

“A Good, Square, Honest Law That Will Always
Give a Good Democratic Majority”

By amending the suffrage clauses of their constitutions in referenda from 1900 to 1908, Democrats in North Carolina, Texas, and Georgia excluded dangerous voters permanently, without the risks and expense of calling conventions. The final episodes in the disfranchisement campaigns in these three states closely resembled corresponding events elsewhere: the character and motives of the restrictionists and their opponents and the timing and development of the successful movements for limitation fell, for the most part, into familiar patterns. Even the texts of the amendments were patterned after those in other states.

Nevertheless, the experiences of North Carolina, Texas, and Georgia differed in important respects from those of the rest of the South in the post-Reconstruction period. North Carolina was the only state where the Democrats lost control during the nineties. The reasons for Democratic defeat, the programs of the Populist-Republican administration, and the difficulties which helped to break up that bipartisan, biracial coalition indicate how opposition parties throughout the South might have operated had the election machinery not been so geared to their defeat. Since farmer parties were stronger and black belt Democratic politicians weaker in Texas than elsewhere, neither coalition-building by the opposition nor disfranchisement by the Democrats followed exactly the same lines as in other states. It took a quarter of a century of repeated efforts to enact a major restrictive device in Texas. Georgia was the first Southern state to enact a cumulative poll tax and the last to adopt a comprehensive suffrage clause in its constitution. The only state which had an effective restrictive law from Reconstruction on, it also had one of the two weakest Republican parties in the South before disfranchisement. Because these peculiarities deserve thorough examination, North Carolina, Texas, and Georgia will receive more attention here than the more typical Southern states.

NORTH CAROLINA: DISFRANCHISING "LOW-BORN SCUM AND
QUONDAM SLAVES"

The North Carolina political system was perhaps the most democratic in the late nineteenth-century South (table 7.1). Turnout at gubernatorial elections in the last two decades of the century never fell below three-quarters of the adult males. From 1880 through 1896, the Democrats never won more than 54 percent of the vote in the races for governor. Since there were relatively few restrictions on the suffrage before 1900, black men voted in large numbers.¹ Ballot box stuffing seems to have occurred on a less extensive scale than in most other Southern states.

Essentially a coalition of upland, ex-Unionist whites and lowland blacks, the Republicans gradually added to their ranks Piedmont

Table 7.1. Strong Party Competition and Heavy Negro Participation in
Gubernatorial Races in North Carolina, 1880-1896.

Year	Democratic	Republican	Other	Not Voting	% Voting Favoring Democrats
1880	41.3	39.2	0	19.4	51.3
1884	45.6	39.2	0	15.2	53.8
1888	44.6	40.2	0.9	14.3	52.0
1892	37.9	26.5	14.1	21.6	48.3
1896	37.5	39.7	8.3	14.6	43.9
	ESTIMATED % OF NEGRO ADULT MALES				
1880	17	69	0	14	- ^b
1884	20	74	0	2	-
1888	19	49	1	32	-
1892	34	27	2	36	-
1896	20	59	8	13	-

^aThese estimates computed by splitting state into 2 groups of counties—those with more than 30% Negro, and those with less—and weighting and summing the estimates for the separate groups.

^bNot estimated.

1. The Democrats did extensively gerrymander congressional, legislative, and city districts, and the election officials from time to time used their broad powers to deny Negroes and other Republicans and Populists the right to vote. See Logan, *Negro in North Carolina*, pp. 49-63; Mabry, *Negro in North Carolina Politics*, pp. 16-22.

manufacturers who favored protective tariffs for their products. When a Democratic-sponsored amendment to prohibit the sale and manufacture of liquor failed by 100,000 votes in an 1881 referendum, the Republicans took advantage of the Democratic split. Allying themselves with some of the "wet" Democrats, the GOP came within 400 votes of winning the statewide race for congressman-at-large in 1882. Many drinking Democrats thereafter preferred the party of emancipation to that of prohibition. The Republicans capitalized, too, on the fact that to prevent Republicans from winning local offices in the black belt and the mountains, the Democratic legislature appointed all officers of the county governments, instead of allowing the people to vote for them. Democratic favoritism towards a small number of business interests, particularly the largely Northern-owned railroads, also probably drove some voters into the Republican or Populist parties.²

Alienated by the national Democratic party's nomination of the conservative Cleveland for president in 1892, and angry at the nominally pro-farmer state legislature's inaction on their demands, leaders of the Farmers' Alliance put up a Populist state ticket in 1892. After the election, the Democratic legislature punished the agrarian apostasy by circumscribing the Alliance charter so as to prohibit its business activities. At the same time, the Democratic governor, former state Alliance president Elias Carr, leased the state-owned railroad to a private corporation for ninety-nine years. These actions led the Populists to fuse with the Republicans on a joint legislative ticket in 1894, a tactic which, in the midst of the economic depression, produced opposition majorities in both houses of the legislature.³

Because North Carolina produced two of the most prominent Populists, Leonidas L. Polk, editor of the *National Economist*, and Marion Butler, Populist national chairman in 1896, historians have put a great deal of emphasis on the Populists' role in this period.⁴ Actually, the Populists garnered a smaller proportion of the votes in

2. Steelman, "Progressive Era in North Carolina," pp. 11-15, 66, 86-96; Mabry, *Negro in North Carolina Politics*, pp. 29-30; David Charles Roller, "Republican Party in North Carolina," pp. 3-6, 48-49; Edmonds, *Negro and Fusion Politics*, pp. 10-11; J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, *North Carolina since 1860* (Chicago and New York; The Lewis Pub. Co., 1919), pp. 197-199, 207-212; DeSantis, *Republicans Face*, pp. 162-163.

3. Steelman, "Progressive Era in North Carolina," pp. 14-56, 98-100; Mabry, "The Disfranchisement of the Negro," pp. 262-263.

4. Mabry, "Disfranchisement of the Negro," p. 260.

North Carolina governors' races than in seven other Southern states. The bulk of those who wished to oppose the Democrats voted Republican during the nineties, just as they had in the seventies and eighties.

In a state as closely divided as North Carolina, however, the Populists' role, though small, was crucial. As table 7.2 shows, the People's Party drew virtually all its strength in the 1892 governor's race from formerly Democratic areas. Running best in counties about one-third Negro, the Populists perfectly complemented GOP strength in the overwhelmingly white and the predominantly black districts. Whites in counties above 30 percent Negro seem to have been hesitant to vote for the "Black Republicans," but many felt free to go into the People's Party in 1892, and, having voted against the Democrats once, were willing to vote against them again after the death of the Populists (table 7.3). In 1896, when the Populist total dropped from its 1892 figure of 13 percent of the adult males to only 8 percent, two-thirds of the Populist defectors appear to have voted Republican. When four years later the Populists fielded no gubernatorial candidate, the 1892 Populists who turned out in 1900 split about three-to-two for the GOP.

In addition to providing votes for the Republicans and denying them to the Democrats in statewide contests, the Populists cooperated with the GOP in congressional and legislative races and in the legislature itself. From 1894 through 1898, Populists and Republicans usually agreed to fuse behind a single candidate in each legislative and senatorial district and, after the election, formulated a common legislative program. Winning control of the legislature in 1894, the Fusionists added the statehouse two years later with Republican Daniel Russell's victory. The furious "white supremacy campaign" swept Populists and Republicans out of the legislature in 1898 (table 7.4).

While they controlled the legislature, however, the Fusionists put

Table 7.2. Populists in North Carolina Were Former Democrats: Estimates of the Relation between Voting in 1888 and 1892 Governors' Contests.

<i>% of Adult Males in 1888 Governor's Race</i>	<i>% of Adult Males in 1892 Governor's Race</i>			
	<i>% Democrat</i>	<i>% Republican</i>	<i>% Populist</i>	<i>% Not Voting</i>
Democrat	63	0	27	12
Republican	18	64	0	18
Not Voting	22	20	0	58

Table 7.3. Most North Carolina Populists Voted Republican in 1896 and 1900 Gubernatorial Races: Estimates of Relationships between Voting Patterns, 1892–1900.

% of Adult Males in 1892 Governor's Race	% of Adult Males in 1896 Governor's Race			
	Democrat	Republican	Populist	Not Voting
Democrat	76	14	0	10
Republican	19	87	-9 ^b	2
Populist	11	21	51	18
Not Voting	10	38	17	34

% of Adult Males in 1892 Governor's Race	% of Adult Males in 1900 Governor's Race ^a		
	Democrat	Republican	Not Voting
Democrat	84	18	-2
Republican	6	83	11
Populist	33	48	19
Not Voting	29	-17 ^b	88

^aThe Populists did not run a candidate in 1900.

^bFor an explanation of estimates below zero, see my "Ecological Regression" article.

Table 7.4. Rise and Fall of Fusionism in North Carolina: Party Composition of Legislature, 1892–1898.^a

Year Elected	Representatives			Senators		
	Democrats	Republicans	Populists	Democrats	Republicans	Populists
1892	93	16	11	47	0	3
1894	46	38	36	8	18	24
1896	26	54	40	7	18	25
1898	94	23	3	40	7	3

^aAdapted from J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, *North Carolina since 1860*, pp. 241, 246, 262, 299.

through an impressive reform program, indicative of what opponents of the Democrats might have accomplished had they come to power elsewhere in the South. After restoring and liberalizing the Alliance charter and seeking to lower bank interest rates, the legislature repealed the old county government law, thereby enabling localities to elect their own officials. Whereas the conservative Democratic regimes had starved public services, the Fusionists—in the midst of a severe depression—substantially increased state appropriations for public schools from the elementary to college level, set up teacher training institutes for local schools, and provided incentives for local school districts to raise their tax rates. The legislature also augmented the

expenditures for charitable and correctional institutions and intensified taxation of railroads and businesses. Governor Russell attacked the lease of the state-owned rail line to J. P. Morgan's Southern Railway Company and called for public ownership of all railroads. As a result of these reforms and threats, railroads, bankers, and manufacturers heavily subsidized the Democrats in the 1898 campaign. Leaders of the denominational colleges, who wished to keep the state university weak, also backed the Democrats in exchange for a promise not to increase funds for the public college.⁵

In addition to attacking upper-class privilege and democratizing local government, the Fusionists reformed election procedures. Stigmatizing the 1889 Democratic registration law as a "force bill," the Fusionists replaced it with what was probably the fairest and most democratic election law in the post-Reconstruction South. To insure a fair count, the county clerk was required to appoint one election judge from each party and allow all of the judges to be present during the counting of ballots. To prevent the clerk from appointing incompetents from parties other than his own, each local party chairman actually nominated his own party's representative. To end disfranchisement by deliberate delays in large precincts, the clerk had to set up a voting place for every 350 voters. To debar registrars from illegally and capriciously disqualifying voters, the Fusionists strictly limited the registrars' powers. To eliminate repeated partisan challenges against voters, the legislature put the burden of proof on the challenger, rather than the voter. Finally, to make voting easier for illiterates, the 1895 law allowed colored ballots and party emblems on the ballots.⁶ Partly as a consequence of the new law, turnout in 1896 rose by seven points to 85.4 percent; the Republicans elected a governor in North Carolina for the first time since Reconstruction; and the Fusionists increased their majorities in both houses of the legislature.

5. Steelman, "Progressive Era in North Carolina," pp. 119-123, 150-152, 162-164; Edmonds, *Negro and Fusion Politics*, pp. 139-140, 151-154; Roller, "Republican Party in North Carolina," pp. 14-15.

