BLACK POLITICAL LEADERSHIP DURING RECONSTRUCTION

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The key to Reconstruction for both blacks and whites was black suffrage. On one hand this vote made possible the elevation of black political leaders to positions of prominence in the reorganization of the South after the Civil War. For southern whites, on the other hand, black participation in the Reconstruction governments discredited the positive accomplishments of those regimes and led to the evolution of a systematized white rejection of the black as a positive force in southern politics. For white contemporaries and subsequent historians, the black political leader became the exemplar of all that was reprehensible about the period. Stereotyped patterns, developed to eliminate black influence, prevented any examination of the actual role played by these men in the reconstruction process.

This study is partially a synthesis of recent scholarly research on specific aspects of the black political role and the careers of individual political leaders. Additional research included examination of a number of manuscript collections in the Library of Congress and the Southern
Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina, state and federal government documents, and contemporary newspapers. On the basis of all these sources, this study evaluates the nature of black political leadership and its impact on the reconstruction process in all the ten states which were subject to the provisions of congressional reconstruction legislation.

The topic is developed chronologically, beginning with the status of blacks at the end of the Civil War and their search for identity as citizens. Black leadership emerged early in the various rallies and black conventions of 1865 and early 1866. With the passage in March 1867 of reconstruction legislation establishing black suffrage as the basis for restoration of the former Confederate states, black leaders played a crucial role in the development of the southern Republican party and the registration of black voters. Black influence reached its apex in the constitutional conventions and the subsequent ratification elections of 1868-1869. Blacks were elected to posts in the new state governments in varying numbers, but with increasing political sophistication began to demand a larger voice in Republican party councils and a larger share of public offices. Their resulting prominence fueled a white determination to eliminate
the Republican governments which had allowed elevation of black politicians.

This study of state political leadership is not a history of the black in the Republican party, nor is it a history of the black masses in Reconstruction. It does examine the role of black leaders and seeks to determine the nature and degree of their influence. The development of black leadership was one facet of building a southern Republican party, and in the tenuous coalition which made up that party the black inevitably became the weakest link because he was the most vulnerable.

This study challenges a number of stereotypes. Southern Reconstruction was not a period of "black rule," as both historians hostile to the black leaders and those sympathetic to them have intimated. Nor was the black politician a passive tool to be manipulated at the will of whites. Strong disagreements among black leaders show the weakness of the traditional monolithic picture of black political action. Black leaders had considerable influence in some states and practically none in others. Total failure of black political leadership would have been welcomed by southern whites, but its successes were intolerable. This study traces the development of a leadership whose successes led to its destruction.
PREFACE

The key to Reconstruction for both blacks and whites was black suffrage. On one hand this vote made possible the elevation of black political leaders to positions of prominence in the reorganization of the South after the Civil War. For southern whites, on the other hand, black participation in the Reconstruction governments discredited the positive accomplishments of those regimes and led to the evolution of a systematized white rejection of the black as a positive force in southern politics. For white contemporaries and subsequent historians, the black political leader became the exemplar of all that was reprehensible about the period. Stereotyped patterns, developed to eliminate black influence, prevented any examination of the actual role played by these men in the reconstruction process.

More recent historians, less influenced by the emotionalism generated by the southern campaign for white supremacy, have taken a more balanced approach and have incorporated reasoned discussions of the black political role into broad studies of the period. Others in monographic works and articles have delineated specific aspects of the black political role and the careers of individual political leaders.
This study is partially a synthesis of scholarly research on individuals and on specific aspects of the period. Additional research included examination of manuscripts, government documents, and contemporary newspapers. On the basis of these sources, this study evaluates the nature of black political leadership as a whole and its impact on the reconstruction process in all the ten states which were subject to the provisions of congressional reconstruction legislation. Only those leaders who had significant influence in the reconstruction of their states are considered; lesser officials and even congressmen are excluded unless their careers were important to state political developments.

Although black political leaders had the responsibility of representing the freedmen, their own interests were not always a direct reflection of those of their constituency. For these leaders were decidedly atypical of the black masses. Of the forty-nine leaders whose origins have been ascertained, only thirteen are known to have been slaves, and those either gained their freedom before the war or had privileged positions within the confines of slavery. Of those whose color is known, almost three-fourths were described as mulattoes. Almost a third had been born in the North, while another third had lived in the North before the war. Over a third of the leaders were professionals, while not a
single one was a farm laborer. Several were college graduates, and there is no evidence of actual illiteracy among the leaders whose careers are examined. At least seventeen had served in the Union army, several as chaplains. A large proportion of these men emerged as leaders soon after the end of the Civil War and continued in various leadership roles until the end of Reconstruction in their states.

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CHAPTER I

THE BLACK SEARCH FOR IDENTITY, 1865

When Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse on 9 April 1865, their agreement marked the end of the southern dream of sectional autonomy. With varying degrees of enthusiasm southerners had poured their energy, wealth, and courage into a vain struggle to preserve a cherished unique civilization. Lee's surrender meant the irrevocable destruction of the two bases of that civilization--state sovereignty and chattel slavery.

Confederate soldiers straggling homeward by foot or horseback faced general devastation as well as personal misfortune. The Confederacy's commercial system was demolished, its credit gone, and its capital destroyed by the repudiation of Confederate bonds and currency and even more by the emancipation of nearly four million slaves. Property values had plummeted. Agriculture, the basis of the southern economy, seemed beyond recovery. Lands lay wasted from neglect and the depredations of invaders. Many fields were untilled and overgrown with weeds; others showed poor crops on worn-out soil. Marketing of these meager crops was difficult, and
even titles to land and crops were in dispute. But the overwhelming agricultural problem was labor. Slave labor, which had always produced the bulk of southern agricultural output, was abolished, and a completely new relationship between capital and labor had to be developed.

In addition to the economic chaos prevailing in the South, the collapse of the Confederacy meant that civil government was in limbo. Defeat had totally discredited the Confederate government. By Presidential proclamation, the wartime administration of Francis H. Pierpont had become the official government of Virginia, and Tennessee, Arkansas, and the occupied portions of Louisiana had organized civil governments under Lincoln's "ten percent" plan. But none of these states had been officially restored to the Union, and martial law was declared for these areas as well as for the other seven states of the fallen Confederacy. Neither President nor Congress had devised a concrete, comprehensive procedure for regularizing the national status of the seceded states or for internal government of those states.

With civil offices technically vacant, the only recognized authority filling the political vacuum was the army of occupation. During the weeks following the surrender, military forces maintained law and order, administered relief to the
destitute, supervised railroad repair, reopened schools, regulated freedmen and their labor, tendered amnesty oaths, and acted as a liaison between the South and Washington.\(^1\) Such measures were temporary, however, and military occupation could obviously be no real solution to the problems of rebuilding, governing, and restoring the rebel states.

In the first place, no one seemed sure of the exact nature or extent of military control. Although the military commanders' authority was supreme, their position was nevertheless ambiguous. Most commanders apparently felt that their role was not to replace civil government, but to help reestablish it, and officers frequently used their authority to encourage southerners to begin reorganizing government.\(^2\) The military were further limited by President Johnson's conviction that the central government had little power to enforce its will on the defeated, and that soldiers must be removed from the South as soon as possible. It became clear very early that no occupying army would be enforcing


\(^2\) Perman, pp. 47, 59.
a mandatory settlement dictated by Washington. Rather, federal troops would aid in reorganization and by their presence spur southerners to take steps Johnson considered appropriate.\(^3\)

Even if administration policies had been otherwise, the large numbers of troops necessary for a sustained, thorough occupation of eleven states were simply not available. When peace came, Union forces were demobilized with remarkable rapidity. Of the more than one million men in blue uniform at the end of the war, only about 57,000 remained a year later; by 1876, the army included only 28,565 men, many of whom were stationed at western frontier posts.\(^4\)

Withdrawal of federal troops from the Confederate states was just as rapid as the general demobilization. Because the presence of black troops, many of them former

\(^3\)Ibid., pp. 14, 95, 136. On August 30, 1865, in a showdown between provisional Governor William L. Sharkey and General Henry W. Slocum over a state militia for Mississippi, Johnson countermanded Slocum's order and thus established the supremacy of the embryonic civil government over military authority. Ibid., p. 97.

slaves, was a special irritant to southerners, black soldiers were quickly removed from the area, with no black forces remaining in the South outside of western posts in Texas by 1870. In June 1865, 202,277 soldiers were in the South, but by January 1866 that number had dropped to 87,550, and by October 1866 to 17,679. The celebrated withdrawal of troops signaling the end of Reconstruction could hardly have been impressive, since only 6,011 troops remained in the entire South in October 1876. Such skeleton forces belie southern claims of suffering under army occupation and show that the military could not maintain meaningful control over developments in the former Confederacy.

The Secretary of War was also directing the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, or Freedmen's Bureau. The Commissioner of the Bureau was Union General Oliver O. Howard; most of the Assistant Commissioners for the individual states and many Bureau agents were also army officers. As early as December 1863 bills had been introduced to create an agency to aid blacks in the transition from slavery to freedom, but the Bureau was not established until 3 March 1865, and then Congress restricted its life to one year after the

5 Sefton, Appendix B, p. 262.
6 Ibid., pp. 261-262.
end of the war. The new agency was to supervise and manage abandoned lands and be in charge of matters relating to refugees and freedmen; it had power to rent to each male refugee or freedman forty acres of abandoned land for three years with an option to buy. 7

Before the end of 1865 the Freedmen's Bureau had provided a staggering array of services to destitute whites as well as freedmen. Distribution of clothing, fuel, and food was an immediate necessity; by August, the Bureau was issuing 148,000 rations daily but was trying to reduce this number by finding work for the needy. Its Medical Division eventually treated 450,000 cases in hospitals and outpatient clinics. The Bureau arranged transportation to former homes or to areas where work was available. It also encouraged northern benevolent societies to aid in these services and to initiate others. Its agents helped locate missing persons and encouraged legal marriages. A most important function was the regulation of labor contracts. The Bureau set standards of employment and forced both employer and worker to comply with contracts, thus becoming an important factor in the

the economic recovery of the South and in keeping the freedmen in the South and on the land.

Although a real court system with power to overrule state officials was to come later, even in 1865 Bureau agents frequently adjudicated individual cases involving blacks. As early as 30 May 1865, however, Commissioner Howard set up procedures for Assistant Commissioners to grant authority to civil courts in cases involving blacks if blacks were allowed to testify. An impressive network of schools, including colleges for blacks, developed under the Bureau's supervision. Only in renting and selling confiscated lands to refugees and freedmen did the Bureau meet real failure; President Johnson's insistence on restoring lands to pardoned rebels not only removed the better lands from possible settlement but deprived the agency of an important source of anticipated income. Altogether, the Bureau served as a valuable transition agency for filling the social and political vacuum in the South after the war.8

8Bentley, pp. 76-87; Abbott, p. 4; Perman, pp. 140-141; John Hope Franklin, Reconstruction After the Civil War (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 36-37. For a discussion of the Bureau as an implementation of the northern policy of employing and caring for the freedmen in the South and thus preventing their emigration in large numbers to the Midwest, see V. Jacque Voegli, Free But Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro during the Civil War (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 105-112,
The natural concentration of the United States' black population in the ten states later subject to Congressional Reconstruction exacerbated the problems of rebuilding and restoration. Of the total United States population of 31,513,000 in 1860, 7,903,000 lived in these ten states, but 42.6% of these were black. Emancipation and Confederate defeat released approximately 3-1/4 million former slaves to adjust to freedom in these states or to build new lives elsewhere. Only in Mississippi and South Carolina did blacks outnumber whites in 1860, but blacks formed almost half the total population in both Georgia and Louisiana. The Reconstruction states with the lowest percentage of blacks in 1860 were Arkansas (25%) and Texas (30%).

Free blacks made up only a minuscule 4% of the black population of the area, and 70% of these "free men of color" lived in Virginia and North Carolina, with another 15% being in Louisiana. The 1860 census classified well over half the free blacks as "mulattoes." While these "free

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"men" generally were better equipped to meet postwar problems than were the former slaves, their small numbers in most states prevented their furnishing much real immediate leadership to the masses of emancipated blacks.\footnote{10}

Nor had their prewar experiences prepared them for true freedom or citizenship. Whites had feared and distrusted the antebellum free black and had confined him with elaborate sets of stringent laws and regulations. Only in North Carolina had the freeman had any of the rights of citizenship; in some other states he was granted trial by jury, which certainly was no guarantee of impartial justice. Most states had forbidden assemblages of free blacks without white supervision and had prevented their migration from county to county and state to state. In all ten states, the threat of reenslavement had been constant. In spite of the multitude of restrictions, however, some free blacks had owned property and even slaves, and the majority had learned at least to read and write. Since many of the free men lived in towns or cities and worked at a variety of occupations, their relative sophistication gave them an early

advantage over the freed slaves in vying for positions of leadership among blacks. 11

Despite the lack of precedent or concrete planning for reestablishing civil government and restoring the seceded states to the Union, southern whites quickly acted to regain as much political power as possible. Very soon after the surrender, governors of all the Confederate states either called their legislatures into session or sent delegations to Washington to see if restoration could be initiated under the old regimes. The governors and other spokesmen argued the need for immediate action to maintain order and relieve widespread suffering, but they were no doubt also hoping to solidify the old power structure before federal officials could formulate procedures. The War Department quickly thwarted these actions by sending orders to commanders in the South, making clear that Washington, not state officials, would take the initiative in deciding on a framework for reconstruction.

In May and June, President Johnson, in a series of proclamations and statements, described his plans for restoring the southern states. On 9 May 1865 he recognized the Pierpont administration as the legal government of Virginia and shortly afterward extended his official sanction to the "Lincoln governments" of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Tennessee. On 29 May Johnson issued two proclamations outlining his restoration conditions. The first extended amnesty to the mass of southerners who took an oath to support the United States Constitution and the laws concerning emancipation. Exceptions included Confederate military and civil officers and Confederate supporters owning over $20,000 worth of taxable property, but excepted persons could receive individual presidential pardon. The second proclamation outlined specific steps for forming a legitimate state government in North Carolina. He would appoint a provisional governor who would have the authority to administer temporary civil government; in addition, the governor would call a convention to amend the state constitution. Eligibility for voters and convention delegates was restricted to those who could qualify under the state's 1860 election laws and who had also received presidential pardon or amnesty. The convention could then prescribe permanent voting and
office-holding qualifications. Johnson further suggested the repeal of secession ordinances, recognition of emancipation, and repudiation of Confederate war debts. He issued successive proclamations over the next two months for the other six states.

Following these procedures the conventions met, state officials and congressmen were elected, and provisional governors turned over their offices to newly elected civil governors. When Congress convened in December of 1865, Johnson could declare all the former Confederate states except Texas reorganized and ready for formal readmission to the Union.12 Congressional rejection of the newly-elected representatives eventually prevented the survival of the "Johnson governments," but for a year and a half they constituted the political framework for attempts at solving the massive social and economic questions created by the war and its outcome.

Of all these problems, determining the status of the black was the most vexing. This question had plagued both

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North and South during the war, but the Confederate surrender determined only that the black would no longer be a slave. Even in the South, the position of the slave had already undergone some change during the conflict. War itself had brought about a gradual erosion of slavery. Most slaves had continued to work for their masters, but complaints of unaccustomed "impudence" were common, and the appearance of Union troops usually precipitated a rush of slaves toward an uncertain form of "freedom" behind Union lines.

War also inspired Confederate interest in modifying slavery. Within the Cabinet, Judah P. Benjamin argued for limited emancipation linked to army service, a plan belatedly adopted by the Confederate Congress in February 1865. J.L. Alcorn, a large Mississippi planter, proposed a joint resolution by the Confederate Congress and state legislatures declaring the intention of freeing the slaves in twenty years. These movements, along with some black experience at free labor for the Union Army or on leased plantations, probably mitigated only slightly the shock of emancipation for southern society and for the freedman himself.\(^{13}\)

The Union had also undergone an evolution of policy and practice toward the freed people and blacks in general.\(^{13}\)

\(^{13}\)Cruden, p. 8; Wharton, pp. 21-22.
Resistance of officials and the public to the use of blacks as soldiers slowly diminished under the exigencies of war and the influence of emancipation. Use of black troops was approved in 1863, and the creditable service of 180,000 blacks in the Union army helped to modify northern attitudes and support postwar demands for equitable treatment of ex-slaves.\textsuperscript{14} Policy toward fugitive slaves within Union lines also evolved during the war. At first, with no official guidelines, individual commanders' reaction to the influx of self-emancipated slaves ranged from declaring them free to returning them to former masters. Later, Union generals supervised the colonizing of ex-slaves on abandoned Confederate lands, most notably on the Sea Islands of South Carolina and in the Davis Bend area of Mississippi. These early experiences at independent labor ended with the return of the plantations to Confederates pardoned by President Johnson.\textsuperscript{15} Despite the disappointing end to such experiments, they contributed to increasing alteration of the status of blacks during the war.


The freedmen's lack of legal status complicated all other questions about southern recovery and restoration. Obviously the black was no longer a slave, but what distinctions would now be made between him and the white? How would his status be defined, and who would do the defining? Former Confederate Secretary of Treasury C.G. Memminger described the problem in a letter to President Johnson:

I take it for granted that the whole Southern Country accepts emancipation from slavery as the condition of the African race, but neither the North nor the South have yet defined what is included in that emancipation. The boundaries are widely apart which mark, on the one side, political equality with the white race, and on the other a simple recognition of personal liberty. Although Memminger advocated a general apprenticeship for the black race, the Assistant Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau for North Carolina insisted that "All laws should apply to all races alike." But he continued, "The white people in this state are not yet ready to treat black men justly. Therefore, the Federal Government ought to retain control." Whether the status of freedmen was to be settled


before readmission of the seceded states added further to the legal uncertainties surrounding blacks at the end of the war.

Whatever the legal position of the freedmen might be, the Union victory initially brought disruption, confusion, and above all, precious mobility to blacks. The first desire of many freed slaves was to test their freedom by leaving their former masters and the scene of their slavery. A Florida planter wrote, "The negroes don't seem to feel free unless they leave their old homes--just to make it sure they can go when and where they choose."\(^{18}\) A former slave owner testified to the same conviction among Virginia freedmen: "The Negroes seemed to get it into their heads that they would not be free unless they left where they had been living."\(^{19}\) Joel Williamson found that in South Carolina "among the servant or domestic class (where slave labor was reputedly least arduous and relations with the

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\(^{18}\) E. Philips to James J. Philips, 21 January 1866, James J. Philips Papers, Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

master most intimate and satisfactory), defection was almost complete."

The mass of blacks on the move was swollen by refugees returning to homes they had fled or looking for friends or relatives; some were moving to other plantations with a reputation for better working conditions. Most moving freedmen, however, were going to towns—to satisfy their curiosity, to receive better wages, to consult with federal officials about their rights, or to seek protection from irate whites. But despite all this movement, many freedmen did not leave their former masters' homes, and a number of those who did soon returned there or to nearby plantations and settled down to work for the season.

The physical displacement of the freedmen was only one facet of their general suffering. Throughout the South their destitution was obvious. Some planters made an effort to care for their former slaves, but they themselves were

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21 Wharton, p. 51.

impoverished.\textsuperscript{23} Other former owners, freed from property interests, took no responsibility for the children, the aged, or the ill and reduced rations for their able-bodied workers.\textsuperscript{24} Many freedmen were made homeless when confiscated lands were restored to Confederates pardoned by President Johnson.\textsuperscript{25} As blacks gravitated toward towns and cities, they were fortunate even to find crowded primitive outbuildings to live in. A northern traveler described black housing in Atlanta:

Some of the negro huts were covered entirely with ragged fragments of tin-roofing from the burnt government and railroad buildings. Others were constructed partly of these irregular blackened patches, and partly of old boards, with roofs of huge, warped, slouching shreds of tin, kept from blowing away by stones placed on the top. Notwithstanding the ingenuity displayed in piecing these rags together, they formed but a miserable shelter at best.\textsuperscript{26}

The lack of adequate food and shelter aggravated the health problems of freedmen. A doctor in a small Mississippi


\textsuperscript{24}Howard, 2:260; Dexter E. Clapp to Benjamin Butler, 9 November 1865, Benjamin Butler Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

\textsuperscript{25}Reid, p. 325.

town reported that two-thirds of the town's blacks were completely indigent and at least ten percent were always sick.\textsuperscript{27} Outbreaks of smallpox and other diseases caused many deaths.\textsuperscript{28} Freedmen's Bureau Commissioner Oliver O. Howard stated, "Before systematic medical aid was extended to these people they were found to be dying at the rate of 30 percent."\textsuperscript{29}

Suffering and death among freedmen gave substance to native whites' claims that the black race could not survive in a state of freedom. While the Meridian, Mississippi, Clarion asserted that the race would disappear within a century, the Natchez Democrat insisted that "the child is already born who will behold the last negro in the State of Mississippi."\textsuperscript{30} In spite of evidence to the contrary, the Hinds County (Mississippi) Gazette repeated this conviction in 1868, 1871, and 1875.\textsuperscript{31} A Virginia planter wrote to Senator William P. Fessenden,

\textsuperscript{27}William C. Harris, Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 80.

\textsuperscript{28}Reid, p. 326; Alan Conway, The Reconstruction of Georgia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966), p. 67.

\textsuperscript{29}Howard, 2:259-260.

\textsuperscript{30}Harris, p. 31.

\textsuperscript{31}Wharton, p. 55.
The Great decrease [in the number of blacks], which obviously exists, cannot be accounted for by emmi-
gration [sic]. To a great degree, it must be attributed
to numbers perishing from sickness, destitution, and
the incapacity of parents to take care of their off-
spring.\(^{32}\)

A Georgia minister reported, "Comparatively few negro infants
will be hereafter raised."\(^{33}\) Former United States Senator
David Yulee, conferring with Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase
in Florida, insisted that the freedmen would all starve
without the supervision of whites: "They are shiftless,
improvident, idle, and incapable of taking care of them-
selves."\(^{34}\)

The conviction that freedmen would die out without
masters was only one manifestation of the southern belief
in black inferiority. Reports of unprovoked physical abuse
and even killing of blacks came from across the South. A
Freedmen's Bureau official wrote Congressman Elihu B.
Washburne of several whites using a wagon spoke to kill a
black man standing on a street corner in Harper's Ferry,

\(^{32}\) S.S. Baxter to Fessenden, 22 December 1866, William
Pitt Fessenden Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of
Congress, Washington, D.C.

\(^{33}\) Report of Commissioner of Agriculture for the Year

\(^{34}\) Quoted by Reid, pp. 164-165.
Virginia.\textsuperscript{35} The Barnwell and Edgefield districts of South Carolina were notorious for cruelty to blacks: clubbings, cutting off ears, and even deaths by whipping were frequent.\textsuperscript{36} Louisiana whites harassed freedmen in various ways, including beating one man for conducting a school for black children.\textsuperscript{37} A delegation of country blacks called on Chief Justice Chase in Savannah and claimed that their former masters were trying to keep them in slavery by whipping and abusing them for going where they pleased.\textsuperscript{38} A South Carolina correspondent summed up southern actions with "They 'deal kindly with the negro,' as the hawk does with the sparrow."\textsuperscript{39}

Some southerners not only tolerated cruelty toward the freedmen, but even advocated racial extermination. Northern traveler Sidney Andrews concluded, "It is a sad, but solemn fact, that three-fourths of the native whites consider him..."

\textsuperscript{35} W.T. Higgs to Washburne, 27 December 1866, Elihu B. Washburne Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

\textsuperscript{36} Sidney Andrews, \textit{The South Since the War} (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1866), pp. 219-220.

\textsuperscript{37} Thomas J. Durant to Henry C. Warmoth, 13 January 1866, Henry Clay Warmoth Papers, Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

\textsuperscript{38} Reid, p. 145.

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{National Anti-Slavery Standard}, 10 February 1866.
[the black] a nuisance, and would gladly be rid of his presence, even at the expense of his existence."

E. Philips of Florida wrote in 1865, "I . . . feel sure thefts & insolence will make it necessary to kill many," and again in 1868, "The negro must be sent to Africa or be exterminated like the Indian."

The frequent proposal by whites to send all blacks elsewhere reflected a strong conviction that the two races could not "live together as free men." In his travels throughout the South, Whitelaw Reid heard such typical remarks as, "'Now, that you've got them ruined, take the cursed scoundrels out of the country'"; and "'We can drive the niggers out and import coolies that will work better, at less expense, and relieve us from this cursed nigger impudence.'" The idea of deporting blacks persisted; as late as 1873 the Vicksburg (Mississippi) Herald advocated seizing part of Mexico and forcing blacks to go there.

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41 E. Philips to J.J. Philips, 2 August 1865 and 5 July 1868, James J. Philips Papers.
42 E. Philips to J.J. Philips, 24 October 1865, Philips Papers.
43 Reid, p. 417.
44 Wharton, p. 49.
Despite vocal sentiment for deportation, responsible men knew the economy of the region would be ruined if the main source of labor disappeared.

Besides, earlier colonization efforts, which continued into the middle of the war, had proved impracticable, partly because of the enormous numbers involved after emancipation, but mainly because blacks simply did not want to go to Africa or to the Caribbean. Despite their subjugation by the master race, they felt themselves to be Americans, and foreign lands held no attraction for them. Also, enlisting blacks in the Union army had dispelled lingering northern sentiment for government-sponsored colonization. Northerners could hardly ask a man to fight for a nation and then deny him the right to live in it.45

The white assumption of unequivocal black inferiority inspired a widely-held belief that blacks would not work without compulsion. A northern traveler reported that north of New Orleans, numbers of planters let their lucrative plantations lie idle in 1864 and 1865 because they were convinced that "'free niggers never would make sugar or

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A Virginian wrote Senator Fessenden that not one freedman in a hundred could take care of himself; his work was too unsteady to earn the good wages available to him. Former Union officer John W. DeForest, who served as a Freedmen's Bureau agent at Greenville, South Carolina, concluded, "The idea seemed to be that if the laborer were not bound body and soul he would be of no use." There are several complications in judging the value of the freedman as a laborer. Very few southern landowners had any experience in managing free labor, and their testimony reveals disgruntlement more at the changed attitude of former slaves than at their work habits. The most frequent complaint was of the "insolence" of blacks. In addition, the poverty of many planters sometimes prevented proper compensation, and blacks were understandably reluctant to work for little more than promises.

Despite these difficulties, diverse observers reported that freedmen generally were working in 1865. Mary Chestnut,

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46 Reid, p. 277.
47 S.S. Baxter to Fessenden, 22 December 1866, Fessenden Papers.
of South Carolina, recorded in her diary on 4 May 1865 that the blacks were in the fields plowing and hoeing as usual. 49 Colonel Samuel Thomas of the Freedmen's Bureau reported in 1865 that most Mississippi blacks were working quietly, many having contracted with their former masters, and were producing good crops. 50 Whitelaw Reid described in detail the profitable operations of a young sugar planter of New Orleans using free labor paid on a sliding scale. 51 William Strother of Augusta wrote Thaddeus Stevens that Georgia freedmen had worked just as hard in 1865 as they ever had under slavery. 52 In South Carolina, Sidney Andrews concluded that blacks had worked with "reasonable faithfulness" during their first season of freedom despite wholly inadequate wages. 53 Widespread rumors of a coming division of lands among freedmen, probably based on the wording of the Freedmen's Bureau bill, kept many from making new contracts for


50 Howard, 2:242-243.

51 Reid, pp. 275-276.

52 Strother to Stevens, 28 April 1866, Thaddeus Stevens Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

53 Andrews, p. 222.
1866. But when the new year arrived without the expected "forty acres and a mule," most freedmen agreed to contracts for the next season. 54

The freedmen's early experiences with southern planters too often confirmed their lack of confidence in their employers. Abuse of labor agreements was common. A Union officer from Richmond testified that southerners tried to exert the same control over workers as they possessed under slavery. 55 A North Carolina planter wrote of driving several blacks off his plantation and asserted, "What is left no [sic] very well they have got to work and act slave fashion or they cant stay with me." 56 According to J.T. Trowbridge, "The universal testimony, not only of travellers, but of candid Southern planters" was that black workers had rarely received their promised share of the crop at the end of the season. 57 Blacks complained to Chief Justice Chase in

54 Howard, 2:247; Harris, pp. 89, 92.


57 Reid, p. 146.
Savannah that the earliest work contracts were designed to establish peonage. A group of one hundred fifty North Carolina blacks sought aid to emigrate to Liberia because, they wrote, "Some of us have not been paid for our work two years back and they will not pay us for our work." These complaints illustrate the basic economic dilemma of the freedmen—they were completely dependent on whites. J.T. Trowbridge's observations in Louisiana and elsewhere in the South convinced him that planters generally imposed on the ignorance and helplessness of black laborers and contrived to keep them in debt. A Savannah lawyer who had served in the rebel army expounded on the problem in a conversation with Sidney Andrews. The lawyer insisted that the black's primary need was not the ballot, but "a chance to live." He continued,

Why, he can't even live without the consent of the white man! He has no land; he can make no crops except the white man gives him a chance. He hasn't any timber; he can't get a stick of wood without leave from a white man. We crowd him into the fewest possible employments, and then he can scarcely get work anywhere

58 Reid, p. 146.
59 Charles Snyder, et al., to Elihu B. Washburne, 1 February 1868, Washburne Papers.
60 Trowbridge, p. 409.
but in the rice-fields and cotton plantations of a white man who has owned him and given up slavery only at the point of the bayonet . . . . He has freedom in name, but not in fact.\textsuperscript{61}

Unquestionably the need to free themselves of their economic dependence on whites was a major element in the blacks' near-universal desire to own land. A recent scholar concludes that "all of the sources, favorable and unfavorable to Negroes alike, agree upon the freedmen's intense desire to own their own farms."\textsuperscript{62} In conversation with a northern traveler in 1865, the superintendent of freedmen's schools in Mississippi "spoke of the great eagerness of the blacks to buy or lease land, and have homes of their own. This he said accounted in great measure for their backwardness in making contracts."\textsuperscript{63} Freedmen's Bureau Commissioner Oliver O. Howard concluded that the freedman's greatest needs were land and a home: "So long as he is merely one

\textsuperscript{61}Andrews, p. 370.


\textsuperscript{63}Trowbridge, p. 362. Whitelaw Reid also found the desire for land expressed in all areas of the South. Reid, p. 301.
of a herd working for hire and living on another's domain, he must be destitute of manly individuality and self-reliance."\(^{64}\) Harry H. Penniman, superintendent of a Freedmen’s Bureau hospital in Lauderdale, Mississippi, wrote Congressman Elihu B. Washburne for information about homestead legislation and the location of public lands and urged the immediate necessity of securing land and homes for freedmen.\(^{65}\)

Not only did land ownership represent the traditional American faith in property and independence; the southern black lived in a society where status was based on owning land. The freedmen's skills being almost entirely agricultural, real freedom was to be able to farm their own land. The Savannah lawyer quoted above asserted, "Give a man a piece of land, let him have a cabin of his own upon his own lot, and then you make him free."\(^{66}\) A considerable number of freedmen did attempt to buy their own farms, despite the opposition of former slaveowners, who feared a smaller and less tractable labor supply. Black landownership in the

\(^{64}\)Howard, 2:368.

\(^{65}\)Penniman to Washburne, 21 December 1867, Washburne Papers.

\(^{66}\)Andrews, p. 372.
South generally failed because of white hostility, lack of capital and experience, and crop failures; most of the freedmen eventually had to settle for tenancy or sharecropping.

Second only to their interest in owning land and homes was the freedmen's enthusiasm for education. Old and young poured into schools established by the Freedmen's Bureau and northern missionaries; even more remarkable were efforts of blacks themselves to support and run their own schools, frequently in conjunction with the Bureau. The humblest illiterate field hand and the most highly educated black leader agreed that education for the black race was a necessity. But southern whites resisted efforts at black education. They vigorously opposed the educational work of the Freedmen's Bureau as well as that of private individuals and organizations. White teachers were ostracized and threatened, schools were destroyed, and black students were intimidated. Education and independence obviously were not part of former Confederates' plans for the freedmen.

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68 Reid, pp. 302-303; Williamson, p. 214.
69 Franklin, Reconstruction, p. 52.
President Johnson's lenient prescription for the restoration of the South precluded direct executive intervention on behalf of the freedmen. His subsequent actions and statements further demonstrated his conviction that black rights were the internal concern of each state, and blacks soon perceived that they could not look to the President as their champion. Johnson told a regiment of returning black soldiers that they must prove themselves "fit and qualified to be free"; he expressed hope that the two races might live together harmoniously in an "experiment" in freedom, but suggested the possible removal of blacks from the United States should such an experiment fail. He consistently opposed universal black suffrage for fear of a "war of the races"; he insisted on leaving "the States to determine absolutely the qualifications of their own voters with regard to color." In a telegram to Provisional Governor William L. Sharkey during the Mississippi constitutional convention of 1865, the President suggested limited


71 "Interview with George L. Stearns," ibid., p. 49.

72 "Interview with Senator Dixon, of Connecticut," ibid., p. 52.
suffrage for literate, property-owning blacks as a means of disarming Radicals, a move which would also serve as an example to other state conventions to follow. But when Sharkey replied that the convention would leave the matter to the future legislature, Johnson took no further action, in Mississippi or elsewhere.73

From the President's restoration policies, his response to black appeals, and his assurances of complete freedom for the southern states once the restoration process was complete, it seemed clear that the white South would have its way in dealing with the freedmen. A newly-arrived northerner wrote Benjamin F. Butler from North Carolina, "Now God have mercy on the blacks, if they are turned over to the government of their old masters, who seem determined to prove emancipation a curse."74 Before the new "Johnson governments" could codify the freedmen's status, unofficial bodies of landowners organized to control free labor; they agreed on conditions of work, rules for keeping order, contract provisions, and standard wages.75 But it was the

73 Perman, p. 75.

74 Dexter E. Clapp to Butler, 9 November 1865, Butler Papers.

notorious "Black Codes" passed by the new southern legislatures which convinced the freedmen that their former masters were determined to keep them as nearly in a condition of slavery as possible.

The Black Codes themselves actually originated with President Johnson. When the southern constitutional conventions of 1865 complied only grudgingly with Johnson's mild suggestions and were especially reluctant to repudiate the Confederate war debt, the President ordered his provisional governors to remain at their posts, although new state officials and congressional representatives had already been elected. He then recommended that the newly-elected legislatures ratify the anti-slavery amendment and enact laws to protect the freedmen.76 The resulting Black Codes, added to the new constitutions neglecting education and denying all suffrage to the black, insured that he would remain an "illiterate, unskilled, propertyless, agricultural worker."77

The codes varied from state to state; North Carolina had none, and those of Mississippi and South Carolina were

76 Perman, pp. 75-77.
77 Stampp, p. 78.
the most severe. All the states, however, recognized the new status of blacks by granting them some rights formerly held only by whites; their marriages were made legal and their children legitimate; they could hold and dispose of property; they could sue and be sued, with limitations on suing whites; and their testimony was acceptable in cases involving blacks. But special restrictions on "colored" (generally defined as persons of as little as one-eighth African blood) demonstrated that the black was to be kept in complete subservience. Economic controls were embodied in laws regulating "vagrants" and "apprentices." In South Carolina, any unemployed black could be found guilty of vagrancy and hired out to a private employer who paid his fine; and black children not being cared for by their parents were to be apprenticed to white masters. A black failing to enter a labor contract was committing a misdemeanor, and black mechanics and artisans had to pay for special annual licenses. Severe penalties were enacted for enticing a black laborer to break his contract.

Mississippi's Black Codes included provisions similar to those enacted in South Carolina, but restricted blacks even further. A special tax for the support of indigent blacks was levied on all adult black men, and those unable
to pay were subject to the vagrancy laws. A supply of dependent labor was assured by forbidding blacks to rent or lease land outside of towns. Any white could arrest and return a black worker who quit before his contract expired; the captor was to receive five dollars from the employer, to be deducted from the worker's wages. Although Mississippi's laws were especially severe, most states passed the basic vagrancy and apprentice laws, forbade the possession of firearms and alcoholic beverages by blacks, and in other ways restricted their labor and their personal freedom. 78

Despite protests even from some southerners and a general outcry against the Black Codes in the North, President Johnson voiced no objection. In a special message to the Senate 18 December 1865 he referred to the codes as "measures . . . to confer upon freedmen the privileges which are essential to their comfort, protection, and security." 79But the freedmen themselves had no gratitude for these

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78 Theodore B. Wilson, The Black Codes of the South (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1965), passim; Randall and Donald, p. 573; Wharton, pp. 84-89; Cruden, pp. 21-22; Franklin, Reconstruction, pp. 48-52; Ellenburg, p. 184.

"privileges." A prominent black politician in South Carolina recalled in 1870, "They saw that . . . their rights were placed at the disposal of their former masters, who would soon make their nominal freedom more intolerable than their former slavery." 80

By early 1866 freedmen realized that their longed-for freedom was equivocal at best. Not only had President Johnson failed to champion their cause; he had acquiesced in the reestablishment of the old slaveholding class in power and in the subjugation of the black race. Although most freedmen only dimly realized the significance of their new status, the impact of emancipation produced a stirring in blacks which was disconcerting to southern whites and often surprising to their northern champions. Despite the fact that slavery had precluded the development of an organized leadership, freed blacks displayed an unexpected militancy in organized efforts to gain some control over their ultimate fate. In the process black leadership began to emerge even before there developed any indication that freedmen would be accorded the right to vote, much less hold

80 Francis L. Cardozo, Address Before the Grand Council of the Union Leagues (Columbia, South Carolina: John W. Denny, 1870), p. 6.
political office. Thus long before they gained the support of a congressional faction favoring equal civil rights, an inchoate black organization, with at least the nucleus of a black leadership group, emerged in several areas of the South.
CHAPTER II

EMERGENCE OF BLACK LEADERSHIP

The traditional story of black political activity in Reconstruction begins with the passage of the congressional Reconstruction Acts of 1867, which gave blacks access to the ballot box, to state legislatures, to Congress, and to a host of state and local offices. Lack of awareness of black organizational activity in 1865 and 1866 contributes to the common assessment of the black as an ignorant tool of carpetbaggers and scalawags. But blacks were intensely aware that their altered status was a central issue of the early postwar months, and they were determined to influence

what that status would be. Organized responses to their new position appeared early all over the South. The frequency of black political meetings and the large numbers participating refutes the image of the inert and inarticulate freedmen awaiting the agitation of northern opportunists.

In addition to patriotic parades and holiday celebrations, blacks found political expression through rallies, mass meetings, and conventions held in reaction to state governments taking shape under President Johnson's tutelage during 1865. These meetings resulted in addresses to the public, memorials to President Johnson and Congress, and petitions to state legislatures and constitutional conventions. The statewide convention, the earliest concerted black political action after the war, ultimately proved to be the most popular means of organizing the freedmen and giving voice to their needs and aspirations.

These early organizational activities were especially important in the development of black political leadership. Many blacks who would be prominent throughout the Reconstruction period as Republican party organizers and major office-holders emerged as leaders in the meetings of 1865-1866, with little white assistance and no guarantee of political gain. When barriers to their active participation
in politics were removed, black meetings and conventions had helped prepare an articulate leadership with some recognition and following and with experience in arousing the black populace, organizing and conducting meetings, and formulating collective demands. Early emergence of these leaders formed the base of a significant continuity in black political leadership throughout the Reconstruction era.

Blacks were acutely concerned with every change in state government brought by the war. When the loyalist convention of Tennessee met in Nashville 8 January 1865 to amend the state constitution in accord with President Lincoln's restoration plan, Nashville blacks immediately petitioned the convention for suffrage and equal protection in the courts. Not surprisingly, the convention refused the petition, and in April 1865 blacks submitted a franchise petition to the new loyalist legislature. When that body ignored their appeal and began to enact restrictive measures against blacks, groups from Nashville, Memphis, and Knoxville issued a call for a statewide black convention to be held in Nashville in August.

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3Ibid., pp. 5-8.
Early in 1865 blacks of Norfolk, Virginia, began to organize to protect their interests and to lobby for suffrage. In response to efforts of white Unionists in January to establish civilian rule in the city, a committee of blacks called a mass meeting for February 27, when resolutions were passed protesting the establishment of any civil rule which might treat them inequitably. At an April 4 meeting, the Colored Monitor Union Club was formed, its primary purpose being to press for universal suffrage. This Union Club met frequently and worked to form auxiliary clubs throughout Eastern Virginia.  

