

dustries, mechanization and factory production. The foundations of the industrial capitalist state of the late nineteenth century, so similar in individualist rhetoric yet so different in social reality from Lincoln's America, were a large extent laid during the Civil War. Here, indeed, is the tragic irony of that conflict. Each side fought to defend a distinct vision of the good society, but each vision was destroyed by the very struggle to preserve it.



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## THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION, 1861-1877: A Critical Overview of Recent Trends and Interpretations

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PROFESSOR FONER, IN HIS PAPER, has concentrated primarily on the politics of the 1850s, the secession crisis, and that historical perennial, the causes of the Civil War.<sup>1</sup>

The major themes I have chosen to deal with are: an evaluation of Civil War party struggles in the North; an assessment of Lincoln's role as war leader; the aims, objectives and ideological commitments of Congressional Republicans; the impeachment of Andrew Johnson; the role of the Supreme Court in the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction periods; an analysis of Congressional Reconstruction in the South—with particular emphasis upon the role of blacks; the identity, location and motives of "Scalawags" and a brief evaluation of the recent exchange between Professors Woodward and Peskin as to the reality and significance of the Compromise of 1877. In addition, we need to consider the implications of recent studies which have extended the scope of Reconstruction historiography to embrace both border and northern states. Recent methodological innovations, especially in the behavioral and quantitative realms also demand attention, as well as important new research currently in the planning or writing stages.

First, let me say that the politics of the Civil War and Reconstruction era ought to be considered as a unit. In recent years Harold Hyman, Herman Belz, Hans Trefousse, Peyton McCrary and others, have emphasized that the analysis of Reconstruction historiography properly begins with 1861, with greater emphasis upon the wartime origins of

<sup>1</sup> An abbreviated version of this paper was read in the Civil War and Reconstruction Overview Session at the meetings of the Organization of American Historians in Denver, April 19, 1974. No one, of course, is aware of everything going on in any field; but during the planning stages for this paper a number of scholars were considerate enough to share with me their own thoughts about the period, and in several instances provided extended written commentaries on their current projects. Especially helpful were: Thomas B. Alexander, Steven Channing, Joanna Cowden, Robert Cruden, Leonard Curry, Carl Degler, Charles Dew, Robert Dykstra, Eric Foner, William Harris, W. D. Jones, Frank Klement, Stanley Kutler, Peyton McCrary, James Mohr, John Niven, Walter Nugent, William Parrish, J. R. Pole, Thomas Pressly, James Roark, Loren Schweninger, Joel Silbey, Russell Weigley, Robin Winks and Bertram Wyatt-Brown.



postwar conflicts and processes.<sup>2</sup> This theme is most thoroughly developed in Belz's study, which deals primarily with events on the Congressional and Presidential levels. Moreover, McCrary's dissertation on the failure of Reconstruction in Louisiana is perhaps the most thoroughly documented study of wartime Reconstruction efforts in any Southern state. I would extend the argument further by maintaining that the issue of Reconstruction constitutes the central theme in explaining the Civil War party struggles in the loyal states. As Frank L. Klement has phrased it, there was, in a sense, "a war within the war."<sup>3</sup> Stated another way, the war produced a massive political and ideological confrontation in the loyal states as to the type of Union that would or ought to emerge from the ashes of war. In short, was the war simply a struggle to preserve the old federal Union of 1860 with slavery intact and the rights of the states unimpaired? Or was the war to be successfully transformed by Republicans into a crusade to preserve the Union, and to eradicate forever the cancer of slavery.

Until late 1864, after Lincoln's convincing victory over McClellan, the answer was not entirely clear. Throughout most of the war, a majority of northern Democrats, who supported a war for Union, bitterly opposed its transformation into a crusade to subjugate the South and destroy slavery. As Leonard P. Curry has convincingly demonstrated, the vast majority of Democratic members of Congress voted men and measures to suppress the rebellion despite their opposition to emancipation.<sup>4</sup>

Other revisionists maintain that Republican charges of widespread subversion among northern "Copperheads" (or Democrats) to subvert the Union war effort and recognize the independence of the Confederacy simply does not conform to reality.<sup>5</sup> Totally reactionary in their racial attitudes and strongly traditionalist in their constitutional doctrines and economic views they most assuredly were, but traitorous and subversive they most assuredly were not, unless, of course, one equates opposition to

<sup>2</sup> Hyman (ed.), *The Radical Republicans and Reconstruction, 1861-1870* (1967); Belz, *Reconstructing the Union: Theory and Practice During the Civil War* (1970); Trefousse, *The Radical Republicans: Lincoln's Vanguard for Racial Justice* (1969); and McCrary, "Moderation in a Revolutionary World: Lincoln and the Failure of Reconstruction in Louisiana" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1972).

<sup>3</sup> Klement, *The Copperheads in the Middle West* (1960), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> L. Curry, "Congressional Democrats, 1861-1863," *Civil War History*, XII (1966), 213-29.

<sup>5</sup> Richard O. Curry's "The Union As It Was: A Critique of Recent Interpretations of the 'Copperheads'" *Civil War History*, XIII (1967), 25-39 contains a useful discussion of "Copperhead" historiography. Revisionist studies not analyzed in Curry's article include: V. Jacque Voegeli, *Free But Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro During the Civil War* (1967); Klement, *The Limits of Dissent: Clement L. Voldigham and the Civil War* (1970); Joe H. Silbey, "A Respectable Minority: The Democratic Party, 1860-1868" (unpublished manuscript, 1968); Ronald Formisano and William G. Shade, "The Concept of Agrarian Radicalism," *Mid-America*, LII (1970), 3-30; and Van M. Davis, "Individualism on Trial: The Ideology of the Northern Democracy During the Civil War" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1972).

the emancipation policies of the Lincoln Administration with treason. Some Republican campaign orators, generals, government officials and newspapers did precisely this—and with great effect in some parts of the country. On the other hand, Democrats were equally accusatory of Republicans whom they condemned as "wild-eyed" Jacobins who, in their lust for power, would transform the federal republic into a monstrous authoritarian state under the control of Father Abraham, his henchmen and their "big business" allies. Not the least of their fears concerned the possibility that hordes of "ignorant and depraved Negroes," would, after emancipation, flock northward and in combination with their "Black Republican" allies dominate Northern society and destroy the purity of Anglo-Saxon civilization—in *sexual* as well as political, economic and cultural terms.<sup>6</sup> In sum, revisionist scholarship convinces me that the vast majority of Northern Democrats supported a war for Union, if not emancipation, and that dismissing them as traitors or quasi-secessionists tends to obscure the depths of racism and conservatism in American society, the continued existence of which still poisons our efforts to create a just and humane society.

To press this point further, my conviction is that a remarkable degree of continuity exists as regards Democratic policies and political philosophy from the 1790's until the late 1920's. However, Jacksonian Democrats are ordinarily placed in the American liberal tradition; and high marks are usually awarded to Woodrow Wilson's "New Freedom" doctrines. Yet, the position of the Jacksonians on slavery and race were equally as reactionary as that of the northern Democracy during the Civil War; and all three groups (Jacksonians, "Copperheads" or Conservative Union Democrats and Wilsonian Democrats) adhered to strict constructionist views of the Constitution—espousing the doctrines of *laissez-faire* individualism and the conception of the negative liberal state. The failure to recognize marked similarities in the ideological commitments of Democrats throughout the nineteenth and the first three decades of the twentieth century not only does violence to our understanding of Civil War and Reconstruction party struggles but of the political process itself—inhibiting meaningful analyses of conflict, change and continuity.<sup>7</sup>

I am not suggesting that no Northern Democrats opposed the war, anymore than I would argue that all Southerners supported the Con-

<sup>6</sup> On Northern fears of miscegenation see Forrest G. Wood, *Black Scare: The Racist Response to Emancipation and Reconstruction* (1968); and George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (1971).

