bit as cruel and degrading as those devised by southern officials. 89

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89 Shofner, Nor Is It Over Yet, 49; James E. Sefton, The United States Army and Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (Baton Rouge, 1967), 42-43; Entry for July 5, 1865, Earl Schenck Miers, ed., When the World Ended: The Diary of Emma LeConte (New York, 1957), 113-16; Ethelred Phillips to James Jones Philips, August 2, 1865, James Jones Philips Papers, SHC; G. P. Collins to Anne Collins, June 5, 1865,
Although troops often went out of their way to placate the racial feelings of southern whites, many natives still criticized the actions of the troops and demanded their removal. Southerners accused federal troops of pilfering livestock and encouraging the freedmen to do likewise. A frequent complaint was that the provost marshals protected Negro criminals from the force of local law; the Reverend Samuel Agnew felt that the Yankees worshiped the Negroes the way the Egyptians worshiped cats. On a more serious level, southerners charged the soldiers with dissuading the blacks from working for their old masters and convincing the deluded freedmen that they had a right to the property of their former owners. In a blind fury, Eliza Andrews of Washington, Georgia, wrote of Yankee soldiers sauntering through the streets of her town with black women on their arms and forcing respectable citizens off the sidewalks. For the white soldiers to openly socialize with ex-slaves was the greatest imaginable affront to southern sensibilities.90

90 Entries for May 17, 24, June 28, 1865, Andrews, Journal of a Georgia-Girl, 259, 267, 323; Citizens of Tuscaloosa, Alabama to Lewis E. Parsons, October 6, 1865,
Blacks and southern union men, though well aware of
the shortcomings of the federal troops, generally saw the
soldiers as absolutely essential to their well-being if
not to their very lives. Witness after witness testified
before the Joint Committee on Reconstruction that the
removal of the troops would mark the beginning of a reign
of terror and probable slaughter of blacks and unionists
in the South. Only the force of bayonets, they pleaded,
stood between them and an overwhelming outbreak of
persecution and outrages perpetrated by bitter rebels.

Major General John G. Foster informed his superiors from
Tallahassee, Florida, that the withdrawal of the troops
would mean that northern men would have to leave the state
and blacks would be reduced to a state of slavery.  

Citizens of Marengo County, Alabama to Parsons, October 18,
1865, Parsons Papers, Ala.; A. P. Aldrich to Benjamin F.
Perry, August 8, 1865, "Justitia," to Perry, September 9,
1865, Perry Papers, Ala.; Entry for July 9, 1865, Nimrod
Porter Diary, typescript, SHC; Entry for July 20, 1865,
Samuel A. Agnew Diary, typescript, SHC; Entry for May 21,
1865, Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 284; Entry for
May 18, 1865, Miers, ed., Diary of Emma LeConte, 102.

91 "Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction,"
House Rep. 30, 39-1, 10, 42, 59, 83; S. S. Houston to
Lewis E. Parsons, August 29, 1865, Parsons Papers, Ala.;
C. E. Lippincott to Lyman Trumbull, August 29, 1865,
Trumbull Papers, LC; Carl Schurz to Charles Sumner,
August 2, 1865, Frederic Bancroft, ed., Speeches, Corre-
respondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz (6 Vols.,
New York, 1913), I, 267-68; O. O. Howard to Edwin M.
Stanton, October 21, 1865, LS, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105,
NA (M742, roll 1); Governor A. J. Hamilton to General
Philip H. Sheridan, January 17, 1866, Major General John G.
Foster to AAG George L. Hartsuff, July 8, 1866, Sheridan
Papers, LC.
Yet there were definite limits to the Army's ability to protect union men and freedmen from violence. Some officers sympathized with the perpetrators of these outrages or simply ignored the problem. In Starkville, Mississippi, an enterprising captain received one hundred dollars in gold to release a Negro rapist and an additional hundred dollars (from the father of the victim) to allow local vigilantes to run the Negro to death with bloodhounds. Given even the will to stop the bloodshed, small and isolated detachments were powerless against large armed bodies of men backed by community approval. Freedmen's Bureau agents seldom had enough troops at their disposal to investigate all the reported outrages against Negroes, much less to deter such violence. To garrison effectively a state the size of Texas was clearly beyond the capability of the small peacetime Army. The southern commanders doubted the ability of troops to prevent outrages so long as the southern people themselves did not take action to ferret out and punish the guilty parties.  

92 J. D. Tucker to Andrew Johnson, May 30, 1865, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 18); Captain James O'Neal to Captain W. W. Deane, June 8, 1866, ibid., (roll 32); J. B. Kiddo to O. O. Howard, August 8, 1866, ibid., (roll 36); Bogue, "Violence and Oppression in North Carolina," 29-50; F. Z. Browne, "Reconstruction in Oktibbeha County," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, XIII (1913), 274; Entry for May 9, 1865, Andrews, Journal of a Georgia Girl, 236; Brevet Brigadier General E. M. Gregory to O. O. Howard, January 31, 1866, "Reports of Assistant Commissioners of the Freedmen's Bureau," House Ex. Doc. 27, 39-1, 78-79; Wager Swayne to James M. Comly, April 20, 1866, Comly Papers, OHS; G. Franklin and Parris Simkins to General Daniel Sickles, August 8, 1866, Dorothy Sterling, ed.,
The Freedmen's Bureau, unlike the Army, had direct responsibility for the welfare of the freed blacks. Bureau officials in Washington and in the field saw their prime duty as being the establishment of a free labor society on a firm foundation. In a manner similar to that adopted by the military, the Bureau agents urged the blacks to work for their old masters if possible or, in any event, to sign and abide by a labor contract. These men also tried to restrain the migratory habits of the Negroes, thus stabilizing the labor market. In Texas Bureau personnel compiled lists of laborers who had left their employers, and prospective employers were told not to hire these delinquent workers. The Bureau agents also could be arbitrary and punitive in dealing with the freedmen, driving them back to their old homes, enforcing stringent vagrancy regulations, and even admonishing the blacks to treat their old master with respect.93

93 De Forest, Union Officer in Reconstruction, 38; Abbott, Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina, 66-81; C. Mildred Thompson, "The Freedmen's Bureau in Georgia, 1865-1866," Georgia Historical Quarterly, V (March, 1921), 44-46; John B. Myers, "The Freedmen and the Labor Supply; The Economic Adjustments in Post-Bellum Alabama, 1865-1867," Alabama Historical Quarterly, XXXII (Fall and Winter, 1970), 160; Kolchin, First Freedom, 5-10; Samuel Thomas, Circular No. 2, BRFAL, January 2, 1866 in John Eaton, Grant, Lincoln
From the Freedmen's Bureau perspective, success depended on convincing the whites to accept free labor and blacks to work. The Bureau adopted the contract system as a way to avoid the re-enslavement of the freedmen while at the same time easing the transition to a new economic order. Individual agents forced blacks to work for low wages or reduced the freedman's share of the crop at harvest time, but most of these men seem to have tried their best to treat both races fairly. They appealed to the whites to manage their former bondsmen with forebearance and Christian kindness, to control their own passions and prejudices, and to prevent the outbreak of racial violence. The Bureau men also preached patience to the blacks, urging them to beware of those who would take advantage of their ignorance, to avoid vengeance or any form of violence, and to allow the Bureau to defend them against wrongdoers. Some of these admonitions to righteousness fell on deaf ears, and others produced unusual results in specific cases. For example, many of the Freedmen's Bureau agents, including General Howard, were strong temperance men. Some agents issued orders prohibiting the sale of liquor to Negroes, and, on Howards's request, distributed pledges of total abstinence

among the freedmen. John De Forest recorded the effect of all this activity in South Carolina: the blacks snickered at the pledges but probably drank less than their besotted white neighbors.  

The Bureau as a whole had too few men trying to do too many jobs. Local agents complained of the flood of paperwork, the excessive number of complaints to listen to from both races, and the bitter hostility of the whites. Most Bureau agents were far from railroads or telegraph lines and often had to act on their own without instructions from their superiors. Caught between the competing demands of planters for labor and blacks for equitable treatment, the Bureau in many ways faced an impossible task in the South. Success depended on substantially changing southern racial attitudes, a labor that immediately evokes images of the mythical Sisyphus. To expect this new, inexperienced, and small federal agency to accomplish its mission in the South

94 Printed Speech of Assistant Commissioner Davis Tillson at Milledgeville, Georgia, October 27, 1865, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 20); AAG H. W. Smith to O. O. Howard, July 21, 1866, ibid., (roll 36); George R. Bentley, A History of the Freedmen's Bureau (Philadelphia, 1955), 80-81; Carpenter, Sword and Olive Branch, 122-26; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 305; G. L. Eberhart, Circular No. 2, November 1, 1865, BRFAL, "Freedmen's Bureau," House Ex. Doc. 70, 39-1, 67; Eliphalet Whittlesey, Circular No. 1, BRFAL, July 1, 1865, ibid., 2; Lieutenant Stuart Eldridge, Circular No. 7, BRFAL, July 29, 1865, ibid., 154; De Forest, Union Officer in Reconstruction, 102-103.
with limited funds in a short space of time was to demand miracles beyond the capability of mortal men.\textsuperscript{95}

Bureau personnel were often ill-suited for their jobs. Many ex-soldiers had little empathy with the blacks and were easily corrupted by white social pressures. Northern missionaries in the South accused many of the Bureau agents of being pro-slavery men and in almost total sympathy with white southerners. Bureau men who were quick to instill the virtues of the work ethic in their black charges often forgot to look into the low wages and wretched working conditions of the freedmen. Other overzealous functionaries went to the other extreme and greatly exaggerated accounts of white outrages against blacks.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{95}De Forest, Union Officer in Reconstruction, 4-5, 29-30; Jimmy G. Shoalmire, "Carpetbagger Extraordinary: Marshal Harvey Twitchell, 1840-1905," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Mississippi State University, 1969), 55; Colonel Eliphalet Whittlesey to O. O. Howard, October 15, 1865, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 23); Shofner, Nor Is It Over Yet, 84; Joe M. Richardson, "An Evaluation of the Freedmen's Bureau in Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly, XLI (January, 1963), 236-37.

With a tenuous foothold in the South, the Bureau often had to rely on the cooperation of southerners and the good offices of civil authorities. The friendliness and moderation of the Bureau agents surprised the whites. Planters, despite their own reservations about free labor, could live with the contract system established by the Bureau because they could take advantage of every opportunity to re-establish control over their black laborers. Southerners usually got along much better with the Bureau men than they would admit or historians later realize.\textsuperscript{97}

Whites, however, questioned the very necessity of an agency that meddled with their economic rights and interfered in their relations with their black workers. Bureau agents, they claimed, encouraged idleness and extravagant expectations among the blacks, supporting the freedmen in their refusal to sign contracts. These northerners also believed the most overblown accounts of outrages against blacks, ignored crimes by blacks against whites, and unfairly arrested whites for trivial offenses based on the spurious testimony of the freedmen. This intense white hostility broke out in social ostracism, harrassment of Bureau agents, and occasionally murder.\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{97}May, "Freedmen's Bureau at Local Level," 8-10; Battle, Memoirs of a Tar Heel, 215; E. F. Puckett, "Reconstruction in Monroe County," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, XI (1910), 133-35; Wilson, Black Codes, 58-60; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, September 28, 1865.

\textsuperscript{98}Abbott, Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina, 114-19; Randolph A. Shotwell, "Three Years in Battle and Three Years
Southerners firmly believed they could easily live without the services of the Freedmen's Bureau. With no unscrupulous agents to lead him astray, the Negro would be a good worker under the paternalistic supervision of the southern whites. The Bureau was an unnecessary intermediary between employer and employee, if not an openly incendiary organization. Southerners blamed the Bureau for inducing blacks to leave the plantations, for fomenting violence, and for using the freedmen for their own political ends. Southerners were convinced that these Yankees simply did not understand the Negroes, and that the demise of the Bureau could not come soon enough.  

The race problem thus seemed to be an endless maze with no exit, a mystery without any clues, an ever present albatross hanging around the neck of the South. The deep(...)


99Richmond Daily Dispatch, July 28, 1866; Wilmington Daily Journal, June 6, 1866; Memphis Daily Appeal, March 3, 1866; New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 13, 1866; Anderson Intelligencer, January 24, 1867; Charles D. McLean to Andrew Johnson, June 29, 1865, Johnson Papers, LC; M. Gillis to St. John R. Liddell, October 6, 1865, Moses Liddell Papers, LSU.
pessimism of most southern statements on race relations after the war overshadow even the most bitter reactions to military defeat. The old world of racial paternalism and chattel slavery was crumbling all around them, and southerners could only clutch at the remnants of the old order. For the hated Yankees to strike a blow at the southern racial system was to penetrate their outer defenses and to probe to the very core of southern passion, prejudice, and irrationality. Men could neither logically debate nor reasonably compromise the explosive questions raised by emancipation. The great fear had descended on the prostrate South. The earlier breakdown of a dialogue between the sections had resulted in a civil war; the emergence of the old racial bugbear in a new and even more virulent form after the war marked the beginning of the southern journey down the long, tortuous, and ultimately bloody path of reconstruction.
Chapter III
THE SPECTER OF SAINT-DOMINGUE

The two men could not have been more unlike. Alexander H. Stephens, Vice President of the Confederate States of America, had been the leading constitutional theorist in the South since the death of John C. Calhoun; Lieutenant George O. Sanderson, a native of Massachusetts, came South with the federal army and became an agent of the Freedmen's Bureau in North Carolina. Yet Stephens' ideas and Sanderson's experiences tell us a great deal about the most critical problem of the postwar South. On March 21, 1861, Stephens delivered what became known as his "Cornerstone" speech in Savannah, Georgia. In speaking of the new Confederate constitution, Stephens pointed out that the South had abandoned the founding fathers' notions about the equality of man:

Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery--subordination to the superior race--is his natural and normal condition.

Sanderson quickly discovered the practical application of Stephens' truism in southern life. One morning a county judge came to the Bureau office in a fever heat
of rage. The judge asked the northerner how much effrontery he would have to stand from the freedmen. Sanderson sought to calm the judge down and learn the cause of his distress. The man recounted that one of Sanderson's black soldiers, an "infernal nigger," had marched past his home and said "good morning" to him. Sanderson was quite naturally mystified about a simple courteous greeting evoking such an excited response. At this point, the judge gave the Yankee a pointed lesson in southern racial etiquette. He told Sanderson that his slaves had never addressed him unless spoken to, and that he had never been obliged to submit to the outrage of a black man first speaking to him. Both Stephens' speech and Sanderson's story illustrate the essence of southern racial thought. The lessons were unmistakable: the black man must always remain in a subservient position, and the most trivial incident could provoke heated reaction.¹

Alexis de Tocqueville observed long before the Civil War that the emancipation of the Negro would not result in the end of racial tension. Emancipation, the Frenchman predicted, would exacerbate rather than ameliorate prejudice. Southerners still believed in most of the major tenets of the pro-slavery argument long after the war. They presumed that the Negro was an inferior creature,

both biologically and morally. God in his infinite wisdom had created separate races, and the mixture of these distinct races could only lead to conflict, suffering, and bloodshed. The continuing vitality of these old arguments had a great influence in shaping the course of southern race relations in the post-bellum period.  

The southern consensus on the question was unswerving and unequivocal. The central theme of southern history, as U. B. Phillips long ago recognized, is the determination of most southerners that the South always remain a white man's country. Southerners, still reeling from the collapse of the Confederacy, repeated to themselves over and over again the old and familiar catechism of white supremacy. They called forth all of American history to prove that the nation and the government rested on the firm foundation of white racial hegemony. Provisional Governor Benjamin F. Perry drove the lesson home in a message to the South Carolina legislature. The radical Republicans in the North, according to Perry, forgot that ours had always been and always would be a white man's government and that even the

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Supreme Court in the famous Dred Scott decision had declared that the Negro was not and could not become a citizen of the United States. So far as the South was concerned, the matter was closed.  

The presumption of black inferiority precluded, of course, the acceptance of black suffrage in the South as a voluntary measure of reconstruction. As Edward A. Pollard pointed out, the war had decided many issues, but it had not converted the South to the acceptance of Negro equality or Negro suffrage. It seemed to most southerners the extremest folly to make voters of a childlike race unable to care for their most basic needs. The idea of black participation in government and politics was utterly absurd. The free Negro was idle, ignorant and vicious, hardly fit material on which to build a polity.  

Those southerners willing to grant the freedmen fundamental legal rights stopped well short of advocating the extension of the elective franchise to them. They drew a sharp line between gradually educating and elevating the

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3 Ulrich B. Phillips, "The Central Theme of Southern History," American Historical Review, XXXIV (October, 1928), 30-43; Sidney Andrews, The South Since the War, ed. by David Donald (Boston, 1971), 154; Natchez Democrat, January 8, 1866; Jackson Daily Clarion, November 4, 1865; Charleston Daily Courier, September 16, November 21, 1865.

Negro and allowing him to cast a ballot. For most southerners, citizenship for the Negro did not follow as a logical consequence of his emancipation. The same moderate leaders who favored the extension of all "legitimate" rights to the freedmen, repulsed all suggestions to establish political and social equality between the races.\(^5\)

Southerners predicted social and political chaos in the wake of a successful attempt to enfranchise the blacks. The imposition of black suffrage on the South would lead to tumult and bloodshed. Negroes could only vote freely, candid southerners admitted, if United States troops were stationed at every polling place in the South. Why sacrifice the lives of both races to satisfy the demands of northern doctrinaires? Angry whites raised the old chimeras of black equality and a war of the races as the probable consequences of black suffrage. Polemicists wrote in ringing passages of the familiar bugbears of Negro rule and the amalgamation of the races. The tensions elicited by this issue in some areas broke out in oppression and violence against blacks. A few southerners openly

admitted that they preferred to see blacks dead before they were ready to see them going to the polls to vote.6

A few moderates proposed eventually giving blacks some sort of limited franchise, perhaps impartial suffrage with a property qualification or educational requirement. The emphasis was, however, on gradualism and southern initiative. The Negro, most southerners agreed, was not yet ready to become a voter. The education and elevation of the Negro to a competent citizenship required time and patience. This process would be slow; some persons suggested fifteen or twenty years or longer. Stephens believed that the blacks could not remain completely separate from white society without some sort of "representation" or they would be worse off than the Aztecs of Mexico.7 The second condition for limited Negro suffrage


7 It is not clear what Stephens meant by the term "representation" in this context. It certainly did not imply any advocacy of black suffrage and may have simply
was that it come through the voluntary action of the South and not be imposed upon the southern people by the hated northern fanatics. Dredging up hoary constitutional arguments, southerners maintained that the states held the sovereign power to determine suffrage qualifications and that the federal government had no control over this question. The adoption of limited black suffrage also faced one insurmountable obstacle in southern state constitutional conventions and legislatures: the advocate of such a proposal often faced ostracism as a racial heretic by his fellow citizens. Southern politicians, slowly rebuilding their political fortunes after the war, were unwilling to risk their careers in the pursuit of a policy of racial moderation. For example, in the South Carolina constitutional convention of 1865, conservative leaders persuaded Governor Perry to omit a proposal giving black property owners the right to vote from his message in order to preserve unity in the convention. Upcountry delegates had denounced the plan as a ploy by the large low country planters to preserve their traditional political hegemony in the state. Throughout the South, proposals for impartial or limited suffrage foundered on the shoals of racial prejudice and political pragmatism.  

There was always the possibility, of course, that the South might be forced to accept some form of Negro suffrage to get back into the Union. Southern politicians exhorted their followers to stand by the Constitution and resist all efforts of the northern radicals to force black suffrage on the South. Restoration should not be purchased at the price of dishonor; the South should never voluntarily participate in her own degradation. Governor Daniel S. Walker advised the Florida legislature that it would be better for the state to remain out of the Union than "go back 'eviscerated of her manhood,' despoiled of her honor, recreant of her duty, without her self-respect; and of course without the respect of the balance of mankind—a miserable thing, with seeds of moral and political death.

in herself, soon to be communicated to all her associates."
A Richmond editor estimated that ninety-nine out of every one hundred southerners preferred military rule to black suffrage. The South clearly would accept the black man as a citizen and voter only at the point of the bayonet.⁹

Southerners predicted that if the doctrines of Thaddeus Stevens and his radical cohorts prevailed, the war of races in the South would begin. One North Carolinian wrote to ex-President James Buchanan that the sudden unleashing of the freed blacks on the South and the attempt to elevate them to a level of political equality with their former masters would release a "spirit of exterminating violence towards the black race." The only possible outcome of such a war would be the extermination of the weaker race, and the blacks would become as rare in the South as Indians or buffaloes. Such considerations revived old proposals for colonizing the blacks in Mexico or in the western states as an alternative to racial warfare. Radicals North and South might chide and scoff at southerners for raising the old cry of a war of the races, but, however unrealistic

⁹Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, January 21, August 18, 1866; Wilmington Daily Journal, March 24, 1866; Wallace, Carpetbag Rule in Florida, 24-25; Richmond Daily Dispatch, February 15, 1867; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, February 16, 1867; John Richard Dennett, The South As It Is, ed. by Henry M. Christman (New York, 1965), 41.
these prophecies were in fact, they were real enough in the minds of many southerners.\(^{10}\)

Southerners saw the beginnings of racial warfare in the action of the freedmen themselves. This was in no way more apparent than in the conflicts involving the possession of abandoned lands. Both the Army and the Freedmen's Bureau during the war and after had handed over lands abandoned by southern rebels to the freedmen, particularly in the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia. When the government halted this transfer and began restoring these confiscated lands to their original owners, federal officials in the South forecast trouble from the evicted blacks. Planters returning to their homes found them still occupied by surly freedmen claiming ownership and threatening the lives of anyone attempting to move on to their land. Even those blacks who treated their former masters with all the accustomed respect and politeness firmly told them that they could move back only by the sufferance of their former slaves. Some freedmen

pointedly informed the whites of their preference to work for the Yankees rather than native southerners. Many blacks realized that land ownership was essential to genuine freedom and naturally resented the return of the whites. Reports came in from the coastal areas of violent clashes between blacks and whites over the possession of the lands with casualties on both sides. Alarmed whites declared that the blacks were in a state of insurrection and both groups formed military companies. When the head of the Freedmen's Bureau, General Oliver Otis Howard, visited the South Carolina Sea Islands, federal authorities hoped that the "Christian soldier" could calm the troubled waters. Howard told the blacks of his good will toward them but informed them that all lands had been returned to their former masters on orders from President Johnson. Some blacks still refused to give up their lands, and restoration was not completed until 1866. Blacks remained hesitant to sign labor contracts with their former owners.  

11Henry Brisbane to James R. Doolittle, November 28, 1865, Doolittle Papers, LC; Myrta Lockett Avary, Dixie After the War: An Exposition of the Social Conditions Existing in the South, During the Twelve Years Succeeding the Fall of Richmond (New York, 1906), 341-46; Entry for June 12, 1865, Mary Boykin Chesnut, A Diary from Dixie, ed. by Ben Ames Williams (Boston, 1949), 540; James R. Pringle to Mrs. William Mason Smith, November 4, 1865, Daniel E. Huger Smith, Alice R. Huger Smith and Arney R. Childs, ed., Mason Smith Family Letters, 1860-1868 (Columbia, South Carolina, 1950), 245; Entry for October 15, 1865, Rupert Sargent Holland, ed., Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne: Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862-1884 (Cambridge, 1912), 167; Elizabeth W. Allston Pringle, Chronicles of Chicora Wood (Boston, 1940), 260-75; Willie Lee Rose, Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal
Blacks outside the Sea Islands also saw land as a key element of freedom and insurance against re-enslavement. The promise of "forty acres and a mule" was more than a glimmering mirage to the freedmen. The early orders of the Army and the Freedmen's Bureau gave blacks reason to believe that they would soon be receiving lands of their own confiscated from their former masters. Yankee sharpers took advantage of the blacks' credulity and sold them painted sticks that allegedly would give a person the plot of ground where he stuck the stick in the soil. Other con men pawned off phony deeds on the blacks for their new land.12

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In the firm belief that the government would give them land at Christmas time, Negroes in 1865 throughout the South refused to sign contracts for the coming year. Planters complained that the inherently lazy freedmen were taking advantage of these delusive rumors to hold out for higher wages and test their overblown expectations of the benefits of freedom. The blacks remained distrustful of their old masters and waited for months before making any permanent arrangements for work. Most planters hoped that the Negroes would work willingly after their hopes of a general distribution of land were dashed. 13

The sullen freedmen's attitude and their soaring dreams of acquiring their masters' lands stirred up old and irrational fears among the southerners of a Negro insurrection. Although many southerners scoffed at the

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13 Hamilton James Eckenrode, The Political History of Virginia During Reconstruction (Baltimore, 1904), 65; N. G. Smith to Andrew Johnson, August 21, 1865, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 16); Wager Swayne to O. O. Howard, October 9, 1865, ibid., (roll 19); Chicago Tribune, October 24, 1865; Thomas S. Staples, Reconstruction in Arkansas, 1862-1874 (New York, 1923), 204-205; Austin State Gazette, November 25, 1865; Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, 71-72; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, September 25, 1865; Entry for October 1, 1865, Margaret Mackay Jones, ed., The Journal of Catherine Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866 (Mebane, North Carolina, n.d.), 109-10; R. M. Smith to Stephen Duncan, December 3, 1865, Duncan Correspondence, LSU; Entry for December 25, 1865, Isaac Erwin Diary, typescript, LSU; Entry for November 29, 1865, Cyrus B. Comstock Diary, LC; Jackson Daily Clarion, December 19, 1865; Bliss Perry, Life and Letters of Henry Lee Higginson (Boston, 1921), 252-53.
possibility of the blacks seizing the lands by force, more prepared for the worst. Fearful southerners warned of the bloody consequences of idle and turbulent Negroes roaming about the countryside and gathering at military posts waiting for the day of revolution. The alarm spread particularly quickly in the South Carolina low country where whites had some reason to believe that the freedmen were ready to drive off the whites to gain possession of the land. In portions of the state, federal troops forcibly ejected blacks who refused to work or sign contracts from the plantations.\textsuperscript{14}

The Freedmen's Bureau did everything in its power to dispel these rumors of a Christmas distribution of land by the federal government and persuade the freedmen to sign contracts for the coming year. General Howard ordered all his agents to squelch false stories and quiet all causes of disorder. The Bureau men told the blacks that they had been given their freedom by the federal government and could expect little more from Uncle Sam. In some areas the agents simply ordered the reluctant freedmen to go back to work and sign contracts. However, these rumors seemed to have lives of their own, and many blacks clung to the hope of still

\textsuperscript{14} Brevet Major General Rufus Saxton to O. O. Howard, December 19, 1865, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 24); Governor William L. Sharkey of Mississippi to Howard, October 10, 1865, ibid., (roll 22); Galveston Flake's Weekly Bulletin, October 11, 1865; Sanford W. Barker to Benjamin F. Perry, July 10, September 8, 1865, Perry Papers, Ala.; Entry for December 5, 1865, Childs, ed., \textit{Journal of Henry Ravenal}, 258.
receiving land at the beginning of 1866. When such beliefs were dispelled, relations between planters and freedmen improved substantially.15

White southerners blamed the Freedmen's Bureau agents for spreading promises of "forty acres and a mule" among the blacks. They charged these men and also the Negro soldiers with circulating radical propaganda and spurring the blacks to insurrection. The very presence of these Yankees, southerners maintained, discouraged the freedmen from working and convinced them of their right to live in luxuriant idleness. The charge of fomenting race conflict was just one more item in the lengthening southern indictment of the northerners in their midst.16


The inclusion of the black troops in the southern list of bogy men was no afterthought. Southerners resented the Negro soldiers more than any other group of "aliens" in their midst. The charges of inciting the freedmen to insurrection did not necessarily reflect the actual behavior of the black units or individual soldiers. Even some southerners conceded that the black troops were often no worse than their white counterparts. Army commanders in the South claimed that their black soldiers were under as firm a discipline as their white units (whose reputation for soberness and good order were far from enviable). In many clashes between local whites and the black troops, the whites obviously were to blame; other tales of outrages by black soldiers were undoubtedly manufactured for political effect. Irate citizens bombarded their governors and President Johnson with urgent requests to withdraw the Negro troops from the South. White commanders commonly lent a sympathetic ear to such petitions and either confined the troops to isolated fortifications or joined with the local whites in asking for the mustering out of the black units. Finally, under orders supported by President Johnson and General Grant, southern commanders began to discharge their black soldiers and occasionally disarm the men also to

prevent fresh disturbances. The evidence on the overall performance of these black units during Reconstruction is incomplete and contradictory. Through no fault of their own, most of these soldiers received less training and were under poorer discipline than comparable white troops. Also, the very presence of these units was a great provocation to the whites, and the Army was probably ill-advised to keep these soldiers in the South after the war.  

Whatever the actual performance of the black troops, southerners strenuously objected to their activities in the region. One elderly man in Wilmington, North Carolina, on seeing a column of Negro soldiers parading down a street, could express his outrage and detestation only by calling for the angel Gabriel to blow his trumpet to sound the coming of the Apocalypse. Carl Schurz predicted to President Johnson that the stationing of black troops in the South would have the salutary effect of driving home to the white people the fact that their former slaves were now

free. However, most southerners interpreted placing these soldiers in their communities as a deliberate and premeditated insult. Southern editors and political leaders poured out their anger against the policy in vitriolic and often incoherent tirades. To see their former slaves parading about armed, lording it over white people, was more than even the calmest man could stomach. Their ubiquity was a constant reminder of the South's degradation and resulting social upheaval. Projecting their own emotions on to the objects of their wrath, southerners accused the black soldiers of stirring up racial hatred and harboring a secret passion to avenge themselves against their old masters. 18

Southerners also put forward more specific charges against the Negro troops. They arraigned the black soldiers for having a pernicious influence on the freedmen by encouraging them in their suspicions against the whites

18W. McKee Evans, Ballots and Fence Rails; Reconstruction on the Lower Cape Fear (Chapel Hill, 1966), 23; Carl Schurz to Andrew Johnson, August 29, 1865, Johnson Papers, LC; A. Toomer Porter to Richard Lathers, June 18, 1865, Alvin F. Sanborn, ed., Reminiscences of Richard Lathers (New York, 1907), 250-51; John MacRae to Donald MacRae, June 22, 1865, Hugh MacRae Papers, Duke; Dennett, South As It Is, 32-33; Wade Hampton to Andrew Johnson, August 25, 1866, Charles E. Cauthen, ed., Family Letters of the Three Wade Hamptons (Columbia, South Carolina, 1953), 129-30; Wilmington Daily Journal, October 16, 1865; Resolution of February 15, 1866, Georgia Senate Journal (1865-1866), 257; Reid, After the War, 213-14; Governor William W. Holden to Andrew Johnson, August 10, 1865, Elizabeth Gregory McPherson, ed., "Letters from North Carolina to Andrew Johnson," North Carolina Historical Review, XXVII (October, 1950), 471; Anderson Intelligencer, September 14, 1865.
and their desire to work as little as possible. According to many southerners, the uniformed blacks transformed orderly and contented servants into turbulent and violent vagabonds. Black troops also encouraged idle freedmen to congregate around their camps and recruited blacks off the plantations to join their regiments. Graphically describing the nearly total demoralization of black labor in areas garrisoned by the Negro soldiers, southern governors pleaded with President Johnson for their immediate removal. Even Schurz conceded that black soldiers sometimes put "queer notions" into the heads of the freedmen and were "apt to be a point of attraction for colored women." Planters upbraided the Army for deliberately enlisting their most vicious former slaves and sending them into the countryside to pillage the plantations and intimidate the old slaveholders. Citizens of Aiken, South Carolina, grew increasingly alarmed when black troops entered their community, refused to sit with the rest of the freedmen in the gallery of the Baptist church, and reportedly murdered several whites in the countryside.19

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19 House Rep. 30, 39-1, 134; Entries for June 27, July 25, 1865, Childs, ed., Journal of Henry Ravenel, 247, 251; John W. Rutledge to Benjamin F. Perry, July 9, 1865, Perry Papers, SHC; Ben Allston to Perry, November 26, 1865, Perry Papers, Ala.; H. Montgomery to Governor William Sharkey, August 16, 1865, A. Gillespie to Sharkey, July 29, 1865, Sharkey Papers, Miss.; John A. Winston to Governor Lewis E. Parsons, August 1, 1865, Citizens of Lawrence County, Alabama, to Parsons, September 26, 1865, Parsons Papers, Ala.; Henry Boyd to Andrew Johnson, October 9, 1866, E. D. Townsend to General Philip H. Sheridan, August 13, 1866, LR, DG, 1865-1866, RG 393, NA; New Orleans Daily
Southerners also accused the black troops of contributing to the local crime problem. The most common complaint was that the black soldiers, reflecting the congenital character of their race, were natural thieves. According to the whites, livestock, foodstuffs and any portable goods were unsafe in the vicinity of an encampment of black soldiers. Southerners also grumbled that the black troops frequently got drunk and made noisy forays into towns firing off their pistols and threatening lives. Fights often broke out between Negro soldiers and the whites near saloons, both parties being well fortified with alcohol. Perhaps exploiting their new position of power, Negro bluecoats treated southerners rudely on streets, insulted women and children, and drove people off the sidewalks. Such confrontations in the streets and railroad cars led to angry words and occasional bloodshed. Black soldiers were no doubt sometimes harsh and undiplomatic when arresting whites, but many times whites shot at men who were peacefully performing their duty. So outrageous was the mere presence of these Negro soldiers in their

Picayune, October 19, 1866; Carl Schurz to Andrew Johnson, August 29, 1865, Joseph C. Bradley to Johnson, October 13, 1865, J. Madison Wells to Johnson, October 20, 1865, Petition from Tuscumbia, Alabama, to Johnson, March 5, 1866, Johnson Papers, LC; Citizens of Macon, Mississippi, to Governor Benjamin G. Humphreys, October 31, 1865, Humphreys Papers, Miss.; Entry for June 18, 1865, Childs, ed., Journal of Henry Ravenel, 245-46; Williamson, After Slavery, 52-53.
midst to most whites that the most trivial incident could 
spark a violent outbreak.20

Examples of white attacks on black soldiers are 
numerous. Investigations of these incidents frequently 
revealed no discernable motives for the assaults other than 
general resentment of the soldiers. Local police and 
militia units savagely attacked black soldiers in towns and 
rural areas, with such affrays usually taking place near 
saloons or when local police sought to disarm the blacks.

20 Harry Willcox Pfanz, "Soldiering in the South During 
Reconstruction, 1865-1877," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 
Ohio State University, 1958), 129-59; John Robert Kirkland, 
"Federal Troops in the South Atlantic States During Recon­ 
struction, 1865-1877," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 
University of North Carolina, 1967), 309-11; John W. Kyle, 
"Reconstruction in Panola County," Publications of the 
Mississippi Historical Society, XIII (1913), 44-45; New York 
Herald, August 14, 1865; Fleming, Reconstruction in Alabama, 
263-64; William E. Highsmith, "Reconstruction in Louisiana," 
(unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 
1953), 155; Willie Malvin Caskey, Secession and Restoration 
of Louisiana (Baton Rouge, 1938), 185; Entry for April 20, 
1865, Childs, ed., Journal of Henry Ravenel, 227; Colonel 
A. C. Edgerton to Lieutenant Nathaniel Burbank, May 31, 
1866, Brevet Brigadier General C. B. Comstock to General 
John A. Rawlins, February 7, 1866, "Removal of Hon. E. M. 
Stanton and Others," House Ex. Doc. 57, 40-2, 59, 136; 
Trowbridge, Desolated States, 295-96; Galveston Bulletin, 
February 27, 1866 in Little Rock Daily Gazette, March 13, 
1866; J. C. Brown, "Reconstruction In Yalobusha and Grenada 
Counties," Publications of the Mississippi Historical 
Society, XII (1912), 231; H. Hanslow to Benjamin G. Humphreys, 
October 31, 1865, Humphreys to Andrew Johnson, November 16, 
1865, Johnson Papers, LC; John S. Reynolds, Reconstruction 
in South Carolina (Columbia, South Carolina, 1905), 4-7; 
Entry for October 11, 1865, Samuel A. Agnew Diary, type­ 
script, SHC; Pamela Cunningham to Benjamin C. Yancey, 
July 24, 1865, Yancey Papers, SHC; Augusta Daily Chronicle 
and Sentinel, December 30, 1865; J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, 
Reconstruction in North Carolina (New York, 1914), 158-61; 
New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 25, 1866; Fletcher, "Negro 
In Knoxville, Tennessee, a black private halted a local citizen (who had served as a colonel in the Union army). When the man reached into his pocket for his identification papers, the black sentry, assuming he was reaching for a weapon, shot and killed him. An angry mob seized the black man, strung him up in front of the local Freedmen's Bureau office, took him down and carried him to the local Army commander's office, and hung him again, the victim dying after forty minutes of agonizing torment. The mob hung a placard on the lifeless body that read: "Hung to show the niggers and Freedmen's Bureau Nigger Officers what it takes to make a true Tennessean and whether they'd be run over or not."

Black troops sometimes were attacked by their white comrades in arms. When white soldiers had to arrest drunken or disorderly black enlisted men, fights broke out and shots were fired. White and black troops clashed in the market

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area of Charleston, South Carolina, throwing stones and bricks at each other. The result was that one black man was killed (it is not clear whether he was a soldier), and one white soldier was injured. As a result of this disturbance, the military authorities imposed a strict curfew in the hope of restoring some semblence of discipline to their men.22

Black troops, rumors of a general division of the plantations, and a growing crime rate all created a genuine insurrection panic among southerners in the summer and fall of 1865. Following the pattern of earlier slave revolt scares, this new series of alarms focused on a preoccupation with incendiary outside radicals and aggressive blacks (particularly Negro soldiers). Fearful southerners carefully questioned visitors for news of the contemplated black uprising. Whether these fears were founded in reality is not the central question; southerners knew in their own minds that the freedmen were ready and willing to begin a bloody insurrection. This belief illustrates the near schizophrenia in the southern evaluation of the black character and personality. On the one hand, whites traditionally portrayed their black slaves as shuffling, child-like Sambos who in their limited way had fully

accepted the system of white paternalism. On the other hand, in times of fear, southerners were convinced that every Negro was a potential Nat Turner ready to raise the red flag of revolt and perpetrate a general slaughter of the whites. Even after the war, southerners still feared that their homeland might become a new Saint-Domingue with a native Toussaint L'Ouverture leading the freedmen in a bloody revolt. An uprising of Jamaican blacks in 1865 only served to exacerbate apprehensions. 23

Alarmed southerners cited specific evidence of the impending black revolution: the freedmen were buying arms, forming military companies, and drilling late at night. Rumors spread of large caches of arms being stored for the day of the uprising. In rural counties particularly, whites complained of armed black marauders stealing and slaughtering livestock, and in some areas shooting women and children. Reports circulated in many states of armed assaults by blacks against whites, and whites wondered if

this was but the first stage of a bloody insurrection conspiracy. 24

Many southerners believed that there had never been a greater possibility of a black uprising. They charged radical incendiaries with inciting the blacks to insurrection by spreading false rumors of their eventual re-enslavement by the whites. In such manner the blacks received assurance of radical support in all their bloody schemes of vengeance. Radical emissaries from the North, according to newspaper reports, were drilling armed blacks and training them for war against the whites. Southerners also charged native union men, such as William W. Holden in North Carolina, with arousing political feeling among the blacks and creating bad blood between the races for their own benefit. 25

Historian Dan Carter has found evidence of insurrection rumors in sixty-six counties and parishes in the eleven


25 Entry for September 15, 1866, Isaac Erwin Diary, typescript, LSU; Richmond Daily Dispatch, August 1, 9, 1866; Little Rock Arkansas Gazette, September 18, 1866; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, August 11, 15, 1866, January 14, 1867; Jonathan Worth to Thomas Ruffin, January 7, 1867, Hamilton, ed., Ruffin Papers, IV, 142.
former Confederate states in 1865, some two hundred references in all. My own research suggests that the panic was even more widespread. Nor did these fears die out after 1865; Mississippi experienced similar insurrection scares in 1866 and 1867. Much of this "evidence" is, of course, from secondhand accounts and is of doubtful value in assessing the actual danger of a black revolt. Many diarists and letter writers reported local hearsay about planned insurrections from some "reliable" source, and there was much general conversation about the possibility of a revolt during the Christmas holidays. Fearful southerners recounted overhearing conversations of suspect freedmen plotting insurrection, the general plan being for the blacks to slaughter all the men and children, sparing the young females for licentious purposes. Some observers also reported plots to burn down towns and seize the plantations. Obviously, most of these rumors were vague, but this fuzziness in no way affected their believability or their power to arouse desperate and violent passions among the whites. The southern perception of these plots and conspiracies was far more important than their objective reality in shaping the reaction.26

The irrational paranoia of many southerners sometimes led to ludicrous denouements. In August 1865 an insurrection panic spread through the South Carolina low country when a group of freedmen united to defend their watermelon patches against persistent thieves. One Tennessee preacher sat up all night in deadly fear with a gun by his side until frightened by the appearance of a solicitous Negro who wondered why he was still awake. When a detachment of federal troops investigated reports of a planned uprising in the Teche country of Louisiana, the only incendiary organization they could find was a group of black children playing with wooden swords. Federal commanders in the fall of 1865 found much of their time occupied in receiving delegations of nervous southerners who related bloodcurdling tales of imminent of black rebellion. Touchy southerners blanched from a sullen look on the face of a freedman, jumped at every mysterious noise, and interpreted a simple

Alabamian, 1865-1874. ed. by James K. Greer (Birmingham, Alabama, 1940), 8; Entry for October 1, 1865, Grace B. Elmore Diary, SHC; James H. Clanton to Lewis E. Parsons, October 20, 1865, Parsons Papers, Ala.; John Bridges to Charles E. Bridges, June, n.d., 1865, Bridges Papers, Duke; James R. Sparkman to Benjamin Allston, November 23, 1866, Easterby, ed., South Carolina Rice Plantation, 224-25; Benjamin C. Cooley to General Philip H. Sheridan, October 1, 1866, LR, DG, 1865-1866, RG 393, NA; Mrs. Ella Storrs Christian, "The Days That Are No More or Plantation Life As it Was, 1860-1866, Part II," Alabama Historical Quarterly, XV (Spring, 1953), 159-60; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, September 5, 1865; Andrews, South Since the War, 27.
act of disobedience on the part of a black man as the
beginning of a war of the races.\textsuperscript{27}

There were, however, many southerners who pooh-poohed
these elaborate predictions of a new Saint-Domingue in the
South. For some whites these rumors clashed with their
long experience with the docile and subservient Negroes.
Others thought that even the blacks had more sense than
to rise against the whites and face certain death. More
rational and temperate persons demanded more substantial
proof of actual danger before following the lead of timid
and fearful rumor mongers. Yet even those whites who
scoffed at the reported plots and ridiculed those faint­
hearted souls who believed in them, advised the southern
people to remain vigilant and prepare for the worst.\textsuperscript{28}

Under pressure from local whites, Freedmen's Bureau
agents and military officers detailed men to investigate

\textsuperscript{27}Letter of August 3, 1865, Holland, ed., Letters and
Diary of Laura Towne, 165; Rev. S. H. Chester, "African
Slavery As I Knew It in Southern Arkansas," Tennessee
Historical Magazine, IX (October, 1925), 181-82; Trowbridge,
Desolated States, 375, 408; A. T. Morgan, Yazoo; Or, On the
Picket Line of Freedom in the South (New York, 1968), 53-67;
Carl Schurz to the Boston Advertiser, August 8, 1865,
Joseph H. Mahaffey, ed., "Carl Schurz's Letters from the
South," Georgia Historical Quarterly, XXXV (December, 1951),
250-53.

\textsuperscript{28}Rachel Susan Cheeves to John Richardson Cheeves,
November 26, 1865, Rachel Susan Cheeves Papers, Duke; Entry
for November 3, 1865, Samuel A. Agnew Diary, typescript,
SHC; Entry for November 26, 1865, ibid.; Memphis Daily
Appeal, November 30, 1865; Athens Watchman, n.d., in Augusta
Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, December 7, 1865; Augusta
Daily Constitutionalist, December 2, 1865; Columbus
Sentinel, n.d. in Little Rock Arkansas State Gazette,
November 25, 1865; Jackson Daily Clarion, December 20, 1865.
the insurrection rumors. They usually found that most of these anticipated uprisings were based on general hearsay and the exaggerations of fevered imaginations. Clinton B. Fisk, an assistant commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, carefully investigated the rumors of a Negro insurrection in Tennessee and northern Mississippi by talking to members of both races. Fisk could discover no evidence of an uprising but learned that the Mississippi panic had begun when whites saw a Negro marching through the woods with a fowling piece shooting squirrels. Southerners, who were themselves armed to the teeth, saw blacks with guns as a sure sign of an impending blood bath. 29

Northern observers maintained that southern whites raised the cry of black insurrection to justify their own persecution of the freedmen. These loud complaints served as a pretext to further restrict the rights of the Negroes and maintain white control over race relations. According to southern unionists and sympathetic northerners, it would

29Dennett, South As It Is, 190; Alvan C. Gillem to Joseph Smith Fowler, December 19, 1865, Fowler Papers, SHC; Frank A. Rollin, Life and Public Services of Martin R. Delany (Boston, 1868), 248-49; Eliphalet Whittlesey to O. O. Howard, December 1, 1865 cited in Oliver Otis Howard, Autobiography of Oliver Otis Howard (2 Vols., New York, 1907), II, 279; Colonel Samuel Thomas to Howard, November 2, 1865, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 22); F. S. Free to Thomas, October 27, 1865, ibid., (roll 16); Howard to Colonel Orlando Brown, September 5, 1865, LS, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M742, roll 1); Carter, "Christmas Day Insurrection Scare," 346-48; Ames, A New England Woman's Diary in Dixie, 110-11; "Report of the Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands," House Ex. Doc. 11, 39-1, 11; House Rep. 30, 39-1, 30; Reid, After the War, 422.
be no wonder if the blacks did revolt, given the cruel treatment they received from southern whites. Southerners used chimerical fears of black revolt to justify oppression of the Negro well into the twentieth century. Such insurrection panics also served the important psychological function of preserving white unity and buttressing the southern racial ideology against the onslaught of "outside agitators."  

Southerners did more than moan and complain about the possibility of racial warfare. Citizens formed county patrols and "home guards" to ferret out black incendiaries and crush any uprisings. White men picketed the roads and disarmed passing blacks. Southerners were not about to trust Negroes with firearms, particularly in times of racial excitement. The whites seized all sorts of weapons which they found in the hands of the Negroes, including hunting pieces and old guns that had long been useless. However, these local patrols went far beyond marching at night and disarming blacks; some of these bands forcibly entered freedmen's homes, stole their money, and hauled them into

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the woods to beat them. Blacks in Florida protested that local authorities confiscated their weapons and required any black who wished to own a gun to get a pass from a white man signed by a probate judge. Under such conditions, these freedmen asked Secretary of State William H. Seward how they could really be free. One Virginian candidly admitted that the local patrol "keeps perfect order and makes them [the blacks] stand in some fear."\(^31\)

These quasi-military organizations did not prove adequate in many places, and southerners were anxious to re-establish their old state militias. This was no where more true than in Mississippi. Arguing for the need to suppress black crime and disorder, provisional Governor William L. Sharkey in August 1865 began to organize state militia units. Sharkey assured President Johnson that such

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a course could be followed with "perfect safety" and that it "would have a good effect in the other states and certainly here." However, on August 24, 1865, Major General Henry W. Slocum, commanding general of the Department of Mississippi, issued a general order forbidding the organization of militia in the state. Slocum, obviously piqued that Sharkey had not consulted him beforehand, said that he could not permit young ex-Confederates to patrol counties garrisoned by black troops, thus defying Army orders relating to the treatment of the freedmen. Most acts of violence, the general claimed, were committed against union men and Negroes, not against native whites. Slocum told Secretary of War Stanton that the Mississippi militia was a thinly veiled reassembling of former rebels. Johnson at first upheld Slocum, and Sharkey immediately protested that the troops in Mississippi, especially the Negro soldiers, were unable or unwilling to control the frightening increases in black crime and disorder in the State. Carl Schurz, who happened to be in the state at the height of the controversy, urged Stanton and the President to stand behind General Slocum. Finally, on August 30, Johnson wrote to Schurz that he favored militia organizations in the southern states and thought that the military authorities could easily prevent any outrages by them. Over the protests of Schurz, who described the militia as being dedicated to the oppression of union men and freedmen, the President rescinded Slocum's order. So Sharkey triumphed over the
wishes of the Army, and his successor Benjamin G. Humphreys in November began to organize militia units in anticipation of a black insurrection during the Christmas holidays. The militia, however, did little to stop any violent outbreaks and were often guilty of outrages themselves.\textsuperscript{32}

Other southern states were just as anxious as Mississippi to form new state militias. Letters poured into the offices of southern governors begging for permission to organize local units or informing them of companies already established. Citizens pleaded for armed force to make the Negroes sign labor contracts and to quell anticipated insurrections. Local officials complained of an alleged crime wave and the need to re-establish order after a bitter civil war. Governor William W. Holden of North Carolina warned that if the blacks pursued a course of vengeance against the whites they would "be visited with swift and condign punishment."\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{32}Carl Schurz to Andrew Johnson, August 29, September 4, 1865, William L. Sharkey to Johnson, August 20, 28, 30, 1865, Johnson Papers, LC; Major General Henry W. Slocum, GO 22, Department of Mississippi, August 24, 1865, Annual Cyclopaedia (1865), 582-83; Johnson to Schurz, August 30, 1865, ibid., 583-84; Johnson to Sharkey, August 24, 1865, Sharkey Papers, Miss.; Slocum to Edwin M. Stanton, August 25, 1865, Schurz to Stanton, August 29, 1865, Stanton Papers, LC; Schurz to Johnson, August 1, 1865, Carl Schurz Papers, LC; William C. Harris, Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi (Baton Rouge, 1967), 71-75; \textit{Jackson Daily Clarion}, November 5, 1865; Major General P. J. Osterhaus to Brevet Major General John A. Rawlins, November 11, 1865, IR, AGO, Main Series, 1861-1870, RG 94, NA (M619, roll 505).

\textsuperscript{33}Thomas J. Moore and John C. Anderson to Benjamin F. Perry, September 27, 1865, Perry Papers, Ala.; Ben Edwards Grey to Lewis E. Parsons, September 23, 1865, F. Litcomb to
With the postwar disruption of the southern economy, many states lacked the financial resources to organize a militia and asked for arms from the federal government. Most of these requests were denied because both the generals in the field and the Army leadership in Washington were naturally reluctant to place federal arms in the hands of state militias composed predominantly of ex-Confederate soldiers. In addition, most officers on the scene greatly doubted the tales of black conspiracies and uprisings; they told their superiors that the troops already stationed in the South were more than adequate to keep the peace without depending on state units of dubious quality and character.

Other northern observers saw the organization of a state militia as a sly maneuver by the rebels to convince the government to remove all its troops from the South. In several states the military authorities not only refused to give the state militia federal arms but sought to suppress

the formation of these units. The Army was partially successful in preventing militia companies from drilling, and other states avoided a heated confrontation between civil officials and military commanders similar to that of Mississippi. 34

The military soon had solid evidence to back up their suspicions about these state militias. Companies marched through the countryside illegally seizing all arms in the hands of freedmen with the usual excuse of preventing an impending black insurrection. The southern commanders saw through this smoke screen and issued orders forbidding any further confiscation of weapons. Militia units also used their authority to engage in personal vendettas and to rob the freedmen of their private property. State troops shot and killed freedmen who in any way obstructed their degradations. Carl Schurz, with some justification, pointedly asserted that the militia in the South had one clear purpose: "the restoration of the old patrol system

34 Sefton, Army and Reconstruction, 29; Montgomery Daily Advertiser, January 17, 1866; Kirkland, "Federal Troops In the South Atlantic States," 108-109; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, December 16, 1865; U. S. Grant to Andrew Johnson, November 9, 1866, Grant Papers, LC; William Alexander to Salmon P. Chase, December 21, 1865, Chase Papers, LC; James L. Bissin to Zachariah Chandler, October 3, 1866, Chandler Papers, LC; Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War (New York, 1962), 491; Max L. Heyman, Prudent Soldier: A Biography of Major General E. R. S. Canby, 1817-1873 (Glendale, California, 1959), 263-64; James L. Orr to Major General Daniel E. Sickles, December 13, 1865, Sickles to Orr, December 17, 1865, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 19).
which was one of the characteristic features of the regime of slavery.\textsuperscript{35}

As could have been readily anticipated, the Christmas holidays in 1865 passed quietly without the greatly feared Negro insurrection. Most of the violence during this period resulted from whites disarming and assaulting Negroes. Were the cries of a new Saint-Domingue then mere pretext to justify a policy of aggression against the freedmen? This may have been true with some southerners, but many sincerely believed that their ex-slaves were ready to wreak vengeance on their former masters in retribution for their years of bondage. The result was a brutal suppression of the freedmen that the military and the Freedmen's Bureau were unable to stop. These so-called "outrages," which greatly increased in numbers and brutality throughout the

\textsuperscript{35}James W. Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi (New York, 1901), 104; Trowbridge, Desolated States, 342; Major General E. R. S. Canby to AG, Washington, April 10, 1866, LR, DG, July, 1865-August, 1866, RG 393, NA; Samuel L. Thomas to O. O. Howard, December 13, 1865, Lieutenant John W. Crutchfield to R. S. Donaldson, October 14, 1865, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 22); Major General Thomas J. Wood to CS W. D. Whipple, December 3, 1865, Oscar J. E. Stuart to Benjamin G. Humphreys, December 8, 1865, Wood to Humphreys, December 20, 1865, January 8, 1866, Humphreys Papers, Miss.; Carl Schurz to Andrew Johnson, September 3, 1866, Johnson Papers, LC; House Rep. 30, 39-1, 49-50; Wager Swayne to O. O. Howard, January, n.d., 1866, "Reports of Assistant Commissioners to the Freedmen's Bureau," House Ex. Doc. 27, 39-1, 70; J. S. Robinson, Jr. to W. H. Barnes, November 30, 1865, C. J. Lewis to Colonel C. M. Hooper, January 10, 1866, Clyde E. Wilson, ed., "State Militia June 1865-December 1865," Alabama Historical Quarterly, XIV (1952), 325-30; Evans, Ballots and Fence Rails, 71-74, 130-31; Andrews, South Since the War, 115; Memphis Morning Post, January 17, 24, 1866; House Ex. Doc 2, 39-1, 36.
Reconstruction period, illustrate once again the determination of the southerners to keep their land a white man's country.36

Besides militia units and county patrols, less organized bands of marauders and desperadoes also attacked the freedmen, making assaults and outrages against blacks quite common in the postbellum South. In the disordered condition of southern society, it was not unusual for ex-rebels to prosecute the freedmen and threaten them with further suffering once the federal troops had been withdrawn. Such attacks often lacked any pretext at all and were made against the most inoffensive freedmen. In many counties outlaws and bands of "regulators" preyed on the Negroes. These armed and mounted men rode about the countryside whipping, hanging, and murdering blacks, immune to capture by either local authorities or federal soldiers. These men drove freedmen off their land and threatened any potential witnesses with swift retribution. Many of these outlaws were brutal even by contemporary standards. Some freedmen received more than three hundred lashes on their bare backs from the desperadoes. In Pitt County, North Carolina, a group of ex-Confederate soldiers met a freedmen on the road, castrated him, and

36 George K. Shellman to Charles Davidson, July 10, 1866, Bruce S. Greenawalt, ed., "Virginians Face Reconstruction: Correspondence from the James Dorman Davidson Papers, 1865-1880," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXXVIII (October, 1970), 454; New York Herald, December 28, 1865; Dennett, South As It Is, 275.
later murdered him. A leader of a band of ruffians in Edgefield, South Carolina, claimed to have cut eight ears off of Negroes; he carried these trophies in an envelope to display to friends and acquaintances.  

Capriciousness was the most notable characteristic of this racial violence. One Confederate soldier returning to New Orleans expressed the hope that the whites would again control the state and shoot down the Negroes "like dogs." Some whites in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, pummeled an old black man for exhibiting some "magic lantern pictures" that had abolition themes. Whites brutally attacked Negro parades, often with the assistance of local police. In Texas blacks were killed for failing to remove their hats when passing a white man, for carrying a letter

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to the Freedmen's Bureau, or for not allowing themselves or their wives to be whipped. A few whites enjoyed watching the Negroes "kick" after they were shot and thought the freedmen should be "thinned out" anyway. Such callous attitudes suggest that the more brutal whites totally denied the humanity of black people and therefore treated them worse than their stock animals.38

The black response to these incidents is an interesting but virtually unexplored field of inquiry. Obviously blacks after the war still had to control their aggressive instincts because of the overwhelming power of the whites over and against themselves. Also black retaliation offended many of their white friends who generally counseled restraint and acquiescence. Black resistance to white outrages frequently led to swift and brutal retaliation against the offending freedman. Yet against great odds and under great provocation, some blacks did fight back. When students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill joined with local residents to attack a Negro meeting, they discovered that the freedmen were not always the obsequious shuffling Sambos of the plantation legend. The blacks

retaliated against their white assailants with sticks until the students and townspeople beat a hasty retreat. Surprised northern visitors found that there were blacks who resisted white assaults, and that some were already armed for an anticipated conflict. 39

The most hotly debated question concerns the number of outrages committed against blacks in the reconstruction South. Southern apologists have minimized the problem of postwar violence while many revisionist historians have emphasized the southern brutality against the blacks. To argue over the figures is largely an exercise in futility because the actual number of outrages cannot be determined with any degree of precision. Military officers and Freedmen's Bureau agents generally reported frequent outrages against blacks from the end of the war up to the passage of the first Reconstruction Act. Such accounts did not include all such incidents and undoubtedly included some

that never happened. The compilations of these northern observers in the South present a dreary picture. The pattern that stands forth from these documents and their cold statistics is that large numbers of freedmen were robbed, assaulted, raped, and killed by whites with little or no action taken against the guilty parties. However one interprets this mass of information, one conclusion is inescapable: there was a substantial number of outrages committed by whites against blacks, southern claims to the contrary notwithstanding. Add to this all the unreported incidents, and a story emerges of intolerant southerners.

40 For a summary of outrage reports in the southern states, see, Reports of Outrages Committed by Whites Against Blacks and Blacks Against Whites Since the Surrender of the Rebel Armies, January 9, 1866, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1861-1870, RG 94, NA (M619, roll 505); Lieutenant T. H. Ward to Captain J. N. Staley, January 6, 1866, ibid.; Reports of Outrages and Arrests, June 1866-December 1868, Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of North Carolina, BRFAL, 1865-1870, RG 105, NA (M843, roll 33); Reports of Murders and Outrages, October 1865-November 1868, BRFAL, South Carolina, 1865-1870, RG 105, NA (M869, roll 34); AAAG Grant Aldridge to General Davis Tillson, November 24, 1866, LS, BRFAL, 1865-1870, RG 105, NA (M742, roll 2); Chicago Tribune, August 15, 1865; U. S. Grant to Andrew Johnson, March 14, 1866, Johnson Papers, LC; New York Tribune, August 3, 1866; White, Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana, 143-46; Memphis Daily Post, January 12, 1867; List of Freedmen Who Have Been Murdered in the State of Texas Since the Close of the Rebellion, June 1865-September 25, 1866 and Record of Criminal Offenses Committed in the State of Texas, September 1865-December 1868, Records of the Assistant Commissioners for the State of Texas, BRFAL, 1865-1869; RG 105, NA (M821, roll 32).
dedicated to the proposition that it was no crime against man or God to oppress a black person.\textsuperscript{41}

The dehumanization of black victims was the final development needed to spark violence in this period of racial and political tension. When a woman asked Huckleberry Finn about a steamboat explosion on the Mississippi River, Huck replied that the boat had blown out a cylinder head. The alarmed woman asked, "Good gracious! anybody hurt?" "No'm," replied Huck, "killed a nigger." The relieved woman could only say: "Well, it's lucky because sometimes people do get hurt." Mark Twain well understood the southern penchant for treating the blacks as less than men and little better than beasts of burden. This belief that the Negro is an animal, an untamed savage, served as a powerful justification for white violence throughout southern history. Moreover, since the Yankees, hated though they were, could not be attacked with impunity, the Negro became both a safe and convenient target of aggression. Northerners expressed great shock at the small value placed on Negro life in the South. Many southerners seemed to consider the murder of a black man as no crime at all, and it was virtually impossible to get a white jury to convict a white man for such an outrage. Some southerners frankly admitted their

hope that every Negro in the South would be killed. To assault or even murder a Negro became just good fun, sport, no more serious than killing a dog. One Tennessean casually remarked in the middle of a personal letter that the Negroes in his neighborhood were working fairly well but "they have to be shot sometimes." A Jackson, Mississippi, newspaper one day reported two murders, the first the killing of a white man by a freedman, the second the murder of a black man by a white man. In the first instance, the paper commented that it hoped that "no efforts will be spared to bring the black fiend to a certain and summary death." In the second case, the reporter simply noted that the provocation for the murder "must have been very great." Thus, southern racial ideology justified the most atrocious crimes and made blacks fair game for armed and angry whites.42

Southerners have traditionally argued, and many historians have agreed that lower class whites were more hostile to Negroes and therefore more likely to commit acts of violence against them than were the members of the old slaveholding class. The poor whites supposedly

42Mark Twain, Huckleberry Finn (New York, 1931), 306-307; Dollard, Caste and Class in a Southern Town, 60, 368-71; [George C. Benham,] A Year of Wreck: A True Story By a Victim (New York, 1880), 90-91; Trowbridge, Desolate States, 228-29, 499; Dennett, South As It Is, 194; Andrews, South Since the War, 28, 100, 219-20; Sen. Ex. Doc. 2, 39-1, 78; House Rep. 30, 39-1, 3-4; George B. Farrar to Miss Maggie Knighton, January 12, 1867, Josiah Knighton Papers, LSU; Tourgee, Bricks Without Straw, 269; Jackson Daily Mississippi Clarion and Standard, June 14, 1866.
resented the elevation of the blacks from slavery to freedom and feared that the Negroes would gain new privileges at their expense. Strong contemporary evidence implicates the poor whites in many of the outrages committed against the freedmen. Considered a part of the master race at least in pro-slavery writings, the lower class whites possessed an intense racial pride and sense of superiority over the blacks. However low his own economic status, or however great his social distance from the southern aristocracy, the poor white knew, in the words of Wilbur Cash, that: "come what might, he would always be a white man." Yet this attribution of a particular animus against the Negro to the common whites of the South is both a self-serving rationalization for racial oppression and an oversimplification of the complexity of southern life. Even among the old aristocracy, habit and prejudice often triumphed over humanitarian or paternalistic impulses in race relations. In many cases upper class whites condoned if they did not participate in acts of violence against the freedmen. From neither the pulpit, the press, nor the upper echelons of southern society came even the mildest condemnation of these outrages against the freedmen, much less effective action to stop the violence. One North Carolina newspaper editor warned of the danger of unleashing the aggressive feelings of the non-slaveholding classes against the freedmen and pledged the best efforts of the southern elite to protect the rights of both the common whites and
the Negroes. However, when push came to shove, he concluded that the southern leadership would stand by their own race: "In this matter, the South is a unit, and will remain so."43

With the growing racial tensions of the postwar South, a massive outbreak of violence seemed inevitable. It was only a matter of time before a small incident grew into a full-scale riot. Since the end of the war, Norfolk, Virginia, had received a large influx of blacks from the surrounding rural areas. A busy port and naval yard with a large number of saloons made the city disorderly under normal circumstances. In addition, union men described Norfolk as a hotbed of secession feeling where no loyal man was safe from abuse and assault. Periodic disturbances and fights between whites and blacks broke out during 1865. In April 1866 local freedmen planned a parade to celebrate congressional passage of the Civil Rights Act. The military and local authorities warned of a possible disturbance if such a procession took place. The local army commander, Major F. W. Stanhope, heard rumors that a group of whites in the city planned to attack the procession, and he

stationed his troops around Norfolk in preparation for any outbreak of violence. 44

The blacks held their parade Monday morning, April 16, despite rainy weather. Eyewitnesses estimated the size of the crowd at anywhere from two hundred to a thousand blacks. Although later testimony is contradictory on this point, it does appear that at least a few of the freedmen were armed. As the procession moved toward a speakers' stand, some whites hiding behind a wall threw bricks and bottles at the Negroes. When the blacks reached the stand, a policeman cursed the Negroes and allegedly shot a young black. General gunfire broke out, and some of the Negroes attacked white onlookers with pieces of wood from a nearby fence. The whites later testified that the blacks had shot first, but the black assault against the white crowd probably took place after the group of Negroes near the speakers' stand had already been fired upon. Witnesses identified one of the rioters as Robert Whitehurst, a young man who had previously quarreled with the Negroes. When Whitehurst came out of his house firing at the blacks, the mob charged him and chased him back inside. Whitehurst's mother urged her son to stop firing but, in a struggle for his gun,

44Dennett, South As It Is, 4-6; Major General Alfred H. Terry to Major General J. A. Rawlins, March 29, 1866, U. S. Grant to Terry, March 29, 1866, John H. Gilman to Andrew Johnson, March 31, 1866, Edwin M. Stanton Papers, LC; "Riot at Norfolk," House Ex. Doc. 72, 39-2, 3.
was shot dead herself. Later some blacks shot and killed Whitehurst.\textsuperscript{45}

That night roving bands of whites, including police and firemen, vowed vengeance on Whitehurst's murderers and almost started another disturbance. However, Major Stanhope's troops patrolled the streets and kept the peace. Altogether, three whites and two blacks were killed in the day's rioting. The civil authorities arrested some Negroes on flimsy charges, but the blacks were later acquitted. A military board set up to investigate the riot placed equal blame on both races and concluded that Norfolk should remain a military post for the immediate future. The whites attributed the disturbance to the incendiary teachings of radicals and the laxness of the military authorities in permitting the Negro procession.\textsuperscript{46}

Norfolk was symbolic of the strains tearing apart the old system of racial accommodation in the South. Such violent episodes demonstrated that reconstruction was not going to be simply the old order restored under a new name. Whites, of course, denied that their society was coming apart at the seams and accused northern radicals of greatly exaggerating the number of outrages in the South for


\textsuperscript{46}House Ex. Doc. 72, 39-2, 4-7, 9, 11, 64; Captain A. S. Flagg to General Orlando Brown, April 17, 1866, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 30); Richmond Daily Dispatch, April 20, 21, 1866.
political effect. Southern newspaper editors charged northern politicians with wishing for a deluge of blood in the South to clear the way for their own reconstruction proposals. With false rumors of southern cruelty to blacks circulating across the country, conservatives doubted that they could ever get a fair hearing in Congress. Southerners argued that most of the violence and murders taking place in the region were perpetuated by freedmen or federal soldiers. They also maintained that the North was hardly a land of peaceful tranquility; an Alabama editorialist, tongue in cheek, suggested that a federal bureau be created to investigate murders and outrages in the North. In light of the great economic, social and racial changes caused by the war, southerners contended that the number of crimes and outrages in the former Confederate states had been relatively small.  

These sentiments were probably sincere, but they were also self-serving and self-deceiving. The old fears of black insurrection which had haunted the slave regime

gained intensity after emancipation. Thousands of phantom Nat Turners stalked the South, producing a new crisis of fear. The result was the formation of quasi-military organizations, the commission of numberless outrages against the freedmen, and the justification of these crimes as being necessary to preserve an ancien régime that had surrendered at Appomattox. Violence penetrated to the heart of southern life despite the restraining influence of the Army and the Freedmen's Bureau. Once these small obstacles were removed, violence became the final step in an escalating resistance by southerners to any real changes in their political, social, and especially racial values.
Chapter IV
MEMPHIS: THE FIRST MODERN RACE RIOT

Expansion, romance, adventure, and violence. All these sum up the image of the Mississippi River in the American mind. The Father of Waters not only divided the United States between east and west but also served as the most important highway of commerce for the young American nation. The rough and tumble river men, often the flotsam and jetsam of American society, bound the sectional economies of the country together while carving out their own legend as frontier heroes. As cities and towns grew up along the river, a large floating population of gamblers, thieves, and prostitutes followed the flatboats, then the keelboats, and finally the steamboats down the river. Taverns and saloons lined the banks of the Mississippi, professional counterfeiters plagued local merchants with their phony money, and most prudent men carried a gun. The burgeoning river towns acquired unsavory reputations as centers of crime and violence, and Memphis, Tennessee, was typical of these river meccas.¹

Memphis from her very beginnings had been a hard drinking and harder fighting river town. By the eve of the Civil War she was a growing community whose whole life depended on the commerce of the Mississippi. Memphis suffered less damage than many southern cities during the war and in 1865 was well on the road to economic recovery. The infusion of northern capital and capitalists soon made Memphis one of the leading commercial centers of a new South. One northern visitor in the summer of 1865 found her docks humming with activity and the levee crammed with casks and cotton bales. Steamboats lined the waterfront, and there seemed to be no dearth of employment even for the rapidly increasing Negro population of the city.  

During the Civil War era, Memphis had been a hotbed first of secession and later of pro-Confederate sentiment and activity. By the summer of 1865 rebel soldiers were returning to their homes unrepentant and anxious to assert their former control of local affairs. Whatever economic benefits northern businessmen might bring to Memphis, the local citizens despised their very presence as symbolic of their defeat and degradation. Old rebels outspokenly condemned the Yankee invaders and affirmed their loyalty

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to the Confederate cause. One well-known citizen of the city stopped a stranger on the street and cursed him for having rejoiced in the fall of Atlanta to the federal armies. When this civic leader thrust a pistol into the surprised man's face, the stranger had to beat him off with a cane. Northern schoolteachers and preachers received constant threats against their lives. Much like the rest of the South, Memphis had not truly surrendered to the hated North.³

Memphis in many ways was a microcosm of the seething political conflicts in Tennessee. This bitterly divided state emerged from the national conflict with the flames of her internal civil war still blazing. Governor William G. "Parson" Brownlow, who had taken over the reins of state government on the election of Andrew Johnson as Vice President, was determined to seek revenge for the wartime suffering of himself and his fellow union men. The governor justified, if he did not incite, atrocities committed by loyal men against returning rebels and urged the legislature to enact proscriptive laws against the ex-Confederates. Two important acts passed in 1865 and 1866 disfranchised

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all those who had voluntarily aided the rebellion and required registrants to provide strong evidence of past loyalty and to take the "ironclad" oath. The effect of these laws in Memphis was to disfranchise much of the white population and leave the city under the control of Irish politicians of questionable qualifications and character. Local politicos ringingly attacked Brownlow and his fellow radicals for denying political power to the "natural leaders" of the community. Newspaper editors trumpeted that these franchise laws established an intolerable tyranny designed only to keep "small-fry demagogues" in power. These cries of anguish belied the fact that fraudulent franchise papers circulated freely in the city, allowing many excluded persons to vote as before.\(^4\)

If the battle between unionists and rebels had not been enough, the movement of large numbers of freedmen into Memphis after the war from the countryside added further to the city's problems. In some rural areas the migration of blacks into Memphis left farmers and planters without laborers. Negroes gathered near the federal military post, Fort Pickering in south Memphis, to see

what the future would bring. Like ex-slaves across the South, these blacks had received no preparation for freedom but saw leaving their old homes as an essential act to secure their new status. The census of 1860 listed 3,882 blacks in Memphis (17 per cent of the total population), but the census of 1870 found 15,741 blacks in the city (39 per cent of the total population). The influx of Negroes created serious social problems. Whites complained of the concentration of blacks in a large settlement of ramshackle houses near the fort that became a center of contagious disease, vice, and crime. Despite the fact that local Negro benevolent societies sought to care for the poor, these groups lacked the resources to deal with the large numbers of blacks daily moving into the city. As Negroes fled their former owners or refused to work for low wages under miserable conditions, some whites even kidnapped blacks in Memphis and carried them back to the plantations. By August of 1865, when the black population of the city had swelled to between 20,000 and 25,000 persons, whites began to fear a possible insurrection among the freedmen and became increasingly alarmed over the problems of overcrowding and crime.\footnote{Capers, Biography of a River Town, 163-64, 174-77; Memphis Morning Post, February 1, 1866; Memphis Daily Appeal, December 20, 1865; Skinner, After the Storm, II, 5-6; Trowbridge, Desolated States, 336; Chicago Tribune, June 6, September 28, 1865; Thomas B. Alexander, Political Reconstruction in Tennessee (Nashville, 1950), 50-51, 54-57.}
Most whites believed that the military and the Freedmen's Bureau supported the Negroes in idleness with full rations and discouraged them from working for their former owners. According to reports, lawless Negroes roamed the streets, robbed local businesses, and shot off their guns at all hours of the day and night. Local newspapers routinely recorded depredations committed by the blacks and called for more vigorous law enforcement. Whites felt that the Negroes had become drunk with freedom (if not with liquor) and had not yet learned the important difference between liberty and license. When two black men were discovered living with two white women in a shanty in south Memphis, whites knew that they were in the midst of a social revolution.\footnote{W. C. Dunlap to Andrew Johnson, March 8, 1866, Johnson Papers, LC; House Rep. 101, 39-1, 329; Memphis Argus, May 23, 1865; Memphis Daily Appeal, April 15, May 1, 1866; Daily Memphis Avalanche, April 17, 1866; Memphis Daily Commercial, February 27, April 18, 1866.}

Pessimists pointed to a growing crime rate in Memphis and in the state at large as the first sign of social anarchy. The city found itself plagued by ever increasing numbers of thieves, gamblers, and prostitutes; public drunkenness, robberies, and murders showed a steady increase. The presence of ruffians roaming about the river front forced the city council to pass a resolution levying heavy fines against those persons caught carrying slingshots and brass knuckles. The widespread practice
of carrying firearms was one of the strongest contributing
to the growth of violence in Memphis. Irate
citizens complained of being unable to sleep because of
the noisy firing of guns each night. Even juveniles went
about heavily armed, a practice that sometimes resulted in
tragedy. When a group of boys, none older than thirteen
and all from "good families," fell into a dispute, one boy
drew a pistol and shot two of his companions, killing one
of them. Such incidents controverted reports which
attributed the growing use of firearms and increasing
acts of violence entirely to the Negroes. By June 1865
army units patrolled the city each night, arresting armed
civilians and quelling disturbances. Yet the combination
of military protection and regular police patrols failed
to stem the tide of lawlessness caused by the explosive
mixture of an expanding population and racial conflict.  

The structure of Memphis society itself produced
serious political, social, and economic conflict. During
the flush times of the 1850's an elite group of planters,
professional men, and merchants formed a local aristocracy
that ruled over a lower working class consisting of Irish
and German immigrants and free Negroes. With the large

\[\text{Alexander, Reconstruction in Tennessee, 52-53; Holmes,}
\text{"Causes of Memphis Riot," 205-208; Memphis Argus, August 5,}
\text{1866; Memphis Daily Appeal, November 14, 1865; January 13,}
\text{February 7, 1866; Memphis Daily Post, April 28, 1866; Memphis}
\text{Morning Post, January 17, 28, February 9, 1866; Memphis Daily}
\text{Avalanche, January 13, 1866; Harry Willcox Pfanz, "Soldiering}
\text{in the South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877," (Unpublished}
\text{Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1958), 56-57.} \]
migration of freedmen into the city after the war, the Irish in particular found themselves in a tough scramble for available jobs. Fearing black competition, Irishmen formed labor organizations to drive all Negro draymen and hackmen out of the city. The result was an intense mutual hatred between the Irish and the blacks that pointed toward an inevitable clash of arms. The upper classes of the city viewed this conflict with indifference or disdain. As one witness later testified before the congressional committee set up to investigate the Memphis riot, "a great portion of the people were indifferent to the rioting . . . they did not care which whipped, whether the Irish killed off all the niggers, or the niggers killed off all the Irish." 8

Long before the Irish came into the political limelight, Memphis had acquired a well-deserved reputation as a city of flourishing political corruption. After the war the Irish, with the aid of the state franchise laws, dominated local politics and held the lion's share of county and municipal offices, including a majority on the city council. The tone of politics remained unchanged. The city's mayor, John Park, was frequently drunk in public and once challenged a critical newspaper editor to a duel for slandering his administration. During the Memphis riot itself, Major General George Stoneman reported that the

mayor was "too drunk to talk." The city recorder, John C. Creighton, was indicted for murdering a drunken man though it is not clear whether the case ever came to trial. With the Irish firmly ensconced in local government, the freedmen found it difficult if not impossible to obtain justice from either civil or judicial officers.9

The Irish also held most of the positions in the police and fire departments, occupying 180 of 186 posts on the police force and 40 of 46 posts in the fire department. The chief of police later testified that the mayor and the police committee made removals and appointments without his knowledge; he candidly admitted his inability to control his men, many of whom were neither sober nor discreet. If a policeman was dismissed from the force for misconduct, the police committee commonly reinstated him. The addition of 31 men in February 1866 strengthened the force but had no noticeable effect on either the competency or efficiency of the Memphis police. Even conservative papers filled their local news columns with reports of drunken police and their outlandish behavior. Shortly before Christmas in 1865 the Memphis Appeal disclosed that four policemen had recently been arrested for mistreating

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or killing prisoners in their custody. Yet the conserv­
vatives protested any indictments of policemen, especially
for brutality against Negroes. Indeed, testimony from all
sides shows that the predominantly Irish police possessed
a particular animus against blacks and went out of their
way to harrass them. Policemen, in arresting a black man
on the street, often beat and sometimes shot their prisoner
while carrying him off to jail. In other instances police
fired at drunken Negroes who fled from them or made even a
token resistance to arrest.10

The presence of federal troops and Freedmen's Bureau
agents wound local tensions tighter yet. Tax collection,
legal proceedings, and much day-to-day business was still
under the watchful supervision of the military authorities.
Although some Memphians praised the generally good conduct
of the Yankee troops, difficulties did arise. Drunken
soldiers clashed with ex-Confederates, policemen, and the
freedmen in frequent fisticuffs and gun battles. The
Freedmen's Bureau was almost universally unpopular among
the whites. Although the head of the Bureau in Memphis,
General Benjamin R. Runkle, discouraged vagrancy and forced
idle freedmen to seek employment, the Bureau agents and
school teachers met with stiff local opposition because

10 House Rep. 101, 39-1, 85, 156-58, 164, 326-27,
366-71; Memphis Daily Argus, October 15, February 23, 1866;
Memphis Ledger, n.d., in Memphis Daily Post, April 4, 1866;
Memphis Daily Appeal, December 15, 1865; Memphis Daily
Avalanche, February 1, April 19, 1866; Memphis Daily
Commercial, January 31, April 26, 1866.
of their supposedly incendiary influence on the Negroes. Just as in much of the South, some whites in Memphis feared an armed uprising of the blacks in December of 1865. In point of fact, Runkle lacked the troops to deal with the complaints he received from both races though soldiers carefully guarded the city during the insurrection panic.11

Memphis might have escaped the contagion of racial violence had it not been for the final explosive element in the situation: the presence of Negro troops. Since 1863 Memphis had served as a collection depot for all drafted blacks in the western theater of the war. By the spring of 1866 there were still some 4,000 black troops in the city. These soldiers were generally under poorer discipline than the white troops. The soldiers spent their off duty hours in the Negro settlement near Fort Pickering where they could buy whiskey at almost any grocery store and were frequently intoxicated on the streets. Drunken soldiers pushed whites off sidewalks, went howling through the streets late at night, and dangerously discharged their weapons at all hours.