On May 11 the Norfolk Union Club formed the nucleus of a large meeting of blacks whose presiding officer, Dr. Thomas Bayne, would later become a Republican party organizer and one of the most vocal members of the 1867 Virginia constitutional convention. Born a slave in North Carolina in 1824, Bayne escaped to Norfolk, Virginia, in 1846, where a new master taught him dentistry. By means of the Underground Railroad he fled in 1855 to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he practiced dentistry and was elected to the city council.  

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4Aptheker, "Organizational Activities of Southern Negroes, 1865," pp. 138-139.

Resolutions adopted at the meeting asserted,

The rights and interests of the colored citizens of Virginia are more directly, immediately and deeply affected in the restoration of the State to the Federal Union than any other class of citizens; and hence, we have peculiar claims to be heard in regard to the question of its reconstruction.

The resolutions forcefully demanded equality before the law and equal suffrage; they emphasized black loyalty and warned against allowing "traitors" to gain political power. The assembly pledged to withhold business from those denying equal rights and appointed a committee to organize a statewide "delegate Convention" to further these aims.6

Norfolk blacks reacted quickly when Unionist Governor Francis H. Pierpont called an all-white election to the state assembly for 25 May 1865. A call to "all loyal citizens" resulted in a meeting of about one hundred fifty whites and two thousand blacks on 23 May 1865. The group adopted resolutions demanding that the state government be reorganized on the basis of equal suffrage and forwarded

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copies to President Johnson, Radical congressmen, and local and national newspapers. They nominated their own slate for the Senate and the House—all white men. On election day, over one thousand black men met at an African Methodist church to organize a voting attempt. In one ward, blacks were allowed to register their votes on a separate list, but in the other three they were turned away completely. Those who were refused recorded their votes at the church, and the results were incorporated into an affidavit to be presented to the legislature in contesting the election. Funds were collected to publish five thousand copies of a pamphlet describing these events.⁷

On June 5 Norfolk blacks again met and elected a committee, headed by Dr. Bayne, to draft an address to the people of the United States to explain the "position of the colored population of the Southern States generally... with reference to their claim for equal suffrage in particular." In this lengthy, well-written document blacks argued for political equality on grounds of humanity, expediency, and historical constitutional right. They attacked the common assertion "This is a white man's country" by recapitulating the blacks' economic and political role in building

⁷Aptheker, "Organizational Activities of Southern Negroes, 1865," pp. 140-142.
the nation. They described intolerable conditions in Virginia resulting from legal disabilities and the intensified hatred of whites toward freedmen. But blacks were not asking for prolonged military occupation. "Give us the suffrage," they promised, "and you may rely upon us to secure justice for ourselves and all Union men." They warned that the North would suffer if the South were abandoned to former slaveholders; the black would not vote, but he would be counted toward an increased southern representation in Congress. They refuted assertions that blacks were too ignorant and lazy to be enfranchised and insisted, "The colored man knows that freedom means freedom to labor, and to enjoy its fruits."

The address urged fellow blacks to action. Specifically, it suggested that three kinds of associations be formed all over Virginia, with organizers to coordinate their efforts through central committees in Norfolk. First, they should form associations to gain "equality before the law and equal suffrage." Second, they needed labor associations to regulate wages, to act as employment agencies, and to see that contracts were fairly carried out. Last, they should form land associations to accumulate funds for buying farms for their investors because "the surest guarantee for the independence and
elevation of the colored people will be found in their becoming the owners of the soil on which they live and labor." Virginia blacks would unequivocally reject colonization: "We are Americans, we know no other country, we love the land of our birth and our fathers."8

Elsewhere in Virginia, blacks were by no means inactive. On 31 May 1865 Petersburg blacks met at the Union Street Methodist Church to discuss their problems. They appointed a committee to consider proposed resolutions and to report at a second meeting on June 6. The adopted resolutions insisted on the unqualified right of blacks to state their grievances and demand equality before the law, a right vindicated by their military service in the late war and in battles dating back to the Revolution. The Petersburg assembly argued that their "comparative ignorance" was no just reason for disfranchisement; they offered to submit to any restrictions which would apply equally to whites,

8"Address from the Colored Citizens of Norfolk, Va., to the People of the United States," *The Liberator* 35(8 September 1865):144. The address was signed "in behalf of the colored people of Norfolk and vicinity" by Dr. Thomas Bayne of Norfolk, chairman of the committee; H. Highland Garnet, pastor of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., and well-known abolitionist speaker and writer, listed as "honorary member" of the committee; and six other Norfolk blacks, two of whom were ministers. See also Greene, pp. 42, 44-45.
"notwithstanding the fact they have had all the facilities and opportunities for moral and intellectual development."

Like their Norfolk counterparts, the Petersburg freedmen condemned the allegation that they considered freedom to mean idleness and indolence. Their final resolution denied any feeling of resentment against their former owners and appealed for conciliation.9

In Richmond, blacks were taking action against official policies which severely restricted their new freedom. Early in June 1865 military authorities set up a pass system making blacks liable to seizure and forced labor. Recently established black schools were closed, and freedmen were subjected to harrassment and brutality by police and white civilians alike. In spite of the potential danger, blacks held a series of meetings in June and issued an appeal for protection which was published in the New York Tribune. They also selected a committee to present an address to President Johnson. Because of the widespread publicity, Washington officials took quick action, and by June 16, when the delegation saw the President, he was able to inform them that the pass system had been abolished and the schools reopened.10

10 New York Tribune, 12, 15, 17 June 1865.
Meanwhile, blacks in other states were circulating petitions addressed to President Johnson asking for the franchise. "Colored Citizens of the State of Georgia" petitioned the President for the right of suffrage "in order to make our loyalty most effective in the service of the Government." In June, five Savannah blacks asked Senator Charles Sumner to forward to the President a suffrage petition signed by three hundred fifty freedmen. A petition initiated at Newbern, North Carolina, was widely circulated throughout the state during May. Invoking the spirit of Lincoln, the petitioners asked the President for the franchise, arguing, "We cannot understand the justice of denying the elective franchise to men who have been fighting for the country, while it is freely given to men who have just returned from four years of fighting against it." They also reminded Johnson that until 1835 free blacks had voted in the state of North Carolina, "without any detriment to its interests." Along with the petition

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11 Published in *The Liberator* 35(30 June 1865):103.


campaign, North Carolina freedmen held several mass meetings during the summer of 1865, all agitating for suffrage.\textsuperscript{14}

On 19 June 1865 Mississippi blacks held a mass meeting at Vicksburg to protest the President's June 13 proclamation appointing William L. Sharkey provisional governor of Mississippi and calling for a constitutional convention with delegates to be elected only by those who had voted before secession. The assembly appealed to Congress not to restore Mississippi until black suffrage was granted.\textsuperscript{15} In protest against the sort of reconstruction inaugurated by the Mississippi constitutional convention of August 1865 Vicksburg freedmen convened on September 18 passed a resolution prophesying:

\begin{quote}
It is our firm conviction... that should Mississippi be restored to her status in the Union under her amended constitution as it now stands... her Legislature, under pretext of guarding the interests of the State from the evils of sudden emancipation, will pass such proscriptive class laws against the freedmen as will result in their expatriation from the State or their practical reenslavement.
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{15}New York Tribune, 11 July 1865; resolutions also published in Aptheker, ed., Documentary History, 2:538-539.

\textsuperscript{16}New York Tribune, 10 October 1865; The Liberator 35 (27 October 1865):169.
In October, the Mississippi political climate not being favorable for a freedmen's convention, a delegation requested Senator Charles Sumner to ask Congress for suffrage as a means of protecting their rights. 17

A series of local meetings in Virginia in December 1865 resulted in sending delegations to Washington to lobby for black rights. The first of these assemblies, held in Norfolk, denounced rumors that blacks were planning an insurrection. They instructed their lobbyists, including Dr. Thomas Bayne, to work for help in retaining confiscated lands, as well as for political and civil rights. The delegation was to oppose readmission of the state so long as blacks were denied suffrage. Blacks in Yorktown, Portsmouth, Williamsburg, Elizabeth City, Hampton, and Old Point held similar meetings and sent several more representatives to join Virginia's unofficial delegation in Washington. 18

Throughout 1865 and 1866 blacks held mass celebrations which frequently had political overtones, especially those

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17 U.S., Congress, Senate, Congressional Globe, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1866, p. 128; DuBois, pp. 230-231. In contrast to these statements by Mississippi blacks, Peter Kolchin (pp. 152-154) concluded that the well-attended mass meetings in different regions of Alabama in 1865 were cautious and conciliatory, avoiding any demand for immediate suffrage.

commemorating patriotic holidays. Because such gatherings had been strictly prohibited under slavery, they now served as a test of freedom just as leaving the home plantation did. But they also gave blacks a sense of solidarity and unity of purpose, and large meetings to hear such distinguished northern politicians as Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase and Senator Henry Wilson helped to educate the freedmen and precondition them toward the Republican party.¹⁹

The numerous local meetings held throughout the South in the months following the Confederate surrender culminated in important state conventions attended by specially chosen delegates and often led by men who later were to assume leadership in the Republican party and in state governments. Black Reconstruction conventions were only the most recent phase of a convention movement through which free blacks had expressed their ideas and hopes since 1819, when the first black convention met to protest white efforts to colonize blacks. The National Colored Convention was established in 1830 and met irregularly through 1864.

¹⁹For accounts of large and enthusiastic crowds of freedmen who gathered to hear Chief Justice Chase on his tour of the South in May and June 1865, see Whitelaw Reid, After the War: A Tour of the Southern States, 1865-1866 (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), passim. The New York Tribune, 22 May 1865, describes a May 12 meeting in Charleston of over 4000 enthusiastic blacks, "convened in less than twelve hours" to hear Chase speak.
accompanied by occasional northern state conventions. In October 1864 one hundred fifty black leaders, including a few southerners, convened in Syracuse, New York, to demand complete abolition and political equality; there they organized the National Equal Rights League to further these aims.20

The Syracuse convention inspired the first of several southern state conventions in 1865, this one held in New Orleans in January. It was organized by James H. Ingraham, a former Union army officer and president of the Louisiana branch of the National Equal Rights League, who later served in the constitutional convention and in both houses of the Louisiana legislature.21 Another leader of the New Orleans convention, Oscar J. Dunn, became Louisiana's lieutenant governor in 1868, a position he held until his sudden death in 1871. Born in New Orleans in 1826 of a free mother, Dunn ran away from his employers and became a barber and


music teacher. After serving in the Union army, he helped found the Universal Suffrage Association. Following a brief stint with the Freedmen's Bureau, Dunn ran a freedmen's employment service while busily organizing blacks for the Radical party.22

Sizable numbers of well-educated, prosperous free men of mixed blood lived in New Orleans, some of them speaking only French. Then, too, federal troops had occupied the city since 1862. Because of these unique conditions, the New Orleans convention was not typical of those held elsewhere later in the year. But it was a significant first attempt to set up statewide organization to aid freedmen and to work for equal rights, and it did give blacks an opportunity to find leaders in their own ranks.

Later state conventions generally developed from local meetings. Most were well organized, with delegates elected by local groups from different areas of the state. Delegates from all sections of Tennessee attended the August convention in Nashville,23 and positions on various committees were


allocated according to district.24 The September convention in Raleigh, North Carolina, was also carefully organized. The convention call, issued by a committee elected at a mass meeting in Wilmington, asked "each county seat to send as many delegates as it [had] representatives in the Legislature."25 Early in September a gathering of Raleigh blacks elected an arrangements committee who secured a meeting hall and housing for five hundred delegates. In spite of the difficulties involved, forty-two of the eighty-seven counties did send certified delegates.26 In South Carolina, each legislative district sent representatives to a large convention in Charleston in September.27 All the conventions reflected effective use of publicity, considerable organizing ability, a concern for wide geographic representation, and an understanding of procedures for conducting a meeting.

24Nashville Colored Tennessean, 12 August 1865.

25Quoted by Nowaczyk, p. 5; see also Greene, p. 21. The chairman of the committee issuing the call was Abraham H. Galloway, an ex-slave who later served in the North Carolina constitutional convention and the legislature.


27Greene, p. 22.
In the first of the series of conventions held across the South in the late summer and autumn of 1865, delegates from seven cities and eleven counties of Virginia assembled in Alexandria on August 2. This meeting was one of several actions by northern Virginia blacks and Unionists protesting Governor Pierpont's appointment of ex-Confederates to important state posts. The delegates issued a series of strongly worded statements. First, they appealed to citizens of Virginia for the franchise because they had no other means of protection, because they were United States citizens and Virginia natives, and because they were as well qualified to vote for their officials as many who already exercised that privilege. The convention also directed an address to "Loyal Citizens and Congress" assailing the "lip loyalty" of those receiving amnesty and pardon from President Johnson; when the state was fully restored, the blacks warned, those ex-rebels would "render the freedom you have given us more intolerable than the slavery they intended for us." They asked for a military governor until they had the ballot. "Give us this, and we will protect ourselves," they


pledged. The convention further passed resolutions declaring any restoration without equal rights to be "an act of gross injustice"; they called on Governor Pierpont to define his position on repealing oppressive black laws and granting equal suffrage.

A few days later the long-awaited Tennessee State Convention of Negroes began its deliberations. One hundred sixty-five delegates from every section of the state filled the Nashville African Methodist Episcopal Church. They condemned the Tennessee legislature for ignoring their repeated appeals. Like the Virginia blacks, these delegates believed their state should not be restored under its present government. They sent Congress a petition protesting admission of the Tennessee congressional delegation until the legislature granted equal rights to blacks.

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The Nashville convention provided the initial political setting for two black leaders who would rise to prominence in other states. James Thomas Rapier, who was elected to the United States Congress from Alabama in 1872, had been born in Florence, Alabama, of a wealthy white planter father and a free black mother. Educated at home by tutors, he later attended Montreal College in Canada, Glasgow University in Scotland, and Franklin College in Nashville. He taught school in Nashville during the civil war and was correspondent for a northern newspaper after Union forces captured the city. In 1866 he returned to Alabama and became a successful planter. The next year he helped to write a new Alabama constitution under the Reconstruction Acts. An organizer for both the Republican party and the Colored National Labor Union, Rapier also edited the Montgomery Sentinel. In his first attempt at elective office, Rapier was defeated for Secretary of State in 1870, but his bid for Congress in 1872 was successful. 34

James Lynch, who made three well-received speeches at the Nashville convention, is now relatively obscure, but he was one of the ablest and most successful leaders of southern blacks during Reconstruction. Secretary of state in Mississippi's first Republican government, Lynch was born in Baltimore in 1838, the son of a free mulatto merchant who had purchased the freedom of James's mother. After attending elementary school in Baltimore, Lynch studied at Kimball Union Academy in Hanover, New Hampshire, for two years. He served as a Methodist minister in Indiana and Illinois in the late 1850's and was married in Galena, Illinois, in 1860. Returning to Baltimore, Lynch was chosen by the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1863 to go to South Carolina as a missionary to freedmen living in areas already taken by the Union army. "Born to be a skillful organizer," he quickly became a leader of blacks

35 Excerpts from all three published in the Nashville Colored Tennessean, 12 August 1865.


37 He was elected secretary of the Baltimore annual conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in April 1862. Charles S. Smith, A History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (Philadelphia: Book Concern of the A.M.E. Church, 1922), p. 49.

in Beaufort. While in South Carolina he was commissioned as a chaplain in the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Infantry but was never mustered. When General William T. Sherman captured Savannah, Lynch quickly expanded his operations to Georgia. In late 1865 or early 1866, he moved to Philadelphia, where he edited the Christian Recorder, national


At an Emancipation Day celebration in Beaufort 1 January 1864 attended by four thousand blacks, Lynch read Lincoln's Proclamation as part of the ceremony. Joel Williamson, After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction, 1861-1877 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), p. 188. Williamson does not identify Lynch as the future Mississippi secretary of state.


Lynch was one of twenty black representatives who conferred with Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton and General Sherman in Savannah 12 January 1865. Harris, p. 42. Harris does not mention Lynch's presence in South Carolina. The Nashville Colored Tennessean, 12 August 1865, identified the speaker at the Nashville convention as "the Reverend James Lynch of Baltimore, Missionary in South Carolina and Georgia." Charles S. Smith (p. 46) said that Lynch labored at Port Royal, Beaufort, and Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia. Lynch spoke to a crowd of ten thousand at a Fourth of July celebration in Augusta in 1865. Alan Conway, The Reconstruction of Georgia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966), p. 72.
organ of the A.M.E. church, from 24 February 1866 to 15 June 1867.\textsuperscript{42} Shortly thereafter he moved to Mississippi, where he established churches and schools, organized freedmen for the Republican party, worked briefly for the Freedmen's Bureau, and edited the \textit{Jackson Colored Citizen}. After serving as alderman in Jackson, Lynch was elected Secretary of state in 1869.\textsuperscript{43}

On 29 September 1865 the Freedmen's Convention of North Carolina opened at the African Methodist Church in Raleigh, despite opposition from some conservative blacks of that city who apparently feared offending members of the constitutional convention meeting there at the same time.\textsuperscript{44} But the four-day proceedings were dominated by a spirit of conservatism, conciliation, and compromise. The convention president, James W. Hood, was a Pennsylvania native who had arrived in Newbern early in 1864 as a missionary to freedmen after organizing churches in New York, Nova Scotia, and Connecticut. He later held offices in the North Carolina

\textsuperscript{42} Charles S. Smith, p. 46.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.; Harris, pp. 43-44; \textit{Washington New National Era}, 26 June 1869, 2 January 1873.

\textsuperscript{44} Aptheker, "Organizational Activities of Southern Negroes, 1865," p. 152. Blacks in Newbern and Wilmington apparently were considerably more radical, having already organized equal rights associations and Union Leagues. See the \textit{New York Tribune}, 7 October 1865; and Reid, p. 51.
Equal Rights League and was a member of the Republican state executive committee. A delegate to the 1868 constitutional convention, he was assistant superintendent of instruction from 1868 to 1870. In his opening convention speech, Hood urged that "all harsh expressions toward anybody or about any line of policy" be avoided. Hood counseled that whites and blacks must learn to live together in their common homeland by respecting each other. He asked three rights for the black man--the right to testify in court, to serve on juries, and to vote--but urged patience and moderation since, he conceded, "I am well aware that we shall not gain them all at once."

Even this muted demand for civil and political rights did not appear in other speeches and resolutions, or the address sent to the concurrent constitutional convention. A conciliatory speech was made by James H. Harris, vice-president of the convention, who was characterized by the

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46 Hood's speech is quoted in its entirety by Andrews, p. 122, and is briefly described in the New York Tribune, 7 October 1865. Some delegates objected to Hood as convention president because he was not a native North Carolinian, but the controversy subsided after Hood offered to resign. New York Tribune, 7 October 1865.
New York Tribune correspondent as the "balance wheel" of the gathering. Born free in Granville County, North Carolina, in 1832, Harris in his youth was apprenticed to an upholsterer and opened his own business. Later he moved to Oberlin, Ohio, where he was educated for two years. He traveled extensively in Canada, Africa, and the West Indies, then in 1863 settled in Terre Haute, Indiana. At the war's end he returned to North Carolina, where he became an education agent for the Freedmen's Bureau in August 1865 and also raised money to aid destitute freedmen. He subsequently held executive positions in the State Equal Rights League, the Union League, and the Republican party, and was president of a state education convention and a national labor convention. In 1867 he was part of a mixed delegation from Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina asking Congressman Thaddeus Stevens for more stringent reconstruction laws. He served in the 1868 constitutional convention and in the state Senate and was a delegate to the 1868 Republican national convention.

47 New York Tribune, 7 October 1865; Andrews, p. 124; Nowaczyk, p. 34.


49 Charleston Daily Courier, 16 December 1867.
In his speech to the Raleigh convention Harris cited examples of prejudice and oppression in the North to show the delegates that intelligent white southerners, rather than northerners, were their best friends. He told them that they must stay where they were and work out their destiny with the white man. He himself had found no better country in forty thousand miles of travel, he asserted, and now he intended to live, die and be buried in his native state. Harris concluded by urging the delegates to show whites that blacks were their friends.  

The New York Tribune reported that Abraham H. Galloway, the third major leader of the convention, made "a very happy speech, sustaining in the main the same train of argument" that Harris did. Galloway was born a slave in Brunswick County, North Carolina, in 1837 and was required to learn brick masonry. How he gained freedom and an education is not known, but in 1862 he traveled extensively in the North, making speeches on the condition of blacks in the South, and in 1864 he attended the National Convention of Colored Men in Syracuse. An early advocate of using blacks in the Union army and navy, Galloway enlisted with

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50 New York Tribune, 7 October 1865.

51 Ibid.
the Wisconsin Volunteers and recruited black troops at Fortress Monroe, Virginia. At the end of the war he returned to North Carolina and worked at educating and organizing the freedmen. Galloway was later a vocal member of the 1868 constitutional convention and of the state Senate.52

The conservative, apolitical tone continued through the reports and resolutions adopted by the convention. A major committee report declared the freedmen's chief desire to be "employment at fair wages, in various branches of industry." The report advised blacks against crowding into cities, but urged them to secure farm land and cultivate. Freedmen were further counseled to work industriously, save their earnings, buy farms and homes as soon as possible, observe the marriage relation, educate themselves and their children, help each other, and cultivate friendly relations with whites.53

Other resolutions commended the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, the establishment of the Freedmen's Bureau, the


53New York Tribune, 7 October 1865.
founding of schools for blacks, and diplomatic recognition
of Hayti and Liberia. The delegates thanked northern friends
for aiding the freedmen and praised the Sumner element of
the Republican party for its efforts to obtain black rights
through congressional action. A resolution recommending
black teachers and preachers for black schools and churches
was finally rejected on the grounds that it might discourage
attendance at schools established by the Freedmen's Bureau
and northern societies. 54

The convention's address to the North Carolina constitu-
tional convention then in session and to the legislature
which would meet in November was remarkably conciliatory,
even servile, in tone. The blacks recalled that while
hoping for a Union victory, they had remained "obedient and
passive" throughout the civil war. Conceding that they had
no power to control legislation, the delegates were depending
upon a "moral appeal" and trusted in the white representa-
tives' justice and wisdom for protection of "the most helpless
class." The assembly reiterated their attachment to the
white race and disavowed any desire to look abroad for
"sympathy and protection." "We know," they assured the
whites, "we must find both at home and among the people of

54 Andrews, pp. 126-127.
our own State, and merit them by our industry, sobriety, and respectful demeanor, or suffer long and grievous evils."

The address did nevertheless include some specific requests, couched in indirect and almost apologetic language. Many planters had acted justly with their former slaves, the freedmen assured the whites, but measures were needed to protect against the "unscrupulous and avaricious practices" of others. Humane working conditions and adequate compensation would encourage black industry and would benefit employers, who could more easily find dependable labor. The delegates also asked for legal marriages for freedmen, black schools, care of orphans and the helpless, and help in reuniting families separated by war or "the operations of slavery." The assembly concluded its memorial by affirming the freedman's love for North Carolina and its people and his intention of staying there unless driven away.55

Raleigh newspapers praised the conservatism of this document, the Raleigh Sentinel calling it "admirable in

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55 Ibid., pp. 128-130. The address also appeared in the New York Tribune, 7 October 1865, and was published in Aptheker, Documentary History, 2:540-543. Apparently some delegates were fearful that a less conciliatory and more offensive document might emerge. Andrews reported (p. 127), "How this address should be prepared was a subject of anxious consideration. There was some fear at the close of the first day's session that the Convention had fallen into control of the unwise and hot-headed faction." The address which was adopted shows that these fears were unfounded.
temper, felicitous in its style, and modest in the tone of its demand." Governor Holden submitted the address to the constitutional convention, where it was referred to a special committee, whose chairman reported back that the legislature could more appropriately act upon such subjects. He warned against "hasty and inconsiderate actions" and urged that these questions "be kept from the arena of party politics." 

Behind all the tactful facade of the North Carolina convention, however, at least some of its leaders were more radically inclined. The three convention leaders whose conciliatory speeches have been described--James H. Harris, James W. Hood, and A.H. Galloway--became active agitators for equal rights and were prominent in the North Carolina Republican party, the 1868 constitutional convention, and the legislature. Sidney Andrews described A.H. Galloway as being of "exceedingly radical and Jacobinical spirit," and correspondents of the New York Tribune reported considerable militancy among some delegates from the eastern seaboard. And in spite of its mild words the convention

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56 Quoted by Nowaczyk, p. 12.

57 The committee chairman's full report is given by Andrews, pp. 159-161.

on its adjournment resolved itself into a State Equal Rights League to secure repeal of discriminatory laws, state and national. 59

In 1865 South Carolina blacks were considerably less equivocal than the North Carolinians in their demands for equal rights. When the state constitutional convention met in Columbia in September, it received two petitions for impartial suffrage, one from freedmen on St. Helena Island, and another signed by one hundred three Charleston blacks, the latter group asking that "if the ignorant white man is allowed to vote . . . the ignorant colored man shall be allowed to vote also." The convention ignored both appeals. 60

59 Nowaczyk, pp. 12-13. In addition to the three convention leaders discussed, two other known participants in the Raleigh convention achieved some political prominence later. Isham Sweat, a convention vice-president, later served in the North Carolina legislature. Sweat was a free-born mulatto barber from Fayetteville, North Carolina. John H. Hyman, who later was elected to the North Carolina constitutional convention, the state senate, and the United States Congress, made his initial political appearance at the convention. Born a slave in North Carolina in 1840, Hyman was sold to Alabama, but acquired some education. He returned to North Carolina after the war and ran a small grocery store in Warrenton, while working at Republican party organization and voter registration. Balanoff, p. 29; Andrews, p. 125; Christopher, pp. 149-151.

60 Among signers of the Charleston petition were Jonathan C. Gibbs, later secretary of state and superintendent of public instruction in Florida, and Robert C. DeLarge, who later went to Congress. Aptheker, "South Carolina Negro Conventions,
Having failed to sway the constitutional convention, South Carolina blacks determined to widen their appeal. Thus large numbers of delegates from all over the state met in convention at Zion Presbyterian Church in Charleston November 20-25. A resolution declared the assembly to be "an extraordinary meeting, unknown in the history of South Carolina, when it is considered who compose it and for what purposes it was allowed to assemble."61

A remarkable number of the delegates attending the Charleston convention became well known in politics later in Reconstruction. Of the six blacks South Carolina sent to Congress during Reconstruction, four were prominent leaders of the meeting at Zion Church.62 In addition, five other future political leaders gained notice through their convention activities.

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1865," pp. 93-95. Referring to the Charleston petition, the Charleston Daily Courier, 26 September 1865, commented, "We trust for the future safety and welfare of the state that the document will not be placed on the records of the proceedings."

61 Simkins and Woody, p. 55.

Future congressman Alonzo J. Ransier served as secretary and committee chairman and was chosen to present the convention's address to Congress. The light-complexioned Ransier was born free in Charleston in 1834, possibly of Haitian ancestry. Of limited formal education, he worked as a shipping clerk before the war. He plunged into political life soon after the war, organizing and addressing freedmen's meetings. A member of the 1868 constitutional convention and the South Carolina legislature, Ransier was chairman of the Republican state central committee for several years. He was elected lieutenant governor in 1870 and congressman in 1872.63

One of the busiest participants in the convention was Robert C. DeLarge; "on the motion of Mr. DeLarge" appears frequently in the proceedings. He served on two important committees and made two speeches during the evening entertainment. A free mulatto born in Aiken, South Carolina, DeLarge became a tailor in Charleston and after the war was a Freedmen's Bureau agent. One of the most energetic organizers of freedmen, DeLarge was elected to the Republican state central committee. An active member of the

constitutional convention and the legislature, DeLarge served briefly as state land commissioner before going to Congress in 1870 in a disputed election which he eventually lost.  

A third future congressman, the Reverend Richard H. Cain, was a recent arrival in South Carolina but was already noted for his "fine command of language." In addition to his felicitous speeches, Cain also wrote the convention's address to the people of South Carolina. Cain was born in 1825 in Greenbriar County, Virginia, of a Cherokee mother and an African father. Taken to Ohio at the age of six, he attended public schools and as a youth worked as a steamboat deckhand. He became a preacher and served churches in Missouri and Iowa. In 1860 he attended Wilberforce University and then spent the next four years as pastor of a Brooklyn church. After the war the African Methodist Episcopal Church sent Cain to South Carolina as missionary to the freedmen. A man of "great energy and organizing power," Cain successfully established a number of churches

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64 DuBois, p. 403; Samuel D. Smith, p. 50; Christopher, p. 97; Williamson, p. 369; Hume, p. 433; Charleston Leader, 25 November 1865.


66 Payne, p. 332.
in the Charleston area. At the same time he edited an influential black weekly, the Missionary Record, and also briefly published the Charleston Leader. A prominent member of the 1868 constitutional convention, Cain later served in the state senate and completed two terms in Congress. After ordination as a bishop, Cain became the second president of Paul Quinn College in Waco, Texas.  

Joseph H. Rainey, the first black to enter the United States House of Representatives, served as secretary and committeeman at the Charleston convention. A light mulatto, Rainey was born in Georgetown, South Carolina, where his free father worked as a barber. Joseph Rainey also became a barber, working in Charleston until 1862, when he became a steward on a blockade runner. Forced to work on Confederate fortifications, Rainey escaped with his wife to Hamilton, Bermuda. They returned to Charleston at the end of the war and later moved to Georgetown, where Rainey was elected to the constitutional convention and the state senate. In 1870 he began the first of his four terms in Congress.  


68 Christopher, p. 26; Breibart, p. 75; Reynolds, p. 295; Williamson, pp. 369-370; Samuel D. Smith, p. 45. The
Jonathan J. Wright, the first black admitted to the Pennsylvania bar, had come to South Carolina in 1865 to organize schools for the American Missionary Society. He was educated in the Pennsylvania public schools and at Antioch College and then taught school. Settling in Beaufort, Wright became legal adviser to Robert K. Scott, assistant commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, in addition to his education work. Elected vice-president of the Charleston convention, Wright made one major speech, served on several committees, and was prominent in the debates. He later worked at organizing freedmen for the Republican party and was elected to its state executive committee. An influential member of the 1868 constitutional convention, Wright became a state senator and in 1870 was elected state supreme court justice, a position he held for seven years.69

William Beverly Nash was the only ex-slave among convention leaders who later achieved political prominence.

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Charleston Leader, 25 November 1865, and the New York Tribune, 29 November 1865, both refer to "E.B. Rainey" the only time the full name is mentioned. But no E.B. Rainey ever appeared in later political activities of South Carolina blacks, and none of the available biographical data on Joseph H. Rainey precludes his attending this convention. Since newspapers of the time frequently misspelled names or used the wrong first name, the Rainey referred to most likely was future congressman Joseph H. Rainey.

69 Breibart, pp. 72-73; DuBois, p. 399; Williamson, pp. 365, 367.
"Black as charcoal," Nash was born in Virginia in 1822, but at the age of thirteen was brought to South Carolina, where he later hired out as a porter in a Columbia hotel. In contact with important men, Nash learned to read and write and developed considerable oratorical abilities before he was freed in 1865. Active in the debates of the Charleston convention, he also served on three important committees. He was appointed city magistrate in Columbia in 1867 and was a member of the 1868 constitutional convention and then of the state senate for nine years. A Republican party organizer, Nash was a delegate to the Republican national convention in 1872 and was a presidential elector in 1872 and 1876. He became a prosperous businessman in Columbia as proprietor of a produce stand, a brick factory, and a coal and wood yard. He served as school book commissioner and was on the boards of directors of the state penitentiary, orphan home, and insane asylum. He also held high office in the state militia.  

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71 Lawrence C. Bryant, ed., Negro Senators and Representatives in the South Carolina Legislature 1868-1902 (Orangeburg, South Carolina: School of Graduate Studies, South Carolina State College, 1968), p. 104; Breibart, pp. 81-82; Reynolds, p. 281.
One of the best-known black politicians of the Reconstruction period is Francis L. Cardozo, who wrote the Charleston convention's memorial to the state legislature. Although Cardozo was born in Charleston, he left at the age of twenty-one and had only recently returned to organize and administer freedmen's schools for the American Missionary Society. The son of a white economist and editor, Cardozo as a youth studied in a black elementary school in Charleston before being apprenticed to a carpenter. He completed his education abroad, working at his trade while he studied at the University of Glasgow and then at seminaries in Edinburgh and London. He returned to the United States in 1864 and was pastor of a Congregational church in New Haven, Connecticut, until he went to Charleston in 1865. Cardozo was a member of the 1868 constitutional convention and was elected South Carolina's secretary of state the same year. In 1871 he was professor of Latin at Howard University in Washington, but he returned to Charleston to run successfully for state treasurer in 1872. Active in the Union League, Cardozo was president of its state council in 1870.  

The Charleston convention elected as honorary member one of its most effective speakers, Martin R. Delany, the first black to be commissioned a major in the United States army, whom the Leader characterized as "the Patrick Henry of his race." Although Delany never held an important political office, he was among the most influential organizers of freedmen. He was born in Charlestown, Virginia, in 1812 of free blacks whose fathers reputedly were African chieftains. The Delanys moved to Pennsylvania when Martin was ten, giving him a chance to attend public schools. He continued his studies in Pittsburgh and there established his own newspaper for blacks. He later was assistant editor of Frederick Douglass's North Star in Rochester, New York, and then went on to study medicine at Harvard. He practiced medicine in Pittsburgh and in Chatham, Canada. An early black power advocate, Delany devoted his life to study of the African and to efforts at race solidarity. In 1852 he published The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States, Politically Considered.

Douglass recalled having originally met Cardozo twelve years before in Scotland, where he "was performing daily labor with his hands to obtain the means of going to college." Washington New National Era, 9 May 1872.

73 Charleston Leader, 25 November 1865.
in which he advocated founding a new black nation in Africa. In 1859 he led an exploratory party of blacks into the Niger Valley to seek suitable places for settlement. He visited Liverpool and London on his return trip, arriving in the United States just as the war broke out. In February 1865 Delany received his commission with orders to recruit black troops in South Carolina, a project cut short by the ending of the war. But Delany continued to work among the freedmen for three years as an agent of the Freedmen's Bureau. He also became a customs inspector and a trial justice.74

Another major speaker at the Charleston convention, the Reverend Jonathan C. Gibbs, moved in 1867 to Florida, where he was a prominent leader of the Radical faction of that state's 1868 constitutional convention and served as secretary of state and superintendent of public instruction. A light mulatto, Gibbs was born in Philadelphia about 1827 and was a carpenter in his youth. He graduated from Dartmouth

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College and attended Princeton Theological Seminary for two years. After serving churches in Troy, New York, and in Philadelphia, Gibbs was sent to North Carolina shortly after the war as a Presbyterian missionary. By September 1865 he had moved to Charleston, where he signed a petition from blacks of that city to the conservative constitutional convention. At the November freedmen's convention he made a "telling, spirit-stirring speech" and also wrote the convention's eloquent memorial to Congress.

The Charleston convention issued four documents stating its views and appealing to different bodies. A "Declaration of Rights and Wrongs" analyzed the "self-evident truths" of the Declaration of Independence and found that black men had


76 Aptheker, "South Carolina Negro Conventions, 1865," pp. 93-95. See fn. 61, above.

77 Charleston Leader, 25 November 1865.

78 New York Tribune, 29 November 1865.
been cruelly deprived of the inherent rights supposedly held by all mankind. The convention's "Address to the White Inhabitants of South Carolina," written by Richard H. Cain, assured the whites, "We ask for no special privileges, or peculiar favors. We ask only for even-handed justice." After listing the rights denied by blacks, the address summarized the demands of South Carolina freedmen:

We simply ask that we shall be recognized as men; that there be no obstructions placed in our way; that the same laws which govern white men shall govern black men; that we have the right of a trial by a jury of our peers; that schools be established for the education of colored children as well as white, and that the advantages of both colors shall, in this respect be equal; that no impediments be put in the way of our acquiring homesteads for ourselves and our people; that, in short, we be dealt with as others are--in equity and justice.

The document expressed the hope that soon white South Carolinians might recognize "that although complexions may differ, a 'man's a man for a' that." The convention also sent to the South Carolina legislature a petition written by Francis L. Cardozo asking for repeal of the Black Codes just enacted, for suffrage, and for the right to testify in court, these being the "rights of every Free-man and ... inherent and essential to every

form of Republican government."\textsuperscript{81} A longer memorial to Congress, written by Jonathan C. Gibbs, listed demands the freedmen felt to be just and expedient, asking first "that the strong arm of law and order be placed \textit{alike} over the entire people of this state, that life and property be secured, and the laborer free to sell his labor as the merchant his goods" and "that a fair and impartial construction be given to the pledges of government to us concerning the land question." The assembly also asked for security for school, pulpit, and press; for equal suffrage "as a protection for the hostility evoked by our known faithfulness to our country and flag under all circumstances"; for the right to serve on juries and to bear arms; for an end to all Black Codes. The petition concluded with a plea for "the right to assemble in peaceful convention, to discuss the political questions of the day; the right to enter upon all the avenues of agriculture, commerce trade, to amass wealth by thrift and industry; the right to develop our whole being by all the appliances that belong to civilized society."\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{81}Petition quoted in full in Aptheker, "South Carolina Negro Conventions, 1865," p. 6.

\textsuperscript{82}Allen, Appendix 2, pp. 228-229. The \textit{New York Tribune} correspondent identified the authors of these documents in the 29 November 1865 issue. The \textit{Charleston Courier} carried
Alabama's first statewide black convention met in Mobile, also in November 1865, and in contrast to the Charleston convention was extremely cautious. The resolutions adopted at the convention contained nothing to offend Alabama whites. The fifty-six delegates pledged to foster a spirit of "peace, friendship, and goodwill . . . especially toward our white fellow citizens," to encourage conscientious labor, to cultivate civil responsibility, and to promote education and religion. But the petition the convention sent to Congress describing conditions in their state might explain the conservative facade presented to white Alabamans. According to this entreaty, the state constitutional convention had scornfully rejected a respectful appeal from blacks, black schools stayed open only with federal protection, freedmen no notice of the convention. In addition to this appeal to Congress, over three thousand South Carolina blacks petitioned Congress not to sanction any state constitution which did not grant the franchise to all loyal citizens. *Congressional Globe*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1865, pp. 107-108. Lamson (pp. 38-39) quotes at length from what she says is Whitelaw Reid's description of a session of this convention, but Reid actually was describing a single mass meeting held months earlier (in May 1865) at which Chief Justice Samuel Chase spoke. See Reid, pp. 80-82.

83 New York Tribune, 12 December 1865. The conservative Daily Selma Times, 28 November 1865, commended the resolutions. Cited by Kolchin, p. 153 n. Kolchin says that most of the delegates were ministers (p. 153); there is no indication that any of the later political activists attended this meeting.
were suffering every form of injustice and outrage, and many were "in a condition of practical slavery." The petitioners were convinced that freedom was only a name, so long as blacks were denied suffrage. 84

Two other black state conventions met in December 1865, one in Arkansas and one in Florida. Both demanded full citizenship rights, 85 but the Florida freedmen asked for homesteads and education as well as the franchise. 86

Georgia freedmen met in convention in Augusta 10-16 January 1866, and formed the Georgia Equal Rights Association, with branches to be organized in all counties of the state. 87 This body approved a set of resolutions appealing primarily to the federal government. As in most other states, the delegates asked for suffrage and the right to testify and serve on juries, but the Georgians disavowed any desire for social equality beyond the contacts of ordinary life because, they

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said, "We deem our own race equal to our wants of purely social enjoyment." They asked that government-owned lands be sold to freedmen "at such rates, and upon such terms," as to make landowning a practical reality. In another unique resolution, this assembly asserted that slaves declared free by President Lincoln on 1 January 1863 because they lived in certain areas should be compensated for services rendered after that day. In addition, the delegates pledged to patronize only those white businessmen who were their "true friends." 88

The Augusta convention also issued a lengthy address to the Georgia legislature, a well-phrased document written in a style direct and unequivocal, yet almost poetic at times. In the address, freedmen asked credit for not having inaugurated a servile insurrection during the war. While white men were absent fighting, they said, "We knew then it was in our power to rise, fire your houses, burn your barns and railroads, and discommoder you in a thousand ways; so much so that we could have swept the country like a fearful tornado." But with the implied threat that this was still a recourse, the freedmen assured their former masters that

88 The resolutions were published in full in the Augusta Loyal Georgian, 27 January 1866.
they preferred orderly means of gaining their rights. After specifying their needs and wishes, the delegates graphically described their ill-treatment on railroads and called the legislators' attention to threats of general extermination of blacks "when the Yankees all leave." But such problems would be eliminated, they said, if the black man had the protection of just and equal laws. The Georgia blacks referred to their love of their homeland and their fellowship with southern whites, just as had blacks who convened in other states, but the Augusta statement was uniquely explicit and poignant:

The inscrutable hand of Providence has cast our lot among yours, we have been born and reared among you. The dust of our fathers mingles with yours in the same grave-yards; you have transmitted into our veins much of the rich blood which courses through yours; we talk the same language, and worship the same God; our mothers have nursed you, and satisfied your hunger with our pap; our associations with you have taught us to revere you. This is your country, but it is ours too; you were born here, so were we; your fathers fought for it, but our fathers fed them. Therefore we know of no country but this, and if we did, we are too poor to emigrate to it, so we shall expect to remain in your midst till Providence at least orders a plan of separation.