<sup>7</sup> Richard O. Curry, "Copperheadism and Ideological Continuity: Anatomy of a Stereotype," *Journal of Negro History*, LVII (1972), 29-36. The fact that numerous individuals deserted Democratic ranks and joined the Republican party during the 1850's detracts but little from the accuracy of this point which focuses upon the decades of the 1820's and 1830's. Besides, the machinations of the "slave power" and not the institution of slavery itself was the only common denominator which unified disparate elements in the Republican coalition.



federacy. What I object to is the failure of historians to make precise distinctions when using such terms as Copperhead, War Democrat, conservative Democrat or peace-at-any-price Democrat. Despite the revisionist assault on the bastions of traditionalist scholarship in recent years, many scholars with solid academic credentials still tend to tar all, or nearly all, northern Democrats with the "Copperhead" brush. The literature is riddled with semantic and conceptual confusion. Such disagreements can be resolved only by intensive study at the state and local levels—utilizing quantitative analysis, among other tools—in an effort to determine the composition of the Democratic party and the relative strength of various factions.<sup>9</sup>

A recent dissertation by Joanna Dunlap Cowden on Connecticut politics, 1863-1868, demonstrates that a sizable minority of Connecticut Democrats, led by Thomas Hart Seymour, opposed the war from its inception and called for a negotiated peace settlement throughout the conflict. After Seymour's defeat in his bid for the governorship in 1863, the influence of the "peace faction" in the Connecticut Democracy declined precipitously. Yet, in spite of Seymour's anti-war views and his outspoken demands for a negotiated peace, it is by no means clear that he favored Confederate independence. In fact, it seems more likely that Seymour was convinced that the Union could not be restored in any way other than by negotiation. Such a position was unrealistic and unenlightened, as well as politically, morally and intellectually bankrupt—considering the determination of the Confederacy to win its independence and maintain the institution of slavery at all hazards. But Seymour and the peace men in Connecticut did not engage in overt acts of treason, sabotage and obstructionism; and more important, they did not succeed in dominating the Democratic party. But to repeat, we des-

<sup>9</sup> For example, see William G. Carleton, "Civil War Dissidence in the North: The Perspective of a Century," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, LXV (1966), 390-402; Eugene C. Murdock, *Patriotism Limited, 1862-1865: The Civil War Draft and the Bounty System* (1967); William Dusingberre, *Civil War Issues in Philadelphia, 1856-1865* (1965); Harold M. Hyman, "The Election of 1864," in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (ed.), *History of American Presidential Elections* (4 vols., 1971), II, 1155-1244; and Stephen Z. Starr, *Colonel Grenfell's Wars: The Life of a Soldier of Fortune* (1971).

<sup>9</sup> Recent surveys and synthetic works reflect the "interpretive schizophrenia" that characterizes "Copperhead" historiography. David M. Potter, *Division and the Stresses of Reunion* (1973); James A. Rawley, *The Politics of Union* (1974); and David Lindsey, *Americans In Conflict: The Civil War and Reconstruction* (1974) occupy revisionist ground. Somewhat ambiguous in dealing with the issue of alleged disloyalty are: Robert Cruden, *The War That Never Ended: The American Civil War* (1973); W. R. Brock, *Conflict and Transformation: The United States, 1844-1877* (1973); and Thomas H. O'Connor, *The Disunited States: The Era of the Civil War and Reconstruction* (1972). Robert H. Jones, *Disrupted Decades: The Civil War and Reconstruction Years* (1972) does not occupy a clearcut position but leans toward the views expressed by revisionists. Emory M. Thomas' *The American War and Peace, 1860-1877* (1973) is also unclear on the issue but tends toward the traditional view of the "Copperhead" as subversive. Donald M. Jacobs and Raymond H. Johnson, *America's Testing Time, 1848-1877* (1973) take no position whatever.

perately need studies of almost every loyal border and northern state to determine the extent to which the work of revisionists themselves stands in need of revising. Until that day arrives, I am not prepared to modify my own views all that much—despite the findings of Cowden in Connecticut which may or may not apply elsewhere.

Thus far, I have approached Civil War politics primarily from the point of view of the intellectual historian—being concerned with such phenomena as ideology, perception and values—although I did "count numbers" in my own dissertation which enabled me to correct a number of misconceptions as regards the disruption of Virginia and the creation of the state of West Virginia.<sup>10</sup> From the point of view of a trained "Cliometrician" (another term for quantifier), my methods were unsophisticated at best, and frankly it did not occur to me that I was engaging in a rudimentary form of quantification. Rather, I was using common sense; and I fully agree with Pardon E. Tillinghast, author of *The Specious Past* (1972), an intriguing book on the nature of history and historical writing, that common sense remains one of the historian's most effective weapons. No doubt one could create quite a stir if one tried to determine the degree to which each of us possesses this rare quality.

Having defended the bastions of "traditional scholarship" (after all, modern intellectual history is at least 35 years old), it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the behavioral and quantitative approaches are beginning to have a significant impact on recent American scholarship.<sup>11</sup> Not all of these scholars have written about the Civil War and Reconstruction era, but recent studies of Congressional voting behavior that utilize various techniques involved in roll call analysis represent an

<sup>10</sup> Richard O. Curry, *A House Divided: A Study of Statehood Politics and the Copperhead Movement in West Virginia* (1964).

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Alexander, *Sectional Stress and Party Strength: A Computer Analysis of Roll-Call Voting Patterns in the United States House of Representatives, 1836-1850* (1967); Alexander and Richard Beringer, *The Anatomy of the Confederate Congress: A Study of the Influences of Member Characteristics on Legislative Voting Behavior, 1861-1865* (1972); Lee Benson, *Toward the Scientific Study of History* (1972); Allan Bogue, "Bloc and Party in the United States Senate, 1861-1863," *Civil War History*, XIII (1967), 221-41; Bogue "The Radical Voting Dimension in the U.S. Senate During the Civil War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* III (1973), 449-74; Bogue, "Some Dimensions of Power in the Thirty-Seventh Congress," in W. O. Aydelotte, A. Bogue and R. Fogel (eds.), *The Dimensions of Quantitative Research in History* (1972), 285-318; Ronald Formisano, *The Birth of Mass Parties: Michigan, 1827-1861* (1971); Edward Gambill, "Who Were the Mass Radicals?" *Civil War History*, XI (1965) 237-44; Richard Jensen, "The Religious and Occupational Roots of Party Identification: Illinois and Indiana in the 1870s," *ibid.*, XVI (1970), 325-44; Jensen, *The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888-1896* (1971); Paul Kleppner, *The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850-1900* (1970); Glenn Linden, "Radicals and Economic Policies: The House of Representatives, 1861-1873," *Civil War History*, XIII (1967), 51-65; Linden, "Radical Political and Economic Policies: The Senate, 1873-1877," *ibid.*, XIV (1968), 240-49; Frederick C. Luebke (ed.), *Ethnic Voters and the Election of Lincoln* (1971); and John L. McCarthy, "Reconstruction Legislation and Voting Alignments in the House of Representatives, 1863-1869" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1970).



exciting new dimension in political history; and the analysis of political party structure in social terms—especially the emphasis upon religious and ethnic factors at the state and local levels, holds great promise for the understanding of cultural and hence, political processes. Clearly, more extensive studies along these lines can help to resolve “some” of the contradictions and ambiguities of Civil War and Reconstruction politics. In addition, historians such as John Blassingame, W. McKee Evans, Joel Williamson, Peter Kolchin and Otto H. Olsen have produced pioneer studies of inestimable value in the realm of social and political history of black Americans during the Reconstruction era.<sup>12</sup>

In light of these studies, it scarcely needs stating that the quantifier and the intellectual historian have much of value to learn from each other. By no means, however, is it clear that historians of various persuasions are in process of forming mutual admiration societies. As Thomas J. Pressly has observed, “. . . it would be human, [but] it would still be tragic if the (perhaps unwitting) intellectual intolerance and arrogance which has characterized some opponents of the use of quantitative evidence in historical study should also come to characterize the proponents of such use.”<sup>13</sup>

Having dealt with the Civil War Democracy, and having “resolved” all of the methodological disputes that divide the historical community, I now want to focus attention upon Lincoln and the Republicans—especially upon Lincoln’s role as war leader, and the strategy and tactics utilized by Lincoln and his party on the related questions of slavery and emancipation. Lincolnian historiography remains a colorful and controversial topic, as evidenced by recent books and articles by Herman Belz, David Donald, John Hope Franklin, Harold Hyman, Ludwell H. Johnson, J. R. Pole, Benjamin Quarles, James A. Rawley, Hans Trefousse, V. Jacque Voegeli, and T. Harry Williams.<sup>14</sup> Stephen Oates, one of the biographers of John Brown, is now writing a new biography of the sixteenth President.

Most Civil War scholars generally agree that Lincoln’s (and the Republican party’s) war policies consisted of a blend of political expediency, idealism, radicalism and conservatism. However, no agreement exists as to which element(s) predominated or ought to receive pri-

<sup>12</sup> Analysis of these works appears below.

<sup>13</sup> Pressly, review of David Donald, *The Politics of Reconstruction, 1863-1867* (1965), *Civil War History*, XII (1966), 267-70.

