

History 319  
Re: The New South

Incidents of corruption in the Redeemer Govts:

One of the self-perpetuating myths of the New South was the honest and scrupulous devotion to office that the Redeemers demonstrated. A marked contrast to the Carpetbaggers of the Reconstruction period. . . .

The Redeemers hid behind their Confederate war records and marched ~~behind~~ under the banner of Reform . . .

Woodward deals with the officials or Redeemers in Georgia--The Colquitt Governorship or the the ~~Redeemer\*\*\*\*~~ unverate-- Colquitt, Hill and Brown . . .

In 1879 the Redeemers in Georgia came under investigation resulting in the impeachment and resignation of the state treasurer and comptroller general, and the resignation of the commissioner of agriculture.

In 1873 the treasurer of the Conservative government in Virginia was indicted for embezzlement of state funds and escaped prosecution and sentencing upon a plea of insanity.

In Tennessee, Marshall T. Polk, the Democratic state treasurer, and the adopted son of former President Polk, skipped with \$400,000 of state funds. Polk had been using these monies for private investment in Louisville and Nashville railroad stock.

Three weeks after the revelations about Polk(1877), the state treasurer of Alabama disappeared along with \$230,000 of state funds. Like Polk, secretary Vincent was a popular Confederate veteran. Vincent used his money to invest in cotton futures. He fled to Mexico . . . .

Arkansas under the Redeemers recorded the same kind of Redeemer larceny--the state treasury coming up with a shortage of \$300,000 . . . .

History # 218  
Re: Redeemer Govts  
addendum

Incidents of graft and corruption among the Redeemer Govts. . . .

In 1883 ~~Marshall Polk (nephew of the former President James K. Polk)~~  
~~disappeared from his post as treasurer of Tennessee with some \$ 366,000~~  
in state funds.

~~The Treasurer of Alabama some three weeks later absconded with \$230,000.~~

the treasurers of Arkansas got away with \$140,000; his administrative  
equal in Kentucky--James "Uncle Dick" Tate ran off with \$ 229,000, etc. . . .

Top prize went to Major E. A. Burke of Louisiana, who disappeared  
in 1889 with \$ 793,000 in state funds. He surfaced a year later in the  
capitol of Honduras, where a New Orleans reporter found he had "the  
government at his beck and call" and was "virtually the controlling  
force in Honduras."

These sums were relatively small but they loom large against the  
Redeemer program of retrenchment. States that strained and ~~to~~/  
cut back savagely on social services to build up forced savings in  
the treasury to pay off state indebtedness (at the expense of the  
small farmer, blacks, and workers) found that these embezzlements  
nearly depleted the state treasuries . . . .

Part of the reason lies with the legacy of Reconstruction Govts with  
their programs of waste and corruption. Continuity was stronger in  
this area than was a new course or a new departure. There was also  
the pervasive climate of Gilded Age rip off and decline in public  
morality. Finally, state officials in the southern govts were so  
poorly paid. . . . That the temptation was too great for many of them . . . .

*Stop here*

History 224

Re: Notes on the "New South"

The meaning of the new paternalism--Their program for Negro uplift amounted to moral guidance and a willingness to provide certain educational facilities, especially industrial education. At best it was an effort to prepare the blacks for scratching out a living at the lower levels of the capitalist ~~social/and/o~~ economic order.

But unlike the system of slavery now under the new paternalism of the industrializing South the new credo was root-hog-or die. There was really no moral obligation of whites to look after the blacks now; blacks were to be treated and prepared to play role as a flexible and exploitable labor force.

## II. Redeemer Program for the South

### A. Political Control . . . Redeemers set out to forge the "solid south"

1. Build up a one-party rule in the South -- the Democratic party under their careful management. . .

2. They played on the old cult of the ~~Romantic~~ Old South . . . .

3. More importantly the Redeemers identified themselves as the white knights who saved the South from the horrors of Reconstruction . . . . with its foreign intervention and "Negro rule". . . . ~~Asside~~ "Mensure"

4. They emphasised that the South could remain independent only if it voted Democratic. . . Their program was a one-party South -- the Democratic party -- the party of white supremacy, patriotism, morality, and the party that would bring to the south the fruits of industrialization. . . . modernity and Progress. . . .

5a These Redeemer governments in the states built political machines. . . controlled the local "courthouse politics" . . . .

They used the poll tax, ballot box stuffing, open fraud, gerrymandering of electoral districts, and when it served their purpose the Negro vote, and violence when necessary to keep their power intact. . . . *of fusion politics*

6. Point -- During this period -- up to 1890s -- the Negro was still voting in some districts of the South. . . And the GOP was still strong enough to present the Redeemers with a serious challenge. . . .

### *and below* B. Economic Policies of the Redeemers

*Economic*  
1. "Retrenchment". . . Expenditures by these Redeemer govts were on the average ~~down~~ about 75% from the Radical Reconstruction period. . . .

a. Florida's Governor Drew's motto "Spend Nothing unless absolutely necessary" held for all these state governments. . .

b. Public sectors of the South suffered. . . . Schooling was one of these sectors the hardest hit. . . Return to the old prewar laissez faire in education. . .

School terms fell off by 20%. . . Illiteracy rose. . . . In Tennessee the illiteracy rate from Reconstruction days went up 50% by the 1880s. . . .

2. Tax policies were drawn up to favor the corporations, railroads, and insurance companies. . . tax rates were based on a undervaluation of the property holdings of these corporations. . . To intice northern capital into southland. . .





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The convict lease system was the ultimate in dehumanization . . . .  
The Redeemers came under more criticism for this system than for any other failures.

It eroded away the moral authority of the Redeemers especially their claim that race relations in the South was rooted in the tradition of paternalism and racial harmony.

Investigations of the penal system in Mississippi revealed that inmates bore marks of brutal treatment: "Most of them had their backs cut in great wales, scars and blisters, some with skin peeling off in pieces as the result of great beatings. . . They were lying there dying, some on bare boards, so poor and emaciated that their bones came through their skins. . . ."

Committee on the Penitentiary of the Georgia Legislature reported

"We find in some of the camps men and women chained together and occupying the same sleeping bunks. The result is that there are now in the Penitentiary 25 bastard children, ranging from three months to five years of age and many women are now far advanced in pregnancy. . . ."

Death rates within the convict lease system ranged from 15-16% in some states per year to as high as 25% in Arkansas. . . .