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The election campaign of 1900 marks the culmination of efforts by white North Carolinians to circumvent Negro suffrage in the years following emancipation. As a new century opened Tar Heel voters gave their nod of approval to a state constitutional amendment which effectively barred Negroes from the ballot box. Sponsored by the Democratic party, this amendment provided literacy tests for all voters, but its provisions also included a discriminatory loophole by which illiterate whites might escape this test and qualify for the franchise.

The campaign to convince white voters of the security of their own suffrage rights under the amendment proved to be a challenging task for the Democratic party. Race became the essential issue of the election, and the Democrats' firm determination to recapture the state in 1900 resulted in a political contest characterized by unprecedented fraud and intimidation.

The study presented here is an attempt to capture the mood of the campaign for disfranchisement as experienced by the citizens of North Carolina, both black and white. It focuses upon grass roots activities as revealed in a variety of the most reliable firsthand sources currently available. By its special emphasis this investigation seeks to define and clarify the essential segments of North Carolina's population which supported and opposed the disfranchisement of the Negro in this state.

Public sentiment with regard to the issue ranged from zealous support to firm opposition and apathetic indifference. Resistance, however, surfaced in every section of North Carolina among whites as well as among Negroes. Despite an adverse reception in some quarters, Negro disfranchisement won the approval of most white voters in 1900, and in this campaign as in many others before and since, North Carolinians exhibited their own unique brand of Southernism.

NEGRO DISFRANCHISEMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA: THE POLITICS OF RACE IN A SOUTHERN STATE

by

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CHAPTER I

NEGRO DISFRANCHISEMENT: THE PRELUDE

Gauged against the entire framework of American history, few themes have aroused greater interest or prompted more spirited controversy than the struggle of American Negroes for first-class citizenship. From the time he first stepped ashore in Virginia in 1619 the black man has been an object of special concern for whites. As a slave the sweat of his brow fattened purses from New England to the Gulf Coast, but by the start of the nineteenth century the new nation, which was beginning to look outward at the world, also looked inward at itself.

The great westward migration in the first half of that century helped serve as a catalyst for this introspection. Change was in the air, as the United States became a veritable hotbed of diverse people with many unique customs and interests. These individual and sectional peculiarities provided ample basis for many potential disagreements. Yet by mid-century one question in particular had captured the mind of America. This was the South's "peculiar institution" of Negro slavery and the position it was to occupy in the future of this growing nation.

Controversy over the Negro's "place" in society developed slowly at first, but gradually the void which divided abolitionist from slaveholder widened and eventually the entire nation was swept into the dispute. After four years of bloody strife the bonds of servitude

fell, but time and experience made it clear that the black man's ability to function as a first-class citizen rested not so much in his own hands as in those of his white neighbors. In the years following Reconstruction, Southern white men wasted little time in reestablishing their personal control over political machinery. They viewed black suffrage as the initial step for changes within the whole system of special relationships between the races. As the Negro's political "place" changed, so would his economic and social position.

Following war and Reconstruction the South over a period of three decades worked to achieve through political and extralegal means what it had failed to secure on the battlefield--the permanent subservience of the Negro. This movement to curb political activity by blacks culminated near the turn of the century with vigorous white supremacy campaigns in nearly all Southern states.

The years preceding these anti-Negro movements were marked by unrest in the South, politically, economically, and socially. To some degree this unrest developed as a consequence of military defeat, Reconstruction rule, and widespread poverty. But apart from these conditions the South was forced to reckon with its backward and newly enfranchised Negro population, which in some areas constituted a numerical majority. The Federal Government after 1876 permitted Southerners to work out their own racial adjustments with their former slaves. These adjustments came in the form of a political and social system which developed largely around an acceptable "place" for the Negro in the new South.

When the disputed presidential election of 1876 heralded the end of Reconstruction and federal supervision of the South, Negro Republican voting started a gradual decline. Over the next thirteen years, moreover, Republicans nationally were unable at any one time to gain control of the Presidency and both houses of Congress. "As a consequence, no partisan legislation could be enacted" to reverse the decline of Mr. Lincoln's party south of the Mason-Dixon line.[1] Southern Democrats minimized the Negro's loyal Republican vote by stuffing ballot boxes, utilizing the gerrymander, or by controlling election machinery and throwing out votes. In one local contest Democrats reduced the Negro turnout by announcing that poll tax receipts were acceptable as admission tickets for a visiting circus.[2]

While these methods were effective, a legal means of disfranchising the Negro was deemed both moral and expedient. This form of disfranchisement was first accomplished in the state of Mississippi by a constitutional convention in 1890. Following Mississippi's lead were South Carolina in 1895, and Louisiana three years later. North Carolina ushered in disfranchisement in 1900 with a suffrage amendment, and most other Southern states had restricted the ballot by 1910.

The movement in North Carolina is of particular interest because this was one of only two states in which the disfranchising

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[1] William A. Dunning, "The Undoing of Reconstruction," Atlantic Monthly, LXXXVIII (October, 1901), p. 441.

[2] Ibid.

scheme was submitted to the electorate for approval. In 1900 this state had a relatively small black belt, a significant area of white Republican strength, an active Populist Party, and a history of political moderation. If the Democratic proposal for disfranchisement could have been defeated by the voters of any Southern state, it might well have occurred in North Carolina. Far reaching in its implications and disputed for the vigor with which it was conducted, North Carolina's election of 1900 ranks as controversial in state history as that of 1876 in national politics.

Legal disfranchisement of the Negro was given a strong boost in North Carolina by Civil War and the years of Reconstruction rule which embittered most whites and left them resentful of the Republican Party in general and black suffrage in particular. The state which was "first at Bethel and last at Appomattox" had contributed heavily to the overall war effort, thus rendering defeat a particularly bitter blow. Tar Heels had provided a disproportionately large share of troops and sustained one-fourth of all Confederate battle deaths. It was inevitable, therefore, that bitterness and emotionalism would endure long after the last guns were silenced and farm, shop, and factory again bore the fruits of peacetime labor.

The election of 1876 found North Carolina Republicans defending Negro enfranchisement and their party's post-war years in power. The issues raised by Democrats were much the same as they would be twenty-five years-later--"Negro domination, and white supremacy."[3] Using these

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[3] Hugh Talmage Lefler, Albert Ray Newsome, North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), pp. 471-472.

slogans to advantage, conservative Democrats clothed their party "with the protective mystique of the 'Lost Cause,'" and in this election secured a grasp on state government which continued for two decades without serious challenge.[4]

A North Carolina Democrat expressed the popular conception of Negro suffrage in 1902 when he characterized Reconstruction and Republican rule as days when the South "lay chained and helpless while the vultures preyed on her vitals." The North, he continued, "allowed a race only a few generations removed from African barbarism to take the reins of government into its own hands, and humiliate the men and women who had built up the splendid civilization of the Old South."[5]

This popular stereotype was in part founded upon nineteenth century racial ideas regarding the darker races. White American civilization from its very inception assumed attitudes of racial superiority. Characterizations of the "black brute" in the 1890's derived from ideas and assumptions differing little from those of two centuries before when explorers and settlers described Indian "savages" to their brethren in Europe.

In The Strange Career of Jim Crow, C. Vann Woodward contends that a gradual "capitulation to racism" occurred in the years following the Civil War, when in fact, the real capitulation came to America long before in the arrival of Europeans with their chauvinistic

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[4]C. Vann Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow (2d rev. ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 75.

[5]Clarence H. Poe, "Suffrage Restriction in the South; Its Causes and Consequences," North American Review, CLXXV (October, 1902), p. 535.

assumption of white superiority. Even though certain "bonds of intimacy" may have at one time existed between black and white, these did not preclude the assumption of a superior and inferior position for the two races.

Over the latter half of the nineteenth century the idea of Negro racial inferiority achieved greater formal acceptance. This resulted in part through developments in the sciences. In 1859 Charles Darwin's work On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life, was first published. Darwin's revolutionary observations set gears in motion which eventually led to theories regarding the "multiple origin of the races and the nation of retarded races...."[6] The white or caucasian race was superior to all others, of course, as scientists and historians alike could easily demonstrate.[7] "In its backward state of development" the Negro race was as yet unprepared "to direct governmental and administrative affairs."[8]

National publications such as Atlantic Monthly and Harper's Weekly presented these propositions to the public, thereby encouraging their popular acceptance. One article appearing in The Arena noted that "whenever the Caucasian has come in contact with an inferior,

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[6]Dewey W. Grantham, Jr., "The Progressive Movement and the Negro," South Atlantic Quarterly, LIV (October, 1955), p. 474.

[7]Woodward, op. cit., p. 74.

[8]Kelly Miller, "A Negro's View," Outlook, LX (December 31, 1898), p. 1060.

either of the black, yellow, or red race he either dominates or exterminates."[9] In The Independent, a North Carolina Democrat explained that whites would "refuse, as they have always refused and will always refuse, even so much as to consider the suggestion of social equality or social intercourse with the negro."[10]

Other historical factors also helped bring this racial issue to greater public attention and into sharper focus. The old attitudes of paternalism and noblesse oblige which characterized the Southern defense of slavery continued in vogue well into the twentieth century. Especially susceptible to these ideas were "lower middle and the upper lower white classes" which traditionally accepted "the permanent inferiority" of the black man.[11]

Paternalists insisted that the ballot "was a torch placed in the hands of a child, with which he [the Negro] has ravaged all about him...."[12] These whites knew what was best for the Negro "just as

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[9]Walter Guild, "A Plea from the South," The Arena, XXIV (November, 1900), p. 487.

[10]Furnifold M. Simmons, "The Political Future of the Southern Negro," The Independent, LX (June 28, 1906), p. 1522.

[11]Guion Griffis Johnson, "Southern Paternalism towards Negroes after Emancipation," Journal of Southern History, XXIII (November, 1957), p. 497. Some historians argue that this author's classification should be broadened. My use of it, however, is not intended to imply that other levels of society did not accept the "Permanent inferiority" of blacks.

[12]Thomas Nelson Page, "The Disfranchisement of the Negro," Scribner's Magazine, XXVI (July, 1904), 15-16.

a father always knows what is best for his child...."[13] What he should have, remarked one Democrat, "is not political power, but the help and sympathy of the white people...."[14] Another concluded that the Negro "can best work out his destiny . . . upon the farm, and . . . nowhere in the world are the conditions and environments so favorable to his development along correct lines as upon the Southern farm."[15]

Not insignificant in the popularity of these attitudes was the life and philosophy of the prominent Negro spokesman of the period, Booker T. Washington. This educator and advocate of vocational training stood in the forefront of a school of thought which stressed racial harmony and Negro self-advancement while shunning political ambitions for blacks.[16] Washington's ideas played into the hands of disfranchisers and his policy of conciliation helped make the transition to legal disfranchisement easier than it might otherwise have been.

In North Carolina the campaign for disfranchisement was preceded by almost three decades of agrarian depression which culminated in hard fought political battles in the 1890's. In power since the 1870's, the state's Democrats consistently allied themselves with their conservative national party, whose economic policies eventually

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[13] Johnson, loc. cit., 490.

[14] The News and Observer (Raleigh) May 10, 1900, p. 2.

[15] Simmons, loc. cit., p. 1525.

[16] Grantham, loc. cit., 474-475. Johnson, loc. cit., 494.

alienated much of the rural sector. As the depression worsened, Democrats continued to embrace outmoded policies while mouthing cliches of reform to appease agrarians. The latter meanwhile were being courted by a rapidly growing Farmer's Alliance.[17] In the early 1890's this organization gave birth to a new rural-based People's Party, which in alliance with the state's Republicans captured control of the legislature in 1894. Two years later the fusion of these parties resulted in the election of North Carolina's only Republican governor between Reconstruction and the successful campaign of James E. Holshouser, Jr. in 1972.

This successful challenge to one-party rule upset white solidarity in the state as Fusionists wooed Negro as well as white voters.[18] Reform legislation quickly followed the ousting of Democrats from state government. The General Assembly enacted a more equitable election law, and the system of local government was modified to insure greater democracy and more local control.[19]

These changes made possible greater Negro participation in the political process, and in some areas, especially in the eastern black belt, it paved the way for Negro officeholding.[20] The election of

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[17]Woodward, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

[18]Woodward, op. cit., p. 78. Daniel M. Robison, "From Tillman to Long: Some Striking Leaders of the Rural South," Journal of Southern History, III (August, 1937), 308.

[19]Helen G. Edmonds, The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1951), p. 219.

[20]V. O. Key, Southern Politics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p. 8; "North Carolina Politics," The Outlook, LXV (August 11, 1900), p. 842; Edmonds, op. cit., p. 218.

Negroes was not new in North Carolina, but in the 1890's the black man was able "to support more effectively his white Populist and Republican leaders."[21] A liberal election law and increased political activity on the part of blacks alienated many whites, and in the East where Democrats had a tradition of circumventing the black vote this new development became an intolerable burden.[22]

During this period there were a number of shrewd and determined North Carolina Democrats willing to exploit the issue of race for political purposes. In the forefront of this group stood Furnifold M. Simmons and Charles B. Aycock, but there were also others including Locke Craig, Cameron Morrison, Robert B. Glenn, Claude Kitchin, Josephus Daniels, and H.G. Connor.

Simmons was a black belt Democrat who early in his career experienced defeat at the hands of Negro voters.[23] In 1886, however, he waged a successful Congressional campaign partly on the race issue and in 1892 became chairman of the Democratic State Committee. In

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[21]Edmonds, op. cit., p. 219. See also as an example T. J. Jarvis to Cyrus Thompson, August 24, 1898, Cyrus Thompson Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. Hereafter cited as Southern Historical Collection.

[22]C. C. Pearson, Review of The Negro in North Carolina Politics Since Reconstruction, by William A. Mabry, Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXVII (March, 1941), 687-688. Key, op. cit., p. 208.

[23]Richard L. Watson, Jr., "Furnifold M. Simmons: Jehovah of the Tar Heels," North Carolina Historical Review, XLIV (April, 1967), 168. J. Fred Rippy, Furnifold M. Simmons Memoirs and Addresses (Durham: Duke University Press, 1936), p. 16.

this position Simmons acquired immediate fame as a "superb party organizer.... This reputation was a result of meticulous attention to detail; voter-by-voter canvass by responsible workers, protection of the polls by poll watchers, judicious use of absentee ballots, distribution of literature," and by "making use of eloquent speakers."[24] After the election Simmons was rewarded with an appointment as Revenue Collector, but Democratic defeats in 1894 and 1896 brought him back to his old post in preparation for the campaign of 1898.[25] Once again with the same determination as before Simmons organized party structure from the state to the precinct level and in doing so erected a machine which accorded him loyalty for the next three decades.[26]

Also of high stature in the party was a young attorney from Wayne County, Charles B. Aycock. The father of this future governor was himself an active politician serving in the state senate during the eventful years of 1864-66. The younger Aycock graduated from the state university with high honors in 1880 and began a law practice in Goldsboro the following year. Almost immediately his interest in politics led him into the public arena, and in 1888 Aycock became a Democratic presidential elector for his district. Rising through the party ranks, he was nominated elector-at-large four years later and in 1893 became United States attorney for the eastern district of North Carolina. Although never an organizer of the Simmons calibre,

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[24] Watson, loc. cit.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Key, op. cit., p. 212.

Aycock acquired fame through his abilities as a campaign orator. His effectiveness on the stump and a long history of Democratic loyalty helped make him the party's choice for governor in 1900.

Earlier defeat at the polls had convinced the state's leading Democrats of the popularity of economic and social reforms, but they nevertheless manifested a conservative force within the party.[27] Many in fact were profoundly influenced early in their political careers by United States Senator Matt W. Ransom the "acknowledged leader of conservative Democrats."[28] It was under this leadership that the state Democratic organization initiated the white supremacy campaign of 1898.

In that year, Simmons later declared, after "perfecting my old organization of 1892 . . . I began the task of exploring the record of the fusionists."[29] It became evident that this record had one explosive political weakness-Negro officeholding. Though Democrats also pointed out the economic "excesses" of Fusionists, race became the paramount issue of this campaign.[30]

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[27] Joseph Flake Steelman, "The Progressive Era in North Carolina, 1884-1917" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of North Carolina, 1955), p. 197.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Rippy, op. cit., p. 22.

[30] Steelman, op. cit., p. 158. Rippy, op. cit., p. 26. Oliver H. Orr, Jr., Charles Brantley Aycock (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p. 112.

In some parts of the state where blacks often constituted a numerical majority, Negro officeholding was not uncommon. Eastern cities such as New Bern, Greenville, and Wilmington elected a number of black officials, and Democrats almost immediately charged that government was being dominated by Negroes. In her excellent study of the Fusion period Helen G. Edmonds investigated this allegation and concluded that "Negro domination did not exist."[31]

> An examination of "Negro domination" . . . revealed that one Negro was elected to Congress; ten to the state legislature; four aldermen were elected in Wilmington, two in New Bern, two in Greenville, one or two in Raleigh; one county treasurer and one county coroner in New Hanover; one register of deeds in Craven; one Negro jailer in Wilmington; and one county commissioner in Warren and one in Craven. There were a few Negroes in minor positions as assistant deputies to the sheriff, register of deeds, and coroner. The largest number of Negro officeholders was included under magistrates, who were largely powerless under the Fusion county government. Through federal patronage one Negro was collector of the port of customs in Wilmington, one was deputy collector of internal revenue in Raleigh and some were postmasters.[32]

The Negro, constituting almost thirty-five percent of the state's population, was comparatively unrepresented in positions of public trust. His meager accomplishments derived in part from block voting in support of the party of abolition -- a loyalty nourished still further by fear of conservative Democratic rule.[33]

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[31] Edmonds, op. cit., p. 220. [32] Ibid., p. 219-220.

[33] Ibid., p. 222. A good explanation of the Negro's loyalty to the Republican party appears in a letter written by a twenty-three year old black to Senator Butler. He states that the Democrats seek "to disfranchise us just because we suports [sic] the North by voting a rep. ticket. The colored people of the South especially here in North Carolina owes they life to the Northern Rep. at the balot [sic] box in battle or

The real impact of increased Negro influence is not readily apparent from mere statistics regarding it. As a campaign slogan or shibboleth the charge of "Negro domination" fired the emotions of most whites and proved to be political dynamite. Democrats "regarded the Fusion parties as constituting the 'majority of Negroes.' The combination of these two parties contained fewer white men than the Democratic party. The Negro . . . gave Fusion its majority...." It was reasoned on this basis, therefore, that "Fusion government was supported by a 'majority of Negroes' and imposed 'Negro rule' on the state." While Negroes did not hold a majority of public offices, "Negro voters determined the choice of white Fusion officials."[34]

Democratic organizers combed the state in 1898, and white supremacy clubs sprang up in many sections. As the election neared, armed bands of red shirted men appeared at Democratic rallies, and in several areas they intimidated Negro and white Fusion voters. "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman of South Carolina helped swell the host of white supremacy speakers, and a Democratic press led by the Raleigh News and Observer unleashed a tirade of emotional and incendiary racist propaganda.[35]

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anywhere else . . . for freedom that party restored upon them when they was under bonage [sic] when the chains of slavery was bound around my parents that good old Republican party's patriots shook them off...." Quote taken from a letter by Joshua Bynum to Marion Butler, June 16, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[34]Orr, op. cit., p. 156.

[35]Rippy, op. cit., p. 23-24. Key, op. cit., p. 213.

Populists and Republicans suddenly found themselves hard pressed to deal effectively with the race issue. Populists especially had no love for the Negro once he became a political liability, and in 1898 and again in 1900 fusion with the Republicans became a controversial and difficult task for the People's Party.

As the fall campaign of 1898 approached, Alex Manly, Negro editor of the Wilmington Record, published an ill-timed article in which he carelessly remarked that "our experience among poor white people in the country teaches us that women of that race are not any more particular in the matter of clandestine meetings with colored men than are white men with colored women." Many Negroes who have been lynched, he continued, "were sufficiently attractive for white girls of culture and refinement to fall in love with them...."[36]

Democrats responded to this example of Negro "insolence" by proclaiming the election as an opportunity to eliminate Negro domination and safeguard the virtues of white womanhood as well. "It was not merely the insult to our white women," concluded one editor, "but the encouragement of the negro brutes that Manly's article gave that was so bitterly resented."[37]

Race relations in the city of Wilmington gradually worsened and eventually took a dramatic turn. Reports circulated that Negro officials

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[36] The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 29, 1900, p. 1.

[37] The Rev. A. J. McKelway, "The Race Problem in the South: The North Carolina Revolution Justified," The Outlook LX (December 31, 1898), p. 1058.

had made "the City Hall, Sheriff's office, and Register's office . . . loafing-places for negro politicians." The sheriff's deputies in one hostile account "were negroes (some of them so ignorant that they could not read the warrants they were sent to serve), except one white man, who was a drunken sot."[38] A "carnival of crime" was also recorded in this "largest and wealthiest of the aristocratic cities of the East," and white women were reportedly insulted on the streets and pushed into the gutter by Negroes.[39]

A proclamation was issued by the "white Citizens of Wilmington" declaring in part that "the time had passed for the intelligent citizens of this community owning 95% of the property and paying taxes in like proportion to be ruled by negroes."[40] Determined action soon followed. Two days after the November Democratic election victory a well planned and executed white rebellion erupted in the port city. Alex Manly was expelled from Wilmington, and his newspaper office "accidentally" burned to the ground. Several Negroes were fatally shot on city streets as a white mob led by A. M. Waddell seized control of the municipal government and replaced duly elected Negro officials with white men.[41]

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[38] Ibid., p. 1057.

[39] Ibid., p. 1058. The Rev. A. J. McKelway, "The North Carolina Suffrage Amendment," The Independent, LII (August 16, 1900), p. 1956.

