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CONTENTS

Articles:	PAGE
A Backcountry Loyalist Plan To Retake Georgia and the Carolinas, 1778, by Randall M. Miller	207
The Correspondence of a Yankee Prisoner in Charleston, 1865, contributed by John E. Duncan	215
Radical Versus Straight-Out in Post-Reconstruction Beaufort County, by Arthur Lewis Gelston	225
South From Appomattox: The Diary of Abner R. Cox, edited by Royce Gordon Shingleton	238
Gibson Family Records	245
Schirmer Diary	249
Reviews:	
Nepveux, <i>George Alfred Trenholm and The Company That Went To War</i> , by Jack Leland	252
Wood, <i>Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina</i> , by St. Julien Childs	252
Book Notes	254
The Society	255
Archives News	261

RADICAL VERSUS STRAIGHT-OUT IN POST-RECONSTRUCTION BEAUFORT COUNTY

ARTHUR LEWIS GELSTON *

In the two decades following the Civil War the Democratic Party in the South split into Conservative and Straight-out factions, sharply divided over economic issues but agreed that black political power must not be permitted to dominate government in the reconstructed states. The Republican Party split into Radical and Reconciliationist factions divided over both economic and racial problems as the party leadership attempted to build Republican strength in the South by relegating black political rights to a secondary importance in overall policy. As early as 1873 in the midst of the first industrial depression, under attack from agrarianism in the West and labor in the East, the Republicans sought a new ally, the moderate white Southerner, who had demonstrated whiggish tendencies before the war.¹ The Whigs, antebellum standard-bearers of the planter and businessman, had been forced into a marriage of convenience with the regular Democrats over the slavery issue, but neither side was pleased with the arrangement. Many Southern Democrats of Whig antecedents called themselves Conservatives rather than openly embrace a political tradition dominated by the figures of Andrew Jackson and Jeff Davis.² To the Reconciliationist Republicans, the old Whig vote "appeared to be the basis for a division of the Democratic hold over the South."³

In South Carolina, Republicanism was primarily of the Radical variety, black; and not at all ready to share political office with representatives of the pre-war ruling class. Radical strength was concentrated in the gerrymandered Seventh Congressional District, principally at Beaufort in the Sea Islands.

Beaufort, captured by Union forces in 1861, had been spared the brunt of the devastation of the war.⁴ In 1865, the Sea Islands were in-

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¹ C. Vann Woodward, *Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction* (Boston, 1951), p. 35.

² Vincent P. DeSantis, *Republicans Face the Southern Question—The New Departure Years, 1877-1897* (New York, 1969), p. 50.

³ *New York Times*, January 11, 1877.

⁴ David Duncan Wallace, *South Carolina, A Short History, 1520-1948* (Columbia, 1961), p. 535.

cluded in the thirty-mile wide coastal strip set aside by General Sherman for the exclusive use of the freedmen, and thousands of contrabands—blacks liberated by federal troops in other areas of the South—streamed into the region.⁵ The town itself was sold to freedmen and the few remaining whites for tax arrears.⁶ Those plantations not broken up into smaller plots for the black farmers were bought by Yankees looking to profit from the long staple Sea Island cotton, indigo, and rice. The population for the county of Beaufort for 1880 stood at 27,732 blacks and 2,422 whites, a drop of about 5000 whites since 1860.⁷ The population remained fairly constant over the period of this study. The commercial and professional makeup of Beaufort County is summarized in the following list prepared for the census of 1890:

10 boot repair shops	4 tailors
1 saw mill	3 carriage shops
2 planing mills	10 dressmakers
1 corn mill	4 blacksmiths
3 cotton mills	10 carpenters
1 dyeing shop	6 masons
1 foundry	1 dentist
2 machine shops	1 cigar maker
2 newspapers	1 upholsterer ⁸

Though the economic and commercial characteristics of the Beaufort area were not unusual for a town in the coastal Black Belt, Beaufort rather than Charleston with her large black population, or Columbia, the state capital, became the focus of Radical activity. The large population of freedmen and sizeable carpetbagger element gave the Radicals a "natural" advantage. Additionally, Beaufort had been the headquarters of General Rufus Saxton's experimental land program under the auspices of the Freedmen's Bureau.⁹ Under this plan black camp followers of the Union army were given plots and seed with which to cultivate the acreage of the plantations. The former slaves governed themselves under a town meeting "legislature" and were generally thriving until the federal

⁵ J. A. Carpenter, *Sword and Olive Branch, Oliver Otis Howard* (Pittsburgh, 1964), p. 110.

