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SOUTH CAROLINA RECONSTRUCTION HISTORIOGRAPHY

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There is no scarcity of books on the history of South Carolina during reconstruction. Historians, journalists, novelists, and propagandists have all produced works on the era. The quality varies as widely as their authors' motives in writing them. A study of South Carolina reconstruction historiography properly begins with James Shepherd Pike, author of the first book on the state during reconstruction.

Like many who followed him onto that "dark and bloody ground of reconstruction historiography," Pike was a journalist and an ardent partisan.[1] Though an abolitionist, he had long been an outspoken Negrophobe. A Liberal Republican and an avowed enemy of "Grantism," Pike was embittered by the crushing defeats handed his party in 1872 in the nation and, especially, in his home state of Maine—where his brother lost a race for Congress and charged the regular Republicans with fraud and vote-buying. During the campaign of 1872 Pike wrote an article for the New York *Tribune,* "A State in Ruin," indicting the Grant administration for fostering a grossly corrupt and inept government upon South Carolina. The next year, after conferring with Wade Hampton in Washington, Pike made his first visit to reconstruction South Carolina. There he spent most of his time observing the General Assembly in Columbia and conversing with conservative enemies of the regime.[2] Finding in South Carolina what he had set out to find, Pike filled his journal with accounts of the corruption and ignorant shenanigans of Radical officials. His observations were first published in a series of articles in the *Tribune* in the spring of 1873;[3] the next year they were issued in his famous book, *The Prostrate State,* one of the foundation stones upon which most studies of South Carolina during reconstruction are built.[4] Ignoring the circumstances of Pike's visit to South Carolina, native writers have cited his work as that of a "dyed-in-the-wool Republican abolitionist,"[5] a man

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[1] Bernard A. Weisberger, "The Dark and Bloody Ground of Reconstruction Historiography," *Journal of Southern History,* XXV (1959), 427-447.

[2] Robert F. Durden, *James Shepherd Pike: Republicanism and the American Negro,* Durham, 1957, pp. 160-219.

[3] New York *Tribune,* March 29–April 19, 1873.

[4] James Shepherd Pike, *The Prostrate State: South Carolina under Negro Government,* New York, 1874.

[5] Henry T. Thompson, *Ousting the Carpetbagger from South Carolina,* Columbia, 1926, p. 33.

away, our natural Rights, and Priviledges, of Tradeing, with a Free People, in Friendship, with all the Kings subjects. The Indians know not what to think of the late precipitate proceedings of the Georgians; are jealous, some designs are forming against them, that their old friends (as they call us,) throw them away and don't carry goods amongst them, as usual; besides looseing the most valuable branch, of our trade, by these measures, the consequence will be much worse to Carolina, for when that's gone, the dependance of the Indians, is gone also; how precarious then will all our estates be? Which can't be the case with our neighbours for they have little or nothing to loose, but what the Crown, and peoples charity, afford them, for Industry, theres none. Our Agent [9] hath orders, to represent these things, with many other arguments that might be offer'd to the King in Council, but we fear the success the Interest of the Trustees is too powerfull for a people, who allways boldly look'd forward, and have struggled, and surmonted, more difficultys in their Infancy, then all his Majestys colonys, in America, put togather. We must beg your Excuse, for dwelling thus long, on so disagreeable a subject.

July 1st

Your favours of the 14th February 22d March, and 12th April, is just come to our hands, per Oxenham, with the state of Jos. Wraggs account, which shall be noted accordingly, and copy of Capt. Smiths letter from St. Kitts, by which we observe, the necessity, he was under, of setting down there, and are pleased he is like to make so good a voyage. The Greyhound, Palmtree, and the Chevvall, takeing up at the Islands is doubtless a loss to us, but its however a satisfaction to find the concern'd have mett with such agreeable sales and remittances. Its very rare any slaves, that arrive here, between the last of October, and first February but suffer considerably, by the cold; on fitting out for this place, regard should allways be had, to the time of being here, to avoid the extremity of the cold and as early as may be in the spring.