6. On the 1889 law and fraud in North Carolina during the nineties, see Logan, *Negro in North Carolina*, pp. 58-60; Edmonds, *Negro and Fusion Politics*, pp. 67-70; Hamilton, *North Carolina since 1860*, p. 217; Steelman, "Progressive Era in North Carolina," pp. 36-37; and Josephus Daniels, *Tar Heel Editor*, p. 504. On the 1895 law, see Simeon A. Delap, "The Populist Party in North Carolina," in Trinity College Historical Society, *Historical Papers*, series xiv (Durham, North Carolina: The Seeman Printery, 1922), pp. 54-56. Edmonds,

Liberal and fair election laws, however, did not save the Fusionists from the tremendous onslaught of violence and fraud, financed from corporate coffers, which the Democrats unleashed in 1898. Weakened by personal feuds and jealousies among their leaders and by the continual difficulty of operating a coalition between two parties which differed on such national issues as monetary policy and the protective tariff, the white Republicans and Populists were also ambivalent in their attitudes towards the black voters who provided the bulk of their support. While most white Republicans and Populists probably remained loyal to their parties in 1898, a significant number capitulated to the Democratic argument that racial identity should override disagreement on all other questions. Still, the Democrats got only 52.8 percent of the votes in the only statewide race (for chief justice of the state supreme court) in 1898, a contest in which 84.2 percent of the adult males, the highest turnout in a non-presidential year in North Carolina's postbellum history, were recorded as voting. And the Democratic totals, a prominent North Carolina clergyman admitted in a national magazine shortly after the election, were considerably padded through frauds.⁷

To the Fusionists' personal bickering and uncertainty over racial policies, the Democrats presented a solid, violently racist front. Led by Furnifold Simmons, Charles B. Aycock, and Josephus Daniels, the North Carolina Democrats borrowed the idea of Red Shirt Clubs from South Carolina. These clubs, composed, according to J. G. de R. Hamilton, primarily of "respectable and well-to-do farmers, bankers, schoolteachers, and merchants," paraded around in bright costume intimidating opposition voters, breaking up Republican and Populist meetings, and cheering when outside agitators like Ben Tillman congratulated them for their valiant defense of white supremacy. Although the fact of gentry domination of the Red Shirts may surprise

Negro and Fusion Politics, pp. 70–74; Mabry, "Disfranchisement of the Negro," pp. 269–276; Steelman, "Progressive Era in North Carolina," pp. 67, 120–122.

7. On the weakening of the Fusionists in 1898, see Steelman, "Progressive Era in North Carolina," pp. 47–53, 123–155, 167–177, 186, 196; Edmonds, *Negro and Fusion Politics*, pp. 40–56, 133–137, 144–145; Mabry, "Disfranchisement of the Negro," pp. 262–263, 280–282; Hamilton, *North Carolina since 1860*, pp. 199, 257–258; Logan, *Negro in North Carolina*, pp. 13–18; Durden, *Climax of Populism*, pp. 11, 167; Daniels, *Editor in Politics*, pp. 123–131; Orr, *Charles Brantley Aycock*, pp. 85, 105, 122; Joseph L. Morrison, *Josephus Daniels Says . . .*, pp. 94–95. On the fraud, see A. J. McKelway, "The Cause of the Trouble in North Carolina," pp. 1488–1492. Later a nationally known "Progressive," McKelway approved the frauds, disfranchisement, and the postelection slaughter of Negroes at Wilmington.

those who believe that lower-class whites were solely responsible for Southern violence, it did not seem strange to contemporaries. As a scribbler for the *Raleigh News and Observer* summarized the Democratic view of the campaign,

Shall low-born scum and quondam slaves
Give laws to those who own the soil?
No! by our gransires' bloody graves,
No! by our homesteads bought with toil.⁸

The Democratic triumvirate's talents meshed perfectly. Simmons, chief protégé of the former Democratic boss and U.S. Senator Matt Ransom, was adept at quietly cajoling campaign contributions and building up an efficient organization. Future Wilson cabinet member Daniels, editor in 1898 of the newspaper with the largest circulation in North Carolina, turned out a widely circulated barrage of editorials and "news" stories portraying the state in the clutches of corrupt, pro-Negro radicals. Another of Matt Ransom's brood, Aycock, supplied the flamboyant, race-baiting oratory. Gesturing wildly, this prototypical Southern Progressive (and railroad lawyer) would wrap himself rhetorically in the Stars and Bars and assure his crowds that the choice in the election was between the "Anglo-Saxon heritage" and "white womanhood" on one side, and "Negro rule" and a return to Reconstruction on the other.⁹

When the Populists and Republicans during the 1898 campaign charged that the Democrats would restrict the suffrage if they won, Furnifold Simmons denied the charges unequivocally. After the election, however, the party of Southern honor and upper-class rectitude promptly reneged. Fearing to call a constitutional convention because the Fusionists might overturn the slim 18,000 vote majority of 1898, the Democrats decided to propose a constitutional amendment. Accordingly, Simmons sent Josephus Daniels junketing around to seek advice from disfranchisers in other Southern states and write propaganda pieces expatiating on the benevolent consequences of restriction elsewhere in Dixie.¹⁰

8. Hamilton, *North Carolina since 1860*, p. 287. *Raleigh News and Observer*, November 6, 1898, quoted in Mabry, "Disfranchisement of the Negro," p. 292.

9. Steelman, "Progressive Era in North Carolina," pp. 168, 178-179; Daniels, *Editor in Politics*, pp. 283-312; Orr, *Aycock*, pp. 118-124.

10. Edmonds, *Negro and Fusion Politics*, p. 144; Mabry, "Disfranchisement of the Negro," p. 291; Daniels, *Editor in Politics*, pp. 312, 374-380; Steelman, "Progressive Era in North Carolina," p. 198.

But before they could be sure of passing an amendment, the Democrats had to change the election law. Daniels may have picked up this tactic in his conversations with the important Louisiana disfranchisers. In any case, the *News and Observer* announced that before the vote on the amendment, the legislature should “make it impossible for any element of white voters to appeal to the Negro voters upon any public question.” Similarly, a black belt correspondent, in a letter to the newspaper, asked the legislature to “give us an election law by which the amendment can be adopted.” A Democratic state senator declared himself in favor of “a good square, honest law that will always give a good Democratic majority.” Drafted by a three-man Democratic committee with the help of State Chairman Simmons, the law passed the legislature with every recorded Democrat but two in favor, and every recorded Populist and Republican in opposition. In the thirty minutes that the majority party allowed for the House Republicans to state their case against the bill, the GOP spokesmen declared the election law a subterfuge to get the constitutional amendment past the electorate.¹¹

The new law snatched appointment of election officers from local officials chosen by the voters and placed it in the hands of a state election board selected by the Democratic General Assembly. To prevent possible federal interference, the law changed the date of the state election from November to August. To negate the lingering effect of the liberal Fusionist law, the Democratic statute required all voters to register anew and gave the registrars enough discretion to exclude anyone. Finally, the law provided that any ballot placed in the wrong box—there were six—whether by election officers or the voter himself, would be void. As Representative Richmond Pearson (R., North Carolina) charged in Congress, this multiple box provision amounted to an educational qualification, at least for the oppositionists, who could not trust Democratic election officers.¹²

The purpose of the constitutional amendment, according to the Speaker of the 1899 North Carolina House, was “to settle this question

11. *Raleigh News and Observer*, January 12, 21, 28, February 5, March 1, 1899. *N. C. House Journal* (1899), pp. 984–988; *N.C. Senate Journal* (1899), pp. 778–782.

12. *N.C. Public Acts* (1899), pp. 658–687; Roller, “Republican Party in North Carolina,” p. 20; Edmonds, *Negro and Fusion Politics*, pp. 184–185; Mabry, *Negro in North Carolina Politics*, pp. 62–63; Rep. Pearson, in *Congressional Record*, 56th Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 667–669.

once and forever.” Expanding on this reasoning, the *News and Observer* declared:

The victory won last November will be short-lived and almost barren unless it is garnered. To leave on the registration books every ignorant Negro in the State, who is merely a tool of selfish and designing men, would be to invite a repetition of the disgraceful rule of 1895–1899 whenever there is any considerable division among the white voters.¹³

Populist newspapers, however, charged that the amendment aimed to disfranchise whites as well, and a Democratic sheet lent credence to these charges when it remarked, “The struggle of the white people of North Carolina to rid themselves of the danger of the rule of Negroes and the lower classes of whites is being watched with interest outside the state” (my italics).¹⁴

As in other states, the disfranchisement managers were black belt aristocrats. The “chief engineer” of the amendment, according to the *News and Observer*, was Francis D. Winston of Bertie County (58 percent Negro in 1900). Born in 1857 of F.F.V. lineage, Winston attended Cornell and graduated from the University of North Carolina. A member of the proper gentry church (Episcopal), Winston followed his father’s path into law and the state legislature, and he surpassed his parent by attaining the lieutenant-governorship in 1904. The only other man who spoke for the amendment in the House was the chairman of the Constitutional Amendments Committee, George Rountree of New Hanover County (51 percent Negro in 1900). Though Rountree’s ancestors settled in Virginia too late to be among the first families, they did predate the Revolution, and his father was a rich North Carolina businessman. Graduating from Harvard in 1877, George Rountree became a lawyer, politician, and pillar of the Episcopal church. A leader in the 1898 Wilmington uprising which overturned the legally elected government and killed twenty black men, Rountree displayed small concern for either Negroes or lower-class whites. As he noted in a private manuscript written later in his life, he and the Constitutional Amendments Committee wished to exclude from the electorate all

13. *Raleigh News and Observer*, January 29, February 3, 1899.

14. *Charlotte Daily Observer*, June 6, 1900, quoted in Steelman, “Progressive Era in North Carolina,” p. 215. See Populist, Republican, and Democratic papers quoted and cited in Steelman, p. 215. The text of the amendment is given in N. C. *Public Acts* (1899), pp. 341–343.

illiterates as soon as possible. Apprehensive about the passage of the amendment without some concession to poor whites, they agreed to the most temporary grandfather clause they could obtain.¹⁵

The votes on the amendment in the House and Senate split sharply along party lines. Five House Democrats who had pledged during the 1898 campaign not to vote for a restricted suffrage chose to honor their promises, but every other Democrat recorded on the House and Senate roll calls abided by the party's new position. The Populists split three in favor to three opposed. The three in the lower house stated that they agreed to the bill in order to submit it to the voters. Every recorded Republican opposed the measure.¹⁶

After the bill's passage, Republican lame-duck Governor Daniel L. Russell and his close adviser J. C. L. Harris traveled to Washington in an apparent attempt to induce national GOP leaders to assist them in fighting the amendment in the courts and in Congress. If this was their mission, they failed to obtain the McKinley administration's backing, and North Carolina Republican Senator Jeter Pritchard's effort to persuade the United States Senate to condemn the amendment's grandfather clause likewise proved unsuccessful.¹⁷

The campaign for the amendment continued the brutal partisanship of 1898. Throughout the state, registrars used their newly regained powers to deny the vote to nearly every black man. The chief speaker for the amendment, Charles B. Aycock, branded his opponents "public enemies" who deserved the "contempt of all mankind." Taking him at his word, Red Shirt Clubs, which enrolled as many as a quarter of the whites in some counties, openly intimidated opposition voters of both races and prevented such anti-amendment orators as Populist U.S.

15. For Winston's role, see *Raleigh News and Observer*, March 5, 1899. For biographical details, see Charles B. Aycock, "Francis D. Winston," in Samuel A. Ashe, ed., *Biographical History of North Carolina* 2:475-480; J. O. Carr, "George H. Rountree," in *ibid.*, 3:365-371. For Rountree's view, see George H. Rountree, "My Personal Recollections of the Campaign of 1898," manuscript quoted in Mabry, *Negro in North Carolina Politics*, p. 59. The Progressive Charles B. Aycock threatened to oppose the amendment if the temporary grandfather clause were extended. See Orr, *Aycock*, p. 170.

16. *N. C. House Journal* (1899), p. 656; *N. C. Senate Journal* (1899), p. 495; *Raleigh News and Observer*, February 18, 19, 1899; Daniels, *Editor in Politics*, p. 326.

17. Daniels, *Editor in Politics*, pp. 332-334; Edmonds, *Negro and Fusion Politics*, p. 198. United States Senator John T. Morgan (D., Alabama) thought Pritchard's resolution so grave a challenge to disfranchisement that he stayed in Washington during part of the time when he could have been campaigning at home in his tough 1900 reelection contest. See Ala. Con. *Proceedings* (1901), vol. 3, p. 2917.