⁶ Wallace, p. 243.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 711.

⁸ George Gage to F. R. Williams, Special Agent in Charge of Manufacturing (Beaufort, S. C., July 28, 1890), George Gage Papers, Letterbook II, no. 429, Duke University Library, (GG II 429).

⁹ Carpenter, p. 110.

government redistributed much of their land in favor of the original white owners in the 1870's.¹⁰

A few descendants of the freedmen continued to own farms on Saint Helena Island as late as 1930, but the economic situation of the black population steadily worsened from the period of near self-sufficiency achieved under General Saxton's program. On Edisto Island, for example, the private property held by an average black household might consist of one horse, a mule or a cow, and household goods. The working stock was numerous though of a very inferior quality and there was seldom any shelter for the animals.¹¹ In return for two days labor per week, the white planter gave the black laborer seven to ten acres to plant for his own use, and a cabin.¹² The typical home of Negro tenants on a plantation near Jamison wore a "disconsolate, tumbledown air; it usually consisted of an unsealed square frame building, drafty, with open windows, and large, heavy wooden shutters."¹³ A Negro journalist visiting his native state as a reporter for the black *New York Age* found "hovels horrible to behold, uninviting without, and cheerless within."¹⁴ The planters ran commissary stores, making advances to their tenants. One prominent black politician from Beaufort commented that the "contract system is such that hundreds of people never see a dollar the whole year round, they only receive orders on stores and at the end of the year are in debt to their employers, having to pay seventy to one hundred per cent (interest) on goods sold on such orders."¹⁵ Debt was inescapable for most, and the whole system was an invitation to the practice of fraud by sharp-dealing merchants who were themselves not immune to the effects of the ever-falling price of cotton.¹⁶

Trapped in a cycle of deadening toil and perpetually in debt to their former masters, the freedmen took refuge from their bleak existence in an exciting political life. Here they escaped the daily monotony by joining in partisan battle matched in rhetorical ferocity only by the sermons of the evangelists traveling through the county to and from

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

¹¹ *Report on Cotton Production in the United States, Part Two, Eastern Gulf, Atlantic, and Pacific States*, United States Bureau of the Census, (Washington, D. C., 1884), p. 60.

¹² *Charleston News and Courier*, April 22, 1880.

¹³ George Brown Tindall, *South Carolina Negroes, 1877-1900* (Columbia, 1952), p. 94.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Robert Smalls to D. McLindsey (Washington, D. C., 1888) in McLindsey, *The Wrongs of the Negro: The Remedy* (Boston, n.d.).

¹⁶ Tindall, p. 99.

Savannah. The political leadership evoked by this type of constituency was a curious melange of black and white carpetbaggers and self-educated slaves.

Foremost among this lot of politicians was Robert Smalls. Born a slave in 1839, Smalls was trained as a sailmaker and later worked as a rigger in Charleston. In 1861 he led a group of seven other slaves and brought the Confederate sloop, *Planter*, over the Charleston bar, delivering it to the Union fleet. Later, in the service of the U.S. Navy, Smalls piloted the ironclad, *Keokuk*, in an unsuccessful attack on Fort Sumter in 1863.¹⁷ Smalls entered Republican politics in 1868 and as representative in the 44th, 45th, 47th, 48th, and 49th congresses he advocated restoration of the Beaufort Town Library, construction of the Port Royal Railroad, and construction of a new Customs House at Beaufort.¹⁸ In 1877 Smalls was convicted of having accepted a five-thousand dollar bribe while in office but was pardoned by the governor. Sir George Campbell, M.P., touring the United States in 1879, described Smalls as a "robust, burly, dark man now in the prime of life, and very popular with the blacks. He is not very educated or brilliant, but is a thoroughly representative man among these people and seems to have their unlimited confidence."¹⁹ In 1889 Smalls was appointed collector of the Port of Beaufort by Secretary of the Treasury John Sherman, and held the post until 1913.

