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gender AND JIM CROW

WOMEN AND THE POLITICS OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN NORTH CAROLINA, 1896–1920

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PLACE AND POSSIBILITY

"Some would say that woman is good in her place. This reminds me of what some white people say of the Negro: that 'He is good in his place.' "[1] Sarah Dudley Pettey challenged the idea of "place," not simply through words such as these but also through her acts. She was an African American woman, the daughter of slaves, who lived in obscurity in a small North Carolina town. In 1896, when she wrote these words, Dudley Pettey thought she saw the day coming when a person's place would depend not on sex or color but on energy and ability.

Since historians enter a story at its end, they sometimes forget that what is past to them was future to their subjects. Too often, what they lose in the telling is what made their subjects' lives worth living: hope. This is a book about hope, about African American women such as Dudley Pettey whose alternative visions of the future included the equity in society they had learned to expect in their families, schools, and marriages.[2] Their progressive visions, if realized, would have ended white supremacy. These were lives on the cusp of change.

With a less prosperous white elite than Virginia or South Carolina, a fast-growing, but ferociously struggling, middling group of people of all hues, and some chance for two-party government, North Carolina's people con-

tested power—economic, social, and political—more openly and more heatedly than many other southerners. In the western mountains, this upper South state resembled its neighbor eastern Tennessee, with pockets of bitter Unionists, an entrenched Republican Party, and a sparse African American population. In the east, where plantations produced cotton and tobacco, black majorities voted in the 1880s and 1890s, and rough port cities could only aspire to the grandeur of Charleston or Savannah. Inhabitants of the crossroad Piedmont hamlets, where whites barely outnumbered a growing black urban population, struggled to turn their locations into a reason for existence and then, as now, looked toward Atlanta with a mixture of envy and disgust.[3] North Carolina's geographical, economic, and historical diversity resulted in close gubernatorial and national elections and a legislature bristling with Republican representatives, not to mention the odd Prohibitionist or Silverite. Shared power among political parties meant that legal segregation came late to the state—not until 1899 did the state legislature demand that railroads provide Jim Crow cars—and that disfranchisement trailed the 1890 Mississippi law by a decade.[4]

Black North Carolinians realized the precariousness of their position even as they imagined the future. North Carolinian Charles Chesnutt, a child genius whose precocity and fair complexion often led whites to draw him into conversation, learned, along with his daily lessons in German and Latin, the depths of southern white prejudice. In his teenage years in the 1870s, before whites perfected Jim Crow institutions, Chesnutt confided to his diary the absurdity of walking around in a place where the color line moved under his feet. Later, after he had left North Carolina and became a renowned novelist, Chesnutt borrowed from mythology to describe his memories of the limited social space assigned African Americans in his home state. He compared white North Carolinians to Procrustes, the innkeeper at Attica, who indulged his fetish that each guest be made to fit his bed perfectly. If one was too short, Procrustes stretched him to new dimensions. If another was too tall, Procrustes simply cut off his legs so that he fit just right.[5] According to Chesnutt, African Americans in North Carolina slept each night in similarly circumscribed spots. "It was a veritable bed of Procrustes, this standard which the whites had set for the Negroes," Chesnutt commented. "Those who grew above it must have their heads cut off, figuratively speaking—must be forced back to the level assigned to their race." On the other side, the lynch rope swayed. "Those who fell beneath the standard set had their necks stretched, literally enough, as the ghastly record in the daily papers gave conclusive evidence."[6] There would be little rest for African Americans as the century drew to a close.

Nonetheless, even as black North Carolinians saw repression creeping across the South in the 1890s, they hoped to turn the tide in their own state.

Reading their story from beginning to end, rather than teleologically, we can see—as they did—that North Carolina could have been the pivot upon which national race relations turned. If people like Sarah Dudley Pettey and Charles Calvin Pettey had been able to hold their ground in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the trend toward disfranchisement and segregation might have been reversed and the history of the twentieth century rewritten. Certainly, black men and women in the state were equal to the task. Many enjoyed fine educations, economic success, and political power, and they saw clearly the danger that awaited them. They tried everything possible to save themselves. Their counterstrategies lay bare two lost worlds: one actual, the other woven from hope.

African Americans hoped that their success would offer testimony to convince whites to recognize class similarities across racial divides; they hoped to prove to whites that they could be Best Men and Best Women. Instead of undermining white supremacy, however, postbellum black progress shored it up. White men reordered southern society through segregation and disfranchisement in the 1890s because they realized that African American success not only meant competition in the marketplace and the sharing of political influence but also entailed a challenge to fundamental social hierarchies that depended nearly as much upon fixed gender roles as they did on the privileges of whiteness. Black progress threatened what southerners called "place."

Place assembled the current concepts of class and race into a stiff-sided box where southern whites expected African Americans to dwell. Southerners lived under a caste system in which skin color, class, and gender dictated the pattern of every daily interaction. For example, African Americans riding in carriages irritated white North Carolinians because such luxury challenged the connections of race, class, and place. How could whites maintain the idea that African Americans were lowly due to laziness if some African Americans worked hard enough to purchase carriages?[7] By embracing a constellation of Victorian middle-class values—temperance, thrift, hard work, piety, learning—African Americans believed that they could carve out space for dignified and successful lives and that their examples would wear away prejudice.[8] As African Americans moved to North Carolina's hamlets and cities to pursue professions and commerce, urban African Americans of the middling sort became increasingly visible at a time when most whites worked diligently to consign blacks to the preindustrial role of agrarian peasants. In one generation, African Americans moved from field hands to teachers, from carpenters to construction bosses. Freedpeople equipped themselves to compete with whites in business, the professions, and politics. Often education, buttressed by strong religious beliefs, made the difference. Black men and women embraced

