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Who Were the Mississippi Scalawags?

By WARREN A. ELLEM

HISTORIANS DISAGREE WIDELY AS TO THE IDENTITY AND NUMERICAL strength of the scalawags in Mississippi. Native white Republicans were obviously significant in southern Reconstruction, but evaluation of their role in Mississippi has been hampered by the inability of historians to agree upon just who they were.¹ There is clearly a need for a reexamination of the scalawag.² This paper attempts to determine the location, number, and, if possible, the identity of scalawags in Mississippi.

David Donald and Allen W. Trelease have attempted analyses of the scalawags in Mississippi, and their conclusions indicate the difficulty of the problem. Donald identified the scalawags as Whigs, as "the large planters and the railroad and industrial promoters," and estimated that 15,000 to 20,000 (or 25-30 percent) of the white voters of Mississippi voted Republican.³ Trelease, however, believed that the Mississippi scalawags had been Jacksonian Democrats before the war and that they numbered no more than 7,000.⁴ The gulf between these interpreta-

¹ T. Harry Williams, writing in 1960, declared that "It is hardly realized, even by historians, how much of the fabric of Radical Reconstruction was the work of native Southerners." Williams, "The Politics of Reconstruction," in Williams, *Romance and Realism in Southern Politics* (Athens, Ga., 1961), 28. While this may have been the case then, it is not so now.

² Two recent articles have underlined this need. See John V. Mering, "Persistent Whiggery in the Confederate South: A Reconsideration," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, LXIX (Winter 1970), 124-43. Essentially, Mering argued that Whigs—either as a group or as 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. The questions Mering raised are important, and while the following analysis is concerned with scalawags rather than Whigs as such, his objections have a bearing on its conclusions. See also William C. Harris, "A Reconsideration of the Mississippi Scalawag," *Journal of Mississippi History*, XXXII (February 1970), 6-7.

³ Donald, "The Scalawag in Mississippi Reconstruction," *Journal of Southern History*, X (November 1944), 449-50. Donald cited approvingly John R. Lynch, *The Facts of Reconstruction* (New York, 1913), 106, and the dissertation of Vernon L. Wharton, later published as *The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890* (Chapel Hill, 1947), 157, who estimated that scalawags accounted for 15,000 to 20,000 of the 70,000 to 80,000 white voters in Mississippi. The majority of these, however, Wharton identified as poor white Unionists.

⁴ Trelease, "Who Were the Scalawags?" *Journal of Southern History*, XXIX (November 1963), 458n, 462.

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tions is wide, and the subsequent controversy between Donald and Trelease in 1964 concerned basic methodological differences.

Trelease, considering all the Confederate states, presented a statistical analysis of southern white Republican voters based upon study of the presidential election of 1872. To locate scalawag voters, he concentrated upon the percentage of the Republican vote in each county in excess of the percentage of Negroes of that county. He used election data from every Confederate state and allowed for inaccuracies in the data by concerning himself only with those counties where the percentage of Republican votes exceeded the Negro population percentage by twenty points.⁵ Using this schema, he located thirteen counties in Mississippi of dubious scalawag strength (10–19 percent) and only one of fair scalawag strength (20–29 percent).⁶ He proceeded to identify scalawags as hill-country farmers and to claim that there were no scalawags in most of Mississippi.

Trelease's findings took sharp issue with Donald's conclusion that most Mississippi scalawags were former Whigs from the black-belt areas. Donald had stated that many Whigs joined the Republican party early in Reconstruction and that by early 1872 most of the former Whigs had become Republicans. After dominating the Republican party until 1873, the Whig-Republicans were repudiated in the election of 1873, with the result that "They had no choice but to make their way slowly and reluctantly over to the Democratic camp." Donald believed that the bulk of these scalawags abandoned the Republican party in 1875 and voted the Democratic ticket.⁷ Trelease found little reason to believe that the scalawags of whom Donald wrote existed at all.⁸

Donald challenged the reliability of the presidential election of 1872 as an index of scalawag strength, but the core of his criticism was methodological and centered upon the way Trelease had handled the scalawag percentage—that is, the percentage of the Republican vote in excess of the Negro population percentage in a county. Trelease regarded this percentage as the mea-

⁵ See *ibid.*, 449–53, for a discussion of those factors which persuaded Trelease to allow for such a wide margin of error.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 459.

⁷ Donald, "The Scalawag," 449, 454 (quote), 459.

⁸ Trelease, "Who Were the Scalawags?" 462. Trelease conceded though the possibility "that the Whig planter element in the party loomed comparatively larger" in Mississippi than in other southern states.

sure of scalawag concentration, but Donald rightly protested that this percentage could be misleading. By eliminating counties under 20 percent scalawag strength, Trelease omitted from his calculations potentially important areas of scalawag activity. In heavily populated Negro counties for instance, scalawags might constitute only a small part of the Republican vote and a smaller part of the total vote. But they might well represent a much higher proportion of the total of white votes than Trelease's charts indicated. Moreover, those areas eliminated from consideration by Trelease's method (those with a high proportion of Negroes) had exhibited strong Whig patterns of voting before the war. This method in effect excluded the Delta and black-belt counties, and Trelease could, therefore, locate scalawag strength only in the hill-country areas. Though Donald conceded that Trelease's method was "ingenious," he asserted that methodological defects "invalidated" Trelease's conclusions.⁹

Can anything more conclusive be learned from the election and census statistics? This paper attempts to do so by building upon Trelease's method in a manner that takes Donald's criticisms into account insofar as possible. It follows Trelease in using two basic figures to estimate scalawag strength in each individual county in Mississippi: the percentage Republican vote and the percentage Negro as a proportion of the total population. Trelease, however, expressed scalawag strength as a proportion of the total voting population for each county, while this analysis attempts to estimate the actual numbers of scalawags for each county and the percentage of scalawags as a proportion of the total number of white voters.

This method, like Trelease's, rests upon two assumptions: first, that Negro voters voted heavily Republican, and second, that turnout rates for whites and blacks were roughly the same in each county. If one grants these two assumptions, then the excess of Republican percentage over percentage Negro population for any given county provides a measure of scalawag strength.