Senator Marion Butler from speaking. Perhaps the Red Shirts' real spokesman, however, was not Aycock, but an upper-class ex-congressman from black belt Wilmington, Alfred Moore Waddell, who told an election eve crowd to "go to the polls tomorrow and if you find the Negro out voting, tell him to leave the polls and if he refuses, kill him, shoot him down in his tracks." Against such powerful and determined forces, the official opposition of the Republicans and the Populists, who charged the amendment would "end popular government in this state," could not prevail. With a recorded turnout of 74.6 percent for the referendum, the amendment carried by a 59–41 margin.¹⁸

Table 7.5 indicates that the 1898 election law and a very large, one-sided turnout in 1900 in heavily Negro counties rolled up the majority for the amendment. Under the Fusion election laws, the Negroes voted overwhelmingly for the Populists and Republicans in 1896. The statewide GOP percentage did not change from 1896 to 1898, but the Fusionist percentage in the predominantly white counties probably rose because of the Populist-Republican agreement on a single statewide candidate in 1898, while intimidation and fraud probably depressed their totals in the black areas. From 1898 to 1900, the Fusionist percentage statewide dropped by about a quarter, and their support in the regions of Negro concentration completely disappeared. Since there was a large amount of intimidation in both of these elections, most of the Fusionist decline from 1898 to 1900 must be attributed to the workings of the new election law. The strong correlation between votes for Aycock and the amendment on the one hand, and the percentage of Negroes in each county on the other, no doubt represents a combination of a disproportionately large turnout for disfranchisement among black belt whites as well as simple fraud. As a North Carolina Re-

18. On the actions of the registrars, see editorials, *The Independent*, 52 (1900): 1874–1876, 1885; Marion Butler, "Elections in North Carolina," in *ibid.*: 1953–1955; A. J. McKelway, in *ibid.*: 1955–1957; editorial, *The Outlook* 65 (1900): 841–843. Both of these national magazines favored suffrage restriction, and neither usually showed much sympathy for either black people or Southern Republicans. Aycock is quoted in Orr, *Aycock*, p. 157; Waddell, quoted in Daniels, *Editor in Politics*, p. 368. Statement of the Populist State Executive Committee is quoted in Mabry, *Negro in North Carolina Politics*, p. 67. The Populists and ex-Populists split over the amendment. Senator Butler's faction fought it strenuously, while other former Populist leaders campaigned for it. See *ibid.*, pp. 63–69; Hamilton, *North Carolina since 1860*, pp. 306–308; Steelman, "Progressive Era in North Carolina," pp. 209–217; Orr, *Aycock*, pp. 163–170. One prominent Republican campaigned for the amendment, according to Roller, "Republican Party in North Carolina," p. 52.

Table 7.5. Election Law, Intimidation, and Fraud Carried the Suffrage Amendment: Election Returns and Estimated Negro Voting in North Carolina, 1896–1904.

<i>Election</i>	% <i>Democratic</i>	% <i>Republican</i>	% <i>Populist</i>	% <i>Not Voting</i>
PARTY BALANCE, 1896–1900				
1896 Governor	37.5	39.7	8.3	14.6
1898 Supreme Court	44.4	39.7		15.8
1900 Governor	44.8	30.3		24.7
1900 Referendum	43.8 ^a	30.8 ^b		25.4
ESTIMATES OF NEGRO VOTING, 1896–1904 ^c				
1896 Governor	20	59	8	13
		<i>Election Law and Intimidation</i>		
1900 Governor	67	0		33
1900 Referendum	73 ^a	0 ^b		27
		<i>Constitution</i>		
1904 Governor	0	0		100

^aFor Constitutional Amendment.

^bAgainst Constitutional Amendment.

^cNo estimates were made for Negro voting in the 1898 state supreme court contest.

publican congressman pointed out at the time, the Negroes “according to the election returns, actually voted to disfranchise themselves.” In the first statewide election after the amendment went into effect, the estimated number of Negroes voting dropped drastically. The crisis having passed, whites in regions of high Negro concentration did not need to turn out again in such large proportions or artificially inflate the returns.¹⁹

Table 7.6 demonstrates the split over suffrage restriction in North Carolina. Virtually every Republican and Democrat who voted in 1900 followed his party’s line on the amendment. It is more difficult to discern what course former Populists took, for their party never ran a strong statewide candidate. Since the People’s Party made by far its best statewide showing in 1892, returns from the governor’s race of that year provide the least unsatisfactory indication of who the Populists

19. I have not been able to obtain county-by-county figures on the race for the Supreme Court in 1898. Republican Congressman Linney is quoted in *Congressional Record*, 56th Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 611–616. For other evidence of fraud in the 1900 referendum, see Steelman, “Progressive Era in North Carolina,” pp. 222–226; Orr, *Aycock*, pp. 181–182.

Table 7.6. Party and Suffrage Restriction in North Carolina: Estimates of Relations between Voting in Gubernatorial Races and Referendum on Suffrage Amendment.

<i>% of Adult Males in 1900 Governor's Race^a</i>	<i>% of Adult Males in 1900 Suffrage Referendum</i>		
	<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>	<i>Not Voting</i>
Democrat	96	0	4
Republican	0	100	0
Not Voting	14	0	87
<i>% of Adult Males in 1892 Governor's Race</i>			
Democrat	74	23	2
Republican	6	80	15
Populist	37	42	22
Not Voting	40	-16 ^b	75

^aThere was no Populist candidate in 1900.

^bFor an explanation of estimates below zero, see my "Ecological Regression" article.

were. The 1892 Populists split in the 1900 referendum, and a slight majority of those who voted opposed the amendment.

With the suffrage restricted, both the Republican and Democratic parties shifted to the right, and turnout declined from 75 percent in the 1900 governor's race to less than 50 percent in 1904. No longer did either party have to concern itself with the illiterate or those too poor to pay the poll tax. Democratic legislatures kept taxes low, cut appropriations in some cases and failed to increase them in others, continued to pass partisan election laws and gerrymander voting districts, enacted few of the usual "Progressive" reforms, and none which protected workers or trade unions. The party convention almost endorsed the gold standard in 1902, elected the Southern Railroad's candidate to the United States Senate in 1903, a corporation lawyer to the governorship in 1904, and felt quite comfortable with the conservative Alton B. Parker as presidential candidate in that year. Abandoning the disfranchised Negroes as a lost and damaging cause, the state GOP adopted a lily-white line, and spent the first decade of the century trying to paint the Democrats as pro-Negro and antibusiness. Settled party loyalties and a political structure devised to ensure Democratic victory aborted the new Republican appeals.²⁰

20. On the Democrats, see Steelman, "Progressive Era in North Carolina," pp. 237-248,

TEXAS: ELECTIONS—"THE MOST TERRIBLE ENEMY"

Texas was in many respects the least "Southern" of the ex-Confederate states. Settled by Americans late in the antebellum period, it entered the Union only in 1845. Slavery lasted for 200 years in Virginia and the Carolinas; for twenty in Texas. The aristocratic planter class, the fixed racial attitudes, and the stable, elitist power structure which characterized a slave society had little time to mature in the Lone Star State. In Alabama and Virginia the antebellum black belt slaveholders began a tradition of political expertise which their descendants cherished and developed. In North Carolina and Tennessee, mountain whites, by banding together against the lowland slaveholders' schemes of secession and war, willed their progeny an inclination to oppose the established politics even if opposition meant alliances with Yankees and Negroes. Postbellum Texans inherited neither of these traditions.

Nor did a post-War Texan's birthright include the profound sense of grievance, the corresponding regional and state pride, and the desire for unity against a common enemy which were shared by inhabitants of states more battered by the Civil War. Cut off from the main theater of the conflict in 1863, Texas never saw its coasts infested with opponents, its towns and crops burned, large numbers of its sons sacrificed. Consequently, Confederate generals received a little less automatic reverence, orators slipped a bit less easily into paeans to the lost cause, the North inspired somewhat less fear and hatred in Texas after the War than in other ex-Confederate states. Texas society after 1865 also differed from the rest of the South in another respect: it included fewer Negroes. In 1880, 36 percent of the population in the 16 states and the District of Columbia which comprised the Census Bureau's South were black, but only 24.7 percent in Texas. By 1910, Texas had the smallest proportion of Negroes, 17.7 percent, among the 11 ex-Confederate states.²¹

Since the percentage of Negroes was too small to pose a plausible

264-268, 272-279, 542-580, 694-721; Roller, "Republican Party in North Carolina," pp. 29-31; Orr, *Aycock*, pp. 213-214. According to Steelman, pp. 386-394, North Carolina in 1916 had the lowest taxes per capita of any state in the United States. On the Republicans, see Steelman, "Progressive Era in North Carolina," pp. 228, 339-409, 423-431; and, generally Roller, "Republican Party of North Carolina."

21. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Negro Population, 1790-1915* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1918), pp. 46, 49.

threat of "Negro domination," opposition political parties could be tolerated more easily than in the rest of Dixie. If an opposition party did triumph in Texas, its victory would not automatically spell a large increase in the number of Negro officials who were given an office as a reward for black support, because Negro votes would constitute a smaller percentage of the dissenters' totals. Conversely, Democrats would have less reason to demand disfranchisement of the Negroes. Moreover, the black belt was smaller and less potent in Texas politics than in other Southern states. Only 14 of Texas' 144 counties had black majorities in 1880; and by 1910, only 8 of 217. In contrast, 66 of Georgia's 146 counties were predominantly black in 1910. These figures translated into legislative impotence for the Texas black belt. For instance, only 7 of 107 members of the 1891-92 Texas House came from counties with Negro majorities.

All this is not to imply that Texas was utterly different from the rest of the South, but only that the forces which shaped late nineteenth-century Southern politics were muted in Texas. The Democrats, predominantly white and drawing their support from all classes, although dominated by businessmen and rich landowners, struggled against the repeated efforts of a poor white-Negro coalition to gain power and office. Since there was no mountain whites' Unionist tradition, few whites adhered to the Texas GOP. Men with economic grievances and those unsuccessful in achieving their ambitions within the Democratic party therefore gravitated to the third-party movements, which consistently attracted a larger proportion of the adult males in Texas than in any other Southern state (table 7.7). Since Negroes regularly voted for the Republicans and third parties, and poor whites often did also,

Table 7.7. Texas Was Hospitable to Third Parties: Percentage of Adult Males Voting for Third Parties in Presidential Elections, 1880-1896.

<i>Party</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>% in Texas</i>	<i>% in Ten Other Southern States</i>
Greenback	1880	7.2	2.2
Union Labor	1888	6.6	0.6
Populist	1892	19.0	8.0
Mid-Road Populist ^a	1896	13.5	1.1

^aThe "Middle of the Road" faction refused to cooperate with either the Democratic or Republican parties, keeping instead its independent identity.

Democrats made repeated efforts to enact laws restricting the suffrage. But since Democrats from counties with large numbers of Negroes had less power in Texas than elsewhere, it took 27 years to enact poll tax legislation.²²

Though it reflected these differences from the rest of the South, the course of Texas politics from the Civil War to the turn of the century was quite similar to that in other areas below the Mason-Dixon line. The Republican party elected only one governor during Reconstruction in Texas, and his margin over an "independent" opponent was less than 800 votes. Thereafter, Texas Republicans provided a constant, though small opposition to the Democrats. It should be noted that Republican support did not erode very much during the eighties. The GOP candidate for governor got 24.4 percent of the votes in 1880 and 22.6 percent in 1890, while turnout remained fairly constant.

The Republicans, about three-fourths of whom were black, posed more of a threat to the Democrats when they supported third-party candidates.²³ In 1880, for example, the Democratic gubernatorial candidate enjoyed a margin of 26.8 percent of the adult males over the Republican nominee; whereas, in 1882, a Greenback-Republican hopeful cut the majority party's margin to 11.6 percent of the potential electorate (table 7.8). Under the skilled generalship of Norris Wright Cuney, a Negro, the Republicans also gave substantial backing to a Farmers' Alliance candidate in 1888, a conservative Democrat in 1892, and a Populist in 1896. In fact, a considerable portion of the votes for unorthodox parties, left or right, came from the blacks, and those parties could not hope to contend with the Democrats without widespread black support.

