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The final years of Reconstruction in Mississippi saw both Republicans and Democrats abandon their efforts to attract the politically undecided. Instead, they began to cultivate the party faithful--the Republicans the black majority, the Democrats the white minority. Burdened by the heavy taxes levied by the Radical regime and disgusted by its incompetence and corruption, the Democrats resolved in 1875 to redeem the state by fair means or foul. They drew the color line, imposed strict discipline in their ranks, and used persuasion, intimidation, and violence to cow Republicans both black and white.¹

¹William C. Harris, The Day of the Carpetbagger: Republican Reconstruction in Mississippi (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), pp. 617-618, 626-627; J. Mills Thornton III, "Fiscal Policy and the Failure of Radical Reconstruction in the Lower South," in Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward, ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 351, 371, 384; Euline W. Brock, "Thomas W. Cardozo: Fallible Black Reconstruction Leader," Journal of Southern History XLVII (1981), pp. 183-206; Michael Perman, The Road to Redemption: Southern Politics, 1869-1879 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), pp. 142, 165-168. Corruption was not so rampant in Mississippi as in some other states, but that fact did nothing to assuage the anger of hard-pressed taxpayers.

The counterrevolution of 1875 left Mississippi firmly in Democratic hands. In some counties fear of Redeemer violence made many blacks too scared to vote. In others the Democrats made a more subtle mockery of the electoral process. A planter from the state's eastern black belt reported that in his county blacks

take but little interest in politics, and we take them into our organization, pay a tax, or do some little thing for them, and we have them solid. . . . Why, our darkies will walk up in line, with Republican tickets in their hands, and just as they get to the polls they will slip Democratic tickets out of their pockets and vote them. . . . And then the judges have a way of accidentally unfolding a ticket and glancing at it. . . . They are afraid to play tricks, and they don't care one way or the other.

Only in a half-dozen or so overwhelmingly black Mississippi delta counties did Republican voters consistently enjoy a measure of political power. There, the Democratic planters, aware of the economic and social dangers posed by a disgruntled work force, often agreed with black leaders on fusion tickets. The blacks usually received a few minor offices, a member or two on the board of supervisors, and a seat in the state legislature. The Democrats, however, reserved the right to approve the black nominees.²

²New York Times, September 14, 1883 (quotes Major Young); Scrapbook 48, Jason Niles Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Vernon Lane Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), pp. 202-203; Harris, The Day of the Carpetbagger, p. 709.

Only internal divisions threatened Democratic supremacy. The traditional rivalry between delta and hill country and disputes between "Bourbons" and "Liberals," agrarians and New South proponents, and courthouse rings and their adversaries severely tested party discipline. The Liberal-Bourbon split posed the least danger to Democratic unity. The Bourbons were unashamed of secession, loathed the Reconstruction amendments, and cared not at all about Northern public opinion. Their Liberal opponents, seeking Northern investment and fearing federal intervention, paid homage to the ideal of national reconciliation and lip service to that of black political equality. In 1875 the Liberals stood in the background while the Bourbons broke Republican heads but, when the carnage was over, seized the reins of power for themselves.³

The leading Liberal and Mississippi's most powerful politician was United States Senator L. Q. C. Lamar. Lamar was a brilliant and charming man who had a keen appreciation of his own ability. Shrewd and disingenuous, he concealed his arrogance under a cloak of false humility. Lamar cared deeply about what Northerners thought of him and of his state. He eulogized Charles Sumner and assured the nation of the

³Willie D. Halsell, "Democratic Dissensions in Mississippi, 1878-1882," Journal of Mississippi History 2 (1940), p. 123.

good faith of the Mississippi Democracy. He quailed not at the bald-faced lie. Recent state elections, Lamar told the Cincinnati Enquirer in 1878, "were as peaceable as any in the world could possibly be. Not a human being was molested or made afraid."⁴

The Bourbons resented the Liberal ascendancy but few considered bolting the party. Other factions were more volatile. Delta planters fretted when neither the state legislature nor the national Democratic Party seemed inclined to build levees along the Mississippi River. In the spring of 1882, a disastrous flood inundated the delta, and Republican President Chester A. Arthur recommended extensive levee improvements. In July a Washington County man warned Governor Robert Lowry:

The national Democratic party in its principles & policies does not and cannot forward the proposition that the national government shall levee the river, but the national republican party is making the bid for the Delta counties. If the bid is accepted the unity of our white population is broken and the state is turned over to republican rule. If we of the Delta are subjected to the annual floods of the river, our country is not habitable, and the character of the government that may prevail over it

⁴James B. Murphy, L. Q. C. Lamar: Pragmatic Patriot (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), p. 202 (quote). "Lamar makes very different speeches in Mississippi from those he delivers for the Northern market," observed former Republican Governor Adelbert Ames (New York Times, May 2, 1876, in Richard Nelson Current, Those Terrible Carpetbaggers [New York: Oxford University Press, 1988], pp. 325-326).

becomes a minor question.⁵

Many counties in the delta and in the rest of the state had fallen under the domination of courthouse cliques. Democrats shut off from places of power and emolument resented handpicked candidates, packed conventions, and the party muzzle. Seizing on local discontents, they frequently challenged party nominees in county elections. The independents badly frightened the Democratic regulars when they on occasion fused with the Republicans.⁶

More worrisome, though, were Mississippi's farmers. In 1875 the farmers, organized by the Grange, had contributed much to the Democratic victory. Yet, in the ensuing years of Liberal rule their influence in party councils diminished while their economic condition worsened. Pushed to the wall by low cotton prices and the scarcity of credit, infuriated by Mississippi's crop lien law, by unequal taxation, and by oppressive and discriminatory railroad rates, they lashed out at

⁵New York Times, May 29, 30, 1882; Chicago Tribune, June 14, 1882; J. L. Morphis, Oxford, to William E. Chandler, June 15, 1882, in Willie D. Halsell, ed., "Republican Factionalism in Mississippi, 1882-1884," Journal of Southern History 7 (1941), p. 91; A. J. Paxton, Arcola, to Robert Lowry, July 9 (quote), Lowry to James Z. George, July 10, 1882, Governors' Records, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson. For the flooding on the lower Mississippi see Chicago Tribune, March-April, 1882.

⁶Harris, The Day of the Carpetbagger, p. 711.

those Democratic leaders, such as Senator Lamar and Governor Lowry, whom they considered too concerned with the welfare of capital and the corporations. Lamar was particularly despised. In 1878 he had ignored the instructions of the state legislature and voted against the inflationary Bland Silver Purchase Bill. "Count me anti-Lamar, on all occasions," thundered W. F. Tucker of Okolona.

He has done less, and got more credit for doing nothing, than any man I ever saw. He makes about two speeches a year, votes against us every chance he gets, and habitually represents Wall Street and Boston, instead of Miss[issippi]. He has no hold on the hearts of the people, and if he is elected again, it will be because his record is not ventilated.⁷

Not all the Democratic chieftains were in as bad odor with the farmers as Lamar. The junior senator from

⁷Ibid., pp. 638-639, 710, 711-712; James Sharbrough Ferguson, "Agrarianism in Mississippi: A Study in Nonconformity," Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1952, pp. 248-260, 398, 418; Albert D. Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi Politics, 1876-1925 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1951), pp. 44-48; Clark Leonard Miller, "'Let Us Die to Make Men Free': Political Terrorism in Post-Reconstruction Mississippi, 1877-1896," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1983, p. 15; Michael Russ Hyman, "Response to Redeemer Rule: Hill Country Political Dissent in the Post-Reconstruction South," Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York, 1986, pp. 159, 254-255; Halsell, "Democratic Dissensions in Mississippi," pp. 124, 125; Willie D. Halsell, "The Bourbon Period in Mississippi Politics, 1875-1890," Journal of Southern History 11 (1945), p. 528; Bradley G. Bond, "Edward C. Walthall and the 1880 Senatorial Nomination: Politics of Balance in the Redeemer Era," Journal of Mississippi History L (1988), pp. 19-20; W. F. Tucker, Okolona, to Lafayette P. Reynolds, August 11, 1881, Lafayette P. Reynolds Papers, Duke University, Durham, N.C.

Mississippi, the blunt and capable James Z. George, enjoyed the confidence of the farmers, as did Otho R. Singleton, congressman from the Fifth District. Perhaps most appreciated was Congressman Henry L. Muldrow, whose district embraced the hills and prairies of the northeastern corner of the state. A Granger editor noted that Muldrow's "conspicuous advocacy of the rights and interests of the farmers, and his opposition to the Money Power, have attracted the attention of farmers throughout the Country." Farmers also usually composed a majority in the lower house of the state legislature, but these "long eared Grangers" seldom thwarted the schemes of Lamar's cohorts. By the early 1880s Mississippi farmers were restless. Some had drifted into the Greenback Party and others listened attentively to the arguments of the independents.⁸

Having done whatever necessary to gain control of the state, the Democratic leaders resolved to do whatever necessary to maintain their power. They warned

⁸Ferguson, "Agrarianism in Mississippi," pp. 402-403; May Spencer Ringold, "Senator James Zachariah George of Mississippi: Bourbon or Liberal?" Journal of Mississippi History XVI (1954), pp. 181-182; Laurence Shore, Southern Capitalists: The Ideological Leadership of an Elite, 1832-1885 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), pp. 95-96; Halsell, "The Bourbon Period in Mississippi Politics," pp. 524-525, 529 (quotes Columbus Patron of Husbandry, July 24, 1880), 531, 532; Bond, "Edward C. Walthall and the 1880 Senatorial Nomination," p. 11; James L. Alcorn, Jackson, to Mary Alcorn, February 3, 1882 (quote), James Lusk Alcorn Papers, MDAH.

the dissidents that if the whites divided the black majority would rule. George C. McKee, a leading white Republican, testified to the potency of the plea for racial solidarity. "Nearly one half of the Southern Dem[ocrat]s are not Democrat for the sake of Democracy," he told the governor of Ohio.

It is simply their most emphatic way of protesting against 'negro rule.' Split the 'Solid Nigger' and you split the Solid South. Split the white vote and you split the Solid South. But you can't split the white vote so long as the solid negro vote . . . threatens them with the much feared 'negro domination.'⁹

When argument failed, party regulars turned to cruder methods. They threatened, assaulted, and murdered independents. In Yazoo County in 1879 a mob forced the withdrawal of Henry M. Dixon as independent candidate for sheriff. When a few weeks later Dixon revived his candidacy, a leading Democratic politician shot him dead. Occasionally, the regulars played on the independents the perverse joke of fusing with black Republicans. Their favorite trick, though, was to use their control of the electoral machinery to count their candidates in and the independents out.¹⁰

⁹Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, p. 18; George C. McKee, Jackson, to Charles Foster, November 25, 1880, copy in McKee to William Mahone, December 25, 1880, William Mahone Papers, Duke.

¹⁰Scrapbook 48, Niles Papers, UNC; Miller, "'Let Us Die to Make Men Free,'" pp. 66-89, 107-138; Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, pp. 23-25, 36; Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, p. 201.

Still, the dissidents enjoyed some local success. Beginning in the late 1870s, a coalition of black and white farmers led by prosperous Hazlehurst merchant James Prentiss ("Print") Matthews challenged the Democratic machine of Copiah County in southwestern Mississippi. In 1881, the insurgents elected the county treasurer and a majority on the board of supervisors. They would also have captured the sheriff's office had not a Democratic mule "eaten" the ballots cast at a black precinct.¹¹

That same year the Democrats faced their first statewide opposition since 1875. In August, the Greenback and Republican parties agreed to field an Independent People's Ticket in the fall gubernatorial elections. The coalition chose as its standard bearer Benjamin King, a dissident Democrat, and offered a platform calling for a free ballot and a fair count, an elective judiciary, and the repeal of the lien law. The attempt by the insurgents to muster a full black vote alarmed the Democrats. Lamar and his associates had enjoyed amicable relations with Mississippi's leading black Republicans and now reaffirmed their friendship by helping black former United States Senator Blanche K. Bruce obtain a position in the Garfield administration.

¹¹William Ivy Hair, Carnival of Fury: Robert Charles and the New Orleans Race Riot of 1900 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), pp. 9-32.

Having thus neutralized Bruce, Lamar returned home to rally the whites to Democratic nominee Robert Lowry. The independents, Lamar told the editor of the Brookhaven Ledger, are "selfish and unscrupulous men who have publicly made a shameless partnership with the negroes of Mississippi. . . . If Ben King and . . . [his] associates were black negroes, they would not give us a more unmitigated negro rule than they will as white men seeking the overthrow of the present government through the organized negro vote."¹²

When the returns were certified, the Democrats had carried most of the counties of the state and Lowry had won the governorship. King, however, had run well in the delta and in North Mississippi's Second Congressional District and had captured 40 per cent of the vote statewide. "The most consummate system of villainy ever resorted to has been practiced to defeat us, such as stuffing ballot boxes, erasing names from

¹²H. R. Ware and John T. Hull, "An Address to the People of Mississippi [September, 1881]," Mahone Papers, Duke; Miller, "Let Us Die to Make Men Free," p. 255; William C. Harris, "Blanche K. Bruce of Mississippi: Conservative Assimilationist," in Southern Black Leaders of the Reconstruction Era, ed. Howard N. Rabinowitz (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), p. 30; Melvin I. Urofsky, "Blanche K. Bruce: United States Senator, 1875-1881," Journal of Mississippi History XXIX (1967), pp. 137-138; Murphy, L. Q. C. Lamar, pp. 228-231; L. Q. C. Lamar to R. H. Henry (quote), in Edward Mayes, Lucius Q. C. Lamar: His Life, Times, and Speeches, 1825-1893 (Nashville: Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1896), p. 435.

poll books, swapping boxes, [and] intimidation," claimed the chairman of the Greenback state executive committee. "Yet with all this they have only counted themselves ahead by a beggarly majority and we have abundant hopes that all will yet be well."¹³

In 1882 the Democrats faced a potentially more serious challenge in the person of the talented, ruthless, and vindictive Vicksburg lawyer James R. Chalmers. A life-long Democrat, a secessionist, a Confederate Brigadier present during the slaughter of black troops at Fort Pillow in 1864, Chalmers after the war assisted in the overthrow of the Radical regime. In 1876 he defeated black Republican John R. Lynch of Natchez for a seat in congress from the heavily black "Shoestring" District which included every county on the Mississippi River. Lynch accused Chalmers of fraud, but the Democratic majority in congress refused to hear the case. In 1880 Lynch renewed the struggle. Once again Chalmers received certificate of election, but only after Democratic officials declared illegal more than 4,500 Republican ballots. This time Lynch carried his

¹³Murphy, L. Q. C. Lamar, p. 231; Miller, "'Let Us Die to Make Men Free,'" pp. 261-262, 271-273; John T. Hull, Jackson, to William Mahone, November 13, 1881 (quote), Mahone Papers, Duke; New York Tribune, January 17, 1882.

contest before a friendly Republican congress.¹⁴

L. Q. C. Lamar thought Chalmers stupid, rabid, and, most damning, personally disloyal and, at this juncture, considered the general's congressional seat not worth saving for the Democracy. "After having sustained him in Democratic Congresses," a New York Times correspondent explained, "the Lamar [men] weakened and dared not too boldly stand by the method they had encouraged while they had the power to control their investigation." The Mississippi legislature attempted to mollify the embittered Chalmers by redrawing the boundaries of his district. The legislators removed four counties at the lower end of the Shoestring and added two upper delta counties. Lynch found his home county of Adams included in the Sixth District which extended across the southern end of the state from the river to the Alabama line and down to the Gulf of Mexico. This piney woods region, observed the Times correspondent, is "populated sparsely, and largely with poor whites, who never vote except for money or whiskey. Probably no part of this country offers so uninviting a stretch of territory or so repulsive a constituency as this district." Despite the changes, the Shoestring retained its massive black majority, and Chalmers

¹⁴John Hope Franklin, "John Roy Lynch: Republican Stalwart from Mississippi," in Southern Black Leaders of the Reconstruction Era, pp. 47, 48.

continued to resent his abandonment.¹⁵

On April 27, 1882, the United States House of Representatives voted to seat John R. Lynch. Incensed that the Lamar Democrats had thrown him over "as a Jonah to the Republican whale," Chalmers met in Washington with William E. Chandler and other officials of the Arthur administration. Chandler later recalled that Chalmers

spoke with bitterness of the treatment he had received from the Democratic leaders, and said he was determined to break up Bourbon Democracy in Mississippi. That he intended to run as an independent Democratic candidate . . . --believed he could carry a large Democratic vote--believed the Republicans . . . would be glad to vote for him, and that he would be elected beyond a question. . . . I expressed my views generally and briefly with reference to the true policy of Republicans in Southern States. That it should be one of co-operation with every man without regard to past political antecedents, who should be willing to contend for a free ballot, an honest count and popular education.

In mid-May, Chalmers announced his removal from Vicksburg to his former home at Sardis in Panola County and his candidacy for congress from the Second District--Lamar's home turf. Chalmers vowed to support inflation, the protective tariff, Mississippi River improvements, and the Arthur administration. He

¹⁵L. Q. C. Lamar to Edward Donaldson Clark, February 20, 1879, July 15, 1881, in James H. Stone, ed., "L. Q. C. Lamar's Letters to Edward Donaldson Clark, 1868-1885, Part III: 1879-1885," Journal of Mississippi History XLIII (1981), pp. 140-142, 153-155; New York Times, May 10, July 27 (quotes), 1882.

contrasted Arthur's advocacy of levee construction "with the action of the Lamar Legislature, which ran from their post while the flood was at its height, as if they were afraid they would be called on to do something for the overflowed districts, and sent Commissioners to Washington to beg aid from Congress while refusing even to pay their expenses."¹⁶

Having encouraged Chalmers, Chandler and the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee had to balance the general's claims on the party purse and patronage against those of Mississippi's Republicans. A split in the state leadership along racial lines complicated the problem. A black triumvirate--state chairman John R. Lynch, Collector of the Internal Revenue James Hill, and Register of the Treasury Blanche K. Bruce--dominated the Mississippi Republican Party. Dignified and calculating, Lynch served as the clique's spokesman and strategist; the efficient Hill used the patronage of his office to manage the county and state

¹⁶Franklin, "John Roy Lynch," p. 49; Chicago Tribune, May 13 (first and third quotes), June 17, 1882; Deposition of Jay A. Hubbell, March 5, Deposition of John Paul, March 8, Deposition of William E. Chandler, March 8 (second quote), Deposition of Green B. Raum, March 18, 1883, U.S. Congress, House, Papers and Testimony in the Contested Election Case of James R. Chalmers vs. Van H. Manning, from the Second Congressional District of Mississippi, House Miscellaneous Document 15, 48th Congress, 1st session, 1884, pp. 112-113, 120, 121, 127; Willie D. Halsell, "James R. Chalmers and 'Mahoneism' in Mississippi," Journal of Southern History 10 (1944), p. 39.

conventions; and Bruce, urbane and amiable, tended to the triumvirate's interests in the offices and salons of Washington. While their power rested on their influence with the black rank and file, Hill, Lynch, and Bruce betrayed no preference for their own race in the dispensation of the federal patronage. Those white Republicans who accepted their leadership enjoyed their largess.¹⁷

The triumvirate was not monolithic. The men occasionally squabbled over matters of patronage and policy. In 1880 Lynch and Hill quarreled bitterly over the control of the spoils in the Shoestring, and in 1881 Lynch parted company with his associates to support the Independent People's Ticket. Still, when threatened by enemies within the party, the triumvirate coalesced.¹⁸

Chief among those enemies was a group of whites led by former Congressman George C. McKee. Well aware that a reputation for corruption, high taxation, and black domination haunted the Republican Party, McKee wanted fresh blood and a fresh start. This he believed thwarted by the black triumvirate. "We have officials

¹⁷John R. Lynch, The Facts of Reconstruction (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1913), pp. 192-193; Harris, "Blanche K. Bruce," pp. 19-20; George C. McKee, Jackson, to William E. Chandler, July 8, 1882, William Eaton Chandler Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹⁸Miller, "'Let Us Die to Make Men Free,'" pp. 161-167, 247-251.

among us," he charged, "who wish to keep the Rep[ublican] party so small that there need be no quarrel about patronage." McKee held that an arrangement existed between the blacks on the one hand and Lamar and his friends on the other by which the Democrats helped the triumvirate maintain its control over the federal patronage. "Bruce & Lamar humbug the different administrations," McKee told Chandler, "and keep up negro rule in the Rep[ublican] party in order that fear of negro rule in the State may keep white men in the Dem[ocratic] party." Greenback State Chairman John T. Hull complained of the treachery of Republican officeholders during the coalition campaign of 1881:

We have Republicans who are not Republicans honeycombed all over the State who were a positive hindrance during our struggle. . . . I was really astonished to find the number of Federal officials in high and low degree who we dare not trust with our plans. They met us at every turn and harassed us at every step. So that to me it is a matter of real gratification that we were not counted out by larger majorities.¹⁹

¹⁹George C. McKee, Jackson, to Charles Foster, November 25, 1880 (first quote), copy in McKee to William Mahone, December 25, 1880, John T. Hull, Jackson, to Mahone, December 4, 1881 (third quote), Mahone Papers, Duke; H. R. Ware, Jackson to William E. Chandler, May 15, Henry C. Niles, Kosciusko, to Chandler, June 7, 30, George C. McKee, Jackson, to Chandler, July 6 (second quote), 1882, in Halsell, ed., "Republican Factionalism in Mississippi," pp. 87-88, 90, 93, 94; L. Q. C. Lamar to Edward Donaldson Clark, March 15, 1877, in James H. Stone, ed., "L. Q. C. Lamar's Letters to Edward Donaldson Clark, 1868-1885, Part II: 1874-1878," Journal of Mississippi History XXXVII (1975), pp. 197-199; Murphy, L. Q. C. Lamar, pp. 185-187; Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, p. 163.

McKee had small hope for the future under the present state Republican leadership. "Suppose we should have a free vote and a fair count and win a victory, what is it?" he asked. "Only a few men in office and the old conflict goes on, to result again in blood and outrage, and a submission of the uneducated, poverty-stricken majority to the will of the abler and more violent minority." J. L. Morphis, United States Marshal at Oxford, proposed a remedy: "If the President will appoint Gen. George C. McKee collector in place of Hill we can organize an independent movement. . . . McKee is a good politician, is a stalwart republican, and is in favor of a fusion with all the elements opposed to ballot box stuffing."²⁰

The national Republican leadership never seriously considered turning the federal patronage in Mississippi over to McKee, but it did decide to aid Chalmers. The leadership balked, however, from following the example Arthur had set with William Mahone in Virginia. It gave Chalmers control of the spoils in only the Second District--not in the entire state. When John R. Lynch protested the administration's policy, Commissioner of

²⁰George C. McKee, Jackson, to Charles Foster, November 25, 1880, copy in McKee to William Mahone, December 25, 1880, Mahone Papers, Duke; J. L. Morphis, Oxford, to William E. Chandler, June 15, 1882, in Halsell, ed., "Republican Factionalism in Mississippi," pp. 91-92.

the Internal Revenue Green B. Raum retorted:

We have given Gen'r'l Chalmers the patronage . . . for the purpose of trying an experiment. The Republican party, in your State, as indeed in all the South, is a failure, as you know, and the reason of the failure is because there are so few white people in it. . . . You and your people ought to allow us to make this experiment without complaint.²¹

In 1882 Republicans and independents hoped to break the Democratic lock on Mississippi's congressional districts. Conceding the First, Fourth, and Fifth districts to Democrats Henry L. Muldrow, Hernando D. Money, and Otho R. Singleton, they believed that James R. Chalmers in the Second, white Republican Elza Jeffords in the Shoestring, and John R. Lynch in the desolate Sixth had chances of winning. They also thought that a strong candidate would enjoy good prospects in the heavily black Seventh (Jackson) District. To the disgust of the Seventh's white Republicans and independents, Internal Revenue Collector James Hill sought the Republican nomination. A McKee lieutenant complained that Hill

now proposes to give this District to his allies the Bourbons, by having himself intrigued by his various Deputies into a nomination for Congress. Of course he well knows that although a Republican District he would be overwhelmingly defeated--for even with the rank and file of his own Race he is extremely unpopular. Easily we can elect some of broad

²¹Deposition of Abram Fulkerson, May 28, 1883, Chalmers vs. Manning, pp. 34-35.

Source: New York Times, July 27, 1882.

national views who will earnestly support the Administration . . . but No! the District must be given to the Bourbons by Hill's Candidacy so that his 'Nomination' . . . may be an endorsement of him at Washington and thus enable him to retain his Revenue position, and use it in the future as he has in the past,--for the good of himself, and for the perpetuity of Bourbon rule in the State.

In August a Republican convention nominated Hill to run against Ethelbert Barksdale, a Bourbon Democrat with agrarian proclivities.²²

In the Second District some Republicans could not reconcile themselves to the Chalmers candidacy. In late August, shortly after the general received the endorsement of the Republican district convention, Hannibal C. ("Ham") Carter, black Union veteran and former state legislator, announced as an independent candidate. The national Republican Party, Carter exclaimed,

has done nothing entitling it to bind us hand and foot and turn us over to the leadership of the men whose hands have been deepest and reddest in the blood of Southern Republicans. . . . This transaction, stooping to barter with the chief of sinners, is a blot upon the fair name of the party which will not soon be forgotten. Our blood and the bleaching bones of our dead protest against this

²²H. R. Ware, Jackson, to William E. Chandler, May 15 (quote), Henry C. Niles, Kosciusko, to Chandler, June 7, J. L. Morphis, Oxford, to Chandler, June 15, 1882, in Halsell, ed., "Republican Factionalism in Mississippi," pp. 88, 90, 91; Halsell, "James R. Chalmers," p. 46; Halsell, "The Bourbon Period in Mississippi Politics," p. 529.

monstrous crime.²³

Administration men in Washington moved quickly to put down Carter's rebellion. The Congressional Campaign Committee denounced Carter as a Democratic tool, officially endorsed Chalmers, and provided the general with a large sum of money, part of which he used to purchase the support of local black leaders. Green B. Raum and other administration officials cracked the patronage whip on Chalmers's behalf. Blanche K. Bruce, always keen to the Capitol's changing political currents, earlier had broken with Lynch and Hill by urging Mississippi Republicans to "Give Chalmers a chance at the Bourbons." Now, he declared his intention of taking the stump on behalf of the ex-Confederate. Chalmers won the support of most of the Second District's blacks. Bribery played its part, but more important was the administration's endorsement. When asked how he could vote for the Butcher of Fort Pillow, a black minister replied: "Should I vote for Mr. Chalmers I should do so from the fact that he had been

²³New York Times, July 27, August 27 (quote), 1882; Chicago Tribune, August 17, 1882; Memphis Appeal, September 1, 1882. For Carter see Walter J. Fraser Jr., "Black Reconstructionists in Tennessee," Tennessee Historical Quarterly XXXIV (1975), p. 364. In Washington, Carter's candidacy was encouraged by Mrs. William W. Chisholm, widow of the victim of a Democratic atrocity in Mississippi (New York Times, September 3, 1882).

made the choice of my party."²⁴

Carter having been rendered harmless, Chalmers concentrated on defeating the Democratic incumbent, Holly Springs lawyer Vannoy H. Manning. The Second District, racially balanced and a stronghold of the state's disgruntled farmers, long had been troublesome to Manning and other Democrats. While little recent rail construction had occurred in the district (or anywhere in Mississippi except the delta), the extension in 1873 of the Mississippi Central from Jackson, Tennessee, to Cairo, Illinois, had brought Second District farmers more deeply into the midwestern market. As the decade waned, the farmers disappointment and frustration intensified. In 1880, Manning barely had turned back the challenge of Greenback and Republican opponents.²⁵

²⁴Chicago Tribune, September 3, 5, 1882; New York Times, September 3, 1882; Van H. Manning, Washington, to J. R. Chalmers, December 30, 1882, Deposition of E. M. Watson, Deposition of John S. Burton, March 17, Deposition of J. G. Johnson (second quote), June 15, Deposition of D. B. Henderson, March 5, Deposition of Blanche K. Bruce, March 16 (first quote), 1883, Chalmers vs. Manning, pp. 13, 40, 93, 107, 126; Halsell, "James R. Chalmers," pp. 44-45, 46-47; James R. Chalmers, Sardis, to William E. Chandler, October 24, 1882, in Halsell, ed., "Republican Factionalism in Mississippi," pp. 94-95; ibid., p. 97, n. 33; Miller, "Let Us Die to Make Men Free," pp. 299, 309.

²⁵Eugene W. Hilgard, "Report on the Cotton Production of the State of Mississippi," in U.S. Congress, House, Report on Cotton Production in the United States, House Miscellaneous Document 42, Part 5, 47th Congress, 2nd session, 1882-1883, p. 70; Halsell,

Capitalizing on his considerable ability as an orator, Chalmers campaigned throughout the district. He excoriated Manning and his supporters for attempting to revive the bitter feelings of 1875. The Lamar Democrats, he told an enthusiastic audience at Ripley, "make long prayers at church and deliver moral lectures, and yet teach young men to stuff ballot-boxes." The Democrats countered by sending into North Mississippi a battery of speakers to assist the overmatched Manning. Senator George, the farmers' friend, spoke in every county save one. Lamar, on the other hand, declined to take part in the canvass. His wife was sick, severe political tests often made him ill, and, besides, he had about as little regard for Manning as he had for Chalmers.²⁶

Well-practiced himself in the arts of political

"James R. Chalmers," pp. 43, 44; Harris, The Day of the Carpetbagger, p. 557; Miller, "Let Us Die to Make Men Free," p. 262.

²⁶Memphis Avalanche, September 21, November 3 (quote), 1882; Memphis Appeal, November 2, 1882; Deposition of J. Z. George, June 26, 1883, Chalmers vs. Manning, p. 89; Murphy, L. Q. C. Lamar, p. 234; L. Q. C. Lamar to Edward Cary Walthall, May 25, 1880, in Stone, ed., "L. Q. C. Lamar's Letters to Edward Donaldson Clark, 1868-1885, Part III," p. 152. Chalmers described to Arthur a typical Lamar stunt: "Col. Lamar returned home on the election day and openly abused and insulted Col. [J. L.] Morphis in the presence of a crowd, for which he subsequently apologized on the ground that he had been misinformed" (James R. Chalmers, Washington, to Chester A. Arthur, December, 1882, Chalmers vs. Manning, pp. 125-126).

chicanery, Chalmers worried that the Democrats would attempt to steal the election. At his insistence, thirty-eight United States Deputy Marshals attended the polls. The marshals operated under instructions framed by Chalmers. Some of them even picked up a few of the general's old habits. The Democratic editor of the Aberdeen Examiner complained that "Everywhere the United States Deputy Marshals proved by their acts that they regarded Chalmers' election to be their chief and only duty."²⁷

When the election was over, James R. Chalmers apparently had won in the Second District as had Elza Jeffords in the Shoestring. Jeffords owed his victory to the disposition of delta Democrats, anxious for levee construction, to count honestly the ballots cast by the Shoestring's black majority. In the Sixth and Seventh districts, however, the Democrats triumphed as Henry S. Van Eaton narrowly defeated John R. Lynch and Ethelbert Barksdale crushed James Hill. The result in the Seventh District confirmed the prophecies of the McKee

²⁷Van H. Manning, Washington, to James R. Chalmers, December 30, 1882, Deposition of J. L. Morphis, June 11, 1883, Chalmers vs. Manning, pp. 14, 72-73; Stephen Edward Cresswell, "Resistance and Enforcement: The U.S. Department of Justice, 1870-1893," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1986, p. 43; James R. Chalmers, "Suggestions for Conducting Elections in the State of Mississippi [July 5, 1882]," Chandler Papers, LC; Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, pp. 13-14; Aberdeen Examiner, November 15, 23, 1882 (quote), in ibid., pp. 13-14.

faction. The independents had supported Barksdale while the Republican vote had declined dramatically from the preceding election. "The James Hill Congressional Campaign found [the independents] sadly wanting," complained a Hill supporter. "To some of them 'Mr. Hill's hair was too kinky'; to others 'this was a white man's country.'" Hill's defeat, declared a McKee lieutenant, revealed "the absolute folly of attempting to run an opposition to Bourbon Democracy 'negro End first'. . . . Jim Hill had all the money he wanted in his race for Congress, he had the prestige of Federal patronage, and he had a largely Republican District--and he lost it."²⁸

Having been outmaneuvered by Chalmers in his home district, the Democrats turned the tables on the general in the state capitol. In Jackson on November 18, 1882, Democratic Secretary of State Henry C. Meyers conducted the official canvass of the vote from the congressional districts. Seizing on a clerical error, Meyers ruled that Manning, not Chalmers, had carried Tate County and

²⁸Vicksburg Herald, September 8, in Nashville American, September 14, 1882; Halsell, "James R. Chalmers," p. 47; Halsell, "Republican Factionalism in Mississippi," p. 95, n. 28; H. R. Ware, Jackson, to William E. Chandler, November, Henry C. Niles, Kosciusko, to Chandler, November 25 (second quote), in ibid., pp. 95, 96; B. F. Garrett, Canton, to editor, Times-Democrat, February 22, 1884 (first quote), in U.S. Congress, Senate, Report of the Special Committee to Inquire into the Mississippi Election of 1883, Senate Report 512, 48th Congress, 1st session, 1884, p. 653.

thus the Second District. The enraged Chalmers attempted to have Meyers's ruling overturned in the state courts. Failing there, he contested the election before the United States Congress. The process was a lengthy one, and not until June 20, 1884, was Chalmers seated by the House of Representatives.²⁹

The long contest eroded Chalmers's influence, but more damaging was the continued ambivalence of the Arthur administration. Fearful of alienating either the independents or the blacks, administration strategists continued to divide the spoils between Chalmers and the black triumvirate. The policy promoted strife rather than unity. Lynch and Hill rejected any arrangement with Chalmers. Intrigue and infighting consumed the opposing factions, and their common cause suffered. In July 1883, a convention of independents headed by Chalmers met in Jackson. The delegates represented only thirteen of Mississippi's seventy-four counties. A newspapermen described them as "a sprinkling of Democrats, Republicans, Greenbackers, and nondescripts. . . . not such an assemblage as would, under ordinary circumstances, be calculated to inspire confidence in its ultimate success." In August, an observer of Mississippi politics called Chalmers "the deadeast

²⁹Miller, "Let Us Die to Make Men Free," pp. 325-336.

political corpse in the South." As far as winning elections was concerned, the statement could have embraced Hill or Lynch as well as Chalmers. In 1884, the Democrats captured every congressional district in the state.³⁰

The Arthur administration probably erred in dividing the federal patronage in Mississippi between James R. Chalmers and the black triumvirate. Judging from Chalmers's victory in the Second District, the administration would have done better to have given the ex-Confederate complete control over the spoils. Yet, the prospect of a successful statewide coalition seems remote. Farmer discontent, while evident nearly everywhere in Mississippi, was somewhat palliated by sympathetic Democrats such as James Z. George and Henry L. Muldrow. The black triumvirate surely would have tried to sabotage the coalition while the whites, recalling Reconstruction ("The corruption of 1868-74 is not forgotten, and the long and exorbitant tax-lists bear fresh in the memory of property-owners," noted a Columbus editor), would have feared a Republican resurgence. More important, the coalition would have

³⁰Halsell, "James R. Chalmers," pp. 53, 54, 56; Miller, "'Let Us Die to Make Men Free,'" pp. 350-367, 399-401; New York Times, July 5 (first quote), September 1 (second quote), 1883.

faced in the Mississippi Democracy an utterly ruthless foe.³¹

On election day 1883, James Prentiss Matthews, fusion leader of Covich County, entered a polling place at Hazlehurst. Soon he fell into quiet conversation with local Democratic leader Ras Wheeler. "Print," said Wheeler at the end of their talk, "I would not vote today if I were you." When Matthews approached the ballot box, Wheeler produced a shotgun and discharged both barrels into the insurgent's back. Matthews (and the Covich coalition) died instantly. Whether Bourbon or Liberal, agrarian or industrialist, planter, lawyer, mill owner, or merchant, the Democratic leaders were determined to rule--whatever the cost. "Politics is not sentiment in Mississippi," said Robert Lowry in 1881. "It is a matter of business, a question of life and death."³²

³¹D. R. Ferris, Columbus, to editor, May 18, New York Times, May 29, 1882. Of course, Chalmers's campaign was more a personal vendetta than a reform movement. But so too, in its initial stages, was William Mahone's.

³²Hair, Carnival of Fury, p. 29; Jackson Weekly Clarion, September 15, 1881 (quote), in Miller, "Let Us Die to Make Men Free," p. 259.

ARKANSAS

Arkansas's difficult geography shaped her politics. Near impenetrable mountain ranges, roads of legendary wretchedness, and a late developing rail system hindered communication and promoted regional rivalry. The major division pitted the upland farmers of the north and west versus the planters of the river valleys and the Mississippi delta. In the resulting stalemate, power fell at the end of Reconstruction in 1874 to a small group of Little Rock lawyers and businessmen. From the capital city, these Democratic chieftains managed a loose network of allies, friends, and business associates in the various counties of the state.¹

The Little Rock crowd like to recall their Confederate service and to expound on the virtues of the officer and gentleman. Their interest, though, was not in an idealized past but in the industrialized present. They promoted the New South, invested in railroads and

¹Joe Tolbert Segraves, "Arkansas Politics, 1874-1918," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1973, pp. 45-46; Berton E. Henningson Jr., "Northwest Arkansas and the Brothers of Freedom: The Roots of a Farmer Movement," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 34 (Winter, 1975), p. 306.

factories, and subscribed to the business ethics of the day. For men so obsessed with chivalry and integrity, they were strikingly devoid of a sense of public responsibility. They tolerated a convict lease that in its brutality rivaled the worst in the South, turned a blind eye to incompetence and thievery among their friends in government, and starved the schools and charitable institutions of the state. Toward Arkansas's blacks, the Little Rock Democrats and their associates affected a paternal attitude. Fearing that excessive political violence might provoke federal intervention or drive away black laborers, they condescended to fusion arrangements with Republicans in several heavily black delta counties. Yet, when they thought it necessary to preserve their power, they unhesitatingly turned to economic coercion, fraud, intimidation, and murder.²

The Democrats faced a formidable Republican challenge. Although branded as the party of Africa,

²Raymond Arsenault, The Wild Ass of the Ozarks: Jeff Davis and the Social Bases of Southern Politics (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), pp. 39-40; Segraves, "Arkansas Politics," pp. 50-67, 69-72, 106-112; Garland Erastus Bayliss, "Public Affairs in Arkansas, 1874-1896," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1972, pp. 153-159, 191-198; George W. Cable, "The Convict Lease System in the Southern States," Century Magazine XXVII (1884), pp. 584, 596-597; Powell Clayton, The Aftermath of the Civil War in Arkansas (New York: Neale Publishing Co., 1915), pp. 309-310; Carl H. Moneyhon, "Black Politics in Arkansas During the Gilded Age, 1876-1900," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 44 (1985), pp. 228-229.

corruption, taxation, and bayonet rule, the Republican organization remained capable of capturing 40 per cent of the vote in presidential election years. The Republicans were strongest in the black counties of the delta but also received appreciable support from Unionist strongholds in the Ozark Mountains. As with the Democracy, the Republican leaders came from among the businessmen of Little Rock. During the late 1870s and early 1880s, the leadership was rent by an epic patronage battle between carpetbaggers Stephen Dorsey and Powell Clayton. Dorsey, a member of the Republican National Committee, was the prototypical political adventurer intent on enriching himself at the public expense. Former State Chairman Clayton, although no angel, was more interested than his rival in the welfare of his adopted state. Resentful of Clayton, Dorsey, and the rest of the Little Rock set was a small group of outsiders, the most prominent of whom was United States Marshal Valentine Dell of Fort Smith. Dell and his friends denounced the party leaders as "government teat-suckers" interested only in the federal patronage.³

³Segraves, "Arkansas Politics," pp. 117-124, 133; Ted R. Worley, "The Arkansas Peace Society of 1861: A Study in Mountain Unionism," Journal of Southern History 24 (1958), pp. 445-456; Marvin Frank Russell, "The Republican Party of Arkansas, 1874-1913," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arkansas, 1985, pp. 4-6, 9, 123, 126-128, 130-154; Berryville Intelligencer (quote) in Harrison Times, November 11, 1882.