Rows frequently occurred in which the black soldiers fought among themselves or attacked passing freedmen near local rum holes. Their white officers conceded, and the large volume of court martial orders testifies to the fact that these troops were more often in trouble than not. Of course, whites exaggerated any untoward actions of these blacks in uniform and falsely pinned on them any unsolved crimes in the city.12

The most common complaint against the black troops was that they, like their race as a whole, were natural thieves. Memphis newspapers contain many accounts of armed robberies by the Negro soldiers, their favorite target being the groceries near the fort. Black troops entered these establishments in force, took whatever food or whiskey they wanted, brandished their pistols at the owners and customers, and threatened to start shooting if anyone tried to stop them. They gunned down proprietors who resisted them and sometimes fired their guns off indiscriminately in the streets. In one case Negro soldiers fell into a dispute with a grocer and set

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his store on fire. Newspaper reports magnified the seriousness of these affrays, and later courts martial occasionally exonerated many of the black soldiers. There is, however, no doubt that the large number of robberies allegedly committed by the Negro troops further alarmed already panicky whites.\footnote{Memphis Daily Appeal, December 1, 17, 1865, February 4, 1866; Memphis Ledger, n.d. in Little Rock Arkansas State Gazette, April 28, 1866; Memphis Daily Commercial, December 17, 19, 20, 1865, February 24, 1866; Memphis Daily Avalanche, February 23, 1866; Memphis Daily Argus, February 23, 1866; Memphis Daily Post, April 21, 1866; House Rep. 101, 39-1, 144-48; SO 84, April 30, 1866, DT, RG 393, NA.}

Whites also accused the black soldiers of stabbing and shooting civilians on the streets and brutally mistreating persons whom they had arrested. In January 1866 black troops stopped two whites and hauled them before the local Freedmen's Bureau court on theft charges. The two Negro soldiers guarding the prisoners shot one of them trying to escape and bayoneted him to death where he had fallen. One soldier called the gathering crowd "sons of bitches" and challenged them to defy him.\footnote{Memphis Daily Appeal, December 14, 1865, March 6, 1866; Memphis Daily Avalanche, January 7, 14, February 9, 1866; Memphis Daily Commercial, January 14, 1866.}

More frequent brawls took place between the Negro troops and the Irish police. A deadly animosity between these two groups grew as they confronted each other daily on the streets of Memphis. The black soldiers received orders to arrest policemen guilty of flagrant brutality;
this practice further aroused the heated passions of the police. Policemen in turn treated freedmen, and especially Negro soldiers, roughly, often beating and abusing them as they carried them off to jail. Policemen attempting to arrest black soldiers or civilians sometimes met stiff resistance from the Negro troops. The black soldiers rescued Negro prisoners and commonly fired at the arresting officers. When police tried to apprehend blacks during their forays into local shops, they frequently found themselves overpowered by black soldiers. In February 1866 officer William Mower, while on foot patrol, met a group of Negro soldiers; one of the blacks accused Mower of following them. Mower denied it, but one of the black soldiers called him a "damned liar," pulled out a gun and mortally wounded the policeman. Such incidents produced rumors that the black troops were planning to murder policemen and returned rebel soldiers in retribution for the infamous Fort Pillow massacre. These skirmishes also increased white fears of a general black uprising over the Christmas holidays.\(^{15}\)

Memphis newspaper editors reflected the general white reaction to the Negro troops and their reported outrages in the city. In ringing editorials, these leaders of public opinion denounced the black soldiers for their pernicious influence on the freedmen, their disorderly conduct, and their deliberate insults to white citizens. The editor of the rabidly pro-Confederate Memphis Avalanche warned that the black troops were only the beginning of radical oppression in the South: "We are to have the black flesh of the negro crammed down our throats; we are to have the black soldier, the black magistrate, the black man's government, and if we cannot stomach it all, we are to be consigned to Hell, and exist within the black drapery of eternal damnation."  

The stage was set. All that was now required was a precipitating incident, a spark, that would set off a general conflagration. On the evening of April 30, 1866, four policemen met a group of Negroes on a street and pushed them off the sidewalk; one black stumbled, and a policeman fell over him. Another policeman then struck one of the Negroes over the head with a pistol and in turn


16 Memphis Commercial, n.d., in Little Rock Arkansas State Gazette, September 30, 1865; Memphis Argus, September 20, 1865; Memphis Daily Commercial, January 24, 1866; Memphis Daily Appeal, April 24, 1866; Memphis Daily Avalanche, January 4, 23, 1866.
received a blow on the head from a stick wielded by one of the other blacks. The two groups separated with threats from both sides to resume the battle at another place and time. To further compound the problem, the last regiment of the black troops in Memphis, the Third United States Colored Heavy Artillery, had been mustered out of service the day before, and, on the night of this initial disturbance, groups of drunken black soldiers roamed the streets firing off their pistols.17

The following day (May 1), approximately one hundred discharged soldiers and other Negroes went on another drinking spree in south Memphis. By the middle of the afternoon this assemblage of blacks had gathered along South Street shouting and firing their guns into the air. About this time two teams of horses, one driven by a white man and the other by a Negro, collided. Angry words were exchanged, and the drivers came to blows. Some nearby policemen rushed to the scene only to face a menacing crowd of black soldiers and freedmen who started shooting at their Irish nemeses. One policeman died in a brief exchange of gunfire, and his comrades became incensed and quickly ordered up reinforcements. They managed to arrest

two black soldiers in the crowd and began carrying them away, followed by blacks making threatening gestures and discharging weapons into the air. As they approached a bridge on Main Street, the police shot into the crowd, and the Negroes returned the fire. Further shooting by the police drove the mob back, but the police themselves were eventually forced to retreat again when they ran out of ammunition.18

Hearing rumors of trouble in south Memphis and believing their families to be in danger, a few black soldiers left Fort Pickering that evening to come to the aid of their beleaguered comrades in arms. In turn, the policemen chased, shot, and killed any black soldiers that they discovered on the streets. Joined by angry whites, the police swore to "kill the God damned nigger soldiers who were fighting here against their rights--the black sons of bitches," and pursued the black troops back to barracks in the fort. The police soon stopped hunting for blacks in uniform and began to attack any freedmen they saw. With no longer even a semblence of organization or discipline, the police singly and in groups prowled the

streets beating and shooting Negroes. One policeman urged the mob to kill all "god damned niggers," large and small alike. Those blacks taken prisoner by the police were beaten on the way to the station house. Other whites soon joined the police in entering the Negro shanties in search of new victims. All the blacks could do was run to get out of the way. The furious whites ransacked the blacks' humble dwellings and often shot the occupants. Ignoring professions of innocence and pleas for mercy, the mob continued to assault helpless blacks well into the night. ¹⁹

The civil officials not only did little to stop the mob but in fact encouraged them in their bloody deeds. The mayor as usual was too drunk to take charge of the situation. City Recorder John C. Creighton urged the mob to kill every black they could find from the cradle on up. County Sheriff P. M. Winters tried unsuccessfully to break up the crowd with a posse, and he joined the mayor in an urgent pleas to General Stoneman to send troops to the scene of the rioting. There is some question as to whether the sheriff sought to disperse or incite the mob, but small

detachments of troops restored order after the several hours of mad slaughter.20

When dawn came on May 2, fighting broke out near Fort Pickering. Large numbers of whites (there are no available estimates of the size of this mob) gathered early in the morning to resume the fight. Both blacks and whites blamed each other for firing the first shot, and witnesses disagree on whether the black soldiers fired at whites from inside the fort. Only a few black soldiers briefly left the fort to fire on the whites. The black troops by this time were naturally in a blind rage, and their white officers only with great difficulty prevented them from going out in force to attack a crowd of whites nearby. When black soldiers rushed the building where the arms were stored, white troops stopped them by firing over their heads. At nine in the morning, whites sounded an alarm, and a general massacre of blacks began anew with citizens running to their homes for their guns to join the fray. Since most businesses wisely closed for the day, rioters had to break into gun shops for weapons and ammunition. The mob quickly became intoxicated and a number of Irish policemen swore to kill off all the Negroes and began assaulting any blacks they could find. Hearing rumors of fighting in the city, more whites poured into

20Ibid., 50, 80, 122, 148-49, 227, 256, 355-56, 358-59; Stoneman to Grant, May 12, 1866, House Ex. Doc. 122, 39-1, 1; Memphis Daily Post, May 2, 1866.
Memphis by train from the nearby countryside to join the fighting.21

Sheriff Winters formed a posse to quell the rioting and separate the whites and blacks, but the posse arrived after the situation had gotten out of control. General Stoneman at first refused to use troops but finally ordered the posse dispersed and took personal command of the city. Troops with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets marched through the streets and dispersed the crowd by one o’clock in the afternoon.22

That evening a mob of police and citizens moved into the Negro quarter near the fort. They broke into homes, robbed the terrified freedmen, and shot many of them. In cruel mockery of white racial ideology, some of these men broke down the doors of the Negro huts, brandished their guns inside, and brutally raped several Negro women. The mob also set fire to Negro homes, schools, and churches. Drunken citizens and police howled like maniacs around the


burning buildings and shot at Negroes trying to escape the flames; a few blacks burned to death in their own homes. Any whites who tried to protect the Negroes or reason with the rioters found themselves ignored or overpowered.23

Sporadic firing and burning took place for the next two days, but the worst of the rioting was over. The grim toll was reflected in the cold statistics: 46 blacks and 2 whites killed, 70-80 persons wounded, 5 black women raped, 4 black churches and 12 black schools burned, 91 black houses and cabins burned, and over $130,000 in property damage. Whites threatened the "nigger teachers" with dire consequences if they did not leave Memphis, and many reluctantly decided to abandon their work. As the smoldering ruins cooled, thoughtful men asked how and why.24

For one thing, the role of the military during the riot was difficult to explain. General Stoneman on the first day of fighting (May 1) ordered his troops to be ready to assist the civil authorities in quelling the


disturbances. The mayor and others asked for troops to join an armed patrol of citizens, but Stoneman instead sent out small detachments, both to break up the mob and keep the enraged black soldiers within the walls of Fort Pickering. When the violence subsided on May 3, Stoneman finally informed the sheriff, the mayor, and the city council that a posse could not be formed and ordered all armed bodies to disband. After quieting the disturbances and establishing military control in the city, Stoneman finally warned Mayor Park that if the civil authorities could not maintain the peace in Memphis, the military would. But Stoneman had only 150 men to use against the rioters, and he had seemed in no hurry to stop the fighting. Freedmen's Bureau agents told desperate Negroes that they simply did not have enough troops to protect them. Stoneman deserves some censure for dilatoriness during the crisis, but, given the long history of outbreaks in the city, the general had no reason to believe that the clashes on April 30 or even the early fighting on May 1 would turn into a full scale race riot.25

25 House Rep. 101, 39-1, 275; Stoneman to Mayor John Park, May 5, 1866, Park to Stoneman, May 1, 1866, Stoneman to CO, Detachment, U.S. 16th Infantry, May 1, 1866, T. M. Winters to Captain A. W. Allyn, May 2, 1866, AAG William L. Porter to Allyn, May 2, 1866, Porter to Colonel J. C. Kappner, May 2, 1866, Porter to Allyn, May 3, 1866 (2 telegrams), ibid., 4, 50, 360-61; Stoneman to Major General George H. Thomas, May 3, 1866, TS, DT, July 1865–June 1866, RG 393, NA; Porter to Sheriff, Shelby County, May 3, 1866, LS, DT, March 1864–June 1866, ibid.; J. H. McMahon, et al., to Stoneman, LR, DT, 1863–1867, ibid.; Stoneman to Grant, May 12, 1866, House Ex. Doc. 122, 39-1, 2-3; Witt Morgan to
A common thread runs through all the reports and investigations of this riot: the inflammatory stories and editorials in the Memphis press had stirred up racial antagonism to a fever heat. Freedmen's Bureau agents charged the newspapers with instilling a belief in the community that northerners, Negroes, and schoolteachers could be murdered with impunity. The outbreak of rebellious sentiments in the daily papers stirred up turbulent elements in the city to assail these human symbols of defeat and Yankee rule. Local editors in turn accused the northerners, and particularly the Freedmen's Bureau men of inflaming the passions of the freedmen and encouraging the black soldiers in their reign of terror. In a pattern that would become common in the Reconstruction period, the perpetrators of violence placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of the victims and their friends.26

Yet even the conservative press denounced the rioters' more senseless acts: the burning of the Negro schools and


26 House Rep. 101, 39-1, 84; Skinner, After the Storm, II, 4-5; Clinton B. Fisk to O. O. Howard, May 3, 1866, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, roll 28); Report of Johnson and Gilbraith on Memphis Riot, May, n.d., 1866, ibid., (roll 33); Report of Runkle on Memphis Riot, May 28, 1866, BRFAL, Tennessee, RG 105, NA; Memphis Daily Post, May 8, 1866; Stoneman to Major General George H. Thomas, May 3, 1866, LS, DT, March 1864-June 1966, RG 393, NA; Daily Memphis Avalanche, June 7, 1866; Fisk to Elihu B. Washburne, June 21, 1866, Washburne Papers, LC.
churches and the assaults on innocent freedmen. Conservatives maintained that they had only kindly feelings for the Negroes, and held the lower classes and the Irish responsible for the rioting. There is, however, evidence to indicate that many of the social leaders of Memphis while not participating in the outrages themselves, encouraged and approved the actions of the police and the white mob.  

The real cause of the riot, according to Memphis whites, was the presence of the black troops in the city. The outrages committed by these soldiers had aroused the passions of the more irresponsible members of the community. The irrepressible conflict between the races had broken out once again with the whites determined never to be ruled by Negroes. Southerners were ready to crush out any "insurrectionary" violence by blacks and would defend white civilization at all hazards and to the last extremity.

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28Memphis Daily Commercial, May 6, 1866; Memphis Daily Post, May 8, 1866; Memphis Daily Appeal, May 3, 4, 1866, Memphis Daily Argus, May 2, 1866; Memphis Daily Avalanche, May 5, 10, 1866. The only "radical" newspaper in Memphis, the Post, asserted that the blacks had been the innocent victims of a small group of lawless whites. Memphis Daily Post, May 4, 5, 1866.
Mayor Park assured General Stoneman after the riot that no guilty parties would escape punishment. As for the Negroes, Park told the general that local whites were best able to deal with them because they lacked any "morbid, sickly sentimentalism" about the race and because Memphis was essentially a "law-abiding and Christian community." Unfortunately, these words bespoke only empty promises. Even though the names of many of the rioters were well known in the city, the civil authorities made no effort at all to arrest them. The military did not act immediately either, referring the question of military trials for the guilty parties to Washington. In the interim, many of the rioters fled the city for parts unknown.

Attorney General James Speed informed President Johnson that the government had no jurisdiction to prosecute these individuals by military tribunal since the civil courts in Tennessee were open. Further talk of arresting certain leaders of the disturbances came to naught, and loyalists in Memphis warned that the failure to prosecute left union men and blacks at the mercy of the rebels.29

29Park to Stoneman, May 8, 1866, House Rep. 101, 39-1, 54-56; ibid., 74-77; Major T. W. Gilbraith to O. C. Howard, May 17, 18, 1866, LR, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M752, rolls 27 and 32); Stoneman to Elihu B. Washburne, June 2, 1866, Washburne Papers, LC; Major General George H. Thomas to AG, Washington, June 15, 1866, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1861-1870, RG 94, NA (M619, roll 520); Attorney General James Speed to Andrew Johnson, July 13, 1866, ibid.; Thomas to Grant, August 15, 1866, Edwin M. Stanton Papers, LC; Memphis Daily Post, January 23, May 1, 1867.
Investigations of the riot by the Army, the Freedmen's Bureau, and a committee of the House of Representatives produced invaluable evidence and testimony but little new or startling information. Congressman Elihu Washburne of Illinois, chairman of the House committee, attributed the riot to Confederate influences but described local union men as "cowardly and pusillanimous." The majority of the committee placed the blame for the troubles on rebel officeholders and the Irish police. Memphis conservatives reacted to this report by denouncing the committee as a radical propaganda agency set up to manufacture outrage stories out of whole cloth for the fall 1866 election campaign.  

The Memphis riot reflected the political, economic, social, and especially racial problems which plagued the Reconstruction South. Yet the Memphis riot was also something new under the sun: it was the first modern race riot in the United States. The main features of this disturbance became characteristic of the major race riots of the twentieth century. The Negro shantytown near Fort Pickering could well serve as a prototype for the larger black enclaves of American cities, that have nurtured racial

30 Jack D. L. Holmes, "The Effects of the Memphis Race Riot of 1866," West Tennessee Historical Society Papers (1958), 58-64; Elihu B. Washburne to Thaddeus Stevens, May 24, 1866, Stevens Papers, LC; Memphis Daily Argus, August 1, 1866; Memphis Daily Argus, August 1, 1866; Memphis Daily Commercial, May 22, 1866; Memphis Daily Avalanche, May 29, August 1, 7, 1866.
tension in our own time. In addition to the usual social and economic problems accompanying the movement of a large number of people into an urban environment, race relations themselves in Memphis and across the South were in a period of transition. The status of the Negro as a free person in southern society was uncertain. Though generally working at cross purposes, both races were grappling for solutions to the problems of a changing structure of racial accommodation. Such a time of uncertainty naturally led to conflict that in turn produced violence. Indeed students of twentieth century racial violence have found that serious rioting usually follows a sudden or massive change in the normal pattern of race relations. It also makes little difference whether these are really significant changes or they are merely perceived as being significant by one race or the other. Also, as in several modern racial outbreaks, the civil authorities were ill-equipped to handle the growing racial hostilities, and the police force became an active participant in the riot. The Memphis press both before and after the riot printed stories that clearly incited racial warfare; similar examples of the influences of the press could be cited in the twentieth century, particularly in the riots that took place shortly after the First World War.\footnote{The characteristics of modern race violence in the United States are most clearly described in Arthur I. Waskow, \textit{From Race Riot to Sit-In: 1919 and 1960's} (Garden City, New York, 1966), Elliott Rudwick, \textit{Race Riot at}
was more than just another tragic chapter in the history of Reconstruction racial violence. It not only reflected the conditions and attitudes of the Reconstruction period but also portended the long range results of America's failure to resolve her racial dilemma in a humane and peaceful fashion.

For our immediate purpose, the Memphis riot did not establish a clear pattern of Reconstruction racial violence, but it does raise important questions about the significance of violence in the Reconstruction era. Despite the modern features that set this riot apart from other Reconstruction outbreaks, the Memphis riot shares one striking characteristic with later episodes: the whites easily drove the blacks from the field of combat. In no significant incident of Reconstruction violence were the blacks able successfully to defeat whites or even resist white aggression. The Memphis incident pointed up several reasons for this result. Despite some swaggering defiance and what whites termed impudent behavior, Memphis blacks in the spring of 1866 were ill-equipped to fight off determined white rioters. By the eve of the fighting the last black regiment of United States troops had been mustered out of service, and local blacks no longer possessed either the weapons or

East St. Louis, July 2, 1917 (Carbondale, Illinois, 1964), and William M. Tuttle, Jr., Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919 (New York, 1970). Much additional useful material may be found in state and federal reports on these disturbances.
the organization to resist well armed white police and citizens. The actions of the white troops in Fort Pickering did more to restrain the recently discharged black soldiers than to deter the white mob. As the whites rampaged through the blacks' quarters, a few groups of former black soldiers forcibly prevented the whites from entering their homes, but most freedmen were unarmed and completely defenseless.

Another important factor in the outcome of many of these affrays was the lingering effects of slavery on the blacks and their short experience as freedmen. The tendency in recent historiography has been to romanticize the newly freed blacks and to portray them as unlettered Solomons who understood far better than anyone else the problems and prospects of the postwar period. Yet as W. E. B. DuBois so clearly pointed out in his passionate treatment of Reconstruction: 32

There was no one kind of Negro who was freed from slavery. The freedmen were not an undifferentiated group; there were those among them who were cowed and altogether bitter. There were the cowed who were humble; there were those openly bitter and defiant, but whipped into submission, or ready to run away. There were the debauched and the furtive, petty thieves and licentious scoundrels. There were the few who could read and write, and some even educated beyond that. There were the children and grandchildren of white masters; there were the house servants, trained in manners, and in servile respect for the upper classes. There were the ambitious, who sought by means of slavery to gain favor or even freedom; there were the

artisans, who had a certain modicum of freedom in their work, were often hired out, and worked practically as free laborers. The impact of legal freedom upon these various classes differed in all sorts of ways.

One should not, therefore, treat the freedmen, as an undifferentiated mass of humanity but rather as human beings with varying physical, intellectual, and moral capacities just recently freed from an oppressive social and economic environment. Given the overwhelming power of the whites and the brief experience of most blacks with freedom, it is not surprising that most of the postwar racial outbreaks should have had such one-sided results. Violence became a powerful instrument in the hands of whites hellbent on regaining their accustomed control over their black population. The interposition of federal power might stay the hand of white aggression for a time, but when the national interest and commitment to southern reconstruction waned, neither the blacks nor their white allies in the South could hold back the tide of intimidation and violence that eventually swept the white Democracy back into power.
Chapter V

NEW ORLEANS AND THE FEAR OF AFRICANIZATION

Abraham Lincoln is the most enigmatic individual of the Civil War era. Few of his contemporaries were able to penetrate to the core of this complex man, and the "real Lincoln" has eluded historians ever since. His assassination further compounded the mystery and has led to endless, fascinating, but in the end futile speculation about the probable course of his second term as President. The most important of these "if Lincoln had lived" questions concerns the problem of reconstruction: would Lincoln have steered a wise and moderate course through the shoals of partisan politics and have avoided the breakers that overwhelmed Andrew Johnson? Any attempt to solve this puzzle must begin with Lincoln's wartime reconstruction policies, the famous "ten percent" plan, and its trials and errors in a few southern states. Of course, historians have correctly maintained that Lincoln's proposals for the post-war period were far from complete, and his statements and policies give only hints of future plans; this very tentativeness was the most notable feature of Lincoln's "policy." Lincoln approached the problem of reconstruction much like Franklin Roosevelt approached the problem of the great
Lincoln was ready to try various expedients to reunite the country; even his proclamation on reconstruction, issued after his pocket veto of the Wade-Davis bill, showed both uncertainty and flexibility on future reconstruction policy.\(^1\) During the war Lincoln worked toward an early restoration of those states or parts of states that came under control of the federal armies; the real testing ground for his ideas came in the state of Louisiana. Wanting to accomplish substantial reconstruction before more radical Republicans could challenge his program in Congress, Lincoln hoped that occupied Louisiana would become "a tangible nucleus which the remainder of the state may rally around as fast as it can, and which I can at once recognize and sustain as the true State government."\(^2\)

The situation in Louisiana, however, was unamenable to quick or simple solutions, and the labyrinthine politics of this most un-American of all the states guaranteed that

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\(^1\)Proclamation, July 8, 1864, James D. Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897 (10 Vols., Washington, 1897), VI, 222-23.


Although I have tried to trace the knotty story of the beginnings of reconstruction in Louisiana and the background of the New Orleans riot through the primary sources, I am much indebted to the careful and judicious treatment of the state's politics in Joe Gray Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, 1863-1877 (Baton Rouge, 1974), passim. See also Herman Belz, Reconstructing the Union: Theory and Policy During the Civil War (Ithaca, New York, 1969), passim.
the course of restoration would be far from smooth. First of all, reconstruction in Louisiana would of necessity take place under the watchful eye and guiding hand of the military. General Nathaniel P. Banks, the skillful politician who had succeeded Ben Butler in the Louisiana command, worked closely with Lincoln to carry out the presidential requirements for restoration, but unfortunately was preoccupied with the planning and execution of military operations, such as the disastrous Red River campaign. Moreover, union men in Louisiana complained about Banks’ administration of Lincoln’s policies, and no one was particularly satisfied with the President’s slowly unfolding plans. To further complicate the situation, the union men themselves were divided between a group of conservative planters and a more radical "Free State" faction, the latter of which split over the question of black rights into moderate and radical wings. When elections were finally held in 1864, Free State leader Michael Hahn was elected governor and a new constitution for the state was drafted and ratified. General Banks optimistically informed Lincoln: "the work of reconstruction in this State is all that you can desire. The clamor against it will disappear." The President soon learned differently. Unionists seemed more interested in scrambling for federal appointments than in restoring Louisiana to the Union, and Lincoln even angrily
accused the military of seeking to sabotage this experiment in civil government in occupied territory.  

Although Congress refused to admit Louisiana back into the Union, the reconstruction process proceeded apace. In March 1865 the legislature elevated Hahn to the position of United States senator, and the lieutenant governor, James Madison Wells, thereby became the new governor. Wells had been a wealthy planter in Rapides Parish before the war, a Whig in politics, and a unionist during the secession crisis. As a loyal man whose views were largely unknown during the war, Wells managed to remain popular with all factions of the fragile union coalition in the state, and received the nomination for lieutenant governor from both the radical and moderate contingents in 1864. When Wells assumed the governorship, no one in Louisiana or Washington could be sure whether he was a conservative, a moderate, or a radical.  

In politics Wells was above all else a realist (his enemies would have said opportunist). He knew that he could

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not build a political power base on the slender reed of
the small, faction-ridden, and constantly bickering band
of Louisiana union men. He therefore turned to the
ex-Confederates to broaden his constituency. Wells
prudently appointed conservative union men as well as
ex-Confederates to the offices at his disposal. For
example, he chose the conservative Hugh Kennedy as mayor of
New Orleans and after a bitter struggle removed the radical
A. P. Dostie as state auditor. In short, Wells steered a
course carefully designed to build up strength for his
own re-election.\(^5\)

Both the moderate and radical factions of the old
Free State coalition expressed outrage at the governor's
actions. A leading New Orleans moderate, R. King Cutler,
described Wells as a "traitor to the union cause, and the
Union people of Louisiana." Loyalists complained to
President Johnson that the governor was removing loyal
men from office and appointing dyed-in-the-wool rebels
to replace them. Unionists ignored the political pragmatism
of Wells' conciliatory course and warned their political
allies in the North of the imminent danger of returning
Confederate power in Louisiana. As conservatives began to

\(^5\)Ibid., 1024-47; Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed,
58-62; James Madison Wells to Abraham Lincoln, March 6,
16, 1865, Lincoln Papers, LC; Wells to General S. A.
Hurlbut, March 17, 1865, Wells to Andrew Johnson, April 28,
May 5, 1865, A. P. Dostie to Wells, April 21, 1865, Andrew
Johnson Papers, LC; Emily Hazen Reed, Life of A. P. Dostie;
or, The Conflict in New Orleans (New York, 1868), passim.
agitato for the removal of any officeholder with even a tinge of radicalism, union men saw their political hopes collapsing around them. After a tour of Louisiana, Pennsylvania radical John Covode reported that the planters of the state were plotting to restore slavery and repudiate the national debt.6

The 1865 state elections vindicated the political sagacity of Wells' policy. Receiving the nominations of both conservative Republicans and a large portion of the Democrats, Wells handily won re-election while the Democrats gained control of the legislature. Both the Democrats and conservative Republicans adopted platforms opposing Negro suffrage, and the Democrats who supported Wells pointedly spelled out their conviction that Louisiana must always have a white man's government. They asserted that Negroes

6R. King Cutler to Carl Schurz, September 5, 1865, Michael Hahn to Schurz, September 6, 1865, Andrew Johnson Papers, LC; Robert M. Bennie to Schurz, September 3, 1865, Carl Schurz Papers, LC; Cutler to Lyman Trumbull, August 29, 1865, Trumbull Papers, LC; George S. Denison to Hugh McCulloch, May 6, 1865, James A. Padgett, ed., "Some Letters of George Stanton Denison, 1854-1866: Observations of a Yankee on Conditions in Louisiana and Texas," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXIII (October, 1940), 1221-23; J. T. Trowbridge, A Picture of the Desolated States; and the Work of Restoration, 1865-1868 (Hartford, Connecticut, 1868), 403, 406-408; William A. Russ, Jr., "Disfranchisement in Louisiana (1862-70)," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XVIII (July, 1935), 571; Fred Harvey Harrington, Fighting Politician: Major General N. P. Banks (Philadelphia, 1948), 168; John Covode to Benjamin F. Wade, July 11, 1865, Wade Papers, LC.
could not become citizens or, under any circumstances, assume a position of equality with the white race.\(^7\)

With the Democrats and ex-Confederates firmly ensconced in power, union men felt as persecuted and helpless as in the darkest days of the rebellion. Henry Clay Warmoth, a young Illinois carpetbagger, lamented the social ostracism of union men and the suddenly cool treatment he received from previously friendly southern belles. Cursed and reviled on the streets, union men cried out to their northern allies that the rebels were plotting to drive them from the state, and many packed their bags and left for more hospitable climes. This sense of persecution was particularly strong in New Orleans where union men saw the returning power of the Confederates in the city government and read the lengthy diatribes against them in the rebel-dominated newspapers.\(^8\)

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Union men claimed that the United States Army was the only barrier standing between them and oblivion. If the military was withdrawn from the state, the unionists predicted a general war of extermination by the rebels against loyal men. The Army's decision to concentrate the troops in New Orleans gave unionists little protection from rebel vengeance in the rural parishes. Although a few rash loyalists talked of organizing a "home guard" to protect themselves and, if necessary, fight another war with the rebels, more realistic unionists recognized their nearly total dependence on military protection. The military authorities in Louisiana did their best to protect the friends of the government but one observer forecast a new "Kansas war" once the troops left the state.  

The always inflammatory race question also helped keep alive smoldering wartime animosities. Native radicals, led by the black publishers of the New Orleans Tribune, accused the conservative planters of conspiring to restore slavery in the state.  

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9Whitelaw Reid, After the War: A Tour of the Southern States, 1865-1866. ed. by C. Vann Woodward (New York, 1965), 407-13; A. P. Field to Lyman Trumbull, May 19, 1866, Trumbull Papers, LC; Thomas J. Durant to Benjamin F. Butler, October 2, 1865, Marshall, ed., Correspondence of Butler, V, 668; New Orleans Tribune, June 7, 22, July 30, August 12, September 9, 22, 1865, January 5, April 18, 1866; Philip H. Sheridan to Andrew Johnson, November 26, 1865, Sheridan Papers, LC; Entries for January 30, February 2, 1866, Cyrus B. Comstock Diary, LC; Comstock to John A. Rawlins, February 3, 1866, Andrew Johnson Papers, LC.  

10New Orleans Tribune, May 12, 16, June 14, 15, 16, July 16, 1865.
somewhat overblown, they did contain a strong kernel of truth. The New Orleans Times published a nostalgic editorial that lovingly described the halcyon days of the old regime and conjured up images of stately plantations, verdant foliage, and obsequious slaves. Like other southerners, many Louisianians questioned the practicality of free black labor and feared the ex-slaves would be misled by evil advisers to surrender to their natural propensities for idleness, whiskey, and crime. One editor argued that it would be easier to darken the skins and flatten the noses of the whites than to "Americanize" the African race. On the other hand, a satirical wag facetiously suggested that a "bureau" be established to straighten the kinky hair of every freedman throughout his life. In a more serious vein, conservatives told the blacks that they would always be humble toilers in complete dependence upon white decisions about their future in the state. Any proposal for Negro suffrage was, according to these commentators, the beginning of a conspiracy to "Africanize" the South, elect a black President of the United States, and have majorities of black men and white women sitting in Congress.¹¹

This general hostility to black freedom and black rights manifested itself in persecution and outrages against the Negroes. The New Orleans Tribune reported that in

¹¹New Orleans Times, October 10, 1865, January 5, February 5, 15, 24, March 26, 1866; New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 5, 1866; New Orleans Daily Crescent, February 9, July 11, 1866.
St. Mary's parish "corpses are found floating on the bayous, or suspended from trees along the roads." Planters continued to whip their laborers and held some in virtual slavery. Local authorities seldom investigated crimes against black people and denied accounts of disorder in their communities. The only remedy, according to some radicals, was to arm the Negroes against white aggressors or to send black troops into the more lawless parishes. Whites, on the other hand, interpreted any resistance to oppression or outrage as a sure indication of an impending Negro insurrection. Local officials arrested black Christmas revelers but left drunken whites alone. The conservatives naturally denied the prevalence of outrages in the state and denounced most such tales as vile falsehoods gotten up for political consumption in the North.  

The growing racial tensions in Louisiana reached their peak in New Orleans with much of the problem caused by the racial attitudes of local white officials. In early 1866 the legislature passed a bill over the veto of Governor Wells providing for new elections in New Orleans. After additional prodding from President Johnson, the governor ordered these elections that resulted in the selection of many ex-Confederates to municipal offices and

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the election of John T. Monroe as mayor. Monroe, who had held the same office before Butler captured New Orleans, had never received a pardon; General Edward R. S. Canby, then in command in Louisiana, denied his right to take office. After a brief effort by incumbent Mayor Kennedy to stay in office and a vigorous protest by Monroe, Johnson pardoned Monroe so that he could take up his new duties as mayor. Union men interpreted this election of a "Confederate" mayor as just another sign of renewed rebellion in Louisiana. The organization of secret groups of armed ex-Confederates following Monroe's victory, created even more unease among the embattled loyalists of New Orleans.13

One of Mayor Monroe's chief tasks was to reorganize and reform the New Orleans police department. He expanded the force to 550 men and appointed a new police chief, Thomas E. Adams. Monroe, however, failed in his attempts to require the men on the force to wear uniforms and to root out corruption in the department. The police board accused Adams of ignoring the dangerous practice of citizens going

about the streets armed and suspended the chief, though Monroe later reinstated him. Despite all the shuffling of personnel and heated controversy, New Orleans remained a violent city, and the hopes for an efficient and nonpartisan police force proved to be ephemeral. As one newspaper editor wisely noted, it was doubtful that many good policemen could be hired at the starting salary of eighty dollars per month. Furthermore, union men charged that the mayor and the police board dismissed loyal men from the force and filled the department with Confederate veterans, an accusation that was substantially correct.\(^{14}\)

Just as in Memphis, the New Orleans police force expressed their contempt and hostility for the freedmen with oppressive action. Policemen arrested numerous blacks on flimsy vagrancy charges but ignored the problem of white derelicts in the Crescent City. The assistant commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau for Louisiana, Thomas W. Conway, tersely summarized the problem: "A poor white man is deemed industrious till proved a vagrant; a poor black man is deemed a vagrant till proved industrious." The police also sought to enforce the old discriminatory curfew laws by breaking up black religious meetings almost nightly in the summer of 1865. Such cases of arbitrary arrests, not to

mention numerous instances of outright brutality, took place during both the Kennedy and Monroe administrations and, if anything, worsened as more ex-Confederates joined the police force.\textsuperscript{15}

The inauguration of Mayor Monroe in New Orleans unhappily coincided with a period of shifting political alliances in the state at large. By early 1866 Governor Wells had come to share the disgust of many union men with the "rebel" legislature. After the battle with the legislature over patronage and the ouster of Hugh Kennedy from the mayoralty of New Orleans, Wells realized that his old alliance of union men and Democrats was simply unworkable. An apparently clumsy attempt by a small group of conservatives to bribe the governor to keep his support further catapulted Wells toward a complete break with his former political allies. The question then became: how could Wells and the unionist force take and hold power in the state? Obviously, under the constitution of 1864, the ex-Confederates would easily control future elections unless the rules of the game were changed. Although Wells had often publicly expressed his aversion to black suffrage, he now turned to it as the only expedient available. His acceptance of black voting, though still

tentative, forced him into an alliance with the small radical wing of the old union party that had long favored Negro suffrage on the basis of abstract principle and morality. Such a coalition, however, seemed preferable to conceding rebel rule in the state for the immediate future. 16

A few radical union men and black leaders had pressed for Negro suffrage immediately after the surrender of the Confederate armies, but this explosive issue had always divided loyal men and won little support until it became the only way to diminish rebel political power. Thus, the goal was clear, but the means were not. The conservatives in the legislature had moved to overturn the constitution of 1864 and summon a new constitutional convention. The opposition of Governor Wells and a negative response from President Johnson squelched the project. A few radicals had also proposed a new constitutional convention, but they had sought a constitution written by "loyal men" and the adoption of universal suffrage. However, by the spring of 1866 both Wells supporters and radical union men concentrated their efforts

on a plan to reconvene the adjourned constitutional convention of 1864.¹⁷

The idea of calling back into session a deliberative body which had not met in nearly two years seems on its face to be preposterous. However, the radicals grasped at a legal technicality to support their proposal. The 1864 convention had not adjourned sine die as was the usual practice with such bodies but rather had disbanded "at the call of the president [of the convention], whose duty it shall be to reconvoke the convention for any cause, or in case the constitution should not be ratified, for the purpose of taking such measures as may be necessary for the formation of a civil government for the State of Louisiana." A reassembling of the convention would have been necessary had voters refused to ratify the document, but it is not clear why the convention adopted this strange adjournment resolution. This loophole, however, gave the radicals an opportunity to completely bypass the hostile legislature in changing the organic law of the state. In March 1866 union men began meeting privately in New Orleans to discuss recalling the convention. Governor Wells, who had by this

time completely broken with the Democrats in the legislature, said, according to Warmoth: "By the Eternal, he intended to beat the rebels and keep them out of power, if in doing so he destroyed the state government and produced anarchy for twenty years." Wells admitted that he opposed universal Negro suffrage but said that he would support the radicals in reassembling the 1864 convention. General Philip Sheridan, then in overall command of Florida, Louisiana, and Texas, also assured the planners that he would place no obstacles in their path. The Louisiana union men were still far from united on this scheme, and they continued to quarrel about it well into June. Some radicals, including several black leaders, took a simple and logical position: the convention of 1864 was dead forever, it could not be revived on such a flimsy pretext, and they refused to take part in the movement to reconvene it.18

Even if the convention still had a shadowy legal existence, there were additional barriers to the radical program. The convention of 1864 had only represented those areas of the state occupied by federal forces, so its reconvening would necessitate new elections in the unrepresented parishes as well as filling vacancies from

other areas. When a group of 43 members (out of an original membership of 98, of which 76 delegates constituted a quorum) assembled at the Mechanics' Institute in New Orleans on June 26, 1866, a second difficulty arose. Many members stayed away from the meeting, including the president of the 1864 convention, Judge Edmund H. Durell. Apparently Durell and others feared bloodshed if the convention met and therefore declined to participate in the movement. As noted previously, the convention could only reconvene at the call of the president (Durell). This legal problem, however, did not stop the determined delegates who proceeded to elect an associate justice of the state supreme court, Rufus K. Howell, president pro tem of the convention. Howell in turn issued a proclamation on July 7 calling for a meeting of the convention at the Mechanics' Institute on July 30. Howell and the convention planners by this time had received the full support of Governor Wells who set September 3 as the day for elections to select delegates to fill any vacancies in the assemblage. This development left a minority of the original convention members in firm control of the body for the time being, a critically important consideration in light of the fact that Louisiana union men were far from unanimous in supporting the convention movement.¹⁹

Of course, none of this feverish activity was taking place in a political vacuum, and opponents of the convention movement later charged that the whole affair had been engineered by radical Republicans in Washington or at least had moved forward with their explicit approval. Leading northern radicals later admitted talking to Judge Howell in Washington about the convention, but their memory of the details of these conversations were vague at best. Evidently several Republicans gave Howell only very general assurances that they would "recognize" the work of the convention. On July 16 Representative George S. Boutwell of Massachusetts informed the Republican caucus that the Louisiana convention was to convene on July 30 and that if Congress was still in session when the assemblage met, they could accept a new constitution drafted by the delegates as the true organic law of the state. With a heated congressional election campaign rapidly approaching, even the radical Republicans were reluctant to prolong the session, and Congress adjourned on July 26. Undoubtedly, the Louisiana radicals received some advice from their political allies in Washington, but there is no substantial evidence of any radical conspiracy in the plans to reassemble the convention of 1864 or in the events leading up to the New Orleans riot itself.20

A calm and retrospective analysis of the charges of radical conspiracy, however, gives little insight into the contemporary perspective on the convention scheme. The New Orleans conservatives saw the attempt to reconvene the constitutional convention 1864 as a sinister radical conspiracy to deprive Louisiana of her liberty. They charged the convention planners with plotting to force Negro suffrage on the state, thereby securing Republican control of Louisiana. Since most whites denied the constitutionality of the 1864 convention itself, they could not help but question the right of a small part of that body (or "rump" as many writers dubbed it) to meet for the purpose of rewriting the organic law of the state. This small group of "slippery characters," conservatives maintained, were for the most part treacherous ex-Confederates seeking only power and position for their own ignoble purposes. Of course, many whites considered simply ignoring this illegal body and decided to take no notice whatsoever of its proceedings. However, as Lieutenant Governor Albert Voorhies pointed out, while such a body could be ignored in "ordinary times," these were not ordinary times. Voorhies and other anti-convention men knew in their own minds that the native radicals had the full support of their northern friends in Washington, a fact that lent deadly significance to an

ostensibly local movement. Prudent men both expected and prepared for the worst. The New Orleans Times reported that Louisiana radicals had visited the nation's capital, had "divided their time when there between rum shops and brothels," and had poured their tales of suffering and woe into the receptive ears of Republican politicians. This ambitious group of political wirepullers seemed clearly determined to overthrow the state government and establish an oppressive revolutionary regime responsive to their every wish and whim. Their success would become even more likely, some editors warned, if these unprincipled villains could provoke a violent outbreak in New Orleans and thus win national sympathy with their cries against oppression and resurgent rebellion. Although many conservatives urged the populace to restrain their passions while the convention met, the mere assembling of such an illegal and revolutionary body would seem in itself to justify whatever measures were necessary (including violence) to grind it into the dust.21

With the exception of Governor Wells, most important state officials cooperated with the conservative opposition to the convention. Both groups attacked Wells for issuing his election proclamation and working with the radicals

21 General Gordon Granger to Edmund Cooper, June 11, 1866, Albert Voorhies to J. A. Rozier, July 13, 1866, Andrew Johnson Papers, LC; New Orleans Daily Crescent, July 9-12, 24, 1866; New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 8, 9, 11, 12, 21, 1866; New Orleans Times, April 24, June 11, 27, 28, 30, July 3, 8, 15, 1866.
but saw no way to thwart the governor's "illegal" course. District Judge Edmund Abell, who had himself been a member of the 1864 gathering, charged the New Orleans grand jury that the attempt to reassemble the convention to alter the state's constitution was "subversive of good order and dangerous to the peace of the State." State leaders thus agreed that they did not want the convention to assemble, but they were unsure about how to prevent it. Since the state was still under military supervision, the conservatives hoped that President Johnson could be persuaded to intervene with federal troops to quash the planned convention.22

The mayor of New Orleans, John T. Monroe, also participated in the discussion of the anti-convention forces. Monroe on July 25 informed the federal commander in New Orleans, General Absalom Baird, that "a body of men claiming to belong to the convention of 1864, and whose object is to subvert the present municipal and State government [sic]" would assemble in New Orleans on July 30. Monroe termed the convention an "unlawful" meeting and affirmed that he, as mayor, had a clear duty to disperse all unlawful assemblies. He also informed the general that he intended to arrest the delegates for violating

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unspecified municipal ordinances. Baird, who showed a great deal of naivete, if not blissful ignorance, in the midst of all these problems, replied that the proposed convention had received no sanction from the Army and that the military authorities in the state had "held themselves strictly aloof from all interference with the political movements of the citizens of Louisiana." Baird went on to give Monroe a rather supercilious lecture on the right of citizens to assemble peaceably for the discussion of political issues. Baird also questioned Monroe's fears of the revolutionary character of the convention and maintained that if the meeting had no legal sanction to modify the government of the state, it would be nothing but a "harmless pleasantry." Obviously, the general concluded, it was not the duty of either Monroe or himself to determine the legality of the convention or forcibly to disperse it. Baird assured the mayor that if violence occurred, troops would be available to put down any riotous proceedings. Baird, however, should have known that legalistic niceties might hold little weight in a situation that many considered revolutionary. As the convention movement gained momentum, union men in New Orleans received suggestions to leave the city and heard threats against their lives. The mounting tension in New Orleans should have convinced General Baird to establish firm control over the actions of the state and local
officials and to keep his troops on constant alert to take command of the city in the event of a riot.\textsuperscript{23}

More so than General Baird, local radicals recognized the potential for violence but pushed their convention plans forward anyway. Their conservative opponents also warned of the possibility of bloodshed when the convention met but feared such an outbreak would only serve as grist for radical propaganda mills. On July 27 the radicals held a mass meeting attended by an estimated 1,500 blacks who listened to a series of radical speakers. What was said at this meeting remains shrouded in controversy, and eyewitnesses later gave widely conflicting testimony. All observers agreed that the speakers strongly advocated black suffrage and urged the Negroes to attend the convention on July 30. The heart of the dispute centers around the words of the radical dentist and former state auditor, A. P. Dostie. Conservative papers and witnesses later charged that Dostie had urged the blacks to arm themselves and kill off the whites. Local reports indicated that after this meeting had broken up a few violent Negroes had clashed with the New Orleans police. Yet other witnesses, whose stories are somewhat more believable, testified that Dostie told the Negroes to return to their homes, but that they should kill anyone who attacked them. Ascertaining the radical

\textsuperscript{23}Monroe to Baird, July 25, 1866, Baird to Monroe, July 26, 1866, House Ex. Doc. 68, 39-2, 6-7; \textit{ibid.}, 178, 270; House Rep. 16, 39-2, 5, 79. General Sheridan was at that time in Texas watching over the Mexican crisis.
dentist's exact words would be of limited value in explaining the direct cause of the riot. Even if the more radical witnesses were correct, the admonition for the Negroes to use their weapons, even in self-defense, naturally alarmed the whites during this period of bitter attacks on the "rump" convention as a revolutionary body and the growing conservative fears of black suffrage and black rule. The most peaceful black suffrage meeting would have provoked white hostility in such an emotional atmosphere. Of course, the incendiary and often inaccurate reports of this meeting by the local press only heightened political and racial tensions. The events of July 27 were, therefore, just one more indication to the conservatives of the absolute necessity for stopping the convention, with force if required.  

The various parties spent a busy Saturday (July 28) in private conferences and at the telegraph office. All prominent state officials, except Governor Wells, met with Mayor Monroe and local officials to decide how to deal with the convention meeting on July 30. Francis J. Herron, the attorney general of the state, urged a three-pronged approach: allow the convention to meet with police

protection, have the grand jury in Judge Abell's court
indict the individual delegates, and, if General Baird
prevented these arrests, then let the question be decided
in Washington. Herron left this meeting thinking that his
proposals had been agreed to, and Monroe later claimed that
they had been accepted. In pursuance of his plan, Herron
and Lieutenant Governor Albert J. Voorhies telegraphed
their intentions to President Johnson. They asked the
President if the military would interfere with the civil
authorities to prevent the arrest of convention members.
Johnson himself had wired Governor Wells earlier in the day
questioning his authority to issue a proclamation calling
for a meeting of the convention. The President's opinions
on these matters were becoming apparent and he made his
position even more clear in his reply to Voorhies: "The
military will be expected to sustain, and not to obstruct or
interfere with, the proceedings of the courts." Johnson
thus lent both his own prestige and the power of his office
to the conservatives, but still left them to decide on their
own specific course of action.

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25This charge was not technically correct. Wells
had issued a proclamation calling for elections to fill
vacancies in the convention. Judge Howell, president
pro t e r n of the convention had issued a proclamation for
the meeting of July 30, 1866.

26House Ex. Doc. 68, 39-2, 56-57, 64, 97-98, 273-74;
Voorhies and Herron to Johnson, July 28, 1866, Johnson to
Voorhies, July 28, 1866, Johnson to Wells, July 28, 1866,
Wells to Johnson, July 28, 1866, ibid., 4.
All this furious activity left General Baird as the man caught between the proverbial rock and the hard place. Baird had approximately 860 men in barracks three miles south of New Orleans at his disposal, but he was not sure what immediate steps he should take to preserve the peace. Baird himself shared the reluctance of his immediate superior, General Sheridan, to become stuck in the quagmire of Louisiana politics and was determined to preserve the peace and maintain the Army's political neutrality. Baird therefore telegraphed Secretary of War Edwin Stanton on July 28 to fill him in on the developing crisis in New Orleans. Baird informed Stanton that he could not allow the civil authorities to arrest the delegates to the convention without orders from Washington and urgently asked for instructions. Unfortunately Baird never received a reply to this important missive.27

Sunday, July 29, the day before the convention, was quiet and largely uneventful. Some witnesses later claimed that the mayor and chief of police spent the day plotting secretly to break up the convention by force, but the evidence on this point is tenuous and indirect. Meanwhile, General Baird instructed the troops south of the city to be ready to march into New Orleans in the event of any disturbances. There was, in short, little activity to break

the languid stillness of a hot and humid Sabbath in the Crescent City. The radicals, conservatives, civil officials, police, and the military all believed they had the situation well under control.28

Monday, July 30, was another steamy day. The conservative newspapers again admonished New Orleanians to restrain their passions while the convention met and prevent violence that could only aid the radicals. Mayor Monroe issued a proclamation calling on the people of the city to avoid any "collision" with the illegal convention by staying away from the Mechanics' Institute. The mayor and chief of police, Thomas E. Adams, later testified that their intention had been to preserve the peace and that they had kept the police force on alert for this purpose. Yet both Monroe and Adams were bitter opponents of the convention and would not maintain a strict impartiality in the crisis. Several policemen on that very morning bragged about how they were going to break up the convention and kill the blacks and union men.29


The military in New Orleans was much less prepared for trouble than the police. General Baird consulted with Monroe and Lieutenant Governor Voorhies in the morning about sending soldiers to protect the convention. Monroe and Voorhies later claimed that they had all agreed that troops should be sent, but Baird maintained that Voorhies and Monroe had never requested troops. Baird himself, however, decided to send soldiers to the Mechanics' Institute to preserve the peace. There was only one problem with this plan: the convention was to meet at noon, but Baird believed that it would not assemble until six o'clock in the evening. Although the general later charged Monroe and Voorhies with deceiving him about the time, Baird himself should have known this essential piece of information, and he cannot be exculpated for his ignorance. This final blunder, committed by a man who was unsuitable for such a responsible command, guaranteed the mayor and police a momentarily free hand in dealing with the convention.30

As Monroe massed the police in the morning, rumors spread through New Orleans of an impending move to break up the convention by force. Ex-Confederates warned unionist friends to stay away from the Mechanics' Institute to save their lives. Yet few people expected a serious outbreak of violence, and the members of the convention neither heeded

the warnings nor prepared an adequate plan of defense. When the convention assembled at noon, twenty-six delegates were present for the opening prayer. Judge Howell, the president pro tem of the convention, adjourned the proceedings until 1:30 so that the sergeants-at-arms could round up enough members to make a quorum. Spectators, including a large number of blacks, milled around in the hall, and the whole affair seemed to be a gigantic fiasco for the Louisiana radicals.

About one o'clock while the meeting was in recess, a procession numbering around one hundred to two hundred blacks marched in support of the convention carrying an American flag. They moved along Burgundy Street, crossed Canal Street, and headed toward the Mechanics' Institute on Dryades Street. Conservative witnesses said the blacks were heavily armed with sticks, clubs, and revolvers, but it is likely that a majority of the marchers were unarmed, and few carried firearms. As the blacks crossed Canal Street, the incident took place that precipitated the New Orleans riot. A young white man either insulted the Negroes or blocked the street, and a black in the procession knocked him to the ground. Apparently one of the blacks also fired at the fallen white youth, but other witnesses recalled that the first shot was fired at the marchers from the crowd of

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policemen and citizens who lined the street. In any case, the blacks in the procession fired one or several shots, and a few police tried to arrest one of the blacks for shooting into the crowd. The mob of whites and police along the street also fired at the blacks. By this time, white men began to hurl brickbats at the Negroes, and more shooting broke out. The well-armed citizens at first scattered, but then regrouped and began to chase the blacks. The Negroes, many of whom were unarmed and certainly not prepared for a military engagement, fled before their white pursuers and ran in the general direction of the Mechanics' Institute. 32

At this point the police, who had braced themselves all day for just such an occurrence, began to arrive on the scene in larger and larger numbers. Instead of stopping the fighting, the police joined their colleagues and the white mob in attacking the blacks. Some Negroes hurled brickbats at the surging crowd, and a few fired their guns


The mass of testimony for this and other episodes that took place during the rioting is voluminous, contradictory and confusing. The account given in the text represents an attempt to sift the evidence and arrive at a fairly accurate chronological account of the riot.
to ward off the mob. Despite the belief of many conservatives that the blacks had conspired to start a riot and slaughter the whites, most of the blacks retreated in disarray before the white onslaught. As the fighting intensified and expanded toward the convention hall, it was soon apparent that the blacks had neither planned for nor come prepared to take part in a general riot. Rather the coordinated movements of the police and the white mob lent some credence to the charge that the New Orleans riot was a preconcerted plot to slaughter union men and blacks.33

Mayor Monroe, according to his later testimony, ordered the police to quell the disturbances and summoned all citizens to be sworn in as special deputies at City Hall. By this time, however, the police had become part of the mob, if not the actual phalanx of the rioters. Losing all sense of discipline and rational control, policemen chased, beat, and shot any Negro they could find, becoming part of the unreasoning and uncontrollable mob. Blacks, young or old, strong or weak, whether part of the procession or mere bystanders, were all targets of the whites' abandoned wrath. Freedmen pleading for mercy received only brutal kicks and more gunfire. Police often shot down a Negro and then stood by while citizens mercilessly beat and kicked the wounded man. It seemed to many observers that the police and the

white mob worked closely together, and, as the riot progressed, the police blended completely into the howling crowd of whites. Firemen also joined the fray, brutally beating blacks with their heavy wrenches. Some policemen bragged of the number of Negroes they had killed during the day and swore they would kill any more that they could find. One policeman frankly told one of his fellow officers that it was "no sin to kill a nigger."34

The composition of the mob presents a striking contrast to that of the anti-convention forces. The conservative, upper-class opponents of the convention and Negro suffrage watched the riot with approval, but few probably participated in the fighting themselves. Instead, the rioters consisted largely of poorer whites, particularly young boys, with a sprinkling of Confederate veterans. Ten-year old lads roamed the streets with revolvers shooting at the blacks. Former Confederate General Richard Taylor described vividly how a "crowd of roughs, Arabs, and Negroes" ran down Canal Street toward the Mechanics' Institute to join the melee. Local prostitutes stabbed blacks who had fallen wounded in the streets. Known white unionists were cursed and threatened whether they were members of the despised

convention or not. Juveniles broke into gun shops for weapons before joining the fighting. The blacks had little chance against the combination of white citizens and the police. Few of the Negroes carried weapons although some had sticks or clubs with them. The blacks probably faced superior numbers (there are not even any estimates of the size of the white mob). The close cooperation of the mob and the police left the blacks to the tender mercies of their bitterest enemies. Many blacks made what seemed at the time to be a wise decision: a retreat toward the Mechanics' Institute in the hope of finding safety with the white convention delegates.  

As the mob swept toward the convention hall, the Negroes huddled around the building, and many moved inside. The police later asserted that they received heavy fire from inside the building, and the Mayor ordered the arrest of the persons firing from inside the building. Those in the Mechanics' Institute told a different story. The members of the convention and spectators (perhaps as many as 150 black people of all ages and sexes) denied that any firing originated from inside the building, insisting that the police and citizens had fired at them and had hurled brickbats through the windows. Still other witnesses

claimed that shots were fired by both sides, and it is far
from certain whether the first shots came from inside or
outside the building. In all probability the mob itself
did most of the shooting because relatively few of the
persons inside the building were armed.  

As the crowd attacked the Mechanics' Institute, all
was confusion inside among the delegates and onlookers.
The police rushed the entrance on Dryades Street and fired
through the doors. Pushing inside, they and some white
citizens shot indiscriminately into the frightened group
of delegates and blacks. A Confederate veteran, who had
lost both his arms in the war, encouraged the police to
"kill every damned son of a bitch in the building, and not
let any escape." The police came up in wave after wave to
fire into the building, looking particularly to kill
convention delegates. Firemen and citizens joined the fray,
entered the hall, and began shooting. The mob poured
bullets into their victims and smashed windows, chairs, and
most of the furnishings. The police shouted that the
American flag that the Negro procession had brought into
the building was a "dirty rag" and refused to give any
quarter to the convention delegates or spectators. Later
testimony and the physical evidence cast doubts on police

Times, July 31, 1866; New Orleans Daily Crescent, July 31,
1866; House Ex. Doc. 68, 39-2, 42, 51-52, 58-59, 110, 112,
116-17, 119-20, 123, 125-27, 146, 152-55, 159, 162, 164,
169-71, 174, 186, 197, 201, 206-208, 217, 223, 238, 265;
Grand Jury Report, 3.
claims about receiving heavy fire from individuals inside the hall. In the wild confusion, the delegates and other persons retreated behind a railing that divided the hall in half and hid near the speakers' platform. Two leading members of the convention, Judge Howell and R. King Cutler urged them to remain quiet and peaceful as the threatening mob rushed into the building. Some frightened persons lay on the floor to protect themselves; others barricaded the doors and fought off the charging police with chairs and a few small arms. This band of defenders managed to repulse the invaders four or five times before being overcome by numbers and firepower. Some convention delegates waved handkerchiefs as white flags of surrender, but the police ignored these gestures and continued to beat and shoot those crowded into the rear of the building; the police killed many blacks who were on their knees pleading for mercy. Attempts to escape the violent onslaught grew desperate; panic-stricken blacks fled to the second floor of the building with their relentless foes in hot pursuit. Negroes jumped from windows to the street below only to be seized by the mob outside who were anxious to continue the slaughter. Blacks leaping from the building were shot as soon as they reached the ground. Pleas for mercy and abject surrender only elicited curses and renewed brutality.\(^{37}\)

Those persons fortunate enough to make their way out of the Mechanics' Institute had to run an additional gauntlet outside. The mob beat and shot blacks fleeing from the building; police chased wounded Negroes through the streets. Citizens and police dragged wounded and dying men from the building and savagely made sure that the wounded would not live. Many persons arrested outside received additional beatings on their way to jail. The police hauled prisoners away very rapidly but allowed the white mob to beat these helpless victims as they were carried along singling out leading members of the convention for particular attention. Ex-Governor Michael Hahn, his body covered with blood, had his clothes ripped to shreds as the police pulled him through the streets; several citizens urged the officers to kill Hahn. When the mob saw A. P. Dostie being brought along the street by the police, five or six whites came out of the crowd and fired their revolvers at the helpless radical. Trampled, beaten, and at one point left for dead, Dostie's nearly lifeless body was thrown into a filthy cart and taken off.

Miraculously, Dostie lived to tell his story to a board of army officers but died a short time after the riot.\textsuperscript{38}

The police carelessly threw wounded and dead Negroes into the same jail cells. A physician who attended the wounded told military investigators that the "prison surpassed the Black Hole of Calcutta" in packing prisoners into the cells. He estimated the temperature inside at between 100 and 130 degrees, and the stench made the doctor himself sick for two days. The police abused wounded men as they lay helpless in this hell hole. Because of the large number of prisoners, wounded and dying men covered the prison yard, and there was little effort taken to alleviate their suffering. An aide to General Sheridan described the scene as "more like a slaughter-pen for animals than a receptacle for human beings."\textsuperscript{39}

Some rioters left the area of the Mechanics' Institute and began to roam the streets beating any blacks they could find, much as rioters in Memphis had done. Late into the night, a mob of drunken whites hauled blacks from their houses and beat and shot them repeatedly. White newspaper boys burst into the home of a black woman, grabbed a black


\textsuperscript{39}House Ex. Doc. 68, 39-2, 70-71, 262-64, 285-86.
man, and shot him in the head; they also killed several other blacks in the woman's yard by splitting their heads open with an ax. Chief of Police Adams stated later in a conversation with a correspondent of the New York Times that he regretted very much the atrocities committed by the police and mob and he promised to see that the guilty parties were punished. This promise was never kept.\(^40\)

After the riot had raged for nearly two hours, federal troops finally arrived to restore order. General Baird then placed New Orleans under martial law, but his failure to act promptly had cost many innocent lives. Local radicals knew in their own minds that the rebels and civil officials had carefully coordinated the attacks on the Negroes and convention delegates. For their part, some whites worried that the Negroes might retaliate against them. With the military in control of the situation, peace came at last to the bloodstained streets of New Orleans.\(^41\)

The grim statistics revealed the results of the day's rioting. Although Monroe and Voorhies later claimed that 42 policemen and several citizens had been killed or wounded in the fighting, army surgeon Albert Hartsuff found that only 22 policemen had been injured and 10 of those were back


\(^{41}\)House Ex. Doc. 68, 39-2, 88, 160-61; Baird to Stanton, July 30, July 31 (2 telegrams), 1866, ibid., 5-6, 8; GO 60, DG, July 30, 1866, RG 393, NA; New Orleans Daily Crescent, August 1, 1866; Entry for July 30, 1866, Henry Clay Warmoth Diary, Warmoth Papers, SHC.
on duty the following day. On the other hand, 34 blacks and 3 white unionists had died with 119 and 17 wounded respectively. Only one "rebel" died as a result of the riot. These casualty figures clearly point up the one-sided nature of the battle.42

On hearing news of the disturbance General Sheridan promptly returned from Texas on July 31 to resume command. Sheridan found New Orleans still in a state of high excitement; he heard idle threats on the streets about driving the military from the city. On orders from General Grant, Sheridan maintained close watch over the city and kept a wary eye on the municipal officials and the police. Sheridan's own inquiries into the origins and course of the riot led him to certain inescapable conclusions. He told Grant that those radicals who had tried to reassemble the convention of 1864 were "political agitators and revolutionary men" and that, before his unexpected trip to Texas, he had decided to arrest the convention members at the first sign of trouble. Sheridan characterized the riot itself as an "absolute massacre by the police, which was not excelled in murderous cruelty by that of Fort Pillow." He furthermore believed that it had been largely "premeditated." A garbled version of Sheridan's dispatches appeared in several northern newspapers with the significant paragraph condemning the actions

42House Ex. Doc. 68, 39-2, 32, 36, 93, 177.
of the police and the mayor deleted. Sheridan naturally felt outraged by this apparently deliberate distortion of his views and immediately wired Grant for an explanation. Grant and Stanton decided, with the authorization of President Johnson, to publish all the telegrams concerning the riot in full to clear the air. Evidently either Johnson himself or one of his friends had sent the incomplete copy of Sheridan's dispatch to the papers in order to defend the administration from radical attacks over the handling of the affair.43

For their part, the people of New Orleans questioned the response of the military and denied the necessity for declaring martial law. Most whites defended the actions of the civil authorities and the police, arguing that the local officials had been in firm control of this explosive situation. Newspaper editorialists castigated General Baird for sending troops to prevent the police from finishing their job. As the attacks on Baird's performance became more strident from all directions, both the Army and the Freedmen's Bureau vainly tried to defend the general.44

43 House Rep. 16, 39-2, 347-48; Sheridan to Grant, August 1, 3, 5, 7, 17, 1866; House Ex. Doc. 68, 39-2, 9, 11, 13-14, 23; Grant to Sheridan, August 3, 1866, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, LC.

44 Sheridan to Grant, August 1, 2, 9, 11, 1866, Sheridan to Brevet Major General J. A. Rawlins, August 9, 1866, Grant to Sheridan August 9, 10, 1866, Stanton to Johnson, August 11, 1866, Albert Voorhies and Andrew J. Herron to E. D. Townsend, August 2, 1866, House Ex. Doc. 68, 39-2, 2-3, 9, 11, 22; New Orleans Daily Crescent, August 1, September 18, 1866; New Orleans Daily Picayune,
Meanwhile, Mayor Monroe, Lieutenant Governor Voorhies, and Attorney General Herron hoped to persuade officials in Washington to accept their version of the riot as the gospel truth. In a long letter to President Johnson, they set forth in detail their numerous objections to the assembling of the convention. They reiterated their belief that the convention forces had planned to overthrow the state government and blamed the outbreak of violence on what they termed the "armed mob" supporting the convention. The military also received censure for failing to cooperate with the civil authorities in arresting the members of the convention. President Johnson evidently agreed with many of these arguments, and he closely questioned General Sheridan about the accuracy of various parts of this statement. Judge Abell on August 2 charged a New Orleans grand jury that the riot had resulted from a conspiracy to subvert the government of Louisiana. The grand jury later placed the blame for the riot squarely on the shoulders of the convention delegates and cited Dostie's "incendiary"

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September 5, 1866; James Harrison to Andrew Johnson, July 31, 1866, Jacob Parker to Johnson, July 31, 1866, Johnson Papers, LC; Major General Oliver Otis Howard to Baird, August 8, 1866, Howard to Sheridan, August 23, 1866, LS, BRFAL, 1865-1872, RG 105, NA (M742, roll 2). Howard became interested in Baird's problems because Baird, in addition to his military duties, was also assistant commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau for Louisiana.
speech of July 27 as the precipitating incident that led inevitably to the bloody confrontation.\textsuperscript{45} 

The New Orleans press, which had significantly inflamed the emotions of the citizenry before the riot, agreed for the most part with the position of the local officials. They blamed the riot entirely on the attempt of revolutionaries, both in Louisiana and in Washington, to reassemble the convention 1864. The convention delegates were "political adventurers" whose only love was for the spoils of office. The fighting began, according to these spokesmen, because the deluded Negroes listened to a small group of white fanatics and plotted to kill off the white people. Conservatives still claimed that they were the Negro's best friends and said that only those blacks in league with the radical conspirators had suffered during the riot. In fact, several editors praised the police and citizens for behaving with "restraint" under extreme provocation. They also accused the radicals of spreading false stories about rebel atrocities committed during the fighting for political consumption in the North.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{45} Monroe, Voorhies, and Herron to Johnson, August 3, 1866, House Ex. Doc. 68, 39-2, 14-16; Johnson to Sheridan, August 4, 1866, \textit{ibid.}, 12; \textit{ibid.}, 75-77; Grand Jury Report, 2-3.

\textsuperscript{46} New Orleans Times, July 31, August 1, 2, 5, 12, September 10, 12, 19, 1866; New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 31, August 1, 2, 4, 9, 14, 24, 25, 1866; New Orleans Daily Crescent, July 31, August 2-4, 1866; Grand Jury Report, 2-3.
The New Orleans riot temporarily achieved one important conservative objective: it left the union men in disarray. Fearing for their lives, several leading radicals left the state; other loyalists warned their northern friends of their great danger if the troops were withdrawn and blamed Andrew Johnson and his policy for their condition. They predicted a resurgence of the rebellion and the restoration of slavery within five years. Unionists felt that they had now lost all they had gained from the northern victory in the war, and pessimists among them predicted even more rebel outrages in the near future. Governor Wells wrote his own apologia in the form of an address to the "loyal people of Louisiana" defending his support for the convention movement. The governor recounted the failure of his early conciliatory gestures toward the former rebels and charged the mayor and the police with conspiring to break up the convention by force. Wells saw the only safety for union men in the retention of federal troops in the state and the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment.47

As was the case after most episodes of Reconstruction violence, there were no prosecutions of any of the New Orleans rioters. General Sheridan, who was acting on his interpretation of the Reconstruction Acts, in the spring of 1867 removed Governor Wells, Mayor Monroe, and Judge Abell. Despite loud protests from the parties most directly concerned, Grant and Secretary of War Stanton upheld Sheridan's action. 48

Thorough investigations of the riot by a board of army officers and a congressional committee produced a mass of important documents and testimony but no end to the controversy about the origins of the riot. The military report whitewashed General Baird's mistakes and charged Monroe and the police with planning violence against the convention. The Republican-controlled Thirty-ninth Congress established a select committee to probe the riot also. When the congressmen arrived in New Orleans in December 1866, both union men and conservatives sought to court their favor. Loyalists worried that local rebels would manage to flatter the committee into believing their version of the story and covering up their own conspiratorial activities.

48 House Rep. 16, 39-2, 247, 364; Sheridan to Grant, April 19, 1867, "Correspondence Relative to Reconstruction," Sen. Ex. Doc. 14, 40-1, 201-202; Grant to Sheridan, March 13, April 3, 1867, Monroe to Andrew Johnson, May 9, 1867, Wells to Johnson, June 4, 1867, Abell to Johnson, June 3, 13, 1867, Johnson Papers, LC; Sheridan to Edwin M. Stanton, June 5, 1867, Grant to Sheridan, June 7, 1867, Stanton Papers, LC; New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 20, 1867.
The conservatives, as the radicals expected, warmly greeted the members of the committee despite the fact that two of the three committee members were Republicans. Conservatives publicly expressed their wish that the committee would listen to radical witnesses with critical minds and write an "objective" report. The conclusions of the committee majority (the two Republican members) dashed their hopes. Thomas D. Eliot of Massachusetts and Samuel Shellabarger of Ohio defended the legality of the reassembled convention of 1864, blamed the city and state authorities for the violence, and accused President Johnson of encouraging the bloodshed. The minority report, drafted by Democrat Benjamin M. Boyer of Pennsylvania, attacked the legality of the convention and denounced the radicals and the Negroes for inciting the wrath of the police and the white mob. The *New Orleans Times* expressed the general conservative reaction to the congressional report by calling it the "jaundiced decree of partisan animosity."^49

Southerners generally drew far different lessons from the riot than had the northern Republicans. Conservative editorialists attributed the violence to the teachings of

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^49*New Orleans Tribune*, October 9, December 16, 1866; Thomas J. Durant to Henry Clay Warmoth, December 18, 31, 1866, January 21, 1867, Michael Hahn to Warmoth, December 27, 1866, Warmoth Papers, SHC; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 9, 12, 1866; *New Orleans Crescent*, December 12, 1866; *House Rep. 16*, 39-2, 4, 16-31, 37-40, 44-47, 51-54, 60 (Majority and Minority reports); *New Orleans Times*, September 7, December 11, 22, 23, 25, 27, 1866, February 13, 1867.
radical incendiaries who had infested the South since the end of the war. These blind fanatics spurred the Negroes to acts of violence and stood ready to reap the political rewards from the inevitable white reaction. These writers had little sympathy for the dead and wounded of New Orleans, and the editor of the Mobile Tribune satirized the emergence of A. P. Dostie as the latest abolition martyr:

Let Dostie's skin be forthwith stripped and sold to [P. T. J Barnum—the proceeds to go to the Freedmen's Bureau and negro newspapers, to be sold by them for the benefit of Negroes who have no taste for work. Dostie's body will make good soap. Let him be boiled down, preparatory to being distributed in bars to Yankee school marms. Delicious will be the kisses sipped, by those angular females from ebony cheeks, late lathered with sweet scented Dostie.

On a more serious note, thoughtful southerners worried that the New Orleans riot might serve as a godsend to radical Republicans and a pretext for new radical legislation. 50

The New Orleans riot marked the emergence of what would become a pattern of Reconstruction violence. Unlike the Memphis riot, which had arisen mainly from the problems of urban growth, the violence in New Orleans resulted

50 Richmond Daily Dispatch, August 1, 2, 8, 1866; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, August 3, 6, September 12, 1866; Charleston Daily Courier, August 9, 1866; Natchez Weekly Democrat, August 13, 1866; Jacob Barker to William A. Baker, October 2, 1866, Barker Letter, Tulane; Daily Memphis Avalanche, August 3, 1866; Mobile Tribune, n.d. in Raleigh Weekly North Carolina Standard, August 13, 1866; Wilmington Daily Journal, August 4, September 18, 1866; Memphis Daily Argus, August 1, 1866.
directly from the agitation of the explosive Negro suffrage question. The exaggerated reaction of Louisiana conservatives to the proposal to reassemble the convention of 1864 illustrated once again the extreme southern sensitivity to even the possibility of change in political, and especially racial, mores and institutions. Above all else, the New Orleans riot clearly demonstrated that southerners would resist even the proposition, much less the imposition, of black suffrage with physical force. Black suffrage meant both the loss of conservative political power and social anarchy. The actions of the New Orleans mob spoke for a southern consensus on race that transcended class or antebellum political divisions. As the police and the white mob attacked the Mechanics' Institute, they were acting out U. B. Phillips' "central theme of southern history." Southerners were prepared to use violence to guarantee that the South would always remain a white man's country.
Chapter VI

MILITARY RECONSTRUCTION: THE TRIUMPH OF JACOBINISM

Historians, either consciously or unconsciously, experience a continuous conflict between their sources and themselves. This results from the fact that the student of the past looks at "history" from both his own perspective and that of the people whom he is studying. While this duality of viewpoint can be a powerful tool of analysis, it can also lead the careless scholar astray; he may either accept the values of his subjects uncritically or, as he is more likely to do, seek to impose his own contemporary standards on the persons and events of the past. Such tendencies inevitably produce logical as well as philosophical confusion, particularly where historians use their own presumably more "enlightened" values to correct the "mistakes" of the past, at least on paper. By imposing his own standards on historical actors and conditions, the historian not only distorts his story but utterly fails to achieve one of the major tasks of his art, that is to understand the persons and events of the past in their own terms. A cursory examination of the course of Reconstruction historiography shows that these
questions have practical consequences that transcend narrow philosophical or epistemological considerations.

William A. Dunning and his students examined the Reconstruction period from a viewpoint that was little removed from that of the southerners of the 1860's and 1870's. These scholars shared with the subjects of their investigations both conservative political positions and racist social values. These points of view, however offensive they are to modern scholars, sharpened the insight of these early Reconstruction historians and allowed them to deal perceptively with the South's reaction to the problems of the period. On the other hand, their own presuppositions blinded them to the positive contributions made by the Republican party in the South and led many of them to write what amounted to scholarly apologias for the southern redeemers. Beginning in the 1940's revisionist historians began not only to question many of the Dunning school's fundamental assumptions, but also, first in articles and later in surveys and monographs, to demolish much of the evidence and arguments put forward in these studies. Revisionists found that Reconstruction had not been nearly such a "tragic era" as earlier scholars had believed. They wrote about Negroes, carpetbaggers, and scalawags in ways that contradicted much of the traditional picture of ignorance and corruption. Yet by examining Reconstruction from a perspective greatly influenced by the early stirrings and later flowering of
the civil rights movement, revisionists neglected the real strength of the Dunningites, namely an appreciation for the real dilemma of the southern whites. Revisionists forgot that Reconstruction might have been a traumatic period for white southerners even if later historians interpreted it as a time of "conservatism" and retreat from reform. While not casting aside the valuable contributions of the revisionists to our understanding of the period, historians must again try to recapture the southern perspective on this era in order to understand the causes for the violent southern response to reconstruction.

As the United States Congress debated and finally passed the Reconstruction Acts of March 1867, a deep gloom, such as had not been prevalent since the final months of the Civil War, spread over the South. The consequences of military rule were uncertain, and no one knew what the radical Republicans had in store for the future. One South Carolina newspaper editor maintained that republican government had passed away with the war and that Washington was rapidly becoming the new Rome. Alexander H. Stephens believed that "we are now in the death throes of Constitutional liberty on this continent." One of Stephens' neighbors in Crawfordville, Georgia, wrote that "madness rules the hour" and that there seemed to be no escape for the South. Southerners had become the victims of a cruel despotism that sought to force them to re-examine and abandon their most deeply rooted
convictions; the experience of generations and the great contributions of southern whites to the science of republican government were being cast aside in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye. One of General P. G. T. Beauregard's many female admirers questioned how the destiny of the American nation could be placed in the "hands of the insensate Jacobins" then in power at Washington. She described what she saw as the true condition of the South and her probable future: "More pitiable than Poland or Hungary, and quite as helpless as were the Asia Minor provinces when governed by Persian Satraps, we of the pseudo 'Territories,' sit like Israel in the captivity, biding the day of retribution... that must surely dawn in blood upon the nation which oppresses us." 1

Although they might lament their fate or bluster about the cruel and arbitrary nature of military rule, southerners had little choice but to submit to the dictates of Congress. Perhaps the southern leaders could take the lead in bringing

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their region back into the Union under the terms set by the radical Congress. Yet even those southerners who favored quiet acquiescence did so with ill grace and looked to the future with more pessimism than hope. James L. Orr of South Carolina feared white disfranchisement and confiscation if the South refused to meet the requirements of the military bills and gloomily predicted that "nothing is left for us but to bear with courage and fortitude such enormities as the fearless conqueror may choose to impose."\(^2\)

A significant minority of white southerners accepted the terms of the Reconstruction Acts as the best available terms under the circumstances and argued that the re-establishment of civil government under any conditions was preferable to continued military rule. The leaders of the southern states during Presidential Reconstruction had not successfully restored the South to the Union and had, in fact, committed egregious errors of political

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judgment. It was now time, some moderates opined, for southern men to take hold of the reconstruction process and work with sympathetic northerners for a rapid restoration of national harmony. As a man of flexible political principles, Joseph E. Brown of Georgia believed that the South could not restore the past but that she should act quickly before the radicals increased their demands. James Longstreet stated both publicly and privately that it was time for the South to abandon special pleadings and constitutional quibbling and face the very real problem of controlling the course of the "revolution." James Lusk Alcorn added that there was no reason for southerners not to cooperate with the newly enfranchised Negroes and even for them to negotiate with northern radicals about key southern concerns, particularly economic subsidies. If southerners failed to act in the crisis, they would be responsible for surrendering their governments to carpetbaggers and blacks. Franklin J. Moses, Jr., urged the ex-Confederates of South Carolina to come forward and redeem the fortunes of their state. However, conservatives branded these conciliators as knaves and cormorants, charges that limited both their strength and effectiveness.  