The issues of Reconstruction attracted only a small percentage of eligible voters to the polls in Mississippi, and there is no way

⁹ Donald, "Communications," *Journal of Southern History*, XXX (May 1964), 254–55. See the two mythical counties constructed by Donald to illustrate his point. Trelease's reply follows Donald's criticisms. The fact that Trelease included all the Confederate states necessarily involved allowance for a considerable margin of error. However, when study is confined to Mississippi alone, the problems are reduced correspondingly.

of determining whether whites or blacks predominated among the voting segments of the population.¹⁰ At least two kinds of evidence, however, support the above assumptions. First, if the percent Republican vote be plotted against the percent Negro for all Mississippi counties in the elections of 1871, 1872 (presidential), and 1873, there is a nearly one-to-one relationship between the two percentages.¹¹ That is, for each point increase in Negro population there is a corresponding increase of one percentage point in the Republican vote, as shown by the regression lines in Figure 1. The lines summarize the relationship between percent Republican and percent Negro in these elections. The one-to-one relationship suggests that most Negroes did indeed vote Republican and that there was not much of a differential effect in turnout during the period 1871-1873. The analysis therefore concentrates on this period. Second, the Democratic vote of 59,053 in 1871, when compared with the Breckinridge vote of 40,464 in 1860, indicates a strong continuity of voting within the Democratic ranks. It at least suggests that there was no marked imbalance resulting from white abstention. Thus, there is more ground for confidence in the above assumptions than would first appear, but they nevertheless remain controversial. As Trelease observed, the scalawag percentage would be artificially raised by the abstention of Democrats from a particular election in a given county; and when

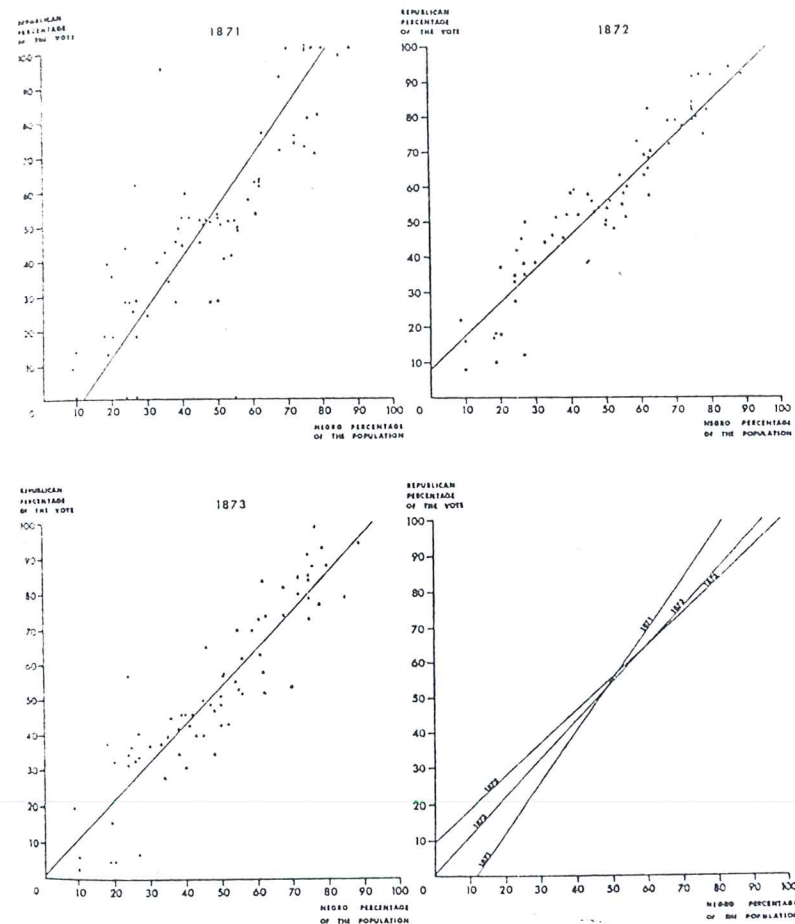
¹⁰ Disfranchisement of ex-Confederates did not affect the composition of the voters in Mississippi after 1870 when the state was readmitted to the Union. The percentage of eligible voters who exercised their power to vote is approximately as follows: 60 percent in 1871; 55 percent in 1872; 53 percent in 1873 and 67 percent in 1875. Since these calculations are based on adult male lists in the 1880 census, the percentages above probably underestimate slightly the percentage that turned out. See *A Compendium of the Tenth Census* (Washington, 1882), 560. Voting statistics are based on *The Tribune Almanac and Political Register* for the appropriate years. On the elimination of the disfranchisement clauses from the Mississippi constitution, see Lynch, *Facts of Reconstruction* 25-26, 30.

¹¹ When the percentage of Republican votes for 1871, 1872 (presidential), and 1873 were correlated with the Negro percentage of the population in each county, the results suggested a high correlation between the percentage of Republican votes and the Negro percentage of the population in all cases.

	1871	1872	1873
Product-moment correlation coefficient	0.83	0.93	0.92
Regression coefficient of percentage Republican on percentage Negro	1.41	0.97	1.06

Bernard Ellem of the University of New England calculated the product-moment correlations and drew up the graphs in Figure 1, and Tom Hughes of Trumbull College, Yale University, provided valuable assistance with computer programming.

FIGURE 1
CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCENTAGES OF NEGRO POPULATION
IN MISSISSIPPI COUNTIES AND REPUBLICAN PERCENTAGE OF
TOTAL VOTE IN 1871, 1872, AND 1873



Negroes did not vote or were prevented from voting, the scalawag percentage would be artificially reduced or would not be reflected at all.¹²

Trelease measured scalawag strength by examining the white Republican vote as a percentage of the total vote, but the present analysis converts the scalawag vote from a proportion of the

¹² Trelease, "Who Were the Scalawags?" 453.

TABLE 1

ESTIMATE OF SCALAWAG VOTE BY MISSISSIPPI COUNTIES GROUPED ACCORDING TO PROPORTION OF NEGRO POPULATION, 1868-1875

Negro Percentage of Population	Governor 1869	District Attorney 1871	Congress 1872	President 1872	Governor 1873	Treasurer 1875
30-39	453	772	523	367	136	29
70-79	2,959	3,747	4,800	2,290	1,319	281
40-49	1,384	1,411	1,431	1,434	1,321	112
50-59	353	35	345	359	1,021	—
40-49	1,359	1,335	1,392	1,414	891	134
15-19	301	371	336	323	350	1
20-29	1,110	329	321	347	371	31
1-9	451	213	59	73	41	—
Total	10,543	10,330	11,319	8,293	6,796	781
Scalawag Percentage of Total Vote	9	6	4	4	4	—
Scalawag Percentage of the White Vote	22	15	14	15	11	—

total vote into a percentage of the white vote, thus establishing a better basis for identifying concentrations of scalawags.¹⁴ In an attempt to indicate the number of scalawags in each county, the scalawag percentage of the white vote is also converted into the number of voters represented in each county in each election by this percentage. These approaches make it possible to gauge the relative strength of scalawag voters. For example, in the election of 1871 (see Table 2), an estimated 18 percent of the total vote of Washington County (large proportion of Negroes) was cast by southern whites for the Republican party and in Neshoba County (small proportion of Negroes) 15 percent of the total vote was cast for the Republican party by native whites. Considered in terms of percentages of the total vote, these two counties would be classified as equal in scalawag

¹⁴ This has been done by adding the scalawag and Democratic percentages and then dividing them into the scalawag percentage multiplied by one hundred. The purpose of this approach was to attempt to adjust for the Negro vote.

strength. But in Washington County this scalawag group accounted for 86 percent of the total white vote and 350 of the total votes, while in Neshoba County the 15 percent scalawag vote comprised only 19 percent of the total white vote and only 134 of the total cast. Washington County, therefore, was a much stronger center of scalawag strength than Neshoba County.