We observe the Rainbow was saild for Bonny, and this place. We shall, on her arrivall [do all] thats possible for the interest concern'd. We hope she escaped [calam]ity which ruined her last voyage. It was very charitable, your assisting, Middleton, the pilott, in distress. We shall receive of him, the value of his bill, and creditt your account therewith.

[9] Peregrine Fury.

of "unquestioned party loyalty" who "came to the state on a visit for health and recreation." [6] Even Henry Steele Commager praised *The Prostrate State* for its "transparent honesty and its thorough documentation." [7]

The Prostrate State was the only contemporary set of observations of the South Carolina reconstruction scene to be published in book form; other journalists and travelers of the era devoted portions of books to South Carolina, but Pike was the only one to write an entire volume on the state. There was, however, an important series of articles by a contemporary observer published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1877. Writing anonymously, Belton O'Neall Townsend, a native South Carolinian, produced an amazingly perceptive analysis of the social, economic, and political conditions and attitudes prevalent in his state as reconstruction was drawing to a close.[8] Unfortunately, Townsend's articles went virtually unnoticed until their value was recognized by a Negro historian nearly half a century later.[9] After the "redemption" of South Carolina, nationwide interest in the state declined sharply. National opinion was inclined to accept the Red Shirt counterrevolution. Even editor Edwin Lawrence Godkin of *The Nation,* who had vigorously supported Governor Daniel H. Chamberlain's efforts to reform the South Carolina Republican Party, expressed no sorrow when his erstwhile favorite was overthrown. Though Chamberlain was certainly preferable to the "baser elements" in the party, Godkin reflected, it was "impossible to avoid the conclusion that a man of the highest self-respect and sense of political honor could hardly . . . have become . . . a carpet-bagger in a Southern State." [10] To defend the character of Daniel H. Chamberlain against such imputations, a friend of the ex-governor published in 1888 the second book on reconstruction in South Carolina.[11]

Walter Allen's *Governor Chamberlain's Administration in South Carolina: A Chapter of Reconstruction in the Southern States* is a patch-

[6] Edward L. Wells, *Hampton and Reconstruction,* Columbia, 1907, p. 94.

[7] *See* Commager's preface to James Shepherd Pike, *The Prostrate State: South Carolina under Negro Government,* New York, 1935, p. xviii.

[8] [Belton O'Neall Townsend,] "The Political Condition of South Carolina," "South Carolina Morals," and "South Carolina Society," *Atlantic Monthly,* XXXIX (1877), pp. 177-194, 467-475, 670-684.

[9] Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction,* Washington, 1924.

[10] [Edwin Lawrence Godkin,] " 'The Republican Party' in South Carolina," *The Nation,* XXIV (1877), 230.

[11] Walter Allen, *Governor Chamberlain's Administration in South Carolina: A Chapter of Reconstruction in the Southern States,* New York, 1888.

work of documents, letters, speeches, and newspaper clippings which, in its totality, is supposed to reflect favorably upon Governor Chamberlain. Although the author keeps his own words to a minimum, he hopes that he has told his story: how Chamberlain fought the "good fight" for the "two great causes which he represented with an ardor and fidelity equal towards each—the cause of EQUAL RIGHTS and the cause of HONEST GOVERNMENT," but, in the end, suffered a "baffling, cruel, defeat." [12] Honest government was a popular cause in those days of the Pendleton Act and Grover Cleveland, but the cause of equal rights—at least where non-whites were involved—was steadily losing its appeal. After the turn of the century, when the United States had shouldered its share of "the white man's burden," Chamberlain gave up the cause of equal rights: "the conditions of (the Negro's) welfare lie in reversing . . . the spirit and policy of reconstruction which brought on him this Iliad of woes." Instead of inspiring in the Negro hopes of political and social equality and giving him the same educational opportunities as the whites, Chamberlain would "give him . . . training in simple manual labor . . . which is his lot to do—lot fixed not by us but by powers above us." Chamberlain's article in the *Atlantic Monthly* of April 1901 is an evaluation of his administration in the light of that later day.[13] As a politician Chamberlain had many deficiencies, but these did not include inability to get in step with the times.

