Black Discourses in North Carolina, 1890-1902:

How North Carolina's Black Politicians and Press Narrated and Influenced the Tumultuous Era of Fusion Politics

By Dannette Sharpley

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors

Department of History, Duke University

Under the advisement of Dr. Nancy MacLean

April 13, 2018

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to write an Honors Thesis in the History Department. When I returned to school after many years of separation, I was prepared for challenging work. I expected to be pushed intellectually and emotionally. I expected to struggle through all-nighters, moments of self-doubt, and even academic setbacks. I did not, however, imagine that I could feel so passionate or excited about what I learned in class. I didn't expect to even undertake such a large project, let alone arrive at the finish line. And I didn't imagine the sense of accomplishment at having completed something that I feel is meaningful beyond my own individual education. The process of writing this thesis has been all those things and more.

I would first like to thank everyone at the History Department who supports this Honors Distinction program, because this amazing process would not be possible without your work. Thank you very much to Dr. Nancy MacLean for advising me on this project. It was in Professor MacLean's History of Modern Social Movements class that I became obsessed with North Carolina's role in the Populist movement of the nineteenth, thus beginning this journey. As my thesis advisor, Nancy instructed, challenged, and encouraged me in innumerable ways. I would also like to thank Dr. Adriane Lentz-Smith for advising me in the History major and supporting the thesis as well. And thank you to Dr. Dirk Bonker for your support and guidance in the Honors Seminar. It is safe to say that without the brilliance and direction of Professors MacLean, Lentz-Smith, and Bonker, this thesis would not exist. Other historians and scholars who encouraged and support this project were Dr. Janet Ewald, Brother Larry Thomas, Dr. David Cecelski, Dr. Cynthia Greenlee, and Dr. Timothy B. Tyson. I would also like to recognize the powerful work of Dr. Glenda Elizabeth Gilmer, Crystal N. Feimster, and so many other scholars from who I learned and drew on for this project.

Thank you to my husband Sammy Truong, my mother Lillian, and my incredible children Baez and Maria Lillian, as well as other family and friends for supporting me through the last two years. You have tolerated a great deal of my surliness and absence, which I know was very difficult at times. I am grateful to my family for holding everything together while I worked at my "boring desk" in my "boring library," as my daughter was fond of saying. I want you to know that your loving support and generosity kept me going. Thank you to Grace and Sophie for being there when I needed a little extra encouragement. Thank you to the History Thesis cohort, because you all are basically incredible people for welcoming such an unconventional character into your precious circle. I can't wait to see all of the amazing things you accomplish. And thank you so much to Amber for knowing when I needed the most diligent study partner in the world, and when I just needed a hot cup of tea and a keekee.

This thesis is dedicated to the Black communities of Eastern North Carolina, whose courage, brilliance, hard work, resilience, and, most of all, hope, inspired this project.

Abstract

In the late 1890s, Black North Carolina was a model and beacon for the race. In their own narrative of racial progress and advancement, these communities were recognized for accomplishments in education and literacy, enterprise, and social development. Towns like Wilmington and New Bern emerged from both the debasement of a slave economy and the devastation of civil war into communities that, while not perfect, provided opportunities and inspired countless Black people. In the ensuing years, when racial violence, disfranchisement and segregation consumed the state, the myriad gains made were severely diminished. Thousands of Black people lost homes, business, and communities to racial terror and white supremacist policies. Many, as in the case of the Wilmington race riot and coup, lost their lives. Despite the very capable efforts of historians and scholars to document and reflect on this history, there is still much work to be done. In seeking out the Black intellectual and public voices from the period, this thesis is striving to help flesh out the picture a little further. Much of the collective narrative is one of loss, of setbacks, suppression, and devastation; yet, there is far more to learn from Black North Carolinians of the turn of the century. I read hundreds of first-hand accounts, personal letters, newspapers articles, and editorials produced by Black people, from many different perspectives. What these voices most reflected for me, was not what people lost, but what they retained. What they refused to lose.

Table of Contents:

Acknowledgements 2
Abstract 4
Introduction 6
Chapter One: Progress and Precarity: Black Life in the 1890s 18
Chapter Two: “Come one! Come all!” Fusion Politics and Possibility 46
Chapter Three: “Too Much Democracy” 89
Conclusion 124
Bibliography 127

Introduction

When African-American Congressman George Henry White of North Carolina rose to address the United States House of Representatives on January 29, 1901, he knew that it was likely the last time he would have such an opportunity. In August of the previous year, the North Carolina General Assembly had passed a constitutional amendment that effectively disfranchised 90% of the African-American vote. The new law employed a combination of poll taxes and literacy tests that were not equally applied across all racial groups to expel Black men from electoral politics. This mass disfranchisement was both a nail in the coffin of a short-lived and tumultuous period of Black participation in politics and a crucial element in the construction of a new Southern social order--- Jim Crow. The repressive racial segregation that characterized Jim Crow depended on the exclusion of Black Southerners from politics, which North Carolina Democrats understood. Though he was in the final year of his second term representing North Carolina's "Black" Second District, Congressman White had already relocated his family out of the state and elected not to seek an additional term.[1] The Honorable Mr. White had risen, as he surely must have countless times before, to denounce the racism of his white Southern peers and advocate for Black enfranchisement.

First, Congressman White briefly addressed the topic currently at issue, which was a bill presented to the Committee on Agriculture regarding seed management.[2] Quickly, he shifted topics "to enter a plea for the colored man, the colored woman, the colored boy, and the colored

[1] Benjamin R. Justesen, In His Own Words: The Writings, Speeches, and Letters of George Henry White (Lincoln, Nebraska: IUniverse, 2004,) 179-180.
[2] George H. White, "Defense of the Negro Race, Charges Answered:" Speech of Honorable George H. White, of North Carolina, in the House of Representatives, January 29, 1901 (Washington D.C., 1901,) 3-4.

girl of this country…"[3] White said that he had made prior attempts to speak against North Carolina's disfranchisement legislation, "but the privilege was denied [him.]" Continuing, White addressed prior statements made by fellow North Carolina Congressman William Walton Kitchin (later North Carolina Governor, 1909-1913), who had been one of the principle architects and campaigners for disfranchisement. Kitchin and his party argued that, while Black men who didn't own property and failed literacy tests did not warrant voice in politics, white men of the same status, by virtue of race and heredity, deserved the right.[4] And while White was essentially "drawing dead," challenging Kitchin's argument after the amendment had already become law, he nevertheless expressed his objections.

Congressman White noted how the state's amendment violated the nation's Constitution, specifically the 14th and 15th Amendments that guaranteed Black people citizenship and voting rights. He also challenged the claim of North Carolina Democrats that failure to disfranchise the Black vote would lead to a reckless and amoral domination of African-Americans over all aspects of Southern life. This claim, often referred to as "Black rule" or "negro domination" by North Carolina Democrats, was the centerpiece of a propaganda strategy and scheme known as the White Supremacy Campaign of 1898.[5] The state's Democrats executed this campaign,

---

[3] George H. White, "Defense of the Negro Race, Charges Answered:" Speech of Honorable George H. White, of North Carolina, in the House of Representatives, January 29, 1901 (Washington D.C., 1901) 4.

[4]State Executive Committee Democratic Party (N.C.), "The Democratic Hand Book, 1898" (Raleigh, N.C. Edwards & Broughton. 1898.), 84.; Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 204-205.

[5] For descriptions on the White Supremacy Campaign of 1898 see: H. Leon Prather, Sr. "We Have Taken a City: A Centennial Essay," in *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and its Legacy*, editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 20-1; Glenda E. Gilmore, "Murder, Memory, and the Flight of the Incubus," in *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and its Legacy*, editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 89-90.; Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 65-66, 82-83, 91-99.

Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 136-145.

which included anti-Black[6] propaganda, election fraud, and racial terror, to disrupt an alliance between Black and white voters opposed to their policies. Beginning in the early 1880s, a national movement of farmers and laborers began disrupting the hegemony of the two major political parties. Across the country from Nebraska to Georgia, this movement, known both as The Peoples' Party and Populism, used a tactic of strategic political alliances, called Fusion, to undermine the traditional power structure and remake politics at every level. In North Carolina, this Fusion of Populists who had defected from the Democratic Party and Black and white Republicans was extremely successful. By 1896, Fusionists controlled most statewide offices, the General Assembly, and numerous municipalities. Merely two years later, however, Democrats had successfully used the rallying cry of white supremacy and the specter of "negro domination" to disrupt the Fusion alliance and retake control in very short order.

African-American leaders like Congressman White used their political and intellectual clout to challenge the cry of "negro domination" and fight to maintain and expand rights for Black people in the state. In his congressional address, White stated, "There never has been, nor ever will be, any negro domination in that State, and no one knows it any better than the Democratic party. It is a convenient howl, however, often resorted to in order to consummate a diabolical purpose by scaring the weak and gullible whites…" Despite his eloquence on that day in 1901, Congressman White wasn't successful in halting the tide of Black disfranchisement

[6] From Movement for Black Lives: The Council for Democratizing Education defines anti-Blackness as being a two-part formation that both voids Blackness of value, while systematically marginalizing Black people and their issues. The first form of anti-Blackness is overt racism. Society also associates un-politically correct comments with the overt nature of anti-Black racism. Beneath this anti-black racism is the covert structural and systemic racism which categorically predetermines the socioeconomic status of Blacks in this country. The structure is held in place by anti-Black policies, institutions, and ideologies. The second form of anti-Blackness is the unethical disregard for anti-Black institutions and policies. This disregard is the product of class, race, and/or gender privilege certain individuals experience due to anti-Black institutions and policies. This form of anti-Blackness is protected by the first form of overt racism. Accessed April 13, 2018, https://policy.m4bl.org/glossary/.

across the South. His passionate and compelling speech as well as his own life's example, however, illustrated both the intellectual and cultural fortitude that carried the Black race out of enslavement and through the hardships yet to come under Jim Crow.

This legacy of Black intellectual life in North Carolina at the turn of the 19th century is the subject of my thesis. The years between the 1890s and early 1900s, as evidenced by the tumultuous period of Fusion politics, the drastic shifts in Black enfranchisement, and the onset of Jim Crow were a critical phase in North Carolina's history. In a time in which segregation and disfranchisement were rapidly becoming law in the South, North Carolina stood apart as a place of optimism for millions of Black Southerners.[7] Black communities in North Carolina had made tremendous strides in education and literacy, economic development, and political participation post-Civil War, through Reconstruction, and the late century. The Eastern region of the state, perhaps more than any Republican stronghold in the South, saw an increase not only in Black voting, but in office holding and local governance.[8] White's career, which peaked in his two successful bids for U.S. Congressman, exemplified this progress. Yet, White's political successes and setbacks at the end of the decade also reflected the brutal backlash which manifested in disfranchisement and segregation.

This thesis will explore how prominent Black intellectuals, journalists, and politicians shaped public discourse during a time of tremendous upheaval, as well as how those events in turn impacted their lives. Throughout this period, politicians like Congressman White, journalists, and other leaders in the Black community engaged these tumultuous developments

[7] Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901: The Black Second* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981,) 227.
[8] Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901: The Black Second* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981,) 342.

via their various public platforms. For Congressman White, his work as a practicing attorney and educator in Eastern North Carolina, as well as his prominence in the Republican Party, provided significant platforms. Another important Republican politician in Eastern North Carolina, John C. Dancy, and African Methodist Episcopal Bishop Charles Calvin Pettey published the *Star of Zion* newspaper. *Star of Zion*, which was produced in Charlotte, became one of the premier African-American periodicals in the country disseminating news and editorials. Sarah Dudley Pettey, Bishop Pettey's wife, was a frequent contributor to the *Star* and an important public voice on the rights of both Black people and women. These North Carolina figures, among others, exemplified the Black intellectual and political class that is obscured by narratives of the period that do not recognize their impact on public discourses.

In this thesis, I argue that Black North Carolinians generated a robust and complex political and intellectual voice in this period, in dialogue with and in resistance to the discourse driven by powerful whites in politics and press. My assertion is that the intellectual life presented by primary sources is nuanced and impactful, revealing the hopefulness, anxieties, disappointment, and determination of Black North Carolinians. Though topics like Populism and Fusion, the White Supremacy Campaign, and Black enfranchisement are the subjects of countless important works on North Carolina politics, this thesis attempts to offer a fresh vantage point of the period.

In search of Black intellectual and political discourses, I focused my research on newspapers created by African-Americans in the late 1890s and early 1900s. Patrick S. Washburn's *The African American Newspaper: Voice of Freedom* provides perspective that suggests the key role that the Black press played in influencing and advocating for African-American communities in this period. In the 30 years after the Civil War, as many as 1,200

Black newspapers were produced, most in the latter two decades. Most of these newspapers (70%) were created in the South where most Black people still lived. Some had hundreds of subscribers, while many of the most successful and influential papers claimed subscriptions in the thousands. But, it is likely that readership far exceeded subscriptions. Historian Martin Dann noted that newspapers were commonly shared communally, passed around by individuals and posted in social gathering places. One newspaper could make its way through an entire family or neighborhood. Consequently, Washburn asserts that one newspaper could have been read by as many as 100 people, many of whom were literate but couldn't afford to buy subscriptions.[9]

The *Star of Zion* was one of the main sources for my research. The newspaper was the premier organ of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A.M.E. Zion) Church and grew into one of the twelve most important African-American periodicals in the country.[10] Bishop Charles Calvin Pettey and John C. Dancy began publishing the *Star* out of Charlotte every Thursday in the mid-1880s. The newspaper was produced to encourage Victorianism and temperance. In addition to the *Star*, I researched many other North Carolina papers produced by Black people, including the *Wilmington Daily Record*, *Wilson Blade*, and *Raleigh Gazette*. The main sources that I researched outside of the state include the *Afro-American Sentinel* (Omaha, Nebraska), the *Colored American* (Washington DC), *The Freeman* (Indianapolis, Indiana), the *Broad Ax* (Salt Lake City, Union,) *Colored Citizen* (Helena, Montana,) *New York Age* (New York, New York), and the *Washington Bee* (Washington, DC).

---

[9] Patrick S. Washburn, *The African American Newspaper: Voices of Freedom* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2006,) 49-50.

[10] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 12.

The Black newspapers and periodicals outside of the state and region are useful to include as supplements to the North Carolina sources. Each of these newspapers had national reach, which meant that North Carolinians read these papers and incorporated the news and perspective into their own thinking. Further, the North Carolina newspapers frequently reprinted and referred to these additional sources, and vice versa, creating a network of information and perspectives available to readers of each paper. These newspapers closely followed North Carolina politics, and they are critical to an exploration of how Black political and intellectual life took shape in the state. I reviewed articles and editorials from the white press as well, particularly North Carolina newspapers *Charlotte Daily Observer*, *Raleigh News and Observer*, and *Wilmington Messenger*.

In addition to the newspapers, I researched speeches by Congressman White and other politicians that appear in the Congressional Record and press. Finally, the personal correspondences and manuscripts of Black and white leaders of the period helped to further flesh out this aspect of Black intellectual history. I deliberately sought out a range of political orientations among the Black sources to gain a more complex view of their contributions to public discourse. My own exploration of these sources is supported by the work of several important historians of the US South. Glenda Gilmore's *Gender and Jim Crow* was a vital resource in my thesis project, as Gilmore's text is a comprehensive social and organizational history that prioritizes the voices of Black North Carolinians. Gilmore's text includes a comprehensive biography of Dudley Pettey, which helps to better understand her intellectual and political development. Other important resources for this thesis are *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* edited by David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson; Helen G. Edmonds' *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina, 1894-1901*;

Crystal N. Feimster's *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching*; and Lawrence Goodwyn's *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America*.

The three chapters of the thesis: 1) locates the Black intellectual voices in historical and social context; 2) explores the political developments between 1896 and 1898, including the White Supremacy Campaign and Wilmington coup; and 3 recounts the election aftermath and push toward Jim Crow. In the first chapter, I assert that many Black North Carolinians of the period held an optimistic view of the progress toward racial equality. Whether born into slavery or post-emancipation, these individuals were often skilled craftsmen, business proprietors, professionals, and civic and religious leaders. This educated, middle-class and middle-class aspiring group both represented and stood apart from Black North Carolinians who had not been afforded the same educational or professional opportunities. Yet, in their individual and collective accomplishments, they embodied the aspirations of millions of Black people from every walk of life. Frequently framing Black peoples' efforts to gain civil rights in "racially optimistic" terms, this community took pride in all that Black people had accomplished and attained since enslavement and felt confident that this "racial progress" would continue. They believed that racial and social equality was the righteous, logical, and natural progression of society. Publicly and privately, many Black politicians, intellectuals, and community leaders spoke confidently and progressively about issues, from female suffrage to economic and educational attainment by African-Americans. In the early 1890s, despite the threat that Jim Crow posed to Black Southerners, the optimism with which many addressed the economic, social, and political aspirations of their race was well-founded.

In order to provide a vivid account of the subjects of this thesis, the first chapter will paint a picture of the communities out of which figures like John C. Dancy, Congressman

George Henry White, and Sarah Dudley Pettey emerged. I specifically highlight Black New Bern and Wilmington, which were two communities that embodied the progress and optimism of the period. Chapter one presents a picture of life for these communities, to better understand their values, aspirations, and beliefs. The first chapter also identifies the mounting tension between some Black and white North Carolina communities, as represented in the push toward Black disfranchisement and Jim Crow segregation. Finally, the first chapter explores some of the ways in which Black public discourses communicated the racial optimism and employed the narrative of progress to counter the threats to equality.

The second chapter covers the period between 1896 and 1898, which encompassed the height and precipitous decline of Fusion politics. The alliance between Populists and Republicans enabled more Black people to be elected or appointed to office. And, the changes that the Fusion government made to election laws encouraged an increase in Black registration and voting. Fusion emboldened and enabled the tenuous interracial alliance to overthrow Democratic control, mirroring the other areas of racial progress that Black North Carolinians celebrated. Yet, these steps toward racial equality, from economic and educational attainment to increased political participation, angered many whites. The Democratic Party stoked this resentment into a racist and repressive campaign that culminated in the 1898 election and November 10th riot and coup in Wilmington.

In chapter two, I explore Black perspectives on the peak of Fusion politics and the 1898 election, which became a referendum on Black enfranchisement and racial and social equality. Chapter two includes three sections that present political history from Reconstruction through the early 1890s, the 1896 election, and finally, the 1898 election and immediate aftermath. This chapter recounts how the Democrats both lost power under Fusion and then successfully ripped

apart the fragile alliance before setting their sights on Black enfranchisement. As the campaign unfolded, Black intellectuals and politicians recognized that the threat of disfranchisement and Jim Crow, which they had consistently resisted, became a greater certainty. Consequently, Black public discourse reflected an awareness of the high stakes at play even beyond the state, as they attempted to preserve Black enfranchisement and resist Jim Crow.

Finally, chapter three focuses on the aftermath of the 1989 election and the Democratic Party's two-year campaign to pass a constitutional amendment disfranchising Black voters. Throughout the year, news of the repressive tactics of the Democratic Party campaign traveled far and wide in the country. And then, once the Democrats had disrupted Fusion and reclaimed control of the state government, they immediately set about instituting Jim Crow segregation and seeking Black disfranchisement. In three segments, I discuss Black reactions to the 1898 campaign and Wilmington coup, African-Americans both in and beyond the state denounced the campaign for its specious claim of "Black rule" and paramilitary-style violence and intimidation, which resembled elections in South Carolina and elsewhere.[11] Black newspapers published countless articles and editorials addressing the campaign, as well as the Democratic Party's strategy to poison the debate with its cry of "negro domination." Black politicians like John C. Dancy and Congressman White became targets of the racist campaign, to which they responded by writing defenses that were published widely in Black and white press. Finally, when the election ended, public discourse lingered on the possibility of federal intervention and rapidly turned to disfranchisement when the legislation was proposed in December of that year.

[11] Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 148-149.

Though the events of 1898 were devastating to Black political power, the fight against the "civil death" that segregation and disfranchisement presented continued beyond the election.[12] Through their fight to amend the state's constitution, segregate public spaces, and repeal the 14th and 15th Amendments, Democrats sought a return to the old Southern order in which whites dominated and Black people served at their pleasure. Yet, it was perhaps the failure of President McKinley and the Republican Party to intervene on behalf of the terrorized Wilmington community that particularly angered and disappointed many Black people. As the newspapers, speeches, and activism demonstrated, however, Black North Carolinians were not undone by those obstacles. In the concluding chapter, I will explore how many Black politicians and intellectuals were encouraged by past progress and galvanized by their outrage to fight the lengthy battle back to the ballot for Southerners. Through their public statements and actions, we see how Black Southerners did not abandon their aspirations for civil rights or social equality, and neither did they lose hope. In fact, the setbacks of the turn of the century inspired sometimes tame, often bold and fresh, strategies that ultimately advanced the cause of racial equality that continues today.

Considered by many whites to be unfriendly, Congressman White was known to demand equal treatment of his white counterparts in politics.[13] Never one to adhere to the deferential role to which African-Americans had been ascribed, White demanded to be addressed as "Sir," in the same manner as his white peers in Congress. And yet, before his second term came a close, changing political winds had undercut his own political voice, and that of thousands of Black North Carolinians. For this project, I first asked the question: from where did figures like

[12] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 119.
[13] Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 86-87.

Congressman White derive the confidence and optimism to strive and agitate for racial and social equality in such a precarious moment of Southern history? And how did they utilize their platforms to shape the dialogue and minimize the attacks against Black aspirations for full citizenship? These questions led down a fascinating road of discovery in which the sheer prolific nature of the Black press was a revelation. Try as I did, it was impossible to read every single article and editorial engaging issues of racial progress and the quest for equality in the period. And still harder to imagine how Black North Carolinians from every walk of life thought, spoke, or even voted about these issues. Yet, from the existing press and public accounts a vivid picture of profound racial optimism, tempered by sober reflection, took shape. And the deeper question of how those communities weathered the highs and lows of the period.

Chapter One: Progress and Precarity: Black Life in the 1890s

> "… The Negro in the South is emerging from old conditions, when he is making plain the fact that he cannot much longer be morally and mentally shackled by unjust legislation strictly enforced or just legislation ignored in practice, and when he presents a figure more conspicuous in political calculations than at any time since he was endowed with a suffrage which he may or may not be able to exercise. It is no longer a question of the South doing justice to the Negro, but of the Negro, as an important part of the South, doing justice to himself."
>
> *Star of Zion*, October 8, 1896

In her capacity as the women's columnist for the A.M.E. Zion church's national *Star of Zion* newspaper, Sarah Dudley Pettey was empowered to influence the minds of countless young Black women. Sarah could be counted on to provide the latest gossip and news about "prominent" Black society, from weddings to club meetings. In her inaugural column, Sarah Dudley colorfully expressed her "rapturous emotions and delight inexpressible" at having the opportunity to "salute the readers of the luminous *Star* for the first time..."[14] Dudley Pettey made it very clear from the start, however, that she would write far more than gossip and fashion tips for the *Star's* large readership. The column continued, "I greet you with a hearty good will for all, malice for none, and the elevation of oppressed humanity as my cardinal creed…" She expressed her faith both in God and the "brotherhood of man," as well as her distaste for the "unjustly" discriminatory treatment of formerly enslaved Black people. From the start, she communicated an energetic optimism about social equality, as well as a critique of the racial injustice of the day.[15]

---

[14] *Star of Zion,* August 6, 1896, 2.

[15] Elizabeth Lundeen, "Sarah Dudley Pettey: 'A New Age Woman' and the Politics of Race, Class, and Gender in North Carolina" in *North Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times* editors Michele Gillespie and Sally G. McMillen (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 2014,) 262.

In the column, Sarah Dudley Pettey conveyed certainty that she and her female readers would not be “narrowed down to the limited confines of womanhood simply.” Dudley Pettey knew that her audience had interests beyond fashion tips, recipes, and “choice tidbits." As she explained, “… [they] can recall the time when [they] were interested only in [their] own hearth-stone, in [their] neighborhood--- after a while [their] town or city; by and by [they] became interested in the affairs of [their] State.” This maturation eventually led women like Dudley Pettey to a “patriotism, like some long concealed volcanic crater, burst[ing] forth within [their] bosoms [with] a love for country.” Dudley Pettey’s interest was the fate of “humanity at large,” and she encouraged other Black women to be similarly engaged.”

Dudley Pettey’s optimistic view of her own place in society reflected a common theme of Black public discourse of the early 1890s. Through speeches and press, many Black journalists, politicians, and intellectuals throughout the country articulated confidence in the country’s march toward racial and social equality. Even in North Carolina, where Dudley Pettey’s parents still recalled the degradation of enslavement, the post-Civil War period provided much cause for optimism. Though many Black North Carolinians identified with this racial optimism, they also recognized the precarity and uncertainty of the strides toward equality. In North Carolina, where racial integration and Black voting rights were never secure, the optimistic view was necessarily tempered by this awareness. The Eastern region, with a burgeoning Black middle class and political leadership, reflected both the progress and precarity of this question for full citizenship and social equality.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine both the optimism and the precarity of life for Black North Carolinians in the early 1890s. The chapter explores these two themes in three sections. The first section introduces the historical context in which many Black North

Carolinians developed an optimistic view of racial and social equality, despite the instability. This section explores how the majority-Black Eastern counties emerged from Reconstruction with several strong, culturally and economically vibrant communities that inspired hope for Black people nationwide. The discussion will focus on New Bern, the largest town in the second Congressional district, and Wilmington, two exemplars of Black progress. Further, these two cities were home to all three figures. The first section then presents brief biographical sketches that demonstrate how White, Dancy, and Dudley Pettey three influential products of this racial striving and optimism. The second and third sections examines both the way Black leaders engaged the themes of progress and precarity. Both inside and outside of the state, Black journalists and politicians promoted the narrative of racial progress, even while reporting on the forces that opposed the quest for racial equality.