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Of course, fire-eaters, such as Jubal Early, talked of leading a band of Commanches and Apaches against the Yankees in the plains states, and Robert Toombs even refused to admit that the South had been defeated on the battlefield. Most conservatives, however, averred that they had sincerely complied with the terms of surrender and could do no more. Ben Hill of Georgia argued that southerners had fought the war from honest motives and should not therefore be treated as common criminals by the North. Hill also denied that the South was totally subject to the will of the conquerors. The North seemed to expect that southerners should express gratitude for being subdued by the hated Yankees, but William Gilmore Simms of South Carolina frankly admitted: "We may submit, as a conquered people to the chain, but we shall not hug, nor embrace the knees of our conquerors. We shall only loathe

them the more, and feel ourselves at all times free of all obligations."^4

Southerners naturally questioned the constitutionality of the Reconstruction Acts as well as the power of Congress to enact such oppressive legislation. They also affirmed that the old ideas of states rights and local self-government had not died with the Confederacy. Sincere men could not possibly approve such ironhanded laws. The South realized that she had lost everything save her honor and was not about to sacrifice this most sacred possession on the altar of political expediency. Southerners could not by an abject submission and unreasonable concessions pass down a legacy of humiliation and disgrace to their children or stain the sacred escutcheon of their glorious past.^5


It was one thing to submit to physical force but quite
another to yield voluntarily and actively contribute to
one's own degradation. The vile northerners must be made
to assume full responsibility for the establishment of
despotic rule in the South and southerners should not
relieve them from this odium by participating in the
devastation of their own land. Herschel Johnson of Georgia
wrote that he preferred to be "ruined without our consent,"
and Stephens maintained that it was better for the South
to seek martyrdom than commit suicide. 6

Southerners rejected all pleas for opportunistic
compromise and argued that acquiescence would not palliate
the passions of the northern radicals. How could one expect
such revolutionary fanatics to be satisfied with the
Reconstruction Acts? Concessions would only clear the way
for new and harsher demands. Ben Hill admonished the people
of Georgia that it was honorable in and of itself to resist
a government imposed by "foreigners" that sought to
disfranchise their best citizens. Indeed, Hill traced the
South's present troubles back to a thirst for office among
conniving politicians who were willing to crawl in the dust
and flatter the conquering Yankees in order to obtain place

6 W. F. Leak to Thomas Ruffin, January 20, 1868,
J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, ed., The Papers of Thomas
Ruffin (4 Vols., Raleigh, 1918-1920), IV, 187; Memphis
Daily Appeal, March 6, 1867; Stephens, Constitutional View,
II, 665; Herschel V. Johnson to John G. Westmoreland,
June 29, 1867, Alexander H. Stephens to Johnson, July 17,
1867, Johnson Papers, Duke.
and favor. To surrender up the South voluntarily to military despotism and Negro rule seemed unconscionable to most southerners. After watching the mayor of Savannah, Georgia, giving General John Pope a tour of the state, Howell Cobb wrote: "I thank God, that the good of my country does not require at my hands a participation in these propitiatory offerings to our taskmasters and oppressors." 7

In retrospect, the South in 1867 was powerless to overturn military reconstruction, but contemporary southerners did not know this. Hill pleaded with his fellow citizens to spurn these military laws, and he charged that the defenders of the Constitution, such as President Andrew Johnson and the Supreme Court, had let the country down because of their own pusillanimity. Linton Stephens counseled his pessimistic brother Alexander neither to follow the course of Joe Brown nor give way to complete despair, and both of them agreed that the South must wait for a strong reaction in the North to restore her ancient liberties. Governor Benjamin G. Humphreys of Mississippi led the way with an act of great symbolic importance. Humphreys refused to relinquish his office to

the military governor, Adelbert Ames, because he saw it as his duty to the people of his state to yield his position only under physical duress. The governor remained at his post but finally left his office when the local commander placed a sentinel at his door to prevent anyone from entering.8

A few southern leaders grasped at a straw in the wind: the possibility that the Supreme Court would declare the Reconstruction Acts unconstitutional. However, a plan to bring together the southern governors in a cooperative effort failed because many of the chief executives were either hostile or lukewarm about the idea of a prolonged and probably futile legal battle. Even the proponents of this idea had little hope for its success. The Supreme Court itself dashed any hopes when in cases from Mississippi and Georgia the justices refused to enjoin either the President or the Secretary of War from enforcing the

Reconstruction Acts. The course of constitutional argument and legal resistance had once again failed the South.  

Those southerners who refused to assent to the demands of Congress stubbornly asserted that they preferred military rule to any civil government created under the Reconstruction Acts. The early cooperation sentiment began to fade by the summer of 1867, and southerners considered dusting off their old policy of "masterly inactivity." The Reconstruction Acts themselves greatly aided those intransigent conservatives who wished to defeat the radicals through inaction. Not only did these laws give southerners the option of voting for or against calling constitutional conventions, but, until the passage of a Fourth Reconstruction Act in early 1868, the new constitutions drafted by such conventions had to receive the approval of a majority of the registered voters to be ratified. Thus, by registering to vote and then simply not voting in the ratification elections, whites could theoretically ensure the defeat of these "mongrel" constitutions. Only Alabama managed to use this ploy to frustrate Congress temporarily, although the voters of Mississippi rejected their new constitution outright. However, the South never presented

9Alcee Fortier, A History of Louisiana (4 Vols., 1904), IV, 97-100; Herschel V. Johnson to Colonel Charles G. Jordan, April 23, 1867, Johnson to Governor Charles Jenkins, April 25, 1867, Johnson Papers, Duke; J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina (New York, 1914), 219-20; Mississippi v. Johnson, 4 Wallace 475 (1867); Georgia v. Stanton, 6 Wallace 50 (1867).
a united strategic front in opposition to the radical plan. Apathy and a conservative revulsion from participating in the politics of a revolutionary era could not overcome a belief among many southerners that the stakes were simply too high for whites to boycott politics. Confusion reigned in southern political circles. While some persons talked of practical considerations and the need to restore the old Union quickly, others spoke of the dangers of Negro rule and the prospect of turning the South into another Haiti or Jamaica. A Richmond, Virginia, resident informed a British visitor that he would rather be annexed to Great Britain or hail Louis Napoleon than submit to the will of the radical Congress. A Memphis, Tennesse, editor told his readers in no uncertain terms why he preferred military rule to Negro suffrage:

Negro suffrage, in the Southern states, where the Ethiops swarm and kennel in multitudes, would, in short, make the country a hell on earth, a hideous, horrid pandemonium, filled with all the devils, of vice, crime, pauperism, corruption, violence, political debauchery, social anarchy; the den and lair of all stains, shames, dishonors, discredits, disgraces, ignominies and infamies,—a rotting carcass, infested with all pernicious plagues and pestilences, like the body of Herod or Louis the Fifteenth, whose flesh dropped, rotten, from the bones, while the miserable life still lingered, and the putrid soul feebly struggled to escape from its more putrid prison.

Truly, the South faced a Hobson's choice.  

Southerners were clearly baffled by the stunning course of events. Ben Hill told his fellow Georgians that when the South had surrendered in 1865 she had met all the conditions set by the conquering North. She had given up the right of secession, she had given up slavery, she had made no claims for wartime damages, she had conceded civil equality for the freedmen, she had repudiated contracts, and she had risked the consequences of a social revolution. Yet the North had not only refused to allow her to rejoin the Union but had in fact passed military bills that called for additional concessions that would lead to the ultimate destruction of constitutional government. Robert E. Lee sadly lamented the fact that the failure to reconstruct the nation had made southerners more

bitter than at any time since the surrender at Appomattox. This theme of their own good faith contrasted with northern perfidy prevailed southern thinking for most of the Reconstruction period. Conservative advocates of reunion, such as John B. Gordon and L. Q. C. Lamar, pleaded with the Yankees to realize how much the South had given up after the Civil War. These men plaintively described their native region as a land of peaceful citizens going about the business of rebuilding their war-shattered fortunes.\footnote{Hill, Hill, 751-53; Entry for September 2, 1868, James G. Randall, ed., The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning (2 Vols., Springfield, Illinois, 1925-1933), II, 216-17; William B. Hesseltine, Confederate Leaders in the New South (Baton Rouge, 1950), 48; Allen P. Tankersley, John B. Gordon: A Study in Gallantry (Atlanta, 1955), 275-76; L. Q. C. Lamar to T. J. Wharton, December 25, 1873, cited in Edward Mayes, Lucius Q. C. Lamar: His Life, Times, and Speeches (Nashville, 1895), 180.}

Southerners vehemently denied charges made by both northerners and southern Republicans of continuing violence and disorder in the South. While controvering the truthfulness of southern "outrage" stories, conservatives argued that most of the actual violence in the South took place in states controlled by the Republicans. They traced these disturbances directly to the effects of incompetent and corrupt state and local governments. As more southern states were "redeemed" from radical rule in the late 1860's and early 1870's, southerners drew a striking contrast between the condition of these states and what they termed the near social anarchy reigning in states still under the
rule of carpetbaggers, scalawags, and Negroes. Why, southerners asked, if the Republicans controlled the entire machinery of government, could they not maintain order? Of course, they knew the obvious answer. Violence and social chaos were the logical results of governments run by fanatical Jacobins and deluded blacks.¹²

Southern spokesmen also pointed out that no community in the United States was without crime or violence, such problems being just as troublesome in the "loyal" states as in the South. The South, these writers argued, would be perfectly peaceful were it not for the deleterious effects of the teachings of radical incendiaries on the minds of the usually tractable Negroes. Carpetbaggers, both white and black, received most of the blame for the increasing violence after the war. Negro crime in turn produced vigilante justice when the whites could no longer tolerate these outrages, and Republican officials refused to arrest the guilty blacks. Even the ever cautious Wade Hampton of South Carolina defended the use of lynch law in cases of aggravated crimes that would go unpunished otherwise. Southerners were, however, careful to provide "accurate"

accounts of such episodes so as to prevent the "misunder-
standing" of their position in the North.13

Southerners, indeed, believed that outrage stories
were deliberately manufactured by radical newspapers for
political consumption in the North. During the excitement
of an election campaign, northern editors fervently waved
the "bloody shirt" in order to blind the voters to the
crimes of the radical party. If the people of the North
could only visit the South and see conditions as they
really were, there would be no more cause for sectional
animosity. Yet southerners wondered if they could ever
successfully dispel the Yankee myth of a revived rebellion.14

The task of making the truth known was made more
difficult by the misfortune that northern newspaper editors

13 Austin Texas State Gazette, April 6, 1867; Augusta
    Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, December 17, 1868; Vicksburg
    Daily Herald, August 18, 1868; Wilmington Daily Journal,
    July 21, November 25, 1868; Richmond Daily Dispatch,
    April 16, 1868; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, April 7, 1868;
    Speech of L. Q. C. Lamar at Nashua, New Hampshire,
    March 7, 1875, cited in Mayes, Lamar, 218-23; Jackson
    Daily Clarion, May 26, 1868; Wade Hampton to Jeremiah S.
    Black, November 11, 1867, Black Papers, LC; Tuscaloosa
    Independent Monitor, April 7, 1868, January 16, 1869;
    Memphis Evening Post, January 11, 1869; undated (ca. 1872)
    account of disturbances in Edgefield, South Carolina, by
    Marion C. Butler and others, Butler Papers, SCL.

14 Charleston Daily Courier, October 21, 1869;
    Wilmington Daily Journal, May 25, 1869; Little Rock
    Arkansas State Gazette, March 27, September 5, 1868,
    September 7, 1869; E. Merton Coulter, Negro Legislators
    in Georgia During the Reconstruction Period (Athens,
    Georgia, 1968), 26-30; Vicksburg Daily Herald, April 16,
    1868; Richmond Daily Dispatch, July 20, 1868; Raleigh
    Daily Sentinel, October 2, 1867; New Orleans Daily
    Picayune, May 20, 1870.
were unprincipled hypocrites. Southerners singled out reports of northern crime and violence with both an accusatory and self-righteous air. They smugly argued that "statistics" proved that there were many more crimes committed in the North than in the South. Noting the mass murders and lynchings in many of the northern states, southern editors asked their northern colleagues why such crimes were not more extensively reported and given the same attention as were "southern outrages." Why did Congress not set up committees to investigate these outbreaks and pass legislation to suppress violence in the "loyal" states? Such "facts" refuted all the self-serving claims of New England and the rest of the northern states to having a "higher civilization" than the South. Despite the impoverished and chaotic condition of southern society, conservatives maintained that it was actually safer to live in the South than in the northern cities.\(^{15}\)

Realizing the rippling political impact of disorder in their region and what they believed to be the refusal of the Republicans to see the true condition of the South, some southerners despaired of ever participating in public matters.

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\(^{15}\)Richmond Daily Dispatch, February 6, 1869; Atlanta Constitution, January 9, 1870; Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, March 22, 1870; Charleston Daily Courier, October 8, 1870; Memphis Daily Appeal, May 1, 1871, July 6, 1873; Mobile Daily Register, November 9, 1872; Speech of Zebulon Vance, n.d., 1871, Greensboro, North Carolina, N. J. Watkins, ed., The Pine and Palm Gathering (Baltimore, 1873), 32; Jackson Weekly Clarion, May 1, 1873; Daily Memphis Avalanche, March 27, 1869; Cleveland, "The Late War," 14-15; Charleston Mercury, August 8, 1868.
life again. As elections for constitutional conventions were held in 1867 and 1868, certain conservative politicians, such as Benjamin F. Perry of South Carolina, advised their fellow citizens not to vote and thus avoid any contact with the arbitrary and corrupt process of congressional reconstruction. Yet rather than allowing the radicals to win by default, many conservatives advised the people to at least register. After sweeping Republican victories in the early balloting, even former proponents of a political boycott urged the southern people to organize themselves to fight their enemies to the death.16

By the summer of 1867 whites, overcoming their earlier political apathy, began to register under the provisions of the Reconstruction Acts. Newspaper editors exhorted whites to vote in full force or face the prospect of the Negroes forming an electoral majority in many southern states. Even if conservatives could not block the assembling of constitutional conventions, they could at least elect some capable convention delegates. On the effectiveness of mobilizing the white vote, many southerners believed,

depended the future of constitutional government in the United States. A Natchez, Mississippi, editorialist compared the South in 1868 to a drowning man who would gladly accept help from any quarter.17

Conservatives also saw the necessity for summoning conventions to counter radical proselytizing efforts. These assemblies gave southerners an opportunity to draft platforms proclaiming the unconstitutionality of the Reconstruction Acts and adopting a program of white supremacy and resistance to black suffrage. Herschel Johnson of Georgia admonished his fellow citizens in a public letter that the whites in Georgia, if united, could easily control their state. He advised Georgians not to acquiesce in the destruction of republican government but rather to cling to the Constitution as an ark of safety in a "storm tossed sea." Following the counsels of Lee and others, the traditional leaders of the South began to throw off their sense of torpor and bestir themselves to enter the electoral lists against the black Republicans.

However, a nagging question remained: what if they were

17Daniel Scully to Charles A. Brusle, June 20, 1867, Brusle Papers, LSU; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, June 10, July 25, 1867; Jackson Daily Clarion, June 11, 12, 1867; New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 1, 1867; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, March 18, 1868; Richmond Daily Dispatch, April 2, 1867; Tallahassee Sentinel, April 2, 1867; Anderson Intelligencer, February 29, 1868; W. F. Leak to Thomas Ruffin, February 29, 1868, Hamilton, ed., Ruffin Papers, IV, 192; Vicksburg Daily Herald, April 7, 1868; D. D. Glenn to L. Q. C. Lamar, September 22, 1867, cited in Mayes, Lamar, 161; Natchez Weekly Democrat, May 6, 1867, April 27, 1868.
unsuccessful? Conservative hopes seemed bright in the states where the whites formed a majority of the new electorate, but even in these states the so-called "scalawag" element might be large enough to carry the Republicans to victory. In states with Negro electoral majorities, such a result seemed inevitable. How then could the newly energized southern whites cope with such cruel political and demographic realities?  

Bucking a general trend toward passivity after the passage of the Reconstruction Acts, some conservatives not only decided to accept Negro suffrage but to solicit actively black votes for their cause. Many reasoned that their best course of action, short of preventing the execution of the Reconstruction Acts, was to control the Negro vote. This strategy did not, of course, mean that white southerners accepted Negro voting as a wise and necessary reform. On the contrary, some white speakers, even when addressing black audiences, candidly admitted their fervent opposition to any form of black suffrage. However, by the spring and summer of 1867, conservatives were holding biracial meetings, often with black speakers who urged their fellow freedmen to follow the leadership of the conservative whites. Southerners pragmatically sought

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to make the best of a bad situation by leading the new black voters in the "proper" direction and, above all else, avoiding any permanent alienation of the races. In the view of many traditional paternalists, the black voter became an object for careful guidance rather than a target of hatred. The Negroes would remain an important part of the southern population, and the whites could ill afford to shove them aside even at election time. For less idealistic politicians, votes were votes, no matter what their color.

Indeed, the strange sight of old members of the planter class soliciting the votes of their former slaves led some northern radicals to fear that the southern whites might actually be able to control the black vote and thus regain their former power in the national government.19

The white appeal to black voters was based on the traditional southern view of society as a unified organic whole in which both capital and labor shared common interests. Southern speakers warned the Negroes to remember that whites were their best friends. Who provided them with employment? Who gave them food, shelter, and medical care? Who shared with them a common interest in agricultural prosperity? Citing the old traditions of white paternalism, stump speakers urged the listening blacks not to desert their trusted confidants, the southern white men. They also asked the freedmen to reflect on the fact that their well-being depended entirely on the good fortune of their white neighbors in the community. Conservatives assured the Negroes that they had no desire to put them back into slavery as radical speakers had led them to believe. One North Carolina editor went so far as argue that the real friends of the Negro were those who had honestly opposed his enfranchisement but who would now aid him in casting his ballot wisely.20

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20 Charleston Daily Courier, April 10, August 17, 1867, May 6, September 29, 1868; Annual Cyclopedia (1867), 19-20, 28; Percy Scott Flippin, Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia: State Rights Unionist (Richmond, 1931), 279-81; Memphis Daily Appeal, March 16, 1872; Charles E. Kennon to Thomas C. W. Ellis, July 5, 1870, E. John Ellis Papers, LSU;
The only disturbing element in the South's biracial Eden was the serpentine influence of the "northern adventurers": without their presence the "kindest feelings" would exist between masters and former slaves. Southerners feared that radical emissaries from the North would stir up antagonism between the races and permanently alienate the black and white populations. Conservative speakers cautioned the freedmen not to be led astray by the siren call of the smooth-tongued radicals. Whites also promised the freedmen full protection in all their rights if they resisted the seductive entreaties of the scalawags and carpetbaggers. Beneath these kindly admonitions lay a distinct tone of harshness. A Memphis editorialist asserted that the Negroes must always remain common laborers and should not let enfranchisement deceive them about their humble position in society. Whites predicted that the failure of their efforts to win black political support would inevitably lead to a breakdown in the relationship between employers (white) and employees (black) that would ultimately produce an American version of Saint-Domingue. Even those whites who spoke most glowingly of the old paternalistic order, warned the blacks that if forced into a corner, they would draw the racial

Richmond Daily Dispatch, October 22, 1867, April 16, 1868; Daily Memphis Avalanche, June 11, 1867, April 6, 1869; Atlanta Constitution, July 22, 1868; Jackson Daily Clarion, June 22, 1867; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, October 14, 1867; Wilmington Daily Journal, April 2, 1870.
line. The result would be the ruin and eventual extinction of the blacks in the South.\textsuperscript{21}

Southerners optimistically believed that their attempts to win the confidence of black voters would be successful. Throughout the Reconstruction period, conservatives predicted that the Negroes had finally learned their lesson, their refrain being that the blacks, having been tricked by the wily carpetbaggers for the last time, would join with their fellow white citizens in precipitating a final rout of radicalism. Even after the blacks had voted the Republican ticket in election after election, some southerners persisted in hoping that the Negroes were about to throw off the yoke of radical thralldom. For the white southerner, the Negro could only be free and independent when he voted according to the dictates of his white friends and neighbors. Only Republicans apparently noticed the fascinating paradox in this position.\textsuperscript{22}


\textsuperscript{22}Charles Delery, The Black Ghost or Radicalism in the United States (New Orleans, 1868), 30-45; Jackson Daily Clarion, July 3, 1868; New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 2, 1869, February 17, 1870; Louisville Courier-Journal.
On a less elevated level, southern politicians went to great lengths to win the confidence of the naturally skeptical Negro voters. Conservatives held bonfires, mass meetings, and large barbecues to gather the blacks together for political speeches. Negro Democratic campaign clubs were organized with great fanfare and received much publicity in the conservative press. Yet most blacks could not trust men who had opposed their enfranchisement and forced the blacks to eat at separate tables at the political barbecues. An imaginative group of whites got a traveling circus to accept voter registration certificates as admission tickets and thereby prevented some blacks from voting. In the long run, urgent pleas, free meals, and outright bribes were ineffective. The blacks listened to the Democratic speakers and feasted on the bounteous viands but then voted the Republican ticket anyway. A common southern expression of the day noted that the Negro would follow his old master in everything but politics.

Frustrated by the failure of milder methods, some whites forced the Negroes to listen to Democratic speakers and showed a fixed determination to control black voters by force if necessary.23

June 29, July 26, 1870; Daily Shreveport Times, May 25, 1875; Memphis Daily Appeal, January 9, July 9, 1875.

23 Myrta Lockett Avary, ed., Dixie After the War: An Exposition of Social Conditions Existing in the South During the Twelve Years Succeeding the Fall of Richmond (New York, 1906), 282-93; Cecil E. McNair, "Reconstruction in Bullock County," Alabama Historical Quarterly, XV (Spring, 1953),
The unsuccessful Union Reform movement in South Carolina in 1870 illustrates the essential weakness of white attempts to win blacks over to the conservative cause. Whites made their plans in the spring to unite the "honest" men of both races into a single party advocating reform in the state government. By July the Union Reform party had made its nominations: a Republican, Richard B. Carpenter, for governor and the conservative Matthew C. Butler of Edgefield for lieutenant governor. The new coalition stood for the common interests of blacks and whites, of capital and labor. Their platform called


24 The equally significant Louisiana Unification movement will be dealt with in chapter VIII.
for lower taxes, a reduction in government expenditures, and an end to official corruption. Even Butler, who would later become a leading force in the violent "Rifle Club" campaign of 1876, described the blacks and whites as a "common people" who shared a "common destiny" and should therefore unite, heal past differences, and throw the Republican rascals out. However, to many blacks this new party seemed to be the old Democratic party in disguise, and the reform movement won few converts among the Negroes. Nor were they any more successful with the so-called "respectable" white Republicans. Ex-Governor James L. Orr argued that only the Republican party could achieve genuine reform in the state and maintained that the only hope of white South Carolinians was to join the Republican party. When the reform party was overwhelmingly defeated in October, whites at first cried "fraud" but soon became apprehensive about "black incendiaries" in their midst.

The most direct result of the defeat of the fusion movement was the revival of the Ku Klux Klan activity in South Carolina.25

Southerners placed the blame for the failure of racial cooperation movements squarely on the shoulders of

the native and "foreign" white radical agitators in the South. Sincere paternalists, such as Lee, worried about the radical emissaries breaking the web of intricate human relationships that had established a common bond between the races. Practical politicians envied the seemingly total control that the Republicans exercised over the blacks. Such reckless partisans induced the Negroes to ignore the advice of their employers and flock to the polls to vote the radical ticket. More importantly, these unprincipled politicians gave the blacks an exaggerated notion of their own importance and made them believe that they had the ability, yea even the right, to hold political office. One disgruntled North Carolinian wrote in his journal: "The people are disquieted by the traveling political tricksters, and intriguers. Oh! My Country! It is filled with rogues, thieves, liars, drunkards and political mountebanks." All would be well if only the radical incendiaries would leave the southerners of both races alone to work out their own destiny. However, such was not to be the case, and many southerners dreaded the long term consequences of a growing antagonism between the races.26

Southerners charged that radical politicians created most of the disturbances in their region. By promising the Negroes free lands and other alluring benefits if the Republicans came to power, these agitators caused the blacks to become insolent and turbulent. While nervously praising the conduct of the Negroes under such great provocation, southerners at the same time were wary of the danger of "black leagues" fomenting riots. Reports of armed Negroes drilling late at night often disturbed the sleep of hyper-sensitive southerners during election campaigns. Conservatives accused the radicals of intimidating the blacks by exercising tight military control over them. A hopeful woman in Mississippi wrote: "If we are once clear of Yankee adventurers we will be happy and prosperous again." 27

The disturbed condition of southern politics rekindled earlier fears of Negro insurrections to a height reminiscent of the Christmas panic of 1865. Rumors circulated of armed blacks, under secret orders from white radicals, marching through the countryside ready to seize white lands. Shadowy tales of secret night meetings, bloody threats, and picketed roads all stimulated already overwrought imaginations. When Negroes were seen buying matches, alarmed whites suspected that this marked the beginning of an epidemic of arson. Such fears, in part, resulted from the continuing dissatisfaction of both races with the settlement of agricultural accounts at the end of each year as well as the political excitement attendant on the formation of the new southern state governments. Gloomy apprehensions of a war of the races and the end of white civilization in the South filled many troubled minds. State governors and private citizens wrote to President Johnson requesting troops to disarm the Negroes and break up insurrectionary combinations. The Negroes in turn became excited about white intentions, and soon began to arm and drill in preparation to defend themselves against an anticipated attack. The Army investigated numerous complaints by whites of impending outbreaks in the fall and winter of 1867-1868 but could find little evidence of any "real" danger. Again, however, perceptions were more important than reality, and southern fears of black
violence soon led to serious consequences for both races in the South. 28

A more tangible object of white concern was the Union League. Originally founded in the North during the Civil War, the Union League of America began to form chapters in the South during the early part of the Reconstruction period. The southern branch, commonly called the "Loyal League," consisted primarily of Negroes enrolled by white

radicals. The Loyal League in the South was both a social and a political organization designed to mobilize Republican strength at each election. White southerners believed that the secret meetings, the rituals, and the elaborate regalia attracted the superstitious blacks. Although this may have been the case for some Negroes, many more joined the League because of its association with the party of emancipation. Since little was known then (or even later) of the details of League activities, stories spread of armed drills and floodcurdling plots against the whites. Conservative politicians also resented the ability of the League to organize the black voters into a solid phalanx for the Republicans. Perhaps this was the real objection of most southerners to the Loyal League.29

White southerners knew in their own minds that the Loyal Leagues were pernicious organizations busily hatching diabolical plans against them. Founded by what one editor

described as "black-hearted whites to the manner born, assisted by a few Yankees," these organizations sought to incite a war between the races. Southerners traced much of the racial unrest in the South back to the clandestine activities of the "oath-bound" Loyal League, comparing the local bodies to the fanatical Jacobin clubs of revolutionary France. The formation of this Negro organization made whites even more panicky and susceptible to wild rumors of approaching riot and insurrection.\(^{30}\)

Alarmed whites decried the marches and demonstrations by the Loyal League as sure signs of impending violence. Newspapers reported, particularly during the election campaigns of 1867 and 1868, that armed Loyal Leaguers were patrolling the roads disarming whites. Planters claimed that these radical Negroes were plotting to destroy gin houses and other white property. A more realistic fear was that these black organizations would effectively muster the full strength of the Republican vote and badly defeat the whites at the polls.\(^{31}\)

\(^{30}\)Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, August 19, 1867; Wilmington Daily Journal, October 30, 1867; Charleston Daily Courier, May 29, August 17, 1867; Richmond Daily Dispatch, January 23, 1868; Jackson Daily Clarion, June 5, 13, 1868; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, May 12, 1870; Morgan, Yazoo, 181-94.

\(^{31}\)Raleigh Weekly North Carolina Standard, November 6, 1867; New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 7, 1867; New Orleans Tribune, July 18, 1867; Memphis Daily Appeal, September 2, 1868; Fleming, Reconstruction in Alabama, 514-16, 562-68; Avary, ed., Dixie After the War, 325-38; John Wallace, Carpetbag Rule in Florida: The Inside Workings of the Reconstruction of Civil Government in
Southerners averred that the incendiary movements of the Union League were not merely the random actions of local groups. Rather they saw all this political militancy as part of a radical plot, hatched in the North, to stir up strife and violence in the South. Northern radicals by cynically manipulating the docile Negroes during an election canvass could create enough "outrages" to gratify the northern appetite for more bloody tales of southern rebellion. Conservative southern leaders frequently warned their constituents to exercise great forbearance unless forced into a violent confrontation. Radical success depended on Negroes being killed, and some southerners charged that the Republicans themselves committed many of these outrages against the Negroes in order to manufacture instant political capital.32


Finding that the Negroes still joined the Union League and refused to follow the lead of their old masters in politics, southerners turned to more coercive methods. Conservatives argued that there was no reason why planters and other employers should continue to hire blacks who voted the Republican ticket and secretly plotted against the whites. Whites also decided to withdraw their patronage from "radical" draymen, barbers, and porters. Southerners fired employees who persisted in their Republicanism and made the connection between politics and employment quite clear to the freedmen. By such means conservatives optimistically expected to show the blacks where their true interests lay.  

Under attack from northern radicals for "intimidating" the blacks, southerners responded that it was natural for anyone to reward his friends and punish his enemies. Employers cited the traditions of the common law and liberty of contract in defending their right to dismiss laborers who proved to be politically untractable. Southerners argued that they intimidated voters less than the radical Loyal Leagues. They also pointed out, with some

justification, that employers in the North, of both parties, had long controlled the votes of their workers.\footnote{Daily Memphis Avalanche, July 17, 1867; Jackson Daily Clarion, June 20, 1868; Wilmington Daily Journal, April 7, 1868; Richmond Daily Dispatch, June 22, 1869; Vicksburg Daily Herald, March 11, 1868; John Niven, "Connecticut: Poor Progress in the Land of Steady Habits," in James C. Mohr, ed., Radical Republicans in the North (Baltimore, 1976), 32-35.}

Overwhelming evidence indicates that white southerners utilized various forms of economic coercion against black voters. Planters warned their field hands before elections that if they voted they would have to leave both their jobs and their homes. Many unwilling freedmen were driven from their lands even as their crops grew in the fields. Local planters also signed agreements among themselves not to hire known Republican Negroes or blacks discharged by other planters. During election campaigns conservatives organized Negro Democratic clubs by promising employment and protection for the members. When employers failed in their attempts to keep the freedmen from learning of voter registration and even elections, they took a more direct approach. As one small farmer in Tennessee later recalled: "I had fully made up my mind that to be governed by my former slaves was an ignominy which I should not and would not endure." On election day he gathered up his small force of black laborers, gave them all conservative tickets,
marched them to the polls, and watched them closely as they cast their ballots.  

In many areas this economic intimidation was not nearly so effective as contemporary observers or later historians have contended. A persistent labor shortage in the postwar South made it economically unfeasible to hire only those Negroes who either did not vote or voted with the conservatives. Some planters who tried to control the votes of their laborers found themselves without hands and forced to employ white men and black women, much to their general dissatisfaction. Clever blacks joined the Democratic clubs and made fulsome promises to vote the Democratic ticket, but quietly supported the Republicans on election day. Blinded by a determination to end radical rule in their states, a few planters made

substantial economic sacrifices by refusing to hire Republican blacks. 36

Economic intimidation was the most effective method of reducing the Republican vote in most states. Blacks on some plantations along the Mississippi River signed labor contracts with the understanding that they would not vote. During the frequent political canvasses Democrats compiled lists of "radical" Negroes for future "reference." Whites purchased the freedmen's registration certificates or forced the blacks to hand them over at gun point. Conservatives in Mississippi told the blacks that they would be enrolled for military service if they registered to vote. County officials indicted blacks on trumped up charges and put them in jail until after the election. Republicans firmly believed that such economic and legal intimidation of the freedmen greatly helped the Democrats and pleaded with the northern radicals for aid. 37


Even with speeches, cajolery, and intimidation, redemption did not come, and southerners found themselves face to face with the bitter prospect of permanent Republican rule. Despairing of their efforts, some conservatives confessed their own political impotence and looked to the North as their only hope of salvation. A sweeping victory by the northern Democrats became their last best chance of overturning Jacobin rule. Southerners optimistically predicted a northern reaction against "Negro government" that would drive the moneychangers from the national temple. After their hopes were dashed in several elections, some conservatives still looked for deliverance by the northern people. However, even in their seemingly helpless condition, the South's leaders brazenly demanded that the northern Democrats stand unalterably opposed to both the Reconstruction Acts and to black suffrage. Should there be any deviations from orthodoxy on these issues, the southerners would immediately repudiate such heresies and desert their northern allies.  

When the Democrats won significant victories in the northern state elections of 1867, southerners again prophesied the imminent collapse of radicalism. The Augusta Constitutionalist crowed: "The radicals have experienced their Quartre-Bras; Waterloo will soon follow." Conservatives interpreted the election returns as a repudiation of Negro suffrage as well as a rout of the radicals. These triumphs gave the southerners a new incentive to organize to gird up their loins for the final overthrow of tyranny, and to ensure the victory of the white race over the forces of darkness.39

A significant number of southern leaders, however, remained deeply skeptical about the prospects of any aid from the North. After all, the siren call of the northern

Democrats had on a previous occasion lured the South into the dangerous shoals and breakwaters of secession and war. Ben Hill described the northern Democrats as timid capitalists and bondholders who would do nothing for the South. L. Q. C. Lamar concluded that it was impossible to sway a northern audience in favor of the South even with the best efforts of conservative speakers. The unreliability of northern support forced southerners to turn more and more inward and to husband their meager political resources in the battle against radicalism. Southerners began to listen to the counsels of men who advocated counterrevolutionary violence.  

The election of Ulysses S. Grant in 1868 not only confirmed the opinions of those southerners who doubted the prospects of aid from the North but also forced the South once again to re-evaluate her political strategy. Although some southerners had little faith in the promise of peace by the great northern war hero and had lost all interest in national politics, others thought differently. Alexander H. Stephens urged the South to give Grant a "fair trial" and treat him with the same spirit of

generosity with which he had treated General Lee and the surrendering Confederates at Appomattox. Some overly sanguine commentators even predicted that Grant would eventually leave the radical party and join the Democracy. 41

Grant's early statements on southern affairs lent some credence to these hopes. The first testing ground of Grant's southern policy became the commonwealth of Virginia. As early as 1867 some leading conservatives in that state had advised their fellow citizens that resistance to congressional reconstruction was futile and had called for a moderate alliance of former Whigs and union men that would prevent the radicals from gaining power by default. Such pleas for reason, however, fell on deaf ears, and the whites remained politically apathetic. Meanwhile, the radicals had captured control of the Virginia Republican party and had won a smashing victory in the 1867 elections, thereby controlling the approaching constitutional convention. The convention met early in 1868 and drafted a new constitution that contained both a stringent disfranchisement provision and required all officeholders and jurors to take the so-called "ironclad oath." Confronting

the likelihood of turning the affairs of their state over to an unsavory coalition of carpetbaggers, scalawags, and Negroes, conservatives moved quickly to avoid this result.\footnote{Eckenrode, \textit{Virginia During Reconstruction}, 70-85; Maddex, \textit{Virginia Conservatives}, 46-66.}

When the federal commander in Virginia, the moderate General John M. Schofield, indefinitely postponed the 1868 state elections, Virginia's traditional political leaders had the time they needed to muster their forces and plan their strategy. In December 1868 Alexander H. H. Stuart, long a powerful voice in state affairs, wrote a public letter to a Richmond newspaper in which he proposed a new compromise plan. Terming the radical constitution drafted by the convention unacceptable, Stuart, nevertheless, argued that the people must now sacrifice their prejudices, bend to the will of Congress, and accept black suffrage. Despite his own strong reservations about Negro voting, Stuart maintained that it would be far better to have universal suffrage and universal amnesty than universal suffrage and disfranchisement. He, therefore, proposed an alliance with the "moderate" elements in the Republican party either to rid the new state constitution of its objectionable features or defeat its ratification altogether. The famous "Committee of Nine," the leaders of this new movement, met with President-elect Grant in Washington in January 1869. Grant refused to commit himself to their cause, but he did express his opposition to the
disfranchisement and test oath provisions of the radical constitution. While negotiations in the capital continued, the conservatives decided to back a compromise electoral ticket headed by moderate Republican Gilbert C. Walker as the candidate for governor. They persuaded the reluctant Democrats and their gubernatorial candidate Robert E. Withers to withdraw from the canvass, but many old party stalwarts grumbled loudly about supporting a Republican for governor. In May, Grant justified the faith of the compromise men in him by setting July 6 as election day and allowing separate votes on the disfranchisement and test oath clauses of the constitution. Faced with no real alternative, most conservatives supported the Walker party. They achieved a sizeable victory over the radicals and defeated both the disfranchisement and test oath provisions. A few unreconstructed mavericks, such as Henry A. Wise, still complained of a "sell out" to the radicals, and leading Republicans charged that "loyal men" had been defrauded of victory through threats and intimidation. Conservatives, however, pointed proudly to a victory won through a subtle combination of public conciliation and private maneuvering. Unrealistically optimistic southerners hoped for a similarly smooth redemption process in other states.\(^{43}\)

\(^{43}\)Maddex, Virginia Conservatives, 67-85; Alexander H. H. Stuart, A Narrative of the Leading Incidents . . . of the Committee of Nine, in 1869 (New York, 1973), 20-23, 44-46; Robert M. T. Hunter to Ulysses S. Grant, April 21, 1869,
Even before the Virginia controversy had been settled, Congress had passed with Grant's approval and sent to the states for ratification a fifteenth amendment to the Constitution that prohibited the states from discriminating in their suffrage requirements on the basis of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Southerners found little comfort in the fact that the northern hypocrites would now have to swallow the bitter pill of black suffrage. The danger had come at last: the states could no longer exercise any control over the composition of the electorate. All the South's dark fears of consolidation had come to pass, and the federal government had become a centralized despotism. When the ratification of this revolutionary amendment was proclaimed in 1870, it seemed that the reins of government had been handed over to reckless partisan fanatics. The race line had eclipsed in importance the Mason and Dixon line in national politics.44


44Charleston Daily Courier, April 14, 1869; Montgomery Daily Advertiser, April 15, 1869; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, January 29, April 1, 1870; Louisville Courier-Journal, March 31, 1870; Memphis Daily Appeal, March 27, 1870.
Whatever its objectionable features, the Fifteenth Amendment was a hard fact of life to be reckoned with. Under the leadership of that copperhead of copperheads, Clement L. Vallandingham of Ohio, the northern Democrats adopted what became known as the "New Departure" policy. Forgoing further opposition to the postwar constitutional amendments, they sought to bury once and for all the old war issues and challenge the Republicans on questions on which that party was vulnerable, e.g., corruption in government. Republicans naturally looked askance at what seemed to them to be rank opportunism. The leading newspaper organ of the party in Texas charged that the Democrats, despite their many previous protests against black suffrage, were now openly courting the Negro voter because power was more important to them than principle.\(^{45}\)

Many southern leaders also came to realize that factious wrangling over the constitutional amendments was certainly futile if not harmful. The chances for repeal of these measures were remote at best, and continued defiance in the South would only impede efforts to convert northern "reform" Republicans to the side of the Democracy. Conservatives advised the southern people to "accept" Negro suffrage as a "fixed fact" and at least give it a fair trial. The New Departure would give the southerners a valuable opportunity to rid themselves of the onus of

\(^{45}\text{Austin Daily State Journal, June 17, 1871.}\)
rebellion and perhaps even win the Negroes over to the
cause of good government. Beneath this surface moderation
lay a bedrock of resistance. Even those politicians
calling for acceptance of the situation cautioned their
constituents not to abate their opposition to Republican
reconstruction measures. Every citizen had a duty to obey
the Constitution and the laws, but, for the southerners,
this obedience would obviously be grudging and conditional,
and would not imply in the least approval of these
enactments. Governor James L. Kemper told the members of
the Virginia General Assembly that the new amendments did
not change at all his unshakable conviction that the white
race must always rule and that "social equality" between
the races was an "impossibility."  

A small but important group of conservatives denounced
even these halfhearted concessions as an uncalled for
abandonment of sacred principles. After a long history
of condemning all the reconstruction measures, for these
New Departure Democrats suddenly to change their tune made

George W. Booker to Alexander H. Stephens, March 12,
1871, Herschel Johnson to Stephens, August 17, 1871,
Stephens Papers, LC; Louisville Courier-Journal, August 12,
1870, July 14, 1871; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, September 9,
1869; Hill, Hill, 55; Nelson Morehouse Blake, William Mahone
of Virginia: Soldier and Political Insurgent (Richmond,
1935), 136-37; Richmond Daily Dispatch, April 17, 1869;
Jackson Weekly Clarion, June 24, 1869; Charleston Daily
Courier, July 12, 1871; Governor Robert B. Lindsay,
Message to the Legislature, November 21, 1871, Alabama
Senate Journal (1871-1872), 7; Governor James L. Kemper,
Message to the General Assembly, December 2, 1874, Virginia
them, in the words of a Memphis editorial writer, "political knaves, gamblers and tricksters, good in promising to restore liberty and the Constitution, but still better in acquiescing in despotism." Far better to stand by ancient truth than grovel in the dust at the feet of your oppressors. Alexander H. Stephens told his fellow Georgians that it was impossible to resist radical rule in the South without opposing the "unconstitutional" amendments. Such an abandonment of southern honor made conscientious conservatives blanch, become disgusted with politics, and ready to quit the field of battle. Stephens' brother, Linton, castigated those cowards who were willing to accept the situation while loyal southerners languished in federal "Bastilles" under false arrest for violations of the unconstitutional Enforcement Acts. If the South was ready to drink to the dregs from this cup of degradation, what was there to distinguish a southern Democrat from a northern radical? The sharp and acrimonious division of the southern leadership over the New Departure was, however, a shadow battle of overblown rhetoric. For one thing, the adamant opponents like Stephens, constituted only a vocal minority. More importantly, even those southerners favoring the New Departure had made only minimal concessions and were still determined to rid the South of Republican rule at all hazards.47

47Memphis Daily Appeal, May 27, June 3, 1871; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, May 1, June 1, July 3, 1870,
Those southerners who opposed the New Departure were also skeptical of the Liberal Republican movement. This group of Republican "reformers" had broken with the Grant administration over a number of issues and had met in Cincinnati, Ohio, in May 1872. After a series of fumbling moves, these political amateurs had nominated Horace Greeley, the editor of the New York Tribune, for President. For the South to support this eccentric old abolitionist and bloody shirt waver was more than some conservatives could stand. Rabid fire-eaters advocated a southern boycott of national politics and even denied the importance of defeating Grant's bid for re-election. Those southerners who favored a so-called "straight-out" policy and a separate Democratic candidate argued that the Liberal Republicans, despite their soothing promises, did not genuinely oppose carpetbag rule in the South. Yet the straight-out Democrats in the South were a rather forlorn band, largely consisting of Stephens' followers in Georgia.  

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48 A. Dudley Mann to Jefferson Davis, December 5, 1871, January 19, 1872, Dunbar Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis,
Other southerners had watched the early stirrings of Liberal Republicanism with intense interest. As unpalatable as the nomination of their old enemy Greeley might be, the man in the floppy white hat was the South's only hope to defeat Grant. Beating Grant at all costs became the watchword of southern conservatives in the campaign of 1872, and they heaped scorn on the purblind straight-out Democrats who would foolishly throw away a chance for victory to maintain some abstract and long dead "principle." These southerners saw the election of Greeley as the key to the redemption of their native land. The stakes were so high that the majority of southern leaders advised the voters to swallow hard and support their old foe.  

Although southerners were willing to use Greeley to defeat Grant they realized that victory in the election


was far from assured. The unprincipled demagogues in the Republican party might again throw sand in the eyes of the northern voters with their usual bloody shirt campaign tactics. Southern spokesmen warned their fellow citizens that the radicals would like nothing better than some fresh "outrages" from the South and exhorted them to behave peaceably. According to southerners, the radicals planned to incite a collision between the races in the South that would serve as a pretext to use the Army to cow the Democrats and thereby ensure the election of Grant. Southerners also accused the Loyal Leagues of intimidating black Greeley supporters. The cruel and diabolical radicals would do anything to control their black dupes, including lies, fraud, and physical force. Given the content of this campaign propaganda, southerners could readily attribute a Republican victory to radical trickery and violence. 50

Democratic apathy and lingering hostility to Greeley allowed Grant to carry much of the South and win a smashing

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50Nolen, Negro's Image in the South, 63-68; Speech of Robert M. T. Hunter, Tammany Hall, New York, September 13, 1872, Hunter Papers, UVa.; Jackson Weekly Clarion, August 15, September 26, November 15, 1872; Atlanta Constitution, August 2, October 5, 12, 25, 1872; Mobile Daily Register, August 11, 24, October 1, November 3, 1872; Greenville Enterprise, August 14, 1872; John Screven to Governor James M. Smith of Georgia, September 14, 1872, Arnold-Screven Papers, SHC; Edgefield Advertiser, August 15, 1872.
victory in the Electoral College. Some southerners again hoped that Grant might behave magnanimously toward them after such an overwhelming personal triumph, but conservatives warned that there could be no national reconciliation so long as the South remained impoverished and garrisoned with federal troops. Southerners directed their attention more and more to their state and local problems. They also despaired of ever winning the political support of the Negro. Their "conciliatory" policy toward the blacks in election after election had not prevented the ungrateful freedmen from siding with the South's most bitter enemies. The radicals themselves had drawn the color line in southern politics and would, therefore, be responsible for the inevitable outbreak of racial warfare.51

Looking at their own condition, southerners found a world turned upside down. The hated Yankees minced no words in their determination to remake southern society from the bottom up. Carpetbaggers and some native Republicans openly proclaimed their intention of reshaping the South into the image of radical New England. When southerners expressed resentment at this cultural chauvinism, Republicans caustically replied that the

hypocritical slaveholders were trying to hold onto their
former domination over the poor whites and the blacks. The
scalawag Governor of Mississippi, James L. Alcorn, even
attacked the sacred memory of John C. Calhoun. Alcorn
bluntly told the people of his state that, by following
the doctrines of the great South Carolinian, they had
stiffled their own economic growth and made the surrender
at Appomattox inevitable. Alcorn admonished his listeners
that the day had come for the South to become a part of
northern industrial civilization. Even some ex-rebels
agreed that slavery had been an impediment to the South's
economy, and rejoiced at its death. North Carolina
Republican Thomas Settle informed the voters of his district
that the benefits of free labor would create a new agricul-
tural prosperity. He maintained that "Yankees and Yankee
notions are just what we want in this country." He also
argued that the love of money was not evil but natural and
that northern capital and expertise would make the South
over into a paradise for both races.  

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52 National Anti-Slavery Standard, October 10, 1868;
George E. Spencer to Grenville Dodge, October 22, 1867,
cited in Stanley P. Hirshon, Grenville M. Dodge: Soldier,
Politician and Railroad Pioneer (Bloomington, Indiana,
1967), 159; G. W. Williams to St. John R. Liddell, March 21,
1867, Moses Liddell Papers, LSU; Atlanta Constitution,
October 25, 1868; Austin Daily State Journal, August 7,
1870; Inaugural Address of Governor James L. Alcorn,
March 10, 1870, Mississippi House Journal (1870), 62-63;
J. B. Killebrew to Kemp P. Battle, January 15, 1868, Battle
Family Papers, SHC; Thomas Settle, Jr., notes of a speech
at Republican meeting in Rockingham County, North Carolina,
March, n.d., 1867, Settle Papers, SHC.
Southerners feared otherwise. Robert M. T. Hunter spoke for many when he asserted that the reconstruction policies of the radical Republicans would "Africanize" the South, drive the whites away, and extinguish Christian civilization in the former Confederate states. The barbarians were at the gates, and black rule was the wave of the future. Alarmed conservatives predicted that Negro enfranchisement would be followed by "social equality" and that racial amalgamation could not be far in the future. The darkest nightmares of the pro-slavery theorists had become all too real. Governor Benjamin G. Humphreys of Mississippi wrote to a political compatriot that the days of a "white man's government" were numbered: "You, and I will have to take back seats or be elevated at the end of a rope. Such is the civilization of the age."53

The most visible sign of the South's degradation was the seemingly omnipresent Negro officeholders. Revisionist historians have shown that blacks held relatively few offices in relation to their proportion of the population and certainly very few relative to their numerical

importance in the Republican party. These studies have served as a useful corrective to earlier accounts, but they tell us little about the contemporary southern perspective. The mere presence of a single black official threw many white southerners into a blind rage. For the proud whites to have to deal with these dusky officeholders was their final humiliation. Some southerners even believed that Negro officials had followed logically from the original evil of emancipation. Whites also questioned the wisdom of summoning Negro jurors, whose favor, everyone knew, could be easily purchased for the sum of five dollars. Conservatives who visited their state legislatures expressed shock and dismay at watching the Negroes act as lawmakers. White disfranchisement in some of the southern states only added insult to injury. Southerners bitterly pointed out that their former slaves now had more political influence than the "best men" of the regime. The Raleigh Sentinel sadly described a dinner attended by three ex-governors, an ex-justice of the state supreme court, one or two ex-members of Congress, and certain other distinguished men. The only person in this august gathering who could vote was the black man who waited on the tables.  

\[54\] Wood, "Revising Reconstruction History," 103-13; Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, July 20, 1867, McLaurin Papers, Duke; Entries for July 9, 14, 1867, Josiah Gorgas Journal, typescript, SHC; A. F. Axson to C. W. Hutson, April 17, 1869, Hutson Family Papers, Tulane; Wilmington Daily Journal, July 27, 1867; Stephen Powers, Afoot and Alone (Hartford, Connecticut, 1872), 68; Frank A. Montgomery, Reminiscences of a Mississippian in Peace and
Corruption at both the state and local level, to the southerners' way of thinking, was but a natural and expected result of "Negro rule." How long would the free white men of the South consent to be ruled by their ex-slaves and have their very substance taken away in taxes to line the pockets of political cormorants? Outraged southerners grimly decided to overthrow radical rule even if the attempt produced racial warfare. The hot-tempered southerners were impatient and eager to throw off the yoke of Republican despotism.55

To win the war against radicalism, the South had to win many battles. The northern Republicans were blind fanatics who shunned rational discourse; they would never

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understand why southerners reacted so violently to rule by foreigners and Negroes. Southerners of an historical turn of mind saw the radical Congress as a contemporary version of the Jacobin Committee of Public Safety in the French Revolution, a group of insatiable zealots who longed to destroy and consume the last remnants of constitutional government in the United States. More horrifying still was the total capriciousness of radical action. As insane men with no fixed principles, the Republicans might confiscate southern lands, send more troops into the South, or push for Negro supremacy rather than Negro equality. What, southerners asked, could stay this hand of iron-fisted despotism?

No one knew the answer. The South found herself bound by the chains of oppression simply because she would not bend her knee to her "foreign" conquerors. Conservatives saw their situation as analogous to that of the Irish under

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British rule and Poland under the heel of the Russian bear. National holidays and the stars and stripes were no longer symbols of proud patriotism but rather stinging reminders of the South's degraded status. Jefferson Davis assured a Virginia audience in 1873 that had the South known what was to follow her surrender, she would never have disbanded her armies.  

What made the situation even more galling to southerners was that the northern radicals were a band of deceiving hypocrites. The Republicans thought that it was fine to force black suffrage on the South but strangely hesitated to impose it on their own constituents. Southerners accused the Republicans of being insincere friends of the Negro, only interested in his vote. These false philanthropists would be more than happy to rid their states of their small black populations while forcing the South to submit to all the horrors of Negro rule. Southern newspapers reported incidents of northern race prejudice in solemn tones of shock mingled with equal measures of self-satisfaction. Some playful writers suggested that the South send only black men to Congress and then allow the

northern pharisees to choke on this massive ministration of their own medicine. 58

Southerners realized that their suffering extended far beyond the political arena and could see the creeping cancer of radicalism eating away at their social structure. After the war southern Negroes became increasingly more assertive not only in politics but in the area of "social rights." Blacks largely through their own persistent efforts gained equal access to public transportation facilities on railroads and streetcars in some southern cities. Republican state legislatures passed civil rights bills, but even in New Orleans, a city noted for its racial tolerance, whites warned the blacks against testing their new rights in public accommodations. Despite the lack of statutory requirements, segregation of public facilities was undoubtedly the unwritten law and nearly universal practice in most of the southern states. As for schools, a brief experiment with integrated education in New Orleans marked the extent of change in this area. Southerners who opposed black suffrage were even more sensitive about the

issue of "social equality." Jubal Early strenuously objected to attending a ceremony in Richmond for the unveiling of a statue of Stonewall Jackson because several companies of Negro soldiers were taking part in this affair. Governor James L. Kemper sharply informed the irascible Early that the Negroes had voluntarily asked to participate on this occasion in order to improve race relations and that the program would go ahead as originally planned. Apparently "Old Jube" decided to stay home.59

The southern horror of racial egalitarianism reached new heights during Reconstruction. Conservatives accused the radicals of trying to tear down white civilization to the level of the Negroes. Even Republicans had reservations about associating with the blacks on terms of "social equality." Southerners occasionally revealed the real basis of their irrational anxiety about social mixing when they argued that it inevitably led to miscegenation. Scattered reports of such practices threw whites into a blind fury and confirmed their worst fears about the

consequences of radical rule in the South. A Mobile, Alabama, editor summarized the dangerous results of radical racial doctrines: "Whenever you determine that your ignorant, brutal, filthy and licentious negro, has a right to obtrude into white people's houses, in their church pews, theatre boxes, &c., you make an issue of instant life or death."\(^6\)

Congress did nothing to allay these fears and in fact intensified them. The all consuming passion of radical Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts during the last few years of his life was the passage of a comprehensive civil rights bill. Sumner's proposed law would have guaranteed to blacks equal access with whites to public accomodations, transportation facilities, schools, and cemeteries. Southern Republicans, and notably several blacks, made impassioned pleas in the House of Representatives for the enactment of this measure as a matter of justice and protection. For the other side that venerable statesman of the old South, Alexander H. Stephens, spoke to his congressional listeners of his long friendship for the black race and his continuing concern for their

\(^6\)Raleigh Daily Sentinel, March 17, 1868, June 21, 1872; William Hand Browne to Alexander H. Stephens, July 9, 1873, Stephens Papers, LC; Entry for May 16, 1868, Samuel A. Agnew Diary, SHC; New York Times, June 6, 1872; Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, February 8, 1873; "Registered Enemy," to Henry Clay Warmoth, June 16, 1872, Warmoth Papers, SHC; W. W. Sparks to James G. Taliaferro, April 5, 1868, Taliaferro Papers, LSU; Mobile Daily Advertiser and Register, November 30, 1867.
welfare. Stephens, however, questioned the constitutionality of such a measure and also disingenuously argued that the black people of the South sought no such rights as were granted to them in this bill. Other southern spokesmen were decidedly less temperate. Representative William S. Herndon of Texas charged that the civil rights bill was a frontal assault on the South's social system that would produce anarchy. Southern conservatives recognized this piece of legislation as the latest radical attempt to degrade and humiliate the downtrodden South.

An alarmed correspondent from Mississippi wrote to an Augusta, Georgia, newspaper about the already dangerous effects of the mere discussion of this explosive subject: a black woman had demanded a seat in a church beside a white man, a black man had sat beside a white lady at a funeral, men and women riding in railroad cars had to drink from the same water cup as a "greasy strapping negro," and worst of all, a carpetbagger and his black wife had attempted to register at a local hotel. Southerners warned of the bloody consequences of the passage of this bill and predicted that its provisions could only be enforced by a greatly expanded military presence in the South. 61

The Civil Rights Act of 1875, passed after Sumner's death, contained the major features of his bill, except those concerning schools and cemeteries. Despite all their dire prophesies beforehand, southerners adopted a pragmatic approach to this law. A woman hotel owner asked Stephens how best to evade the act's requirements. Those few blacks who tried to test their rights under the new law met with little success and much local resistance. Southerners had no intention of obeying such an arbitrary and unconstitutional enactment, and, by 1875, the federal government lacked both the means and the will to enforce it.\footnote{Message of Governor James M. Smith, January 14, 1875, Georgia House Journal (1875), 40-42; Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, February 9, 1875; Mrs. W. M. Thomas to Alexander H. Stephens, February 28, 1875, Stephens Papers, LC; New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 10, 23, 1875; New Orleans Bulletin, March 10, 1875; Daily Shreveport Times, March 4, 1875; Mary Allan-Olney, The New Virginians (2 Vols., Edinburgh, Scotland, 1880), I, 237-39, II, 100-105.}

Southerners saw "Negro supremacy" as producing social chaos and ultimate disaster for both races. The South refused to submit to black domination while the rest of the Union was free. Whites determined to protect themselves from the barbaric black hordes and fight for the preservation of white civilization. The result of this irrepressible conflict, so ran the dark predictions, would be the long feared outbreak of racial warfare that would engulf the South in bloodshed and drive the whites from
their homes. Fatalism and racial determinism dominated southern thinking as the specter of social revolution loomed on the horizon.63

Southerners knew in their own minds that the radicals had consciously intended to incite a war of the races in the South with their flood of fanatical legislation. Josiah Gorgas, writing from his rural Alabama home, foresaw that the northern Jacobins were converting the South into another Jamaica. These conscienceless quacksalvers then became solely responsible for the bloodshed and social wreckage in the former Confederate states. Ben Hill charged that Republican politicians would rather "reign in hell" than give up political power and were therefore

utterly callous to the massive suffering created by their partisan enactments.64

Increasingly southerners conceded that disaster was unavoidable. Stephens pessimistically maintained that the race problem was insoluble. Since the irrepressible conflict between the races transcended all class conflict between capital and labor, the southern whites had to form a solid phalanx of opposition to "Negro government." Before racial equality led to amalgamation, the southerners would have to fight the blacks until Caucasian supremacy was re-established or the blacks had been utterly destroyed.65

The southern detestation of black rule and the resultant fear of impending racial conflict gradually drew the color line in southern politics. Because the Negroes


65 Alexander H. Stephens to Dr. E. M. Chapin, March 29, 1867, Stephens Papers, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia; Stephens to J. Glancy Jones, June 14, 1867, Stephens Papers, LC; H. H. Goodloe, "The Negro Problem," Southern Magazine, XIV (April, 1874), 373-76; Ethelred Philips to James Jones Phillips, July 5, 1868, James Jones Philips Papers, SHC; Memphis Daily Appeal, June 11, 1867; G. I. Crafts to William Porcher Miles, April 13, 1867, Miles Papers, SHC; N. H. C. Shaw to B. B. Butler, December 21, 1867, Mrs. Roy Rollins Papers, Miss.; Charleston Mercury, September 17, 1867; "The Future of the Blacks: Their True Policy," DeBow's Review (After the War Series), IV (November, 1867), 420; Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, January 5, April 27, 1869.
had refused to unite with the whites in election after election, conservatives blamed the freedmen for aligning race against race. This assertion had little relation to the facts of the case. The whites in most southern states had begun discussing the possibility of forming a white man's party immediately after the passage of the Reconstruction Acts. Racial appeals became the staple ingredient of southern political campaigns, and southern politicians served their own interests as well as what they perceived to be the interests of their "country" by playing on the theme of racial solidarity.

White racial unity thus became the be all and end all in southern politics. Southerners affirmed that the races by their very nature must always remain as peoples apart. Edward A. Pollard declared that the South had actually fought the war over the race question and still sought to foster white civilization and white democracy. Pollard also argued that democracy and the equality of all white men could only be preserved by the maintenance of Negro

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subordination. Man innately felt a strong sense of loyalty toward his own race and could not defy these divine laws. Radical rule and black equality had driven all the whites together, united by primordial instincts against the malefic forces of black barbarism. 67

The seemingly chronic problems of emancipation, reconstruction, and the role of blacks in southern society revitalized key elements of the old pro-slavery ideology. Some southerners believed that the Negro could not govern himself because he was not truly human. Recalling previous controversies about the origins of man and the various races, these latter day disciples of Josiah Nott claimed that the blacks were closer to being apes than men. From an historical perspective, southerners pointed to the "fact" that the Negroes had never successfully created a real civilization during their long years of isolation on the African continent. In fact, the southern slaves, under the influence of a superior white culture, had risen substantially in the scale of civilization while their black brothers in Africa still languished in primitive savagery. Wade Hampton even questioned whether white

civilization in the South could withstand the great pressure from the emancipated black hordes. Making the wish father to the thought, other southerners forecast that the degeneration of the Negro since emancipation would lead to the eventual extinction of the race in America. All these scholarly analyses, random comments, and spirited colloquies demonstrated the utter confusion and consternation of the southern mind during Reconstruction. Despite much wishful thinking, the Negro would not go away or disappear. The nagging problem remained of how to deal with this overwhelming threat to what southerners considered to be the greatest civilization known to human history. 68

Would they, Southerners asked, then supinely submit to tyrannical rule or rise up, throw off their chains, and drive the foreign emissaries from her soil? Conservatives maintained that radical reconstruction could only be imposed on proud southerners at the point of a bayonet.

68 Charleston Mercury, November 19, 1867, July 14, 1868; Ethelred Philips to James Jones Philips, December 1, 1867, James Jones Philips Papers, SHC; Andrew Johnston, Third Annual Message, December 3, 1867, James D. Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897 (10 Vols., Washington, 1897), VI, 565; Richmond Daily Dispatch, September 24, 1868; Memphis Daily Appeal, September 22, 1874; New Orleans Daily Picayune, August 28, 1868, June 10, 1871; Wade Hampton to Senator James R. Doolittle, November 12, 1869, Duane Mowry, ed., "Post-Bellum Days: Selections from the Correspondence of the Late Senator James R. Doolittle," Magazine of History, XVII (August-September, 1913), 51; Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, February 9, 1870; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, August 16, 1868, January 17, 1874.
They warned the scalawags, carpetbaggers, and Negroes that the day for retribution was near. Why did the insatiable Jacobins raise their bloody hands in horror? They had sown the wind and would reap the whirlwind. The nearly total subversion of constitutional and legal institutions had created a spirit of lawlessness and violence among the oppressed people. Conservatives solemnly prophesied that the sins of the radicals would be visited on their own heads.\(^{69}\)

An apocalyptic vision of impending war and devastation came to dominate southern thinking. Preparations for the battle took shape apace, and southerners began to organize for the jihad against the radical Anti-Christ. Southerners now listened to their own wild men. Ryland Randolph, the editor of the Tuscaloosa \textit{Independent Monitor} advised his readers to massacre the radical leaders whenever a racial disturbance erupted. Louisiana conservative E. John Ellis wrote, almost whimsically: "If there was one hope of successful armed revolution I would be willing tomorrow to enlist for life."\(^{70}\)

\(^{69}\)\textit{Anderson Intelligencer}, March 18, 1868; New York Tribune, July 18, 1868; Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, December 4, 1867; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, August 6, 1869; Charleston Mercury, January 17, March 16, 1868; Atlanta Constitution, October 23, 1868; Powhatan Lockett to Edward Hawthorne Moren, January 3, 1876, Moren Papers, Ala.; Jackson Daily Clarion, February 7, 1868.

\(^{70}\)William Gilmore Simms to John Esten Cooke, May 9, 1868, Oliphant, Odell and Eaves, eds., \textit{Letters of Simms}, V, 131; Louis T. Wigfall to Halsey Wigfall, November 30, 1868, Sarah Agnes Wallace, ed., "Confederate Exiles in
Southerners had reached a point in their thinking that made a recourse to violence inevitable.\textsuperscript{71} The South had strongly protested against Republican reconstruction policies, but she had initially sought to make the best of an impossible situation. Southerners had looked successively to the northern Democrats, the Negroes, and to some extent even the Republicans for relief from their suffering. All their efforts had failed, and they could expect no outside assistance. Jacobinical reconstruction and Negro rule had descended on the South. Conciliation, moderation, and compromise were no longer conceivable. Prescient men started cleaning their rifles and preparing for Armageddon. They would conquer or die.

\textsuperscript{71} P. G. T. Beauregard to Robert E. Lee, July 30, 1867, Beauregard Papers, Duke; Wilbur J. Cash, \textit{The Mind of the South} (New York, 1941), 119; Ray Granade, "Violence: An Instrument of Policy in Reconstruction Alabama," \textit{Alabama Historical Quarterly}, XXX (Fall and Winter, 1968), 188.
Chapter VII

THE TORTUOUS COURSE OF THE COUNTERREVOLUTION

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer
Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

These oft quoted lines of William Butler Yeats not only capture the essence of the polarization of southern politics after the passage of the Reconstruction Acts but also reveal the genuine dilemma of the Republican party in the South.

The southern Republicans in their early days held no such premonitions of disaster. They saw themselves as the wave of the future and never doubted their ultimate triumph. With strong support from the North they believed they could eventually build a powerful alliance across racial lines that would bury the rebel Democracy once and for all. Southern Republicans also reflected the still powerful idealism of the national party. Carpetbaggers and scalawags alike perceived themselves as part of a tidal movement to sweep away the last vestiges of human bondage from the land and remake the South along the lines
of the North's free labor society. Totally innocent of any Marxist ideas of class conflict, the Republicans believed in an organic unity between capital and labor that had reached its fruition with the death of slavery. Republicans argued that labor contracts were a key element of the South's future prosperity, and they somewhat naively hoped that "free labor" would obliterate racial lines and launch the South into a vigorous economic recovery from the lingering effects of the war.  

The early success of the Republicans in recruiting several respected leaders of the ancien regime into their ranks naturally reinforced their optimistic outlook on the future. All the historiographical debate over the social and political identity of the so-called "scalawags" has settled very little. The evidence does seem to indicate that these white Republicans were of diverse political backgrounds and came from a wide range of economic and social classes.  It cannot be gainsaid, however, that men


2Thomas B. Alexander, "Persistent Whiggery in the Confederate South, 1860-1877," Journal of Southern History,
like James Longstreet, James Lusk Alcorn, and John S. Mosby lent strength to the Republican party entirely out of proportion to their numbers. Alcorn told the people of Mississippi in his inaugural address as governor that he was a true southern man and had the best interests of the South at heart. The scalawags frequently had to defend themselves in just such a manner against violent Democrats who branded them as "Judases" and "traitors." These native advocates of change naturally sought to crush out the power of the rebels at whose hands they had often been the chief sufferers. They became primarily concerned with retaining political dominion over the ex-Confederates and therefore became entangled in the complexities of federal, state, and local patronage. Such priorities, in addition to the overbearing attitude of some ex-Whig aristocrats, undermined Republican appeals to the poor whites and assuaged conservative fears of a class-based political coalition across racial lines.3


3 Thomas Robson Hay, James Longstreet, Politician, Officeholder and Writer (Baton Rouge, 1952), 329-36; James Lusk Alcorn to Elihu B. Washburne, June 19, 1868, Washburne Papers, LC; Virgil Carrington Jones, Ranger Mosby (Chapel Hill, 1944), 287; Inaugural Address of
Scalawag leaders believed that the only way to build a strong Republican party in the South was to recruit large numbers of "respectable" whites and thus prevent the drawing of the color line in southern politics. Joseph E. Brown of Georgia hoped to split the Democratic party by pursuing a course of steady moderation. Southern Republicans urged northern leaders to use the federal patronage to build such a broad-based coalition in the South. Reflecting the growing divisions in Republican ranks, scalawags criticized the Grant administration for favoring the carpetbaggers in making federal appointments. In addition, these moderate men tried to attract conservative southerners by throwing overboard the more radical members of their own fragile coalition.4


In fact, all elements of the southern Republican party (scalawags, carpetbaggers and the blacks) favored an extraordinarily mild treatment of the ex-Confederates. Although some radicals pushed for stringent disfranchisement provisions in the new state constitutions so as to block permanently the return of the rebels to positions of political influence and power, most Republicans adopted a more moderate policy. Several states repealed their disfranchisement provisions shortly after their enactment. Southern Republicans hoped that the removal of all political disabilities by both the state and the federal government would produce a spirit of tolerance and reconciliation even among dyed-in-the-wool Democrats. In addition to the issue of abstract justice, a universal amnesty would also greatly expand the number of qualified white men available for appointive offices and would aid the scalawags in their plans to broaden the party's political base. Negroes for similar reasons also favored universal amnesty and adopted an extremely liberal attitude toward their former masters. Yet the amnesty question seriously divided the Republicans in several states and provided the first signs of a widening...
gulf between the native and carpetbag elements of the party.  

Factionalism plagued the Republicans throughout their brief time of power in the South, and the inability of the party to maintain tight discipline in its ranks was one of its major weaknesses. Disputes and divisions could hardly have been avoided in such a disparate coalition of competing personalities and interests. Original union men distrusted the recent Confederate converts, old line Whigs still hated the former Democrats, would-be leaders fell out among themselves over the age-old question of who would control the state and local offices. The most significant breach of party unity was the pervasive conflict between the carpetbaggers and scalawags. Although recent scholarship has shown that the carpetbaggers were not altogether the crafty rogues that their name implies, the scalawags naturally

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resented the intrusion of these interlopers into their political bailiwicks. Such intraparty quarrels became publicly rancorous on occasion as when the scalawag Governor of Alabama, William E. Smith, accused the carpetbag senator, George E. Spencer, of desiring to have more blacks killed by the Ku Klux Klan to increase his own political power. In general, the moderation of the scalawags created divisions between themselves and the carpetbaggers over national political issues as well as over the methods of curbing violence in the South. This lack of party harmony clearly demonstrated the difficulties of keeping the diverse coalition that was the southern Republican party united, the divisions frequently embarrassing the northern Republicans.6

Lasting fissures in Republican ranks also arose over the distribution of the fruits of victory. Both

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carpetbaggers and scalawags vied for the control of the
federal patronage within their states. These controversies
extended down even to the county level, often making the
Republicans look like selfish partisan hacks and greatly
sapping the strength of the party. As the number of white
Republicans declined, the leaders of the party charged that
many posts of profit and honor were going to partisan
Democrats, these appointments further weakening the party's
slender hold on political power.7

In the end, however, racial issues did as much as
anything to destroy southern Republicanism. The blacks
were the backbone of Republican voting strength in nearly
all the southern states. The party could not win elections
without Negro support, but at the same time, they needed
some white strength. To keep both the blacks and native
white Republicans happy proved to be impossible. Some
blacks made it quite clear that they resented the often
arrogant and condescending attitude of some white party
leaders and demanded a more equitable share of the political
spoils for themselves. Alarmed white Republicans feared
that perhaps the conservatives had been correct in their
belief that the blacks were trying to "Africanize" the

7Joseph E. Brown to Ulysses S. Grant, May 5, 1868,
Brown Papers (Hargett Collection), typescript, UGa.;
Wiggins, Scalawag in Alabama, 56-71; Herbert Clarence
Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, Virginia
(Richmond, 1955), 429-35; Tod R. Caldwell to J. M. Broomall,
July 8, 1867, Caldwell Papers, HML; C. H. Hopkins to
Henry P. Farrow, August 12, 1870, H. L. Carroll to Farrow,
July 30, 1870, Farrow Papers, UGa.
southern states. Sharing many of the racial views of their Democratic opponents, these leaders sincerely questioned the capacity of the newly freed blacks to perform the duties of even minor local offices. One former slave succinctly described this important aspect of the racial infighting in the southern Republican party: "Trouble was, de carpetbaggers wanted de whole pie." Conservatives mischievously pointed out to the Negroes every sign of radical reluctance to nominate black men for important public offices and sought to convince the Negroes of the selfish hypocrisy of the Republican leaders. The race issue heightened the intensity of already bitter factional quarrels among southern Republicans and certainly hastened the downfall of the party in the South.\(^8\)

White Republicans were also less than unanimous in supporting their black friends on key civil rights issues. Governor William G. Brownlow of Tennessee made no secret of his opposition to black suffrage but finally advocated Negro voting, not as a matter of justice, but rather as a means of preventing the ex-Confederates from recapturing political ascendancy. Moderate Republicans abstained from voting when Democrats in the Georgia general assembly expelled several newly elected Negro members from that body. Governor Henry Clay Warmoth of Louisiana vetoed a civil rights bill passed by the legislature on constitutional grounds and also brusquely informed the blacks that they had no greater rights than anyone else. Fearing the loss of white support, southern Republicans hesitated to press for the passage of new civil rights legislation. Even those Republicans who favored the federal Civil Rights Act of 1875 realized the potentially damaging effects of this measure on their party. Having learned firsthand the potency of the race issue in the hands of the rebel Democracy, these men anticipated more white defections from their ranks. Even so steadfast a radical as carpetbagger Albion Tourgee in North Carolina castigated the

northern politicians for pressing this measure: "I have no use for those who prescribe for diseases without knowing their nature." Tourgee thought the best solution to the race problem was to let it alone for awhile and allow the Negroes to use their newly acquired freedom to improve their own lot.\(^9\)

The white Republicans not only faced division within their party but, more importantly, the unrelenting hostility of the majority of southern whites. To declare oneself a Republican in most areas of the South was tantamount to nailing a quarantine sign to the door. Southerners avoided all social contact with traitors to their race. Southern women refused to associate with the wives of white Republicans and used their not inconsiderable social resources to make them feel isolated and unwelcome in the community. Blanche Butler Ames, the wife of Mississippi's carpetbag governor Adelbert Ames and daughter of Benjamin F. Butler, found that native southerners made a great fuss over her new baby until they learned the child's surname. Excluding white Republicans from what passed for polite society put

\(^9\)E. Merton Coulter, William G. Brownlow: Fighting Parson of the Southern Highlands (Chapel Hill, 1937), 290, 328-29; Nathans, Losing the Peace, 120-26; Louisiana Senate Journal (1871), 4-6; Allen Johnston Going, Bourbon Democracy in Alabama, 1874-1890 (University, Alabama, 1951), 10-11; New Orleans Republican, September 28, 1870; Fleming, Reconstruction in Alabama, 521-24; Silas N. Stilwell to William W. Holden, July 14, 1868, Holden Papers, NCDAH; Parks, Brown, 483; New York Times, September 15, 1874; Queener, "Decade of East Tennessee Republicanism," 82-84; Albion W. Tourgee to "My Dear Doctor," May 11, 1874, Tourgee Papers, SHC.
very effective pressure on people whose education and social background made them loath to mix socially with their black constituents. Such actions were every bit as effective as physical intimidation in driving whites out of the Republican party. 10

The Republicans also faced a constant stream of verbal abuse and physical violence. Both white and black officeholders slept in the woods to avoid roving bands of angry whites. Alcorn reported to an Illinois congressman that the rebels had burned down the buildings on one of his plantations because he had leased part of it to some freedmen. Southern Republicans complained that the Democrats continued to persecute loyal men and pointed out that it was not even safe for Republicans to register black voters. Many leaders feared that without some sort of protection, the Democrats would prevent the blacks from voting altogether. Foster Blodgett, a prominent Georgia Republican, wrote: "I know very well that if the friends

of the Republican party are not sustained by the strong power of Congress that I cannot live in the South."\footnote{Austin Daily State Journal, March 6, 1870, March 12, May 11, 1871; Memphis Evening Post, July 13, 1869; Charles Stearns, The Black Man of the South and the Rebels (New York, 1872), 213-28; Morgan, Yazoo, 167ff; James Lusk Alcorn to Elihu B. Washburne, January 18, 1869, Washburne Papers, LC; John Cary to William G. Brownlow, July 8, 1867, Brownlow Papers, Tenn.; George H. Tracy to O. D. Kinsman, July 9, 1867, S. Moore to William H. Smith, July 13, 1867, Wager Swayne Papers, Ala.; Victor C. Berringer to Albion W. Tourgee, n.d., 1868, Tourgee Papers, SHC; Foster Blodgett to William Pitt Fessenden, December 30, 1867, Fessenden Papers, LC.}

These men knew firsthand whereof they spoke, but a few of their northern friends also learned quickly. During the spring and summer of 1867, several leading Republicans, including Congressman William D. "Pig Iron" Kelley of Pennsylvania, toured the South on a proselytizing mission. Most southern communities received these radical emissaries with coolness and disdain. On May 14 Kelley spoke to a crowd of approximately four thousand persons (mostly black) in Mobile, Alabama. Kelley apparently made a rousing stump speech in which he blamed the South for the war and defended the rights of the Republicans to campaign freely in the former Confederate states. When a few white men in the audience became unruly, Kelley warned them that he had federal troops at his side ready to defend him. A gang of rowdies on the edge of the crowd, however, shouted such epithets as: "Put him down!" "Give that dog a bone." "How many Negroes and pianos did you steal?" The chief of police sought to arrest the principal heckler, and a
scuffle ensued. The ruckus spooked a team of horses pulling an Army ambulance, and they veered toward the crowd adding to the confusion. Some shots rang out from the back of the mob, the blacks fired back (generally into the air), and many persons took to their heels. When the firing broke out, Kelley ducked under a table, and some friends spirited him away to his hotel where a military guard protected him until he left the city.12

There was no evidence of any prior planning or conspiracy in the Mobile disturbance. Most of the firing was ineffective (one white man and one black man died in the "riot"). Major General Wager Swayne, in command of the troops in Alabama, criticized the local officials and police for not moving more quickly to quell the fighting and arrest the rioters. Swayne's immediate superior, Major General John Pope, commander of the Third Military District (created by the Reconstruction Acts) ordered the removal of the mayor and chief of police on the grounds of their inefficiency during the outbreak. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton approved Pope's actions because he favored

removing the civil authorities in Mobile who sympathized with this new "rebellion."\textsuperscript{13}

Southern Republicans naturally interpreted the "Pig Iron Kelley riot" as just another example of the lingering disloyalty in the land. Radical newspaper editors called for further congressional legislation to crush out their bloodthirsty enemies once and for all.\textsuperscript{14} Some conservatives regretted that a disturbance had erupted in Mobile and counseled southerners to ignore the radical speakers or listen to them in contemptuous silence. More adamant spokesmen accused the northern Republicans of inciting the Negroes to acts of violence and welcoming the resulting bloodshed as being useful for the fall political canvass.\textsuperscript{15}

Republicans experienced physical danger in many election campaigns. Southern radicals sent moving letters

\textsuperscript{13}Major General Wager Swayne to John Pope, May 20, 1867, American Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events, 1867 (New York, 1868), 22-23 (hereinafter cited as Annual Cyclopaedia); Pope to General Ulysses S. Grant, May 22, 1867, "Correspondence Relative to Reconstruction," Sen. Ex. Doc. 14, 40-1, 57-58; Pope to Grant, June 5, 1867, ibid., 104-105; Pope, GO 27, May 22, 1867, House Ex. Doc. 342, 40-2, 122; Edwin M. Stanton to Andrew Johnson, May 30, 1867, Stanton Papers, LC.


