

Kenneth Wayne Dilda. WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT AND THE SOUTHERN POLICY OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, 1906-1912. (Under the direction of Dr. Joseph F. Steelman) Department of History, East Carolina University, May 1970.

The purpose of this study is to examine the southern policy of William Howard Taft and the Republican party between 1906 and 1912. It is primarily concerned with Taft's efforts to divide the Democratic vote in the South through extensive southern travels, appointment of numerous white Democrats to office, abandonment of the southern Negro, and appeals to southern businessmen to support the Republican party and its principle of protection.

When William H. Taft was elected President in 1908, numerous intellectuals, journalists, and politicians advocated the adoption of a southern policy by the Republican party. It appeared that the time was ripe for the dissolution of the "Solid South." Many southerners were cognizant of the detrimental effects their political solidarity had upon their role in national politics. William Garrott Brown, Walter Hines Page, Silas McBee, John Motley Morehead, and a host of other southerners encouraged Taft to establish a two-party system in their region.

Many southerners had also adopted a new attitude toward the Negro. Racial relations were improving and many southern whites were convinced that they no longer needed to unite politically to prevent Negro political domination. The attitude of the South toward protection for its domestic products had also changed by the time of Taft's election. More businessmen and politicians were demanding a higher tariff for their goods. Another changed condition by 1908 was a growing political independence among southern voters. During the Roosevelt era, many southern Democrats

had broken with tradition and voted against Democratic candidates. A changed attitude toward federal regulatory laws and educational progress were other signs that indicated the time was ripe for the Republican party to make inroads into the southern Democratic vote.

Before his election in 1908, William Taft embarked on one facet of his southern strategy. As Secretary of War under President Theodore Roosevelt, he visited North Carolina and Kentucky in an effort to gain support for the Republican party. In October, 1908, as the Republican presidential candidate, he became the first member of his party personally to carry his campaign into the South. Traversing the states of Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia, Taft was well-received and encouraged by his receptions.

After his election, President Taft embarked on an extensive southern tour in 1909 which carried him into every southern state except Maryland and Florida. His speeches were devoted primarily to praising southern historical traditions and heroes. By avoiding political issues, Taft told his southern audiences exactly what they wanted to hear and was unusually well-received in return. Another facet of his southern travels included trips to dedicate Civil War battlefields and memorials and to honor the South's historical past. These excursions included the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Bull Run in Manassas, Virginia in 1911 and the commemoration of North Carolina's "so-called" Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence in Charlotte in 1909. Taft's southern travels also included six vacations. All were spent in Hot Springs, Virginia, and Augusta, Georgia. The southern travels revealed several weaknesses in

Taft's political abilities. In his southern excursions, the President failed to visit and converse extensively with businessmen, workers, educators, and Negro leaders. He relished ceremonial functions too much to become involved with arduous political conversations.

In his southern strategy, President Taft also sought to improve the status of the Republican party by appointing a majority of white Democrats to influential positions. The party in the South was ridden with factionalism in practically every state and many incumbent Republican officeholders hoped to keep the party small. Taft's inability to unite these factions weakened his southern strategy. He appointed Jacob McGavock Dickinson, a Tennessee Democrat, as his Secretary of War. In his southern judicial appointments, the President selected practically all white conservative Democrats. To the Supreme Court he selected Edward Douglas White of Louisiana, Joseph Rucker Lamar of Georgia, and Horace Harman Lurton of Tennessee. Henry Groves Connor of North Carolina and William I. Grubb of Alabama were among those white Democrats appointed to federal district judgeships. Taft's policy toward local federal offices was to insure life tenure for competent officials, regardless of party affiliations. As a result of this policy, many Republicans were replaced with Democrats. In appointing census supervisors and enumerators for the thirteenth census in 1910, President Taft divided the appointments between Democrats and Republicans in the states of Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. In the politically doubtful states of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky, all census appointments went to Republicans. President Taft's appointment policy infuriated southern Republicans and weakened his overall southern policy. No large numbers

of Democratic followers were attracted to the Republican party as a result of the President's patronage strategy.

Taft's policy toward southern Negroes was disastrous for the race. In an effort to woo white southerners into the Republican party, Taft completely abandoned the southern Negro. He defended white supremacy and "lily-whitism." Taft endorsed discriminatory southern election laws disfranchising the Negro. He assured southerners that the fifteenth amendment did not require the franchise be granted to the ignorant and irresponsible. The President rejected the ideas of social equality, race amalgamation, and even social association among the races. In his handling of Negro patronage, Taft deviated from Theodore Roosevelt's policy by refusing to appoint southern Negroes to influential positions. He secured the resignations of William Demos Crum as collector of customs at Charleston, South Carolina and Thomas Richardson as postmaster at Port Gibson, Mississippi for no other reason than that they were black. Both were replaced with whites. Many other Negro officeholders were likewise removed and replaced with whites. Only token numbers were given political positions. Taft also deviated from previous Republican policies by refusing to allow Negro census takers to count members of both races in the South. The President also refused to recommend congressional action against persons participating in lynchings.

The only favorable facet of his southern strategy toward southern Negroes was conveying to them his sympathy. He believed the solution to the Negro's future was acquiring primary and industrial education. Only doctors, lawyers, teachers, and ministers should receive advanced

education. A second solution was for the southern Negro to win the respect of his white neighbor. Taft also opposed the American Colonization Society's efforts to remove American Negroes to Africa. When Booker T. Washington was attacked by Henry Adams Ulrich, a white man, in 1911, Taft wrote the Negro leader expressing his regrets for the incident and condemning the action of the white man.

President Taft's Negro policy was popular among southern whites and a few Negro leaders, especially Booker Washington, but was condemned by a majority of Negro spokesmen. By betraying his Negro political allies in the South, Taft weakened his party's strength in the region. Furthermore, no significant numbers of white Democrats were attracted to the Republican party in the South.

A last major facet of Taft's southern strategy was an appeal to southern businessmen to support the Republican party and the Republican principle of tariff protection. Realizing that industrial progress in the South had caused a corresponding demand for more protection, President Taft directed an appeal to southern industrialists. He also undertook the first major tariff reform since 1897 by calling Congress in special session in 1909 to revise the tariff rates. During the tariff debates, many southerners demanded protection for their domestic products such as lumber, iron and steel, citrus fruits, sugar, and tobacco. Taft often declared that he wanted a downward revision of the tariff schedules, but the Payne-Aldrich Bill of 1909 revealed no significant downward revision of the Dingley duties. Furthermore, the President's efforts at tariff reform caused an irreparable split among Republicans between insurgents and regulars. The

measure proved unpopular among southerners because the rates on consumable products had not been reduced enough to satisfy their demands. When southern Democrats and insurgent Republicans combined in 1911 to pass a wool bill, a cotton bill, and a farmers' free list bill drastically reducing the tariff duties, Taft vetoed all three. When the vetoed wool bill was repassed in 1912 along with a steel bill, Taft again vetoed them. The President charged that the rates were reduced so drastically as to abolish the Republican principle of protection.

In an effort to illustrate his desire for tariff revision, Taft concocted the Reciprocity Agreement with Canada late in 1910. The agreement placed hundreds of imported items from Canada on the free list and reduced the rates on numerous American goods consumed in Canada. The treaty was popular among southerners, but Taft did not receive credit for its passage in Congress since a coalition of southern Democrats and insurgent Republicans had accomplished that goal. In September, 1911, however, the Canadians defeated the agreement. President Taft's economic programs resulted in no Republican gains in the South because his pledges of tariff revision were not fulfilled during his administration.

By the end of 1912, it was apparent that President William H. Taft's southern policy was a failure. He had made no inroads into the Democratic vote in the South. The President had been unable to heal the factional strife and division among his southern colleagues. White Democratic support for the Republican party had not been obtained. The congressional elections of 1910 and 1912 and the presidential election of 1912 clearly revealed the failure of Taft's southern strategy. The 1910 congressional election resulted in a Democratic landslide and in 1912 no new southern Republican congressmen

were elected. The 1912 presidential election resulted in the election of a Democratic president for the first time since 1892. The split within the Republican party between Roosevelt Progressives and Taft regulars undoubtedly contributed to Woodrow Wilson's election, but Republican support was markedly less than in 1908. Taft and the Republican party failed to create a strong opposition party in the South between 1906 and 1912. The only successful aspect of Taft's southern policy was that it resulted in his personal popularity among white southerners, but this represented no political strength or gain.

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT
AND THE SOUTHERN POLICY
OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, 1906-1912

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of History
East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in History

by
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May 1970

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT PAGE

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Dr. Joseph F. Steelman of the East Carolina University faculty for his untiring efforts in supervising this thesis. His patient and constructive counseling has immeasurably contributed to the completion of the thesis. The efforts of Dr. Lala Steelman and Dr. Fred Ragan, other members of the thesis committee, are also acknowledged for the reading of this paper.

The author would like to thank the cooperative personnel in the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina, the Manuscript Department at Duke University Library, and the Manuscripts Division at the Library of Congress for their assistance in examining the manuscripts of their repositories.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Beginning with the Compromise of 1877, every Republican president devised a southern strategy aimed at wooing white southerners into the Republican party. Realizing the need for a two-party system in the South, the Republican party adopted southern policies to attract disillusioned southern Democrats into its ranks. The post-Civil War policy of military intervention in the South was recognized as a deterrent to Republican success. President Rutherford Birchard Hayes removed the last federal troops from the South in April, 1877, and devised a policy to conciliate southerners. He wanted to build a Republican party in the region supported largely by white conservatives. Hayes appointed David M. Key, an ex-Confederate Democrat from Tennessee, as his Postmaster General. In 1877 the President made two southern trips in which he pleaded for "union and conciliation." Hayes sought to divide the Democratic vote on economic rather than racial issues. Appealing to former southern Whigs, Hayes advocated federal aid for internal improvements. In an effort to conciliate further southern whites, he appointed white Democrats to most of the influential southern offices. The President's southern strategy did not include any coalitions with Independent Democrats such as the Readjusters in Virginia headed by William Mahone. He abandoned the Stalwarts and carpetbaggers by refusing them patronage privileges. In his policy toward southern Negroes, Hayes appointed only token numbers to influential positions. President Hayes' southern strategy was a failure because the 1878 congressional elections and the presidential election of 1880 resulted

in less southern support for the Republican party than in 1876. Further-
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 more, the policy caused intraparty disputes and factionalism.

When James Abram Garfield succeeded Hayes to the presidency in 1880, he adopted a southern policy which deviated from Hayes' pacificatory attitude toward white conservative southerners. Garfield listened more to the advice of carpetbaggers and cooperated more with Mahone's Readjuster movement in Virginia. He also opposed giving the majority of southern jobs to Democrats. William Henry Hunt, a white Republican from Louisiana, was appointed head of the Navy Department. In his strategy toward southern Negroes, Garfield continued Hayes' policy of appointing a few to influential positions. The President believed the South's future "lay in the education of its youth and in the development of its business interests." Garfield's southern strategy was never fully implemented

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Vincent P. DeSantis, "President Hayes's Southern Policy," Journal of Southern History, XXI (November, 1955), 476-494; Vincent P. DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question: The New Departure Years, 1877-1897 (Baltimore, 1959), 66-133, hereinafter cited as DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question; Paul H. Buck, The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900 (New York, 1959), 105-107; Stanley P. Hirshson, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt: Northern Republicans and the Southern Negro, 1877-1893 (Bloomington, Indiana, 1962), 24-44, hereinafter cited as Hirshson, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt; Comer Vann Woodward, Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction (New York, 1956), 235-267; Rayford Whittingham Logan, The Betrayal of the Negro from Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson (New York, 1969), 23-47, hereinafter cited as Logan, The Betrayal of the Negro; Rayford Whittingham Logan, The Negro in the United States: A Brief History (New York, 1957), hereinafter cited as Logan, The Negro in the United States; Comer Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913, Volume IX of A History of the South, edited by Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter (Baton Rouge, 1951), 42-50, hereinafter cited as Woodward, Origins of the New South.

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before his assassination in 1881.

The southern strategy of President Chester Alan Arthur was a new departure for the Republican party. Arthur was convinced that "Our straight Republican, carpet-bag Negro governments...have been destroyed and cannot be revived...."³ Therefore, President Arthur threw his full support behind anti-Bourbon southerners, especially Mahone and other Independent Democratic movements in the South. They were given the patronage powers in their respective states. Arthur also abandoned southern Negroes by refusing to support civil rights and patronage opportunities for the race. In his economic policies, President Arthur "courted" southern economic radicals who espoused the programs of the Greenbackers and the coinage of silver dollars. The 1884 presidential and congressional elections proved that Arthur's southern policy was also a failure. James Gillespie Blaine, the Republican presidential candidate, received a relatively smaller vote in the South than did Hayes and Garfield. The eight Independents elected in 1882 were defeated and the Republicans gained no new seats. Therefore, Arthur's southern strategy reaped no immediate political gains for the Republican party in the South.⁴

The ascendancy of Benjamin Harrison to the presidency in 1888 marked the inauguration of another new southern strategy by the Republican party.

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Vincent P. DeSantis, "President Garfield and the Solid South," North Carolina Historical Review, XXXVI (October, 1959), 442-465; Hirshson, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt, 78-98; DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, 133-150; Woodward, Origins of the New South, 100.

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Quoted in Woodward, Origins of the New South, 101.

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Vincent P. DeSantis, "President Arthur and the Independent Movements in the South in 1882," Journal of Southern History, XIX (August, 1953), 346-363; DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, 150-181; Hirshon, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt, 99-122; Woodward, Origins of the New South, 101-106; Logan, The Betrayal of the Negro, 54-57.

During the first year of his administration, Harrison appealed to southern whites to support his high tariff policy. Former southern Whigs and protectionists were urged to support the Republican party. The Negro and the racial issue were given secondary importance. In his annual message to Congress on December 3, 1889, however, President Harrison abandoned his former strategy and advocated a revamped southern policy. Harrison lashed out at the South for denying the Negro his political and civil rights. The President revealed that he had abandoned the idea of creating a "lily-white" party in the South and implied the need for a force bill to ensure Negro suffrage. When the Lodge Force Bill of 1890 was introduced, Harrison initially supported it. He deviated from Hayes' conciliatory policy toward white southern conservatives and refused to cooperate with southern Independent Democratic movements as Arthur had done. The President decided to turn his attention to getting southern Republican votes counted by federal supervision. However, Harrison and the Republican party acquiesced in abandonment of the Force Bill on account of party disagreements and the expediency of the tariff issue. The bill never became law. After the failure of the measure, the Republican party never adopted another aggressive policy toward southern Negroes. The entire southern question became "a matter of dispensing patronage and of obtaining delegates for national conventions."

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Vincent P. DeSantis, "Benjamin Harrison and the Republican Party in the South, 1889-1893," Indiana Magazine of History, LIC (December, 1955), 279-302; DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, 190-226, 261-262; Hirshson, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt, 156-236; Woodward, Origins of the New South, 220; Logan, The Betrayal of the Negro, 62-87; Donald Marquand Dozer, "Benjamin Harrison and the Presidential Campaign in 1892," American Historical Review, LIV (October, 1948), 49-77.

There developed no significant changes in the Republican party's southern strategy with the election of William McKinley in 1896. McKinley made two southern tours during his presidency, but his southern appeal was more sentimental than political. On such issues as Negro suffrage President McKinley generally remained silent. Hoping to maintain a large following among southern Negroes, however, McKinley appointed more blacks to office than any of his predecessors. Between 1899 and 1900 alone, the President appointed twice as many Negroes to federal offices as any former president.⁶

The elevation of Theodore Roosevelt to the presidency in 1901, upon the assassination of McKinley, produced marked changes in the southern policies of the Republican party. Roosevelt wooed black-and-tans, "lily-whites," and white supremacy Democrats. He removed a white Republican as federal judge in Alabama and appointed Thomas G. Jones, a conservative Gold Democrat, to the post. In 1908 he appointed Luke E. Wright, a Tennessee Democrat and ex-Confederate, as his Secretary of War after William H. Taft resigned to campaign for president. Numerous other white Democrats were placed in federal offices in the South. Roosevelt publicly admitted that Booker T. Washington was his advisor on Negro patronage and invited the Negro leader to dinner at the White House in October, 1901. In 1902 the President appointed William Demos Crum, a Negro, as collector of customs in Charleston, South Carolina. In January, 1903, Roosevelt closed the post office at Indianola, Mississippi, after white protests against the Negro postmistress. In an effort to attract more

Woodward, Origins of the New South, 462; Logan, The Betrayal of the Negro, 93-104; John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans, 3rd ed. (New York, 1969), 434, hereinafter cited as Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom.

southern support for the Republican party, Roosevelt made two southern tours in 1905. He praised southern historical traditions and heroes and advised southern Negroes to "trust southern whites as their best friends." Comments on southern restrictions on Negro suffrage were avoided. In the 1904 presidential election, Republican support increased in the South and gained even more substantially in the 1908 election.

At the time of William Howard Taft's election in 1908, the Republican party in the South was still small, impotent, and unappealing to many southerners. Many southern Republican leaders were more interested in retaining the patronage powers than in creating a stronger political party. The party had fallen into such a deplorable condition that Secretary of War, William H. Taft, told the North Carolina Republican State Convention in Greensboro on July 6, 1906, "There is no Republican party in the South." Since Reconstruction a majority of southerners had united politically into a "Solid South." Because of this political

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Woodward, Origins of the New South, 463-467; Logan, The Betrayal of the Negro, 347; Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, 434-435. For other discussions of Republican strategies between 1877 and 1908, see Vincent P. DeSantis, "Republican Efforts to 'Crack' the Democratic South," Review of Politics, XIV (April, 1952), 244-264; Vincent P. DeSantis, "The Republican Party and the Southern Negro, 1877-1897," Journal of Negro History, XLV (April, 1960), 71-87; Vincent P. DeSantis, "Negro Dissatisfaction with Republican Policy in the South, 1882-1884," Journal of Negro History, XXXVI (April, 1951), 148-159.

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Quoted in Weekly Tar Heel (Greensboro, North Carolina), July 12, 1906, hereinafter cited as Weekly Tar Heel.

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The "Solid South" included Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. For a refutation of the idea of the "Solid South" see Gilbert E. Gowan, "The Solid South," East Tennessee Historical Society Publications No. 12 (1940), 3-15.

solidarity the South had been denied its proportionate role in national affairs. During the years of party hegemony in national politics, the vote in the South was not needed. Cognizant of the deplorable condition of the Republican party in the South and the region's political isolation, William H. Taft undertook to formulate between 1906 and 1912 a southern policy aimed at rectifying these flaws in party strategy and organization.

In 1908 Taft and numerous political observers were confident that the times were ripe for a rebirth of Republicanism in the South. The new President engaged in extensive southern tours allegedly to improve his knowledge and understanding of southern traditions and sentiments and North-South relations. By undertaking extensive southern tours and scheduling numerous vacations in the South, Taft hoped to relate to southerners his concern for them. When he appointed numerous southern Democrats to influential federal positions, President Taft hoped to illustrate further his desire to restore the South to national prominence. Many southern Republican officeholders lost their jobs to Democrats because of Taft's appointment policies. Hoping to woo white southerners into the Republican party, Taft devised a southern Negro policy which placated the white community. He gave tacit approval to southern disfranchisement laws and white primaries. The southern Negro's interest was sacrificed in order to increase Taft's personal popularity in the South. In his economic policies, Taft attempted to attract southern support for a protective tariff. Democratic businessmen and industrialists were urged to support the Republican party so that continued economic prosperity could be achieved.

President Taft undertook his southern policy with a sincere hope

that the North and South would be drawn closer together and that the Republican party would be transformed into a viable and strong opposition party in the South. He did not embark upon such a strategy without support and adequate justification. Intellectuals, journalists, and politicians throughout the nation gave encouragement and justification for such a southern policy. Taft was provided substantial impetus to undertake such a difficult and challenging southern strategy.

CHAPTER II

THE RATIONALE OF A SOUTHERN POLICY FOR THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

During the first decade of the twentieth century numerous intellectuals, journalists, and politicians expressed their dismay with the political solidarity and isolation of the South. They asserted hopefully that the "Solid South" was slowly approaching dissolution. In 1908 the New York Age foresaw the "incipient break-up of the solid South."¹ Walter Hines Page, editor of the World's Work, welcomed "the impending and inevitable breaking of the Solid South."² In 1910 Ray Stannard Baker, an intense observer of the southern race problem, spoke of "the pending break-up of the political solidarity of the South."³ These and similar statements were made because notable economic, political, and racial changes had occurred in the South since the Civil War. When William Howard Taft was elected President of the United States in 1908, it appeared that a dedicated southern policy by a Republican president would reap abundant political gains.

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New York Age, November 12, 1908.

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William Howard Taft, The South and the National Government (n.p., 1908 [?]), 6, hereinafter cited as Taft, The South and the National Government; Walter Hines Page, "Breaking the Solid South," Outlook, XC (December 19, 1908), 874; Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., "Walter Hines Page and the Spirit of the New South," North Carolina Historical Review, XXIX (October, 1952), 491, hereinafter cited as Sellers, "Walter Hines Page."

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Ray Stannard Baker, "Negro Suffrage in a Democracy," Atlantic Monthly, CVI (November, 1910), 619, hereinafter cited as Baker, "Negro Suffrage in a Democracy"; "The Status of the Negro as a Voter," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XLII (December, 1910), 725, hereinafter cited as "The Status of the Negro As a Voter"; see also, Enoch Marvin Banks, "The Passing of the Solid South," South Atlantic Quarterly, VIII (April, 1909), 101, hereinafter cited as Banks, "The Passing of the Solid South."

Many signs indicated that the South was ready to abandon its one-party system. Numerous southerners evidently were disillusioned with their political solidarity and had begun to realize the advantage of two viable political parties in the region.⁴ An increasing number of political observers realized that the political solidarity of the South prevented it from obtaining an influential role in the affairs of the national government. Since the Civil War the South had been practically isolated from the federal government. In 1904 Senator Augustus Bacon, Democrat from Georgia, asserted that the South was as effectively isolated from the national government as if it were "a British crown colony."⁵

The South's one-party system had many detrimental effects upon the region and the entire nation. One ill effect was that southerners had not been awarded influential positions in the national government as had been the case before the Civil War. Before 1861 the South furnished 9 of the 15 elected presidents, 29 of the 37 justices of the Supreme Court, 73 of the 153 cabinet members, 12 of the 23 House speakers, and 27 of the 82 diplomatic representatives to England, France, Austria,

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Most prominent among these were William Garrott Brown, Walter Hines Page, Hannis Taylor, Samuel Mitchell, John Motley Morehead, Silas McBee, Enoch Marvin Banks, and James Garner. It appears that Brown and Page were unofficial advisors to Taft during his presidency through personal correspondence and editorials in Harper's Weekly and World's Work.

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"What About the Solid South?," Public Opinion, XXXVII (November 24, 1904), 644; Woodward, Origins of the New South, 460.

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Russia, and Spain.

Between 1861 and 1912, with the South unified politically, these statistics changed drastically. The South furnished only 1 president, 5 of the 20 justices of the Supreme Court, 14 of the 125 cabinet members, 2 of the 11 House speakers, and 10 of the 112 diplomatic representatives to England, France, Austria, Russia, Spain, Italy, and the German Empire. Of the 333 men in the consular service in 1910, only 31 were southerners. The proportion of southerners in both the diplomatic and consular services was only 9 per cent.

Southern political solidarity diminished the role of this section in national elections. After the Civil War federal elections in the South were frequently "little more than a mere perfunctory compliance with the form of the constitution and election laws...." Because of its strict adherence to the Democratic party, the South did not have debate on national issues between two viable political parties. Generally, the results of elections in the South were a foregone conclusion and the entire process

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James W. Garner, "Southern Politics," in Studies in Southern History and Politics (New York, 1914), 370, hereinafter cited as Garner, "Southern Politics"; "The Solid South: A National Calamity," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XXXIX (February, 1909), 217, hereinafter cited as "The Solid South: A National Calamity." For a slight variation in some of these statistics, see Woodward, Origins of the New South, 457.

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Garner, "Southern Politics," 370-371; Hannis Taylor, "The Solid South: A National Calamity," North American Review, CLXXXIX (January, 1909), 2, hereinafter cited as Taylor, "The Solid South: A National Calamity"; William Garrott Brown, "The South in National Politics," South Atlantic Quarterly, IX (April, 1910), 104-106, hereinafter cited as Brown, "The South in National Politics"; see also, Robert H. Woody (ed.), The Papers and Addresses of William Preston Few (Durham, 1951), 187, hereinafter cited as Woody, Papers of Few. For a slight variation in some of these statistics, see Woodward, Origins of the New South, 456.

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had become a "farce."

Many political observers were convinced that a strong respectable Republican party in the South was needed to relieve southerners of the incubus of one-party domination and rule. Another party was needed to criticize the Democrats and to give southerners an opportunity to vote their genuine political convictions. The South's ablest men would then be placed in more influential national positions and the entire area would be awarded a more proportionate share of offices in the national government. Taft and the Republican party were challenged to develop and execute a southern policy aimed at breaking the "Solid South." A rejuvenated southern Republican party would be achieved when the national party leaders began to place "policy above pie."

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Garner, "Southern Politics," 371-372; James W. Garner, "New Politics for the South," Annals Of The American Academy Of Political And Social Science, XXXV (January, 1910), 173, hereinafter cited as Garner, "New Politics for the South."

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Samuel C. Mitchell, "The Nationalization of Southern Sentiment," South Atlantic Quarterly, VII (April, 1908), 110; Bruce L. Clayton, "An Intellectual on Politics: William Garrott Brown and the Ideal of a Two-Party South," North Carolina Historical Review, XLII (Summer, 1965), 319, 326-327, hereinafter cited as Clayton, "William Garrott Brown"; William Garrott Brown, "President Taft's Opportunity," Century Magazine, LXXVIII (June, 1909), 257; "The Tariff and the Southern Republicans," Harper's Weekly, LV (August 19, 1911), 4, hereinafter cited as "The Tariff and the Southern Republicans"; "The Republicans and the South," Harper's Weekly, LVII (January 18, 1913), 5; "Mr. Taft's Appeal to the South," Current Literature, XLVI (January, 1909), 5-6, hereinafter cited as "Mr. Taft's Appeal to the South"; "Republican Opportunity in the South," World's Work, XV (April, 1908), 10061-10062, hereinafter cited as "Republican Opportunity in the South"; "Republican Revival Needed in the South," Harper's Weekly, LI (September 5, 1908), 5; "What About the Solid South?" 644; John Motley Morehead to William Garrott Brown, July 2, 1910, William Garrott Brown Papers, Manuscript Department, Duke University Library, Durham, hereinafter cited as Brown Papers; William Garrott Brown to Charles D. Norton, October 13, 1910, William Howard Taft Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, hereinafter cited as Taft Papers; Evening Post (New York, New York), August 29, 1908, hereinafter cited as Evening Post; William Garrott Brown, The New Politics and Other Papers (New York, 1914), 187, 192, hereinafter cited as Brown, The New Politics.

By 1908 a changed attitude on the race question was apparent. Many Americans believed the South had already attained the end for which it consolidated politically -- prevention of Negro political domination. As a politically unified section to maintain white supremacy, the South had lost its raison d'etre. The "Ghost of negro domination" had practically disappeared as a threat to southern white supremacy. Even the New York Age, the most widely distributed Negro newspaper in 1908, asserted that southern fears over the "bogey" of Negro political domination were "foolish." The issue should have been long ago "relegated to the limbo of oblivion." When southern fears over the race problem could be dissipated, it was believed there would result a corresponding rebirth of two-party government in the South.

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Taylor, "The Solid South: A National Calamity," 5-6; John L. McLaurin, "Breaking Up the Solid South," World's Work, II (July, 1910), 985; Garner, "New Politics for the South," 172-174; Guy B. Hathorn, "Congressional Campaign in the Fighting Ninth: The Contest Between C. Bascom Slep and Henry C. Stuart," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXVI (July, 1958), 341, hereinafter cited as Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slep"; "Can Mr. Taft Break the Solid South?," World's Work, XVI (August, 1908), 10516, hereinafter cited as "Can Mr. Taft Break the Solid South?"; Burton J. Hendrick, The Training of an American: The Earlier Life and Letters of Walter H. Page, 1855-1913 (New York, 1928), 91, hereinafter cited as Hendrick, The Training of an American; Howard Washington Odum (ed.), Southern Pioneers in Social Interpretation (Chapel Hill, 1925), 55; Silas McBee, The South and Mr. Taft (Sewanee, Tennessee, 1908), 7, hereinafter cited as McBee, The South and Mr. Taft.

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New York Age, November 12, 1908.

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Garner, "New Politics for the South," 172-174, 176-177; see also, James W. Garner, "Recent Agitation of the Negro Question in the South," South Atlantic Quarterly, VII (January, 1908), 21-22; Garner, "Southern Politics," 383; McLaurin, "Breaking up the Solid South," 985.

13

Edwin A. Alderman, "The Growing South," World's Work, XVI (June, 1908), 10382; "The Growing South," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XXXVIII (July, 1908), 98; Garner, "New Politics for the South," 183; "The Solid South: A National Calamity," 217.

At the time of Taft's election a better relationship existed between southern whites and blacks. Southern whites tended to be more tolerant of their black neighbors than at any time since the Civil War. Frequently, members of both races met jointly to discuss such topics as education and economics. These and other associations resulted in better understanding between the two races. Ray Stannard Baker prophesied enthusiastically that southern whites and blacks were on the verge of knowing each other "not merely as master and servant, but as co-workers."

14

A third significant development that had occurred in the South since the Civil War was a change of attitude on the issue of the tariff. Traditionally, southerners had been proponents either of free trade or a tariff for revenue only on their domestic products. By 1909, however, numerous southern industrialists and politicians were demanding a higher tariff. The increased production of iron and steel in Alabama, sugar in Louisiana, lumber in North Carolina and Georgia, and citrus fruits and longstapled cotton in numerous southern states resulted in a corresponding demand for more protection. Many southern districts were "in the same boat with Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, so far as tariff legislation was concerned."

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16

The Democratic belief that a protective tariff

14

Baker, "Negro Suffrage in a Democracy," 617-618; "The Status of the Negro as a Voter," American Monthly Review of Reviews, 725.

15

Banks, "The Passing of the Solid South," 104-105; McLaurin, "Breaking Up the Solid South," 985; "Republican Opportunity in the South," 10060; William Garrott Brown to Charles D. Norton, October 13, 1910, Taft Papers; Evening Post, August 29, 1908; "Republican Revival Needed in the South," Harper's Weekly, 5; Garner, "New Politics For the South," 182; "The Solid South: A National Calamity," 217.

16

Quoted in "The Solid South: A National Calamity," 217-218.

was "robbery and fraud" had lost much of its appeal.¹⁷

Many southern industrialists traditionally voted the Democratic ticket, but were in sympathy with the Republican principle of protection. Taft hoped that as more southern businessmen realized that they were voting contrary to their convictions that they would openly join the Republican ranks. Taft and the Republican party were advised to make a strong appeal to this element in the southern electorate. If more southern businessmen could be enticed into the Republican party, a more effective¹⁸ opposition party would develop in the South.

A fourth development ascertainable in the South in 1908 was a growing political independence among white voters. During the preceding two decades many southerners had broken with tradition and voted against the Democratic party. Numerous liberal southerners had grown tired of "being¹⁹ counted as sheep by their political leaders." The fact that the South was "a mere recognized appendage of one political party-a species of bob...on the tail of its kite" also disturbed many southerners and led²⁰ them to desert the Democratic party.

In the congressional elections of 1894 the Democratic and Republican vote in Maryland and Kentucky was about equal. In 1895 the entire Republican state ticket was elected in those two states. In 1896 the Republican

17

Garner, "New Politics For The South," 182-183.

18

Banks, "The Passing of the Solid South," 104-106; William G. Brown to Charles D. Norton, October 13, 1910, Taft Papers.

19

Quoted in "Can Mr. Taft Break the Solid South?," 10517.

20

Quoted in "Mr. Taft's Appeal to the South," 3.

presidential candidate, William McKinley, carried Kentucky and Maryland. In Georgia, he received only 15,000 fewer votes than the Democratic candidate, William Jennings Bryan. McKinley also received substantial votes in Alabama, Tennessee, Texas, and Arkansas. In 1896 many southern Democrats rejected Bryan in favor of John Palmer and Simon Bolivar Buckner, the National Democratic party's presidential and vice-presidential candidates. In the presidential election of 1900, many southern Democrats voted
21
for McKinley and openly assailed Bryan.

In the 1904 presidential election, Theodore Roosevelt, the Republican candidate, made inroads into the "Solid South" when he carried the state of Maryland. A change of 12,000 votes in Kentucky and 27,000 in Tennessee would have placed those states in the Republican column. Roosevelt also received a substantial number of votes in North Carolina, Texas, and
22
Virginia. Cognizant of these Republican gains in the South, many liberal southern Democrats and national Republican leaders were hopeful that William Howard Taft would be able to continue the trend in 1908 and in succeeding years.