Christian ideals, filtered through Victorian sensibilities, as standards of equity and morality in an effort to break the southern caste system.[9]

African American women helped make those accomplishments revolutionary. Women were integral components of economic gain, generational change, and ultimately civic participation. Educated black women believed progress would flow logically from predictions they had first heard from parents, black ministers, and northern missionary teachers. They expected advancement on three fronts: in living standards, in opportunities for women of both races, and in white attitudes toward African Americans. Raised by ex-slave mothers and grandmothers, the first and second generations of freedwomen saw racial progress as inclusive, not exclusive, of those less fortunate.[10] In a racially charged atmosphere, black women knew that private acts and family-based decisions could be used against them. They carefully considered each move, since a fleeting whim, if acted upon, could furnish whites "proof" of the capability or deficiency of an entire race.[11]

Charles and Sarah Pettey represent the extraordinary potential of ordinary African Americans in the first three decades of freedom. If we begin the story by adopting one family as a guide, we can trace hope's meaning as it beams through slavery's vicissitudes and Reconstruction's raw light to the moment of possibility before disfranchisement. The marriage of Sarah Dudley and Charles Calvin Pettey brought together two people convinced that race and gender discrimination were vestiges of the past, anachronistic feudalisms that would melt like snow under the rays of an upcoming age of reason. An examination of their lives reveals the ideals and hopes that made up their vision of a New South never to be born. Their story provides an opening wedge for understanding a group of men and women who saw themselves as the future of their race but who have virtually disappeared from the historical record.

Beginning with a close look at one family is bound to prompt questions concerning typicality. A historian can rescue a woman from oblivion, painstakingly reconstruct her life and her ancestors' lives, and finally make modest claims for her experience, only to face the charge that if the subject is *that* interesting or important, then she must be unrepresentative. However, a hierarchical presumption lurks in the typicality argument: average people are simply average; only their leaders are exceptional. Therefore, if the subject is interesting, she must be atypical. This study operates from a different premise: that every story would be interesting if we could recapture it and that each one has something to teach us. Writing history by grinding away the nuances of each person's experience produces the typical; in real life, we see individuality more readily. The world in these pages belonged to many women; here it is articulated by a few whose voices, by pluck or by chance, happened to survive.

Historians have used generational models to explain the dynamics of immigrant families, and the rage for genealogy testifies to the explanatory power of family narrative in many people's lives. Slavery, however, waged a war on the institution of the family, and the rupture between slavery and freedom cleft historical memory, often separating historians of African Americans from evidence of powerful family strategies over time. Yet what might be lost to documentation often loomed large in individual consciousness. Sarah Dudley Pettey is a case in point. The first member of her family to be born in freedom, her optimism and outspokenness sprang from the hopes and fortitude of three generations that came before her. To understand her, one must understand them.

Edmund Pasteur, Sarah Dudley Pettey's paternal great-grandfather, was born around the time of the American Revolution. John Carruthers Stanly of New Bern, North Carolina, the largest black slaveholder in the South, bought Pasteur sometime before the War of 1812. Stanly had himself been born a slave. His slave-trading father, a white man, had purchased his mother, an African Ibo woman, and impregnated her during the middle passage. The Stanly family later freed the son, who bore his father's name. Edmund Pasteur's African heritage remains unknown, but it may have been quite recent to him, given North Carolina's slave-trading patterns. His mother, or even Edmund Pasteur himself, might have been born in Africa, or his ancestors might have been enslaved in the Caribbean for a generation or more.[12]

It is impossible to know what kind of master Stanly proved to be, but at least he allowed Edmund Pasteur to hire himself out in the busy port city of New Bern. By 1815, Pasteur had saved enough money to buy his freedom, an action Stanly supported. Then, after three years of freedom, Edmund Pasteur had saved $750 to purchase a mulatto woman and her thirteen-month-old baby—his wife, Dinah, and his daughter, Sarah—from his original owner. Dinah, who was thirty-nine at the time, may have been her owner's daughter and had been married to Edmund for at least fourteen years. Despite Edmund Pasteur's manumission, her owner had allowed her to continue their relationship. However, the slaveholder's decision to sell Dinah and Sarah clearly owed more to avarice than to kindness since the $750 bought only a middle-aged woman and a suckling baby, not Richard, Edmund and Dinah's fourteen-year-old son, who remained enslaved.[13]

One word hints at Edmund Pasteur's thoughts on slavery and his family's condition. Pasteur later recounted that he had finally "ransomed" Richard, just as the boy was about to be sold into "slavery in remote

countries."[14] Edmund never thought of himself, Dinah, Richard, and Sarah as property or as members of a degraded class of people who belonged in slavery. They were people who had been kidnapped, had lived through it, and now had ransomed themselves. Through his incredible efforts, Edmund Pasteur came to own his entire family, but they remained his slaves. In 1827, he petitioned the court to manumit Dinah, now fifty years old, Richard, twenty-two, and Sarah, nine. In this last and crucial effort, it seems that Edmund Pasteur failed.[15]

Thirteen years later, in 1840, Sarah Pasteur, by that time a young woman of twenty-two, gave birth to a baby boy, Edward Richard Dudley, Jr., named for his father, who was most likely a mixed-race free man.[16] Although Edward Dudley is listed in the census as a white man, the large Dudley family included many light-skinned people of African descent who married whites. Roughly one of every four "blacks" in New Bern was free in 1860, and free people of color made up 12 percent of the total population.[17] These astounding figures suggest a community teeming with complex racial interactions, a place where "black" and "white" were fluid, not frozen, categories. The port city on the Trent and Neuse rivers provided both wage labor and the opportunity to live off the fruits of the sea, advantages that attracted freed and runaway slaves and landless whites. Edward Dudley supported himself as a fisherman.[18] Pasteur and Dudley may have lived together openly, or their relationship may have been more clandestine. Even though Sarah Pasteur belonged to her father, as a slave she could not marry. Three years later, in 1843, Sarah and Edward had a second son, James.