<sup>14</sup> Belz, *Reconstructing the Union*; Current, *The Lincoln Nobody Knows* (1958); Donald, “Devils Facing Zionwards,” in Grady McWhiney, (ed.), *Grant, Lee, Lincoln and the Radicals* (1964), 72-91; Franklin, *The Emancipation Proclamation* (1963); Hyman, “Lincoln and Equal Rights for Negroes,” *Civil War History*, XII (1966), 258-66; Johnson, “Lincoln and Equal Rights: A Reply,” *ibid.*, XIII (1967), 66-73; Johnson, “Lincoln and Equal Rights,” *Journal of Southern History*, XXXII (1966), 83-87; Pole, *Abraham Lincoln and the American Commitment* (1966); Quarles, *Lincoln and the Negro* (1962); Rawley, *Turning Points of the Civil War* (1967); Trefousse, *The Radical Republicans*; Voegeli, *Free But Not Equal*; and Williams “Lincoln and the Radicals: An Essay in Civil War History and Historiography,” in McWhiney, *Lincoln and the Radicals*, 92-117.

mary emphasis. For example, Current portrays Lincoln as a cautious and somewhat reluctant emancipator who “veered to an actively anti-slavery line for reasons of wartime expediency”—that the President was at odds with the Radical wing of his party, that he favored combining emancipation with colonization, and that in issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, his motives were ambiguous at best. Yet, Current deals with the contradictions in Lincoln’s character by concluding that by war’s end, the President had demonstrated an amazing capacity for personal growth, moving inexorably towards total abolition as a goal. “Lincoln,” Current concludes, “as a symbol of man’s ability to outgrow his prejudices, still serves the cause of human freedom.”<sup>15</sup> Hyman’s position is not identical to Current’s but their conclusions are similar. Johnson, in an exchange with Hyman on “Lincoln and Equal Rights” disputes the idea that Lincoln was “moving by his own volition” toward equalitarianism, and that it has yet to be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that Lincoln ever acted for reasons other than political expediency.<sup>16</sup>

To complicate matters further, Trefousse and Belz argue that Lincoln had no serious differences with the Radicals (including the question of Reconstruction)—that in fact Radical agitation gradually enabled the President to occupy higher ground. Beyond this, Donald suggests that the Radical-Conservative dichotomy in Republican ranks ought to be discarded as the majority of Republicans agreed that slavery ought to be destroyed, and that the Radicals did not become a cohesive faction until war’s end. Williams agrees that all Republicans were anti-slavery but contends that the Radicals “are still identifiable as a faction” both in terms of attitude and temperament. Williams describes what he terms “the essence of the paradox” in Republican division as follows:

Lincoln and the Radicals *were* in agreement on the ultimate goal, the extinction of slavery. On the great end there was no fundamental difference between them. But they *were* divided on the methods and the timing, on how fast and in what manner they should move toward the goal. Both were committed to bringing about a wrenching social change. One would do it with the experimental caution of the pragmatist, the other with the headlong rush of the doctrinaire. And this matter of method on this particular issue was a fundamental difference. If a question of semantics arises concerning the use of fundamental, it can at least be said that the difference was deeper and darker than the fissures normally separating American political groups. It should not be exaggerated. But it cannot be exorcised.<sup>17</sup>

There is something to be said for each of these viewpoints. Two important elements in Lincoln’s thinking that may clarify some of the contradictions or apparent contradictions are those of *timing* and *calculated risk*. In sum, what good is lofty idealism or radicalism if it is not tempered by political realism? When Lincoln repudiated Free-

<sup>15</sup> Current, *Lincoln Nobody Knows*, p. 236.

<sup>16</sup> Johnson, “Lincoln and Equal Rights: A Reply,” 73.

<sup>17</sup> Williams, “Lincoln and the Radicals,” 113-14.



mont in 1861, he could hardly have done otherwise whatever his private beliefs. Shaken by the adverse reaction in the border states to Fremont's ill-timed and unauthorized emancipation decree, Lincoln rescinded it. "I think to lose Kentucky," Lincoln wrote to Orville H. Browning, "is nearly the same as to lose the whole game, Kentucky gone we cannot hold Missouri nor as I think Maryland. These all against us, and the job on our hands is too large for us. We would as well consent to a separation at once. . . ."<sup>18</sup> Equally important, the President not only had to consider the reactions of loyal border slaveholding states, but the distinct possibility of a resurgent northern Democratic party in 1862, 1863 and 1864. If Lincoln proceeded with caution, and with scrupulous regard to constitutional principles in attacking the institution of slavery; and if he couched his language in terms of military necessity, what does this indicate?

Richard Hofstadter may have been right by concluding that the Emancipation Proclamation contained "all the moral grandeur of a bill of lading."<sup>19</sup> But it occurs to me that he misses the point. That Lincoln did act decisively in January 1863 after the critical fall elections of 1862 allowed the Republicans to retain control of the national government. If the proclamation freed no slaves immediately, it *did* commit the nation to abolition if the Union army won the war. If it did not win, all the moral grandeur in the world would not have amounted to a tinker's dam. Lincoln's famous reply to Horace Greeley's "Prayer of Twenty Millions" has been too often used as evidence of Lincoln's conservatism. He would save the Union, Lincoln said, with or without slavery. Saving the Union, the President continued, was his primary objective; and he would do so "the shortest [possible] way under the Constitution." If he attacked slavery, the President concluded, he would do so only on grounds of military necessity, and this despite his own "personal wish that all men could be free."<sup>20</sup>

Far from establishing Lincoln's fundamental conservatism, this statement demonstrates beyond question his shrewdness as a politician. After all, Lincoln had already announced to his Cabinet in July, 1862 his intention of issuing an emancipation proclamation; and he accepted Seward's suggestion that he wait until the Union won a decisive victory before issuing it. In the interim, Greeley's "Prayer" allowed him to educate the public. By playing down his radicalism, by using conservative rhetoric, he was in fact trying to prepare the public for drastic action. Even when Lincoln issued the preliminary proclamation in September, 1862, he not only stressed the idea of military necessity, but offered the Confederates the opportunity to lay down their arms and

<sup>18</sup> Lincoln to Orville H. Browning, Sept. 22, 1861, in Roy Basler (ed.), *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (1953), IV, 532.

<sup>19</sup> Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (1949), p. 132.

<sup>20</sup> "To Horace Greeley," Aug. 22, 1862, in Basler (ed.), *Collected Works of Lincoln*, V, 388-89.

return to the Union with slavery intact. It occurs to me that when Lincoln couched the preliminary proclamation in these terms, one need not conclude that the President was an arch-conservative.

First of all, is it conceivable that the President seriously believed that the Confederates would accept his offer? And second, considering the potential strength of the Democratic party in general, and the immediacy of the fall elections of 1862 in particular, what sagacious political leader would boldly proclaim a holy war when such a stance could readily lead to disaster? In short, to whom was Lincoln speaking? Certainly not the Confederates. In my opinion, his rhetoric was calculated to prevent extreme polarization in the Union camp. On the one hand, he could subdue, if not pacify, the Radicals by announcing his intention to take some action; and, on the other, he could, perhaps, partially allay the fears of some Democrats and some conservative Republicans who would not support an administration which based its war policies upon radical antislavery principles. But to repeat: once the Republican party passed its first acid test, the elections of 1862, Lincoln, despite the fears of Radicals, not only issued the Emancipation Proclamation, but authorized the enrollment of black soldiers into the Union army.<sup>21</sup> And this issue, of course, had not only provoked dissent in Democratic ranks, but in Republican as well. It is possible to continue in this vein indefinitely—citing still other examples of Lincolnian and Republican strategy and tactics in which the radical implications of Republican war aims were covered by a smokescreen of conservative rhetoric.

Lincoln may or may not have been committed to colonization in principle; but as Professor Voegeli has convincingly demonstrated, Lincoln never again *publicly* implemented or mentioned colonization schemes after the smashing Republican political victories in 1863 and the triumph of Union arms at Gettysburg and Vicksburg—"mute evidence," Voegeli concludes, that Lincoln "felt it was no longer politically essential" to use a conservative mask to hide a radical face.<sup>22</sup>

Lack of conclusive evidence may make it impossible to measure, be-

<sup>21</sup> For the many and diverse roles played by Negroes during the Civil War see especially: Herbert Aptheker, *The Negro in the Civil War* (1938); Dudley Cornish, *The Sable Arm* (1956); W. E. B. DuBois, "The Negro and the Civil War," *Science and Society*, XXV (1961), 347-52; Robert F. Durden, *The Gray and the Black: The Confederate Debate on Emancipation* (1972); Louis S. Gerteis, *From Contraband to Freedom: Federal Policy Toward Southern Blacks, 1861-1865* (1973); James McPherson (ed.), *The Negro's Civil War* (1965); Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War* (1953); George W. Smith and Charles Judah, *Life in the North During the Civil War* (1966); Charles L. Wagandt, "The Army Versus Maryland Slavery, 1862-1864," *Civil War History*, X (1964), 141-48; Bell I. Wiley, *Southern Negroes, 1861-1865* (1938); and Wiley, Billy Yank and the Black Folk," *Journal of Negro History*, XXXVI (1952), 35-52.