[40] A proclamation by the white citizens of Wilmington, November 9, 1898, A. M. Waddell Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[41] Edmonds, op. cit., pp. 158-174. George Rountree, "Memorandum of My Personal Recollections of the Election of 1898," Folder 41, Henry Groves Connor Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

The Wilmington coup d'etat was triggered in part by jubliant reaction to the sweeping statewide Democratic election victory of 1898. Having solidified white voters through a passionate appeal to race, the Democratic party carried seventy-three of North Carolina's ninety-six counties and for the first time since 1894 held undisputed control of the state legislature. Democrats could now look with an optimistic eye toward the election of 1900 and the governorship.

By 1898 Fusion policies had alienated much of North Carolina's white population as well as certain financial interests.[42] The agrarian depression which led many to abandon the old parties in the early 1890's had eased and somehow appeared less important when racial thunder rolled across the state. Largely because of the race issue the Populist and Republican parties had been slow to fuse, and this strategy which gave them victory in two previous contests failed completely in 1898. Only in their traditional Western strongholds and among the state's blacks was Republican support left intact. The once burgeoning Populist party, moreover, carried only two counties and sent a mere handful of representatives to Raleigh. Even some Democrats were disturbed by the fervor of their party's efforts. After the election H. G. Connor remarked that politicians had "stirred the minds and feelings of the people more deeply than they intended."[43] Most Democratic officials as well as members of the opposition parties anticipated, however, that the incendiary rhetoric, the widespread

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[42]Orr, op. cit., p. 116.

[43]H. G. Connor to George Howard, November 25, 1898, Henry Groves Connor Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

intimidation, and the well oiled Democratic machine were only a prelude to 1900 and the culmination of white supremacy in North Carolina.

CHAPTER II

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE 1900 CAMPAIGN

The Legislature of 1899

Throughout 1898 Fusionists insisted that Democrats would seek the disfranchisement of illiterate whites and Negroes if again returned to power. To counter these allegations several Democrats openly declared that such was not the intention of their party. James H. Pou, state executive committee member, and later United States Congressman, went so far as to sign a notorized affidavit to the effect that he had "never heard a single Democrat give utterance to such a sentiment," and furthermore did not believe it would receive "a single Democratic vote" even if proposed.[1] In October the News and Observer branded the Fusion charge a "lie," declaring that Simmons had committed his party "not to disfranchise any voter." The paper noted that this pledge had been reiterated by "the leaders of the party on the stump.... The assurances from the State Chairman and the leaders of the party settle the matter fully and completely."[2]

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[1] The Caucasian (Raleigh), January 11, 1900, p. 2.

[2] The News and Observer (Raleigh), October 25, 1898, p. 4. See also the letters of T. D. Copeland and J. H. Evans to Marion Butler, January 24, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. Hereafter cited as Southern Historical Collection.

The issue was not settled, however, and events soon made this clear. Shortly after the election H. G. Connor expressed his desire "to secure the permanent and undivided political supremacy of the white man."[3] Another Democrat wanted to "eliminate the negro question from politics as fast as it can be done," and other members of the party probably entertained these ideas, despite pronouncements to the contrary.[4]

The Democratic party had campaigned on a pledge only to eliminate Negro rule, provide a new election law, and abolish the Fusion system of local government; but once the legislature convened in January, 1899, steps were immediately taken toward the establishment of a new suffrage restriction. Amid Populist and Republican cries of deception, a bill was introduced into the legislature on January 6 to achieve the permanent disfranchisement of the Negro.

Several Democrats helped frame this measure. H. G. Connor was prepared "to go a very long way to remove the negro from the politics of the state," but he said, "the situation is far from pleasant and the problem full of complications. I wish that some other Democrat had my seat."[5] Other members of the party were much less apprehensive, however, and years later vied with one another in

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[3]H. G. Connor to George Howard, November 25, 1898, Henry Groves Connor Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[4]Letters of W. M. Bond and R. H. Battle to H. G. Connor, November 10, 1898, ibid. J. Fred Rippy, Furnifold M. Simmons Memoirs and Addresses (Durham: Duke University Press, 1936), p. 16.

[5]H. G. Connor to George Howard, November 11, 1898, Henry Groves Connor Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

claiming authorship. The original bill was similar to a Louisiana law and was primarily the work of George Rountree, F. M. Simmons, and Charles B. Aycock.[6]

The suffrage bill provided for an educational and property qualification, a poll tax to be paid by March 1 preceding the election, and a "grandfather clause." This last provision exempted from the educational test the descendents of any male person who was qualified to vote in 1867 or had served in the United States Army prior to that year. Practically no blacks qualified under this provision, and its implementation would disfranchise the illiterates of that race while granting suffrage to equally ignorant whites. After passage by the general assembly the entire plan was to be submitted to the state's voters in August, 1900.

In the overwhelmingly Democratic legislature there was little doubt that some form of suffrage restriction would eventually be approved. For several weeks the original bill was vigorously debated, and various changes were proposed. Its supporters offered diverse arguments defending the wisdom of the measure, but most revolved around the Negro's alleged incapacity for self-rule.

In a speech on the house floor George Rountree declared that "the last four years in North Carolina . . . have completely demonstrated the fact that the negro is unfitted for self-government." Rountree insisted that "fitness for self-government was largely a matter of heredity, it must be obtained by inheritance and not by

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[6]Rippy, op. cit., p. 27. Oliver H. Orr, Jr., Charles Brantley Aycock (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p. 112.

schools and learning."[7] In defending the grandfather clause to the public, Democratic newspapers echoed much the same argument. "The capacity for self-government" wrote the News and Observer, "seems, in the light of history to be peculiar to certain races or types of men." Anglo-Saxons "alone have developed the power to preserve and maintain liberty regulated by law. The exceptions [grandfather clause] to the general rule prescribed in the amendment recognize the truth that this quality of mind and character is transmitted...."[8] Discounting these arguments, a Negro representative from Vance County asserted that such claims were "a revival of the doctrine of the divine right of Kings" and opposed the bill in its entirety.[9]

Democrats acknowledged that the amendment would disfranchise most Negroes "not because they are negroes, but because they are ignorant and have neither by acquisition nor inheritance, the capacity to vote intelligently." This has been accepted in other southern states, and "we but follow their example."[10]

While considering the proposal a house committee permitted several Negroes to speak in defense of their race. Admitting that

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[7] The News and Observer (Raleigh), February 18, 1899, p. 1.

[8] A newspaper interview with H. G. Connor, January 29, 1899, Folder 44, Henry Groves Connor Papers, Southern Historical Collection. Guion Griffis Johnson, "Southern Paternalism toward Negroes after Emancipation," Journal of Southern History, XXIII (November, 1957), p. 484.

[9] The News and Observer (Raleigh), February 18, 1899, p. 2.

[10] Contained in a newspaper clipping found in the Henry Groves Connor Papers, Southern Historical Collection. Also see ibid.

only meager progress had been made since abolition, they explained that the Negro was still "but a few years out of savagery and fewer out of slavery...." Isaac Smith, a Negro, cautioned house members "to consider well what you are about to do. Take away from the colored man this privilege and he will never again consider you his friend."[11] Smith went on to say that:

> If your mothers and sisters who know all about the trying time of 1861-'62-'63, its woes and its sorrow, could come back from heaven this minute and speak to you, you would be changed . . . because you would hear a still voice from her saying, "Son stay thy hand! For Uncle Tom and Aunt Harriet were faithful and true to me and the children when you were far, far away...."[12]

It was ironic and distressing to some Democrats that proposals for a literacy test were rejected by the Georgia assembly the previous fall. In that contest whites argued that a literacy requirement would encourage Negroes to study and "thus bring in a dangerous element." Others branded it unjust and unconstitutional, while some thought the bill "too drastic" and feared that ignorant whites might be disfranchised.[13]

Unmoved by such logic, North Carolina Democrats pressed forward with their proposal. On February 18, the day of its passage, final arguments were heard. Francis D. Winston, prominent Democrat and

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[11] The News and Observer (Raleigh), February 18, 1899, p. 1.

[12] Ibid., p. 2.

[13] Editorial "Disfranchisement Defeated in Georgia," The Independent, LI (December 7, 1899), p. 3307.

later Superior Court Judge, declared that "the individual conscience must be sunk in the public good. Let not this revolution fall. We must go forward. Every man who now talks of white supremacy must now show his faith by his works."[14]

In its final form the bill incorporated most of the features of the original version, the principal exception being exclusion of a property requirement for voting. The amendment won easy approval in both chambers of the legislature with Republicans in general voting solidly against it. The Populist vote was divided, and a handful of Democrats also opposed the measure.[15] With its passage the Democratic Party had before itself the task of selling disfranchisement to the state's voters. The prospects of such a campaign led one Tarboro resident to conclude that politics have "just been put upon the stage."[16]

The Election Law of 1899

North Carolina Democrats foresaw a great political struggle over this issue in 1900. Josephus Daniels, firebrand editor of the News and Observer, wrote that the campaign to secure Negro disfranchisement "is a desperate fight and we can win it only by the hardest sort of

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[14] The News and Observer (Raleigh) February 18, 1899, p. 2.

[15] Ibid., February 19, 1899, p. 3.

[16] George Howard to H. G. Connor, February 3, 1899, Henry Groves Connor Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

conflict."[17] Former Governor T. J. Jarvis "never believed that the proposed suffrage amendment would sweep the State...." To pass it, he said, "will require a united, aggressive, heroic effort."[18]

Other prominent Democrats echoed these sentiments, and at the grass roots level ample reason existed for their caution. "I believe we are going to have the fight of our lives" wrote a Kinston merchant, "and I am by no means an alarmist."[19] Letters reaching Populist headquarters also indicated strong opposition to the amendment. In Onslow County to the east and Buncombe in the West seventy-five per cent of the people reportedly stood against the measure.[20] A Rutherford County resident found Democrats divided and Fusionists solidly against the amendment, and in Harnett it was expected to suffer defeat by three hundred votes.[21]

Even within the black belt disfranchisement was not overwhelmingly popular among some whites. Many people viewed the

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[17] Josephus Daniels to Matt Ransom, June 14, 1900, Matt W. Ransom Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[18] T. J. Jarvis to Francis Winston, December 22, 1899, Francis D. Winston Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[19] J. W. Grainger to F. D. Winston, January 3, 1900, and George Dees to F. D. Winston, January 19, 1900, Francis D. Winston Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[20] D. C. Downing to Marion Butler, February 27, 1900, and F. L. Whitaker to Marion Butler, June 25, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[21] L. Purgason to Marion Butler, June 15, 1900, and L. H. Marks to Marion Butler, July 26, 1900?, in ibid.

proposal with "suspicion," and Vance County Populists expressed a determination "to defeat the Amendment and count their votes as cast if they have to wade in blood to the polls."[22] "The poor white people the greater portion of them say they are not going to vote for the Amendment" wrote a Wilmington white man.[23] "There are many who are afraid of the Amendment" remarked another correspondent, "and who if properly educated would vote with us."[24] One black belt resident reported that the number of Populists in his precinct had at least doubled, and another found his neighbors optimistic and "full of enthusiasm."[25]

In 1900 the Democratic party possessed one great asset which stood as a formidable barrier to Fusion victory and seriously eroded much of this anti-amendment "enthusiasm." This was a new election law approved in 1899 by the same Democratic assembly which sponsored the suffrage amendment. The controversial law contained provisions which greatly aided the Democratic party on election day and made approval of the suffrage restriction considerably easier to secure.

Possibly to avoid confusion with national issues and to discourage federal intervention, the legislature moved the election day

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[22] W. C. Bowers to Marion Butler, July 11, 1900, and E. A. Kelly to Butler, January 22, 1900, in ibid.

[23] L. J. King to Marion Butler, February 17, 1900, and Edward T. Clark to Butler, July 7, 1900, in ibid.

[24] T. W. Babb to Marion Butler, June 8, 1900, in ibid.

[25] A. J. Dolby to Marion Butler, July 27, 1900, and J. E. Person to Marion Butler, July 12, 1900, in ibid.

from November to August. This new law also centralized election machinery by permitting the general assembly to appoint a state election board which would obviously be Democratic. This body would in turn appoint county election boards which selected registrars and two literate election judges in each precinct. Although state law specified that these judges be of opposite political parties, their authority was limited, and election machinery in most areas was under firm Democratic control.[26]

The election law called for a new and complex voter registration before election day, and registrars were accorded almost unlimited authority over these proceedings. New and unusually stringent requirements for registration were also instituted. Prospective electors were compelled to answer a dozen or more questions regarding age, residence, identity, place of birth, occupation, criminal record, or "any other question which may be regarded by the registrar as material...." The registrar was also empowered to require an applicant to certify certain of these facts by the oath of two qualified electors.[27]

The law further specified that duly registered voters could be challenged on election day by the registrar, election judges, or any other voter. In such an event the registrar was instructed to set aside a time when he along with the judges could decide on the

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[26]North Carolina Public Laws, 1899, Chapter DVII, pp. 685-687.

[27]Ibid., p. 661. The Caucasian (Raleigh), March 22, 1900, p. 2. Marion Butler, "Election in North Carolina," The Independent, LII (August 16, 1900), p. 1953.

individual's qualifications for the franchise.[28] In addition voters were expected to determine the correct box for each ballot and deposit them accordingly. Those cast in the wrong boxes would be declared void when the count was taken.

The intricacy of this law created much confusion, and its rigid provisions disfranchised a large number of voters, especially among the ignorant Negro population. The fact that framers had this purpose in mind was openly acknowledged. The News and Observer asserted that there were "upon the registration books the names of between fifteen and twenty thousand negroes who have no earthly right to vote . . .," and Heriot Clarkson, who later sat on the State Supreme Court, informed an audience that the election law "was drawn for the purpose of letting the white man vote and disqualifying negroes...."[29]

Democrats and Fusionists: An Assessment

The campaign strategy of the Democratic party required that "white supremacy vs. negro rule" be the essential issue dividing

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[28] Public Laws, op. cit., p. 664.

[29] The News and Observer (Raleigh), June 26, 1900, p. 2. A Gaston County speech delivered by Heriot Clarkson, May 20, 1900, Heriot Clarkson Papers, Southern Historical Collection. Joseph Flake Steelman, "The Progressive Era in North Carolina, 1884-1917" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of History, University of North Carolina, 1955), p. 197.

the political parties.[30] At their convention in April, 1900, a slate of candidates from widely scattered sections of North Carolina was nominated, giving the ticket broad geographical representation.[31] In addition hundreds of speakers from the town lawyer to the courthouse boss were called upon to stump in support of the party and amendment. Aycock and Simmons decided that "the whole ticket of candidates for state office would tour the state together, exhorting the people from the same platform and expounding the same basic ideas, yet each man appealing in his own way to the people he knew best."[32]

In 1900, the Democratic party benefitted from the large number of energetic workers within its ranks. Many were seasoned campaigners, but others were small town lawyers, and some were Confederate veterans. In Sampson County a Fusionist reported that Democrats "are filling our county with Speakers."[33] In Durham, another correspondent found Democratic lawyers "speaking at every Street Corner," and in Pitt County the party held numerous "night meetings at school houses."[34] A

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[30] The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 22, 1900, p. 1.

[31] Ibid., April 12, 1900, p. 5.

[32] Orr, op. cit., p. 165.

[33] L. H. Johnson to Marion Butler, July 18, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[34] J. E. Carpenter to Hal Ayer, July 13, 1900, and T. A. Carson to Marion Butler, January 19, 1900, in ibid.

discouraged Iredell County merchant informed Populist headquarters that lawyers from the Statesville area were campaigning heavily and making a "house to house canvass" both day and night.[35] Just prior to election day the Greensboro Telegram revealed that during the final two weeks of campaigning the Democratic party had fielded an incredible total of twelve hundred speakers each day.[36]

Democrats printed hundreds of thousands of leaflets and broadcast them across North Carolina. They appealed to racial prejudices and mobilized "Lost Cause" sentiment in a desperate effort to discredit the Republican and Populist leadership and bring voters into the ranks of the Democratic party.[37] Their appeal was further broadened by a neo-Populist progressive platform which was looked upon with favor by most whites.

The Fusion parties embarked on this campaign with considerable optimism despite the sound thrashing which they received at the polls in 1898. The Populist movement was led by Sampson County's most prominent citizen, Marion Butler. A graduate of the University of North Carolina, Butler was long an active member of the Farmer's Alliance. In 1888 he had purchased the Clinton Caucasian and moved it to Raleigh as a mouthpiece of the agrarian movement. Two years later Butler was elected to the North Carolina Senate as an Alliance Democrat but soon abandoned that party to spearhead the Populist drive

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[35]W. B. Gibson to Marion Butler, July 24, 1900, and W. B. Gibson to Marion Butler, July 17, 1900, in ibid.

[36]The Greensboro Telegram, August 2, 1900, p. 2.

[37]The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 22, 1900, p. 2.

in his home state. When Fusionists captured control of the legislature in 1894, this friend of the farmer was elected to the United States Senate where he served ably until 1901.

Butler was an astute politician and a shrewd organizer whose talents brought him to national prominence in the agrarian movement. Less well known but hardly less active in 1900 were Cyrus Thompson, the Populist nominee for governor, B. F. Kieth, prominent Wilmington merchant, and Edenton attorney W. J. Leary. In addition to such local talent, Populists also called upon "Cyclone" Davis of Texas and J. E. Kelly of Kansas to stump in their behalf.

The Republican Party suffered from a lack of strong and talented leadership. Probably the most capable of their clan was the veteran Jeter C. Pritchard. Elected to the legislature in 1884, he later became the party's nominee for lieutenant governor and in 1894 earned the distinction of being the only Republican United States Senator from the South. Also prominent, though somewhat colorless, was the Republican nominee for governor in 1900, Spencer B. Adams of Greensboro. While prosperous and politically experienced, he was hardly qualified to compete with such Democratic orators as Charles B. Aycock.[38]

The numerical inferiority of anti-amendment workers proved a great handicap throughout the campaign, and complaints regarding the manpower shortage flooded Populist headquarters in Raleigh. A Guilford County school principal insisted that if we "could have one tenth

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[38] Orr, op. cit., p. 162.

the speakers they have we could carry the state."[39] "What is the trouble that you can't send us down a speaker...?" asked a Franklin County supporter. Many Democratic "speeches have been made here and lots of people are being misled...."[40] Another Fusionist wrote that people in his section were "discouraged" by the lack of anti-amendment activity, and in Aycock's home county of Wayne the Democrats reportedly held a great advantage because the Fusionists "have not had eny [sic] speaking...."[41] Citizens of one eastern county even agreed to pay Butler's traveling expenses if he would deliver an address to them on the burning election issues.[42]

The shortage of workers in the East resulted in part from a Fusion tendency to neglect that section in order to concentrate on the Piedmont and West where sympathy for their cause was greatest.[43] Recalling the emotional contest of 1898, one black belt Populist thought it advisable to "be quiet" in the East, for "by doing so the Democrats will stay at home and not vote. We have a good many negros [sic] with us and any efort [sic] on our part will cause the Democrats to cry out 'Negro' and 'White Supremacy.' There by calling

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[39] J. M. Weatherly to Marion Butler, July 2, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[40] W. P. Alley to Marion Butler, June 25, 1900, in ibid.

[41] W. B. Gibson to Marion Butler, July 18, 1900, and O. D. Bass to Marion Butler, July 29, 1900, in ibid.

[42] R. E. Creech to Marion Butler, July 12, 1900, in ibid.

[43] E. G. Hackett to Marion Butler, June 20, 1900, in ibid.

up the predudice [sic] of the ignorant whites causing them all to vote."[44]

In June W. S. Hyams, secretary of the Republican state committee, advised Butler that his party would "look after the west and are expecting you to take care of the east in the matter of sending speakers...."[45] While there had been some anti-amendment activity in this section of North Carolina, it was mid-June before Populist vice-chairman Hal Ayer informed a Greenville sympathizer that "we are today billing some speakers for the Eastern Counties...."[46] If the understaffed statewide effort did not seal the fate of Negro suffrage, a tardy campaign in the East helped insure the Democrats of a large margin of victory.

The anti-amendment effort was basically one of defending Fusion government against Democratic charges and broadcasting the dangers posed by the amendment. Republicans were fighting for their political life in the state and strongly opposed any move to disfranchise a large portion of their supporters. Jeter C. Pritchard insisted that the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments be enforced and committed himself to "the protection of the poor and illiterate of both races...."[47] Marion Butler and most other Populists, on the

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[44]W. A. Copehart to Marion Butler, July 10, 1900, in ibid.

[45]W. S. Hyams to Marion Butler, June 27, 1900, in ibid.

[46]H. W. Ayer to D. W. Patrick, June 19, 1900, and J. E. Person to H. W. Ayer, July 12, 1900, in ibid.

[47]Jeter C. Pritchard to Charles Hunter, January 26, 1900, Charles Hunter Papers, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina. Hereafter cited as Duke Library.

other hand, were confirmed white supremacists, but instead of supporting the amendment they attempted to steer a middle course between the other two irreconcilable parties.[48] They opposed the measure out of genuine fear that the courts would declare the grandfather clause unconstitutional while permitting the educational qualification to stand, thus disfranchising illiterate whites along with the Negroes.

Republicans and Populists alike affirmed the doctrine of white superiority and denied that Negro domination had existed or could exist in North Carolina. They put numerous speakers into the field and issued large amounts of literature seeking to discredit the Democratic party and demonstrate that its progressive promises were little more than campaign rhetoric. The middle of the road Populist stand was mapped out by the party's state convention which declared that the proposed constitutional amendment was "above party lines" and not a "Party Question." Butler wrote that any Populist could support the amendment "and still maintain his standing with the party."[49] Despite these utterances, however, the actual position of the party was one of opposition to the proposal. The amendment was branded as dangerous, and Butler believed that if passed it would

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[48] Donna Jeanne Poali, "Marion Butler's View of the Negro, 1889-1901," (unpublished Master's thesis, Dept. of History, University of North Carolina, 1969), pp. 103-104.

[49] Marion Butler to Furnifold M. Simmons, April 30, 1900, and Marion Butler to C. Gibson, April 24, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection. The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 22, 1900, p. 12.