22. For evidence of blatant favoritism toward privileged economic groups under Democratic rule, see Frank W. Johnson, *A History of Texas and Texans*, 1: 586-593; James Aubrey Tinsley, "The Progressive Movement in Texas," pp. 15-22, 91-106, 177-187. Roscoe C. Martin, *The People's Party in Texas*, presents proof from correlations of subcounty election returns and economic statistics that the Populists represented poor whites, while the large landowners on good land were Democrats. In the four presidential elections cited in table 7.7, the third party received a larger percentage of the votes than in any other state with one exception. The Populists in Alabama got 24.8 percent of the vote in the 1892 presidential race.

23. Rice, *The Negro in Texas*, pp. 34-112, is the best treatment of Republicanism and Texas elections in this period. Robert Saunders, "Southern Populists and the Negro, 1893-1895," p. 257, treats the 1894 contest. For the attitudes of white Republicans and Populists toward the blacks, see, in addition, Pollack, *The Populist Mind*, pp. 284-285; Martin, *People's Party in Texas*, pp. 82, 93-99, 137, 236-237; Casdorph, *History of the Republican Party in Texas*, pp. 44-45, 49-50, 58, 68-71.

Table 7.8. Stiff Party Competition in Texas Gubernatorial Contests, 1880-1896: Actual Votes and Estimates of Voting by Race.

<i>Election</i>	<i>Democratic</i>	<i>Republican</i>	<i>Third Party</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Not Voting</i>
% OF ALL ADULT MALES					
1880	43.7	16.9	8.9 ^a	0	30.5
1882	36.7	0	24.9 ^a	0	38.4
1888	49.6	0	19.5 ^b	0	30.9
1890	49.0	14.5	0	0	35.9
1892	33.6	0	19.2 ^c	23.6 ^d	23.7
1894	40.5	9.3	26.7 ^c	1.4 ^e	26.6
1896	47.6	0	36.1 ^c	0	14.3
ESTIMATED % OF WHITE ADULT MALES					
1880	53.6	4.9	8.7 ^a	0	36.9
1882	44.1	0	18.0 ^a	0	37.8
1888	55.6	0	10.1 ^b	0	34.3
1890	63.3	6.6	0	0	29.4
1892	36.2	0	23.1 ^c	23.2 ^d	17.0
1894	41.7	5.3	29.5 ^c	0	22.0
1896	47.6	0	34.1 ^c	0	18.0
ESTIMATED % OF NEGRO ADULT MALES					
1880	26.5	62.2	4.0 ^a	0	11.2
1882	9.9	0	61.8 ^a	0	28.3
1888	27.9	0	58.3 ^b	0	13.3
1890	11.5	56.1	0	0	32.7
1892	24.1	0	8.3 ^c	29.4 ^d	38.2
1894	21.4	34.5	22.4 ^c	0	22.9
1896	47.0	0	49.9 ^c	0	3.2

^aGreenback^bAlliance^cPopulist^dConservative Democrat^eProhibitionist

Politicians of every party no doubt recognized these facts and sought to bargain for the endorsement of black leaders when possible, and undercut those leaders by appealing over their heads to the black masses when necessary. The Democrats and Populists concentrated on the latter tactic particularly in 1892, with a fair amount of success. The Democrats continued to seek black support outside regular Republican channels throughout the nineties, but the Populists, after their substantial defeat in 1894, chose to deal with Cuney directly. Unfor-

unately for the People's Party, one of Cuney's young lieutenants who was feuding with his captain revolted against the older man's choice and openly backed the Democratic candidate. The Democrats also swelled their totals in the 1896 contest through extraordinary efforts, legal and illegal, in black belt counties in which they had gained control by violence and intimidation.²⁴

The attempt to restrict the suffrage began long before 1896. Delegates to the 1875 constitutional convention beat down three efforts to enact a poll tax by votes of 52–28, 44–28, and 56–22. Led by former Confederate postmaster-general and future United States Congressman and Senator John H. Reagan of Anderson County (44.7 percent Negro in 1880) and by W. L. Crawford of Marion County (65.6 percent Negro), proponents of the poll tax argued that the restriction would eliminate “irresponsible” voters. Voting, according to these conservatives, was not a natural right, but a privilege which the state should deny to those unwilling to pay the tax.²⁵ As the *Houston Telegraph* summed up the poll taxers' stand,

Must the low, groveling, equal-before-the-law, lazy, purchasable Negro, who pays no taxes, have the privilege of neutralizing the vote of a good citizen and taxpayer? Ought the miserable apologies for men with white skins, who exercise the right to vote only because it furnishes them with whiskey, be allowed to vote, if they dont [*sic*] pay the state a pittance for its protection and the privileges afforded them?²⁶

Almost every Democrat who joined the fourteen Republicans in opposition to the tax was a member of the Grange, a farmers' organization. Most of those who spoke against the voting restriction came from counties with very few Negroes. Defending the traditional belief that suffrage was a natural right, these men charged that the capitation tax would disfranchise many whites, encourage fraud, invite the federal government to overthrow Texas' constitution, and “oppress the poor.”

24. Rice, *Negro in Texas*, pp. 68–85; Casdorff, *Republican Party in Texas*, pp. 53–54. Graphs of the series of gubernatorial election returns by county make clear which counties deviated from the general pattern and when those deviations occurred.

25. In analyzing the conventions, I have relied upon the *Tex. Con. Con. Journal* (1875); McKay, ed., *Texas Constitutional Convention*, and McKay, *Making the Texas Constitution*. The roll calls are given in the *Journal*, pp. 306, 309, 310. For the conservatives' arguments, see *Texas Constitutional Convention*, pp. 167–190. An opponent of the poll tax identified Reagan and Crawford as its chief backers in *ibid.*, p. 185.

26. *Houston Telegraph*, October 10, 1875, quoted in McKay, *Making the Texas Constitution*, p. 98.

"Is this a covert design, cunningly devised," asked B. D. Martin of Hunt County (7 percent Negro), "to plant the germ of aristocracy in this land? . . . It cannot affect the *rich*; they can always pay their taxes. It afflicts the *poor* man and the poor man alone." J. W. Barnett of Parker County (3.9 percent Negro) more bluntly castigated the tax as "a stepping stone toward aristocracy and imperialism."²⁷

The convention defeat of the "aristocratic design" proved temporary. Four years later, Alexander Watkins Terrell pushed a poll tax amendment through the state senate. Terrell, who served in the state senate from 1876 to 1884 and in the lower house from 1890 to 1892 and 1902 to 1906, was the most prominent and constant advocate of the poll tax in Texas. Born in Virginia in 1827 of a slaveholding family, Terrell migrated to Missouri, where he attended the state university, read law, and married the daughter of a wealthy tobacco farmer and politician. Moving on to Texas, Terrell became a lawyer, Democratic politician, and Confederate general in the Civil War.

After the War and his first wife's death, Terrell married a Texas plantation owner's daughter. Averse to appearing in courts where Negroes served on juries, he retired from the law temporarily and devoted himself entirely to running the plantation from 1867 to 1871, but he entered politics again in 1872. Throughout the rest of his life, he divided his time between law, politics, and the plantation. One of the first bills he introduced in the state senate was aimed at eliminating blacks from Texas juries. Strongly challenged by a Greenback candidate in 1878, Terrell introduced his poll tax bill in 1879 because, in his biographer's words, he "thought that the only way to prevent the people of Texas from voting to confiscate property for educational and eleemosynary purposes was to reform the ballot box by requiring a poll tax for the privilege of voting." In fact, Terrell wished to destroy public elementary education in Texas, though he eagerly supported allocations for the University of Texas, which primarily served those wealthy enough to prepare at private secondary schools. He also fought valiantly to reward, with three million acres of public land, the builders of an opulent new capital building.²⁸

27. On the opposition Democrats, see *ibid.*, pp. 97–98, 101–102. Spokesmen include Weaver, in *Texas Constitutional Convention*, pp. 170–172; Martin, in *ibid.*, pp. 173–175; Flournoy, in *ibid.*, pp. 167–168; J. F. Johnson, in *ibid.*, p. 184; Pickett, in *ibid.*, p. 177; John Johnson, in *ibid.*, p. 177; Barnett, in *ibid.*, p. 176.

28. Charles K. Chamberlain, "Alexander Watkins Terrell, Citizen, Statesman," pp. 140–

Although his 1879 bill died in the House, Terrell introduced poll tax bills in the 1881 and 1883 legislatures, again meeting defeat. His minority report on the bill to a state senate committee in 1883 may be coupled with a speech he gave to the "Progressive" National Civic Federation in New York City in 1906 to indicate Terrell's views on the necessity of a restricted suffrage and on the purposes of the poll tax.²⁹ Characterizing the Fifteenth Amendment as "the political blunder of the century," Terrell proposed the poll tax to eliminate "the thriftless, idle and semi-vagrant element of *both races*" (my italics). "Though liberty requires elections," this adherent of the "Democratic" party remarked in 1883, "yet when they are not controlled by intelligence and patriotism they become the most terrible enemy." And in 1906 he added this non-sequitur: "Whether universal manhood suffrage is good for the country depends entirely on the sort of men who vote."

Stressing his desire to regulate, but not disturb the railroads, Terrell ran unsuccessfully for the United States Senate in 1886. After this defeat, he attached himself to the "reform" governor Jim Hogg and returned to the state legislature, where he quickly became one of the most important leaders. In the 1891 session, Terrell was the principal sponsor, according to the *Dallas Morning News*, of a poll tax amendment (February 20, 1891). After a debate in which Terrell declared, in the *News's* summary (February 21, 1891), "that the chief object in view was to collect the tax on the woolly scalp" (i.e., to disfranchise Negroes), the bill passed the House. Opposition was apparently so substantial in the Senate, however, that the bill was never brought to a vote.³⁰

141, 191-192, 230, quote at p. 140. Biographical details on Terrell are taken from this thesis. The Greenback Party platforms from 1878 through 1882 endorsed "universal manhood suffrage" and strongly denounced any attempts to set up "property suffrage" through a poll tax. See Winkler, *Political Parties in Texas*, pp. 181, 200, 208. Terrell may well have had a financial interest in the "Capital Syndicate's" operations.

29. Recognizing Terrell's central role in the adoption of the poll tax, despite the fact that he did not serve in the legislature which finally passed the amendment, the *Austin (Texas) Daily Statesman* reprinted his 1883 minority report during the 1902 campaign for ratification. See the issue of October 19, 1902. Terrell's 1906 speech to the National Civic Federation in New York is reported in Chamberlain, "Terrell," pp. 493-494, and Tinsley, "Progressive Movement in Texas," pp. 195-196.

