1954

Louisiana During Reconstruction.

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LOUISIANA DURING RECONSTRUCTION

A Dissertation

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

in

The Department of History

by
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B. A., Southeastern State College of Oklahoma, 1942
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August, 1953

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

The author wishes to express his sincerest appreciation to Professor T. Harry Williams for the patience and understanding which have been so helpful in the preparation of this study. He is indebted to the Duke University Library which made available many valuable research documents. He would also like to express his appreciation to the officials of the Julius Rosenwald Fund for financial assistance which facilitated research.

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A B S T R A C T

Secession, war, and defeat brought wrenching changes to people in a state which had become an important center of agricultural wealth. Fertile land in alluvial valleys and Negro slaves who tilled the soil were the basis for Louisiana's prewar claim to agricultural distinction. In the hinterlands, far from the wealth laden streams, the bulk of the white population earned their livelihoods by cultivating the thin and unproductive soil. The plantation system meant that the Black Belt would be closed to the small farmer. The many thousands of poor farming families approved of slavery because it guaranteed to them a position above the absolute bottom in the social order. Slavery, with its attendant system of large-scale landholding and planter-merchant economic and political dominance, was accepted as a fair price for the preservation of white supremacy.

The occupation of the Crescent City by agents of the national government inaugurated a period of fifteen years during which men responsible only to Washington ruled Louisiana. Butler and his successors controlled the southern parishes until the war was over. During the years between 1862 and 1865 the agents of Washington organized a civil government composed of men loyal to the Union, supervised the writing of a new constitution, established schools for Negroes, and made unsuccessful efforts to extend Federal control over Confederate Louisiana. Their efforts to make Louisiana conform to Northern ideals were not acceptable to the majority of citizens of the Bayou State.

In the late spring and summer of 1865 former Confederate soldiers began to return to Louisiana, only to find their state a vast scene of destruction and neglect. Their sole hope for survival now lay in the fields which had once produced abundant harvests; but the former slaves did not want to work the land. An election in the fall of 1865 brought to New Orleans a legislature composed of men who would force the Negroes to return to the soil by legislative decree. Their reactionary labor laws helped justify claims being made by Northern Republicans that the former slaveowners were returning to their old practices.

The Reconstruction laws passed by Congress in the spring of 1867 resulted in the political triumph of Louisiana Republicans. By persuading the Negroes that only Republicans could guarantee their rights, and by frequent appeals to Federal power, the new regime was able to control the government of the state until 1877. The Republican administrations showed few indications of being interested in the former slaves, other than to keep them coming to the polls. Glaring frauds, administrative confusion, and high taxes troubled people of property. To the masses, the mere presence of Negroes at the polls and in public office was sufficient excuse for anger. The result was violence at the polls and dishonesty in counting the ballots.

Reconstruction wrought few basic changes in Louisiana; planters and merchants remained as secure in their control of the state as they had been before the war.

CHAPTER I

THE PELICAN FLAG

Abraham Lincoln's election in 1860 was a shock to the people of Louisiana. In the Bayou State, Republicans and abolitionists were one and the same; both were to be despised. During the campaign, a Louisiana physician, William H. Holcombe, asserted in a political pamphlet that "when Lincoln is in place, Garrison will be in power."[1] This was a succinct statement of the views of the majority of Louisianians. The people had not anticipated the Republican victory because they had listened to United States Senator John Slidell who predicted that the House of Representatives would select the president, as it had done in 1824. Slidell had been relieved when Lincoln was nominated over William H. Seward at the Chicago convention. He had, in fact, written to General A. G. Carter, President of the Louisiana Democratic Convention, that the Illinois lawyer was neither as strong nor as dangerous as Seward and should not be taken seriously as a candidate.[2] Lincoln's victory was a signal for Slidell to start demanding secession. When the news of the Republican triumph had been confirmed, Slidell wrote President James Buchanan that he saw "no probability of preserving the Union, nor indeed [did he] consider it desirable to do so if [he] could."[3]

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[1] William H. Holcombe, The Alternative: A Separate Nationality or the Africanization of the South (New Orleans, 1860), 1.

[2] Louis Martin Sears, John Slidell (Durham, 1925), 169-70.

[3] Ibid., 174.

The fires of public opinion were fanned by New Orleans' most eminent Protestant divine. The Reverend Benjamin M. Palmer delivered a Thanksgiving Day address calculated to arouse his audience to an emotional fervor. He reviewed all of the pro-slavery arguments that had emerged in the heat of a long struggle. The South, he asserted, had a providential trust — a trust "to conserve and perpetuate the institution of slavery as now existing."[4] Palmer appealed to the cupidity as well as the spirituality of his audience, reminding them of the South's economic investment in slaves. He also believed that it was the will of God that Southern people fight atheistic abolitionism. This sermon, pamphletized and widely distributed, placed the stamp of religious approval on an all-out effort to defend the peculiar institution against aggression from any quarter.

In every parish in the state, including the sugar parishes which had for years sought to destroy Slidell's political power, secessionist sentiment steadily increased after November of 1860. The anti-Union spirit was on the rise in New Orleans, where John C. Breckinridge had received only twenty per cent of the vote in the national election. Excitement began to reach a fever pitch as each night witnessed its orations and public meetings.[5] William Ware, the British Consul in New Orleans, made some interesting comments about conditions in the Crescent City. He informed London that thirty factors, with aggregate liabilities of that many millions of dollars, failed because of the uncertain future of the New Orleans market. Some premature

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[4] Benjamin M. Palmer, Thanksgiving Sermon, Delivered at the First Presbyterian Church, New Orleans (New York, 1861), 7.

[5] John Smith Kendall, History of New Orleans (Chicago and New York, 1922), I, 233.

diplomats sounded out the Consul on the possibility of British recognition of a Southern Confederacy in return for a favorable commercial agreement.[6]

The people in Louisiana who wanted to remain in the Union, or at least have time to think the matter through, were not asleep. They were, however, rapidly being outnumbered. Stephen A. Douglas, the leading Democratic nationalist, made a trip to New Orleans to pour his own brand of oil on the troubled waters. He made a few brief speeches and penned a long letter for publication. The Illinois statesman emphasized the anti-Lincoln majority in Congress and the constitutional methods of redressing grievances.[7] It was wasted time and travel so far as the "Little Giant" was concerned. While he was pleading for compromise within the Union, petitions demanding just the opposite course of action were piling up on the desk of Governor Thomas O. Moore.

Louisiana's governor, owner of more than two hundred slaves on his plantations in Rapides Parish, was not one to oppose the rising sentiment in the state. In the early part of December, he issued a hurried summons for the state's legislators to convene in Baton Rouge on the tenth day of the month. After three days of deliberation, the lawmakers announced that on January 7, 1861, the people would elect a convention which would determine the future course of the state.[8] The

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[6] Milledge L. Bonham (ed.), "Financial and Economic Disturbances in New Orleans on the Eve of Secession," Louisiana Historical Quarterly (Baton Rouge, 1917-), XIII (1930), 33. This journal will be hereafter cited as L.H.Q.

[7] Alexandria Constitutional, November 17, 1860.

[8] Willie Malvin Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana (University, La., 1938), 20.

decision to hold a convention violated the organic law of the state. The correct procedure in amending the Constitution of 1852, which secession certainly involved, would have been to allow the people to decide the question of holding a convention.[9] This constitutional inconsistency became only a minor issue in the ensuing campaign. With revolution in the air, the time for legalistic niceties had passed.

During the following weeks, the earlier adherents to the Breckinridge wing of the Democratic party and their converts demanded withdrawal from the Union. In all the parishes their candidates for seats at the convention had a clear and simple program: immediate, separate, and unqualified secession from the United States. The Secessionists had an easy path to victory because of the simplicity of their appeal, the logic of the situation, and the confusion among their opponents. Slidell's well-disciplined political machine and the frightened slaveholders were an orderly nucleus which directed a pliable public opinion. There were no unusual conspiracies or bargains because none were necessary. Many of the state's distinguished sons raised their voices in the growing clamor for secession. Charles Gayarre, the historian and jurist, stated publicly that "deliberations must give way to action when Barbarians are at the foot of the Capitol."[10] Reverend Palmer and numerous ministers preached secession from the pulpits.[11] The state's press kept the public in touch with what was being done and said throughout the state and nation.[12]

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[9] Roger Wallace Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana (Baton Rouge, 1939), 162.

[10] New Orleans Daily Delta, December 27, 1860.

[11] Caskey, Secession and Restoration, 19.

[12] Ibid., 23.

It is improbable that anyone will ever be able to gauge accurately the pro-Unionist sentiment during those frantic weeks. Opponents of secessionism called themselves collectively "Co-operationists". There were wide variances in their thinking. Some were merely secessionists who preferred to bargain, while others were unalloyed Union supporters. The majority of the Co-operationists wanted the Southern states to send representatives to a convention which would negotiate with the North for constitutional amendments. If the North rejected the overtures, the South could then secede in one great movement. Many Co-operationists, while deprecating the necessity for secession, extolled the virtues of slavery and excoriated the Yankees for wrongs done to the South. This was the weakness of their position. The Secessionists pounced upon the flaw, dubbed these people "Submissionists and shouted that their attitude resulted from faint hearts rather than intellectual or ethical convictions.[13]

Although many of the Co-operationists did not oppose too strongly the idea of secession, they certainly did object to the way it was being done and to the men doing it. Broadly speaking, the Co-operationists were old-time Whigs who had opposed Slidell's Democracy for half a generation. Even though fearful for their slave property, they found it difficult to work with "King John" and the Democrats. The campaign for seats at the convention was waged bitterly. Party, or rather faction, papers sniped at each other from the editorial pages. The Baton Rouge <u>Gazette and Comet</u> was an outspoken critic of secessionism. In the December 19 issue, it called secession the

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[13] Sugg, <u>Origins of Class Struggle</u>, 162.

"foul breath of death and destruction." At another time, it prophesied that "a Southern Confederacy will become rent by intestine feuds ... A synonym of contempt throughout the civilized world."[14] C. W. Boyce of the Alexandria Constitutional was just as trenchant a critic of "Yancey, Slidell and Co., whose only aim had been to precipitate the cotton states into a revolution..."[15] The West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter warned its readers to beware of the "wheedlings and coaxings" of Slidell's machine.[16] The New Orleans Picayune early asserted its opinion that the time for fighting Lincoln on the field would come "when we find [that] either constitutional resistance fails, or that he and his party are bent on our humiliation and destruction."[17]

Speakers on the rostrums exhausted the language of politics in attacking each other. A goodly portion of this intensity of feeling stemmed from previous frays in the arenas rather than the immediate question. John Slidell's old opponent, Pierre Soule, who claimed to speak for seven thousand Douglasites, advised caution. He was opposed to "an inconsiderate and dishevelled revolution."[18] J. M. Sandidge, member of Congress and a Co-operationist, attacked the logic of the "right of secession." It was really unimportant, he believed, whether states went out under a flag of secession or a revolutionary banner, they would still be out of the Union.[19] Few candidates shared

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[14] Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet, December 20, 1860.

[15] Alexandria Constitutional, December 15, 1860.

[16] West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter, January 5, 1861.

[17] New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 10, 1860.

[18] New Orleans Daily Delta, December 23, 1860.

[19] Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet, January 5, 1861.

William S. Pike's belief that Louisiana should remain in the Union "under any circumstances."[20] One of the most important aspects of the December hustings was the fact that no candidate or public figure, even the most ardent anti-secessionist, had a word to say against the institution of slavery.

The Secessionists replied to their critics shot for shot. The New Orleans Daily Crescent held that the states should go out of the Union "precisely as they went in — one by one."[21] This paper did some interesting theorizing about the constitutional position of the Co-operationists. The December 19 issue cited the first article of the Federal Constitution which prohibits states from entering any treaty, alliance or confederation. This, thought the editors, placed constitutional barriers before the Co-operationists' desired convention. If the Southern states met together and agreed to withdraw, argued the Crescent, it would be unconstitutional. If they seceded and then held a meeting they would be in harmony with the Federal document. The most vigorous of Slidell's newspapers, the New Orleans Daily Delta, proclaimed the independence of Louisiana a month before the convention started its sessions.[22]

On January 7, 1861, the people of Louisiana elected eighty Secessionists, forty-four Co-operationists, and six undecided delegates.

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[20] Ibid., December 25, 1860.

[21] New Orleans Daily Crescent, December 20, 1860.

[22] Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet, December 25, 1860.

[23] Jefferson Davis Bragg, Louisiana in the Confederacy (Baton Rouge, 1941), 26.

Opponents of secession depended on the conservative vote in New Orleans, but the city went secessionist by a slight majority. The Picayune lost hope when this happened. "The city vote," it lamented, "prefigures the vote of the State."[24] There was a persistent rumor that the Secessionists polled less than a majority of the votes cast. The successful candidates received their credentials from the Secretary of State, but no official election returns appeared.[25] Weeks after the election, several New Orleans newspapers published unofficial returns, but the tabulations were in such a form as to raise serious doubts about their accuracy and authenticity. By that time, however, Fort Sumter had been attacked and few were interested.

The Co-operationists carried nineteen of Louisiana's forty-eight parishes. Three parishes in the sugar region continued to follow the lead of Pierre Soule, who opposed the secession movement as it was being conducted. Nine parishes in the small farm areas of the northern part of the state, Slidell's old stronghold, deserted "King John" as the farmers decided that they might have to fight to protect the slaves of their erstwhile political opponents. The slaveholding parishes were the wellsprings of secessionist strength. The parishes which had supported Breckinridge the previous November showed larger majorities for secessionism. Some of the sugar producing localities which had cast a large vote for John Bell now elected Secessionist delegates.[26] The

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[24] Cited in Caskey, Secession and Restoration, 25.

[25] Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle, 163.

[26] Ibid., 165.

people in the cane country believed that their plantations would be worthless without slaves. The November elections had frightened the planters of sugar cane almost to the point of hysteria. The old patrol system, which had deteriorated through disuse, was made far more elaborate in order to give the planters a tighter control of the movement of slaves and free men of color.[27]

Before the delegates held their first session, Governor Moore made a decision which indicated his faith in the inevitability of secession. The Chief Executive, acting "upon information which did not leave [him] in doubt as to [his] public duty," ordered the seizure of the Federal arsenal in Baton Rouge and Forts Pike, Jackson, and Saint Philip. The governor did not disclose his information nor its source. These Federal posts, manned by only a few caretakers, surrendered without opposition. In order to protect the officers and "facilitate future settlements," the captors gave receipts for the property, showing, thereby, an interesting respect for the legal aspects of the situation.[28]

The delegates to the convention assembled in Baton Rouge on January 23 with little more to do than to recognize a fait accompli. When the election was held on January 7, only South Carolina had passed a secession ordinance. During the fortnight that followed the Louisiana election, four more states had followed suit. With this background of widespread secessionist spirit, the convention began

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[27] Charles P. Roland, "The Louisiana Sugar Plantations During the Civil War." This Ph.D. thesis was read before pagination.

[28] Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet, January 26, 1861.

its work. The Secessionists were startled when their opponents tried to establish a credentials committee. This committee could have challenged some of the delegates and examined the voting in their districts. Oscar Arroyo, the temporary chairman, ruled that the convention would not look behind the certificates from the Secretary of State.[29] With this temporary embarrassment out of the way, the convention held its first test of strength. Alexander Mouton, former governor who had led Louisiana's bolters at the Charleston convention, won the presidency of the convention from Isaih Garrett of Ouachita Parish. The vote was eighty-one to forty-one. The delegates realized that this was the real vote on secession. After some halfhearted attempts at delay, most of the Co-operationists accepted the will of the majority and agreed to vote for the Ordinance of Secession.[30]

One delegate remained an unconverted Unionist and insisted on being heard. James G. Taliaferro represented Catahoula Parish, where farms were small and where there were few planters and slaves. The delegates listened to Taliaferro, but refused to enter the speech in the official journal. The Daily Crescent, although opposed to his ideas, decided to publish his remarks.[31] Taliaferro was an old-fashioned nationalistic Democrat who loved the Union and disliked the planter-directed convention. After the war he became a Republican and presided over the Black and Tan Convention of 1868. Taliaferro fumed at the idea of withdrawal from the United States. Secession,

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle, 166.

[31] Roger Wallace Shugg, "A Suppressed Co-operationist's Protest against Secession," LHQ, XIX (1936), 199.

he maintained, was no cure for the ills of Louisiana; it would only create bigger ones.[32] His voice was the only one raised in unqualified opposition to secession.

On January 26, 1861, a cold midwinter drizzle fell on Baton Rouge. Louisiana's Gothic-type capitol looked dreary and forbidding. Around the noon hour, a large crowd began surging toward the hall of the House of Representatives. Within, the clerk was reading the names of the members as they recorded their ayes and nayes on the Ordinance of Secession. Members of the convention and the throng of officials and onlookers became quiet and tense as the clerk approached the name of delegate York from Concordia Parish. Then it was over. The brief tabulation revealed that one hundred and thirteen votes favored the ordinance and only seventeen opposed. When the figures were read and the crowd realized that secession was now a reality, the quiet, cold afternoon was pierced by the shouts and yells of the multitude.[33]

As soon as Alexander Mouton proclaimed the Ordinance of Secession, and while the applause and cheering was at a peak, a small procession started threading its way through the exuberant mass of people. Governor Moore and his two aides, Colonel Braxton Bragg and Captain Henry Watkins Allen, followed by a minister and a priest, carried down the center aisle a flag of spotless white with one red star, which contained in its center the figure of a pelican. This was the Pelican Flag, emblem of an independent Louisiana. The minister prayed

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[32] Ibid., 200-203.

[33] The Convention's proceedings were described in detail in the press. See especially the Baton Rouge Gazette and Comet, and the New Orleans Delta, Picayune, and Crescent for the January 23-26 period.

and the priest blessed the flag. The ladies present discreetly waved white handkerchiefs.

Outside of the legislative halls the news spread rapidly. The people of the little river town had awaited this moment since the convention began its deliberations. Those who could not crowd into the building milled around the grounds watching a flag raising ceremony and a fireworks display. While the local people and their distinguished visitors were celebrating, the telegraphic keys were busy tapping out the news to state and nation. The celebration in Baton Rouge was merely the first of many spontaneous and organized demonstrations throughout the state. The people at Mrs. Eliza McHatton's plantation, which was on the river near Baton Rouge, saw steamboats puffing up the river with flags flying and whistles and bells creating an inferno of noise. Passengers and crew members waved and shouted at the crowds along the banks until the crafts disappeared from sight. The slaves on the plantation, sensing the holiday mood, erected a pole and held a dance around it.[34]

In New Orleans, the traditionally noisy Saturday afternoon and evening became deafening with the firing of cannons and the ringing of church and fire bells. The Washington Artillery marched back and forth through the streets of the city, basking in the hearty applause of the men and the admiring looks of the ladies. On the banks of the Mississippi River, the soldiers fired one hundred guns in honor of independence. Then they dispersed to join in the merrymaking. With the business houses closed, the hotels and theatres brilliantly lighted and alive with people, and the streets and banquettes crowded with the

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[34] Roland, "Sugar Plantation During the Civil War," n.p.

happy populace, the Crescent City took on all the exciting color of a gigantic and hilarious Mardi Gras.[35] Few gave a thought to the Lent that was to follow.

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[35] See New Orleans Daily Crescent, January 26, 1861.

CHAPTER II

THE LAND OF THE PLANTERS

The outcome of the 1860 election was interpreted by the people of Louisiana as the beginning of an attack on slavery. With few exceptions, slaveholders and nonslaveholders alike supported the peculiar institution. Ownership of slaves meant to the planter or merchant a tightly controlled labor force. To the upper classes, slaves as well as land were an acceptable basis for social aspirations. The poor farmers who cultivated the unproductive land in the backwoods and the poverty-stricken common laborers in New Orleans approved of slavery because it guaranteed to them a position in the social order one step above the absolute bottom. No demogogic leader had ever been able to separate the farmers and laborers from the planter-merchant leadership. In Louisiana, race prejudice had always been an acceptable substitute for class prejudice.[1]

Professor Allan Nevins, in a recently published study, gives a cogent analysis of how the will to retain slavery led Louisiana and the other Southern states to secession and war. He asserts that "the main root of the conflict (and there were minor roots) was the problem of slavery _with its complementary problem of race-adjustment_. . ."[2] Professor Nevins believes that the war came because the leaders of the

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[1] Shugg, _Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana_, passim.

[2] Allan Nevins, _The Emergence of Lincoln_ (New York, 1950), II, 468. The italics are those of the author.

two sections were unwilling, or unable, to convince their respective followers that sacrifices should be made by all. No Southern leader, who expected to remain a leader, dared suggest that the problem of race relations could be solved without slavery. No Northern leader could hope to convince his people that they should bear some of the expense of transporting Negroes to white areas, pay owners for freed slaves, or help support an elaborate educational system. With this in mind, it is not difficult to see why Northerners and Southerners relied on arms rather than reason.

The Louisiana attitude toward slavery was that of the South at large. The poor farmers and laborers may have hated black skins, but slave owners were in love with black muscles. Negro slaves came into Louisiana while the French were trying to establish a colony of a few hundred people along the lower Mississippi. From these early settlements until the crisis of 1860, Louisiana's system of large-scale landowning was hopelessly enmeshed in the institution of slavery. Estimates of population, beginning with Don Alexandro O'Reilly's census of 1770 and continuing with the decennial censuses of the United States, showed that for almost a century preceding the Civil War the slaves in Louisiana constituted about one-half of the total population. The census takers in 1860 found in Louisiana 331,726 slaves; 47% of the state's 708,002 people.[3] As far as dollars and cents are concerned, it is practically impossible to ascertain the value of Louisiana's sable property. Nevertheless, one

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[3] United States Census Office, Eighth Census, Population of the United States in 1860 (Washington, 1864), XIII and 194.

can justifiably imagine a figure near the two hundred million mark.

Just as the word "slavery" describes Louisiana's antebellum rural labor, so also the phrase "plantation system" describes the state's land tenure before the war. While the white and black people were spreading through the Bayou State, the fertile, alluvial soil was falling into the hands of men who were hungry for land. The early French and Spanish masters made large land grants along the principal rivers and bayous, thereby making large-scale landowning an integral part of Louisiana's development as an agricultural area. About the turn of the nineteenth century, the introduction of the two great staples, cotton and sugar, meant that those great estates already held could become profitable. These events also heralded the beginning of a mighty surge of people into areas where waterways provided good land and easy transportation. By 1860 most of the valuable land was in the hands of planters with large estates. The plantation owners produced the cash crops, sent them to market by way of the numerous waterways, and then depended on the New Orleans merchants to dispose of the crops and keep the plantations provided with the necessities of life. Each year the Mississippi River brought into the commercial capital vast agricultural wealth from the farmlands. Little wonder, then, that there had arisen a political and economic understanding among planters and merchants. To be sure, cotton planters and sugar planters quarreled over the tariff, but that was of minor significance when compared with the larger issues involved. When an anti-tariff clause was inserted in the Confederate Constitution the sugar magnates did not secede from the seceders.

Slaves, whose true economic value lay in their agricultural

productivity, constituted the laboring base upon which the prosperity of the plantation system rested. The agricultural nature of slavery in Louisiana is best demonstrated by noting that the only city, New Orleans, had almost one-fourth of the state's population, but only one-twentieth of the slaves.[4] Where large and valuable plantations were numerous the number of slaves would be large. In the piney-woods areas, far from the wealth laden streams of water, the farms were of the small, subsistent type. Here the owners and cultivators of land could not afford the squads of slaves so characteristic of the plantation areas. This can easily be seen by comparing the 1860 population of Concordia and Madison, both cotton parishes on the Mississippi River, with Winn and Calcasieu, which were far from the alluvial land. In the two parishes on the river there were 2,882 white people in the midst of 25,019 slaves. In Calcasieu and Winn there were 9,931 whites and only 2,525 slaves.[5]

There was a close relationship between plantations and politics, which is best demonstrated by comparing the influence in the state legislature of the four parishes already mentioned. The basis for a parish's number of legislators was the combined black and white population. Hence Concordia and Madison, with less than one-third of the number of whites in Winn and Calcasieu, had more than twice the representation. This system of representation had been bitterly criticized in the debates on the Constitution of 1852. The small farmers living outside of the plantation areas resented a

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[4] Ibid., 183-93.

[5] Ibid.

system which would decrease their political power. The Constitution of 1852 was opposed in New Orleans because it limited the city's representation in the legislature. Many of the planters in the state felt that the Crescent City's motley population, all with ballots, could not be trusted to remain loyal to the plantation ideal.[6] Counting the slaves as a basis for allocating legislators really amounted to a property rather than a strict populational base for representation. Needless to say, the slaves had no voice in the parishes where plantations dominated the scene. There the few owners of land and slaves made the decisions.

During the 1860's and 1870's there were many developments which altered the position of power which the planters had created for themselves. The theme of this study will be the changes of social, economic, and political systems which occurred in these crucial years of Louisiana's history. Before discussing what happened in Louisiana during the long years of war and reconstruction, it will be necessary to establish some base for future comparison. Plantations and slaves were the foundation of the state's ante-bellum economic system. The impact of the 1860's and 1870's on the landowners and on the Negro slaves will constitute a major portion of this study. Much of the information concerning land ownership was obtained from the unpublished census schedules for agriculture in 1860, 1870, and 1880. These original documents are storehouses of data for the student interested in the history of an agricultural region. Despite the unavoidable inaccuracies in condensing a mass of

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[6] Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 140 ff.

data into a few manageable statistics, one can get from the census documents an excellent idea of what Louisiana's agricultural economics was like on the eve of conflict and what happened in the years that followed.[7]

It was not considered necessary, and certainly not feasible, to study each of Louisiana's parishes. For the purpose of analysis, twelve parishes were selected as being representative of the state at large. In the northern part of the state, Caddo and Caldwell represent those parishes in which there were a few plantations along the waterways, but in which there were large numbers of simple farmers. Madison and Concordia, on the Mississippi River, were wealthy cotton parishes where a few planters owned the land and the slaves. Winn Parish was selected as the example par excellence of the piney-woods area where land and men were poor. St. Landry and Rapides are in the central part of Louisiana where the soil and climate produced both cotton and sugar as well as planters and farmers. Iberville was selected from the Sugar Bowl region of south Louisiana. Terrebonne, Plaquemine, and East Baton Rouge were parishes where sugar plantations as well as small farms existed. East Feliciana was taken as representative of the Florida Parishes. Perhaps more representative parishes could have been selected. It is doubtful, however, if they would have reflected any difference in the broad picture of Louisiana's agricultural system.

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[7] The author is deeply indebted to the Duke University Library. The directors of this institution were kind enough to send the original documents rather than microfilm. Unless otherwise footnoted, the statistics of landholding in 1860 have been taken from the unpublished census reports of the United States Eighth Census, Schedule IV, Productions of Agriculture. In developing the statistical tables, the data from the documents were placed in frequency distributions, and the tables constructed from these summaries.

The census of 1860 shows that in certain aspects of the economic picture Louisiana was a thriving agricultural region. The state ranked high in the nation in per capita wealth. In this analysis of wealth, however, slaves were counted as property. Louisiana would have suffered a great statistical decline by any change in the status of slave property, and without the destruction of a single physical item. In studying and comparing the wealth of Louisiana during the ante-bellum and postwar periods one should keep in mind the economic aspect of the changing status of the Negro slave. If the Negroes had remained in their former places after the war, and if their wages had remained approximately the same as the cost of keeping a slave, then there would have been no change in the real wealth of Louisiana. To be sure, there would have been a change in the amount of property in the state, but no change in wealth.

Disregarding the status of the Negro, the state had abundant agricultural wealth in 1860. The following table shows the total agricultural picture in the year of the Eighth Census.

Table I

Statistics of Agriculture in Louisiana in 1860[8]

Total Population	708,002
Number of Slaves	331,726
Improved Acreage	2,707,108
Unimproved Acreage (in farms)	6,591,468
Cash Value of Farms	$204,789,662
Value of Implements	$ 18,648,225
Value of Livestock	$ 24,546,940

[8] In the tables which follow those figures showing population, both white and slave, are from the Eighth Census, Population of the United States in 1860, 188-93. The figures on land improvement, productions of agriculture, farm values, and implement values are from United States Census Office, Eighth Census, Agriculture of the United States in 1860 (Washington, 1864), 66-69.

Productions of Agriculture

Indian Corn (bu.)	16,853,745
Rice (lb.)	6,331,257
Cotton (bales)	777,738
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	2,060,981
Sugar (hhd.)	221,726
Molasses (gal.)	13,439,772
Peas and Beans (bu.)	431,149
Irish Potatoes (bu.)	294,655

The above table indicates the state's dependence on staple crops. Sugar and cotton, and to a lesser extent, corn, brought millions of dollars into the state. Because of the plantation type of economy, the necessary subsistence items, such as orchards, gardening, and dairy produce were not emphasized.

These gross statistics do not tell how the land was held and who produced the staples. For this important information it is necessary to turn to the individual parishes which have been selected for this study.

Table II

Statistics of Agriculture in Caddo Parish in 1860

Total Population	12,140
Number of Slaves	7,338

Improved Acreage	98,928
Unimproved Acreage (in farms)	208,472
Cash Value of Farms	$3,843,015
Value of Implements	$ 110,476
Value of Livestock	$ 534,401

Productions of Agriculture

Indian Corn (bu.)	464,205
Cotton (bales)	9,385
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	179,445
Peas and Beans (bu.)	38,365
Orchard Produce	$ 29,975
Market Gardens	$ 15,134
Value Animals Slaughtered	$ 27,445

Table III

Statistics of Agriculture in Caldwell Parish in 1860

Total Population	4,833
Number of Slaves	1,945

Improved Acreage	21,468
Unimproved Acreage (in farms)	86,972
Cash Value of Farms	$1,701,075
Value of Implements	$ 231,497

Productions of Agriculture

Indian Corn (bu.)	145,561
Cotton (bales)	7,296
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	5,506
Irish Potatoes (bu.)	5,165
Peas and Beans (bu.)	358
Orchard Produce	$ 300
Value Animals Slaughtered	$ 9.702

Cotton was the principal staple crop in northern Louisiana. Large plantations were numerous along the banks of the Mississippi, Ouachita, and Red. The small family farm was standard in the areas away from the alluvial soil and the important waterways. Caddo and Caldwell parishes had some valuable plantations near the Red and the Ouachita rivers. The majority of the agricultural units in these two parishes, however, were small and of relatively little value.

Table IV

Distribution of Improved Land in Caddo Parish in 1860

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	119	27.2	2.5
50 - 199	156	35.6	17.2
200 - 499	99	22.6	30.5
500 - 999	45	10.3	29.8
1,000 and over	19	4.3	20.0
Totals	438	100%	100%

Table V

Distribution of Improved Land in Caldwell Parish in 1860

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	152	55.7	13.6
50 - 199	96	35.2	43.0
200 - 499	19	6.9	23.8
500 - 999	5	1.8	13.5
1,000 or over	1	.4	6.1
Totals	273	100%	100%

Table VI

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in Caddo Parish in 1860

Value Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
$999 or less	68	15.2	.8
1,000 - 3,999	182	40.8	10.9
4,000 - 9,999	90	20.2	15.1
10,000 - 24,999	68	15.2	28.5
25,000 and over	38	8.6	44.7
Totals	446	100%	100%

Table VII

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in Caldwell Parish in 1860

Value Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
$999 or less	107	36.8	2.9
1,000 - 3,999	107	36.8	14.8
4,000 - 9,999	44	15.1	17.1
10,000 - 24,999	19	6.5	12.6
25,000 - and over	14	4.8	52.6
Totals	291	100%	100%

The above tables for Caddo and Caldwell indicate the general prevalence of the small and medium-sized farms in the north-western parishes of Louisiana. Along the banks of the Red River in

Caddo, and the Ouachita in Caldwell, there were some valuable plantations. These plantations did not dominate the scene as the large units did in other areas of the state. In Caddo, which was destined to become one of the population centers of the state, there was a much larger population than in its smaller neighbor. Here, also, there were many more plantations. Shreveport, on the Red River, was a small but thriving center of trade and the point of departure for much of the produce of that part of the state. Away from the Red River, the small farms were numerous. Farms of less than 200 acres constituted a little over one-third of the farming units in the parish. The units of this size accounted for about twenty per cent of the total improved land in the parish. In Caldwell Parish the farms with less than 200 acres of improved land numbered 248; over ninety per cent of the farming units. These smaller farms encompassed more than fifty-six per cent of the total improved land in the parish.

The tables on cash value of farms show how a few large and valuable estates can color the economic picture. In Caddo Parish there were thirty-eight plantations worth more than $25,000. These estates, only 8.6% of the 446 agricultural units, were worth 44.7% of the total land value of the parish. The smallest farms, worth less than $4,000 each, were 56% of the number of units, yet they were worth only 11.7% of the aggregate land value of Caddo Parish.

This situation is more strikingly demonstrated in Caldwell. The plantations, nestling along the banks of the Ouachita, were far more valuable than the little farms in the hinterlands. The thirty-three most valuable of the parish's agricultural units were worth

65.8% of the total value of land. Despite the statistical influence of the plantations, these parishes were not considered as important plantation areas.

Table VIII

Distribution of Cotton Production in Caddo Parish in 1860

Production Per Unit in Bales	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Produced by Class
39 or less	200	57.9	16.0
40 - 99	77	22.4	21.6
100 - 199	40	11.6	23.9
200 and over	28	8.1	38.5
Totals	345	100%	100%

Table IX

Distribution of Cotton Production in Caldwell Parish in 1860

Production Per Unit in Bales	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Produced by Class
39 or less	210	85.0	42.0
40 - 99	22	8.9	15.4
100 - 199	9	3.5	13.5
200 and over	6	2.6	29.1
Totals	247	100%	100%

There was not enough good soil in Caddo and Caldwell to make these areas important cotton producing centers. The absence of rich alluvium affected the distribution of cotton production as well as the total amount grown. In Caldwell, especially, this is evident. Of the 247 growers of cotton, 210 made crops of less than forty bales. Only six planters in the parish were able to claim cotton crops of more than 200 bales. In Caddo Parish 200 of the 345 producers of cotton grew fewer than 40 bales. Twenty-eight planters claimed more

than 200 bales in 1860.

The slave population in Caddo and Caldwell was not as large as in areas where the plantations were predominant. Caldwell, with 1,945 slaves, was one of the few parishes in which the whites outnumbered the slaves. In this parish there were three masters whose slaves numbered between fifty and one hundred and only one slave-owner had more than one hundred.[9] The unpublished census reports show that no master in Caddo Parish held more than fifty slaves.

Table X

Statistics of Agriculture in Winn Parish in 1860

Total Population	6,834
Number of Slaves	1,354

Improved Acreage	20,617
Unimproved Acreage (in farms)	85,618
Cash Value of Farms	$438,190
Value of Implements	$ 46,674
Value of Livestock	$186.483

Productions of Agriculture

Indian Corn (bu.)	120,423
Cotton (bales)	2,993
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	20,686
Butter (lb.)	19,340
Peas and Beans (bu.)	3,464
Animals Slaughtered	$ 31,126

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[9] All statistics showing the distribution of slave ownership are from Unpublished Census Returns, 1860, Schedule II, Slave Inhabitants. This material is in the microfilm collection of the Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Table XI

Distribution of Improved Land in Winn Parish in 1860

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	214	62.2	17.0
50 - 199	117	34.0	58.5
200 - 499	10	2.9	14.1
500 - 999	2	.6	6.0
1,000 and over	1	.3	4.4
Totals	344	100%	100%

Table XII

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in Winn Parish in 1860

Value per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
$999 or less	242	70.4	19.2
1000 - 3,999	90	26.2	38.4
4,000 - 9,999	9	2.6	10.8
10,000 - 24,999	2	.5	5.9
25,000 and over	1	.3	25.7
Totals	344	100%	100%

When we turn to Winn Parish, the census records reveal a region of small, poor farms. Winn is in the piney-woods section of north-central Louisiana, where the thin soil guarantees poor farms and poor farmers. The above tables reveal the poverty of Winn's soil and people. In Winn more than ninety-six per cent of the farms had fewer than 200 acres of improved land. The value of farming land in this parish can be seen by noting that 242 of the 344 farms were valued at less than $1,000.

Table XIII

Distribution of Cotton Production in Winn Parish in 1860

Production per Unit in Bales	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Produced by Class
39 or less	273	96.4	81.2
40 - 99	7	2.4	7.3
100 - 199	1	.4	2.2
200 and over	2	.8	9.3
Totals	283	100%	100%

As should be expected, there were few large-scale cotton growers in Winn Parish. Most of the farmers in the parish raised a few bales of cotton to supplement their income. With the exception of a mere handful of large producers, these small farmers made the cotton crop in Winn Parish. The 273 units which produced fewer than forty bales accounted for 81.2% of the total production in the parish. Most of this amount was in units of fewer than five bales.

Along the banks of the Mississippi River large plantations flourished. Planters, rather than farmers, owned most of this valuable, fertile land. Although small farms existed, they were few in number and were worth only a small fraction of the total wealth of the area. In this land of valuable cotton plantations, the planters dominated society, politics, and economics. The land they owned and the cotton they grew was the basis for their eminence. Concordia and Madison Parishes are excellent examples of the cotton plantation section.

Table XIV

Statistics of Agriculture in Concordia Parish in 1860

Total Population	13,805
Number of Slaves	12,542

Improved Acreage	87,406
Unimproved Acreage (in farms)	158,523
Cash Value of Farms	$12,335,720
Value of Implements	$ 837,310
Value of Livestock	$ 920,581

Productions of Agriculture

Indian Corn (bu.)	502,340
Cotton (bales)	63,971
Peas and Beans (bu.)	75,735
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	53,685
Value Animals Slaughtered	$ 45,273

Table XV

Statistics of Agriculture in Madison Parish in 1860

Total Population	14,133
Number of Slaves	12,477

Improved Acreage	104,383
Unimproved Acreage (in farms)	172,642
Cash Value of Farms	$11,640,660
Value of Implements	$ 364,920
Value of Livestock	$ 756,953

Productions of Agriculture

Indian Corn (bu.)	399,050
Cotton (bales)	44,870
Peas and Beans (bu.)	27,563
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	51,298
Value Animals Slaughtered	$ 62,204

Table XVI

Distribution of Improved Land in Concordia Parish in 1860

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	35	17.5	.9
50 - 199	44	22.0	5.7
200 - 499	38	19.0	14.5
500 - 999	58	29.0	46.8
1,000 and over	25	12.5	32.1
Totals	200	100%	100%

Table XVII

Distribution of Improved Land in Madison Parish in 1860

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	4	1.9	.09
50 - 199	36	16.7	4.0
200 - 499	89	41.4	27.91
500 - 999	63	29.3	42.5
1,000 and over	23	10.7	25.5
Totals	215	100%	100%

Table XVIII

Distribution of Cash Value of Land in Concordia Parish in 1860

Value Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
$999 or less	7	3.6	.03
1,000 - 3,999	19	9.7	.4
4,000 - 9,999	23	11.3	1.3
10,000 - 24,999	27	13.7	3.87
25,000 and over	122	61.7	94.4
Totals	198	100%	100%

Table XIX

Distribution of Cash Value of Land in Madison Parish in 1860

Value Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
$999 or less	1	.5	.004
1,000 - 3,999	6	2.8	.1
4,000 - 9,999	9	4.2	.5
10,000 - 24,999	32	14.8	4.8
25,000 and over	167	77.7	94.5
Totals	215	100%	100%

All of the figures in the above tables indicate the nature of the plantation economy as practiced in the cotton areas along the Mississippi. In this fertile section the land was owned by a few planters. The two parishes, Madison and Concordia, supported a total population of 27,938. Of this number, 25,019 were slaves. In Concordia more than 78% of the improved land was in units larger than 500 acres. The thirty-five smallest farms, each with less than fifty acres of improved land, accounted for less than one per cent of the improved land in Concordia. The real influence of the plantation economy can be seen by studying the distribution of cash value of farms. In both Concordia and Madison Parishes, the plantations evaluated at more than $25,000 were worth more than ninety-four per cent of the total land value. The predominance of the valuable plantations is further demonstrated by noting that in Madison Parish the units worth more than $10,000 were over ninety-nine per cent of the parish's land value.

Table XX

Distribution of Cotton Production in Concordia Parish in 1860

Bales Produced Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	%of Total Produced by Class
39 or less	15	11.5	.5
40 - 99	6	4.7	.7
100 - 199	22	16.9	5.5
200 and over	87	66.9	93.3
Totals	130	100%	100%

Table XXI

Distribution of Cotton Production in Madison Parish in 1860

Bales Produced Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Produced by Class
39 or less	29	15.3	1.3
40 - 99	31	16.4	4.8
100 - 199	31	16.4	10.1
200 and over	98	51.9	83.8
Totals	189	100%	100%

In the plantation areas along the upper Mississippi, production of cotton was the basis for the entire economic structure. In Concordia in 1860 the planters grew 63,971 bales of the fleecy staple. The cotton crop in Madison was 44,870 bales for the same year. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the rich, fertile land, where cotton could grow in such great quantities, was owned by a relatively small number of people.

In these two parishes, Indian corn was a secondary staple. Much of the corn was consumed locally by the slaves and the livestock, leaving only a part of the crop to be sold into other areas. Neither parish completely ignored the subsistence items. The production of items other than cotton and corn, however, was not large enough to

create a balanced agricultural economy.

The system of slave ownership in these parishes was a logical development from the plantation system and the one crop economy. In Concordia Parish there were ninety-one planters who owned more than fifty slaves; forty-eight of the slave owners had more than one hundred. In Madison there were eighty-one slaveholders with squads of slaves numbering more than fifty.

St. Landry and Rapides were two large parishes in the central part of the state. In these regions there were plantations with large gangs of slaves along the waterways. Away from the valleys created by the rivers and bayous, there were many small farmers who tilled their farms without the aid of Negroes.

Table XXII

Statistics of Agriculture in St. Landry Parish in 1860

Total Population	23,104
Number of Slaves	11,436

Improved Acreage	93,292
Unimproved Acreage (in farms)	221,340
Cash Value of Farms	$5,026,118
Value of Implements	$ 314,110
Value of Livestock	814,278

Productions of Agriculture

Indian Corn (bu.)	516,922
Cotton (bales)	21,198
Sugar (hhd.)	3,437
Molasses (gal.)	339,610
Peas and Beans (bu.)	5,464
Sweet Potatoes	68,244
Value Animals Slaughtered	$ 109,055

Table XXIII

Statistics of Agriculture in Rapides Parish in 1860

Total Population	25,360
Number of Slaves	15,358

Improved Acreage	105,839
Unimproved Acreage	331,117
Cash Value of Farms	$9,340,611
Value of Implements	$1,092,340
Value of Livestock	$1,405,040

Productions of Agriculture

Indian Corn (bu.)	820,378
Cotton (bales)	49,168
Sugar (hhd.)	12,087
Molasses (gal.)	854,585
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	98,880
Peas and Beans (bu.)	12,825
Value Animals Slaughtered	$ 110,785

Table XXIV

Distribution of Improved Land in St. Landry Parish in 1860

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	127	21.4	2.6
50 - 199	307	51.9	31.3
200 - 499	113	19.1	32.3
500 - 999	32	5.4	19.6
1,000 and over	13	2.2	14.2
Totals	592	100%	100%

Table XXV

Distribution of Improved Land in Rapides Parish in 1860

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	566	68.2	12.2
50 - 199	126	15.2	11.3
200 - 499	85	10.3	31.1
500 - 999	25	3.0	17.1
1,000 and over	28	3.3	28.3
Totals	830	100%	100%

Table XXVI

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in St. Landry Parish in 1860

Value Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
$999 or less	58	10.5	.5
1,000 - 3,999	230	41.7	7.5
4,000 - 9,999	125	22.7	17.4
10,000 - 24,999	91	16.5	31.7
25,000 and over	47	8.6	42.9
Totals	551	100%	100%

Table XXVII

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in Rapides Parish in 1860

Value Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
$999 or less	211	43.2	1.1
1,000 - 3,999	107	21.9	1.9
4,000 - 9,999	16	3.3	1.2
10,000 - 24,999	35	7.1	6.7
25,000 and over	120	24.5	89.1
Totals	489	100%	100%

In St. Landry and Rapides the farmers were far more numerous than the planters. Both of these parishes included vast areas of pine hills or swamp regions where small farms dotted the countryside and where there were only a few Negro slaves. In Rapides Parish the Red River had created a narrow valley where the land was fertile and the climate suitable for the production of both cotton and sugar. In this valley there was a concentration of plantations and large groups of Negro slaves. St. Landry had no valley comparable to that in Rapides. As a result, there were fewer plantations, fewer large slave gangs, and a less noticeable concentration of land values in the hands of the planters.

There was a goodly number of plantations in St. Landry in

1860, but they did not hold such a high percentage of the land values as seen in Madison or Concordia. There were forty-seven units worth more than $25,000. These plantations were worth 42.9% of all the land value in St. Landry. The large number of farms can be seen in the table on improved land. Over seventy per cent, 434 farms, had fewer than 200 acres of improved land.

In Rapides Parish there were hundreds of farms away from the alluvial valley. Despite the existence of these numerous units, the plantations dominated the economy. There were 566 farms with less than fifty acres of improved land. The farms with less than 200 acres constituted 83.4% of the parish's agricultural units. These smallest units, however, held less than one-fourth of the parish's improved land. The importance of the plantations in the valley can be seen in the table on cash values. According to the statistics available, the plantations worth more than $25,000 were, in aggregate, 89.1% of the land value in Rapides. A more complete census record would have lowered this figure, but not much.

Both of these central Louisiana parishes produced sugar. St. Landry had a sugar production of only 3,437 hogsheads in 1860. Rapides, however, was one of the ranking sugar parishes with a total of 12,087 hogsheads. Because of the expensive machinery required, only planters were interested in sugar manufacturing.

Table XXVIII

Distribution of Cotton Production in St. Landry Parish in 1860

Bales Produced Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Produced by Class
39 or less	391	69.9	31.3
40 - 99	115	20.6	32.3
100 - 199	45	8.1	27.1
200 and over	8	1.4	9.3
Totals	559	100%	100%

Table XXIX

Distribution of Cotton Production in Rapides Parish in 1860

Bales Produced Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Produced by Class
39 or less	331	69.7	6.4
40 - 99	29	6.1	3.1
100 - 199	26	5.5	8.2
200 and over	89	18.7	82.3
Totals	475	100%	100%

St. Landry's cotton production was in the hands of farmers rather than large-scale planters. Of the 21,198 bales grown in 1860, only 9.3% was grown in units of more than 200 bales. Of the 559 cotton growers, 391 made less than forty bales. In Rapides there were 360 farmers who had crops smaller than one hundred bales. In the valley, however, there were so many plantations with large cotton crops that they easily produced most of the staples. The eighty-nine planters with more than 200 bales produced 82.3% of Rapides' cotton in 1860.

All of the indices of the agricultural economy show how the Red River Valley influenced the economy and value of Rapides. St. Landry

had approximately the same population, improved land, and slaves. Yet Rapides more than doubled St. Landry's cotton production and almost quadrupled the amount of sugar manufactured. The land value in Rapides was almost twice that of St. Landry. There is also a disparity in slave ownership. Seven planters in St. Landry held more than one hundred slaves. In Rapides the forty-three owners of more than one hundred slaves held, altogether, 8,185.[11]

In Iberville, and the other parishes in Louisiana's famous Sugar Bowl, the nature of sugar production required unusual agricultural methods. The Louisiana sugar planter was both an agriculturalist and a manufacturer. It was considered necessary at that time for each sugar planter to have his own sugar house, where the cane was crushed and the juice boiled in steam vats until it crystallized. Sugar houses were elaborate and expensive. More than 1,000 of the state's 1,291 sugar houses had an average value of $50,000.[12] The system meant that sugar production was in the hands of agricultural capitalists who could obtain the necessary funds for the heavy investment in land, slaves, and equipment. One authority estimates that in 1860 the total investment in land,

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[11] For a more detailed study on Rapides Parish, especially the importance of the Red River Valley, see William E. Highsmith, "Social and Economic Conditions in Rapides Parish During Reconstruction." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1947.

[12] Walter Prichard, "The Effects of the Civil War on the Louisiana Sugar Industry," Journal of Southern History (Baton Rouge, 1935-) V (1939), 315-17.

agricultural equipment, sugar houses, and slaves was approximately $200,000,000. The value of slaves amounted to roughly one-half of this figure.[13]

The statistics of sugar production do not lend themselves to the same kind of analysis used in studying the cotton regions. In a cotton producing parish, such as Caddo, there were many small farmers who grew cotton so that they might have a cash crop. In the Sugar Bowl, production of sugar and molasses was limited to the planter. In 1861 one-fourth of the sugar establishments made more than 500 hogsheads. Only one-seventh produced less than one hundred in that year.[14]

Table XXX

Statistics of Agriculture in Iberville Parish in 1860

Total Population	14,661
Number of Slaves	10,680

Improved Acreage	62,523
Unimproved Acreage (in farms)	131,688
Cash Value of Farms	$12,661,190
Value of Implements	886,719
Value of Livestock	$ 1,111,205

Production of Agriculture

Indian Corn (bu.)	572,022
Sugar (hhd.)	10,828
Molasses (gal.)	214,982
Peas and Beans (bu.)	5,312
Value Animals Slaughtered	$ 48,315

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Roland, "Sugar Plantations During the Civil War," n.p.

Table XXXI

Distribution of Improved Land in Iberville Parish in 1860

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	106	38.2	3.7
50 - 199	77	27.8	13.6
200 - 499	45	16.3	22.2
500 - 999	40	14.4	42.2
1,000 and over	9	3.3	18.3
Totals	277	100%	100%

Table XXXII

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in Iberville Parish in 1860

Value Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
$999 or less	24	8.8	.1
1,000 - 3,999	70	25.5	1.4
4,000 - 9,999	44	16.1	2.4
10,000 - 24,999	34	12.4	4.5
25,000 and over	102	37.2	91.6
Totals	274	100%	100%

Iberville Parish was one of the centers of Louisiana's ante-bellum sugar culture. There were many small farms in this parish, but they amounted to only a small fraction of the land values of the parish. In Iberville, stretching along the banks of the Mississippi, 183 of the 277 units had less than 200 acres of improved land. These smallest farms held only 17.3% of the total improved land in the parish. Sixty per cent of the land was owned by individuals with more than 500 acres of improved land.

The table on cash value of farms shows that the sugar planters held the overwhelming majority of valuable lands in the

parish. Thirty-four per cent of the farms were worth less than $4,000 each. The least valuable one-third of the farms had only 1.5% of the land value in Iberville Parish. The plantations valued at more than $10,000 held ninety-six per cent of the land values.

The plantation system in Iberville, although based on a different staple, was similar to that of the cotton parishes along the Mississippi River. In both regions more than ninety per cent of the land values was owned by planters. The unpublished census records of Iberville's slave inhabitants are illegible, preventing any analysis of large slaveholdings. After considering the other aspects of the parish's economy, one can only surmise that the majority of the slaves were owned in large groups.

Table XXXIII

Statistics of Agriculture in East Baton Rouge Parish in 1860

Total Population	16,046	
Number of Slaves	3,570	
Improved Acreage		55,220
Unimproved Acreage (in farms)		127,401
Cash Value		$2,588,300
Value of Implements		$ 592,848
Value of Livestock		$ 470,525

Productions of Agriculture

Indian Corn (bu.)	395,350
Cotton (bales)	11,621
Sugar (hhd.)	5,477
Molasses (gal.)	412,680
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	53,635
Peas and Beans (bu.)	5,601
Value Animals Slaughtered	$ 47,382

Table XXXIV

Statistics of Agriculture in East Feliciana Parish in 1860

Total Population	14,697	
	10,593	
Improved Acreage		96,728
Unimproved Acreage (in farms)		124,316
Cash Value of Farms		$2,218,878
Value of Implements		$ 213,965
Value of Livestock		$ 592,073

Productions of Agriculture

Indian Corn (bu.)	358,769
Cotton (bales)	23,332
Sugar (hhd.)	1,013
Molasses (gal.)	61,800
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	97,810
Peas and Beans (bu.)	7,904
Value Animals Slaughtered	$ 50,410

Table XXXV

Distribution of Improved Land in East Baton Rouge Parish in 1860

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	154	41.6	6.0
50 - 199	123	33.2	24.0
200 - 499	70	18.8	38.3
500 - 999	16	4.6	18.8
1,000 and over	7	1.8	12.9
Totals	370	100%	100%

Table XXXVI

Distribution of Improved Land in East Feliciana Parish in 1860

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	15	5.0	.3
50 - 199	104	34.6	11.9
200 - 499	116	38.7	37.5
500 - 999	53	17.7	36.7
1,000 and over	12	4.0	13.6
Totals	300	100%	100%

Table XXXVII

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in East Baton Rouge Parish in 1860

Value Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
$999 or less	97	26.2	1.7
1,000 - 3,999	146	39.3	12.6
4,000 - 9,999	66	17.9	15.8
10,000 - 24,999	38	10.4	22.8
25,000 and over	23	6.2	47.1
Totals	370	100%	100%

Table XXXVIII

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in East Feliciana Parish in 1860

Value Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
$999 or less	18	5.9	.3
1,000 - 3,999	113	37.0	10.8
4,000 - 9,999	89	29.2	23.9
10,000 - 24,999	71	23.2	47.5
25,000 and over	14	4.7	17.5
Totals	305	100%	100%

The plantation system was not as flourishing in East Baton Rouge Parish as in other areas along the Mississippi River. East Baton Rouge was too far south for a cotton production matching that of Concordia or Rapides. Neither had the parish developed a sugar industry to compare with those areas on the west side of the river. Although there were many plantations, they did not account for all the good land. Thirty-one per cent of the improved land was in units of more than 500 acres. Of the 370 units listed in the census, approximately 75% had less than 200 acres of improved land.

The table on cash values shows the prevalence in East Baton Rouge of the small and medium-sized farms. Slightly over sixty-five per cent of the farms in the parish were valued at less than $4,000 each. Seventy per cent of the land value was in plantations worth more than $10,000. This figure shows that there were many valuable sugar and cotton plantations in East Baton Rouge. Nevertheless, the percentage is considerably below the same index in Concordia, Iberville, or Rapides.

The census statistics of cotton, sugar, and subsistence items reveal the moderate influence of the plantations. Only eight of the 270 cotton growing units had a crop larger than 200 bales. In East Baton Rouge the most valuable plantations were devoted to manufacturing the parish's 5,477 hogsheads of sugar.

The population of East Baton Rouge Parish needs some explanation. Baton Rouge, one of the few towns of any size, claimed 5,428 inhabitants; 1,247 were slaves. This left approximately 10,00 people in the country, about 6,300 being Negro slaves.

East Feliciana was almost a duplicate of East Baton Rouge, except in the sugar industry. The population, slaves, concentration of land, and total cash value were almost the same. East Baton Rouge, however, had a much larger sugar crop, which meant a greater value per acre, more farm equipment, and more concentration of land value in the largest plantations.

The figures on improved land and cash value show that there were only fourteen plantations in East Feliciana valued at more than

$25,000. The units worth more than $10,000 accounted for, collectively, sixty-five per cent of the land value in the parish. This figure is very close to that of East Baton Rouge.

Table XXXX

Distribution of Cotton Production in East Baton Rouge Parish in 1860

Bales Produced Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Produced by Class
39 or less	185	68.5	27.1
40 - 99	50	18.6	25.7
100 - 199	27	10.0	29.5
200 and over	8	2.9	17.7
Totals	270	100%	100%

Table XL

Distribution of Cotton Production in East Feliciana Parish in 1860

Bales Produced Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Produced by Class
39 or less	108	36.9	8.8
40 - 99	100	34.3	28.1
100 - 199	61	20.9	36.8
200 and over	23	7.9	26.3
Totals	292	100%	100%

Cotton planters did not control the production of that staple in either East Baton Rouge or East Feliciana. In East Feliciana, which had about twice the cotton crop of East Baton Rouge, there were eighty-four cotton plantations with crops of more than one hundred bales. There were only thirty-five such plantations in East Baton Rouge. In neither parish, however, did the percentage of cotton production in large amounts approach that of Concordia or

Madison. Along the lower part of the Mississippi River there were enough cotton producing farms to account for a healthy proportion of the total crop.

Slaveholding in these two parishes reflects the moderate influence of the planters. Slightly more than 6,000 of East Baton Rouge's slaves lived in the farming sections of the parish. Twenty-one planters owned between fifty and one hundred; only six slave-owners had more than one hundred. In East Feliciana, which had a cotton crop much greater than that of East Baton Rouge, there were 10,593 slaves. Thirty-two slave groups were more than fifty and less than one hundred. Eleven cotton planters had more than one hundred slaves.

The last two parishes selected for this study are Terrebonne and Plaquemine, each of which is in the extreme southern part of the state. Here the numerous bayous and rivers crisscross the land while carrying water into the Gulf of Mexico. Sugar cane was the staple of the planters in this area, as cotton would not grow in the hot, moist climate. In these two southern parishes there were many farmers who owned small tracts of land and had limited production. There were also planters with broad land holdings who owned most of the valuable land along the water-ways.

Table XLI

Statistics of Agriculture in Terrebonne Parish in 1860

Total Population	12,091	
Number of Slaves	6,785	
Improved Acreage		38,816
Unimproved Acreage (in farms)		158,806
Cash Value of Farms		$7,166,390
Value of Implements		$ 946,733
Value of Livestock		$ 587,124

Productions of Agriculture

Indian Corn (bu.)	404,853
Sugar (hhd.)	17,022
Molasses (gal.)	1,210,603
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	48,800
Value Animals Slaughtered	$ 11,622

Table XLII

Statistics of Agriculture in Plaquemine Parish in 1860

Total Population	8,494	
Number of Slaves	5,385	
Improved Acreage		28,975
Unimproved Acreage (in farms)		61,469
Cash Value of Farms		$2,791,300
Value of Implements		161,000
Value of Livestock		$ 572,640

Productions of Agriculture

Indian Corn (bu.)	657,850
Rice (lb.)	4,635,500
Sugar (hhd.)	12,607
Molasses (gal.)	819,600

Table XLIII

Distribution of Improved Land in Terrebonne Parish in 1860

Size of Units in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	223	69.3	12.6
50 - 199	37	11.5	10.4
200 - 499	40	12.4	31.6
500 - 999	17	5.3	28.7
1,000 and over	5	1.5	16.7
Totals	322	100%	100%

Table XLIV

Distribution of Improved Land in Plaquemine Parish in 1860

Size of Units in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	76	52.1	6.2
50 - 199	34	23.3	12.9
200 - 499	14	9.6	16.1
500 - 000	19	13.0	46.6
1,000 and over	3	2.0	17.2
Totals	146	100%	100%

Table XLV

Distribution of Cash Value of Land in Terrebonne Parish in 1860

Value Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
$999 or less	54	17.0	.4
1,000 - 3,999	134	42.3	4.6
4,000 - 9,999	37	11.7	3.5
10,000 - 24,999	26	8.2	6.2
25,000 and over	66	20.8	85.3
Totals	317	100%	100%

Table XLVI

Distribution of Cash Value of Land in Plaquemine Parish in 1860

Value Per Unit	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
$999 or less	3	2.0	.1
1,000 - 3,999	59	40.4	5.5
4,000 - 9,999	33	22.6	8.3
10,000 - 24,999	15	10.3	9.6
25,000 and over	36	24.7	77.5
Totals	146	100%	100%

In Terrebonne Parish there were few plantations with large acreage. Of the 322 farming units listed in the 1860 census, only twenty-two had more than 500 acres of improved land. Despite the

relatively small size of the plantation in this area, many were evaluated at large sums of money. There were ninety-two units in the $10,000 and above group. These valuable units, twenty-nine per cent of the total, were worth ninety-one per cent of the improved land in Terrebonne. The least valuable fifty-nine per cent of the farms held only five per cent of the parish's improved land. The situation in Plaquemine was a replica of that in Terrebonne. Plaquemine extended from south of New Orleans to the Gulf of Mexico. The swampy land of the delta made it necessary for the people to live near the river. The land was extremely fertile, but was so limited in amount that it could support only a small number of people. The nature of the soil and climate meant that the farmers in Plaquemine would have to gain their livelihood from crops suited to the region. Rice would grow quite well in the heavily watered parish. This provided a staple not grown in most areas of the state. Forty-four farmers grew rice in 1860, with some producing a quarter of a million pounds.

There were valuable plantations where the land was approachable and cultivable. The twenty-two plantations with more than 500 acres of land held sixty-three per cent of the improved acreage. Thirty-six plantations, worth more than $25,000, held 77.5% of the land value in the parish.

In Plaquemine Parish there was only one owner of more than fifty slaves and no slaveholder had more than one hundred. Terrebonne, which had a much greater land value and sugar production than

Plaquemine, had more large-scale slave owners. There were fifteen slaveholders in the 50-99 bracket; six owned one hundred or more.

Some generalizations concerning Louisiana's rural economy should, by now, be obvious. The importance of the state's rivers and bayous was tremendous. The principal streams of water provided fertile land and, since there were few highways, transportation to New Orleans. Planters, with slaves to cultivate the soil, owned most of the good land along the waterways. Farmers, who could not acquire the capital necessary for large-scale operations, were forced to get along as best they could in areas where the soil was thin and production meager. From this had developed two distinct forms of rural life. A heavy concentration of Negroes, with few whites present, was characteristic of the plantation areas. The white people who owned land in these regions were wealthy, at least in land, and were politically important. There were thousands of farming families where the land was poor and transportation difficult; few expensive slaves dwelled in these sections.

The Eighth Census provides some important information concerning the amount and distribution of Louisiana's population. There were 357,629 whites, 18,647 free Negroes, and 331,726 slaves living in the state on the eve of the Civil War. In New Orleans there were 149,063 whites, 10,939 free Negroes, and 14,484 slaves. The statistics of the Crescent City's population show that rural Louisiana was predominantly Negro. Outside of New Orleans there were 208,566 white people and 317,242 slaves. These figures indicate

how important the race problem was in rural Louisiana.[15]

There is an important relationship among the figures on slave ownership, concentration of land values in the hands of the planters, and white population. In areas where the land was productive and near an important river there were few whites and many Negroes. In these valuable parts of the state the small-scale farmers owned only a tiny fraction of the land. The planting parishes along the Mississippi River bear out this generalization. The parishes of Carroll, Madison, Tensas, Concordia, Point Coupee, West Feliciana, West Baton Rouge, Iberville, St. Charles, and St. Mary were important plantation centers. In these parishes there were 109,252 slaves and only 24,630 whites.[16] The broad picture of Louisiana's plantation and slave concentration was duplicated on a small scale in the individual parishes. In Rapides, for example, the Red River Valley was the center of agricultural wealth and slaves. Out of this valley there were hundreds of farming families who farmed the poor land without the help of Negroes.

Louisiana had become by 1860 a land dominated by wealthy planters and their associates, the merchants and lawyers. They controlled and owned the sources of wealth as well as the channels of trade. They were the wellsprings of political power. Their voices were heard in the halls of the legislature. Hands controlled by them penned the opinions published in the newspapers. Thousands of

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[15] Eighth Census, Population of the United States in 1860, 192-93.

[16] Ibid.

farmers and laborers accepted their commands. There was nothing else for the poor to do because they had no desire to foster a revolution which might mean the elevation of the Negro from the status of a slave to the level of a free man.

Federal power swept into this land of the planters in the spring of 1862 and stayed for fifteen years. The history of those trying years is the story of a people who tried to re-create their lives and their land so that everything would be, as nearly as possible, as it was before the war.

CHAPTER III

GOVERNMENT BY GENERALS

To avoid interfering with the regular government, the convention which had passed the Ordinance of Secession moved to New Orleans. After the transfer was completed, the first important problem taken up was the relationship between Louisiana and the other seceded states. John Perkins, Jr., one of the leading figures in the secession crisis, wanted a delegation to go to Montgomery, Alabama, where plans were being made for the organization of a Southern Confederacy. The convention sent Perkins and five other men to Montgomery, instructing them to help form a provisional government based on the United States Constitution, the document which they had cast aside only a few days before.[1]

The convention had to find new ways for administering the existing departments of the state's government. Because of fears that an anarchic condition might develop, the delegates decided that there would be no change in Federal civil officers or national laws except when absolutely necessary. The convention determined that if any United States official refused to take an oath of allegiance to Louisiana, he would be removed from his office and all property in his official custody would be seized. The decision to seize Federal property resulted in an immediate windfall for the state. The

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[1] Bragg, Louisiana in the Confederacy, 39.

subtreasurer's office in the mint yielded almost one-half million dollars in gold and silver.[2]

During the weeks following the transfer to New Orleans, the convention selected a flag, provided rules for Louisiana citizenship, established systems for transferring Federal suits to Louisiana courts, and appropriated all public land for the state.[3] A short-lived crisis arose when the Confederate Constitution arrived from Montgomery. Some of the Co-operationists believed that this was their last chance to change the minds of the Secessionists or, at least, make them appeal to the people. J. A. Rozier, from Orleans Parish, wanted another convention to be elected. He maintained that the existing organizations had acted hastily and did not represent the views of the majority of the people in the state. Christian Roselius, one of the state's most eminent attorneys, thought that the document brought from Montgomery was oligarchical. He objected to the fact that the men who had written it had been appointed by conventions similar to Louisiana's and were not directly responsible to the people of their respective states. Roselius, Rozier, and their followers were as ineffective as they had been in Baton Rouge only a few weeks before. The convention adopted the Confederate Constitution by a vote of 101 to 7.[4]

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[2] Ibid., 40.

[3] Ibid., 41-44.

[4] Ibid., 44-45.

One of the last official acts of the convention was the creation of a state army. Richard Taylor, son of former president Zachary Taylor, was one of the leaders who insisted on an armed force strong enough to repel invasion. The convention decided to allow men to enlist for a four month tour of duty under the state commander, Braxton Bragg. Louisiana became a member of the Confederate States of America before an army could be fully organized. After Louisiana became a part of the Confederacy, the state's military units became a part of the military establishment of the Confederacy.[5]

Throughout the state, men were forming military companies weeks before secession. In February of 1861, the Military Board, a political bureau which directed the state's preparation for war, was supplying twenty-eight companies with a total strength of 1,765 men. This number did not include companies and regiments which were being formed and outfitted without state aid.[6] Soon after Fort Sumter was fired upon, President Jefferson Davis asked Louisiana to furnish 5,000 trained and equipped men.[7] This was only the beginning of a terrible drain on Louisiana's manpower.

The Louisiana soldiers departing for the Virginia front were sped on their way by friends, relatives, and men of the cloth. The various churches held special sessions immediately prior to a

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[5] Kendall, History of New Orleans, 236-37.

[6] Bragg, Louisiana in the Confederacy, 54.

[7] Kendall, History of New Orleans, 238-39.

company's departure. Reverend Palmer told the Washington Artillery that "history reads to us of wars which have been baptized as holy; but she enters upon her records none which is holier than this in which you have embarked."[8] Albert D. Richardson, a clandestine correspondent for a New York newspaper, felt that Palmer expressed the wildest of radical views. "The pulpit as usual," he reported, "made obeisance to the pews, and the pews beamed encouragement to the pulpit."[9]

The New Orleanians did not allow secession and threat of war to affect their Gallic joie de vivre. The gay winter and spring social season was only interrupted, even at times highlighted, by the departure of military units for Virginia. The local impresarios offered Lucia de Lammermoor, Martha, Barbier de Seville, Il Trovatore, and other less well-known operas to the patrons of serious music.[10] Adelina Patti, one of the foremost artists of the mid-nineteenth century, was the darling of Gallier's elaborate new opera house. Blind Tom, a phenomenal blind Negro boy who could reproduce any sound or combination of sounds; Dan Rice's popular variety shows; and the Metarie Jockey Club provided entertainment and relaxation for thousands of people in the Crescent City. In the spring of 1861, the world famous Mardi Gras was celebrated with all of its traditional color and

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[8] Ibid., 239.

[9] Albert D. Richardson, The Secret Service, the Field, the Dungeon, and the Escape (Hartford, 1865), 49.

[10] John David Winters, Jr., "Confederate New Orleans, 1861-62," Unpublished Masters' Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1947, 10.

reckless abandon.[11]

Few people in Louisiana thought that war would affect their daily lives, even though soldiers were streaming out of the state to meet the expected invasion of Virginia. In the latter part of May, 1861, there was a sudden awakening. A United States naval vessel, the Brooklyn, appeared at the mouth of the Mississippi River. The appearance of the Brooklyn began a blockade which was to cause serious economic dislocations. A few planters, expecting such a logical move by the Federal Government, had planted unusually large corn crops so that they would have food for their slaves and livestock. These farsighted men were all too few in number. Thousands of farmers and planters, who had depended upon the Mississippi River to bring them necessities from faraway places, found that their artery of trade was now only a winding ribbon of water.[12]

Federal blockade, begun so soon after the outbreak of war, slowly strangled the economic life of one of America's most important commercial cities. Scattered throughout the lower Mississippi area were people in villages, farms, and plantations who depended upon the New Orleans merchants to provide them with the necessities of life which they did not produce. The value of the lower Mississippi became more apparent when secession and war halted the flow of goods from such centers as St. Louis and Cincinnati. The city of New Orleans had reached the peak of its ante-bellum prosperity in the years

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[11] Kendall, History of New Orleans, 240ff.