Also of danger to Democratic rule were forces unleashed by the expansion of the cotton economy. Before 1870, the Memphis and Little Rock Railroad, completed shortly after the Civil War, was the only rail line of significance in Arkansas, but in the succeeding decade construction boomed. Tracks followed the Arkansas River from the delta through Little Rock to Fort Smith. Other rails connected Texarkana and Little Rock with St. Louis and brought much of Arkansas within the commercial orbit of that Missouri city. The railroads transported immigrants by the thousands. Between 1870 and 1880 the population of the state increased by 65 per cent while acreage under cultivation expanded by 85 per cent and cotton production more than doubled.⁴

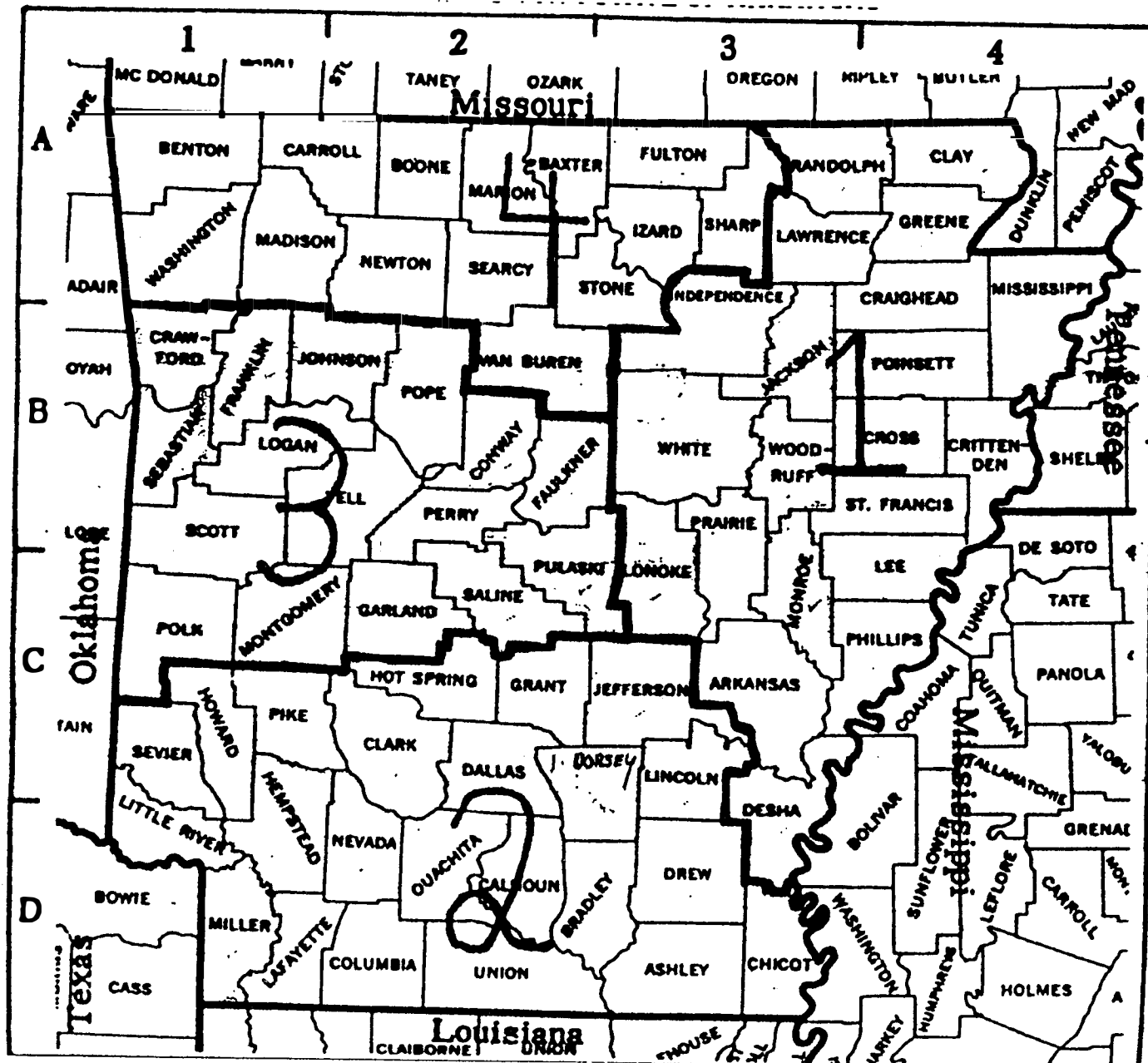
As Arkansas farmers, both old and new, became ever more reliant on cotton, they accumulated the usual grievances--high taxes, scarce credit, anaconda mortgages, discriminatory railroad rates. When the

⁴Bayliss, "Public Affairs in Arkansas," p. 121; Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1882 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883), p. 29; Arsenault, The Wild Ass of the Ozarks, p. 29; L. Tuffly Ellis, "The Revolutionizing of the Texas Cotton Trade, 1865-1885," Southwestern Historical Quarterly LXXIII (1970), p. 484; Henningson, "Northwest Arkansas and the Brothers of Freedom," p. 307; R. H. Loughridge, "Report on the Cotton Production of the State of Arkansas," in U.S. Congress, House, Report on Cotton Production in the United States, House Miscellaneous Document 42, Part 5, 47th Congress, 2nd session, 1882-1883, p. 39.

Little Rock Democrats ignored their cries for help, many of the farmers began in the late 1870s to listen to the arguments of the Greenback Party. The Greenback threat roused the Democracy. Although Democratic "farmers" in the legislature continued to neglect agrarian concerns, Democratic politicians out on the stump adopted Greenback rhetoric and warned of a Republican resurgence. The strategy enjoyed its customary success. Except in the southwestern upcountry and in a few Ozark counties, most of the would-be Greenbackers chose to remain in the Democratic fold.⁵

Despairing farmers were not the only Arkansas Democrats who chafed under the sway of Little Rock. Politicians outside of the charmed circle objected to the usual symptoms of ring rule. They maintained that the Little Rock clique was out of touch with the people and pointed to its attitude toward the state debt and treasury scandals as proof of its indifference to public opinion. The Arkansas debt controversy was born in the same atmosphere of optimism and venality as that of Virginia. Reconstruction Governor Powell Clayton, in

⁵Henningson, "Northwest Arkansas and the Brothers of Freedom," pp. 307-308, 310, 311; F. Clark Elkins, "Arkansas Farmers Organize for Action: 1882-1884," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 13 (1954), pp. 231-232, 238-239, 243-244; Segraves, "Arkansas Politics," pp. 148-153, 156-163; Judith Barjenbruch, "The Greenback Political Movement: An Arkansas View," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 36 (1977), pp. 107-122; Bayliss, "Public Affairs in Arkansas," pp. 242, 245-246, 252.



his zeal to protect and develop the state's resources and, along the way, to provide his cronies with the opportunity for a little graft, persuaded the legislature to approve the issue of state bonds for the construction of levees and railroads. He maintained that the improvements would help bring prosperity to the state and credit to his administration. Clayton badly miscalculated. Arkansas went into a business slump, the bond issue quickly acquired the odor of corruption, and the high taxes levied in part to service the debt helped bring about the downfall of the Republican regime.⁶

The triumphant Redeemers soon divided into debtpayer and repudiator factions.⁷ Governor Augustus H. Garland, his successors, and their Little Rock associates tried to persuade the bondholders to scale the debt from the \$16,000,000 inherited from the Republicans. Failing in that hopeless task, the Garland men resolved that the state should meet its obligations. Arkansas's credit and honor were at stake, they intoned, and, besides, although some of the bonds might be

⁶Segraves, "Arkansas Politics," pp. 17, 19-20, 91, 102-104; C. E. Mitchel, Prescott, to William Mahone, November 13, 1881, William Mahone Papers, Duke University, Durham, N.C. Clayton also convinced the legislature to fund some prewar script of dubious legality.

⁷For the debt controversy see Garland E. Bayliss, "Post-Reconstruction Repudiation: Evil Blot of Financial Necessity?" Arkansas Historical Quarterly 23 (1964), pp. 243-259; Segraves, "Arkansas Politics," pp. 77-91.

tainted, railroads and levees nevertheless had been built. The debtayers suggested that the repudiators were riding a political hobbyhorse and by threatening to split the Democracy were playing into the hands of the Republicans. While the ring rejected repudiation, they made little effort to repay the debt. They drastically reduced government spending but also slashed taxes. State legislators C. Elmo Mitchel of Nevada County and William H. Fishback of Fort Smith led the repudiators. Fishback, Mitchel, and their followers maintained that the debt was conceived in sin and born in corruption, that it scared off immigration and capital, and that repayment would necessitate onerous taxes. They pointed out that wealthy Northerners held most of the bonds and wondered aloud whether the debtayers were more loyal to Wall Street brokers than to Arkansas workingmen.⁸

The controversy troubled the Arkansas Democratic Party for nearly a decade. The ring staved off repudiation, but Fishback and his allies slowly gained the high ground. In 1877 the Arkansas Supreme Court on a technicality declared the railroad bonds invalid and in 1878 reached a similar judgement on the levee bonds. Still, Garland and his friends refused to consider repudiation. In 1880 the legislature allowed a

⁸C. E. Mitchel, Prescott, to William Mahone, November 13, 1881, Mahone Papers, Duke.

constitutional referendum on a repudiation amendment introduced by William Fishback. Despite the stubborn resistance of Little Rock, better than 60,000 voters supported the measure while about 40,000 opposed it. The Fishback amendment failed of ratification, however, because it won the votes of less than a majority of the 133,000 participating in the general election.

Meanwhile, State Treasurer Thomas J. Churchill, an ardent debtpayer, captured the governorship. Defeat only hardened the resolve of the repudiators, and in 1882 they demanded a new referendum and the replacement of Churchill on the Democratic ticket by one more sympathetic to their cause. Many Democrats worried that should the Little Rock men remain obstinate a complete rupture between the factions would occur.

If Fishback and his allies were not trouble enough, the machine in 1882 found itself embarrassed by a scandal involving Governor Churchill. Little Rock lawyer, Confederate Major General, three-term state treasurer, member of the Democratic inner circle, upright defender of the state's credit, Churchill was also, if not a criminal, an incompetent. Not long after his inauguration in 1881 a legislative committee discovered serious arrearages in the treasury accounts. A senate investigation, much resisted by the governor's friends, established in May 1882 that Churchill owed the

state \$114,000. The investigating committee also reported a shortage in the accounts of another long-time state officer, Auditor "Honest" John Crawford. "The defalcation will be the all-absorbing question in State politics," a New York Times correspondent predicted, "and should the Democracy follow their defiant action in nominating Churchill for the Governorship and fail to make the sureties of the defaulter 'come to time' as quickly as practible, Democracy will certainly lose much in its stronghold, and find Republicans and honest men combine and sweep the old rebel element out of power."⁹

An Arkadelphia editor proved more prescient than the Times reporter. "The Democratic policy of the approaching campaign," the editor concluded, "will be made to conform to the will of the masses." Faced with rebellion, the leaders of the Little Rock ring made in the Democratic convention the best deal for themselves that they could. When the party met in mid-June, the gubernatorial nomination went by acclamation to a one-legged Confederate veteran, James H. Berry of the Ozark

⁹F. Clark Elkins, "Thomas James Churchill," in The Governors of Arkansas: Essays in Political Biography, ed. Timothy P. Donovan and Willard B. Gatewood Jr. (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1981), pp. 68-72; Bayliss, "Public Affairs in Arkansas," pp. 258-260, 263-267; Segraves, "Arkansas Politics," pp. 92-95; David Y. Thomas, Arkansas and Its People. A History, 1541-1930 (Chicago and New York: American Historical Society, 1930), I, 184; Chicago Tribune, May 21, 1882; New York Times, May 21, 1882. Arkansas historians agree that Churchill was an incompetent, not a thief.

county of Carroll. Although a repudiator, Berry otherwise was considered by the ring to be suitably conservative. The convention also agreed on a platform calling for the resubmission of the Fishback amendment. The question, however, was not to be recognized "as furnishing any test whatever of any man's democracy." Another plank made a half-hearted call for the strict financial accountability of state officials. The document led the editor of the Little Rock Arkansas Gazette to marvel that "One of the many evidences of the strength, vigor and purpose of the Arkansas democracy is found in its ability to survive and flourish in spite of the most meaningless platform that can be invented."¹⁰

A poorly attended Greenback convention met a week later. The thirty-one delegates, who represented only eleven of Arkansas's seventy-four counties, endorsed the Fishback amendment and nominated Rufus K. Garland, brother of Augustus H. Garland, for governor. The editor of the Gazette commented that the Greenback platform "contains the usual unsound financial

¹⁰Alschul, Arkadelphia, to editor, May 21, New York Times, May 29, 1882; Little Rock Arkansas Gazette March 15, June 17 (quote), 1882; Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia . . . 1882, p. 30; Arsenault, The Wild Ass of the Ozarks, pp. 57-58; New York Times, June 18, 1882; Bayliss, "Public Affairs in Arkansas," pp. 268-269. In late July the Arkansas Gazette editor conceded that the debt plank "removed all complaint, harmonized all elements and united the party solidly and enthusiastically in support of the whole ticket" (July 28, 1882).

declarations characteristic of such assemblages, but possesses a merit unknown to the democratic deliverance of the other day--it says what it means, and is not susceptible to a half dozen constructions."¹¹

The Republican convention which met in early July ratified the recent victory of Powell Clayton over Stephen Dorsey for supremacy in the Arkansas party. Only a year earlier, Dorsey appeared to have won the contest. In 1880, as secretary of the Republican National Committee, he had used funds assessed from federal employees and begged from New York businessmen to buy the crucial state of Indiana for James Garfield and Chester Arthur. In February 1881, Republican politicians, fatcats, and preachers honored Dorsey at a banquet at Delmonico's in New York City. A slightly inebriated Vice President-Elect Arthur made a fulsome toast to the Arkansas carpetbagger. Less than a month later, Dorsey was indicted for his role in the Star Route Scandal, a kickback scheme involving millions of dollars in Post Office Department contracts. When Arthur ascended to the presidency in September 1881, he refused to grant an interview to the suddenly disreputable Dorsey. Clayton capitalized on his rival's misfortune. Ensconced in Arthur's good graces, he

¹¹Barjenbruch, "The Greenback Political Movement," pp. 112-113, 117; Bayliss, "Public Affairs in Arkansas," p. 271; Little Rock Arkansas Gazette, June 21, 1882.

resumed the chairmanship of the Arkansas Republican Executive Committee and caused the removal from office of prominent Dorsey associates. Moreover, he had the irritating Valentine Dell replaced as federal marshal at Fort Smith. When the party faithful gathered for the convention, they placed Clayton in the chair and his henchmen in the minor offices.¹²

Although aware of Arthur's enthusiasm for fusion politics, Clayton insisted that the convention back Republican principles and Republican candidates. The delegates responded by condemning the Fishback amendment and by nominating for governor W. D. Slack, a Little Rock railroad executive. Clayton kept open the door to coalition, however, by having the convention leave to the central committee the endorsement of a candidate for congressman-at-large. After the convention adjourned, the committee promptly met and endorsed the candidacy of Greenbacker Charles E. Cunningham.¹³

¹²Segraves, "Arkansas Politics," pp. 127-133; Harper's Weekly XXVIII (November 15, 1884), p. 748; Thomas C. Reeves, Gentleman Boss: The Life of Chester Alan Arthur (New York: Knopf, 1975), pp. 201-202, 213-215; J. Martin Klotsche, "The Star Route Cases," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 22 (1935), p. 414; Washington Post, December 27, 1881; Little Rock Arkansas Gazette, January 3, 7, 1882; Chicago Tribune, February 25, July 11, 1882; Russell, "The Republican Party of Arkansas," pp. 27, 130, 140, 146-148; Bayliss, "Public Affairs in Arkansas," pp. 271-273.

¹³New York Times, July 7, 1882; Little Rock Arkansas Gazette, July 7, 1882; Russell, "The Republican Party of Arkansas," pp. 55, 56, 57; Bayliss, "Public

Clayton now seemed to have the situation well in hand, but items in a Washington newspaper soon threw the Arkansas Republican Party into confusion. In mid-July, the National Republican, a paper owned by William E. Chandler, heralded for Arkansas an absurd coalition of debt-paying Democrats, Greenbackers, and Republicans. The National Republican hoped to see Rufus K. Garland become "the Mahone of Arkansas." For a few weeks rumors circulated in Little Rock that Slack would be withdrawn in favor of the Greenback leader. Clayton, however, had no intention of assisting at the coronation of Rufus Garland. He had fought too long and too hard for the exclusive control of the federal patronage to relinquish it without a struggle. By July 25, Clayton was in Washington and within a day or two had set things straight. On the 27th he informed the press that if Garland replaced anyone on the Republican ticket it would be Charles Cunningham. Powell Clayton, the Arkansas Gazette affirmed on July 28, is "President Arthur's Arkansas chief."¹⁴

Affairs in Arkansas," pp. 273-274.

¹⁴Washington National Republican, July 12, 15, 1882, in C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), p. 102; Little Rock Arkansas Gazette, July 26, 28 (quote), August 5, 1882; Barjenbruch, "The Greenback Political Movement," pp. 117-118. Garland rejected a Republican proposal that he withdraw from the gubernatorial race in exchange for their endorsement of him for congressman-at-large (Russell, "The Republican

On election day, the returns fit the familiar Arkansas pattern. Berry polled 87,675 votes, Slack 49,352, and Garland only 10,142. Despite the Republican endorsement, Cunningham, the Greenback candidate for congressman-at-large, lost to his Democratic opponent by a two-to-one margin. In the four regular congressional districts, Republican candidates carried the coalition banner, but they too met defeat.¹⁵

The prospects for an insurgent movement in Arkansas in 1882 were more apparent than real. Just as the Little Rock ring had been flexible enough to meet the Greenback challenge of the late 1870s, they now proved able to meet that of the debt repudiators. The ring probably regretted the act but not the fact of repudiation. After all, the debt was a Republican, not a Democratic, creation; it stank of corruption; and it was a source of political mischief. With the controversy behind them, the Little Rock crowd soon reabsorbed most of the leading repudiators. Indeed, James H. Berry became a member in good standing of the Party of Arkansas," p. 57).

¹⁵Segraves, "Arkansas Politics," p. 163; Guide to U.S. Elections (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1975), p. 646. In a September 1884 referendum, the Fishback amendment was ratified by an overwhelming majority (Bayliss, "Post-Reconstruction Repudiation," p. 258).

Arkansas establishment.¹⁶

The transition for men like Berry was an easy one. Unlike the Readjusters in Virginia, the Arkansas repudiators championed no reforms and posed no real threat to the status quo. The Little Rock ring recognized the debt controversy for what it mostly was-- a political hobbyhorse--and, while stung by their defeat on the issue, they had little reason to fear the consequences of the repudiator victory.

The coalition also proved illusory. Charles E. Cunningham ran 38,000 votes behind the combined totals of Rufus Garland and W. D. Slack. Meanwhile, the Republican candidate in the Second Congressional District, the southwestern stronghold of the Greenback Party, lost decisively despite receiving the endorsement to Garland and C. Elmo Mitchel. The Republican leadership had little interest in a movement that might endanger their control over the patronage while the Greenbackers distrusted the party that had defended the debt and nominated for governor a railroad executive.¹⁷

The farmers remained the orphans of Arkansas

¹⁶Arsenault, The Wild Ass of the Ozarks, pp. 56-58.

¹⁷Little Rock Arkansas Gazette, August 3, 1882; Chicago Tribune, September 19, October 14, 1882; Harrison Times, October 21, 1882; Russell, "The Republican Party of Arkansas," pp. 8, 58, 59, 60.

politics. As their poverty and resentment grew, many of them in the late 1880s joined first the Brothers of Freedom and the Agricultural Wheel and then the Populist Party. These organizations, poorly led and disciplined, proved politically ineffective. Not until the emergence of Jeff Davis at the turn of the century did the farmers find a politician able both to articulate fully their frustrations and to wage a winning campaign. So enamored were they of Davis, however, that they failed to notice a characteristic that he shared with the Little Rock ring. The Wild Ass of the Ozarks was long on rhetoric but short on reform.¹⁸

¹⁸For Davis see Arsenault, The Wild Ass of the Ozarks.

THE SOUTHERN RIM

TEXAS

Railroads transformed Texas in the immediate post-Civil War decades. In 1870 the state had only 591 miles of track, most of which extended in short lines from Houston. Encouraged first by Republican financial aid and, after Redemption in 1873, by generous Democratic grants of public land, the railroads in the next dozen years laid nearly 5,000 additional miles of track. By the late 1870s, an extensive rail system serviced the fertile plains of south and east Texas while a less mature network tapped the more arid lands of the west and north. The rails also connected the major Texas towns with each other and with the rest of the nation via St. Louis and New Orleans.¹

¹L. Tuffly Ellis, "The Revolutionizing of the Texas Cotton Trade, 1865-1885," Southwestern Historical Quarterly LXXIII (1970), pp. 482-487, 489-490, 491, 508; John Martin Brockman, "Railroads, Radicals, and Democrats: A Study in Texas Politics, 1865-1900," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1975, pp. 9, 194; Donald J. Millet, "Southwest Louisiana Enters the Railroad Age, 1880-1900," Louisiana History XXIV (1983), p. 174; Alwyn Barr, Reconstruction to Reform: Texas Politics, 1876-1906 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), pp. 11, 77; Stanley Howard Scott, "Angry Agrarian: The Texas Farmer, 1875-1896," Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Christian University, 1973, pp. 9, 10-11; Galveston News, September 1, 1882; Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of

The railroads opened vast tracts of Texas for settlement. Seduced by the shameless propaganda of land company agents, immigrants by the thousands followed the rails into the interior. "Never before in the history of Texas has there been such a tide of immigration," noted a Bonham editor. "Old men with their grown-up children, middle-aged men with families, young men without families are coming in. Every train is crowded to overflowing." The state's population nearly doubled in a single decade. At 818,579 in 1870 it soared to 1,591,749 in 1880. Many of the settlers came from Germany to join an already large community of their countrymen in south central Texas. Most of the immigrants, though, came from the poorer parts of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee. Some of the newcomers found homes in the more densely populated region east of the 97th meridian. The majority, however, settled on the west Texas frontier.²

the Years 1882 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883), p. 794.

²"Studies in the South," Atlantic Monthly 49 (1882), pp. 681-682; Scott, "Angry Agrarian," pp. 1-9; Bonham News in Galveston News, October 26, 1882; Ralph Smith, "The Farmers' Alliance in Texas, 1875-1900: A Revolt Against Bourbon and Bourgeois Democracy," Southwestern Historical Quarterly XLVIII (1945), pp. 346-347; Barr, Reconstruction to Reform, pp. 16-17, 67; Donald G. Nieman, "Black Political Power and Criminal Justice: Washington County, Texas, 1868-1884," Journal of Southern History LV (1989), pp. 393-394; Robert C.

North of the Neuces River, the railroads brought many farmers, both immigrant and native, into the cotton economy. In the decade 1870 to 1880 more than 113,000 new farms came into existence, farm acreage nearly doubled, and cotton production increased from 350,628 bales to 805,284. Austin, Dallas, Houston, Marshall, and other Texas towns experienced rapid growth. After two railroads located their termini in Denison in 1873, that north Texas community grew in two years from around 50 souls to 4,000. From the smallest railroad village to Galveston, the state's most populous city, townsmen enjoyed boom times. In 1881, A. G. Malloy, collector of customs for the port of Galveston, boasted that exports had nearly doubled from the previous year and that customs receipts (and, presumably, fees) were up 500 per cent. "Never was the outlook in Texas so bright; everything is prospering," he exclaimed. "Good times prevail everywhere and in all branches of business."³

McMath Jr., "Sandy Land and Hogs in the Timber: (Agri)cultural Origins of the Farmers' Alliance in Texas," in The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation, ed. Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), p. 211; Lawrence D. Rice, The Negro in Texas, 1874-1900 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), p. 11.

³Scott, "Angry Agrarian," p. 5; R. H. Loughridge, "Report on the Cotton Production of the State of Texas," in U.S. Congress, House, Report on Cotton Production in the United States, House Miscellaneous Document 42, Part 5, 47th Congress, 2nd session, 1882-1882, pp. 49-50; Ellis, "The Revolutionizing of the Texas Cotton Trade,"

Malloy should have qualified his statement. He surely knew that, while townsmen prospered, cotton farmers struggled. Texas farmers were beset by the same problems that plagued cotton growers across the South: overproduction and low prices, scarce money, expensive credit, high and discriminatory railroad rates, forced sale and tenancy. By the mid-1870s, as the farm situation worsened, as wealth hastened its departure from the countryside to the town, from the farmer to the cotton broker, furnishing merchant, compress operator, railroad agent, and customs collector, Texas farmers, like other of their Southern brethren, turned to politics for relief.⁴

Some Democratic politicians espoused the farmers' cause. Congressman John H. Reagan of Palestine strenuously opposed currency contraction, monopolies, and extortionate railroad rates. "The question," he

pp. 492, 501-504, 506; Brockman, "Railroads, Radicals, and Democrats," p. 214; Barr, Reconstruction to Reform, p. 14; Randolph B. Campbell, A Southern Community in Crisis: Harrison County, Texas, 1850-1880 (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1983), pp. 373-374; McMath, "Sandy Land and Hogs in the Timber," p. 211; Nieman, "Black Political Power and Criminal Justice," p. 394; New York Times, August 3, 1881 (quote).

⁴Brockman, "Railroads, Radicals, and Democrats," pp. 201, 214-215; Scott, "Angry Agrarian," pp. 17-18, 19-20, 21; Ronald N. Gray, "Edmund J. Davis: Radical Republican and Reconstruction Governor of Texas," Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1976, p. 404; Barr, Reconstruction to Reform, p. 11; Campbell, A Southern Community in Crisis, 375-376, 385-389.

told a congressional committee, "was not the control of the management of the railroads, but whether the people, by the machinery of their Government, are to be masters of their rights or the railroad corporations to be the masters of the people." Most Democratic leaders, however, were less consistent than Reagan. They might occasionally extol the merits of greenbacks or free silver, but on the salient issues of railroad regulation and land speculation they usually sided with the corporations.⁵

Especially disheartening to the farmers was the unreliability of the Grange politicians. In the mid-1870s, the farmers had made Texas a Grange stronghold and had elevated Grange leaders to prominent positions in the Democratic hierarchy. Too often, though, the Grange leaders had succumbed to the wiles of the speculators and railroad lobbyists (at one point the Grange Worthy Master even voted in the legislature against railroad regulation). Not surprisingly, as the decade came to a close, disillusioned farmers abandoned the Grange in droves. Many of the erstwhile Grangers

⁵Scott, "Angry Agrarian," pp. 90-91; Ben H. Procter, Not Without Honor: The Life of John H. Reagan (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), p. 217; Chicago Tribune, March 29, 1882 (quote); Barr, Reconstruction to Reform, p. 39; Robert C. Cotner, James Stephen Hogg, A Biography (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1959), pp. 87-88; Brockman, "Railroads, Radicals, and Democrats," pp. 186, 228-230, 231-232.

turned to the Greenback Party. A Galveston newspaper reported in 1878 that a majority of the 482 Greenback clubs in Texas were former Grange chapters. The Texas Greenbackers championed inflation and railroad regulation, insisted that the public domain be granted to settlers rather than to speculators, demanded that landowners be prohibited from restricting access to pasture and water, and urged the improvement of the public school system.⁶

While the Greenbackers were a force to be reckoned with everywhere in the state, they were strongest in the Fifth Congressional District. Extending from the Gulf of Mexico to the Edwards Plateau, the Fifth included the fertile land between the Brazos and Colorado rivers. The river country long had produced cotton, but the frenzied railroad building in the region in the 1870s brought considerable new land under cultivation. Fifth District Greenbackers drew their greatest support from where the new rail construction was heaviest--a block of predominantly white river counties stretching roughly from Travis on the Colorado to Austin on the Brazos. In 1880 the Fifth District provided the Texas Greenback

⁶Scott, "Angry Agrarian," pp. 30, 31, 96-97, 101; Brockman, "Railroads, Radicals, and Democrats," p. 224; Rice, Reconstruction to Reform, pp. 54-55; McMath, "Sandy Land and Hogs in the Timber," p. 213.

Party with three-quarters of its total vote.⁷

Elsewhere in the state, Greenbackers posed less of a threat to Democratic domination. At the height of the movement, Greenbackers counted only about 40,000 votes while the Democrats polled nearly four times that many. Lack of organization and forceful leadership hurt the Greenbackers, but probably less than the flexibility of Democratic politicians. While some Democrats assailed the Greenbackers as financial crackpots, others attempted to out-greenback them. A disgusted Democratic congressman complained in 1878 that "here in Texas our party from fear of the Greenbackers has taken a greenback mongrel platform and stands on no ground whatever." Nevertheless, the Democratic response worked quite well. In 1881, a prominent Republican observed that the greenback "cause is about dead in Texas, and there is scarce a hope of its revival."⁸

Also near dead was the Texas Republican Party. The great post-war migration worked against the Republicans. Most of the immigrants were whites from the Deep South, and they brought with them their Democratic predilections. The Republicans also were in bad odor

⁷Rice, Reconstruction to Reform, p. 168; Washington Post, December 10, 1881.

⁸Barr, Reconstruction to Reform, pp. 50, 51 (quotes Gustavus Schleicher), 56; New York Times, August 3, 1881 (quotes A. G. Malloy).

with native whites who recalled the high taxes, the martial law, and the imaginary black domination imposed by the Reconstruction regime. During the late 1870s and early 1880s, the Republicans at best had the support of about 65,000 voters of whom more than 80 per cent were black. The party was competitive with the Democrats only in the heavily black counties of extreme east Texas and along the lower Colorado and Brazos rivers and in the Unionist German counties of the south central portion of the state.⁹

Though their ranks were thin, the Republicans had in Edmund J. Davis an indomitable leader. Davis, an old Texan, was cold, blunt, and vindictive, but also impeccably honest. Throughout his career, he consistently and fearlessly pursued an unpopular course as Unionist, Union soldier, Republican governor, and friend to blacks. He had little patience with those within his party whom he considered morally less than

⁹James A. Baggett, "The Rise and Fall of the Texas Radicals, 1867-1883," Ph.D. dissertation, North Texas State University, 1972, pp. 20-21, 156, 169, 171, 197, 207; Campbell, A Southern Community in Crisis, p. 333; Galveston News, September 7, 16, 1882; Ann Patton Baenziger, "The Texas State Police During Reconstruction: A Reexamination," Southwestern Historical Quarterly LXXII (1969), pp. 475, 479-483, 486; Rice, The Negro in Texas, pp. 35, 53; Barr, Reconstruction to Reform, pp. 17, 20; Nieman, "Black Political Power and Criminal Justice," pp. 394-395; James Alex Baggett, "Origins of Early Texas Republican Party Leadership," Journal of Southern History XL (1974), pp. 448-449.

steadfast. Among white Republicans, Davis had many admirers but few friends, and Democrats hated him with a passion. His loyalty to black Texans was reciprocated, however, and with their support he remained chairman of the state Republican Party until his death in 1883.¹⁰

Despite his local prestige, Davis had little clout with Republican administrations in Washington. National party leaders considered Texas a hopeless case and believed that the state chairman deserved no special recognition. In patronage matters, they generally ignored Davis and his allies in favor of a rival ring headed by United State Marshals Anthony B. Norton and Stilwell H. Russell and Austin Postmaster Archelaus M. Cochran. The national leaders also relied on the advice of Thomas P. Ochiltree, a native Texan now a Washington lobbyist and bon vivant. Davis found his experiences with the Republican administrations disillusioning. "The appointments to our local Federal offices have been too frequently made to suit the wishes of persons living at a distance from us," he noted in 1882. "Thus the national Republican Party has not invited support here, but has intentionally aided the secessionists or Bourbons to maintain their hold on the Southern people and keep the solid South in line. It has offered no

¹⁰Galveston News, September 7, 1882; Rice, The Negro in Texas, p. 34. For a biography of Davis see Gray, "Edmund J. Davis."

opportunity to our young men for distinction and preference." Davis later complained that "We are a kind of 'Botony Bay' for Northern politicians to put off their deadbeat . . . upon."¹¹

Davis was that rare Southern Republican who actually was interested in winning elections. Unfortunately, Texas was the Southern state least likely to go Republican. Davis saw fusion as the solution. He already had fused the Republicans to the Greenback ticket in the gubernatorial election of 1878 and, despite the objections of the Norton clique, was willing to attempt a similar experiment in 1882. Texas, Davis told his fellow Republicans,

can be brought into accord with the liberal ideas of this party . . . concerning education, immigration, security of franchise, suppression of lawlessness, and encouragement of labor; we will all be the gainers if our State Government can pass into the hands of men sincerely in favor of these measures, even though they be not Republicans and do not agree with us in our opinions touching national politics

¹¹Gray, "Edmund J. Davis," pp. 364, 378-379, 381-383, 392-394, 415 (second quote); Baggett, "The Rise and Fall of the Texas Radicals," p. 203; Paul Casdorph, A History of the Republican Party in Texas, 1865-1965 (Austin: Pemberton Press, 1965), p. 39; B. P. Stacy, Dallas, to Leonidas C. Houk, March 17, 1882, Leonidas Campbell Houk Papers, East Tennessee Historical Center, Knoxville; Claude H. Hall, "The Fabulous Tom Ochiltree: Promoter, Politician, Raconteur," Southwestern Historical Quarterly LXXI (1968), p. 359; Edmund J. Davis to the Republicans of Texas, June 27 (first quote), New York Times, July 5, 1882; William P. Moseley, Mexia, to William Mahone, May 18, 1882, William Mahone Papers, Duke University, Durham, N.C.

and were on the other side during the war.¹²

Davis and other opposition leaders knew that a simple Republican-Greenback fusion was not strong enough to displace the Democrats. A coalition of the two parties needed the help of Democratic dissidents to be successful. In 1882 such a broad-based insurgency seemed possible. Many Texans were disgusted not only with the Democratic response to the farm situation but also with the performance of Governor Oran M. Roberts and the legislature. They accused Roberts of bossism, cronyism, and the toleration of lawlessness, and they criticized severely the governor and the legislature for the passage of the "Fifty Cent" Land Law of 1879 which allowed speculators to purchase at low prices huge chunks of the public domain. A Denison editor summed up dissident sentiment:

the rank and file have well nigh tired of 'bossism,' which is a motive power for running the machine in the interest of speculation, regardless of the people's interest. . . . The people of this country are not at war with Democratic ideas, but they are at war with the would-be leaders who seek to make a hobby of the party for selfish ends, hence the Independent movement is assuming shape.¹³

¹²Gray, "Edmund J. Davis," pp. 388-389; Barr, Reconstruction to Reform, p. 48; Edmund J. Davis to the Republicans of Texas, June 27, New York Times, July 5, 1882.

¹³New York Times, December 26, 1881; Galveston News, October 4, 1882; P. R. T., Washington, to editor, October 29, New York Tribune, November 25, 1881; Barr, Reconstruction to Reform, pp. 58, 78; T. J. Crooks, Denison, to editor, May 20, New York Times, May 29, 1882.

The disparate opposition elements found a candidate behind whom they perhaps could unite when in December 1881 Congressman George W. ("Wash") Jones of Bastrop hinted that he would run for governor in 1882. A Unionist, a Confederate veteran, and, briefly, Democratic lieutenant governor, Jones first won election to congress in 1878 as an independent running on a greenback platform. His Fifth District included the Brazos and Colorado counties where beat the heart of the Texas greenback movement. The typical Texan, Jones was a genial and plain-spoken man, always ready to bend an elbow with his friends or to brawl with his enemies. A Northern journalist described him as "rough, big-footed, horny-handed, and cadaverous, with a woeful power to get on the stump and swing his arms and make Rome howl." Jones was a true independent. "I am opposed to party nominations and to the party lash," he told a reporter. "I took this independent position as far back as 1876, when I cut aloof from party organizations." Jones would not object to the endorsement of the Republicans or the Greenbackers, "but I would have it clearly understood that I was not the candidate of any party or set of politicians."¹⁴

¹⁴Washington Post, December 11, 1881 (quotes Jones); Barr, Reconstruction to Reform, pp. 35-36, 51, 54; Galveston News, October 22, 25, 26, 1882; Chicago Tribune, December 10, 1881, February 7, 1882 (quotes "Gath").

Fifth District Republicans had supported Jones in his congressional campaigns, and now the Davis faction touted him to Chester Arthur as a suitable standard bearer for a statewide coalition. Fearful of competition for the patronage, the Norton men argued that to consort with Democrats and Greenbackers was to sully the honor of the party. In May, Arthur ended the dispute by removing from office Norton, Russell, and Cochran and replacing them with Davis men. Obedient to the dictates of the national administration, the Texas Republican convention meeting in Austin in August overwhelmingly resolved to "give our entire aid and votes to the Hon. G. W. Jones for governor." Newspapermen noted that Davis lieutenant Norris Wright Cuney and other black delegates supported the resolution with great enthusiasm.¹⁵

The Greenbackers who had met in convention at Fort Worth in late June displayed neither zeal for Jones nor the discipline of the Republicans. The Galveston News reported that when the question of endorsement arose

¹⁵New York Tribune, December 8, 22, 1881; Chicago Tribune, December 30, 1881, May 17, 1882; Washington Post, May 21, 1882; New York Times, August 24, 1882; Galveston News, August 24 (quote), 25, October 27, November 1, 1882. In December 1881, the law partner of a former Greenback gubernatorial candidate asked William Mahone to use his influence with President Arthur to secure the control of the federal patronage for Wash Jones (Francis M. Adams, Calvert, to Mahone, December 14, 1881, Mahone Papers, Duke).

a most disgraceful wrangle ensued. Scores of delegates were on the floor at once, all speaking and gesticulating virulently. Members shook their fists in the speaker's face, declaring he had no right to speak. One member crossed the floor, barking like a dog. Another ran a bell. Considerable profanity was indulged.