The year 1905 saw the publication of the first two extensive works on reconstruction in South Carolina by academically trained historians. Both John Porter Hollis and Thomas Dixon, Jr., did graduate work in history at Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Hollis' dissertation, *The Early Period of Reconstruction in South Carolina,* is a reasoned, scholarly treatment of the period from 1865 through 1868. In the preface Hollis acknowledges the "helpful suggestions" given him by Professor William A. Dunning of Columbia University,[14] and the text bears many of the marks of what has become known as the "Dunning school," including a favorable view of the "Black Codes" [15] and a rather harsh evaluation of the work of the Freedmen's Bureau.[16] Whatever shortcomings the present generation of historians may see in Dr. Hollis' work, none can deny its

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 486.

[13] Daniel H. Chamberlain, "Reconstruction in South Carolina," *Atlantic Monthly,* LXXXVII (1901), 473-484.

[14] John Porter Hollis, *The Early Period of Reconstruction in South Carolina,* Baltimore, 1905, p. 8.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 129.

importance as a milestone in the historiography of reconstruction in South Carolina—the first serious attempt to treat the period in a detached, dispassionate manner. The spirit of Hollis' dissertation is diametrically opposed to that of Thomas Dixon's novel *The Clansman.*

The Clansman is a miserable novel and could be dismissed as an absurdity were it not for the evil influence it has undoubtedly had upon South Carolina, the South, and the nation. Artistically and technically the novel is an abomination. Often nauseatingly saccharine, always preposterous and one-dimensional, the narration and dialogue are hard to endure. But what is revolting is the book's brazen appeal to the basest instincts: "He had the short, heavy-set neck of the lower order of animals. His skin was coal black, his lips so thick they curled both ways up and down with crooked blood marks across them. His nose was flat, and its enormous nostrils seemed in perpetual dilation. The sinister bead eyes, with brown splotches in their whites were set wide apart and gleamed ape-like under his scant brows. His enormous cheekbones and jaws seemed to protrude beyond the ears and almost hide them." [17] After this primate, emanating a "foul African odour," ravishes a Southern belle, the good Scotch-Irish people ("that unconquerable race") of Ulster County, South Carolina, call together the Klan—in the manner of their ancestors in old Scotland—and appropriately deal with the offending beast. Dixon's training at Johns Hopkins must have helped him in digging up the Negrophobic pronouncements that he puts in the mouth of Abraham Lincoln. Dixon was also an ordained Baptist minister, but it is doubtful that his seminary training aided him in writing this novel. In 1915 Dixon wrote the screenplay for *The Birth of a Nation,* the pioneer American motion picture based on *The Clansman.*[18]

The year 1905 also saw the publication of the first book-length nonfiction account of the entire reconstruction period in the state. John S. Reynolds' *Reconstruction in South Carolina: 1865-1877* is a valuable historical work which was first published in weekly installments in *The State* newspaper of Columbia, South Carolina. Although the work is not footnoted, the author states that "public records have been used wherever accessible." [19] The danger of this approach may be seen in Reynolds' own assertion that after the Radicals "had been driven from power, there was an investigation by committees who made it their business to probe

[17] Thomas Dixon, Jr., *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan,* New York, 1905, p. 216.

[18] *Who's Who in America, 1916–1917,* p. 484.

[19] John S. Reynolds, *Reconstruction in South Carolina, 1865–1877,* Columbia, 1905, p. 2.

to the bottom—who aggressively undertook to justify the charges made at intervals for eight years that the Government of South Carolina was steeped in rottenness and that its agents were with very few exceptions actual thieves and perjurers." [20] It is not surprising that the public records produced by these committees seeking to justify the charges of eight years present the Radical regime in an unfavorable light. And it is not surprising that in them Reynolds finds support for his claim that "the negro government of South Carolina . . . became a 'stench in the nostrils of decent people' and a disgrace to the country." [21] Notwithstanding Reynolds' bias and his neglect of the social and economic aspects of the period, his book is highly significant: it was the "standard" treatment of reconstruction in South Carolina for twenty-seven years.