[12] Bragg, Louisiana in the Confederacy, 73.

immediately preceding the war. During the busy season, one could see endless rows of ships lined up at the docks. While ships already anchored were disgorging their wealth, other crafts would frequently be five or six deep in the river while they waited their turn. Cotton, sugar, and hundreds of other items were often piled high on the docks when the bulging warehouses would hold no more. During the spring of 1861, the Crescent City handled almost half a million hogsheads of sugar, a million barrels of molasses, 600,000 bales of cotton, and numerous other items sent down the river from all points in the Mississippi Valley.[13]

The state's financial prosperity was reflected in the condition of the New Orleans banks. In March of 1861, the Crescent City's financial institutions held $17,636,356 in specie, $22,751,000 in deposits, and controlled a circulation of more than $3,000,000.[14] The Bank of the State of Louisiana had the largest specie reserve of any bank in the United States, more than $4,000,000. Louisiana's banks had a ratio of $54.46 in specie to each $100 of notes in circulation. This ratio was ten times that of Illinois and more than twice that of such commercial states as New York and Massachusetts.[15] The bankers, for a few months after secession, insisted that all transactions be on a specie basis because they were afraid of Confederate money. Governor Moore forced the banks to accept all Confederate notes because of the pressure of public opinion and the insistence of the

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[13] Kendall, History of New Orleans, 241.

[14] Stephen A. Caldwell, A Banking History of Louisiana (Baton Rouge, 1935), 90.

[15] Alcee Fortier (ed.), Louisiana (Atlanta, 1909), I, 66.

Confederate Government. The banks stopped paying out specie a few days after Moore's order went into effect. Soon Confederate notes and city scrip were flooding the city. The people would not spend their specie or the notes of the New Orleans banks. In the spring of 1862, when invasion was imminent, the banks sent $4,000,000 in specie to the Confederate Government in Richmond.[16]

New Orleans had been for years a gigantic funnel through which poured the produce from farms and plantations in the Mississippi Valley. Merchants and their agents, in the busy seasons, scurried around the waterfront or thronged Carondelet Street as they went about their business of selling sugar and cotton or purchasing the goods brought from New England or Europe. As there was no real commercial exchange, the numerous saloons and cafes became informal and, at times, ribald trading marts. There the commercial people, so indispensible to the plantation system, could complete a business deal or relax at the end of a day. Some of the South's busiest and most colorful slave markets were located in the Crescent City. At the twenty-odd auction blocks, encanteurs kept the price of slaves going higher and higher to keep pace with the money which flowed into the city. Slave property was not restricted to members of the white race. Some of New Orleans' more affluent free Negroes, the cordons bleu, owned slaves. The Daily Delta interpreted accurately the attitudes of the more fortunate Negroes when it asserted that the "free colored population of Louisiana . . . who own slaves . . . are ready to shed their blood for her defense. They have no sympathy for abolitionism,

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[16] Caldwell, A Banking History of Louisiana, 90-91.

no love for the North but they have plenty for Louisiana."[17] Free Negroes organized a "Native Guard" in April of 1861. By the spring of 1862 there were 3,000 members of this autonomous organization. The Confederate officials refused to accept their services, whereupon Governor Moore asked them to stand by in case the city was invaded.[18]

The bustling trade and prosperous merchants were only one part of New Orleans' ante-bellum life. Scattered throughout the city, in the American section as well as the French, were the miserable hovels to which the thousands of free laborers crept after a day on the docks or on the streets. Most of the free Negroes lived in one-story huts in dark and muddy alleys, far removed in space and spirit from their wealthier kinsmen, the cordons bleu. The owners of the filthy shacks, in which lived the majority of free workers, both black and white, made no repairs on their property because they did not need to; the occupants had no other place to go. Poverty, ignorance, and disease strode hand-in-hand through the city. The scourge of yellow fever killed thousands of people in the late summer and fall of each year; fifty thousand died of the disease during the twenty years preceding the war. Property owners, who could afford to leave the city during the pestilential epidemics, would not provide the tax funds necessary for cleaning the malodorous streets, privies, and sewers. Newspapers, shopkeepers, and

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[17] New Orleans Daily Delta, December 28, 1860.

[18] Kendall, History of New Orleans, 240ff.

hotel owners conspired to play down the ravages of yellow fever, lest the news affect the city's prosperity. When forced to admit the presence of the dread disease, they placed the blame on immigrants. The truth of the matter was that native Americans were the most frequent yellow fever victims in New Orleans.[19]

General David E. Twiggs, the commander of New Orleans and vicinity, rightly believed that the Federal Government would send a major expedition into the area of his command. Twiggs and his successor, General Mansfield Lovell, made the best preparations they could with the limited funds made available by the New Orleans aldermen.[20] The possibility of invasion, however, was of secondary importance in the summer and fall of 1861. The immediate problem was the disastrous effect the Federal blockade was having on Louisiana's unbalanced agricultural economy. In the Sugar Bowl, in the cotton areas, and in the piney-woods, the people were in the habit of buying goods shipped through New Orleans. William H. Russell, a navy-conscious Englishman, warned the scoffing Louisianians that a blockade was nothing to be sneered at. Before many weeks had passed, a number of sugar barons were ready to agree with him. A. Franklin Pugh, one of the wealthiest planters in the sugar region, noted in his diary that he had never seen so many people in New Orleans. Sugar and molasses were selling at ridiculously low prices,

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[19] Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 53ff.

[20] Winters, "Confederate New Orleans, 1861-62", 117-18.

he complained, and everything he wanted to buy was high.[21] Pugh decided that he must have enough provisions for his slaves and livestock, even if it became necessary to devote all of his broad acres to corn and other foodstuffs.[22]

A squadron of Confederate ships sailed down the river and dispersed the Federal vessels, but the victory was only temporary. The Federal ships returned in greater numbers and established a more effective control over the exits to the Gulf.[23] By November, the New Orleans markets were depleted of bare necessities. Soap advanced to a dollar a bar, and coffee was $1.25 a pound when it was available.[24] One newspaper suggested that sweet potatoes be dried, ground, and used as coffee, but that could never replace New Orleans' fragrant brew.[25] The collapse of trade meant the loss of jobs for many of the workingmen in the city. Forced to choose among starving, begging, or fighting, many decided to enlist in the Confederate States Army. Soon families throughout the city had lost their means of support to either the army or the blockade. In July, the city authorities established a free market in order to provide food for people in need of relief. The city government, aided by nearby planters who sent what they could spare, was soon handling approxi-

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[21] Roland, "Louisiana Sugar Plantations During the Civil War," n.p.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Winters, "Confederate New Orleans, 1861-62," 119.

[24] Bragg, Louisiana in the Confederacy, 75-76.

[25] New Orleans Daily Crescent, October 2, 1861.

mately 2,000 families whose visits to the free market was their sole means of support.[26] The city markets began to suffer from the lack of small change immediately after the banks suspended specie payment. The city council issued small denomination checks which circulated at par value for a while, but soon were discounted. The city authorities had to pass stringent rules concerning the acceptance of small notes because of the market people's resistance to "shinplasters". Business houses emitted notes and certificates which were frequently accepted, but the most widely used items of small change were streetcar tokens.[27]

The disparate supply and demand in foodstuffs and the lack of effective governmental control constituted an open invitation to speculation. At first, speculators traded only in such scarce items as coffee or salt. The Crescent reported in November that ten dollars was the speculator's price for a sack of salt.[28] Some people, possessing more capital than integrity, went through the countryside buying provisions which were needed in New Orleans. An Alexandria editor became furious when he found out that "sharpers and shylocks" from the city had purchased large quantities of goods from the local merchants.[29] During the fall of the year, the most remote parishes began to suffer from the gradual dwindling of provisions which they ordinarily imported. Some of the north Louisiana

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[26] Kendall, History of New Orleans, 242ff. See also Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 171.

[27] Kendall, History of New Orleans, 241-42.

[28] New Orleans Daily Crescent, November 6, 1861.

[29] Cited in Bragg, Louisiana in the Confederacy, 75.

parishes were overstocked with meat and grain. The disruption of the transportation system meant that they could not receive what they needed from New Olreans and that the people in the city would have to do without the foodstuffs stored in the northern parts of the state.

The Louisiana planters had some mystical faith that "King Cotton" would come to their rescue. They reasoned that the withdrawal of cotton from the world markets would force England, and perhaps other European countries, to rescue the South in order to prevent the destruction of their own valuable textile industries. New Orleans factors, in the summer of 1861, asked planters not to ship cotton down the river until the blockade was lifted. Governor Moore, backed by General Twiggs, ordered that none of the fleecy staple be sent to New Orleans or vicinity. During September, October, and November of 1861, the amount of cotton received in New Orleans was far smaller than for the comparable period of 1860.[30]

Louisiana's authorities worried more about their weak military position than about the loss of trade or the disruption of the economy. Former Senator Judah P. Benjamin, reflecting the ideas of the Confederate Government, told the local military and civil leaders that they were unduly concerned.[31] General Lovell, who assumed command of the lower Mississippi in October, tried to build

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[30] Ibid., 76ff.

[31] Ibid., 98.

adequate defenses with no help from Richmond. He asked for large guns and naval vessels, but the Confederate authorities did not listen to his requests. As a result, the defense of New Orleans was concentrated at Forts Jackson and St. Philip, on opposite sides of the Mississippi River about seventy-five miles below the city. Lovell increased the garrisons and armaments of the position, but he realized that they could have only nuisance value in case of a powerful and determined assault. The New Orleans municipal leaders provided funds for throwing a cypress log barricade, held together by chains, across the river. This obstacle was washed away by high water before the Federal vessels appeared. The largest city in the Confederacy was defended by only 1,500 men in the forts and 3,000 with Lovell in the city itself.[32] Lest the populace become unduly alarmed, the Daily Delta reported that the "defenses [are] in good hands . . . equal to the emergency."[33]

Washington, evidently, was more interested in capturing New Orleans than Richmond was concerned about defending it. Control of the entire length of the Mississippi was part of the Federal plan of surrounding and crushing the Confederacy. In the early months of 1862, an army under the command of Major General Benjamin F. Butler used Ship Island, in Mississippi Sound, as a base preparatory to an attack on New Orleans. Butler, believing that the city's defenses could offer little more than token resistance, was ready to move by

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[32] Ibid., 99-100.

[33] New Orleans Daily Delta, April 8, 1862.

the middle of April.[34] The plan of attack was quite simple. David Porter and David G. Farragut, commanding the naval support, moved their gun- and mortar-boats into position near the forts and for forty-eight hours poured shells into the weakly defended positions. Porter estimated that 1,800 shells fell into the works proper, making them a total wreck.[35] Should the bombardment prove inadequate, Butler's soldiers, protected, of course, by the naval guns, were to land in surf boats and storm the places.[36] The projected land assault was unnecessary. On the morning of April 24, Farragut took twelve ships past the forts and started for New Orleans. Butler remained on the scene to reduce the forts and accept the surrender of the garrisons.[37] Two hundred fifty men at Fort Jackson spiked their guns and offered to surrender; the following day, April 28, witnessed the capitulation of the entire military installation.

In New Orleans, the feeling of apprehension turned into panic when the news of Farragut's feat became known. The immediate reaction of fear and indignation was followed by a frantic desire to prevent the Federal soldiers from capturing anything that might be of value to them. Sailors on the United States vessels could see, as they approached New Orleans, hundreds of bales of cotton blazing

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[34] Private and Official Correspondence of General Benjamin F. Butler During the Period of the Civil War (Norwood, Mass., 1917), I, 337. This work will be hereafter cited as Butler Correspondence.

[35] David G. Porter to Gideon Wells, Butler Correspondence, I, 429.

[36] General Butler to Mrs. Butler, Ibid., I, 422. The general told his wife that Farragut was hasty in going to New Orleans. Butler felt that the naval officers were thirsty for glory.

[37] Butler to George F. Shepley, April 26, 1862, Ibid., I, 423.

away along the docks. Hogsheads of sugar and barrels of molasses were spilled wherever they were found, filling the gutters in the warehouse district with a brown syrupy liquid. While the destruction was going on, thousands of men and women were fighting among themselves, trying to get the sugar or molasses or meat which had been destined for the flames.[38]

Rational citizens realized that resistance would be folly. Mayor John T. Monroe, fearing that hotheads might create a disastrous incident, put General Paul Juge Fils in charge of 450 volunteers who would be responsible for public order.[39] The newspapers explained the situation and warned the public to be quiet and orderly. Monroe, in a proclamation, requested the citizens to display "that silence, more eloquent than words, which befits so solemn an occasion."[40] There was no alternative to peaceful surrender. General Lovell removed his troops from the city because he knew his men would be wasted if ordered into combat with the vastly superior Federal army and navy. Lovell had lost his effective force when all of the Confederate soldiers in New Orleans, save about 3,000, were ordered to join General P. G. T. Beauregard at Corinth, Mississippi.[41]

General Butler, with a total of about 15,000 men, assumed

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[38] Bragg, Louisiana in the Confederacy, 103-104. See also Herbert Asbury, The French Quarter (New York, 1938), 224.

[39] New Orleans Daily Delta, May 1, 1862.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Bragg, Louisiana in the Confederacy, 104.

command of New Orleans on May 1, 1862. He immediately issued a proclamation to the people which instructed all persons in arms against the United States to surrender themselves and their equipment. The European Legion, which was a police auxiliary and not a military unit, was specifically excluded. Butler allowed shops, theaters, and churches to go about their business, but ordered all public houses and drinking saloons to secure licenses from the occupation authorities. He forbade the circulation of Confederate bonds, but allowed Confederate banknotes to be used temporarily because they were necessary for the economic life of the city. Newspapers were to be strictly censored and were not to criticize the occupation or any branch of the Government of the United States.[42]

Butler's first cause celebre was that of William B. Mumford. While negotiations were going on between Farragut and the city officials, some of the sailors raised the United States flag over the mint. The next day, April 27, Mumford climbed out on the rooftop of the building and pulled it down. James Parton, Butler's biographer and apologist, says that Mumford was a professional gambler who bragged of his exploit and stoutly denied that the Federal officers would ever touch him.[43] About two weeks after the incident, Mumford was arrested, tried for treason, convicted, and sentenced to be hanged. The New Orleans city council decided not to petition for

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[42] Butler Correspondence, I, 433-435.

[43] James Parton, General Butler in New Orleans (New York, 1864), 346.

his pardon because they believed that Butler would not go through with the execution. The general stated later that he was inclined to spare Mumford, but was convinced that if he did the city would be threatened by the arrogance of thugs and gamblers.[44] Butler preferred hanging Mumford to firing grapeshot into an aroused and confident mob. Thousands of people witnessed the execution; there were no incidents. The trial and hanging of Mumford was only one of many acts by General Butler which made his name hated and reviled in Louisiana and the South.[45]

The Federal troops seem to have been normal American soldiers. While still on Ship Island, Butler had been forced to issue a general order forbidding the use ofintoxicating beverages.[46] Just before entering New Orleans, he warned his men that they were entering a great pleasure-loving metropolis, and that they should beware of all "temptations and inducements."[47] The general, less than a week after his arrival, warned his men of the "lewd women parading our principal thoroughfares." What especially worried him was the fact that many of his officers were seen escorting the "disreputable characters" in public.[48] Not all of the New Orleans women welcomed the conquerors with open arms. Confederate ladies would often feign nausea when near the Federal troops, lift their

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[44] Bragg, Louisiana in the Confederacy, 106-107.

[45] New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 8, 1862.

[46] Butler Correspondence, I, 385.

[47] Ibid., 432.

[48] New Orleans Daily Delta, May 6, 1862.

skirts to avoid contact with the "unclean" Yankees, or play Confederate music when the Federals marched by.

Butler issued his famous "Woman Order" because of repeated insults to the occupation officers and men.[49] If the order was to be enforced literally, it meant that if any Northern soldier charged a New Orleans woman with insulting manners, she could be, upon conviction, fined for being a common prostitute, a profession which was illegal, but not unpopular, in New Orleans. Few acts committed during the Civil War met with such widespread denunciation. Butler rationalized his order by explaining that a woman who would insult a person to whom she was a perfect stranger was, by definition, a common woman and should be treated as one. Mayor Monroe protested so violently against the insult to the women of the city that Butler incarcerated him along with his secretary and the chief of police.[50] After Monroe had been sent to Fort Jackson, Butler ordered Brigadier General George F. Shepley to assume military command of the city until a loyal mayor could be elected.

The Daily Delta commented, on the day following Butler's arrival, that the general was a States' Rights Democrat of the Jefferson and Jackson school.[51] The people of New Orleans soon found out that he had changed. He left control of routine administrative matters in the hands of local men, but retained for himself all power over policy and public opinion.[52] As commander of the Department of

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[49] Ibid, May 16, 1862.

[50] Bragg, Louisiana in the Confederacy, 109.

[51] New Orleans Daily Delta, May 2, 1862.

[52] Ibid., May 4, 1862.

the Gulf, Butler was responsible for the success of the Federal occupation of the lower Mississippi area. No one was more impressed with the rank and the authority than Butler himself. One of his first acts, aimed at removing opposition, was to arrest Pierre Soule, who had become an ardent Confederate when the war actually started. Soule, Butler claimed, was the leader of the Southern Independence Association, whose members had sworn to oppose occupation and reorganization. Butler also suspected Soule of having been the author of some insulting letters sent to Farragut by Mayor Monroe.[53] The commander did not ignore the press when he started to stamp out any semblance of resistance. The Daily True Delta, which had been an opponent of secession only a year before, refused to publish Butler's initial pronunciamento. The general suspended the paper immediately. The following day, however, the paper resumed publication under strict surveilance.[54] Butler selected a printer from his own troops to work at the newspaper office, insuring, thereby, compliance with official directives.[55] Newspapers did not criticize the occupation or the United States Government, nor did they make any comments on the Confederacy while General Butler was in New Orleans. A few weeks after the True Delta episode, Butler suspended the Bee and the Daily Delta for approving the actions of the cotton burning mobs. The Delta became one of the journals of the occupying forces, and the Bee resumed work after apologizing for its

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[53] Butler Correspondence, I, 431-32.

[54] Ibid., 440.

[55] New Orleans Daily Delta, May 3, 1862.

editorial.[56] These incidents were the beginning of a running feud between Butler and the quasi-independent press. Frequently, Butler would suppress a newspaper, only to allow it to resume publication after it apologized for offenses.

The Citizens' Bank of New Orleans owed a large sum of money to Hope and Company of Amsterdam, Holland. When it became obvious that the city would surrender, the local bank paid the debt to the Company's agent in New Orleans. This, the directors of the bank assumed, would remove the debt and, without moving the specie out of the city, place it where the Federal commander could not sequester it. They did not understand Butler's abrupt methods. The money, $800,000 in specie, was located in a liquor store. Butler immediately seized it on the grounds that the bank paid the debt only to keep the money out of Federal hands and was, therefore, acting in bad faith.[57] The people of New Orleans, who had their own financial worries, did not concern themselves with the financial squabble involving Butler and the governments of Holland and the United States.

Butler, upon his arrival, stopped all dealing in Confederate bonds, scrip, and evidences of debt. He modified his directives when it became apparent that continued restriction would have a disastrous effect upon the populace.[58] Counterfeit money, which was in evidence before the fall of the city, was only one of many currency problems.[59]

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[56] New Orleans Daily Picayune, May 26, 1862. See also Butler Correspondence, I, 442ff.

[57] Butler Correspondence, I, 490.

[58] Caldwell, Banking History of Louisiana, 92-93.

[59] New Orleans Daily Delta, May 1, 1862.

On May 1, the day Butler assumed command, Mayor Monroe told the people that they could exchange Confederate notes for city bills by applying to the Committee of Public Safety.[60] A number of individuals and companies began to print currency, backed only by public confidence, because of the demand for money which would not be tainted by association with the Confederacy. The H. Fassman Company, for example, issued several thousand dollars worth of small notes, backed by the firm's real estate.[61] This situation led to confusion because some companies were retiring notes while others were issuing new ones. Because of the intolerable currency condition, as well as uncertainty for the future, the city's banks stopped accepting deposits.[62] This meant that all monetary transactions would have to be settled in the markets and on the streets. One newspaper demanded that all bills be withdrawn and a new start made because there were so many kinds of small denomination bills.[63]

The currency was in such a state that Butler felt impelled to take action. General Order Number 30, dated May 21, 1862, directed that no more Confederate notes be paid by banks to creditors or depositors. Instead, all money dispersed by banks must be bank bills, United States Treasury notes, or specie. Moreover, all persons and firms with outstanding shinplasters were directed to redeem them in

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., May 3, 1862.

[62] Ibid., May 4, 1862.

[63] Ibid., May 7, 1862.

specie, United States notes, or city notes.[64] The directive had little effect. For a couple of days there were runs on the city treasurer by people trying to rid themselves of worthless money. The city treasurer and the banks would accept the notes of only a few stipulated concerns, but most of the people realized that these notes were good. They were trying to exchange those of doubtful value.[65] By the middle of summer, the people were using as currency little tickets with the phrases "good for one show", or "good for one drink" printed on them. Their value was the standard price for a drink or a show.[66] All of this confusion resulted in the hoarding of specie. The condition offered unparalleled opportunities to clever criminals. One man, after putting up some security, received permission from the city to issue shinplasters. He printed, and then sold, tens of thousands of dollars more than the value of his deposit before leaving the city.[67]

There was little of an arbitrary nature that could be done to ease the situation so long as New Orleans was isolated from her former sources of trade. General Butler realized that measures should be taken to resurrect the trade which had been destroyed by blockade and invasion. Butler, realizing that the Federal position would be strengthened if planters in the interior sent their produce

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[64] New Orleans Daily Piacyune, May 21, 1862.

[65] Ibid., July 25, 1862.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid., July 1, 1862.

to New Orleans, sent out notices that he would guarantee the safe conduct of all shipments to the city. It was widely believed that the invasion of south Louisiana was aimed primarily at destroying or confiscating the valuable agricultural produce which had been withheld from New Orleans.[68] If Butler could persuade the people in the interior to send their cotton and sugar to New Orleans, he would aid the economy of the city and, he hoped, drive a wedge between the planters and the Confederate Government. Butler also wanted to re-open commerce between New Orleans and other ports. He wrote Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton that "no measure could tend more to change the entire feelings and relations of the people here than this."[69]

The Daily Delta made the existing situation an excuse for criticizing the agricultural habits of the people, especially the planters. It pointed out that many planters, expecting the war to be a short one, had planted extra cane and cotton. They had expected to buy their necessities with the increased profits. Now, the Delta proclaimed, the planters should see the necessities of concentrating on cereals, livestock, and other subsistence items. To do so, thought the editors, would not only bring less money and less extravagance, but also more industry, more self-reliance, and

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[68] Butler Correspondence, I, 443.

[69] Ibid., I, 492.

a greater variety of pursuits and employments.[70] These ideas, sound as they were, offered no immediate relief, nor was there any evidence that they would be heeded in the future.

On June 3, 1862, the newspapers informed the city that the Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase, had, with some restrictions, opened the port of New Orleans to world trade. Within a few days, mail which had been delayed for weeks was pouring into the city. Soon the markets were livelier, meat and vegetables were available, and prices began to drop. By the latter part of June, the Picayune was complaining that many vessels, waiting to come into port, were forced to delay their work because of the inadequate number of tow boats.[71]

General Butler, shortly after his arrival, issued a general order which provided for poor relief. Butler, who believed that the planter oligarchy had led the state into secession and war without consulting the people, wanted the distribution of food to serve as a wedge which would separate the economic classes of the city. The ruling classes in Louisiana had always been apprehensive of what might happen should the planter-merchant alliance lose control of the masses. It is no wonder, then, that Butler's proposal made Louisiana's Chief Executive seethe with indignation. Governor Moore, upon receipt of a copy of Butler's order, sent a proclamation to the city which said that "he [Butler] appeals to your selfishness, and

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[70] New Orleans Daily Delta, May 10, 1862.

[71] Ibid., June 24, 1862.

attempts to arouse the basic passions of your nature as though he were addressing Yankees . . . "[72] Butler, however, ignored the blast from Moore, and continued to give food to the needy and to put the unemployed to work on the city's dirty streets.

The Daily Picayune, agreeing with the general's plan to clean the city, asserted that the "gutters are filled with stagnating water, bearing on its surface a verdant [sic] scum."[73] Street cleaning, the Picayune asserted, would be a valuable contribution to the health of the people as well as a means of employing the idle laborers. General Butler had his own men do all the organizing and supervising of the laborers, because he did not trust the city administration. They were, he insisted, too habituated to administrative indolence.[74] General Shepley planned to employ 2,000 men at fifty cents a day plus a full day's ration. He would not hire a returned Confederate soldier unless the veteran took an oath of allegiance to the United States.[75] The small army of laborers, commanded by the occupation officers, soon had New Orleans in a cleaner condition than anyone then alive could remember. Butler's action in cleaning the city, coupled with his quarantine restrictions, resulted in stopping the yellow fever epidemics. The problem of public health had been simplified, however, by the decrease in the

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[72] Butler Correspondence, I, 58-59.

[73] New Orleans Daily Picayune, May 11, 1862.

[74] Butler Correspondence, I, 457.

[75] New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 6, 1862.

number of ships coming into New Orleans from distant places.[76] The Picayune, noticing the number of men picking up grass and paper from the sidewalks instead of doing the heavy work around the levees and wharves, voiced some objection against this type of activity.[77]

The poor relief and the cleaning work were a part of Butler's campaign to separate the New Orleans masses from their local economic and political leaders. General Order Number 55 stated that food and clothing for the poor should not be supplied by taxing the laborers because the working class had never voiced its opinion in the action which led the state out of the Union. The cost of relief, Butler maintained, should be borne by the individuals who had been the leaders in secession and who had contributed large sums of money to the ill-fated defenses of the city. He issued elaborate schedules which listed the names of individuals and business firms and how much they were to contribute to poor relief. The assessments, ranging from a few hundred dollars to $85,000, must be paid, or property of the delinquents would be seized and sold at auction.[78] The chief culprits, in Butler's opinion, were the business firms which had made large contributions to the Committee of Public Safety, and the factors who had advised the planters not to send their cotton to

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[76] John Rose Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana (through 1868) (Baltimore, 1910), 33-34.

[77] New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 24, 1862.

[78] The schedules and accompanying instructions were in the Daily Picayune, August 5, 1862.

New Orleans. The taxes for support of the poor were conceived as just retribution for those planters and merchants who had taken Louisiana out of the Union.

On July 17, 1862, the United States Congress passed legislation which provided for the seizure of property of several classes of Confederates who were "aiding, countenancing, or abetting the Rebellion."[79] The Federal law was a powerful weapon in the hands of Butler, who had already taken houses in New Orleans for his staff and had seized abandoned plantations in St. Bernard and Plaquemine parishes.[80] Butler published the provisions of the Federal enactment and, after the required sixty days, began enforcing it. All persons over eighteen years of age were ordered to register and describe all property that they owned. If any refused to take the oath of allegiance they were to receive certificates naming them "enemies of the United States."[81] More than 61,000 people took the oath; 4,000 refused to do so. Butler, thereupon, offered conveyances for all of the 4,000 irreconcilables who wished to go across the Confederate lines.[82] The oath, given under duress, was not considered morally valid by many people who elected to remain in New Orleans.

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[79] Cited in Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, 61.

[80] La Grove Rogers, The Rise and Fall of Carpet-Bag Rule in Louisiana (n.p., n.d.), 7-8.

[81] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 39.

[82] Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, 61.

With the congressional law as his authority, Butler began seizing the property of absent soldiers and registered aliens. Upon confiscation, the seized goods were sold at public auction. Newspapers carried daily advertisements of furniture and other personal property that was going on the block.[83] The general, who wanted to develop trade across enemy lines, had no desire to use his authority as a means of capturing goods in transit. He stated that safe conduct and an open market would be guaranteed to all merchandise coming into the city "were [the owner] Slidell himself."[84] Butler, aware that the confiscation of property was an open invitation to thievery, threatened the severest punishment should any of the soldiers enter a house without authority. He did, in fact, execute four men who had robbed a house after being ordered into it in a search for hidden weapons.[85]

The most serious attempt at wholesale sequestration was General Order Number 91, which declared that "all property in this District of Lafourche is sequestered."[86] The District of Lafourche included the sugar parishes west of the Mississippi with the exception of Plaquemine and Jefferson. After army needs had been provided for, the property was to be sold at public auction in New Orleans. In case property of loyal citizens or foreigners was seized by mistake, the owners could put in claims for the proceeds. The general order opened

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[83] New Orleans Daily Picayune carried running stories during the first weeks of August, 1862.

[84] New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 22, 1862.

[85] Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, 72n.

[86] Ibid.

the way for widespread pillaging in one of the state's wealthiest agricultural districts.[87] The acts of sequestration earned for the general the unflattering nickname of "Spoons" Butler, because so many people assumed that he was profiting personally from the seizures and auctions. It is extremely difficult to offer conclusive historical proof in such a matter as this. As far as public opinion is concerned, Butler was condemned as a thief. George S. Denison, a personal friend and agent of Salmon P. Chase, wrote his mentor that Dr. A. J. Butler, the general's brother, was making a fortune out of abandoned land and captured personal property.[88] Denison believed that "Colonel" Butler, as he was inappropriately called, was also doing some blockade running into the Confederacy.[89] Shortly after arriving in New Orleans, General Butler indicated his attitude toward private gain in a letter to Edwin M. Stanton. Butler wrote the Secretary of War that he was buying sugar at a good price and was trying to get planters to stop burning cotton so that he could buy it also. The general pointed out that, legally, he could not do this with United States funds, so he was investing his own money. Butler sent his produce to New York as ballast in transport vessels.[90] After many complaints that Butler was engaging in questionable business deals, the Federal Government sent

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[87] Roland, "Louisiana Sugar Plantations during the Civil War," n.p.

[88] George S. Denison to Salmon P. Chase, October 10, 1862. Published in House of Representatives Document 461, Fifty-seventh Congress, Second Session. II, 321.

[89] Butler to Edwin M. Stanton, May 16, 1862, Butler Correspondence, I, 493.

[90] Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, 67-68.

Reverdy Johnson to New Orleans to make an investigation. He reported that members of Butler's staff were guilty of fraud and corruption, the charges hitting men so close to the commanding general that the implications were clear. The most serious charges stated that Butler had risked the lives of men in his command in ventures which profited his brother and in which it seemed that the general was a silent partner.[91]

None of the problems facing the Federal authorities was loaded with as much potential trouble as that of the slaves. As the months went by after the capture of New Orleans, the United States troops conquered parishes in southern Louisiana where lived a large portion of the state's Negroes. Planters along the lower Mississippi abandoned their homes when the Federal army appeared. Butler seized these abandoned lands and used the slaves to continue cultivation. Some of the loyal planters in St. Bernard and Plaquemine were persuaded to pay ten dollars a month to their slaves and leave all disciplinary problems to the army.[92] Not all of the slaves who started pouring into New Orleans came of their own volition; some slaveholders, realizing that they could not support their Negroes, sent them into the city, hoping that they would be able to reclaim them later. Butler simply declared that these Negroes were emancipated.[93]

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[91] Rogers, The Rise and Fall of Carpet-Bag Rule in Louisiana, 7-8.

[92] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 119.

[93] Butler Correspondence, I, 519.

Butler was not disposed to enroll Negroes in the army because he thought that they would be no good. "The Negro here by long habit and training has acquired a great horror of fire-arms," he thought, "sometimes ludicrous in the extreme when the weapon is in his own hands."[94] Later, he relaxed his attitude toward the Negroes and, by the end of his regime, claimed that he had enlisted a total of 15,000. As could be expected, the Confederate Government refused to recognize the Negroes as soldiers.[95] Actually, the Negroes were laborers rather than soldiers; they worked on fortifications and public buildings, receiving, nevertheless, the same bounties, enlistment terms, and rations that white soldiers enjoyed.[96]

During the middle of summer, the Louisiana planters hit upon a way to exasperate the occupation authorities. The deputy provost marshall told Butler that many slaveholders, living within Federal lines, were ordering their slaves to go to the Yankees, and then besieging his office with requests for the return of their property. The impetuous Butler decided that such requests would be regarded as acts of voluntary emancipation.[97] The general had trouble with his own men over the race question. One of his orders informed his command that any soldier or officer who admitted a woman, black

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[94] Ficklin, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 123.

[95] Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, 54.

[96] New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 23, 1862.

[97] Ibid., June 6, 1862.

or white, into his quarters would be severely punished.[98] Shortly after the order was issued, General Butler was riding in a carriage when he was confronted by a woman who claimed that an officer had enticed her slave girl into his quarters. The irate general got out of his carriage and personally restored the slave girl to her mistress.[99] There was a general feeling of uneasiness in the Department of the Gulf over the conditions and attitudes of the slaves. A 9:00 o'clock curfew was established to prevent large congregations at night.[100] Butler also stated that he would confiscate any vessel which left New Orleans with a slave who had not been on board when the vessel arrived.[101] He hoped by these measures to lessen some of the concern which had arisen among the white people in his department.

Few of Butler's acts aroused more antagonism than his orders controlling the schools and churches. Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, directed the South to observe a day of fasting and prayer. Butler ordered the people of New Orleans to ignore the proclamation from Richmond. When the news reached the commanding general that the city's Episcopal clergy were refusing to pray for the President of the United States, he ordered their churches closed. Some of the New Orleans churches did not re-open their doors until

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98 Ibid.

99 Ibid., July 20, 1862.

100 Ibid., June 3, 1862.

101 Ibid.

Butler was relieved of his command.[102] All teachers who continued to express loyalty to the Confederacy were removed from their classrooms, and all schoolbooks were examined to see that no anti-Union sentiment was contained.[103]

Louisiana's regularly constituted government made plans to leave Baton Rouge when it became obvious that the Federal invasion could not be stopped. Shortly after the fall of New Orleans, Governor Moore transferred the seat of government to Opelousas. Moore was acutely aware of what the loss of New Orleans, the financial and commercial center of the state, would mean to the people in all of Louisiana. More than anything else, he feared that a lively trade would develop between Federal Louisiana and that portion of the state which remained in Confederate hands. Such trade, he reasoned, would aid the occupation without giving any benefits to the Confederacy. He issued an appeal on July 18 which asked the people to refrain from trading with the enemy because he did not want his people to be trading with the Yankees at the same time they were fighting them. The governor had no objections to crossing the lines for personal reasons, so long as no cotton, sugar, or corn was taken along. This worked a hardship on all Louisiana, for the people in New Orleans needed the produce of the interior and the agriculturists needed to sell their crops. Moore hoped to prevent Butler from using economic necessity as a means for destroying dreams of independence.

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[102] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 35.

[103] Rogers, The Rise and Fall of Carpet-Bag Rule in Louisiana, 4.

Louisiana's governor thought that trade between Rebel and Yankee would be a symptom of defeatism.

Elements of the United States Navy took possession of the arsenal and other public buildings in Baton Rouge only a week after the capture of New Orleans. The naval force was not large enough to meet an expected counterattack, so Butler sent Brigadier General Thomas Williams with 4,500 men to hold the city. The people of Baton Rouge began destroying everything of potential military value when they learned that a major force was enroute. Baton Rougeans shared the mystical feeling that cotton was the key to the future of the Confederacy. Bales of cotton were taken to the public square and burned or loaded on barges and sent smoking down the river. The burning of cotton and the destruction brought by the invading forces made the region around the former capital a vast scene of desolation. Confederate General John C. Breckinridge led an attack against the Federals in Baton Rouge which forced them to withdraw to New Orleans. The marauding and destruction of two armies, plus the work of the local citizens, left Baton Rouge and its vicinity a wreck.[104]

The state officials in Opelousas realized that Butler would send an army into the Teche country, center of Louisiana's wealthy sugar industry. Major General Richard Taylor, who commanded the District of West Louisiana, engaged the Northern troops in a few light skirmishes during the summer of 1862. Taylor's operations were often complicated by the mass exodus of planters and their families, who

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[104] Bragg, Louisiana in the Confederacy, 125-126.

clogged the rivers and bayous with crafts of all descriptions in their headlong flight to the Red River and north Louisiana. The abandoned plantations offered wonderful opportunities for pillaging to Yankees, Rebels, and slaves. In October of 1862, Brigadier General Godfrey Weitzel led 4,000 United States soldiers down Bayou Lafourche from Donaldsonville. Their goal was quite simple: destruction of Taylor's army and conquest of the Sugar Bowl. For months Weitzel and Taylor waged an unceasing and indecisive war which brought horrible destruction to what had been, a few months before, an opulent and peaceful countryside.[105]

There were constant rumors circulating in New Orleans and throughout the state that Butler had made himself persona non grata with the administration in Washington and would be recalled. The controlled press in the city denied the validity of the rumors, but they persisted until December 14, on which day Butler was replaced by another politician-general, Nathaniel P. Banks. General Butler expressed surprise at his ouster, claiming that he had not expected it and that he did not know why the national administration was dissatisfied. The reason was not that Butler was hated in Louisiana and the South at large. His ouster had been requested by several foreign governments, whose agents in New Orleans Butler had treated in a cavalier fashion. Also, Reverdy Johnson's report of graft insinuated that the general and his closest associates were interested in making personal profits rather than leading a rebellious people back into their former relationships with the United States. Butler, something

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[105] Ibid., 131.

of a showman, made a "farewell address" before turning over the Department of the Gulf to Major General Banks. He told the people in the conquered areas that the invading armies had refrained from wholesale pillaging and ravaging, despite the provocations, because of the civilized concept of war held by the people of the United States. To be sure, the Federal troops had, with some exceptions, gone about their business with commendable restraint. Butler, however, must have been unrealistic if he expected to leave Louisiana with grateful cheers ringing in his ears. No other person connected with Louisiana has ever received the bitter denunciation which was, and has been, directed at Major General Benjamin Franklin Butler.[106]

Although Butler probably earned much of the approbrium heaped upon his head, he had established Federal control over one of the most important areas of the South. As commander of the Department of the Gulf, he had been charged with securing the mouth of the Mississippi River and holding it for the United States. Butler, who was more politician than general, had a better understanding of the social and economic forces at work than would have been expected of a professionally trained military commander. Butler realized that in Louisiana, and the South, there was more going on than an armed rebellion. He saw a social and political revolution in which the real revolutionists were the agents of the North who were in conflict with Southern conservatism. Butler believed that the character and habits of the Southern people should be reformed so

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[106] On Butler's actions in New Orleans, see works already cited by Bragg, Caskey, and Ficklen.

that the antagonistic forms of labor and society in the North and in the South could be assimilated. This could only be done, Butler believed, by organizing free, compensated, and honest labor to take the place of the old plantation system of slavery. Many of the Louisiana loyalists, especially from the laboring classes, persuaded Butler to hold to his original idea that the secessionist movement had been instigated and led by a planter-merchant alliance which had run roughshod over the majority opinion in the state. This concept ignored the important fact that white opinion, slaveholding and non-slaveholding alike, was solidly in favor of slavery because of the racial implications. Butler believed that there was a great similarity between the proletarians of New Orleans and his native Massachusetts. He acted as if he expected the laboring class in New Orleans to become the nucleus of a movement which would destroy the agrarian system which had been so dependent on slavery. What turned Butler's military success into political failure was his personal rashness, the taints of fraud, and his failure to understand the nature of the race problem.[107]

General Banks, after assuming command of the Department of the Gulf, adopted a program more lenient and magnanimous than that of his predecessor. He quickly stopped the sequestration and auctioning of property, moved staff officers from private houses, provisionally reopened churches, and released many of Butler's prisoners.[108]

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[107] See letter from Denison to Chase in House of Representatives Document 461, Fifty-seventh Congress, Second Session, II, 377.

[108] Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, 71.

Disorders, which resulted from Banks' displays of leniency, caused a partial restoration of severity. A few months after his arrival, Banks was railing at those who "propagated treason under the mantle of religion."[109] He was obliged to fire some schoolteachers for possessing Confederate emblems and for teachings that were of "an insulting and seditious character."[110] Banks, a mild man by nature, was forced by the logic of the situation to adopt harsh measures from time to time. He did not, however, display the rashness and petulance which had frequently characterized Butler's pronunciamentos.

Banks' desire for military conquest was one of the reasons for his seeming lack of a forthright policy of reorganization. Major General Henry W. Halleck had instructed Banks to take Vicksburg, Mississippi, and capture the Red River Valley. Vicksburg was too much for Banks' limited ability and available force. It was destined to surrender to a military commander rather than a politician in uniform. Banks did believe, however, that he could carry out Halleck's other demand - conquest of the Red River area. This would be an important objective within itself and would afford an excellent base for an invasion of Texas.[111] Banks, upon his arrival in New Orleans, sent 10,000 men to Baton Rouge without even allowing them to leave their vessels and have a brief holiday in the Crescent

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[109] Ibid., 72.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Bragg, Louisiana in the Confederacy, 145ff.

City. Using New Orleans and Baton Rouge as bases, the new commander began to prepare for a campaign into central Louisiana. Butler had been able to control the parishes near New Orleans; Banks hoped to wrest most of the state from the Confederates. Banks' preparations, coupled with General U. S. Grant's operations near Vicksburg, created the greatest fear and consternation in the central part of the state. The campaign, when it got under way in the spring, turned out to be little more than a marauding expedition, accompanied by sporadic opposition. The Federal army marched as far as Alexandria, where they decided to stop because of their inability to use naval support beyond that point. Banks wrote Halleck that he considered the expedition a success because he forced the Rebel forces into the pineywoods north of Alexandria and because he had made it "impossible to organize and supply a large force from that [Red River] country."[112] Banks seemed not to realize that as long as an effective Confederate force was in the field and intact he had won no great victory. He had, nevertheless, brought havoc in the areas through which his soldiers had marched. His men brought back 20,000 heads of livestock, 5,000 bales of cotton, and many hogsheads of sugar from the Red River campaign of 1863.[113] Several thousand slaves from central Louisiana followed the Federal armies as they moved southward toward Baton Rouge and New Orleans. What was the "day of Jubilo" to the

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[112] Ibid., 149.

[113] Ibid., 151.

Negroes was a severe handicap to the commanders of the Northern soldiers.[114]

While Banks was concentrating on his Red River campaign, a pro-Unionist organization was developing rapidly in New Orleans and vicinity. A Union Party had been organized in the summer of 1862 which had as its goal the fusion of all anti-Confederate sentiment. Those who were first interested in a new political body were some former Whigs who remained loyal to the Union, a few Democrats who had been followers of Douglas, and a goodly sprinkling of Irish and German laborers who developed some political articulateness when the threat of Know Nothing nativism was removed.[115] Denison, Salmon P. Chase's friend and agent, expected Randall Hunt, an important Union sympathizer, to break the silence he had observed since secession.[116] Denison was disappointed when Hunt and Christian Roselius remained aloof. The leading men in the early move to restore Louisiana to the United States were Benjamin F. Flanders, Thomas J. Durant, J. A. Rozier and Michael Hahn. Durant and Rozier were able men and had the advantage of being native lawyers.[117] In an election held in early December, shortly before the arrival of Banks, Flanders and Hahn were elected to seats in the United States House of Representatives. Flanders and Hahn were aided

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[114] Fortier, Louisiana, I, 441-442.

[115] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 40-41.

[116] Denison to Chase, House of Representatives Document 461, Fifty-seventh Congress, Second Session, II, 378.

[117] Ibid., 380.

in their desire to restore Louisiana to the Union by people who hated military rule, Unionist slaveholders who wanted protection for their property, and ambitious politicians who yearned for offices formerly monopolized by the planter-merchant alliance.[118] Although eager to begin restoration, the Unionists had to wait for Banks to finish his expedition to the Red River.

An active Unionist movement was in full swing by the summer of 1863. The Louisiana loyalists, believing that the Northern victories at Port Hudson, Vicksburg, and Gettysburg were symptoms of a dying Confederacy, began to be more optimistic of their chances for success. There were two wings in the pro-Unionist movement; one hoping for a return to the conditions which prevailed before the war and the other demanding the end of slavery and the beginning of a political revolution which would destroy the power of the planters and merchants. General Banks carefully refrained from entering the struggle among the local Unionists because he wanted them to decide the issue among themselves. When the time came, he would support the stronger side.[119]

The conservative faction among the loyalists was composed of men who were desirous of restoring Louisiana to its old position in the Union, but they wanted the restoration to be without emancipa-

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[118] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 45.

[119] Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, 79.

tion. Dr. Thomas Cottman, who had been a signer of the secession ordinance, and Christian Roselius were the conservative leaders. They could make little popular appeal at that time because the people ordinarily receptive to their type of thinking were fighting for the Confederacy. Dr. Cottman, who was exceptionally active, was a well-known and popular physician who could rely on personal contacts when political ideologies would make no appeal.[120] Had these men been successful in molding public opinion, it would have meant that authority in the state would be in the hands of pro-slavery men who were unsuccessful, and somewhat unrepentent, Rebels.[121] The other loyalist group, calling themselves the Free State Party, wanted the restoration of Louisiana to become a social and political revolution which would destroy both slavery and the power of the planter-merchant alliance. They wanted Louisiana to become a state in which the votes of the more numerous city workers and farmers would outweigh the ballots of the slaveholding planters. They wanted freedom for the slaves because slavery had been the basis for the _ancien regime_. Their thinking on the race problem did not go beyond emancipation; social and political equality was not a part of their creed.[122]

The conservative and radical factions maneuvered throughout

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[120] Denison to Chase, _House of Representatives Document 461_, Fifty-seventh Congress, Second Session, II, 413.

[121] _Ibid._, 417.

[122] For discussions of the intricate details of this early Unionist movement, see Caskey, _Secession and Restoration of Louisiana_, 75ff.

1863 with speeches, delegations to Washington, and even an abortive election. Despite the fact that Louisiana had two men in the national House of Representatives, there was no civil government behind the Federal lines. Banks, stating that he had authority from Lincoln, finally took matters in his own hands. He announced that an election would be held in February of 1864 which would name a governor and other state officials. They would be accepted as the state's legitimate authorities, but they would be selected by only the people who had taken the oaths of allegiance and who wanted to vote; and their authority would be coterminous with the areas held by the army.[123] The Federal Government controlled only a small percentage of the land in Louisiana, but it was the most populous section of the state. Although the Northern troops were constantly expanding or contracting their perimeter, the center of Federal power in Louisiana was the thirteen southernmost parishes. Living in these parishes were 198,995 whites and 85,786 slaves. The total population living under the domination of the Northern armies was about forty per cent of the population of the state.

There were three rival sets of candidates in the election of February 1864. The conservatives, calling themselves the Constitutional Union party, nominated J. Q. A. Fellows when Christian Roselius refused to run. Michael Hahn and B. F. Flanders led rival Free State tickets which differed in their attitude toward the future of the Negro. Flanders, who denied that he wanted Negro suffrage,

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[123] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 55-56.

was considered more radical than Hahn, who said nothing about the Negro except that he should not be a slave.[124] The Constitutional Union Party wanted to retain the Constitution of 1852, which recognized slavery and also provided for a system of representation which guaranteed political ascendancy to the Black Belt areas which were controlled by planters. Both Free State candidates agreed with the conservatives that Louisiana should regain her former status as a member of the Union; but there the resemblance stopped. The basic question was whether the economic and political control of the state should be given back to the planters and merchants by a return to the old Constitution, or be placed in the hands of the majority of loyal, white people under a new organic law. Michael Hahn's wing of the Free State organization won because it was backed by Banks and the Federal army and because Hahn's followers made a revolutionary appeal to the laborers in New Orleans. On March 4, 1864, amid much pomp and ceremony, Hahn took the inaugural oath in New Orleans' Lafayette Square.[125]

The election of Hahn meant that the loyal element in occupied Louisiana wanted slavery to be abolished but did not want the Negroes to receive full rights of citizenship. In the fall of 1863, the United States officials had established free Negro schools

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[124] Ibid., 58.

[125] Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, 109; see also Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 198.

in areas under their command.[126] This was the beginning of a movement which was to grow into a demand for full and equal rights for the colored people of Louisiana. New Orleans Negroes, many of whom were prosperous and educated, formed a group called the Radical Union Association which began demanding Negro schools, the abolition of all law codes reminiscent of slavery, and a voice in the state legislature. When General Shepley turned down their bid for ballots in the February election, the association sent a man to Washington to plead the Negro cause.[127] The Negro association, which was too far advanced for that particular time, indicated that there were Negroes and whites who were considering the possibility of Negro suffrage years before the beginning of radical reconstruction. Some of the early leaders of the Radical Union Association, such as Dr. A. P. Dostie and P. B. S. Pinchback, were prominent figures in later years.

On March 11, 1864, only a week after Hahn's inauguration, General Banks announced that an election would be held for delegates to a convention which would revise and amend the Constitution of 1852. President Lincoln, who had recognized the Hahn administration, had a mild suggestion concerning Negro suffrage. The president wondered "if some of the colored people may not be let in, as for instance the very intelligent and especially those who have fought gallantly

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[126] Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, 90.

[127] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 59.

in our ranks.[128] Negroes were not allowed to vote for delegates to the convention, nor did the convention itself take definite steps to grant suffrage to colored people. The distribution of delegates among the parishes was on the basis of white population in 1860; a scheme of distribution which was contrary to the system as outlined in the Constitution of 1852. It was also provided that parishes within Confederate lines could send delegates at any time before the dissolution of the convention.[129] The election, held on March 28, produced only 6,400 votes because the opponents of the Banks regime stayed away from the polls. All of the delegates at the Convention of 1864 were in favor of Louisiana's restoration, although some of them were conservative slaveholders who wanted to protect their property and reinstate planter supremacy. It became apparent that the conservatives could not control the convention when E. H. Durell was selected to preside over the ninety-eight delegates. Durell had been a member of Butler's Finance Bureau and shared the departed general's attitudes toward the slaveholding oligarchy.[130]

The convention which assembled in New Orleans' Liberty Hall on April 6 was revolutionary because of the nature of the men present. Never before had a Louisiana constitutional convention been so out of sympathy with the plantation ideal and all it stood for. One shrewd

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[128] Quoted in ibid., 63.

[129] Ibid., 67.

[130] Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, 120-121.

observer commented that the men, as far as character, ability, and social standing were concerned, left a great deal to be desired.[131] To be sure, there were delegates like Edmund Abell and Christian Roselius who had enjoyed respect and wealth in the years before the war, but they were hopelessly outnumbered. Control of the convention was in the hands of men like E. H. Durell, Randall Terry, and Benjamin Orr. Their constituents were the New Orleans laborers who were, now that they were not intimidated, becoming politically articulate. The Convention of 1864 represented the desires and prejudices of the New Orleans proletariat and, to a lesser degree, the ideas of the farmers in the conquered sections of the state. Lacking any background for such work, the delegates frequently misunderstood the responsibilities and procedures of constitution making. Some of the delegates appeared on the floor in a drunken condition. Frequently, the sessions would be postponed for a half-hour after roll call while the sergeant-at-arms went through the city rounding up members to make a quorum. After the convention voted to forfeit the per diem of any member who was more than fifteen minutes late, attendance became much better.[132]

The convention quickly repealed the Ordinance of Secession, but that was the last time there was any harmony. As soon as the slavery issue came to the floor, the antagonistic interests started

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[131] Denison to Chase, House of Representatives Document 461, Fifty-seventh Congress, Second Session, II, 435-436.

[132] New Orleans Daily True Delta, June 30, 1864.

warring on each other. As the arguments progressed, Negro education as well as Negro freedom was discussed. The delegates understood how necessary some education would be if the freedom of the slaves was to mean anything. "Great God!" Edmund Abell exclaimed at this point in the deliberations, "Gentlemen, pause before you take this step, and think what you are doing. Pause before you tear from the widow, the orphan, and the loyal man their slave property, and then take their money to pay for its education."[133] Abell spoke for three days; a voice out of the past. He went over the old arguments about slavery's superiority as a system of labor. He pitied the poor blacks who would be brought into competition with white labor. He condemned the legislative theft of the slave property of widows and orphans. When Abell finished he was answered by excoriating and withering blasts. Opponents of his views took turns in denouncing slavery and the political and social systems based upon it. The poor had lost more than the planters, one member asserted, why not indemnify them for their lives, their farms, their savings. One delegate, who sounded like Hinton R. Helper, proclaimed that "the emancipation of the African will prove to be . . . the true liberation and emancipation of the poor white laboring classes of the South."[134]

The men at Liberty Hall hated slavery but they had no great love for the Negro; their racial ideas were those of the Southern poor

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[133] Ibid., June 7, 1864.

[134] Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 205.

whites, not the Northern abolitionists. The emancipation clauses in the Constitution of 1864 passed the convention after Abell's addresses touched off debate. It was necessary, however, for Hahn and Banks to pressure the convention into authorizing the legislature to enfranchise "such persons" as might be deemed fit because of their property or education.[135] This was as close as the delegates would go toward Negro suffrage. The attitude of some of the white laborers was reflected in demands that, after emancipation, Negroes be prohibited from learning a profession or mechanical trade.[136] Such a shortsighted policy would have immediately created the type of competition the convention was trying to destroy, and it was easily defeated. The convention voted to abolish slavery without compensation because as one delegate observed, remuneration would mean taxing the New Orleans workers in order to aid their old enemies. In order to salve wounded feelings, the convention memorialized the United States Congress to pay the loyalist slaveholders for their confiscated property.[137]

Mechanics and laborers in New Orleans, knowing that the convention was on their side, drew up memorials on the general theme that "the homage that capital requires of labor is beginning to be insupportable and detestable."[138] One petition praised the delegates who constituted the "only liberty loving constitutional body, composed

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[135] Ibid., 206.

[136] Denison to Chase, House of Representatives Document 461, Fifty-seventh Congress, Second Session, II, 439.

[137] Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, 131-132.

[138] New Orleans Daily True Delta, June 23, 1864.

of Louisiana."[139] The laborers, remembering the Irish and German

of Louisiana."[139] The laborers, remembering the Irish and German immigrants who had been worked to death in the swamps and on the levees, cursed the employers who had "frequently reserved for the white that which was detrimental for the black."[140] The conflict between the old and the new broke out on the floor of the convention when Benjamin Orr, a former steamboatman, proposed minimum wages and maximum hours for laborers working under state or municipal authorities.[141] Once again Edmund Abell was the spokesman for conservatism. In the emancipation issue he had echoed the arguments of the past; in the labor issue his arguments were those which would be heard for a generation whenever social legislation was the topic. Regulations of hours and wages, he maintained, would violate freedom of contract, it would interfere with laws of supply and demand, it would destroy the incentive of the poor to work, and it would take from the laborer his right to dictate his own terms.[142] Abell spoke with a background of education and gentility which had taught him to believe all these things. In this convention, the opposition was the voice of experience. Article 134 of the completed document established a graduated minimum wage for men who worked on public works of the state or who were employed by parochial or city governments. The $2.00

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139 Ibid., July 6, 1864.

140 Ibid.

141 Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 209.

142 Ibid.

a day minimum wage for common laborers and the nine hour day were hailed as great victories.[143]

The committee on education, which included James Madison Wells and Randall Terry, advocated a free public school system in which "all schools for colored children shall be separate and distinct from schools for white children."[144] Article 141 of the constitution provided for the free education of all children between the ages of six and eighteen. The legislature was directed to levy a special tax on colored persons for the support of Negro schools.[145] Unsatisfactory as this might have been, it was the beginning of Negro education in Louisiana. Banks had organized some Negro schools the previous fall, but they had been few in number and were not intended to be permanent.

When the delegates adjourned on July 25, they had completed an extraordinary document. They had made reforms of profound social significance by relaxing residence requirements for suffrage, abolishing the old system of counting the slaves for representation without letting them vote, removing the restrictions on New Orleans' representation in the legislature, and prohibiting future legislatures from aiding private organizations such as banks and corporations; they had also freed the slaves, opened public schools to all children, and passed wage and hour provisions. These were tremendous changes for Louisiana.

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[143] New Orleans Daily True Delta, July 26, 1864.

[144] Ibid., July 20, 1864.

[145] Ibid., July 26, 1864.

The delegates to the convention, however, represented only a small part of the state. Their work could not last.[146]

The convention of 1864 spent $364,000. There was no excuse for such extravagant expenses; no carpetbaggers sat in Liberty Hall. Roger Shugg explains the abnormal expenditures by calling attention to the "get rich quick" fever which afflicted New Orleans at that time.[147] No matter what the cause for excessive expenditures may have been, the lack of care in spending public money was widely condemned. Moreover, the Convention of 1864 was only the first of many political bodies which spent money too lavishly. This became valuable propoganda material for people who could point to government bodies controlled by conservatives which were niggardly in spending public funds.

On September 5, 1864, the people who had qualified to vote and who were living in occupied Louisiana, accepted the Constitution by a vote of 6,836 to 1,566. Members of the new state legislature, who were elected at the same time, started their sessions on October 3. They could do little work because they were not sure of their status in Louisiana. Banks' repeated efforts to expand Federal control had failed, leaving the Federals in control of the lower Mississippi but nowhere else. Also, serious questions about the recognition of Louisiana were being raised in the national Congress. These conditions meant that for months civil government in Federal Louisiana could only mark time and wait for the collapse of the Confederacy.

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[146] Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 204ff.

[147] Ibid., 202.

CHAPTER IV

RETURN OF THE REBELS

After Banks failed in his invasion of central Louisiana in the spring of 1864, the United States Government was content to hold New Orleans and the nearby southern parishes. Small military detachments engaged in skirmishes with the Confederates around Thibodeaux, Donaldsonville, and other places in the Sugar Bowl. General Richard Taylor and later General Harry Hays led halfhearted assaults on the perimeters of the Federal areas, but there were no significant encounters. The bulk of the 40,000 Confederate troops in Louisiana were stationed at Opelousas, Alexandria, Minden, and Shreveport. The Rebel soldiers at these places could prevent any advance, except a full-fledged invasion, that the Federal armies might attempt. As the closing months of the war dragged on, morale in Confederate Louisiana sank lower and lower. Soldiers, who were not engaged in any important military adventures, had ample opportunity to complain about inadequate food, clothing, and pay. The commanders at the various military installations were forced to execute deserters every week, but the desertions continued. General E. Kirby Smith, commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department with headquarters at Shreveport, insisted that his department continue the war, even after the news arrived that Lee had surrendered. The general's determination to prolong hostilities was not reflected in the civil government of Confederate Louisiana. Governor Henry

Watkins Allen, who had succeeded Moore in 1864, knew that further resistance would be the sheerest folly. The conflicting opinions of Smith and Allen were widely known, and their divided council contributed to further decline in the soldiers' will to fight.

Representatives from General Smith signed surrender papers in New Orleans on May 26, 1865. The terms of the surrender stated that Confederate troops, both officers and enlisted men, would be paroled until released from that parole by the United States Government. All weapons, ammunition, and materiel of war would be turned over to Federal representatives. Officers and men thus released were directed to return to their homes, where they would not be disturbed so long as they observed the paroles and the laws of their own locality.

General Smith signed the surrender agreement one week after the council in New Orleans. As he was the last department commander to surrender, the affixing of his signature on June 2, 1865, is usually regarded as the end of the military phase of the war. Governor Allen made his farewell address on the same day that Smith signed the capitulation articles. Allen, who had no desire to remain in the state and wait for martyrdom, went to Mexico City, where he died about a year later. The governor's message to the people of Louisiana is an important document because it reflects the attitude of a weary and defeated people. Allen, who realized that a condition of anarchy might develop before adequate Federal power could be spread through the state, suggested that the paroled men organize companies and squads

to maintain order. The departing governor told his people that the war was now a lost cause and that there should be no repinings or murmurings over what had happened. The people should accept the reimposition of Federal authority and establish themselves as loyal American citizens. Allen's suggestion that his people hold out the hand of friendship and brotherly love was not realistic. Magnanimity, after a war, is a quality usually reserved for the victor. It would be difficult to imagine a conqueror being magnanimous when the vanquished hosts attempt to re-create the ways of life which had been one of the causes of the war.[1]

There were some people in Louisiana who did not share Allen's desire for moderation. L. A. Bringier, a colonel in the Seventh Regiment of Louisiana Cavalry, wrote his wife that the countryside near Alexandria was full of men who were giving up. "What a shame on this country," Bringier cried, "Eight millions of people, whipped, subdued, thoroughly subjugated in four years of war! I disown this cowardly people."[2] The Ouachita Telegraph, commenting on the vacillating nature of public opinion, told of people who had said during the war that they would fight till "Hell freezes over," who later said they would go to Mexico in case of defeat, and who were then saying they would leave the

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[1] For a summary of the end of the war in Louisiana, see Bragg, Louisiana in the Confederacy, 297ff.

[2] L. A. Bringier to Mrs. Bringier, May 11, 1865, Bringier Papers, Louisiana State University, Department of Archives and Manuscripts.

country in case of Negro suffrage. The editor found it difficult to take seriously such bombastic utterances.[3] The majority of the people in Louisiana knew that they had been subdued in a long and costly struggle. Louisiana had not witnessed a series of major campaigns such as had devastated northern Virginia, nor had Banks been the equal of General William T. Sherman in destructiveness. Nevertheless, the Bayou State had suffered from loss of trade and destruction in the valuable sugar and cotton regions.

Louisiana men, who had been in action in Virginia, the Carolinas or in their home state, started arriving at their homes during the summer of 1865. The state presented a sad picture to the returning veterans. Planters coming back to their abandoned lands and soldiers returning to their homes found everywhere the evidence of the ravages of war. To them, the immediate problem was obvious; they must rebuild the desolate plantations and farms. In that simple matter of resurrecting the agricultural economy lay one of the horrible problems of reconstruction - who would do the work?

Louisiana's sugar industry, which had represented an ante-bellum investment of approximately $200,000,000 had averaged 293,000 hogsheads of sugar in each year of the decade prior to the war. In 1862 the production was 87,000 hogsheads; it dropped to

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[3] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, November 9, 1865.

77,000 for 1863. By the end of the war, there were only 188 sugar plantations actually in operation. The loss in land value and equipment in the Sugar Bowl has been estimated at about seventy per cent.[4] Many former sugar planters were ruined. Their plantations passed to new owners, frequently banks and corporations, who could raise the essential capital. The neglected lands, delapidated buildings, and rusty equipment, could be purchased for a small fraction of the prewar value. What the vandals had left untouched had deteriorated from years of disuse and neglect. Ditches were overgrown with weeds, levees were broken, fences had been used as fuel by Rebel and Yankee alike.

The same general conditions prevailed in the areas which Banks had invaded in 1863 and 1864. Northern soldiers in the Red River valley had removed valuable agricultural produce and had disrupted the life of the slaves. John H. Ransdell, an overseer on Governor Moore's property in Rapides, wrote his employer that the "arrival of the Yankees alone turned the Negroes crazy . . . [they were] utterly demoralized . . . subordination and restraint were at an end."[5] Some of the Negroes along the Red River placed Confederates in whipping stocks which had been designed for slaves. Some Negroes, who did not depart with the Federal soldiers, were shot as an example to the re-

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[4] Walter Prichard, "The Effects of the Civil War on the Louisiana Sugar Industry, "Journal of Southern History," V (1939), 315-322.

[5] G. P. Whittington (ed.), "Concerning the Loyalty of Slaves in North Louisiana in 1863: Letters from John H. Ransdell to Governor Thomas O. Moore, dated 1863," L H Q, XIV (1931), 491.

mainder. The village of Alexandria was burned during the 1864 raid. Outside of the areas of military conflict, physical conditions were much better. Defeat, however, hung like a heavy cloud over the entire land.

The New Orleans Price Current stated the principal economic problem when it said: "It is not lands we want, it is labor."[6] The production of agriculture in the prewar years had depended on slave labor. To be sure, there had been few large gangs of slaves outside of the Black Belt, but that area was the center of agricultural productivity. The changed status of the Negro was the important economic problem in the early Reconstruction period. General Banks, in his General Order Number 23, had established a temporary system for controlling the labor of the former slaves. Banks stopped enlisting Negroes from plantations, established public schools for Negro children, outlined wages and sharecropping arrangements, and informed the freemen that they must work and abide by their bargains.[7] When the war ended, this system, which had been used in Federal Louisiana, was adopted throughout the state. Confederate General A. S. Herron, who was the ranking military officer in northern Louisiana after the surrender, ordered the Negroes to stay on the plantations until the crops were in.[8] The news of freedom had caused the former slaves to

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[6] New Orleans Price Current, September 1, 1865.

[7] Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, 141.

[8] Fortier, Louisiana, I, 444.

start leaving the fields to enjoy the blessings of a free status. Had this been allowed, the economy of Louisiana would have become worse.

The serious problem facing everyone in Louisiana was the inability of either black or white to understand the nature of a free labor system. The white landowners and planters had always identified free labor with the shiftless "po-white". The planters had scorned the unfortunate white people, and had assumed that free labor was the cause of their degradation. Few gave a thought to the possibility that the poor white people might have been demoralized by an institution which made all labor disreputable. The Negroes frequently had trouble in understanding their new status.[9] General J. S. Fullerton, of the Freedmen's Bureau, was forced to tell the Negroes that they were free to work, not free to confiscate property. If the Negroes wanted land and a house, the general asserted, they must work and save and not expect the government to do more for them than it did for the whites.[10] Many systems and experiments were tried in the first few months after the end of the war. The trouble with the Negroes was that they did not want to work; they grumbled about wages and found other excuses to stay away from the fields.[11] As one observer stated, "negroes as a class have not yet learned that their labor is their capital, and therefore are too ready to quit

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[9] John T. Trowbridge, A Picture of the Desolated States; and the Work of Restoration. 1865-1868 (Hartford, 1868), 369.

[10] Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 242-243.

[11] Bell I. Wiley, "Vicissitudes of Early Reconstruction Farming in the Lower Mississippi Valley," Journal of Southern History, III (1937), 449.

their work for the most trivial reason."[12]

Many experiments were made as the planters and freedmen tried to find arrangements that would be mutually satisfactory. A Mr. May, who owned a plantation several miles upriver from New Orleans, was one of the first of the ante-bellum owners to use free labor. May, although troubled by guerilla raids in the latter phases of the war, managed to pay his former slaves twelve dollars a month and, in addition, kept them supplied with essential food. He tried white labor for a while, but was dissatisfied and returned to the use of Negroes. During 1863 and 1864, when other planters were letting their land lie idle because they did not believe they could cultivate it without slaves, May made $45,000 on 1,000 acres. The profit was high because of the inflated wartime prices on agricultural produce.[13] J. C. Batchelor, a Pointe Coupee planter, furnished his Negro workers with land, stock, implements, quarters, and feed for their livestock. His workers received twenty per cent of the proceeds of the cotton after Batchelor deducted all expenses incurred in making the crop. The Negroes affixed their marks to elaborate contracts which outlined the entire arrangement.[14] One cotton planter near Lake Providence thought that sharecropping was best for Negroes, because it stimulated them to work harder. This particular individual claimed that Negroes did not

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[12] Senate Executive Documents, Thirty-ninth Congress, Second Session, 70.

[13] Whitelaw Reid, After the War: A Southern Tour May 1, 1865 to May 1, 1866. (New York, 1866), 278.

[14] Batchelor Papers, Louisiana State University, Department of Archives and Manuscripts.

steal from him because they were well handled and did not need to resort to petty thievery. One agent of a cotton estate told a visitor in Louisiana that the freedmen stole when they were poorly fed and overworked. This particular agent did not blame them.[15]

Thomas W. Conway, General Superintendent of the Freedmen in the Department of the Gulf, outlined the general nature of contracts between employers and former slaves in a directive issued in early 1865. Under these instructions, laborers could select places of employment, subject to a few restrictions. Negroes were to receive quarterly cash payments during the contracted year, and were to agree to make only a very few visits to New Orleans and the towns and villages.[16]

There were many problems in the early attempt to recoup agricultural prosperity. Bad weather often ruined crops, resulting in dissatisfaction among both employers and employees. Many planters, interpreting the governmental regulations to suit themselves, would discharge men on the slightest provocation or refuse to pay wages because of alleged idleness or insolence. Some planters, forced to discharge their men because of bad crops, would pay the laborers for the period worked and allow them to depart. The freedmen, however, were expected to work for the full period of the contract.[17]

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[15] Trowbridge, The Desolated States, 392.

[16] Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, 143.

[17] Senate Executive Documents, Thirty-ninth Congress, Second Session, 70.

Despite efforts by the United States Army, the Freedmen's Bureau, and irate planters, many freedmen managed to idle their time away in New Orleans and other places. They would work occasionally at odd jobs, but other than that they had no visible means of support. The Freedmen's Bureau wanted to put former slaves on lands belonging to the United States. These lands were usually in heavily wooded areas or in regions which were not adequately watered. Lands of this nature could be of no value to the Negroes; they needed land which could be cultivated immediately. Placing Negroes on land of their own also raised the problem of the attitude of neighboring whites. Negroes had to settle in large communities or face the possibility of being killed or driven out by whites.[18]

Planters, especially in the Sugar Bowl, hurt their own interests in their desperate attempts to hire laborers. They frequently competed among themselves for the services of freedmen, which resulted in demoralization among the Negroes, strikes, and dalliance when the time arrived for signing contracts.[19] Planters also found much to complain about in the controls and regulations they had to observe. They had to acquire permits before shipping cotton or sugar, produce affidavits showing fulfillment of contracts with their laborers, and give proof that the cotton or sugar they were selling had not been stolen or bought at reduced prices. They

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[18] Ibid., 72.