"disfranchise fifty or sixty thousand illiterate white voters in North Carolina."[50]

In January, 1900, Negroes assembled in Raleigh to commemorate Lincoln's proclamation of emancipation. Charles N. Hunter, prominent black educator, sounded a note of opposition when he cautioned that "the proposed amendment to our State Constitution is the initial step in the direction of nullifying the Proclamation...."[51] Despite a desire on the part of Negroes to participate in the campaign the Fusion parties chose to de-emphasize and discourage Negro political activity thereby revealing their own brand of racism. It was suggested that Negroes be dissuaded from registering and voting, and one white Populist thought it advisable to keep the mouth of the Negro "Shut and Sealed."[52] Senator Pritchard told his "colored friends that this fight is something for the white man to settle," and consequently at the Republican state convention "the negro figured very little."[53] Chiding Republicans for their about-face the News and

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[50]Marion Butler to C. Gibson, April 24, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[51]The News and Observer (Raleigh), January 2, 1900, p. 7.

[52]G. F. Walker to Marion Butler, January 22, 1900; S. L. Gibson to Marion Butler, July 17, 1900; Hal W. Ayer to Marion Butler, March 10, 1900; John W. Knight to Marion Butler, July 17, 1900; Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection. The Caucasian (Raleigh), February 1, 1900, p. 2. Jeter C. Pritchard to Charles Hunter, January 26, 1900, Charles Hunter Papers, Duke Library.

[53]The News and Observer (Raleigh), May 3, 1900, p. 1. The Caucasian (Raleigh), May 3, 1900, p. 3.

Observer explained that Democrats merely wanted "to do at the ballot box what Republicans have done in their primaries and conventions."[54] That Fusionists would consent to disfranchise potential anti-amendment voters voluntarily amply justifies the criticism that the Negro was indeed a pawn for all three political parties.

During the years of Fusion rule the Republican party was a reasonably potent force in state politics, and at their 1900 convention all counties sent delegations with the exception of three.[55] The previous campaign had wrought such cleavages among the population, however, that it became evident these strains would spill over into both Fusion party conventions. Republicans denied the possibility of Negro domination and condemned the amendment along with the fraud and intimidation of the late campaign. They sought at the same time, however, to disassociate themselves with the events of Governor Russell's administration and declined to accord him "a place of honor on the rostrum, endorse his administration, or to elect him to serve as a delegate at large to the party's national convention."[56]

At the Populist convention dissension over the race issue was also quite pronounced. With almost one-fourth of the state's counties unrepresented, this body condemned the Democratic legislature of 1899 and then fought down a resolution by delegate Harry Skinner of Greenville

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[54] The News and Observer (Raleigh), May 3, 1900, p. 4.

[55] Ibid., p. 1.

[56] The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), May 10, 1900, p. 1, 4, 5. Steelman, op. cit., p. 218.

calling for the repeal of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution.[57]

Fusionists fully appreciated the gravity of the campaign they were waging. "This is our last struggle" wrote a Robeson County Populist, "it is live or die this time."[58] Cyrus Thompson saw the campaign as "a question of physical force," and State Auditor Hal W. Ayer informed chairman Butler that he had:

> not begun to realize the character of such a fight as the democratic machine now contemplates. Their plan does not mean argument or discussion, it means riot, slander, abuse, physical violence and general anarchy. Their plan now is to red-shirt every town in the State, and to terrorize voters through the means of such characters as can be hired to wear red-shirts, drink mean whiskey and raise commotion generally.[59]

Despite some intra-party disagreements the Fusionists set out to perfect a coordinated organization which could return them to power and defeat the proposed change in suffrage. Though urged to begin early and "Organize! Organize!! Organize!!!," they were slow to do so.[60] Literature moved sluggishly, and speakers were great in demand but limited in supply.

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[57] The Caucasian (Raleigh), April 19, 1900, p. 2. The People's Paper (Charlotte), July 27, 1900, p. 2. The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 19, 1900, p. 6.

[58] S. J. McLeod to Marion Butler, February 13, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[59] Cyrus Thompson to Marion Butler, January 22, 1900, and Hal W. Ayer to Marion Butler, Folder 114, in ibid.

[60] B. F. Keith to Marion Butler, December 19, 1899; A. S. Pence to Marion Butler, January 8, 1900; B. F. Keith to Marion Butler, February 26, 1900, in ibid.

Many Populist and Republican campaign woes derived from the financial burden of their efforts. Individual donations and loans could be obtained, a few business interests might contribute, and some funds were possibly secured from national campaign treasuries. But whatever the sources they were never sufficient. In late May the Republican state committee was "out of funds."[61] This same problem led a Populist executive committee member to explain that "literature moves out slowly for lack of sufficient mailing force, & want of funds generally," and shortly before the election Butler was compelled to make an appeal to the voters. "We are now at the end of our row," he declared, "and without enough money in sight to meet expenses for the next few days. I have exhausted every resource I could command."[62]

The Democratic effort was also plagued by a monetary shortage. In 1892 the party had received aid from its national organization and in 1898 obtained funds from "the bankers, the railroad officials, and the manufacturers of the State."[63] In 1900 these same sources probably came through again.[64] The scope of this campaign, however,

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[61]W. S. Hyams to Marion Butler, May 29, 1900, in ibid.

[62]R. B. Davis to Marion Butler, May 22, 1900; letter from Butler requesting donations, dated July 26, 1900; R. B. Davis to Marion Butler, June 9, 1900; letter from Butler to an aid, dated June, 1900, in ibid.

[63]Rippy, op. cit., pp. 19, 23.

[64]George E. Hunt to Marion Butler, January 18, 1900; B. F. Keith to Marion Butler, July 27, 1900; B. F. Keith to Marion Butler, February 17, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

required considerable funding, and despite all contributions the Democrats were eventually forced to borrow hundreds of dollars. As early as March Simmons wrote that "contributions have stopped coming in altogether and . . . I do not wish to make any public request for funds again [italics mine] until after the convention."[65]

Despite their financial woes Democrats were on a more solid footing than Fusionists, and they pressed forward with one of the most hotly contested elections in North Carolina history. In January and February white supremacy clubs were revived in the state.[66] Membership in this order was available to "every white man who desires white government in North Carolina and is willing to use every practicable and honorable means to restore and permanently establish white supremacy...."[67]

These associations were set up in accordance with guidelines carefully prepared by the party's head F. M. Simmons. Democratic county chairmen were instructed to appoint organizers to visit each township in their counties and establish white men's clubs. Associations of this nature, it was declared, would "appeal to the good character and the highest aspirations of the people."[68]

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[65] Furnifold M. Simmons to Francis D. Winston, December 3, 1899, and Furnifold M. Simmons to Francis D. Winston, March 19, 1900, Francis D. Winston Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[66] The News and Observer (Raleigh), January 2, 1900, p. 3; February 22, 1900, p. 3.

[67] Ibid., February 22, 1900, p. 3.

[68] Ibid., May 16, 1900, p. 6.

Each club contained four basic committees. One was to oversee voter registration, another handled campaign literature, a third made appointments for Democratic speakers, while the fourth observed the polls on election day and challenged the qualifications of opposition voters.[69] It was the duty of club members to aid "in securing a full registration, in winning doubtful and floating voters, and in persuading those white men who have been alienated from the Democratic Party of their duty to their race, themselves, and their families."[70] Such dissidents were to be approached and persuaded by "discreet men of influence."[71]

In many areas of the state white supremacy clubs were the heart of Democratic organization, and by mid-June almost eight hundred were reported in all but nine of North Carolina's counties.[72] A Populist from Bertie County reported that boys of twelve were being admitted to the order, and another black belt resident wrote that Democrats withdrew from his Sunday School class when he refused to join.[73]

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[69] Ibid., February 22, 1900, p. 3.

[70] Ibid.

[71] W. S. Hyams to Marion Butler, July 23, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[72] The News and Observer (Raleigh), June 26, 1900, p. 6.

[73] W. H. Brown to Marion Butler, July 5, 1900, and John W. Knight to Marion Butler, July 17, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

In 1900 Fusionists attempted to counter these clubs by organizing anti-amendment societies in the state. A doubtful report from New Hanover County indicated that such a club was formed in the city of Wilmington with a membership of seven hundred and their existence was also reported in several other counties across the state.[74] Two counties which later defeated the amendment, Chatham and Sampson, had anti-amendment clubs; but none of these organizations achieved the prominence or effectiveness of their Democratic counterpart.[75]

The Voter Registration of 1900

In many parts of North Carolina the grass roots tone of this campaign was set by the Red Shirts much as in 1898, when their debut had supposedly been sparked by the visit of South Carolina's Ben Tillman. When they appeared in 1900, however, they were far more numerous and more widespread.[76] The Raleigh Caucasian described the red shirt as "an emblem of blood and anarchy,"

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[74]Roscoe Mitchell to Marion Butler, April 20, 1900; Robert W. Dolby to Marion Butler, May 6, 1900; Numa Reid to Marion Butler, June 6, 1900, in ibid.

[75]W. L. Goldston to Marion Butler, June 26, 1900; W. F. Sessoms to Marion Butler, June 6, 1900, in ibid.

[76]Rippy, op. cit., p. 24. Orr, op. cit., p. 174.

but the Democratic press patriotically depicted it "as the insignia of freedom from negro domination in politics."[77] The editor of the Presbyterian Standard wrote:

> It is difficult to speak of the red shirts without a smile. They victimized the negroes with a huge practical joke, the point of which was the ridiculous timidity of the black advocates of manhood suffrage. A dozen men would meet at a cross-road, on horseback, clad in red shirts of calico, flannel or silk.... They would gallop through the country, and the negro would quietly make up his mind that his interest in political affairs was not a large one.... It would be wise not to vote, and wiser not to register....[78]

Red Shirt activities were by no means limited to the intimidation of Negroes. In Duplin County members of a Populist township convention were ordered "to leave within a short time or. . . leave in blood."[79] A Warsaw citizen wrote that his town was "in the hands of an organized armed mob.... The town authorities have lost control of the situation and are powerless.... Any Populist or Rep. speaker who should attempt to get off here would be dealt with by this red shirt brigade."[80]

These red shirted men whose "fathers had followed Lee and Jackson" also played a colorful part in Democratic campaign rallies.[81]

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[77] The Caucasian (Raleigh), May 10, 1900, p. 2. The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 19, 1900, p. 4.

[78] The Rev. A. J. McKelway, "The North Carolina Suffrage Amendment," The Independent, LII (August 16, 1900), p. 1956.

[79] M. Ward to Marion Butler, July 26, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[80] R. W. Blackmore to Marion Butler, July 28, 1900, in ibid.

[81] McKelway, loc. cit., pp. 1956-1957.

One account spoke of a mile long parade of red shirted men "yelling," and on horseback and at other gatherings they often numbered a hundred or more.[82]

While condemned in many quarters, their activities were consistently encouraged by the Democratic party and its battery of campaigners. In a Columbus County address A.M. Waddell "advised and even urged his party to kill the leaders of the opposition to the amendment," and Charles B. Aycock "without instructing them to wear red shirts or carry guns . . . encouraged them to believe that they must do these things to protect the white race...."[83] Robert B. Glenn, a future governor of the state, told a group that "the older men could shoot in the Civil War and the young had . . . learned since.... He advised them . . . to shoot to hit and shoot to kill; that . . . they must not shoot the poor innocent negro but the white men."[84]

For many Tar Heels, Red Shirt activities were a popular diversion and sometimes involved elaborate procedures. There was a "regulation red shirt yell," and in Richmond County a band composed the "Richmond Red Shirt March."[85] Despite such pomp, however, there

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[82] Ibid. The News and Observer (Raleigh), May 1, 1900, p. 1.

[83] D. J. Lavis to Marion Butler, July 18, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection. Orr, op. cit., p. 132.

[84] M. Ward to Marion Butler, July 16, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[85] The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 22, 1900, p. 6; July 19, 1900, p. 2.

appears to have been no formal Red Shirt organization. The acts commonly associated with this group represented only a fraction of the violence and intimidation which occurred during the campaigns of 1898 and 1900. The wearing of a red shirt was merely the outward symbol of one's fervent political loyalties and likely developed as a spontaneous outgrowth of the campaign and the loosely organized white supremacy clubs. The Raleigh News and Observer thought it a worthy investment for citizens to hold on to their red shirts. "Ten years from now," declared the paper, "one of the original red shirts will be a bigger curiosity than a Confederate uniform...."[86]

Although Red Shirts intimidated many anti-amendment supporters, one of the most visible aspects of their activities centered upon efforts to block the registration of Fusion voters. In late June books were opened for twenty days, and during this short period it became evident that election machinery was as discriminatory as its authors had intended. Registration irregularities in the form of fraud and intimidation were reported in every section of the state, leading to the disfranchisement of thousands of potential anti-amendment voters.

In Robeson County a registrar informed two blacks that any attempt to register would lead to arrest, and in a nearby precinct the registrar drew a pistol on a Negro applicant and ordered him to

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[86] An original statement of the Lumberton Argus quoted by The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 26, 1900, p. 4.

leave the polling place.[87] Red Shirts were reported on the registration grounds in Duplin County firing guns into the air and intimidating bystanders who wished to observe the official proceedings.[88] A Richmond County registrar kept his forty-eight caliber pistol on the table beside him and was said to have registered only one Negro in ten. "About fifty of the red shirt Democrats went out last friday night" wrote a correspondent, "and went to several of the colored mens houses . . . and called them out and told them that they need not go to register...." They would then fire "a hundred or more Pistol shots around the yard and house...."[89]

At Burgaw Red Shirt mobs made "nightly rounds," and in Scotland County seven Negroes who did register "were visited at night & told to take their name[s] off" the registration book.[90] Granville County Negroes were treated more gently and were merely offered bribes not to register and vote.[91] The more effective and probably more widespread means of circumventing Negro registration was through wholesale fraud

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[87] T. W. McHorgun ? to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900; Alex Parham to Marion Butler, July 16, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[88] M. Ward to Marion Butler, July 16, 1900; B. L. Blackman to Marion Butler, July 22, 1900; J. H. Fussell to Marion Butler, July 14, 1900, in ibid.

[89] A. D. Spivey to Marion Butler, July 20, 1900, ibid.

[90] G. F. Walker to Marion Butler, July 20, 1900; A. S. McNeill to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; J. H. Fussell to Marion Butler, 1900? in ibid.

[91] D. C. Farabow to Marion Butler, July 26, 1900, ibid.

and trickery. The particular method employed varied widely according to the preferences of election officials. The election law provision enabling registrars to ask applicants any question deemed relevant was often used effectively, as in this exchange between a prospective elector and a Craven County registrar:

> What did you say your occupation was? Ans. Fishing, How Many do you catch? Where do you sell your fish? Who buys them? What do you get for them? [92]

A Chatham County Negro was quizzed regarding the origin of the calendar system used in dating the year 1900, and a group of Moore County Negroes were threatened with thirty-year jail sentences should they respond to queries incorrectly.[93] A black who had voted in previous elections was denied the franchise because he stole some cotton in 1884, and other Negro men were not registered because of separation from their wives.[94] Whites in a few areas reportedly registered in more than one precinct, and in some sections the names of white boys under twenty-one appeared on the books.[95]

To futher inconvenience some voters the legislature of 1899 changed the boundaries of many election precincts. Some were enlarged

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[92] G. L. Hardison to Marion Butler, July 3, 1900, ibid.

[93] W. F. Crutchfield to Marion Butler, July 25, 1900; J. M. Wicker to Marion Butler, July 6, 1900, in ibid.

[94] C. P. Davis to Marion Butler, July 23, 1900; C. C. Fagan to Hal Ayer, July 13, 1900; W.A.L. Veazey to Marion Butler, July 27, 1900; William J. Leary to Marion Butler, July 3, 1900; J. E. McCaskey to Marion Butler, July 13, 1900, in ibid.

[95] John W. Knight to Marion Butler, July 17, 1900; William J. Leary to Marion Butler, July 3, 1900, in ibid.

to such an extent that all electors could not easily cast ballots in a single day, and in one eastern township a few residents were compelled to travel eleven miles if they wished to register and vote.[96]

In many localities voter registration was not even conducted in accordance with the already biased election law. Books were scheduled to open at all polling places on June 28, but at precincts in Duplin and Montgomery counties registration did not commence until two days later; and in Pamlico a registrar informed applicants they could register "at his home if any one could catch him home...."[97] A disgruntled Smithfield attorney wrote that on each Saturday during the registration period the books for his town were opened at a local newspaper office rather than at the required place of voting, and a number of Duplin County Democrats reportedly registered after the twenty day period had elapsed.[98]

In several areas registrars moved the books from place to place within their own precincts in order to register Democrats conveniently.[99] One such official sought Democratic registrants at

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[96]Van B. Carter to Marion Butler, July 16, 1900, ibid.

[97]R. D. Carr to Marion Butler, July 3, 1900; James D. Thomas to Marion Butler, July 3, 1900; Enoch Linton to Marion Butler, July 3, 1900, in ibid.

[98]J. D. Parker to Marion Butler, July 21, 1900; J. D. Usher to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900, in ibid.

[99]W. S. Bartlett to Marion Butler, July 18, 1900; D. B. Morrison to Hal Ayer, July 20, 1900; H. C. West to Marion Butler, July 23, 1900; J. A. Buchanan to Marion Butler, July 20, 1900, in ibid.

a Cumberland County cotton mill, and in Charlotte electors were registered at Democratic rallies.[100]

Of considerable import was the outright rejection of many hundreds of qualified voters who did brave intimidation to present themselves for registration. Most of those who applied and failed to qualify were rejected on the basis of age and residency requirements, which struck particularly hard at the uneducated and somewhat mobile Negro population. To facilitate this rejection the 1899 law required that voters establish their exact age rather than merely prove they were over twenty-one.

In Martin County a registrar reportedly rejected one-third of the Negroes who applied. The official explained his actions by stating that he did not think they were old enough "as their face is slick." This registrar would not accept their dates and ages as shown on the tax list but instead required the testimony of two qualified electors--white, of course.[101] In a Robeson County precinct Negroes who had voted for twenty years were turned down because of inability to establish their exact age, and in another eastern county a Negro applicant was rejected after his age was certified by a white man.[102]

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[100] Duncan Baker to Marion Butler, July 25, 1900; J. P. Sossaman to Marion Butler, July 16, 1900, in ibid.

[101] William Powell to A. E. Holton, July 6, 1900, ibid.

[102] D. M. Hall to Marion Butler, July 16, 1900; R. D. Carr to Marion Butler, July 3, 1900; C. Walker to Marion Butler, July, 1900? ibid.

A Pender County registration official turned away blacks because they could not prove the year, month, day, hour, and minute on which they were born; and Bertie Negroes from thirty-seven to seventy were reportedly rejected on these grounds.[103] Many whose declared age failed to tally with that indicated on the tax list or old registration book were also disqualified, and numerous others were turned away on minor technicalities.[104]

The election law's residency requirements were strictly adhered to and often exaggerated during questioning sessions. One group of Negroes failed to qualify because they did not own the land on which they lived and were thus "not bona fide residents."[105] A Vance County Negro was denied because "he could not prove he slept in his fathers house <u>every</u> night of the year," and in Bertie a fifteen year resident who could not establish exactly where he was born was likewise rejected.[106] Questions relating to residency were

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[103] T. B. Long to Marion Butler, July 10, 1900; J. R. Bynum to Marion Butler, July 19, 1900; R. R. Harris to Marion Butler, July 7, 1900, in <u>ibid</u>.

[104] B. H. Thompson to Amous Gaskins, July 9, 1900. In this letter Thompson, a white man, threatens Gaskins, a Negro, with arrest for allegedly giving the registrar his incorrect age. See also J. B. Winders to Marion Butler, July 7, 1900; John W. Rowe to Marion Butler, July 4, 1900; Hanson Malpass to Marion Butler, August 6, 1900; Robert Johnson to Marion Butler, July, 1900, all in <u>ibid</u>.

[105] Joseph Allen to Marion Butler, July 20, 1900; Alex Parham to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; Alex Parham to Marion Butler, July 16, 1900, in <u>ibid</u>.

[106] G. W. Wright to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; J. R. Bynum to Marion Butler, July 19, 1900, in <u>ibid</u>.

frequently complex and often totally unrelated to election law provisions. These queries were posed by registrars in Nash and Johnston Counties.

> What Judicial District do you live in?
> What Congressional District do you live in?
> Who is the Sherif [sic] of this County?
> Who is the Govener [sic]?
> How did you vote to [sic] years ago?[107]

When these interviews failed to disqualify some Negroes, outright trickery was frequently the next step. After Negroes responded to questions correctly, several registrars in Harnett, Sampson, Columbus, and Mecklenburg counties entered their names on slips of paper rather than upon the registration book, and in Chatham County a few electors were registered by initials only.[108]

After voter registration ended on July 21, the books of Marion Butler's predominately Populist home township were stolen by thirty masked men. Similar thefts also took place in nearby Columbus County.[109] Though registrars were required by law to make books available

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[107] W. S. Bailey to Marion Butler, July 1, 1900; H. C. Williams to Marion Butler, July 7, 1900; S. T. Gupton to Marion Butler, July 7, 1900, in ibid.

[108] W. F. Sessoms to Marion Butler, July 29, 1900; Claude Bell to Marion Butler, June 29, 1900; John Edmound to Marion Butler, June 7, 1900; J. P. Sossamon to Marion Butler, July 16, 1900; J. W. Meacham to Marion Butler, July 20, 1900; C. L. Williams to Marion Butler, July 16, 1900, in ibid. The Caucasian (Raleigh), July 26, 1900.

[109] W. F. Sessoms to Marion Butler, July 23, 1900; W. C. Tew to Marion Butler, July 23, 1900; E. R. Hall to Marion Butler, July 25, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection. The Caucasian (Raleigh), August 16, 1900, p. 1. The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 22, 1900, p. 6.

for public examination, this privilege was denied electors in parts of Granville, Sampson, Chatham, Montgomery, Wake, Guilford, and Harnett Counties.