The next book published on South Carolina during reconstruction is practically worthless. Edward L. Wells' *Hampton and Reconstruction* is misleadingly titled. Nearly a third of the book deals with Hampton's early life and wartime exploits; the years 1865-1875 are given thirty-one pages, many of which are devoted to long quotations from Pike and to the author's own incoherent philosophizing on the race question. The election of 1876 and the dual government are unevenly treated and, except for a few half-interesting anecdotes, nothing of any value is presented. The book trails off with the author's ramblings on business, the Spanish-American War, and Theodore Roosevelt.[22]

In 1916 Laura J. Webster published *The Operation of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina,* the second book-length attempt to apply the standards of historical scholarship to a phase of the South Carolina reconstruction story. Although Miss Webster is certainly more fair-minded in dealing with the Freedmen's Bureau than any of the above authors, she betrays her Southern prejudices by chiding a Bureau official for believing that "his five years' experience had brought keener insight (into the character of the Negro) than the lifetime of a former slaveholder." [23] This attitude of Miss Webster's is closely akin to that of the native whites pictured in the best novel on reconstruction in the Carolinas who insist that they "know more about the negroes than anybody else, just as a groom knows more about the horse he drives and controls than anybody else. . . ." [24] This bias, however, only affects Miss Webster's

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 463.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 514.

[22] Wells, *loc. cit.*

[23] Laura Josephine Webster, *The Operation of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina,* Northampton, 1916, pp. 148-149.

[24] The passage continues, "and is best informed as to the horse's opinion of him, the said groom." [Albion W. Tourgee,] *A Fool's Errand,* New York, 1879, pp. 295-296.

conclusions and hardly detracts from an excellent presentation of much significant factual material, the fruits of diligent research.

The next book on reconstruction in South Carolina was published by the Negro scholar and social worker Alrutheus Ambush Taylor in 1924. In the introduction to *The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction* Taylor lists the shortcoming of earlier works on reconstruction.

> Some of them were written by noted students of history who availed themselves of the first opportunities offered by the graduate schools of Northern universities, especially Johns Hopkins and Columbia. . . . [But] they were written to prove that the Negro is not capable of participation in government and to justify the methods of intimidation instituted to overthrow the reconstruction governments. . . . Self interest . . . impelled them to select such facts as would establish their point of view and to ignore facts to the contrary. . . . These treatises would leave the impression that history is largely a record of political strife. . . . In addition to political institutions . . . history includes the study of things social, industrial, economic, aesthetic, and religious. During this very period these Negroes and their friends were working for their uplift by laying a foundation for the acquisition of knowledge, the accumulation of wealth, the establishment of homes, and the extension of the Christian religion. Until all . . . these affairs have been adequately treated . . . the public can never have the proper view as to what was going on [in the South] at that time.[25]

Thus, Taylor sets out to "adequately treat" the social and economic aspects of South Carolina Negro life during reconstruction, and, despite his tendency to use thirty words where ten would suffice, he does a creditable job, making good use of Belton O'Neall Townsend's articles.[26] He also uses "reports made to the press from year to year by the native whites themselves" to show that "the efficiency of Negro labor progressively increased throughout the reconstruction" and that "after 1868 there was no serious disturbance of Negro labor until the whites injected politics into the question in 1876." According to Taylor, life and labor went on peaceably in South Carolina while the Radicals controlled the state, and both races generally prospered: "statistics show that from the economic point of view, South Carolina was steadily progressive throughout the reconstruction period." [27] Taylor also treats the political aspects of reconstruction. He does not attempt to excuse the Negro for his part

[25] Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.
[26] [Townsend,] *op. cit.*, p. 2.
[27] Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 309-310.

in the graft and frauds of the period, but tries to put these South Carolina scandals in perspective, recalling the national climate in those days of the Credit Mobilier and the Tweed Ring.[28] Taylor makes a strong case for his contention that the corruption of the Radical government has been exaggerated and its numerous and lasting accomplishments largely ignored. Although his partisanship is evident, Taylor's work is thorough and balanced and quite valuable.