In order to avoid the eccentricities in data from a single election, this study embraces a number of elections on the state and national level during the period 1869-1875 in Mississippi. The elections for governor in 1869 and 1873, for district attorneys in 1871, for Congress in 1872, for President in 1872, and for treasurer in 1875 were chosen partly because they span the period but mainly because complete returns exist for these elections.¹⁴

Census data for the calculation of racial percentages in each county came from the Ninth (1870) and Tenth (1880) censuses. Despite the reservations of Donald and Trelease about the accuracy of the 1870 census, it is used here in conjunction with the 1880 census.¹⁵ Negro percentages derived from the 1880 census were usually slightly higher than those of the 1870 census but were sometimes lower. The procedure adopted here was to take the lowest estimate of Negro strength in each county from the two censuses, and it therefore exaggerates scalawag strength slightly.¹⁶

¹⁴ The vote on the constitution in 1868 and the gubernatorial election of that year were examined against the above elections but were excluded because a basic assumption—that Negroes voted overwhelmingly for the Republican ticket—could not be made. Data for the congressional elections of 1869 and 1876 were gathered but not used, on the ground that results deviated by a very small margin from the gubernatorial and presidential elections respectively of those years. Election data for the presidential campaigns were taken from W. Dean Burnham, *Presidential Ballots, 1836-1892* (Baltimore, 1955) and for the remaining elections from *The Tribune Almanac and Political Register [1868-1877]* (New York, 1868-1877).

¹⁵ Donald, "The Scalawag," 458; Trelease, "Who Were the Scalawags?" 451. Trelease used the Tenth Census exclusively, noting that in only a few counties did the proportions of Negro population vary by more than 10 percent in the Tenth and Eleventh censuses. The difficulties of using the Ninth Census are reduced when study is confined to Mississippi alone. Variations in the racial proportions of counties in the Ninth and Tenth censuses are not sizable enough to discredit the 1870 census as a valid source for the purposes of this essay. Moreover, proportional percentage, not the accuracy of numbers, constitutes the function of census data here. Figures for Negro and white population in Mississippi counties for 1870, 1880, and 1890 can be found in *Compendium of the Eleventh Census, Pt. I* (Washington, 1892), 493-94.

¹⁶ Such an exaggeration helps to identify concentrations of scalawag strength and does not create them. The variations are generally 5 percent or less; Grenada and De Soto are two notable exceptions, their 1870 tabulations of Negro per-

TABLE 2

SCALAWAG VOTE FOR DISTRICT ATTORNEYS IN MISSISSIPPI COUNTIES IN 1871*

County	1	2	3	4	5
Issaquena	89	11	97	155	R
Washington	85	13	86	150	R
Bolivar	80	20	100	167	R
Wilkinson	79	2	9	59	R
Leflore	78	-8	—	—	R
Tunica	77	23	100	177	R
Noxubee	76	4	13	184	R
Adams	75	25	100	683	R
Claiborne	75	22	89	531	R
Coahoma	75	25	100	303	R
Jefferson	75	25	100	481	R
Lowndes	75	-8	—	—	R
Madison	72	1	3	27	R
Yazoo	72	3	11	123	R
Clay**	70	—	—	—	R
Warren	70	30	100	1,179	R
Hinds	68	24	76	1,060	R
Helmes	68	3	7	86	R
Grenada	63	13	35	229	R
Monroe	62	0	—	—	R
Oktibbeha	62	-1	—	—	R
Sunflower	62	0	—	—	R
Amite	61	-3	—	—	R
Panola	61	1	2	38	R
Tallahatchee	59	-1	—	—	R
Marshall	56	-7	—	—	R
Rankin	56	-7	—	—	R
Carroll	55	-55	—	—	R
De Soto	55	-4	—	—	R
Kemper	54	-13	—	—	R
Yubousna	52	-12	—	—	D

* Column 1 gives the percentage Negro population of the county.

Column 2 gives the scalawag percentage of the total vote. A minus sign before a number means that the Republican percentage of the vote was less than the Negro percentage of the population.

Column 3 gives the scalawag vote as a percentage of the white vote.

Column 4 gives the estimated number of scalawag voters.

Column 5 indicates which party carried the county.

The problems and uncertainties involved in the study of Reconstruction elections are numerous. While these difficulties

percentage being respectively 10 and 12 percent below their 1880 tabulations. It might perhaps be objected that exclusive use of the 1880 census percentages might eliminate the scalawag percentages of the total vote in counties where the Negro majority was large. While this would be the case in a few instances, the overall

Chickasaw	51	-1	—	—	D
Tate**	51	—	—	—	D
Copiah	50	2	4	57	R
Franklin	50	2	4	26	R
Montgomery	50	-22	—	—	D
Benton	48	-20	—	—	D
Lauderdale	48	3	6	113	R
Pike	47	4	8	80	R
Clarke	46	4	7	97	D
Jasper	45	0	—	—	D
Lawrence	45	6	10	66	R
Lafayette	42	10	17	293	R
Lincoln	41	18	31	342	R
Attala	40	12	19	269	R
Scott	40	4	10	78	D
Wayne	39	10	16	86	D
Simpson	38	7	11	65	D
Winston	38	-9	—	—	D
Marion	36	-2	—	—	D
Leake	35	7	10	97	D
Newton	34	60	91	257	R
Covington	33	6	10	46	D
Lee	30	-6	—	—	D
Alcorn	27	-9	—	—	D
Hancock	27	—	—	—	D
Jackson	27	1	1	4	D
Perry	27	34	46	99	R
Choctaw	26	0	—	—	D
Harrison	25	3	4	26	D
Pontotoc	24	4	6	91	D
Tippah	24	-24	—	—	D
Union	24	19	25	285	D
Neshoba	20	15	19	134	D
Smith	20	-2	—	—	D
Prentiss	19	20	24	271	D
Calhoun	19	-6	—	—	D
Greene	18	0	—	—	D
Itawamba	10	4	4	45	D
Tishomingo	10	-10	—	—	D
Jones	9	0	—	—	D

** Clay County (or Colfax) was established between the elections of 1871 and 1872, and Tate County between those of 1872 and 1873.

result of using the 1880 census proportions only would accentuate the trends suggested in this study. The most substantial decreases in scalawag percentages would occur in the 40-59 percent Negro population bracket.

should induce skepticism about the results obtained from the statistical analysis of such elections in Mississippi, they do not preclude the possibility that this method may provide a basis for generalizations as reliable as those stemming from more traditional historical approaches. Voter turnout was relatively stable throughout the early period of Reconstruction, and election results in Mississippi during this time probably reflected the opinion of voters more reliably than the election results of 1875. Elections from 1869 through 1873 provide as reasonable a basis for analysis as one could expect in view of the circumstances surrounding them.