Outrage at registration trickery led Fusionists to take legal action against forty-five Democratic registrars across the state.[110] Fusion leaders were cautioned by many of the rank and file that such a move might further alienate the white vote, but this advice was disregarded.[111] A United States Marshal made the first arrest in Winston on July 6, following a complaint filed by a Negro. The News and Observer indignantly declared that this action "proves . . . that the Federal office-holders are running this campaign . . . and that this is a fight between the people and the Federal office-holders and between the white man and the negro...."[112]

Gubernatorial nominee Aycock offered to defend personally any registrar arrested in the performance of his duty, and F. M. Simmons ordered Democratic county chairmen to press counter charges against those who initiated the arrests.[113] One Fusionist wrote that

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[110] Orr, op. cit., p. 177.

[111] W. R. White to Marion Butler, July 16, 1900; W. R. White to Marion Butler, July 14, 1900; Joshua Skinner to Marion Butler, July 21, 1900; Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection. McKelway, loc. cit., 1956.

[112] The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 7, 1900, p. 4, August 7, 1900, p. 5. John S. Henderson's letter to his wife, July 13, 1900, John S. Henderson Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[113] The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 15, 1900, p. 2; July 22, 1900, p. 6. N. C. Cooper to Marion Butler, July 23, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

when a Duplin County registrar was taken into custody it drove "the cranks and Lawbrokers [sic] perfectly crazy."[114] In all probability these arrests did help solidify whites and ultimately achieved little either materially or psychologically for the Fusion cause.

It is obvious that a significant degree of disfranchisement resulted from the election law of 1899 and the ensuing voter registration of 1900. Estimates regarding the actual number of voters disfranchised are speculatory. Fusionists put the figure at somewhere between thirty and fifty thousand yet still maintained that a majority of electors were registered as Republicans or Populists.[115] Unofficial accounts from various precincts around North Carolina give conflicting reports and indicate, if anything, that the percentage disfranchised varied between precincts even within the same county.

A Fusionist from Laurinburg insisted that no Negroes were registered in Scotland County while in Wilmington only thirty out of a possible three thousand were reported on the books.[116] In some areas of the black belt, on the other hand, it was not uncommon for correspondents to write Populist headquarters that "all can

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[114] T. Jones to Marion Butler, July 26, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[115] The Caucasian (Raleigh), August 2, 1900, p. 2; July 26, 1900.

[116] Editorial "The Campaign and its Results," The Outlook, LXV (August 11, 1900), p. 842. W. H. Cox to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900. See also T. Jones to Marion Butler, July 26, 1900; D. M. Hall to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900; James A. Gill to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

register without any trouble."[117] One account from a Halifax County precinct listed the official tally as twenty Populists, seventy-one Democrats, and one hundred and seventy-five colored Republicans--a Fusion majority of one hundred and twenty-four votes.[118]

Statewide, however, the new registration denied the franchise to many qualified males. While rejections may not have been as large as some Fusionists thought, they were significant, and in almost every instance those disfranchised were black.[119] It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that ballots counted in the election of 1900 were overwhelmingly the votes of white men.

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[117] George W. Sherwin ? to Marion Butler, July 10, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[118] R. A. Hardy to Marion Butler, July 30, 1900; Samuel P. Brummitt to Marion Butler, July 30, 1900, in ibid.

[119] Indians in Swain County were also denied registration "because they were Indians." See A. J. Hall to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900, in ibid.

CHAPTER III

SELLING DISFRANCHISEMENT TO THE VOTERS

Democrats were intent upon maintaining a determined offensive throughout the long campaign of 1900. White supremacy orators led by Charles B. Aycock combed the state, addressing voters in a relentless day to day effort. A portion of Aycock's May itinerary called for speeches in Durham on the fourteenth, Rockingham County on the fifteenth, Surry on the sixteenth, Wilkes on the eighteenth and nineteenth, Alleghany on the twenty-first, Ashe on the twenty-third, Watauga on the twenty-fifth, Mitchell on the twenty-sixth and twenty-eighth, Yancey on the twenty-ninth, and Madison on the thirtieth and thirty-first.[1]

To insure good attendance Democrats publicized rallies and campaign stops well in advance and rarely failed to make scheduled appearances. The anti-amendment campaign was not characterized by such punctuality. Senator Pritchard contracted smallpox in January and was unable to open the Republican campaign as planned; and the limited number of Republican and Populist orators sometimes made advance billing difficult and haphazard.

A disgruntled Populist from Orange County wrote the state party headquarters that he was "very much surprised and annoyed because Senator Butler can not come [to deliver an address]. You

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[1] The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 25, 1900, p. 6; April 10, 1900, p. 10; April 29, 1900, p. 9.

say you have done the best for Orange you could" he continued, but "we beg to say we think you have done just a little less than nothing."[2] When Butler failed to make an expected appearance in Wayne County, many who came to hear him were "sadly disapointed" [sic], and there was "grumbling."[3] The Senator's decision not to visit Hillsborough was expected to produce "many long faces," and one Fusionist termed it a "death blow."[4] In late July Butler published a letter in which he apologized for having neglected some of his speaking obligations.

> I knew that my duty as State Chairman would keep me at Head-Quarters . . . until after registration.... I discovered afterwards, however, that my duty as State Chairman would require my presence at Head-Quarters not only every day but every hour up to the election.[5]

The Populist campaign was marred by a lack of grass roots organization. Public meetings were often announced and then later rescheduled.[6] Inadequate publicity and poor coordination also typified their effort. One People's Party campaigner noted that his appointments in the East were not "very well advertised. We had

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[2]C. W. Turner to Hal Ayer, Folder 115 (m), Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. Hereafter cited as Southern Historical Collection.

[3]O. D. Bass to Marion Butler, July 29, 1900. See also A. W. Colson to Hal Ayer, June 19, 1900, both letters in ibid.

[4]Devereux Turner to Marion Butler, July 21, 1900, ibid.

[5]The Caucasian (Raleigh), July 26, 1900, p. 2.

[6]Ibid., June 21, 1900, p. 3; June 28, 1900, p. 3.

so [as] good as no populists at this place [Kinston] yesterday." The discouraged worker was led to admit that in the East his party would "not have a dog's showing" on election day.[7] Democrats also wounded the public credibility of their opponents by sometimes rumoring that party leaders such as Butler and Spencer B. Adams would participate in joint debates along with prominent Democrats. When no Fusion spokesman appeared at the specified rally the obvious winner was the Democratic party.[8]

In sharp contrast to most Fusion campaign gatherings, Democratic rallies were often quite elaborate. Populists and Republicans often spoke before courthouse audiences or at local meeting places to small crowds consisting largely of men.[9] Democratic gatherings, however, were often geared for the entire family. Women and children were welcomed and often composed half of the audience.[10] Reduced railroad fares were sometimes available for those wishing to attend, and the Democratic party frequently

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[7] J. E. Fowler to Marion Butler, July 25, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[8] The Caucasian (Raleigh), May 31, 1900, p. 2.

[9] J. H. Quenn to Marion Butler, July 11, 1900; Harry Tracy to Marion Butler, July 25, 1900; James S. Mitchell to Marion Butler, July 10, 1900; Burton Stilley to Marion Butler, June 18, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[10] The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 19, 1900, p. 2; April 20, 1900, p. 1. T. Jones to Marion Butler, July 26, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

treated crowds to free barbecue.[11] Adding to the carnival atmosphere were parades, brass bands, and many lesser attractions.[12] Aycock's entry into Concord in late June received colorful treatment by the News and Observer.

> All along the roads they came, some decked, both horse and rider, with ribbons, bunting and flags, others wearing red shirts and caps. First came the band wagon drawn by four horses with the Albemarle band; next a beautiful float drawn by four horses. In the float sat twenty-five young ladies arrayed in purest white. Above them stretched . . . a banner with the words "Protect Us." Following this was the carriage with the speaker and committee and a long line of vehicles. Next came fifty horsemen, carriages filled with red shirts and one hundred red shirts on horses. A large crowd followed on foot.[13]

An indoor gathering in Shelby was also the occasion for considerable fanfare. "On the rostrum sat the speakers, and behind them a choir of 150 men and women. Just above . . . stretching the entire width of the building was a huge banner" inscribed with the words "White Supremacy."[14]

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[11] The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 11, 1900, p. 1. L. V. Owen to Marion Butler, July 19, 1900; W. T. Neal to Marion Butler, June 9, 1900; J. R. Joyce to Marion Butler, July 20, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection. The Anglo-Saxon (Rockingham), July 19, 1900.

[12] The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 25, 1900, p. 1; May 8, 1900, p. 1. W. H. Standin to Marion Butler, July 26, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[13] The News and Observer (Raleigh), June 24, 1900, p. 1. For other accounts of such gatherings see The News and Observer, May 19, 1900, and J. S. Mitchell to Marion Butler, July 20, 1900, in the Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[14] The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 27, 1900, p. 1.

As the August election neared, political tensions increased in dramatic response to the rising tide of written and verbal abuse which was exchanged between the contending parties. Democrats put large amounts of printed material in circulation early in the year. By March over one-half million pieces had been distributed, and the party later made available thousands of free copies of a special four-page newspaper devoted entirely to a defense of the amendment.[15] One of the most effective Democratic campaign documents was the Amendment Catechism which replied to all major questions regarding the proposal.[16] In order to help convince western voters of the "horrors suffered in the black counties of the east" Democratic newspapers printed drawings of Negro politicians and officeholders. The Raleigh News and Observer even hired a special cartoonist to reproduce caricatures of the black man.[17]

With anti-amendment speakers at a premium, Fusionists were forced to rely on the printed word as a primary means of informing voters on the amendment. Democrats enjoyed the unqualified support of most daily newspapers in North Carolina, while the Fusion banner

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[15]Furnifold M. Simmons to Francis D. Winston, March 6, 1900; Francis D. Winston Papers, Southern Historical Collection. Furnifold M. Simmons to Marmaduke J. Hawkins, March 17, 1899, Marmaduke J. Hawkins Papers, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina. Hereafter cited as Duke Library. Frank Carr to Marion Butler, June 7, 1900; James S. Mitchell to Marion Butler, March 12, 1900; Van B. Carter to Marion Butler, Folder 118 (a), in the Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[16]Rippy, op. cit., p. 28. The Amendment Catechism, North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina. Hereafter cited as North Carolina Collection.

[17]Rippy, op. cit., p. 24.

was hoisted by scarcely any. A Populist from Cabarrus County recognized the consequences of this dilemma and wrote Butler that it would "be hard to carry on a campaign, with our speakers speaking today, and being villified and misrepresented in a principleless press tomorrow."[18]

In order to stimulate circulation several Fusion newspapers offered a limited number of free issues, and Butler's Caucasian was for a time available at reduced rates.[19] Negro publications in the state were few, and black editors wisely remained silent on the campaign issues.[20] Fusionists relied heavily on handbills and pamphlets, but inadequate financing hindered printing as well as distribution. The result was a relative shortage of anti-amendment literature.[21]

In certain parts of the state Democrats were suspected of interfering with United States mail service in order to disrupt the flow of anti-amendment material. A Randolph County Populist reported that a parcel of literature sent him had been opened and

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[18]J. T. Newell to Marion Butler, January 29, 1900, J. T. Newell to Marion Butler, March 9, 1900; unsigned letter to Marion Butler, February 21, 1900; James S. Mitchell to Marion Butler, March 12, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection. The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 19, 1900, p. 1.

[19]The Caucasian (Raleigh), March 8, 1900. See also an unsigned letter from Marion Butler to Ralph Bender, June 28, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[20]Editorial "Government by Terrorism," The Independent, LII (August 16, 1900), p. 1998.

[21]B. F. Keith to Marion Butler, February 10, 1900; B. F. Keith to Marion Butler, March 12, 1900; Hal Ayer to D. C. Batchelor, June 20, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

a portion removed, and in another county a postmaster who also served on the county election board was accused of the same act.[22] Whether a consequence of financial inadequacy or Democratic thievery, the comparative shortage of printed material proved an added handicap to an already lagging anti-amendment effort.[23]

Far from being insignificant as a factor in the outcome of this campaign was the racial stereotype commonly associated with the Negro. In a campaign address delivered in McDowell County Locke Craig declared that:

> The Anglo-Saxon always was and always will be his own ruler. It is the race that came from the impenetrable forests of Germany to conquer and civilize and rule the world. It was this blood that conquered Napoleon, that transformed the wilderness of the west into the greatest republic of all time.[24]

The assumption of white superiority manifest in such a statement was shared by many North Carolinians in 1900, and it proved to

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[22] R. M. Welborn to Marion Butler, June 25, 1900; H. T. Casey to Marion Butler, June 29, 1900; T. B. Long to Marion Butler, July 14, 1900, in ibid.

[23] A Wilmington resident warned Butler that "valuable time is being lost, as if the readers do not get our literature before they are poisoned by the [Democratic] stuff...." A Wayne County man found that "the whole source of information for the great mass is what is contained in the Goldsboro Argus & the Headlight [both Democratic]...." See B. F. Keith to Marion Butler, February 17, 1900; J. A. Caldwell to Marion Butler, January 22, 1900; G. F. Walker to Marion Butler, January 22, 1900, in ibid.

[24] The News and Observer (Raleigh), August 22, 1899, p. 3.

be an idea easily popularized among many more. Caucasian superiority was seen as a lesson of both science and history, for such disciplines clearly demonstrated that man's ability for self-government was an inherited possession of this most honored race. The English philosopher Herbert Spencer had explored "the effect of heredity and tradition upon race," while John Stuart Mill and Edmund Burke suggested their effects on government.[25] It was because of the white man's unique inheritance that the grandfather clause of the proposed amendment could be justified.[26] "There is a distinction between the ignorant man and an uneducated man," wrote F. M. Simmons:

> The Uneducated white man of North Carolina, though he had no book learning, is seldom ever an ignorant man; he is generally well informed; he is generally well posted; he cannot read the newspapers, but he can understand them when he hears them read; . . . he is a man of independence of thought and independence of action. On the other hand, the uneducated negro is nearly always an ignorant man, dull, heavy, without opinions, without convictions, with but little judgement and scarcely any independence. He has comparatively no love of family, home or country, and because he cares little for these, he is indifferent as to the effect of his vote upon them....[27]

Throughout the white supremacy campaigns of 1898 and 1900, Democrats publicized this racial stereotype. Locke Craig spoke of "manhood" as "the highest test of the right to vote," and the Negro,

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[25] George Rountree: Speech in the North Carolina House of Representatives on the Constitutional Amendment, pp. 12, 5, 8, North Carolina Collection.

[26] The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 12, 1900, p. 1.

[27] J. Fred Rippy, Furnifold M. Simmons Memoirs and Addresses (Durham: Duke University Press, 1936), pp. 91-92. The News and Observer (Raleigh), January 14, 1900, p. 4.

he said, was not in this category.[28] Under slavery, wrote another white supremacist, the Negro had "the best possible advantages for training as to good citizenship...." Now after three decades without close supervision his "racial tendency" toward backwardness has returned, and the black man of 1900 is less qualified to cast an intelligent vote than before abolition.[29]

In a speech supporting disfranchisement George Rountree remarked that a "crime against civilization was never perpetrated" greater than the passage of the fifteenth amendment.[30] The News and Observer labeled Negro suffrage a "folly" and a "crime forcibly put upon the South in the hour of her defeat by a fanatical and furious foe."[31]

Another source interpreted the fifteenth amendment as not giving "any man a vote to whom the local sense of the public welfare refuses the privilege...."[32] Advocates of disfranchisement pointed to states which had already taken steps in the direction of suffrage restriction. In the South alone three had purged the

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[28] The News and Observer (Raleigh), August 22, 1899, p. 3.

[29] Ibid., April 22, 1900, p. 2, and August 22, 1899, p. 3. See also General J. S. Carr's Letter to Ex-Confederates, North Carolina Collection

[30] George Rountree: Speech in the North Carolina House of Representatives on the Constitutional Amendment, p. 2, North Carolina Collection.

[31] The News and Observer (Raleigh), January 28, 1900, p. 12.

[32] Edgar G. Murphey, "Lynching and the Franchise Rights of Negroes," an address, Annals of the American Academy of Political Science, XV (May, 1900), pp. 496-497.

Negro from politics, and Rhode Island and Massachusetts had restricted the legal rights of immigrants.[33] A few western states imposed discriminatory restrictions on Chinese, and the constitution of Oregon contained a requirement that "no free negro or mulatto not resident in this State at the time of the adoption of this constitution shall come, reside or be within this State...."[34]

In 1898 the United States embarked upon imperialistic enterprises in both the Pacific and Caribbean. Suffrage laws in our new acquisitions were cited in 1900 by the advocates of Negro disfranchisement as another precedent for restricting suffrage in North Carolina. "In Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines the negro not only does not vote" wrote the News and Observer, "but is shot by our government for even wanting to vote...."[35] George Rountree declared that the laws of these islands were framed in part by a United States Congress which had seen fit to alter suffrage. "No one in authority has seriously proposed to allow them to govern themselves at all, simply because . . . they are known to be utterly unacquainted with the principles of enlightened self-government."[36] North Carolina, therefore, was

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[33]George Rountree: Speech in the North Carolina House of Representatives on the Constitutional Amendment, p. 15, North Carolina Collection.

[34]The News and Observer (Raleigh), June 26, 1900, p. 4. Ibid., p. 2.

[35]Ibid., June 18, 1899, p. 1.

[36]George Rountree: Speech in the North Carolina House of Representatives on the Constitutional Amendment, pp. 2-3, North Carolina Collection. See also A. J. McKelway, "The North Carolina Suffrage Amendment," The Independent, LII (August 16, 1900), p. 1957.

not a pioneer in this movement, concluded the News and Observer.

> White Yankees and white Southerners have run over negroes . . . by act of a Republican Congress directed by a Republican President.... Does anybody suppose that the white men of North Carolina are fools enough and cowards enough to stand still and submit to negro domination, when all the rest of the world is governing the negro?[37]

Democratic newspapers maintained that Republicans could not demand suffrage rights for the southern Negro while at the same time denying these privileges to the residents of Puerto Rico and the Philippines.[38] The good people of the South had shouldered the "white man's burden" for thirty years and had failed to develop decent government because certain of its citizens were "hopelessly ignorant.... The alternatives were surrender by the white man or circumvention" of Negro suffrage.[39] Senator John L. McLaurin of South Carolina told his colleagues in the United States Senate that suffrage in his region had very early "degenerated into a race question," and one Tar Heel Democrat explained that manhood suffrage was not "an end in itself...." The real objective, he continued, is

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[37] The News and Observer (Raleigh), May 9, 1900, p. 4.

[38] Ibid., May 20, 1900, p. 6.

[39] George Rountree: Speech in the North Carolina House of Representatives on the Constitutional Amendment, p. 3, North Carolina Collection. See also C. Vann Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow, (2d rev. ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 72-73. The News and Observer (Raleigh), February 14, 1899, p. 1.

"good government--the advancement of civilization...."[40]

In accepting the Democratic nomination for governor Charles B. Aycock emphasized that "all parties have in different ways and to different extents recognized the incapacity of the negro for government."[41] The Chatham Record found it unthinkable "that the votes of 80,000 of the best white men of North Carolina should be killed by the votes of 80,000 of the most ignorant negroes."[42] A Senator from Alabama voiced the consensus among North Carolina Democrats when he proclaimed from the floor of Congress that "a new generation in which every lawful voter has the right to be heard on this subject [Negro suffrage], as if it were for the first time presented, must be permitted to express its free untrammeled opinion...."[43]

Negro officeholding was practically eliminated following the Democratic election victory of 1898, but despite its demise that party returned to the familiar slogans of "Negro rule" and "Negro domination" in 1900. Democrats maintained that while Negro officeholding had subsided the possibility of Negro domination remained,

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[40] The News and Observer (Raleigh), February 14, 1899, p. 1 George Rountree: Speech in the North Carolina House of Representatives on the Constitutional Amendment, p. 2, North Carolina Collection.

[41] The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 12, 1900, p. 1. New York publisher T. Thomas Fortune wrote Charles Hunter March 21, 1899, that "southern white men have educated northern white men so that they have no faith whatever in black men." Charles Hunter Papers, Duke Library.

[42] The Chatham Record (Pittsboro), July 12, 1900.

[43] The News and Observer (Raleigh), January 9, 1900, p. 2.

so long as blacks enjoyed the franchise. Whites were reminded of the East's experiences under Fusion rule, and Manly's insult to the white ladies of North Carolina was again recalled.[44] Democrats concluded that unless the amendment was passed disfranchising the Negro permanently, these dark clouds might again engulf the Old North State. Merely to prevent Negro officeholding would not be sufficient, for "good government . . . suffers almost as much from the white men elected to office by negroes as from negro officers themselves."[45] White officials elected by Negroes must "pander" to the black man, for "it is the party behind the office-holder that governs and not the office-holder himself."[46]

Negro votes had played a part in previous Democratic election defeats. It was necessary, therefore, to quash Negro suffrage along with Negro officeholding if the Democratic party was to dominate North Carolina politics.[47] Passage of the amendment was described by its exponents as an opportunity for white men to "gain independence," and forever be free of "this great black crowd."[48] "We are

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[44] Ibid., January 14, 1900, p. 4.

[45] Ibid., May 20, 1900, p. 12.

[46] Ibid., April 12, 1900. May 20, 1900.

[47] Kelly Miller, "A Negro's View," The Outlook, LX (December 31, 1898), p. 1059. Clarence Poe, "Suffrage Restrictions in the South; Its Causes and Consequences," North American Review, CLXXV (October, 1902), p. 535. The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 12, 1900, p. 1.

[48] The Anglo-Saxon (Rockingham), July 19, 1900. The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 20, 1900, p. 1.

not going to have negro domination," declared Charles B. Aycock, "and no power on earth can force it on us."[49]

Democrats not only recalled the Negro's role under Fusion government, but compared this period with the highly unpopular era of Reconstruction.[50] Most of the state's Democratic leadership was too young to have fought in the Civil War, but they remembered well the repercusions of military defeat and Reconstruction government. This post-war generation was now convinced that their own struggle to rid North Carolina of the Negro vote was as necessary and desperate as the campaign to end Republican rule twenty-five years before.[51] One citizen typified this popular attitude in a letter to the News and Observer.