The convention adjourned without making an endorsement. It reassembled, however, in Corsicana in late August where it finally gave Wash Jones its blessing.¹⁶

The Democrats responded to the Jones candidacy with their usual flexibility. In June, the legislature moved to defuse the railroad and public domain issues by reducing passenger fares and by halting the transfer of land to the railroads. These measures, however, did little to address the grievances of the farmers. Few farmers rode the rails as passengers, and speculators continued to purchase large quantities of land under the "Fifty Cent" law.¹⁷

The Democratic convention which met in Galveston in mid-July gave further evidence of the party's suppleness. The delegates declared that the rail and other corporations were subject to the control of the state and they condemned rate discrimination. Moreover, they nominated for governor "Oxcart" John Ireland of Seguin, a long-time foe of both railroad

¹⁶Galveston News, July 1 (quote), September 1, 1882.

¹⁷Brockman, "Railroads, Radicals, and Democrats," pp. 232-234; Scott, "Angry Agrarian," pp. 107-108.

subsidies and Oran Roberts. The nominee had other virtues. Ireland, a Dallas editor wryly noted, "so far, has not been charged with drunkenness or pugilism. He can boast of this, as he is about the only candidate we have had for governor for several years who did not have one or the other charge to confront."¹⁸

Throughout the fall, Ireland and Jones stumped the state. Their speeches in many respects were mirror images. Both advocated better schools, immigration promotion, tariff reduction, railroad regulation, currency expansion, and the sale of public land to settlers only. Jones, however, criticized the Democrats for talking much but doing little about the scarcity of credit and the abuses of the railroads, and he invited black support by calling for national reconciliation, a free ballot and a fair count, and the expansion of the juror pool to include any qualified voter. The Democrats countered by invoking the specters of Reconstruction and class conflict. A Galveston editor accused Jones of "engender[ing] discontent among the poorer classes and cater[ing] to the vile passions of envy and jealousy that exist wherever misfortunes, indolence and thriftlessness have

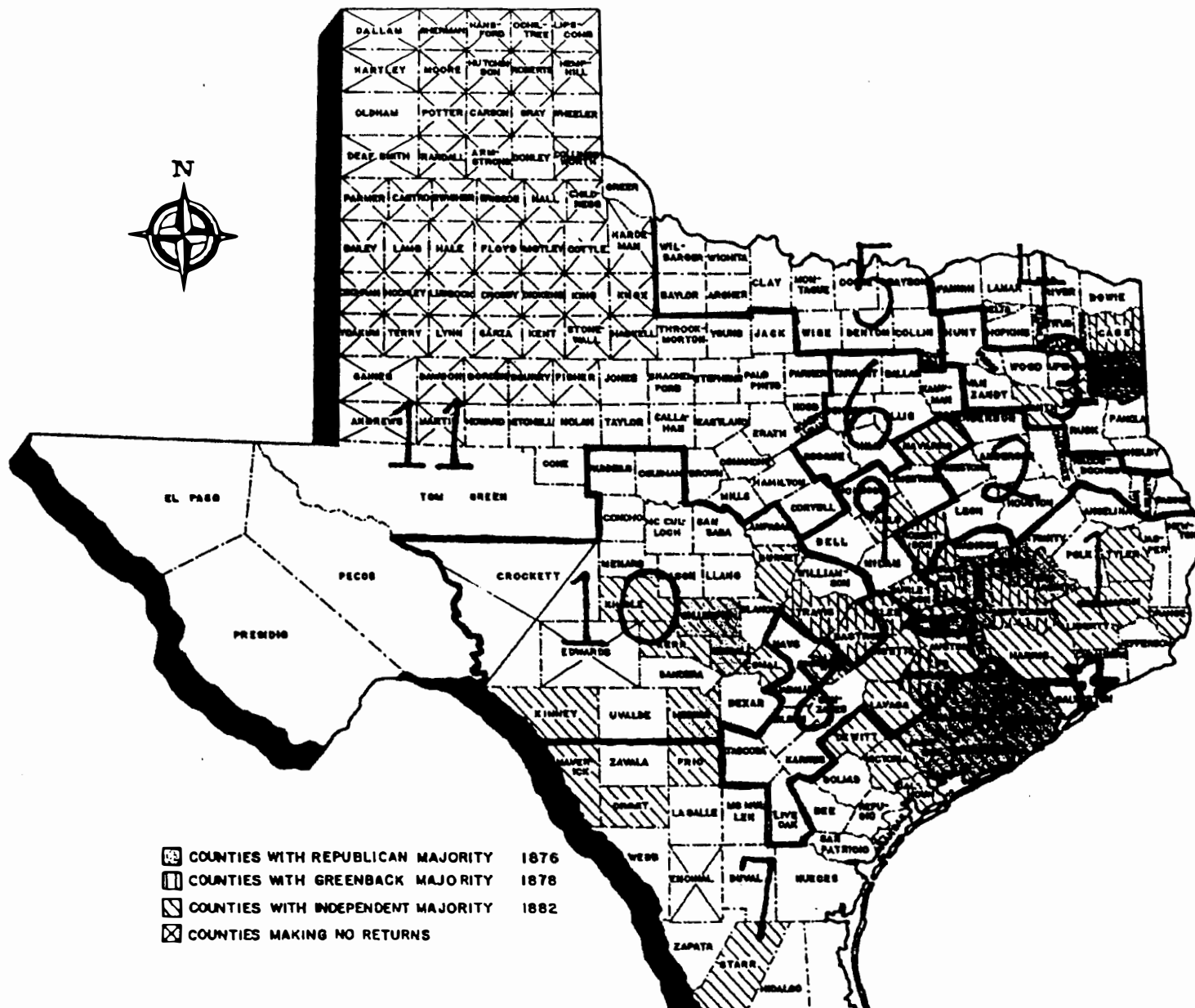
¹⁸Galveston News, July 18, 19, 20, 1882; New York Times, July 20, 1882; Brockman, "Railroads, Radicals, and Democrats," pp. 144, 234; Dallas Times (quote) in Galveston News, October 26, 1882.

wrought poverty and want, and wherever industry and thrift have made riches."¹⁹

In most of Texas's eleven congressional districts, coalition candidates posed little threat to their Democratic opponents. Exceptions were the Seventh and Tenth districts where traditional Republican appeals for internal improvements and a protective tariff struck responsive chords. In the Seventh (Galveston) District, Washington lobbyist Thomas P. Ochiltree ran as an independent. Ochiltree was exceptionally well connected. His charming personality, his lavish parties, and his superb taste in wine, clothes, and women had won him the friendship of Chester Arthur and other powerful politicians in both parties. Deeply interested in the economic development of his native state, Ochiltree succumbed to the pleas of Galveston businessmen who believed his presence in congress would insure the funding of major improvements for the city's harbor. Besides the backing of his political and business friends, Ochiltree enjoyed the support of his boyhood tutor, L. C. M. Chambodut, who now, as Catholic Bishop of San Antonio, had immense influence over the

¹⁹Barr, Reconstruction to Reform, pp. 65, 66, 67; Rice, The Negro in Texas, p. 64; Galveston News, October 17, 1882.

TEXAS CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS, 1882



district's numerous Hispanic voters.²⁰

Extending from Galveston south to Brownsville and up the Rio Grande as far as Eagle Pass, the Seventh District embraced a territory the size of Kentucky. Here, in south Texas, sheep and sugar were as important as cotton, and Ochiltree advocated protection for the sugar and wool industries as well as harbor construction for Galveston, Pass Cavallo, and other Texas ports. The election, Ochiltree maintained, is "a question of commercial rather than party interest. . . . The mistake and misfortune of the South since the war have been in sending men to Congress who spent their time in delivering to empty seats . . . long-winded speeches, to show that they were still orthodox on the Dred Scott decision." George P. Finlay, the Democratic nominee, adopted Ochiltree's platform, but against Ochiltree's advantages, Finlay found the going rough.²¹

In the adjacent Tenth (formerly the Fifth) District, Edmund J. Davis challenged John Hancock, a railroad lawyer, for the seat being vacated by Wash

²⁰Hall, "The Fabulous Tom Ochiltree," pp. 350 (n. 11), 361-362; Barr, Reconstruction to Reform, p. 70. Stilwell H. Russell was a Straightout Republican candidate in the Third District.

²¹Hall, "The Fabulous Tom Ochiltree," p. 362; Galveston News, September 1, October 3, 13 (quote), 15, 22, 1882; Corpus Christi Sunday Morning Ledger, September 16, in Raleigh (N.C.) State Journal, October 26, 1882.

Jones. Despite extensive gerrymandering, the district included enough Greenback and German counties to persuade Davis that his chances of election were good. He ran as an independent on a protectionist platform attractive to sheep herders on the Edwards Plateau. Hancock replied to Davis's appeal to the wool growers by arguing that tariff reduction would "greatly cheapen woolen goods and [thus] increase the consumption of them . . . and prove rather beneficial than hurtful to the sheep husbandry." Meanwhile, a Democratic editor condemned Davis for "his impudent proposal, as an exponent of the Republican tariff policy, that citizens sell their votes to him and his party for a pitiful slice of class legislation." The protective tariff, the editor reminded the district's farmers, is "part of a still vaster system of usurpation and abuse, which has steadily sought to league avarice with power for the inordinate aggrandizement of the few."²²

In the congressional races, John Hancock and the other Democratic candidates won easy victories everywhere except in the Seventh District where Thomas P. Ochiltree defeated George P. Finlay 12,457 votes to

²²Gray, "Edmund J. Davis," pp. 419, 422-423; Brockman, "Railroads, Radicals, and Democrats," pp. 142-143; Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia . . . 1882, p. 795; Galveston News, October 11 (second quote), 13 (first quote), 1882.

9,851. Democratic State Chairman John M. Claiborne attributed Ochiltree's triumph to the use of money, the influence of federal officeholders, Democratic disorganization, illegal votes cast by Mexicans in the Rio Grande Valley, and the "general cussedness of the rabble." Claiborne ignored the most important factor--the confidence of the electorate in Ochiltree's ability to obtain funding for the improvement of Galveston harbor. Ochiltree received over 3,000 votes in Galveston County, turning the usual 1,700 vote Democratic majority into a 500 vote Republican majority.²³

In the Tenth District, Hancock buried Edmund J. Davis 16,098 votes to 9,783. Davis suspected Democratic fraud in the German counties, but he placed the ultimate blame for his defeat on the Greenbackers. "Undoubtedly the failure of even a majority of the greenbackers to support men caused my defeat," he complained. "I thought that at least they would remain neutral, but I do believe I received as many votes from straight out democrats as I did from them." The Greenbackers, a Democratic editor noted before the election, "refuse to vote for E. J. Davis, a Republican hard-money man. . . . Greenbackers may not like Hancock, but they can not

²³Guide to U.S. Elections (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1975), p. 649; Galveston News, November 9, 10 (quote), 1882.

desire to elect Davis." As for the Democratic sheep herders, they found Davis's tariff appeal not quite strong enough to convince them to sever their ties with the white man's party.²⁴

In the gubernatorial election, John Ireland polled 150,809 votes to 102,501 for Wash Jones. While Ireland fell more than 15,000 ballots behind Oran Roberts's vote of 1880, Jones only slightly exceeded the combined Greenback and Republican totals of that year. Jones carried forty-eight counties, but most of them were in the Greenback and Republican strongholds of the south and east. While Jones polled the full Greenback and Republican votes, he failed to win much support from dissident Democrats. Restless Democratic farmers remained with the old party because recent legislation and the nomination of Ireland had persuaded them that it might reform itself. Disgruntled conservatives held fast because, in Jones's words, they "consider a Greenbacker a crazy man." Nowhere was the conservatives' disdain for Jones better illustrated than in Galveston County where Jones ran 700 votes behind Ochiltree. Lacking an issue attractive to dissident Democrats, the Republican-Greenback coalition remained confined to its strongholds and doomed to minority

²⁴Guide to U.S. Elections, p. 649; Gray, "Edmund J. Davis," pp. 423-424 (first quote); Galveston News, September 30 (second quote), October 8, 26, 27, 1882.

status.²⁵

The decisive defeat of Wash Jones ended for a time political insurgency in Texas. Farmer discontent remained, but its locus gradually shifted to the northwest. There, as the railroads expanded and the times grew harder, a new farmer organization, the Farmers' Alliance, gained strength. In the 1890s, the Texas Alliance, often led by former Greenbackers, became the foundation on which was built the national Populist Party.²⁶

²⁵Barr, Reconstruction to Reform, p. 69; Roscoe C. Martin, "The Greenback Party in Texas," Southwestern Historical Quarterly XXX (1927), p. 172; New York Times, November 8, 1882; Washington Post, December 11, 1881 (quote); Galveston News, November 10, 1882.

²⁶Scott, "Angry Agrarian," p. 110; McMath, "Sandy Land and Hogs in the Timber," pp. 215, 219; Smith, "The Farmers' Alliance in Texas," p. 351; James Turner, "Understanding the Populists," Journal of American History 67 (1980), p. 362. For the Texas origins of the Populist Party see Lawrence Goodwyn, Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

LOUISIANA

A malleable mediocrity named Samuel D. McEnery served in 1882 as governor of Louisiana and titular head of the state's Democratic Party. McEnery made a career of assiduously catering to the rich and influential. In return he reaped the reward of high office--first governor, then justice of the state supreme court, and finally United States Senator. Real power in the state lay with the directors of the immensely profitable Louisiana Lottery Company and with the firm which operated the convict lease. The lessees and lottery men used their money liberally in making sure that Governor "McLottery" and the legislature did nothing to endanger their lucrative monopolies. Their principal agent and thus the most important man in Louisiana was State Treasurer E. A. Burke. While Burke was busy debauching the legislature, bossing the Democratic Party, and favoring his bondholding friends, he also was helping himself to the public monies. His eventual exile in

Honduras would be a comfortable one.¹

If the Louisiana Democratic Party took its morals from cosmopolitan New Orleans--home of Creole aristocrats and New South businessmen, of gamblers, whores, and drunkards, of Burke, the lottery, and the Irish toughs whose muscle ensured Democratic success in city elections--it took its racial attitude from the parishes north of the Red River. The north was Confederate Louisiana, barely removed from the frontier, hard-shelled Baptist, backward and provincial. Its unofficial capital was Shreveport, one of the most reactionary towns in the South. The cotton planters of north Louisiana used their leverage over their black tenants to discourage Republican activity. When economic coercion failed, they turned unhesitatingly to violence. The terrible Reconstruction massacres of Republicans at Colfax and Coushatta had occurred in the Red River Valley, and since the fall of the carpetbag regime in 1877 not an election in the north had passed without bloodshed. Battered by the Negrophobes and abandoned by the state Republican leadership, north Louisiana blacks either lost interest in politics or

¹Mark T. Carleton, Politics and Punishment: The History of the Louisiana State Penal System (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), p. 40; William Ivy Hair, Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest: Louisiana Politics, 1877-1900 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), pp. 27-29, 108-109, 127-128, 141.

made arrangements with the more tolerant among the Democrats. By 1878 the local Republican Party was nearly dead.²

Not every Louisiana Democrat relished seeing his party in the hands of the corruptionists and the bulldozers. Democrats across the state resented ring rule in Baton Rouge and in the parishes. Many of those from the predominantly white hill country of north Louisiana protested party rules which gave the heavily black Mississippi and Red River parishes disproportionate strength in district and state conventions. Upland farmers believed that the lawyers, merchants, bankers, and planters who ran the party cared little that their plight became less tolerable with each passing year. Still, although a few hill country farmers flirted with the Greenback heresy in the late

²New Orleans Louisianian, September 17, 1881; Chicago Tribune, August 4, 1882; E. North Cullom, New Orleans, to William E. Chandler, July 14, 1882, William Eaton Chandler Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Hair, Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest, pp. 113, 171-172; Clara Lopez Campbell, "The Political Life of Louisiana Negroes, 1865-1890," Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1971, pp. 187-188. "The criminal classes of [New Orleans] are nearly all in the pay of the present City Government, and mainly under the protection of the Administrator of Improvements, who is Chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee, and head of the Ancient Order of Hibernians" (Chicago Tribune, June 26, 1882). For the massacres at Colfax and Coushatta see Ted Tunnell, Crucible of Reconstruction: War, Radicalism and Race in Louisiana, 1863-1877 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), pp. 189-192, 196-201.

1870s and early 1880s, no insurgency developed. The railroads were slow in bringing north Louisiana fully into the cotton economy. Not until 1882 did rails connect Shreveport with New Orleans, and construction in the rest of the north similarly lagged.³

In the black belt some cotton planters worried that political violence demoralized the labor force. "The planter finds the bulldozer, not the Republican laborer his real foe," maintained a federal marshal, "for all violence dealt to the laborer smites agriculture right between the eyes." The cotton planters joined their brethren in the sugar parishes in condemning the national Democratic Party for its refusal to appropriate funds for levee construction. In the wake of the spring floods of 1882, a Democratic newspaperman confessed his "contempt for Northern Democrats who have turned their backs upon us in this hour of suffering and

³Hair, Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest, pp. 45-46, 69, 70, 115-119; Joe Gray Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, 1863-1877 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), p. 361; R. P. Webb, Athens, to William Mahone, June 21, 1882, William Mahone Papers, Duke University, Durham, N.C.; Eugene W. Hilgard, "Report on the Cotton Production of the State of Louisiana," in U.S. Congress, House, Report on Cotton Production in the United States, House Miscellaneous Document 42, Part 5, 47th Congress, 2nd session, 1882-1883, pp. 38-39; Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1882 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883), p. 483.

deprivation."⁴

The planters of the French, Catholic, and predominantly black sugar parishes of south Louisiana faulted the national Democracy not only for its failure to finance internal improvements but also for its insistence on a low tariff. Louisiana sugar needed federal protection in order to compete with cheap Cuban imports, and only the Republicans seemed inclined to extend that protection. Many native sugar planters already had gone over to the Republican Party where they joined a goodly number of Northern men who had settled in the bayou country after the Civil War. The presence of so many white Republicans, the prevalence of wage labor or tenancy, and the mutual interest in the tariff of black laborers and white planters of both parties kept political intimidation at a minimum in south Louisiana.⁵

⁴J. R. G. Pitkin, New Orleans, to William Mahone, November 14, 1881 (first quote), Mahone Papers, Duke; J. T. Sanders, Houma, to editor, May 16 (second quote), Leonce and L. A. Sandoz, Opelousas, to editor, May 23, 1882, New York Times, May 29, 1882.

⁵Hair, Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest, pp. 38-39, 88; Matthew J. Schott, "Class Conflict in Louisiana Voting Since 1877: Some New Perspectives," Louisiana History XII (1971), pp. 158-159; Gilles Vandal, "Politics and Violence in Bourbon Louisiana: The Loreauville Riot of 1884 as a Case Study," ibid. XXX (1989), pp. 28-29; John A. Heitmann, "Responding to the Competition: The Louisiana Sugar Planters Association, the Tariff, and the Formation of the Louisiana Sugar Exchange, 1877-1885," Southern Studies XXV (1986), pp. 315-340. The level of political violence in south

Also dissatisfied with the Democratic Party was a patrician element nauseated by the McEnery regime. Representative of them and the man considered by E. A. Burke the greatest threat to Democratic unity in 1882 was Congressman E. John Ellis, whose district embraced a portion of the city of New Orleans and several adjacent sugar parishes. Scion of an old Whig family, distinguished Confederate soldier, leader in the redemption of Louisiana from Republican rule, able champion of sugar and levees in the federal congress, Ellis longed for private wealth to equal his public stature. His desires, however, were constantly thwarted. His New Orleans law practice suffered from his extended stays in Washington. His investments in railroads and manufacturing proved unremunerative. His lobbying, including an inept attempt to convince the state legislature to charter a rival to the Louisiana Lottery Company, was unsuccessful. Still, even in the Crescent City's depraved political atmosphere, Ellis refused to debase himself. "Had I been corrupt or contemptible," he told his brother in 1884, "I could

Louisiana varied widely from parish to parish. For example, St. John the Baptist was quite peaceful while Iberia experienced twenty-three political killings between 1868 and 1883 (New York Tribune, April 5, 1879; Vandal, "Politics and Violence in Bourbon Louisiana," pp. 25-27).

today have been a man of wealth."⁶

And yet the men who ran Louisiana were indeed corrupt and contemptible. In March 1882, Ellis made public a letter in which he arraigned the McEnery administration and hinted that he might declare himself an independent. "We have a deplorable state of affairs," he informed a supporter,

a Constitution which is a blotch and disgrace; officers in many cases incapable of, or unwilling to, execute the laws; laws so ignorantly and clumsily framed as to be incapable of execution; the stigma of repudiation on the fair name of the State; officials, even Judges, speculating in State and city securities that fluctuate in decisions of the courts; taxes exceeding the constitutional limit; taxes in New Orleans over 3 1/2 per cent; commerce and business frightened at the very word 'Legislature'; officeholders and legislators grown suddenly and mysteriously rich; and the State stagnant and the people poorer--and yet the Democratic Party (so called) has been in power since 1877. . . . I am with . . . the honest people, of whatever name, or color, or party, who love their State and want law and order, and peace and good government, and honest Judges, Governors, Legislators, and capable and faithful Congressmen, and who are determined, come what will, that the penitentiary shall have the thief and corruptionist, and the high places shall be filled with honest men.⁷

⁶Hair, Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest, pp. 21-23; Chicago Tribune, August 4, 1882; E. John Ellis, Washington, to Thomas C. W. Ellis, April 1, 1884, Ellis Family Papers, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. For a biographical sketch of Ellis see Robert Cinnamond Tucker, "The Life and Public Service of E. John Ellis," Louisiana Historical Quarterly XXIX (1946), pp. 679-770.

⁷E. John Ellis, Washington, to Thomas C. W. Ellis, February 6, 1882, Ellis Family Papers, LSU; Ellis, Washington, to Robert J. Caldwell, February 14, New York Times, March 19, 1882. "The tax burden in New Orleans is very heavy. The valuation for assessment is quite

The reaction of most Louisiana Republicans to a possible independent movement was lukewarm at best. Powerful United States Senator William P. Kellogg wanted nothing to do with the idea while P. B. S. Pinchback, the state's foremost black politician and a member of the anti-Kellogg wing of the party, displayed only scant enthusiasm. Through the columns of his New Orleans newspaper, Pinchback and his associates made clear their opinion of an independent-Republican coalition. In January the editors of the Louisianian declared that Republicans "need not balance with any faction or form any entangling alliance." In March they responded to Ellis's letter by suggesting that the congressman "and other conservatives who are interested in the welfare of their State need take but one step further to liberate this State from Bourbon rule. Let them pass the Rubicon and come boldly over into the lines of the party of progress and they will find honest masses ready to support them in their loyal views."⁸

The Democrats whom Ellis threatened with the penitentiary struck back at the congressman by attempting to deny him renomination from the Second

high and often higher than the actual market value" (Chicago Tribune, March 19, 1882).

⁸J. R. G. Pitkin, New Orleans, to William E. Chandler, June 8, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; New Orleans Louisianian, January 7, 14 (first quote), March 11 (second quote), 1882.

District. They badly miscalculated. Ellis's work for sugar and internal improvements had made him very popular with his constituents. James E. Richardson, an astute Republican commentator, observed that "Ellis, if beaten in the democratic nomination, could through a democratic division, by the aid of the Republican vote from the country parishes . . . probably be elected as an Independent. The democratic machine men don't want him, but would much prefer to have him elected as a regular democrat, than as an independent through Republican votes. He is thus, comparatively, master of the situation."⁹

By early September, Ellis felt confident enough of renomination to announce that he would not run as an independent. Perhaps believing that Ellis had prematurely tipped his hand, E. A. Burke launched a last-minute assault. On October 1, the editors of Burke's New Orleans Times-Democrat accused the congressman of being too cozy with his Republican colleagues in the House of Representatives. They also charged that Ellis's "personal conduct in Washington has brought reproach upon himself and his district." All to no avail. On October 6, Ellis was unanimously

⁹New York Times, July 26, 1882; James E. Richardson, New Orleans, to J. M. Currie, August 1, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; E. John Ellis, Washington, to Thomas C. W. Ellis, August 9, 1882, Ellis Family Papers, LSU.

renominated.¹⁰

E. John Ellis's real intention remains obscure. Republican United States Marshal J. R. G. Pitkin, a childhood friend of Ellis, believed that the congressman "came home from Wash[ington] to project himself as an Independent, and did not, solely because the Republican conditions . . . dissuaded him." Perhaps so, but Ellis, unlike William Mahone or James R. Chalmers, did not court Republican support in either Washington or Louisiana. Nor did he attempt to set up an independent district or state organization. Moreover, he disdained the patron saint of Southern independents. "Virginians have all turned politicians," Ellis told his parents in 1883, "and the good men in the State are united to overthrow Mahone. I hope they may succeed."¹¹

Ellis and many other Democrats were disgusted with their party, but few chose to bolt. The editor of the Nachitoches Peoples Vindicator feared not for the party's ultimate regeneration:

Because we insist that the Democracy . . . shall strip itself of war, war measures and warriors; shall leave to the 'wrack of time' slavery, disunion and State Sovereignty . . . and planting itself

¹⁰Tucker, "The Life and Public Service of E. John Ellis," pp. 747 (quotes New Orleans Times-Democrat, October 1, 1882), 748; Chicago Tribune, October 3, 1882.

¹¹J. R. G. Pitkin, New Orleans, to William E. Chandler, October 24, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; E. John Ellis, New York, to his parents, October 15, 1883, Ellis Family Papers, LSU.

firmly on an advocacy of the material wants of the people, the education of the masses, the purity of the franchise and ballot box, the development of the natural resources of the country by generous public aid, the protection of American labor and American industries, and the destruction of intolerance in all its horrid forms--it must not be supposed that our intention is to abandon the Democratic organization, for we have unbounded faith in the ability and intelligence of its masses to accomplish the purpose we indicate and advocate.

Most of the dissidents found the idea of a union with the Republicans nearly unthinkable. The powerful New Orleans Picayune questioned whether they would vote for the Saviour and His Apostles on a Republican ticket. James Richardson best summed up the situation within the Louisiana Democratic Party in 1882:

I cannot say that the times are altogether ripe for an Independent movement. We have no man in Louisiana evidently, as yet, who had the calibre out of which to make a Mahone. I do not see that we have any local issues, upon which a movement is to be based. We have simply to count upon a growing indifference to bourbon rule.¹²

As in the rest of the South, the Republican Party in Louisiana divided into two factions--those who held the federal offices and those who wanted to hold them. The offices in the state were many and lucrative, and

¹²Natchitoches Peoples Vindicator in New Orleans Louisianian, July 2, 1881; New Orleans Picayune, December 23, 1881, in Scrapbook 28 (1882), p. 3, Mahone Papers, Duke; "Comite," Clinton, to editor, May 16, New York Times, May 29, 1882; Campbell, "The Political Life of Louisiana Negroes," p. 223; James E. Richardson, New Orleans, to J. M. Currie, August 1, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; Chicago Tribune, August 4, 1882.

the most coveted were those located in the mammoth customhouse of the port of New Orleans. The men who occupied the customhouse dominated the Louisiana Republican Party. Composed chiefly of carpetbaggers and their black subordinates, the customhouse ring handed out jobs, packed conventions, and bossed caucuses throughout the state. Unfortunately, they proved not so adept at winning elections. They long ago had abandoned north Louisiana and appeared only slightly more interested in the sugar parishes. "The party to-day is in the four walls of the Customhouse," complained J. R. G. Pitkin, "--the rest of the state long since ran to weeds. . . . It should be announced explicitly from Washin[gton] that delivering a periodical delegation of customs employees to a convention does not suffice the full measure of Rep[ublican] duty here."¹³

The customhouse men, however, felt satisfied with the status quo. "When I tell you, privately, that here upon the ground, Louisiana republican congressmen are not wanted by Louisiana republican managers, I tell you what every intelligent republican knows, even though he dare not speak it," confided James Richardson. "The advent of new men means a redivision of patronage--that some of those in place must step down and out. That is

¹³J. R. G. Pitkin, New Orleans, to William E. Chandler, June 8 (quote), October 24, Pitkin to D. B. Henderson, October 19, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC.

the secret of the situation in a nut shell." The leader of the customhouse ring was former Governor William P. Kellogg, native of Vermont and resident of Washington, D.C., professional politician and power broker whose interest in Louisiana was of a purely business nature. As United States Senator, he used his prestige and influence to reward and protect his friends and chastise his enemies.¹⁴

Foremost among Kellogg's enemies was a group of native aristocrats led by sugar planter Taylor Beattie of Lafourche Parish. Beattie and his friends had joined the Republican Party because of its protectionism and its support for internal improvements. They believed that the party would attain a majority in Louisiana if its leadership was purged of carpetbaggers, spoilsmen, and time-servers. "I have no prejudice against the nativity or color of any citizen," fumed Beattie associate and secretary of the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce William M. Burwell, "but I know that no party which disregards the conduct and courage of the leaders can sustain itself in the South, even if it had all

¹⁴J. R. G. Pitkin, New Orleans, to William E. Chandler, June 8, James E. Richardson, New Orleans, to J. M. Currie, August 1, Richardson to William E. Chandler, October 5 (quote), A. S. Badger, New Orleans, to D. B. Henderson, October 26, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; William M. Burwell, New Orleans, to William Mahone, December 21, 1881, Mahone Papers, Duke.

Africa to back it."¹⁵

The Mahone movement meant many things to many men. To the Beattie faction it marked the beginning of a Whig uprising against the Bourbon Democracy. Burwell and other Beattie followers congratulated Mahone on his victories, sought his aid, and told him that "Should we succeed in placing the state in perfectly reputable hands we will organize a party on your basis of universal suffrage, universal education, and conciliation & justice." They maintained that, if President Chester A. Arthur would recognize Beattie as he had Mahone, a new era would dawn in Louisiana. "Whigs, Conservatives, business men and the better class of people are now ripe to break away from Bourbonism as the Whigs in Virginia have done if President Arthur will sweep away men who are non residents and appoint in their stead native republicans of repute and popularity," observed a Beattie lieutenant. "If the Administration desires to save Louisiana to the republican party it must sweep away

¹⁵J. Carlyle Sitterson, Sugar Country: The Cane Sugar Industry in the South, 1753-1950 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press; 1953), pp. 331-332; William M. Burwell, New Orleans, to William Mahone, March 5, 24, December 21, 1881, January 21 (quote), 1882, E. L. St. Ceran to New Orleans Louisianian in Scrapbook 28 (1882), p. 5, Mahone Papers, Duke; clipping from New Orleans Louisianian in Burwell to Lewis Harvie, July 1, 1881, Harvie Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

Kellogg's convention packers and corruptionists and place men in the lead who will see to it that the vote is cast and have it counted."¹⁶

Allied with Beattie was a group of prominent black politicians led by P. B. S. Pinchback and including H. C. C. Astwood of the New Orleans Louisianian; Henry Demas, boss of St. John the Baptist Parish; A. F. Riard of Vermillion; L. A. Martinet of St. Martin; and Theophile T. Allain of West Baton Rouge. Pinchback and his friends believed that the customhouse ring took black Republicans too much for granted and demanded that blacks be given more and better places at the public trough. The carpetbaggers ignored their pleas. The Beattie men, on the other hand, gave the Pinchback group a place in their councils and promised to protect black voters at the polls.¹⁷

The split in the Louisiana Republican Party was

¹⁶William M. Burwell, New Orleans, to Lewis E. Harvie, June 23, clipping from New Orleans Louisianian in Burwell to Harvie, July 1, 1881, Harvie Family Papers, VHS; Burwell to William Mahone, November 17, 1881, June 17, 1882, M. R. Nicholas, New Orleans, to Mahone, November 17 (quote), 1881, New Orleans Picayune, December 29, 1881, Scrapbook 28 (1882), p. 4, E. L. St. Ceran to New Orleans Louisianian, Scrapbook 28 (1882), p. 5, Mahone Papers, Duke; New Orleans Louisianian, July 2, November 12, 19, 1881; E. North Cullom, New Orleans, to William E. Chandler, July 14, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC.

¹⁷New Orleans Louisianian, July 2, August 6, September 17, October 29, November 12, 1881; Campbell, "The Political Life of Louisiana Negroes," pp. 194-195, 210-211.

formalized in 1880 when Secretary of the Treasury John Sherman used his control of the departmental patronage to gain the support of the New Orleans customhouse for his bid for the presidency. U. S. Grant, however, was the overwhelming choice of Louisiana blacks, and in the state Republican convention Pinchback led the general's forces in a vain attempt to thwart the Sherman ring. Taylor Beattie joined Pinchback as a Grant man. That stuffy patrician may have thought Grant the best candidate, but surely the foe of the carpetbag spoilsmen must have shuddered at the scandals of the Grant administration. Beattie, however, was not devoid a measure of low cunning, and now he saw an opportunity for advancement and for revenge. In 1879 Beattie had been the unsuccessful Republican candidate for governor, and he blamed his defeat on the half-hearted support given him by the customhouse. The bitter aftermath of the 1880 convention saw the formation of separate Republican state committees--the Kellogg committee chaired by customhouse black Andrew J. Dumont and a rival committee headed by Taylor Beattie. Both claimed to be the state party's legitimate governing body, and both sought recognition from the national administration.¹⁸

¹⁸Campbell, "The Political Life of Louisiana Negroes," pp. 211-212; Philip D. Uzee, "Republican Politics in Louisiana, 1877-1900," Ph.D. dissertation,

Beattie enjoyed advantages over Kellogg in their battle for supremacy in the Louisiana Republican Party. He had considerable influence in his home Third Congressional District. "The Beattie Committee is the strongest of the two," noted Theophile T. Allain, "because it is backed by actual Republican votes elected and returned. . . . The Third Congressional District which is the stronghold of the Beattie Committee is the only elective power left of the Republican party in the State of Louisiana as far as Congressional elections are concerned, while the other committee is made strong by federal patronage." Beattie also had great confidence in President Arthur. In 1880, Arthur had been a stalwart adherent of General Grant and, as president, had indicated by his support of the Readjusters his intention of recognizing Southern insurgents. In late October 1881, the Beattie committee instructed Beattie, Burwell, Pinchback, Astwood, Riard, Martinet, and five others to meet with Arthur to discuss the political situation in Louisiana.¹⁹

Kellogg by now was alarmed. He not only wanted to

Louisiana State University, 1950, pp. 73, 96-100; New Orleans Louisianian, November 19, 1881; William M. Burwell, New Orleans, to William Mahone, November 17, December 21, 1881, Mahone Papers, Duke.

¹⁹New Orleans Louisianian, September 17 (quote), October 29, November 12, 19, 1881; newspaper clipping in M. R. Nicholas, New Orleans, to William Mahone, November 17, 1881, Mahone Papers, Duke.

retain his power as boss of the state Republican Party but also, because his term as United States Senator was coming to a close, wished to return to Washington as congressman from the Third District. He decided to try to reach an agreement with Beattie. On November 17, Kellogg met with his rival at the customhouse. The senator obtained no satisfaction from the interview. The Times-Democrat reported that "Judge Beattie did not evidence much desire to harmonize, bearing in mind no doubt that the customhouse committee on one occasion had sold him out." On January 6, 1881, both Beattie and Kellogg departed for Washington.²⁰

While Beattie appeared to have caught the tide in Southern affairs, Kellogg proved the more adroit politician. He had the prestige of being the only Southern Republican Senator, and, during his long residence in Washington, he had cultivated the powerful in business, the congress, and the departments. The senator soon taught Beattie that in the national capital the Lafourche Parish planter was out of his political league. Kellogg instinctively went for the weak point in the Beattie-Pinchback coalition. He knew that black politicians often were poor men with few wealthy friends

²⁰New Orleans Times-Democrat, November 18, clipping in M. R. Nicholas, New Orleans, to William Mahone, November 17, 1881, Mahone Papers, Duke; New Orleans Louisianian, January 7, 1882; New York Tribune, January 12, 1882; Chicago Tribune, January 30, 1882.

to whom they could turn in time of need. They therefore depended greatly on the proceeds of public office. Kellogg's continued command of the patronage enabled him to pick off one by one Beattie's principal black supporters. He had L. A. Martinet appointed special agent in the Post Office Department, H. C. C. Astwood made consul-general at St. Domingo, and A. F. Riard promoted from deputy collector of the internal revenue to assistant appraiser for the port of New Orleans. His most effective move, though, was having Pinchback made surveyor of the port. Kellogg also went bond for Pinchback and introduced legislation to increase the surveyor's salary.²¹

When rumor of Pinchback's appointment reached New Orleans, the editor of the Louisianian defended his employer: "As to the allegations of selling out, it is as false as it is unjust. The trouble is, [Pinchback] will not sell." Nevertheless, after the Louisianian announced Pinchback's appointment, Beattie's once familiar name disappeared from the columns of the newspaper.²²

By mid-March, the Beattie men knew that they had

²¹New Orleans Louisianian, December 24, 1881, February 11, 25, March 4, 11, April 1, 29, 1882.