[19] Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 252.

had to pay officials for the services they did not want and produce receipts showing that their payments had been made.[20]

Freedom meant to the Negroes freedom from forced labor. As a result of this normal reaction, they did their best to flock into towns. Throughout 1865, the Freedmen's Bureau as well as the army furnished rations to Negroes in all of the rural areas of the state. In Avoyelles Parish, two-thirds of the freedmen needed help if they were to be kept from starving. The Bureau's fear of the result of indiscriminate relief led officials to demand that the indigent Negroes pay for the rations when they went to work. Rations distributed by the Bureau were usually based on one bushel of corn and eight pounds of pork per month for adults. Such items as sugar, coffee, and vegetables would be added when available.[21]

Unfortunately, there was a general disposition to keep the freedmen in debt by furnishing supplies at dishonest prices.[22] Thomas W. Knox, a New York newspaperman, found that the speculators in Louisiana agriculture were too frequently unprincipled. Although many of the speculators were Northerners, Knox complained, they were as callous to the Negro as the most cruel slaveholder. Knox found men who were selling goods to Negroes at five times their value and openly boasting

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[20] Wiley, "Vicissitudes of Early Reconstruction Farming in the Lower Mississippi Valley," loc. cit., 444-445.

[21] John C. Engelsman, "The Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1937, 35-58.

[22] See Trowbridge, The Desolated States, 409.

of their ability to take advantage of Negro innocence.[23]

Many of the white people in Louisiana, ignorant of the nature of a free labor system, were impatient because of the general economic malaise and were fearful of the future because of the desire of the Negroes to express their new freedom in some tangible way. Most of the Louisianians felt that the Negro should be a serf now that he was no longer a slave.[24] The first efforts to enforce a de facto slavery were made in the villages of Opelousas and Franklin. The general nature of the Black Codes adopted by these two places was copied by the legislature a few months later. The town ordinance of Opelousas stated that no Negro could be in town without permission of his employer. Any Negro on the streets after 10:00 o'clock in the evening would work five days for the town or pay a five dollar fine. No Negro could rent or keep a house within the limits of the town, live in town unless he was a servant, own firearms, sell or barter, preach without a license, or appear on the streets in an inebriated condition. If a Negro was in town after 3:00 o'clock on Sunday afternoon, he would work two days or pay a two dollar fine.[25] Opelousas was one of the places the Negroes in western Louisiana wanted to see; many had heard of "Opelousy" all their lives, but had never seen the old Acadian settlement. The town council wanted to remove the possibility of an inundation from the countrywide and, by preventing the Negroes from congregating in town, make sure that the agricultural

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[23] Wiley, "Vicissitudes of Early Reconstruction Farming in the Lower Mississippi Valley," loc. cit., 444-445.

[24] Trowbridge, The Desolated States, 408.

[25] Henry Clay Warmoth, War, Politics, and Reconstruction: Stormy Days in Louisiana (New York, 1930), 273-275.

laborers would be in the fields.

The people living outside of the Black Belt were not so troubled about the problem of labor as were the Black Belt planters. Piney-woods people had not aspired to be lords of vast acres; they had always tried to obtain some degree of self-sufficiency by being simple backwoodsmen who tilled their own soil.[26] After the war, some of the poor whites living near the Black Belt moved on the plantations where they joined the Negroes as tenants, but they were few in number. The majority of people in the hills did not want to live in the Black Belt, even if they owned land, because that would mean they would have to live among Negroes. In southwest Louisiana, where the poor people were accustomed to Negroes, sugar planters often hired Creole or "cajun" farmers to break Negro strikes.[27] Planters at first despaired of ever receiving the same efficient service they had learned to expect from the Negro. After the first few hectic months of migration, Negroes started drifting back to their old surroundings, prodded by either the Freedmen's Bureau or by simple economic necessity. Nevertheless, labor was a serious problem during the early postwar years.

Some people in Louisiana, who had been closely associated with the agricultural economy, began demanding fundamental changes in the landholding system of the state. Daniel Dennett, a newspaper editor who had been writing about Louisiana's agriculture for years, was one of the most outspoken of the agrarian reformers. Dennett wanted

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[26] Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 256.

[27] Ibid., 265.

Louisiana to develop a small farm system which would mean a stable and self-sufficient economy. Dennett and his followers preached against the evils of the plantation system and the aristocratic concepts which were a part of large-scale landholding. The rural reformers knew that to achieve their ideal there must be an immigration into Louisiana from outside areas. Poor folks from the backwoods would not move into the Black Belt because they did not want to live where there were large numbers of Negroes. They would work their thin, sandy soil rather than live among the former slaves.[28] Planters derided the people who were advocating the breakup of the plantations, pointing out that they were being very liberal with other peoples' land. Men with large estates did not want to part with any of their property because the estates still insured social prestige.

The New Orleans merchants knew full well that their prosperity depended on the productions of the interior. If no cotton or sugar came into the city, they could buy nothing from other places. The Price Current, journal of the New Orleans merchant class, constantly sounded the message that the merchants, planters, and farmers could not import goods unless they had something to sell. De Bow's Review, another important economic journal, demonstrated the effects of blockade and war by revealing some statistics of New Orleans imports. In the fiscal year 1859-1860, the value of imports into New Orleans was $185,000,000. In 1862-1863, the figure had dropped to a mere $29,000,000. During the latter stages of the war, imports increased to the 1864-1865

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[28] Ibid., 255.

level of $111,000,000; which was still far from the pre-war averages. The 1865 figure was inflated by the release of some cotton and sugar which had been stored in the interior since the beginning of hostilities.[29]

Each September 1, the Price Current reviewed the economic developments of the business year. The issue of September 1, 1865, informed its readers that cotton was now the principal staple because of the lack of productivity in the sugar areas. Inasmuch as all were so concerned with cotton, it was now quite obvious that the realization of all commercial and industrial benefits "depends in a great degree on the final settlement of the relations between labor and capital, in connection with the culture of our chief Southern staple."[30] This journal of the New Orleans merchants wanted the Negroes to be forced to work. Wages should be adequate to provide the freedmen with the necessities, but they should not be allowed to waste time in idleness. The economy of the state depended on the return of Negroes to the fields and their working once they were in the fields. The Price Current thought that "to effect these humane purposes and preserve social order, we can see no other sure resort than a new labor system to be prescribed and enforced by the State."[31]

The returned Confederates' desire for a more tightly controlled labor system was very closely tied to their desire to regain

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[29] New Orleans De Bow's Review, January, 1866.

[30] New Orleans Price Current, September 1, 1865.

[31] Ibid.

their ascendancy in the state government. The former Rebels believed that if they got control of the state government, they could reorganize the political and economic life so that it would closely resemble ante-bellum conditions. Slavery was dead; but a rigidly controlled Negro labor would be an adequate substitute. The former Confederates found a pliable man in the governor's office. James Madison Wells, from Rapides, had been Hahn's lieutenant governor before Hahn was sent on an unsuccessful quest for a seat in the United States Senate.[32] One of Wells' first acts after his inaugural on March 4, 1865, had been the appointment of Dr. Hugh Kennedy, a pro-slavery man, as mayor of New Orleans. The Crescent City's mayor was always a powerful figure in Louisiana politics because he controlled the machine in the only large city.[33] The appointment of Kennedy, Wells believed, would give him strength in New Orleans among people formerly indifferent or hostile to the state government. Kennedy, however, was neither as outspoken nor as popular as Monroe, who had been the city's mayor before the arrival of Butler.

When the war ended, one of the most important questions was the future course of Governor Wells. The governor did not leave the returning Confederates in doubt very long. Wells knew that, without outside interference, the former rulers in Louisiana could easily return to power. Wells allied with the Confederates and

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[32] Walter Lowrey, "The Political Career of James Madison Wells," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1947, 41.

[33] George S. Denison to Salmon P. Chase, March 21, 1865, House of Representatives Document 461, Fifty-seventh Congress, Second Session, II, 455-456.

turned against the people who had placed him in office. He selected Christian Roselius, W. B. Hyman, and Robert B. Jones, all Conservatives, to sit on the Supreme Court.[34] He also started using his position to secure pardons for returning Confederates who were in the classes excepted in President Johnson's amnesty proclamation.[35] Wells, along with Kennedy and Thomas Cottman, went to Washington to build up relations with Andrew Johnson. When Wells returned from Washington, he brought with him support from Johnson and full civil power in the state.[36]

With the political fences in Washington strengthened, Wells started forming local governments in Louisiana by removing his erstwhile political friends and appointing recently returned Confederates. Wells spent the summer of 1865 appointing coroners, sheriffs, constables, and mayors. Dr. Dostie and Randall Terry, who had been leading figures in the early reorganization of the state, were bodily carried out of their offices by police.[37] A public testimonial was held for the governor on June 17, 1865. On the list of 400 sponsors, all singing the praises of Wells, were the names of many former officers of the Confederate States Army.[38]

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[34] Lowrey, "The Political Career of James Madison Wells," 46ff.

[35] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 105.

[36] Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, 165-169.

[37] Lowrey, "The Political Career of James Madison Wells," 57.

[38] Ibid., 58-59.

In the early fall of 1865, Wells announced that an election would be held on November 6 to elect state officers and representatives to Congress. The privilege of voting would be accorded to all adult white males who could produce a certificate stating that they had taken either the oath of allegiance prescribed by Lincoln in December of 1863 or Johnson's oath of 1865. Men in the excepted classes, office-holders in the Confederacy or wealthy individuals, would have to have personal pardons from Johnson.[39] The Confederates in Louisiana wanted to keep amicable relations with Washington, but they also wanted to resume control of the state. The election of 1865 was held to put the leaders of secession back into their old positions so that they could control Negro labor, handle the carpetbaggers who were coming into Louisiana, and destroy many of the ideas contained in the constitution of 1864. This was counterrevolution.

There were many people in north Louisiana who disliked Wells' pro-Union background, and felt that he was now trying to please everyone instead of following an affirmative policy. A public meeting was held in Pineville in October, which decided to support Henry W. Allen, although the former Confederate governor was in Mexico City.[40] There was no political organization supporting Allen, but his name drew several thousand votes in the election the following month.[41]

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[39] Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet, September 26, 1865.

[40] Ibid., October 31, 1865.

[41] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 112.

In July of 1865, Thomas J. Durant, B. F. Flanders, and H. C. Warmoth met with the Negro leaders, Oscar J. Dunn and F. C. Christophe, and formed an organization called the Friends of Universal Suffrage. They requested Wells to allow Negroes to vote in the coming election, but in mid-1865 Wells was on the other side of the fence. Wells' reply was an emphatic no. A month after the early meeting, Warmoth, Dostie, Hahn, and Durell spoke at a mass meeting in Lafayette Square, at which Wells was denounced as being "false to the high trust reposed in him."[42] These men, who had been in positions of influence in the government before Wells changed his political ideas, organized the Republican Party in Louisiana as a means for contesting the election set for November. T. J. Durant headed a ticket which advocated disfranchising active Rebels and endorsed free labor and universal suffrage.[43] Warmoth, Dostie, and other Republicans began to argue that Louisiana had committed suicide by seceding from the Union and now was a territory which must be readmitted by Congress on terms described by Congress. Knowing that they had no chance to win any positions in the election, the Republicans called the regular election invalid, and held their own balloting on the same day. In keeping with their theories about the status of Louisiana, Warmoth ran for the office of Territorial Delegate. Negroes voted in this election and were allowed to contribute money to defray Warmoth's

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[42] Lowrey, "The Political Career of James Madison Wells," 72.

[43] Warmoth, War, Politics, and Reconstruction, 43-45.

expenses in Washington.[44]

The Democratic party's platform in 1865 stated that "we hold this to be a Government of white people, made and to be perpetuated for the exclusive benefit of the white race."[45] The Democrats cursed the Constitution of 1864, but had to recognize its validity, as the election was being held according to provisions in the 1864 document. The Democrats approved of Johnson's plan for admitting seceded states, provided that there was no equality, civil or political, between black and white.[46] Mass meetings were held throughout the state, praising Johnson and Wells, and reasserting the political doctrine of white supremacy. The 1864 constitution was criticized as being a creature of fraud and corruption, but one which would have to be used until a new organic law could be written.[47]

Both the Democrats and the National Conservative Union Party nominated Wells for the office of Governor of Louisiana. The Conservative Union Party was the residue of the group which Banks had helped create the year before. They opposed Negro suffrage and compensated emancipation, upheld the Constitution of 1864, repudiated the Confederate debt, and condemned secession. This party, which lost its left wing elements to the Republicans and its right wing to the Democrats, had no chance in the election of 1865.[48] They made

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[44] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 113.

[45] Lowrey, "The Political Career of James Madison Wells," 86-87.

[46] Warmoth, War, Politics, and Reconstruction, 39.

[47] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 109.

[48] Ibid., 111.

some appeal to the working classes in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, but nowhere else.[49] H. C. Warmoth tells in his autobiography that "organized violence was common throughout the State . . . The greatest sufferers of all, however, were the newly emancipated slaves. They were whipped and scourged and killed mercilessly. No one was punished for killing negroes."[50] It is quite probable that Warmoth exaggerated the brutality to the blacks in 1865. Killings and whippings were plentiful in Reconstruction days, but they came later. There was little necessity for it in 1865 because the former Confederates were getting precisely what they wanted. The election, which swept the Democrats into power, demonstrated that voting under the Banks and Butler regimes had not reflected the thinking of the state. Wells, Albert Voorhies, A. S. Herron, and others were elected because they condemned everything the Federals had done.

As soon as the election returns were in and it was obvious that the Rebels had regained control of the government, Wells issued a call for an extra session of the legislature to meet in the Mechanics' Institute in New Orleans on November 23.[51] The planters, who were back in power, were primarily interested in labor legislation which would give them more control over the freedmen. They also wanted something done about the levees, which had deteriorated during the war, and they wanted relief from tax debts which had not been

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[49] Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet, September 14, 1865.

[50] Warmoth, War, Politics, and Reconstruction, 42.

[51] Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet, November 14, 1865.

settled for several years.[52]

With Wells in the governor's office, Voorhies presiding over the Senate, and Duncan S. Cage the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the planters felt sure that they could get the type of labor legislation they wanted. The laws concerning Negro labor which were passed at the extra Session of 1865 resulted in returning the Negro to a de facto slavery. Act number 10 stated that a Negro convicted of carrying firearms would be punished by fine or imprisonment.[53] Act number 11 provided that anyone entering a plantation without consent would be punished.[54] A vagrancy act stipulated that a justice of the peace, judge, sheriff, or mayor could arrest a vagrant and hire him out for twelve months or put him to work for a year on public works, roads, or levees.[55] Act number 16 provided for a $500 fine or a year in jail for anyone "tampering" with employees under contract.[56] The laws passed by the legislature did not recognize proprietary rights on the part of white men to own and sell black men. It did, however, outline a system of management and employment which made the Negroes something less than free men. Rather than owe services to an individual,

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[52] Rogers, Rise and Fall of Carpet-Bag Rule in Louisiana, 24.

[53] Acts of the Louisiana Legislature, Extra Session, 1865, 14.

[54] Ibid., 16.

[55] Ibid., 18-20.

[56] Ibid., 24.

Negroes would owe their labor to the whites at large.[57] The restrictions provided by this legislation made the development of a free labor system impossible. Negroes could not organize, strike, or in any way take action to better their position. Planters could not create a free market for labor, nor could they raise the level of wages by competing for labor. Employers were required to give certificates showing that the individual Negro had performed his work. Hirers of labor were prohibited from giving employment to any Negro who could produce no certificate. In this way a supply of compulsory labor was assured to the planters.[58] All cases arising from the labor laws were to be heard by justices of the peace, who were invariably planters or agents of the planters. Duncan F. Kenner offered a bill which stated that each adult freedman or woman must provide himself with a comfortable house and a means of earning a living within twenty days following the passage of the act or be arrested and hired to the highest bidder for one year.[59] Wells vetoed this bill.

When the legislature was through with its labor bills, it had provided that contracts must be signed during the first ten days of January, wages could be deducted in case of illness, ten hours in summer and nine hours in winter would be the workday, deductions could be made in case of damage to stock or property, fines could be levied

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[57] Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 212-213.

[58] Ibid., 213.

[59] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 138.

by the employer in case of impudence or disobedience, and thefts should be paid for by the culprit at double the value stolen.[60] If an individual was declared a vagrant, he could be hired out for a year by a justice of the peace or a sheriff.[61]

In addition to the local labor situation, there was the problem of representation in Washington. Michael Hahn and R. King Cutler had never been allowed to assume their seats in the United States Senate. The new legislature elected Randall Hunt and Henry Boyce as Louisiana's representatives in the upper chamber in Washington. The two senators, along with Warmoth, presented themselves to the Thirty-ninth Congress, but they were never recognized by that body.[62]

Wells' honeymoon with the former Rebels did not last through the first sessions of the legislature. The governor was primarily a Union man; he had suffered ostracism in his own locality during the war because of his pro-Union sentiments. He wanted Louisiana to resume her place in the Federal Union; but he was not a radical, at least not in 1865-1866. The men in the legislature were unreconstructed Rebels. They would accept the reimposition of Federal rule, provided that it did not interfere with local control over labor and race questions. Because of experience, they recognized the supremacy

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[60] Warmoth, War, Politics, and Reconstruction, 277-278.

[61] Ibid., 279.

[62] Rogers, Rise and Fall of Carpet-Bag Rule in Louisiana, 23.

of the army, but they had misgivings about the Federal Government. The most important issue which split Wells from his new friends was his veto of a bill which would have suspended all state taxes of the 1861-1864 period for those who had lived behind Confederate lines. Wells objected to this measure because it would sanctify secession and treason.[63]

On March 12, 1866, the legislature passed over Wells' veto a bill directing New Orleans to hold an election for mayor and other municipal offices. Wells knew that an election would mean that Kennedy, his appointee, would go out and John T. Monroe would regain his former post. The issue between Wells and the legislative body was simple. The legislature wanted to remove all Union men in the state government and replace them with ex-Confederates. Many of Wells' appointments were Union sympathizers, although they were not radicals of the Bostic or Warmoth type. The decision to hold an election in New Orleans broke up this unnatural political alliance between Wells and the former Confederates.

Monroe, who was elected mayor of New Orleans in May of 1866, was suspended by General E. R. S. Canby because he had not qualified under the oath of allegiance, but President Johnson issued a special pardon and the suspension was removed.[64] After the May election in New Orleans, the Democratic state government was in full operation,

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[63] Lowrey, "The Political Career of James Madison Wells," 106-107.

[64] Rogers, Rise and Fall of Carpet-Bag Rule in Louisiana, 27.

except for the governor who could easily be bypassed.[65] The legislature began considering the desirability of framing a new constitution, one which would be more in harmony with the plantation system than the document of 1864. Duncan S. Cage led a small group to Washington to ascertain the reaction in the nation's capitol. They were advised to let well enough alone and to work with Johnson rather than embarrass him.[66]

While the former Confederates were regaining power in Louisiana, efforts were being made in Washington to destroy that ascendancy. Thomas W. Conway, whom Banks had placed in authority over freedmen in the Gulf Department, appeared before a Congressional committee in February of 1866. Conway asserted that the "most odious features of slavery were preserved in [the Black Codes]." Negroes had been jailed for not having employment certificates. Hugh Kennedy, according to Conway, ordered the New Orleans police to arrest the members of the 74th United States Colored Infantry the day after they were mustered out. "One justice of the peace," Conway asserted, "not far from the city of New Orleans, sentenced a man, for the crime of stealing a horse, to receive forty lashes on his bare back. I received the sentence in his own handwriting and sent it to General Canby." Conway thought that there were many sincere Unionists in Louisiana, but that they were outnumbered and could not be articulate without

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[65] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 148.

[66] Ibid., 149.

Federal protection.[67] Testimony of this nature, of course, was precisely what the radicals in Washington wanted to hear. Conway was not alone in his criticism of Louisiana. Colonel J. W. Shaffer, who had been in New Orleans during the war and afterward, said "the worst men I met, I think, were those who were property holders previous to the rebellion . . . who have returned with their pardons in their pockets and have resumed their old positions." Many of the people elected to office, Shaffer observed, had on their tickets: "Late of Confederate Army." Shaffer thought that an armed force should be maintained in Louisiana to protect men of Union sympathies and the Negroes.[68] Conway, Shaffer, and D. E. Haynes, a former sheriff, testified to the anti-Union and anti-Negro spirit which prevailed in Louisiana. All excoriated Wells for firing Unionists in order to fill their jobs with former Confederates. John Covode, who was to play a leading role in later Reconstruction history, made a visit to Louisiana at the request of Secretary of War Stanton. Covode found the former officers and men of E. Kirby Smith's army docile and submissive; the planters and women, he stated, were the violent ones.[69]

Although the planters had resumed control of the government, this had not, in any real sense, solved their most serious problem.

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[67] See Conway testimony in House of Representatives Reports, Report Number Thirty, Thirty-ninth Congress, First Session, 78-80.

[68] Reports of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Thirty-ninth Congress, First Session, Report Number Thirty, Part IV, 50-59.

[69] Ibid., 114-117.

The year of 1865 was a hectic, chaotic period, and few people expected any large-scale agricultural productivity. When the time came to organize labor and credit for 1866, the planters ran into difficulty. General St. John R. Liddell, a Catahoula landowner, sent a man to Mississippi to try to find some laborers. His agent wrote: "I assure you hiring hands is no pleasant job. I hope it is my last effort in this line." Liddell was offering $15 a month for men, $10 for women, and would furnish food and medicine.[70] Liddell tried to hire white laborers in New Orleans, but found that just as difficult as obtaining freedmen.[71] Labor troubles were statewide. In the Red River area it was hard to find laborers who were free to sign contracts.[72] C. J. Batchelor, a cotton planter, offered his freedmen one-third of the cotton for a years work. Batchelor contracted to advance supplies and then deduct the advance from the laborers' share. The Negroes contracted to use respectful language, work diligently, and pay for anything broken through carelessness.[73]

Most of the people in Louisiana believed that freedom had demoralized the Negroes. The general complaint heard was that it took two or three Negro servants or hired hands to do what one slave had done before the war.[74] It was probably true that the Negroes did

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[70] Liddell Papers, Louisiana State University, Department of Archives and Manuscripts.

[71] Ibid.

[72] J. G. to A. A. Batchelor, March 2, 1866, Batchelor Papers, Louisiana State University, Department of Archives and Manuscripts.

[73] See contract between C. J. Batchelor and freedmen, April 13, 1866, Batchelor Papers.

[74] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, July 5, 1866.

not work as hard as they had done when they were slaves. It would have been unrealistic to have expected them to. The slaves, when freed, wanted to live and act like their former masters, to whom they had always looked as the embodiment of a preferred way of life.

The New Orleans press, especially such economic journals as De Bow's Review and the Price Current, continued to agitate for a more effective labor system. The South, De Bow's Review maintained, should not be expected to make Solomons or even Frederick Douglasses of the former slaves. All Southerners should do was "compel them to engage in coarse, manual labor, and to punish them for dereliction of duty or nonfulfillment of contract."[75] The Price Current maintained that labor in the fields was only about fifty per cent of its former efficiency, and that to attain even this figure took "far more constant watching and driving than formerly." The Price Current thought that "idleness is a curse to the Negro-industry a blessing."[76] Despite the lack of a labor force which could match slavery's efficiency, the New Orleans commercial press was optimistic. The business in the city during 1866, editorialized the Price Current, "should inspire hope and confidence in the commercial community."[77] In its discussions of economic topics, De Bow's Review evidenced no enthusiasm for ideas of redistributing Southern land. This would be, the journal asserted,

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[75] New Orleans De Bow's Review, June 1866, 578.

[76] New Orleans Price Current, September 1, 1866.

[77] Ibid.

"equivalent to a proposition to return to the savage state . . . The ownership of land by everyone would be equivalent to holding all land in common. It is the ownership by a few that lashes labor into execution, and rewards genius."[78]

In the summer of 1866 there occurred a riot in New Orleans which was of such a shocking nature that it concentrated national attention on Louisiana. The basic causes of the riot were the general attitude toward Negroes and the resentment of the people toward Unionists in general and the New Orleans radical Unionists in particular. The immediate cause was an attempt to reconvene the Constitutional Convention of 1864. The Unionists, who had been in power in Federal Louisiana at the end of the war, were angry over the political trend in the state. Many of them had been loyal to the Union during the war, and had suffered because of their convictions. One of the purposes of the convention of 1864 had been to destroy the supremacy of the planters and slaveholders, yet these people were back in power as if nothing had happened between 1861 and 1865. A meeting of some members of the 1864 convention was held in New Orleans on June 26, 1866. When the meeting decided to invoke the clause which had provided that the convention could be reconvened by call of the presiding officer, E. H. Durell, who had presided in 1864, refused to issue the call and withdrew from the meeting. Judge Rufus K. Howell, a member of the Supreme Court, was elected president pro tempore and

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[78] New Orleans De Bow's Review, June 1866, 252-253.

he issued a proclamation calling for the convention to reconvene and for elections to be held in the parishes which had not been represented in New Orleans in 1864.[79] Governor Wells, who was now persona non grata with the Confederate powers, announced that an election for delegates to the convention would be held on September 3. The convention was to meet in the Mechanics' Institute on July 30 to ascertain if there was a quorum, and, if there was no quorum present, action would be postponed until after the election of September 3. It was widely understood that the convention would discuss measures aimed at limiting the rights of former Confederates and enlarging the franchise to include Negroes.[80]

Judge Howell's proclamation, which was published three weeks before the initial meeting, gave the opposition ample time to prepare for action. Mayor Monroe, who was generally thought to be one of the most violent men among the former Confederates, notified General Absalom Baird that he thought a session of the convention would be illegal and that he would stop it from meeting. Baird told Monroe that as mayor of New Orleans he had no authority to take such action.[81] Baird informed everyone concerned that the Federal troops would not protect the convention nor would they allow any action to take place which would disturb the peace of the city.

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[79] House of Representatives Reports, Report Number 16, Thirty-ninth Congress, Second Session, 3-4.

[80] Ibid., 4-5.

[81] Ibid., 7.

Michael Hahn presided over a radical mass meeting in New Orleans on the night of July 27, a meeting at which Dostie made a violent and inflammatory speech. Hahn was reported to have said: "I would rather every office in the State was in the hands of colored men than in the hands of unrepentent rebels." Dostie's address, which was not reported, has always been cited, however, as the fiery address of that evening.[32] The following day, Lieutenant Governor Voorhies wired President Johnson for instructions. Wells, the Lieutenant Governor said, was now with the radicals and could not be trusted by the Democrats.[33] Numerous telegrams were exchanged between New Orleans and Washington, but they had no effect on the rapidly approaching crisis.

There is rather good evidence that the attack, which occurred about noon of July 30, was prearranged. The mayor had freely stated that he would break up the meeting, but no one had expected the city police to get completely out of hand. One public school, which was located near the Mechanics' Institute, was dismissed on July 30 because of expected trouble. Sunday night, the evening of July 29, policemen were withdrawn from their stations and told to get some rest. When the police appeared in front of the Institute, their hatbands were reversed so that the numbers could not be seen.[34]

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[32] Emily Hagen Reed, Life of A. P. Dostie: or, The Conflict in New Orleans (New York, 1868), 294.

[33] House of Representatives Executive Documents, Document Number 68, Thirty-ninth Congress, Second Session, 4.

[34] House of Representatives Reports, Report Number 16, Thirty-ninth Congress, Second Session, 16-17.

About noon of July 30, twenty-six members of the convention of 1864 met at the Mechanics' Institute. Approximately 150 colored people were inside the building and eighteen or twenty were loitering outside. Of this number of people, both members of the convention and onlookers, only about one in ten was armed. The trouble started when a marching group of about 100 Negroes started up Burgundy Street, across Canal, and toward the Institute. They carried an American flag, and were going to the meeting of the convention to cheer the participants on. While the marching column crossed Canal Street a shot was fired, whereupon a large crowd started following the procession. When the men arrived at the Institute, there was a brief flurry of fighting with brickbats before the procession disappeared into the building. At about the time the Negroes went into the building, police arrived on the scene, and, seeing evidence of fighting, started an indiscriminate firing into the building. A white flag was hung from the room where the convention was meeting, whereupon the police rushed into the building. They opened the doors, emptied their revolvers, and returned outside. By that time the whole scene was pandemonium; the attack of the police turned into a vicious and gory race riot.[85]

There were thirty-four Negroes and four whites killed during the riot; about 160 were injured seriously enough to require hospitalization. Dr. Dostie was the only well-known individual who lost his

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[85] Philip H. Sheridan, Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan (New York, 1888), II, 237-239.

life. There was only one white person killed who was not a member of the convention. The New Orleans riot established a precedent which was followed in most of the race violence during Reconstruction. It was always the Negroes who were killed in large numbers, never the whites.

The following report, which appeared in the August 25, 1866 issue of Harper's Weekly, gives a good account of what went on that summer day in New Orleans. It also explains why there was an immediate reaction in the North:

> On Common, Baronne, Dryades, St. Charles, Rampart, and Carondolet Streets freedmen were murdered by the police and mob in cold blood. Standing in the door of the telegraph office on Carondolet, I saw about two hundred men chasing one Negro down the sidewalk. Six policemen were nearest to him, and in advance of his pursuers. They emptied their revolvers into his back, and finally another one, when he was near enough to his victim to lay his hand on his shoulder, shot him in the head. And he fell dead in the alley. Another freedman was trying to escape from the institute when I saw him fall from a policeman's shot. As he struck the ground at least a dozen police and rioters surrounded him and fired their pistols into his head and breast, at the same time pounding him with clubs and canes . . . I saw a white man draw a stiletto and strike it into the heart of a dying Negro in Common Street. The blood spurted out in great jets, staining the murderers clothing, face and hands. He got up and displayed the gory marks as though they were proud emblems of a praiseworthy deed.

A board of investigation was established by the national Congress to question people about the riot. The board visited New Orleans, where they talked to 159 people who had been present or

connected with the incident.[86] The story of the riot gave the radicals in the national government another powerful piece of propaganda which could be used in justifying their demands for a severe type of reorganization policy. The Northern radicals emphasized the fact that there were no attempts to punish anyone in New Orleans for the riot.

When the Fourteenth Amendment reached New Orleans for ratification, the legislature was not in session, and no one was sufficiently interested to call an extra session for the summer of 1866. When the legislature took action on the Amendment on February 9, 1867, the lawmakers rejected it unanimously. The rejection of the Fourteenth Amendment, the general political situation in the state, and the New Orleans riot played into the hands of the radicals in Washington. Such men as Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner could point to the conditions in Louisiana, as well as other Southern states, as examples of the completely unrepentant attitudes of the people. They were in a good logical position; the rebellion against the Federal Government had been destroyed, but the Rebels were back in power and giving every evidence that they were going to resurrect the conditions which had prevailed before the war.

The result of the radical efforts in Congress was a series of acts passed in 1867 which placed the former Confederate States under military commanders who would be responsible to Congress. The

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[86] House of Representatives, Executive Documents, Document Number 63, Thirty-ninth Congress, Second Session, 32.

first act, which became law on March 2, 1867, was based on the premise that there were no lawful governments in the former Confederate States except Tennessee. The principal feature of the bill provided for temporary military rule and reorganization of state government on the basis of Negro suffrage. The ten states were divided into five military districts, to be commanded by generals whose powers were to be superior to state government. When the states had rewritten their constitutions so as to provide for Negro suffrage, had proscribed former Confederate leaders, and had ratified the Fourteenth Amendment, they might be admitted into full membership in the United States. The Reconstruction Acts, which were passed over Johnson's veto, stated that so long as the requirements remained unfulfilled, military rule would continue. The Act of March 2, 1867, and subsequent acts clarifying and implementing it, started radical reconstruction in the South.[87]

The commander of the Gulf Department, Major General Philip A. Sheridan, became the commander of the Fifth Military District, which included Louisiana and Texas. On March 19, 1867, Sheridan assumed control of the Fifth District and immediately declared that all state and local governments were only provisional and that they could be modified, superseded, or abolished as the general desired.[88] Eight

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[87] J. G. Randall, The Civil War and Reconstruction (New York, 1937), 753ff.

[88] Sheridan, Personal Memoirs, II, 251-252.

days after Sheridan assumed his new post, he discharged Mayor Monroe, Judge Edmund Abell, and Attorney General A. S. Herron.[89] Abell, Sheridan asserted, was the judge of the only criminal court in New Orleans and had for months been stimulating the populace to trouble by promising no prosecution in his court. Sheridan pointed out that there had been no prosecution of anyone connected with the July 30 riot.[90] Monroe and Herron were also charged by Sheridan with having been implicated in the riot.

A few weeks after his assumption of power, Sheridan began administering the Supplemental Law, which required the registration of voters in the state, preparatory to holding an election for delegates to a constitutional convention. Sheridan's Special Order Number 15, dated April 10, 1867, provided for registration boards in each parish which would designate the number of polls and where they would be located. General U. S. Grant told Sheridan to interpret the Reconstruction Acts as he saw fit until some kind of ruling could be received from the United States Attorney General. Sheridan, thereupon, told his appointees that they were to use a rigid interpretation in determining who could not register. The law stated that every male citizen of the United States, twenty-one years of age, of any race, color, or creed, and who was not disfranchised by participation in rebellion, could vote. Residence requirements were

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[89] Ibid., 254.

[90] Ibid., 254-255.

one year in the state and three months in the parish. This law could be interpreted so as to disfranchise any white man who had been living in the Confederacy and who had not, by some overt act, identified himself with the Unionist cause.[91] Army officers were to supervise the registration so that there would be no trouble.

The white people in Louisiana soon saw that they were being disfranchised. In Rapides Parish, many persons were not allowed to register because of "private instructions" of the registers. One individual who had opposed secession was not allowed to register because he had been a member of the police jury before the war and another was refused because he could not produce naturalization papers which had burned in the Alexandria fire in 1864.[92] The registers in the various parishes were powerful figures who had been selected on the basis of unchallenged Unionist sympathy and background.[93] In Baton Rouge, the registers were men who had been known there for years.[94] This was exceptional, as many of the individuals who determined the admissability of citizens to the franchise had never been in their registration districts before. In Ouachita Parish, for example, the registers were total strangers. Of one of

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[91] Ibid., 258-259.

[92] Alexandria Louisiana Democrat, May 1, 1867.

[93] There are a number of letters from people wanting these jobs in the Taliaferro Family Papers, Louisiana State University, Department of Archives and Manuscripts. All of these proclaimed unalloyed sympathy for the Unionist cause.

[94] Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet, April 30, 1867.

them, the local newspaper declared, he "came here without an enemy, and leaves without a friend."[95]

Sheridan closed the registration polls on July 15, but was immediately directed by President Johnson to keep them open until August 1. Sheridan thought that the President was trying to get more registrations under a liberal ruling from the attorney general. According to the attorney general, the people who should be excluded from registration were those members of Congress or officers of the United States who had gone into service of the Confederacy and officers of state governments who had taken oaths to support the Federal constitution. General Sheridan, who thought that his own interpretation of the law was more consistent with the mood of Congress, closed the registration polls anyway. He wrote General Grant that to reopen the registration would be to defeat the will of Congress; whereupon Grant informed the district commander that he was to enforce his own ideas until ordered to do otherwise.[96]

While the registration process was going on, Sheridan came into conflict with Governor Wells. There were two commissions claiming authority over levee construction and repair: one appointed by the legislature and one which had been subsequently appointed by Wells. The conflict in authority, Sheridan believed, would lead to disastrous

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[95] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, October 17, 1867.

[96] Sheridan, Personal Memoirs, II, 269-270.

results in the levees. Sheridan appointed a third set of commissioners which received the approval of the legislature. Wells requested a presidential directive which would rescind Sheridan's order. The Secretary of War ordered Sheridan to stop all proceedings and make a full report. The general then removed Wells from office, justifying his action by stating that water would flow over the levees while courts pondered over the situation. "Governor Wells is a political trickster and a dishonest man," Sheridan proclaimed, "his conduct has been as sinuous as the mark left in the dust by the movement of a snake."[97] The removal of Wells on June 3, 1867, led President Johnson to send General James B. Steadman to New Orleans to watch General Sheridan. Steadman told Johnson that the district commander had usurped authority in discharging Wells, but that the governor deserved it. Steadman also told the president that he was right in distrusting General Sheridan.[98] Sheridan selected Thomas J. Durant to succeed Wells, but he refused the office. Sheridan then appointed B. F. Flanders who became governor after Wells was forcibly removed from the office.

Governor Wells was only the most important of many officials who were removed from their offices by General Sheridan. The treasurer, surveyor, comptroller, city attorney, and twenty-two aldermen were ousted in New Orleans.[99] A justice of the peace and the sheriff of

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[97] Ibid., 267.

[98] Ibid., 268.

[99] Ibid., 274.

Rapides were removed when news reached New Orleans that they had refused to allow a Negro to testify in a murder case and had allowed a white man to go out of court on a $500 bond when he had been accused of killing a Negro.[100] In New Orleans, Sheridan issued an order which rescinded an act of the legislature. The legislature had passed a law stating that no one could be a member of the New Orleans police force who had not resided in the city for five years. This would eliminate all men who had come to New Orleans during or after the war. Sheridan cut this time to two years, and ordered Mayor Edward Heath, his own appointee, to adjust the police force so that one-half would be former Union soldiers.[101] The action which finally led to Sheridan's dismissal was his order of August 24, which revised jury lists so as to exclude anyone who was not eligible for voting.[102] Sheridan was succeeded by Major General Winfield Scott Hancock, who was much less the military dictator than Sheridan.

While Sheridan was involved in his ousters and appointments, the registers in the parishes were qualifying Negroes to vote and refusing to register many white citizens. The white conservatives, who saw what was developing, began to withdraw from all contact with the registration boards. One newspaper stated what many people were thinking when it said that no white man in Louisiana would bother to register or

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[100] Ibid.

[101] House of Representatives Executive Documents, Document Number 342, Fortieth Congress, Second Session, 165.

[102] Sheridan, Personal Memoirs, II, 275.

vote; "like touching pitch-their hands would be defiled."[103] Some of the white leaders thought that they could control the Negroes after registration. The Ouachita Telegraph, one of the most important journals in north Louisiana, expressed pleasure at the conduct of the Negroes during registration and hoped that the white people could keep the Negroes from being indoctrinated with false ideas.[104] As the Monroe paper saw the registers in the parish filling the Negroes with radical propaganda, it became more bitter. Within a few months it was one of the most violent Democratic journals in the state. The Telegraph was pleased, however, when Henry Burns, a Negro, made a political speech in the Monroe square. Burns told his listeners that the interest of the whites and Negroes were identical and that the freedmen should co-operate with local whites rather than with radicals.[105] During 1867 colored meetings were held in most of the towns in the state.[106] Major General Joseph A. Mower, one of Sheridan's officers, told an assembly of Negroes in Baton Rouge that they had the same political status as loyal whites and that the United States Government would protect them in legitimate fields of action. He warned them, however, that their enemies would be delighted at any excuse to commit an outrage.[107]

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[103] West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter, May 4, 1867.

[104] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, May 9, 1867.

[105] Ibid., June 6, 1867.

[106] Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet, April 18, 1867.

[107] Ibid., May 21, 1867.

A Special Order was issued on August 17, 1867, which announced that an election would be held on September 27 and 28 "to determine whether a convention shall be held, and delegates thereto." Each board of registration in the parishes was to examine the lists and strike from each list anyone not entitled to vote. In order to fulfill their obligations, the registers were empowered to make arrests during the voting period.[108] The results of the election were a foregone conclusion. There were 127,639 men registered; 82,907 were colored. The total vote in the September election was 79,174; 75,083 of which approved the call for a convention.[109] As a result of a prior arrangement, there were forty-nine Negro delegates and forty-nine white delegates selected for the convention. All of the delegates were Republicans save two.[110] The voting in September was quiet. At the little village of Trenton, for example, the Negroes went to a small frame building where two white representatives from New Orleans held forth. They cast the ballots that had been given to them and quietly walked away.[111] This performance was repeated throughout the state. The whites merely ignored the whole proceeding. The editors in New Orleans were as apathetic as the other white people in the state.[112]

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[108] House of Representatives Executive Documents, Document Number 342, Fortieth Congress, Second Session, 171-172.

[109] Ibid., 174.

[110] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 193.

[111] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, October 10, 1867.

[112] See New Orleans Crescent for September, 1867.

When the convention started its deliberations in New Orleans on November 23, there were no violent reactions such as had precipitated the riot of July 30, 1866. Most of the Democrats were willing to let the "Black and Tan" convention proceed, thinking that they could capture control of the government under any type of constitution once the Federal troops were removed. The Ouachita Telegraph predicted that the convention would transfer itself to a religious meeting of the "protracted" type, and that New Orleans should expect more prayers, shouts, groans, and amens than legislating.[113] Despite the expected jeers and opposition from the majority of white people in the state, the delegates settled down to serious business. James G. Talliaferro, who had been such an ardent opponent of secession, became the presiding officer.[114] Talliaferro was a member of the Supreme Court and was well-known for his opposition to the planter aristocracy. The leading figures in the convention were local men who had been Unionists during the war and Northerners who came into the state while the Federal army was supreme. Their political strength lay in their control of the Negro vote and their relationship with the Republicans in Washington.[115]

One of the first decisions made by the convention was to disfranchise as many former Confederates as possible. Article 99 of

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[113] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, November 14, 1867.

[114] Fortier, Louisiana, I, 261.

[115] Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 220.

the completed document withheld the ballot from all men who had been civil or military officers in the Confederacy, leaders of guerrilla bands, editors or ministers who supported the rebellion, or who had voted for or signed the Ordinance of Secession. The people so proscribed could remove their disability by voluntarily certifying that the rebellion was morally and politically wrong.[116] The delegates expected that the restrictions, plus an article guaranteeing suffrage to freedmen, would remove the possibility of a resurgence of conservative political power. The convention, which granted Negroes the right to vote and hold office, also declared that all schools would be open to freedmen and their children. A few of the more conservative delegates declared that admission of Negro children might destroy the entire educational system, but their advice was ignored.[117]

The action of the convention which aroused the most violent resentment was the unqualified declaration for social equality. Any idea which savored of social equality was contrary to the tradition and tempers of the people. The declaration by the convention made it inevitable that future political differences would degenerate into racial antagonism rather than remain on the level of politics or economics. P. B. S. Pinchback, who had insisted on the declaration, derided the idea that widespread miscegenation would result. Social

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[116] Fortier, Louisiana, I, 274.

[117] Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 222.

equality, he insisted, merely meant that a man, regardless of color, could enter public places, schools, and courts, and pursue his own ideas of happiness so long as he did not infringe on the rights of others.[118]

The constitution of 1868 would be far more effective than the 1864 document in destroying the old slaveholding oligarchy. The distribution of seats in the legislature was to be on the basis of total population in each parish. The political power of the legislature was to remain in the Black Belt, but now the blacks could vote.

The white press went into action as it became apparent that the convention was actually going to complete its work and present the state with a new organic law. Prior to a mass meeting in Monroe, the local editor called for the people to "arise, and in the majesty of your might by all constitutional and legal means in your power throttle and destroy the demon Radicalism."[119] The Opelousas Journal urged the people in southwest Louisiana to register and vote so that the constitution could not go into effect.[120] The Opelousas paper told its readers that "mixed schools will not elevate the Negroes but will debase the whites."[121] The West Baton Rouge Planters' Banner used such epithets as "vile," "infamous," and "conscienceless" in its attacks on the document and the men who had written it.[122] The New

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[118] Ibid., 223.

[119] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, January 16, 1868.

[120] Opelousas Journal, March 7, 1868.

[121] Ibid., March 28, 1868.

[122] West Baton Rouge Planters' Banner, April 11, 1868.

Orleans journalists matched the country editors in vituperation. The Crescent asked its readers: "Do you want to be forced to send your children to school with Negroes? You do not? Then be sure to vote against the Black Crook Constitution."[123]

The convention ceased its deliberations on March 9, 1868. The document was to go to the people for approval or disapproval on April 17 and 18, at which time new state officers would be selected, provided that the document was accepted.[124] At the election, in which the constitution was overwhelmingly ratified, H. C. Warmoth won over J. G. Talliaferro in the race for the governor's office. On June 25, the United States Congress, seeing that Louisiana was on the way to fulfilling all requirements for re-admission, passed an act bringing Louisiana, along with five other Southern states, back into the Union. The first act of the new legislature, half of which was colored, was to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment. When Governor Warmoth informed the military commander of the action of the legislature, the commander gave orders that military law would no longer exist and that the civil government of Louisiana was now supreme. Military force, however, did not leave the state. Federal troops remained in Louisiana, to preserve order and the new government.[125]

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[123] New Orleans Crescent, April 7, 1868.

[124] Fortier, Louisiana, I, 262-263.

[125] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 201ff.

CHAPTER V

FIRST DAYS OF FREEDOM

The Civil War ended slavery in Louisiana; at the same time it presented Louisianians, and the Southern people at large, with the greatest problem of readjustment any American people have ever faced. Slavery had performed two important functions for the white people living in the Bayou State. It had guaranteed a controlled labor system for all people who could acquire the money that was necessary for purchase of slaves; hence, the peculiar institution was supported by the wealthy and those who aspired to wealth. Slavery had also meant that the mass of Negroes living in the state would forever be on the bottom rung of the social ladder; therefore, the poor white people in New Orleans, in the villages, and on the farms could look down on half of the people in the state and feel, because of their identification with the upper half, a sense of elevation which their personal accomplishments did not justify. To be sure, the city of New Orleans had a large number of foreign-born laborers who were not in sympathy with slavery, but they were completely outnumbered, and could be intimidated by the nativistic preachings of Know-Nothingism.[1] The truth of the matter is that Louisiana's Catholics and Protestants, Cajuns and "red necks," rich and poor, were never as whole-hearted in

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[1] See W. Darrell Overdyke, The Know-Nothing Party in the South (Baton Rouge, 1950), 59ff.

support of slavery as in the early 1860's.

Because of the anomalous condition which existed in the state between May, 1862, and the end of the war and because of the incongruities of the Emancipation Proclamation, there was a serious question as to when slavery actually came to an end in Louisiana. The question arose in a murder case in St. Martin, one of the excepted parishes in Lincoln's proclamation. Jean Allison, a Negro, was charged with a murder which was committed on July 15, 1865. If Allison was a slave at the time of the crime he should be tried under the slave codes, if a freeman he should be tried in another court and under a different law. The court decided that Allison was not released from the status of slavery by the Emancipation Proclamation, nor had he been freed by the provisions of the invalid Constitution of 1864. Therefore, in the opinion of the court, slavery had not ended until the legislature ratified the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. On December 6, 1865, "the institution of slavery was abolished by the people of Louisiana and the defendant became by operation of law a freedman." The court failed to note that the legislature which ratified the Thirteenth Amendment was in session under provisions of the 1864 document, nor did it consider the fact that both the legislative and executive branches of the government had accepted the validity of the 1864 Constitution. The court freed Allison because it claimed no jurisdiction. At the same time it denied the validity of the constitution which had been supported by Federal bayonets, it retained the legal fiction that the people of Louisiana, acting in their sovereign capacity in a general assembly, had abolished human

bondage. All legal concepts notwithstanding, a de facto freedom had been created wherever Union armies marched, which had been extended throughout the state when Kirby Smith surrendered.[2]

It is surprising that there was so little violence during the first months after the liberation of the blacks. In an editorial entitled "The Fanatics Failed," the Daily Picayune asserted that "the institution of slavery is rapidly vindicating itself," because Negroes were becoming unmanageable and dangerous in Federal camps.[3] In the Negro exodus to the Northern-held areas there was some violence. One Negro was killed and six wounded when a group of about twenty slaves from plantations near New Orleans used knives and clubs in their efforts to fight their way into Federal lines.[4] The New Orleans newspapers, during the summer of 1862, had frequent articles about Negroes coming into the city, armed with clubs and cane knives, and ready to use them if opposed. Negroes were killed by Confederates when the approach of Northern armies precipitated premature uprisings among the slaves, but there were no mass executions. While the war lasted, the Relief Division of the Union Army took care of Negroes by encouraging them to work on plantations, enlisting them in the army, putting them in newly-created home colonies for the aged and infirm, and supplying them with food and clothing.[5]

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[2] This case received full coverage in the Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, October 11, 1866.

[3] New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 1[illegible], 1862.

[4] Ibid., August 5, 1862.

[5] John C. Engelsman, "The Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1937, 33-34.

De Bow's Review published a letter from an Alabama physician which stated that the postwar problem was not a "mere abstract question of liberty or slavery"; the new issue was that of race.[6] That idea did not gain prominence in the early years of Reconstruction, because white Louisianians believed that they could handle the race problem satisfactorily. The inauguration of new Black Codes and the political supremacy of the former Rebels seemed to bear out that conclusion. There were, of course, incidents which indicated that latent animosities might erupt. A drunken Negro corporal, in one of the very few occasions when a soldier was involved in a racial scene, threatened to whip a white woman. The Monroe military authorities, where the incident occurred, put out a strong guard and closed all drinking establishments.[7] Despite the infrequence of actual violence, the white people in the country parishes who were unarmed lived in dread of armed Negro uprisings.[8] With the exception of the July riot of 1866, there were few outbursts of passion and violence between the races in New Orleans. In the summer of 1864 there was some trouble over Negro privileges in streetcars. The problem was solved, however, by putting stars on cars which could be used by Negroes. New Orleans radicals of both races continued to demand equal privileges for Negroes until the issue almost exploded into a riot in 1867. General Sheridan refused to issue instructions demanding that Negroes confine themselves to the star cars.

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[6] De Bow's Review, March, 1866, 267.

[7] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, November 2, 1865.

[8] Ibid., November 16, 1865.

Thereupon, some Negroes forced their way into the other cars, almost precipitating a riot. A few weeks later the system of star cars was abandoned.[9]

Few white people actually believed that there would be any serious attempt to establish civil, political, or social equality between the races. The bitterness and actual violence occurred when the Negroes refused to work and when, after acquiring the suffrage, they refused to vote as their former masters demanded. In the early years of Reconstruction, there was much good-natured condescension when the former slaves started kicking up their heels in celebration of their freedom. Alexandria town officials levied a small fine when two freedmen disturbed the peaceful tenor of the village by staging an impromptu horse race on the principal street. The Alexandria newspaper registered some complaints about the plantation parties which "town niggers [would] attend en masse, return to town about daylight, drunk and boisterous and kick up H--l generally."[10] The editor of the Ouachita Telegraph thought that in simple justice he should assert that the Negroes were polite, respectful, and obedient, although given to "putting on airs" and performing "grotesque didos" which furnished more amusement than resentment.[11] About 2,000 colored people in East Baton Rouge Parish formed an organization which was completely free of any political designs and which was approved of by the whites. They banded together in a protection and benefit society which was aimed at

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[9] Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 183.

[10] Alexandria Louisiana Democrat, October 31, 1866.

[11] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, April 12, 1866.

providing for their sick and dead, checking disorderly conduct, and regulating the behavior of children. Hoping that they might acquire some land to aid their treasury, they asked white friends to help their organization by making donations.[12]

Despite efforts by whites to adjust to the new situation, it was impossible to change overnight habits of thought which were deep-rooted. George S. Denison expressed the matter clearly when he wrote that Northerners "cannot soon remove the prejudice which the poor whites of the South have been acquiring during their whole lives."[13] The attitude of the people was summarized by J. D. B. De Bow when he told a Congressional committee that people in Louisiana laughed at the idea of educating the Negro because they thought that the Negro was too stupid to learn.[14] Old ideas about the Negro were constantly repeated, such as the news report in a Baton Rouge newspaper which told of Negroes caught with stolen clothing "which was fast assuming the redolent hue and perfume of its sable wearers."[15] Of all the concepts about the Negro which had developed in two and a half centuries of Louisiana history, none had a worse effect on the whites than the identification of hard manual labor with Negro slavery. Stephen Powers, a writer who wandered through the South after the war, stated the essence of the problem when he wrote that "the saddest thing of all that sad war was its termination.

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[12] Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet, September 16, 1865.

[13] George S. Denison to Salmon P. Chase, January 13, 1865, House of Representatives Document 461, Fifty-seventh Congress, Second Session, II, 455.

[14] House of Representatives Report Number 30, Thirty-ninth Congress, First Session, Part IV, 135.

[15] Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet, September 16, 1865.

The conqueror went back to an anvil or a loom . . . the conquered returned to a plow on which the negro had riveted the curse of Canaan."[16]

Although exasperated and angry because of the radicalism being preached to the Negro, whites did not take up arms so long as the ancien regime held the power it regained in 1865. Some men, however, were worried about the consequences of a successful radical movement. A friend of General Liddell wrote of a visit to a radical mass meeting at which "incendiary and revolutionary language was enough to freeze the blood."[17] Louisianians were apprehensive about radicalism in race relations and politics, but so long as the Confederates held the government they felt no cause for alarm.

The journal which was the bete noir of white conservatism was the New Orleans Tribune. The Tribune was edited by highly educated and articulate Negroes who demanded equal rights for the Negro and destruction of the plantation system with all of its attendant social, political, and economic evils. The Tribune, which published its first issue in July of 1865, asserted that "the Black Code of Louisiana is as bloody and barbarous as the laws against witchcraft." With slavery a thing of the past, the paper turned its attention to the rights of the freedman. Recognizing the fact that the end of slavery had not destroyed the "aristocracy of color," it became the most articulate spokesman for Negro schools, Negro suffrage, and Negro rights. J. B. Roudanez, one of

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[16] Stephen Powers, Afoot and Alone: A Walk from Sea to Sea by the Southern Route (Hartford, 1872), 107.

[17] F. D. Richardson to General St. John R. Liddell, July 31, 1866, Liddell Papers, Louisiana State University, Department of Archives and Manuscripts.

the editors, was a vice-president of the Freedman's Aid Association which advocated breaking up seized plantations into small farms for Negroes.[18] During 1865 and 1866 the paper harangued its readers about the rebel spirit which dominated the state. One of the reporters went to Amite City, where he found that the Negroes knew that they were free, but still lived as in the old days. They had not heard of the Freedmen's Bureau, nor had they made contracts or received any pay for their labor.[19] This discovery resulted in a series of editorials on the general theme that Negroes must be educated to appreciate and profit by their new status. The Tribune policy for freedmen was succinctly stated in the issue of April 14, 1867, which said: "we want to ride in any conveyance, to travel on steamboats, eat in any steamboat, dine at any restaurant, or educate our children at any school." The Tribune praised a speaker at a colored meeting in New Orleans who proclaimed that "if my colored brother and myself touch elbows at the polls, why should not his child and mine stand side by side in the school room."[20] Here was developing what the whites feared; demands for political equality were leading to demands for social equality.

Despite their desires for a new kind of life, the Negroes remained agricultural workers. The shackles of slavery were removed, but the signing of documents in faraway places did not give abilities to individual blacks. They had only known how to till the fields of cotton or cane, and that knowledge was their only economic asset. Even before the war was over, occupation authorities found it necessary to

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[18] New Orleans Tribune, May 4, 1865.

[19] Ibid., December 23, 1865.

[20] Ibid., April 17, 1867.

force the slaves to remain at work. The arrival of Negroes in the Federal camps meant constant worries for the commanders, and it also meant that there would be less agricultural productivity at a time when the people needed every single item that could be grown locally. The Federal regulations of 1864 stopped the Negroes from moving from plantation to plantation, prevented them from attaching themselves to the Union army, and established wage scales for the different classes of Negro labor. The Federal system operated on the assumption that labor was a duty and idleness or vagrancy a crime.[21]

The first months of freedom were glorious days in the minds of the former Negro slaves. Emancipation meant that they could come and go as they pleased and also refuse to work if it suited their fancy. Although without funds, thousands of freedmen found their way to New Orleans. Ouachita River steamboats would allow penniless Negroes to work on the boats in payment for their passage to the Crescent City. By that device, Negroes got a trip to the city and steamboat owners received some cheap labor. It resulted in denuding some of the rural areas of agricultural labor and flooding the city with former slaves.[22]

People living in Louisiana during the postwar years reflected their political and racial ideas when they interpreted the willingness of Negroes to sign contracts and their attitude toward contrast labor in general. Reverend Joseph E. Ray, a missionary in Louisiana, told a Congressional committee that Negroes, although naturally disposed to enjoy their freedom, were ready to make contracts but often hesitated to

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[21] Fortier, Louisiana, I, 17-18.

[22] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, December 21, 1865.

do so because they did not believe that their prospective employers would keep the bargains.[23] Ray was following the general outline of the radical party line, which aimed at placing the blame for all problems on the shoulders of the cane and cotton planters. Louisiana planters, merchants, and newspapermen claimed that the Negroes were refusing to work and were, thereby, threatening the prostrate state with further economic calamities. One of the important reasons for the decrease of available labor was the refusal of Negro women to return to the fields. Internal migration and the Negro women's reluctance to resume work go a long way in explaining the labor shortage. Planters who criticized the Negroes and Negro sympathizers who cursed the planters could find abundant evidence to support either position. Negroes were naturally ill-disposed to work after they became free, and their former masters could not adapt themselves to any type of labor system in which the Negro was a free agent. Both employers and employees suffered because of the habits of thinking which had accumulated during the history of slavery in Louisiana.

Control of the Negroes was a function of the Union provost marshals during the early period of occupation. As Federal power extended throughout the southern parishes, it became necessary to have a special department which would be responsible for all problems concerning slaves and free Negroes. General Banks organized the Bureau of Free Labor with a former Baptist minister, Thomas W. Conway, as its head.[24]

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[23] House of Representatives Report Number 30, Thirty-Ninth Congress, First Session, Part IV, 63-72.

[24] Engelsman, "Freedmen's Bureau," 22-23.

The organization which Banks formed became the nucleus of the Louisiana branch of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, which was created by Congress in the spring of 1865. The Federal enactment conferred jurisdiction over the former slaves upon the Freedmen's Bureau. A Federal law of 1866, which was passed over President Johnson's veto, went far beyond the legislation of the previous year in authorizing officials of the Freedmen's Bureau to assume functions normally reserved to civil magistrates. Acting as a quasi-military power, and operating through the Secretary of War, Bureau officials were supreme in all affairs concerning freedmen.[25]

Conway spent his first few months in office in appointing his principal assistants, who, in turn, selected the officials in the numerous localities throughout the state. Louisiana was divided into five main divisions and thirty-three sections with an elaborate bureaucracy of assistants, sub-assistants, and assistant sub-assistants.[26] Local officials were usually officers or former officers of the United States Army. Ordinarily, the white people in Louisiana treated the Bureau officials fairly well, although in the north and northwest parishes they were frequently insulted. The only violence in the early stages of the Bureau's history was the murder of Lieutenant S. G. Butts, in Winn Parish, which could have been the result of personal malice rather than conflicting ideologies.[27]

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[25] James G. Randall, The Civil War and Reconstruction (New York, 1937), 731.

[26] Engelsman, "Freedmen's Bureau," 22-26.

[27] Senate Executive Document Number 6, Thirty-Ninth Congress, Second Session, 68.

There quickly developed a division of authority over Negro labor. Both the state government and the Freedmen's Bureau had regulations concerning labor contracts. The Bureau used its power in enforcing contracts made under its supervision, and the state authorities did the same. There were some instances in which a Negro signed two contracts. In such cases the Bureau saw to it that the contract which was enforced was the one which had been made under its supervision.[28]

The act of March 3, 1865, which created the Bureau, gave it control of all abandoned and confiscable land which was not used for military purposes. There was a distinction between abandoned land, which was relinquished by men who were fighting in the Confederate States Army or who had fled before the Yankee hordes, and confiscable land which belonged to officers of the Confederate army or government. Conway received eighty plantations in June of 1865, whereupon he formed the Plantations Department which divided the plantations and rented them to Negroes. The freedmen placed on the seized lands needed cash. They started cutting the timber and selling it until General J. S. Fullerton stopped them.[29] By the fall of 1866, most of the confiscated land was back in the hands of its owners.[30] Conway published instructions which outlined the steps people must take in order to regain their property.[31]

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[28] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, February 15, 1866.

[29] Engelsman, "Freedmen's Bureau," 99.

[30] Senate Executive Document Number 6, Thirty-Ninth Congress, Second Session, 69.

[31] Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet, August 10, 1865.

The Bureau's chief function, after the seized lands had been relinquished, was the supervision of Negro labor and the protection of Negroes so that they would not lose the rights which had been guaranteed to them by national law.

General Fullerton, who was concerned about the mistaken notions the freedmen held concerning their new status, sent out an open letter in the fall of 1865. The general informed the freedmen that they could work for the employers they selected, could control and use their wages, and could sue in state courts. The purpose of the Bureau, Fullerton asserted, was to protect the Negroes and teach them how to live and labor as free men. The Bureau would not tolerate idleness and wanted the Negroes to return to their plantations and observe the terms of their contracts.[32] Captain Frank Morey, supervisor of the Bureau in the Monroe area, addressed a large colored assembly and told them to return to their former masters, make contracts, and fulfill their obligations. He told the freedmen that if they wanted forty acres and a mule they would have to work for them.[33] Some of the Negroes feared labor contracts because they thought that if they signed a contract they would lose some of their freedom. Many Negroes, who entered a contractual relationship, left their employers because they were not provided with adequate food and clothing or because they received too much punishment. The Bureau usually sustained the freedmen in their action and tried to find new employers for them. In 1866, many Negroes got the idea that they were going to be provided with forty acres and a mule. When the story had received wide cir-

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[32] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, November 2, 1865.

[33] Ibid, December 7, 1865.

culation, many Negroes refused to sign contracts or to leave the plantation where they were living. In such cases, the Bureau co-operated with state officers in enforcing the rigorous vagrancy laws.[34]

Freedom did not mean economic emancipation to the Negroes. As freedmen they ate simple and cheap food, whether it was provided by themselves, their employers, or the Freedmen's Bureau. They accumulated no property as a slave. Postwar wages, ranging from three to ten dollars a month, would not provide them with the necessary funds to become property owners. As far as food, clothing, shelter, and labor were concerned, there was little change. The Negro had been an impoverished rural laborer before the war; he did not change.

The Freedmen's Bureau had a large amount of relief work to perform for both blacks and whites. The levees were in such bad condition that they frequently crumbled under the pressure of the rivers, causing inundation of the adjacent farm lands. Levee troubles caused conditions to become worse in a state which was already prostrate. When the worst floods occurred in the spring of 1866, the Bureau announced that it was willing to aid all people who were endangered.[35] Floods, as well as general agricultural conditions, were at their worst during 1866. Local areas could not raise the funds necessary to meet the emergency, and were forced to rely on the United States Government. By October of 1866, conditions were improved enough to justify the Bureau's action in discontinuing relief except when necessary to prevent starvation.[36] Again in 1867, the people were threatened

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[34] Engelsman, "Freedmen's Bureau," 52ff.

[35] Opelousas Southern Sentinel, June 2, 1866.

[36] Senate Executive Document Number 6, Thirty-Ninth Congress, Second Session, 83.

with disaster because of floods, drought, and insects. Sale of crops was so curtailed that the employers could not pay their laborers and were forced to discharge them, thereby increasing the relief responsibilities of the Freedmen's Bureau.[37] When the Bureau turned over the problem of relief to the parish police juries in 1868, it had completed the distribution of a vast amount of supplies. From June 1 of 1865 to June 1 of 1866, the Bureau distributed 370,087 rations to freedmen and 9,710 rations to whites.[38] During the 1867-1868 period, the Bureau gave away 197,454 rations; 15,000 went to whites.[39] The Bureau had not discriminated between black and white when it came to distributing supplies in stricken areas. In the spring of 1866, for example, the Red River levees broke in front of Alexandria, inundating the entire village. Major S. G. Willaver, Alexandria agent of the Bureau, made 20,000 rations available to all who were in need.[40]

Although the Freedmen's Bureau aided whites in times of emergency, there was widespread resentment against the Bureau and its agents. The existence of the Bureau in Louisiana meant that an agency which was directed and protected from Washington would have final authority over problems concerning the Negro. The Bureau established elaborate systems of contracting for labor, which included the inevitable multiplicity of forms to be filled, and the agents insisted that the contract blanks be made out with bureaucratic efficiency. Employers did not like the complicated machinery, they

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[37] Engelsman, "Freedmen's Bureau," 40-41.

[38] DeBow's Review, February, 1867.

[39] Engelsman, "Freedmen's Bureau," 41.

[40] Alexandria Louisiana Democrat, June 30, 1866.

did not like paying for the services rendered by the Bureau in filing contracts, and they did not like to pay the poll taxes levied by the Bureau on employers.[41] The former slaveholders resented the interference of an agency of the United States in what they considered to be purely local affairs.

The actual contact between planter and the Bureau was on the level of the local Bureau agents. The agents put the regulations into effect and explained the system to prospective employees. Before the election campaigns of 1868, which started a new era in Louisiana history, most of the white people were content to judge agents on their individual merit rather than condemn them all because of the system. Many of the agents deserved the criticism of the people; even Conway and Fullerton expressed dissatisfaction with some of them.[42] Frank Morey, who was praised in Monroe for trying to make the freedman work, was later condemned for defrauding Negroes and for accepting bribes.[43] Another agent in north Louisiana was forced to leave to avoid arrest for nonpayment of personal bills.[44] So long as the Bureau agents made Negroes sign labor contracts and fulfill them, they were accepted by the white people. When the agents used their position as a means of preaching radical propaganda there were violent reactions among the whites. A Dr. Bishop, who was the Bureau's agent at Jackson, was one of the most severely condemned. He was charged with "pandering

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[41] Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet, December 26, 1865.

[42] Engelsman, "Freedmen's Bureau," 29.

[43] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, October 14, 1868.

[44] Ibid., May 13, 1868.

to passions of negroes," making arrests without warrants, prosecuting whites on testimony of Negroes, and "officious intermeddling and usurpations."[45]

The most general complaint of the planters was that Bureau agents enforced the contractual obligation of the employer but allowed freedmen to break contracts as they pleased. J. D. B. DeBow explained to a Congressional committee that "The Freedmen's Bureau, or any agency to interfere between the freedman and his former master, is only productive of mischief."[46] DeBow, who reflected the thinking of the old planters and merchants, wanted his friends to have complete charge of the labor situation in Louisiana. His magazine, which was a potent organ of public opinion, advocated a strict labor law which would be enforced by the state and which would guarantee cheap labor to the planters. DeBow's ideas would also guarantee that the freedom of the Negroes would be meaningless in an economic sense. Some of DeBow's friends wanted to use measures more extreme than those already provided in the Black Codes. They would write vagrant legislation which would apply the principles of the Black Codes to the poor whites of Louisiana.[47] Such a proposition, while recognizing in a legal sense the end of slavery, would have reduced the former slaves and the poor whites to a condition not far removed from actual bondage.

The Negroes did not receive any deliverance from the cotton and

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[45] Ibid., September 26, 1867.

[46] House of Representatives Report Number 30, Thirty-Ninth Congress, Part IV, 135.

[47] See New Orleans Price Current, September 1, 1865, and Daily Picayune, September 28, 1865.

cane fields; they had been field hands, and so they remained. In another important aspect of life, however, they became as free as they could have desired. The one undisputed freedom that the Negroes received was the freedom of religion. Before the war, the slaves, when they received any religious instruction at all, were indoctrinated in the faith of their owner. The end of slavery brought about a "great awakening" among the Negroes. With no knowledge of the intricacies and subtleties of Christian theology, the former slaves began creating their own religion, which at times became a pathetic but human blend of Catholicism, Protestantism, and fetishism. Louisiana Negroes, especially those in the old French Catholic regions, had always been impressed by the stately and colorful ritual of the Roman Catholic Church. Their emotional approach to religion led them to adopt some of the practices of the Baptists and Methodists, the predominant Protestant churches in the state. Catholic ritual and symbolism, frontier Protestant emotionalism, and some borrowings from voodoo made up the freedman's religion. Some Negroes in Louisiana rejected the Bible, because they had always been told that the Bible and Christianity justified and sanctified slavery, but these Negroes were few in number.

The Negro's feeling for simple and understandable modes of expression were a powerful factor in developing Negro religion, just as they would be a creative force a generation later in the birth of the blues and jazz music. Basic in the freedmen's religion was an acute awareness of an omnipresent Divine Being. They seemed to feel God bending over them like the sky; they sensed His presence like a storm or like sunshine. When the time came to express their joy or their sorrow, they had the powers of imagery that simple people have always possessed. Figures of

speech were not translations of a forgotten tongue nor were their parables of a distant land. Opelousas or New Orleans would be more preached about than Jerusalem, and it would have been hard to convince the former slaves that the mighty Mississippi was less important than the River Jordan.

Mysticism was important in Negro religion because the mystic's direct approach has an appeal to simple and uneducated people. Some Negroes professed to have revelations, explaining that "De Master teaches we poor coloured folk in dat way, for we hasn't edication, and we can't read his bressed word for ourselves."[48] The Negroes, in borrowing ideas and ritual from the Catholic Church, often talked of the Virgin Mary in a manner completely naive, as, for example, a prayer which asked "Lord, if you is busy tonight, and can't come down yourself, please send Mudder Mary wid her broom to sweep de chaff from our hearts."[49] A more common beginning of a prayer was: "O Lord, we come to Thee like empty pitchers to a full fountain to be filled."[50]

There were many ways in which a Negro could be converted to Christianity; and all were exciting. Sometimes a man, or a woman, would be in a state of intense depression, perhaps for days or a week. He would be thinking of what he had been told by his friends, or what he had heard the preacher say the previous Sunday. Then, suddenly, while at rest or while going about his daily tasks, he would raise a shout of joy: "I've got religion! Bress de Lord! Hallelujah!" The first man he met after conversion would be his father in the Lord, and the first woman he met

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[48] David Macrae, The Americans at Home: Pen-and-Ink Sketches of American Men, Manners, and Institutions (Glasgow, 1885), 282.

[49] Ibid., 291.