89 American Freedman 1(April 1866):12-13. The authorship of this document is not known. It appears that fewer future politicians were leaders in this convention than in those held in North Carolina and South Carolina, although the convention voted on the first day to invite Aaron A. Bradley and Henry M. Turner, both of whom would be important state legislators, to participate. Turner had given the convention's opening prayer. Augusta Loyal Georgian, 20 January 1866.
In 1866 southern freedmen were beginning to hope for sanguine results from their numerous appeals. Representatives of the Johnson state governments had not been admitted by Congress in December 1865. Radicals were gaining support in Congress, and more northern people were beginning to consider black suffrage a practical necessity for preserving the gains of the war and assuring the ascendancy of the Republican party. In the meantime, southern blacks were attacking some of their immediate practical problems. The North Carolina State Equal Rights League formed by the earlier Raleigh convention called a convention in Raleigh 2 October 1866 which formed an Education Association for blacks. Also in October 1866 a convention of the Georgia Equal Rights and Education Association was held in Augusta, but political agitation was minimal. A Georgia education convention met in Macon 1 May 1867.

But a frankly political tone pervaded the second statewide convention of Alabama blacks called for 1-3 May 1867.

90 Nowaczyk, p. 14. James H. Harris was elected president of the convention.


92 Americus Tri-Weekly Republican, 4 May 1867. Tunis G. Campbell, later a flamboyant member of the Georgia legislature, took a prominent part in this meeting.
in Mobile to unify black political action. The convention's marked militance contrasted sharply with the timidity of the 1865 Mobile convention and indicated the growing radicalism of Alabama's black political leaders. At least twelve of the delegates would later hold political office. The resolutions adopted by the convention proclaimed their "undeniable right" to hold office, serve on juries and use public accommodations.

The convention address to the people of Alabama firmly aligned the black voters with the Republican party--the only party which had ever attempted to extend their privileges--and disdained overtures by southern Democrats, who would treat them as political servants, not as equals. The address even threatened confiscation for property owners who fired their laborers for supporting the Republican party. On black office-holding they asserted, "Our people are too deficient in education to be generally qualified to fill higher offices, but when qualified men are found, they must not be rejected for being black."

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93 Call issued by a committee on March 26; published in the New York Tribune, 10 April 1867, quoting the Mobile Nationalist, a black paper.


95 "Address of the Colored Convention to the People of Alabama," Mobile Nationalist, 23 May 1867.
The latter half of 1867 and all of 1868 were periods of intense political activity for black leaders. Most of them were busily organizing freedmen for the Republican party, working in registration drives and election campaigns, and helping to write new state constitutions. But in January of 1869 a number of southern political leaders went to Washington for the National Colored Convention. Henry M. Turner of Georgia was elected temporary chairman of the convention; other southern politicians attending included Lewis Lindsay of Virginia, John Carraway of Alabama, T.W. Stringer of Mississippi, and James M. Simms of Georgia.96

Blacks, having achieved some success in political organization, continued to use convention strategy to enlarge racial opportunism in seeking economic advancement and equal civil rights. Late in 1869 blacks began to form labor organizations to improve working conditions for freedmen. Henry M. Turner led a labor convention held in Macon, Georgia,

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96 National Anti-Slavery Standard, 30 January 1869. See also Greene, pp. 24-25, and Charles H. Wesley, Negro Labor in the United States, 1850-1925 (New York: Vanguard Press, 1927), p. 171. Stringer (misspelled "Springer" in the Standard) was a leader of the Mississippi constitutional convention and a state senator. Lindsay served in the Virginia constitutional convention of 1867-1868, Carraway was speaker of the Alabama House of Representatives, and Simms along with Turner had been expelled from the Georgia legislature by its white members.
in October 1869; Robert Brown Elliott, later a congressman, was president of a similar convention in Columbia, South Carolina, the next month. James T. Rapier, who also would be elected to Congress, organized another state labor convention in Montgomery, Alabama. In December 1869 a number of southern political leaders attended the National Colored Labor Convention in Washington and helped to organize a black labor union. James H. Harris of North Carolina was elected convention president, and Rapier of Alabama became a vice-president of the convention as well as of the new labor union. Joseph H. Rainey and Johathan J. Wright of South Carolina made speeches and served on committees. James M. Simms and future congressman Jefferson Long of Georgia also attended. Harris, Rapier, and Rainey were also leaders in the first National Labor Union meeting, held in Washington in January 1871.

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98 Lamson, pp. 77-79; DuBois, p. 416; Simkins and Woody, p. 235.


100 Washington New Era, 13 January 1870.

101 Ibid., 12 January 1871.
The first regional meeting of southern blacks, the Southern States Convention of Colored Men, was held in Columbia, South Carolina, in October 1871;\textsuperscript{102} delegates attended from all the ex-Confederate states except Virginia, as well as from Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. Alonzo J. Ransier, lieutenant governor of South Carolina, presided. Robert Brown Elliott was chairman of the committee preparing the convention address, which called for suppression of violence and intimidation by whites, for full civil rights, and for an equal opportunity to learn trades and skills.\textsuperscript{103} In spite of party strife within delegations from South Carolina and Louisiana the meeting was fairly harmonious,\textsuperscript{104} and the


\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Washington New National Era}, 4 November 1871.

\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Ibid.}, 26 October 1871.
convention on its adjournment formed the National Protective Union of the Colored People of the United States of America, with South Carolina Supreme Court Justice Jonathan J. Wright as president.105

Because convention leaders felt their meeting was not well attended as a result of conflicts with fall election campaigns, they issued a call for the National Convention of Colored People to meet in New Orleans in April 1872. This meeting reflected some of the national Republican party strife. Although the delegates overwhelmingly passed a resolution expressing no sympathy with the Liberal Republican convention to be held in May, they hastened to adopt another praising Senator Charles Sumner's actions on behalf of blacks.106 The convention address particularly emphasized equal treatment in public conveyances and accommodations and equality of educational facilities.107 Many of the


same politicians who participated in the Columbia and New Orleans conventions were active in the National Civil Rights Convention held in Washington in December of 1873 to urge Congress to pass a strong civil rights bill. All of these conventions of 1869 through 1873 reflected a common concern for civil rights, education, and economic issues.

The black convention movement of the Reconstruction era reveals a consistent pattern of common ideas and aspirations among freedmen and their leaders. The public statements of the Raleigh and Mobile conventions of 1865 were especially conservative, but all the early meetings offered conciliation to southern whites and appealed to their self-interest as well as to their humane instincts. The blacks pointed out mutual benefits to be gained from elevation of the freedmen, since blacks had no intention of leaving their common homeland. All the conventions advocated landownership as a major means of solving the freedmen's problems, and all emphasized education as essential for blacks. The conventions

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108 Elliott was temporary chairman and Pinchback president of the convention. Other important southern politicians who participated were J.T. Rapier and Jeremiah Haralson of Alabama; Josiah T. Walls of Florida; Joseph H. Rainey, Alonzo J. Ransier and Richard H. Cain of South Carolina; State Superintendent of Education Thomas W. Cardozo and Congressman John R. Lynch of Mississippi; State Senator James Henri Burch and Lieutenant Governor C.C. Antoine of Louisiana, and George T. Ruby and Customs Inspector Norris Wright Cuney of Texas.
demanded decent working conditions and just compensation for labor, and by the late 1860's conventions were the organizational base of black labor unions. The blacks protested against violence and the restrictive Black Codes; they asked to be treated equally as men.

After the northern Republican victories in the election of 1866 and the passage of the March 1867 Reconstruction Acts, the conventions were generally more militant, but even early conventions had asked for suffrage, with the exception of the Raleigh meeting. They argued for black enfranchisement as a natural, legal, and constitutional right, as a matter of political expediency, and as the only means of protecting their newly-won freedom. A persistent theme in convention statements is the failure of the great American democratic tradition in the problem of the black. Buttressing demands for equal political rights was an angry insistence that blacks did understand the meaning of freedom and only asked for the right to exhibit their understanding.

The conventions of 1865 and 1866 served as an important base of organization for blacks. Some conventions established committees to continue their work and call future meetings; state Equal Rights Leagues were formed by conventions in Louisiana, Georgia, and North Carolina. Various appeals of
the early conventions also supplied Radicals in Congress with valuable ammunition for their attacks on Johnson's policies. Furthermore, the plight of freedmen as depicted in convention appeals influenced northern conservatives toward a more radical Reconstruction.

But the early conventions were most significant as a proving-ground for black political leaders. Although there was some slight white influence in the form of occasional speakers from the Freedmen's Bureau, the army, and the Republican party, these were truly black conventions run by blacks. Sidney Andrews' description of the Raleigh convention applies to the others as well: "It was really a convention of colored men, not a colored men's convention engineered by white men."109

The blacks who organized and led these early conventions were not newly-freed slaves fresh from the fields. A highly privileged group, they were extraordinary men fit for extraordinary times. Of the sixteen leaders whose backgrounds have been described, only three had ever been slaves, and two of these had escaped to the North well before the Civil War began. The third ex-slave, William B. Nash, had unusual opportunities to gain education and sophistication

while working in an important hotel. In contradiction of the traditional image, not one of the sixteen was illiterate; indeed, the group as a whole was much better educated than a cross-section of the white population. Six are known to have attended reputable colleges and universities, four of these having graduated and at least three of the four having additional graduate or professional training. Four leaders were born in the North, but of the twelve southern natives, eight had moved north as children or had traveled or been educated in the North, in Europe, or in the West Indies, leaving only four who had never lived outside the South. Three of the group served in the Union army.

With the exception of one planter, these black leaders had been professionals, artisans, or tradesmen. Five were ordained, experienced ministers, two of these also being teachers. Two were barbers, one a physician, one a lawyer, and one a dentist. The others had worked as upholsterer, brick mason, tailor, shipping clerk, and hotel porter. In addition to their other occupations, four edited newspapers at one time or another. The color of one of the group is unknown, but of the remaining fifteen only five were described as black or full-blooded African. The other ten were of noticeably mixed blood, most of them described as "mulatto."
These sixteen men were uniquely suited by ability and background to assume leadership at a time when many of their race were lost in the confusion of the immediate postwar months, and their experiences in the early conventions further prepared them for real political leadership when blacks received the franchise.

Future office-holders served the conventions in various ways: they instigated, organized, and promoted; they presided, made speeches, participated in debates, served on committees, prepared addresses and resolutions. They strongly influenced the direction and public stance taken by the conventions. When blacks were granted suffrage in 1867, their votes often went to black men who had risen to prominence in the early conventions. Major black candidates were rarely chosen arbitrarily by white Republican leaders; most of them had been working to improve the position of their people for two years or longer, and the black convention of the immediate postwar period was a major vehicle for that work.
CHAPTER III

BLACKS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLICAN COALITION

Despite their abilities and their initiative, black leaders could ultimately be little more than bystanders in the political life of the nation without black suffrage—an imperative recognized by some blacks even before the war ended. Although the extension of suffrage necessary for active black political participation did not become a crucial national issue until after the establishment of the "Johnson governments" in former Confederate states, free blacks in federally-occupied New Orleans began seeking the franchise as early as 1863. When appeals to Brigadier General George F. Shepley, military governor of Louisiana, and to General Nathaniel P. Banks, Union commander in New Orleans, brought no response, the newly-organized Union Radical Association decided in January 1864 to send a representative to lay the suffrage claims of free blacks before President Lincoln. The President replied that he would intervene in...

granting limited suffrage only if it were necessary to the readmission of Louisiana to the Union. But his congratulatory telegram to Michael Hahn, "the first Free State Governor of Louisiana," did include the following: "I barely suggest, for your private consideration, whether some of the colored people may not be let in, as, for instance, the very intelligent, and especially those who have fought gallantly in our ranks." Although the 1864 Louisiana constitutional convention refused to consider even such restricted suffrage, pressure from Governor Hahn and General Banks resulted in a constitutional provision authorizing the legislature to "pass laws extending the suffrage to such persons, citizens of the United States, as by military service, by taxation to support the government, or by intellectual fitness, may be deemed entitled thereto." But the new legislature in late 1864 refused to consider a black petition for suffrage.


4 Ficklen, pp. 71-72.

Failing in this initial effort, New Orleans' free blacks attempted to enlist all Louisiana freedmen in an expanded suffrage campaign through the statewide black convention of January 1865. And despite President Johnson's claim that "the negroes have not asked for the privilege of voting" in his veto of the first Reconstruction Act, blacks in other southern states began soon after the Confederate surrender to organize and appeal for black suffrage. Black leaders gave priority to gaining the vote, even over education and landownership. Black groups argued that they could foster their own interests and avoid virtual re-enslavement only through the ballot box. Appeals from the mass meetings and conventions of 1865 and early 1866 further reminded northerners that unless blacks were enfranchised, former rebels could dominate national legislation through the increased representation resulting from emancipation.


7 On a trip through the South with Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase in May and June 1865, Whitelaw Reid found that "the expectation was general, among the more intelligent [of the freedmen], that suffrage would be given them." Whitelaw Reid, After the War: A Tour of the Southern States, 1865-1866 (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 301. In Savannah a delegation of blacks called on Chase to inquire about prospects for enfranchisement. Reid, p. 143. For a description of blacks' early organized appeals for suffrage see Chapter 2.
The pleas of blacks for enfranchisement were reinforced by numerous appeals from white southern Unionists who were becoming convinced that black suffrage was the only practical means of preventing a return to power of a southern oligarchy devoted to undermining any constructive reconstruction program. The Union Association of Alexandria, Virginia, organized in June 1865 and issued an address to Congress and the people of the North criticizing Governor Francis H. Pierpont's appointment of ex-Confederates to state offices and advocating black suffrage as the only way to avoid a Confederate take-over. About the same time, Brigadier General Israel Vogdes wrote Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase from Florida that the black vote was the only remedy to government by "the still-rebellious and traitorous class." Vogdes confessed his reluctance to adopt this stand:

I was opposed to having this right conferred upon him, until observation confirmed me in the opinion that it was the only permanent element that could be put in opposition to the hostile secession element of the South.

An Alabama Unionist wrote Senator Zachariah Chandler that unless blacks were allowed to vote, the loyal freedman who

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9 Vogdes to Chase, 7 June 1865, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
aided the Union would be "bound hand and foot over to the men who once owned him."  

Endorsement of black suffrage became more widespread as ex-Confederate officials were elected to Congress and to state offices under Johnson's restoration procedures. Brigadier General James L. Brisbin wrote Thaddeus Stevens from Arkansas that allowing these newly-elected legislators and congressmen to run the state and national governments would be to disgrace Union soldiers who had died. Loyal men could not be elected in the South, he asserted, without the black vote. Loyalists from Virginia and Georgia urged Stevens to support legislation removing rebels from office and granting suffrage to freedmen to secure the election of loyal men. A Florida Radical advocated military occupation followed by universal suffrage as the only deterrent to constant outrages suffered by freedmen with the acquiescence of conservative officials. An Illinois

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11 Brisbin to Stevens, 29 December 1865, Thaddeus Stevens Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

12 Augustus Watson to Stevens, 3 May 1866; William Strother to Stevens, 28 April 1866, Stevens Papers.

Republican wrote Congressman Elihu B. Washburne that loyal men knew the necessity of suffrage for blacks "if they are to have a government they can live under." Rebel control of southern state governments unquestionably helped southern Unionists overcome their antipathy to granting political privileges to freedmen. A Virginian reported to Stevens, "There is no union man who does not infinitely [sic] more fear and dread the domination of the recent Rebels than that of the Recent Slaves." After the defeat of the Texas Union party in 1866, A.J. Hamilton began to argue in favor of black suffrage to prevent control of the South by ex-Confederates.

Southern Unionists also insisted that black suffrage must be imposed directly by the federal government. Daniel Richards, leader of the more radical wing of the Florida Republican party, wrote Congressman Washburne that the proposed fourteenth amendment could not effect the desired end because, he said, "The great majority of these rebels

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14 Wait Talcott to Washburne, 18 December 1866, Washburne Papers.

15 William B. Downey to Stevens, 7 January 1867, Stevens Papers.

16 John P. Carrier, "A Political History of Texas during the Reconstruction, 1865-1874" (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1971), pp. 177-178.
care but very little about representation in Congress if
they can only retain control of the State government and
the administration of the laws of the State." If the black
received the franchise, conservative hopes of retaining
complete control of the state government would be lost.
Any just application of laws to loyal men and freedmen
depended upon federally enforced equal suffrage.\textsuperscript{17} Richards' arguments were later reinforced by O.B. Hart, leader of
Florida's more conservative Republican faction, who insisted
that Florida could have a republican form of government
only through federally imposed suffrage.\textsuperscript{18}

Early in January 1867, while Richards was in Washington
lobbying for more stringent reconstruction laws, he wrote
several Florida Unionists asking them if the state government
could be permanently secured to loyal men through universal
suffrage. While three of his respondents feared that
ignorant freedmen in the interior who had stayed with their
former masters would be misled by them, they felt that almost
all who had left their old masters would vote Republican.
The Florida Unionists believed that the black who had served

\textsuperscript{17} Richards to Washburne, 7 May 1866, Washburne Papers.

\textsuperscript{18} Hart to Richards, 8 January 1867, William P. Fessenden
Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington,
D.C.
in the Union army must receive the franchise at all costs, while one wrote that loyalists could not control the state government without total black suffrage. Richards made a note about the background of each correspondent and passed the letters on to Senator William P. Fessenden of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction. Such appeals from white southern Unionists helped convince Republican congressmen that the freedmen comprised the only large group whose votes could be marshaled against white conservatives to elect loyal white men in the southern states.

The movement for black suffrage evolved slowly on the national level in the early postwar months. On this question as on others concerning restoration policy, President Johnson's position seemed uncertain and contradictory. Although the President had earlier shown some sympathy for imposed black suffrage, his proclamations establishing provisional governments for North Carolina in late May and for Mississippi in mid-June 1865 omitted any provision for black suffrage, thus implying that this was a matter for states to determine. The President expressed this conviction

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19 C.L. Robinson to Richards, 10 January 1867, J.C. Emerson to Richards 11 January 1867, Norman Brownson to Richards, 12 January 1867, Jonathan T. Turner to Richards, 12 January 1867, Fessenden Papers.

more explicitly in subsequent statements. But Johnson's actions do not indicate clearly whether he actually wanted the states themselves to extend suffrage to freedmen. He repeatedly stated that such strong enmity existed between blacks and non-slaveowning whites that immediate black suffrage would lead to a war of the races. Johnson also expressed fear that the large planters would control the black vote, thus increasing the power of the antebellum oligarchy. He nevertheless sent provisional Governor William L. Sharkey of Mississippi a telegram advising that the state constitutional convention adopt limited black suffrage as an expedient to out-maneuver the Radicals. But when Sharkey replied that the suffrage question would be left to the legislature, Johnson dropped the subject and did not repeat his recommendation to any of the other southern states.

21"President Johnson's Interview with George L. Stearns," 3 October 1865, Edward McPherson, p. 49; December 1865 message to Congress, Cox and Cox, p. 156; "Interview with Senator Dixon of Connecticut," 28 January 1866, Edward McPherson, p. 51; "Interview with a colored delegation respecting suffrage," 7 February 1866, ibid., p. 52.

22Edward McPherson, pp. 49, 51, 52.

23Ibid., pp. 19-20.

24Cox and Cox, p. 159.
During the presidential reconstruction period one of the most active northern crusaders for black suffrage was Frederick Douglass, well-known ex-slave and abolitionist leader. In 1865 he made speeches throughout the North advocating black suffrage, and in 1866 he expanded his campaign to include specific attacks on Johnson's restoration procedures.25 Douglass was spokesman for a delegation of northern black leaders who appealed to the President for equal suffrage in February 1866, and he wrote a public reply to Johnson's arguments against extending the franchise.26 The wide publicity given this interview helped mobilize public support for equal suffrage.27 The same delegation "made it their business to personally see and urge upon leading Republican statesmen the wisdom and duty of impartial suffrage."28 Douglass also headed a group of black leaders who addressed a memorial to the Senate opposing the proposed constitutional amendment allowing states to disfranchise classes of citizens with the penalty of reduced congressional powers.


26 Edward McPherson, pp. 52-56.

27 Foner, p. 245.

Southern black lobbyists who served as their states' unofficial representatives in Washington in 1866 reinforced Douglass' efforts. His associates in the abolitionist movement also strongly advocated black suffrage in the National Anti-Slavery Standard throughout 1866.

The national equal suffrage drive received further impetus from the Southern Loyalists' Convention held in Philadelphia in September 1866 as a counter-measure to the pro-Johnson National Union Convention. Although only one southern black attended, delegates from the unreconstructed states, many of whom were recently arrived northerners,

29 Ibid., pp. 385-386.


31 National Anti-Slavery Standard, January-December 1866, passim.


were determined that the convention should endorse black suffrage. Border state delegates pressed for an early adjournment to prevent such an endorsement, but on the failure of their efforts merely withdrew from the convention to avoid further open conflict.\(^3\)\(^4\) A special address from the committee on unreconstructed states asking for federally imposed "impartial suffrage and equality before the law"\(^3\)\(^5\) was adopted by an 80-8 vote from the southern states, with an additional fifteen affirmative votes being added by sympathetic border state delegates.\(^3\)\(^6\) Representatives from the southern states, convinced that total black suffrage was the only means of protection and political participation for loyalists in their states, had forced the convention to take a stand more clearly aligning Radicals with the goal of equal suffrage.

The congressional struggle for black suffrage was led in the Senate by Charles Sumner and in the House by Thaddeus Stevens. During President Johnson's first few weeks in office, Sumner had urged upon him the justice of giving

\(^{34}\) The Southern Loyalists' Convention (Philadelphia: Tribune Tracts--No. 2), pp. 39-42; National Anti-Slavery Standard, 15 September 1866.

\(^{35}\) Southern Loyalists' Convention, p. 52.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., p. 61.
freedmen the vote. Sumner subsequently came to the conclusion that black suffrage was a practical necessity for the protection of freedmen and white southern Unionists and by early 1866 was advocating a constitutional amendment giving complete enfranchisement to blacks. Sumner was the chief agent for relaying to Congress suffrage petitions from blacks all over the country.

Thaddeus Stevens did not consider universal suffrage a panacea; he believed economic independence more crucial than the ballot to the progress of freedmen. Stevens envisioned a prolonged military occupation which would allow for a complete restructuring of southern society. The federal government would confiscate ex-rebels' estates and distribute them among the freedmen. Once blacks were economically secure and free of the influence of former

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37 Franklin, Reconstruction, p. 27.

38 The development of Sumner's support for a black suffrage amendment is traced in David Donald, Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), pp. 218-267.


40 For Stevens's speech on reconstruction policy, see Congressional Globe, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1865-1866, pt. 1: 72-75.
masters, they could be given the vote. In December 1866 he introduced a North Carolina reconstruction bill calling for limited but impartial suffrage, but he soon embraced the necessity of immediate unrestricted suffrage to prevent political domination by ex-rebels. Prevailing laissez faire political thought could not sanction the massive federal interference Stevens's truly radical reconstruction plans required, and Stevens finally had to accept black suffrage as a compromise means of protecting the freedmen.

Moderate Republican congressmen, made increasingly uneasy by southern rejection of the proposed Fourteenth Amendment and reports of persecution of blacks and Unionists and by the President's apparent alliance with the recent enemy, became more responsive to appeals by blacks, white Unionists, and civil rights spokesmen. The massive Republican victory in the congressional elections of 1866, aided by Johnson's intemperate campaigning, not only gave congressional Republicans an ample majority for overriding presidential

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43 Brock, pp. 178, 294-295; Stampp, pp. 128-131.
vetoes, but also reflected northern revulsion against developments in the South. Even before newly elected Republicans were seated, moderates as well as the Radical minority were determined to strengthen the role of Congress in reconstruction and thereby restrict the power of ex-Confederates. By February 1867 moderate Republicans had come to accept mandatory black suffrage as necessary for a more extensive reorganization of southern politics than that demanded by the Fourteenth Amendment. \footnote{Martin E. Mantell, *Johnson, Grant, and the Politics of Reconstruction* (New York: Columbia, University Press, 1973), pp. 22-23; Franklin, *Reconstruction*, pp. 69-70.}

Congress finally brought southern blacks directly into the political process through passage of the act of 2 March 1867 "to provide for more efficient Government of the Rebel States." \footnote{Congressional Globe, 39th Cong., 2nd sess., 1866-1867, pt. 1:1745, 1976.} This First Reconstruction Act, subsequently amplified and corrected by three additional measures, divided the ten unrestored states into five districts, to be governed by military commanders until those states had approved constitutions granting full black male suffrage and had ratified the Fourteenth Amendment. After years of appeals, debates, and various limited suffrage proposals,
Congress completely reorganized the southern electorate by disfranchising much of the antebellum political leadership and granting unrestricted suffrage to all loyal black males.

The congressional reconstruction acts were based on the assumption that granting the franchise to southern blacks would implement congressional policies and counteract the renewed power of ex-Confederates. But at first southern Conservative leaders were not willing to accept this end as inevitable. Unable to avoid black suffrage, they determined to control it and use black votes to undermine congressional aims and expand their own power. This strategy by former slaveowners was not entirely new. Even in 1866 Alabama black belt legislators attempted unsuccessfully to regain their political ascendancy over the northern Alabama Unionists controlling the legislature by extending limited suffrage to some blacks whose votes they expected to control.

By the beginning of 1867, discerning white leaders were

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46 Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins, "Unionist Efforts to Control Alabama Reconstruction, 1865-1867," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 50(1968):58; Walter L. Fleming, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1949), p. 388. These black belt leaders were reflecting the conviction expressed by General Wade Hampton's brother to Whitelaw Reid: "They [northern men] would only be multiplying the power of the old and natural leaders of Southern politics by every vote given to a former slave." Reid, p. 288. A Virginia native also was scornful of building a southern Republican party on the black vote, but he feared
aware that Congress had the power to reorganize southern state governments, and some were advising acceptance of black suffrage. With the passage of the First Reconstruction Act, many of the same spokesmen who had led their states in rejection of the milder Fourteenth Amendment now counseled compliance. This shift in strategy resulted from a realization that their earlier expectations were hopeless and that the radical policies truly were sustained by northern public opinion. The question was no longer whether the Johnson governments would be reorganized, but who would have power in the reorganized governments. The so-called cooperationist movement was especially strong in states with a black majority, where conventions were sure to be approved and Conservatives were determined to dominate them.

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the adverse influence of corrupt, low native whites on enfranchised freedmen. S.S. Baxter to William P. Fessenden, 22 December 1866, Fessenden Papers.


This conservative policy was based on the assumption that southern whites could continue to direct the actions of freedmen just as they had directed those of slaves. The planter class did not believe the ex-slave capable of the independent judgment which would allow him to determine his own interests and to align himself with the faction which best represented those interests. Leading Conservatives accordingly began their campaign to convince freedmen that white southerners were their "truest friends and most ready sympathizers." Prominent men sponsored barbecues and addressed black meetings throughout the South during the spring and early summer of 1867 in an attempt to convince the black that any benefit to his race could only come

49Leaders of the Mississippi cooperationist movement wrote a series of newspaper messages to convince whites that the black vote could be controlled by quick acquiescence to congressional acts and persuasion of the freedmen. William C. Harris, Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), pp. 237-239.

50Tarboro Weekly Southerner, 16 May 1867. Similar admonitions to blacks appeared in the Southerner of 18 April 1867 and 6 June 1867, and the Charleston Daily Courier, 26 March 1867 and 10 April 1867. The radical Mobile Nationalist, 25 April 1867, commented on the current campaign: "If there are not many negroes in the conservative party, it is not for want of present zeal among its leaders--as far as words go--or public professions. Indeed they undertake to out-Herod Herod, and claim to be better friends of the colored people than those who have emancipated and enfranchised them."
through an alliance with his former masters. Conservatives even had some temporary success in persuading such black leaders as James H. Harris of North Carolina, Beverly Nash of South Carolina, and Henry M. Turner of Georgia to speak from the same platform.

All these efforts were doomed to failure, however. For one thing, the cooperationist leaders did not represent the majority of southern whites, who were hostile to any kind of alliance with former slaves. More importantly, the freedman was not so docile as the slave. During two years of freedom, the black had learned through the Black Codes


and his own experiences the true attitude of Conservatives toward any improvement in the status of blacks. Many freedmen were aware that the sudden Conservative overtures had been forced by Republican efforts for political equality and turned quite naturally toward the Republican party. A Florida Unionist wrote to Senator William P. Fessenden, "The colored men will vote Republican by as true an instinct as a robin flies south in November." And Republican organizer Thomas W. Conway wrote to Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase from North Carolina, "The colored people are wide awake even down here and it is impossible to lead them to vote for their former masters." 

Predictably, the black leaders who had emerged in local and statewide meetings in 1865 and 1866 saw the Republican party as an obvious vehicle for achieving the aims of their race as well as their own personal ambitions. Knowledgeable, articulate black leaders were quickly recognized as the most effective organizers of the freed masses, but the task of building a workable political organization from an inchoate black electorate was enormous. Thousands of freedmen had attended rallies and conventions in 1865 and 1866, but tens

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53 C.D. Lincoln to Fessenden, 20 September 1867, Fessenden Papers.
54 Conway to Chase, 23 April 1867, Chase Papers.
of thousands of the newly enfranchised had not. Many were unsure of their status and ignorant of procedures for registering and voting. But many freedmen did know that the Republican party had delivered them from slavery, and now Republican promises of political and civil equality and increased educational opportunity attracted blacks to the Radical camp despite conservative inducements. Capitalizing on this natural attraction, black leaders were instrumental in successfully publicizing Radical policies, establishing Union Leagues and Republican clubs, and organizing freedmen to register and vote.

Soon after the surrender the Union League, an arm of the Radical wing of the Republican party, extended its activities to southern Unionists and in some states incorporated secret Unionist societies already formed. Under

55 The Union League was founded in Philadelphia in 1862 to promote Union support. Walter L. Fleming, Documentary History of Reconstruction, 2 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1907), 2:7; Franklin, Reconstruction, pp. 123-124; Scroggs, pp. 59-60. A disgruntled North Carolina Conservative complained, "These unprincipled creatures are organizing these oath bound secret political leagues or clubs in every neighborhood." D.F. Caldwell to Jonathan Worth, Correspondence of Jonathan Worth, 2:804. Peggy Lamson, The Glorious Failure: Black Congressman Robert Brown Elliott and the Reconstruction in South Carolina (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1972), p. 43, states that there was no connection between the northern and southern Leagues, but her only evidence is a 1970 statement from the librarian of the Union League of Philadelphia. Black politician Francis L. Cardozo, in his Address Before the Grand
the impetus of congressional reconstruction measures, the Leagues in the spring and summer of 1867 accelerated their work of politically educating the freedmen. 56 Devising elaborate oaths, ceremonies, and initiation rites to appeal to the recent slave, the Union League instructed its new members in their rights and duties, supervised their registration, and urged them to vote for no one who had participated in the rebellion. 57

Black leaders quickly accepted leading roles in the League. James H. Harris of North Carolina was first vice-president of the state League and was elected grand marshal of the national League in December 1867. 58 In Florida the Union League was organized by a mulatto barber from Baltimore, William U. Saunders, with the aid of white Radicals Liberty Council of the Union Leagues (Columbia: John W. Denny, 1870), p. 3, refers to the northern origin of the Leagues. Clement M. Silvestro, "None but Patriots: The Union Leagues in Civil War and Reconstruction" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1959), passim, describes the extension of northern Union League activities into the South after the war.

56 In some areas, the League had earlier been actively campaigning for black suffrage. C.S. Watson to Benjamin F. Wade, 28 January 1867, Benjamin F. Wade Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

57 Silvestro, p. 327.

58 Augusta Loyal Georgian, 15 February 1868; Silvestro, p. 350.
Billings and Daniel Richards. Sent to Florida in 1867 by the Republican Congressional Committee, Saunders aroused broad black support for the Union League, which quickly replaced the moderate "Lincoln Brotherhood" established earlier by Freedmen's Bureau official Thomas W. Osborn. The articulate and literate Saunders, a former Union soldier and strong Grant supporter, was elected state president of the Union League and rapidly became one of Florida's most prominent black politicians.59

The Union League had found widespread support among whites in the northern part of Alabama in 1865 and 1866,60 but with the extension of suffrage to blacks the black belt counties were rapidly organized under the leadership of Benjamin F. Royal, an ex-slave who later served in the constitutional convention and the state senate.61

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61 Silvestro, p. 360; Hume, p. 84. Royal was also Register of Bankruptcy for the Seventh District. More
the Union Leagues came under the control of Radical northern-born mulatto leader George T. Ruby of Galveston, who was elected state president. Numerous other blacks were locally important in the establishment of the Union League, which was very successful in welding blacks together into a cohesive political force. After completing its initial task of political education, however, the League declined in importance as its leaders devoted themselves to more permanent and effective party activities.

The Freedmen's Bureau inevitably played a considerable role in organizing the freedmen for the Republican party. Upon passage of the reconstruction acts of March 1867, the Bureau instructed its officers and agents to disseminate information to enable the freedmen "to avail themselves of all political rights and privileges which those acts extended

locally, ex-slave George W. Houston was Union League leader in Sumter County. Houston became a voter registrar and state legislator. Kolchin, pp. 166-167.

62 Silvestro, pp. 362-363, 396; Virginia N. Hinze, "Norris Wright Cuney" (Master's thesis, Rice University, 1965), p. 12. Ruby, born in New York City and educated in Maine, went to Louisiana in 1866 to teach black children, but after threats and a beating by whites he went to Texas as an agent of the Freedmen's Bureau. He became the most important black Republican leader in Texas, was elected to the state senate, and made a number of public appearances on a northern tour in 1870. Lawrence D. Rice, The Negro in Texas, 1874-1900 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), p. 34; National Anti-Slavery Standard, 22 September 1866, 1 and 22 October 1870; Washington New National Era, 20 October 1870, 25 April 1872.
to them" and to "advise and encourage registration." A number of black officers expanded these instructions to include Republican proselytizing and even used their Bureau positions for personal aggrandizement. White Bureau officials also directed freedmen toward the "correct" party. A white official wrote a Louisiana Radical in April 1867,

> The Colored People call on me very often to get advice in regard to voting. I always advise them to hold frequent meetings and on election days have someone at the poles [sic] who can tell if they are giving the proper vote.

Alabama's Assistant Bureau Commissioner, Wager Swayne, distributed Republican literature and exhorted the freedmen to align themselves with the party. In November 1867 a white Virginia loyalist praised Bureau officials for having persuaded freedmen to elect the best of available Republican

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candidates. But Bureau agents were by no means hand-picked Republican emissaries, and most of the assistance they gave to organizing the party in the South seems to have been incidental to their general duties.

Concerned that the reconstruction acts be fully implemented to insure Republican control of the ten unrestored states, national Radicals actively directed organizing activities among blacks. The National Union League Council sent agents into the South to organize Leagues and help establish state party machinery. In April Thomas W. Conway began his tour of eight southern states, where he made frequent speeches and gave organizational aid. Also in April Massachusetts Senator Henry Wilson left Washington on a speaking tour of the South, where his addresses defending congressional reconstruction were enthusiastically received by large crowds of blacks. The Republican Congressional Committee also sent Representative William D. ("Pig-Iron")

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Kelly to speak throughout the region in the summer of 1867. The Radical-controlled Republican National Committee sent William J. Armstrong to South Carolina to coordinate Republican work there, as well as dispatching Daniel Richards and the mulatto William U. Saunders to win Florida blacks away from more moderate organizers. The Republican Congressional Committee delegated the Reverend James V. Givens, a black South Carolina native, to canvass the southern states. Conservatives charged that, in addition to these overt activities sponsored by northern Radicals, northerners were subsidizing southern Republicans and that a northern-financed "Union Publishing Committee" was spreading Radical propaganda among blacks and poorer whites.

Benefiting from northern Radical support and the proliferating Union Leagues and utilizing leadership developed in black churches, Freedmen's Bureau schools, and black

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70 Armstrong assisted with the state Republican convention in Columbia. Charleston Daily Courier, 25 and 26 July 1867, 5 August 1867. Givens was speaking to large gatherings, mostly black, in Virginia in August. New York Tribune, 2 August 1867, 5 September 1867.

71 Scroggs, pp. 78-79.

72 Joel Williamson, After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction, 1861-1877 (Chapel Hill:
meetings and conventions, Republicans rapidly established permanent statewide organizations during the spring and summer of 1867. In South Carolina, black leaders were extraordinarily prominent in every stage of party development. Creation of state party machinery was initiated by Charleston blacks at meetings on March 7 and 21. About three hundred persons met at Military Hall in Charleston March 7 and selected a committee of thirteen, eleven of whom were black, to draft a platform. At the second meeting, held to ratify the resulting platform, a large crowd heard speeches by Francis L. Cardozo and B.F. Randolph. Cardozo had risen to prominence in earlier black meetings, but Randolph was now emerging as one of the most active and effective

University of North Carolina Press, 1965), pp. 365-370, describes the activities of future political leaders of South Carolina in churches and the educational division of the Freedmen's Bureau.

73 New York Tribune, 9 March 1867; Simkins and Woody, p. 82.


75 See Chapter 2.
black organizers for the Republicans. Born in Kentucky in the early 1820's, the mulatto Randolph in early childhood was taken to Ohio, where he attended Oberlin and entered the Methodist ministry. He came to South Carolina as chaplain of a black regiment and stayed to become assistant superintendent of Freedmen's Bureau schools and assistant editor of the Charleston Advocate. The March 21 assemblage, heeding the urgings of Randolph and Cardozo, adopted the platform endorsing congressional reconstruction, payment of the national debt and repudiation of Confederate debt, public schools, revision of courts and laws, civil rights legislation, division and sale of unoccupied lands, elimination of imprisonment for debt, and the election to public office of men "truly loyal, honest, and capable, irrespective

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76 After being elected to the constitutional convention of 1868 and to the South Carolina Senate, Randolph was assassinated by whites in October 1868. Emily Reynolds, Biographical Directory of the Senate of the State of South Carolina, 1776-1964 (Columbia: South Carolina Archives, 1964), p. 296; Charleston Advocate, 11 May 1867; New York Times, 28 October 1868, p. 5. Reporting on the July Republican convention, the New York Times correspondent described Randolph as "a person of superior mind, an excellent debater, a man of good sense and moderation." Two other black delegates attacked him for his conservatism in the convention. New York Times, 31 July 1867. Randolph's death is described in detail in a letter from A.J. Ransier, black chairman of the state central committee who was elected lieutenant governor in 1870, to T.L. Tullock, secretary of the Republican Congressional Committee, 19 October 1868, William E. Chandler Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
of race, color, or previous condition." An adjourned session on March 26 led by blacks Cardozo, Randolph, R.H. Cain, and the new associate editor of the Charleston Leader, Robert Brown Elliott, voted final adoption of the platform and pledged to unite against a return to power of the old oligarchy.

The first state convention of the Union Republican party met in Charleston on May 7. Since only nine of thirty-one counties was represented, the convention adjourned three days later after planning a second convention for Columbia in July. But the Charleston convention did set up a central committee to accelerate Republican organization.

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77 Edward McPherson, pp. 252-253; Charleston Daily Courier, 22 March 1867. Among committee members signing the proposed platform were R.C. DeLarge, who had participated in several black meetings in 1865 (see Chapter 2), and J.N. Hayne, who later served in the constitutional convention of 1868 and the South Carolina legislature. Hume, p. 436.