Smalls' frequent rival in Beaufort County Republican politics was another black man, Thomas Ezekial Miller. Miller was freeborn in Ferrybeeveville, Beaufort County, and attended the public school for Negroes at Charleston, and later at Hudson, New York. A graduate of Lincoln University in Chester County, Pennsylvania, Miller moved to Grahamville, S. C., and served as school commissioner of Beaufort County in 1872. He sat on the State Supreme Court in 1875 and won election to the state House 1874, 1876, and 1878, and to the state Senate in 1880. Miller successfully contested the election of Col. William Elliott (Democrat) of Beaufort to the 51st Congress and served out the last quarter of the term. He was later elected first president of the State Negro College at Orangeburg, in office from 1896 to 1911.²⁰ Reputed to be less than one sixty-fourth black, Miller was called in the press "Canary Bird"

¹⁷ Dorothy Sterling, *Captain of the 'Planter': The Story of Robert Smalls* (Garden City, 1958), p. 127.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

¹⁹ George Campbell, *White and Black: The Outcome of a Visit to the United States* (London, 1879), pp. 341-343.

²⁰ Monroe N. Work, "Some Negro Members of Reconstruction Conventions and Legislatures and of Congress," *Journal of Negro History*, V (1920) 100.

because of his yellowish skin color; he occasionally had trouble convincing black voters that he was not white.²¹

A third important figure was black carpetbagger William J. Whipper. Described by "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman, a Straight-out, as the "ablest colored man I ever met"²² and by a fellow Republican as a "drunkard and gambler,"²³ Whipper was raised in Michigan, and by the outbreak of war was clerk in a law office. Joining a volunteer regiment, he found himself in South Carolina in April of 1865. Whipper became a lawyer in Charleston and was elected to the state legislature in 1868 and 1870. In 1875 he was elected a circuit judge by the legislature, though many of his Radical colleagues knew of his fraudulent activities.²⁴ From 1882 to 1888 Whipper was probate judge of Beaufort County and was subsequently jailed for refusing to leave office after being deposed in the election of that year. Whipper owned the small Beaufort *Tribune* from whose editorial columns he attacked his occasional rival Robert Smalls.²⁵ Later in his political career he went into partnership with S. J. Bampfield, Smalls' son-in-law, and R. W. Anderson in the management of the Beaufort *New South*, a pro-Smalls paper.²⁶

Deeply involved in the political life of the county, though never a candidate for elective office, was a white carpetbagger, George Gage. Gage was born in McConnellsberg, Ohio, in 1830. He lived in Belpré, in the same state until 1862 when he left for Beaufort to work for the United States government as a surveyor.²⁷ Arriving penniless in South Carolina, within a year Gage married a former school teacher from New Jersey and was appointed to an inspectorship in the Customs House. In 1871 he went to work as an assistant engineer on the Port Royal to Augusta Railroad and soon was promoted to the rank of resident engineer. In this capacity Gage supervised the layout of the road over the 25 miles between Port Royal and Yemassee. Operations were suspended for a time due to lack of funds, and when the work was resumed Gage was made chief engineer.²⁸ In 1873 Gage received an appointment as collector of customs for the Port of Beaufort, an important position in

²¹ *News and Courier*, September 22, 1888.

²² Tindall, p. 81.

²³ George Gage to Wilson (Beaufort, August 10, 1889), (GG II 347), Duke.

²⁴ Tindall, p. 81.