The change of attitude by many southerners on the issue of state rights was also viewed as an indication of the breakup of the "Solid South." This change was most evident in southern views of federal regulatory laws passed during the first decade of the twentieth century. Southern congressional

21

Garner, "Southern Politics," 386; Edwin Mims, "The Independent Voter in the South," South Atlantic Quarterly, V (January, 1906), 4-5; Wendell H. Stephenson, "The Negro in the Thinking and Writing of John Spencer Bassett," North Carolina Historical Review, XXV (October, 1948), 437; Edwin Mims, The Advancing South: Stories of Progress and Reaction (Garden City, New York, 1926), 174; "Can Mr. Taft Break the Solid South?," 10517.

22

Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1908 (Washington, 1909), 43, hereinafter cited as Statistical Abstract of the United States.

support for federal laws concerning regulation of railroads, inspection of slaughter houses, pure food and drugs, and quarantine exemplified this changed attitude. In the nineteenth century southerners would have considered these measures as infringements upon their reserved rights. In the twentieth century, however, they supported the measures with the same enthusiasm as other Americans.²³

Educational progress in the South was another promising sign that the section was ripe for a rebirth of Republicanism. The expansion of schools, colleges, and universities in the South since Reconstruction resulted in a corresponding broadening of thought, vision, and tolerance. Educational progress also caused a change of attitude among many southerners toward their political solidarity and isolation. Southerners increasingly regarded themselves as an integral part of the nation. They were anxious to resume their former position as national leaders and formulators of national policies.²⁴

During the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt a calculated effort was made to break the "Solid South." Roosevelt developed and executed a southern policy which he hoped would create a stronger Republican party in the South.²⁵ Some political observers believed that Roosevelt's southern policy

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Garner, "New Politics for the South," 183.

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"Republican Opportunity in the South," 10061-10062.

²⁵

For an adequate discussion of Theodore Roosevelt's southern policy see, Henry Pringle, "Theodore Roosevelt and the South," Virginia Quarterly Review, IX (January, 1933), 14-25, and Seth M. Scheiner, "President Theodore Roosevelt and the Negro, 1901-1908," Journal of Negro History, XLVII (July, 1962), 169-182.

weakened the South's political solidarity and prepared the way for a more
 26
 successful attempt by Taft.

In 1908 many southerners were weary over the defeats and increasing radicalism of William Jennings Bryan. Among the hosts of liberal southern Democrats who were disillusioned with Bryan and his policies were William Garrott Brown, a native southerner who had taught at Harvard University and wrote numerous books on southern history; Walter Hines Page, a native North Carolinian and editor of World's Work; Edwin A. Alderman, President of the University of Virginia; Silas McBee, editor of the Churchman; Henry Watterson, editor of the Louisville, Kentucky, Courier-Journal; and James Calvin Hemphill, editor of the Charleston, South Carolina, News and Courier. These and other southern Democrats charged that Bryan's policies of free silver, government ownership of railroads, and anti-imperialism were not acceptable to many southerners in 1908. They alleged that he had developed
 27
 no new programs or reforms in his long political career. Watterson
 28
 charged in 1907 that Bryan had politically "gone stale." McBee firmly believed that the 1908 election was an ideal time for the South to dissolve its solidarity because Bryan did not represent many of the "principles which

26

McBee, The South and Mr. Taft, 4-5.

27

Silas McBee, "The South and Mr. Taft," Sewanee Review, XVI (October, 1908), 493, hereinafter cited as McBee, "The South and Mr. Taft"; Evening Post, August 29, 1908; "Republican Revival Needed in the South," 5; William G. Brown to Charles D. Norton, October 13, 1910, Taft Papers; "Charleston on Bryan's Chances," Harper's Weekly, LII (March 14, 1908), 4; McBee, The South and Mr. Taft, 10; Hendrick, Walter Hines Page, 103; Silas McBee to William Howard Taft, November 4, 1908, Silas McBee Papers, Southern Historical Collection, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereinafter cited as McBee Papers; Dumas Malone, Edwin A. Alderman; A Biography (New York, 1940), 268, hereinafter cited as Malone, Edwin A. Alderman; see also Josephus Daniels, Editor in Politics (Chapel Hill, 1941), 565, hereinafter cited as Daniels, Editor in Politics.

28

New York Times, August 23, 1907.

the South solidified to defend" and Taft did "not represent the vicious principles it solidified itself to fight."²⁹ McBee spoke for many southerners when he characterized Taft as follows: "He is greater than any party; too great for any section and too noble to limit to any section, party or school, his sympathy, his interest and his life..."³⁰

The results of the 1908 presidential election provided Taft and the Republican party added impetus and justification for developing and executing a southern policy. In the election Taft received a larger vote in every southern state than did Roosevelt in 1904.³¹ In a few southern states the Republican vote was substantially greater than that of 1904. The Republican party gained more than 32,000 votes in North Carolina, 30,000 in Kentucky, 14,000 in Texas, almost 18,000 in Georgia, 13,000 in Tennessee.³² A change of about 9,000 votes in Kentucky, 17,000 in Tennessee, 21,000 in Florida,

29

McBee, The South and Mr. Taft, 5.

30

McBee, "The South and Mr. Taft," 493.

31

Edgar Eugene Robinson, The Presidential Vote, 1896-1932 (Stanford, California, 1934), 133, 139, 156, 161, 208, 218, 224, 247, 280, 314, 323, 330, 354, hereinafter cited as Robinson, The Presidential Vote; Statistical Abstract of the United States, 43-44. For a state-by-state comparison of the southern states for the elections of 1904 and 1908, see Appendix A.

32

Statistical Abstract of the United States, 43-44. For more detailed results of the election in the various southern states, see Brown, The New Politics, 179; "Official Vote for President, State Officers and Congressmen in the State of North Carolina from 1900 to 1912," Thomas Settle Papers, Southern Historical Collection, hereinafter cited as Settle Papers; William H. Taft to J. Elwood Cox, November 30, 1908, J. Elwood Cox Papers, Manuscript Department, Duke University Library, hereinafter cited as Cox Papers; Woodward, Origins of the New South, 468; "Mr. Taft's Appeal to the South," 4; Garner, "New Politics for the South," 183; Brown, "President Taft's Opportunity," 255; "Election of Judge Taft," Independent, LXV (November 12, 1908), 1087; "Trying to Melt the Solid South," Literary Digest, XXXVIII (January 23, 1909), 122, hereinafter cited as "Trying to Melt the Solid South"; New York Times, November 12, 1908.

and 22,000 in North Carolina would have given the electoral votes of
 33
 these states to Taft. Taft received two of Maryland's eight electoral
 34
 votes. A total of five new Republican congressmen from the South were
 also elected. John Kronmiller from Maryland's third district, John Motley
 Morehead, Charles Holden Cowles, and John Gaston Grant from North Carolina's
 fifth, eighth, and tenth districts respectively, and Richard Wilson Austin
 from Tennessee's second district were elected to their first terms to the
 35
 House of Representatives. Although Taft's showing in the South may have
 been "a vote more against Bryan than for Taft," Republican gains in the
 36
 section were encouraging signs that the "Solid South" was being challenged.

The unusually warm reception of the Republican Taft by southern Demo-
 cratic newspapers also offered hope to the Republican party. As early as
 June, 1908, the Atlanta Constitution set the stage for this reception by
 declaring that it would "regard the accession of Judge Taft to the Presi-
 37
 dency with confident complacence." After the election most of the more

33

Statistical Abstract of the United States, 43-44.

34

New York Times, January 12, 1909; "Report of Presidential Elections
 of 1908: Electoral Vote," Taft Papers.

35

Congressional Directory, Sixty-First Congress, First Session (Washington,
 1909), 46, 90-92, 119; see also, "The Democratic 'Open Season,'" Harper's
 Weekly, LIV (April 16, 1910), 8; "The House of Representatives," Independent,
 LXV (November 12, 1908, 1088; News and Observer (Raleigh, North Carolina),
 November 6, 1908, hereinafter cited as News and Observer; Joseph F. Steelman,
 "Jonathan Elwood Cox and North Carolina's Gubernatorial Campaign of 1908,"
North Carolina Historical Review, XLI (Autumn, 1964), 447, hereinafter
 cited as Steelman, "Jonathan Elwood Cox."

36

Quoted in George E. Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt and the
 Birth of Modern America, 1900-1912 (New York, 1962), 231, hereinafter cited
 as Mowry, The Era of Roosevelt; see also, New York Times, November 4, 1908.

37

Quoted in "Aspects of the Taft Nomination," Literary Digest, XXXVI
 (June 27, 1908), 916.

liberal southern Democratic newspapers maintained this attitude. The
 views of two of the South's most bitter anti-Republican newspapers, the
 Jacksonville Florida Times-Union and the Houston Post, reflected an unusually
 favorable opinion toward the President-elect. The Times-Union characterized
 Taft as a "man of infinite good humor, of broad toleration and a lover of
 justice." It further stated, "Mr. Taft has a broader sympathy with the South
 than any Republican who ever preceded him...." The Post referred to Taft
 as "a man of fine ability and good character." Furthermore, it maintained
 that Texas Democrats had no personal objection to the Republican president.

Several journals attempted to analyze the election and stated prematurely
 that the "Solid South" had begun to dissolve. The Atlanta Constitution
 charged that southerners had begun "the writing of their political declara-
 tion of independence." The election was also significant because:

It means that the South is no longer to be kept as a voting
 machine; as a slice of country to be depended on to go solidly
 Democratic tho the heavens fall; as a mere tail to what by
 itself would be an unflyable Northern Democratic kite.⁴¹

The New York Tribune maintained that the election results in the South proved

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Among these papers were the Charleston, South Carolina, News and
 Courier; Atlanta Constitution; Knoxville Sentinel; Little Rock Gazette,
Chattanooga News, and Birmingham Age-Herald. See Atlanta Journal, January
 17, 1909; Atlanta Independent, March 27, 1909; "Southern Comment on Taft's
 Victory," Current Literature, XIV (December, 1908), 592, hereinafter cited
 as "Southern Comment on Taft's Victory"; "The Republican Party in the
 South," Independent, LXV (November 19, 1908), 1194-1195, hereinafter cited
 as "The Republican Party in the South"; New York Times, November 8, 1908.

39

Quoted in "Southern Comment on Taft's Victory," 591.

40

Houston Post, November 5, December 9, 1908; "Southern Comment on
 Taft's Election," 591.

41

Quoted in "The Republican Party in the South," 1195.

that there was "a promising chance of upsetting the old order below
⁴²
 Mason and Dixon's line."

The election results in the South were encouraging to Republican leaders because scores of anti-Bryan Democrats broke with tradition and voted for Taft. General Rufus Rhodes, Democratic editor of the Birmingham News, personally told Taft after the election that many southerners regarded the election results "as a benediction from God Almighty Himself to the people of the South over their own protest."⁴³ J. MacMartin, a Mississippi Democrat and former state senator and representative, stated that he supported Taft because his record was "absolutely unassailable."⁴⁴ Thomas W. Shelton, an anti-Bryan Democrat, proclaimed that Taft was leading "the anti-Bryan Democrats out of the wilderness."⁴⁵

Soon after the election, President-elect Taft expressed his views on the significance of the Republican gains in the South. He wrote James Calvin Hemphill that he "shook up the old bones of the South and got a good many votes than most of my predecessors...."⁴⁶ He wrote another

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Quoted in "Trying to Melt the Solid South," 122. For other comments, see New York Times, March 19, 1909.

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Quoted in News and Courier, January 3, 1909; see also, "Trying to Melt the Solid South," 121; "Judge Taft and the South," Independent, LXVI (January 7, 1909), 3.

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J. MacMartin to William H. Taft, November 11, 1911, Taft Papers.

⁴⁵

Thomas W. Shelton to Wade H. Ellis, May 13, 1909, Henry Groves Connor Papers, Southern Historical Collection, hereinafter cited as Connor Papers. For other anti-Bryan Democrats who supported Taft, see McBee, The South and Mr. Taft, 5; "Mr. Taft and the Amendments," Outlook, XC (October 24, 1909), 360-361; New York Times, August 28, 1908; W. Gordon McCabe to Charles D. Norton, October 24, 1910, Taft Papers.

⁴⁶

William H. Taft to James Calvin Hemphill, November 30, 1908, Hemphill Family Papers, Manuscript Department, Duke University Library, hereinafter cited as Hemphill Family Papers.

friend, "I am greatly interested in the southern question and have only just begun."⁴⁷

William Howard Taft developed a concern for the South, its people, and its problems long before he became President in 1908. He first became acquainted with the South as a federal judge in the United States Sixth Judicial Circuit between 1892 and 1900.⁴⁸ This circuit included the states of Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee. While serving in this capacity, Taft became aware of and compared conditions that prevailed in these four states. As he travelled into Tennessee and Kentucky, Taft was touched by the southern hospitality. Consequently, he developed "a deep sympathy and a great admiration for the South...."⁴⁹ He sought to place himself as best he could into the southern environment and to understand its thoughts and sentiments.

Taft's concern for the South can also be attributed to his political ideology and training. Having been a conservative and a judge since he entered public life, Taft possessed the necessary rudiments to be naturally sympathetic toward the South. His judicious temperament, reverence for traditions, and desire for personal popularity aided his efforts to understand southern sentiments.

The primary objective Taft had in mind in formulating his southern

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William H. Taft to H. W. Anderson, November 4, 1908, Taft Papers.

48

"World Politics," North American Review, CLXXXVIII (July, 1908), 155; Theodore E. Burton, "William Howard Taft," North American Review, CLXXXVII (May, 1908), 679; see also, Mowry, The Era of Roosevelt, 231.

49

Quoted in The State (Columbia, South Carolina), December 8, 1908, hereinafter cited as The State.

policy was to eradicate sectional animosities between the North and South. He declared, "The principal aim I have in my administration...is that of bringing the sections more closely together."⁵⁰ In a speech to the North Carolina Society of New York City on December 7, 1908, the President-elect expressed this objective most vividly. He stated:

...nothing would give me more claim to the gratitude of my fellow-citizens, than if I could so direct that policy in respect to the Southern States as to convince its intelligent citizens of the desire of the Administration to aid them in working out satisfactorily the serious problems before them and of bringing them and their Northern fellow-citizens closer and closer in sympathy and point of view.⁵¹

The political conflicts with the Republican party during the Civil War and the hatreds caused by Reconstruction implanted in southern minds much distrust and dislike for the North and the Republican party.⁵² When slavery was abolished Taft believed that "the excision of the cancer left a wound that must necessarily be a long time healing."⁵³ Since the Civil War, with the exception of Grover Cleveland's two administrations, the Republican party had been in control of the national government. Taft believed that the relationship between the national government and the South during that time had "been that almost of an alien government or, at least, of a government like that of a home government to a colony."⁵⁴ The Democratic

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William H. Taft to James C. Hemphill, January 12, 1910, Hemphill Family Papers.

51

Taft, The South and the National Government, 16; David Lewis Dorroh, "President Taft and the Solid South," Nineteenth Century and After, LXXII (November, 1912), 1016, hereinafter cited as Dorroh, "President Taft and the Solid South"; Taylor, "The Solid South: A National Calamity," 5; "Mr. Taft's Appeal to the South," 1; New York Times, December 8, 1908.

52

Taft, The South and the National Government, 12.

53

Taft, The South and the National Government, 10.

54

Quoted in Atlanta Journal, January 16, 1909; Atlanta Constitution, January 16, 1909.

party and the South's political leaders had been out of national leadership roles so long that southerners felt that they were almost an alien people. But Taft was determined to eliminate as much of this feeling as possible. To do so would fulfill one of his life-long ambitions.

One way to accomplish this goal was to attempt to dissolve the "Solid South." As early as 1906 Taft told North Carolina Republicans at their state convention in Greensboro that nothing could happen in American politics more advantageous to both the South and the nation than the dissolution of the "Solid South." This political upheaval would allow both northerners and southerners the opportunity to register their genuine convictions at the polls and would restore the South to its proper role in the affairs of the national government.

Taft believed, "The growth of Republicanism in the South is the open sesame in the South's being a power in national politics...." This development would also result in a two-party system in the South. As the New York Times editorialized, Taft had "a concern for relieving the South

55

Presidential Addresses and State Papers of William Howard Taft from March 4, 1909 to March 4, 1910 (New York, 1910), 3, hereinafter cited as Presidential Addresses and State Papers; New York Times, November 13, 1912.

56

New York Times, January 21, 1909.

57

New York Times, July 10, 1909; see also, "Mr. Taft on the Disadvantages of a 'Solid South,'" Literary Digest, XXXIII (July 21, 1906), 74, hereinafter cited as "Mr. Taft on the Disadvantages of a 'Solid South.'" 74.

58

William H. Taft, Present Day Problems: A Collection of Addresses Delivered on Various Occasions (New York, 1908), 230, hereinafter cited as Taft, Present Day Problems; New York Times, July 10, 1906; "Mr. Taft on the Disadvantages of a 'Solid South,'" 74.

59

Quoted in The State, December 8, 1908.

of the incubus of its subservience to a single party...."⁶⁰ An effective opposition party was a prerequisite to good government. Such a party was needed in the South to check and correct the abuses which frequently resulted when one party remained in power an extended period.⁶¹ Taft was equally concerned about southern voting patterns since the Civil War. The fact that many southerners had voted the Democratic ticket merely out of tradition and fear of a return to Reconstruction days disturbed him. To vote one way and to believe another was an unhealthy political situation. He wanted to upset the southern tradition of voting the Democratic ticket and believing in Republican principles.⁶²

The President-elect was optimistic about destroying the political solidarity of the South and persuading southerners to vote their genuine convictions. He observed among many southerners "an impatience, a nervousness, and a restlessness in voting for one ticket and rejoicing in the success of another."⁶³ The 1908 election results also convinced him that the movement against the one-party system had started and ought to be encouraged by his administration. He believed the best way to encourage the movement

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New York Times, January 2, 1909.

61

New York Times, May 21, 1909; Atlanta Journal, January 16, 1909; "The President in the South," Outlook, XCII (May 29, 1909), 249, hereinafter cited as "The President in the South"; see also Times-Dispatch (Richmond, Virginia), May 21, 1909, hereinafter cited as Times-Dispatch; Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 63-64; Atlanta Independent, March 27, 1909; "The South and the Negro," Independent, LXVI (March 11, 1909), 505, hereinafter cited as "The South and the Negro"; "Mr. Taft's Speeches in the South," Independent, LXVI (May 27, 1909), 1100; "The Week," Nation, LXXXVIII (January 21, 1909), 51; William H. Taft, Political Issues and Outlooks: Speeches Delivered Between August, 1908, and February, 1909 (New York, 1909), 235, hereinafter cited as Taft, Political Issues and Outlooks.

62

New York Times, December 8, 1908; The State, December 8, 1908.

63

Quoted in New York Times, December 8, 1908.

toward a two-party system in the South was to convince southerners that the attitude of both the Republican party and northerners toward them was "not one of hostility or criticism or opposition, political or otherwise...."⁶⁴

One reason for the political impotence and solidarity of the South since the Civil War was political fear of Negro domination. Taft referred to this fear as a "spectre" and "a mere ghost of the past." It was time for southerners to dispel this fear and begin to divide their political affiliations according to conviction. The South's role in national politics would be enhanced when it abandoned the idea that the Negro was still a potential political threat.⁶⁵ By convincing southerners of this political reality Taft believed that he could quicken the dissolution of the "Solid South."

The President-elect also believed this movement could be hastened by appealing to southern Democrats who believed in Republican principles.⁶⁶ He declared, "I would like to appear as an agent in the movement to make Southern politics consistent with Southern business interests."⁶⁷ Taft wanted to convince those southern businessmen who depended upon the protective tariff for their economic prosperity to join and support the party

64

Taft, The South and the National Government, 13; quoted in Taylor, "The Solid South: A National Calamity," 5; New York Times, December 8, 1908.

65

New York Times, July 10, 1906; Taft, Present Day Problems, 230; Oscar King Davis, William H. Taft: The Man of the Hour (Philadelphia, 1908), 329-330, hereinafter cited as Davis, William H. Taft; Garner, "New Politics for the South," 181.

66

"Wise Political Advice," Outlook, LXXXVIII (February 22, 1908), 380; Taft, Present Day Problems, 283; Davis, William H. Taft, 379.

67

Quoted in The State, December 8, 1908.

responsible for that prosperity. As early as February, 1908 he told Kansas City Republicans that it was time for them to make a sincere effort to entice more southern business interests into the party.⁶⁸

In 1908 Taft frankly admitted that the South was not on the eve of a political revolution. He did not even expect the "Solid South" to dissolve during his administration.⁶⁹ Prophetically, he stated that "it may be that this is not the time for the complete revolution to take place, but that it is coming I am as confident as I am of anything in the future...."⁷⁰ However, Taft wanted to quicken the movement in that direction. The motive for encouraging the development of a two-party system in the South was not solely political but also presumably in the national interest. Taft challenged all patriotic Americans to seek to make the nation's political parties non-sectional. Furthermore, they should unite a once-divided nation into "one in feeling, sympathy and aspirations."⁷¹ Taft entered into his southern policy with optimism. He felt that if he could contribute a small part to the growth of Republicanism in the South and could heal some of the sectional wounds his presidency would be a success.

68

Taft, Present Day Problems, 283.

69

New York Times, May 21, 1909; Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 413; Times-Dispatch, May 21, 1909; Taft, Political Issues and Outlooks, 234; Atlanta Journal, January 16, 1909.

70

Quoted in New York Times, October 11, 1908.

71

Quoted in Atlanta Journal, January 16, 1909.

CHAPTER III

THE SOUTHERN TRAVELER

Beginning in July, 1906, and continuing through March, 1913, William Howard Taft travelled extensively throughout the South. He felt that visiting personally the southern states he could become familiar with the area's sentiments and problems. First-hand knowledge would be essential to develop and execute a southern policy acceptable to southerners and beneficial to the Republican party. Taft made so many trips to the South between 1906 and 1913 that he was dubbed "the champion railroad traveler of the world."¹ A majority of the trips were allegedly non-political and motivated primarily by a desire to cultivate the good will and sympathy of southerners. However, Taft was undoubtedly seeking southern Democratic support on his visits.

As Secretary of War under President Theodore Roosevelt, Taft made two visits to the South. On July 9, 1906, he addressed the state convention of North Carolina Republicans in Greensboro and on August 22, 1907, he spoke² to an audience in Lexington, Kentucky. In these visits Taft was primarily concerned with drumming up southern support for the Republican party. When he became the Republican presidential nominee in June, 1908, Taft continued

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Untitled, undated article by Wilfred Jones, Taft Papers; see also, "The President as Traveler and Speaker," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XLIII (March, 1911), 271.

2

Taft's views on southern Negro patronage and economics, as expressed in these and other southern visits, will be discussed in depth in the appropriate chapters. This chapter will deal primarily with travel and not the formulation of Taft's entire southern policy.

his southern visits. His eyes were then set upon the presidency and the prospect of winning southern support for his candidacy.

In October 1908, Taft did something no Republican presidential nominee had previously undertaken since the Civil War. He carried his campaign into the "Solid South." He broke with precedent and made the decision³ against the wishes of his campaign managers. Beginning October 15, Taft spent three days campaigning in Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia. Chattanooga in Tennessee, Greensboro in North Carolina, and Richmond in Virginia, were the major cities included in his itinerary. His main theme was an appeal to disillusioned Bryan Democrats to join the⁴ Republican ranks. Taft accurately predicted that he would not receive one electoral vote south of the Mason-Dixon line. However, it would be gratifying if he should receive the electoral votes of one or two southern⁵ states. These statements reflected Taft's weakness as a politician. He probably alienated many southern Republicans by declaring that he did not expect any southern electoral votes. This statement did not recognize the efforts of southern Republicans who had been working for this development.

Another noticeable development exemplified in this campaign trip was

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"Mr. Taft's Invasion of the South," Literary Digest, XXXVII (October 24, 1908), 576, hereinafter cited as "Mr. Taft's Invasion of the South"; New York Times, October 16, 1908; Woodward, Origins of the New South, 467.

⁴

New York Times, October 16, 17, 18, 1908.

⁵

Journal and Tribune (Knoxville, Tennessee), October 16, 17, 1908, hereinafter cited as Journal and Tribune; Chattanooga Daily Times, October 17, 1908; The State, October 17, 1908; Taft, Political Issues and Outlooks, 178-179.

that southerners generally were impressed with Taft's personality. His rapport with southern audiences was good. In Richmond on October 17, Taft encountered numerous Democratic hecklers. Instead of trying to outshout them or criticize their actions Taft remarked, "Mr. Bryan has been running for the Presidency for twelve years. We ought to allow a shout for him anyway."⁶ This attitude toward hecklers won for Taft the admiration of many southerners. The crowds which greeted the Republican candidate were large and enthusiastic. The enormity of the crowds undoubtedly was a result of curiosity and respect, but this Republican,⁷ nonetheless, made a favorable impression upon many southern Democrats. His joviality and outward concern for the South were not completely overshadowed by his party label. The actual political effects of the tour upon the 1908 election results can not be measured accurately, but the image of Taft, the man, was enhanced among southerners. Senator William Alden Smith of Virginia declared that Taft's campaign in the South was "the most remarkable campaign ever conducted by a Republican Presidential candidate...." Smith observed that Taft's apparent concern for the South⁸ and frankness in his speeches were commendable characteristics.

The opposition to Taft and his southern campaign trip was also intense. The opposition leader was Josephus Daniels, Democratic editor of the Raleigh

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Quoted in Chattanooga Daily Times, October 18, 1908; Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, Virginia), October 18, 1908, hereinafter cited as Virginian-Pilot; New York Times, October 18, 1908.

7

Chattanooga Daily Times, October 16, 17, 1908.

8

Virginian-Pilot, October 18, 1908.

News and Observer and chairman of the press bureau for the Democratic National Committee in 1908. In a host of editorials in the Observer, Daniels attacked Taft's 1908 campaign tour. The following was a typical Daniels' editorial blasting Taft:

In his insane desire for office he comes into the South with insults and untruths on his lips, a cheap echo of Rooseveltism, without the ability to recognize that what he terms argument is merely the utterance of the demagogue who is seeking votes.⁹

Furthermore, Taft was "rainbow chasing" if he ever expected to break the "Solid South." He had insulted southerners when he told them that they were a part of the Union and must forsake their principles and vote the Republican ticket if the South were to regain its influence in the national government. Daniels charged that southerners would not "sell their birthright for a¹⁰ mess of pottage."

The Virginian-Pilot of Norfolk, another Democratic newspaper, charged that southerners had been more "offended than placated" by Taft's speeches. The candidate had spoken to southerners "as though they were spoiled and¹¹ naughty children...." The State of Columbia, alleged that Taft's "hypocritical posturings" had insulted southern intelligence and that southerners¹² knew their conditions better than a Northern Republican. Other papers charged that regardless of how strong the appeal for the dissolution of the "Solid South" or how popular the orator, the South would never vote

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News and Observer, October 18, 1908.

10

News and Observer, October 17, 20, 1908; The State, October 18, 1908; "Mr. Taft's Invasion of the South," 577-578.

11

Virginian-Pilot, October 18, 1908.

12

The State, December 9, November 3, 1908. For indictments from the Norfolk (Virginia) Landmark and Times-Dispatch, see "Mr. Taft's Appeal to the South," 4.

the Republican party into power. Southerners were too firmly rooted in
 13
 their traditions and principles ever to be uprooted. One observer expressed many southerners' views thusly: "The South embrace the Republican party! Oh, what a joke! When rabbits seek the society of hounds, then
 14
 will the South espouse the Republican party."

Refusing to allow these sentiments to discourage him, Taft undertook an even more extensive tour into the South in 1909. This excursion was part of his "swing around the circle" which began on September 15, 1909, in Boston and ended on November 10, in Richmond. This national tour involved 266 speeches, 579 formal breakfasts, luncheons, and dinners, 13,000
 15
 miles, 33 states, and 56 days of travel.

The stated objectives of such a tour were that the people needed the opportunity to "size-up" their president from personal observations and the President needed a better understanding and knowledge of the various sections. Taft wanted to seek the peoples' "advice on public policies, their aims, their aspirations, and their needs." Supposedly, the trip was not politically motivated. Taft alleged that he was not coming South to seek votes, but to seek moral support and sympathy for his administration. He wanted to come as closely in personal contact with

13

Atlanta Journal, December 13, 1908; "Mr. Taft on the Disadvantages of a 'Solid South,'" 74.

14

Dorroh, "President Taft and the South," 1026.

15

"Last Days of the President's Tour," Independent, LXVII (November 18, 1909), 1109; "The Restoration of Roosevelt," Current Literature, XLVII (December, 1909), 591.

16

southerners as possible. In a speech in Del Rio, Texas on October 17, Taft even stated, "I am not here either as a Republican or a Democrat."¹⁷ However, President Taft did come to the South as the Republican leader and again was unquestionably seeking Democratic support for his party.

18

President Taft began his sojourn into the South at El Paso, Texas on October 16, 1909. His tour carried him into every southern state except Maryland and Florida. A conspicuous feature of this southern tour was Taft's almost total lack of outward attention to politics. The practice of praising the traditions, histories, and heroes of the southern states was the trademark of his visit. This Republican President relished participating in ceremonial functions and his 1909 southern tour provided an excellent opportunity to fulfill this pleasure.

At San Antonio on October 18, Taft gave a flattering speech praising the history of Texas. He said that he was in "one of the cradles of American liberty." Texas had fought for and won their own independence without the assistance of the American government. This feat entitled the state to special consideration by all Americans. Taft also observed the gathering of both Union and Confederate soldiers to greet him as a promising sign

16

New York Times, October 18, November 3, 1909; "President Taft in the South," Independent, LXVII (November 11, 1909), 1058; Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 411, 416; The State, November 6, 1909.

17

Quoted in New York Times, October 18, 1909.

18

"The President's Journey to the People," World's Work, XVIII (October, 1909), 12083; "The President's Vacation and Plans," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XL (September, 1909), 270; "Mr. Taft Begins His Long Tour," Independent, LXVII (September 23, 1909), 673; New York Times, August 7, 1909.

19

that former hatreds were disappearing.

On November 1, Taft stopped at Jackson, Mississippi where he paid a glowing tribute to Jefferson Davis. Taft referred to the Confederate President as one of Mississippi's greatest heroes. Taft delighted his audience when he said that he was glad Davis' name had been restored to Cabin John Bridge as Secretary of War.²⁰ Davis' name had been removed from the bridge in 1862 by order of Caleb Smith, Secretary of Interior. On February 22, 1909, President Roosevelt ordered Davis' name restored to the bridge.²¹ In an earlier comment concerning the removal of Davis' name, Taft charged that it "was an act of vandalism and disrespect to history that ought to be remedied by those who have the power." Davis was "a distinguished man."²²

In Columbus, Mississippi on November 2, Taft paid another tribute to a Confederate leader, General Stephen D. Lee, a native of the city. The President regretted that he had never had the privilege of meeting Lee, but he affirmed that he wanted to because of his kindness and gentleness.²³

Taft continued his popular practice of praising southern history in Columbia, South Carolina on November 6. He was received in the state Capitol Building, the first time that he had been so received. The President

19

New York Times, October 19, 1909.

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New York Times, November 3, 1909; "President Taft in the South," 1057.

21

"Report of the President-General, United Daughters of the Confederacy, 1909," Taft Papers.

22

William H. Taft to James C. Hemphill, May 7, 1909, Hemphill Family Papers.

23

New York Times, November 3, 1909.

did this southern city a great honor by including it on his itinerary because no other president had visited it since George Washington's tour in 1791. Taft told the South Carolinians that their heroes and role in American history were so great that he felt humble to be in their presence. 24

On November 9, in Wilmington, North Carolina Taft exalted the state's history during the pre-Revolutionary period. He told the receptive Tar Heels that their state had been first to do many things during this important period. The colony issued its "so-called" Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, suppressed the stamp tax, and had its own "tea party" before similar events in the other colonies. Considering these accomplishments, Taft told his audience that it was a great honor to be so cordially welcomed by the descendants of such great Americans. In appreciation of Taft and his speech, North Carolina made the President an honorary Tar Heel 25 for life.

President Taft ended his southern tour in Richmond on November 10. He told the Virginians that he hoped southerners had been convinced by his excursion that he was sincere in his efforts to understand and help the South. His most popular statement was his endorsement of a school of engineering at Washington and Lee University in honor of General Robert Edward Lee. 26 Taft's admiration for General Lee was immense. He often

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The State, November 7, 1909; Atlanta Journal, November 7, 1909; New York Times, November 7, 1909; News and Observer, November 9, 1909.

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News and Observer, November 10, 1909; New York Times, November 10, 1909.

26

Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 424-425, 430-431; New York Times, November 11, 1909; "Last Days of the President's Tour," 1109-1110.

spoke of the man and his accomplishments. This southern statesman and
 27
 soldier was among those Americans most revered by President Taft.