<sup>22</sup> Voegeli, *Free But Not Equal: The Midwest and The Negro During the Civil War* (1967), p. 112. On colonization plans see Walter A. Payne, "Lincoln's Caribbean Colonization Plan," *Pacific Historian*, VII (1963), 65-72; and Paul J. Scheips, "Lincoln and the Chiriqui Colonization Project," *Journal of Negro History*, XXXVII (1952), 418-53.



yond any shadow of doubt, Lincoln's precise aims, motives and objectives. Lincoln's death in April 1865 reduces us to the game of IF history as regards the actions he would have taken toward the South and the freedmen had he lived. Yet, one thing is clear, at least in my mind that unless historians give greater weight to the elements of *timing* and *calculated risk* in Lincolnian, and indeed, Republican party strategy, we will never understand the essential Lincoln.

Turning now to Reconstruction historiography, the first major area of controversy concerns Andrew Johnson's clash with Congress, his subsequent impeachment and the aims, objectives, successes and failures of Congressional—not Radical—Reconstruction in the South. Several historians have argued that the term "Radical" Republican has meaning only in terms of a common commitment to the destruction of slavery—that in fact they agreed on little else—certainly not on economic issues, and clearly, there was no agreement on the roles that freedmen would be allowed to play after emancipation.<sup>23</sup> In short, how many Republicans agreed with Thaddeus Stevens that Rebel property should be confiscated, deeded to freedmen, and thousands of "Nabobs" sent into exile so that a truly radical transformation of Southern society might occur?

Herman Belz, in a penetrating review essay of recent books, attacks what he terms "The New Orthodoxy in Reconstruction Historiography" which places the failure of confiscation and land distribution to freedmen at the core of the failure of Reconstruction. "The number of Republicans," Belz writes, who favored confiscation "is acknowledged to be small, but their existence is taken as proof than an alternative existed, that there was a decisive moment out of which an entirely different and more satisfactory solution to the problem of Reconstruction could have come." "I like the idea of redistributing property as much as the next person," Belz concludes, "But I think that to make it the key to interpretations of Reconstruction is unhistorical."<sup>24</sup> With that judgment, the present writer could not agree more.

When considering Andrew Johnson should he be viewed as Eric McKittrick's "outsider," as Kenneth Stampp's "last Jacksonian" whose ideological rigidity rendered him incapable of compromise, or as the Coxes' shrewd politician whose appeal to states' rights and Negrophobia conceivably could have sustained his position? Or should one agree with John Niven's more recent view that "Johnson, far from being a cool, cal-

<sup>23</sup> Stanley Coben, "Northeastern Business and Radical Reconstruction: A Re-examination," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLVI (1959), 67-90; Walter Nugent, *The Money Question During Reconstruction* (1969); Robert Sharkey, *Money, Class and Party* (1959); Irwin Unger, *The Greenback Era: A Social and Political History of American Finance, 1865-1879* (1964); and Peter Kolchin, "The Business Press and Reconstruction, 1865-1868," *Journal of Southern History*, XXXIII (1967), 183-96.

<sup>24</sup> Robert Cruden, *The Negro in Reconstruction* (1969); Thomas H. O'Connor, *The Disunited States*; and Allen W. Trelease, *Reconstruction: The Great Experiment* (1971), in Belz, "The New Orthodoxy in Reconstruction Historiography," *Reviews in American History*, I (1973), 106-13.

culating, shrewd politician, as pictured by the Coxes and others, was a bumbling, fumbling, politically inept individual, who spent most of the war years remote from eastern and middle-western political power centers; who was ignorant of the various Union Republican factions and who relied too much on the advice of a polarized cabinet"—especially William H. Seward.<sup>25</sup> Whatever view one chooses to adopt (though I tend to agree with the "ideological rigidity" and "bumbling politician" schools of thought), one thing is perfectly clear: the Coxes demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that if Johnson had been willing to compromise with moderate and conservative Republicans in 1866 by agreeing to the principle of federal protection of civil rights for freedmen, short of suffrage, he might have averted the collision with Congress.<sup>26</sup> Michael Perman may or may not be correct in concluding that Draconian measures could or would have produced a drastic societal reformation in the South.<sup>27</sup> But once again the point is irrelevant precisely because it is unhistorical. One can hardly characterize Congressional Reconstruction as being radical or even having contained the potential for radicalism. The Military Reconstruction Acts, and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were rather slender reeds upon which to engineer a social and political revolution. Numerous recent works or commentaries clearly reveal the limitations and handicaps—in ideological, political, economic and constitutional terms—that constituted the tragedy of post-Civil War America.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (1960); Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (1965); Lawanda and John H. Cox, *Politics, Principle and Prejudice, 1865-1866* (1963); and Niven to R. O. Curry, October 11, 1973.

<sup>26</sup> Eric Foner disagrees with this point of view—maintaining that "your argument may impose a kind of static attitude on a very dynamic situation. Sure, there didn't have to be a break in February 1866—but could a break really have been averted at some point, as long as Republicans held the very un-radical aims of seeing 'loyal' men in control of the South, and really protecting the freedman? And what would have been Johnson's role? In a *modus vivendi* he would have had to give up his ambitions, since Republicans were not going to accept him for 1868. So I think the speculation that the whole fight might have been avoided is questionable." Foner to R. O. Curry, March 13, 1974.

<sup>27</sup> Perman, *Reunion Without Compromise: The South and Reconstruction, 1865-1868* (1973). See also Lawanda Cox's review essay of Perman's book, "Reconstruction Foredoomed?: The Policy of Southern Consent," *Reviews in American History*, I (1973), 541-47.

<sup>28</sup> See W. R. Brock, *An American Crisis: Congress and Reconstruction, 1865-1867* (1963); John H. and LaWanda Cox, *Politics, Principle and Prejudice, 1865-66* (1963); John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction After the War* (1961); Hyman, "Reconstruction and Political-Constitutional Institutions: The Popular Expression," in Harold Hyman (ed.), *New Frontiers of the American Reconstruction* (1966), 1-39; Hyman, *A More Perfect Union: The Impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on the Constitution* (1973); Alfred H. Kelly, "Comment on Harold M. Hyman's Paper," in Hyman (ed.), *New Frontiers*, 40-58; Stanley I. Kutler, *Judicial Power and Reconstruction Politics* (1968); William McFeely, *Yankee Stepfather, General O. O. Howard and the Freedmen* (1968); James McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (1964); David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862-1872* (1967); Rembert Patrick, *The Reconstruction of the Nation* (1967); Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (1964); Patrick A. Rid-



In part, the failure of Congressional Reconstruction may be attributed to conflicts of race. The fear of white recalcitrance was a real, not an imaginary threat to Republican policymakers. But equally important, the Republican majority demonstrated a remarkable commitment to what Alfred Kelly has termed "the Republicans' self-imposed constitutional dilemmas"—not the least of which was their reluctance to enhance power on any level of the federal system, especially the national.<sup>29</sup> In short, the Fifteenth Amendment did not enfranchise anybody. It merely forbade state discrimination on grounds of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Such discrimination would be extremely difficult to prove in a court of law on these grounds and these grounds alone if state authorities chose to violate the spirit, or even the letter of the law. Intrastate voluntarism did not—indeed, could not work, once the so-called "Redeemers" seized control of Southern state governments by fair means and foul, and once the Supreme Court surrendered the principle of equality before the law for blacks in the Slaughter House cases, in *United States v. Reese* (1876), and the famous, or rather infamous, civil rights cases in 1883 which declared unconstitutional the much vaunted Civil Rights Act of 1875.<sup>30</sup> But even if this act had withstood the assault of the Court, would it really have changed anything? Bertram Wyatt-Brown argues:

if the bill could claim any significance, it lay in its demonstration of the bankruptcy of Republican Reconstruction principles. Rather than being a true memorial to Charles Sumner and his cause, it was a travesty of racial justice, because neither the white public nor its representatives expected or wanted the Act's enforcement.<sup>31</sup>

Beyond this, Richard Curry has demonstrated, to his own satisfaction, that even the abolitionists, the most advanced social thinkers of their time, were not precursors of twentieth century social planners. "One may . . . suggest," Curry writes,

without challenging the idea that most abolitionists were dedicated equalitarians that their conception, in practice if not in theory, was that of equality before the law—nothing more. And even this modest institutionalization of equalitarian prin-

lleberger, "The Radicals' Abandonment of the Negro During Reconstruction," *Journal of Negro History*, XLV (1960), 88-102; Riddleberger, *George Washington Julian, Radical Republican: A Study in Nineteenth Century Politics and Reform* (1966); Kenneth M. Stampp, *Era of Reconstruction*; and C. Vann Woodward, "Seeds of Failure in Radical Race Policy," in Hyman (ed.), *New Frontiers*, 125-47.