78 Charleston Daily Courier, 27 March 1867; New York Tribune, 5 April 1867. Cain, editor of the Leader, had been active in black political meetings in 1865 and 1866 (see Chapter 2). He probably introduced the eloquent young newcomer, Elliott, to South Carolina politics. Elliott was elected honorary member of the July state convention and made a speech to that gathering. Charleston Daily Courier, 26 July 1867. Elliott's name had first appeared on the Leader's masthead just three days earlier, 23 March 1867. For a dissection of his alleged antecedents, see Chapter 1, "A Man of Mystery," in Lamson, pp. 21-33.

79 Williamson, p. 371; Simkins and Woody, p. 82; Charleston Daily Courier, 13 May 1867; New York Tribune, 14 May 1867. A list of officials for this May convention reads like a "who's
B.F. Randolph and other blacks traveled widely over the state before the Columbia convention addressing black meetings, setting up local Republican clubs, and arranging the election of convention delegates. At the July convention, the state central committee reported Republican organizations set up in all the coastal counties and in three large inland districts since May.

The success of party recruitment among freedmen was reflected in the attendance of sixty-four blacks among the eighty delegates to the convention which opened July 24 in Columbia. Blacks dominated convention offices, electing as president Richard H. Gleaves, a mulatto from Pennsylvania of "considerable parliamentary ability" who had come to

who" of black political leadership in the state. Five officers--R.H. Cain, J.J. Wright, F.L. Cardozo, J.C. Gibbs, and R.C. DeLarge--had been prominent in black political activities in 1865 and 1866, and W.J. McKinlay, T.K. Sasportas, W.J. Whipper, and H.E. Hayne were to be prominent in the July convention, the 1868 constitutional convention, and the South Carolina legislature. Charleston Advocate, 11 May 1867.

80 Charleston Daily Courier, 30 July 1867.


82 Ibid., 31 July 1867. While many of the black delegates were native South Carolinians, most of the convention leaders were carpetbaggers, black and white. Scroggs, p. 80.

83 Charleston Daily Courier, 25 July 1867.
Beaufort in 1866 and had served as president of the Charleston convention in May. Two vice-presidents of the July convention also were blacks. One, Freedmen's Bureau teacher James N. Hayne, would serve in the 1868 constitutional convention and in the South Carolina legislature, along with his brothers Charles and Henry. The convention's other


86 The Haynes were free-born mulattoes, natives of South Carolina. Charles Hayne was in the house of representatives 1868-1872 and in the state senate 1872-1876. Henry E. Hayne, who had been a sergeant in the First South Carolina Colored Volunteers and also a Freedmen's Bureau teacher, was in the senate 1868-1872 and served as Secretary of State 1872-1876. Emily Reynolds, p. 235; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Army Life in a Black Regiment (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1890), pp. 204-205; Hume, p. 436. Henry E. Hayne had served on an important committee in the May convention. Charleston Advocate, 11 May 1867. At the July convention he was also selected for the new state central committee. Charleston Courier, 27 July 1867. In 1873 he became the first black to enter the medical department of the University of South Carolina. Washington New National Era, 13 November 1873.
vice-president, former South Carolina slave C.M. Wilder, also served in the constitutional convention and the legislature. Convention secretaries were W.J. McKinlay and T.K. Sasportas, freeborn South Carolina natives who had held the same posts in the May convention.

The convention debated and finally adopted a thirteen-point platform almost identical to that adopted at the March and May Republican meetings. Passage of a controversial resolution asking for division and sale of unoccupied lands among the poorer classes was skillfully engineered by

87 Central committeeman Wilder, a carpenter, was appointed United States deputy marshal and later became postmaster in Columbia. Hume, p. 450; Solomon Breibart, "The South Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1868" (Master's thesis, University of North Carolina, 1938), p. 84. He was elected chairman of the state Republican convention in 1874. Lamson, p. 202. In the 1870's his affluence allowed his wife to take a leading role in charitable activities. Williamson, p. 177.

88 Charleston Daily Courier, 26 July 1867; Charleston Advocate, 11 May 1867. Sasportas, a Charleston-born mulatto from a free, slave-owning family, was sent to Philadelphia for his education. Returning to South Carolina after the war, he became a Freedmen's Bureau teacher and traveled with B.F. Randolph to organize freedmen for the Republican party. In 1868 he was elected to the legislature. Breibart, p. 76; Hume, p. 446. McKinlay, also a free-born native and a Freedmen's Bureau teacher, became secretary of the new state central committee. In 1868 he was elected to the constitutional convention and to the legislature. Hume, p. 441; Breibart, p. 75.

89 Charleston Daily Courier, 27 July 1867.
William J. Whipper, perhaps the most vocal and effective black delegate in the convention. A Michigan native who came south in the Union army, Whipper established a law practice in Beaufort and taught in a Freedmen's Bureau school. He was later prominent in the 1868 constitutional convention and in the legislature.\footnote{New York Times, 31 July 1867; Breibart, pp. 71-72; Hume, p. 450; Williamson, pp. 330-331. Whipper married one of the four beautiful and cultivated Rollin sisters. Simkins and Woody, p. 368. Whipper had been a member of the platform committee in the May convention. Charleston Advocate, 11 May 1867. He wrote letters to the Washington New National Era, 23 November 1872 and 12 December 1872 advocating compensatory class legislation favoring blacks.} Future state supreme court justice Jonathan J. Wright created a sensation in the convention by proposing that Republicans nominate a black for vice-president the next year. Other articulate blacks contributed to black domination of the proceedings, with Randolph and McKinlay being elected officers of the new state central committee.\footnote{New York Times, 31 July 1867. Charleston Daily Courier, 27 July 1867. President of the committee was white carpetbagger B.F. Whittemore. Also on the committee were Henry E. Hayne and William E. Johnson of Sumter, a Methodist minister from Pennsylvania who came south as a member of the Union army and later served in the 1868 constitutional convention and in both houses of the South Carolina legislature. Hume, p. 438. Breibart, p. 69; Williamson, p. 206.}
New York Times correspondent Solon Robinson was favorably impressed with the black leadership; he praised the "skill, tact, and force" of Whipper, DeLarge, Randolph, and Wright, whose intellect he thought outshone that of the white delegates. Robinson considered the mass of black delegates, however, to be markedly inferior. But these black members enthusiastically supported the convention's relatively radical stance, and solid black support for the party and platform seemed assured. Beverly Nash, who had earlier led a group of conservative blacks in trying to conciliate former rebels, at the end of the convention declared his hearty endorsement of the platform. The convention adjourned July 26, and delegates dispersed to continue their vigorous efforts to register and indoctrinate the freedmen in preparation for the convention election.

A caucus of Unionist legislators in North Carolina took immediate advantage of the reconstruction act of March 2 and


93 Ibid., 31 July 1867, 15 April 1867. Wright, Whipper, and DeLarge, along with several white leaders, addressed a large, enthusiastic mass meeting just after the convention adjourned. Charleston Daily Courier, 27 July 1867. On July 31 convention leaders organized a mass meeting in Charleston of over 800, mostly blacks, to endorse the platform of the Columbia convention. Prominent in this rally were R.B. Elliott, Henry E. Hayne, R.C. DeLarge, William J. McKinlay, W.H. Whipper, and A.J. Ransier. Ibid., 31 July 1867.
called a Republican organizational convention to meet in Raleigh March 27. With 101 whites and forty-six blacks attending, the leadership assiduously courted black approval by dispensing convention offices evenly between the races. Although the convention president was white, two of the four vice-presidents—James H. Harris and J.R. Good—were black, as was one of the two secretaries, James E. O'Hara. Harris joined a white delegate in escorting the president to the chair, and the platform committee consisted of ten whites and ten blacks. The assemblage selected an executive committee of twenty-three whites and ten blacks to direct party organization in the state. Delegates enthusiastically adopted a platform endorsing civil rights and universal suffrage with no property qualifications, advocating educational

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95 James H. Harris and James W. Hood, both of whom had been prominent in the Raleigh black convention of September 1865, were members. Raleigh Tri-Weekly Standard, 6 June 1867.
facilities for all citizens, and insisting on the rights of free speech and a free press, a program designed to appeal to poor whites and wartime Unionists as well as to blacks.\footnote{Edward McPherson, pp. 251-252; \textit{Raleigh Sentinel}, 9 September 1867.}

With the basic framework for the North Carolina Republican party established, many of the convention delegates turned their energies toward organizing local Union Leagues and Republican clubs, insuring the registration of freedmen, and persuading gatherings of blacks to endorse the Republican platform and support radical candidates for the constitutional conventions. Between April and September James H. Harris and executive committee president W.W. Holden traveled over the state addressing black meetings. J.W. Hood also canvassed the state for the party. Anxious about the black electorate, Holden wrote General Benjamin F. Butler urging him to speak at a rally in Raleigh July 4, since Butler would make an excellent impression, especially upon "our colored fellow-citizens."\footnote{Holden to Butler, 12 June 1867, Benjamin F. Butler Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.}

The executive committee called another state convention for September to coordinate party efforts and make final plans for the November convention election. Of the four
hundred delegates convening in Raleigh, blacks outnumbered whites and filled several convention offices. Black leaders brought about an important compromise which prevented a threatened split in the party occasioned by an internal fight over convention leadership. Native white Unionists were struggling against the dominant carpetbag element over the convention presidency. Alarmed by the developing factionalism, black leaders met in caucus to determine their course. J.W. Hood announced to the convention the black delegates' support for carpetbagger Joseph C. Abbott as convention president and for North Carolina native W.W. Holden as state party chairman. Abraham H. Galloway, another prominent black delegate, led a successful fight against a pro-Abbott move to concentrate power in the chair.

98 Among others, James H. Harris was one of the vice-presidents and James W. Hood served as secretary. *Raleigh Sentinel*, 5 September 1867; *Wilmington Daily Journal*, 7 September 1867; Nowaczyk, p. 27.


100 *Raleigh Sentinel*, 5 September 1867. Galloway had become prominent in black meetings in North Carolina in 1865 (see Chapter 2). In an 1868 letter requesting General Benjamin Butler's aid in securing Galloway's appointment as minister to Hayti, Galloway asserted, "For the past three years I have labored night and day for Republican government and the success of the cause . . . . I have done as much as any man in the state to place Gen. Grant where he is." Galloway to Butler, 23 December 1868, Butler Papers.
Black leaders also determined the settlement of another major question, confiscation of property of former rebels, which threatened to divide the party in several southern states. Advocates of confiscation generally came from the masses of black Republicans and rarely included the black leaders, a pattern which prevailed in the North Carolina convention.\textsuperscript{101} When a confiscation resolution was introduced, the majority of black delegates supported it, but black leaders Hood, Harris, and Galloway collaborated with white leadership to secure defeat of the resolution. In a speech opposing confiscation, Galloway mollified his black audience by proposing a free school system to be financed by a heavy land tax, the effect of which would be to bring a great deal of land into the market.\textsuperscript{102} Harris, fearful of the party's prospects if it supported confiscation, warned blacks against believing "evil-minded men who persuade you that you will get a portion of your master's land."\textsuperscript{103} Although Hood advocated outright repudiation of confiscation, the convention, to avoid alienating black supporters, adopted a substitute

\textsuperscript{101} Scroggs, p. 94.

\textsuperscript{102} New York Tribune, 9 September 1867. The Tribune correspondent called Galloway "a clear-headed young mulatto."

\textsuperscript{103} Raleigh Tri-Weekly Standard, 5 September 1867.
resolution agreeing to abide by congressional action on the matter. Finally, the convention merely endorsed the platform of the March 27 convention. 104

The September convention revealed overtones of the vacillation of its most prominent black leader, James H. Harris. Unquestionably the most able and influential black leader in North Carolina, Harris had already held offices in the state and national Union League, the North Carolina Equal Rights Association, and in the freedmen's convention of 1865. In December 1867 prominent carpetbagger Albion W. Tourgee attested that Harris had journeyed all over North Carolina in the previous two years and had attended more Radical meetings than any other man in the state, despite frequent threats from Democrats. 105 But the convention's debate on confiscation was not the only occasion for Harris to put party expediency above principle. At the December 1867 meeting of the National Union League, Harris declared himself against a resolution supporting black suffrage in

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104 Ibid., 7 September 1867; Wilmington Daily Journal, 6 and 8 September, 1867.

105 Letter signed "Winegar," Tourgee's middle name and pseudonym, National Anti-Slavery Standard, 14 December 1867. Harris had so impressed his black followers that one black speaker at a Radical celebration rejoiced that "now, thank God, we can send a James H. Harris" to Congress. Raleigh Sentinel, 28 November 1867.
the North because he felt it would harm the Republican party. Reporting on the September Republican convention, the New York Tribune correspondent stated,

[Harris] has already acquired considerable influence among his colored brethren; he is now coquetting for favors among the whites, seeming to forget that if he gains the favor of one class, he must surely lose that of the other.\footnote{Note 107}

In a convention speech, Harris perhaps alluded to his own experience when he stated that conservatives who had vilified blacks had then "tried mighty hard to pull black negroes into their parlors and endeavor to win them to the conservative side,"\footnote{Note 108} because the Radical Raleigh Standard later claimed that Governor Worth and other Conservatives had tried to lure Harris away from the Republicans with promises of office.\footnote{Note 109} Radical leaders had become so concerned over Harris's wavering radicalism that they prompted a flattering letter to him from Chief Justice Chase.\footnote{Note 110}

\footnote{Note 106}Silvestro, p. 347.
\footnote{Note 107}New York Tribune, 9 September 1867.
\footnote{Note 108}Raleigh North Carolina Standard, Extra, 5 September 1867.
\footnote{Note 109}Raleigh Tri-Weekly Standard, 14 December 1867.
\footnote{Note 110}Thomas W. Conway to Chase, 23 April 1867, Chase Papers. Apparently Chase's letter had the desired effect, for Harris replied, "I am scarcely able to express my thanks for the ecomium from a source so honorable." Harris to Chase, 3 December 1867, Chase Papers.
Conservatives who in 1867 hoped to control the black vote wished to use Harris's talents to achieve their goal, but there is no indication that Harris had any further doubts about his allegiance after the end of the year.

Although Alabama had fewer well-educated, politically experienced blacks than South Carolina or even North Carolina, those few nevertheless were important in the organization of the Republican party. Soon after passage of the March reconstruction acts, black leaders in Alabama were organizing and addressing freedmen's rallies. At a huge Republican meeting in Mobile 17 April 1867 Ovide Gregory drafted the assembly's resolutions, and John Carraway made a major speech warning against allowing white Democrats to control black political action. Gregory, a free-born Creole and light mulatto who spoke French and Spanish and had traveled widely in the United States and Latin America, owned a cigar store in Mobile. He was among the organizers of the May 1 black convention and later in 1867 was appointed assistant chief of police in Mobile. He served in the 1867 constitutional convention and in 1868 was elected to the

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111 Mobile Nationalist, 25 April 1867. L.S. Berry, who would later serve as Mobile alderman, also made a speech demanding that blacks be given their rights.
Carraway was also an organizer and secretary of the black convention and later became a member of the constitutional convention and speaker of the Alabama house of representatives. Born in North Carolina of a white planter father and a slave mother, Carraway was freed upon his father's death. He moved to Boston, where he became a tailor before going to sea. During the war, he was one of the first volunteers in the Massachusetts Fifty-fourth Regiment. Moving to Mobile after the war, he worked as assistant editor of the Radical Mobile Nationalist and became very active in politics. In smaller towns over the state, other blacks were busily speaking to freedmen's meetings and securing the election of black delegates to the upcoming state Republican convention.

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112 Ibid., 28 March 1867; Hume, p. 82; Kolchin, p. 164.


The black convention assembling in Mobile 1 May 1867 was primarily planned to declare the adherence of Alabama blacks to the state and national Republican party. Delegates were particularly concerned that blacks might be discharged from their jobs because of their unwillingness to become political tools of their employers, and they threatened to bring the national power of the Republican party to retaliate against white conservative reprisals, even to the extreme of confiscation. Declaring itself to be a portion of the state party, the convention asked that its resolutions be incorporated into the Republican platform.  

Leaders of the black convention were also prominent in Alabama's first Republican state convention which met in Montgomery the first week in June. Holland Thompson, president of the May convention, served on important committees and was elected to the state executive committee. Thompson, a Baptist minister and ex-slave, had begun political organizing among the freedmen in 1866. James T. Rapier, black convention leader, was elected vice-president of the

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115 Mobile Nationalist, 9 and 23 May 1867.

116 In December 1867 several newspapers printed a letter allegedly written by Thompson declaring his support for the conservatives. Thompson said the letter was a forgery and remained an active Republican. Kolchin, pp. 153, 154, 158, 172. Mobile Nationalist, 30 August 1866, 9 May 1867.
Republican convention and served on the resolutions committee, as did Ovide Gregory. John Carraway was convention secretary. Seven of the twenty-five members of the new state executive committee were blacks. In addition to Holland Thompson, they included Peyton Finley, a free Alabama native who had been doorkeeper of the Alabama House of Representatives and was to serve as a voter registrar and delegate to the constitutional convention, and free-born Moses Avery, a Methodist minister who served on a federal gunboat and then became assistant editor of the New Orleans Tribune before moving to Mobile and becoming registrar and assistant secretary of the constitutional convention. Before adjourning, members of the new Alabama Republican party adopted a platform advocating equality before the law, free speech, and free public schools.

Republican organization in Florida was hampered by dissension among party leaders, culminating in three well-defined Republican groups struggling for control of the

117 Mobile Nationalist, 13 June 1867; Wiggins, p. 63.
118 Hume, p. 81.
119 Kolchin, p. 166. Also on the executive committee were Samuel Blandon, later a member of the constitutional convention and legislature, and Lafayette Robinson, another future constitutional convention delegate. Ibid., p. 158.
party. The most conservative faction, composed of pro-Johnson federal office-holders and native whites and led by carpetbagger Harrison Reed and Jacksonville businessman Ossian B. Hart, organized the quickly successful Union Republican Club of Jacksonville. Scarcely more radical was the faction led by Florida's Assistant Freedmen's Bureau Commissioner, Thomas W. Osborn, who organized the relatively conservative Lincoln Brotherhood among blacks. Alarmed at the conservative drift of Florida Republicans, congressional Radicals dispatched to the state organizers Daniel Richards and William U. Saunders, a black, who along with Liberty Billings organized Union Leagues to supersede the Lincoln Brotherhood. Known as the "Radical Mule Team," these three quickly gained the adherence of Florida's blacks, who outnumbered whites on the registration lists. Richards boasted to Congressman Washburne that the "Mule Team" had "literally created the Republican party in Florida," but gave special credit to Saunders.


121 Daniel Richards to Elihu B. Washburne, 11, 13, 19 November 1867, Washburne Papers. Richards described Republican organizer Thomas W. Conway's efforts to enlist Saunders in Chief Justice Chase's presidential campaign; according to Richards, Saunders' subsidy from the Republican Congressional Committee was cut off when he refused.
At Florida's first state Republican convention, which opened July 11 in Tallahassee, open factionalism erupted when native Republicans objected to seating "recent residents" as delegates. Backed by black votes, the third and most radical element joined moderate carpetbaggers to defeat this attempt, and also brought about the election of carpetbagger Osborn over scalawag Hart as convention chairman. Radical control of the convention was further reflected in the party platform, but the disunity which characterized the convention was to be the dominant influence on the development of the party in Florida.\textsuperscript{122}

Division in the ranks of Virginia Republicans also created problems in organizing a state party, and again support from blacks allowed the more radical element to gain control. On April 17, 210 delegates, only fifty of them white, assembled in Richmond to solidify party organization and to enunciate the party's aims and policies. Although the convention was controlled by scalawag James W. Hunnicutt, several blacks held convention offices and even more were active in the debates. Dr. Thomas Bayne, who had been the most active organizer and spokesman for blacks since early

\textsuperscript{122}C.D. Lincoln to Senator William P. Fessenden, 20 September 1867, Fessenden Papers; Scroggs, pp. 85-86; Davis, pp. 475-476.
1865, again was the most influential black leader. As in the North Carolina Republican convention, many blacks advocated confiscation of rebel property, but the leaders helped suppress the resolution. The convention did include in the official address, however, a threat to confiscate lands of owners who retaliated against their workers' political activities or tried to control their votes—a resolution similar to one passed by the Alabama black convention in May. The platform adopted called for the same reforms demanded by Republicans in other states: equal political rights, equal protection in courts, free common schools, tax reform, internal improvements, and inducements to immigration.

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124 New York Tribune, 18 and 20 April 1867, Charleston Daily Courier, 18 and 19 April 1867.
Dismayed by Radical domination of the party, a group of conservative Virginia Republicans, under the leadership of John Minor Botts, called another state convention for July. But congressional envoys, anxious to avoid an open split, helped to arrange a convention to open in Richmond August 1. Hunnicutt, determined to preserve Radical control of the state party, urged all Richmond blacks to attend \textit{en masse}. When they responded by the thousands, the convention was moved to Capitol Square, where over five thousand blacks and about fifty whites, chiefly those who had attended the Radical convention in April, quickly re-elected the officers of the earlier convention. With an overwhelming majority assured, Hunnicutt tried to conciliate by allowing a spokesman for the conservative wing to address the convention, but Bayne engineered the adoption of the April platform. He then succeeded in pushing through a motion to adjourn \textit{sine die}, thus preventing the moderates from speaking while the convention was in session. Blacks, having demonstrated their preference for the Radical program, had decisively defeated the attempt of former Whigs and conservative Republicans to wrest control of the Virginia Republican party from the coalition of carpetbaggers, blacks, and native white Radicals. \footnote{New York Times, 2 and 3 August 1867; New York Tribune, 2 and 3 August 1867; Charleston Daily Courier, 1, 2, 3 August}
In the weeks preceding Mississippi's first Republican state convention, the chief party organizer among the freedmen was the recently arrived James Lynch, Methodist missionary and unexcelled orator. The conservative Jackson Clarion, calling Lynch "the ablest and most influential man of his party in the state," said that he had done more than all other Republican leaders to build up the party. Combining religious and political proselytizing, Lynch began almost from the day of his arrival in the state to speak to freedmen and persuade them to register and to vote for Republican delegates to the upcoming constitutional convention. On 1 August 1867 the Mobile Nationalist reported that at "Brandon, Canton, Vicksburg and Marion [Lynch] addressed the largest political gatherings ever held in those places . . . . If the State is not carried for the Republican party, it will not be his fault."  

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Conservatives were not the only protesters against using such tactics to overwhelm the opposition. Black Radical R.D. Berkley of Alexandria also denounced the crowding out of "interior" delegates by Richmond blacks who had not been duly selected. New York Times, 2 August 1867.


127 Mobile Nationalist, 1 August 1867. Further reports of large gatherings addressed by Lynch appear in ibid.,
Lynch's tremendous success in arousing blacks and aligning them with the Republican party can doubtless be attributed to his phenomenal oratorical abilities, which were attested to by observers of every political persuasion. Carpetbag leader Albert T. Morgan considered him "the most brilliant orator of his time in Mississippi." Calling him "the Henry Ward Beecher of the colored race," contemporary black politician John Roy Lynch (no relation) said of James Lynch:

He was not only intelligent and well educated, but his command of the English language was such that he could hold a congregation or audience spellbound for at least two hours at a time with his powerful and convincing eloquence.

A conservative Mississippi Democrat said of Lynch:

He was a great orator; fluent and graceful, he stirred his audience as no other man did or could do. He was the idol of the negroes, who would come from every point of the compass and for miles, on foot, to hear him speak. He rarely spoke to less than a thousand and often two to five thousand. He swayed them with

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as much ease as a man would sway a peacock feather with his right hand. 130

The Republican party rewarded Lynch for these services by making him vice-president of Mississippi's first Republican state convention, which was held in Jackson September 10 and 11. Blacks comprised about one third of the delegates. Despite some conflict over adding the word "colored" after each black delegate's name, the convention agreed to set up the state party machinery and adopted a platform endorsing congressional reconstruction and the principles of the national party. The platform called for universal free education and the elimination of racial distinctions in education, voting, and office-holding. 131

In Georgia the reconstruction measures of March 1867 were the catalyst bringing together the predominantly black Georgia Equal Rights Association, the white-dominated Union League, and the unorganized potential Republicans, black and


white. Blacks were eager supporters of congressional policies and formed the core of Republican support in the state, but their leadership in early party development was generally restricted to speaking to local freedmen's meetings. No blacks were among the chief officers of the first Republican state convention held in Atlanta July 4, although a number of blacks attended. With native whites in control, the convention adopted a platform pledging support for equal rights, free schools, relief measures, and homestead laws—a program designed to appeal to freedmen and to white yeoman farmers. Delegates then scattered over the state to begin organizing the series of mass meetings which were to be a major device for winning freedmen and uncommitted white farmers and workers to the Republican party.


133 New York Times, 6 and 10 July 1867. Northern-born black Tunis G. Campbell was selected to the state central committee. Augusta Loyal Georgian, 10 August 1867.

134 Rallies called to ratify the Republican platform were occasions for campaign speeches to arouse enthusiasm for the cause. New York Times, 11 July 1867, p. 4; New York Tribune, 19 July 1867; Augusta Loyal Georgian, 24 August 1867; Nathans, p. 42.
In Texas the Republican party in 1867 was dominated by moderate Republicans whose goal was a biracial party under white leadership. While the moderate whites strongly supported black suffrage, they hoped to limit black political activity to voting. Although Texas' first Republican state convention, held in Houston 4 July 1867, consisted of 150 black delegates and only twenty whites, Union League president George T. Ruby was the only black listed among the convention leadership. The platform adopted called for public schools without racial distinction and the elimination of all discriminatory laws. But in the party organization set up by the convention, whites occupied all major positions.\footnote{135}

Blacks had an even smaller role in early organization of the Arkansas Republican party. Over one hundred delegates from forty-eight counties attended the "Union State Convention" held in Little Rock in April 1867, with native whites overwhelmingly in the majority. Only four black delegates were elected to the convention, and one of those did not attend. One of the black delegates was reluctantly added to the platform committee and to the state central committee after slates for those groups were presented to the convention.

\footnote{135}{John Pressley Carrier, "A Political History of Texas during the Reconstruction, 1865-1874" (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1971), pp. 169-173; Hinze, p. 12.}
White delegates were clearly uncomfortable about any black participation. In the following months numerous black meetings were organized to hear Republican speakers, but there is little evidence of black leadership at this stage of party organization.

In Louisiana passage of congressional reconstruction measures inspired a struggle for party dominance between two factions, each of which hoped to control the votes of the freed masses. "Free men of color" who had earlier organized the Friends of Universal Suffrage and the Louisiana Republican party began to fear a takeover of prominent posts by white newcomers to Louisiana's Radical ranks--whites who had been absent or relatively inactive the previous two years and now saw some hope of office and power. The free men of color, mostly light mulattoes, saw themselves as the natural leaders of the freedmen and feared that white Radicals considered the black's political role as voter only. By the time of the Republican state convention in

136. Little Rock Arkansas Gazette, 2-6 April 1867; Thomas S. Staples, Reconstruction in Arkansas 1862-1874 (New York: Columbia University, 1923), pp. 162-166.

June 1867, the carpetbagger faction was strong enough to defeat a resolution recommending that state offices be equally divided between whites and blacks. Many of the free colored class considered white domination inevitable and quietly aligned themselves with the carpetbagger faction; they set to work organizing large Republican clubs among upstate freedmen. The Louisiana Republican party was continually beset by factionalism, but after 1867 the formerly dominant free class from New Orleans ceased to be an autonomous, powerful element within the party. Black leadership was crucial to state party organization, but Louisiana Republicans devoted themselves to internecine combat waged primarily over patronage control and only peripherally over racial issues. 138

The struggle of New Orleans' wealthy, educated free-born men of mixed blood for party control appears to have been part of a larger plan to use the votes of freedmen and aid from white Radicals to control the state government. Ex-slaves were given no positions of honor or leadership

within the free colored Republican organizations, and in
mid-1867 white Radical leaders were concerned about jealousies
between the free-born and freedmen. 139

Intraracial conflict also appeared elsewhere. In 1866
the Radical Mobile Nationalist attacked the Creole Fire
Company in that city for inviting ex-Confederates to its
annual torchlight parade and supper while ignoring Union
men. Accusing white Conservatives of flattering the Creoles
to divide the race, the Nationalist urged Creoles to elevate
their own race. 140 Such charges apparently had some founda-
tion, for when the Mobile Creole Ovide Gregory espoused the
Radical cause, the city's leading newspaper denounced him
for deserting his own class. 141 A similar phenomenon appeared
among Virginia blacks, with the Petersburg Index reporting
in April 1867 that the freemen felt superior to the freedmen
and intended to use the latter for their own political
advancement. 142 But these early divisions between the elite

139 Donald E. Everett, "Demands of the New Orleans Free
Colored Population for Political Equality 1862-1865," Louisiana
Historical Quarterly 38(1955):62-64; J.H. Sypher to Henry
Clay Warmoth, 24 August 1867, Warmoth Papers.

140 Mobile Nationalist, 26 April 1866, 3 May 1866.

141 Cited by Kolchin, p. 164.

142 Cited by Alrutheus A. Taylor, The Negro in the Recon-
struction of Virginia (Washington: Association for the Study
and the masses did not create lasting factions, primarily because native whites insisted upon treating all blacks, regardless of education, wealth, or degree of African blood, as "nigger."\(^{143}\)

With statewide party structures established, Republicans turned their attention to the task of registering as many freedmen as possible. In Alabama, the registration supervisor appointed one black and two whites to the board of registration in each district, the forty-two black registrars being the first blacks to serve in an official political capacity in that state.\(^{144}\) In several other states blacks appeared on local registration boards, although less systematically than in Alabama. Freedmen's Bureau officials and army officers encouraged registration of freedmen as part of their official duties, and their efforts were reinforced by Republican organizers who urged registration and Republicanism at the same time. Black churches as well as Union Leagues and Republican clubs were means of securing full registration of freedmen. Black ministers in Georgia were asked to read to their congregations an open letter urging blacks to register and concern themselves with public affairs. Churches


\(^{144}\)Kolchin, p. 160.
were asked to organize associations to collect weekly or monthly sums to send black speakers into the field "to teach our people what to do and how to do it."\textsuperscript{145}

White Conservatives tried to discourage black registration through threats or misrepresentation. In some areas of Alabama and Mississippi, whites told freedmen they would be put in the army and pay more taxes if they registered, while a Republican newspaper in North Carolina reported that black laborers were threatened and discharged for registering.\textsuperscript{146} In Vermillion Parish, Louisiana, a member of the registration board, puzzled by the absence of black registrants, went out to talk to freedmen and found that they had been deterred by "false representations made by the Whites, such as are too numerous and too ridiculous to mention."\textsuperscript{147} In some states Conservatives publicly urged planters and businessmen to discharge black workers who persisted in registering and supporting the Radicals.\textsuperscript{148}

\textsuperscript{145}The letter, signed by Bishop Henry M. Turner of the A.M.E. Church, was quoted in the \textit{Augusta Loyal Georgian}, 6 July 1867.

\textsuperscript{146}Kolchin, p. 161; Garner, pp. 174-175; \textit{Raleigh Standard}, 21 September 1867.

\textsuperscript{147}William George to Henry Clay Warmoth, 6 May 1867, Warmoth Papers.

\textsuperscript{148}\textit{Americus Tri-Weekly Republican}, 8 August 1867; \textit{Raleigh Standard}, 21 September 1867; \textit{Raleigh Sentinel}, 4 January 1868; Davis, p. 486.
Despite such intimidation, freedmen did register to vote in numbers so large as to astonish whites who had been assuming that black population was declining and that few blacks would be interested in political participation. The high percentage of blacks registering, combined with disfranchisement of important ex-Confederate officials and the refusal of some eligible whites to register, created black voter majorities in Alabama and Florida, where the majority of the population was white, and increased black numerical domination of Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, where the majority of adult males was black. Although blacks in some states would register in increasing numbers in 1868 and 1869, the initial effort to acquaint inexperienced freedmen with the political process had been impressively successful.\(^{149}\)

Along with the registration drive, Republicans were campaigning for the election of Radical candidates to the

constitutional conventions, and black speakers and organizers were conceded to be most effective in arousing the freedmen whose votes were essential to the cause. White carpetbaggers in Florida credited the strength of the black vote to William U. Saunders's exhaustive canvass of the state, but Freedmen's Bureau Commissioner O.O. Howard commended the effective campaigning of several black speakers in Florida.\textsuperscript{150} Black campaigners were most active in South Carolina; large gatherings of freedmen throughout the state responded enthusiastically to Radical speeches by B.F. Randolph, R.C. DeLarge, W.J. McKinlay, J.N. Hayne, R.B. Elliott, F.L. Cardozo, and others.\textsuperscript{151} During the campaign, black leaders were instrumental in defeating efforts by United States Marshal J.P.M. Epping to make the South Carolina Union League less radical.\textsuperscript{152}

The convention campaign in Georgia saw the emergence of Henry M. Turner as the chief political leader of the state's freedmen. Born in 1834 near Newberry Courthouse, South Carolina, of free parents of mixed blood, Turner had

\textsuperscript{150} Daniel Richards to Elihu B. Washburne, 19 November 1867; Howard's Bureau report is in \textit{Report of the Secretary of War}, 1867, p. 676.

\textsuperscript{151} \textit{Charleston Daily Courier}, 6, 13, 24 August 1867.

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 18 and 21 October 1867.
worked in cotton fields and in an Abbeville law office, where he learned to read and write. At the age of twenty he was licensed as a Methodist minister and later preached in several southern cities. He served churches in Saint Louis, Baltimore, and Washington. In 1863 he became chaplain to a black regiment, and in 1865 he was sent to Georgia as army chaplain and Freedmen's Bureau agent, posts he resigned to devote full time to politics and missionary work for the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Despite his cooperation with Conservatives earlier in 1867, Turner apparently became a confirmed Radical by mid-year and was elected to the constitutional convention and the 1868 legislature on the Radical ticket. He worked at religious and political organizing simultaneously; he traveled and spoke all over Georgia, establishing Union Leagues and Republican clubs, organizing rallies, and writing campaign documents.153

Although white speakers were more common at black gatherings in Alabama, Texas, and Arkansas, capable black campaigners were used wherever they were available and funds could be found to send them into interior districts. The success of such leaders and their carpetbagger counterparts greatly alarmed white Conservatives. The Charleston Daily Courier attacked the Union Leagues for promoting dissension and teaching the freedmen "to aspire not for equality, but for supremacy." Later the Courier charged that the Leagues and party managers were driving freedmen to vote in a mass "for the party who holds them in a slavery far worse than that from which they have been set free." Former Virginia governor Henry A. Wise claimed that efforts were being made "to make the white freemen of the South subject to the domination of the black freedmen." North Carolina Conservatives blamed paid agents for injecting Radical views into black minds and expressed fear that freedmen would instigate a war of races.

154 Kolchin, p. 162; Carrier, pp. 221-222; Staples, pp. 171-172.
155 Charleston Daily Courier, 17 August 1867, 28 October 1867.
156 Ibid., 23 August 1867.
157 Raleigh Sentinel, 20 August 1867; Tarboro Southerner, 12 September 1867.
Even at this stage some Conservatives still hoped to win over some black voters. In several states prominent Conservative speakers pleaded with blacks to cast off their ties with northerners and recognize their former masters as their true friends.\(^{158}\) Conservative conventions composed of black and white delegates met in Columbus, Georgia, and Montgomery, Alabama, to proclaim the good intentions of southern whites toward their former slaves.\(^{159}\)

Such efforts were futile, however, and in the face of continued black adherence to the Republican party, white Conservatives generally turned to more negative tactics to prevent a large Radical vote by blacks. Threats, violence, deception, and intimidation were common throughout the South. Republican organizer Thomas W. Conway reported to the national president of the Union League that his chief problem was white opposition to black political gatherings, with blacks being waylaid by ruffians while going to or from meetings.\(^{160}\)

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\(^{158}\) *Americus Tri-Weekly Republican*, 23 July 1867; *Charleston Daily Courier*, 1 August 1867; *Raleigh Sentinel*, 18 November 1867. For a reasoned analysis of the cooperationist movement, see Perman, pp. 269-303.


In Alabama many blacks failed to vote for the constitutional convention because of "systematic assertions that the election had been postponed."\(^{161}\) Threats against blacks were common in Mississippi,\(^ {162}\) and an Arkansas Unionist wrote Benjamin Butler, "The culered [sic] people are kept in great fear there is [sic] but few of them that will go to the poles [sic] to vote."\(^ {163}\) But the most common measure, one that was openly advocated in the Conservative press, was the threat of being discharged from work for voting Republican. Numerous reports after the elections indicated that this was no idle threat.\(^ {164}\) Further indication of Conservative frustration was the belated effort to mount a campaign of registration accompanied by abstention from voting as a device to prevent the calling of conventions.

\(^{161}\) New York Tribune, 7 October 1867.

\(^{162}\) Harry H. Penniman to Elihu B. Washburne, 21 December 1867, Washburne Papers.

\(^{163}\) C.C. Ewing to Benjamin F. Butler, 1 August 1867, Butler Papers.

\(^{164}\) C.C. Bowen (President of the State Central Committee of the South Carolina Republican Party) to Benjamin F. Butler, 30 May 1867, Butler Papers; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, 4 January 1868; Charleston Daily Courier, 9 November 1867; Report of the Secretary of War, 40th Cong., 3rd sess., 1868, pp. 705-706; John C. Underwood to Elihu B. Washburne, 16 December 1867, Washburne Papers.
Ultimately the vacillating and inept efforts of white Conservatives opened the way for a sweeping victory by a relatively well-organized Republican coalition. Of fundamental importance in the Republican victory was the solid support given the party by black leaders and the mass of black voters. Indeed, in this first election under the congressional plan black voters achieved the apex of their postwar political influence, a position made possible by disorganization of white conservatives, abstention of registered whites, cooperation of numerous whites who supported constitutional reform, and a relatively free election under federal supervision. Although Republicans carried all the states in approving conventions and the black vote was a decisive factor, the results were not due to a white versus black alignment but rather to a contest between Radicals and Conservatives. In general whites were still in control of the southern states, but black delegates were elected in sufficient numbers to insure direct black influence in shaping the new constitutions, while white Republican delegates were further constrained by the need for black support in the coming ratification elections.
CHAPTER IV
BLACKS AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

At the same time that voters in the ten unrestored states approved constitutional conventions under the congressional reconstruction acts, they elected a majority of Republican delegates in each state, including blacks in varying proportions. In the first state assemblies in which blacks participated as representatives of the people, the two races were working together, if not always harmoniously, at the momentous task of adjusting the southern state governments to the consequences of Confederate defeat and emancipation of the slaves.

Although a racial admixture occurred in all the conventions, the derisive label of "black and tan" conventions applied by the conservative press is hardly descriptive. Of the total 1,010 delegates who participated in the ten constitutional conventions of 1867-1869, only 257 (25%) were blacks.\(^1\) Despite their failure in most states to gain

\(^1\)Richard L. Hume, "The 'Black and Tan' Constitutional Conventions of 1867-1869 in Ten Former Confederate States: A Study of Their Membership" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1969), pp. 4, 657. This quantitative study of
convention seats in proportion to their numbers in the electorate, blacks exerted considerable influence in the framing of several of the new constitutions. In fact, their impact on the course of Reconstruction was probably greater in the constitutional conventions than at any other time, even though more than half the total delegates in the ten conventions were southern whites. Blacks had enough power to force the carpetbagger leaders of several of the conventions to accept a degree of civil rights for blacks, some moderate economic reforms, and a mitigation of political sanctions against former Confederates. In addition, black delegate support buttressed carpetbagger leadership in effecting social, political, and legal reforms.

Only in South Carolina did blacks exercise real dominance in the convention. There, seventy-three out of 124 delegates (59%) were black. Blacks comprised almost half the Louisiana convention--forty-five out of ninety-eight (46%)--but failed to dominate the proceedings as did their counterparts in South Carolina. In the Florida convention blacks held eighteen of the forty-six seats (39%), but their potential biographical information and voting patterns, based on documentary materials and a large number of secondary works, will be the source for many of the statistics presented in this chapter.
power was nullified by a convention split between Republican factions. In the other states, blacks made up less than one quarter of the total assembly. Twenty-two percent of the Virginia and Georgia conventions were black, while black delegates comprised 18 percent of the Alabama convention and 16 percent of the Mississippi delegation. Blacks held only 11 percent of the seats in the Arkansas and North Carolina conventions and only 10 percent in Texas.²

Biographical information on black delegates is sketchy, especially in the important state of Louisiana, but it is clear that the 257 black delegates to the ten reconstruction conventions came from a variety of backgrounds. Although the antebellum status of over 20 percent of the black delegates is unknown, a majority of the total group (55%) are known to have been former slaves. If ex-slaves had been elected in proportion to their numbers in the electorate, however, they would have held all but a very few of the black seats. Twenty-five percent of all the black delegates are known to have been born free or to have escaped from bondage before the war, while only 4 percent of the blacks living in those ten states in 1860 were free. Moreover, freeborn delegates

were not evenly distributed among the conventions; only two appeared in each of the conventions in Georgia, North Carolina, Mississippi, and Arkansas, and only one of the nine black delegates to the Texas convention was born free. On the other hand, almost half the black members of the South Carolina convention and slightly over 40 percent of the black Virginia delegates had been born free or had escaped from bondage.