As the only location of concentrated Black voters in the mid-1890s, North Carolina's "Black Second" district is significant to the narrative of Black progress and optimism. The second became a majority-Black district because of Democratic Party gerrymandering in 1872.[16] At that time, the jurisdiction included Craven, Jones, Halifax, Northampton, Warren, Edgecombe, Greene, Lenoir, Wayne, and Wilson counties, nearly all of which had Black majorities. Though there were a few small towns throughout the region, most of the district remained rural in this period. Yet, even in the rural territories, many Black people owned and farmed land. In the late 1880s, about 10% of the farmland in Warren, Bertie (joined the district

[16] North Carolina History Project, "The "Black Second" Congressional District, 1872-1901," North Carolina History Project, accessed December 10, 2017, http://northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/the-Black-second-congressional-district-1872-1901/.

in 1883,) Craven, Jones, Halifax, and Northampton Counties was Black-owned: a high proportion compared to the rest of the country.[17] Though most Black farmers were sharecroppers who cultivated land they did not own, the proportion of Black-owned land was evidence of racial progress in the region.

Of the several small towns in the "Black Second," the majority-Black town of New Bern was the largest and perhaps most hopeful for the race. By the time White began teaching and practicing law in New Bern in the 1880s, the town was already a beacon and model of Black progress. In 1862, New Bern's population was at least 50% African-American, with one third of those residents (over 700) being free people.[18] Many of those African-Americans had fled slavery and the Confederacy for a coastal town that offered both an alternative and a portal to most any other place in the country. Over the next few years, thousands of "refugees" from the Confederacy would find a home in New Bern, most notably in the Union Army settlement of James City on the outskirts of town.[19]

In addition to the Union Army, Black and white missionaries from the North established churches in coastal communities like New Bern to provide for the needs of a vast war refugee population. Historian David Cecelski noted, however, in "Abraham Galloway: Wilmington's Lost Prophet and the Rise of Black Radicalism in the American South" that New Bern's Black residents were far from a "downtrodden" population in need of charity. In this community, Cecelski found elements of political savvy and cultural militancy that enabled them to survive

---

[17] Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901: The Black Second* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981,) 26.

[18] "Remembering the Battle of New Bern on Its 150th Anniversary," History.com, March 08, 2012, accessed December 12, 2017, http://www.history.com/news/remembering-the-battle-of-new-bern-on-its-150th-anniversary.; David S. Cecelski, "Abraham H. Galloway: Wilmington's Lost Prophet and the Rise of Black Radicalism in the American South," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 42-45.

[19] Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901: The Black Second* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981,) 8-9.

the tumult of a war-torn society and even aid the Union cause. Thousands of New Bern's "refugees" served the federal cause as spies and recruits into the Union army. [20] The New Bern of the 1890s, with its prominent Black bankers, lawyers, barbers, and butchers, was a "reassuring sight" to Black Southerners.[2122]

One hundred miles down the coast from New Bern, sat Wilmington, another compelling model for social progress and optimism among Black North Carolinians. Though not in the "Black Second," Wilmington was another majority-Black town that imparted to Black North Carolinians a sense of racial progress and possibility. While control of New Bern was strategic during the war, as the largest city in a state that was still overwhelmingly rural, the taking of Wilmington signaled almost certain victory for the Union.[23] When federal troops entered the city in February 1865, a period of rapid change and transition began.[24] In addition to the influx of federal troops, thousands of Black and white refugees came to Wilmington. Between 1860 and 1880, Wilmington's population rose from 9,500 to over 17,000.[25] When war generated a rapid population influx, Wilmington experienced massive food shortage and required the urgent response of federal and local actors. As the people gained control of the crisis brought on by war,

---

[20] David S. Cecelski, "Abraham H. Galloway: Wilmington's Lost Prophet and the Rise of Black Radicalism in the American South," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 45, 50.
[21] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 28.
[22] *Star of Zion*, Jan 21, 1897, 2 article on Mr. Isaac H. Smith, "wealthy banker" of New Bern, NC.
[23] In 2000, two members of the North Carolina General Assembly initiated a bill calling for a commission to investigate the events related to the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898. As a result of this legislation, a commission was formed and a report produced in May 2006. The lengthy report, containing extensive research conducted primarily by Principal Researcher LeRae Umfleet, covers the historical context of Black and white Wilmington leading up to 1898, the events involving the race riot, and the aftermath and impact of those events. This paragraph draws significantly from the sketch of Wilmington between the 1860s and late-1890s. The commission's report was produced out of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources at the State Archives. It can be accessed online at http://www.history.ncdcr.gov/1898-wrrc/report/report.htm.2-3.
[24] LeRae Umfleet, Principal Researcher, "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Report," 1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission, Research Branch, Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources (May 31, 2006,) 2-3.
[25] Ibid., 33.

the city began to make a turnaround. While artisans and entrepreneurs strove to fill a vacuum where the city lacked services, the industries that relied on ports and railroad systems gradually regained their footing. Finally, as Northern investment increased, industries like cotton mills expanded, offering steady employment and fueling an industrial boom. Consequently, five years after the war ended, Wilmington experienced an era of economic progress that was in many ways unique for the state.

Another relatively unique aspect of Wilmington's positive turnaround is that many Black people were at the forefront of that recovery. First, in 1890, over 11,000 out of the population of 20,000 were Black.[26] Further, as racial segregation had not been codified in North Carolina, the majority Black population in Wilmington had access to the same economic opportunities and public accommodations as whites. Both races often patronized the same businesses, many owned and operated by successful Black families. And while most Black Wilmingtonians were surely unskilled laborers filling the ranks of the town's low wage workers, this was also true for most whites. Even as early as the 1860s, some Black and white workers joined labor unions that organized and agitated for their mutual interests.[27] In 1865, Black stevedores who worked the lucrative port of Wilmington staged a strike, for example, seeking better pay and conditions. [28] These elements placed Black Wilmingtonians at the center of the city's efforts to rebuild. Owing to collaboration between federal stakeholders and the industrious community, Wilmington not only recovered from war, but experienced a boom.

Wilmington was the product of the successful recovery of the 1870s and 1880s, which was a source of pride for Blacks across the state. The 2006 state commission report on the 1898

[26] H. Leon Prather, Sr., "We Have Taken a City," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 16.
[27] Umfleet, "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Report," 32.
[28] Ibid., 32.

riot in Wilmington documented the uncommon success, particularly of the Black middle class. In the community were a variety of successful Black tradesman, including butchers, bakers, and undertakers. In 1890, Wilmington boasted a successful Black builder, a banking and loan firm, and a medical doctor who built and occupied one of the nicest homes in town.[29] As in New Bern, an extensive network of churches, literary clubs, schools, labor associations, and civic groups linked and served all classes of Black Wilmington. If New Bern was a beacon of optimism and opportunity for Black people in the late 19th century, Wilmington was a strobe light.

While economic, social, and political development marked racial progress in the region, there were cultural and religious elements as well. Like White, Dancy, and Dudley Pettey, many Black North Carolinians embraced a cadre of values and behaviors that they believed would directly result in racial progress, and ultimately, equality. This strict moralistic code, which adhered to the ideals of British Victorianism, included industriousness, thrift, self-moderation, and service to others.[30] If Victorianism represented the "best" of middle-class white society, then many reasoned that these values would elevate the Black race to its "best" as well. Further, by adopting this lifestyle, Black middle-class and middle-class aspiring people could place themselves on equal social and moral footing with whites.[31] Many prominent Black figures of the period prescribed this moral and social code for all Black people, not only themselves. While they identified strongly with their race and wanted to see progress for the whole community, they nevertheless did not want their own place in Southern society dictated by the color line.

---

[29] Commission's report, 47-50

[30] Sandy Dwayne Martin, *For God and Race: The Religious and Political Leadership of AMEZ Bishop James Walker Hood* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1999,) 121-122.

[31] Elizabeth Lundeen, "Sarah Dudley Pettey: A New Age Woman" in *North Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times* editors Michele Gillespie and Sally G. McMillen (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 2014,) 265.

In 1897, Bishop Alexander Walters, editor of *Star of Zion*, gave a lecture to the Black male students of North Carolina's Biddle University in which he connected this Victorian moralism to racial progress. Bishop Walters promoted a narrative of U.S. history in which Black students could take pride. He spoke about the race's invaluable contribution to the nation's development while laboring under slavery. In Walters' estimation, Black college students in 1897 should look back on Black laborers under slavery as a moral contribution. Building on that legacy, Walters said that, "[t]he negro [of 1897] should strive to live up to the nobler principles of life. He should educate, be industrious, economize, obtain homes and be law abiding." Walters connected the moralistic standard that he attributed to the formerly enslaved to the characteristic optimism of the period, concluding: "[t]hat God made all things work together for the good of the race in the past should be a guarantee for all time to come."[32] This fervent belief that Victorianism would lead to individual and racial progress is manifested in the lives of White, Dancy, and Dudley Pettey in varying measure.

Perhaps owing to this industrious quality, strides in literacy and education also marked racial progress and inspired optimism in the region. Prior to the Civil War, opportunities to become literate were withheld from enslaved people by law and force. When chattel slavery ended, newly freed Black Southerners worked hard to become literate and educated, and to extend those opportunities to others. Literacy rates at the tail end of the century reflected those efforts. The 1890 Census found that 1.4 million, or 19% of Black youth and adolescents in the South Atlantic region were enrolled in common public schools.[33] This number reflected a 62% increase over the figure in the previous decennial census. By comparison, the rate of increase for

[32] *Star of Zion* Other articles that reflect these values include: *The Freeman,* January 18, 1896, 2.
[33] Robert A. Margo, "Race and Schooling in the South: A Review of the Evidence," in *Race and Schooling in the South, 1880-1950: An Economic History*, editor Robert A. Margo (University of Chicago Press, January, 1990,) 6-12.

white youth in the same period was lower--- 48% over the 1880 figure. In North Carolina, while African-Americans were only one third of the population, the amount enrolled in school was 117,017 compared with 208,844 whites.[34] In Craven County, home of New Bern, 3800 of the county's 20,533 residents were enrolled in common public schools, two-thirds of which (2270) were Black. And in New Hanover County (home of Wilmington), 2911 of the county's 24,026 were enrolled. Of those approximately 2900 students, 1600 were Black and 1300, white.

Further evidence of the significance placed on education can be seen in the investment in the "Colored Normal Schools" set up to educate children and young adults throughout the region. Under Reconstruction, the Freedman's Bureau, Northern missionaries, and local Black leaders worked together to establish both public and private schools to benefit Black youth either born into enslavement or in the years after emancipation. "Normal" schools were a significant aspect of the social infrastructure, where Black youth received an education, teachers served the community and developed professionally, and founders and administrators took on leadership roles. The December 15, 1898 issue of *Star of Zion* included an article on the "Education of the Negro" that celebrated the number of Black schools, students, and teachers in the country. The article particularly noted that North Carolina (and Georgia) led the way in institutions of higher learning, and that Black churches had been the primary investors in educating Black youth.[35] Underscoring the last point, a January 24, 1896 article in the *Charlotte Daily Observer* reported that the A.M.E. Zion Church had committed itself to raising $100,000 to support a "Colored Literary Club."[36] John C. Dancy was involved in the project. Both the *Star* and *Daily Observer* articles illustrate the importance that many Black North Carolinians placed on literacy and

[34] Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 225-229. Appendix Tables 1, 2.
[35] "Education of the Negro," *Star of Zion*, December 15, 1898, 5.
[3636] "Colored Literary Club," January 24, 1898, 4.

education. The figures on literacy and education, and the investment in normal schools, support the idea that Black North Carolinians invested in literacy and education as a component of racial progress.

George Henry White's life and career also exemplified the hopefulness of racial progress in the region. White, who is recognized for striving for racial equality throughout his life, was born in December of 1852 in Rosindale (Bladen County), a rural community in Eastern North Carolina. He was the son of a free farmer and an enslaved mother of whom very little is known. His formal education began as an adolescent at Allen's Whitin Normal School, founded in Lumberton (Cumberland County) by African-American pastor David P. Allen. [37] He continued his education at Howard University, the prestigious Black college in Washington, DC.

Before his political career began with his election to the state House of Representatives, White was established in New Bern first as a teacher and later as one of the few practicing Black attorneys in the state. [38] When White joined the Black New Bern community in 1880, the marks of social progress were evident. Black New Bernians could point to the number of African-American schools, benevolent societies, churches, and businesses, for instance, to find cause for optimism. Into this community, White came eager to make a positive contribution of his own. Reflecting an investment in education for the race, White petitioned the legislature to open more schools for Black kids and himself taught and served as principal at one of the state schools.

[37] LEARN NC Has Been Archived, accessed December 12, 2017, http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-newsouth/7887.
[38] Benjamin R. Justesen, *In His Own Words: The Writings, Speeches, and Letters of George Henry White* (Lincoln, Nebraska: IUniverse, 2004,) 42.

From his home in New Bern (and later in Tarboro), White served his community as an educator, attorney, and advocate, all the while pursuing an historic career in politics.

A friend and colleague of Congressman White, John C. Dancy also embodied the hopeful prospects for Black North Carolinians who adopted Victorian values in this period. Dancy was born in the small Eastern North Carolina town of Tarboro in 1857. At the time of Dancy's birth, his father had purchased his own freedom, but that did not legally secure his son's freedom. After emancipation, Dancy attended a local public school as an adolescent and then spent some time as a student at Howard. Dancy also taught in Eastern North Carolina before working in local press as a typographer. Reflecting a view of racial progress that was moderately optimistic, Dancy developed a reputation for his social conservatism and commitment to moral piety. Often compared to Tuskegee president Booker T. Washington, with whom he shared a close friendship, Dancy prescribed self-reliance, hard work, and patience for the Black race. An August 1895 editorial written by Dancy entitled "Our Worst Enemy," typified his views. He instructed Black educators to focus their efforts, "not on what [the race] wants, but rather with what is necessary and essential for its growth and expansion…" He criticized the Black race for having failed to earn the "esteem and respect of the progressive citizens of the other race." To Dancy, the remedy lay in Black peoples' pursuit of success in education and industry. In keeping with the Victorian emphasis on temperance and self-moderation, Dancy cautioned about excess in eating and clothing habits, saying they should make "wise and judicious economical" decisions.[39] Further evidence of Dancy's leanings, which historian Helen G. Edmonds defined as "rational conservatism," is that he served as president of the state's Black temperance convention.

[39] Afro-*American Sentinel*, August 31, 1895, 2.

Sarah Dudley Pettey, who advocated racial progress and universal suffrage, was a model of the optimism that swept many Black North Carolinians in this period. Glenda Gilmore's seminal sketch of Dudley Pettey notes how, in 1896 at the age of 27, she "… thought she saw the day coming when a person's place would depend not on sex or color but on energy and ability."[40] Edward Dudley, Sarah Dudley Pettey's father, was among the recently emancipated who established a family amid the chaotic Union-occupied New Bern in the aftermath of the Civil War. In slavery, he had become literate and learned a valuable skill as a cooper, both of which prepared him for life after emancipation and reinforced the Victorian idea of racial progress. While building a career as a cooper, Edward Dudley served the New Bern community as local magistrate, city marshal, and later, state representative. [41]

When Sarah was born to Dudley and his wife Caroline in 1869, she was the first in her family to be born into the hopeful post-emancipation era. [42] Dudley Pettey's generation, particularly those of the nascent Black middle class, were encouraged by their elders to take racial equality as a given.[43] Their parents believed that racial equality would come as a result of education, hard work, cultural refinement, and moral conservativism. In her life, Dudley Pettey took those aspirational lessons to heart, becoming an advocate of Victorian middle-class values and racial and gender equality.[44] At the New Bern State Colored Normal School, where George

[40] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 1.
[41] Elizabeth Lundeen, "Sarah Dudley Pettey: A New Age Woman" in *North Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times* editors Michele Gillespie and Sally G. McMillen (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 2014,) 272.
[42] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 7.
[43] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 7.
[44] Sarah Dudley Pettey is a principal figure in Glenda Gilmore's Gender and Jim Crow. There, Gilmore chronicles the Dudley family's journey from the enslavement of Dudley Pettey's grandmother and father, the birth of Dudley Pettey as the first family member born into freedom, and her life as a prominent intellectual and leader of the New Bern and African Methodist Episcopal communities. Gilmore's narrative of Dudley Pettey's life illustrates

Henry White taught, Dudley Pettey prepared herself to study at Scotia Seminary, a Presbyterian College founded in Concord, North Carolina for young Black women. Scotia's curriculum was rooted in Victorian values, which meant piety, hard work, and temperance. The college offered a well-rounded education that prepared Dudley Pettey for a position of leadership in the Black community. After three years at Scotia, she returned to the normal school in New Bern to assist White in training others to become schoolteachers in the same cultural mode. Once she married Bishop Charles Calvin Pettey, Sarah eagerly sought public life and used her various platforms to promote her Victorian sensibilities and roadmap to social equality. [45]

In the 30 years after the Civil War ended, Eastern North Carolina experienced a dramatic influx of Black residents, who saw in emancipation an opportunity for individual and collective social advancement. The post-bellum period in places like New Bern and Wilmington provided many such opportunities, for Black North Carolinians who fortunate enough to find work as laborers, craftsmen, and merchants. For many others, schooling led to lucrative and influential occupations as educators, bankers, doctors, and other professionals. As literacy and educational attainment, wealth, and social infrastructure grew in those Black communities, the outlook for racial progress improved concurrently. As members of these communities, White, Dancy, and Dudley Pettey surely absorbed both the moralistic values and racial optimism that characterized this emerging Black middle class. The lessons gleaned from their elders and the formal educations they pursued reinforced the racial optimism and Victorian values.[46] Observing the racial progress in the region, many reasoned that a new South ordered by meritocracy, class, and social standing was preferable to the old South, in which a person's gender, race, and skin color

[45] Elizabeth Lundeen, "Sarah Dudley Pettey: A New Age Woman" in *North Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times* editors Michele Gillespie and Sally G. McMillen (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 2014,) 265.
[46] Elizabeth Lundeen, "Sarah Dudley Pettey: A New Age Woman" in *North Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times* editors Michele Gillespie and Sally G. McMillen (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 2014,) 265-267.

proscribed their social place. Though these figures cannot stand in for every Black North Carolinian of every walk of life in the period, their examples ably animate the values and ideas that grounded Black discourses in the state.

> "Gleanings: Which Tell the Story of Afro-American Progress"
>
> "Negroes in the Cuban Army… as fighting men they are equal to any. They have more endurance than their white companions and enemies, and they can march 50 miles a day and fight all night after it..."
>
> "Louisville, Ky., has a population of Afro-Americans which number between 30,000 and 40,000 and who have 28 churches... 9 public schools, 1 hospital, 7 lawyers, 52 teachers, 12 physicians, 1 drugstore, 7 groceries, 2 tailors, 20 restaurants, 10 saloons, 3 newspapers, 20 barber shops, 8 carpenter shops, 3 Blacksmith shops, 20 preachers.
>
> "Summer Bryon, the popular pianist, of St. Louis, returned to his home from a two years' foreign tour... During his travels he played before vast audiences in Germany, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and France".
>
> "Miss Mabel Johnson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Johnson, of San Francisco, won the first prise [sic] for the best essay at the closing of the Cosmopolitan grammar school. This is the second time that a colored girl has won the Denman prize at this school..."
>
> "Dr. W.E.B. DuBois has resigned his position as Professor of Ancient Languages at Wilberforce University and has been appointed Assistant in the Department of Sociology, for one year, in the University of Pennsylvania, to take charge of a special investigation into the condition of the colored people of Philadelphia."
>
> "Clarence G. McKoin, of St. Louis, is the youngest colored lawyer in that city, being only 23 years old.
>
> *Star of Zion*, August 20, 1896, 4

Many Black North Carolinians were encouraged by Black advances in literacy and education, economic development, and Victorian refinement to embrace a hopeful view of the

quest for racial equality. However, many surveyed the nation and knew that an optimistic outlook alone would not ensure enfranchisement or social equality with whites. Black North Carolinians realized that disfranchisement and racial segregation threatened to undermine decades of striving for racial equality in the state. Aware of the threats to progress, many registered to vote and exercised the franchise despite efforts by Democrats to obstruct and intimidate them. They also opposed efforts to segregate public spaces. Black women, who did not have voting rights, fought the Democratic Party's push toward Jim Crow as well. In Wilmington, for instance, Black women initiated a public protest when they petitioned the (white) bus conductors, demanding that they offer equal assistance to Black and white women.[47]

In press, speeches, and publications, Black community leaders both in North Carolina and beyond reinforced the view that racial progress and social elevation would eventually lead to racial equality. Prominent Black North Carolinians like White, Dancy, and Dudley Pettey carefully traversed the crooked color line even as they believed it would one day vanish entirely. Their efforts included promoting the narrative of racial progress and optimism to other Black people. As Republican politicians from the "Black Second," George Henry White and John C. Dancy were both models and defenders of this progress narrative. George Henry White, for instance, was a self-described "race man," who championed the social advancement of Black people throughout his political career. White addressed racial progress in his frequent speeches to Republican and Black audiences throughout the country. The influential politician often

[47] Glenda E. Gilmore, "Murder, Memory, and the Flight of the Incubus," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 82; David S. Cecelski, "Abraham H. Galloway: Wilmington's Lost Prophet and the Rise of Black Radicalism in the American South," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 194.

commended Black people for making great strides since slavery and called on the Republican Party to defend voting rights in the South.[48]

> "A Wedding in High Life."
> On the evening of November 11th, 1896, Mr. J. D. Barfield of Newbern, N.C., led to the hymeneal altar Miss Annie E. Smith of Pleasant Hill, Craven County, N. C. Mr. Barfied is a prominent wholesale and retail merchant, who by dint of energy and strict attention to business, has amassed a small fortune and now begins housekeeping with exceedingly bright prospects for the future. Miss Smith, his bride is a clever, unassuming and modest young lady. Both ranking high socially, it was not at all surprising to behold about fifty carriages leaving the city for the A. M. E. Zion Church of Pleasant Hill, just six miles from the city… The presents, which were costly and numerous, were as follows: The groom presented the bride a beautiful two-story house with kitchen attached, furnished and carpeted throughout… Silver sugar spoon… silver sugar dish… large rocking chair… set of knives, forks, and spoons…"
>
> *Star of Zion*
> Dudley Pettey's Women's Column
> November 26, 1896

Dudley Pettey's column in the *Star of Zion* may have read like a high-society gossip rag at times, but her message was about more than expensive foods and fancy carriages. Beginning in 1896, Sarah Dudley Pettey conveyed progressive ideas about race and gender equality in a manner in-keeping with her own conspicuously middle-class lifestyle.[49] Dudley Pettey's column reflected her racial optimism, which was closely linked with her commitment to Victorianism. Sarah frequently celebrated the accomplishments of "best" men and women, reporting on lavish society engagements. Her beliefs were reflected in the column describing the proper use of finger

[48] *Brooklyn Daily Eagle,* September 22, 1897, 7.; "Account of speech to Republican Second District nominating convention, June 28, 1894," Benjamin R. Justesen, In His Own Words: The Writings, Speeches, and Letters of George Henry White (Lincoln, Nebraska: IUniverse, 2004,) 44-45.

[49] Editor J. W. Smith, D. D. kicked off Dudley Pettey's column by singing her praises and declaring that "[e]very progressive paper should have a female editor." It is noteworthy that Smith used the term "progressive," which suggests a somewhat surprising orientation for a socially moderate religious newspaper.

bowls as well as her coverage of the National Association of Colored Women, to which she belonged.[50]

As a well-respected politician and lay person in the A.M.E. Zion Church, John C. Dancy's own life recommended the progress narrative of the race. Dancy, as co-founder of the *Star*, supplemented his influential platform in the Republican Party by giving editorial direction to the newspaper. He also edited the church's Quarterly Almanac, whose 1893 Centennial volume celebrated racial progress throughout. In the section on the "Many Facts in Brief about the Negro," Dancy wrote that there was a higher proportion of Black Christians in the country than that of any other race, suggesting the importance of religious piety to the progress narrative. The section was devoted to the recognition of Black accomplishments, from the revolutionary acts of Crispus Attucks, to achievement in poetry and drama, law, medicine, music, academia, science, and taxidermy. Dancy noted that Granville T. Woods was "an expert electrician, mechanical engineer and manufacturer," and that Wiley Jones of Pine Bluff, Arkansas owned a street trolley and a race track and park, worth $150,000.

Dancy furthered the idea of progress and achievement in the "Valuable Race Items" section as well. There, Dancy reflected race pride when he noted that Dr. J.C. Price and Reverend William D. Johnson were the first Black men to preach sermons in the famous "Plymouth Church," which was the church of Henry Ward Beecher (Brooklyn, NY). And that Judge J.J. Wright of South Carolina was the only Black man to have served on any state's supreme court. The Review noted that J. Willis Menard of Florida was the first to be elected to the U.S. Congress. Dancy also recognized accomplishments in North Carolina, when he wrote

[50] *Star of Zion,* February 4, 1897, 2 and September 10, 1896, 2, respectively.

that John H. Collins from the Black Second was the first Black solicitor elected in the country, a position then held by George Henry White.[51]

The "Race Gleanings" column in the *Star of Zion*, which celebrated an innumerable number and variety of Black accomplishments, exemplified the message of racial progress in the Black press of the 1890s. *The Freeman* of Indianapolis also maintained a "Race Gleanings" column that promoted pride at Black peoples' accomplishments. Several Black newspapers featured prominent Black clergy, politicians, or professionals on the front page of each issue. Below a dignified imagine in profile, editors published reports on accomplishments that reflected well on the race.[52]. Another way in which the Black newspapers promoted a sense of racial optimism and social advancement was through articles that reported on the opening of new schools, churches, and businesses. For instance, the *Raleigh Gazette* published news of expanding business opportunities of Thomas Bomar, the "successful colored man" who made a name for himself as a mill building contractor.[53] The November 20, 1897 issue of North Carolina's Black-owned *Wilson Blade* likewise reported that Ida Estelle Hill of Millerton (New York) was making history as the first Black woman to enter Boston University in pursuit of a bachelor's degree.[54]

The Black press also used the publication of academic reports to support its picture of racial progress. Black newspapers featured reports on the status or "condition of the Negro" that frequently reinforced the idea that Black people had made tremendous strides since emancipation. The *Broad Ax* printed the findings of a report by "Prof Jones" of Wheeling, West

[51] John C. Dancy, The A.M.E. Zion Quarterly Review, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Church Board of Publications of the A.M.E. Zion Church (Bedford, PA., 1893.)
[52] *The Freeman,* December 31, 1898.
[53] *Raleigh Gazette,* October 31, 1896, 4.
[54] *Wilson Blade*, November 20, 1897, 4.