When the counties of Mississippi are arranged in order of the percentage of Negro population as in Table 2, several patterns emerge.¹⁷ Predictably, the Republican party in elections from 1869 through 1873 polled most strongly in those counties with Negro majorities in the population. In the twenty-four counties where Negroes accounted for 60 percent or more of the population, the Republican party carried every election in each county until after Adelbert Ames became governor. In the twenty-two counties registering between 40 and 59 percent Negro, the pattern of election results is more varied. In this bracket, surprisingly, counties falling in the 40-49 percent Negro population grouping voted more consistently Republican than did the 50-59 percent grouping. And not surprisingly, counties containing less than 40 percent Negro almost invariably went Democratic. These figures reflect the well-known fact that the Republican party in Mississippi was based on the enfranchised Negro.

The elections of 1875 clearly revealed the transformation which occurred in Mississippi after the election of 1873. Although the Republican party was obviously on the wane in 1873, it carried thirty-six counties as did the Democrats; but in 1875 the Republicans carried only eleven counties, all of which had a Negro population of more than 60 percent. After the presidential election of 1876, only six of these eleven counties remained in the Republican fold. Negroes made up 75 percent or more of

¹⁷ The number of counties in Mississippi increased from sixty-one in 1869 to sixty-nine in 1871. Clay and Tate counties, established after 1871, are included in Table 2. Pearl County, which was formed from Hancock and Marion in 1872, was excluded from this study because it was not listed in the 1880 census. Pearl went consistently Democratic and is included in totals of counties carried by that party. The following analysis of scalawags considered only the seventy-one counties in Table 2.

the population in these counties, and all six bordered the Mississippi River. Not only had the scalawag element abandoned the Republican party by 1875, but the Negro voter, the basis of the Republican party in Mississippi, had been neutralized.¹⁸ These two developments seem to have been closely connected.

The figures suggest that Negroes voted the Republican ticket overwhelmingly; that counties with Negro percentages falling within the 30-59 percent range, after a brief flirtation with the Republican party, quickly reverted to the Democratic party; and that counties with less than 30 percent Negro went predominantly Democratic. These first two patterns accord with Trelease's analysis of trends throughout the South in the presidential election of 1872.

The behavior of counties with less than 30 percent Negro population indicates that Mississippi is an exception to Trelease's generalizations about southern white Republicans—or scalawags—for the South as a whole. After examining state elections as well as the Grant-Greeley campaign, Trelease observed that "the white Republican minority was largely concentrated in counties with the smallest Negro populations."¹⁹ As Table 1 shows, however, scalawag strength was present throughout Mississippi in both state and national elections. Moreover, if the scalawag percentage in each county (that percentage of the Republican vote in excess of the Negro population percentage) is considered as a proportion of the white vote rather than of the total vote, scalawags in Mississippi constituted a higher proportion of white voters in counties where Negroes constituted a large proportion of the population than in counties where the Negro proportion was small.²⁰

¹⁸ Donald, "The Scalawag," 458-59, argued that the Mississippi Plan with its combination of terrorist tactics and coercion spiced with fraud does not explain the revolution which took place in Mississippi election results in 1875. He considered this interpretation to be an "over-simplification." The credence one can place in the reliability of the election returns of 1875 and 1876, however, is low. Violence, intimidation, and election fraud were prominent factors, and without consideration of them the conversion of a Republican majority in 1873 of 20,467 into a Democratic majority of 30,441 in 1875 is unintelligible. See Wharton, *Negro in Mississippi*, 181-98; Lynch, *Facts of Reconstruction*, 141-46; and James W. Garner, *Reconstruction in Mississippi* (New York and London, 1901), 338-53. But Donald makes his point that this explanation by itself is insufficient. The abandonment of the Republican party by the scalawags during and after 1873 played an important role in facilitating this reversal.

¹⁹ Trelease, "Who Were the Scalawags?" 452.

²⁰ In the presidential election of 1872 for example, the twenty-four counties containing a Negro population of 60 percent or more exhibited the following

When scalawag percentages in each county for each election were converted to estimate the number of scalawag votes, it became evident that the bulk of the scalawags were located in the Delta counties. In the seventy-one counties analyzed, more than half the total number of scalawags in every election except the congressional campaign of 1872 were located in the twenty-four counties whose population was 60 percent or more Negro. Not only did this group of counties have the most southern white Republican voters and the highest concentration of scalawag strength, it also had those white voters who were most consistently Republican. In other words, the black-belt and Delta counties contained the highest concentration of scalawag strength in Mississippi throughout the era of Reconstruction.

A fruitful means of illustrating this generalization is to examine one election in detail. The choice of a particular election to measure scalawag strength inevitably involves controversy. Because of variations in voting turnout, the role of particular issues in different elections, and deviations in the voting behavior of counties during the period, the election chosen for detailed analysis will not necessarily be representative of other elections. As the figures for 1869 in Table 1 indicate, percentage figures are particularly liable to misinterpretation—estimates of scalawag strength in this election were inflated by a low Democratic turnout. Since the calculations were grounded in percentage variations and could be regarded only as approximations, it was essential to choose an election in which the voting turnout for both parties was comparatively strong and in which a clear party vote might have been cast. The election of 1871 stands out as the logical choice.

This was the first election for members of the legislature and county officers after Mississippi was readmitted to the Union, and it therefore attracted a high turnout of voters for both parties. Since those disfranchised by the Reconstruction Acts and

concentrations of scalawag strength: in three counties, scalawags constituted an estimated 30-49 percent of the white voters; in two counties, 50-59 percent; in three, 30-39 percent; in four, 20-29 percent; in seven, 10-19 percent; in four, 1-9 percent; and in one, no scalawags were recorded. The twenty-five counties which contained a Negro population of less than 40 percent displayed the following concentrations: in one county, scalawags constituted an estimated 32 percent of the white voters; in five counties, 20-29 percent; in nine, 10-19 percent; in four, 1-9 percent; and in six, no scalawags were recorded. The tendency of counties with large Negro populations to have higher concentrations of scalawags than counties with small Negro populations is more pronounced in the elections of 1871 and 1875.

excluded from the 1869 elections had had their voting privileges restored by the admission of Mississippi to the Union and since the Republican government had completed almost two years in power, the election was vigorously contested and probably affords the best indication of scalawag location.²¹ Not only did more people vote Republican in 1871 than in any other election during the Reconstruction period in Mississippi, but more Democratic voters went to the polls in 1871 than in any other election before 1875. By reducing the dangers of exaggerating or underestimating scalawag strength and by its position in time, the 1871 election offers the most reliable basis for determining areas of the state in which scalawags were concentrated and thereby provides the most reliable framework for identifying them in terms of prewar voting patterns.