\textsuperscript{15}Raleigh Daily Sentinel, May 21, 1867; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, May 17, 1867; New Orleans Daily Picayune, May 19, 1867; Daily Memphis Avalanche, May 17, 1867.
to their northern friends about the daily outrages. To be sure, some of these accounts may be dismissed as self-serving partisan pleas or the exaggerated workings of fevered imaginations, yet the evidence is overwhelming that southern Republicans of both races ran great risks by being active in politics. Roving bands of whites forced radical leaders to flee their homes. Sympathetic newspapers proclaimed that the spirit of slavery was still alive in the South and that southerners were using the cry of a war of the races to justify an exterminating policy of their own against their Republican opponents.\(^\text{16}\)

Federal and state officeholders complained of a virtual reign of terror in the South. Many scalawags, in addition to unrelenting social ostracism, suffered severe beatings and whippings. Midnight assassins frequently murdered local Republican leaders of both races, a practice that effectively kept the rank and file away from the polls.\(^\text{17}\)


\(^{17}\) George E. Spencer to Elihu B. Washburne, May 23, 1868, Washburne Papers, LC; J. P. Newsham to Henry Clay Warmoth, March 19, 1867, Warmoth Papers, SHC; Stearns,
Republicans quite literally took their lives in their hands during a political canvass. Ruffians heckled radical speakers, scuffled with them, or even shot at them. Local officials often cooperated with the desperadoes who rode about the countryside breaking up Republican political meetings. Free speech was at a premium during many a southern autumn. 18

Conservatives charged that most of the political violence was either manufactured out of whole cloth for northern consumption or caused by the Jacobinical incendiaries themselves. Whites held the Loyal Leagues and other radical organizations responsible for disturbing conservative meetings where speakers sought to win over the deluded blacks. Southerners contended that the radicals did not genuinely desire peace but were willing to shed many crocodile tears over the bodies of alleged outrage.


victims. Responding to similar Republican accusations against themselves, the whites branded the radicals as the real enemies of free speech in the South because the latter sought to prevent their enslaved black followers from hearing the truth.\(^{19}\)

According to Republicans, rebel intimidation prevented blacks from casting their ballots. Armed whites frequently drove blacks from the polls, and local Republican officials were powerless to stop them. White posses brazenly shot up towns on election day in some communities; whites also brought the blacks forcibly to the polls to vote the Democratic ticket. Army officers noted that Negro suffrage created such great hostility among the whites that available troops were not sufficient either to prevent such outrages or even capture the perpetrators. A Republican officeholder in Opelousas, Louisiana, wrote to Governor Henry Clay Warmoth in 1870 that the blacks were still so overawed by

the violence of the 1868 campaign that only Warmoth's personal appearance could assuage their terror.20

Conservative leaders also used bribery, trickery, and legal technicalities against black voters. White politicians plied the blacks with liquor to get them either to cast their ballots for the Democrats or not vote at all. Other conservatives stuffed ballot boxes or simply paid off Republican election officials for a favorable count. Since many of the blacks could not read, crafty whites pawned off printed advertisements and other worthless pieces of paper on the unsuspecting freedmen as Republican election tickets. Conservatives always upbraided the radicals for herding underage blacks to the polls and encouraging the Negroes to vote several times. Whites therefore surrounded the ballot boxes and watched them all day, taking down the names of the voters and carefully watching for repeaters. Republicans heatedly replied that the Democrats were

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not averse to voting their own black followers time after time.  

Exciting political campaigns and close elections created wild rumors and inflammatory situations. In Donaldsonville, Louisiana, a small town on the west side of the Mississippi River below Baton Rouge, United States troops stationed there to watch over the polls on election day in 1870 started some fires to keep warm, and alarmed whites reported that the Negroes were burning down the town. The Democrats, however, who had lost the election, decided, in typical Louisiana fashion, to seize the ballot boxes in town and prevent the commissioners of election from collecting the boxes on the other side of the river. Hearing of this plot, Negro militiamen came into Donaldsonville to foil the scheme, but instead clashed with white Republican leaders. This quarrel of uncertain origins led to the murder of the mayor and a local judge, both Republicans and apparently at the hands of their own

partisans. The disturbance thwarted the Democratic designs on the ballots, and the Republican victors eventually took their seats. A similar attempt by Democrats to confiscate the ballots in Baton Rouge ended in a small riot in which several black men were killed or wounded, and United States troops had finally to restore order.\textsuperscript{22}

The perennial question has been: how extensive was this political violence? A Republican committee of the Texas constitutional convention of 1868 found that some 939 homicides had taken place in that state since June 1865. This report also claimed that many union men and Negroes had been murdered by ex-rebels, but the figures were incomplete. A United States attorney in western Texas estimated that 2,000 murders had been committed in the entire state during this period. Conservatives could only attribute a limited number of these affrays to quarrels that took place among the Negroes. The very fragmentary reports by the Freedmen's Bureau on outrages in other states after 1868 make any estimates of the extent of southern violence impossible. Yet the Republicans were for the most part correct in their assertion that there was extensive violence against black and white radicals in the South, though all factions in southern politics used violent methods from time to time. Because it was more

\textsuperscript{22}New Orleans \textit{Daily Picayune}, November 11, 16-December 3, 1870; \textit{New Orleans Republican}, November 10-12, 15, 17, 20, 26-December 4, 1870.
dangerous to attack the carpetbaggers and scalawags, the helpless Negroes became the logical targets of white aggression. 23 Tourgee, a man who had lived through the terror, wrote a careful and eloquent summation for the Republicans: 24

Of the slain there were enough to furnish forth a battlefield, and all from those three classes, the negro, the scalawag, and the carpet-bagger,—all killed with deliberation, overwhelmed by numbers, roused from slumber at the murk midnight, in the hall of public assembly, upon the river-brink, on the lonely woods-road, in simulation of the public execution,—shot, stabbed, hanged, drowned, mutilated beyond description, tortured beyond conception.

He might have added that all this bloodshed was instrumental in the overthrow of his party's rule in the South.

Not all assaults on blacks were political acts. Sheriff's posses and private bands of whites meted out


to accused black criminals their own rough form of justice. Vigilantes, often with the connivance of local lawmen, seized black prisoners from jails and lynched them. A Georgia freedman who had the temerity to defend his wife from a beating by a white man was shot for his efforts. A white posse captured the wounded black man and sent him to jail. Later a mob took the man and his wife and hung them both. An account later circulated that the mob had cut out the man's heart and fed it to the dogs. 25

Military reconstruction in the South not only failed to stop such incidents of extralegal "justice," it did little to improve the quality of the South's legal system. Blacks still received very unequal treatment in southern courtrooms, even from Republican judges. Black lawbreakers generally met with condign punishment, but if a white committed a crime against a Negro, the courts seldom took notice. The so-called "rebel" juries either refused to convict whites who had murdered Negroes or brought in verdicts of justifiable homicide. Republicans pointed out that native southerners considered blacks to be brute animals and therefore could not classify the wrongful death of a freedman as murder. Republicans complained to the

military that local authorities would or could do nothing against whites guilty of crimes against blacks. One alarmed citizen wrote from Texas that no white man had been hung in that state for murder since the revolution against Mexico and that the Texans considered homicide to be "one of their inalienable state rights."  

The Presidential election campaign of 1868 provided a focal point for political violence. When the Democrats nominated Horatio Seymour of New York and Frank Blair, Jr., for President and Vice President respectively, they also adopted a strong platform plank that declared the Reconstruction Acts to be unconstitutional and void. Both northern and southern Republicans accused the Democrats of planning to overturn the reconstruction process by revolutionary means. They argued that union men and Negroes would be driven from their homes and be subject to midnight assassinations. Nervous partisans predicted that the

victory of Seymour and Blair would lead to the outbreak of
civil war in all the southern states. Joe Brown, who had
recently become a Republican, told his fellow Georgians
that the choice in the canvass was between Seymour and
war or Ulysses S. Grant, the Republican nominee, and peace.
Judge Thomas Settle, a prominent North Carolina Republican,
saw the contest as a life and death struggle with the very
survival of southern loyalists at stake. 27

Southern Democrats dreaded Republican success based
on this war-or-peace issue. In this context, acts of
violence in the South would not only alienate the blacks
but would help the radical cause. Even when leading
Confederates, such as Hampton and Hill, merely delivered
campaign speeches, Republicans regaled the voters with
warnings of a re-emerging rebellion in the South. Although
most conservatives publicly called for a peaceful campaign,
the growing number of violent outbreaks, which occurred as
the canvass progressed, gave the lie to these professions
of good will. William Hidell, a southern journalist of
moderate views, informed Alexander H. Stephens that he
thought that the people of South Carolina were "more rampant

Raleigh Weekly North Carolina Standard, July 29,
September-October, passim, 1868; Tallahassee Sentinel,
July 16, August 27, 1868; Stearns, Black Man of the South,
233; Niles G. Parker, Daniel H. Chamberlain, and C. C.
Bowen to William E. Chandler, September 12, 1868, Chandler
Papers, LC; Joseph E. Brown speech, August 19, 1868,
Brown Papers (Hargett Collection), typescript, UGa.; Thomas
Settle to Albion W. Tourgee, August 8, 1868, Tourgee
Papers, SHC.
and crazy" than anywhere else and were talking war just as they had done in 1860, Hidell also heard a drunken Robert Toombs advise a cheering audience to clean their muskets, rifles, and shotguns and prepare to shoot the Yankees and Negroes. Hidell concluded that some of the people "are just big enough fools to imagine they can of themselves be an army and wage successful war." 28

Such rabble-rousing statements in their own peculiar way illustrate the great frustration of the conservative South. In a widely printed letter to former Union general William S. Rosecrans, Lee, Stephens, Beauregard, and other prominent "rebels" denied any hostility on their part to the blacks or even opposition to Negro suffrage. All that southerners desired, according to these men, was peace and the end of radical misrule. However, attempts to organize black Democratic clubs and hold mixed political meetings failed, perhaps because the southerners did not have their hearts in these efforts. Although the radicals warned the freedmen of possible poisoning if they attended Democratic

barbecues, the blacks hardly needed this sort of "advice" to make them wary of the honey-tongued ex-slaveholders. 29

To the southerners the election of 1868 seemed critically important to their future, the consequences of defeat being continued Republican domination. Alfred Huger, who had occupied a minor post of honor in the South since the incendiary publications controversy of the 1830's, lamented the fate of his native South Carolina with the offices once held by a Lowndes, a Calhoun, or a Cheeves being occupied by unprincipled white Jacobins or their Negro sycophants. Much to the embarrassment of the more temperate northern Democrats, southerners maintained an uncompromising opposition to reconstruction and all its works. They denied any revolutionary intentions in the same breath with which they hurled fiery anthems against the hated Yankees and their black minions. In the heat of the canvass, southerners accused the radicals of "Afri-canizing" the southern states and opening the way for a Saturnalia of corruption. The spirited editor Ryland Randolph told his Tuscaloosa, Alabama, readers that the

29 New York Times, September 5, 1868; Charleston Daily Courier, August 6, 1868; Anderson Intelligencer, September 30, 1868; Entry for October 15, 1868, Paul L. De Clouet Diary, Alexandre De Clouet Papers, LSU; Wilmington Daily Journal, September 3, 1868; New York Herald, August 26, 1868; B. F. Saffold to William H. Smith, August 17, 1868, Smith Papers, Ala.
inauguration of Seymour and Blair would be a signal to hang scalawags and carpetbaggers.\textsuperscript{30}

Those southerners of cooler demeanor realized that the statements of the wild men would only inflame the northern voters, but they also predicted that radical journalists would be busy throughout the campaign grinding the southern outrage mill. Southerners believed that the truth about such disturbances never managed to catch up with the first lying reports in the northern press. Race riots, the natural fruits of African radicalism, instead of discrediting their real perpetrators, served as yet another excuse for the continued oppression of the South. Should the Republicans fail to stir up violence with their inflammatory harangues, they were more than willing to "create" suitable material for northern propaganda. Southerners maintained that theirs was the party of peace and the Republicans were the true agents of bloodshed.

\textsuperscript{30}Richmond Daily Dispatch, September 21, October 30, 1868; Alfred Huger to Thomas L. Wells, October 3, 1868, Daniel E. Huger Smith, Alice R. Huger Smith and Arney R. Childs, eds., Mason Smith Family Letters, 1860-1868 (Columbia, South Carolina, 1950), 277; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, October 1, 1868; Charleston Daily Courier, September 12, 1868; "Louisiana Contested Elections," House Misc. Doc. 154, 41-2, Pt. 2, 321-24; Governor Robert Scott of South Carolina to J. Stuart Hanchel, et. al., September 1, 1868, Andrew Johnson Papers, LC; Atlanta Constitution, August 20, 1868; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, July 30, August 1, 1868; Charleston Mercury, July 29, 1868; New York Tribune, July 28, 1868; Annual Cyclopedia (1868), 512; Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, September 1, 1868.
with the radicals holding the question of war and peace in their own hands.\textsuperscript{31}

Southerners believed strongly that the radicals traveled about their land inciting the Negroes to violence. The carpetbaggers and their black tools were not satisfied with placing the South under alien rule but were now attempting to foment the dreaded war of the races. Conservatives attributed all campaign disturbances, even where the whites were clearly the aggressors, to Republican teachings. The wily partisans would do their best to exasperate the conservatives with all sorts of provocations and would then condemn the resulting violence as fresh evidence of southern rebellion. These amoral rogues would welcome the slaughter of their own followers if they could thereby manufacture some political capital. While the Republicans cried for peace, they plotted war. If the radicals were successful and a bloody contest ensued, an Augusta, Georgia, editor vowed that the southerners were prepared: "they will not shrink from it, but rather with all the manhood of a proud and still powerful people make the issue so complete that another shall be impossible."\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{31}Lucius Q. Washington to Robert M. T. Hunter, September 25, 1868, Hunter Papers, UVa.; Atlanta Constitution, August 5, 1868; New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 12, August 8, October 7, 1868; Richmond Daily Dispatch, September 24, 1868; Little Rock Daily Arkansas Gazette, September 20, 1868; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, July 22, 1868; Charleston Daily Courier, July 27, 1868.

\textsuperscript{32}Charleston Daily Courier, August 19, September 9, 1868; Memphis Daily Appeal, September 27, 1868; Atlanta
Rumors and alarms of armed Negro insurrections spread through the South during the campaign. Northern radicals had reportedly shipped arms to the turbulent blacks. Loyal Leagues drilled at night in preparation for a bloody uprising against the whites. Such activities spurred Democratic organizations that harshly suppressed blacks who armed and marched. Conservative editors used accounts of black violence to prove that only the radicals engaged in riotous behavior and were therefore entirely responsible for the so-called "southern outrages."\footnote{Entry for October 1, 1868, Arney R. Childs, ed., The Private Journal of Henry William Ravenal, 1859-1887 (Columbia, South Carolina, 1947), 238; John B. Hubbard to Governor Robert K. Scott, September 3, 1868, W. M. Porcher to Scott, September 6, 1868, Scott Papers, SCA; Scott to J. Stuart Hanchel, et. al., September 1, 1868, Andrew Johnson Papers, LC; New York Tribune, September 25, 1868; Charleston Mercury, September 25, 1868; John M. Johnson to Howell Cobb, September 22, 1868, Ulrich B. Phillips, ed., "The Correspondence of Robert Toombs, Alexander H. Stephens and Howell Cobb," Annual Report of the American Historical Association (1911), Vol. II, 704; Entry for September 20, 1868, Paul L. De Clouet Diary, Alexandre De Clouet Papers, LSU; Charleston Daily Courier, August 24, 1868; Milledge Luke Bonham to Scott, August 19, 1868, Bonham Papers, SCL; Anonymous Reminiscence of Reconstruction in Louisiana, John R. Ficklen Papers, LSU; Little Rock Daily Arkansas Gazette, August 31, October 18,
The events at Camilla, Georgia, in September 1868 demonstrated the tragic results of this feverish political and racial agitation. This small town, located in Mitchell County in the extreme southwestern part of the state, was the location of a Republican political meeting scheduled for September 19. When some 200-300 blacks approached the town on the appointed day, sheriff M. S. Poore and four or five white citizens intercepted the Negroes a few miles from town and informed them that they could hold a meeting but that they would not be permitted to carry their weapons into town. Two white men then led the procession into town where waiting citizens opened fire on them. The blacks fled into a nearby woods when the shooting started despite attempts of their white leaders to rally them. Between twenty-five and thirty-five Negroes died in the fighting; there were no whites killed and only six wounded. Conservatives asserted that the radicals had finally been successful in igniting a war of the races and blamed the white Republicans in the county for egging on the Negroes to violence. A more candid observer, Linton Stephens, wrote to his brother that the actions of the whites in the Camilla affray could not be entirely justified.  

27, 1868; New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 11, 1868; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, October 19, 1868.

Republicans reported that Democrats were shipping arms to the South for use in the election campaign. Spreading rumors similar to those the conservatives had published about the black military companies, radicals related stories of Democratic meetings at which bloody plots were being hatched against them. The whites defended their need for weapons by simply referring to the formation of armed Loyal Leagues. They also stridently opposed a Republican plan to obtain arms for southern state militias from Congress (such appropriations were not made until after the election). Governor Harrison Reed of Florida purchased guns and ammunition in New York, but armed whites seized the train carrying this materiel from Jacksonville to Tallahassee and strew it along the tracks. Men who knew firsthand of the brutal methods of the armed Democrats, such as Governor Robert K. Scott of South Carolina, still defended the "constitutional right" of citizens of both races to bear arms even if the exercise of such a right resulted in the carrying of shotguns to political meetings. So widespread had the actual intimidation and violence become by August 1868 that Thomas Settle virtually conceded defeat at the polls but put forward a scheme for the

81-82; Georgia Senate Journal (1868), 353-57; Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, September 22, 23, 1868; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, September 23, 1868; Linton Stephens to Alexander H. Stephens, September 23, 1868, Alexander H. Stephens Papers, MC.
legislatures in all the southern states to choose the presidential electors rather than the voters.\textsuperscript{35}

As the campaign moved into autumn, blacks in many areas found it impossible to exercise their newly won political rights. White "regulators" raided Republican meetings, warning the freedmen not to listen to radical speakers. White bands picketed the roads, drove frightened blacks from their homes at night, and viciously murdered several black Republican leaders. Nightriders assassinated Negro state senator B. F. Randolph in Abbeville County, South Carolina, as he was stumping the state for the Republicans. Officials could obtain no testimony against these desperadoes from the local citizens and therefore could not prosecute the perpetrators. Blacks who refused invitations to join the Democratic clubs frequently met with ambushes along lonely country roads, their bodies being found some time later riddled with bullets. During the 1868 campaign in South Carolina, in addition to

Randolph, whites killed three members of the legislature and one former member of the state's constitutional convention.  

White Republicans faced continuous heckling as well as threats of personal violence by armed Democrats at their mass meetings. Prominent politicians believed that they had been "marked out" for assassination by the rebels and therefore curtailed their campaign activities. Such terror tactics led to gloomy predictions that the Republicans could never get a fair vote in the election. One terrified wife of a South Carolina Republican wrote to Governor Scott: "I never lie down to sleep with that sense of safety which I could feel, if my husband's principles were democratic." 


37 "Condition of Affairs in Georgia," House Mis. Doc. 52, 40-3, 12-23; John A. Rockwell to "My dear brother and sister," October 6, 1868, Rockwell Letters, UGa.; Sebastian Kraft to Robert K. Scott, August 5, 1868, Matthew Gray to B. F. Whittemore, September 12, 1868, Richard H. Cain to Scott, October 24, 1868, Mrs. John Cochran to Scott,
Relaying information received from frightened Republicans, Governor Henry Clay Warmoth of Louisiana on August 1, 1868, informed President Johnson that 150 men had been murdered in the state in the past month and a half. According to Warmoth, armed military organizations (primarily the Knights of the White Camelia) were breaking up Republican meetings and creating a general reign of terror. Johnson, however, refused to provide additional troops as requested by the governor. Conservatives charged that Warmoth had greatly exaggerated the number of murders. The legislature asked the governor to document his assertions, and even the military authorities in Louisiana thought that Warmoth's statements were overblown.38

There is, however, no denying the fact that political intimidation and murder stalked the state of Louisiana during the 1868 campaign. Threats of violence deterred Republicans from holding meetings and generally paralyzed the party throughout the state. Armed men rode through

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the countryside attacking the Negroes and intimidating Republican civil officials who were powerless to stop these outrages. Prominent politicians received warnings to leave the state and nighttime visits from the Knights of the White Camelia and other such organizations. Midnight assassinations of Republican officials served as a very effective object lesson for the rank and file party members. Employers threatened their black laborers with dismissal if they did not join the Democratic clubs and vote for Seymour and Blair. A few whippings or murders of leading blacks convinced the freedmen that it was the better part of valor to either stay at home on election day or support the Democrats. 39

There were also large-scale race riots. In Bossier Parish in the extreme northwestern corner of the state, armed and drunken Negroes tied up and beat an Arkansas cotton salesman who had snapped his pistol at one of the blacks. After the freedmen also killed two other white men on September 30, a body of armed whites, many from Arkansas, surrounded the blacks on a local plantation and murdered at least one hundred of them. Conservatives blamed incendiary white radicals for stirring up violence among the Negroes, but the resulting punishment hardly

fitted the original crime, even using Levitical standards of punishment. 40

St. Landry Parish in south central Louisiana had a large black population, few native Republicans, and two notable carpetbaggers, Emerson Bentley and Michael Vidal, the publishers of the radical St. Landry Progress. Although the Democrats had handily carried the parish in the April 1868 state election, by the summer the Republicans were better organized and holding meetings addressed by Bentley, guarded by black sentinels. Whites feared that the carpetbag leaders made incendiary harangues at these gatherings, and a rumor circulated that the blacks intended to burn down the small town of Washington. Conservatives also charged that Bentley had advised the Negroes to use "matches" during the campaign and had prevented them from attending Democratic meetings. On September 28 two whites visited Bentley at his school, which he had set up for the black children in the parish, and severely caned the radical editor for writing an editorial attacking the violent activities of the Democratic clubs. The school children ran from the building screaming that Bentley had been murdered, and the blacks became greatly alarmed. Republicans of both races headed toward Opelousas, the parish's largest town, to investigate the affair. Some blacks shot at whites near the outskirts of town, and the whites

returned the fire. Armed bands then fanned out along the
country roads, captured twenty-nine black men, and brought
them back to jail in Opelousas. The next day a group of
whites took all but two of the prisoners from the jail and
shot them to death. Whites then again moved into the
countryside brutally murdering any blacks they could find.
Republicans later estimated that the Democratic clubs had
slaughtered some two hundred Negroes, and even the Democrats
conceded that twenty-five or thirty had been killed.
Whatever the actual toll of the carnage, there was no longer
any danger of the radicals winning the election. As one
witness told a congressional investigating committee:
"The Republican party had ceased to exist in St. Landry
since the riot." 41

With its long tradition of political violence dating
back to the days of the Know Nothings and continuing
through the riot of 1866, New Orleans not unexpectedly
became a hotbed of tension during the 1868 campaign.
Warmoth later described the city at that time as "dirty,
impoverished . . . with a mixed, ignorant, corrupt, and
bloodthirsty gang in control. It was flooded with

41 Carolyn E. DeLatte, "The St. Landry Riot: A
Forgotten Incident of Reconstruction Violence," Louisiana
History, XVII (Winter, 1976), 41-49; Warmoth, War, Politics
and Reconstruction, 67; New Orleans Daily Picayune,
October 6, 1868; Brevet Major General Lovell H. Rousseau
to Ulysses S. Grant, November 27, 1868, House Ex. Doc. 1,
40-3, 308-309; Captain A. E. Hooker to R. B. Ayres,
October 16, 1868, LR, Department of Louisiana, 1868-1870,
RG 393, NA; House Mis. Doc. 154, 41-2, Pt. 1, 406-21,
lotteries, gambling dens, and licensed brothels. Many of the city officials, as well as the police force, were thugs and murderers." By September, with the election canvass well underway, the Democrats were already expressing their perennial alarms at the prospect of a Negro insurrection. Reportedly, armed Negroes paraded the streets committing untold outrages and terrifying the white citizens.42

Claiming that the blacks were becoming more insolent and the police more inefficient, New Orleans whites began to form quasi-military organizations, such as the Crescent City Democratic Club and the Seymour Legion, that patrolled the streets supposedly to suppress black violence. Radicals complained that these Democrats paraded about the streets armed and violently assaulted black and white Republicans. United States Marshal Stephen B. Packard charged that the Democrats and the Knights of the White Camelia controlled New Orleans and could simply take any weapons they wanted from local gun shops without paying for them. One fearful radical reported that the Democrats were going to sound the fire alarm as a signal for a general uprising and slaughter of the Republicans.43

42 Warmoth, War, Politics and Reconstruction, 80; W. A. Smallwood to Andrew Johnson, September 6, 1868, Johnson Papers, LC; New Orleans Daily Picayune, August 4, September 9, 1868.

Military authorities in New Orleans nervously watched the increasing political disorder. The War Department instructed General Robert C. Buchanan, in command of all the troops in Louisiana, to keep his forces on alert in the city for any signs of trouble. The commander of the troops in New Orleans, General Lovell H. Rousseau, deplored the growing mob spirit and warned that the highly partisan police force would be useless in quelling any disturbances. Because the Johnson administration was not about to send more troops into the state to help Republicans, the officers on the scene had to act largely on their own hook.

The civil and military officials managed to keep an uneasy peace until the evening of September 22 when black and white political processions clashed. As the black Grant and Constitution clubs marched along Canal Street, a white man on a balcony let out a yell for Seymour and Blair. The blacks rushed the building, broke through the doors and windows of a restaurant, and wildly fired inside. A Democratic club rushed to the scene, hurled rocks, and used their knives and pistols against the blacks, driving them away. Three blacks died in the fighting, and several persons on both sides were injured before the military and the police finally restored order. Crescent City conservatives saw this affray as just another example

of the incendiary influence of white Jacobins on the tractable blacks.\textsuperscript{44}

The violence mounted in New Orleans as the campaign moved into October. The Democratic clubs became more active and brazen in their attacks on the Republicans. Radicals claimed that their opponents had broken up Republican clubs, burned schools and churches, and murdered hundreds of blacks. Governor Warmoth warned Secretary of War John M. Schofield in late October that the civil authorities in New Orleans and the surrounding parishes were powerless to stop these outbreaks without the support of an increased force of United States troops. Democrats defied the Republican Metropolitan Police and took virtual control of large parts of the city. On October 25 the Democratic clubs launched full-scale assaults on policemen all over New Orleans. They also broke into Republican club rooms, demolished furniture, and killed somewhere between twenty-five and thirty radicals. Such one-sided clashes completed the demoralization of the Republicans and clearly established Democratic dominance in New Orleans.\textsuperscript{45}


\textsuperscript{45}Stephen B. Packard to William E. Chandler, October 20, 1868, M. A. Southworth to Chandler, October 21,
BUT THERE WAS NO PEACE:
VIOLENCE AND RECONSTRUCTION POLITICS
VOLUME II

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Disturbances erupted at the same time in St. Bernard Parish, just southwest of New Orleans. Whites had long accused black politicians of encouraging the Negroes in the parish to commit various outrages. The Sicilians, Portuguese, and Spanish formed a Democratic club interestingly called the "Innocents" that held processions throughout the campaign and evidently murdered several blacks. In late October a drunken group of black Republicans broke into the bakery of one Pablo Filio, killed both the owner and his son, and burned the building to the ground. United States troops arrived on the scene but lacked the authority to take any action other than to preserve an uneasy peace. Many whites fled the parish into New Orleans. Fifty or sixty blacks were arrested, held in custody for about a month, and then released with no charges having ever been filed against them.46

With the growing disorders in Louisiana and other southern states, the Army remained uncertain of its mission in the South. Beginning with Warmoth's previously mentioned letter, southern governors sent numerous requests for


additional troops to Washington. Republicans hoped that the presence of federal soldiers would deter Democratic outrages and ensure a peaceful election. Troops already stationed in the South were available for such duty, and certain Republican politicians sometimes dictated their distribution within their own states. The Johnson administration nevertheless informed Republican officials that they had to attempt to enforce the laws themselves and could not call for federal help unless faced with overwhelming resistance. General George G. Meade, the commander of the Department of the South (which then included the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Alabama), reported to his superiors in Washington that he was unable to aid the Republican governors in these states with his present number of troops and under his current orders. However, more troops were not sent, and new orders were not issued. This placed the generals in an uncomfortable dilemma. For example, Secretary of War Schofield and the President himself vaguely directed General Rousseau in Louisiana to keep the peace without interfering in the functions of civil government. Such instructions for all practical purposes left the bewildered general to stumble about on his own in the quicksands of Louisiana politics, a most cruel fate. The Army therefore assumed a largely passive role during the campaign, intervening only to suppress some of the
more violent disturbances and providing the beleaguered Republicans with precious little protection.\(^{47}\)

When it became evident that the Army would not intervene, Democratic employers stepped up their economic warfare against their black laborers. Republicans realized that the propertyless blacks could hardly defy the wealthy planters or sacrifice their family's welfare just to cast a ballot. There is also evidence to indicate that some planters after the election drove Republican Negroes from their lands and turned entire families out of their humble homes.\(^{48}\)

A worried Joe Brown predicted even before the election that this Democratic intimidation of the Negroes had destroyed all chances of a Republican victory. Although there were no major disturbances on election day itself, radicals in some places complained of armed (and


\(^{48}\)Volney Spalding to William E. Chandler, September 1, 1868, Chandler Papers, LC; Morgan, Yazoo, 207; Report of Major General O. O. Howard, BRFAL, October 14, 1868, House Ex. Doc. 1, 40-3, 1048; Ishmael Powel to Robert K. Scott, November 30, 1868, John T. Henderson to Scott, November 30, 1868, Scott Papers, SCA.
occasionally disguised) bands who prevented the blacks from voting. Democratic election officials challenged Negro voters at the polls, and armed whites crowded around the ballot boxes to dissuade potential Republican voters from depositing their tickets. The police in several towns and cities chased blacks from the polls, and a few blacks died in election day disturbances. 49

Aided by intimidation and violence, the Democrats carried Georgia and Louisiana for Seymour. The black voters in the former states, justifiably frightened by some anonymous and not so anonymous threats and the growing power of the Ku Klux Klan, either did not go to the polls or involuntarily voted Democratic. In Louisiana, Republicans shortly before the election advised their supporters of both races not to vote if they had to do so at the risk of their lives. Some blacks played it safe and voted for Seymour as an act of self-preservation. As a result, Grant received virtually no votes in several parishes that had gone strongly Republican in the April state elections. Grant did not need the votes of these two states because he had defeated Seymour by a wide margin in the electoral college. However, the results of the

49 Joseph E. Brown to William E. Chandler, October 8, 1868, Chandler Papers, LC; Stearns, Black Man of the South, 249; House Mis. Doc. 52, 40-3, 27-32, 35-38, 49-123; Joseph Crews to Robert K. Scott, November 4, 1868, W. F. DeKnight to William Stone, November 6, 1868, Scott Papers, SCA; Francis H. Smith to Elihu B. Washburne, November 8, 1868, Washburne Papers, LC.
voting unmistakably demonstrated that even a crudely con­ceived campaign of violence and intimidation could diminish the strength of the Republican party in the South.50

Conservatives heatedly denied the use of such methods against Republican voters and again charged the radicals with making up false tales of election outrages for their own partisan purposes. Southerners played on the old themes of a peaceful South in the hands of a violent North and attributed any disturbances in the South to the evils of radical rule. Discerning Democrats privately forecast that the unsuccessful campaign of 1868 merely marked the beginning of a successful rebellion against African rule in the South.51

To interpret Reconstruction violence in strictly political terms is to miss its wider significance. The South in the late 1860's and early 1870's was still in the throes of a social and economic revolution, which produced its own amount of tension and violence. The transition from slave to free labor was slow, and the place of the


51 Richmond Daily Dispatch, November 10, 1868; Louisville Courier-Journal, November 17, 1868; New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 18, 1868; Henry B. Richardson to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry B. Richardson, November 30, 1868, Henry Brown Richardson and Family Papers, LSU.
free Negro in southern society was not yet established. Thus, it becomes often impossible to separate those outbreaks arising out of strictly political causes from those reflecting deeper divisions in southern society.

This is not to say that the South was not gradually adjusting to free labor. Both northern and foreign travelers, as well as many southerners, pointed out that the whites were becoming accustomed to the Negroes as free workers. Planters came to realize that black labor was indispensable for their operations and so accepted as a necessity what they could not yet see as a virtue. There were exceptions and qualifications, but many southerners admitted that the freedmen worked about as well as could have been expected and just as efficiently as the native whites. General William T. Sherman on a visit to New Orleans remarked in a letter to his wife that the talk of the Negro not working was "all bosh" and that the blacks were about the only ones who did work in the South.  

Observers also noted that many of the blacks retained the old obsequious, and to some extent affectionate, relationship with their former owners. The blacks seemed to prefer working for the old southern planters rather than for new planters of either northern or southern origins. Yet just as in the antebellum South, under this seemingly cozy paternalism lay harsher aspects of an oppressive social and economic order. Planters still cheated the blacks in terms of wages and crop shares, and many an employer insisted that the Negroes buy all their supplies at his store. A mean-spirited resentment of emancipation manifested itself in the refusal of whites to sell land to industrious freedmen.53

Indeed, there were those whites who looked back upon slavery days with a loving nostalgia or even advocated the rebirth of the old regime. Southerners lamented the fact that the blacks no longer cultivated the good will of their old masters or listened to their advice. Whites believed that the blacks had been far better off under slavery and pointed to a supposedly rising mortality rate among the race after emancipation to clinch their point.

1871, Sherman Papers, University of Notre Dame Archives, South Bend, Indiana.

Southerners also argued that the blacks could never work without supervision and quickly became idle and vicious without the guiding hand of the white man. One North Carolina planter informed a northern visitor: "The nigger, sir, is a savage whom the Almighty maker appointed to be a slave. . . . With him free the South is ruined, sir, ruined."

All across the South farmers and planters sat around on the languid afternoons grumbling about the idle blacks. Southerners were unalterably skeptical about the freedmen ever working as they had worked as slaves, and voiced their perennial complaint about the stupidity and want of independent judgment of workers who, as they seemed to forget, had been instilled with just such qualities by the whites. Blaming the lack of agricultural prosperity entirely on the inefficiency of black labor, many southerners agreed with the Tennessee farmer who feared that he would surely lose his religion if it depended on keeping his temper with the free Negroes. A Mississippi planter, meditating on the problems of the new order, wrote in his

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54 Mr. Greeley's Letters from Texas, 38-40; Montgomery Daily Advertiser, July 14, 1869; Carter, ed., Magnolia Journey, 104; Charleston Daily Courier, September 21, 1869, February 10, 1873; Edwin De Leon, "Ruin and Reconstruction of the Southern States: A Record of Two Tours in 1868 and 1873," Southern Magazine, XIV (March, 1874), 287-309; Frances Butler Leigh, Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation Since the War (London, 1863), 71; John Slidell to Edward G. W. Butler, December 2, 1867, Butler Papers, Duke; Stephen Powers, Afoot and Alone (Hartford, Connecticut, 1872), 35-36.
journal: "The leopard cannot change its spots and the nigger will continue to remain as he is until the Angel Gabriel blows his horn."^55

A few disgusted southerners feared that the South relied far too much on black labor and should therefore encourage white immigration into the region. Efforts to induce immigration, undertaken by both Republican state governments and private investors, utterly failed. There were few inducements for foreign immigrants to move into a land of grinding poverty whose denizens were hardly more receptive to the strange ways of foreign immigrants than they were to the cultural mores of the blacks. Planters griped constantly about the few foreign immigrants who did come south and found them much less tractable than the blacks. Most of the immigrants wanted to become independent land owners, but the planters refused to break up their large holdings. Realistic conservatives admitted that the

South would remain dependent upon black labor for the indefinite future.\(^{56}\)

Southerners still found it terribly bothersome to make labor contracts with the freedmen. Whites complained that the blacks never seemed satisfied with their wages or hours of work. The end of each crop year brought on a new crisis for both races with blacks leaving their employers and whites looking for new laborers. Planters felt that the Negroes were rapidly losing their loyalty to their old masters and becoming much more independent in their attitudes and actions. The change from labor contracts to the share system occurred amidst the constant carping about the unreliability of the freedmen. A Mississippi planter, sounding much like an Old Testament prophet mourning the apostasy of the children of Israel, lamented in his diary: "Verily, there is little dependence to be placed in the promises of many of the colored people."\(^{57}\)

\(^{56}\) L. S. Walker to Alexander H. Stephens, March 24, 1869, Stephens Papers, LC; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, September 17, 1874; Memphis Daily Post, July 10, 1869; Mrs. B. S. Holmes to Nickels J. Holmes, July 7, 1868, Nickels J. Holmes Papers, Duke; Edgefield Advertiser, February 17, 1870.

\(^{57}\) Sarah Catherine Himes to Adam Himes, January 29, 1870, Sarah Catherine Himes Letters, Duke; Jackson Daily Clarion, December 19, 1867; Leigh, Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation, 87-91, 128-29; New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 5, 1867; Mrs. Armand J. DeRosset to Louis J. DeRosset, January 12, 1868, DeRosset Family Papers, SHC; Entry for January 1, 1869, Samuel A. Agnew Dairy, ibid.
The most common black moral deficiency according to whites was their frequent violation of the eighth commandment. Southerners reported that the idle blacks refused to work for a living and survived by stealing provisions and livestock from the whites. Yet much of this brigandage, as whites sometimes realized, was also due to the hard times that plagued southern agriculture after the war and that threw black laborers out of work. The poorer whites often cooperated with the black thieves and served as what in modern parlance would be called "fences" for stolen goods. Also unscrupulous white storekeepers encouraged the blacks to steal seed cotton from the planters by purchasing the pilfered cotton from the freedmen at secret nighttime rendezvous.\(^5^8\)

Planters saw the new political status of the freedmen as a major obstacle to the employment of black labor. Whites believed that campaigning, running for office, and

voting needlessly drew the Negroes away from the fields. Whites groused that the blacks would drop everything and run off to attend a radical meeting as if the crops would harvest themselves. Conservatives also accused the Republicans of coercing the freedmen into listening to radical speakers and neglecting their work. Southerners feared that the blacks would hearken to the seductive promise of free land and would refuse to sign contracts now that they could obtain through the ballot what they could not earn with the hoe.59

The new demands of the free labor system put strains on both races that resulted in bruised feelings and sometimes bloody denouements. In rare instances, blacks who could no longer abide the arbitrary or cruel treatment they received at the hands of a white employer, would physically assault their nemesis. Whites who attempted to chastise the Negroes with the old methods of corporal punishment either met resistance or found themselves under military arrest when their victims complained to the nearest army commander. It is impossible to estimate how frequently such conflicts between white employers and

black laborers erupted in violence, but these incidents occurred often enough to remind both races of the instability of the new regime.60

The period's social and economic problems, aggravated by the political tensions incumbent upon Republican rule, helped to bring into being that shadowy, and in the opinion of some that incorporeal body, the Ku Klux Klan. Despite the vast amount of both primary and secondary material available, the Klan's origins, organization, and influence remain as mysterious as its cryptic name. Part of the problem lies in the fact that contemporary southerners (as opposed to their boastful descendants) publicly downplayed the activities of the Klan if not actually denying its existence. A Virginia politico welcomed a group of northern newspapermen in Richmond in 1871 by congratulating them on their safe journey through the land of the Ku Klux. The editors playfully responded that they had seen none of these ghostly figures en route. The accounts of Klan raids that appeared in the southern press were often humorous or satirical sketches, bitterly mocking the very real and justifiable terror of southern Republicans. Southerners argued that Ku Klux raids were for the most part imaginary

60 Frank Smith to Jeptha McKinney, November 19, 1870, McKinney Papers, LSU; Edgefield Advertiser, April 29, 1868; Entry for September 22, 1867, John Q. Anderson, ed., Brokenburn: The Journal of Kate Stone, 1861-1868 (Baton Rouge, 1972), 368; New York Herald, October 30, 1867; George S. Hawley to Colonel J. F. Chur, July 15, 1868, William W. Holden Papers, NCDAH; Entry for November 3, 1868, Samuel A. Agnew Diary, SHC.
products of nervous or unscrupulous radicals and attributed any outbreaks against Republicans to factional quarrels within the enemy camp, a sort of falling out of thieves. Republican editors criticized the conservatives for ignoring or explaining away such glaring outrages, but most southerners were willing, at least in the early phases of the Klan's career, to laugh at, ignore, or at most privately disapprove of the growing intimidation and violence.\textsuperscript{61}

Moreover, southerners believed that the radicals welcomed Klan outbreaks, peace being abhorrent to these bloodthirsty fanatics. The northern press published greatly embroidered accounts of those Klan "outrages" that did occur for the political benefit of Grant and the Republicans. One Augusta, Georgia, editor warned that "every strolling vagabond who will assume the slightest pretension of loyalty can gain the ear and the willing sympathies of the powers that be in Washington. . . . He can create a sensation which will fill the eye of and the ear of the northern public." Conservatives branded a

proposed congressional investigation of Klan activities in the South as just another Republican fishing expedition designed to dredge up bloodcurdling tales to scare timid voters in the North. 62

Southerners argued that actual Klan violence grew out of the evils of Negro rule. The secret activities of radical incendiaries and the Loyal Leagues naturally produced a reaction from the other side: hence, the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan gave frustrated southerners a way to fight back against their Republican rulers without eliciting, so they hoped, the interference of the federal government. Radical corruption and misrule could not help but provoke a violent response among southerners who watched their wealth being consumed by insolent knaves. When southerners did not deny the existence of or make light of Ku Klux activities, they asserted that the oppressive Republican state and local governments made the organization of the Klan necessary in the first place. Pointing out that the radicals controlled the political machinery in the South, the whites asked why the Republicans could not suppress Klan violence. 63

62 Memphis Daily Appeal, October 24, 1871; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, January 26, 1871; Louisville Courier-Journal, February 13, 1872; Atlanta Constitution, January 25, 1871; Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, April 27, 1870, January 17, March 25, 1871; Charleston Daily Courier, January 23, September 27, 1871.

63 J. C. Lester and D. L. Wilson, Ku Klux Klan: Its Origin, Growth and Disbandment (New York, 1971), 75-82; Anderson Intelligencer, April 13, 1871; William Stanley
Klan activity also served as a deterrent against the always imminent Negro insurrection. John B. Gordon told a congressional committee that the Klan operated in Georgia solely to prevent black uprisings. In many areas Klan members claimed to be dealing with a black crime wave and meting out the swift and sure "justice" that Republican judges and juries either could not or would not provide. When radicals gave arms to blacks and organized ignorant fieldhands into militia units, they should hardly decry the whites' measures of self-defense. Southerners justified the use of vigilante techniques by charging the Republicans with committing far more heinous crimes than the Klan itself.64

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Southern pleas to the contrary notwithstanding, the Ku Klux Klan was a terrorist organization whose victims were usually Republicans of both races. Nightriding Klansmen assassinated Republican officials and sought to drive frightened blacks from the party's ranks. The Klan itself served as an extra-legal arm of the Democratic party, which sought to win through terrorism that which the party could not gain through peaceful elections. The conservatives' loss of political power, the racial fears of the poor whites, and the economic instability of southern agriculture all combined to make the white South receptive to or at least acquiescent in Klan violence. The random and capricious raids, the whipping of blacks dragged from their homes in the dead of night, and the murder of prominent Republicans added to the Klan's aura of terrible mystery and pointed up the real impotency of Republican officials.  

The events in Laurens County, South Carolina, in the fall of 1870 demonstrated at least on the local level the real power of Klan terrorism. Joe Crews was a white Republican and organizer of a black militia unit in the county. Conservatives claimed that the drilling of this company made it unsafe for respectable people to walk the streets alone, and the familiar talk of a Negro plot to burn down the town of Laurensville gained currency. A false alarm in September placed the whites on their guard, but feverish precautions apparently prevented Crews and his minions from taking any steps to carry out this incendiary plot though he had distributed arms to his followers. For their part, the whites discussed seizing the ballot boxes from the recent state election. Meanwhile, on October 20 a street fight broke out between a white man and a black man that resulted in shots being exchanged between armed blacks and whites. The better organized whites then rushed to the houses where the militia arms were stored, seized these weapons, and began a general assault on the Negroes that sent them scurrying out of town. Whites fanned out into the countryside and slaughtered an unknown number of blacks. The fate of

66As in many such incidents, the involvement of an official "den" of the Ku Klux Klan in this riot is uncertain. As Allen Trelease points out time after time, it is often impossible to distinguish between "genuine" Ku Klux and other terrorist bands. It is also not terribly important to do so. Trelease, White Terror, passim.
the ballot boxes is uncertain; the Republicans may have shipped them to Columbia before the fighting began. In other counties where the Ku Klux Klan was most active, such overwhelming displays of force temporarily destroyed the local Republican party. 67

Schoolhouses and northern teachers became the particular targets of Klan attacks. Whites resented the establishment of schools for Negroes especially when they suspected that the blacks learned more politics than arithmetic, and the hated Union League held its meetings in the schoolhouses. Klansmen visited Yankee schoolteachers at night, warned them to leave the area, and often whipped them. The teachers who refused to heed these warnings often found their schools mysteriously burned down by unknown incendiaries. Seeing the education of the blacks under Republican auspices as a subversive activity, southerners either condoned or at least did not denounce clandestine assault and arson. 68

67 William Watts Ball, The State That Forgot: South Carolina's Surrender to Democracy (Indianapolis, 1932), 151-53; John A. Leland, A Voice From South Carolina (Charleston, 1879), 51-64; Mrs. J. Ward Motte to Robert Motte, September 3, 21, October 20, 22, 1870, Lalla Pelot Papers, Duke; Governor Robert K. Scott to Secretary of War William W. Belknap, October 21, 1870, IR, AGO, Main Series, 1861-1870, RG 94, NA (M619, roll 775).

Resistance to Klan raids by their intended victims was infrequent, heroic, but in the end futile. One black woman in North Carolina split open the head of a Klansman with an ax. Blacks sometimes formed their own armed companies to counter Klan nightriding. There were also instances of blacks refusing to work for farmers and planters who either belonged to or supported the Ku Klux. Other Negroes stoically followed the course described years later by an old black man in South Carolina: "I sticks out to de end wid de party dat freed me." 69

Such acts of individual defiance could not stay the bloody hands of Klan terror. State and local officials mourned their powerlessness to stop the nightriding and outrages. Governor William W. Holden of North Carolina


issued ringing proclamations against the Klan but with little or no effect. Radicals pleaded for federal intervention, predicting bloody consequences if the nation failed to act. The fiery Tennessee Senator, William G. "Parson" Brownlow wildly predicted that the Ku Klux might even assassinate President Grant. Federal commanders in areas ravaged by these armed bands added their voices to those calling for strong action to stop the violence.70

The breadth of Klan membership partially explains the terrible potency of the movement. Most dens, such as the original one in Pulaski, Tennessee, were organized by solid local citizens for purposes more social than political. The elaborate regalia and mysterious ceremonies of the order carried an appeal to many men similar to that of the fraternal groups and lodges of the day. The Ku Klux recruited members of all ages and economic backgrounds, though in general only the younger and less prominent men participated in the raids. As the Klan became more violent, many of its founders became disenchanted with the

organization and dropped out, thus leaving control in the hands of the more radical elements. The wide membership and diverse motives behind Klan activity virtually guaranteed substantial community support, and this guerilla movement could not have long survived without white acceptance or at least tolerance. Although aristocratic whites and later apologists often described the Ku Klux Klan as a violent aggregation of poor whites, there is no doubt that leading conservatives endorsed the organization and certainly benefitted from it if they did not actually participate in the bloodshed.\footnote{Trelease, White Terror, 5-6, 51-52, 199-200, 332-33; J. C. Brown, "Reconstruction in Yalobusha and Grenada Counties," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, XII (1912), 240-43; Augusta Longstreet Hull, Annals of Athens, Georgia, 1801-1901 (Athens, Georgia, 1906), 323; Ralph L. Peek, "Lawlessness in Florida, 1868-1871," Florida Historical Quarterly, XL (October, 1961), 164; C. Mildred Thompson, Reconstruction in Georgia: Economic, Social, Political, 1865-1872 (New York, 1915), 361-94; William Dudley Bell, "The Reconstruction Ku Klux Klan: A Survey of the Writings on the Klan with a Profile and Analysis of the Alabama Klan Episode, 1866-1874," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1973), 208-11, 218-33; J. C. A. Stagg, "The Problem of Klan Violence: The South Carolina Up-Country, 1868-1871," Journal of American Studies, VIII (December, 1974), 303-18; Herbert Shapiro, "The Ku Klux Klan During Reconstruction: The South Carolina Episode," Journal of Negro History, XLIX (January, 1964), 47-55.}

These conservative leaders were seldom able to control the membership completely, and many violent acts were committed against their will or without their knowledge. There was no effective organization at all beyond the county level, and certainly no Ku Klux "conspiracy" in the
South. Conservatives explained Klan terrorism by citing the infiltration of bad men into the organization; they should have known that vigilante operations are easier to start than to stop. The racial animus of the common whites overrode upper class efforts to halt the raids. Even though the poorer whites were more hostile to the Negroes than were the old planters, all classes believed that they profited from Ku Klux activities, a factor that explains the durability of the Klan in many counties.\textsuperscript{72}

A few white leaders eventually denounced Klan terror and openly broke with the organization. Some feared that continued raids would generate black retaliation while others simply believed that the grosser acts of brutality were unnecessary for maintenance of conservative political hegemony and white supremacy. The wide publicity that Klan outrages received only hurt the South and solidified radical strength in the North. A few southerners excoriated vigilante justice as being inherently dangerous in a free society and called for an end to Ku Klux violence before it provoked federal action. Unfortunately, those white southerners who condemned the Klan were a tiny minority, and it was the fear of federal intervention, not their

\textsuperscript{72}Trelease, White Terror, 28-35; Bell, "Reconstruction Ku Klux Klan," 282-85; Lester and Wilson, Ku Klux Klan, 83ff; Randolph A. Shotwell, Three Years in Battle and Three Years in Federal Prisons, Hamilton, ed., Shotwell Papers, II, 279-80, 344-51; T. Harry Williams, "An Analysis of Some Reconstruction Attitudes," Journal of Southern History, XII (November, 1946), 475-84; Coulter, South During Reconstruction, 163-64.
mild disapproval, that eventually ended the Invisible Empire's career in the South.73

The legendary stature of the Klan far exceeded its contemporary importance. Klan raids constituted but a small part of the counterrevolutionary intimidation and violence that whites employed to overthrow radical rule in the South. Allen Trelease, the leading student of the Reconstruction Klan, has concluded that the organization achieved few of its goals during its brief existence. It failed to subvert a single Republican state government, though it may have contributed to redeemer victories in the states of Georgia and North Carolina. The Klan did not restore Democratic power, but it did break up the Union League and reduce Republican strength in many southern counties. More importantly, the Klan provoked federal intervention, a development that paradoxically contributed to the downfall of the Republican party in the former Confederate states.74


74Granade, "Violence in Reconstruction Alabama," 181; Simkins, "Klan in South Carolina," 606-29; Trelease, White Terror, 82, 419.
The Ku Klux violence pointed up the impotency of Republican governments in the South. In Alabama, Governor Smith and Senator Spencer disagreed over the extent of disorder in their state; Spencer and his fellow carpetbaggers used the issue of Klan terrorism as a weapon in their factional quarrel with the scalawags. Even where Republicans agreed on the need to combat the disguised bands, legal action proved ineffective. Judge Albion Tourgee of North Carolina quickly discovered the realities of southern justice. Tourgee wanted to crush the Klan bushwhackers with an "iron heel" but met strong local resistance. When a grand jury brought in indictments, witnesses were difficult to find, and the accused parties produced a multiplicity of alibis. Arrests of accused persons were not easy, and many simply fled prosecution. Tourgee became even more disgusted with jurors who refused to convict men whose guilt had been overwhelmingly established and lamented to his wife: "It is no crime for a white man to cut a colored man open in Alamance [county]." Arrests and convictions could themselves become meaningless when hooded riders broke into jails to rescue their comrades.75

The failure of state prosecution led Republicans to plead for federal assistance. Radicals pressed for passage of congressional legislation against voter intimidation and nightriding. Southern Republican congressmen argued that if the state governments could not maintain order, the federal government had the responsibility to do so. Could the nation stand idly by and allow its reconstruction policy to be nullified by a willful minority? Black representatives movingly pleaded for the protection of Negro voters, asserting that Klan violence was an attack on the federal government itself and a symptom of renewed rebellion. Congress eventually passed three Enforcement Acts (1870-1871) that provided for federal prosecution of persons who through intimidation or physical force prevented citizens from exercising their rights under the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. These laws also prohibited a long list of activities associated with the Ku Klux Klan (such as riding about in disguise) and gave the President the power to suspend the writ of habeas corpus in states where the resistance to legal authority had become overwhelming.76

Southern conservatives raised the familiar cry of "tyranny" against what they termed the "force bills." Linton Stephens believed that the Enforcement Acts were

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null and void because the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments had never been ratified in a constitutional manner. Excited editorial writers trumpeted that the passage of these laws struck the death knell of liberty in America and clothed Grant with the powers of a Roman emperor or an Asian despot. Southerners furthermore charged that these partisan measures allowed the Republican party to "legally" persecute the Democrats. The imprisonment of imaginary Ku Klux would only inflame the passions of northern voters for Grant's re-election campaign in 1872.77

Conservatives protested loudly against dragging white citizens from their homes in the dead of night on the information of some unreliable Negro or carpetbag knave. Federal judges sent southern men to prison for no other offense than the exercise of their political rights under the constitution. Indictments resulted from personal and political vengeance rather than actual crimes, and the

77 Speech of Linton Stephens, Macon, Georgia, January 23, 1871, Alexander H. Stephens, Reviewers Reviewed, 228-30; Wilmington Daily Journal, April 20, 1871; Memphis Daily Appeal, April 2, 21, 1871; Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, March 29, 1871; C.G. 42-1, 376-78; Charleston Daily Courier, January 9, March 27, 1872. The Democrats were not entirely wrong in attributing partisan motives to some Justice Department officials. Despite efforts to remove political considerations from the law enforcement activities in the South, Attorney General George H. Williams wired a federal marshal in Mississippi asking him whether he had supported the Democratic ticket in the election of 1872. Attorney General Amos T. Akerman to John A. Minnis, November 24, 1871, LS, DJ: Instructions to U.S. Attorneys and Marshals, 1867-1904, RG 60, NA (M701, roll 3); Williams to Robert J. Alcorn, July 8, 1873, ibid., (roll 4).
perjured witnesses and packed juries ensured conviction. Such hyperbolic rhetoric converted federal prisons into veritable Bastilles and turned Justice Department officers into Persian satraps.78

These impassioned denunciations of the Enforcement Acts had little to do with their actual operation in the South. United States district attorneys and marshals confronted the same problems faced by state and local officials. Arrests of leading Klansmen at first provided Republicans of both races with some security, but many of the leaders successfully evaded capture by federal troops. In some areas, the desperadoes intimidated deputy marshals and even assassinated witnesses. The Klan's victims were more often than not poor and illiterate men unlikely to bring their plight to the attention of federal officials, and many rightly feared the consequences of doing so. Congress never appropriated enough money to hire detectives to conduct investigations or to carry through lengthy prosecutions. The burden of the enforcement program fell on the shoulders of district attorneys and marshals who varied widely in both their ability and their will to bring these offenders to justice. Federal judges in the South were also of uneven quality, and the decisions of the

78 Charleston Daily Courier, November 27, 1871; Jackson Weekly Clarion, July 11, 1872, November 19, 1874; C. Minaham to George P. Davis, February 17, 1872, David Davis Papers, Chicago Historical Society.
circuit courts and the Supreme Court significantly circumscribed the reach of their authority.\(^{79}\)

Statistics compiled by the Attorney General show that government prosecutors obtained convictions in a high proportion of Enforcement Act cases. As time went on, however, indictments were simply dropped or declared to be *nolle prosequi*. This trend reflected not only the success of federal prosecution of the Klan but also the previously discussed limitations of federal law enforcement in the South. Because of the heavy case load, Attorney General Amos T. Akerman instructed a United States district attorney in Yorkville, South Carolina, to bring the Klan leaders to trial and to allow the lesser offenders to be released on light bail or not prosecute them at all. As Akerman and other federal officials realized, the federal government was ill-equipped to punish persons guilty of crimes normally falling under state or local jurisdiction. This was particularly true where ordinary citizens sympathized with the defendants. The combination

\(^{79}\)John M. Harlan to Benjamin H. Bristow, September 27, 1871, Akerman to Bristow, October 28, 1871, R. H. Hill to Bristow, December 21, 1871, Bristow Papers, LC; Edward C. Wade to Henry P. Farrow, May 6, 1873, Farrow Papers, UGa.; J. H. Pierce to Akerman, May 23, 1871, G. Wiley Wells to Williams, January 16, 1872, LR, DJ, Mississippi, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M970, roll 1); Akerman to John E. Bryant, July 28, 1871, LS, DJ: Instructions to U.S. Attorneys and Marshals, 1867-1904, RG 60, NA (M701, roll 2); Everette Swinney, "Suppressing the Ku Klux Klan: The Enforcement of the Reconstruction Amendments, 1870-1874," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1966), 184-88, 194-99. For the important court decisions, see Chapter VIII.
of waning northern support for a radical reconstruction policy, unfavorable court decisions, and the lack of sufficient funds to prosecute those persons already indicted sapped the strength of the federal enforcement program and allowed groups such as the Louisiana White League to function with relatively little fear of federal interference.\footnote{Statistics on prosecutions under the Enforcement Acts may be found in the Annual Reports of the Attorney General (1870-1877), House Ex. Doc. 90, 41-3, 4-7; House Ex. Doc. 55, 42-2, 4-6; Sen. Ex. Doc. 32, 42-3, 18-21, 24-31, 36-39; House Ex. Doc. 6, 43-I, 20-23, 26-29; House Ex. Doc. 7, 43-2, 27; House Ex. Doc. 14, 44-1, 23; House Ex. Doc. 20, 44-2, 19; House Ex. Doc. 7, 45-2, 25; Akerman to E. C. Camp, September 26, 1870, LS, DJ; Instructions to U.S. Attorneys and Marshals, 1867-1904, RG 60, NA (M701, roll 1); Akerman to D. T. Corbin, November 10, 1871, Akerman to John A. Minnis, February 11, 1871, ibid., (roll 2); Everette Swinney, "Enforcing the Fifteenth Amendment," Journal of Southern History, XXVIII (May, 1962), 205-18.}

After the passage of the Reconstruction Acts, the authority of the Army to enforce the law and to maintain order greatly expanded but at the same time became more uncertain. Southerners believed that the Yankee soldiers exerted a vast and undue political influence in favor of the Republican party. Moreover, the Army's presence became a symbol of arbitrary power and tyrannical rule in the South. Acting under powers granted by the Enforcement Acts, companies of soldiers arrested respected citizens but ignored the Negro criminals who plagued the people. A large standing army was a financial drain on the national economy and too great a temptation in the
hands of a would-be dictator such as Grant. Despotic rule, southerners still hoped, might produce a strong reaction that would lead to redemption. 81

Clashes between soldiers and civilians took place over much less elevated issues than these classical protests against military occupation would indicate. Ex-Confederates resented the display of the United States flag at military posts, and some persisted in flying the stars and bars with the clear purpose of riling the Yankees. Southerners greatly exaggerated the number of military arrests made for cursing the stars and stripes or intemperate speeches defending the "Lost Cause," but even a few such incidents rankled deeply in the breasts of sensitive rebels. Citizens occasionally tussled with soldiers on the streets, and drunken off-duty troops disturbed the peace of many a southern town. When police arrested soldiers for violating local ordinances, Army commanders sent off heated telegrams to Washington seeking to transfer such cases to the federal courts. 82


Officeholders of both parties were a painful thorn in the side for many Army officers. Under the Reconstruction Acts, commanders in the five military districts could appoint and remove state and local officials. The proper use of such discretionary power required the wisdom of a Solomon and the patience of a Job. The men removed from office almost always sent lengthy protests to political friends in Washington, and those passed over for appointments howled just as vociferously. Some disgruntled placeholders refused to give up their posts until compelled to do so by troops with fixed bayonets. Army officers often had to get rid of local officials who obstructed the administration of the Reconstruction Acts or were patently unfair to the blacks. Whites complained that the Army interfered with the administration of justice by taking Negro criminals from local courts and trying them before military commissions. However discreetly they performed their duty, hard pressed officers seldom received any plaudits from the civil authorities.\(^3\)

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\(^3\)Major General Philip H. Sheridan to J. Madison Wells, June 7, 1867, Brevet Colonel George A. Forsyth to Robert H. Bradford, July 13, 1867, General Winfield Scott Hancock to Grant, November 30, December 4, 23, 1867,
The most onerous duty of all for troops stationed in the South came at election time. Given the violent nature of southern politics, the troops did their best just to prevent the outcome of an election from being decided by shotguns. Although most commanders preferred to leave peacekeeping to the local constabulary, they frequently had to intervene when these men either could not or would not act to prevent lawlessness. The task was both thankless and herculean. Any appearance of uniformed soldiers near a polling place appeared on its face to be an attempt by the military to control the election. To preserve political neutrality and maintain order at the same time was a difficult goal, but one that the Army often achieved. Commanders sometimes stationed troops within a state according to the wishes of the governor or other leading Republicans, but they also turned down requests that they suspected of originating in a desire to intimidate the Democrats. 84


Despite their loud cries of anguish and vigorous protests against "military despotism," southerners got along reasonably well with the Yankee soldiers. Many whites had long preferred military rule to government by Republican scoundrels. Southern editors praised the conduct of federal troops, and appreciated the fact that most of the officers were "gentlemen" who sympathized with the suffering whites. Many southerners also welcomed the presence of the soldiers as a deterrent against Negro insurrections, and they constantly asked commanders to investigate the latest rumors of a black uprising. Since many of the soldiers were Democrats or conservative Republicans, southern radicals rightly suspected that the troops helped the Democrats more than they did the Negroes, scalawags, or carpetbaggers. One Georgia Republican complained that the soldiers of one garrison hobnobbed only with Confederate cutthroats.  


85Wilmington Daily Journal, April 9, 1871; Richmond Daily Dispatch, April 7, 1869; Charleston Daily Courier, February 12, 1873; James Morris Morgan, Recollections of a Rebel Reefer (London, 1918), 221; Mrs. Nicholas Ware Eppes, "Francis Eppes (1801-1881)," Florida Historical Society Quarterly, V (October, 1926), 100-101; Max L. Heyman, "'The Great Reconstructor': General E. R. S. Canby and the Second Military District," North Carolina
A fundamental problem in the use of the Army in the South was that most officers intensely disliked duty below the Mason-Dixon line. Conservative generals, such as George G. Meade, Winfield Scott Hancock, and John M. Schofield, hesitated to interfere with civil authorities and detested their inevitable entanglement in southern politics. The incessant requests by southern Republicans for the Army to intervene in civil disputes on their behalf drove such men to side with the Democrats. The fact that their superior officers in Washington discounted reports of southern outrages and favored a restrained use of military power further limited the Army's effectiveness in the eyes of the radicals. General Alfred Terry, after struggling with the bitter complexities of Georgia politics, wrote to General Sherman: "I would not again go through

with a job of this kind even if it would make me a Marshal of France." 86

The common soldiers shared many of the prejudices of their commanders, were often hostile to the government's reconstruction policies, and were definitely no friends of the southern blacks. As the War Department shifted large numbers of troops from the former Confederate states to the Great Plains to fight the Indians, the Army's role in the South became more difficult. In the case of the Ku Klux outrages, division and department commanders moved slowly and rejected the idea of military trials for these outlaws. On a practical level, mounted southerners easily evaded pursuit by infantry detachments. As radical General Philip Sheridan had lamented as early as 1867, there were simply many crimes and outrages committed beyond the reach of military power. 87


87. Kirkland, "Federal Troops in the South Atlantic States," 300; Pfanz, "Soldiering in the South," 19; Trelease, White Terror, 384-85; Sefton, Army and
In the absence of effective federal assistance, Republican governors and legislatures turned to their state militias to arrest the desperadoes and restore peace and order to the southern countryside. After a good deal of radical lobbying in Washington, the federal government agreed to furnish a limited number of arms for southern militias, and their organization got underway. Both blacks and whites enlisted in some states while only blacks joined up in others or Republican officials refused to enroll white units. 88

The conservative reaction to the formation of what amounted to Republican state militias was predictable. Southerners denied any need for state troops and accused the radicals of using the issue of rebel outrages to conceal their own peculation. Moreover, they feared that the governors would send the militia on state-wide raids, intimidating whites and ensuring radical electoral majorities. The most serious objection to these militia units was their predominantly Negro composition. The very thought of armed blacks drilling at night was enough to send most whites into a rabid frenzy. Klansmen rationalized their own vigilante activities by pointing to the

Reconstruction, 223-24; Philip H. Sheridan to J. A. Rawlins, November 21, 1867, Sheridan Papers, LC.

depradations committed by Negro militiamen. Some fire-eaters averred that the South was reaching the point where "forebearance ceases to be a virtue" and the oppressed victims of tyranny might finally rise up to defend themselves against these tools of radicalism. 89

Tennessee Republicans felt that a state militia was necessary to protect them from the Ku Klux and other white bands. It was the same old question of the war all over again: would the new rebellion be encouraged or crushed? Governor Brownlow summoned the militia to arms early in 1867 to protect union men against "violent and disloyal men." Conservative whites complained bitterly of outrages committed by black militia units. Many whites honestly feared Brownlow's men and used the name of the governor to frighten recalcitrant children. There is no doubt that the Tennessee militia did commit some crimes and were overzealous in persecuting ex-Confederates, but

89 Jackson Weekly Clarion, March 24, 1870; New Orleans Republican, July 20, 1870; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, July 31, 1868; Memphis Daily Appeal, September 26, 1870; Charleston Daily Courier, August 14, 1868, April 1, 1870; Yorkville Enquirer, September 15, 17, 1870; Anderson Intelligencer, March 31, 1870; Atlanta Constitution, July 2, 1870; New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 24, 1868, September 14, 1870; Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, August 4, 1868; Joel Williamson, After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction, 1861-1877 (Chapel Hill, 1965), 260-66; Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, The Negro in South Carolina During the Reconstruction (Washington, 1924), 190-91; Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, March 30, 1870; Vicksburg Daily Herald, August 23, 30, 1868.
its activities never justified the conservative charges that it was seeking to foment a war of the races.\textsuperscript{90}

Governor Holden of North Carolina began using his militia in the autumn election campaign of 1868 when General Meade refused to meet his request for additional troops. While Republicans spoke of the familiar need to protect loyal men, Democrats raised the equally well-worn cry against a "standing army" in time of peace. Conservatives cautioned the radicals that a Negro militia would certainly force the whites to arm for self-defense. Josiah Turner, the editor of the Raleigh \textit{Sentinel}, and the pre-eminent bourbon leader, bluntly informed his readers that the organization of a so-called "loyal militia" meant war. Fortunately, this heated invective marked the limit of actual hostilities, and the election took place quietly.\textsuperscript{91}


Holden likewise turned to the state militia to deal with the Ku Klux Klan but found it to be ineffective. Facing the bitter prospect of defeat in the 1870 elections, Holden and the Republicans decided to organize a body of men commanded by one George Kirk to patrol the state and protect the voters from armed Democrats. Some Republicans feared that the Klan would infiltrate this group, and others believed that a military campaign in the middle of an election canvass would only hurt their chances. Whether Kirk and his men actually committed all the depredations attributed to them by the Democrats, their movements about the state did not prevent the Republicans from losing the election. This fiasco, popularly known as the "Kirk-Holden war," led to the governor's impeachment.\footnote{William M. Moore to William W. Holden, June 24, 1870, Albert H. Darrell, Jr., to Holden, June 27, 1870, J. C. Williams to Holden, June 28, 1870, W. F. Henderson to Holden, July 9, 1870, A. W. Fisher to Holden, July 21, 1870, George W. Kirk to Holden, July 24, 1870, Holden to Kirk, August 3, 1870, Holden Papers, NCDAH; Raleigh Weekly Standard, July 20, 27, August 17, 1870.}

The use of militia proved much more successful in Arkansas, mainly because of the cool judgment and iron will of the state's governor, Powell Clayton. After watching the state drift toward anarchy during most of 1868 and particularly during the Presidential canvass, Clayton informed the legislature that he had called out the militia

August 15, September 3, 1868; J. W. Sharp to Andrew Johnson, September 7, 1868, Johnson Papers, LC; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, July 22, 24, August 7, September 7, 17, November 12, 1868.
and declared martial law in those counties that had suffered from Ku Klux raids. Newspapers carried scare headlines of robberies, rapes, and murders committed by the armed Negroes, but the militia officers charged the whites with armed resistance. Despite inflated reports of militia outrages throughout January 1869, and an apparent attempt to assassinate Clayton, the governor's firm use of military force crushed the Klan in Arkansas.93

Texas Republicans established a state law enforcement agency that could well have served as a model for other southern states. Texas after the war had changed little from Texas before the war: this frontier state remained a haven for highwaymen and murderers. In addition to no small amount of political violence, the state contained vast untamed and unsettled areas and faced continuing hostilities with the Indians. The Republicans set up a state militia (officially called the State Police) because of what all parties conceded to be a prevailing spirit of lawlessness. Few whites chose to join the force and accused Negro state policemen of inciting a black

insurrection. White resistance to the state police forced Governor Edmund J. Davis to declare martial law in several counties, and violence broke out when the black police attempted to arrest white civilians. In some instances, Republicans used the police as a partisan mechanism, but even their opponents admitted the success of the force in reducing crime in the Lone Star state. When the Democrats disbanded the state police after regaining control of the legislature in 1873, brigands and assassins roamed the state freely once again.94

Even taking into account their limited achievements in Arkansas and Texas, the southern militias during Reconstruction were never very successful in protecting Republicans and blacks from hostile Democrats. Some Republican governors denied the existence of or simply ignored disorder in their states and therefore refused to summon the militia into action. These men were reluctant to declare martial law and feared the consequences of sending predominantly black troops to already disturbed counties. This overweening fear of starting a war of the

races became as much of a bugaboo to conservative Repub-
licans as it was to their Democratic opponents. Of course,
it cannot be gainsaid that the massive deployment of black
militia units in many southern states could well have
precipitated hostilities in which the better armed and
organized whites would have exterminated the Negroes.\footnote{Richard N. Current, Three Carpetbag Governors
(Baton Rouge, 1967), 25; Message of Governor Harrison Reed,
January 4, 1872, Florida House Journal (1872), 20-22;
Message of Governor Robert K. Scott, January 16, 1871,
South Carolina House Journal (1870-1871), 229-33; Message
of Governor William H. Smith, November 15, 1869, Alabama
State Documents (1869-1870), 5-13; Otis A. Singletary,
Negro Militia and Reconstruction (Austin, 1957), 32-33,
145-47.}

In the absence of a powerful impediment, the counter-
revolution in the South rolled on, gathering momentum
much like a large boulder plunging down a steep mountain-
side. Between 1869 and 1874, Republican governments in
Tennessee, Georgia, and Arkansas fell, victims of
destructive internal quarrels over patronage and racial
issues. Their counterparts in North Carolina and Texas
succumbed to a revitalized and unified Democratic party.
In all of these states, factional infighting, the weakness
of federal support, a single-minded opposition, and to
some extent extra-legal violence contributed to the
restoration of Democratic rule. By the early 1870's
political intimidation had become a fact of life for
radicals in those states still under Republican control.
Alabama became the first testing ground for a new Democratic strategy based on white solidarity and the calculated use of force. By 1874 the Alabama Republicans, long divided by a bitter feud between the carpetbag and scalawag elements, were in desperate straits. Native whites deserted the organization in droves as a result of the agitation over the federal Civil Rights bill and also because of growing black demands for a larger share of the loaves and fishes of political power. The Democrats, on the other hand, temporarily abandoned their personal and factional quarrels and united on the single issue of race. Blaming the radicals for drawing the political color line, conservative politicians called for a party of white men to throw out the thieves and rascals. The whites cast aside all attempts to woo black voters but at the same time publicly repudiated the use of violence in the campaign and nominated the conservative and colorless George Smith Houston for governor.96

In this new spirit of harmony and reborn enthusiasm the Democrats smelled victory and campaigned hard. The determined conservatives clearly told the Republicans that they would carry the contest at all costs. Whites stepped up the social ostracism of the men they termed the "Judases" to their race and "discouraged" radical black orators from proselytizing among the Negroes. In September, Republican congressman Charles Hays wrote a public letter denouncing the Democrats for engaging in a campaign of intimidation, terror, and murder against both black and white radicals. Hays and other Republicans charged that many of their fellows had been slaughtered by armed Democrats during the canvass. The whites heatedly denied overawing anyone and blamed most of the disturbances during the campaign on factional quarrels within their opponents' camp. Party spokesmen systematically refuted specific charges listed in the Hays letter and lambasted the Republicans for still trying to wave the "bloody shirt." However, the Democrats attended Republican meetings in force, sometimes pelted radical speakers with rotten eggs, and in several counties went much farther to carry their political point.97

Unwilling to fall victim to radical political rhetoric, the conservatives countered with criticism of the Republicans for arming and drilling the Negroes to intimidate the whites. Any outbreaks by the blacks were not accidental but were fomented by a national Republican conspiracy that sought to hang on to power in the face of an angry white majority. Reports of Negro military companies drilling at night poured into the office of Republican governor David P. Lewis, but few of these tales had any foundation in fact.\(^98\)

Most of the campaign disturbances took place in the Alabama black belt, those counties running from east to west in the south central part of the state. In Choctaw County, on the western edge of this region, Jack Turner, an intelligent ex-slave and local black leader, began to organize his forces for the fall canvass. He held several secret meetings, and his followers whipped a Negro named Huff Chaney who informed the whites of their doings. The conservatives who knew Turner to be an implacable and formidable foe, sent out a posse that discovered the black leader and his men marching toward the small town of

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\(^98\)\textit{Chicago Daily Tribune, September 21, 1874; Mobile Daily Register, August 19, October 14, 1874; Entry for November 2, 1874, Stewart, ed., "Journal of James Mallory," 232; W. H. Black to David P. Lewis, August 25, 1874, Lewis Papers, Ala.; Herbert, "How We Redeemed Alabama," 861.}

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Mount Sterling. Turner signed an appearance bond when the whites threatened to take him to jail immediately. After the posse left, he called together more of his Negro followers; whites learned of his plans and suspected an armed invasion of Butler, the county seat. Again a posse rode out to intercept the blacks; Turner informed them that he would appear in court but refused to give up his arms. As Turner and his men marched toward Butler, nine men from Mount Sterling surprised them from the rear. Caught in a crossfire between the white parties, the blacks fled into a nearby woods. Conservatives accused Turner and the other Negroes of insolently asserting their rights under the proposed federal Civil Rights bill, of planning to start an insurrection, and of threatening to kill any black who sided with the Democrats. Someone, apparently an overly zealous Republican, circulated a story that ten of Turner's men had been killed by the whites; this groundless outrage tale appeared in Hays' infamous public letter. For their part, the Democrats stopped any further Republican meetings in the county by forcing several Negro leaders to flee to the nearby swamps for the duration of the campaign. After mounted men broke up several Negro meetings, troops were sent to the county. The election day passed quietly, and the Democrats were victorious.  