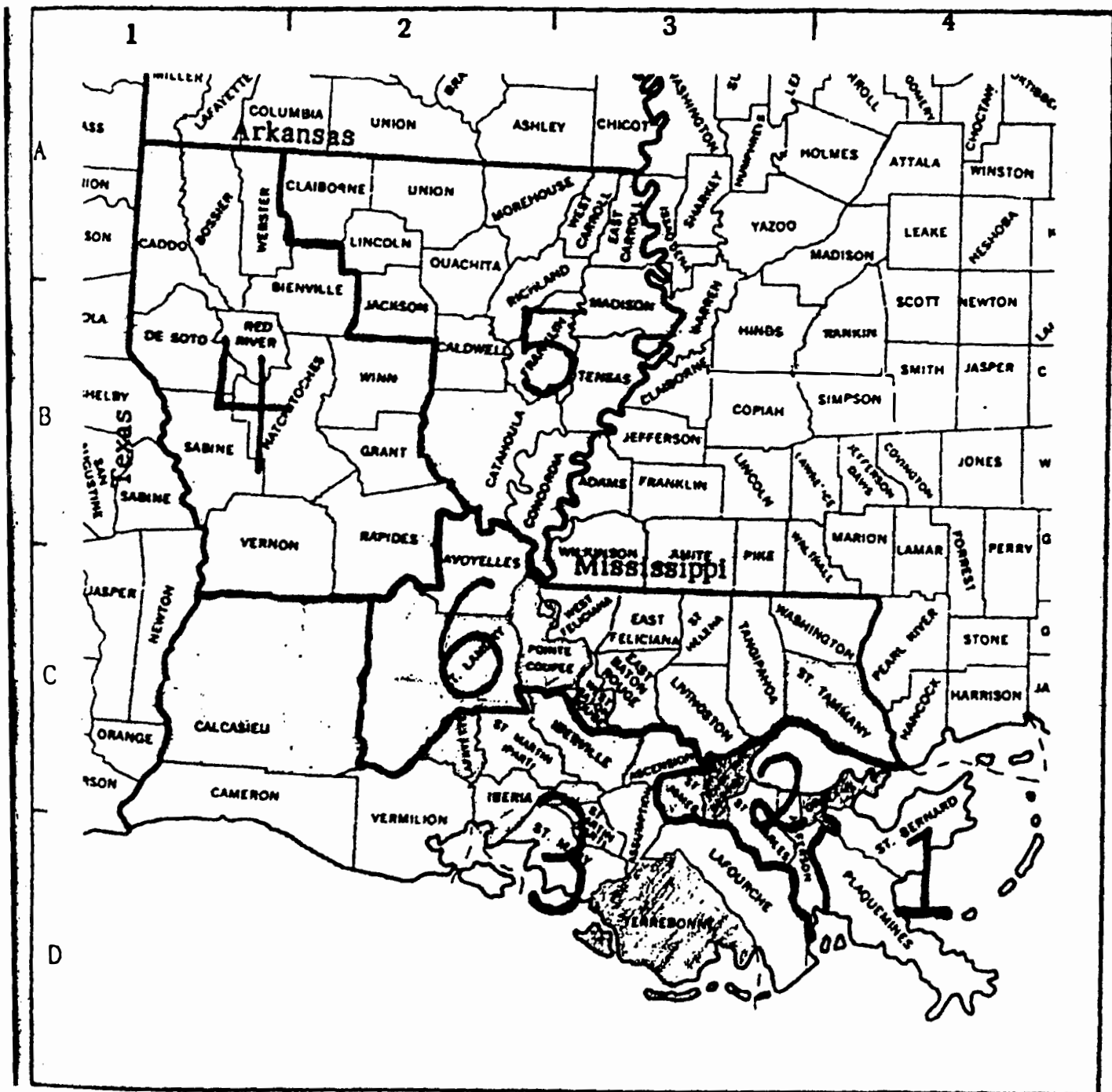
²²H. C. C. Astwood, New Orleans, to New Orleans Times-Democrat, January 2, in New Orleans Louisianian, January 7, 1882. The Louisianian suspended publication on June 17, 1882.

failed in their attempt to win control of the federal patronage in Louisiana. The appointment in April of Kellogg's long-time friend and legal counsel William E. Chandler as the administration's chief advisor on Southern affairs merely confirmed the senator's victory. Still, Taylor Beattie would not quit. He would challenge Kellogg and incumbent Chester B. Darrall for the Republican nomination for congress from the Third District.²³

A glance at the elections of 1882 in the Louisiana congressional districts reveals the variety and possibility of the state's politics. Along the Red River in northwest Louisiana's Fourth District, fraud and intimidation had so demoralized the Republican Party that it offered no opposition to Democratic incumbent Newton C. Blanchard. Alas, the wealthy young Shreveport lawyer would prove a better friend to Northern railroad interests than to the hill country farmers who elected him.²⁴

²³William M. Burwell, New Orleans, to William Mahone, March 17, June 5, 1882, Mahone Papers, Duke; Leon Burr Richardson, William E. Chandler, Republican (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1940), pp. 83, 159, 171-172.

²⁴New York Times, July 26, 1882; James E. Richardson, New Orleans, to J. M. Currie, August 1, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; Hair, Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest, p. 206. A newspaper correspondent noted that "a in the Fourth District's Red River parishes "a



Over in the northeastern corner of the state, the Fifth District Republican Party also was in poor condition. Party managers nevertheless believed that they could defeat Democratic Congressman J. Floyd King, one of Louisiana's most aggressive bulldozers. "In each year of Gen. King's campaigns heretofore," explained a New York Times correspondent, "large Republican parishes have gone unanimously Democratic, through the moral effect of judicious negro-whipping just before election day." King's tactics, however, were wearing thin with some Mississippi River planters. They complained of the deleterious effect of political violence on the labor force and threatened to guarantee a free vote and a fair count. This novelty would insure a Republican victory in the heavily black district.²⁵

The Republicans attempted to take advantage of the situation by nominating William L. McMillen, veteran of the Crimean and Civil wars and now the well-connected postmaster of New Orleans. James E. Richardson told a friend that "Postmaster McMillen owns a fine plantation in this District. He is by no means unpopular with the whites. They guarantee him, on every hand . . . a fair

Republican candidacy is not suggestive of longevity" (Chicago Tribune, October 23, 1882).

²⁵New York Times, October 16, 1882; J. R. G. Pitkin, New Orleans, to William E. Chandler, October 24, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC.

and open field. He is even tendered a guard of honor . . . composed of the best citizens of each parish, to see that he is in no manner molested or interfered with." McMillen conducted a spirited campaign, and Republican leaders took hope. After traveling with the candidate in the Fifth District, J. R. G. Pitkin decided that "the Dem[ocratic] disposition there has signally mellowed."²⁸

Floyd King's counterattack put an end to such wishful thinking. While his henchmen purchased, intimidated, or defrauded black voters and harassed McMillen's white supporters, King played the demagogue. The national Republican leaders, he thundered, have "paid over the price . . . and the other conspirators stand ready with forged papers or torch and dagger to do their bidding. They are on our soil. They are in our district. Their midnight whispers and incendiary councils are echoed in the hovels of the ignorant and the unwary." Old habits died hard in the Fifth District. On election day King defeated McMillen by a better than two to one margin. Shortly afterward a federal grand jury indicted several of King's supporters

²⁸Chicago Tribune, September 13, 1882; James E. Richardson, New Orleans, to J. M. Currie, August 1, J. R. G. Pitkin, New Orleans, to William E. Chandler, October 7, Henry C. Warmoth, New Orleans, to Chandler, October 16, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; New York Times, July 26, September 22, 1882. A native of Ohio, McMillen was a veteran of the Russian and Union armies (Stewart Sifakis, Who Was Who in the Civil War [New York: Facts on File, 1988], pp. 421-422).

on charges of election fraud. As usual in such cases in the South, no convictions resulted.²⁷

Republicans in central Louisiana's sprawling Sixth District also entertained hope of electing a congressman. Not only were some river parish planters disgusted with the bulldozers but the local Democratic Party was seriously divided. The lottery men wanted to retire Congressman Edward W. Robertson, an ally of E. John Ellis. In mid-August, Robertson went into the Democratic convention with more supporters than any other candidate. The lottery men, however, persuaded the delegates to adopt the two-thirds rule, and Robertson went down on the fifty-fifth ballot before former state Attorney General Andrew S. Herron. Herron, reported a New York Times correspondent, "has never distinguished himself except by the tenacity of his partisanship. He is an average country lawyer, with good abdominal development." Robertson vowed to support Herron but reserved a

question upon which I propose being a free lance. . . . Poor as I am, the lottery company cannot buy me, and as this question has entered into our politics, I propose to make it an issue in every canvass. . . . It has been charged that this lottery company

²⁷New York Times, October 16 (quote), 24, November 7, 1882, February 16, April 1, 15, 1883. Two of the men arrested at Vidalia, Concordia Parish, were black (ibid., February 16, 1883). "This is . . . the one all-important fact, never to be lost sight of, that the court is in the hands of the Democratic ring-managers" (Chicago Tribune, August 4, 1882).

controls the Legislature and even members of Congress. Is it not, then, our duty to fight this despotism, that is worse than hell itself?²⁸

Unfortunately, the Republicans also had trouble deciding on a candidate. Within a few days of each other, rival conventions met at Red River Landing and at Baton Rouge. The Red River meeting nominated Louis J. Souer, appraiser for the port of New Orleans; the Baton Rouge convention nominated Louis Trager, a convict labor lessee. Behind the Trager candidacy James Richardson saw the influence of Governor Samuel D. McEnery. According to Richardson, McEnery feared the gubernatorial aspirations of Andrew Herron. If Trager could divide the Republican vote with Souer, Herron would spend most of the next two years in distant Washington. In return McEnery would continue to protect Trager in the exercise of his portion of the convict lease. Thus the politician and the businessman would profit; only the convicts, worked unto death on the Louisiana levees, would be at a loss.²⁹

Richardson wanted both Trager and Souer to withdraw in favor of Thomas C. Anderson of St. Landry Parish--a

²⁸James E. Richardson, New Orleans, to J. M. Currie, August 1, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; New York Times, July 26, August 17 (quotes), 1882; Chicago Tribune, September 14, 1882.

²⁹J. R. G. Pitkin, New Orleans, to William E. Chandler, October 7, James E. Richardson, New Orleans, to Chandler, October 14, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; New York Times, September 22, 1882.

curious choice when Anderson's Reconstruction reputation as an embezzler from the school fund and manipulator of election returns is recalled. Eventually, Souer dropped out of the race and Anderson came in belatedly as an independent. On election day Herron polled 8,002 votes, Trager 3,965, and Anderson 34. While Trager received covert aid from E. W. Robertson, his involvement with the lease made him odious to many of the district's blacks.³⁰

The First District included the lower, or Frenchtown, section of New Orleans and the parishes of St. Bernard and Plaquemines to the south of the city. The heavily black parishes frequently gave the Republicans a majority while Creoles, Germans, and Italians made the Frenchtown wards solidly Democratic. Richardson thought that the Republicans could carry the district. "The democratic machine," he reported, "proposes to be respectable. They are to nominate Mr. Carleton Hunt . . . an aristocrat of the first water-- just the man as such, to be eminently distasteful to the average 'Dago' of Frenchtown. In the country Parishes, finally, the democracy are very much divided. There

³⁰James E. Richardson, New Orleans, to William E. Chandler, October 5, J. R. G. Pitkin, New Orleans, to Chandler, October 7, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, p. 466; Hair, Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest, p. 8; New York Times, November 9, 1882, March 5, 1883.

comes in, too, the Sugar Interests." In Richardson's opinion, the only Republican who could win was the handsome, charming, and unscrupulous Reconstruction Governor Henry C. Warmoth. When Warmoth's administration ended in 1872, he retired to his plantation in Plaquemines Parish where his engaging personality and his defense of sugar won him the respect of his fellow planters. In 1882, he felt strapped for money and, despite the pleas of Richardson and others, declined to accept a nomination.³¹

The next most likely Republican candidate was Beattie lieutenant William M. Burwell. Burwell, conservative Republican, ardent protectionist, and secretary of the chamber of commerce, chose instead to run for mayor of New Orleans--on the Greenback ticket. The New Orleans Greenbackers attempted also to place a congressional candidate in the field. They first nominated John Delaney, a longshoreman and president of the Combined Union of Black and White Laborers. Delaney, fearing dissension in the union, refused to run. The Greenbackers then turned to former Washington lawyer Albert C. Janin. The ambitious Janin, who had sought the Democratic nomination, shortly thereafter won

³¹James E. Richardson, New Orleans, to J. M. Currie, August 1, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; New York Times, July 26, 1882; Chicago Tribune, August 4, September 26, 1882; Heitmann, "Responding to the Competition," pp. 331-332.

the endorsement of the by-now frustrated Republicans. Janin did better than might have been expected. He received 4,852 votes to Hunt's 8,498.³²

Most Republicans in the Second District--nine New Orleans wards and the parishes of Jefferson, St. James, St. Charles, and St. John the Baptist--believed E. John Ellis unbeatable. Two Republicans, however, decided to challenge the congressman. State Senator Henry Demas, a cultured and articulate Pinchback ally identified as "the blackest man in Louisiana," won the nomination of the regular party convention. A couple of weeks later, 38 of the 106 delegates reassembled and, in proceedings enlivened by pistol fire, knife fights, and a serious wounding, placed in the field Internal Revenue Collector Morris Marks. James Richardson urged that Marks receive the support of the national party. "Mr. Demas is a black, has a history [of corruption], has no support save in the parish of 'St. John,' among his 'colored constituency,'" he told William E. Chandler. "Marks stands well as a republican, is a very energetic and

³²New York Times, September 3, 22, 1882; Joy J. Jackson, New Orleans in the Gilded Age: Politics and Urban Progress, 1880-1896 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), p. 73; Uzee, "Republican Politics in Louisiana," pp. 76-77; Chicago Tribune, October 23, 1882; Henry C. Warmoth, New Orleans, to William E. Chandler, October 16, A. S. Badger, New Orleans, to D. B. Henderson, October 26, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; Guide to U.S. Elections (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1975), p. 647.

indefatigable worker; has a large republican following in the parish of St. James; is of Jewish extraction . . . is backed in his claims, by the promise of Jewish support, both in votes, and if need be, in money." In mid-October, Marks traveled to Washington where he met with Chandler and other Republican leaders. They agreed to back his candidacy and instructed Louisiana Republican officeholders to do the same.³³

The administration's decision provoked an angry response from some local Republicans. Pinchback warned that "to attempt to force [Demas] from the field will demoralize, if not revolutionize, the colored voters not only in his District but be hurtful all over the state. . . . I do not hesitate to say . . . that, if Mr. Demas was a white man the conduct of Mr. Marks would not be tolerated by the administration for a moment." Pinchback thought he knew the true reason behind Marks's quest for a seat in congress. According to Pinchback, Marks feared that after the election Kellogg planned to remove him from his collectorship. His candidacy, therefore, was intended to win him friends in

³³Chicago Tribune, September 7, 1882 (first quote); James E. Richardson, New Orleans, to William E. Chandler, October 14, Jay A. Hubbell and D. B. Henderson to J. R. G. Pitkin [telegram], October 18, Pitkin, New Orleans, to Chandler, October 24, A. S. Badger, New Orleans, to Henderson, October 26, New Orleans Times-Democrat, October 22, clipping in Pitkin to Chandler, October 24, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; Uzee, "Republican Politics in Louisiana," p. 172.

Washington. The disgusted Pinchback advised the administration to "let it be understood that defeated candidates will not be regarded by it as political martyrs entitled to be pensioned for life, but that their defeat at the polls will be interpreted as a popular repudiation and that they will be left to enjoy the quiet shades of private life thereafter."³⁴

J. R. G. Pitkin told Chandler that "I espoused Demas' cause because he was the regular nominee, could be pulled down with his assent should Ellis run as an Indep[endent] and has the faith of his (colored) race within the district." Pitkin maintained that Marks could not command 10 per cent of the black vote, and, as for his white adherents, the marshal commented on the endorsement of Marks by a Workingman's Democratic and Conservative Club: "This 'Club' has been improvised by Marks . . . under the auspices of a notorious character and a Democratic hoodlum named 'Bow-legged' Donavan. The names published are of many of the worst characters in N[ew] O[rleans] who, as usual, have yielded to the seductions of beer and money. This is the fair token of Marks' white support." Pitkin sarcastically observed that, if the administration wanted to help Marks, it

³⁴P. B. S. Pinchback, New Orleans, to William E. Chandler, October 19 (first quote), 26 (second quote), 1882, Chandler Papers, LC.

should have begun by backing Taylor Beattie.³⁵

As expected, Ellis crushed his opposition. He polled 7,701 votes to 2,789 for Marks and 2,666 for Demas. Ellis's margin would have been even greater, Pitkin maintained, had not many of his friends in the parishes felt so assured of his victory that they stayed home on election day in order to tend to the sugar harvest.³⁶

In an attempt to overcome the large Republican majority in south Louisiana's Third District, local Democrats started their campaign early in the year. On February 20, their convention unanimously nominated former Congressman Joseph H. Acklen, a personable young lawyer of St. Mary Parish. Acklen was known as a maverick and as something of a roue. Such reputation, however, did him little harm along the bayous Teche and Lafourche. His platform could well have been that of a Republican. He acknowledged the supremacy of the national government and endorsed the protective tariff,

³⁵J. R. G. Pitkin, New Orleans, to D. B. Henderson, October 19, Pitkin to William E. Chandler, October 24 (first quote), 27 (second quote), A. S. Badger, New Orleans, to D. B. Henderson, October 26, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC.

³⁶Guide to U.S. Elections, p. 647; J. R. G. Pitkin, New Orleans, to William E. Chandler, November 10, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC.

internal improvements, and national education.³⁷

The Republican district convention did not meet until August. William P. Kellogg flexed his patronage muscle, and Taylor Beattie's former allies flocked to Kellogg's standard like vultures to a carcass. Hopelessly outnumbered, the delegates pledged to Beattie and to incumbent Chester B. Darrall bolted, formed a separate convention, and united behind the independent Republican candidacy of Beattie. Kellogg easily countered the Beattie threat. In Washington, he obtained the endorsement of the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee. In Louisiana, P. B. S. Pinchback, Andrew J. Dumont, Henry C. Warmoth, and other prominent Republicans took an active part in Kellogg's campaign, and, perhaps as important, the district's black preachers gave him their blessing. "I am hard at work holding large meetings in every Parish in the District," Kellogg told his friend William E. Chandler. "I find the colored people are almost solid for the 'old Governor.' I tell you it is a regular camp meeting time with them. The whites are very friendly. Many of the planters declare openly for us & I now believe we will have a fair election. If so there can be but one

³⁷New York Times, February 21, 22, 25, 1882; Hair, Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest, p. 80. For a charming description of the Teche country see Chicago Tribune, March 22, 1882.

result." Warmoth suspected that Kellogg had secretly neutralized Acklen. "I think Kellogg has an arrangement with Acklen," he confided to Chandler. "This is believed by Democrats and Republicans. Whether so or not the impression will tend to eliminate Acklen from the fight."³⁸

As election day approached, only one thing bothered Kellogg. In July the senator had been implicated in the Star Route Scandal, a kickback scheme involving high Post Office Department officials and several members of congress. Kellogg now feared that a grand jury might indict him before the election and so in October asked the influential Chandler to "look after matters" for him in Washington. Kellogg should not have worried. He was not formally charged until April 1883.³⁹

Kellogg won handily in the Third District. He polled 11,686 votes to Acklen's 6,831 and Beattie's 4,067. The Republicans ran well in the district's eight sugar parishes while Acklen drew his strength from the

³⁸New York Times, July 26, August 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, September 26, 1882; Chicago Tribune, May 8, September 3, 5, 14, 1882; William P. Kellogg, Napoleonville, to William E. Chandler, October 4, Kellogg et al., Franklin, to Chandler [telegram], October 14, Henry C. Warmoth, New Orleans, to Chandler, October 16, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC.

³⁹New York Times, July 17, 18, 22, 25, 1882, April 19, 1883; W. P. Kellogg, Napoleonville, to William E. Chandler, October 4, October 9 (quote), 1882, Chandler Papers, LC.

southwestern prairie parishes. Kellogg owed his election to the black vote, but he also received support from white sugar planters impressed by his influence in Washington. On November 28, Governor McEnery tried to rob Kellogg of his victory by refusing to issue him a certificate of election on the not altogether unreasonable ground that the senator was a nonresident of the state. However, on December 6, pressure from Third District planters, New Orleans businessmen, and the state press forced McEnery to issue the certificate.⁴⁰

The congressional elections of 1882 confirmed the sad state of the Republican Party in Louisiana. In one district the party did not even run a candidate, in three others it was rent by faction, and in another its standard-bearer was an adventurer who sought the endorsement of each and every party. Only in the Fifth District did Republicans cheerfully unite behind a single candidate, and he was helpless before Floyd

⁴⁰New York Times, November 28, 29, 30, December 7, 1882; Sitterson, Sugar Country, p. 332; James E. Richardson, New Orleans, to J. M. Currie, August 1, J. R. G. Pitkin, New Orleans, to William E. Chandler, October 24, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; Chicago Tribune, August 4, 1882. Acklen admitted that the election had been an honest one (New York Times, November 30, 1882). Southwest Louisiana was cattle country (Donald J. Millet, "Cattle and Cattlemen of Southwest Louisiana, 1860-1900," Louisiana History XXVIII (1987), pp. 311-330).

King's bulldozers.

Democratic intolerance and ruthlessness can be blamed for a number of the Republicans' problems but as many were self-inflicted. By 1882 the Louisiana G.O.P. was more a vehicle for personal aggrandizement than for the expression of a political philosophy. Its public image was that of a corrupt leadership manipulating an ignorant rank and file. Of course, the Democratic Party was a near reflection of its Republican rival. The only (but crucial) difference was one of black and white.

Yet, for all its problems, the Republican Party remained a potent force in Louisiana politics. While as good as dead north of the Red River, the party retained much of its strength in the southern sugar parishes where Republican policies of internal improvements and protection for sugar attracted a sizeable number of white planters. The planters usually were able to protect their black laborers in the exercise of their political rights. The party would remain strong in south Louisiana until the turn of the century. Indeed, to the Populist-Republican fusion of 1896, the Republican south would provide more money and votes than the Populist north.⁴¹

The Arthur administration should have taken better

⁴¹Schott, "Class Conflict in Louisiana Voting Since 1877," p. 155.

advantage of the situation in south Louisiana. Taylor Beattie was no William Mahone. Beattie lacked Mahone's acuteness, persuasiveness, and determination. He also lacked the Virginian's burning desire to distribute the benefits of progress and prosperity among all classes and races. In 1887 Beattie would play a leading role in the savage suppression of a strike by black sugar workers. Still, he shared with Mahone a commitment to the Republican principles of a protective tariff, internal improvements, and universal education. Beattie was not a corruptionist, and he wanted to expand the size of the Louisiana Republican Party. Before William P. Kellogg seduced them away, he had the support of the state's leading black politicians. Experience indicates that Beattie would have retained their allegiance had he been given the control of the federal patronage. Under the leadership of Beattie and other Louisiana natives, the party might have broadened its base in the southern parishes and might even have improved its performance in the north. At the least, had race, the memory of Reconstruction, and Democratic resistance proved too much to overcome, Beattie still could have done no worse than Kellogg. It is ironic that the same administration that supported economic radicals and ex-Democratic bulldozers would turn its back on Taylor Beattie,

conservative and respectable Republican.⁴²

⁴²Hair, Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest, pp. 182-183.

FLORIDA

An oligarchy of county bosses ruled the Florida Democratic Party in 1882. The bosses generally were middle-aged Confederate veterans who restricted nominations for the higher offices to men of their own generation and experience. While many of them came from the planter class, they cheerfully allied themselves with New South railroad men and Northern financiers. The bosses considered their party at war with the Republicans and agonized but little over the means, fair or foul, that they employed to win elections. They maintained their power within the Democratic Party through the manipulation of conventions and through the control of much of the state press. A St. Augustine man noted that "The prerogatives of government are monopolised through office holding conventions and a peculiar machine power exercised by Bosses, that is hedged & enforced by discipline. . . . The disciplinarians are the eleemosinary news-papers at the Capitol & in the Counties--those who subsist on

legal advertising and public favours."¹

Although under the constitution of 1868 the governor appointed almost all of a myriad of state and local officials, the Democratic executives who served after Redemption in 1877 dared not move without first consulting the oligarchs. William D. Bloxham, who held the governorship in 1882, was especially amenable to the bosses' desires. Indeed, in Bloxham, they had a governor who shared their background and their attitudes. A genteel Leon County planter, Bloxham recalled with nostalgic pride his Confederate service. He professed to have adjusted to the realities of postbellum politics, but his pronouncements in favor of racial harmony and justice seldom were backed by effective action. When in Madison County in August 1882 black Republicans Charles Savage and Howard James were taken by a white mob from the custody of law enforcement officers and shot dead, Bloxham condemned the murders but refused to offend the local authorities by ordering

¹Edward C. Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, 1877-1893 (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1976), p. 21; Arnold Marc Pavlovsky, "'We Busted Because We Failed': Florida Politics, 1880-1908," Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1973, pp. 25-26, 28; John Westcott, St. Augustine, to William Mahone, December 6, 1881, William Mahone Papers, Duke University, Durham, N.C.

a thorough state investigation of the incident.²

Bloxham proved a generous friend to railroad executives and land developers. Because of a \$1,000,000 lien on the state internal improvement fund, rail construction in Florida had stood still throughout the 1870s. In 1881 Bloxham retired the debt by selling at the remarkably low price of 25 cents an acre four million acres of the public domain in sparsely settled south Florida to Hamilton Disston, a Philadelphia industrialist. Bloxham and the bosses claimed that the Disston Sale would add acreage to the tax rolls and would encourage rail construction and immigration. Their enemies within the Democracy, however, declared that the deal smelled of corruption, and for some of them it provided an excuse for rebellion.³

Unlike most Deep Southern insurgencies, the Florida independent movement was not rooted in the fears and resentments caused by economic dislocation. Florida's existing transportation system, numerous ports, and

²Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, pp. 64, 70, 137; Edward C. Williamson, "Black Belt Political Crisis: The Savage-James Lynching, 1882," Florida Historical Quarterly XLV (1967), pp. 402-409; Jesse Jefferson Jackson, "Republicans and Florida Elections and Election Cases, 1877-1891," Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1974, pp. 148-167.

³Edward C. Williamson, "Independentism: A Challenge to the Florida Democracy of 1884," Florida Historical Quarterly XXVII (1948), p. 132; Williamson, "Florida Politics in the Gilded Age," pp. 8, 70, 72-74; Pavlovsky, "We Busted Because We Failed," pp. 58, 59.

unique climate enabled most of her farmers to avoid the clutches of single-crop agriculture. In the panhandle, rice, tobacco, lumber, and vegetables challenged the primacy of cotton. On the peninsula, cattle, vegetables, and the rapidly expanding citrus industry dominated the export trade. Her diverse produce found markets along the rim of the Gulf of Mexico, on the islands of the Caribbean, and up the Atlantic coast. Moreover, the seasonal visitation of invalids and tourists benefited much of the state.⁴

Although times generally were good in Florida, some agrarian discontent was evident. Many farmers opposed the land grants and other special privileges extended the railroads, and they resented the arrogance of railroad executives. A sore point was the attempt by the railroadmen to dictate to north Florida farmers the

⁴Pavlovsky, "We Busted Because We Failed," p. 165; Robert P. Ingalls, "General Joseph B. Wall and Lynch Law in Tampa," Florida Historical Quarterly LXVIII (1984), p. 59; Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1882 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883), p. 314; Montgomery Advertiser, March 14, 1882; Nashville American, September 25, 1882; New York Tribune, November 16, 1882; Emory Fiske Skinner, Reminiscences (Chicago: Vestal Printing Company, 1908), p. 136; Eugene Allen Smith, "Report on the Cotton Production of the State of Florida," in U.S. Congress, House, Report on the Cotton Production in the United States, House Miscellaneous Document 42, Part 6, 47th Congress, 2nd session, 1882-1883, pp. 29, 30; Clifton Paisley, "Madison County's Sea Island Cotton Industry, 1870-1916," Florida Historical Quarterly LIV (1976), pp. 286-288; Derrell C. Roberts, "Joseph E. Brown and Florida's New South Economy," ibid. XVL (1967), p. 53.

crops that they should plant. In the spring of 1881, a meeting of Columbia County produce growers noted that "the Southern Express Company has upon the eve of vegetable shipments increased the tariff on transportation of peas, beans, and all light vegetables, fully sixty per cent." The farmers condemned the rate increase as a move "to throttle the enterprise of raising early vegetables for market." The Columbia County men and other disgruntled farmers received scant sympathy from the Democratic bosses, but they nevertheless believed that they had an advocate within the party in United State Senator Wilkinson Call. A flamboyant maverick of distinguished lineage and volatile temperament, Call was no agrarian reformer but his harsh anti-railroad rhetoric and virulent race-baiting made him popular with Florida farmers and thus for years safe from the fury of the oligarchs.⁵

The Florida independent leaders paid scant attention to farmer concerns. They were not inflationists, and they seldom complained of anaconda mortgages, a rigged cotton market, or discriminatory railroad rates. In experience and aspiration, they often mirrored the county bosses. Many of the independents were Confederate veterans who fervently

⁵Tallahassee Floridian, April 5, 1881 (quote), in Williamson, "Independentism," p. 133; Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, pp. 47-49, 72.

supported rail construction and land development. Their quarrel was not with the goals, but with the profligacy, cronyism, arrogance, and brutality of the present regime. In their struggle against the machine, these older men were joined by an emerging generation of politicians who believed that the bosses discriminated against them because of their youth and their lack of Confederate service.⁶

In October 1881, David S. Walker Jr., son of a former prominent Whig politician, publicly voiced his disgust with both Democrats and Republicans and called for the formation of a new party. Jesse T. Bernard, long-time Democratic stalwart and editor of the Tallahassee Economist, seconded Walker's proposal. Bernard observed that

Members and workers of the old Republican Machine; members and workers of the present Democratic Machine; pretty well all of them want a great many offices and very high salaries. . . . Against a conspiracy of the official classes in their own behalf, to maintain a multiplicity of offices, high salaries, high taxes and autocratic centralized power in the executive, there should be a combination of business men and classes for a reduction in the number of officials, of salaries, of taxes, and in favor of local self-government.⁷

⁶Jackson, "Republicans and Florida Elections," p. 206.

⁷Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, p. 83; Jerrell H. Shofner, Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction, 1863-1877 (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1974), p. 46; Starke Florida Weekly Telegraph, December 3, Tallahassee Economist, December 10 (quote), 1881, Scrapbook 28 (1882), pp. 10-11, 16, Mahone Papers, Duke; Jesse T.

Shortly after the New Year, a group of prominent politicians and businessmen from all sections of the state met in Jacksonville. The meeting resolved "That we as conservative citizens of the State of Florida alike reprobate and disown Bourbonism of Democracy and Stalwartism of Republicanism and think there is much of a disintegration and disruption of the old parties in this state both of whom have demonstrated their utter want of honesty, their incapacity and unfitness to govern." The group condemned "the sale of four million acres of the Public Lands to a Foreign Monopolist [Hamilton Disston] for an inadequate price" and demanded "a new constitution and the election of all officers by the people." The meeting closed by naming an executive committee and by calling for the organization of a new party.⁸

Soon after adjournment, M. J. Murphy, a member of the independent executive committee, wrote to William Mahone. Murphy was one of several Florida insurgent leaders who had served during the Civil War in Mahone's division, who had followed with interest the Readjuster's political career, and who had taken

Bernard, Tallahassee, to William Mahone, December 13, 1881, ibid.

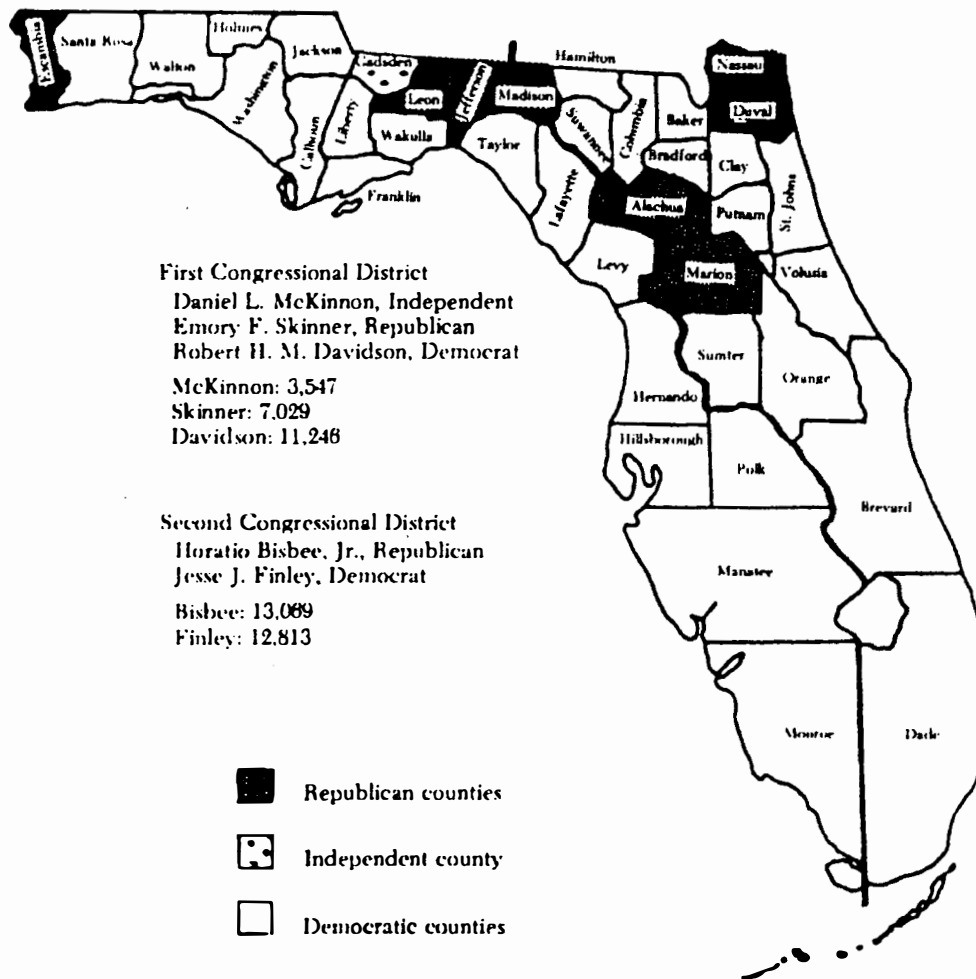
⁸Meeting of the Citizens of the State of Florida, January 6, in M. J. Murphy, Jacksonville, to William Mahone, January 11, 1882, Mahone Papers, Duke.

inspiration from his successes. Murphy informed Mahone of the Jacksonville meeting, enclosed a copy of its resolutions, and asked the general for funds to finance the coming campaign. At about the same time, from across the panhandle came a letter from R. W. Ruter, a Pensacola Republican. Ruter also wanted aid for the independent movement, but he asked not for money but for Mahone's influence with the Arthur administration. "I have had occasion to travel over much of this first congressional district," Ruter told Mahone,

and to my great gratification I found a widespread feeling of opposition to the present Bourbon administration. In fact the old Whig element entire (heretofore, acting with the Democracy) have declared in favor of a new Party, and it is this element that the present Administration at Washington should favor and foster in the distribution of the Federal patronage. The elevation of the moral of the federal service in the South is what we want to break up this Southern Conspiracy (Solid South).⁹

Discontent in the First District, which encompassed the western half of the state, became focused when in April 1882 Daniel L. McKinnon, a young Marianna lawyer, announced his independent candidacy for congress. McKinnon denounced the Disston Sale, but his harshest

⁹William Ledwith, Jacksonville, to William Mahone, November 17, Jesse T. Bernard, Tallahassee, to Mahone, December 13, 1881, M. J. Murphy, Jacksonville, to Mahone, January 11, R. W. Ruter, Pensacola, to Mahone, January 16, 1882, Mahone Papers, Duke, Finegan's Florida Brigade surrendered with Mahone's Division at Appomattox (Nelson Morehouse Blake, William Mahone of Virginia: Soldier and Political Insurgent [Richmond: Garrett & Massie, 1935], p. 65, n. 186).



6. Congressional Vote in Election of 1882. (Statistics from the Official Certificate of the Board of State Canvassers of the General Election held November 7, 1882. published in the *Tallahassee Weekly Floridian*, December 19, 1882.)

criticisms of his old party fell on the Democracy's nefarious election practices. He maintained that the consequences of such behavior were the perversion of the judicial process and the establishment of boss rule. McKinnon left open the door to a coalition of independent Democrats with the Republicans.¹⁰

The Florida Republican Party suffered the usual ills. Cursed by the Democrats as the party of black rule, high taxes, and federal intervention, it emitted its own peculiar odor of corruption. While numerically the Republicans were nearly as strong as the Democrats, most Republican leaders cared little whether the party won elections, and those who did saw victory at the polls as primarily a means of gaining a better place at the federal trough. As much as any in the South, the Florida party was torn by factionalism. Republicans warred continually on one another over the federal spoils. Although few whites outside of the port cities joined the Republican rank and file, Northern adventurers dominated the party. "The carpetbaggers," maintained a prominent Democrat, "were everywhere the organizers and manipulators of the negro vote. They set up the machinery of politics and ran it, while the black

¹⁰Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, pp. 83-84; Pavlovsky, "We Busted Because We Failed," pp. 36-37; Jackson, "Republicans and Florida Elections," p. 207.

hands turned the crank."¹¹

The strongest of the carpetbaggers were the federal officeholders of the port cities, and preeminent among them was the only Republican holding high office from Florida, Second District Congressman Horatio Bisbee of Jacksonville. Few denied Bisbee's intelligence and charm, but fewer still denied his political self-interest. A Tallahassee newspaperman held that "if there is any milk of human kindness in his political heart it is frozen as hard as the ice bound peaks of his native [Maine]." Bisbee, a railroad lawyer, shared the concerns of white Florida businessmen and Northern financiers rather than those of black laborers and tenants, but his power rested on black votes. He won the support of blacks by paying lip service to their aspirations and by bestowing minor office on some of their leaders.¹²

Opposed to Bisbee and other federal officeholders were a handful of conservative Republicans who believed that the party should be made more acceptable to respectable whites. Northern immigrant Henry S.

¹¹Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, pp. 9-11, 90; Tallahassee Weekly Floridian, June 5, 1877 (quote), in Jackson, "Republicans and Florida Elections," p. 5.

¹²Jackson, "Republicans and Florida Elections," pp. 101-103; Tallahassee Floridian, March 30, 1880 (quote), in ibid., p. 101; Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, pp. 13, 15, 73.

Sanford, central Florida land developer, railroad builder, and orange grower, would "gradually replace some of the men of the old system, who represent nothing but themselves, by those sympathetic to the republican party, who represent property and intelligence, and would inspire confidence in the State." Sanford took black Republicans for granted: "We need in our ranks more white men, and I have no fear of alienation of any considerable portion of those of African descent. They will be always our friends naturally, and look to our party for support." Former Governor Harrison Reed, although himself a politician of somewhat unsavory reputation, echoed Sanford. Reed advised that "The federal patronage must be so disposed as that Republicans of character & tried integrity may hold the offices of leading influence & they must all cooperate in bringing to the front character & responsibility, instead of petty jealousy & low pandering to negro prejudice."¹³

Reed, Sanford, and other conservatives thought that they saw a natural white constituency for the Republican Party. A large number of Northerners had emigrated to

¹³Henry S. Sanford, New York, to Chester A. Arthur, November 19, 1881, in Edward C. Williamson, ed., "Florida Politics in 1881: A Letter of Henry S. Sanford," Florida Historical Quarterly XXXI (1953), pp. 279-281; Harrison Reed, Jacksonville, to William E. Chandler, April 16, 1882, William Eaton Chandler Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Florida during the 1870s, many natives cherished a Whig heritage, and most Floridians favored federal aid for internal improvements and protection for the developing citrus industry. The influential Democratic editor of the Tampa Sunland Tribune recognized an irony of sectional politics. Floridians, he reflected, want protection for citrus and appropriations for harbor and river improvements,

and on these points there is no difference between Southern Democrats and Republicans; yet these measures do not appear to meet the approbation and support of Northern Democratic leaders. . . . The Southern Democrats are more in accord on many great questions affecting the material prosperity of the country with Northern Republicans than they are with their party allies of the North.