[50] Ibid., 290.

would be his mother in the Lord.[51]

The most exciting and breath-taking conversions were those which occurred at church, under the deliberate and protracted promptings of friends and exhorters. Of all the spectacular aspects of Negro religion, none compared with the "Frenzy." There were many methods used in developing an emotional hysteria which would lead an impressionable sinner into the straight and narrow way. The most frequently used device was a slow, rhythmic chant, which would be accompanied by some type of musical instrument and handclapping and dancing. With the clapping, chanting, and dancing getting more and more unrestrained, it would not be too long before sinner and saved would be swaying and shouting in their feeling of uninhibited ecstasy. In such meetings as these, the words were those of Christianity, but the spirit was of Congo Square.

Negro preachers relied on this vivid imagination much more than on their scanty knowledge of Holy Writ. One man, who had learned to read a little, found the phrase "my feet are as a hind's feet," but read it "my feet are as a hen's feet." In discussing the meaning of the verse he explained "A hen in de henroost, when it falls asleep, it tightens its grip so's not to fall off. And dat's how true faith, my breddern, holds on to de rock."[52]

Despite the inroads made by Christianity, voodooism held on tenaciously, especially in south Louisiana, for years after the war. One of the fabulous persons living in New Orleans during the middle of

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[51] Ibid., 283.

[52] Ibid., 292.

the century was a "Doctor John," also called "Voodoo John" and "Jean-Gris-Gris." This Negro man, who claimed to be a Senegalese prince, was the last of a long list of wizards whose African titles were recognized. Spanish slavers brought him to the West Indies, and from the islands he came to New Orleans. Thousands of people, of both sexes and races, visited him for his prophetic utterances.[53] Doctor Jean specialized in healing the sick and selling magic prescriptions. The voodoo wizard, to whom many whites came for advice, was able to aid in domestic problems because of his many followers who worked in white homes and reported all of the domestic tragedies.[54] Most of Doctor John's white trade came from heavily veiled ladies who carried away from their clandestine visits small phials of magical liquids which would help them in their love affairs. These clients made the wizard a wealthy man; he owned valuable property and a carriage and pair worthy of an affluent planter of ante-bellum days.[55]

Powerful though the Reconstruction politicians were in dictating to the New Orleans Negroes, few could match the influence of such voodoo queens as Marie Leveau and Melvina Latour. Marie Leveau was an old woman after the war, but she retained much of her power over the voodoo worshippers until 1869, when she was succeeded by the younger woman. Voodoo queens became wealthy by selling gris-gris and by occasional excursions into pandering, but their position among the Negroes was attained because

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[53] Albert Mordell (ed.), An American Miscellany by Lafcadio Hearn (London, 1925), II, 205-208.

[54] Robert Tallant, Voodoo in New Orleans (New York, 1946), 37.

[55] Mordell, Hearn's Miscellany, 205.

they presided over the voodoo rites. By the postwar period, voodooism in the sense of an African religion was moribund and existed only in an accumulation of Negro practices. The voodoo dances were still wild and orgiastic and were frequently entered by whites who expected some magical result. What actually survived of voodoo was an elaborate system of superstition based on gris-gris or "conjure." For example, a Negro in New Orleans gave a hen to a friend of Lafcadio Hearn, who had done some small favor: "Marsi Henry, you keep dat frizzly hen, an if eny nigger frow eny conjure in your yard, dat frizzly hen will eat de conjure."[56] Much of the Negroe's superstition stemmed from voodooism and centered around death. It was bad luck to whistle the tune that was being played at a funeral, to cross a funeral procession, or count the carriages. If a funeral procession stopped in front of a house, it meant that the corpse wanted company. One should never sleep with the foot of the bed towards the door, because corpses were carried out feet first.[57] All these and many more ideas were a part of the Negro's religion.

In the summer of 1865, the members of the Beulah Baptist Church, in Rapides Parish, met to discuss the attitudes of the colored members of their church. After deciding that the freedmen had not been faithful in attending meetings, had been doing things inconsistent with Christian character, and were developing erroneous ideas about baptism, they notified their colored members to repent their transgressions and renew their affiliations with the Beulah Baptists. Some months later, several of the colored members requested that they be established as a separate church.

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[56] Ibid., 213.

[57] See ibid., 200 ff.; Tallant, Voodoo in New Orleans, Passim; and Asbury, The French Quarter, 254ff.

The whites agreed, and the twenty-five colored members departed in peace and formed their own congregation.[58] Scenes like this were repeated all over Louisiana. During slavery days, Negroes went to church with whites and occupied separate pews in the back or sat on benches along the sides of the buildings. When the Negroes became free, they usually wanted to have their own preacher and their own congregation. They encountered little opposition from the whites. When the white people in Louisiana criticized some of the Negro churches, they were speaking of radicalism in the pulpit or some of the long and loud services the Negroes seemed to enjoy; seldom did whites express any resentment over the Negro's freedom of worship itself.

A Plenary Council of the Catholic Church, which was held in Baltimore in 1867, took up the matter of emancipated Negroes and how they could be brought into communion with the Roman Church. The following year, nearly a hundred priests landed in New Orleans to begin missionary work among the blacks.[59] Catholicism, which had been the religion of the Negroes in south Louisiana for two and a half centuries, continued to hold most of its colored members. The various orders of the Church, such as the Sisters of the Holy Family and Little Sisters of the Poor, continued to minister to the needs of unfortunate Negroes, just as they had done before the war.[60] One visitor in Louisiana observed that in

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[58] Records of the Beulah Baptist Church of Cheneyville, Louisiana. These records are in the custody of Miss Bessie Shelton of Cheneyville, Louisiana.

[59] Macrae, Americans at Home, 298.

[60] Roger Baudier, The Catholic Church in Louisiana (New Orleans, 1939), 419-20.

Catholic churches there was no distinction as to color; all knelt side by side, giving him the idea that Christianity had done its work.[61] At least one priest thought that there was considerable work to be done before the Church could consider itself free of racial bias. Father Claude Pascal Maistre, pastor of the Church of St. Rose de Lima on Bayou Road in New Orleans, started inciting the Negroes to demand racial rights and equality in 1862 and 1863. Archbishop Jean Marie Odin ordered him to desist, but the priest refused to obey the prelate's demand. The archbishop imposed ecclesiastical censure on Father Maistre and later interdicted the church, but the priest ignored all orders and continued to preach racial equality and justice to the Negroes who came to listen to him. St. Rose was closed, whereupon Father Maistre undertook to erect a new church at the corner of Ursuline and North Claiborne streets. The father, who kept the records of his other congregation, called his new church the Holy Name of Jesus Christ, and continued to hold services although under interdict from Archbishop Odin. Father Maistre's church continued to function until 1871, at which time the priest renounced his transgressions and was assigned elsewhere. Father Maistre's capitulation ended the only serious attempt to establish a bi-racial congregation in an authoritarian church.[62]

Before the war, the Catholic Church had ministered to the needs of the slaves. Priests, assigned to households, had given instructions and guidance. After emancipation, they could not continue to use the old

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[61] George Rose, The Great Country: or Impressions of America (London, 1868), 191.

[62] Baudier, Catholic Church in Louisiana, 413.

methods because the free Negro could choose his own religion and was not bound to accept the religion prescribed by his employer. Although they bore no malice toward the priests, Catholic Negroes began to drift to other denominations. Protestant missionaries from the North labored among the freedmen and provided them with churches, schools, and hospitals. Missionary endeavors, and the prospect of having control of their own congregational affairs, led many Negroes into communion with the Baptists, and, to a lesser extent, the Methodists.

The Louisiana Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was formed by fifteen preachers in New Orleans on March 13, 1865. The presiding officer of the first meeting was Bishop J. J. Clinton who shortly before had formed the Negro Methodist Conference in North Carolina. The African Methodists in Louisiana increased rapidly in numbers until 1871, at which time there were 10,124 members.[63] In 1866 a convention of the Methodist Episcopal Church met in New Orleans and drew up certain principles to be followed concerning colored Methodist churches. One of the first decisions made at the convention was that colored members might organize separate congregations whenever they desired to do so if they had sufficient members to justify such action. Negro Methodists were to be regulated by the official doctrine and discipline of the church, colored preachers must be licensed, and Negro congregations were to be subject to the regular College of Bishops. The desirability of separate general conferences was recognized.[64] The New

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[63] J. W. Hood, One Hundred Years of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church; or The Centennial of African Methodism (New York, 1895), 312-313.

[64] DeBow's Review, July, 1866.

The New Orleans Tribune ran frequent stories about the activities of Negro Methodists in the city, and inaugurated a religious column which interpreted scriptures for the readers.[65] In the rural areas, the Negro Methodists had illiterate preachers who screamed and contorted and jumped. One observer, however, noted that they were "not more violent or ghastly than I have seen in Western camp-meetings among white people."[66]

Free Negroes and slaves had started joining Baptist groups many years before the Civil War. A mixed church at Bayou Chicot in St. Landry Parish was one of the first Baptist churches in Louisiana, and for many years was the moderator of the Louisiana Baptist Association. During the ante-bellum period, white and colored Baptists increased greatly in number in north Louisiana. The Baptist service, and especially the congregational autonomy, had a great appeal to the Negro when they became free.[67] The freedom and local democracy of the Baptist Church enabled Negroes to participate in their own religious affairs to a much greater extent than they could expect in an authoritarian church organization.[68] In 1866, Negro Baptists in Louisiana joined the Consolidated American Baptist Missionary Convention.[69] The first convention of all colored Baptists in the state was held in New Orleans in June of 1873.

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[65] See New Orleans Tribune, February 5, 1865.

[66] Charles Nordhoff, The Cotton States in the Spring and Summer of 1875 (New York, 1876), 73.

[67] Walter H. Brooks, "The Evolution of the Negro Baptist Church," Journal of Negro History, VII (1922), 13.

[68] Ibid., 11.

[69] Ibid., 19.

More than fifty congregations were represented, most of them being from such nearby parishes as St. John the Baptist, St. James, and Jefferson.[70] Governor W. P. Kellogg, who owed his position to Negro votes, addressed the convention. The governor spoke on what he considered to be the wicked doctrine that a good judge of color could pick out a Negro's soul in heaven.[71] The people at the convention concerned themselves with the perennial problems of organization, raising money for churches and schools, and standards for admission into the church. The convention resolved that preachers and deacons who visited bars and consumed intoxicating beverages would be dismissed from the church, along with all members who lived in unlawful cohabitation.[72] The problem of cohabitation was a serious one at that time because slave marriages had never had a legal status, and it was not until 1868 that a legislature provided that people who had been living as husband and wife could make declaration before an officer of the state and legitimate their marriage and their offspring.[73] White Baptists fostered the development of their religion among the Louisiana Negroes. At the Louisiana Baptist Convention of 1875, delegate George W. Nager insisted that the State Mission Board continue working among the Negroes. Nager remarked that "God seems to have invited us to this work by putting it into their hearts to ask for the gospel from the lips of white Baptists."[74] The white Baptists were pleased

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[70] New Orleans Republican, June 3, 1873.

[71] Ibid., June 5, 1873.

[72] Ibid., June 17, 1873.

[73] Harriet Spiller Daggett, A Compilation of Louisiana Statutes affecting Child Welfare and the Report of the Louisiana Children's Code Committee (Baton Rouge, 1933), 284, 291-292.

[74] Minutes of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Session of the Louisiana Baptist State Convention (Memphis, 1875), 8.

with their colored brethren because in the middle of the 1870's they had 263 churches, 163 ordained ministers, and 35,154 members.[75]

White Louisianians had no objection to Negro religion, but they did resent the idea of Negro education because Negro schools supported by the state would be paid for by white taxpayers. The idea of state supported public schools was anathema to a large number of white conservatives, and they could certainly not be expected to support Negro public education when they opposed public education for white children. The State Superintendent's Report for 1865 stimulated the editor of the Alexandria Louisiana Democrat to blaze forth in his issue of February 12, 1866, as follows:

> The report before us shows that the benefits conferred by the public schools on the people of the State are by no means proportionate to the immense outlay required to support them. In short, public education in Louisiana, being an exotic of Yankee vegetation, has never flourished in this climate and never will flourish. The public Schools are a failure and always will be a failure. We take it that the highest aim of Education is to improve the moral character of youth ... we must remember that it is in educated Massachusetts, Connecticutt, and other Northern States, that have originated in past years all that fanaticism and illiberality of spirit towards the South which have culminated in the cutting of their brothers' throats, and have overwhelmed the South with ruin and desolation.

Prejudices such as these would have made any school system operate under a handicap, much less Negro schools in Louisiana during

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[75] Ibid., 43.

Reconstruction. There had been Negro schools in Louisiana before the war, but they had been almost exclusively for free Negroes. Organizations in the Catholic Church, such as the Ursulines, Sisters of the Order of Sacred Heart, and Carmelites had held schools for Negroes where the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic were taught. In 1842, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family was formed by Louisiana Negroes, all descendents of reputable free Negroes in New Orleans. These colored sisters, who were concerned with charitable, educational, and religious work among their own people, had a small orphanage where they taught the catechism and elementary subjects. The slave laws, which provided heavy penalties for teaching a slave to read, said nothing against education for free Negroes. The wealthy Negroes in New Orleans frequently sent their offspring to France for their education. Most of the Negro schools in ante-bellum Louisiana were in or near New Orleans, although there were some in other parts of the state, like the little four room building used by the Daughters of the Cross in Natchitoches and a rather large school in Pointe Coupee which was maintained by about 200 free Negro families. There were also small Negro schools supported by religious orders in Opelousas and Baton Rouge.[76]

The first efforts at large-scale Negro education was begun by the Federal Army. General Banks, in January of 1863, organized a Committee on Enrollment which soon had seven schools, twenty-three teachers, and 1,500 pupils under its supervision.[77] Banks made a much more

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[76] For a brief account of ante-bellum Negro education see Betty Porter, "The History of Negro Education in Louisiana," Unpublished Masters Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1938, Passim.

[77] Ibid., 14.

thorough approach to Negro education in a general order issued in March of 1864. A supervisory board was created which was to establish at least one school in every district designated by the provost marshal, acquire land and buildings, employ teachers, and provide books and supplies. Banks authorized the educational board to levy a one and one-half mill tax on real property and crops in order to have money to operate the schools. Despite such problems as bad weather, bad roads, and irregular pay, there were ninety-five schools, 162 teachers, and 9,500 students in the thirteen occupied parishes in December of 1864. There were also 2,000 adults who were attending night schools.[78] Most of the teachers were Southern white women, who suffered ostracism at the hands of other whites in the communities. Northern school teachers were singled out as special objects of scorn. As they had difficulty finding boarding places, they frequently resorted to makeshift shanties. Some were actually driven away by irate whites.[79] The Board of Education of the Department of the Gulf, which supervised Negro education, invited all who were interested in public education among the blacks to feel free to confer with the board at any time; few people availed themselves of the privilege.[80]

The Constitutional Convention of 1864, composed of local loyalists, displayed no great interest in Negro education. Few were opposed to it on principle, but no one was satisfied with the idea of having white people pay for schooling black children. Article 141 of

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[78] Ibid., 16-17.

[79] Ibid., 16.

[80] New Orleans Daily True Delta, May 25, 1864.

the constitution stated that future legislatures should provide for educating all children, and that these legislatures should concern themselves with the problem of financing public education for white and black. A proposal to eliminate public education for Negro children was defeated by a vote of seventy-two to nine.[81] The delegates in 1864 were not going to provide an adequate arrangement for Negro schools, but neither were they going to deny them; after all, General Banks wanted Negro schools and the convention had been called and was being protected by Banks. The first legislature elected under the constitution of 1864 did nothing about Negro education because white public opinion was opposed to it.[82] Negro education, although tacitly accepted in the 1864 document, remained in the hands of the occupation authorities.

The Federal law which created the Freedmen's Bureau committed all problems related to freedmen to that organization. Control of the Negro schools was turned over to the Bureau as soon as it was organized and ready to assume responsibility. The activities of the Bureau were seriously curtailed in educational matters because there were no specific financial provisions concerning Negro education. The Bureau, which started operation at about the time the Federal power was extended over the entire state, had much greater responsibilities than had been borne by the army. Despite the handicaps, the first year's operation under the Bureau witnessed the establishment of 141 schools with approximately

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[81] Porter, "Negro Education in Louisiana," 27.

[82] Ibid., 29.

20,000 pupils.[83]

During 1865, expenses of operating schools for freedmen were taken from Bureau funds. The Bureau spent $20,686 in December of 1865, which was about average.[84] A tuition system was used in New Orleans, as well as some of the smaller towns, whereby pupils paid a dollar or a dollar and a half a month. Schools for Negroes began to lapse in early 1866, not only because of financial troubles but also because of indifference on the part of too many Negroes. In country places, where schools needed protection to keep going, the departure of Federal soldiers meant the end of Negro schools.[85] The Freedmen's Bureau had funds to pay the teachers through January 31, 1866, at which time the schools were to receive no more aid from the Bureau.[86] Some teachers, who had private incomes, continued to hold classes. Others, who had no other means of support, tried to exist on the eight or ten dollars a month they could get from tuition.[87] The civil government in Louisiana made no effort to provide for Negro schools. Robert M. Lusher, who was elected State Superintendent of Public Education when the former Confederates regained control of the government, did not mention Negro education in his report of 1866.[88]

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[83] Ibid., 20.

[84] Senate Executive Document Number 6, Thirty-Ninth Congress, Second Session, 74.

[85] Ibid., 75.

[86] Porter, "Negro Education in Louisiana," 20.

[87] Senate Executive Document Number 6, Thirty-Ninth Congress, Second Session, 75.

[88] Porter, "Negro Education in Louisiana," 30.

The United States Congress passed a supplementary Freedmen's Bureau bill over the veto of Andrew Johnson, and thereby enabled the Louisiana division of the Bureau to continue the educational work which was about to perish from lack of funds. The commissioners of the Bureau were given enlarged powers in establishing and maintaining schools for freedmen, and were authorized to sell seized property, which had formerly been held by Confederate states, as a source of funds for the schools.[89] By April of 1866, conditions looked better because the Bureau had more money for schools and because some planters began to think that their employees worked better when their children were in school. During the summer of 1866, agricultural conditions were deplorable because of overflows and drought. The planters and laborers were not so favorably inclined toward Negro schools as they had been a few months before. The riot of July, 1866, resulted in increased racial tension, which was manifested by the burning of four Negro churches which were being used as schools. There were only a few places in the state where crops were good and where new Negro schools could be organized; everywhere else Negro education was being curtailed.[90] During the first nine months of 1866 the Bureau maintained 110 schools with 244 teachers and 11,500 pupils.[91]

The principal reasons for the failure to establish a satisfactory Negro education program during the early years after the war were the apathy of the Negroes when they discovered the time involved, the hostility of the

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[89] Ibid., 22-23.

[90] Senate Executive Document Number 6, Thirty-Ninth Congress, Second Session, 76.

[91] Ibid., 77.

mass of local whites, and the lack of adequate funds. The schools in New Orleans were protected by the army, but in the country parishes there was no power sufficient to maintain the schools if the white people objected to their presence. Country whites would refuse to board teachers or sell them anything at the stores. Threats of mob violence were frequent, as were rumors concerning the character of the teachers.[92] Joseph E. Roy, an agent of the Home Missionary Society, told a committee of the House of Representatives that in Franklin Parish four colored schools were broken up when the Federal troops withdrew. In Terrebonne Parish one Negro school building was burned and another torn down shortly after the Northern soldiers left.[93]

Whitelaw Reid, a prominent Northern editor, visited the colored schools in New Orleans in 1865. He found that the value of the school depended almost altogether on the character and ability of the teacher. Some of the instructors, especially those of the lower classes, were coarse, seedy individuals who knew little more than their students. They approached Negro school teaching as merely another way of making a living, and did not care if the young Negroes learned anything or not so long as they caused no trouble. One woman teacher whom Reid observed demanded perfect quiet in the class. When one little fellow made a noise "she bowled him against the wall as one would bowl a ball down a ten-pin alley."[94] Reid found some teachers who had received some training and

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[92] Engelsman, "Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana," Passim.

[93] House of Representatives Report Number 30, Thirty-ninth Congress, First Session, Part IV, 63.

[94] Whitelaw Reid, After the War: A Southern Tour: May 1, 1865 to May 1, 1866 (New York, 1866), 247.

were sincerely interested in the educational work that they were performing, but they were all too few. At one of the schools he found a wealthy young quadroon who had volunteered to teach. The attitude of the class and the work they could perform attested to the success that could be achieved by a competent individual.[95] In one room, where there were rows of small children, Reid found an old man of about sixty, whose white wool and wrinkled face were grotesque amid his fellow pupils. The old man had a Bible which he wanted to read, and told the distinguished visitor that if learning was good for white it was good for colored and if it was good for children it could not be bad for old folks.[96] Reid attended a Negro Sunday School where he was met by a sedate Negro graduate of Amherst. A hymn was called for, and when a young Negro touched the piano keys, there poured forth from the assembly a volume of melody which was "like listening to the grand peals of Plymouth Church itself." After the hymn was sung, there was an address on liberty and how it should be used by the individual. Occasionally the speaker would ask such questions as "What great man freed you all, and was then taken home?" and "Are you really free now?" Each question would be answered by a shouted chorus from the mass of young Negroes.[97]

Several of the parishes began to demand that control of Negro education be in the hands of Louisiana people rather than an agency of the United States. Few of the parishes, however, were in any position to assume the responsibilities of providing for colored schools. Two schools

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[95] Ibid., 252.

[96] Ibid., 253.

[97] Ibid., 257.

in Jefferson were turned over to parish officials, who promised to create two more. In November of 1867, sixteen New Orleans schools were transferred to the newly-created Board of Public School Directors. The city councillors had empowered the board to establish public schools for Negro children, and had appropriated $70,000 for the purpose.[98] The movement to transfer authority over Negro schools to the Louisiana parish and state authorities never became important because the Black and Tan Convention of 1867-1868 completely changed the educational system in the state. The Constitution of 1868, which provided that children of the educable age must be without distinction as to race, started a new period in the history of Negro education in Louisiana.

The beginning of Radical Reconstruction in 1867, and the elections of 1868, mark the beginning of a new position for the Louisiana Negro. During the first few years after the war, few Negroes were concerned with problems of social and political rights. The majority of blacks were looking for ways either to find work or avoid it, and were adjusting to the peculiar ways of freedom. With the exception of some radical leaders in New Orleans, few people of either color were overwrought about Negro suffrage. To be sure it had been discussed in the newspapers and in private conversation, but scarcely anyone took the matter seriously. As far as the whites were concerned, the only serious problem of racial adjustment was getting the freedmen back into the fields. The Constitution of 1864, which was considered a radical document by the white conservatives, had not guaranteed Negro suffrage, it had merely provided that future

[98] Porter, "Negro Education in Louisiana," 31.

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legislature could allow Negroes to vote if the legislators so desired.

The former rebels who gained control of the state government in 1865 ignored the provisions of the 1864 Constitution which pertained to Negro voting. Their action, after the election of 1865, indicated that they would allow the Civil War to mean only that secession was impossible and that slavery had ended. In all social, political, economic, and racial matters they desired to recreate the ways of life which had existed before the war. The radicals in Washington interpreted the developments in Louisiana, and other states, as evidences of an unrepented spirit. They reasoned that if the whites were disfranchised and the Negroes given the ballot, the Southern states would consistently be in the Republican fold. Louisiana whites did not begin to use harsh measures of persuasion until it became apparent that the Negroes were going to vote as the radicals directed. The widespread race troubles, which were such an important part in Louisiana's Reconstruction history, usually occurred between fire-eating Rebels and radically-minded Negroes. Colored men who were members of Democratic clubs were as assiduously courted by leading white conservatives as were the Republican Negroes sought after by the radicals. Both the wealthy planter-merchant group and the poor farmers in the hills accepted Negro votes when they were cast for conservative whites. There were few serious and effective efforts to alter the pattern of race relations. Therefore, the whites were not troubled by their conscience when they mingled with Negro Democrats at political rallies and at the polls. After Negro suffrage was forced on Louisiana, whites accepted it and tried to control the colored vote. The bitterness and violence of Reconstruction was not altogether a problem of race. The fundamental clash was between local whites,

who had no support from Washington and little from the Negroes, and radicals who were directed from the national capital and who controlled the Negro vote. Both sides appealed to the Negro vote; neither side was interested in Negro welfare.

CHAPTER VI

THE COST OF DEFEAT

When the Confederate soldiers started returning to their homes in the summer of 1865, they found desolation and want in what had once been a flourishing agricultural region. Houses were dilapidated, fences were down, levees were broken, and weeds grew in fields which had a few years before produced abundant harvests. The flow of goods by way of the mighty Mississippi and the numerous smaller rivers had been interrupted by the military conquests of Northern soldiers and sailors. To be sure, there had been a restoration of trade a few weeks after the Federal troops occupied New Orleans, but the value of imports and exports was far below the prewar averages. Confederate money and bonds were worthless and specie virtually unobtainable. The important credit system, which had made country dependent upon city in ante-bellum days, was hopelessly inadequate. Only the land remained; and the former slaves seemed disinclined to return to it.

The first task of restoration was to obtain labor for the cotton and cane fields. Planters and Freedmen's Bureau officials were agreed that the Negroes must till the soil, although they disagreed as to many of the methods in persuading the freedmen to work. The Freedmen's Aid Association, whose president was B. F. Flanders, wanted to help the Negroes by giving them advice and money, but the society was small and could not aid the thousands of freedmen scattered through-

out the state.[1] The National Equal Rights League, a radical organization in New Orleans, provided an employment service, but it could not affect materially the labor picture.[2] Many planters despaired of getting efficient service from the emancipated Negroes because so many of them were flocking into such places as Shreveport, Monroe, Alexandria, Opelousas, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans in their search for some of the joys of freedom. Louisiana's state officials and the men in the Freedmen's Bureau aided the stranded masters, but men accustomed to unqualified submission among their laborers were not satisfied.[3] Even after returning to the fields, the Negroes were apathetic toward work, grumbled about wages, hours, and other conditions of labor.[4]

New Orleans editors, especially the men who published the Price Current and DeBow's Review, recognized the significance of labor trouble in the country. They knew that the prosperity of the merchant community depended upon the production of sugar and cotton, which could be sold to buyers from other areas. Without the credits accumulated from the sale of cotton and sugar, the New Orleans merchants could not buy the vast number of articles which were not produced locally, but which were necessary for any enjoyable standard of living. The Price Current was an early advocate of some system of

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[1] New Orleans Tribune, April 15, 1865.

[2] Ibid., January 3, 1865.

[3] Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 252.

[4] Wiley, "Vicissitudes of Early Reconstruction Farming," Journal of Southern History, III (1937), 449.

forced labor for the Negroes.[5] The farmers in the piney-woods, who eked out an existence on poor soil, did not produce the staples which were handled by the New Orleans merchants; hence, their habits of industry were not important to the city folk. Negroes, on the other hand, were the laboring force in the Black Belt, where the soil was good and where the valuable staples were grown. The merchants in the city had reason to be concerned over the habits of Negro laborers in the Black Belt. Should the Negroes "prefer the savage enjoyments of a life of idle liberty, like the Indians who preceded them," the economy of the Crescent City would be ruined.[6]

The legislature which was elected in 1865 was dominated by former Confederates who were acutely aware of labor unrest in the Black Belt. Their solution for the problem was a series of laws which would have, if enforced, subjected the Negroes to controls by the state government and, in effect, made the Negroes owe their labor to the whites at large. The legislators were under pressure from the white planters and merchants to adopt some drastic measures to force recalcitrant Negroes to work. New Orleans newspapers were not alone in demanding strict labor legislation. The Opelousas Southern Sentinel published stories about freedmen moving around the countryside, visiting each other, taking a look at "Opelousy," and waiting for something to turn up but not too concerned if it did not.[7] The Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet published letters from planters who had ideas about laws which would make the Negroes work without actually returning

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[5] New Orleans Price Current, September 1, 1865.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Opelousas Southern Sentinel, January 13, 1866.

them to slavery.[8]

For several years after the war was over, planters in the Black Belt were hard pressed to find laborers to work in their fields. A friend of St. John R. Liddell asked the former Confederate General if he might borrow some cotton pickers from the general's fields, as they were exceedingly hard to find.[9] In the spring of 1866, J. H. Boatner wrote General Liddell that he was having trouble in securing laborers and was also having difficulty controlling them once they were under contract.[10] J. S. Kennard, an associate of Liddell's, wanted to hire white laborers in New Orleans because "Negroes are hard to make work or hire."[11] J. G. Batchelor, a cotton planter, was having the same difficulty with laborers in the Red River Valley. Batchelor wrote many letters to his friends and relatives describing his labor problems.[12] Former Governor Thomas O. Moore, who planted both cotton and cane on his two plantations in Rapides Parish, carried on extensive correspondence with men who could aid him in locating laborers. Aristide Miltenberger, a New Orleans factor, sympathized with Moore and expressed the hope that "when they [freedmen] have spent all their money they will not be so independent."[13] In the summer of 1869, Moore

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[8] Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet, July 18, 1865.

[9] F. D. Richardson to General Liddell, July 31, 1866, Liddell Papers.

[10] J. H. Boatner to General Liddell, May 8, 1866, Liddell Papers.

[11] J. S. Kennard to General Liddell, February 21, 1866, Liddell Papers.

[12] J. G. to A. A. Batchelor, March 2, 1866, Batchelor Papers.

[13] Aristide Miltenberger to Thomas O. Moore, January 2, 1869. Moore Papers, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Louisiana State University.

dealt with a Negro named Pierce who brought eight men to the former governor's plantation. The labor agent collected his fees, plus forty dollars for the transportation by boat, and left. Shortly thereafter the laborers left also.[14] A few months later, Moore sent an agent to Delaware and North Carolina in search of field hands. In addition to the salaries to be paid to the laborers, Moore contracted to pay the transportation from the east coast to Rapides and ten dollars to his agent for each family head who contracted to work.[15] At times the difficulty involved in securing Negro labor would drive the white planters almost to hysteria. Surely, it must have been aggravating for men who had commanded a squad of slaves to be forced to bargain with Negroes for labor. One planter, for example, was so desirous of having a particular Negro work for him that he wrote a friend: "if he dont seem inclined to come you can let on like Peter has employed you to have him sent out by the Sheriff."[16]

Development of a Negro brokerage business was an interesting sidelight of the labor picture. Some men, similar in function to the old slave traders, would contract to deliver to a planter a number of laborers, usually at the rate of ten dollars per man. The broker would appear at the designated plantation, collect his fees, and then depart

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[14] John F. Pollock to Thomas O. Moore, August 14, 1869, Moore Papers.

[15] John F. Pollock to Thomas O. Moore, November 3, 1869, Moore Papers.

[16] John P. Haney to S. D. Ellis, January 9, 1869, Ellis Papers, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Louisiana State University.

with the money and, frequently, some of the laborers as well. One of Thomas O. Moore's friends, in recommending a labor agent, remarked "he is, we think, honest and reliable as a man in his business can be."[17]

Much of the bad feeling which developed between black laborers and white planters came from general economic conditions rather than specific grievances. Bad weather and broken levees ruined crops and made both employer and employee dissatisfied with everything pertaining to the new system. Had the postwar crops been good, both would have been happier with the free labor system, and free labor as a method of agricultural business would have been strengthened.[18] One instance, witnessed by a traveler in the state, indicates how general conditions affected the attitude of Negroes toward their employers. A planter offered jobs to about one hundred Negroes, but they refused to work for him. The freedmen, who had tilled the planter's fields the previous year, had been told that they would receive one-half of the crop. At the end of the year the price of cotton was down and proceeds from the sale of the crop barely covered the items which the planter had advanced during the year. The Negroes could not understand this and assumed that they had been cheated.[19]

Labor problems, coupled with the demands for the productions of agriculture, stimulated many people to demand that measures be

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[17] John F. Pollock to Thomas O. Moore, October 23, 1869, Moore Papers.

[18] Senate Executive Document 6, Thirty-ninth Congress, Second Session, 70.

[19] Macrae, Americans at Home, 255.

taken to bring immigrant laborers into the state. In July of 1865, a Baton Rouge newspaper suggested that means be taken to foster a mass migration of agricultural laborers into Louisiana. If the Negro was to survive, the paper proclaimed, he must work and work hard. Should a large number of immigrants start working in the fields, the competition would force the Negroes to do likewise.[20] The same newspaper, in the fall of 1865, was publishing frequent articles extolling the virtues of Chinese laborers.[21] The West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter, echoing the rising demand for imported labor, wanted to offer good inducements to get white immigrants into Louisiana, and then let come what may to the Negroes.[22] The legislature, feeling the pressure from the worried agriculturalists, established a Bureau of Immigration in March of 1866. The Chief of the Bureau was to supervise agents in foreign countries who were charged with advertising the physical merits of Louisiana. He was also to arrange for transportation of workers to Louisiana and serve as a liaison agent between the planters and immigrants.[23]

DeBow's Review, in the issue of January, 1866, published an article which brought out some important ideas about Louisiana's labor supply. For a number of years before the war, the Review stated, there had been a deficiency of labor. Some people had advocated reopening communication with the coasts of Africa and Asia to secure

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[20] Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet, July 8, 1865.

[21] Ibid., November 11, 1865.

[22] West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter, February 10, 1866.

[23] Fortier, Louisiana, I, 528.

cheap labor. No one had suggested, in the late ante-bellum years, that white laborers might be secured. White laborers would not have entered the slavery areas, but in the late 1860's it might be different.[24] The Review further stated that "the South must throw her immense uncultivated domain into the market at a low price; reduce the quantity of land held by individual proprietors, and resort to intelligent and vigorous measures, at the earliest moment, to induce an influx of population and capital from abroad."[25] Ideas such as were expressed in this article were being published in newspapers and journals, but they never had any real effect because landowners were loath to sell their land.

James C. Kathman, Chief of the Bureau of Immigration, published a letter in DeBow's Review which explained the failure of the immigration scheme. Immigrants were arriving at the port of New Orleans, Kathman stated, but if existing influences continued only a few would remain in Louisiana. The trouble lay in the fact that Louisianians who were loudest in demanding some substitute for Negro were actually preventing immigrants from staying in the state. In other sections of the United States, large landholders were dividing their property and selling small farms at low prices, offering long terms, and were aiding newcomers in other ways. In Louisiana, Kathman protested, each individual planter was trying to recover immediately

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[24] DeBow's Review, January 1866, 6.

[25] Ibid., 8.

his lost wealth and was trying to do it independently. Prospective settlers could not get from the state Bureau or any other agency sufficient information about farm lands for sale. Therefore, they went elsewhere.[26] Kathman told of many farms which were being offered for sale and of some planters who would sell part of their land to desirable neighbors. The serious drawback to the whole plan of immigration was the fact that planters wanted laborers, not prospective landowners, to come to Louisiana. They wanted families who would till the fields and not agitate to own their own land.

Some immigrants came into Louisiana from other parts of the United States and from foreign countries. Kathman's office reported that during 1866 and 1867 more than 9,000 entered the port of New Orleans, although less than one-half remained in the state.[27] During 1868 and 1869 there were about 3,000 immigrants at the port of New Orleans, but only a small percentage of this number were classed as rural laborers.[28] Demands for immigrants continued but the supply steadily decreased. Representatives from Louisiana and the neighboring states held an immigration convention in the spring of 1868, but accomplished nothing of importance.[29] Small societies, such as the "Immigration Society of the Parish of St. Landry," held regular meetings, collected dues, but were unable to persuade workers to come to the

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[26] Ibid., November 1867.

[27] Ibid., December 1867.

[28] House of Representatives Executive Document 235, Forty-first Congress, Second Session, 56-68.

[29] DeBow's Review, April, 1868.

state.[30] A group of one hundred Germans brought into the state from New York indicated some of the problems inherent in importing labor. The men, all under contract, landed in New Orleans and within twenty-four hours thirty of the group had deserted for better pay.[31]

There were thousands of foreigners pouring into the United States in the years after the Civil War, but they stayed away from Louisiana. The basic reason was the lack of economic opportunity for the common man. The good land was in plantations, and the planters would not sell portions of their land to common farmers, even if doing so might mean superior labor and a general increase in the value of all real estate. Immigrants into Louisiana had no more chance of getting good land than the Negro. Some of the few laborers who immigrated into the state were treated like former slaves as soon as they signed contracts to work.[32] The result of these conditions was chronic labor unrest in the areas where the land should have been productive.

Postwar economic conditions emphasized the need for a balanced agricultural economy in Louisiana. The nature of the plantation and one-crop systems, which had characterized the state's ante-bellum economy, precluded any possibility of a diversified agricultural system. During the years following the war, unsettled labor conditions, ruin in the fertile areas where the armies had marched, and restrictions on credit prevented large-scale production of cotton and sugar. Planters in the Black Belt exhausted themselves trying to get capital and labor

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[30] Opelousas Journal, May 23, 1868.

[31] Trowbridge, Desolated States, 414.

[32] Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 255.

so that they might start producing the valuable staples once again. They did not try to change their systems of farming so that vegetables, fruits, and dairy products would be important items in the state's agricultural production. Much of the story of economic ills during Reconstruction centers around the inability of the planters to adjust to a new situation. Their position had been so enviable in the ante-bellum period that they wanted to return to the ways of social and economic life they had once enjoyed. The reactionary desires of the planters was an important factor in postwar troubles because it extended into all of the aspects of social, economic, and political life.

There were many people in Louisiana who wished that the solution of current problems would result in a better balanced economy. These agrarian reformers demanded that planters stop relying on cotton and cane and concentrate on the many other productions of agriculture which Louisiana's fertile soil would grow. For several years the editor of the Monroe Ouachita Telegraph wrote articles denouncing the one-crop economy of North Louisiana. Vegetables, which the editor thought should be grown near Monroe, were brought by steamboat from New Orleans, where the city merchants had purchased them from producers in other areas.[33] The Telegraph stated in the spring of 1867 that "cotton has nearly been the ruin of the South."[34] The editor of the Monroe paper sought information about crops which could be grown in the northern parishes and wrote long articles about them, but few

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[33] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, February 7, 1867.

[34] Ibid., March 14, 1867.

planters paid them any attention. The Baton Rouge Gazette and Comet carried numerous editorials about the evils of growing cotton or cane at the expense of depending on other areas for foodstuffs. The Opelousas Journal, discovering that one man in St. Landry Parish was deserting cotton and producing vegetables, remarked: "we are glad to see that one at least is so far cured of the cotton mania . . . to produce . . . without buying from producers in other states."[35] In February of 1869, a boat loaded with corn and other foodstuffs docked at Alexandria, inspiring a broadside from the virulent pen of E. R. Biossat, editor of the Louisiana Democrat. "Will the planters of Rapides never learn a lesson," he exclaimed, "corn, peas, potatoes, oats, pumpkins, and vegetables are the parish's salvation . . . stick to cotton and buy corn and the place will go to H--L."[36]

One of the extremely important developments during the postwar years, and a natural result of the conditions, was the beginning of sharecropping. The system whereby planters allowed men to work for a share of the crop rather than cash wages was a logical answer to the agricultural problems because laborers would accept a sharecropping arrangement quicker than they would sign a contract to work for wages. Moreover, most of the planters believed that laborers, especially the freedmen, would work harder for a share of the crop than for wages because they had an incentive to produce more. Sharecropping arrangements were made in an infinite variety of compromises because of the differences among laborers. A man who had only his labor and skill to

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[35] Opelousas Journal, March 28, 1868.

[36] Alexandria Louisiana Democrat, February 19, 1869.

offer (most of the freedmen were in this category) could not hope for as high a percentage of the total crop as a man who brought with him a mule and some equipment. C. J. Batchelor, for example, gave his freedmen and freedwomen one-third of the crop and advanced supplies during the year, the value of which would be deducted from the laborers' share after the crops were sold.[37] Batchelor, a Pointe Coupee cotton planter, also made agreements which stated that he would give freedmen one-fifth of the crop and support them during the year. In the sharecropping system, the planters kept the records and computed the deductions at the end of the year. It was easy to cheat the Negroes because they could not keep records themselves. Too many of the planters yielded to temptation and exaggerated the value of goods advanced to the freedmen during the year. Despite the cheating that was practiced in keeping the records, planters throughout the state found that sharecrop arrangements kept their laborers in the fields better than a wage system. Several of the state's newspapers believed that the sharecropping arrangements would bring farmers who were grubbing for a living in poor soil into contact with rich, productive soil.[38] Few of the native poor whites moved into the alluvial lands because they were afraid of yellow fever and because they did not want to compete with the former slaves as either wage earners or sharecroppers.[39]

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[37] See contract signed April 3, 1866, Batchelor Papers.

[38] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, December 19, 1870.

[39] Roger Shugg, "Survival of the Plantation System in Louisiana," Journal of Southern History, III (1937), 321.

One of the most important economic developments during the 1860's and 1870's was the decline of sugar production. In the years before the war, producers of sugar had been in an enviable position because, protected by a tariff, the price of their product did not depend on the conditions of world trade. Cotton prices, on the other hand, were determined in the markets of England and tended to fluctuate more than sugar prices. The protected market enjoyed by the sugar producers made it possible for them to invest great sums of money in sugar plantations and all of the expensive and necessary equipment which went into the production of sugar. After the war, the Sugar Bowl presented a sad picture. It had been fought over more often than the cotton regions of North Louisiana. Devastation of war, neglect, and lack of credit prevented the sugar region from recuperating as rapidly as the cotton lands. Because of the expenses necessary in reconditioning or replacing machinery in the sugar houses, it took far more money to get a sugar plantation back into full production than was necessary to revive a cotton plantation. Sugar planters estimated in 1865 that they needed about $25,000,000 to get their plantations back into operation, and that would not mean a return to prewar productivity.[40] Credit in that amount was not available to the sugar planters. By using care in all operations, planters gradually improved conditions in the Sugar Bowl. The number of plantations actually in operation increased from 138 in 1865 to 653 in 1867; the number passed the thousand mark in 1870. After 1873, the number of

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[40] Pritchard, "Effect of the Civil War on Louisiana Sugar Plantations," Journal of Southern History, V (1939), 324.

sugar plantations in operation decreased because the owners of smaller plantations were forced to sell their land to big planters or to banks which were investing in the sugar business.[41]

A significant development of the postwar period was the separation of the production of cane from the manufacturing of sugar. In ante-bellum days, each sugar planter had his own sugar house. After the war, large and more efficient sugar houses began to dot the landscape, making it possible for a person who had a few acres planted in cane to take his crop to a refinery and have it manufactured into sugar. The widespread use of large steam-operated sugar mills made it possible to use the sharecropping system in the Sugar Bowl.[42]

Bouchereau's annual analyses of the sugar industry provide valuable statistics which show the effect the Civil War had in the cane fields. The following table, taken from the 1869 report, shows the tragic decline of sugar production during the war, and the unsuccessful attempts to regain prewar levels.

Table I

Total Production of Sugar in Louisiana in Hogsheads

1860 - 228,758	1866 - 41,000
1861 - 459,410	1867 - 37,647
1864 - 6,668	1868 - 84,256
1865 - 15,000	1869 - 87,000

Late in January of 1868, when both labor and credit should have been ready for the new year, few sugar planters had secured

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[41] Ibid., 330.

[42] King, The Great South, 80.

laborers. Negroes were wandering around over the countryside, visiting each other, and deciding for whom they would work during the ensuing year. Complete arrangements for planting operations were not completed by the larger units until March. The year 1868 was an election year, and the Negroes were excited about politics until the national election was held in November. As a result, planters had to start their grinding season late. An unexpected cold wave hit the Sugar Bowl in November, resulting in a poorer crop than even the most pessimistic had anticipated. Situations similar to this were repeated often, especially in election years.[43] Bouchereau, spokesman for the sugar producers, blamed postwar troubles in the Sugar Bowl on the inadequate labor supply, lack of capital, and inability of planters to control their laborers once contracts had been signed. He estimated that only three-eighths of the former slaves were in the fields. Much of the decrease came from Negro women's refusal to be field hands once they were free.[44] Another problem in the cane country, according to Bouchereau, was the injudicious competition for labor. He believed that the wage increases, caused by bidding on the part of the planters, were creating too much confidence on the part of the Negroes. Competition for labor might tend to "create hostility among the planters, which may result in feuds, precluding the exchange of social courtesies and neighborly kindness." The problem could be solved, the editor of the sugar reports asserted, by the importation of Chinese workmen.[45]

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[43] L. Bouchereau, Statement of the Sugar and Rice Crops Made in Louisiana in 1868-1869 (New Orleans, 1869), vii.

[44] Ibid., viii.

[45] Ibid., ix-x.

During the debates at the Constitution Convention of 1868, some of the delegates advocated breaking up large plantations in the Sugar Bowl by prohibiting the sale of more than 150 acres to any one individual or corporation at distress sales. It was also suggested that uncultivated land be taxed at double the rate of cultivated land so that no planter could afford to hold land that he was not actually using. They hoped that such laws would force landowners to sell part of their property. The proposal was stopped by a steering committee composed mostly of white men.[46] Such a measure would have had a bad effect on the production of sugar. There were not enough large refineries to enable a multiplicity of small producers to use the facilities of a central manufacturer. The hundreds of sugar houses built before the war were still necessary for the production of sugar; and that meant that large-scale landowning would continue.

During the ante-bellum period of Louisiana's history, the state's economy depended upon the production of the two great staples, cotton and sugar. The decline in sugar production meant that cotton would be the chief staple; and the production of cotton became the most important single item in Louisiana's economy. Northern capital, which was coming into the state, went into the cotton fields where immediate returns could be expected rather than into the sugar plantations where investments must be large and where little profit could be expected for several years. Also, there was an important demand for cotton in the Northern textile factories.[47] In addition to the

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[46] Shugg, "Survival of the Plantation System in Louisiana," Journal of Southern History, III (1937), 317.

[47] Trowbridge, Desolated States, 400.

Northern manufacturers, British and other European investment, importing, and manufacturing interests were calling for large cotton crops.[48]

The New Orleans Price Current asserted a few months after the war was over that "the ability of the Southern planter to pay for western produce must ever depend upon the degree of his success in the culture of Cotton and Sugar."[49] The production of cotton, which was now paramount in Louisiana, affected all elements in the economy from the laborers in the fields to the merchants in New Orleans. Mercantile classes, importers, steamboat operators, and factors; all of these, and more too, must work together if Louisiana was to prosper again. The necessity for co-operation was stressed by the Price Current, DeBow's Review, the newspapers, and political economists of all descriptions. The sugar fields were virtually barren, so all of Louisiana's people began looking to the cotton fields for signs of hope.

During the war, the demand for cotton had pushed the cost higher and higher until August of 1864, at which time the low-middling grade was selling for $1.85 per pound. In the summer of 1864, the supply of cotton was increasing, but it was not large enough to meet the heavy demand felt in the New Orleans market. It took, in that year, $2.60 in paper money to buy a gold dollar, so that the actual coin price of cotton was seventy-one cents.[50] After the Confederate surrender, some cotton bales which had been stored in north Louisiana were released, resulting in a lower price for cotton in New Orleans. In mid-summer of

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[48] Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 250.

[49] New Orleans Price Current, September 1, 1865.

[50] Ibid.

1865, cotton was selling for about forty cents per pound in the low-middling grade. The Price Current expected the total cotton sales in 1865 to approach the monetary value of the 1860 crop because of the inflated prices.[51] This did not mean that Louisiana would have a purchasing power comparable with that of 1860. The prices of all the items that were being imported into Louisiana had skyrocketed also. All along the Mississippi Valley, production of cotton increased when the fighting stopped. The New Orleans facilities handled 131,044 bales of cotton during the 1863-1864 season and 271,015 in 1864-1865. There was a definite trend upward, but the 1865 level was far from the 2,255,448 bales shipped through New Orleans in the last year before the war.[52] DeBow's Review, in January of 1866, discussed the value of the cotton trade for the past several years. In the 1859-1860 year, the value of cotton handled in New Orleans was $109,389,228; this index of agricultural prosperity dropped to less than two million dollars in 1861-1862. In 1864-1865, the value of cotton going through New Orleans was $73,326,398. By this time, prices of cotton and all other products had been inflated by the war.[53] During 1866 and 1867, the amount of cotton being shipped down the river to New Orleans increased significantly. The Crescent City received 787,386 bales during 1865-1866, and 730,490 the following year, but this increase in quantity was partially offset by a steady decline in price. The annual values of cotton received in New Orleans for the three years

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] DeBow's Review, January 1866, 49.

following the war were $73,000,000, $140,000,000, and $98,000,000.[54] The drop in total value for the last year mentioned was caused by the decline of cotton prices to about twenty-five to twenty-eight cents per pound. Strangely enough, at the time cotton was reaching its first postwar lows in 1867 there were cotton bales coming down the river that had been stored in north Louisiana since the beginning of the war.[55]

The planting, cultivating, and harvesting of cotton in Louisiana was a process which would begin in some parts of the state in the middle of March and would not be completed until the last bolls had been picked over in late September.[56] In the alluvial parishes, where most of the cotton was grown, the labor in the fields was done by former slaves who were not wage earners or sharecroppers. In such parishes as Catahoula, Winn, Red River, or Franklin the cotton fields were tilled by white farmers who owned the land and who depended on a small cotton crop to augment their simple economy. In all of the cotton parishes, there was a tendency to raise more of the necessary supplies at home. Nevertheless, the agriculturalists in the areas where large cotton crops were grown could not get away from the one-crop system. Sharecropping was the most prevalent labor system, except in parishes such as Bienville or Franklin where there had been few slaves before the war. Usually, the landowners furnished

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[54] Ibid., September, 1867, 236.

[55] New Orleans Price Current, August 31, 1867.

[56] Eugene W. Hilgard, Report on Cotton Production in the United States (Washington, 1884), 80.

land, work animals, and implements and kept one-half of the crop.[57] Throughout the cotton areas, whether the Negroes were sharecroppers or hired hands, the local merchants acquired all they earned. In Catahoula, for example, the local merchants provided the necessary supplies for about eighty per cent of the farmers and sharecroppers in the parish. Reports from other parishes revealed the same tendency. Few planters and almost no laborers ever paid cash for anything; nor did they have much to keep at the end of the year.[58]

The Price Current of September 1, 1870, in its annual review of commerce, expressed a feeling of optimism which had been absent for many years. In nearly everything that "constitutes the main sources of our prosperity," the journal stated, "there has been a satisfactory improvement." The business year of 1869-1870, although not comparing well with the prewar years, had witnessed a noticeable increase of wealth in both city and country. Cotton, the principal crop in the postwar years, was one of the sources of increased prosperity. New Orleans received only 81,000 hogsheads of sugar in 1869-1870, which meant that the commercial city would have to depend upon the income from the fleecy staple. The value of cotton passing through New Orleans jumped from $98,000,000 in 1868-1869 to $120,000,000 in the 1869-1870 business year. The New Orleans commercial press was jubilant over the increased purchasing power for all people engaged in agriculture and commerce whether they worked directly with cotton or not. The Price Current, nevertheless, commented on the fact that the

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[57] Ibid., 83.

[58] Ibid., 84.

Crescent City was losing some of its business to St. Louis and other cities which were railroad terminals.[59] It would have been better for the future welfare of New Orleans and the entire state had there been a more thorough understanding of the effect railroad transportation would have on the Mississippi port city. The development of railroading in the central part of the continent meant the end of the importance of the Mississippi River as a commercial waterway.

The condition of the New Orleans banks was an important factor in the attempts to revive economic prosperity. The banking institutions, because of their influence on the available supply of credit and currency, had a great deal to do with the welfare of the people throughout the state. The First National Bank was organized in 1864 with a capitalization of one-half million dollars. Two years later, the City National Bank and the Louisiana National Bank were founded, capitalized at $300,000 and $1,000,000 respectively. These three institutions were the only national banks in Louisiana during the early postwar years. The First National Bank, however, closed its doors in 1867 because of the heavy defalcation of its president. The closing of the unfortunate bank caused runs on the others, which included the Citizens' Bank and the Bank of America, two institutions which were not associated with the national banking system.[60] Despite this embarrassment, the banks remaining in operation were in good condition because they had been careful in

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[59] New Orleans Price Current, September 1, 1870.

[60] Caldwell, History of Banking in Louisiana, 100.

their operations. Shortly before the closing of the First National Bank, the value of bank stocks varied from twenty-five to fifty-six points above par.[61] The Comptroller of the Currency reported to the Fortieth Congress that the two banks remaining in operation had a total capital paid in of $1,300,000, $1,400,000 in bonds on deposit, and had $1,245,000 worth of banknotes in circulation.[62]

An important event, which facilitated all types of trading in the postwar years, was the opening of the Merchant's Exchange. The commercial people had suffered during the ante-bellum period because they had no centralized exchange, and the erection of the new building was a boon to the city's commerce.[63] The organization of new banks and the erection of a trade mart, however, did not remove the basic ills. The limited amount of money available to the banks prevented them from making the long-term loans which were really needed, especially by the planters in the Sugar Bowl. The new organizations did not solve the currency problem either. People in New Orleans had trouble with currency from the beginning of the war. City notes, which took the place of tokens and other substitutes for currency, were used in large amounts in local trade because other forms of currency were not available in sufficient amounts. As there was a lingering suspicion that local banks might start refusing to accept city notes for deposit, there was a desire on the part of many people in

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[61] Ibid., 98.

[62] House of Representatives Executive Document 4, Fortieth Congress, Second Session, iii.

[63] New Orleans Price Current, August 31, 1867.

New Orleans to fund the city notes and create a currency which would be accepted without question.[64] People continued to use city notes, however, because there was nothing else that could be done.

People of property in Louisiana, whether in the city or country, feared that the radicals in Congress wanted to bring about some kind of revolt against private property of all kinds. Some of the speeches of Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner, the Negro's dream of forty acres and a mule, and the remarks of local agrarian reformers, seemed to give credence to these fears of economic revolution. DeBow's Review published an article expressing the sentiments of the uneasy propertied classes. The Negroes, according to the author, were fundamentally agrarians and were not hostile to whites; they were hostile to property. The true dividing line between Negro and white was that the colored man was an enemy of property and the white man was its protector and advocate. Should the Negro acquire some voice in government, the writer asserted, he would "abolish private property and inaugurate savage communism." The author added that "if they [Yankee socialists] wish to bring about individual human equality, they must put the negro uppermost, and thereby abolish individual private property."[65] Such fears, although frequently voiced in public addresses and outlined in editorials, were groundless. In Louisiana during the Reconstruction there were no important attacks on the ethics of private property itself. Even the most violent radicals merely wanted land to be given to the Negro so that he might be able to

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[64] Edward Heath to B. F. Flanders, April 8, 1867, Flanders Papers.

[65] DeBow's Review, February, 1868, 135-136.

sustain himself. The people who were concerned with the possibility of the destruction of private property should have examined the government in Washington. Big business was in the process of getting control of the national government, and representatives of the corporations were not going to foster an economic revolution in one section of the country when there was a possibility that it might serve as an example to the masses in the North where there was already developing a consciousness of class.

Five years after the war was over, individuals appointed by the Louisiana offices of the Bureau of the Census went through the state to make a count of the population and to estimate the wealth. They did not do their job well. The forms filled in by the census takers, which were examined for this study, do not give the necessary information for an adequate evaluation of the economic conditions. Many of the census forms cited the name of a farmer, but gave no information about his land or agricultural wealth. Many farmers refused to give information to the census takers because they felt that the information would not be kept confidential and could be the basis for persecution by the radical government of Louisiana. The following note, written on the last page of the Madison Parish schedule, tells of the type of reaction many census takers encountered when questioning Negro tenants:

> I feel assured that the officers of the Census Department can understand the difficulty that have to be met by those who labor with the Negro population in making enumerations for Statistical purpose. Taxation is a new thing with them and in spite of all protestations to the contrary, they

> could not be made to believe but what this work has some thing to do with Taxes. Consequently, their Report of Production, I fully believe to be at least 25 per cent below, what it should have been.

Because of the paucity of the type of information used in this study, some of the parishes mentioned in Chapter II will not be examined here. The information in the unpublished census returns is not adequate to justify conclusions in many of the parishes. Some of the parishes were fairly well covered, and the information from these areas provides an indication of what was going on in Louisiana's agricultural economy.[66]

Table II

Statistics of Agriculture in Louisiana in 1860 and 1870

	1860	1870
Total Population	708,002	726,915
Number of Slaves	331,726	
Number of Negroes	350,373	364,210
	1860	1870
Improved Acreage	2,707,108	2,045,640
Unimproved Acreage	6,591,468	4,980,177
Cash Value of Farms	$204,739,662	$68,215,421
Value of Implements	$ 18,648,225	$ 7,159,333
Value of Livestock	$ 24,546,940	$15,929,188

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[66] The statistics shown in the tables in this chapter are from the following documents: Ninth Census, The Statistics of Wealth and Industry of the United States (Washington, 1872). Tables which show the distribution of land ownership, land values, and production were compiled from Unpublished Census Returns, 1870, Schedule II, Agriculture.

Productions of Agriculture

	1860	1870
Indian Corn (bu.)	16,853,745	7,596,628
Rice (lb.)	6,331,257	15,854,012
Cotton (bale)	777,738	350,832
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	2,060,981	1,023,706
Sugar (hhd.)	221,726	80,706
Molasses (gal.)	13,439,772	4,585,150
Peas and Beans (bu.)	431,148	26,888
Irish Potatoes (bu.)	294,655	67,695

Table II shows some of the gross figures pertaining to Louisiana's agricultural economy in 1870 as compared to 1860. The total population had not changed drastically during the period of war. The number of acres in cultivation had decreased, but not enough to indicate an agricultural catastrophe. The decrease in cash value of farms from $204 million to $68 million is probably the most significant figure, ranking in importance with the statistics showing the decline in production of staples. The destruction of war, loss of productivity, and generally unsettled conditions were responsible for the decline in the value of the state's rural property. The figures showing the production of cotton, corn, and sugar demonstrate the poverty of the agricultural community.

Table III

Statistics of Agriculture in Caddo Parish in 1860 and 1870

	1860	1870
Total Population	12,140	21,714
Number of Slaves	7,338	
Number of Negroes	7,407	15,799

	1860	1870
Improved Acreage	98,928	75,813
Unimproved Acreage	208,472	125,474
Cash value of farms	$3,843,015	$1,911,256
Value of implements	$ 110,476	$ 177,895
Value of livestock	$ 435,401	$ 564,475

Productions of Agriculture

	1860	1870
Indian Corn (bu.)	464,205	384,824
Cotton (bale)	9,385	26,387
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	179,445	56,705
Peas and Beans (bu.)	38,365	982
Orchard Produce	$29,975	$490

The general statistics relative to Caddo Parish's agricultural wealth in the years mentioned follow the pattern established for the state. The important factor to be noted in Caddo is that the population had greatly increased in the few years after the war. This was the period when Caddo was rapidly becoming one of the important population centers of Louisiana and Shreveport was growing as an agricultural village. The increase in population in Caddo prevented any great decline in the production of corn and cotton, the two items most popular in Caddo. Cotton production, in fact, showed an important increase between 1860 and 1870. The value of livestock also increased, as Caddo was the area where livestock in northwest Louisiana was gathered prior to movement down the Mississippi or into Texas.

Table IV

Distribution of Improved Land in Caddo Parish in 1860-1870

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
49 or less	119	1,620	27.2	87.2	2.5	44.9
50 - 199	156	176	35.6	9.5	17.2	24.4
200 - 499	99	48	22.6	2.6	30.5	18.6
500 - 999	45	12	10.3	.6	29.8	9.9
1,000 and over	19	1	4.3	.1	20.0	2.2
Totals	438	1,857	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table V

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in Caddo Parish in 1860-1870

Value per Unit	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
$999 or less	68	1,511	15.2	81.2	.8	33.3
1,000 - 3,999	182	264	40.8	14.2	10.9	29.1
4,000 - 9,999	90	68	20.2	3.7	15.1	21.0
10,000 - 24,999	68	13	15.2	.6	28.5	9.2
25,000 and over	38	5	8.6	.3	44.7	7.4
Totals	446	1,861	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table VI

Distribution of Cotton Production in Caddo Parish in 1860-1870

Production Per Unit in Bales	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Produced by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
39 or less	200	1,752	57.9	94.9	16.0	75.9
40 - 99	77	63	22.4	3.4	21.6	9.6
100 - 199	40	22	11.6	1.2	23.9	7.2
200 and over	28	10	8.1	.5	38.5	7.3
Totals	345	1,847	100%	100%	100%	100%

The statistics of the 1870 census show how changes in the system of labor affect figures relative to landowning. There were 446 farms in Caddo Parish in 1860 and 1,861 according to the Census of 1870. These figures, without any clarification of the sharecropping situation, would indicate that land was being sold in wholesale quantities in Caddo and that the sales were being made in small amounts to individual landowners. Such was not the case. The census takers listed each sharecropped unit as a separate farm and made no particular effort to indicate ownership. The Census of 1870 did not specify that a farming unit was owned, rented, or sharecropped. As a result, a casual look at the census figures would lead one to believe that the concentration of land in the hands of a few planters was being changed to a family-farm type of landownership.

Table VII

Statistics of Agriculture in Winn Parish in 1860-1870

	1860	1870
Total Population	6,834	4,954
Number of Slaves	1,354	
Number of Negroes	1,395	909
	1860	1870
Improved Acreage	20,617	21,927
Unimproved Acreage	85,618	71,311
Cash Value of Farms	$483,190	$189,117
Value of Implements	$ 46,674	$ 30,811
Value of Livestock	$186,483	$210,706

Productions of Agriculture

	1860	1870
Indian Corn (bu.)	120,428	87,540
Cotton (bale)	2,993	2,680
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	20,686	18,022
Irish Potatoes (bu.)	990	969
Peas and Beans (bu.)	3,464	1,482

Table VIII

Distribution of Improved Land in Winn Parish in 1860-1870

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
49 or less	214	401	62.2	73.2	17.0	32.5
50 - 199	117	138	34.0	25.2	58.5	56.0
200 - 499	10	8	2.9	1.5	14.1	9.1
500 - 1,000	2	1	.6	.1	6.0	2.4
1,000 and over	1	0	.3	0	4.4	0
Totals	344	548	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table IX

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in Winn Parish in 1860-1870

Value per Unit	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
$999 or less	242	485	70.4	91.0	19.2	61.5
1,000 - 3,999	90	41	26.2	7.7	38.4	26.1
4,000 - 9,999	9	7	2.6	1.3	10.8	12.4
10,000 - 24,999	2	0	.5	0	5.9	0
25,000 and over	1	0	.3	0	25.7	0
Totals	344	533	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table X

Distribution of Cotton Production in Winn Parish in 1860-1870

Production Per Unit in Bales	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Produced by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
39 or less	273	540	96.4	99.4	81.2	98.1
40 - 99	7	3	2.4	.6	7.3	1.9
100 - 199	1	0	.4	0	2.2	0
200 and over	2	0	.8	0	9.3	0
Totals	283	543	100%	100%	100%	100%

Tables VII, VIII, IX, and X show the general farming conditions in Winn Parish for 1860 and 1870. The various indices of agricultural wealth and productivity, such as value of farms and production of staples, show that Winn Parish did not suffer from the drastic effects of war to the same degree as the parishes where cotton or cane was grown in great quantities. The statistics of improved land and cotton production show that sharecropping was extensively practiced in Winn Parish. The increase in number of farming units, especially in the lower brackets, and the great increase in the number of farming units producing only a small amount of cotton were the results of the new sharecropping system.

Table XI

Statistics of Agriculture in Concordia Parish in 1860-1870

	1860	1870
Total Population	13,805	9,977
Number of Slaves	12,542	
Number of Negroes	12,563	9,257

	1860	1870
Improved Acreage	87,406	87,275
Unimproved Acreage	158,523	137,663
Cash Value of Farms	$12,335,720	$3,168,500
Value of Implements	$ 837,310	$ 80,175
Value of Livestock	$ 920,581	$ 491,491

Productions of Agriculture

	1860	1870
Indian Corn (bu.)	502,340	62,950
Cotton (bales)	63,971	26,712
Peas and Beans (bu.)	75,735	none listed
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	53,685	4,350

Table XII

Distribution of Improved Land in Concordia Parish in 1860-1870

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
49 or less	35	11	17.5	6.4	.9	.3
50 - 199	44	40	22.0	23.4	5.7	5.2
200 - 499	38	57	19.0	33.3	14.5	20.8
500 - 999	58	41	29.0	24.0	46.8	32.0
1,000 and over	25	22	12.5	12.9	32.1	41.7
Totals	200	171	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table XIII

Distribution of Cash Value of Land in Concordia Parish in 1860-1870

Value per Unit	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
$999 or less	7	6	3.6	3.5	.03	.1
1,000 - 3,999	19	46	9.7	26.9	.4	3.4
4,000 - 9,999	23	29	11.3	17.0	1.3	5.5
10,000 - 24,999	27	34	13.7	19.9	3.87	17.2
25,000 and over	122	56	61.7	32.7	94.4	73.8
Totals	198	171	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table XIV

Distribution of Cotton Production in Concordia Parish in 1860-1870

Production Per Unit in Bales	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Produced by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
39 or less	15	39	11.5	25.8	.5	3.3
40 - 99	6	33	4.7	21.9	.7	9.4
100 - 199	22	29	16.9	19.2	5.5	17.7
200 and over	87	50	66.9	33.1	93.3	69.6
Totals	130	151	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table XV

Distribution of Improved Land in Madison Parish in 1860-1870

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
49 or less	4	1,435	1.9	93.1	.09	58.2
50 - 199	36	70	16.7	4.5	4.0	14.2
200 - 499	89	24	41.4	1.6	27.91	13.6
500 - 999	63	10	29.3	.7	42.5	12.2
1,000 and over	23	1	10.7	.1	25.5	1.8
Totals	215	1,541	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table XVI

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in Madison Parish in 1860-1870

Value Per Unit	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
$999 or less	1	1,236	.5	80.2	.004	24.6
1,000 - 3,999	6	228	2.8	14.8	.1	22.7
4,000 - 9,999	9	31	4.2	2.0	.5	9.2
10,000 - 24,999	32	26	14.8	1.7	4.8	18.1
25,000 and over	167	20	77.7	1.3	94.5	25.4
Totals	215	1,541	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table XVII

Distribution of Cotton Production in Madison Parish in 1860-1870

Production Per Unit in Bales	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Produced by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
39 or less	29	1,494	15.3	97.4	1.3	88.9
40 - 99	31	22	16.4	1.5	4.8	3.7
100 - 199	31	16	16.4	1.0	10.1	5.7
200 and over	98	2	51.9	.1	83.8	1.7
Total	189	1,534	100%	100%	100%	100%

The tables for Concordia and Madison Parishes show the expected decline in value of farms and productions of agriculture. The most significant feature of the tables for the two parishes is the amazing difference in the number of agricultural units as indicated by the Census. The statistics for the two parishes indicate how confusing an unrealistic analysis of landowning can become when proper care is not taken to picture accurately the method of using labor and distributing that labor on plantations. The census records show that Concordia Parish had 171 farming units in 1870 as compared with 200 in the last year before the war. In putting down the figures for this parish, the census takers obviously listed the small, sharecropped plots as part of one centrally owned plantation. The resulting statistics show that there was a general decline of farm value and productivity, but no appreciable change in the concentration of land ownership in the hands of a few planters. The plantations of more than 500 acres constituted 78.9% of all improved land in 1860; in 1870 the percentage was 73.7. In 1860, 98.2% of all farm values

were in plantations worth more than $10,000; in 1870 the figure was 91%. The drop from over ninety-eight per cent can be explained by the general decline in farm values. It was not because of sales to individuals who could purchase only a small amount of land.

The statistics for Madison Parish, which was similar to Concordia in all aspects of its economy, show the widespread practice of sharecropping and also the confusion created when sharecropping is not adequately analyzed in the census reports. According to the 1870 Census, the number of farming units smaller than fifty acres numbered 1,435 as compared with only 4 in 1860. The census takers in Madison did not try to show that a large number of sharecropped plots were owned by one planter and were, therefore, only one agricultural unit. By failing to show this in the census, the impression was created that the land in Madison had been broken up into small plots and that large-scale ownership of land no longer existed. Such an impression is not correct. Although one cannot get the necessary information from the census, there is no reason to believe that the ownership of land changed any more in Madison than Concordia.