The same year that Taylor's book came out, Thomas Nelson Page published a novel on reconstruction in South Carolina. The literary merits of *The Red Riders* are slightly more than those of *The Clansman,* but Page's novel falls far short of Dixon's in viciousness. *The Red Riders* is, in fact, a rather innocuous book for boys.[29] Two years later another rather insignificant book on South Carolina reconstruction was published. This was Henry T. Thompson's *Ousting the Carpetbagger from South Carolina,* which was timed to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the Red Shirt movement. Aside from the reminiscences of a few old Red Shirts, Thompson offers little new material, relying instead mainly upon the research and scholarship of Reynolds and Taylor. Towards the Negro Thompson's attitude is paternalistic: "As the races have to live in the South, side by side, the white man, because he is of the superior race, owes it to himself that he treat the negro with kindness and consideration."[30] As for the squabbles between the white conservative factions of 1876, Thompson tries to avoid taking sides, but he tends to emphasize the roles played by Matthew Calbraith Butler and Alexander Cheves Haskell in the "straightout" movement and to neglect the contributions of Martin Witherspoon Gary. The importance of General Gary, however, was soon put dramatically before the public.

In 1926 William A. Sheppard, a reporter for the New York *World* and an avid student of the life of General Gary, came into contact with Claude G. Bowers, editor of the *Evening World,* who was writing a general history of reconstruction in the South. The editor's subsequent use of Sheppard's material in his book "brought General Gary out of the obscurity to which he had been relegated by historians."[31] In Bowers' *The Tragic Era: The Revolution after Lincoln,* published in 1929, General Gary emerges as the "ingenuous, two-fisted fighting man who stepped forth in 1875 to demand that the Democracy . . . place a straight-

[28] *Ibid.,* pp. 288-289.

[29] Thomas Nelson Page, *The Red Riders,* New York, 1924.

[30] Thompson, *op. cit.,* p. 166.

[31] William Arthur Sheppard, *Red Shirts Remembered: Southern Brigadiers of the Reconstruction Period,* Atlanta, 1940, pp. ix-x.

out ticket in the field the next year." According to Bowers it was Gary who "in a spirited battle wth the conservatives and the compromisers, brought the party out of nebulosity to reality." To Bowers "the militant, resourceful leader of the movement was General Martin Witherspoon Gary. . . . Hampton was the symbol of what was wanted; Gary was the grimly practical politician quietly superintending the machinery of the movement. Hampton's appeal was in his popularity and gentleness; Gary's power was in his organizing genius." [32]

In depicting the campaign of 1876 Bowers makes use of the graphic reminiscences of Albert B. Williams, a distinguished Virginia journalist, whose first assignment was to cover the Red Shirt campaign. Williams' reminiscences were published in a series of articles in *The State* in 1926 and 1927. In 1935 they were reprinted in book form as *Hampton and His Red Shirts: South Carolina's Deliverance in 1876,* which remains a fascinating personal account of a bitter revolutionary struggle, waged with fraud and violence by both sides.[33] Besides the material of Sheppard and Williams, Bowers uses the books of Pike, Allen, Reynolds, Wells, Taylor, and Thompson—though he ignores the scholarly works of Hollis and Webster. In addition Bowers uses the minutiae culled from letters and diaries to adorn his narrative and give it a "you-are-there" flavor. His book is masterfully constructed and altogether engrossing. Were Bowers not such an accomplished artist, he could never have created the stir that eventually brought the wrath of the historical profession down upon his head. According to South Carolina historian Francis Butler Simkins, some rather unscrupulous writers "have so effectively correlated the events of Reconstruction with those of their own times that their books have been best sellers. The outstanding example of this is Claude Bowers' *Tragic Era,* in which an attack upon the Republican enemies of Alfred E. Smith in 1928 is veiled behind attacks upon the Republican leaders of 1868, 1872, and 1876." [34] Nevertheless, Simkins saw fit to lift at least one long passage from *The Tragic Era* and incorporate it into the book he wrote with Robert Hilliard Woody, *South Carolina During Reconstruction,* published in 1932.[35]