With the Democracy in turmoil, Reed sensed an opportunity. "A majority [of the Democrats] are protectionists," he informed William E. Chandler, "& have been ever since the days of Clay & a sound organization of intelligent leaders will bring large accessions from the old time Whigs who are now playing second fiddle to the Bourbon dynasty."¹⁴

Also anxious to unite with the independents was the Republican faction perhaps most despised by the conservatives--the carpetbaggers of the central black belt. Long the victims of Democratic terror, the

¹⁴J. P. Wall, Tampa, to editor, May 15, New York Times, May 29, 1882; Harrison Reed, Jacksonville, to William E. Chandler, April 16, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC.

carpetbaggers and their black supporters recently had endured a particularly trying period. During the gubernatorial campaign of 1880, Democrats across the black belt had relied to an unusual extent on intimidation, violence, and fraud to carry the election of William D. Bloxham. In an attempt to protect the ballot and to exact a measure of revenge, the carpetbaggers persuaded the United States Department of Justice to investigate Democratic violations of the election laws. The outcome was disappointing. Few convictions resulted, and in Madison County the investigation occasioned Democratic nightriding and atrocities, the midnight flight from the county of carpetbag boss Dennis Eagan, and, eventually, the brutal murders of black leaders Charles Savage and Howard James.¹⁵

Having received no protection from the federal government, the carpetbaggers turned to the independents. "Unless we can get some of the southern white men with us," Malachi Martin of Tallahassee exclaimed, "elections in the south are worse than a farce. The support of the Independent movement, for which the time seems ripe, is our only hope of success

¹⁵Jackson, "Republicans and Florida Elections," pp. 98, 133-185; Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, p. 69; Williamson, "Black Belt Political Crisis," pp. 402-409.

and protection at the polls." Many central Florida blacks agreed with Martin. A large meeting at Miccosukee declared their faith that a Republican-independent coalition "would insure the protection of the ballot box and give our race such recognition as it is entitled to by its numbers." From distant Key West came a plea for coalition from the influential black politician J. Willis Menard. Menard years ago had come to doubt the efficacy of federal bayonets and statues. In the late 1870s, he had advocated a fusion with the Greenbackers, and he now embraced the independents. "The fact that the Republicans of this [First] District cannot elect a straight ticket is patent to all," he told William E. Chandler. "Our only hope . . . is by uniting our forces on McKinnon, the Independent candidate."¹⁶

During the summer of 1882, Malachi Martin laid the groundwork for a coalition in the First District. He negotiated with Daniel McKinnon and David S. Walker Jr.

¹⁶J. Willis Menard, Key West, to William E. Chandler, September 13, Malachi Martin, Tallahassee, to David B. Henderson, September 23, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; Jackson, "Republicans and Federal Elections," pp. 167, 208 (quotes Tampa Sunland Tribune, June 1, 1882); Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, pp. 84-85; Pavlovsky, "We Busted Because We Failed," pp. 34-35; Bess Beatty, "John Willis Menard: A Progressive Black in Post-Civil War Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly LIX (1980), pp. 127, 128, 130.

and oversaw a conference of Republicans and independents. Martin's work seemed near success when on August 21 at Quincy a gathering of leading Republicans endorsed McKinnon. The Quincy meeting, however, failed to include representatives of the district's most powerful Republican faction, the federal officeholders of the western ports. The port city Republicans found repugnant the idea of supporting McKinnon. Fearing that the Marianna independent might challenge their control over the federal patronage in the district, they hastened to cripple the coalition before it attracted the attention of the Arthur administration. The port city men put forward as their candidate for congress Emory F. Skinner of Santa Rosa County, an obscure but wealthy Wisconsin lumberman, and they readied their followers for the Republican district convention to be held in Quincy on September 12.¹⁷

A majority of the delegates entered the convention favoring McKinnon, but a number of them lacked firm commitment. The port city men swayed the wavering by warning them that the national administration frowned on the proposed fusion and by offering them money provided by Skinner and the Democrats. Still, the nomination

¹⁷Malachi Martin, Tallahassee, to David B. Henderson, September 23, 1882; Chandler Papers, LC; New York Times, August 22, 1882; Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, pp. 85, 89; Skinner, Reminiscences, pp. 155, 163.

remained in doubt until a turncoat McKinnon supporter cast for Skinner a six-vote proxy of dubious authenticity. The convention chairman, a Pensacola carpetbagger, ruled the proxy legitimate and declared Skinner nominated by three votes. Enraged, the McKinnon faction stormed out of the hall, reassembled nearby, and endorsed their candidate.¹⁸

Although a political neophyte, Skinner brought to his campaign a number of assets. He was a hard worker, he had deep pockets (he spent \$5,000 of his own money, \$2,000 of which "disappeared" into the pockets of his campaign treasurer), and he enjoyed the personal friendship of United States Senator Philetus Sawyer, a fellow Wisconsin lumber baron. The senator importuned the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee on Skinner's behalf, and in the absence of countervailing pressure from Chester A. Arthur or anyone else in higher authority, the committee gave Skinner its blessing. At that, some of the would-be coalitionists stepped back into line. "As the Congressional Committee at Washington has indorsed Mr. Skinner's candidacy, we have made up our minds to support him," sighed J. Willis Menard, "although I have no hope of carrying the

¹⁸J. Willis Menard, Key West, to William E. Chandler, September 13, Malachi Martin, Tallahassee, to David B. Henderson, September 23, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, pp. 89-90; Skinner, Reminiscences, pp. 159-161.

District."¹⁹

Others were more stubborn. Malachi Martin and former Republican Governor Marcellus J. Stearns of Gadsden County remained in the McKinnon camp. The Skinner candidacy infuriated Martin. "The support of McKinnon is the entering wedge to the disorganization of the Bourbons," he explained to the secretary of the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee. "This they know as well as we do and hence they throw up their hats and shout for joy at Skinner's candidacy and tell us to our face, they have us now. They will do as they please and then ask what are we going to do about it." And if Skinner won? "What then?" Martin continued.

I will tell you. He would be counted out! Then he would make his contest; take evidence of the frauds, ballot box stuffing &c. The poor unprotected black man would be called on to give evidence. Let us assume that he would do so. Then he need never attempt to return to his home, for if he does he will not live long to tell the tale! He would be ruthlessly shot to pieces as were Savage and James the other day! And no jury would ever be empaneled to punish the assassins. . . . I ask you in all frankness if we would be justified in leading these people into such difficulty.²⁰

¹⁹Skinner, Reminiscences, pp. 162-163, 165, 168; J. Willis Menard, Key West, to William E. Chandler, October 10, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC.

²⁰J. Willis Menard, Key West, to William E. Chandler, October 10, November 27, Malachi Martin, Tallahassee, to David B. Henderson, September 23, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; Skinner later recalled that Stearns told him that "if I would promise him a consulship he would support me. . . . I replied that I had no consulship to give" (Skinner, Reminiscences, pp. 164-154). The Independent Campaign Committee pledged "to

Over in east Florida circumstances favored coalition. As a member of the Congressional Campaign Committee, Horatio Bisbee maintained a firm grip on the Second District patronage. His Republican enemies had not the strength to oppose his renomination, and the district's independents failed to field a candidate. With no independent in the race and with the patronage secure, Bisbee saw only advantage in coalition. He accepted independent support while on the county level his Republican followers backed independent candidates for the state legislature. Heavily black Madison County, in particular, was crucial to Bisbee's success, and there the congressman joined local Republican boss Dennis Eagan in encouraging the candidacy for the state senate of Frank W. Pope, a young independent. Pope openly solicited the black vote and hoped that disgust with the Savage-James murders would win him white support.²¹

During the campaign, the Democrats directed most of their wrath at the independents. The insurgency so

defend the colored man's rights as their own" (New York Evening Post, October 26, 1882).

²¹Chicago Tribune, June 3, 1882; Peter D. Klingman, Josiah Walls: Florida's Black Congressman of Reconstruction (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1976), pp. 126-127; Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, pp. 85, 91, 112; Jackson, "Republicans and Florida Elections," p. 218; Pavlovsky, "We Busted Because We Failed," pp. 38-39.

irritated the party leaders that, when in the Second District convention a group of young Democrats opposed the nomination of Confederate veteran Jesse J. Finley, some of the bosses wanted to throw the young men out of the party. The Democratic press continually characterized the independents as soreheads who because of thwarted ambition would turn Florida over to the blacks and carpetbaggers. The editor of the Ocala Banner-Lacon feared that the independent movement would deliver the state "into the hands of the horde of vampires and vandals from whom it was, at such great labor and coast, rescued six years ago." The independents countered that the Democrats masked their corruption and cronyism with demagoguery. The 'nigger' and the 'carpetbagger' have been cherished by the politicians," an insurgent lectured the Banner-Lacon, "and, like a jumping jack, are kept to be sprung in the faces of the honest but credulous masses to inveigle them into the support of the 'the party,' by appeals to instinctive race prejudice."²²

When the election returns were counted, the coalition had performed well in the legislative races.

²²Pavlovsky, "'We Busted Because We Failed,'" pp. 34 (quotes Ocala Banner-Lacon, August 26, 1882), 40-41, 87 (quotes George T. Maxwell in Ocala Banner-Lacon, August 26, 1882); Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, pp. 84, 90; Jackson, "Republicans and Florida Elections," pp. 218, 328.

The independents captured nine seats in the state senate, the Republicans six, and the Democrats 17; in the house of representatives the independents claimed fifteen seats, the Republicans twenty-seven, and the Democrats thirty-four. Most of the independent legislators came from the predominantly white counties. An exception was the black belt county of Madison where Frank Pope led the coalition ticket to victory. In Madison the determination of the independents and revulsion at the Savage-James killings convinced the Democratic bosses of the prudence of allowing their rivals the novelty of a free vote and a fair count.²³

In the Second Congressional District, Horatio Bisbee defeated Jesse J. Finley 13,122 votes to 12,823. Bisbee attributed his narrow victory to his advocacy of federal protection for Florida's agricultural produce. In the First District, Democrat Robert H. M. Davidson received 11,244 votes to 7,017 for Emory Skinner, and 3,553 for Daniel McKinnon. Democratic fraud contributed much to Davidson's wide margin, but the opposition's confusion and apathy contributed more. Skinner's ill-disguised racism made him an unpopular candidate among black Republicans, many of whom refused to vote for him.

²³Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia . . . 1882, p. 315; J. Willis Menard, Key West, to William E. Chandler, November 27, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, p. 93; Jackson, "Republicans and Florida Elections," p. 167.

They balked, however, at breaking party ranks and casting their ballots for an independent. In the black belt, McKinnon carried only Marcellus Stearns's home county of Gadsden. In the northern white counties, McKinnon attracted some support, but among the inhabitants of south Florida his candidacy proved singularly unappealing. From the peninsula counties of Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, and Polk, he received a total of five votes.²⁴

J. Willis Menard knew whom to blame for the mess in the First District. "I have no doubt that McKinnon would have been elected if Federal office holders had not pushed Skinner into the field," he complained to William E. Chandler. "Skinner was forced upon us to control the federal patronage; his election was never intended or expected." Menard criticized the management of the Congressional Campaign Committee and warned Chandler that if the Republicans expected to win the presidential election of 1884 "a man like yourself, who is acquainted with Southern politics, [should] be placed

²⁴Guide to U.S. Elections (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1975), p. 646; New York Tribune, November 16, 1882; Jackson, "Republicans and Florida Elections," p. 219; J. Willis Menard, Key West, to William E. Chandler, November 27, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; Skinner, Reminiscences, pp. 142-143, 167-168, 169; Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, pp. 91-93.

in charge of the Southern canvass."²⁵

The Arthur administration learned the lesson of 1882. In 1883 it dismissed from office those Florida Republican leaders who had opposed McKinnon and directed the survivors to fuse with the independents. The next year independents and Republicans united behind the gubernatorial candidacy of Frank Pope of Madison County. Pope conducted a spirited canvass but fell just short of victory, receiving nearly 47 per cent of the vote. Pope vehemently maintained that he had been counted out, but his indignation availed him nothing. The Democrats controlled the election machinery, and they certified their candidate as the winner. Recognizing its impotence, the Florida independent movement soon dissolved.²⁶

The Florida insurgency had strengths. It drew its membership from the lawyers, merchants, and commercial farmers of the rail and river communities rather from the agrarians recently brought into the cotton economy. Its adherents, then, were not politically inexperienced

²⁵J. Willis Menard, Key West, to William E. Chandler, November 27, 1882, Chandler Papers, LC; New York Evening Post, October 26, 1882.

²⁶Jackson, "Republicans and Florida Elections," pp. 245-246, 248; Pavlovsky, "'We Busted Because We Failed,'" p. 65; Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, p. 127.

and independent to a fault but were disciplined, sophisticated, and well versed in the sinister ways of the Democratic bosses. Before 1882 to a limited extent and afterward more fully, the independent movement also enjoyed the support of Republican leaders and of the party's black rank and file. Finally, although the movement offered no program of reform, the Disston Sale provided a unifying issue.

Nevertheless, the Florida insurgency failed. The Disston issue proved rewarding for the independents in most of the panhandle but a liability on the peninsula where south Floridians welcomed the rail construction and immigration that the sale promised. Also damaging was the tardiness of the Arthur administration's endorsement. Had the administration acted in 1882, McKinnon might have carried the First District and the coalition would have had an extra year (and an extra campaign) in which to lay the foundation for Pope's gubernatorial candidacy in 1884. More critical, though, was that common independent weakness--the absence of a strong leader. No one emerged from among the Florida independents who was capable of building a party, of imposing discipline on its ranks, of raising funds, of defining a package of reforms, or of presenting the independent case to the Arthur administration. Neither Daniel McKinnon nor Frank Pope displayed the necessary

organizational or inspirational ability. Given the experience and attitudes of the Florida independents, it is interesting to speculate on what might have happened had a boss managed to come forth from among the anti-bosses.²⁷

²⁷Pavlovsky, "We Busted Because We Failed," p. 68; Williamson, "Independentism," pp. 155, 156; Williamson, Florida Politics in the Gilded Age, pp. 127-128.

NORTH CAROLINA

The Civil War deeply divided white society in North Carolina. Unionism persisted throughout the war in all sections of the state, and the efforts of the Confederate government to collect taxes, draft soldiers, and apprehend deserters often met resistance, much of it organized and violent. Most of the disaffected lived in the Quaker Belt, a swath of piedmont and mountain counties extending from Moore and Chatham in the southeast to Wilkes and Alleghany in the northwest. The Quaker Belt included among its inhabitants numerous members of antislavery religious sects--Quakers, Moravians, Dunkards, Lutherans, German Reformed, and Wesleyan Methodists. After the war, many Unionists in the Quaker Belt and elsewhere found it impossible to forget the indignities and hardships inflicted upon them by the pro-Confederate majority. They therefore ignored the Democratic plea for racial solidarity and joined the Republican Party. With 25,000 white adherents and 90,000 black, the North Carolina Republican Party enjoyed a slight numerical advantage over the Democrats in the coastal counties and near parity in the piedmont and mountain counties. In 1880

in an election that the Democrats probably stole through their control of the election machinery, the Republican gubernatorial candidate lost by only 6,000 votes.¹

The Republicans had held the governorship as recently as 1876, and, given their numerical strength, a return to power was not inconceivable. First, however, they would have to overcome internal divisions and an embarrassing past. The party suffered from the usual carpetbagger-scalawag rivalry. The scalawags were led

¹Paul D. Escott, Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), pp. 68-69, 71, 181; Paul D. Escott and Jeffrey J. Crow, "The Social Order and Violent Disorder: An Analysis of North Carolina in the Revolution and the Civil War," Journal of Southern History LII (1986), pp. 373-402; Martin Crawford, "Political Society in a Southern Mountain Community: Ashe County, North Carolina, 1850-1861," ibid. LV (1989), p. 388; William T. Auman, "Neighbor Against Neighbor: The Inner Civil War in the Randolph County Area of Confederate North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review LXI (1984), pp. 59-92; William T. Auman, "Bryan Tyson: Southern Unionist and American Patriot," ibid. LXII (1985), pp. 257-292; William T. Auman and David D. Scarborough, "The Heroes of America in Civil War North Carolina," ibid. LVIII (1981), pp. 327-363; Richard Bardolph, "Confederate Dilemma: North Carolina Troops and the Deserter Problem," ibid. LXVI (1989), pp. 61-86, 179-210; Robert C. Kenzer, Kinship and Neighborhood in a Southern Community: Orange County, North Carolina, 1849-1881 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987), p. 138; Michael K. Honey, "The War Within the Confederacy: White Unionists of North Carolina," Prologue 18 (1986), pp. 74-93; Wayne K. Durrill, War of Another Kind: A Southern Community in the Great Rebellion (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); New York Herald, October 11, 1882; Winston Union Republican, March 2, April 6, June 22, 1882; Elgiva D. Watson, "The Election Campaign of Governor Jarvis, 1880: A Study of the Issues," North Carolina Historical Review XLVIII (1971), p. 297.

by State Chairman Dr. John J. Mott of Statesville in Iredell County. Precise, industrious, and demanding, Mott had used his federal position as collector of the internal revenue to build a machine in his western North Carolina revenue district. Mott's influence, of course, was strongest in the west, but he also had the support of eastern leaders such as James E. O'Hara, a prominent black lawyer of Halifax County, and William P. Canaday, collector of customs for the port of Wilmington. Mott and his friends were pragmatists. They admired the Readjuster achievement in Virginia and believed that a similar coalition in North Carolina not only would augment Republican strength at the polls but also would dissuade the Democrats from attempting to steal elections.

Mott's great rival was carpetbagger Thomas Keogh, a resident of Greensboro in Guilford County. A former state chairman and national committeeman, Keogh invested less energy in building the Republican Party in North Carolina than in pulling wires in Washington. He rejected the idea of coalition with dissident Democrats, preferring to preserve his party's purity and its undivided control over the federal patronage. Keogh's attitude, while self-serving, was not necessarily defeatist. Many Republicans argued (some from conviction) that they could win elections without

the help of political vagabonds. "There is no room for an independent party," exclaimed a Keogh supporter.

"All we Republicans ask is a fair vote and our party will win every time." Keogh, a genial man who never forgot a friend, had allies across the state, but his greatest strength lay in the Fifth Congressional District which included Guilford and seven other piedmont counties.²

Mott's wing of the party enjoyed an advantage over Keogh's in being slightly less associated in the public mind with Republican profligacy and corruption during Reconstruction. Republican regimes both in Raleigh and in the counties had spent liberally, raised taxes dramatically, and fallen deeply into debt. The frequent misappropriation of local funds and the legislature's

²Raleigh News and Observer, January 15, 26 (quotes R. N. Douglas), June 15, 1882; Winston Union Republican, March 2, 1882; Chicago Tribune, June 16, 1882; Mocksville Davie Times in Salisbury Carolina Watchman, November 23, 1882; George B. Everitt, Winston, to Matt W. Ransom, February 10, 1881, Ransom Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.; William A. Hearne, Raleigh, to William Mahone, March 29, George B. Everitt, Winston, to Mahone, November 3, William P. Canaday, Wilmington, to Mahone, November 10, James E. O'Hara, Enfield, to Mahone, November 12, D. C. Pearson, Morganton, to Mahone, December 8, 1881, William E. Clarke, New Bern, to Mahone, June 18, 1882, Mahone Papers, Duke University, Durham, N.C.; William Donaldson Cotton, "Appalachian North Carolina: A Political Study, 1860-1889," Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1954, pp. 420-421; Alan Bruce Bromberg, "Pure Democracy and White Supremacy: The Redeemer Period in North Carolina, 1876-1894," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1977, p. 71.

issue of \$28,000,000 in tainted railroad construction bonds made the Republican Party seem to many North Carolinians incapable of honest government. The Democratic leadership skillfully took advantage of the public's disgust. Ignoring the unsavory role played by influential Democrats in the bond scandals, it effectively portrayed the Republicans as solely responsible for the various rascalities and the Democrats as the state's selfless redeemers. By 1881, Democratic appeals for fiscal responsibility and racial solidarity, aided by occasional violence and frequent fraud, had won for them the control of the state executive, judiciary, and legislature, the two seats in the United States Senate, and seven of the eight congressional seats.³

³Escott, Many Excellent People, pp. 152-162; Mark W. Summers, Railroads, Reconstruction, and the Gospel of Prosperity: Aid under the Radical Republicans, 1865-1877 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 72-74; Raleigh News and Observer, June 30, 1882; Mocksville Davie Times, August 25, 1882; Salem People's Press, September 27, 1882; Catherine Silverman, "'Of Wealth, Virtue, and Intelligence': The Redeemers and Their Triumph in Virginia and North Carolina, 1865-1877," Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York, 1971, pp. 132-138, 264-268; Bromberg, "'Pure Democracy and White Supremacy,'" pp. 166-173. Richard F. Walker related an amusing anecdote of North Carolina corruption to William Mahone: "I happened in at Zetelle's Restaurant [in Richmond] yesterday evening, where I met Judge Marshall, who was tolerably tight. He came up to me and said he had just returned from North Carolina, where he had been to check-mate some of your work; that you had inspired the proceedings down there against Tom Scott; that he had 'fixed' everything all right. I asked him how the 'fixing' was done. He said that 'our

Yet, despite its preeminence in state affairs, the Democratic Party was far from a monolith. The party was one of convenience, a jealous coalition of Whigs and Democrats, unionists and secessionists, held together by white supremacy and the lust for office. No one bossed the North Carolina Democracy, but the rank and file looked for guidance from the state's most prominent officeholders, Governor Thomas J. Jarvis and United States Senators Zebulon B. Vance and Matt W. Ransom. Vance was the best of the lot. Ambitious, vindictive, and bitterly partisan, he nevertheless was no one's cat's-paw, distrusted the rail corporations, and occasionally took an unpopular stand. At a time when Southern Democrats more often were free traders in theory than in practice, Vance was unabashedly anti-tariff. The farmers of the state idolized him. He had the common touch. He mingled easily with his constituents, and his speeches, filled with bawdy aphorisms and witty asides, enthralled the court-day crowds.⁴

folks in Pennsylvania sent me a long letter, reciting cases, authorities, evidence, &c. I answered them by saying "Damn your precedents! Send me some blank checks!!" (Walker to Mahone, April 30, 1873, Mahone Papers, Duke).

⁴Bromberg, "Pure Democracy and White Supremacy," pp. vi, 5-6, 106, 300; Cotton, "Appalachian North Carolina," p. 399; Josephus Daniels, Tar Heel Editor (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939), pp. 404, 449; Raleigh State Journal, September 28, 1882.

Matt Ransom also was an accomplished speaker, but his style was more eloquent than homely. Formal and self-satisfied, Ransom enjoyed no great popularity with the masses. He held onto his office by avoiding controversy and by ingratiating himself with the state's politicians. In the senate the ex-Confederate brigadier won national attention as an advocate of sectional reconciliation. Republicans both North and South applauded him. Less conspicuous work, however, brought Ransom more tangible rewards. As chairman of the Senate Railroad Committee, he quietly looked after the interests of the railroad barons who in turn repaid the impecunious senator with "loans" and retainers.⁵

Governor Thomas Jarvis was one of North Carolina's more progressive politicians. In 1881 he had with limited success urged the legislature to increase expenditures for the public schools and asylums, to improve the state Department of Agriculture, to codify the state laws, and to establish a railroad commission. He also occasionally called for sectional harmony and racial tolerance. Jarvis's progressivism, however, was too often betrayed by greed and ambition. While a member of the legislature during Reconstruction, he had

⁵Bromberg, "Pure Democracy and White Supremacy," pp. 86-89; Daniels, Tar Heel Editor, pp. 212-213, 450-451; New York Times, April 10, 1882; William P. Canaday, Wilmington, to Ransom, November 30, 1882, Ransom Papers, UNC.

accepted a loan from a Northern speculator in exchange for an affirmative vote on a suspect bond issue. In 1880, late in his first term as governor, he had killed the old dream of a statewide rail system servicing North Carolina seaports by allowing the Western North Carolina Railroad to fall into the hands of the Northern-controlled Richmond and Danville Railroad. Shortly thereafter, Richmond and Danville influence in the Democratic convention secured for him the gubernatorial nomination.⁶

Sadly, the men who really ruled North Carolina, the Democratic legislators, were seldom up to even the shabby standards of Jarvis and Ransom. They too often were bloody-shirt wavers, race baiters, and election thieves. Many were little better than lobbyists for the rail corporations, and of those not on retainer most shared the background and interests of the railroad executives, the textile manufacturers, the cotton and tobacco planters, and other wealthy men. Aware that the experience of Reconstruction had soured the public on

⁶Bromberg, "Pure Democracy and White Supremacy," pp. 45, 58-59, 321-334, 336-345; Escott, Many Excellent People, pp. 192-194; Watson, "The Election Campaign of Governor Jarvis," pp. 276-277, 281-288, 297-298; Margaret W. Morris, "The Completion of the Western North Carolina Railroad: Politics of Concealment," North Carolina Historical Review LII (1975), pp. 256-282; Daniels, Tar Heel Editor, pp. 186-188; New York Times, April 10, 1882; Chicago Tribune, May 4, 1882; William E. Clarke, New Bern, to William Mahone, June 18, 1882, Mahone Papers, Duke.

direct financial assistance to business, they instead adopted a laissez faire philosophy which emphasized puny expenditures, low and regressive taxation, and little, if any, business regulation.⁷

In their ceaseless effort to control expenditures, the legislators underfunded the government departments, the charitable institutions, the university, and the public schools. They so starved the educational system that in 1880 North Carolina stood dead last in the nation in teacher salaries and per pupil expenditures. No wonder half of the adult population of the state could not read or write and nearly a third of the white population was illiterate (the highest rate in the country). The legislators also served the interests of their class by passing fence and stock laws, by restricting the rights of tenants, and by effectively exempting the well-to-do from mandatory work on the

⁷Baltimore Sun in Charleston News and Courier, January 14, 21, 1882; Bromberg, "Pure Democracy and White Supremacy," pp. 186-187, 268, 272-282, 320; Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, North Carolina: The History of a Southern State, rev. ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), pp. 509, 510. See also Bess Beatty, "The Edwin Holt Family: Nineteenth-Century Capitalists in North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review LXIII (1986), pp. 511-535; John J. Beck, "Building the New South: A Revolution from Above in a Piedmont County," Journal of Southern History LIII (1987), pp. 441-470; Wayne K. Durrill, "Producing Poverty: Local Government and Economic Development in a New South County, 1874-1884," Journal of American History 71 (1985), pp. 764-781.

public roads.⁸

More important, the Democratic legislators also deprived the citizens of the state of the right to local self-government. In response to the pleas of white taxpayers in the predominantly black eastern counties, they ended local elections for justices of the peace and county commissioners. Instead, the legislators appointed the justices who, in turn, appointed the commissioners. White supremacy and fiscal responsibility (if not penury) were thus assured in the counties, but so too was ring rule. A New Bern Republican explained to William Mahone how the county rings worked:

The Justices in every instance [were] recommended by the Democratic Executive Committee of each county, not for their fitness, but entirely on the score of being good political manipulators. . . . The Justices elected the County Commissioners, almost always from their own number and these in turn appointed the . . . Judges and Inspectors of Elections. In reality elected the Legislature.

The appointment of the justices by the legislature closed the circle. Other Southern states were plagued by court house cliques during the post-Reconstruction period, but North Carolina was one of the few to make

⁸Bromberg, "Pure Democracy and White Supremacy," pp. 193, 194-195, 226; Appletons' Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1882. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883), pp. 631-632; New York Times, February 11, 1882; Watson, "The Election Campaign of Governor Jarvis," pp. 289-291.

them an institution.⁹

Not surprisingly, numerous Democrats were dissatisfied with their party. Whigs and sons of Whigs loathed the very name Democrat, and only the color line kept them from joining their Republican soulmates. Many Democrats, on the other hand, believed their party too dominated by Whig leadership and too enamored of Whig philosophy. "It is not Democracy at all," fumed the editor of the Salisbury Examiner.

It is a gigantic swindle--a ring run in the interests of the few--a conclave of office-holders and office-seekers. They favor not a single principle that is Democratic. They favor sumptuary laws, infamous prohibition schemes, class legislation, and deny the people the right to elect their own officers. The Democracy of our fathers has become a hiss and a byword in the land.¹⁰

⁹Eric Anderson, Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901: The Black Second (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), pp. 56-57; Bromberg, "Pure Democracy and White Supremacy," pp. 152-153; William E. Clarke, New Bern, to William Mahone, June 18, 1882, Mahone Papers, Duke. "I will give you my views as regards the election of Magistrates by the people and throwing the eastern counties under Negro rule again for it amounts to that," a Weldon man told Matt Ransom. "I believe that the white people of the east will loose all interest in politicks and not one half will go to the polls, if they do they will vote the republican ticket. . . . If it is forced upon us they are done with politics and shall vote as they please" (H. J. Pope to Ransom, January 13, 1882, Ransom Papers, UNC).

¹⁰W. L. Love, Franklin, to William Mahone, January 2, 1882, Mahone Papers, Duke; New York Herald, August 26, in Greensboro North State, September 7, 1882; New York Herald, November 2, 1882; Robert Watson Winston, It's a Far Cry (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937), p. 165; Salisbury Examiner, October 12, 1882.

The more liberal Democrats maintained that the leadership's habitual resort to racism and sectionalism discouraged Northern investment and robbed the state of influence in Washington. "North Carolina is tired of the Porcupine species of representatives," a Republican friend told Matt Ransom. "They has blustered and pouted and cussed and talk[ed] nigger and the South until the people is getting a glance at the Ass's Ears hid under a cloak of false pretences and Demagogism." The liberals believed that North Carolina could do more to aid in her development than pander to Northern capitalists. "We have not educated our people and fitted them to hold prominent positions and to develop our resources," complained a Mocksville editor.

We are supinely waiting for northern men to come down here and work our mines and manufacture our goods for us. They do all the thinking and get all the pay for it. What is the matter? Let us look at our schools.¹¹

The iniquities of the county government system aroused the ire of many Democrats. Those living in the western counties, where blacks seldom accounted for more than 20 per cent of the population, demanded the right to vote for county officers while everywhere ambitious,

¹¹W. L. Love, Franklin, to William Mahone, April 14, 1882, Mahone Papers, Duke; Raleigh State Journal, September 21, 1882; W. A. Smith, Princeton, to Matt W. Ransom, March 18, 1882, Ransom Papers, UNC; Mocksville Davie Times, November 10, 1881; Josephus Daniels, Wilson, to editor, May 20, New York Times, May 29, 1882.

independent-minded politicians resented the power of the rings. "There is now a general feeling that the Democratic leaders are actuated more by personal interests than by patriotic motives," noted a Macon County man, "and our people adhere to them mainly because they see that in forsaking them they will thereby aid the Republican Party."¹²

The farmers too had their grievances. Recently, truck farming had gained a foothold in portions of coastal North Carolina, but the predominant feature of post-Civil War agriculture in the state was the steady expansion of the cotton and tobacco monocultures. Stimulated by the recovery and growth of the state's textile industry and by the extensive application of commercial fertilizers, cotton culture spread in the 1870s into nearly every corner of the piedmont. Between 1870 and 1880, North Carolina cotton production increased by over 250 per cent. Meanwhile, strong national demand for bright leaf tobacco encouraged the expansion of the tobacco belt from the region along the

¹²W. R. Aiken, Icard Station, to Samuel McDowell Tate, February 1, 1881, Tate Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.; Paul B. Means, Concord, to Zebulon B. Vance, July 1, 1882, Vance Papers, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.; John F. Wootten, Reidsville, to William Mahone, December 6, 1881, William E. Clarke, New Bern, to Mahone, June 18, 1882, Mahone Papers, Duke; New York Times, July 28, 1882; anonymous, Franklin, to editor, May 22, New York Times, May 29, 1882.

Virginia border down into the central portion of the state.¹³

Single-crop agriculture brought the usual ills-- overproduction, declining prices, expensive credit, debt, tenancy. The farmers placed much of the blame for their troubles on Wall Street and on the railroads but reserved a healthy portion for the Democratic legislature. They excoriated the legislators for refusing to regulate the railroads, for passing stock and fence laws, and for instituting a tax policy that discriminated against farmers in favor of the rail corporations and other business interests. In 1880, a Harnett County man warned the state commissioner of agriculture that

The people--the farmers . . . are opening their eyes. They have been led and coaxed and frightened into the party traces so long by 'social equality' issues which heretofore, our democratic candidates have flaunted with the same potency to arouse prejudice in their behalf, as that which, in a colder clime, follows in the wake of the 'bloody shirt.' That feature is about to 'play out.' . . . We must go for N.C. and her interests and her agriculture must be in the ascendancy. Her material

¹³New York Times, August 12, 1882; Escott, Many Excellent People, pp. 174-178, 197-198; Richard W. Griffin, "Reconstruction of the North Carolina Textile Industry, 1865-1885," North Carolina Historical Review XLI (1964), pp. 48-49, 50-53; W. C. Kerr, "Report on the Cotton Production of the State of North Carolina," in U.S. Congress, House, Report on the Cotton Production in the United States, House Miscellaneous Document 42, Part 6, 47th Congress, 2nd session, 1882-1883, p. 22; New York Tribune in Mocksville Davie Times, January 6, 1882; New York Herald, September 27, 1882; Appletons' Annual Cyclopaedia . . . 1881, pp. 667-668.

progress must be the watchword and, of course, the prosperity of her farmers guarantees advancement to all other trades and professions.

The Harnett man knew on whom the farmers' fury should fall. "We have within our borders," he continued, "so many big lawyers, who are all political aspirants and, versed in wire-pulling, that, I fear, it would take the vituperation of a base woman, and the billingsgate of a Dennis Kearney, to describe them, in their true colors."¹⁴

So far, though, few farmers had sought a political solution to their problems. The state Grange had never amounted to much as a lobby, and Greenback candidates in the congressional elections of 1878 and 1880 had received precious few votes from Democratic farmers. With their accustomed cynicism, the Democrats had defused the greenback issue by miraculously discovering the virtues of soft money.¹⁵

¹⁴Appletons' Annual Cyclopaedia . . . 1882, p. 634; Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina, pp. 491, 493; New Berne Commercial News, September 18, 1881; William E. Clarke, New Bern, to William Mahone, June 18, 1882, Mahone Papers, Duke; Bromberg, "'Pure Democracy and White Supremacy,'" pp. 282-283; Escott, Many Excellent People, pp. 191-192; D. M. McKay, Harnett County, to Leonidas L. Polk, January 28, 1880, Polk Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.

¹⁵Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina, p. 512; Bromberg, "'Pure Democracy and White Supremacy,'" pp. 34-38, 54; Jeffrey J. Crow and Robert F. Durden, Maverick Republican in the Old North State: A Political Biography of Daniel L. Russell (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), pp. 34-38.

In the early 1880s, the issue placing the greatest strain on Democratic unity was that of prohibition. In late 1880, North Carolina religious leaders, disturbed by the common occurrence of grog shops and drunkenness and jealous of the influence of the Liquor Dealers' Association, organized a campaign to force the legislature to prohibit the manufacture and sale of spirituous liquors. In March 1881, the legislators, smothered under an avalanche of petitions, yielded to the demands of the godly and passed an act which outlawed the manufacture of liquor and prohibited its sale except by physicians and druggists for medical or chemical purposes. The law would go into effect in October if ratified by a majority of the state's citizens at a referendum in early August.¹⁸

The prohibitionists were not entirely happy with the law (a Burke County Democrat noted that "if you allow men to make it medically and sell it medically & drink it medically and give it away medically you turn every Drugstore in N. Carolina to a Drinking Saloon") but decided to support the measure as the best that they could get. Aware that the prohibition question was extremely divisive, most of the state's leading

¹⁸Daniel J. Whitener, "North Carolina Prohibition Election of 1881 and Its Aftermath," North Carolina Historical Review XI (1934), pp. 71-79; Daniels, Tar Heel Editor, p. 195.

Democrats, including Vance and Ransom, dodged the issue (one congressman even temporarily fled the state). Governor Jarvis, however, surprised those who had long considered his bulbous, red nose evidence that he was a secret drunkard by taking to the stump in support of the law. Despite the activities of numerous "wet" Democrats, Jarvis's endorsement further convinced the public that prohibition was Democratic policy.¹⁷

Prohibition's opponents included liquor dealers, internal revenue officers whose livelihoods depended on the collection of the liquor tax, transportation-starved mountain fruit and grain farmers who had to convert their produce into liquor in order to get it economically to market, and citizens who enjoyed recreations more potent than hymn sings and ice cream socials. On June 1, a convention, organized and bankrolled by the liquor dealers, met in Raleigh and formed an Anti-Prohibition Association. The association's executive committee was dominated by wet Democrats, but in its zeal to defeat prohibition it was

¹⁷W. R. Aiken, Icard Station, to Samuel McDowell Tate, February 1, 1881, Tate Papers, UNC; Whitener, "North Carolina Prohibition Election of 1881," pp. 79, 80, 82; Daniels, Tar Heel Editor, pp. 185, 194-195; New York Times, October 1, 1882; Raleigh State Journal, November 2, 1882.

quite willing to accept Republican aid.¹⁸

The Republicans, as ever, were divided. Tom Keogh was personally a confirmed prohibitionist, and, besides, he realized that prohibition would cripple, if not destroy, John Mott's internal revenue machine. Mott, on the other hand, saw the controversy as a wonderful opportunity for the Republican Party. An alliance with the anti-prohibitionists would for the present place the party on the side of personal liberty and for the future establish contacts with independent-minded Democrats. After a hard struggle, Mott defeated Keogh in the Republican Executive Committee, and the party officially came out against prohibition.¹⁹

On election day, Republican organization and liquor money proved decisive as the anti-prohibitionists buried their blue-nosed opponents by 166,325 votes to 48,370. The prohibitionists carried only three of the state's ninety-four counties. About 8,000 Republicans, many of them in the Quaker Belt, supported prohibition, but most of the white and almost all of the black Republicans

¹⁸Bromberg, "Pure Democracy and White Supremacy," p. 62; Whitener, "North Carolina Prohibition Election of 1881," pp. 79, 81-82; Gordon B. McKinney, Southern Mountain Republicans, 1865-1900: Politics and the Appalachian Community (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), pp. 97-98.

