The Louisiana Unification Movement Of 1873

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THE LOUISIANA UNIFICATION MOVEMENT OF 1873

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

The Department of Government

by

Vincent J. C. Marsala
B.A., Northeast Louisiana State College, 1958
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MANUSCRIPT THESES

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The occupation of New Orleans on April 28, 1862 by Federal forces began the period of military occupation which was to last in Louisiana until the spring of 1877. This fifteen-year span can be divided into two distinct periods. The first was the era of Presidential Reconstruction under Lincoln and Johnson (1862-1867); the second was Congressional Reconstruction under the Radicals (1867-1877).

Reconstruction left a heavy mark upon the economy, politics, and people of Louisiana. So disturbed were the businessmen and planters of New Orleans and South Louisiana over the adverse economic conditions in the state that they made a noble effort to unite the permanent residents in a political movement to regain control and raise Louisiana once again to a state of wealth and prominence. This movement aimed at breaking down the racial barriers which at once divided the endemic population and made it possible for outsiders to gain control of the state government. The attempt to regain power peacefully has been termed "The Louisiana Unification Movement of 1873."
It is the purpose of this thesis to analyze the factors which lead to the formation of the Unification Movement and to suggest reasons for its apparent success and abrupt failure.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1862 as the Union forces gained a foothold in Louisiana President Lincoln appointed a military governor whose duty it was to stimulate the reappearance of the loyal element of the population. To this position General George Foster Shepley was appointed. He was, however, under the authority of General Benjamin P. Butler, commander of the Department of the Gulf. Butler was relieved on December 14, 1862 by General N. P. Banks.

The President's policy was based on the belief that there existed in every Southern State a loyal element which might be made to prove the germ of a civil government owning allegiance to the United States of America. Thanks to the vigorous grip on New Orleans by Generals Butler and Banks, a large body, stronger in numbers than in social prestige,

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became firmly wedded to the Union cause.3

By December of 1863, President Lincoln became convinced that the existing loyal population required support from the rebel ranks in order to assume the character of a political people. Thus he issued his proclamation of December 8, 1863.4 In effect Lincoln proclaimed that all Confederates who would take an oath of allegiance to the United States would be pardoned and regain all rights of property, except as to slaves. Those not benefiting from this proclamation were persons who were presently or had been civil officers of the Confederate Government; all who are or had been military or naval officers above the rank of colonel in the army or of lieutenant in the navy; all who left seats in the United States Congress to aid the rebellion; all who resigned commissions in the Army or Navy of the United States and aided the rebellion; and all who had in any way treated colored or white persons who were prisoners of war in an unjust manner. Also and of greater importance Lincoln announced that he would recognize as the


4Dunning, loc. cit.
true State government in the states of Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina that government organized by citizens taking the oath if their number was equal to one-tenth of the votes cast in such state at the Presidential election of 1860. Under this plan of reorganization, commonly known as Lincoln's ten per cent plan, Louisiana was restored to the Union.

The people of Louisiana were to be allowed to pick up the pieces and start anew the political struggle for power. General Nathan P. Banks, in accordance with Lincoln's plan, ordered an election of state officers for February 22, 1864 and further ordered that in March delegates would be elected for a Constitutional Convention. At this time there were two political parties organized in Louisiana, the Conservative party and the Free State party. The latter contended that Louisiana had committed political suicide by secession and must be created anew through the repudiation of secession.

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and the abolition of slavery. The Conservatives, on the other hand, agreed that secession should be repealed but desired to retain the Constitution of 1852 and slavery. Both of these parties were loyal to the Union. The fundamental issue between them was whether Louisiana should be restored to the control of planters and merchants under the old constitution, or put in the hands of a majority of loyal white people under a new organic law. The latter view was championed by the Free State party and its candidate for governor, Michael Hahn, won at the polls.\(^7\)

Delegates to the Constitutional Convention were chosen on March 28, 1864 and met in New Orleans on April 6, 1864. The total number of parishes represented was nineteen. This left twenty-nine parishes unrepresented. From the parishes represented the largest number of delegates on the roll at any time was ninety-eight. All of the delegates were anti-secessionists, but there was present also a scattering of

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conservatives who hoped to secure compensation for the emancipated slaves. The most prominent members of the convention were not natives of Louisiana. However many of the delegates had resided for some time in the state and were not merely radicals from the North. Judge Edward H. Durell was elected as president of the convention. He was born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire and moved to New Orleans in 1836. While in Louisiana Judge Durell was prominent in state and local affairs. One could hardly consider him a foreigner to the state for he had a great interest and love for his adopted home.

The Convention of 1864 resulted in an extraordinary document which contained reforms and innovations of great

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8Ibid., pp. 67-69. The parishes represented were Orleans, Assumption, Avoyelles, East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Concordia, East Feliciana, Jefferson, Lafourche, Madison, Rapides, St. Bernard, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Mary, Terrebonne, Ascension, Plaquemines and Iberville. Of the 98 delegates, New Orleans had 63, leaving the country parishes only 35. See Shugg, op. cit., p. 201. "... the convention was to be largely a city affair."


social import. In effect it remedied the chief grievances of which farmers and laborers complained before secession. The white urban labor group completely dominated the actions of the convention. The franchise was extended to all white males of twenty-one years who had lived in Louisiana for one year; and the basis of representation in both House and Senate was changed from total population to the qualified electorate, without any restriction on the number of New Orleans seats. The legislature was forbidden to charter banks or create corporations by special act. On the other hand, internal improvements were encouraged by continuing the provisions of the Constitution of 1852. The convention, however, was not content with merely reforming the old order. For instance, slavery was abolished, a progressive income tax was inaugurated, public schools were opened to every child, black or white, between the ages of six and eighteen, and a nine-hour day plus a minimum wage of two dollars was established for all laborers engaged in public works. The convention refused to accord colored labor the right to vote. However, General Banks and Governor Hahn exerted pressure on enough delegates to authorize the legislature, if it so desired, to enfranchise such persons as might be deemed fit because of military service, taxation
or education.11

The convention adjourned in August, 1864, and in September the constitution was submitted to the people and ratified by a vote of 6,836 to 1,566. In the city of New Orleans, the vote was 4,664 to 789.12

The new legislature provided for in the constitution met October 3 and elected two Senators, Michael Hahn and R. King Cutler, and adopted the Thirteenth Amendment unanimously. Although the government of Louisiana was recognized by President Lincoln, its authority was restricted to a very narrow limit, that actually within the Union military lines, and neither branch of the United States Congress admitted

11 Shugg, op. cit., pp. 203-206. See Ficklen, op. cit., pp. 79-80. Governor Hahn was no doubt influenced by a personal letter he received from President Lincoln which stated, "Now you are about to have a convention which, among other things, will probably define the elective franchise. I barely suggest for your private consideration, whether some of the colored people may not be let in, as, for instance, the very intelligent, and especially those who have fought gallantly in our ranks. They would probably help, in some trying time to come, to keep the jewel of liberty within the family of freedom. But this is only a suggestion, not to the public, but to you alone." Quoted from John G. Nicolay and John Hay, Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln (Lincoln Memorial University, 1894), Vol. X, pp. 38-39.

the members chosen by the new state government. Similarly, seven presidential electors chosen by the state legislature had their ballots, which were cast for Lincoln, rejected by Congress in 1865. Thus in Congress the reconstructed government of Louisiana found but little support since Lincoln's policy was under fire from Wade, Davis, and the radicals. A joint resolution introduced in both Houses of Congress which would recognize the state government adopted in Louisiana fared no better than did her claims to representation. The committees had reported in favor of recognizing the government established under Lincoln's plan; but Congress as a whole did not commit itself to such recognition. Such was the status of Louisiana up to the death of President Lincoln.

\[13\] Lonn, op. cit., p. 3. Hahn resigned the governorship on March 4, 1865, and was succeeded by J. Madison Wells the lieutenant governor.


\[15\] Shugg, op. cit., pp. 210-11. The radical Republicans looked upon the South as conquered territory and believed that it should be treated as such.

\[16\] Ficklen, op. cit., pp. 91-92.
It was inevitable that the Confederates returning to their homes from the war would resume control of Louisiana. This was brought about by their great numbers and influence. They had not been disfranchised by the Constitution of 1864; and none but Confederate officeholders and the wealthiest planters were excluded from citizenship by President Johnson's proclamation of amnesty. Governor Wells, seeking re-election, immediately enlisted the votes of the returning soldiers. His backers campaigned through the countryside on a platform hostile to Negro suffrage and Northern radicalism. 17

A Democratic Convention held in New Orleans adopted a strong white supremacy platform. Unqualified support was given the National Democratic party because it was recognized as the only agent by which radicalism could be defeated and the state government restored to its rightful custodians. The convention further held that the government of Louisiana was to be a white man's government, solely for the benefit of the white race, and that those people of African descent

could not be considered as citizens of the United States, and that there could be no equality between the white and the Negro races. Through such a platform the majority of farmers and returning soldiers voted overwhelmingly for white supremacy and home rule, thus capturing the major state offices and the legislature in 1865. The opposition, which was only a remnant of the Free State party, was decisively defeated because it lacked Confederate leadership and laid no claim to compensation for freed slaves.

The newly won political victory of the Democrats in Louisiana proved to be short-lived. The old line aristocrats embarked upon a program which proved repugnant to the people of the North and made it possible for a radical Congress to bring about its own brand of reconstruction.