> The Republican Party with the negro in the majority has been in charge of affairs in North Carolina on two occasions and each time the peace, safety and quiet of the state was threatened; cities and towns of Eastern North Carolina attest the truth of this statement. The perilous days of 1868-69 and 1896-98 ought to be a lesson to the people of this State....[52]

In full agreement the paper's editor similarily spoke of these two periods in North Carolina history.

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[49] The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 25, 1900. p. 2.

[50] Ibid., July 30, 1899, p. 1. See also a newspaper clipping found in the Alfred M. Waddell Papers, Volume 7, Southern Historical Collection.

[51] Oliver H. Orr, Jr., Charles Brantley Aycock (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p. 111. Woodward, op. cit., pp. 78-79.

[52] The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 16, 1899, p. 3.

> Well do we remember the dark days of '68-'69 when that black banner waved over this long suffering people. When sorrow sat brooding upon every heart, when the cry of lamentation was heard in our streets, and when a wail went up from our glorious old State that sounded like the wail of a mother as she comes from the chamber of her dying child. They are "not dead but sleepeth." In '96-'98 they gathered from the mountains to the sea with that same old banner of darkness, and those perilous times of corruption and misrule were again upon us.[53]

The Democratic press blasted Senators Butler and Pritchard for their attempts "to rally the negro and scalawag white in one last effort to turn back the hand on the dial...."[54] The white men of the state must unite as they did in 1870, urged Aycock. "I warn you that if negro suffrage remains as it is we shall again pass through the experience of 1898. The negro will continue to vote as a race--the white men will again divide, and with division will come a recurrence of negro rule."[55] George Rountree termed the black man an "arrogant and insolent animal," and other firebrand Democrats argued that the very survival of civilization hinged upon disfranchisement.[56]

Leaders of the Republican and Populist parties denied that Negro supremacy had ever existed in North Carolina and maintained

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[53] Ibid., January 14, 1900, p. 4.

[54] Ibid., January 28, 1900, p. 1.

[55] Charles B. Aycock's speech at Asheboro, March 20, 1900, Charles B. Aycock Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. Hereafter cited as Department of Archives and History. The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 17, 1900, p. 1.

[56] George Rountree: Speech in the North Carolina House of Representatives on the Constitutional Amendment, p. 4, North Carolina Collection. The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 12, 1900, p. 3.

that it could not exist in a state where white voters outnumbered blacks two to one.[57] Marion Butler declared that government in North Carolina "has always been a white man's government, and always will be," and a Winston-Salem newspaper insisted that white supremacy "is no issue, because no one opposes it. One political party is as much a defender of white supremacy as another...."[58] Arguing along these lines Senator Pritchard dismissed the Negro phobia and declared that Tar Heel blacks "have never acted offensively nor have they shown a disposition to interfere with the white people in the management of State affairs."[59]

The ramifications of Fusion rule and the events of 1898, however, convinced many white citizens that Democratic charges possessed a certain shred of truth. This was evident from the election returns of 1898, but perhaps more significantly that election indicated to Democrats that race was the Achilles' heel of Fusion politics.

In 1900 the Populist state convention was anxious to remove the Negro blemish from the party and it consequently expressed a firm opposition to officeholding by Negroes. The News and Observer thought this strange, since the state leader of the People's Party had voted "to put 1000 negroes in office in North Carolina."[60] Nevertheless,

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[57] The Caucasian (Raleigh) January 25, 1900, p. 2. Editorial "North Carolina's Red Shirt Campaign," The Independent, LII (August 2, 1900), p. 1874. Miller, loc. cit., p. 1061.

[58] The News and Observer (Raleigh), January 19, 1900, p. 2. The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), May 3, 1900.

[59] The News and Observer (Raleigh), January 23, 1900, p. 1.

[60] Ibid., June 30, 1900, p. 4.

with considerable convention support the Populist gathering approved a substitute amendment "to outlaw negro officeholding" while at the same protecting his right to vote.[61] It was argued that such an approach would settle the Negro question amicably without endangering the suffrage of ignorant white men.

The waning of Populist sympathy for the Negro had even been evident two years before in the party's 1898 convention. During those proceedings Butler secured approval of a motion calling for Fusion with the Democratic party on a pledge of white supremacy.[62] Democrats declined the offer, however, and the ensuing Populist defeat at the polls prepared many of the party members for 1900 and an even firmer stand on this racial question which diverted so much attention from "great economic issues."[63] Discredited in the eyes of many whites, Populist leaders turned to the song of white supremacy in 1900 and went so far as to hint at colonization as "the only remedy to settle the negro question and do it humanely...."[64]

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[61] Ibid., April 19, 1900, p. 5. The People's Paper (Charlotte) July 13, 1900. Alex Parham to Marion Butler, April 4, 1900; J. F. Click to Marion Butler, March 3, 1900, and March 8, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[62] Orr, op. cit., p. 113.

[63] The Caucasian (Raleigh), March 15, 1900, p. 2. See also March 2, 1900, p. 2.

[64] The People's Paper (Charlotte), August 11, 1899. See J. F. Click to Marion Butler, March 8, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

> Stopping the negro from voting will not make . . . positions now generally held by negroes, respectable enough to be filled by thousands of whites now needing the places; but taking the negroes away will do this. So colonization would be preferable to simple disfranchisement. Better for the nigger and better for the white....[65]

The Republican party was put on the defensive by the cry of "nigger" and compelled to retreat on the race issue while at the same time attempting to soothe dissatisfied blacks within the party.[66] By declining to join Populists in their strong position on the racial question Republicans provided Democrats with an opportunity to exploit these differences and drive an additional wedge into the strategy of Fusion.

In 1898 and 1900 Democrats aroused many potent loyalties which had slowly subsided in the years following Reconstruction. The impact of military defeat and Reconstruction government left great political scars on the state which immediately surfaced when irritated. Democrats were determined to capitalize on these wounds and thoroughly integrated their campaign efforts with the tide of "Lost Cause" sentiment now rising among the post-war generation. The ill-feelings which were awakened, however, were not directed at the North but at the Negro, the Republican party, and their Populist ally.

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[65] The Caucasian (Raleigh), March 2, 1899, p. 2. See also May 10, 1900, p. 4.

[66] Helen G. Edmonds, The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina 1894-1901 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1951), pp. 221-222.

Democrats recalled war memories in repeated newspaper and campaign references to "North Carolina's Troops and Their Glorious Record in the Civil War."[67] In typical Democratic fashion Charles B. Aycock extolled the virtues and sacrifices of his state before a sympathetic Randolph County audience.

> North Carolina sent into the Confederate army more men than she had voters--every battle robbed her of her noblest and best--she poured out the blood of her sons like water--her noble and true-hearted women . . . came out from palace and from hut, from piano and from spinning wheel and with breaking hearts took upon themselves to run the farm and forage, the shop and the factory, until they were swept into the grave from sheer sorrow almost as fast as the storm of battle destroyed their sons, and brothers, and fathers.[68]

A solemn testimonial contained in one campaign leaflet assured illiterate veterans that they would not be disfranchised by the amendment and encouraged the sons of veterans to do their patriotic duty with regard to the Negro. This writer said:

> I am myself the son of a Confederate soldier who was one of the first to leave for the front, and one of the last to return, and because of the fraternal ties which bound you men to fight a common enemy, so should we, their sons, fight whatever threatens the peace of our homes, and firesides, leaving no stone unturned....[69]

In an emotion laden attack the News and Observer condemned a Republican candidate for his "insult" to former Confederates implied

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[67] The News and Observer (Raleigh), May 6, 1900, pp. 1-3.

[68] Speech delivered by Aycock at Asheboro, March 20, 1900, Charles B. Aycock Papers, Department of Archives and History. The Caucasian (Raleigh), March 22, 1900, p. 3.

[69] General J. S. Carr's Letter to Ex-Confederates, North Carolina Collection.

in a remark that by their rebellion the soldiers had been "guilty of treason and perjury" and were justified in losing their right to vote in 1868.[70] In the glib and slanderous style for which he became famous, Josephus Daniels wrote that the Republican stand "is that it was all right to disfranchise 20,000 of the best white men of the State . . . because those men had exercised their constitutional right to follow their State when it lawfully seceded . . . but that it is a crime to disfranchise 75,000 negroes, who are not fit to exercise the right of suffrage."[71]

During the spring and summer of 1900 "Lost Cause" feeling soared to a refined pinnacle with the introduction of a Civil War drama written by Christian Reid, a North Carolina native. Under the Southern Cross played to audiences across the state and was soundly applauded by those who could appreciate a work "written from a strictly Southern standpoint; beautiful in lines and patriotic in sentiment."[72] Unable to tap this war nostalgia Populists and Republicans felt the full brunt of the emotional reaction. Democrats came to view the campaign as an opportunity to succeed where their fathers had failed. In 1900 they worked to convince white voters that a Negro threat had replaced the Yankee enemy, thereby rendering disfranchisement "a great patriotic object."[73]

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[70] The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 22, 1900, p. 5; July 27, 1900, p. 1.

[71] Ibid., July 27, 1900, p. 1.

[72] The Salisbury Daily Sun, June 14, 1900. From a clipping found in the John S. Henderson Papers Folder 218b, Southern Historical Collection.

[73] The News and Observer (Raleigh), January 14, 1900, p. 5.

A significant key to the success of disfranchisement in North Carolina lay in the neo-Populist progressive platform of which the amendment was an integral part. Populists had first pointed out the need for reforms, but successive electoral defeats convinced the state's Democratic leadership of the advisability of raising this banner themselves.

In certain respects North Carolina appeared to lag somewhat behind sister states. The agrarian depression had dulled business as well as agriculture, and the 1890's brought a "considerably greater" outmigration of white residents than in previous decades.[74] Pointing a finger first at the national Republican administration, Democrats came eventually to attribute North Carolina's plight to the Negro and his political allies in the state.[75] Aycock charged the black man with retarding business activity, and F. M. Simmons declared that this ignorant vote had defeated "every progressive issue."[76] Former Governor T. J. Jarvis of Greenville argued that the "danger of negro domination" prevented consideration of other questions, and the News and Observer ventured even more sweeping conclusions.[77]

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[74]James Joseph Maslowski, "North Carolina Migration 1870-1950" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, University of North Carolina, 1953), pp. 87, 89.

[75]Daniel M. Robison, "From Tillman to Long: Some Striking Leaders of the Rural South," Journal of Southern History, III (August, 1937), p. 308. Furnifold M. Simmons, "The Political Future of the Southern Negro," The Independent, LX (June 28, 1906), p. 1522. B. F. Keith to Marion Butler, February 26, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[76]The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 20, 1900, p. 2. Rippy, op. cit., p. 28.

[77]The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 30, 1899.

> For thirty years the South has been strangled, crushed, stunted, suffocated in the Foul atmosphere of African equality of suffrage. For thirty years his vote has nearly destroyed us. Every [italics mine] evil that the South has suffered has come from the negro. The production of great men has been impossible. Civilization has fought to even maintain itself.[78]

Democrats who raised the banner of reform in 1900 represented the actual vanguard of a progressive "spirit" in North Carolina government which continued for many decades.[79] The proposal generally credited with initiating this tradition, and one which accorded disfranchisement with much of its impetus, was a Democratic pledge to improve the state system of public education. The amendment's literacy requirement specified that all citizens registering after 1908 do so without benefit of the grandfather clause which was to expire in that year. With the nation's highest rate of illiteracy (23% for whites, 60% for blacks), North Carolinians could expect to see many young whites disfranchised along with the Negro.[80]

Fusionists were quick to recognize this possibility and from the outset attacked the amendment at what proved to be its most vulnerable point. The weight of their appeal was directed to white illiterates, and the Democratic party soon respected the potency of Fusion arguments, showing special concern for the effect in the West where illiteracy was greatest.

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[78] Ibid., June 1, 1900, p. 4.

[79] V. O. Key, Southern Politics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), pp. 208, 210.

[80] The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), June 14, 1900. They are Against the Free Schools, North Carolina Collection.

Fear of defeat led Simmons and Aycock to conclude that the Democratic party should give the amendment a more positive interpretation. Although the measure had originally been framed as a means to insure white supremacy, a promise to substantially improve public education appeared to be the "only possible" response to Fusion charges.[81] Democrats pledged, consequently, that "if the amendment should be accepted we would inaugurate an educational campaign that would enable all the white adults to pass the test by 1908."[82] In later years this strategy made it possible for Aycock to be acclaimed as the great apostle of universal education rather than as the prime exponent of Negro disfranchisement.

Democrats described the amendment as an actual incentive to education. If new voters were expected to read and write, said T. J. Jarvis, "then it will be the duty of the people to so improve and extend the common schools...."[83] This amendment "was not designed to disfranchise," but "was intended to lift the standard of education"

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[81] Oliver Hamilton Orr, Jr., "Charles Brantley Aycock: A Biography," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of History, University of North Carolina, 1958), p. 266. Joseph Flake Steelman, "The Progressive Era in North Carolina, 1884-1917," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of History, University of North Carolina, 1955), p. 211. Edmonds, op. cit., p. 222. Rippy, op. cit., pp. 27, 3.

[82] Rippy, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

[83] The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 30, 1899, p. 1. See also Aycock's article June 18, 1899, p. 1.

remarked another high ranking Democrat.[84] The party's nominee for governor epitomized the zealous exponents of universal education more than any other individual:

> We undertake to provide you [the people] with full opportunity to learn to read and write and in addition to this free gift from the State we offer as a prize for learning to read and write participation in the government of the State. Can anyone doubt the splendid results of this provision? Each party will vie with the other in providing for public schools--all other expenses of government will be rigidly scrutinized and appropriations will be held down to the most economic basis in order to save money with which to educate the children of the State. This political virtue will become likewise a private virtue and citizens everywhere . . . will begin to cut off useless and injurious expenses in order that their children may become veritable kings and rule the State.[85]

Aycock emphatically insisted that the Democratic intention was to "abolish illiteracy," and he branded as a "liar" anyone who supported universal education but opposed the amendment and its educational requirement.[86] The literacy test was expected to encourage Negroes as well as whites to study, and one speaker confidently assured his white friends that should their children fail to meet the 1908 deadline they could merely petition the legislature for an extension of time "and it would be granted them...."[87]

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[84] The Caucasian (Raleigh), January 4, 1900, p. 1.

[85] The News and Observer (Raleigh), June 18, 1899, p. 1. See also July 30, 1899, p. 1.

[86] Ibid., April 20, 1900, p. 1; April 25, 1900, p. 2.

[87] Ibid., July 30, 1899, p. 2. W. P. Alley to Marion Butler, June 25, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

Fusionists repeatedly denounced the Democratic goal of universal education as unrealistic or impossible to achieve. The Caucasian reported that in Aycock's home town of Goldsboro only 423 of the 673 school age white boys attended school the previous year, and those 250 who were absent could expect to be disfranchised by the amendment.[88] Populists and Republicans explained that because white children in rural districts were needed on the farms, absenteeism would run higher than in cities and towns. Since "as a general rule" most Negroes lived in town they might have "better educational facilities than the white people of the country" and would consequently earn their right to vote while unlettered rural white could not.[89] A Populist orator proudly noted that during the previous two decades the Democratic party had reduced illiteracy in the state by only two-tenths of one per cent, and if they advanced at this progressive rate "it would take 1200 years to educate the people of North Carolina."[90]

In 1899 the Charlotte Observer wrote that the education of the Negro was "very far distant," and an Asheville newspaper in that year predicted that once in power the Democrats would abandon the ignorant white man just as they had abandoned the black.[91] "These disfranchised

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[88] The Caucasian (Raleigh), July 26, 1900.

[89] The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), May 3, 1900. The Caucasian (Raleigh), January 4, 1900, p. 1.

[90] The Caucasian (Raleigh), July 12, 1900, p. 3.

[91] The Charlotte Observer, February 10, 1899, p. 4.

voters," said the article, "will have no rights which a political party that is stronger without them than with them is bound to respect."[92]

History somewhat exonerated the Democratic party, however, for their program of "universal education" did include education for Negroes, although within the framework of paternalism.[93] Heriot Clarkson, a Democratic House member, spoke in opposition to a proposal apportioning the school fund between the races according to the amount of taxes paid by each. "Our duty," he said, "is to uplift humanity and educate our people . . . of any race...."[94] Aycock felt that "while universal suffrage is a failure universal justice is the perpetual decree of Almighty God...."[95] At Reidsville he spoke "in favor of educating the negro," and in a later address outside the state emphasized that "the white man cannot lift himself without at the same time raising the negro."[96]

The apparent paradox between some Democratic statements regarding the Negro typified the often unconscious hypocrisy of the paternalist. North Carolina blacks undoubtedly benefitted from the educational

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[92] The People's Paper (Charlotte), August 11, 1899, quoting the Asheville Daily Gazette.

[93] Grantham, loc. cit., pp. 465, 474, 476.

[94] The News and Observer (Raleigh), February 13, 1894, p. 3.

[95] Ibid., April 12, 1900, p. 1.

[96] Statements contained in an undated speech delivered at Baltimore, found in the Charles B. Aycock Papers, Department of Archives and History.

awakening initiated in 1900, but in exchange for these measured advances paternalists demanded the imposition of legal restrictions which insured the security of the Negro's "place" in the state for many decades to come.

Negro disfranchisement was a single but catalytic step in the progressive reform movement in North Carolina. Former General Julian S. Carr described the amendment as "a measure of reform," and former Governor Jarvis spoke of the need for a "progressive administration . . . that is able to establish and maintain good government . . . so that the laborer and the capitalist shall know that his labor and investments will not be imperiled or swept away by bad government [Negro officeholding]."[97] By 1900 reform slogans popularized by the People's Party had given way to Democratic racial catchwords as disfranchisement gradually superseded the economic demands of reformers.

With the amendment fashioned as a fundamental progressive step, Populist opposition to the measure ran headlong against the general trend toward reform politics which that party initiated in the early 1890's. Fusionists now appeared to stand in the path of a racial reform exhibited in American policy both state and federal, and one given unmistakeable encouragement by the voters of North Carolina in 1898. This confronted Fusionists with the difficult task of developing a popular argument which could effectively defuse

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[97] General J. S. Carr's Letter to Ex-Confederates, North Carolina Collection. The News and Observer (Raleigh) July 30, 1899.

the explosive issue of white supremacy versus Negro domination and expose the progressive fallacy of disfranchisement.

The most viable argument used against the amendment dealt with the operation of the grandfather clause. Fusionists insisted the provision was discriminatory and unconstitutional because it exempted from the literacy test only those persons who voted on or before January, 1867, and their lineal descendents.[98] Since the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution were not ratified until after this date, former slaves and their offspring were not aided by this loophole.

H. G. Connor accepted the "settled and elementary principle" that states were free to regulate suffrage, and the News and Observer explained that under the amendment the Negro's color did not bar him from the ballot box so much as "his lack of education." The grandfather clause "simply extends to a class of persons, without regard to race or previous condition of servitude the franchise."[99] Charles B. Aycock boasted that North Carolina had three thousand free Negroes in 1835, and many of these he felt were "doubtless" alive and could vote under the clause as could their descendants.[100]

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[98] The Chatham Record (Pittsboro), July 5, 1900.

[99] A News and Observer interview with Henry Groves Connor found in the Henry Groves Connor Papers, Folder 44, January 29, 1899, Southern Historical Collection. Also see The News and Observer (Raleigh), January 28, 1899, p. 8.

[100] An undated Charlotte address delivered by Charles B. Aycock contained in the Charles B. Aycock Papers, Department of Archives and History.

The Fusion leadership was not silenced by Democratic assurances, and they sought to inform voters of what might follow an unfavorable court ruling on the clause. The opinions of judges, lawyers, and United States Senators were offered in support of a contention that the clause would be struck down by the courts, thus compelling illiterate whites to submit to literacy tests along with the Negro.[101] One Democrat who bolted his party's position declared that under the amendment ignorant whites would surely forfeit their right to vote, and the Caucasian cautioned citizens who had sworn to uphold the Constitution that they committed perjury by voting for an unconstitutional measure.[102]

Senator Pritchard engendered the wrath of his Southern colleagues in the Senate by introducing a resolution declaring in part that any law "which confers the right to vote upon any of its citizens because of their descent . . . in the opinion of the Senate is in violation of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the constitution...."[103] The proposal was never approved by the upper chamber but did arouse spirited debate on the Senate floor and was viewed with considerable

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[101] United States Senator R. F. Pettigrew to Marion Butler, January 23, 1900; United States Senator William V. Allen to Marion Butler, January 29, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection. It was the opinion of both Senators Pettigrew and Allen that the grandfather clause was unconstitutional. Other United States Senators also shared this belief. See The Caucasian (Raleigh), April 26, 1900, p. 2.

[102] The Caucasian (Raleigh), January 4, 1900, p. 1; July 12, 1900, p. 2; January 18, 1900, p. 2.

[103] The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), January 11, 1900.

interest in North Carolina. Its failure could only encourage the opponents of Negro suffrage and render Pritchard's vain efforts a mere prelude to the bigger defeat of August 2.

Populist opposition to the amendment developed from a genuine fear that illiterate whites would be disfranchised. They insisted that in Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, Negro disfranchisement had also deprived unlettered whites of their suffrage.[104] The Caucasian reported that machine Democrats had "no love for the honest, humble, brave and noble-hearted 'plain people' of North Carolina," and were seeking "to rob them of their rights...."[105] Butler and Pritchard both insisted that white illiterates would "be forced to stand aside with the uneducated negroes...."[106] These disfranchised whites could even expect to be placed on a lower level than some Negroes for "the colored town dude who parts his hair in the middle and wears bangs would exercise the right of franchise."[107]

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[104] William J. Leary, An Address to the People of Chowan County, March 10, 1900, North Carolina Collection. The Caucasian (Raleigh), May 25, 1900, p. 1.