¹⁹Winston Leader, May 31, 1881; Greensboro North State, September 7, 1882; McKinney, Southern Mountain Republicans, pp. 97-98.

toed the party line. As for the Democrats, roughly two of three refused to follow their governor into the prohibition pew.²⁰

The success of the anti-prohibition coalition convinced Mott and leading Democratic dissidents, or "Liberals" as they were called, that a restructuring of North Carolina politics was possible. During the early months of 1882, Liberal leaders William Johnston of Mecklenburg County and Charles Price of Rowan enjoyed gratifying interviews with Mott at Statesville and with President Chester A. Arthur in Washington. Before the Republican-Liberal union was consummated, however, Tom Keogh launched a determined effort to dissuade Arthur and others in the national administration from political adventurism in North Carolina.²¹

Not surprisingly, the resolution of the Mott-Keogh controversy hinged on a patronage dispute. At the turn of the new year, Mott had resigned as collector of his internal revenue district and had recommended as his replacement one of his lieutenants, Thomas N. Cooper. Keogh immediately put forward one of his own followers,

²⁰Whitener, "North Carolina Prohibition Election of 1881," pp. 85-86; Raleigh News and Observer in New York Times, August 29, 1881.

²¹Wilmington Post, August 28, 1881; Raleigh Chronicle, January 14, 1882, in Scrapbook 28 (1882), Mahone Papers, Duke; Raleigh News and Observer, January 17, 26, 1882; Mocksville Davie Times, February 24, 1882.

David A. Jenkins. A war of lobbyists ensued. Although the qualifications of the candidates were much debated, the real issue was fusion with the Liberals. Mott and his friends predicted that a Republican-Liberal coalition could sweep the state in the 1882 elections while the Keogh men countered that the Liberals merely wanted to climb into office over the backs of Republican voters. "We cannot afford to take our leaders from the other side," exclaimed the editor of Keogh's newspaper, the Greensboro North State, "put them in commission, and then place them in command of our faithful soldiers, who, for lo! these many years, have, in the face of ostracism, abuse and every adversity, bravely marched to the polls and voted the Republican ticket."²²

Keogh and his allies fought manfully but to no avail. President Arthur was determined on a new departure in North Carolina. In April, Internal Revenue Commissioner Green B. Raum sent Cooper's name to the senate for confirmation and the Republican National and State Committees endorsed coalition in North Carolina. In July, Keogh complained to a friend that "It is rather humiliating to me to have to confess that I can't even

²²New York Times, January 10, 1882; Thomas B. Keogh, Greensboro, to Daniel L. Russell, December 29, 1881, Russell Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.; Greensboro North State in Raleigh News and Observer, January 29, 1882.

get a clerk appointed under this administration."²³

While Keogh and Mott struggled over the control of the patronage, the regular Democrats sought to regain the initiative by shifting public attention from the prohibition issue to that of the internal revenue. The federal tax on the manufacture of liquor had long irritated mountain farmers who because of the lack of transportation were forced to convert their fruit and grain into alcohol. Not only did the farmers consider the tax unfair, but they also resented the strong-arm methods--bribery, intimidation, the use of informers--employed by internal revenue agents in its collection. The Democratic politicians paid lip service to the grievances of the mountain farmers, but their main complaint with the internal revenue service was Mott's use of it to build a political machine in western North Carolina. The Democrats often brayed about abolishing the liquor tax, but they were insincere. They knew that someday a Democratic administration would give them the power and pelf.²⁴

²³Raleigh News and Observer, April 19, 1882; New York Times, April 22, 1882; Winston Union Republican, June 1, 1882; Thomas B. Keogh, Greensboro, to Thomas Settle, July 2, 1882, Settle Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.

²⁴Bromberg, "Pure Democracy and White Supremacy," p. 67; Wilbur R. Miller, "The Revenue: Federal Law Enforcement in the Mountain South, 1870-1900," Journal of Southern History LV (1989), pp. 195-216.

Noting with mock horror that the cost of collection in Mott's district was fifty-three cents on every dollar and hinting darkly of widespread corruption, Zebulon Vance demanded in early 1882 that the United States Senate investigate Mott's administration of the district. Meanwhile, Vance held up Cooper's confirmation as Mott's successor. After some dickering, Vance's Republican colleagues agreed to allow the appointment of an investigating committee with Vance as chairman in exchange for Cooper's confirmation. At the urging of mountain Democrats, Vance dragged out the inquiry until after the fall elections. Although the investigation failed to implicate Mott in any wrongdoing (indeed, his efficiency was acknowledged), revelations of petty theft on the part of a few of his underlings made delicious copy for the Democratic press throughout the summer.²⁵

Elections in North Carolina in 1882 involved the legislature and the district court judgeships, the eight

²⁵New York Times, January 10, 18, April 22, 25, 1882; Lenoir Topic, October 18, 1882; Cotton, "Appalachian North Carolina," pp. 403, 404-405; James M. Leach, Washington, D.C., to Matt W. Ransom, April 13, 1882, Ransom Papers, UNC; William M. Robbins, Statesville, to Zebulon B. Vance, April 17, 1882, Vance Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History; J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, History of North Carolina: North Carolina Since 1860. (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1919), III, 208-209.

regular congressional seats, a seat for a congressman-at-large, and a state supreme court judgeship. The Republicans and the Liberals arranged to divide the nominations. A Republican would get the coalition's nomination for congressman-at-large; a Liberal that for supreme court justice. Republicans would claim the nominations in the three congressional districts of predominantly black eastern North Carolina (the First through Third); Liberals those in the districts embracing the piedmont and mountains (the Fourth through Eighth). The Republicans would get half of the district judgeships; the Liberals half. The legislative nominations would depend on local fusion agreements. Because no single Liberal leader enjoyed much more than regional prestige (a common weakness of Southern independent movements), John J. Mott assumed the overall coordination and daily direction of the coalition campaign.²⁶

On June 7, the Liberals assembled in convention in Raleigh under the auspices of the Anti-Prohibition Association. Members of both parties attended. Among the Republicans were a few blacks and a large contingent of revenue officials. According to plan, the convention

²⁶Raleigh News and Observer, June 8, 1882; New York Times, July 13, 1882; John J. Mott, Raleigh, to William E. Chandler, September 5, 1882, Chandler Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

nominated Republican Oliver H. Dockery of Richmond County for congressman-at-large, Liberal George N. Folk of Caldwell for supreme court judge, and a mixed slate for the district judgeships. The delegates then adopted a platform that condemned prohibition and the county government system, called for "a free ballot and a fair count," and demanded that the federal government turn the revenue from the liquor tax over to the states for the use of the public schools. The liquor tax plank struck the fancy of delegate Isaac J. "Ike" Young, a Republican revenue collector notorious for wirepulling, womanizing, and tippling. What a happy idea, he exclaimed, "that whenever you took a mint julep you were educating your neighbor's children."²⁷

A week later, the Republicans gathered in Raleigh. The convention was well-attended, its membership predominantly white. Although Thomas Keogh and some of his friends were present, the delegates without dissent endorsed the Arthur administration and the Liberal nominations and platform. "We can do not better than sustain the ticket, for what is there to hope for from

²⁷Raleigh News and Observer, May 3, June 8 (quotes Young), 1882; New York Times, June 8, 1882; Washington Post, June 8, 1882. Jacob A. Long and Frank H. Darby, two of the nominees for district judge, refused to leave the Democratic Party. Long later served as temporary chairman of the Democratic State Convention (Raleigh News and Observer, June 14, 1882; New York Times, July 6, 1882).

the success of the Democracy?" sighed a Winston editor. "It is better for us to accept Coalition, with its nauseating dose of Democratic candidates, then to give the State and Nation to those who tried to destroy the Government."²⁸

Fusion in the congressional districts did not always proceed as happily. In the First District, the Republicans rejected John B. Respass, the Liberal choice, desiring instead the nomination of Miles Commander, a prominent prohibitionist. John J. Mott resolved the dispute by persuading Respass and Commander to retire in favor of Walter F. Pool, a Republican acceptable to both parties. In the overwhelmingly black Second District, rival Republican conventions nominated white incumbent Orlando Hubbs and black leader James E. O'Hara. Mott preserved party unity by inducing Hubbs to withdraw in the expectation of receiving a federal appointment.²⁹

Controversies in the Fifth and Seventh districts

²⁸Chicago Tribune, June 14, 1882; New York Times, June 15, 1882; Raleigh News and Observer, June 15, 1882; Winston Union Republican, June 22, 1882; John J. Mott, Raleigh, to William E. Chandler, September 20, 1882, Chandler Papers, Library of Congress.

²⁹Raleigh News and Observer, August 2, 19, September 3, 1882; Winston Leader, September 19, 1882; Anderson, Race and Politics in North Carolina, pp. 102-113; John J. Mott, Raleigh, to William E. Chandler, December 12, 1882, Chandler Papers, Library of Congress.

had ominous implications. Tom Keogh had kept his silence at the state convention, but once at home in the Fifth District he did all in his power to sabotage the coalition. Keogh so dampened the enthusiasm of Greensboro Republicans for fusion that James M. Leach, the Quaker Belt's most popular Liberal, decided that neither he nor any other coalition candidate could win in the district. With Leach out of the running, the Liberal nomination went to John R. Winston, who as a Greenback candidate in 1880 had received fewer than 600 votes. The Republican convention, dominated by revenue officers, endorsed Winston but felt compelled to pass a resolution repudiating their candidate's greenback views. In the Seventh District, in yet another convention managed by Mott's henchmen, the Republicans endorsed Dr. Tyre York, the Liberal nominee, but not until after some Straightout Republicans had left the hall shouting that they would not be dictated to by the whisky ring.³⁰

Straightout Republicans appeared not only in the Fifth and Seventh districts but across the state. Most of the professional politicians among them were Keogh

³⁰John J. Mott, Statesville, to William E. Chandler, November 18, 1882, Chandler Papers, Library of Congress; Greensboro North State, October 5, 1882; Winston Union Republican, October 12, 1882; Raleigh State Journal, December 7, 1882; Winston Leader, September 5, 1882.

men who, if they hated the idea of coalition, hated the idea of a victorious coalition even more. "I think it is wrong in the President to bestow . . . all the best patronage on men who have done little if any political work and ignore his friends," whined Keogh. The Straightout politicians hoped to defeat the coalition and thus bring Chester Arthur to his senses.³¹

Most Straightouts were more disinterested. Prohibitionists considered the coalition little more than a racket for the benefit of liquor dealers and revenue officers. Others believed it a vehicle for the advancement of failed Democratic politicians. They wondered at the audacity of the Liberals who, having only recently harassed and abused them, now demanded their votes. "I find it rather unpalatable to identify myself with the men who call themselves Liberals in this section," sniffed an Asheville Straightout. "They command very little respect either by reason of their character or their talents."³²

³¹Thomas B. Keogh, Greensboro, to Thomas Settle, July 2, 1882, Settle Papers, UNC; C. L. Cooke to Fellow-Citizens, Greensboro North State, October 5, 1882; John J. Mott, Raleigh, to William E. Chandler, September 20, 1882, Chandler Papers, Library of Congress.

³²Cotton, "Appalachian North Carolina," p. 437; Mocksville Davie Times, August 25, 1882; Greensboro North State, September 7, 14, 1882; Salisbury Carolina Watchman, September 14, 1882; George H. Gregory, Greensboro, to Matt W. Ransom, July 18, 1882, Ransom Papers, UNC; Oliver H. Dockery, Mangum, to Daniel L. Russell, July 21, 1882, Russell Papers, UNC; Richmond

Some of the Liberals seemed to conform to the Straightouts' stereotype. Tyre York, for example, had earned a reputation in the legislature as a Negrophobe, a champion of the county government system, and an enemy of the public schools. From the stump, he had repeatedly calumnized North Carolina Republicans as "the filth and mud of Radicalism." A Straightout noted that "For seventeen long years, [York] has held the Republicans up to the scorn and derision of the people, applied to them the most vulgar, indecent and filthy epithets that his slanderous tongue could command. He has never been able to pronounce the word Republican. It was always Radical and nigger party."³³

George N. Folk, the coalition nominee for supreme court justice, had in the aftermath of the Civil War been indicted for the murder of union men in Randolph County. Republicans believed that only the amnesty act and the liberal use of money had saved him from the noose. Now, in an interview with the Lenior Topic, Folk confessed to the authorship of the infamous county government act, maintaining that it was "made . . .

Pearson, Asheville, to Thomas Settle, October 4, 1882, Settle Papers, UNC.

³³Bromberg, "Pure Democracy and White Supremacy," pp. 97, 98-99; Raleigh News and Observer, September 22, 1882; Winston Union Republican, October 5, 1882; C. L. Cooke to Fellow-Citizens (quote), Greensboro North State, October 5, 1882.

necessary by the peculiar character of the citizenship of the Eastern counties, which were filled with ignorant negroes, who became the tools of bad and designing men." He followed this revelation with the equally ill-considered admission that he "has now nothing to take back." As if Folk had not done enough to antagonize Republicans, William M. Cocke Jr., the coalition congressional nominee in the mountainous Eighth District, published a letter in which he referred to "the late Republican party" and declared that "When the Liberal-Democrats proposed to abandon their old party organization . . . , the Republicans . . . met them wholly on [the Liberals'] ground."³⁴

The Straightouts sought to cripple the coalition by publicizing Liberal misdeeds and faux pas and by running independent candidates in legislative races. They also supported an independent congressional candidate in Tyre York's Seventh District. Democratic bribes encouraged the Straightouts in their resistance but not as much as

³⁴Cotton, "Appalachian North Carolina," pp. 437-438; C. L. Cooke, New Castle, to George C. Gorham, October 9, Greensboro North State, October 19, 1882; Lenoir Topic, June 21, 1882; Greensboro North State, September 21, 1882 (quotes Cocke). "These are my reasons for accepting," Folk told Matt Ransom. "It was a Judicial office. No recantations as to the past, or promises as to the future were required. Its platform was a series of mere postulates. . . . I am still as ever your friend and at the proper time you will find me" (Folk, Lenoir, to Ransom, June 18, 1882, Ransom Papers, UNC).

the Arthur administration's listless support of the coalition. The president had assented to the fusion scheme and had endorsed Mott's nominees for federal office, but he had not given Mott the authority to remove malcontents nor had the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee supplied the coalition with campaign funds. When by late September neither cash nor beheadings were forthcoming, Mott told William E. Chandler that "Our 'Straight-out' friends . . . are acting upon the belief that the defeat of the coalition will place the party patronage in their hands," and he complained that "Keogh gives it out that the President is waiting to see the result before he takes any stock in it, and he (Keogh) is sustained in this claim by pointing to different office-holders who openly fight the coalition, and are not removed." A few decapitations, Mott continued, "would have a good effect."³⁵

Mott's pleading finally stirred Arthur from his lethargy. On September 30, the president strongly reiterated his support for coalition in North Carolina.

³⁵A. Barnes, Elizabeth City, to Matt W. Ransom, October 6, 1882, Ransom Papers, UNC; New York Times, October 1, 1882; Raleigh State Journal, October 26, 1882; Salisbury Examiner, October 26, 1882; John J. Mott, Raleigh, to William E. Chandler, August 12, September 5, 7, 20 (quote), William P. Canaday, Wilmington, to Chandler, August 15, James M. Leach, Lexington, to Chandler, September 11, 1882, Chandler Papers, Library of Congress.

"Liberalism," he authorized a spokesman to say, "means fair elections, free schools, home rule, and genuine restoration of the Union." A delighted Mott immediately circulated copies of Arthur's statement throughout North Carolina. This, coupled with a spate of removals in early October, considerably deflated the Straightouts.³⁸

The Straightouts caused problems, but in other respects the coalition campaign proceeded smoothly. Mott organized with his usual efficiency; a half dozen of the state's newspapers gave their support; and campaign expenses were met by the liquor dealers and, after Arthur's public endorsement, by the Congressional Campaign Committee. The coalition also enjoyed the services of accomplished speakers--James Leach, Charles Price, and Tyre York from the Liberal side and Ike Young, Daniel Russell, and William F. "Uncle Billy" Henderson from the Republican. Oliver Dockery, the coalition nominee for congressman-at-large, lived up to his reputation as a rousing campaigner. He even won the grudging endorsement of the Greensboro North State. Tom

³⁸New York Times, October 1, 1882; Chicago Tribune, October 3, 10, 1882; Raleigh State Journal, October 5, 1882; George C. Gorham, Washington, D.C., to C. L. Cooke, September 30 (quote), Greensboro North State, October 5, 1882; Salisbury Carolina Watchman, October 12, 26, 1882; Washington Star in Raleigh News and Observer, October 5, 1882; Winston Union Republican, November 9, 1882; C. L. Cooke, New Castle, to George C. Gorham, October 9, Greensboro North State, October 19, 1882.

Keogh's newspaper.³⁷

The Democrats held their convention in Raleigh in early July. The delegates nominated for congressman-at-large Ridsen T. Bennett of Anson County and for justice of the supreme court Thomas Ruffin of Alamance. They then adopted a platform which declared the prohibition issue dead, condemned "the corrupt and corrupting use of federal patronage . . . in influencing and controlling elections," and called for the abolition of the internal revenue service. The platform also promised increased aid for the public schools (as long as expenditures did not "materially increase the present burdens of our people") and protection for eastern whites "from the oppressive domination of ignorant blacks."³⁸

Ridsen Bennett proved an unhappy choice. He had been a gallant Confederate soldier and was an able

³⁷John J. Mott, Raleigh, to My Dear Sir [form letter], August 29, 1882, Talton L. L. Cox Papers, Duke University, Durham, N.C.; W. H. Phillips, Hatteras, to Matt W. Ransom, September 6, A. M. Erwin, Marion, to Ransom, September 7, 1882, Ransom Papers, UNC; Raleigh News and Observer, July 20, 1882; New York Times, July 28, 1882; New York Herald, September 24, 1882; Winston Union Republican, October 5, 12, 1882; William E. Clarke, New Bern, to William Mahone, June 18, 1882, Mahone Papers, Duke; Charlotte Observer, November 23, 1882; James M. Leach, Lexington, to William E. Chandler, September 11, 1882, Chandler Papers, Library of Congress; New York Herald, August 26, in Greensboro North State, September 7, 1882; Greensboro North State, October 12, 1882.

³⁸Raleigh News and Observer, July 6, 7 (quote), 1882.

lawyer, but he also was an erratic and eccentric personality. Courtly and formal, he hated the accoutrements of the industrial age. He particularly loathed typewriters, bicycles, and tan shoes. On the stump, Bennett was an enigma. At one appointment he might enthrall his auditors with his oratory; at the next repel them with his vulgarity. Josephus Daniels later recalled that Bennett's "campaign started with a bang and ended in near-failure."³⁹

Bennett and the other Democratic congressional nominees either had been for prohibition or had avoided the issue. This, of course, displeased many North Carolinians, particularly the mountain farmers of the Seventh and Eighth districts. In the Seventh, the party leadership had urged the nomination of a wet Democrat, but former Congressman William M. Robbins had taken the prize by packing the convention with his prohibition brethren. A delirious Robbins supporter applauded the victory of that elusive entity, "the people": "They have rushed forward in a solid phalanx, grasped the politicians by the throat, snatched them from the first rank, and with a wild cry of triumph, hoisted Robbins with the Democratic battle flag in one hand and the

³⁹Daniels, Tar Heel Editor, pp. 198-199; New York Times, July 22, October 1, 1882; Winston Union Republican, August 10, 1882; New York Herald, September 24, 1882.

sword of Gideon in the other." The vision of the courthouse politicians was no less apocalyptic but hardly as sanguine. They feared that Robbins would alienate as many wet Democrats as his opponent Tyre York had Republicans.⁴⁰

In the Eighth District, Robert B. Vance, a brother of Zebulon, won the Democratic nomination. In a marvelous piece of invective, a coalition editor revealed that "Vance was always a psalm-singing prohibition demagogue and during the Prohibition campaign slunk into churches and class meetings in school-houses, where he could not be followed and exposed, to demagogue it and appeal to the passions and weaknesses of women and children." Party leaders worried not so much that the Vance candidacy might cause the loss of the overwhelmingly Democratic district (indeed, a mountain Liberal described it as "the stranglehold of Democracy in the Old North State") as that it might cost so many votes as to place the state ticket in jeopardy.⁴¹

⁴⁰New York Times, October 1, 1882; Raleigh State Journal, November 2, 1882; Ego to editor, Mocksville Davie Times, August 18, 1882.

⁴¹Cotton, "Appalachian North Carolina," pp. 425-426; New York Times, October 1, 1882; Raleigh State Journal, November 2, 1882 (first quote); Raleigh News and Observer, January 26, 1882; W. L. Love, Franklin, to William Mahone, April 14, 1882 (second quote), Mahone Papers, Duke. A correspondent noted that Vance's "zeal at camp meetings during his vacation is only equalled by

Throughout the campaign, Democratic orators and editors tried to avoid the prohibition issue, but, when cornered, they declared it settled and now nothing more than a hobby for unscrupulous politicians. The Liberals, growled a Winston editor, "scent spoils from afar, even as a jackall does a carcass, and they propose to grow fat upon Prohibition meat." Realizing the unpopularity of the county government system, the Democrats recounted the horrors of black rule in the eastern counties and recalled that prominent Liberals such as Folk, York, Leach, and Price had supported the county government act. At the state convention, Governor Thomas Jarvis outlined the major themes of the Democratic campaign. The governor denounced the Republican Party as the plaything of the revenue officers, reviled the Liberals as "purchasable Democrat[s]," and asserted that "the dividing line between the parties was the line of color." Until election day, Jarvis and his like prattled on about black magistrates and jurors, Liberal soreheads, and "Boss" Mott and his revenue machine. "What is this new party?" asked Zeb Vance. "It comes from the worst pedigree of any child born in the State. It was begot

his assiduous attentions to the departments during the sessions of Congress. He has established more post offices than any living congressman" (New York Herald, September 24, 1882).

by a revenue officer, out of a negro and born in a still house."⁴²

The coalitionists, for their part, flailed the Democrats for prohibition and for the county government system and its progeny, ring rule. Liberal leader William Johnston complained to the New York Herald that "the Democratic party has become a mere machine in the State. . . . Cliques, rings and combinations, from the Court House up to the State Convention, control nominations, and the machines often suppress the view of the people." Coalition success, he assured the Herald, would signal a new beginning for North Carolina and for the nation. "We mean to abolish so far as practicable race and sectional prejudice and educate the public mind in order that the two sections may be brought into harmonious relations," he promised.⁴³

On election day, the Democrats maintained a firm grip on the legislature, swept the district judgeships, and won the supreme court judgeship and six of the nine

⁴²Winston Leader, May 23, 1882; Mocksville Davie Times, November 3, 1882; New York Times, July 6, 1882 (quotes Jarvis); Raleigh News and Observer, July 13, September 1 (quotes Vance), 1882; W. W. McDiarmid, Lumberton, to editor, May 18, Rex, Concord, to editor, May 22, New York Times, May 29, 1882; Salisbury Carolina Watchman, October 5, 1882.

⁴³Salisbury Examiner, April 20, 1882; Raleigh State Journal, November 2, 1882; New York Herald, August 26, Greensboro North State, September 7, 1882.

congressional seats including congressman-at-large. Their victory, however, was more narrow than it first appeared. The coalition increased the number of opposition members in the general assembly and won three congressional seats--Walter F. Pool captured the First District, James E. O'Hara the black Second, and Tyre York the Seventh. Coalition candidates also lost by slim margins in the Third (500 votes out of 31,700 cast) and Fourth (389 out of 32,661) districts and in the state at-large (443 out of 223,083), while in the Eighth District Democrat Robert B. Vance's margin of victory shrunk from 7,855 votes in 1880 to 2,962 in 1882.⁴⁴

The coalitionists might well have reduced Vance's majority even more and turned their near misses into wins had they not had to contend with Democratic fraud and Straightout perfidy. John J. Mott rejoiced that the Liberal presence had curbed Democratic cheating. He told William E. Chandler that "The Bourbons were afraid of Liberal witnesses and at most of the boxes the Liberals contended for a fair polling & counting of the vote." Still, Mott estimated that fraud had cost the coalition up to 4,000 votes statewide.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Bromberg "Pure Democracy and White Supremacy," p. 79; Anderson, Race and Politics and North Carolina, p. 112; Raleigh State Journal, December 7, 1882.

⁴⁵John J. Mott, Statesville, to William E. Chandler, November 18, 1882, Chandler Papers, Library of Congress; J. G. Ramsay, Mt. Vernon, to Patrick H. Cain,

Straightout strength varied from district to district--negligible on the coast, appreciable in the piedmont and mountains. It was at its most potent in the Fifth District where Thomas Keogh's malign influence denied John R. Winston at least 2,000 Republican votes. Mott blamed the Straightout abstention on Chester Arthur's tardy announcement of support for the coalition. He complained to Chandler that "up to two weeks before the election many [Republicans] were led to believe that the President cared nothing for [coalition], and the fact that a dozen or more federal officers were outspoken against it, confirmed this belief." The president's public endorsement and the subsequent removals of recalcitrant officeholders diminished the Straightout revolt but came too late to end it.⁴⁶

The Republican-Liberal coalition in North Carolina little resembled the independent insurgencies of the

November 11, 1882, Cain Papers, Duke University, Durham, N.C.; Wilmington Post, November 26, 1882; Bromberg, "Pure Democracy and White Supremacy," p. 79. In the Seventh District, Democrat William M. Robbins charged the coalition with fraud (Winston Union Republican, November 23, 1882; Cotton, "Appalachian North Carolina," p. 425).

⁴⁶Raleigh State Journal, December 7, 1882; Cotton, "Appalachian North Carolina," p. 426; J. G. Ramsay, Mt. Vernon, to Patrick H. Cain, November 11, 1882, Cain Papers, Duke; John J. Mott, Statesville, to William E. Chandler, November 18, 1882, Chandler Papers, Library of Congress.

Lower South. The coalition was a statewide movement that based its appeal on prohibition, the county government system, the public schools, and other issues that cut across class lines. Coalition candidates seldom addressed farmer concerns such as currency inflation and railroad regulation. They themselves embraced as closely as any Democrat a laissez faire, pro-business philosophy, and they feared that an agrarian appeal might stir up a hornet's nest. Nor were North Carolina farmers resentful enough to demand that the politicians dwell on such issues. Unlike in the Lower South, the railroad had penetrated the breadth of the North Carolina hill country before the Civil War. The economic and psychological trauma incident to the coming of commercial agriculture gripped the piedmont during the 1850s, 1860s, and early 1870s and perhaps contributed as much to the bitter divisions of the war and Reconstruction as did religious and racial enmities. By the 1880s, however, the shift from self-sufficiency to the market was nearly complete. The piedmont farmers were used to, if not entirely happy with, their situation and generally were satisfied by the occasional rhetorical bone thrown them by the Democrats. Their gradually deteriorating economic status would drive them to revolt in the 1890s, but for now they were relatively

quiet.⁴⁷

The North Carolina coalition also differed from the Deep Southern movements in the quality of its leadership. Mott was a tireless and efficient organizer who used the federal patronage not only to build his Republican organization but also to strengthen the Republican-Liberal alliance. The Liberal leaders, for their part, appreciated Mott's evenhanded distribution of the spoils and the nominations and worked well in harness with him. Yet, for all the equality in its upper echelons, the coalition was largely a Republican affair. Of the 111,000 votes received by Oliver Dockery, the coalition candidate for congressman-at-large, at least 100,000 were Republican. Many Democrats had indeed lost faith in their party, but neither prohibition nor the county government system nor any combination of the current issues could compel them to

⁴⁷Paul D. Escott, "Yeoman Independence and the Market: Social Status and Economic Development in Antebellum North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review LXVI (1989), pp. 291-295. Farmer grievances did play a crucial role in at least one locality during the 1882 campaign. Disgust in Davie County with a Democratic-sponsored fence law helped Tyre York win a stunning upset in that heretofore solidly Democratic bastion. York's margin of victory in Davie exceeded his margin in the entire Seventh District (Mocksville Davie Times, February 24, March 17, November 17, 1881, September 22, 1882; Mocksville Davie Times in Salisbury Carolina Watchman, November 23, 1882; Winston Union Republican, March 23, July 27, 1882; Raleigh State Journal, December 7, 1882; Caswell Harbin, Mocksville, to Patrick H. Cain, January 11, 1883, Cain Papers, Duke).

forget the Civil War and Reconstruction and unite with the Republican Party--the party of corruption, high taxes, and black rule. Nor were restless Democrats reassured by Mott's leadership of the coalition. His reputation as the clever boss of a patronage machine led many would-be Liberals to agree with a Winston editor that "The ear marks of the Republican wolf are too visible through the sheep's skin of the new movement."⁴⁸

In 1884, the coalition tried to augment its Democratic support by nominating Tyre York for governor. The nomination proved a terrible blunder. Drove of disgusted Republicans stayed home on election day, and the Democrats swept to victory. The coalition dissolved forthwith. Political revolution in North Carolina would have to wait for Populism.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Bromberg, "Pure Democracy and White Supremacy," p. 80; Winston Leader, May 23, 1882; Chicago Tribune, June 14, 15, 16, 1882; New York Herald, September 24, November 2, 1882; New York Evening Post, October 10, 1882.

⁴⁹Anderson, Race and Politics in North Carolina, pp. 117-119; Bromberg, "Pure Democracy and White Supremacy," p. 101.

TENNESSEE

Tennessee politics in the early 1880s was shaped by a controversy over the state debt. To a Virginian observer, the tale must have seemed distressingly familiar. In the antebellum decades Tennessee borrowed heavily to aid the construction of a rail network. The Civil War damaged the railroads and compromised the state's ability to meet its obligations. Immediately after the war, the Republican legislature voted to refund the entire debt plus accumulated interest. The legislation probably was influenced less by a desire to restore Tennessee's credit than by the charms of lobbyists, hired preachers, and prostitutes and by bribes of whisky, clothing, and cash. Having sinned once, the legislature sinned again by issuing new bonds to finance additional rail construction. The result by 1869 was a debt that had reached \$39,000,000 and a tax rate that in five years had increased from twenty-five cents on the \$100 to sixty cents on the \$100.¹

¹Robert B. Jones, Tennessee at the Crossroads: The State Debt Controversy, 1870-1883 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977), pp. 3-6, 8-13; Stanley J. Folmsbee, "The Radicals and the Railroads," in Tennessee: A History, 1673-1932, ed. Philip M. Hamer

The Democrats proved hardly less susceptible to temptation. When they took over in 1870, they cut taxes to forty cents on the \$100 and prohibited the issue of any new bonds, but, under the influence of railroad lobbyists, they allowed the rail corporations to retire their indebtedness to the state with worthless scrip. In 1873, in a fit of bondholder-induced optimism, the Democrats attempted their own debt settlement. They consolidated into a single series of bonds bearing 6 per cent the refunded debt, the recent Republican bond issues, and all accumulated interest.²

Unfortunately for the bondholders, hard on the heels of the Democratic funding act came the Panic of 1873 and the ensuing depression. Tennessee was blessed with a diversified agriculture (only in the West Tennessee delta was cotton king), an extensive transportation system, and a small, but expanding, industrial sector. While this bade well for the future, it failed at the present to insulate the state against curtailed industrial output and increased unemployment, low commodity prices, falling land values, and tight credit. The farmers suffered the worst, especially in Middle Tennessee where commercial agriculture had taken

(New York: American Historical Society, 1933), II, 659-673.

²Jones, Tennessee at the Crossroads, pp. 15, 23-28, 29, 43-45.

a firm hold. They howled about high taxes and discriminatory railroad rates and saw at the root of these evils the state debt.³

As the depression deepened, the Tennessee Democratic Party divided. The low-tax wing demanded the repudiation of at least a portion of the debt and a drastic reduction in taxes. The low-taxers argued that the debt had been contracted in violation both of statute law and of public morality, that the losses caused by the Civil War and the current hard times made repayment impossible, and that the Northerners and Englishmen who held the bonds should not profit from Tennessee's misfortune. They also maintained that the Democratic leadership was a corrupt ring serving an

³Stephen V. Ash, Middle Tennessee Society Transformed, 1860-1870: War and Peace in the Upper South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), pp. 4-9, 17-19; James M. Safford, "Report on the Cotton Production of the State of Tennessee," in U.S. Congress, House, Report on Cotton Production in the United States, House Miscellaneous Document 42, Part 5, 47th Congress, 2nd session, 1882-1883, p. 40; James T. Campen and Anne Mayhew, "The National Banking System and Southern Economic Growth: Evidence from One Southern City," Journal of Economic History XLVIII (1988), p. 133; Jones, Tennessee at the Crossroads, pp. 5, 67-70; Constantine G. Belissary, "The Rise of Industry and the Industrial Spirit in Tennessee, 1865-1885," Journal of Southern History XIX (1953), pp. 213-214; Samuel Boyd Smith, "Joseph Buckner Killebrew and the New South Movement in Tennessee," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications 37 (1965), pp. 5-22; Roger L. Hart, Redeemers, Bourbons, & Populists: Tennessee, 1870-1896 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975), pp. 73-74.

unholy trinity of bondholders, railroads, and self.⁴

While low-tax supporters were present in all sections of the state and in all walks of life, they were most numerous among the small farmers, particularly those who worked the rugged lands of eastern Middle Tennessee. Reflecting the movement's agrarian base, the low-tax leadership included but few prominent politicians. Richard Warner of Marshall County, elected to congress from the Fifth District in 1880, enjoyed popularity, but a fellow low-taxer admitted that "he is not of much force." Leonidas C. Houk, the Republican boss of the Second District, agreed. When chided about missing numerous congressional roll call votes, Houk replied, "but fellow citizens, there's Dick Warner who never did miss one." More substantial was John H. Savage of McMinnville. A shrewd political analyst, an inveterate campaigner, and a ferocious debater, Savage possessed a hot temper and a legendary capacity for bearing a grudge. His most hated enemy was United States Senator Isham G. Harris, acknowledged leader of

⁴Jones, Tennessee at the Crossroads, pp. 13-14, 77-82; Verton M. Queener, "The East Tennessee Republicans as a Minority Party, 1870-1896," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications 15 (1943), p. 52; Nashville American, March 5, 1882; William H. Hidell, Memphis, to William Mahone, April 22, 1881, Mahone Papers, Duke University, Durham, N.C.

the state-credit Democracy.⁵

Harris and the debt-payer leadership represented the professional politicians; the urban businessmen, bankers, and lawyers; and the more well-to-do citizens in the countryside. They argued that repudiation would sully Tennessee's honor and impede the state's economic progress and diversification. "Repudiation would not only destroy state credit," Harris fumed, "but individual credit would be greatly impaired, if not destroyed . . . , immigration retarded, the influx of capital repelled, and with it our commercial, manufacturing and mechanical interests crippled, if not prostrated." The state-credit men denounced the low-taxers as communists, frustrated officeseekers, and unconscionable louts willing to snatch bread from the lips of legions of bondholding widows and orphans. John H. Savage, declared a Chattanooga editor, "is an ignorant, bumptious, conceited agrarian fraud, without sense or any other commendable quality."⁶

⁵Jones, Tennessee at the Crossroads, pp. 72-74; Hart, Redeemers, Bourbons, & Populists, pp. 28-29, 37, 44-46; Chattanooga Times, October 17, 1882; James A. Jones, Woodbury, to William Mahone, December 12, 1881, Mahone Papers, Duke; Nashville American, August 29, 1882 (quotes Houk).

⁶Jones, Tennessee at the Crossroads, pp. 53, 57-66; "To the Merchants, Manufacturers, Farmers and Mechanics [1882]," broadside in Howell-Jackson Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (quotes Harris); Joseph H. Fussell Scrapbook, p. 42, Fussell Papers, Tennessee State

On the issue of debt repayment, the state-credit Democracy had a faithful ally in the Republican Party. The Tennessee G.O.P. was a formidable organization, controlling about 40 per cent of the state's total vote. It had a stronghold in the black counties around Memphis but drew at least half of its support from the white inhabitants of the mountains and valleys of East Tennessee. Most East Tennesseans had stood by the Union during the secession crisis and, when war came, had suffered through a capricious, and often brutal, Confederate occupation. By the time of Appomattox, they had firmly embraced the Republican Party. East Tennessee Republicans (and Democrats, for that matter) rejected debt repudiation because they feared that it would frighten away the Northern capital they so desperately needed to develop their rich deposits of coal, marble, and zinc and their abundant stands of timber. Moreover, Republicans everywhere in Tennessee recalled that their party had initiated the debt settlement, and they believed that to abandon it now would validate charges that the G.O.P. had been guilty of corruption and mismanagement.⁷

Library and Archives, Nashville; Chattanooga Times, August 30 (quote), October 13, 1882.

⁷Verton M. Queener, "The East Tennessee Republicans in State and Nation, 1870-1900," Tennessee Historical Quarterly 2 (1943), pp. 100-101; James Welch Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction in Tennessee, 1860-1869.

For all their strengths--wealth and respectability, conventional morality, an enticing vision of the future, obsequious creatures in politics, the pulpit, and the press--the state-credit men could not answer the terrible logic of depression. In 1875 a shortfall in state revenue forced the legislature to repeal the section of the funding act requiring the setting aside of monies sufficient to pay the interest on the debt. As a result, in July the state treasurer informed Tennessee's creditors of its inability to meet its obligations. In 1877 the legislature further undermined the debt settlement by lowering the tax rate to ten cents on the \$100. Faced with de facto repudiation, the bondholders anxiously sought a compromise, and in 1879 an act of the legislature refunded the debt at fifty cents on the dollar in bonds bearing 4 per cent

(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), pp. 51-74; Martha L. Turner, "The Cause of the Union in East Tennessee," Tennessee Historical Quarterly XL (1981), pp. 366-380; Charles F. Bryan Jr., "'Tories' Amidst Rebels: Confederate Occupation of East Tennessee, 1861-63," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications 60 (1988), pp. 3-22; C. Stuart McGehee, "Military Origins of the New South: The Army of the Cumberland and Chattanooga's Freedmen," Civil War History XXXIV (1988), pp. 323-343; Queener, "The East Tennessee Republicans as a Minority Party," pp. 49-51, 56-57, 62-64; Robert L. Taylor Jr., "The New South Mind of a Mountain Editor: William Rule, 1877-1898," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications 47 (1975), p. 107; Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1882 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883), pp. 789-790; Jones, Tennessee at the Crossroads, pp. 53-54.

interest. The electorate, however, thought the 50-4 settlement overgenerous and in a referendum defeated the measure 76,333 votes to 49,772.⁸

The defeat of 50-4 guaranteed a bitter struggle at the Democratic gubernatorial convention in August 1880. The state-credit delegates, many of whom owed their presence to railroad money and influence, took control of the convention and endorsed a platform which condemned repudiation while pledging to accept the best terms the creditors might offer. When the state-credit men rejected a low-tax proposal demanding that any future debt settlement be submitted to the people for ratification, the low-taxers bolted, formed their own meeting, and nominated for governor S. F. Wilson in opposition to state-credit candidate John V. Wright. In November the Democratic schism resulted in the election of Republican Alvin Hawkins with 103,964 votes to 78,783 for Wright and 57,080 for Wilson. The Republicans also registered impressive legislative gains.⁹

Whether through venality, hubris, or simple stupidity, the Hawkins administration soon launched yet

⁸Jones, Tennessee at the Crossroads, pp. 41, 50, 70, 100, 103.