The state legislature, but more so the parish police juries, enacted laws to regulate the newly freed Negroes. The new black code of Louisiana in effect reduced the Negro

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19 Shugg, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

to a position little short of slavery.\textsuperscript{21} It was not brought about simply because of a hatred for the Negro or a desire to keep the black man in subjection. It was enacted primarily to provide a source of labor for the white planters and to force the thousands of wandering colored people to settle down. To be sure the black code discriminated against the Negro but its provisions were never enforced as it was suspended by the army and the Freedman's Bureau. Nevertheless the enactment of such legislation did much to strengthen the position of Northern radicals who clamored for a vengeful reconstruction.\textsuperscript{22}

Similarly the Radicals were greatly aided in bringing about a severe reconstruction policy by the bloody riot of July 30, 1866 which took place at the Mechanics Institute in New Orleans.\textsuperscript{23} This riot was the direct result of the action of irresponsible white radicals who sought to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21}Commager, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 5-7. The "Black Code" of Louisiana, 1865. See Shugg, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 213. Also see Edward McPherson, \textit{The Political History of the United States of America During the Period of Reconstruction, 1865-1870} (Washington: Philp & Solomons, 1871), pp. 43-44.
\item \textsuperscript{22}Walter L. Fleming, \textit{The Sequel of Appomattox} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), pp. 97-98.
\item \textsuperscript{23}See Report of the Select Committee on the New Orleans Riots. House Reports, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 16.
\end{itemize}
transfer the franchise from Confederate veterans to all free Negroes. 24 Thirty to forty former members of the Convention of 1664 desired to reconvoke the Convention of 1864 so as to revise the Constitution of that year in accordance with their radical views. 25 The Radicals were embarking on a desperate coup d'etat to drive the Democrats from power. This action was taken with the knowledge and apparent support of such influential Radical Republicans in Congress as Thaddeus Stevens, Boutwell, and Conkling, who were seeking to destroy the work of President Johnson in the South. 26

Judge Durell, the ex-president of the Convention, refused to recall the body for fear that it would result in a riot. The radicals however, determined in their efforts, elected R. K. Howell, an associate justice of the state supreme court, as president of the Convention. On the 8th of July he issued a proclamation reconvoking the Convention of 1864. The date for its meeting was set as July 30, 1866 in the old Mechanics Institute.

One of the main instigators of what was to ensue was Dr. A. P. Drostie a dentist from the North. A few days

24 Shugg, op. cit., p. 216.
25 Picklen, op. cit., p. 156.
26 Shugg, loc. cit.
before the Convention was to meet he addressed a large as-
semble of radicals, black and white. His oratory only
served to stir up trouble and dissension between the races.

I want the negroes to have the right of suffrage,
and we will give them this right to vote. . . . We
have three hundred thousand black men with white
hearts. Also one hundred thousand good and true
Union white men, who will fight for and beside the
black race, against the three hundred thousand hell-
hound rebels. . . . We are four hundred thousand to
three hundred thousand, and can not only whip but
exterminate the other party. Judge Abell with his
grand jury may indict us. Harry Hays, with his
posse comitatus, may be expected there, and the
police, with more than a thousand men sworn in, may
interfere with the Convention; therefore let all
brave men, and not cowards, come here on Monday.
There will be no such puerile affair as at Memphis,
but, if interfered with, the streets of New Orleans
will run with blood.  

Ex-Governor Hahn also took his turn in speaking to
the assembly and in effect told the Negroes that they were
as good as any white man. There was no interference on the
part of the Democrats with the speakers, but needless to say
such speeches aroused great indignation and hatred. Little
was now needed to bring about blood shed; and the ignorant
Negroes, led blindly by their white leaders, dreamed of a
future in which they would dominate their ex-masters.  

27 Annual Cyclopedia, 1866, p. 454. Also see Picklen,
op. cit., p. 161.
28 Ibid., p. 162.
Thus it was conveyed to the Negroes that they should march to the Convention and act as a guard for its members. As subsequent events proved, the Negroes acted accordingly.29

The convention assembled as planned at 12:10 P.M., Monday, July 30, 1866. President pro tem Howell took the chair.30 Only twenty-five members were present at the time of the roll call. Because a quorum of seventy-six was not present a recess of one hour was taken so as to enable the sergeant-at-arms to find the absent members.

Meanwhile a procession of one hundred to one hundred and fifty Negroes led by a band came marching up Philippa Street from Canal. They soon massed themselves in a crowd around the portico of the Mechanics Institute listening to the inflammatory remarks of one of their number. At this point a policeman arrested a Negro and attempted to remove him from the scene.31 At first it seemed that the Negro


30 New Orleans Times, July 31, 1866. Events of the riot were objectively reported in this newspaper. See also Ficklen, op. cit., pp. 167-69.

31 Writers disagree over the initial overt act that started the shooting. This writer accepts the incident as related by the Times.
throng would not interfere. But one or two Negroes advanced
toward the policeman and one of them pulled a revolver and
fired at the officer. Other Negroes began to fire and their
shots were met with return fire from the massed police and
white citizens. The Negro crowd scattered, some running
down side alleys while the larger number took refuge in the
entrance of the Institute, out of which they were able to
fire on the police. The pistol fire of the police and white
citizens was much more effective than the Negroes and the
entrance soon resembled a "slaughter pen." The retreating
Negroes took refuge in the convention hall. Many of the
police fired into the assembly room from the front and sides.
Evidently the radicals were expecting such trouble as they
were well armed and returned the fire. The Rev. Dr. Horton
who had opened the convention with a prayer was mortally
wounded. Dr. Dostie, who was a prime target because of his
inflammatory speeches, was shot five times and died a few
days later. The only member of the convention that was
killed was John Henderson. The Democrats lost only one man,
Edgar H. Cenas, and he was killed accidentally by the dis-
charge of a policeman's pistol. The firing remained steady
until two o'clock at which time a lull occurred. Several
Negroes attempted to run out the front door or climb from
the windows. Those that succeeded in leaving the building were attacked and killed. As an eyewitness reporter stated, "to see the Negroes mutilated and literally beaten to death as they sought to escape was one of the most horrid pictures it has ever been our ill fortune to witness." 32

In all about thirty-four Negroes were killed, and over two hundred were wounded. On the other side only ten policemen were wounded and one white citizen was killed accidently. 33

As a result of this episode, together with the rejection of the Fourteenth Amendment 34 and the passage of the "Black Codes," the North and especially the Congress concluded that the colored people were not safe in the hands of their former masters. Thus the Congressional plan of reconstruction, or rather destruction, was forced on

32 *Times, loc. cit.* The Chief of Police Thomas E. Adams was everywhere trying to prevent drunken white citizens and even his own policemen from committing acts of brutality.

33 *Shugg, op. cit.*, p. 217.

34 James G. Blaine, *Twenty Years of Congress* (Connecticut: Henry Bill Publishing Co., 1886), Vol. II, pp. 246-50. The amendment was unanimously rejected February 9, 1867. The passage of the first reconstruction act some three weeks later was no surprise to the Democrats.
Louisiana and the South by the Acts of March 2, 1867.  

Military reconstruction as ordered by these acts reduced all former states of the Confederacy except Tennessee to the status of a conquered territory. As a consequence these territories could regain their sovereignty only by following the wishes of Congress, granting complete Negro suffrage and by ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment.  

Under the Reconstruction Acts Louisiana became a part of the Fifth Military District. General Sheridan was appointed commander of the district and his rule was a harsh one. On March 27, 1867 Sheridan removed from office Attorney-General Herron, Mayor John Monroe and Judge Edmund Abell. In their places he appointed men holding radical views. On June 3 Governor Wells was removed and replaced by B. F. Flanders. Sheridan's action did not stop here. He immediately set out to see that all Negroes were enrolled as voters. Sheridan ordered his registration appointees to exclude from registration all those about whose loyalty there

35 Lonn, op. cit., p. 5.

36 Shugg, op. cit., p. 219. See also Fleming, Documentary History of Louisiana, p. 397.

was any doubt. The result of such action led to the disfranchisement of many white citizens without specific cause or reason. Also it became apparent that the Negroes would vote, not with their old masters as some conservative leaders had hoped, but with the party which had given them the ballot. By September the number of Negroes registered was 82,907 while only 44,732 whites were registered. Negro registrants were immediately organized against the whites in reconstruction clubs, leagues and lodges.\textsuperscript{38}

On August 17, General Sheridan ordered that an election be held on September 27 and 28 on the question of whether a constitutional convention should be convened. Also on election day the people were to vote for 98 delegates in case the proposed convention was approved. The Negro voter turn-out was very large, whereas the white vote was small. The lack of a sizable white vote was caused by the white citizen's hope that his absence from the polls would defeat the plan of the Republicans, which provided that to make the election valid, the votes cast must be a majority of those registered. The plan of the white Democrats failed however as the vote for the convention was

\textsuperscript{38}Ficklen, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 187, 191. See also \textit{Building of a Nation}, \textit{loc. cit.}
75,083, with only 4,006 against. By previous agreement of the party chiefs the delegates were equally drawn from both races with the result being 49 whites and 49 Negroes. All but two members of the convention were Republicans.39

The Convention of 1868 assembled at New Orleans in November and remained in daily session until March 9, 1868. The work of the Convention reflected rather well the political objectives of a faction temporarily in power. The freed Negroes and white Radical Republicans sought to destroy the political power of the planter-merchant oligarchy which had almost regained ascendency with the elections of 1865.40

The chief provisions of the Constitution of 1868 were as follows. First, it provided that all persons should enjoy equal rights and privileges upon any public conveyance. Also, all places of business or public entertainment should be deemed places of a public nature and should be open to all persons regardless of race or color. Second, so as to


prevent future secession, the Constitution provided that all persons born or naturalized in the United States and who had lived for one year in Louisiana were citizens of Louisiana, and that allegiance to the state was subordinate to allegiance to the United States. Third, representation in both houses was to be in proportion to the total population rather than in proportion to the number of qualified voters. Fourth, no public school should be established solely for any particular race. Fifth, a suffrage law was passed which contained the strongest disfranchising clause of any in the South. Every adult male citizen of the United States who had lived in Louisiana for one year was permitted to vote. Exceptions were (1) persons convicted of crime or under interdiction; (2) those who had held any office for one year or more under the Confederate Government; (3) registered enemies of the United States; (4) leaders of guerilla bands during the conflict; (5) those who in advocating treason wrote or published newspaper articles or preached sermons during the rebellion; (6) those who voted for or signed the ordinance of secession. In addition it was added that no excepted person could vote or hold office in Louisiana until that person had signed a certificate acknowledging the rebellion to have been morally and politically wrong and that he regretted any aid or
comfort he had given during the rebellion. However, a person could be excused from signing such a certificate if before January 1, 1868 he had favored the reconstruction acts, and if he had openly and actively assisted the loyal men of the state in their efforts to restore Louisiana to her place in the Union. Sixth, an oath was prescribed, even for members of the legislature, that they should accept the civil and political equality of all men. Also they should agree not to attempt to deprive any person of such equality on account of race or color. Seventh, the labor laws passed in 1865 by the Democratic legislature were declared null and void. Eighth, in case the constitution was not adopted, a majority of the members could recall the convention. Eighty-five members signed the constitution. Several members of the convention were absent, and five who were present refused to attach their signatures, chiefly because of the disfranchising and civil rights clause.41

April 16 and 17 were appointed as election days for the approval or rejection of the proposed new constitution.