Virginia, for instance, that chronicled Black progress particularly in business and industry. Jones found that, in thirty years of emancipation, Black people had amassed $400,000,000 worth of real estate and possessed $603,000 of wealth in the shipping industry. The report stated that Black people owned 5 banks holding $3,000,000 of capital and 200 daily newspapers. Further, Jones' report recorded 2,000 physicians, 3,000 lawyers, 30,000 skilled workmen, and 16 sculptors who brought pride to the race.

Despite the well-founded racial optimism of the early 1890s, most Black North Carolinians understand that there were constant threats to the rights and progress that Black people had attained. One of the greatest threats to the forward march of racial progress was to Black male enfranchisement. In the decades since emancipation, the state's election laws had changed frequently, making Black enfranchisement unstable. Though the Fifteenth Amendment of 1870 guaranteed African-Americans the right to vote, Democrats in North Carolina had long put up road blocks to prevent full suffrage for Black men in the state. Since the North Carolina County Government Act of 1877, the General Assembly had appointed local County positions, rather than allowing voters to elect these positions. In this manner, Democrats undercut the voting power of districts with high concentrations of African-Americans. In addition to the suspension of "county rule," the Democrats used literacy tests, poll taxes, racial gerrymandering, and intimidation to abridge the power of the Black vote.[55] Further, Democrats challenged the legitimacy of Black enfranchisement by claiming that Black voters lacked the intelligence and

[55] "North Carolina Bourbons Using the Poll Tax Question and Prohibition to Further Democratic Schemes," *New York Times*, February 22, 1881, accessed April 12, 2018, accessed April 12, 2018, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1881/02/22/98912374.pdf.

discipline to contribute to "sound government," and that Black voters and politicians were vulnerable to the morally corrupting influence of Northern "carpetbaggers." [56]

In addition to the threats to enfranchisement, Black North Carolinians feared the possibility of Jim Crow segregation becoming state law. While North Carolina was one of the few Southern states in which separate and unequal accommodations weren't yet codified by law, the trend of Jim Crow segregation in the South was apparent. In the 1896 *Plessy v Ferguson* case, the US Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation, giving license to Southern states to pass racially restrictive codes, particularly in public transportation and accommodations.[57] Echoing Charles Chestnutt's sentiment, a Black North Carolinian who traveled either South to South Carolina or North to Virginia in a public train car had a harsh reminder of the reality of Jim Crow segregation the minute they crossed the state line. As Gilmore notes, racial separation was not yet consistent or solidified in the state.[58] Even in the North, challenges to racial equality concerned Black people. One issue that threatened Black progress at the national level was a push by Republican leaders to decommission Black officers in the federal army.[59] Similarly, Black jurors were routinely denied opportunities to serve across the nation, in defiance of Constitutional mandate. [60]

The sense of precarity was also caused by the hostility that many white North Carolinians felt toward Black progress, which fed agitation for Black disfranchisement and segregation in

---

[56] *News and Observer,* April 14, 1901, 1; State Executive Committee Democratic Party (N.C.), "The Democratic Hand Book, 1898" (Raleigh, N.C. Edwards & Broughton. 1898.), 84.; Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 58.
[57] David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson, *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) *x-xi*.
[58] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 73-74.
[59] *Colored Citizen,* October 28, 1896, 1.
[60] *Colored Citizen* January 30, 1898, 1.

North Carolina. New Bern and Wilmington, as models and beacons for Black Southerners, were sites where racial optimism and social equality collided with white resentment. As "best" Black men and women of the race, prominent Black New Bernians and Wilmingtonians didn't always shy away from displaying the trappings of their middle-class lifestyles.[61] Though many hoped their social refinement and conspicuous success elevated their race in the eyes of whites, some responses suggested otherwise. In New Bern, for instance, the transition between Reconstruction and Jim Crow had created a space for people like the Dudleys and Petteys to put their ideas about Victorianism and racial progress to work. Their conscious efforts to present the "best" of their race, however, earned middle-class Black New Bernians the derisive tag of "colored swelldom" from whites who found their Victorian airs and private carriages offensive.[62]

In addition to the resentment toward Black middle-class Victorianism and conspicuous wealth, many whites at every skill level resented the economic competition of Black labor.[63] The hostilities that bubbled over in Wilmington over the course of the 1890s were significantly rooted in economic rivalry. White resentment over the establishment of the Coleman Manufacturing Company in 1897 is evidence of this hostility toward Black entrepreneurs and workers. The first Black-owned cotton mill in the country, Coleman Manufacturing was founded in Cabarrus County primarily by Black Wilmingtonians, including John C. Dancy. Coleman's mission was to provide mill employment for Black workers who had often been excluded from

---

[61] Elizabeth Lundeen, "Sarah Dudley Pettey: A New Age Woman" in *North Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times* editors Michele Gillespie and Sally G. McMillen (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 2014,) 266, 269.
[62] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 15.
[63] Glenda E. Gilmore, "Murder, Memory, and the Flight of the Incubus," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 76.; Michael Honey, "Class, Race, and Power in the New South: Racial Violence and the Delusions of White Supremacy," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 165-166.

jobs in the growing textile industry.[64] The textile mill, and particularly its Board of Directors in Wilmington, was the frequent target of hostile press, revealing the economic component to white resentment. The measures of racial progress like education, social refinement, and financial attainment that encouraged many Black people were sources of anger and disgruntlement among whites. The striving for progress and social elevation among Black North Carolinians may have affirmed racial optimism, but to many whites, it was evidence that "the negro" was aspiring too high.[65] This white resentment, which mounted as Black North Carolinians made more progress, fed the precarity that marked the period.

Black people, particularly in the South, were frequently the targets of racial terror, mob violence, and lynching, also fueling the sense of precarity. After the Civil War ended, the federal government restructured the economic and political system, which disempowered and enraged the former Confederacy. First, the Reconstruction Acts granted citizenship rights, including enfranchisement, to newly-emancipated Black people. Second, the end of legal slavery created a Southern labor force in which whites significantly competed with Black workers for the first time. Finally, the Reconstruction governments passed laws curbing the political rights and autonomy of the former Confederacy, even withholding voting rights for several years. Throughout the Reconstruction period, white Southerners vehemently resisted these economic and political changes that challenged the white supremacist social order. In an effort to maintain the racist order, White Southerners committed mass violence against Black people throughout the Reconstruction period.[66] Under Reconstruction, however, the presence of federal troops

[64] "Coleman Manufacturing Company," Coleman Manufacturing Company | NCpedia , accessed April 5, 2018, https://www.ncpedia.org/coleman-manufacturing-company.
[65] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 21.
[66] Equal Justice Initiative, "Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror," Third Edition (Montgomery, Al, 2017,) 18-21.

minimized some, but not all, of the terror unleashed on Black people.[67] This federally-imposed restraint ended after the 1876 elections, when the Republican-controlled Congress struck a political "comprise" with the formerly-Confederate South and ended Reconstruction. The terror tactics of lynching and mob violence increased dramatically into the 1880s, reflecting the desire among many whites to maintain racial inequality and white supremacy.

Nationally, Black intellectuals and journalists addressed threats to equality, sometimes employing the narrative of racial progress as well. First, many Northerners saw that threats to equality in the South could eventually impact them. As this editorial in *The Freeman* noted, many Black Northerners saw the fight for full citizenship as national, not regional or state-specific.[68] The unsigned letter read, "the "heinous" "disfranchisement of the race [proposed by Senators Butler and Pugh (Alabama)] does not apply solely to the South; its scope is the United States. Think of it, Negroes of the North..." Even those Black people who felt relatively secure in the North and West expressed solidarity and concern for what Black Southerners experienced. Noting the progress that Black Mississippians had made in literacy and voting registration, *The Freeman* reported how the Mississippi legislature had "squelched and destroyed the Negro vote." By reducing eligible voters from 175,000 to 8,000 in the first year, Mississippi Democrats had made it so that Black people in the state didn't even have the political power to elect a "constable." [69] An 1895 editorial in *The Freeman* also denounced the disfranchisement of Black

[67] Equal Justice Initiative, "Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror," Third Edition (Montgomery, Al, 2017,) 8-11.
[68] *Freeman*, January 3, 1891.
[69] "Negro Disfranchisement: The Incentive to Mississippi's New Constitution, Facts and Figures," *The Freeman*, September 3, 1892.

voters in South Carolina, calling it "[a]n outrage that should be condemned by the civilized world."[70]

Sarah Dudley Pettey also confronted the precarity of the times in her women's column. In the January 21, 1897 column she poetically urged young Black men to abandon the South and "go West," where she believed they had a better chance at equality. One of Sarah's most passionate and politically charged columns covered the battle over segregation in Georgia, echoing the Wilmington petition campaign in her own state. Dudley Pettey reported that a "courageous" group of Black women in Atlanta had "covered themselves with honor and glory" when they delivered a resolution denouncing segregated railcars. While honoring the "liberty-loving" women, Dudley Pettey admonished the "ungentlemanly" executives at the Atlanta Traction R. R. Company and the "prejudiced legislature" for pushing segregation in Georgia. And she called on the "better class" of Black Atlanta to boycott the segregated cars until the company provided "better arrangement for all classes and conditions of mankind regardless of race or color." Making abundantly clear her investment in resisting Jim Crow, Dudley Pettey wrote: "… Would to God that in every town, village and hamlet where undue and unjust discrimination is brought to bear upon the race… we could muster volunteer heroines with [the same] womanhood and unswerving volition…" [71]

Like Dudley Pettey's column, the *Star of Zion* provided optimistic news of racial advancement as well as the battles to preserve and expand that progress. The paper published a letter by Bishop Charles Calvin Pettey that employed the narrative of racial progress while defending Black aspirations toward racial equality. The *Newbern Journal*, a white newspaper,

[70] "Condition of the Negro," *The Freeman*, September 28, 1895.
[71] *Star of Zion,* October 8, 1896, 3.

had published an editorial enumerating the "Mistakes of the Negro." The cardinal mistake, according to *The Journal*, was in seeking political and social equality. They asserted that Black people had failed to "see the impassable barrier between the two races which can never be destroyed." Further, they argued that Black people weren't equipped for the social station to which the federal government had elevated them. In his rebuttal, Bishop Pettey spoke in defense of the progress among the race as well as their claim to moral and racial equality. Pettey wrote, "… Never in the history of the world has any race been so imposed upon morally and restricted socially and commercially as the Negroes... and yet no race in history ever made such advancement along these same lines..."[72] Pettey informed *The Journal* that the equality that Black people sought didn't depend on intermixing with whites, because "[t]he representative Negroes of this country… [had] as refined and accomplished [a] society on [their] own side as [they knew] of on the other side..."[73] Bishop Pettey employed the narrative of progress while affirming the commitment to racial equality in society.

The following *Freeman* editorial expressed not only an understanding that the threat of disfranchisement could impact Northerners, but an admiration and gratitude toward Southerners who persisted in fighting for enfranchisement. D. Augustus Straker of Detroit wrote: "I have often thought that nothing short of emigration was an effective remedy against the oppression used by the whites…" Yet, Straker had observed the battles for Black suffrage in the South and had a change of heart. Straker later considered the choice to flee North "cowardice," because it "sacrifices a question of rights which affect a whole race, and the battle must be fought on the ground where the matter arose…" The editorial employed the narrative of racial progress in a

[72] *Star of Zion*, August 19, 1897. 2.
[73] *Star of Zion*, August 19, 1897, 2.

unique way, conferred hero status on Black Southerners who " did not fly from the State..." These heroes, according Straker, contributed positively to the race by showing "intelligence" and "courage" even in their losing battle against the disfranchisement legislation. "The editorial concluded that, "[t]he late disfranchisement of the Blacks in South Carolina does not affect the colored people of the South only, but all over the United States. Let us uphold their hands."[74]

The threat of Jim Crow segregation across the South drew condemnation from the Black press of the North as well. The September 28, 1895 report from the Indiana A.M.E. conference denounced so-called Jim Crow cars as a "full blast" of "disgusting effect." The conference resolved that Black people should fight until every law that discriminated "on account of color or previous condition" was repealed. Not surprisingly, the church's defense of Black progress relied on the familiar narrative of the period. The report stated, "in the few short years" since emancipation, Black people had demonstrated that they deserved full citizenship. The church credited the "wonderful thrift" of the race, which had led to educational and economic achievements, for proving the "fitness" of the race. When the threat of disfranchisement was raised in North Carolina, the *Afro-American Sentinel* published a lengthy editorial opposing the move. Editor Cyrus D. Bell wrote that "state pride and her best citizens" should prevent [North Carolina] from forcing Black people into 'jim crow cars.'" Bell's editorial continued, denouncing racial segregation as something from "the dark ages" that North Carolina Democrats should be "ashamed" to pursue.[75]

Black communities across the country were impacted by the terror of mob violence and lynching, which sparked condemnation and calls for federal intervention in the press. Just as the

[74] "Colored Heroes," *The Freeman*, December 21, 1895.
[75] "North Carolina: Her Legislature—Her People," *Afro-American Sentinel*, February 4, 1898, 3.

Star of Zion addressed the crisis of lynching in an 1897 editorial "Lynch Law Must Cease," so too did Black press nationwide.[76] The *Broad Ax* reported on the legislator H.C. Smith's (Cleveland, Ohio) successful campaign to pass anti-lynching legislation in his state. The bill, which imposed a $5,000 fine on any county in which a person was lynched, was set to be used in the case of Click Mitchell who was lynched in Urbana, Ohio the previous year.[77] The November 2, 1895 issue of the *Washington Bee* printed a resolution from the Anti-Lynching Committee of London condemning the practice. Secretary Florence Balgarine wrote that the resolution criticized white America's objections to human rights atrocities abroad because they were "greatly weakened by" white peoples' participation in mob violence, lynching, and "torture practices in America." The committee appealed to any American individual or governing body "in the name of Justice and Mercy to end this terrible disgrace."[78] No journalist agitated on the issue of lynching more than Ida B. Wells of the *Memphis Free Speech*, Wells' 1892 reporting on the lynching of three Black grocery store proprietors Tom Moss, Calvin McDowell, and Will Stewart earned national attention and the ire of whites in Memphis, Because of her dogged investigative journalism into lynching, Wells was driven out of Memphis and wouldn't return to the South for many years.[79]

To most Black North Carolinians, the reality of the early 1890s was likely one of both optimism and caution, hope and precarity. Black communities could take pride in the collective

[76] *Star of Zion*, February 4, 1897. *Star* editors argued that the racial violence, especially lynching, discouraged Northern investment in the South.
[77] "H.C. Smith and his Anti-Lynching Bill," *Broad Ax,* November 19, 1898, 4.
[78] "News from London, W.C.." *Washington Bee, November 2, 1895.*
[79] Kenneth W. Goings, Memphis Free Speech, Tennessee Encyclopedia, Tennessee Historical Society, October 8, 2017, accessed March 1, 2018, http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/memphis-free-speech/.

accomplishments that 30 years of emancipation had enabled. Yet, despite the tremendous progress, the quest for racial equality was far from accomplished. As Black political power and social status improved over the decade, the white resentment mounted as well. The threats of disfranchisement campaigns, segregation laws, and racial terror were not only aimed at preventing further progress, but "redeeming" the white supremacist order that had prevailed under slavery. Black peoples' sense of racial progress and precarity were expressed in a variety of ways, frequently adhering to the optimistic tenor of the period. Public discourses among Black political and intellectual leaders reveal how they maintained a hopeful outlook on the quest for racial equality even while resisting the challenges mounted by the political opposition.

Chapter Two: "Come one! Come all!" Fusion Politics and Possibility

> "It is a hawkneyed [sic] saying, and certainly a true one, that the Press and the Pulpit are the two great agencies for molding public opinion and sentiment."
>
> *The Afro-American Sentinel*, February 4, 1899

On a gray, humid day in September 1898, a group of young Black women greeted each other at the intersection of Red Cross and Seventh Streets in Wilmington, North Carolina. In this district, half of the stores and businesses were African-American owned, marking Wilmington as a place of social progress and a symbol of success for many Black people.[80] The women may have been working, shopping, or simply socializing when they noticed two white women approaching the same street corner. As the two groups converged, a physical altercation occurred between them, providing a dramatic illustration of the racial tension of the period.[81] The *Wilmington Messenger* published an account that was later picked up by the *Charlotte Daily Observer*, a statewide organ of the Democratic Party.[82] As the *Daily Observer* reported, the Black women chose not to fully clear the walkway or step into the street in deference to the white women, who did not take the slight kindly. When the two groups met, one white woman forcefully grabbed one of the Black women and shoved her into the street. Then, the Black woman responded by using her umbrella to hit the white woman several times.

---

[80] H. Leon Prather, Sr., "We Have Taken a City," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 16-18. LeRae Umfleet, Principal Researcher, "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Report," 1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission, Research Branch, Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources (May 31, 2006,) 46.

[81] Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 103.

[82] "Still Another Outrage," *Charlotte Daily Observer*, September 8, 1898, 7.

In assessing the import of the street incident, Black and white press drew dramatically difference conclusions about the causes of the confrontation. The *Daily Observer*, representing the white perspective, said the supposed failure of the Black women to show sufficient deference to the white women was evidence of the moral degradation of their race. The article stated how this "outrage" against a white woman reflected the poor and dangerous character of "the Negro," a character in moral decline since the days of slavery. The article read, in part, that this "bumptiousness and unbridled insolence" proved that Black people had "forgot(ten) their place" in North Carolina. In asserting that the social place of Black people should be unchanged since emancipation, the article reflected the hostility that some whites felt toward Black people in a post-emancipation southern society.

In contrast to this picture of Black lawlessness and impudence, Black newspapers proffered an assessment of incidents like the one in Wilmington that affirmed Black social progress. A January 27, 1898 issue of the *Colored Citizen*, for example, laid the responsibility for these encounters on white Southerners who had not yet adjusted to the reality that Black people had elevated their social standing. The article, entitled, "'All Coons look Alike to Me,'" stated that white people showed a lack of intelligence when they instigated these incidents. It read, "with the antebellum and minstrel Negro in his mind as a type, he approaches the up-to-date fellow in the same manner he would have done his father; unmindful of the transformation wrought by a generation of educational facilities and the ambition which knowledge begets…" The article continued, placing the responsibility for provoking "friction and clashings [sic]," on white people. [83]

[83] "All Coons Look Alike," *Colored Citizen*, January 27, 1898, 1.

Street incidents like the one above, as chronicled in both Black and white press, powerfully illustrated the crossroads at which Black North Carolinians found themselves. On one hand, many would have taken for granted that the Black women were right to assert their freedom, and even social equality, in public spaces. Tense street encounters between Blacks and whites may suggest that many Black people were aware of white hostility to Black social progress and used these incidents to assert their newly elevated status. *The Daily Observer's* account of the incident, in fact, stated that a Black male onlooker loudly cheered the Black woman's retaliation with the umbrella. At the same time, Black North Carolinians would also have been aware that many of their white neighbors rejected the notion that Black peoples' social status had changed and decried these "uppity airs" as a marker of moral degradation. Anthropologist James Scott, who examined small acts of political resistance among the Southeast Asian peasantry, recognized the importance of seemingly "petty" encounters. As Scott noted, unlike the relatively rare incidences of mass rebellion and revolution, such "everyday" manifestations of political conflict and dissent can have tremendous historical significance. [84]

Scott was not thinking of the racial climate of late-19th North Carolina, however, when he opined that these everyday encounters rarely make the press. Several white newspapers in the state routinely depicted these street incidents, usually described as "negro outrages" against innocent and vulnerable white people, as common, regular occurrences.[85] Papers like *The Messenger* and *The Observer* devoted significant copy length to incidents like the one in

[84] Talib, S, "Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance in Southeast Asia," editors James C. Scott and Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet (London: Frank Cass, 1986.)

[85] Specific examples include: Headline: "An Outrage at Wadesboro Depot. A Negro Attacks a Woman Alone in the Depot-Investigation Falls to Identify the Villain," *Charlotte Daily Observer* (Charlotte, North Carolina: May 31, 1892) 2. "He Never Reached Jail," *Charlotte Daily Observer* (Charlotte, North Carolina: February 11, 1897) 2. "The Criminality of the Negro," *Charlotte Daily Observer* (Charlotte, North Carolina: January 6, 1898) 3. For general perspective, see: Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth, "Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920 (The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London: 1996). 102-103.

Wilmington, promoting a narrative of Black lawlessness, and insolence. White coverage of "negro outrages" assailed the character of post-slavery Black North Carolinians, presenting a threatening counter-narrative to the image of racial progress that Black intellectuals, and even some common Black people, asserted. While Black newspapers heralded their people for progress in education, enterprise, and religious piety, white newspapers pointed relentlessly to these street incidents to censure the entire Black community. The constant coverage in white newspapers also suggests these accounts were effective at encouraging white people to see themselves as victims of Black aggression. While each individual incident may have seemed minor, even petty, the representations in the white press likely had significant impact on readers. These stories engendered in white readers an idea of Black lawlessness and moral decline as well as a hostile attitude toward changing racial relationships in the state. The white coverage of these "negro outrages" showed how public assertions of social progress and elevation by Black people were met with white hostility, and how white public discourse placed Black people in a vulnerable social position.

The Wilmington incident serves to illustrate the profound disconnect between Black narratives of racial progress, upliftment and elevation, and white narratives of decline and loss. The incident also reveals the power that both Black and white newspapers had in shaping narratives about Black peoples' social place in the post-bellum South. As the *Citizen* article demonstrated, Black politicians and public intellectuals understood the great distance between their hopeful "ambition" as free people and the hostility reflected back to them from many whites. They knew that the markers of positive progress they steadfastly documented and celebrated in their journals were diminished by the discourse in white papers.

This chapter traces how the politics of the mid-late 1890s reflected the progress and the precarity of Black lives, and how Black politicians and intellectuals addressed those developments in public discourse. The chapter will explore how Black intellectuals and newspaper editors promoted Black progress, particularly participation in politics, as much to defend their present social position as to improve it. The political successes of the period, punctuated by the election of Congressman George Henry White and appointment of John C Dancy in Wilmington, epitomized Black progress and the impact of Black enfranchisement. Those political gains reinforced for many Black people the idea of progress; and yet, many whites resented those victories just as they had the signs of Black economic advances. White hostility to what Black people considered positive progress escalated into the violence of the White Supremacy Campaign in 1898. As the final decade of the 19th century unfolded, Black North Carolinians saw their political fortunes rise hopefully, and fall brutally, despite their efforts to realize a better future in the state. While the Black press proclaimed and celebrated Black achievement, forces mobilized in North Carolina to undermine that progress, using newspaper propaganda as a central tool.

Notwithstanding the positive changes that the Civil War and Reconstruction had brought to Black people in North Carolina, the Democratic Party still maintained control in the early 1890s. This dominance was partially due to the demise of Reconstruction in 1870, when federal troops withdrew and left the state in the hands of the heavily Democratic legislature. [86] Sectionalism also dictated that white Southerners show reverential loyalty to the party of the

[86] Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 14-15.

Confederacy. Since the end of the Civil War, most white southerners had displayed overwhelming support for Democratic hegemony. In North Carolina, this loyalty had secured for the Democratic Party dominance, despite a significant Republican presence in the state. Additionally, the Democrats used electoral policy and procedure to suppress the impact of the Republican Party in the state. An 1876 amendment to the state's constitution, for instance, made most county positions appointive, by the Democratic-controlled legislature, rather than directly elected by local constituents. This change, known as "County Rule," lessened the weight of individual votes, particularly in rural territories where county government was most influential.[87]

Another piece of legislation, a proposed federal initiative of 1890 which Democrats rebranded as the "Force Bill," helped their party maintain dominance in the state. The Force Bill proposed the appointment of election supervisors to oversee voting on federal positions in any state or county which local voters petitioned the federal government for assistance. The legislation was intended to stop voter suppression and fraud. North Carolina Democrats saw this potential legislation as a return to Reconstruction-era federal control of the South, which they abhorred. Even though the proposed bill would only pertain to elected federal positions, Democrats in North Carolina believed that federal officials would also attempt to influence state elections.[88] The legislation failed to pass Congress, but the mere threat of Republican-led federal oversight placed sufficient pressure on the South to help the Democrats consolidate their partisan base among many whites.[89]

---

[87] Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 8-9.
[88] Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.)
[89] Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 37-39.

Democratic Party dominance was significantly challenged in the mid-1890s because of changes in the economy and Black participation in politics. Southern towns like Wilmington emerged from the Civil War with changing demographics and old industries in decline while new ones developed, which led to the growth of the Republican Party. This urban growth in the state coincided with recession and decline for the agrarian economy, sparking discontent with Democratic rule. Finally, increased voter registration, electoral success, and key political appointments by Black men made their constituency more significant to state politics.

The rapid growth of the industrial sector complicated the dominance of North Carolina Democrats and created an opening for increased Black political participation. The final two decades of the 19th century brought exponential investment and growth in textiles and manufactured goods to North Carolina, including cotton mills and tobacco and furniture factories. The number of cotton mills more than tripled in that period, while the tobacco and furniture industries investment and value grew even more rapidly. [90] Many of the most successful investors and profiteers of this industrial boom were powerful Democrats, the sons of the former plantation elite. This industrial shift opened a door for expanded Black political power because it created a dramatic internal conflict in the Democratic Party. The problem for the Party was that, while the pro-business elite began to represent industrial interests, the rank and file was still overwhelmingly agrarian. In 1890, as the state's total population rapidly approached 2 million, there were only 18 towns with populations of 2,500 or more. [91] Most of the state's population, over 80%, lived in nonincorporated communities, too small to be called

[90] Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 139

[91] United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Eleventh Census, 1890, Vol. I, Part 1, Table 19, 473.