Origins of almost half the black delegates are unknown, but most of those whose birthplace can be determined were natives of the state in which they were elected or of other former slave states. Only nineteen (7%) of the total group are known to have been born in the North, and two more were born in other countries. The occupations of more than half (55%) of the delegates have not been determined. The majority of those whose occupations are known were artisans, ministers, or teachers. Only 4 percent are known to have been farmers or planters, in contrast to the black population as a whole, which consisted almost entirely of landless agricultural workers. A surprising number (12%) of the 257 black delegates had served in the Union army.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 666, 668-669.} Education ranged from professional and graduate study in excellent colleges to the
"agricultural degrees and brickyard diplomas" of former slaves.  

The black contingent in the South Carolina convention, being the only black majority among the conventions, is of special interest. Of the seventy-three black members, thirteen were northerners and one was a native of Dutch Guiana. Thirty-two (44%) had never been enslaved, and two more had purchased their freedom before the war. Of the freeborn delegates, the northern natives were more likely to be professionals, while the southerners had nearly all been engaged in trades. Roughly two-thirds of the southern freeborn blacks had continued their trades after the war, and several others had taken service with the Freedmen's Bureau. Twenty-one black delegates had served in the Union army, and three had done menial work for the Confederate armed forces.

Thirty-nine of the South Carolina delegates were former slaves. The occupations of twelve of these are not known,

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4George Teamoh's "Journal," p. 265, Carter G. Woodson Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Teamoh was referring to his own education and that of other ex-slaves in the Virginia convention, an education he considered inadequate. George T. Ruby, the only free-born person among the nine black delegates to the Texas convention, reported that all could read and write, the oldest black having decided to learn upon receiving the ballot. Letter from Ruby in the National Anti-Slavery Standard, 1 May 1869.
but not one of the other twenty-seven was described as an agricultural worker. The ex-slaves were in professions, business, or trades, with eight of the twenty-seven being ministers. The other nineteen freedmen included carpenters, blacksmiths, shoemakers, coachmen, businessmen, and a tanner, a barber, a teacher, a waiter, and a carriage-maker. Most of the tradesmen had pursued the same occupation as slaves. Although these freedmen had little formal education, nearly all had attained some degree of literacy, and a few were surprisingly well read. 5 Even the former slave in the South Carolina convention, then, was atypical of the black populace as a whole.

Many of the former slaves took little part in the debates of the ten conventions. This does not mean, as numerous accounts suggest, that they blindly followed the dictates of white Republicans. The freedmen were more likely to support proposals by capable black leaders, whose back- grounds were quite different from those of most black delegates. The articulate, influential black leader was generally one of the fifty-seven black delegates who had

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never been in bondage, and he most likely was of mixed blood. The leaders were usually much better educated than the average black delegate, and most were professionals. Some of this leadership was drawn from the free black colonies of New Orleans, Charleston, and Richmond, and others were migrants from the North, some of whom were native southerners returning after years of study, travel, or exile. A number of the more important black convention leaders had served with the Union army or the Freedmen's Bureau.

Most of the black leaders in the conventions had emerged in earlier political activities. Although convention delegate was the first official political position ever open to blacks in the South, the leaders had risen to prominence as organizers of rallies and conventions in 1865 and 1866 and as Republican party organizers and campaigners in 1867. Almost all of the convention leaders would subsequently hold important state offices, and several would later serve in Congress. Lesser-known delegates used the convention to build a base of black support for future political careers. With a few exceptions, the men who held top posts in those ten states during the Reconstruction years began their public service as delegates to the 1867-1869 constitutional conventions.6

6Hume has pointed out that all black delegates to the Mississippi convention held further political office of some
In most of the ten conventions, black delegates failed to receive a proportionate number of committee assignments and held an even smaller percentage of committee chairmanships. Blacks in the Arkansas convention received only seventeen of the two hundred committee assignments and none of the chairmanships. In Louisiana, where almost half the convention membership was black, less than one-third of the committee positions went to blacks, but black delegates were chairmen of the committees on militia, bill of rights, and contingent expenses. No blacks were appointed to a committee chairmanship and none elected to an office in the Mississippi convention, and while one or two blacks were appointed to each standing committee, two of the sixteen black delegates were on no committees at all. In the North kind, as did most of the delegates in other states. Pp. 79-85, 197-203, 263-266, 321-323, 351, 387-467, 475. The six blacks which South Carolina sent to Congress during Reconstruction were all members of the 1868 constitutional convention. Samuel D. Smith, The Negro in Congress, 1870-1901 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), p. 43.

7 Hume, p. 276.


Carolina convention established black leaders Abraham H. Galloway, James H. Harris, and James W. Hood received multiple committee assignments, but the other ten black delegates served on only one committee each. James E. O'Hara was elected engrossing clerk of the convention by acclamation, but no other convention offices went to blacks.¹⁰

Of the thirty-three black delegates to the Georgia convention, only three received any committee appointment, and none was a committee chairman.¹¹ One or two blacks were appointed to most standing committees in Alabama, but none was made chairman. Black delegates became assistant secretaries, pages, and messengers, but important convention offices went to whites.¹² In the Virginia and Texas conventions, black delegates were generally appointed to one committee each, while most of the committee posts and all


¹¹Hume, p. 212.

the chairmanships went to whites. In Florida, most of the black delegates aligned themselves with the Radical faction which originally controlled the convention and gave blacks influential posts, but their influence was lost when the more conservative faction walked out and framed their own constitution, which was eventually accepted by Congress on the recommendation of General George C. Meade, military commander for the Third District.

Black delegates held exactly half the committee posts in the predominantly black South Carolina convention, but received only three of the eleven chairmanships. The committees headed by blacks were, however, extremely important.

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13 Hume, pp. 136-137.

14 L.D. Stickney to Elihu B. Washburne, 21 May 1868, and Daniel Richards to Washburne, 2, 11, 12 February 1868, in Elihu B. Washburne Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Jerrell H. Shofner, "The Constitution of 1868," Florida Historical Quarterly 41(1963): 148-150; Charlton W. Tebeau, A History of Florida (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971), pp. 248-249; Joe M. Richardson, The Negro in the Reconstruction of Florida, 1865-1877 (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1965), pp. 155-157. Two blacks were among the conservatives who left the convention, but the more influential blacks supported the Radicals. Foremost among the black leaders were Union League organizer William U. Saunders; Jonathan C. Gibbs, who had been active in earlier political organizing in South Carolina; and "Bishop" Charles H. Pearce, an A.M.E. minister recently arrived from Canada who was later elected to the state senate. For an account of Saunders' and Gibbs' earlier activities, see Chapters 2 and 3.
R.C. DeLarge was chairman of the committee on franchise and elections, Francis L. Cardozo was chairman of the education committee, and Stephen A. Swails was chairman of the powerful rules committee. DeLarge and Cardozo had already gained prominence among black leaders, but Swails, a teacher and Freedmen's Bureau agent, was just entering the state political arena. Born in Pennsylvania in 1832, the mulatto Swails had become the first black to be commissioned in the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Infantry and had come south with his regiment in 1864. He was later to become president pro tem of the South Carolina senate and in 1872 was a leader of the reform bolt from the state Republican party. The South Carolina convention selected Dr. Albert G. Mackey, a southern white, 15

as permanent chairman, but elected as vice-presidents two blacks who had already been active political organizers, William Beverly Nash and Jonathan J. Wright.\(^{16}\) Even with their large majority of convention seats, black delegates did not dominate convention offices in South Carolina as whites did in conventions where they were a majority, but blacks did occupy more positions of power there than in any other convention.

The much-maligned "black and tan" constitutional conventions of 1867-1869 were responsible for lasting constitutional reforms in the South. Similar progressive and democratic changes had been incorporated into northern constitutions during the reform movements of the 1830's and 1840's, but only in the social-political revolution of the postwar era did the South undertake a program of basic constitutional reform. While white carpetbaggers held commanding positions in several of the conventions and instigated a number of reforms,\(^{17}\) black leaders, both

\(^{16}\) *Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina*, p. 15; Robert H. Woody, "Jonathan Jasper Wright, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of South Carolina, 1870-1877," *Journal of Negro History* 18(1933):116. For information on Nash's and Wright's earlier careers, see Chapters 2 and 3.

northern-born and native, took the leadership in proposing some important governmental changes and in marshaling the black delegate support necessary for extensive constitutional change.

When the conventions opened they faced immediate problems not directly related to constitution-making. Most pressing was destitution in the defeated states, which prompted a series of relief ordinances, or stay laws, to alleviate suffering only until appropriate provisions of the new constitutions should become operative.

The debate over a relief ordinance in the South Carolina convention inspired the first major division among black convention leaders. William J. Whipper, a lawyer from Michigan whose campaigning among freedmen had contributed heavily to Republican successes in the convention election, argued vigorously in favor of a proposed stay law because it would protect not only debtors but also the laborers dependent upon property owners for their wages. Northern-born Methodist minister Richard H. Cain and prominent Charleston mulatto Francis L. Cardozo, on the other hand, both insisted that the law was class legislation designed to help big landowners keep their estates. Cardozo argued that by refusing to pass such a law, the convention could force large property
owners to break up their large plantations, thereby allowing poor people to buy small farms. Whipper scoffed at this contention; "It would be perfect folly to entertain the opinion that in the present miserable destitution of the South the poor people will become owners of the vast tracts of land if thrown into the market." Both Whipper and R.C. DeLarge charged that speculators were behind opposition to the measure and that failure to pass it would turn over large holdings to the control of absentee land monopolists. Commanding General E.R.S. Canby finally settled the dispute by issuing a general relief order for the Carolinas. But black convention leaders took the matter further by sponsoring an ordinance annuling all unpaid debts contracted for the purchase of slaves.\(^{19}\)


\(^{19}\) Blacks speaking in favor of cancellation included J.J. Wright, B.F. Randolph, Robert B. Elliott, William J. Whipper, R.C. DeLarge, and A.J. Ransier. Cardozo was the only black leader to speak against the ordinance, which passed by a vote of ninety-five to nineteen. Ibid., pp. 214-232, 248. It was later declared unconstitutional because it impaired contracts. Francis B. Simkins and Robert H. Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1932), p. 100. Stephen A. Swails later introduced a resolution to Congress asking for relief for former Confederates who had not been paid for their services as assistant assessors of internal revenue in 1866 and 1867.
In the North Carolina convention, black leaders split over a stay law temporarily suspending the collection of debts contracted before 1 May 1865. James W. Hood declared that such laws benefited the rich and deprived the poor, but James H. Harris and Abraham H. Galloway disagreed. They led half the black delegates in voting with the majority for the ordinance, while Hood led the other blacks in a fruitless opposition. All but two of the blacks, however, voted against a proposal by white carpetbagger Albion W. Tourgee to extend such relief to debts contracted since 1 May 1865, and black delegates were solidly opposed to Tourgee's effort to repudiate the state's antebellum debt.

In Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, most of the black delegates voted with the majority of their conventions to pass temporary stay laws, and blacks and carpetbaggers gave strong support to the successful move in the Georgia convention to make permanent debt relief a part of the constitution. In Mississippi, however, the convention's persistent efforts to grant relief were thwarted by commanding General A.C. Gillem's refusal to issue orders implementing

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20 Raleigh Daily Standard, 6 March 1868; Bernstein, pp. 400-401; Nowaczyk, pp. 45-46.

21 Hume, pp. 481-482.
relief measures, on grounds that the convention was acting outside its authority or that such measures were not needed.\textsuperscript{22}

Most of the conventions permanently incorporated a degree of debt relief into the new constitutions through homestead provisions which exempted a specified minimum amount of property from attachment for debts. Although such provisions were an innovation in the southern states, the only controversy they aroused was over the amount of property to be allowed for exemption. Radical delegates, including blacks, generally favored a smaller exemption which would protect the small property holder but not large landowners. The Georgia convention, under the control of planters and conservative businessmen, allowed a $3000 exemption, the largest passed by any convention. Black delegates in the Louisiana convention failed in their effort to adopt an exemption of $1000 in personal property and eighty acres of land plus the buildings thereon.\textsuperscript{23}


\textsuperscript{23} Scroggs, "Carpetbagger Constitutional Reform," pp. 479-480; Vincent, "Negro Leadership and Programs," p. 348. In the North Carolina convention, James W. Hood successfully proposed that the exemption provision should apply to debts
Black leaders in several conventions were convinced that the only real means of alleviating the financial distress of freedmen was landownership. They accordingly sponsored measures aimed at aiding the impoverished to buy small plots of land, but none of these schemes achieved any real fruition. There was a tendency to place proportionately heavier tax burdens on property owners, but none of these tax systems effected meaningful land redistribution. The most direct land purchasing proposal came in the South Carolina convention from R.H. Cain, who introduced a resolution requesting that Congress allocate $1 million from the Freedmen's Bureau funds for the purchase of lands to be sold in small parcels to the homeless of both races. Cain's resolution set off an acrimonious three-day debate, with black leaders Cardozo and A.J. Ransier lending strong support to the proposal. W.J. Whipper, on the other hand, felt such proposals were cruel delusions for the more ignorant freedmen, whose earlier hopes of confiscation and redistribution of large estates would be revived in vain. The petition was nevertheless passed by a large majority and then dropped on the telegraphed advice of Senator Henry Wilson, who assured the convention that

incurred before adoption of the constitution as well as to those incurred afterward. All black delegates supported this amendment, as well as the complete article. Bernstein, p. 402.
Congress would not appropriate the money. Actual land confiscation was never countenanced by either white or black Radical leaders, not merely because they realized it was politically inexpedient, but also because they believed it to be contrary to the laws of economic morality. South Carolina Radicals of both races did, however, successfully promote a constitutional provision for a state land commission which would purchase lands for division and resale to actual settlers.

Black leaders in the various conventions were determined to incorporate the principles of equalitarianism into a permanent bill of rights, despite southern whites' vigorous resistance to eradicating legal differences between the races. The South Carolina convention finally adopted B.F. Randolph's proposal prohibiting any distinction on account of race or color and providing equal legal and political privileges for all citizens over the opposition of some white carpetbaggers.

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as well as native whites. In North Carolina, adamant white southern opposition to a provision in the bill of rights affirming that "all men are created equal" was successfully countered, with James H. Harris leading the majority. The Louisiana convention accepted black delegates' proposal for a general statement of equal rights, but blacks failed in their efforts to expand the bill of rights and make it more explicit. The Florida and Georgia constitutions, framed with little black influence, contained no specific guarantees for equal civil and political rights.

Under conditions imposed by the congressional reconstruction acts, it was generally assumed that the new constitutions would provide for universal male suffrage, except for temporary voting restrictions on certain classes of ex-Confederates. Black delegates naturally placed black suffrage above all other demands, and white carpetbaggers knew that Republican ascendency in the South depended upon


the black vote. And despite dire forebodings in the Conservative press, southern white delegates generally accepted the inevitability of black suffrage forced by a victorious North as a condition for readmission. When a few Conservative delegates denied that voting was an inherent right, James W. Hood warned that freedmen would not tolerate withdrawal of the right of suffrage.²⁹ In the Arkansas convention, articulate and intelligent black leader William H. Grey replied to Conservative arguments that black ignorance should preclude the granting of the franchise:

> When we have had eight hundred years as the whites to enlighten ourselves, it will be time enough to pronounce [blacks] incapable of civilization and enlightenment. The last election showed that they were intelligent enough to vote in a solid mass with the party that would give them their rights, and that too in face of the influence of the intelligence and wealth of the state and in face of threats to take the bread from their very mouths.³⁰


Since few of the Arkansas convention's southern white majority would vote against black suffrage, that state joined the other nine in extending the franchise to freedmen.

The bills of rights of the Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina constitutions prohibited the future imposition of property qualifications for voting, but some South Carolina delegates, including a few blacks, attempted to require literacy as a voting requisite after 1874. B.F. Randolph originally proposed the measure as an incentive for education, and R.C. DeLarge was chairman of the committee which adopted the provision. But after arguments against the qualification by several black leaders, including DeLarge himself, the literacy clause was deleted.\textsuperscript{31} Henry M. Turner in the Georgia convention also advocated educational requirements for voting after the public school system had been in operation for a time, but in Alabama John Carraway successfully argued against disfranchising illiterates.\textsuperscript{32} South Carolina's


black convention leaders split over the wisdom of allowing the legislature to restrict the ballot for nonpayment of a poll tax, but eventually black delegates united to defeat the proposal overwhelmingly.\textsuperscript{33} Black delegates in the North Carolina convention unanimously supported an ordinance which further protected their right of suffrage by prohibiting any form of intimidation of voters.\textsuperscript{34} Black convention leaders W.J. Whipper in South Carolina and Thomas Bayne in Virginia even argued unsuccessfully in favor of extending suffrage to women.\textsuperscript{35}

This limited black interest in women's suffrage was related to the general black reluctance to impose severe disfranchisement upon former Confederates. Having so recently gained citizenship and the ballot themselves, blacks

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina}, pp. 724-725, 734-735.

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{North Carolina Convention Journal}, p. 452.

were especially sensitive to the injustice of denying the franchise to whole categories of people. Imbued with patriotic enthusiasm and employing the rhetoric of the Declaration of Independence, blacks were inclined to believe—naively, as it turned out—that with true universal suffrage the best interests of all the people would be served. The South Carolina convention, with its black majority, included no voting restrictions on former Confederates. Indeed, R.C. DeLarge introduced a resolution asking Congress to relieve all citizens of the state from the political disabilities imposed by the Fourteenth Amendment, a motion supported by speeches from Cardozo and Nash. This measure did not pass, but the committee on petitions did present a list of specified persons to be sent to Congress for release from disabilities.36 Black delegates also supported the North Carolina convention's lenient policy toward former Confederates, and J.W. Hood served as chairman of a committee to draw up a list of persons to be presented to Congress to be relieved.37


37 Hume, pp. 486-487; Bernstein, pp. 399-400. A.H. Galloway, however, opposed the petition because he felt it was not yet time for the recently enfranchised black to take such a stand. Galloway to Benjamin F. Butler, 29 September 1867, Butler Papers.
on the question. In an early vote, eight of the nine blacks voted against a lenient franchise measure, but a switch of four black votes later provided the margin for passing an article granting universal male suffrage. In Georgia blacks, led by Turner, voted unanimously in favor of removing the voting disabilities of southern whites. In all these conventions showing liberality toward former Confederates, black leadership and black votes contributed to the mildness of disfranchisement.

In the conventions which disfranchised whites severely, on the other hand, a number of black leaders took a dissenting stand and spoke out for universal male suffrage. A lesser-known black delegate in the Alabama convention spoke against harsh disfranchisement, saying that he wanted only "equal civil and political rights for all men" and had "no desire to take away any of the rights of the white man." Although the Alabama convention did approve a harsh disfranchisement provision, it was mitigated somewhat with the support of a majority of black delegates, and James T. Rapier successfully sponsored a petition to Congress to remove political


39 Hume, p. 221; Coulter, p. 378.
disabilities of some whites. The Virginia convention placed voting restrictions on former southern leaders with the support of a majority of black delegates, but black leader James W. Bland spoke against extending disfranchisement and Thomas Bayne offered a resolution exempting all disfranchised persons from payment of taxes. Although the majority of blacks in the Louisiana convention favored the franchise article limiting the political rights of ex-rebels, four black delegates signed a protest against the article, stating, "We are now, and ever have been advocates of universal suffrage, it being one of the fundamental principles of the Radical Republican Party."
The general trend toward democratization in the new constitutions prevailed in establishing eligibility for office-holding. Property requirements were abolished with solid endorsement by black delegates, and constitutions written by dominant black-carpetbagger coalitions guaranteed qualified electors the right to hold state office. Such a guarantee was adopted in North Carolina, however, only after the defeat of a Conservative proposal to prohibit persons of "African descent or of mixed blood" from holding any executive office. Further dissension occurred when a relatively obscure black delegate introduced a provision that either the governor or the lieutenant governor be a colored man. Black leader James H. Harris denounced the resolution, saying that no such views were entertained by his people and that the proposal had been drawn up by a Conservative who hoped to discredit the Radical program. The North Carolina constitution finally excluded from office-holding only persons convicted of serious crimes and those denying the existence of God. The requirement that

535. An exception to this general pattern was Mississippi, where all the black delegates but one supported the disfranchisement of citizens above the rank of private who had given aid to the Confederacy. Vernon L. Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), p. 150. Eventually this provision was rejected in a second ratification election. North Carolina Convention Journal, pp. 162-163; Hume, p. 488; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, 28 January 1868;
office-holders acknowledge a supreme being inspired sharp controversy among black leaders in the South Carolina convention. J.J. Wright argued that such a requirement was contrary to the United States constitution, while Cain and Randolph vigorously opposed his stand. All black delegates in the Virginia convention supported the adopted "test oath" which would require office-holders to swear that they had never given voluntary aid to the Confederacy. In Mississippi also blacks voted to restrict office-holding among several classes of southern whites. These restrictions were to create difficulties in the ratification process. In Georgia, black delegates were persuaded to vote for removal of the article providing that all qualified electors could hold office. Lack of a constitutional guarantee of the black's right to hold office was later used to justify expelling black members of the first legislature under the new constitution.

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45 Hume, pp. 147, 344.

46 Thompson, pp. 196-197; Hume, p. 222; Americus Tri-Weekly Republican, 18 February 1868, 9 April 1868; Augusta Tri-Weekly Constitutionalist, 19 February 1868.
Further democratic provisions in the new constitutions included apportionment of representation according to population, popular control of local government, and making most state and local offices elective rather than appointive. In conventions where blacks exerted strong influence, such changes were readily accepted. In Georgia, Florida, and Arkansas, where black influence on the new constitutions was negligible, the governor could appoint large numbers of public officials, thus effectively excluding blacks from those offices, as well as removing from all voters any control over these officials. The conservative constitutions of Florida and Georgia based legislative representation on the "county-unit" system, with no county having more than three representatives in Georgia and four in Florida. This system reduced the relative strength of the populous counties with a heavy concentration of black voters and further assured white control of those state governments.

47 Tebeau, p. 249; Jack B. Scroggs, "Carpetbagger Influence in the Political Reconstruction of the South Atlantic States, 1865-1876" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1951), pp. 169-170; Thomas S. Staples, Reconstruction in Arkansas, 1862-1874 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), p. 244. The major differences in the two constitutions drawn up in Florida were: (1) the Radicals made county offices elective, the moderates, appointive; (2) the Radicals apportioned representation according to population, the moderates used the county-unit system. Congress accepted the moderate version.
No subject aroused more interest among black delegates than provisions for public education. Although public school systems had been decreed in the southern states during the antebellum period, most of these states had no effective means of implementation or financing, with the result that public schooling was unavailable to most whites and, of course, to all blacks. Among the lasting progressive changes wrought by the conventions of 1867-1869 were specific, mandatory provisions for common schools available to all citizens and supported by uniform systems of taxation. Black advocacy and support were instrumental in the inclusion of these measures in the organic law.

Again, the black-dominated South Carolina convention furnishes an instructive view of the role of black leaders. The resolution providing for a system of state-supported, free, compulsory education was introduced by a former slave and native South Carolinian, Robert Smalls, who was just entering the state political scene but would later be elected to the legislature and to Congress.48 The chief advocate

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48 Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina, p. 100; Okon Edet Uya, From Slavery to Public Service: Robert Smalls, 1839-1915 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 52. The son of a slave mother and a white father, Smalls was born in Beaufort in 1839 and grew up there as a favored personal servant. In 1851 his master moved to Charleston, where he hired Robert out as a hotel
of the education provision, however, was Francis L. Cardozo, an experienced educator who was chairman of the education committee. The compulsory feature of the education article created considerable dissension among black leaders. DeLarge and Cain felt compulsion to be contrary to the spirit of republicanism, but Elliott strongly denied their contention. Ransier, supported by Randolph, argued: "Civilization and enlightenment follow fast upon the footsteps of the school master; and if education must be enforced to secure these grand results, I say let the compulsory process go on."

Cardozo expressed a sense of urgency in exhorting delegates to seize the propitious moment because the old aristocracy would never pass such a measure upon their return to power. 49

waiter and then a stevedore. Smalls eventually became a boat pilot and made his own employment arrangements, paying his master fifteen dollars a month. On 13 May 1862 he and fifteen other blacks fled to freedom, with Smalls piloting the Confederate cotton steamer the Planter into the Union fleet blockading Charleston harbor, where the cargo of Confederate artillery was delivered to federal authorities. Smalls worked at recruiting blacks for the Union army, was commissioned a second lieutenant in a black regiment, and became a pilot for Union ships. After the war he bought his former master's house in Beaufort, established a cooperative shipping business, and acquired numerous properties in the Sea Islands. Ibid., pp. 1-37.

Underlying the arguments over the advisability of compulsory education was the question of racial mixing in the schools. White carpetbagger C.P. Leslie made an impassioned plea for removing the compulsory education clause because he believed South Carolinians would reject a constitution establishing biracial schools. But Cardozo retorted that the black vote would carry the constitution just as it had the convention. Although the article adopted did not require separate schools for the two races, most of the black leaders did not anticipate such immediate integration. Cain said that forcing children of both races to go to school together was not contemplated. Cardozo explained that most districts would have separate schools—an arrangement preferred by most blacks until white prejudice abated—but in less populous districts a dual system would be prohibitively expensive.

Other black leaders concurred without abandoning their pursuit of racial equality. DeLarge insisted that "if there is a place in the State where no distinction should be made, or in this country, it should be in the schoolhouse, or in the Church." But the blacks believed that

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general progress and the meliorative effects of education would gradually erase prejudice; in the meantime, according to J.J. Wright, colored children probably would not want to go to white schools, or vice versa. Obviously South Carolina's black leaders were much more interested in obtaining education for black children than they were in forcing racial mixing in the schools.  

Black leaders in the North Carolina convention vigorously opposed a Conservative proposal requiring racially segregated public schools, but they denied having any desire for racial mixing in the schools. James W. Hood expressed the hope that black children would have black teachers in separate schools, thus avoiding being trained to think of themselves as naturally inferior to whites. But such a separation should not be part of the organic law because, Hood argued,

In many places the white children will have good schools at the expense of the whole people, while the colored people will have none or worse than none. If the schools are to be free to all, the colored children will be insured good schools in order to keep them out of white schools.

51 Ibid., pp. 688-693, 748-749, 899-900; Williamson, pp. 220-221.

In voting on the amendment to establish separate schools, all the white carpetbaggers and most of the southern whites joined the black delegates to defeat the requirement eighty-six to eleven. In order to refute Conservative accusations that the reconstructionists wished to promote social equality and racial mixing in North Carolina, however, a black delegate introduced the following resolution:

> It is the sense of this Convention that intermarriage and illegal intercourse between the races should be discountenanced, and the interests and the happiness of the two races would be best promoted by the establishment of separate schools.

Just before adjournment, the resolution was adopted in an unrecorded vote, with North Carolina Republicans thus rejecting both required segregation and forced integration.\(^5\)\(^3\)

In the Virginia convention, some white leaders attempted to require separate schools for the two races. Thomas Bayne led the vehement black opposition to this proposal, with Lewis Lindsay warning the convention's carpetbaggers not to forget their pledges to the blacks. The segregation requirement failed, but Bayne also failed in his efforts to substitute a requirement for integrated schools, and the final education article did not indicate whether schools were to be integrated or segregated.\(^5\)\(^4\)


\(^5\)\(^4\)James D. Smith, pp. 113-114; Hume, pp. 150-151; Richard L. Morton, The Negro in Virginia Politics, 1865-1902
Black delegates in Mississippi were foremost in pushing for a free state-wide public school system, and black votes were instrumental in defeating efforts by Mississippi Conservatives to require separate schools for blacks and whites. One black delegate introduced a resolution which would put the convention on record as opposed to separate schools, but his black colleagues voted as a group against the resolution, and it failed. Thomas W. Stringer, a strong leader of the public school movement in the convention, tried to incorporate compulsory school attendance into the education article, but when he failed to get the support of the other black delegates, this provision was rejected.\textsuperscript{55}

Stringer, who was born in the South but reared in Ohio, had come to Mississippi in 1866 as superintendent of missions and presiding elder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. In Mississippi he proved to be as effective in organizing churches and fraternal orders as he had been in Ohio and Canada. Stringer was an equally vigorous political organizer of whom a recent scholar has said, "His influence upon the constitution of 1868 was as great as that of any

\textsuperscript{55}Howell, p. 46; Hume, pp. 340-341; Wharton, p. 150.
other man in the convention." He was later elected to the state senate.56

In the Arkansas and Alabama conventions, black delegates voted against requiring the new school systems to be segregated, and neither constitution mentioned such racial separation.57 In Louisiana, too, black delegates took the lead in sponsoring a public school system, but unlike their counterparts in the other state conventions, they successfully supported a provision that no separate schools or institutions of learning should be established exclusively for any race.58

Black leaders attempted, with varying degrees of success, to have the new constitutions guarantee equal access to public conveyances and public facilities. Several states did include the right to use public transportation; but with massive opposition from southern white delegates and little support from white carpetbaggers, blacks generally failed to gain guaranteed access to hotels, restaurants, theaters, and other public places of business.59 Again, black leaders in the

56Wharton, p. 148. See also Hume, p. 380; Howell, pp. 12, 68.

57Staples, pp. 244-245; Kolchin, p. 170.


59Bernstein, pp. 405-406; McMillan, p. 135; Kolchin, p. 170; Debates and Proceedings of the Constitutional
Louisiana convention were more successful in achieving at least nominal guarantees of equal access. Pinckney B. S. Pinchback was author of the civil rights article which granted blacks the same rights and privileges as whites on common carriers and in places of business or public entertainment. 60

Pinchback was perhaps the most famous, flamboyant, and controversial of the black political leaders who rose to prominence in the postwar years. Born in Mississippi in 1837 of a mulatto mother and a white planter, Pinchback was sent to school in Cincinnati. As a youth he worked on canal boats and eventually became a steamboat steward. Going to New Orleans in 1862, he quickly became involved in recruiting Union volunteers among free men of color, but he resigned his commission in 1863 because of conflict with superiors over their treatment of black recruits. After the war he moved to Alabama but returned to New Orleans after the enactment of the reconstruction acts. He organized the Fourth Ward Republican Club and was elected to the Republican state committee. After demonstrating considerable


leadership ability in the constitutional convention, he became a state senator, land registrar, and lieutenant governor. He also set up a cotton brokerage business and published the weekly *Louisianan*. He went to Congress after a contested election but was eventually denied a seat in the House of Representatives. Pinchback was prominent in the internal feuds which wracked the Louisiana Republican party throughout the Reconstruction period.61

The most explosive issue to come before the Arkansas constitutional convention was a proposal by an ex-Confederate officer to insert a prohibition against interracial marriage into the constitution. William H. Grey led the opposition to such a prohibition. He first argued that the provision was unnecessary, because there was so little likelihood that blacks and whites would desire to marry each other. He then contended that although miscegenation had been forbidden in the past,

> The contract has been kept on our part, [but] it has not been kept upon the part of our friends; and I propose, if such an enactment is to be inserted in the Constitution,

to insist, also, that if any white man shall be found cohabiting with a negro woman, the penalty shall be death. [Laughter and applause.]

Grey spoke at length of the scientific difficulties in determining who was a Negro, because the purity of blood so extolled by the white Conservatives had already been interfered with, and not on the initiative of the black race. 62 White carpetbag leaders tried to terminate the divisive debates, but southern whites refused to abandon the matter. The question was finally settled by the unanimous adoption of a resolution opposing all forms of amalgamation. 63 Other mulatto leaders, incensed by the hypocrisy of Conservative proposals, generally attacked the question just as Grey did; they countered with amendments placing severe penalties upon white men cohabiting with black women. In Alabama, John Carraway proposed life imprisonment for such a deed, and Ovide Gregory asked that a white man who had "taken up" with a black woman should be forced to make the relationship legal. 64 Black delegates in the Mississippi

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64 Kolchin, p. 170-171; McMillan, p. 139.
convention introduced similar amendments when southern whites attempted to prohibit interracial marriages. None of the ten conventions actually included a constitutional prohibition of racially mixed marriages, but North Carolina did pass a black-sponsored resolution discountenancing such unions, as well as illegal intercourse between whites and blacks. On miscegenation as on other issues, speeches by blacks show that they had little interest in promoting what was referred to as "social equality," but they did demand provisions for civil and political equality.

An examination of the position and actions of blacks in the constitutional conventions brings into question some longstanding assumptions about their role in this stage of Reconstruction. Certainly the relatively small number of blacks elected to most of the conventions refutes the allegation that blacks dominated the framing of the new state governments in the South. Nor were the blacks an inarticulate, ignorant mass to be manipulated at the will of venal, unscrupulous whites. The black delegates were not so

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65 T.W. Stringer did successfully propose empowering the legislature to recognize common-law marriages and to punish adultery and concubinage. Wharton, p. 150; Howell, p. 48.

66 See p. 193, above.
absurdly unsuited for the task of constitution-making as many historians have depicted them. Well over half had been handicapped by the experience of slavery, but even the ex-slaves were decidedly atypical of the freedmen as a whole. Illiteracy was rare, and convention records show that many former slaves had the intelligence to learn quickly. The black men who assumed real leadership were even more uncommon. A northern newspaperman considered Jonathan Gibbs the ablest delegate in the Florida convention, and a white South Carolina delegate wrote to Congressman Elihu Washburne, "We have now a convention composed of better material than any other Southern state, although the majority are colored men."  

Although blacks held few important convention posts, they did have considerable impact on the resulting constitutions, especially in the areas of civil rights, suffrage, economic reform, and public education. Black voting was generally cohesive and in accord with a "Radical" stance, but blacks clearly were, as a group, not responding to white instructions. In fact, black leaders frequently

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67 New York Tribune, 5 and 10 February 1868.

68 J.P.M. Epping to Washburne, 22 February 1868, Washburne Papers.

69 Hume's analysis of group voting patterns shows the black delegates to have a consistent overall "Radical" voting
disagreed with each other sharply in the debates. The leaders themselves were usually less extreme in their demands than were the mass of black delegates.\textsuperscript{70} Repeatedly black leaders disavowed the idea of confiscation; in the South Carolina convention future congressman J.H. Rainey introduced a resolution "to disabuse the minds of all persons whatsoever throughout the State who may be expecting a distribution of land by the Government of the United States."\textsuperscript{71} But in areas of debt relief and tax laws, as well as in political and social reform, black delegates made a distinct contribution to the new constitutions under which the southern states were to be readmitted to the Union.

\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{70}} For example, Kolchin found that Alabama's black leaders were not among the convention's eleven "extreme Radicals" on political questions. The five blacks in the Radical group were all obscure freedmen from the blackbelt. Kolchin, p. 169.

\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{71}} Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina, pp. 115-118.
CHAPTER V

MOBILIZING THE BLACK VOTE--ELECTIONS OF 1868

The adjournment of the constitutional conventions was a signal for intensified political activity as ratification campaigns got underway. Because the reconstruction acts required that each constitution be ratified in an election in which a majority of the state's registered voters participated, many Conservatives were committed to a policy of defeating the constitutions by staying away from the polls. Others sought to defeat the new constitutions by outvoting the supporters and either controlling or suppressing the black vote. Against such opposition, ratification could be accomplished only through a massive black turnout and a solid black vote in favor of the constitutions. In the same elections, voters in each state were electing officials to establish and operate the new state government should the constitution be ratified. The newly-elected legislature would in that event ratify the Fourteenth Amendment and present the new constitution to Congress for approval. In meeting these requirements for readmission, the black vote and the black leadership needed to mobilize that vote were
crucial. Furthermore, southern Republicans were under pressure to complete the required procedures quickly so that states with probable Republican majorities could participate in the 1868 presidential elections.

Republican success depended upon sustaining the coalition of recently-arrived northerners, blacks, and southern whites seeking to change traditional political patterns. Yet the party was caught between the dangers of arousing further white hostility by nominating blacks for public office and of alienating black voters by selecting all-white slates. To insure the vital black vote, Republicans with considerable reluctance did nominate blacks to some offices. In all the unrestored states blacks were nominated for legislative seats, but very few were chosen to run for important state offices. In Mississippi native and northern whites received all the party nominations for state office, despite black efforts to obtain a nomination to a minor office for the capable T.W. Stringer.¹ The higher offices in Alabama also were reserved exclusively for white Republicans, and of the

blacks nominated for the legislature, only one was for the state senate.² No blacks were included on the Republican slate of state officials in Arkansas, Georgia, or North Carolina, although a few blacks were nominated for legislative seats in each of the three states.³ Black Republicans in Texas attempted to secure the nomination of George T. Ruby as lieutenant governor, but there as elsewhere blacks were confined to local and legislative nominations.⁴ South Carolina Republicans named only one black for a state office, Francis L. Cardozo as secretary of state.⁵

When a breach occurred within a state party, white Republicans apparently were willing to nominate blacks to high posts in an attempt to lure black voters away from the rival party faction. In Louisiana, blacks were nominated

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⁵ Charleston Daily Courier, 12 March 1868.
for lieutenant governor by both wings of the party, with Oscar J. Dunn being the running-mate of young carpetbagger Henry C. Warmoth on the regular Republican ticket and Frances E. Dumas, a prominent member of New Orleans' free colored community, being nominated by the "pure Radical" faction. The regular Republican nominee for lieutenant governor in Virginia was Dr. J.D. Harris, who was added to the ticket primarily to embarrass Henry H. Wells, the gubernatorial nominee. Neither of the two Republican factions in Florida, however, included a black on its slate of state nominees.

In this first election of officials who would serve under the new state governments, the absence of black nominees for high posts resulted in part from the reluctance of black leaders to press for a larger share of the offices. In South Carolina Cardozo opposed the movement to nominate a black for lieutenant governor and even declined the nomination for himself, not wanting to go "beyond the limits

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James H. Harris refused the nomination to Congress proffered by North Carolina Republicans because he feared his election would injure the Republican party.\(^8\)

But other blacks were not so willing to allow white Republicans to pre-empt all the important posts. A party emissary from Washington reported a serious Republican split in Charleston, where William J. Whipper was determined to run for Congress "against any white man" and was encouraged by Democrats who hoped to profit from the party division.\(^9\)

In Tuscaloosa, Alabama, the county "Freedmen's Executive Committee" denounced the party's white congressional candidate and nominated instead a black minister, who soon was forced to withdraw for lack of funds.\(^10\)

During the ratification campaign, moderate Mississippi political leader James Lynch

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\(^8\) New York Times, 1 May 1868, p. 11.

\(^9\) Charleston Free Press, 5 April 1868; Nowaczyk, p. 56. It was rumored that Harris was bribed to withdraw by J.T. Deweese, the white who replaced him on the ticket. Hamilton, p. 281; Raleigh Daily Sentinel, 4 March 1868.

\(^10\) John M. Morris to William Claflin, 14 September 1868, William E. Chandler Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Apparently the breach was healed, and Whipper did not run for Congress at this time. In the South Carolina legislature, Whipper unsuccessfully urged the election of Robert B. Elliott as speaker of the lower house and protested the exclusion of blacks from positions of power. Charleston Daily Courier, 7 and 8 July 1868.

\(^11\) Kolchin, p. 172.
denied any black desire for political supremacy but warned that white hostility to political equality might force blacks to seek a larger share of offices.\(^{12}\) By 1869, abuses by white Republicans led the black editor of the *Arkansas Freeman* to demand a fair share of offices for his race.\(^{13}\) These early rumblings indicated that blacks would not be satisfied indefinitely to provide the bulk of Republican votes while being denied important offices. Indeed, black leaders from South Carolina and Virginia were already seeking Benjamin Butler's advice on the desirability of sending blacks to Congress.\(^{14}\)

In the meantime, blacks continued to serve in various capacities in state party organizations, and a number were delegates to the 1868 Republican national convention. P.B.S. Pinchback was a prominent member of the Louisiana delegation, while Henry E. Hayne, Robert Smalls, and W.B. Nash represented South Carolina.\(^{15}\) George T. Ruby attended as delegate from

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\(^{12}\) Harris, "James Lynch," p. 46.