30. Chamberlain, "Terrell," pp. 268-329; *Dallas Morning News*, February 20, 21, 26, 1891. Terrell was apparently chief author of the railroad commission law which so angered the Farmers' Alliance leaders that they broke with the Texas Democrats and launched the Populist Party. See Harry Tracy (Alliance lobbyist) to the *News*, March 23, 1892. For the progress of Terrell's bill in the Senate, see *Austin (Texas) Daily Statesman*, February 21, 1891; *Tex. House Journal* (1891), pp. 84, 162, 565-566, 572-573. During the debate, Ed Patton, the only

The 1891 legislature also considered a bill to call a constitutional convention. Terrell, the leading opponent of the proposal, objected to calling a convention at this time because (again in the *News's* summary),

The people are confused over new theories, projects, crankiness about subtresury schemes, state ownership of railroads, and [Henry] Georgeism, and . . . a large element is in favor of confiscation and a general divide. It is, therefore, a dangerous time to elect men for the essentially conservative work of constitution making.³¹

The legislature did pass a bill providing for voter registration and a secret ballot in cities of ten thousand or more people. The registration bill was a direct response to the outcome of the “nonpartisan” Dallas city election of April 1891, in which incumbent Mayor Connor beat a candidate endorsed by the local Democratic party. Much of Connor’s majority came from Negro and lower-class white precincts. Furious at their defeat, the local Democratic leaders rushed to Austin and persuaded the legislators to jam through a registration law during the last three days of the session.³²

The secret ballot law, introduced in the special session of 1892 by W. H. Pope of Harrison County (68 percent Negro in 1890), at first applied to every county in the state. Before final passage, however, it was grafted onto another bill that limited its effect to the ten largest cities, which together contained fewer than one of every ten Texans. The bill also allowed election judges to assist illiterate voters, despite one representative’s protest that “the object of the bill could hardly be accomplished” if illiterates were allowed to vote.³³ These provisions severely limited the bill’s restrictive impact.

black member of the House, charged that while the bill was aimed chiefly at Negroes, it would affect many whites as well. The *News*, March 5, 1891, endorsed disfranchisement of Negroes and the “agrarian agitators of the large cities” (by definition, presumably, a rather miniscule group). After one day of hot debate in the Senate, the bill languished. See *News* March 20, 1891; *Statesman*, March 20, 1891; *Tex. Senate Journal* (1891), pp. 436–437. Neither newspaper explained precisely why the sponsors allowed the bill to die. Robert C. Cotner asserts in *James Stephen Hogg*, p. 226, that Governor Hogg opposed a poll tax, but offers no evidence for his assertion, and does not specify whether or not Hogg ever threw his considerable political weight into active opposition to the tax.

31. *Dallas Morning News*, February 6, 7, 1891. Terrell’s proposal to kill the convention bill passed the House by 67–13.

32. *Ibid.*, April 8–14, 1891. The election took place on April 7; the bill was introduced April 10. The legislature adjourned April 13.

33. *Tex. House Journal* (extra session, 1892), pp. 180–191, 242, 260; *Tex. Senate Journal* (extra session, 1892), pp. 69, 73, 78–80, 83, 84, 88, 153, 227–229; *Austin Daily Statesman*, April

Throughout the rest of the decade, various legislators proposed certain changes in election laws, but none of their bills passed either house. In 1893, for example, Rowell of Marion (64 percent Negro in 1890) proposed to extend registration and the secret ballot throughout the state, but a majority of the House refused to take up his bill. A majority, but not the two-thirds of the House members necessary to pass a constitutional amendment, did favor a poll tax in the same session. Other poll tax bills met with even less success. Since there were so few votes on the actual bills, and since historians have written so little on Texas politics during these years, it is difficult to tell which groups pushed and which fought the measures.³⁴

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Texas was unnaturally quiet politically. After Norris Wright Cuney's death, two black leaders, Henry Ferguson and William McDonald, fought for control of the state's Republican organization. Although Ferguson had clearly won by 1900, he had to struggle continuously for the next decade against a lily-white faction of the party. By 1900, too, most Populists had found the middle of the road overgrown with weeds. In the gubernatorial election of 1900, the Populist candidate attracted only about 6 percent of the white adult males and almost none of the Negroes.³⁵

12, 1892; *Tex. General Laws* (extra session, 1892), pp. 13–19.

34. *Tex. House Journal* (1893), pp. 100, 218, 780, 862–863, 1248, 1286; *Tex. House Journal* (1895), pp. 382, 1026, 1063; *Tex. Senate Journal* (1895), p. 748; *Texas House Journal* (1897), pp. 318, 1420, 1447–1448; *Tex. Senate Journal* (1895), pp. 375, 903; *Tex. House Journal* (1899), pp. 1169, 1531–1532; *Tex. Senate Journal* (1899), pp. 619, 792, 1150. Grover Cleveland appointed Terrell ambassador to Turkey in 1893, and Terrell did not return to the legislature during the decade. Though members of dissenting parties unanimously opposed all disfranchising measures brought to a vote in the 1891, 1893, and 1899 legislatures, there were too few Populists or Republicans in the legislature at any time to stop any bill which the vast majority of the Democrats wanted passed. Nor were there enough Democrats from heavily Negro counties to push through bills without the aid of a great many white-county Democrats. I therefore tried a variety of dividing lines between “whiter” and “blacker” counties. Although Democrats from counties over 30 percent or 40 percent Negro did support the poll tax more strongly than those from overwhelmingly white counties in these sessions, the differences in the two groups' voting patterns during the nineties were slight. Nor do correlations of roll calls with the strength of Populist or Republican candidates in each legislator's home county unveil any pattern. These facts, in addition to the secret deaths of many of these measures in committees or on the calendar of one house, lead me to place particular stress on the few legislative leaders about whom we have some information.

35. The Ferguson-McDonald struggle may be followed in Rice, *Negro in Texas*, pp. 49–52; Winkler, *Political Parties in Texas*, pp. 405–409, 433–441, 454–461, 474–478, 487–491, 514–519. The tiny Populist vote in this election and in the 1902 contest, when the Populists received the

The Democrats were no less drowsy. Each of the three governors who held office from 1894 to 1906 put himself under the tutelage of Col. Edward M. House and repeatedly reassured the conservative wire-puller that he felt inactivity the best course for government. A leading student of the period describes the two terms of Governor Joseph D. Sayers (1898–1902) as “placid.” Headlining an article on the 1901 legislature “Demand for ‘Reform’ Is No Longer Heard,” the *Dallas Morning News* reported that “not one [legislator] in fifty wants to discuss with another member the importance of disturbing the present apparent placid and satisfactory conditions.”³⁶ The adoption of the poll tax in Texas, then, was neither part of a general “reform” program nor the result of a frantic racist upsurge. It was the quiet climax of a long drive by a few men, a drive which succeeded when the opposition became dormant.

In the 1899 legislature, Representative Pat Neff of McLennan (24 percent Negro in 1900), and Senator A. B. Davidson of DeWitt (23 percent Negro) had introduced poll tax bills. The former failed, 50 ayes, to 50 nays; the latter, 18 to 11, neither of which received the necessary two-thirds vote. In 1901 Neff and Davidson re-introduced their bills, and Davidson’s eventually became the constitutional amendment. Both legislators were aspiring, legislatively talented politicians. Neff, 28 years old in 1901, became House Speaker in the 1903 session and governor from 1920 to 1924. Davidson rose to be President Pro-Tem of the Senate in 1903. His bill passed both houses fairly easily in 1901, 87–15 in the House and 23–6 in the Senate, with the voting patterns showing no significant difference between legislators from counties over and counties under 40 percent Negro.³⁷

franchises of 1.6 percent of the adult males, destroys the contention of Strong and Smith that the poll taxers aimed to quell an immediate Populist threat; although they may have wished to guard against the renaissance of a Populist-type party. See Donald S. Strong, “The Poll Tax: The Case of Texas,” pp. 693–709; Dick Smith, “Texas and the Poll Tax,” pp. 167–173.

36. Tinsley, “Progressive Movement in Texas,” pp. 32–43; *Dallas Morning News*, January 13, 1901.

37. For the 1899 vote on the poll tax bill, see *Tex. House Journal* (1901), p. 1368; *Tex. Senate Journal* (1901), p. 29. For the 1901 passage of the bill, see *Tex. House Journal* (1901), pp. 481–482; *Tex. Senate Journal* (1901), pp. 55–56, 63–64, 80. When the vote on final passage in the House was announced, the bill lacked a two-thirds margin by three votes. Several members, including a freshman representative named John Nance Garner, switched sides so the bill could pass. *Dallas Morning News*, February 22, 1901. On an earlier vote in the House to make the 1901 amendment self-enacting without further legislative action—thus precluding

The 1902 referendum took the character of a party, race, and class battle. The Democrats endorsed the amendment. The Populists blasted it, charging that it was a plot to rob “the laboring people . . . of their liberties at the ballot box. Every laboring man who loves liberty, who believes in freedom of suffrage, who prizes his rights of citizenship should vote against the poll tax amendment.” Citing the Declaration of Independence, the State Federation of Labor denounced the tax as a “cunning effort of the wealthier classes to defeat the will of the people by disfranchising the poorer classes . . . a step in the direction of disfranchising a larger part of the people whenever the ruling class sees fit to increase the tax.” Likewise, Negroes and white Republicans organized to defeat the tax, and the precinct returns for at least one large county, Travis, show a close correlation between votes for the GOP candidate for governor and votes against the poll tax.³⁸

Only 41 percent of the adult males cast ballots in the November 1902 referendum, which was 7 percent less than the percentage cast in the governor’s race held at the same time. Sixty-five percent of those who voted, or just over a quarter of the potential electors, favored the poll tax. The estimates of voting by race indicate that there was a great deal of fraud and/or intimidation in the counties of high Negro concentration. Whereas the Republican candidate for governor in 1902 got better than three-fourths of the estimated Negro votes (table 7.9B), more than four-fifths of the same voters appear to have backed the poll tax (table 7.9A). Since it is ludicrous to assume either that Negroes

possible legislative delay or de facto nullification later—there was something of a white county–black belt split. Eighty-five percent of those from counties over 40 percent Negro voted for the automatic provision, while only 62.5 percent from the counties under 40 percent Negro favored it. See *Tex. House Journal* (1901), pp. 388–391.

Printed sources for Texas biography in this period are abominable. This sparse information was gleaned from Seth S. McKay and Odie B. Faulk, *Texas After Spindletop*, pp. 77–87; C. W. Raines, ed., *Year Book For Texas*, vols. 1 and 2 (Austin, Texas: Gammel Book Co., 1902, 1903).

38. *Dallas Morning News*, October 14, 1902. Editorials and letters to the editor make it clear that the Democrats represented the tax as a white supremacy measure. See *El Paso (Texas) News*, quoted January 23, 1901; editorial, February 15, 1901; George T. Todd to *ibid.*, October 14, 1902; editorial, October 26, 1902. The Democrats also tried to confuse the issue by arguing that the tax would protect the poor from the “outrages” of “corrupt office-holders.” See *ibid.*, November 2, 1902; *Austin Daily Statesman*, October 28, 1902. For the Populists’ and state Federation of Labor’s response, see Ogden, *Poll Tax in the South*, pp. 18–19; *Dallas Morning News*, October 26, 1902. Republican efforts are detailed in *Dallas Morning News*, October 19, 1902. The Travis County results are from *Austin Daily Statesman*, October 30, November 7, 1902.

Table 7.9. Violence, Disorganization, and Fraud: Estimates of Negro Voting in Texas, 1902.

<i>Race</i>	<i>A. Referendum, 1902</i>		
	<i>For Poll Tax</i>	<i>Against Poll Tax</i>	<i>Not Voting</i>
White	34	18	48
Negro	23	4	73

<i>Race</i>	<i>B. Governors' Contest, 1902</i>			
	<i>Democratic</i>	<i>Republican</i>	<i>Populist</i>	<i>Not Voting</i>
White	50	9	3	38
Negro	6	21	-3	77

voted for the tax or that black belt whites voted Republican, one can only conclude that election officers, realizing that the Democrats were safe in the gubernatorial election but fearing that the referendum might be close, changed the figures on the poll tax. The very low turnout in counties with large percentages of blacks probably reflects the disorganization of Negro voters after the Ferguson-McDonald struggle and the decline of the Populists, as well as a consolidation of power by whites in those counties, a consolidation which had often been delayed because of the fervid competition for votes in the nineties. Estimates of votes in the referendum according to party alignments in 1900 (table 7.10) reflect the evident tampering with returns—surely the Republicans did not vote three-to-one for the tax—as well as the opposition of the few remaining Populists to suffrage restriction.³⁹

In 1903 A. W. Terrell returned to the legislature to author what

Table 7.10. Texas Populists Opposed the Poll Tax: Estimates of Relationships between Party and Voting in 1902 Referendum.