99William Warren Rogers and Robert David Ward, August Reckoning: Jack Turner and Racism in Post-Civil War Alabama
In neighboring Greene County whites heckled Republican speakers and threatened the leaders with assassination if they held any more meetings. Two hundred armed whites prevented the radicals from gathering at the county seat of Eutaw and drove them away amid predictions of an imminent outbreak of racial warfare. When the Negroes reportedly threatened to burn the tiny village of Forkland, the whites chased the Negroes into the countryside and evidently killed and wounded several of the fleeing blacks. United States soldiers arrived and arrested several white citizens; the Republicans managed to win the election in the county.100

Whites in Sumter County, just north of Choctaw and east of Greene, were more discriminating in their selection of victims. Walter P. Billings, a northern lawyer and prominent local Republican, had traveled through the county during July addressing large audiences of blacks. Returning from a meeting on August 2, held about six miles from the county seat of Livingston, he was ambushed within sight of his home. His attackers fired five shots killing both Billings and his horse. Tom Ivey was a railroad mail

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(Eaton Rouge, 1973), 24-54; Euba Eugenia DuBose, "The History of Mount Sterling," Alabama Historical Review, XXV (Fall and Winter, 1963), 322-23; Edmund Turner and Jackson Turner to David P. Lewis, August 21, 1874, Lewis Papers, Ala.; House Rep. 262, 43-2, 249, 251; Mobile Daily Register, August 18, 1874.

100 House Rep. 262, 43-2, 232-36, 706-10, 751-60, 907-13; Mobile Daily Register, September 10, 11, 18, October 2, 1874.
agent and spokesman for the Negro Republicans in the county; he had received several threats against his life because of his political activities. White men flagged down a train about six miles from Livingston and surrounded the car in which Ivey was riding. When the unfortunate black man looked out a window of the car, they shot him dead. Few persons doubted that the murders of Billings and Ivey were part of a general plan to rid the county of Republican leaders and thoroughly cow the blacks. Some angry black leaders urged their followers to arm themselves and kill one Democrat for each one of their own number who was murdered. Such incendiary, if understandable, advice led the whites to raise the cry of black insurrection and arrest the ringleaders, accusing them of planning to burn down some small settlements. Even though the conservatives denied any desire to intimidate the blacks, there was clearly a reign of terror in Sumter County. After two Justice Department undercover agents investigated the deaths of Billings and Ivey, troops arrived to arrest several whites accused of involvement in these killings. Conservatives protested that the federal government had turned to the "mailed fist" to prevent a Democratic victory in the approaching election. Editorial writers denounced the "cruel" treatment of the Sumter prisoners and accused federal officials of inaugurating a "reign of terror" in the county and allowing vengeful Negroes to prey on the
helpless whites. After all this furor Sumter County went Republican anyway.\textsuperscript{101}

Elias Kiels was a scalawag judge and the most influential Republican leader in Barbour County, located in the extreme southeastern corner of the black belt. Whites resented Kiels not only for his politics but because of what they considered the more than evenhanded treatment of blacks in his courtroom. Some local Negroes also chafed under Kiels' nearly absolute control of the county Republican party. Claiming that they had been too long cheated by Republican scoundrels, the Democrats formed a White Man's Club to unite all the anti-radical sympathizers for the November election. Republicans charged that the conservatives had gone much farther, threatening Republican Negroes with the loss of their jobs and forcing them to sign pledges to vote the Democratic ticket. Kiels and his friends also berated the whites for heavily arming themselves and intimidating radical speakers. They joined with a United States marshal in requesting that troops be

sent to the county seat of Eufaula to guarantee a peaceful election. Although a handful of soldiers eventually arrived, they could do little to stop the determined Democrats. On election day, November 3, the blacks jammed the streets of the town. When a white clerk took a young black with him to vote the Democratic ticket, a Negro named Milas Lawrence challenged the boy as being underage. At this point a white man, Charley Goodwin, argued with Lawrence, and, after an exchange of uncomplimentary epithets, shooting broke out. As was almost always the case in such affrays, witnesses disagreed over who had fired the first shot. However, with a rapidity that suggested prior planning, the whites opened fire on the crowd of Negroes and sent them scurrying from town in all directions. A local Army officer tabulated the outcome of the rioting: 1 white man killed, 12 wounded, 6 or 7 black men killed, and about 70 wounded.¹⁰²

A similar collision occurred in Mobile where a turbulent and racially mixed mob crowded around the polls on election day. Democratic leaders instructed their

followers to watch carefully for black "repeaters," and some Democrats tried to prevent the Negroes from voting for the radical candidates even once. Armed deputy sheriffs arrested blacks on trumped up charges of election law violations and carried them off to jail. Whites accused a prominent black leader, Allen Alexander, of inciting the Negroes to riotous behavior at the election, and placed him under arrest. Correctly fearing that Allen might well be killed, armed blacks ordered the whites to release their prisoner. After some sporadic firing, the blacks rescued Alexander, and the disturbance ended. The conservatives, nevertheless, had turned many blacks away from the polls.103

With the notable exceptions of the disturbances in Eufaula and Mobile, election day in Alabama had been relatively peaceful. Republicans noted that the campaign of intimidation had effectively convinced the Negroes that it was not worth risking their lives to cast a ballot. Many Georgians apparently crossed the state line to vote in the election, a not uncommon practice in the South during this period. Most of the troops distributed around the state stayed in their barracks.104


104 Ibid., 25-37, 111-16, 392-401, 1242-43; Captain E. R. Kellogg to AAG, DS, November 4, 1874, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 171).
While they celebrated their electoral victory, conservatives asserted that the presence of troops had intimidated white voters. There had been only 679 United States soldiers in the entire state on election day, and these few men were scattered about in tiny garrisons. Troops did assist deputy marshals in making arrests of persons charged with violations of the Enforcement Acts, but even the whites admitted that the troops had had little influence on the outcome of the election, a belief substantiated by the results of the balloting. 105

On the other hand, Alabama Republicans complained to their friends in Washington that the Democrats had won the election by fraud and violence. With the "rebel" party in control of the state government, conservatives would be free to nullify the postwar constitutional amendments, return the blacks to slavery, and drive loyal men from the state. The victorious Democrats in many areas prevented the Republicans from meeting the bonding requirements for offices such as tax collector and sheriff and thus were able to place their candidates in power even in those counties won by the Republicans. A majority of the committee of the House of Representatives that investigated the election of 1874 in Alabama concluded that the Democrats had used violence to overturn Republican

majority in the state. Yet the northern Republicans were not prepared to act on these findings. Attorney General George H. Williams refused to provide troops for the United States marshals to use in arresting persons accused of political intimidation, eliminating the final obstacle to Democratic ascendancy in Alabama.106

Elsewhere in the South during the 1874 canvass, the whites' deepest emotions welled to the surface. Robert M. T. Hunter told a New York reporter that he doubted that any other conquered people in history had been so cruelly treated as when the northern government forced the South to accept the rule of carpetbaggers and Negroes. Conservatives argued dogmatically that the condition of the South was a direct outgrowth of a malevolent radical plot to alienate the whites from the blacks. If the Yankees would just leave southerners alone, could anyone doubt that peace would return? Moderate spokesmen begged for peace and assured the North that the withdrawal of the troops from the South would not lead to a war of the races. The wild men should not give the

radicals an additional pretext for waving the bloody shirt and rekindling sectional animosity. However, many southerners could not hold their tongues when the barbarous Negroes were pressing for social equality and while Jacobinical knaves threatened to drive the white people from the South. If their backs were pressed to the wall, the southerners would fight.107

Radicals all across the South braced themselves for violence on election day. Southern Republicans charged that the Democrats were slaughtering Negroes like cattle. Stories spread of large arms shipments heading south for use by white military companies. The leading newspaper organ of the South Carolina radicals warned that the southern bourbons had learned nothing in defeat and would give no quarter to union men if they won a smashing electoral victory.108

107 New York Herald, August 25, September 10, 1874; Louisville Courier-Journal, August 31, September 21, 1874; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, August 13, October 21, 1874; Atlanta Constitution, September 20, 1874; Little Rock Daily Arkansas Gazette, September 29, 1874; Natchez Daily Democrat, September 24, 1874; Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, August 14, 1874; Memphis Daily Appeal, August 4, 1874.

108 Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, November 1, 1874; Atlanta Constitution, October 27, 1874; A. J. Flournoy to CO, Atlanta, September 25, 1874, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 169); Barbour Lewis to Attorney General George H. Williams, October 3, 1874, ibid., (roll 170); Pittsburgh Telegraph, n.d., 1874 in "Conditions of the South," House Rep. 261, 43-2, Pt. 3, 796; New York Times, September 1, 1874; Columbia Daily Union-Herald, August 12, 1874.
Southerners predicted early in the canvass that the radicals of both sections would again unfurl the bloody shirt for the campaign. How could the North legitimately castigate the South for outrages committed only under the greatest provocation? Editorial writers accused the federal government of sending troops into the South every time a murder was committed. Pointing to similar acts of violence in the North, southerners asserted, as they had done since 1865, that southern outbreaks were for the most part products of the northern imagination, usually manufactured just in time for the fall election campaigns. When the southern radicals pleaded for more troops, they were actually begging to be allowed to hang on to their lucrative offices a while longer so that they could continue their career of plundering the southern people. When the Democrats triumphed in the October northern state elections, southerners crowed that the radical outrage mill had run out of grist and that the northern people could no longer be hoodwinked by radical crocodile tears.  

The Grant administration, responding to very real disorders, sent more troops into the South to keep the

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109 Raleigh Daily Sentinel, September 1, 30, 1874; Louisville Courier-Journal, September 5, 1874; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, September 6, 9, 1874; Wilmington Daily Journal, September 9, October 16, 1874; Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, September 12, 1874; Little Rock Daily Arkansas Gazette, September 18, October 14, 31, 1874; Charleston News and Courier, October 13, 1874; Atlanta Constitution, October 15, November 19, 1874; Memphis Daily Appeal, October 18, 1874; Jackson Weekly Clarion, October 22, 1874.
peace and to apprehend those guilty of outrages. Attorney General Williams gave special attention to the stationing of troops in Louisiana, South Carolina, and Alabama and directed federal marshals and district attorneys to prosecute persons who violated the Enforcement Acts by seeking in any way to intimidate voters. However, there were simply not enough soldiers in the South to patrol all the disturbed areas, and the shortage of cavalry units greatly reduced the effectiveness of the available troops.¹¹⁰

The events in Gibson County, in western Tennessee, showed that not all southern outbreaks were imaginary and also pointed up all too clearly the limitations of federal law enforcement. Talk had been rife in August of armed blacks threatening to murder whites and burn the small town of Picketsville. On August 24 and 25 the local authorities rounded up Negro suspects and placed them in the county jail at Trenton. After two unsuccessful attempts, a mob of between 75 and 150 whites broke into

¹¹⁰Grant to Secretary of War William W. Belknap, September 2, 1874, Annual Cyclopedia (1874), 478-79; Attorney General George H. Williams to Belknap, September 3, 1874, LS, DJ: To Executive Officers and Members of Congress, 1871-1904, RG 60, NA (M702, roll 2); Williams to U.S. Attorneys and Marshals in Alabama, South Carolina, Louisiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, September 3, 1874, General Irvin McDowell to AG, DS, October 6, 1874, Williams to Robert W. Healy, September 29, 1874, House Rep. 262, 43-2, 1224, 1236, 1264; Williams to W. Spence, September 15, 1874, LS, DJ: Instructions to U.S. Attorneys and Marshals, 1867-1904, RG 60, NA (M701, roll 5); McDowell to General William T. Sherman, IR, AG0, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 169).
the jail and seized 16 prisoners. Roping the blacks together, the mob marched them a few hundred yards to a bridge where they opened fire on them. Four blacks were killed, two were wounded, and the rest miraculously escaped. Governor John C. Brown offered a five hundred dollar reward for the capture of each member of the mob, and eventually 41 persons were indicted in state courts. The governor criticized the United States marshal for making arrests when the state and local authorities were prosecuting the case to the best of their ability. Despite his own severe condemnation of this crime, Brown blamed it on the agitation over the federal Civil Rights bill that had spurred the blacks to insurrection. On the other hand, United States attorney W. W. Murray informed the Justice Department that it would be impossible to bring the guilty parties to trial in state courts, and he therefore favored federal indictments. Attorney General Williams, however, instructed Murray to discontinue the prosecutions because of the difficulty in obtaining convictions under the Enforcement Acts as a result of recent court decisions. Most whites denounced the Trenton rioters, and Jefferson Davis, in a rare postwar public speech, admonished the whites to retain their paternalistic affection for the Negroes and protect them from such brutality.\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{111}Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, \textit{The Negro in Tennessee, 1865-1880} (Washington, 1941), 102-105; \textit{New York Herald}, September 5, 1874; John C. Brown to Grant, September 15, 1874, W. W. Murray to Williams, October 2, 1874, "Massacre
The Democratic "landslide" in the state elections of 1874 that resulted in the party gaining control of the House of Representatives raised southern spirits. Ecstatic editors predicted that the failure of traditional bloody shirt tactics meant that the old war issues were finally dead. Other southerners believed that the federal Army would no longer impede the overthrow of the remaining radical state governments. The control of the lower house of Congress gave the southerners the leverage they needed to put Grant on the defensive and elect a Democratic President in 1876.112

After the 1874 elections, a quiet confidence spread across the South. Conservatives waited patiently, knowing that the day of final redemption was close at hand. The reaction to a threatened black insurrection in Georgia in 1875 most clearly illustrated this mellowing of the southern spirit. In July the blacks in Hancock County, southwest of Augusta, elected their own militia general, an act that enraged the whites. In August rumors spread that one Candy Harris was organizing the Negroes in


112 Natchez Daily Democrat, November 8, 1874; New Orleans Bulletin, November 5, 1874; Wilmington Daily Journal, November 7, 1874; Jackson Weekly Clarion, November 12, 1874; Edward Spencer to Charles E. A. Gayarre, April 19, 1874, Gayarre Collection, LSU.
neighboring Washington and Jefferson counties into militia companies and preparing them for a general massacre of the whites. White posses moved into Burke County, just south of Augusta, and arrested the notorious Joe Morris and several other supposed ringleaders. They also captured some forty blacks in Washington and Jefferson counties. Newspapers reported a bloody plot extending to from ten to twenty counties in this middle region of Georgia. The arrests of the black "conspirators" calmed the public mind, and many of the incarcerated Negroes blamed the whole affair on Harris and Morris. In all their raids across the state, white companies never found the estimated five hundred to a thousand blacks supposed to have been under arms. Although the whites jailed one hundred Negroes, they held only twenty-five for trial. Yet there was no bloodshed, and the white reaction to this alleged conspiracy had been extremely mild compared to the panics of the recent past. Judge Herschel Johnson charged a grand jury in the middle circuit court of Georgia that the accused were presumed innocent and that the jurors should not allow momentary passions to overcome their sense of justice and fair play. Even though these men indicted several Negroes, subsequent trials ended with the charges being dropped for lack of evidence. Southern editors congratulated the people of Georgia on their calm wisdom in dealing with this potentially explosive
situation and forecast that the day of reconstruction disturbances was at an end.\textsuperscript{113}

Of course, the people of Democratic Georgia, secure under home rule, could afford to act rationally. This helps explain the fact, often noted by conservative editors, that few disorders occurred in those states that had thrown off the yoke of radical rule. There were, however, three notable exceptions to the prevalence of this new found spirit of moderation. In Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, the whites still seethed with discontent, waiting for the day of deliverance, their hands nervously waiting to fire the opening shots of the battle of Armageddon. The counterrevolution of violence and terror was not yet over.

\textsuperscript{113}Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, July 16, August 19-22, 25, September 5, 11, 26, 1875; Augusta Daily Constituionalist, August 19-21, September 1, 3, 7, 1875; Atlanta Constitution, August 20, 22, 25, 1875; Charleston News and Courier, August 21, 1875; Percy Scott Flippin, Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia: State Rights Unionist (Richmond, 1931), 306-308; Columbia Register, August 22, 1875; Anderson Intelligencer, August 26, 1875; Daily Shreveport Times, September 2, 1875; Natchez Daily Democrat, September 2, 1875; Greenville Enterprise and Mountaineer, September 8, 1875; New Orleans Bulletin, September 8, 1875; Jackson Weekly Clarion, September 25, 1875. Morris was later arrested, tried, and convicted on a subsequent charge of carrying a concealed weapon. As a convict, he worked in a pottery factory from which he was kidnapped in April 1876 and probably lynched. Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, April 19, 1876.
Chapter VIII
COUNTERREVOLUTION ABORTED: LOUISIANA, 1871-1875

Henry Clay Warmoth was just twenty-six years old when he became the first Republican governor of the state of Louisiana in 1868. A veteran of the Union Army from Illinois, Warmoth had come to Louisiana in 1864 to practice law, but entering politics, he quickly became a leader first in the Union party and later in the Republican party. Ambitious and possessing remarkable flexibility, Warmoth adapted quickly to the Byzantine style of politics in his adopted state. Throughout his career, charges of corruption, abuse of power, and inordinate ambition swirled around the young governor's head. Warmoth usually laughed off such allegations, although he became a wealthy man while holding public office (a fact never satisfactorily explained). The young governor, as T. Harry Williams has noted, had also amassed enough political power to make him for a time a virtual dictator in Louisiana. In 1870 the legislature passed a series of laws that gave Warmoth nearly complete control over the state's election machinery and the military power to back it up. The registration bill empowered the governor to appoint a state registrar of voters and one supervisor in each parish, except Orleans,
where the state registrar would serve in this capacity. These officials would enroll qualified persons and make out a list of registered voters. Under the election bill, the governor also controlled the conduct of state elections and was responsible for ensuring fair and peaceful balloting. After the votes had been cast, a state returning board, consisting of the governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, and two senators would count the ballots and determine the winners. The returning board was purposefully designed to prevent the Democrats from carrying an election by fraud or violence, but, as Joe Gray Taylor has observed, this body could also steal elections for the Republicans. A third part of this imposing legal edifice was the constabulary law, which allowed the governor to appoint a constable in each parish in order to quell any disturbances. The necessary military adjunct to these acts was the militia law that placed the governor in complete command of the state's armed forces. These four measures not only established the statutary foundations for Warmoth's political supremacy in Louisiana but also placed an imposing obstacle in the path of the white opposition.¹

The vast accumulation of power in the hands of a single man naturally created jealousy and envy among Warmoth's Republican colleagues. The center of opposition to Warmoth's ascendancy was the United State Custom House in New Orleans. The collector, James F. Casey (who also happened to be the brother-in-law of President Ulysses S. Grant's wife) and United States Marshal Stephen B. Packard controlled the federal patronage in the state and became bitter enemies of the dynamic governor. During the election of 1870 these men set up rival tickets to run against Warmoth supporters in several parishes. By 1871 the split between the "Custom House" and Warmoth factions had become irreconcilable. Ignoring what some cautious party members regarded as a dangerous division in the ranks that could only help the Democrats, each faction went its separate way determined to destroy the opposition.2

The state's black leaders, whose constituents formed the bone and sinew of the Republican party, also had reasons to dislike Warmoth. Not only had the governor vetoed a civil rights bill passed by the legislature, he had appointed very few blacks to public office. Early in 1871 Warmoth reached an agreement with some Democrats in the legislature to remove all patronage from the hands

2Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, 184, 210-13; Henry Clay Warmoth, War, Politics and Reconstruction: Stormy Days in Louisiana (New York, 1930), 90-91; John Scollard to Thomas W. Conway, June 6, 1871, Henry Clay Warmoth Papers, SHC.
of the black lieutenant governor, Oscar J. Dunn, in exchange for Democratic opposition to any attempt by the Custom House faction or the so-called "last ditch" Democrats to impeach the governor. One of Warmoth's chief supporters, United States Senator James R. West, observed that "our colored brethren are asking too much, and that the strong hand must be used to bring them to their senses in time for 1872." An outraged Dunn publicly criticized the governor for "selling out" to the Democrats and urged his fellow black politicians not to be influenced by any bribes that Warmoth might offer them to join his fight against the Custom House Republicans. Dunn also had close connections with Casey and Packard, having recommended the latter's appointment as marshal to President Grant in 1869. Yet the blacks in Louisiana were much less subservient to the white leaders than in other southern states. Pinckney Benton Stuart Pinchback, who would soon become the most powerful figure among the state's Negro Republicans, told a convention of Republican newspaper editors in New Orleans that he had played "second fiddle" long enough and that he refused to be a cat's-paw for any political faction. Pinchback, who realized his own great influence among the black voters, candidly told his fellow Republicans: "If I'm going to be in the orchestra I shall be one of the chief fiddlers."3

The Republican State Central Committee, of which Packard was the chairman, made the next move in the factional struggle by issuing a call for a Republican convention to assemble in New Orleans in August. The governor ordered his own followers to disrupt meetings set up to elect anti-Warmoth men as delegates. Packard countered by specifying that the assemblage would be held in the Custom House and he placed burly deputy marshals around the building to keep Warmoth partisans at bay. Packard, Dunn, speaker of the house George W. Carter, and other leading Republicans asked the President for military protection against Warmoth "thugs" who had previously broken up several of their meetings. The President listened to the pleas of Packard and his friends, and sent a company of troops with two Gatling guns to the Custom House on August 9 to "protect" the delegates. When Warmoth and his supporters arrived there, the governor realized that few of his men would be seated by a convention under Packard's control so he led his followers to Turner Hall where they set up a rival body. As Warmoth was leaving the Custom House, a deputy marshal attempted to shoot him, but one of the governor's friends grabbed the gun of the would-be assassin. The next day Warmoth addressed the

University of North Carolina, 1969), 216-17; James R. West to Warmoth, March 6, 1871, Warmoth Papers, SHC; Oscar J. Dunn to John Simms, July 26, 1871 in Warmoth, War, Politics and Reconstruction, 113-14; Dunn to Ulysses S. Grant, April 12, 1869, Grant Papers, Duke; New Orleans Times, July 17, 1871.
Turner Hall assembly and delivered a long and bitter series of personal attacks against the Custom House men from Packard, Casey, and Carter on down. In the meantime, the so-called Gatling gun convention elected Dunn as its chairman and appointed a new state central committee that Grant and the national party was certain to recognize as the authentic voice of Louisiana Republicans. The factionalism in the party had destroyed all chances for unity, and only the presence of the soldiers at the Custom House had prevented the outbreak of fratricidal warfare.

On November 22, 1871, Warmoth's chief black nemesis, Dunn, suddenly died. So bitter had the feud within the party become, that rumors circulated about Dunn having been poisoned by one of Warmoth's henchmen. Although there is no evidence to substantiate this interesting theory, Warmoth himself could not have been too upset at his opponent's convenient demise. The governor, after attending Dunn's funeral, wasted little time in seizing the moment and called an extra session of the senate to

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4American Annual Cyclopedia and Register of Important Events, 1871 (New York, 1872), 472-73, hereinafter cited as Annual Cyclopedia; Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, 216-19; Stephen B. Packard to Attorney General Amos T. Akerman, July n.d., 1871, Oscar J. Dunn, et. al., to Packard, July 28, 1871, Packard to James F. Casey, July 28, 1871, George W. Carter to Grant, July 28, 1871, William Pitt Kellogg to Akerman, July 29, 1871, Benjamin F. Flanders to Akerman, July 29, 1871, Dunn to Grant, August 3, 1871, Endorsement of Grant on letter of Dunn to Grant, July 29, 1871, James R. West to Akerman, August 5, 1871, IR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 1); New Orleans Times, August 10, 12, 1871; Binning, "Warmoth," 243-50.
select a new lieutenant governor. Warmoth took a calculated risk and supported Pinchback for this position in order to defeat the Custom House candidate, but the governor still had to bribe at least one senator in order to have Pinchback elected with no votes to spare. Warmoth realized that Pinchback was a man who kept his own counsel, a dangerous and independent force in politics, but for the time being these two volatile personalities worked together.  

George W. Carter, the speaker of the house, was another powerful enemy who plagued Warmoth. Originally Carter and the governor had been fast friends, and Warmoth had even arranged to have Carter elected to the house by creating Cameron Parish, a thinly populated area in the southwest corner of the state largely inhabited by alligators. Following his election as speaker, however, Carter joined with the Custom House faction in opposition to the governor. When Warmoth revoked several printing contracts awarded earlier by Dunn and Carter, the Custom House men prepared for all-out war. Maintaining that Warmoth was the chief obstacle to "reform" in the state government, they plotted in late 1871 to impeach the governor as soon as the legislature convened in January.

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6Warmoth, War, Politics and Reconstruction, 109-12; New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 9, 20, 31, 1871; "Testimony Taken by a Select Committee to Investigate the
General William H. Emory, then in command of the federal troops in Louisiana, nervously watched the escalating factional battle and became more and more disgusted with the corruption and inefficiency that was seemingly endemic to the state. Throughout the conflict Emory received only vague instructions from Washington, but he did his best to preserve the Army's political neutrality while at the same time keeping the peace.7

By January, the Custom House Republicans had reached an agreement with the Democrats in the house to impeach Warmoth and refuse to recognize Pinchback as lieutenant governor. Under the state's constitution, the governor would then be suspended from office pending the outcome of a trial in the senate. The conspirators intended to prevent a quorum in that body, thus leaving Warmoth hanging in mid-air and allowing house speaker Carter to become governor. To carry out this bold scheme, Casey arranged for three Democratic and eleven Custom House senators to take a short cruise on the federal revenue cutter Wilderness, thereby leaving the senate without a quorum.


There were two flaws in this plan: Carter was unable to control the house, and the plotters reckoned without the resourcefulness of their crafty foe. On January 2 Carter's weakness became apparent when he narrowly averted a move in the house to unseat him as speaker. Packard requested that federal troops be sent to preserve order at the State House and also arranged for the arrest of Pinchback, Warmoth, and several members of the house and senate. However, enough angry Warmoth legislators stormed out of the house to break the quorum there. The ever alert Warmoth then called a special session of the house for four o'clock in the afternoon on January 4 but intentionally failed to notify the Custom House faction of this meeting. The house assembled, elected a new speaker, and placed the Warmoth forces in control of the house. Early in the contest the governor had summoned both the Metropolitan police (a quasi-military force under the command of the governor that was neither a police force nor an agency whose jurisdiction was confined to "metropolitan" areas) and the militia to protect the State House against Carter and his followers. Authorities in Washington informed General Emory and the federal officeholders in New Orleans that the use of troops to support one faction or the other was forbidden. 8

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8 Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, 222-27; New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 2, 3, 5, 1872; Warmoth to Grant, January 5, 1872, House Ex. Doc. 1, 42-3, Vol. I, Pt. 2, 96; Warmoth to Emory, January 5, 1872, Warmoth Proclamation, January 5, 1872, House Misc. Doc. 211, 42-2, 10-11, 67-69; ibid., 5-60, 97-107; Warmoth to James R. West, January 4,
Carter warned that his supporters were armed and ready should Warmoth's "tools" precipitate violence, but such wild statements were mostly the angry bluster of a man who had been outmaneuvered by a master tactician. Some of Carter's overzealous followers broke into an armory and seized fifty Enfield rifles for use in attacking the State House, but this rash act only made Warmoth more alert. A mass meeting of Carter supporters on January 8 was boisterous and filled with threats to hang Warmoth, but General Emory kept the troops ready to prevent any outbreaks. The Grant administration had at last become disgusted with the behavior of the Custom House faction and declined to help the rapidly sinking Carter.9


9Warmoth to Emory, January 8, 1872, James Longstreet to Emory, January 6, 8, 1872, Benjamin F. Flanders to Emory, January 6, 1872, Emory to George W. Carter, January 6, 1872, House Mis. Doc. 211, 42-2, 70, 80-83, 86-87; ibid., 61-95, 107-16; Emory to Townsend, January 8, 1872, House Ex. Doc. 209, 42-2, 3; Emory to AG, Washington, January 7, 1872, TS, DG, 1871-1878, RG 393, NA; New Orleans Times, January 6, 7, 1872; New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 6, 1872; Charles W. Squires, Autobiography, Vol. III, 22-23; W. H. T. Squires Papers, SHC; Lonn, Reconstruction in Louisiana, 123-24; New York Herald, January 9, 1872; Sherman to David F. Boyd, January 6, 1872, Boyd Papers, LSU; Akerman to Grant, January 6, 1872, LS, DJ: To Executive Officers and Members of Congress, 1871-1904, RG 60, NA (M702, roll 1); Akerman to Beckwith,
Both Warmoth and Carter claimed that the other led a violent mob intent upon overthrowing the state's legitimate government. Carter set up his own house of representatives in a room above the Gem Saloon on Royal Street and appointed a number of sergeants-at-arms to round up stray legislators. Two of these men got into a street brawl with Walter Wheyland, a member of the Warmoth house, and shot him to death. A coroner's jury indicted Carter as an accessory before the fact to the murder. The police arrested the two sergeants-at-arms and took over the Gem Saloon. Carter and many of his supporters had fled before the police arrived. Meanwhile, the Custom House Republicans, and some Democrats sent urgent pleas to Grant begging the President to declare martial law and frustrate Warmoth's designs. Emory calmly reported to the War Department that only the presence of troops had thus far prevented bloodshed and that he was prepared for the worst.  

January 6, 1872, LS, DJ: Instructions to U.S. Attorneys and Marshals, 1867-1904, RG 60, NA (M701, roll 3).

Grant approved Emory's course of action and refused to upset the status quo. Warmoth also asked for troops to protect his men at the State House, and Emory moved additional soldiers into the city, but, for all practical purposes, the battle was over. The Carterites eventually abandoned their ruse of being the "legitimate" government and drifted back to the Warmoth assembly, which readmitted all but two of the prodigals. Despite periodic threats by Carter partisans to seize the State House, the Democrats, who had rapidly become disenchanted with the Custom House Republicans, refused to join any such warlike movement. On January 19 Warmoth finally removed the militia and Metropolitan Police from the State House. The Carter forces held a final gathering on Canal Street at the Henry Clay statue on January 22, but Emory warned both parties that the troops would maintain peace at all costs, and a dejected Carter finally told his supporters to go home.11

As a fitting sequel to this fustian battle, Carter and General A. S. Badger of the Metropolitan Police fought a bloodless duel in which they fired one shot apiece, both missed, and each professed himself satisfied. The Custom House supporters could only lick their wounds and prepare for a more successful fight in the future. Republican National chairman William E. Chandler optimistically predicted that "Warmoth will disappear when the people can get at him."  

In order to prevent more turmoil, the legislature quickly repealed the Election law, the Registration law, and the Constabulary law. Warmoth, however, went back on an earlier promise and refused to sign them on the basis of a legal technicality. This betrayal set the stage for more political ferment in the state. A Reform party, consisting mainly of ex-Whigs, had organized in late 1871 in opposition to Warmoth and the corrupt "ring," with some members advocating tax resistance. The Democrats drafted a platform in April that strongly criticized Warmoth and complained of the crushing burden of taxation in the state. The Custom House Republicans shortly thereafter adopted similar resolutions denouncing the governor. To further complicate the political troubles in the state, many prominent Louisianians, including Warmoth, endorsed

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12 New York Times, February 16, 1872; William E. Chandler to Flanders, February 9, 1872, Flanders Papers, LSU.
Horace Greeley for President and established a Liberal Republican party.13

After a tangled series of negotiations and maneuvers, the Reform party, the Democrats and the Liberal Republicans came together and nominated a Fusion ticket headed by Democrat John D. McEnery for governor with former Confederate colonel and Liberal Republican D. B. Penn for lieutenant governor. The Custom House Republicans characterized the Fusion ticket as nothing but the old corrupt, fire-eating, Bourbon Democracy of John Slidell under a new name. Some die-hard Democrats refused to join any coalition that included Warmoth, but most party members decided to campaign hard for McEnery and Penn.14

The state's black politicians, led by Pinchback, for a time pursued an independent course, but finally saw no alternative but to join with the Custom House Republicans to defeat the Fusion ticket. This new alliance nominated Vermont carpetbagger William Pitt Kellogg for governor, the black Custom House Republican C. C. Antoine for lieutenant governor, and Pinchback for congressman-at-large.


14Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, 229-40; New Orleans Republican, July 26, 1872; Daily Shreveport Times, September 18, 1872; New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 7, 1872.
Nevertheless, the relationship between the blacks and the Republicans was still tempestuous. Compared to the ebullient and skillful Warmoth, Kellogg struck people as rather a cold fish who was not really at home in the exotic atmosphere of Louisiana. Nor was Kellogg an ardent supporter of black rights; in fact, one report circulated that he always wore a glove when he shook hands with a black man.¹⁵

To this day, no one can say with certainty who won the election of 1872 in Louisiana. The campaign itself was quiet by the state's usual standards, with little excitement or violence. Warmoth used his control of the election machinery to gain every advantage possible, and the Fusion ticket on the face of the returns won the election. The Republicans charged that Warmoth's supervisors of registration had refused to enroll black voters, had moved polling places to remote locations, had closed the voting early, and had stuffed ballot boxes. Radicals also accused the Fusion supporters of having used physical threats and economic intimidation. Although one may discount some of this evidence that was obviously manufactured by Packard and his cohorts in order to buttress their case, there is no doubt that enough irregularities occurred to skew the results. With both sides claiming

victory, it was up to the Louisiana Returning Board to count the ballots and declare the winners.\textsuperscript{16}

This would have been easy to do if there had been one Returning Board. Instead there were three: the first (Warmoth Board) declared the Fusion ticket elected, the second (Lynch Board) counted in the Kellogg ticket, and the third (DeFeriet Board) created later by Warmoth also decided that the Fusion ticket had won. The Republicans desperately sought to defeat the Fusionists, and emissaries of Kellogg evidently offered Warmoth a seat in the United States Senate if he, as a member of the original Returning Board, would favor Kellogg's claims.\textsuperscript{17}

Into this labyrinthine confusion stepped the national government. Attorney General Williams refused a request made shortly after the election to send more soldiers to the state but instructed Packard to prosecute those guilty of violating the Enforcement Act. On November 23 Kellogg sent an extremely important letter to William E. Chandler in which he asked whether the federal government would furnish troops to support any court orders issued against Warmoth. On December 3 Williams telegraphed Packard


\textsuperscript{17}Taylor, \textit{Louisiana Reconstructed}, 241-49; Warmoth, \textit{War, Politics and Reconstruction}, 205.
ordering him to "enforce the decrees and mandates of the
United States courts, no matter by whom resisted, and
General Emory will furnish you with all the necessary
troops for that purpose." Similar instructions were sent
to Emory, and he held his men in readiness, as yet unaware
of the unfolding Republican scheme. On December 5 federal
judge Edmund H. Durell, an old man in poor health and
much under the influence of Kellogg's friends, issued a
decree to Packard directing the marshal to occupy the
State House and disperse all illegal assemblies there.
This meant that Packard could prevent the convening of any
legislative body recognized by the DeFeriet Board and could
himself determine in effect who had and who had not a right
to a seat in the legislature. 18

On the morning of the following day, Packard and a
military posse took possession of the State House. Emory,
after receiving new orders from Washington, had furnished
Packard with two companies of soldiers to guard the State
House. Packard informed Grant that these actions would
give Louisiana a Republican legislature and government.

18 J. D. Hill, H. N. Ogden and D. W. Brickell to
Colonel George Williams, November 15, 1872, Daniel Warren
Brickell Papers, LSU; Attorney General George H. Williams
to Packard and Beckwith, November 16, 1872, LS, DJ:
Instructions to U.S. Attorneys and Marshals, 1867-1904,
RG 60, NA (M701, roll 3); Kellogg to William E. Chandler,
November 23, 1872, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60,
NA (M940, roll 6); Williams to Packard, December 3, 1872,
House Ex. Doc. 91, 42-3, 13; Belknap to Townsend,
December 3, 1872, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94,
NA (M666, roll 93).
On that same day Judge Durell declared the DeFeriet Board to be illegal and ordered the Lynch Board to take possession of and canvass the election returns. Warmoth still defied the Custom House Republicans and refused to give up the returns. The Lynch Board, however, apparently using extraordinary powers of perception, decided without any returns at all that Kellogg and a majority of the Republican legislative candidates had won the election. The legislature seated by the Lynch Board met in an "extra session" on December 9 and impeached Warmoth, thereby making Pinchback the acting governor of the state. Pinchback complained to Grant about Democratic indignation meetings being held in New Orleans and requested that federal troops be available to protect the state government. General Emory kept his men in readiness to prevent any clash between the rival governments. 19

Warmoth called the legislature seated by yet a fourth Returning Board (the senate had created the Forman Board to succeed the DeFeriet Board, but its findings did not differ from those of its predecessor) into session at the City Hall and proclaimed the body organized by Pinchback and Kellogg to be illegal. Pinchback again asked for troops. Attorney General Williams approved the request and

19 Casey to Grant, December 6, 1872, Pinchback to Grant, December 9, 10, 1872, House Ex. Doc. 91, 42-3, 13-14, 16; Packard to Emory, December 8, 1872, Emory to Packard, December 9, 1872, Emory to Townsend, December 11, 1872, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 93); New York Herald, December 7, 1872.
telegraphed Pinchback on December 12 that the President recognized him as the acting governor of the state and the assembly meeting at the Mechanics' Institute (State House) as the legislature of Louisiana. Emory, who received instructions from Williams to defend the Pinchback government, described the situation in New Orleans as "deplorable" and hoped that the question of the two state governments would somehow be resolved in the courts.20

Emory realized the danger of armed clashes between the state militia supporting Warmoth and the police defending Pinchback. Pinchback wrote to Grant that Warmoth's militia had taken over the state armory and were in open revolt against his government. Adjutant General Townsend in Washington telegraphed Emory to assist Pinchback with federal troops; the soldiers seized the armory and turned it over to Pinchback's police. Kellogg, Pinchback, and other Republicans had good reason to fear that rowdy elements in New Orleans might force a confrontation and pointed to the assembling of the rival McEnery legislature as the first step in an attempted coup against the state government. As the situation grew more tense, Republicans even believed that the McEnery forces planned

20 Warmoth to Grant, December 11, 1872, Pinchback to Williams, December 11, 1872, Kellogg and Casey to Grant, December 11, 1872, Pinchback to Grant, December 12, 1872, Williams to Pinchback, December 11, 12, 1872, House Ex. Doc. 91, 42-3, 18-21, 23; Endorsement of Williams on Emory to Townsend, December 13, 1872, Emory to Townsend, December 12, 1872, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 93).
to assassinate Pinchback and blow up the State House with nitroglycerine. 21

The Republicans argued that the McEnery forces were engaging in "treason" against the United States. General Emory worried that both Kellogg and McEnery would demand that he furnish troops after their inaugurations. The Grant administration, notwithstanding its recognition of Pinchback and by implication Kellogg, instructed Emory not to interfere with the meeting of the McEnery "legislature" or the installation of McEnery as "governor" but simply to prevent the opposing parties from shooting at each other. 22

Meanwhile, the Fusion forces carefully planned their strategy. Conservatives excoriated Judge Durell and accused Grant of propping up an unpopular government with federal troops and making Louisiana a colony of the United States. A large meeting in New Orleans at

21 Pinchback to Grant, December 14, 1872, Emory to Townsend, December 13, 1872, Townsend to Emory, December 14, 1872, House Ex. Doc. 91, 42-3, 24-25; Emory to Townsend, December 15, 1872, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 93); New Orleans Republican, December 14, 17, 19, 1872.

22 New Orleans Republican, December 28, 1872; Pinchback to Grant, January 3, 1873, House Ex. Doc. 91, 43-2, 30-31; Emory to AAG, Division of the South, January 1, 1873, Belknap to Sherman, January 4, 1873, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 93); Emory to Pinchback, January 3, 1873, LS, DG, 1872-1878, RG 393, NA; Williams to Packard, January 4, 1873, LS, DJ; Instructions to U.S. Attorneys and Marshals, 1867-1904, RG 60, NA (M701, roll 3); Grant to Belknap, January 5, 1873, Grant Papers, LC.
Exposition Hall on January 2 vowed never to recognize Pinchback. One resolution adopted at this meeting stated that the people of Louisiana preferred a single military despot to the fraudulent Pinchback usurpation. Leading conservative E. John Ellis told the cheering crowd that McEnery had been elected governor and that he would be inaugurated as governor. Both the Republican legislature returned by the Lynch Board and the McEnery legislature convened on January 6, 1873. Amid threats by Pinchback to break up the McEnery body and counterthreats by the Fusion partisans to attack the police and Negro militia, General Emory resolved under his present orders that he had no choice but to support the Pinchback government and considered forcibly dispersing the McEnery legislature. Yet Emory found the use of troops in political disputes extremely distasteful and wired General Sherman informing him of his opinion that the governor of any state should always have to consult with the President before calling in the Army for assistance.\(^{23}\)

Kellogg and McEnery, each claiming to be the legally elected governor of Louisiana, were inaugurated on January 13. The rival legislatures continued in session for nearly two months, both pressing their claims as the

\(^{23}\)New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 2, 3, 5, 8, 1873; New Orleans Times, January 3, 7, 1873; New Orleans Republican, January 3, 7, 1873; New York Herald, January 5, 1873; Emory to AAG, Washington, January 5, 1873, Emory to Sherman, January 8, 9, 1873, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 93).
legitimate voice of the state. With the support of the federal government, Kellogg decided to wait for the McEnery government to fade away. He optimistically informed Attorney General Williams that public sentiment, particularly among the businessmen in New Orleans, was running against McEnery but Kellogg little realized the violent tenacity of his opposition. 24

Both the conservative New Orleans Picayune and the fire-eating Shreveport Times urged the citizens of Louisiana to keep up their resistance to the "illegal" Kellogg government. McEnery organized his own state militia commanded by Frederick N. Ogden, making the chances for civil war in the state even greater. Ellis told an enthusiastic crowd in New Orleans at the end of February that he was tired of "truckling to the United States" and would ignore Grant's recognition of the Kellogg government. The watchword became no quarter for the "usurpation." The Republicans dismissed these threats and believed that any armed resistance to the state government would be quickly put down by the state militia and the federal troops. 25

24 Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, 253-54; New Orleans Times, January 14, 15, 1873; Kellogg to Williams, February 8, 1873, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 1).

On the night of March 5, a division of the McEnery militia attacked a police station in the old Cabildo on Jackson Square in New Orleans. Some men broke into a gun store nearby and distributed weapons to a fast growing crowd of supporters. Republicans estimated that six hundred men had opened fire on the police station. General Badger, the commander of the Metropolitan Police, arrived with United States troops, which dispersed the mob. This attack shocked Kellogg into taking the threats of the McEnery forces more seriously, and he decided that the charade of dual governments could continue no longer. 26

The next day, the governor, believing that the assault on the police station had been just the beginning of a planned coup by the Fusionist supporters, moved against the McEnery "government." Police armed with Winchester rifles took possession of the Odd Fellows' Hall where the McEnery legislature had been meeting and later arrested sixty-five persons for their involvement in the attack on the Cabildo. McEnery angrily accused the federal soldiers of complicity in this action, but Emory maintained that his men had had nothing to do with the dispersal of the Fusion legislature and informed the would-be governor that his orders from Washington directed him to protect the legally...

26 Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, 254-55; New Orleans Republican, March 6, 1873; Kellogg to Packard, March 5, 1873; Kellogg to Emory, March 5, 1873, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 93); Emory to Kellogg, March 5, 1873, LS, DG, 1872-1878, RG 393, NA.
recognized state government. Kellogg was pleased with the
turn of events and reported "everything is quiet." 27

The failure of armed insurrection and the gradual
disintegration of McEnery's shadow government did not mean
that most whites in Louisiana cheerfully submitted to the
new regime. Prominent conservatives took their case to
Washington. Former Confederate General Richard Taylor, who
was a close friend of Grant, spoke with the President and
his cabinet members early in 1873, but all he received from
them were kind words and a series of vague excuses for not
repudiating Kellogg. When Congress likewise failed to act
and Grant recognized Kellogg as the legally elected governor,
Taylor returned home cursing the influence of the
radical "hyenas" in Congress on the President. 28

The cry still rose for resistance to the "usurpation."
Defiant whites threatened to pay no taxes to the state
government. A "foreign" government, after all, had no
legitimate right to collect these revenues from the people.
The Republicans charged that tax resistance would hurt
business in the state and at the same time asserted that

27 New Orleans Republican, March 6, 7, 1873; New York
Herald, March 7, 1873; McEnery to Emory, March 6, 1873;
Emory to McEnery, March 6, 1873, Emory to AAG William D.
Whipple, March 7, 1873, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880,
RG 94, NA (M666, roll 93); Kellogg to Williams, March 12,
1873, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940,
roll 1).

28 Richard Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction:
Personal Experiences of the Late War. ed. by Richard B.
the movement was a great failure. Perhaps to overthrow the Kellogg government by refusing to pay taxes or striking a direct blow in New Orleans was not possible. The real vulnerability of the Republican regime lay in the country parishes where local officials bore the brunt of conservative wrath.  

Grant Parish, located in central Louisiana 350 miles northwest of New Orleans, became the scene of the bloodiest attack on a local Republican government anywhere in the South. Created by the legislature in 1868, the parish was named after President-elect Grant, and the small parish seat of Colfax received its name from Grant's first vice-president, Schuyler Colfax. Both geographically and socially, the parish contained two distinct areas: an alluvial plain along the Red River inhabited mostly by blacks and a hill country populated primarily by white farmers. Colfax itself consisted mainly of William Calhoun's plantation buildings near which most of the blacks lived. Montgomery, some twelve miles to the north, was the major white settlement, there being about equal numbers of blacks and whites in a total parish population of approximately 4,500 persons. The whites suspected that the Republicans had only created the parish to supply themselves

29 Warmoth to L. Texada, March 11, 1873, Warmoth Papers, SHC; Daniel Thompson to Cyrus Woodman, April 15, 1873, Marquette, ed., "Letters of a Yankee Sugar Planter," 526-27; Daily Shreveport Times, March 9, 16, April 5, 8, May 30, 1873; New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 17, 19, 1873; New Orleans Republican, March 18, 19, 1873.
with more lucrative offices, particularly for Calhoun whom they accused of corruption as well as cohabiting with a black woman whom he had "purchased" in New Orleans. There had been some racial conflict in the parish before, but the election of 1872 brought tensions close to the boiling point. Conservatives charged that William Ward, a prominent black leader, had promised the Negroes that they would receive the lands of their former masters if they voted for Kellogg. 30

As a result of the state election embroglio there were two sets of officers in Grant Parish. McEnery commissioned the Fusionist candidates Alphonse Cazabat and Christopher Columbus Nash as parish judge and sheriff respectively. Two local citizens, W. R. Rutland and W. A. Richardson, visited Kellogg in New Orleans and apparently convinced him to recognize Cazabat and Nash. However, the governor soon changed his mind and declared the radical candidates for judge (R. C. Register) and sheriff (Daniel Shaw) as the legal officials. On March 31 Register and Shaw climbed in a window of the Colfax courthouse and took possession of their offices. Ward and other blacks then sent out runners into the countryside summoning

the Negroes to assemble in Colfax to defend the Kellogg appointees from a possible white attack. Some armed whites also approached the town on April 1 and 3 but turned back when they saw the large number of blacks who had flocked to Colfax. Most of the whites living in town left, and the New Orleans Republican warned that the Negroes would no longer kowtow to the whites or be bullied into submission. Ward and another black leader, E. H. Flowers, later denounced Kellogg and charged during the 1876 campaign that the governor had deliberately recognized two sets of officers in the parish. They claimed that Kellogg thereby hoped to stir up racial strife to help his own cause. Contemporary evidence suggests, however, that the governor was more indecisive than devious.31

The blacks in Colfax seized the courthouse and made it their headquarters. They improvised two cannons from gas pipes and fired these off periodically, much to the dismay of the few whites still in the vicinity. The whites believed that the blacks intended to kill off all the white men and take the white women for themselves and raise up a

"new race" of people. Some Negroes shot at the whites as they fled town, and the blacks broke into Rutland's deserted house and took a small coffin containing the body of his daughter who had died in Lake Charles in 1867 and that Rutland was preparing to reinter. As they hauled the coffin away, they dumped the body on the ground. Passing steamboat captains reported armed Negroes along the banks of the river patrolling the outskirts of town. Kellogg considered sending Adjutant General James Longstreet and the Metropolitan Police to Colfax but failed to act until it was too late. Even white Republicans left Colfax soon after the blacks had taken possession of the town. They had advised the Negroes to disband peacefully, but their pleas had fallen on deaf ears, and they fled with the other whites on a steamboat to New Orleans. The blacks picketed the roads for a twenty mile radius around Colfax, and eyewitnesses estimated that 400 to 500 Negroes (of which many were armed) occupied the town. White scouting parties discovered that the Negroes had thrown up crude breastworks and were evidently preparing to defend themselves against a white attack.32

32 Grant, "From Blue to Gray," 131-37, Layssard Papers, ISU; New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 5, 7, 8, 10-13, 15, May 6, 1873; New Orleans Republican, April 8-10, 1873; Henry M. Hyams to Henry M. Hyams, Jr., April 4, 1873, Henry M. Hyams Papers, LSU; Colfax Chronicle, June 3, 1882; Lieutenant E. M. Hayes to Emory, April 10, 1873, LR, DG, 1873-1877, RG 393, NA; Captain J. H. Smith to AAAG, DG, April 29, 1873, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 93); Johnson, "Colfax Riot," 402-402; "Ride to Colfax," John R. Ficklen Papers, LSU.
Nash, the Fusion sheriff, gathered a white posse to recapture the town from the blacks. A small group of Nash’s men approached Colfax, but the blacks, led by Ward, drove them away. On April 5 fifteen armed whites approached the house of one Jesse McKinney, a black farmer. One of the whites shot McKinney while he was mending a fence, and this crime further excited the Negroes in town. Nash meanwhile called for help from the surrounding parishes of Winn, Rapides, Natchitoches, and Catahoula, and by April 13 he had collected a force of 125 to 300 men.33

On Easter Sunday, April 13, Nash and more than 100 men moved toward Colfax; some whites had decided to return to their homes rather than fight the entrenched blacks. The sheriff arrayed his forces along the east bank of the river and gave the Negroes a half hour to remove their women and children before the attack would take place. The Negroes (numbering 250 to 400 men) had ranged themselves behind the breastworks, which were about four feet high. Levi Allen, the leader of the black forces (Ward had fled to New Orleans earlier with his white friends) refused all demands to surrender. Around noon white skirmish lines engaged the blacks, and sporadic firing continued until about three o’clock in the afternoon. At that time a squad of thirty whites crept along the river

bank and discovered a gap in the breastworks. They poured through the opening and surprised the Negroes from behind. The panic-stricken blacks fled in all directions, some 150 Negroes taking refuge in the courthouse. After the whites fired a cannon at this building, some of the blacks hoisted a flag of truce, and several whites moved forward. They later charged that the blacks had treacherously fired on them as they approached with their own truce flag, but the Negro survivors denied this, claiming that the whites had fired on unarmed blacks rushing out of the building. Whatever the direction of the bullets, two whites died near the courthouse, an occurrence that further incensed the white mob. The whites forced an old Negro to set fire to the courthouse, and they shot blacks trying to escape from the flames. The whites chased the blacks into the surrounding countryside and killed an unknown number there. They also took some thirty to forty prisoners and kept them under guard that night. Many of the men from the surrounding parishes returned to their homes after the fight, and conservatives later testified that young and impulsive whites had been left to watch the captured Negroes. Some time that night, the whites took the Negro prisoners away two by two and shot them. Some miraculously escaped by feigning death. One can only guess at the number of casualties, but at least 100 blacks had been killed.  

When the Metropolitan Police and the federal troops arrived a few days later, a scene of sickening carnage greeted their eyes. They found some 65 mutilated black corpses near the courthouse. Many of the dead had not been buried, and the soldiers had to carry out this grisly duty, a task made more difficult by the fact that the whites had thrown some of the dead Negro prisoners into the river. Despite a few brief outbreaks in succeeding days, the situation gradually calmed down, and both sides took pause to assess the results.35

Conservatives blamed the Colfax riot entirely on the Negroes and warned the blacks that any war of the races could only result in their own extermination. Whites furthermore charged that Kellogg had known about the trouble beforehand and had encouraged the blacks to incite white violence and thus keep himself in power. Editors dismissed northern outcries against the Colfax rioters as the wild and unprincipled ravings of blind partisans.

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Conservatives mocked Republican demands for a thorough investigation of the affair as just another Republican effort to manufacture political capital by publicizing southern "outrages." The Republicans in Louisiana downplayed the local causes for the Grant Parish troubles and interpreted the outbreak as but part of a white conspiracy to subvert the Kellogg government.\footnote{Kellogg to Emory, April 15, 1873, LR, DG, 1873-1877, RG 393, NA; Dawson, "Long Ordeal," 275; Johnson, "Colfax Riot," 419; New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 25, 30, May 18, 1873.}

When he learned of the massacre, Kellogg had immediately requested that federal troops be sent to Colfax, and Emory on April 15 had dispatched two companies. However, the steamship captains of Baton Rouge refused to allow the Army to use their vessels, and the troops had to make the trip up the river in a boat chartered in New Orleans. The soldiers arrived at Colfax on the evening of April 21 with orders to arrest any citizens who had participated in the slaughter. Many of the guilty parties, including Nash and several other leaders, fled the parish. Conservatives as usual eloquently condemned the "arbitrary" arrests of "innocent" citizens by federal officers.\footnote{Daily Shreveport Times, April 16, May 4, 1873, June 3, 1874; New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 17, 22, 1873; New Orleans Times, April 16, 1873; New Orleans Republican, April 16, 17, 19, 23, 26, May 1, 1873.}

Armed men invaded Colfax in August and threatened the lives of anyone aiding in the prosecution of the rioters.
Whites believed that the prisoners had been arrested on the basis of false affidavits signed by ignorant Negroes who had themselves been involved in the outbreak. Conservatives took up collections to pay for their defense. A federal grand jury originally returned indictments against seventy-two men under the Enforcement Acts, but on the advice of Attorney General Williams, the federal prosecutor in New Orleans decided to bring only nine of these cases to trial in February and March 1874. Black witnesses recalled in detail the events of April 13, 1873 and testified that the defendants had committed various outrages. The prisoners produced a string of white witnesses who without exception swore that the accused parties had not even been in Colfax on that fateful Easter Sunday. Such conflicting testimony, despite strong suspicions of perjury by many of the whites, led to the acquittal of one man and a hung jury in the other cases. A second trial for these eight men took place in May and June. This time a jury found William Cruikshank and two others guilty of violating several conspiracy provisions of the Enforcement Acts but acquitted the remaining prisoners.38

38 J. Ernest Breda to Packard, August 11, 1873, Breda to Beckwith, August 11, 1873, Breda to Williams, August 11, 1873, Breda Letters, Tulane; Beckwith to Williams, June 17, 1873, Kellogg to Williams, November 13, 1873, Packard to Williams, September 6, 1873, June 11, 1874, IR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 1); Kellogg to Williams, November 3, 1873, Packard to Williams, November 3, 1873, ibid., (roll 6); Williams to Beckwith, June 16, 1873, IS, DJ: Instructions to U.S. Attorneys and Marshals, 1867-1904, RG 60, NA (M701, roll 4);
Conservatives decried the convictions of the Grant Parish prisoners, criticizing federal officials for listening only to the lying testimony of vicious Negroes and believing that white people had no rights that they were bound to respect. General Emory kept some troops in Colfax to protect the witnesses who had appeared at the trials. United States Attorney James R. Beckwith warned, in the midst of the September 1874 rebellion against the Kellogg government, that the withdrawal of the soldiers from the parish would lead to the murder of these men.  

Cruikshank and his co-defendants appealed their convictions to the United States Circuit Court, which rendered its decision before the end of the year. The district judge, who had presided at the earlier trials, upheld the original verdict, but Supreme Court Justice Joseph P. Bradley disagreed and wrote an opinion in the case.

Packard to Emory, September 10, 1873, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 93); New Orleans Daily Picayune, August 2, October 24, 1873, January 18, February 22, 27-March 12, May 19-June 12, 1874; New Orleans Republican, November 2, 11, 1873.

39 New Orleans Bulletin, March 27, June 11, 1874; Emory to AAG, Division of the South, June 25, 1874, LS, DG, 1871-1878, RG 393, NA; Packard to Williams, April 2, 1874, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 1); Beckwith to Williams, September 13, 1874, ibid., (roll 2). Conflicts over local offices continued in Grant Parish in 1875 when a former sheriff murdered the Republican tax collector. Unknown parties killed Register in 1876. William Ward to Kellogg, March 15, 1875, W. Deal to Kellogg, July 15, 26, 1875, R. C. Register to Kellogg, June 20, 1875, Kellogg Papers, LSU; T. H. Page to Kellogg, March 14, 1876, Louisiana State Executive Department, Governor's Correspondence, ibid.
that virtually emasculated the Enforcement Acts. Bradley argued that Congress under the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments could pass legislation prohibiting the states from infringing the rights of United States citizens. However, he drew a sharp distinction between the actions of states and those of individuals. He maintained that Congress could not enact laws dealing with crimes such as murder, robbery, and assault that generally fell under state jurisdiction. Therefore, the federal government could only act when it had been shown that a state had deprived someone of their rights on account of his race or color. With the Circuit Court divided the case automatically went to the Supreme Court. Chief Justice Morrison R. Waite, speaking for the court's majority, agreed with Bradley that Congress could not pass laws dealing with crimes committed by individuals in the states, that such offenses fell under the cognizance of state governments. The court affirmed Justice Bradley's verdict of dismissal in the case and ordered the defendants to be discharged. Beckwith had recognized the practical implications of Bradley's opinion even before the Supreme Court heard the case. He warned that such a narrow interpretation of federal jurisdiction made armed bands in the South immune from prosecution and gave timid grand jurors a convenient excuse to avoid doing their duty. As a result of these decisions as well as several others in the federal courts, the Justice Department's enforcement of these laws came to
a standstill. Those southerners engaging in counter-revolutionary terror against Republicans no longer had to fear the force of federal authority. 40

After the Colfax massacre conservatives still called for withholding tax payments. Local officials elected on the McEnery ticket defied Kellogg's officers and forced them to resign their positions. Democrats seized power in Franklin Parish in northeastern Louisiana, and organized a local militia to protect themselves. In May 1873 a Fusionist tax collector in New Orleans stepped up to a carriage in which Kellogg was riding and fired a shot through the top of the vehicle as it sped away. Although Kellogg was unharmed, he must have been impressed at the lengths to which his fanatical opponents were willing to go in their efforts to seat McEnery. The governor frequently asked for federal troops to protect parish officeholders, and General Sherman ordered Emory to provide them. 41

40 U.S. v. Cruikshank, et. al. 25 Fed. Cas. 707 (1874); U.S. v. Cruikshank, et. al. 2 Otto 542 (1875); Beckwith to Williams, October 27, 1874, IR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 2).

41 Daily Shreveport Times, March 18, April 23, 30, May 1, 1873; W. H. McVey to Charles Clinton, April 29, 1873, C. H. Brewster to Kellogg, May 5, 1873, Isaac H. Crawford to Kellogg, May 7, 1873, Clinton to Kellogg, May 16, 1873, IR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 1); New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 21, May 2, 3, 1873; New Orleans Republican, April 9, May 8, 1873; Kellogg to Emory, April n.d., 1873, LR, DG, 1873-1877, RG 393, NA; Sherman to Emory, April 19, 1873, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 93).
According to accounts in the New Orleans Republican, Kellogg had been gathering arms for the Metropolitan Police to oust the McEnery usurpers and install his own parish officials. The first test of this bold policy came in St. Martin Parish, located in the swampy Teche region of the state. On May 3 a group of Metropolitans under General A. S. Badger left New Orleans for St. Martinville to seat the Kellogg officers and break the back of the tax resistance movement in that parish. Colonel Alcibiades DeBlanc, who had been one of the founders of the Knights of the White Camelia, commanded the McEnery militia in the parish. When the Metropolitans approached the town, DeBlanc and his force of 400 to 600 men, after only token opposition, retired from the field of battle, allowing Badger's men to occupy St. Martinville. After the Metropolitans had installed a Republican judge and district attorney in the courthouse, DeBlanc's forces harassed them by periodically firing off their two cannons. Under such warlike conditions Emory wisely sent troops to prevent a bloody collision between the two sides. Stubborn steamboat captains again delayed the progress of United States forces, and DeBlanc's men issued bloody threats against Badger and the Metropolitans. After a brief skirmish with the enemy on May 7, DeBlanc ordered his company back into a swamp from which they later fled when federal troops finally arrived. A deputy United States marshal, who had accompanied the soldiers, brought a packet of arrest warrants
with him but found few of the parties named in them still around. Local businessmen, not wanting to let politics stand in the way of profits, cheerfully opened their stores for the convenience of the Metropolitans and the Army contingent. DeBlanc and ten other insurrectionists at last surrendered to federal officials. The prisoners returned to New Orleans where cheering whites greeted them at the ferry landing. Later a United States commissioner dismissed the charges against them, but peace had been restored to the parish along with the Republican officials.42

Kellogg used the Metropolitans to seat Republican officeholders in other parishes. President Grant helped the governor by issuing a proclamation declaring that the Kellogg men had a right to their offices and ordering all "turbulent and disorderly persons" to disband. Although conservatives heatedly protested against Grant's action, they also disingenuously denied that there was any organized resistance to the Kellogg government.43

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42 New Orleans Daily Picayune, May 6-12, 1873; New Orleans Republican, April 17, May 4, 6-10, 13, 15, 16, 18, 27, 1873; Daily Shreveport Times, May 10, 20, 1873; Chicago Daily Tribune, May 7, 8, 1873; New York Herald, May 8-11, 1873; Isaac Sutton to Kellogg, May 9, 1873, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 1); Colonel C. H. Smith to AAG, DG, May 16, 1873, General Irvin McDowell to Sherman, May 6, 1873, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 93); Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, 274-76.

43 New Orleans Republican, April 3, 22, 23, 29, May 1, 1873; Grant, Proclamation, May 22, 1873, James D. Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897 (10 Vols., Washington, 1897), VII, 223-24; New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 23, May 24, June 1, 1873.
Did the policies of the Kellogg government justify the overwhelming white hostility? From an historical perspective Kellogg and his fellow Republicans were not as arbitrary or corrupt as the Democrats portrayed them. Taxes compared with the rates before the war were high, but the assessments were low. However, the panic of 1873 made even a reasonable tax burden seem overbearing and confiscatory. Compared with the brazen and spectacular thievery of the Warmoth years, Kellogg's administration seemed positively staid. The governor, moreover, managed to diminish corruption, though there was still much petty stealing. His most solid achievement was the funding of the state debt on a sound basis. Kellogg appointed some Democrats to office, and, like Warmoth, gave relatively few such positions to blacks. A "revisionist" examination of Kellogg's administration, however, does not explain the continuous attempts to drive him from office. No matter how competent and honest a governor Kellogg might have been, to the white people of Louisiana he was still a carpetbagger, a man who held his position by virtue of Negro votes and federal bayonets.  

In the summer of 1873, conservatives in New Orleans made one last peaceful effort to expel Kellogg by appealing to the common interest among whites and blacks in good government. Led by former Confederate general

P. G. T. Beauregard and several of the city's prominent businessmen, the Louisiana Unification movement sought to create a broad-based anti-radical coalition. Beauregard advised the blacks to listen no longer to the carpetbag adventurers who had plundered the state and to join with the whites to throw out the thieves. Despite great fanfare and several biracial meetings, the movement foundered on the shoals of the strong racism in north Louisiana and on the fact that even men with good intentions were unwilling to make major concessions to the powerful black politicians. Like many previous attempts at compromise, unification died aborning leaving the state to the tender mercy of the racial extremists. 45

Although McEnery himself had to some extent faded from the picture, hostility to the Republicans at the local level continued unabated. In Franklin Parish a party of men ambushed and killed district judge T. S. Crawford and district attorney A. H. Harris. When the guilty parties in this affair were later arrested, a mob threatened to rescue them from the jail. A police juror in north Louisiana returned his commission to the governor simply saying: "I cannot with safety accept it." An Alexandria Republican stated that it was not uncommon for blacks to be

hung or shot in Rapides Parish and that the radicals might have to take the law into their own hands.

By the beginning of 1874 the opposition to Republican rule had grown desperate. Arguing that resistance to tyranny was a citizen's most solemn duty, white leaders publicly proclaimed that only federal bayonets kept Kellogg and his minions in power. The New Orleans Bulletin, which was fast becoming the leading organ of the state's violent fanatics, maintained that when all peaceful avenues of protest had been closed, there would be an "outburst of indignation against this usurping Government, as will sweep it from power and consign it, we trust, to the farthest depths of oblivion." More significantly, conservatives carefully watched as large numbers of troops were withdrawn from the South, as northern opinion turned against propping up the carpetbaggers, and as Grant failed to sustain Republican governors in Texas and Arkansas, and decided that the time was ripe to strike a blow for liberty.

In the spring and summer of 1874 John McEnery led a growing chorus calling for the organization of white people

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46 Emory to AAG, Division of the South, July 11, 1873, LS, DG, 1872-1878, RG 393, NA; New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 14, 1873; New Orleans Republican, September 16, 23, October 11, 1873; Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, 271-72; George Wear to Kellogg, September 12, 1873, S. H. Cardill to Kellogg, October 20, 1873, Kellogg Papers, LSU; Jefferson McKinney to Jeptha McKinney, December 14, 1873, Jeptha McKinney Papers, ibid.

to overthrow Negro rule and drive the carpetbaggers from the land. Rabid conservatives argued for the critical necessity of forming a solid phalanx against the tide of social equality and miscegenation brought on by radical domination in the state. Whites blamed the Negroes for voting against the best interests of the community in election after election, forming armed black leagues, and hatching vile conspiracies. Several north Louisiana editors asserted that the blacks had drawn the color line against the whites and that the superior race would retaliate by mustering its strength to defeat the dark forces of barbarism.

Any further attempts to win Negro votes seemed futile. Those advocating a "White League" policy clearly stated that their purpose was to array race against race in order to overthrow radical rule. Conservatives informed the blacks that they were now on their own politically and that the whites would make no further concessions or appeals to them. Returning to the central question of the 1860's, many White League advocates argued that the Negro by his very nature was unfit to exercise the right of suffrage and that he had so corrupted politics as to put the future of republican government in Louisiana in jeopardy. Denying

any desire to come into conflict with the blacks, the proponents of white unity warned the Negroes that they would no longer tolerate government by ignorant freedmen. Privately, some conservative leaders also questioned whether universal white suffrage had not also degraded politics, increased taxation, and allowed petty demagogues to dominate public life.  

The whites justified racial solidarity in politics by accusing the blacks of forming secret societies that fomented insurrectionary violence. Such leagues prevented the Negroes from joining Democratic clubs and listening to conservative speakers. Newspaper reporters claimed to have discovered several revolutionary plots in the country parishes during the summer, but nothing ever came of these sanguinary conspiracies. Even the usually restrained New Orleans Picayune carried vivid accounts of an armed "Black League" whose object was to kill off all the white men and keep all the white women. The editors also published what they claimed to be a constitution of this organization that pledged the members to total secrecy and provided for an elaborate series of secret passwords and handshakes. The insubstantial nature of this "evidence"

49Alexandria Caucasian, April 25, May 16, 23, June 13, October 3, 1874; New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 12, 14, 18, 25, July 2, 1874; Daily Shreveport Times, June 9, 10, 30, 1874; Natchitoches People's Vindicator, August 8, 1874; New Orleans Bulletin, June 7, 28, July 10, 1874; Charles E. Kennon to Thomas C. W. Ellis, June 13, 1874, E. John Ellis Papers, LSU.
of a Negro uprising led even fervent White League supporters to question its existence. Governor Kellogg was probably correct when he later testified that people may have believed these wild tales but that the white leaders certainly did not.50

In any event, White Leagues began operating in the rural parishes during the spring of 1874, long before any mention of black leagues appeared in the press. Starting with Opelousas in April, these groups spread north to the Red River region. With pageantry and the enthusiastic participation of women and children, whites held large meetings whose festival atmosphere belied their serious purpose. The resolutions adopted at these organizational gatherings recited the familiar litany on the evils of the Kellogg administration, and the White League in St. Martin Parish compared their catalogue of grievances against the Republicans to those of the American colonies against Great Britain listed in the Declaration of Independence. Whites also accused Kellogg of "Africanizing" Louisiana by turning the reins of power over to the debauched and degraded blacks. Since the race issue had been forced upon the whites, the White Leaguers resolved

to meet the enemy squarely on his own terms and re-establish their racial hegemony at all hazards. Emboldened by the winds of political reaction blowing out of the northern states, Louisiana conservatives openly vowed to use intimidation to crush the black electoral majority. The White Leagues shared a singular animus against the traitors to their race, both scalawags and carpetbaggers, who had aligned the black masses against them. They favored the social and economic ostracism of these white Judases and Benedict Arnolds, and many of their rasher statements contained faintly concealed threats against the very lives of white Republicans.51

So fanatical had White League sentiment become in north Louisiana that political leaders there even carped against the Democratic party for having compromised and sold out the people in the past. They particularly distrusted the New Orleans politicians whom they accused of collaboration with Kellogg, and they swore that they would support no party that refused to endorse White League principles. On the other hand, more moderate

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spokesmen argued that drawing racial lines was rash and foolhardy and that all men opposed to corruption should unite regardless of race or party affiliation. The New Orleans Times asserted that the state neither needed a black man's party nor a white man's party but an honest man's party. Such prudent counsels could not be heard above the rumblings of political pyrotechnics. The Democratic convention, which met in Baton Rouge in August, adopted a platform calling for all white people opposed to the "Kellogg usurpation" to join together to preserve white civilization. Even this document's meaningless pledge to respect the rights of all citizens regardless of race was similar to those contained in many White League statements. As the Republicans realized, there were no essential differences between the White League and the Democratic party in Louisiana.52

Perceptive conservatives feared that the rash statements and violent acts of fanatical White Leaguers would greatly injure the cause of Louisiana in the eyes of the nation and delay the overthrow of "carpetbag rule." They had good reason to feel apprehensive. John McEnery advised white Louisianians to arm themselves in preparation for the coming conflict with Negroes. The Natchitoches

52Daily Shreveport Times, July 14, August 5, 1874; Alexandria Caucasian, June 6, 20, 17, 1874; New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 28, August 9, 26, 27, 1874; New Orleans Times, July 3, 1874; House Rep. 261, 43-2, Pt. 3, 682-88; Annual Cyclopedia (1874), 477; New Orleans Republican, July 31, 1874.
People's Vindicator maintained that the whites would resist the Kellogg government "with all the means the God of nature has placed within our reach [emphasis in original]." The fire-breathing editor of the Shreveport Times issued a solemn warning to the Republicans: "If a single hostile gun is fired between the whites and blacks in this and surrounding parishes, every carpetbagger and scalawag that can be caught, will in twelve hours therefrom be dangling from a limb."^3

The White Leaguers were men of action as well as words. In May and June, Republican officials in Natchitoches Parish received anonymous notices that "the people" would exterminate the thieving rascals. Conservatives made the usual complaints of high taxes and official corruption, and on June 13 a large taxpayers' meeting passed resolutions detailing their grievances and establishing a committee of seventy citizens to investigate the problem. In July the whites demanded the resignation of several police jurors and other officials. District judge Henry C. Myers and parish judge D. H. Boullt, Jr., fearing for their lives, left the parish. An estimated 1,300 persons assembled in Natchitoches on July 27 and insisted that Myers, Boullt

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^3E. John Ellis to Thomas C. W. Ellis, June 24, 1874, E. John Ellis Papers, LSU; Entries for July 23, August 25, 1874, David F. Boyd Diary, Walter L. Fleming, ed., Documentary History of Reconstruction (2 Vols., Cleveland, 1906-1907), II, 144-45; Warmoth, War, Politics, and Reconstruction, 177-78; New Orleans Bulletin, June 9, 26, July 14, 1874; Natchitoches People's Vindicator, June 20, 1874; Daily Shreveport Times, July 9, 1874.
and several other parish officials relinquish their offices. Parish attorney J. J. Bossier and the parish tax collector, D. H. Boullt, Sr., quickly acceded to this request. The expulsion of Kellogg's men in Natchitoches not only made it impossible for the Republicans to canvass the parish but also gave the White League encouragement to move against Republican officeholders elsewhere.\(^{54}\)

The redoubtable Alcibiades DeBlanc led an armed mob that forced Republican officials in St. Martin Parish to quickly resign their positions and head for New Orleans. DeBlanc made several fire-eating speeches urging the people to defy the Metropolitan Police if they dared to enter St. Martinville. The effort to force Republican officeholders to abandon their posts spread north into Avoyelles, Winn, Lincoln, and Webster parishes. A taxpayers' association in Caddo Parish (Shreveport) investigated local assessments and admittedly tried to frighten Republican "rogues and scoundrels." Conservative editors justified the ouster of parish officials by appealing to the hallowed Anglo-Saxon tradition of popular resistance to tyranny. Although the Republicans maintained that coerced resignations were pointless because Governor Kellogg would never accept them, few Republican officeholders would return to

their parishes unless accompanied by United States troops. The White League proclaimed themselves innocent of any violent intentions, and boldly predicted that their party would capture a majority of the seats in both houses of the legislature in the 1874 elections.\textsuperscript{55}

Of course, Republicans still might garner a victory by using Army bayonets. Newspaper editors charged Kellogg and his wretched crew with creeping around the state searching for exaggerated "outrage" tales to fire the northern heart. White League organs placed the responsibility for any disorders in the state entirely on the shoulders of Kellogg and his corrupt and inefficient subalterns. Conservatives questioned whether Grant would again send large numbers of soldiers to Louisiana and declared that if he did, the people of the state would welcome them and certainly not wage war against the United States government. The events in Red River Parish, however, soon gave the lie to these soothing promises of peace.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{55} New Orleans Republican, August 22, 25, 29, 30, September 1, 10, 1874; New Orleans Daily Picayune, August 20, 21, 26, September 1, 1874; E. H. Riddell to Packard, August 28, 1874, "Use of the Army in Certain of the Southern States," House Ex. Doc. 30, 44-2, 222; House Rep. 261, 43-2, Pt. 3, 310-20, 346-52, 581-87; New Orleans Bulletin, August 9, 22, 1874; Daily Shreveport Times, June 6, July 12, 1874; E. John Ellis to Thomas C. W. Ellis, August 3, 1874; E. John Ellis Papers, LSU.

\textsuperscript{56} Daily Shreveport Times, July 28, 30, August 11, 14, 19, 22, September 4, 8, 10, 1874; New Orleans Bulletin, August 29, 1874; New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 4, 5, 12, 1874; Alexandria Caucasian, September 12, 1874.
Marshall Harvey Twitchell was a Union Army veteran from Vermont who after the war had settled in the small Red River community of Coushatta, about sixty-five miles below Shreveport. After his election to the state senate, Twitchell convinced the legislature to create a new parish of Red River, of which he soon became the political boss. Twitchell's brother Homer and several other relatives moved to Coushatta and received appointments to local offices from then Governor Warmoth. These carpetbaggers had grandiose plans for the economic expansion of the town and the growth of their own power and influence. Twitchell, who was a relatively poor man when he came to Louisiana, became quite wealthy between 1871 and 1873. He made a lot of his money by purchasing land at tax sales, but the Democrats accused him of operating a lucrative "ring" in the parish for his family's profit. In particular, whites criticized the Republicans for making a large profit on the construction of a courthouse in Coushatta. Twitchell's most bitter political and economic rival in the parish, T. W. Abney, resented the sudden prosperity of these new residents. What most exasperated local conservatives was their powerlessness to thwart Republican schemes. With a parish population of 300 whites and 1,100 Negroes, Twitchell's control of the black vote made him impregnable at the polls. Since the blacks virtually worshiped Twitchell because of his friendship for them and
support for their schools, the whites could see no end to their frustration.\textsuperscript{57}

Abney and his fellow conservatives, following the example of Natchitoches Parish, organized a White League and held a large meeting in July where they resolved to "persuade" Twitchell and his henchmen to give up their offices. Although both Republicans and Democrats later agreed to eschew violence, Twitchell had good reason to distrust his rabid enemies, and he left for New Orleans to discuss sending federal troops to the parish with Packard and Governor Kellogg. White citizens denied that they had tried to "force" Twitchell and the others to resign.\textsuperscript{58}

The troubles in the parish soon reached the crisis point. On August 25 some blacks in the tiny settlement of Brownsville, ten miles below Couthatta on the Red River, fell into a dispute with two white men and threatened their lives. One of the whites evacuated his family to Couthatta; armed blacks entered his home and searched the premises.