\(^{13}\) Martha Ellenburg, "Reconstruction in Arkansas" (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 1967), pp. 199-200.


Nevertheless, in several states party dissension between whites and blacks was evident. A black Virginian complained to Thaddeus Stevens that blacks had no influence in the state party. But a northern Republican organizer thought blacks were too influential in the South Carolina party:

The colored element overwhems the white element of the party to its injury. The colored men are very shrewd, but not yet educated politically. They have not experience and sagacity. Yet they think they have. The State Convention . . . elected B.F. Randolph, a colored man [for state committee chairman] . . . . Randolph is a Methodist minister and quite a speaker and a good man but totally unfit for that position.

In most of the southern states these interracial, intra-party struggles were suppressed, at least for the duration of the campaign, with white Republicans dominating state party conventions as well as slates of nominees. But increasing black discontent with providing much of the party support and receiving little party power was indicative of future conflict.

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17 Moses Goddin to Stevens, 23 July 1868, Thaddeus Stevens Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

18 John M. Morris to William Claflin, 14 September 1868, Chandler Papers.
Blacks figured prominently in the dissensions which split the Republican party in Florida, Louisiana, and Virginia. A long-standing rift in the Florida party resulted in two competing constitutions and two Republican slates. Although white carpetbagger Daniel Richards and black leader William U. Saunders presented a memorial in favor of the Radical constitution to the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Congress approved for the ratification election the constitution drafted by conservative Republicans, or the "Johnson Party," on the recommendation of General George G. Meade, commander of the third military district. The Radical slate remained in the race, however, and that faction campaigned vigorously against ratification of the moderate constitution. Their apparent success with black voters alarmed the more conservative Republicans, especially when the Florida Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church adopted resolutions opposing the constitution. A spokesman for the conservative Republicans urged Thaddeus Stevens to help persuade black voters to support the constitution. Some extraordinary influence would be needed to counteract the A.M.E. Conference action, he felt, because

The colored preachers are the great power in controlling and uniting the colored vote, and they are looked to, as political leaders, with more
confidence and sincerity, than to any other source of instruction and control.

The Radical campaign was further handicapped when Saunders, who in 1867 had worked closely with white Radical leaders to organize Union Leagues and mobilize the freedmen's vote for the Republican party, suddenly deserted the Radical wing and began campaigning for ratification and the election of the conservative Republican slate.

White Radical leader Daniel Richards described the black reaction in a letter to Congressman Elihu Washburne:

The colored people here are terribly exasperated towards Colonel Saunders. The feeling is universal that he has sold out and betrayed the best interests of the race. We shall restrain them from any threats or personal violence. But it will require some effort to do so.

Richards later charged that Saunders was trying to bribe the black minister C.H. Pearce and also was making personal, abusive attacks on his former political associates.

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19 F.A. Dockery to Stevens, 18 March 1868, Stevens Papers.
21 Richards to Washburne, 14 April 1868, Elihu B. Washburne Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
22 Pearce had been prominent in the Radical constitutional convention. Richards to Washburne, 20 and 21 April 1868,
the autumn of 1868, however, Saunders had deserted his new political allies and led a separate black Republican faction outside of any organized party group. Known as the "Unterrified Tiger Committee," the organization offered Saunders as an independent candidate for Congress. With ratification of the constitution and the election of the conservative Republican slate, Saunders departed from the limelight of Florida politics.

In Louisiana, a struggle for party control between carpetbaggers and New Orleans' "free men of color" led to the nomination of blacks for lieutenant governor by both Republican factions. At the state nominating convention, young white carpetbagger Henry C. Warmoth barely defeated prominent free black merchant Francis E. Dumas for the gubernatorial nomination. Dumas declined the second spot on the regular Republican ticket, which then went to Oscar J. Dunn, with the nomination for treasurer going to another black, Antoine Dubuclet. The faction led by New Orleans' free colored class, known as "Pure Radicals," then fielded


23 Republican newspapers accused the Democratic organization of bribing Saunders to become a candidate. He carried only one county. Davis, pp. 610-611.
another slate of candidates headed by scalawag James G. Taliaferro, with Dumas accepting the nomination for lieutenant governor. Although the "pure Radicals" had pushed harder for equal suffrage and black civil rights than had the Warmoth faction, the Taliaferro ticket received considerable support from Democrats who were attracted to Taliaferro as a moderate and to the general economic conservatism of the "pure Radicals," a group consisting primarily of prosperous New Orleans businessmen and professionals. This faction predictably gained the support of most freeborn blacks, but the freedmen generally supported the Warmoth ticket, partly because of the aggressive campaigning of former Union officers who went among freedmen in the role of liberators. But the former slaves also were alienated by a degree of caste feeling among the light-skinned, well-educated bourgeois dominating the "pure Radicals" and by the fact that Dumas, their black nominee for lieutenant governor, was himself a former slaveholder. With widespread support from freedmen, the Warmoth faction succeeded in using the campaign to destroy the "pure Radicals" as a viable force in Louisiana politics. Warmoth's conservative
racial policies, however, would soon drive blacks into a new opposition group within the Louisiana Republican party. 24

In the Virginia ratification election, which was finally held in July of 1869 after Congress authorized a separate vote on the test oath and disfranchisement clauses, the regular Republican ticket included a black, Dr. J.D. Harris, for lieutenant governor. Harris was nominated by another black, Lewis Lindsay, but his selection can be attributed to his endorsement by opponents of gubernatorial nominee Henry H. Wells, who hoped thereby to weaken the ticket. George Teamoh, an ex-slave who served in the constitutional convention and later in the state senate, wrote that the freedmen were betrayed when Republicans "advocated the claims of Dr. J.D. Harris (a very good scholar and a refined gentleman, I admit) as occupying the second place on the ticket;--who, accepting the nomination, killed the ticket off." According to Teamoh, Harris was "put forward with the evident intention of being defeated." 25 In a successful effort to split the black vote, conservative Republicans charged that Wells' campaigners were urging


anti-black Republicans to scratch Harris's name from the ballot and substitute a white man. The inclusion of Harris's name on the ticket obviously did not mean that Virginia Republicans were ready to consider blacks as serious candidates for major offices.\footnote{Taylor, pp. 251-253; Richard G. Lowe, "Republicans, Rebellion, and Reconstruction" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1968), p. 252.}

With the outcome of both the ratification elections and the national presidential elections of 1868 depending on a massive black vote, black speakers and organizers were of critical importance to successful Radical campaigns. Realizing this, party workers in the South pleaded with the national committee for funds to pay the expenses of black campaign workers. After the rejection of the Mississippi constitution, a white Republican asserted that victory could have been assured if only "a few thousand doll[ar]s could have been expended sending colored men throughout the state" or organize voters through the Union League.\footnote{A.C. Fisk to William E. Chandler, 4 July 1868, Chandler Papers.}

The Union League was in several states a major means of mobilizing black voters to the two important elections. Although the League lost influence in the national Republican
party in 1868 because of its strong support of black suffrage in northern states, it continued to be an effective organizational force in southern Republican campaigns through 1868.  

In March the Republican Raleigh Standard urged the reorganization and expansion of the Leagues, to form "a phalanx impenetrable and invincible"; by the end of August the paper reported that the League was organizing in every county in North Carolina and had seventy thousand enrolled members.  

These claims apparently had some validity, since Conservative papers in both North and South Carolina expressed concern over League successes and urged freedmen to stay away from such organizations.

Black speakers were instrumental in delivering the freedman's ballot to the Warmoth wing of the Louisiana Republican party. A white campaign organizer wrote Warmoth

28 Clement M. Silvestro, "None but Patriots: The Union Leagues in Civil War and Reconstruction" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1959), pp. 368-369, 376. Black League official James Harris of North Carolina opposed the League's stand because he felt it would harm the party's chances in the 1868 election. Ibid., p. 369.


30 Raleigh Daily Sentinel, 19 and 20 August 1868; Charleston Daily Courier, 13 August 1868.
that four black ministers were going through Morehouse Parish making speeches and distributing copies of the constitution. He later described a successful rally of five hundred freedmen at Bastrop, where two black speakers persuaded the entire audience to endorse the constitution and the regular Republican ticket. A team of three black campaigners worked effectively among freedmen throughout the northern part of the state despite threats of assassination.

Although lack of party organization and widespread distaste for the strongly proscriptive clauses of the Mississippi constitution contributed to its rejection in that state, blacks did gain valuable campaign experience which would be used to good effect when the constitution was re-submitted to the voters in 1869. James D. Lynch was the leading black campaigner in Mississippi, and he even journeyed to South Carolina to aid in the ratification campaign there. South Carolina black campaigners were also busy urging ratification in every corner of the state.

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31 Charles C. Swenson to Henry C. Warmoth, 9 and 13 April 1868, Henry Clay Warmoth Papers, Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Charles Delery to Warmoth, 16 April 1868, ibid.

32 J.H. McVean to Henry C. Warmoth, 16 April 1868, ibid.

Conservative factions within state parties showed their respect for the efficacy of black campaigners by trying to lure black leaders into the more conservative ranks. William U. Saunders's desertion of the Radical faction in Florida demonstrated how successful Conservative inducements could be. In Virginia the "True Republicans," a coalition of moderate Republicans and Conservatives, mounted a powerful campaign to split the black vote. In addition to citing alleged racial biases of the Radical candidate, they enlisted the aid of black activist Dr. Thomas Bayne by promising him an office after the election. Their real attitude toward him is revealed in a private letter from a "True Republican" campaign organizer to William Mahone, railroad official who was later the leader of the Virginia "Regulator" movement:

My friends have succeeded in getting Bayne to enter on the canvass . . . . I want you to send the damned old wretch a ticket over your roads as far as Lynchburg. We are to give him a hundred dollars a month for the present & he is to be provided with an office after the canvass somewhere about the wash woods in the lower part of Princess Anne Co.

The attempt to attract the black vote to the conservative side was especially effective in southeastern Virginia, where

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Bayne and other blacks were campaigning against the regular Republican ticket.  

The national party was eager to secure the assistance of black campaigners to canvass the southern states for the presidential election of 1868. Thomas L. Tullock, secretary of the Republican Congressional Committee, reported in September:

[1] have written to Mr. Saunders of Florida to canvass that section; also to Dr. Brown, of Baltimore, to go there, friends in Maryland will pay his expenses. John T. Costin, Turner and others of Georgia will render most efficient service—all colored men and very efficient.  

Henry M. Turner did not disappoint Tullock; the next month a white Republican reported to the national committee that Turner was attracting large crowds, having just spoken to an audience of several thousand enthusiastic blacks in LaGrange, Georgia.  

In North Carolina, A.H. Galloway and

35 Lowe, "Republicans," p. 353.  
36 Thomas L. Tullock to William Claflin, 4 September 1868, Chandler Papers. Daniel Richards, Florida Radical, believed Tullock to be supporting William U. Saunders in his defection to Florida conservatives earlier in the year. Richards to Elihu B. Washburne, 20 April 1868, Washburne Papers. Costin was in the Georgia constitutional convention and later in the legislature; Turner was the most important of Georgia's black political leaders.  
James H. Harris were among several blacks who campaigned for the Grant ticket throughout the state. A white North Carolinian was so impressed with their speaking abilities that he suggested that the national committee send them into northern states to campaign for the Republicans. George T. Ruby, who had resigned from the Texas constitutional convention in disgust over that body's conservatism, wrote national party officials offering to campaign in the North, but there is no indication that his offer was accepted.

Just as Republican hopes for winning the ratification elections and the presidential contest of 1868 lay in delivering the black vote, Conservative strategy was based on control or suppression of the black vote. In spite of the near-total adherence of black voters to the Republican cause in the convention elections, Conservatives still hoped to control some black ballots. They encouraged every possible

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38 Nowaczyk, pp. 74-75; James H. Kelley to the National Republican Executive Committee, 14 July 1868, Chandler Papers.

conflict between blacks and their white Republican allies and eagerly magnified or even fabricated stories of black defections from the Union League or the Republican party. Virginia conservatives pointed out examples of the Radical gubernatorial candidate's disregard for blacks, and Alabama blacks were reminded that white Republicans had monopolized nominations for the choicest posts. In an effort to reduce the influence of Union Leagues among freedmen, Democratic clubs were organized to attract blacks, and letters from "converted" blacks, sometimes spurious, appeared in the Democratic press. When rifts in the Republican party appeared in several states, Conservatives were quick to encourage a division of freedmen's votes. In some areas, bribes and even promises of office were used to enlist the support of influential blacks.


42 The defection of Bayne and Saunders to the conservative wings of the party in Virginia and Florida, respectively, are only among the more notorious examples of this practice, which was applied to lesser-known black voters as well. A Florida Radical [probably Richards] to Thaddeus Stevens, 27 May 1868, Stevens Papers; J.S. Powell of Savannah, Georgia, to "the Reconstructing Committee," 18 February 1868, ibid.
Conservatives had not, however, forsaken their earlier strategy of warning blacks against the influence of strangers. A Conservative journal in North Carolian cautioned: "We tell the negroes, again, that the carpet-baggers and scallawags are their worst enemies. They will bring disgrace and ruin on you if you allow them to put you forward to do their dirty work."\(^\text{43}\) Democrats issued an "Address to the Colored People of South Carolina" urging the freedman to cooperate with his former master and avoid the ruin which would be his through the use of too much power: "Forsake then, the wicked and stupid men who would involve you in this folly, and make to yourselves friends and not enemies of the white citizens of South Carolina."\(^\text{44}\) Whites in Greene County, Georgia, also warned blacks against "strangers from the North" and urged the freedmen to "come with us, then we who live together can all be friendly together."\(^\text{45}\)

Conservatives were not content merely to warn against outside agitators. A Republican national commiteeeman from Georgia wrote national party officials that Democrats had

\(^{43}\) Wilmington Morning Star, 5 April 1868.  
\(^{44}\) Charleston Daily Courier, 6 April 1868.  
\(^{45}\) From the Greensboro Herald, quoted in the Wilmington Daily Journal, 27 May 1868.
carried a heavily black district in the ratification election by using money, gifts, and promises.46 A white Radical in Shreveport, Louisiana, heard Democrats talk of "persuading colored men to vote with them as their best friend, and propose to use money freely."47 Henry M. Turner of Georgia later told the National Anti-Slavery Society that before the 1868 elections Democrats offered freedmen "houses and land, and every imaginable thing."48 A Republican trouble-shooter sent to South Carolina reported to the national committee: "The Democrats are very active and well supplied with money . . . . They incite colored men to demand money, to run as independent candidates--they hire them to do scores of unfortunate things." The same observer asserted that the "rebels coax with one breath and threaten with the next."49 Conservatives seemed to find threats a more effective means.


48 National Anti-Slavery Standard, 5 June 1869.

49 John M. Morris to William Claflin, 14 September 1868, Chandler Papers. According to a Louisiana Republican, Shreveport rebels "offered money as freely as water to get a few col men to form a procession by all sorts of promises they managed to get twenty and nineteen [sic] are known to be 1" class radicals." J.H. McVean to Henry C. Warmoth, 16 April 1868, Warmoth Papers.
of containing the black vote than gifts and cajolery.

Economic coercion was the most widespread device for preventing freedmen from participating in politics. White employers frequently threatened to dismiss or evict workers who voted with the Radicals, and in some cases those threats did become realities. Democrats in the Richland district of South Carolina agreed in a public meeting not to hire any labor which was associated in any way with the Union Leagues or Radicals, and a white Georgian reported that planters in his area would be "very much controlled in hiring their freedmen next year by their politics."51

Fraud and intimidation, extending to threats and actual violence, were also commonly used to keep black voters from

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50 Turner said, "The next week after the . . . election . . . the whole town [Macon, Georgia] was flooded with men and women who had been discharged from their work." *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, 5 June 1869; Charles F. Lewis to Senator Henry Wilson, 19 November 1867, Henry Wilson Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Kolchin, p. 174; Lowe, "Republicans," p. 353; Silvestro, p. 371-372; Wharton, p. 152. A North Carolina legislator told the House that landowners refused to give supplies to workers as agreed upon after the blacks voted Republican. *Raleigh Daily Sentinel*, 21 August 1868. So many Georgia blacks were fired for voting Republican that Foster Blodgett, mayor of Augusta, suggested a tax on the wealthy to support the jobless. *Americus Tri-Weekly Republican*, 7 May 1868.

the polls. Some white employers sent their workers far from the polls on election day; others deceived blacks about the times of voting. Early in January of 1868 a white Republican in Alabama warned Congressman Elihu Washburne that rebels were organizing "War Clubs for the express purpose of keeping the colored people from the polls."\(^52\)

A white delegate to the Mississippi constitutional convention explained to Thaddeus Stevens the defeat of the constitutional referendum:

> Previous to and during the election, gangs of white men, opposed to reconstruction, prowled around, at night, hunting up the leading freedmen who took an active part in the canvass, perpetrating on them gross outrages, and by doing so frightening hundreds and thousands and preventing them from voting if through threats they could not be induced or compelled to vote the Democratic ticket. Other freedmen, and their number is large, who were very anxious to vote the Republican ticket, abstained from voting through fear of maltreatment or of losing their homes and crops.\(^53\)

The Republican Raleigh Tri-Weekly Standard complained that "thousands and thousands of colored people" had been frightened from the polls in the North Carolina ratification election.\(^54\)

White violence was also common in northern Louisiana, where

\(^{52}\) C.W. Buckley to Washburne, 9 January 1868, Washburne Papers.

\(^{53}\) U[rbain] Ozanne to Stevens, 9 July 1868, Stevens Papers.

\(^{54}\) Raleigh Tri-Weekly Standard, 5 May 1868.
Radical speakers were in constant danger of ambush and assassination, and blacks reportedly were driven from the polls or forced to vote against the constitution by armed rebels.  

Before the presidential elections in the fall, blacks in New Orleans and surrounding parishes were robbed of their registration papers by bands of armed whites. As the national elections approached, violence in North and South Carolina became so prevalent that a delegation from those

55 "Out of 4500 registered voters [in Caddo Parish] scarcely 2000 voted," and the parish was lost despite its Radical majority. J.H. McVean to Henry C. Warmoth, 16 and 21 April 1868, Warmoth Papers, W.L. Mudgett of Shreveport wrote Warmoth: "[Democrats] found it necessary to give the colored men whom they had bought up to go into the country in this parish passes in the form of cards marked Conservative to wear on their persons in a conspicuous place & letters of recommendation signed by many of the leading citizens of Shreveport & of the Central Democratic Club that the bearer was 'all right' and 'one of us' & asking that they be allowed to 'speak to the Negroes on their plantation' 'distribute tickets' &c." Mudgett to Warmoth, 29 April 1868, Warmoth Papers. A freedman from Claiborne Parish in the northern part of the state also wrote Warmoth of many "bade and durtty act [sic]" done to blacks during the election. William R. Meador to Warmoth, 18 April 1868, ibid. See also Allen W. Trelease, White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction (New York: Harper and Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1974), pp. 95-96.

56 M.A. Southworth to William E. Chandler, 31 October 1868, Chandler Papers.
states called on Secretary of War Schofield to ask for action because the sheriffs were making no arrests.57 Prominent white Republicans in South Carolina wrote northern Radical leaders that intimidation and violence formed "the favorite weapon of the Southern Democracy," who openly declared that no black would be allowed to approach the polls in the presidential election.58 After the election the Charleston Republican claimed that scores of South Carolina blacks had been shot, hundreds beaten, and hundreds more driven from their homes and cheated of their pay for voting Republican, "while thousands were kept from the polls by threats of murder and injury."59 Foster Blodgett, chairman of Georgia's Republican state committee, reported,

57 National Anti-Slavery Standard, 31 October 1868. The Standard later ran brief stories of political murders and outrages across the South under the headline "The South: A Month of Assassinations." Ibid., 14 November 1868. The same issue reported that in the seacoast districts of South Carolina, where blacks outnumbered the whites by four to one, Democrats were courting black voters and deprecating the assassinations committed in the hill country, where blacks were fewer.


59 Quoted in the National Anti-Slavery Standard, 21 November 1868. See also Trelease, pp. 115-117.
"Negroes are killed almost every day, while white Republicans are threatened abused and mal-treated."\(^{60}\)

Among the more serious incidents during the presidential campaign was the so-called "Camilla riot," which occurred in southwest Georgia on September 19. At least seven blacks were killed and thirty to forty wounded in an affray provoked when Republicans attempted to hold a political rally in Camilla. Accounts of the affair varied according to the politics of the reporter, but even though whites accused the blacks of deliberately arming themselves in preparation for the rally, no whites were reported to be among the killed or injured. Both Democrats and Republicans sought to take political advantage of the Camilla affair as tensions accelerated with the approach of the presidential election.\(^{61}\)

\(^{60}\) Blodgett to William E. Chandler, 13 September 1868, Chandler Papers. Early in October a Savannah black on his way to Blakely, in southwest Georgia, to organize a Grant club, was kidnapped by "unknown parties" and shot. Charleston Daily Courier, 5 October 1868. By early 1869, Henry M. Turner, writing Benjamin F. Butler in behalf of the "Civil and Political Rights Association of Georgia," asked for relief from Congress. He cited murder, false imprisonment, and burning of black schools and churches, and claimed that blacks were "becoming demoralized" because they felt forsaken by the Republican party. Turner to Butler, 19 February 1869, Butler Papers. See also Turner's letter to Georgia black J.M. Simms, who was on a lecture tour in the East, published in the National Anti-Slavery Standard, 10 April 1869.

\(^{61}\) Charleston Daily Courier, 23 and 24 September 1868, 7 January 1869; Columbus Daily Sun, 23 and 24 September 1868; National Anti-Slavery Standard, 3 and 10 October 1868. See also Trelease, p. 117.
South Carolina Republicans were also outraged when B.F. Randolph, black state senator and chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, was murdered October 19 when he stepped out onto the train platform at the Cokesbury depot while on a campaign tour for the Grant ticket. The three undisguised white assailants departed on horseback after the shooting and were never punished. News of Randolph's murder caused great excitement among the blacks of Charleston. "Crowds of freedmen assembled in knots and groups in the streets," and Republican leaders were afraid to return the body to Charleston for fear of precipitating a riot. At a mass meeting October 21 A.J. Ransier, R.C. DeLarge, and several white Republicans introduced resolutions protesting Democratic violence and asking the governor for protection. The speakers asked the crowd of blacks, however, to control their passions and to take no drastic action.

While it is difficult to attribute specific acts of violence directly to the Ku Klux Klan or similar vigilante

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62 A.J. Ransier to T.L. Tullock, 19 October 1868, Chandler Papers; F.A. Sawyer to William E. Chandler, 22 October 1868, ibid. Sawyer calls Randolph a victim of "this new policy of crushing out Republicanism by slaying Republicans." See also Charleston Daily Courier, 19 October 1868 and National Anti-Slavery Standard, 14 November 1868.

63 Charleston Daily Courier, 20, 21, 22 October 1868.
groups, certainly the enormous increase in violence against blacks during the election campaigns of 1868 was at least partly a result of the spectacular expansion of the order throughout the South in the spring and summer of 1868. Much of this expansion occurred as the new state governments began to take shape under the reconstruction acts, when political opposition to the Radicals became a part of the Klan's central purpose of maintaining white supremacy. White southerners justified the establishment of Klans as the only means of breaking the power of the Union Leagues over the freedmen. A number of similar bands of "regulators" appeared under various names in different states, and all these groups contributed to, but were by no means solely responsible for, the violence which characterized southern politics in 1868.64

64 A conservative paper in North Carolina stated that the Klan would be used as much as necessary to put down "carpetbaggers, who organize Union Leagues all over the country for the purpose of engendering hate between the Southern whites and their former slaves." Wilmington Morning Star, 29 March 1868. In Arkansas the Campaign Gazette, a special campaign edition of the leading Democratic organ, proclaimed: "To protect themselves against so inflammable and dangerous a combination as negro leagues, the white men would seem to be justifiable in constituting themselves in an organization." Cited in Staples, p. 255. For a thorough treatment of the role of the Klan in Reconstruction, see Trelease, passim. See also Silvestro, pp. 378-380, 399-400; Ellenburg, p. 193; Raleigh Tri-Weekly Standard, 5 May 1868; National Anti-Slavery Standard, 12 September 1868.
The first in the series of constitutional ratification elections occurred in Alabama 4 February 1868. The vote was 71,817 for the adoption of the constitution and 1,005 for rejection. But because of intimidation of black voters and a white voter boycott, the number of votes cast was less than half the state's total registration. The commanding general therefore officially reported that the constitution had been rejected under the terms of the reconstruction act of 23 March 1867. As a result, Congress passed the supplementary reconstruction act of 1 March 1868, by which a majority of votes actually cast was made sufficient for adoption of the new state constitutions, and Alabama was included in the "Omnibus Bill" of 25 June 1868 which readmitted six states to the Union.\(^6^5\)

In Arkansas, the second state to hold a ratification election, the constitution was adopted by the close vote of 27,913 to 26,597. By a separate act of 22 June 1868, Arkansas became the first of the ten unrestored states to

\(^6^5\) Edward McPherson, The Political History of the United States of America during the Period of Reconstruction (New York: DaCapo Press, 1972), pp. 337, 374; Walter L. Fleming, Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1949), pp. 538-550; Kolchin, p. 175. For the supplementary reconstruction act of 23 March 1867 requiring at least half the registered voters to vote on the ratification question, see U.S., Statutes at Large, 15:2-5.
gain readmission, on the fundamental condition that the constitutional provision for black suffrage in the state should be perpetual. In rapid succession four other states adopted new constitutions in relatively close elections--Florida (14,520-9,491), Georgia (89,007-71,309), Louisiana (66,152-48,739), and North Carolina (93,084-74,015). South Carolina, however, with a black electorate of 80,550, ratified its constitution by an overwhelming margin of 70,758 to 27,288. These five states along with Alabama were readmitted late in June, 1868. Later, when blacks elected to the Georgia legislature were expelled and disqualified ex-Confederates were given offices, Congress withheld recognition, reimposed military supervision, and eventually readmitted Georgia in July, 1870.

Restoration was also delayed in the three remaining states--Mississippi, Virginia, and Texas. The Mississippi constitution was the only one of the ten to be rejected outright, with 63,860 votes cast against the constitution and only 56,231 for it. The constitution had failed primarily because of its severely proscriptive franchise clauses, which

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66 McPherson, pp. 337, 374; Staples, pp. 264-265.
67 McPherson, pp. 337, 374.
68 Ibid., p. 615; Thompson, pp. 255-268.
required a stringent test oath of all voters and denied office-holding to anyone who had promoted secession or supported the Confederacy. Congress then authorized a second ratification election for Mississippi, in which the franchise clauses could be voted on separately from the main question of adopting or rejecting the constitution. In the new election the constitution was adopted almost unanimously and the proscriptive clauses rejected overwhelmingly. After meeting a further condition of ratifying the Fifteenth Amendment, Mississippi was readmitted in February of 1870.69 The ratification election in Virginia was delayed until July 1869 when the constitution was approved but the test oath and disqualifying features defeated.70 The Texas constitution was finally approved in November 1869 and after ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, the state was readmitted by special congressional action 30 March 1870.71


70 The constitution vote was 210,585 for and 8,136 against. McPherson, p. 506; see also pp. 408, 420-421.

Unquestionably, large turnouts of black voters and their solid support of the constitutions formed an essential ingredient in the ratification process. But blacks were not the only voters favoring adoption of the new constitutions; in every state sizable numbers of whites cast their ballots for ratification. Thus the new constitutions did not establish "black" governments, even in the sense that their ratification depended solely on black support, although this was the post-election charge of white Conservatives.

Black voters and the leaders who instructed and mobilized them not only helped to ratify the constitutions, but they also contributed to Grant's election in 1868. Despite reprisals, southern Union Leagues had an especially large role in delivering the black vote for the Republicans in the fall election. Of the southern states participating in the elections, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina went Republican, while only Georgia and Louisiana voted Democratic. Although Grant won the national electoral vote by a landslide, 214-80, his popular majority was less than 310,000, and over 400,000 blacks voted Republican. Thus in their first opportunity to cast their ballots for a president, blacks were an important factor in Grant's
huge electoral victory, despite the large numbers excluded from the polls by intimidation.\textsuperscript{72}

While blacks were a dominant factor in the elections establishing new state governments in the South, these elections certainly did not usher in a period of black rule, as alleged by contemporaries and posterity. Blacks were not in control of the government in any state. Even in South Carolina, where blacks had their greatest numerical strength, they formed a majority only in the lower house, and only one black, Secretary of State Francis L. Cardozo, was elected to a state office. Black South Carolinians did, however, contribute heavily to the vote which swept the entire Republican state and congressional ticket into office.\textsuperscript{73} In Mississippi and Louisiana, the only other states in which blacks were a majority of the population,\textsuperscript{72}\textsuperscript{73}


black representation was even less. In the first constitutional ratification election in Mississippi, Republicans included no blacks on their statewide ticket, but in the second election, James D. Lynch was elected secretary of state by a large majority, along with the remainder of the Republican state. Thirty-one blacks were among the 107 members of the house of representatives, while only five blacks were elected to the thirty-three-member senate.  

Louisiana was the only state electing two blacks to state posts in the first reconstruction government, with Oscar J. Dunn becoming lieutenant governor and Antoine Dubuclet state treasurer. The racial composition of the first legislature is not known precisely, but almost half the members of the lower house were said to be "colored," and seven of the thirty-six senators were so designated.  

None of the remaining seven states elected blacks to statewide posts. With the support of Alabama's blacks, Republican candidates were successful throughout the state.

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74 The conservative coalition which opposed the Republicans in the 1869 election also nominated a black for secretary of state, but he was "an ignorant and servile freedman with no standing among his fellows," while Lynch was "the best-known Negro in the state." Wharton, pp. 155, 172.

Although blacks were elected to a number of local posts in the blackbelt, only twenty-four were named to the house of representatives and one to the senate. Of the 170-member North Carolina legislature, twenty were black. Georgia voters elected three blacks to the upper house and twenty-nine to the lower, although all would soon be expelled on the grounds that the constitution did not explicitly grant blacks the right to hold office. In Florida nineteen of the seventy-six legislators elected in 1868 were black, with three of the nineteen being senators. Virginians defeated the Radical Republican ticket, including the black nominee for lieutenant governor, but counties with black majorities elected a total of twenty-seven blacks to the legislature. In Texas, the Radical Republican slate owed

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77 Nowaczyk, pp. 58-59.


79 Late in 1868, Governor Harrison Reed appointed Jonathan C. Gibbs secretary of state after the first man he appointed joined in the attempt to impeach the governor. Joe M. Richardson, The Negro in the Reconstruction of Florida, 1865-1877 (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1965), pp. 185-187; Davis, p. 527.

its small plurality in the 1869 election to the solid support of black voters. Only nine blacks were elected to the legislature, however, with two of these going to the state senate.\textsuperscript{81} Arkansas voters sent even fewer blacks to the legislature, six being elected to the lower house.\textsuperscript{82}

The most significant contribution of black leaders to the constitutional ratification campaigns and the presidential elections of 1868 was the successful indoctrination and mobilization of black voters. The black vote determined the outcome of these elections in most of the ten unrestored states. But in no state was a black elected to the highest state office, nor were blacks elected to the lower offices in proportion to their numbers in the electorate. They were, however, elected to offices of some power in every state and thus were in a position to attempt inauguration of programs they considered to be important.

\textsuperscript{81}John P. Carrier, "A Political History of Texas during the Reconstruction, 1865-1874" (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1971), pp. 343, 394-399; DuBois, pp. 559-560.

\textsuperscript{82}Little Rock Arkansas Republican, 7 and 8 January 1869.
CHAPTER VI

BLACK INFLUENCE IN NEW STATE GOVERNMENTS

With the ratification of new state constitutions and the election of officials to implement them, the blacks elected to the new legislatures and to a handful of other state offices became directly involved in bringing significant change to the southern states. The major political restructuring initiated by Congress in the reconstruction legislation and in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments had been furthered in the numerous democratic changes of the new constitutions. Now, in directing social and economic reconstruction, new administrators and legislators were faced with problems arising from the enormous extension of the responsibilities and powers of state governments and from the implications of black equality before the law.

Of immediate concern was the physical reconstruction of the South. Public buildings, roads and bridges, and railroads had to be repaired or rebuilt, while economic expansion required state assistance for massive new internal improvements. Eager to effect economic recovery and partake of the rapid industrialization transforming the North,
southern governments offered tax exemptions and other inducements to industry, and they granted to railroads franchises and aid based on state credit. Prewar efforts to establish state responsibility for education, care for the aged and handicapped, relief of poverty, and rehabilitation of criminals had been minimal. But the reconstruction governments embarked on extensive expansion of public services to individual citizens. Partly because of black pressure, the new constitutions committed the states to free public education for all. The reconstruction governments also inaugurated programs to provide schools for the blind and deaf, hospitals for the insane, homes for orphans, and aid for the destitute. Imprisonment for debt was abolished, and homesteads were exempt from seizure by creditors. Reform of prisons was begun, and punishments were made more humane. State judiciaries were reorganized and new codes of law adopted. Furthermore, the extension of civil and political equality to blacks required measures to delineate and guarantee their rights as citizens.

In bringing about these changes, blacks furnished direct leadership in some areas and supplied necessary legislative votes in others. Indirectly the black electorate also affected legislation through their demands on whites who were dependent
on black votes to continue in office. The degree to which black leaders actually were able to influence events depended only partially on their numbers. Their skill and power, their position within the Republican party, the party's indebtedness to those leaders for its success, all helped to determine the black role in reconstructing the southern states. Whatever power the blacks were able to wield also depended on Radical control of the state governments. Once Conservatives or outright Democrats regained control, black politicians would have little influence even when they continued to hold seats in legislatures. George Teamoh, a former slave elected to the first Virginia senate under the new constitution, described the ineffectual position of blacks in a Conservative-dominated legislature:

Had I or any colored member of that body--and there were six of us--been as ornate and forcible in argument as the Summers or Websters have been in their day, we should have failed in making a single impression on the most liberal minded of the "Only True Republicans," as that was the assumed name by which Democracy carried the State.

Republican control, and with it the possibility of meaningful black influence, survived in only three states when federal support of the southern experiment ended with the inauguration of President Rutherford B. Hayes on 4 March

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1877 and the withdrawal of the few remaining federal troops from the South. Of those three, Florida had throughout the period been governed by a conservative Republican element which allowed the black little voice, and in Louisiana and South Carolina intra-party dissension and corruption diminished the potential impact of black leadership. Republican dominance was much more brief in other states. When Virginia was restored to statehood in 1869, Conservatives were already in control. Within a few months after Georgia's delayed readmission in 1870, Conservatives came to power. North Carolina Republicans lost their uncertain hold on the state government in 1870. Democrats captured the Alabama government in 1870, lost it in 1872, and gained final ascendancy in 1874. They won Texas in 1872, Arkansas in 1874, and Mississippi in 1875. The brevity of Republican control was then a serious restriction on the efficacy of black political power. But within this and other limitations, blacks did have some influence on the nature of the social, economic, and political change which characterized the Reconstruction period.²

In South Carolina, where blacks had their greatest numerical strength, only one black gained statewide office in 1868. Later, however, black pressure resulted in the selection of several blacks for important positions. From 1868 to 1872 the prominent mulatto minister and educator, Francis L. Cardozo, was secretary of state, and from 1872 through 1876 he served as state treasurer. South Carolina had two black lieutenant governors, Alonzo J. Ransier (1870-1872) and Richard H. Gleaves (1872-1876). In 1872 Henry E. Hayne succeeded Cardozo as secretary of state, a post he held until 1876. Hayne was also appointed land commissioner during the Republican regime, as was Robert C. DeLarge. 3


Even fewer blacks held important statewide offices in Mississippi, despite their majority in the electorate. In the state's first Republican administration, the able and charismatic James Lynch as secretary of state was the only black in a high position. Extremely active in organizing the Mississippi Republican party, Lynch was highly influential among the freedmen. After Lynch's death late in 1872, blacks began to demand a larger share of offices, and in 1873 Republicans nominated A.K. Davis for lieutenant governor, T.W. Cardozo for superintendent of education, and James Hill for secretary of state.5

Both contemporaries and later historians considered Davis to be one of the weakest officials among blacks who attained high office during Reconstruction. John R. Lynch, black speaker of the Mississippi house of representatives, said of Davis's nomination, "It could not be said that his name added strength to the ticket," and the daughter of Adelbert Ames, white carpetbagger governor, called Davis

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Little is known of Davis's background prior to Reconstruction, but he performed creditably as a state legislator. As lieutenant governor, however, he created a furor by making appointments and issuing pardons while Governor Ames was out of the state. In 1876 the legislature impeached and convicted him on a charge of bribery, although he was subsequently cleared in a criminal court.7

Superintendent of Education Thomas W. Cardozo was also held in low esteem because of his alleged dishonesty, although both Ames and John Lynch attested to his intellectual and educational fitness for his position, and Ames considered him definitely superior to Davis.8 Historians have reported Cardozo's background to be obscure, but contemporary newspapers refer to him as the brother of South Carolinian Francis L. Cardozo and describe Thomas's varied and interesting experiences before he came to Mississippi in 1870. Cardozo

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7 Wharton, p. 164; Garner, pp. 293, 298-299, 404; Ames, pp. 395, 401, 441-442.

was apparently born in 1838 in Charleston, where he attended private school until his father's death in 1855, when he became an apprentice to a builder of rice-threshing machines. His mother moved to Ohio before the war, and Thomas attended Newburg Collegiate Institute in New York. During the war years he taught school, and in 1866 he became an agent for the American Freedman's Union Commission, canvassing New York to raise money for schools in Mississippi and North Carolina. In 1868 the Commission sent him to North Carolina, where he helped to establish a series of common schools and a normal school for freedmen. Cardozo himself settled down to conduct a school for over a hundred blacks in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. When the Commission ended its operations in 1869, Cardozo went north to raise funds to continue the school. He carried a letter of commendation for his efforts in Elizabeth City written by North Carolina's United States Senator John Pool and endorsed by Governor W.W. Holden and other state officials. In 1870 Cardozo moved to Vicksburg, where he opened a school. In 1871 he was elected circuit clerk of Warren County, a position he held until his election as state superintendent of education in 1873. He resigned

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9 Biographical information from the Mississippi Pilot (n.d.) published in the Washington New National Era and Citizen, 18 September 1873. See also National Anti-Slavery
this post in 1876 under threat of impeachment for alleged embezzlement of funds from Tougaloo University.10

James Hill, the third black to be elevated to state office in 1873, was born on the plantation of "J. Hill" near Holly Springs, Mississippi, in 1846. The light mulatto boy was tutored by his master's daughters but received no formal training. A personal servant to the family's young sons during the war, Hill later went to work in railroad shops in Holly Springs. After serving as sergeant-at-arms for the Mississippi house of representatives, he became a member of that body in 1871.11 According to John Lynch,

Standard, 29 August 1868, 10 April 1869, 16 January 1869, 17 July 1869, 25 December 1869. Both the Standard and the Era consistently identify Thomas as Francis Cardozo's brother. Historians (with the exception of Vernon L. Wharton) have generally spelled Thomas's name Cardoza, but these newspapers spelled it Cardozo. The Elizabeth City North Carolinian called Cardozo's school in that city "a remarkable success" and referred to Cardozo as "a gentleman of character [and] education [who] as a Teacher has few superiors." Cardozo wrote frequent letters reporting on conditions in Mississippi to the New National Era under the pseudonym "Civis." Cardozo possibly went back to Charleston briefly at the end of the war. The Charleston Leader, 25 November 1865, calls attention to "the fine stock of Groceries and Crockery at T.W. Cardozo's store" and expresses the "hope that the colored portion of the community will patronise those of their own class in preference to others."

10Wharton, p. 164; Garner, 332, 404-405.

11Wharton, p. 163.
Hill's "nomination was favorably received, because it was generally believed that, if elected, he would discharge the duties of his office in a way that would reflect credit upon himself and give satisfaction to the public."\textsuperscript{12} He did fill the position competently and efficiently and retained his office three years after the Democrats swept to power in 1875. Hill was unsuccessful in his bid for Congress in 1882, but he held several appointive posts, including those of postmaster at Vicksburg and collector of internal revenue.\textsuperscript{13}

In Louisiana's first Republican administration, two blacks were elected to high posts. Oscar J. Dunn, who had been influential in the organization of the Louisiana Republican party, was selected as lieutenant governor, a position he held with distinction until his sudden death in November 1871.\textsuperscript{14} Through the maneuvering of Governor Henry C. Warmoth,

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{12}Lynch, p. 75.