41 Ficklen, op. cit., pp. 196-200. See also Edwin A. Davis, Louisiana: A Narrative History (Baton Rouge: Claitor’s Book Store, 1961), p. 270. The Constitution of 1868, "was a Radical document, chiefly designed to give the Negro the political, civil, and social rights he had been denied by the Constitution of 1864."
On these days the people of Louisiana were also to vote for state officers. Major-General R. C. Buchanan, who was now District Commander, issued an order that a recent act of Congress would apply in Louisiana. This act stated that state elections would be decided by the majority of the votes cast, without regard to the number of registered voters. This would in effect prevent those who abstained from voting from defeating the proposed constitution. He also ordered the presence of military troops at the polls so as to insure unhampered voting by Negroes. The election proceeded as planned with no outbursts of violence. The Constitution of 1868 was ratified by a vote of 51,737 to 39,076. H. C. Warmoth, the carpetbag candidate of the Republicans, was elected governor over J. G. Taliaferro by a vote of 64,941 to 38,046. Other officers elected were: Oscar J. Dunn (Negro), lieutenant-governor; George E. Bovee, secretary of state; Simeon Belden, attorney-general; G. M. Wickliffe, auditor; Antoine Dubuclet, treasurer; and Rev. T. W. Conway, superintendent of education.  

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42 Picklen, op. cit., pp. 198-203. A new legislature was elected also. Of the entire assembly about one-half were Negroes. The Republicans had a majority in both houses, 20 to 16 in the senate and 56 to 45 in the house. The Democratic leaders thought it best not to put up a state ticket in opposition to Warmoth. However, the Democrats did compete for legislative seats, judicial positions and parish offices.
With the adoption of the Constitution of 1868 and the establishment of a Radical state government, composed of a Negro-carpetbag-scalawag coalition, Louisiana found herself faced with a painful period of Republican domination that was to last until the triumph of white supremacy in 1877.

The new legislature quickly ratified the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. In so doing Louisiana was readmitted to the Union by the act of June 25, 1868. For the first time since 1861 Louisiana was empowered to send her Representatives and Senators to occupy seats in the United States Congress.\(^43\)

Governor Warmoth through his control of the state legislature and his strong police powers virtually assumed the role of a dictator.\(^44\) As Governor he was able to appoint and remove local tax collectors, assessors, and registrars of voters. Also he could name special constables and fill all vacancies of office, even in the parish police juries. The total registration of voters never tallied with tax or census figures and in some places more Negroes were registered than were alive. Elections had little meaning

\(^43\)Lonn, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

\(^44\)Davis, *Louisiana: A Narrative History*, *loc. cit.*
since a voter could use any poll in his parish or, as in New Orleans, in his ward. As a result it was easy for voters to vote again and again. Also, regardless of the true vote the results of an election could be changed by a central returning board. This board was made up of a Republican majority confirmed by the Senate. 45

Roger Shugg sums the situation up by stating:

This gubernatorial despotism was the antithesis of democratic government. It gave one man, at first H. C. Warmoth and then W. P. Kellogg, the control of elections, courts, and taxation; and by his leadership of the Republican party, he dominated the legislature and the making of laws. The governor was generally supported in the face of local opposition by President Grant, who maintained a "Federal protectorate" over Louisiana with national troops. The state was policed for a decade by soldiers whose mission was to preserve law and order, especially at elections, but the law was whatever a corrupt legislature ratified, elections were determined by fraudulent returns, and the overseer of Louisiana was the governor. 46

The character of the work done by the Radical legislature was inferior and corruption was rampant. 47 The greater portion of the legislation passed during this period was enacted primarily to keep the Republican politicians in power and to provide rewards for their friends. 48 The result

45 Shugg, op. cit., pp. 224-25.
46 Ibid.
47 Lonn, op. cit., p. 21.
48 Shugg, op. cit., p. 226.
of such dishonest government was soon realized in the de-
pression of property values, wasteful expenditures, heavier
taxes and an increase of the bonded debt. The running ex-
penses of the state government increased five hundred per
cent while the state tax rate increased eight hundred per
cent. Increased taxation, however, did not produce enough
revenue to support the state government. The public debt of
Louisiana rose from $14,000,000 in 1868 to $48,000,000 in
1871. Much of the state debt was the result of fraudulent
issues of bonds or overissues. As a result of this fiscal
irresponsibility property values in Louisiana decreased from
fifty to seventy-five per cent.\(^49\) The local governmental
units suffered also because of oppressive taxation. For
instance, in Natchitoches where $13,476 had been ample
revenue to provide local services in 1860, the tremendous
sum of $82,207 was not enough to cover local expenses in
1873. New Orleans suffered even more. The value of resi-
dential property was cut in half and more than 47,000 legal
seizures for taxes were made from 1871 to 1873. By 1873
the fiscal crises had become acute.\(^50\)


\(^{50}\)Shugg, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
Politically the Democrats were in a pathetic state. Little or no opposition had been offered against the party in power. But in the election for state offices in 1872 the Democrats offered the first vigorous and united election campaign against their carpetbag rulers. The candidates of the Radical faction were William Pitt Kellogg for governor, and C. C. Antoine, a Negro, for lieutenant governor. The Democratic candidates were John McEnery for governor and Davidson Penn for lieutenant governor. Governor Warmoth who became involved in a factional fight within his party became a Liberal and supported the conservative state ticket against the Radicals who had the support of President Grant.

The election was carried out in a peaceful manner with the Democrats declaring a victory for their party. The Radicals, however, claimed the victory for their side and accused the Democrats of fraud and intimidation. Warmoth

51 Ibid., p. 229. Also see Lonn, op. cit., p. 154. A fusion Democratic ticket was offered in opposition to the Republicans. This fusion ticket was composed of the Democrats, Reformers, and Liberal Republicans.

52 Davis, Louisiana: A Narrative History, loc. cit.

53 Dunning, op. cit., p. 217.
secured a canvass of the returns by his own returning board thus giving the governorship, the legislature and the presidential electors to the Democrats. S. B. Packard, a United States Marshall and leader of the Custom House faction, appealed the decision to United States District Judge Durell. Durell prohibited the meeting of the Democratic legislature and directed a canvass of the returns of the election by a board which he claimed to be the legal one. This returning board declared the Radicals the victors. As a result two governments were organized in New Orleans. Each recognized itself as the true state government. The Democrats were at a loss, however, as President Grant accepted the verdict of the election as declared by the Louisiana Republicans and W. P. Kellogg was recognized as governor. 54

From such a bitter experience the white business leaders realized that the control of state offices could only be captured with the help of the Negro voters. The war and radical reconstruction had reduced a once proud and rich Louisiana to a state of poverty, chaos, and racial conflict. As a result of this financial insecurity, civil and political

54Ibid., pp. 217-18. For a detailed study of the election of 1872 see Lonn, op. cit., pp. 166-245.
instability, the businessmen and merchants of New Orleans, both white and Negro, were led to join forces in an attempt to end the process of despotism, misrule, and thievery imposed upon Louisiana by the Radical politicians of the North.

The following chapter will deal with the efforts of these businessmen in bringing about a political unification of the races. Such a unification was looked upon by these men as the only solution to Louisiana's problem.
CHAPTER II

THE UNIFICATION MOVEMENT

The seeds of the Unification Movement were sown early in the year 1872. At this time a group of New Orleans citizens, desiring to bring about better government, appointed a committee of fifty-one citizens for the purpose of securing reform in the city government. The committee found that reform must take place in the state government before it could be realized at the municipal level. The reason for this was that many of the ills of the municipal government were brought about by "State interference, and the manipulation of municipal affairs by the State authorities." The committee therefore recommended that all people of Louisiana

\[1\text{See circular letter, dated March 7, 1872, by W. M. Randolph urging unification of all citizens of Louisiana, regardless of race or color. The original letter may be found in the Brickell (Daniel Warren) Papers, Department of Archives, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. See also T. Harry Williams, "The Louisiana Unification Movement," Journal of Southern History, XI (1945), 350. Hereafter cited as "Louisiana Unification Movement." Dr. Williams, Boyd Professor of History at Louisiana State University, is responsible for the only scholarly work on this subject.}\]
organize into one grand party of reform. A convention of
the people of Louisiana was called to meet in New Orleans
on April 23, 1872. Also a State Central Committee of the
Reform party was appointed. On March 12 this committee
issued a notice postponing the proposed convention and
called on all citizens of Louisiana, white and colored, to
join the Reform party. In its address of postponement the
committee attributed the troubles of the state to a lack of
sympathy and co-operation between the two great races in-
habiting Louisiana.²

The Reform party was able to draw some support from
the city but failed in securing support from the country
parishes. Realizing their chance of victory to be slight
the reformers fused with the Democrats hoping that such a
fusion would prove strong enough to defeat the Republicans.
This hope, as previously pointed out, was wiped out by the
Federal Government's recognition of a Republican controlled
government in Louisiana.³

Nevertheless the seeds of race co-operation and unity

²*Annual Cyclopedia*, 1872, p. 474. See also Lonn, *op.
cit.*, pp. 140-41.