"towns." [92] While the Party's elites became champions for the expanding industrial sectors, their policies grew further and further out of touch with the interests of their agrarian base. This disconnect bred discontent in the Party, benefiting the other constituencies in the state, including African-Americans. White Democrats who made their living in the agrarian sector suddenly found common cause with Black people, whose interests were also in opposition to the Democratic leadership.

North Carolina's farmers, Black and white, experienced hardships throughout the 1880s and 1890s that put both constituencies bitterly at odds with Democratic elites who represented business and industry. The factors fueling agrarian discontent in the state centered on a set of economic issues around which farmers had begun to rally nationwide. For one, the lenders and investors imposed a *crop lien* system, which essentially forced farmers to live and operate on credit, borrowing against the value of their crops and burying them in debt, foreclosures, and failures. Farmers also looked at the broader financial system and saw how lending and currency standards undercut the value of their farms, while simultaneously inflating the burden of overhead. Finally, farmers resented the privately-owned railroads on which they were professionally dependent, because they had no control over how the railroads operated. [93]

In response to these adverse conditions in the agrarian sector, white farmers joined in the Farmers Alliance movement sweeping the nation. Beginning in 1887, thousands of the state's white farmers joined the North Carolina Farmers Alliance under the presidency of Leonidas L.

---

[92] Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 124.

[93] Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981,) 20-27, 120; Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 20-23.

Polk, a national leader in the alliance movement.[94] The statewide Alliance, and its countless sub-alliances, became a force for agrarian reform, attempting to work mostly within the Democratic Party.[95] They advocated state oversight over the railroad system and an end to the crop lien system. Though most Alliancemen pushed for legislation in the Democratic Party, some ran for office as independents to make reforms. After narrowly defeating Republicans and independent Alliance candidates in the November 1892 election, Democratic politicians revealed their fear of the agrarian movement by repealing the Alliance's state charter that same month. [96] The Alliance Democrats were unsuccessful at pushing the legislature to pass reforms of the *crop lien* system or control the influence of the railroads. The expanding industrial interests in the Party obstructed those reforms, driving a wedge between the pro-corporate leadership and its disgruntled rural base. The hostility toward the Alliance, and refusal to adopt legislation that championed the agrarian sector, led many farmers to lose faith in the Party. White farmers concluded that they needed an independent political movement, and in 1890, they defected from the Democratic Party and formed the People's, or Populist, Party.

Capitalizing on the open represented by Populist movement, Black farmers also joined in the alliance movement. Though the charter of the North Carolina Farmer's Alliance expressly forbade non-white membership, several associations served Black farmers and agrarian workers across the South.[97] At least one million Black people from every Southern state joined the major group, the Colored Alliance, which began in rural Texas in the 1880s.[98] Throughout the South,

---

[94] Edmonds, The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina: 1894-1901," 23-24.
[95] Edmonds, The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina: 1894-1901," 13-14.
[96] Edmonds, The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina: 1894-1901," 27.
[97] Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981,) 118-123.
[98] Holmes, William F. "The Demise of the Colored Farmers' Alliance." *The Journal of Southern History* 41, no. 2 (1975): 187-200. doi:10.2307/2206013.

the "colored" alliances worked on behalf of their constituents, supporting cooperative farm practices, advocating for longer school terms for children, and representing Black farmers to the white alliance networks.[99] In North Carolina, Black farmers formed a "Colored" Alliance that worked with the statewide white Alliance.

Though many Black farmers participated in alliances, the sparse archival record of their work may reflect the limited reach or impact of such groups. In a climate of white racism and hostility to Black progress, their organizational efforts may have been difficult, if not dangerous. Historian Lawrence Goodwyn suggested that Black farmers particularly in North Carolina did not engage with the same level of activism as white farmers because of the relentless threats of political repression and violence during the Populist uprising. [100] Alliances for Black farmers also found themselves at odds with white alliances at times, further undercutting their political impact. "Colored" alliances became necessary because white groups refused to admit or serve Black farmers and agrarian workers. Furthermore, white Alliancemen sometimes supported legislation that was detrimental to Blacks, including an 1889 initiative in Screven County, Georgia that banned Black farmers from leasing land.[101]

Despite these obstacles and the racism of the white-only Alliance movement, there is evidence of interracial cooperation among North Carolina's agrarians. An April 1896 flyer, for instance, advertised a "non-partisan Silver Rally" in Edwards Mill, near Raleigh, North Carolina. The flyer read, "Come one, come all--- white and colored, Democrats, Republicans, and

---

[99] Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981,) 187-188.
[100] Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981,) 122-123.
[101] Holmes, 190-191, 194.

Populists."[102] Though the Black alliances may not have the same level of membership or activism as the white alliances, their existence demonstrated that many Black farmers embraced Populism and strove to benefit their families and counties through the movement.

In addition to the "colored" alliances, Black North Carolinians built their political power through Fusion between the Populist and Republican Parties. Fusion, an electoral strategy in which parties agreed on a slate of candidates to run in consort, was employed by Populists throughout the country in the mid-1890s. After two unsuccessful election cycles in the early 1890s, North Carolina Populists realized that without the assistance of Black and white Republicans, they could not have much impact in elections. They could not simply rely on the support of white Democrats, whose loyalty to the party of their Confederate fathers posed a major hurdle. The failure of the Populist Party to win over sufficient white Democrats proved the need for participation with Republicans, leading to the phenomenon of Fusion politics.

Many white Populists were resistant to Fusion because they feared the strategy would increase Black political power in the state.[103] Going back to the early 1890s, many *Alliancemen* felt a third-party movement was a mistake and urged their members to remain loyal Democrats. In October 1892, J. F. Tillman, an Executive Board member of the National Farmers Alliance and Industrial Trade Union, issued an official letter urging Alliance Democrats to remain loyal to the party. A companion letter typed by an unidentified Allianceman claimed that Tillman warned that the support for Populist candidates in the South would mean "a Force Bill and negro

[102] *Advertisement for Silver Rally at Edwards Mill*, in the Marion Butler Papers #114, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Folder 16. (hence after Butler Papers).
[103] Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901: The Black Second* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981,) 235-236, 240-241.

rule."[104] In addition to these racial fears, Populists worried that Fusion would undermine the principles of the party. Marion Butler, Polk's successor as head of the national Alliance, worried that, by forcing members to vote for Republicans who opposed Populist goals, Fusion would compromise their fundamental beliefs. Specifically, financial reform, and the monetization of silver, was a key platform agenda for Populists. Most Republicans, including many on Fusion tickets, upheld their party's adherence to the "gold standard." Butler's predecessor and mentor Leonidas Polk wrote a letter in March 1892 to Allianceman John D. Thorne stating that Fusion, even with Democrats, would be "hazardous to [their] cause." Polk expressed the sentiments that many Populists carried into the 1890s when he stated, "This is a fight for principles, not for expediency or policies." [105]

The Fusion experiment reflected the reluctant realization among white Populists that an alliance with Republicans, among them nearly 100,000 Black voters, was necessary to overturn Democratic control of the state. North Carolina Populists embraced Fusion in the mid-1890s, to great success. Even though fear of increased Black political power and other concerns gave Populists pause, most embraced Fusion, owing to national directives and mass support among their rank and file.

As the prospect of Fusion between Populists and Republicans developed, Black intellectuals and politicians addressed the strategy in public discourse. Both Black political

[104] J F Tillman letter and unidentified companion letter, in the Butler Papers, #114, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Folder 4.
[105] *Leonidas L. Polk March 29, 1892 letter to John D. Thorne regarding Fusion*, in the Butler Papers, #114, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Folder 1.

leaders and the Black-owned press featured Populism prominently throughout the 1890s, suggesting that many Black people were engaged in these developments and saw themselves as significant political actors. The extensive coverage of Populism also revealed that Black politicians hoped to capitalize on the moment to secure political gains for themselves and their constituents. Republican George Henry White, for instance, frequently discussed the Populist Party and the possibility of Fusion in his campaign speeches. In an address to the Second District's Republican convention in June 1894, White claimed the force of the entire state's Party when he declared that Populists must come to the Republicans and make their case if they sought cooperation. [106] Ultimately, White became a Fusionist in hopes that the alliance would keep at bay the Democrats and their agenda of Black disfranchisement. [107]

At first, Congressman White's hope for preserving Black voting power through Fusion seemed well-placed. The Fusionists had sweeping success in the 1894 elections, gaining control of the North Carolina General Assembly, state treasurer's office, and Supreme Court, as well as a majority of the county governments. In that same year, they passed election law reform that secured access to the polls and reformed the odious "County Rule Law" that angered both Black and white voters. Voting in the state's "Black Second" district increased by more than 82 percent between the 1892 and 1896 elections, from 18,543 to 33,900. Election law reform in the intervening years had clearly impacted Black voting strength.[108] Though North Carolina's Fusionists found success in 1894, it would take two years for the alliance to reach its peak. The coalition gained support by delivering on campaign promises including electoral law and

[106] Benjamin R Justesen, "George Henry White: An Even Chance in the Race of Life" (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 42-43.
[107] Benjamin R Justesen, "George Henry White: An Even Chance in the Race of Life" (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 42-43.
[108] Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 56.

education reforms as well as economic relief for the agrarian sector, all of which united many rural and urban, Black and white North Carolinians. In 1896, the Fusion ticket had greater success, which included Congressman White's bid to become the lone Black congressman in the nation.

Black leaders like Congressman White saw Populism as an opportunity to secure greater political access for Black people. They used their various platforms to advocate for the Black community and defend the right to vote for its men. Often, this engagement meant taking strong positions on party loyalty on one hand, or political independence on the other. These prominent Black voices also capitalized on the moment to oppose politicians they believed did not support Black people and to advocate for specific legislation. The extensive coverage of Populism and Fusion reflected their belief that Black voters held a significant place in state and national politics. The diversity of perspectives, and willingness to disagree in public discourse, suggested that these intellectuals felt a measure of security both as political actors and Black people with public platforms.

Many of the prominent Black voices promoted loyalty to the "Party of Lincoln," even as they called on the Party to better defend Black voters and enfranchisement. A significant contingent of North Carolina's Black Republicans opposed the presumptive nomination of Daniel Russell, a popular Republican, for the governorship. Russell, considered by many in North Carolina to be a progressive because of his advocacy for free education, angered many Black people when he publicly spoke of Blacks in disparaging terms. The "confidential" protest letter signed by 11 Black Republicans meeting in Durham on June 6 denounced Russell as unfit for leadership in the Republican Party because he had referred to "(n)egroes" as "largely

savage," easily duped, and lazy.[109] The men, representing Black constituencies in Maxton, Rockingham, Durham, and Raleigh, among other towns, opposed Russell's nomination and called for a mass meeting to further their protest later that year. They counted John C. Dancy among their camp and nearly succeeded in subverting Russell's nomination.[110] The Durham gathering was covered in at least one newspaper, which incorrectly stated that the "prominent colored men" backed the Durham lawyer William Guthrie, who many Populists supported. The anti-Russell faction actually wanted Republican Henry C. Dockery to be endorsed.[111] Though Russell ultimately received the party's endorsement by winning a very narrow majority, this activism on the part of prominent Black Republicans demonstrated their willingness to marshal their collective political power in the midst of Fusion politics to defend and improve the social position of Black people, and push back against white leaders who disparaged them.

Similarly, *The Freeman*, published in Indianapolis, leveraged party loyalty in defense of Black enfranchisement. The first illustrated Black newspaper in the country, it became a staunch organ for the Republican Party. On February 1, 1896, the editors published "Genius of Republicanism," a lengthy article chronicling the development of Republicanism beginning in the Colonial Revolutionary period, and the Republican Party in the 1860s, through the current moment. Spanning several pages, the article advocated for Black voters an adherence, not merely to the party of "Honest Abe Lincoln," but rather, to the ideals of free labor and common wisdom that grounded the movement. The article cleverly used this purported devotion to the

[109] James E Shephard Call to anti-Russell meeting and companion newspaper clipping regarding the call to a mass meeting, in the Butler Papers, #114, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Folder 20.
[110] Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 49-52.
[111] James E Shephard Call to anti-Russell meeting and companion newspaper clipping regarding the call to a mass meeting, in the Butler Papers, #114, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Folder 20.

Republican Party, however, to call on the Party to defend Black enfranchisement in the South. Ruminating that "the Republican Party was the very first Party ever founded to primarily and aggressively vindicate the rights of the laboring classes." *The Freeman* cautioned Party leaders not to "flag" or lose the "courage" to defend "political freedom" in the South. The author promised that, as long as the Republican Party remained loyal to Black Southerners, they would in turn continue to "preach the gospel of the grand ole Party."[112]

The Freeman followed up two weeks later with another article entitled, "Delegates Elected," reporting from the Republican Party's National Convention. In the article, editor George L. Knox embraced Fusion and celebrated what the movement could mean for Black Southerners. "Fusion with the Populist Party," Knox wrote, sounded "the death-knell… to the moss-back, Negro hating Democracy…" Knox ridiculed the Democratic Party's complaint of "nigger rule," as the cry of a "kicked dog," and rejoiced that Fusion in the South would put an end to legislation aimed at disfranchising Black voters. [113]

The Afro-American Sentinel, produced in Omaha, Nebraska, where the People's Party convened in 1892 to develop the Populist platform, struck a more moderate tone when addressing Populism. *The Sentinel*, unlike *The Freeman*, a self-described "race paper," was published "in the Interest of the General Public but Particularly Devoted to the Elevation of the Negro Character." While the *Sentinel* plainly endorsed the national Populist ticket of Democrats William Jennings Bryan and Arthur Sewell on each cover page in 1896, they usually offered reports on the election with little to no editorializing. In general, *The Sentinel* addressed the

[112] "Genius of Republicanism," *The Freeman*, February 1, 1896, 1-4.
[113] "Delegates Elected," *The Freeman,* February 15, 1896, 5.

matter even-handedly, even publishing in entirety the Democratic Party platform in the August 29, 1896 issue. [114]

As the 1896 elections approached, an August 6 article in North Carolina's *Star of Zion* reported that Republican John C. Dancy didn't support Fusion, suggesting that editor Bishop Walters may also have been resistant. The *Star* reported that Dancy had given a stump speech "against the Democratic Party and for McKinley and sound money [that] set his audiences wild with cheers and laughter."[115] And 1897 article in the same paper referred to the Populist presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan as a "deadbeat," for courting the favor of corporations while simultaneously denouncing them in his rhetoric.[116] Despite this apparent lack of enthusiasm for Populism or Bryan, *Star of Zion* published a multi-page article assessing the central campaign issues raised by Populists and mocking the state's Democratic leadership for

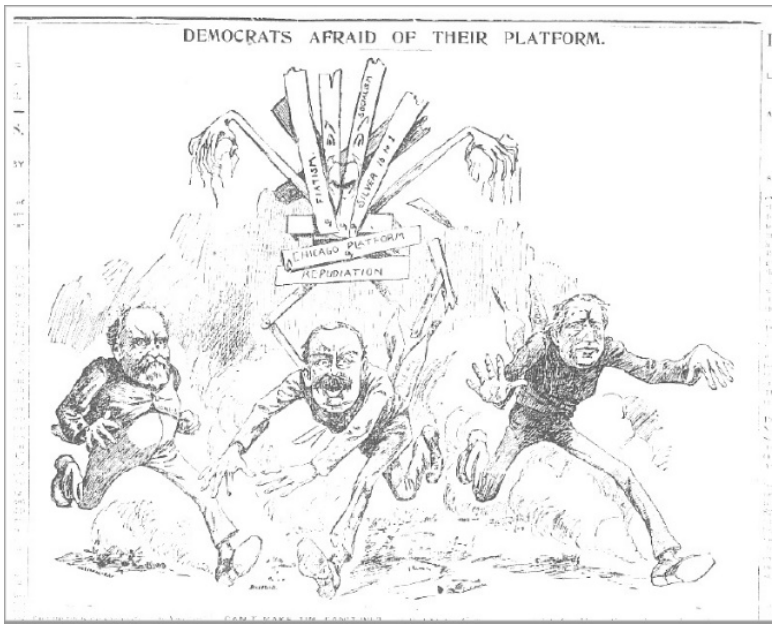

Figure 1: Democrats Afraid of Populism, Star of Zion, November 25, 1897

[114] *Afro-American Sentinel*, August 29, 1896, 4.
[115] *Star of Zion*, August 6, 1896.
[116] "Bryan as a Deadbeat: He Attacks the Corporations and then Asks and Accepts Favors from Them," *Star of Zion,* October 28, 1897, 3.

opposing that agenda. [117] The *Star* claimed in a political cartoon that Democrats were afraid of the issues that Populists raised. (Figure 1)

While Black politicians and intellectuals freely debated the merits of Fusion and Populism, some voices made calls for race unity as well. *The Freeman* editor George L. Knox published a lengthy editorial by an E.R.J. of Hilsboro, Texas demanding that Black people "Unite for Race Protection." While some level of discourse and debate was tolerable and healthy, the letter denounced Black Democrats as "tool[s]" for a party that did not support them and called for "union for protection" against lynching and other forms of racist injustice. [118] Both the ideological differences and the calls for unity in the political discourse demonstrate the investment and confidence with which Black figures engaged Populism and Fusion.

Beyond Fusion politics, Black politicians and public intellectuals advocated for an end to the vigilante violence of lynching, revealing their desire to mitigate the hazards of Southern Black life. Alongside the February 1 article extolling the "genius of Republicanism," editor Knox engaged in debate with another newspaper over the best strategy to stop lynching. *The Statesman-Exponent* had reported that the National Federation of Colored Men planned to send delegations to the Republican, and even the Democratic, National Conventions demanding a platform plank opposing lynching. The other journal deemed this plan a "mistake," stating that the problem of lynching could not be fixed with a party platform that politicians weren't bound to respect. Their position was that Black people should instead wage a "moral crusade" to change hearts and minds and keep politics out of the strategy. *Freeman* editors responded with a

[117] *Star of Zion*, November 25, 1897 cartoon.
[118] *The Freeman*, August 8, 1898, 8.

suggestion that Black people could have political success by pitting the two parties against one another in competition for Black votes. The editors supported exploiting the natural rivalry between the parties to generate action on a bill against lynching. [119] [120] In North Carolina, a February 4, 1897 article in *Star of Zion* entitled "Lynch Law Must Cease" likewise advocated for action against the violence.

Yet, as Black North Carolinians capitalized on political openings to exercise voting rights and engage in advocacy, a popular minstrel tour reflected white hostility toward this new political ambition among Black people. In March of that year, then North Carolina Governor Elias Carr organized a tour for a racist minstrel with the goal of energizing the sectional loyalty of white Democrats in the lead-up to elections.[121] The show, "Polk Miller's Recital," promised "An Evening of Story and Song in Dialect" in which Miller "delineat[ed] the Old Plantation Negro." Governor Carr and the local organizers sold tickets to the performances as a fundraising measure, ostensibly to build a monument for confederate veteran Zebulon Vance, who also served as state governor and had recently passed in 1894. [122] The advertisements claimed that Miller, a white man, offered the best and most accurate depiction of the dialect of enslaved Blacks peppered with colorful recollections of his happy "boyhood down on the farm." The minstrel troupe included an interracial Black and white quartet who performed what Miller

[119] *The Freeman*, February 1, 1898, 4-5.
[120] Subsequent issues in 1896 issues addressed the need for an "anti-lynching" bill: A February 15 editorial written by D Augustus Straker took up the debate from the February 1 issue, criticizing the original letter and demanding legislative action to prevent the "crime" of lynching. "The Anti-Lynching Bill," *The Freeman*, February 15, 1898, 1-2.
[121] Flyer advertising Polk Miller Recital. Governor Elias Carr, Elias Carr Papers, 1805-1968 (bulk 1860-1916), Eastern Carolina University, Greenville, NC, Manuscript Collection #160, Folder 8A (hereafter cited as "Carr Papers}.; Rose, Joel. "An Unlikely African-American Music Historian." NPR, November 17, 2009, accessed February 2, 2018, https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=120398673.
[122] April 4th, 1896 Polk Miller letter to Carr expressing gratitude for the tour and gratification that so many are devoted to the memory of Zebulon Vance, whom he refers to as "God." Miller also expressed the hoped that the tour raised a sufficient amount of money to erect the monument. Carr Papers.

claimed was authentic Black music recalled from his days growing up on a Virginia plantation. His version of the "plantation negro" was not performed in Blackface like most minstrels of the day, but instead promised an "authentic" dialect and depiction.

Polk Miller's minstrel show, which made stops from Statesville to Durham, Raleigh to Charlotte, and Washington to Wilmington, drew the enthusiasm of local whites who were nostalgic for the days of slavery. The show portrayed Black people as more charming and moral under slavery. [123] Miller invoked an idealized image of his boyhood on the Virginia plantation to cast the ante-bellum south as kind and just. The show suggested that not only was the "negro" character better under slavery, but the South was a happier place. Carr's manuscript collection features numerous letters from local clubs and societies including cash and offering to sell tickets, prepare meals, and even provide lodging in their own homes for Miller. [124] Miller's success in North Carolina revealed white peoples' nostalgia for slavery and the racial order of the ante-bellum south. The patronage of one of the most powerful Democrats in the state suggested that this sentiment was common. Further, in tying the tour to the veneration of the state's most celebrated Confederate veteran, Governor Carr demonstrated that the Democratic Party leadership believed upholding that cause would appeal broadly to white North Carolinians. As the *Concerned Citizen* article suggested and the minstrel show revealed, many whites viewed the social position of Black people in 1896 with skepticism, if not condemnation. That the successful minstrel tour occurred in 1896, at the height of Fusion politics and Black political

[123] Brochure for Polk Miller including "Personal Commendations of Mr. Miller's Recital," Carr Papers.
[124] March 5, 1896 Horace J. Smith to A.A. Thompson with Governor's office regarding tour dates and locations, March 7 2896 Mayor Maxcy L. John to A.A Thompson regarding tour stop in Laurinburg, NC and pledge of $100, May 12, 1896 Ina M Anderson of Statesville, NC letter to A.A. Thompson offering to house Miller in home to save funds for the Vance memorial, Carr Papers.

power, reveals the deep chasm between many Black and white peoples' notions about race relations in the state.

The ensuing 1896 elections, particularly the success Congressman White and John C. Dancy, signaled that the goal of greater political access and representation was attainable. The North Carolina Populist movement, with its inter-racial cooperation and Fusion strategies, presented an opportunity for Black people to exercise political power. It also affirmed for many Black people that their social position in the state was improving.[125] Further, the robust and dynamic discourse among Black politicians and intellectuals projected confidence in their growing political influence as well as their awareness of the need to better secure and preserve that new standing.

At the height of Populism in North Carolina, there was strong indication that Fusion was a success and that Black political power had grown with it. Despite the misgivings of prominent Black Republicans, Daniel Russell was elected governor and declared in his inaugural address to the General Assembly that Populism was in the state to stay.[126] Russell's confidence in what the alliance had accomplished was understandable. In a short amount of time, Fusionists had overturned Democratic rule of the state and achieved something that had rarely been done: Black and white Southerners voting together victoriously. Cooperation between Populists and Republicans had transformed North Carolina's party alignments in a mere handful of years, such

[125] Crystal Nicole Feimster, *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 55-61.

[126] North Carolina Governor 1897-1901: Russell (M.I. & J.C. Stewart, Public Printers and Binders, Winston, N.C.: 1897.)

that in the 1896 elections, Fusionists gained control of the governorship, both state houses of the legislature, many mayorships, the state supreme court, and most of the state's representation in Washington DC.[127]

The success of 1896 benefited Black voters because the Fusion-controlled legislature redrew district lines to allow for fairer representation, passed electoral reforms, and allowed local governments more control.[128] In Eastern North Carolina, where Black populations were concentrated, these reforms bore fruit. Both Congressman White's and Mr. John C. Dancy's success in 1896 were the result of increased Black voting and the Fusion alliance. Further, Russell even issued an olive branch to Black constituents in his address, stating, "(w)hen the Legislature adjourns the word should go out to the world that the crimes called lynchings must stop in North Carolina."[129] At the end of the year, there was sufficient reason to feel optimistic about the effectiveness of Fusion as well as the salience of Black political participation.

Yet, while the election of Congressman Henry White was a bright point of optimism for the Black community, it was also a trigger of Democratic anger. North Carolina was one of few states to have even sent a Black member to Congress after Reconstruction, which made the state a hopeful place for growing Black political power.[130] And George Henry White was an

---

[127] Hunt, James L. "Fusion of Republicans and Populists." *Encyclopedia of North Carolina* ed. William S. Powell. (University of North Carolina Press: 2006). Used by permission of the publisher. http://www.ncpedia.org/fusion-republicans-and-populists.

[128] Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901: The Black Second* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981,) 227. LeRae Umfleet, Principal Researcher, "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Report," 1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission, Research Branch, Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources (May 31, 2006,) 67-39-40.

[129] Joseph L. Morrison, JOSEPHUS DANIELS SAYS … AN EDITOR'S POLITICAL ODYSSEY FROM BRYAN TO WILSON AND F.D.R., 1894–1913. *Social Forces*, Volume 42, Issue 1, 1 October 1963 (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press: 1962) 95.

[130] "Black-American Representatives and Senators by Congress, 1870–Present," US House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives, accessed February 6, 2018, http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/BAIC/Historical-Data/Black-American-Representatives-and-Senators-by-Congress/..

unabashed "race man," who made the social and political progress of Black people his primary focus. One of his objectives was to expand Black political power by recommending qualified Black Republicans for opportunities. This common practice, which amounted to coveted appointments, allowed White to magnify the gains that Fusion had enabled.[131] In 1897 and 1898, Democrats made hay of White's postmaster appointments in Scotland Neck, Littleton, Rocky Mount, and Wilson, among other Eastern towns.[132] His strident voice and unabashed devotion to his Black constituents alienated even some white Republicans, but they especially drew the ire of North Carolina's Democrats.