²⁵ Robert H. Woody, *Republican Newspapers of South Carolina* (Charlottesville, 1936), p. 22.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ George Gage to J. W. Marshall (Beaufort, March 29, 1885), (GG II 46), Duke.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

the local hierarchy of federal patronage.²⁹ He also served as one of three county commissioners of the South Carolina Free School Fund at about this same time. Between 1875 and 1876 Gage was the acting intendant (mayor) of the town and presided as magistrate over several cases brought before the Mayor's Court.³⁰ In 1879 Gage was removed from the collectorship for political reasons, and subsequently established a lumber mill to prepare timber for the New York and Boston markets.³¹ Judging from the available records, Gage was one of the more substantial citizens of the county. His total income for any given year during his tenure as collector was at least 1250 dollars, about one half of the salary of the governor and about five times the annual income of the most industrious black farmers in the Beaufort area.³²

A self-made and a self-righteous man who claimed to adhere to "principles higher than the law" in his financial and political dealings, Gage was quick to deprecate his political allies as well as his enemies. In his eyes Robert Smalls was a "South Carolina politician of the worst sort."³³ Of the unscrupulous William Whipper, along with his own patron, Thomas E. Miller, Gage wrote that "they may only be trusted with secrets to be repeated."³⁴ Gage, a comparatively wealthy man in his section of the state, and a Radical, did not support Reconciliationist changes in the old Republican ideology and strategy. The majority of Beaufort Republicans shared this attitude.

The issues of Beaufort politics primarily concerned the resolution of local racial and economic problems. The race issue played an important role in the patronage politics among office seekers within the Radical camp. Ordinarily shunning fusion politics, the Radicals preferred to work alone in order to keep as many patronage positions as possible within their control. The office-seeker's expressed sympathy towards the black man was a major criterion of his acceptability. In a letter to Thomas E. Miller supporting the petition of a Mr. Millet for the Inspectorship at Port Royal, Gage writes that Millet

²⁹ *Beaufort Republican*, March 7, 1872.

³⁰ George Gage to Robert Smalls (Beaufort, August 7, 1876), (GG I 455), Duke.

³¹ George Gage to Colonel William Stokes (Beaufort, February 15, 1885), (GG II 441), Duke.

³² George Gage to William Laurence (Beaufort, April 28, 1874), (GG I 125), Duke.

³³ George Gage to Thomas E. Miller (Beaufort, September 24, 1888), (GG II 238), Duke.

³⁴ George Gage to Joseph Gage (Beaufort, July 20, 1890), (GG II 421), Duke.

is a northern man. He is honest, and while he is not agreeable, and far from being a favorite, still I do think that the delegation should be willing and even glad to give him the place, notwithstanding all of his swagger and pretense. He is a friend of the colored man. I can give a great many instances which occurred that there was no trouble between the white and the colored men in which he did not stand up square for the rights of the latter.³⁵

Gage wrote the above recommendation in 1885, but four years later, support for white Radicals in the patronage was declining. A reporter for the *Washington Bee* wrote in reference to the struggle for the Beaufort collectorship in 1889, that Thomas E. Miller "is in trouble if he quarrels with Smalls, especially since he wants to put a white Republican (George Gage) in Smalls' place after Smalls threw himself into the breach to get Miller elected as the next Negro congressman from the state."³⁶ Race-related problems of rank and status within the party did occasionally surface in Republican politics, but the issue of race, *per se*, was not the motive force behind the activities of the Radical politicians.

The issue of race, in and of itself, was however of primary concern to the Straight-outs. In a letter to the *Abbeville Medium*, a Straight-out wrote that the object of the Democratic Party was "to purify and elevate the legislative, executive and judicial departments (of the state government), to punish the Radical thieves, and check the encroachment of the African upon our civilization. The policy was to repress the Negro politically."³⁷ The Democratic appeal for support played to fears of Negro supremacy, and Straight-out leaders were quick to devise a stratagem to defeat the black menace.