³See Chapter I, footnote 51.
were planted. Thus in the dark days of 1873 the Reform leaders, convinced that the salvation of Louisiana lay in a political union of the races, brought forth a specific plan to combine the races. This plan was given the new name of "Unification."\(^4\)

The news that a new party was to be formed was brought to the attention of the public through a column in the New Orleans Times entitled Round About Town. Roundabout, as the writer of the column was known, filled his article with interesting political and social happenings of the day. Letters addressed to him were frequently published and questions, if any, were always answered by Roundabout. On March 29, 1873 this reporter announced the formation of a new party. He stated that some of the best men of New Orleans were organizing to meet the present emergency. In his words, "they are agitating the propriety of forming a party intended solely to meet the existing crises, without any consideration of past issues, and altogether free from traditions or memories."\(^5\)

The New Orleans Times was soon filled with approving

\(^4\)Williams, "Louisiana Unification Movement," p. 351.

\(^5\)New Orleans Times, March 29, 1873.
letters sent in by New Orleans citizens. On April 1, Roundabout published a letter to the people of Louisiana. It was signed by "Juvenus" who claimed to represent the young men of New Orleans. He said,

We believe the hour has come for immediate action on a broad and liberal plane of honesty and good faith to the interests of all citizens, white and black, in Louisiana . . . we believe it the part of wisdom to forget local differences, party issues and personal grievances; we believe it imprudent and il­liberal to feed idle vanities with speculations of what might have been, or to gratify a senseless pride with empty hopes of what may be, when we are convinced those hopes are illusion and impossible of fruition; and upon this plane of our honest faith, with ears deaf to the cries of political malcontents and party hacks, and with lips dumb as to past grievances and failure, we propose to work out the problem whose solution will secure the best possible good for the common interests of every man, woman and child in the State.6

On April 22, a white citizen, desirous of restoring Louisiana to its once proud status, wrote to Roundabout concerning the attitude of the Negro citizen and the necessity for racial toleration and co-operation.

The negroes, disgusted with their white leaders, are desirous of entering into an agreement with the white people by which both parties may be enabled to dwell in concord and pull together in political harness. Their representative men wish to meet the young men of our color, who have no past Democratic records to maintain, to form a coalition having for

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6Ibid., April 1, 1873.
its object the political regeneration of Louisiana. Taxation weighs as heavily upon them as it does upon us. The cost of living and rate of wages are out of proportion. They cannot increase the latter, so they naturally seek to lessen the former. I have it from their leaders, that the negroes are desirous of joining with us in this movement, and that they will agree to use their efforts to establish an honest administration, provided we do not attempt to withhold from them the representation to which their numbers entitle them. In view of these facts I take it that now is the golden opportunity. We cannot afford to let the opportunity slip.

Unless the two races adopt some platform on which they can stand on friendly terms, Louisiana has nothing to look forward to but debt, dissension, anarchy. This is the great question that should occupy our undivided attention, and I desire to meet with my young fellow-citizens to organize a movement looking to this end. It is for this reason I have set forth these views. If they strike the thoughtful as being practical, I hope to hear an expression of opinion from them, as it is only by public discussion of such questions that they can be brought properly before the community.7

Encouraged by such statements, Roundabout created in his column a fictitious citizen of Louisiana named "Mr. Chucks." This character represented the citizens of Louisiana who were coming to their senses on the race issue.8 In one of his first statements Mr. Chucks exclaimed that if the unwillingness of the white citizens to grant political rights to the Negroes was the cause of the fighting and

7Ibid., April 22, 1873.

squabbling, the commercial prostration and the political anarchy, then, "we're doing nothing but making asses of ourselves." 9

The statements of Mr. Chucks were supported by many of the Times readers. 10 On May 3 Roundabout published a letter written by a Negro who signed his statement "Truth." The letter stated that the Negro only wished to live in friendship with the white people of the state. If the Negro possessed civil rights and representation the whole matter would be settled and the carpetbaggers would be thrown out of Louisiana. In short Louisiana would be at peace if the new party would recognize the Negro as a citizen. 11

"Progress," another interested citizen, appealed for the "noisy demagogues" to be ignored and for the two races to seek the confidence and friendship of each other.

We admit ... that our present troubles are the legitimate and direct outgrowth of the failure of the white and black people to dwell in amity and act together in political affairs. The feeling that keeps them apart is not the ordinary difference of

9New Orleans Times. April 29, 1873.

10See ibid., May 1, 4, 1873. Letters signed by "Audax" and "Radical Democrat."

11Ibid., May 3, 1873.
opinion that divides a people into parties; it is deeper and more intense. The prejudices of race have been appealed to; designing men have inflamed the passions and possessed the minds of both races, and their bitter differences have culminated in the present unhealthy, dangerous condition of affairs. We say that the cause of the existing animosity is owing to carpet-baggers having excited the hatred of the negro against the white man. True. But on the other hand, have not designing men among our own people appealed to, kindled and kept alive our prejudices? If it is not so, why is it that, while we readily admit the negro's right to vote, we cannot tolerate his holding office? If we are not blinded by prejudice, why cannot we see the futility of any attempt on the part of 80,000 voters to deny representation to 70,000 voters of the same community? We could easily be made to see all this, but there stands between us and the truth a horde of noisy demagogues, who mislead us as completely as the wily carpet-bagger hoodwinks the credulous negro. And here is our great error. We listen to the teachings of these men, and fondly hug the delusion that the only thing in the way of a coalition between the white and black voters of this State, is the negro's opposition to it. This is a fallacy. The fault is as much ours as it is his. The negroes are as kindly disposed toward the whites as the whites are to them. It only needs the inauguration of proper steps on our part to develop this feeling into one of confidence, of affection.12

The New Orleans Times attempted to strengthen the movement for the talked about unification party by publishing interviews with businessmen who were supporting this new party as the only agency capable of restoring peace to

12Ibid., May 16, 1873.
Louisiana. One such individual stated that the object of the new party was to redeem Louisiana from its existing state of misrule. A prosperous merchant and well-known citizen was quoted as saying, "I am in favor, in case we ever have another election, of giving to the colored people the bulk of the lucrative positions. . . . I am not afraid that they will, in any considerable degree, abuse their privileges, and, for ourselves, we want nothing but peaceful government." 

Roundabout reported that the citizens of the state would be interested to know that the movement had reached an advanced stage of preparation. However, he could not at this time divulge the names of the gentlemen who were representing the white people. Also in the near future a joint call for a convention would be issued and at the convention a platform would be presented that would be acceptable to every man, white or black, who possessed a true interest in the affairs of Louisiana.

At first support for the movement came solely from

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14New Orleans Times, June 2, 1873.
15Ibid., May 30, 1873.
16Ibid.
the Times. However as more and more people voiced their approval for the formation of a new party and unification other newspapers began to show approval and endorsement.17

The New Orleans Herald endorsed the movement but stated:

It can only be a successful one when it has the acquiescence and approval of large and representative classes of the two races. No little club or caucus arrangement, especially when manipulated by gentlemen inexpert in directing political movements, will command success.18

On June 8 the New Orleans Picayune, the leading paper of the conservative Democrats, completely endorsed unification.

Our people should consider well the situation and avail themselves of the opportunity now offered to bring about a complete and cordial reconciliation between the colored and white population of this State. Such a reconciliation would be destructive to carpetbaggery and premise the highest prosperity in the future.

In vain will we open the mouth of our great river to the commerce of the world; in vain build railroads and dig canals, unless the political and moral atmosphere be cleared by some strong movement in which both races participate.

Let there be a union, then, on terms of the

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17See ibid., June 6, 1873 for endorsement by a respected citizen. Also see ibid., May 28, 29, 1873 for interviews with prominent New Orleans citizens.

18New Orleans Herald, quoted in the New Orleans Republican, May 31, 1873.
broadest liberality. Let there be an end of prejudice and proscription, and for the future let there be no differences of opinion dividing our people except upon questions of governmental polity.  

The Republican press looked upon unification under a different light and warned Negroes and Republicans that the movement was a sinister, disguised Democratic plot to destroy the Kellogg government. The New Orleans Republican wrote, "any proposal of alliance coming from the defunct Democratic, anti-civil-rights, star-car party to the colored element, must naturally be regarded by the latter with sharp distrust."  

While the newspapers discussed the issue of unification, the leaders of the movement, white and colored, were holding a number of secret meetings. Finally it was revealed through the New Orleans Republican that a committee representing both races had met and that future meetings were planned. The report of the Republican read:

We learn that there was a meeting for consultation, on Wednesday night, . . . between fifty of the leading white citizens of New Orleans and a equal number of

19New Orleans Picayune. June 8, 1873.  
21New Orleans Republican. June 4, 1873.  
colored men. ... The principal objects of the meeting, as we understand, were to take steps to establish a better understanding between the white and colored people than now exists. ... The utmost harmony prevailed, and every speaker appeared to be actuated by an earnest and sincere desire to establish proper amicable relations between the two races. ... 

The character of the gentlemen who participated in this initial movement is such as to make it one of great importance to the future interests of this city and State.23

On Monday, June 16, the Times reported that a meeting of the representatives of the two races was to be held that evening. The meeting was described as "pregnant with more results for good or evil than any event that has transpired in months."24

Thus at seven o'clock on the evening of June 16 the representatives of the white and colored races met at No. 27 Carondelet Street. The purpose of the meeting was to draw up a suitable platform of principles upon which all the citizens of Louisiana could stand. The meeting place was filled to capacity. Those present were described as "a representation of the intelligence of the State, such as

23 New Orleans Republican, June 13, 1873.

24 New Orleans Times, June 16, 1873.
had never probably before convened."\(^{25}\)

Chairman of the Committee of One Hundred was Isaac N. Marks, a prominent and much-esteemed New Orleans wholesale grocer. He was born in Charleston, South Carolina but had lived in New Orleans since the age of nineteen. As a citizen he was most active in the affairs of New Orleans and the state. His many positions included head of the Fire Department, President of the Firemen's Charitable Association, Alderman of the Second Municipality, President of the Louisiana Fair Association, President of the New Orleans, Florida and Havana Steamship Company, President of the Mutual Aid and Benevolent Life Association and Director of the Sun Mutual Insurance Company.\(^{26}\)

At the head of the important committee on resolutions was Louisiana's own hero, General P. G. T. Beauregard.\(^{27}\) As chairman of this committee Beauregard was called upon to read a memorial to the people of Louisiana as prepared by

\(^{25}\)Ibid., June 17, 1873. Activities of the meeting were reported in virtually all Louisiana newspapers.


the resolutions committee. The document he presented was that of the majority report. The report read as follows:

Whereas, Louisiana is now threatened with death in every vital organ of her moral, material and political being;

And whereas, her dire extremity is but the fruit of unnatural division among her natural guardians—the children of her soil and of her adoption; and

Whereas, we have an abiding faith that there is love enough for Louisiana among her sons to unite them in a manful and unselfish struggle for her redemption;

Be it therefore resolved—

FIRST—That henceforward we dedicate our selves to the unification of our people.