The curse of slavery under which Sarah Pasteur had lived for twenty-five years struck now with the death of her father, just when she was most vulnerable. In the years after the Pasteurs' manumission attempt failed, slavery's institutional shell had hardened as white southerners grew to fear abolitionism and insurrection. In the 1830s, those few slaveholders who chose to emancipate their slaves encountered greater difficulties, and it must have been nearly impossible for a black man to free his slave family.[19] In 1843, after Dinah had died and Richard had vanished, Sarah, with a three-year-old and a baby, had cared for her father to the end in the small house that he owned. After her father's death, her lover Edward Dudley either could not or would not help but only watched as Sarah and his two children were sold as slaves.

Edmund Pasteur had paid dearly for his loved ones, but the white court-appointed executor of his estate sold Sarah and her two children cheaply, for $377 on credit, to Richard N. Taylor of New Bern, who owned a cotton mill and a fleet of schooners.[20] Being appointed executor was literally a license to steal: the proceeds of Pasteur's "property"—the house, Sarah,

and the two children—went to the executor since Pasteur had no legally free heirs. The oldest boy, Edward Richard Dudley, Jr., was three, the youngest, James Dudley, only a few months old. Six years later, it appears that the boys' free father married a white woman and had a son, to whom he gave the same name as one of his slave sons: James. To Sarah, this must have been the unkindest cut of all.[21]

In the two decades of her family's enslavement, Sarah Pasteur secretly taught her children to read and write, and she must have provided great love and great hope. After secession, Sarah probably had a pipeline to the latest news by eavesdropping on meetings of the Confederate Soldiers Relief Society, over which her owner's wife presided during 1861. Confederate soldiers' relief in New Bern was short-lived, however, as whites scrambled to evacuate the city in January 1862 with the approach of Union troops. The Taylors fled with their slaves and spent the Civil War in Salisbury well to the west, where they put Edward to work in a tobacco factory. Salisbury stubbornly clung to the Confederacy even after Lee surrendered. A week later, General George Stoneman burned down the city. Finally, the period of the Pasteurs' captivity ended. Sarah Pasteur was forty-eight at the time, twenty-two years a slave. Her kidnapped boys emerged as free men, and they headed for home.[22]

The oldest, Edward Dudley, was twenty-five. He could read and write and was soon practicing a lucrative trade in New Bern as a cooper, which he probably learned in the tobacco factory. Dudley quickly assumed a leadership role amid the chaos of the Federal-occupied town. He joined a Masonic lodge and served on the police force.[23] A pillar of Saint Peters, the first African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion church in the South, Dudley headed the statewide Grand Lodge of Colored Good Templars, the first black branch of an international temperance order.[24] Sometime between 1862 and 1868, Dudley married a biracial woman named Caroline, who, like him, had learned to read and write in slavery. She joined her husband as a Good Templar.[25] The Dudleys taught their children to take pride in their African American roots and to take their places among the best people, regardless of race. Edward Dudley's place was in politics.

Dudley's experience as a black man serving as a lesser official in the Reconstruction South—a good citizen doing his duty—complements portraits of famous black Reconstruction leaders and counters white fictions about boisterous black swindlers taking over state legislatures. His daughter, Sarah, born in 1869, learned her political lessons at her father's knee. Members of Sarah's generation of African Americans were raised to expect full civil rights, a generational experience repeated only by those who came of age after the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

African Americans' continuous involvement after Reconstruction in

Thought by her great-great grandchildren to be a portrait of Sarah Pasteur, this is more likely a photograph of her daughter-in-law Caroline Dudley, taken in the late 1860s. Courtesy of Allene Dudley Bundy, New Bern, North Carolina.

eastern North Carolina local politics—through campaigning, voting, appointment, and election—meant that the violence and legal codification of segregation in the late 1890s represented cataclysmic ruptures in the fabric of black civil rights, not simply the institutionalization of repression.[26] If historians later took Jim Crow's career to be strange, African Americans at the time found it unbelievable. They expected reverses, even pitched battles, but they never expected to be counted out of the electoral process completely. The careers of Dudley and his daughter illustrate the ebb and flow of black political life throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and prove that it was not over until it was over: that is, until the 1900 constitutional amendment disfranchising African Americans.

This is not to say that some times were not better than others. The period from 1888 to 1894 seemed particularly bleak, even though African Americans continued to serve in the state legislature throughout the period.[27] In 1877 the legislature had seized the power to appoint local officials to counter black votes in the eastern part of the state. For two years, the legislators appointed justices of the peace, who in turn appointed other

local officers; from 1879 until 1894, the justices of the peace appointed county commissioners, who then dished up the remaining slices of pie.[28] Black and poor white officeholders persisted, however. After 1888, the state legislature tightened its control on local offices by forcing officials to post high bonds that might prevent poor men from serving.[29] Raleigh's control proved onerous to both poor whites and African Americans, and "home rule" became an issue that crossed racial lines.[30] As they attempted to prevent African Americans from holding local offices, legislators trailed the boundaries of the Second Congressional District around eastern North Carolina in an attempt to contain black voting strength in national elections. Craven County fell within the borders of the "Black Second," and the Dudleys' neighbor, African American George White, became their congressman.