If Congressman White's presence in Congress angered many white Democrats, John C. Dancy's appointment as collector of customs at the Port of Wilmington sparked hysteria. As Wilmington's Black middle class had grown in the late 19th century, so had Black political representation. Yet, while the Democrat-controlled legislature maintained "county rule," Republican influence was stifled. This control slipped, and Black political power grew, after the 1896 elections. In March 1897, the year Dancy began his appointment, Fusionists elected the white Republican Mayor Silas P. Wright and amended the city's charter to remove Democratic appointees. [133] No longer allowing the legislature to appoint people in key positions, the new charter made them electable by popular vote.

After the city's changes and the 1896 election, Wilmington's municipal governance more closely represented its majority Black population. In 1897, three of the ten members of the powerful board of aldermen, as were the justice of the peace, New Hanover county clerk, and

---

[131] Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901: The Black Second* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981,) 242-248.
[132] Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901: The Black Second* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981,) 245.
[133] Umfleet, "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Report," 43-45.

coroner. The town boasted several Black police officers and members of the fire department as well.[134] It was in this context that Dancy, appointed by President William McKinley, claimed the highest paid public office in the state. Dancy's annual salary was $4,000, which outstripped those of the state's supreme court judges, treasurer, and secretary. Dancy earned $1,000 a year more than North Carolina's governor.[135] Whites who were offended by the "uppity airs" of prominent and successful Black people fixated on Dancy as an example of Black aspirations toward social equality.

Not since the years of Reconstruction had North Carolina's Democrats been curbed by popular sentiment and vote. Populism had created a wedge between party leadership and its erstwhile loyal base, while Fusion had emboldened and empowered both Black and white Republicans. The Democratic Party's strategy to make Black enfranchisement the central campaign issue tore at Fusion, which was already a fragile inter-racial alliance. Southern Democrats had attempted to use white fears of Black political dominance, first to maintain party

[134] H. Leon Prather, Sr., "We Have Taken a City," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 16. Dec 10 1898 *Colored American*, Honorable Judson W Lyons, Register of the United States Treasury, attempted to address the cry of "negro domination" that had justified the Democrats' actions. In Lyons' accounting. Black people constituted 1/3 of the state's population, but far less of the share of wealth and property in the state. Further, of the 120 state representatives and 50 state Senators, only 7 representatives and 2 Senators, were Black. That there were no Black members in statewide government, namely the Governor's office or his cabinet positions. Dr. Silas P. Wright, the Mayor, a white man. 3/10 members of the Board of Alderman Black. 10 of 26 policemen, Black, with a white chief. City attorney, white. City Clerk and Treasurer, white. Same issue, Bishop A Walter, president of the National Afro-American Council, stated, that the "Afro-American press [was] almost a unit in its demand for a national organization which has for its objects a fair representation in government of the country, local, state, and national; to resist by all legal means mob and lynch law, of which we are made the special victims, and to insist upon the arrest and punishment of all such offenders against our legal rights; to resist the tyrannical [illegible] of the railroads, steam boats, and other corporations, and the violent and insulting conduct of their employees; to labor for the reformation of our penal institutions, where barbarous, cruel, and unchristian treatment of convicts is practiced; to secure a more equitable distribution of school funds; to insist on a healthy emigration from terror-ridden sections to others and more law abiding sections; to encourage all kinds of business enterprises, etc."

[135] Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 89-90.

control, and later to disrupt the wave of Populism, long before 1898.[136] As the Tillman letter showed, early on Fusion was vulnerable to race-baiting cries of "negro domination," and Southern Democrats seized upon the strategy. A Democratic Party newspaper in Alabama, for instance, warned against interracial Populism and undue public "influence" by Blacks in the 1880s. [137]

In 1898, Democrats identified Black aspirations for social and political equality as the state's central ill and offered white supremacy as the remedy. The chief conspirators of the campaign were state Democratic Party Chairman Furnifold M. Simmons, principal architect of the strategy, Josephus Daniels, owner and editor of *The Raleigh News and Observer*, and Goldsboro lawyer Charles B. Aycock, who would ride the wave of white supremacy into the Governorship in 1900.[138] Calling themselves "Redeemers" in the tradition of their Confederate elders, these conspirators, all hailing from the second district, implored white men to stand together to save the state from "negro rule." Simmons believed that waging a campaign that avoided popular issues like finance reform and free education to focus on white supremacy would entice white North Carolinians to break with Fusion.[139] The White Supremacy Campaign employed flagrant race-baiting in the press, which painted Black people as lawless and racially inferior, armed mass rallies to intimidate the opposition, and fraudulent elections.

The Democratic Party Handbook of 1898 provided keen insight into the party leaderships' race-baiting strategy. The document, 200 pamphlet-sized pages, used the word

---

[136] Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901: The Black Second* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981,) 254-255.
[137] Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981,) 120-121.
[138] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 104-105.
[139] Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 141-142.

"negro" 280 times. Several of those instances could be found on page 38 under the heading "To Rule Over White Men," which read:

> *"It is no fault of the negro that he is here, and he is not to be punished for being here; but this is a white man's country and white men must control and govern it. They must govern it not only because they are white men, but because they can do it better than the negro…"*
>
> *Democratic Party Hand Book of 1898*

Indeed, the authors urged that it was the responsibility of white men to save "negroes" from the "ruin" of self-governance and demonstrate the inherent superiority of whites to make laws and administer government. The handbook stated that the Democratic Party alone had as its "special mission" the duty to "rescue the white people of the east from the curse of negro domination."[140] Further evidence of the race-baiting included "The Eastern Towns Given up to Negroes"[141] and "Scandalous Conduct," which asserted that Republican and Fusion rule had led to Black lawlessness and an "alarming numbers of outrages and crimes that have made the women of the Stae [sic] afraid to travel the public roads alone."[142] By comparison, the word "white" appeared 178, "railroad," 91, "farmer," 29, and "education," 27 times. Though Populists

[140] State Executive Committee Democratic Party (N.C.), "The Democratic Hand Book, 1898" (Raleigh, N.C. Edwards & Broughton. 1898.), 84.; Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 38.
[141] State Executive Committee Democratic Party (N.C.), "The Democratic Hand Book, 1898," 44.
[142] State Executive Committee Democratic Party (N.C.), "The Democratic Hand Book, 1898," 58-59.

had fled the Democratic Party over an array of social and financial concerns, Democratic leaders calculated that a campaign of white supremacy would draw them back.

As the face of the campaign, Aycock gave rousing speeches across the state charging large crowds of whites with the task of saving their state from the corrupting influence of "carpet-baggers" and "negros." In response, white men and women formed White Government

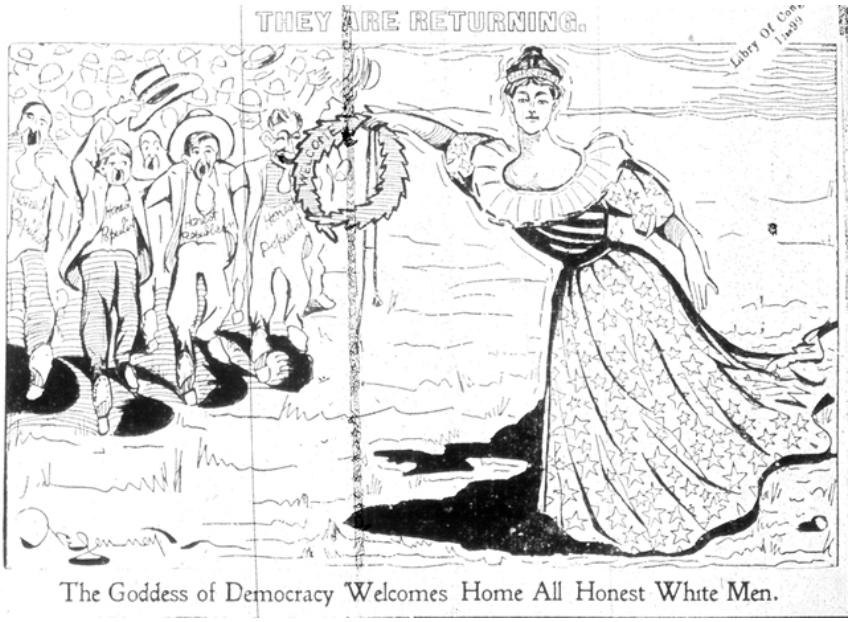

Figure 2: "They Are Returning." Raleigh News and Observer, September 16, 1898. Accessed http://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/1898/item/2204 on February 5, 2018

Leagues, devoted to white supremacy and "home-loving."[143] The Leagues' goal was to ensure 100 percent of white votes for the Democratic Party.[144] White Government Leagues became the organizing apparatus through which the Democratic Party propagated its claims of a Black crime wave, and provoked whites into supremacist fervor. The campaign's most well-known and inflammatory speakers who addressed White Government Leagues included Congressman Ben

[143] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 98-99.
[144] Umfleet, "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Report," 67.

Tillman, South Carolina's leading white supremacist defender of violence as a political tool.[145] Tillman's "Red Shirts" in South Carolina carried out terroristic intimidation and violence to keep Black people from the polls, thus inspiring a similar movement among North Carolina's White Government Leagues.[146]

In the name of white supremacy, Red Shirts broke up Black political meetings in churches, rode through Black neighborhoods displaying white supremacist paraphernalia and weapons, and assaulted both Black and white Republicans who attempted to speak in public.[147] A brief article in *The Charlotte Daily Observer* illustrated the Red Shirt tactics at a Republican rally in the town of Wilson. The article, "Dancy Couldn't Speak. He Left Wilson on the First Train- Butler Will be Dealt with the Same Way on Saturday," reported that on November 2, a "determined" "committee" of Democrats thwarted what was intended to be an address to area Republicans. The article claimed that, without making threats of violence, White Government Leaguers refused to let Dancy speak and then ordered him onto a train. The title's claim that "Butler [would] be dealt with the same way," which could be considered a threat of violence by the paper itself, is indicative of the way white press worked in collusion with the Democrats' campaign.

---

[145] Benjamin R. Tillman, "The Use of Violence Against Southern Blacks," in *For the Record: A Documentary History of America. Vol. 2,* eds David E. Shi and Holly A. Mayer (New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016,) 119-120.
[146] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 98-99.
[147] Umfleet, "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Report," 67-68.

While Aycock's White Government Leagues and Red Shirts executed the ground game of the White Supremacy Campaign, Simmons and Daniels supplied the propaganda. As editor of *The News and Observer*, Daniels turned his paper over to the campaign. Printed articles and racist political cartoons warned of "negro domination." Unlike the sensational coverage of random unidentified "negro outrages" in the streets, this propaganda tended to target specific Fusionists and Republicans. (Figure 2)

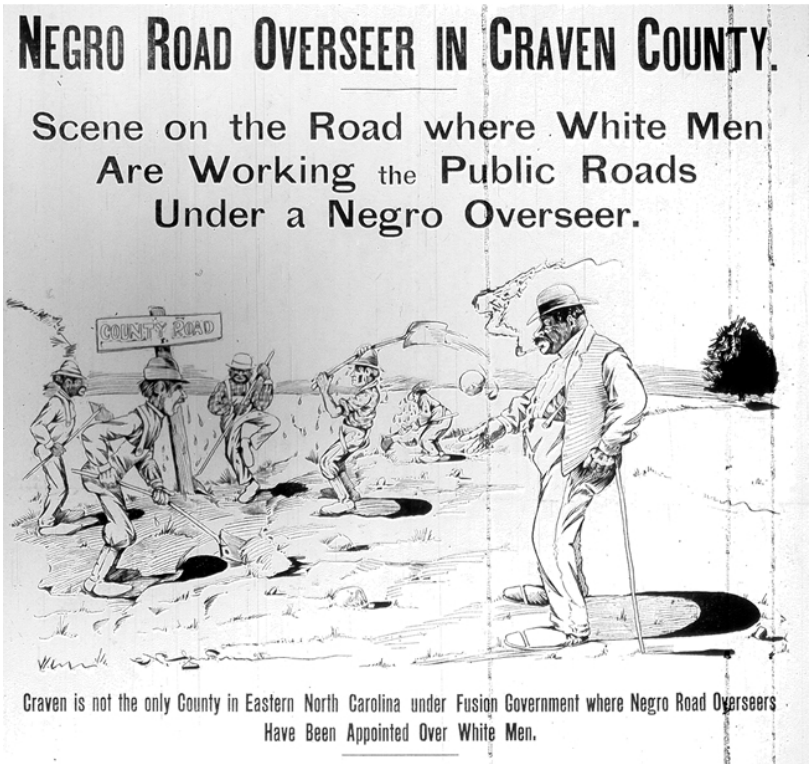

Figure 2: "NEGRO ROAD OVERSEER IN CRAVEN COUNTY." Raleigh News and Observer, September 11, 1898. Accessed http://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/1898/item/2200 on February 5, 2018.

In addition to promoting the idea that Black politicians had overrun state government, Simmons and Daniels manufactured a crisis in which they claimed Black men were committing acts of sexual violence against white women at increasing and alarming rates. By printing false statistics and dubious accounts of rape, *The News and Observer* linked racialized white fears of

Black political dominance and social equality with more visceral anxieties about white male domination to produce violence.[148] Another of the campaign's most impactful speakers, Rebecca Strowd, told a group of White Government Leaguers in Laurinburg that there was a "Black vampire hovering over [their] beloved old North Carolina."[149] The speech had so much resonance that *The News and Observer's* cartoonist immortalized it into an iconic propaganda element of the campaign. *(Figure 4)*

Figure 4: "THE VAMPIRE THAT HOVERS OVER NORTH CAROLINA." Raleigh News and Observer, September 27, 1898. Accessed http://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/1898/item/2215 on February 5, 2018.

Over the course of 1898, the campaign grew in intensity, catching both Congressman White and Customs Agent Dancy in its heat. Because the ascendency of White and Dancy validated and empowered the role of Black North Carolinians in politics, they became targets of

[148] Crystal Nicole Feimster, *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 82-89, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 83-84, 86.

[149] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 99.

the vicious campaign to cast Blacks as unfit for political leadership. Black politicians and leaders responded, hoping to diffuse the dangerous rhetoric and stave off the threat to Black enfranchisement. Dancy, who was already a source of disgruntlement for many white North Carolinians, became a campaign target in September when he attended a conference of the National Afro-American Council in New York City that passed a resolution advocating reform of marriage laws. The resolution called for uniform laws across the country to remedy the vulnerability of Black women living with white men. The resolution was aimed at ameliorating the lack of protections for Black women in these legally unsanctioned relationships.[150] Yet, it was reinterpreted by white supremacists into a Black male desire for inter-racial marriage with white women. The resolution affirmed to many whites that Black peoples' aspiration was inter-marriage with whites, which Democrats used to paint Dancy as a would-be "defiler" of white women. Picking up from *The News and Observer*, both the *Charlotte Daily Observer* and *Winston-Salem Journal* published numerous accounts of this meeting, suggesting Dancy desired "race-mixing" in North Carolina. Through his own paper, *Star of Zion*, Dancy repudiated these claims, stating that he wasn't present during the signing of the resolution and didn't wish for "race-mixing." Despite his protestations, printed and reiterated several times, the white newspapers continued to insinuate otherwise.[151]

The *News and Observer* attacked Congressman White's practice of patronage, assisting other Black Republicans in winning coveted positions, as evidence that Black politicians were corrupt and had overrun the state. While White fended off these attacks unapologetically, as a

---

[150] Glenda E. Gilmore, "Murder, Memory, and the Flight of the Incubus," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 79-80.

[151] For a sampling of the exchange between Dancy (via *Star of Zion)* and the white newspapers, see: *Star of Zion* September 29, 1898 and *Charlotte Daily Observer*: September 20 and 21; October 9, 12, and 17; and November 3.

practice common to all office holders, he also used his platform in Congress to address the white-on-Black terror in the South. In March 1898 he gave a Senate speech in which he lamented the violence and said the country was failing in its duty to protect the rights of Black people. White denounced the lack of action, saying, "This is painfully evidenced by the almost daily outrages chronicled, showing murders [and] assassinations… all over the Southland." White urged his fellow Congressman to do their part to defend Black people from such "outrages." White's entreaty inverted the narrative of Black lawlessness and white victimhood that whites were being fed, exposing the terror Black people were enduring. Yet, his words also revealed the vulnerability of Black Southerners. Even as an ascendant and influential politician, White seemed to express powerlessness to protect his constituents.

White was not alone in voicing anger or despair at the repression, nor in calling for a political response to the situation. In its February issue, *The Colored Citizen* advocated "political independence" and a dramatic break with the Republican Party. They published a letter reprinted from the *Omaha Enterprise*, which expressed a desire that Black display more political freedom by eschewing partisanship. The editorial suggested that Democrats in the South were "extremely hostile to the Negro's political participation because he believes the Negro is unilaterally republican…" And, while the Democratic Party was hostile toward Black voters, the Republicans were "indifferent" to them because it took their support for granted.

This call for a mass exodus from the Republican Party marked a dramatic shift from the loyal Republicanism that propelled Fusion politics just two years earlier. The sense that Black people had been abandoned by an "indifferent" Republican party revealed the mounting anxiety many must have felt. Though *The Citizen* did not begin publishing until 1897, it is easy to understand how the shift in tone across different newspapers and over that period responded to

the changing political temperature. No longer extolling the virtues of "The Party of Lincoln," Black intellectuals chided and perhaps even beseeched white Republicans to work to maintain Black enfranchisement. In the same Feb 17 issue of *The Citizen*, a lengthy article entitled "The Republican Party and Emancipation," repudiated the idea that the Republican Party, "out of sheer love and affection, set [Black people] free." It stated that emancipation was an "accident" of the war. The article asserted that, if Black men exercising their freedom in politics represented "ingratitude" towards whites, then so be it.

Many Black newspapers documented how lynching and white mob violence were being instigated by the conservative Democratic campaigns of 1898.[152] An August 30, 1898 article in the Black-owned *Wilmington Daily Record* printed "Terrorized Negroes," an account of "outrages" against Black Texans, including whippings, shootings, and arson of homes.[153] Black newspaper editors addressed white-on-Black terror by continuing to push for anti-lynching legislation, calling on federal action to prevent violence, and even imploring Black Southerners to take action.[154] In a March 5, 1898 issue of *The Afro-American Sentinel* editor Cyrus D. Bell issued a powerful indictment of unchecked white violence against Black people in the South. The article, "Brutal Barbarians vs. Arrant [sic] Cowards," denounced not only "white criminals" and "villains" for their violence and the federal government for inaction, but also Black people themselves. Bell called for armed resistance, saying,"... the very cowardice of the victims of these atrocities offers an almost irresistible temptation to those whose brutal tastes find satiation in such … devilry."[155] Dramatically different from the optimistic confidence with which Bell

[152] Crystal Nicole Feimster, *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 81-82.
[153] "Terrorized Negroes," *Wilmington Daily Record*, August 30, 1898, 1.
[154] *The Freeman,* February 15, 1896; August 8, 1896, 3.
[155] "Brutal Barbarians vs. Arrant Cowards," *The Afro-American Sentinel*, March 5, 1898, 1.

and others addressed issues just two years earlier, these voices reveal the hardship that the push to Jim Crow imposed on Blacks. In the entreating, anxious, and even angry perspectives of 1898, no longer confident in the "Party of Lincoln," we see a marked shift in Black discourse.

Despite the pleas, demands, and calls for self-defense that some Black writers and officials expressed in public, the Democrat's campaign marched on in North Carolina. On the same day in the fall of 1898 that the *Charlotte Daily Observer* published the account of the infamous "umbrella incident" in Wilmington, the *Raleigh News and Observer* reported how lazily and insolently the duly elected Republicans ran the town. In the article, "The Negro Office Holders in the City of Wilmington, A Dirty and Filthy Town," H. E. C. Bryant lambasted John C. Dancy and the Wilmington government for dereliction and incompetence, saying they poorly managed the city's public services. Bryant issued the familiar call to action to white men to reclaim and redeem the state from the influence of Black political leadership in the leadup to the November election.[156]

White Wilmingtonians heeded the Democratic Party's command to resist "negro domination." The expansion of Black political power in 1896 and 1897 built on the marked economic and social progress already on display in Wilmington. Since the Civil War, the Black community, which represented a majority in the town, had made certain gains that inspired hope for Black people and angered many whites. Through education and entrepreneurship, Black Wilmingtonians became some of the town's most prominent and wealthiest residents.

[156] H E C Bryant, "The Negro in Hanover: The Negro Office Holders in the City of Wilmington, A Dirty and Filthy Town," *Raleigh News and Observer*, 3.

Additionally, Black artisans and skilled workers were half of the workforce, comprising the town's small but growing Black middle class. Even unskilled Black laborers were steadily employed at both Black and white businesses. Wilmington also boasted an extensive infrastructure of schools, churches, and social clubs that united and organized the Black community.[157] For the white men who resolved to overthrow the Fusionist government in Wilmington, they saw "negro domination" and bad governance as closely linked with economic competition they experienced.[158]

The politics of the fake rape scare also took root fatefully in Wilmington. Alexander Manly, a Black newspaper editor who produced the daily *Wilmington Record*, confronted the underlying narrative of the rape scare in an August editorial that enraged white North Carolinians. Manly's editorial was a direct rebuttal of a speech issued by the white Georgian agitator Rebecca Felton, who called on white men to prevent Black-on-white rape and preserve white racial purity. Felton, who endorsed the claim of a "Black rapist" crisis to push white men to command white male loyalty to white women, told her audience to "lynch a thousand times a week" if that's what it took to protect white women from "ravenous beasts."[159]

Felton's pro-lynching speech, which was reprinted often in the white press, appeared in the *Morning Star* in August of 1898, placed a target on the backs of Black men across the state and prompted an editorial response from Manly. In his rebuttal, which appeared in the *Daily Record* just days later, Manly refuted the racists' notion that Black men could only have intimate relationships with white women by force. He suggested that white women occasionally desired

[157] Umfleet, "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Report," 46-52.
[158] Ibid., 52-53.
[159] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 105.

and sought inter-racial liaisons.[160] He also challenged Felton's call to white male chivalry, which he applied to both Black and white women. Manly frankly pointed out that white men violated the color line by pursuing Black women. He therefore admonished women like Felton to "[t]each [their] men purity. Let virtue be something more than an excuse for them to intimidate and torture a helpless people." Manly's defense of both Black men and women placed them on equal social and moral footing with whites, stating, "you [white men] set yourselves down as a lot of carping hypocrites in that you cry aloud for the virtue of your women while you seek to destroy the morality of ours" through inter-racial liaisons. Rather than stoking fears of Black rapists, he said that white men should protect their women better and stay on their own side of the color line where Black women were concerned.

Manly's editorial, which directly confronted the principle lie of the campaign, inflamed whites not only in the state but across the South. Like the resolution of the National Afro-American Council, Manly's effort to defend Black people, particularly women, was reimagined in the minds of whites as an endorsement of "race-mixing." What underlay white anger was the insinuation that Black and white men were of equal social standing. In his editorial, Manly answered accusations of Black male lasciviousness by reminding white men of their own "carnal" transgressions. Likewise, in defending Black women, he assumed the chivalric role that white men claimed for themselves. If Black men were expected to observe the color line and respect racial purity, so, too, were white men. And if socially elevated white men were charged with bestowing chivalry on "their" women, so, too, were Black men equally responsible. It is this insistence on social equality and a common morality, not a manifesto for "race-mixing," that angered many white people. In placing Black men on an even level with white men, Manly's

[160] Umfleet, "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Report," reproduction of the original Manly editorial. The original editorial appeared in the August 18, 1898 issue of the *Wilmington Daily Record*, 98.

manifesto expressed what many whites in Wilmington most feared and resented about Black social progress.

The Democratic propaganda machine stoked white anger by printing and reprinting versions of the editorial, even changing words to paint him in worse light.[161] Whether the response in Wilmington was a product of that propaganda or the culmination of the political confrontation white Wilmingtonians desired, we may never know. In either case, Manly became a lightning rod in an already tempestuous political moment. White newspapers printed and reprinted the editorial, insinuating that Manly was justifying his own sexual desire for white women. [162] The *Washington Bee* reported that fellow Wilmingtonian John C. Dancy blamed the Wilmington "troubles" on Manly, which prompted angry responses from figures sympathetic to Manly's perspective.[163]

The White Supremacy Campaign asserted to white North Carolinians that Black participation in politics and public life was shameful and ruinous to the state. Wilmington, with a bustling Black community and prominent figures like Dancy and Manly, represented all that Democrats claimed was wrong. The conspirators who responded to Simmons' call for redemption, known as the "Secret 9," worked in league with Wilmington's Democratic Committee, White Government Union, and Red Shirts to devise a plan. The Secret 9 included

---

[161] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 106-107; H. Leon Prather, Sr. "We Have Taken a City: A Centennial Essay," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 23.
[162] H. Leon Prather, Sr. "We Have Taken a City: A Centennial Essay," in in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 23-25; David S. Cecelski, "Abraham H. Galloway: Wilmington's Lost Prophet and the Rise of Black Radicalism in the American South," Michael Honey, "Class, Race, and Power in the New South: Racial Violence and the Delusions of White Supremacy," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 172-173.
[163] *Washington Bee*, November 26, 1898, 4.

several of the city's most powerful white members: J. Alan Taylor, Hardy Fennell, W.A. Johnson, L.B. Sasser, William Gilchrist, Pierre B. Manning, Edward S. Lathrop, Walter Parsely, and W Hugh MacRae. They planned to win the election by suppressing the Black and Republican votes. To this end, the men unleashed Red Shirts on the Black communities to threaten men who planned to vote, instructed white businesses to fire anyone who registered, and planted articles in the city papers about the corruption and ineptitude of the present government. [164]

Despite the intimidation tactics, some Black Wilmingtonians defended their social place and their right to vote. In late October, the *Daily Record* printed a letter signed by "[a]n Organization of Colored Ladies," insisting that Black men register and vote. The letter, which was printed by the *Wilmington Messenger on the 21st*, promised that "every negro who refuses to register his name next Saturday that he may vote, we shall make it our business to deal with him in a way that will not be pleasant." The undersigned "ladies" pledged their "assistance in every way" in the perpetuation of their social status, including all "liberties, regardless of the insults and threats thrown out at [them] by those who seek to crush [them.]"[165] Later, on the eve of the election, some Black Wilmingtonians met and discussed their plans to vote, despite the threats. [166] In the face of withering pressure, many Black Wilmingtonians fought to maintain their enfranchisement and social status.