The Democrats went to extremes to assure the disenfranchisement of the freedmen. Beginning with the 1876 and 1878 elections, the Straight-outs adopted a program of violence and electoral fraud designed to intimidate the Radical vote. In these elections, many blacks were coerced into voting the Democratic ticket, and a large percentage stayed away from the polls altogether. In one instance, two Republican election managers in Edgefield County described the activities surrounding a local contest and requested the state election board to discard the ballots from their precinct. They claimed that the third manager of the precinct, a Democrat, took the ballot box to the Edgefield Court House, where the polling place was so crowded with armed whites that black

³⁵ George Gage to Colonel William Stokes (Beaufort, February 15, 1885), (GG II 41), Duke.

³⁶ *Washington Bee*, May 4, 1889.

³⁷ Martin Witherspoon Gary Papers, n.p., n.d., Duke.

men were not allowed to vote. Several hundred horsemen were crowded around the Court House in such a manner that Negroes could not approach. Many of these riders voted four or five times. Two Democrats, one from Edgefield and the other from Augusta, Georgia, counted the vote without authority, and during the count several Democratic tissue ballots were frequently discovered within the official paper stubs.³⁸

The most effective of the Straight-out ploys to eliminate Radical votes was the passage of a new registration and election law in 1882, so complex that illiterate blacks were easily misinformed as to its requirements. All citizens eligible to vote in 1882 were required to register in that year or be permanently disenfranchised. Those citizens becoming eligible after 1882 could register on one day per month up to the July preceding the November of an election. Migrant laborers, primarily black, and sharecroppers who moved their residences, even to another location on the same farm, had to re-register. Furthermore, the county election supervisor had the power to deny registration to those persons he thought unqualified for any reason.³⁹ He was not legally bound to advertise the location of the monthly registration office.⁴⁰ These strictures of the Election Law met with the general approval of Democrats in the legislature, but portions of the bill that threatened to disenfranchise poor whites were altered by the Straight-outs.

These other portions were primarily concerned with the passage in the legislature of the "Eight Box Law" which in its final form required (black) voters to place their ballots unassisted into the box with one of eight particular offices inscribed on the top.⁴¹ Any misplaced ballots were discarded by the election managers, most of whom were appointees of the Democratic governor. George Gage wrote that the eight-box elections "where the voters cannot read are a farce, and when you come to add ballot box stuffing, it is a farce and a crime combined."⁴² Gage described conditions in one of the voting precincts of Beaufort County during an election in which he served as an unofficial Republican election supervisor:

³⁸ Affidavit in the Martin Witherspoon Gary Papers, Duke.

³⁹ Robert Smalls, "Election Methods in the South," *The North American Review*, CLI (1890), 595.

⁴⁰ William J. Cooper, *The Conservative Regime, South Carolina, 1877-1890* ("The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science;" (Baltimore, 1968), p. 102.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* The eight inscriptions were for governor and lieutenant governor, other state offices, circuit solicitors, state senator, state House of Representatives, county offices, representative to Congress, and presidential electors.

⁴² George Gage to J. D. Taylor (Beaufort, November 10, 1888), (GG II 254), Duke.

Saint Helena Island has the best educated colored population of any part of the state, so two years ago instead of talking about their being ignorant and (mistakenly) voting the Democratic ticket, they (the Democrats) got a man to swear there was a row, and intimidation made by the Republicans. Some of the best white men in the county who voted for Col. Elliott say that they neither saw nor heard anything of the kind, and they were there. Nevertheless the vote was thrown out. Our only loss this year was about two hundred votes that could not be cast for want of time. There are about seven hundred or eight hundred votes on Saint Helenas and only five hundred voted because there was not time enough. The polls were opened by the Democratic managers one and a half hours late in the morning and closed to the minute at night, with the voters pressing for the door, but they were all Republicans.⁴³

Gage's account is typical of the reports filed by other Republicans with the state board of elections to no effect.