<sup>29</sup> Kelly, "Comment on Harold Hyman's Paper" *ibid.*, 53.

<sup>30</sup> Astute analyses of these cases are found in Kutler, *Judicial Power* and William Gillette, "Anatomy of a Failure: Federal Enforcement of the Right to Vote in the Border States During Reconstruction," in Richard O. Curry (ed.), *Radicalism, Racism and Party Realignment: The Border States During Reconstruction* (1969), 265-304.

<sup>31</sup> Wyatt-Brown "The Civil Rights Act of 1875," *The Western Political Quarterly*, XVIII (1965), 775. See also James M. McPherson, "Abolitionists and the Civil Rights Act of 1875," *Journal of American History*, LII (1965), 493-510; and William P. Vaughn, "Separate But Unequal: The Civil Rights Act of 1875 and the Defeat of the School Integration Clause," *Southwest Social Science Quarterly*, XLVIII (1967), 146-54.

ciples . . . necessitated a modification of ideological commitments by many Garrisonians who found it difficult to embrace political activism after years of dedication to the idea that moral reform and social change were not matters of laws to be passed . . . but of error to be rooted out and repentance . . . exacted."<sup>32</sup>

Having painted such a bleak picture in analyzing the failure of Congressional Reconstruction, should we then reject the Coxes' position that the Republicans acted not from political expediency, but despite political risk? I think not. The point at issue is not the *ends* which Republicans sought—equality of all men before the law—but the fact that those ends were limited and the *means* employed to achieve even these were inadequate. Thus, within the self-imposed limits under which the Republicans operated, they were able to act—and often decisively.<sup>33</sup>

For example, Michael Les Benedict in his recent study, *The Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson* (1973), convincingly demonstrates that the President was impeached for two major reasons: (1) Johnson,

<sup>32</sup> Curry, "The Abolitionists and Reconstruction: A Critical Appraisal," *The Journal of Southern History*, XXXIV (1968), 527-45. For opposing points of view, see especially: George M. Fredrickson, *The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union* (1965); John G. Sproat, "Blueprint for Radical Reconstruction," *Journal of Southern History*, XXIII (1957), 25-44; Rose, "Iconoclasm Has Had Its Day: Abolitionists and Freedmen in South Carolina," in Martin Duberman (ed.), *The Antislavery Vanguard: New Essays on the Abolitionists* (1965), 178-205; John L. Thomas, "Antislavery and Utopia," *ibid.*, 240-69; and Thomas, "Romantic Reform in America, 1815-1865," *American Quarterly*, XVII (1965), 656-81.

<sup>33</sup> The question of Republican motivation has long been a major issue in Reconstruction historiography. The most recent and influential interpretations are those of William Gillette and John H. and LaWanda Cox. See the Coxes, "Negro Suffrage and Republican Politics: The Problem of Motivation in Reconstruction Historiography," *Journal of Southern History*, XXXIII (1967), 303-30; Gillette, *The Right To Vote: Politics and the Passage of the Fifteenth Amendment* (1965, 1969). The 1969 edition of Gillette's book contains a new epilogue (pp. 166-90), "The Black Voter And The White Historian: Another Look At Negro Suffrage, Republican Politics, And Reconstruction Historiography." The Coxes, in the article cited above, take Gillette to task for maintaining that political expediency was the primary force behind the Fifteenth Amendment—that the "primary object of the Amendment was to get the Negro vote in the North." The Coxes forcefully argue that the Republican leadership committed the nation "to equal suffrage for the Negro not because of . . . expediency but *despite* political risk." In his 1969 epilogue, which in fact is a reply, Gillette chides the Coxes for oversimplifying the issues by creating an artificial "dichotomy between idealism and expediency." The point at issue, therefore, is: to what extent did Republicans recognize the dangers involved as opposed to the practical advantages to be derived from enfranchisement. If I read the Coxes and Gillette correctly, their positions are not irreconcilable—reflecting differences in emphasis rather than fundamentals. Conceding that "idealism" played a role, Gillette writes, "The Amendment was a step in the right direction—no less and no more. It represented neither an unalloyed victory nor an unforgivable sellout; it represented only 'practical wisdom.'" "As I see it," LaWanda Cox wrote recently, "The surprising thing is not that the Republicans didn't do more, but that they did as much as was the case" (LaWanda Cox to R. O. Curry, May 11, 1974). It occurs to me that Gillette's argument that the Coxes are guilty of hindsight in constructing their argument can be used against his own contention that Negro suffrage did, in fact, make a difference in numerous elections during the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s. In short, could anyone predict in 1869 what the outcome of ratification would be, regardless of *perceived* advantages by contemporaries?



by his actions was violating the principle of the separation of powers in government; and (2) the President's obstructionism in failing to carry out the spirit, and in some instances, the letter of the Military Reconstruction Acts—once they had been passed over his veto, threatened the success of the Congressional program.<sup>34</sup> In sum, it could not have been as clear to contemporaries as it now appears to historians, that their program was doomed from the beginning. Far from being a mindless or vindictive act, Johnson's impeachment was a political necessity as viewed by the Republican majority. As Stanley Kutler observes,

now that Benedict has somewhat redressed the balance on Andrew Johnson's impeachment and trial [it cannot be too strongly emphasized that historians] have been terribly guilty of counter-factual thinking on this subject. For example, note how they have accepted *prima facie* [Lyman] Trumbull's contention that the President had to be acquitted or all future presidents would have been in jeopardy for disagreeing with Congress. Preposterous.<sup>35</sup>

Speaking of Kutler, his book *Judicial Power and Reconstruction Politics* (1968) is a brilliant revisionist study which not only demolishes old characterizations of the role of the Supreme Court during the Reconstruction era and the attitudes of Republicans toward the Court, but demonstrates convincingly that the origins of the modern judicial system lie in this period. Especially compelling is Kutler's analysis of the Jurisdiction and Removal Act of 1875 which was partially responsible for broadening the Court's jurisdiction in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Unfortunately, limitations of space prohibits the extended analysis here that Kutler's work so richly deserves.<sup>36</sup> The same holds true for Hyman's *A More Perfect Union: The Impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on the Constitution* (1973). While some historians "may be a bit disconcerted to find it pervaded throughout with a fervent liberal nationalism," most will undoubtedly agree with William Wiecek's judgment that *A More Perfect Union* is not only a provocative work of synthesis, but a book which "strikes out in new directions, searching for both the scattered wellsprings of policymaking and for the way contemporaries themselves saw their current history unfolding."<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Raoul Berger occupies a more traditional position on Johnson's impeachment and trial in *Impeachment: The Constitutional Problems* (1973). See Stanley Kutler's review essay of the Benedict and Berger books in *Reviews in American History*, I (1973) 480-87. See also James E. Sefton, "The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson: A Century of Writing," *Civil War History*, XIV (1968), 120-47.

<sup>35</sup> Kutler to R. O. Curry, Sept. 16, 1973.

<sup>36</sup> Kutler argues persuasively that the Republican majority, being committed to the principle of separation of powers, was not hostile to the Supreme Court as an institution, and that the court was not inclined to interfere with the Congressional Reconstruction program despite fears in some circles that it was. For an opposing view as regards the attitudes of Congressional Republicans toward the Supreme Court, see Charles Fairman, *Reconstruction and Reunion, 1864-88* (1971), pp. 258-514.

<sup>37</sup> Wiecek, "The Reconstruction of the Constitution," *Reviews in American History*, I (1973), 548-53.

Turning to Reconstruction in the South, one is delighted to reiterate that at long last the old Dunningite stereotype of "vindictive Carpetbaggers, ignorant Negroes, and unprincipled Scalawags" has been consigned to the scrapheap of historical blindness and perversity—a fate it so richly deserves. The work of early revisionists including W. E. DuBois, A. A. Taylor, Francis B. Simkins, Howard K. Beale, David Donald, T. Harry Williams, Vernon L. Wharton and John Hope Franklin undermined the assumptions on which traditional views were based.<sup>38</sup> But only in the last decade has the *coup de grace* been delivered by the massive outpouring of revisionist works. In the limited space available here, I would like to address myself briefly to two principal themes: (1) the structure of the Republican party in the South and the reasons for its failure aside from the lack of national support; and (2) the effects of emancipation upon the lifestyle of blacks in social, cultural, and economic terms.