[105] The Caucasian (Raleigh), April 26, 1900, p. 2; also see January 4, 1900, p. 2; and in the Marion Butler Papers see E. D. Patterson's letter to Marion Butler, folder 115L, Southern Historical Collection.

[106] The News and Observer (Raleigh), January 19, 1900, p. 2. The Caucasian (Raleigh), March 8, 1900, p. 1; March 29, 1900, p. 3. For the Democratic reply to the Fusion allegation that uneducated whites would be disfranchised by the amendment see General J. S. Carr's Letter to Ex-Confederates, North Carolina Collection

[107] The Caucasian (Raleigh), January 4, 1900, p. 1; February 1, 1900, p. 2.

In the Faison Sun a letter reportedly written by a Negro was published stating that "in voting for the amendment there is a chance to elevate our race a little bit above the white man. Even if the grandfather (1867) clause should stand the test" said the letter, "there will be enough white men disfranchised to make a negro sing 'Hail Columbia' at election time."[108] Butler's Caucasian condemned the controversial clause and concluded that if a white man could inherit the right to vote his son should also enjoy this privilege, even after 1908.[109] An Edenton attorney phrased the public's dilemma in succinct terms when he challenged voters to resolve the possibility of having "to disfranchise your white neighbor in order that the negro may be disfranchised."[110]

Most Democrats refused to acknowledge the amendment's constitutional weakness despite Fusion legal counsel and rumors that Republicans were moving to test the measure in court.[111] Democrats upheld the grandfather clause and literacy test, insisting that at the bench both sections would "stand or fall together" making the disfranchisement of uneducated whites impossible. Aycock said that the Negro's "failure as a voter" was so widely accepted "that even

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[108] Ibid., May 10, 1900, p. 1, quoting the Faison Sun.

[109] Ibid., July 5, 1900, p. 2.

[110] William J. Leary, An Address to the People of Chowan County, March 10, 1900, North Carolina Collection.

[111] The Morning Star (Wilmington), November 8, 1899, p. 2. The Caucasian (Raleigh), January 11, 1900, p. 1. The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 5, 1899, p. 4; January 4, 1900, p. 3.

the courts have been affected...." He confidently predicted that a Republican-dominated Supreme Court would not be anxious to disfranchise voters by striking down the grandfather clause while permitting the educational requirement to stand.[112]

> The "grandfather clause" [section 5] . . . does not deny or abridge anybody's right to vote. On the contrary, quite the reverse. Neither is section 4 [literacy test] considered by itself open to argument of unconstitutionality. It simply prescribes an educational qualification that everybody admits the State has a right to impose. Now if the court should hold that they were unconstitutional when considered together, but that each considered separately was valid and operative, the unconstitutional element would be in both and not distinctly either in the one or the other; and of course both would have to fall. Another reason why the courts cannot hold section 5 unconstitutional and leave section 4 in operation is that they together clearly make one scheme for legislation. They will be voted for jointly.[113]

The opinions of lawyers and judges were widely circulated in order to refute Fusion claims and impress white voters with the judicial soundness of the amendment. Previous court rulings were cited and laboriously manufactured proofs were turned out by the Democratic press.[114] In a Charlotte address Charles B. Aycock declared that because the educational test discriminated against Negroes was not sufficient grounds for declaring it unconstitutional,

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[112] The News and Observer (Raleigh), June 18, 1899, p. 1. On July 26, 1900, The Anglo-Saxon (Rockingham), declared that "the northern people are with us on this Negro question. They have learned a lesson or two recently."

[113] The News and Observer (Raleigh), January 14, 1900, p. 5.

[114] Ibid., January 28, 1900, p. 10. George Rountree: Speech in the North Carolina House of Representatives on the Constitutional Amendment, p. 9, North Carolina Collection.

and the Chatham Record concluded that if the proposal were unconstitutional the Senate would have undoubtedly declared it so by approving Senator Pritchard's resolution.[115]

One pro-amendment pamphlet said that in Louisiana, Republicans had tried to "fool" the public by proclaiming that illiterate whites risked their suffrage by supporting a literacy test and grandfather clause. Once the plan was adopted, continued the leaflet, all saw that this did not occur.[116] A fervent group of Rockingham County Democrats expressed full confidence in the measure's legal soundness and offered one thousand dollars to any white man disfranchised by the North Carolina amendment.[117]

There were, however, a number of Democrats who, while outwardly confident, actually entertained serious doubts regarding the amendment's chances in court and of their own abilities to convince white men of the security of their ballot.[118] A McDowell County Democrat wrote that "people up here will not vote for the Amendment unless they can be made to believe that they can relieve the East without

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[115] An address delivered in Charlotte by Charles B. Aycock, February, 1900, in the Charles B. Aycock Papers, Department of Archives and History. The Chatham Record (Pittsboro), July 19, 1900.

[116] The Amendment Catechism, North Carolina Collection.

[117] The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 21, 1900, p. 4.

[118] Rippy, op. cit., p. 28.

risking their own right to vote."[119] Despite Aycock's assurances that "every syllable of the amendment" was constitutional, his party deemed it advisable to call a special session of the legislature to modify the measure.[120]

In June and July of 1900 the legislature met to consider suggestions that voting under the grandfather clause be prolonged from 1908 until 1920, and that all sections of the amendment were intended to stand or fall as a unit. While only the latter change was accepted, most Democrats felt relieved that the amendment's weakest link was to some degree reinforced. The official statement of intent written into Article VI read as follows:

> That this Amendment to the Constitution is presented and adopted as one indivisible plan for the regulation of the suffrage, with the intent and purpose to so connect the different parts and to make them so dependent upon each other, that the whole shall stand or fall together.[121]

Binding the literacy test and grandfather clause into "one indivisible plan" did little to silence Populist and Republican criticism. In February, 1900, the Caucasian warned that such a

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[119] E. J. Justice to Francis D. Winston, March 1, 1900, Francis D. Winston Papers; Thomas J. Oldham to Marion Butler, March 5, 1900; B. F. Keith to Marion Butler, February 26, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[120] The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 20, 1900, p. 1.

[121] The Chatham Record (Pittsboro), July 5, 1900.

declaration would have "nothing to do with limiting or qualifying or regulating" but would be interpreted as an attempt on the part of the legislature "to instruct the court as to how it should pass...."[122] In July this paper again insisted that such a declaration would not influence the courts, but the Populist gubernatorial nominee, Cyrus W. Thompson volunteered a more realistic appraisal of its probable impact on voters.[123] In correspondence with Marion Butler, he concluded that Populists would be unable to "face the Democratic party by declaring against the Amendment after they have amended it."[124] It remained, however, for the August election to pass judgment on the dire accuracy of this observation and define with certainty the political future of the Negro in North Carolina.

Constitutionality was not the sole objection raised in connection with the proposed change in suffrage. A farmer from eastern North Carolina predicted that Negro disfranchisement would result in a shortage of labor by encouraging blacks to migrate to other states, and a Winston-Salem newspaper maintained that it signified the return of "taxation without representation."[125]

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[122] The Caucasian (Raleigh), February 8, 1900, p. 2.

[123] Ibid., July 5, 1900, p. 2.

[124] Cyrus Thompson to Marion Butler, March 13, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[125] The Caucasian (Raleigh), January 11, 1900, p. 3; March 15, 1900, p. 1. The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), March 29, 1900.

The amendment was also attacked because it was politically partisan in operation. The Winston-Salem Union Republican declared that if approved the act would eliminate enough opposition votes to enable Democrats to entrench themselves in power and achieve a monopoly of state government.[126] The formerly Democratic Asheville Gazette was quick to read these implications and in the summer of 1899 put this danger before the public.

> The people of this state, having been fooled and betrayed in the matter of the constitutional amendment and the election law, are able to know just what is the danger of the present political situation in this state. It is that a political machine has arranged a plot to fasten their "rule" upon North Carolina so that the people connot [sic] however they may desire, unfasten it.[127]

Republicans and Populists branded the amendment un-Christian, and some orators readily quoted scripture from the stump.[128] Such pleas for the most part fell upon deaf ears, however, and most Fusionists found it worthwhile to concentrate on more secular criticisms.

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[126] The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), May 3, 1900. In connection with this Fusion charge see also The Caucasian (Raleigh), July 5, 1900, p. 1. J. F. Click to Marion Butler, March 23, 1900; H. L. Griffin to Marion Butler, folder 118 a, in the Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection. Steelman, op. cit., p. 212.

[127] The People's Paper (Charlotte), August 11, 1899, quoting the Asheville Daily Gazette.

[128] See Jeter C. Pritchard's speech delivered at Greensboro, June 2, 1900, in the "Campaign Book 1900," North Carolina Collection. Also see The Caucasian (Raleigh), May 3, 1900, p. 2; July 5, 1900, p. 1. The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), June 14, 1900.

The hotly contested proposal, like its Louisiana counterpart, embodied a poll tax. Democrats insisted that this tax would give a boost to public education because revenue from this source was to be funneled into a school fund. The proposed amendment, however, required payment only by those adult males who intended to vote. Marion Butler asserted that by making the tax optional Democrats were trying "to bribe the voter not to vote," and declared their concern for public education a hoax.[129] A Stokes County resident wrote that poor whites could no more pay the tax than could poor Negores, and both, he felt, would be disfranchised if the amendment passed.[130]

A number of citizens genuinely felt that Democrats might further restrict suffrage once an initial step was taken in this direction. The bulk of this concern stemmed from the sympathy shown by some Democrats toward a property requirement for the franchise. An early draft of the amendment had contained a property requirement, though this provision was deleted from the final bill. At the close of the 1899 legislative session H. G. Connor remarked that the amendment is "not perfect," but was quoted by Fusion sources as saying that "it is the basis upon which we may be able to build a safe, stable, and intelligent system of suffrage...."[131] In an 1897 letter to

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[129]Marion Butler to Furnifold M. Simmons, April 30, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[130]The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), May 3, 1900. Also see The Caucasian (Raleigh), January 4, 1900, p. 2.

[131]A Property Qualification Next, North Carolina Collection.

Connor, a Rocky Mount attorney foresaw "a struggle ahead for property interests," and two years later another Democrat advised "making the electorate of the Senate consist of those owning at least $500.00 tax valuation of real estate."[132]

With some basis for their misgivings Populists and Republicans accused their political opponents of favoring property interests at the expense of "laboring classes."[133] A Union Republican article attacked the amendment, proclaiming that a "fight is now on between the aristocrat and the laboring man; the tendency," continued the paper, "is to build up a Southern aristocracy and to deprive the 'lower classes' of both races of their right of suffrage...."[134] Throughout 1899 and 1900 the controversy raged. Though overshadowed by the constitutional issue, fear of the addition of a property clause weighed heavily on the conscience of many voters and helped make the campaign of 1900 an uneasy one for the Democratic party.

Populists and Republicans felt that Negro disfranchisement had failed to measure up to expectations in neighboring states and would similarly fail in North Carolina. The Caucasian asserted that

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[132]Thomas Battle to Henry Groves Connor, March 13, 1897; George Howard to Henry Groves Connor, February 3, 1899, in the Henry Groves Connor Papers, Southern Historical Collection. During the legislative session of 1899, Negro representative Isaac Smith was questioned by the House Committee on constitutional amendments as to whether his race would "be satisfied with a small property qualification." Smith replied that Negroes would "like that better than what they think they are going to get." The News and Observer (Raleigh), February 14, 1899, p. 6.

[133]The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), May 3, 1900.

[134]Ibid., June 14, 1900.

in Louisiana racial conflict was still common, and the familiar cry of "nigger" continued to occupy the main arena of political contests.[135] It was claimed that in that state eighty to one hundred thousand whites were disfranchised, and election fraud continued to occur at an alarming rate.[136]

North Carolina Democrats denied such allegations, and in the spring of 1900 Josephus Daniels was dispatched to Louisiana to observe for himself the effects of disfranchisement in the state whose plan North Carolina was to adopt. Daniels sent optimistic reports back to his Raleigh newspaper. In Louisiana he found "No Necessity or Excuse For Fraud or Force."[137] Voting returns had been reduced by fifty per cent "due to the inability of the negro to register."[138] This system of suffrage, he concluded, was a success in every form and fashion.

North Carolina Democrats believed that this measure which "does the white race justice and . . . does the negro no injustice" was essential for the future well-being of the state.[139] One authority maintained that if white supremacy were not permanently secured, North Carolina would be transformed into another "Hayti."[140]

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[135] The Caucasian (Raleigh), January 4, 1900, p. 2; April 5, 1900, p. 2. The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), June 14, 1900.

[136] The Caucasian (Raleigh), March 15, 1900; June 7, 1900.

[137] The News and Observer (Raleigh), May 16, 1900, p. 4.

[138] Ibid., May 5, 1900, p. 4.

[139] Ibid., February 18, 1899, p. 1.

[140] Ibid., July 14, 1900, p. 3.

> Suppose the Amendment fails--what then? It is notice to all the world that North Carolina is the political haven for the negro politician.... This notice will cause many of the best white men in the State to seek homes in States where white supremacy is permanent and at the same time will make North Carolina the dumping ground for the negroes in Virginia, South Carolina and other states who are denied equal power....[141]

Democrats thoughtfully assured Republicans that disfranchisement would pave the way for a Republican political resurgence in the state by erasing their stigma as a "Negro party."[142] Following speeches by the Democratic candidates on their western tour, eight Murphy Republicans reportedly declared their support for the amendment and were heard to acknowledge unanimously that the Negro was "a millstone about the neck of the Republican party of the West, and a curse to the State."[143]

The Republican stigma, however, derived not so much from the Negro "curse" as from Democratic propaganda and rascality. The Raleigh News and Observer branded Spencer Adams, the Republican nominee for governor, a "Negro Lover" and greatly exaggerated the role of blacks in Republican party affairs.[144] Republican magistrates

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[141] Ibid., June 26, 1900, p. 4.

[142] Ibid., June 18, 1899, p. 1; July 16, 1899, p. 1.

[143] Ibid., April 22, 1900, p. 9.

[144] Ibid., July 29, 1900, p. 1; January 14, 1900, p. 4; April 25, 1900, p. 4; July 16, 1899, p. 3.

and judges were accused of leniency in the prosecution of Negro criminals, and state Republican officialdom was verbally assaulted for its "contempt for our race [which] does not stop with the 120,000 negroes whom they array against us to dominate us and to humiliate us...."[145] In addition to its dominant Negro element the party was also characterized as boss ridden and under the reins of Mark Hanna and the national Republican organization.[146]

The Democratic effort against "the anti-amendment or Negro Rule campaign" was characterized by consistent verbal attacks on Fusion leaders.[147] "Men of Butler's class" declared one source, "are opposed to the amendment because, and solely because it deprives them, as office-seekers, of the negro vote. They care nothing for the State."[148] In Halifax County Claude Kitchin charged that Senator Butler had turned down a Confederate veteran's application for a federal appointment, giving the position instead "to a big Black Negro weighing over 200 lbs."[149] In late July rumors circulated in

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[145] The Anglo-Saxon (Rockingham), July 19, 1900.

[146] The News and Observer (Raleigh), May 2, 1900, p. 1; May 3, 1900, p. 1.

[147] Ibid., July 8, 1900, p. 4. The Negro and His White Allies, North Carolina Collection.

[148] The News and Observer (Raleigh), January 5, 1900, p. 5.

[149] S. L. Gibson to Marion Butler, July 19, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

Duplin County that the Populist leader was "drunk in Raleigh," and had "cussed out & give up the job."[150] Butler's political enemies taunted him at every turn of the campaign trial and insisted that he was a staunch ally of the Negro.

In eulogistic terms Democrats praised those principles which first characterized the People's Party but maintained that these were abandoned by the party's present leadership. The banner of reform, they insisted, had now passed into Democratic hands. "When the Populist Party was first organized it was a white man's party," declared the Chatham Record. "Then it fused with the negro party.... It joined with the Republicans in putting one thousand negroes in office.... It then fought the elimination of the negro from politics in order to retain his vote...."[151]

Fusionists rejected Democratic allegations and leveled charges of their own. Aycock's party was castigated for employing blacks at the state headquarters, and the Caucasian maintained that Democrats were themselves dominated by Negroes because they always received large electoral majorities in the black belt.[152] The Democratic party was also credited with the appointment of many Negro officeholders. "The only negro officeholder in this [Cumberland] County, is a Democrat," wrote the Union Republican, "a great big bellied fat greasy negro Magistrate."[153]

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[150] V. N. Seawell to Marion Butler, July 26, 1900, in ibid.

[151] The Chatham Record (Pittsboro) July 12, 1900. The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 19, 1900, p. 5.

[152] The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), June 14, 1900.

[153] Ibid.

One of the more credible Fusion allegations centered upon the Democratic campaign pledge of 1898 that no voters would be disfranchised after that election.[154] Simmons and several other Democrats made these promises and affidavits were secured in 1900 from witnesses who had heard these utterances. The affidavits, it was hoped, would demonstrate "how the Democratic Machine . . . deliberately broke their pledges after they got in power."[155]

A decade of political turmoil in North Carolina could not be entirely erased even by the issue of white supremacy. Party loyalities in many cases were strong, and when race became a point of political contention an inevitable result was the progressive deterioration of political ethics. Unprincipled editors were quick to echo the explosive remarks of equally unprincipled politicians, thereby contributing to the groundswell of political hatred under which North Carolina sweltered in the summer of 1900.

Worked into an emotional frenzy by Democratic orators, a Clinton audience "from the Sunday School superintendent to the squalling babe" applauded a proposal that Populists who refused to support disfranchisement "be caused to see red blood and smell it fresh and hot."[156] In several quarters violence flared as anti-amendment campaigners carried their volatile appeal to the people. A riot in which many

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[154] Ibid., May 10, 1900.

[155] See Marion Butler's unaddressed letters of November 23, 1899, in the Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[156] The Caucasian (Raleigh), June 7, 1900, p. 3.

"were cut and injured" erupted in Smithfield as a Populist spokesman mounted a platform to speak.[157] Two of the party's campaigners faced a mob at Warsaw and were forced back on their train, and in Dunn a red shirt band stormed the room of a visiting Populist and forced him to leave town.[158]

In scattered localities "Democratic scoundrels" greeted Fusion speakers with rotten eggs and in other ways disrupted their gatherings.[159] Such tactics forced the cancellation of some campaign stops, and the fear of violence discouraged Fusion speakers from entering Democratic strongholds, especially in the East.[160] Marion Butler was cautioned to be on guard for his life should he venture into "some

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[157] The Asheville Daily Gazette, August 1, 1900. The Greensboro Telegram, August 2, 1900.

[158] J. Person to Marion Butler, July 26, 1900; T. Jones to Marion Butler, July 26, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection. The Asheville Daily Gazette, August 2, 1900. Also see "North Carolina's Red Shirt Campaign," The Independent, LII (August 2, 1900), p. 1875. "The Campaign and Its Results," The Outlook, LXV (August 11, 1900), p. 842.

[159] J. H. Quinn to Marion Butler, June 7, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection. The Caucasian (Raleigh), July 26, 1900. The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), June 14, 1900.

[160] J. C. McMillan to Marion Butler, June 26, 1900; J. B. Winders, to Marion Butler, July 25, 1900; M. Ward to Marion Butler, July 26, 1900; G. Shearin to Marion Butler, July 30, 1900, in the Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

parts" of North Carolina, and a Wilmington Democrat declared that the Senator should be "forcibly expelled" from the state.[161]

If Democratic intimidation discouraged Fusion campaigners, it also silenced a great deal of free discussion among rank and file voters. A group of delegates attending the Beaufort County Populist convention were attacked in Washington by Democrats, and another party member was reportedly "beaten by one of their howling mobs...."[162] A People's Party township chairman was shot following a disagreement with a firebrand Democrat, and another Populist was aroused from bed on the night of July 18 by a red shirt mob determined to confiscate his political literature and silence opposition to the amendment.[163]

In widespread sections of the state many of those who opposed the amendment responded to this political intolerance by resigning themselves to its likely passage.[164] This apathy was further enhanced by a state election law which enabled Democrats to appoint practically all election officials. The requirement that election judges be of

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[161]George Butler to Marion Butler, July 24, 1900; George E. Hunt to Marion Butler, January 18, 1900; George E. Hunt to Marion Butler, February 16, 1900; Marion Butler to J. D. Bellamy, August 1, 1900, in the Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection. In connection with this last letter see The Caucasian (Raleigh), August 2, 1900.

[162]J. B. Price to Marion Butler, April 10, 1900; T. E. Cutler to Marion Butler, July 17, 1900, in the Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[163]W. E. Murphrey to Marion Butler, July 18, 1900; W. E. Wheeler to Marion Butler, August 8, 1900 in ibid.

[164]Nelson McAskill to Marion Butler, July 24, 1900, J. H. Fussell to Marion Butler, folder 115L, in ibid.

opposite political parties was not carried out uniformly, and in many counties incompetent or partisan officials sat as representatives of Populists and Republicans. In some localities Populists suggested the names of acceptable persons to local election boards, but these men were usually rejected in favor of individuals more in harmony with the Democratic Party.

An Orange County Populist reported that election officials "did not give us a single man we asked for," and in Halifax the situation led one citizen to predict that on election day Democrats would have "every thing just as they want it...."[165] A Trenton resident found that a member of the Jones County Board of Elections was himself a Democratic candidate for public office and had taken a hand in appointing three Negroes and an "almost blind" white man as election judges.[166] Many of the illiterate and incompetent appointees resigned before election day, thus permitting the installation of Democrats in their places.[167] In many precincts all election officials were Democratic, and in a few other appointees were not legal residents.[168]

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[165] T. M. Roberson to Marion Butler, July 18, 1900; George W. Sherwin ? to Marion Butler, July 10, 1900, in ibid.

[166] L. E. Koonce to Marion Butler, July 2, 1900, in ibid.

[167] J. P. Overman to Marion Butler, August 6, 1900, in ibid.