Table 2 gives the scalawag vote in each county in 1871 as a percentage of the total vote and as a percentage of the white vote, and it also gives the estimated number of scalawags in each county. The fact that Democrats did not contest this election in six counties and polled poorly in three other counties does not seriously limit, although it does qualify, deductions based on these figures. All nine counties gave evidence of being areas of scalawag strength throughout Reconstruction. The failure of these Democrats to vote in 1871 only emphasized trends evident in other elections.

In the sixty-eight counties which voted for the election of district attorneys in 1871, thirty-five went Republican and thirty-three went Democratic. Counties which went Republican tended to be those with the highest proportions of Negroes, and most of those going Democratic had a white majority. Only seven counties with more than 50 percent Negro population went Democratic. In only eight counties did it appear that scalawag votes carried the election for the Republican party: Lauderdale, Pike, Lawrence, Lafayette, Lincoln, Attala, Newton, and Perry.

A clear majority of counties (forty) registered scalawag voters, however, and these are the counties of greatest interest. They embrace the whole range of racial balances and geograph-

²¹ Document 267, The Third Reconstruction Act, July 19, 1867, Secs. 5-6, in Henry S. Commager, ed., *Documents of American History* (7th ed., 2 vols., New York, 1963), I, 492. Garner, *Reconstruction in Mississippi*, 246, cited an estimate of 15,000 whites as disfranchised in 1869 and indicated that a large element of eligible white voters boycotted the election. Such abstention, enforced and voluntary, rendered the 1869 election almost useless as the measure by which to gauge scalawag strength because the scalawag percentages would be artificially inflated.

TABLE 3
SCALAWAG VOTES AS PERCENTAGES OF THE WHITE VOTE IN MISSISSIPPI COUNTIES IN 1871*

90-100%	80-89%	70-79%	60-69%	50-59%
Issaquena (89) Bolivar (80) Jefferson (75) Tunica (77) Adams (75) Coahoma (75) Warren (70)	Washington (85) Claiborne (75)	Hinds (68)		
40-49%	30-39%	20-29%	10-19%	1-9%
Perry (27)	Lincoln (41) Grenada (63)	Prentiss (19) Union (24)	Neshoba (24) Wayne (39) Simpson (38) Covington (33) Leake (35) Lawrence (45) Lafayette (42) Attala (40) Scott (40) Noxubee (76) Yazoo (72)	Itawamba (10) Jackson (27) Harrison (25) Pontotoc (24) Lauderdale (48) Pike (47) Clarke (46) Franklin (50) Copiah (50) Panola (61) Holmes (68) Wilkinson (79) Madison (72)

* The numbers in parentheses give the percentage of Negroes in the population of the county. Newton County has been omitted since its vote in this election was an aberration from its normal pattern.

ical locations, from Issaquena in the Delta area down to Harrison in the Piney Woods and up to Itawamba on the northeastern border with Alabama. Yet when the scalawag percentage of the total vote is assessed against the Democratic percentage of the total vote, or—to put it another way—when the Negro vote is eliminated, several striking patterns emerge. (Table 3 gives the scalawag votes as percentages of the white vote in all counties which registered scalawag strength in 1871 except Newton.)

As Map 1 shows, the greatest concentration of southern white Republicans was in those counties bordering the Mississippi River and in the Delta area. Except for Newton,²² every county which cast an estimated majority of its white vote for the Republican party was located in this area. Most counties in which scalawags were a minority of white voters were outside this area. In five counties an estimated 20-49 percent of the white vote went to the Republican party; in eleven, an estimated 10-19 percent; and in thirteen, an estimated 1-9 percent. Nine of these twenty-nine counties fell in the Delta and black-belt areas. Counties registering southern white Republican voters thus divided almost evenly between Delta and black-belt counties (nineteen) and hill-country counties (twenty). Closer examination indicates, however, that the vital source of scalawag strength was in the former rather than the latter counties. Scalawags, therefore, were strategically located in areas of heavy Negro population.

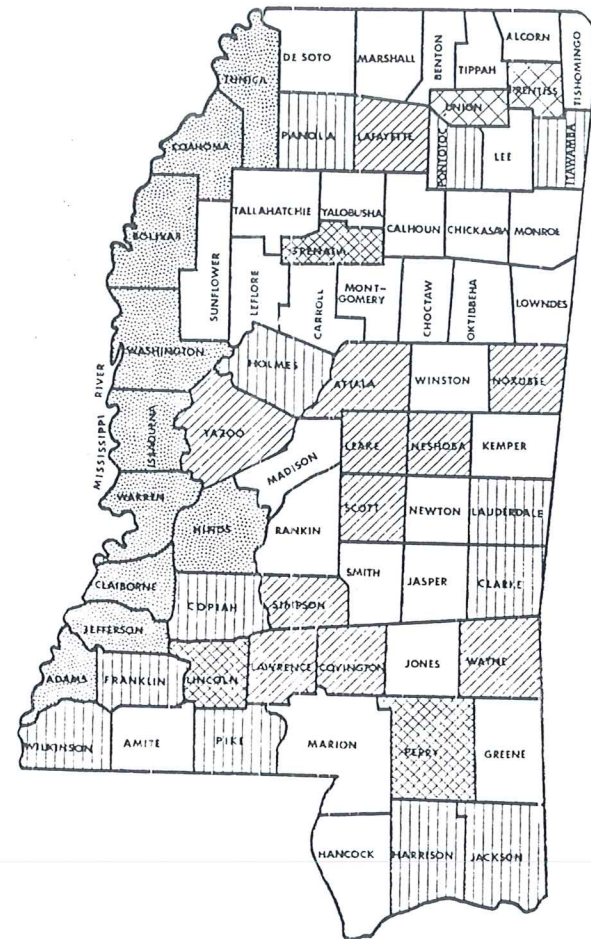
When the preceding percentages are translated to represent the numbers of votes cast, it becomes clear that the Delta and black-belt counties provided the most important source of scalawag votes. (See the fourth column in Table 2.) The seventeen counties which registered scalawag voters and which contained a Negro population in excess of 60 percent accounted for 5,932 (67 percent) of the total scalawag vote cast in 1871; and 87 percent of these 5,932 votes came from the ten counties in which a majority of the white vote was cast for the Republican party. In other words, the highest concentration of scalawag strength—whether in terms of percentages or of votes—was the Delta area.







A comparison of concentrations of scalawag strength with pre-war voting patterns in these counties indicates a close associa-

²² The exception to this pattern, Newton County, normally fell in the category of counties casting only 6 percent of their white vote for the Republican party. In 1871 only 24 Democrats, instead of the usual 600 to 700, voted in Newton County, and it has been excluded from the bracket of counties where scalawags cast a majority of the white votes on the ground that 1871 was an aberration.