By the time election day dawned on November 8, the "Secret 9" had complete control over the town. They had divided the city into zones and established a militia to patrol and assault any Black person trying to vote. In Wilmington as in other parts of the state, partisan

[164] Umfleet, "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Report," 94-95, 104.
[165] Ibid., 103-104.
[166] Ibid., "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Report," 107.

officials destroyed or miscounted Republican ballots, while looking the other way when Democrats voted illegally.[167] In the 5th precinct of the town's 1st ward, for instance, voting results were highly suspicious. While there were 30 registered white voters and 313 registered Black voters (343 total registered voters), on election day 456 votes were cast for Democrats, 151 for Republicans. This total of 607 ballots is 176 percent of the number registered in the precinct. Another set of doubtful results were found in the 2nd precinct of the 5th ward where 251 votes were cast for Democrats, when only 225 whites were registered to vote. While, the precinct had 154 registered Black voters and only 39 votes counted for Republicans. [168] The White Supremacy Campaign tactics proved successful statewide and in Wilmington. When the election results were in, Democrats had won the day. In making the election a referendum on white men's manhood, on their commitment to their Confederate elders, their race, and their women, Democrats secured a relatively easy victory over the fractious Fusionist alliance. The terroristic tactics and election fraud delivered whatever results that the noxious battle against "negro domination" might not have secured.

After the election, the Wilmington conspirators resolved to execute their plan to take control of the city by force. On the day after the election, the militia that had been organized by the Secret 9 initiated the coup with a planned meeting at the town's Wilmington Light Infantry Armory. The militia was led by Alfred Moore Waddell, the former US Congressman who had given a speech in which he promised to "choke the current of the Cape Fear with [Black] carcasses" if it were necessary to ensure a Democratic victory.[169] Waddell, a wealthy Wilmingtonian, had gained prominence over the course of the year because of his speeches in

[167] Umfleet, "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Report," 108-109.
[168] Ibid., 110.
[169] Ibid., 79.

support of white supremacy and the Democratic Party. When the gathering issued a "Declaration of White Independence," Waddell read the statement aloud. The declaration, which announced the coup, stated that "the undersigned citizens of the City of Wilmington and County of New Hanover, do hereby declare that [they] will no longer be ruled, and will never again be ruled by men of African origin."[170] They declared that jobs currently being held by a majority of Black laborers would be given to whites because "white families cannot thrive here unless there are more opportunities for … employment." They also demanded the resignation of the city's Republican and Fusionist officials and demanded that the *Daily Record* cease publication and editor Alexander Manly leave town before the day ended. Waddell, flanked with his militiamen, summoned a group of prominent Black Wilmingtonians to a meeting, presented them the declaration, and demanded a response first thing the following morning.

The Black participants, calling themselves the Committee of Colored Citizens (CCC), left the Waddell meeting and continued their discussion, drafting a response to be delivered per Waddell's directive. [171] The CCC response to the white declaration struck a conciliatory and cautious tone. The note informed the whites that Manly had already left the town, to parts unknown. It disavowed his editorial, while insisting that they were individual citizens who had no authority to guarantee the extensive demands laid out in the declaration.

Waddell and the conspirators did not receive the CCC response on the morning of the 10th, prompting the militia of approximately 2,000 to gather at the armory. At 8:00am, they marched to the offices of the *Daily Record* and set fire to the building, destroying the property.[172] After burning the offices, the militia began patrolling the town, instigating violence with Black

[170] Umfleet, 111-115.
[171] Ibid., 116-117.
[172] Ibid., 122, 124-129.

Wilmingtonians they encountered on the streets. When a gunshot was fired, the riot escalated. The white militia, aided by the light infantry and Naval Reserves, beat and shot their way through the town's Black neighborhoods, killing and wounding many. Historians have attempted to estimate the total number of casualties from the riot, with widely varying results. The report commissioned by the state estimated the number of Black victims at least 10, and perhaps as many as hundreds.[173] While whites assaulted the Black community, many Black Wilmingtonians fled the city on foot, hiding in the swamps on the edge of town. In the midst of the violence, the Secret 9 and their co-conspirators coerced the resignation of the Republican mayor, Board of Aldermen, and chief of police, expelling both Black and white Republicans from Wilmington. They held a new "election" and declared Waddell mayor. By the end of the day, they had installed an entire administration of Democrats in power.[174]

The 1898 election spelled doom for Fusion and Black political representation, as the White Supremacy Campaign effectively destroyed the nascent and still tenuous alliance. The riot and coup in Wilmington coincided with the restoration of Democratic hegemony in the state and presaged the "civil death" that Black North Carolinians feared and resisted. Fusion politics had first enhanced Black political power, but ultimately helped to instigate the disfranchisement amendment of 1900.

When Republicans and Populists employed Fusion tactics to leverage Black political power against the Democrats, they placed a target squarely on the backs of Black North Carolinians, whose votes had helped to make Fusion a success. While Black voters and politicians capitalized on the political opening to defend and preserve the gains of the period, the

[173] Umfleet, "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Report," 133-152.
[174] Ibid., 152-155

opportunity was short-lived. Recognizing the threat that Black voters posed to the Democratic agenda, the party seized on white fears of racial equality to reinvigorate Civil War loyalties and once again marginalize Black voters. And, when confronted with the elements of the White Supremacy Campaign, both Republican and Populist whites proved their race loyalty in the end.

The almost boundless optimism that Black politicians and intellectuals espoused in the early 1890s peaked during the Fusion successes, as increasing educational, civic, and political gains affirmed Black social progress. This discourse gave way to far more defensive, anxious, and angry perspectives as the threats to Black social progress, particularly enfranchisement, gained steam. The Democratic Party rebounded from its mid-decade losses with the White Supremacy Campaign of 1898, provoking violence and repression against Black North Carolinians. Black intellectuals and politicians leveraged their political power and alliances to try to stop the violence and preserve enfranchisement. Powerful Republicans like Congressman White and Customs Agent Dancy joined the chorus of Black intellectuals nationwide who understood the threats and defended Black civil and political life. As Black newspaper editors and public intellectuals narrated the period's events, they revealed their disillusionment with the federal government and Republican Party's unwillingness to protect Black Southerners, and occasional discontent with Black responses to white terror.

The 1898 election exposed just how salient the call to white supremacy, and the hostility to Black social progress, ultimately was for white North Carolinians. Democrats successfully discredited Black political leadership and set about destroying any role that Black North Carolinians had in politics. Despite their resistance, Black politicians and leaders were not successful in stopping the dramatic push toward Jim Crow in North Carolina. Yet, their voices

reflect a keen awareness of both the vulnerabilities and the opportunities that the political moment presented.

Chapter Three: "Too Much Democracy"

On November 15, just days after the election and riot in Wilmington came to an end, three important articles appeared side by side in *The Farmer and Mechanic*, a Raleigh, NC daily published by Josephus Daniels, lead propagandist of the 1898 campaign. *The Farmer and Mechanic*, like all Democratic print media in the state, had been printing triumphant reports of the Democratic Party's electoral success for several days. In the November 15 issue, a large spread detailing election results highlighted the sparse Populist and Republican victories, including Congressman White's reelection.[175] Below this spread, an article titled "Hanging to a Tree" reported the lynching of Manny McCauley, a Black man accused of attempting to "run away" with a white woman near Chapel Hill. The article was one sentence and less than 6 lines in length.

Further down the page, below the report of McCauley's hanging body, was a lengthy editorial by Troy Poole of Auburn, entitled "Our Women Defended and Protected." Writing on behalf of his local White Government Union, Poole thanked the "gallant" "young men" of the state for defending "North Carolina's Sweet Womanhood." Poole wrote that protecting white women was as important to white men as redeeming the state from "corruption and negro domination." Poole thanked not only white men, but also the women who he said issued an appeal for protection that men felt honor-bound to satisfy.

This single page of Daniels' *Farmer and Mechanic*, "The Cheapest Paper in the World," profoundly encapsulated both the causes and effects of the events of 1898. Where legislative policy had failed to claim (or reclaim) the loyalty of white voters, appeals to their sense of male

[175] *Farmer and Mechanic,* November 15, 1898, 3.

chivalry, racial victimhood, and supremacy had proven successful. And where white North Carolinians saw Black aspirations and progress as corrupt and oppressive, they had come together to solve that imagined problem through repressive and violent means. The Democrats' narrative of triumph and redemption, as represented in the first two pieces, literally and figuratively obscured the devastation symbolized by the brief description of McCauley's lifeless body. The reality was that Democrats had stoked fears of rampant white victimhood to unleash the Red Shirts to inflict mob terror on the Black community. And, rather than face the supposed horror of "negro domination" in state politics, Democrats had employed coercion and fraud to ensure their own race and party hegemony. The brief footnote about McCauley's gruesome death, on the otherwise jubilant page, mirrored the violent suppression of Black life in the state.

While Democrats engaged in smug self-congratulation and celebrated what Poole called a victory for "white supremacy and honest government," Black people issued public assessments of the events as well. In addition to issuing newspaper articles and editorials, North Carolina politicians like Congressman George Henry White made speeches throughout the country offering perspectives on the election and its implications for the state and nation. In this chapter, I will explore how Black people understood and responded to the campaign, the withering political defeats that set the stage for disfranchisement and Jim Crow. This chapter is interested not only in the public statements and assessments Black made, but also in what people did in response to those events. I argue that it was a moment of radical disagreement and fresh thinking. Black North Carolinians conveyed disappointment, anger, and disillusionment, as well as a resolve to maintain and expand rights that were under attack. Despite differing passionately over the methods, many Black people remained committed to advancing Black enfranchisement and racial equality. Further, in response to the "civil death" of disfranchisement, some

developed two key new strategies: the massive migration from Southern to Northern states and the creation of several important national organizations. Black reactions to the devastation of 1898 and the onset of Jim Crow varied; but those reactions reflected, more than anything, that Democrats had not destroyed Black aspirations or resolve to erase the color line from society. Both the positive and the devastating lessons of the period compelled Black people to develop new strategies and approaches in their fight for racial equality.

When the dust settled in late 1898, Black North Carolinians must have felt they had very few political friends. While the Democrats' campaign of white supremacy had placed a target on the backs of all Black North Carolinians, white Populists had taken plenty of shots over the course of the campaign as well. During the 1898 campaign, Populists employed a strategy against the Democrats that amounted to fighting fire with fire, or rather, answering the "cry of nigger" with a "negro wail" of their own. Rather than conceding that Fusion had indeed enhanced Black political participation, the *Populist Party Handbook* returned the volley to Democrats, reminding voters of the many Black politicians elected and appointed under their leadership. Consequently, the text was a close second to the Democrats' in its references to "Negro" politicians, although they at least capitalized Negro.[176] Populists recounted in excruciating detail the Black politicians who owed their positions to Democratic support. Examples include postmasters, clerks, and county officials in Craven, Hanover, Pender, and Lenoir counties. Whereas Populists had fended off prior cries of "negro domination" by focusing

[176] State Executive Committee of the People's Party of North Carolina, "People's Party Hand-Book of Facts. Campaign of 1898," (Raleigh, N. C.: Capital Printing Company, Printers and Binders, 1898). In 189 pages, the handbook included 75 references to the word "Negro," while "nigger" appeared 47 times.

on the economic issues, their 1898 strategy helped Democrats ensure that Black participation in politics was the only real issue that mattered.

By the end of 1898, Black North Carolinians saw that they had no allies in Populists; with Fusion destroyed, moreover, the Republican Party was once again marginalized. Another effect of the white supremacy campaign was such that even many Republicans now blamed Black enfranchisement for their party's failures. Some white Republicans believed that it was the prominence and actions of Black Republicans like Young, Dancy, and White that undermined the party's appeal to white voters.

Given the scapegoating and attacks that Black voters and politicians had sustained from all parties, many may have anticipated that most white voters would be swayed by the Democrats' campaign. In fact, early responses communicated no surprise, but rather simply disappointment and anger over the brutality of the campaign. On November 10, 1898, two days after the election, Charlotte's *Star of Zion* printed several illustrative pieces. One unsigned letter to the Editor, referring to the "ugly, bitter, and bulldozing campaign," asserted that a Democratic victory was not the least remarkable. Another letter complained that the Democrats had prevented Congressman White and John C. Dancy from speaking weeks earlier in Kinston and Wilson, respectively. AME Zion Reverend and journalist William Henry Davenport directed his anger not just at Democrats, but at white Southerners in general, in a speech that was printed in the same issue. Reverend Davenport, who was born and raised in New Bern, but then living in Camden, New Jersey, suggested that Black communities should meet white aggression with a militant response of their own. Davenport wrote, "If white men wish to institute a reign of terror, the Negroes will help them. If they think that shotguns should be carried to the polls, the Negroes

will be willing to assist…" Davenport said that Black people were angry over the mistreatment and "growing more and more so every day."

While upset over the election colored Black peoples' responses, news of the bloody coup in Wilmington sparked even more outrage. First, the Black reporting on Wilmington worked to balance the biased coverage in the white papers. To be sure, Democratic organs like the *Charlotte Daily Observer* and *Winston-Salem Journal* provided daily reports on Wilmington that painted the white rioters sympathetically, even suggesting Black people had initiated the violence.[177] The front page of the December 3, 1898 issue of *The Freeman* was devoted to the "Wilmington Riot" and provided a decidedly different slant. The coverage included first-hand accounts from a Black and a white Wilmingtonian. The first account, given by W.E. Henderson, a prominent Black attorney, described in great deal the underlying causes of the riot and coup, detailing the escalation of terror and violence. The attorney recounted how he and other Black residents had been discouraged from voting, given ultimatums by employers, and threatened with conspicuously placed Gatling guns throughout the city. Still, Henderson said that many had remained determined to vote. Henderson described the harrowing escape that he and his family made after being "compelled" to leave by "forty or fifty" armed white men who had surrounded his home. He said that his goal in speaking was to "set right" the "false reports" of the "deplorable" actions of white Wilmingtonians.

The other first-hand account, simply signed by "A Canadian," likewise contradicted the white reporting and expressed outrage on behalf of the Black community. Where the white

[177] "A Crisis in Wilmington: Manly Must Leave," *Charlotte Daily Observer,* November 10, 1898, 1; "11 Negroes Dead: The War in Wilmington," *Charlotte Daily Observer,* November 11 , 1898, 1.; "Wilmington Aroused: Her People Hold a Great Mass Meeting and Adopt Strong Measures.," *Winston-Salem Journal*, November 9, 1898, 1; "Rioting in Wilmington: Five Negroes and One White Man Killed and Many Wounded," November 10, 1898, 1.; "The Wilmington Riot: The People are Still Greatly Excited More Trouble is Feared," November 11, 1898, 1.

newspapers had offered a story of mutual violence and destruction, the Canadian asserted, "[t]here was no riot, simply the strong slaying the weak and helpless. The Negroes had no firearms of any kind, but every white man from 10 years to seventy was handling guns." The writer continued, "From every town around the whites poured in to exterminate the Negroes." The Canadian confessed that he had been "forced to join what they called the white men's union," and wrote his account "to unburden [his] mind." These accounts provided an alternative picture of the riot and coup from that painted in the Democrat-leaning press. Reverend Davenport reserved his most direct anger for white demagogues, especially the "white-haired editor" of the *Wilmington Messenger*, a "raving and frothing" "bull," who had used the paper to propagandize for the Democratic campaign. Davenport excoriated the *Messenger* for calling Dancy "the Sambo of the Customs House" and for claiming that "salacious [Black] conspirators" were hatching a scheme to defile white women. Reverend Davenport ridiculed the myth of the "Black male rapist," employing a tactic that the *Wilmington Daily Record* editor Alexander Manly had used just months earlier, notwithstanding the incendiary response. "Wonder if [the *Messenger's* editor] knows anything of the consuming lusts of 'white beasts,' who seek to destroy the chastity of colored women," Davenport wrote. The minister suggested the editor "roar at the white men in Wilmington" for their contributions to miscegenation.

Interestingly, Davenport wasn't the only Black journalist to invoke Manly's message while expressing anger over the violence in Wilmington. Julius F. Taylor, editor of Salt Lake City's *Broad Ax*, published two editorials in defense of the Wilmington editor, one of which was written by Taylor himself. The first letter, "Editor Manley's [sic] Predicament," printed December 10, 1898, read, "[t]he action of the white mob in Wilmington, N.C., was reprehensible, and the resolutions demanding the resignation of the mayor of the city and the

chief of police together with the virtual confiscation of the property of the *Wilmington Record*, and the exile of its editor outrageous."[178] Taylor's own piece stated: "We agree with Editor Manley [sic] when he states that '… the white men must absolutely cease from debauching the female members of our race before they can consistently chastise the negro for flirting with the female members of their race.'" Taylor concluded, "[Manly] has been severely censured by a great many people for speaking the truth." While Dancy and a council of Wilmington's Black leaders had previously denounced Manly's editorial, these comments offered a different viewpoint, one enraged that Manly's words had been used as an excuse to incite violence.[179]

In addition to the expressions of outrage, many Black people noted the urgency of the North Carolina situation for Black people nationally and made frantic appeals for federal intervention. The *Freeman* editor George L. Knox poetically observed on January 14, 1899, that "[t]he issue [in North Carolina] today is not merely local in its scope... But like the great sympathetic nervous system of the human body, stands the relation of the states, and ere long the malady of one will overlap all artificial bounds and infect the whole." The *Colored American* published a series of editorials that also communicated urgency, while calling on President McKinley to act. One editorial in the *Colored American* condemned the White Supremacy Campaign as "shameful and indefensible." They continued, "[n]ot in thirty years has the majesty of the law been so openly defied, or the rights of a people so ruthlessly trampled upon." Another writer asserted that "everything of value to the Black man is in the balance" and warned

[178] Julius F. Taylor, "Editor Manley's [sic] Predicament," *Broad Ax*, December 10, 1898, 4.
[179] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 115.

President McKinley that if "disorder and mob violence" went unchecked, "election day [would] mark an epoch of revolution and anarchy."[180]

African Americans in Wilmington and throughout the country made fervent appeals to the President to offer a remedy for the Wilmington coup, in particular. A Black woman who had survived the events wrote an anonymous letter pleading with McKinley to intervene on behalf of her traumatized and scattered community.[181] The African-American Second Baptist Church of Washington D.C. publicized a resolution imploring the White House to "executive interference." It warned that "[t]he farce that is about to be enacted in the state of North Carolina will return to plague the instigators of it."[182] Congressman White, who had been helpful to McKinley's presidential bid, appealed to the nation's leader on behalf of Black North Carolinians.[183]

Despite the numerous pleas and entreaties by African Americans, McKinley's administration refused to intervene in North Carolina. Perhaps in response to the various demands and entreaties issued to McKinley, United States Attorney General John W. Griggs directed the North Carolina office to investigate the coup. Attorney C.M. Bernard may or may not have been motivated to prosecute the conspirators, but Griggs ultimately decided not to pursue charges out of fear that the federal government would lose. An editorial in the January 14, 1899 issue of the *Freeman* related disappointment over McKinley's decision to let the coup stand, in effect allying with the Democrats. "The south should love McKinley," for "he has proven to them by uttered speech that their union is one of race, state and country," a white country in which Black rights and lives apparently mattered little. In failing to protect Black

---

[180] "The Situation in North Carolina," *Colored American*, November 5, 1898, 4.
[181] Umfleet, "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Report," 196.
[182] *Colored American*, November 26, 1898.
[183] Benjamin R. Justesen, *In His Own Words: The Writings, Speeches, and Letters of George Henry White* (Lincoln, Nebraska: IUniverse, 2004,) 252.

North Carolinians, McKinley showed loyalty to the "ill-tempered southern sentiment [that] remains the eating cancer of the nation."[184]

It was a moment of truth in party politics. *Broad Ax* editor Julius F. Taylor, engaging in a dialogue with George L. Knox of *The Freeman* about what to do with the "negro vote," answered, "It is hard for [Knox] to realize the fact that the Republican party has... endeavored to throw the negro overboard." Taylor portrayed the Black GOP loyalists as blind, even pathetic: "the negro clings to the old ship and cries out 'Save me or I will sink.' But all the time he is sinking lower and lower... and Hons. Judson W. Lyon, Lynch, Cheatam [sic], Pledger, Pinchback, White, Green, Dancy, Fortune, Mitchell, Lewis, and Knox will only remain to mark the spot where they went down to oblivion."[185]

Some Black people were so dejected by the federal government's inability or unwillingness to protect Black voters, that they felt discouraged about the prospects for Black enfranchisement across the South. An editorial in the December 3, 1898 issue of the *Colored American* by Hamilton S. Smith deplored the mob attack on the *Wilmington Daily Record* as "a signal to whites to commence their diabolical work."[186] The letter expressed doubt that even the federal government had the power to protect Black Southerners from white violence and assessed that "[t]he right of franchise may be the greatest gift in American citizenship for the white man, but for years it has been the greatest curse to the Negro of the South." Smith suggested Black Southerners "eschew politics entirely… until such time as protection in [their] political rights are guaranteed [them] by the government." Smith concluded, "The white man's motto and rule of life is self preservation, and it is time the Negro was emulating his example."

---

[184] *Freeman,* January 14, 1899, 2.
[185] *Broad Ax,* December 3, 1898, 1.
[186] "Looking Facts in the Face," *Colored American,* December 3, 1898.

Smith's letter profoundly incapsulated several of the key themes that emerged in the wake of the election. First, Smith articulated widely felt disappointment and anger, as well as a lack of faith that the federal government could or would protect Black Southerners. Second, in his advice to "eschew politics entirely," Smith may have anticipated the brutal disenfranchisement battle ahead, as a logical sequel to the Wilmington terror. And finally, Smith's call for self-preservation as the highest goal certainly must have been on the hearts of minds of many Black people as they contemplated new strategies in the months and years that followed.

Indeed, Black North Carolinians had little time to react to the devastation 1898 election before they were engaged in another battle for their rights. Though Democrats had made a campaign promise in 1898 not to introduce disfranchisement legislation, they began to pursue this goal immediately after the November election.[187] As the public discourse over the early-mid 1890s revealed, Black North Carolinians had seen the threat of disfranchisement and Jim Crow laws coming for some time. The Democrats' condemnation of Black legislators and officials as inept and corrupt had occurred in prior elections, making Black enfranchisement a political issue long before 1898. Congressman White's reelection that year, despite the crushing Republican defeat, showed Democrats that Black participation in politics had not been fully nullified. Democrats in Mississippi, South Carolina, and Georgia had already succeeded in enacting disfranchisement laws, and North Carolina would soon follow

Black North Carolinians likely understood that the charge of "negro domination" had been a specious howl that masked the Democrat's true fear--- Black enfranchisement. As

[187] "Bishop's Address: The Negro Leaves God, God Leaves the Negro," *Star of Zion*, December 22, 1898, 1.

historian Michael Honey has noted, Black people had never held more than one-fifth of the legislature's positions, despite being more than one third of the state's population.[188] Further, even in the "Black Second," the Eastern district so-called because of its predominantly Black population, only 4 African Americans had been elected to the U.S. Congress in the 14 years leading up to disfranchisement. Only the alliance between Populists and Republicans had helped to expand Black political power. And to abort this progress, Democrats had united many white voters against Black participation in politics, setting the stage to more permanently neutralize the Black vote. Though the 1898 election had restored Democratic order, Black voters still retained the ability to impact future elections. It was "too much democracy," Honey concluded, "rather than Negro domination, that threatened Democratic hegemony."[189]

To stifle Black participation, in January 1899, Democrat Francis D. Wilson introduced a disfranchisement bill based on one recently adopted by the Louisiana legislature, similarly taking aim at the potential the Populist movement revealed. The law would amend the state Constitution and restrict voting by educational level, property ownership, and the use of a poll tax. The disfranchisement law would disproportionately impact black men, who owned less property and had higher rates of illiteracy compared with whites.[190] Under this law, many white men would also have been excluded, but for the key component of the "grandfather clause." The grandfather cause stipulated that an illiterate man could vote if he or an ancestor had been a

---

[188] Michael Honey, "Class, Race, and Power in the New South: Racial Violence and the Delusions of White Supremacy," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 170.

[189] Michael Honey, "Class, Race, and Power in the New South: Racial Violence and the Delusions of White Supremacy," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 169-170.

[190] Black illiteracy rate was at 40%, compared to 20% for white men. Raymond Gavins, "Fear, Hope, and Struggle: Recasting Black North Carolina in the Age of Jim Crow," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 189.

registered voter before 1867. As these conditions could only apply to white men, the clause ensured that the amendment would effectively disfranchisement Black men without mentioning race and so running afoul of the Fifteenth Amendment.