In recent years studies by scholars such as John Blassingame, W. McKee Evans, Robert Cruden, Peter Kolchin, Joe Richardson, Willie Lee Rose, and Joel Williamson have extended pioneering efforts to look at Reconstruction in the South from the black man's point of view.<sup>39</sup> In his study of the social history of Alabama blacks, Kolchin directly attacks the Sambo stereotype; but clearly the others do so by implication. All make important contributions in treating such topics as the relative strength of the black family, the crucial roles played by the Negro church, educational opportunities, and intellectual life and social patterns in general. Certainly, Williamson's book is by far the most comprehensive in dealing with a single state, but the strength of Blassingame's study, the first major monograph on the Southern Negro during Reconstruction in an urban setting, stems, in part, from the greater availability of evidence from black rather than white sources. Moreover, he uses demographic and quantitative methods with great effect. In the period that he covers, 1860-1880, Blassingame paints a rather

<sup>38</sup> DuBois, *Black Reconstruction* (1935); Taylor, *The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction* (1924); *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (1926); and *The Negro in Tennessee, 1865-1880* (1941); Simkins, "New Viewpoints of Southern Reconstruction," *Journal of Southern History*, VI (1939), 49-61; Beale, "On Rewriting Reconstruction History," *American Historical Review*, XLV (1940), 807-27; Donald, "The Scalawag in Mississippi Reconstruction," *Journal of Southern History*, X (1944), 447-60; Williams, "An Analysis of Some Reconstruction Attitudes," *ibid.* (1946), 469-86; Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi* (1947); and Franklin, "Whither Reconstruction Historiography," *Journal of Negro Education*, XVII (1948), 446-61.

<sup>39</sup> Blassingame, *Black New Orleans, 1860-1880* (1973); Evans, *Ballots and Fence Rails: Reconstruction on the Lower Cape Fear* (1967); Cruden, *The Negro in Reconstruction* (1969); Kolchin, *First Freedom: The Response of Alabama's Blacks to Emancipation and Reconstruction* (1972); Richardson, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Florida, 1865-77* (1965). Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*; and Williamson, *After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (1965). See also John Hope Franklin, "Reconstruction and the Negro," in Hyman, *New Frontiers*, 59-76 and August Meier, "Comment on John Hope Franklin's Paper," *ibid.*, 77-86. Closely related is Evans' *To Die Game: The Story of the Lowry Band, Indian Guerillas of Reconstruction* (1971).



progressive, if not totally optimistic picture, in pointing to the ability of blacks to make substantial economic progress. Similar views are expressed both by Kolchin and Williamson. However, Joseph Logsdon, in a perceptive review essay of the Kolchin and Blassingame books, suggests that "their picture of improvement in the lives of black people during Reconstruction" fails to consider "the enormous setbacks that followed, in what DuBois termed the move 'Back Toward Slavery.'" "When further work is done on social developments from 1880-1900," Logsdon continues, "perhaps utilizing similar census data which will become available to historians in 1975, that reaction can be ascertained." "For New Orleans," Logsdon speculates, "the reversal may well be of catastrophic proportions." In short, as exciting as recent contributions to the history of blacks during Reconstruction are, the exploration of the field has just begun.<sup>40</sup>

As regards political developments in the South, it is now generally agreed that despite some corruption in Republican regimes in the South, these governments, while they survived, enacted basic social, economic and political reforms. In fact, the corruption of Republican Reconstruction governments is minor relative to corruption in the North and to "Redeemer" governments in the South. Blacks participated in all of the governments but black officeholding was never commensurate at any level with the size of the black electorate. All this is well-known, but we still need intensive studies of black voting behavior and political consciousness for nearly all Southern states, evidence for which is not all that easy to come by.

Another intriguing and complex problem in the political realm involves the identity, location and motives of Southern white Republicans—or if we must use the more traditional term—who were the Scalawags? Professor Donald opened the debate on this subject in 1944, arguing that former Whigs in Mississippi, many of whom had opposed secession, and could not abide the prospect of Democratic dominance, joined ranks with Carpetbaggers and blacks to form the Republican party. Former Whigs, led by Governor James L. Alcorn, dominated the Republican party, 1869-1873. Donald estimates that by 1873 approximately 25-30 per cent of white voters in Mississippi had joined the Republicans. Why? "By recognizing the legal equality of the Negroes," Donald writes, "Alcorn hoped to gain their political support for his own policies" which favored the planter class. But this coalition was doomed to failure. By 1873, blacks, who cared nothing about Whig economic policies, demanded a greater share voice in government and policies calculated to serve their own interests. As a result, blacks threw their support to and elected Adelbert Ames, a principled Carpetbagger—if we must also use that term—to the governorship. Shortly thereafter, the Republican coalition disintegrated. "The basic trouble was," Don-

<sup>40</sup> Logsdon, "Black Reconstruction Revisited," *Reviews in American History*, I (1973), 553-58.

ald concludes, that the Southern planter, "though he might advocate legal equality and civil rights [for blacks] as a matter of expedience . . . could not accede to the Negro's demand for social equality." In short, the race question—then as now—dominated the Southern white's consciousness.<sup>41</sup> In recent years, Donald has extended his Unionist former Whig thesis to include most of the South, the chief exceptions being Alabama and North Carolina, where the Scalawags primarily were hill-country farmers who had opposed the planter class before, during and after secession.<sup>42</sup>

The most comprehensive challenge to Donald's point of view has come from Allen Trelease, who has done a county-by-county quantitative analysis of Republican voting patterns for every Southern state, focusing attention upon the Presidential election of 1872. In striking contrast to Donald, Trelease argues that in only three states—Tennessee, North Carolina, and to a lesser extent Virginia "was there much ground for identifying postwar Republicans with pre-war Whigs, and even there the correspondence was by no means complete." Moreover, Whig areas that did go Republican

were the habitat of the Appalachian highlander. The planter-businessman aristocracy to which Professor Donald and others have referred seems in general to have found the postwar Democratic or Conservative camp more congenial. Doubtless the minority of this group who did join the Radicals carried more weight in terms of leadership and prestige than their numbers would indicate, but they were hardly more typical of the white Republicans as a whole than of their own class.<sup>43</sup>

According to Trelease, the evidence suggests rather that most white Republican voters were small farmers, who lived in counties containing few Negroes, who were predominately Democratic before the war, who were poorer by far than the Southern average, and had little in common with former slaveholders who "had frequently dominated affairs in their respective states." These small farmers, therefore, were free "to join (or not to join) the antiplanter, Radical, Union party with less reference to the albatross of Negro equality or to other major issues of Reconstruction policy." In most areas of the South "there were enough freedmen to constitute at least the illusion of a threat to white supremacy; thus few Republicans joined the Republican party to begin with and many of those who did dropped out early. Personal conviction united with social pressure—often expressed physically—to keep a large majority in the party of conservatism and white supremacy." If this

<sup>41</sup> Donald, "The Scalawag in Mississippi Reconstruction," *Journal of Southern History*, X (1944), 447-60, esp. pp. 450 and 452.

<sup>42</sup> Donald and James G. Randall, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (revised edition, 1961), 627-28. By implication, at least, the work of Thomas B. Alexander lends support to Donald's position. See Alexander, "Persistent Whiggery in Alabama and the Lower South, 1860-1867," *Alabama Review* XII (1959), 35-52 and "Persistent Whiggery in the Confederate South, 1860-1877," *Journal of Southern History*, XXXVII (1961).

<sup>43</sup> Trelease, "Who Were the Scalawags?" *Journal of Southern History*, XXIV (1963), 445-68. Quote taken from p. 462.



preoccupation with race was indeed the "central theme of Southern history," it not only confirms "the highlanders' isolation from the mainstream of Southern life," but demonstrates that W. E. B. DuBois's "vision of democracy across racial lines" was—alas—too utopian.<sup>44</sup>

Shortly after Trelease's work appeared, Donald challenged the validity of his findings—arguing that Trelease's work contained serious methodological shortcomings. Trelease, Donald observes, omitted from consideration in his analysis all counties in which the Republican voting percentage did not exceed

the percentage of Negro population by at least twenty. . . . To put it another way, Professor Trelease's method excludes, by definition, virtually all counties with a heavy Negro population as sources of possible scalawag strength. . . . As Professor Trelease admits, his index eliminates 'about two thirds of the black belt counties' and 'a majority of all counties which were more than 40 per cent Negro in composition.' What is left is the hill and mountain counties of the South. . . . Of course there were few Whig-planter-businessmen in the impoverished counties, and Mr. Trelease's method does not permit him to identify this element in the black belt counties and the growing cities, where research has repeatedly revealed strong and persistent Southern Whiggery.