\textsuperscript{58} Shoalmire, "Twitchell," 139-51; House Rep. 261, 43-2, Pt. 3, 385-86; Natchitoches People's Vindicator, August 8, 15, 22, 1874; Daily Shreveport Times, June 16, August 14, 1874.
The following day a posse arrested one of the blacks, Dan Wynn, and tried to arrest another, Tom Jones, but he opened fire on them and mortally wounded a young white man. The enraged whites then executed both Negroes and raised the familiar cry of black insurrection. With Twitchell in New Orleans, the whites suspected that the radicals intended to stir up the Negroes and incite an outbreak that would provide some basis for their request for troops.59

Several white Republicans rode to Brownsville to calm the blacks and assure them that the murders committed by the posse would not go unpunished. Amid rumors that the blacks intended to kill off the whites, the young people of the town held a dance at Abney's new brick store in Coushatta. The occasion was, however, far from festive; the men came dressed in rough clothes with weapons bulging beneath their coats, and the women noticed that their partners seemed distracted and kept nervously watching the door. That same night a number of Negroes gathered at Homer Twitchell's home, some hiding under the house and others concealing themselves in a nearby cotton field. White pickets, who had been posted on the roads leading into town, discovered this black gathering. Two pickets stopped a Negro who was carrying a load of buckshot into town, but he fled into the

night. These same two men later met Homer Twitchell himself on the road. After briefly talking with him, they turned to go back to their posts when the blacks in the cotton field opened fire on them. One of the men, Joseph Dixon, received five bullet wounds, but they both escaped to warn the whites at the dance that the Negroes had risen in revolt.60

Having been alerted to the situation by couriers dispatched by Abney, 1,000 armed men poured into Coushatta on August 29 from the neighboring parishes. The mob grew excited during the day and threatened to hang several local radicals. Abney and his friends decided to arrest six white Republicans for their own protection: Homer Twitchell, Sheriff E. S. Edgerton, Robert Dewees, the tax collector of De Soto Parish, W. R. Howell, Red River Parish attorney, registrar Clark Holland, and M. C. Willis, a justice of the peace. They also took a United States marshal, a deputy sheriff, and six Negroes into custody, but later released these men. At a public trial for the six prisoners held the following day, the conservatives produced no evidence that any of the Republicans had plotted

to incite insurrection among the Negroes, but the citizens still decided that they must resign their offices. All six men consented to this demand and agreed to leave the state within twenty-four hours. Abney kept the prisoners under heavy guard and delayed their departure an additional day to allow the popular excitement to abate.61

The plan was to escort the radicals to Texas with a posse of their own choosing. The prisoners and their twenty-five guards left Coushatta at ten o'clock in the morning on Sunday, August 31. They tried to keep their exact route a secret though they headed toward Shreveport, riding hard that day but finally making a stop to rest their horses about twenty miles from the city. Back in Coushatta some of the young hotheads, who suspected that the six Republicans were guilty of many more crimes than had been revealed in the public proceedings and who disapproved of the "lenient" verdict, took off after the prisoners and their escorts. They overtook their quarry as the latter were resting and killed all six Republicans, mutilating several of the bodies. The guards either could not or would not protect their charges. Although conservatives claimed that the Coushatta massacre had been the work of a wild group of Texans, the finger of guilt more clearly pointed to the White Leaguers from Red River and

surrounding parishes, led by the bloodthirsty Dick Coleman of De Soto Parish, also known as Captain Jack. Shortly afterward a mob lynched the two Negroes charged with the August 27 shooting of Dixon.62

Republicans naturally blamed the White League for the troubles and complained of a continuing reign of terror against their party in Red River Parish. Kellogg immediately sent an account of the massacre to Washington, using it as an additional reason to request more troops for Louisiana. The governor had good reason to fear that Coushatta might only be the beginning of a conspiracy to murder Republican officials in other parishes because the White League newspapers palliated the crime and blamed the Kellogg government for all the disorder in the countryside. John McEnery denied ever making a speech praising the Coushatta murderers, but he did argue that the people had the right to resort to the "paramount law of self-preservation to protect society against the ravages of official plunderers and spoliators."63

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63 New Orleans Republican, September 2, 4, 1874; New Orleans Times, September 2, 1874; House Rep. 101, 43-2, Pt. 2, 104-105; Kellogg to Williams, August 30, 31, 1874, Sen. Ex. Doc. 13, 43-2, 11-12; Annual Cyclopedia (1874),
Kellogg offered a reward of 5,000 dollars for the arrest of the Coushatta murderers, and troops finally arrived in the area in late September, restoring a tenuous Republican control to the parish. In October, on instructions from Attorney General Williams to apprehend the perpetrators of outrages in the southern states, Beckwith issued warrants for the arrest of the guilty parties. On October 19 Major Lewis Merrill, who had also dealt with Klansmen in South Carolina, arrived in Shreveport. Merrill and his men captured thirteen persons in connection with the Red River affair as well as several other men accused of intimidating blacks and Republican officeholders in neighboring parishes. Conservatives believed that the Army meant to intimidate the whites and protested the marching of armed soldiers among peaceful citizens. The resulting controversy and General Emory's failure to support Merrill's actions prevented additional arrests before the November election. While Democrats cried out excitedly about military despotism, the prisoners voted under guard on election day. The charges against them were later dropped. 

478; Daily Shreveport Times, September 3, 1874; New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 3, 1874.

64 Shoalmire, "Twitchell," 178-80, 185-93; Dawson, "Long Ordeal," 364; Circular of the Attorney General, Instructions to United States Marshals and Attorneys, September 3, 1874, IR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 169); Beckwith to Williams, October 17, 1874, IR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 2); Emory to AG, Washington, October 26, 1874, Major Lewis
For Marshall Twitchell, the Coushatta affair had its own grisly aftermath. Despite the fact that he won re-election as a state senator, Twitchell was exhausted and understandably tired of politics. He traveled to Vermont during the summer of 1875, returned for the convening of the legislature in early 1876, and arrived back in Coushatta in late April. On May 2 Twitchell along with his brother-in-law George King took a ferry to attend a police jury meeting in town. That morning a mysterious stranger rode into Coushatta on a pony. Disguised in a rubber raincoat, his face concealed by a false beard and pair of goggles and a hat pulled down over his eyes, he waited patiently near a blacksmith shop until he saw Twitchell and King board the ferry on the opposite bank. As they approached the shore, he leveled a rifle at the boat and opened fire; King shot back but soon fell into the boat dead. Twitchell received a leg wound and jumped into the water, holding onto the boat with first one hand and then the other as the stranger mercilessly shot him in each arm. The man remarked to a horrified woman nearby

Merrill to AAG, DG, October 25, 26, 1874, Lieutenant Donald McIntosh to AAG, DG, November 14, 1874, Major J. F. De Vargas to McIntosh, October 27, 1874, Sen. Ex. Doc. 17, 43-2, 2, 4-7, 12-16; Deputy United States Marshal J. P. Stockton to Packard, October 22, 1874, House Ex. Doc. 30, 44-2, 360-61; House Rep. 816, 44-1, 727; New Orleans Republican, October 21, 29, 1874; Daily Shreveport Times, October 20, 23, 25, 27, 29, 1874; New Orleans Bulletin, October 20, 1874; New Orleans Daily Picayune, October 21, 25, 27-November 8, 1874; Natchitoches People's Vindicator, October 24, 31, 1874; Alexandria Caucasian, October 31, 1874; Bryan, Wild Work, 359-384.
that he was shooting "a damned black alligator." He then mounted his pony and rode off. The black ferryman, though himself wounded, managed to pull Twitchell back into the boat and prevent him from drowning. Although an Army surgeon later amputated both of Twitchell's arms near the shoulder, he miraculously lived thirty years longer, serving as a consul at Kingston, Canada. Later testimony indicated that the would-be assassin had been the notorious Captain Jack, but the timid sheriff failed to summon a posse, and the stranger disappeared, returning years later to Coushatta for a hero's welcome.65

With near anarchy in the country parishes, Kellogg's effective power was largely confined to New Orleans, and it was questionable how long he could hold out there.66 In June the old Crescent City Democratic Club rechristened itself the Crescent City White League, and its members vowed to use all their resources to defend white civilization against radical tyranny. The city's White League recruited

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66 Although Kellogg and his fellow Republicans confidently expected President Grant and the national party to support them, by August they had grown more desperate. Grant refused to send more troops, and Kellogg must have wondered how long he could stay in power without outside assistance. New Orleans Republican, July 23, September 6, 1874; Kellogg to Grant, August 19, 1874, Sen. Ex. Doc. 13, 43-2, 9-10; Kellogg to Williams, August 26, 1874, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 2); New York Herald, September 3, 1874.
members from all classes of society and welcomed gray-beards and young boys alike. By July the quasi-military organizations were arming and drilling, anxiously waiting to take the field against the Republicans at the first opportunity.  

On September 1 many of the city's White League units attended a large meeting to ratify the Democratic platform drafted at the Baton Rouge Convention. John McEnery asked his cheering supporters how long the people were going to tolerate the Kellogg "usurpation." The self-proclaimed governor predicted that Grant would no longer use troops to prop up the Republican state government. Metropolitan policemen with Winchester rifles and a Gatling gun nervously watched the assemblage for any sign of trouble. 

When the War Department sent more troops to Louisiana after the Coushatta affair, Republicans rejoiced that at last they would receive protection from White League attacks. While conservatives criticized Grant for sending soldiers into such a "peaceful" state, they mocked Kellogg


for his exaggerated fears. Some whites admitted that they preferred military government to the continuation of the Kellogg regime. The more rabid White Leaguers maintained that even federal troops could not stop a popular uprising of the people against Republican oppression. Since most of the troops normally in New Orleans had been stationed in Holly Springs, Mississippi, during the yellow fever season, Emory informed Packard that even with additional men sent by the War Department he did not have an adequate force in the city to keep the peace.\(^{69}\)

The White League military companies in New Orleans had ordered Belgian and Prussian rifles from New York, but the Republicans intercepted the shipments. The Metropolitan Police seized several boxes of arms from a store on Canal Street under warrants charging that these weapons were to be used for an insurrectionary purpose. On September 10 more rifles arrived on the steamer \textit{Dallas} in boxes marked "machinery," though they had not been entered on the ship's manifest. Custom House officers and Metropolitans confiscated the boxes as they were being unloaded and carried them to a nearby police station. When the police refused to return these captured weapons to their owners, conservative editors screamed about this violation of the

\(^{69}\)\textit{New Orleans Republican}, September 5, 11, 12, 1874; \textit{New Orleans Daily Picayune}, September 11, 1874; \textit{New Orleans Bulletin}, September 3, 5, 6, 12, 1874; Natchitoches \textit{People's Vindicator}, September 12, 1874; Emory to Packard, September 11, 1874, LS, DG, 1871-1878, RG 393, NA.
right of the people to bear arms, warning that popular endurance had reached its limits and that it was time for all good citizens to rise up and throw off their oppressors. Some men feared that blind fanatics would resist even federal troops. The governor defended the seizure of the rifles and denied the right of private military companies to purchase and carry weapons. Shortly thereafter the steamer Mississippi arrived with a large shipment of arms, and whites vowed to prevent the Metropolitans from taking their guns away again. On the night of September 15 White Leaguers entered the Leeds Foundry where they stored their weapons. The officers distributed these arms to their men in preparation for their duties the next day.  

With McEnery purposefully safe in Vicksburg, Mississippi, awaiting the results of the impending revolution, his lieutenant governor D. B. Penn and military commanders Frederick N. Ogden and John B. Angell plotted out their course of action. Penn had considered earlier the idea of stationing armed men near the State House (the old St. Louis Hotel) who would kidnap Kellogg, take him out to sea, and install McEnery as governor. McEnery,

however, feared a violent conflict with the Kellogg forces and vetoed the idea. On September 12 Ogden and Penn decided to demand Kellogg's resignation, and if he refused, to seize all the state offices and records. As part of this plan, the leaders ordered the White League forces to be ready on Monday morning September 14 to take possession of their arms on the *Mississippi*, by force if necessary. The newspapers published a call for a mass meeting to assemble at the Henry Clay statue on Canal Street that same day, thus marking the opening move in the attempted overthrow of the state government.\textsuperscript{71}

At the appointed hour of 11:30 a crowd of 5,000 persons gathered to listen to fiery orators denounce Kellogg and call for the governor's immediate resignation. A committee appointed to wait on Kellogg returned to report that the governor refused to receive any communication from an armed mob. This response elicited cries of "Hang Kellogg." As part of the preconcerted plan, armed White Leaguers appeared on the streets and threw up barricades along the length of Poydras Street from Carondelet toward the river.\textsuperscript{72}


\textsuperscript{72}New *Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 15, 1874; *New Orleans Republican*, September 15, 1874; *New Orleans Bulletin*, September 15, 1874; *New York Herald*, September 15,
General James Longstreet, the Adjutant General of the state militia, apparently with the approval of Kellogg, decided to take the offensive. Late in the afternoon he moved his black militiamen and the racially mixed Metropolitans from the police station on Jackson Square and distributed them along Canal Street between the Custom House and the levee. About 250 Metropolitans commanded by General A. S. Badger marched from the levee toward the right flank of the White League forces. As they approached Gravier Street, Ogden's men opened up a blistering fire, and the Metropolitans beat a hasty retreat toward the Custom House, leaving two Gatling guns and one twelve-pound artillery piece to be captured by the victorious White Leaguers. At the Custom House, Longstreet heard the whites give the rebel yell as they charged his position, reportedly "blanched," and ordered his men to move inside the building. When the Negro militia saw the Metropolitans break and run, they too scattered in all directions, leaving the insurrectionary forces in control of the city. The whites easily captured the state buildings but wisely decided not to attack the Custom House because it was federal property. In the fight the Metropolitans had lost 11 killed and 60 wounded, while the White Leaguers suffered 21 killed but

only 19 wounded. Badger himself had fallen seriously wounded, and Longstreet was also hit.\(^7^3\)

On receiving word of the fighting in New Orleans, General Emory, who was still with the body of his forces in Mississippi, ordered Lieutenant Colonel John R. Brooke and four companies of soldiers to New Orleans. The victorious White Leaguers cheered the arriving troops; they never suspected that the federal government would attempt to reinstate Kellogg. Adjutant General Townsend in Washington ordered a reluctant Emory to return to the city immediately and assume command. He instructed the general not to recognize the insurgent government under any circumstances. Packard and other Republicans bitterly felt that the Kellogg government would never have been overthrown.

\(^7^3\)Penn to Ogden, September 14 (?) , 1874 , Frederick N. Ogden Papers, Tulane; Thomas Robson Hay, James Longstreet , Politician, Officeholder and Writer (Baton Rouge, 1952) , 356-76; Richardson, "Battle of New Orleans," 499; Lonn, Reconstruction in Louisiana, 271n; Ogden to AAG, E. John Ellis, September 17, 1874, House Rep. 101, 43-2, Pt. 2, 213-15; New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 15, 1874; John S. Kendall, History of New Orleans (3 Vols., Chicago, 1922), I, 370-71; Packard to Williams, September 14, 1874, Sen. Ex. Doc. 13, 43-2, 14. According to Professor Taylor (Louisiana Reconstructed, 293), Longstreet had 500 Metropolitans and 3,000 black militia in his command but faced 8,400 White Leaguers and volunteers. Still Longstreet never brought his full number of men into play. Badger allowed himself to be badly outflanked near the levee, and his troops soon fled in disarray. Even taking into account their superior numbers, the White League forces had moved with greater discipline and precision than their Republican foes.
had there been a sufficient number of federal troops in
the city.74

Conservatives jubilantly celebrated the demise of
their archenemy and marveled at the power of popular
indignation to bring a despot to his knees. The leading
White League newspaper proclaimed New Orleans the "happiest
city in the universe." David F. Boyd, the president of
Louisiana State University, assured his friend General
Sherman that there was "no hostility to the United States
Government, or to the President" and that even the blacks
rejoiced at Kellogg's downfall. Boyd advised that if the
administration would leave Louisiana alone, she would
trouble them no more.75

An ominous quiet spread over the Crescent City on
September 15 as White Leaguers dismantled their barricades,
and acting governor Penn set up the new government in the
State House. Hungry Democrats gathered there early looking
for patronage favors under the new dispensation. The Custom
House was closed, and Packard reported that the insurgents

74 Dawson, "Long Ordeal," 329-35; Emory to AAG, Division
of the South, September 15, 1874, "Annual Report of the
Secretary of War," House Ex. Doc. 1, 43-2, Vol. I, Pt. 2,
55-56; Emory to AAG, Washington, September 15, 1874,
General Irvin McDowell to Sherman, September 14, 15, 1874,
Townsend to Emory, September 16, 1874, AGO, Main Series,
1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 169); House Rep. 101,
43-2, Pt. 2, 26-29.

75 New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 15, 16, 1874;
New Orleans Bulletin, September 15, 16, 1874; Daily
Shreveport Times, September 16, 1874; Chicago Daily Tribune,
September 15, 1874; David F. Boyd to Sherman, September 16,
1874, Walter L. Fleming Collection, LSU.
had captured the police stations, the arsenal, and all other state buildings. White Leaguers from the neighboring parishes poured into the city to join in the festivities of the victors. Penn informed President Grant that Louisianians had had no choice but to revolt against the "usurpers" who had oppressed and plundered the people, and he pledged that the new government would keep the peace, protect the blacks, and guard federal property from attack. The Republicans, on the other hand, were confident that Grant would again come to their rescue. Kellogg wired the President twice informing him that the armed revolutionaries had overpowered state authorities and asking him to use all the resources of the federal government to put down this "domestic violence."

Contrary to the hopes of the whites, Grant on September 15 issued a proclamation calling on the insurgents in Louisiana to disperse within five days and submit themselves to the legal (Kellogg) government. False reports spread of new barricades being erected and of armed blacks marching toward the city. On the night of September 17 both McEnery and General Emory arrived in New Orleans.

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76 New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 16, 1874; New York Herald, September 16, 1874; Packard to Williams, September 15, 1874, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 2); New Orleans Times, September 17, 1874; Penn to Grant, September 14, 1874, Annual Cyclopedia (1984), 481; New Orleans Republican, September 16, 17, 1874; Kellogg to Grant, September 14, 1874, W. C. Brown and Charles Clinton to Grant, September 15, 1874, Sen. Ex. Doc. 13, 43-2, 13-14; Kellogg to Grant, September 15, 1874, Kellogg Papers, LSU.
McEnery and Penn held fast to their contention that theirs had always been the legal government of the state and that in fact no insurrection had taken place. McEnery met with Emory the following morning, and the general demanded the disbanding of the "state" troops and the return of all weapons to the armory. Evidently a few irreconcilables favored resistance, but General Ogden and his staff unanimously resolved that they would "not come in conflict with United States troops." McEnery, trembling and nearly overcome with emotion, conferred with Colonel Brooke and surrendered his forces to the military authorities. McEnery and Penn then issued an address to the people in which they stated that they could not resist United States soldiers and had therefore submitted to the dictates of federal power. By September 18 the military had restored the state government to Kellogg's hands, and Emory reported all quiet in New Orleans. He requested that the persons who had participated in the rebellion should be exempt from prosecution because "the outbreak embraced nearly every white man in the community." This simple statement accurately described Kellogg's shaky hold on the reins of power. 

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Grant, Proclamation, September 15, 1874, Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers, VII, 276-77; New Orleans Bulletin, September 17, 1874; New Orleans Republican, September 18, 20, 1874; McEnery and Penn to Emory, September 17, 1874, Proclamation of McEnery and Penn, September 17, 1874, House Rep. 261, 43-2, Pt. 3, 825-28; New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 18, 1874; New York Times, September 17, 1874; Unsigned resolution, AG office, September 17, 1874,
As peace returned to the city, with it came renewed talk of a compromise. McEnery offered to "resign" the "governorship" if Kellogg would do the same, thus clearing the way for a new election. Kellogg, however, declined and maintained that he was the legally elected chief executive of Louisiana and a genuine reformer. Conservatives feared that the northern people might look upon them as bloodthirsty rebels and therefore proclaimed publicly that the decision to overthrow the Kellogg government had been made reluctantly and only when all other forms of redress had failed. Yet they could not help pointing out that the initial success of the revolution had clearly shown the impotency of the Republicans. Most whites favored continued resistance, and the rabid editor of the Shreveport Times remarked that Kellogg would receive the same obedience as if Grant had placed a "toad" in the gubernatorial chair. The still tense situation in New Orleans forced the War Department to leave the troops in the city although they would have preferred transferring them elsewhere during the bloody 1874 southern election campaign.\(^7^8\)

\(^7^8\) New Orleans Republican, September 18, October 1, 1874; New York Herald, September 19, 1874; James A. Adams to E. M. Craveth, September 22, 30, 1874, American
On the heels of the September rebellion, the White Leaguers and their allies forced more local Republican officials to resign their positions and in many cases leave their homes. Conservatives in West Feliciana Parish accused white radicals of inciting the Negroes to insurrection, and armed bands roamed the countryside arresting leading Republicans. Emory sent troops from Baton Rouge to quell these disturbances, but the soldiers could do little because the blacks had also come to distrust the white Republicans in the parish. Urgent pleas for assistance came into Emory's headquarters from many quarters, and the general did his best to meet Kellogg's requests for troops to reinstate expelled officeholders. However, as the New Orleans Bulletin perceptively noted, there would have to be soldiers stationed in all fifty-seven parishes of the state to keep the governor's men in power.79

Missionary Association Archives, Louisiana, Dillard; New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 19, 1874; New Orleans Bulletin, September 19, 22, 1874; Daily Shreveport Times, September 19, 20, 22, 1874; Jack Wharton to Henry Clay Warmoth, October 8, 1874; Warmoth Papers, SHC; General Irvin McDowell to AAG, Washington, September 22, 1874; Emory to AAG, Division of the South, September 22, 1874, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 169).

79New Orleans Republican, September 19, 29, October 6, 1874; James W. Thompson to Thomas C. W. Ellis, September 17, 1874, E. John Ellis Papers, LSU; New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 17, 19, 24, 27, 1874; F. A. Weber to Packard, September 22, 1874, R. H. Adams to Packard, September 29, 1874, L. W. Baker to Packard, September 17, 1874, House Ex. Doc. 30, 44-2, 215, 302, 358-59; Alexandria Caucasian, September 19, October 17, 1874; Natchitoches People's Vindicator, September 26, 1874; Captain Arthur W. Allyn to
In several parishes conservatives adopted a compromise policy whereby black Republicans and white Democrats would divide the local offices and form a single electoral ticket. Such efforts received little support from either radical White Leaguers or the white Republicans, and despite a promising start, failed to serve as a basis for the reconciliation of the racial and political conflict raging in the state. An agreement between the conservatives and Kellogg on voter registration was likewise short-lived, and the whites soon repudiated their promises to end violence and intimidation in the state.  

D. J. Compton, September 21, 1874, John J. Compton to Allyn, September 21, 1874, Allyn to AAG, E. R. Platt, DG, October 2, 1874, Second Lieutenant L. W. Cooke to CO, St. Martinville, October 11, 1874, House Rep. 101, 43-2, Pt. 2, 62-64; Packard to Emory, September 18, 1874, LR, DG, 1873-1877, RG 393, NA; Major Lewis Merrill to AG, DG, October 28, 1874, TR, DG, 1874-1875, ibid.; Merrill to AAG, DG, October 27, 1874, Sen. Ex. Doc. 17, 43-2, 7-11; Robert Hewlett to Williams, September 19, 1874, Packard to Williams, November 1, 1874, Sen. Ex. Doc. 13, 43-2, 14-15; Emory and McDowell to Colonel William D. Whipple, September 25, 1874, Emory to AAG, Division of the South, September 18, 1874, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 169); Kellogg to Emory, October 15, 1874, ibid., (roll 170); Packard to Beckwith, September 18, 1874, Packard to Williams, September 22, 1874, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 2); New York Times, October 6, 1874; Daily Shreveport Times, September 26, 1874; New Orleans Bulletin, September 19, 1874.

Armed whites still marched in the streets of New Orleans, and General Emory wondered if he had enough troops in the city and state to keep the peace on election day. Much to Governor Kellogg's chagrin, the White Leaguers never returned some 1,500 stand of arms and two howitzers, which they had seized from the state armory in September. Emory refused to order his troops to search the city for these weapons. The New Orleans Republican reported that the notorious political rogue E. A. Burke had tried to assassinate Kellogg in his carriage. In the unsuccessful attempt Burke got off five shots, but Kellogg only fired once, which seemed to be the pattern in most clashes between conservatives and Republicans in Louisiana. Even with such ominous portents, election day passed peacefully, depending that is on one's definition of that word. Major Merrill reported a "quiet" election in Shreveport where one person was killed and four or five wounded.81

While the people of the state waited for the Returning Board to declare the results the conservatives already basked in their self-proclaimed triumph. They optimistically predicted that after the September rebellion it would no longer be possible for the Returning Board to

override the verdict of the people. The New Orleans Bulletin published a cartoon showing Kellogg packing his carpetbag and preparing to leave the state. Yet the whites had learned through bitter experience not to underestimate the resourcefulness of their enemies. White Leaguers in north Louisiana warned the Republicans against any attempt to falsify the returns, and the editor of the Shreveport Times threatened to use "hemp" on candidates illegally counted into office. 82

For their part, the Republicans charged that the conservatives had used intimidation and violence to elect Democratic candidates. Many witnesses told the Returning Board and congressional investigators that the White Leagues had inaugurated a reign of terror against Republicans during the campaign. Election officials testified that few blacks had voluntarily supported the Democrats and that the much publicized Negro Democratic clubs were largely paper organizations. Employers had threatened to and actually did fire black employees who voted for the radical candidates. The social ostracism of white Republicans had become more intense than ever. Armed nightriders had broken up Republican meetings and had threatened the lives of both black and white leaders. Radicals complained

82 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 7, 1874; Entry for November 17, 1874, David F. Boyd Diary, Fleming, ed., Documentary History of Reconstruction, II, 152; New Orleans Bulletin, November 8, December 15, 1874; Alexandria Caucasian, November 21, December 5, 19, 1874; Daily Shreveport Times, November 7, 12, 15, 20, 21, 24, 1874.

Democrats naturally discounted these accounts of pre-election terrorism. Some witnesses brazenly denied the existence of White League clubs even though the conservative newspapers had crowed about their good work before the election. As usual, conservatives blamed all the campaign disturbances on radical incendiaries and insolent Negroes. So far as intimidation was concerned, whites admitted that there was much of this activity during the campaign but that it was all on the other side. Witnesses gave touching accounts of their concern for the welfare of their black friends and their unremitting efforts to protect them from the threats of the carpetbaggers. Conservatives criticized radical attempts to browbeat Democratic Negroes but argued that the blacks had become fed up with Republican thievery and had voted with their white friends anyway.\footnote{Daily Shreveport Times, November 10, 1874; House Rep. 101, 43-2, Pt. 2, 29-32, 43-44, 48-49, 56-59, 88-89, 98-102, 111-12, 133-34, 139-40; House Rep. 261, 43-2, Pt. 3, 237-42, 600-605, 643-48.}

The members of the Returning Board would have to sift through a mass of charges, countercharges, exaggerations, outright lies, and ex parte testimony. In reality there
was and is no way to determine who won this election. Between Democratic intimidation, Republican fraud, and various irregularities in counting the ballots, the actual results must always remain a mystery.®

Nor was the atmosphere in New Orleans conducive to a dispassionate investigation by the Returning Board. In early December the Crescent City White League turned its attention to a radical program to integrate the city's schools, and they encouraged roving bands of white youths to attack black pupils in the classrooms. Ex-governor Warmoth got into a street brawl with a manager of the fanatically conservative Bulletin and stabbed his assailant to death. In such an environment witnesses naturally feared to appear before the Returning Board in public session to present their testimony. Republican officials feared an attack on the Board itself. Party leaders admitted that without the support of Congress and the President, the Kellogg government was doomed but expected that Grant would again come to their aid. General Emory dreaded the outbreak of partisan warfare in the city and, on orders from Washington, held his troops in readiness. President Grant issued secret instructions to General Philip Sheridan to go quietly through Mississippi and Louisiana, and especially to New Orleans, and report on the condition of affairs in these areas. He also authorized Sheridan to take command

of the Division of the South (or any part of it) if necessary. 86

Even before the election, conservatives had contended that the Returning Board would listen only to Republican hearsay and pay no attention to Democratic witnesses. Louis Arroyo, the only Democrat on the Board, claiming that he feared for his life had resigned. The evidence does indicate that the Republican members went out of their way to throw out returns from parishes carried by the Democrats though they could make a strong case that Republican voters had been intimidated. On Christmas eve, the Board issued its report. They declared the Republican candidate for state treasurer elected and seated fifty-three Republicans and fifty-three Democrats in the house with five seats to be decided by that body when it convened. Staggered terms in the Senate left that body with a safe Republican majority. Conservatives denounced these decisions for negating the

86 Note on School Imbroglio, December, 1874, E. S. Stoddard Diary, 1874-1875, Tulane; John W. Blasingame, Black New Orleans, 1860-1880 (Chicago, 1973), 116-17; Beckwith to Williams, December 11, 1874, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 2); J. Madison Wells to Grant, December 10, 1874, Kellogg to Grant, December 9, 1874, Sen. Ex. Doc. 13, 43-2, 16; New Orleans Republican, December 8, 1874; L. A. Sheldon to Benjamin H. Bristow, November 6, 1874, Bristow Papers, LC; Sheldon to James A. Garfield, November 16, 24, 1874, Garfield Papers, LC; James G. Taliaferro to Susan B. Alexander, December 17, 1874, Taliaferro Letters, LSU; AAG E. R. Platt to CO, Jackson Barracks, December 13, 1874, Emory to AG, Washington, December 15, 16, 1874, Townsend to Emory, December 16, 1874, Secretary of War William W. Belknap to Sheridan, December 24, 1874, Sen. Ex. Doc. 17, 43-2, 19-20, 65-66.
very idea of popular elections and posing a dangerous threat to free government in the United States. White Leaguers vowed that the people would never submit to such an outrage, and several country editors warned that candidates counted in by the Returning Board could never safely assume their duties.87

Before the new legislature assembled, Republicans suspected that their opponents were planning some sort of coup. On January 2, 1875, two men kidnapped A. J. Cousin, a Republican member of the house from St. Tammany Parish, and spirited him away into the piney woods near Covington. Kellogg asked that troops be placed near the State House to prevent a mob from gathering there, and General Emory agreed to do so. Sheridan, who had just arrived in New Orleans, reported a chaotic state of affairs in the city with the civil government powerless to suppress disorder. In light of subsequent events, this dispatch had an ominous ring.88


On the morning of January 4 Emory stationed more than 700 officers and enlisted men near the State House in anticipation of trouble during the opening session of the house. Although the state militia tried to prevent non-members from entering the house, several thousand persons surrounded the building as the session got underway at noon. There were fifty-two Republicans and fifty Democrats present in the house, but confusion ruled the day. Conservative Louis A. Wiltz took over the speaker's chair from the Republican clerk and declared himself elected temporary speaker. He proceeded to swear in the five Democratic claimants from those districts in which the Returning Board had declared no winners. Finding that their loud cries of protest went unheeded, the Republicans started to leave the hall, but Democratic sergeants-at-arms suddenly appeared and prevented some of them from doing so. Meanwhile, a crowd in the lobby had grown boisterous and unruly, and Wiltz requested Colonel Regis de Trobriand, in command of the troops nearby, to bring in his soldiers and clear the hall of these disorderly persons. De Trobriand entered the house and received a long ovation from the Democrats.

An alarmed Kellogg called on General Emory to remove the "lawless body" of men occupying the State House. With Sheridan watching over his shoulder and "advising" him, Emory sent de Trobriand back to the scene of his earlier triumph. The colonel entered the hall and informed Wiltz that he had orders to clear the house of all persons not
recognized as members by the Returning Board. Each of
these five men rose in his seat, protested his expulsion,
and then quietly followed the soldiers out of the hall.
The Republicans who had returned with de Trobriand elected
Michael Hahn as their speaker, and the Democrats, furious
at this military interference with the legislature, stormed
out of the hall. That afternoon General Sheridan took
command of the Department of the Gulf. 89

"Little Phil" wasted no time in taking vigorous action
(at least on paper) against the Democrats. The irascible
general wired the Secretary of War suggesting that Congress
declare the White Leaguers "banditti" so that they could be
tried by military commission. Sheridan confidently asserted
that he had settled matters in New Orleans and that the
White League was about to collapse. He pooh-poohed rumors
of attempts on his life and dismissed protests against his
actions as not being worthy of serious consideration.
Sheridan furthermore asserted that nearly 3,500 persons had

89 Dawson, "Long Ordeal," 401, 405; Packard to Williams,
January 4, 1875, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 2); Kellogg to Emory, January 4, 1875, Emory
to Colonel Regis de Trobriand, January 4, 1875, LR, AGO,
Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 173);
de Trobriand to AG, DG, January 6, 1875, Marie Post Post,
The Life and Memoirs of Comte Regis de Trobriand (New York,
1910), 445-56; New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 5, 6,
1875; New Orleans Republican, January 5, 1875; House Rep.
Doc. 45, 43-2, 1-5; "Louisiana Affairs," Sen. Mis. Doc. 46,
43-2, 1-12; Sheridan, GO 1, January 4, 1875, Sen. Ex. Doc.
13, 43-2, 22. At that time the Department of the Gulf
included the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and
Arkansas.
been murdered in Louisiana since 1866 and that at least 1,200 of these had died because of their political beliefs. He even claimed, with little evidence, that the substantial and respectable men in New Orleans were opposed to the White League. The general also turned his telegraphic guns on General Emory whom he described as a "very weak old man, entirely unfitted for this place" and whose "heart" was not on the side of the government. When the War Department removed Emory from command, the general angrily protested that he had only followed Sheridan's suggestions throughout the January crisis.\(^{90}\)

In reality, Sheridan's imprudent telegrams, when they appeared in the newspapers, greatly embarrassed the Grant administration and unleashed a new storm of controversy in Louisiana. Conservatives blasted the military occupation of the legislature, comparing Kellogg to Oliver Cromwell and Grant to Caesar. Far from being the "banditti" described by Sheridan, Democratic editors characterized the White Leaguers as the best people of the state, the virtuous members of all social and economic classes. With Sheridan in the audience an actor playing Cardinal Richelieu uttered the line, "Take away the sword; states can be saved

\(^{90}\)Sheridan to Belknap, January 5 (3 dispatches), 6, 7, 8, 10, 1875, Sen. Ex. Doc. 13, 43-2, 23-31; New Orleans Republican, January 7, 1875, Sheridan to Orville Babcock, January 25, 1875, Sheridan to Belknap, February 9, 1875, Sheridan Papers, LC; Sheridan to Belknap, January 6, 9, 1875, Emory to AG, Washington, March 27, 1875, IR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 173).
without it," with special emphasis. The crowd cheered wildly, and the general glowered. Guests at the St. Louis Hotel sent abusive newspaper articles to Sheridan's breakfast table with pertinent passages underlined.91

Kellogg's police nailed planks across all the doors and windows of the State House, leaving only one entrance open. The governor, conscious of his own weakness, may have secretly longed to lay down his burden but now felt it his duty to stick it out to the end of his term. Louisiana Republicans were painfully aware that only federal bayonets kept them in power, and they begged Congress to grant them the same recognition and support that Grant had provided. But there were ever smaller numbers of white men in the state who called themselves Republicans, and the blacks showed increasing signs of discontent. Pinchback had never really trusted Kellogg and the Custom House Republicans. He resented what he considered their condescending treatment of his race and their greed in filling state jobs with white radicals. The Kellogg legislature elected Pinchback to the United States Senate in 1873, but Congress in 1875

91George R. Preston to Benjamin H. Bristow, January 7, 1875, Bristow Papers, LC; John McEnery to Grant, January 5, 1875, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 2); New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 4, 6, 7, 1875; New Orleans Bulletin, January 5-7, 1875; Daily Shreveport Times, January 6, 1875; Alexandria Caucasian, January 9, 1875; George F. Hoar, Autobiography of Seventy Years (2 Vols., New York, 1903), I, 208; James Ford Rhodes, History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850 to the Final Restoration of Home Rule at the South in 1877 (7 Vols., New York, 1896-1906), V, 125.
decided not to seat him. Pinckback blamed Kellogg and other white Republicans as well as northern party members for denying him this honor. So even with the aid of federal troops, the Republicans in Louisiana seemed destined for an early and ignominious departure from the political scene.92

The conservatives, their own disgust for the turn of events notwithstanding, could wait for Kellogg's government to fall of its own weight, like an overripe fruit dropping from a tree. Even though some conservatives denounced all talk of compromise as a surrender of the right of self-government, Congressman William A. Wheeler of New York and his congressional subcommittee investigating Louisiana affairs, worked out a temporary settlement. The Democrats agreed not to impeach Kellogg for any past acts and to help maintain law and order in the state. For their part the Republicans would allow the congressional committee to review the 1874 election returns and determine the actual composition of the house, a procedure that would undoubtedly give the Democrats a majority in that body. After a good bit of arm twisting and with much reluctance on both sides, the warring parties accepted the "Wheeler compromise."

92 Dixon, *White Conquest*, II, 50, 106-109, 195-96; H. N. Frisbie to Sheridan, January 13, 1875, *House Ex. Doc.* 30, 44-2, 353-54; Kellogg to Williams, January 9, 1875, Beckwith to Williams, January 9, 1875, IR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 6); Charles Nordhoff, *The Cotton States in the Spring and Summer of 1875* (New York, 1876), 41, 66-67; *New Orleans Times*, April 1, 14, August 4, 1874; Pinchback to Frederick Douglass, April 20, 1875, Douglass Papers, LC.
The agreement never received the hearty approval of a majority of the whites in the state. The house impeached Kellogg at the beginning of 1876, but the Republican senate acquitted him on all articles. The counterrevolution had only been halted temporarily.93

In a broader context, Louisiana became the symbol for the agony of the Reconstruction South. Grant's recognition of Kellogg made southerners fear that carpetbag pretenders to power in their own states might receive similar support. Liberty itself seemed to hang in the balance. Conservative editors accused Grant of becoming a virtual dictator and of completely undermining state sovereignty (such ringing statements seemed to still echo from the 1850's and 1860's). Moreover, southerners encouraged the people of Louisiana to resist Republican rule as their only hope of salvation. Even the brutal massacre at Colfax became but the logical result of radical tyranny. Democratic spokesmen could find no historical parallels to the highhanded outrages committed by the Grant administration against Louisiana.94


94Raleigh Daily Sentinel, April 17, 23, 1873; Charleston Daily Courier, January 4, March 11, 1873;
While some conservatives criticized the formation of the White League, the rejoicing in the South at the insurrection of September 14 was nearly universal. Jubilant editorials proclaimed that the overthrow of Kellogg clearly demonstrated the failure of congressional reconstruction legislation and the powerlessness of southern Republicans. Grant's restoration of Kellogg to power elicited equally vigorous condemnations of the President for supporting Republican knaves against the popular will. Most southern conservatives did nothing to discountenance further revolutionary violence in Louisiana, arguing that the oppressive nature of Republican rule fully justified any means of resistance.95

All of these attacks on Grant and the Republican party paled before the South's reaction to the military interference in the Louisiana house during January 1875.

95 Raleigh Daily Sentinel, September 19, 1874; Wilmington Daily Journal, September 16, 18, 1874; Charleston News and Courier, July 18, September 16, 17, 19, 1874; Atlanta Constitution, September 16, 1874; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, September 19, 1874; Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, September 16, 1874; Mobile Daily Register, September 16, 1874; Jackson Weekly Clarion, September 24, 1874; Natchez Daily Democrat, September 18, 1874; Raymond Hinds County Gazette, December 2, 1874; Memphis Daily Appeal, September 18, 1874; Louisville Courier-Journal, September 17, 18, 1874; New York Herald, September 25, 1874.
Conservatives declared that Grant had gone too far this time and that the people would never sit still and allow him to commit this final assault on republican government. The President had now taken on the mantle of a Caesar, and Sheridan was but the cat's-paw of a far-reaching conspiracy to elect Grant to a third term and perhaps make this military despot President for life.96

Such overblown rhetoric with its paranoid logic expressed southerners' deep-seated fear of Republican intentions and their detestation of "foreign" rulers in their midst. In their more candid moments, southern politicians must have conceded that Grant's southern policy had been more of a disaster for his own party than for themselves. The weakness of the Louisiana Republican party, Grant's stubborn and unyielding support for Kellogg, and the rash words and actions of General Sheridan, not to mention the fierceness of white resistance, had pushed the state to the brink of anarchy, and consequently nearer to

96Raleigh Daily Sentinel, January 14, 19, 1875; Wilmington Daily Journal, January 6, 8, 1875; Charleston News and Courier, January 6, 7, 1875; Atlanta Constitution, January 6, 10, 14, 30, 1875; Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, January 7, 8, 1875; Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, January 8, 10, 1875; Vicksburg Daily Herald, January 8, 1875; Natchez Daily Democrat, January 15, 1875; Memphis Daily Appeal, January 6, 15, 1875; Little Rock Daily Arkansas Gazette, January 8, 1875; Louisville Courier-Journal, January 6, 7, 1875; Message of Governor James M. Smith, January 14, 1875, Georgia House Journal (1875), 42-43; C.R. 43-2, 853-60; Barton H. Wise, The Life of Henry A. Wise of Virginia, 1806-1876 (New York, 1899), 391; Benjamin H. Hill, Jr., Senator Benjamin H. Hill of Georgia: His Life, Speeches and Writings (Atlanta, 1891), 413-32.
redemption. The Louisiana fiasco had discredited radical southern policies and made the downfall of the remaining Republican state governments only a matter of time.
Chapter IX
MISSISSIPPI, 1873-1876: COUNTERREVOLUTION TRIUMPHANT

No one could doubt the gallantry and courage of Adelbert Ames. Badly wounded at the first battle of Bull Run, for which he later received the Congressional Medal of Honor, he also fought in the Peninsular campaign, at Fredericksburg, at Chancellorsville, at Gettysburg, and at Petersburg. By the end of the war he was a brigadier general and not yet thirty years old.

These triumphs did nothing to prepare Ames for the stormy postwar period. Remaining in the Army after Appomattox, he became Mississippi's provisional governor in 1868, was elected to the United States Senate from that state in 1870, and to the governorship in 1873. Besides being a veteran of the Yankee army and a carpetbagger in a hostile land, Ames labored under yet another handicap. After the war he had married Blanche Butler, the daughter of Benjamin F. Butler. Blanche detested life in Mississippi and refused to live there, thus forcing Ames to be absent from the state whenever the legislature was not in session. Ames' enemies seldom hesitated to drag into political discussions his "infamous" father-in-law who had delighted in stealing silver and insulting southern womanhood.
Yet Ames himself was a man of sterling character, as even his bitterest foes admitted and as would befit a native of Rockland, Maine. He came to Mississippi with a New England zeal to aid and protect the union men and freedmen by building up the electoral strength of the Republican party. He took great, though to some extent condescending, pleasure in the devotion of the Negroes to the party of Lincoln, and had little doubt of his own rectitude or his own ability to lead the black race to freedom's promised land. Indeed, he firmly believed that it was such men as himself who would save the benighted South: "The carpetbagger represents northern civilization, northern liberty and has a hold on the hearts of the colored people that nothing can destroy. He is the positive element of the party and if the south is to be redeemed from the way of slavery it must be done by him."¹

There was but one obstacle in Ames' road to power. James Lusk Alcorn, an old Whig and ex-Confederate, had surprised his friends and confounded his enemies by becoming a Republican shortly after the passage of the Reconstruction Acts. As the state's first Republican governor, Alcorn's idée fixe was the building of a Republican party in

¹Adelbert Ames to William Claflin, November 8, 1869, Claflin Papers, HML; Ames to Blanche Butler Ames, July 30, October 1, 1873, Jessie Ames Marshall, ed., Chronicles from the Nineteenth Century: Family Letters of Blanche Butler and Adelbert Ames (2 Vols., n.p., privately published, 1957), I, 503, 585; Ames to Justin S. Morrill, October 20, 1871, Morrill Papers, LC.
Mississippi that would attract the white planter class to a broad-based conservative coalition. He had little use for carpetbaggers, and his appointment of native whites to most of the offices at his disposal endeared him neither to this element nor to the Negroes. Ames openly attacked Alcorn on the floor of the United States Senate for truckling with the rebel Democracy and failing to suppress the Ku Klux Klan. The political rancor between these two men became so bitter that in 1873 each was determined to deny the other the party's gubernatorial nomination. Ames, working skillfully with the black politicians, agreed to put three of their number on his state ticket and easily won the regular Republican nomination for governor. Alcorn ran against Ames as a "national Republican" on a platform declaring that the state government should not be turned over to outsiders who shared no common interest with the people of Mississippi. Although some leading conservatives endorsed Alcorn, many Democrats could see little real choice in the election. One disgruntled man who had not yet adjusted to the new order was disgusted when the competing candidates for a local office were both blacks: "I am not prepared to swallow 'darkies' for office yet." With thousands of Democrats sitting on their hands, Ames crushed his rival at the polls.2

2John R. Lynch, The Facts of Reconstruction. ed. by William C. Harris (Indianapolis, 1970), 72-82; Jackson Weekly Clarion, September 4, 1873; American Annual Cyclopædia and Register of Important Events, 1873 (New York,
The carpetbag governor in his inaugural address praised the blacks for their quiet adjustment to the demands of freedom and their kindness toward the whites. He needlessly pointed out that most Negroes were Republicans because they wished to avert their own destruction at the hands of the Confederate Democracy. On a more conciliatory note, he argued that both races shared a common interest in the state's prosperity and called for reduced expenditures, a lower state debt, and a policy to attract manufacturing to the state. Yet he also entered some harsh strictures against plantation agriculture and asserted that the men who tilled the land should own the land, such a statement making him sound like something of an agrarian radical. Some whites pledged to give the governor a chance to deliver on his reform promises, but bitter criticism of the Ames administration began almost immediately.  

Conservative editors and politicians attacked the carpetbaggers and the Negroes for extravagant expenditures, 

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2 Inaugural Address of Governor Adelbert Ames, January 22, 1874, Mississippi House Journal (1874), 27-32; Jackson Weekly Clarion, January 22, 1874.
excessive taxation, and corruption. Compared to recon-
struction governments elsewhere, however, the Republican
regime in Mississippi was remarkably free of scandal. There
were no great railroad swindles, taxes were modest, and the
state debt was not a great worry, Democratic campaign
rhetoric notwithstanding. At the bottom of most of the
criticisms of Ames and his administration lay two factors:
the governor and many of his supporters were "foreigners,"
and more Negroes than ever before held public office.
Blacks never occupied a majority of the seats in either
house of the legislature and certainly did not receive
appointments at either the state or local level in any way
commensurate with their numerical strength in the Republican
party or even in the general population. There is no
evidence that the black politicians were either more venal
or less competent than their white counterparts, but such
"facts" were largely irrelevant to the irrevocably hostile
whites. The old planters, yeomen farmers, and poor whites
resented even a few black officeholders, and they sincerely
believed that Ames and his henchmen had placed the state
under the domination of ignorant Negroes. The increasing
migration of blacks into Mississippi from nearby southern
states that had fallen under Democratic control further
exacerbated white fears that they were drowning in a black
sea of corruption and misrule. Many Republicans likewise
never favored black officeholding and joined Alcorn by
deserting the party in large numbers. By 1874 the
carpetbaggers and the blacks were the sole components competing for control of the Republican organization, and the color line in state and local politics became a fact of life.

Nowhere was the racial polarization of politics and society more apparent than in Vicksburg, a river city in the middle of the state's black belt. During the antebellum period, Vicksburg had been a notably violent community, and after the war shooting affrays frequently occurred on the streets. The city and surrounding Warren County had a population with more than twice as many blacks as whites, and the Negroes controlled both the county and city governments, which led to the usual conservative complaints against crushing taxation and official corruption. Much like southerners elsewhere, Vicksburgers felt that emancipation and the elevation of the Negro to a level of civil and political equality with the whites had ruined the blacks. Whites maintained that they were the Negroes' best friends but deplored the influence of the carpetbaggers

and black politicians in alienating the races from each other.  

In April 1874 the black county sheriff, Peter Crosby, asked that troops be sent to keep the peace in the city, but the military commander in Jackson turned down his request. By July many citizens feared disorder, and both black and white military companies drilled in the streets. Crosby and the city's mayor issued a proclamation calling on these armed men to disperse and for all citizens to aid the civil authorities in keeping the peace. With Governor Ames out of the state, the black lieutenant governor, A. K. Davis, reported to President Ulysses S. Grant that there were two white and one black companies in Vicksburg who were in rebellion and who had refused to turn back state militia arms to the adjutant general. Davis and other Republicans suspected that both races in Vicksburg planned to use these weapons during the August municipal election. Several city officials, however, wired Grant that order prevailed in the city, and the President therefore refused to send troops. When Ames returned to Jackson, he also informed Grant that an infantry and cavalry organization were active in Vicksburg and that a number of artillery

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pieces had been brought into the city. The President again declined to provide military assistance.\(^6\)

Whites contended that the blacks would rise up in rebellion in order to carry the election, and they formed armed bands to patrol the city and countryside. Conservatives charged Crosby with closing registration early to prevent additional whites from being added to the voters' roll. Military companies filled the streets on election day, and the Republicans later asserted that many Negroes had been prevented from voting through various forms of intimidation. In one ward, as the election officials were tabulating the results, the lights in the room suddenly went out, and someone threw the ballots and the tally sheet out the window. The conservative People's party won the election. Ames maintained that the white victory had been achieved through terror tactics, and he feared the long-range consequences of Grant's refusal to send troops.\(^7\)


\(^7\)A. T. Morgan, Yazoo; Or, On the Picket Line of Freedom in the South (New York, 1868), 436-39; James Madison
Mississippians were extremely sensitive to the subtleties and nuances of Grant's southern policy and felt by 1874 that a great reaction had taken place in the North against the radicals. Conservatives believed that Grant's failure to dispatch soldiers to Vicksburg demonstrated that the South would thereafter be left to manage her own affairs. The whites became ever bolder in their statements and actions, vowing that their patience had worn thin and that forcible resistance to the public plunderers was an increasing possibility. Ames found the Democrats organizing all across the state and urged Republicans to avoid collisions and prevent the outbreak of racial strife. One frightened black man in Meridian wrote that the Negroes "had better have Alcorn in power than to be killed up like hogs and cows the way the cuclucks [sic] is killing our men now."  

In Tunica County, in the northwestern corner of the state, it seemed for a time in August 1874 that the long
feared war of the races had at last erupted. A white man, who had shot and killed a black girl in the county seat of Austin, won release from jail on a writ of *habeas corpus*. Angry blacks gathered their arms and marched into town. The whites, who barricaded themselves inside Austin, held off the attacking Negroes and killed four or five of them. Fearing for the safety of their families in the countryside, the whites left town, allowing the blacks to enter and ransack a few stores. Armed men came in from Memphis, Tennessee, and surrounding counties to aid their beleaguered brethren. The Negroes had scattered by that time, and no sign of further "insurrection" could be found. After quiet was restored, conservatives sarcastically chided Ames for not calling for troops to aid the whites as he had for the blacks during the Vicksburg disturbances.9

Peace had not yet returned to that troubled community. The conservative election victory had done nothing to allay racial tension, nor had it reduced white hostility to the black county officials. In August and September, a

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Taxpayers' League began an investigation of the county government and found what satisfied its own members to be a strong evidence of corruption. In November a racially mixed grand jury indicted three local judicial officers for larceny, embezzlement, and forgery. Soon afterward, a large body of important records relating to these cases disappeared from the sheriff's office, and whites immediately suspected that Crosby had been the culprit. By this time, however, the black sheriff had other worries. After a lengthy examination of the sufficiency of the security on Crosby's sheriff bond, the county board of supervisors refused to require a new one. The conservatives decided to act on their own hook. 10

On December 2 the Taxpayers' League resolved that several county officials must give up their offices, and a committee of ten men went to the courthouse to carry out this decision. Only Crosby was there, and he appeared reluctant to comply with their request. Several hours later 500 to 600 whites, many of them drunk and armed, crowded around the courthouse and into the sheriff's office. Crosby then signed a resignation but told the persons

10 Vicksburg Daily Times, August-December, 1874, passim; McNeily, "Climax and Collapse of Reconstruction in Mississippi," 316-21; House Rep. 265, 43-2, 11, 215-20, 252-72, 302-303, 311-17, 328-29, 399; Report of the Joint Special Committee Appointed to Investigate the Late Insurrection in the City of Vicksburg, Warren County (Jackson, Mississippi, 1875), 42-44, 58-59 (hereinafter cited as Insurrection in Vicksburg); Natchez Daily Democrat, August 22, November 20, 27, December 10, 1874; Jackson Weekly Clarion, August 13, 1874.
present that he had only done so under duress; the whites then took over his office. Crosby left and rode to Jackson to consult with Governor Ames and other Republicans about regaining his post. 11

Ames advised Crosby of his rights to summon a posse comitatus to disperse the white mob. Besides issuing a proclamation calling for all riotous persons to return to their homes, the governor sent a militia captain, the state's adjutant general, and one of his own aides to Vicksburg to investigate the situation and assist Crosby. Local citizens informed the governor's representatives that the people could no longer tolerate the "ring's" peculation and that they insisted on the ouster of the thieves. On a less elevated level, these men also heard talk on the streets about hanging Crosby. The sheriff meanwhile published a card in the local Republican newspaper that detailed his forced resignation and called on the people in the country (i.e., the blacks) to come to his aid. 12


Negro preachers read Crosby's card in church services on December 6, and some blacks decided to go to Vicksburg to reinstate the sheriff. The governor's representatives urged Crosby not to summon the blacks to the city, but he never rescinded his earlier call. The whites anxiously watched every move of the city's Negro militia company and prepared to defend themselves against the invading blacks.13

Whites poured into Vicksburg from surrounding counties on the morning of December 7 to repulse Crosby's black legions. There were only seventeen men on the city's police force, but two white militia companies were available for duty. Many private citizens as well waited with their weapons for the advancing blacks to reach the city limits. Some 160 men had come from Louisiana, but they took no part in the fighting. Conservative leaders wisely put Crosby in jail to protect him from the growing white mob. Colonel H. H. Miller and Captain Warren Cowan readied the militiamen to defend the city. White patrols ordered Negroes on the streets to return to their homes or be shot. Reports came in around nine o'clock in the morning that three black columns were approaching the city limits from the east.14


Andrew Owen, believing that Crosby had ordered the blacks to Vicksburg, led the main force of between 120 and 500 Negroes along the Grove Street Road. An unknown number of his men were armed. Colonel Miller and his band of whites halted the Negroes on the outskirts of town and, after a brief discussion, escorted Owen into the city for a parley with Crosby. The sheriff told him to disband his company, and Owen angrily returned to his men feeling betrayed. As the Negroes began to disperse, the whites opened fire on them. Some whites later claimed that a few blacks had resisted Owen's order to leave and had started shooting, but other witnesses from both sides testified that the whites had fired the first shot. Whatever the truth of the matter, mounted men pursued the fleeing blacks, continuing to shoot at them. The whites also attacked another group of Negroes who had thrown up breastworks on the Jackson Road near the John C. Pemberton monument; this brief fight too ended with the blacks abandoning the field. The third column of Negroes moving toward the city on the Cherry Street Road fired at a policeman and several other whites, but retreated when met by a band of militia. O. S. Lee, the governor's aide, reported that ten to twelve blacks and one white man had died in the fighting and that probably twice that number had been wounded. Unfortunately the bloodshed was not yet over. That night armed men ransacked black homes, ostensibly searching for weapons, but in fact relieving several persons of their money and
dragging black men outside where they were murdered. No one knows how many died in the merciless slaughter.  

With threats of lynching still circulating, Crosby resigned his office again on December 8, and the board of supervisors had little choice but to accept his decision. Crosby remained in jail until December 16 when he took a train to Jackson. Despite the obvious drawbacks of being the sheriff of Vicksburg, many eager applicants asked Governor Ames to appoint them to the position. Ames informed the President that a rebellion was in progress in Warren County and asked that federal troops be sent to put down the insurgents. So serious had the situation become that the Adjutant General in Washington ordered the troops in Jackson to protect the governor and the legislature from attack, and Grant issued a proclamation on December 21 commanding all disorderly persons to disperse. The whites held an informal election of questionable legality and elected one A. J. Flannagan as sheriff. On December 29 the board of supervisors rescinded all previous actions on Crosby's resignation because they admitted having acted under the threat of force. Finally in January, General

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Philip Sheridan in New Orleans ordered a company of United States soldiers to Vicksburg who removed Flannagan and installed Crosby. The sheriff's troubles were, however, far from over. In June a disgruntled deputy whom Crosby had fired shot him in the head. Crosby resigned in October because "peculiar circumstances" made it impossible for him to perform the duties of his office.16

When the House of Representatives voted to investigate the Vicksburg affair, congressman Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar of Mississippi directed conservative efforts to provide the committee with a "proper" understanding of the outbreak. Lamar suggested that the conservative witnesses present detailed statements on corruption in the county government, on the necessity for forcing Crosby to resign, and the complicity of governor Ames in the entire affair. Lamar prudently warned that any further violence would only help Grant to push new enforcement legislation

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(the so-called Force Bill) through Congress. Coinciding with these machinations, the state's conservative newspapers published elaborate defenses of the Vicksburg whites. Editors detailed the long train of abuses by dishonest officials in Warren County to prove that the citizens there had acted purely in self-defense against intolerable evils. They denied any connection between the taxpayers' organization and the so-called "White Leagues." Privately, however, some of the young firebrands regretted that the slaughter of the blacks had not extended into the countryside and feared they would have to fight the Negroes again soon. Conservatives blamed Ames for supporting Crosby and encouraging the Negroes to invade the city. The governor had been too cowardly to go there himself to quell the disturbances but had been more than willing to send his deluded tools, the blacks, to be massacred for the greater glory of the Republican party. One Vicksburger bitingly suggested a new inscription for the Pemberton monument: "Here surrendered the Confederate cheiftain in 1863, and here fell 100 Dupes to the unhallowed ambition of Adelbert Ames in 1874." 

White Mississippians asked themselves if they were doomed to remain under the foreign yoke forever. They felt powerless to overthrow Ames and his thievish crew yet felt a deep need to exorcise their lethargy. As early as 1873 conservatives in Washington County, along the Mississippi River where the blacks outnumbered the whites nearly six to one, had formed a taxpayer's league to protect their property from the ravages of Republican cormorants. By 1874 citizens were discussing the possibility of refusing to pay the confiscatory state and local taxes. A movement was afoot by the end of the year for a state taxpayers' convention. On January 4, 1875, this body met in Jackson and drafted a strong appeal to the legislature to reduce the state's tax burden. Claiming that the people daily grew poorer and poorer while corrupt officials luxuriated in wasteful extravagance, these conservatives called for retrenchment in state government. They suggested slashing public printing expenses, legislative budgets, state salaries, and school funds. Arguing that it was unfair for the people who bore most of the burden to be taxed by a legislature representing primarily the non-taxpayers, conservatives vowed that the failure to enact reforms

Lamar-Mayes Papers, Miss.; James Madison Batchelor to Albert A. Batchelor, January 4, 1875, Albert A. Batchelor Papers, LSU; Otis A. Singletary, Negro Militia and Reconstruction (Austin, 1957), 85-86.
would greatly increase the strength of the tax resistance movement. 18

Conservatives also contended that Ames had reneged on his early promises of improvements, had used his patronage to build a political machine, and had failed to veto excessive appropriations bills passed by the legislature. Moreover, whites argued that the black representatives and senators had aligned themselves solidly against economical and honest government and were therefore responsible for the establishment of the color line that dominated the state's politics. 19

The Republicans replied that the whites, by setting off race against race, had forced the state government to take military measures to prevent a bloody revolt similar to that undertaken by the Louisiana White League. Ames decided to reorganize the state's chaotic militia system and proposed the establishment of a state police similar to that of Texas. Conservatives described this plan as a slander on the peaceful people of Mississippi and accused

18 Wiley P. Harris to Lamar, December 16, 1876, cited in Mayes, Lamar, 296; Jackson Weekly Clarion, May 8, 1873, November 26, December 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, 1874, January 28, March 18, 1875; Jackson Daily Clarion, January 6, February 12, 1875; Raymond Hinds County Gazette, October 28, November 4, December 4, 10, 1874, January 6, March 10, 1875; McNeily, "Climax and Collapse of Reconstruction," 303-304; Natchez Daily Democrat, November 25, December 29, 1874.

19 Jackson Daily Clarion, January 13, 14, 27-29, February 11, March 2, 1875; Jackson Weekly Clarion, April 21, 1875; Natchez Daily Democrat, July 9, 1875.
the governor of seeking to goad the whites to retaliatory violence that would serve as a pretext for federal intervention. Editorialists raised the horrid specter of an armed black banditti scouring the state, breaking into homes, and assaulting innocent citizens. Furthermore, such a measure would require vast expenditures and would place almost unlimited power in the hands of Ames and his Negro sycophants. Whites asked the Negroes if they were willing to allow the governor to mislead them as he had done in the Vicksburg fiasco. How could the Republicans complain that crime went unpunished in Mississippi when the entire machinery of state and local government was in their hands? The legislature finally passed a bill authorizing the governor to organize two militia regiments and to purchase four or more Gatling guns for them. Any existing military companies in the state were required to turn in their weapons to the quartermaster general. The whites bitterly criticized Ames for appointing carpetbaggers and Negroes as officers in the militia and pledged never to pay taxes for this vile purpose. Some intemperate men advocated mustering their own armed bodies to protect the whites from these state marauders, but one wag suggested that there would be little danger because most of the money appropriated would be stolen by state officials.20

20 Ames to A. T. Morgan, August 14, 1874, Ames to Grant, September 30, 1874, Ames Papers, Miss.; Jackson Weekly Mississippi Pilot, January 2, February 27, 1875; Jackson Daily Clarion, January 7, 13, 18, 28, 30, February 1-5, 10,
The passage of the militia act added further impetus to a growing movement in the state to form a white man's party. By 1874 leaders in several counties proposed local organizations uniting all white men in the interest of ousting the radicals. Even these "white liners" stated that the interests of the two races were identical, but they argued that the nearly complete allegiance of the blacks to the radical party had forced them to this measure of self-defense. The time for compromise and political equivocation had ended—the blacks had thrown down the gauntlet, and the whites were prepared to take it up.21

Such militant rhetoric undermined the efforts of Lamar and other conservatives to promote sectional reconciliation and greater understanding of the South's plight in the North. When Lamar delivered his famous eulogy of Charles Sumner, he was more concerned with presenting the southern case in the best possible light than in extolling the virtues of the Massachusetts radical. The Mississippian never admitted in this speech that Sumner had been right and

15, 22, March 4, 1875; Jackson Weekly Clarion, May 26, 1875; Raymond Hinds County Gazette, February 10, March 30, May 19, 1875; Vicksburg Daily Herald, March 3, 1875; Natchez Daily Democrat, March 4, 1875; McNeily, "Climax and Collapse of Reconstruction in Mississippi," 359-61; Mississippi Senate Journal (1875), 28-29, 147-49; Reconstruction in Mississippi, 382; Mayes, Lamar, 239-40.

21 Raymond Hinds County Gazette, September 23, April 7, 1875; Mayes, Lamar, 243-47; Pascagoula Star, n.d., in Jackson Weekly Clarion, October 15, 1874; Kinloch Falconer to Jefferson Davis, April 9, 1875, Dunbar Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, His Letters, Papers and Speeches (10 Vols., Jackson, Mississippi, 1923), VII, 418.
the southerners wrong on the major issues of the sectional conflict. Rather, he tried to take advantage of the growing national revulsion to the carpetbag governments in the South to plead for the withdrawal of the troops, pledging in return that conservative state governments would fully protect the rights of the blacks. Yet even Lamar's friends questioned whether he had not made too many concessions, and his fire-eating opponents charged that he was not defending southern rights in Congress forcefully enough. Lamar by 1875 doubted his own success and wrote to his wife: "I think the future of Mississippi is very dark. Ames has it dead. There can be no escape from his rule. His negro regiments are nothing. He will get them killed up, and then Grant will take possession for him. May God help us!"  

This despair and gloom did not immediately generate more support for the white liners. Conservatives still cautioned that such a movement would only stir up racial strife and probably provoke federal intervention. Former United States Senator Albert Gallatin Brown, who had been a prominent southern nationalist, warned that a white line

policy would only produce similar organizations among the blacks, a dangerous situation in a state where the two races had to live in close contact. Brown favored the old policy of winning black support by convincing the Negroes that the southern whites could be trusted to protect them in their new rights of citizenship. The state's leading conservative newspaper, the Jackson Clarion edited by Ethelbert Barksdale, was the strongest voice against the white line. Barksdale called for the unity of all enemies of corrupt government regardless of race or party affiliation and, like Brown, held out the hope of converting the Negroes to the cause of reform. These men feared that a more proscriptive policy could well lead to bloodshed and further delay in the state's redemption.\(^{23}\)

By the spring and summer of 1875 the counselors of moderation, though still powerful, were increasingly divorced from the political reality. While the Democrats discussed the white line, most white Republicans abandoned their party's sinking ship. Even proponents of conciliation sadly admitted that the Negroes themselves had divided the races. When the New York Herald correspondent Charles

\(^{23}\)Mayes, Lamar, 246; Jackson Daily Clarion, January 18, 1875; Jackson Weekly Clarion, August 27, September 3, 10, October 1, November 19, December 10, 1874, May 5, 1875; Holly Springs Reporter, n.d., ibid., September 10, 24, 1874; Canton Mail, n.d., ibid., September 24, 1874; Robert A. Hill to Attorney General George H. Williams, September 18, 1874, LR, DJ, Mississippi, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M970, roll 1); Natchez Daily Democrat, September 5, November 13, 1874, April 10, 13, 24, 1875; Raymond Hinds County Gazette, August 12, 26, 1874.
Nordhoff asked a white liner how he would deal with white opposition, he replied: "We'll make it too damned hot for them to stay out."  

New trouble in Vicksburg gave the debate on the white line a greater urgency and set the tone for the election campaign of 1875. On July 4 black secretary of state James Hill and the black superintendent of education T. W. Cardozo arrived in the city to speak at a Republican meeting. Warren Cowan, famed for his active role in previous affrays, hit Cardozo on the head with his revolver at the railroad depot. When Hill later addressed the gathering at the courthouse, a scuffle broke out, someone shot and killed a black deputy sheriff, and the Negroes fled from the building fearing that the Democrats were about to precipitate another massacre. Many blacks stayed away from the municipal election the next day for fear of their lives or meekly voted for the white man's ticket.

All these conflicting tendencies came together at the August convention of the state Democratic and Conservative party. Lamar delivered a strong address reviewing

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Mississippi's time of troubles but avowing that the whites accepted Negro suffrage and the constitutional amendments. Lamar declared that the adoption of a color line strategy based on the tyranny of race would be "suicidal policy." The party platform recognized the civil and political equality of all men and urged the state's citizens to redeem Mississippi by capturing a majority in both houses of the legislature in the November election. Although Lamar and other conservative leaders rejoiced over the seeming defeat of the white line forces, they soon realized the impossibility of enforcing the platform pledges in many counties. Even while making his conciliatory speeches, Lamar knew of the intimidation and terror being perpetrated by his party. However repulsive these bloody deeds may have seemed to him, he must have believed in their necessity. The excitement of the canvass and the organization of local Democratic clubs gave the campaign the appearance of a military operation. Moreover, the Democrats had nominated no blacks for public office, and many country editors proclaimed that the party had adopted the white line policy in fact if not in name. The Columbus Democrat gave its own interpretation of the party's position:

And the white men of Mississippi will do it [win] in spite of eloquent diatribes and sham platforms which represent nothing but a clique's notions of expediency. In the contest on which they have entered they mean something more than the election of certain men to office or the elevation of Lamar or Alcorn to the Senate. They mean the preservation of their constitution, their laws, their
institutions, their civilization from impending ruin. They mean that white men shall rule Mississippi.

Such ringing declarations portended anything but peace.  

Democratic editors admonished their readers: "Carry the election peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must."

Rabid partisans talked of using hemp in the canvass and warned white Republicans that they would be the first to die in any racial disturbances. There could be no middle ground; each white man must decide "yea" or "nay." The white liners threatened to murder Negroes who did not join the Democratic clubs and vote with the party of "reform," apparently missing the fascinating paradox in this strategy. The campaign soon took on the air of both a camp meeting revival and a revolutionary upheaval, wild enthusiasm coupled with an underlying determination to achieve victory at all costs. Gun dealers noticed that weapons sales soared between July and October. For conservatives, the election of 1875 became the final struggle for self-government,

a fight to gain control of their own lives, and a battle that could not be lost.  

Ames perceived from the outset that though the Democratic platform had seemingly repudiated the color line, the whites would campaign on just such a basis. The governor and his friends rightly worried that intimidation and murder would overturn the state's "normal" Republican majority. Some frightened radicals warned Ames that the white liners would attempt to assassinate him. While Lamar preached conciliation with his honey-tongued words, his fellow party members were busily employing the gun and the rope. Yet with complete control of the state government and with Grant as President, Republicans entered the canvass with a false sense of confidence and security.  

27 Jackson Weekly Mississippi Pilot, June 12, 1875; Jackson Weekly Clarion, October 13, 1875; Raymond Hinds County Gazette, September 22, October 20, 1875; Entries for September 13, October 8, 1875, Jason Niles Diary, SHC; Thomas Smith Dabney to B. H. Greene, August 29, 1875, cited in Susan Dabney Smedes, Memorials of a Southern Planter (Baltimore, 1888), 259-60; Anonymous, Vicksburg to Ames, September 13, 1875, Ames Papers, Miss.; Clippings from various newspapers, "Documentary Evidence," 162-67; W. D. Sprott to Ames, September 6, 1875, We Colored Citizens, Vicksburg, to Ames, September 8, 1875, W. I. Willing to Ames, September 10, 1875, N. B. Blackman to Ames, October 16, 1875, John E. Meek to Ames, October 22, 1875, James W. Lee to Ames, October 28, 1875, ibid., 17-19, 25, 44, 63-64, 69, 89; Sen. Rep. 527, 44-1, 51-52, 56, 1064, 1131-41, 1274-77; Aberdeen Examiner, October 7, 1875, cited ibid., 1144.  

28 Ames to Blanche Butler Ames, August 3, 4, 31, 1875, Marshall, ed., Chronicles from the Nineteenth Century, II, 122, 124, 153; Jackson Weekly Mississippi Pilot, July 31, August 14, 21, October 2, 1875; John P. Adams to Ames, August 10, 1875, "Documentary Evidence," 91; Morgan, Yazoo, 460.
The radicals not only had to contend with a united and determined opposition but also with factionalism within their own ranks. Bitter quarrels had divided Republicans in several counties and had led to "bolting" and separate tickets being entered into the field, thus virtually assuring victory for the Democrats. Several federal office-holders in Mississippi, normally strong adherents to the party, attacked the supposed corruption in the Ames administration. United State District Attorney G. Wiley Wells accused the governor of stating shortly after the Vicksburg troubles that the deaths of twenty-five or thirty Negroes would greatly help the radicals. By this time, of course, the scalawags had almost completely deserted the Republicans, aghast at both the slipshod administration of the state government and the large number of black office-holders, and convinced the carpetbaggers were destroying the party in Mississippi. Even the Negroes by 1875 had become restless and had demanded a more equitable distribution of the political spoils. Black former United States Senator Hiram Revels blasted Ames and his henchmen for engaging in a career of theft and embezzlement that had nearly ruined the party. The governor gloomily remarked shortly before the beginning of the canvass: "It is saddening, yet with ludicrous phases, to see the strifes,
envies, jealousies, and animosities existing in our own ranks."  

The first challenge to the Republicans came in Yazoo County directly northwest of Jackson. Albert T. Morgan was a Wisconsin carpetbagger who had migrated to the area after the war, engaged in planting, established a school for Negroes, married a black woman, and became a leading light in Republican politics. The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the county by more than two to one and were Morgan's strongest supporters. He won election as sheriff in 1873, but his Republican predecessor and bitter political rival refused to vacate the office. Morgan by chance one day took possession when his opponents had relaxed their guard. The other claimant summoned a group of around thirty men to

recapture the jail, and Morgan stepped outside to warn this mob that they had no right to expel him. Ignoring this admonition, the crowd forced their way inside, where, in an exchange of gunfire, one of Morgan's black deputies killed the former sheriff. The Democrats accused Morgan himself of committing the murder and would have arrested him had not large numbers of Negroes appeared in Yazoo City to defend their friend, allowing Morgan peacefully to assume his duties as sheriff. During the Vicksburg disturbances several white military companies had gone to the aid of their brethren in that city, and during the summer of 1875, conservative papers printed forged documents allegedly showing that 1,600 rifles had been sent to the Negroes in the county.\textsuperscript{30}

Amid growing rumors of a Negro insurrection, Morgan called a political meeting for September 1 in Wilson's Hall in Yazoo City and invited persons of both parties to attend. The blacks and a few white Republicans filled the second floor of the building along with a handful of Democrats who, as if by prearrangement took seats in the front row shortly after Morgan began speaking. Whites later swore that Morgan had told the blacks that a Democratic victory would put them back into slavery and that they might have to use some of

their 1,600 guns during the campaign. Morgan claimed, however, that he had always advised the blacks to come unarmed to political gatherings and to avoid any conflicts with the whites. According to his own account, the sheriff attacked the white liners, defended the Republican record in Yazoo County, and even advised the Negroes to give the Democrats some representation on the board of supervisors. The whites had brought in a black Democrat who kept interrupting Morgan's speech, much to the dissatisfaction of the audience. On several occasions, the Democrats drew their revolvers and vowed to shoot anyone who tried to eject their Negro friend from the meeting. When Morgan praised the performance of the board of supervisors, one of the whites shouted that they were all "damned thieves." A black man took umbrage at this outburst, and shooting broke out (as usual the parties disagreed on who fired first). Morgan pleaded for peace, but several Democrats opened fire on him. The sheriff fired twice at his foes and then nimbly climbed out a rear window. A black deputy sheriff died during the brawl. The whites sounded an alarm, and armed men roamed the streets of Yazoo City searching for the hated Morgan.  

Morgan holed up in his own house, and his black allies deceived the whites into thinking that he had left the county. On September 7 some Negroes ambushed a white posse near the settlement of Satartia, southwest of Yazoo City. Fearing a general black uprising, white companies stepped up their patrols and promised to arrest Morgan when they found him. The sheriff kept out of sight but sent trusted black couriers to the capital with messages for the governor. Morgan stated that his life was in danger and begged Ames to aid the desperate Republicans of Yazoo. On September 13 he left for Jackson in disguise and successfully evaded pickets on the roads. The white bands continued their nightriding and hung several Republican leaders. The Republicans abandoned all attempts to canvass the county, and in the November election the party polled but seven votes!  

Close on the heels of the Yazoo disturbances, a riot occurred near the small Hinds County town of Clinton just west of Jackson. On September 4 several black clubs marched into town for a large political meeting and barbecue. Some 2,000 to 3,000 Negro men, women, and children and perhaps 100 whites gathered for a joint discussion between the two parties. The blacks became somewhat boisterous during the Democratic speech but listened with marked interest to the address of white Republican Hiram T. Fischer. After Fischer had spoken for about ten minutes, a disturbance broke out in the audience. Some young white men had taken a bottle of whiskey and walked down a nearby hill for a drink. A black policeman told them that no drinking was allowed at the meeting, and a scuffle ensued. Meanwhile some whites in the crowd had shouted some insults at Fischer. Black state senator Charles Caldwell rushed to the scene of the conflict, and Fischer told his listeners to pay no attention. The whites later claimed that the Negroes began beating their drums and shouting: "Kill the whites!" Several shots were fired, and the crowd began to break up. The small group of whites retreated with the Negroes pursuing and firing on them. Three whites died in the fighting, including one man who owned property nearby and was sheltering frightened black women and children in his house when he was shot. The blacks reportedly mutilated the corpses and took a diamond ring from one of the dead men.
Four blacks died during the rioting, and a handful of both races were wounded.  

Someone immediately telegraphed to surrounding counties for aid, and white companies came in on the train from Vicksburg and elsewhere. These armed men began whipping and shooting blacks in the countryside around Clinton. Democratic leaders later asserted that they had been unable to control the passions of these enraged men who killed several Republican leaders and drove the Negroes through the swamps and fields. At least thirty blacks died during this reign of terror. Refugees jammed the road leading to Jackson before a small detachment of federal soldiers stopped the massacre. Democratic state chairman James Z. George feared that the Clinton riot would give Ames the pretext he needed to call for federal intervention and cautioned local leaders to restore peace quickly. Democrats mocked the fears of the Negroes in the capital and as usual blamed the disturbance on the blacks. A grand jury

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investigating the riot brought in no indictments, but Charles Caldwell was later murdered, and the relatives of the slain whites sought retribution by attacking radical Negroes. Both the Yazoo and Clinton outbreaks, taking place so near to Jackson, demonstrated the weakness of the state government and the inability of Ames and other leaders to protect their friends during the campaign. The governor realized his powerlessness in the face of the well organized and well armed white bands and saw his only hope for salvation in the aid of the federal government. 34

Ames asked General C. C. Augur in New Orleans for troops to protect citizens in Hinds County, but Augur replied that he could not act without orders from the

34 Brough, "Clinton Riot," 60-63; Wells, "Reconstruction in Hinds County," 100-101; Sen. Rep. 527, 44-1, 4, 31, 288-302, 330-33, 338-48, 439-40, 483-89, 540-68; G. M. Lewis to J. Z. George, September 6, 1875, S. M. Shelton to George, September 6, 1875, J. C. Prewitt to George, September 4, 1875, George to Shelton, September 6, 1875, George to C. D. Gillespie and Robert Withers, September 7, 1875, ibid., 306-81; William H. Harney to Ames, September 6, 1875, "Documentary Evidence," 40-41; Captain Arthur W. Allyn to AG E. R. Platt, DG, September 7, 1875, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 228); William Wirt Dedrick to Pierrepont, September 6, 1875, LR, DJ, Mississippi, 1871-1880, RG 60, NA (M970, roll 3); Mrs. C. S. Lee to Ames, September 15, 1875, Affidavits of Colored Men from Clinton, September 9, 10, 1875, Ames Papers, Miss.; Memphis Daily Appeal, September 8, 1875; Entry for September 6, 1875, Jason Niles Diary, SHC; Raymond Hinds County Gazette, September 15, 22, 1875; Natchez Daily Democrat, September 24, 1875; Jackson Weekly Clarion, September 29, 1875; Jackson Daily Clarion, February 9, 1876; W. B. Sibley to Kate Power, October 22, 1937, J. L. Power Papers, Miss.; Vicksburg Herald, September 6, 1875 in New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 8, 1875; Jackson Weekly Mississippi Pilot, September 11, 1875; Ames to Blanche Butler Ames, September 3, 5, 6, 1875, Marshall, ed., Chronicles from the Nineteenth Century, II, 159-60, 163-65.
President. On September 7 the governor issued a proclamation concerning the unrest in Hinds and Yazoo counties that called for all private military companies to disband and sent Grant an official request for troops. Attorney General Edwards Pierrepont advised the President that in case of insurrection he could send federal troops to the aid of a state governor, and the War Department telegraphed Augur to be ready for such a contingency. Interestingly enough, the general claimed that he had enough troops in Mississippi to keep the peace. From his post in New Orleans 13 officers and 235 enlisted men may have seemed sufficient, but this force was certainly not strong enough to garrison the troubled areas around Jackson, much less protect citizens against the armed white liners in other parts of the state. Ames realized the extent of northern opposition to more military intervention in the South, but he was confident that Grant would have enough backbone to resist the cries of political expediency.  