The problem of the Negro in politics was quickly resolved; the disenfranchisement of the black man met with little protest from Reconciliationists in Congress. The alteration of Republican policy from bloody shirt tactics to a strategy of reconciliation caught local politicians by surprise, and many felt betrayed by the rapid change of plans. In letters to T. E. Miller in 1889, George Gage expressed dismay that Senator Don Cameron (R-Penn) shared the platform with Conservative Senator Butler at a Charleston parade while the Democrat derided President Harrison. Cameron made no move to contradict the slander and shortly thereafter actually worked for the appointment of several local Democrats to patronage offices in preference to Republican petitioners.⁴⁴ In contrast to the lax Reconciliationist position on political appointments, the Radicals under Robert Smalls had forced Gage's retirement from the Customs House in 1873 because he had appointed Democrats as lighthouse keepers.⁴⁵

The Cameron incident was not the first time Republican Party officials from outside the state interfered with local appointments, and in a region characterized by chronic job shortages and declining cotton prices, the appointment of white Democrats to lucrative positions was received coldly. Aside from the economics of the issue, the Radicals had formerly monopolized the distribution of patronage and had manipu-

⁴³ George Gage to J. D. Taylor (Beaufort, January 24, 1889), (GG II 289), Duke.

⁴⁴ George Gage to Thomas E. Miller (Beaufort, February 27, 1889), (GG II 277), Duke.

⁴⁵ George Gage to Colonel William Stokes (Beaufort, February 15, 1885), (GG II 41), Duke.

lated the system to their own political advantage. Their appointments almost always promoted partisan ends and they resented Northern interference in South Carolina politics. In this respect Radicals and Straight-outs thought along similar lines, and in fact, Martin Witherspoon Gary, speaking for the Democrats advocated "home rule by home folks" in letters to the *Chronicle and Constitutionalist*.⁴⁶ On the Republican side, the *Washington Bee* stated that national party leaders showed more interest in gathering Southern delegates to the national convention than they did in a genuine rejuvenation of the party, encouraging the belief that the Reconciliationists preferred a skeletal Republican organization in the South which need not have a voice in the running of the party.⁴⁷

Disgusted with Northern congressmen interfering in their local political concerns, a faction within the Radical camp vented their anger on the most immediate manifestation of the "outsider" in the Beaufort area, the few remaining politically active carpetbaggers in the district. This nativist impulse reached a head in the election of 1888.

William J. Whipper, incumbent probate judge, wrote that some months before the election Robert Smalls had decided to contest the House seat of Democrat Col. Elliott of the Seventh Congressional District. At the same time, however, Smalls planned to run for sheriff of the county, though two candidates had already announced for the post. If Smalls captured Elliott's seat and won the election for sheriff, one of the offices would be declared vacant and subsequently filled by appointment by the governor. Smalls' actions were tantamount to a deal with Col. Elliott and the Democracy. The Republican county convention of 63 members convened to draw up a slate for the upcoming election; aware of Smalls' activities the delegates refused him a vote of confidence upon which Smalls removed his name from consideration for any lesser office. Instead, in convention, he supported George Reed for sheriff, but Reed lost to S. E. Taylor. Smalls, Bampffield, and Reed then plotted against the regulars and tried to get up an independent ticket. They went over to the Democrats and offered to divide the offices if the election "could be carried by the usual Democratic methods." On the day of the election, the Democratic poll managers refused to open three of the strongest Republican precincts, and there were scattered reports of ballot box stuffing. In the Ladies Island precincts, Democratic managers refused to sign the returns, rendering them invalid. Whipper concluded

⁴⁶ Martin W. Gary to the *Chronicle and Constitutionalist*, Martin Witherspoon Gary Papers, Duke.

⁴⁷ *Washington Bee*, December 19, 1888.

that "necessity knows no laws in South Carolina politics," and refused to turn over his court records to the nativist claimant to the post of probate judge.⁴⁸ He was incarcerated in the Beaufort jail and wrote his account of the election while awaiting trial.