<i>Party in 1900</i>	<i>1902 Poll Tax Referendum</i>		
	<i>For Tax</i>	<i>Against Tax</i>	<i>Not Voting</i>
<i>Governors' Race</i>			
Democratic	39	12	48
Republican	66	18	16
Populist	0	81	19
Not Voting	2	5	94

39. These conclusions are based on a series of graphs of votes in gubernatorial elections and the percentage Negro in each county. The graphs are too numerous and complex to include in the text. Since the Populists did not control the election machinery even in the counties where they remained strong, one must assume that that group's partisans really voted against the tax.

became known as the "Terrell Election Law." That law, together with a more comprehensive statute passed two years later also written by Terrell, provided for a noncumulative poll tax to be paid six months before the election and an office-block secret ballot in every county for general elections and primaries. Only election judges could assist illiterates in voting. Minority parties were not guaranteed roles in the election machinery. Chiefly to allow counties to conduct white primaries, the county committees of each party were authorized to prescribe additional qualifications for voting in their primaries.⁴⁰

Texas election returns from the first decade of the century tend to undermine some contentions crucial to V. O. Key's fait accompli hypothesis, a hypothesis which rested largely on the example of Texas. Key asserted that by the time the poll tax was passed, the "Negroes [had] been disfranchised . . . and the electoral abdication of a substantial part of the white population signed and sealed . . ." (p. 535). To be sure, most blacks in Texas had been pushed out of the electorate by 1902 through violence and intimidation, or had at least temporarily ceased voting because of the disarray of the Populist and Republican parties.⁴¹ Yet an estimated 36 percent managed to vote in the 1900 governor's race, and 21 percent in 1902. And much larger proportions of whites continued to participate in the pre-poll tax elections—80 percent in 1900 and 62 percent in 1902. If their abdication was already "signed and sealed," delivery awaited the institution of the poll tax. In the first general election for governor in which tax payment was required (1904), estimated white turnout dropped to 46 percent, and the figures in successive elections were 27 percent, 39 percent, and 29 percent. The analogous turnout percentages for blacks were 15 percent, 11 percent, 16 percent, and 2 percent. Moreover, the voters did not turn out for post-poll tax Democratic primaries, either. Only about a third of the Texas adult males—about 40 percent among the whites—voted in the hard-fought Democratic gubernatorial primaries of 1908 and 1910.

The Terrell election laws also sealed the doom of opposition parties in Texas until the late 1950s. In the 1900 presidential contest, 23 per-

40. *Tex. General Laws* (1903), pp. 133–158; *Tex. General Laws* (1905), pp. 532–565.

41. On the disarray of the opposition, see Chester Alwyn Barr, Jr., *Reconstruction to Reform*, pp. 176–208; Lawrence C. Goodwyn, "Populist Dreams and Negro Rights: East Texas as a Case Study," *American Historical Review* 76 (1971): 1435–1456.

cent of the adult males in Texas voted for the Republican or Populist candidates, compared to 39 percent for the Democrats. In 1904, after the poll tax went into effect, the combined GOP-Populist percentage dropped to 8 percent, and the opposition did not attract as many as one eligible voter in ten in any of the decade's remaining presidential or gubernatorial elections. Each decade since the Civil War had witnessed a major challenge to Texas Democrats—Radicalism in the sixties and seventies, the Greenback-Independent movement in the eighties, and the Populists in the nineties. Depressions, which seemed to strike about every ten years, had nurtured the Greenback and Populist parties. The recessions of 1907–08, 1914–15, or 1920–21 might have bred similar protests. Moreover, the Socialist party, which attracted many voters west of the Mississippi after 1900, might have provided the vehicle for Texans' economic protests.⁴² Or perhaps—had their Northern stronghold begun to crumble in the face of Democratic victories—the Republicans would have turned South again in an effort to regain national predominance. The point is that if the electorate had not been restricted and the remaining voters channeled into the Democratic fold by the primary, some party might well have arisen to challenge the status quo. At the very least, the Democrats who framed the poll tax and similar restrictions elsewhere must have feared that possibility.

GEORGIA: THE "TOOMBS PLAN"

"Give us a convention," Bob Toombs is reported to have said in 1876, "and I will fix it so that the people shall rule and the Negro shall never be heard from." A planter, congressman, and U.S. senator before the War, Toombs was considered too rash and bibulous for the Confederate presidency. Although he was an antebellum Whig, Toombs did not become a "New South" paternalist after the conflict. Indeed, he was the prototypical unreconstructed rebel, carrying to his grave a passionate hatred of a Yankee-dominated Union and an unshakable

42. On Socialist party activities in the South and West, see James Weinstein, *The Decline of Socialism in America, 1912–1925* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), pp. 16–19. The party was especially strong among ex-Populists in Texas and Oklahoma. See also Don Nimmo and Clifton McCleskey, "Impact of the Poll Tax on Voter Participation," pp. 682–699, who found that repeal of the poll tax alone increased turnout by about 15 percent in Harris County. They showed that the increases were highest among white collar workers, Mexican Americans, and the young. They predicted larger changes in the character of county politics as politicians realized the necessity of catering to the new voters.

belief that Negroes were subhuman beasts fit only for slavery. He got his constitutional convention, ruled it autocratically as head of its chief committee, and came close to keeping his promise to eliminate black men from Georgia politics. His method, later referred to as the "Georgia plan," was the cumulative poll tax.⁴³

The 1868 Georgia constitution had required each male adult to pay a \$1 poll tax each year or lose the right to vote. Realizing the damage this requirement would do their cause, the Republicans suspended the requirement from 1868 to 1871. The Democrats, however, resorted to widespread terrorism and fraud, and many self-appointed election officials disfranchised nontaxpayers regardless of the actions of the Republican governor and legislature. When the Democrats took over in 1871, one of their first acts was to reinstitute the poll tax prerequisite. Nevertheless, the 1868 provision did not guarantee Democratic success, for under it taxes cumulated only in the election year. Even if poor citizens could not pay their tax, politicians in tight contests might be able to pay the \$1 taxes for large numbers of their partisans.⁴⁴

The cumulative poll tax, adopted at Toombs' 1877 constitutional convention, insured that the Georgia GOP would never rise again. Several knowledgeable contemporary observers believed that it was the most effective device for restricting the suffrage.⁴⁵ An analysis of

43. Toombs's quotation from *Atlanta Constitution*, January 26, 1876, quoted in Allie M. Allen Jackson, "The Georgia Constitutional Convention of 1877" (M.A. thesis, Atlanta University, 1936), p. 15. The most recent biography of Toombs is William Y. Thompson's *Robert Toombs of Georgia* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1966). Rarely if ever has one man so dominated a constitutional convention in America as Robert Toombs dominated the Georgia convention of 1877. Every convention bill had to be submitted to the Committee on Final Revision, which Toombs chaired. When the legislative appropriation for the convention ran out, Toombs personally advanced the money to pay for the rest of the session. Jackson, "Georgia Constitutional Convention," pp. 21, 26. There was no record vote and little discussion on the poll tax provision. See Samuel W. Small, *A Stenographic Report of the Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention Held in Atlanta, Georgia, 1877* (Atlanta, Georgia: The Constitution Co., 1877), pp. 36, 63-65, 480-481, 489. Congressman William H. Howard (D., Georgia) said in 1906 that "our poll-tax qualification was put in the constitution by [Confederate] General Toombs as his idea of disfranchisement," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 12, 1906.

44. On events from 1868 through 1871, see Elisabeth Studley Nathans, *Losing the Peace*, pp. 141, 202; Alan Conway, *The Reconstruction of Georgia*, p. 175; Shadgett, *The Republican Party*, p. 44. Governor Colquitt's followers were able to pay the taxes of their poor followers in Macon in 1880, but the cost of doing so became increasingly high. The Georgia comptroller-general stated in 1904 that most Negroes were 10-25 years in default on their poll taxes. Clarence A. Bacote, "The Negro in Georgia Politics, 1880-1908," pp. 46, 421.

45. See above, chapter 3, footnote 8.

election returns bears out their estimate (see also chapter 3, tables 3.2, 3.3).

Figure 7.1 portrays actual turnout figures for presidential elections from 1876 to 1908 in Georgia and in the ten other ex-Confederate states, and estimates of black turnout in Georgia. Political participation in Georgia was markedly lower than in the rest of the South except in 1892 and from 1904 on. The emergence in 1892 of the Populists, the first significant opposition party since Reconstruction in statewide Georgia politics, and the passage of restrictive laws between 1888 and 1892 in four other states account for the narrowing of the gap in 1892. The turn-of-the-century disfranchising efforts in other states explain the convergence of the two lines after 1900. Black participation always trailed white in Georgia, reaching a post-1880 peak of only an estimated 41.7 percent in the 1892 election. After 1900, fewer than one in ten Georgia Negroes seems to have voted.

Ignoring the 1892 election for a moment, note the gradual steady decline in voting in Georgia—just the cumulative impact one would expect from a tax which placed increasing burdens on defaulters. In other Deep and Border Southern states, turnout was relatively stable until they passed restrictive laws. This comparison implies that Georgia's pattern cannot be brushed off as the result of a general falling-off in political interest or a regional rise in Negro apathy.

The poll tax also influenced the course of party politics during the period. The Republican party was weaker in Georgia during the 1880s than in any other Southern state except South Carolina after the eight-box law took effect. Only in Mississippi and Georgia did the GOP fail to run a single statewide party campaign after 1876. As table 7.11 shows, the Republicans almost always garnered a smaller percentage of the adult male population in Georgia than in any other "Deep South" state. (The GOP usually did much better, of course, along the Dixie periphery.)

Why were the Georgia Republicans so weak? A recent student of Reconstruction in that state chastizes the GOP leaders for refusing to adopt a more moderate stance in order to attract the wealthy antebellum Whigs. Relying too much on the protection of the Congressional Radicals and on a yeoman white-black coalition, the Republicans, according to this view, collapsed in the face of the "natural Democratic majority" in Georgia. Another student blames violence, intimidation,



Figure 7.1. Effect of Cumulative Poll Tax: Overall Turnout and Estimated Black Turnout in Georgia Compared with Turnout in Ten Other Southern States in Presidential Elections, 1876–1908.

Table 7.11. The Poll Tax Weakened the Georgia GOP: Votes in Presidential and Congressional Races in Six Deep South States, 1880s.

<i>A. % of Adult Males Voting Republican in Presidential Elections</i>						
<i>State</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>1884</i>	<i>1888</i>			
Mississippi	14.4	17.3	11.0			
South Carolina	28.2	10.0	6.0			
Georgia	16.8	13.6	10.6			
Alabama	21.7	20.7	18.3			
Florida	38.4	37.1	29.7			
Louisiana	17.7	20.1	12.6			
<i>B. % of Adult Males Voting Republican in Congressional Elections</i>						
<i>State</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>1882</i>	<i>1884</i>	<i>1886</i>	<i>1888</i>	<i>1890</i>
Mississippi	10.3	8.4	15.1	4.3	10.5	5.0
South Carolina	29.5	13.0	9.2	2.7	4.4	5.5
Georgia	7.8	4.3	7.8	0.5	5.1	4.2
Alabama	12.2	0.8 ^a	16.2	7.3	17.5	7.5
Florida	37.3	29.4	36.7	19.1	29.7	15.8
Louisiana	16.6	12.1	15.4	8.8	11.0	5.1

^aIn 1882 the Alabama Republicans obviously backed candidates running under the “opposition” label, who received the franchises of 17.3 percent of the adult males.

and the ineptitude of the white GOP chiefs Rufus Bullock and Foster Blodgett.⁴⁶

Such contentions demonstrate again the need for comparative state history. Were Bullock and Blodgett any less capable than their Republican counterparts in Florida, Alabama, or Tennessee, or some of their Democratic successors in Georgia? Was there more violence and intimidation in Georgia than in Louisiana or Mississippi? How could there have been a “natural Democratic majority” in a state 47 percent Negro in 1880, a state in which the defection of a minuscule number of whites would have ensured the victory of a solidly voting black party? Why did the poor white–black coalition do so much worse in Georgia than in other Southern states? These questions have no simple answers, but we do know that generous amounts of violence and ineptitude, as well as tactical errors, were not peculiar to Georgia, and that poll tax laws in other states severely damaged lower-class opposition parties. These considerations suggest that the unusual frailty of the Republican

46. Nathans, *Losing the Peace*; Conway, *Reconstruction of Georgia*, pp. 198–199, 225.

party in Georgia was directly related to the fact that Georgia was the only Southern state with a poll tax prerequisite throughout the 1880s.