In many of the state's cities and eastern rural areas, African Americans took an active part in local politics, despite the obstacles the legislature placed in their paths. Edward Dudley served on New Bern's common council and was a city marshal. He won election to the state house of representatives in 1870, when seventeen other African Americans gained seats in the house and three in the senate. Two years later, he returned for another term.[31] Even more significant than Dudley's elections was his appointment as justice of the peace in New Bern from 1880 to 1884 since by appointing Dudley the legislature acknowledged his political power in state and national politics through the Republican Party. Dudley's tenure points up the system's flexibility and hints at a lack of resolve among all whites to exclude African Americans from politics.[32] The white *New Bern Weekly Journal* acknowledged as much in 1886 when it pitched the Democratic Party to African Americans: "Drawing the color line is wrong in principle. . . . Why seek to array one race against another? The negroes are citizens, and have the right of suffrage."[33] They might not have been happy about it, but white men had to reckon with black votes. Democratic appeals for African American votes resulted in few converts, however, and use of such a strategy abated in the early 1890s.

Tentative interracial alliances characterized politics in the century's last two decades. Dudley, for instance, forged a close alliance with white congressman Orlando Hubbs, and he maintained his loyalty to Hubbs when Hubbs battled African American James O'Hara for the nomination to the Second Congressional District seat in 1882. Dudley's opposition to O'Hara ran deeper than simply repaying any political debts to Hubbs. As statewide leader of the black Good Templars, Dudley despised O'Hara because he had attended an antiprohibition convention when the issue came up in the state in 1881.[34] Hubbs lost his fight for the nomination, and O'Hara relieved Dudley of his post as deputy collector of federal revenues. Dudley

cemented the breach forever by calling O'Hara a "creature of the mob, organized for the sole purpose of 'sending a Negro to congress.'" "Thank God," Dudley concluded, his own principles counted for more than race and he had "never worshipped at the shrine of color." Dudley's hatred of O'Hara led him to support another white man, Furnifold Simmons, to replace him in Congress in 1886. When Simmons took the seat—he won Craven County by only forty-five votes—he recognized his debt to the district's African Americans.[35]

African Americans also knew they had carried Simmons's election. As one put it, O'Hara "got bit by his own dog."[36] Two years later, however, Simmons's own dog bit him, as white voters accused Simmons of being too responsive to black constituents. Simmons attributed his 1888 defeat to his failure to draw the color line, a lesson he would never forget.[37] Ironically, Dudley, who "never worshipped at the shrine of color," helped launch the career of the man who at the century's end would disfranchise him on account of color. African American votes counted until then.

If politics was a part-time passion for Edward Dudley, his family was a full-time one. His brother James also lived in New Bern, and his mother lived with him and Caroline. When the couple had a daughter in 1869, they named her Sarah, for her grandmother. Baby Sarah was the first member of the Pasteur-Dudley family born in freedom, even though more than a half century had elapsed since Edmund Pasteur ransomed himself. The year after Sarah's birth, Edward Dudley was elected to the legislature, after which he returned home most months to farm and to teach school.[38] Two boys and five girls followed Sarah. Edward Dudley's farm was worth $600 in 1870, and he approached farming as he did everything else, with high-spirited competition. He won prizes for his produce, including an eggplant two feet wide and pumpkins five feet tall.[39]

Sarah Pasteur and Caroline Dudley taught Sarah Dudley to read and write before the little girl was six. Literacy was the most valuable gift Pasteur had to give, first to her sons in slavery, then to her granddaughter in freedom. The family certainly needed no coaxing to enter the schoolroom after American Missionary Association teachers flocked to New Bern in the late 1860s and established at least five private schools, which supplemented the short public school year. Education had given hope to the Dudleys in slavery, had provided them with an advantage in Reconstruction, and would propel them into the future. By the time Sarah Dudley entered the classroom, New Bern's black public schools were graded, a northern innovation still unknown in white southern schools, and the teaching force included local African Americans.[40] Temperance societies dominated extracurricular life at each school.[41] After she completed the six grades the school system offered, Sarah Dudley attended the coeducational

New Bern State Colored Normal School, a state-funded teacher-training school that combined high school work with pedagogy courses.

One year later, thirteen-year-old Sarah left home for Scotia Seminary, a Presbyterian school for women in Concord, North Carolina, 200 miles to the west. There the biracial faculty oversaw a curriculum calculated to give students the knowledge, social consciousness, and sensibilities of New England ladies, with a strong dose of Boston egalitarianism sprinkled in. Mary McLeod, who followed Sarah Dudley to Scotia five years later, recalled that her northern white teachers there taught her that "the color of a person's skin has nothing to do with his brains, and that color, caste, or class distinctions are an evil thing."[42] Scotia's white founder, Luke Dorland, modeled the school on Mount Holyoke. He intended it to be a place where students learned to do as well as to think. Dorland believed that "skilled hands must be directed by a sound mind in a sound body, motivated by a zeal to serve others."[43] The cooking, music, and needlework that students learned along with their Latin was to be employed to their own ends, not in domestic service for white people. A Scotia woman would "make a good housewife as well as a good school teacher," and the cornerstone of Sarah's dormitory bore the words, "Head, Heart, and Hands."[44] When Sarah arrived, she joined 139 other young women students, who ate, lived, and studied with a faculty of white and black women teachers.[45] Her roommate was Lula Pickenpack, a slightly older girl from Charlotte who already had a serious suitor, Charles Calvin Pettey.