[168] R. Liles to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900; Alex Carter to Marion Butler, July 14, 1900; D. W. Kornegay to Marion Butler, July 16, 1900; J. S. Basnight to Marion Butler, July 21, 1900; S. R. Chambers to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900, in ibid.

In several sections of the state, county boards refused even to accord representation to the People's Party, granting election representatives only to Republicans and Democrats. In Gates County the board turned down a Populist request for judges, declaring that there were "only two parties," and in Bertie a Populist dispairingly wrote that they "failed to recognize us...."[169]

While the appointment of unreliable whites and "bulldozing" Democrats was condemned as a prelude to election fraud, the widespread appointment of Negroes to fill these posts created the greatest indignation among white Fusionists. It was reported that among the Republican precinct judges in Bertie County, all "but one or two" were Negroes, and the Northampton board appointed blacks after receiving a Populist appeal for white representation.[170] In Pender a Negro judge of election who had been found unqualified to register and vote was appointed.[171] In Nash "worthless negroes" were assigned "to represent white men and Populists," and at Rocky Mount "they appointed negroes to represent everything but . . . Democrats."[172]

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[169] G. H. Rountree to Marion Butler, July 12, 1900; G. W. Cobb to Marion Butler, July 10, 1900, in ibid.

[170] M. J. Rayner to Marion Butler, July 13, 1900; B. P. Long to Marion Butler, July 12, 1900, in ibid.

[171] J. H. Newkirk to Marion Butler, July 12, 1900, in ibid.

[172] C. H. Baines to Marion Butler, August 13, 1900; G. W. Coley to Marion Butler, July 4, 1900; also see D. C. Farabow to Marion Butler, July 27, 1900; J. A. Kinsey to Marion Butler, July, 1900; Robert Wilson to Marion Butler, July 21, 1900, in ibid.

Fifteen Negroes were appointed in Granville County, sixteen in Cumberland, and numerous others in Caswell, Craven, Chowan, Jones, Greene, Bertie, Vance, Warren, Halifax, Pitt, Wilson, and Durham counties. A Populist leaflet condemned this Democratic action and urged voters to remember:

> That the best white men of the counties (in which these negroes were appointed) were recommended for these important and responsible positions, and stood ready to take them; but the negroes were appointed over their heads by the Simmons Machine and its "nigger yellers."[173]

These appointments undoubtedly came in response to encouragement from state Democratic headquarters. The appointment of incompetent Negro election judges further increased racial friction and reinforced an attitude held by many Populists that their party would indeed have a stronger voice in politics with the permanent elimination of the Negro issue.

This conclusion was easier for many whites to grasp as the fires of racial passion rose higher in the closing weeks of campaigning. The Tarborough Southerner emphasized that "a vote against the Amendment is a vote against White Supremacy," and the Chatham Record predicted that on election day "the great bulk of the white men of North Carolina will be on one side, and on the other side will be 120,000 negroes. On which side," the paper asked, "will you stand?"[174]

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[173] See the Populist Campaign leaflet listing counties in which Negro election judges were appointed, in folder 115 m of ibid.

[174] The Tarborough Southerner, August 2, 1900. The Chatham Record (Pittsboro), July 26, 1900. R. B. Eliot to Marion Butler, April 4, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Orr, op. cit., p. 173.

Anti-Negro propaganda was especially vehement in black belt areas. "If you vote with the negroes," declared one article, "history will so record it, and in future years, your children will be taunted with the humiliating accusation that their father was a traitor to his race."[175] Newspaper reports of Negro "insolence" and accounts of Negro assaults upon white women were also common. One headline reported that Rockingham women were "Terrified by Prowling Negroes," and Claude Kitchin told a Sampson County gathering that men who chose not to support the Democratic party were "for the negroes, and . . . endorsed the rapes that the negroes committed."[176] A. M. Waddell, exalted leader of the Wilmington rebellion, branded those who opposed the amendment as "fools" and declared that such men should "be classed with the Negroes and compelled to bed with them."[177]

Other utterances, while sometimes less vindictive, were nevertheless sufficiently inspiring to incite violence or widen the void of racial mistrust which typified black-white relations in the state. The News and Observer disclosed that Bladen County Negroes were preparing to go "to the polls . . . well armed" in order to forestall a repeat

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[175] The Anglo-Saxon (Rockingham), July 26, 1900.

[176] The News and Observer (Raleigh), May 5, 1900, p. 1, The Caucasian (Raleigh), May 10, 1900, p. 2. Also see McKelway, loc. cit., p. 1955, in which it is stated that "in the first year of Governor Russell's administration there were four times as many cases of the rape of white women by negro men as in the twenty-five years preceding."

[177] E. D. Patterson to Marion Butler, July 30, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

of the one-sided Wilmington riot.[178] In July the paper again resorted to scare headlines and announced that a Guilford County Negro had intimated "in the presence of reputable white men" that a violent uprising was planned in that section were the amendment approved. This Negro reportedly said "that white men would be called out and shot and that women and children would be put to death."[179] The newspaper's editor concluded that such talk resulted from "white men advising negroes to protect their vote...."[180]

North Carolina blacks were helpless to safeguard their suffrage, however, even with the aid of white Republicans and Populists. Democratic intimidation and partisan election machinery nullified Negro votes, and the emotional intensity of the campaign cultivated among many whites an apathetic willingness to see the wheels of disfranchisement set in motion. The amendment's eventual passage put Negro suffrage essentially where it had been prior to emancipation, but for the Democratic party and for North Carolina it heralded the beginning of a new era. Approval signified popular endorsement of that party's previous two years in the public trust and acknowledged public acceptance of a progressive program which was to initiate a new and unprecedented period in North Carolina's development. This new era would be progressive and reform oriented, but it would also be partisan and racist, and temporarily would bring the decline of multi-party politics in the state.

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[178] The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 18, 1900, p. 2.

[179] Ibid., July 8, 1900, p. 5.

[180] Ibid., July 21, 1900, p. 1.

NEWSPAPER CARICATURES OF THE NEGRO

The Raleigh News and Observer, June 26, 1900.

A LESSON IN GEOGRAPHY.

The Raleigh News and Observer, July 4, 1900.

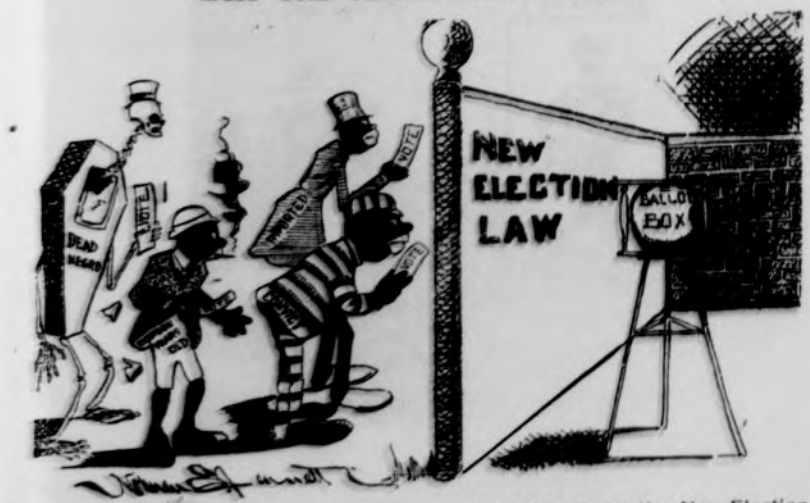
The Raleigh News and Observer, July 14, 1900.

WHAT HAPPENED IN MONTGOMERY.

Three Negroes, Accompanied by Three White Men, Forced the Registrar to Register them at the Point of a Pistol.

The Raleigh News and Observer, June 24, 1900.

WHY THE RADICALS ARE MAD.



The Members of Their Party That Will Not Be Able to Vote Under the New Election Law.

The Raleigh Caucasian, July 5, 1900.

The Raleigh Caucasian, July 26, 1900.

CHAPTER IV

THE ELECTION OF 1900 AND AN ANALYSIS

Within the councils of the Democratic party no election victory was deemed more vital than that of 1900. A continuation of Negro suffrage risked a resurgence of Fusion government while disfranchisement ensured the statewide political supremacy of the Democratic party. Aycock proclaimed that "we have ruled by force, we can rule by fraud but we want to rule by law."[1] Josephus Daniels wrote that an "ordinary" victory would not suffice and called for passage of the amendment "by such an overwhelming majority as to silence all opponents...."[2] Locke Craig boasted that his party would secure the amendment's approval or "drench" North Carolina in blood, and other Democrats acknowledged that violence might be necessary.[3]

Exactly what measure of victory was expected became clear during the closing weeks of campaigning. E. Y. Webb, acting chairman of the Democratic state convention, predicted that if "the cannon of this

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[1] The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), March 29, 1900. Marion Butler, "Election in North Carolina," The Independent, LII (August 16, 1900), p. 1954. Joshua Bynum to Marion Butler, June 16, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. Hereafter cited as Southern Historical Collection.

[2] The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 15, 1900, p. 12.

[3] Thad Jones to Marion Butler, April 2, 1900; E. A. Kelly to Marion Butler, January 22, 1900; H. E. Whittle to Marion Butler, April 7, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

republic should thunder in every voting precinct . . . we would still find . . . the means and courage to adopt the amendment by 50,000...."[4] Charles B. Aycock and other individuals "who know the situation" also predicted fifty thousand as the more than "ordinary" plurality by which one-third of the state's voting population should be disfranchised.[5] On August 2, ballots were cast and counted, and Democratic estimates were proved accurate. The amendment triumphed in North Carolina by an overwhelming majority of fifty-four thousand votes.

This Democratic victory derived from much more than passionate speeches, fraudulent voter registration, and partisan election machinery. It entailed the application of irregular methods which many Democrats regarded as necessary and just in order to secure legal disfranchisement. If this election was a victory for the white man it was also a victory for fraud and force.

Many localities reported a quiet election, but in some sections ballot box thievery and voter intimidation were common. The registration book of one Eastern precinct was stolen shortly before voting began, and in another the returns themselves mysteriously disappeared when a Fusion majority was apparent.[6] Republican or Populist election judges not present when polls opened were often replaced by some other

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[4] The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 12, 1900, p. 3.

[5] Ibid., July 8, 1900, p. 5; July 20, 1900, p. 6; July 29, 1900 p. 12. The Headlight (Goldsboro), August 2, 1900.

[6] The Caucasian (Raleigh), August 9, 1900. Unsigned and undated letter found in the Marion Butler Papers, folder 115m, Southern Historical Collection.

"discreet" person.[7] One white Republican judge reported that Democrats moved his boat to an opposite shore of the Cape Fear river, thus delaying his arrival at the polling place. A Democrat was appointed to fill the vacant post.[8]

At Saint Pauls a registrar was shot from ambush, and in other localities liquor and money flowed freely.[9] A Populist observing the election at Red Springs was doused with water by a "mob" of determined Democrats and then escorted out of town by the local marshal.[10] Stores and shops in many sections were closed to permit white men to give "one day to their State and race," and the advocates of disfranchisement encouraged supporters to "administer some good sound neighborly advice" to anyone coming to the polls undecided on the racial issue.[11]

A significant amount of "neighborly advice" was meted out well in advance of the August election. Individuals employed by or indebted

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[7] S. R. Chambers to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900; G. T. Coley to Marion Butler, August 2, 1900, in ibid.

[8] E. C. Cox to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900. For similar accounts see E. H. Linton, to Marion Butler, August 7, 1900; W. M. Sparkman to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900, in ibid.

[9] The News and Observer (Raleigh), August 4, 1900, p. 3. C. E. Ainsley to Marion Butler, August 7, 1900; Heenan Hughes to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900, in ibid.

[10] Neill McRae to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[11] The Headlight (Goldsboro), August 2, 1900. John Mercer to Marion Butler, folder 118 a, in ibid. The Anglo-Saxon (Rockingham), July 26, 1900.

to Democrats often courted financial hardship by opposing the amendment. A mail carrier was dismissed as a consequence of his stand on the question, and a Hertford voter reportedly had "his application for liquor license suppressed" on this account.[12]

As election day neared Democrats boasted of having "the negroes where they want them" and threatened to shoot any white man found giving assistance to the blacks.[13] Armed red shirt brigades roamed parts of the Piedmont and Coastal Plain, and at night shots were heard in many sections as the campaign moved toward its dramatic climax.[14] Red Shirts deposited threatening letters at the homes of Negroes in Sampson County, and in other areas blacks were beaten or had their homes fired upon by zealous whites.[15]

The seemingly unbounded determination of the amendment's supporters convinced many citizens that voting against the measure was

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[12] Robert Wilson to Marion Butler, July 21, 1900; James S. Mitchell to Marion Butler, July 16, 1900; for other examples of such intimidation see N. Sutton to Marion Butler, January 30, 1900; B. F. Keith to Marion Butler, March 12, 1900; Edward T. Clark to Marion Butler, July 7, 1900; Alex Parham to Marion Butler, August 7, 1900, all in the Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[13] R. D. Paschall to Marion Butler, July 21, 1900, in ibid.

[14] Dr. I. H. Lutterloh to Marion Butler, August 7, 1900; J. L. Matheson to Marion Butler, August 2, 1900; also see an unsigned, undated letter from Moore County, to Marion Butler, folder 115 m, all in ibid.

[15] M. C. Gidden to Marion Butler, August 13, 1900; J. T. Haywood to Marion Butler, August 10, 1900, in ibid. Also see A. J. McKelway "The North Carolina Suffrage Amendment," The Independent, LII (August 16, 1900), p. 1956.

both dangerous and fruitless.[16] Those who did venture to the polls on August 2 often discovered the surroundings as uproarious and intimidating as the long campaign had been. Many precinct election officials and pro-amendment bystanders were well armed. One observer witnessed a registrar opening the polls with "a gun in his hand," and in Sanford the official "had a pistol laying on the desk near the [ballot] boxes...."[17]

North Carolina had not adopted the Australian system of balloting in 1900, and spectators could often discern an elector's choice. This proved an additional handicap to Fusionists for it exposed them to the intimidation of bystanders and election officials. In one black belt precinct "you could see Dems walking around with . . . pistols in their pockets," and from the Piedmont a correspondent reported spectators wielding "clubs & pistols."[18] Such exibitions preceded the use of force in some areas, and especially so in parts of the East where blacks were concentrated in large numbers. One resident wrote that at his polling place voters were "sometimes taken holt [sic]

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[16] James D. Thomas to Marion Butler, folder 115 m; H. F. Seawell to Marion Butler, August 6, 1900, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[17] M. McLeod to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900; Dr. I. H. Lutterloh to Marion Butler, August 7, 1900, in ibid.

[18] N. C. Couper to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; Zeb V. Walser to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; Alex Parham to Marion Butler, August 7, 1900, in ibid.

of and jerked out in a rough manner," and another said that all Negroes who presented themselves at the polls were "run off" by red shirts.[19] White Fusion election judges likewise encountered hostility at the polls, and several were forced to abandon their posts.[20]

A flurry of election day challenges further thinned Fusion ranks by entangling voters in the maze of election law technicalities. In sections of the state where white supremacy clubs existed these challenges were handled by designated members. While qualifications might be questioned on several grounds, age and residency were the most common. Often, however, electors were challenged and disqualified for the most trifling reasons. One man convicted of cruelty to animals was disqualified, and another who had been "whipped at [a] whipping post" was also rejected.[21] Negroes convicted of assault and battery were challenged "while white men (of both parties) who had been convicted of the same offense were allowed to vote...."[22]

Both whites and Negroes were challenged, but the great majority

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[19]Alex Parham to Marion Butler, August 7, 1900; Jacob James to Marion Butler, August 10, 1900; C. H. Baines to Marion Butler, August 13, 1900, in ibid.

[20]John G. Brown to Marion Butler, August 2, 1900; Alex Parham to Marion Butler, August 7, 1900, in ibid.

[21]C. J. Smith to Marion Butler, folder 148; G. W. Wright to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900, in ibid.

[22]A. H. Stone to Marion Butler, August 13, 1900, in ibid.

of such cases involved the latter.[23] It was said that in Nashville every registered Republican was challenged, and in Anson County a correspondent found that one hundred and twenty-five of the one hundred and fifty registered blacks in his precinct had met this fate.[24]

Because blacks were asked to step aside in such large numbers many were unable to have their challenged status resolved before polls closed.[25] Those who got a hearing were usually disqualified by the unreasonable queries of partisan election officials.[26] Though it cannot be accurately known how many anti-amendment votes were eliminated in this manner, it is reasonable to assume that such a figure would climb into the thousands. It remained now for Democrats to exclude enough of the anti-amendment votes actually cast and the victory of greater than "ordinary proportions" would be theirs.

In many sections of North Carolina such a victory might have been secured without fraud and trickery, but rank and file Democrats were thoroughly aroused and unwilling to risk defeat on such an

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[23]Alex Parham to Marion Butler, August 7, 1900; H. C. West to Marion Butler, August 10, 1900; C. H. Baines to Marion Butler, August 13, 1900; M. C. Gidden to Marion Butler, August 13, 1900; J. F. Maxwell to Marion Butler, August 14, 1900, all in ibid.

[24]N. C. Couper to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; T. V. Howell to Marion Butler, August 11, 1900; for additional accounts see A. S. Reynolds to Marion Butler, August 5, 1900, all in ibid. The Caucasian (Raleigh), August 9, 1900. The Greensboro Telegram, August 2, 1900.

[25]C. B. Capps to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900, in the Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[26]T. W. Horgun ? to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900, in ibid.

important issue. The state Democratic organization had provided legal and emotional impetus for a fraudulent election, and in every section of North Carolina ballot box thievery occurred on an unprecedented scale.

Each polling place had at least six ballot boxes, one of which was for voting on the question of disfranchisement. Electors were expected to deposit their ballots in the correctly labeled box, and those incorrectly cast were invalid. In one predominately black county labels were "posted on the boxes upside down so that nobody but a good reader could tell what they were voting...."[27] Elsewhere precinct officials often rotated the positions of the six ballot boxes to prevent literate voters from disclosing their sequence to illiterates.[28]

Election officials at some precincts voluntarily deposited the ballots of illiterates, initiating a practice which undoubtedly resulted in many stuffed boxes. At one voting place "the boxes were paper or pace [sic] board boxes [,] shirt [,] hat & shoes boxes" with unfastened lids.[29] In predominately black Warren County "each illiterate (or careless) Republican or Populist would hand his

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[27] T. V. Howell to Marion Butler, August 11, 1900, in ibid.

[28] This was apparently a common practice in many sections. See T. V. Howell to Marion Butler, August 11, 1900; H. P. Thompson to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900; Alex Parham to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; A. S. Reynolds to Marion Butler, August 5, 1900; J. B. Powell to Marion Butler, August 6, 1900, in ibid.

[29] D. M. Hall to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900, in ibid.

ticket to the poll holder, who would put them in his pocket & would deposit Democratic tickets in the boxes...."[30]

While such trickery was common, the actual counting of ballots also provided a convenient and reliable means of misrepresenting the vote. State law provided that any elector desiring to witness the final tally might do so, but in many instances this privilege was denied.[31]

> Our judge contended for his right to see the votes as they were counted but they refused him that privelage [sic] and told him if he could not do what he was told to do to get out of there and he obliged them. And he says he was afraid to stay and contend for our rights on account of his own personal safety as there was a howling mob of Democrats shooting and rioting and making great threats . . . to we white people who contended for justice....[32]
>
> A Washington County Populist

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[30] J. B. Powell to Marion Butler, August 6 and 9, 1900; also see Z. V. Walser to Marion Butler, August 30, 1900; S. R. Chambers to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900; D. M. Hall to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900, all in ibid. The Asheville Register, August 10, 1900, reported that a Democratic election judge in Haywood County "threw a large number of County Republican ballots in the creek and in lieu thereof placed in the box and counted Democratic ballots. James Boyd leaped into the water and recovered 41 of these Republican tickets."

[31] J. W. Barabow to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; James W. McNeill to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; F. G. A. Tart to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; G. D. Neal to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; James A. Gill to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; Stephen O. Holmes to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; J. A. Brantley to Marion Butler, folder 115 m, all in the Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[32] S. P. Woodley to Marion Butler, August 7, 1900, in ibid.

Another disgruntled Populist graciously permitted to witness the count reported that as each ballot was removed from the box it was merely called out and then "torn up without being tallied...."[33] In some precincts bystanders observed the polls all day and kept their own unofficial tallies which often differed sharply with official results.[34] At one polling place where some three hundred Negroes voted, official returns listed only twenty-two votes against the amendment.[35] In Weldon a similar condition prevailed with the unofficial tally showing one hundred and seventy-nine against disfranchisement while official figures indicated only seventy-two.[36]

Fraudulent proceedings were by no means confined to the black belt for in many predominantly white districts official returns sometimes exceeded the number of registered voters.[37] In a few areas where

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[33] M. C. Gidden to Marion Butler, August 13, 1900, in ibid.

[34] Van B. Carter to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900; W. H. Cox? to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; George E. Hunt to Marion Butler, August 6, 1900; J. P. Overman to Marion Butler, August 6, 1900; Zeb V. Walser to Marion Butler, August 30, 1900, in ibid.

[35] C. H. Baines to Marion Butler, August 13, 1900, in ibid.

[36] D. L. Gibson to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900, in ibid.

[37] D. A. Long to Marion Butler, August 2, 1900; W. J. Teel to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; W. A. L. Veazey to Marion Butler, August 7, 1900; J. B. Winders to Marion Butler, August 3, 1900; A. B. Waters to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; J. B. Powell to Marion Butler, August 9, 1900, all in ibid.

the amendment was voted down, county canvassing boards simply disqualified the returns on conveniently fabricated grounds.[38]

These acts, however, did not occur without challenge. A "near riot" occurred at Bayboro over the Democratic controlled proceedings, and in Chatham County indignant voters assaulted election officials, destroyed "the ballot boxes and burned the ballots."[39] In a few counties protests were filed with local election boards, and "indignation" meetings were held to voice disapproval of the election.[40]

Although one Democrat acknowledged that "the boys were a trifle too enthusiastic," the scattered protests failed to arouse the Democratic conscience or stir public wrath.[41] Many voters were gratified to see the turbulent campaign brought to a conclusion. The Caucasian was relieved that the Democratic party could never again shout "negro at its political opponents," and a Northern editor wrote that a disfranchised black man should now "be contented if he sees ahead of him a reasonable chance for his children."[42]

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[38] James W. McNeill to Marion Butler, August 4, 1900; C. H. Baines to Marion Butler, August 13, 1900, in ibid. The Caucasian (Raleigh), August 16, 1900.