The impotence of the Republicans led opponents of the Democratic party to run as independents, and later, as Populists. That Georgia was the scene of the first sustained independent movement in the South is but another evidence of the premature demise of the Republican party there. As early as 1874 William Felton captured the predominantly white seventh district in north Georgia, a poor, hill-country district with large portions of small farmers and pre-War Unionists. He held the district until 1878, and Emory Speer, also an independent, won another northern congressional seat in 1878 and 1880. In 1880 the state Democratic convention split and both Alfred Colquitt and Thomas M. Norwood claimed to be at once independent and Democratic. Colquitt appealed to whites as a former Confederate hero, while Norwood, a dull speaker with no war record, could not rid himself of the stigma of having represented Northern railroad bondholders during Reconstruction. Norwood's bitterly racist views were also well known. Consequently, Colquitt, who pictured himself as an "anti-Bourbon" racial moderate before black audiences, and whose friends controlled most of the election machinery, received almost 80 percent of the votes of the Negroes who turned out. This was the last statewide election for eighty years in which a majority of the blacks voted.⁴⁷

Unlike several other Southern Republican parties, the Georgians did not court the independents in order to build a formidable statewide fusionist movement in the early eighties or cajole those who had bolted the Democratic party into becoming full-fledged Republicans. Perhaps the obvious hopelessness of the GOP prospects repelled the followers of Felton. Not until 1892 did the Democrats face serious statewide opposition.

The Populists ran serious statewide campaigns for governor in 1892, 1894, and 1896. Even though these were the most exciting and hotly contested statewide races since Reconstruction, only a minority of male

47. Arnett, *Populist Movement in Georgia*, pp. 33-36, 41-43; Shadgett, *Republican Party in Georgia*, pp. 62-65; Felton, *Memoirs of Georgia Politics*, pp. 273-274, 307; Raymond B. Nixon, *Henry W. Grady, Spokesman of the New South*, pp. 170-177; C. Vann Woodward, "Tom Watson and the Negro in Agrarian Politics," p. 15; Ralph Wardlaw, "Negro Suffrage in Georgia, 1867-1930," pp. 42-50. Several of these authors indicate possible fraud in the vote count. My estimate, which rests on the published totals, is that 44.5 percent of the Negro adult males voted for Colquitt, 11.9 percent for Norwood, and 43.7 percent did not vote.

adults turned out to vote. Even these figures reflected extensive fraud and, in all probability, relaxation of the cumulative poll tax requirement.⁴⁸

The Negro vote probably never held the balance of power in Georgia during the nineties because the poll tax crippled black turnout and because the majority of the whites who voted stayed loyal to the Democrats. Democratic majorities among whites probably exceeded the estimates given in table 7.12. The estimates of Negro voting cast considerable doubt on Woodward's early view that "never before or since have the two races in the South come so close together politically" as in the Populist movement.⁴⁹

Table 7.12. Race and Populism in Georgia: Actual Votes and Estimates of Votes, by Race, 1892-1896.

<i>Election</i>	<i>Democratic</i>	<i>Populist</i>	<i>Republican</i>	<i>Not Voting</i>
% OF ALL ADULT MALES				
1892	33.6	14.1	0	52.3
1894	27.6	22.1	0	50.3
1896	26.3	18.7	0	55.0
1892 Presidential	30.9	10.3	11.6	47.2
ESTIMATED % ADULT WHITE MALES				
1892	42.6	29.0	0	28.3
1894	34.7	33.8	0	31.4
1896	39.9	31.7	0	28.4
1892 Presidential	36.3	16.4	12.5	34.8
ESTIMATED % OF NEGRO MALES				
1892	28.4	7.5	0	64.1
1894	23.4	15.0	0	61.7
1896	15.6	8.2	0	76.4
1892 Presidential	22.6	6.4	12.2	58.3

48. For evidence of fraud, see Arnett, *Populist Movement in Georgia*, pp. 154-155, 183-184, 209; Bacote, "Negro in Georgia Politics," pp. 181, 193-194. It is difficult to believe that many poor Georgians could have paid their poll taxes, already \$10-15 in arrears in many cases, or that politicians could have assumed the burden for them. Consequently, many registrars must have winked at the law.

49. Woodward, "Tom Watson and the Negro," p. 21. Similarly, Jack Abramowitz referred to Georgia Populism as "the most unique [*sic*] experiment in race relations in the history of the South." See his "The Negro in the Populist Movement," in Sheldon Hackney, ed., *Populism: The Critical Issues* (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1971), p. 39. Woodward seems recently to have moderated his enthusiasm for the Populist-Negro coalition. See his article,

Twice as high a percentage of blacks appear to have voted for Harrison as for Weaver in the 1892 presidential contest, and Cleveland and the Democratic gubernatorial candidate attracted even more Negroes. To be sure, ballot-box stuffing and overwhelming support for the Democrats among black belt whites probably distort the estimates. And both newspaper reports and the election returns imply that black support for the Populists was stronger in the Third and Tenth (Watson's) Congressional Districts than in other areas. Perhaps a majority of the Negroes who participated in 1894 cast Populist ballots.⁵⁰ Still, the relative size of the estimated statewide Negro support for the Populists from election to election correlates closely with the Populist and Democratic vote-getting strategies and with contemporary impressions of the way most blacks voted.

In 1892, the Populists, stressing the economic similarities between black and white farmers, attempted to appeal to Negro voters through the Colored Alliance, instead of through the Republican party and the established Negro leaders. Apparently realizing their error, the Populists in 1894 addressed themselves openly and directly to the issue of Negro civil rights, gave more prominence to black campaign workers, and seem to have cooperated more closely with the traditional black leadership. Two years later, the Populists seem to have courted Negro support less eagerly, and refused for the first time to place a Republican on their state ticket. The Democrats throughout the decade sought black votes through conventional channels, and especially in 1896, according to the Negro *Savannah Tribune*, "wined, dined, and slept with colored men in order to get their votes." Moreover, the Democratic legislature passed a registration law in 1895 that tightened the procedures requiring proof of poll tax payment before voting. This new law may have dampened Negro turnout in 1896.⁵¹

Party competition and turnout quickly declined after 1896 (table

"The Negro in American Life, 1865-1918," in John A. Garraty, ed., *Interpreting American History: Conversations with Historians*, 2 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1970), 2: 58. The most bitter—and unfair—attack on Woodward's view of the Populist-Negro coalition in Georgia, is Lawrence J. Friedman's *The White Savage, Racial Fantasies in the Postbellum South*, pp. 77-98.

50. *Atlanta Journal*, Nov. 9, 1892; *Atlanta Constitution*, October 4, 5, 1894, quoted in Abramowitz, "Negro in the Populist Movement," p. 47; Georgia state Democratic executive committee chairman A. S. Clay, quoted in Bacote, "Negro in Georgia Politics," p. 206.

51. On the 1892 election, see *Bulletin of Atlanta University*, November 1892, p. 4, quoted in Bacote, "Negro in Georgia Politics," p. 183, which reported that most Negroes had voted for the Democratic candidate for governor in 1892. On Populist, Democratic, and Republican

7.13). Populist failure bred apathy among both Populists and Democrats. Furthermore, enforcement of the taxpaying requirement for voting undoubtedly stiffened after 1895, and election officers had less reason to inflate returns.

This decline in competition, the desire to prevent a recurrence of partisan battling, the news of suffrage restriction in other states, as well as some politicians' extreme racism led Georgia Democrats to propose two major changes in 1898. The state committee introduced coordinated white primaries in each county for statewide elections, and State Representative Thomas W. Hardwick proposed a literacy test for voters.

Before 1898, delegates to state Democratic conventions could be chosen by county primaries, conventions, mass meetings, or other methods. After 1898, the party made primaries mandatory and provided for a uniform primary day, although the election was for delegates instead of directly for candidates and each candidate's strength was apportioned by county units rather than total votes. The purpose of the primary, according to the *Atlanta Constitution*, was to "permit the *conservative people* of the state to control affairs without depriving any person of the vote" (my italics). That substituting intra- for inter-party competition was another purpose was implied in Governor Terrell's statement in 1905 that "the primary elections have become, *as they deserve to be*, the all important elections in our State" (my italics).⁵²

tactics during the campaign, see pp. 166-183; Arnett, *Populist Movement in Georgia*, pp. 153-155; Shadgett, *Republican Party in Georgia*, pp. 109-114; John Hope, "The Negro Vote in the States Whose Constitutions Have Not Been Specifically Revised," in American Negro Academy, *The Negro and the Elective Franchise*, p. 53; Woodward, "Tom Watson and the Negro," pp. 21-24. On the 1894 election, see Arnett, *Populist Movement in Georgia*, pp. 183-184; Bacote, "Negro in Georgia Politics," pp. 198-209; Saunders, "Southern Populists and the Negro," pp. 241-255; Shadgett, *Republican Party in Georgia*, pp. 116-117. On the 1896 election, see Bacote, "Negro in Georgia Politics," pp. 212-223, 518-519; *Savannah Tribune*, October 30, 1897, quoted in Bacote, "Negro Officeholders in Georgia Under President McKinley," *Journal of Negro History* 44 (1959): 232; Durden, *The Climax of Populism*, pp. 105-106. For the registration act, see Ga. *Acts and Resolutions* (1894-95), pp. 116-119; Ga. *House Journal* (1894-95), pp. 181, 510-512, 595-596; Ga. *Senate Journal* (1894-95), pp. 121, 533. Since there were no important struggles after the relatively innocuous bill emerged from committees, I will not treat the bill at greater length. And for the effect of this law on Negro voting, see Bacote, "Negro in Georgia Politics," pp. 218-219, who noted that Negro registration in Fulton County (Atlanta) dropped from about one-third of the total in the period before 1895 to one-seventh of the total in 1896. Unfortunately, we do not have similar figures for other counties.

52. Lynwood Mathis Holland, "The Direct Primary in Georgia;" *Atlanta Constitution*, May 15, 1900, quoted in Shadgett, *Republican Party in Georgia*, p. 154. Terrell is quoted in Holland, "Direct Primary in Georgia," p. 99.

Table 7.13. Declines in Party Competition and Estimated White and Negro Turnout in Georgia after 1896.

<i>Election</i>	<i>Democrat</i>	<i>Populist</i>	<i>Republican</i>	<i>Not Voting</i>
% OF ALL ADULT MALES				
1898 Gov.	24.7	10.7	0	64.6
1900 Gov.	18.1	4.6	0	77.3
1902 Gov.	15.6	1.1	0	83.3
1900 Pres.	16.2	1.2	6.8	75.8
1904 Pres.	15.3	4.1	4.4	76.2
% OF WHITE ADULT MALES ^a				
1898 Gov.	42	20	0	38
1900 Gov.	33	8	0	59
1902 Gov.	28	2	0	70
1900 Pres.	26	2	12	60
1904 Pres.	24	7	8	61
% OF NEGRO ADULT MALES ^a				
1898 Gov.	11	4	0	85
1900 Gov.	0	0	0	100
1902 Gov.	0	0	0	100
1900 Pres.	8	0	0	92
1904 Pres.	4	0	0	96

^aLogically impossible estimates of Negro voting have been set at the 0% or 100% limits, and estimates of white voting have been accordingly recalculated. For the procedures involved see my "Ecological Regression" article.

The Hardwick Disfranchisement Bill, a literacy test with a grandfather clause loophole, easily emerged from committee, but failed in the House by overwhelming margins in 1899 and 1901. Although conservative Governor Allen D. Candler strongly endorsed literacy and property tests to prevent the possibility of Negro influence in future elections, many conservatives seem to have felt the poll tax and white primary had removed the need for further racial agitation and voting restrictions. Moreover, the bill aroused intense opposition from such Negro leaders as W. E. B. DuBois and John Hope of Atlanta University, Booker T. Washington, and John H. Deveaux, the leading Negro politician in southern Georgia. A New York magazine thought Negro protests responsible for the bill's defeat. Hardwick himself believed the bill failed in 1898 because Democratic legislators feared the

Populists would use the issue in 1900 to secure the votes of Negroes and poor whites concerned about being cast out of the electorate.⁵³

With almost no Negroes voting and no opposition party operating in the first decade of the new century, most Georgians saw no need for more limitations on voting.⁵⁴ In 1905–06, however, the issue of further restrictions was thrust into a Democratic primary campaign for governor. Once again, it was Thomas W. Hardwick, by then a congressman, who focused attention on the issue and manipulated events.