[32] Claude G. Bowers, *The Tragic Era: The Revolution After Lincoln,* Cambridge, 1929, pp. 502-515.

[33] Albert B. Williams, *Hampton and His Red Shirts: South Carolina's Deliverance in 1876,* Charleston, 1935.

[34] Francis Butler Simkins, "New Viewpoints of Southern Reconstruction," *Journal of Southern History,* V (1939), 49.

[35] Francis Butler Simkins and Robert Hilliard Woody, *South Carolina During Reconstruction,* Chapel Hill, 1932, p. 559.

The Simkins and Woody book is the first and only full-scale treatment of reconstruction in South Carolina by professional historians. With some truth, however, it could be said that the Simkins and Woody book is merely a refinement of Taylor's work. Its authors share the Negro historian's interest in economic and social matters and they use much of the material first exploited by Taylor—especially the Townsend articles and Negro church publications. But the Simkins and Woody treatment is also broader than that of Taylor, whose focus is on the Negro. There is in Simkins and Woody a preciseness of language that is not to be found in Taylor. Besides Taylor's book, Simkins and Woody use all the works mentioned above, and many more; the bibliography of *South Carolina During Reconstruction* fills twenty-one pages. The book is both thorough and concise, and remarkably free of bias. If the work has a shortcoming, this must be the authors' failure to deal adequately with one of the most influential figures in the state during this period: Francis W. Dawson is dismissed with one sentence.[36] There is no attempt to explore the relationship between the two most prominent intellectual adventurers on the South Carolina reconstruction scene—Dawson and Chamberlain.

The Simkins and Woody book was followed in two years by another landmark of South Carolina historiography. David Duncan Wallace's three-volume *History of South Carolina* is still "perhaps the best history of a southern state ever written."[37] His views on reconstruction were those of an upcountry South Carolina progressive who accepted the traditional attitude of his state on race. His sympathy is for the common white man and he finds the most "lamentable change" wrought by the constitutional convention of 1868 to be Negro suffrage. Nevertheless, Wallace praises what he believes to be the progressive features of the Radical constitution[38] and is certainly fairer to the Radicals than Yates Snowden, the only other post-Civil War author to produce a full-scale history of the state.[39] Wallace's history is far superior to Snowden's in almost every respect, but the inclusion of a giant fourth volume of biographies of mostly insignificant people, living at the time of publication tends to lower Wallace to the level of Snowden—who devotes more pages to current biography than to history. Wallace's *History of South*

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 355.

[37] Francis Butler Simkins, "Review of South Carolina: A Short History," *Journal of Southern History*, XVIII (1952), 526.

[38] David Duncan Wallace, *The History of South Carolina*, New York, 1934, III, 255-257.

[39] Yates Snowden, *History of South Carolina*, Chicago, 1920. The work is in five volumes, three of which contain biographical material.

Carolina is also marred by a cumbersome style and the inclusion of much undigested material, especially statistics. These defects are only partially remedied in his *South Carolina: A Short History,* published in 1951.[40] The most recent general history of South Carolina is a thin volume by Ernest McPherson Lander, Jr., dealing with the period 1865-1960. In Lander's book reconstruction comes under the scrutiny of a member of a new generation of South Carolina historians. But Lander's conclusions scarcely vary from Wallace's: reconstruction had a few "good points . . . offset by many evils." [41]