Table XVIII

Statistics of Agriculture in Rapides Parish in 1860-1870

	1860	1870
Total Population		
Number of Slaves		
Number of Negroes		

	1860	1870
Improved Acreage	105,839	63,265
Unimproved Acreage (in Farms)	331,117	162,901
Cash Value of Farms	$9,340,611	$1,580,915
Value of Implements	$1,092,340	$ 395,403
Value of Livestock	$1,405,040	$ 450,945

Productions of Agriculture

	1860	1870
Indian Corn (bu.)	820,378	261,579
Cotton (bales)	49,168	9,133
Sugar (hhds.)	12,878	3,062
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	9,880	54,276
Peas and Beans (bu.)	12,825	6,779

Table XIX

Distribution of Improved Land in Rapides Parish in 1860-1870

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
49 or less	566	516	68.2	76.1	12.2	19.2
50 - 199	126	83	15.2	12.2	11.3	13.3
200 - 499	69	49	8.3	7.2	20.8	25.7
500 - 999	41	17	5.0	2.4	27.4	18.5
1,000 and over	28	14	3.3	2.1	28.3	23.3
Totals	830	679	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table XX

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in Rapides Parish in 1860-1870

Value Per Unit	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
$999 or less	211	530	43.2	78.0	1.1	8.4
1,000 - 3,999	107	62	21.9	9.1	1.9	7.7
4,000 - 9,999	16	31	3.3	4.6	1.2	14.3
10,000 - 24,999	35	42	7.1	6.2	6.7	40.5
25,000 and over	120	14	24.5	2.1	89.1	29.1
Totals	489	679	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table XXI

Distribution of Cotton Production in Rapides Parish in 1860-1870

Production Per Unit in Bales	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Produced by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
39 or less	331	536	69.7	88.4	6.4	38.8
40 - 99	29	51	6.1	8.4	3.1	29.8
100 - 199	26	15	5.5	2.5	8.2	21.7
200 and over	39	4	18.7	.7	82.3	9.7
Totals	475	606	100%	100%	100%	100%

The statistics of agricultural wealth and productivity indicate that Rapides Parian was going through the same type of economic readjustment that the other parishes were experiencing. The value of farm land, value of equipment for working the fields, and available labor were far below the amounts shown during prewar years. The Red River, which meandered through the parish, had created a valley about ten to fifteen miles wide where the land was fertile. In this valley there had been many plantations producing sugar and cotton and providing

their owners with a comfortable and, at times, a luxurious life. After the war, the planters who owned the land had to worry about such things as unavailable credit and labor. Although they still owned most of the good land in the parish, their life was far from what it had been before the war. They still owned the land, but little else.

Table XXII

Statistics of Agriculture in East Feliciana Parish in 1860-1870

	1860	1870
Total Population	14,697	13,499
Number of Slaves	10,593	
Number of Negroes	10,616	9,393

	1860	1870
Improved Acreage	96,728	73,545
Unimproved Acreage	124,316	108,470
Cash Value of Farms	$2,218,878	$886,420
Value of Implements	$ 213,965	$ 11,257
Value of Livestock	$ 592,073	not shown

Productions of Agriculture

	1860	1870
Indian Corn (bu.)	358,769	167,262
Cotton (bales)	23,332	10,252
Sugar (hhds.)	1,103	not shown
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	97,810	26,263
Peas and Beans (bu.)	7,904	not shown

Table XXIII

Distribution of Improved Land in East Feliciana Parish in 1860-1870

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
49 or less	15	1,304	5.0	85.0	.3	35.4
50 - 199	104	153	34.6	10.0	11.9	20.8
200 - 499	116	54	38.7	3.5	37.5	20.5
500 - 999	53	19	17.7	1.2	36.7	15.5
1,000 and over	12	5	4.0	.3	13.6	7.8
Totals	300	1,535	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table XXIV

Distribution of Cotton Production in East Feliciana Parish in 1860-1870

Production Per Unit in Bales	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
39 or less	108	1,417	36.9	98.0	8.8	92.8
40 - 99	100	27	34.3	1.9	28.1	6.2
100 - 199	61	2	20.9	.1	36.8	1.0
200 and over	23	0	7.9	0	26.3	0
Totals	292	1,446	100%	100%	100%	100%

The returns from East Feliciana Parish were not complete enough to justify a summary of the distribution of cash value of land. This, within itself, is a strong indication of the prevalence of sharecropping. The individuals who were working the small units of land which had been created by subdividing the plantations were not familiar enough with land values or were too disinterested to make an estimate for the people from the Bureau of the Census. The census forms showed the individual unit which was being worked, but made no statement concerning the estimated value of the small amount of land.

This also explains the extremely small value given to implements in East Feliciana. The implements of a plantation were usually divided among the many sharecroppers on the place. The values of these individual collections of agricultural equipment were frequently ignored, although the total might be owned by the landlord and should have been listed as one unit. Table XXIII shows clearly the agricultural units which were divided into sharecropped plots. There were 181 units with more than 200 acres of improved land in 1860; in 1870 that number had been reduced to 78. The decrease in improved land in the parish had dropped from 96,728 to 73,545 acres, not enough to explain the decrease in number of the large farms. The table on cotton production shows the effect sharecropping had on the distribution of the production of cotton. In 1860, there were twenty-three units producing more than 200 bales of cotton and only 108 units which produced less than forty; in 1870 the figures had changed to zero and 1,417 respectively. Inasmuch as the reports give no information that can be used in determining the changes in land ownership, it is impossible to make any generalization about the amount of concentration of land in the hands of a few landlords. It is reasonable to assume, nevertheless, that ownership of large landed estates still prevailed in the productive sections of East Feliciana Parish.

Table XXV

Statistics of Agriculture in Terrebonne Parish in 1860-1870

	1860	1870
Total Population	12,091	12,451
Number of Slaves	6,785	
Number of Negroes	6,857	6,172

	1860	1870
Improved Acreage	38,816	36,693
Unimproved Acreage	158,806	93,798
Cash Value of Farms	$7,166,390	$2,742,325
Value of Implements	$ 946,733	$ 555,215
Value of Livestock	$ 11,622	$ 3,501

Productions of Agriculture

	1860	1870
Indian Corn (bu.)	404,853	209,050
Rice (lb.)	131,016	233,000
Sugar (hhd.)	17,022	6,537
Sweet Potatoes	48,800	9,947

Table XXVI

Distribution of Improved Land in Terrebonne Parish in 1860-1870

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
49 or less	223	161	69.3	62.9	12.6	9.3
50 - 199	37	31	11.5	12.1	10.4	8.9
200 - 499	40	39	12.4	15.2	31.6	31.6
500 - 999	17	20	5.3	7.8	28.7	34.7
1,000 and over	5	5	1.5	2.0	16.7	15.5
Totals	322	256	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table XXVII

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in Terrebonne Parish in 1860-1870

Value Per Unit	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
$999 or less	54	87	17.0	34.3	.4	1.4
1,000 - 3,999	134	86	42.3	33.9	4.6	7.2
4,000 - 9,999	37	19	11.7	7.5	3.5	4.4
10,000 - 24,999	26	25	8.2	9.8	6.2	14.5
25,000 and over	66	37	20.8	14.5	85.3	72.5
Totals	317	254	100%	100%	100%	100%

The same general conditions that have been noticed in the other sections of Louisiana may be seen in the statistics relative to Terrebonne Parish. All of the indices of agricultural wealth, such as value of farms and equipment and production of the important staples show that the parish was far less wealthy in 1870 than in 1860. The production of rice was increasing, but it had not yet reached the level of a major crop. The most important money crop, sugar, was only a little more than one-third of the prewar level. The tables on ownership of land and distribution of land values show that no appreciable change had occurred in the nature of land ownership in Terrebonne. The agricultural units of more than 500 acres of improved land constituted 45.4% of all improved land in the parish in 1860; in 1870, the percentage was slightly more than fifty. In 1860, the plantations of more than $10,000 evaluation were worth 91.5% of all farm values in the parish. The plantations worth more than $10,000 constituted 87.0% of the total in 1870. Thus, it can be seen that, despite decrease in agricultural productivity and value of farm land, the pattern of land owner-

ship had not changed in Terrebonne Parish.

Despite its inaccuracies, the Census of 1870 confirms other impressions about Louisiana's agricultural plight in the 1860's. The value of land throughout the state had dropped to levels unknown in the recent ante-bellum period. The production of staple crops was at such a low level that the purchasing power of the entire state was impaired. The sections of south Louisiana which had produced sugar were especially hard hit because of the great difficulties encountered in putting sugar plantations back into production. The reluctance of the Negroes to return to the fields of sugar or cotton made it necessary to practice sharecropping - a method of handling the agricultural labor problems which, in the long run, would prove to be deleterious to the state's rural folk, both black and white, in a manner hardly visualized in the late 1860's. Land sales were being made in the 1860's, but not in a way which would affect the basic pattern of landholding. In the areas where the soil was rich and productive, owners of large estates continued to dominate the economic scene. As the postwar years went by, many of the planters lost their land to merchants and bankers, men who did not have the paternal attitude toward land and labor, although they matched the planters' desire for both.

CHAPTER VII

THE BEGINNING OF RADICALISM

The Reconstruction laws passed by the United States Congress in the spring and summer of 1867 placed powerful weapons in the hands of Louisiana Republicans. They did not hesitate to use them. After General Sheridan assumed command of the military district composed of Louisiana and Texas, the former Confederates, who had taken up their old positions of power when the war ended, found themselves unable to control the policies of Louisiana's government. The series of events which was climaxed by the Constitutional Convention of 1867-1868 and the election of H. C. Warmoth was evidence which would convince the most skeptical that a new force would now rule Louisiana. This was not a palace revolution. Before many months had gone by, even the most uninformed knew that the new regime, if unchecked, could alter the most basic aspects of life and labor in the Bayou State. The landed gentry and their city allies would not be heard in the state legislature. Uncouth voices and manners would be heard and seen in what had once been a meeting place for gentlemen. Although important political changes were to occur, the new government was not destined to accomplish any great agrarian reforms. The economic changes which did occur in Louisiana after the Civil War came as a result of war and its aftermath of economic dislocation rather than from legislative decree. Republicans in Louisiana, knowing that they could not persuade many of the white people to support them, turned to the enfranchised Negro. They intended to stay in power by controlling both the black vote and the machinery of

elections, and one was as important as the other. Here lay the great tragedy of Louisiana's postwar history. The time was ripe for important reformations of economy and society, but the critics and conquerors of the old regime did not act like reformers. Economic reform meant little to men who were thirsty for immediate gain. Social reform meant little to men who were solicitous of the Negro only on election day.

Tempers reached high levels during the months in which the Black and Tan Convention was deliberating and during the ratification campaign which followed. Although many whites had been disfranchised by Sheridan's instructions in the fall of 1867, they had not lost their interest in politics, as was shown when the general nature of the Constitution of 1868 became public. Editors of country and city newspapers bombarded their readers with denunciatory editorials and news stories which outlined the horrors of things to come and offered suggestions to the frustrated people. Realizing that the Republicans could not be beaten while the voting regulations remained in force, many native whites tried to persuade Negro leaders to organize their people into Democratic groups.[1] Such efforts were of no avail. The Negroes could not be enticed away from the new friends who had given them freedom and the right to vote and who were promising other and more delightful joys for the future. Little wonder that the Republicans assumed control of government against a background of sullen resentment. Little wonder, also, that they looked to Washington for the strength that would keep them in power.

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[1] See Opelousas Journal, May 9, 1868.

The election of Warmoth was the first important success of a political party which began to operate in Louisiana during the closing months of the war. In the summer of 1865, a group of men led by Warmoth and Thomas J. Durant formed a club entitled "Friends of Universal Suffrage." They wanted to make their organization the hard inner core of a party which would receive the blessings and support of the radicals in the Republican party in the North. Support from the Northern radicals was promised, and in September of 1865 the club dropped its euphemistic title and became the Republican Party of Louisiana. Durant withdrew from the party after the New Orleans riot of 1866, leaving Warmoth as the strongest figure among Louisiana Republicans. Warmoth increased the size of the party by bringing freedmen into the Republican Loyal League with local chapters scattered throughout the state.[2] The goal was obvious and the methods far from obscure. The small group of leaders in New Orleans gave direction to operations in the state and received advice and support from Washington. With the colored population eager to vote as their new friends directed, the Republican party quickly became a potent political force in Louisiana. In addition to the Negroes, Warmoth could rely on the people who came to Louisiana from the North during the Federal occupation or when the war ended. These people, numbering somewhere between five and ten thousand in Louisiana, were the famous "carpetbaggers" of Southern folklore.[3] Warmoth's influence with important Northerners was

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[2] Philip D. Uzee, "Republican Politics in Louisiana, 1877-1900," Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Louisiana State University, 1950, 12-14.

[3] Ella Lonn, Reconstruction in Louisiana after 1868 (New York, 1918), 12.

strengthened when he secured for himself the position of Grand Commander of the Louisiana branch of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization composed of veterans of the Union Army.[4] Warmoth's service as a lieutenant colonel justified his position in the veteran's organization.

Warmoth took the oath of office on July 13, 1868, although he and his colleagues had been exercising the duties of their respective offices since June 27. When the new legislature started to meet on June 29, a few frantic opponents decided that they must prevent the session even if it became necessary to kill the Republican leaders. Upon receipt of the news that such a bold stroke was being planned, General R. C. Buchanan filled the streets around the Mechanics Institute with troops. The legislators convened about two hours after the soldiers took up their positions and proceeded with their business. There were no efforts made to prevent the body from assembling.[5] The unfortunate incident helps explain why the new government would consider physical power a prerequisite for the discharge of their duties. The force under the command of General Buchanan was not large, consisting of three infantry regiments, a battery of artillery, and two cavalry companies.[6] A large military establishment was probably not necessary for the preservation of law and order, as the mere appearance of Federal soldiers in company strength or less was usually adequate for the purpose

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[4] Henry Clay Warmoth, War, Politics, and Reconstruction: Stormy Days in Louisiana (New York, 1930), 51.

[5] House of Representatives Executive Document Number 1, Fortieth Congress, Third Session, 315.

[6] Ibid., 303.

of preventing actual riots.

The avowed purpose of the presence of United States troops was to preserve law and order rather than to act as a bulwark for an unpopular regime. The civil authorities were supreme after Louisiana resumed her position in the Union and were not to call for military support unless there was a threat to the orderly processes of government. Military officials were not to interfere with civil affairs unless requested by the proper civilian authorities. Inasmuch as the Republicans were in power against the will of the majority of Louisiana whites, the presence of a military organization acted as a constantly present threat of force against which the Louisianians did not wish to contend. Governor Warmoth was not pleased with the fact that the army units were not immediately subordinate to him. He solved the problem by having the legislature create the Metropolitan Police. The legislators took control of city police from New Orleans' mayor and placed that power in the hands of a police board which was composed of three Negroes, three whites, and Lieutenant Governor Oscar J. Dunn, a mulatto. Although the Metropolitan Police was created for the purpose of placing a police force in New Orleans which would be subject to the governor, the organization could be used outside of the boundaries of Orleans Parish when any threat to the peace could not be handled by local authorities.[7] The combined strength of the elements of the army and the Metropolitan Police was expected to be sufficient to meet any opposition that could be reasonably anticipated. The new administration, therefore, had reason to believe that they would be secure unless voted out of office by the people of Louisiana or unless

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[7] Ibid., 306.

the Republicans lost control of the national government.

Louisiana Republicans had control of the executive and legislative branches of the government as a result of the elections held on April 17 and 18. The Constitution of 1868 provided for a Supreme Court composed of a chief justice and four associate justices who would be named by the governor. Warmoth worked carefully on these appointments; he wanted men of legal experience who were loyal to Republican ideals. Of the five men appointed, only two of them, Rufus K. Howell and James G. Taliaferro, had been prominent in political struggles between 1862 and 1868. Warmoth did his work well, as the justices he placed on the Supreme Court were men of ability. A modern historian of the Louisiana Supreme Court has stated that "no student of the law can deny the learning and the strength and ability of the reasoning by which many great questions were then settled . . ."[8] The legal acumen of the justices notwithstanding, the people believed that they were ardent partisans and that the court was merely another branch of the radical regime.[9]

The legislature immediately ratified the Fourteenth Amendment, whereupon Congress was satisfied that its conditions had been met and allowed William Pitt Kellogg and J. B. Harris to assume their seats in the Senate.[10] With the formalities of acquiring full rights of statehood completed, Warmoth and his followers were free to put their program into action. The first thing to be considered was the condition of finances.

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[8] Henry Plauché Dart, "The History of the Supreme Court of Louisiana," L. H. Q., IV (1921), 57.

[9] Ibid., 56.

[10] Lonn, Reconstruction after 1868, 6.

The new administration found that the government was heavily in debt, that assessed property evaluation was at about one-half of the 1860 figure, and that taxes from 1860 to 1867 were in arrears. Specie was so rare that the majority of transactions were accomplished by using the various forms of script which had been in existence since 1862.[11] State bonds were selling on the open market for less than fifty per cent of par value and some of the levee bonds were at twenty-five or thirty cents. The legislature allowed Warmoth to negotiate the sale of a new issue of bonds which gave the government some operating funds. This was done by making the sale at such a discount that the state stood ready to lose heavily whenever the bonds were redeemed.[12] Lack of funds, however, did not prevent the passage of a bill which provided printing contracts for the radical newspapers which were being published in many of the parishes and which depended upon contracts with the state government for financial support.[13]

Warmoth spent his first months in office doing little more than organizing the basic machinery of government. As the summer went by, it became apparent that serious efforts to create all of the desired changes would have to wait until the late fall of 1868 or until 1869. General Grant was campaigning for the presidency against the Democratic nominee, Horatio Seymour. Democrats throughout Louisiana had formed clubs in support of Seymour and his running mate

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[11] Warmoth, Stormy Days in Louisiana, 79.

[12] Lonn, Reconstruction after 1868, 18-19.

[13] H. Oscar Lestage, Jr., "The White League in Louisiana and its Participation in Reconstruction Riots," L.H.Q., XVIII (1935), 633.

Frank Blair. The campaign in Louisiana was so intense that Warmoth was impelled to concentrate his energies on the election, even if such concentration meant postponing other plans. The campaign for the presidency offered a contrast in violence to the election which placed Warmoth in power. The Louisiana Republicans, in winning the election held in April 1868, had faced little opposition other than harsh remarks published in the newspapers. Now the whites were in a fighting mood. Methods used by both parties in the summer and fall of 1868 became precedents for the violence, brutality, and chicanery which characterized Louisiana elections for eight years. Fights between the races began to occur in the early summer of 1868. On June 10, some Negro homes near Monroe were burned by disguised whites who left no evidence which would indicate their identity. Later in the month, the same thing was done near Mansfield by a group of white men who had presumably come from Shreveport in order to prevent local Negroes from identifying them.[14] The reason for the beginning of destructive racism in 1868 was simple. The Republicans had maneuvered the local whites out of power by capturing the Negro vote. In order to keep their advantage, they were making promises which, if carried out, would have changed the racial patterns in the state. During the writing of the Constitution of 1868 and after its acceptance, the Louisiana press emphasized a theme which had been succinctly stated in DeBow's Review: "questions of black suffrage comprehend, necessarily, that of equal social station . . ."[15] The author of the article in

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[14] House of Representatives Executive Document Number 1, Fortieth Congress, Third Session, 314.

[15] DeBow's Review, July, 1868, 599.

the Review asserted that giving Negroes the rights of man included the legal right of mixed marriages, which was the bete noir of Southern thinking. Such fears of Africanization were kept before the people by every means of public communication.

Opponents of the radical regime found themselves in a paradoxical situation in which they were condemning the principle of Negro suffrage and at the same time wooing the Negro vote.[16] The answer to critics of the anomolous situation was simple. The Democrats said that Negro rule would be inefficient and the Negroes should trust native Louisianians to govern for all because they, in the final analysis, were the Negro's best friends. The Democrats did not get much Negro support with that line of reasoning. The theory that the native whites should rule because their decisions would be best for both races remained the standard appeal throughout the remaining years of Reconstruction. As long as Negroes voted, white Democrats sought their support. The Ouachita Telegraph, one of the most trenchant journals in the state, announced that a barbecue and rally would be held at which "people of the parish, without distinction of race, color or previous condition [would] be invited to attend."[17] In a later issue, the same paper stated that "Distinguished White and Colored orators will address the people."[18] For Negroes and radicals

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[16] Lonn, Reconstruction after 1868, 14-15.

[17] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, August 5, 1868.

[18] Ibid., August 12, 1868.

who would not follow the white Democracy, the editor had this to say: "Having no shame, their depravity is now complete. They have reached the lowest depth in infamy, an open and unblushing confession of their baseness and hypocrisy."[19] In Rapides Parish, the movement to organize Democrat clubs among the Negroes started in 1867. In July of that year, the owners of the Ice House Hotel, the largest and finest hostelry in Alexandria, opened its ballroom to colored Democrats for a dance.[20] After the national nominating convention met in 1868, Seymour and Blair clubs sprang up among the Negroes and received support from white Democrats. Band concerts, barbecues, and political rallies were held in Alexandria and attended in large numbers by men of both races. At a rally held on October 10, 1868, Thomas O. Moore shared honors at the speakers' stand with Willis Rollins, a Negro who was one of the principal organizers of colored Democratic clubs in Rapides.[21] At a colored Democratic meeting near Baton Rouge, some drunken men created a scene which led the editor of the local paper to remind them that "young Democratic whiskey drinkers help the carpet-baggers."[22]

The Democrats soon learned that they could not persuade enough Negroes to follow them to create a threat to Republican supremacy. Violence and threats of violence were then used to force

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[19] Ibid., August 10, 1868.

[20] Alexandria Louisiana Democrat, July 15, 1867.

[21] Ibid., October 14, 1868.

[22] West Baton Rouge Planters' Banner, September 5, 1868.

Negroes to vote Democratic or not vote at all. One editor wanted "every white man who has a gun, a pistol, or a six shooter, to put it in order, [and] keep ammunition always ready to be used at a moment's warning."[23] In late September, an assault was made on Emerson Bentley, a former Union soldier who was editing the St. Landry Progress, a Republican journal. When the report was circulated that Bentley had been killed, a riot broke out in Opelousas. Republicans reported that several of their number were killed and estimated the wounded at two hundred. Eight Republicans were jailed and then lynched.[24] Daniel Dennett, editor of the Planter's Banner, editorialized that "The people generally are well satisfied with the result of the St. Landry riot, only they regret that the carpetbaggers escaped."[25]

Violence became commonplace as the day of the election drew near. Democrats believed that the election of General Grant would mean the continuation of radical policies. They thought that if Seymour became president he would withdraw support from Republican governments in the South. It seemed imperative that Louisiana vote Democratic, and it was obvious that this could be accomplished by preventing Negroes from voting for Republicans. On September 22, a riot on Canal Street resulted in the death of several Negroes. On October 18, the sheriff and judge of St. Mary's Parish were murdered.[26] A Democratic

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Warmoth, Stormy Days in Louisiana, 67.

[25] Quoted in ibid., 68.

[26] House of Representatives Executive Document Number 1, Fortieth Congress, Third Session, 303-304.

club in St. Bernard Parish fired on members of the police who were investigating the murder of a Negro. The situation was so explosive in St. Bernard that Governor Warmoth warned the Negroes not to vote.[27] People from Arkansas joined Shreveporters in a Bossier Parish riot after a Negro was charged with firing a revolver at a white man.[28]

As the reports of conflict and death kept pouring into New Orleans, Governor Warmoth decided that the government could neither maintain order nor guarantee an honest and quiet election. Conditions were especially bad in New Orleans, the center of radical Republicanism. On October 26, Warmoth told the commanding officer of the army that he could not protect lives or property in Orleans, Jefferson, or St. Bernard. When Warmoth made this admission, a riot was going on in the French Quarter which was so uncontrollable that police had abandoned their beats and were making no effort to quell the disturbance.[29] Fortunately for Warmoth, the size of the military had been increased. On September 30, 1868, there were 107 officers and 2,080 enlisted men stationed new New Orleans.[30] The governor believed that no civil officer could maintain order and that it must be done by troops.[31] President Andrew Johnson, who was no lover of radicalism, sent the following telegram to Major General Rousseau

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[27] Ibid., 307.

[28] Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, October 14, 1868.

[29] House of Representatives Executive Document Number 1, Fortieth Congress, Third Session 304.

[30] Ibid., 316-317.

[31] Warmoth, Stormy Days in Louisiana, 76.

on October 31, 1868: "You are expected and authorized to take all legitimate steps necessary and proper to prevent breaches of the peace or hostile collisions between citizens."[32]

The Democrats' methods were so successful that Louisiana gave Seymour and Blair a majority of 47,000 votes.[33] The Congress of the United States, knowing that intimidation had been used in the election, sent a committee to the South to investigate. Job E. Stevenson of Ohio, S. S. Burdett of Missouri, and Michael C. Kerr of Indiana were members of the subcommittee sent to New Orleans.[34] This group, in submitting their report, stated that ". . . the day will come when the relation of their horrors will curdle the blood of whole generations, and men will wonder that monsters who committed such crimes were permitted to live among mankind."[35] The committee estimated that there had been more than 1,000 murders in Louisiana during 1868.[36] The report made by the congressmen listed the parishes alphabetically and described the details of butchery and passion. Much of the report was for the obvious purpose of impressing Washington with the fact that Federal protection was essential. The fact remains, however, that most of the report was true and the information could

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[32] Senate Report Number 1, Forty-second Congress, First Session, 406.

[33] House of Representatives Report Number 92, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 1.

[34] House of Representatives Miscellaneous Document Number 154, Forty-first Congress, Second Session, 3.

[35] Ibid., 4.

[36] Ibid.

have been obtained in the Democratic press without the necessity of bringing witnesses to New Orleans and taking their testimony under oath.

The witnesses who appeared before the subcommittee gave information which is valuable for understanding the methods of intimidation. The purpose was simple: Republicans must be prevented from voting. There was no subtlety or camouflage used in warning Negroes and whites that they must vote Democratic or not vote at all. The testimony became repetitious as scores of witnesses told how they had been forced to vote the Democratic ticket. Thomas Thompson, a freedman, told how his employer kept his registration papers and forced him to vote for the Democrats.[37] Another freedman produced a certificate which stated: "This is to certify that Pierre Toussin is a member of the democratic club of the seventh ward and is entitled to the friendship, confidence, and protection of all good democrats."[38] It was signed by two committee members of the St. Landry Parish Democratic Committee. J. H. Sypher, a Republican candidate for congressman in the First Congressional District, stated that 12,000 Republicans in Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes had been prevented from going to the polls.[39] The committee asked questions from time to time which indicated that they had preconceived ideas which they

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[37] House of Representatives Miscellaneous Document Number 12, Forty-first Congress, First Session, 6.

[38] Ibid., 11.

[39] Ibid., 4.

wanted to substantiate. Oscar J. Dunn, for example, was asked: "State whether there was any effort made during this time [1868] to organize a police board and make it such as it was in 1866, with John T. Monroe's thugs upon it."[40] W. A. Moulton, who had been sent to Morehouse Parish as election superviser, said that the Ku Klux Klan had warned Negroes to join Democratic clubs or die.[41] Moulton testified that he had received threats signed simply "K.K.K."[42] C. W. Keating, a deputy United States marshall, protested against appearing because he felt that to do so would endanger his life. Nevertheless, he asserted that approximately 120 colored men had been killed in the Bossier riot.[43] Keating, who was stationed in Shreveport, said that the town was a trading point for Texas, Arkansas, and Indian Territory and as a result of the impermanent nature of the population, was a likely place for drinking, gambling, and shooting.[44]

Daniel Dennett, editor of the Planters' Banner, presented some of the most valuable testimony the committee heard. Copies of his paper were presented, and he maintained that the Ku Klux Klan and similar notices were placed in the columns of his paper "to

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[40] House of Representatives Miscellaneous Document Number 154, Forty-first Congress, Second Session, 177.

[41] Ibid., 68.

[42] Ibid., 69.

[43] Ibid., 127.

[44] Ibid., 128.

amuse the readers."[45] After prolonged prompting, Dennett admitted that he was a member of the Knights of the White Camelia, which was usually referred to as "KWC". Dennett then boasted: "I know as much about the order as the originator himself does."[46] There were ten local councils in his parish and Dennett, as "Eminent Commander," gave them instructions. Colonel Alcibiades LeBlanc, of St. Martin Parish, was the "Grand Commander" for Louisiana. The organization had all of the traditional passwords, rituals, and uniforms associated with secret clubs. The purpose, of course, was obvious; to intimidate members of either race who were considered a threat to white supremacy. W. B. Bailey, editor of the Lafayette Advertiser, continued Dennett's account of the organization. Bailey said that the purpose of the Knights of the White Camelia was to "preserve pure and intact the Caucasian race." Members were pledged "not to carnally know a black woman outside of marriage as well as in marriage."[47] A. C. Harrison, a physician from St. Landry Parish, maintained that every white in the parish, except one very old man, belonged to the group.[48]

The effectiveness of intimidation can be demonstrated by reviewing the voting record of some of the parishes. In Caddo Parish, 2,987 Republicans registered with the parish officials. Warmoth carried the parish in April of 1868, but in November of the same year

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[45] Ibid., 545.

[46] Ibid., 555.

[47] Ibid., 566.

[48] Ibid., 569-570.

Grant received one vote.[49] In nineteen parishes where Warmoth received almost 25,000 votes, Grant got 1,253. In the parishes of De Soto, Franklin, Jackson, Morehouse, St. Landry, Vermillion, and Washington, not a single vote was cast for the Republicans.[50]

Despite the successes of white Democrats in Louisiana during the summer and fall of 1868, the Republicans won the national election. When the excitement quieted down, Governor Warmoth became more concerned about state problems. On February 23, 1869, the governor signed a bill stating that all people, regardless of color, should have equal rights in licensed businesses such as street cars, railroads, and places of entertainment.[51] The statute was little more than a dead letter, as the colored people made no large scale effort to avail themselves of the privileges guaranteed them by statutory decree. The law was intended to grant something in the way of legislation to the people who had placed the Republicans in power. After the experiences during the campaign of 1868, Warmoth believed that some system must be devised which would protect the Negroes from outbreaks of violence. Although no legislation was passed until early 1870, the matter was discussed throughout 1869. In the spring of 1870, the legislature completed work on a bill which gave the governor unprecedented power over elections. He could appoint the chief election officials, the registers in the parishes who had charge of polling places, and all

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[49] Senate Report Number 41, Part 1, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 22.

[50] Ibid., 250.

[51] Warmoth, Stormy Days in Louisiana, 91-92.

local commissioners. The parish registers were to send all votes to the Returning Board composed of the governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, and two senators. The board had final authority to reject all ballots it considered fraudulent or obtained through duress.[52] This board, if dominated by a strong man, could be a powerful factor in controlling the results of any election. It was to play an important part in the future politics of Louisiana.

In the spring of 1869, a man appeared in Louisiana who quickly became the leader of an anti-Warmoth faction in the Republican party. He was James F. Casey, brother-in-law of Mrs. Grant, who had received an appointment as collector of customs of the Port of New Orleans. As the ranking Federal employee, he had great powers of patronage in Louisiana.[53] A schism quickly developed as Casey and Warmoth struggled with each other to determine who would dominate the Republicans in the state. No important ideological principle separated the two men, although Warmoth was thought to be of a higher stature than Casey. It was simply a struggle between two powerful men for control of a state. Warmoth had the better machine in Louisiana, but Casey had the advantage of being close to President Grant. Also, Federal jobs, which were under his jurisdiction, were not subject to the shifting political winds which blew through Louisiana. The "customhouse gang," as it was called, became a powerful factor in state politics.

While rival political forces were building up their strength

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[52] Ibid., 87.

[53] Ibid., 90.

for anticipated struggles, the state legislature was passing bills which steadily increased the bonded indebtedness and tax loads of the people. State funds were poured into canals, railroads, and levees as if the people had an inexhaustible supply of money. The nature of many of the grants showed that new enterprises were starting. State aid to planters was an old story in Louisiana. Planters, however, received little from the new legislators. The Mississippi and Mexican Gulf Ship Canal Company gave a first mortgage on its property in return for $600,000 in state bonds. The New Orleans and Ship Island Canal Company got $2,000,000 and a bonus of state lands. Warmoth vetoed this measure, but the legislature passed the measure over his veto.[54] The Louisiana and Arkansas Railroad Company was exempt from taxes for ten years as an inducement for organization. The legislature guaranteed the bonds of the New Orleans, Mobile, and Chattanooga Railroad at a rate of $12,500 per mile of track laid west of New Orleans.[55] In the Gilded Age there was nothing peculiar about governments making lavish grants to private corporations. It was a common phenomenon, and nowhere was there anything to match the generosity shown by the Congress of the United States. Big business was moving into Louisiana, and the legislators were making sure that the entry would be easy. Nothing was more symbolic of the collapse of the plantation ideal than the spectacle of representatives of corporations bribing colored legislators for grants of land or tax immunities.

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[54] Lemn, Reconstruction after 1868, 33-34.

[55] Ibid., 35-36

During the session of 1868 and 1869, the legislature took little heed of the condition of the levees, although there were many places where bad conditions posed a constant threat to the surrounding country.[56] The lawmakers appropriated money to pay their own salaries and expenses, but did not concern themselves with balancing budgets or providing for important agencies. They made the governor special custodian of the peace by authorizing him to appoint the chief constable in each parish, by giving him arresting powers, and by placing him in control of the militia.[57] State charitable institutions for orphans, deaf mutes, aged people, and the insane received no appropriation.[58] Legislative indifference in the lower chamber became so bad that a revenue bill passed without reading or debate.[59] A law providing for public schools to be open to children of both races was so poorly conceived that it had to be rewritten about a year after it first passed. For the years 1868-1870 the legislature appropriated approximately $1,000,000 for mileage and per diem for members and clerks.[60] Although this was not a large sum of money when compared with the big transactions between the legislature and some of the railroad and canal companies, it aroused resentment against the legislators personally. Among the issues which did not arouse much debate,

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[56] Ibid., 34-35.

[57] Ibid., 64-65.

[58] New Orleans Times, April 21, 1869.

[59] Lonn, Reconstruction after 1868, 31-32.

[60] Ibid., 30.

although they were important, was the approval of the Fifteenth Amendment,[61] and the removal of voting restrictions which had been imposed on former Confederates.[62]

The first indications of schisms in the Republican ranks occurred in the spring of 1869 when Warmoth preferred charges of misappropriation of funds against G. M. Wickliffe, the state auditor.[63] Wickliffe replied by publishing articles in the press which branded Governor Warmoth as a consummate liar, a scoundrel, and a crook. Democratic newspapers were happy to review for their readers the charges of graft and corruption the two disputants were making about each other. The Times, commenting on the accusations being made, said ". . . irregularities are charged to the auditor, and as to the Governor, the exact sum he has realized since his induction into office, is variously estimated by the knowing ones from $200,000 to $300,000."[65] Wickliffe was acquitted and restored to office, but the break in the Republican Party was not closed. As months went by, the Republicans became split into two well defined groups. Opponents of Warmoth began to cluster around Collector of Customs Casey and United States Marshall Stephen B. Packard. There were no basic differences of principle, although the customhouse faction was usually considered to be more

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[61] Fortier, Louisiana I, 421.

[62] Lonn, Reconstruction after 1868, 57.

[63] West Baton Rouge Planters' Banner, February 9, 1869.

[64] See New Orleans Picayune and Times for March and April of 1870.

[65] New Orleans Times,

extreme on the race issue than Warmoth.

Tension between the two groups continued to increase during 1870 and 1871. In January of 1870, the House of Representatives asked for the names of individuals who were on the payroll of the customhouse. Casey refused to reveal the names of his employees. Legislators friendly to Warmoth wanted to know the names of Casey's employees because they had reason to believe that some men were receiving two salaries. Also, Warmoth's friends were anxious to know who belonged to the customhouse faction. The August, 1870, meeting of the State Central Committee of the Republican party brought the rupture into the open. Oscar J. Dunn defeated Warmoth in the election for the position of presiding officer of the central committee. Warmoth retaliated a few months later by conspiring with the few Democrats in the Senate to rob the lieutenant governor of his patronage.[66]

While the political differences between Warmoth and Casey continued to grow, the state legislature listened to the coaxing voices of lobbyists and passed measures which aided those corporations wealthy and unscrupulous enough to offer bribes. Warmoth blamed the so-called "best people" for this practice. A bank bill was forced through the legislature, over the strenuous veto of Governor Warmoth, because the bank presidents wanted it. A bill providing for an issue of five million dollars worth of bonds, the principle and interest to be paid in gold, also passed over a veto.

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[66] Lonn, Reconstruction after 1868, 73-76.

When Warmoth walked into the Senate after veteing the measure, he found almost every banker in New Orleans on the floor of the Senate talking to the members.[67] By January of 1871, the governor had vetoed thirty-nine bills and only five had been passed over his veto.[68] Despite Warmoth's self-styled parsimony, the legislature in the year 1870 granted $12,000,000 to private corporations.[69] Some of the members of the legislature received cash on the floor of their respective houses for votes on these measures.[70]

The two factions of the party used every available force in trying to secure control of the central committee for 1871-1872. Delegates to the committee were selected by ward meetings held in August of 1871. Each faction hired thugs to attend the ward meetings and intimidate the rank and file party members. Warmoth's Metropolitan Police played an important role in these activities.[71] The governor wanted the delegates to meet in the Mechanics Institute, which was being used as the capitol building. His office was in the building and it would be possible for him to use the Metropolitan Police if the necessity arose. Packard and Casey insisted that the meeting of the central committee be held in the customhouse which was Federal

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[67] Senate Report Number 41, Part 1, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 202.

[68] Lonn, Reconstruction after 1868, 77.

[69] Ibid., 84.

[70] Ibid., 87-88.

[71] Ibid., 97-98.

property. There, the Federal officials would have an advantage. As the Packard-Casey group had controlled the committee for a year, a call was issued for delegates to meet in the customhouse on August 9, 1871. Packard, as a United States marshall, had secured the use of Federal troops to protect the building from violence. Warmoth and his group arrived, but were told they could not enter the designated room until eleven-thirty. Upon discovering that Packard, Casey, and Dunn and their followers were already in the room and in session, Warmoth and his men went to another building and organized their own committee with P. B. S. Pinchback as chairman. Each faction then issued pronouncements denouncing their rivals.[72]

To make the political situation more confusing, Oscar J. Dunn died on November 22, 1871. Warmoth immediately called the senators to convene for the purpose of electing a new presiding officer of the Senate. The man selected would be ex officio lieutenant governor. The lower house was not called at this time because the governor knew that an impeachment movement was underway, and he wanted a friendly man presiding over the Senate before such proceedings started. After a tie vote on the first ballot, one senator changed his vote and Pinchback became President of the Senate. The rumor at the time was that the senator received $20,000 for his change of mind.[73]

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[72] House of Representatives Report Number 92, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 1-3.

[73] Lonn, Reconstruction after 1868, 107-108.

When the state legislature met on January 1, 1872, there were not enough senators present to make a quorum. The Democrats and anti-Warmoth men were on the United States cutter Wilderness and were moving around in the river so that the Senate sergeant-at-arms could not arrest them and force them to attend the sessions.[74] The House of Representatives adjourned on January 1 out of respect for Oscar J. Dunn, then met on the following day and adopted by a vote of forty-nine to forty-five a resolution expressing confidence in Speaker George W. Carter, an outspoken critic of Warmoth. On the following day, Mortimer Carr, a former speaker and a Warmoth man, moved that the chair be declared vacant and Harry Waters be declared speaker. Carr, who had not been recognized by Speaker Carter, shouted in a loud voice that all in favor of his motion say "aye" and then assist him to remove Carter and place Waters in the speaker's chair.[75] After this abortive effort to gain control of the lower chamber, Carter retaliated by having Warmoth and twenty-two of his followers arrested for alleged violation of the Ku Klux Klan laws. While bail was being arranged, Warmoth's men in the House of Representatives tried to leave in order to destroy the quorum, but were detained by force. Warmoth then called for a special meeting of the house late in the afternoon. Members of the opposite faction received no notice of the meeting. Fifty-five representatives met and proceeded to take formal action as they had more than the fifty-two necessary for a quorum. Carter was

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[74] House of Representatives Report Number 92, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 5-6.

[75] Ibid., 6-7.

expelled from the House of Representatives and, on the following day, was prevented from entering the capitol by an armed guard. Carter and his followers then met in a hall above the Gem Saloon and issued notices that they were the only legitimate legislative body.[76] Major General W. H. Emory reported to his superiors in Washington that his display of Federal troops prevented open fighting. He strongly suggested that his command be strengthened by more men.[77]

Before many days had passed, General Emory needed all of the Federal troops he could muster. Both sides were sending messages to Washington asking for support, but were also getting ready to fight if necessary. Warmoth sent a telegram to President Grant on January 5, asking for aid from General Emory's troops. He knew, of course, that an affirmative reply would mean that he had the proper backing in the nation's capitol.[78] Casey informed the president that the governor's police were guarding the Mechanics Institute and were intimidating all anti-Warmoth members of the legislature.[79] Casey's story was strengthened by a message signed by fourteen Negro members of the legislature who asked that Grant intervene so that the rights of colored citizens would be protected.[80] Both sides, although hoping

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[76] Ibid., 8ff.

[77] House of Representatives Executive Document Number 209, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 2.

[78] House of Representatives Executive Document Number 268, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 50.

[79] Ibid., 56.

[80] Ibid., 55.

for Federal aid, prepared for local conflict. General Emory informed the adjutant general in Washington that a mob had broken into the armory and had stolen sixty muskets.[81] On the night of January 6 a mass meeting listened to colored speakers who demanded repeal of the election laws and other acts which placed great powers in the hands of Governor Warmoth.[82] Warmoth, of course, was rallying all of the support he could get by issuing proclamations condemning the Casey-Packard crowd and promising that legitimate government would be protected at all costs. The central part of the city resembled an armed camp, with the Metropolitan Police protecting the Mechanics Institute, deputy marshalls surrounding the Gem Saloon, and Federal soldiers stationed at strategic spots so that they could move immediately if fighting started.

An editorial in the New Orleans Bee expressed the sentiments of that part of the population which did not adhere to either faction. After pointing out the danger to innocent people and the obvious fact that such a continued situation would threaten even the best business men with bankruptcy, the editorial closed by remarking that "a more absolute despotism does not exist on the face of the earth than that which Governor Warmoth has established in Louisiana."[83] The following day's copy of the Bee featured a demand for martial law because of the businesses which were closing out of fear of riot. Many of the

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[81] House of Representatives Executive Document Number 209, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 3.

[82] House of Representatives Executive Document Number 268, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 54.

[83] New Orleans Bee, January 10, 1872.

business men were demanding martial law, as they began to think that an impasse existed between Warmoth and his opponents. A group of the most prominent bankers and merchants formed an organization known as the "Committee of Fifty-one," which went on record as desiring martial law in preference to the current situation. B. F. Flanders, mayor of New Orleans, echoed the Committee's request in a message to the attorney-general in Washington.[84] Flanders pointed out that the acts passed by the legislature had stripped him of any right to organize a police force and use the power customarily inherent in the mayor's office.[85] General Emory, thinking that George Carter's inflammatory speeches were preparation for riots, told Flanders that troops would be ready to suppress any outbreak of violence.[86]

The expected fight never occurred. Carter, who claimed to be the legitimate presiding officer of the House of Representatives, issued a proclamation calling for all enemies of the administration to prepare themselves for a march on Warmoth's citadel on January 22. He claimed in his appeal that he intended to remove the Metropolitan Police and all armed men from the Mechanics Institute.[87] Carter's expected assistance from the general populace did not materialize and he and the other leaders were afraid to move with only their regular followers. The customhouse faction had a chance to get local

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[84] House of Representatives Executive Document Number 268, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 73.

[85] Ibid., 59-60.

[86] Ibid., 75.

[87] Ibid., 82-83.

support but did not take advantage of it. Colonel Eugene Waggaman, who was an important leader among native New Orleanians, held a conference with Packard and the others at which he said, "Gentlemen, I am in command of the fire and nerve of this city - They are clamorous to be led against the police and thugs of the Governor - But I will never lead them as long as you mask your hands."[88] Waggaman's men would have been delighted at the prospect of ousting Warmoth, but they would not do so if the only result would be placing Casey and Packard in power without any promise of reform. Casey and Packard made no promises and received no local support. When Warmoth's legislature went through the motions of repealing legislation obnoxious to the other side, the barricades came down and quiet was restored to the city.

The trouble created for the business community by the political intrigues of Warmoth, Packard, and Casey, coupled with the deleterious effect Warmoth's administration had on business generally, led many merchants who had been relatively aloof from politics to concern themselves with political affairs. The Committee of Fifty-one had represented the commercial interests during the recent fray, and the members realized that worse struggles might occur unless a new political force emerged. Their idea was to create a party of reform which would unite all persons interested in eliminating dishonesty from the government. Also, they would naturally look with pleasure on an administration which would indicate more interest in the welfare

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[88] John Ellis to Tom Ellis, January 12, 1872. Ellis Papers, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Louisiana State University.

of the business community than had been demonstrated by Warmoth. The committee advocated calling a convention at which all persons interested in reform would be invited without regard to political connection or race. Inasmuch as Negro votes would be valuable, the Committee appointed sixteen Negroes as vice-presidents of the rapidly coalescing party.[89] The new political organization would represent conservative economic thinking and be associated with neither Republicans nor Democrats. A movement of this nature had been under consideration by former Whigs for several years. They had associated with the Democrats when the war ended because they thought it was necessary to be united against outside forces. It was not a comfortable alliance. Many conservative people felt that they should have organized their own party after the war instead of joining a group with which they had little sympathy.

One conservative of importance, Charles E. Kennon of Tangipahoa Parish, realized that the basic ideas of the Republican party in the North reflected his own type of thinking. He suggested to another prominent figure, T. C. W. Ellis, that if the local conservatives were to join the Republicans in Louisiana, convince them that they could win without the Negro vote by going after the white conservatives instead, then the Louisiana Republicans would stop legislating for the Negroes because it would not be necessary for

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[89] For the reaction of a country editor who opposed this fishing for colored votes, see Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, March 23, 1872.

political success.[90] Kennon, by the spring of 1872, was willing to accept Negro support in cleansing the government even if that meant making concessions to the blacks. After attending a reform meeting at Lafayette Square, Kennon received a note from a Negro which stated that the colored people owed everything they enjoyed to Republicans and intended to stay with them. Kennon then remarked that the race issue was quite clear as it was "based on conscious superiority of race on the one part and inferiority on the other. Hence, the jealousy of the negro can never be appeased save by the complete degradation of the whites."[91] Kennon's ideas represented the postwar trends of thought among the conservatives. They opposed the Democrats before the war because they objected to their leveling ideas and practices. After the war, they entered an alliance with the Democrats because they felt it necessary, although they opposed the extremism of many returning Democrats. They opposed the radical Republicans because of the inefficiency in the government and class legislation favoring the lowest class. During 1872 and 1873, there were attempts to create a third force which would be separate from either Republicans or Democrats. When this failed and race became so important, the conservatives entered the fray for the whites.

During the spring and early summer of 1872 there was a plethora of political organizations as the principal parties broke

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[90] Charles E. Kennon to T. C. W. Ellis, February 24, 1870. Ellis Papers.

[91] Charles E. Kennon to T. C. W. Ellis, February 29, 1872. Ellis Papers.

into splinter groups representing the various interests and viewpoints. Before the process of adjusting had been completed, there were five parties holding conventions and nominating candidates: Reform party, Democrats, Liberal Republicans, Customhouse Republicans, and Pinchback Republicans. The easiest coalition was that between the customhouse faction and the followers of P. B. S. Pinchback. Pinchback had opposed Casey and his followers because he believed that they were interested in offices and spoils instead of reforms favoring the Negro.[92] Pinchback had broken with Warmoth when the governor came out in favor of Horace Greeley and the reform element of the Republicans.[93] Pinchback had a large following because he was the strongest Negro leader in Louisiana after the death of Oscar J. Dunn. His faction held a convention in Baton Rouge in June and nominated Pinchback for governor. Shortly thereafter, they joined the customhouse faction and supported the nomination of William Pitt Kellogg for governor and C. C. Antoine, a Negro, for lieutenant governor. Pinchback was rewarded by being made the nominee for the position of congressman-at-large.[94]

The most interesting adjustment centered around the politically astute personality of Governor Warmoth. After the fighting of January, he had no power among the Republicans generally. He did, however, control the machinery of the state government, which meant

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[92] See article in Opelousas Journal, March 23, 1872.

[93] John Edmond Gonzalez, "William Pitt Kellogg: Reconstruction Governor of Louisiana," unpublished M.A. thesis, Louisiana State University, 1945, 11.

[94] Lonn, Reconstruction after 1868, 146ff.

that he had control of all election officials. He would be the governor, moreover, until the election was over and the certificates of election completed. This gave him a powerful bargaining position, although he could control only a few thousand votes. Warmoth became an ardent admirer of Horace Greeley and the Liberal Republican movement because he was completely out of favor with the inner core of the Republicans and had never been on friendly terms with President Grant. Warmoth attended the Liberal Republican meeting in Cincinnati and returned singing the praises of reform and liberalism. He knew this would aid him and embarrass the Louisiana Democrats because the Northern Democrats were considering a merger with Greeley and the Liberal Republicans. By the early part of June, a Liberal ticket had been selected with D. B. Penn at its head and Warmoth as the choice for the United States Senate. The New Orleans Times and Warmoth's Republican became the journals most completely in support of the coalition. One of the strongest appeals the Liberal Republicans could make was that they had support from such men as D. B. Penn, P. O. Hebert, Alexander Dimitry, Harry Hayes, and P. G. T. Beauregard.[95] These men, although called Liberal Republicans, were so only in the sense that they supported Greeley and the national organization and not because they had any admiration for Warmoth.

When the Democrats met in New Orleans' French Opera House on June 3, the possibility of a merger with the Liberal Republicans was immediately discussed. Although members of the party had been cursing

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[95] See New Orleans Republican and Times for month of June, 1872.

Warmoth for years, they were forced to acknowledge that they could do little against the customhouse faction without Warmoth's machine and extraordinary powers. The governor had stated that, since the great problems such as resumption of statehood and Negro political and educational rights had been settled, the time was at hand for reform in administering the government.[96] The Democrats accepted this and the merger was consummated late in the summer of 1872. The Reform party, which was led by New Orleans merchants and some old Whigs, had held a convention and nominated George Williamson of Shreveport and B. F. Jonas of New Orleans for the two top positions. As they had little more than a pious hope, they had gone back into alliance with the Democrats. When all the adjusting was complete, John McEnery was the candidate for governor and D. B. Penn had agreed to accept the second position on the ticket.

The election campaign was not so much a contest for votes as it was a struggle to determine who would control the men who counted the votes. Nevertheless, each side sent speakers through the state who presented the program and ideas of their party. Kellogg, who felt reasonably sure that the Negroes would vote for him and the whites against him, made little effort to present a campaign full of analyses of wrongs and plans for the future. He asserted that the Louisiana government should be in harmony with the national administration and tried to draw business men from the Democrats by saying he

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[96] Gonzalez, "William Pitt Kellogg," 9-10.

could do more than anyone else toward luring industrial capital into Louisiana.[97] He tried to get planter support by favoring protective tariffs generally and protection for sugar specifically.[98] The New Orleans Republican, which passed from Warmoth's control, pointed out that since 1862 Louisiana had acquired the Chattanooga Railroad, a free press, fifteen hundred free schools, and free labor.[99] The Democrat-Liberal fusion took a stand for return of honest government by the removal of corrupt customhouse people. They asked the colored voters to oppose Kellogg and the others because they had never been the real friend of the colored man. The Opelousas Journal brought up the point that a few years before a Senator Anderson had been criticized for drinking a glass of eggnog in the auditor's office in the presence of Oscar Dunn, but "now they [Democrats] are just as good at it as the Reds, when they want an office . . ."[100]

The campaign was not as brutal as the campaign of the summer and fall of 1868. A notice in the Donaldsonville Chief stated that the election would be peaceful, and then made a remark which indicated some of the practices of the time when it said that "there is no need for any of our citizens to incur the trouble and expense of sending their families away from home."[101]

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[97] Ibid., 18.

[98] Ibid., 21.

[99] New Orleans Republican, July 13, 1872.

[100] Opelousas Journal, September 28, 1872.

[101] Donaldsonville Chief, October 26, 1872.

The Democrats went about the state speaking to their friends and threatening their enemies and at the same time relying on Warmoth to handle the election and registration machinery. The governor appointed Brainard P. Blanchard as State Registrar of Voting. Blanchard selected the supervisers in each parish, who in turn controlled the registration of voters and the actual casting of ballots.[102] In every parish the election officials were Warmoth's men. Many devices were used to prevent Republicans from voting. Among the techniques were such methods as scarcity and inaccessibility of polls, uncertain hours of registration, pretexts for disfranchisement, and dishonesty in counting the ballots. The tricks used were numerous as each parish official developed his own variation on the fundamental theme.[103]

When the balloting ended on November 4, the election officials, acting under orders, counted all of the votes for national offices in the presence of United States officials. Then the ballot boxes were sealed until the Federal officers left. The ballots for state and parish offices could then be counted without fear of outside interference. The Federal officers, having no jurisdiction over votes cast for local offices, had to leave.[104] During the days

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[102] Allie Bayne Windham, "Methods and Mechanisms Used to Restore White Supremacy in Louisiana: 1872-1876," Unpublished M.A. thesis, Louisiana State University, 1949, 4.

[103] Ibid., 4ff.

[104] Lonn, Reconstruction after 1868, 168.

following the election, stories of methods used to prevent Negroes from voting the Republican ticket began to flood the state. Pinchback issued a notice in New Orleans which called for a meeting of colored people at his home where plans could be made for collecting evidence which would prove that Republicans of both races had been prevented from voting. Kellogg, the Republican candidate for the governor's office, stated that polls had been placed so that they would be remote from the Negro population, that announcements of polling places were withheld until the day preceding the election, and that ballot boxes were stuffed before counts were made.[105] As the information flowed into New Orleans from all the parishes, it became obvious that the election machine had done its work well. Threats of violence, unemployment, and ostracism were commonplace during the weeks before election day. Violence was not necessary on the day that ballots were cast because the Democrat-Liberal fusion believed it unnecessary.

The parish officials made their counts, certified the results, and sent the boxes to New Orleans where the Returning Board would make the official announcements. Warmoth was a member of the board and was expected to dominate it, although Pinchback was also a member. There was a problem, however, about the legitimate members of the Returning Board. According to the law which created the board, the governor, lieutenant governor, and secretary

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[105] House of Representatives Executive Document Number 91, Forty-second Congress, Third Session, 3-7.

of state were ex officio members. The first board had consisted of Warmoth, Dunn, George E. Bovee, John Lynch, and Thomas C. Anderson. In August of 1871, Warmoth removed Bovee and appointed F. J. Herron as secretary of state. In March of 1872, Judge Henry Dibble of the Eighth District Court ruled that Herron's commission had expired and that Bovee was entitled to the office. Warmoth then removed Dibble and appointed another judge who refused to execute the earlier writ. As Judge Dibble had ruled against Herron while he was still a judge and had the power to do so, Herron could not be secretary of state. Warmoth then appointed Jack Wharton to the office. As Pinchback and Anderson were candidates for office, they were disqualified. Warmoth and Wharton therefore, constituted a majority of the three remaining members of the board. In the presence of John Lynch, they appointed F. W. Hatch and Durant Daponte to the facant position. Lynch, who was an opponent of Warmoth, then withdrew. He and Herron, who still claimed to be secretary of state, then appointed former Confederate General James Longstreet and Jacob Hawkins to what they called the legitimate Returning Board. Warmoth's position on the board was unquestioned, so no one was appointed in his place. On November 16, Kellogg had Judge E. H. Durell of the United States Circuit Court issue a temporary injunction restraining Warmoth's board from canvassing any returns except in the presence of the Lynch board. After that move, each side issued a complex assortment of suits and countersuits as they jockeyed for position. Four days after Durell issued his injunction, Warmoth signed a bill which had passed the previous legislature and which abolished the

Returning Board. Warmoth then, acting under the power granted him by the new enactment, appointed another board composed of his men. The new board thereupon declared the entire Democratic-Liberal ticket elected. On December 4, Warmoth issued a proclamation to this effect and listed the parish and state officials who had been elected. Late in the night of December 5, Judge Durell issued an order to United States Marshall Packard which instructed him to take possession of Mechanics Institute and hold it until further order from the court. This was done to prevent the assembly of legislators whom Warmoth had declared elected. Marshall Packard had already received a telegram from the attorney general which instructed him to enforce all decrees and mandates from United States courts, no matter by whom resisted. Packard, upon receipt of Judge Durell's order, created a posse and at two o'clock in the morning of December 6 seized the Mechanics Institute. He held it until the Kellogg regime was fully established.[106]

On December 6, the board composed of Lynch, Longstreet, Hawkins, and Bovee certified the election of the Republican ticket. This included the names of members of the legislature as well as other officers. According to the Lynch board's certificate, the new legislature would be composed of strong Republican majorities in each house. The Lynch board stated in the official journals that the Republicans had carried the state by a majority of more than 18,000 votes. Warmoth's board had earlier announced that the

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[106] Fortier, Louisiana, II, 361-362.

Democrat-Liberal candidates had received 10,000 more votes than their opponents. The Warmoth board had the ballots which had been brought to New Orleans from all of the parishes. The Lynch board which did not have access to the ballots, estimated what the vote would have been had there been complete honesty before and during the election.[107] When Lynch testified before a group sent from Washington to investigate the election, he said "we took all the evidence we had before us, and our knowledge of the parishes and their political complexions, and we then decided." When asked pointblank if he had made his certificate on the basis of what he thought the vote should have been, he said "Yes sir. That was just the fact, and I think on the whole we were pretty correct."[108]

The men who received certificates of election from the Lynch board assembled at the Mechanics Institute on December 9 to take the oath of office. One of the first acts of this body was the impeachment of Governor Warmoth. The vote was fifty-eight to six in the House of Representatives. The impeachment and announcement that Pinchback was now governor of the state took place within a few hours after the legislature convened.[109] The Constitution of 1868, which the members had sworn to obey, stated that officers being impeached were to be summoned before a committee of the House of

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[107] Senate Report Number 457, Forty-second Congress, Third Session, LV-LVI.

[108] Ibid., LVI.

[109] Ibid.

Representatives where the official could confront his accusers and interrogate witnesses. Warmoth received no chance to defend himself.[110]

Upon completion of the day's work, letters were sent to Washington requesting recognition of the new officers. Pinchback received the following telegram from the attorney general: "Let it be understood that you are recognized by the President as the lawful executive of Louisiana, and that the body assembled at Mechanics Institute is the lawful legislature of the State . . .". The attorney general added that necessary assistance would be given to protect the people from disorder and violence.[111] John McEnery, Kellogg's opponent in the election, received a telegram from the same source stating that any deputation sent to Washington" . . . will be unavailing so far as the President is concerned. His decision is made and will not be changed, and the sooner it is acquiesced in the sooner good order and peace will be restored."[112] From December 9 of 1872 until January 13 of the following year, Pinchback held everything in readiness for the inauguration of William Pitt Kellogg.

The de facto impeachment of Warmoth closed one of the chapters of Louisiana's turbulent history and removed from a position

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[110] Ibid., LVIII.

[111] Ibid., LIX.

[112] Ibid., LXI.

of great power the most picturesque and controversial figure of Louisiana's postwar years. During most of his administration, Warmoth's name was reviled by natives of the Bayou State. His last months in office, nevertheless, were spent in attempting to defeat the Republicans he had helped organize and to bring back to power the men he had been fighting for many years. It is difficult to analyse such a personality as Henry Clay Warmoth, and it is even more difficult to arrive at a balanced analysis of conditions in Louisiana during his administration. To be sure, many of the developments during the years from 1868 and 1873 were not the direct results of Warmoth's policies and probably would have occurred in one way or another no matter who was governor of the state. Nevertheless, Warmoth dominated the political scene so thoroughly that it would be difficult to distinguish what was Warmoth's work from what was not.

The first Republican regime added tremendous power to the prerogatives of the state's chief executive. Law after law appeared on the statute books as the legislature responded to the desires of Warmoth and his advisers. The governor received the power to appoint and remove election officials in all of the parishes, tax collectors, assessors, boards of public works, and officers of the Metropolitan Police. He had the right to name special constables when making arrests.[113] One of the most far-reaching powers, granted by the legislature only a few months before the break with Casey and Packard

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[113] Shugg, Origin of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 224-225.

in 1871, was the right to appoint members of parish police juries.[114] The Metropolitan Police constituted an armed force capable of enforcing the governor's demands. There were usually a few more than 500 regular members of the organization and 100 to 125 supernumeraries who could be added in time of crisis.[115] The average annual cost of the Metropolitan Police for the years 1869-1871 was approximately $800,000. Salaries for the men came from taxes collected in New Orleans, but control of the body was vested in the Board of Metropolitan Police which was controlled by the governor and was in no way responsible to officials of the city.[116] As the leader of the Republicans, at least until he ran afoul of Packard and Casey, Warmoth directed the legislative program of the dominant political association. All of these powers made it possible for the governor to originate legislation, guide the bills through the legislature, and see that they were enforced.

Louisiana had seen earlier politicans rise to great power and certainly would not find Warmoth to be the last powerful man in state affairs. What brought the white people into serious opposition against the governor was the program which he planned to inaugurate. Chief among the causes for opposition was Warmoth's policy toward the position of the Negro in Louisiana. Freedom from slavery had brought

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[114] Acts of the Louisiana Legislature, First Session, Second Legislature, Act Number 97, 216-217.

[115] See testimony of A. S. Badger, Superintendant of Metropolitan Police in House of Representatives Miscellaneous Document Number 211, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 101-102.

[116] Edward King, The Great South (Hartford, 1879), 94.

no appreciable change into the lives of the Negroes other than the removal of the chattel status and relaxation of restrictions on movement. Such things as education, economic position, political influence, and civil rights would have to be developed within the state because the new status did not automatically guarantee these privileges. Legislation passed during the period from 1865 to 1867 indicated that, if left alone, Louisianians would see to it that Negroes were placed in a position little different from that of ante-bellum days. The beginning of radicalism meant that Republicans, who received votes from the Negroes, would have to grant to the Negroes some of the demands being made by their leaders. It is true that in the councils of the Republican party there were Negroes who were cultivated, educated, and wealthy.[117] It is also true that among the Negro politicans there were men who were corrupt opportunists or who were too ignorant to understand what was going on. The triumph of the Republicans in 1868 brought Negroes into official positions for the first time. Despite the fact that much was made out of the fact that Negroes were in the legislature, only six of the Senate's membership of thirty-six and about one-third of the members of the lower chamber were colored.[118] J. C. Moncure, who was one of the few Democrats in the legislature, told representatives from Congress that he did not think that "the colored members are a whit worse than

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[117] Warmoth, Stormy Days in Louisiana, 56.

[118] Ibid., XII.

these men who have been foisted on the house improperly. I do not think they are as bad."[119] Moncure indicated that he could see a split developing among the Republicans when he said "I think they [Negroes] are becoming vastly more liberal than some of their party would like them to be."[120] Moncure's ideas were shared by some of the Negro leaders. B. F. Joubert, a Negro from New Orleans, stated that the white Republican leaders abused the confidence of the Negroes and that the colored people would be happy to see many of them leave Louisiana.[121] Pinchback told a reporter from the Opelousas Journal that the white Republicans "out Herod Herod in love for the negro until they get in office, and then they grow colder toward their benefactors than any Southern man ever was or can be."[122] In a speech in New Orleans, Pinchback accused the Northerners in Louisiana of breaking faith. The Negroes, according to Pinchback, had received their just demands by civil legislation but the laws were not obeyed.[123] Warmoth's reluctance to enforce legislation pertaining to Negro rights, and his efforts to prevent other laws favoring the Negroes from passing, created a schism between himself and Pinchback. When Pinchback broke with Warmoth, he took

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[119] House of Representatives Miscellaneous Document Number 211, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 58.

[120] Ibid., 59.

[121] House of Representatives Report Number 92, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 28.

[122] Opelousas Journal, March 23, 1872.

[123] Charles Kennon to T. C. W. Ellis, February 29, 1872. Ellis Papers.

away from the governor the vote which had placed him in office and without which he could do nothing in the Republican party.

A case might be developed in support of the great powers given to Warmoth by the legislature. Changes were being made, and a powerful executive would be needed. Arguments in favor of the changes that were taking place in race relations could certainly be advanced. It is difficult to imagine, however, any justification for the financial dishonesty with which the Warmoth regime was plagued. To be sure it was not solely a result of Warmoth himself; nor was it peculiar to Louisiana. Knowledge that bigger scandals and more dishonesty could be found elsewhere was no solace to the Louisianian who looked about him and found bribery and peculation in all levels of government. Charles W. Lowell, a member of the Constitution Convention of 1868 and later postmaster of New Orleans, testified before members of Congress that Warmoth, when confronted with the Ship Island Canal legislation (which was designed to turn control of city drainage over to a company), promised the company's president that he would veto the measure for the sake of public opinion and would see to it that the bill passed over the veto. When this maneuver was completed, Lowell said, Warmoth and his friends had a quiet celebration in the governor's chambers.[124] Other citizens tried to bribe Warmoth, according to Lowell, but

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[124] House of Representatives Miscellaneous Document Number 211, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 202.

were unable to afford the high price.[125] Warmoth's office was not the only place where money changed hands for illegal purposes. A committee sent to New Orleans by Congress found evidence of irregularities and frauds in the importation of dutiable goods.[126] The customhouse people had a system of acquiring funds which they used for several years. Vouchers made out in the customhouse for services supposedly rendered by temporary laborers were attested by a clerk who also had the power to notarize the documents. The vouchers would then be presented to the United States Treasury for collection. Daniel P. Kinsella, an agent of the Treasury Department, knew that this was going on but made no report because he had two minor sons who received large salaries from the customhouse.[127] Flagrant dishonesty was not restricted to agents of executive departments. Legislators fought for bills in which they had a personal interest. At times, bribes were offered and accepted on the floor while debates were going on. Pinchback, when asked how he made money while he was a legislator, made this candid remark: "I had this advantage: I belonged to the General Assembly, and I knew what it would do." Pinchback, who was in a position to know, added that "bribery and corruption has been indulged in to such an extent that I would not

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[125] Senate Report Number 41, Part 1, Forty-second Congress Second Session, 202.

[126] House of Representatives Report Number 816, Forty-fourth Congress, First Session, II.

[127] Ibid., III-IV.

be surprised at anything."[128] The precedents established in New Orleans were followed throughout the state. Charles E. Kennon complained that the tax assessor placed the value of goods in his store at four times their real value.[129] Money paid into state and parish coffers increased from year to year but services rendered to the people continued to decline. The annual expenditure in New Orleans increased from $3,767,000 in 1862 to almost $7,000,000 a decade later. Nevertheless, the streets were uncared for, services were not rendered, and the treasury was empty.[130] In Natchitoches Parish, thirteen thousand dollars provided what was considered adequate revenue in 1860. More than eighty thousand dollars was insufficient in 1873.[131]

These things could not be legitimately blamed on Warmoth alone, nor could such creditable items as legalized Negro marriages, Negro education, and child welfare legislation be credited to him. He did, nevertheless, dominate the period by his bold and, at times, reckless way of handling public affairs. His fight against the customhouse faction and subsequent withdrawal from the Republican party made him more acceptable to New Orleanians and he was allowed to live in the Crescent City for half of a century after his abrupt departure from the governor's office.

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[128] Opelousas Journal, March 23, 1872.

[129] Charles Kennon to T. C. W. Ellis, May 13, 1871. Ellis Papers.

[130] King, The Great South, 94.

[131] Shugg, Origin of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 228.

CHAPTER VIII

THE END OF RECONSTRUCTION

Two groups of men, each claiming to be the legitimate legislature of Louisiana, met in New Orleans on January 7, 1873. The Republicans held their assembly in the Mechanics Institute, which had been guarded by Packard for a month, and issued statements that only their decrees were to be accepted as law. The supporters of John McEnery issued the same type of statements from their meeting place, the Odd Fellows' Hall.[1] Both McEnery and Kellogg took the oath of office on January 14, and each then forwarded certificates to that effect to Washington. Each document bore what was claimed to be the great seal of Louisiana.[2] For weeks the people of the state were hopelessly confused as they did not know which government to obey. The United States Congress asked for reports and sent investigators, but made no move to support either of the rival parties. Some members of Congress wanted to hold another election with safeguards which would guarantee honesty, but this plan did not receive wide support.[3] President Grant recognized Kellogg and his legislature when the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections reported that they believed that Warmoth's election officials had used

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[1]Fortier, Louisiana, I, 606.

[2]Senate Report Number 457, Forty-second Congress, Third Session, 1.

[3]Lonn, Reconstruction After 1868, 234 ff.

fraud in obtaining about 20,000 votes.[4] The Supreme Court of Louisiana had already ruled that Kellogg was the governor. That did not matter too much, however, as the Supreme Court had no power to back up its decision.

McEnery's faction did not accept the new regime without a display of force. On March 5, in what became known as the "Battle of the Cabildo," Eugene Waggaman and Frederick N. Ogden led some men to the Cabildo building to take control of the precinct station located there. When some members of the Metropolitan Police appeared on the scene, Waggaman and the others went into Jackson Square and started firing. Federal soldiers quickly arrived and stopped the fight.[5] On the following day, police entered the Odd Fellows' Hall and arrested the speaker of McEnery's legislature and four of the members. John McEnery issued a statement denouncing what he termed a usurpation, but he made no effort to force the issue at that time.[6] There was no organized resistance in New Orleans to Kellogg's government after the Battle of the Cabildo and the dissolution of McEnery's legislature until the following year, when there seemed to be some chances for success.

The new governor was a classic example of what the native Louisianians thought of when the term "carpetbagger" was used. Kellogg

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[4]Senate Executive Document Number 13, Forty-third Congress, Third Session, 3.

[5]Opelousas Journal, February 8, 1873.

[6]Lonn, Reconstruction After 1868, 228-29.

Kellogg

was born in Vermont in 1830 but moved to Illinois where he studied law and was admitted to the bar. He was a presidential elector in 1860 and used his influence in securing the position of chief justice in the Nebraska Territory. He served as a cavalry officer during the war and, after the surrender at Appomattox, moved to New Orleans where he was customs collector at the port. He became interested in Republican politics while the party was being formed and soon emerged as one of the Republican leaders.[7] In 1868 he was Louisiana's delegate-at-large to the national convention. When the Republicans secured control of Louisiana, he became a member of the United States Senate. Although much of his time was spent in Washington, he was an important factor in local politics. He broke with Warmoth in the summer of 1871 and became one of the leaders of the customhouse faction, which was dominated by Casey and Packard.[8] Kellogg was never the real leader of the faction he represented. He was a weak but ambitious man, and he was always controlled by stronger men, especially Stephen Packard.