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35 Ames to Augur, September 4, 6, 1875, Augur to Ames, September 5, 1875, Augur to AG, Washington, September 9, 1875, AG E. D. Townsend to Augur, September 9, 1875, Allyn to Platt, September 6, 1875, Platt to Allyn, September 6, 1875, Statement of United States troops stationed in the Department of the Gulf, September 9, 1875, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 228); Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 379; Ames to Grant, September 7, 8, 1875, Annual Cyclopaedia (1875), 515-16; Grant to Ames, September 8, 1875, cited in Blanche Ames Ames, Adelbert Ames, 1835-1933 (New York, 1964), 424; William Wirt Dedrick to Pierrepont, September 8, 10, 1875, LR, DJ, Mississippi, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M970, roll 3); Pierrepont to Grant, September 8, 1875, LS, DJ: To Executive Officers and Members of Congress, 1871-1904, RG 60, NA (M702, roll 3); Ames to Blanche Butler Ames,
The governor should have known that the President's support was far from certain. After all Grant had turned down several of Ames' previous requisitions. His father-in-law Ben Butler had assured him of the President's good will, but Ames needed something more concrete than mere words. A delegation of Republicans had gone to Washington for consultations with Grant even before the Yazoo and Clinton affairs, but several anti-Ames party members had also conferred with administration leaders. The Democrats sent dispatches to Washington claiming that there was no resistance to the execution of the law and certainly no rebellion against the state government. Several cabinet members believed these statements as well as those of the dissident Republicans. A group of national party leaders visited Grant at Long Branch, New Jersey, and warned that sending troops to Mississippi could cost the party precious votes in the Ohio state election that promised to be extremely close. On September 14 Pierrepont gave Ames the bad news. The Attorney General quoted Grant as saying: "The whole public are tired out with these annual autumnal outbreaks in the South, and the great majority are ready to condemn any interference on the part of the Government." The President and Attorney General both lectured the governor on the necessity of exhausting his own peacekeeping resources rather than always wiring Washington at the first

September 7, 8, 9, 1875, Marshall, ed., Chronicles from the Nineteenth Century, II, 166-67, 169.
sign of trouble. Ames glumly concluded that the northern Republicans simply did not understand the persistent spirit of rebellion in the southern states. 36

The Democrats rejoiced that no troops would be sent to help Ames and his corrupt minions. Southerners interpreted the failure of Grant to intervene in Mississippi as a sure sign that the southern outrage mill was no longer grinding and that the northern people would lend no further support to the carpetbaggers. Southern editors praised Pierrepont as a gentleman who understood the impropriety of using bayonets to carry elections. 37

The understandable bitterness that Ames felt toward the wavering northern Republicans did not prevent him from

36 Butler to Ames, March 3, 1875; Ames to Blanche Butler Ames, September 10, 19, 1875, Marshall, ed., Chronicles from the Nineteenth Century, II, 98, 172, 186; Platt to Ames, May 19, 1875, LS, DG, 1871-1878, RG 393, NA; Ames to Orville E. Babcock, September 2, 1875, Ames Papers, Miss.; Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 390-91; Morgan, Yazoo, 458-59; Lynch, Facts of Reconstruction, 150-55; Lynch, "Historical Errors of Rhodes," 362; J. Z. George to Pierrepont, September 9, 1875, Sen. Rep. 527, 44-1, 382; Charles Gray, A. A. Diloon, Charles L. Moore, and James Chambers to Grant, September 18, 1875, Grant Papers, LC; Pierrepont to Grant, September 10, 11, 1875, LS, DJ; To Executive Officers and Members of Congress, 1871-1904, RG 60, NA (M702, roll 3); Pierrepont to Grant, September 12, 1875, ibid., (roll 4); Ames to Pierrepont, September 11, 1875, Pierrepont to Ames, September 14, 1875, Annual Cyclopedia (1875), 516.

37 Jackson Weekly Clarion, September 15, 22, 1875; Natchez Daily Democrat, September 18, 1875; Columbia Register, September 17, 1875; Anderson Intelligencer, September 23, 1875; New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 14, 18, 1875; Augusta Constitutionalist, September 14, 1875; Little Rock Daily Arkansas Gazette, September 16, 1875; Memphis Daily Appeal, September 24, 1875.
trying to salvage the situation. Many county Republican leaders advised him to put the state militia into the field against the white liners and crush out Democratic terrorism once and for all. The party, these men advised, must convince its foes that it could not be cowed and that force would be met with force. Besides considering the use of militia, Ames tackled the problem of federal intervention from another angle by proposing that the government send a detective to the state to infiltrate the white military organizations and uncover Democratic conspiracies. He also asked the Attorney General if United States marshals could summon troops to make arrests and looked into the possibility of having soldiers at the polls on election day.38

The Democrats, of course, contemptuously chided the governor for pulling the old bloody shirt ploy, and worse, threatening them with attack by Negro militia. They accused Ames of trying to win the election by armed force and frankly averred that they would resist state troops. Such truculent statements hardly reflected the conservatives' commanding position of power in the countryside where they

could have easily beat back any militia forays. On
September 2 about fifty white men boarded a steamer docked
at Vicksburg and stole five boxes of state arms destined for
Jackson. Elsewhere whites seized militia weapons, and Ames,
unable even to protect munitions in Jackson, finally sent
this materiel to a nearby Army camp for safekeeping. 39

The attempt to arm and deploy the militia had been
ill-fated from the beginning. The legislature appropriated
only $60,000 for the purpose, but worse yet a Republican
supreme court justice enjoined the governor from spending
most of this money. Many radicals were less than whole­
hearted in their support for military measures and feared
that black companies would spark racial warfare. As he
waited for militia to escort him back to Yazoo City,
Sheriff Morgan found that many black legislators in Jackson
shared similar qualms and naively believed that their old
masters would not use violence against them. More ardent
partisans accused Ames himself of being lax in making
military preparations. The governor finally sent a company
of black militiamen on a short march to Edwards' Station in
western Hinds County, an insignificant movement that marked

39 Raymond Hinds County Gazette, September 22, 29, 1875; McNeily, "Climax and Collapse of Reconstruction in
Mississippi," 378-80; Jackson Weekly Clarion, August 25,
September 29, October 6, 1875; Natchez Daily Democrat,
September 14, October 7, 8, 1875; Duff Green to General
A. G. Packer, September 2, 1875, Adelbert Ames Papers,
Miss.; R. G. Temple to Ames, September 2, 1875, S. W. Gore
to Ames, October 15, 1875, "Documentary Evidence," 83-84;
Jackson Weekly Mississippi Pilot, October 2, 1875; Sen. Rep.
527, 44-1, 1277-1285.
the extent of such maneuvers in the state. The Democrats howled loudly and prepared to prevent the entrance of the blacks into Yazoo County, but the militia quietly returned to the capital. Meanwhile, General George and other Democratic bigwigs tried to keep their unruly partisans from spilling more blood.40

The conservatives, whose campaign of persuasion, intimidation, and outright terror, had already been largely successful, now proposed a "compromise" with Ames. The governor's advisers predicted that there would be bloodshed in Jackson itself if he did not agree to a settlement. By October Ames had come to doubt that the militia could be called out or that federal troops would be sent to the state and therefore agreed to confer with Democratic representatives. After some preliminary discussions, and through the

good offices of Justice Department detective George K. Chase, the governor on October 15 met with General George and several other Democrats. The parties signed a document in which Ames agreed to disarm and disband the militia in return for a Democratic promise to keep the peace for the remainder of the canvass. The governor kept his part of the bargain, but there was some doubt whether the white leaders would or could control their armed followers. 41

Putting the best face possible on what was an humiliating agreement for the governor of a supposedly sovereign state to make with rebellious citizens, Ames maintained that he had really conceded nothing and hoped that the opposition would live up to the terms of the settlement. The Democrats may have genuinely desired peace, and they advised their supporters to remain quiescent, but military companies continued to patrol the counties, and there was little abatement in voter intimidation. Ames received firsthand evidence of the value of conservative pledges when a howling mob of whites in Jackson took pot shots at the executive mansion for three consecutive nights and shouted for the "coward" to come

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out of his hiding place. Attorney General Pierrepont praised the peace agreement but did inform the governor less than a week before election day that a small number of soldiers in the state would keep order at the polls if needed. Such meager assistance meant little to the beleaguered Republicans and came far too late to deter the white liners from carrying all before them.42

The Democrats, it must be admitted, conducted a brilliant campaign, mobilizing their supporters and demoralizing their enemies. The conservatives held mass meetings during the day and large torchlight processions at night. With bands playing, flags flying, and wagons carrying colorful transparencies satirizing prominent Republicans and suggesting their destination in the afterlife, the Democratic organizers not only aroused the enthusiasm of their own followers but gave the Negroes a powerful visual demonstration of white power and determination. Some conservatives candidly admitted that the large bonfires, the likewise fiery oratory, the frequent

42 Ames to Blanche Butler Ames, October 14, 15, 18, 20, 28, November 1, 1875, Marshall, ed., Chronicles from the Nineteenth Century, II, 217, 220, 224, 229, 244, 248; Natchez Daily Democrat, October 18, 1875; Pierrepont to Ames, October 23, 1875, Augur to AAG, DG, October 19, 1875, W. H. Bolton to Ames, November 1, 1875, Ames Papers, Miss.; Jackson Weekly Mississippi Pilot, October 20, 23, 1875; Charles Caldwell to N. D. Sneed, October 19, 1875, Resolutions of Mass Meeting of Republicans in Hinds County, October 30, 1875, "Documentary Evidence," 31-33; Sen. Rep. 527, 44-1, 15-16, 425-28, 433-35, 440-41; George and Ethelbert Barksdale to F. Barksdale, et. al., October 28, 1875, George to J. D. Vertner, November 1, 1875, ibid., 392, 397.
rebels, and the discharge of firearms were designed to make the Negroes stand in fear. Some of the wagons in the parades carried empty coffins with the names of local carpetbaggers and scalawags written on them. Such campaign tactics may not have been subtle, but no one could doubt either their meaning or effectiveness.

Many Democratic clubs purchased cannon which they hauled to Republican meetings to fire off at "appropriate" interludes. Republicans complained that these artillery displays not only lighted up the night sky but also frightened the blacks. One Army captain allowed the whites in Rankin County to borrow a federal cannon for a political rally, an act for which he was later courtmartialed. With a mock tone of innocence, Democrats claimed that they fired off blank rounds to arouse the dythrambic passions of their followers and that they even let Negroes set off the charges. If cannons were unavailable, resourceful men placed one anvil on top of another with gun powder in the crevice between them. When ignited this crude device made a tremendous noise. Such a makeshift procedure was not

without its dangers. A rural diarist during the 1876
campaign described a "premature" firing of anvils in which
one man received severe powder burns and another had a hole
torn in his pants. 44

Whites still used the more traditional method of
threatening blacks with dismissal from employment if they
insisted on supporting the radicals. Newspapers published
lists of both Democratic and Republican Negroes for their
readers to refer to during the next hiring season.

Merchants signed agreements not to extend credit to radical
blacks. Although this economic pressure had some effect,
in a state such as Mississippi that was so dependent on
black agricultural labor, many Negroes could ignore such
warnings simply because the whites could not afford to
carry out their threats. 45

44 H. W. Lewis to Ames, October 22, 29, 1875, Henry B.
Whitfield to Ames, October 29, 1875, Colored People of
Noxubee County to Ames, November 3, 1875, James W. Lee to
Ames, February 7, 1876, "Documentary Evidence," 53-57,
67-69, 73; Sen. Rep. 527, 44-1, 45-46, 244-53, 825-31,
1150-1153; W. J. Taylor to George, October 28, 1875, ibid.,
593; Raymond Hinds County Gazette, October 27, 1875;
Jackson Weekly Clarion, December 15, 1875; F. Z. Browne,
"Reconstruction in Oktibbeka County," Publications of the
Mississippi Historical Society, XIII (1913), 288-89; Hattie
Magee, "Reconstruction in Lawrence and Jefferson Davis
Counties," ibid., XI (1910), 185; George J. Leftwich,
"Reconstruction in Monroe County," ibid., IX (1906), 72-73;
Entry for October 23, 1876, Samuel A. Agnew Diary, SHC.

45Clippings from various newspapers in "Documentary
Aberdeen Examiner, September 9, 1875, ibid., 1145-1146;
Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 393; Entry for
October 28, 1875, Samuel A. Agnew Diary, SHC; Puckett,
"Reconstruction in Monroe County," 143; Leftwich, "Recon­
struction in Monroe County," 75-78; Wells, "Reconstruction
Civil officials were powerless to deal with intimidation because witnesses rightly feared to give their testimony. In some counties armed whites forced Republican officials to resign their posts, and Governor Ames could do nothing to help them. Many conservatives frankly informed their Republican opponents that even if they won the election they would never be allowed to take office. 46

The Democratic campaigners gave the radicals little chance to achieve even an initial victory. Whites followed Republican speakers around and demanded joint discussions. The conservatives decided that the carpetbaggers had deceived their black charges long enough and that Democrats should appear at every radical meeting to give the lie to Republican billingsgate. White horsemen appeared at these gatherings, fired off their cannon, and jeered at the radical speakers. Armed men shoved pistols against the ribs or heads of Republican orators, a practice that convinced many of them to abandon the canvass altogether. On the other hand, if the Republicans tried to generate any excitement among their listeners by, for example, beating drums, whites would cut the heads out of these instruments.

in Hinds County," 102-103; Jackson Weekly Mississippi Pilot, October 2, 9, 1875.

Some Democrats simply told the Negroes that they had no right to hold Republican meetings, and such of these conclaves as did take place frequently broke up in a hail of gunfire. Whites believed that it was beneficial for the blacks to see their leaders publicly cower before the "moral" force of the Democracy.  

In a few counties such tactics forced the Republicans to support "compromise tickets." Democrats would replace certain radical candidates in exchange for conservative promises to prevent disorder before and during the election. The defenseless Republicans could do little but acquiesce to this impossible state of affairs.

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Even Republican concessions failed to halt the spread of Democratic terrorism. White liners still rode about at night firing into the homes of black and white radicals. Alarmed Republicans reported large weapons shipments being made to the Democratic clubs while their own followers were virtually unarmed. Armed men threatened the lives of prominent Republicans and convinced many of them to flee their homes and hide in the woods and swamps. Whites picketed country roads at night, and Charles Nordhoff discovered that nearly every man in the state went about armed. There can be little doubt that white bands assassinated important Republicans and effectively discouraged ordinary citizens from even attempting to cast their ballots.  

As if white Mississippians were not accomplishing enough on their own, Alabamians came over to join the

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49 Anonymous, Vicksburg, to Ames, September 6, 1875, W. K. Jones to Ames, September 10, 1875, W. R. Simonton to Ames, September 12, 13, 1875, Three Hundred Voters, Vicksburg, to Ames, September 14, 1875, Charles W. Clark to Ames, September 16, 1875, A. Parker to Ames, September 19, 1875, H. M. Settle et al., to Ames, October 7, 1875, Henry B. Whitfield to Ames, October 8, 1875, A. P. Merrill to Ames, October 9, 1875, Wade Walker to Ames, October 18, 1875, Willis M. Calcutt to Ames, October 25, 1875, Julius Allen to Ames, October 26, 1875, R. A. Simmons to Ames, October 17, 1875, Finis H. Little to Ames, October 27, 1875, Anonymous, Canton, to Ames, October 28, 1875, William D. Frazee to Colonel Travis Rhodes, January 26, 1876, "Documentary Evidence," 3, 10-12, 14-15, 19, 43, 47-49, 54-55, 58, 65, 72, 84, 87, 92-93, 105-107; Sen. Rep. 527, 44-1, 159-72, 259-67, 863-910, 956-57, 1045-1050, 1194-1208, 1591-1595, 1627-1629, 1760-1764; R. A. Simmons to Ames, October 26, 1875, Ames Papers, Miss.; Entry for October 29, 1875, Jason Niles Diary, SHC; Nordhoff, Cotton States, 78; Wharton, Negro in Mississippi, 187-88, 190-93.
crusade to overthrow carpetbag rule. Although the Democrats denied receiving any aid from outside the state, mounted men crossed the border to conduct raids in several counties. Republicans reported to Ames that Alabama nightriders had forced them to abandon the canvass and leave their homes.⁵⁰

The whites justified their campaign of violence and terror by using the familiar lame excuse of an impending Negro insurrection. They attributed all racial disturbances in the state, no matter what their true origins, to the activities of incendiary Negroes. Whites often used exaggerated rumors of a black uprising as an excuse for their own nightriding. Mysterious fires generated wild fears of a conspiracy to burn the whites out of their homes. Since many Democrats believed that Ames welcomed radical disturbances as part of a plot to elicit federal intervention, they could readily blame such outbreaks on a radical cabal in Jackson.⁵¹

⁵⁰E. C. Walker to Ames, August 26, 1875, J. B. Allgood to Ames, September 12, 1875, N. G. Gill to Ames, October 11, 1875, James W. Lee to Ames, October 26, 1875, Affidavit of O. A. Esquirol, November 1, 1875, "Documentary Evidence," 35-36, 62, 70-72; Sen. Rep. 527, 44-1, 2, 10-11, 789-804; George to Thomas E. Sykes and R. O. Reynolds, October 17, 1875, Sykes and Reynolds to George, October 27, 1875, ibid., 392; E. C. Walker to Grant, September 7, 1875, LR, DJ, Mississippi, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M970, roll 1).

Many conservatives brazenly asserted that all the political intimidation was on the other side and expressed great solicitude for the safety of Negro Democrats. Newspapers gave wide publicity to the activities of black Democratic clubs to prove that the Negroes had at last seen the light and were finally joining their white friends in politics. The Democrats held large barbecues for their sable supporters, but the blacks seemed more interested in the food than in conservative politicking. Lamar throughout the canvass made conciliatory speeches to the Negroes and advised them to throw off the yoke of radical thralldom. Yet Lamar and others never repudiated white line methods, and many Negroes joined Democratic clubs while staring down the barrel of a shotgun.\(^5\)

Other than the Yazoo and Clinton affairs, there were only a few minor disturbances before election day. In the southwestern county of Pike armed "regulators," who had driven Republican officeholders out of West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, expanded their vigilante activity into Mississippi. Louisiana Democrats, according to the

sheriff's report, helped to ambush and assassinate Republicans. At the small settlement of Rose Hill near the state line, an estimated 500 armed whites broke up a Republican meeting and killed two blacks. Sketchy testimony indicates that similar incidents took place until election day.^[53]

At the northern end of the state in Coahoma County along the Mississippi River, the black sheriff John Brown, an Ohio carpetbagger, was an able leaders of local Republicans. White leaders accused Brown and other radicals of operating a corrupt "ring" in the county and they nominated their own candidate for sheriff. In October, James Lusk Alcorn delivered a blistering speech in which he accused the sheriff of pocketing public money. Several days later Brown called a Republican meeting at the county seat of Friar's Point where he planned to answer Alcorn's charges. The whites in town organized a militia company to protect themselves against the invading Negroes (a few of whom were armed). When shooting broke out, one white and two blacks died. Brown and other radicals escaped to Helena, Arkansas, from where they wired the governor describing the reign of terror in the county. This rout of local Republicans deterred many voters of both parties

from casting their ballots, but the Democrats won the election.\textsuperscript{54}

In many ways, the so-called "Mississippi plan" reached its fruition on election day. In the north Mississippi town of Aberdeen, the Democrats placed an old cannon on a hill ominously pointing toward the polls. White infantry, artillery, and cavalry companies entered the town and only allowed blacks with Democratic tickets to vote, forcing others to run for their lives. At Port Gibson in the southern part of the black belt, armed whites drove Negro voters out of town. In Pike County, Democrats simply seized the ballot boxes and dumped their contents on the ground. That night some drunken Louisianans chased frightened Republicans through the woods.\textsuperscript{55}

Military companies in several counties threatened to hang men attempting to distribute Republican tickets. Even cautious radicals who carefully hid this contraband

\textsuperscript{54}John Brown to Ames, October 7, 8, 1875, Ames Papers, Miss.; Brown to Ames, October 24, 26, 1875, "Documentary Evidence," 20; Sen. Rep. 527, 44-1, 26-29, 43-44, 68-71; H. P. Reid to George, October 5, 1875, \textit{ibid.}, 386; \textit{Memphis Daily Appeal}, October 6, 9, 1875; Letter of James Lusk Alcorn, October 11, 1875, \textit{New York Tribune}, October 12, 1875.

\textsuperscript{55}Jane Page, \textit{et. al.}, to Ames, November 1, 1875, John E. Meek to Ames, November 2, 1875, James W. Lee to Ames, November 2, 1875, A. Parker to Blanche K. Bruce, January 6, 1876, "Documentary Evidence," 6-8, 23-24, 65-66; Sen. Rep. 527, 44-1, 5, 74-106, 172-90, 199-204, 1050-1086, 1624-1627; Aberdeen Examiner, November 11, 1875, \textit{ibid.}, 1147-1149; J. T. Vertner to George, November 2, 1875, \textit{ibid.}, 409; Sen. Mis. Doc. 45, 44-2, 189-91; Leftwich, "Reconstruction in Monroe County," 78-81; Puckett, "Reconstruction in Monroe County," 152-55.
had difficulty reaching all their assigned precincts. In Yazoo County the Democrats warmly greeted a man with Republican tickets, plied him with whiskey, and thereby made him forget his important duty. So cowed had the Republicans in Kemper County on the Alabama border become that they simply told the blacks to not even attempt to vote.⁵⁶

Many Negroes correctly decided it was not worth the sacrifice of their lives to cast their ballots. Armed whites stampeded those Republicans who did try to vote. With Democrats giving the "rebel yell," and surrounding the polls, the election of 1875 became a mockery of democracy. Angry mobs jostled election supervisors and forced them to sign false returns. If the Republicans seemed to be winning the day, the Democrats stole the ballot boxes.⁵⁷


⁵⁷ Thomas K. Knowland to Ames, October 7, 1875, Isaac Jones to Ames, November 7, 1875, "Documentary Evidence," 42, 57-58; Sen. Rep. 527, 44-1, 123-35, 139-45, 508-14, 779-81, 1270-1274; Report of United States Grand Jury and accompanying affidavits, Oxford, Mississippi, July 8, 1876, LR, DJ, Mississippi, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M970, roll 2); Entry for November 2, 1875, Jason Niles Diary, SHC; Braden, "Reconstruction in Lee County," 143; Brown, "Reconstruction in Yalobusha and Grenada Counties," 255-56; Cooper, "Reconstruction in Scott County," 175-76; W. W. Hardy, "Recollections of Reconstruction in East and Southeast
After the election conservatives denied using untoward means to influence the outcome and asserted that many blacks had willingly voted with the Democrats. Whites explained the presence of armed men at the polls by pointing to the danger of turbulent Negroes massing around the ballot boxes on election day. So far as conservatives were concerned there had been no intimidation or violence at the polls, at least by their party. 58

The smashing Democratic triumph in the election vindicated some of the less savory campaign methods in the eyes of many whites. The Democrats had turned the 1873 Republican majority of 23,000 into a margin of 30,000 for themselves and had gained lopsided control of both branches of the legislature. In the warm glow of victory, leading conservatives vowed to carry out their pledges to the Negroes whom they praised for their adherence to the cause of reform. Yet the Democrats also showed signs of moving in the opposite direction. The politicians turned their attention away from the race question and toward the more pressing issues of reduced taxation, retrenchment in state expenditures, and cleaning up the cesspool of Republican corruption. Rural fire-eaters advised the planters to keep their pledges not to hire radical Negroes. The era of


good feelings had been short-lived, thus verifying Republican suspicions of Lamar's fulsome promises.\(^{59}\)

When the Republicans examined the county returns, they saw clearly how they had been driven out of power. Massive Republican majorities had vanished through intimidation, fraud, and blatant terrorism. While Lamar's soothing words had lulled the northern people to sleep, the white military companies had gained control of much of the state. As local Republicans reported to Ames about their troubles, they asked the governor how these wrongs would be redressed. However, some Republicans blamed Ames and his corrupt black allies for the party's loss. As is often the case after a crushing defeat, the competing factions uttered bitter recriminations against each other. The Republicans had little recourse but to wait for President Grant to play the role of a deus ex machina before the curtain fell on the final act of their political drama.\(^{60}\)

\(^{59}\)Wharton, Negro in Mississippi, 197; Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 395; Jackson Weekly Clarion, November 3, 10, 1875; Brookhaven Ledger, November 11, 1875, February 10, 1876; Natchez Daily Democrat, November 19, 1875; Oscar J. E. Stuart to A. G. Brown, November 4, 1875, Stuart Papers, Miss.; Raymond Hinds County Gazette, November 10, 17, 24, December 1, 1875; Jackson Daily Clarion, January 4, 1876; Aberdeen Examiner, November 4, 11, 1875, in Sen. Rep. 527, 44-1, 1141-1142, 1145.

\(^{60}\)William M. Connor to Ames, November 3, 5, 1875, "Documentary Evidence," 29, 56, 74, 77; W. F. Connell to Ames, November 7, 1875, W. H. Dodson to Ames, November 10, 1875, Ames Papers, Miss.; C.R. 44-1, 2101-2104; H. R. Ware to Benjamin H. Bristow, December 7, 1875, Bristow Papers, LC; Hiram Revels to Grant, November 6, 1875, Appendix to C.R. 45-3, 224; Ames to Blanche Butler Ames, November 4, 1875, Marshall, ed., Chronicles from the Nineteenth Century.
Equally serious was the continued persecution of Republicans in the countryside by the white liners long after the election. Fearful men of both races slept in the woods, and Republican officeholders received frequent threats against their lives; some of them tired of the battle and left the state. In the river county of Issaquena, one of the few carried by the radicals, the whites in December 1875 drove the Republican officials away at gun point. A federal grand jury at Oxford received voluminous testimony of violence and intimidation before and during the election, but after receiving threats against their own lives and listening to the stories of witnesses who shared similar fears, they refused to bring in any indictments, but suggested that the federal government take some action to stem the tide of terrorism in the state.\footnote{P. H. Green to Ames, November 22, 1875; C. Lindsey to Ames, December 6, 1875; Reuben Kindrick to Ames, December 7, 1875; Mark Joseph to Ames, January 6, 1876, "Documentary Evidence," 10, 61-63, 75-76; William Breck to Frederick Douglass, September 15, 1876, Douglass Papers, LC; Raymond Hinds County Gazette, December 15, 1875; Sen. Rep. 527, 44-1, 500-10, 623-36, 719; Report of Grand Jury, Oxford, Mississippi, July 8, 1876, "Documentary Evidence," 150-51; Thomas Walton to Attorney General Alphonso Taft, July 16, 1876; James R. Cavett to Taft, August 23, 1876, J. H. Pierce to Taft, September 3, 1876, "Use of the Army in Certain of the Southern States," House Ex. Doc., 30, 44-2, 112, 115, 122.}

Ames in his annual message to the legislature presented a ringing condemnation of Democratic campaign tactics and strongly asserted that the right to vote had become a
nullity in Mississippi. The Republicans presented a convincing argument both to the federal government and to the northern people that the Democrats' words had not matched their deeds and that conciliatory speeches had only masked brutal outrages. Conservatives, of course, indignantly denied these radical calumnies and, as usual, held the Republican leaders themselves responsible for any significant disturbances. Even moderate men who had been appalled by the more vicious atrocities believed that the evils of Republican rule had justified the use of the questionable means necessary to overthrow it.  

For the Democrats, however, a new danger suddenly appeared on the horizon. That inveterate waver of the bloody shirt, Senator Oliver P. Morton of Indiana, proposed that the Senate investigate the 1875 election in Mississippi. Although the Democrats claimed to have no fear of an "honest" inquiry, many suspected that Morton was seeking to manufacture political capital for his presidential campaign in 1876. Conservative editors contended that the blacks had voluntarily deserted the carpetbaggers and denied any use of coercion on the part of the Democrats. Even though the Senate conducted lengthy hearings and

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62 Annual Message of Adelbert Ames, January 4, 1876, Mississippi House Journal (1875), 5-8; Jackson Weekly Mississippi Pilot, January 8, 1876; Henry B. Whitfield to Pierrepont, November 6, 1875, LR, DJ, Mississippi, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M970, roll 2); Jackson Daily Clarion, January 5, 1876; Wells, "Reconstruction in Hinds County," 105.
finally issued a report in August 1876, this feeble response came far too late to save Mississippi Republicans.63

Long before election day, white leaders recognized that a Democratic victory would give them the opportunity to impeach Ames and remove him from office. Soon after the Democrats had secured their victory, newspapers across the state first began to discuss and then to push for the ouster of the Republican governor. The new legislature, which assembled in January 1876, impeached and convicted the black superintendent of education Cardoza and more importantly persuaded the black lieutenant governor Davis to resign under threat of removal. With these obstacles out of their path, the Democrats drafted twenty-one articles of impeachment against Ames, charging him with corruption, partisan appointments to office, illegal requests for federal troops, and incitement to racial violence. In Washington, Ben Butler let it be known that his son-in-law would soon be moving to Massachusetts. On March 28 Ames agreed to give up the governorship if the house would drop the charges against him which they agreed to do.

63 James L. Pugh to Lamar, December 8, 1875, Lamar-Mayes Papers, Miss.; Natchez Daily Democrat, December 17, 1875; Raymond Hinds County Gazette, December 22, 1875; Brookhaven Ledger, December 23, 1875; Senator Robert E. Withers to John W. Daniel, January 27, 1876, Daniel Papers, Duke; Jackson Daily Clarion, January 11, 14, 29, April 5, 9, 1876; Jackson Weekly Clarion, May 10, 1876.
He resigned the following day and left the state, never to return again.  

Ames told a New York Times reporter a short time later that it was unsafe for a northern man who had defended the Union to live in the South. He bitingly commented that Lamar's fire-eating oratory in Mississippi was far different from the statesmanlike speeches that he delivered on the floor of the House. Ames also described a fact of political life that was an essential weakness of carpetbag governments: Republicans in the South could only survive with the military support of the national government.  

Ames lived quietly in Massachusetts and later moved to Florida where he died in 1933. With such a long time to mull over his Reconstruction experiences, he came to believe, much like his compatriot in North Carolina, Albion Tourgee, that he had indeed undertaken a "fool's errand." Ames described to historian James W. Garner how he had come to Mississippi with a sense of "Mission with a large M," convinced that he could "guide" the blacks  

64Raymond Hinds County Gazette, June 2, 1875; Entry for November 7, 1875, Samuel A. Agnew Diary, SHC; Natchez Daily Democrat, November 24, 1875; Jackson Weekly Clarion, November 24, December 3, 1875; Jackson Weekly Mississippi Pilot, January 8, 1876; Brookhaven Ledger, March 2, 1876; Articles of Impeachment, March 2, 1876, Ames to House of Representatives, March 28, 1876, Mississippi House Journal (1876), 424-48, 530; Lamar to General E. C. Walthall, February 23, 1876, cited in Mayes, Lamar, 263; Ames, Resignation, March 29, 1876, Marshall, ed., Chronicles from the Nineteenth Century, II, 352-53.  

65New York Times, May 2, 1876.
toward making a success of their freedom while pacifying his shattered country at the same time. He sadly concluded that his efforts had been foredoomed because "at all times and places the inferior race must succumb to the superior race even though the latter be backed by such a power as the United States." 66 Ames' own confession of failure reflects his later disillusionment as well as a realization of the true dimensions of his self-appointed task. He had done his best, no one could doubt that, and he shared the burden of defeat with many lesser men. The swirling tide of reaction had swept him away just as it had carried his mortal enemies into power, with blood still dripping from their hands.

Chapter X

1876: THE YEAR OF THERMIDOR

In the centennial year of American independence, the white South could not fully celebrate the country's nationhood. Despite the Democratic tidal wave of 1874, Republican "carpetbag" governments still controlled South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida. The fact that a Presidential election loomed on the horizon complicated the course of southern politics, but did not change its direction. The determination to overthrow radical rule and restore white supremacy overrode any national political considerations, particularly in South Carolina and Louisiana. By 1876 the southern counterrevolution seemed unstoppable. The "redeemers" had conquered Alabama and Mississippi with varying degrees of physical force, and Republican power in Louisiana hardly existed outside of New Orleans. Only in South Carolina did the radicals seem to have reasonably bright prospects. The end of Reconstruction was near, the only remaining questions being when and by what means it would fall.

South Carolina was truly the "prostrate state." If Louisiana symbolized the hazards of Republican southern policy, and Mississippi the strength of white intransigence, 594
South Carolina revealed the fatal flaws in southern Republicanism. Even revisionist historians have conceded that when it came to corruption, South Carolina took a back seat to no other state. There seemed at times to be rings within rings, and no one has ever untangled the mass of charges and countercharges bandied about between 1868 and the collapse of Republican rule in 1877. Contemporary commentators as well as later historians believed that the problem originated in the fact that South Carolina had a black electoral majority and also the largest number of Negro officeholders of any state. Yet the scalawags, carpetbaggers, and a number of conservatives shared in the rewards of public thievery. The black officials, though less educated and certainly less experienced in politics, were no more honest or dishonest than their white colleagues. The blacks did not "rule" the state nor did white Republicans exert dictatorial authority over subservient Negroes. As one carpetbagger remarked after observing a session of the state legislature, there were many capable and honest men of both races in that body, but unfortunately the plunderers held a solid majority.¹

The white citizens of the Palmetto State cared little for the complexities of their condition. Much like their brethren in other southern states, the conservatives loudly complained of their unbearable suffering under an oppressive Republican regime. In early 1874 angry whites held a taxpayers' convention in Charleston and drafted a petition for relief to be sent to Congress. Their memorial asserted that the state government was not administered in the interests of those who paid the taxes, indeed that a majority of the legislators themselves were not property owners and were therefore oblivious to the crushing burden of taxation and the gargantuan increases in state expenditures. In addition, thieves raided the state treasury while dishonest executive officials looked the other way. The taxpayers asked that the federal government intervene to rid South Carolina of these intolerable evils. The Republicans sensibly replied that the whites had only themselves to blame because they had refused to cooperate with the reconstruction process and thus left affairs in the hands of men of both limited ability and character. The radicals also defended the increase in state spending for such items as education and declared that the wealthy men in the state should pay the lion's share of the taxes. They maintained that many Democrats had been guilty of peculation and that the "taxpayers" were merely stalking-horses for the old planter aristocracy seeking to restore the ancien régime. Representatives of both the "taxpayers"
and the Republicans met with President Grant in Washington. During his conference with the conservatives, Grant expressed indignation at the attacks made against him by certain stump speakers in Edgefield County and said that he could do nothing to remedy the situation.²

South Carolina Republicans were painfully aware of the crying need for reform both in the state and local governments. They realized that if they failed to institute needed changes, their political future was bleak. In both the 1872 and 1874 elections, a group of "bolters" had deserted the party, and, as in other southern states, the disaffection of native Republicans left the carpetbaggers and Negroes to fight for control. So potent had the reform issue become, that all factions ran under its banner while branding their opponents thieves and cormorants.³

When the "regular" Republicans nominated the Massachusetts carpetbagger Daniel H. Chamberlain for


³Columbia Daily Union, January 19, March 13, May 11, July 2, August 27, 28, 30, 1872; Entries for July 21-October 21, 1874, R. H. Woody, ed., "Behind the Scenes in the Reconstruction Legislature of South Carolina: Diary of Josephus Woodruff," Journal of Southern History, II (February, 1936), 78-102; Columbia Daily Union-Herald, July 14, August 2, 6, 1874; Charleston News and Courier, August 17-20, 1874; W. M. Heath to Attorney General George H. Williams, October 24, 1874, LR, DJ, South Carolina, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M947, roll 2).
governor in 1874, the prospects for routing the corruptionists seemed remote. Chamberlain had been attorney general during Governor Robert Scott's openly corrupt administration, and many members of both parties saw his election as a continuation of business as usual. Yet joined by black state treasurer Francis L. Cardozo, Chamberlain early established his reputation as a man ready to reclaim the loyalty of honest men. In his inaugural address the governor called for economy and honesty in the administration of the state government, a fairer assessment of taxable property, and an end to the scandalous public printing contracts. Chamberlain's most nagging problem was the large number of officeholders, particularly the county trial justices, who were either dishonest or incompetent, and he carefully tried to fill available openings with men who possessed the proper qualifications for the job but were also loyal Republicans. Forced, however, to appoint conservative whites to many of these posts, Chamberlain ran the clear risk of alienating many radicals.4

It was not therefore surprising that the governor's strongest opposition came from within his own party.

4Columbia Daily Union-Herald, August 20, September 30, November 17, 1874, January 5, April 8, 1875; Milledge Luke Bonham to Daniel H. Chamberlain, December 17, 1874, Bonham Papers, SCL; Walter Allen, Governor Chamberlain's Administration in South Carolina (New York, 1888), 10-29, 66-67; Belton O'Neal Townsend, "The Political Condition of South Carolina," Atlantic Monthly, XXXIX (February, 1877), 182; Daniel H. Chamberlain Papers, 1874-1876, passim, SCA.
Robert Brown Elliott, former congressman and then speaker of the house of representatives, had called for the Republicans to correct their own abuses before Chamberlain's election and had in fact been his close political ally. Yet Elliott, who had political ambitions of his own, probably resented Chamberlain's wrapping himself in the mantle of reform and also feared, with good reason, that the governor might form an alliance with the white conservatives, thus leaving the blacks to the tender mercies of their worst enemies. Chamberlain never established a working relationship with black leaders who found him aloof and patronizing. The governor's frequent vetoes of bills passed by the legislature also antagonized many party stalwarts. Although the story may be apocryphal, the notorious Senator John J. "Honest John" Patterson was highly indignant about such reform talk and reportedly said: "Why, there are still five years of good stealing in South Carolina." Republican opposition not only stymied Chamberlain's proposals in the legislature, but also further divided the party at both the state and local levels, at last giving the conservatives a realistic hope of ending Republican domination.5

5Peggy Lamson, The Glorious Failure: Black Congressman Robert Brown Elliott and the Reconstruction (New York, 1973), 154-55, 184-87, 208-14; Francis Butler Simkins and Robert Hilliard Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction (Chapel Hill, 1932), 474-79; Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, 38-45, 88-102; John S. Reynolds, Reconstruction in South Carolina (Columbia, South Carolina, 1905), 229; George C. Rogers, Jr., The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina (Columbia, South Carolina, 1970), 459-60; Holt, Black Over White, 175-107; Columbia Daily Union-Herald,
While Chamberlain was absent from the state in December 1875, the legislature elected state circuit judges, choosing the infamous ex-governor Franklin J. Moses, Jr., and a black politico of unsavory reputation, W. J. Whipper. The angry governor later refused to sign their commissions, a decision that aroused a storm of protest from the Republicans but which won conservative plaudits. When Senator Oliver P. Morton of Indiana questioned Chamberlain's loyalty to the party, the governor defended his Republican credentials and warned both Morton and President Grant that the party would either have to repudiate such men as Moses and Whipper or lose many votes throughout the nation.6

Many white South Carolinians applauded Chamberlain's action. Francis W. Dawson, editor of the influential Charleston News and Courier and a leading spokesman for that city's business community, wrote long editorials extolling the governor's virtues. Dawson and other conservatives were doubtful about reviving the state Democratic party, which had been disbanded since 1868, favoring rather an alliance


6Daniel H. Chamberlain, "Reconstruction in South Carolina," in Richard N. Current, ed., Reconstruction in Retrospect: Views From the Turn of the Century (Baton Rouge, 1969), 84-85; Chamberlain to Benjamin H. Bristow, December 23, 1875, Bristow Papers, LC; Charleston News and Courier, December 18, 1875, January 4, 6, 1876; Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, 221-24; Chamberlain to Grant, January 4, 1876, Chamberlain to Oliver P. Morton, January 4, 1876, ibid., 228-34.
between the whites and reform Republicans. Sincerely believing that a so-called "straight-out" policy would prove disasterous, Dawson drummed up white support for Chamberlain in 1876 as the only way to end black racial hegemony in the state.7

On the other hand, white county leaders had debated for some time the wisdom of reorganizing the Democratic party for the 1876 campaign. These men had little faith in Chamberlain as a reformer and, more importantly, could not stomach the idea of an alliance with a black Republican. The Moses and Whipper episode, despite the governor's own courageous stand, magnified the straight-out sentiment and led to a meeting of the Democratic State Central Committee on January 6, 1876 in Columbia. While praising Chamberlain, many delegates to this conclave simply did not trust the Massachusetts radical because of his close friendship with Grant and other national Republican leaders. Some fire-eaters vowed that they could never back a carpetbagger for governor and vowed never to compromise with the forces of

darkness. This straight-out support was particularly strong in Edgefield County in the midlands region of the state. There former Confederate general Martin Witherspoon Gary controlled a group of fanatical racists who would brook no concessions to radicalism. So adamant was Gary in his opposition to any milk-and-water ticket that he almost fought a duel with Dawson over the issue. 8

The questions of home rule and campaign strategy could not however, by themselves generate such furious passions, for at the bottom of these disputes lay the omnipresent race question. Most South Carolinians saw Republican government as rule by ignorant Negroes, but they had to deal with the bitter fact that a majority of the state's voters were blacks. Of course, traditional paternalists, like Dawson, believed in a natural community of interest between the races and maintained that the wily carpetbaggers had temporarily alienated the blacks from their real friends. White leaders who favored a color line policy in South Carolina were simply impractical, and even back country leaders were not immune to the racial passions that were the foundation of their opposition to any compromise with the radical Republicans. 9

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8 Chamberlain, "Reconstruction in South Carolina," 85-86; Simkins and Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction, 479-82; Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, 273-74; Reynolds, Reconstruction in South Carolina, 337-39; F. A. Forcher, "Last Chapter of Reconstruction in South Carolina," Southern Historical Society Papers, XII (1884), 204-205; Anderson Intelligencer, September 23, December 9, 16, 1875, January 27, February 17, June 15, 1876; Columbia Daily Register, November 26, 1875, May 26, July and August, passim, 1876; Augusta Constitutionalist, January 7, 1876; Spartanburg Herald, January 12, February 9, March 29, April 5, 1876; New York Herald, August 14, 1876; Alfred B. Williams, Hampton and His Red Shirts (Charleston, South Carolina, 1935), 52-53.
spokesmen, such as Benjamin F. Perry, grudgingly conceded the necessity for bringing the Negroes into the crusade for redemption. Making the hope father to the thought, optimistic newspaper editors proclaimed in late 1875 and early 1876 that the blacks were finally waking up and seeing the white radicals in their true light. There was but one important caveat: earlier attempts at racial conciliation between 1868 and 1876 had all failed, and even Dawson warned that white patience was growing thin and that the state must be redeemed "whatever the means or cost."  

Several racial disturbances further undermined the influence of the moderates. When a Negro militia company began drilling in Ridge Spring, near Augusta, Georgia, in 1874, panicky whites spread rumors of an impending black uprising. Armed and mounted men scoured the countryside looking for the insurrectionary Negroes. Luckily no fighting took place, but the Republican sheriff fled for his life, and the whites accused radical leaders of fomenting a war of the races. Undoubtedly this hyperbolic rhetoric served unspoken political purposes, but many South Carolinians felt in their own hearts that the

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9Robert Somers, The Southern States Since the War, 1870-1871, ed. by Malcolm C. McMillan (University, Alabama, 1965), 41-42, 50-51; William Hepworth Dixon, White Conquest (2 Vols., London, 1876), II, 141-43; Columbia Daily Register, August 8, November 2, 1875, March 4, May 14, July 15, 1876; Columbia Daily Union-Herald, August 16, 1874; Williamson, After Slavery, 353-56; Charleston News and Courier, May 12, 1875, August 13, 28, 1874, December 1, 1875, January 21, February 10, 21, April 22, June 21, 1876.
Republicans had a vested interest in keeping the southern outrage mill grinding even if they had to supply their own grist.\textsuperscript{10}

One black militia captain, Ned Tennant, proved especially troublesome to the whites in Edgefield County. When Tennant paraded his men on July 4, 1874, angry young whites emptied their pistols into the militia captain's home. A group of armed Negroes prepared to defend their leader, but cooler heads among the local conservatives prevented bloodshed. In September a similar disturbance took place, and white military companies commanded by former Confederate general Matthew Calbraith Butler and former Confederate colonel Andrew P. Butler surrounded about eighty blacks near a plantation. The timely arrival of United State troops, however, prevented a serious outbreak, and after a parley, both sides agreed to disband, though tensions remained high for some time afterward. Shortly before the 1874 state election, Gary, in an undisguised attempt to intimidate Negro voters, advised the planters to reduce their labor force by one-third, and

\textsuperscript{10}Deposition of O. F. Cheatham, August 19, 1874, Milledge Luke Bonham Papers, SCL; Charleston News and Courier, August 19, 20, 25, October 8, 1874; Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, August 19, 21, 1874; Columbia Daily Union-Herald, August 22, 28, 1874; L. Cass Carpenter to Grant, August 26, 1874, LC, DJ, South Carolina, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M947, roll 2); J. H. Goodman to J. C. Cromley, August 30, 1874, Chester McArthur Destler, ed., "The Post-Bellum South: Some Letters and Documents," \textit{Georgia Historical Quarterly}, XLVI (March, 1962), 88.
many blacks thereafter could not find employment. A citizens' meeting in December resolved to lynch any person caught setting fire to a house, gin house, or cotton and accused Republican leaders of failing to prevent such acts of arson. The following month Matthew Butler's residence burned to the ground, and suspicions immediately fell on Tennant's militia company. A posse searched for the Negroes but met with armed resistance. In a brief exchange of gunfire, two blacks died. Finally, Governor Chamberlain ordered all state militia arms returned to Columbia and commanded all private military companies in Edgefield to disband. However, when one of the governor's aides tried to take possession of these weapons, he found that local whites had already seized some of them. Unsubstantiated rumors of armed and drilling Negroes circulated for the remainder of the year.11

In Edgefield and surrounding counties racial disturbances continued on into the election year of 1876.

11 Francis Butler Simkins, Pitchfork Ben Tillman: South Carolinian (Baton Rouge, 1944), 58-61; Charleston News and Courier, December 10, 1874, January 19, 21, 22, 25, 28, 29, February 8, 1875; Columbia Daily Union-Herald, September 27, October 16, 1874, January 6, 21, 29, February 17, 1875; Columbia Register, August 29, 1875; Major General Irvin McDowell to AAG, St. Louis, September 30, 1874, "Annual Report of the Secretary of War," House Ex. Doc. 1, 43-2, Vol. 1, Pt. 2, 49-50; Harry Willcox Pfanz, "Soldiering in the South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1958), 500-501; Franklin J. Moses to Attorney General George H. Williams, September 26, 1874, Chamberlain to Williams, January 27, 1875, LR, DJ, South Carolina, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M947, roll 2); Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, 68-69.
Unknown parties assassinated the black militia leader Joe Crews. Alarmed whites reported an outbreak of arson against gin houses, robberies of local stores, and several murders of "respectable" citizens. When an old man and his wife were killed in May, the Edgefield sheriff arrested six black men. A band of whites hauled the suspects from the jail and shot them all to death. Even those conservatives who disliked lynch law justified its use in this case, claiming that the Negroes would never have been punished by the local authorities. Some men apparently objected to the fact that blacks could appeal their convictions and thus delay their punishment, in other words, that they had the same legal rights as white citizens.\(^{12}\)

Hamburg was a small village on the opposite side of the Savannah River from Augusta. Once an important transport center for up country cotton on its way to Charleston, after the war Hamburg became a somnolent community of only 500 inhabitants, mostly Negroes. Whites disapproved of having even this insignificant town controlled by the blacks and in the spring of 1876 suggested that several Negro politicians leave before the election. The racial disorders in nearby Edgefield compounded Hamburg's own problems, particularly after a black man named Doc Adams organized a militia company. Local whites

\(^{12}\)Columbia Daily Register, September 2, 4, 9, 1875, March 7, 10, 25, May 27, 1876; Charleston News and Courier, May 26, 1876; Anderson Intelligencer, September 16, 23, 1875, June 1, 1876.
saw the main purpose of this body as being to intimidate Democrats and perhaps even massacre innocent citizens. As Benjamin R. Tillman later recalled, the white military companies just waited for an incident to give them an excuse to teach the Negroes a valuable lesson, written in blood.\footnote{New York Times, July 14, 1876; Letter to the editor of the New York Sun, August 1, 1876, Horatio R. Cook Memorandum Book, 1842-1888, Duke; Charleston News and Courier, August 14, 1876; "Denial of the Elective Franchise in South Carolina at the Elections of 1875 and 1876," Sen. Mis. Doc. 48, 44-2, Vol. I, 3-11, Vol. II, 447-76; Simkins and Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction, 487n.}

On July 4 Adams drilled his company of about eighty men along a quiet Hamburg street. Two young whites, Henry Getzen and T. J. Butler, drove their buggy into town and came upon Adams' men going through their paces. After watching the drill for a short time, they asked the militia captain to move his troops to one side of the street so they could pass. Adams pointed out a wide space on either side of the columns, but the whites later charged that he had cursed them and refused to move. Adams claimed, however, that Getzen and Butler had vowed that they would stay in their usual wagon "rut" and not be turned out of it by any "damned niggers." When a rain came up, the blacks left the street, and the two white men went on their way. When Robert J. Butler, the young Butler's father and Getzen's father-in-law, learned of the incident, he complained to the local trial justice, a black man named...
Prince Rivers. The trial justice issued arrest warrants against Adams and the other militia officers on charges of blocking a public thoroughfare. During an appearance in court on July 6, Adams cursed Rivers, and the trial justice declared him in contempt of court, postponing the proceedings for two days.14

Meanwhile, the Butler family retained M. C. Butler of Edgefield (no relation) as their attorney, who along with 200 to 300 armed whites rode into Hamburg on July 8 for the trial. Butler rudely told Rivers that the militia company must surrender their arms, and Adams later accused the whites of threatening to burn the town, (an interesting reversal of the usual pattern in these racial conflicts). Butler probably knew that Adams would never surrender the state weapons, but he also demanded that the militia captain personally apologize to the offended whites. Since armed men were milling about in the streets, Adams did not appear in the courtroom but cautiously negotiated for a parley with Butler. They could not agree on a meeting place because both sides feared an ambush. Butler appeared determined to capture the militia arms at all hazards, and he abandoned even the pretense of seeking legal satisfaction. With the white mob growing more belligerent, Adams and thirty-eight of his men holed up in a brick building used as an armory. When firing broke out, one of

the blacks shot and killed a young white man near the railroad bridge; the enraged whites mounted a fierce attack on the militiamen. They brought over a cannon from Augusta and fired four rounds into the black stronghold. Fearing that the whites might blow up the building, Adams ordered his men to escape out the back as best they could. The whites pursued the fleeing blacks, took some prisoners, and ransacked the homes of several Negroes and of at least one white Republican. The mob murdered the black town marshal near the armory and killed at least one other Negro. Unfortunately the bloodshed was not yet over.\textsuperscript{15}

Having captured perhaps twenty-five blacks, Butler ordered his men to march them to the jail in Aiken. Tillman's company disapproved of such lenient treatment for black incendiaries and executed five of the prisoners, apparently mutilating the bodies. Although Butler denied encouraging this merciless slaughter, he shared the ultimate responsibility for turning a minor traffic incident into a bloody riot.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., Vol. I, 37-77, 695-714, Vol. II, 490-98, 602-14; "Slaughter of American Citizens at Hamburg, South Carolina," Sen. Ex. Doc. 85, 44-1, 10-11, 13-24; Attorney General William Stone to Chamberlain, July 12, 1876, \textit{ibid.}, 8-10; Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel, July 9, 1876; Augusta Constitutionalist, July 9, 1876; Charleston News and Courier, July 10, 12, 14, 18, 1876.

The News and Courier spoke for many conservatives in immediately condemning the Hamburg massacre, particularly the unnecessary deaths of the black prisoners. Some editors were sharply critical of Butler for attempting to disarm the blacks in the first place and especially for allowing his men to become brute savages. Conservatives worried that this incident might assist the Republican bloody shirt campaign both in the state and the nation. However, even those editorialists who criticized the whites took the usual position that such incidents arose inevitably from the evils of Republican rule.  

A leading organ of the straight-out Democracy placed the blame for the riot squarely on the shoulders of the black militia. The "restless barbarism" of the Hamburg Negroes had born its legitimate fruit. Democratic newspapers across the South defended Butler and cited the behavior of the black incendiaries in justification for the white attack. Some editors accused the radicals of encouraging such racial strife because a bloody clash between blacks and whites could only benefit Jacobinical leaders whose stock in trade was to play on the old tune of rebel outrages. Conservative spokesmen too familiarly asserted that these disturbances seldom took place in states that had been redeemed from radical control but rather

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17 Charleston News and Courier, July 10, 11, 13, 14, 28, 1876; Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel, July 11, 1876. The News and Courier printed extensive excerpts from country newspapers commenting on the Hamburg riot.
occurred in those still suffering from the evils of Republican misrule. Southerners criticized northern politicians who would make political hay out of the Hamburg incident while ignoring the violence of the Molly Maguires and other labor groups in their own section.  

To counter the white statements on the affair, the Negroes held a large indignation meeting in Charleston. Black leaders detailed the long history of their suffering at the hands of "semi-barbarous whites" (there are curious parallels in the rhetoric of both sides here) and accused Butler and his men of committing premeditated murder. They warned that there were 80,000 black men in the state who could carry Winchester rifles and 200,000 black women who could use torches and knives and that the forebearance of their race was nearly exhausted (again compare this to white arguments). The speakers defended the right of blacks to organize militia units and blamed the Hamburg outbreak on a Democratic conspiracy to carry the approaching election. The Negroes drafted a ringing appeal to the "people of the United States" written by Robert Brown Elliott, and black

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18 Columbia Daily Register, July 11, 20, 1876; Harry Hammond, undated letter to a newspaper on Hamburg riot, Hammond Papers, SCL; New Orleans Daily Picayune, August 17, 1876; Jackson Weekly Clarion, July 19, 1876; Atlanta Constitution, July 13, 1876; Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel, July 12, 1876; Augusta Constitutionalist, July 13, August 8, 1876; Anderson Intelligencer, July 20, August 3, 1876; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, July 29, 1876; Charleston News and Courier, July 17, 21, 27, August 7, 1876; Unidentified and undated newspaper clipping, Benjamin F. Perry Papers, SHC; Memphis Daily Appeal, July 27, 1876; New York Herald, August 3, 1876.
congressman Joseph H. Rainey attacked General Butler on the floor of the House, asking how long American citizens would have to stand such treatment. 19

The blacks had reason to fear that Hamburg might be only the beginning of a campaign of terror against Negroes and Republicans. The sheriff of Aiken County reported that the Negroes still lived in fear and that much of their property had been destroyed and most of their arms taken from them. White cavalry companies patrolled the countryside and sometimes rode through Hamburg itself. A very uneasy peace prevailed. 20

Chamberlain gave Grant a detailed account of the slaughter, labeling it as but part of a conspiracy already partially successful in Louisiana and victorious in Mississippi to overturn duly elected governments through fraud and violence. The governor asked for troops to protect the helpless Negroes, and United States Marshal Robert M. Wallace suggested that soldiers be placed in several counties near Hamburg. Senator Patterson informed his colleagues in Washington that such carnage occurred because of Democratic hostility to black officeholding and

19 Sen. Ex. Doc. 85, 44-1, 41-54; Charleston News and Courier, July 19, August 1, 1876; C.R. 44-1, 4644-4646.

suffrage and that the Republicans in South Carolina were in a life and death struggle with the forces of resurgent rebellion. Grant was personally shocked at the sickening details of the Hamburg riot and, overcoming his recent reluctance to use force in the South, ordered several companies of troops to be stationed in Edgefield, Laurens, and Barnwell counties. Outraged conservatives uttered their usual maledictions against military oppression and denied any warlike intentions on their part. Whatever the moral defects of their policies, the South Carolina Democrats were resourceful politicians who by this time had realized the powerlessness of federal troops to stem the counterrevolutionary tide. When two companies arrived at Edgefield Courthouse, cheering whites lined the streets to greet them. Some of the soldiers were embarrassed, but others just grinned. Quite a reception for these tools of despotism!  

21 Chamberlain to Grant, July 22, 1876, Grant to Chamberlain, July 26, 1876, Sen. Ex. Doc. 85, 44-1, 2-6; Robert M. Wallace to Attorney General Alphonso Taft, July 17, 1876, Sen. Mis. Doc. 48, 44-2, Vol. III, 89; C.R. 44-1, 5345-5356; General William T. Sherman to General Winfield Scott Hancock, August 17, 1876, "Use of the Army in Certain of the Southern States," House Ex. Doc. 30, 44-2, 6; Columbia Daily Register, July 18, 21, 23, 26, September 3, 13, 1876; Charleston News and Courier, August 22, 31, 1876; Anderson Intelligencer, August 24, 1876; Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel, September 9, 1876; M. C. Butler to Thomas F. Bayard, cited in Charles Callan Tansill, The Congressional Career of Thomas Francis Bayard (Washington, 1946), 130; Williams, Hampton and Red Shirts, 106-107; James E. Sefton, The United States Army and Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (Baton Rouge, 1967), 247.
The Republicans could not afford to let such a bloody affray as Hamburg go unpunished lest they reveal their own weak hold on power. A grand jury indicted approximately sixty men, whom the conservatives described as some of the state's "best citizens." Their loud protests did not indicate any real fear on the part of the prisoners who openly boasted that they would never be brought to trial. United States Attorney David Corbin admitted that armed whites would probably intimidate witnesses and make the outcome of the cases problematical. Tillman's men donned their red shirts, the white man's badge of courage, and quietly surrendered to state officials. Attorney General William Stone ordered a continuance in the case until after the election in order to let partisan emotions dissipate. By that time, unforeseen events prevented any further action in these cases.  

The most important result of the Hamburg riot was to deal a fatal blow to the cooperation movement. Dawson found that subscriptions to his newspaper sharply declined while the circulation of Charleston's straight-out organ, the Journal of Commerce, dramatically increased. With the Edgefield fire-eaters leading the way, the up country was

22 Columbia Union-Herald, July 11, September 9, 1876; Charleston News and Courier, August 2, 12, 1876; Edgefield Advertiser, August 10, 1876; Samuel Jones to Chamberlain, August 13, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, SCA; David Corbin to Taft, Sen. Mis. Doc. 48, 44-2, Vol. III, 89-91; Simkins, Tillman, 64-65; William Stone to Chamberlain, Sen. Mis. Doc. 48, 44-2, Vol. III, 497-98; Columbia Daily Register, September 15, 1876.
ablaze for uncompromising Democracy. However, the moderates who favored supporting Chamberlain had significant support in the low country, and the state Democratic convention which met in Columbia from August 15 through 17 reflected this sectional division. After a secret debate of some five and a half hours on the final day of the convention, the delegates voted to select their own slate of candidates for state offices. General Butler and his allies had pulled something of a coup by convincing Wade Hampton before the convention to accept the nomination for governor. The choice of the popular and publicly moderate Hampton soothed the feelings of the losers and ended the divisions among the conservatives.  

As a matter of public record, the South Carolina Democracy committed itself to running a conciliatory and peaceful campaign. Their platform recognized the permanency of the postwar constitutional amendments and called for all citizens regardless of color to join the cause of reform. To be sure, several planks castigated the Republicans for corruption, exorbitant taxation, and

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23 Charleston News and Courier, July 8, August 16, 1876; Williams, Hampton and Red Shirts, 34-35; Harry Hammond, undated letter to a newspaper on Hamburg riot, Hammond Papers, SCL; Simkins and Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction, 489-90; U. R. Brooks, ed., Stories of the Confederacy (Columbia, South Carolina, 1912), 372-73; Avary, ed., Dixie After the War, 359; Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, 335-36; Henry Tazewell Thompson, Ousting the Carpetbagger from South Carolina (Columbia, South Carolina, 1927), 104; Anderson Intelligencer, August 24, 1876.
inciting racial warfare, but the party also promised to
eschew violence during the canvass. Hampton himself seemed
the embodiment of reasonableness. Though a speaker of
ordinary ability, he effectively addressed racially mixed
audiences, giving special attention to his black listeners.
He called for an end to political intimidation and talked
of his long friendship for the Negro race. In particular
he pledged as governor to guarantee the blacks impartial
justice, to support free schools, and to protect them in
all their legitimate rights. Hampton advised the violent
men of his own race not to vote for him and urged his
supporters to keep the peace during the campaign. The
Republicans were justifiably skeptical of these honey-
tongued words and preferred relying on federal troops rather
than Hampton's perfervid promises. The party's leading
newspaper organ cut to the heart of the issue:

Meanwhile, General Hampton may be all that his
friends claim him to be, but he is the repre-
sentative of the hot heads and reckless hearts
which dictated his nomination. The leading
characteristics of the campaign thus far
developed are those of the tiger policy in
Edgefield. The Tillmans, the Butlers, the
Garys, the [James N.] Lipscombs, are the ones
to whom he would owe his election, and to them
he must needs bow in shaping his policy. He
submits to their dictation now, and the habit
would have to be continued.

There is no evidence to indicate that Hampton ever
repudiated or supported the use of violence during the
campaign. Although Hampton was no puppet of the wild men,
he lacked both the will and the ability to stop their bloody deeds.\textsuperscript{24}

Other Democratic spokesmen made touching appeals to the blacks, and newspapers gave wide coverage to alleged conversions, reporting that the Negroes had finally awakened to the fact that the whites were their best friends. The only problem was that the wily carpetbaggers would use every trick in their large repertoire, including physical intimidation, to discourage their supporters from deserting the party. According to conservative accounts, oppression of Democratic Negroes was an everyday occurrence in the South Carolina low country. The whites believed that the black women controlled the votes of their menfolk and cited several instances where these redoubtable battlers had whipped conservative Negroes. Local Democratic clubs made a great show of seeking legal redress for their injured black allies. Yet the number of Negroes won over by the conservatives was not large, and Hampton, as Joel Williamson has pointed out, really offered the blacks very little, except the opportunity to vote for him. The Republicans

cited numerous instances of Negroes joining the Democratic clubs at gun point or whites inciting their black dupes to attack radical Negroes. 25

The Democrats raised their threadbare cry against the Republicans for encouraging racial antagonism. Editors labeled Chamberlain and Patterson as the real authors of and beneficiaries of violence. Whites spread false reports that the governor had shipped arms to blacks in the country. In August a box labeled "agricultural implements" arrived in Newberry, northeast of Edgefield. The chief of police opened it, found sixteen Remington rifles inside, and arrested the Negro to whom the box had been sent. The slipshod administration of the militia during the Scott and Moses regimes had allowed state arms to fall into the hands of unauthorized persons, and Chamberlain tried to retrieve these weapons. In Edgefield, however, armed men broke into the jail and seized more than 100 rifles. Frightened

conservatives reported throughout the campaign that turbulent blacks were threatening the lives of peaceful citizens. Republican speakers supposedly advised the Negroes to use arson against their enemies. This irrational anxiety gave the white military companies a slender justification for their own outrages.26

The Democratic tales of radical intimidation were overblown but not without foundation. The available evidence strongly suggests that in the low country Republicans effectively employed some of the same methods as their conservative antagonists. On September 6 in Charleston the Democrats held a political meeting during which several of their Negro supporters spoke. Unruly black Republicans gathered outside the hall, cursing these turncoats and brandishing heavy sticks. When the whites tried to escort their black friends home, the mob attacked them and completely routed the Democrats. One white man died, and several others received head wounds. For the next two days, the rifle clubs guarded all Democratic

26 Charleston News and Courier, August 16, September 2, 23, 25, 27, 29, October 2, 11, 20, 1876; Y. J. Pope, et. al. to Chamberlain, September n.d., 1876, Julius P. Strobel to Chamberlain, September 11, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, SCA; Columbia Daily Register, June 9, August 30, September 24, 1876; Anderson Intelligencer, August 24, 1876; Spartanburg Herald, September 27, 1876; Greenville Enterprise and Mountaineer, September 20, 1876; William Quirk to Ulysses S. Grant, September 25, 1876, Grant Papers, LC; Ferdinand Gregone, et. al. to General Thomas H. Ruger, October 21, 1876, LR, DS, 1868-1883, RG 393, NA; Sen. Mis. Doc. 48, 44-2, Vol. II, 77-81; James A. Richardson to Chamberlain, October 11, 1876, ibid., Vol. III, 545; Williams, Hampton and Red Shirts, 253-54.
meetings, but still some blacks hurled brickbats at the whites or assaulted lone pedestrians. The mayor alerted the police and forbade armed bodies of men to parade on the streets. For their part, white leaders kept their men under a strict discipline to prevent further bloodshed. These incidents showed that the blacks could adopt their own version of the Edgefield policy.27

Similar conditions prevailed in neighboring plantation areas. On the morning of October 16 a steamer left Charleston with about 200 passengers aboard, mostly Democrats, for a joint political discussion at the small town of Cainhoy, about twenty miles to the northeast. Both parties came to the meeting armed and during the speaking, a fight broke out. Whites and blacks grabbed their guns, but the numerically superior Negroes chased the frightened Democrats back to their boat. One black and at least six whites died in the disturbance. The conservatives claimed that the Negroes had planned a general slaughter of the whites, and for once the radicals seem to have been the aggressors. Troops arrived in time to prevent a white

27House Mis. Doc. 31, 44-2, Pt. 2, 46-54, 80-85, 184-95; Charleston News and Courier, September 7, 8, 9, 11, 1876; James P. Low to Chamberlain, September 8, 12, 1876, R. Chisolm to Chamberlain, September 8, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, SCA; Williams, Hampton and Red Shirts, 152-53; Columbia Union-Herald, September 9, 1876; Columbia Daily Register, September 10, 1876; unidentified and undated newspaper clipping, Benjamin F. Perry Papers, SHC.
counterattack, but black violence in the low country continued through election day.  

Labor strife in the rice fields added to the turmoil of the political campaign. In May 1876 the sheriff of Colleton County, southwest of Charleston, reported that many blacks refused to work because of low wages. On the other hand, planters complained that lower rice prices had forced them to cut wages and that unscrupulous white storekeepers stirred up discontent among the fieldhands. In the latter part of August the Negroes along the Combahee River demanded a fifty percent wage increase and an end to payment with checks that could only be redeemed at the planters' stores. Strikers drove blacks still working from the fields. When a sheriff's posse arrested the ringleaders, a mob of some 300 Negroes overpowered them and released the prisoners. Black congressman Robert Smalls and black lieutenant governor R. H. Gleaves calmed the angry Negroes and convinced them to allow ten of their number to be taken into custody. The charges against these men were eventually dropped, but many blacks stayed away from the

28 House Mis. Doc. 31, 44-2, Pt. 2, 153-79, 214-26, 229-56; Robert M. Wallace to Taft, October 18, 20, 1876, Sen. Mis. Doc. 48, 44-2, Vol. III, 96-98; Lieutenant G. N. Bumford to AAG, DS, October 22, 1876, House Ex. Doc. 30, 44-2, 58; Charleston News and Courier, October 17, 18, 25, 30, 1876; Mrs. C. M. Leagare to Chamberlain, October 23, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, SCA; Chamberlain to General Thomas H. Ruger, October 17, 1876, Captain M. Laughlin to AAG, DS, October 23, 1876, Lieutenant Edward Davis to AAG, DS, November 5, 1875, LR, DS, 1868-1883, RG 393, NA; Williams, Hampton and Red Shirts, 361-62.
fields. Angry planters informed the governor that they faced disastrous crop losses if the labor troubles continued, and they called for the arrest and punishment of the troublemakers who abused and whipped Negroes working quietly at their tasks. Evidently the planters agreed to a temporary settlement in order to save part of their crop, but sporadic disturbances continued through September. 29

All their claims to the contrary notwithstanding, the South Carolina Democracy was hardly a peaceful organization. Many conservatives believed that only intimidation and violence could secure victory. General Gary had followed the progress of the 1875 campaign in Mississippi with great interest and based his own plan on information received from that state. He called for the Democrats to form clubs and military companies and advised that armed men attend every radical meeting and denounce Republican speakers as liars in order to make an impression on the Negroes. Since it

29Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, 340-41; Columbia Daily Register, May 25, 1876; David McPherson to Chamberlain, June 30, 1876, Robert Smalls to Chamberlain, August 24, 1876, John W. Ogilvie, et. al. to Chamberlain, August 24, 1876, B. T. Sellers to Chamberlain, August 26, September 1, 1876, Henry Taylor, et. al. to Chamberlain, September 2, 1876, T. B. Colding to Chamberlain, September 4, 8, 1876, James S. Low to Chamberlain, September 7, 14, 1876, William Elliott to Chamberlain, September 12, 1876, William Stone to Chamberlain, September 12, 14, 1876, John W. Burbridge to Chamberlain, September 13, 1876, William Middleton, et. al. to Chamberlain, September 13, 1876, A. C. Shaffer to Chamberlain, September 21, 29, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, SCA; House Mis. Doc. 31, 44-2, Pt. 2, 78-80, 89-95, 210-14; Charleston News and Courier, August 23-25, September 5, 13-15, 19, 21, 23, 1876.
was not possible to appeal to the blacks' reason, the whites must speak to the Negroes' fears. Every radical leader should know that any disturbance would cost him his life and Gary favored the assassination of particularly obnoxious Republicans. Although the party officially repudiated this program of terrorism, county Democratic clubs adopted many of Gary's recommendations. Whites openly threatened to murder radical leaders and scoffed at the prospect of federal prosecution in light of the Supreme Court's Cruikshank decision.\(^{30}\)

On one level the campaign of 1876 in South Carolina was a typical and exciting nineteenth century political contest. Hampton addressed large audiences of wildly enthusiastic whites, many wearing red shirts, the newly adopted symbol of the Democracy. The conservatives held grand torchlight processions, brightly illuminating the night with their fervor for Hampton and reform. Women and children were also active, preparing bunting and other decorations for the eagerly anticipated "Hampton day" when the general would speak in their community. Brass bands

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\(^{30}\) Chamberlain, "Reconstruction in South Carolina," 88; Sen. Mis. Doc. 48, 44-2, Vol. I, 871-85, 970-75, Vol. II, 168-72; Charles Hard, Recollections, SCL; J. Harvey Jones to Chamberlain, August 17, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, SCA; Simkins and Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction, 500, 564-69; Barnwell County, Democratic Executive Committee, Plan of Campaign, August 1, 1876, SCL; Loula Ayres Rockwell Recollections, p. 3-4, typescript, SHC; Greenville Enterprise and Mountaineer, October 25, 1876; Williams, Hampton and Red Shirts, 31-32; Simkins, Tillman, 57-58; Columbia Union-Herald, October 12, 1876.
played, military units fired off cannon, and the red shirts marched with Negro Democrats as prominent members of the procession. Even young boys paraded about in red shirts. Voices old and young sang the favorite refrain of the canvass: "We'll hang Dan Chamberlain on a sour apple tree."

In South Carolina history the daring deeds of 1876 took on a legendary quality that even eclipsed the heroism of the Civil War; to have ridden with Hampton and the red shirts became the proudest boast of many citizens.  

Beneath the oratory and pageantry lay the harsher reality of the Mississippi plan. Planters asked the blacks to remember from whom they received their food and shelter and vowed to cast out those ungrateful wretches who insisted on voting for the radicals. Even the News and Courier defended the right of employers to exercise political preference in hiring laborers and suggested special consideration for black Hampton supporters. Physicians threatened to refuse treatment for Republican blacks, and

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31 Williams, Hampton and Red Shirts, 104-105, 161-65; Entry for September 6, 1876, Arney R. Childs, ed., The Private Journal of Henry William Ravenal: 1859-1887 (Columbia, South Carolina, 1947), 380; Charleston News and Courier, October 3, 1876; James Conner to Mrs. James Conner, October 10, 1876, Hampton Family Papers, SCL; Robert E. Evans to Chamberlain, September 30, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, SCA; Louise Haskell Daly, Alexander Cheves Haskell, Portrait of a Man (Norwood, Massachusetts, 1934), 180-81; William Watts Ball, The State That Forgot: South Carolina's Surrender to Democracy (Indianapolis, 1932), 159-68; Sally Elmore Taylor, Memoir, Vol. I, p. 169, typescript, SHC; Loula Ayres Rockwell Recollections, p. 1, typescript, SHC; [Townsend] "Political Condition of South Carolina," 183-84; Thompson, Ousting the Carpetbagger, 112-14; Reynolds, Reconstruction in South Carolina, 357.
the Democratic clubs made lists of voters for future reference. One woman recalled how her father had taken one of his hands aside, telling the black man that he did not want to "dictate" to the Negroes how they should vote, but that if they went against Hampton, they would never live on his plantation again. One man's persuasion became another man's intimidation.\(^{32}\)

An important part of the Edgefield plan was "joint" political discussions. Democrats insisted that Republicans "divide the time" with conservative speakers. They claimed that they attended these meetings in force to protect black Democrats from the wrath of desperate radicals, but the evidence suggests otherwise. In many instances the whites forced Republicans to hold joint rallies, a refusal serving as a convenient excuse for armed men to assault the radicals. Military companies guarded these meetings but then jeered and cursed the Republican speakers, sometimes threatening their lives. Whites fired off cannons and in many cases drowned out the speaking; ruffians dragged radical orators from the platform and whipped them.\(^{33}\)


\(^{33}\)J. R. N. Johnston to Chamberlain, August 22, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, SCA; Sen. Mis. Doc. 48, 44-2, Vol. I,
Governor Chamberlain and other Republican leaders stumped the state in August, September, and October but received violent receptions outside the low country. At Edgefield in August, when Chamberlain addressed a Republican ratification meeting, Butler and Gary marched armed red shirts across the radical parade route, yelling at the top of their lungs and waving pistols in the air. Gary warned the Republicans to either share their platform with the conservatives or cancel the meeting. As Chamberlain spoke, the whites interrupted him with hoots and jeers, and questioned his paternity. Gary and M. C. Butler then harangued the crowd at length on the evils of the Chamberlain administration, and several red shirts suggested executing the governor on the spot. Armed whites greeted Chamberlain in a similar fashion at other meetings. In Barnwell County the son of William Gilmore Simms described the governor as a "carrion coward, a buzzard and a Puritanical seedy adventurer who had come down here to steal our substance." Toward the end of the campaign,

315-19, 509-14, 788-99, Vol. II, 85-93, 388-95, 438-47; James S. Strain to Chamberlain, September 7, 1876, W. Magill Fleming and Anson R. Merrick to Chamberlain, October 30, 1876, Charles A. Darling to Chamberlain, October 30, 1876, John Luney, et. al., deposition before James O. Ladd, Notary Public, January 10, 1877, ibid., 551, 555-56, 576-77; L. Cass Carpenter to Zachariah Chandler, August 23, 1876, House Ex. Doc. 30, 44-2, 97-98; Captain Samuel S. Elder to AAG, October 22, 1876, LR, DS, 1868-1883, RG 393, NA; Williams, Hampton and Red Shirts, 111-18; Charleston News and Courier, August 21, September 1, 1876; Columbia Union-Herald, September 25, October 21, 1876; James Morris Morgan, Recollections of a Rebel Reefer (London, 1918), 276-77, 281-82.
armed whites followed the Republicans from town to town, heckling the speakers and sometimes beating or killing blacks. In several counties the Republicans could not hold more than one meeting during the entire canvass.  