The only national issue on which Taft spoke during his entire southern tour was inland waterways. While travelling through the Mississippi Valley and Gulf States, Taft told his southern audiences that he was a staunch advocate of deep inland waterways. They were an excellent check upon high railroad rates and provided an excellent source for irrigation. Taft charged that future projects for irrigation and waterway improvement would not be used by congressmen to distribute "pork" to every part of the country. Henceforth, every project would be considered and adopted on its merits and usefulness to the entire nation. When a project was finally decided upon, Taft favored the issuance of federal bonds to complete it. However, he was opposed to issuing bonds for large sums of money and then parcelling them out at random to different sections of the country. Taft charged that this latter practice "not only smells of the
 28
 'pork barrel,' but it would be a 'pork barrel.'" Beginning on October 25, Taft also conducted a five-day voyage down the Mississippi River from St. Louis, Missouri, to New Orleans, Louisiana to study the problems of
 29
 transportation and waterways.

27

Archibald Willingham Butt, Taft and Roosevelt: The Intimate Letters of Archie Butt (2 vols., Garden City, New York, 1930), II, 456, hereinafter cited as Butt, Taft and Roosevelt; James Tanner to William H. Taft, June 28, 1910, Taft Papers; see also, "General Lee's Statue in the Capitol," Harper's Weekly, LIII (October 9, 1909), 12.

28

Quoted in "Putting the Lid on the 'Pork Barrel,'" Literary Digest, XXXIX (November 6, 1909), 751; New York Times, October 23, 26, 1909.

29

New York Times, October 26, 29, 30, 31, 1909.

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On this trip down the Mississippi, Taft revealed a major weakness in his political nature. House Speaker Joseph G. Cannon and Taft were often seen fraternizing. They were frequently photographed with their arms around each other and often spoke together on the same platform. The impression given was that these two men were the best of friends. The contradictory nature of Taft's personality was revealed because Taft and Cannon were far from being friends. Just one day before the journey, Taft wrote to Secretary of State, Philander C. Knox, expressing his genuine feelings toward Cannon. Taft wrote that Cannon was vulgar, "a constant reproach to the decent self-respecting element of the country," and should be thrown out of public office. Archibald Butt, Taft's Chief White House aide, stated that Taft even despised and hated Cannon. Later, Taft revealed the reason he had socialized with Cannon. He did so for the sake of party unity and because of his personal dislike for discord.

In the South, Cannon was regarded generally as a demagogue who thwarted genuine progress and reform in the House of Representatives. The term "Cannonism" was recognized as something "ultra-Republican" and "anti-Democratic." The Virginian-Pilot expressed many southern sentiments with its indictment of Cannon. Cannon was characterized as "a predistined incubus upon healthful progress and genuine reform." Furthermore, he was

30

Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, I, 201-202, II, 609; Henry F. Pringle, The Life and Times of William Howard Taft: A Biography (2 vols., New York, 1939), I, 467-468, hereinafter cited as Pringle, Taft.

31

Erving Cockrell to William G. Brown, March 7, 1910, Brown Papers; New York Times, March 28, 1909; Henry L. Stoddard, As I Knew Them: Presidents and Politics from Grant to Coolidge (New York, 1927), 359, hereinafter cited as Stoddard, As I Knew Them.

"narrow, dictatorial, frankly contemptuous of ideals, of a school of politicians thoroughly commercialized and not at all nice about the means³² whereby ends may be accomplished."

Regardless of his association with Cannon, the rapport which Taft had with his southern audiences was unusually good and he made a noticeably favorable impression upon the South. Devoting so little time to politics, Taft avoided alienating both Republicans and Democrats. He was always at his best when approaching politics by indirection, praising the South's leaders and traditions. The fact that Taft told southerners exactly what they wanted to hear accounted for his personal popularity in the South. He exemplified this well in Dallas on October 23. When asked if he had any doubt that Texas was a part of the Union, Taft replied that his only doubt³³ "was whether the Union was not a part of Texas." On November 3 in Birmingham, Alabama, an ex-Confederate soldier told the President, "Mr. President, you have captured the Secessionists, the Ku Klux and the cranky³⁴ Democrats, all of them."

Southern Democratic newspapers were also generally favorable to Taft's 1909 southern tour. The Houston Post stated that it had been a privilege for the South to give Taft its "admiration, affection and respect." Taft was recognized as a "stalwart statesman and patriot of the type which gives

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Virginian-Pilot, November 7, 1908.

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Quoted in New York Times, October 24, 1909.

³⁴

Quoted in New York Times, November 4, 1908; "President Taft in the South," 1058.

dignity and substance to American citizenship...." Furthermore, the South had observed through personal contact with their president all the characteristics of an impartial leader.³⁵

The State, a newspaper which was often critical of Taft and his programs, believed that the South had benefited from the President's tour because he must have learned more about southern needs and attitudes. The paper believed that Taft's tour was non-partisan and non-political. Summarizing the sentiments of many southerners The State concluded, "Somehow--and it might be difficult to explain--we feel that we are somewhat closer to the Union--regardless of politics and tariff revision--than ever we've been before."³⁶

Another important facet of President Taft's southern travels included excursions to dedicate Civil War memorials, commemorate Civil War battles, and honor the South's historical past. His first trip of this nature occurred shortly after his inauguration. On May 19, 1909, Taft visited Petersburg, Virginia to honor the Pennsylvania soldiers who had fought and died in the Petersburg campaign by dedicating a memorial at Fort Mahone, near Petersburg. Although the original purpose of this visit was to honor Pennsylvania's role in the battle, Taft used the occasion to pay a tribute to the Confederates who died in the encounter.³⁷

The President stated that he could not have dedicated the memorial to

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Houston Post, October 23, 24, 1909.

36

The State, November 7, 1909.

37

"Mr. Taft's Speeches in the South," 1099; "Mr. Taft's Sayings and Doings," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XXXIX (June, 1909), 654; Times-Dispatch, May 20, 1909.

the Pennsylvania soldiers had they not confronted an enemy of "equal valor and fortitude." The pride which Pennsylvanians should have was "in the victory achieved by her men against so brave, resolute and resourceful enemy."³⁸ Taft expressed his belief that most of the bitterness resulting from the Civil War had disappeared and that finally both northerners and southerners could honor each other's soldiers who died in that internecine struggle. The fact that people from both sides had gathered together on common grounds was excellent proof that the sections were drawing closer together. Taft labelled as "fools" those who worked against the reunion of North and South by encouraging sectional animosities.³⁹

Taft made two other similar visits to the South. On July 21, 1911, he visited Manassas, Virginia to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the Battle of Bull Run. On November 10, 1911, the President visited the Chichamauga Battlefield near Chattanooga, Tennessee. The trip was unofficial and no formal address or dedication was made. For over two hours Taft rode over the battlefields often stopping to read marker inscriptions.⁴⁰

The President also honored Confederate heroics by frequently sending messages to Confederate organizations holding annual meetings. In May, 1911,

38

Quoted in New York Times, May 20, 1909.

39

Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 99; New York Times, May 20, 1909; News and Observer, May 21, 1909.

40

Greensboro Daily News, July 22, 1911; L. S. Brown to Charles D. Hilles, July 6, 1911, Taft Papers; Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, II, 702, 709; News and Observer, July 22, 1911; New York Times, July 22, November 11, 1911.

the United Confederate Veterans Association met in Little Rock, Arkansas. Taft sent the delegates a telegram commending the valor of the Confederates during the Civil War. A number of the members collectively replied in a telegram assuring Taft that his attitude toward the South had won him the
⁴¹
 esteem and affection of many ex-Confederates. In May, 1912, Taft wrote a leader of the Blue and Gray organizational committee expressing his hope that the memorial services on Decoration Day at Arlington Cemetery would be a success. Taft believed such joint meetings between northerners and southerners to honor their heroic dead was an impetus to reuniting the
⁴²
 two sections.

On November 12, 1912, Taft paid his greatest tribute to the heroism of the Confederates in an address to a convention of the United Daughters of the Confederacy in Washington, D.C. The occasion was to lay the cornerstone of a monument in Arlington Cemetery in honor of the Confederate dead. Taft told the southern ladies that to order the erection of the monument had been a privilege. He was proud to participate because he wanted to commend the patriotic sacrifice of Confederates for their homeland and to
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 recognize the genius of their leaders.

Taft's speech was so emotional and sympathetic that his office was flooded with complementary southern mail. One southerner wrote that after

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George W. Gordon, Bennett H. Young, K.M. Vauzaralt, et.al., to William H. Taft, May 17, 1911, Taft Papers.

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William H. Taft to Mrs. J. L. Barringer, May 22, 1912, Taft Papers.

⁴³

New York Times, November 13, 1912; Address of President Taft at the Opening Session of the Convention of the United Daughters of the Confederacy at Continental Memorial Hall (Washington, 1912), 3, hereinafter cited as Address of President Taft.

he read Taft's speech he wanted to take his hand and "give it one good long squeezing shake...."⁴⁴ Another wrote that southerners would always regard Taft as one of their most beloved presidents.⁴⁵ The Confederate Veterans Association of the District of Columbia and the Atlanta, Georgia branch of the United Confederate Association passed resolutions lavishing praise upon Taft for his order to erect the Confederate statue and for his sympathetic speech at the dedication.⁴⁶

On May 20, 1909, President Taft visited Charlotte, North Carolina to commemorate the "so-called" Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. Allegedly, this Declaration was adopted on May 20, 1775, by the citizens of Mecklenburg County, declaring themselves free and independent of Great Britain.⁴⁷ The "Declaration" had been such "a storm centre of acrimonious controversy"⁴⁸ that Taft wrote a friend before his trip that he did not intend to declare for or against the authenticity of the document.⁴⁹ During his speech Taft was non-committed on the matter of the authenticity of the May 20 convention and declaration.⁵⁰

44

Joe Ferguson to William H. Taft, November 30, 1912, Taft Papers.

45

R. B. Burns to William H. Taft, November 15, 1912, Taft Papers.

46

"Resolutions adopted by the Confederate Veterans Association of the District of Columbia," January 7, 1913; "Resolutions adopted by Atlanta Camp No. 159, United Confederate Veterans," November 18, 1912, Taft Papers.

47

William Henry Hoyt, "The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence," William Henry Hoyt Papers, Southern Historical Collection, hereinafter cited as Hoyt Papers; "Mr. Taft's Speeches in the South," 1099; Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, I, 96.

48

William Henry Hoyt, "The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence," Hoyt Papers.

49

William H. Taft to William Henry Hoyt, April 26, 1909, Hoyt Papers.

50

Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, I, 96.

However, Taft did comment favorably upon the document and its importance to North Carolinians. He said that the colonists who drew up the document were resolute and courageous because they had been willing to risk execution as traitors for their actions. The document exemplified⁵¹ much "self-reliance."

Taft further stated that he was in Charlotte to celebrate a declaration of independence. He said that "some unregenerate persons" in South Carolina and other places had attempted to destroy the historical significance of the Mecklenburg Declaration.⁵² Taft referred to James Calvin Hemphill, editor of the Charleston, News and Courier, who had earlier called⁵³ the Mecklenburg Declaration a myth. Hemphill was in Charlotte for Taft's speech so the President decided that it was an excellent opportunity to debunk Hemphill's allegations. To accomplish this goal Taft used an anecdote. He compared Hemphill to a man in Tipperary, Ireland who was arrested for manslaughter. The Irishman had killed a man by hitting him on the head with a club. The victim's head, however, was so thin that the accused was charged with manslaughter instead of murder. When asked if he had anything to say on his behalf the defendant replied, "No, your lordship, I have nothing to say, but I would like to ask one question...What the devil a

51

New York Times, May 21, 1909; Times-Dispatch, May 21, 1909; Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 106.

52

Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 101-102.

53

"President Taft Down South," Harper's Weekly, LIII (June 5, 1909), 5, hereinafter cited as "President Taft Down South." For interesting side-lights to Taft's statements in reference to Hemphill, see James C. Hemphill to J. P. Caldwell, May 7, 1909; William H. Taft to James C. Hemphill, May 5, 1909, Hemphill Family Papers.

man with a head like that was doing in Tipperary?" Taft then looked directly at Hemphill and asked why anyone would come to Charlotte who⁵⁴ did not believe in the Declaration. Incidents like this enhanced Taft's personal popularity among many southerners.

After the conclusion of Taft's speech in Charlotte, two interesting incidents occurred. One symbolized the reduction of sectional animosities between North and South. Mrs. Thomas Jonathan [Stonewall] Jackson greeted Taft as "the harmonizer of all our hearts."⁵⁵ Later, Taft stated that he found Mrs. Jackson "so simple as to be charming, so full of common sense⁵⁶ as to be instructive, and so warm as to encourage gallantry toward her." The second incident concerned Taft's sentiments toward the authenticity of the May 20, 1775, Mecklenburg convention. Taft told Hemphill, who was a close and sympathetic Democratic friend, that he did not really believe that two conventions were held in North Carolina, one on May 20 and the other on May 31, 1775. Admitting his unwillingness to support what appeared to him a falsehood, Taft stated, "I am equally unwilling to denounce what⁵⁷ appears to be sacred to others." Taft was so anxious to say what southerners wanted to hear that he would not publicly reveal his genuine

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Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 102; "President Taft Down South," 5; New York Times, May 21, 1909; Times-Dispatch, May 21, 1909.

55

Quoted in "Mr. Taft's Southern Appointments," Literary Digest, XXXVIII (June 5, 1909), 952, hereinafter cited as "Mr. Taft's Southern Appointments"; "The President in the South," 250; "An Era of Good Feeling," World's Work, XVIII (July, 1909), 11733; "The Week," Nation, LXXXVIII (May 27, 1909), 523.

56

Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, I, 94.

57

Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, I, 96.

beliefs about the Mecklenburg Declaration. He sacrificed principle in order to maintain his southern popularity.

The last major facet of Taft's southern travels consisted of spending several vacations in the South. His two favorite resorts were at Hot Springs, Virginia and Augusta, Georgia. Between July, 1908, and March, 1913, Taft spent six vacations at these two resorts. The President probably chose these southern sites instead of northern or western ones because of the pleasant climate and the fine golf links, especially those at Augusta. He relished golf and undoubtedly this fact weighed heavily in his decision to go south to relax.

On July 1, 1908, Taft resigned from President Theodore Roosevelt's cabinet as Secretary of War and on July 3 established his presidential campaign headquarters at Hot Springs, Virginia. He stayed at the New Homestead Hotel where he had an excellent view of the mountains and easy access to a golf course. Taft's first stay in Hot Springs extended from July 3 to August 27. The Republican nominee held many political conferences, drew up his speech of acceptance, and mapped out his presidential campaign. Taft established another first while in Hot Springs by becoming the first Republican presidential nominee to address a Virginian audience. This was accomplished on August 21, 1908.

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On November 7, 1908, Taft again honored Virginia by choosing Hot Springs as his vacation site after the election. He came this time only

 58

Mrs. William H. Taft, Recollections of Full Years (New York, 1914), 322, hereinafter cited as Mrs. Taft, Recollections; New York Times, July 4, 5, August 22, 28, 30, 1908; Virginian-Pilot, July 29, 1908; "Mr. Taft to Virginians," Outlook, LXXXIX (August 29, 1908), 963.

for rest and exercise, which consisted primarily of a daily golf game.

Taft stayed at the Ruth Harrison cottage and remained until December 7,

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1908. On November 3, 1911, Taft arrived in Hot Springs for a three-

day vacation. He had just completed an exhaustive western tour and came

to Virginia for a quick rest. He also prepared his annual message to

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Congress while on this vacation.

The other favorite southern resort was Augusta, Georgia. Taft's

first vacation in this famous resort town began on December 18, 1908,

and extended until January 23, 1909. Augusta was recommended by Taft's

physician because of the warm climate. Taft stated that he came south

because he wanted to gauge southern sentiments and reactions to his

61

election. The Atlanta Journal concurred by stating that the President-

elect was coming to Augusta to "catch the very atmosphere of our southern

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sentiments and institutions." Another important duty that Taft per-

formed while in Augusta was to select his cabinet. He stayed at the

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Terrett cottage near the Bon Air Hotel in the suburbs of Augusta.

On January 15, 1909, Taft left Augusta for an unforgettable two-

day visit to Atlanta. He made numerous stops at the small towns between

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Virginian-Pilot, November 5, 7, 8, 1908; New York Times, November 7, 8, December 8, 1908.

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New York Times, November 4, 1911.

61

New York Times, November 10, December 18, 1908; Woody, William P. Few, 256.

62

Atlanta Journal, December 13, 19, 1908.

63

Mrs. Taft, Recollections, 324; Atlanta Journal, December 17, 19, 1908.

the two cities and received overwhelming receptions at each one.⁶⁴ In this one day of traversing Georgia, Taft did more "to destroy the Confederacy than Lincoln's armies had been able to accomplish in four years." His trip to Atlanta "told out a beautiful ribbon of good-will and friendship."⁶⁵ The Atlanta Constitution adequately described the trip by stating that "the towns along the road might never go Republican, but would certainly go for Taft. He radiated good nature like a red-hot stove on a winter's day...."⁶⁶

When Taft arrived in Atlanta, the crowds were unusually receptive. The Constitution again added, "It has been many a day since there was such a turning-out of the people to welcome the coming of one man."⁶⁷ The Atlanta Journal characterized Taft as "the affable man of the warm hand grasp whom southern people understand and who will understand southern people."⁶⁸ The fact that both of Atlanta's Democratic papers were so unusually favorable to this Republican president reflected Taft's growing popularity in the South.

On January 15 the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce gave a banquet in honor of Taft, who was the principal speaker. The President told his enthusiastic hosts that he was proud to have been the first Republican presidential candidate who personally carried his campaign into the South.

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For a complete list of these towns, see E. Merton Coulter, The Attempt of William Howard Taft to Break the Solid South (Savannah, Georgia, 1935), 4-5, hereinafter cited as Coulter, The Attempt of Taft to Break the Solid South.

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Coulter, The Attempt of Taft to Break the Solid South, 4-6.

66

Atlanta Constitution, January 16, 1909.

67

Atlanta Constitution, January 16, 1909.

68

Atlanta Journal, January 15, 1909.

The fact that he was so warmly received was viewed as conclusive proof that political toleration among southerners was on the increase. Taft frankly admitted that his southern receptions did not necessarily reflect political agreement with him or his party, but that they had been given out of respect for his office. He did feel, however, that his southern receptions demonstrated a sincere desire by southerners that he should "become the president not of a party, but of the whole united people." To the accusation that he had come south to woo it into the Republican party, Taft replied that he was not hopeful of winning the South, but that the South had already won him.

An interesting sidelight to this banquet concerned the menu. It consisted of opossum, "taters," and persimmon beer, with opossum the main dish. Harry Fisher, "the premier 'possum connoisseur" in the United States, was responsible for killing and preparing one-hundred 'possums for the banquet. Fisher stated that fat men such as Taft should like fat 'possum so he secured an eighteen-pounder for the President. When Taft finished the dish, he left "only a shattered wreck remaining." He commented that he liked the 'possum and that it was the best meal he had eaten in weeks.

69

Taft, Political Issues and Outlooks, 231, 234-236; Woodward, Origins of the New South, 467; Atlanta Journal, January 16, 1909; Atlanta Constitution, January 16, 17, 1909.

70

In 1909 Taft stated that he weighed 295 pounds, see Atlanta Journal, January 17, 1909.

71

On his trip down the Mississippi River during his 1909 southern tour, Taft said that he did not exactly "hanker" after opossum.

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New York Times, January 16, 17, 1909; Atlanta Journal, January 16, 1909; Atlanta Constitution, January 16, 1909.

At the banquet, Taft told an interesting story concerning the eating of opossum. He said that on the day of the banquet he received word from a friend in Chicago advising him not to eat opossum. The animal was labelled unfit and unclean food through Biblical injunction found in the eleventh chapter of Leviticus. Taft sent for a Bible and found the advice true. However, Taft justified his eating the animal with the words of James Russell Lowell, "They didn't know everything in Judea."⁷³ This comment met with thunderous approval.

On January 16 Taft was entertained with a dance in Atlanta by the Capital City Club. The women with whom Taft danced stated that he kept perfect step, knew how to lead his partners, and was surprisingly nimble. Taft was supposed to have left the dance at midnight to return to Augusta, but became so engrossed in his dancing that he did not leave until approximately 1:00 A.M.⁷⁴ The overall effect of Taft's visit to Atlanta was probably best proclaimed by the following newspaper headline: "Atlanta Surrenders Socially If Not Politically to Judge Taft."⁷⁵

Before Taft ended his vacation in Augusta, he made one more notable address on January 20, 1909. Commenting on his desire to win the popularity of all Americans, Taft compared himself with the presidential candidate who was the most popular man in the country except on election day. Taft said, "Well, I tell you I'd rather be popular 364 days out of the year than

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Quoted in Atlanta Journal, January 16, 1909; News and Courier, January 16, 1909.

74

Atlanta Journal, January 15, 17, 1909; New York Times, January 18, 1909.

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Atlanta Journal, January 16, 1909.

on the 365th." Continuing in this humorous vein, Taft related that someone once told Theodore Roosevelt that he had more friends and less votes in Texas than in any other state. Taft replied, "That sounded like good
76
praise to me." Although President Taft made these comments on a humorous note, he was really expressing his feelings about becoming popular with the electorate.

On January 23, Taft ended his vacation in Augusta. After he left, the city of Augusta paid the President an unusual honor. In appreciation for having selected their city as a special vacation resort, Augustians placed the President's name in the city directory thusly: "Taft, William
77
Howard, President of the United States, Terrett Cottage, Summerville." The favorable impression Taft made with the Georgians was tremendous. He stayed long enough to convince his southern hosts that he really enjoyed being with them and that his visit was non-political. He did the South an honor by choosing Augusta instead of a northern resort area. Realizing this honor, southerners gave this Republican President one of the most cord-
78
ial receptions he ever received.

The second vacation Taft enjoyed in Augusta was from March 11 to March 19, 1911. After addressing the Southern Commercial Congress in Atlanta on March 10, Taft immediately went to Augusta where he enjoyed his usual

76

Quoted in New York Times, January 21, 1909.

77

Atlanta Journal, November 7, 1909.

78

William P. Few, "President Eliot and the South," South Atlantic Quarterly, VIII (April, 1909), 184-185; Lovick P. Winter, "Mr. Taft's Visit to the South," Independent, LXVI (January 28, 1909), 175, 177, 179.

79

rounds of golf and the warm southern climate. The third and final vacation in Augusta began immediately after the inauguration of President Woodrow Wilson. On March 5, 1913, Taft arrived in Augusta for a three-week stay. His visit to the South in 1913 was different from all his other visits because this time he came as an ordinary citizen. The fact that Augusta warmly greeted him confirmed that the South did admire and adore the man. His popularity was further enhanced by virtue of this final trip to the South as the Republican leader. Although Taft made a few minor visits to the South while President, his last vacation in Augusta was an appropriate finale to his southern travels. He had for the final time, as the leader of the Republican party, honored the South as he was fading out of the limelight of American politics.

President Taft's southern travels represented the most successful facet of his entire southern policy. By frequently avoiding political topics during his southern visits, Taft did not alienate as many southerners as did some of his predecessors, notably Theodore Roosevelt. Southerners

79

Joseph W. Brown to William H. Taft, December 13, 1910; "Movement of the President to Atlanta, Ga., Augusta, Ga., thence to Washington, D. C.," March 9, 1911; Charles Hall Davis to Charles D. Norton, February 2, 1911; "Trip of the President in Atlanta, Ga.," March 9-11, 1911, Taft Papers; New York Times, March 14, 1911.

80

New York Times, March 5, 6, 1913; Joseph W. Brown to William H. Taft, December 17, 1912; C. G. Trussell to Charles D. Hilles, January 10, 1913; William H. Taft to Joseph W. Brown, December 31, 1912; W. S. Coleman to William H. Taft, November 14, 1912, Taft Papers.

81

See New York Times, February 12, 1909, November 23, 1910, November 9, 1911, May 2, 3, 1912; B. M. Mewbold to Charles D. Hilles, April 29, 1912; R. Roy Goodwin to Rudolph Foster, April 23, 1912; John Rourke to William H. Taft, December 12, 1911; "Trip of the President to Hampton Roads, Va., June 2-4, 1912"; Charles D. Hilles to Dr. H. B. Frissell, May 29, 1912; "Trip of the President to Aberdeen, Bel Air, and Havre de Grace, Maryland, May 4, 1912," Taft Papers; Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, II, 560.

were attracted to Taft by his joviality, frankness, and non-political nature.

Taft's southern travels also reflected some deficiencies in his ability to execute a southern policy. He attempted to set himself up as the friend of southerners. He repeatedly stated that he wanted to get acquainted with the attitudes and needs of southerners. However, Taft failed to visit and converse with the southern working classes, intellectuals, and businessmen. His lack of visiting with Negro leaders, workers, and educators revealed his unconcern for the race. Failing to visit southern universities, colleges, and public schools further exemplified the President's apathy. Taft consistently appealed to southern businessmen who were disillusioned with the Democratic party to join the Republican party. With the exception of his 1911 speech before the Southern Commercial Congress in Atlanta, Taft neither met nor conversed with southern businessmen personally to persuade them to join the Republican ranks. His 1908 and 1909 southern tours provided excellent opportunities to visit southern furniture factories, iron and steel plants, lumber mills, tobacco factories, cotton textile mills, and other industries, but he failed to take advantage of these opportunities. The President's relish for ceremonial activities in the South did not attract large numbers of prospective recruits into the Republican party. Taft's southern visitation policy did not strengthen the Republican party in the South and was a weak link in his overall southern policy.

CHAPTER IV

PATRONAGE AND PARTY POLITICS

The Republican party in the South during President Taft's administration was in a deplorable condition. As Secretary of War, Taft described his party in the South to the North Carolina Republican State Convention in Greensboro on July 6, 1906, in the following way:

There is no Republican party in the South. There is a little coterie of politicians who devote themselves solely to the selection of delegates to national conventions, who devote no time and energy whatever to elections, and whose whole object is the securing of the Federal patronage.¹

He maintained that the struggles among southern Republicans for the distribution of patronage had produced factionalism, personal animosities, and usually defeat at the polls. As long as these conditions existed, the disreputable status of the party in the South would continue, prospective recruits would not actively support the party, and continued defeat at the polls would be the most consistent characteristic of the party. In amplifying his indictment, Taft stated that southern Republicans were not even worthy of victory at election time unless they reformed their state organizations. Respectable and influential men should be chosen as Republican candidates, and a genuine effort should be undertaken to convince all southerners that the party was not solely self-centered and patronage-minded.²

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Quoted in Weekly Tar Heel (Greensboro, North Carolina), July 12, 1906, hereinafter cited as Weekly Tar Heel; "Using the Offices," Nation, LXXXVI (February 13, 1908), 142, hereinafter cited as "Using the Offices"; Steelman, "Jonathan Elwood Cox," 238.

2

Weekly Tar Heel, July 12, 1906; "Using the Offices," 142; News and Observer, July 10, 1906, October 16, 20, 23, 1908; Woodward, Origins of the New South, 467; Eugene P. Lyle, Jr., "Taft: A Career of Big Tasks," World's Work, XV (November, 1907), 9515-9516.

Political observers who wanted a revitalized Republican party in the South concurred with Taft's assessment.³ Southern Republicans were characterized as "a mere gang of Federal office-holders or of Federal office-seekers," "disgraceful office-brokers," and "squabbling scrubs."⁴ The small coterie of federal officeholders which comprised most southern Republican organizations were labelled as "brokerage corporations dealing in federal patronage...."⁵ These officials operated the "pie-counter system" or "referee system" in the South. The "referee system" was headed by the Postmaster General who used southern "referees" to control federal patronage.⁶ Normally, the managers of the successful Republican presidential candidate promised federal jobs to southern "referees" in

3

These included William Garrott Brown, Walter Hines Page and John Motley Morehead.

4

"Republican Opportunity in the South," 10061-10062; "Can Mr. Taft Break the Solid South?," 10517.

5

"A Vitally Illuminating Article on a Criminally Corrupt Condition in the Republican Party," Munsey's Magazine, XLVI (February, 1912), 619; quoted in Atlanta Journal, February 2, 1912; see also, "The South's Representation in Republican Conventions," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XLV (March, 1912), 346, hereinafter cited as "The South's Representation in Republican Conventions"; "The Tariff and the Southern Republicans," 4; John Motley Morehead to Charles D. Hilles, April 24, 1911, Taft Papers; Woodward, Origins of the New South, 462.

6

Some of the most powerful referees in the South during Taft's administration were Cecil A. Lyon of Texas, John G. Capers of South Carolina, Pearl Wight of Louisiana, Edward C. Duncan of North Carolina, and Prelate D. Barker of Alabama. For a complete list of southern referees, see "Republican National Committeemen and State Chairmen for Democratic States," Taft Papers.

7
return for manageable delegates to national conventions. The "pie-
counter system" did not represent the growing Republican sentiment in the
8
South and thwarted the growth of the party in that section.

John Motley Morehead, a Republican representative from North Carolina
from 1908 to 1910, was one of the most conscientious reformed-minded Re-
9
publicans in the South during Taft's administration. Morehead frequently
attacked the activities of the "professional politician and chronic office-
10
seeker." He charged that previous Republican policies toward the South
had not been aimed at rejuvenating the party, but had been dedicated to
"the perpetuation of a patronage controlling machine at the cost of all
11
party advancement and harmony...."

Another characteristic of the Republican party in the South at the

7
"The Referee System," Harper's Weekly, LIV (May 21, 1909), 4-5; "The
Southern Negro Politician," Harper's Weekly, LII (March 28, 1908), 5; Wendell
H. Stephenson, "William Garrott Brown: Literary Historian and Essayist,"
Journal of Southern History, XII (August, 1946), 337, hereinafter cited as
Stephenson, "William Garrott Brown"; William G. Brown to E. L. Brown, July
4, 1910, Brown Papers; William G. Brown to Charles D. Norton, October 13,
1910, Taft Papers; New York Times, January 22, 1909; Atlanta Independent,
February 13, 1909; see also George F. Moffett to William H. Taft, August 21,
1910, Taft Papers.

8
William G. Brown to Charles D. Norton, October 13, 1910, Taft Papers;
"An Assailant of the Solid South," Harper's Weekly, LIV (July 9, 1910), 5.

9
Congressional Directory, Sixty-First Congress, First Session (Washington,
1909), 90-91. For an excellent study of Morehead's political career between
1908-1912, see Joseph F. Steelman, "Republicanism in North Carolina: John
Motley Morehead's Campaign to Revive a Moribund Party, 1908-1910," North
Carolina Historical Review, XLII (Spring, 1965), 153-168, hereinafter cited
as Steelman, "Republicanism in North Carolina"; and Joseph F. Steelman,
"The Trials of a Republican State Chairman: John Motley Morehead and
North Carolina Politics, 1910-1912," North Carolina Historical Review, XLIII
(Winter, 1966), 31-42, hereinafter cited as Steelman, "John Motley Morehead."

10
John M. Morehead to J. Elwood Cox, August 28, 1908, Cox Papers.

11
John M. Morehead to Charles D. Hilles, April 24, 1911, Taft Papers.

time of Taft's election was that its members were often more interested in retaining their federal jobs than in party growth. Often, they did not genuinely try to win elections or new recruits because a Republican victory in the South would have been detrimental to their prestigious positions as patronage dispensers. Southern Republican leaders were "big fish in little ponds" and preferred to remain in that position. Frequently, national Republican party managers did not contest southern Democrats at the polls because they felt it a waste of time and money when success would be more easily achieved in the doubtful northern and western states.¹²

Charles W. Eliot, President of Harvard University, charged that southern Republican machines had even worked to prevent the election of southern Republican congressmen for fear that they might have their patronage privileges transferred to these congressmen.¹³ Republican bosses in the South were audacious enough even to admit that "the fewer there is to divide the pie [patronage] the more there is to go around."¹⁴ The selfishness of party leaders and their inefficiency in conducting party affairs disgusted and undoubtedly drove away prospective Republican recruits whose political and

12

Robert W. Belcher, "The Activity of Robert S. Sharp in Tennessee Politics," hereinafter cited as Belcher, "Robert S. Sharp"; Francis G. Caffey to Charles D. Norton, August 18, 1910; John M. Morehead to Charles D. Hilles, April 24, 1911; undated magazine clipping, Taft Papers; "Mr. Taft and the South," 11188; Alexander Heard, A Two-Party South? (Chapel Hill, 1952), 97, hereinafter cited as Heard, A Two-Party South?; Edward Lissner, "The Republican Party in the Doubtful South," Harper's Weekly, LII (February 22, 1908), 13, hereinafter cited as Lissner, "The Republican Party"; Steelman, "Jonathan Elwood Cox," 436-437.

13

Charles W. Eliot to William H. Taft, July 25, 1910, Taft Papers.

14

Heard, A Two-Party South?, 99.