Kellogg started running into trouble soon after his opposition in New Orleans was suppressed. The principal immediate reason was his effort to collect unpaid taxes. One of the first acts of Kellogg's legislature provided for the immediate collection of approximately $2,300,000 in back taxes with the threat of heavy penalities for

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[7]Fortier, Louisiana, I, 605.

[8]John E. Gonzalez, "William Pitt Kellogg: Reconstruction Governor of Louisiana," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1945, 6-7.

nonpayment. An organization called the "Peoples League" then emerged which opposed payment to the "unlawful" government. Local attorneys offered free service to members of the league who refused to pay taxes to Kellogg's collectors. The legislature then passed an act which changed the Metropolitan Police to the Metropolitan Brigade and gave the governor authority to use it in any parish in the state.[9] Citizens of St. Martin Parish, led by Alcibiades DeBlanc, beat off the Metropolitan Brigade, but quickly surrendered when Federal soldiers arrived to back up the constabulary.[10] This incident indicated that only Federal power could protect the Kellogg regime.

There were several parishes where rival groups claimed political offices even after the problem had been solved in New Orleans. In Caddo Parish there were two sheriffs, two parish judges, and two parish clerks. One set of officials held commissions from McEnery and the other from Kellogg.[11] The claimants to public office in Natchitoches Parish could not decide who had been elected or who held valid commissions, so they divided the offices evenly.[12] Few parishes were able to arrive at such a peaceful solution. The contests for control of public offices were parts of a basic struggle for control of

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[9]Fortier, Louisiana, I, 606.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Land and Taylor to J. G. Taliaferro, April 21, 1873, Taliaferro Papers, Louisiana State University Department of Archives and Manuscripts.

[12]Opelousas Journal, May 3, 1873.

the state. The problem could not be solved by superficial compromises.

Grant Parish, which had been created by Warmoth as a gerrymandering move, was the scene of a bloody riot which developed from the struggle for power. Colfax, the parish seat, was a small village of not many more than a hundred white people which was in an agricultural area populated by a large Negro majority. Officials selected by the Warmoth - McEnery fusion claimed that they were legitimately elected and held their posts until March 25, when Governor Kellogg's men appeared and took possession of the offices. Negroes, in support of the new officials, formed a quasi-military organization which was armed with rifles, shotguns, and an improvised cannon. Isolated fights broke out frequently, but there was no organized effort made to remove the parish officials until April 13. On the morning of that day, whites from Grant and several nearby parishes arrived at Colfax to drive the Kellogg men from the parish. Firing began after an unsuccessful attempt at compromise. The whites managed to set fire to the courthouse where the Negroes were entrenched and about sixty Negroes were killed after the fire forced them out of the building. Members of the army and Metropolitan Brigade came to Colfax a few days later, but could not find the white participants in the riot because of the reluctance of people living in that area to disclose any names.[13]

The inquiries which were held after the Colfax riot brought to light a number of indications as to the ineffective way in which public

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[13]For a full account of the Colfax riot see Marie White Johnson, "The Colfax Riot of April, 1873," L.H.Q., XIII (1930), 399 ff. See also the Alexandria Gazette, April 26, 1873.

affairs were being handled. As early as 1871, James Longstreet had raised objections over the indiscriminate and careless way in which arms were being distributed among Negroes near Colfax.[14] Longstreet's ideas were ignored, and the Negroes continued to receive weapons without any instructions about using them and protecting themselves against organized bodies. Federal soldiers, after the news of the riot reached New Orleans, tried to go to Colfax by river. Steamboat owners refused to carry the troops because they maintained that such action would be misconstrued by the public and would be bad for business. As a result, Federal forces did not get to Colfax until ten days after the riot.[15] Some of the advance deputies from New Orleans reached Colfax on April 15. They found fifty-nine bodies, many with pistol wounds in the back of their heads, indicating that they had been killed after having surrendered.[16] The whole shoddy story of the Colfax riot indicated the depths of hatred and passion which had been reached, and the inability of the government to operate effectively.

The riot which occurred in Colfax was one of the worst of many such incidents during Louisiana's reconstruction. The state was on the verge of chaos as a result of the bitterness which had existed since 1868. Property values had suffered severe declines, trade with other areas was almost at a standstill, and potential investors were hesitant

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[14]Lonn, Reconstruction After 1868, 241.

[15]Fortier, Louisiana, I, 606.

[16]Senate Executive Document 13, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 3.

to risk their money because they did not have confidence in the ability of the government to protect property. The people were divided into two large and hostile political groups which were incapable of compromise. One citizen was so enraged that he shot at Kellogg while the governor was riding through New Orleans in a carriage.[17] He was merely doing what many were talking about.

There were, nevertheless, people living in Louisiana who saw that the existing state of affairs, if continued, could only result in more horrible calamities. They also realised that a complete triumph by either faction would be a solution which would contain within itself the sources of future strife. In the early summer of 1873 some of the most eminent and respected members of both races and both parties tried to start in New Orleans a movement which would create one political party of all of the people who saw the dangers of extremism. They objected to the regime of Kellogg, Packard, and Casey because they were corrupt and venal. They rejected the leadership of the Democrats because they were so extreme that they could not appreciate the advantages of a peaceful settlement. The failure of this "Unification Movement" was one of the great tragedies of Louisiana's postwar history. What makes the tragedy so great is the fact that the movement never had a real chance to succeed. By the summer of 1873, reasonableness in any matter pertaining to race relations was not one of the characteristics of the average Louisianian.

During the election campaign of 1872 the Reform party represented the political ideas of business men in New Orleans who had

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[17]Gonzalez, "William Pitt Kellogg: Reconstruction Governor of Louisiana," 42-43.

reason to fear extremists on both sides. It stood for a state government which would be honest, efficient, and inexpensive. The reformers also wanted a solution to the basic problems which had divided Louisiana into two warring camps. They did not take a strong stand in favor of Negro rights in 1872 and the Negroes did not support the reformers. As a result, the Reform party fused with the Democrats in order to present a united front against the radical Republican regime. When the Democrats were counted out and Kellogg and the Republicans assumed control, men who had been prominent in organizing the Reform party tried once again to inject a third force into Louisiana politics. They believed that the masses of the Negroes were dissatisfied with the Republican government and could be persuaded to abandon it. Such separation would have to be accomplished by offering to Negroes the civil and legal equality they had been promised by the Republicans. Leaders of the Unification Movement also knew that their goal could not be reached without support from the white masses. They hoped to gain this by persuading white people throughout the state that the Negro should be granted his legitimate aims and that all should work together to destroy the corrupt Republican administration. The alternative would be continued chaos, crime, brutality, and depression.[18]

By the early summer of 1873, the Unification Movement was developing rapidly in New Orleans. I. N. Marks, a well-known business leader who had helped create the Reform party, was the guiding genius

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[18]For an excellent review of the Unification Movement, see T. Harry Williams, "The Louisiana Unification Movement of 1873," Journal of Southern History, XI (1945), 349 ff.

of the movement. Negroes respected Marks and believed that he was sincere in his desire for justice between the races. The New Orleans Times, which was the propaganda agent for the movement, published many articles, editorials, and letters in praise of unification, honest government, and racial justice. Other New Orleans newspapers began to come around to the Times' position. One of the most impressive aspects of the movement was the numbers of famous Louisiana men who supported it by lending their names or by actual participation. General P. G. T. Beauregard, the state's favorite Civil War hero, sat in on some of the meetings and voiced approval. Judge William M. Randolph, of the Virginia family, was a prominent leader. Former governors P. O. Hebert and Alexander Mouton wrote letters and made speeches in favor of unification as the only salvation for the state. Mouton, in a letter to Beauregard, wrote that ". . . if they (Negroes) do not act with us to redeem Louisiana from ruin and shame it will be our fault."[19] Beauregard, in an address to the people of the state, said that "the ends proposed are not only unobjectionable, but patriotic and praiseworthy." Beauregard pointed out that prosperity could return to Louisiana only if there was co-operation among all people sincerely interested in public welfare. This would mean allowing the colored man to enjoy his legitimate desires such as serving on juries, voting, and entering public places. There was nothing in the program of action, according to Beauregard, which contemplated interference or dictation in private social relations.[20]

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[19]Quoted in Opelousas Journal, July 19, 1873.

[20]Ibid.

Marks and the other exponents of unification realized that they would have little success without large-scale aid from the Negroes. They sought that aid by requesting the advice and co-operation of the most respected Negro leaders. Louis C. Roudanez, publisher of the Tribune, James Lewis, member of the New Orleans City Council, and James H. Ingraham, member of the Louisiana Senate, accepted the invitation of the unification people.[21] A "Committee of One Hundred," composed of fifty members from each race, masterminded the early organization and kept publicity flowing from the city's newspapers. The committee met on June 16 to consider a platform which had been written to outline the principles of the movement. The meeting of June 16 revealed to the general public for the first time the names of many men who had been in the background. Marks, Beauregard, and Randolph were the most prominent of the many influential business and civic leaders present. The Negro leaders who attended were Roudanez, Lieutenant Governor C. C. Antoine, State Senator George Y. Kelso, Aristide Mary (a respected cordon bleu), and Charles H. Thompson who was a well-known clergyman and member of the New Orleans school board.[22] Antoine and Kelso were Negro politicians and their presence at the meeting was a mistake because of their identification with the regime under attack.

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[21]Williams, "The Louisiana Unification Movement of 1873," Journal of Southern History, XI (1945), 355-56.

[22]Ibid., 357-358.

The committee approved a statement of policy which offered to the Negroes, in return for their political support, all civil and political rights which their leaders had been demanding.[23] The resolution outlined briefly the plight of Louisiana and asserted that prosperity and amity could be restored by co-operation of fair-minded members of both races. The document then systematically listed the rights of Negroes which should be accepted and maintained. It stated that members of either race should be allowed on vehicles of public conveyance and in public places. Public schools on all levels should be open to children regardless of color. Also, economic opportunity in all fields of endeavor should be open to the Negro as well as to the white. Political and civil rights already outlined in laws of both Louisiana and the United States were restated and approved.

The object of unification was known throughout the state after the committee published its program and its goal. The unifiers wanted to eject the Republican administration and substitute natives of the state who could be trusted to maintain law and order, protect property, and restore dignity, honesty and efficiency to the state government. Home rule and honest government, in the thinking of the backers of unification, could best be achieved by getting support from both blacks and whites. The Negroes would not support a regime unless it promised civil and political rights to all citizens. Therefore,

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[23]The entire document is printed in ibid., 359-61. The Manuscript is in the Louisiana State University Department of Archives and Manuscripts.

concession to the Negroes were necessary. The Negroes would have to be convinced of the sincerity of the native whites who were leading the new movement. The whites would have to be persuaded that concessions were necessary in order to have stability and prosperity.

The idea of political unity between white and black for the purpose of restoring home rule and honest government was accepted fairly well in New Orleans where business leaders and editors could publicise favorable arguments and mould public opinion. In the rural areas, however, the idea of granting civil and political rights to Negroes, no matter what the justification, met widespread opposition. The Ouachita Telegraph, published in Monroe, said that if such names as Beauregard and Randall Gibson were not on the list of sponsors the unification idea would be something to laugh at. Even so, the editor could not help from declaring: "Unification on the basis of a perfect equality of whites and blacks! We abhor it to the very fiber of our being."[24] The Telegraph later commented that the current situation in Louisiana proved that Negro suffrage was a pernicious thing and should be destroyed, not accepted.[25] The Opelousas Journal was being realistic when it wondered if the Negroes would leave the Republicans to enter a new party in which they had no voice.[26] Such newspapers as the Alexandria Democrat, Shreveport Times, Clinton Patriot-American, and many others were harsh in their criticisms of unification and the racial

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[24]Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, June 21, 1873.

[25]Ibid., July 19, 1873.

[26]Opelousas Journal, June 21, 1873.

adjustments being advocated by the unifiers.[27]

The leaders of unification held a public meeting at Exposition Hall on July 15. The purpose of the meeting was to present the unification platform to the general public, have representatives from both races make speeches supporting the program of action, and stimulate popular support which would become the springboard for further action. The meeting was a failure. A large crowd attended, but the speeches were far from satisfactory. Among the Negro speakers were State Senator J. Henri Burch and James Lewis, a New Orleans politician. When they finished speaking everyone present knew that many influential Negroes did not trust the whites and would make no effort to support unification until they had some assurance that civil and political rights would be retained by the Negroes after the Republicans were removed from office. After the meeting was over there was little enthusiasm for unification. The white leaders resented the attitude of Burch and Lewis, although other Negro speakers had been wholehearted in their approval. Negroes pointed out that most of the people at the meeting were colored and that neither Beauregard nor Randolph was present. Despite the charges which were quickly made as to who killed unification, it was most certainly dead.

Unification never had much of a chance to succeed. The white people in Louisiana, especially in the productive rural areas where the Negroes lived in large numbers, would not accept the idea of unification because it meant that they would have to accept and protect

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[27]Williams, "The Louisiana Unification Movement of 1873," Journal of Southern History, XI (1945), 362 ff.

the type of racial adjustment they had been fighting against for years. Moreover, the problems of trade, protection of property, and governmental stability did not mean as much to farmers as they did to the city merchants. Merchants had much to lose from inefficient government. Farmers who had only a few acres of poor land could not be reached by the argument that the Republican regime was bad for business. They had only their race pride, and they would not give it up.

The Kellogg administration had all of the problems it inherited from Warmoth, plus those of its own making. One of the most immediate and aggravating of Kellogg's worries was the matter of finances. The government under Warmoth had been unable to collect more than about one-half of the taxes owed by the people. When Kellogg assumed office he found that unpaid warrants totalled two and one-fourth million dollars and that interest on bonded indebtedness was in arrears to the amount of $300,000. The receipts from delinquent taxes were being used to pay outstanding warrants. A system of espionage had developed which informed some of the holders of warrants when delinquent taxes were collected. The holders of the warrants would present their documents within a few hours after the money was received at the treasury. As a result, only a selected few received payments for the warrants they held. Moreover, the government could not build up money from the collection of delinquent taxes to provide funds for other governmental needs.[28] Soon after Kellogg became governor, the Board of Examiners estimated the

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[28]Lonn, Reconstruction After 1868, 247.

total public debt at $53,000,000. Members of the board suggested that $30,000,000 of the figure be ignored as it represented unwarranted guarantees . Kellogg wanted to repudiate the unwarranted indebtedness. The governor also wanted a reduction in the tax rate as he was "not willing to advise the continuance of a rate of taxation which is not far removed from confiscation."[29]

Kellogg had many sound ideas in the realm of financial affairs. State finance, however, could not be separated from state politics. The governor was unable to carry through many of his plans because to do so would be to invade the spheres of some of the important members of his own party. Kellogg did, nevertheless, make sound recommendations. He wanted the government to keep appropriations down, budget expenses so that they could be met by anticipated revenue, prevent the auditor from issuing warrants unless there was money on hand to pay the warrant at the time it was issued, and fund and readjust the public indebtedness.[30] The legislature ignored Kellogg's requests. Members of the legislative body were not willing to take effective action which would decrease their income as individuals. Some of the governor's recommendations were approved, but adequate machinery for carrying them out was not created.

Economic conditions in Louisiana were bad for several years following 1873. The general depression which started in that year, the inability of the state to produce items for sale to other areas, the labor problem, and venality and lack of imagination in the state

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[29]Quoted in Ibid., 248.

[30]Ibid.

government were a combination of forces with which the people could not cope. The serious and bitter struggles for power during the closing years of Reconstruction must be understood in the light of economic conditions which worsened situations which were already bad and which made extremists of men who would ordinarily be more inclined to reason and moderation.

The most important economic problems were those concerning agriculture. Land and agricultural production were the state's greatest potential assets. Continued trouble in the rural areas meant that there was little chance for satisfactory recuperation. The cities and towns had financial troubles which were frequently more spectacular than those of the farming areas and which could be more readily explained as the result of Republican practices. New Orleans, which was the fountainhead of Republicanism, was in a terrible condition. Gold bonds carrying seven per cent interest were selling on the open market at less than one-half of their par value. Tax rates were so high that the newspapers had to publish extra pages of fine print when they published lists of delinquent taxpayers.[31] This was, of course, the type of condition which was abhorrent to the business leaders in New Orleans and was one of the reasons for their interest in creating a unified group of Negroes and whites which would expel the Republicans and try to create a sounder economic system.

Shreveport, which was growing rapidly during the postwar years, had the same aggravations although in a smaller way. City bonds and script were not accepted at anything approaching face value because of the

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[31] *Ibid.*, 252.

general feeling that the city could not pay its debts. In the spring of 1874, the city council tried to float a bond issue of $100,000 for street pavement. A taxpayer's association took over the job and paved the streets according to specifications for $36,000. The people naturally assumed that the difference between the two figures would have been graft for the members of the council and their contractors.[32] In 1873 the Shreveport Savings Bank and Trust Company received a fifty year franchise which gave it exclusive control of the city's water and gas. The company was to pay to the city $500 per year to retain the franchise. C. C. Antoine, William Harper, and several other Republican leaders were stockholders in the company.[33]

In Plaquemines Parish, which had no important urban center, similar situations existed. In 1868 the parish had no debts and had $6,000 in its treasury. In 1875 the parish had a debt of $92,000. During the years from 1868 to 1875, between twenty and twenty-five thousand dollars were collected each year, and yet the parish received no roads, schools, levee repairs, or public buildings.[34]

Petty, but annoying, systems of graft existed in most cities and villages. A branch of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals received a charter in New Orleans which gave it exclusive control over the city's pounds. Agents of the society seized animals

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[32]Charles Nordhoff, The Cotton States in the Spring and Summer of 1875 (New York, 1876), 45.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid., 52.

in the streets and charged their owners five dollars each day the animal was held. Sometimes horses would be seized in the streets while the owner was doing business in one of the shops. One phase of the society's activities was curtailed when they tried to pick up goats in the outskirts of the city. A crowd of irate Irish women in full battle array descended on the agents. They never returned.[35] Another aggravation in New Orleans was the system of cleaning privies. The legislature gave an exclusive charter for this job to a New Orleans company. The scale of charges immediately increased.[36] Several members of the legislature incorporated themselves into the Louisiana National Building Association and started negotiations for the purchase of the St. Louis Hotel which they intended to convert into a state building. Their plan was to purchase the hotel at a low price and then rent the building to the state for $50,000 per year. The income and the property were to be free from taxation. There was such an outcry when the story became known that the sale and lease were cancelled. The Citizens' Bank then purchased the building, which was to have been rented for $50,000 per year, for $84,000.[37] These evidences of opportunism, plus countless others, were considered by the people of Louisiana to be symptomatic of Republicanism.

Kellogg's government was under constant fire from native white Louisianians. Democratic politicians received money from merchants and

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[35] Ibid., 61.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., 62.

planters to finance their operations and kept their popular support by constant references to the economic and racial situations. The Republican politicians in New Orleans reacted to the unceasing opposition by increasing their control over Negro votes and the machinery of government. Negro legislators and officials became more prominent under Kellogg than they had been under Warmoth. Negroes were the only important source of votes for Republicans. If the Negroes deserted and supported the Democrats, the Republicans would have no legitimate claim to the offices. The result of this condition was that racism became more important as a political battle cry than it had been in earlier years.

In the fall of 1874 there was to be an election for members of the state legislature. No important executive officers were to be selected, but native white control of the legislature could be an important entering wedge in the drive for home rule by whites. White leaders began to prepare for the election many months before it was to be held and in a more systematic and grandiose scale than had been used before.

In March of 1874 three former Confederate officers began publishing the Alexandria Caucasian. The purpose of the new journal reflected the changes in thinking about race and politics which were taking place throughout the state. There would be, an editorial stated, "no security, no peace, and no prosperity for Louisiana, until the government of the State is restored to the hands of the honest, intelligent, and tax-paying white masses; until the superiority of the Caucasian over the African, in all affairs pertaining to government is acknowledged and

established."[38] The editors believed that all thinking about politics should be in terms of Negroes against Caucasians rather than Democrats against Republicans. They wanted all memories of political differences among the whites to be forgotten and political cleavage to be based on race alone. The first issue of the newspaper called for a white man's political party which would not bear the name of Democrat, or Reform, or Conservative.[39] The Caucasian began publication amidst rising anti-Negro feeling throughout Louisiana. A New Orleans Republican journal had earlier stated that the white people of Louisiana proceed "upon the hypothesis that Negroes and white Republicans have no rights which a Southern Democrat is bound to respect."[40] The idea stated in the Republican was becoming the avowed principle of the white people of the state. Such newspapers as the Caucasian, the Shreveport Times, the Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, and many others began to take up the theme that politics must be based on race. They argued that all of the ills being suffered by Louisianians resulted from Negroes in politics. The next step in the argument was simple. Remove the Negro from politics and all conditions would improve. The whites of Louisiana had tried to win the black vote in the elections held between 1868 and 1872. They had failed. Now, if the Negroes cared to vote for white candidates their votes would be accepted, but there were to be no concessions for

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[38]Alexandria Caucasian, April 4, 1874.

[39]Ibid., March 28, 1874.

[40]New Orleans Republican, January 3, 1873.

such votes.[41] This spelled real trouble for the Negroes in the state. Increased racism in politics meant increased pressure, violence, and intimidation. The Louisiana whites had experience in intimidation by 1874 and knew how to make pressure effective.

The result of the new trend in politics was the formation of the famous "White League." It was not a centrally directed and regimented organization with an accepted hierarchy of command. Rather, it was a large number of local clubs which had a striking similarity of purpose. Local leagues began springing up all over Louisiana in the spring and early summer of 1874. There had been earlier movements of this kind, but they had been more limited in size and scope of action. The Knights of the White Camellia was the first important organization of men devoted to the principle of white supremacy. It had never been a really effective organization because of the size of its membership and the ritualistic secrecy surrounding its meetings. It had been too exclusive to become a power in the state. There was an organization known as the "Innocents Club" in New Orleans composed of about 2,000 men of Sicilian, Spanish, and Italian extraction. It was a terroristic organization which aimed at controlling Negroes in the poorer districts of the city. Its activities, however, were not restricted to terrorizing Negroes, and it was feared by many whites in the city.[42] A club called simply "298" had branches in a number of villages in south Louisiana, but it had little significance. The members

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[41] Lonn, Reconstruction After 1868. 253.

[42] House of Representatives Miscellaneous Document Number 154, Forty-first Congress, Second Session, 21.

were large badges with the number "298" on them and displayed them prominently at Democratic rallies. Members of the club claimed that it was purely social, but it was popular knowledge that they engaged in terroristic activities against the Negroes.[43]

The situation created by these organizations was such that a general order from the headquarters of the Department of the Gulf was sent out which told all commanding officers of Federal troops that when United States marshalls or deputies made written applications for troops their requests were to be complied with immediately and without question. After troops had done the job requested, reports could be sent to the headquarters and if there had been any violations of law it could be handled then.[44]

Citizens of Opelousas created the first White League on April 27, 1874. The principles established as the basis for the League's existence reflected the people's experiences since 1868 and the resulting attitudes toward race. The members of the League stated that they were devoted to the purpose of uniting all whites in a struggle to rid the state of the Republican regime and to remove the Negroes from politics.[45] As weeks passed during the spring and summer of 1874, other parishes were forming their own branches of the White League.

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[43]Senate Report Number 701, Forty-fourth Congress, Second Session, 2009-2011.

[44]Nordhoff, Cotton States in 1875, 65.

[45]Allie Bayne Windham, "Methods and Mechanisms Used to Restore White Supremacy in Louisiana: 1872-1876," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1950, 48.

The titles varied from one parish to another, but the goals and the methods were standard. There was such a unanimity of thinking that there was no necessity for any central administration. Newspapers began to applaud the movement as it continued to grew. In addition to the early pro-League papers, the New Orleans Picayune, Morning Star, and Catholic Messenger came out in favor of the League.[46]

The most important chapter in the state was the Crescent City White League which was formed on June 27, 1874. The platform of the New Orleans club stated that Negroes were looking forward to such an exodus of whites from Louisiana that the state would become another Haiti. The object of the League as stated in the platform was to restore honesty and integrity to the state's government and to maintain, protect, and enforce the rights of all citizens. These objects, according to the platform, could only be achieved by the restoration of white supremacy and the elimination of the Negro from politics.[47] The New Orleans branch of the White League grew out of the Crescent City Democratic Club which had been organized in 1868 to work for Seymour and Blair in the national election. Frederick N. Ogden, the president of the club, was a former Confederate officer who had emerged as one of the prominent leaders in New Orleans during the postwar period.[48]

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[46]H. Oscar Lestage, Jr., "The White League in Louisiana and its Participation in Reconstruction Riots," L.H.Q., XVIII (1935), 638.

[47]A copy of the platform of the Crescent City White League is in the Ogden Papers, Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

[48]Walter Prichard (ed.), "The Origin and Activities of the White League in New Orleans (Reminiscences of a Participant in the Movement)," L.H.Q., XXIII (1940), 528-29.

He had been one of the most ardent opponents of the Unification Movement of 1873. He was, as one man put it, "the first man of prominence to raise his voice against this Covenant with Hell."[49] The Crescent City White League, with its numerous branches throughout the city, quickly assumed a military character. Ogden held the title of Colonel of the First Regiment of Louisiana Infantry. The organization was broken down into companies which had their own captains and lieutenants. One company, commanded by Rufus Pleasant, raised enough money to supply themselves with Remington breech loading rifles.[50] There was no effort made to maintain the type of secrecy which had surrounded such earlier organizations as the Knights of the White Camellia. On the contrary, the White League publicized its strength and its goals as a method of intimidating Negroes and white Republicans. News of the military nature of the League was widely known and was commented upon by journals in Boston, Cleveland, Washington and New York.[51]

One of the first things the White League did was to supervise the circulation of stories of black atrocities, especially those charged against the Negro police in New Orleans.[52] Members of the League threatened any white man who co-operated with Negroes with dire calamities. The Shreveport Times said that in case of a single shot fired

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[49]Quoted in Ibid., 531.

[50]Ibid., 533.

[51]Lemn, Reconstruction After 1868, 260-61.

[52]Ibid., 254.

between black and white, every carpetbagger and scalawag would be dangling from a limb within twelve hours.[53] These were the types of threats which had been made every election year since 1868. In 1874, however, economic coercion became far more important than it had been in previous years. On October 14, 1874, eighty residents of Shreveport signed the following manifesto:

> We, the undersigned merchants of the City of Shreveport, in obedience to a request of the Shreveport Campaign Club, agree to use every endeavor to get our employees to vote the people's ticket at the coming election; and, in event of their refusal to do so, or in case they vote the radical ticket, to refuse to employ them at the expiration of their present contracts.[54]

The Shreveport merchants also pledged themselves not to advance supplies or money to any planters who employed or rented land to anyone who voted the Republican ticket. The Natchitoches Vindicator, Minden Democrat, and Alexandria Democrat, lauded these measures and demanded that citizens of all areas in the state follow suit.[55] Merchants in Baton Rouge had already agreed among themselves that they would not employ any radical voter or advance credit to planters who did so.[56] The St. Mary Parish branch of the White League had in its by-laws that it was the solemn duty of all members of the League to

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[53]Shreveport Times, July 29, 1874.

[54]Senate Executive Document Number 13, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 5.

[55]Senate Executive Document Number 11, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 31-32.

[56]Windham, "Methods and Mechanisms: 1872-1876," 71.

give preference in business transactions to their fellow members.[57] From all areas of the state there were reports of economic pressures used to force Negroes to stay away from the polls or to vote Democratic.

An editorial in the New Orleans Bulletin explained succinctly the attitude of the people toward the race issue:

> The colored laborer owns no land and can take his vote and his labor elsewhere. However, we will gladly avail ourselves of his labor if he will unite with us for the redemption of the State and be content to occupy the station assigned to him by providence and for which he is fitted by his limited capacity and attainments.[58]

Such an offer could not arouse much approval among the Negroes. All that was offered to them in return for their support was the prospects of allowing the whites to avail themselves of colored labor. The effectiveness of economic pressure indicated quite clearly the superficial nature of the Republican attempt to reconstruct Louisiana. They made no effort to provide the Negroes with the economic security which is essential for freedom at the polls. As a result the changed status of the Negro was illusory. They could not be free men while they depended on the planters for their economic existence.

Violence was inherent in the explosive situation of 1874. Members of the White League did not shrink from the prospects of bloodshed. Rather, they prepared for it. The New Orleans Bulletin estimated that there were 14,000 men in Louisiana who were organized and armed. The Minden Democrat claimed that there were 10,000 in North Louisiana alone.[59]

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[57] House of Representatives Report Number 261, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 795.

[58] New Orleans Bulletin, July 26, 1874.

[59] Cited in Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 230.

One branch of the League, in St. Mary Parish, indicated its reliance on force in the name chosen for the club. It was called the "White League Army."[60] In Natchitoches, which was one of the most troubled areas of Louisiana, a meeting of the White League listed twelve white Republicans who were to be killed when the United States cavalry left.[61] Negro Republicans organized a "Grand Rally" in Natchitoches for the Fourth of July. Members of the League swooped down and the Negroes fled in all directions.[62] This was a mild demonstration of powers. As the summer wore on, more direct and forceful measures became standard.

One of the most widely publicized incidents of 1874 was the massacre which occurred in Coushatta, a small village in Red River Parish. Trouble developed in the countryside around Coushatta in the latter part of August which resulted in the deaths of one white man and two Negroes. Some of the Negroes were enraged over the way the incident had been handled and began organizing a march on the village. On the night of August 28 a dance was being held by the whites in a brick store in the town. Pickets were placed on the roads when news arrived that the Negroes were massing, but the expected assault did not occur. The next day, however, six white Republican officeholders were seized, charged with arming the Negroes and inciting them to riot,

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[60]Senate Executive Document Number 11, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 31.

[61]Senate Executive Document Number 13, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 15.

[62]Lestage, "The White League in Reconstruction on Riots," L. H. Q., XVIII (1935), 652-55.

and taken out of the village toward Shreveport. On the way, they were overtaken by a band of men from Coushatta and the Republicans were killed.[63] An officer of the United States Seventh Cavalry visited the scene a couple of days after the shooting. He testified before a Congressional Committee that one of the bodies was so perforated with bullets that it had to be removed with care lest it fall to pieces.[64] On September 3, Governor Kellogg offered a reward of $5,000 for the apprehension of any man involved in the killing. The money was never claimed.[65]

Some comment should be made about the white men who were involved in such affairs as those which occurred at Coushatta and Colfax. The propertied people, such as planters and merchants, protested vigorously against inefficiency in government and high tax rates. Seldom, however, did they enter into actual physical contact with Negroes, Republicans, or the Metropolitan Police. To be sure, such men as Ogden, Waggaman, McEnery, and DeBlanc were men of property. They were the commanders, not the followers. The men who were on the firing lines when conflicts occurred were the poor, white men of both city and country - the same type of men who filled the ranks of the Confederate army. In these men, the fires of race consciousness burned as brightly, if not more brightly, than in the minds of the upper classes. Surely, it must have

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[63] Ibid., 671-81.

[64] See testimony of First Lieutenant Donald McIntosh in House of Representatives Report Number 101, Part Two, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 70-71.

[65] Fortier, Louisiana, I, 607.

been galling for a white farmer or a white laborer to see a Negro in political office making money from public taxes. Only a few Negroes held office and mademoney in that way. That, however, had little to do with the situation. Thinking in terms of race never got to the point of distinguishing among individuals. The race concept by its nature prevents that type of thinking. The poor, unlettered whites who were least qualified to analyze the complicated problems or Reconstruction were the shock troops in the struggle for white supremacy and home rule.[66]

The Democratic Central Committee issued a call for a state convention to meet in Baton Rouge on August 24. The delegates decided to band all of the political organizations into one group which would be called the "White Man's Party of Louisiana." There would be no Democrats, Conservatives, Liberals, or Reformers. All native whites were to be united into one group with their race as the common bond.[67] Their goal was control of the membership of the legislature, which was to be selected in November. To many people in Louisiana the new terminology was merely another name for the Democratic party.[68] The difference was that old party designations carried with them basic ideas of government over which the white people had been fighting for many years. The term "White Man's Party" indicated that differences among the whites on basic policies of government were ignored and that racial solidarity was the paramount issue.

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[66]On this Aspect of Reconstruction, see Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 229-31.

[67]Lonn, Reconstruction After 1868, 263.

[68]Ibid., 259.

During the early days of September, people in New Orleans were extremely tense. Registration for the November 2 election started on August 31 and lasted for several days. A committee representing the White Man's Party called on Kellogg and asked for equal representation in the supervision of registration and voting. The governor denied the request and the situation, which was already bad, became worse.[69] The Louisianian, one of the Republican journals, hinted at expected troubles and commented on the brutality of the White League.[70] The immediate cause for the increased tension was the expected arrival of a shipment of Belgian rifles which had been purchased in New York for the White League and which was expected daily. The Republican administration, upon receipt of the information, started a systematic search for the weapons which involved searching private residences and seizing shotguns from boys who were going hunting.[71]

On September 12 it became known that the expected consignment of rifles was aboard the steamship Mississippi which would dock at New Orleans sometime the following day. Members of the White League were determined to prevent the police from seizing the arms. The Mississippi moored at a wharf near Jackson Square, where one of the headquarters of the Metropolitan Brigade was located. The police quickly seized the ship and remained on it to prevent any attack.

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[69]A full account of the events during September of 1874 is contained in an elaborate broadside at the Louisiana State Museum in New Orleans.

[70]New Orleans Weekly Louisianian, September 12, 1874.

[71]Prichard, "White League in New Orleans," L. H. Q., XXIII (1940), 533.

Frederick Ogden, when he heard that the Mississippi was in the hands of the police, called his men into action to go to the ship and seize the arms. Members of the Metropolitan Brigade, New Orleans city policemen, and employees of the customhouse had already been alerted and were under arms in various police station houses.

On the morning of September 14, a mass meeting was held at the foot of the Clay Statue. D. B. Penn, who claimed that he had been elected lieutenant governor in 1872, presided over the meeting and issued a proclamation declaring himself the acting governor of the state (John McEnery was not in Louisiana at the time). He appointed Ogden as the commander of the state's armed forces. The meeting passed a resolution demanding the immediate abdication of Kellogg. A committee went to Kellogg with the resolution, but the governor refused to be disturbed. When the committee returned to the meeting with the news that they had been rebuffed by the governor, the men dispersed with the intention of reconvening at two o'clock in the afternoon. For the afternoon meeting, they were to be armed and ready to force the issue.

While the mass meeting was in progress, James Longstreet and A. S. Badger prepared for the expected attack on the Mississippi. Longstreet, commander of the Metropolitans, had 600 infantrymen, 200 cavalrymen, and four pieces of artillery. These forces were lined up at the head of Canal Street to intercept the expected charge up the wide thoroughfare. Longstreet's cavalry rode up and down Canal Street warning the onlookers to get out of the way because the artillery would fire into the street. Such warnings did not prevent thousands of people from packing the sidewalk to view the anticipated battle.

Ogden's regiment spearheaded the charge of the citizens down Canal Street. Amidst the screams of the enthusiastic spectators lined along the street, the members of the various White League units plunged into the lines of the Metropolitan Brigade. There was little discipline but much excitement as the companies kept pouring down the street. The Metropolitans broke and ran, giving the opposition complete control of the city. Ogden sent one of his companies after the retreating police so that there would be no threat to White League supremacy in New Orleans. General Badger fell before the onslaught of the enraged Louisianians, along with ten other members of the Metropolitan Brigade. The White League lost sixteen killed and forty-five wounded.

The following day, September 15, Ogden's men took control of all city and state buildings. Kellogg and his followers stayed in the customhouse, which was Federal property and where the Louisianians did not dare to go. Penn left his residence on St. Charles Street and rode through the exuberant masses of people to Mechanics Institute where he was installed as acting governor of Louisiana. The news of the New Orleans events became known throughout the state and resulted in seizures of public buildings by the many local branches of the White League.

Penn sent a telegram to Washington informing President Grant that he had assumed control of the government of Louisiana. The president had already received messages from both Packard and Kellogg which informed him that violence had started which was of such a nature that state power could not function. The president was enraged with the news from the Crescent City, and ordered Penn and all other "insurgents" to disperse within five days. To back up his position, he ordered a battleship to proceed to the city. Soon Federal troops were swarming over New

Orleans and Penn, Ogden, and the other leaders knew that they were completely overpowered. On September 17, John McEnery, who had returned to the state, sent a letter to General John R. Brooks in which he surrendered all state property to Federal authorities.[72] Although bitterness remained, there was no necessity for the large number of Federal troops in New Orleans and they were quickly withdrawn.[73] Once again the Republican government had been kept in power by Federal strength.

The abortive coup d'etat in New Orleans did not arrest the activities of the Louisiana White League. Members were determined that they would win control of the state legislature on November 2. A. B. Levissa, United States commissioner in Shreveport, sent a report to the attorney-general in Washington which described the conditions which continued to prevail in the northern parishes. Levissa maintained that the white voters of each parish north of the Red River were organized in such a way as to constitute an armed conspiracy. Threats, intimidations, and frauds were commonplace as the White League sought to frighten the Negroes into acquiescence. Even local whites who were not Republicans were afraid to speak out against the White League. Levissa,

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[72]There is a wealth of material about New Orleans' famous riot of September 14, 1874. See especially Prichard, "White League in New Orleans," L. H. Q., XXIII (1940), 535 ff.; "Carpet-Bag Misrule," an unpublished manuscript in the Louisiana State Museum in New Orleans; a broadside with maps and details of the battle in the Louisiana State Museum; and official reports in Senate Executive Document Number 13, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 13 ff.

[73]See report of Lieutenant Colonel Henry A. Morrow in House of Representatives Report Number 101, Part Two, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 80.

who had lived in Louisiana since 1874, asserted that the Negroes were systematically intimidated, personally maltreated, cheated of their earnings and suffrage, and driven from their homes.[74] Levissa's remarks about north Louisiana could have been amplified to include the entire state. In all areas of Louisiana the White League was going about its business of systematically eliminating Negroes as a factor in the forthcoming election. Kellogg's men seized guns and firearms from private citizens throughout the state on the assumption that they were to be used in making war on Negroes. Dealers in arms were arrested on a variety of charges and their stocks confiscated.[75] Such activities by the state government had little effect upon the armed strength of the White League.

A committee composed of prominent leaders of each party met in New Orleans to try to establish an arrangement which would insure a fair election. The representatives of the two antagonistic political groups appointed a committee composed of Albert Voorhies and E. A. Burke from the White Man's Party and Stephen Packard and B. F. Joubert from the Republicans. Both sides agreed on Dr. M. F. Bonzano as an impartial umpire. Bonzano resigned on October 15, no successor could be agreed upon, and the plan for a bi-party commission failed.[76] The

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[74]Senate Executive Document Number 11, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 17 ff.

[75]Fortier, Louisiana, I, 607.

[76]Ibid., 608-609.

Republicans then notified Washington that they would need more Federal soldiers to maintain order and guarantee a fair election.[77]

There was little violence on election day because the pattern of intimidation had started many months before. The White League felt certain that they could control the balloting, but they were not so confident of their ability to guarantee success in the counting. As had been the case in 1872, the election officials who had custody of the ballots were all administrative men. J. Madison Wells was now the president of the Returning Board and the other members were Thomas C. Andersen, L. M. Kenner, Gadane Casanave, and Oscar Arroyo. Arroyo was the only non-Republican on the board.[78] The voting throughout the state was done on November 2 and the ballot boxes sent to New Orleans for certification by the Returning Board. The board took its time in counting the ballots, and did not release its statement until December 24 when it announced a Republican victory. John McEnery immediately issued a statement questioning the Board's count. Arroyo, the only Democrat (White Man's Party) on the board, had resigned the day before the public announcement of the results. The Board's promulgation was then interpreted as a Republican document. According to the announcement of the Returning Board, fifty-four Republicans had been elected to the legislature. These men, plus holdovers in the Senate, would constitute a Republican majority. McEnery claimed that

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[77]Senate Executive Document Number 13, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 15.

[78]Fortier, Louisiana, I, 364.

his organization had won seventy-one seats and would not be satisfied unless all were awarded.[79]

When the news reached Washington that Louisiana had another hotly disputed election, three members of the Congressional Select Committee on the Condition of the South journeyed to New Orleans to hold hearings. They were especially interested in the activities of the White League and the Returning Board. One of the first things noted was that state law specified that the Returning Board should be composed of representatives of all parties. The board which issued the results was composed of all Republicans inasmuch as Oscar Arroyo resigned the day before the official announcement.[80] The committee from Washington listened to some informative testimony about the conduct of affairs in the Bayou State. George Y. Kelso, a colored legislator, said that Negroes in his parish, Rapides, told him that they were afraid to vote because they knew it would cost them their jobs.[81] Stephen Packard testified that the White League was in complete charge in north Louisiana and had reinaugurated the old patrols of slavery days.[82] Colonel Edward Hatch, a former Freedman's Bureau official, said that he personally say a Republican procession being fired upon.[83] George Stafford,

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[79] Ibid.

[80] House of Representatives Report Number 101, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 1.

[81] Ibid., 20.

[82] Ibid., 23.

[83] Ibid., 25-30.

a White League leader from Rapides, told the committee that appeals were made to Negroes on the basis of law and order and that there had been no intimidation.[84] Stafford was one of the editors of the Alexandria Caucasian which published threats, invitations to violence, and inflammatory remarks in every issue. The majority of the White League members followed Stafford's type of testimony. They said that they knew nothing of intimidation and that many Negroes deserted the Republicans because the government was so corrupt. Major Lewis Merrill, who commanded the Federal force in Shreveport, said that trouble makers in north Louisiana were "reckless, passionate men of broken fortunes" who had nothing to do but foment trouble. A. H. Leonard, Merrill said, was McEnery's major-general of militia in the northern parishes. Merrill told of how he arrested Leonard and several other leaders in Shreveport and how that action stopped trouble and discord.[85] As the parade of witnesses passed before the committee they told their stories of violence or denied that any violence had occurred. Despite the denials, it was common knowledge throughout the state that threats and physical violence had been used. There was a substantial amount of evidence to that effect in the Democratic press.

President Grant sent General Philip Sheridan to New Orleans with instructions to assume command of the Department of the Gulf if he thought such action justified. On January 4, 1875, Sheridan wrote to Secretary of War W. W. Belknap that he had taken over the Department of the Gulf because citizens had no adequate protection and because basic

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[84] Ibid., 52-53.

[85] Ibid., 69-70.

practices of law and order were being ignored. The general informed his superiors that since 1866 there had been 3,500 people killed in Louisiana in either isolated murders or in horrible massacres. He also noted that members of the White League had resolved not to employ or give credit in any way to persons who voted for Republican candidates.[86] Sheridan, who was always a man of direct action, wanted White League members to be declared "banditti" and be tried by military courts where the traditional methods of jury trial and elaborate protection for defendants could not be used.[87] Archbishop Perche of the Catholic Church, two Episcopal bishops, and a Jewish rabbi signed a statement condemning Sheridan's reckless demands.[88] Ephraim S. Stoddard, a New Orleans Republican who had come to the city after the war, expressed the attitude of his fellow Republicans when he wrote that between September 14 and the arrival of Sheridan he had not slept at night or walked through the streets without his hand being close to a revolver. Stoddard, who was a keen observer and a trenchant writer, said that no Republican would dare tell much of what he knew to the committee from Washington because of what he could expect when the Congressman went home.[89]

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[86]See letter from Sheridan to Secretary of War Belknap in Senate Executive Document Number 11, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 21.

[87]Ibid., 23.

[88]See manuscript "Carpet-Bag Misrule" in the Louisiana State Museum in New Orleans.

[89]See letter from E. S. to H. R. Stoddard, January 10, 1875, in Stoddard Papers, Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Sheridan's presence in New Orleans meant that there was little chance for rioting, but it did not solve the problem of the state legislature. The Returning Board had, in the opinion of the native whites, thwarted the will of the people by certifying that Republicans had a majority in the legislature. It looked as if another impasse had arrived which would result in administrative stagnation if not actual violence. Leaders of both parties decided to seek a compromise solution, an approach which had not been tried before. Kellogg asked the congressional committee which was still in New Orleans to offer a plan of compromise which might result in a workable legislature even if it did not solve the basic questions. McEnery and his group were willing to discuss the prospects but wanted the committee to analyze the voting of 1872, when McEnery claimed he had been elected governor. The Republicans were willing for the committee to look at the 1874 election, which could only affect members of the house and would have little bearing on the state senators and none on the officials in the executive branch of the government. McEnery, Ogden, and some of the Republican leaders were opposed to the suggested compromise, but there were enough of both parties in support of the effort to justify taking steps toward outlining a program. The leaders of the business community were happy that some action was being planned which could restore law and order without an excess of bayonets.

William A. Wheeler of New York was the leading committeeman working for a solution to the problem and it was for him that the term "Wheeler Compromise" was used. Wheeler suggested that both sides submit their claims based on the 1874 election and promise to abide by the decisions of the committee. The Democratic legislators were to agree to

attend sessions and to promise not to try to impeach Kellogg or embarrass him in any way other than legitimate opposition to proposed legislation. Despite the arguments raised against the proposal, there were enough people wanting compromise to justify examining the balloting and counting of the 1874 election. The committee placed sixty-three Democrats (the old party name was again used) and forty-seven Republicans in the House of Representatives. All of the senators were not up for re-election in 1874, so the Democrats received only nine seats as compared with the Republicans' twenty-seven in the upper chamber.[90] The Wheeler Compromise solved no basic issues nor did it attempt to do so. It did, nevertheless, provide for the first bipartisan legislature since 1868. The Democrats in the lower chamber could block any legislation and now had, at least, the veto power.

The first session of the legislature presented an interesting contrast to the meetings which had taken place since 1868. It was strange indeed for the two factions which had been waging a bloody war for several years to be seated together in a deliberative body under the terms of an uneasy and grudging truce. The call for the new session of the legislature had gone out on March 24 and the body started to work on April 14. One of the principal reasons for the Republican's apparent desire for compromise was the pressure put on them from Washington. Grant and other national leaders were tired of the constant wrangling and wanted some type of peaceful and practical solution. The local Republicans did not dare run the risk of angering the administration in the

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[90]For a full account of the Wheeler Compromise, see Lonn, Reconstruction After 1868, 358 ff., and Fortier, Louisiana II, 365.

nation's capitol. There was enough pressure on the Democrats from New Orleans businessmen and other people concerned with peace to guarantee at least a temporary cessation of hostilities.[91]

There were many criticisms made about the new legislative body from people in both parties. The general impression was that the legislators were not concerning themselves with important matters such as revenues and budgets but were spending their time in endless bickering over past grievances and arguing about seats in the legislature. Kellogg, who knew how much necessary work was being left undone, sent a letter of protest. The New Orleans Times published an editorial which castigated both parties and told them that if they could not do better they should all go home. A delegation of New Orleans mechanics addressed the body about important legislation concerning the welfare of the working people in New Orleans which was being ignored.[92] Each side blamed the other and went on doing those things which were arousing widespread dissatisfaction. The legislature ignored such important problems as funding the debt, repudiating questionable appropriations, and reducing the cost of government.

There were irreconcilables in both parties who opposed the Wheeler Compromise and wanted to destroy the bi-partisan legislature which it had created. These men blocked the possibility of any constructive work in 1875. Throughout the remainder of the year they maneuvered for position and kept the flames of hatred alive. Considering what

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[91]Lonn, Reconstruction After 1868, 373 ff.

[92]Ibid., 377-78.

had happened between 1868 and 1875, it is easy to understand how they could be successful. When the next session of the legislature convened in January of 1876 it was obvious that extremists were in control of the Democratic majority in the lower house. Once again, they wanted to write new election laws rather than bother with other types of legislation. The Returning Board, which had been the deus ex machina of Republican victories, came in for heavy attacks. The Board was already in existence, the Democrats could force nothing through the upper house because of the Republican majority there, so the Returning Board remained.[93] The Democrats then repudiated the Wheeler Compromise by bringing up impeachment proceedings against Kellogg. By a strictly partisan vote of sixty-one to forty-five, the governor was impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors. The Senate immediately rejected the charges by a partisan vote of twenty-five to nine.[94] This left everyone precisely where they had been before the issues of the Returning Board and the governor were brought up. Such actions had, however, eliminated any chance for continued co-operation in the legislature. It was obvious that both parties were concerned with the election of 1876 rather than any work which could have been done in legislative session. The New Orleans Times evaluated the situation accurately when it remarked that the coming campaign "was a matter of more engrossing interest to our legislators than the welfare of the people."[95]

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[93]Ibid., 393.

[94]Ibid., 396.

[95]New Orleans Times, March 3, 1876.

During the spring and summer of 1876 both parties began to prepare for the fall election. This was to be a big year for politics as all of the executive offices were to be filled as well as seats in the legislature. Moreover, 1876 was a national election year and the people in Louisiana believed that the Democrats could sweep the Republicans out of control in Washington. The Republican party in Louisiana understood the political situation and began to organize for their biggest fight. The Republican state convention nominated Stephen B. Packard for the gubernatorial office and C. C. Antoine for the position of lieutenant governor. Packard was unquestionably the strongest man in the party and, moreover, had never been seriously charged with personal financial dishonesty. Antoine was a Negro who, along with Pinchback who supported him, had a wide following among the state's colored population. Henry Clay Warmoth was back in the Republican fold by 1876 and was running for Congress from the First Congressional District. A large Democratic vote had been cast in that district in 1874 and Warmoth was expected to counteract the influence of the Democrats.[96] Mass meetings were quickly held in the principal areas of Republican strength to whip up the necessary enthusiasm for the ticket. All in all, the Republicans had the strongest organization they had had since 1868, when there was little opposition.

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[96]The New Orleans Republican of July 6, 1876, carried a full story of the proceedings of the Republican State Convention.

The Democratic ticket of 1876 was widely approved by native whites. Francis T. Nicholls, the candidate for governor, was a crippled veteran of the Confederate army. He had not been identified with the extremist wing of the Democrats and was more palatable to New Orleans businessmen than would have been Ogden, Samuel McEnery, or several others who were mentioned for the position. Louis A. Wiltz, the Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor, was also widely known in Louisiana.[97] Nicholls made his acceptance speech before the Democratic convention on July 26. He promised protection for colored people in all their rights and stated that he wanted a fair election with no fraud on either side. The fundamental issue, according to the candidate, was honesty and integrity in the government.[98]

Other Democrats were not so insistent that fraud and intimidation be abandoned as a matter of policy. The Democrat, Nicholls' campaign organ, published the following warning in its issue of August 30, 1876:

> If it shall become necessary for our white fellow citizens to resort to desperate measures to protect their lives and properties, we hope they will act with coolness and judgement and go for the white rascals at the bottom of all this trouble.[99]

A confidential Democratic circular which was distributed among the leaders of each parish urged activity and optimism and remarked that "We have the means of carrying the election and intend to use them. But

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[97]See Senate Report Number 701, Forty-fourth Congress, Second Session, 262.

[98]Ibid., 265-66.

[99]Quoted in Fanny Z. Lovell Bone, "Louisiana in the Disputed Election of 1876," L. H. Q., XV (1932), 98.

be careful to say and do nothing that can be construed into a threat or intimidation."[100] Many of the local Democratic leaders did not adhere to the cautious warning. The election campaign of 1876 did not bring such widespread disorders as had occurred two years before. Intimidation was concentrated in a few key parishes.

Once again a committee from Congress came to New Orleans to listen to witnesses tell about their experiences. And, once again, a procession of people appeared before the congressmen telling personal accounts of threats and violence they experienced during the summer and fall of 1876. The Democrats used a new technique of concentrating their efforts rather than dispersing them. The five parishes of East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, West Feliciana, Morehouse, and Ouachita had been returning consistent Republican majorities since 1868. The Democrats reasoned that if they could eliminate the Republican vote in those areas they could win the state election, carry Louisiana for the Democrats in the national election, and avoid too much trouble with the Returning Board. They would not worry too much about a few Negro Republicans who might be elected in other areas. They could be handled later. The result of this plan was a period of horrible violence in the sections selected to be purged.

Whites in each of the parishes designated for concentrated effort created rifle clubs which were organized and drilled on a disciplined military basis. Brigadier General J. R. Brook, who was the Federal officer in command of the Baton Rouge district, told of how "Bulldozer"

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[100] *Ibid.*, 94.

or "Regulator" clubs rode around the parish shooting, killing, and hanging. Once Brook saw one of the groups when they did not know he was nearby. They left a boat and began to proceed toward a place where Negroes were gathered and, according to Brook, "they did not fall in irregularly, but in a way that a company of soldiers would, and according to size."[101] He also told of how Negro women "would be whipped so badly that they could not sit down, unless they stopped using their influence in favor of the Republican party."[102] One woman was hanged in East Baton Rouge parish for repeatedly ignoring demands from white Democrats. There were several other Negro women hanged as the Democrats began to discover that the women were the most bitter in their sentiments and were using their influence to prevent their men from weakening.[103]

Cora Williams, a Negro woman who lived near Monroe, told the committee of a raid by Bulldozers who were looking for her husband. One of the men raped her while holding a pistol at her head. She concluded her testimony with the remark that "the gentlemins [sic] what done this was Democratic gentlemins [sic]."[104] Samuel McEnery was from Monroe and characterized the men named by Cora Williams as being among the most respected men in the parish.[105]

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[101] Senate Report Number 701, Forty-fourth Congress, Second Session, 1700.

[102] Ibid., 1695.

[103] Ibid., passim.

[104] Ibid., 92.

[105] Ibid., 406.

John Culpepper, also from Ouachita parish, said that compulsion" . . . was used from the 30th of August and smack until the election." He told of how Negroes were seized throughout the parish on election day, herded to the polls, and forced to vote for Democrats. He also testified that Samuel McEnery and several other men had gone through the parish after election day forcing the Negro Republican leaders to sign affidavits that there had been a peaceful election.[106] McEnery denied the affidavit story, but agreed that there were rifle clubs in Ouachita parish. They were organized, he said, "for the purpose of preserving the peace and order of the community, and also for the purpose of protecting the democratic negroes against outrages of their own color."[107]

The testimony became monotonously repetitious as tales of murder, brutality, and violence were related to the visiting Congressmen. The pattern was quite simple. Democrats during the summer and fall of 1876 used all of the techniques they had learned in eight years of violent strife. This time, however, they concentrated on a few key parishes instead of trying to dominate every parish in the state.

The election was held on November 8 amidst comparative peace and quiet. No one felt any particular need for force at the polls because of what had been going on for several months. The returns from East Feliciana indicated how effective the campaign of violence had been.

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[106] Ibid., 240-241.

[107] Ibid., 333.

In 1870, 1872, and 1874 the parish had turned in Republican majorities. In 1876 there were 1,736 Democratic votes and none for the Republicans.[108]

After the ballots had been cast and the boxes sent to New Orleans, the Returning Board occupied the center of the stage. By the time the board held its first meeting it was known throughout the nation that the electoral votes from Louisiana, South Carolina, Florida, and Oregon would decide the election. The Returning Board could not certify the electoral votes, but it was the agency in possession of the ballots and its report would be of profound importance in the national controversy over the election. Six Democrats and six Republicans, led by such national figures as Lyman Trumbull, John Sherman, and James A. Garfield, left Washington on November 11 so that they could be present when the ballots were counted in New Orleans.[109]

The Returning Board, which held its first meeting on November 16, was composed of Wells, Anderson, Casanave, and Kenner. These were the same men, except for Oscar Arroyo who had resigned, who counted the ballots in the 1874 election.[110] The Democrats, remembering their experiences of previous years, objected to the personnel of the board and raised questions as to its constitutionality. They pointed out that the board was composed of men from one party and that it was self-perpetuating in that vacancies were filled by the remaining members of the

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[108] Ibid., IV.

[109] Senate Miscellaneous Document Number 14, Forty-fourth Congress, Second Session, 1.

[110] Ibid., 2.

board.[111] Such objections were ignored by Wells and the other members. Local Democrats could not receive much support from the congressmen from Washington as they were just as partisan in their outlook as were the Louisiana politicians. Also, the congressional leaders were in no position to do anything officially as they were allowed to witness the sessions of the Returning Board only as private citizens. It was agreed by all that any other approach would have violated the principle which places each state in control of elections within that state.[112]

The board started looking at the ballots and listening to witnesses on November 20. The system was simple. If there were no questions concerning the parish's ballots, the boxes would be turned over to clerks who counted them secretly. The clerks were all Republicans. The ballots from the disputed parishes would be laid aside and were handled by the four board members in secret session.[113] The five "Bulldozed" parishes were handled in this way as were several others where there were reports of violence and intimidation. On December 2 the board went into secret session to discuss the disputed parishes. On December 6 the members announced their verdict that Louisiana had voted for Rutherford B. Hayes in the national election and that all of the Republican candidates for state offices were elected.[114] In establishing the Republican majority, the board threw out 13,350 Democratic and

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[111]*Ibid.*, 14.

[112]Bone, "Louisiana in the Disputed Election of 1876," *L. H. Q.*, XIV (1931), 445.

[113]Lonn, *Reconstruction After 1868*, 446 *ff*.

[114]Bone, "Louisiana in the Disputed Election of 1876," *L. H. Q.*, XIV (1931), 111.

2,042 Republican votes.[115] The board offered no explanation for the rejected ballots.

As soon as the announcement was made, Warmoth and the other electors met, cast their electoral votes for the Republicans, and forwarded the documents to Washington. The Democratic electors, who claimed that they had been robbed, cast their ballots for Samuel Tilden and forwarded their documents with a letter of explanation.[116] With these gestures out of the way, there was nothing for the people in Louisiana to do but wait for the verdict from Washington. A Democratic victory in the nation's capitol would guarantee a Democratic government in Louisiana. Also, there were strong hints that Hayes, if victorious, would change the administration's Southern policy.

On January 1, 1877, the men who claimed that they were the Democratic legislature marched to the state house. After being refused admission, they went to St. Patrick's Hall where they organized as a legislature. The Republicans were, of course, doing the same thing on that day.[117] On January 8, both Packard and Nicholls went through inaugural ceremonies and addressed the people who gathered about them. Nicholls sent E. A. Burke to Washington to represent the Democratic government and to determine how Louisiana would fare after March 4. Burke told the national leaders that Nicholls would agree to the idea of civil and political equality for all men, enforcement of all laws,

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[115] Senate Miscellaneous Document Number 14, Forty-fourth Congress, Second Session, 11.

[116] New Orleans Republican, December 7, 1876.

[117] Lonn, Reconstruction After 1868, 475-76.

education of both black and white with equal advantages, and promotion of friendly relations between the races.[118] Burke soon learned that Grant did not support Packard and that a policy of non-interference was rapidly developing. Burke also learned that Grant did not want either faction in Louisiana to use violence in trying to obtain control.

Louisiana was strangely quiet during the months following the inauguration of rival governments. Both parties knew that the decisions of importance were being made in Washington and that there was nothing to do but wait. The inauguration of Rutherford Hayes marked the end of an important and turbulent era of Louisiana's history. The policy of non-interference in Southern affairs was proclaimed and Federal troops were gradually withdrawn. The last soldier left New Orleans on April 24 and everyone knew that Democratic and white supremacy had returned. It was a day of celebration as the happy people crowded into the streets to parade or gathered on the balconies to watch the processions and listen to the noise. The Washington Artillery paraded through the streets and fired one hundred guns in honor of freedom, just as it had done on January 26, 1861.

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[118] *Ibid.*, 503.

CHAPTER IX

SOCIAL LIFE IN RECONSTRUCTION LOUISIANA

On October 12, 1865, the Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet announced that the George W. DeHaven Circus would soon play in the city with an exotic assortment of daring acts and jungle animals. The announcement symbolized the beginning of the way back to a normal life after a long and exhausting war. The old capitol city was not the only place to be visited by touring shows. All of Louisiana's river towns were entertained by circuses and other forms of professional entertainment as quickly as troupes could be put together.[1] The desire to relax and be entertained was merely one part of the over-all groping for a return to the prewar way of life. It has long been popular to view the history of Reconstruction as a long era of race strife, political debauchery, and economic chaos. There was plenty of all these in postwar Louisiana; but racial, economic, and political troubles were not the whole story. People were married, had children, went to church, played, and had personal problems with apparent disregard for the profound changes they were witnessing. Evidently, it would take a bigger shock than the Civil War to affect the pattern of life which had emerged in Louisiana during the ante-bellum years.

Baton Rouge was fairly typical of Louisiana's small towns. It had been the capitol of the state before the war, which accounted for a

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[1]See editorial in Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet, February 19, 1867.

larger population than it otherwise would have had. With the state offices and employees in New Orleans after the war, it became a quiet little agricultural center on the Mississippi River. Business was stagnant during the early years of Reconstruction, leaving the people with little to do. Sidewalks and streets were in need of repairs for several years before money could be raised for improvements. The town, like the others in Louisiana of about the same size, presented a picture of neglect and apathy. The morale of the people was low as the months dragged on after the end of the war. Jobs were hard to find except at despised menial tasks, and many young men spent their time loitering on the streets. One local editor, concerned about this, remarked that "the loose and rambling specimens of juvenile depravity to be seen about our streets, is one of the sad demoralizing fruits of the war."[2]

One of the important efforts at wiping out gloom and lethargy was the organizing of amateur theatrical clubs in most of the villages in the state. These groups not only put on plays and other types of performances but also engaged in many benevolent activities. Baton Rouge had a group called "Thespians" which was organized in late 1866. In addition to presenting plays, they arranged for a library, installed some reading rooms and sponsored balls and masquerade parties whenever there was an excuse.[3] These activities always raised money for projects the club had planned. At one performance, a chance on a town lot was offered with each fifty cent admission ticket.[4] Other towns such as

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[2]Ibid, August 31, 1865.

[3]Ibid, January 7, 1867.

[4]Ibid, December 5, 1867.

Alexandria, Clinton, Monroe, and Opelousas had similar clubs which played an important role in providing the people with entertainment. Professional troupes would stop at most of the towns, but their visits were too infrequent to make any real differences in the daily life of the people. An editorial in the May 10, 1871 issue of the Alexandria Democrat had a comment which might indicate a permanent problem of taste in theatricals. Shakespeare's Macbeth had been performed by a visiting troupe with dramatic success and financial failure. The editor, who was dissatisfied with the size of the crowd, remarked: "when burnt cork, legs, and the horse opera come along we will note down crowded and jammed houses." After the theatrical groups were started, other types of organizations were formed. There were many brass bands organized by wandering musicians, who usually advertised in the papers with the title of "professor." These units provided the people with frequent concerts and, of course, were always important parts of parades. Brass bands were also popular for public dances as the music fitted the waltzes, polkas, and reels which were popular at that time.

Ladies' benevolent associations began to spring up as soon as the war ended. In May of 1866 the "Ladies' Benevolent Association of Louisiana" began attracting membership throughout the state. The aim of the members of the association was to provide artificial limbs for Confederate veterans and to see to it that all graves of Louisiana soldiers who died during the war were properly marked.[5] The "Baton Rouge Benevolent Association" was composed of women who were interested

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[5]Kathryn Reinhart Schuler, "Women in Public Affairs in Louisiana During Reconstruction," L. H. Q., XIX (1936), 689.

in more things than merely distributing charity. They agitated for the erection of a cotton factory which would provide jobs for the many unemployed. They once raised $1,200 for the unfortunate people in the town at a big barbecue and tournament.[6] They also received large quantities of food and clothing from a society in St. Louis, Missouri, after an appeal had been sent requesting help for the city's poor.[7] There were numerous ad hoc groups of ladies, such as an association in New Orleans which gave a concert to raise money for the families of those who died in the September 14, 1874 riot.[8]

An article in the West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter told of plans for a number of parties which were to be held and concluded that there was "nothing like fun and frolic, even if we are pretty well smashed up politically and otherwise."[9] This statement well expressed the attitude of most of the people. They were concerned, naturally, about affairs of race, economics, and politics, but they were not depressed to the point of losing interest in social life. This was obvious by the number of stories of parties, balls and dances which were published in the newspapers. An announcement in the Monroe paper told of a ball which was being planned, and added that tickets were going at the

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[6]Ibid., 690.

[7]Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet, January 10, 1867.

[8]Schuler, "Women in Public Affairs in Louisiana During Reconstruction," L. H. Q., XIX (1936), 691.

[9]West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter, February 17, 1866.

"extremely low figure of two dollars and fifty cents."[10] Evidently many people had enough money to pay for tickets, as a subsequent issue told of a large and enthusiastic crowd.

A number of baseball teams, bearing such names as "Robert E. Lees" and "Rebels", were organized during the postwar years as interest began to grow in what would become one of the nation's major sports. It would be interesting to read a modern sportwriter's account of the games, as the scores reported to the press frequently went into the fifties and sixties. Boxing, another sport which was in its infancy in the 1860's and 1870's, did not receive much support outside of New Orleans. The matches were bare-fisted and lasted until one opponent could no longer continue. A Baton Rouge editor described one of the matches in New Orleans and expressed the hope that such uncouth exhibitions would not continue.[11] His views must have been shared by many others, as the sport was not popular.

Travel by river boat and by horseback were the principal modes of transportation, and also provided the most widespread possibilities for the sporting instinct. Horse races, whether impromptu or staged at a professional track, were always sure to gather a crowd and stimulate gambling. Sometimes planters along the rivers would make serious complaints about the many races being conducted by steamboats. They argued that frequently the captains would be so concerned about racing other crafts that they would not perform the services which they had contracted for.

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[10]Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, January 26, 1871.

[11]Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet, July 4, 1867.

Tournaments were probably the most popular of all the sports as they combined pageantry, feminine interest, and sporting thrill. They were tame indeed, when compared with the medieval encounters upon which they were based, but they always attracted big crowds and excitement in Louisiana. A young man who entered a tournament, for which a fee was always charged, would outfit himself and his horse with gay decorations and would assume some chivalrous title such as "Knight of Ivanhoe" or "Knight of Woman's Rights." At a given signal all of the knights would ride to the tournament marshall's stand where they would sit at attention while the marshall delivered an oration on chivalry and honor. Then the knights would ride at full gallop while trying to thrust their long lances through a small ring which was suspended by a string so as to be about shoulder high to a horseman. The knight who collected the largest number of rings was the winner and had the privilege of naming the queen of honor for the ball which invariably followed.

Hunting was, of course, popular as a sport and as a means of augmenting income or diet. Game was plentiful throughout the state, but nowhere was there such exotic hunting as in the Teche country. One traveler who hunted in that area left accounts of pelicans, flamingoes, cranes, and twenty-four kinds of wild geese. Deer and black bear also abounded in the bayous of southwest Louisiana. One unusual method of hunting was by use of trained oxen. A hunter would hide behind an ox which could walk through an area without frightening the game. It would then stand while the hunter fired from beneath its belly. Modern hunters might think of such a technique as unsporting, but it

was effective.[12]

The people in Louisiana who lived in small towns and in the country needed diversions such as sports and dances and plays. Life in the rural areas did not offer much in the way of excitement, and any form of wholesome relaxation and entertainment could certainly brighten their lives. Monroe, for example, was a quiet town with many "dull, dog days." For several years after the war there was little excitement except from brawls which occurred occasionally at the taverns. As the local editor once remarked, with "no Fenian excitement, no big fires, no picnics, and no weddings," life was dull indeed.[13] The organization of theatrical units, bands, and other clubs aimed at providing public entertainment went a long way toward increasing the happiness of the people. One of the troubles in Monroe right after the war, and this was symptomatic of other towns, was inertia. The result was general lethargy, unemployment, and depression. On December 30 of 1871, Monroe had a serious fire which destroyed sixteen buildings in the business area. The editor of the Ouachita Telegraph commented that if the merchants had been telling the truth about their troubles before this, the fire would mean the end of Monroe. The truth of the matter was, the editor stated, that "they have been too timid, too selfish, and too restricted in their views of business."[14] After 1872, Monroe began to grow rapidly as the work of rebuilding stimulated activity which

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[12]Henry Latham, Black and White: A Journal of a Three Month's Tour in the United States (Philadelphia, 1867), 180.

[13]Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, July 12, 1866.

[14]Ibid., January 20, 1872.

carried on for several years.

Shreveport was north Louisiana's most rapidly growing city during the postwar years. It was the focal point for people moving to Texas or wanting to send cotton to New Orleans. Also, it was becoming a railroad center as both Texas Pacific and Southern Pacific were putting lines into the city.[15] There was a raw frontier aspect about Shreveport in the 1860's and 1870's. The commercial buildings were simple frame structures fronting board sidewalks and overlooking unimproved streets which were full of dust, dogs, swine, and oxen.[16] During the fall of the year when cotton was being loaded for shipment to New Orleans, the Red River would swarm with boats eager to load and be on their way. Hundreds of Negroes worked along the docks, having replaced the Irish laborers who were dockhands before emancipation allowed the Negroes some degree of freedom in choosing their work. Shreveport was a lusty, robust frontier settlement, and it had all of the drinking, fighting, and gambling which go with that sort of town. After Reconstruction, the railroads acquired most of the trade and the Red River came to be regarded as little more than a drainage ditch which sometimes threatened the planters with inundation.