Donald admits, however, that the existence of methodological flaws in Trelease's analysis "does not . . . prove that Whig planters and businessmen became Republican in large numbers. To establish, or to refute, that argument will require much more thought and much more research."<sup>45</sup> Donald penned these words in 1964. In the interim, the debate has by no means been resolved, but several historians—including Otto H. Olsen, Lillian Pereyra, Elizabeth Nathans, John V. Mering, Warren Ellem and William M. Cash have made important contributions which underscore the difficulties involved in making accurate generalizations about the nature and sources of Scalawag strength.<sup>46</sup>

Olsen's work on North Carolina supports Donald's view that the "Tar Heel" state was a major exception to the Unionist former Whig thesis. Curiously enough, North Carolina is one of three states in which Trelease concedes that the former Whig thesis has a degree of validity. On the other hand, Elizabeth Nathans' recent study of Reconstruction in Georgia maintains that whereas former Whigs from black belt counties played an important role in the Republican party, former Democratic voters from the hill country of North Georgia and the wire grass

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 467-68.

<sup>45</sup> Donald, Communication to the Editor of the *Journal of Southern History*, XXX (1964), 254-56. For Trelease's vigorous reply to Donald, see *ibid.*, 256-57.

<sup>46</sup> Olson, "Reconsidering the Scalawags," *Civil War History*, XII (1966), 304-25; Pereyra, *James Lusk Alcorn: Persistent Whig* (1966); Nathans, *Losing the Peace: Georgia Republicans and Reconstruction, 1865-1871* (1968); Mering, "Persistent Whiggery in the Confederate South: A Reconsideration," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, LXIX (1970), 124-43; Ellem, "Who Were the Mississippi Scalawags?" *Journal of Southern History*, XXVIII (1972), 217-40; Cash, "Alabama Republicans During Reconstruction: Personal Characteristics, Motivations, and Political Activity of Party Activists, 1867-1880" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alabama, 1973).

country in the southern part of the state also voted the Republican ticket in large numbers.

To complicate matters even further, Donald modified his own position considerably in 1967 in a review of Lillian Pereyra's biography of Governor Alcorn of Mississippi. Pereyra, Donald wrote,

might well have been advised to minimize Whiggery as Alcorn's cardinal principle and to stress instead his consistent advocacy of the interests of the Mississippi Delta area, as opposed to those of the hill country. Indeed it seems likely that persistent patterns of intra-state sectionalism . . . were more important in shaping Southern politics during the Reconstruction period than ideology, class, or even race.<sup>47</sup>

Three years later, John Mering elaborated upon this theme by arguing, as Warren Ellem observes, "that Whigs—either as a group or individuals—did not act consistently enough to permit historians to examine meaningfully their reaction to the issues of Reconstruction in terms of Whiggery, considered either as a class ideology or a political entity."<sup>48</sup>

At this point, the reader might well be forgiven for washing his hands in despair—at least temporarily—considering the wide disparity in historians' findings. However, a recent article by Ellem on the Mississippi Scalawags rejects Trelease's analysis as well as Mering's position and Donald's modification of his earlier views. Although Ellem argues that Mississippi Scalawags numbered approximately 9,000 rather than 20,000-25,000, he vigorously reasserts the validity of the Unionist former Whig thesis—leaving the major premises of Donald's original argument intact.<sup>49</sup> Equally important, William Cash extends the Unionist former Whig thesis to include Alabama. According to Thomas B. Alexander, Cash's study identifies 2,700 Republican activists and concludes that

they were not chiefly from the hill country but predominantly from the Black Belt, Tennessee Valley, and larger cities of Alabama. Of the 258 men for whom he could identify antebellum party affiliations . . . 21% were too young to have voted in 1860, 60 per cent had been Whigs or Constitutional Unionists, 16 per cent had been Democrats and 4 per cent Northern Republicans.<sup>50</sup>

In conclusion, it is clear that the Unionist former Whig thesis, far from being passe, remains the most influential frame of reference thus far developed by historians to characterize the Scalawags. As Ellem demonstrates (and to some extent Trelease), this thesis does not necessarily preclude the importance of intrastate sectional cleavages in explaining divisions among Southern whites. Even so, a consensus does not exist, and we still need studies of nearly every Southern state before

<sup>47</sup> *American Historical Review*, LXXII (1967), 707-08.

<sup>48</sup> Ellen, "Mississippi Scalawags," 217.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>50</sup> Being unable to utilize Cash's thesis personally, I am indebted to Professor Alexander for providing the above analysis. Equally important, Alexander was extremely helpful in providing bibliographical data for other materials that I had overlooked (Alexander to R. O. Curry, April 27, 1974).



historians can make accurate generalizations (replete with the proper qualifying factors and distinctions) for the South as a whole.

There is little point in repeating here the familiar story of the fall of various Republican regimes in the South—the lack of national support, the influence of the race issue in destroying shaky and ultimately unviable Republican coalitions, and the use of terrorism, fraud and subterfuge by Southern “redeemers” to destroy the opposition.<sup>51</sup> Republican Reconstruction in Louisiana, South Carolina and Florida lasted until 1877 in large measure because of the size of the black electorate. But even these regimes could not hold out forever without some degree of national support which, of course, was not forthcoming. C. Vann Woodward's *Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and The End of Reconstruction* (1951) is the standard account of this subject and has enjoyed wide acceptance. Recently, Allan Peskin, in an article entitled, “Was There A Compromise of 1877?” launched the first major assault upon Woodward's influential thesis.<sup>52</sup>

Space does not permit an extended analysis of the arguments pro and con. However, it is clear that in all probability that we will never know all the details involved nor will we know the relative importance of various concessions made. Beyond this, the motives of some individuals who either delivered or reneged on promises or alleged promises are not entirely clear. On balance, however, I think Professor Woodward has provided the far more persuasive argument. “The subject under discussion,” Woodward reminds his critic, was not the disputed election of 1876, “but the compromise of 1877 and its consequences.” The compromise was not concluded until after the Electoral Commission, the creation of which was originally considered a Democratic victory, had already voted for Hayes.

“Tilden's defeat then,” Woodward writes, “was not a consequence of the compromise.” But the “elimination of Tilden from ‘consideration’ . . . did not assure the constitutional election and peaceful inauguration of Hayes.” After the Electoral Commission's decision, as Peskin admits, “the choice was no longer between two candidates but between Hayes and chaos.”<sup>53</sup> Peskin suggests that the failure of many key features of the compromise to materialize stemmed from what Ellis Paxton Oberholtzer termed Republican “honeyfugling.” Woodward is far more persuasive in suggesting that if anyone “honeyfugged” anyone it was the Southerners, not the Republicans, who succeeded.<sup>54</sup>

However, I do have one criticism of Professor Woodward's analysis.

<sup>51</sup> On violence and terrorism, including the failure of Republican regimes to use effectively black militia to protect themselves, see especially: Otis A. Singletary, *Negro Militia and Reconstruction* (1957); James E. Sefton, *The United States Army During Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (1967); and Allen W. Trelease, *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy During Southern Reconstruction* (1971).

<sup>52</sup> *Journal of American History*, LX (1973), 63-75.

<sup>53</sup> Woodward, “Yes, There Was a Compromise of 1877,” *ibid.*, 222, 220.

<sup>54</sup> Peskin, “Was There A Compromise,” 72; Woodward, “Yes,” 222-23.

As regards the return to “home rule,” Woodward argues that “in this respect [at least] the Compromise of 1877 outlasted all the other compromises [ever made in the United States] and enjoyed a life span exceeding that of all of them combined.”<sup>55</sup> It occurs to me that long before 1877 Republican Reconstruction in the South was a moribund experiment, and that Woodward may have overemphasized both the importance of the compromise and its long-range significance. In sum, the compromise of 1877 paved the way for the orderly inauguration of “Rutherford” B. Hayes (as some contemporaries called him); but Congressional Reconstruction was doomed from the beginning, and even the limited objectives envisioned by northern Republicans could not be long sustained in South Carolina, Louisiana or Florida—the only states then remaining under Republican rule, compromise or no compromise.

Other extremely important new dimensions in Reconstruction historiography must receive at least passing mention here. A jointly authored book edited by Richard O. Curry, *Radicalism, Racism and Party Realignment* brings the history of the “dark and bloody” border states into the mainstream of Reconstruction historiography for the first time.<sup>56</sup> Equally important, numerous studies of society and politics in Northern states during the Reconstruction era are currently being undertaken; thus far four books and several articles have reached print.<sup>57</sup> In ad-

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 217-18. I was unable to secure a copy of Keith Ian Polakoff's *The Politics of Inertia: The Election of 1876 and the End of Reconstruction* (1973) before this paper was completed. According to William P. Vaughn, whose review of Polakoff's book appeared in *Civil War History*, XX (1974), 87-88, *The Politics of Inertia* is not a refutation of Woodward's landmark study, “but it is a revision of that part of Woodward's thesis which emphasized the secret deal by which southern Democrats of (Old Whig) antecedents assented to the seating of . . . Hayes in return for various political and economic concessions. . . .” Woodward, Polakoff states, concentrated too heavily on the maneuvers and negotiations of a few politicians, lobbyists and journalists, “ignoring the internal strife of the Republicans and the defeatist attitude of Democratic standard bearer Samuel J. Tilden. . . . Polakoff insists that it was the almost total inability of both the Republican and Democratic leaders to control their own organizations, even in a crisis demanding centralized direction, which assured a peaceful, though clumsy solution to the disputed election.” Having effectively countered Peskin's arguments, Professor Woodward's reactions to Polakoff's book are anticipated with interest.