A conflicting account of the election was published in a series of articles in the *Charleston News and Courier*. In the issue of November 4, the *Courier* reported that the political ring of carpetbaggers in the Republican county convention captured the convention by fraud and nominated a ticket "that with four exceptions was the worst slate ever nominated in Beaufort County." The ticket was a "stench in the nostrils of all honest and decent people."⁴⁹ The "respectable element" of the Republican Party (Smalls, *et al.*) nominated a fusion ticket which the Democratic Party approved. In the issue of November 14, the *Courier* went on to say that Taylor, Whipper, and T. H. Wheeler, the regular nominee for school commissioner, had tried to buy the convention. The three were all "Northern Negroes who lead profligate and adulterous lives."⁵⁰ Bampfield, the "only native Negro on the ticket, went over to the fusion ticket out of disgust, though he had no Democratic opponent."⁵¹ The rest of the fusion ticket consisted wholly of natives.⁵² The Radical *Washington Bee* also justified the fusion ticket as a means of eliminating corrupt Northern influences.

In an editorial dated March 3, 1889, the *Bee* defended Robert Smalls against such writers as Whipper, claiming that the "Southern colored people had been imposed upon for too long by a class of corrupt Northerners."⁵³ Smalls himself wrote an open letter to President Harrison defending his actions, stating that he had nothing to do with the fusion ticket, and that he had actually worked for the regular ticket, "except for those men of the lowest degree of character, the carpetbag-

⁴⁸ William J. Whipper, *An Account of the Beaufort County Election of November 6, 1888* (Beaufort, 1888).

⁴⁹ *News and Courier*, November 4, 1888.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, November 14, 1888.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.* The "People's Ticket," as the fusion slate was known, consisted of George Reed, black Republican, for sheriff; S. J. Bampfield, black Republican, for clerk of court; J. I. Washington and R. C. Reynolds, black Republicans, and W. N. Heyward, white Democrat, for state House; W. J. Verdier, white Democrat, for state Senate; A. S. Bascomb, black Republican, for county school commissioner; Thomas Talbird, white Democrat, for probate judge, W. H. Gregory and Solomon S. Deas, black Republicans, and Heyward Lynch, white Democrat, for county commissioners; Renty F. Greaves, black Republican, for coroner.

⁵³ *Washington Bee*, March 2, 1889.

gers and the rum element, who were of a convention that nominated adulterers, drunkards, and gamblers to office."⁵⁴

The attempt to proscribe carpetbaggers further eroded what little unity existed in Radical circles. Probably the major incentive of a single Radical faction to form a fusion ticket was to bolster the tarnished prestige of Smalls. Rejected by his party's convention, Smalls could remain a major figure in local politics only by bolting the official ticket. Smalls' decision played right into the hands of the Democrats; here was an unparalleled opportunity for an invasion of the Seventh Congressional District. Straight-out willingness to support a fusion ticket indicates that they saw no other way of capturing any of the offices in the overwhelmingly black coastal region. The composition of the People's Ticket, though it left the blacks in control of their local affairs, except in the lucrative business of the probate court, delegated significant power to the Democrats in the General Assembly. The election of 1888 marked the first time that a white Democrat was elected to any post in the county since the war. The success of the whites, aided and abetted by a portion of the black leadership, was rationalized by the blacks as a way to rid themselves of Northern interference once and for all.

Smalls and the editors of the *Bee* and of the *Courier* all cite the corruption and the irresponsibility of the carpetbaggers as justification for supporting a ticket not officially nominated by the party convention. It is true that Whipper's habits of drunkenness and gambling were common knowledge, that T. R. Reynolds, another regular candidate, attempted to incite a mob to burn the town when his opponent won, and that in the year following the election, S. E. Taylor was arrested for embezzling funds from the county treasury, but the Radical fusionists could lay no claim to integrity in office either. Back in 1882, A. C. Maxwell and Joseph Robinson, both Beaufort blacks, had led a short-lived reform movement against the leadership of Smalls and Bampfield, proclaiming the end of "rule by ignorant men."⁵⁵ At a political meeting in that year, T. R. Reynolds had been knocked off the speaker's platform when he attempted to discuss the Smalls bribery case in public.⁵⁶ George Gage commented on Smalls' corruption and on his tight hold over the Beaufort electorate in letters to Smalls' rival, Thomas Miller. Gage apparently had compiled a dossier on Smalls' disqualifications for office which he used in the patronage battle for the collectorship in 1889. Smalls' political ally, George Reed, was later implicated in the S. E.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, April 27, 1889.