SECOND—That by "our people" we mean all men of whatever race, color or religion who are citizens of Louisiana, and who are willing to work for her prosperity.

THIRD—That we shall advocate by speech, and pen, and deed, the equal and impartial exercise by every citizen of Louisiana of every civil and political right guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States, and by the laws of honor, brotherhood and fair dealing.

FOURTH—That we shall maintain and advocate the right of every citizen of Louisiana, and of every citizen of the United States, to frequent at will all places of public resort, and to travel at will on all vehicles of public conveyance, upon terms of perfect equality with any and every other citizen; and we pledge ourselves, so far as our influence, counsel and example may go, to make this right a live and practical right, and that there may be no misunderstanding of our views on this point:

1. We shall recommend to the proprietors of all places of licensed public resort in the State
of Louisiana, the opening of said places to the patronage of both races inhabiting our State.

2. And we shall further recommend that all railroads, steamboats, steamships and other public conveyances pursue the same policy.

3. We shall further recommend that our banks, insurance offices, and other public corporations recognize and concedo to our colored fellow citizens, where they are stockholders in such institutions, the right of being represented in the direction thereof.

4. We shall further recommend that hereafter no distinction shall exist among citizens of Louisiana in any of our public schools or State institution of education, or in any other public institution supported by the State, city or parishes.

5. We shall also recommend that the proprietors of all foundries, factories, and other industrial establishments, in employing mechanics or workmen, make no distinction between the two races.

6. We shall encourage, by every means in our power, our colored citizens in the rural districts to become the proprietors of the soil, thus enhancing the value of lands and adding to the productivity of the State, while it will create a political conservatism which is the offspring of proprietorship; and we further more recommend to all landed proprietors in our State the policy of considering the question of breaking up the same into small farms, in order that the colored citizens and white emigrants may become practical farmers and cultivators of the soil.

FIFTH—That we pledge our honor and good faith to exercise our moral influence, both through personal advice and personal example, to bring about the rapid removal of all prejudices heretofore existing against the colored citizen of Louisiana, in order that they may hereafter enjoy all the rights belonging to citizens of the United States.

Be it further resolved, That we earnestly appeal
to the press of this State to join and cooperate with us in erecting this monument to unity, concord and justice, and like ourselves forever to bury beneath it all party prejudices.

Resolved, also, That we deprecate and thoroughly condemn all acts of violence, from whatever source, and appeal to our people of both races to abide by the law in all their differences as the surest way to preserve to all the blessings of life, liberty and property.

Resolved, That we pledge ourselves to the cultivation of a broad sentiment of nationality, which shall embrace the whole country, and uphold the flag of the Union.

Resolved, That as an earnest of our holy purpose, we hereby offer upon the altar of the common good all party ties and all prejudices of education which may tend to hinder the political unity of our people.

Resolved, That in view of numerical equality between the white and colored elements of our population, we shall advocate an equal distribution of the offices of trust and emolument in our State, demanding, as the only conditions of our suffrage, honesty, diligence and ability; and we advocate this not because of the offices themselves, but simply as another earnest and proof upon our part, that the union we desire is an equal union and not an illusive conjunction brought about for the sole benefit of one or the other of the parties to the union.28

28 Taken from the New Orleans Times, June 17, 1873. The original document is in the Department of Archives, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. A photocopy of the original manuscript is located in the Appendix of this thesis. The unification document was published also in New Orleans Picayune, June 17, 1873 and in many of the country newspapers. See Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, June 21, 1873.
This document was signed by the members of the resolutions committee who were responsible for its formation. They were I. N. Marks, P. G. T. Beauregard, C. C. Antoine (Negro), George Y. Kelso (Negro), Charles H. Thompson (Negro), James I. Day, Auguste Bohn, Aristide Mary (Negro), Dr. L. C. Roudanéz (Negro), and W. M. Randolph. All of these members were prominent in the affairs of New Orleans and were well known throughout the city and to some extent the state. I. N. Marks, as previously pointed out, was a successful grocer who found time to participate in many different activities. Beauregard, well known because of his exploits during the war, was president of the New Orleans and Carrollton Railroad. Caesar Confucius Antoine, Lieutenant Governor, headed the list of Negro members. His inclusion was a serious error on the part of the unifiers. Antoine was highly respected by his own race but despised by the whites. George Y. Kelso was a State Senator from Rapides Parish who had some standing as a legislative leader. Less prominent of the Negro members was Charles H. Thompson a preacher and

29 New Orleans Times. June 17, 1873.

30 See Williams, "Napoleon in Gray." pp. 281-86.
member of the New Orleans School board. 31 James I. Day was at one time president of the Bank of Louisiana and afterwards president of the Sun Mutual Insurance Company. 32 Auguste Bohn was president of the Mechanics' and Traders' Bank, a director of the New Orleans Cotton Exchange and a stockholder in the Vallette Dry Dock Company. 33 Alexandre Aristide Mary was a Creole Negro philanthropist who was respected by both races. 34 Dr. L. C. Roudanez, born in St. James Parish, was by far the most prominent of the Negro members. He was Paris educated, refined and wealthy. Dr. Roudanez vigorously championed the interests of his people. He purchased the L'Union and renamed it the New Orleans Tribune. This was the first Negro daily newspaper in the United States. It proved to be a journalistic success; however, it was a financial failure. 35 W. M. Randolph, the


32 Jewell, op. cit., p. 129.

33 Williams, "Louisiana Unification Movement," p. 357.


last member of the resolutions committee, was a respected and well-known judge. He was born in Virginia and a relative of the great defender of States Rights, John Randolph of Roanoke.36

After the reading of the majority report by General Beauregard, Captain Ferner presented the minority report. This report pledged its signers to support all of the promises contained in the majority report, but suggested the calling of a mass meeting, at which resolutions would be adopted which would at once create a public sentiment that would guarantee to the colored man every public right. This suggestion immediately brought Dr. Roudanez to the floor. He stated plainly that if the gentlemen were afraid of what they were doing, if they had to first educate public sentiment up to it, then the colored people had best remain where they were until the white colleagues could make up their minds. It was within the power of the white man to grant voluntarily those rights which the law guaranteed. It was upon this basis that the races had proposed to join together. Dr. Roudanez further stated that if this was to be done at a mass meeting the colored people would not come.

36Jewell, op. cit., p. 100.
They would wait until the white people would make up their minds.

Isaac Marks then took the floor and urged acceptance of the majority report without reservation. To him there was no middle course. The colored men must be met fairly and honorably, with no restraints. Peace in Louisiana could only be restored by a perfect equality of the races. He argued that those present must meet the issue squarely, or give up the entire program.

J. H. Kennard, in a boisterous and irrelevant speech, endeavored to show that in recommending to the proprietors of foundries and the officers of corporations that no distinction should be made between the races, the committee was acting in disobedience of the Constitution. Dr. Roudanez again took the floor to rebut his statement and defiantly asserted the colored man's rights.

Senator Henri Burch (Negro) in a short speech recommended that the colored gentlemen present should not vote because the question was to decide what the white men were going to do. This suggestion was not accepted. C. C. Antoine in his remarks stated that the majority report expressed all that the colored man asked, and that its adoption would establish a unity between the two races.
This Committee of One Hundred was composed of the business, legal, and journalistic leaders of New Orleans. The committee included, "the presidents of practically every corporation and bank in the city." The gathering certainly resembled our modern-day Chamber of Commerce meeting.

Now that the cloak of secrecy that had hidden the new movement from the people's view had been ripped away public opinion concerning unification began to take shape. Roundabout quickly sought to shape this opinion in favor of the

37 *New Orleans Times*, June 17, 1873.

38 Williams, "Napoleon in Gray," p. 269.
unification movement by heartily endorsing its leaders and goals. For instance on June 18, the day after publication of the majority report, Roundabout replied in answer to a doubtful colored citizen:

The ruling spirits of the movement, so far as the white men are concerned, are not men to rashly promise, or weakly break their plighted word. General G. T. Beauregard, Isaac N. Marks, Dr. Samuel Choppin, David Urquhart, W. B. Schmidt, A. Mitchell and James I. Day are not aspirants for office. The thousands who have eagerly watched every phase of the movement, the merchants, mechanics and planters, have not the faintest desire for political preferment. For the first time in a long and not uneventful career, we behold men who take an interest in public affairs, without an ulterior object. . . . The expressions of a majority of the gentlemen who addressed the meeting on Monday night were far too earnest . . . and their appeals in behalf of justice were far too eloquent and heartfelt to admit for an instant a doubt of their determination to carry the measure cut in its fullest meaning. Within a few days, every citizen of New Orleans who believes in the wisdom of the change, will have an opportunity to participate, and if Roundabout is any judge of public sentiment, the number will embrace every man in Louisiana who has the interests of the State at heart. 39

As optimism of the Times grew, the Picayune and the Republican loudly sang the praises of unification. The New Orleans Picayune looked upon the movement as most valuable in bringing about a better understanding between the people

39New Orleans Times, June 18, 1873.
of the state. A week later another editorial in the Picayune expressed even greater support for the movement.

It is a Louisiana proposition, for Louisiana alone—to save the people of Louisiana, from being garrotted by the thieves and tyrants who now hold us by the throat. We heartily support the great end sought to be obtained. We heartily assent to give the colored race all the political rights and privileges under the law, the white race possesses. We merely desire a political unification of all races in Louisiana.

What is wanted is, an unification of honest men of all parties into one Grand Louisiana Party, to lift the State up, from the deadly control of the thieves, carpet-baggers, and scalawags who now plunder and oppress her.