15

economic inclinations were favorable to the Republican party.

When not occupied with distributing patronage, southern Republican machines devoted their time to "corralling manageable delegations to Republican national conventions...." At the national conventions, these southern delegates were "moved about like pawns, or bought like cattle...." Republican presidential candidates and their campaign managers perpetrated this condition because the approximately two hundred southern delegates often determined the party's presidential nominee.¹⁶

Taft was challenged by John M. Morehead, William G. Brown, and other politicians to give new recruits more influence in the running of the party in the South. The party's obsession with patronage had to be abandoned if it ever expected to win consistently at the polls. Taft was further advised to separate patronage in southern minds from the idea of reward for party service. By so doing, he would contribute to the

15

"Is the Solid South Passing?," World's Work, XVII (January, 1909), 11076; Belcher, "Robert S. Sharp"; R. L. Woodward to William H. Taft, September 15, 1910; undated magazine clipping, Taft Papers.

16

"Taft's Southern Appointments," Harper's Weekly, LIII (May 29, 1909), 4, hereinafter cited as "Taft's Southern Appointments"; "The Republican Open Sore," Nation, XCIV (June 13, 1912), 580; "The Southern Negro Politician," Harper's Weekly, LIII (March 28, 1908), 5; "Mr. Taft and the South," 11188; "What Rosewater Knows," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XLV (May, 1912), 523; "The Week," Nation, LXXXVI (January 16, 1908, 47; "Along the Color Line: Political," Crisis, I (November, 1910), 3; "Mr. Hitchcock and the South," Harper's Weekly, LIV (March 12, 1910), 4; "Mr. Taft's Southern Appointments," 952-953; Heard, A Two-Party South?, 100-101, 122-123; Norman M. Wilensky, Conservatives in the Progressive Era: The Taft Republicans of 1912 (Jacksonville, Florida, 1965), 17, hereinafter cited as Wilensky, Conservatives in the Taft Era; New York Times, January 2, 1908; News and Observer, March 1, 1912; undated newspaper clipping, Settle Papers.

17

rejuvenation of the Republican party in the South.

A third characteristic of practically every southern state Republican party during Taft's administration was factionalism and rivalry among its leaders. In Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, and Maryland, there were no marked rivalries or factions, but in the remaining southern states the factions were clearly drawn. Generally, the cause of the factionalism was control of the state's patronage.

18

In Virginia, Campbell Bascom Slemph, Representative from the ninth district and state Republican chairman, and Alvah H. Martin, national committeeman, comprised the most powerful faction of the Republican party. The opposing faction was led by Joseph L. Crupper and Royall Cabell. Cabell was United States Internal Revenue Commissioner. The cause of the factionalism involved control of federal patronage in Virginia. The Slemph-Martin faction controlled the majority of the appointments during Taft's administration.

19

In Tennessee, the "Anti-Home Rule" faction was led by Newell Sanders,

17

John M. Morehead to William G. Brown, July 2, 1910, Brown Papers; William G. Brown to Charles D. Norton, October 13, 1910, Taft Papers; Brown, "President Taft's Opportunity," 257; Brown, The New Politics, 187, 192; "The Tariff and the Southern Republicans," 4; "The Republicans and the South," Harper's Weekly, LVII (January 18, 1913), 5.

18

Wilensky, Conservatives in the Progressive Era, 15.

19

William H. Taft to Frank H. Hitchcock, August 10, 1911; George L. Hart to Campbell B. Clemp, July 27, 1911, Taft Papers; Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slemph," 337; Virginian-Pilot, January 29, 1911; New York Times, February 18, June 2, 1912; see also, Frank H. Hitchcock to William H. Taft, May 23, 1911; Alvah H. Martin to William H. Taft, May 24, 1911; William H. Taft to Alvah H. Martin, May 19, 1911; Frank H. Hitchcock to William H. Taft, May 22, 1911; William H. Taft to Frank Hitchcock, June 27, 1911, Taft Papers.

state chairman, and H. Clay Evans, former congressman and federal officeholder. The "Regulars" or "Home Rule" faction was led by Walter Preston Brownlow, Representative from the first district, Richard Wilson Austin, Representative from the second district, Jesse M. Littleton, and John C. Houk. A major issue in Tennessee during Taft's presidency was prohibition. The "Regulars" encompassed many anti-prohibitionists while the "Anti-Home Rule" element strongly favored state-wide prohibition. Both elements were constantly contending for control of the federal patronage, but the Sanders-Evans faction won the struggle during Taft's administration. ²⁰

The origin and success of the Tennessee factions were noteworthy. Tennessee was the only Confederate state which did not have a carpetbag governor during Reconstruction. President Andrew Johnson recognized the state government headed by William G. Brownlow, the uncle of William Preston Brownlow. H. Clay Evans, a carpetbagger, came to Tennessee after the Civil War and became a powerful and influential voice in Tennessee Republican politics. Thus began the Evans-Brownlow faction which existed during Taft's administration. ²¹

These two factions achieved one substantial accomplishment. In 1910 they joined together with a coalition of independent Democrats to elect

20

Verton M. Queener, "The East Tennessee Republican Party, 1900-1914," East Tennessee Historical Society Publication No. 22 (1950), 96-97, 107, hereinafter cited as Queener, "The East Tennessee Republican Party"; Paul E. Isaac, "The Problems of a Republican Governor in a Southern State: Ben Hooper of Tennessee," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXVII (Fall, 1968), 235, hereinafter cited as Isaac, "Ben Hooper"; Belcher, "Robert S. Sharp"; Robert S. Sharp to Frank H. Hitchcock, January 24, 1912; Newell Sanders to William H. Taft [telegram], November 29, 1912; Newell Sanders to William H. Taft, April 1, 1912, Taft Papers; Lissner, "The Republican Party," 14.

21

Lissner, "The Republican Party," 14.

Benjamin W. Hooper, a moderate Republican, as Governor. This was only the second time since the Civil War that a Republican governor had been elected in the state.²² Unfortunately, this unity proved to be temporary. In 1912, Governor Hooper, Newell Sanders, and numerous other Tennessee Republicans supported President Taft. Anti-Sanders Republicans, however, organized a Progressive party and supported Theodore Roosevelt. The Progressive party then split into two factions. W. J. Oliver led one faction which campaigned for Roosevelt and supported Hooper for governor. John Houk and G. T. Taylor led the opposing faction which supported Roosevelt and a different slate of candidates for governor and other state officers.²³

In Alabama, the two Republican factions were headed by Joseph O. Thompson, collector of internal revenue at Birmingham and state chairman, and Prelate D. Barker, national committeeman. The two consistently differed on nominees for federal office and both refused to compromise on one candidate. In July, 1911, Thompson resigned as state chairman and in 1912, Taft demanded his resignation as collector of revenue. In the

22

Robert S. Sharp to Frank H. Hitchcock, January 24, 1912; William H. Taft to Frank H. Hitchcock, January 26, 1912; Robert S. Sharp to Richard H. Dana, January 26, 1912, Taft Papers; Queener, "The East Tennessee Republican Party," 96; Isaac, "Ben Hooper," 230, 235; Russell L. Stockard, "The Election and Second Administration of Governor Ben W. Hooper of Tennessee as Reflected in the State Press," East Tennessee Historical Society Publications No. 32 (1960), 51. For an excellent study of Hooper's first term as governor of Tennessee, see Russell L. Stockard, "The Election and First Administration of Ben W. Hooper as Governor of Tennessee," East Tennessee Historical Society Publications No. 26 (1954), 38-59.

23

Queener, "The East Tennessee Republican Party," 113; Isaac, "Ben Hooper," 236-237.

1912 presidential campaign Thompson became a staunch Roosevelt supporter.

In Louisiana, the Republican factions were divided along the color line. The recognized leader of the "lily-white" faction was Pearl Wight, national committeeman. Wight had served as the Louisiana "referee" under President Roosevelt and served in the same capacity until March, 1912, when he was succeeded by Victor Lorsel. Wight resigned because of his admiration for Roosevelt. The leader of the opposing faction was Walter L. Cohn, an influential Negro spokesman. Cohn led a group of black delegates to the 1908 Republican National Convention where they were paired with the "lily-white" delegates.

25

In Texas, factionalism was not as acute as in some southern states. For several years Cecil A. Lyon had been the "uncrowned king" of the Republican party in the state. He controlled practically every major appointment and no factions of any significance developed against him until 1912. In 1912 Lyon lost support from the Taft administration after he publicly announced his support for Theodore Roosevelt. H. F. MacGregor was assigned the duty of organizing the state for Taft and was given the control of the federal patronage. In 1912 a group of prominent Texas Republicans, led by H. F. MacGregor, Harry Beck, E. H. R. Green, W. B. Bush, A. S. Hackworth, and R. B. Harrison, organized a faction "to unhorse

24

Birmingham News, July 15, 1911; Joseph O. Thompson to Charles D. Hilles, June 26, 1911, July 25, 1911, May 20, 1911; Joseph O. Thompson to William H. Taft, January 25, 1911; William H. Taft to Franklin MacVeagh, July 19, 1912; George J. Beyer to Charles D. Norton, September 1, 1910; R. O. Bailey to Charles D. Hilles, July 3, 1911, Taft Papers.

25

Emmett J. Scott to Charles D. Norton, September 7, 1910; Pearl Wight to William H. Taft, February 26, 1912, March 15, 1912; William H. Taft to Pearl Wight, February 29, 1912; Franklin MacVeagh to Charles D. Hilles, March 16, 1912; William H. Taft to Frank H. Hitchcock, March 6, 1912; undated newspaper clipping, Taft Papers.

26

Colonel Cecil Lyon."

Factionalism in North Carolina was unusually acute after the election of John Motley Morehead as state chairman in 1910. There developed an intense rivalry between Morehead and Edward C. Duncan, state "referee" and national committeeman, for control of the federal patronage. President Taft and his Postmaster General, Frank Hitchcock, consistently recognized the Duncan machine in federal appointments. Aligned with Morehead in his efforts to get more recognition for the North Carolina anti-machine element were Thomas Settle and Edmond Spencer Blackburn. Aligned with Duncan were Jeter C. Pritchard, Thomas S. Rollins, Virgil S. Lusk, and Spencer B. Adams.

In 1912 the factionalism within the North Carolina Republican party became even more intense and caused further disunity. In an effort to simmer the blazing factional fires, Taft withdrew ten North Carolina appointments from the Senate on February 10. The rivalry between Morehead and Duncan became so acute that Taft decided to withdraw the appointments until after the state convention could meet to decide the party's leader.

26

Undated newspaper clipping; "Petition by Republicans of Texas"; R. B. Harrison to William H. Taft, April 15, 1911, Taft Papers.

27

Steelman, "Republicanism in North Carolina," 165; Steelman, "John Motley Morehead," 36-38; "North Carolina," Harper's Weekly, LIV (August 13, 1910), 4, hereinafter cited as "North Carolina"; "Taft and North Carolina," Harper's Weekly, LVI (March 16, 1912), 4, hereinafter cited as "Taft and North Carolina"; "Patronage in Politics," Outlook, C (March 30, 1912), 724; "Taft and Roosevelt and the South," Harper's Weekly, LVI (March 16, 1912), 4; John M. Morehead to Charles D. Hilles, December 13, 1911, Taft Papers; Wilensky, Conservatives in the Progressive Era, 17; News and Observer, March 9, 1912. For discussions of factionalism in North Carolina before Taft's presidency, see Joseph F. Steelman, "Vicissitudes of Republican Party Politics: The Campaign of 1892 in North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review, XLIII (October, 1966), 430-442; David C. Roller, "Republican Factionalism in North Carolina, 1904-1906," North Carolina Historical Review, XLI (Winter, 1964), 62-73.

The action came after a conference with Morehead, who urged Taft to make
 28
 the move. Taft put up for grabs in North Carolina the power over the
 federal patronage with this move. His failure and inability to reconcile
 these factions led to even further division within his party.

During the 1912 presidential campaign, the state Republican party
 split into three factions. Morehead, Settle, and Duncan remained loyal
 to Taft. Richmond Pearson, Charles Holden Cowles, and Marion Butler led
 a faction of Roosevelt Republicans who supported Roosevelt and the national
 Republican platform. James N. Williamson, Jr. led a faction of Progressive
 Republicans who supported Roosevelt, but not the Republican national plat-
 form. The latter two elements finally agreed to support the same state and
 29
 national Progressive candidates, but maintained separate state organizations.

28

Gilliam Grissom to William G. Brown, March 19, 1912, Brown Papers;
 John M. Morehead to Charles D. Hilles, March 10, 23, December 13, 1911,
 Taft Papers; Joseph F. Steelman, "Richmond Pearson, Roosevelt Republicans,
 and the Campaign of 1912 in North Carolina," North Carolina Historical
Review, XLIII (Spring, 1966), 124-126, hereinafter cited as Steelman,
 "Richmond Pearson"; News and Observer, February 20, 21, March 12, 16, 24,
 1912; Ashville Citizen, February 20, 1912.

29

J. F. Gray to William H. Taft, June 27, 1912, Taft Papers; Theodore
 Roosevelt to Richmond Pearson, March 2, 1912; Joseph W. Dixon to Richmond
 Pearson, August 19, 1912; Richmond Pearson to [?], August 19, 1912; Edward
 C. Duncan to Richmond Pearson, August 24, 1912; James N. Williamson, Jr.
 to Richmond Pearson, August 24, 1912; Marion Butler to Richmond Pearson,
 August 24, 1912; Richmond Pearson to Joseph W. Dixon, August 28, 1912;
 Richmond Pearson to James N. Williamson, Jr., August 28, 1912; John M.
 Morehead to Richmond Pearson, August 28, 1912; D. G. Wagoner to Richmond
 Pearson, August 28, 1912; James N. Williamson, Jr. to Richmond Pearson,
 August 31, 1912; Richmond Pearson Papers, Southern Historical Collection;
News and Observer, March 1, 14, 26, May 15, 16, August 18, September 5, 6,
 1912; Charlotte Daily Observer, May 16, 1912; Ashville Citizen, February
 29, 1912; "Another Statesman with Two Parties," Harper's Weekly, LVI
 (August 31, 1912), 4; "Some Republicans Who Stay Republicans," Harper's
Weekly, LVI (September 21, 1912), 5; Robert F. Durden, Reconstruction
Bonds and Twentieth Century Politics: South Dakota v. North Carolina
 (Durham, 1962), 253. The best article on North Carolina factionalism in
 1912 is Steelman, "Richmond Pearson," 122-139.

The factional strife and rivalries within the southern Republican state organizations weakened Taft's southern policy. His inability to unite the dissenting elements in states like Tennessee and North Carolina where Republicans had made steady gains for a decade resulted in continued political disunity and chaos. Instead of encouraging reform-minded southern Republicans by awarding them patronage privileges, Taft alienated many by his appointment policy. He personally abhorred the machine system operating in the South, but failed to attempt to destroy it. Again he failed to execute a policy which might have had significant results for the Republican party in the South.

Taft's appointment policy in the South was not aimed as much at destroying factionalism and strengthening the Republican party as it was at winning personal popularity from southern Democrats. An unusually large number of southern white Democrats were appointed to influential federal and state positions. ³⁰ Taft proclaimed that the best way to convince southerners of his desire to restore them to their proper role in national affairs was to appoint well-qualified and respected southerners to office. The attitude of the national government toward the South could best be gauged by the qualifications and character of those appointed officials representing the government in the South. He would appoint only those whose reputations and acceptability in their communities commended them to public office. In appointing southern federal officeholders, Taft wanted to select those "whose presence in important positions will remove,

if such thing exists, the sense of alienism in the Government which they represent."³¹ Party affiliations would not influence his southern appointments. In an effort to obtain the best qualified man for each available position, Taft unequivocally declared, "I am going to appoint Republicans and I am going to appoint Democrats...."³² He further explained, "I shall not relinquish my hope to build up a decent white man's party there, politics or no politics." When no satisfactory Republican could be found,³³ a Democrat would be appointed. All of the southerners appointed to influential positions were conservative Democrats whose social and political beliefs coincided with those of the President.

Taft courageously and unwaveringly fulfilled these pledges. His first southern appointment was the selection of Jacob McGavock Dickinson, a Tennessee Democrat, as his Secretary of War. Dickinson was a native of Columbus, Mississippi, and was educated at the University of Nashville, Columbia Law School, and the University of Leipzig. He was admitted to the Tennessee bar in 1874 and appointed by President Grover Cleveland in 1895 as Assistant Attorney-General of the United States, a post he held until 1900. In 1903 Dickinson gained fame as American counsel before the

31

Quoted in Atlanta Constitution, January 16, 1909; News and Observer, January 16, 1909; Atlanta Journal, January 16, 1909; "Trying to Melt the Solid South," 121; "The Difficulty of Making Good Federal Appointments," World's Work, XVII (March, 1909), 11299; Taft, Political Issues and Outlooks, 237; New York Times, January 16, 1909.

32

Quoted in Times-Dispatch, May 21, 1909; News and Observer, May 21, 1909; "An Era of Good Feeling," 11733; "Mr. Taft's Southern Appointments," 952; "The President in the South," 249; Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 109. This appointment policy was set forth in Taft's speeches in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 19, 1909, and in Charlotte, North Carolina, on May 20, 1909.

33

Quoted in Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, II, 510.

Alaskan Boundary Tribunal. By 1909 he was recognized as one of the ablest
 34
 railroad lawyers and administrators in the United States. Taft justified the appointment of this southern Democrat by stating that Dickinson was a well-tested and qualified public servant. Furthermore, he was not
 35
 a sectionalist, but a great American.

Initially, Dickinson did not want to accept the cabinet post. In 1911 when he retired from Taft's cabinet to devote more time to personal affairs, Dickinson discussed Taft's objectives in selecting him and the reasons he had accepted the position. He stated that Taft's motive was "magnanimous" and "patriotic." The President wanted to assure the South at the commencement of his administration that he was not going to be a sectional leader. At a personal sacrifice Dickinson stated that he accepted
 36
 the post because of Taft's motive. The appointment proved to be generally popular among southern Democrats. Dickinson was characterized as
 37
 a man of high ability and worthy of high position.

Another governmental branch to which Taft appointed southern Democrats was the judiciary. Believing the judicial branch to be "the strongest

34

Elbert F. Baldwin, "President Taft's Cabinet," Outlook, XCI (March 27, 1909), 695; Elbert F. Baldwin, "The New Secretary of War," Outlook, XCII (May 22, 1909), 168; Willard French, "President Taft's Cabinet," Independent, LXVI (March 11, 1909), 513-514; "President Taft's Cabinet," World's Work, XVII (April, 1909), 11411; "Breaking the Solid South by Better Appointments," World's Work, XVII (April, 1909), 11412; New York Times, March 4, 7, 1909.

35

Lexington Leader (Lexington, Kentucky), July 1, 1909, hereinafter cited as Lexington Leader; New York Times, November 3, 1909.

36

Nashville Tennessean and American, June 2, 1911; Jacob M. Dickinson to William H. Taft, April 28, 1911, Taft Papers.

37

Times-Dispatch, December 31, 1910.

bulwark" Americans had to protect their civil liberties and the entire Constitution, Taft was determined to make appointments which would strengthen the judicial system. Considerations of political faiths would be of secondary importance. Party labels and political partisanship had little or no effect upon the selection of Supreme Court and federal district judges. Placing principle above politics resulted in the appointment of numerous southern Democrats to high ranking judicial offices. Furthermore, Taft wanted to convince southerners that their most qualified citizens would not be denied influential positions in government. During his presidency Taft had the unusual privilege of appointing five new associate justices and elevating one associate justice to the chief justiceship. Two of the five new justices and the chief justice were southern Democrats.

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On July 4, 1910, Chief Justice Melville Weston Fuller died. A new chief justice was not appointed until December, 1910. During this interim period Taft revealed the characteristics his new appointee would possess. The new chief justice would be young enough to discharge his duties with efficiency and quickness. He would take his time in selecting his apointee because the Supreme Court was too important "to be approached

38

"The New Chief Justice," Current Literature, L (January, 1911), 17, hereinafter cited as "The New Chief Justice"; Times-Dispatch, May 21, 1909; New York Times, May 21, 1909, "Mr. Taft's Southern Appointments," 952; H. F. MacGregor to Charles D. Hilles, May 12, 1912, Taft Papers; Horace Dutton Taft, Memories and Opinions (New York, 1942), 123, hereinafter cited as Taft, Memories and Opinions; Pringle, William Howard Taft, I, 536; Francis E. Leupp, "President Taft's Own View," Outlook, XCIX, (December 2, 1911), 811; see also Mahlon Pitney to Richmond Pearson, March 25, 1912, Pearson Papers.

39

Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, II, 433; "Rapid Changes in the Supreme Court," Current Literature, XLIX (August, 1910), 123; "Remaking the Supreme Court," Literary Digest, XL (July 16, 1910), 81; Pringle, William Howard Taft, I, 533.

lightly or in haste."⁴⁰ In a more humorous vein, Taft stated that it was ironical that he should have to appoint another man to the one position in government which he had always wanted.⁴¹ Taft's first choice for the chief justiceship was Charles Evans Hughes, whom Taft had recently appointed to the Supreme Court to fill the vacancy left by the death of David J. Brewer. After a visit by six members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, President Taft changed his mind. The Senators argued that Hughes had never argued a case before the Supreme Court and that the older justices would resent being presided over by a member who had only two months experience on the Court. After many late meetings and consultations with Republican leaders, Taft finally sent the name of Edward Douglas White to the Senate on December 12, 1910, as his appointee to the chief justiceship. White, who was currently an associate justice, was confirmed by the Senate within one hour after receiving his nomination. White was born in Lafourche Point, Louisiana, in 1845. He was educated at Mount St. Mary's in Maryland, the Jesuit College in New Orleans, and Georgetown College. At the age of sixteen, White enlisted in the Confederate army. He served as Louisiana state senator from 1874 to 1878, judge of the Louisiana State Supreme Court from 1879 to 1880, and United States Senator from Louisiana from 1891 to 1894. In 1894 President Grover Cleveland appointed him Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, a post he held until 1910. White was a Democrat and a Roman Catholic. In his political and judicial philosophies, White was a conservative. His

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Quoted in Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, II, 442-443.

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Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, II, 439.

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fundamental beliefs toward government and law were similar to Taft's.

In appointing Edward White Chief Justice, Taft established three precedents. White was the first associate justice ever elevated to the chief justiceship. A Chief Justice of the opposite political faith of the President had never before been appointed. White was also the

43

first ex-Confederate soldier to be appointed to the chief justiceship.

White's appointment was generally well-received throughout the nation. He was acclaimed for his impartiality and ability to analyze clearly and judiciously.⁴⁴ The Washington Post declared that the appointment "deals sectionalism a death-blow." The Wall Street Journal commended Taft's impartiality in choosing a southern Democrat. Former President Theodore Roosevelt summarized the sentiments of many Americans:

It seems to me that nothing could be a better augury of the future than that a Republican President should appoint a former Confederate Chief Justice of the United States, and receive the unanimous applause of his countrymen.⁴⁵

William Garrott Brown analyzed the appointment as being another indication of Taft's genuine desire to restore the South to its proper place

42

New York Times, December 12, 13, 1910; "Momentous Judicial Changes," Literary Digest, XLI (December 24, 1910), 1181, hereinafter cited as "Momentous Judicial Changes"; Elbert F. Baldwin, "The Supreme Court Justices," Outlook, XCVII (January 28, 1911), 156, hereinafter cited as Baldwin, "The Supreme Court Justices"; "Our New Chief Justice: A Great Mind and Personality," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XLIII (January, 1911), 3, hereinafter cited as "Our New Chief Justice"; "The New Chief Justice," 17; "Chief Justice White," Harper's Weekly, LIV (December 24, 1910), 4; Leo Pfeffer, This Honorable Court: A History of the United States Supreme Court (Boston, 1965), 249-250.

43

Baldwin, "The Supreme Court Justices," 156-157; "Momentous Judicial Changes," 182; "The New Chief Justice," 17.

44

"Our New Chief Justice," 3; "The Week," Nation, XCI (December 15, 1910), 567.

45

Quoted in "Momentous Judicial Changes," 1182.

in the national government. Brown doubted if any Republican president⁴⁶ had ever been "drawn so strongly Southward as President Taft was."

Martin W. Littleton, a member of the New York Society of Southerners, believed the appointment demonstrated the reuniting of the North and South. The fact that a Republican president from Ohio had appointed an ex-Confederate from Louisiana to such an exalted position was a promising⁴⁷ sign for the future of America.

White's appointment was not popular among orthodox Republicans. When Taft made the appointment, he stated that he had "driven another nail in my political coffin." House Speaker Joseph Cannon summarized the dissatisfaction of Republicans when he charged, "If Taft were pope, he'd⁴⁸ want to appoint some Protestants to the College of Cardinals."

The same day Taft sent White's name to the Senate he nominated another southern Democrat to fill White's vacancy. On December 12, 1910, Joseph Rucker Lamar was named Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. His nomination was confirmed in late December. Lamar was born in Georgia in 1857 and educated at the University of Georgia, Bethany College, and Washington and Lee University. He served in the Georgia House of Representatives from 1886 to 1899 and was Associate Justice of the Georgia Supreme⁴⁹ Court from 1903 to 1905. Lamar was also a conservative southern Democrat.

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Quoted in "The President and the South," 4.

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New York Times, December 15, 1910.

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Quoted in Pringle, William Howard Taft, I, 535.

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James A. Blount, "Associate Justice Lamar of the Supreme Court," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XLIII (February, 1911), 168, hereinafter cited as Blount, "Associate Justice Lamar"; New York Times, December 13, 1910; Andrew J. Cobb, "Sketch of Justice Lamar," Taft Papers; "The Judiciary," Independent, LXIX (December 8, 1910), 1298; Baldwin, "The Supreme Court Justices," 159.

Justice Lamar was characterized as a man of strong character and mind. He had "a reputation for thoroughness, clearness, and the possession of splendid judicial faculties...."⁵⁰

The third southern Democrat Taft appointed to the Supreme Court was Horace Harman Lurton. On October 24, 1909, Associate Justice Rufus Wheeler Peckham died. In late November, 1909, Taft announced the appointment of Lurton to fill the vacancy and received Senate confirmation in late December. Judge Lurton was born in Kentucky, but resided in Tennessee at the time of his appointment. He had served in the Confederate army with the Third Kentucky Cavalry, was a former Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court, and was appointed by President Grover Cleveland in 1893 as United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Judicial Circuit, the position he held in 1909. Lurton was also a conservative in his political and judicial philosophies. He and Taft had been colleagues on the Sixth Circuit and were close friends.⁵¹

Lurton's appointment was viewed by Secretary of War Dickinson as a

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Quoted in "Momentous Judicial Changes," 1182; see also, "Justices Van Devanter and Lamar," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XLIII (January, 1911), 5; Blount, "Associate Justice Lamar," 168; New York Times, December 13, 1910.

51

New York Times, October 25, 1909; "Justice Peckham," Literary Digest, XXXIX (November 6, 1909), 754; E. A. Angier to Ralph Peters, November 12, 1910, Taft Papers; John W. Gaines to James Mathews Griggs, October 27, 1909, James Mathews Griggs Papers, Southern Historical Collection, hereinafter cited as Griggs Papers; "Judge Horace H. Lurton; of Tennessee," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XL (December, 1909), 642; "The Latest Addition to the Supreme Court," Current Literature, XLVIII (March, 1910), 271-272, hereinafter cited as "The Latest Addition to the Supreme Court"; Herbert S. Duffy, William Howard Taft (New York, 1930), 267-268, hereinafter cited as Duffy, William Howard Taft; "Justice Lurton and His Critics," Literary Digest, XXXIX (December 25, 1909), 1164, hereinafter cited as "Justice Lurton"; "Judge Lurton," Outlook, XCIV (January 1, 1910), 2; Baldwin, "The Supreme Court Justices," 158.

sincere effort by Taft to place the most qualified man on the bench to
 52
 strengthen the federal judiciary. Judge Lurton believed his appointment
 was motivated by Taft's desire "to draw the South to him with cords of
 53
 affections."

Lurton was not a nationally known figure at the time of his nomination;
 therefore, the appointment of this southern Democrat did not arouse unusual
 criticism from the Republican ranks. Those close to Lurton described him
 54
 as "broad, strong, clear and to the point in his opinions." The general
 impression was that Lurton should be well-qualified since Taft had previ-
 55
 ously worked with him and knew his capabilities.

In a speech to the students at the University of the South at Sewanee,
 Tennessee, on November 10, 1911, Taft reflected upon his three southern
 Democratic appointments. He related that it had been a privilege to
 appoint White, Lamar, and Lurton to the Supreme Court, not because they
 were ex-Confederates or Democrats, but "because they were good men and
 56
 brainy lawyers."

Another facet of Taft's patronage policy involved the appointment
 of federal district judges. Taft viewed the status of the judiciary in
 the South with shock and disdain. He stated:

52

Jacob M. Dickinson to Horace H. Lurton, December 10, 1909, Taft
 Papers; "The Latest Addition to the Supreme Court," 272.

53

Quoted in "The Latest Addition to the Supreme Court," 272.

54

John W. Gaines to James M. Griggs, October 27, 1909, Griggs Papers.

55

"Justice Lurton," 1164.

56

Quoted in New York Times, November 11, 1911.

The judiciary has fallen into a very low state in this country. The federal judges of the South are a disgrace to any country, and I'll be damned if I put any man on the bench⁵⁷ of whose character and ability there is the least doubt.

With these convictions, Taft proceeded to appoint Democrats to almost every southern federal district judgeship. Allegedly, they were the most qualified and respected lawyers in their districts and communities.⁵⁸

The district judgeship appointment which best exemplified Taft's appointment policy and which aroused the most attention was one made in the Eastern District of North Carolina. Judge Thomas R. Purnell, federal judge of the Eastern District, died in late 1908. Herbert Seawell, former North Carolina Populist, was appointed by President Roosevelt before he left office. The Senate, however, failed to confirm Seawell's appointment so President Taft⁵⁹ was confronted with the appointment.

After Taft's inauguration, North Carolina Republicans "kept the road hot between North Carolina and Washington" urging the appointment of their favorite candidates. These efforts were in vain, however, because Taft decided to go outside his party for his appointee. He confided to North Carolina Senator Lee Slater Overman that he would not appoint anyone who would use the position for political gain nor would consider party labels in making his final selection. He would do everything in his power to

57

Quoted in Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, I, 15.

58

Nashville Tennessean and American, June 2, 1911; Pringle, William Howard Taft, I, 536; see also, "Good Judges Are Expected," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XXXIX (May, 1909), 523.

59

Daniels, Editor in Politics, 555-556; "Judicial Appointments in North Carolina," Harper's Weekly, LIII (May 22, 1909), 5, hereinafter cited as "Judicial Appointments in North Carolina."

insure that a "Scrub" was not appointed. After much deliberation, Taft nominated Henry Groves Connor to the Eastern District judgeship on May 10, 1909. Confirmation soon followed. Connor, a native of Wilson and a Democrat, had been Associate Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court for ten years.

Connor's appointment was widely applauded. He was characterized as the "ablest Jurist in the State of North Carolina" whose character and judicial temperament were above reproach. He was commended for his impartiality while on the bench. Connor was unquestionably a most respected and capable jurist.

Taft was also widely praised for making the appointment. The sentiment among many North Carolinians was that Connor's appointment would result in the eradication of the feeling that they were going into a "foreign court" when appearing before the Eastern District court. Furthermore, the appointment would instill in Tar Heel citizens the confidence that henceforth they would be treated like American citizens "and no longer as the inhabitants of provinces." It was hailed as a new departure by the Republican party toward judicial appointments in the South.

60

Daniels, Editor In Politics, 555-557; New York Times, May 11, 1909: Lee Slater Overman to Henry Groves Connor, March 26, April 12, May 10 [telegram], 1909, Connor Papers; "Judicial Appointments in North Carolina." 5; "Mr. Taft's Southern Appointments," 952.

61

Clarence H. Poe to William H. Taft, April 24, 1909; H. G. Anderson to William H. Taft, May 4, 1909; Miles O. Sherrill to Robert M. Douglas, January 19, 1909, Connor Papers.

62

Furnifold M. Simmons to Henry Groves Connor, May 28, 1909; C. A. Woods to Henry G. Connor, May 12, 1909, Connor Papers; Baltimore Sun, May 10, 1909.