Sarah Dudley graduated with distinction from Scotia in 1883 and returned to New Bern as an assistant principal of the black graded public school. During her first teaching year, the average monthly salary of the state's 700 black teachers was $22, a little less than that of white teachers but the highest salary a black woman could earn anywhere.[46] Each school term lasted only four months, and in the summer, Dudley attended a month-long teacher-training session at the New Bern State Colored Normal School. The next year, she moved up to vice principal in the public school system and associate principal of the summer normal school under George White, who would soon become her congressman.[47]

Sarah Dudley kept in touch with Lula Pickenpack and Charles Pettey, who were now married.[48] Pettey stood 5 feet 8 inches tall, "with short arms and legs, a long body, a prominent receding forehead, cheeks indicative of Indian descent, complexion of an Indian . . . his black hair nearly straight."[49] Pettey had a piercing, direct gaze, a dashing mustache, and a beautiful singing voice. Despite his probable triracial mix, Pettey's racial identity was always African American, and he had been born in slavery in Wilkes County in the northwestern section of the state in 1849.[50] After the Civil War, Pettey farmed during the day and worked as a cobbler and

basketmaker at night. He traded his handicrafts, along with ferry rides across the Yadkin River, to white people for reading lessons. After he could read, he hoarded every penny. Finally, in 1872, at age twenty-three, he put on a pair of shoes he had made, dressed himself in a suit sewn from fabric he had spun, pocketed $95 in savings, and walked ninety miles to Charlotte to enroll in college.[51]

The college, Presbyterian-supported Biddle Memorial Institute, offered classical training for men who wanted to be teachers or ministers, and there Pettey learned to read Latin and Greek. The institute did not insist on denominational fealty, and Pettey remained a member of the AME Zion Church. On weekends, he began preaching in the countryside, making "appointments," first at one crossroad and then another. Starting out on a Friday night, he would walk more than fifty miles in forty-eight hours. Pettey worked barely four months after graduation as head of a black public school in Charlotte when he became an elder in the AME Zion Church and discovered he would have to move to South Carolina to assume his new post. From his South Carolina base, Pettey established a normal school, built a national name for himself in the church, and with John Dancy, a prominent churchman, contributed to the *Star of Zion*, a denominational newspaper that soon became one of the twelve most important black newspapers in the nation.[52]

Sometime after 1881, Charles and Lula Pettey departed on a great adventure. Along with Alexander Walters, who would later help found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Pettey led a band of black colonists to California. They settled near San Francisco, founded a community named Petteyville, and spread out to establish AME Zion churches. Pettey became pastor of the downtown Stockton Street church.[53] Lula and Charles had two daughters, the first of whom they named Sarah. Lula died in 1887, and Charles was left with the two young girls.[54] He soon became bishop with responsibility for Texas, and in 1888 a conference brought him back to North Carolina and a reunion with Sarah Dudley. Within a year, they married and set up their home in New Bern.[55]

The recovered bits of the Petteys' life together confound notions of the South as an isolated, parochial place where African Americans existed as shadows, bent wraiths who shuffled subserviently along wooden sidewalks. Like many other successful black families in North Carolina's urban areas, the Petteys lived a deliberately conspicuous life. "There are plenty of carriages in New Bern," noted the black-owned *Raleigh Gazette*, "owned principally" by African Americans. Sarah Dudley Pettey rode around town in a black carriage drawn by a high-stepping mare. Charles Pettey sported silk top hats. At her table, Dudley Pettey served roast bear, lobster cutlets, and

Russian salad with sauce tartare and provided finger bowls.[56] The trappings of the Petteys' lives particularly annoyed white New Bernians, who termed the Petteys' society "colored swelldom." But "colored swelldom" had room to exist in New Bern, to rent reception rooms at the town's best "white" hotel, to shop in the best stores, and to host white townspeople at special programs in Saint Peter's AME Zion Church.[57]

The Petteys' group of affluent African Americans in New Bern contrasted with the population of James City, a virtually all-black town of 2,500 across the river. A comparison of the two reveals class differences, some of which can be traced back to the moment of freedom. James City represented the vestiges of a contraband encampment during the Civil War. African Americans who had fled there as slaves during the Federal occupation twenty-five years earlier had, of course, come with nothing. Across the river in New Bern, newly emancipated African Americans like Edward Dudley had advantages over them. Dudley knew the local people, he could read, and his barrels were in demand. John Stanly, the black slaveholder, had moved to Ohio, but his remaining New Bern relatives were even better off than Dudley. These initial differences carried over into the next generation: John's daughter, Sara, went to Oberlin College and Sarah Dudley went to Scotia Seminary, but in James City, young women went to work.[58]

Black people, whether they lived in New Bern or James City, certainly recognized variations in economic and educational standing; the important question is what those differences meant to them. Was class position the result of heredity? Were such gradations permanent? Should those who had become successful close ranks in order to exclude others?