A new German community named Faquetaique was established about thirty miles southwest of Opelousas shortly after the war ended. It was founded by Joseph Fabacher, a wealthy German who believed that such a settlement could thrive on the rich soil of southwest Louisiana. The success of the small community demonstrated that the economic ills of

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[15]See centennial edition of Shreveport Times, June 28, 1935.

[16]See Description in Powers, Afoot and Alone, 104.

Reconstruction could be overcome with some thoughtful planning and co-operation. The German settlers worked without the use of Negro servants and quickly had a clean, efficient, and prosperous community.[17] Before the war, there had been German migrations into Louisiana, but the people were primarily artisans or intellectuals. The postwar years saw the first movement of farmers into the state. Such communities as Paquetaique and others in East Feliciana and Washington parishes provided organized social life and also demonstrated that agricultural success was not impossible if hard work and co-operation were present.[18]

Despite the fact that the majority of Louisianians were not interested in literature, there were some literary developments of significance during Reconstruction. Charles Gayarre, whose ninety years of life spanned the nineteenth century, continued to work on his histories long after the war. Grace King, who was to become a significant literary figure in later years, tells of her early meetings with Gayarre and of his continued mental activities even at an advanced age.[19] George Washington Cable, one of America's most important writers of local color, wrote a column entitled "Drop Shot" for the Picayune during Reconstruction and, at the same time, was collecting material which would later make him famous. Cable, like many reporters before and since, decried what he called the public's barbaric hunger for news

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[17]Opelousas Journal, July 8, 1871.

[18]Robert T. Clark, Jr., "Reconstruction and the New Orleans German Colony," L. H. Q., XXIII (1940), 514.

[19]Grace King, Memories of a Southern Woman of Letters (New York, 1932), 32-35.

and the press' willingness to cater to every whim. Occasionally his column in the Picayune would contain impressions of life in New Orleans rather than straight news reporting. There was not enough of this, however, to satisfy an author who wanted to write rather than to report.[20]

An excellent literary journal entitled The Crescent Monthly was published in New Orleans by William Evelyn. It suspended publication after only two years, as there was not enough support. The Crescent Monthly was a high quality literary magazine devoted to news and comments about the worlds of art, literature, and music. The magazine stated that its purpose was not to appeal to Southern patriotism but to offer an opportunity for Southern writers to reach a national audience. Paul Hamilton Hayne, James R. Randall, and Henry Timrod were among the writers who understood the value of such a journal and published some of their work in it. The Monthly frequently published book reviews of well-known works which would be caustic enough to satisfy the most cynical twentieth century critic. At a time when few people in the South would dare criticize any of the books extolling the virtues of Confederates during the war, the Crescent Monthly was publishing reviews which took authors to task for literary crudeness or intellectual flimsiness. When William Gilmore Simms published War Poetry of the South, the Crescent Monthly derided Simms' "sympathy for mediocrity in verse."[21] When a book on the war in North

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[20]Arlin Turner, "George Washington Cable's Literary Apprenticeship," L. H. Q., XXIV (1941), 171 ff.

[21]New Orleans Crescent Monthly, January, 1867, 77.

Carolina was published, the reviewer remarked that "we seriously think that scarcely one fact which deserves to be recorded in history will be found in its pages."[22] Evelyn thought that Paul Hamilton Hayne was producing some of the finest postwar poems, and once stated that "Tennyson might have written [them] without damage to his reputation. . ."[23] The Crescent Monthly did not live more than two years as there were few people in Louisiana who would support a journal devoted to literature and fewer still who cared to read critical reviews of books praising the South.

In 1872, several French-speaking persons in South Louisiana organized the "Athenee Louisianais," a literary society concerned with stimulating writing in French. Although General Beauregard and several other well-known persons were members, the society always had a limited appeal.[24] It is interesting to note that the journal of the society, Les Comptes Rendus, published works of Negro writers.[25]

There were many people in Louisiana who were writing books during the postwar years. William Preston Johnston published a biography of his father, Albert Sidney, in 1878 and later did some writing on Shakespeare in which he engaged in arguments over the authorship of the famous plays.[26] Thomas W. Collins, a judge of one of the district

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[22]Ibid., February, 1867, 159.

[23]Ibid., March, 1867, 202.

[24]Fortier, Louisiana I, 48.

[25]Charles Barthelemy Rousseve, The Negro in Louisiana: Aspects of His History and His Situation (New Orleans, 1937), 114.

[26]Thomas McCaleb, The Louisiana Book: Selections From the Literature of the State (New Orleans, 1894), 247 ff.

courts, wrote several books in which he argued that progress was the result of the arduous labors of theorists and philosophers.[27] General Beauregard was interested in literary developments, as was indicated by his membership in the Athenee Louisianais. Years after the war, one of the nation's leading publishers brought out his Summary of the Art of War.[28]

No visitor could have stayed long in Louisiana without discovering that the state had a large and well-supported lottery. Raffles and lotteries had been popular in the state for many years, but nothing before or since matched the Louisiana State Lottery Company, which received a charter from the legislature allowing it to operate after January 1, 1869.[29] Charles T. Howard, who steered the charter through the legislature, had been a lottery operator before the war and had handled tickets for lotteries from other states during the early post-war years. The Louisiana legislature in 1866 and again in 1867 passed laws requiring lottery operators to give bond, obtain licenses, and pay taxes.[30] These measures, however, were picayunish when compared with the charter of 1868, which gave to the company exclusive control of all lottery activities and required that the company pay a mere $40,000 per year for its license. New Orleans, where a large part of the tickets were sold, tried to levy city taxes on the sale of lottery

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[27]Ibid., 286.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Berthold C. Alwes, "The History of the Louisiana State Lottery Company," L. H. Q., XXVII (1944), 973.

[30]Ibid., 971.

tickets, but this was blocked by a court decision which held that the company could not be taxed except for the $40,000 annual license fee.[31] Beauregard and former Confederate General Jubal A. Early became officers in the company, although they performed few services other than presiding over drawings. Beauregard justified lending his name to the organization by stating that the company was licensed by law and that he was doing a public service in seeing that it remained honest.[32] Newspaper advertisements made prominent mention of the names of Beauregard and Early. Lottery drawings were held in New Orleans on a large platform where people could crowd around to watch the operation. Whole tickets sold for ten dollars each, but a person could buy parts of tickets for as little as one dollar and receive one-tenth of the prize going to the winning number. People who supported the idea of a state lottery argued that the money which would have ordinarily gone out of the state in the purchase of lottery tickets would stay in Louisiana and that the money paid to the state in the form of a license fee was for the support of schools. Opponents pointed out that the lottery was owned by investors in New York and New Jersey and that the hundreds of thousands of dollars they made each year was far more than would normally go out of the state in the purchase of imported lottery tickets. Moreover, critics of the lottery pointed to the demoralizing effect the lottery had on the poorer classes of both races who spent far

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[31] Ibid., 978.

[32] Ibid., 979.

more than they could afford in the hopes of getting rich quickly and easily.[33] Despite the arguments which continued for many years over the merits and demerits of the lottery, it was a profitable concern with agents selling tickets in every part of Louisiana and in other states as well.

The city of New Orleans, sprawling along the banks of the Mississippi River, was the capital of Louisiana in every realm of human activity. The governor and legislature were in New Orleans during Reconstruction, but that had little to do with the city's preeminence in the state. In matters of economics, politics, religion, entertainment, and social life, the people of Louisiana looked to the Crescent City as the guide for all. New Orleans, like a colossus controlling the river, had grown from an old French settlement to become one of the major cities of America. The key to its size and economic importance was the fact that goods going in either direction on the Mississippi River had to stop there. Ocean going vessels would bring in items from all over the world and deposit them in the warehouses which lined the banks of the river and then take on cargoes of cotton, sugar, or other products of the interior before moving them into the stream of world trade. New Orleans controlled this trade and would continue to do so until railroads destroyed the economic importance of the Mississippi.

Within a few years after the end of the war, the New Orleans docks were bustling places, trying to regain the wealth which had once poured through. The levees were lined with wharves and busy streets

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[33]Charles Nordhoff, The Cotton States in the Spring and Summer of 1875, 60.

crowded with merchandise, boatmen, and laborers. Barges from the Mississippi Valley loaded with cotton or livestock or grain, fruit boats from South or Central America with bananas and pineapples and coffee, luxurious steamboats crowded with passengers, and large vessels from Europe and the Atlantic coast vied for dock space as they came into the river approaches to New Orleans.[34]

Amidst the seeming confusion there was an orderly system which brought each boat into a special stall and provided laborers who swarmed over the crafts as soon as the cables were taut and the gangplanks were down. There were myriads of small flags with devices indicating to which mercantile establishment the space on the dock was assigned. Negro roustabouts wheeled the cotton or other produce from the boats past a "tally-man" who told them where the goods were to be placed on the dock.[35] The colorful, sweating, singing Negro dock hands always attracted the attention of newcomers to the river area by their singing and chanting while at work and by their complete relaxation on top of the cotton bales when there was no work to be done.[36] Along the levees there were hundreds of small merchants or peddlers who pushed their carts on the streets and docks or presided over stalls on the sidewalks or in the gutters. Negro women selling apples and cakes, old men pushing carts filled with cans of ice cream, coffee and sausage peddlers, and the inevitable Sicilian and Italian fruit peddlers were

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[34]Latham, Black and White, 149; Trowbridge, The Desolated State, 398.

[35]King, The Great South, 54-55.

[36]See Ibid., 52.

all parts of a bedlam which made the river front exciting and colorful. When the day's work was over, the people rushed away to all parts of the city and left the river front a quiet, still place in the care of a few watchmen who patrolled the docks and warehouses.

A traveler coming to New Orleans would have looked for transportation from the docks to a hotel, and would have been surprised to find the hackney drivers an arrogant and prideful lot. There were many hackney coaches with good equipment and sound horses waiting for passengers, but they would not move from the area for less than two or three dollars, depending on the destination.[37] Several hotels had regular hackneys to care for their customers, but this was unusual and was resented by the other drivers. The travelers who stayed in New Orleans hotels were usually fascinated by the swarms of people who seemed to use the hostelries as headquarters for all sorts of enterprises. The St. Charles, St. Louis, and the smaller and less famous establishments were all centers for more activities than lodging or dining. Hotel life was important in New Orleans, and some of the places, built during the flush times of the 1830's and 1840's, still tried to carry on as if they were the winter capitols they had once been. New Orleans' costly hotels were not merely stopping places for travelers. They were really gigantic boarding houses with a few accomodations for people passing through the city on business or in search of pleasure. It was not at all uncommon for couples to live in hotels permanently and to rear their children in them. For the average fee of three dollars per day, a person could have a room with maid service and three meals a day in the hotel's dining room. New Orleans hotel chefs were proud of their

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[37]Rose, The Great Country, 187.

work and the food served there had nation-wide repute. Many travellers were impressed by the quality and vast quantities of food served in the spacious dining rooms.[38]

New Orleans' appeal was not based only on the economic importance of the river trade. The Crescent City was a colorful and exotic center of foreign culture set down on the banks of the lower Mississippi. The influx of Americans during the first half of the nineteenth century had helped make the city prosperous. The French, Spanish, and other European descendants refused to accept many of the American folkways and, thereby, made New Orleans an American city with a character all its own. Along the narrow, continental streets in the old section of the city there were substantially built houses with large airy rooms, high ceiling, and windows of the type popular in France during the eighteenth century. Broad, low staircases led to open courtyards in the rear of the buildings where people could relax without being disturbed by the noises of the street. Scattered throughout the French Quarter, as the old part of the city was called, were restaurants and smaller hotels where the cuisine was uncompromisingly French and only the old recipes were used. There the buildings, such as the Hotel de Ville, were of an older type architecture featuring dark red stone, painted gable roofs, and elaborate colonnades.[39] Canal Street, a wide thoroughfare dividing the old and the new parts of the city, was a street

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[38]See description of hotel life and fare in Macrae, The Americans at Home, 310 ff.

[39]For the impression of a visiting aristocrat, see Therese Yelverton (Viscountess Avonmore), Teresina in America (London, 1875), II, 374.

with countless two and three story buildings with porch-like balconies fronted with iron grill work which overlooked the streets and where people sat and relaxed at the end of a day. Fine shops, Christ Church, the Varieties Theater, Moreau's famous restaurant, the customhouse, and many other places of interest were on Canal Street.[40]

Mule drawn cars with one man acting as both driver and conductor moved along Canal and to the other streets in a never ending procession. New Orleans had twenty streetcar companies and one hundred fifty miles of track during the 1860's and 1870's.[41] The fare of five cents was considered so low that even the poorest persons would get on and ride, even if their journey was only a few hundred yards.[42] There was an etiquette which usually was followed by passengers on the many cars. Male passengers would drop their fare into glass receptacles upon entering, but ladies always took their seats and then passed the coin to the nearest male who gallantly placed the fare in the receptacle.[43]

New Orleans' houses were of an endless variety of every size, shape, and color; from the pretentious Italian villas with groves of magnolias, oleanders, and other trees to the tiny one room frame huts which housed the many thousands of citizens who could not afford more.[44]

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[40]King, The Great South, 62.

[41]Historical Sketchbook and Guide to New Orleans (New York, 1885) 33.

[42]William Saunders, Through the Light Continent; or The United States in 1877-1878 (New York, 1879), 69-70.

[43]Macrae, The American at Home, 308-309.

[44]Yelverton, Teresina in America, II, 364.

New houses being built in the 1860's and 1870's were not like those of prewar years. Fewer people could afford large homes, and there were increasing demands for double cottages which would provide accomodations for two families at the cost of privacy and space.[45] As the number of people in the poorer classes continued to increase, it was thought necessary to tear down older structures and replace them with less expensive dwellings which would house more people. Lafcadio Hearn, who spent several years in New Orleans in the late 1870's, was one of a large number of people who regretted the destruction of colorful and picturesque old buildings to make way for the practical but ugly structures which were being erected.[46] In the outskirts of the city there were fewer pressures to provide for masses of people, and one could see the large houses with long deep verandahs and grounds covered with trees and flowers.[47]

New Orleans was, as one visitor believed "the most luxurious, most unprincipled, the most extravagent, and to many, the most fascinating city in the Union."[48] It was the only city which, before the war, supported opera for a full winter and where theaters were open seven days every week. While the war was going on and especially after

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[45]Lafcadio Hearn (Charles W. Hutson, ed.), Creole Sketches (Boston, 1924), 175-80.

[46]Lafcadio Hern (Albert Mordell, ed.), An American Miscellany, I, 179.

[47]Rose, The Great Country, 190.

[48]Reid, After the War, 234.

it was over, opera and theatre were important parts of life in the Crescent City. In the winter of 1873, opera was temporarily suspended, and that was as good an indication of the economic troubles as any set of indices concerning prices and flow of trade.[49] The French Opera House, on the corner of Bourbon and Toulouse Streets, was built in 1859 and continued to be used throughout the century.[50] As many as 1,600 patrons could be handled in this building devoted to opera and theater. In addition to the French Opera House, there were the St. Charles Theater, the Academy of Music, the National Theater, and the Olympic Varieties to provide entertainment of many kinds to a public which was never sated.[51] It was often necessary to purchase tickets three or four days in advance when a popular play was being produced.[52]

Of all the amusements and colorful excitement of New Orleans, none approached the city-wide relaxation and gaiety of the Mardi Gras. A Catholic holiday celebrating the last Tuesday before the beginning of Lent, New Orleans' Mardi Gras had grown from its inception in the 1830's until it was known the world over. In 1866 clubs which sponsored the Mardi Gras parades took up the activities which had been suspended by war. Each year a new theme would be proclaimed for the

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[49]King, The Great South, 36.

[50]Nathaniel Cortlandt Curtis, New Orleans: Its Old Houses, Shops, and Public Buildings (Philadelphia, 1933), 195.

[51]See article on theaters in New Orleans Republican, February 4, 1871.

[52]A letter from A. Ducourvais to J. P. Breda, January 23, 1870, describes the trouble he had in getting tickets to see "Rip Van Winkle." Breda Papers, Louisiana State University Department of Archives and Manuscripts.

parade, and all of the clubs would construct their floats and devise their costumes to fit the central theme. In 1867 the theme was "Epicurean", which fitted well the attributes of New Orleanians, and the clubs responded with floats depicting the types of gigantic feasts of Roman days.[53] In 1870 floats showed the history of Louisiana with numerous soldiers, adventurers, cavaliers, and Jesuits.[54] Rex, King of Misrule, made his first appearance in 1872 and quickly became the most popular of the Mardi Gras celebrities. Shown as a venerable dignitary with white hair and beard, he rode through the streets surrounded by large crowds of maskers who were his subjects. Sometimes, during Reconstruction, Federal troops marched in the Rex parades disguised as Arabian or Egyptian soldiers. According to a rumor of the time, some New Orleans ladies, not knowing that the paraders were the hated Federals, gave a flag to one of Rex's officers, only to hear later that it was displayed prominently in a Federal barracks.[55] Each year the Mardi Gras celebration intrigued the people with its color, excitement and abandon. None of the other activities in the city could match it as a spectacle because it provided entertainment on the grand scale and allowed the people to mask and costume themselves in any way they saw fit and to throw caution to the winds for one day of feasting, drinking, and merry-making.

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[53]King, The Great South, 39.

[54]Ibid., 40.

[55]Ibid., 43.

Of the persistant weaknesses demonstrated [illegible] people of south Louisiana, gambling was probably the longest lin[illegible] most expensive. Gaming devices of every description existed in [illegible]rleans before the war and continued to enthrall people during Recons[illegible]on and for many years afterward. Stories of the Mississippi River s[illegible] boats and the gambling which took place on them have become an authentic part of American folklore. During the years following the war, there was no dearth of gambling houses offering a slim chance to get rich quickly to a people who were in constant financial straights. Men called "ropers" for the gambling places roamed the streets in their efforts to lure citizens into the establishments which flourished in many parts of the city.[56] Many of the old time river boat gamblers stayed at their trade after the war, settling down to the relatively peaceful job of running the various tables which the houses featured.[57] George Deval, who wrote Forty Years a Gambler on the Mississippi, was a prominent gambler in New Orleans after the war. His former servant, Lieutenant Governor Pinchback, was in a situation which made it possible for him to return past favors.[58] In 1869, the legislature legalised gambling with a $5,000 annual tax on each house.[59] Professional gambling went forward with great strides after this favorable legislation. There were so many gamblers in New Orleans that the competition was ruinous to the larger operators. Keenly aware of the possibilities,

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[56] Ibid., 43.

[57] Asbury, The French Quarter, 148.

[58] Ibid., 151-153.

[59] Ibid., 170.

they persuaded the legislature to repeal the law which legalized gambling. City police then eliminated the undesirables. After the opposition was gone, the owners of the large houses went back into business without any serious threat from single operators. The bribes to the police were more than the taxes which had been paid, but provided for security from competition.[60] Throughout the state people lamented the existence of widespread gambling. Daniel Dennett, editor of the Planters' Banner, was furious at the way the poor people were being duped by promises of rich rewards for a successful night at the poker, roulette, faro, or blackjack tables. "They now have music in these Keno dens," he exclaimed, "to give a new charm to the infernal acts legalized by Radical votes."[61] Try as opponents might, they could not prevent people from gambling when they wanted to do so.

Another big business which performed its role in enticing people to the Crescent City was prostitution. During Reconstruction, the politicians who had a keen eye for chances for profit did not overlook the possibilities presented by New Orleans' longtime experience with the oldest profession. There were no effective laws for checking prostitution, and there was little pressure for their passage. Kate Townsend, who might be considered the Belle Watling of Reconstruction New Orleans, operated a house which was one of the favorite haunts for politicians.[62] It was widely rumored, but not proved, that ballots would

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[60]Ibid., 173-174.

[61]St. Mary Planters' Banner, June 9, 1869.

[62]See account in New Orleans Times, September 22, 1870.

occasionally be secreted in Kate Townsend's place, or one like it, before being given to the Returning Board. Basin Street, which became well-known as the place "where dark and light folk meet," was lined on each side of the thoroughfare with expensive brothels of two and three stories.[63] Little could be done about the situation because only a few people really wanted the places closed. Even the newspapers in the remote parishes of the state took cognizance of what was happening in New Orleans' brothels. The Monroe Ouachita Telegraph published a story about Madame Bianca Robbins, who was lost on a ship coming from New York. "She was returning," the journal mused, "with an invoice of attractions for her establishment."[64] With such widespread interest, and connections with sources of supply, it is easy to understand why prostitution flourished in New Orleans.

One of the persistent social problems in New Orleans was the large number of people born in Europe who had migrated to the Crescent City. Although the foreign born people contributed to the culture of the city, they still faced many problems of adjustment in a country noted for its insistence on conformity. Demands that they abandon ways of living reminiscent of Europe were weaker in New Orleans than in other cities, but the pressures were there. Foreigners had constituted a political and social problem in ante-bellum years because they had little sympathy with the plantation social and economic ideals. During Reconstruction the problem diminished as the percentage of foreigners gradually decreased. The Census of 1860 gives an indication of the

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[63]Asbury, The French Quarter, 263.

[64]Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, October 18, 1866.

importance of foreign born people in New Orleans. Out of a total population of 168,675, there were 64,621 who had been born in other countries. Almost 55,000 of this group came from Ireland, France, and the Germanic states, all areas where there was widespread resentment against landlordism and the political and social system based on it.[65] In 1870 the ratio dropped to 48,000 out of a total population of more than 190,000.[66] The 1880 documents showed that there were only 41,157 foreigners in a city of 216,090 people.[67] As the years went by and emmigrants stopped coming to New Orleans, the problem of assimilating foreigners gradually decreased.

Some of the organizations created by the foreign born caused trouble in the Crescent City. Cuban patriots, demanding freedom from Spain, had many torch-lit processions in which anti-Spanish sentiments of extreme nature would be voiced.[68] New Orleans had been a center of Cuban filibustering expeditions for many years, and their activities were taken in stride. Of a more serious nature was the dread Mafia, a secret band of Sicilian robbers and assassins who preyed on people in the poorer districts of the city. The terroristic Mafia was growing in

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[65] The Statistics of Population of the United States, The Eighth Census, XXXII.

[66] A Compendium of the Ninth Census of the United States, 416.

[67] The Statistics of Population of the United States at The Tenth Census, 671.

[68] Telverton, Teresina in America, II, 352.

the 1860's and 1870's and continued to be dangerous until the famous Hennessey incident in 1891, during which eleven alleged members were lynched by an irate mob.[69] The German immigrants were probably the most aggressively clannish of all the foreign elements in New Orleans. They had their own newspapers such as the Deutsche Zeitung, their own theatere where German plays and operas were performed, their own political clubs, and their own schools. During the Franco-Prussian war there were frequent outbreaks of minor violence when the German immigrants expressed their delight with the progress of the war in front of New Orleans citizens of French descent.[70] Such clubs as the Deutsche Gesellschaft for aiding immigrants get through customs and become oriented, the famous Turnverein for organized athletics, and the Mannerchor singing clubs provided service, entertainment, and relaxation for the Germans and demonstrated their ability to organize for specific types of activities.[71] An Italian group called Tiro al Bessaglio was a patriotic and social club but there were too few members to make it a power in New Orleans.[72]

There had been Jews in New Orleans since the early eighteenth century in spite of the colonial laws which outlawed them. Judah Touro,

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[69]Asbury, The French Quarter, 310-14.

[70]Clark, "Reconstruction and the New Orleans German Colony," L. H. Q., XXIII (1940), 504 ff.

[71]William Robinson Konrad, "The Diminishing Influence of German Culture in New Orleans Life Since 1865," L. H. Q., XXIV (1941), 159-60.

[72]New Orleans Republican, June 5, 1873.

a wealthy philanthropist, and Senator Judah P. Benjamin were two Jews who acquired fame in ante-bellum New Orleans. During the Civil War the members of the Jewish group split over the issue of secession in about the same way the Catholics and Protestants did. In 1868 a school was erected to provide education for Jews because many of the elders, like the Catholics and Protestants, were opposed to "mixed" schools. During the 1870's there were serious splits among New Orleans Jews as the worldwide reform movement which was aimed at relaxing some of the rigid codes began to take hold in the city.[73]

The city's most serious postwar social problem came from the changed status of the Negro. New Orleans was the capital of the state and was in most direct contact with the Federal force which upheld the Republican governments. Moreover, there had existed in New Orleans before the war a type of racial adjustment which was different from the system in existence elsewhere in Louisiana. There had been, in reality, a third caste composed of educated and fairly well-to-do Negroes who were not accepted socially by the whites but who held a position far superior to the slaves and illiterate free men of color. The New Orleans whites, who understood the situation quite well, did not ordinarily think of them when they spoke of Negroes in general. In other words, New Orleanians did not have a completely organized concept of race which was based on biology. There were too many glaring examples of individual variation to justify treating all Negroes alike. During the postwar years, the New Orleans Negroes who had enjoyed a privileged position saw that the dominant whites were beginning to include them in all

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[73]Julian B. Feibelman, A Social and Economic Study of the New Orleans Jewish Community (Philadelphia, 1941), 83 ff.

thoughts and plans pertaining to race. The affluent and educated Negroes, who gave leadership to their people, quickly realized that they must argue for Negroes generally if they were to retain the privileges they had formerly enjoyed and to obtain more. Whites were approaching the problem from the standpoint of race; they had to do the same thing. They knew that if rights were not recognized for all Negroes they could be enjoyed by none.

As soon as the war ended, the New Orleans colored people began making their ideas known to leading Republicans. Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase and Whitelaw Reid attended a fair given by Catholic Negroes only a few months after Appomattox. The event, held for the purpose of raising money for schools for slave children, was in the Pierre Soule mansion. Reid, who had a journalist's keen awareness for the unusual, was impressed with the dress and manners of those present. Many, he learned, had been educated in Paris at excellent schools and had the vivacity and grace one finds among sophisticated people.[74] Those "ancient freedmen," as they were sometimes called to distinguish them from the former slaves, had long thought of themselves as being French rather than American. Their ancestors had been citizens during the French and Spanish periods, and it was only after the Louisiana Purchase that they began to lose legal guarantees of citizenship. They had always thought of Paris as their capital rather than Washington. In 1865 they realized that their future was linked with the former fieldhands. In their conversations with Chase, they requested that he make known their situation to President Johnson. They pointed out that they paid taxes

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[74]Reid, <u>After the War</u>, 243-44.

for the support of white schools but had no public schools of their own and that their taxes did not give them a voice in state and local governments.[75]

The New Orleans Tribune became the leading journal dedicated to the improvement of the position of the Negroes. It was published by the Roudanez brothers, who made the newspaper an important organ of protest and leadership. During the postwar era, it featured caustic analyses of the social and political situation as a part of its struggle to present the intelligent Negroes' point of view. Colored persons of property continued to frequent the shops in the company of servants and to attend the operas and theaters in a tier of seats especially designed for them; but that was a far cry from the type of social rights being demanded by the Tribune.

One of the obvious demands made by the advocates of Negro improvement was for schools. General N. P. Banks made a beginning toward Negro education while he was in New Orleans, but it was limited in scope. The Constitutional Convention of 1864 discussed Negro education, but did not make specific statements establishing it. When the former Confederates regained control in 1865, the problem of Negro education was dismissed. Negro schools in large numbers were the product of the Republican assumption of power in 1868. Republican politicians knew that Negro votes were their source of political strength in Louisiana, and they naturally planned for colored schools in order to get continued support from colored voters. A law providing for schools to be supported by state funds and to be open to children of both races was written

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[75] Ibid.

in 1868 and then revised the following year. The law stated that any public school teacher who refused to admit a student because of his race could be punished by fine and imprisonment and, moreover, could be sued by the parents of the child involved.[76] New Orleans was the only place in the state where there were mixed schools operating on public funds as outlined in the 1869 law. In every other section of the state there was such violent opposition that the schools were either separated or children of one of the races would be excluded. The presence of Negro students in several of the New Orleans public schools was tolerated until late 1874, when the race issue was probably more serious than during any other period.

Despite opposition and criticism, mixed schools were a part of the New Orleans scene for several years. Pinchback sent his children to the mixed schools but white boys made their presence so uncomfortable that they quit. "They're good enough niggers," the boys said, "but still they're niggers, you can't teach 'em not to be black."[77] George Washington Cable visited a mixed school where he found a few octoroons and two or three girls who were pure Negroid.[78] Probably the largest number of Negroes attended the Claiborne Boy's School on

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[76] Acts of the Louisiana Legislature, Second Session, First Legislature, (1869), Number 121, 175-188.

[77] Quoted in Edwin R. Embree, Brown America: The Story of a New Race (New York, 1931).

[78] George Washington Cable, Strange True Tales of Louisiana (New York, 1917), 220-30.

Julia Street, where there were ninety-nine colored students in a total enrollment of 289.[79] State Superintendent Conway said in his report to the legislature in 1871 that "in many schools white and colored children may be seen together." As Conway did not name the schools, and because of the general attitude throughout the state, it can only be assumed that such schools were restricted to New Orleans. In the same report, he indicated that most children in public schools had chosen to attend schools with other children of their own race.[80]

Mixed schools ended in New Orleans in December of 1874 when some Negro students tried to enroll in the Upper Girl's High School, which had been restricted to whites. The incident started when Charles W. Boothby, who administered the New Orleans school district, announced that admission to the city high schools would be based on examinations which would be held from December 14 to December 17. All grammar school principals received notices to bring children to the appointed places for the examination. On the morning of the fourteenth, the principal of the Upper Girl's High School was confronted by a colored teacher and eleven Negro girls who demanded that they be allowed to take the entrance tests. A discrepancy was discovered in the applications which the girls brought with them which made it possible for them to be dismissed until the matter could be decided by higher

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[79]Porter, "History of Negro Education in Louisiana," 45.

[80]Annual Report of the State Superintendant of Public Education Thomas W. Conway to the General Assembly of Louisiana for the year 1871 (New Orleans, 1872), 46. Hereafter these documents will be cited as State Superintendent Reports, and the year will be given.

authorities. In the meantime, the white girls were told to go home also. The senior girls refused to do so and drew up a petition stating that they would not accept their diplomas later in the month unless the matter was settled prior to that time. Boothby was attacked by a group of fifteen men the following day who forced him to sign a document swearing that he opposed mixed schools. He was then taken into the school and forced to apologize to the girls for purported insulting remarks. The principal of the school upheld Boothby and said that he had not made any statement which could be construed as insulting or derogatory. For two days following this incident, groups of boys went to every school in the city and ejected all students who were dark enough to indicate Negroid characteristics. There were some pathetic and also amusing scenes when the boys confronted students of French and Spanish extraction and told them to get out. Some rebelled, some left weeping, and some left making threats of dire consequences. Most of the Negroes knew in advance what was to occur and did not attend schools on those days or thereafter.[81]

The issue of mixed schools in New Orleans was merely one phase of the larger problem of developing public schools in postwar Louisiana. There had been efforts to create a public school system before the war, but they had not been generally successful. Education for the children of all citizens at public expense contradicted the basic tenets of the aristocratic plantation ideal and did not receive much support from

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[81]State Superintendent Report, 1874, L-LXXX; See also Porter, "History of Negro Education in Louisiana," 45; and New Orleans Picayune and Bulletin for the December 15-20 period.

people in position of authority. State supported schools were for the purpose of educating "indigent children." Poor people resented the implication of charity, and the people of property preferred to send their children to private schools. There were some public schools in New Orleans before the war, but only a few were established in other areas of the state.[82] The majority of the schools which had been operating were closed for several years during the war and school properties naturally suffered from deterioration and lack of management. Some district directors remained on duty, but they could not employ competent people to teach in the schools. Moreover, the people as a whole were uneducated, had little interest in affairs of learning, and resented the idea of paying taxes for it.[83] Public schools emerged in Louisiana despite the long depression caused by war, the opposition of people in all walks of life, and the problem of educating children of both races in schools supported by public money.

In the spring of 1864 General Banks created a Board of Education for Freedmen which was ordered to make all financial arrangements for schools, purchase equipment, select teachers, and outline courses of study. The provost marshalls in each parish received instructions to collect taxes for the support of the Negro schools.[84] Banks did not enter into the business of educating white children as that was considered the responsibility of local whites. New Orleans had a school

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[82]State Superintendent Report, 1864, 6-7.

[83]Ibid., 8-10.

[84]New Orleans Daily True Delta, May 31, 1864.

board presided over by the mayor, who was subservient to Banks, so that there was no problem of confusion in matters of policy. The Board established by Banks was later incorporated into the Freedman's Bureau, which administered colored schools until the Republicans acquired control of the government and made Negro education a function of the state. Thomas W. Conway's 1869 report as Republican superintendent of the state's schools showed that he had received 115 buildings and $14,610 for maintenance from the Bureau, which was operating 216 schools with 259 teachers and 12,309 pupils.[85] During the first few years after the end of the war, the Freedmen's Bureau handled Negro education and the system operated by the state conducted schools for white children. Robert M. Lusher became the head of all public schools when the former Confederates regained control of the government in 1865. His report in 1866 merely stated that there was apathy toward the idea of establishing schools and that there were few public schools in the state worth mentioning.[86] Lusher removed some teachers of loyalist sentiment and was reported to have forbidden the singing of "Hail Columbia" and "The Star Spangled Banner."[87]

The development and expansion of private schools was the important trend in white education in the early postwar years despite economic crises and the existence of a department of the state government which was supposed to foster public education. Even Conway

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[85]Porter, "History of Negro Education in Louisiana," 24.

[86]State Superintendent Report, 1866, passim.

[87]See letter from C. Block to B. F. Flanders, January 10, 1867, Flanders Papers.

admitted that many of the private establishments were good and that they were securing the best teachers.[88]

The success of the Republican party in capturing control of the state in 1868 marked the beginning of a new period in the history of education in Louisiana. The new government, composed of Northern adventurers and reformers, Negroes, and dissident native whites was out of sympathy with the concept of public education as practiced in prewar Louisiana. Its goal was to provide adequate instruction for all children regardless of color or status. Educational democracy was one of the important and revolutionary practices of Reconstruction. It is necessary to note that when the Republicans were ejected from power the people did not return to their ante-bellum ideas about public education. They merely eliminated the Negroes.

Conway, on assuming his duties after the election of 1868, found few schools in operation, no system of control or planning, and no adequate school law outlining the function of the educational establishment and the responsibilities of its officers. His predecessor made no report for 1867 and there was no accounting for the money which had been spent in 1867 and early 1868.[89] The laws of the state did not provide for educating Negro children.[90] The city of New Orleans had the only adequate schools in the state because the people of the city were supporting them locally rather than waiting for action by the state

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[88]State Superintendant Report, 1868, 12-13.

[89]Ibid., 6.

[90]Ibid., 10.

government.[91] Conway wanted the legislature to write a new law which would make it possible for him to organize and operate a school system of value. In keeping with the general philosophy of the Republican administration, he insisted that the law provide for mixed schools. Conway, who was an effective politician, coyly inserted into his first report some recommendations by district directors suggesting that the authority of the state superintendent be widened and that the salary be increased.[92] The legislature did not pass an adequate school law until 1869.

While Conway was waiting for the desired legislation, he was conducting a feud with Robert M. Lusher, Louisiana's administrator of a fund created by George Peabody, a New England philanthropist, for the benefit of Southern education. Conway wanted the money spent in Louisiana to be controlled by the state, while Lusher insisted that it be handled as a private operation. Lusher's argument was that the whites paid taxes for schools but refused to allow their children to attend. If money from the Peabody Fund were controlled by Superintendent Conway, according to Lusher, there would be no schools for the whites, as they would refuse to go to school with Negroes no matter who provided the money. The Peabody authorities supported Lusher and put money into privately operated white schools for several years.[93]

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[91] *Ibid.*, 11-12.

[92] *Ibid.*, 15.

[93] "Peabody's Education Fund: Proceedings of Trustees and Reports of General Agents, etc. 1867-1876," 1 *ff*. This document is in the form of a scrapbook with typed copies of newspaper articles, letters, and reports of Peabody Fund officials. It is in the New Orleans Public Library.

By the end of 1868, the Peabody Fund was paying about one-third of the cost of eleven schools with more than one thousand students.[94] The contributions of the Peabody Fund continued to increase as the whites insisted on having their own schools rather than sending their children to state supported institutions.

The school law of 1869 provided the legal basis for the reorganization of Louisiana's public schools. The first meeting of the newly created Board of Education met in Conway's office in April of 1870 and began making plans for new schools and for reorganizing the old ones. One of the first difficulties encountered came from the fact that the law gave no power to the Board of Education nor to any of the state officials to act in establishing schools when the parish school boards failed to organize them. The result was that some of the parishes had no public schools of any kind.[95] One of Conway's first problems in administering the new law came from New Orleans. The city board in charge of schools was intent on keeping the races separated despite the provision of the law. Conway solved this by sending money directly to the various ward boards so that the city officials could not control it.[96] Outside of New Orleans, there was stiff opposition to the new school system because of the racial implications. Many local citizens who were qualified to serve as school directors were

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[94] Ibid., 5.

[95] State Superintendent Report, 1870, 6.

[96] Ibid., 23.

afraid to do so because of the threats of ostracism.[97] The school boards in the many wards were the base upon which the system rested. There were too few qualified Negroes and too few interested whites to guarantee adequate performances on the operating level.[98] The legislature listened to Conway's complaints and amended the school law as he suggested. As a result, the Board of Education, presided over by Conway, received expanded powers. The ward boards were eliminated, the central Board acquired control over parish directors, and all parish treasurers were instructed to turn over school money to the treasurers of the parish school boards.[99] With the increased authority centering in Superintendent Conway, new schools started operation in all areas of the state. During 1871, the state Board expended more than one-half million dollars in educating approximately 45,000 students.[100] The average term for the schools was six months.

The schools which were in operation during the late 1860's and early 1870's left much to be desired by any standard of judgment. In such parishes as Livingstone, for example, the country was wild and the schools were isolated log huts with the most elementary and rudest furniture. One inspector went into a district near New Orleans where there was complete apathy toward schools of any kind and for any purpose. He found only a half dozen literate persons and no printed matter of any

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[97] Ibid., 29.

[98] Ibid., 32.

[99] Ibid., 187.

[100] Ibid., 132.

kind, not even a Bible.[101] E. S. Steddard, director of one of the districts in southwest Louisiana, visited schools by steamboat, pirogue, horseback, and on foot. He found indifference to schools in all areas and hostility in some. Steddard, a transplanted New Englander, was amazed at the life of the Acadians in his district. In one village of 1200 people, according to his story, a Catholic priest visited once a year and that was all the religious instruction the people received.[102] Another district supervisor reported that he tried to organize a school in St. Martinsville, but the mayor informed him that the people of his village did not obey the school law or any other law passed by the Reconstruction legislatures.[103] Impressions of mass illiteracy and indifference were standard parts of the reports turned in by the people who were involved in the actual operation of schools. In addition to the indifferences toward schools generally and hostility toward Negro education particularly, there were problems within the school system itself. Parish officials had great difficulty in collecting taxes for schools and in securing accurate information about the number of children of educable age.[104] The quality of teachers was such that it became the source of as much criticism as any other aspect

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[101]House of Representatives Executive Document Number 1, Part 5, Forty-second Congress, Third Session, 134.

[102]State Superintendent Report, 1871, 120-123.

[103]Ibid., 211.

[104]House of Representatives Executive Document Number 1, Part 5, Forty-Second Congress, Third Session, 193.

of the public schools. Also, the personnel in administrative capacities left much to be desired. There were frequent reports of school directors misappropriating funds or absconding with them. Teachers infrequently received their salaries on time and, even when they were paid, often had to cash the warrants at ruinous reductions.[105]

William G. Brown, a Negro, was elected to succeed Conway in 1872. His first report to the legislature indicated the expansion of Louisiana's public schools. The statistics showed that there were 864 schools, 1,476 teachers, and 57,433 students. Brown's report stated that the average monthly salary for the teachers was $42.50 and that the average duration of the school year was four and one-half months.[106] The last two items, plus the fact that less than twenty per cent of the children of school age were in attendance, indicated that the state had a long way to go before it would have an adequate educational program. The system was, nevertheless, far more expansive than anything which had existed before. The growth in numbers of students had been faster than the ability of the state to provide adequate school buildings. Some schools were meeting in old sheds and barns with no doors, windows, or floors.[107]

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[105]Schuler, "Women in Public Affairs in Louisiana During Reconstruction," L. H. Q., XIX (1936), 689.

[106]State Superintendent Report, 1873, 11-12. The Report did not state how many students were Negro and how many were white.

[107]Ibid., 14-15.

Public school funds were often the source of private wealth for politicians and school officials. Brown was of the opinion that one of the reasons for the lack of financial integrity among people handling school funds was the fact that speculations were occurring in all departments of the state government and that laws generally were being ignored.[108] Financial crises resulting from theft or mismanagement were occurring throughout the state. In Catahoula parish, for example, teachers were hired when there were no funds in the treasury and, as a result, the parish school system had a $3,000 indebtedness in outstanding warrants.[109] No one was able to untangle the financial situation in Carroll Parish because a former treasurer refused to give up the books which were in his possession.[110] Charles W. Keating, one of the division directors in charge of several parishes, was "in no way prepared to meet such a demoralized, corrupt and inafficient class of men as he found composing a number of the retiring boards." Two of his treasurers absconded, and what books were available showed many types of personal expenses charged to the state.[111] E. S. Steddard reported that in his area one of the board members burned all of the old warrants and vouchers and then jumped a $5,000 bond after being charged with misappropriation of funds.[112] Merchants in many rural areas were making a practice of cashing warrants issued

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[108] Ibid., 17.

[109] Ibid., 18.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid., 19.

[112] Ibid., 21.

by school boards and holding them until they could be redeemed at face value.

Public schools continued to grow, external opposition and internal weakness notwithstanding. During the last few years of Reconstruction, the number of schools became steady at a little more than a thousand with approximately 75,000 students enrolled. The teachers' average salary remained small, buildings were inadequate, and funds were always hard to acquire. Nevertheless, the schools continued and progress was made.

As the struggle for control of Louisiana became increasingly severe, public schools came in for more criticism. Democrats used every weapon at their command to cast reflections on the schools and the men who conducted them. Opposition was sometimes based on religion as well as politics. E. S. Stoddard recorded in his diary that in the Lockport area "priests tell the parents that they had better tie a millstone around their children's necks and sink them in the Bayou than send them to the public schools." Public school teachers of Lockport, according to Stoddard, were told that they were lost beyond hope as no one who teaches a public school can go to heaven.[113] Threats made against teachers were usually of a more this-worldly nature. In 1874 a colored school house near Farmersville was burned to the ground during the political campaign.[114] The same year witnessed the murders of the president of the De Soto Parish school board and the school board

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[113]See entry of May 25, 1875 in Stoddard Diary, Stoddard Papers.

[114]State Superintendent Report, 1874, 22.

treasurer in Red River Parish.[115] One of the few Democratic parish judges was removed from a school board for embezzling $4,000, but the district judge and the district attorney were afraid of him and refused to prosecute the case.[116] L. H. Lewis, a colored teacher in West Feliciana, told one of the groups of investigating congressmen that he was chased down the road by a group of whites shouting "kill the damn nigger school teacher." When he was finally caught, he was fined $7.50 for disturbing the peace by one of the men chasing him and told to teach no more.[117]

One of the charges made by Democrats was that there were more Negro schools supported from public funds than white schools. The Board of Education was the only organization with accurate information concerning the ratio of funds spent on educating children of each race. Its reports did not give this information. It was widely believed, however, and the situation was such that the belief was probably based on fact. One aspect about which there was little argument was the quality of the schools. All reports from the state superintendents during the years from 1870 to 1876 pointed out the great difficulty in obtaining competent teachers. The inadequacy of so many of the schools plus the fraud that was going on in managing school funds made many enemies for the public school system. Criticism of the schools was not limited to members of the white race. Colored parents did not often find the Democratic newspapers anxious to publish their ideas about

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[115] Ibid., 224-25.

[116] E. S. to H. R. Stoddard, January 25, 1875, Stoddard Papers.

[117] Senate Report Number 701, Forty-fourth Congress, Second Session, 2559.

anything, and the Republican press was reluctant to print derogatory statements about the operation of any branch of the government. Some Negroes, however, managed to make their ideas known. One colored man told a traveler in the state that the schools in his district were terrible and there was little that could be done about it.[118] William H. Hill, a Ouachita Parish colored Democrat, told a Congressional committee that for three years there were no schools in his parish that were worth sending children to.[119] Aaron Robinson told the same committee that some years there were no schools in operation in the Clinton area.[120] A colored man from East Feliciana, Aaron Taylor, said that both political parties were represented on his school board but the schools were unsatisfactory anyway. When asked who was responsible he made a perfectly intelligent reply by saying "... in my opinion I sorter laid it to them both."[121]

Louisiana's public school system came in for severe criticism during its formative years. It is difficult to imagine, however, a statewide system of public instruction being created under less favorable circumstances. Dishonesty was so flagrant in all branches of the government that it would be naive to assume that school administrators would keep their hands clean. The policy of using public funds to

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[118]Nordhoff, The Cotton State in the Spring and Summer of 1875, 73.

[119]Senate Report Number 701, Forty-fourth Congress, Second Session, 445-46.

[120]Ibid., 1887-88.

[121]Ibid., 1149.

educate Negro children was worse than revolutionary to many citizens, it was obscene. Moreover, Louisiana was in such a precarious economic condition during Reconstruction that it would have been extremely difficult to establish schools for white children alone if taxes had to be collected to pay for them. The people accepted the principle, however, that public education at public expense resulted in an improved society and that all shared the benefits. Once the principle was accepted it was not abandoned.

There was a constant outcry against the poor teaching with which the schools were plagued. People concerned with education soon realized that the training of adequate teachers could not be accomplished quickly. Teachers' Institutes were held in each of the six divisions of the state at least once a year and all of the teachers were requested to attend the meetings. Some of the people with experience would read papers or deliver lectures on problems which arose in classrooms, or upon various techniques of teaching.[122] New Orleans had a Normal School during the 1868-1869 year which had an average daily attendance of about 70. Students received two classifications - seniors were graduates of New Orleans high schools, and juniors were students over eighteen years of age. The school was financed by the city and the students were at no expense other than books.[123] The most important movement toward providing better teachers was stimulated by the Peabody Fund. The Peabody Normal Seminary opened in New Orleans in 1870 with $1,500 donated by the Fund and some money it acquired from other sources.

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[122]House of Representatives Executive Document Number 1, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 132-33.

[123]"Peabody's Education Fund," 4-5.

It continued to operate for a number of years, but was always hampered by the lack of money.[124] The officials of the Fund also aided small schools which were training teachers in Plaquemines, Mt. Lebanon, Bastrop, and Clinton.[125] Many of the teachers in the state met after duty hours in their school building or in private homes to receive instructions on problems of teaching. The Peabody Fund ordinarily supported the small costs involved.[126] Both Conway and Brown made many requests to the legislatures for funds to create an adequate school devoted to the education and training of public school teachers. Their requests were always ignored. As a result, the state's school system could not advance as rapidly as would have been possible had some school been established for the purpose of training teachers.

There were many efforts to establish and maintain institutions of higher learning during Reconstruction, but the lack of money hampered them all. The Louisiana Seminary of Learning and Military Academy, which was to become the state university, began its first session at Pineville in 1860 with William Tecumseh Sherman as the school's first president.[127] When it became apparent that Louisiana would secede from the Union, Sherman resigned and re-entered the Federal army. Attempts

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[124]Edwin Whitfield Fay, The History of Education in Louisiana (Washington, 1898), 112.

[125]"Peabody's Education Fund," 3-9.

[126]Ibid., 10 ff.

[127]Walter L. Fleming (ed.), General W. T. Sherman as College President (Cleveland, 1912), 16 ff.

were made to keep the institution open during the war, but the economic and military situations were such that the school was frequently open in name only. Confederate Colonel David French Boyd, who had been associated with the school before secession and war, became acting superintendent in 1865. As a result of Boyd's hard work, classes recommenced in the fall of 1865, although there were only four instructors and about one hundred students.[128] Boyd and the other faculty members spent several years trying to improve the school's facilities, attract more students, increase the number of subjects taught, and get money from the state legislature. All who were interested in the seminary found that improvement was extremely difficult because of the general situation in Louisiana. A fire on the night of October 15, 1869, started in the commissary of the main building and soon destroyed the entire structure. The state had invested $150,000 in the building but carried no insurance.[129] Boyd, after an emergency meeting with the school's supervisors, made arrangements to move the school to the state institution for the deaf and the dumb in Baton Rouge. Students received a thirty day furlough from classes and were to report to the new location at the end of that time. It was a severe blow to an institution which was already hard pressed to remain alive.

The next few years were exceedingly difficult for those people who were trying to build the seminary. In addition to all of the other troubles, the fact that the school was in a temporary location created a

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[128]Alexandria Louisiana Democrat, June 20, 1866.

[129]Ibid., October 20, 1869.

general atmosphere of instability. Boyd was determined not to admit Negroes as students despite the fact that it was a state institution, and the laws of 1869 specifically stated that all public schools must admit students of both races. Governor Warmoth proved to be an ally in this situation. He and Boyd managed for several years to obtain money from the legislature for the school without promising that Negroes could enroll. Boyd stated many times that the seminary would have ceased operation had it not been for the support of Warmoth.[130] The legislature heeded requests from Boyd and Warmoth and, in 1870, changed the name of the institution to the Louisiana State University. Boyd, who became president, found that the new name meant no real change. Between 1870 and 1872 the legislature appropriated about $64,000 annually, but such an amount would not support the type of university which Boyd wanted.

Real trouble began for the university when Kellogg became governor in January of 1873. Boyd and the supervisors refused to change their policy toward Negro students, so the legislature stopped appropriations. The university received no money from the state until 1877 and the ejection of Republicans from power.[131] Boyd, with the help of Warmoth, had already fought off Thomas W. Conway's drive to bring the university under his jurisdiction.[132] The new situation, however,

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[130]Walter L. Fleming, Louisiana State University: 1860-1896 (Baton Rouge, 1936), 155.

[131]Ibid., 205 ff.

[132]State Superintendent Report, 1870, 43.

was far more of a threat to the continued existence of the school. Boyd petitioned the legislature for financial support, but received none as he was adamant on admitting colored students. He told the legislature that the "...suffering entailed on the professors, employees, and tradespeople, in their heroic effort to save the University well merits and now cries aloud for relief."[133] The school's only income was from the tuition money obtained from private students and those who were in attendance as beneficiary students of the state. Although enrollments diminished and the faculty was once composed of only three professors, the university continued in session.

President Boyd's ambition was to incorporate the law and medical departments of the University of Louisiana in New Orleans into Louisiana State University, and, with Federal aid as outlined in the Morrill Act of 1862, add an agricultural and mechanical division. The result would be the emergence of a genuine center of higher learning. One of Boyd's arguments was that developing specialists in the physical sciences who were unfamiliar with cultural and intellectual subjects would be bad for the individuals and for the public generally.[134] He had been advocating centralization of higher learning for several years, once remarking that "Louisiana has already too many little sickly colleges and universities, and not a single good one."[135] His desire to take advantage of

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[133]State Superintendent Report, 1873, 427.

[134]Ibid., 427-32.

[135]Ibid., 1871, 462.

the Morrill Act was shared by Republican leaders, but they did not want an agricultural and mechanical college created by themselves to be under the jurisdiction of Boyd. In March of 1873, a committee appointed by the legislature finished its work and reported in favor of starting an institution in New Orleans which would teach the agricultural and mechanical arts. The applications sent to Washington requesting public lands received a favorable response, and in the summer of 1874 the Agricultural and Mechanical College of the State of Louisiana held its first session in a building on the corner of Baronne and Common Streets.[136] J. L. Cross was the first president of the institution. Governor Kellogg, Lieutenant Governor Antoine, John Lynch, George Y. Kelso, T. C. Anderson, and several other well-known politicians were on the Board of Control which directed the policies of the new college.[137] The Board decided to locate the school permanently on the Chalmette battleground in St. Bernard Parish and proceeded to make arrangements to purchase land in that area.[138] The school had about sixty-five day students and one hundred thirty in the night classes during the first year of operation. The second year saw both figures double.[139] Inasmuch as Republican policies prevailed, the majority of the students were colored. In

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[136] Reports of the Board of Control of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of the State of Louisiana; Submitted to the General Assembly at the Session of 1875 (New Orleans, 1875), 9. These documents will be cited hereafter as Board of Control Reports.

[137] Ibid., 5-6.

[138] Ibid., 11-12.

[139] Board of Control Report, 1877, 7.

keeping with the terms of the Morrill Act, military training was included in the curriculum. Students belonged to a corps of cadets, performed military drills, lived under military discipline, and marched to and from classes in regular military formation. This type of regime, of course, did not apply to students who took night classes only and who were not considered full-time students.[140] Students had class room work and practical studies in mechanics in the New Orleans location and went to the Chalmette grounds for the farm work.[141]

Most of the people associated with the new college resisted the pressures being put on it to incorporate with the state university in Baton Rouge. Parents of students, machine shop proprietors, foundry men, and planters signed a petition requesting that the two schools remain separate.[142] Their argument was that the school should be near New Orleans where the machine shops and establishments employing skilled labor were located. They also thought that too much of the pressure for unification was coming from people in Baton Rouge who would profit by the move. H. Bonsano, chairman of the Board of Control, wrote Kellogg a letter in which he objected stremuously to the plan of incorporating with "the now bankrupt, destitute, and deserted institution known in the past as Louisiana State University."[143] Bonsano, and others, feared that the university's situation was hopeless and that unification would result in the collapse of both. Their views were ignored after

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[140] Ibid., 14-15.

[141] Ibid., 1.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid., 6.

1877. One of the first acts of the Nicholls government was the establishment of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in Baton Rouge.

The Freedmens Bureau and several religious agencies became interested in higher education for Negroes as it became apparent that the need for trained teachers in colored schools constituted a serious problem. The Bureau, which ceased its educational program in 1870, was unable to organize colored colleges, leaving the field open to private organizations. The American Missionary Association established Straight University in New Orleans in 1869, making it the pioneer Negro college in the lower South.[144] The school was named for Seymour Straight, a New Orleans merchant who did a great deal of work for the institution, and who was later on the Board of Control of the agricultural college.[145] Straight University was first located in a building on Esplanade and Burgundy which it acquired from the Freedmens' Bureau for a nominal sum.[146] Although it advertised as an institution of higher learning for Negroes, it had to adopt a simpler program for several years as there were so few colored students ready for college work. The American Baptist Home Mission Society established Leland University in New Orleans in 1871 as an institution dedicated to preparing Negro ministers, teachers, and business men. Dr. Halbrook Chamberlain, of Brooklyn, New York, became interested in Leland and

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[144]Porter, "History of Negro Education in Louisiana," 3.

[145]Fortier, Louisiana, I, 446.

[146]Porter, "History of Negro Education in Louisiana," 60-61.

gave it about $65,000 during his lifetime and, upon his death, left it property valued at $100,000.[147] As a result of grants from Chamberlain, the missionary association, and others interested in its progress, Leland University found itself the only institution of higher learning in Louisiana which was free from financial worries. It, like Straight, had to spend several years teaching elementary subjects before it could offer work on the college level. The Methodist Episcopal Church founded New Orleans University in 1873 as an elementary school, high school and college for Negro members of the Methodist church. It had so much to do in the lower levels that it was unable to concentrate on college work during the Reconstruction era.[148]

Louisiana's religious organizations, observing the relationship between Republican politics and state schools, began stressing the value of schools of higher learning which would be subordinated to religious rather than political groups. Centenary College of Louisiana, which had been founded in 1845 by the Methodists, reopened in October of 1865 after being closed during the late stages of the war. The Shreveport institution quickly ran into financial troubles but was rescued by Bishop John C. Keener, who realized the potential value of the school for Methodists in North Louisiana. Despite the interest of the bishop, Centenary barely stayed alive during the Reconstruction

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[147] Ibid., 70.

[148] United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Survey of Negro Colleges and Universities (Washington, 1928), 2.

period.[149] The Methodist church maintained the Mansfield Female College and the Homer College for Boys. These two schools, although called colleges, were actually high schools for white Methodists.[150] Members of the Baptist congregations made several efforts to establish colleges, but they were generally unsuccessful. Mt. Lebanon University started operation in 1853 and continued until 1861. It reopened in September of 1865, but was in a precarious condition because the directors of the institution had invested all of the funds in Confederate bonds. They had no way of replacing the money so the Baptists had to abandon it. The Baptists established Shreveport University in 1871, but it was a victim of the depression of 1873 and the yellow fever epidemic which hit the city in the same year.[151] The Catholic church made no effort to establish an institution of higher learning during the postwar years. It did, however, maintain many schools on the lower level for both races. Sisters of the Most Holy Sacrament started teaching Negroes in New Orleans in 1873. The Redemptorist fathers, who conducted many of the parochial schools in the Crescent City, operated schools for colored children as part of their regular duties. There were a few Catholic schools for Negroes in other parts

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[149]Robert Lawrence Clayton, "Contributions of Methodism to Education in Louisiana, " Unpublished Master's Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1938, 28-29.

[150]Ibid., 59-63.

[151]John T. Christian, A History of the Baptists of Louisiana (Shreveport 1923), 487.

of the state.[152]

The churches of Louisiana maintained schools during Reconstruction but that type of work, of course, was in addition to the many other religious activities. The basic challenge facing Louisiana's religious groups was that of rebuilding. The war had ruined many buildings, either by military destruction or by vandalism. Congregations had broken up as the members joined the army or fled to safer areas. In reconstructing the buildings and congregations, the problem was simple; the church leaders had to obtain money and members. Many colored churches received funds from northern missionary societies, but the white congregations were not so fortunate. They had to raise money from a populace which had little to give.

The Baptist church came into existence in the early part of the nineteenth century and quickly became one of the dominant religious bodies in North Louisiana. Some congregations kept together during the war, but there were no conventions or associations to give direction and aid to the church as a whole. Reverend W. E. Paxton of Shreveport was probably the most active minister during the postwar years although he had little real authority as the Baptists opposed anything approaching a hierarchical church administration.[153] The church suffered a severe blow to its prestige in 1870 when William M. Fancher, one of the prominent members in the association of Louisiana Baptists, deserted

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[152]Sister Mary David Young, "A History of the Development of Catholic Education for the Negro in Louisiana," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1944, 60-62.

[153]John Pinckney Durham and John S. Ramond, Baptist Builders in Louisiana (Shreveport, 1934), 19.

his wife and family and fled the country with the daughter of a deceased minister.[154] Such an incident, embarrassing though it was, had little effect on the growth of the church. Some of the most important work the Baptists did during Reconstruction was expansion among the Negroes. The first postwar convention, held in 1865, discussed the changed status of the Negroes and the possibilities of missionary work among them. Reverend Paxton estimated that in 1871 there were 30,000 Negro Baptists in the state.[155]

Presbyterians, Methodists, and Episcopalians were less concerned with missionary work among Negroes than with rebuilding their old churches and obtaining new members. As soon as the war ended, members of these churches, and others as well, started holding fairs, benefit suppers, concerts, and any other types of entertainment which would raise money. Newspapers throughout the state carried weekly stories about the efforts being made to obtain funds. One man, not approving of the many activities going on, thought that the "church has been turned into a show-shop, and the pulpit into a political rostrum."[156] Fund raising continued in spite of occasional charges that churches were more interested in money than in spiritual affairs. Gradually, as mortgages were retired and buildings restored, church life lost much of the spirit of crisis which was characteristic of the early postwar years. Bishop Joseph Wilmer of the Episcopal Church, for example,

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[154]Christian, A History of the Baptists in Louisiana, 230.

reported that between 1866 and 1874 the number of congregations increased from thirty to seventy-four and communicants from 1,556 to 4,351.[157] Reverend Benjamin M. Palmer, one of the leading Presbyterians in the South, had been an advocate of secession and slavery in 1861. He changed few of his ideas in the years that followed the war. He opposed reunion with the Northern branch of the church because it had "involved itself in criminal errors touching the kingly office of Christ ...perverting the power of the keys to uphold the state, and introducing terms ...contradictory to the commands of Christ."[158] Palmer, a man of fine mind and strong conviction, was frequently assailed for speaking on politics in the pulpit and for being one of the leading unreconstructed rebels. Palmer feared the emergence in the South of a "coarse and selfish utilitarianism which measures all things only by a material standard."[159] Palmer yearned for an ante-bellum way of life in which people would be more concerned with the social graces and the spirit of noblesse oblige and less troubled with sordid problems of earning money. Palmer's prewar associates had been like that. They did not have to worry about making money . They already had it.

The Catholic church in Louisiana was in a serious financial condition at the end of the war. In 1866, Archbishop John Mary Odin ordered

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[157]Herman Cope Duncan, The Diocese of Louisiana: Some of its History, 1838-1888 (New Orleans, 1888), 15-16.

[158]Thomas Cary Johnson, The Life and Letters of Benjamin Morgan Palmer (Richmond, 1906), 328.

[159]Ibid., 357.

the establishment of Peter's Pense, an annual tax on all Catholic families, in his efforts to obtain funds for rebuilding. This tax, plus money raised by local parishes, provided funds for a slow reorganization and expansion. The church lost some of its most valuable personnel in the yellow fever epidemic which struck Shreveport in 1873. The city had left itself vulnerable to such an attack by ignoring elementary sanitation. Pools of stagnant water, decayed garbage, and carcasses of dead animals had been allowed to go untended. One man died of yellow fever on August 18, and three men died in the streets the following day. By the middle of September, 146 people had died and 3,000 had fled. Father Biler wired to Father Gergaud in Monroe that hundreds of people were calling for him and he could not live much longer. The Monroe priest quickly went to Shreveport, but soon both priests were dead. Then Father LeVezouet rode horseback for four days from Natchitoches to continue the ministrations, but he lived only two weeks. By the time another priest could arrive from New Orleans the epidemic was over. Five priests and two sisters died during the most horrible month in the history of the city.[160] The selflessness and devotion to duty evidenced by the Catholic clergy in North Louisiana was a magnificent display of Christianity during a period characterized by meanness and brutality. Their sacrifice was widely praised and the meaning of it as widely ignored.

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[160]See account of this episode in Baudin, The Catholic Church in Louisiana, 437-39.

CHAPTER X

PROBLEMS OF MONEY AND LAND

The basis of Louisiana's economic system was an operating alliance which bound the rural producer to the city distributor. Planters and merchants worked together before the war in developing a system of agricultural economics which provided both with an enviable way of life. The alliance survived the war and its aftermath.

Factors, as the commission merchants in New Orleans were called, received shipments of produce from their clients in the interior, supervised the sale of cotton or sugar or corn, purchased items which their clients wanted, saw to it that such orders were sent by steamboats, and kept records of all business transactions. Should the planter need money for operating purposes, he usually borrowed from his factor in New Orleans. Except for direct loans of money, the customary fee charged against the planter was two and one-half per cent of the value of the item handled, whether it was a cargo of sugar or a spool of thread. In addition to selling the planters' crops and purchasing items for plantation use, factors placed their capital, skill, and knowledge of world trade at the disposal of their clients. They advised the planters when to sell their crops so as to take advantage of the best prices. They also were on the alert for bargains in the numerous things which planters had to have shipped from New Orleans.[1]

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[1]See New Orleans Price Current, August 31, 1872.

The busy season for the New Orleans factors was the period from January to May. During these months, both merchants and patrons worked night and day in supervising the shipment of goods coming down the river from the Mississippi Valley or coming into the city from all parts of the world. The center of business in New Orleans during the 1870's was the Cotton Exchange. Sugar production was so low and the sugar planters were having so much trouble getting capital and going back into production that everyone concerned with trade had to look to the cotton fields as the chief hope for survival. The Price Current, journal of the New Orleans merchants, recognized this when it remarked that "it is to our great Southern staple then that we must mainly look for present and future prosperity."[2] The Cotton Exchange, organized as a meeting place for local merchants and agents from other areas, provided an effective method for pooling intelligence and facilitating trade. It soon included far more than the three hundred merchants who organized it in 1870. The Exchange spent about $30,000 each year in collecting information concerning the cotton trade from all over the world.[3] This was a valuable service as the merchants did not have to try to obtain information by themselves in an inefficient and expensive way. The Exchange, moreover, made it easy for people who were interested in the cotton business to get together and bargain.

Many factors went into bankruptcy after the war as there was not enough business for all. Also, planters borrowed money from their

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[2]Ibid.

[3]King, The Great South, 53.

factors to support themselves until harvest time. If the crops were not what was expected or if prices dropped, everyone suffered. In 1870-1871, for example, some factors loaned planters as much as sixty dollars per bale of cotton at a time when cotton was selling for only fifty dollars per bale.[4] Some of the factors, foreseeing long years of bad business, rejected almost all of the applications from new customers and stopped handling the affairs of planters who were getting into trouble. Such actions, of course, meant further restrictions of credit and resulted in increased difficulty for planters who were fighting for existence.[5]

The depression beginning in 1873 was one of the most trying periods the New Orleans commercial people faced. Many factors were unable to meet the situation in 1873 as they had been greatly disappointed by the sugar crop of 1872, upon which they had gambled heavily.[6] During 1873-1874, New Orleans merchants were faced with declining cotton prices, low sugar production, and a drop in the volume of meat and grain importation from the West and Midwest. Factors went bankrupt, stores of all kinds closed their doors, banks lost money, and the value of investment securities declined.[7] In spite of troubles from politics and depression, factors continued to lend money to planters and handle their affairs. It had been a lucrative business before the war and could become so again.

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[4]New Orleans Price Current, August 31, 1872.

[5]Ibid., September 1, 1873.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., September 1, 1874.

Some subtle changes were occurring in the planter-merchant relationship. When the planters started the system of sharecropping they lost their centralized control over food, clothing, and all of the other items consumed by the freedmen. Country merchants then started contacting the Negro families personally and offering to provide them with necessities and luxuries on credit. Records of indebtedness were always kept by the merchants. Before the war, planters made purchases from New Orleans for the entire plantation. Now, they could purchase only for their immediate family. As one newspaper observed, "the country store-keepers have risen to the dignity of country merchants."[8] The small merchants in the country had some important advantages over their New Orleans rivals. They lived in the area, knew the laboring habits of all of their customers, and could watch the crops. The rural merchant, knowing when each tenant was going to take his cotton to the gin, went along with his own wagon and scales. The planter took out his share for rent; the merchant took out his share for supplies advanced during the year; and the tenant kept for his own the small amount which was left. In order to be sure that the Negroes purchased heavily, country merchants sent wagons loaded with trinkets through the countryside. The former slaves were always intrigued with the prospects of buying items they could only look at before the war. The result was that the Negroes usually bought what was offered, and found themselves in debt at the end of each year.

The Opelousas Journal of February 15, 1873, carried an article

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[8]Opelousas Journal, November 14, 1873.

entitled "Where the Money Goes - The Credit Business." The editor offered a cogent analysis of some of the ills of the state's economy. He pointed out that the 1872 cotton crop was good and that prices were satisfactory. Local planters, however, had borrowed so much money in 1871 that even a good year had not removed them from debt. Planters were trying to live too well, the editor thought, and would continue to do so as long as the merchants in New Orleans would lend money to finance the planters' every desire. Daniel Dennett, fiery editor of the St. Mary Planters' Banner, had been saying the same thing for years. There would never be a general rural prosperity, claimed Dennett, as long as farmers and planters borrowed money from New Orleans at ruinous rates of interest.[9] The Price Current, of course, had a different interpretation of the function of city capital leaned to planters. The New Orleans journal maintained that without loans from the city there would be little in the way of agricultural production for anyone to enjoy.[10]

There were good arguments to substantiate the position of both city and country. Planters held that they had to pay such high rates of interest for funds advanced by New Orleans banks and merchants that their position was imperilled. Factors argued that high interest rates were necessary because of the risks involved and that, moreover, New Orleans capital was necessary for the survival of the plantation. Both were correct. The system of landholding and planting which prevailed in Louisiana's Black Belt areas was based on large-scale

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[9]See St. Mary Planters' Banner, March 1, 1871.

[10]New Orleans Price Current, August 31, 1872, and September 1, 1873.

production by a few landowners. In the 1860's and 1870's, that meant large-scale financing. Neither planters nor factors would consider the possibility of developing a more balanced and diversified agricultural economy which would mean a decrease in the production of cotton, corn, and cane, and an increase in vegetables, orchard produce, and livestock. They rightly feared that the end of the one crop system would mean the end of the importance of planters and merchants. As Roger Shugg has pointed out, New Orleans capital preserved the plantations during Reconstruction even if it did not preserve some of the individual planters.[11]

As the Price Current and other city journals were so fond of mentioning, the production of cotton and the handling of the staples in New Orleans was the most important aspect of the general trade of the city. During the years from 1869 to 1877, the number of bales of cotton going through the city's facilities averaged about one and one-third million each year. The price of cotton dropped below fifteen cents per pound several times during those years, but it was usually stabilized at eighteen or twenty cents. The value of the cotton going through New Orleans would be between one hundred and one hundred twenty-five million dollars each year.[12]

Trouble in the Sugar Bowl continued during the 1870's, making Louisiana as a whole increasingly dependent upon cotton. Almost one-half million hogsheads of sugar were produced in the state in 1861, but

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[11]Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 251.