William Garrott Brown and Walter Hines Page were laudatory of the Connor appointment because they felt it represented an effort to destroy the southern Republican machines. By failing to recognize Republican machine candidates and by keeping politics out of the picture, Taft had warned southern Republicans that better qualified and respected judicial candidates would have to be suggested in the future.⁶³

Connor's appointment was even popular among non-machine North Carolina Republicans. Jonathan Elwood Cox, a prominent and progressive Republican, stated that Connor's appointment would be well-received "by all fair-minded people...."⁶⁴ The North Carolina Republican machine did not concur with this sentiment. Virgil S. Lusk, a representative of the state machine element, charged that Connor's appointment was a "murderous assault" upon the party in North Carolina. If the appointment were not counteracted by a more favorable one, the state machine would "hang up the fiddle and quit the frolic." To endorse the appointment would be an admission by North Carolina Republicans that they were "fools" who could not produce one qualified judge for a district judgeship. Furthermore, the appointment was "not only insulting but humiliating to every Republican in the whole state."⁶⁵

Taft's reaction to this appointment substantiated his policy of selecting the best man for each southern judicial position, regardless of party affiliations. In the heat of the 1912 presidential campaign, many

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"Mr. Hitchcock and the South," 4; "Six Months of President Taft," World's Work, XVIII (September, 1909), 11983.

64

Jonathan Elwood Cox to Henry Groves Connor, May 12, 1909, Connor Papers.

65

Quoted in "Mr. Taft's Southern Appointments," 953.

southern Republicans recalled this and other Democratic appointments as justification for supporting Theodore Roosevelt for president. Taft stood firm behind his motives that resulted in Connor's selection. He wrote Senator Lee Slater Overman of North Carolina that he had been attacked by many southern Republicans for this particular appointment.

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However, he would not apologize, nor did he regret his selection.

Numerous other southern Democrats were appointed as federal district judges. On May 8, 1909, Taft appointed William I. Grubb as federal judge of the Northern District of Alabama. Grubb, a graduate of Yale University and the Cincinnati Law School, was a well-qualified and impartial jurist. In 1911 Taft appointed a Democrat to the eastern district of Texas. This appointment infuriated Cecil Lyon, Texas Republican "referee."

67

President Taft's policy of appointing respected and qualified southern Democrats to influential judicial positions was the strongest aspect of his entire appointment policy. Refusing to allow politics to dominate his appointments, Taft was able to choose outstanding jurists. As honorable as this policy was, however, it alienated many southern Republicans, especially the machine elements. It did not heal the factional disputes, nor did it strengthen the Republican party in the South.

The policy was immensely popular among many Americans. William G. Brown stated that Taft had "knocked the breath out of more than one Southern Republican machine. The country will not go into mourning if they

 66

William H. Taft to Lee S. Overman, August 17, 1912, Taft Papers.

67

New York Times, May 9, 1909; "He Means What He Says," Harper's Weekly, LIII (May 29, 1909), 4; William H. Taft to Cecil A. Lyon, February 7, 1912; "Memorandum," June 25, 1911, Taft Papers.

68
 never get it back." The Memphis Journal stated, "Politicians are aghast
 at the determination of the President no longer to regard the South as a
 69
 political Alsace."

Another important aspect of Taft's southern patronage policy involved the selection of postmasters, assayers, appraisers of merchandise, and other local officials. The dispenser of federal patronage for these southern positions was Postmaster General, Frank Hitchcock. Hitchcock had served as President Roosevelt's Assistant-Postmaster General between 1905 and 1908, Taft's campaign manager in 1908, and Republican national chairman in 1908. He was adept at lining up southern delegates for Taft's nomination in the convention and became the principal advisor to Taft
 70
 on matters of patronage. Hitchcock's policy toward federal officials was life tenure for competent officials, regardless of party affiliations. Hitchcock stated, "I invariably favor reappointment for postmasters whose records are good and this regardless of their political affiliations." He wanted "to divorce the postal service as completely as possible from politics...." The criteria for a good postmaster were "merit and fitness." In making new appointments Hitchcock stated that he would consult with the Republican national committeemen and state chairmen. When the two advisors disagreed over a proposed appointee and neither would yield to the other,

68

"Taft's Southern Appointments," 4; quoted in "Mr. Taft's Southern Appointments," 953.

69

Quoted in "Mr. Taft's Southern Appointments," 952.

70

Dorothy Ganfield Fowler, The Cabinet Politician: Postmasters General, 1829-1909 (New York, 1943), 287, 291-292, 295-297, hereinafter cited as Fowler, The Cabinet Politician; Pringle, William Howard Taft, I, 347; New York Times, July 3, 9, 1908; William G. Brown to E. S. Martin, July 2, 1910, Brown Papers; George H. Mayer, The Republican Party, 1854-1966 (New York, 1967), 301, hereinafter cited as Mayer, The Republican Party.

71

he would select whom he considered the best nominee.

President Taft concurred with Hitchcock's policy. He stated that he did not have time to be "bothered" with frequent changes in postmasters who performed their duties effeciently and admirably. If postmasters passed the Post Office inspections, they would be retained regardless of party affiliations. ⁷² As a result of this policy, President Taft retained many southern Democrats whom Republican leaders wanted replaced with Republicans and he replaced many Republicans with Democrats. This policy of life tenure for competent officials met continued resistance from southern Republican leaders.

Taft's determination to support the policy in the face of severe opposition was exemplified in the reappointment of William Fleming, a Democrat, as postmaster at Athens, Georgia. In June, 1910, Fleming's commission expired. Henry S. Jackson, President of the Georgia State League of Taft Clubs and an avid Taft Republican, recommended the appointment of Paul L. Smith, "a staunch, life-long Republican." Jackson argued that Smith had the support of about 90 percent of the patrons of the Athens post office the county and district executive committees, and the Taft Club of Georgia. Jackson believed that nothing would give more encouragement to rank and file Georgia Republicans than Smith's appointment. If Fleming were reappointed, there would be "the greatest wave of disappointment" ever

71

Frank H. Hitchcock to Henry S. Jackson, July 17, 29, 1911; Frank H. Hitchcock to William H. Taft, October 16, 1910; undated newspaper clipping, Taft Papers.

72

William H. Taft to Campbell Bascom Slemph, July 28, 1911; William H. Taft to W. O. Bradley, March 7, 1911; William H. Taft to Newell Sanders, February 9, 1912; W. O. Bradley to William H. Taft, January 23, 1911; Henry S. Jackson to Frank H. Hitchcock, July 14, 1911; John M. Morehead to Charles D. Hilles, November 27, 1911, December 13, 1911, March 10, 1911, Taft Papers.

experienced by Georgia Republicans. If Smith were not appointed, Jackson declared, "I will naturally lose hope and become discouraged and feel that further effort is unnecessary." If the Republican party in Georgia could not depend upon the administration on local patronage matters, the incentive to rejuvenate the party would be destroyed.⁷³ Jackson became so concerned over the matter that he flooded the desks of Taft and Hitchcock with appeals on behalf of Smith, but all to no avail.

Postmaster General Hitchcock recommended the reappointment of William Fleming because of his good record. Taft followed the advice and reappointed the incumbent in July, 1911. Taft and Hitchcock wrote explanatory letters to Jackson after the reappointment. Both stated that to have appointed Smith would have deviated from the recognized rule of the Post Office Department.⁷⁴

The reaction of Jackson and other Georgia Republicans was one of frustration and despair. Jackson charged that Fleming's reappointment would retard the efforts of many Republicans in the state in strengthening their party. Furthermore, the hope of carrying Georgia for Taft in 1912 had diminished.⁷⁵ Churchill P. Goree, another Georgia Republican, stated that Republicans all over the state had closely observed the case to see whether a Democrat would be victorious over a Republican. The victory of

73

Henry S. Jackson to John Hays Hammond, March 21, 1911; Henry S. Jackson to William H. Taft, August 9, 1911; Henry S. Jackson to Charles D. Hilles, July 6, 25, 1911; Henry S. Jackson to Frank H. Hitchcock, July 14, 25, 1911, Taft Papers.

74

Frank H. Hitchcock to Charles D. Hilles, May 27, 1911; Frank H. Hitchcock to Henry S. Jackson, July 29, 1911; William H. Taft to Henry S. Jackson, July 28, 1911, Taft Papers.

75

Henry S. Jackson to William H. Taft, August 9, 1911, Taft Papers.

Fleming, the Democrat, proved that a Democrat stood a better chance than
 76
 a Republican for federal office in Georgia.

Another appointment of a postmaster in which Taft alienated southern Republicans by placing principle above politics concerned B. L. Garber, a Democrat, who became postmaster of Demopolis, Alabama. Lee Woodruff, the incumbent Republican postmaster at Demopolis, was charged in 1911 with engaging in political activities, allowing his debts to accumulate, and signing his personal checks with the initials "P. M." [Postmaster] after his name. The chief post office inspector recommended the removal of Woodruff. Woodruff countered these charges by stating that he was the only white Republican in Marengo County and had the support of his post
 77
 office patrons, as well as a majority of Alabama Republicans. The Demopolis Times substantiated this argument and declared that Woodruff's service had been efficient and satisfactory. Woodruff was described as
 78
 an ardent Taft supporter and a "dyed in the wool" Republican.

These appeals, however, did not influence Taft's final decision. On July 13, 1912, the President appointed B. L. Garber to succeed Woodruff. The removal was justifiable because of the charges against Woodruff. Garber, a Democrat, had been recommended by Prelate D. Barker, Alabama's Republican
 79
 national committeeman.

 76

Churchill P. Goree to William H. Taft, August 1, 1911, Taft Papers.

77

"Brief in Case of Lee Woodruff, postmaster, Demopolis, Alabama"; F. R. Barclay to William B. Smith, March 29, 1911; Lee Woodruff to Charles D. Hilles, December 3, 1911, Taft Papers.

78

Demopolis Times (Demopolis, Alabama), July 4, 1912.

79

William H. Taft to Horace W. Woodruff, July 16, 1912; Prelate D. Barker to Charles D. Hilles, February 12, 19, 23, 1912; Lee Woodruff to William H. Taft, July 14, 1912; Lee Woodruff to Charles D. Hilles, March 1, 1912, Taft Papers.

In August, 1912, Rene F. Clerc was nominated as appraiser of merchandise at New Orleans.⁸⁰ The appointment came under severe attack from Walter L. Cohn, Taft's leading Negro supporter in Louisiana. Cohn charged that Clerc's appointment was unsatisfactory to the rank and file Republicans of the state. As late as March, 1912, Clerc had been an active Democrat and participated in the Louisiana Democratic primaries on behalf of Democratic candidates. Cohn asserted that Clerc was given the job merely because he had recently joined the Republican party. Such appointments were unfair to those loyal Alabama Republicans who had fought for Taft during the 1908 national convention,⁸¹ Cohn believed.

One last appointment of a Democrat to a southern office involved the assayership of Charlotte, North Carolina. In April, 1911, Frank P. Drane, a Democrat, was appointed assayer. The position had previously been held⁸² by William S. Pearson, a Republican.

Taft's policy of life tenure for federal officeholders in the South incurred the wrath of southern Republican leaders. Campbell Slemph of Virginia, Newell Sanders of Tennessee, William O. Bradley of Kentucky, and John Motley Morehead of North Carolina were among those most opposed to this policy. They wanted the privilege of filling positions when an incumbent died or his term expired. In numerous cases, these and other Republican leaders were deprived of this privilege because of the policy of Taft and Hitchcock.

80

Franklin MacVeagh to William H. Taft, August 9, 1912, Taft Papers.

81

Walter H. Cohn to William H. Taft [letter and telegram], August 12, 1912, Taft Papers.

82

S. S. McNich to William H. Taft, April 17, 1911, Taft Papers.

The most outspoken critic of this policy was John Motley Morehead, North Carolina Republican Representative from 1908 to 1910 and state chairman between 1910 and 1912. Although Morehead was patronage-conscious, he was one of the South's most devoted Republican party reformers. He wanted the machine system destroyed and the Republican party revitalized in the South. Morehead charged that Taft's policy was detrimental to his efforts toward making the party stronger and more respectable in North Carolina. Incentive to strive for a rejuvenated Republican party was seriously inhibited by such an obnoxious appointment policy. The natural and inevitable result of this course led him and other southern Republicans to tell themselves, "What's the use." Morehead analyzed the effects of the policy upon North Carolina as follows:

The application of this policy to North Carolina means a continued recognition of a system that has been officially repudiated by 90 per cent of the Republican Party of the State, and ...will set the Party back indefinitely by sheer hopelessness engendered by this effort resulting in an absolute fiasco, as far as the Washington end is concerned. It says in effect that you shall have no voice in your own affairs [sic] but shall remain as a chattel to be led by a halter in any direction that the selfish interests of certain individuals may dictate, and that too in spite of the fact that this same coterie unto whom this decision again delivers the Party, have even prior to the election of 1908 and until this moment been the avowed apponents of the Administration.⁸⁴

Morehead was especially disturbed because the North Carolina state committee, chaired by himself, did not have the sole privilege of the patronage since a majority of North Carolina Republicans repudiated the state machine

83

John M. Morehead to Charles D. Hilles, November 27, December 13, 1911, March 23, 1911; John M. Morehead to Z. L. M. Jeffreys, November 27, 1911, Taft Papers.

84

John M. Morehead to Charles D. Hilles, March 10, 1911, Taft Papers.

in the 1910 convention. When Edward Duncan, the machine leader and national committeeman, continued to be recognized by Hitchcock, Morehead became so disillusioned and bitter that he developed the attitude, "What the hell's the use."⁸⁵

Taft's patronage policy toward federal offices in the South had a detrimental effect upon those southern Republican reformers who were seeking to revamp their state party organizations. The continued recognition of the machine elements even after state conventions had repudiated them only increased the frictions between southern reformers and the administration. The policy was unpopular because of southern dislike for Frank Hitchcock, the dispenser of southern patronage. Hitchcock aroused the hostility and hatred of numerous southern Republicans. They felt that he was denying Taft's genuine southern supporters the consideration they deserved.⁸⁶ Morehead referred to Hitchcock as "a damnable sneak, alongside of whom I reverence a chicken thief."⁸⁷

This characterization was the consensus of many national observers. Archie Butt, Taft's chief White House aide, charged that Hitchcock was "as cold-blooded as a fish...."⁸⁸ John Hays Hammond, the organizer of

85

John M. Morehead to William G. Brown, August 20, 1912, Brown Papers; see also Steelman, "John Motley Morehead," 31-42; Z. M. L. Jeffreys to John M. Morehead, November 25, 1911, Taft Papers.

86

A. E. Holton to William G. Brown, March 12, 1912; Thomas Settle to William G. Brown, March 4, 1910; John M. Morehead to William G. Brown, April 21, 1910, Brown Papers.

87

John M. Morehead to William G. Brown, June 1, 1910, Brown Papers; see also, John M. Morehead to William G. Brown, December 1, 1911, Brown Papers.

88

Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, I, 315.

state Taft clubs, charged that the Postmaster General "was a fish with no blood in his veins and would throw down anybody to curry a little favor with the President or with some political henchman." ⁸⁹ Senator Murray Crane of Massachusetts believed Hitchcock was "the heaviest load the Administration has to carry." ⁹⁰ William Garrott Brown, a frequent critic of Hitchcock, charged that the Postmaster General's actions in the South were motivated solely by a desire to keep the Republican machines intact in order to control southern delegates to the 1912 Republican national convention. Hitchcock had done all he could "to perpetrate the Federal pie-counter as the controlling factor in Southern Republican politics...." ⁹¹

President Taft concurred with some of these accusations. He believed that Hitchcock did not really understand his southern appointment policy. Because of this, the President stated that it was often a constant struggle ⁹² to appoint well-qualified and respected federal officeholders in the South. This confession by Taft raised an interesting paradox. It was strange that the President allowed a man in whom he did not have complete faith almost absolute control over patronage matters in the South. Perchance, Taft was too interested in such activities as golf and travelling to become involved in such an intricate and delicate political activity as dispensing federal

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Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, I, 207.

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Quoted in Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, II, 463-464.

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"A Statesman Who Understands," Harper's Weekly, LIV (April 16, 1910), 4; "And How He Uses It," Harper's Weekly, LIV (May 21, 1910), 5; "Mr. Hitchcock," Harper's Weekly, LV (May 20, 1911), 4; "Taft and North Carolina," 4; "North Carolina," 4; "Patronage in Politics," 724.

⁹²

Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, II, 463-464.

patronage. His dislike for discord and inability to cope with strife probably contributed to this paradoxical situation.

Taft's dislike for politics and inherent weaknesses as a politician⁹³ were witnessed by both his family and political associates. Mrs. Taft⁹⁴ once observed, "Mr. Taft was such a poor politician." Horace Dutton Taft, Taft's brother, asserted that Taft "loathed the arts" of politics⁹⁵ and was "very clumsy" when he had to practice them.

Taft concurred with these observations. He frankly admitted that he⁹⁶ did not know much about politics, nor did he even like politics. In July, 1908, as the presidential campaign was getting underway, Taft stated,⁹⁷ "The next four months are going to be a kind of nightmare for me." He often questioned his political abilities. After his election, he stated⁹⁸ that he did not know whether he would "arise to the occasion or not."

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"Taft's Four Years," Nation, XCVI (March 6, 1913), 222; Edward G. Lowry, "Mr. Taft and His Critics," Harper's Weekly, LIV (August 6, 1910), 15, 30; "The Penalty of Poor Politics," Harper's Weekly, LIV (March 19, 1909), 4; "A President's Functions," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XLII (October, 1910), 387; "Politics in the Magazines," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XLV (March, 1912), 345; "A Plea for Fair Judgement," World's Work, XXIII (March, 1912), 491; "A Measure of the Candidates," World's Work, XXIV (May, 1912), 9-10; "Mr. Taft's Four Years," Independent, LXXIV (March 6, 1913), 488; Edward G. Lowry, "One Year of Mr. Taft," North American Review, CXCI, (March, 1910), 300-301; "The President Not a Politician," Harper's Weekly, LIV (March 19, 1910), 4; Charles Willis Thompson, Presidents I've Known and Two Near Presidents (Indianapolis, 1929), 213, 215, hereinafter cited as Thompson, Presidents I've Known; Pringle, William Howard Taft, I, 427; Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, II, 634.

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Mrs. Taft, Recollections, 305.

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Horace Taft, Memories and Opinions, 116.

96

William H. Taft to D. K. Watson, May 16, 1910, Taft Papers.

97

William H. Taft to C. E. Magoon, July 10, 1908, Taft Papers

98

William H. Taft to C. H. Brent, December 22, 1908, Taft Papers.

Furthermore, he felt "like a fish out of water."⁹⁹ In January, 1909, the President-elect commented, "I look forward to the future with much hesitation and doubt as to what is to happen...."¹⁰⁰ This inherent political weakness resulted in Taft's unpopularity among many southern Republicans in his post office appointment policy. The fact that he entrusted so much power to Postmaster General Hitchcock to execute this aspect of his patronage policy led to its increased unpopularity.

The last major aspect of Taft's southern patronage policy involved the appointment of census supervisors and enumerators for the thirteenth census in 1910. In August, 1909, President Taft laid down the guidelines to be used in making these southern selections. In the traditionally solid Democratic states of Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas, the appointments would be equally divided between Democrats and Republicans. In the doubtful or debatable southern states of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky, all census appointments would be awarded to Republicans. He warned that no supervisor would be allowed to build up a political machine through the use of the census patronage. If any supervisor attempted to influence local elections by supporting a particular candidate, he would be discharged immediately. This policy would be "enforced without exception."¹⁰¹

The policy proved to be generally unfavorable among Republicans in the

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William H. Taft to H. A. Morrill, December 2, 1908, Taft Papers.

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William H. Taft to Theodore Roosevelt, January 2, 1909, Taft Papers.

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New York Times, August 9, 14, 16, 1909; "The Week," Nation, LXXXIX (August 12, 1909), 129; "A Non-Political Census," Literary Digest, XXXIX (August 28, 1909), 293, hereinafter cited as "A Non-Political Census."

South. Cecil Lyon of Texas made a special trip to Beverly, Massachusetts, Taft's summer home, to protest the President's policy in the solidly Democratic states. Lyon argued that the policy of splitting the appointments equally between Democrats and Republicans in those states was detrimental to the Republican party in the South.¹⁰² Charles Holden Cowles, Republican congressman from North Carolina between 1908 and 1910, charged,¹⁰³ "I am afraid the President is going to destroy us yet."

The reaction of southern Democratic newspapers also reflected further unpopularity of Taft's census policy. The Raleigh News and Observer charged that Taft's policy was another example of the South being used and treated unjustly by the Republican party. Taft was following the footsteps of his predecessor in treating the South as a separate section. If the Republican party expected to become respectable in the South, it had to cease trying to win southern support with patronage.¹⁰⁴ The Norfolk Virginian-Pilot charged that when the Republicans of Virginia fully realized the implications of dividing census appointments between Republicans and Democrats¹⁰⁵ that there would be "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth...."

President Taft's policies in making southern appointments had varying effects. His cabinet and Supreme Court appointments were the most applauded because political labels were disregarded. They were generally regarded

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New York Times, August 14, 15, 1909.

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Charles Holden Cowles to Henry Reynolds, December 12, 1909, Calvin Josiah Cowles Papers, Southern Historical Collection, hereinafter cited as Cowles Papers; see also Charles H. Cowles to Henry Reynolds, June 4, 1909, Cowles Papers.

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"A Non-Political Census," 293.

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Virginian-Pilot, August 10, 1909.

as a sincere effort to select the best qualified man for each position and to restore the South to its proper role in the national government. His southern judicial, post office, and census appointments were not as popular and alienated southern Republicans. Taft's appointment policy increased his personal popularity among southern Democrats, but it did not strengthen or contribute to the rejuvenation of the Republican party in the South.

CHAPTER V

TAFT AND THE BETRAYAL OF THE NEGRO

President Taft's policy toward the southern Negro was primarily one of sympathy and passive concern. Realizing that one of the reasons for the South's political solidarity was protection against political domination by the Negro, Taft undertook to placate southern whites and dispel southern fears of Negro domination. This fear should be only "a dream and nightmare of the past," he proclaimed.¹ The President also sought to lessen southern opposition to the 1908 Republican party platform plank entitled "Rights of the Negro." This plank declared the party's approval of "the enforcement in spirit and letter" of the Civil War amendments and condemned all methods to disfranchise the Negro for color alone "as unfair, un-American, and repugnant to the supreme law of the land."² Taft supported southern efforts to restrict the suffrage to the literate and property owners. He refused to endorse social equality or amalgamation of the races. Only token numbers of southern Negroes were appointed to office during his administration while many were removed and replaced with whites. In essence, President Taft's policy toward southern Negroes was a defense of "white supremacy" and "lily-whitism."³ He catered to southern white racial

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Davis, William H. Taft, 326.

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New York Times, June 19, 1908; Booker T. Washington to William H. Taft, June 4, 1908, Booker Taliaferro Washington Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, hereinafter cited as Washington Papers; Davis, William H. Taft, 400-401.

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Woodward, Origins of the New South, 648. The term "lily-white" was first used in 1880 by Norris Wright Cuney, Negro Texas Republican, to depict white opposition to him, Heard, A Two-Party South?, 222.

prejudices in every facet of his policy.

An important aspect of Taft's policy was his attitude toward southern constitutional limitations upon the Negro franchise. Realizing that many southerners believed the Republican party was still trying to enforce unrestricted Negro suffrage and political domination, Taft attempted to dispel this fear by supporting southern constitutional amendments restricting the franchise.⁴ He declared that every southern state could lawfully enact constitutional suffrage restrictions if administered equally among whites and blacks. Southern efforts to prevent political domination by an irresponsible and illiterate electorate were not inconsistent with the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution,⁵ he believed. These measures were essential to maintain responsible government. The fifteenth amendment did not require the enfranchisement of every black, but it did prohibit his exclusion from the ballot merely because of his color. If a Negro lacked educational, property, and other southern franchise prerequisites, he could lawfully be excluded from the ballot if whites were also excluded who lacked the same qualifications. Furthermore, the federal government had no legal right to interfere with the laws, regulations, and domestic affairs of the southern states as long as their constitutional amendments did not violate the

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Arthur S. Link, "The Negro as a Factor in the Campaign of 1912," Journal of Negro History, XXXII (January, 1947), 81, hereinafter cited as Link, "The Negro as a Factor in the Campaign of 1912"; A northern Republican to William H. Taft, December 15, 1911, Taft Papers; Booker T. Washington to William H. Taft, November 19, 1908, Washington Papers.

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The fifteenth amendment to the United States Constitution reads as follows: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

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federal Constitution. Between Reconstruction and 1890 Congress passed and attempted to pass numerous "force bills" or federal elections laws protecting Negro suffrage in the South and attempted to reduce southern representation in Congress because of Negro disfranchisement. Taft believed these attempts had "proved to be a failure" because the 1890 "force bill," which failed to pass Congress, marked the last major attempt on the part of the Republican party to regulate southern elections.

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Taft, The South and the National Government, 11; Taft, Present Day Problems, 229; Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 64-65; "Mr. Taft and the South," 11188; "Mr. Taft on Disfranchisement," Literary Digest, XXXVII (December 19, 1908), 932; "Nearing a Solution," Outlook, XC (December 19, 1908), 860; "Mr. Taft's Plea to the South," Independent, LIII (August 29, 1907), 476, hereinafter cited as "Mr. Taft's Plea to the South"; "The South and the Negroes," Independent, LXVI (March 11, 1909), 505, hereinafter cited as "The South and the Negroes"; "Trying to Melt the Solid South," 121; Henry Litchfield West, "President Taft and the South," Forum, XLI (April, 1909) 294, hereinafter cited as West, "President Taft and the South"; "The South and its Problems," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XXXIX (April, 1909), 394; "The Inauguration of President Taft," Harper's Weekly, LIII (March 13, 1909), 4, hereinafter cited as "The Inauguration of President Taft"; "Appointments and the Suffrage," Harper's Weekly, LIII (March 20, 1909), 4, hereinafter cited as "Appointments and the Suffrage"; "The South and the Negroes," 506; New York Times, August 23, 1907, December 8, 1908, March 5, 1909.

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For discussion of these "force bills," see Harold U. Faulkner, Politics, Reform and Expansion, 1890-1900 (New York, 1963), 110-111, 125; William Watson Davis, "The Federal Enforcement Acts," in Studies in Southern History and Politics, 205-228; Richard E. Welch, Jr., "The Federal Elections Bill of 1890: Postscripts and Prelude," Journal of American History, LII (December, 1965), 511-526.

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Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 65; "Mr. Taft Ushers in a New Era of Good Will," 354; "Mr. Taft, the South, and the Negro," Harper's Weekly, LIII (March 20, 1909), 4; New York Times, March 5, 1909. For other concurring opinions see "Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation," Current Opinion, LIV (February, 1913), 96. Edward P. Clark, "The 'Solid South' Dissolving," Forum, XVII (November, 1896), 267-269, 271; McBee, "The South and Mr. Taft," 489; McBee, The South and Mr. Taft, 6; "Can Mr. Taft Break the Solid South?," 10516; Banks, "The Passing of the Solid South," 103-104; Taylor, "The Solid South a National Calamity," 4; Garner, "New Politics for the South," 175; "A Taft and a Bryan Platform," World's Work, XV (April, 1908), 10059; "The Taft and Bryan Platforms," Literary Digest, XXXVI (March 21, 1908), 394-395; New York Times, November 8, 1908.

Taft was often contradictory and inconsistent in his statements concerning southern election laws. He frequently stated that they did not violate the fifteenth amendment if administered equally among whites and blacks. Taft undoubtedly realized that equal administration of the election laws in the South was a political impossibility, but he never publicly admitted it. He actually defended white primaries, southern disfranchisement laws, and "white supremacy." Taft contradicted himself by confessing that the fifteenth amendment had been and was still nullified by southerners through violence, election fraud, and oppression. He admitted that the fifteenth amendment was practically a "dead letter" between Reconstruction and 1890. Further placating southern whites, the President defended this annulment:

The taking away from the Southern slave-owners the 5,000,000 negroes...was a change so radical and social wrench so violent that it must have been accompanied by the temporary evils which for a long time clouded the great beneficence of the change.

The southern slaves had been their masters' legal property, had no preparation for political responsibilities or self-support, and 95 per cent of them were illiterate. That white southerners would extend their former slaves political equality could not have been expected. Taft concluded, "Declarations of equality and popular rights and universal suffrage offer but a feather's weight against the inevitable impulses of human nature." Taft actually presented the rationale of the southern white man and completely avoided the Negro's point of view in defending southern actions toward the Negro.

In 1890 white southerners commenced to imploy "legal" methods to disfranchise the Negro. They amended their state constitutions and incorporated property and educational qualifications. The inclusion of "grandfather clauses"¹⁰ in these amendments was the "legal" method used to allow unqualified whites the franchise. President Taft stated that he deplored the use of these clauses and charged that they were evasions of the fifteenth amendment.¹¹ In 1909 and 1911 Maryland attempted unsuccessfully to pass a state constitutional amendment containing a "grandfather clause." The attempts drew national attention because Maryland had a large number of enfranchised Negroes. Republicans feared that if these Negroes were disfranchised that the state would no longer remain politically balanced, but would become solidly Democratic. The Republicans and Taft also feared that the amendment would arouse racial hatreds at a time when such feelings were discouraged. President Taft charged that the amendment was "vicious," "a gross injustice," and in

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Between 1890 and 1908, Mississippi, South Carolina, Louisiana, Alabama, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia adopted state constitutional amendments with "grandfather clauses." For excellent discussions of these amendments, see, Banks, "The Passing of the Solid South," 103; Link, "The Negro as a Factor in the Election of 1912," 81; William Alexander Mabry, "Louisiana Politics and the 'Grandfather Clause,'" North Carolina Historical Review, XIII (October, 1936), 290-310; William Alexander Mabry, "'White Supremacy' and the North Carolina Suffrage Amendment," North Carolina Historical Review, XIII (January, 1936), 1-24; T. B. Edgington, "The Repeal of the Fifteenth Amendment," North American Review, CLXXXVIII (July, 1908); Norman P. Andrews, "The Negro in Politics," Journal of Negro History, V (October, 1926), 420-436; "The Week," Nation, XCI (November 3, 1910), 405-407; Gilbert Thomas Stephenson, Race Relations in the South: Race Distinctions in American Law (New York, 1911), 295, 299, 302, 305-308, hereinafter cited as Stephenson, Race Relations in the South.

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Taft, Present Day Problems, 226-228, 277; Davis, William H. Taft, 324-325; "The Week," Nation, LXXXVI (March 19, 1908), 250.

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violation of the "spirit of the Fifteenth Amendment." This attack on the Maryland amendment by Taft was superficial. The amendment was such an obvious violation of the fifteenth amendment that Taft was compelled to publicly denounce it. His inconsistency was again exemplified.

The President viewed the South's transition from the use of violence to the employment of "legal" means to disfranchise the Negro as an improvement in southern white attitudes toward the Negro. He believed this change of means even to accomplish the same end indicated that more equal and impartial administration of the southern election laws would evolve. The consciences of those who previously violated the fifteenth amendment through violence had at least been stirred, Taft believed. Hopefully, the southern whites would become tolerant toward their black neighbors and grant them full political rights. This was an unrealistic assessment of southern politics. Taft unquestionably realized that southern whites would never grant the Negro his political rights without federal legislation. Admitting that the Negro would not be granted his rights in the near future, Taft declared that the fifteenth amendment presently served a useful purpose for the southern Negro. He asserted that "it stands there [in the South] as a monument and a mandatory restriction upon state laws and as an ideal toward which politically the South must work." Furthermore, he was "confident that in the end it [the fifteenth amendment] will prove to be a bulwark equally beneficial with that of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth

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Stephenson, Race Relations in the South, 319-320; "Other Election Results," Literary Digest, XXXIX (November 13, 1909), 819; "The Week," Nation, XCIII (November 16, 1911), 457; "Disfranchisement in Maryland," Literary Digest, XXXIX (October 9, 1909), 562; "Judge Taft and the South," 3; Atlanta Independent, June 8, 1912.

13

Amendments to an unfortunate, down-trodden struggling race...."

Taft vehemently opposed those southerners who fought for repeal of the fifteenth amendment. The two foremost southern racists of this school were James Kimble Vardaman of Mississippi and "Pitchfork" Benjamin Ryan Tillman of South Carolina. Both men believed the Negro incapable of governing and inferior to whites. The repeal of the fifteenth amendment would check the potential political power of the Negro while preserving

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"white supremacy." Taft labelled these demands and charges as "foolish" and "utterly impracticable and should be relegated to the limbo of for-

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gotten issues." The President's defense of the fifteenth amendment was weak and vacillatory. He defended the amendment and accepted discriminatory southern election laws simultaneously. Taft was guilty of double talk and euphemisms in this facet of his Negro policy.

Another important aspect of Taft's southern Negro policy involved his views toward social equality and racial amalgamation. The prevailing sentiment among many Americans during Taft's administration was overwhelming

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opposition to these issues. Taft concurred with this sentiment. He

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Taft, Present Day Problems, 227, 229, 277-278; Davis, William H. Taft, 325-326; Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 64; "The South and the Negroes," 505; New York Times, March 5, 1909.

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Link, "The Negro as a Factor in the Election of 1912," 86; "Opinion: Vardaman," Crisis, II (September, 1911), 2; Albert Dennis Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi Politics, 1876-1925 (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1964), 163, 224; Garner, "Recent Agitation of the Negro Question in the South," 16, 20; New York Times, January 21, 1909; see also, "The Fifteenth Amendment," Independent, LXXI (September 21, 1911), 660-661.