[39] The News and Observer (Raleigh), August 7, 1900, p. 1. The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), August 9, 1900.

[40] C. W. Turner to Marion Butler, August 15, 1900; George E. Hunt to Marion Butler, August 16, 1900, in the Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection. The Asheville Register, August 17, 1900. The Caucasian (Raleigh), August 23, 1900.

[41] Howard A. Foushee to Henry Groves Connor, August 6, 1900, Henry Groves Connor Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[42] The Caucasian (Raleigh), August 9, 1900. Editorial "North Carolina's Suffrage Amendment," The Review of Reviews and World's Work, XXII (September, 1900), p. 213.

A discriminating look at this election reveals more than a typical white supremacy victory. Election returns indicate the sectional scope of the amendment's popularity, and also suggest a rural-urban division on the issue of the amendment.

Despite methods utilized by Democrats to carry this election the amendment was defeated in many western counties and in a string of counties in the central Piedmont. Many of these areas had a history of Republican loyalty, and the appeal to race failed to reverse old voting trends. In 1900, moreover, these counties which rejected the amendment for the most part contained fewer Negroes than other sections of North Carolina. Voters in these areas, consequently, had little to gain from Negro disfranchisement and were unwilling to risk their own suffrage rights by supporting a measure whose effect upon white voters appeared unclear at best.

In some Eastern and border counties where blacks were often in the majority the amendment was approved overwhelmingly. Halifax County with a population 64 per cent Negro recorded 6,280 votes in favor of disfranchisement and only 899 against. In New Hanover the returns were even more astonishing. With blacks constituting slightly more than 50 per cent of the population only 2 votes were recorded against the proposal as opposed to 2,967 for passage.

"What self-sacrificing creatures these negroes were," wrote the Caucasian, "to vote themselves into political bondage, that their former masters and political enemies might be" free of Negro domination.[43]

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[43] The Caucasian (Raleigh), September 13, 1900.

If it is "assumed that no community will cheerfully and deliberately vote to disfranchise itself" the number of Negro votes eliminated at many precincts is at once apparent.[44] Josephus Daniels, however, was gratified at his party's victory. "It was a splendid sight," he said, "to see nearly all the Democrats who voted together in 1890 voting together again, forgetting the differences of the stormy years from 1892 to 1898...."[45]

While these differences may have been forgotten in some areas they were remembered elsewhere. Precinct returns from many counties which approved the amendment reveal distinct areas of opposition. The most clear-cut example was Forsyth County whose returns are shown in table I.

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[44]Editorial "North Carolina's Suffrage Amendment," The Review of Reviews and World's Work, XXII (September, 1900), p. 274.

[45]The News and Observer (Raleigh), April 5, 1900, p. 12.

TABLE I

FORSYTH COUNTY VOTE ON DISFRANCHISEMENT[46]

URBAN-RURAL BREAKDOWN

TOWNSHIP OR PRECINCT	VOTES FOR AMENDMENT	VOTES AGAINST AMENDMENT	% FOR AMENDMENT
Ward I (Winston)	274	37	88.2
Ward 2 (Winston)	367	40	90.2
Ward 3 (Winston)	295	20	93.6
Salem	416	237	63.8
TOTAL VOTE OF WINSTON AND SALEM	1352	334	80.3
Abbott's Creek	33	135	19.6
Belew's Creek	130	111	54.0
Bethania	150	177	45.9
Broadbay	130	345	27.4
Clemonsville	66	92	41.8
Kernersville	187	231	44.7
Lewisville	95	123	43.5
Middle Fork 1	64	190	25.2
Middle Fork 2	66	81	44.9
Old Richmond	105	143	42.3
Old Town	145	130	52.8
Salem Chapel	89	140	38.8
South Fork	118	203	36.8
Vienna	80	126	38.8
TOTAL EXCLUDING WINSTON AND SALEM	1458	2227	39.5
TOTAL COUNTY VOTE	2810	2561	52.4

[46] The Union Republican (Winston-Salem), August 9, 1900.

Although fifty-two per cent of the voters in this county approved the amendment, precinct returns indicate strong opposition in rural districts. In these areas slightly more than 39 per cent of the voters supported disfranchisement, but in the towns of Winston and Salem the amendment received 80 percent of all votes cast. County-wide this represented enough support to overcome rural opposition and carry Forsyth for white supremacy.

In other counties this urban-rural division was also evident though less decisive. In 1900 Wake County was 44 per cent Negro. Here the amendment was approved by 56 per cent of the voters, but in the city of Raleigh this margin stretched to 60 per cent while in all other precincts outside the city it averaged only 54.[47] Likewise in Cumberland County with 43 per cent of its citizens black the trend continued. Fayetteville, the largest town in the county, gave the amendment 76 per cent of its votes. In all other precincts combined, however, the proposal received only 54 per cent of the vote.[48]

Only within a few black belt counties does this rural resistance to the amendment appear to dissolve. In Scotland County only 7 votes were recorded against the amendment, giving white supremacy a landslide victory of 99.5 per cent.[49]

The inclination of rural voters to oppose the amendment probably stemmed from several factors. Foremost among these was a traditional

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[47] The News and Observer (Raleigh), August 5, 1900, p. 13.

[48] The Fayetteville Observer, August 9, 1900.

[49] The Anglo-Saxon (Rockingham), August 2, 1900.

opposition of upcountry rural whites to Eastern rule. Especially was this true in parts of the Piedmont and West where loyalty to the Republican party had become a way of life. In 1900 there were educational, cultural, and occupational differences between rural whites and city dwellers. Illiteracy was highest in the country districts and even within the black belt some "Democrats who are illiterate" opposed the amendment.[50] "All the laboring classes and poor farmers are opposed to it," wrote one Eastern resident, "while the Eristicrats [sic] ar [e] in favor of it...."[51]

In 1900 only 10 per cent of North Carolina's population was urban, yet over the previous decade this urban population had expanded by over 60 per cent.[52] A large portion of these new arrivals in cities and towns were undoubtedly Negroes seeking to escape the confines of the farm and discover opportunities for advancement elsewhere. Their increasing presence in urban areas posed a political threat to ruling whites who were in a position to manipulate city election machinery and now had ample reason to do so.

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[50] T. E. McCoskey to Marion Butler, July 13, 1900; Patrick to Cyrus Thompson, June 14, 1900; E. T. Clark to Marion Butler, July 7, 1900; L. J. King to Marion Butler, February 17, 1900; T. W. Uzzell to Marion Butler, February 11, 1900; in the Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

[51] J. B. Price to Marion Butler, April 10, 1900; W. F. Stroud to Marion Butler, January 13, 1900; E. N. Robeson to Marion Butler, April 21, 1900; in ibid.

[52] James Joseph Moslowski, "North Carolina Migration 1870-1950," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, University of North Carolina, 1953), pp. 81, 83.

The election of 1900 was a victory for white men and a victory won by the votes of white men. In most areas, however, the cry of Negro domination and white supremacy did not produce the overwhelming solidification of white voters which Democrats claimed or that many historians have been content to accept.

In the black belt and in a few other localities intimidation and fraud flagrantly circumvented free elections. In many of these areas any opposition to disfranchisement was completely smothered by the zealous exponents of white supremacy. The existence of fraud and intimidation, and the passage of a partisan election law does not, however, justify a conclusion that without such methods the Democratic party could not have triumphed in 1900.

The Republican and Populist parties had gone a long way toward bringing about their own defeat on this issue. After the successful campaigns of 1894 and 1896, they enacted political reforms with little regard for the effects in Eastern North Carolina--a section which had traditionally proven itself a stronghold of political power in the state. The repeated fusion of Populists and Republicans also angered many rank and file party members who increasingly lost view of the two organizations as distinct and independent entities.[53] In 1900 this distinction was further clouded when Populists fused with Republicans statewide and with Democrats on the national level. The failure of

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[53] M. H. Caldwell to Marion Butler, December 20, 1899; Fernando Ward to Marion Butler, March 10, 1900; James H. Hurrill to Marion Butler, May 24, 1900; in the Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

fusion in 1898 and again in 1900 helped bring to an end an unprecedented American experiment with coalition government. Democrats used the Negro to cripple the Republican party and accelerate the decline of the Populists, while restoring their own domination over state government.

In 1900 as in the 1860's North Carolina's Southernism asserted itself on the question of the Negro. The issue so familiar to Southerners had a broader and more enduring appeal than did free silver and agrarian reform. Tar Heels, therefore, followed their sister states into disfranchisement, but with much the came cautious faith they had previously shown in abandoning the Union. In 1900, however, the consequences were not military defeat and Reconstruction, but Democratic victory and a subtle "undoing of Reconstruction." F. M. Simmons felt the amendment's adoption was "one of the greatest achievements of my life," and a Northern editor insisted that its passage "ought not to be disheartening to the negro race. It should simply give them a new incentive to overcome obstacles and meet the new constitutional test. In a few years the discrimination will have been outlived."[54]

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[54] J. Fred Rippy, Furnifold M. Simmons Memoirs and Addresses (Durham: Duke University Press, 1936), p. 28. Editorial "North Carolina's Suffrage Amendment," The Review of Reviews and World's Work, XXII (September, 1900), p. 274.

APPENDIX

Table 1

URBAN-RURAL BREAKDOWN

EDGECOMBE COUNTY VOTE ON DISFRANCHISEMENT*
(The Tarborough Southerner, August 9, 1900)

TOWNSHIP	VOTES FOR AMENDMENT	VOTES AGAINST AMENDMENT	% FOR AMENDMENT
1 (includes town of Tarboro)	435	3	99.3
12 (includes town of Rocky Mount)	555	28	95.2
TOTAL	990	31	96.9
Essentially Rural Townships			
2	441	0	100.0
3	...	..	...
4	186	57	96.5
5	303	27	91.8
6	321	91	75.5
7	326	71	56.9
8	266	7	97.5
9	209	21	90.8
10	254	2	99.2
11	168	1	99.4
13	145	45	76.3
14	50	23	68.5
TOTAL	2669	345	88.6

*In 1900 the population of Edgecombe County was 62 per cent Negro.

APPENDIX

Table 2

URBAN-RURAL BREAKDOWN

MECKLENBURG COUNTY VOTE ON DISFRANCHISEMENT*
(The Charlotte Observer, August 3, 1900)

TOWNSHIP OR PRECINCT	VOTES FOR AMENDMENT	VOTES AGAINST AMENDMENT	% FOR AMENDMENT
City of Charlotte			
Ward 1 Box 1	359	72	83.3
Ward 1 Box 2	414	61	87.0
Ward 2 Box 1	222	65	77.3
Ward 2 Box 2	143	71	66.9
Ward 2 Box 3	267	34	88.7
Ward 3 Box 1	273	53	83.8
Ward 3 Box 2	219	55	80.0
Ward 4 Box 1	336	16	95.5
Ward 4 Box 2	505	22	95.8
TOTAL	2738	449	85.7
Essentially Rural Townships			
Crab Orchard Box 1	129	46	73.7
Crab Orchard Box 2	73	20	78.5
Clear Creek	153	83	64.8
Huntersville	130	125	51.0
Morning Star	107	40	72.8
Mullard Creek	65	42	60.7
TOTAL	657	356	64.8

*In 1900 the population of Mecklenburg County was 43 per cent Negro.

APPENDIX

Table 3

URBAN-RURAL BREAKDOWN

WAYNE COUNTY VOTE ON DISFRANCHISEMENT*
(The Headlight (Goldsboro), August 9, 1900)

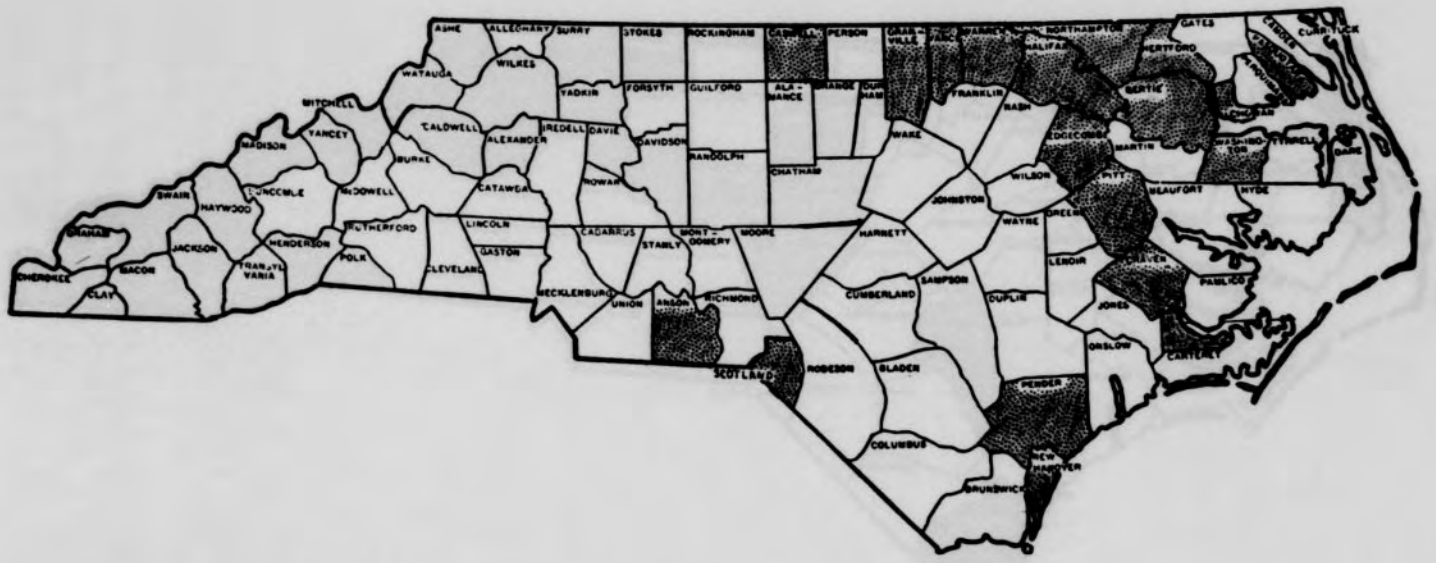
TOWNSHIP OR PRECINCT	VOTES FOR AMENDMENT	VOTES AGAINST AMENDMENT	% FOR AMENDMENT
Goldsboro # 1	1065	111	90.5
Goldsboro # 2	240	27	89.8
Town of Mount Olive	320	75	81.0
Town of Fremont	216	52	80.6
TOTAL	1841	265	87.5
Essentially Rural Townships			
Fork	184	169	52.2
Grantham	227	161	55.9
Providence	77	67	53.5
Dudley	70	116	37.6
Indian Springs	118	111	51.5
White Hall	93	56	62.4
New Hope # 1	134	80	62.6
New Hope # 2	99	72	57.9
Saulston	194	85	69.5
Sauls Crossroads	202	160	55.8
Great Swamp	240	42	85.2
Pikeville #1	116	102	53.2
Pikeville #2	144	120	54.5
Stony Creek	99	210	32.0
TOTAL	1997	1551	56.3

*Wayne County was the home of the Democratic nominee for governor in 1900, and had a population which was 43 per cent Negro.

APPENDIX

Map 1

THE NORTH CAROLINA BLACK BELT IN 1900

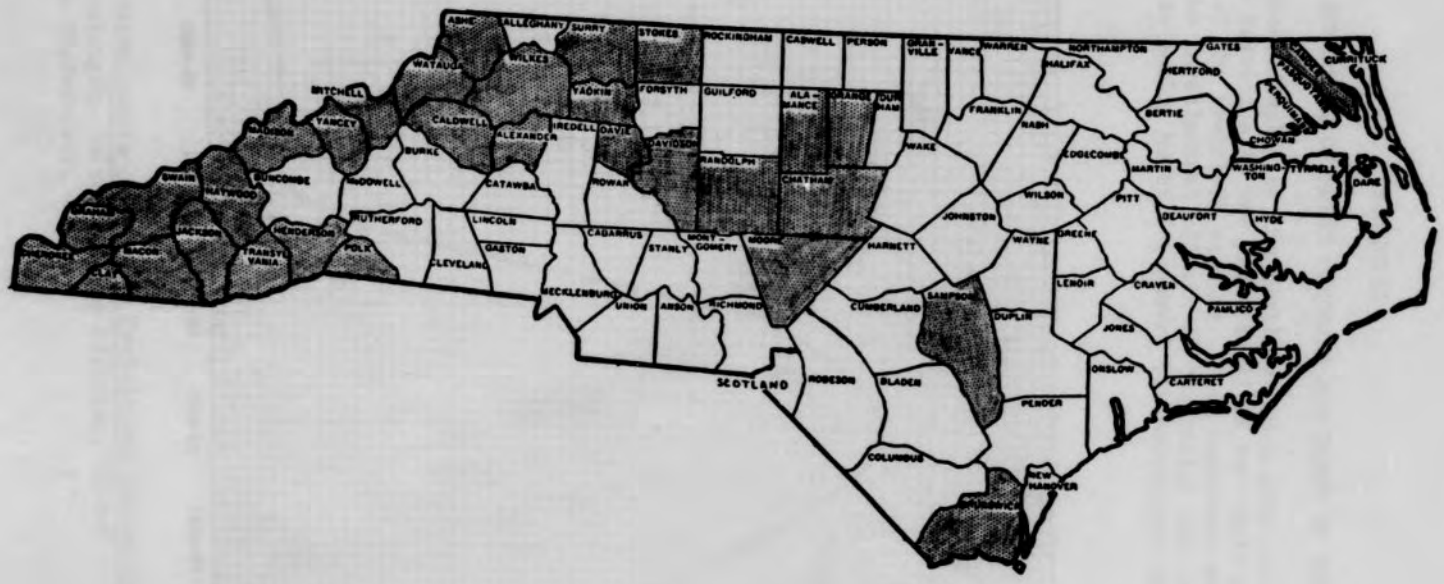


Counties where the Negro population exceeded 50 per cent.

APPENDIX

Map 2

THE VOTE ON NEGRO DISFRANCHISEMENT AUGUST 2, 1900

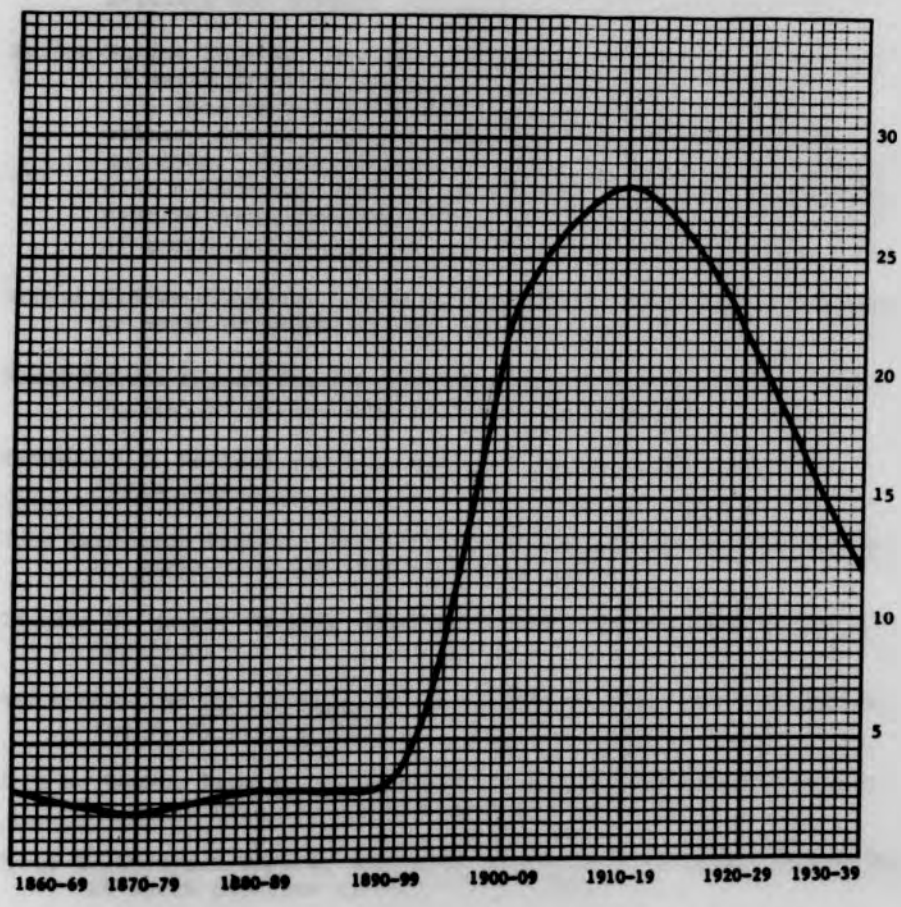


Counties which rejected the proposed suffrage amendment

APPENDIX

THE CIVIL WAR MONUMENTS OF NORTH CAROLINA AND DATES OF COMPLETION*

A graphical display of the Civil War monuments dedicated in North Carolina testifies to the groundswell of war nostalgia in the early decades of the twentieth century. This sentiment was an integral part of the intellectual climate of the period and contributed substantially to public hostility toward the Republican party and the Negro.



*Mrs. S. L. Smith, North Carolina's Confederate Monuments and Memorials (Raleigh: North Carolina Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, 1941).

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This manuscript collection contains a wealth of primary source material regarding the elections of 1898 and 1900. These extensive holdings provide the researcher with a backstage look at the movement against disfranchisement in North Carolina and are indispensable for any study of grass roots political activity during this period.

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