Many southern whites would have answered "yes" to all of the above questions. Within that group of mostly backward-looking heirs of southern planters, class position was a matter of breeding—blood would tell. To maintain one's standing, one simply chose a marriage partner wisely. Amid the poverty of the postbellum economy, some southern whites tried to engineer their class system to run on heredity rather than on the economy. They remained tied to the land, and some managed to retain a degree of political power—though in North Carolina fewer did so than in the lower South. Their constrictive family bonds grew thick and tangled as the century progressed, and a part of white society froze looking back over its shoulder at a mythical antebellum romance. By the end of the century, some influential southerners, for example, Thomas Dixon, Jr., grafted the vines of hereditary class privilege onto pseudo-Darwinism to produce a mutant class system dependent upon fixed racial and gender categories. Who you were, more than what you did, mattered to these white southerners.[59]

But a growing group of white southerners would have answered "no" to each of these gatekeeping questions. This nucleus saw social position not

as hereditary and inflexible but as broachable, if not exactly fluid. For the most part descendants of antebellum yeoman farmers and petty slaveholders who had emerged impoverished after the war, these young southerners grew restless as the Bourbons who "redeemed" the state in the 1870s held it in limbo for the next two decades by painting change as anathema to the southern way of life. Middle-class white men in the 1870s began to prepare for occupations that would lift them out of rural poverty and to lobby the state to educate its white citizens. To these men and women, merit mattered; the best men should lead, regardless of their birth.[60]

As white men recast class by arguing for the capability of educated and industrious people, African Americans furnished living proof of their theories. Because education represented the key to class mobility, African Americans came to see it as nothing less than sacred, a spiritual duty that fell more heavily on women because of motherhood. Dudley Pettey connected class, gender, and education directly when she argued, "In the civilization and enlightenment of the Negro race its educated women must be the potent factors." Clearly "civilization" represented *her* version of manners and morals, those middle-class values that she learned from her family, church, and Reconstruction teachers. Yet she also foresaw class aspirations brokered by educational achievement as inclusive: "Ere long Ethiopia's sons and daughters, led by pious, educated women, will be elevated among the enlightened races of the world."[61]

In Reconstruction schools, middle-class identity, then, was something to be learned and, in turn, taught. Girls like Sarah Dudley attended Scotia Seminary with girls who were dirt-poor orphans and with others who were simply dirt-poor, like Mary McLeod, the fifteenth child of slave parents. McLeod's home was so humble that when she arrived at Scotia, she had never climbed a flight of stairs or used a knife or fork.[62] Yet she learned skills of self-presentation that ultimately gained her a federal post and Eleanor Roosevelt's friendship. Although Sarah had been born free to a prestigious black politician, her husband, her father, and her beloved grandmother, like her James City neighbors, had been born slaves. Only a very few "aristocrats of color" used heredity to signify class standing.[63]

Differences in color might have mattered to some but not to most educated black North Carolinians setting out to prove their race's ability. Light-skinned people married darker people, politicians came in all hues, and the black press bragged most loudly about the intellectual achievements of very dark men such as Joseph Charles Price, the founder of the AME Zion Livingstone College.[64] Sarah Dudley Pettey, obviously of black and white heritage, attributed her success to her family's love and her education, not to her light skin. Sarah and Elizabeth Delany, born to educators at Saint Augustine's College in Raleigh in the 1890s, described their

light-skinned mother's choice of their brilliant dark-skinned father this way: "Some colored women who were as light as Mama would not have gotten involved with a dark-skinned man, but Mama didn't care. She said he was the cream of the crop, a man of the highest quality."[65]

Upon the founding of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs in 1896, Sarah Dudley Pettey lauded the organization's mission while deploring its use of the word "colored." She attributed its origin to the "softening" of the word "nigger" to "you colored people" in the antebellum South. All people are colored, she argued, "from the fairest blonde to the darkest hue of humanity." Far better to use the term "Afro-American . . . as it designates both the races and countries from whence we, the amalgamated race, came." It was typical of her to speak forthrightly of racial mixing; on another occasion, she argued that the word "Negro" was useless because it denoted "one type of the African race without mixture." By clinging to "Afro," she showed her pride in her African heritage; by linking it with "American," she held whites accountable for both slavery and miscegenation. When an African American writer proposed "affirming we are 'Americans, pure and simple,' " Dudley Pettey retorted that if "we [were] Americans, pure and simple," there "would be no class legislation against us; there would be no need of separate schools and churches."[66] To Dudley Pettey, race prejudice worked like class prejudice: it created false divisions among worthy human beings.

Black writers in the late nineteenth century regularly referred to racial segregation as "class legislation," and they saw race as one marker among many. Thus, to consider class among African Americans apart from the racial caste system in which they lived is to take too myopic a view. In real life, race, class, and gender never sorted themselves into convenient categories of analysis. Moreover, as Charles Chesnutt reminds us by invoking Procrustes, how African Americans viewed class differences among themselves mattered less in determining their wider opportunities than how whites saw those differences since it was whites who allotted the social space available.[67]

Whites tried to order the world to prevent African Americans from rising. When some blacks nevertheless achieved success, whites set off alarms. Whites preferred the Uncle Remus of the farm to the "colored swelldom" of the cities, and it was in the state's cities that black success showed most. After 1879, the percentage of black-owned urban property in the state increased at a time when the value of farms decreased and town lots grew more valuable. Wilmington ranked second in the South in black property ownership among cities with populations of 10,000 to 25,000. Only 5.6 percent of North Carolina's African Americans owned homes in 1870; by 1910, the figure had risen to 26 percent.[68] It must have seemed as if

Sarah Dudley Pettey, circa 1900. Courtesy of Corine Pettey, New York, New York.