⁵⁵ Port Royal *Palmetto Post*, August 24, 1882.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Taylor embezzlement case. No Radical faction held a monopoly of the numerous incidents of misconduct in office throughout the 1870's and 1880's. The fusionists' attempt to defend their ticket as "tossing the rascals out" merely obscured the real issue of Northern interference in the local politics.

Hayes adoption of a Reconciliationist policy and variations of this policy by his successors marked the end of the black man's usefulness to the Republican cause. Whitefield J. McKinlay, a black collector of the Port of Washington, D. C., wrote that the "Republicans were too cowardly . . . to fight in cases which involve principles touching the black man."⁵⁷ In 1888 the *News and Courier* recognized that South Carolina blacks were being "taxed out of their boots by the Americo-Blaine Tariff. They want to vote for the GOP that freed them."⁵⁸ Following the adoption of the new Republican strategy that looked for Conservative support, Southern Radicals and Straight-outs were left to their own devices.

⁵⁷ Whitefield J. McKinlay to Robert Smalls (Washington, D. C., August 23, 1912), Carter Godwin Woodson Collection, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

⁵⁸ *News and Courier*, September 22, 1880.

SOUTH FROM APPOMATTOX:
THE DIARY OF ABNER R. COX

Edited by

ROYCE GORDON SHINGLETON *

At the end of the Civil War, Lieutenant Abner R. Cox commanded Company L of the Palmetto Sharpshooters¹ (described by Cox as the "PSS") of Bratton's brigade,² Field's division,³ First Corps, Army of Northern Virginia.⁴ Cox enlisted as a private on April 14, 1861 in Ander-

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¹ On April 21, 1862, the Confederate Congress had authorized battalions of sharpshooters which were to be armed with long-range muskets or rifles. *Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865*, II, First session (Washington, 1904, 220-222). The Palmetto Sharpshooters (earlier the Palmetto Regiment or South Carolina Sharpshooters) evidently had been formed in early 1862. William F. Amann, *Personnel of the Civil War* (New York, 1961), I:114. At the time of surrender, Captain A. H. Foster commanded the Palmetto Sharpshooters. Clement A. Evans, ed., *Confederate Military History*, V (Atlanta, 1899), p. 552.

Sharpshooters were used in battle, but even when there was no battle, they usually continued to fire throughout the day. Tents were sometimes pitched over pits two or three feet deep to reduce the danger, but since the soldiers on both sides were accustomed to the sharpshooting routine, they were often careless in their movements about camp and six or more were killed daily. *Columbia Daily South Carolinian*, June 21, 1864, cited in J. Cutler Andrews, *The South Reports the Civil War* (Princeton, 1970), p. 403. Confederate sharpshooters were probably more effective, not because they were more expert marksmen, but because the English Enfield rifle musket was superior to the Springfield generally used by the Army of the Potomac. *Montgomery Daily Advertiser*, September 8, 1864, cited in Andrews, *South Reports*, p. 415. Yet Union sharpshooting helped to destroy Lee's army. G. C. Eggleston, *A Rebel's Recollections* (New York, 1875), p. 176.

² General John "Old Reliable" Bratton began the war as a private; he was twice wounded and once a prisoner. At Appomattox his brigade was "the most completely manned and was the only one which left the field as an organized unit." Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., *Dictionary of American Biography*, II (New York, 1943), 608.

³ General Charles William Field was constantly engaged in battle during the war, and at Appomattox his division was "the only thoroughly organized and effective body of troops in the Army of Northern Virginia". *DAB*, VI: 356-357.

⁴ The Army of Northern Virginia was composed of three army corps, nine divisions and approximately thirty-six brigades, exclusive of artillery and cavalry. To each brigade was attached a battalion of sharpshooters, composed of from two to four companies or 125 to 200 picked men. It is difficult to determine the battalion