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Taft, Present Day Problems, 229; Taft, The South and the National Government, 11; New York Times, December 8, 1908.

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"Opinion: The Appeal to Europe," Crisis, I (January, 1911), 10; William G. Brown to William H. Taft, November 9, 1910, Taft Papers; Woody, William P. Few, 256; "The New South," Outlook, XCII (July 17, 1909), 627; "Mr. Taft's Appeal to the South," 3-4.

believed the strict enforcement of the fifteenth amendment did not involve racial amalgamation, social equality, or even social association. The southern fear that legislative enactments would force social equality upon southern society had no foundation "except in the imaginations of those who fear such a result," Taft stated. The federal government and the Civil War amendments had nothing to do with social integration. Taft summarized his convictions toward the issue as follows: "Social equality is something that grows out of voluntary concessions by the individuals forming society."¹⁷ By raising the issues of racial amalgamation, social equality, and social association, Taft revived dormant topics. There were no concerted efforts to bring about these conditions during Taft's administration.

A third major facet of Taft's southern Negro policy involved handling of patronage. The President followed a different course than that of his predecessor, Theodore Roosevelt. Taft appointed fewer Negroes to office, was more selective in his Negro appointees, and did not always consult Booker Washington on his appointments. During Roosevelt's administration, Washington was the most influential Negro office broker. Roosevelt admitted that most of his Negro appointees were recommended by Washington. Taft, however, did not always follow the Negro leader's advice. He informed Washington that he would often seek his counsel on Negro matters, but that he would not necessarily follow that advice on every occasion. President Taft strongly believed that Roosevelt had been more detrimental than helpful

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"Mr. Taft's Plea to the South," Independent, LIII (August 29, 1908), 476; "Mr. Taft's Appeal to the South," 2; Taft, Present Day Problems, 229; Taft, The South and the National Government, 11-12; New York Times, August 23, 1907, December 8, 1908; Virginian-Pilot, December 8, 1908.

to southern Negroes by appointing them to office where white sentiment was vehemently opposed to the appointee. The selection of unpopular Negroes, such as Dr. William Demos Crum as collector of customs at Charleston, South Carolina, was to be avoided. Instead of provoking white racial tensions with such appointments, Taft decided to reward
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Negroes with political positions in the North. When advised during the pre-congressional election campaign of 1910 by Frank Hitchcock to make certain appointments in the South to aid southern Republican candidates, Taft emphatically declared, "I shall not appoint Negroes to office
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in the South."

Taft explicitly outlined his Negro appointment policy in his inaugural address. Negroes would not be appointed to office in the South where white racial tensions were acute. The appointment of a Negro to any southern office where the community was strongly opposed would be more detrimental than helpful to the race. Therefore, much selectivity and discretion

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August Meier, Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1963), 113, hereinafter cited as Meier, Negro Thought in America; Pringle, William H. Taft, I, 389-390; Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the Making of America (New York, 1964), 170-171, hereinafter cited as Quarles, The Negro in the Making of America; William H. Taft to Booker T. Washington, December 3, 1902, Washington Papers. For a partial list of Washington's recommendations, see "Memorandum of Prominent Colored Men for the Use of President Taft"; Booker T. Washington to Charles D. Norton, August 7, 1910; William H. Taft to W. R. Nelson, February 23, 1909, Taft Papers; Booker T. Washington to Frank H. Hitchcock, March 9, 1908; Booker T. Washington to William H. Taft, May 16, 1911; Charles D. Hilles to Booker T. Washington, May 19, 1911, Washington Papers.

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Quoted in Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, II, 510; see also, Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, I, 204.

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would be exercised before any Negro was appointed. In essence, Taft stated that he would not appoint a Negro to any high ranking position in the South. He was unconcerned over the provocation of black racial tensions by refusing to appoint qualified blacks to office. The first opportunity to implement this policy occurred soon after Taft's inauguration with the controversial and racially explosive position of collector of customs at Charleston. William Demos Crum, a Negro Republican and incumbent customs collector, was appointed to the office in November, 1902, by President Roosevelt. Between November, 1902 and January, 1905, Roosevelt retained Crum in this position through a series of recess appointments because the Senate would not confirm the nomination. Finally, in January, 1905, the Senate confirmed Crum's appointment. When Taft assumed his presidential duties in March, 1909, there was so much white opposition to the retention of Crum that Taft questioned the wisdom of reappointing him.²¹ After the 1908 election, Taft and Roosevelt agreed not to continue the controversial fight over Crum's reappointment. Booker Washington was urged to persuade Crum to resign. He succeeded in March, 1909. Crum, who stated that he was "somewhat afraid of Taft," resigned allegedly with no regrets or hard feelings. He explained his resignation on the grounds that he wanted to leave office with his friends and supporter, Theodore Roosevelt. Furthermore, he did not want to embarrass President Taft

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Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 65-66; "Mr. Taft Ushers in a New Era of Good Will," 355; "Negroes and Office-Holding," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XXXIX (April, 1909), 394; "The Inauguration of President Taft," 4; "Appointments and the Suffrage," 4; "The South and the Negroes," 506; New York Times, March 5, 1909; Atlanta Independent, March 27, 1909.

21

Willard B. Gatewood, "William D. Crum: A Negro in Politics," Journal of Negro History, LIII (October, 1968), 301-302, hereinafter cited as Gatewood, "William D. Crum."

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by placing him in the same precarious position as his predecessor.

Edward W. Durant, Jr., a white Republican and native of Charleston for seven years, was chosen as Crum's successor. Durant was also popular among the city's white citizens. Taft's unusually warm reception in Charleston during his 1909 southern tour attested to the popularity of Durant's appointment.²³ The securing of Crum's resignation because of his color was an example of racism by Taft. In his federal appointments, Taft courageously attempted to appoint the best man to each position and retain those who performed their duties efficiently. In his Negro appointment policy, however, Taft was spineless. Crum's performance of duty was beyond reproach, but the black officeholder was removed because of his color. Taft's catering to white racial prejudices was again exemplified.

President Taft further executed his pledge to reduce southern white racial tensions by securing in 1911 the resignation of Thomas Richardson, Negro postmaster at Port Gibson, Mississippi. Richardson had held the position since 1898 and was an excellent postmaster. Taft and L. B. Moseley, Mississippi "referee," commended Richardson for his efficient work. In Port Gibson, however, where a white girl's college was located, many white residents resented a Negro postmaster. To placate this white resentment

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"Inauguration of President Taft," Independent, LXVI (March 11, 1909), 504; Gatewood, "William D. Crum," 317-318; Pringle, William H. Taft, I, 309; William D. Crum to Whitefield McKinlay, January 17, 1909, Carter G. Woodson Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, hereinafter cited as Woodson Collection; Afro-American Ledger (Baltimore, Maryland), March 5, 1912, hereinafter cited as Afro-American Ledger.

23

West, "President Taft and the South," 293; Gatewood, "William D. Crum," 319; "Charleston's New Collector," Harper Weekly, LIII (March 20, 1909), 4.

Taft secured Richardson's resignation and appointed him to the postal service in Washington, D. C. ²⁴ Color was again the only reason for the removal.

Taft's relationship with Negro Republicans also involved the selection of outstanding southern Negroes to important federal positions. James G. Napier, Negro lawyer and politician from Nashville, Tennessee, was appointed in April, 1911, as Register of the United States Treasury, traditionally a Negro political office. Napier was educated at Wilberforce and Oberlin colleges and obtained his law degree from Harvard University. He had served for eight years on the Nashville City Council. Napier was unquestionably an able and respected Negro; therefore, his appointment proved to be generally popular among southerners. He replaced W. T. Vernon, ²⁵ a Kansas Negro. In 1910 Taft appointed Henry Lincoln Johnson of Atlanta, Georgia, as Recorder of Deeds, traditionally another Negro political office. Taft referred to Johnson as "one of the ablest colored men of the country." Booker Washington advised against Johnson's appointment because he wanted ²⁶ to retain John C. Dancy, the Negro incumbent.

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William H. Taft to John S. Black, July 28, 1911; William H. Taft to Frank H. Hitchcock, July 6, 1911; John S. Black to William H. Taft, July 31, 1911; W. A. Dickson to William H. Taft, June 2, 1911; L. B. Moseley to William H. Taft, July 1, 1911, Taft Papers; "Along the Color Line: Politics," Crisis, II (October, 1911), 227.

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New York Times, April 6, 1911; "Along the Color Line: Politics," Crisis, I (April, 1911), 5; "Along the Color Line: Political," Crisis, I (November, 1910), 3; undated newspaper clipping, Washington Papers; Meier, Negro Thought in America, 253-254.

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William H. Taft to Booker T. Washington, February 22, 1910; William H. Taft to George W. Clinton, February 25, 1910; Booker T. Washington to Charles D. Hilles, February 21, 1910, Washington Papers; "Memorandum," December 8, 1911, Taft Papers; Meier, Negro Thought in America, 309.

Taft also selected outstanding southern Negroes to diplomatic posts. The most important of these was the appointment of Dr. William Demos Crum as Minister Resident and Consul General to Liberia in June, 1910. Booker Washington was elated with the appointment because he felt that Crum should be rewarded for his graceful resignation earlier as Charleston's customs collector. Crum replaced Ernest Lyon, another Negro. In 1909 Taft appointed Emmett J. Scott, Booker Washington's efficient secretary, as one of three special commissioners to Liberia to report on the needs and internal conditions of the black republic. This position was temporary, but required intelligent and adaptable men.

The President also refused to reappoint numerous Negro federal officeholders. Many Negroes lost their jobs to southern whites as a result of this policy. In 1910 Henry A. Rucker, Negro collector of internal revenue for Georgia, was replaced by Henry S. Jackson, a white Republican who served as President of the Georgia State League of Taft Clubs. In 1911 Walter L. Cohn, Register of the New Orleans, Louisiana, Land Office, lost his job to Frank Nuttles, a white Republican. Cohn was the leading

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Gatewood, "William D. Crum," 318; Booker T. Washington to William H. Taft, May 25, 1910, Taft Papers; Kathleen Long Wolgemuth, "Woodrow Wilson's Appointment Policy and the Negro," Journal of Southern History, XIV (November, 1958), 466, hereinafter cited as Wolgemuth, "Woodrow Wilson's Appointment Policy and the Negro"; Meier, Negro Thought in America, 265.

28

Ralph W. Tyler to George A. Green, January 9, 1912; "Memorandum," Taft Papers; William H. Taft to Booker T. Washington, March 16, 1909; Booker T. Washington to William H. Taft, March 12, 1909, Taft Papers.

29

W. W. Russell to William H. Taft, August 16, 1910, Taft Papers; Philadelphia Courant, September 3, 1910; New York Age, August 25, 1910; "Opinion," Crisis, I (November, 1910), 8; Meier, Negro Thought in America, 251.

Negro Taft supporter in the state and the only federal officeholder of any importance in the state. The land offices at Natchitoches and New Orleans were consolidated with new headquarters at Baton Rouge. Cohn³⁰ lost his position as a result of the consolidation. In 1909 Robert L. Smith, Negro Deputy Marshall for the Eastern District of Texas, was discharged from his office. Smith had held the position since 1902. Taft dismissed him because his duties required only one-fourth of his time and his salary was more than that of the chief marshall. Smith was the only Negro officeholder in Texas of any importance at the time of his³¹ dismissal. Other southern Negro officeholders who lost their jobs during Taft's administration included the following: Ellis E. Perkins, Postmaster of Edwards, Mississippi; Santa A. Morse, Postmaster of Denbigh, Virginia; Albert P. Christian, Postmaster of Yorktown, Virginia; James Lewis, Surveyor General of the land office at New Orleans; J. A. Brier, Revenue Inspector at Greenville, South Carolina; R. E. Williams, Deputy Collector of Customs at Newberry, South Carolina; and M. M. Rogers and³² M. Q. Henderson, Deputy Internal Revenue collectors of Texas.

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"Along the Color Line: Politics," Crisis, II (May, 1911), 5; (June, 1911), 49; Booker T. Washington to Charles D. Norton, November 25, 1910; Walter L. Cohn to Emmett Scott, October 1, December 16, 1910, February 4, 1911; Emmett Scott to Charles D. Norton, September 7, 1910; Fred Dennett to Walter Cohn, January 6, 1911, Washington Papers; Final Pieree to Charles D. Norton, August 17, 1910; Booker T. Washington to Charles D. Norton, July 30, 1910; "Memorandum," December 10, 1910; Emmett J. Scott to Charles D. Norton, September 7, 1910, Taft Papers.

31

George W. Wickersham to William H. Taft, June 12, 1909, Taft Papers; William H. Taft to Booker T. Washington, June 14, 1909, Washington Papers; Meier, Negro Thought in America, 253.

32

Frank H. Hitchcock to William H. Taft, October 24, 1910; "Changes Effecting Colored People Since Mr. Taft's Inauguration," March 4, 1910; Ralph W. Tyler to George A. Green, January 9, 1912; Emmett J. Scott to Charles D. Norton, September 7, 1910, Taft Papers.

Despite these and other removals, Taft appointed a few southern Negroes to minor positions and retained numerous Negro officeholders. W. D. Johnson of Kentucky was appointed to the Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture. P. B. S. Pinchback, Lieutenant-Governor of Louisiana during Reconstruction, was appointed to a position in the Internal Revenue Service in New York City. Among those retained in office were: Nathan Alexander, Register of the land office, Montgomery, Alabama; Robert Smalls, Collector of Customs, Beaufort, South Carolina; Joseph E. Lee, Internal Revenue Collector, Jacksonville, Florida; James Weldon Johnson, Consul to Corinto, Nicaragua; Mrs. E. P. Booze, Postmistress, Mound Bayou, Mississippi; Isaiah J. McCottrie, Collector of Customs, St. Marys, Georgia; George A. Reed, Postmaster, Beaufort, South Carolina; and J. B. Washington, Postmaster of Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama. 33

The last major facet of Taft's handling of patronage matters involved the selection of the 1910 census enumerators. E. Dana Durand, Director of the Census, and President Taft announced in late 1909 that Negro enumerators in the South would be employed to count only Negroes. Taft broke with precedent in announcing this policy because black and white enumerators had

33

Whitefield McKinlay to P. B. S. Pinchback, October 4, 1912; Whitefield McKinlay to Robert Smalls, July 8, 1912; Robert Smalls to Whitefield McKinlay, May 11, 1912, August 19, 1910, November 10, 1909, Woodson Collection; Charles D. Hilles to Booker T. Washington, October 4, 1910, Washington Papers; "Memorandum," October 3, 1910; Charles D. Hilles to William H. Taft, July 8, 1910; Ralph W. Tyler to Charles D. Norton, June 30, 1910; Ralph W. Tyler to George A. Green, January 9, 1912; "Colored Federal Officials Appointed by President Taft"; "Colored Federal Officials Serving Under President Taft"; undated newspaper clipping, Taft Papers; "Along the Color Line: Political," Crisis, I (November, 1910), 3; Wolgemuth, "Woodrow Wilson's Appointment Policy and the Negro," 467; Meier, Negro Thought in America, 251, 254-255.

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previously worked together in counting members of both races. In an effort to further placate white southerners, Taft even segregated the census takers. The previous policy of allowing blacks and whites to work together had caused no acute racial tensions; therefore, President Taft was unjustified in changing the procedure.

Another aspect of Taft's southern Negro policy involved his views on lynchings. For years Negro leaders had been concerned over the increasing frequency of lynchings and the failure of Congress to enact federal punitive measures against participants in the acts. During Taft's administration the demand for congressional action increased. He was frequently requested by Negro leaders to recommend to Congress appropriate
35
legislation to check and prevent the barbaric practice. President Taft, however, refused to recommend punitive measures against lynchings. He believed the responsibility for prevention and prosecution of crime and violence rested solely within state powers. He condemned lynchings as "heinous," "an outrage," and "bestial." The act was a horrible shame and disgrace to America. The only solution to the problem was to "have men as sheriffs, and as governors, and prosecutors, and as jurors" who would insure

34

"The Week," Nation, XC (January 6, 1910), 1; Afro-American Ledger, April 6, 1912.

35

Mary Church Terrell, et. al. to William H. Taft, May 31, 1911; Ralph W. Tyler to William H. Taft, August 22, 1911; J. Milton Waldron and J. R. Clifford to William H. Taft, May 31, 1911; William A. Sinclair to William H. Taft, May 30, 1911; Theodore Hawkins to William H. Taft, April 10, 1912, Taft Papers. For interesting statistics on lynchings between 1892 and 1910 and a state-by-state tabulation of lynchings in 1910, see, "The Burden: Colored Men Lynched Without Trial," Crisis, I (December, 1910), 26; II (December, 1911), 76; "Opinion: Lynching," Crisis, I (February, 1911), 14.

that the men who pulled the rope "shall themselves swing by the rope."³⁶

Once again Taft catered to southern white sentiments on a vital racial issue.

Although President Taft failed to condemn discriminatory election laws except "grandfather clauses," refused to advocate racial integration, removed many Negro officeholders because of their color, failed to appoint many Negroes to southern offices, and recommended no congressional action against lynchings, he allegedly was concerned about and sympathetic toward the plight of the southern Negro. The origins of this sympathy presumably emulated from his father. Taft's father, Alphonso, had been a staunch abolitionist, Secretary of War under President Ulysses Grant, and an avid friend of the Negro. Alphonso's concern for the Negro left a slight impact upon his son. William Taft's interest in the southern Negro became more intense during his tenure as judge of the Sixth Circuit. In this capacity, he studied the social and political problems in Tennessee and Kentucky. He became better acquainted with the attitudes of southern whites and blacks on the race issue. His sympathy for the Negro reached its zenith while serving as Governor-General of the Philippine Islands. There he was sympathetic with the Filipinos in their efforts to uplift themselves and prepare for self-government.³⁷ This sympathy was transferred to the southern

36

William H. Taft to New York Times, June 26, 1912; "President Taft Denounces Lynching"; "Address of President Taft to delegates of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; The Constitution League of the United States; and The National Independent Political League, in the East Room of the White House, May 31, 1911," Taft Papers; Atlanta Independent, June 8, 1912; Afro-American Ledger, April 13, 1912; quoted in Southwestern Christian Advocate (New Orleans, Louisiana), April 18, 1912.

37

Taft, Political Issues and Outlooks, 66, 262-263; Davis, William H. Taft, 319; New York Times, January 20, 1909; Afro-American Ledger, September 26, 1908.

Negro when Taft became president.

In numerous speeches to southern Negro audiences and in other public addresses, Taft expressed his sympathy with the race. Among the most important of his addresses to southern Negro audiences were those delivered at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, on May 22, 1908; Big Bethel Church in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 16, 1909; Colored Young Men's Christian Association in New Orleans on February 12, 1909; Biddle University in Charlotte, North Carolina, on May 20, 1909; and Georgia State Industrial College in Savannah, Georgia, on May 1, 1912. Taft told the southern Negroes that he had "a burning desire" to convey to them his sympathy. He was cognizant of the "heart pangs" which the southern Negro suffered from white insults and violent deeds. The injustice experienced by the southern blacks must have "burned itself into his breast." The burdens, abuses, and rejection of the Negro were unjustly and unbearably thrust upon him. Taft strongly believed that he had a sacred duty as President to give words of comfort and encouragement to the race. Furthermore, the entire nation had an obligation of "trusteeship and guardianship" toward the Negro.

Taft was optimistic about the southern Negro's future and believed there were solutions to his plight. The primary solution to his problem

38

"Address by Hon. William H. Taft at Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, May 22, 1908," Washington Papers, hereinafter cited as "Address by Hon. William H. Taft at Fisk University"; New York Times, January 17, 18, 20, May 21, 1909, May 2, 1912; Atlanta Journal, January 16, 1909; Times-Dispatch, May 21, 1909; Taft, Political Issues and Outlooks, 240-244.

39

Taft, Political Issues and Outlooks, 66, 72, 240-241; New York Times, January 17, 18, 20, May 21, 1909; Times Dispatch, May 21, 1909; Afro-American Ledger, September 26, 1908.

was education. Taft advocated universal primary and industrial education for the southern Negro. The Negro masses needed primary education to enable them to read, write, and use figures. This type of education would enable the Negro to determine the amount of fertilizer needed for his crops, what prices to expect for his products, and keep records of business transactions. The masses needed industrial education to train them to become good farmers, mechanics, carpenters, blacksmiths, brick layers, and managers of their own businesses. They needed to be taught the honor and dignity of manual labor. Both unskilled and skilled manual laborers provided the key to the uplift of the Negro. Taft praised the efforts of the Hampton, Virginia, Normal and Agricultural Institute and Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama, to uplift the Negro race. Both schools were for Negroes and stressed industrial and agricultural skills. They taught the value of hard work and stressed the importance of buying property for economic self-sufficiency. Taft commended the schools for teaching "the dignity of labor, the value of skill, and the use of the mind, and the application of the hand...." The graduates, founders, and principals contributed to the elevation and prosperity of their race.

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Taft, The South and the National Government, 14; Taft, Political Issues and Outlooks, 68, 243-244, 265, 272; Taft, Present Day Problems, 225; William H. Taft, 322, 328, 330; Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 112, 444-446; Meier, Negro Thought in America, 88, 102; William H. Taft to Robert Bacon, November 30, 1912; Hollis B. Frissell to Fred W. Carpenter, May 27, 1910, Taft Papers; "Secretary Taft as a Conciliator," Independent, LXIV (March 26, 1908), 696; Alderman, "The Growing South," 10378; Booker T. Washington, "Negro Disfranchisement and the Negro in Business," Outlook, XCIII (October 9, 1909), 311; "Some Notable Educational Enterprises: Tuskegee Institute," Outlook, C (March 30, 1912), 708-709; "Hampton Revisited," Outlook, CIII (April 12, 1913), 802; Hollis B. Frissell, "The Progress of Negro Education," South Atlantic Quarterly, VI (January, 1907), 37-43; New York Times, March 17, 1908, January 20, February 24, 1909; New York Age, December 10, 1908.

College training was needed to provide the race with professionals. Advanced training, however, could not be given to the masses because the government could not afford it and the masses were not mentally advanced enough for such preparation. Doctors, lawyers, teachers, and ministers were the only ones who should be afforded a college education. These leaders could transfer their knowledge and ideals to the masses. The best available education should be provided these professionals because the southern Negro needed better sanitation, medical care, legal assistance, primary and industrial instructors, and religious guidance. 41 Taft overlooked the need for advanced training of Negro scientists, engineers, and politicians. He made no mention of training the Negro as a citizen, voter, taxpayer, prospective officeholder, and moulder of public policy.

Taft believed the Negro would be in a better position to receive the aid and sympathy of the southern white after he acquired primary, industrial, and advanced education. A second solution to the race problem was for the Negro to win the respect of the white man by displaying "industry, self-restraint, thrift, and business success." The blacks must make themselves indispensable to the prosperity of their communities. As white respect was secured, race prejudices would diminish and political

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Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 112-114; Taft, The South and the National Government, 15; Taft, Political Issues and Outlooks, 263-264, 272; "Address by Hon. William H. Taft at Fisk University"; M. P. Thurfield to Charles D. Hilles, September 26, 1910; "President Taft Denounces Lynching," Taft Papers; News and Observer, September 16, 1908; Atlanta Journal, January 16, 1909.

42

and social rights would be forthcoming for the southern Negro. Taft's solution to the race problem was unrealistic and a brief for servility. He never explained why it was necessary for blacks to earn the respect of whites. No attention was given to whites earning black respect before racial conditions could be improved. Taft catered to and propagated white racial prejudices in his solution to the southern race problem.

The President attempted to justify his position by citing previous white efforts to uplift the Negro. Southern states spent more than \$150,000,000 between 1880 and 1908 for support of Negro public schools. In 1908 white teachers were teaching in Negro public schools in Charleston, South Carolina. During Taft's administration the University of Virginia was attempting to establish a sociology fellowship for the study of Negro problems in the South. In May, 1912, the University Commission on Southern Race Questions, composed of leading white southern educators, was established to study Negro educational problems. Booker Washington made numerous "Educational Pilgrimages" throughout the South during Taft's presidency to study Negro progress and was well-received, especially by whites. Taft firmly believed the southern race question was well along toward settlement because of improved racial relations and increased white

 42

"Too Hopeful Perhaps," Harper's Weekly, LIII (March 20, 1909), 4; Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 66; Taft, Present Day Problems, 226-228, 276, 278; Taft, Political Issues and Outlooks, 68, 241-242, 270-272; Davis, William H. Taft, 326-327, 374-375; Times-Dispatch, May 21, 1909; Atlanta Journal, January 16, 1909; New York Times, March 17, October 5, 1908, January 17, 18, 1909.

interest in the advancement of the Negro.

Taft's views about the colonization of American Negroes in Africa further illustrated his views on racial problems. In 1817 the American Colonization Society was formed to remove free American Negroes to Liberia. During President Taft's administration the Society was in its final years of existence, but the movement still had some support. Taft referred to the idea of transplanting American Negroes to Africa as "chimerical," "utterly absurd," and "utterly fatuous." He detested the Society's activities because the Negro was essential to the further economic development and prosperity of the South. The Negro had also exhibited such patriotism in American global encounters that he deserved the opportunity to elevate himself and receive his full rights as an American citizen.

43

Times-Dispatch, May 21, 1909; Atlanta Journal, January 16, 1909; Taft, Political Issues and Outlooks, 68, 72, 242, 266, 273-274; Davis, William H. Taft, 321; "Along the Color Line: Education," Crisis, I (December, 1910), 8; Albert Bushnell Hart, "The Outcome of the Southern Race Question," North American Review, CLXXXVIII (July, 1908), 60; "A New Appreciation of Negro Schools," Independent, LXX (February 16, 1911), 371-372; "Editorial," Independent, LXX (March 23, 1911), 632; "Studying the Negro Problem," Outlook, C (January 13, 1912) 66; "Notes," Nation, XCV (November 14, 1912), 463; "Booker Washington's Greatest Service," Nation, LXXXIX (December 9, 1909), 560-561; "The South and the Negro," Outlook, CI (June 29, 1912), 457; Booker T. Washington, "Durham - City of Negro Enterprises," Independent, LXX (March 30, 1911), 642, hereinafter cited as Washington, "Durham"; R. R. Wright to William H. Taft, September 20, 1911; R. R. Wright to Charles D. Hilles, April 18, 1912; Lee S. Overman to William H. Taft, March 30, 1912; James E. Sheppard to William H. Taft, January 20, 1912, Taft Papers; Booker T. Washington to William G. Brown, December 27, 1912, Brown Papers; Booker T. Washington to William H. Taft, September 10, 1910, Washington Papers.

44

Taft, The South and the National Government, 14; Taft, Political Issues and Outlooks, 292-293; Taft, Present Day Problems, 228; Davis, William H. Taft, 327; New York Times, January 18, 1909. For favorable southern reactions to these expressions, see "Opinion: The Assault on Mr. Washington," Crisis, II (May, 1911), 13.

A further aspect of Taft's southern Negro policy involved his reactions to an attack on Booker Washington on March 19, 1911, by Henry Adams Ulrich, a white man. Washington was looking over the nameplates in an apartment house in New York City for the name of D. C. Smith, auditor of Tuskegee Institute, when Ulrich attacked him with a club. Some reports stated that Ulrich mistook Washington for a kidnapper because several attempts had been made to kidnap Ulrich's stepdaughter who lived in the apartment. Others charged that Ulrich deliberately attacked Washington for looking through the keyhole of the apartment of a Mrs. Revett.

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Ulrich was charged with assault, but later acquitted. Taft wrote Washington expressing his hope that he would soon recover "from the wounds inflicted by insane suspicion or viciousness...." Taft's letter of sympathy was applauded by a host of southerners. Washington was advised by his fellow southerners to stay in the South where he would be safe

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from such attacks.

William Howard Taft's Negro policy was one of the most popular facets of his southern strategy among southern whites. His endorsement of discriminatory election laws, social segregation, refusal to appoint southern

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New York Times, March 20, 1911; "Along the Color Line: Crime," Crisis, III (December, 1911), 56; "The Attack on Booker Washington," Literary Digest, XLII (April 8, 1911), 664-665, hereinafter cited as "The Attack on Booker Washington"; Logan, The Betrayal of the Negro, 389-390.

46

William H. Taft to Booker T. Washington, March 21, 1911, Taft Papers; quoted in New York Times, March 23, 1911; "The Assault on Booker T. Washington," Outlook, XCVII (April 1, 1911), 708.

47

"The Attack on Booker Washington," 665; H. R. Rodman to Charles D. Norton, March 23, 1911; Joseph O. Thompson to William H. Taft, March 23, 1911; A. W. Gray to William H. Taft, March 23, 1911, Taft Papers.

Negroes to influential positions, replacement of numerous Negro office-holders with whites, and advocacy of primary and industrial education for the Negro masses was applauded by whites. The Richmond Times-Dispatch believed Taft's policy had given white southerners "full reassurance" that Negro political domination through "force bills" and other legislative enactments was a nightmare of the past. The State of Columbia asserted that Taft had "as clear an understanding and as just an appreciation of conditions affecting the races in the South as fair and just Southerners⁴⁸ could wish."

Although Taft's policy toward southern Negroes was "lily-white," many prominent Negroes supported it. Foremost among these was Booker Taliaferro Washington. Washington believed the southern Negro would never obtain his full political rights "through outside or artificial forcing...." The future of the Negro depended upon "his cultivation of habits, thrift, economy, honesty, the acquiring of education, Christian character, property and industrial skills." Washington hoped the Negro would eventually secure his political rights by winning white respect and becoming economically independent. The granting of the franchise would be a slow, evolutionary process. Therefore, the Negro should postpone political goals until he could prove himself capable and worthy to govern. Washington referred to the idea of social equality as "folly" and southern fear of social integration as a "bugbear." In his Atlanta address of 1895, Washington declared that in social matters, whites and blacks could "be as

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Quoted in "Mr. Taft Ushers in a New Era of Good Will," 355-356; W. W. Russell to William H. Taft, August 16, 1910, Taft Papers; News and Courier, May 3, 1909.

separate as the fingers; yet one as the hand in all things essential to social progress." Washington even defended southern franchise restrictions as essential to prevent rule by an ignorant and irresponsible

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electorate. Taft often referred to Washington as the greatest Negro leader in America and one of the great men of the twentieth century.

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Both men advocated essentially the same solutions to the race problem.

Other prominent Negro leaders supported the President's policy. J. Silas Harris, President of the Negro National Educational Congress, believed

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"The Prospect for the Negroes," Harper's Weekly, LII (January 9, 1909), 5; Washington, "Durham," 647; "The Negro in Business Life," Outlook, XCVI (September 3, 1910), 4; "The Black Spectre in Georgia," Current Literature, XLVII (July, 1909), 15; John Spencer Bassett, "Two Negro Leaders," South Atlantic Quarterly, II (July, 1903), 268; August Meier, "Booker T. Washington and the Rise of the NAACP," Crisis, LXI (February, 1954), 71, 74, hereinafter cited as Meier, "Booker T. Washington"; Emma L. Thornbrough, "Booker T. Washington as Seen by His White Contemporaries," Journal of Negro History, LIII (April, 1968), 167; Guion Griffis Johnson, "Southern Paternalism Toward Negroes After Emancipation," Journal of Southern History, XXIII (November, 1957), 493; Rayford Whittingham Logan, The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901 (New York, 1954), 306-307, hereinafter cited as Logan, The Negro in American Life and Thought; Booker T. Washington, The Story of My Life and Work (Atlanta, 1901), 142, 148, 236; Meier, Negro Thought in America, 103; Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, 390-397; Thomas Jesse Jones to Ray Stannard Baker, January 31, 1908, Ray Stannard Baker Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, hereinafter cited as Baker Papers; Booker T. Washington to William H. Taft, November 19, 1908, Washington Papers; see also "The Hurt of Unwise Friends," Outlook, XCII (June 12, 1909), 342; "The Negroes and Illiteracy," Independent, LXXII (October 3, 1912), 766; Booker T. Washington, "The Census and the Negro," Independent, LXXII (April 11, 1912), 785-786; New York Times, February 24, 1909; Montgomery Advertiser, May 26, 1911.

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"The President to Negroes," Independent, LXXI (November 9, 1911), 1048-1049; Taft, Present Day Problems, 225-226; Davis, William H. Taft, 330-331; World, August 27, 1910; New York Times, February 24, 1909; "Extract from Address Delivered by President Taft Before the Christian Endeavor Convention at Young's Pier, Atlantic City, New Jersey, July 7, 1911," Taft Papers.

Negroes had more respect for Taft than any other Republican president
 51
 in the preceding twenty-five years. Ralph W. Tyler, Auditor for the
 Navy Department, commended Taft's Negro policy as an attempt to elevate
 52
 the race through the lessening of racial tensions.