African Americans were cornering the real estate market in North Carolina's towns and cities. In Wilmington, for example, many African Americans lived in "fine" houses with "pianos and servants and lace curtains to their windows."[69]

Because her husband served as bishop of the Texas, Alabama, and Louisiana district, Sarah Dudley Pettey spent little time looking through her lace curtains. Their honeymoon took them to Europe, California, and Mexico. In England, the archbishop of Canterbury received them and U.S. minister Robert Lincoln presented them at the Court of St. James. Their visit to rural Ireland prompted Charles to write an article comparing the South's racial situation to Ireland's ethnic strife caused by British home rule.[70] After Pettey became bishop of the Allegheny-Ohio Conference in 1896, they spent several months each year in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and the District of Columbia.[71]

Their five children—two boys and three girls—were born at two-year intervals, and Pettey's two daughters lived with them in New Bern as well. Traveling extensively, serving as her husband's secretary, and, beginning in

Bishop Charles Calvin Pettey, circa 1895. From the *Star of Zion*, 13 Dec. 1900.

August 1896, writing a bimonthly column for the *Star of Zion*, Sarah Dudley Pettey had to employ the organization of a field marshal. One of Sarah's sisters and one of Charles's cousins shared their household to help care for the children, and Sarah's brother, George, lived next door with his own growing family.[72]

Charles and Sarah made each other happy, and their devotion to one another spilled over into public life. He was extraordinarily proud of her, saw her as his equal, and bragged about her to his colleagues. Once, in an editorial in which Charles was bowing out of a long theological debate with readers of the *Star of Zion*, he promised, "Madam Pettey, who has been reviewing . . . the Greek testament scriptures . . . will remain at my desk; . . . I am quite confident that she will be able to keep off all intruders."[73] She certainly was able, it turned out, since she subsequently accused a bumptious theological adversary of misrepresenting Charles's position just to vent "the great drops of gall escaping from the puncture in his swelling spleen."[74] Sarah and Charles made a formidable team.

The Dudley-Pettey marriage suggests mutual cooperation and equal

partnership. Sarah and her peers understood marriage as a duty, the site of "civil enterprise" for the post-Reconstruction black generation. Analyzing the domestic fiction of black women writers of the period, novels that Sarah Dudley Pettey most certainly read, Claudia Tate has argued that the ideal marriage for these black women was an "industrious partnership" rather than a passionate dive into abandon.[75] The Dudley-Pettey union certainly qualified as an industrious partnership, even as it managed to convey, on occasion, just a hint of passionate abandon. Among African Americans, marriage itself was political, a testimony to capability as piercing white eyes peered through domesticity, searching for degeneracy.

Black male voters often saw themselves as representing their wives, not as patriarchs who assumed that their wives' interests coincided with their own but as family delegates to the electoral sphere. Although there is evidence of this delegate-husband model among some whites in the North, such as members of the Society of Friends, such evidence is rare in the nineteenth century, especially among white southern ladies and their patriarchal husbands. Eventually white women educated in the 1890s reshaped white marriage relationships, but southern black women were a generation ahead of them in forging companionate partnerships.[76] The pervasive white gaze, contact with earnest northern white and black women missionaries, strong ex-slave grandmothers and mothers, and a keen sense of fairness forged in the fires of discrimination all contributed to black women's construction of the ideal marriage, as did their coeducational experiences.

The fact that they saw their husbands as familial delegates to the political world did not mean, however, that some women did not seek self-representation. Charles encouraged Sarah to go forward, even on his own ground. Sarah traveled with Charles to churches in his district, where they both gave remarkable performances. First the bishop would preach, then the bishop's wife would take the pulpit and deliver a speech on woman's rights, either "Woman the Equal of Man" or "Woman's Suffrage." One of her male listeners called her "a power with the pen, clearly demonstrating the possibilities of a woman."[77] Dudley Pettey regularly reported in the *Star of Zion* on women's accomplishments that she believed would "be of historic interest a century from now." "What position is there," she asked rhetorically, "that woman cannot fill?"[78]

Dudley Pettey's belief in woman's equality was not an aberration in her church, but it may have been a minority opinion. In 1867 church leaders deleted the word "male" in the description of church officers' qualifications, at a time when other denominations argued that women had no place "teaching or preaching."[79] Thirty years later, Mary Small, a bishop's wife and recent deacon who had taught Sunday school in Fayetteville with

Charles Chesnutt, sought ordination as an elder. Bishop Charles Pettey created a huge controversy when he ordained her in 1898. Sarah was delighted. She opined that before the word "male" was struck, AME Zion women's "usefulness was limited to a certain narrow and prescribed sentimental boundary." That was no longer the case, she gloated, since the church had kept "pace with the advanced ideas of to-day." "To-day, to the called female church-worker there is no majestic Shasta looming up before her, with sexual prejudicial peaks and impregnable sentimental buttes saying 'thus far shalt thou come and no farther.' "[80]

To Sarah Dudley Pettey and Mary Small, it was no longer enough for AME Zion women to experience spirituality individually. A woman who experienced a calling could not hold it within; she must follow where it led, even if the road seemed steep. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham has argued that in the African American tradition, personal testimony was seen as a political stand.[81] In slavery, the body was indeed the body politic. If a slave witnessed, his or her thoughts escaped bondage and entered a free market of ideas, a potentially revolutionary act that could liberate or endanger not just the speaker but also other slaves. Thus, once given voice, personal belief both embodied and mandated public action. As a result, if God called on a woman and filled her with the spirit, she should speak it aloud; she was responsible not simply for saving her own soul but for saving others' as well.