<sup>56</sup> See also Thomas B. Alexander, *Political Reconstruction in Tennessee* (1950 and 1968); William E. Parrish, *Missouri Under Radical Rule* (1965); Norma L. Peterson, *Freedom and the Franchise: The Political Career of B. Gratz Brown* (1965); Margaret L. Calcott, *The Negro in Maryland Politics, 1870-1912* (1969); Ross A. Webb, *Benjamin Helm Bristow: Border State Politician* (1969); and Jean H. Baker, *The Politics of Continuity: Maryland Politics from 1858 to 1870* (1973).

<sup>57</sup> Erwin H. Bradley, *The Triumph of Militant Republicanism: A Study of Pennsylvania and Presidential Politics, 1860-1872* (1964); Frank B. Evans, *Pennsylvania Politics, 1872-1877: A Study in Political Leadership* (1966); Felice Bonadio, *North of Reconstruction; Ohio Politics, 1865-1870* (1970); James C. Mohr, *The Radical Republicans and Reform in New York* (1973); Philip D. Swenson, “The Midwest and the Abandonment of Radical Reconstruction, 1864-1877” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1971); David Montgomery, “Radical Republicanism in Pennsylvania, 1866-1873,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXXV (1961), 439-57; Ira V. Brown, “Pennsylvania and the Rights of the Negro, 1865-1887,” *Pennsylvania History*, XXVIII (1961), 45-57; Leslie H. Fishel, “Wis-



dition, James C. Mohr is now editing a collection of original essays on Reconstruction in the North for the Johns Hopkins Press. Beyond this, I was extremely impressed by the number of papers presented at the 1973 meetings of the Southern Historical Association in Atlanta on variations of this significant new theme.<sup>58</sup>

Other important topics on which significant writings have appeared recently concern Anglo-American and Franco-American relations during the war years. For example, Lynn Case and Warren Spencer have produced the first authoritative account of France's role in the American Civil War.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, Melvyn Dubofsky's essay review of Mary Ellis's *Support for Secession: Lancashire and the American Civil War* (1973) shows that the debate over the attitude of English workingmen toward slavery and the war itself is far from over.<sup>60</sup> The same holds true for the impact of the American Civil War on the passage of the British Reform Bill of 1867. Especially useful on this topic are the writings of Joseph Herson, Jr., Gertrude Himmelfarb, W. D. Jones, and H. C. Allen.<sup>61</sup> Equally important is Harold Hyman's edited volume, *Heard Round the World: The Impact Abroad of the Civil War* (1969) which deals with England, France, Russia, Canada and Latin America.<sup>62</sup>

Another major topic that deserves extended treatment is the long-range significance of the American Civil War in social, constitutional, economic and political terms. Especially important is the work of Thomas C. Cochran and his critics on the economic consequences of the

consin and Negro Suffrage," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XLVI (1963), 180-96; Fishel, "Repercussions of Reconstruction: The Northern Negro, 1870-1883," *Civil War History*, XIV (1968), 325-45; and Edgar A. Toppin, "Negro Emancipation in Historic Retrospect: Ohio, The Negro Suffrage Issue in Postbellum Ohio Politics," *Journal of Human Relations*, XI (1963), 232-46.

<sup>58</sup> Richard Mendales, "Republican Defectors to the Democracy During Reconstruction"; James Quill, "Northern Public Opinion and Reconstruction, April-December 1865"; Phyllis Field, "New York Voters and the Issue of Black Suffrage, 1846-1869"; and Kermit Hall, "Judicial Politics and Regional Reward: Congress and the Federal Courts, 1861-1869." I wish to thank these scholars for providing me with copies of their papers.

<sup>59</sup> Case and Spencer, *The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy* (1970). See also Daniel B. Carroll, *Henri Mercier and the American Civil War* (1971); and Stuart L. Bernarth, *Squall Across the Atlantic: American Civil War Prize Cases and Diplomacy* (1970). In addition the entire issue of *Civil War History*, XV (December 1969) is devoted to new perspectives on Anglo-American diplomacy.

<sup>60</sup> Dubofsky, "Myth and History," in *Reviews in American History*, I (1973), 396-99. See also Joseph Herson, Jr., "British Sympathies in the American Civil War: A Reconsideration," *Journal of Southern History*, XXXIII (1967), 356-67.

<sup>61</sup> Herson, *Celts, Catholics and Copperheads: Ireland Views the American Civil War* (1968); Himmelfarb, *Victorian Minds* (1968); W. D. Jones, "The British Conservatives and the American Civil War," *American Historical Review*, LVIII (1953), 527-43 and H. C. Allen, "Civil War, Reconstruction and Great Britain," in Harold Hyman (ed.), *Heard Round the World: The Impact Abroad of the Civil War* (1969), 3-96.

<sup>62</sup> See also Belle B. Sideman and Lillian Friedman, eds., *Europe Looks at the Civil War* (1960) and Robin Winks, *Canada and the United States: The Civil War Years* (1960).

war,<sup>63</sup> Kutler's and Hyman's work on constitutional development and the various volumes (either completed or in preparation) in *The Impact of the Civil War Series* sponsored by the Civil War Centennial Commission.<sup>64</sup>

Important new research—either recently completed or now in progress—must be treated briefly here. Along these lines, I think Thomas J. Pressly's forthcoming study of comparative slave societies at the time of emancipation promises to be an extremely enlightening work, as does the projected study by Steven Channing on the collapse of slavery in the South during the war itself and James Roark's forthcoming book on Southern planters during the Civil War and Reconstruction era.<sup>65</sup> Equally important, as Professors Lee Benson and Robin Winks have suggested, the comparative study of civil wars ought to place the American experience in clearer perspective. "I hope that one day," Winks writes, "We might see a symposium volume on civil wars in which the American example is just one essay, with Cyprus, and Aden, and Malaysia, and Mexico, and Spain, and a dozen others, examined within a sophisticated, perhaps Deutschian frame." Professor Raimondo Luraghi's recent article comparing Italian unification to the American Civil War is highly suggestive.<sup>66</sup>

In conclusion, let me say that if there can be no salvation without sin, neither can there be justification for graduate study in history without ignorance. As Peyton McCrary wrote recently:

On the whole I would say the field is in a healthy state. It continues to attract some of the best scholarly minds, and its close relationship to the literature on slavery and black history should be a further source of strength (since that is also one of the exciting areas of American scholarship). If the behavioral revolution in political history and the so-called new social history continue to find appreciative reception

<sup>63</sup> See Cochran, "Did the Civil War Retard Industrialization?" *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLVIII (1961), 197-210; Stephen Salisbury, "The Effect of the Civil War on American Industrial Development," in Ralph Andreano (ed.), *The Economic Impact of the American Civil War* (1962), 161-68; Harry N. Scheiber, "Economic Change in the Civil War Era: An Analysis of Recent Studies," *Civil War History*, XI (1965), 396-411; David T. Gilchrist and David Lewis (eds.), *Economic Change in the Civil War Era* (1965); Stanley L. Engerman, "The Economic Impact of the Civil War," *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History*, 2nd series, III (1965), 176-99; and Richard F. Wacht, "A Note on the Cochran Thesis and the Small Arms Industry in the Civil War," *ibid.*, IV (1966), 57-62.

<sup>64</sup> Thus far, Mary Elizabeth Massey's *Bonnet Brigades* (1966) and Paul Gates' *Agriculture and the Civil War* (1965) have appeared. See also Robert H. Bremner, "The Impact of the Civil War on Philanthropy and Social Welfare," *Civil War History*, XII (1966), 293-303.

<sup>65</sup> Pressly to R. O. Curry, Sept. 14, 1972 and Apr. 12, 1974; Channing to Curry, Oct. 9, 1973 and Roark to Curry, Nov. 13, 1973. See also Channing's "Slavery and Confederate Survival: The Debate on Arming and Freeing the Slave," *Reviews in American History*, I (1973), 400-05.

<sup>66</sup> Benson, *Toward the Scientific Study of History* (1972), esp. pp. 310-40; and Winks to R. O. Curry, Dec. 27, 1973. Luraghi, "The Civil War and the Modernization of American Society: Social Structure and Industrial Revolution in the Old South Before and During the War," *Civil War History*, XVIII (1972), 230-50.