Likewise the New Orleans Republican approved and supported the unification movement but warned, and rightly so, that the Negroes as a class were not prepared to trust the unifiers. It would be a while before they could forget slavery, degradation and the thirtieth of July, 1866. Nor could the Negro easily forget that these things were caused by the very class who were now willing to acknowledge the Negro as a fellow citizen.

Influential and prominent citizens of New Orleans

40New Orleans Picayune, June 18, 1873.
41Ibid., June 25, 1873.
42New Orleans Republican, June 18, 1873.
expressed their support of the new movement and urged others to do likewise. The Catholic archbishop of New Orleans, Napoleon Joseph Perche, asked that the Catholics of Louisiana give their support to the unification movement. In a letter published in the Le Propagateur Catholique he said:

I have . . . seen this meeting of reconciliation with joy, looking upon it as the beginning of a new era for us. The honorable names which I have seen on both sides, and particularly the respected name of its President, Gen. Beauregard, which is synonymous with honor and loyalty, are guarantees of the sincerity of the reconciliation on all sides.

I am satisfied that the Catholics, who through principle and conviction have always shown themselves devoted to the country, will labor to hasten the effect of this close union, which has only been retarded by unfortunate misunderstandings.

Ex-Governors Paul O. Hebert and Alexandre Mouton announced their support of the movement and their letters of approval were published by the press. Hebert was strong in his endorsement, "... our duty is plain. Let us grant all the rights and privileges enjoyed by white people, equally, and beyond cavil, to the freedman."

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45 Williams, "Louisiana Unification Movement," loc. cit.
46 New Orleans Times, July 11, 1873. For approval of a prominent produce merchant see ibid., June 23, 1873.
his letter of endorsement, which was addressed to General Beauregard, stated:

The colored people are not our enemies, the freedmen particularly, and if they do not act with us to redeem Louisiana from ruin and shame it will be our fault.

Let us in good faith allow them all the rights of citizenship, including a fair proportion of the public offices according to their merit and capacity.

Probably the strongest appeal for unification came from General P. G. T. Beauregard. This appeal was made in answer to the many "ungracious" and "illiberal" statements directed toward Beauregard because of his prominent position in leading the unification movement. His statement appeared in the Times as a direct letter to his "Fellow Citizens." The letter read in part:

I am persuaded that the natural relation between the white and colored people is that of friendship. I am persuaded that their interests are identical; that their destinies, in this state where the two races are equally divided, are linked together, and that there is no prosperity for Louisiana which must not be the result of their co-operation.

I surrender no principle, nor do I separate from any friends. I unite with those who, upon a candid consideration of the circumstances they do not control, have to extract from them the greatest amount of good that they allow of.

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47Ibid., July 12, 1873.
If there be any who can propose other and better means, I shall not be backward in adopting them. But it is very clear to my mind that the strength of a State consists in the harmonious, cordial, contented union of all the good men of the community in honest efforts for the improvement and progress of the whole. It is equally clear that strife, discord, disunion and distracted efforts and pursuits will produce nothing but weakness and disappointment. The base, selfish, unscrupulous, and mercenary always profit from confusion, disorder and the disintegration of society.

This is a full, candid, and to my mind, accurate view of the situation, and I shall regulate my conduct accordingly, so as to free ourselves from "carpet-bag" rule, and the improper interference of the Federal Government in our State affairs.48

As one can see endorsement and approval of the political unification of the races was heavily favored in New Orleans. It soon became evident that the movement would primarily be a city affair because of the lack of approval outside of New Orleans. In the country parishes unification was loudly denounced. For example, in North Louisiana the Democratic Monroe Ouachita Telegraph in its editorial entitled "Radicalism Outdone" wrote:

The [unification] document itself furnishes its own comment, and requires, intrinsically, from us no lengthy disapproval. As a specimen of satire, it would rank high in the humorous literature of the day, did not the names of Beauregard, Gibson and

48Ibid., July 1, 1873.
other well known Southern men appear as endorsers, whose manliness of character lifts this pernicious scheme above the atmosphere of satire and insincerity. . . .

The address is wrong not only in theory, but recommends a practice which must prove destructive to all the ennobling virtues of our race and to every material interest of the State.

Unification on the basis of perfect equality of whites and blacks! We abhor it in every fibre of our being. We know no necessity that can bring us to such a pass.49

The Republican country newspapers were divided in their opinions on unification. Some supported the movement while others advised the Negroes to have nothing to do with it.50

49Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, June 21, 1873. Also see ibid., June 28, 1873 for statement concerning unification quoted from the Mobile Register. "We warn Louisiana that she walks blindfold to the doom: that she cannot buy present peace at the price of eternal shame." Also of interest see remarks on Gen. Beauregard's statement in ibid., July 19, 1873. Of importance see the Shreveport Times, July 20, 1873. This leading organ of white supremacy stated, "we have to the best of our ability studied this movement . . . and see nothing in it but failure and degradation."

Finally, the committee of fifteen that had been appointed by Marks to study the possibility of a mass meeting announced in the New Orleans papers that such a gathering was to take place. Notice of this meeting appeared under the title "Grand Unification—An Appeal for the Unification of the People of Louisiana." The date was set as Tuesday, July 15, at seven P.M., and the place of meeting was Exposition Hall. The public notice of the mass meeting also contained the unification platform and a lengthy list of over a thousand signatures of citizens who endorsed the platform.

The purpose of such a meeting was to win public ratification of the unification platform. This meeting, everyone realized, would decide the fate of the unification movement; either make it a successful political upheaval, or a dismal flop.

Exposition Hall, on the night of the meeting, was completely filled. People of both races were present in

51New Orleans Times, July 11, 1873. This notice also appeared in the New Orleans Picayune, July 11, 1873.

52Ibid., July 12, 1873. See letter written by a member of the Committee of One Hundred.

53The following description of the unification meeting was taken from the New Orleans Times, July 16, 1873.
great numbers, however, the number of white citizens was estimated to be four times that of the colored citizens present. On the platform were seated several members of the Committee of One Hundred and the vice-presidents of the meeting. Over the platform hung two large American ensigns, between which was suspended a large square of canvas inscribed with the words "Equal Rights, One Flag, One Country, One People."

At eight o'clock the assembly was called to order by J. D. Hill. Thereafter Isaac Marks was nominated and elected as chairman of the meeting. Hill then took the floor again and read a list of names, sixty-five, of men who had been selected as vice-presidents, and three secretaries. Marks then made the opening address.

I stand here tonight in the presence of my God, deeply impressed with the solemnity of this occasion, altogether as the hour for the purpose of endeavoring to reconcile the difference and divisions of Louisiana, which have so long existed among the people of Louisiana. I desire to impress every man within the hearing of my voice, with the same solemnity of feeling which fills my bosom tonight. This is no ordinary occasion; this is no political gathering; it is no outpouring of the adherents of a political party; but it is the quiet, earnest, determined counsel of a portion of the people of the State of Louisiana coming together for the purpose of adopting measures looking to the extrication of our beloved State from the perils which now surround it. We come here to-night, I hope—I trust in God—that we come here to-night

54 The New Orleans Picayune. July 16, 1873 states that more colored citizens than white were present.
to lay upon the altar of our country all of the prejudice of the past. To recognize all citizens of the United States as equals before the law, and we come here to-night as, I trust, to unanimously ratify the manifesto set forth by a committee of one hundred citizens of Louisiana, composed equally of two races, which, I trust has caused to dawn a new era, not only in our own State, but through the length and breadth of our entire land. . . .

At the conclusion of his speech Marks asked if W. M. Randolph, who was scheduled to be the first speaker, was present. As he was not, the chair then recognized the Hon. T. T. Allain, of Baton Rouge. Senator Allain called upon the people of Louisiana to unite and march together to the polls so as to "redeem our State from the pangs of exhaustion and depletion under which she so long has been and is yet suffering."

The third speaker was James Davidson Hill. He was called upon to read, in the absence of W. M. Randolph, certain resolutions prepared for the meeting. Before reading the resolutions he stated that he supported the unification movement simply because it was the only way by which Louisiana could be redeemed. The resolutions were as follows:

55New Orleans Times, loc. cit.

Resolved, That the preamble and resolutions adopted by the Committee of One Hundred, meet with the adprobation of this mass meeting.

Resolved, That we, the people of Louisiana, white and colored, assembled in mass meeting, pledge ourselves—as soon as the existing opposition to the enjoyment of the civil, political and public rights of all citizens, irrespective of color, shall have ceased—to unite all our influence and energies, and co-operate in a common movement to reduce taxation to a rate corresponding to the resources of the country; to investigate and correct the public debt; to suppress unnecessary offices; to diminish the high salaries and exorbitant emoluments attached to public office; and to secure in Louisiana, as soon as possible, the establishment of an honest, economic and patriotic government.

Resolved, That the President be authorized to appoint an executive committee of thirty, to advocate, maintain, and develop throughout this State the principles hereinbefore set forth, and to convene the people, and take other measures for the purpose of the hereinbefore—recited resolutions.57

The next speaker was State Senator Henri Burch, a Negro. His presence on the platform "was a prime political blunder." He was known by the whites as a member of the corrupt customs house faction, and a carpetbagger from Connecticut. His speech went a long way toward ruining the meeting. In effect he said, "we Negroes congragulate [sic.] you white citizens upon overcoming your silly prejudices;

57New Orleans Times, loc. cit. The Times noted that these resolutions were adopted and that many voices voted negative.
we will help and guide you upward on the path that leads to complete tolerance."\textsuperscript{58} Senator Burch further ridiculed and scolded the whites by stating:

We the colored people, are, I repeat, guilty of no crime. You, the white people of this state, if you had taken the proper course, would have easily acquired the confidence of the colored people, and you would have had the government in your own hands. . . . But to the contrary your course was such as to satisfy the colored man that he could not trust you, and he firmly believed, of his own accord, that the moment you came into power you would deprive him of his civil and political rights. You, by your own action forfeited entirely the confidence of the colored people of this State. Your exclusion from office and from participating in the government of her affairs, was the result of your own conduct and your hostility to the advancement of the colored man.\textsuperscript{59}

The last speaker was James Lewis, a colored leader of New Orleans. He took the chair to read a document prepared by several of the prominent Negro leaders of New Orleans. The document was a pledge designed to dispel any fears which the white citizens may have had concerning colored support of the unification movement. This pledge of Negro support read as follows:

We, the undersigned, firmly convinced that the movement of reconciliation inaugurated under the

\textsuperscript{58}Williams, "Louisiana Unification Movement," p. 365.