\textsuperscript{14}Dunn's death was widely rumored to have been caused by poison. See Marcus B. Christian, "The Theory of the Poisoning of Oscar J. Dunn," \textit{Phylon} 6(1945):254-266. According to a signed statement by a white state senator, black senator James H. Ingraham swore that he had been present at the disinterment of Dunn's body a few hours after it was buried and that a chemical analysis of the stomach contents revealed the presence of a large quantity of poison. Written statement by L.B. Jenks, 9 December 1871, Warmoth Papers.
\end{footnotesize}
P.B.S. Pinchback was selected to finish Dunn's term. The other black official elected in 1868, State Treasurer Antoine Dubuclet, was re-elected in 1872 and again in 1876. In 1872 C.C. Antoine became Louisiana's third black lieutenant governor. The other two blacks who held state offices in Louisiana were P.G. Deslonde, who was secretary of state from 1872 to 1876, and W.G. Brown, a member of the 1868 constitutional convention who was superintendent of public education from 1872 to 1876.

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16 A businessman from New Orleans, Antoine had raised and captained a company of colored volunteers for the Union army. After the war he opened a grocery in Shreveport and was elected to represent that city at the constitutional convention. He served in the state senate for the four years preceding his nomination as lieutenant governor. William J. Simmons, *Men of Mark: Eminent, Progressive and Rising* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1868), pp. 1132-1134; Lonn, pp. 155, 164.

Blacks in other states held very few high state offices. Governor Harrison Reed of Florida appointed Jonathan C. Gibbs, a Pennsylvania minister and teacher, as secretary of state in 1868, and Governor Ossian B. Hart appointed him state superintendent of public instruction in 1873. Blacks held only appointive offices in Arkansas, also. Black legislator W.H. Grey served as commissioner of immigration from 1871 to 1873, and J.C. Corbin was Arkansas's superintendent of education in 1873 and 1874. In North Carolina James W. Hood was appointed assistant superintendent of public instruction, the only state post to go to a black.

The six blacks who became lieutenant governor during Reconstruction had some influence over legislation as presiding officers in their respective state senates. A few blacks wielded a similar power as speakers of the houses of representatives. As speaker of the Mississippi house, John R. Lynch became one of the most respected and powerful politicians in the state. Born in Louisiana in 1847 of a


slave mother and a wealthy white planter, Lynch was sold and taken to Natchez upon his father's death. Emancipated by the arrival of federal troops, Lynch attended night school while working as a photographer's assistant. After a brief term as justice of the peace, Lynch was elected to the lower house at the age of twenty-two. With membership on several important committees, Lynch became one of the most active and important members of the house. Early in 1872 he was elected speaker and at the close of the session was commended by the house for presiding with efficiency and impartiality. Elected to Congress in 1872, Lynch remained a major figure in the state Republican party after the Democrats regained power. 21

Lynch was succeeded as speaker by J.D. Shadd, the son of a northern abolitionist who worked with the underground railroad in Canada. Born in Delaware in 1837 and reared in Pennsylvania, Shadd moved to Canada in 1854, where he became an associate editor of the Provincial Freeman. In 1870 he went to Mississippi and worked as a bookkeeper for the "Davis Bend" plantation operated by the black Montgomery family.

Elected to the legislature in 1871, Shadd became speaker late in 1873.22

In 1872 Samuel J. Lee became South Carolina's first black speaker of the house. A former slave, Lee had worked after the war as a farmer and sawmill laborer, had educated himself and had become a lawyer. His tenure as speaker was marked with no particular distinction; his public record was marred by allegations that he was involved in railroad fraud.23 In 1874 Lee was succeeded by Robert Brown Elliott, who had resigned from Congress to run for the state legislature.24

In addition to James Hill in Mississippi, two other black politicians used the relatively unimportant appointive post of legislative sergeant-at-arms as a means of attaining higher office. In Texas, Norris Wright Cuney was appointed sergeant-at-arms in 1870; he attached himself to the radical wing of the Texas Republican party and in 1872 was appointed

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22 Washington New National Era, 16 April 1874; Wharton, p. 176.


inspector of customs for the state.25 Blanche K. Bruce of Mississippi used a similar position as a stepping stone toward his eventual goal of a seat in the United States senate.26

Most black legislators had to be content with one or two committee assignments, but a few became influential chairmen of important committees. As chairman of the Florida senate's education committee, Charles H. Pearce worked vigorously to help establish a common school system.27

25 After Republicans lost control of Texas, Cuney was the dispenser of patronage for the state Republican party for twenty years. President Benjamin Harrison in 1889 appointed Cuney collector of customs in Galveston, the most prestigious and lucrative patronage post in the state. Maud Cuney Hare, Norris Wright Cuney: A Tribune of the Black People (New York: Crisis Publishing Company, 1913), pp. 13, 16, 27, 121; Virginia Neal Hinze, "Norris Wright Cuney" (Master's thesis, Rice University, 1965), p. 12.

26 Bruce, a near-white ex-slave, was born in Virginia, taught school during the war, and established himself as a successful planter in Floreyville, Mississippi, in the late 1860's. He became sheriff and tax collector, county school superintendent, and levee commissioner, and in 1873 he refused the Radical nomination as lieutenant governor. In 1874 he achieved his goal and was sent to the senate. Maurine Christopher, America's Black Congressmen (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1971), pp. 1516; John W. Cromwell, The Negro in American History (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968), pp. 164-167; G. David Houston, "A Negro Senator," Journal of Negro History, 7(1922):243.

Blacks also held chairmanships on important committees in the South Carolina legislature. R.C. DeLarge was chairman of the house ways and means committee, while Joseph H. Rainey was chairman of the senate finance committee.\textsuperscript{28} Prince Rivers, an ex-slave from Beaufort who gained fame as a first sergeant in the First South Carolina Regiment of Volunteers and then served as voter registrar and member of the constitutional convention, was chairman of the house military affairs committee. He became a major general in the militia he helped to organize.\textsuperscript{29}

Even before Republicans in the new administration could complete committee structures and formulate their programs, they were subjected to verbal abuse from Conservatives in public and in the press. But Georgia Conservatives had enough strength in the legislature to carry their opposition even further. Conservatives in both houses were looking for the earliest opportunity to eliminate the three black senators and twenty-nine representatives from their midst,

\textsuperscript{28}Simkins and Woody, p. 132; Christopher, p. 26.

\textsuperscript{29}T.W. Higginson, Rivers's Union commander, praised his administrative ability and his authority over the men. Higginson wrote, "No anti-slavery novel has described a man of such marked ability . . . if there should ever be a black monarchy in South Carolina, he will be its king." Thomas Wentworth Higginson, \textit{Army Life in a Black Regiment} (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1960), pp. 43-44. See also Williamson, p. 267, and Hume, p. 446.
but in late July 1868 the first resolution asking for an inquiry into their eligibility was tabled. The senate then concentrated on its most vulnerable black member, the notorious mulatto Aaron Alpeoria Bradley, who had previously been expelled from the Georgia constitutional convention for his violent attacks on fellow members who were trying to oust him because of an earlier conviction for seduction in New York. Born a slave near Augusta, Bradley had escaped to the North, where he gained an education and practiced law in Massachusetts. Returning to Georgia by 1865, he was arrested and given a brief sentence by a military court for swindling freedmen and inciting them to resist with violence the repossession of abandoned lands they had been occupying under General William T. Sherman's special orders. After his expulsion from the convention, Bradley campaigned vigorously for the Radical ticket and was elected to the state senate.

Conservative legislator H.R. Felden wrote William Leroy Broun that the carpetbaggers could be handled once the blacks were ousted. Felden to Broun, 13 July 1868, William Leroy Broun Papers, Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. See also C. Mildred Thompson, Reconstruction in Georgia (New York: Columbia University Press, 1915), pp. 190, 211-212.

In his first week as a member of that body, a committee was appointed to investigate his eligibility because of his alleged felony conviction. The committee minority, led by black senator Tunis G. Campbell, argued that seduction was not a felony in New York nor even a crime in Georgia. Bradley attempted to resign so that the governor could appoint a Republican in his place, but the senate forestalled this move by declaring him ineligible and assigning his seat to the Conservative who had the next highest number of votes in the election. 32

Using the arguments of Joseph E. Brown that the constitution did not specifically confer the privilege of office-holding on freedmen, senate Conservatives quickly moved to expel its two remaining black members, George

Constitutionalist, 14 February 1868, 12 January 1870; Ethel M. Christler, "Participation of Negroes in the Georgia Legislature, 1867-1870" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1932), pp. 14-19; Alan Conway, The Reconstruction of Georgia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966), p. 155. The Charleston Daily Courier, 25 April 1867, reported that when Bradley applied for admission to the New York bar, it was found that he had been expelled from the Massachusetts bar for malpractice. The Radical Mobile Nationalist, 31 January 1867, reported that Bradley had applied to the Superior Court of Chatham County, Georgia, for permission to practice law, but the presiding judge replied that such permission could not be granted to a person of color.

32 Augusta Tri-Weekly Constitutionalist, 14, 16, 21 August 1868; Coulter, pp. 156-161, 410-411; Thompson, p. 212; Charleston Daily Courier, 11 August 1868.
Wallace and Tunis G. Campbell. Wallace was less prominent, but Campbell was one of the most flamboyant figures in southern reconstruction. He was born in New Jersey in 1812 and educated in New York. A Methodist minister and a popular lecturer, he organized a number of anti-colonization and temperance societies. After numerous fruitless efforts to join the Union army, he finally was accepted in 1863 and sent to South Carolina. In 1865 he asked to be sent to Georgia's sea islands, where he established a black government with himself as governor. Finally driven out by federal troops at the behest of the northerner who bought St. Catherine's Island, Campbell set up another black community on a plantation near Darien, Georgia. He became a voter registrar and member of the constitutional convention before his election to the state senate.33 In the senate Campbell made a long speech defending the right of blacks to hold public office, but to no avail.

While the Georgia senate was expelling its black members, the lower house took similar steps. Henry M. Turner made an impassioned address in the lower house protesting the ouster,

saying, "Never before has a man been arraigned, charged, with an offence committed by the God of Heaven himself." Turner asked that the question be referred to Congress. But Conservative legislators ignored these pleas and by mid-September 1868 had completed the expulsion process.

The expelled blacks did not capitulate. They immediately organized themselves into a "Civil and Political Rights Association," with Turner as president, and issued a call to black voters of Georgia to send delegates to a state convention to be held early in October to "invoke Congressional aid in the security of our rights." One hundred thirty-six black delegates representing some eighty-two counties assembled in Macon in answer to this call. Facing almost certain defeat at the hands of state authorities, they described their impossible political position and appealed to Congress for aid. Governor Rufus Bullock, unlike the legislature, referred the appeal to Congress along with his own opinion that the legislature had acted in an illegal fashion in ousting the elected black legislators. Shortly thereafter Campbell and


35 National Anti-Slavery Standard, 3 October 1868; Franklin, Reconstruction, p. 132.
his son, Tunis G. Campbell, Jr., a member of the lower house, went to Washington to protest the expulsion and try to prevent the seating of Georgia's senators-elect. They conferred with Senators E.D. Morgan and Charles Sumner, who agreed that Georgia's reconstruction process must remain under congressional control. In 1869 the senior Campbell returned to Washington with other Georgia Radicals to lobby for a special Georgia reconstruction bill. 36

Some Republican leaders in Georgia were also petitioning congressional Radicals for aid, but others opposed further congressional action. White Republican Volney Spalding first wrote William E. Chandler that the blacks could do little good in a legislature with a Democratic majority, but their ouster might arouse black voters to support the Republican ticket in the November elections. One advantage of their expulsion, Spalding asserted, would be "to send into the field some thirty of their most intelligent men, who can exert an influence more potent at home with their people than in the Legislature." 37 After the blacks were removed, however, Spalding expressed fears that Georgia blacks would be

36 Campbell, pp. 9-10.

37 Spalding to Chandler, 1 September 1868, William E. Chandler Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
disfranchised and that a race war might result if Congress failed to act. 38 Another white Georgian wrote Benjamin F. Butler urging that Georgia's newly elected senators and representatives not be seated in Congress. 39 The issue of black office-holding and re-imposition of military rule widened the breach within the Georgia Republican party, with white carpetbagger J.E. Bryant leading the conservative Republicans who opposed Governor Rufus Bullock's proposals for further congressional action. 40

Republicans brought a test case in the Georgia courts, and in June 1869 the state supreme court ruled that blacks were eligible to hold office under the state's legal code and the new constitution. 41 Before the legislature had an opportunity to act on the court's decision, Congress passed

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38 Spalding to Chandler, 5 September 1868, ibid.


40 Americus Tri-Weekly Republican, 19 January 1869 and 25 February 1869. Bryant had been a prime mover in organizing the blacks into an "Equal Rights Association" in 1865, and he and J.H. Caldwell were the only white legislators to speak out against expelling the blacks. Caldwell to William Claflin, 7 October 1868, Chandler Papers; Nathans, pp. 26-27.

41 Americus Tri-Weekly Republican, 19 June 1969.
the Georgia reorganization act when the Georgia legislature refused to ratify the Fifteenth Amendment. Reorganization of the legislature by General Alfred H. Terry resulted in restoration of the ousted blacks as well as the unseating of a number of Democrats disqualified under the Fourteenth Amendment. But a combination of Democrats and conservative Republicans brought about the end of Radical control in 1870, thus giving the reinstated black legislators little opportunity for influencing the direction of state government in Georgia.

Though the degree of black officeholding varied from state to state, Republican organizations obviously depended on the black vote for perpetuation of party control. This political reality was grasped by the more astute black leaders as a device to influence the course of legislation designed to expand and solidify the gains already made by federal and state constitutional changes. The influence of black leadership in shaping the course of Reconstruction in the South can most readily be seen in the fields of civil rights and education. The constitutions of 1868 and 1869 established the principle of equal civil rights, and blacks

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took the leadership in subsequent action to guarantee legal equality. Most black leaders, however, as a matter of expediency were reluctant to support any measure which implied social equality. In South Carolina, with its preponderance of black voters, when black demands forced introduction of a bill prohibiting discrimination in common carriers and in licensed businesses, black carpetbagger R.H. Cain supported an amendment which merely required facilities of equal quality for the two races, thus making it more palatable to whites. In a speech to the legislature, W.J. Whipper tried to reassure his white Republican colleagues, who he charged were dodging the race issue. He insisted,

Our race do not demand social equality. No law can compel me to put myself on an equality with some white men I know, but talk about equality and the member imagines he must take you into his arms as he probably would your sister if she was good looking.

Whipper assured the whites that his race was demanding only equality before the law, not any kind of enforced social mixing.

North Carolina blacks were eager to remove discriminatory laws from that state's statute books but disagreed about method. Finally black legislators agreed to support a series

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43 Charleston Daily Courier, 5 September 1868.
of bills specifically guaranteeing the right of all persons to testify in courts and serve on juries. But black legislators failed in their efforts to protect the rights of all citizens traveling on public conveyances, and the Democratic takeover in 1870 prevented further civil rights action.\textsuperscript{45} The Mississippi legislature passed a bill prohibiting discrimination on all public conveyances after Governor James L. Alcorn's attempt to arrange a private agreement between railroad executives and black legislators failed.\textsuperscript{46} After much controversy, further civil rights legislation granting Mississippi blacks access to places of entertainment was passed in 1873.\textsuperscript{47} In Alabama, black legislators also sponsored a bill providing for equal accommodations on streetcars and railroads.\textsuperscript{48}

The struggle over civil rights legislation in Louisiana was not between Radical and Conservative legislators, but between black leaders and Governor Henry C. Warmoth. In the


\textsuperscript{46} The blacks rejected the railroad officials' offer to provide separate cars with equal accommodations. Garner, pp. 285-286.

\textsuperscript{47} Wharton, p. 175.

first Reconstruction legislature, Thomas Isabelle introduced a measure to enforce the public accommodations clause of the constitution, only to have the governor veto the bill. In January of 1869 P.B.S. Pinchback introduced a much milder civil rights bill which Warmoth agreed to sign. The law did not provide for any real enforcement, and in 1870 Isabelle introduced a more stringent measure. Warmoth returned this bill to the legislature with a harsh veto message.\(^\text{49}\)

In 1873 the Arkansas legislature adopted a black-supported civil rights measure which in theory compelled hotels and places of public amusement to admit blacks. The bill also guaranteed equal, although separate, public school facilities.\(^\text{50}\) In the Georgia house of representatives Henry M. Turner introduced a bill to prevent common carriers from providing facilities of unequal quality for blacks and whites, but his efforts were cut short by the expulsion of all blacks from the legislature.\(^\text{51}\)

\(^{49}\) Teddy B. Tunnell, Jr., "Henry Clay Warmoth and the Politics of Coalition" (Master's thesis, North Texas State University, 1966), pp. 6-12.

\(^{50}\) DuBois, pp. 551-552; Franklin, Reconstruction, p. 141.

Some black leaders also showed concern for expanding the rights of women. In South Carolina W.J. Whipper continued in the legislature the fight for women's suffrage he had begun in the constitutional convention. As chairman of the house judiciary committee, he arranged for his sister-in-law, the socially prominent mulatto Louisa Rollin, to speak on the floor of the lower house in favor of women's suffrage. In 1871 Whipper spoke at a female suffrage meeting in Columbia arranged by Lottie Rollin, Louisa's sister. Nothing came of these efforts, since even Whipper's friends considered his ideas too radical. In the North Carolina legislature senator A.H. Galloway proposed a constitutional amendment granting women the ballot, but his proposal gained no support from his colleagues. Galloway and representative James H. Harris were more successful in sponsoring several measures to protect women against their husbands' cruelty or abandonment and to grant wives some property rights. Through their efforts a relatively humane divorce law was adopted.


53 Balanoff, pp. 33, 43-44.
Georgia legislators also attempted unsuccessfully to introduce discussions of female suffrage. 54

Blacks championed the cause of women's rights on other fronts. A number of black political leaders from the South were prominent in the National Colored Labor Convention held in Washington in December 1869, which denounced discrimination based on nationality, sex, or color. One of the convention's standing committees was concerned with women's labor, and the convention platform called for promoting training for the trades and professions without regard to sex. 55

Few issues interested black leaders so much as education, and formulation of a tax supported public school program in the southern states was one of the most creditable achievements of the reconstructionists. Blacks occupied the position of superintendent of education in four states, and black legislators sponsored measures to implement the educational provisions of the new constitutions. In every state the work of reorganizing the school system was hampered by two major problems--opposition by a sizable group of whites and lack of available funds. Both of these problems were further

54 Allen, p. 139.

55 Washington New Era, 13 January 1870. The Era, a nationally circulated black newspaper edited by Frederick Douglass and his son, consistently supported the cause of women's rights during its four years' existence (1870-1874).
magnified by the persistent question of the possibility of mixed schools—a spurious issue in most cases but one which was anathema to southern whites. Despite these handicaps black leadership was a determining factor in achieving permanent improvement in public education during Reconstruction.

As Florida's second superintendent of public education, the well-educated Jonathan C. Gibbs took over a struggling system in 1873 and supervised the development of 676 schools with over 30,000 enrolled students. By 1876 almost every county levied a school tax in addition to the yearly education tax collected by the state government.56 As early as 1871 Gibbs had been writing sketches on important blacks for Florida newspapers in order "to incite the colored youth of [the] state to acquire knowledge, and fit themselves for the higher walks of usefulness."57 As superintendent he worked to secure adoption of suitable, uniform texts for elementary and secondary schools, and under his supervision


a series of textbooks was developed and published by the state. Gibbs coordinated the state's education efforts by requiring full and accurate reports from county superintendents. In his capacity as state superintendent, he was also president of the board of trustees of a proposed agricultural college to be developed under the Morrill Land Act. His leadership in developing the Florida school system was cut short by his sudden death in August 1874.\textsuperscript{58} Gibbs' work had been greatly facilitated by the efforts of Charles H. Pearce, who had led the fight in the Florida legislature for adequate school laws.\textsuperscript{59}

In the first reconstruction legislature in Louisiana, blacks initiated a revamping of the state's school system. A predominantly black education committee formulated a plan whereby division superintendents would establish teaching standards and certify each teacher annually, organize conferences and teachers' associations, and receive regular, accurate reports from each school. The black legislators


\textsuperscript{59} Pearce also was superintendent of public instruction in Leon County in 1869-1870. Richardson, The Negro in the Reconstruction of Florida, pp. 189, 191-192.
also set up a system of uniform textbook distribution.\textsuperscript{60} Black influence on Louisiana education increased with the election of William G. Brown, a former teacher and editor of West Indian origins, as state superintendent of education. Brown antagonized some Radical politicians by his failure to require more extensive school integration, but he discharged his official duties ably.\textsuperscript{61} Another of Louisiana's black officials, Lieutenant Governor Oscar J. Dunn, also took a special interest in education and on a trip to New York in 1869 visited several black schools in the company of the New York school superintendent.\textsuperscript{62}

Despite public resistance to financing a comprehensive school system, Mississippi black leaders were ardent exponents of schools for all children. New common schools were built and others improved, and Alcorn College for blacks was established, with ex-Senator Hiram Revels as its first president. Although charged with dishonesty, black superintendent of education Thomas W. Cardozo performed his duties

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{60}Charles Vincent, "Negro Leadership in Louisiana, 1862-1870" (Master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1968), pp. 75-77.
  \item \textsuperscript{61}William P. Vaughn, \textit{Schools for All: The Blacks and Public Education in the South, 1865-1867} (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1974), pp. 87, 92-93.
  \item \textsuperscript{62}National Anti-Slavery Standard, 15 May 1869.
\end{itemize}
well. In addition, Secretary of State James Lynch, as a member of the state board of education, supervised the development of the state's public school system. Lynch was also involved in the development of Shaw University, a Methodist school for blacks at Holly Springs which became a state normal school in 1870.63

Blacks in the South Carolina government were hopeful of establishing a widespread common school system and of making higher education available to blacks. Black legislators, who were prominent on the education committees of both houses, inaugurated a permanent scheme for an elementary school system in 1870. Secondary schools received little attention, but in 1872 the legislature chartered a state-supported agricultural and mechanical institute, to be administered in conjunction with the privately supported Claflin University for blacks in Orangeburg. Legislative Radicals also reorganized the state university at Columbia and adopted a proposal by W.J. Whipper that forbade distinctions

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based on race, color, or creed. The legislature then elected Francis L. Cardozo and another black to the new board of trustees. Enrollment dropped as rumors of impending integration circulated. Early in 1873 the legislature elected a new board consisting of three whites and four blacks, with Samuel J. Lee acting as the board's president pro-tem. In October Henry E. Hayne, South Carolina's secretary of state, entered the university's medical department, thus officially integrating the university. Three white faculty members immediately resigned and were replaced by men favorable toward integration. In February 1874 the legislature established 124 competitive scholarships of two hundred dollars each to be allocated among legislative districts, but the scholarship program was weakened by low standards. With the overthrow of Republican control, the Conservative legislature in June 1877 repealed the scholarship act and reduced operating funds so drastically that the university was forced to suspend operations, thereby concluding the only experiment in truly integrated public higher education in the South during Reconstruction.

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North Carolina's black legislators were among advocates of the education bill passed in the spring of 1869 which provided for public schools four months each year, with a minimum of sixteen months of total attendance required. A.H. Galloway in the senate and James H. Harris in the house led an unsuccessful battle to allow local communities to tax themselves to continue their schools longer than four months. In the controversy over separate schools, black legislators favored allowing but not requiring mixed schools. One black representative tried unsuccessfully to include a requirement that any separate schools established for different "classes" should be equal in facilities and instruction. Blacks also advocated giving the state superintendent of education a good salary because of the importance of his work. In the unfriendly atmosphere of the Conservative-dominated legislature, blacks continued to argue for increased allocations of funds for education. Some of their aims were carried out by the well-known black carpetbag minister, James W. Hood, who was appointed assistant superintendent of public instruction and became an important figure in the education of blacks. 65

After the blacks were reseated in the Georgia legislature, senators A.A. Bradley and Tunis G. Campbell proposed several measures to provide a thorough public school system, but all were defeated. Black efforts to expand higher education for blacks also failed. The school act which finally passed in 1870 required separate schools but equal facilities for blacks and whites, while a new law enacted by the Democratic legislature in 1872 merely required the same facilities "as far as practicable." 66

Although public school systems were established in both Arkansas and Texas, the initiative for legislative action on public education came from white Republicans, and in both states actual development of school systems lagged far behind that of other southern states. In Arkansas the legislature carried out the mandate of the new constitution with sweeping educational legislation in 1868. Lack of funds seriously hampered early development, and when black leader J.C. Corbin assumed the position of state superintendent in 1873 the goals of earlier school legislation were still largely unrealized. 67

66 Thompson, pp. 336-337; Christler, pp. 55-58.

Corbin, who was born in Chillicothe, Ohio, in 1833, taught school in Louisville, Kentucky, as a youth and saved enough money to enter Ohio University. After graduating in 1853, he returned to Louisville to teach. After the war, he moved to Cincinnati and worked for a bank while editing the Colored Citizen. In 1870 he went to Arkansas to work as a shorthand reporter and joined the Little Rock Republican. As state superintendent of education, he was one of only two blacks to hold statewide office in Arkansas during Reconstruction. 68

Although the aims of black leaders and other Radical reformers were never completely fulfilled, Reconstruction was a period of significant gains in public education. The concept of a publicly supported compulsory school system was established, and the framework for such a system was created. Republicans initiated the principle of direct taxation to support schools, a practice which was continued under subsequent Democratic administrations. Black leaders were instrumental in bringing about a recognition of public responsibility for educating blacks on an equal basis with whites. Although the return of Democratic control resulted in a lower share of school funds for blacks, the principle

68Washington New National Era and Citizen, 8 May 1873.
of providing some kind of free public schooling for blacks was never abandoned.

The black leaders' careful attention to education issues reflected a growing awareness that the granting of political rights alone could not effect the elevation of the freedmen. Without education and a degree of economic independence, even the ballot was of limited value. Toward the end of the 1860's black leaders were also realizing that economic factors were severely retarding the progress of their race, especially the increasingly institutionalized sharecrop system. Two major solutions sought by blacks were more widespread landownership and organization of black labor into a more effective bargaining force. In the face of persistent opposition by the main body of Republican leadership, early postwar demands for wide-scale confiscation and redistribution of land by the federal government subsided, even among the most uninformed freedmen. Still black leaders sought some means of helping poorer people to purchase small tracts. Everywhere they met resistance from large landowners who hoped to preserve a large pool of available propertyless laborers.

In a series of letters published in 1871 in the Jackson Pilot and later in other newspapers, Mississippi's black
secretary of state, James Lynch, warned blacks against the economic bondage resulting from the sharecrop and credit system. Having found political solutions insufficient to meet the needs of his race, Lynch proposed that white planters be persuaded to divide and sell their surplus lands in tracts of 40 to 160 acres, which could be paid for in 5 years at 6 percent interest. A few hard-pressed landowners were selling off parcels of land, but there is no indication they were influenced by Lynch's arguments, and no large trend toward black landowning developed in Mississippi.69

In North Carolina black legislators attempted to take action on the constitutional convention's resolution asking the legislature to assist citizens in acquiring small freeholds. In 1869 John Hyman introduced a resolution in the senate asking Congress for aid in providing land for homeless North Carolinians. When no sizable program for helping the poor to obtain land developed on either the national or state level, blacks introduced legislation to help poor people keep the land they were able to acquire. A.H. Galloway successfully sponsored a measure designed to help blacks keep land or houses given to them when they were slaves. Despite the persistent efforts of black legislators, however,

freedmen in North Carolina made little progress toward independent landownership during the brief and unstable Republican regime. 70

South Carolina was the only state to set up a workable system for aiding the poor to buy land, and that program was hampered by mismanagement and corruption. In pursuance of a constitutional convention ordinance, the legislature set up a land commission which was to purchase lands, survey them, divide them into tracts of twenty to one hundred acres, and sell them to actual settlers at the purchase price. Because of the potential benefits to blacks, their leaders were intensely interested in this program and became aroused when the first land commissioner, white carpetbagger C.P. Leslie, handled the office dishonestly and corruptly. Francis L. Cardozo, who as secretary of state was a member of the commission's advisory board, soon refused to participate. Then he and a group of black leaders who dominated the legislature in 1870—including Joseph H. Rainey, Robert Brown Elliott, William J. Whipper, A.J. Ransier, and Beverly Nash—forced Leslie out of the land commission by withholding further appropriations until he resigned. They demanded a black commissioner, and the post went to Robert C. DeLarge,

70 Balanoff, pp. 41-42.
who was more honest and efficient than Leslie but still not an ideal choice.

As criticisms continued, the legislature tightened its control over the commission and ultimately assigned the duties of land commissioner to the secretary of state. In his new role, Cardozo quickly organized the land records and facilitated the settlement of families on lands acquired by the state. When black senator Henry E. Hayne succeeded Cardozo as secretary of state in 1872, he further improved the operations of the land commission. After the overthrow of the Republicans, the "Redeemers" continued the commission's work, although they acquired no more land. Eventually over two thousand families acquired farms through the operations of the land commission.71

Black leaders also made persistent efforts to improve working conditions for laborers. When proposals to enforce a ten-hour working day and to set minimum health and safety standards failed in various legislatures, black politicians sought to promote the cause of labor through non-governmental organizations.72 By late 1869 black politicians were


72 Of all the labor bills sponsored by black legislators in North Carolina, only a mechanics' lien law was adopted. Balanoff, pp. 42-43.
prominent in the growing black labor union movement. The first attempt to organize black farm workers into a labor union came at a state labor convention in Macon, Georgia, in October 1869, organized by Henry M. Turner and future congressman Jefferson Long. Delegates from fifty-six counties reported broken contracts, cheating by employers, and monthly wages of five to ten dollars. The convention recommended the formation of cooperatives to buy supplies and associations for the purchase of lands. The group made plans for a statewide union which would demand minimum wages and conditions for tenant contracts, but efforts to organize county associations among field hands were unsuccessful, and no widespread effects resulted from this first effort to organize Georgia blacks into a labor union.73

Black politicians were also leaders of a similar labor convention held the next month in Columbia, South Carolina. After some resistance from white delegates to a slate to officers composed entirely of black Republican politicians, R.C. DeLarge and A.J. Ransier withdrew in favor of white trade unionists. Robert Brown Elliott, however, remained as president of the convention. The convention concentrated on the problems of black farm laborers, and its final

73 National Anti-Slavery Standard, 6 November 1869; Thompson, p. 297.
resolutions asked for a half-share of crops for farm workers or a wage of seventy cents to one dollar a day, a state commissioner to supervise labor contracts and insure fair crop divisions, and measures to prevent arbitrary discharge of workers. 74

A number of important black politicians from the South were active participants in the first annual National Colored Labor Convention held in Washington 6-10 December 1869. James H. Harris of North Carolina was elected convention president. James T. Rapier, who had been organizing labor unions among Alabama freedmen, became a vice-president, presented a major address, and was chairman of the homesteads committee. J.H. Rainey of South Carolina also addressed the convention, and his colleague J.J. Wright was prominent in the proceedings. Georgia was represented by politicians Jefferson Long and James M. Simms. The convention set up a bureau of labor and laid plans for a national labor union based on state and local organizations. This national union was instrumental in developing several state labor organizations and convoking labor conventions in Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee. 75

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74 DuBois, pp. 416-417; Lamson, pp. 77-79.

The black National Labor Union formed at the 1869 convention held its first annual meeting in Washington in January 1871, and again Harris, Rainey, and Rapier were leaders both in the convention and in the bureau of labor established by the union.76 Later that year Henry M. Turner presided over the National Labor Union meeting held concurrently with the "Southern States Convention" of blacks meeting in Columbia, South Carolina. The Union's address asked for equal treatment in industry and equal opportunity to learn skills and trades and called for an alliance of northern labor with the interests of southern labor.77 The failure of northern labor to identify with problems of southern agricultural workers and the white unions' steady resistance to any alliance with black labor contributed to the eventual failure of the national black labor movement. But during the Reconstruction period a number of southern black political leaders saw the labor movement not merely as a means of personal aggrandizement, but also as an adjunct to political efforts to solve the problems of the black race.78

77 Ibid., 12 October 1871, 4 November 1871; DuBois, pp. 366-367.
78 For an account of blacks' futile efforts to affiliate with white labor organizations, see Charles H. Wesley, Negro
In areas other than human rights the efforts of black leaders merged with other socioeconomic interests. Black officials were generally as interested as whites in encouraging economic and industrial development and in inviting capital to the southern states. Indeed, black politician W.H. Grey served as commissioner of immigration in Arkansas during the Powell Clayton regime. Black legislators supported measures granting tax privileges to industry, and they supported the issuance of state bonds for repair and building of internal improvements. At the center of economic expansion was the development of railroads, and black politicians were as eager as their white colleagues, Republican or Democratic, to extend state aid to railroads.\textsuperscript{79}

When railroad bonds, in some instances, became a source of manipulation and speculation, black officials were inevitably included in blanket charges of bribery and corruption. Such charges were seldom pressed, however, since investigation disclosed biracial, nonpartisan speculation which was


characteristic of national development of the period.

Ultimately the various fraud reports of "Redeemer" legislatures proved to be too sketchy and inconclusive for effective use in the campaign to eliminate or control the black vote. Indeed, experience in political maneuvering, intimidation, and economic coercion proved to be more effective devices for a resurgence of traditional white propertied political dominance as the Republican coalition began to weaken after brief periods of state control.

Black influence is readily discernible in the promotion of legislation directly affecting the interests of freedmen seeking to revolutionize their status, particularly in the

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80 For example, see The Evidence taken by the Joint Committee of the Legislature of the State of Georgia Appointed to Investigate the Management of the State Road, Under the Administration of R.B. Bullock and Foster Blodgett (Atlanta: J. Henly Smith, 1872); Report of the Commission to Investigate Charges of Fraud and Corruption, Under Act of Assembly, Session 1871-72, North Carolina (Raleigh: James H. Moore, 1872); Report of the Evidence taken by the Committee of Investigation of the Third Congressional District, Under Authority of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, Regular Session, 1868-69 (Columbia: John W. Denny, 1870); Report of the Joint Investigating Committee on Public Frauds and the Election of Hon. J.J. Patterson to the United States Senate made to the General Assembly of South Carolina at the Regular Session 1877-78 (Columbia: Calvo and Patton, 1878). Black Virginia senator George Teamoh described at length the strenuous efforts to bribe him to vote for the Pennsylvania Central incorporation measure. A female "lobbyist" was sent to his room to persuade him and offer him $10,000. Teamoh's "Journal," pp. 326-333.
areas of civil rights and universal education. In league with carpetbaggers and sympathetic southern whites they made their greatest contribution in developing precedents for social responsibility in these areas. Unfortunately their efforts toward establishing legal codes and a court system which would provide equal protection for all citizens fell somewhat short of their goals. While the new constitutions provided for equality before the law and new legal codes reflected a major departure from outmoded antebellum systems, most of the social gains ultimately proved to be more attuned to the safeguarding of the legal rights of whites than of blacks. In only one instance did a black achieve a high judicial position; Jonathan J. Wright, a member of the Pennsylvania bar, served for seven years on the South Carolina supreme court. Since the courts inevitably became the only alternative to force in the preservation of social and political reforms of the Reconstruction period, lack of black representation in this area of government proved to be a crucial factor when the southern Republican coalition began to disintegrate in the early 1870's.

CHAPTER VII

BLACK SUCCESS AND WHITE REPRISAL

Paradoxically, the very successes of black political participation and leadership led to the decline and destruction of black influence. White southerners could accept military defeat and even the consequent eradication of slavery, but they could not accept as political equals a race so recently released from bondage presumably based on natural inferiority. As white Conservatives' recurrent efforts to woo the black voter show, they were willing to accept black suffrage if they could control the black vote and use it to further their own goals, in the long-established southern pattern of deferential politics. But despite frequent disappointments with the Republican party, the mass of black voters and their leaders continued to believe that their interests would best be served by the party which had emancipated them and promised them political and civil equality.

Initially, the success and even the survival of the Republican party in the South depended upon attracting, organizing, and controlling black voters. Yet the black-white
Republican coalition was at best an uneasy one. Believing in white supremacy as deeply, if not so bluntly, as southern Conservatives, most white Republicans tried to keep the black a junior partner in the coalition. Even in states such as South Carolina, Mississippi, and Louisiana, where black voters were in the majority, the number of black men in major public office was held to a minimum, and blacks received a disproportionately small share of minor offices. At first, with black voters poorly organized and their leaders inexperienced in politics, blacks had to be content with their subordinate role. With increasing experience and confidence, however, they pressed for greater recognition in the party and in allocation of public offices. Because the party depended on black votes for its power, some accession to black demands for a larger role was necessary. Yet when black pressure was strongly applied, it weakened and divided the only party which offered any hope for black political leadership.

A truly viable, permanent Republican party in the South depended on attracting to its ranks native whites, yet the increasing numbers of blacks running for office and influencing party policy alienated potential white converts, to whom meaningful black leadership was anathema. Destruction of the
Republican party came to be seen as the only means of reinstating the traditional leadership to power. Because the black was inseparably tied to the Republican party and in some states formed its major element, an attack on black political participation became the most available device for destroying the party. The very success of the Republicans in controlling the black vote thus led to their downfall by making possible a Conservative campaign based primarily on racial antagonism. As black voters gained political experience and sophistication, Conservatives began to realize that the black was no malleable tool. A Florida carpetbagger attested to increasing white respect for the black as a political opponent:

The opposition may talk of the everlasting "nigger" but it is beginning to learn that it has in the black man a foe whose opinions are born of honesty and whose native instincts, assisted by six years education in the exercise of the suffrage, and his naturally Christian heart, make him at this time their most formidable enemy, and the first and most progressive friend of the Republican party. ¹

Neither the increasing political sagacity of blacks nor their enlarged role deterred Conservatives bent on their elimination as a political force. Indeed, their increased

visibility as leaders assisted white leaders in exploiting the race issue, as the specter of "black rule" came to seem all too real to southern whites. Against the evils of "black domination," any means could be used--and excused. But the black's vulnerability to Conservative attack did not depend solely on pervasive racism; his economic dependence on the white propertied class was an even greater burden. Ultimately economic coercion proved to be the whites' most effective weapon against black participation in politics, although violence and fraud were not to be scorned.

By 1870, blacks were voicing a widespread discontent with their inferior role in the party and in the new state governments. Black politicians feared that some white Republicans wanted to restrict black political power to the right to cast ballots. A Georgia black typified the feelings of many when he wrote to Charles Sumner, "I am tired of being used as stepping-stones to elevate white men alone to office." With the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, blacks became even more sensitive to their crucial role as voters and more assertive in demanding a larger

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share of important offices. As a result, increasing numbers of blacks were elected to state offices and even to Congress. In the spring of 1870, black leaders in South Carolina mounted a concerted campaign for more offices. A black speaker at a Republican rally in Charleston asked that the lieutenant governor be black. A.J. Ransier publicly attacked white Republican Senator F.A. Sawyer for failing to secure more federal appointments for blacks, and R.H. Cain suggested that the state's four congressional seats be divided between the races. At a Republican mass meeting in Charleston in June, Martin R. Delany argued that black men should have black leaders. "We have the strength," he asserted, "and we want a fair share of the offices." Carefully specifying that he was not advocating the formation of a black man's party, Delany nevertheless asked for "a colored Lieutenant Governor, and two colored men in the House of Representatives and one in the Senate, and our quota of State and county offices." At the same rally R.C. DeLarge hinted at the possibility of a black man's party, suggesting that the black race was Republican only from necessity.³

DeLarge later assured white Republicans that he had not meant to suggest desertion of the Republican party. But the flurry of seemingly extreme statements did help blacks gain more power in the party. At the July 1870 state convention black delegates pressed the racial issue and received a much larger share of party nominations. A.J. Ransier became the first black to be elected as lieutenant governor in the state, Francis L. Cardozo retained his position as secretary of state, and three of the four congressional seats went to blacks—Joseph H. Rainey, Robert Brown Elliott, and R.C. DeLarge. Blacks also dominated the state party structure, with Ransier becoming chairman of the state central executive committee, which had only one white member. The black majority in the legislature also increased, with the election of 75 black representatives and 11 black senators out of a total of 156 legislators. A few blacks in the new legislature attempted to send Cardozo to the United States Senate, but the native white incumbent was returned.  