The most effective agency of intimidation and terrorism were the rifle and sabre clubs, first organized during the 1874 militia disturbances, and reactivated for the 1876 campaign. Chamberlain's private secretary found that there were 290 such clubs in the state with perhaps a membership of 14,350, a formidable aggregation. Francis Butler Simkins estimated from these figures that a majority of the white male population able to ride was under arms. Many companies carried state weapons seized from the black militia, and some had cannon. These armed bands often took over the duties of local law enforcement from Republican officials who were powerless to object. Conservatives claimed that the rifle clubs were purely defensive organizations formed to quell black disturbances, but mounted whites roamed the countryside, cajoling, threatening, and

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occasionally murdering Republicans. Red shirts attended
Republican meetings in force and abused radical speakers.
This nightriding created panic among both white and black
radicals who suspected that the rifle clubs might even
attack the United States troops. Republicans predicted
that armed conservatives would storm the polls on
election day.\textsuperscript{35}

Nowhere were the military organizations more active
than in Edgefield and Aiken counties. In early June, white
leaders threatened the blacks that they would carry the
election or kill off all Republicans. The red shirts
patrolled the roads and broke up radical meetings. On
September 15 near Silverton in Aiken County, two blacks

\textsuperscript{35}Rogers, History of Georgetown County, 461;
Williamson, After Slavery, 266-67; Sen. Miss. Doc. 48, 44-2,
Vol. III, 37-54, 91-92, 499-509; A. S. Wallace to Taft,
August 25, 1876, C. Smith to Chamberlain, September 20,
1876, Jonathan Scruggs, et. al. to Chamberlain, October 25,
1876, ibid., Vol. III, 91, 553, 557-58; Simkins, "Election
of 1876," 337; Loula Ayres Rockwell Recollections, p. 3,
typescript, SHC; E. M. Brady to Chamberlain, June n.d.,
1876, Robert L. Beckham to Chamberlain, June 24, 1876,
S. W. Gerritte, et. al. to Chamberlain, July n.d., 1876,
G. E. Osborne to Chamberlain, July 31, 1876, James A.
Richardson to Chamberlain, August 26, 1876, J. Gilder
Varn, Jr., to Chamberlain, September 20, 1876, A. D. Cooper
to Chamberlain, September 29, 1876, E. J. Black to
Chamberlain, October 2, 1876, T. P. Stansell to Chamberlain,
October 9, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, SCA; Entry for
September 18, 1876, Childs, ed., Journal of Henry Ravenal,
381; Charleston News and Courier, September 2, 22, 1876;
Ball, State That Forgot, 156-59; Wallace to Secretary of War
J. Don Cameron, October 4, 1876, 1876, LR, AGO, Main Series,
1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 298); Wallace to Taft,
September 30, 1876, LR, DJ, South Carolina, 1871-1884,
RG 60, NA (M947, roll 3); Columbia Union-Herald, July 3,
August 16, 1876; Captain Jacob Kline to AG, DS, October 25,
1876, LR, DS, 1868-1883, RG 393, NA.
entered the home of Alonzo Harley, struck his wife and young son over the head with sticks, but fled when Mrs. Harley grabbed a gun. White horsemen took off in pursuit and caught one Peter Williams whom they brought back to the scene of the crime. After Mrs. Harley identified Williams as one of the attackers, the whites shot him to death. Republicans later charged that Williams, who had in fact been dragged out of a sick bed, had not assaulted the Harley woman or her son. The whites obtained an arrest warrant for the other suspect, Frederick Pope, and began a search for him. Radicals accused the white rifle clubs of not really being interested in capturing the men who had assaulted Mrs. Harley. They had merely used this incident as a convenient pretext for a general slaughter of the blacks.36

With the rifle clubs on the march, the Negroes met at a nearby church the next day to decide on a plan of defense. According to white sources, black incendiaries advised their people to burn gin houses and massacre whites. Men from Aiken and Edgefield, led by Andrew P. Butler of Hamburg fame, broke up a Republican meeting on the night of September 16 and by the next morning had surrounded a large number of blacks in a swamp. Butler's men held a

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parley with several Negroes, but they refused to turn Pope over to the angry whites. After a brief discussion on this point, both parties agreed to disperse peacefully. However, as both sides moved away, other blacks ambushed one of the white companies, and the rifle clubs rode across the county shooting blacks in the cotton fields. Some whites forced terrified Negroes to fall on their knees and promise to vote for the Democrats. 37

On September 20 the fighting spread to nearby Ellenton, a depot on the Port Royal railroad after which the riot received its name. Rifle clubs came in by train to join the battle, and the blacks moved a rail causing derailment near the station. The enraged whites then killed several Negroes, including state legislator Simon Coker, whom Tillman's men shot as he prayed for mercy. Eyewitnesses testified that many of the whites were drunk and that Georgians joined the fighting. The whites vowed to kill any blacks they could find, and several military companies again besieged the Negroes in a swamp. A detachment of federal troops arrived in time to prevent an almost certain massacre and made both sides disband. One belligerent white remarked to an Army officer that he would have

given five hundred dollars if the soldiers had arrived an
hour later. 38

Since the local authorities could do little but watch
the fighting, Governor Chamberlain had asked for troops
almost immediately. However, conditions remained explosive
even with the soldiers on guard. All told a handful of
whites and perhaps as many as 100 blacks had died in the
riot, but the fighting was so spread out that one can only
roughly estimate casualty figures. Ignoring the large
number of black corpses, the whites blamed the Negroes for
the outbreak and shed many crocodile tears for the
"innocent" men arrested by United States Marshal David
Corbin. Corbin imprisoned more than eighty whites before
the election, but Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
Morrison R. Waite, whose judicial circuit then included
South Carolina, declined to hear the cases during the
excitement of the canvass. Whites charged that federal
authorities had solicited thousands of false affidavits
and had paid ignorant Negroes liberal per diem allowances
for perjured testimony. When the rioters finally came to
trial in the spring of 1877, their attorneys charged that
the arrests had been made solely to intimidate the

38Sen. Mis. Doc. 48, 44-2, Vol. I, 11-23, 183-87,
281-86, 377-79, 779-88, 1001-1006, 1028-1036, Vol. III,
231-70, 341-91; Captain Thomas J. Lloyd to AAG, DS,
September 21, 1876, David Corbin to Taft, October 8, 1876,
ibid., Vol. III, 93-95, 514-15; Charleston News and Courier,
September 20-23, 1876; L. Cass Carpenter to Taft,
September 20, 1876, William Howard Taft Papers, LC; Simkins,
Tillman, 66; Williams, Hampton and Red Shirts, 209, 211.
Democrats. The defense further made many procedural objections, maintained that the indictments were legally defective, and used dilatory motions to delay the proceedings. Waite was disgusted with the distorted newspaper coverage of the trial, particularly the slanderous attacks on government witnesses. However, such tactics proved effective, and the jury deadlocked along racial lines. On the request of then Governor Wade Hampton, President Rutherford B. Hayes ordered the charges dropped.  

The Ellenton riot forced Chamberlain to face the possibility of losing control of South Carolina, as Kellogg had done in Louisiana. Letters poured into the governor's office from all parts of the state and from both parties requesting federal troops to put down various disturbances. The Democrats realized that the Republicans were faltering badly, and they saw their deliverance on the horizon. General Thomas H. Ruger, the commander of federal forces in South Carolina, simply did not have enough men to garrison all the possible flashpoints. On October 7 Chamberlain

39 Chamberlain to General Thomas H. Ruger, September 18, 1876, LR, DS, 1868-1883, RG 393, NA; Entries for September 20, 21, 24, 1876, Childs, ed., Journal of Henry Ravenal, 381; Charleston News and Courier, September 25, October 2, 11, 12, 14, 1876; Columbia Daily Register, October 13-18, 1876; Greenville Enterprise and Mountaineer, November 8, 1876; Sen. Mis. Doc. 48, 44-2, Vol. II, 47-62; [Townsend] "Political Condition of South Carolina," 184; Fragmentary proceedings in the trial of the Ellenton Riot Cases, May 15-17, 22-27, 1877, LR, DJ, South Carolina, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M947, rolls 8, 9); C. Peter Magrath, Morrison R. Waite: The Triumph of Character (New York, 1963), 156-64.
issued a proclamation declaring that "unlawful combinations" in Aiken and Barnwell counties were hindering the enforcement of the law and ordering that all rifle clubs immediately disband.\footnote{Chamberlain Papers, October 1876, passim, SCA; Columbia Daily Register, September 14, 1876; Columbia Union-Herald, September 19, 1876; General Thomas H. Ruger to Chamberlain, September 30, 1876, LS, DS, 1868-1883, RG 393, NA; Chamberlain, Proclamation, October 7, 1876, Sen. Mis. Doc. 48, 44-2, Vol. III, 439-40.}

The disingenuous cries of protest from the Democrats were deafening. The party's executive committee issued an address disputing the governor's contention about a state of rebellion and asserting that the whites were prepared at any time to offer their services to preserve order. Conservatives produced statements from the state's circuit judges, including several Republicans, to prove that perfect peace prevailed. Hampton and the Democratic newspapers joined in proclaiming that the only intimidation came from radicals trying to prevent the Negroes from breaking the party phalanx. Indeed, the governor's proclamation was a sure sign that the Republicans were in grave danger of losing the election. The rifle clubs received Chamberlain's decree dispassionately and reorganized themselves into such unlikely groups as the Allendale Mounted Base Ball Club and the First Baptist Church Sewing Circle.\footnote{Sen. Mis. Doc. 48, 44-2, Vol. I, 887-903, Vol. II, 668-84, Vol. III, 441-44, 447-49; Charleston News and Courier, October 9, 10, 13, 21, 1876; Columbia Daily Register, October 8, 11, 12, 1876; Anderson Intelligencer, October 12, 1876; Greenville Enterprise and Mountaineer,}
The governor had good reason not to appreciate this bit of humor and reported to President Grant in October that violence still plagued the state. South Carolina Republicans believed that only additional troops and the declaration of martial law could save them from being trampled into the dust under the thundering hooves of the mounted red shirts. Although Grant and his advisers had hoped to avoid using the Army during the 1876 election, the President issued a proclamation on October 17 calling on all rifle clubs to disband. He also ordered the War Department to send more soldiers to South Carolina. Chamberlain prepared a carefully detailed statement defending his call for troops and assured the Democrats that the military forces would not be used for partisan purposes. Such pledges did not prevent conservative orators and editors from hauling out all their favorite cliches about military despotism and bayonet rule. Democrats severely criticized Grant for believing Chamberlain's lying statements but candidly admitted that they no longer feared the troops.\(^\text{42}\)

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\(^{42}\) Chamberlain to Grant, October 11, 1876, Secretary of War J. Don Cameron to General William T. Sherman, October 17, 1876, Chamberlain to New York Tribune, October 24, 1876, Sen. Mis. Doc. 48, 44-2, Vol. III, 95, 451, 526-35; ibid., 451-53; Grant, Proclamation, October 17, 1876, James D. Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897 (10 Vols., Washington, 1897), VII,
The interposition of federal authority undoubtedly convinced some whites to moderate their behavior. Republicans declared that they could at last hold their meetings with relatively little interference. Chamberlain optimistically predicted that the radicals would carry the election with large majorities, if peace prevailed. The soldiers themselves found little evidence of white hostility. Ruger cautiously confined his men to their barracks on election day but kept them close enough to the polls to render assistance to deputy marshals in the event of a disturbance. 43

Election day was comparatively quiet; Army officers reported scuffling between the parties in scattered precincts, but little violence. Deputy marshals met with

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396-97; A. G. Magrath and W. G. DeSaussure to Chamberlain, October 26, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, SCA; Chamberlain to Magrath and DeSaussure, October 25, 1876, Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, 421-22; Ruger to Sherman, October 16, 1876, Sherman to Ruger, October 14, 1876, Sherman to General Winfield Scott Hancock, October 17, 1876, J. C. Winsmith to Grant, October 14, 1876, House Ex. Doc. 30, 44-2, 14, 103-104; Charleston News and Courier, October 18-20, 26, 1876; Columbia Daily Register, October 13, 24, 1876; Anderson Intelligencer, October 26, 1876; Greenville Enterprise and Mountaineer, October 25, 1876.

43 Charleston News and Courier, October 21, 1876; Anderson Intelligencer, November 2, 1876; William Stone to Taft, October 21, 1876, Robert M. Wallace to Taft, November 5, 1876, LR, DJ, South Carolina, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M947, roll 3); Chamberlain to Taft, November 4, 1876, William Howard Taft Papers, LC; J. M. Bramman to AAG, DS, October 30, 1876, J. T. Parks to Ruger, November 6, 1876, LR, DS, 1868-1883, RG 393, NA; Columbia Daily Register, November 6, 1876; Circular No. 10, DS, October 28, 1876, House Ex. Doc. 30, 44-2, 13.
some resistance and feared to make arrests with armed whites near the polls. The Democrats believed that federal troops sympathized with their cause. However the story of Gary forcing Ruger to personally go back on his orders to protect black voters is probably apocryphal.44

The Democrats tried to bring their Negro supporters to the polls early out of fear that the Republicans would intimidate conservative blacks and force them to cast their ballots for the radical ticket. Whites accused their opponents of voting underage blacks and women at many precincts. These generally false cries of protest pointed up the Democrats' lack of success in winning black support. After feeling the force of Edgefield tactics firsthand, it is not surprising that the Negroes did not believe Hampton's soothing words. One black man remarked after a conservative meeting in Beaufort: "Dey say dem will do dis and dat. I ain't ax no man what him will do--I ax him what him hab done [emphasis in original]."45

44 Lieutenant Clarence Deems to AG, DS, November 8, 1876, Lieutenant William B. Wheeler to Lieutenant G. N. Bamford, November 8, 1876, Captain H. C. Cook to AAG, DS, November 10, 1876, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 298); House Mis. Doc. 31, 44-2, Pt. 1, 381-94; Entry for November 7, 1876, Childs, ed., Journal of Henry Ravenel, 385; Greenville Enterprise and Mountaineer, November 8, 1876; "Deputy Marshals Employed at the Election of November 7, 1876," Sen. Ex. Doc. 6, 44-2, Pt. 2, 18-19; Ruger to CO, Chester, South Carolina, November 7, 1876, LS, DS, 1868-1883, RG 393, NA; Loula Ayres Rockwell Recollections, p. 6, typescript, SHC; Sheppard, Red Shirts Remembered, 152-56.

45 Charleston News and Courier, November 4, 1876; Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel, November 18, 1876; House
For their part, Republicans cited frequent incidents of trickery, intimidation, and violence at the polls. Conservatives printed up ballots that looked like Republican tickets but listed the Democratic candidates, and handed them out to illiterate blacks. Merchants and planters "persuaded" their Negro dependents to vote for Hampton. Armed red shirts rode into villages, hooting, hollering, and threatening to kill all the Republicans if the Democracy did not carry the day. Armed whites surrounded the ballot boxes, brandishing pistols and preventing radicals from casting their ballots. Watchful conservatives stopped the distribution of Republican tickets. At several precincts deputy marshals had to flee for their lives when whites took over the election process. Armed Georgians crossed the state line and not only voted themselves but helped the rifle clubs to cow the Republicans. 46

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Because of their role in the post-election controversy, Laurens and Edgefield counties deserve closer attention. Armed whites in the former yelled, cursed, and beat would-be black voters with clubs. Some Negroes heard that they would be jailed for supporting the Republicans. Democrats grabbed radical tickets from several blacks and led them away from the polls. Thus, Laurens experienced the "peaceful" coercion common in other parts of the state.\textsuperscript{47}

Not unexpectedly, election day in Edgefield more nearly resembled a military operation than democracy's most solemn ritual. Gary and M. C. Butler brought the red shirts out in full force very early in order to beat the blacks to the polls as well as to beat the blacks at the polls. Armed men had arrived in town the night before and rode around giving the rebel yell, firing off their pistols, and hurling bloodcurdling epithets at local Republicans. These wild men formed a solid line around the polls and prevented blacks without Democratic tickets from even approaching the ballot boxes. On the other hand, Democrats including many helpful Georgians voted several times during the day. Federal troops finally cleared a path to the polls for the blacks, but by that time many had already left.\textsuperscript{48}


The only serious disturbance occurred in Charleston. The blacks crowded the streets, and conservatives claimed that many Democratic Negroes were being intimidated. The following day, November 8, several whites gathered around a bulletin board in front of the News and Courier office to read the latest returns. When a drunken man fired off a pistol, nearby blacks ran through the streets screaming that a leading white Republican had been murdered. A crowd of Negroes, including several policemen, then opened fire on the whites. The rifle clubs and United States troops restored order, but one white man had died and several men of both races had been wounded in this last riot of the Reconstruction era in South Carolina.  

The evidence of irregularities and violence before and during the election in South Carolina is overwhelming. The red shirts and other armed bands ravaged several counties during the canvass. While low country blacks likewise used physical intimidation, most of this coercion was nonviolent. On election day both sides encouraged

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Kellogg to Hoyt, November 8, 1876, ibid., Pt. 1, appendix, 176-77; Affidavit of Wiley J. Williams and Abraham Lauhaw, November 9, 1876, Deposition of 280 black men, November 14, 1876, Martin W. Gary Papers, Duke; Affidavit of Jack Piley, et. al., November 13, 1876, Gary Papers, SCL.

repeaters and did their share of ballot box stuffing. Whites from Georgia and North Carolina crossed the border to secure victory for Hampton. All in all, even taking into account some fraud and coercion on the other side, the Democratic terrorism had been very effective, a fact that muddled the results of the state election and further complicated the settlement of the disputed Presidential contest. 50

In contrast to South Carolina, Louisiana was almost tranquil. Unlike their namesakes, the state's Bourbons had learned from the past. Although there was some discussion of running the 1876 campaign according to the Mississippi plan, cooler heads prevailed, at least on the surface. Officially the Democrats promised to eschew using force during the campaign though they would admittedly employ any other means, including apparently fraud and threats, to redeem the state. The platform, drafted at their July convention in Baton Rouge, accepted the postwar constitutional amendments and made a clarion call for reform. The Democrats nominated Francis T. Nicholls for governor, a choice that reflected a cooling of political passions. A former Confederate general who had lost an arm during the war, Nicholls was the epitome of southern respectability

and a man who could appeal to old soldiers and former slaves alike. In the classic manner of the southern paternalist, Nicholls promised the Negroes to abide by his party's pledges and to ensure both races the equal protection of the law. To the radicals, however, the Louisiana Democracy's only fixed principle was hostility to the Negro. Governor Kellogg correctly pointed out that Nicholls, despite his own conciliatory attitudes, would never be able to ride herd over the racial extremists in his own party, a problem analogous to the relationships between Hampton and Gary in South Carolina and between L. Q. C. Lamar and the white liners in Mississippi. The *New Orleans Republican* sarcastically observed: "Take away from the Democrat his shotgun, and he becomes as weak as Samson with his head shaved."\(^{51}\)

Conservative orators nostalgically and sometimes eloquently appealed to the common interests of both races in the future prosperity and safety of the state. Did the wily carpetbaggers, the planters asked the Negroes, ever feed or clothe you? Wishful thinkers believed that the blacks had seen the light on the Damascus road and would forsake heretical radicalism. The conservatives vowed to

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\(^{51}\) *New Orleans Republican*, January 7, August 3, 11, September 2, 1876, E. W. Robertson to Henry Clay Warmoth, June 13, 1876, Warmoth Papers, SHC; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 11, 1876; *Annual Cyclopaedia (1876)*, 483, 485-86; *Daily Shreveport Times*, October 24, 1876; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 10, 1876; William H. Garland to Rutherford B. Hayes, October 4, 1876, Hayes Papers, HML.
protect the blacks from Republican intimidation and credited any violent outbreaks to a radical conspiracy to provoke military interference in the election. Although some blacks had become disillusioned with Republican corruption and broken promises, it is uncertain how many voluntarily joined the conservatives. Both parties produced scores of witnesses who swore that the blacks either listened receptively to Democratic appeals or had been forced at gun point to vote with the whites.52

Factionalism continued to erode the strength of Louisiana Republicans. Native radicals claimed that carpetbag misrule had ruined the state party's reputation in the North, and one wag suggested that the symbol of the campaign should be a broom. Henry Clay Warmoth, back in the Republican fold and again allied with Pinchback, challenged the Custom House wing for control at a tumultuous convention in New Orleans. The Custom House men crushed their enemies and nominated Stephen B. Packard on a ticket that included three black men. Packard had long experience in the state's back room politics, and for the Democrats...

and some Republicans his candidacy meant the triumph of political machination over reform.\textsuperscript{53}

With Pinchback and Warmoth sulking on the sidelines, the Republicans knew that they faced a difficult struggle and were convinced that the Democrats had not abandoned the politics of terror. One enthusiastic partisan wrote to Kellogg offering to bring in blacks from Arkansas to swell the Republican vote. Throughout the canvass, Republican speakers charged that Nicholls lacked both the will and the power to restrain his bloodthirsty followers. If the violence continued much longer, one Republican facetiously suggested, the state would not have enough Negroes left for a good race riot. On a more serious note, radicals gloomily forecast that a Democratic victory would drive the white Republicans into exile and lead to the disfranchisement of the Negroes.\textsuperscript{54}

Alarmed by violent outbreaks in several parishes, Republicans urgently requested that Grant send additional troops. Governor Kellogg even wanted black cavalry units

\textsuperscript{53}John R. G. Pitkin to Benjamin H. Bristow, June 7, 1876, Bristow Papers, LC; Pitkin, Letter to the Whigs, March 1, 1876, Pitkin Letter, LSU; L. A. Sheldon to James A. Garfield, January 29, 1876, Garfield Papers, LC; New Orleans Republican, April 29, June 2, 21, 28, 1876; W. H. Roberts to James M. Comly, Comly Papers, OHS; P. B. S. Pinchback to Warmoth, May 6, 1876, Warmoth Papers, SHC.

\textsuperscript{54}C. McKinney to William Pitt Kellogg, March 7, 1876, Kellogg Papers, LSU; New Orleans Republican, February 5, May 7, 9, 16, 17, June 1, 21, 24, July 26, August 23, 26, 31, September 26, October 6, 20, 28, 1876; Daily Shreveport Times, October 31, 1876.
deployed around the state. The radicals reasoned that the Democrats could never peacefully win black voters to their side and that Louisiana would have large Republican majorities so long as military protection deterred white violence. General Christopher Columbus Augur, who had succeeded Emory in command of the Department of the Gulf, used his men discreetly in accordance with Grant's policy of making the military presence in the South as inobtrusive as possible.55

Conservatives naturally cried out that the soldiers were overawing white voters by making wholesale arrests based on trumped up charges. Through fraudulent registration and phony indictments, the radicals would again attempt to thwart the will of the people. Yet the Democrats realized that under recent judicial interpretations of the Enforcement Acts, the troops could do little to bring those persons guilty of political crimes to justice. Augur stationed soldiers in sixty-two locations across the state on election day. The Republicans in New Orleans expected

55Warmoth to Rutherford B. Hayes, October 18, 1876, William Howard Taft Papers, LC; Packard to J. R. Beckwith, September 5, 1876, Pitkin to Grant, October 3, 1876, J. R. West to Grant, October 3, 1876, House Ex. Doc. 30, 44-2, 150-51; Kellogg to R. C. McCormick, October 16, 1876, L. A. Sheldon to Hayes, October 31, 1876, Hayes Papers, HML; Charles Hill to J. Earnest Breda, September 5, 1876, J. P. Breda Papers, LSU; New Orleans Republican, July 25, September 22, October 3, 1876; New York Herald, July 25, August 25, 1876; Chicago Daily Tribune, July 21, 1876; Brigadier General C. C. Augur to C. C. Antoine, May 16, 1876, LS, DG, 1871-1878, RG 393, NA; Augur to AAG, Division of the Missouri, September 25, 1876, "Report of the Secretary of War," House Ex. Doc. 1, 44-2, Vol. I, Pt. 2, 497.
trouble, and Kellogg asked that General Philip Sheridan return to the scene of his earlier "triumphs."^56

Election day was extraordinarily peaceful by the state's usual standards. Unlike previous contests, the Democrats had concentrated their efforts at intimidation in five parishes, later called the five "bulldozed" parishes.

Bands of "regulators" infested East Baton Rouge Parish as well as those areas lying immediately to the north. These vigilantes claimed to be dispensing justice to thieving blacks and unscrupulous white storekeepers who dealt in stolen seed cotton. Their activities included whipping and hanging Negroes and burning several stores. Also known as "bulldozers," they justified their existence by charging that Republican officeholders refused to arrest black criminals. White citizens eventually forced the black sheriff, the tax collector, and the parish judge to resign and leave the parish. When the election campaign got underway in 1876, bulldozers rode through the countryside

^56 New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 9, August 25, October 21, 27-29, November 2, 3, 7, 8, 1876; New Orleans Republican, October 10, November 7, 1876; Circular Letter No. 18, DG, November 1, 1876; Kellogg to Secretary of War J. Don Cameron, November 1, 1876, House Ex. Doc. 30, 44-2, 12-13, 40; Pitkin to Grant, November 6, 1876, House Mis. Doc. 34, 44-2, Pt. 2, 629; Pitkin to Taft, November n.d., 1876, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 3); Joseph Green Dawson, III, "The Long Ordeal: Army Generals and Reconstruction in Louisiana, 1862-1877," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1978), 458-59; November 1876, TR, DG, 1876, RG 393, NA; Augur to AAG, Division of the Atlantic, October 12, 1877, "Report of the Secretary of War," House Ex. Doc. 1, 45-2, Pt. 2, 99-100.
beating and in some cases murdering Republicans. Wild young men, many of respectable lineage, threatened to kill anyone who dared vote for the radical ticket and even abused black women. The coroner, who held inquests over the bodies of several murdered Negroes, received a stern warning either to leave the parish or suffer a similar fate. Mounted regulators broke up Republican meetings and forced the blacks to attend Democratic conclaves. Two men who tried to organize a Republican club were later found hanging from a gate post. On election day, whites handed the Negroes Democratic tickets and herded them to the polls. Armed bulldozers mistreated election commissioners and seized control of the ballot boxes. The mayor and city police allowed the Democrats to picket the roads leading to Baton Rouge, thus preventing many blacks from voting. 57

Just to the north, rumors of a Negro insurrection spread through East Feliciana Parish in July 1875 and by August the regulators were killing blacks on a regular basis. In October, a sheriff's posse arrested a black man and woman on charges of poisoning a local doctor. Vigilantes seized the pair from the posse, shooting the man to death and lynching the woman. When a district judge

arraigned several of these rioters, armed whites broke up the court and forced the judge to leave the parish. In March 1876 regulators lynched two young black girls, one of whom was pregnant, on a plantation near the parish seat of Clinton. By the summer of 1876 the Democrats had determined that the Republican majority in the parish could only be overturned by preventing the Negroes from voting. Armed men visited blacks at night and warned them against going to the polls. When Packard spoke at Clinton in September, bulldozers shouted and interrupted his address. Republicans abandoned the canvass, and many slept out of doors until after election day. Negroes who had been threatened or whipped decided to join the Democratic clubs and support the conservative ticket. 58

The bulldozers in neighboring West Feliciana Parish assaulted a German storekeeper who was an active Republican, hanged two planters for living with black women, and whipped several Negroes for allegedly stealing cotton. According to local radicals, only the presence of troops in Bayou Sara prevented the Republicans from being driven out altogether.

but the post commander showed decided sympathy for the Democrats. In May armed regulators "persuaded" four police jurors to resign their offices. Vigilantes from Wilkinson County, Mississippi, joined in the terrorism against blacks and white radicals. Refugees crowded the roads, fleeing from the plantations in fear of the nightriders. Conservatives used the thin excuse of an anticipated black uprising to exculpate their own crimes. Republicans had no opportunity to canvass the parish, and many blacks joined the Democratic clubs in order to receive at least some protection from the bulldozers. Whites led the blacks to the polls on election day under threat of losing their jobs or even their lives if they did not support the Nicholls ticket. The Republicans feared to distribute their ballots and failed to poll a single vote in a parish that had gone heavily in their favor in previous elections.59

59 Sen. Ex. Doc. 2, 44-2, 186-88, 192-93, 200-23; D. A. Weber to William Pitt Kellogg, March 6, 1876, Joseph A. Armistead and George Swazzie to Kellogg, May 1, 1876, Kellogg Papers, LSU; "Federal Officers in Louisiana," House Rep. 816, 44-1, 729-33; Captain G. M. Bascom to AAG, DG, May 2, 15, 1876, Augur to Bascom, May 2, 1876, ibid., 736-37; Sen. Rep. 701, 44-2, 2342-2386, 2401-2433, 2446-2451, 2511-2513, 2565-2586, 2739-2942; Second Lieutenant M. F. Jamar to CO, Bayou Sara, July 13, 1876, ibid., 2619-2620; Bascom to AAG, District of Baton Rouge, July 13, 1876, Aide-de-camp G. B. Russel, Statements of Refugees from Mount Pleasant Plantation, June 24, 1876, LR, DG, 1873-1877, RG 393, NA; Dawson, "Long Ordeal," 450-51; Charles Barrow to Panny Bone, November 23, 1927, Bone, "Louisiana in the Disputed Election of 1876, III," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XV (January, 1932), 100-103; New Orleans Daily Picayune, October 21, 25, 31, 1876; E. M. Gerald to James R. Beckwith, January 1, 1876, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 2); Thomas R. Landry, "The Political Career of Robert Charles Wickliffe, Governor of Louisiana,
In the northern parish of Morehouse the whites determined to carry the election at all costs. Bulldozers made "friendly" visits to Negroes at night, sent coffins to Republican candidates, and whipped blacks who refused to join a Democratic club. Republicans attempting to hold their own meetings had to run for their lives. When Packard delivered a speech in Bastrop, Democrats hung him in effigy and shouted him down. Regulator intimidation continued through election day.  

Coercion and violence were more serious in adjoining Ouachita Parish. Whites accused the Negroes of setting fire to several plantation homes and whipped several black suspects. Regulators strung up Negroes to a tree until they agreed to join the Democratic clubs. Republicans could openly campaign only in the presence of federal troops. Prominent Negro Republicans fled into the swamps to escape from the bulldozers. In August a man in a black slouched hat and false whiskers (perhaps the infamous Captain Jack) assassinated parish tax collector Bernard H. Dinkgrave, whose dead body served as a grim warning to other radicals. Rumors spread in Monroe that armed Negroes planned to march into the city on election day and create a disturbance.

1856-1860," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXV (July, 1942), 709-10.

60 Sen. Ex. Doc. 2, 33-2, 422-59; Sen. Rep. 701, 44-2, 1507-1522; House Mis. Doc. 34, 44-2, Pt. 2, 147-54; New Orleans Republican, August 4, September 26, 1876; James A. Denny to Thomas B. Pugh, October 31, 1876, W. W. Pugh Papers, LSU.
The mayor issued a proclamation, using this threat as an excuse to call out special policemen whose main duty seems to have been preventing blacks from going to the polls. After the ballots were cast, future governor Samuel D. McEnery and other white leaders forced the blacks to sign affidavits swearing that there had been no intimidation in the parish. 61

Florida was the only other southern state still under radical control. A thinly settled rural backwater, the state had attracted little national attention during Reconstruction. The Ku Klux Klan had ridden in several counties, but the most pressing issue in state politics was transportation; both parties gladly partook of the spoils of questionable ventures in railroad construction.

The Republicans at an early date had split into bitter factions, each with some truth accusing their rivals of collaboration with the conservatives. When the 1876 party convention failed to reconcile past differences, two Republican tickets entered the canvass until the national committee forced one to withdraw. By contrast,

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the Democrats were well organized and held enthusiastic meetings. The whites made up a slight majority of Florida's voting age population, and the Democrats therefore believed that they could win if they could get all their voters to the polls. 62

By and large, the campaign was strenuous but peaceful, though a few shots were fired at some Republican meetings. Democrats turned to the customary methods of economic intimidation against the blacks, and the Republicans relied on black social ostracism against wavering Negroes. A few white rifle clubs organized but played no active role in the canvass. 63

Republican Governor Marcellus L. Stearns admonished citizens to eschew fraud and violence and not to come to the polls armed. Both parties cooperated to keep the peace. However, armed Georgians voted in several border counties, and the Democrats cut telegraph lines and burned railroad bridges, thereby cutting off communication between Stearns


and the United States marshal. Apparently both parties voted their share of minors and repeaters. Fraud was pervasive: irregular tickets were printed, ballot boxes were stuffed, tally sheets mysteriously vanished. 64

The results of elections in South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida became shrouded in confusion and controversy, a development that not only delayed a decision on the Presidential contest but for a time clouded the prospects for "redemption." The chance for the counterrevolutionary overthrow of the remaining Republican regimes had generated entirely on its own the passion and violence of the campaign with little reference to the national election. 65

Southerners supported the Democratic Presidential nominee Samuel J. Tilden and believed that his election would mean the end of a proscriptive southern policy by the national government. However, southerners' concern about the Presidential contest was distinctly secondary


65 A substantial amount of intimidation and bloodshed also took place in Alabama and Mississippi where the Democrats had only recently returned to power. "Recent Elections in the State of Alabama," Sen. Rep. 704, 44-2, passim; "Mississippi, Testimony as to Denial of Elective Franchise at the Elections of 1875 and 1876," Sen. Mis. Doc. 45, 44-2, passim.
to their all consuming interest in their state elections. Zebulon Vance of North Carolina remarked that he considered the national campaign to be "small potatoes." 66

What most worried southerners about the Presidential election was the constant waving of the bloody shirt. The soldiers of the opposing sides, conservatives argued, had long been eager for sectional reconciliation, but Republican demagogues insisted on keeping the fires of wartime hatred burning. If radical incendiaries could not goad the southern people into some rash act, Grant and his sycophantic minions would send troops to carry the contest with bayonets. More realistically, southern politicians admitted that the Yankees had grown weary of the southern question and that the desperate Republicans were merely trying to distract popular attention from the disgrace of Grantism. 67

If worse came to worse and the voters elected Republican Rutherford B. Hayes President, conservatives doubted

66 New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 22, November 5, 1876; Columbia Daily Register, July 4, 1876; Charleston News and Courier, July 27, August 5, 1876; Sheppard, Red Shirts Remembered, 149; New York Tribune, November 6, 1876.

67 Memphis Daily Appeal, October 21, 1876; New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 23, 1876; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, August 24, 29, September 19, 1876; Jackson Daily Clarion, February 12, 1876; Jackson Weekly Clarion, June 21, 1876; Charleston News and Courier, August 13, 1876; Atlanta Constitution, July 13, 1876; Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel July 25, August 4, 26, 1876; Little Rock Daily Arkansas Gazette, October 19, 1876; C.R. 44-1, 5087-5094; Columbia Daily Register, March 5, 1876; Joseph H. Parks, Joseph E. Brown of Georgia (Baton Rouge, 1977), 486.
that there would be a new departure in radical southern policy. Oliver P. Morton, James G. Blaine, and other party chieftains would easily control the new President and prevent him from following his own liberal instincts. Whatever the complications in national politics, self-government remained for the southern people the most important issue of the 1876 campaign.\textsuperscript{68}

While the country waited for the Presidential election returns, the southern crisis deepened. In Florida fraud and intimidation beclouded the results of the election, though most scholars agree that the Democratic state ticket and maybe Tilden held small majorities. The War Department transferred troops from South Carolina to Tallahassee to protect the board of canvassers. After a long series of maneuvers and several attempts at bribery, this body awarded the state's electoral votes to Hayes, but the state supreme court ruled that the Democrats had won the state election. With armed men posted around the capitol on January 2, George Drew, the new Democratic governor, took the oath of office. In his inaugural address Drew pledged to usher in an era of good race relations and to protect the blacks in all of their rights. The Republicans quietly acquiesced in the conservative triumph and sadly realized that they had little hope of any assistance from either Grant or Hayes.

\footnote{\textit{Columbia Daily Register}, August 23, 1876; Raymond \textit{Hinds County Gazette}, November 1, 1876; \textit{Jackson Weekly Clarion}, June 7, 1876.}
Florida returned to its languid existence, to remain undisturbed until the great tourist invasion of the twentieth century. 69

The situation in Louisiana was naturally more complex. The Republicans charged that intimidation and violence in the five "bulldozed" parishes had allowed the Democrats to pile up bogus majorities. Republican officials guarded the ballot boxes, and the Democrats suspiciously watched their enemies for any sign of trickery. The radicals realized that their cause was lost unless the Returning Board threw out the votes from the bulldozed parishes as well as those from selected polling places in other parishes. The Board with its Republican majority would do its duty, but the Democrats promised to resist any such result by force if necessary. 70


70 New Orleans Republican, November 9, 14, 16, 23, 1876; Pitkin to Taft, November n.d., 1876, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 3); L. A. Sheldon to Rutherford B. Hayes, November 11, 1876, George A. Sheridan
Conservatives predicted even before the election that the Republicans would again attempt to count themselves in, a probability that had made Nicholls somewhat reluctant to accept the gubernatorial nomination. The Democrats were convinced that they had won the election and hoped for a strong demonstration of northern support to foil the brazen radicals. Party leaders set the betting odds on a just decision at about even. A multitude of witnesses solemnly swore before the Returning Board that the election had been free and fair and that many blacks had willingly voted for the Democrats. Both parties agreed that there was perjury and deep damnation somewhere.71

Expecting the worst, Grant sent General Sheridan back to New Orleans with additional troops to protect the Returning Board but placed him under strict orders to take no part in canvassing the votes. Sheridan found little excitement and few signs of trouble in the Crescent City.

White Leaguers welcomed the soldiers and amiably conversed with them on the streets.72

Armed whites controlled the country parishes. Republicans who had testified before the Returning Board could not leave New Orleans and had to abandon their homes and crops. General Augur sent some troops to Monroe, but the conservatives recognized only those officials appointed by Nicholls. As soon as the soldiers left a given area, the White Leaguers resumed their terrorist activities.73

Whether or not Nicholls approved of this extra-legal intimidation, it did not hinder his plans to set up a de facto government and seek recognition from Grant. Marshal Pitkin reported that the White League in New Orleans still held many weapons captured from the state armory during the September rebellion. Republicans had every reason to doubt the Democrats' peaceful intentions, but

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72Cameron to Sheridan, October 31, 1876, Grant to Sheridan, November 10, 1876, Grant to Sherman, November 10, 1876, Sheridan to Sherman, November 16, 1876, House Ex. Doc. 30, 44-2, 24-26, 39, 41; J. N. Brickell to Lemuel P. Conner, November 10, 1876, Conner Papers, LSU; John S. Kendall, History of New Orleans (3 Vols., Chicago, 1922), I, 395.

73Pitkin to West, December 11, 1876, House Mis. Doc. 34, 44-2, Pt. 2, 826; "Willie" to J. Ernest Breda, December 1, 1876, J. P. Breda Papers, LSU; Pitkin to Augur, December 11, 1876, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 299); Sherman to Sheridan, December 13, 1876, Captain Clayton Hale to AAG, DG, December 15, 1876, Kellogg to Augur, December 18, 1876, Pitkin to Augur, December 14, 1876, Augur to AAG, Division of the Missouri, December 18, 1876, ibid., (roll 300).
the conservatives wished to seat Nicholls without violence and, they hoped, without provoking federal intervention.\textsuperscript{74}

The Returning Board on December 5 published the results of their deliberations. The Board threw out enough votes to give Hayes the state's electoral vote, to elect the Republican state ticket, and to give the party a majority in both houses of the legislature. Whether this partisan decision reflected a fair verdict is anyone's guess. That fraud and intimidation had severely skewed the original returns is unquestionable, but which party deserved the victory is unknowable.\textsuperscript{75}

The news of the Returning Board's action exploded like a bombshell in Louisiana. Once again it seemed to the Democrats that radical chicanery had deprived them of a just triumph. Augur stationed soldiers around the State House to protect Packard's legislature when it convened on New Year's Day. In contrast to the fiery Sheridan who had returned to Chicago, Augur was a cool and deliberate man who kept his troops ready to prevent any disturbances without compromising his government's political neutrality. Republicans dreaded violence at Packard's inauguration,

\textsuperscript{74} New Orleans Republican, November 28, 1876; Lathrop, ed., "Autobiography of Nicholls," 255-56; J. N. Brickell to Lemuel P. Conner, November 13, December 25, 1876, Conner Papers, LSU; Pitkin to Taft, December 11, 18, 1876, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 3); New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 10, December 27, 1876; Daily Shreveport Times, December 28, 1876.

\textsuperscript{75} Joe Gray Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, 1863-1877 (Baton Rouge, 1974), 493.
but the conservatives criticized the would-be governor for cravenly holding the ceremony behind the locked doors of the State House. Grant and his cabinet recognized neither claimant to the governorship while Congress was investigating the election.  

Nicholls' inauguration on January 7 was a public and joyous celebration of the state's "redemption." State militia (the White League) columns paraded in the streets of New Orleans while General Ogden and his staff prepared to move against the pretender Packard. Early on the morning of January 9 armed men suddenly appeared on the streets. Shops closed, and citizens braced themselves for the coming battle. However, this time the badly outnumbered Metropolitan Police decided that resistance would be futile, and armed whites captured the police stations and the supreme court building and cut the telegraph lines. A mob surrounded the State House where Packard and his friends were holed up waiting for word from Washington. Nicholls issued a proclamation urging citizens to avoid violent excesses, and he assured General Augur that he would disband
his forces immediately. Augur refused Packard's request for troops to recapture the supreme court building because no bloodshed had taken place.77

Nicholls' plan had been a bold one, but he had carefully calculated that he could peacefully establish a de facto government without causing Grant to recognize Packard. After the coup of January 9, Nicholls again promised the blacks (and at the same time the nation) that he would protect the rights of all men. Armed whites patrolled the streets of New Orleans, and most observers predicted that any support for Packard by the federal government would be met with force.78

77New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 9, 1877; Walter Prichard, ed., "Origin and Activities of the 'White League' in New Orleans (Reminiscences of a Participant in the Movement)," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXIII (April, 1940), 538-41; Louisiana Militia and National Guard, Orders, January-April 1877, Louisiana Historical Association Collection, Tulane; Packard to Grant, January 9, 1877, Pitkin to Taft, January 9, 10, 1877, Hugh J. Campbell to John Sherman, January 9, 1877, Alfred Shaw to Taft, January 14, 1877, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 3); Augur to Cameron, January 9, 10, 1877, Cameron to Augur, January 10, 1877, S. A. Herbert to Cameron, January 9, 1877, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 300); Chicago Daily Tribune, January 10, 1877; New York Times, January 10, 1877; L. A. Sheldon to James A. Garfield, January 10, 1877, Garfield Papers, LC; Annual Cyclopedia (1877), 456.

78Annual Cyclopedia (1877), 456; J. B. Stockton to Taft, January 13, 1877, James R. Beckwith to Taft, January 15, 1877, Packard to Grant, January 15, 1877, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 3); Augur to AG, Washington, January 15, 1877, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 300); New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 16, 1877.
Republican members steadily left the Packard assembly to join the Nicholls legislature, even though the desperate carpetbagger gave unauthorized offers of liberal patronage from Hayes. James Longstreet, who was angling for a cabinet post, told Grant that Nicholls' inauguration would please the people of Louisiana and restore peace and order to the state. Pinchback, who reportedly had not voted for Packard, by early 1877 openly backed Nicholls, from whom he later received a political job. The helpless Packard lamented that his side had but one gun for every hundred White League weapons and a story went the rounds that national Republican bigwig Zachariah Chandler had advised Packard to die on the street to provoke federal intervention. Power slowly but inexorably ebbed away from the radicals.  

Nicholls' appointees took office in several parishes, leaving enraged Republican claimants to contemplate their own impotency. Packard pleaded with Grant to recognize his government or at least force a restoration of the status quo as of the beginning of the year. Augur repeated his earlier refusal to use troops to seize the state arms in the hands of the White League companies, and Packard realized that time was on the side of his implacable enemies. Attorney

79 L. A. Sheldon to James A. Garfield, January 13, 1877, Garfield Papers, LC; James Longstreet to Grant, January 9, 1877, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 3); New York Herald, November 16, 1876; William J. Simmons, Men of Mark: Eminent, Progressive and Rising (New York, 1968), 773-74; P. E. S. Pinchback to William E. Chandler, January 14, 1877, Chandler Papers, LC; New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 16, 1877.
General Taft confessed to Hayes that the Packard government should have received immediate federal assistance but that Grant had hesitated to adopt such a bold policy.\footnote{Chicago Daily Tribune, January 6, 1877; Packard to Grant, January 16, 25, 1877; Packard to Pitkin, January 22, 29, 1877, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 3); Packard to Cameron, January 17, 1877, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 300); Packard to Augur, January 17, 1877, LR, DG, 1873-1877, RG 393, NA; Augur to Packard, January 17, 1877, LS, DG, 1872-1878, RG 393, NA; Taft to Hayes, February 14, 1877, Hayes Papers, HML.}

Even casual visitors to New Orleans reported that the whites would never allow Packard to become governor and that the conservatives preferred martial law to the continuance of Republican rule. Panic and confusion spread through the Republican camp. Marshal Pitkin asserted on February 13 that the White League would attack the State House at any time. Two days later a mysterious stranger from Philadelphia allegedly tried to shoot Packard at the State House, though conservatives believed that the whole affair had been concocted by the radicals themselves. Had either Grant or Hayes recognized Packard, the latter's assassination would have been only a matter of time. In contrast to their fanatical support for Nicholls, Louisianians attached little importance to the Presidential question and were apparently ready to accept Hayes so long as they achieved home rule.\footnote{David F. Boyd to William T. Sherman, January 24, February 16, 1877, Sherman Papers, LC; L. A. Sheldon to James A. Garfield, January 20, February 10, 1877, Garfield Papers, LC; Pitkin to Taft, February 13, 1877, J. B. Stockton to Pitkin, February 15, 1877, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 3); Augur to AG,}
There was, however, no way for the state to stay clear of the national imbroglio. In January Nicholls sent E. A. Burke to look out after his interests in Washington, the primary objective being to commit the national government to a policy of non-intervention. Hoping even to have Grant recognize the Nicholls government before Hayes' inauguration, Burke and his fellow negotiators, congressmen E. John Ellis and William M. Levy, met with the outgoing chief executive several times. For his part Nicholls kept his armed forces under restraint and prevented any violent outbreak that would upset the sensitive negotiations. Burke found that many Republicans, including several of Hayes' friends, had grown tired of the Louisiana carpetbaggers. At the famous Wormley House conference on February 26 the Louisianians promised peace, equal protection of the law to both races, and no prosecution of Republican malefactors in exchange for the explicit assurance that Hayes would not support Packard with federal troops. Implicit in this agreement was the understanding that the Democrats would not join a filibuster in the House to block the completion of the electoral count. Although Nicholls later denied having bartered away Tilden's chances

Washington, February 15, 1877 (two dispatches), E. D. Townsend to Augur, February 14, 16, 1877, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 300); John B. Robertson to William D. Kelley, February 18, 1877, Rutherford B. Hayes Papers, HML; A. B. Griswold to Samuel J. Tilden, February 19, 1877, Tilden Papers, NYPL; New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 16, 1877; Nicholls to Burke, February 17, 1877, Nicholls Letterbook, LSU.
for the Presidency, it is difficult to interpret his actions in any other way. 82

Hayes and his advisers well knew that the Louisiana Democrats would never fight for Tilden but that they might do anything to seat Nicholls. A despondent Packard pleaded with Grant and Hayes for assistance, but on March 1 Grant's private secretary informed him that "public opinion will no longer support the maintenance of the State government in Louisiana by the use of the military" and that the troops in New Orleans would not be used to back either claimant to the governorship. Under the force of this final blow, the Packard government melted away in the warm Louisiana spring, and Hayes ordered the soldiers guarding the State House to return to their barracks. Governor Nicholls quietly took possession of the State House, and Reconstruction in Louisiana was at an end. 83


83 "Old Line Whig" to Hayes, February 22, 1877, George Hannahs to Hayes, February 24, 1877, Packard to Grant,
The final curtain was also coming down on the era of Republican rule in South Carolina. Incomplete returns and charges of intimidation and fraud had placed the outcome of the election in doubt. Governor Chamberlain and the Republicans claimed a small majority for both Hayes and the state ticket. Under orders from the War Department, Colonel H. M. Black in Columbia instructed his troops to protect the State Board of Canvassers in their deliberations. Just as in Louisiana, an Army officer reported that the people did not take "any apparent interest" in the Presidential contest.\(^{84}\)

Basing their decision on massive evidence of pre-election violence and other irregularities, the State Board threw out the returns from Edgefield and Laurens counties, thereby giving the Republicans a majority of two in the house and five in the senate. Such a determination became even more important because under state law the general assembly in joint session would canvass the votes for

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March 1, 1877, Hayes Papers, HML; Packard to Hayes, March 21, 1877, LR, DJ, Louisiana, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M940, roll 3); L. A. Sheldon to James A. Garfield, February 24, 1877, Garfield Papers, LC; Daily Shreveport Times, February 28, 1877; C. C. Sniffen to Packard, March 1, 1877, House Mis. Doc. 31, 45-3, Vol. I, 537; New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 1, 1877; Desmund Fitzgerald to "Dear Lizzie," April 24, 1877, Fitzgerald Letter, LSU.

\(^{84}\) Sherman to Grant, November 10, 1876, Cameron to Colonel H. M. Black, November 13, 1876, House Ex. Doc. 30, 44-2, 26, 30-31; Chamberlain to William E. Chandler, November 15, 1876, Chandler Papers, LC; Colonel John M. Bacon to William T. Sherman, November 17, 18, 1876, Sherman Papers, LC. Much of the following account of post-election events in South Carolina relies heavily on Simkins and Woody, *South Carolina During Reconstruction*, 514-41.
governor and lieutenant governor. In addition, the house and senate would each decide on whom to seat from the two disputed counties. After a series of legal challenges in the state and federal courts and the brief imprisonment of the Board members, the way was clear for the general assembly to meet in late November.

Hampton and his conservative supporters vehemently protested against the "arbitrary" edicts of the Board of Canvassers. The radicals sent urgent telegrams to Washington reporting bloody threats against Republican legislators, and Chamberlain rightly feared that armed men would disrupt the assembly. Grant ordered the federal troops in Columbia to protect the governor against "domestic violence." Chamberlain had an advantage over Packard in Louisiana because Grant had no choice but to support him until a new chief executive was inaugurated. During the night of November 27 federal soldiers slipped into the State House to safeguard the members against attack by Democratic roughs.85

The house (that is those members with certificates of election from the Board of Canvassers) met the next day. When this body refused to seat the conservative contestants from Edgefield and Laurens, the Democrats angrily stormed

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85 Charleston News and Courier, November 23, 1876; Grant to Cameron, November 26, 1876, L. Cass Carpenter to Grant, November 23, 1876, House Ex. Doc. 30, 44-2, 32, 111; Chamberlain to Grant, November 25, 1876, J. B. Gordon and Bradley T. Johnson to Grant, November 27, 1876, Grant Papers, HML; Columbia Union-Herald, November 28, 1876.
out of the hall. A turbulent mob gathered outside and seemed about to drive the United States soldiers from the building, but Hampton pleaded for peace, and the crowd dispersed. Conservative newspaper editors responded to this latest "military outrage" by dusting off their hackneyed denunciations of federal despotism and bayonet rule.86

Their cries of protest were as short-lived as the Republican triumph. After leaving the house, the Democrats had adjourned to nearby Carolina Hall and elected William H. Wallace as their speaker. Before the Republicans arrived at the State House on November 30, the members of the so-called Wallace house pushed their way past the Negro sergeants-at-arms, swarmed into the chamber, and began conducting business. When the Republicans entered, led by their own speaker E. W. M. Mackey, the legislative proceedings degenerated into a dangerous farce. Mackey demanded that Wallace vacate the speaker's chair, and Wallace commanded his own sergeant-at-arms to preserve order. Neither man would give way. Two Democratic bruisers stood near Mackey ready to kill him if any violence erupted in the hall. In a cacophony of warring tongues such as had

86 Chamberlain to Grant, November 28, 1876, Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, 439; Sheppard, Red Shirts Remembered, 166-68; Williams, Hampton and Red Shirts, 393-97; Thompson, Ousting the Carpetbagger, 142-43; Charleston News and Courier, November 29, 1876; Columbia Daily Register, November 29, 1876; Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel, November 29, 1876.
not been heard since the days of the tower of Babel, both
houses stood firm, usually with several members holding the
floor at the same time.

This low political comedy continued for more than four
days with both sides fearing to adjourn lest their
loquacious opponents take possession of the chamber. The
members ate and slept at their desks, and the speakers
droned on day and night. What was said during this forensic
marathon has fortunately been lost to history. On
December 3 Hampton received an anonymous letter claiming
that Governor Chamberlain had ordered 100 members of the
Charleston Hunkidori Club (predominately black) to Columbia
to expel forcibly the Democratic members from Edgefield and
Laurens. As rumors of an impending collision spread, rifle
clubs marched into the city. As armed white men thronged
the streets, Hampton and other conservative leaders decided
to withdraw from the State House. Without conceding the
legal right of the Republicans to occupy the hall, on
December 4, the Wallace house moved back to Carolina Hall.
Hampton had notified Ruger that he might not be able to
prevent his militant supporters from slaughtering the
Negroes or even attacking federal troops, and it was with
some difficulty that he dissuaded his outraged followers
from storming the State House. General Gary and the
Edgefield fire-eaters vigorously opposed the "retreat,"
but Hampton had wisely avoided precipitating a fatal confrontation with national authority.  

Early in the crisis Chamberlain reported that the radicals had "the world, the flesh and the devil to fight" but that with the aid of their "Washington friends" they would "pull through." For General Ruger the situation seemed more complex, and with some degree of indecision, he decided on the course of least resistance, that was to allow the competing houses to talk on so long as their blows were strictly rhetorical ones. Grant and his advisers likewise waited and sent no new instructions to poor Ruger. Secretary of War J. Don Cameron and Attorney General Taft informed Chamberlain on December 2 that he would have to use his own resources to establish the authority of the Mackey house. Just as the South Carolina Republicans were cursing the pusillanimous course of their northern brethren, Grant on December 3 ordered Ruger to protect Chamberlain and his legislature from outside interference. The general

87Avary, ed., Dixie After the War, 366-70; South Carolina House Journal (1876-1877), 9-13; Chamberlain to Cameron, November 30, 1876, House Ex. Doc. 30, 44-2, 36; Charleston News and Courier, December 5, 1876; Columbia Union-Herald, December 1, 5, 1876; Williams, Hampton and Red Shirts, 399-420; Sheppard, Red Shirts Remembered, 170-71, 173-79; Thompson, Ousting the Carpetbagger, 149-51; Morgan, Recollections of a Rebel Reefer, 288-90; Sally Elmore Taylor, Memoir, Vol. I, p. 171, typescript, Franklin Harper Elmore Papers, SHC.
stationed a corporal's guard around the State House but reported quiet in the city.\textsuperscript{88}

Conservatives correctly pointed out that only federal troops could keep Chamberlain in power, and the Massachusetts carpetbagger was painfully aware of his precarious situation. In his inaugural address Chamberlain quoted Hampton as saying that he held the peace of the state as well as the governor's life in his hands. This striking statement generated much controversy, but black leader Robert Brown Elliott swore that he had himself heard Hampton's impolitic but accurate assertion.\textsuperscript{89}

Like his counterpart Packard, Chamberlain had virtually no authority outside the capital. He daily received letters from enraged Republican officials who had been expelled from office by Hampton appointees. On the other hand, every

\textsuperscript{88}Chamberlain to Taft, November 30, 1876, William Howard Taft Papers, LC; David T. Corbin to Taft, December 1, 1876, Chamberlain to Taft, December 6, 1876, LR, DJ, South Carolina, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M947, roll 3); Ruger to Sherman, November 30, December 1, 1876, Taft to Chamberlain, December 1, 2, 1876, Grant to Ruger, December 3, 1876, Chamberlain to Cameron, December 1, 5, 1876, Cameron to Ruger, December 1, 2, 5, 1876, House Ex. Doc. 30, 44-2, 34-35, 37-39; Cameron to Ruger, December 2, 1876, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 300); Moulton Emery to Chamberlain, December 3, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, SCA; Ruger to Grant, December 5, 1876, LS, DS, 1868-1883, RG 393, NA; Chamberlain to Ruger, November 30, 1876, LR, DS, 1868-1883, RG 393, NA; Ruger to Grant, December 3, 6, 7, 1876, Grant to Ruger, December 3, 1876, Chamberlain to Grant, December 4, 1876, Grant Papers, HML; New York Herald, December 1, 5, 1876.

\textsuperscript{89}Greenville Enterprise and Mountaineer, December 6, 1876; Anderson Intelligencer, December 7, 1876; Columbia Union-Herald, December 6, 7, 13, 1876; Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, 449-50.
hungry Democrat in the state of South Carolina besieged Hampton asking for a job under the new dispensation. Although Democrats certainly favored home rule for its own sake, the practical political results of their victory were not inconsequential. Republican peace officers could no longer execute arrest warrants, nor could they prevent rampaging whites from committing murders. Armed men drove the witnesses in the Hamburg and Ellenton riot cases from their homes and threatened their lives.  

In his inaugural address Hampton reiterated his pledges to the blacks and expressed his determination to work for reform despite the highhanded military outrages then taking place in the state. As the realization grew in the public mind that Chamberlain's power was waning steadily, the tone of public discourse became more temperate though no less stubborn in its insistence on installing a conservative government without fail. Hampton wrote to both Hayes and Tilden that peace prevailed in South Carolina and that he intended to press his own claims for the governorship through entirely legal and peaceful methods. Veteran Ohio

90 Williams, Hampton and Red Shirts, 430-31; W. G. Mixson to Chamberlain, January 4, 1877, and Chamberlain Papers, November 1876-April 1877, passim, SCA; Wade Hampton Papers, November 1876-April 1877, passim, ibid.; Columbia Union-Herald, January 4, 1877; John T. Dent to Chamberlain, December 9, 1876, Sen. Mis. Doc. 48, 44-2, Pt. III, 548; W. M. Heath to Grant, January 16, 1877, Grant Papers, HML; David T. Corbin to Taft, December 9, 1876, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 300); Corbin to Taft, January 13, 1877, LR, DJ, South Carolina, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M947, roll 3).
politico Samuel Shellabarger, however, reported that the rifle clubs remained in Columbia and that Chamberlain would have been dead long ago had Hampton not restrained his more impassioned friends. Shellabarger incidentally noted that the conservatives would readily yield the state to Hayes if they could seat Hampton.\textsuperscript{91}

The Democrats sought to strike telling but non-violent blows at the vestiges of Republican power. The Wallace house passed a resolution in December calling on all citizens to pay twenty-five percent of their state and county taxes to the Hampton government. The News and Courier urged the people not to hand over any more of their money to the radical cormorants and to "starve out the thieves." Mass meetings demonstrated popular support, and by January Hampton's tax collectors began receiving substantial sums. Through a complete boycott of the Chamberlain regime the Hampton men sought to present the incoming President with a \textit{fait accompli} that could not be undone, even by military intervention.\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{91}\textit{South Carolina House Journal} (1876-1877), 39-42; \textit{Columbia Daily Register}, December 10, 23, 1876; \textit{Charleston News and Courier}, December 12, 1876; Hampton to Hayes, December 28, 1876, in Hampton M. Jarrell, \textit{Wade Hampton and the Negro: The Road Not Taken} (Columbia, South Carolina, 1949), 170-71; Samuel Shellabarger to James M. Comly, December 12, 1876, Comly Papers, OHS.

\textsuperscript{92}\textit{South Carolina House Journal} (1876-1877), 54; \textit{Charleston News and Courier}, December 16, 18, 20, 28, 29, 1876, January 9, 1877; \textit{Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel}, January 9, 1877; Resolutions of Planters on Savannah River, January 12, 1877, Wade Hampton Papers, SCA;
As Republicans deserted the Mackey house and joined the Wallace house, the News and Courier predicted that: "The end is certain; and we believe that within ninety days, possibly within thirty days, the whole Chamberlain crew will have fled from South Carolina, unless they tarry, by the way, in the State Penitentiary." The rifle clubs, which had become Hampton's state militia, were furious because Grant forbade them to parade on George Washington's birthday, and the countryside remained uneasy. The whites reported incendiary fires set by radical blacks, and Republicans complained that murders had become commonplace. 93

The Chamberlain supporters knew that their future depended entirely upon the course of the federal government, but their strength steadily diminished, often through defections in their own ranks. Former Republican governor Robert K. Scott conferred with Hayes about removing the troops. Immediately after the new President's inauguration, Hampton pressed him to deliver on his promises for a more liberal southern policy. When asked what would happen if Chamberlain was recognized by the government, Hampton

Columbia Daily Register, February 21, 1877; Anderson Intelligencer, February 22, 1877.

93 Columbia Union-Herald, December 22, 1876; Charleston News and Courier, January 1, 29, February 17, 20, 22, 1877; E. R. Arthur to Taft, February 12, 1877, LR, DJ, South Carolina, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M947, roll 3); Cameron to Colonel H. M. Black, February 20, 1877, LR, AGO, Main Series, 1871-1880, RG 94, NA (M666, roll 300); AAAG Wheeler to Ruger, February 19, 1877, TS, DS, 1874-1877, RG 393, NA; Columbia Daily Register, January 17, 1877; E. F. Whittemore to Chamberlain, January 29, 1877, Chamberlain Papers, SCA.
bluntly told Hayes that every Republican tax collector in the state would be hanged within twenty-four hours. After the President ordered the troops to leave the State House and return to their barracks, Chamberlain bitterly reflected that the national Republican party had betrayed him and his fellow radicals into the hands of the bloodthirsty murderers who had subverted the state government.⁹⁴

Given their conspiratorial political outlook, southerners naturally projected their fears onto the events of the national campaign. Even before the election, conservatives predicted that Grant would use federal troops to elect Hayes. The resulting deadlock became part of a plot hatched by the radical cabal in Washington to destroy republican government. Rumors circulated that the President was concentrating troops near Washington to overturn the popular verdict and perhaps install himself as dictator for life.⁹⁵

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⁹⁴Columbia Union-Herald, January 8, March 1, 6, 1877; Charles M. Cummings, "The Scott Papers: An Inside View of Reconstruction," Ohio History, LXXIX (Spring, 1970), 116; Hampton to Hayes, March 5, 1877, LR, DJ, South Carolina, 1871-1884, RG 60, NA (M947, roll 8); Simkins and Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction, 541n; Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, 480-82.

⁹⁵Austin Weekly State Gazette, September 9, 1876; Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel, September 23, 1876; Little Rock Daily Arkansas Gazette, November 12, 1876; Memphis Daily Appeal, November 15, 1876; Gideon J. Pillow to Samuel J. Tilden, November 14, 1876, Tilden Papers, NYPL; Pillow to Tilden, November 18, 1876, John Bigelow, ed., Letters and Literary Memorials of Samuel J. Tilden (2 Vols., New York, 1908), II, 489-90; New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 28, 1876, January 18, 1877; Atlanta Constitution,
Despite these alarms, southerners maintained a calm demeanor throughout the electoral crisis, the most striking evidence of all as to where their true interests lay. The South was tired of sectional agitation and longed for peace. To be sure, a few wild men talked of using force to seat Tilden, but most leaders welcomed the establishment of the Electoral Commission as a reasonable compromise. From the outset, southern opposition to warlike measures made a bloodless solution to the dispute almost inevitable. Much of this moderation originated from the simple fact that few southerners were willing to risk another war to see a New York Democrat in the White House.96

The ultimate decision rested with the North. If the Yankees could stomach "Returning Board Hayes," southerners could swallow him also. The politicians realized their own delicate position in the crisis and wisely chose to wait

December 15, 1876; Raymond Hinds County Gazette, December 6, 1876.

96 Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel, January 27, 1877; E. Merton Coulter, The South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (Baton Rouge, 1947), 372-73; Daily Memphis Appeal, February 4, 1877; Wilmington Daily Journal, January 26, 1877; Atlanta Constitution, February 18, 1877; New York Herald, December 19, 1876; Natchez Daily Democrat, February 25, 1877; New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 19, 1876; George H. Shields to Rutherford B. Hayes, December 28, 1876, William Ewing to Hayes, January 1, 1877, A. H. Garland to A. J. Kellar, January 1, 1877, Hayes Papers, HML; Entry for January 1, 1877, Josiah Gorgas Journal, typescript, SHC; A. S. Meriwether to David F. Caldwell, January 20, 1877, Caldwell Papers, SHC; Memphis Daily Appeal, November 24, December 3, 22, 1876; L. A. Sheldon to James A. Garfield, December 12, 1876, Garfield Papers, LC; L. Sheldon to Samuel J. Tilden, February 18, 1877, Tilden Papers, NYPL.
for their northern friends to make the first moves toward resistance. If the northern Democrats would not stand firm, what could the South do?97

Southerners clearly did not trust Yankee politicians, even those of their own party. The northern Democracy had long followed a course of deception, evasion, and retreat in the face of radical aggression. Southerners asked themselves what these doughfaces had ever done for them, and they could discover very little. Conservatives believed that Tilden had acted indecisively when the Electoral Commission was first proposed, and they questioned whether the party chieftains even had the backbone to force concessions by Hayes on Louisiana and South Carolina. Hampton was still piqued at Democratic officials who had treated him like a pariah during the campaign, refusing to send him needed financial support. E. John Ellis wrote from Washington that "the great New York leader (Tilden)

97Daily Shreveport Times, December 7, 13, 1876; Augusta Constitutionalist, November 19, 26, December 7, 1876; Jackson Weekly Clarion, December 20, 1876, January 10, 1877; Jackson Daily Clarion, January 9, 1877; H. A. Pope to Samuel J. Tilden, January 8, 1877, Bigelow, ed., Letters of Tilden, II, 521-22; Message of Governor James M. Smith, January 11, 1877, Georgia House Journal (1877), 37-39; Anderson Intelligencer, November 23, 1876; Atlanta Constitution, November 30, 1876; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, November 16, 28, 1876; Entry for December 11, 1876, Samuel A. Agnew Diary, SHC; New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 31, 1876; Little Rock Daily Arkansas Gazette, December 10, 1876; J. Dickson Burns to Manton Marble, November 11, December 11, 1876, Marble Papers, LC; New Orleans Republican, December 17, 1876; Joseph E. Brown to L. N. Trammell, December 12, 1876, cited in Parks, Brown, 489.
has proved himself without a plan or a policy." Who could blame the South for refusing to take up arms to defend such a contemptible coward?98

When the Electoral Commission awarded all the disputed states to Hayes, the southerners showed little enthusiasm for a filibuster to block the counting of the votes, particularly with Hayes making soothing promises to them. The Democrats had accepted, yea even pushed for, the creation of the Electoral Commission, and they were therefore bound to abide by its verdict. After all with "redemption" nearly accomplished, southerners now had the luxury of waiting another four years to elect a Democratic President.99

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The South had some hope that Hayes would follow a conciliatory course and refuse to prop up the carpetbag governments with Army bayonets. Yet some conservatives were doubtful that the new President could ignore the contrary opinions of Republican stalwarts. Their most optimistic statements contained a distinct admixture of skepticism. The editor of the Memphis Appeal cautioned that Hayes was "imitating the example of the leader of the Radical party in proposing to take the southern people high up into the mountains and pointing to the rich spoils that are in store for them if they will only desert the Democratic party and join the men who have so long robbed, plundered, and oppressed the south." However anxious southerners might be for conciliation, their promises of cooperation with Hayes contained important qualifications.¹⁰⁰

On the heels of the inauguration, conservatives demanded that Hayes' liberal statements give way to concrete actions. The new President could prove his sincerity by repudiating the carpetbaggers and ending his party's sectional aggression. Southerners would follow the Biblical admonition to judge a tree by its fruits. When Hayes took no immediate steps, leading conservatives stridently

¹⁰⁰Columbia Daily Register, February 20, 1877; Raymond Hinds County Gazette, February 28, March 14, 1877; Daily Shreveport Times, December 22, 1876, February 25, 1877; Natchez Daily Democrat, February 24, 1877; Louisville Courier-Journal, February 24, 1877; Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel, December 28, 1876; Memphis Daily Appeal, March 4, 1877.
admonished him to redeem his earlier pledges. In April
the President finally ordered the troops away from the
State Houses in Columbia and New Orleans. With home rule
restored, the South had achieved her primary objective
and could accept a Republican President with unflappable
equanimit. 101

The great losers in the bargain, the southern Repub­
licans of both races, could barely control their anger.
As the final acts of what they understandably termed a
"betrayal" took place in Washington, their only recourse
was to pour out their vitriolic wrath into stinging private
denunciations of Hayes and his advisers. They warned the
President that Hampton, Nicholls, and other men of their ilk
would grind the southern Republicans into the dust and
inaugurate a reign of terror against the blacks. Some
feared that Hayes was another James Buchanan who would
passively permit a new rebellion to burst forth in the
South. Former Republican judge and future novelist

101 Charleston News and Courier, March 3, 9, 1877;
Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel, March 6, 7, 1877;
Louisville Courier-Journal, March 8, 1877; Memphis Daily
Appeal, March 6, 7, 1877; Columbia Daily Register,
March 7, 1877; New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 6, 1877;
Anderson Intelligencer, March 8, 1877; Brookhaven Ledger,
March 8, 1877; E. A. Burke to Nicholls, March 2, 1877,
R. L. Gibson to Nicholls, March 4, 1877, House Mis. Doc. 31,
45-3, Vol. III, 628, 631; L. Q. C. Lamar to Rutherford B.
Hayes, March 22, 1877, Hayes Papers, HML; David F. Boyd
to William T. Sherman, March 11, 1877, Sherman Papers, LC;
Nicholls to R. L. Gibson, E. John Ellis, and William M.
Levy, March 26, 1877, Nicholls Letterbook, LSU; Clarence C.
Clendenen, "President Hayes' 'Withdrawal' of the Troops--
An Enduring Myth," South Carolina Historical Magazine,
LXX (October, 1969), 246.
Albion Tourgee wrote the epitaph for southern Republicanism: "Every one who fought for the country's integrity or favored the policy of reconstruction will have reason to curse the day they were born." 102

EPILOGUE

ON THE INEVITABILITY OF TRAGEDY

The successful use of violence by white southerners to overthrow Republican state governments and to subvert the nation's reconstruction policies raises several disturbing questions. The American nation failed to resolve its sectional differences peacefully during Reconstruction, just as it had failed to do so in 1860. The fruits of the northern battlefield victory had to some degree disappeared by 1877.

The tumult and bloodshed of the postwar period reflected the era's revolutionary character. The trend in recent historiography has been to interpret Reconstruction as an age of conservatism. This thesis may appear self-evident from the perspective of our own time, but it would have seemed peculiar if not absurd to the Americans of the 1860's and 1870's, and particularly to southerners. One need not accept Charles Beard's holistic interpretation of the Civil War and Reconstruction as a "Second American

Revolution" to demonstrate the reality of the upheaval.\(^2\)
To speak of the triumph of northern capitalism over southern agrarianism is perhaps simplistic, but the revolutionary character of emancipation is undeniable. In 1860 most southern blacks were slaves, by 1865 they were free, by 1867 they were citizens and voters, and by 1868 some were holding important public offices. For the white South, the world had indeed been turned upside down.

After the war southerners tried to preserve as much of the old order as possible. Military reconstruction forced them to make temporary adjustments but did little to change the ultimate direction of the region's politics. In the end southerners threw off the yoke of what they considered to be Jacobinical radicalism and re-established home rule and white racial hegemony.

For these reasons, all the myths and legends of radical Reconstruction that have been exorcised by modern scholarship still have a life of their own. For white southerners, Reconstruction was the great trauma that could not be forgotten. Even as old men embroidered tales of carpetbagger knavery and Negro depravity for their children, the failure of the Republican party to remake southern society should not blind us to the fact that the attempt was made. The North's abandonment of the crusade and the South's

victorious guerilla war against the new regime did not blot out the memory.³

The absence of a formal peace settlement at the end of the Civil War is more significant than students of the period have often recognized. In disbanding her armies, the South made few promises to the victors. Under Andrew Johnson's lenient guidance, southern legislatures, with great reluctance and some ill temper, agreed to accept the perpetuity of the Union, to abolish slavery, to repudiate the Confederate debt, and to recognize the validity of the national debt. Yet southern politicians spurned the Fourteenth Amendment as a possible compromise of the sectional conflict and never fully acquiesced in any of the reconstruction measures.

The Confederacy had not surrendered, if the word has any meaning beyond the mere laying down of arms. An anonymous Georgian prophetically cautioned Thaddeus Stevens, "Your idea of governing the conquered states by the force of the bayonet may serve for a time, but it fills the future with blood. You are aware of the historical fact that no people have yet been satisfied with a single unsuccessful blow for independence." After the passage of the first Reconstruction Act, a Memphis, Tennessee, editor candidly

admitted that the southern people would not be bound by any sense of allegiance to the new state governments created by these laws but would, if the opportunity offered, rise up, repudiate the "radical" constitutions, and send their Republican rulers fleeing for their lives. Such defiance was not empty bluster or mere campaign braggadocio. Albion Tourgee concluded from his own bitter experience as a carpetbagger in North Carolina that when southerners assaulted and killed white and black Republicans, they also were attacking the national government and the ideas it represented.  

The series of skillful and violent blows that caused the reconstruction process to collapse in ruin has led some writers to suggest what actions might have been taken to avert this disaster. Woodrow Wilson once observed that the historian sees events more clearly than the people whom he studies. His vision transcends his subjects' contemporary perspective because he knows what happened next. Theoretically, the historian can survey the entire field of his inquiry with a detached and Olympian air, a neutral observer watching antlike men of the past foolishly scurrying across the pages of history; in reality he is also a product of his own time and culture. Among recent historians David Potter has written most eloquently and perceptively of the

pitfalls of historical hindsight, but Wilson summed up well the persistent tugging between the perspectives of the past and the present when he noted, "It is a wonder that historians who take their business seriously can sleep at night."

Many modern scholars have argued that the reconstruction policies adopted by the national government were too mild and short-lived to effect fundamental changes in southern society. These students have therefore concluded that the South should have been kept out of the Union under military supervision for an indefinite period of time. Other historians have added that the crucial ingredient for a successful reconstruction was the distribution of land to the freedmen. In this way the blacks would have acquired an economic base from which to exercise and protect their newly won civil and political rights. Indeed, the conviction that land reform was the answer has become, in Herman Belz' phrase, the "New Orthodoxy in Reconstruction Historiography."

The assertion that a more radical approach would have been successful may rest on questionable ideological

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assumptions, but it more importantly ignores completely the context of the times. Tourgee later recounted how many southern Republicans had been unmindful of the fact that "the social conditions of three hundred years are not to be overthrown in a moment." From a much different perspective the conservative William T. Sherman predicted that the problems plaguing the South "will hardly disappear till a new generation is born and reach maturity." As later events proved, this seemingly pessimistic forecast was overly sanguine.7

A more important stumbling block lay in the fact that the northern people and politicians lacked sufficient patience or a strong enough commitment to racial justice to carry a radical policy to completion. The Yankees demanded a reconstruction that would be both thorough and brief, objectives that were mutually exclusive. When a decision had to be made, they preferred to wash their hands of the race question rather than to pursue a consistent program to its logical conclusion in the distant future. Even many old abolitionists came to believe that progress in the South would come only with education over a long period of time. Historians who criticize the Republicans for not implementing more radical proposals have neither demonstrated their workability nor have they shown that

7Tourgee, A Fool's Errand, 24-25; William T. Sherman to Philip H. Sheridan, January 2, 1875, Sheridan Papers, LC.
such expedients could have been adopted, much less effectively administered.\(^8\)

In fact, there is every reason to believe that a larger dose of radicalism was not a realistic alternative. Any Draconian measures would have had to rely on military power in the South to enforce them. The popular cry for slashing federal expenditures had so reduced the strength of the Army that it could barely handle its large responsibilities in the South and on the Great Plains. Moreover, both the officers and enlisted men detested southern duty. Most soldiers seemed to prefer fighting Indians to dealing with recalcitrant and sometimes dangerous rebels because they knew firsthand of southerners' willingness to use violence as a political instrument. How many regiments would have been needed in the South to administer a truly radical reconstruction? It would obviously have required many more men than were stationed in the region in the 1870's, and neither Congress nor the American public were willing to expand the size of the Army for this purpose. Southern Republicans painfully realized that the soldiers provided them with precious little protection.\(^9\)


\(^9\)William T. Sherman to John Sherman, January 7, February 3, 1875, Rachel Sherman Thorndike, ed., The Sherman Letters: Correspondence Between General and Senator Sherman from 1837 to 1891 (New York, 1894), 342-44;
Popular attitudes about the size of the Army reflected a general trend in political thought during the period. There were few people who advocated the sort of activist government that would have been necessary to remake the South along the lines desired by radical Republicans or later historians. Despite the centralizing tendencies of the Civil War, retrenchment of expenditures and limited functions became the hallmark of government at all levels during the postwar decades. Men who were primarily interested in civil service reform favored a smaller government so as to give the principles of classical liberalism free play in society. President Ulysses S. Grant tried to administer the laws passed by Congress without actively participating in the formation of policy. Grant and his entourage took frequent vacation trips to the seaside resort at Long Branch, New Jersey leading James A. Garfield to remark, "The President has done much to show with how little personal attention the Government can be run." Garfield saw all this as the "drift of modern thought," and one can find little support for a more vigorous southern policy in such a climate of opinion.  

Irvin McDowell to James A. Garfield, October 28, 1874, January 27, 1875, Garfield Papers, LC; Austin Daily State Journal, September 14, 1872.  

The desire to leave things alone coupled with the growing popularity, at least in intellectual circles, of Social Darwinism precluded any massive welfare assistance for the freed blacks. Universal suffrage was the great panacea of the age, and many friends of the Negro believed that he needed no further help once he had acquired the sacred ballot. If armed with this powerful weapon, the blacks and their white allies still lost elections to the white Democracy in the South, so be it. The public had grown weary of the southern question and certainly had no stomach for the redistributionist schemes and long term military occupation proposed by several Reconstruction scholars.11

The waning of northern interest in sectional issues was hardly a singular development. The ability of any people to participate actively in a political or social crusade is sharply limited by time. In applying this generalization to the problem of revolution, Crane Brinton has argued that a Thermidorean reaction is a "universal" phenomenon that comes sooner or later in diverse settings under widely differing circumstances. Therefore to expect the American people to have sustained the commitment necessary for a "radical" reconstruction of the South is asking them somehow to transcend their own humanity.

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11*Independent*, September 3, 24, 1874.

C. Vann Woodward has wisely remarked that the tragedy of the Reconstruction era will prevent men from ever looking upon it as some sort of golden age.\textsuperscript{13} The inevitability of the tragedy is the most disquieting element of the period. No one has discovered, within the context of the middle decades of the nineteenth century, how a satisfactory solution to the nation's racial and sectional problems could have been found and adopted. That justice would be denied to black people seems an inescapable conclusion. For academic writers to blithely suggest their own solutions to the central dilemma of reconstruction is an act of intellectual arrogance that dismisses with a wave of the scholar's hand the stubborn complexities of the age. In the end resistance by the white South swept radicalism away in a powerful counterrevolutionary tide. There was, however, a final irony. Southern nationalism, whose growth had been so stunted in the embattled and divided Confederacy during the war, suddenly blossomed in the rocky soil of Reconstruction. The "Lost Cause" had not been lost after all.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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V I T A

George Calvin Rable was born on June 8, 1950 in Lima, Ohio. He graduated from Shawnee High School in Lima in 1968. He graduated from Bluffton College in 1972 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history. On August 12, 1972 he married Kay Lynn Kohli at Greenwich, Ohio. Beginning graduate work at Louisiana State University in September, 1972, he received a Master of Arts degree in history in 1973. Since that time he has been working toward the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in history at Louisiana State University.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: George Calvin Rable

Major Field: History

Title of Thesis: BUT THERE WAS NO PEACE: VIOLENCE AND RECONSTRUCTION POLITICS

Approved:

[Signatures]
Major Professor and Chairman
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]
William Cooper
James Bolin
Robert Bache
Thomas C. Oliver

Date of Examination:

November 2, 1978