⁹Chicago Tribune, January 9, 1882; Hart, Redeemers, Bourbons, & Populists, pp. 41-42, 49; Jones, Tennessee at the Crossroads, pp. 109-110, 114-115.

another attempt to settle the debt. Following the instructions of the bondholders and working with the state-credit Democrats, in April 1881 the administration forced through the legislature an act funding the debt at 100 cents on the dollar in bonds bearing 3 per cent interest. The legislation further provided that the treasurer accept the interest coupons for taxes. The passage of 100-3 was a near thing, and the fetid odor of bribery lingered in the air. The low-tax men maintained that by disregarding the result of the 50-4 referendum the state-credit Democrats had violated a public trust. "If any policy in manner, shape or form resembling 100-3 is to be enforced upon the people of Tennessee," bellowed John H. Savage, "I hope that Hawkins . . . may be governor of Tennessee for 99 years."¹⁰

By the late fall, constituent protests and the Readjusters' victory over the Funders in the Virginia elections had convinced the more pragmatic of the debt-paying Democrats of the precariousness of their position. "A settlement which in my opinion is in itself the best which could have been made is attacked

¹⁰Hart, Redeemers, Bourbons, & Populists, p. 52; Jones, Tennessee at the Crossroads, pp. 119-122, 123; John R. Beasley, Nashville, to William Mahone, April 6, William H. Hidell, Memphis, to Mahone, April 19, 1881, Mahone Papers, Duke; John H. Savage, McMinnville, to Howell E. Jackson, November 24, 1881, Howell-Jackson Papers, UNC.

furiously & that too by our former friends who had lost courage," noted a state-credit zealot. "It is sickening to see so many of our public men who ought to be leaders holding back waiting preparing to go either way as may seem best for individual interests." United State Representative John DeW. C. Atkins of the Eighth District sensed the prevailing current. "The success of the Readjuster movement in Virginia has sadly demoralized the Democratic party in Tennessee," Atkins told a reporter. "Thousands of 'State credit' Democrats are now in favor of repudiation or of scaling the debt." Acknowledging that he had "hitherto stood for maintaining the faith and credit of the State, and paying every dollar she owes," Atkins confessed that "I am now inclined to support a measure which will be prepared to scale the debt down to one half the principal and two-thirds the interest."¹¹

For some low-tax adherents, this autumnal discontent and demoralization seemed to promise a political realignment in Tennessee. In November a Sweetwater man told William Mahone that if the Republicans would refrain from running a gubernatorial candidate in 1882, "it will be easy to form a low tax

¹¹R. P. Cole, Paris, to Howell E. Jackson, January 14, William M. Janes, Paris, to Jackson, January 17 (quote), 1882, Howell-Jackson Papers, UNC; New York Tribune, December 8, 1881 (quotes Atkins).

party that will sweep the Gov., congress and legislature. Then the republicans will be able to see some advantage in the combination." A few weeks later, Judge James A. Jones of Woodbury informed Mahone of a long talk he had had with John H. Savage "over the result [in Virginia] and as to our future policy in Tennessee." Would the national administration, Jones wondered, "favor a coalition of the republicans with us in the next election?"¹²

Jones's query elicited no response from the Arthur administration. Devoutly committed to the repayment of the debt, practically no one in the Tennessee Republican leadership even considered allying with the low-taxers. Moreover, John H. Savage and some other repudiationist leaders were persona non grata with black Republicans. They made no effort to attract black support and at time expressed regret that the Civil War had occasioned the loss of their "nigger" property. Tennessee Republicans of both races made it clear to President Arthur that they would have no truck with what L. C. Houk called "the rag-tag and bobtail of the Democratic party."¹³

¹²John R. Beasley, Nashville, to William Mahone, April 6, William W. Dickey, Sweetwater, to Mahone, November 15, James A. Jones, Woodbury, to Mahone, December 12, 1881, Mahone Papers, Duke; Chicago Tribune, December 5, 1881.

¹³Jones, Tennessee at the Crossroads, pp. 83, 84; Greeneville Herald, September 14, 1882; Chicago Tribune, January 9, 1882 (quotes Houk).

In February 1882, the tortured history of the Tennessee debt took another curious turn when the state supreme court by a three-to-two vote struck down as illegally binding on future legislatures that section of the 100-3 act making interest coupons receivable for taxes. The supreme court's decision threw Governor Alvin Hawkins and the rest of the Tennessee Republican leadership into a quandary: should they leave the debt issue in limbo in anticipation that a Democratic split might again allow them a victory in the fall elections, or, in the words of a Republican stalwart, "take the high ground" and enact another debt settlement in the hope of attracting into their ranks thousands of disgruntled state-credit Democrats?¹⁴

Governor Hawkins and some equally optimistic associates considered a rapprochement between the warring Democratic factions highly unlikely. "Many, many state credit Democrats have publicly declared they will hence forth vote the Republican ticket," the governor gleefully stated. Thomas Waters of Nashville, however, warned against Hawkins's idea of calling a special session of the legislature to deal with the

¹⁴Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia . . . 1882, p. 786; Nashville American, February 11, 12, 13, 26, 1882; Samuel P. Rowan, Maryville, to Leonidas C. Houk, February 15, 1882, Houk Papers, East Tennessee Historical Center, Knoxville (quote).

debt. "The Democracy is hopelessly demoralized and divided," Waters told L. C. Houk. "As long as the bone of contention is left in their midst so long will they growl and fight among themselves. Remove the bone and they will soon settle their differences and again be the majority party." When the Republican Executive Committee met in emergency session in Nashville in early March, Houk expressed an opinion that "this whole thing is a Dem[ocratic] Skunk, . . . let them skin it, surely [it] is no part of our business to be engaged in pulling their chestnuts out of the fire." The committee, however, ignored the congressman's metaphor-laden warning and resolved to back Hawkins's plan to refund the debt on the best terms possible.¹⁵

Governor Hawkins called the legislature into special session in late April coincident with the gathering in the capitol of the state Republican convention. The convention followed a familiar course,

¹⁵James R. Dillin, Nashville, to L. C. Houk, February 13, Alvin Hawkins, Nashville, to Houk, February 15, Thomas Waters, Nashville, to Houk, February 15, Oliver P. Temple, Knoxville, to Houk, February 21, March 1, James Putnam, Murfreesboro, to Houk, March 4 (quotes Houk), 1882, Houk Papers, ETHC; William W. Dickey, Sweetwater, to William Mahone, November 15, 1881, Mahone Papers, Duke; New York Tribune, December 23, 1881, January 11, 1882; Chicago Tribune, February 18, 1882; New York Times, March 3, 4, 1882. Even the supreme court's decision was tainted. "How did speculators learn in advance how the Court stood and what the decision would be?" Hawkins asked Houk (February 15, 1882, Houk Papers, ETHC).

renominating Hawkins for governor and declaring that the state debt should not be readjusted "without the voluntary consent of the bondholders." The meeting departed from the usual only in the content of L. C. Houk's keynote speech. Besides making the customary defense of the Republican Party, Houk expressed the warmest regard for the state-credit Democrats. So effective was Houk's oratory that an excited Knox County delegate arose and offered three cheers for the debt-paying Democracy.¹⁶

The spirit of goodwill and cooperation that Houk sought was evident in the proceedings of the special legislative session. Following the explicit instructions of the bondholders, Republicans and some state-credit Democrats united to pass an act funding the debt at sixty cents on the dollar with interest beginning at 3 per cent and rising 1 per cent biennially to a ceiling of 6 per cent. The interest coupons, of course, were not acceptable for the payment of taxes. As with earlier funding legislation, 60-6 had about it the aroma of corruption and violated trust. Public outcry against the act soon chilled the hopes of both the bondholders and the state-credit politicians.¹⁷

¹⁶Nashville American, April 27, 28, 1882.

¹⁷Eugene Kelly, New York, to Alvin Hawkins, April 19, 1882, Correspondence of the Governor's Office, TSLA; Nashville American, May 21, 1882; Jones, Tennessee at

Some of the debt-paying Democrats, like the fellow travelers in the legislature, clung to their state-credit principles, but others, tired of the impasse, mindful of voter resentment, and fearful of a permanent Republican ascendancy, entertained notions of compromise with the low-taxers. "Every man of ordinary intelligence knows that our long and continuous refusal to pay our interest--lying under protest--has already brought on us what you say you will never submit to," lectured the editor of the influential Nashville American.

The State has, in its organized capacity, upon test after test, solemnly decided not to levy a tax to pay this interest. Our creditors are not getting one cent, divided as we now are, and there is not the slightest chance of their getting a dime of their interest, and upon reflection you must know and admit it.¹⁸

Foremost among those reconsidering his position was Isham G. Harris. While Harris always had been considered the leading state-credit Democrat in Tennessee, he had remained quiet at the times when taking an outspoken stand on the debt issue might have proved politically disastrous. While some might doubt

the Crossroads, pp. 129-131; Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia . . . 1882, pp. 787, 788.

¹⁸J. C. Dougherty, Washington, to L. C. Houk, January 7, James R. Dillin, Nashville, to Houk, March 8, S. T. Logan, Knoxville, to Houk, March 9, 1882, Houk Papers, ETHC; Nashville American, February 26, March 5 (quote), 25, 1882.

Harris's political courage ("I-sham G. Harris," one enemy called him), no one doubted his sagacity. Now he feared for his reappointment to the senate. The legislature to be elected in November would pick his successor, and, should the situation remain unchanged, either a Republican or, more likely, a low-taxer would be chosen. To preclude such an unfortunate development, Harris would reunite the Democratic Party behind his leadership by urging a compromise on the debt. His numerous followers would go along. They too feared political extinction, and, as important, they admired Harris for his perspicacity, oratorical ability, and generosity. "The State Credit Democrats are not sincere," remarked a Republican cynic, "and if the question was to be submitted, whether Isham G. Harris, or the state debt settlement was to be defeated, they would say, 'let the state debt go to H__ll.'" ¹⁹

The prospect of compromise tempted weary Democrats of both factions. In mid-April, after some backstage maneuvering, the low-tax and state-credit chairmen issued a joint call for a convention of the Democratic Party to meet in Nashville on June 20. When the convention assembled, most of the delegates were ready

¹⁹Hart, Redeemers, Bourbons, & Populists, pp. 58-59; William H. Hidell, Memphis, to William Mahone, April 19, 22 (first quote), 1881, Mahone Papers, Duke; New York Times, July 6, 1882; James Putnam, Murfreesboro, to L. C. Houk, March 4, 1882, Houk Papers, ETHC (second quote).

to dispose of the debt question once and for all. "I understand that the state debt is the rock on which our party is split," said Isham Harris, "and now I am in favor of splitting the rock." The convention thereupon resolved to fund the debt at fifty cents on the dollar at 3 per cent interest for ten years and 4 per cent thereafter. For governor, the delegates nominated William B. Bate, an inoffensive Confederate veteran with a mildly state-credit past. When some low-tax men grumbled that they had surrendered too much, John H. Savage spoke bluntly. "Let Low-tax men be wise," he counseled. "To sustain Bate and 50-3 beats Hawkins and 60-6. . . . We have barely escaped 100-3, had we not accept 50-3 for fear of something worse?" A small band of state-credit zealots, on the other hand, strenuously objected to a settlement that ignored the interests of the bondholders. Speaking from the floor of the convention, Duncan B. Cooper of Maury County told the delegates that "you have adopted a platform which is utterly devoid of everything that smacks of real Democracy. In that platform you recognize no law but that of might." Cooper then led a bolt of around 100 of the 1,500 delegates out of the hall and into a nearby auditorium where they arranged for a convention of

state-credit devotees.²⁰

The debt-paying Democrats who gathered in the capital in early July considered themselves honor's forlorn hope. One delegate boasted that, while he had probably consigned himself to political damnation, he at least would be in the company of honest men. The July convention was a distillation of the state-credit Democracy--more wealthy, more urban, more professional. Some of the delegates were true believers in fiscal orthodoxy; others were financially interested in debt repayment; all pretended to such an ethereal purity of motive that they earned the nickname "Sky-Blues." The convention demonstrated its exquisite morality not only by pledging to maintain "inviolable the public faith" (it would honor 60-6) but also by championing the cause of prohibition. The Sky-Blues nominated for governor Joseph H. Fussell of Maury County. The handsome and accomplished Fussell was a strait-laced attorney and Presbyterian elder who evinced an equal enthusiasm for the state-credit and temperance crusades.²¹

²⁰Nashville American, March 27, April 6, 16, June 21, 22 (quotes Cooper), 1882; Daniel Merritt Robison, Bob Taylor and the Agrarian Revolt in Tennessee (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935), pp. 20-21 (quotes Harris); Jones, Tennessee at the Crossroads, pp. 131-133, 134-135 (quotes Savage); Hart, Redeemers, Bourbons, & Populists, p. 61.

²¹W. A. Collier, Memphis, to Howell E. Jackson, July 4, 1882, Howell-Jackson Papers, UNC; J. W. Warren, Murfreesboro, to John H. Fussell, July 13, 1882, Fussell

The Sky-Blues shared with the Republicans a devotion to debt repayment and to industrial development, but old prejudices precluded a coalition. The Sky-Blues had long memories, and they recalled vividly the vindictiveness of the Republican regime. They remembered how the Republicans had disfranchised Confederates en masse and how they had cynically imposed black suffrage on Tennessee. They also remembered the corruption incident to the Republican funding act and the high taxes levied by the Radical legislature. The Sky-Blues' innate conservatism and overweening pride made stubborn their adherence to the Democracy. "You may drive me from this convention and from the support of its action," Duncan Cooper informed Harris and the other compromisers, "but I defy you to drive me from the Democratic party, which is my political house."²²

Scrapbook, p. 62, Fussell Papers, TSLA; Nashville American, July 12, 1882; Hart, Redeemers, Bourbons, & Populists, pp. 62-63, 67-68. Ironically, the hard-drinking ex-Confederate General Frank Cheatham chaired the Sky-Blue convention (Christopher Losson, Tennessee's Forgotten Warriors: Frank Cheatham and His Confederate Division [Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989], pp. 274-275).

²²Jones, Tennessee at the Crossroads, p. 136; Queener, "The East Tennessee Republicans in State and Nation," pp. 101-121; F. Wayne Binning, "The Tennessee Republicans in Decline, 1869-1876: Part I," Tennessee Historical Quarterly XXXIX (1980), pp. 473-474; Thomas B. Alexander, "Political Reconstruction in Tennessee, 1865-1870," in Radicalism, Racism, and Party Realignment: The Border States During Reconstruction, ed. Richard O. Curry (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), pp. 68-71; Nashville American.

The Republicans also nurtured old grievances. They despised the Sky-Blues and other Democrats for attempting to destroy the Union, for persecuting Unionists, and for hypocritically maintaining that the G.O.P. held a monopoly on corruption. Enjoying extensive white support (especially in East Tennessee), the Republicans believed themselves strong enough to forego coalition. They would welcome dissident Democrats, but only if the dissidents became Republicans.²³

While most Republicans shared a disdain for the Democrats, they suffered the usual internal divisions along the lines of race, party history, and the federal patronage. Not surprisingly, these divisions were most evident in the places where the Republican were strongest. In the Tenth District, Republicans excluded from a share in the patronage accused William R. Moore of Memphis, the incumbent congressman, of using federal appointments to maintain a ring of family and friends. Most vociferous in their criticisms was a group of blacks led by Edward Shaw, a chronic sorehead who often confused his own advancement with that of his race.

June 22, 1882 (quotes Cooper).

²³Chicago Tribune, December 10, 1881; Oliver P. Temple, Knoxville, to L. C. Houk, February 21, 1882, Houk Papers, ETHC.

Pointing out that nine-tenths of the Republican votes in the district were cast by blacks, Shaw claimed that Moore and Governor Hawkins had denied blacks a commensurate share of the spoils. Tired of the criticism, the able Moore in September announced his retirement to private life at the completion of his term. Moore's exit, however, failed to satisfy the Shaw clique. Realizing that the ring still controlled the local party, Shaw and his friends cut a deal with the Memphis Democrats in which they agreed to vote for William Bate and for Democratic congressional candidate Casey Young in return for Democratic support of two of their number for the legislature. In addition, after the election, Shaw received the endorsement of local Democrats for the lucrative post of coal oil inspector of the city of Memphis.²⁴

Over in East Tennessee, in the overwhelmingly Republican Second District, a bitterly contested convention resulted in the rival Republican candidacies of L. C. Houk and William Rule. The roots of the Houk-

²⁴James H. Smith, Memphis, to L. C. Houk, January 31, March 6, A. D. Lewis, LaGrange, to Henry H. Harrison, March 2, 1882, Houk Papers, ETHC; Nation XXXIV (May 25, 1882), p. 439; Walter J. Fraser Jr., "Black Reconstructionists in Tennessee," Tennessee Historical Quarterly XXXIV (1975), pp. 362-382; Joseph H. Cartwright, The Triumph of Jim Crow: Tennessee Race Relations in the 1880s (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976), pp. 20, 25-30; New York Times, August 11, 1882; Nashville American, September 21, 1882.

Rule contest went back to the early days of the Republican regime when Houk had gained the enmity of Governor William G. Brownlow, the vitriolic patriarch of the Tennessee G.O.P., by opposing the governor's plan to disfranchise all those citizens whose Unionist credentials were not simon-pure. Such extensive proscription, Houk argued with some prescience, would drive many potential recruits from the Republican Party. Houk also irked Brownlow by resisting black suffrage. Both Houk and Brownlow were native East Tennesseans, and, here, Houk better than the governor represented the anti-black sentiment of their native region. Brownlow, of course, prevailed on both suffrage questions, and, never one to forget an injury, until his death in 1877 worked with his henchmen in the Knoxville customs house and post office to thwart Houk's congressional ambitions.²⁵

L. C. Houk, however, was a stubborn man. He swallowed his disappointment and went to work extending

²⁵Chicago Tribune, January 9, 1882; Knoxville Chronicle, September 5, 1882; Binning, "The Tennessee Republicans in Decline, 1869-1876: Part I," p. 472; Alexander, "Political Reconstruction in Tennessee," pp. 48-49; Thomas B. Alexander, "Neither Peace Nor War: Conditions in Tennessee in 1865," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications 21 (1949), p. 40; Amos Leo Gentry, "Public Career of Leonidas Campbell Houk," M.A. thesis, University of Tennessee, 1939, pp. 18-21, 23, 39-44; Gordon B. McKinney, Southern Mountain Republicans, 1865-1900: Politics and the Appalachian Community (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), pp. 79-81.

his political base in the rural counties surrounding Knoxville. By 1878, he was strong enough to wrest control of the Republican convention from the Knoxville ring and win election to congress. William Rule had opposed Houk all the way. Rule had been a friend and sometime employee of Brownlow and, after the governor's death, had placed his newspaper, the Knoxville Chronicle, at the service of the ring. Houk had beaten Rule for the congressional nomination in 1878 and had ousted him from the Knoxville postmastership in 1881. With Houk now filling the local federal offices with his own men, the Rule candidacy seemed the ring's last chance to escape political oblivion.²⁶

The short, ill-dressed, plain-spoken Houk was a machine politician par excellence. Only an appreciation of whisky and women even remotely approached his enthusiasm for the details of political life. While an effective speaker, Houk realized that in the New South hard work, not oratory, won elections. In Washington, he wasted little time attending the daily sessions of congress, preferring instead to roam the corridors of

²⁶Taylor, "The New South Mind of a Mountain Editor," pp. 100-117; Gentry, "Public Career of Leonidas Campbell Houk," pp. 39, 47-49, 59; McKinney, Southern Mountain Republicans, pp. 82, 85-86. Houk took the part of the rural whisky distillers who were at odds with the internal revenue collectors allied with the Knoxville Ring (Gentry, "Public Career of Leonidas Campbell Houk," pp. 52-53).

the White House, the Capitol, and the departments ingratiating himself with the founts of power in the administration and the House of Representatives. He soon won a place on the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee and gained control over the federal patronage in lower East Tennessee. He also secured the chairmanship of the House Committee on War Claims from which he dispensed liberal indemnities to East Tennessee Unionists and used his influence to advance the numerous pension claims of fellow East Tennessee veterans. So great was Houk's influence with the pension commissioner that, when the Board of Examining Surgeons in Knoxville rejected an unacceptable number of disability applications, he had the board purged. By mid-1882, Houk seemed to many people in the Second District to be a sort of Santa Claus, rewarding those faithful to the Union (and to Santa himself) from the bounty of the federal government.²⁷

Rule sought to convince the public that Houk was

²⁷Gentry, "Public Career of Leonidas Campbell Houk," pp. 4-5, 61-62, 92-94, 106; McKinney, Southern Mountain Republicans, pp. 77-78; D. K. Young, Clinton, to L. C. Houk, January, J. M. Thornburgh, Knoxville, to W. W. Dudley, January 21, Houk, Washington, to A. B. Tadlock, February 9, S. T. Logan, Knoxville, to Houk, March 9, 1882, Houk Papers, ETHC; New York Herald, September 7, 1882; New York Tribune, August 29, 1882; Chicago Tribune, March 14, 1882. Tennessee supplied the Union Army with over 31,000 soldiers, most of whom were from East Tennessee (Turner, "The Cause of the Union in East Tennessee," p. 376).

less the essence of benevolence than that of corruption. Rule accused Houk of being absent from congress "six-sevenths of the time," of debasing the civil service, and of moral laxity. Through the columns of the Chronicle, he publicized Houk's recent arrest in Washington for drunk and disorderly conduct and related how, during his spree, Houk had "been taken to his committee room, where he had defiled the elegant carpets in the most disgusting manner imaginable." Rule also printed an affidavit of the head bell-man at the Ebbit House in Washington alleging that Houk frequently entertained lewd women in his room. The contest in the Second District, averred a Rule associate, "is a conflict of intelligence, honesty, sobriety, and morality against all that these antagonize."²⁸

Houk ignored the accusations of his involvement with prostitutes, and, as for the episode of public drunkenness, he claimed that he had been poisoned. He

²⁸William Rule, Knoxville, to Dear Sir, June 19, 1882, Houk Papers, ETHC (first quote); New York Tribune, August 29, 1882; Knoxville Chronicle, August 23 (second quote), October 25, 1882; J. M. Thornburgh, Knoxville, to D. B. Henderson, September 2 (third quote), in Chicago Tribune, September 6, 1882. Thornburgh, the champion of "honesty, sobriety, and morality," had had "the personal misfortune, of being charged with decoying two young girls, the daughters of a deceased Union soldier, from the home of their mother to a house of ill fame where they were seduced, by him and others" (L. C. Houk to A. O. Aldis, August 29, 1873, in F. Wayne Binning, "The Tennessee Republicans in Decline, 1869-1876: Part II," Tennessee Historical Quarterly XL [1981], p. 80).

dismissed Rule and his friends as soreheads. "There is not a Republican in the district that is in any way a leading and respectable man opposing me, except those who have been turned out of office or disappointed in getting office," he said. Houk also assured his fellow Republicans that he was the party's legitimate candidate. The Tennessee Executive Committee had made him its envoy to the president, and the Congressional Campaign Committee had contributed money to his campaign. As election day approached, rumors circulated that emissaries of both Houk and Rule had offered to the Democrats (who had no congressional candidate in the field) to trade votes for Bate for votes for their respective candidates.²⁹

The campaign in Tennessee's eight other congressional districts lacked the color of those in the Second and Tenth. The Fourth through Ninth districts, embracing most of Middle and West Tennessee, were solidly Democratic. There, the Democratic nominations went invariably to candidates supporting the Bate

²⁹Knoxville Chronicle, September 17, 1882 (quotes Houk); Statement of the Republican State Executive Committee, March 2, 1882, Houk Papers, ETHC; Chicago Tribune, September 3, November 4, 1882; Nashville American, October 5, 1882. Houk's story about having been poisoned might have been grounded in reality. A Knoxville friend told him in early 1882 that "I was informed . . . that the Rule devils here have two men in Washington paid by the day to hound your steps and to use every effort to get you to take a drink" (W. L. Trent to Houk, January 12, 1882, Houk Papers, ETHC).

platform. In the First District, in upper East Tennessee, Republican Congressman Augustus H. Pettibone, an Ohio carpetbagger, faced an attractive opponent in the genial, fiddle-playing Democrat Robert L. Taylor. Pettibone, however, had proved as assiduous as Houk in procuring jobs and pensions for his constituents and with a united (and appreciative) party at his back had little reason to fear for his reelection. In the Third District, which sprawled across portions of Middle and East Tennessee, a close race developed between Democratic incumbent George G. Dibrell and Republican D. C. Trewhitt, a popular Chattanooga judge. Dibrell was hampered by moderate free trade views which antagonized the district's furnacemen and coal miners; Trewhitt by a lack of money which prevented his leaving the bench to campaign.³⁰

The gubernatorial race was a four-cornered fight between Republican Alvin Hawkins, regular Democrat

³⁰Clarksville Chronicle, September 9, 1882; Pulaski Citizen, September 14, 1882; Nashville American, September 26, October 3, 4, 12, 1882; Robert L. Taylor Jr., "Apprenticeship in the First District: Bob and Alf Taylor's Early Congressional Races," Tennessee Historical Quarterly 28 (1969), pp. 24-25, 26, 37; Greeneville Herald, September 28, 1882; Jonesborough Herald and Tribune, November 2, 1882; McMinnville New Era, September 21, 1882; Chattanooga Times, September 25, 1882. In the Eighth District veteran Congressman John DeW. C. Atkins was unable to compromise sufficiently his state-credit views and so was coolly cast aside (New York Times, August 11, 1882; New York Herald, September 19, 1882).

William B. Bate, Sky-Blue Democrat John H. Fussell, and extreme low-taxer John R. Beasley, nominee of Tennessee's small Greenback Party. All were talented stump-speakers and debaters except Bate who, while capable of delivering a passable set speech, lacked the wit to hold his own in a verbal encounter. The regular leaders were especially worried about how Bate might fare against Fussell (described by a newspaper correspondent as "a brainy man, and as full of nerve as an egg is of meat") and so restricted Bate's campaigning to parades and brief remarks. To counter the arguments of Fussell, Hawkins, Beasley, and other opposition spokesmen, the regulars relied on their old warhorse Isham G. Harris. Senator Harris was happy to oblige. He relished the give-and-take of debate, and, more important, welcomed the chance to collect i.o.u.s for his upcoming reelection fight.³¹

While all four parties warred one with the other, the crucial battle was fought between the regular Democrats and the Sky-Blues. Both the Sky-Blues and the Greenbackers might siphon off Democratic votes, but the Sky-Blues, the darlings of many of the state's newspapers, seemed to the regulars the more formidable opponents. The regulars realized that they must keep

³¹Chicago Tribune, July 26, 1882 (quote); Nashville American, August 26, 1882.

the Sky-Blue vote at a minimum if they were to defeat Hawkins and the 60-6 settlement. The Sky-Blues, on the other hand, had no illusions about winning the election but knew that by attracting enough Democratic votes they could assure the survival of 60-6.³²

The Sky-Blues branded the Democratic leadership the mortal enemy of honest and decency. Claiming that every liquor dealer in Tennessee, Democrat or Republican, was a Bate man, they declared that "to vote for Bate is to vote for whisky." The idea of repudiation drove Fussell into a rage. "The man who would refuse to pay a debt under the circumstances that now surround our state debt is a thief and a scoundrel, and ought to be hung at the end of a hemp rope and have a hell afterward," he fumed. The Sky-Blues held that the Bate men were "merely playing a game of policy." The Democratic platform, complained a Nashville editor, "shows an utter recklessness as to the fate of the State and the interests and future well being of the people and a sole view as to the advantage of the party as an end in itself." The state-credit men pointed to the alliance with Edward Shaw as a particularly horrifying example of the regulars' cynicism. Declaring that "there is not a scoundrel in the South who more richly deserves hanging

³²Hart, Redeemers, Bourbons, & Populists, p. 69, n. 25;

than Ed. Shaw," a Chattanooga editor wondered why "it is worse for Republicans to tamper with the negro, deceive him and swindle him than for Democrats to use the criminal classes of negro population to obtain offices for themselves?"³³

The Bate men replied to these gallows-obsessed harangues by maintaining that the debt issue had indeed become more a matter of policy than of principle. Republican rule had been a nightmare under Brownlow that had recurred under Hawkins. Only a united Democratic Party could banish the incubus, and only a drastic readjustment of the debt could unite the party. The regulars considered the Sky-Blues' devotion to principle incredibly myopic and self-centered. "These opposition candidates are clever gentlemen," sneered a Pulaski editor, "but the life of the party is of more consequence than their individual preferment." The regulars also arraigned the Sky-Blues for hypocrisy. Why should the Sky-Blues criticize us for allying with Edward Shaw, the Bate men asked, when they are aiding the cause of Alvin Hawkins? Isham Harris struck a particularly stinging blow when he told the Sky-Blues

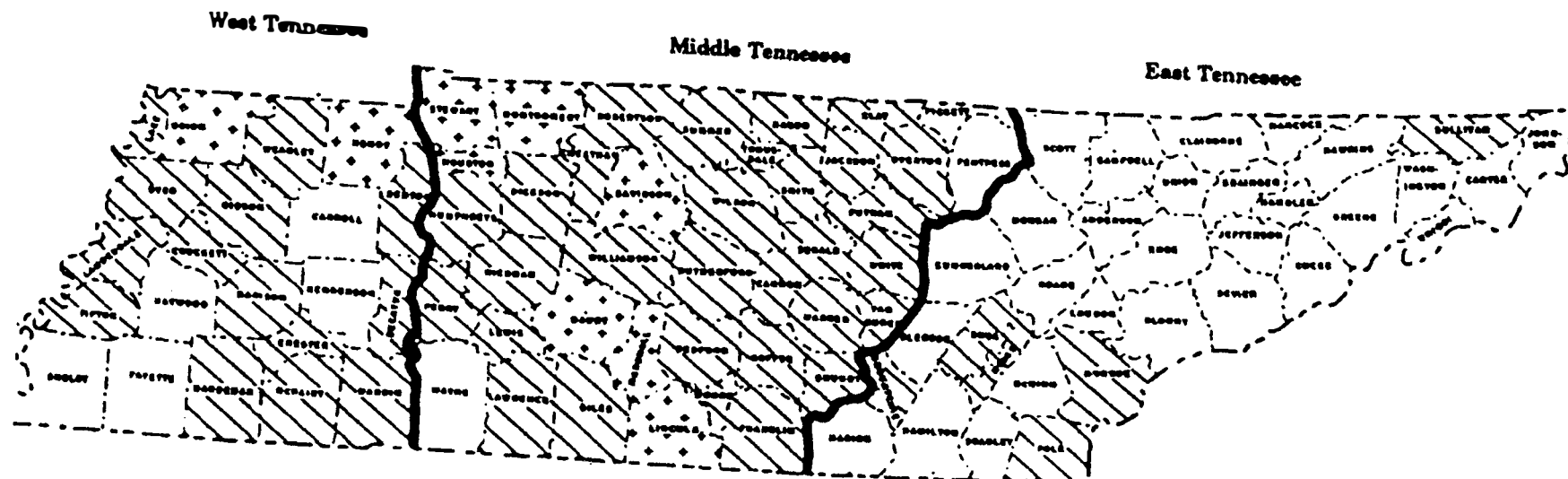
³³Fussell Scrapbook, pp. 51 (first quote), 58, Fussell Papers, TSLA; Pulaski Citizen, September 14, 1882 (quotes Fussell); Nashville Banner, July 1, 1882 (third quote); Memphis Avalanche, October 12, 1882; Chattanooga Times, October 10 (fourth quote), 19, 1882; Clarksville Chronicle, September 2, October 21, 1882.




that "I consider Ed. Shaw and his crowd better Democrats than you."³⁴

In the struggle for the soul of the Tennessee Democratic Party, the Sky-Blues' appeal to principle proved much less effective than the regulars' appeal to party discipline. Indeed, on election day, the Sky-Blues were humiliated. Sky-Blue gubernatorial candidate John H. Fussell failed to carry a single county, receiving only 4,814 votes to 120,637 for regular William B. Bate, 93,168 for Republican Alvin Hawkins, and 9,660 for Greenbacker John R. Beasley. Bate's overwhelming victory killed the Sky-Blue movement. An ensuing scandal buried it past redemption. A few months after the election, State Treasurer Marshall T. Polk, a Sky-Blue noted for his insistence on "guarding the sacred principles of our forefathers," was arrested in Texas enroute to Mexico, his accounts having been found \$400,000 in arrears. Polk's hypocrisy and that of some Sky-Blues who defended him as "one of the grandest men in the state" infuriated many Tennesseans. "I feel very much like the entire S.B. crew ought to be tried for treason against the state," muttered a Paris man. While

³⁴Pulaski Citizen, October 19, 26 (quote), 1882; Nashville American, September 27, 1882; Louisville (Ky.) Commercial (quotes Harris) in Chattanooga Times, October 28, 1882.

Map 2. Election of 1882.



-  Carried by Bate, with less than 5% of the vote for Fussell
-  Carried by Bate, with 5-11% of the vote for Fussell
-  Carried by Hawkins

Source: *The Tribune Almanac and Political Register, 1883* (New York: Tribune Association, [1882]), 72-73. Pickett County returns were included in the returns of Overton and Fentress counties.

the Polk scandal absorbed the public's attention, the legislature ended the debt controversy by passing the Democrats' 50-3 settlement and vindicated Isham G. Harris by reelecting him to the United States Senate.³⁵

The regular Democrats triumphed in all the congressional districts except the First and the Second. In the Third District, Democrat George G. Dibrell relied on large majorities in the Middle Tennessee counties to overcome Republican D. C. Trewhitt's strong showing in industrialized Chattanooga. In the Tenth District, Democrat Casey Young owed his 22-vote victory to the 1,000 ballots supplied by Edward Shaw's band of black dissidents. Shaw and his friends, however, received no reward for their apostasy. Their two legislative candidates lost to regular Republicans, and Shaw, despite the strenuous efforts of Memphis Democrats, failed to secure from Governor Bate appointment as the city's coal oil inspector.³⁶

In East Tennessee, the Republican incumbents easily

³⁵Jones, Tennessee at the Crossroads, pp. 140, 143-146; Hart, Redeemers, Bourbons, & Populists, pp. 70-71; Marshall T. Polk, New York, to Howell E. Jackson, July 16, 1882, Howell-Jackson Papers, UNC (quote); A. G. Trevethan, Paris, to Samuel A. Champion, January 9, 1883, Champion Papers, TSLA (quote).

³⁶Guide to U.S. Elections (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1975), p. 649; Chattanooga Times, November 11, 1882; Cartwright, The Triumph of Jim Crow, pp. 38-41; W. H. Rhea, Memphis, to William B. Bate, January 6, 1883, Correspondence of the Governor's Office, TSLA.

retained office. Augustus H. Pettibone defeated Robert L. Taylor in the First District, and L. C. Houk, benefitting from his generosity with the federal government's money and from recognition as the official Republican candidate, crushed William Rule by carrying every county in the Second District. The Rule men hinted that Houk's victory resulted from a corrupt bargain with the Democrats, but in December Rule acknowledged the finality of the election by selling the Knoxville Chronicle to a syndicate which included Houk.³⁷

The Tennessee debt controversy invites comparison with that in Virginia. The controversies were similar in some particulars--the rhetoric of the antagonists, the malign influence of the bondholders, the ultimate adaptability of the regular Democratic leaders--but were strikingly dissimilar in the crucial areas of insurgent leadership and the formation of coalitions. The low-taxers occupied a position analogous to that of the Virginia Readjusters. They differed from the Readjusters, however, in the source of their strength, their geographical distribution, and the quality of their leadership. The low-taxers were most often

³⁷Greeneville Herald, November 16, 1882; Knoxville Chronicle, November 11, December 2, 1882; Queener, "The East Tennessee Republicans in State and Nation," pp. 109-110; Taylor, "The New South Mind of a Mountain Editor," pp. 105-106.

farmers living in the poorer rural counties of Middle and West Tennessee. Because the low-tax credo had few subscribers in the cities, towns, and wealthier rural areas, the low-taxers suffered from a dearth of talented and experienced leaders. No Riddleberger, Cameron, or Wise came to the fore of the low-tax movement. John H. Savage, the most prominent low-tax spokesman, was a compelling character, but he lacked the political capabilities of William Mahone. Savage, the McMinnville lawyer, was a controversialist, agitator, and orator. Mahone, the Petersburg industrialist, was an organizer, manipulator, and motivator. Mahone proposed a plan for a new Virginia. Savage offered only a remedy for the specific problem of the debt. He provided no program of reform and articulated no New South visions. Narrowly Negrophobic and anti-Republican, he attempted no coalition. "If Savage & Co. were half as shrewd as Mahone they would very easily capture seven-tenths of the so-called Republican vote in Middle and West Tennessee," suggested a Chattanooga editor in 1880.

All they have to do is to invite Sambo and Gumbo into their counsels, divide the small offices with them and talk prettily of General Grant. . . . The unsavory and unattractive crowd of ignorant little men who lead the Repudiators have neither the sense nor the nerve to head such a coalition. The best Republicans of Tennessee are fortunate in not having a Mahone to contend with.³⁸

³⁸Chattanooga Times, February 12, 1880 (quote).

More closely resembling Mahone was L. C. Houk, Tennessee's most dynamic Republican leader. Like Mahone, Houk saw a New South of railroads, factories, coal mines, and diversified agriculture. Like Mahone, Houk understood the necessity for party organization and appreciated the political value of the federal patronage and purse. Houk, however, lacked Mahone's ambition and audacity. As resolutely as any Sky-Blue, he rejected the idea of coalition. He publicly claimed that coalition would violate his principles while privately worrying that it might threaten his control over the spoils. A typical Southern Republican, Houk was content with the sure thing. He would look no further than his Balkan-like kingdom in the East Tennessee mountains.³⁹

³⁹Chicago Tribune, January 9, 1882; Nashville American, April 28, 1882; Gentry, "Public Career of Leonidas Campbell Houk," pp. 30-33, 88-89, 96, 98-101.

CONCLUSION

Chester A. Arthur's attempt to break the solidly Democratic South by sponsoring Republican-independent coalitions failed miserably. The number of anti-Democratic congressman elected from the states south of Virginia actually decreased from thirteen in 1880 to twelve in 1882. The reasons for the failure of the Southern coalitions varied from state to state, but common to most were poor leadership, the weakness of local Republican and independent organizations, and the absence of a unifying issue. A vague disgust with Democratic arrogance and selfishness was evident everywhere in the South, but this alone was not enough to support statewide independent movements. Issues capable of galvanizing widespread opposition to Democratic rule surfaced only in Arkansas, Florida, North Carolina, and Tennessee. In the end, however, these controversies were either defused or unexploited. In Arkansas and Tennessee the Democrats thwarted their opponents by compromising on volatile state debt issues (something the Virginia Funders were initially too stubborn or stupid to attempt) while in North Carolina

they cut their losses by accepting as final their defeat on the prohibition question. In Florida, the Arthur administration failed to gain advantage from the unpopular Disston Land Sale by neglecting to force the state's Republicans to unite with the independents. Anti-Democratic success, therefore, was limited to those congressional districts where local grievances or overwhelming black majorities made victory possible.¹

As the lost opportunity in Florida indicates, the Arthur administration's Southern policy was neither consistently nor firmly applied. The administration gave no support at all to coalitions in Florida, Louisiana, and Tennessee; qualified support to those in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, and Mississippi; and wholehearted support only to those in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas. No one in the administration--not Arthur, not William E. Chandler--exercised overall control of its Southern policy. The result was contradictory signals, false starts, embarrassing delays, and half-way measures. Local Republican leaders often were not sure of the administration's intentions and were thus encouraged in their chronic infighting. Had the administration promoted coalition in the South with the same vigor with

¹Guide to U.S. Elections, 2nd ed. (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1985), pp. 798-805

which it promoted that in Virginia, it might well have enjoyed much greater success.