MAP 1

Concentrations of Scalawag Strength
in the Election of 1871



-  more than 50 percent of white votes cast
-  30-49 percent of white votes cast
-  20-29 percent of white votes cast
-  10-19 percent of white votes cast
-  01-09 percent of white votes cast
-  no scalawag strength indicated

tion between southern white Republican strength and Whig, Know-Nothing, and Unionist sentiment. The ten counties in which scalawag votes accounted for more than 50 percent of the white vote in 1871 were predominantly Whig counties before the war. The same counties also reveal a striking continuity with Whig, Know-Nothing, and Unionist voting percentages. The continued existence of Whig elements in Mississippi in opposition to the Democratic party is quite clear and is stronger than John V. Mering has conceded.²³ Every county which gave a majority to the Know-Nothings in 1856 had a constant record of Whig strength in previous elections;²⁴ and only one county, Tishomingo, provided a majority for Unionist candidates in 1860 without having been previously a center of Whiggery. Since the remaining black-belt counties which registered significant scalawag strength also had a record of antebellum opposition to the Democratic party, there are good reasons to identify scalawags as ex-Whigs. Affinity between the principles of Whiggery and Republicanism, continued opposition to the Democratic party, and a faith in their own duty and ability to lead were among the factors inducing these Whigs to join the Republican party.²⁵

In areas outside the Delta and black-belt counties there were indications of scalawag strength in 1871 in twenty counties. In sixteen of these scalawags made up less than 20 percent of the white electorate.²⁶ In general, then, scalawags in such areas were relatively unimportant both in terms of percentage and of numbers. Just under half of the total number of scalawags in the thirty-four counties with less than 50 percent Negro population

²³ Mering, "Persistent Whiggery," 130-35.

²⁴ See also Donald M. Rawson, "Party Politics in Mississippi, 1850-1860" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1964), 209, 210, 231, 238-40, 252, 256-63, 269-70, 272-75, for evidence of the continuation of Whig elements in opposition to the Democratic party. Counties carried by the Know-Nothing party in the gubernatorial campaigns of 1855 and 1857 may be found on pages 205 and 233 respectively. The list in 1857 was much smaller than in 1855. Eighteen of the twenty-one counties Rawson listed gave evidence of scalawag voters up to 1875.

²⁵ Wharton, *Negro in Mississippi*, 157, 181; Donald, "The Scalawag," 449-51; Nannie Lacey, "Reconstruction in Leake County," *Mississippi Historical Society, Publications*, XI (1910), 276; John W. Kyle, "Reconstruction in Panola County," *ibid.*, XIII (1913), 20-21, 73; Ruth Watkins, "Reconstruction in Marshall County," *ibid.*, XII (1912), 160.

²⁶ In Perry County scalawags constituted an estimated 46 percent of the white voters; in Lincoln County, 31 percent; and in the remaining two, Union and Prentiss, 25 percent and 24 percent respectively. In no other election did Perry or Prentiss counties indicate scalawag strength.

were located in the eight counties with a Negro population of 40–49 percent. In seven of these eight scalawag strength was sufficient to carry the counties narrowly for the Republican party. It is reasonable to conclude that in counties outside the black belt and the Delta, scalawags were too few in number and too small a proportion of white voters to justify identification of them as small farmers.²⁷ Rather, scalawags in areas dominated by small farmers were clearly out of sympathy with the attitudes and political affiliation of the bulk of the population. That they had been Whigs before the war and Unionist voters in 1860 cannot be established but seems probable. Comparison of prewar election returns with scalawag estimates leaves open the possibility that scalawags in these areas did move into the Republican party from the Whig party.²⁸

Scalawag support of the Republican party was strongest in 1871 as the estimates of scalawag voters in Table 1 suggest. (As noted above, the estimates of scalawags in 1869 in Table 1 were inflated by Democratic abstention.) These estimates also suggest that the number of scalawags decreased rather than increased after 1871. The estimate of John R. Lynch that 25 to 30 percent of southern whites became Republicans between 1872 and 1875 seems exaggerated.²⁹ At no time do scalawags appear to have constituted more than 15 percent of the white voters of Mississippi. Most of these southern white Republicans remained firm in their commitment to the goals of the Reconstruction govern-

²⁷ Trelease, "Who Were the Scalawags?" 460. If most white Republican voters had been "small farmers," there ought to have been a much higher proportion in these areas where Negroes accounted for a low proportion of the population.

²⁸ This is not to say that Whigs may be equated with scalawags. County election returns provide no basis for such an assertion. They do suggest, however, that Whigs did not move as a body into the Republican party in the counties under discussion in this section. These counties are Attala, Clarke, Covington, Harrison, Itawamba, Jackson, Lafayette, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Leake, Neshoba, Pike, Pontotoc, Scott, Simpson, and Wayne. The numbers of scalawag votes in these counties are considerably smaller than Whig and Unionist voting strength before the war. But scalawags in these counties most likely had been Whigs before the war, even though all or even most Whigs did not become Republicans after the war. See Julia Kendel, "Reconstruction in Lafayette County," Mississippi Historical Society, *Publications*, XIII, 228, 230–31; Forrest Cooper, "Reconstruction in Scott County," *ibid.*, 107; Hattie Magee, "Reconstruction in Lawrence and Jefferson Davis Counties," *ibid.*, XI, 163n, 167–68; M. G. Abney, "Reconstruction in Pontotoc County," *ibid.*, 233; compare the observation that Old Line Whigs generally did not join the Democratic party after the war in Julia C. Brown, "Reconstruction in Yalobusha and Grenada Counties," *ibid.*, XII, 219–20.

²⁹ Lynch, *Facts of Reconstruction*, 106.

ments until after the election of Ames in 1873. A large number of scalawags, however—the precise number cannot be estimated—left the party between the elections of 1872 and 1873, and their departure signified that the Republican party in Mississippi was losing its capacity to attract biracial support. While the Democratic vote in 1873 rose by more than fifty-five hundred over its 1872 level, the Republican vote for Ames fell almost nine thousand under the vote for Ulysses S. Grant in 1872. The comparison below of county returns for the elections of 1872 and 1873 confirms the exodus from the Republican party and attests the significance of the 1873 election as the harbinger of Democratic victory in 1875.