\textsuperscript{59}New Orleans Times, loc. cit.
auspices of the Committee of One Hundred is the only means by which confidence may be restored among the people of Louisiana, every citizen secured in the quiet enjoyment of his civil and political rights, order re-established in her finances, and prosperity developed upon her soil, unhesitatingly accord it a sincere and unscrupulous support, with the same ardor with which we participated in its inception.

In order, therefore, still further to develop and strengthen this movement, and deduce therefrom its natural results, we publicly declare that so soon as the existing opposition against the enjoyment of our rights to be admitted, on an equal footing with other citizens, in places of public amusement and public resort; to receive equal accommodation on public conveyances, steamboats, and in public hotels; admission in public schools and public institutions of learning, shall have ceased; so soon as our fellow-citizens will be disposed to divide the governmental powers equally between the two races inhabiting our State, that each race may thus be equally protected, we pledge ourselves to unite all our influences and our energies with those of our fellow-citizens in a common movement to reduce taxation to a rate corresponding to the resources of the country; to investigate and correct the public debt; to suppress unnecessary offices; to diminish largely the high salaries and exorbitant emoluments attached to public office, the useless multiplicity and extravagant compensation of office being among the principal causes of the public demoralization and disorder; and, in a word, to secure in Louisiana, as soon as possible, the establishment of an honest, economic and patriotic government. This pledge we publicly make and engage our honor to maintain. We will add we believe ourselves sufficiently authorized to affirm that the masses of our colored citizens who, equally with ourselves, have the welfare of Louisiana at heart, will, with this understanding, promptly become the adherents, supporters and advocates of the reconciliation movement.
This politically inept document reflected the deep distrust which the colored people felt for the white citizens. It bluntly and tactlessly stated that the Negroes must first receive full recognition of their civil and political rights before they would unite with the whites to overthrow the carpetbaggers and redeem Louisiana. "This conditional promise rang down the curtain on the meeting like a wet blanket."\(^6^1\)

With the reading of this document the meeting adjourned. A few observations of the unification meeting should be made at this time. First it should be noted that two of the most prominent white leaders of the unification movement were absent from this all-important meeting. They were

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\(^6^0\)See ibid. Also see a photocopy of the original document in the Appendix of this thesis. The manuscript is located in the Department of Archives, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

\(^6^1\)See Williams, "Louisiana Unification Movement," p. 366.
General Beauregard and William Randolph. Why were they not present? The more probable answer is that they believed the unification movement could not achieve state-wide support. Thus they realized that the movement was doomed as nothing more than a city affair. So to escape embarrassment they absented themselves from the ill-fated meeting. Another interesting observation is that of the five platform speakers, three were Negroes. Also the tone of the speeches by these Negro leaders was not of reconciliation or of unification but of wrist-slapping and chastisement of the whites.

Thus the unification movement collapsed before it really got started. However not everyone was quick to realize its failure. The Times reported after the ill-fated mass meeting:

The unification movement may now be considered as fairly afloat, and should the ocean before it prove rife with storms, its friends would do well to remember that storms, even if troublesome, are purifying; while they prostrate the weak trees of the forest they more firmly root those which are stronger.62

The Picayune spoke out and charged that the movement had been crushed by the colored peoples refusal to co-operate with the whites until their rights were recognized.63

63Williams, "Louisiana Unification Movement," loc. cit.
Concerning the Negro leaders and fate of the unification movement the Picayune wrote:

Again we say, we are sorry indeed that these "representative men" of the negro should have so wantonly and effectively killed the unification movement, but they have done it, and the funeral is theirs. 64

However, the failure of the movement seemed no great surprise to the Picayune. As early as July 13, an article taken from the Natchitoches Times stated that unification was a failure. This statement was based upon the observation that the movement was repudiated by the Negroes because it offered more than they demanded and repudiated by the whites because it conceded more than they were willing to give up. 65

The New Orleans Herald reported that unification was "as dead as a door nail." Blame for its demise was put on James Lewis and his reading of the pledge written by the several colored leaders. Lewis was described as, "the ruthless bird who killed Cock Robin, with the arrows furnished him by the Customhouse managers." 66

64 New Orleans Picayune. July 18, 1873.
65 Ibid., July 13, 1873.
66 New Orleans Herald as quoted in the Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, July 26, 1873.
Even though the consensus acknowledged that unification was dead and should be forgotten, Marks made a final and futile appeal to the people of Louisiana.

Despite the declarations and predictions of the opponents of Unification, it is not a failure, and cannot fail, unless madness has taken possession of our people, and they are determined, rather than sacrifice their absurd and inhuman prejudices, that the state shall become the prey of anarchy and ruin.

Why not come forward gracefully, generously and cheerfully, as true lovers of justice, equal rights and human liberty, join hands with the colored citizens of Louisiana and form an organization on the basis of the plan for unification, and thus be ready to treat with the Government at Washington for the redemption of the State.67

These pleadings went unheard and unification was buried. As Roundabout so aptly stated, unification was, "misjudged; its spirit distorted; its deductions falsely and illogically stated. . . ."68
CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

The attempted political unification of the races in Louisiana in the year 1873 was a unique endeavor. This final chapter will deal with the reasons for the failure of the unification movement. But before an analysis can be made, the reason for the formation of such a movement must be pointed out.

Louisiana, as a result of the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction, was in a state of financial ruin. In 1860 Louisiana was second in the nation in per capita wealth but by 1880 she was in thirty-seventh place. With the abolition of slavery Louisiana lost over one-third of its assessed wealth. This loss of the Negro as a form of economic capital brought widespread ruin to the planting aristocracy and Louisiana as a whole. Real property was worth only thirty per cent of its 1860 value, and over one-third of the once rich farm lands were no longer in cultivation. The rich plantation owner was not the only citizen to suffer great
financial loss. The poor man suffered likewise through the loss of horses, mules, cattle, pigs, machinery and farm implements. The sugar industry of south Louisiana suffered more than the cotton areas because of the heavy capital investment necessary for sugar production. For example, in 1861 over twelve hundred large estates were harvesting cane but in 1865 only one hundred and eighty were able to operate. The entire countryside of Louisiana was a pitiful scene of ruin and desolation.

New Orleans, the great metropolis of the South, escaped the physical ruin endured by the rest of the state, but its thriving merchants and businessmen were virtually wiped out. The large city banks had sent millions in gold bullion to the Confederate government never to be returned and the businessmen never fully recovered from the loss of their wealth. Thus the financial ruin of Louisiana was felt primarily by the businessmen and planters in whose hands the wealth of the state had once been concentrated.

The end of the war brought no relief from this poverty and despair. "Reconstruction" as carried out by the Radicals merely increased the chaos and bitterness of the South. Taxation imposed by the Radical state government of Louisiana was unbearable. The tax rate increased from thirty-seven
and one-half cents on one hundred dollars in 1866 to $2.15 in 1871. The state debt rose from eleven million dollars after the war to over fifty millions in 1875. These heavy tax demands were made of a people who had not yet recovered from a devastating war. In New Orleans the value of residential property was cut in half and legal seizures of property were common occurrences. By 1873 the fiscal crisis was explosive.¹

To alleviate these drastic conditions peacefully the businessmen and planters of New Orleans and south Louisiana sought to solve their problem rationally through a political unification of the races. The planter-business class realized that the heavy taxes imposed upon them as the property class could only be removed by those who were responsible for such taxation, namely, the newly enfranchised Negro voters. The businessmen of New Orleans, led by General Beauregard, were confident that once the Negroes were won over from the Republicans that the Negro electorate could be easily controlled.² After all, Negro suffrage was a reality

¹See Shugg, op. cit., pp. 190-233.
and it was to the unifiers' advantage to make the best of a "bad situation." Thus the motive for unification seemed to have been economic and was not prompted by the white man's desire to raise the status of the Negro to that of a first-class citizen. The concessions that the white unifiers were called upon to make were a form of capitulation to reality. For economic reconstruction seemingly could be purchased only by endemic promotion of racial integration.

Unification of the races, however, was a complete failure even though it appeared for a time to eventuate in certain success. The initial acceptance of the movement was confined primarily within the boundaries of New Orleans and was never able to achieve state-wide endorsement. Unification furthermore was supported in the main by the more prominent upper-class citizens who stood to benefit economically from a political union of the two races. Also city-wide support for unification was greatly helped by the endorsement of the New Orleans press which was controlled by the aristocrats who had a vested interest in unification. One writer explains New Orleans support of unification by the observation that the people of south Louisiana were

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predominately of French descent and Catholic, resulting in a more tolerant attitude toward the Negro as opposed to the Anglo-Saxon whites of central and north Louisiana.4

The primary reason for the demise of the unification movement was the lack of support from the white citizens.5 The majority of these people were solidly united in opposition to any form of racial co-operation. This attitude was brought about by the elements of fear, jealousy, proscription, hatred and fanaticism that had long been present in Louisiana, as they are present to some degree in any society.6 These feelings were relatively dormant until they were aroused by the power-seeking Bourbons who screamed the threat of Negro supremacy. Thus in Louisiana as in the other southern states a policy of extreme racism was adopted and all whites were united under the spell of white supremacy regardless of civic or economic issues in national or local politics. The fear of Negro rule by the white citizens of Louisiana was to some extent justified. For the general character of the Negro state government in Louisiana during

reconstruction was dismal and devastating in the extreme. 7

A second important reason for the failure of unification was the inability of the unifiers to gain mass support from the Negroes. 8 This was brought about by two factors. First, the Negro, only recently freed was suspicious of the friendly overtures of the white unifiers who only a short time ago were referred to as "Master." Also the Negroes as a class could not easily forget the degradation imposed upon him, the bloody riot of July, 1866 and the Colfax riot of April, 1873. Thus the Negroes were dubious, and understandably so, of any ideas of union with the white race which had for so long looked upon him as a mere chattel. A second reason for the lack of Negro support was brought about by the Negro politicians who benefited from the Radical Republican state government. These Negro leaders advised and warned their colored brothers to avoid any form of cooperation with the planter-business class. For the first time the Negro was experiencing participation in public affairs and would not jeopardize the loss of these privileges through


8Williams, "Analysis of Reconstruction Attitudes," loc. cit.
a doubtful realignment with the planter-business class. Even if the unifiers could have massed Negro support behind their movement the desired ends of unification, economic peace and recognition of the Negro as a social person, could not have been realized. The whites of Louisiana would not, as previously pointed out, tolerate the political recognition of the Negro as an equal citizen. But more important the planter-business class would never make the financial concessions necessary to supply the social services as promised the colored people in the unification platform. These services could only be provided by high taxes and this was the very thing that the white unifiers wished to curtail. 9 Thus the desires of the two groups were from the beginning incompatible.