The coalitions in the South were seriously, if not fatally, hampered by fundamental antipathies between the independents and the Republicans. Potential white coalitionists remembered the taxation, corruption, and black officeholding of Reconstruction. Young Southerners, an Atlanta Republican sighed, "are deterred from going into the Republican Party by reason of their past associations and their disinclination to recognize the majority interest of the colored race in the power of that party South." A Richmond editor prophesied in early 1882 that

The Mahone movement will not thrive further South. . . . There is not the slightest hope for it in South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, and Texas. . . . The largely preponderating negro population in all those States will always compel the white people to maintain their close organization, in order to prevent negro ascendancy. . . . Had the negro population in Virginia been greater than the white, instead of nearly one-third less, our white vote would never have been divided.²

Former Confederates complained that the Republican leaders continually pandered to the black vote.

We have had for some time past a couple of weekly republican papers devoted to the praising [of] emancipation, the denunciation of slaveholders, the horror of rebellion and the praising of the national officeholders. It has been evident that such doctrine cannot attract support from any respectable Southern men. However we may accept . . . the

²New York Times, February 4, 1882 (quotes H. I. Kimball); Richmond State, February 23, 1882.

situation we cannot subscribe ourselves as criminals in having produced it,

a New Orleans man maintained. Independent farmers had difficulty in reconciling their beliefs in inflation and free trade with Republican penchants for hard money and the protective tariff. "A diminished Democratic majority in Texas could not be expected merely from a coalition of [Greenbacker George W.] Jones and [Republican Edmund J.] Davis," observed a Galveston editor. "These leaders represent ideas, principles and practices as widely apart as ever divided parties." Indeed, the only thing that really united independents and Republicans in most of the South was the mutual desire for a free ballot and a fair count.³

Resistance to coalition came not only from fastidious independents but also from Republican leaders with too hearty an appetite for the fleshpots of politics. Having long before abandoned the tedious business of trying to win elections, many of the Republican bosses saw in the independent movements not an opportunity for their party but a threat to themselves. "A large number of [Republicans] act as though they thought office holding was the chief end of man and that they had been elected from all eternity to

³William M. Burwell, New Orleans, to William Mahone, June 27, 1882, William Mahone Papers, Duke University, Durham, N.C.; Galveston News, October 4, 1882.

fill the offices," black leader James T. Rapier of Alabama told William Mahone. Fearful that a coalition victory might cost them the exclusive control over the federal patronage, some of the Republican bosses resisted fusion with the independents. Others publicly toed the administration line while privately engaging in acts of sabotage. Yet, even where the Republican leaders were sincere in their support of coalition, the party often failed to cast its full vote. In too many places, the G.O.P. drew its strength from blacks who had been politically emasculated by Democratic intimidation and fraud. "The Rep[ublican] party in the South is nothing but a stuffed club," confessed a Mississippi Republican. "It looks formidable, but it lacks strength and weight; it lacks sand."⁴

The Democrats did not stand back and wait for the coalition to self-destruct. They tightened their organization, reached deep into their well-lined pockets, and mobilized their hordes of speakers and editors. They dilated on Republican sins and magnified their own modest virtues. Ignoring their corruption, penuriousness, and subservience to corporate interests,

⁴New York Times, August 11, 1882; "Studies in the South," Atlantic Monthly 49 (1882), p. 194; George C. McKee, Jackson, to Charles Foster, November 25, copy in McKee to William Mahone, December 25, 1880, James T. Rapier, Montgomery, to William Mahone, May 3, 1882, Mahone Papers, Duke.

they drew the color line, wrapped themselves in the Confederate flag, boasted of their successful efforts to reduce taxation and public indebtedness (something the Virginia Funders could not claim), and emphasized their mild soft money proclivities. When argument failed, the Democrats often as not resorted to economic coercion, fraud, intimidation, and violence. "It is a fact that cannot successfully be denied that an active and persistent minority of the people, using the potent influence of power, passion, cupidity, and cowardice, so control the masses that . . . the opportunity is not afforded for a full and free discussion of public questions, or for such a voluntary exercise of the franchise as truly represents the individual preference and convictions of the voter," an Augusta man concluded in 1882. The Democrats represented respectability and power, and most white Southerners adjusted accordingly.⁵

Dealing with the Democratic juggernaut was beyond the ability of most of the Southern independent leaders. The independent chieftains lacked the diplomacy necessary to negotiate successfully with Republicans in Washington and at home, the intellectual dexterity to formulate an attractive program of reform, the energy to organize tightly their followers, and the ruthlessness

⁵H. D. D. Twiggs, Augusta, to R. H. May, et al., October 23, in New York Times, October 28, 1882.

to force their will on the recalcitrant. James R. Chalmers of Mississippi and William M. Lowe of Alabama (perhaps) had the requisite skills, but they were constrained by circumstance--in Lowe's case by his tragic illness, in Chalmers's by the refusal of the Arthur administration to grant him the control of the patronage. In many respects, the independent leaders reflected the qualities of the hill country farmers whose interests they championed--courage, racism, independence, contempt of discipline, distrust of outsiders. George W. Jones might have been speaking of independents anywhere in the South when in a fit of chauvinism he gushed that "The old Texan has more individuality than any other man in the South . . . ; he is opposed to party rule; he will not wear a collar; he belongs to no man or to no set of men." Jones himself had no use for party caucuses and conventions, William H. Felton of Georgia washed his hands of the patronage, and E. B. C. Cash of South Carolina relied only on the force of his own personality. No wonder Cash, Felton, Jones, and their politically inexperienced followers were crushed under the Democratic machine.⁶

Observers who critiqued the Southern independent movements agreed on what was missing. "Every state needs a Mahone," thundered a Warren, Ohio, editor,

⁶Washington Post, December 11, 1881.

As an army needs and must have a commander-in-chief, so the political organization in each Southern state needs and must have one head--a man born to command, and whose orders will be respected and obeyed. Impracticables may raise the cry of 'bossism' against such leadership, but the plain cold truth is that no Southern state can be wrested from the control of the mossbacked Democracy in any other way.

Mahone had the necessary attributes--creative intelligence, boundless energy, indomitable will, utter ruthlessness, and a magnetic personality that elicited a fierce loyalty from his younger lieutenants. He achieved what the Southern independent leaders could only dream. He gained the complete confidence of President Arthur and the exclusive control over the federal patronage. He took over the Virginia Republican Party, raised thousands of dollars from Northern fatcats, built an organization the likes of which the South had never before seen, and won elections. Mahone knew the odds he was facing. He knew that his party's success and survival depended on his using every weapon available. He knew the value of a coherent ideology, of money, of the press, of the patronage, and of party discipline in building a political institution that could endure over time. Above all, he knew the necessity of a boss. Some of his lieutenants resented his imperiousness and his refusal to share authority. Mahone dismissed their criticisms. He had learned from the example of the Southern G.O.P. He would not have

the Virginia party balkanized. He would not have it divided and destroyed.⁷

Mahone's achievement depended greatly on his political skills and on the force of his personality, but it also owed much to the type of men who joined him in the Readjuster Movement. Favored by a benevolent climate, an excellent transportation system, and adjacent urban markets, Virginians enjoyed a more advanced and diversified economy than most other Southerners. Unlike the Southern hill country farmers, Virginians had long been integrated into the national market and had learned the lessons in trust, discipline, and organization that the market taught. The Readjuster Movement included not only farmers disgusted by high and unequal taxes but also townsmen--lawyers, merchants, teachers, artisans, indeed, people from all walks of life hungry for the benefits of readjustment, sectional reconciliation, education, and the protective tariff.

⁷Warren Tribune, February 7, 1882, in Scrapbook 28 (1882), p. 9, Mahone Papers, Duke. A Democratic congressman acknowledged that "If every Southern State had a Mahone, we would have more cause to fear the so-called Liberals than we shall probably ever have" (New York Tribune, December 15, 1881). Mahone himself "would recommend as a general plan of some one man in every State as a leader and follow his counsels in all things. Political battles could not be won without acknowledged and respected generalship any more than those of actual warfare could be. Somebody must be trusted who is on the ground and was familiar with the eddies and currents of local politics as well as with the National politics" (ibid., November 18, 1881).

These recruits helped give the Readjusters a disciplined rank and file able to subsume their racial prejudices and to resist Democratic blandishments and threats. They also helped supply an articulate leadership cadre. No other independent movement boasted such a high quality of leadership from top to bottom. While some might have an accomplished man at its head, none included in subordinate roles men of the calibre of William E. Cameron, Harrison H. Riddleberger, and John S. Wise. Of perhaps more importance were the storekeepers and professional men who worked the precincts for the Readjusters. Unlike the impoverished farmers of the South, these men had the time, money, political experience, and social respectability to meet the Democratic organizers on equal terms. The Readjusters were New South men employing New South methods for New South ends.⁸

Southern Populism of the 1890s was an expanded version of the farmer independentism of the early 1880s. The continued decline in cotton prices and the educational activities of the Farmers' Alliance made

⁸The importance of physical courage in the Readjusters' success should not be discounted ("That is the kind of candidate to have in Virginia!", exclaimed Mahone on hearing of Wise's involvement in a duel. "An exchange of three shots at 6 o'clock in the morning, and addressing a mass meeting at twelve at noon" [Chicago Tribune, July 26, 1882].), but Readjuster leaders appear no braver than their brethren in the Southern independent movements.

thousands of new converts to the cause of reform and the formation of the national People's Party in 1892 gave the farmers a unity of purpose that they had never before enjoyed. Yet, despite the numbers it attracted and the enthusiasm it generated, Populism accomplished almost as little as independentism. In North Carolina, the Populists fused with the Republicans to carry the state, but elsewhere they won few victories. Like their independent predecessors, the Populists were fatally crippled by the chronic ills of farmer insurgencies--racism, poverty, political inexperience, poor leadership, and poor organization.

The only reform movement of the 1890s to achieve enduring success was that led by Benjamin R. Tillman in South Carolina. Tillman, a dynamic Edgefield County planter, shared with other Upcountry farmers a resentment of the state's rail and phosphate corporations and the Democratic politicians who did their bidding. Beginning in the mid-1880s, he painstakingly organized the South Carolina farmers' clubs and alliances into a political machine that in 1890 took over the state Democratic Party and initiated a program of reform. The Tillman movement, however, was not restricted to farmers. It included and drew much of its leadership from Upcountry entrepreneurs who believed that the monopolistic practices of the

corporations had retarded their region's economic and industrial development. Tillman, then, embraced the means and ends of New South politics, and, like Mahone, he triumphed.⁹

⁹Francis Butler Simkins, Pitchfork Ben Tillman, South Carolinian (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1944); William J. Cooper Jr., The Conservative Regime: South Carolina, 1877-1890 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968), pp. 174-206; Randolph D. Werner, "'New South' Carolina: Ben Tillman and the Rise of Bourgeois Politics, 1880-1893," in Developing Dixie: Modernization in a Traditional Society, ed. Winfred B. Moore Jr., Joseph F. Tripp, and Lyon G. Tyler Jr. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988), pp. 149-165.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: THE CENSUS COMPUTER DATABASES

The population computer database consists of biographical information taken from the United States 1880 Manuscript Census of Population on the 9,330 males aged sixteen and older living in Accomac and Northampton counties. The categories composing the database include name, magisterial district, enumeration district, page number, town (if provided), race, age, marital status, occupation, literacy (can the individual read and write), and state of origin. The dBASE II software program was used to control the data.

The agriculture computer database consists of information taken from the United States 1880 Manuscript Census of Agriculture on the 2,899 farm operators in Accomac and Northampton counties. The categories composing the database include name; magisterial district; enumeration district; page number; race; age; occupation; farm tenure; improved acreage tilled; improved acreage pasture; total improved acreage; unimproved acreage woods; other unimproved acreage; total unimproved acreage; total acreage; value of land, buildings, and fences; value of implements and

machinery; value of livestock; total value of farm; value of fence built in 1879; value of fertilizer used in 1879; weeks wages paid in 1879; and value of farm productions sold, consumed, or on hand in 1879. The race, age, and occupation categories were not included in the 1880 Manuscript Census of Agriculture. They were added to the agriculture computer database by checking the names of farm operators against the names listed in the population computer database. The dBASE II software program was used to control the data.

APPENDIX II: THE POLITICIANS COMPUTER DATABASE

The politicians computer database consists of biographical information on the 759 Eastern Shoremen identifiable during the period 1881-1885 as either Funders or Readjusters. The categories composing the database include name, residence, race, age in 1880, occupation, literacy (can the individual read), state of origin, religion, military service, leadership experience, party affiliation, mercantile credit rating, landholding, farm tenure, farm acreage, value of farm, and value of farm produce. The names of the 759 individuals were taken mostly from the Accomac Court House Peninsula Enterprise and other newspapers and from the William Mahone Papers. Biographical information was gathered from many sources including the Peninsula Enterprise and other newspapers, the Mahone Papers and other manuscript collections, the United States 1880 Manuscript Censuses of Population and Agriculture (see Appendix I), federal and state documents, rosters of veterans, church histories, tombstone inscriptions, Bible records, Dun's Mercantile Agency Reference Book and Chataigne's Virginia Business Directory and

Gazetteer. The dBASE II software program was used to control the data. The following tables include information not included with the text. Part A includes statistics on all Funders and Readjusters; Part B on Funder and Readjuster leaders only.

PART A:

GENERAL

TABLE A1. PARTY AFFILIATION

	Total	White	Black
Funder			
Conservative	343 (86%)	341 (87%)	2 (33%)
Republican	7 (2%)	4 (1%)	3 (50%)
unknown	<u>48</u> (12%)	<u>47</u> (12%)	<u>1</u> (17%)
	398	392	6
Readjuster			
Conservative	64 (18%)	64 (32%)	0
Republican	202 (56%)	44 (22%)	158 (100%)
unknown	<u>95</u> (26%)	<u>95</u> (46%)	<u>0</u>
	361	203	158

TABLE A2. AVERAGE AGE

	Total	White	Black
Funder	38.5	38.6	33.3
Readjuster	39.7	41.3	37.5

TABLE A3. OCCUPATION

	Total	White	Black
Funder			
businessman	79 (20%)	79 (20%)	0
farmer	151 (38%)	149 (38%)	2 (33%)
laborer	9 (2%)	8 (2%)	1 (17%)
mechanic	27 (7%)	27 (7%)	0
waterman	25 (6%)	25 (6%)	0
professional	53 (13%)	51 (13%)	2 (33%)
federal officeholder	25 (6%)	24 (6%)	1 (17%)
state officeholder	10 (3%)	10 (3%)	0
unknown	<u>19 (5%)</u>	<u>19 (5%)</u>	<u>0</u>
	398	392	6
Readjuster			
businessman	44 (12%)	43 (21%)	1 (1%)
farmer	137 (38%)	75 (37%)	62 (39%)
laborer	57 (16%)	5 (2%)	52 (33%)
mechanic	20 (6%)	14 (7%)	6 (4%)
waterman	36 (10%)	22 (11%)	14 (9%)
professional	29 (8%)	22 (11%)	7 (4%)
federal officeholder	10 (3%)	8 (4%)	2 (1%)
state officeholder	3 (0%)	3 (1%)	0
unknown	<u>25 (7%)</u>	<u>11 (6%)</u>	<u>14 (9%)</u>
	361	203	158

Notes

Businessman includes merchants, commission merchants, storekeepers, grocers, clerks, hotelkeepers, undertakers, lumber dealers, oyster dealers.

Laborer includes laborers, farm laborers, woodcutters, servants, etc.

Mechanic includes mechanics, carpenters, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, barrelmakers, sawyers, shoemakers, harnessmakers, millers, brickmasons, etc.

Waterman includes watermen, sailors, oystermen, fishermen.

Professional includes doctors, dentists, lawyers, school teachers, clergy.

TABLE A4. LITERACY

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
can read	381 (96%)	375 (96%)	6 (100%)
cannot read	<u>15</u> (4%)	<u>15</u> (4%)	<u>0</u>
	396	390	6
Readjusters			
can read	256 (73%)	192 (96%)	64 (42%)
cannot read	<u>95</u> (27%)	<u>8</u> (4%)	<u>87</u> (58%)
	351	200	151

TABLE A5. STATE OF ORIGIN

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
Virginia	343 (86%)	338 (86%)	5 (83%)
elsewhere or unknown	<u>55</u> (14%)	<u>54</u> (14%)	<u>1</u> (17%)
	398	392	6
Readjusters			
Virginia	314 (87%)	170 (84%)	144 (91%)
elsewhere or unknown	<u>47</u> (13%)	<u>33</u> (16%)	<u>14</u> (9%)
	361	203	158

TABLE A6. PLACE OF RESIDENCE

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
country	295 (74%)	293 (75%)	2 (33%)
town	<u>103 (26%)</u>	<u>99 (25%)</u>	<u>4 (67%)</u>
	398	392	6
Readjusters			
country	291 (81%)	151 (74%)	140 (89%)
town	<u>70 (19%)</u>	<u>52 (26%)</u>	<u>18 (11%)</u>
	361	203	158

TABLE A7. MAGISTERIAL DISTRICTS

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
Accomac			
Atlantic	49 (12%)	49 (13%)	0
Islands	33 (8%)	33 (8%)	0
Lee	100 (25%)	98 (25%)	2 (33%)
Metompkin	50 (13%)	50 (13%)	0
Pungoteague	61 (15%)	60 (15%)	1 (17%)
Northampton			
Capeville	38 (10%)	38 (10%)	0
Eastville	40 (10%)	39 (10%)	1 (17%)
Franktown	<u>26 (7%)</u>	<u>24 (6%)</u>	<u>2 (33%)</u>
	397	391	6
Readjusters			
Accomac			
Atlantic	116 (32%)	50 (25%)	66 (42%)
Islands	26 (7%)	16 (8%)	10 (6%)
Lee	47 (13%)	32 (16%)	15 (10%)
Metompkin	45 (12%)	35 (17%)	10 (6%)
Pungoteague	62 (17%)	32 (16%)	30 (19%)
Northampton			
Capeville	23 (6%)	12 (6%)	11 (7%)
Eastville	27 (8%)	16 (8%)	11 (7%)
Franktown	<u>15 (4%)</u>	<u>10 (4%)</u>	<u>5 (3%)</u>
	361	203	158

TABLE A8. RELIGION

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
Baptist	55 (32%)	55 (32%)	0
Presbyterian	16 (9%)	16 (9%)	0
Episcopal	23 (13%)	23 (13%)	0
Catholic	0	0	0
Methodist Episcopal	10 (6%)	10 (6%)	0
Methodist Episcopal, South	61 (35%)	61 (35%)	0
Methodist Protestant	9 (5%)	9 (5%)	0
African Methodist Episcopal	0	0	0
	<u>174</u>	<u>174</u>	<u>0</u>
Readjusters			
Baptist	33 (32%)	30 (31%)	3 (50%)
Presbyterian	7 (7%)	7 (7%)	0
Episcopal	22 (21%)	22 (23%)	0
Catholic	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	0
Methodist Episcopal	9 (9%)	8 (8%)	1 (17%)
Methodist Episcopal, South	19 (19%)	19 (20%)	0
Methodist Protestant	8 (8%)	8 (8%)	0
African Methodist Episcopal	2 (2%)	0	2 (33%)
	<u>102</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>6</u>

TABLE A9. VETERAN

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
Confederate	31 (8%)	31 (8%)	0
Union	4 (1%)	3 (1%)	1 (17%)
noncombatant	<u>363</u> (91%)	<u>358</u> (91%)	<u>5</u> (83%)
	398	392	6
Readjusters			
Confederate	16 (4%)	16 (8%)	0
Union	35 (10%)	9 (4%)	26 (16%)
noncombatant	<u>310</u> (86%)	<u>178</u> (88%)	<u>132</u> (84%)
	361	203	158

TABLE A10. FARM TENURE

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
owners	122 (66%)	121 (66%)	1 (50%)
cash renters	35 (19%)	34 (19%)	1 (50%)
share renters	<u>28</u> (15%)	<u>28</u> (15%)	<u>0</u>
	185	183	2
Readjusters			
owners	96 (55%)	83 (78%)	13 (20%)
cash renters	58 (34%)	16 (15%)	42 (64%)
share renters	<u>19</u> (11%)	<u>8</u> (7%)	<u>11</u> (16%)
	173	107	66

TABLE A11. IMPROVED ACREAGE

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
owners	9316 (76 av)	9246 (76 av)	70 (70 av)
cash renters	1628 (47 av)	1613 (47 av)	15 (15 av)
share renters	<u>1978</u> (71 av)	<u>1978</u> (71 av)	<u>0</u>
	12922 (70 av)	12837 (70 av)	85 (43 av)
Readjusters			
owners	6933 (72 av)	6800 (82 av)	133 (10 av)
cash renters	2113 (36 av)	945 (59 av)	1168 (28 av)
share renters	<u>1058</u> (56 av)	<u>752</u> (94 av)	<u>306</u> (28 av)
	10104 (58 av)	8497 (79 av)	1607 (24 av)

TABLE A12. TOTAL ACREAGE

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
owners	16766 (137 av.)	16656 (138 av.)	110 (110 av.)
cash renters	5990 (171 av.)	5965 (175 av.)	25 (25 av.)
share renters	<u>3714</u> (133 av.)	<u>3714</u> (133 av.)	<u>0</u>
	26470 (143 av.)	26335 (144 av.)	135 (68 av.)
Readjusters			
owners	12867 (134 av.)	12548 (151 av.)	319 (25 av.)
cash renters	5176 (89 av.)	1976 (123 av.)	3200 (76 av.)
share renters	<u>1890</u> (99 av.)	<u>1263</u> (158 av.)	<u>627</u> (57 av.)
	19933 (115 av.)	15787 (148 av.)	4146 (63 av.)

TABLE A13. VALUE OF FARM (\$)

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
owners	440627 (3612 av.)	438927 (3627 av.)	1700 (1700 av.)
cash renters	93136 (2661 av.)	92351 (2716 av.)	785 (785 av.)
share renters	<u>87296</u> (3118 av.)	<u>87296</u> (3118 av.)	<u>0</u>
	621059 (3357 av.)	618574 (3380 av.)	2485 (1243 av.)
Readjusters			
owners	284155 (2960 av.)	276634 (3333 av.)	7521 (579 av.)
cash renters	68863 (1187 av.)	41326 (2583 av.)	27537 (656 av.)
share renters	<u>44444</u> (2339 av.)	<u>27706</u> (3463 av.)	<u>16738</u> (1522 av.)
	397462 (2297 av.)	345666 (3231 av.)	51796 (785 av.)

Note

Value of farm is the combined value of land, fences, buildings, livestock, and implements and machinery.

TABLE A14. VALUE OF FARM PRODUCE (\$)

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
owners	63724 (522 av.)	63424 (524 av.)	300 (300 av.)
cash renters	15852 (453 av.)	15692 (462 av.)	160 (160 av.)
share renters	<u>13273</u> (474 av.)	<u>13273</u> (474 av.)	<u>0</u>
	92849 (502 av.)	92399 (505 av.)	460 (230 av.)
Readjusters			
owners	43903 (457 av.)	42418 (511 av.)	1485 (114 av.)
cash renters	15079 (260 av.)	7843 (490 av.)	7236 (172 av.)
share renters	<u>7282</u> (383 av.)	<u>4782</u> (598 av.)	<u>2500</u> (227 av.)
	66264 (383 av.)	55043 (514 av.)	11221 (170 av.)

Note

Value of produce is the value of all farm productions (sold, consumed, or on hand) for 1879.

TABLE A15. RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE

	White Conservatives (n-182)	White Republicans (n-30)
Baptist	57 (31%)	4 (13%)
Presbyterian	17 (9%)	1 (3%)
Episcopal	36 (20%)	5 (17%)
Catholic	1 (1%)	1 (3%)
Methodist Episcopal	9 (5%)	8 (27%)
Methodist Episcopal, South	50 (27%)	8 (27%)
Methodist Protestant	12 (7%)	3 (10%)

PART B:

LEADERS

Note

Leaders are defined as acknowledged men of influence and those who served as officeholders, electors, party chairmen, party committeemen, and party canvassers above the precinct and primary levels who were elected or appointed after 1879 and through 1885.

TABLE B1. LEADERS: PARTY AFFILIATION

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
Conservative	98 (97%)	98 (97%)	0
Republican	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0
unknown	<u>2 (2%)</u>	<u>2 (2%)</u>	0
	101	101	
Readjusters			
Conservative	30 (41%)	30 (48%)	0
Republican	28 (38%)	16 (26%)	12 (100%)
unknown	<u>16 (21%)</u>	<u>16 (26%)</u>	<u>0</u>
	74	62	12

TABLE B2. LEADERS: AVERAGE AGE

	Total	White	Black
Funders	39.3	39.3	0.0
Readjusters	41.2	44.0	26.9

TABLE B3. LEADERS: OCCUPATION

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
businessman	17 (17%)	17 (17%)	0
farmer	37 (36%)	37 (36%)	0
laborer	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0
mechanic	6 (6%)	6 (6%)	0
waterman	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0
professional	27 (27%)	27 (27%)	0
federal officeholder	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	0
state officeholder	6 (6%)	6 (6%)	0
unknown	<u>4 (4%)</u>	<u>4 (4%)</u>	0
	101	101	
Readjusters			
businessman	16 (22%)	15 (24%)	1 (8%)
farmer	25 (33%)	21 (34%)	4 (33%)
laborer	2 (3%)	0	2 (17%)
mechanic	2 (3%)	2 (3%)	0
waterman	1 (1%)	1 (2%)	0
professional	17 (23%)	15 (24%)	2 (17%)
federal officeholder	2 (3%)	2 (3%)	0
state officeholder	3 (4%)	3 (5%)	0
unknown	<u>6 (8%)</u>	<u>3 (5%)</u>	<u>3 (25%)</u>
	74	62	12

Notes

Businessman includes merchants, commission merchants, storekeepers, grocers, clerks, hotelkeepers, undertakers, lumber dealers, oyster dealers.

Laborer includes laborers, farm laborers, woodcutters, servants, etc.

Mechanic includes mechanics, carpenters, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, barrelmakers, sawyers, shoemakers, harnessmakers, millers, brickmasons, etc.

Waterman includes watermen, sailors, oystermen, fishermen.

Professional includes doctors, dentists, lawyers, school teachers, clergy.

TABLE B4. LEADERS: LITERACY

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
can read	99 (98%)	99 (98%)	0
cannot read	$\frac{1}{100}$ (2%)	$\frac{1}{100}$ (2%)	0
Readjusters			
can read	70 (95%)	60 (97%)	10 (90%)
cannot read	$\frac{3}{73}$ (5%)	$\frac{2}{62}$ (3%)	$\frac{1}{11}$ (10%)

TABLE B5. LEADERS: STATE OF ORIGIN

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
Virginia	87 (86%)	87 (86%)	0
elsewhere or unknown	<u>14</u> (14%)	<u>14</u> (14%)	0
	101	101	
Readjusters			
Virginia	67 (91%)	57 (92%)	10 (83%)
elsewhere or unknown	<u>7</u> (9%)	<u>5</u> (8%)	<u>2</u> (17%)
	74	62	12

TABLE B6. LEADERS: PLACE OF RESIDENCE

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
country	73 (72%)	73 (72%)	0
town	<u>28</u> (28%)	<u>28</u> (28%)	0
	101	101	
Readjusters			
country	54 (73%)	43 (69%)	11 (92%)
town	<u>20</u> (27%)	<u>19</u> (31%)	<u>1</u> (8%)
	74	62	12

TABLE B7. LEADERS: MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
Accomac			
Atlantic	11 (11%)	11 (11%)	0
Islands	10 (10%)	10 (10%)	0
Lee	32 (31%)	32 (31%)	0
Metompkin	14 (14%)	14 (14%)	0
Pungoteague	12 (12%)	12 (12%)	0
Northampton			
Capeville	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	0
Eastville	14 (14%)	14 (14%)	0
Franktown	<u>6 (6%)</u>	<u>6 (6%)</u>	0
	101	101	
Readjusters			
Accomac			
Atlantic	14 (19%)	12 (19%)	2 (17%)
Islands	5 (7%)	5 (8%)	0
Lee	12 (16%)	11 (17%)	1 (8%)
Metompkin	9 (12%)	9 (15%)	0
Pungoteague	15 (20%)	12 (19%)	3 (25%)
Northampton			
Capeville	4 (5%)	3 (5%)	1 (8%)
Eastville	13 (18%)	9 (15%)	4 (33%)
Franktown	<u>2 (3%)</u>	<u>1 (2%)</u>	<u>1 (8%)</u>
	74	62	12

TABLE B8. LEADERS: RELIGION

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
Baptist	15 (29%)	15 (29%)	0
Presbyterian	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	0
Episcopal	16 (31%)	16 (31%)	0
Catholic	0	0	0
Methodist Episcopal	4 (8%)	4 (8%)	0
Methodist Episcopal, South	11 (22%)	11 (22%)	0
Methodist Protestant	2 (4%)	2 (4%)	0
African Methodist Episcopal	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	0
	51	51	
Readjusters			
Baptist	8 (23%)	7 (21%)	1 (50%)
Presbyterian	2 (6%)	2 (6%)	0
Episcopal	12 (34%)	12 (36%)	0
Catholic	2 (6%)	2 (6%)	0
Methodist Episcopal	2 (6%)	2 (6%)	0
Methodist Episcopal, South	5 (14%)	5 (15%)	0
Methodist Protestant	3 (8%)	3 (9%)	0
African Methodist Epsicopal	<u>1 (3%)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1 (50%)</u>
	35	33	2

TABLE B9. LEADERS: VETERAN

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
Confederate	14 (14%)	14 (14%)	0
Union	0	0	0
noncombatant	<u>87</u> (86%)	<u>87</u> (86%)	0
	101	101	
Readjusters			
Confederate	9 (12%)	9 (15%)	0
Union	8 (11%)	5 (8%)	3 (25%)
noncombatant	<u>57</u> (77%)	<u>48</u> (77%)	<u>2</u> (75%)
	74	62	12

TABLE B10. LEADERS: FARM TENURE

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
owner	35 (60%)	35 (60%)	0
cash renter	17 (29%)	17 (29%)	0
share renter	<u>6 (11%)</u>	<u>6 (11%)</u>	0
	58	58	
Readjusters			
owner	37 (77%)	35 (79%)	2 (50%)
cash renter	8 (17%)	6 (14%)	2 (50%)
share renter	<u>3 (6%)</u>	<u>3 (7%)</u>	<u>0</u>
	48	44	4

TABLE B11. LEADERS: IMPROVED ACREAGE

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
owner	3715 (106 av.)	3715 (106 av.)	0
cash renter	717 (42 av.)	717 (42 av.)	0
share renter	<u>488</u> (81 av.)	<u>488</u> (81 av.)	0
	4920 (85 av.)	4920 (85 av.)	
Readjusters			
owner	2405 (65 av.)	2397 (68 av.)	8 (4 av.)
cash renter	323 (40 av.)	309 (52 av.)	14 (7 av.)
share renter	<u>363</u> (121 av.)	<u>363</u> (121 av.)	<u>0</u>
	3091 (64 av.)	3069 (70 av.)	22 (6 av.)

TABLE B12. LEADERS: TOTAL ACREAGE

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
owner	6627 (189 av.)	6627 (189 av.)	0
cash renter	4250 (250 av.)	4250 (250 av.)	0
share renter	<u>1067</u> (178 av.)	<u>1067</u> (178 av.)	0
	11944 (206 av.)	11944 (206 av.)	
Readjusters			
owner	4875 (132 av.)	4852 (139 av.)	23 (12 av.)
cash renter	687 (86 av.)	665 (111 av.)	22 (11 av.)
share renter	<u>508</u> (169 av.)	<u>508</u> (169 av.)	<u>0</u>
	6070 (126 av.)	6025 (137 av.)	45 (11 av.)

TABLE B13. LEADERS: VALUE OF FARM (\$)

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
owner	184280 (5265 av.)	184280 (5265 av.)	0
cash renter	52618 (3095 av.)	52618 (3095 av.)	0
share renter	<u>27187</u> (4531 av.)	<u>27187</u> (4531 av.)	0
	264085 (4553 av.)	264085 (4553 av.)	0
Readjusters			
owner	117426 (3174 av.)	116711 (3335 av.)	715 (358 av.)
cash renter	16153 (2019 av.)	15130 (2522 av.)	1023 (512 av.)
share renter	<u>10275</u> (3425 av.)	<u>10275</u> (3425 av.)	0
	143854 (2997 av.)	142116 (3230 av.)	1738 (434 av.)

Note

Value of farm is the combined value of land, fences, buildings, livestock, and implements and machinery.

TABLE B14. LEADERS: VALUE OF FARM PRODUCE (\$)

	Total	White	Black
Funders			
owner	23388 (668 av.)	23388 (668 av.)	0
cash renter	7815 (460 av.)	7815 (460 av.)	0
share renter	<u>3648</u> (608 av.)	<u>3648</u> (608 av.)	0
	34851 (601 av.)	34851 (601 av.)	
Readjusters			
owner	18546 (501 av.)	18431 (527 av.)	115 (58 av.)
cash renter	3288 (411 av.)	3058 (510 av.)	30 (15 av.)
share renter	<u>1450</u> (242 av.)	<u>1450</u> (242 av.)	<u>0</u>
	23284 (485 av.)	22939 (521 av.)	145 (36 av.)

Note

Value of produce is the value of all farm productions (sold, consumed, or on hand) for 1879.

TABLE B15. WHITE LEADERS

	Funders (n-101)	Readjusters (n-62)
Age (av.)	39.3	44.0
Occupation (%)		
farmer	36	34
businessman	17	24
professional	27	24
Literate (%)	98	97
Born in Virginia (%)	86	92
Town Dweller (%)	28	31
Leadership Experience (%)	45	34
Veteran (%)		
Confederate	14	15
Union	0	8
Religion (%)		
Methodist Episcopal, South	22	15
Baptist	29	21
Episcopal	31	36

Notes

Businessman includes merchants, commission merchants, store-keepers, grocers, clerks, hotelkeepers, undertakers, lumber dealers, oyster dealers.

Professional includes doctors, dentists, lawyers, school teachers, clergy.

Literate indicates those who could read.

Leadership experience was possessed by acknowledged men of influence and by those who served as officeholders, electors, party chairmen, party committeemen, and party canvassers above the precinct and primary levels who were elected or appointed through 1879.

TABLE B16. WHITE LEADERS: FARM OPERATORS

	Funders (n-58)	Readjusters (n-44)
Tenure (%)		
owner	60	79
cash renter	29	14
share renter	11	7
Improved Acreage (av.)	85	70
Total Acreage (av.)	206	137
Value of Farm (av.)	\$4553	\$3230
Value of Produce (av.)	\$601	\$521

Notes

Value of farm is the combined value of land, fences, buildings, livestock, and implements and machinery.

Value of produce is the value of all farm productions (sold, consumed, or on hand) for 1879.

TABLE B17. WHITE LEADERS: MERCHANTS

	Funders (n-13)	Readjusters (n-12)
Credit Rating (av.)	3.0	3.1

(Source: Dun's Mercantile Agency Reference Book 47 [July, 1880]. R. G. Dun & Company assigned credit ratings at intervals of .5 on a scale of 4.0 [lowest] to 1.0 [highest]. Thus, Funder merchants enjoyed a slightly higher average credit rating).

TABLE B18. WHITE LEADERS: PRINCIPAL FARMERS

	Funders (n-22)	Readjusters (n-16)
Acreage (av.)	476	416

(Source: J. H. Chataigne, ed., Virginia Business Directory and Gazetteer, 1880-1881. Chataigne listed farmers holding 100 acres of land or more).

APPENDIX III: CONGRESSIONAL VOTE IN ACCOMAC COUNTY IN 1882

	Massey (Funder)	Wise (Rjr.)	Voters		white coalitionists
			white	black	
Accomac C.H.	317	216	348	185	31
Greenbackville	60	0	60	0	0
Hall's Store	38	8	44	2	6
Locustmount	152	136	175	113	23
Mappsville	54	53	71	36	17
New Church	79	100	104	75	25
Newtown	98	71	121	48	23
Onancock ¹	252	155	281	127	29
Pungoteague ²	369	370	405	351	36
Saxis	44	1	45	0	1
Temperanceville	<u>117</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>139</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>22</u>
	1580	1211	1793	1016	213

¹Woltz (Straightout) received 1 vote.

²Dawson (Straightout) received 15 votes.

Poll books for Chincoteague and Guilford precincts are not available. Statistics for Greenbackville, Onancock, and Saxis represent votes cast for Garrison (Funder) and Mayo (Readjuster).

Statistics on race were gathered by locating the names in the poll books in the 1880 United States Census of Population. Those voters who could not be located in the census (106 in number) were divided proportionally between the races.

(Sources: Accomac Court House Peninsula Enterprise, November 10, 1881; U.S. Congress, Papers and Testimony in the Contested-Election Case of John E. Massey vs. John S. Wise, House Miscellaneous Document 14-15, Number 27 (Parts 1 & 2), 48th Congress, 1st Session, 1884, I, 250-260, 274-276; U.S. Congress, Testimony and Papers in the Contested-Election Case of George T. Garrison vs. Robert M. Mayo, From the First Congressional District of Virginia, House Miscellaneous Document 18, 48th Congress, 1st Session, 1884, pp. 76-83.)

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Bessie Gunter Diary

Charles Albert Van Ness Journals

Florida State Archives

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University of Georgia, Athens

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 Nashville (TN) Banner
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 New Orleans (LA) Louisianian
 New York (NY) Evening Post
 New York (NY) Herald
 New York (NY) Times
 New York (NY) Tribune
 Norfolk (VA) Landmark
 Norfolk (VA) Virginian
 Onancock (VA) Eastern Shore News
 Onancock (VA) Eastern Virginian
 Philadelphia (PA) Press
 Pulaski (TN) Citizen
 Richmond (VA) Dispatch
 Richmond (VA) State
 Richmond (VA) Virginia Star
 Raleigh (NC) News and Observer
 Raleigh (NC) State Journal
 Salem (NC) People's Press
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