Wallace's great history and the reconstruction studies of Taylor and Simkins and Woody were all written when the school of economic determination loomed large in the American historical profession. Not one of these historians is strictly an economic determinist, but all reveal the influence of the school in an awareness of economic matters far surpassing that of the preceding generation of state historians. A strict economic determinist view of reconstruction was that of Charles A. Beard:

> Nothing like this had ever happened in history. . . . On the continent of Europe, the liberation of serfs generally left them freeholders or tenants on the land which they tilled. In the South . . . slaves were chattels bound to their masters and not to the land. . . . The slaves had not been accustomed to any village cooperation akin to that practiced by the servile peasants of old Europe. They did not have historic rights in cottages and plots of land. They knew little or nothing about the managerial side of agrarian economy. . . . In these circumstances, the Washington government, apart from attempts to give temporary relief through a freedmen's bureau, confined its work on behalf of the Negroes mainly to conferring civil and social rights upon them in paper proclamations.[42]

But another breed of economic determinists, the Marxists, tended to ignore the historical uniqueness of the reconstruction experience and saw it as a glorious chapter in the class struggle. In W. E. B. DuBois' *Black Reconstruction,* published in 1935, the color line is blurred, but the class line stands out sharply. As DuBois uses the word "Negro," it is interchangeable with "proletarian"; all whites—whether they be carpetbaggers, scalawags, or conservatives—are capitalistic exploiters. In the chapter "The Black Proletariat in South Carolina," the native poor whites

[40] David Duncan Wallace, *South Carolina: A Short History,* Chapel Hill, 1951.

[41] Ernest McPherson Lander, Jr., *A History of South Carolina, 1865–1960,* Chapel Hill, 1960, p. 22.

[42] Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization,* New York, 1931, II, 116-117.

are virtually ignored. According to DuBois, the Negro government was a good government; "the center of the corruption charge . . . was in fact that poor men were ruling and taxing rich men." DuBois maintains that only the Negroes (proletarians) were virtually free of the taint of corruption, and he makes much of the aristocratic connections of the arch-corruptionist Franklin J. Moses. The motivation of the Red Shirt reactionaries was not to end corruption, for, according to DuBois, "if there was one thing that South Carolina feared more than bad Negro government, it was good Negro government." Nor was the race issue really important, because beneath it "and unconsciously of more fundamental weight, was the economic issue. Men were seeking again to reestablish the dominion of property in Southern politics." [43] DuBois' several valid points were blunted as he carried them to absurd extremes.

Another extremist view of reconstruction in South Carolina came out in 1940. William A. Sheppard's material on General Gary was published that year under the title *Red Shirts Remembered: Southern Brigadiers of the Reconstruction Period.* Expertly written and permeated with biting sarcasm, Sheppard's book is as spirited in its damnation of the "Bourbon" reactionaries as DuBois'. Wade Hampton is not spared, and M. C. Butler comes under especially bitter attack. But the real villain of the piece is Francis W. Dawson. As does DuBois, Sheppard alleges collusion between the Radical corruptionists and the most conservative whites. According to Sheppard, the "foreigner" and "bastard" Dawson—"whose real name was Reeks"—had benefitted considerably from the graft of the Radicals, and, like his friend Chamberlain, turned reformer only to preserve some of his ill-gotten gains. Sheppard's masterful dissection of Chamberlain's speech to the state Republican convention in 1876 effectively shatters the image of the carpetbag governor as an upright and fearless reformer. Had it not been for his hero Gary, Sheppard maintains, Dawson would have been able to lead the befuddled Hampton and his followers into an alliance with Chamberlain, thus preserving Radical rule. Gary foiled Dawson's plans, but after Hampton's inauguration the wily editor was able to induce the Bourbons to betray Gary and the "honest, hard-working" white people who had been the backbone of the Red Shirt movement. But, in 1890, when they elected Governor Benjamin R. Tillman, the "Red Shirts remembered" who had really won the victory in 1876.[44] The book raises some interesting points,

[43] W. E. Burghardt DuBois, *Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880,* Philadelphia, 1935, pp. 381-430.