A third reason for collapse of the movement was the lack of expert political leadership. For a political movement to be a success there must be competent professional politicians to chart the course which is necessary to achieve victory. The unifiers refused to acknowledge this inescapable fact and as a result contributed to their own defeat.

9Ibid.
As Professor T. Harry Williams so aptly stated, "... the hand of a professional [politician] would have saved the movement from some of its blunders. Any good ward heeler ... would never have let Burch speak at the meeting of July 15."^{10} But the unifiers, amateurs as they were, refused to admit the professionals within their ranks, believing that through such action the people desirous of honest government would flock to their call.

Now that the movement for unification has been examined as to the underlying motive as well as reasons for its failure, the question may well be asked what this brief episode adds to the already well-known story of Reconstruction. This proposed movement by the businessmen and planters of New Orleans to unify the races represents an attempt by both sides, white and black, to face realistically the serious economic and social problems confronting Louisiana. The unifiers believed that these problems could be solved rationally without resort to violence, fraud and intimidation. There is evidence to indicate that if the races could have been reconciled the doctrine of white supremacy might

^{10}Williams, "Louisiana Unification Movement," p. 368. For a statement concerning alarm over the exclusion of the professional politicians see the New Orleans Times, July 13, 1873.
not have achieved such success in Louisiana. This state-
ment is based upon the inescapable fact that until the end
of the nineties the races enjoyed a considerable amount of
compatability. For instance at the International Exposition
in New Orleans in 1865 the white and colored people mingled
together freely and their respective societies marched to-
gether on Louisiana Day. In 1896 there were 130,334 regis-
tered Negro voters in Louisiana and many schools were
integrated. Racial toleration was even evident in Missis-
sippi where most saloons served whites and Negroes at the
same bar and many restaurants served both races in the same
room. Also the results of reconciliation and harmony of
political purpose achieved by the Southern Populists in the
nineties proved the ability of the races to work together.
However the economic, political and social frustrations
experienced by the nation in the nineties were overwhelming.
These frustrations and tensions had to be relieved and the
choice agreed upon to bring about such relief was the Negro.
Permission to use the Negro race as a scapegoat was given
by the federal courts in such cases as Louisville, New
Orleans, and Texas Railroad v. Mississippi (1890), and
Plessy v. Ferguson (1896). Also "permissions-to-hate" as C.
Vann Woodward calls them were given by the Northern liberals
who were eager to conciliate the Southern states, from Southern conservatives who had abandoned their policy of moderation in their fight against the Populists, from the Populists themselves who were disillusioned with their former Negro allies, and from the nation as a whole which found itself embroiled in imperialistic adventures against colored peoples in other parts of the world. Thus the Negro who enjoyed only temporary prestige and the status of a first-class citizen, given him by the Federal Government during Reconstruction, served as a national scapegoat in the reunion of North and South and as a sectional scapegoat in the reunion of the Solid South.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{11}See Woodward, \textit{op. cit.}, Chapters I and II, pp. 13-95.
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APPENDIX

THE LOUISIANA UNIFICATION DOCUMENT OF 1873
Whereas Louisiana is now threatened with death
in every vital organ of her moral, materi-
al and political being.

And whereas her dire extremity is but the fruit
of unnatural division among her natural
 guardians. The children of her soil, of her
 adoption, and whereas we have an abiding
 faith that there is love enough for Louisiana
 among her test to unite them in a manful and
 selfless struggle for her redemption.

Be it therefore resolved

First, that henceforward we dedicate ourselves to
the unification of our people.

Second, that by "our people" we mean all men of
 whatever race, color or religion, who are citizens of Louisiana who are willing to
work for our prosperity.

Third, that we shall advocate by speech and pen and
deed, the equal and impartial exercise by every
citizen of Louisiana of every civil and political
right guaranteed by the constitution and laws
of Louisiana, by the constitution and laws of the
U.S., and by the laws of honor, brotherhood,
and fair dealing.
Fourth, that we shall maintain and advocate the right of every citizen of Louisiana and of every citizen of the U. S. to frequent at will all places of public resort and to travel at will on all vehicles of public conveyance, upon terms of perfect equality with any and every other citizen, and we pledge ourselves to feel as our influence, counsel and example may go to make this right a live & practical right, and that these may be no misunderstanding of our views on this point.

We shall recommend to the proprietors of all places of licensed public resort in the State of Louisiana, the opening of said places, to the patronage of both classes inhabiting our State.

And we shall further recommend that all railroads, steamboats, steamships & other public conveyances pursue the same policy.

We shall further recommend that our Banks, Insurance Offices, and other public Corporations recognizing & concede to our colored fellow citizens when they are stockholders in such institutions the right of being represented in the direction of the same.
4th

He shall further recommend that hereafter no distinction shall exist among citizens of Louisiana in any of our public schools or state institutions of education, or in any other public institution supported by the state, city, or Parish.

6th

He shall also recommend that the proprietors of all factories, factories and other industrial establishments in employing mechanics or workmen make no distinction between the two races.

X

from the manuscript and archival collections in the Department of Archives
Louisiana State University
We shall encourage by every means in our power our colored citizens in the rural districts to become the proprietors of the soil, thus enhancing the value of lands and adding to the productivity of the state, while it will create a political conservatism which is the offspring of proprietorship. And we furthermore recommend to all land proprietors in our State, the policy of considering the question of breaking up the farms into small farms, in order that our colored citizens and white emigrants may become practical farmers and cultivators of the soil.

Fifth, that we pledge our honor and good faith to exercise our moral influence, both through personal advice and personal example, to bring about the rapid removal of all prejudices that forelock against the colored citizens of Louisiana, in order that they may thereafter enjoy all the rights belonging to citizens of the United States.
SIXTH.
Be it further resolved that we earnestly appeal to the people of this State to join and cooperate with us in erecting this Government on a principles of unity, concord, justice, and like ourselves forever bury beneath it all past prejudice in the subject of race or color.

SEVENTH.
Resolved that we deplore and strongly condemn all acts of violence from whatever source, and appeal to our people of both races, to abide by the law in all their differences as the best way to preserve to all the blessings of life, liberty, and property.

EIGHTH.
Resolved that we place ourselves to the cultivation of a broad sentiment of nationality which should embrace the whole country in the firm of the Union.

from the manuscript and archival collections in the DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES Louisiana State University
That— as an earnest— of our holy purpose we hereby offer upon the altar of the common good all Party bias, all prejudice of educational which may tend to hinder the political unity of our people.

That— in view of the nominal equality between the white and colored elements of our population, we shall advocate an equal distribution of the offices of trust and emolument in our state, demanding as the only condition of our sufrage— honesty, diligence, ability, and we advocate this not because of the offices themselves but simply as another earnest proof upon our part, that the union we desire is an equal union and not an illusive conjunction brought about for the sole benefit of one or the other of the parties to that union.

C. O. L. Superintendent

Chas. W. Thompson

James W. White

Dr. W. F. Read and

M. R. Randolph

from the manuscript and archival collections in the DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES Louisiana State University
PLEDGE OF SUPPORT BY LEADING NEGRO CITIZENS
We, the undersigned, firmly convinced that the movement of reconciliation inaugurated under the auspices of the Committee of One Hundred is the only means by which confidence may be restored among the people of Louisiana; every citizen secured in the quiet enjoyment of his civil and political rights; order re-established in her finances; and prosperity developed upon her soil; unhesitatingly accord it our sincere and continued support, with the same ardor with which we participated in its inception.

We therefore still strive to develop and strengthen this movement, and declare therefore its natural results, and publicly declare that so soon as the existing opposition against the enjoyment of civil rights to be admitted and placed on an equal footing with other citizens in places of public amusement, liberty...
present to receive equal accommodations and public conveyance, steamboats &c. in public hotels, shall have ceased &c. to com as

and fellow citizens will be disposed to divide the government powers equally between the two races inhabiting our state, that each race may

and be equally protected. We pledge ourselves to unite all our influence &c. and energies with those of our fellow citizens in a common movement to reduce taxation to a rate corresponding with the resources of the country; to investigate &c. correct the public debt; to suppress unnecessary offices; to diminish largely the high salaries &c. extravagant expenses attached to public office; the necessity &c. extravagant compensation of office being among the principal causes of the public demoralization & disorder: and in a word, to secure in Louisiana, as soon

from the manuscript and archival collections in the Department of Archives
Louisiana State University
as possible the establishment
of an honest, economic, and
patriotic government.

This pledge we
publicly make and engage
our honor to maintain.

We will add
that we believe ourselves self-
assuredly authorized to affirm
that the major part of our
honor citizens, who,
unalike, with ourselves, have
the welfare of Louisiana at
heart, will with this under-
standing, promptly become
the adherents, supporters,
and advocates of the Recommit Movement.

Aristide May

Geo. B. Rostain

William May

H. William Roy

Wm. Rodolph

from the manuscript and archival
collections in the
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES
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VITA

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Date of Examination: May 15, 1962