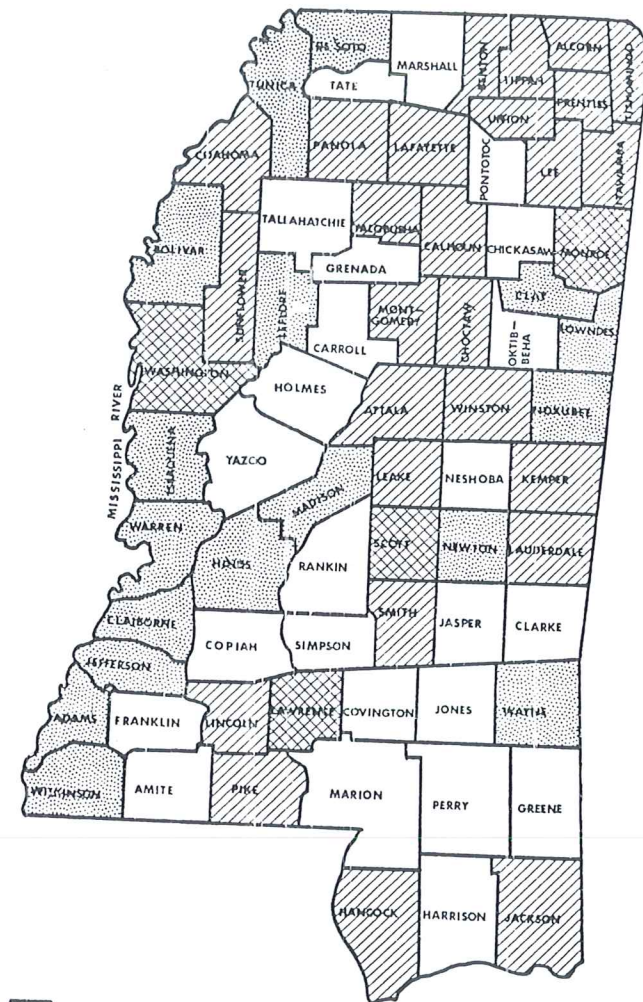
Those who left the Republican party after the 1872 elections or during the 1873 campaign are a difficult group to trace. Some no doubt voted the Democratic ticket, but a number of factors indicate that few did. First, even if it be assumed that the fifty-five hundred increase in Democratic votes in 1873 came from Republican defections, this would still leave nearly thirty-five hundred of those defections unaccounted for. Second, the vote for James L. Alcorn in 1873 was six thousand less than the Democratic vote in 1871—Alcorn's increase in 1873 over the Democratic vote in 1872 might only represent a resumption of voting habits by a large proportion of those Democrats in Mississippi who had been unenthusiastic at the prospect of Horace Greeley in the White House. Third, as Map 2 indicates, the large Democratic increases in 1873 occurred mostly outside the Delta and black-belt areas, where the Republican vote decreased substantially. Moreover, defection from the Republican ranks in areas of scalawag strength was not accompanied by a comparable increase in Democratic turnout. There is little reason then for postulating an exodus of scalawags from the Republican party into the Democratic party in 1873.





It is clear that fewer Mississippians voted for the Republican candidate in 1873 than in any other election after 1868.³⁰ It was only to be expected, however, that Grant would draw out more voters in a presidential campaign than would a carpetbagger in a state election. Yet the decrease in the Republican percentage of

³⁰ The Republican vote and its percentage of the total vote in the elections of 1869, 1871, 1872 (presidential), and 1873 were respectively 76,186 (67 percent), 83,102 (59 percent), 82,176 (63.5 percent), and 73,324 (58 percent). The Democratic vote and its percentage of the total vote in the same elections were respectively 38,097 (33 percent), 59,053 (41 percent), 47,288 (36.5 percent), and 52,857 (42 percent).

MAP 2

The Election of 1873



-  Substantial increase in Democratic vote
-  Substantial decrease in Republican vote
-  Substantial increase in Democratic vote and substantial decrease in Republican vote
-  Counties in which none of these trends were indicated

The vote in forty-four counties reflected important changes in the political structure of Mississippi. As Map 2 indicates, the significant feature of the election is that the Republican decrease cannot be explained simply in terms of a Democratic increase. While the Republican party had been seriously weakened in areas of its greatest strength by the vicissitudes of the Ames-Alcorn campaign, the Democratic party sharply increased its voting strength in the poorer areas of the state. The substantial Democratic increase which occurred in thirty counties indicates that Alcorn was more attractive than Greeley and that the candidacy of Ames, based on support for civil and political rights as well as federal intervention against such organizations as the Ku Klux Klan, aroused determined opposition in hill-country counties. Twenty-two of these thirty counties had a Negro population of less than 50 percent. In the remaining eight counties, the Democratic increases might indicate either support for Alcorn's more conservative policies or growing adherence to the color line, which became more sharply drawn after 1873.³¹

Although Alcorn's candidacy failed to draw sufficient support from Democratic voters, it seems to have dealt the Republican party in Mississippi a crippling blow. Alcorn realized, not without chagrin, that he had played a significant role in creating the conditions under which the Mississippi Plan could be successfully implemented.³² He had clashed bitterly with Ames in the United States Senate over the Ku Klux Klan Enforcement Acts, and the importance of this issue in the 1873 election largely explains the renewed strength of the Democratic party in counties outside the Delta and black-belt areas.³³ Intimidation of Negroes had been widespread in eighteen counties in northeastern Mississippi during Alcorn's administration.³⁴ Voting trends in these counties in 1873 are significant. In three of these counties

³¹ In most counties containing a high proportion of Negroes, Democratic voters fled away from Alcorn. Substantial reductions in the Republican vote were often accompanied by sharp decreases in the Democratic vote. In Adams County, for example, where the Republican vote fell from 2,972 in 1872 to 2,053 in 1873, the Democratic vote dropped from 782 to 392; and in Claiborne County, where the Republican vote fell from 2,240 in 1872 to 1,844 in 1873, the Democratic vote fell from 439 to 179.

³² Lillian A. Pereyra, *James Lusk Alcorn: Persistent Whig* ([Baton Rouge], 1969), 163.

³³ On the division between Ames and Alcorn over the latter's policies towards the Negro and the problem of racial violence see *ibid.*, 121-63, and Garner, *Reconstruction in Mississippi*, 290-92.

³⁴ Pereyra, *Alcorn*, 137. The counties were Tippah, Alcorn, Tishomingo, Union, Prentiss, Pontotoc, Lee, Itawamba, Chickasaw, Monroe, Choctaw, Oktibbeha,

(Pontotoc, Chickasaw, and Oktibbeha) voters exhibited little interest in the candidates of either party in 1872 or 1873, although in Pontotoc County Democratic voters displayed marked aversion to Alcorn.³⁵ In the other fifteen counties voting trends are revealing. In Monroe, Lowndes, and Noxubee the Republican vote dropped noticeably—all three counties were in the black belt.³⁶ In the other twelve counties the Democratic vote rose substantially—almost all were poor white counties. The Democratic total in these twelve counties rose from 8,677 in 1872 to 12,939 in 1873. As Map 2 shows, six counties adjacent to these eighteen also registered substantial increases in the number of Democratic votes cast in 1873.³⁷ The regathering of Democratic strength in these predominantly hill-country counties was important, but perhaps a more significant feature of the election was that the defection of Alcorn cut heavily into Republican strength in the black-belt counties.