Congressman Hardwick first endorsed Pope Brown, a proponent of disfranchisement and Negro repatriation to Africa. When Brown's early canvass proved him a sure loser against *Atlanta Constitution* editor Clark Howell, Hardwick persuaded Brown to withdraw in favor of Hoke Smith, editor of the *Atlanta Journal* and former Cleveland cabinet member. The congressman then induced his friend Tom Watson, old racial egalitarian, new ultra-racist, to endorse Smith, Watson's arch-enemy during the nineties.⁵⁵

Clark Howell and Hoke Smith vied before the white-primaried, poll-taxed electorate for the title of most rabid racist. Smith, a former moderate who had opposed the Hardwick bill in 1898, now assailed "Negro domination" from every rostrum, approving the use of "any

53. Candler's 1898 and 1900 addresses to the legislature are quoted in Bacote, "Negro in Georgia Politics," p. 276; and Alton DuMar Jones, "Progressivism in Georgia, 1898–1918" (Ph.D. diss., Emory Univ., 1963), p. 137. Like James K. Vardaman, Candler believed educating Negroes only resulted in a higher crime rate. Candler wanted to disfranchise the propertyless and illiterate, regardless of race, and cut appropriations for Negro education. The magazine noted was *The Independent* 51 (1899): 3306–3307; Bacote, "Negro in Georgia Politics," pp. 282–288. It should be noted that the predominately white trade unions also opposed the bill. See *ibid.*, pp. 289–290. Hardwick is quoted in *Atlanta Journal*, October 23, 1900, cited in Bacote, "Negro in Georgia Politics," p. 290.

54. From 1878 to 1908, Negroes representing only three counties sat in the Georgia legislature. From 1902 to 1908, only W. H. Rogers of McIntosh managed to win a seat. This fact indicates that a few Negroes were still voting. See Monroe N. Work, "Some Negro Members of Reconstruction Conventions and Legislatures and of Congress," *Journal of Negro History* 5 (1920): 63–119.

55. For Hardwick's and Brown's views on Negro suffrage and Hardwick's central role in the shenanigans, see Bacote, "Negro in Georgia Politics," pp. 276–278, 335; Dewey W. Grantham, "Some Letters from Thomas W. Hardwick to Tom Watson Concerning the Georgia Gubernatorial Campaign of 1906," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 34 (1950): 328–340; Grantham, *Hoke Smith*, pp. 134, 138–148; Woodward, *Tom Watson*, pp. 372–374. Watson supported Smith because of his stand on disfranchisement and railroad regulation, despite Smith's record as a Gold Democrat and staunch opponent of Populism, and Smith's tepid support for the liberal Democratic candidate for president, William Jennings Bryan.

means” to expel Negro elected officials from any community in the state. Backing Hardwick’s new plan, Smith charged that Howell’s willingness to rely on the present safeguards might lead to an eventual Negro takeover in Georgia.⁵⁶ Howell, on the other hand, blasted Smith for the grievous sin of appointing Negroes to office while he was secretary of the interior. Charging that a literacy test would lead Negroes to flock to school and thereby rise above their traditional field-hand positions, Howell also declared that the Hardwick-Smith plan would disfranchise many poor whites. When his campaign faltered Howell applied the tattered whip of party loyalty, accusing Smith of plotting with Tom Watson to break up the Democratic party.⁵⁷

Watson claimed he had swung “90,000” Populists to Smith, a claim which lends credence to charges that the Populists were largely responsible for passage of the literacy test. Watson, however, puffed up his power over his followers in an attempt to increase his influence with politicians. As the forlorn Populist presidential candidate in 1904, he had drawn only 22,310 votes in Georgia, and the Populist candidate for governor in 1900 had tallied only 23,235. Regression estimates of the way those who participated in the 1892 and 1894 gubernatorial campaigns voted in the 1906 primary indicate that between 22,000 and 27,000 Populists voted for Hoke Smith. Smith would have had a comfortable plurality if all the Populists who turned out in 1906 had voted for his closest competitor. Far from dominating the Democrats in 1906, Watson could not even win a seat from his home county in

56. For the Howell-Smith campaign, see Grantham, *Hoke Smith*, pp. 147-149, 151; *Atlanta Constitution*, August 1, 2, 1906. Conservative opposition to the Hardwick-Smith proposal during the 1905-06 campaign did not imply that they opposed disfranchisement in general. Governor Allen Candler, an earlier proponent of literacy and property tests, denounced Smith and his plan, as did Senator A. O. Bacon, author of a bill to repeal the 15th Amendment. See *Atlanta Constitution*, August 12, 1906; Dewey W. Grantham, Jr., “Georgia Politics and the Disfranchisement of the Negro,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 32 (1948): 9. Headlines from Howell’s newspaper show how far the “conservatives” were willing to engage in racial demagoguery and how much of the burden they bear for the racist climate which made the 1906 Atlanta riot possible: “In Presence of Outraged Girl Black Fiend is Shot to Death by Enraged Atlanta Citizens” (a lynching, *Constitution*, August 1, 1906); “Assaults Girl with Meat Knife—Negro makes diabolical assault on young woman” (*ibid.*, August 15, 1906); “Girl’s Father Favors Torture for Assailant . . .” (*ibid.*, August 17, 1906). Examples of such grisly headlines could easily be multiplied.

57. *Ibid.*, August 5, 15, 19, 1906. Interestingly enough, the old Independent Dr. William H. Felton echoed Howell’s charges that the plan would disfranchise poor whites. For the party loyalty issue, see *ibid.*, August 1, 21, 1906. Howell’s charges may well have led historians to exaggerate Watson’s power and his role in the campaign.

the state convention. It was, rather, staunch Democrat Thomas Hardwick, who had coached Smith on disfranchisement and drafted the plan, who gave the chief speech in favor of the proposal at the state convention. Moreover, the legislature which overwhelmingly passed the amendment in 1907 contained no avowed Populists and only a handful of former Populists.⁵⁸

The object of the suffrage amendment was not to cut down a serious immediate threat, for few Negroes were still voting, but to ensure "that the Negro shall not be left around the corner, awaiting the awakening hand of the corruptionist whenever division shall again break the white ranks and discord lift its threatening hand."⁵⁹ The actual bill, based on the Alabama amendment, provided for a literacy test easy to administer in a discriminatory manner, along with a property qualification and a number of escape clauses. It passed both houses easily, the chief dissent arising from those who thought the bill might eliminate too many whites.⁶⁰

The campaign for the referendum in 1908 resembled those in other states. Blacks tried hard to organize against passage, calling several conferences, urging Negroes to register in large numbers, denouncing federal neglect and state destruction of the civil rights of black men.⁶¹ Democrats responded typically, making registration difficult, threatening, burning churches, lynching, stuffing ballot boxes. Even the sustained efforts of the highly competent Negro leadership of Atlanta and Savannah resulted in the registration in Fulton and Chatham Counties

58. Watson quoted in Woodward, *Tom Watson*, p. 378. William A. Mabry in effect makes the charge against the Populists in "The Disfranchisement of the Negro," pp. 439-440. For Hardwick's speech, see *Atlanta Constitution*, September 5, 1906.

59. *Ibid.*, Hardwick's speech. It is instructive to note that the chief disfranchiser, far from desiring to remove the Negro so that the whites could safely split into parties, perceived division as "threatening."

60. During the campaign, the Smith followers had asked for and received advice on what plan to adopt and how each worked from leading Democrats in states which had already passed restrictive amendments. See Bacote, "Negro in Georgia Politics," pp. 412-413; Grantham, *Hoke Smith*, p. 150; Mabry, "Disfranchisement of the Negro," pp. 453, 457. The text of the amendment is given in *Ga. Acts* (1907), pp. 47-50. For the passage, see *Ga. Senate Journal* (1907), pp. 294-299; *Ga. House Journal* (1907), pp. 922-929; Grantham, *Hoke Smith*, pp. 159-160; Mabry, "Disfranchisement of the Negro," pp. 464-466; Bacote, "Negro in Georgia Politics," pp. 452-467. Eleven of the fifteen white House members who opposed final passage of the bill came from white-majority counties.

61. Bacote, "Negro in Georgia Politics," pp. 434-512, details this story, proving conclusively that the Negro leadership was far from accepting Booker T. Washington's public counsel to drop out of politics.

of only 2,500 Negroes, or less than one-tenth of the Negro adult males. The election returns themselves demonstrated how little the amendment represented a popular upsurge of feeling, how effective previous restraints on the suffrage were, and how anticlimactic the campaign had been (table 7.14). Only one Georgian in five—about one in four among whites—turned out. Both supporters and opponents of Hoke Smith among the whites who voted seem to have favored the amendment overwhelmingly.

The model of voting most in accord with contemporary judgments and statistical criteria indicates that anti-amendment strength varied directly with the proportion of Negroes in each county.⁶² As the figures in the table indicate, about 16 percent of the white adult males in a county that contained no Negroes could have been expected to vote against the amendment, compared to 24 percent for it. As the Negro proportion rose from county to county, white opposition to the amendment dropped off markedly. In typical counties that were 10 percent, 20 percent, and 30 percent Negro, respectively, the proportion of white males voting against the amendment amounted to 13 percent, 10 percent, and 6 percent, in that order. According to this interpretation of the data, virtually no black belt whites opposed the amendment. The rationale for the white voting pattern which this model expresses is simple: some whites in almost entirely white counties opposed the amendment because of a hostility to white disfranchisement, but whites in counties with more Negroes increasingly feared Negro domination more than the restriction of the white vote.

The pattern of Negro voting appears to have been just the reverse of the whites'. The black leaders apparently concentrated their limited resources in the counties with the most Negroes. Thus, in a county where Negroes made up 10 percent of the population, only an estimated 2.5 percent of them turned out against the amendment, while in a 50 percent Negro county, 12.5 percent of the blacks registered votes against

62. The model employed here is based on the assumptions that no Negroes supported the amendment, and that opposition can be represented by the following equation:

$$Y = a + b_1X + b_2X^2$$

where Y is the proportion against the amendment, X is the proportion Negro, and a, b₁ and b₂ are the multiple regression coefficients. This equation explains 16.7 percent of the variance of Y, whereas, an equation containing no X² term explains only 2.1 percent. Of the several possible soluble models which could underlie this multiple regression equation, the one given in the text best satisfies contemporary impressions of voting behavior.

Table 7.14. Votes and Estimated Voting, by Race, in 1908 Georgia Disfranchisement Referendum.

	<i>Percentage of Adult Males</i>		
	<i>For Amendment</i>	<i>Against Amendment</i>	<i>Not Voting</i>
All Males	13.4	6.8	79.8
Whites	23.6	3.8 (15.7–31.4X) ^a	73.6
Blacks	0	12.5 (24.9X) ^a	87.5

^aThese estimates are based on a curvilinear model, $Y = a + b_1X + b_2X^2$, where $Y = \%$ against the amendment, $X = \% \text{ Negro}$, and $a, b_1,$ and b_2 are regression coefficients. Estimates of Negro and white turnout were changed from the straight-line estimates slightly to accord with the estimates of anti-amendment voting.

disfranchisement. In the state as a whole an estimated 3.8 percent of the whites and 12.5 percent of the blacks opposed the amendment. That the amendment had some effect in reducing whatever slight possibility of black participation remained is indicated by the fact that Negro registration dropped from 28.3 percent in 1904 to 4.3 percent in 1910.⁶³

63. Bacote, "Negro in Georgia Politics," pp. 421, 499–500; Grantham, *Hoke Smith*, p. 162.