4 New York Times, 8 December 1870, p. 1; Williamson, p. 359; Lamson, p. 107; Samuel D. Smith, The Negro in Congress, 1870-1901 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), p. 45. The conservative "Union Reform" party also nominated Cardozo for lieutenant governor, but he refused the nomination and in his famous address to the 1870 state meeting of Union Leagues denounced the party as inimical to
In Mississippi's first constitutional ratification election, Republicans ignored blacks completely in nominating a slate of state officials. But in the ratification election of 1869, black Republicans were allowed to choose James Lynch for secretary of state. When the first reconstruction legislature met in January 1870, black members insisted that one of the United States senators to be elected should be a black. White Republicans allowed them the very brief term which would expire in March 1871, and the well-educated but politically inexperienced Hiram R. Revels thus became symbolically important as the first black to occupy, even if for only a few weeks, a seat in the United States Senate.5

By 1872, Mississippi blacks were ready to move beyond
tokenism and openly expressed their displeasure when James
Lynch failed to win the Republican nomination for Congress
in the heavily black Jackson-Vicksburg district. Convinced
that they had not received an equitable share of state
offices, black delegates went into the state Republican
convention of 1873 determined that three of the seven
nominations for statewide office should go to blacks. With
the numerical strength to enforce their demands, the blacks

chaplain. In 1866 he settled in Natchez, where he was
elected alderman in 1868. He was selected as a compromise
candidate for the state senate by a Republican county con-
vention in 1869. According to John Lynch, "So far as known
he had never voted, had never attended a political meeting,
and of course had never made a political speech. But he was
a colored man, and presumed to be a Republican, and believed
to be a man of ability and considerably above the average
in point of intelligence." Revels's eloquent opening prayer
in the new legislature supposedly gained him the nomination.
Ibid., pp. 41, 46-47. See also Hiram R. Revels, "Auto-
biography," Carter G. Woodson Collection, Manuscripts
Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Elizabeth
Lawson, The Gentleman from Mississippi (New York: published
by the author, 1960), passim; Vernon Lane Wharton, The Negro
in Mississippi 1865-1890 (New York: Harper and Row, 1965),
p. 159; Washington New National Era, 3, 10, 17, 24 March 1870.

6A.C. Fisk to William E. Chandler, 13 August 1872,
Chandler Papers; William C. Harris, "James Lynch: Black
58; Wharton, p. 155. As early as 1869, Lynch had antagonized
white Republicans by publicly demanding that blacks be given
fair representation in all departments of government. Harris,
"Lynch," p. 49. He did not, however, carry out his threat
to run as an independent in 1872, and he died in December,
1872.
were able to secure the nomination and subsequent election of A.K. Davis as lieutenant governor, T.W. Cardozo as state superintendent of education, and James Hill as secretary of state. The potential of blacks is reflected in convention delegate John R. Lynch's observation that "since the colored men had been particularly loyal and faithful to [gubernatorial nominee Adelbert] Ames, it was not deemed wise to ignore their demands."\textsuperscript{7} Although the Republican majority in the 1872-1873 legislature was sharply reduced, black membership increased by seven. The next legislature, elected in 1873, included sixty-four black members, almost twice as many as the first reconstruction legislature.\textsuperscript{8}

By 1870, Alabama blacks were also becoming aware of Republican dependence on their votes and began to demand a share of major offices. At the state convention in September, black pressure resulted in the nomination of J.T. Rapier for secretary of state. The "black belt" district convention at

\textsuperscript{7}Lynch, \textit{Facts}, p. 73. Lynch said that Blanche K. Bruce was first choice as lieutenant governor. But Bruce, with his eye on the U.S. Senate seat he was to acquire the next year, categorically refused to accept the nomination. Ibid. In a report to the \textit{New National Era}, 29 May 1873, T.W. Cardozo said Mississippi blacks had decided that the three posts "must be filled by colored men" and named Bruce as a prominent candidate for lieutenant governor. See also Garner, p. 293, Wharton, p. 175; S.D. Smith, p. 27.

\textsuperscript{8}Wharton, pp. 172, 176.
Selma likewise nominated Benjamin S. Turner, an ex-slave who had been tax collector and city councilman in Selma, for Congress. Despite his attacks on carpetbaggers for their failure to help his campaign, Turner won easily in his predominantly black district. Rapier, however, went down to defeat along with the rest of the state Republican slate.

In 1872 the chairman of the state executive committee, R.W. Healy, wrote national party officials that the Republican defeat of 1870 was partially caused by Rapier's presence on the ticket. According to Healy, Alabama Republicans were planning to rectify this mistake in 1872:

> In order to success [sic], however, I think it will be of utmost importance to put up a ticket composed almost entirely of the "native" element, that is, in contra-distinction to the colored men and the new comer or "Carpet Bagger," for however great their Republicanism, Patriotism or love for the Union it is almost impossible to persuade a "Native" to vote for a negro, and with difficulty for any person who did not come here with the Indians.

White Republicans did avoid nominating a black for statewide office. But in August 1872 white Montgomery leader

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9 Walter L. Fleming, Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1949), pp. 749, 754; S.D. Smith, pp. 78-79. According to Fleming, Turner had originally entered politics as a Democrat and had warned the freedmen against carpetbaggers. For an account of Rapier's background and earlier activities, see Chapter 2.

10 Healy to William E. Chandler, 15 March 1872, Chandler Papers.
Paul Strobach reported J.T. Rapier's nomination for Congress "to satisfy the demands of the bulk of our voters, the colored men here in the Cottonbelt," and in December he reported Rapier's election "by a large majority." ¹¹

In 1870 Florida blacks revolted against white carpetbag leadership and forced the selection of black senator Josiah T. Walls over the white carpetbagger incumbent Charles M. Hamilton as Republican nominee for Congress. Walls represented the whole state for two years, but in 1872 Florida was divided into two congressional districts, with the northern one having a large black population. With blacks demanding a nominee from that district, Walls again was elected, and despite active opposition from some white Republicans, he won the seat again in 1874. ¹² In 1873 black threats to desert the party resulted in Jonathan C. Gibbs's appointment as state superintendent of public instruction. ¹³

¹¹ Strobach to William E. Chandler, 18 August 1872, 6 December 1872, Chandler Papers.

¹² S.D. Smith, pp. 75-77; John Wallace, Carpetbag Rule in Florida (Kennesaw, Georgia: Continental Book Company, 1959), pp. 126-127. Born free in Winchester, Virginia, in 1842, Walls served three years in the Union army. He was a member of the Florida constitutional convention, house of representatives, and state senate. Christopher, pp. 78-79; National Standard, 1 October 1870.

In the typically muddled and factionalized political scene in Louisiana, the black demand for a greater number of offices fails to conform to the easy categorizations which can be applied to some other states. Essentially, though, black demands for a larger role in Louisiana politics and government were tied to a larger movement opposing carpetbag Governor Henry C. Warmoth which involved a number of issues. By 1870, a number of black leaders and the mass of black voters were beginning to turn away from their earlier support of Warmoth because of his reluctance to support civil rights, his granting patronage positions to white Conservatives, and his resistance to black office-holding. Black Lieutenant Governor Oscar J. Dunn was the chief leader of the anti-Warmoth movement, but in its early stages P.B.S. Pinchback and State Treasurer Antoine Dubuclet were supporting Warmoth. Dunn led the insurgents who wrested control of the predominantly black state Republican convention of August 1870 from the Warmoth forces. At the same time, a group of black religious leaders organized the Christian Republican Association, which nominated black candidates for state offices and for Congress.14 Dunn's success in organizing blacks

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14 Teddy B. Tunnell, Jr., "Henry Clay Warmoth and the Politics of Coalition" (Master's thesis, North Texas State University, 1966), pp. 32-38; Dubuclet to the "Republican
disturbed the Warmoth faction. Louisiana Senator J.R. West wrote Warmoth from Washington that Republicans there were "agreed in the opinion that our colored brethren are asking too much and that the strong hand must be used to bring them to their senses in time for 1872." He later wrote Warmoth of reports that a "formidable opposition" was being organized against Warmoth among blacks in northern Louisiana. "This is some of O.J. Dunn's doings," West warned, "and you may look for Black ramifications all through the State . . . . We have got no fool of a war on our hands."¹⁵ In August 1871 Dunn wrote a letter to Horace Greeley of the New York Tribune defending the anti-Warmoth actions of the state central committee. Although 84,000 of Louisiana's 90,000 Republican voters were black, according to Dunn, Warmoth was

much more concerned to have the entree into good Southern Society, than he is to do the arduous but honorable work of elevating the masses of that race who elected him, and to perfect harmony between the races by an impartial and honest enforcement of the law.¹⁶

¹⁵ West to Warmoth, 6 and 24 March 1871, Warmoth Papers.
¹⁶ Washington New National Era, 14 September 1871.
In October Dunn issued a public statement claiming for blacks the right to "a fair proportion of the civil positions for which they may be qualified, and to which the people may elect them." Dunn died later in 1871, but the black desire for greater political rewards continued to be a major issue, and Warmoth was reported to have made a private speech in December promising "his aid in curtailing the growing influence and power of the negroes in their demands for office."  

Black politicians never posed any truly threatening opposition to white leaders of Georgia's faction-torn Republican party, but black agitation contributed to the party's disorganized state. As early as May 1869 Henry M. Turner was in Washington trying to secure federal appointments for Georgia blacks. In response to black pressure, Georgia Republicans selected Jefferson Long, an ex-slave who owned a tailoring business in Macon, for a very brief congressional term ending 4 March 1871. In May 1870 A.A. Bradley openly

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17 New Orleans Republican, 19 October 1871, cited by Tunnell, p. 63.
18 Ibid., 11 January 1872.
19 National Anti-Slavery Standard, 8 and 15 May 1869.
20 Long was Georgia's only black congressman until the 1960's. Maurine Christopher, America's Black Congressmen (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1971), p. 27; S.D. Smith, pp. 72-74.
encouraged black voters to desert Governor Bullock and white Republicans, whom he accused of selling out the blacks. Later that year Bradley followed his own advice and ran for Congress independent of the Republican organization. Running an anti-carpetbagger campaign, Bradley denounced Senator Henry Wilson for attempting to persuade him to drop out of the race in favor of the white Republican nominee. Bradley's campaign did succeed in splitting the Republican vote so that a Democrat was elected.\footnote{Augusta Tri-Weekly Constitutionalist, 4 May 1870, 6 December 1870; E. Merton Coulter, "Aaron Alpeoria Bradley, Georgia Negro Politician During Reconstruction Times," Georgia Historical Quarterly 51(1967):277.}

In Texas, no black received a statewide office through either election or appointment throughout the Reconstruction period. The moderate George T. Ruby accepted this secondary status for his race in the hope of ingratiating himself with party leaders, but his only black colleague in the state senate, Matthew Gaines, was more defiant. At a Brenham rally in July 1871 Gaines urged his large black audience to use "the great power we possess" and insist on sending a black to Congress from the heavily black third district. He derided carpetbaggers who

hardly speak to you now, and won't shake hands. But just before elections they will knock at your door
before daylight to let you know they are candidates, and will eat with you out of your dirty skillets. It almost makes me a Democrat to think of such fellows.

But in the Republican state convention a few weeks later, white leaders ran roughshod over black delegates' efforts to place in nomination the names of Gaines and two other blacks. To appease the blacks, Ruby's name was placed in nomination, but he declined as was expected of him. After the nomination of a white to the post, Gaines asked a later black gathering, "Shall we turn the mill forever and somebody else eat the meal?" In Texas, the answer had to be yes, because blacks were not in a position to challenge white party leadership and had no other possible political haven.²²

In North Carolina, where the native white element had always been strong in the Republican party and blacks were a minority of the population, blacks had little chance to gain high office. Nevertheless, in 1870 black Republicans

were determined to gain more recognition and were successful in securing party endorsement for a large number of legislative seats and a congressional nomination for the able and hard-working James H. Harris. But according to T.W. Cardozo, who would later become Mississippi's superintendent of education, "to send a negro to Congress from North Carolina was too much for our pseudo Republicans who form a very large bulk of the party in this State." Harris went down to defeat in the sweeping Conservative victories of that year. Ironically, the Conservatives themselves paved the way for the later election of John A. Hyman to Congress in 1874 by gerrymandering congressional districts so that most black votes were concentrated in one district.

Conflict over distribution of offices was only one of several issues dividing Republicans in those states where reconstruction governments still survived in 1872. The national Liberal Republican movement organized in opposition to the Grant administration added one more dimension to state party factionalism growing out of personal political

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23 Letter from Cardozo to the editor of the National Standard, 5 November 1870.

rivalries, mistrust between the three elements of the southern Republican coalition, reform movements within state party organizations, or conflicts between business interests over legislation. With Republican factions competing for black support, black politicians had even greater leverage for demanding nominations and party offices, but their growing prominence was at the same time repelling white voters.

In the face of intra-party feuds, national Republican officials were reluctant to contribute the campaign funds so badly needed in the South. It seems almost as if state Republicans were bent on destroying themselves, thus eliminating any possibility of black political influence.

With little organized Conservative resistance and a comfortable black voting majority of over 25,000, South Carolina Republicans in 1872 could afford to devote their energies to internecine fighting. A number of black leaders were among Republicans voicing concern over financial policies of Governor Robert K. Scott's second administration. A group of black legislators, including R.C. DeLarge, Beverly Nash, and Robert Smalls, had in 1871 gone before the Charleston Chamber of Commerce and the Board of Trade to propose repudiation of the state debt.25 By 1872, public finances

25 Simkins and Woody, p. 165.
were in such dire straits that at times officials were not receiving their salaries. Lieutenant Governor A.J. Ransier, in the midst of a campaign for Congress, made a confidential appeal to the national Republican committee for personal aid, "however small the am't . . . . I have important Engagements," he pleaded, "and really have not the means to travell [sic], not being able to get even my salary, the only source of remuneration I have, from the State." In January 1872 Secretary of State Frances L. Cardozo wrote his brother T.W., then circuit court clerk in Vicksburg,

The present state of our financial affairs . . . . are in a deplorable and desperate condition. The Governor, State Treasurer, and Attorney General constitute the State financial board, and there has been great swindling or gross mismanagement of our finances somewhere. But as soon as I discovered what seemed to me like swindling or mis-management, I refused to apply the seal of the State to any more bonds, and defied the Treasurer to take me into the supreme court . . . . The colored men of the State are proud of the stand I have taken.

In spite of criticism over handling of finances, the party rift which occurred at the August 1872 state convention involved personal rivalries rather than reform, and both groups endorsed the Grant ticket. The "regulars" made an

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26 Ransier to William E. Chandler, 7 August 1872, Chandler Papers.

unfortunate choice in scalawag Franklin J. Moses, Jr., for governor, but were eager to dissociate their nominees from the previous administration. State party chairman Robert Brown Elliott wrote national party officials that support for the Moses slate would definitely not imply an endorsement of the Scott administration "and its disastrous financial policy." Alarmed by William E. Chandler's noncommittal reply and by rumors that the national committee was supporting the bolting Republicans, Elliott wired national Republican chairman E.D. Morgan to send "an immediate and explicit declaration of [the] committee's views." Morgan replied that the national committee did not want to interfere in the differences of South Carolina Republicans which did not affect the national vote. The committee was giving no money to either side and expressing no opinion, Morgan said, urging South Carolina Republicans to recognize that "national issues are paramount." 28

While most blacks remained solidly with the regular Moses party, a number of leaders, including R.C. DeLarge, W.J. Whipper, and Robert Smalls, joined the bolters. The bolters nominated two lesser-known blacks for statewide

28 Elliott to Morgan, 3 September 1872; wire from Elliott to Morgan, 20 September 1872; copy of Morgan's reply (n.d.), Chandler Papers.
offices, but when the black voting majority swept the "regular" ticket into office in October, blacks captured the positions of lieutenant governor (R.H. Gleaves), secretary of state (Henry E. Hayne), state treasurer (F.L. Cardozo), and inspector-general (H.W. Purvis). In addition, R.H. Cain had been elected congressman-at-large, while J.H. Rainey, A.J. Ransier, and R.B. Elliott won three of the four remaining congressional seats. Blacks had also increased their legislative majority from 86 to 106 of the 156 places. The first major split in the South Carolina Republican party had resulted in such prominence for black politicians that Conservative charges of "black rule" had some appearance of validity.  

The national Liberal Republican movement was a more important factor in the party conflicts of Louisiana than it was in South Carolina. Early in 1872, both Democrats and Republicans were split into a number of factions, but by November these factions had formed two coalitions--Republicans supporting the Grant ticket, and Liberal Republicans plus Democrats supporting the Greeley ticket. In the bargaining and maneuvering preceding this alignment, however, blacks gained important offices as concessions from

29 Simkins and Woody, pp. 465-469; Williamson, pp. 360, 396; Lamson, pp. 159-163.
the regular Republicans. Early in the national Liberal Republican movement Governor Henry C. Warmoth began to explore possibilities of tying his re-election hopes to that campaign. Louisiana blacks were taking a very strong stand for Grant, however, and some of Warmoth's associates advised him to endorse Grant in order to gain black support. After Warmoth openly declared for the Liberal Republicans in April, his supporters around the state were increasingly anxious about the black vote. Not until late August did Lieutenant Governor Pinchback's Republican faction finally make a deal with the other Republican faction, the so-called "Customs House gang," and throughout the summer Warmoth's campaign workers asked for Pinchback's help with black voters. W.D. Floyd wrote from Greensburg that most blacks in the area were against Warmoth, but that Pinchback could help the Warmoth cause "more than any man living." William Biggs of Delta asked for colored speakers, especially Pinchback, to help convince blacks to vote for the Liberals. A delegate to the state Liberal Republican convention even suggested placing Pinchback "or some one that will be a representative


31 F.J. Herron to Warmoth, 23 March 1872, Warmoth Papers.
of that race" on the ticket. But S.M. Thomas of northern Louisiana did not want "too much 'nigger,'" particularly Pinchback, forced upon Liberal Republicans. "Their arrogance, impudence, and exactions in official positions is [sic] a little bit more than I can well stand."32

The regular Republicans were less than happy with the concessions they had to make to blacks in order to gain the support of the Pinchback faction. In addition to C.C. Antoine and P.G. Deslonde, who had earlier been nominated by the "Customs House" group for lieutenant governor and secretary of state, respectively, the Pinchback alliance forced them to add W.G. Brown for superintendent of education and Pinchback himself for congressman-at-large. U.S. Marshal S.B. Packard, leader of the "Customs House" group, wrote in a letter to William E. Chandler marked "private and confidential":

In the reorganization of the party it became necessary to place upon the ticket W.G. Brown a colored friend of Gov. Pinchback's, as the candidate for Sup't of Education. It is hurting the chances of the ticket. We realized the effect at the time but deemed it best to run risks for the sake of harmonizing the party and hoping that some other arrangement might be made afterwards.

32 W.F. Blackman to Warmoth, 25 June 1872, Floyd to Warmoth, 6 June 1872, Biggs to Warmoth, 31 July 1872, J.H. Jordan to Warmoth, 3 August 1872, Thomas to Warmoth, 12 July 1872, ibid.
When you see Gov. Pinchback can you not mention this to him, of course not intimating that you had heard from us on the subject. You can readily see for yourself the importance of the change.

Upon joining the Grant forces, Pinchback was immediately engaged to campaign for the ticket in the Northeast. Still hoping to deflect Warmoth from his course, Pinchback wrote the governor from Boston, "All you have you owe to the Republican party and especially the Colored people of Louisiana." Both their political futures depended on the friendship of black voters, Pinchback argued, offering to help obtain a Senate seat for Warmoth if he would desert the Liberal Republicans. 33 Warmoth refused, and went to New York to confer with Greeley leaders. At the suggestion of national Republican officials William E. Chandler and Henry Wilson, Pinchback rushed back toward Louisiana in an effort to become acting governor and sign into law bills which would deprive the governor of control over election officials. Warmoth discovered the plot and through friendly railroad officials managed to delay Pinchback's train and

33 Packard to Chandler, 5 September 1872, Chandler Papers.

win the famous "railroad race," thus retaining his control over the state's election machinery. Election officials declared the Liberal Republican ticket elected, but after months of litigation, violence, and dual government, President Grant declared the regular Republican officials to be the legitimate government of Louisiana. The "Customs House" legislature elected Pinchback to the United States Senate, and Pinchback, acting as governor because of impeachment proceedings against Warmoth, signed his own election certificates as congressman-at-large and senator. His eligibility was questioned in both houses, and after years of delay and controversy, the House finally denied him his seat in March 1875 and the Senate did the same in March 1876.

Early in 1872, the Florida Republican party was rent by dissension over an attempt to impeach Governor Harrison Reed and by Grant's removal of two prominent carpetbaggers from their federal posts. After turbulent beginnings, the state convention finally yielded to black pressure to nominate


scalawag O.B. Hart for governor. With relative harmony prevailing and with the solid support of black voters, both state and national Republican tickets prevailed.37

In Mississippi a sweeping Republican victory in the presidential and congressional elections of 1872 and the resulting demoralization of Mississippi Democrats led the Republican party to the pinnacle of its power in the state by mid-1873. But this very strength contributed to the eventual downfall of the party as personal rivalries led to open schism in the state elections of 1873. When carpetbag Senator Adelbert Ames gained the Republican nomination for governor with the enthusiastic support of most black leaders, scalawag Senator J.L. Alcorn and his adherents bolted and nominated an opposing state. The party division was not, however, a contest between northern and native elements vying for the support of blacks. Instead, the real conflict was over the extent to which blacks would be allowed to hold office and to dominate the party organization. Alcorn, who

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had already shown himself to be unalterably opposed to any black control of the party, gained support of the Democratic-Conservative organization, despite the token presence of black legislator T.W. Stringer on the ticket. The Ames party, totally dependent on the black vote, acceded to black demands and placed three blacks on the state ticket, while nominating numerous blacks for legislative and county posts. With the color line clearly drawn, Ames and his supporters defeated the opposition group by a large margin. With the tremendous increase in the number of blacks holding office and the defeat of the state's most promising fusion party, white Mississippians began to plan the openly racist strategy which would return the state government to Democratic control and become a model for the "redemption" of the South. The blacks' greatest political triumph thus became the basis of their removal as a political force in Mississippi. ³⁸

Although Senator Charles Sumner tried to use his considerable influence with blacks to carry their vote for Greeley in 1872, few black voters or their leaders deserted Grant and the regular party. While Pinchback was wavering between the Greeley and Grant factions of the Louisiana party, Lieutenant Governor A.J. Ransier of South Carolina issued

an open letter to Pinchback arguing that all blacks should remain loyal to the Republican party. To insure this loyalty, blacks were given unprecedented prominence in state party organizations and in the national Republican convention held in Philadelphia in June. With a conspicuous number of blacks on each of the southern delegations, several made major addresses to the convention. James H. Harris of North Carolina, Robert Brown Elliott of South Carolina, James Lynch of Mississippi, and William H. Grey of Arkansas all made eloquent appeals for a platform advocating a strong civil rights bill. With a number of former abolitionist leaders aligning themselves with the Liberal Republicans and seeking to appease former Confederates, black leaders were carrying on the civil rights battle on their own.

Fear of losing their hard-won political and civil rights through a Liberal Republican victory inspired blacks to campaign enthusiastically for the Grant ticket in the North as well as the South. In August 1872 black Virginia Senator

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39 S.D. Smith, pp. 61-62.

George Teamoh wrote Frederick Douglass of the active Grant campaign in Virginia and predicted that the "evils of Greeleyism" would be exposed.\textsuperscript{41} Black leader James T. Rapier gave William E. Chandler an optimistic report on the Grant campaign in Alabama, and a white carpetbagger gave Chandler a very bright picture of Grant's prospects in South Carolina, asserting, "One thing is sure no colored person who has ever been a slave will vote for Greeley [sic]."\textsuperscript{42} Aware that the black vote was crucial, campaign workers bombarded the national committee with requests for funds and suggestions for effective black campaigners. A North Carolina black offered to make speeches both north and south, with assurances that he was a Grant man, "which all Colored men should be." A white Virginian asked for campaign funds to get out the black vote, predicting that 85,000 of his state's 90,000 black votes would go to Grant. North Carolina Republicans also asked for financial aid: "We need some active canvassers to arouse the colored voters, and no one can do this more efficiently than colored speakers, and we have none who can bear the expense." A black party official in Texas

\textsuperscript{41}Washington New National Era, 22 August 1872.

\textsuperscript{42}Rapier to Chandler, 19 September 1872, B.F. Whittemore to Chandler, 22 July 1872, Chandler Papers.
who had received no campaign funds from the state organization pleaded with the national committee for financial aid to canvass the eastern portion of the state.43

Southern blacks were particularly concerned that northern blacks, not being aware of true conditions in the South, might support the Liberal Republicans. They therefore urged the national committee to send prominent southern blacks to speak to black voters in the North. Three blacks from Jackson, Mississippi, wrote:

We believe it could be properly shown that dreadful calamity would befall us should we loose [sic] our "Protector" of the last three years, and upon the accession of such as Horace Greeley and his democratic hoardes [sic], that we could save to the Republican party, numbers of our people.

A white Republican from Selma, Alabama, who described himself as a former large slave owner and Douglas Democrat, added his voice to black appeals and recommended as a northern campaigner Jeremiah Haralson, who was elected to Congress two years later. His admirer described him as

colored Jerry Harrellson [sic] black black negro the smartest colored man on the Stump speaking in America--


he is a six-horse team himself get him after that
Greeley [sic] niger in New York Jerry will challenge
him.45

At least two well-known black politicians from the South
did campaign effectively in the North. White Republicans
in Mississippi recommended that the national committee send
the eloquent James Lynch to speak in the North, and the
Indiana state committee invited Lynch to make speeches in
five cities in October 1872. His tour was reported to have
been enormously successful, inspiring huge torchlight parades
in Indianapolis, Terre Haute, and Evansville, Delighted
campaign organizers reported:

He has met with a perfectly stunning ovation . . . .
His receptions exceeded any political demonstrations
we have had during the present campaign . . . . He
is one of the finest scholars in the United States,
and a finished orator . . . . We of Indiana can never
forget his herculean efforts in behalf of the noble
old Republican party.46

Louisiana's Lieutenant Governor P.B.S. Pinchback, in great
demand by Republican organizers, campaigned successfully in
Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Maine, as well as in the cities
of Boston, Baltimore, and Memphis.47 Grant's election, while

45 John H. Henry to E.D. Morgan, 18 July 1872, ibid.
46 C.P. Lincoln to William E. Chandler, 20 August 1872,
ibid.; Harris, "Lynch," p. 59; Washington New National Era,
17 October 1872.
47 Unsigned telegram to S.B. Packard, 10 September 1872,
A.W. Denison to William E. Chandler, 16 September 1872,
William L. Burk to Chandler, 11 September 1872, Packard to
Chandler, 5 September 1872, Chandler Papers.
not solely a result of the southern black vote, did provide a national climax for the southern drive for black recognition.

While blacks continued to be active and prominent in those states which retained Republican regimes after 1872, their role was no longer a determining factor in the headlong rush to destruction of the Republican governments. Blacks had made their contribution to the decline of the southern Republican party and the consequent loss of black political power in their electoral triumphs of 1870-1873. By contributing some appearance of reality to the specter of "black rule," blacks hastened the formation of powerful white groups determined to crush the party which gave even nominal power to blacks. And in states such as Texas and Arkansas, where blacks had never been allowed a meaningful voice, even within the Republican organization, black leadership was not a real factor in the intra-party dissension which led to ultimate Republican defeat.

Events in Mississippi in 1874 and 1875 clearly illustrate the relation between black political victories and the overthrow of the Republican party. From the beginning of Reconstruction a large number of white Mississippians had recognized the necessity of accepting federal requirements and granting to blacks the minimum rights guaranteed by
constitutional amendments. These whites were never able to acknowledge the black as a political equal, but they hoped to persuade blacks to accept their leadership. By 1874, adherents of this position in both the Republican and Conservative parties had to admit their failure. Conservative efforts to woo the black had been rebuffed, and the decisive defeat of the Alcorn Republicans and the elevation of unprecedented numbers of blacks to office in 1873 demonstrated a conclusive black rejection of the paternalistic white leadership which would deny political equality. The majority of Mississippi whites, moreover, had never accepted the principle of even minimal cooperation with blacks, and their convictions were further strengthened with the upsurge of black officeholding in 1873. Emboldened by the sweeping Democratic victories across the nation in 1874, original "White Line" Mississippians began to speak out openly for the restoration of total white supremacy. More conservative white leaders abandoned their caution to embrace this uncompromising stand, and white Republicans began to desert the party in droves. To recapture the state government--"peacefully if we can, forcibly if we must"--whites organized what came to be known as the "Mississippi plan."
The policy of breaking up Republican control at any cost was implemented in various ways. Part of the program was stirring up enthusiasm among whites for the long-dormant Democratic party. Another involved coercing whites who remained with the Republicans to leave the party or leave the state. But the "Mississippi plan" was primarily aimed at blacks, and economic coercion became one of the most powerful forces, if not the most dramatic, in forestalling a black Republican vote. Newly-revived Democratic clubs warned that no black who voted Republican would be able to find a job; newspapers cooperated by printing lists of blacks who were known to have been associated with the party. On the other hand, Democratic clubs promised jobs, protection, and bonuses to blacks who would join their ranks. Much more effective than promises when blacks remained intransigent, were threats and actual violence. Democrats formed rifle clubs to roam all areas of the state to break up any Republican activity and to terrorize blacks. So-called "riots" became common, with the victims always being black. In September 1875 Governor Ames finally called on Grant to send federal troops. Influenced by a delegation of Ohioans who feared such a move would have an adverse effect on Republican chances in their state's upcoming election, Grant sent Ames
a message stating that all local resources must be exhausted before aid could be sent. Attorney General Edward Pierrepont explained to Ames, "The whole public are tired of these annual autumnal outbreaks in the South."48

The actual election on November 3 was relatively quiet. The work of terrorism and intimidation had already been accomplished, and blacks either stayed away from the polls or approached cautiously beside a Democratic "sponsor." In heavily black Yazoo County, only seven Republican votes were cast, and a similar pattern was found in other black counties. In fact, John R. Lynch was elected to Congress only because of an early error in the vote count and because he had considerable white support. With the black vote thoroughly suppressed, Democrats carried the state by a majority of over 30,000 and emerged in complete control of the legislature and of almost all the county governments. When the legislature met in January 1876 they completed the Democratic takeover by impeaching and removing Lieutenant Governor A.K. Davis and forcing the resignation of Governor

Ames and Superintendent of Education T.W. Cardozo. In preparation for the congressional and presidential election of 1876, the legislature then passed a complicated election law which made it difficult for blacks to register. With a repetition of 1875's successful campaign tactics, all but four of the state counties returned large Democratic majorities in the 1876 elections, thus furnishing a fitting epilogue to the revolution of 1875.49

The "Mississippi plan" had been so successful in 1875 that it served as a model for Democrats in the southern states still under Republican control at the beginning of 1876. True to their history, Florida Republicans were again divided, with a moderate, or "reform," ticket opposing the regular nominees. Before the election the bolters withdrew from the race, but the real problem was the Democrats' systematic efforts to keep black voters from the polls. Following the Mississippi pattern, bands of white "regulators" broke up black political meetings and intimidated blacks with threats and violence. White employers threatened their workers with the loss of jobs and farms if they voted Republican. Some blacks were given marked and numbered ballots to insure that they voted Democratic. With the presidential

49 Ibid.
election at stake this year, federal officials responded to the governor's plea for aid by sending additional troops, but they were able to curb intimidation only in spots. After a quiet election, Republican candidates found they had run well behind the national ticket, and on 2 January 1877 the first Democratic governor in ten years was inaugurated. In a state where blacks had been able to exert little leadership, Democrats had, through violence and economic coercion, re-established an unequivocal white man's government.50

Alabama Republicans, who had regained a tenuous hold on the state government in the disputed elections of 1872, went down to their final defeat in 1874. Weakened by widespread personal rivalries, the party was further rent by white unwillingness to expand black office-holding and by whites who could not tolerate the increasing prominence of blacks in the party. The revitalized Democrats organized the state thoroughly and determined to win by whatever means necessary. Confederate veterans organized drill companies, and the usual tactics of intimidation were used. Although a number of black legislators were elected from the Black Belt counties, Democrats took all state offices and gained large majorities in both houses of the legislature.51

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51 Fleming, Civil War and Reconstruction, pp. 771-797.
The extreme chaos and conflict which made Louisiana unique even in the generally turbulent politics of southern Reconstruction continued through the election of 1876 and its aftermath, but the Democratic program for winning the election was merely one more copy of the "Mississippi plan." Republicans were warring among themselves as usual, with former Governor Warmoth attempting to recapture the state's top post from the "Customs House" group. Although Pinchback had refused to follow Warmoth into the Liberal Republican camp in 1872, he was now proposing a renewed alliance with Warmoth. In June he wrote to Warmoth,

The prospects of a bloody campaign are daily increasing and consequently the colored voters are becoming more and more demoralized. Dreadful as it is, there may yet good result from it, in that all are fast coming to the conclusion that no man should be placed upon the ticket that cannot make a canvass of the state. Every day brings additional evidence of your popularity and I am quite certain that should you and I hitch teams the Devil and Tom Walker cannot prevent our nomination, but what then?52

A Democratic friend who had worked with Warmoth in the fusion campaign of 1872 warned Warmoth not to get involved in a hopeless Republican campaign:

I believe the white people of the state will make a very determined effort to carry the election, and I believe they are more united than ever and while they

52Pinchback to Warmoth, 6 May 1876, Warmoth Papers.
will accord to the black man all his rights they do
not intend him to be the governing, law-making power
in the State.\textsuperscript{53}

Warmoth chose to take Pinchback's advice and try for the
nomination, but he had not been able to rehabilitate himself
with the many party members who still resented his defection
to the Liberal Republicans in 1872. Republicans nominated
instead S.B. Packard, long-time Customs House leader, for
governor, and at the insistence of black delegates renominated
Lieutenant Governor C.C. Antoine and Superintendent of
Education W.G. Brown.\textsuperscript{54}

But white determination to end Republican control and
black political influence in Louisiana stymied the Republican
campaign. "White Leagues," or rifle clubs, covered the
countryside terrorizing black voters. Serious "riots"
occurred in Port Hudson and Ouachita Parish, but those
killed in these disturbances were all black. When Democratic
clubs also tried cajoling the blacks with barbeques and
entertainments, large numbers enjoyed the affairs, but few
deserted the Republican party. The outcome of the election
was disputed for months, with dual state governments in
operation, but with the national compromise of March 1877,

\textsuperscript{53}E.W. Robertson to Warmoth, 13 June 1876, ibid.

\textsuperscript{54}Lonn, pp. 402-407; Warmoth, p. 238.
the Packard government collapsed. Reconstruction in Louisiana was over. 55

Although South Carolina blacks determined their ultimate fate by their dramatic takeover of numerous state and party posts in 1870 and 1872, their elimination as a powerful political force was not achieved until the spring of 1877. Black leaders continued to be a determining factor in the political events of 1874 and 1875 because, in South Carolina more than in any other state, the large numbers of black voters and the quality of black leadership made the black politicians an integral part of the state government and of the political structure. By 1874 charges of corruption in the South Carolina government were so insistent that Republicans in Congress and in the administration were issuing warnings, and many South Carolina Republicans began to call for reform. In a speech in Columbia in March 1874, Robert Brown Elliott placed a major part of the blame on Republican officials:

It is not our errors and inexperience which threaten to ruin us; it is the present reckless disregard of public interest, the prostitution of the machinery of government to personal ends, and the total lack of responsibility of some [of] our public officers . . . .

55 Lonn, pp. 413-425, 432-435, 440-450, 513-525; Warmoth, pp. 237-239; Weisberger, p. 76.
It is not the Democracy that will overthrow us, it is our own party.

A.J. Ransier also warned the blacks, "By every scoundrel you keep in office, you justify the public opinion in the country adverse to . . . the fitness of the colored man for the franchise." But most of the black leaders rejected the fusionist bid of a bolting group which nominated Martin R. Delany for lieutenant governor. As F.L. Cardozo said in an interview with the *New York Times*, blacks could not trust Democrats, who would reduce the blacks to near-slavery once they were back in power. Although the regular Republican ticket headed by carpetbagger Daniel Chamberlain and black R.H. Gleaves won, the surprisingly large Independent vote indicated a revival of white participation.

Chamberlain quickly demonstrated that reform was to be more than a campaign promise, and in doing so he alienated many of his black supporters. While some had espoused reform for campaign purposes only, others were offended by his overtures to former political opponents and his replacement

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57 Ibid., 26 March 1874.

of Republican appointees with Conservatives. State Treasurer F.L. Cardozo soon replaced Speaker Elliott as the black advocate of Chamberlain's program. In March 1875 Elliott led an unsuccessful attempt in the legislature to impeach Cardozo on technical charges. But the climax of the battle between Chamberlain and the black legislators came when they elected F.J. Moses and W.J. Whipper as circuit court judges. The election was overturned by a legal maneuver on Chamberlain's part, but Democrats seized upon the affair to mobilize white resistance to the Republican regime. Democratic editors who had not been able to inspire a concerted, powerful opposition with charges of black-carpetbagger rule trying to rob the state now got a dramatic response to charges of a "Black Band" trying to Africanize the state.

Chamberlain still had hopes of forging a reform coalition with himself as candidate for re-election, but after an initial struggle between Cooperationists and Straightouts, the Democratic party began a systematic reorganization around the candidacy of popular ex-Confederate General Wade Hampton. Chamberlain further lost favor with Democrats by his firm and indignant reaction to outrages against blacks in Hamburg and Ellenton. His own party renominated him and then sealed his fate--and theirs--by including Elliott, whom Democrats
considered a corruptionist, on the ticket for attorney general. Probably any Republican slate would have been doomed, given the white determination to oust the Republican regime by any means. Deriving their inspiration from Mississippi's "White Liners," the Straightouts mounted a carefully organized campaign of economic coercion, terror, and violence. Their success resulted in a contested election and a period of "dual government," which was ended by the national compromise of 1877.59

The struggle for control of state governments in 1875 and 1876 was basically a racial conflict. Scalawags and carpetbaggers were hated not because they were Republicans, as persistent attempts at fusion show; they were hated because they inflicted on the southern states black suffrage, and even more importantly, black office-holding, setting off an irrational fear of black domination. Real political power for blacks could be sustained only through enforcement by the federal government. Some sporadic attempts were made by the periodic use of troops in local conflicts. The Enforcement Acts had made the 1872 elections fairly open, thus allowing widespread black victories. But the federal

government was never committed to any prolonged military assistance, and the sustained intervention necessary to protect black political power was inconsistent with nineteenth-century convictions on the proper role of government. The Democratic capture of the House of Representatives in 1874 ended any possibility of further congressional aid to keep Republican regimes in power. Furthermore, by 1876 few northerners were interested in supporting black political activity. Former civil rights champions now wanted an end to military intervention and a reuniting of the nation. Tired of the black cause, they argued that the civil and political guarantees of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were sufficient. Blacks could now protect their own interests through the normal political processes. Most northerners had never been enthusiastic about black office-holding, and the fraud and mismanagement so widely publicized as the chief feature of reconstruction governments made them sympathetic to the white southerners' position. Northern Republican leaders did little to interfere with the extra-legal tactics used to destroy reconstruction governments. These governments were destroyed not because they were corrupt or expensive or inefficient--redeemer governments had the same flaws--but because they allowed blacks to exercise
real political power. The existence of the Republican party in the South depended absolutely on the black vote, and mere suffrage southern whites could be brought to accept. But blacks had insisted on a real voice, on the opportunity to exercise leadership. Radical politics had elevated the black to places of public trust, and thereby unwittingly assured their inevitable political destruction.
They obeyed the Constitution of the United States, and annulled the bonds of states, counties, and cities which had been issued to carry on the war of rebellion and maintain armies in the field against the Union. They instituted a public school system in a realm where public schools had been unknown. They opened the ballot box and jury box to thousands of white men who had been debarred from them by a lack of earthly possessions. They introduced home rule into the South. They abolished the whipping post, the branding iron, the stocks and other barbarous forms of punishment which had up to that time prevailed. They reduced capital felonies from about twenty to two or three. In an age of extravagance they were extravagant in the sums appropriated for public works. In all of that time no man's rights of person were invaded under the forms of law. Every Democrat's life, home, fireside and business were safe. No man obstructed any white man's way to the ballot box, interfered with his freedom of speech, or boycotted him on account of his political faith.

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