That the Democratic Party sought to ensure the "civil death" of Black North Carolinians was only too apparent. Given the success of the 1898 campaign, Democrats resorted to a similar strategy of intimidation and fraud in their disfranchisement campaign.[191] An account of a North Carolina dispatch in the July 28, 1900 issue of the *Colored American* painted a vivid picture of the Democrat campaign:

> Fraud, intimidation, murder, arson, and theft in turn, have served the purpose of sending the Negroes to the rear. The campaign culminated in a 'grand red shirt rally; the other day in Lumberton. The press dispatches tell us that all issues of a general nature dropped and that Indians and even a few renegade Negroes put on the insignia of lawlessness, and joined with the red-shirted rebels and white clad women, all crying out the shibboleth: 'The Negro must and shall be disfranchised.' All pretense of fair play was thrown aside. The cloven-hoof of race prejudice glistened openly under the glare of the noon day sun. The speakers, led by one Aycock, candidate for governor, all sang one song- The Negro must stay away from the ballot box, but every white man can be counted in. The play is to win.[192]

With the violence and devastation of the Wilmington riot and coup still a fresh memory, it is little wonder that the Democrats found success employing familiar suppressive tactics. Between July and August of that year, numerous North Carolinians wrote to Senator Marion Butler to report instances in which Black men were refused registration. Reports came in from the towns of Faison, St. Paul's, Henderson, and from Duplin County.[193] People made numerous allegations of election day fraud as well, including Cullen G. Battle's August 3 letter claiming

---

[191] Benjamin R. Justesen, *In His Own Words: The Writings, Speeches, and Letters of George Henry White* (Lincoln, Nebraska: IUniverse, 2004,) 295.
[192] "North Carolina's Pitiable Plight," *Colored American*, July 28, 1900, 8.
[193] Butler Papers, #114 Butler, Marion Series 1.2 21, July-Dec 1900, Box 14, Folders 172-173.

that, in the town of Whitakers, only 10 of the nearly 150 votes supporting Fusion candidates and opposing the amendment were counted. Additionally, Cullen suspected that none of the 150 Black people registered or qualified to vote had votes counted.[194] Which may have indicated those Black people chose not to vote, or that their ballots were also miscounted. It is likely that many Black people chose not to vote, given the violence and terror they faced. One such Black man, S.S. Strother, the owner of a "little grocery store," described election night terror in Eureka, NC. Strother wrote that, after trapping him inside his store, "[a] substantial number [of] white men Democrats" shot guns outside the business and then strung a rope "from [his] store a cross [sic] the street," tied the rope to a coffin, and wrote the words 'dead negro' on the coffin." The next morning, Strother wrote, he was informed by the white mom that he could "leave and live, or stay and be buried."[195] Butler also received reports that some Black men in the state cast ballots despite the Democrats' tactics.[196]

In support of the disfranchisement amendment, Democrat-controlled newspapers published articles expressing the party's rationale. One such article targeted Congressman Henry White over a Congressional speech he had made regarding lynching and white male "assaults" on Black women. According to the article, Congressman White's "Manlyism" disqualified him for public office and demonstrated the danger that Black enfranchisement posed to the state. The article insisted that "the 'inoffensive negro official' is largely a myth. The negro may be inoffensive as a private citizen, but with his induction into office he becomes a new individual." The author continued, "[Congressman] White is typical of his kind. Venomous, forward, slanderous of the whites, appealing to the worst passions of his own races, he emphasizes anew

[194] Butler Papers, Folder 178.
[195] Butler Papers, Folder 178-180.
[196] Butler Papers, Folder 178-179.

the need of making an end of him and his kind."[197] While the editorial used Congressman White to make the case for permanent disfranchisement, a separate article provided a summary list of the "Twelve Best Reasons" to support the amendment. The paper offered each category of voter, Democrats, Republicans, Populists, and "Sensible Negroes," a separate list of "reasons." Essential to the lists was the assertion of Black unfitness, the appeal to white supremacy, and the threat of more racialized violence should the amendment fail. Where political arguments may have fallen short, Democrats relied on the intimation of further violence to seal the deal.

Although many Black North Carolinians anticipated the Democrats' disfranchisement bill, many may not have foreseen how white Republicans would turn their backs on Black voters. The state's Republican Governor, Daniel Russell, who had relied on Black support throughout his political career, drew ire by criticizing George Henry White as unqualified for office and denouncing Black enfranchisement. Russell's letter, which was quoted in the November 12 issue of the *Salt Lake Herald*, was merely a hint of the harsh position the party would take toward Black enfranchisement. As the *Broad Ax* reported a week later, Russell stated that "the Hon. George H. White... [had] no other qualification to recommend him... but the color of his skin." The Governor went on to assert that "no one would more rejoice than [Russell] to see the negro race treated with liberality and justice, but the attainment of this end is remote," because, he said, Black people displayed no capacity for self-government. Russell's comments revealed that Republican Party support for Black enfranchisement was waning.

More than Governor Russell's repudiation, it was the Republican Party's declaration of "lily-white" politics that ultimately stunned and betrayed North Carolina's Black voters and

[197] *News and Observer,* February 2, 1900, 4.

politicians. In an article entitled "Blackest Ingratitude," the *Star of Zion* observed that "[s]everal of the leading white Republicans of North Carolina, since they [had] been licked by the Democrats, [were] showing base ingratitude to the Negro voters." The unnamed author doubted the Republicans' claim that Black people had not benefited the party in 1898. It was true that many Republican Party leaders withdrew support for Black enfranchisement in the wake of the election.[198] 'White Republican Hiram Grant, who had been Congressman White's ally in past elections, became critical of North Carolina's foremost Black statesman, denouncing him as the Black race's worst enemy.[199] In the same speech, Grant made the specious claim that he had always opposed Black politicians holding offices, though his record in Republican and Fusion politics strongly suggests otherwise.[200] Senator Jeter C. Pritchard made a similar stopping short of endorsing disfranchisement, but publicly opposing Black office-holding.

Despite such reversals, Black members still made up a majority of the party's rank and file, which white Republicans saw as a political liability. Consequently, they put all questions about the status of Black Republicans to rest at the 1901 meeting of the Republican Executive Committee in Raleigh. White Republicans barred Representative James Young and John C. Dancy from entry when they arrived at the meeting, demanding that Black office holders resign their positions immediately. A year later, when Black Republicans attempted to attend the party's convention in Greensboro, Senator Pritchard officially declared the party "lily-white," while white members ejected the Black delegates from the space.[201] As they chased the Black

---

[198] Benjamin R. Justesen, *In His Own Words: The Writings, Speeches, and Letters of George Henry White* (Lincoln, Nebraska: IUniverse, 2004,) 292.
[199] Benjamin R. Justesen, *In His Own Words: The Writings, Speeches, and Letters of George Henry White* (Lincoln, Nebraska: IUniverse, 2004,) 290.
[200] Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901: The Black Second* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981,) 301-302
[201] Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 91-92.

members out of the building, the whites sang "Coon, coon, I wish my color would fade… Morning, night or noon, It's better to be a white man, than a coon coon coon." [202]

With Black male suffrage under dire threat in the South, Black intellectuals, journalists, and publications elsewhere spoke out frequently to oppose disfranchisement.[203] Hamilton S. Smith had counseled Black people to "eschew politics" in the South, but only until white-dominated governments could be trusted to defend Black voting rights. Colonel C.H J. Taylor of Atlanta's *Southern Appeal* at first didn't believe the North Carolina amendment posed a threat to Black suffrage. Colonel Taylor initially claimed "not [to be] alarmed," even praising the "Hon. Josephus Daniels" for his wisdom and expressing support for the disfranchisement law, while rebuking the possibility of railway segregation.[204] Yet Taylor appeared to have a drastic change of heart before long, writing an article which stated, "in a republic no man will ever amount to much without the BALLOT... You can make him the greatest farmer that ever lived, the most skilled mechanic… the greatest accountant that ever entered a bank." But "without the BALLOT he is nothing." Taylor concluded that people who would "subordinate" politics to other pursuits were "fools." "The ballot is the panacea for all ills," he announced.[205]

While Smith and Taylor equivocated, most Black writers were united in denouncing any disfranchisement legislation. The *Sentinel* published an account of a speech by Bishop Walters, which defended both Black manhood and claims to full citizenship. Dr. M. Henderson's account of Bishop Walters' "heroic words," presented a powerful figure no longer willing to tolerate a subjugated role in Southern society. Bishop Walters had begun, Henderson wrote, by "[q]uoting

---

[202] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 129.
[203] *Star of Zion*, February 1, 1900, 5.; *Freeman,* August 12, 1899; August 11, 1900.; *Freeman,* March 30, 1901
[204] *Afro-American Sentinel*, February 4, 1899, 2.
[205] C.H J. Taylor, "The Only Way," *Southern Appeal*, Date Unknown.

Lincoln's Gettysburg address, in defense of freedom and government of, by, and for the people." Henderson recounted that, as Bishop Walters addressed a crowd at Cooper Union, New York, he "drew up his tall form… his face assumed the cold, hard lines of determination." Walters announced that he would "never again submit to the treatment that denies [his] manhood." In his own justification for enfranchisement, Henderson asserted that Black people of different classes had competing interests that undermined their political power. Henderson employed Victorianism to suggest that the nation's "best" Black men should stake a claim for political representation separate from other members of their race. Henderson predicted that the color line would be removed from politics the minute Black (and white) men, the "educated, industrious, and tax-paying" separated their interests away from the "thriftless element of the race." Though Henderson seemed invested in the franchise only for a certain class of Black men, he nevertheless held out hope that, upon receiving the Bishop's message, "A million Negroes [would] awaken to new life… and a great race [would] turn from retreat to victory." [206]

Noting that many Black soldiers had served with distinction in the Spanish-American War, some called on their claims to patriotism in defense of Black enfranchisement. When the Cuban revolutionaries attempted to fend off Spanish attacks Santiago de Cuba, it was U.S. soldiers, Black and white, aided the Cubans by preventing the siege at the Battles of San Juan Hill and Kettle Hill. An editorial writer in the *Washington Bee* addressed the contradiction that many Black people must have felt, asking of the expression "Southern Chivalry: "What does it mean? The galantry [sic] and patriotism of the negro soldiers in the late Spanish-American war… are not regarded by the southern oligarchy as commendable acts and deeds to rase [sic]

[206] *Afro-American Sentinel*, February 4, 1899, 1.

the citizenship of the negro. [207] In another editorial, W. P. Hough likewise addressed the contradiction between imperial efforts to advance democracy abroad while denying it at home. Hough wrote, "[i]t seems passing strange," Hough wrote, "that we should interfere in the affairs of other nations in the interests of justice and humanity when here within our very gates the flag we are fighting… does not protect the negro in his civil and political rights." Hough warned that disgruntled Black people might be drawn into the "ranks" of radicals and anarchists, "no longer loyal to a nation that is not loyal to them."[208]

Another argument that Black people made in opposition to disfranchisement was that it violated federally guaranteed rights. In North Carolina, *Star of Zion* published several pieces against the proposed legislation that highlighted its unconstitutionality. One editorial, entitled "Nullifying Citizenship," read, "[d]isfranchisement is a subversion of representative Government, a crime against liberty, and means that the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States is an 'indefensible blunder.'"[209] Indeed, many in the state and country reasoned that, even if the law passed, it would be struck down by federal courts.[210]

Despite efforts to defeat the disfranchisement law, the amendment passed in August 1900. Whether as a result of Though the Populists had opposed the amendment out of fear that it would impact illiterate and poor whites, they criticized "Negro office holding" and affirmed once again that the Populist Party was a white man's party.[211] Their denunciation would likely have precluded another Fusion with Republicans, had the latter party not also adopted "lily-white"

---

[207] "Southern Chivalry," *Washington Bee*, November 5, 1899, 4.
[208] *Broad Ax*, November 26, 1898, 1.
[209] "Nullifying Citizenship," *Star of Zion*, January 26, 1899, 4.
[210] Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 199, 211.
[211] Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 199-200.

politics and refused to endorse any Black candidates. Though the Republican Party also opposed the amendment, the Democratic Party's tactics, which had served them so well in 1898, were equally effective in suppressing the opposition vote in the state. Even in the short term, the disfranchisement law's impact on Black voting was devastating. Though roughly 60,000 Black North Carolinians retained voting eligibility under the new law, only 4.6 percent of the state's Black voters remained registered after 1902.[212]

In addition to the disfranchisement law, North Carolina Democrats pushed other changes that compelled the state inexorably toward Jim Crow. Democrats had proposed to segregate the railway system, for instance, in 1892, but the measure had been defeated by Fusionists.[213] Yet, with their return to power in 1898, Democrats were able to realize this key Jim Crow measure. The Democrat-controlled legislature of 1899 passed a law that required "separate but equal" accommodations in railway transit. Though Black North Carolinians had seen the threat that *Plessy v. Ferguson* and "Jim Crow Cars" in neighboring states posed, the reality of segregation in transportation must have been a bitter pill to swallow.

Another key component of the new order was the state's divestment from education for Black students, particularly girls and women. Some of the country's most successful and respected Black academic institutions, including Hampton and Fisk Institutes, had long embraced the industrial education model promoted by Professor Booker T. Washington. In addition to its industrial institutions, North Carolina was home to Biddle University, Livingstone College, and Scotia Seminary, whose programs prepared Black professionals through a classical

---

[212] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 125-126.
[213] Raymond Gavins, "Fear, Hope, and Struggle: Recasting Black North Carolina in the Age of Jim Crow," in *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 188.

curriculum including Latin, Literature, and Mathematics. Further, both North Carolina Agricultural and Mechanical College (A&M) and Livingstone College were among few institutions of any race that educated both men and women. While the state had never provided sufficient funding to support Black education, legislators took steps in 1899 and 1900 to close several normal schools and underfund many others.[214] These changes forced many Black girls and women out of school. Additionally, both state agencies and Northern philanthropists began funding the trade training model exclusively, forcing schools to adapt such a curriculum or fail. Finally, new industrial schools sprang up and attracted philanthropic dollars to train labor and service workers for the segregated Jim Crow economy.[215]

The "civil death" that Democrats envisioned for Black North Carolinians included disfranchisement, racial segregation, and the undercutting of Black higher education. By accomplishing these objectives through repressive, fraudulent, and even violent means, Democrats solidified the Jim Crow order that would control the South for at least fifty years.

This reversal of the social, economic, and political gains made after Reconstruction was catastrophic for Black North Carolinians. For Black Wilmingtonians alone, thousands of whom were either forced or prompted to leave after the riot and coup, the devastation amounted to hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost jobs, homes, churches, schools, and businesses.[216] When the tumult began, hundreds of Black Wilmingtonians had fled into the nearby swamps and

---

[214] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 138-142, 158-160.
[215] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 141-143.
[216] Umfleet, "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Report," 224-233.

woods, planning to return to their homes and jobs once the violence abated. After spending several frightening days unsheltered and starving, many returned traumatized, yet hoping to resume their lives.[217] Others chose, or were forced, to leave the city. Some Black Wilmingtonians fled the mobs in haste with nothing but the clothes on their backs, never to return. Images of the riot show white men lining up hundreds of Black Wilmingtonians in the streets and forcing them out of town at gunpoint, their most prized possessions flung over their shoulders or dragging behind. Still others took days and weeks to get their affairs in order before abandoning their homes, jobs, and communities. Whether by force or choice, fourteen hundred Black Wilmingtonians left the city in the first month alone. [218] In subsequent years, hundreds more left Wilmington. [219]

Black North Carolinians across the state experienced the diminished social status and freedom that racial segregation imposed on every aspect of their public lives. And, with the loss of Black male suffrage, disfranchisement brought a severely reduced voice in politics, not only for men, but for the entire community. While devastating, the stifling of Black civilian life was not as totalizing as Democrats may have hoped or imagined. Black peoples' reactions reveal that, despite the tremendous setbacks, many remained as doggedly determined to realize Black enfranchisement and racial equality as they had been in the more hopeful days of the early 1890s. Indeed, those comparatively positive and progressive years had likely affirmed for many Black people their inalienable right to full citizenship, enfranchisement, and racial equality. The

---

[217] H. Leon Prather, Sr. "We Have Taken a City: A Centennial Essay," in *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and its Legacy*, editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 36.

[218] David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson, *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy,* editors David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998,) 5.

[219] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 113.

steps that Black people took both inside North Carolina and across the country, whether moderate or radical, reflected their commitment to restoring and expanding former progress. Further, the confidence and boldness with which many Black people adapted approaches and devised new strategies showed that, even in devastation, some gains could not be lost.

While white North Carolinians imposed Jim Crow on the state, Black people sought solutions and remedies to the "civil death" they had been dealt. Naturally, there were disagreements among them about how to best respond to these harsh developments. On December 22, 1898, *Star of Zion* editor Bishop A. Walters wrote an editorial that began, "It is the concensus [sic] opinion among the leaders of our race that the outlook just now for the Negro in America is gloomy." Bishop Walters enumerated the reasons he and other Black leaders shared this view, which included the "outrages" against Black North Carolinians. Walters noted that such outrages had transpired with no response or remedy on behalf of President McKinley. The passage of disfranchisement legislation in several Southern states, and the fact that many forces, even the "pulpit and the press," seemed united against fair treatment for Black people made the situation especially grim.[220] Once again appealing to Black manhood, Bishop Walters wished that Black people would not despair, but rather face the "crisis" "like men." He cautioned, "If we remain silent and surrender all that has been given us as citizens, we shall prove ourselves unworthy of the name of FREEMEN." Bishop Walters invited all Black people "who [were] interested in the future welfare of their race" to a meeting to be held later that month in Washington, D.C. He concluded, "in this dark hour," Black people could unite to remedy the "gloomy" reality they faced.

[220] Bishop Alexander Walters, D.D., "The Outlook Gloomy: What Must We Do to Be Saved--- Our Rights Asked For," *Star of Zion*, December 22, 1898, 1.

In his address, Bishop Walters identified several concerns, namely the unchecked racial violence and repression, disfranchisement and segregation, the destructive role of the white church in promoting white supremacy; and the collusion between white press and politicians. Walters' analysis encapsulates many of the themes that other Black leaders would address as well. And, while Walters certainly had ideas for how to counter these problems, Black leaders were far from united about the best approaches.

As they attempted to address the issue of racial violence and repression, many considered the possibility of militant responses like armed resistance. Black journalists and intellectuals in the North often called for militant responses, including the taking up of arms in defense of their homes and communities. T. Thomas Fortune, colorful editor of the *New York Age*, was one of the most radical voices. Fortune had drawn backlash from both races when he wrote in an editorial that, "for every drop of Negro blood shed in the South, an equal amount of white blood must be shed."[221] Fortune likely intended his words as a call for armed self-defense for Black communities rather than a revolution. He had spoken in support of armed self-defense for years. When the civil rights organization the National Afro-American League first convened in 1890, Fortune made this statement in his keynote address: "We propose to accomplish our purposes by the peaceful methods of agitation, through the ballot and the courts, but if others use the weapons of violence to combat our peaceful arguments, it is not for us to run away from violence. A man's a man, and what is worth having is worth fighting for." Similarly, a brief editorial from Taylor in a November 26, 1898 issue of Salt Lake City's *Broad Ax* defended Black Arkansans who shot and killed a white man in self-defense. The letter read, "... the negroes were perfectly right in

[221] T. Thomas Fortune, "Political Independence of the Negro," 1884, accessed February 6, 2018. http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/political-independence-of-the-negro/.

blazing away at the white-cappers, for we must remember that whoever would be free must himself strike the first blow."[222] Not all Black Northerners called for armed rebellion to remedy the Southern problems, but, as Hough had warned in 1898, some certainly may have felt compelled by circumstances to undertake radical actions.[223]

In response to these admonishments from the North, Black Southerners reminded their compatriots that it was easy to call for militant actions from a point of relative safety and security. One such response, entitled "Conservatism Their Salvation," read: "[o]ur Northern brethren are acting on the theory that there is some human power that can and will force a better recognition of our rights in the South, against the white peoples' consent…"[224] Perhaps in recognition of that vulnerability, many Black Southerners continued to champion conciliatory and cautious approaches to the white power structure. As the leading voice for moderatism and racial accommodation, Professor Booker T. Washington held his line that staying on the good side of white Southerners was necessary for racial progress. In a May 23, 1900 address before A. M. E. Church in Columbus, Ohio, Washington stated, "[n]o settlement will be permanent and satisfactory that does not command the confidence and the respect of the Southern white man, the Northern white man and the Negro himself..." Sticking to his commitment to industrial education for Black people, Washington continued, "I would set no limitations on the attainments of the Negro in arts, letters, or statesmanship, but, my friends, the surest and speediest way to reach these ends is by laying the foundation in the little things of life that are immediately at our door." Washington had confidence that this conciliatory approach to the Southern problems would continue to advance the cause of racial equality. He said, "[t]he world

[222] *Broad Ax*, November 26, 1898, 4.
[223] *Broad Ax*, November 26, 1898, 1.
[224] *Colored American*, December 26, 1898.

[was] going forward, not backward... and the trend in this direction [could] no more be resisted in any part of the country than we [could] stay the life-giving influence of the rays of the daily sun."[225]

In the height of the repressive campaign of 1898, John C. Dancy of North Carolina had represented the moderate accommodationist approach when he had denounced Manly's editorial in the press.[226] Additionally, Howard University Professor Kelly Miller also displayed his accommodationist approach concerning disfranchisement and Jim Crow. Miller published an article in the November 19, 1898 issue of the journal "The Outlook" in which he criticized Black voters in North Carolina and defended the Democratic Party conspirators. In the article, entitled "A Negroe's [sic] View," Professor Miller wrote, "In marshaling his political forces in solid phalanx against the intelligence, discipline, and material substance of the South, the negro has, to a great degree, nullified the beneficent intendment of his own franchise." The article preached "self-effacement" on behalf of Black North Carolinians and asserted that "the white race is bound to rule, whether the negro consents or not. By according his consent [sic] the colored man would be in a better position to secure a just and equitable rule."[227]

A January 12,1899 *Star of Zion* editorial by Mr. Bruce-Grit, entitled "Dancy and Miller Will Survive the Damnation of Their Critics," championed the effectiveness of their accommodationist approaches. In defense of Miller and Dancy, Bruce-Grit wrote, "*Bombastes Furioso*," calls for revolution, expatriation, and anarchism "have not frightened anybody or

---

[225] "B.T. Washington's Able Address," *The Freeman,* June 16, 1900.
[226] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 115-116.
[227] Kelly Miller, "A Negroe's [sic] View," in *The Outlook*, eds. Lyman Abbott, Hamilton W. Mabie, Robert D. Townsend, Amory H. Bradford, Charles B. Spahe, Elbert F. Bardwin, James M. Whiton, and Lillian W. Betts (New York, N.Y.: The Outlook Company, September-December, 1898,) 1059-1063.

remedied a single of the evils of which we all complain." He defended both the two as neither "coward [nor] craven." About Dancy, Bruce-Grit wrote that his motive in condemning Manly as "rash and uncalled for" was to "allay the fury of the irresponsible mob of white men…" The editorial continued: "The battle of the race is an intellectual one, and there ought to be no place in the forefront for visionaries and theorists, and no place anywhere for revolutionists and anarchists..."

While Washington, Miller, and Dancy held to moderate stances, other Black people were disillusioned and abandoned this response to racial terror and disfranchisement. Major Douglas, editor of the *Colored American*, typified this disillusionment in a November 26, 1898 letter, with a lengthy title that explained much: "A Surrender that Failed: The Compact of Self-Effacement Does Not Improve Race Conditions in Mississippi. Has Little Faith in the Line of Least Resistance—Apologists for Carolina Troubles Denounced as Traitors to the Race- Miller and Johnson."[228] Douglas' editorial agreed with prominent Washington, D.C. Reverend Francis J. Grimké, who had rejected as traitors Professor Miller and "any Negro who comes forward at this time, with argument or recital, be it true or false, showing up race deficiencies as a justification of the recent murderous assaults on the Negro in North and South Carolina…"

Reverend Francis J. Grimké published a series of his sermons in a text entitled "The Negro: His Rights and Wrongs, The Forces for Him and Against Him," in which he addressed the theme of the complicity of white clergy in the white supremacist campaigns. He specifically denounced Wilmington's Reverend Dr. Peyton H. Hoge, who, just days after the riot and coup, preached in defense of the rioters and conspirators. Reverend Grimké said, "The Sunday after this carnival of death, after these white fiends had turned loose upon the community…

[228] *Colored American*, November 26, 1898, 1.

[Reverend Hoge] stood up in the sacred desk… and commended the white people for 'their gallant conduct in redeeming the city for civilization, law, order, decency, and respectability.'" Grimké denounced this "cowardly ministry" as a "curse to any nation."

As he reflected on the theme of Black voting rights, Reverend Grimké's sermons conveyed a hopefulness that drew on the narratives of social progress. He was optimistic about a "brighter future," because Black peoples' consciousness had been awakened by decades of advancement and invigorated by attacks on their rights.[229] Grimké preached, "that the Negro [was] becoming more and more insolent, more and more obtrusive, more and more self-assertive--- [which was] the very things which [gave him] hope." He likened Black people to Elijah in the Bible, a "no more pathetically sad picture… in the wilderness sitting under a juniper tree--- the very picture of despair."[230] Yet, like Elijah, Grimké believed that Black people could deliver themselves from the wilderness of disfranchisement and Jim Crow through faith, courage, and perseverance. The reverend called on fellow clergy to stand against the "hostility of the press" and "silence and cowardice of the pulpit." He included one sermon with the follow hymn, which captured both the despondence and hope that the reverend felt:

> Some of these days, in the deserts up springing,
> Fountains shall flash, while the joy bells are ringing,
> And all the world, with the birds, shall go singing,
> Some of these days, some of these days.
>
> Some of these days! Let us bear with our sorrow;
> Faith in the future--its light we may borrow;
> There will be joy in the golden tomorrow,
> Some of these days, some of these days!
>
> "Some of these days all the skies will be brighter"
> Frank Lebby Stanton and Elisha A. Hoffman

[229] Francis J. Grimké, *The Negro: His Rights and Wrongs, the Forces for Him and against Him* (Ann Arbor, MI.: University Microfilms International, 1992,) 49.
[230] Grimké, 1.

Black responses to the campaigns of 1898 and 1899 ranged from the militant to the conciliatory, and addressed racial terror, disfranchisement, segregation, and the complicity of white clergy and press. Yet, nearly all Black voices were united about the need for new and greater organization to defend and expand their rights.[231] In the December 10, 1898 issue of *Colored American*, Bishop A. Walters, President of the newly formed National Afro-American Council, stated, that the "Afro-American press [was] almost a unit in its demand for a national organization. Suggesting that Walters was correct in his assessment, T. Thomas Fortune wrote that, "now was the time for organization, and that the sooner this was accomplished in North Carolina the better for all concerned."[232] Fortune said that, not only in North Carolina, but nationwide Black people should get organized "without loss of time."