Some leading Negro newspapers supported Taft's handling of the
 Negro question. The Atlanta Independent, "one of the ablest and most
 53
 conservative negro papers" in the nation, was one of the most ardent
 supporters of Taft's Negro policy. The newspaper defended Taft's en-
 dorsement of southern franchise laws because the "rule of intelligence"
 should apply to the granting of the franchise to the Negro. Furthermore,
 the Negro would and never should be allowed to govern until he proved his
 worthiness to society through his character, usefulness, and industry.
 The newspaper believed the Negro had to win the respect of white south-
 erners before his political and social rights would be granted to him.
 No court or legislative enactment would ever enhance the political rights
 of the southern Negro as long as the whites were united against such a
 development. The Independent supported every facet of Taft's Negro policy
 54
 with enthusiasm. The Baltimore Afro-American Ledger, a newspaper often

51

J. Silas Harris to Charles D. Hilles, July 25, 1911; J. Silas Harris
 to William H. Taft, September 16, 1910, March 7, 1911, February 17, 1913,
 Taft Papers.

52

Ralph W. Tyler to Rudolph Forester, July 6, 1912; Ralph W. Tyler to
 Nick Chiles, December 29, 1911; Ralph W. Tyler to Charles D. Hilles, August 17,
 1911; Ralph W. Tyler, "Lest We Forget," Taft Papers.

53

Atlanta Independent, February 20, 1909.

54

Atlanta Independent, December 19, 1908, January 23, February 13, 20,
 27, March 13, 20, 27, May 1, 1909, April 20, 1912.

critical of Taft's policies, supported the endorsement of southern election laws, social segregation, and primary and industrial education for the

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Negro masses. The New York Age, another newspaper often critical of Taft, commended the President for taking a stand against racial prejudices and

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attempting to elevate the race.

The critics of Taft's southern Negro policy, however, were as equally vocal. The foremost Negro critic was William Edward Burghardt DuBois. DuBois believed Taft's policy was "unfortunate and wrong." The future of the Negro depended upon the acquisition of civil and political rights, social equality, and higher education. The postponement of these goals would be detrimental to the Negro's cause. As editor of the Crisis, the official publication of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, DuBois filled the pages of the magazine with indictments

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of Taft and his Negro policy. DuBois was also critical of Booker Washington's solutions to the race problem. He believed Washington was misleading the Negro by devoting his attention to the winning of white

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Afro-American Ledger, December 12, 1908, March 13, 1909.

56

New York Age, June 15, 1911.

57

Maxwell Roy Brooks, The Negro Press Re-examined (Boston, 1959), 94; Charles Flint Kellogg, NAACP: A History of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1909-1920 (Baltimore, 1967), 68, hereinafter cited as Kellogg, NAACP; Quarles, The Negro in the Making of America, 172-174; Logan, The Betrayal of the Negro, 330; Logan, The Negro in the United States, 63; "Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation," Current Opinion, LIV (February, 1913), 95; "Editorial: Politics," Crisis, IV (August, 1912), 181; "Editorial: Mr. Taft," Crisis, II (October, 1911), 243; "Opinion: The Lewis Appointment," Crisis, I (December, 1910), 13-14; Oswald Garrison Villard to Charles D. Norton, September 20, 1910; William Edward Burghardt DuBois to Charles D. Hilles, April 13, 1912, Taft Papers; "A Colloquy on the Negro Problem," Baker Papers.

respect, industrial education, and the accumulation of wealth. He indicted Washington for his "tacit acceptance of the alleged inferiority of the Negro."⁵⁸

Other prominent Negro leaders who concurred in these indictments included Bishop Alexander Walters of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and President of the National Colored Democratic League; The Reverend J. Milton Waldron, pastor of the Berean and Shiloh Baptist churches in Washington, D. C. and an official of the National Independent Political League; William Monroe Trotter, editor of the Boston Guardian; T. Thomas Fortune, editor of the New York Age; The Reverend Francis J. Grimke, nephew of the abolitionist Angelina Grimke; and The Reverend Theodore Dwight Weld,⁵⁹ pastor of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, D. C. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, incorporated in May, 1910, was generally critical of Taft's Negro strategy. This new organization supported a crusade for Negro rights "through a militant but nonviolent course of action."⁶⁰

58

Quarles, The Negro in the Making of America, 173; Logan, The Betrayal of the Negro, 330; Logan, The Negro in the United States, 62-63; Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, 393-395.

59

Logan, The Betrayal of the Negro, 353; Quarles, The Negro in the Making of America, 173, 175-176; Logan, The Negro in the United States, 46, 63; Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, 501; Alexander Walters, My Life and Work (New York, 1917), 189, 209; "Along the Color Line: Political," Crisis, IV (August, 1912), 166; J. M. McDowell to William H. Taft, April 1, 1911, Taft Papers; Whitefield McKinlay to P. B. S. Pinchback, August 16, 1912, Woodson Collection. For criticism from other Negroes, see Walter L. Cohn to Emmett Scott, February 4, 1911, Washington Papers; Whitefield McKinlay to Robert Smalls, June 28, 1912, Woodson Collection.

60

Kellogg, NAACP, 291; Heard, A Two-Party South?, 183; Meier, "Booker T. Washington," 70, 75, 76, 117, 119; "The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," Crisis, I (December, 1910), 3; III (November, 1911), 43; Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, 447.

Many Negro newspapers viewed Taft's Negro policy as a surrender and betrayal of black interests in order to woo white southerners into the Republican party. Taft was charged with catering to the southern "lily-white" and Bourbon elements. He had recognized and contributed to race prejudices by attempting to placate southern whites at the expense of the southern Negroes. Many of the newspapers urged the Negro to divorce himself from the Republican party if it did not change its racial policies. 61

The Afro-American Ledger adequately expressed the sentiments of many black Americans when it labelled Taft's Negro policy "the most conscienceless betrayal of political allies that is recorded in the history of American politics." Furthermore, it was "dispicably iniquitous, un-American, unholy," and "the most humiliating, demoralizing, and destructive policy which has happened to us since the Hayes surrender." Taft had become so infected with white southern hospitality during his southern tours that he had forgotten the southern Negro. His "feverish desire" to placate white southerners resulted in his betrayal of the Negro. 62

President Taft's policy toward southern Negroes was a failure because it did not reap any noticeable political gains in the South. Since black votes constituted the Republican strength in most southern states, Taft abandoned his political allies. His desire for popularity among white

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Gazette (Cleveland, Ohio), May 27, 1911; New York Age, August 25, September 1, 1910; Pittsburg Courier, n.d.; Washington Bee, n.d.; Cleveland Journal, n.d.; W. A. Byrd to William H. Taft, August 12, November 14, 1911, Taft Papers. For other Negro newspaper comments on Taft's Negro policy, see "Negro Press on Mr. Taft's Suffrage Views," Literary Digest, XXXVII (December 26, 1908), 960-961.

62

Afro-American Ledger, March 30, April 6, 13, 1912; undated newspaper clipping, Taft Papers.

southerners represented no real strength and accomplished nothing of lasting value for the Republican party. Taft's convictions were shallow and superficial. If he had convictions on the Negro issue, he did not have the courage to defend them and was too spineless to reveal them. As one observer commented, Taft's policy was "the worse setback suffered by the Negro race since Mississippi began Negro disfranchisement in 1890...."⁶³

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Maude E. Lacy to Charles D. Norton, September 28, 1910, Taft Papers.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOUTH AND ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

In 1908 the value of southern manufactures exceeded that of agricultural products. Since the Civil War, the South had made tremendous industrial progress in the manufacture of steel, textiles, furniture, iron, cotton, lumber, sugar, and scores of other products. Southern dissatisfaction with the low tariff doctrines of the Democratic increased with this new economic development. Although most southerners generally favored a tariff for revenue only in 1908, an increasing number of southern businessmen supported a protective tariff for their industrial products. William Howard Taft strongly appealed to these southerners during his 1908 campaign tour and during his 1909 excursion to join the Republican ranks. The President's economic views and programs were of the utmost concern to many southerners.¹

In 1908 there had been no consequential tariff revisions since the high Dingley Tariff of 1897. Taft decided to become the first president

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Taft, The South and the National Government, 13; George E. Mowry, "The South and the Progressive Lily White Party of 1912," Journal of Southern History, VI (May, 1940), 238, hereinafter cited as Mowry, "The South and the Progressive Lily White Party of 1912"; John Lowndes McLaurin, "The Commercial Democracy of the South," North American Review, CLXXIII (November, 1909), 658-659; "Tariff Revision Present and to Come," Literary Digest, XXXIX (August 14, 1909), 218, hereinafter cited as "Tariff Revision Present and to Come"; "The Tariff and the Southern Republicans," 4; "Here Is the Danger," Harper's Weekly, LVI (October 12, 1912), 5; E. N. Vallandigham "The Solid South in Dissolution," Putnam's Magazine, VII (April, 1910), 803; George Kibbe Turner and Arthur Wallace Dunn, "Pursuing the President," McClure's Magazine, XXXIX (October, 1912), 604, hereinafter cited as Turner and Dunn, "Pursuing the President"; Atlanta Journal, December 13, 1908, August 25, 1912; St. Louis Globe Democrat, August 6, 1909; New York Times, May 23, 1909.

since 1897 to attempt tariff revision and reform. Former President Roosevelt refused to undertake the task because he said the tariff did not interest him nor did he know much about the subject.² Taft, however, was determined to revise the tariff schedules downward. He revealed this goal on numerous occasions before his election. He charged that business conditions had so changed since 1897 that a downward revision of the excessive rates of the Dingley law was needed. Substantial reductions also were needed in such schedules as the wool and cotton rates. Taft's tariff revision pledges were also motivated by political pressure from Democrats and western farmers to decrease the schedules in order to combat the high cost of living.³

The Republican platform of 1908 supported a tariff which equalled the difference between the cost of producing an article at home and abroad while allowing a reasonable profit to the American producer. The tariff plank called for a revision of the duties, but did not specify whether the revision should be downward or upward.⁴

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Stoddard, As I Knew Them, 352.

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Duffy, William Howard Taft, 281; "The President and the Tariff," 399-400; Edward G. Lowry, "One Year of Mr. Taft," North American Review, CXCI (March, 1910), 293, 295-296, hereinafter cited as Lowry, "One Year of Mr. Taft"; Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 17; "Mr. Taft Ushers in a New Era of Good Will," Current Literature, XLVI (April, 1909), 353, hereinafter cited as "Mr. Taft Ushers in a New Era of Good Will"; New York Times, November 9, December 17, 1908.

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"The President and the Tariff," 399; Lowry, "One Year of Mr. Taft," 296; Frank William Taussig, The Tariff History of the United States, (New York, 1967), 363, hereinafter cited as Taussig, The Tariff History of the United States; "Taft's Speech of Acceptance," August 1, 1912, Taft Papers; New York Times, December 18, 1908, August 5, 1909; News and Courier, January 16, 1909.

The most important tariff legislation enacted during Taft's administration was the Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act of 1909. The actions and voting patterns of southern congressmen toward their particular products during the debates on this bill illustrated that the South was not exclusively a free-trade section and that the demand for protection of southern products was noticeable. The details of the Payne-Aldrich Bill will not be discussed because, as a leading journalist observed, "It is far too intricate for the understanding of any one man, unless he devoted himself for years to the sole and exclusive study of tariff details."⁵

On March 4, 1909, a special session of Congress convened at Taft's behest for the specific purpose of revising the tariff. On March 17, 1909, Representative Senero Payne, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, introduced the tariff bill into the House of Representatives. On April 9, the House passed the bill by a vote of 217 to 161. Only four southern Democrats voted for the bill, all from Louisiana: Robert Broussard, Albert Estopinal, Robert Wickliffe, and Arsene Pujo. The House bill increased the tariff rates on women's gloves and plate glass, reduced duties on lumber, iron, and steel, and placed wood pulp and iron ore on the free list. Generally, the House bill was regarded as revision downward.⁶

On April 12, 1909, the Senate began consideration of the bill with

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"What the New Law Really Is," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XL (September, 1909), 259.

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Atlanta Constitution, August 6, 1909; New York Times, March 18, April 10, August 6, 1909; "The Formal Democratic Position," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XXXIX (May, 1909), 522; Kenneth William Hechler, Insurgency: Personalities and Politics of the Taft Era (New York, 1940), 96, hereinafter cited as Hechler, Insurgency; Congressional Record, Sixty-First Congress, First Session, Volume 44, Part 2 (April 9), 1301.

Senator Nelson W. Aldrich of Rhode Island, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, as its most influential spokesman on the tariff issue. On July 8, the Senate passed the bill by a vote of 45 to 34. Senator Samuel McEnery of Louisiana was the only southern Democratic Senator who voted for the bill. The Senate bill contained 847 amendments to the House bill, most of which were increases over the House rates. Hides, iron ore, and coal were put back on the dutiable list, the duty on print paper was doubled, and the duties on such products as cotton goods, hosiery, lumber, lead, and fruits were generally increased over the House rates.⁷

On July 9, the Payne-Aldrich Bill was sent to a conference committee and was reported back to the House on July 20. On July 21, the House passed the conference report by a vote of 195 to 183. Representatives Broussard and Estopinal of Louisiana were the only southern Democrats voting for the report. On August 5, the Senate passed the report by a vote of 54 to 38. No southern Democrat voted for the final report. President Taft signed the bill the same day the Senate passed the conference report. Of the 2024 dutiable items in the Dingley Bill, the Payne-Aldrich Bill left 1150 unchanged, decreased the duties on 654 items, and increased the rates on 220 items.⁸

There were many changes in the new bill which affected the South.

⁷ Hechler, Insurgency, 103; Mayer, A History of the Republican Party, 309; Taussig, The Tariff History of the United States, 375-376; "In the Conference Stage," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XL (August, 1909), 132; Virginian-Pilot, July 9, 1909.

⁸ New York Times, August 1, 6, 1909; "Revision Upward," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XL (September, 1909), 259; Tariff Speech: Address of President Taft at Winona, Minnesota, September 17, 1909 (Washington, 1909), 4, hereinafter cited as Tariff Speech; Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 211-212; "Mr. Taft Tinkering the Tariff," Literary Digest, XLI (September 10, 1910), 370; Congressional Record, Sixty-First Congress, First Session, Volume 44, Part 5 (July 31), 4755 (August 5), 4949.

Lumber was reduced from \$2.00 to \$1.25 per thousand feet, iron ore was reduced from 40¢ to 15¢ per ton, scrap iron was reduced from \$4.00 to \$1.00 per ton, bituminous coal was reduced from 67¢ to 45¢ per ton, and tobacco and sugar were allowed free interchange with the Philippines. Cattle hides and crude petroleum were put on the free list. The high Dingley rates on wool were not significantly altered, and the high tariffs on cotton and wool products were slightly increased. An item most unfavorable to the South was the duty on cotton bagging. It was estimated that this duty increased the cost of cotton bagging in the South \$625,000 per year.⁹ In essence, practically all the South's industrial and agricultural products were well-protected in the Payne-Aldrich Tariff of 1909. Sugar, rice, tobacco, peanuts, lumber, coal, iron ore, citrus fruits, vegetables, cotton, wool, and numerous other products still retained a tariff which protected them against foreign competition. One journalist aptly described the attitudes of many southerners toward the new tariff bill by stating, "A little study of the situation in concrete detail will show why Southern statesmen who have the habit of talking free trade in the abstract have become very partial toward protection in the concrete."¹⁰

⁹ Tariff Speech, 9; Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 219, 222; "The Payne-Aldrich Tariff," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XL (September, 1909), 341-346; "Aldrich and the Insurgents," Current Literature, XLVII (July, 1909), 6, hereinafter cited as "Aldrich and the Insurgents"; Hechler, Insurgency, 103; Lexington Leader (Lexington, Kentucky), July 29, 1909, hereinafter cited as Lexington Leader; St. Louis Globe Democrat, July 9, 1909; News and Observer, August 6, 7, 1909; Atlanta Constitution, August 6, 1909; "How Much Has the President Won?," Literary Digest, XXXIX (August 7, 1909), 183; "The Tariff Bill Down South," Harper's Weekly, LIII (August 14, 1909), 4; Daniels, Editor in Politics, 566. For an excellent article-by-article comparison of the Dingley and Payne rates, see New York Times, August 6, 1909.

¹⁰ "The South in the Tariff Bill," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XXXIX (May, 1909), 515-516.

Excellent proof of the thesis that southern congressmen fought for high duties on products from their districts was shown in the discussion on the tariff on lumber. The Democratic platform of 1908 declared in favor of free lumber. William Jennings Bryan and other Democratic leaders were firmly pledged to eliminating the duty on lumber. In the discussions over this plank in both the Senate and House, however, numerous southern Democrats openly repudiated their platform and voted for a tariff on lumber. Senator Joseph Bailey of Texas justified this stand of his colleagues by charging that a party platform was binding only on principles, but not on the details of legislative acts. The Dingley rate on lumber was \$2.00 per thousand feet. The House reduced this duty to \$1.00, but the Senate¹¹ raised it to \$1.25. The Senate rate was the one finally accepted.

Numerous southern Democratic congressmen voted against amendments to put lumber on the free list. On April 9, 1909, the following southern representatives voted against the House amendment to restore lumber on the free list: William Brantley, Charles Edwards, James Griggs, Gordon Lee, and Leonidas Livingston from Georgia; Eaton Bowers and William Dickson from Mississippi; Richmond Hobson and George Taylor from Alabama; Robert Broussard, Albert Estopinal, Arsene Pujo, Joseph Ransdell, John Watkins, and Robert Wickliffe from Louisiana; Frank Clark, Dannitte Mays, and Stephen Sparkman from Florida; Carter Glass, John Lamb, Francis Lassiter, Harry Maynard, and Edward Saunders from Virginia; Hannibal Godwin, Robert Page, Edward Pou, John Small, Charles Thomas, and Edwin Yates Webb

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"Aldrich and the Insurgents," 2, 3; "Still Harping on the Tariff," Current Literature, XLIX (November, 1910), 473, hereinafter cited as "Still Harping on the Tariff"; Daniels, Editor in Politics, 563.

from North Carolina; Alexander Gregg and Martin Dies from Texas; George Gordon, John Moon, and Lemuel Padgett from Tennessee; and Asbury Lever¹² from South Carolina. These House members represented approximately one-third of the South's Representatives. On May 24, the following Democratic Senators voted against an effort to put lumber on the free list: Augustus O. Bacon from Georgia; Joseph Bailey from Texas; John Bankhead and Joseph Johnston from Alabama; John W. Daniel and Thomas Martin from Virginia; Duncan Fletcher and James Taliaferro from Florida; Murphy Foster and Samuel McEnery from Louisiana; Hernando Money from Mississippi; Lee Slater Overman and Furnifold M. Simmons from North Carolina; Benjamin¹³ Tillman from South Carolina; and Robert Taylor from Tennessee. These Senate members represented approximately two-thirds of the South's Senators.

Senator Furnifold Simmons from North Carolina, one of the strongest supporters among southern Democrats for the retention of the Dingley duty of \$2.00 on lumber, charged that the Dingley rate was already based upon a revenue basis and did not need reduction. If the duty were reduced, the¹⁴ price of lumber to the consumer would not be proportionately reduced.

Senators John W. Daniel of Virginia, Joseph Bailey of Texas, and Augustus O.

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New York Times, April 10, 1909.

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New York Times, May 24, 1909.

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J. Fred Rippy (ed.), F. M. Simmons: Statesman of the New South, Memoirs and Addresses (Durham, 1936), 159, 160, 163, 221, 230, 294, hereinafter cited as Rippy, Simmons; Daniels, Editor in Politics, 563, 566; New York Times, April 29, 1909; "Still Harping on the Tariff," 473; "Is the Taft Policy Reactionary?," Current Literature, XLVI (June, 1909), 587, hereinafter cited as "Is the Taft Policy Reactionary?"; "The True Danger to Tariff Reform," Harper's Weekly, LV (April 1, 1911), 4; "The Southern Democrats and Protection," Harper's Weekly, LV (June 3, 1911), 4.

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Bacon of Georgia, were also strong advocates of a high duty on lumber.

Senator Duncan Fletcher of Florida charged that free lumber would ruin
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 the lumber industry in the South. Representative Charles Holden Cowles
 of North Carolina expressed the determination of many southern congressmen
 to retain a high lumber duty when he stated, "We who favor a high lumber
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 tariff will fight for it to the bitter end...." So many southern con-
 gressmen favored a duty on lumber that confusion and anxiety engulfed
 those southern congressmen who were undecided on the issue. Representative
 Cowles commented, "I am between the Devil and the deep blue sea on the
 18
 lumber tariff question." Senator Tillman stated, "We are so badly mixed
 here that it is hard to tell the sheep from the goats, and I am afraid that
 before we get through there won't be trough enough for all the hogs to
 19
 get their scraps." Senator Isidor Rayner of Maryland rose in the Senate
 during the debates and commented on the confusion:

I have risen mainly for one purpose, and that is to try and find
 out where I am in this bewildering confusion upon the subject be-
 fore us. I want to locate myself, if possible, in this wild night
 of tumult and commotion, and see if there is any light upon the
 horizon that will lead us to an anchorage out of the gloom. Where
 am I and what am I?²⁰

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New York Times, April 29, May 20, 1909; Rippy, Simmons, 165;
 "The Solid South Again," Harper's Weekly, LIII (July 31, 1909), 5,
 hereinafter cited as "The Solid South Again."

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News and Courier, May 1, 1909.

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Charles Holden Cowles to Henry Reynolds, March 25, 1909, Cowles Papers.

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Charles H. Cowles to Henry Reynolds, March 25, 1909, Cowles Papers.

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Quoted in News and Courier, May 1, 1909.

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Quoted in "Is the Taft Policy Reactionary?," 586.

Other southern congressmen were ardently pledged to maintain tariffs on products from their districts. Senator John W. Daniel of Virginia did not attempt to conceal the fact that he wanted a high duty on quebracho, a chestnut bark extract used in tanning. Of the twenty-three quebracho factories in the United States in 1909, nine were in Virginia. In supporting a high duty on this product, Daniel affirmed, "I want to protect American interests. That is my policy. I don't care what you call it,

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I am for it." Senator Samuel McEnery of Louisiana, a professed protectionist, consistently voted for high tariffs on products from his state. Louisiana was a big producer of cane sugar, but was unable to compete with the West Indies. The state, therefore, was always eager to have its product protected with a high tariff. McEnery proved to be an adequate spokesman for this sentiment until his death in 1910. He was the only southern Democrat who favored the conference report in the Senate, but was absent from the floor when the final vote was taken on

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August 5. Among the host of other southern congressmen who fought for high tariff duties on such products as coal, iron ore, peanuts, and tobacco, were Virginia Representatives Francis Lassiter, Edward Saunders,

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Carter Glass, and Senator Thomas S. Martin.

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Quoted in Times-Dispatch, May 21, 1909; New York Times, May 21, 1909; see also, "The Solid South Again," 5.

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New York Times, August 2, 1909; Atlanta Constitution, August 6, 1909; "Beet Sugar and the Tariff," American Monthly Review of Reviews, XXXIX (June, 1909), 649-650; "A Representative of the Solid South," Harper's Weekly, LIV (July 9, 1910), 4.

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Times-Dispatch, May 20, 1909; Rippey, Simmons, 165; New York Times, April 8, 1911; see also, Turner and Dunn, "Pursuing the President," 604; New York Times, May 23, 1909.

The actions of these southern Democrats were frequently noticed by national figures. Senator Porter McCumber of North Dakota stated that southern Democrats had made a stronger appeal for protection than some
²⁴
of the regular Republicans. The New York World commented that southern Democrats had repudiated their party declarations and obligations in an effort "to get a full measure of Aldrich protection for their own
²⁵
constituents...." Ray Stannard Baker, a close observer of southern Democratic actions during the tariff debates, proclaimed that he had found only two southern Democrats who had voted against every increase and for every decrease in the tariff schedules. These were Senators
²⁶
Ellison Smith of South Carolina and Isidor Rayner of Maryland.

President Taft saw these southern voting patterns as a good sign that the two sections were coming closer together on the tariff question. During the tariff debates, many southerners claimed they were voting for revenue tariffs when they supported high rates on their products. In essence, they were voting for protective tariffs on their products, but most would not publicly admit it. Taft believed that when a southern congressman voted for a \$2.00 tariff on lumber for revenue and when a northern congressman voted for the same duty for protection, then little difference existed between them. The important issue was not whether the two men agreed that the duty was one for revenue or protection, but that they were both striving for the same end. The significance was that the

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News and Courier, May 1, 1909.

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Quoted in "Is the Taft Policy Reactionary?," 587.

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"Still Harping on the Tariff," 473.

two congressmen were "working closer and closer together along different
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 routes."

Although numerous southern congressmen voted for high duties during the tariff debates, the overall southern reaction to the Payne-Aldrich Tariff of 1909 was hypercritical. Senator Simmons, who had frequently voted for high duties, was vehemently opposed to the bill. He charged
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 that it was "an iniquitous measure." Senator Bailey called the bill
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 "the most extreme protective measure ever passed by any party." Simmons, Bailey, and other southerners were alienated with the bill because substantial reductions had not been made in such consumer products as shoes, woolen and cotton goods. The fact that only about one-fifth of the articles on the free list were consumable goods while the rest were raw materials needed by the manufacturers and trusts to produce finished products
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 angered a majority of southerners. Bailey warned the beneficiaries of the bill that they had enjoyed "their last license to rob and plunder the
³¹
 American people."

Southern Democratic newspapers also showered critical editorials upon the Republican party and the Payne-Aldrich Bill. The Republican platform pledges to revise the tariff were "hollow mockeries." The bill was

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Quoted in Times-Dispatch, May 20, 1909.

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Rippy, Simmons, 294.

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Quoted in News and Observer, August 6, 1909.

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Rippy, Simmons, 295.

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Quoted in News and Observer, August 6, 1909; see also, New York Times, May 20, 1909.

"a failure and a trick." The fact that the duty on cotton bagging was not lowered or abolished was a major source of criticism.³² Many newspapers, however, conceded that Taft had done all in his power to revise the tariff downward. The President was even commended for signing the bill in order to avert further controversy and agitation.³³ Republican newspapers were generally favorable, but not enthusiastic, toward the new tariff bill. The Knoxville Journal and Tribune, one of the South's leading Republican newspapers, predicted that "the Republicans have made their beds and in them they must lie."³⁴

On August 5, 1909, after the signing ceremonies for the Payne-Aldrich Act, Taft issued a statement concerning his personal views about the legislation. He said he signed the act because it represented a genuine effort on the part of the Republicans to enact a downward revision of the Dingley rates. Furthermore, the measure was even "a substantial downward revision."³⁵ Taft confessed, however, that the new act was imperfect and did not comply

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Atlanta Constitution, August 7, 1909; The State, August 7, 1909; Atlanta Journal, August 2, 8, 1909; Times-Dispatch, August 6, 8, 1909; Virginian-Pilot, August 7, 1909; News and Observer, July 25, 1912; "Has President Taft 'Made Good?'," Current Literature, XLVII (September, 1909), 237, hereinafter cited as "Has President Taft 'Made Good?'"; "Tariff Burdens Laid Upon the President," Literary Digest, XXXIX (July 24, 1909), 115-116, hereinafter cited as "Tariff Burdens Laid Upon the President."

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Times-Dispatch, August 6, 8, 1909; "Tariff Revision Present and to Come," 218; "Tariff Burdens Laid Upon the President," 116.

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Journal and Tribune, August 6, 1909; see also, St. Louis Globe Democrat, August 6, 1909, August 19, 1911; Journal and Tribune, June 25, 1912.

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Frank Taussig, an expert on American tariff history, disagreed with Taft's statement. Taussig asserted that the Payne-Aldrich Act effected no essential change in the tariff rates. The Act "brought no real breach in the tariff wall, and no downward revision of any serious consequence," Taussig, The Tariff History of the United States, 408.

fully with the Republican promise of tariff revision. Furthermore, criticism of the bill was to be expected because it dealt with too many schedules
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to satisfy everyone.

On September 17, 1909, Taft further explained his views of the Payne-Aldrich Act in Winona, Minnesota, the home of Republican Representative James Tawney and a hotbed of opposition to the new tariff schedules. Tawney was the only Republican congressman from Minnesota who voted for the Payne Act and Taft was in the city to campaign for Tawney's re-election. In defense of the Payne Act, Taft made one of the biggest political mistakes of his presidency. Completely unaware of the repercussions of his statements, Taft proclaimed that "the Payne tariff bill is the best tariff bill
37
that the Republican party ever passed." Furthermore, the act was one of downward revision and should be supported by all Republicans for the sake of party unity. Taft admitted, however, that the wool schedule was still too high and should have been reduced. He did not want any further efforts undertaken at tariff revision during his administration because there was not enough time to gather all the facts and data necessary for genuine re-
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vision.

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"Tariff Revision Present and to Come," 217; "Has President Taft 'Made Good?'," 233; Lowry, "One Year of Mr. Taft," 297; Atlanta Constitution, August 6, 1909; Journal and Tribune, August 6, 1909; New York Times, August 6, 1909; St. Louis Globe Democrat, August 6, 1909.

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Tariff Speech, 11; Presidential Addresses and State Papers, 222; quoted in "Not Quite the 'Best Ever,'" American Monthly Review of Reviews, XL (October, 1909), 393; see also, "Mr. Taft Speaks Out," Independent. LXXI (December 7, 1911), 1277; Thompson, Presidents I've Known, 218; Stoddard, As I Knew Them, 374-375; Lowry, "One Year of Mr. Taft," 298.

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Tariff Speech, 11; "The President and the Tariff," 462.

Frequently, Taft defended the Payne Act as a step toward substantial
 39
 downward revision. His actions toward this controversial act reflected another major weakness in his political abilities. Taft had repeatedly attempted to establish himself as the friend of tariff reformers before the debates commenced. After the debates began Taft failed to take the initiative in attempting to secure reductions in the Dingley rates. He allowed Representative Sereno Payne, House Speaker Joseph Cannon, and Senator Nelson Aldrich almost total freedom to conduct the tariff fight as they pleased. Then he chose one of the most inappropriate cities in America in which to defend the bill. Taft failed in his attempts to convince the southerners and other Americans that he was an advocate of genuine tariff reform. His inability to unite the factions in his party over the tariff further weakened his position.

Undoubtedly, Taft hoped that the tariff fight of 1909 would be the only one during his administration. This was a utopian hope, however, because in 1911 Congress passed three tariff reform measures: a wool bill, a cotton bill, and a farmer's free list bill. In an effort to lower some of the high Payne rates, a coalition of Democrats and insurgent Republicans continued the tariff battle. All of these bills were of particular concern to southerners because of the products that were involved. On August 14, 1911, the House of Representatives passed a wool revision bill and on August 15, the Senate approved the measure. Every Democrat in both houses of Congress supported the bill. The duties on raw wool were reduced from 47.24 to 29

"Mr. Taft Judged by His Message," Literary Digest, XXXIX (December 18, 1909), 1117; "The President's Speech on Lincoln Day," Outlook, XCIV (February 26, 1910), 411; Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, I, 179; New York Times, August 13, 1912.

per cent ad valorem. The duties on cloth and wearing apparel were
 reduced from 97.27 and 81.37 per cent respectively to 49 per cent. ⁴⁰

On August 17, 1911, the Senate passed a cotton revision bill and the House approved the bill on August 21. The duty on cotton was reduced from 48.12 to 27.06 per cent ad valorem. The farmers' free list bill passed the House on May 8 and the Senate on August 1, 1911. It provided for the free admission of approximately one hundred articles which the farmer consumed, but did not sell. Agricultural implements, cotton bagging, cotton ties, leather, fence wire, shoes, meats, cereals, flour, bread, salt, and numerous other items were placed on the free list. ⁴¹

All three bills were quickly vetoed by President Taft: the wool bill on August 17, the cotton bill on August 22, and the farmers' free list on August 18, 1911. Taft charged the insurgent Republican-Democratic coalition with "log-rolling" tactics. He believed the "pop-gun tariff bills" had been concocted solely to put him "in a hole" because the Democrats realized that political capital for the presidential campaign of 1912 could be gained from his vetoes. The President firmly believed that the tariff question should be removed from the political

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New York Times, August 6, 8, 1911; Lexington Leader, August 9, 1911; Atlanta Journal, August 11, 1911; Houston Post, July 7, 1911; The State, August 15, 1911; "The President at the Cotton Mills," Independent, LXX (June 29, 1911), 1435; "Assailing the 'Citadel of Protection,'" Current Literature, LI (July, 1911), 7; Hechler, Insurgency, 188, 190; Congressional Record, Sixty-Second Congress, First Session, Volume 47, Part 4 (August 14), 3919 (August 15), 3963.