[12]See annual analyses of business in New Orleans Price Current, September 1, 1870; September 1, 1871; August 31, 1872; September 1, 1873; and September 1, 1877.

it was not until the 1890's that the record was matched. Meanwhile, serious difficulties beset the sugar planters as they struggled to extricate themselves from financial ruin against the pressures of labor troubles, high taxes, and unavailable capital. The end result was that sugar plantations started falling into the hands of corporations and partnerships which were financed by banks.[13]

Sugar offered more chances for large profits than did cotton, but it also involved more investment and greater risk. These aspects centered around the fragile nature of cane. Ordinarily, a sugar planter would want to wait until the last possible moment to harvest so that the cane stalks would be at their maximum of juiciness. To do so, however, meant that one unseasonably cold night could destroy a year's work. Some planters would cut one-half of their crop early and then gamble on the other half's reaching full maturity. Once the cane was cut, it had to be processed immediately to prevent spoilage. Elaborate sugar houses capable of handling large amounts of cane juice were considered essential for every plantation because each grower wanted to handle his own cane in his own time.

The following table, taken from Bouchereau's annual reports of sugar production in Louisiana, indicates the nature of production levels in the Sugar Bowl.

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[13]Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 249.

TABLE I

Production of Sugar in Louisiana, 1868-1877

1868 - 84,256	1873 - 89,498
1869 - 87,090	1874 - 116,867
1870 - 144,881	1875 - 114,146
1871 - 128,461	1876 - 169,331
1872 - 108,520	1877 - 127,753

The general level of sugar production was rising during the late 1860's and 1870's, but it was far below prewar averages. Such years as 1868, 1869, and 1873, when production fell below one hundred thousand hogsheads, were years of suffering for everyone connected with the sugar industry.

An important aspect of general conditions in the Sugar Bowl was the changes which were taking place in ownership. Bouchereau's reports provide invaluable data concerning the pattern of landowning in the sugar area. The reports list and locate sugar producing units in each parish, and, by comparing the reports year by year, one can get a rather good picture of what was taking place. Because of the many divisions, redivisions, and combinations among plantations, accurate statistics would be almost impossible to obtain. The best one can do is obtain what might be little more than an informed guess.

In East Baton Rouge Parish, for example, there were thirty-nine sugar plantations in 1861 which produced 5,683 hogsheads. Nine of the twelve units which produced sugar in 1868 were under the same management. In 1875, there were thirty-two sugar plantations, but the total production was less than one-half the 1860 figure. Of the thirty-two units, eighteen were under new management. A more important sugar parish was Iberville, which had 122 plantations in 1860 and a crop of almost 20,000 hogsheads. In 1868, which was a terrible year for

sugar, fifty-one plantations produced 5,707 hogsheads. Only nine of the fifty-one were under new management. In 1875, there were sixty-one sugar producing plantations, and forty-four were operated by new owners.[14] Examination of the reports on other parishes, shows the same general trend. Unfortunately, the number and amounts of mortgages on the various properties were not a part of the reports.

Internal transportation was an important aspect of Louisiana's economic system because trade between city and country would be impossible without some system for moving goods. During the mid-nineteenth century, intrastate trade was handled by steamboats, barges, and towboats which plied Louisiana's numerous waterways. River travel, plus the rivers' responsibility for much of the state's rich alluvial areas, made the waterways of vital importance to the people of Louisiana.

The first problem at the end of the war came out of the condition of the levees. De Bow's Review observed in May of 1867 that one-fourth of the state's land area, one-half of the population, and two-thirds of the valuable property were protected by levees. The Review also pointed out that overflows had seriously damaged some of the best farm lands during the previous year and that little improvement had been accomplished since that time.[15] During the years immediately after the war, the condition of the levees constituted one of the state's most urgent problems. Everyone knew that the levees needed repairing, but no one knew where to get the money. The Ouachita Telegraph, one of the most

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[14]L. Boucherean, Statement of the Sugar and Rice Crops Made in Louisiana in 1860, 1868, and 1875.

[15]De Bow's Review, May, 1867, 473.

trenchant critics of intervention by the Federal government, demanded that the same government repair the Red River levees.[16] A Baton Rouge newspaper was enraged over the way politicians were ignoring the levees. "Louisiana," it proclaimed, "has never been cursed, damned, with such an insatiable, office-seeking, wide-wasting extravagent combination of political plunderers as at present."[17] These charges were hurled against Democrats, not Republicans. When General Sheridan intervened with the levee situation, the journal remarked that "military government, when thus exercised, though it be a despotism, is not an unwise or unjust government."[18] As the years went by, levees were improved and there was no widespread threat of inundation.

A longer lived problem of river traffic was presented by the sand bars at the mouth of the Mississippi River. Louisiana found out in 1861 and 1862 what would happen when ships could not sail up the river to New Orleans, and the sand bars threatened the state with the same type of blockade. The muddy Mississippi carried vast quantities of silt until it met the tidewater of the Gulf of Mexico. At that time, the silt which had been carried in suspension would settle, gradually building up huge obstructions to river travel. The condition worsened each year, until it became one of the significant factors in the state's economic plight. Sometime there would be as many as twenty

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[16]Monroe, Ouachita Telegraph, December 9, 1868.

[17]Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Gazette and Comet, April 4, 1867.

[18]Ibid., May 7, 1867.

vessels with thousands of bales of cotton anchored at the mouth of the river waiting for the water level to rise so that they could pass over.[19] In 1866, the Price Current referred to the sand bars as an important deterrent to trade, and they became more of a restriction in later years.[20] L. J. Higbe, a New Orleans grain and elevator man, told a committee from Congress that the sand bars were more of a hindrance to the state's economic development than the Republican governments.[21] Cyrus Bussey, a commission merchant, corroborated Higbe's testimony concerning the sand bars.[22] The Federal government invested money in dredging the sand bars, but it was several years after Reconstruction was over before they offered no restrictions to travel.

The rivers of Louisiana constituted an elaborate network for communication, in spite of troubles from levees and sand bars. Visitors to the state were usually entranced by the colorful scenes along the rivers and bayous. Even at night the river craft worked, stopping for coal at various stations or anchoring at the numerous private docks to handle mail, passengers, and produce. Except in settled areas, the river banks were lined with oaks or cypress covered with Spanish moss which hung in great festoons to the water line. Wild birds, alligators, snakes, and gloomy and forbidding inlets of water would frequently give the rivers an aura of majestic wildness. At frequent intervals along the banks of the rivers there would be docks where squads of Negro

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[19] Ibid., January 22, 1867.

[20] New Orleans Price Current, September 1, 1866.

[21] House of Representatives Report Number 101, Part 2, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 254-55.

[22] Ibid., 257-58.

roustabouts waited for ships to anchor so that they could swarm aboard and remove the cargoes destined for that particular location.[23] As bridges were too expensive, parish police juries issued franchises to people who wished to ferry passengers and goods across the waterways. There were numerous ferries after the war, resulting from the increase in trade and travel.

River travel was of utmost importance to such places as Baton Rouge, Monroe, Shreveport, and New Orleans because steamboats connected them with all parts of the state. Railroads, of course, would create a far more efficient communication system, but that was to occur after Reconstruction. Luxurious steamboats such as the Selma or the Robert E. Lee provided well furnished staterooms, thick carpets, and large bars for people who liked travelling in style and could afford to pay for it. Tugs, barges, and towboats, some large enough to carry 100,000 bushels of grain, moved slowly along the rivers connecting the principal agricultural areas. Advertisements of the schedules of passenger and freight vessels were standard features of all newspapers in the state.

In early August of 1866, a new locomotive whistled loudly and pulled in at the Vicksburg, Shreveport, and Texas Railroad station in Monroe. Little though the people may have thought of it at the time, the first postwar train symbolized the beginning of a new era in

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[23]See King, The Great South, 70-72; Latham, Black and White, 150-151.

[24]King, The Great South, 56.

transportation for the area.[25] Louisiana had few railroad lines before the war, and none had been built during the course of hostilities. As soon as the war was over, however, efforts were quickly made to renew and expand railroading. It would be an expensive project and would require outside capital, but railways could increase the speed of transportation and connect inland areas in a way which would always be impossible for river craft.

During the war, the United States government seised the New Orleans, Opelousas, and Great Western and the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern lines, but restored them to private owners in 1865.[26] General Beauregard, who was superintendent and chief engineer of the New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern lines, thought that it would take almost one-half million dollars to pay all the indebtedness and put his railroad into satisfactory condition.[27] The state legislatures became interested in railroad activities during the postwar years, often pledging state funds to the support of one project or another. In 1868, for example, the state chartered the New Orleans, Mobile, and Chattanooga Railroad. The company built only seventy miles of track, but received several million dollars from the state for doing so.[28] Legislation providing state guarantees for railroads were among the few

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[25]Monroe Ouachita Telegraph, August 9, 1866.

[26]House of Representatives, Report Number 34, Thirty-ninth Congress, Second Session, 324.

[27]Ibid., 832.

[28]Nordhoff, Cotton States in the Spring and Summer of 1875, 58.

examples of bi-party unity.[29]

The number of lines operating in Louisiana and the amount of track continued to increase during the Reconstruction years. Such famous lines as the Illinois Central, Louisville and Nashville, Texas Pacific, and Kansas City Southern operated in Louisiana as did smaller roads like the Alexandria, Homer, and Fulton.[30] River travel continued to be important after the war, but it was the end of an era. Railroads connected old centers, built new ones, provided rapid transportation of goods, and connected Louisiana with the rapidly developing West.[31] Accomodations were primitive, but the people accepted them in order to enjoy the speed. One editor thought that a "man might find a lucrative business in travelling up and down the railroad and picking up the hats that blow from the heads of passengers on the trains."[32] Such villages as Donaldsonville, which was serviced by the New Orleans, Mobile, and Chattanooga line, faced new problems of city planning. The streets were impassable after rain, making it difficult to get to the new train station except in dry weather.[33] Another problem, especially in New Orleans, arose from the

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[29]Senate Report Number 41, Part I, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 201.

[30]For articles on railroading see Historical Sketchbook and Guide to New Orleans, 29; also see newspapers of period.

[31]New Orleans, Price Current, September 1, 1880.

[32]Donaldsonville Chief, October 28, 1871, cited in Sidney A. Marchand, The Flight of a Century (1800-1900) (Donaldsonville, 1936), 168.

[33]Ibid., 169.

practice of boys and drunken men jumping on and off the trains while they were moving. Segregation, incidently, had more than one aspect. The Beauregard papers contain an account of a judge who was "forcibly ejected from the ladies' car of the 2 P.M. train to Carrollton."[34]

The lack of available investment capital was an important matter which affected agriculture, commerce, railroading, and all other aspects of economics. In addition to the obvious difficulties in resuscitating a defeated land, there was the ever present danger of racial violence. People with capital were afraid to invest money in new ventures or reorganize old businesses because they did not believe that the state government could protect private property.[35] The number of national banks in New Orleans had increased to nine by the early 1870's, and they had total assets of approximately $17,500,000.[36] This amount of money, divided among nine banks, meant that none were really capable of entering into large-scale loan operations. Neither could they offer long-term loans at low rates of interest which were necessary for developing production in the sugar areas.

The Congressional committee which came to New Orleans after the September, 1874, riot listened to some valuable testimony about finance from people who were in a position to know what was happening. Samuel

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[34]Beauregard Papers, Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Department of Archives, Tulane University, New Orleans.

[35]See comments in King, The Great South, 32 and 95.

[36]See Report of the Comptroller of Currency in House of Representatives Executive Document Number 3, Forty-second Congress, Third Session, 451-53.

H. Kennedy, president of the State National Bank of New Orleans, told the visitors that he knew people with money who were leaving the city and taking their funds with them because they distrusted the Republican government.[37] Joseph Bowling, a wholesale druggist, testified that "capital would come here if there was confidence; capital is here already, but people will not invest it."[38] James Seixas, a prominent stockbroker, said that the lack of confidence had driven capital away, that all businesses were suffering, that residences could not be sold at any price, and that state securities were of little value as no bank would accept them and no capitalist would lend money on them.[39]

The general situation in finance, as described by these men and many others, was reflected in the value of New Orleans bank stocks. The Germania National Bank, which catered to the German community, was accepted as the soundest institution and its stocks sold at about thirty-five to forty points above the par value of one hundred dollars per share. Other bank stocks sold at figures ranging as low as thirty-five per cent of the par value.[40] The Price Current voiced the opinion of many of the city's businessmen in its frequent statements that the banks needed an infusion of capital from the North or from England.[41] In spite of the widespread understanding that New Orleans needed money, it

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[37]House of Representatives Report Number 101, Part 2, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 259.

[38]Ibid., 242.

[39]Ibid., 245-46.

[40]Ibid., 262-63.

[41]New Orleans Price Current, September 1, 1873.

could not be obtained from investors who were reluctant to lend.

Taxes caused much financial distress during the 1868-1877 period. State taxes on real property were notoriously low in ante-bellum Louisiana, and the property owners were outraged over the tax laws written by Republican governments. The tax rate of twenty-one and one-half mills for each dollar of real property was about twice the figure established by the Democrats in 1865.[42] People in Louisiana objected as much to the method of assessment as to the tax rates because they believed that they were arbitrary and inequitable.[43] A statewide association of tax resisters, which emerged in 1873, was supported by a group of fifty-five New Orleans lawyers, and others in the towns, who promised free legal assistance.[44] Citizens had to pay parish and municipal taxes in addition to tax payments demanded by the state, and frequently the rates set by parishes would be much higher than the state rates. Moreover, there was widespread resentment over the system which allowed tax collectors to keep a percentage of all the money they collected.[45]

In spite of funds obtained from higher rates of taxation, the state government was never able to operate without a deficit. In 1871, for example, the auditor reported income of $4,750,000 and expenditures

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[42]Roger Shugg, "Survival of the Plantation System in Louisiana," Journal of Southern History, III (1937), 229.

[43]Shugg, Origins of Class Struggles in Louisiana, 22.

[44]See testimony of J. W. Patton in Senate Report Number 701, Forty-fourth Congress, Second Session, 288.

[45]House of Representatives Report Number 101, Part 2, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, 285.

of more than $14,000,000.[46] The state government's persistent inability to balance budgets and its overwhelming desire to support railroads and other forms of business created one of the most complicated financial muddles of the Reconstruction period. On the eve of the Civil War, Louisiana had a public debt of $10,000,000 which climbed to $26,000,000 by the end of the war. The Fourteenth Amendment forced Louisiana to repudiate all obligations relating to the war, leaving a debt of about $11,000,000.[47] By late 1867, the debt had increased to $17,000,000 and the income of the state government was so low that General Hancock was notified that the civil government might stop operation because of lack of money. Hancock started to use the power of the Federal government to help the state treasurer collect taxes, but the Republican era started before he could make any headway.[48]

After two years of Republican rule, the debt had increased to $22,500,000. Much of the increase resulted from selling state bonds to finance levee repairs and to aid the Mississippi and Mexican Gulf Ship Canal Company. Although the legislators established a legal debt limit of $25,000,000, they continued to issue bonds in favor of railroads and other corporations in such large amounts that the bonded indebtedness reached $42,000,000. Deficits from current operations were not included in the forty-two million figure. Property owners and taxpayers in New

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[46] Senate Report Number 41, Part I, Forty-second Congress, Second Session, 357.

[47] Ibid., 189-91.

[48] Fortier, Louisiana, I, 397-98.

Orleans published warnings that the bond issues should not be purchased because the legal debt limit had been passed. Nevertheless, the bonds were sold. Kellogg became concerned over the status of bonds which were held by investors throughout the United States and Europe. In his annual message of January, 1874, he pointed out to the legislators that bonds issued and sold after the legal debt limit had been reached were null and void. Kellogg also thought that some earlier bond issues were illegal and should be repudiated. Three weeks after Kellogg's message, the legislature provided for funding all outstanding obligations and issuing consolidated bonds in exchange for the old ones. The "consols," as the new bonds were called, were to mature in forty years and to carry seven per cent interest. The exchange was to be made at the rate of sixty cents worth of consols for each dollar of the old securities. Bonds which had been issued after the legal debt limit was reached were not to be included in the funding process. Courts immediately considered the legality of the consolidation, as there were many people who maintained that the action was nothing more than repudiation of forty per cent of the states bonded indebtedness. The courts upheld the legislature's actions.

The new debt figure was $12,000,000, but there were many people in the state who thought that even this amount represented obligations of questionable legality. Moreover, the interest rate of seven per cent for the consols was considered usurious. More than $66,000 of interest went unpaid in 1874, the year of the consolidation. The Democratic administration which assumed power in 1877 found the consols a complicated affair. The new regime's inability to cope with the

problem was an important factor in its decision to write a new constitution.[49]

Louisiana was an agricultural state during Reconstruction. In spite of spectacular problems of debt and taxation, the important economic developments were in the rural areas where the base of the economic order was located. By 1870 there was not much trouble in obtaining labor as the Negroes had settled down after a year or two of moving around and had accepted the sharecropper or wage-earner status. Planters throughout the state reported that Negroes worked fairly well, except during election periods. All over Louisiana, employers of colored laborers found that Negroes would listen to their white employers on all matters pertaining to farming or personal affairs. They ignored the whites, however, when it came to voting. Negroes were the victims of a basic weakness of the Reconstruction policy. They became free politically, but they were so dependent upon the white landowner economically that their political freedom was meaningless unless supported by outside force.

Whites generally learned to accept the free labor system, although occasional grumbling could be heard. Spokesmen of the planters maintained that the Negro laborer should be poorly paid, whether he worked for wages or shares of the crop. The argument, as stated in the Price Current, was that "under low wages they [Negro laborers] are satisfied with the modest living appropriate to their condition."[50] The

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[49]For an excellent account of the complicated problem of state financing, see William A. Scott, The Repudiation of State Debts (New York, 1893), 110 ff.

[50]New Orleans Price Current, September 1, 1874.

Price Current rationalized that in some ways a free labor system might be more beneficial to the planter than slavery. The planter could dismiss his laborers if the cotton or cane crop looked bad. In the old days, slaves had to be supported no matter what happened to crops or prices.[51] The same newspaper had argued during the 1865-1868 period of labor shortage that the state government should force Negroes to sign contracts for a year of labor and abide by their agreements. Now, it was telling the planters that they should discharge laborers in the middle of the year if it was to the planters' advantage to do so.

The Opelousas Journal, a newspaper which advocated diversification, was extremely worried about the way both planters and farmers were planting cotton or corn or cane in large amounts and then borrowing money on the crops in order to buy meat, vegetables, and other supplies. "Mortgages of those who advance these supplies," the paper prophesied, "will sooner or later deprive them of their land and leave them in poverty and actual want." The Journal added that "the old population will be sold out to pay their board to commission merchants, and a new class of people will own and grow rich on the lands of the former lords of the soil."[52] Unfortunately, few heeded the prophetic warning.

Daniel Dennett, and other agrarian critics, preached the same gospel throughout the Reconstruction era. De Bow's Review, which was inclined to favor the planters, occasionally published mild remonstrances about the practice of growing staples and importing necessities.[53] Many

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[51] Ibid., September 1, 1871.

[52] Opelousas Journal, February 18, 1871.

[53] De Bow's Review, April, 1868, 370 ff.

agricultural advisers suggested that cotton be planted as a money crop, but only after subsistence had been provided for. They also thought that much of the laborers' time should be devoted to the cultivation of subsistence crops.[54] The Weekly Louisianian, a Republican newspaper published in New Orleans, worried about the relatively high prices of cotton in 1871 and 1872. The newspaper feared that the high prices would result in increased cotton production which would lead to lower prices and inability to pay for all of the items which would have to be imported.[55]

A Coushatta farmer, discussing the situation with an Opelousas editor, stated that "we have placed ourselves in the hands of commission merchants, entrusted them with all, and paid for every necessity of life in return." He believed that the really dangerous tax gatherers were the business men who loaned money with the farmers' crops as security. "Our government has been recklessly extravagant," he said, "but if we had not paid one dollar of tax since the war, we could not have told the difference."[56]

The amount of land being planted in cotton gave the critics reason for alarm. Economists of the period estimated that when as much as one-third of the tilled soil was devoted to cotton it became necessary to import supplies.[57] Professor E. W. Hilgard's "Report on

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[54]Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 273.

[55]New Orleans Weekly Louisianian, March 7, 1872.

[56]Opelousas Journal, August 8, 1873.

[57]Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 272.

Cotton Production in the United States," which was a part of the Tenth Census, shows why there was so much alarm. The state had, in 1880, almost 865,000 acres planted in cotton. These acres represented 34.9% of all tilled land in the state.[58] Cotton, of course, grew only in the northern half of the state. The percentage of land in north Louisiana which was planted in cotton ranged from about thirty per cent in Winn to more than ninety per cent in Concordia.[59] The alluvial parishes on the Red, Ouachita, and Mississippi rivers had the highest percentage of land devoted to cotton culture. The amount of land dedicated to cotton in such farming parishes as De Soto, Webster, Jackson, and Grant bears out Roger Shugg's contention that the farmers, like the planters, were devoting an increased share of their land to cotton. Crop liens and cotton went hand in hand. Poor farmers had to borrow money for seed and other supplies; and the larger the debt became the more cotton they had to plant in order to extricate themselves. The long-range results of crop liens and cotton were low prices, importation of subsistence items, absentee ownership, and agrarian revolts.[60]

One of the unfortunate results of the agricultural confusion after the war was the development of the idea that the Civil War and Reconstruction destroyed the plantation system and substituted an economy in which small, family-sized farms prevailed. That interpretation of an important era in Louisiana's agricultural history is not

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[58]See Eugene W. Hilgard, "Report on Cotton Production in the United States," in Tenth Census of the United States (Washington, 1884), Volume V, Part II, 3.

[59]Ibid., 3 ff.

[60]Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 273 ff.

correct. As Roger Shugg's Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana demonstrated with an impressive array of facts, the concentration of land was greater after Reconstruction than before. It is true that there was an increase in the number of small farms operated by owners. After all, Louisiana's population increased by 200,000 between 1860 and 1880. The number of new farms being operated by owners were in areas where land was poor. In the Black Belt there was a greater concentration of land in a few hands.

The erroneous conclusion about farms and plantations came from faulty information from the Census Bureau. The decennial Census failed to distinguish properly farms which were operated by owners from those which were operated by tenants. It was a complicated problem, to be sure, but it could have been handled better. The basic trouble with the agricultural statistics after 1880 came from the fact that Census takers did not designate ownership of each plot of ground which was listed as a farm. Instead of stating who owned the land, they entered each sharecropped section as a separate farm. The result was a group of statistics which made it appear that the number of farm units greatly increased by 1880. By itself, this would offer no unusual problem to the student of agricultural history because each unit was listed as being operated by an owner, a renter, or a sharecropper. The amount of land occupied by tenants, whether cash renters or sharecroppers, could easily be determined. Also available in the Census reports is the number of tenant-operated farms in each size bracket. What is missing, and it is an important omission, is information about the owner of each unit operated by tenants. If that material were in the Census returns it would be easy to develop

a complete and accurate picture of the complicated land ownership. Inasmuch as it is not present in either published or unpublished records, the best one can do is to analyze the available statistics and make a few estimates.

TABLE II[61]

Statistics of Agriculture in Louisiana in 1860, 1870 and 1880

	1860	1870	1880
Total Population	708,002	726,915	939,946
Number of Slaves	331,726		
Total Number of Negroes	350,373	364,210	483,655
Number of Farms			48,292
Improved Acreage	2,707,108	2,045,640	2,739,972
Unimproved Acreage(in farms)	6,591,468	4,980,177	5,533,534
Cash Value of Farms	$204,789,662	$68,215,421	$58,989,117
Value of Implements	$ 18,648,225	$ 7,159,333	$ 5,435,527
Value of Livestock	$ 24,546,940	$15,929,188	$12,345,905

Productions of Agriculture

	1860	1870	1880
Indian Corn (bu.)	16,853,745	7,596,628	9,889,689
Rice (bu.)	6,331,257	15,854,012	23,188,311
Cotton (bale)	777,738	350,832	508,569
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	2,060,981	1,023,706	1,318,110
Sugar (hhd.)	221,726	80,706	171,706
Molasses (gal.)	13,439,772	4,585,150	11,696,248
Peas and Beans (bu.)	431,148	26,888	126,291
Irish Potatoes (bu.)	294,655	67,695	180,115

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[61]Statistics pertaining to agricultural production in 1880 were compiled from Tenth Census of the United States, Report on the Production of Agriculture; indices of population are from Tenth Census of the United States, Statistics of the Population (Washington, 1883). Statistics for 1860 and 1870 have been cited in Chapters II and VI but are reproduced to facilitate comparisons. All tables showing distribution of land, cash values of land, and agricultural production are from Unpublished Census Returns of the Tenth Census. The manuscript returns are in the Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

There are a few general statements which should be made about the gross statistics shown in Table II. In the first place, the fact that the population increase during the 1860-1880 period was predominantly rural helps explain the larger number of small farms operated by owners. Another important aspect of the 1880 Census is that the figures on value of land, value of implements, and production of subsistence items are not accurate. An analysis of the unpublished returns shows that many sharecroppers would tell the Census takers how much land they tilled and how much cotton they produced. They gave no estimate of the value of the land they worked nor the implements they used. Neither did they report how much they produced in the way of subsistence items nor how many animals were on their sharecropped plots. Planters reported only such information that pertained to the land they operated directly. The result was that in cotton parishes where sharecropping was widespread the published totals were too small.

TABLE III

Statistics of Agriculture in Caddo Parish in 1860, 1870 and 1880

	1860	1870	1880
Total Population	12,140	21,714	26,296
Number of Slaves	7,338		
Total Number of Negroes	7,407	15,794	19,368
Improved Acreage	98,928	75,813	97,028
Unimproved Acreage(in farms)	208,472	125,474	161,108
Cash Value of Farms	$3,843,015	$1,911,256	$1,512,432
Value of Implements	$ 110,476	$ 177,895	$ 72,382
Value of Livestock	$ 435,401	$ 564,475	$ 302,089
Productions of Agriculture			
Indian Corn (bu.)	464,205	384,824	156,118
Cotton (bale)	9,385	26,387	20,963
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	179,445	56,705	25,203
Peas and Beans (bu.)	38,365	982	959
Orchard Produce	$ 29,975	$ 490	$ 3,244

One important item should be noted in the table showing gross production and wealth in Caddo Parish. The population more than doubled between 1860 and 1880 and most of the increase was Negroid. The growth of Shreveport as a railroading and steamboating center was an important factor in the rise in population.

TABLE IV

Distribution of Land in Caddo Parish in 1880

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	748	47.4	6.5
50 - 199	414	26.2	17.9
200 - 499	318	20.1	38.6
500 - 999	60	3.8	15.6
1,000 and over	41	2.6	21.4
Totals	1,581	100%	100%

The information shown in Table IV demonstrates the problem of determining land ownership from the Census. The published reports list 1,581 units in Caddo in 1860. Of this number, 430 were farmed by sharecroppers and 337 by renters. The returns do not indicate who owned the sharecropped and rented lands.[62] The Census, therefore, does not give enough information to make possible a complete, factual analysis of who owned the land and the productions of agriculture.

There were 394 farms of less than 100 acres which were being cultivated by owners in 1880. This is, by itself, an important figure as there were only 438 units of all sizes in 1860. Most of the small farms operated by owners were away from the Red River. Land in the

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[62]All statistics relative to the number and size of rented and sharecropped farms are from Report on the Production of Agriculture, 58-59.

valley was owned by planters and operated by themselves or by tenants. These 101 units constituted thirty-seven per cent of all the land in Caddo Parish. It must be assumed that the owners of the plantations also owned most of the 679 units smaller than 100 acres which were operated by renters or sharecroppers. One can estimate the total amount of land in tenantry because the published reports show the numbers of rented and sharecropped farms by approximate size. The amount of land cultivated by tenants in Caddo was approximately 25,000 acres. When this figure is added to the amount of land in plantations larger than 500 acres, where the ownership probably rested, it can be seen that the thirty-seven per cent of land in plantations would become appreciably greater.

The tables showing land distribution in 1880 cannot be compared with land distribution tables in Chapters II and VI because the 1880 tables are based on total land in farms rather than improved land. The construction of tables on that basis for 1880 was necessary because the Census did not make adequate entries for sharecropped units. Caddo, for example, had about 300 entries which listed no improved land.

TABLE V

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in Caddo Parish in 1860, 1870 and 1880

Value per Unit	Number of Units			% of Total			% of Total Owned by Class		
	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880
$999 or less	68	1,511	726	15.2	81.2	71.5	.8	33.3	18.6
1,000 - 3,999	182	264	215	40.8	14.2	21.1	10.9	29.1	27.6
4,000 - 9,999	90	68	45	20.2	3.7	4.4	15.1	21.0	16.3
10,000 - 24,999	68	13	18	15.2	.6	1.8	28.5	9.2	16.3
$25,000 and over	38	5	12	8.6	.3	1.2	44.7	7.4	21.2
Totals	446	1,861	1,016	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table V shows how the inadequate Census returns distort the picture of agricultural economics. Only 1,016 of the 1,581 farms listed an estimated cash value. Nearly all of the unlisted units were small sharecropped or rented plots. Were they added to the 726 farms worth less than $1,000, the proportion of the total value of land in the parish in the least valuable units would rise from 18.6% to about twenty-five per cent. The proportionate value of the units worth more than $10,000 was 37.5%. The index of proportionate value of plantations would rise to a figure approaching the prewar ratio of seventy-five per cent were the value of the land operated by tenants added to the value of the units in the highest brackets.

TABLE VI

Distribution of Cotton Production in Caddo Parish in 1860, 1870 and 1880

Production Per Unit in Bales	Number of Units			% of Total			% of Total Produced by Class		
	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880
39 or less	200	1,752	1,305	57.9	94.9	94.5	16.0	75.9	70.8
40 - 99	77	63	40	22.4	3.4	2.9	21.6	9.6	7.6
100 - 199	40	22	20	11.6	1.2	1.5	23.9	7.2	8.1
200 and over	28	10	16	8.1	.5	1.1	38.5	7.3	13.4
Totals	345	1,847	1,381	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The basic problem involved in a study of Louisiana's postwar agricultural history can be seen in the analysis of cotton production. More than seventy per cent of the production was in crops smaller than forty bales. It would be almost impossible to determine who owned the cotton produced on rented or sharecropped land. Probably the great majority of the cotton produced by tenants was on land owned by planters. The Census, however, does not indicate the owner of each sharecropped plot. Therefore, a mathematical measurement cannot be made.

The 1880 Census returns for Caldwell were too inadequate to justify separate analyses. Moreover, Caldwell's agricultural system was so similar to that of Caddo that there would be no value in repetition.

TABLE VII

Statistics of Agriculture in Winn Parish in 1860, 1870 and 1880

	1860	1870	1880
Total Population	6,834	4,954	5,846
Number of Slaves	1,354		
Number of Negroes	1,395	909	1,047
Improved Acreage	20,617	21,927	24,505
Unimproved Acreage	85,618	71,311	70,787
Cash Value of Farms	$488,190	$189,117	$241,836
Value of Implements	$ 46,674	$ 30,811	$ 27,407
Value of Livestock	$186,483	$210,706	$231,919
Productions of Agriculture			
Indian Corn (bu.)	120,428	87,540	81,651
Cotton (bale)	2,993	2,680	3,002
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	20,686	18,022	27,024
Irish Potatoes (bu.)	990	969	not shown
Peas and Beans (bu.)	3,464	1,482	6,467

TABLE VIII

Distribution of Land in Winn Parish in 1880

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	317	41.3	5.5
50 - 199	147	18.9	12.6
200 - 499	281	36.7	68.2
500 - 999	19	2.5	9.9
1,000 and over	5	.6	3.8
Totals	769	100%	100%

The statistics for Winn Parish show the persistence of poverty in an area of poor land. Table VII demonstrates the continued decline in land values which was prevalent during the postwar period. The

table on land distribution shows the absence of plantations, which was characteristic of poor agricultural areas. Also, inasmuch as there were few plantations, there were few sharecroppers. There were only sixty-seven tenants in the parish; forty-four working for shares of the crops and twenty-three renting land for cash.

TABLE IX

Distribution of Cash Values of Farms in Winn Parish in 1860, 1870 and 1880

Value per Unit	Number of Units			% of Total			% of Total Owned by Class		
	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880
$999 or less	242	485	688	70.4	91.0	93.9	19.2	61.5	74.9
1,000 - 3,999	90	41	42	26.2	7.7	5.9	38.4	26.1	23.5
4,000 - 9,999	9	7	1	2.6	1.3	.2	10.8	12.4	1.6
10,000 - 24,999	2	0	0	.5	.0	.0	5.9	.0	.0
25,000 and over	1	0	0	.3	.0	.0	25.7	.0	.0
Totals	344	533	711	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

TABLE X

Distribution of Cotton Production in Winn Parish in 1860, 1870 and 1880

Production per Unit in Bales	Number of Units			% of Total			% of Total Produced by Class		
	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880
39 or less	273	540	645	96.4	99.4	99.8	81.2	98.1	99.5
40 - 99	7	3	1	2.4	.6	.2	7.3	1.9	.5
100 - 199	1	0	0	.4	.0	.0	2.2	.0	.0
200 and over	2	0	0	.8	.0	.0	9.3	.0	.0
Totals	283	543	646	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Tables IX and X show the pattern of landed wealth and cotton production in a parish away from the alluvial valleys. There were no plantations worth more than $10,000 and no cotton crops of more than 100 bales. Ownership of land and cotton was by subsistence farmers.

TABLE XI

Statistics of Agriculture in Concordia Parish in 1860, 1870 and 1880

	1860	1870	1880
Total Population	13,805	9,997	14,914
Number of Slaves	12,542		
Number of Negroes	12,563	9,257	13,594
Improved Acreage	87,406	87,275	51,155
Unimproved Acreage	158,523	137,663	85,360
Cash Value of Farms	$12,335,720	$3,168,500	$980,743
Value of Implements	$ 837,310	$ 80,175	$ 92,403
Value of Livestock	$ 920,581	$ 491,491	$345,292
Productions of Agriculture			
Indian Corn (bu.)	502,340	62,950	109,333
Cotton (bale)	63,971	26,712	33,110
Peas and Beans (bu.)	75,737	none listed	4,055
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	53,685	4,350	16,098

In Concordia, one of the important cotton parishes on the banks of the Mississippi River, there were significant developments after the Civil War. Table XI, taken from the published volumes of the Census and checked against the unpublished returns, shows what was recorded by the Census people. It is not an accurate picture of agriculture in Concordia because of the information which was left out of the original records, which, of course, was the basis for the published material. There were 1,200 sharecroppers and 182 renters in Concordia in 1880. Most of the plots occupied by tenants were small, usually ten to twenty-five acres. The sharecroppers did not give an estimate of the value of the land they tilled. With so much of the land values unaccounted for, the figure for total cash value of Concordia farms was far too small. An accurate estimate would be practically impossible to reach, but it would be more than the $980,000 listed in the Census. The indices showing value of implements in both 1870 and 1880 are too small

for the same reason. Statistics relative to the production of agriculture are probably accurate, as each unit listed its crops even if there were no figures for land values.

TABLE XII

Distribution of Land in Concordia Parish in 1880

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	1,270	84.8	23.8
50 - 199	113	7.6	10.5
200 - 499	43	2.9	11.3
500 - 999	30	2.0	16.9
1,000 and over	43	2.9	37.5
Totals	1,499	100%	100%

The table on land distribution in Concordia in 1880 shows the impact of tenantry on an alluvial parish. There were 200 plantations and farms in 1860. The 1880 Census shows 1,499; tenants operated 1,382 of them. Inasmuch as owners managed eighty-two of the units larger than 100 acres, one must assume that nearly all of the land cultivated by tenants belonged to the owners of the large estates.

TABLE XIII

Distribution of Cotton Production in Concordia Parish in 1860, 1870 and 1880

Production per Unit in Bales	Number of Units			% of Total			% of Total Owned by Class		
	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880
39 or less	15	39	1,229	11.5	25.8	91.5	.5	3.3	56.3
40 - 99	6	33	64	4.7	21.9	4.7	.7	9.4	10.3
100 - 199	22	29	19	16.9	19.2	1.4	5.5	17.7	6.5
200 and over	87	50	31	66.9	33.1	2.4	93.3	69.6	26.9
Totals	130	151	1,343	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

A tabular analysis of the distribution of cash value of farms would be meaningless for Concordia. The 1880 returns were inadequate because so many of the sharecroppers did not give an estimate of the cash value of the land they tilled. Table XIII, however, demonstrates the persistence of planter domination in the parish. Thirty-one cotton planters with crops of more than 200 bales produced 26.9% of the parish's total. They also owned most of the cotton grown on the 1,229 small plots because they owned the land. Table XIII emphasizes the problem of the one crop economy. So much of the land was devoted to cotton that nearly all supplies had to be imported.

TABLE XIV

Statistics of Agriculture in Rapides Parish in 1860, 1870 and 1880

	1860	1870	1880
Total Population	25,360	18,015	23,563
Number of Slaves	15,358		
Total Number of Negroes	15,649	10,267	13,942
Improved Acreage	105,839	63,265	82,965
Unimproved Acreage (in farms)	331,117	162,901	194,031
Cash Value of Farms	$9,340,611	$1,580,915	$1,753,073
Value of Implements	$1,092,340	$ 395,403	$ 191,103
Value of Livestock	$1,405,040	$ 450,945	$ 486,967
Productions of Agriculture			
Indian Corn (bu.)	820,378	261,579	488,370
Cotton (bale)	49,168	9,133	17,990
Sugar (hhd.)	12,878	3,062	1,832
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	9,880	54,276	26,814
Peas and Beans (bu.)	12,825	6,779	5,121

Rapides, a large parish in the central part of the state, had a narrow strip of good land along the banks of the Red River and vast stretches of thin, sandy soil in the hinterlands. With such a terrain, it was natural for the parish to have large numbers of both planters

and subsistence farmers. Before the war there were both sugar and cotton plantations in the valley. Sugar production was small in the postwar period, making it necessary for the planters to depend on cotton. The parish lost much of its area when Vernon and Grant parishes were formed, which accounts for the decrease in the amount of improved and unimproved land.

TABLE XV

Distribution of Improved Land in Rapides Parish in 1860, 1870 and 1880

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units			% of Total			% of total Owned by Class		
	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880
49 or less	566	516	1,349	68.2	76.1	83.1	12.2	19.2	38.3
50 - 199	126	83	202	15.2	12.2	12.2	11.3	13.3	21.5
200 - 499	69	49	63	8.3	7.2	3.1	20.8	25.7	27.4
500 - 999	41	17	7	5.0	2.4	.3	27.4	18.5	6.6
1,000 and over	28	14	5	3.3	2.1	.3	28.3	23.3	6.2
Totals	830	679	1,626	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Rapides did not have much sharecropping in 1880, there being only 122 units in that category. There were, however, 468 farms which were rented for cash. Rapides demonstrates one of the important aspects of postwar agriculture. There was a significant increase in ownership, evidenced by the fact that there were more than 1,000 farms cultivated by owners. The numerical increase in owner-operated farms did not change the basic nature of landholding in the parish. Soil in the Red River Valley, which was the bulk of the parish's wealth, was still owned by planters. They rented and sharecropped their land in order to obtain labor, but the soil was theirs and they directed the cultivation of it.

TABLE XVI

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in Rapides Parish in 1860, 1870 and 1880

Value per Unit	Number of Units			% of Total			% of Total Owned by Class		
	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880
$999 or less	211	530	843	43.2	78.0	76.3	1.1	8.4	13.1
1,000 - 3,999	107	62	149	21.9	9.1	13.5	1.9	7.7	14.3
4,000 - 9,999	16	31	61	3.3	4.6	5.5	1.2	14.3	18.0
10,000 - 24,999	35	42	41	7.1	6.2	3.8	6.7	40.5	30.2
25,000 and over	120	14	11	24.5	2.1	.9	89.1	29.1	22.4
Totals	489	679	1,105	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The table showing distribution of cash value of land needs clarification. More than 500 units failed to indicate a cash value. Most of them were small rented or sharecropped farms. Their aggregate value, if added to the units worth more than $10,000, would increase the proportion of the total value owned by planters. It would not, however, boost the proportion to the prewar ratio.

TABLE XVII

Distribution of Cotton Production in Rapides Parish in 1860, 1870 and 1880

Production per Unit in Bales	Number of Units			% of Total			% of Total Produced by Class		
	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880
39 or less	331	536	1,250	69.7	88.4	93.5	6.4	38.8	55.8
40 - 99	29	51	54	6.1	8.4	4.0	3.1	29.8	14.6
100 - 199	26	15	22	5.5	2.5	1.7	8.2	21.7	15.7
200 and over	89	4	10	18.7	.7	.8	82.3	9.7	13.9
Totals	475	606	1,336	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

There were ten planters who grew more than 200 bales of cotton in the 1879-1880 year. About one-half of the 1,250 units producing fewer than forty bales were owned by large landlords. That leaves, of

course, a significant number of farmers who grew small amounts of cotton on their own land. Rapides' cotton system was similar to Concordia's in the valley and like Winn's in the areas of poor soil.

TABLE XVIII

Statistics of Agriculture in St. Landry Parish in 1860 and 1880

	1860	1880
Total Population	23,104	40,004
Number of Slaves	11,436	
Total Number of Negroes	12,401	19,399
Improved Acreage	93,292	147,536
Unimproved Acreage	221,340	213,671
Cash Value of Farms	$5,026,118	$2,665,176
Value of Implements	$ 314,110	$ 130,374
Value of Livestock	$ 814,278	$ 576,356
Productions of Agriculture		
Indian Corn (bu.)	516,922	831,181
Cotton (bale)	21,198	23,148
Sugar (hhd.)	3,437	2,877
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	68,244	63,643
Peas and Beans (bu.)	5,464	2,550

TABLE XIX

Distribution of Land in St. Landry Parish in 1880

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	1,953	53.1	10.3
50 - 199	984	26.7	25.0
200 - 499	650	17.7	48.3
500 - 999	64	1.7	10.1
1,000 and over	28	.8	6.3
Totals	3,679	100%	100%

TABLE XX

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in St. Landry Parish in 1860 and 1880

Value per Unit	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1880	1860	1880	1860	1880
$999 or less	58	2,317	10.5	83.9	.5	36.7
1,000 - 3,999	230	358	41.7	12.9	7.5	28.7
4,000 - 9,999	125	62	22.7	2.3	17.4	13.8
10,000 - 24,999	91	23	16.5	.7	31.7	12.7
25,000 and over	47	7	3.6	.2	42.9	8.1
Totals	551	2,767	100%	100%	100%	100%

TABLE XXI

Distribution of Cotton Production in St. Landry Parish in 1860 and 1880

Production per Unit in Bales	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Produced by Class	
	1860	1880	1860	1880	1860	1880
39 or less	391	2,976	69.9	98.1	31.3	91.8
40 - 99	115	47	20.6	1.5	32.3	5.2
100 - 199	45	9	8.1	.3	27.1	2.1
200 and over	8	3	1.4	.1	9.3	.9
Totals	559	3,035	100%	100%	100%	100%

St. Landry Parish was similar to Rapides in that it had a plantation nucleus surrounded by large areas populated by small farmers who tilled their own soil. There are several important indices in the St. Landry tables. The increase in population between 1860 and 1880 is noteworthy and helps to explain the significant increase in the number of farms being operated by owners. Of the 3,679 farms in St. Landry, 2,461 were cultivated by owners, 251 were rented, and 967 were tilled by sharecroppers. One should keep in mind that sharecropped units were in areas of good land where the centrally directed plantations held

sway before the war. The fact that almost 1,000 sharecropped units were counted by the Census is an important indication of the agricultural practices in the former centers of landed wealth. There were few small farms operated by owners in the areas where land was good. The fact that more than 1,200 plots of ground were cultivated by non-owners should be kept in mind when reading the statistics showing distribution of land values and cotton production. For example, of the 1,953 units of less than fifty acres, 1,086 were rented or sharecropped. This means that much of the proportionate value and production of the smallest units were owned by the planters.

TABLE XXII

Statistics of Agriculture in Iberville Parish in 1860, and 1880

	1860	1880
Total Population	14,661	17,544
Number of Slaves	10,680	
Total Number of Negroes	10,841	12,759
Improved Acreage	62,523	48,456
Unimproved Acreage(in farms)	131,688	64,647
Cash Value of Farms	$12,661,190	$1,443,619
Value of Implements	$ 886,719	$ 197,388
Value of Livestock	$ 1,111,205	$ 211,679
Production of Agriculture		
Indian Corn (bu.)	572,022	231,596
Rice (lb.)	none shown	2,198,550
Sugar (hhd.)	10,829	15,273
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	15,827	3,431
Peas and Beans (bu.)	5,312	145

TABLE XXIII

Distribution of Land in Iberville Parish in 1880

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	70	27.3	1.9
50 - 199	64	25.0	8.4
200 - 499	54	21.1	19.6
500 - 999	23	8.9	18.0
1,000 and over	45	17.7	52.1
Totals	256	100%	100%

TABLE XXIV

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in Iberville Parish in 1860 and 1880

Value per Unit	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1880	1860	1880	1860	1880
$999 or less	24	101	8.8	39.9	.1	2.9
1,000 - 3,999	70	58	25.5	22.9	1.4	8.6
4,000 - 9,999	44	41	16.1	16.2	2.4	16.8
10,000 - 24,999	34	36	12.4	14.2	4.5	36.9
25,000 and over	102	17	37.2	6.8	91.6	34.8
Totals	274	253	100%	100%	100%	100%

Iberville Parish provides an excellent example of the developments in the Sugar Bowl. The Parish had a larger sugar crop in 1880 than in 1860, but that was, of course, unusual. The 1860 crop was not impressive for a sugar parish. There are two important observations to be made about Iberville: first, the absence of sharecropping; second, the persistence of planter domination. There were only five sharecroppers in Iberville in 1880, certainly a negligible number. The reason for the small amount of land tilled on a sharecropping basis lay in the nature of the sugar industry. Plantations were not subdivided into small units in the manner of cotton lands because a much more centralized type of control was necessary. The absence of sharecroppers

makes it much easier to compare the distribution of landed wealth in 1860 and in 1880. As can be seen in Table XXIV, concentration was still in the upper brackets. It is true that 71.7% of the total land value was in estates worth more than $10,000 in 1880 and that 96.1% of the total value was in the more valuable plantations in 1860. The decreased percentage is more of an indication of a decline in the value of land than a change in the pattern of ownership.

TABLE XXV

Statistics of Agriculture in East Baton Rouge Parish in 1860 and 1880

	1860	1880
Total Population	16,046	19,966
Number of Slaves	8,570	
Total Number of Negroes	9,102	12,863
Improved Acreage	55,220	45,632
Unimproved Acreage(in farms)	127,401	106,400
Cash Value of Farms	$2,588,300	$1,286,361
Value of Implements	$ 592,848	$ 127,784
Value of Livestock	$ 470,525	$ 266,686
Productions of Agriculture		
Indian Corn (bu.)	395,350	211,449
Cotton (bale)	11,621	5,756
Sugar (hhd.)	5,477	3,366
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	53,635	27,727
Peas and Beans (bu.)	5,601	216

TABLE XXVI

Distribution of Land in East Baton Rouge Parish in 1880

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	343	42.3	5.6
50 - 199	164	20.3	1.3
200 - 499	236	29.1	54.6
500 - 999	44	5.5	21.8
1,000 and over	23	2.8	16.7
Totals	810	100%	100%

TABLE XXVII

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in East Baton Rouge Parish in 1860 and 1880

Value per Unit	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1880	1860	1880	1860	1880
$999 or less	97	371	26.2	61.1	1.7	11.3
1,000 - 3,999	146	171	39.3	28.2	12.6	26.2
4,000 - 9,999	66	38	17.9	6.3	15.8	16.3
10,000 - 24,999	38	17	10.4	2.8	22.8	18.2
25,000 and over	23	10	6.2	.6	47.1	28.0
Totals	370	607	100%	100%	100%	100%

TABLE XXVIII

Distribution of Cotton Production in East Baton Rouge Parish in 1860 and 1880

Production per Unit in Bales	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1880	1860	1880	1860	1880
39 or less	185	640	68.5	95.7	27.1	83.6
40 - 99	50	23	18.6	3.5	25.7	10.5
100 - 199	27	6	10.0	.8	29.5	5.9
200 and over	8	0	2.9	.0	17.7	.0
Totals	270	669	100%	100%	100%	100%

People continued to plant both sugar and cotton in East Baton Rouge Parish. There were a few cotton plantations with sizeable acreage, as evidenced by the fact that there were sixty-six sharecropped units which were planted in cotton. There were 248 rented farms, 217 of them being smaller than fifty acres. As was the case in the more northern parishes, most of the land in tenantry produced cotton. The units tilled by renters and sharecroppers were, of course, the property of those who owned the larger estates. There were 496 farms cultivated by owners, which meant that East Baton Rouge's economy reflected little

of the type of concentration found in such cotton areas as Concordia or Madison.

TABLE XXIX

Statistics of Agriculture in East Feliciana Parish in 1860 and 1880

	1860	1880
Total Population	14,697	15,132
Number of Slaves	10,593	
Total Number of Negroes	10,616	10,635
Improved Acreage	96,728	56,193
Unimproved Acreage	124,316	122,192
Cash Value of Farms	$2,218,878	$ 730,857
Value of Implements	$ 213,965	$ 41,174
Value of Livestock	$ 592,073	$ 204,603
Productions of Agriculture		
Indian Corn (bu.)	358,769	206,307
Cotton (bale)	23,332	11,098
Sugar (hhd.)	1,103	9
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	97,810	57,394
Peas and Beans (bu.)	7,904	722

TABLE XXX

Distribution of Improved Land in East Feliciana Parish in 1880

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	934	63.8	11.4
50 - 99	202	14.4	12.3
200 - 499	237	16.1	40.4
500 - 999	65	4.3	23.7
1,000 and over	23	1.4	12.2
Totals	1,461	100%	100%

TABLE XXXI

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in East Feliciana Parish in 1860 and 1880

Value per Unit	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1880	1860	1880	1860	1880
$999 or less	18	589	5.9	76.0	.3	27.9
1,000 - 3,999	113	157	37.0	20.3	10.8	37.2
4,000 - 9,999	89	26	29.2	3.3	23.9	17.3
10,000 - 24,999	71	2	23.2	.3	47.5	3.3
25,000 and over	14	1	4.7	.1	17.5	14.2
Totals	305	775	100%	100%	100%	100%

TABLE XXXII

Distribution of Cotton Production in East Feliciana Parish in 1860 and 1880

Production per Unit in Bales	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1880	1860	1880	1860	1880
39 or less	108	1,282	36.9	98.0	8.8	91.4
40 - 99	100	20	34.3	1.5	28.1	5.0
100 - 199	61	6	20.9	.5	36.8	3.6
200 and over	23	0	7.9	.0	26.3	.0
Totals	292	1,308	100%	100%	100%	100%

In studying the statistical record of agriculture in East Feliciana Parish, one encounters again the important correlation between cotton farming and sharecropping. East Feliciana had a few sugar plantations before the war, but its postwar agriculture was devoted to sharecropped cotton fields. The parish had a small increase in population, which helps to account for a small increase in the number of farms operated by owners. The important factor in East Feliciana, as in other cotton parishes, was the large number of sharecropped units. There were 825 plots cultivated by people working for a share of the

crop and 132 farms tilled by renters. Nearly all of them, of course, were small in acreage. Of the 934 units smaller than fifty acres, 833 were cultivated by renters and sharecroppers. Land in tenantry belonged to the owners of the prewar plantations.

The table on distribution of land value was based on the values of only 775 units, as almost 700 of the small units made no estimation of the value of the land. Were these figures available in the unpublished reports, they would be added to the 589 farms evaluated at less than $1,000. The inclusion of unestimated wealth of sharecropped land would increase the proportionate value of small units. Inasmuch as sharecropped land belonged to planters, the corrected figure would really be an indication of concentrated ownership. The same pattern of analysis must be used in studying the record of cotton production. Only twenty-six units produced more than forty bales, but the owners of the twenty-six larger units also owned most of the 1,282 small plots producing fewer than forty bales.

TABLE XXXIII

Statistics of Agriculture in Plaquemines Parish in 1860 and 1880

	1860	1880
Total Population	8,494	11,575
Number of Slaves	5,385	
Total Number of Negroes	5,899	7,214
Improved Acreage	28,975	38,201
Unimproved Acreage	61,469	47,776
Cash Value of Farms	$2,791,300	$1,671,310
Value of Implements	$ 161,000	$ 296,257
Value of Livestock	$ 572,640	$ 209,554

Productions of Agriculture

	1860	1880
Indian Corn (bu.)	657,850	30,469
Sugar (hhd.)	12,607	14,017
Rice (lb.)	4,635,500	6,609,954
Orchard Produce	33,055	98,801

TABLE XXXIV

Distribution of Land in Plaquemines Parish in 1880

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	85	29.0	2.9
50 - 199	97	33.1	16.5
200 - 499	76	25.9	36.1
500 - 999	17	5.8	17.3
1,000 and over	18	6.2	27.2
Totals	146	100%	100%

TABLE XXXV

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in Plaquemines Parish in 1860 and 1880

Value per Unit	Number of Units		% of Total		% of Total Owned by Class	
	1860	1880	1860	1880	1860	1880
$999 or less	3	106	2.0	33.5	.1	2.9
1,000 - 3,999	59	144	40.4	45.5	5.5	20.1
4,000 - 9,999	33	31	22.6	9.8	8.3	12.2
10,000 - 24,999	15	19	10.3	5.9	8.6	18.6
25,000 and over	36	17	24.7	5.3	77.5	46.2
Totals	146	317	100%	100%	100%	100%

Plaquemines Parish was developing as an important agricultural region after the Civil War. Production of sugar declined after 1862, but began to improve in the 1870's. Plaquemines' fertile soil made it possible for people to respond to New Orleans' need for truck gardening produce. The parish was also becoming an important rice producing region as there was always plenty of water available.

Inasmuch as there was no cotton, there was only a small amount of land cultivated on shares. There were only twelve renters and three sharecroppers in the parish. Table XXXV shows that the pattern of ownership was virtually unchanged. There were some valuable plantations, to be sure, but there were also many farms in areas of fertile soil.

TABLE XXXVI

Statistics of Agriculture in Terrebonne Parish in 1860, 1870 and 1880

	1860	1870	1880
Total Population	12,091	12,451	17,957
Number of Slaves	6,785		
Total Number of Negroes	6,857	6,172	9,111
Improved Acreage	33,816	36,693	42,045
Unimproved Acreage (in farms)	158,806	93,798	124,483
Cash Value of Farms	$7,166,390	$2,742,325	$2,061,790
Value of Implements	$ 946,733	$ 555,215	$ 154,297
Value of Livestock	$ 11,622	$ 3,501	$ 361,903
Productions of Agriculture			
Indian Corn (bu.)	404,853	209,050	291,833
Rice (lb.)	131,016	233,000	397,554
Sugar (hhd.)	17,022	6,537	13,751
Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	48,800	9,947	30,405

TABLE XXXVII

Distribution of Improved Land in Terrebonne Parish in 1880

Size of Unit in Acres	Number of Units	% of Total	% of Total Owned by Class
49 or less	210	37.9	3.8
50 - 199	135	24.5	12.4
200 - 499	141	25.5	36.3
500 - 999	20	3.6	10.9
1,000 and over	47	8.5	36.6
Totals	553	100%	100%

TABLE XXXVIII

Distribution of Cash Value of Farms in Terrebonne Parish in 1860, 1870 and 1880

Value per Unit	Number of Acres			% of Total			% of Total Owned by Class		
	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880	1860	1870	1880
$999 or less	54	87	271	17.0	34.3	48.8	.4	1.4	5.3
1,000-3,999	134	86	171	42.3	33.9	31.9	4.6	7.2	17.5
10,000-34,999	26	19	48	11.7	7.5	8.7	3.5	4.4	13.1
25,000 and over	66	37	23	20.8	14.5	4.1	85.3	72.5	39.6
Totals	317	254	555	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Terrebonne was one of the few sugar parishes where there were many sharecroppers and renters. There were sixty-five units worked on a sharecrop basis and twenty-one being farmed by people who rented for cash. Although there were more tenants in Terrebonne than in any of the other sugar parishes analyzed in this study, the number was inconsequential when compared with the cotton parishes. There was an increase in the number of units cultivated by owners, which can be explained by the larger population. Table XXXVIII shows that the ante-bellum system of landholding still prevailed. Plantations worth more than $10,000 constituted a smaller proportion of the total value than in 1860, but that was because of lower land values and not the result of a basic change in the pattern of ownership.

There are some important generalizations which should be made about Louisiana's postwar agricultural economy. In the first place, the alliance between city merchants and rural planters remained intact. New Orleans commission merchants needed produce from the interior because distribution of agricultural products was the basis of the city's commercial activities. The needs of the city naturally meant that there

would be pressure placed on the planters to plant staples which would have market value. Planters ignored widespread demands for diversification and concentrated on staples not only because of the pleas from New Orleans factors but also because production of staples had provided them with a comfortable life before the war and they wanted to regain it. Because of the shortage of capital for investment in agricultural development, cotton became the primary staple as it required less capital than the expensive sugar plantations. In order to obtain labor in the cotton parishes, planters divided their estates into small plots and placed freedmen on them to grow cotton for a share of the crop. Sharecropping was not practiced extensively in the sugar parishes because of the necessity for more centralized control.

The result of concentrated staple production in the Black Belt was the emergence of an avaricious credit system. Planters, who were financially destitute, relied on credit advances from New Orleans banks and factors who charged high rates of interest. As subsistence items had lower market value, planters had to concentrate on staples to repay their obligations. Country storekeepers advanced credit to sharecroppers, and frequently to planters, on a crop lien basis. Frequently the recipients of credit were unable to pay their debts. The result was that tenants became tied to the soil and planters lost their land to New Orleans financiers or to rural merchants. In spite of the increased number of farms operated by owners, Louisiana's economic system was dominated by large-scale land owners. Land in the Black Belt was not parceled out among farmers anxious to obtain soil for themselves. It remained in the hands of a small, propertied class.

S U M M A R Y

Ante-bellum Louisiana was a land where fertile soil and deep rivers provided an enjoyable way of living for those people who had access to them. During the many decades between the first settling of the state and the outbreak of the Civil War, people moved into the valleys, secured ownership of the alluvial soil, organized plantations, developed an elaborate system of internal communication, purchased slaves, and then let the natural increase of slaves add value to their possessions. Less fortunate persons, and there were many more of them, lived in isolated areas out of contact with the waterways and more delightful ways of life. The city of New Orleans emerged as a commercial center which presided over the flow of agricultural produce from the great valley of the Mississippi River and also supervised the importation of goods from all over the world. City merchants realized that their enviable income depended on the production of cotton and sugar in large quantities on the plantations. Planters knew that their way of life would be impossible were it not for the commercial people who disposed of their crops and imported the countless items which were not produced locally. The planter-merchant alliance was the most important economic fact in Louisiana because it brought producer and distributor together in an understanding which embraced all phases of society, politics, and economics. Planters and merchants were relatively few in number, but they owned the valuable properties in the interior and controlled the flow of capital in New Orleans. Editors, lawyers, and politicians gave advice and carried out their commands.

Economic systems such as that which prevailed in ante-bellum Louisiana have frequently caused revolutions or, at least, demands for agrarian reform. In Louisiana, however, the presence of Negro slaves complicated the issue. The existence of slavery as such was not of paramount importance in the minds of rural yeomen and city workers, who might have been expected to rebel against a system which guaranteed to them a depressed condition. They accepted slavery because the slaves were Negroes and because they could not imagine another way of keeping the blacks in a subordinate position. The fact that the existence of slavery made labor generally disreputable and was the basis for the dominance of planters and merchants was accepted as a fair price for the preservation of white supremacy. Louisiana seceded from the United States and joined the Confederacy in order to retain the ante-bellum way of life. Sons of planters, sons of farmers, and sons of city people fought together during the war just as they had done during prewar years when they went together on patrols to see that the slaves did not escape.

The Civil War brought death and destruction to Louisiana, and it demonstrated the weakness of an agricultural area which could not support itself. The Federal blockade at the beginning of the war created chaos, but it only lasted for a year. Nevertheless, it demonstrated some of the weaknesses of the state's economic system. Federal soldiers arrived in the spring of 1862 and started expeditions of conquest in the Sugar Bowl and in the Red River Valley. What had been an area of economic stringency became a land of desolation as Rebel and Yankee armies destroyed and plundered.

The Federal army brought with it more than soldiers to be used for conquest. The arrival of Butler and later Banks meant that extraneous forces would rule the conquered portions of the state. Butler's seven month reign in New Orleans was characterized by efforts to separate the city's masses from their local rulers by taxing the wealthy for support of the poor. General Banks, upon his arrival in December of 1862, adopted a policy of moderation toward the people in the areas controlled by the Federal army. Moreover, backed by President Lincoln, he concerned himself with the creation of a loyal government. This was consummated by the election of Hahn and the acceptance of the Constitution of 1864, a document which challenged some of the basic ideals of the plantation system. The authority of Hahn, although he was proclaimed as civil governor for the entire state, existed only in areas which were controlled by Federal power. Confederate Louisiana, of course, disdained Hahn and looked to Shreveport where Moore and later Allen were located. Hahn went to Washington as a senator, leaving James Madison Wells to handle the governor's complicated affairs. Wells, who was recognized by Washington, gave every indication of being a political trimmer when the Confederate soldiers started pouring back into the state after the surrender at Appomattox.

Wells retained his post as governor and the returning Confederates secured control of the legislature in an election which was held in the fall of 1865. The newly elected legislators immediately passed laws of a reactionary nature. War had changed the Negroes from slaves to freedmen, but it had not changed their status as agricultural laborers. The legislature, representing the planters' interests, placed on the statute books a series of laws which were aimed at forcing the

Negroes to work. This was thought to be essential as the former slaves were indicating that their freedom would mean freedom from labor. Louisiana, which was in a terrible economic condition, needed produce from the plantation areas, where freedmen lived in large numbers. Only production in the Black Belt would save the state, as farmers in the hinterlands could not produce an exportable surplus which, in turn, might be used for importing goods from other areas. The postwar labor laws, the refusal to consider the Fourteenth Amendment, and such incidents as the New Orleans riot of 1866, played into the hands of radicals within the Republican party who were dissatisfied with the lenient attitude which was being displayed by President Johnson. The Reconstruction laws of 1867 marked the beginning of a new period in the history of Louisiana.

Citizens of the Bayou State knew that far-reaching changes were in store for them as soon as General Philip Sheridan arrived as commander of the Fifth Military District. Sheridan, who was more devoted to the principle of direct action than Butler had ever been, quickly brought the state under military rule by summarily discharging local office holders from the governor on down to minor parish officials. Moreover, his application of the Reconstruction laws meant that in the future all power would be in the hands of agents of the Republican regime in Washington. In compliance with the new laws, an election was held for delegates to a convention which was to meet in New Orleans for the purpose of writing a new Constitution for the state. Should the Congress of the United States accept the document, and the character of the men in the convention meant that no unacceptable document would be forthcoming, Louisiana would return to

its old position in the Union.

In the spring of 1868 the new Constitution was approved by a majority composed of newly enfranchised Negroes and white Republicans. Disfranchised and disgruntled natives of the state were helpless and unorganized. Henry Clay Warmoth, who became the first Republican governor, quickly demonstrated himself to be the type of strong willed and dominating person which often emerges in time of chaos. His efforts to create a powerful political machine with himself at its head met with such violent internal opposition that the final result was his impeachment by the party he had helped create.

Negro voters placed the new government in power, but the national administration was the only agency which could keep it there. After the initial shock had passed, native whites began to ignore their prewar political differences and weld a united front against the Republican regime. Native whites found much to criticise in the new government, although the Republicans made few gestures toward the type of reform they were fond of talking about. They could claim credit for abolishing slavery, but they made no effort toward providing the type of economic security which would mean a real change for the freedmen. As a result, former slaves were economically dependent on white planters, just as they had been before the war. Republicans in power were more avid for the spoils of politics than for reforms which might have had a lasting and beneficial effect.

In addition to the problems presented by Reconstruction politics, native whites were troubled with serious economic ills which were the results of defeat. Prewar prosperity depended on the production of sugar and cotton which could be traded to other areas for the many items which

people wanted but could not, or would not, produce. Sugar regions in the southern part of the state were devastated during the war and did not return to prewar levels of production until long after Reconstruction was over. Capital was necessary for the resurrection of the sugar industry, but it was not available. Cotton became the mainstay of the state's economy as it did not require heavy investments.

The Census of 1870, although it was not an adequate assessment of the state's wealth, demonstrated the economic consequences of war and defeat. The Census, nevertheless, showed with relentless figures the loss of wealth, depressed land values, and decreased production which was Louisiana's lot during the postwar years. Moreover, the Federal document showed that large-scale land ownership still existed in the Black Belt.

The election of 1872 witnessed the unusual spectacle of Republican Governor Warmoth placing all of his power at the disposal of white conservatives who wanted to eject the Republicans from power. The Kellogg-Packard-Casey wing of the Republicans refused to accept the results of the election as proclaimed by Warmoth's Returning Board, estimated what the count should have been, and referred the claim to Washington. The Federal government recognized Kellogg and ordered all people in the state to obey his administration. The political confusion of late 1872 and early 1873, which sometimes gave New Orleans the appearance of an armed camp, had a deleterious effect on business. Conservative leaders, fearful of the dire results of continued strife, then made an unsuccessful effort to bring black and white together in a party which, while avoiding the extremism of the Democrats, would eliminate the radical government and create a regime more favorable to the business community. Leaders of

the Unification Movement knew that it would be necessary to make important concessions to Negroes in order to get their votes. People in the rural areas, however, would not accept the concessions. Despite the impressive array of public figures who came out in support of unification, the plan never had a real chance to succeed because it advocated a type of race adjustment which was anathema to the majority of white people in the state.

The depression of 1873, which worsened conditions which were already bad, plus the continuation of Republican fraud and mismanagement, made the white people of Louisiana desperate. The White League and the White Man's Party, in spite of their widespread membership and effectiveness in intimidating Negro voters, could not bring about a change in the government because they had no access to ballots after they were cast. The Returning Beard was a Republican agency which could perform miracles of legerdemain when it came to counting ballots. After the fall of 1874, highlighted by an election and the New Orleans riot, Republicans did not receive prompt and unquestioning support from Washington. National leaders were tired of the annual disturbances in Louisiana and, moreover, had troubles of their own. A Congressional group came to New Orleans to investigate the complications arising from the election of 1874. As a result of the interest demonstrated by William A. Wheeler, one of the Congressional visitors, a compromise was reached which gave local Democrats control of the lower house of the legislature but left the Senate and the executive branch in the hands of Republicans. Such a solution, naturally, could only result in legislative paralysis.

Public affairs were relatively stable from 1875, when the Wheeler Compromise went into effect, until the end of Reconstruction. The election of 1876 was a replica of earlier elections inasmuch as it was

characterised by intimidation and dishonesty. This time, however, Louisiana politics were completely subordinated to the important and sweeping changes which were taking place in Washington.

The most important social change which occurred in Louisiana after the Civil War was the new status of the Negro. The former slaves, hopelessly lacking in training for the political roles thrust upon them, were merely pawns in a struggle for control. Except for politics, the condition of the Negroes changed little. They were no longer slaves, to be sure, but neither did they have the freedom ordinarily associated with the rights of free men. The ludicrous mistakes so many of them made during Reconstruction were, and have been, cited as evidences of biological incapacity for performing the higher duties of man.

Postwar social customs, when not involved with race, were strongly reminiscent of ante-bellum habits. With extremely rare exceptions, Negroes made no effort to mix socially with whites. Parties, entertainment, and the free visiting back and forth so characteristic of the rural South went on with little change. Social practices were simple and bucolic in ante-bellum Louisiana and they did not change. New Orleans, center of the strongest Republican efforts to bring new habits of thought and action to Louisiana, witnessed mixed schools as the only important aspect of racial equalizing. White Republicans were often friendly with Negroes on a personal or social basis, but that had nothing to do with indigenous customs.

The obvious need for Negro training brought into being one of the most important long-range results of Reconstruction. Public education did not amount to much before the war as the theory justifying it was contradictory to the plantation ideal. Republicans, upon accession to power,

opened public schools all over the state with expenses being paid from public taxation. The schools met opposition because of the racial implications, but the idea that the public at large should provide training for all children was accepted. Once accepted it was not abandoned.

The end of the Reconstruction era saw economic conditions improving gradually. Sugar production climbed slowly in the 1870's, resulting in far more wholesome conditions in south Louisiana. In the northern part of the state cotton production continued to be the economic basis of society. There were many demands that a more diversified agricultural system be adopted instead of the complete reliance on one crop. Agrarian reformers, however, made little impression as their ideas were in conflict with the desires of the planters and merchants to recoup their lost wealth as quickly as possible. They assumed that it could only be done by concentrating on cash crops. The continuation of the one crop system meant that large-scale ownership, sharecropping, and landlordism would remain as constant factors affecting the economics of the state.

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B I O G R A P H Y

The author was born on March 21, 1920, in Eastland, Texas, and attended public schools in Texas and Arkansas. He attended Phillips University, the University of Texas, and Southeastern State College of Oklahoma, receiving the Bachelor of Arts degree from the last named institution in 1942. From 1942 until 1946 he served in the Army Air Force and entered Louisiana State University upon being discharged. He received the Master of Arts degree from Louisiana State University in 1947. From 1947 until 1949 he was a graduate assistant in the Louisiana State University Department of History, and from 1949 to 1950 an instructor in Department of History and Political Science of the University of Arkansas. In 1950 he returned to Louisiana State University as an instructor in history, leaving the following year to serve as Administrator of the Louisiana State University Caribbean program. He is now a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Louisiana State University Department of History.

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Date of Examination:

July 21, 1953