This demand for a new level of cooperation and organization was a significant shift in philosophy and approach for many Black leaders. Evidence of this shift is a December 3, 1898 editorial by *Broad Ax* editor Julius Taylor entitled "The Dawning of a New Day Marks the Advent of new Principles- True Issue is Upon us- Negro Tactics Must Change- Political Influence the Means." In the editorial, Taylor wrote, "Hon C. H. J. Taylor, of Atlanta, a few months ago, appeared in print with a strong letter advocating the organization of a national negro party..." Taylor acknowledged that, when the letter first appeared, it was not met with positive responses. He continued, "[f]or reasons wise, unwise, and otherwise, hundreds of us 'big

[231] One editorial, which expressed a rare opposing viewpoint on a national organization appeared in the June 16, 1900 issue of *The Freeman* under the title "A Negro Party: Kentucky Resisting the Idea." The article opposed a national organization based on the fear that it would bring about "… [t]he acrimony of the Republican Party" and [a] crystalization [sic] of sentiment against Negro…" The letter concluded, "It is no crime to conspire against the party even should that be the intent, but it is not always expedient."

[232] *Star of Zion,* August 30, 1900, 3

negroes' fell over each other in our efforts to criticize and damn Taylor for a scheme so visionary." Yet, by the end of 1898, Julius Taylor and apparently many others had experienced a change of heart. "But dear reader," Taylor suggested, "…shut your eyes and spend ten minutes reviewing the present political situation of this country…" Taylor said that Black leaders should "be honest with [themselves,] and see if Mr. Taylor is really a fool." [233]

In the same issue, an editorial by J. A. Jones of Chattanooga further demonstrated this shift in thinking among Black people. Jones wrote that, "[t]he Caucasian race unites when occasion demands without regard to party, and the combination is irresistible." The letter continued, "... if the present situation does not yet suggest a change in the negro's tactice [sic] then I am a fool. But I must stop." Jones, a preacher "pastoring a big church," expressed anger that the race was not sufficiently united. As if to illustrate the shift, it is noteworthy that Taylor, a staunch Democrat who had frequently sparred with Knox, a loyal Republican, reprinted this editorial from the Knox's *Freeman* demanding unity through organization.

In demonstration of this commitment to organization and fresh strategies, the agenda of the upcoming Conference of the National Afro-American Council included Black leaders of wide-ranging orientations. The conference agenda, which was published in *Colored American,* proposed discussions that addressed the themes discussed and debated among Black leaders. As Council President (also editor of the *Star of Zion*,) Alexander Walters, opened the gathering with an address on the importance of organization. Two sessions on the "Protection of the Negro" and "Mob Violence and Anarchy" addressed racial violence. Congressman White ran the former session, while Journalist and anti-lynching activist Ida B. Wells' led the latter. Professor Kelly Miller presented a discussion on higher education, while John C. Dancy led a discussion on

[233] *Broad Ax,* December 3, 1898, 4.

Black peoples' place in politics. Journalist T. Thomas Fortune presented on the "economic status" of the Black race, while a discussion on the influence of the press addressed the need for coordination among the Black press. A session on "the Church as a factor in solving the race problem" was planned. Finally, Professor Booker T. Washington presented on the benefits of industrial education and Paul Lawrence Dunbar discussed Black peoples' place in Literature.[234]

The Council further demonstrated its commitment to organization, by arranging for work to be accomplished in committees and subcommittees centered on the primary themes. Congressman White chaired a subcommittee "to examine legislation affecting the race," while Reverend Grimké chaired the "ministerial advisory committee. A women's auxiliary subcommittee formed as well. This Council's robust agenda reflected the wide ranging interests and perspectives of the gathered leaders.[235] Bishop Walters' editorial summarized the main objectives of the new organization, which included fair representation in government, resistance to mob and lynch law, the securing of "a more equitable distribution of school funds," and assistance for the "healthy emigration from terror-ridden sections [of the country.]" [236]

In addition to the formation and activities of the Afro-American Council, which garnered tremendous coverage in the Black press, other new organizations exemplified this fresh approach. In North Carolina, W. B. Crittendon formed the Colored Voters League of North Carolina to create a political voice after the Republican Party ejected Black members.[237] The Pan-African Conference convened in London 1900 for "Pure-Blooded and African Descent" to discuss race issues of import to Black people worldwide. This new organization, over which

---

[234] "Gathering of the Clans," *Colored American*, December 24,1898, 1, 6.
[235] "Stellar Lights in the Afro-American Council," *Colored American*, December 31, 1898, 1.
[236] *Colored American*, December 10, 1898.
[237] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 130.

Bishop Walters also presided, included participants from the United States, Dominica, Liberia, and other nations. In 1905, W.E.B. DuBois' Niagara Movement, founded along with William Monroe Trotter, brought together Black civic and intellectual leaders to demand equal rights in the nation. And just a few years later in 1909, Congressman George Henry White would join DuBois, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and Mary Church Terrell to form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in defense of civil rights. This surge in new local, regional, and national Black political and civic organizations marked a strategic pivot in response to the setbacks of the late 1890s.

Another fresh approach that Black North Carolinians employed in response to disfranchisement, segregation, and racial terror, was to leave the South for points North and West. Though the Great Migration of more than one million African-Americans out of the South officially began during World War I, the trend started in the 1890s. In response to the disfranchisement and Jim Crow campaigns of the period, many Black Southerners reasoned that, in the North and West, they could live and vote without facing the same repression.[238] And, while many fled the conditions that Democrats had forced on Southern states, others were simply drawn to the prospect of job opportunities and a fresh start elsewhere. Certainly, migration was only a viable option for some Black North Carolinians. Such mobility depended on having the financial resources to travel and settle in a new place as well as freedom to leave. As white North Carolinians soon discovered, the economy depended on the labor of thousands of Black farmers, factory workers, and mechanics.[239] Consequently, some Southern towns and counties

[238] Umfleet, "1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Report," 233.
[239] R.H. Leavell, T R. Snavely, T.J. Woofter, Jr, W.T.B. Williams, and Francis D. Tyson, "Report of Negro Migration in 1916-1917, U.S. Department of Labor: Office of the Secretary, Division of Negro Economics (Washington, D.C.: Washington Government Printing Office, 1919,) 93-94.

threatened and intimidated Black people to prevent migration. Finally, people were more likely to leave when there were family, friends, or other social resources waiting for them on the other side of the journey.

In 1899, Congressman George Henry White had addressed the prospect of migration for Black people in comments he gave at a banquet in his honor. As the *Star of Zion* reported, White didn't believe that the problems Black people faced would "be solved [through] emigration."[240] It may be that White understood the limitations of mobility for many Black people, making migration impractical as a mass solution. Yet, by the following year, Congressman White's position on emigration began to shift. After the passage of the disfranchisement amendment, White became deeply disillusioned about the prospects for citizenship rights for Black Southerners.[241] Consequently, he urged migration as an option.[242] His former pupil Sarah Pettey Dudley had also issued a directive to young men to "go west" in her *Star* column.

The idea of migration clearly caught on among many Black North Carolinians, nearly 28,000 of whom left the state in the first decade of the twentieth century.[243] It is likely that some proportion of those numbers reflected the Wilmington case, where many were forced into involuntary migration. Yet, many others made the decision to migrate North in this period. As members of the middle class, George Henry White and his family were among those with the mobility to leave. And in 1900, White decided to move North and resume his legal career.[244]

---

[240] *Star of Zion*, January 12, 1898, 2.
[241] Benjamin R. Justesen, *In His Own Words: The Writings, Speeches, and Letters of George Henry White* (Lincoln, Nebraska: IUniverse, 2004,) 253, 298-299.
[242] Benjamin R. Justesen, *In His Own Words: The Writings, Speeches, and Letters of George Henry White* (Lincoln, Nebraska: IUniverse, 2004,) 254-255.
[243] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina: 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 131.
[244] Benjamin R. Justesen, In His Own Words: The Writings, Speeches, and Letters of George Henry White (Lincoln, Nebraska: IUniverse, 2004,) 179.

According to the *Evening Star* article, White predicted that 50,000 would leave the state because of disfranchisement. The following day, the *New York Times* reported that, "White [was] compelled to leave… because the subjugation of the Negro [had] carried to such a point that an educated colored man [could] no longer remain there."[245] With the investment of several wealthy Black friends, White purchased land in New Jersey and established the all-Black town called Whitesboro in the early 1900s.[246]

The loss of so many workers impacted the state's economy. A U.S. Department of Labor report on Black migration between 1916-1917 found that, "[t]he exodus has pointedly called attention to the value of Negro labor to the South and to the South's dependence upon it."[247] Further, North Carolina's Labor Commission had reported labor shortages in 87 of the 100 counties in 1917.[248] Though these years are more firmly in the period of Great Migration, they suggest that the strategy grew dramatically among Black North Carolinians at the turn of the century. The outmigration of Black North Carolinians from Wilmington and the state was significant in the 1890s, as it merited coverage in both the Black and white press. The *Star of Zion's* Anderson J Harvey reported in May 11, 1899 that "[s]everal of the leading white papers of North Carolina seem exercised over the Negroes leaving Wilmington." Whites feared that "the effects of the last political campaign," as well as disfranchisement and segregation, might "cause a general exodus all over the State." According the Harvey, white newspapers published

[245] Benjamin R. Justesen, In His Own Words: The Writings, Speeches, and Letters of George Henry White (Lincoln, Nebraska: IUniverse, 2004,) 193.
[246] Benjamin R. Justesen, *In His Own Words: The Writings, Speeches, and Letters of George Henry White* (Lincoln, Nebraska: IUniverse, 2004,) 357-358.
[247] R.H. Leavell, T R. Snavely, T.J. Woofter, Jr, W.T.B. Williams, and Francis D. Tyson, "Report of Negro Migration in 1916-17, U.S. Department of Labor: Office of the Secretary, Division of Negro Economics (Washington, D.C.: Washington Government Printing Office, 1919,) 96.
[248] R.H. Leavell, T R. Snavely, T.J. Woofter, Jr, W.T.B. Williams, and Francis D. Tyson, "Report of Negro Migration in 1916-17, U.S. Department of Labor: Office of the Secretary, Division of Negro Economics (Washington, D.C.: Washington Government Printing Office, 1919,) 73-74.

reassurances to Black North Carolinians that their property would be protected, and they would "find ample opportunity for employment." The newspapers also warned white employers that it would be "hard to replace the large amount of colored labor now employed in this State."[249]

Black North Carolinians, either unable or unwilling to tolerate the conditions that Jim Crow imposed on their lives, joined other Black Southerners beginning in the 1890s and continuing through the 1940s. In all, as many as one million Black Southerners chose to relocate to Northern and Western cities where they hoped to find better race relations and economic opportunities. This migration, encouraged and facilitated by African-American churches and other organizations in the North, was a strategic pivot that profoundly altered the demographics and power relations in the nation.

When Congressman White addressed the banquet attendees on January 12, 1899, he said that Black North Carolinians were not looking for "privileges or other favoritism," only "a man's chance for the race in life." White insisted Black people would "not be content until [they] receive[d] it, and [they would] contend for it until that time arrive[d]."[250] This discontent with Jim Crow and disfranchisement, with less than an equal opportunity, was born of years of aspirations, struggle, and progress. When the Democratic Party inaugurated its "redemption" and institution of Jim Crow across the South, they demoralized the Black population, destroying much of the progress that the race had won. They did not, as Congressman White's speech

[249] "What May Cause an Exodus," *Star of Zion*, May 11, 1899, 4.
[250] *Star of Zion*, January 12, 1898, 2.

suggested, destroy Black Southerners' commitment to restoring and expanding their civil rights. The *Star of Zion* reported that Congressman White "was applauded to the echo at the conclusion." This response suggests that White wasn't alone in his avowal to continue the struggle for equality in the South. Though Black people throughout North Carolina and the nation embraced conservative and radical, familiar and approaches in their efforts, most were united in the ultimate goals they sought. If the narrative of triumph, redemption, and order restored typified the white narratives at the onset of Jim Crow, the counter-narrative from Black voices, was not simply one of chaos, defeat, and demoralization. Rather, Black people from the press, the pulpit, and the floor of Congress expressed a devout faith that their perseverance would ultimately will out over the forced that sought to deny them equality.

Conclusion

On January 29, 1901, as Congressman George Henry White reached the end of his historic speech on the floor of the United States House of Representatives, the prognosis for Black participation in Southern politics was painfully grim. Not since the demise of the Reconstruction experiment in the late 1870s had Black North Carolinians been so thoroughly excluded from electoral politics. The Democrats' White Supremacy Campaign of 1898 had destroyed Fusion and, along with it, the tenuous alliance between Populists and Black and white Republicans. On the heels of the 1898 election, Democrats led by Charles Aycock, Josephus Daniels, and William W. Kitchin, advanced their campaign of disfranchisement. Despite relying on the strength of Black Republicans to enable the dramatic Fusion successes of the mid-1890s, neither the Populist nor "lily-white" Republican Parties helped Black voters fight the amendment. Few Populists or Republicans publicly endorsed disfranchisement, but most conceded the Democratic Party's claim that Black office-holding had been detrimental to the state. Congressman White had already publicly announced his retirement from politics, which signaled his recognition that no Black candidate could win in North Carolina anymore.

The tone of the Congressman's words seemed demoralized and defeated, which was reasonable considering all he and his constituents stood to lose under disfranchisement. Yet, his message was quite forceful. Drawing on narratives of racial progress since emancipation, White offered a detailed accounting of Black advancement in the state. White said that, since 1968, the Black race had reduced illiteracy "at least 45 per cent… written and published near 500 books," and produced "nearly 300 newspapers." White noted the 2,000 practicing Black attorneys and comparable number of doctors in the country. And counted an investment of $12,000,000 in

schools, colleges, and universities run by Black people. The Congressman continued to sing the praises of Black farmers, homeowners, educators, and entrepreneurs.[251]

The characteristic optimism with which Black people lived and narrated the time was, however, always tempered by sober realities. White followed up this account of Black achievement with a reminder for the members of the House of the many obstacles through which Black people had come. After all, Congressman White was aware that it was precisely this racial progress that white "Redeemers" resisted. That white North Carolinians who participated in the Government Unions, Red Shirts, and "white man's votes" targeted the state's "best" Black men and women. Make no mistake: Black people from all walks of life were terrorized in this period. It is important to recall, however, that while the Wilmington conspirators drove business owners and community leaders out of town under pain of death, the white press practically begged unskilled Black laborers to remain.

It was, therefore, strategic for Congressman White to remind the nation that white supremacist terror and brutality was explicitly tied to racial progress and attainment. As he continued, White said that such noteworthy progress had been accomplished "in the face of lynching, burning at the stake, with the humiliation of "Jim Crow" cars, the disfranchisement of [Black] male citizens, [and the] slander and degradation of [Black] women. By enumerating and punctuating the hardships of the current period, White delivered a powerful message to the state and country. Perhaps, he knew that, even though the "civil death sentence" had been issued for Black North Carolinians, the struggle for full citizenship could and would continue. Perhaps White understood that, even defeated, he still had power to shape the nation's narrative. He had

[251] George H. White, "Defense of the Negro Race, Charges Answered:" Speech of Honorable George H. White, of North Carolina, in the House of Representatives, January 29, 1901 (Washington D.C., 1901,) 9-10.

the power of that very moment, his final address in those hallowed chambers. And more, perhaps the Congressmen knew that his powerful oratory would outlive himself. As an attorney, he chose his words in "defense of the Negro Race" judiciously.

Like most of his mentors, peers, and students, Congressman White's final note as a politician reflected anger and disappointment, but not hopelessness. Like many Black North Carolinians of his time, White walked away from the setbacks with a resolve to keep fighting for racial equality. He would continue to champion racial progress through political and civic organizations like the Afro-American Council and the NAACP, as well as his legal practice and community development. In his final words, he left the Black journey to full citizenship on a hopeful not and put white detractors on notice. White concluded his speech with the following words:

> "You may tie us and then taunt us for a lack of bravery, but one day we will break the bonds. You may use our labor for two and a half centuries and then taunt us for our poverty, but let me remind you we will not always remain poor. You may withhold even the knowledge of how to read God's word and learn the way from earth to glory and then taunt us for our ignorance, but we would remind you that there is plenty of room at the top, and we are climbing."[252]

The message of progress despite precarity, and optimism in the face of withering attacks, is powerfully expressed in the Black North Carolina of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. White's final words in Congress resonate across time and place, and have been validated in the striving against white supremacy and for racial equality that continues today.

[252] George H. White, "Defense of the Negro Race, Charges Answered:" Speech of Honorable George H. White, of North Carolina, in the House of Representatives, January 29, 1901 (Washington D.C., 1901,) 10.

Bibliography

Archival Collections

Elias Carr Papers,1805-1968, Joyner Library, Eastern Carolina University, Greenville, N.C., Manuscript Collection. #160.

Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C., #114.

Staff, MSRC, "DUBOIS, William Edward Burghardt" (2015). Manuscript Division. 64. Howard University, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. Washington, D.C.

Staff, MSRC, "GRIMKE, Archibald" (2015). Manuscript Division. 84. Howard University, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. Washington, D.C.

Staff, MSRC, "GRIMKE, Francis" (2015). Manuscript Division. 85. Howard University, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. Washington, D.C.

Staff, MSRC, "TERRELL, Mary Church" (2015). Manuscript Division. 191. Box 149-3. Howard University, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. Washington, D.C.

Staff, MSRC, "WASHINGTON, Booker T." (2015). Manuscript Division. 207. Howard University, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. Washington, D.C. NIDS Fiche #: 4.72.120 NUCMC #: DCLV96-A711.

Newspapers

Afro American Sentinel

The Caucasian

Charlotte Daily Observer

Colored American

Colored Citizen

Broad Ax

Brooklyn Daily Eagle

Farmer and Mechanic

The Freeman

Kinston Free Press

Laurinburg Post

New Bern Journal

New York Age

New York Post

New York Times

Raleigh Gazette

Raleigh News and Observer

Richmond Planet

Star of Zion

Washington Bee

Washington Evening Star

Western Vindicator

Wilmington Daily Record

Wilmington Messenger

Wilson Blade

Winston-Salem Journal

Published Primary Sources

———. 2005. “Black Tip, White Iceberg: Black Postmasters and the Rise of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1897-1901.” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 82 (2): 193-227.

Butler, Marion, 1863-1938. 1911. *Marion butler's Raleigh Speech: Delivered, November 4, 1910*. s.l.: s.n.

Chesnutt, Charles W. *The Marrow of Tradition: The Wilmington Insurrection of 1898*. United States: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015.

Dancy, John C. *The A.M.E. Zion Quarterly Review.* African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Church Board of Publications of the A.M.E. Zion Church. Bedford, PA. 1893.

Democratic Party (N.C.). State Executive Committee. *The Democratic Hand Book.* 1898. Prepared by the State Democratic Executive Committee of North Carolina. Raleigh, N.C. Edwards & Broughton. 1898.

Fortune, T. Thomas. *Political Independence of the Negro.* 1884. Accessed February 6, 2018. http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/political-independence-of-the-negro/

Grimké, Francis J. *The Negro: His Rights and Wrongs, the Forces for Him and Against Him*. Washington D.C. s.n., 1898.

Hood, J. W. (James Walker.) *One Hundred Years of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church; or The Centennial of African Methodism.* 1831-1918. A. M. E. Zion Book Concern, 353 Bleecker Street, New York City. 1895.

Miller, Kelly. “A Negroes [sic] View.” In *The Outlook*. Edited by Lyman Abbott, Hamilton W. Mabie, Robert D. Townsend, Amory H. Bradford, Charles B. Spahe, Elbert F. Bardwin, James M. Whiton, and Lillian W. Betts. New York, N.Y.: The Outlook Company, September-December, 1898.

Mr. Kitchin and Fusion. 1908.

Old and new fusion in the Populist Party. 1912.

People's Party (N. C.). *The Proposed Suffrage Amendment: The Platform and Resolutions of the People's Party*. 190-?.

State Executive Committee of the People's Party of North Carolina. *People's Party Hand-Book of Facts.* Campaign of 1898. Raleigh, N. C.: Capital Printing Company, Printers and Binders, 1898.

Tillman, Benjamin R. “The Use of Violence Against Southern Blacks.” In *For the Record: A Documentary History of America. Vol. 2.* Edited by Shi, David E., Holly A. Mayer. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016.

White, George H. *Defense of the Negro Race, Charges Answered: Speech of Hon. George H. White, of North Carolina, in the House of Representatives,* January 29, 1901. Washington, 1901.

Will the republicans and populists fuse? 1898.

Journals

Holmes, William F. "The Demise of the Colored Farmers' Alliance." *The Journal of Southern History* 41, no. 2. 1975. doi:10.2307/2206013.

Margo, Robert A. “Race and Schooling in the South: A Review of the Evidence.” In *Race and Schooling in the South, 1880-1950: An Economic History*., Edited by Margo, Robert A. University of Chicago Press, January, 1990.

Talib, S. (1988). “Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance in Southeast Asia.” Edited by Scott, James C. and Tria Kerkvliet, Benedict J. London. Frank Cass. 1986. doi:10.1017/S002246340000062X.

Secondary Sources

Anderson, Eric. *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901: The Black Second*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981.

Barber, William J., II,1963- author. 2016. *The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Brown, Leslie. *Upbuilding Black Durham: Gender, Class, and Black Community Development in the Jim Crow South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.

Cecelski, David S., and Timothy B. Tyson. *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Crow, Jeffrey J. 1977. *Maverick Republican in the Old North State: A Political Biography of Daniel L. Russell*, Edited by Robert Franklin Durden. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

Dailey, Jane Elizabeth, 1963-. 2000. *Before Jim Crow: The Politics of Race in Postemancipation Virginia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Edmonds, Helen G. *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina, 1894-1901*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

Equal Justice Initiative. "Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror." Third Edition. Montgomery, Al. 2017.

Feimster, Crystal Nicole. *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth. *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Greenwood, Janette Thomas. 1994. *Bittersweet Legacy: The Black and White "Better Classes" in Charlotte, 1850-1910*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Goodwyn, Lawrence. *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Hunt, James L. (James Logan), 1959-. 2003. *Marion Butler and American Populism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Jenkins, McKay, 1963-. 1999. *The South in Black and White: Race, Sex, and Literature in the 1940s*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Justesen, Benjamin R. *Broken Brotherhood: The Rise and Fall of the National Afro-American Council*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2014.

Justesen, Benjamin R. *George Henry White: An Even Chance in the Race of Life.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012.

Justesen, Benjamin R. *In His Own Words: The Writings, Speeches, and Letters of George Henry White*. Lincoln, Neb.: IUniverse, 2004.

Leavell, R.H., Snavely, T.R., Woofter, Jr, T.J., Williams, W.T.B., and Tyson, Francis D. "Report of Negro Migration in 1916-17." U.S. Department of Labor. Office of the Secretary. Division of Negro Economics. Washington, D.C. Washington Government Printing Office. 1919.

Lundeen, Elizabeth. "Sarah Dudley Pettey: 'A New Age Woman' and the Politics of Race, Class, and Gender in North Carolina." In *North Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times*. Edited by Michele Gillespie, Sally G. McMillen Journal of Southern History 82, no. 3. Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 2014. doi:10.1353/soh.2016.0177.

Martin, Sandy Dwayne. *For God and Race: The Religious and Political Leadership of AMEZ Bishop James Walker Hood*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999.

Patterson, James T. 2010. *Freedom is not Enough: The Moynihan Report and America's Struggle over Black Family Life: From LBJ to Obama*. New York: Basic Books.

Perman, Michael. 2001. *Struggle for Mastery: Disfranchisement in the south, 1888-1908*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Postel, Charles. 2007. *The Populist Vision*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Simmons, Furnifold M. (Furnifold McLendel), 1854-1940. 1936. *F. M. Simmons, Statesman of the New South, Memoirs and Addresses*, ed. publisher Duke University Press Durham, N. C., Duke University Press, 1936.

Umfleet, LeRae. "1898 Wilmington Race Riot - Final Report," May 31, 2006. Accessed April 10, 2017. http://www.history.ncdcr.gov/1898-wrrc/report/report.htm.

Tyson, Timothy B. 2004. *Blood done sign my name: A true story*. New York: Crown Publishers.

Washburn, Patrick S. *The African American Newspaper: Voices of Freedom*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2006.Craig, Lee A. (Lee Allan), 1960-. 2013. *Josephus Daniels: His life & times*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Wells-Barnett, Ida. 2016. *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900*, ed. Royster, Jacqueline Jones, editor, writer of introduction. Boston: Bedford.

Websites

Barksdale, Nate. "8 Things You Might Not Know about Booker T. Washington." History.com. June 09, 2015. Accessed November 27, 2017. http://www.history.com/news/history-lists/8-things-you-might-not-know-about-booker-t-washington.

"Black-American Representatives and Senators by Congress, 1870–Present." US House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives. Accessed February 6, 2018. http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/BAIC/Historical-Data/Black-American-Representatives-and-Senators-by-Congress/.

"Coleman Manufacturing Company." Coleman Manufacturing Company. NCpedia. Accessed April 5, 2018. https://www.ncpedia.org/coleman-manufacturing-company.

History.com Staff. "Remembering the Battle of New Bern on Its 150th Anniversary." History.com. March 08, 2012. Accessed December 12, 2017. http://www.history.com/news/remembering-the-battle-of-new-bern-on-its-150th-anniversary.

Kenneth W. Goings, "Memphis Free Speech," Tennessee Encyclopedia, Tennessee Historical Society, October 8, 2017, Accessed March 1, 2018, http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/memphis-free-speech/.

LEARN NC Has Been Archived. Accessed December 12, 2017. http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-newsouth/7887.

Martin, Jonathan. "James City." North Carolina History Project. Accessed September 10, 2017. http://northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/james-city/.

North Carolina History Project. "The "Black Second" Congressional District, 1872-1901." North Carolina History Project. Accessed December 10, 2017. http://northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/the-Black-second-congressional-district-1872-1901/.

Rose, Joel. "An Unlikely African-American Music Historian." NPR. November 17, 2009. Accessed February 2, 2018. https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=120398673.

T. Thomas Fortune, "It Is Time to Call A Halt," (1890). The Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed. Accessed February 6, 2018. http://www.blackpast.org/1890-t-thomas-fortune-it-time-call-halt.

References

Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth. *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920.* Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Honey, Michael. “Class, Race, and Power in the New South: Racial Violence and the Delusions of White Supremacy.” In *Democracy Betrayed the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy.* Edited by Cecelski, David S., Tyson, Timothy B. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.