The behavior of black-belt counties in northeastern Mississippi acquires greater importance when compared with the conduct of Republican voters in other counties of the state. Sixteen of the twenty counties in which the Republican vote declined substantially in 1873 either bordered the Mississippi River or were in the Delta and black-belt areas.³⁸ The total reduction of Republican votes in these sixteen counties amounted to 11,589. The number of these defections, especially in Warren County, suggests that a large number of blacks and scalawags suspended their active support of the Republican party when Ames was nominated. In view of differences between the carpetbag and scalawag factions, the large decrease in Republican votes in 1873

Lowndes, Winston, Noxubee, Leake, Kemper, and Lauderdale. On the impact of violence, especially after 1873, see Wharton, *Negro in Mississippi*, 181-98.

³⁵ In Pontotoc County the vote for Alcorn was 420 as against 1,041 for Greeley. The Republican vote increased from 508 for Grant to 560 for Ames.

³⁶ In Monroe County the Republican vote fell from 2,588 in 1872 to 1,997 in 1873; in Lowndes, from 3,217 to 2,725; and in Noxubee, from 3,058 to 2,358. This decrease in the Republican vote in Monroe and Lowndes cannot be attributed to the formation of Clay County as it was formed before the 1872 elections.

³⁷ Benton, Lafayette, Yalobusha, Calhoun, Montgomery, and Attala. Their total of Democratic votes increased from 4,860 in 1872 to 7,376 in 1873.

³⁸ See Map 2. The counties and their decrease in Republican votes are as follows: Adams (919); Bolivar (547); Claiborne (396); Clay (296); De Soto (994); Hinds (535); Issaquena (389); Jefferson (456); Lowndes (492); Madison (189); Monroe (591); Noxubee (670); Tunica (288); Warren (3,046); Washington (1,145); and Wilkinson (630). The Republican decrease in De Soto was probably caused by the formation of Tate County in 1873. The other four counties were Lawrence, Newton, Scott, and Wayne.

in these areas of scalawag strength assumes great significance when coupled with the lack of a Democratic increase in all of these counties except Monroe and Washington.³⁹ These estranged scalawags apparently would not vote for Ames, but neither would they aid directly to return the Democratic party to power in 1873. Unable to follow the more radical commitment of Ames to the goals of Reconstruction, they seem to have been marking time and waiting for an opportunity to regain control of the party. It did not come. Instead, the Negroes became increasingly determined to exercise a degree of power within the party commensurate with their voting strength, Ames and the carpetbaggers consolidated their hold, and the color line became sharply drawn in Mississippi politics.⁴⁰ As these developments and the resurgence of the Democratic party gathered momentum during 1874, this group of scalawags probably moved into the Democratic party.

It also seems probable, though it cannot be demonstrated statistically, that most of the scalawags who supported Ames in 1873 had abandoned the Republican party by 1875.⁴¹ If a substantial number of southern whites had still been Republicans in 1875, it seems most unlikely that the Republican party would have suffered such a resounding defeat. That every county with a majority of whites would go Democratic in 1875 had been foreshadowed by the Democratic revival in those counties in 1873. That the Republican party carried only eleven of the thirty-six counties which had Negro majorities, however, was striking because it had carried thirty-two of these counties in 1873 and, although considerably weakened in the Delta and black-belt areas, seems to have retained during 1873 a fairly large number

³⁹ It is impossible to determine the extent to which this decrease in the Republican vote was caused by scalawag defections and by abstention on the part of Negro voters. Nevertheless, the estimate of scalawags in Table 1, combined with the fact that the Republican party was most weakened in areas of scalawag strength by Alcorn's opposition, would suggest that the number of scalawags who left the Republican party in 1873 was considerable. Note Pereyra's observation that "prominent natives" were "conspicuous by their absence from the struggle. . . ." Pereyra, *Alcorn*, 162.

⁴⁰ Wharton, *Negro in Mississippi*, 175-76, 180-98; Donald, "The Scalawag," 454-59.

⁴¹ The estimate in Table 1 of the scalawag vote in 1875 suggests that few southern whites voted Republican in this election. This is dubious evidence, however, because at least one of the two basic assumptions on which such calculations were based could not be made for the election of 1875. See Donald, "The Scalawag," 459, for indications that Negroes voted or were "voted" for the Democratic ticket.

of scalawags.⁴² In the absence of more conclusive evidence, it is feasible to suggest that the loss of these heavily Negro counties in 1875 was closely connected with the repudiation of the Republican party by the scalawag.

The Republican victory in 1873 accelerated the demise of the party by simplifying the complex currents of Reconstruction politics in Mississippi. Unable to resolve within its own councils the varying responses of its disparate elements to the new status of the Negro and to the reaction of most white Mississippians to that new status, the Republican party fragmented. The first indication of substantial scalawag defections appeared in the election of 1873, and it seems probable that by 1875 the Republican party retained only a very small proportion of its earlier scalawag support. The scalawags, by abandoning the Republican party in Mississippi at a time when the national commitment to reconstructing the South had all but dissolved, undermined whatever chance remained for the successful fulfillment of the equalitarian aims of the party.

By leaving the Republican party, the scalawag ceased to be but his onetime existence remained to haunt those who attempt to identify this elusive figure. The scalawag seems to have been present in most parts of Mississippi from 1869 through 1873 and to have constituted only a small proportion of the electorate. Estimates of his numerical strength are hazardous, but an estimate based on the figures in Table 1 would suggest that he numbered about nine thousand and that he represented about 15 percent of the white electorate and 6 percent of all voters. The scalawag seems to have played a role of importance which far outweighed his numerical strength, as the effect of his defection on the fortunes of the Republican party suggests. His apparent importance and prominence in areas which had been strongly Whiggish before the war and his relative weakness outside these areas indicate that the Republican party drew its southern white voters in Mississippi from the antebellum Whigs, from that element which had consistently opposed the Democratic party before the war under the various labels of Whig, Know-Nothing, and Constitutional Unionist.

⁴² See Table 1. There were no election returns in 1875 from De Soto, one of these thirty-six counties.

Southern History in Periodicals, 1971: A Selected Bibliography

THIS CLASSIFIED BIBLIOGRAPHY INCLUDES MOST SCHOLARLY ARTICLES in the field of southern history published in periodicals in 1971 except for descriptive or genealogical writings of primary interest to a restricted group of readers. Since some journals were not published on schedule in 1970, articles from them were not included in the 1970 list published in the May 1971 issue of the *Journal*. The present listing includes these late journals with a bracketed notation that the article was published in 1970, or earlier if appropriate.

Entries under each heading are by author and are arranged alphabetically except for entries under "Military and Naval" and "Politics and Government," which are arranged chronologically.

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