[44] Sheppard, *loc. cit.*

but is, of course, terribly unbalanced. Sheppard provides some valuable insight into the character of Gary, who, despite the author's intentions, appears as a dangerous fanatic.

In 1944 the second important Marxist interpretation of reconstruction in South Carolina appeared in the form of a novel by Howard Fast. Like DuBois, Fast took much of his historical material from Simkins and Woody.[45] But unlike DuBois' "The Black Proletariat in South Carolina," Fast's *Freedom Road* finds a place for the poor whites in the reconstruction proletariat. To Fast most scalawags were not capitalistic exploiters, but genuine working class revolutionaries who marched arm-in-arm with their Negro comrades. The constitutional convention of 1868 is described, but most of the novel is concerned with life on a commune established by Negro and white workers on a midlands plantation. The narrative is broken off at 1868 and taken up again at 1876, when the counterrevolution begins to gather steam. There is not a word, pro or con, on the functioning of the Radical government in Columbia. The novel reaches its climax as the men, women, and children of the biracial commune make their last stand in the old plantation manor and are all blasted into eternity by Ku Klux Klan artillery in the year 1877. Fast assures his readers that his commune—and its fate—was like that of "a thousand" others that "actually existed" all over the South.[46] As history *Freedom Road* is, of course, preposterous; as a novel it is mediocre. Fast has a great gift for description, but his Negroes and poor whites are far too virtuous to be believed. The novel leaves an impression of patent dishonesty, for it is not subtle enough to be allegorical.

A professor of English at Winthrop College wrote the next book to appear on reconstruction in South Carolina. Hampton M. Jarrell's *Wade Hampton and the Negro: The Road Not Taken* is a spirited work published in 1950 to support the author's views on the race question. "This study," Jarrell frankly admits, "is not only a record of the past, but also a plea for moderation now and in the future."[47] It is also a defense of Hampton's record in dealing with the Negro against charges of bad faith. Jarrell insists that Hampton "embodied the best tradition of Southern friendship for the Negro,"[48] and never betrayed the trust they placed in him. General Gary is roundly attacked for being like Thaddeus Stevens and having a one-track mind. According to Jarrell, it was Hampton's

[45] Howard Fast, *Freedom Road*, New York, 1944, p. 262.

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 262-263.

[47] Hampton M. Jarrell, *Wade Hampton and the Negro: The Road Not Taken*, Columbia, 1950, p. ix.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. xi.

conciliatory attitude towards the Negro that carried the day for the Red Shirts in 1876. "If South Carolina had elected to follow Gary . . . [in] 1876 as the North had followed Stevens . . . [in] 1867, Gary's leadership would have been as disastrous for the state as Stevens' had been for the nation." [49] In the author's view, it is not to men like Gary and Stevens, but "to Southern men like [Hampton that] the nation must look for any substantial improvement of race relations in the South." [50] Jarrell's points are well taken, but his book, like so many others on the period, is as much propaganda as history.

The most recent book of importance to students of reconstruction in South Carolina is Robert F. Durden's valuable study on James S. Pike, which casts much light on the motives and temperament of the author of *The Prostrate State*.[51] Durden's work is well done and points up the need for scholarly biographies of the other important figures on the South Carolina reconstruction scene. There is already a good general study of the period by Simkins and Woody, and there is no shortage of popular works embracing a variety of partisan viewpoints. New interpretations of a serious nature are always useful, but most needed are thoughtful biographies of such figures as Gary, Dawson, and Chamberlain. Competent biographies of these men would serve the historical profession, and—if done artistically, as all good history must be—should interest the general public, for each of these men had about him an air of romance. And there is yet to be written a good novel on this exciting period in the state's history. It is unfortunate for South Carolina that Margaret Mitchell did not live on the northern bank of the Savannah river. The conscientious novelist can portray an era as accurately and effectively as the historian; South Carolina during reconstruction still presents a challenge for both.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. xi.
[51] Durden, *op cit.*, pp. 1-2.