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News and Observer, April 3, 1912; Atlanta Journal, August 22, 1911, June 1, 1912; The State, August 2, 4, 18, 24, 1911; Houston Post, August 19, 22, 23, 1911; New York Times, April 13, 20, 23, August 18, 19, 22, 1911; Hechler, Insurgency, 190-191; Congressional Record, Sixty-Second Congress, First Session, Volume 47, Part 2 (May 8), 1121; Part 5 (August 1), 4067 (August 17), 4351; Turner and Dunn, "Pursuing the President," 604.

arena and changes in the tariff schedules should come only after impartial and scientific research by qualified investigators. Taft implied that the tariff debates of 1909 and 1911 were not conducted in an impartial and scientific manner. He justified his vetoes on the grounds that his Tariff Board, created by the Payne-Aldrich Act, had not yet made its recommendations concerning tariff revision. Furthermore, the bills were contrary to the Republican principle of protection. They had been concocted in an effort to reduce so drastically the duties as to leave only a revenue tariff on American products. The bills would be detrimental to the American business community.⁴²

The farmers' free list bill was of particular concern to Taft because it included numerous schedules. He was most outspoken in his indictment of the measure. He charged the bill with discriminating against American industries by placing finished products on the free list while retaining the raw materials and machinery needed to produce the finished products on the dutiable list. By involving so many schedules, the bill would cause much confusion, expense, and unnecessary litigation. The placing of cotton bagging, jute, and related items within the cotton schedule on the free list would have "destroyed the cotton schedule, and produced the utmost lack of

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New York Times, August 18, 19, 22, 23, 1911; The State, August 18, 23, 1911; Houston Post, August 18, 19, 22, 23, 1911; News and Observer, April 4, 1912; "The Tariff Vetoes and Veto Messages," Harper's Weekly, LV (August 26, 1911), 4; "The Wool Bill Veto," Outlook, XCVIII (August 26, 1911), 910-911; William H. Taft to Robert A. Taft, August 27, 1911; William H. Taft to Mrs. Helen Herron Taft, July 28, 1911; William H. Taft to Jacob M. Dickinson, July 29, 1911; William H. Taft to William O. Bradley, August 10, 1911, Taft Papers; Carlton Jackson, Presidential Vetoes, 1792-1945 (Athens, Georgia, 1967), 169, hereinafter cited as Jackson, Presidential Vetoes; Hechler, Insurgency, 191; Butt, Taft and Roosevelt, II, 737.

symmetry and confusion." The free admission of fencing wire would have upset "the symmetry of the metal schedule." The free admission of meat and flour was limited practically to Canada. It was "a mere fraud" to tell Americans that the prices on these products would be reduced because the United States already sold them cheaper than Canada. The prices of agricultural implements were also cheaper in the United States than in Canada; therefore, no legitimate justification existed for putting them on the free list.⁴³

In a further effort to embarrass the President and to reduce drastically the Payne-Aldrich rates, the Democrats and insurgent Republicans resumed their tariff reform fight in 1912. The Tariff Board made its report early in that year. Although it defended Taft's vetoes of 1911, the report stated that both the wool and cotton schedules were excessively high. This report having been made, the coalition of tariff reformers believed Taft was deprived of his main veto weapon. They rapidly enacted the same wool bill which Taft had vetoed in 1911 and a steel and iron bill which reduced the Payne rates one-third. On advice of the Tariff Board, Taft vetoed both of these measures: the wool bill on August 9, and the steel and iron bill on August 14, 1912. The President reaffirmed his determination to maintain protective tariffs on American products and charged the coalition with irresponsible political conniving. Both

The State, August 19, 1911; News and Observer, August 19, 1911; New York Times, August 19, 1911; "The Week," Nation, XCIII (August 24, 1911), 155; William H. Taft to Robert A. Taft, August 27, 1911, Taft Papers.

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vetoed were overridden by the House, but sustained in the Senate.

Taft's tariff vetoes of 1911 and 1912 "reflected his conservative, legalistic attitude toward government." Realizing the need for lowering some of the tariff rates, Taft was fearful of the drastic and rapid methods of the Democratic-insurgent Republican coalition. Believing that all changes should come only after careful, patient, and scientific investigation, Taft refused to sacrifice principle for political expediency. His personal dislike and distrust of the Republican insurgents stemmed from this same opposition to swift change in any governmental program. Taft's judicial temperament was a hindrance in the political arena. A judge requires that all the facts be accumulated and presented before a decision can be rendered. Time is then needed to weigh the evidence. A president, however, has to make spontaneous decisions and does not have time to gather all the necessary facts for every decision he makes. The presidency requires a man to be quick and responsive. One observer commented, "A judicial mind does not make the best executive mind." Taft's "conservative, legalistic" approach to politics, as exemplified in his tariff vetoes, was one of his major weaknesses as President.

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William O. Bradley. "The Wisdom of Taft," Taft Papers; New York Times, March 25, August 14, 15, 1912; Houston Post, August 10, 1912; Journal and Tribune, August 6, 10, 15, 1912; Atlanta Journal, August 3, 1912; Lexington Leader, August 9, 14, 1912, August 13, 1909; News and Observer, July 26, August 10, 15, 17, 1912; William Howard Taft, "The Republican Party's Appeal," Independent, LXXIII (October 24, 1912), 934; Jackson, Presidential Vetoes, 171-172.

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Jackson, Presidential Vetoes, 168, 178; "President Taft," Atlantic Monthly, CIX (January, 1912), 166-167; "A Political Balance Sheet," Outlook, XCIV (April 2, 1910), 745; "Before the Convention," World's Work, XXIV (June, 1912), 129; Eugene H. Roseboom, A History of Presidential Elections (New York, 1957), 356, hereinafter cited as Roseboom, A History of Presidential Elections.

The effects of Taft's tariff vetoes were detrimental to his southern policy. The southern Democratic press was practically unanimous in its opposition to the President's actions. Taft's justifications for vetoing the various tariff reform measures were "flimsy." He had proved himself a friend of "the high tariff barons" and had aligned with "the reactionary element of his own party...." As a tariff reformer, the President was characterized as "an awkward and blundering figure...."⁴⁶ The only defense of the President's actions came from a few loyal southern Republican newspapers.⁴⁷

The last major economic policy of Taft's administration which affected the South was the 1911 Reciprocity Agreement with Canada. After the Payne-Aldrich Act proved so unpopular and the congressional elections of 1910 resulted in a disaster for the Republicans, President Taft was more determined than ever to fulfill his tariff revision pledges. He and Canadian Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier secretly concocted the Canadian Reciprocity Agreement in late 1910. Taft did not consult leading Republicans because he wanted to keep the discussions free of political pressures. This action was naturally condemned by Republican congressmen, but Taft was willing to bear criticism in order to get the type of agreement he wanted.⁴⁸

Taft confided, "I believe this treaty is right, but I rather think its advocacy will eliminate me from the considerations of practical politicians."⁴⁹

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Houston Post, August 22, 1911; The State, August 18, 24, 1911.

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Journal and Tribune, August 15, 22, 1912; Lexington Leader, August 18, 1912; St. Louis Globe Democrat, August 11, 18, 19, 1911.

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William H. Taft to James C. Hemphill, February 14, 1911, Hemphill Family Papers; The State, January 30, 1911; Hechler, Insurgency, 178.

⁴⁹

William H. Taft to Horace D. Taft, January 27, 1911, Taft Papers.

He related to Senator William Bradley of Kentucky that Canadian reciprocity was the "most important measure" of his administration and was "of the highest importance to the welfare of the country." He was not "playing politics" in the matter, but "endeavoring to obtain an agreement advantageous to both countries."⁵⁰ Taft realized that the measure would probably be unpopular with regular Republicans, but he once again placed principle above political expediency.

On January 26, 1911, Taft sent the Reciprocity Treaty to Congress with an explanatory message. The primary purpose of the agreement was to reduce the cost of living by placing on the free list such food and forest products as cattle, hogs, poultry, vegetables, cottonseed oil, fish, eggs, wheat, oats, rye, apples, peaches, rough lumber, and hundreds of other imported items from Canada. Significant reductions were provided on many American products consumed in Canada, such as bituminous coal, farm machinery, and farm implements. The treaty included approximately six hundred⁵¹ items. Taft explained that the treaty provided America with an added source of staple food products and raw materials. Free entry into Canada for American products such as fruits and vegetables could be especially advantageous to the South and the Pacific Coast. The South would also profit from the treaty because of free entry into Canada of cottonseed oil, a heavily consumed product in Canada. Furthermore, the agreement would cement American-Canadian relations. The two nations shared a common boundary and were closely linked by common languages, races, and political

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William H. Taft to William O. Bradley, February 27, 1911, Taft Papers.

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New York Times, January 27, July 23, 1911; Atlanta Journal, January 27, 1911; "Canadian Reciprocity," Outlook, XCVII (February 4, 1911), 244; Hechler, Insurgency, 178.

institutions. Taft further stated that the agreement did not violate the principle of protection because such a tariff was not required on goods from a country as closely linked to America as Canada.

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The congressional battle over the Reciprocity Treaty required two sessions before approval was obtained. On January 28, 1911, Representative Samuel McCall of Massachusetts introduced the treaty into the House where passage came on February 14. The Senate, however, failed to act during the regular session, so the agreement was postponed until a special session was called on April 4. On April 21, the House repassed the measure. Only four southern Democrats voted against reciprocity: Representatives Robert Doughton, James Gudger, and Edwin Webb from North Carolina; and Arsene Pujo from Louisiana. On July 22, the Senate passed the pact with three southern Democrats voting against it: Senators Joseph Bailey from Texas, Furnifold Simmons from North Carolina, and James Clarke from Arkansas.

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An overwhelming majority of southern Democratic newspapers and congressmen favored the Reciprocity Treaty. Many believed the agreement was a step in the right direction toward lowering all the existing high tariff duties. The opening of new markets for southern cottonseed oil was applauded as well as the free interchange of foodstuffs and raw materials. The hope that the cost of living would be reduced by abolishing the duties on numerous consumable

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New York Times, January 27, 1911; Journal and Tribune, January 27, 1911.

53

News and Observer, July 23, 1911; New York Times, January 29, April 13, 22, July 23, 1911; Houston Post, July 23, 1911; Congressional Record, Sixty-First Congress, Third Session, Volume 46, Part 3 (February 14), 2563-2564; Volume 47, Part 1 (April 21), 559-560; Part 4 (July 22), 3175; Hechler, Insurgency, 180, 182, 185; Pringle, William Howard Taft, II, 594-595; Stoddard, As I Knew Them, 362; "Canadian Reciprocity Would Help Our Farmer," Outlook, XCVII (February 25, 1911), 372-373; Turner and Dunn, "Pursuing the President," 603.

54

goods was widespread among southerners. Even the Raleigh News and Observer, one of the most trenchant critics of Taft's southern policy, asserted that Taft's reciprocity agreement was "a first step" in eliminating restrictive commercial barriers with America's northern neighbor. 55

Southern opposition to the measure came primarily from those Democrats who were either protectionists or represented lumber interests. Senator Simmons was vehement in denouncing the treaty for placing what the farmer sold on the free list while retaining a protective duty on goods he had to purchase. He opposed the retention of protective duty of 60¢ per barrel on flour, 1¼¢ per pound on beef products, 1¼¢ per pound on lard, a 20 per cent duty on all meat extracts. If the farmer were to be treated equitably with manufacturing interests, these and other articles should have been placed on the free list. The North Carolina senator charged that he had no "stomach" for this type of tariff revision because it was "an outrageous discrimination against the American farmer." 56 Senator Bailey of Texas believed the agreement would expose unfairly the American farmer to competition with the Canadian farmer. Such consumable items as clothing should have been given free entry between the two countries if agricultural products were to enjoy that treatment. Representative James Gudger of North Carolina opposed the pact because unfinished or rough lumber was placed on

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The State, January 28, July 24, 1911; Atlanta Journal, January 27, 1911; Virginian-Pilot, January 29, 30, 1911.

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News and Observer, January 29, 1911.

56

Rippy, Simmons, 167-168, 252, 260, 261, 295; Daniels, Editor in Politics, 609; News and Observer, July 25, 1912; see also, "Bailey and Simmons," Harper's Weekly, LV (July 22, 1911), 4, hereinafter cited as "Bailey and Simmons."

the free list. He charged that reciprocity was incompatible with North
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 Carolina lumber interests.

Southern Republican newspapers were generally not enthusiastic over
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 the measure. Many northern and midwestern congressmen opposed reciprocity
 because of objections to free entrance into America of Canadian farm products
 and raw materials. Republican insurgents denounced the pact as an attempt
 to provide eastern trusts with cheap raw materials while allowing Canadian
 grain to flood American markets, which would undermine farm income. Many
 regular and insurgent Republicans voted against the Reciprocity Treaty,
 thereby allowing the Democrats the opportunity to receive credit for its
 59
 passage.

Undoubtedly, Taft hoped the pact would placate the Republican insur-
 gents and reduce insurgent-Democratic criticism of the Payne Act. Fate
 did not prove so kind, however. The insurgents, most of whom were from
 the Midwest where opposition to the treaty was intense, did not relinquish
 their attacks upon Taft's tariff programs. Furthermore, Democrats received
 credit for the pact's passage in both houses because it was their votes
 which passed it. This ironical twist of events deprived the President of
 the credit he justly deserved for initiating the agreement.

57

Houston Post, July 3, 21, 1911; News and Observer, January 28,
 July 21, 1911; "Bailey and Simmons," 4; "North Carolina and Ditto," Harper's
Weekly, LV (April 29, 1911), 4; "Not Making a Southern Tariff," Harper's
Weekly, LV (August 12, 1911) 4; "The Democrats for Reciprocity," Harper's
Weekly, LV (February 18, 1911), 4.

58

Lexington Leader, February 25, 1911.

59

Hechler, Insurgency, 180; Stoddard, As I Knew Them, 362-363; Mayer,
A History of the Republican Party, 319; "A Free List for the Farmer,"
Literary Digest, XLII (April 22, 1911), 765; New York Times, April 23, 1911.

Since the agreement had to be approved by both the American and Canadian legislatures, the fate of the Reciprocity Treaty rested with the Canadians. On September 21, 1911, Canadian voters rejected the treaty by ousting Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Liberal party leader. Laurier had concocted the treaty with Taft in 1910 and based his reelection hopes on the agreement.⁶⁰ The Conservatives' main campaign issue was that reciprocity was a prelude to American annexation of Canada. Canadians had long feared this possibility and the Conservatives played upon this fear to good advantage. A speech by Representative Champ Clark from Missouri on the House floor on February 14, 1911, in support of reciprocity, provided the Conservatives their campaign weapon. Totally unaware of the repercussions of the statement, Clark declared his support of reciprocity "because I hope to see the day when the American flag will float over every square foot of the British North American possessions clear to the North pole."⁶¹ The speech proved to be "one of the most idiotic speeches" in the Senate's history.⁶² With Laurier's defeat, reciprocity became a dead letter during Taft's administration.

President Taft's economic programs proved to be one of the weakest links in his southern policy. Although there were numerous southerners who agreed with the administration's principle of protection for their products, the overwhelming majority of southerners opposed Taft's signing of the Payne-Aldrich Act of 1909 and his tariff vetoes of 1911 and 1912. Taft's

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Pringle, William Howard Taft, II, 583, 598; Stoddard, As I Knew Them, 363; "Reciprocity's Waterloo," Literary Digest, XLIII (September 30, 1911), 517; "Canada Defeats Reciprocity," Outlook, XCIX (September 30, 1911), 250.

61

Quoted in Pringle, William Howard Taft, II, 589; and see 583, 597.

62

Pringle, William Howard Taft, II, 583.

failure to prove that he was a genuine tariff reformer weakened his position among southerners. By the end of his presidency, his pledges of tariff revision downward were only token statements and not realities. The tariff issue further split the Republican ranks and weakened any constructive efforts to execute his southern policy. The tariff was indeed "the rock on which the Taft administration floundered."

63

Roseboom, A History of Presidential Elections, 356; see also, "Taft in the West," Harper's Weekly, LV (September 30, 1911), 4.

CHAPTER VII

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE FAILURE OF TAFT'S SOUTHERN POLICY

At the time of William Howard Taft's election in 1908, the Republican party was strong and hopeful of increased political gains. Taft was elected on a wave of enthusiasm engineered by Theodore Roosevelt. The party and nation were confident that the time was ripe for political gains in the South and a rejuvenation of the party therein. By 1912, however, the Republican party was torn asunder by factionalism. Taft's southern policy had proved to be a failure because no noticeable inroads had been made into the political solidarity of the South. During Taft's administration there developed no significant advancements in the Republican party's appeal to Democratic southerners.

Taft and the Republican party were confronted with many obstacles in their efforts to rejuvenate the party in the South. Party disunity was the biggest obstacle. A group of midwestern and western Republican congressmen broke with the regular or "old guard" Republicans on such issues as the Payne Tariff fight of 1909, the movement to dethrone House Speaker Joseph G. Cannon, and the tariff revision bills of 1911 and 1912. These insurgent or progressive Republicans often aligned themselves with the Democrats on these and other legislative measures. The insurgent Republicans were led in the Senate by Robert M. La Follette, William Borah, Jonathan Bourne, Hiram W. Johnson, Albert J. Beveridge, Joseph L. Bristow, Jonathan Dolliver, Albert Cummins, and Moses Clapp. Insurgent House leaders included Representatives Augustus P. Gardner, Victor Murdock, George T. Oliver,

William Allen Cullop, and George W. Norris. When it became evident early in 1909 that President Taft was not a progressive and was determined to align himself with regular or "old guard" Republicans such as Joseph Cannon and Nelson W. Aldrich, the insurgents openly rebelled against the President in Congress. Taft disliked and distrusted the insurgents and viewed them as "potential troublemakers and party deserters," "demagogues," "stupid," "obnoxious," and "assistant Democrats." The President also opposed many of the progressive principles which his insurgents supported: direct election of senators, initiative, referendum, recall and a third term for Theodore Roosevelt. He was too conservative and fearful of rapid government changes to support the ideas espoused by left-wing colleagues. Concerning the House fight to dethrone Speaker Joseph Cannon, Taft told a group of insurgents on March 9, 1909, that he would have been a "fool" to join them because he needed Cannon's help in getting the Payne Bill passed.² This irreparable split within the Republican party was detrimental and politically disastrous to the party and thwarted any potential efforts in rejuvenating its southern branch.

The division in the Republican ranks resulted in disaster in the congressional and gubernatorial elections in November, 1910. The election was a Democratic landside. For the first time since 1892, the Democrats won

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James Holt, Congressional Insurgents and the Party System, 1909-1916 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1967), 1-80, hereinafter cited as Holt, Congressional Insurgents and the Party System; Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 236-273; Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917 (New York, 1963), 2-6, hereinafter cited as Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era; Hechler, Insurgency, 27-91, 92-145, 158-162; William H. Taft to Horace Taft, June 27, 1909; William H. Taft to Mrs. Helen H. Taft, July 14, 30, 1909; William H. Taft to W. D. Foulke, July 15, 1909, Taft Papers.

control of the House of Representatives by a majority of 227 to 162. This was a gain of fifty-nine seats for the Democrats. In the new Senate there were forty-nine Republicans and forty-two Democrats. The Republican control was only nominal because the insurgent Republicans controlled the balance of power between the Democrats and regular Republicans. A total of twenty-six Democratic governors were also elected with many coming from traditionally Republican states such as Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Indiana, Nebraska, and Colorado. Only three new southern representatives were elected: Sam R. Sells of Tennessee's First District; Thomas Parran of Maryland's Fifth District; and Caleb Powers of Kentucky's Eleventh District.

On January 21, 1911, the Republican party was further weakened when the National Progressive Republican League was organized to defeat Taft for the 1912 Republican nomination. This mounting division among Republicans further split the regular and insurgent members. On February 24, 1912, Theodore Roosevelt announced that he would be a candidate for the Republican nomination. Failing to obtain the nomination in June, 1912, Roosevelt organized his own Progressive party and became its candidate in August, 1912. The candidacy of Roosevelt completed the split within Republican ranks. Between September 24 and October 1, 1912, Roosevelt carried his campaign into the southern states of Arkansas, Tennessee, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina. Carrying a "lily-white" banner into these southern

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Congressional Directory, Sixty-Second Congress, First Session (1911), 35-36, 42, 99; Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 272-273; Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 7; Holt, Congressional Insurgents and the Party System, 41-43; New York Times, November 9, 10, 1910.

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states, Roosevelt was greeted with enthusiastic and encouraging audiences.

The candidacy of Theodore Roosevelt also weakened the Republican party because it resulted in the temporary defection of many powerful and influential southern Republicans into the Progressive ranks. Joseph O. Thompson, Alabama State Chairman until 1911; Cecil Lyon, Texas National Committeeman and State Chairman until 1912; John G. Capers, South Carolina National Committeeman; Pearl Wight, Louisiana National Committeeman; John M. Parker, prominent Louisiana Republican; L. H. Anderson, prominent Florida Republican; and Richmond Pearson, prominent North Carolina Republican, joined Roosevelt's bandwagon. These and other Republicans deserted Taft and the Republican party because of their tariff policies and the appointment of numerous southern Democrats. The magnetism and robustness of Roosevelt drew them to the side of the man who had given most of them their political positions.

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Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 291; Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 14-16; Arthur S. Link, "Theodore Roosevelt and the South in 1912," North Carolina Historical Review, XXIII (July, 1946), 314, 317-318, 321-323, hereinafter cited as Link, "Theodore Roosevelt"; Arthur S. Link, "Democratic Politics and the Presidential Campaign of 1912 in Tennessee," East Tennessee Historical Society Publications No. 18 (1946), 128, hereinafter cited as Link, "Democratic Politics and the Presidential Campaign of 1912 in Tennessee"; Arthur S. Link (ed.), "Correspondence Relating to the Progressive Party's 'Lily-White' Policy in 1912," Journal of Southern History, X (November, 1944), 484-486; "Roosevelt Drops the Subject," Harper's Weekly, LVI (October 5, 1912), 4; Heard, A Two-Party South?, 233; New York Times, August 3, 1912; George E. Mowry, "The South and the Progressive Lily White Party of 1912," Journal of Southern History, VI (May, 1940), 240, hereinafter cited as Mowry, "The South and the Progressive Lily White Party of 1912."

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Link, "Theodore Roosevelt and the South in 1912," 316, 321; Joseph F. Steelman, "Richmond Pearson, Roosevelt Republicans, and the Campaign of 1912 in North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review, XLIII (Spring, 1966), 122, hereinafter cited as Steelman, "Richmond Pearson"; Stoddard, As I Knew Them, 33; H. F. MacGregor to Charles D. Hilles, February 29, March 13, 1912; Charles D. Hilles to Joseph O. Thompson, January 15, 1912; Charles D. Hilles to H. F. MacGregor, February 7, 1912; John A. Steele, et. al., to Charles D. Hilles, February 6, 12, 1912; William H. Taft to John Simpson, February 21, 1912; Joseph O. Thompson to Charles D. Hilles, January 6, 1912; Joseph O. Thompson to Franklin MacVeagh, July 23, 1912; "MacGregor Discusses Civil Service Law," undated newspaper clipping; "Republican National Committeemen and State Chairmen for Democratic States," Taft Papers.

As the 1912 presidential campaign approached, President Taft realized that his former hopes of making inroads into the "Solid South" were merely chimerical dreams of the past. In his formal speech of acceptance on August 1, 1912, Taft said nothing about the South. During the campaign he sent William Henry Lewis, his Negro Assistant Attorney General, to serve as his speaking proxy in the South. He realized that a campaign trip such as the one of 1908 into the South would have been politically futile.⁶

The presidential and congressional elections of 1912 further illustrated the failure of Taft's southern policy. Taft's vote in every southern state was considerably lower than in 1908. He received approximately 16,000 fewer votes in Alabama; 32,000 in Arkansas; 36,000 in Georgia; 120,000 in Kentucky; 61,000 in Maryland; 86,000 in North Carolina; and 59,000 in Tennessee. He did not receive a single southern electoral vote and no new southern Republican congressmen were elected.⁷

Taft and the Republican party were deprived of much of their 1908 southern support because of Theodore Roosevelt's candidacy. His total vote in the South was 318,089 votes. In Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina, Roosevelt received more votes than Taft. In North Carolina, he received almost 40,000 more votes than Taft; in Georgia, almost 17,000 more; and in Alabama, almost 13,000

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"Speech of William Howard Taft Accepting the Nomination for the Presidency by the Republican National Convention," August 1, 1912, Taft Papers; News and Observer, August 11, 1912.

7

Robinson, The Presidential Vote, 133, 139, 156, 161, 208, 218, 224, 241, 247, 280, 314, 323, 330, 354; The World Almanac and Encyclopedia, 1916 (New York, 1915), 727-728; 1910 (1909), 649; Mayer, A History of the Republican Party, 333; Wilensky, Conservatives in the Progressive Era, 71; New York Times, November 6, 1912; New York World, November 6, 1912.

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more. These statistics illustrated Taft's poor showing in the South in 1912.

Woodrow Wilson's candidacy as the Democratic nominee also deprived Taft of his 1908 support from such southerners as William Garrott Brown, Edwin A. Alderman, and Walter Hines Page. These and other southern Democrats welcomed the liberal and progressive Wilson as their new party leader in 1912.

The 1912 election revealed two major political realities in the South. First, President Taft had not succeeded in making any inroads into the South's political solidarity through his southern policy. One political observer reflected upon the status of the "Solid South" after the election, "The solid South was still the solid South and from the returns of 1912 it gave every indication of remaining so."¹⁰ A contemporary journalist had warned as early as 1909, "The line that bounds the solid South will take a good deal of scouring before it disappears."¹¹ Taft had failed in his "scouring" of the South because its political solidarity remained intact.

The second political reality was that Taft had failed to create a respectable minority party in the South. This had been one of the foremost goals of his southern policy. The fact that no new southern Republican congressmen were elected revealed a continued lack of confidence in

8

The World Almanac and Encyclopedia, 1916, 727; see also, "The Week," Nation, XCV (November 11, 1912), 445-446; Appendix B.

9

Malone, Edwin A. Alderman, 267-268; Hendrick, The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page, I, 103-104.

10

Mowry, "The South and the Progressive Lily White Party of 1912," 246.

11

"The Week," Nation, LXXXIX (November 11, 1909), 447.

Republican nominees. Taft had failed to instill into his southern colleagues the importance of winning elections rather than controlling patronage.

On November 12, 1912, William H. Taft presented a fitting analysis and summary of his southern policy in a speech to the United Daughters of the Confederacy in Washington:

I am sure I can say that, so far as in me has lain, I have left nothing undone to reduce the sectional feelings and to make the divisions of this country geographical only. But I am free to admit that circumstances have rendered it more difficult for a Republican administration than for a Democratic administration to give our Southern brothers and sisters the feeling of close relationship and ownership in the government of the United States....While I rejoice in the steps that I have been able to make to heal the wounds of sectionalism and to convey to the Southern people, as far as I could, my earnest desire to make the country one, I can not deny that my worthy and distinguished successor has a greater opportunity....¹²

William Howard Taft left the presidency with the admiration and respect of many southerners who had not voted for him. Before and after his defeat in November, 1912, southerners paid their tributes to this Republican president. Governor Joseph M. Brown of Georgia stated that Taft had "done more to bring the South to the realization that she is an equal partner in the Union than any other one since the days of '65."¹³ Jacob Dickinson, Taft's former Secretary of War, stated:

The south has never had a warmer sympathizer or a more sincere friend -- a friend who has done things requiring sympathy, understanding, independence and courage of the highest order. There is no man for whom I have greater affection, reverence, and respect.¹⁴

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Quoted in "William Howard Taft in Defeat," Current Opinion, LIV (January, 1913), 20, hereinafter cited as "William Howard Taft in Defeat."

13

Joseph M. Brown to William H. Taft, December 17, 1912, Taft Papers.

14

Quoted in Tennessean and American, June 2, 1911.

James Calvin Hemphill, the Democratic editor of the Charleston News and Courier, stated that the attitude of the average southerner toward any Republican presidential candidate was that he "would see him in hell before I would vote for him." However, the South thought "far more of Taft than it ever thought of Roosevelt." ¹⁵ One Georgia Democrat summarized the rapport between Taft and southerners as follows: "While most of us folks in this neck of the woods are, politically, 'tooth and nail, hide and hair' 'agin' the Republican party, yet we all love Mister 'Big Bill' Taft." ¹⁶ The Virginia chapter of the Confederate Veterans' Association passed the following resolution in appreciation of Taft's sympathetic and laudatory speeches toward Confederate veterans: "RESOLVED, That to the end of our days we will cherish for him our warmest appreciation and best wishes." ¹⁷

Southern Democratic newspapers also praised Taft for his southern policy. ¹⁸ The Houston Post adequately set forth this approval:

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James Calvin Hemphill, "Sincerity vs. Hypocrisy: Taft vs. Roosevelt," Harper's Weekly, LVI (May 4, 1912), 8.

¹⁶
B. W. Barrow to William H. Taft, February 16, 1913, Taft Papers. ¹⁷

"Resolution Adopted by the Harry Heth Camp No. 119, Grand Camp, Virginia, January 7, 1913," Taft Papers. For other favorable southern comments on Taft's southern policy, see "William Howard Taft in Defeat," 21; "Let the President Speak Out," Harper's Weekly, LV (April 22, 1911), 4; "The Other Side," Harper's Weekly, LIV (February 19, 1910), 4; "And the Colonel Himself?," Harper's Weekly, LVII (January 11, 1913), 4; "Mr. Taft is Cheerful," Harper's Weekly, LVI (March 16, 1912), 5; "To William H. Taft: Good Morning," Harper's Weekly, LVII (March 1, 1913), 6; W. S. Coleman to William H. Taft, November 14, 1912; Joe Ferguson to William H. Taft, November 30, 1912; R. B. Burns to William H. Taft, November 15, 1912, undated newspaper clipping, Taft Papers.

¹⁸
Atlanta Journal, November 14, 1912; Atlanta Independent, November 16, 1912; Journal and Tribune, November 7, 1912; Times-Dispatch, April 14, 1911; "A Non-Political Census," 294.

...President Taft has done more than all his Republican predecessors in establishing such a feeling of relationship and ownership, we feel sure that the Southern people, without regard to political affiliations, will always honor him and feel grateful to him for what he has done to obliterate sectionalism in this country...it is no exaggeration to say that President Taft will retire from his great office one of the most beloved presidents, so far as the South is concerned, who has ever occupied that lofty station....¹⁹

In conclusion, William Howard Taft's southern policy was a political failure. He lacked the necessary rudiments to implement effectively a successful southern policy. He failed to take the initiative in the tariff debates of 1909 to secure a genuine downward revision of the rates. When many southern Republicans were trying to reform their state organizations, Taft failed to aid them with patronage. Declaring for downward revision and against the southern Republican machines, Taft found few receptive southern listeners when he failed to implement these pledges by deeds. By betraying and abandoning the southern Negro, Taft castigated and drove many blacks into the Democratic party. By alienating the southern blacks, Taft and the Republican party were deprived of much of their political support. An inept politician by nature, Taft lacked the drive, robustness, decisiveness, and tact needed to execute such an undertaking as his southern policy. He meant well in his course of action and was sincerely interested in restoring the South to its proper role in national politics, but lacked the means whereby to achieve these ends.

William H. Taft's southern policy was successful in only one aspect. His personal popularity among southerners was probably greater than any

¹⁹

Houston Post, November 14, 1912.

former Republican president. By catering to southern white sentiments in his Negro policy and consistently praising southern historical traditions, he cultivated much southern admiration. Since he was apparently more interested in personal than political popularity, Taft might have achieved what he really desired from his southern policy after all.

APPENDIX A

1

POPULAR VOTES FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORS, 1904-1908

	<u>1904</u>		<u>1908</u>	
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>
Alabama	22,472	79,857	25,308	74,374
Arkansas	46,860	64,434	56,760	87,015
Florida	8,314	27,046	10,654	31,104
Georgia	24,003	83,472	41,692	72,413
Kentucky	205,277	217,170	235,711	244,092
Louisiana	5,205	47,708	8,958	63,568
Maryland	109,497	109,446	116,513	115,908
Mississippi	3,187	53,374	4,363	60,287
North Carolina	82,625	124,121	114,937	136,995
South Carolina	2,554	52,563	3,965	62,290
Tennessee	105,369	131,653	118,324	135,608
Texas	51,242	167,200	65,666	217,302
Virginia	47,880	80,648	52,573	82,946

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Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1908, 43-44.

APPENDIX B

1

POPULAR VOTES FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORS, 1912

	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Progressive</u>
Alabama	82,436	9,731	22,689
Arkansas	68,838	24,297	21,673
Florida	36,417	4,279	4,535
Georgia	93,171	5,190	22,010
Kentucky	219,584	115,512	102,766
Louisiana	60,966	3,834	9,323
Maryland	112,674	54,956	57,786
Mississippi	57,164	1,511	3,627
North Carolina	144,507	29,139	69,130
South Carolina	48,355	536	1,293
Tennessee	130,335	59,444	53,725
Texas	221,589	28,853	26,755
Virginia	90,332	23,288	21,777

1The World Almanac and Encyclopedia, 1916, 727.

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