Mary Small's ordination as an elder, which seems to have been the first ordination of a woman in any denominational body in the United States, set off a firestorm of controversy in the AME Zion Church.[82] One minister devoted his column, "Red Hot Cannon Ball," to warnings of a "petticoat ministry," arguing that "women's work in the church from the earliest dawn till now has been in subordination to man." Since it could not have been God who turned this hierarchy upside down, women must be bearing false witness. The minister concluded, "I as much doubt a woman's call to the ministry as I do my ability to fly."[83] Such nay-saying merely propelled Sarah Dudley Pettey to greater rhetorical heights. Small was an "eloquent, pathetic and forcible preacher," Dudley Pettey argued.[84] If the clamor did not subside, she threatened, "I have almost gotten in the notion of being ordained myself."[85]

Oppression, whether on account of race or on account of sex, was all of a piece to Sarah Dudley Pettey since it sprang from the same sin: a hierarchical mind-set that violated Christian teachings. She linked race and sex discrimination closely: "Those persons who are disposed to criticise the advanced woman reason from the same analogy as that class of Anglo-Saxons who believe Anglo-Africans should be educated only for manual

labor." It was wrong to "put a limit to the capabilities and possibilities of certain classes of humanity," she wrote.[86] Her feminism was not just a response to patriarchy but a response to racial oppression as well.

By contrast, a white woman's radicalizing experience generally came at the moment in which she found her "capabilities and possibilities" limited on account of her sex. Such an incident shaped self-identity because it sparked the recognition of exclusion and, therefore, of oppression. A black woman's radicalizing experience almost always occurred at the moment she realized that racial exclusion precluded possibility. By the time black female children first encountered sexism, they were armed with an ideological paradigm: racism is wrong; therefore sexism is wrong. The limitation of one's possibility might have mattered less if ambition represented self-indulgence, but God had given everyone work to do.[87] Women, Sarah Dudley Pettey argued, stood poised to enter "every door of usefulness." Slamming those doors shut was simply wrong.[88]

Together Charles and Sarah created a world in which, it seemed, anything could happen. Their own happiness surely colored their optimism, but as they looked around themselves prior to 1898, the Petteys saw racial and gender progress everywhere. Dudley Pettey wrote romantic, exhortatory, and relentlessly progressive columns in the *Star of Zion*. "This is . . . an age of evolution, an age of development, an age of restlessness and commotion," she commented approvingly. "The day is past when the world will bow to any one man's theory." Although some took issue with her controversial columns on economics, politics, and woman's place, no one challenged Sarah Dudley Pettey's right to be heard, and some male readers stepped up to champion her. She even inspired poetry:

> We've many brilliant women,
> With intellectual life—
> Just take for example,
> Our Bishop Pettey's wife.[89]

From the remove of New Bern and the cocoon of their love, the Petteys put the best possible face on the ominous stirrings of segregation and federal abdication of their rights. They saw the 1890 Mississippi election reform laws and the 1896 Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* as temporary setbacks. Despite "frowns in the highest courts of the land," Charles Pettey argued, "we as a race are enjoying the brightest rays of Christian civilization. . . . The evils we are enduring are more than compensated for through God's providence by placing us within the touch of the greatest intellectual battery the world has ever witnessed."[90]

The Petteys could testify to the immediate dividends African Americans gained from investment in the great "intellectual battery." In the 1890s,

educated African American professionals began to compete with whites for business and to earn more than many of their competitors in North Carolina. African Americans practiced medicine and law, taught and preached, and established mortuaries, pharmacies, and benevolent societies under the noses of, and in competition with, whites in the same professions. Leonard Medical School opened in 1881 at Shaw University in Raleigh to train black physicians, and Shaw inaugurated a pharmacy school nine years later.[91] By 1890, forty-six African Americans practiced medicine in the state. Although this figure hardly constitutes a black takeover of the medical profession, the numbers grew each year.[92] In a speech at Leonard's first commencement, graduating senior Lawson Andrew Scruggs linked racial uplift and professional training: "The colored man must go forward, he must harness himself for the battle, and we who stand before you tonight, are pioneers of the medical profession of our race."[93] Black women as well threatened white doctors' monopoly. In 1894, Lucy Hughes Brown, an orphan who had attended Scotia Seminary with Sarah Dudley Pettey, returned to North Carolina after attending medical college in Philadelphia. Along with two white women, she passed the state medical exam and opened a practice in Wilmington.[94]

Shaw University also pioneered black legal education in the state in 1888 after its white president determined that African Americans were being "taken advantage of" by white lawyers. The ranks of black lawyers grew rapidly; only fourteen practiced in the state in 1890, but by 1908 an additional forty-three had graduated from Shaw.[95] Others read law with practicing attorneys, according to the custom of the day.[96]

To whites, the important thing was not how *many* African Americans rose, but that *any* did. If, in the shambles of Reconstruction, some whites began to believe that merit and hard work mattered more than family background, old definitions of racial place might be changed. If accomplishments counted for something, African Americans could proceed accordingly. When John Leary, a black attorney in Charlotte, got thirsty, he drank from the dipper designated for bar members at the courthouse.[97] As a living testament to capability, successful African Americans' lives provided a perpetual affront to whites. The black lawyer, doctor, preacher, or teacher represented someone out of his or her place. The danger lay not in their numbers, but in the aspirations they inspired in their fellow African Americans and the proof they gave to the white lie of inherent African inferiority. Warnings began to sound in North Carolina's towns. As one African American newspaper put it, "The Negro has not said one word about rule, but his steady move in the wake of wealth, education and thrift is telling its own tale and causing alarm."[98]

Sarah Dudley Pettey knew that not all African Americans could be

doctors and lawyers, and she believed that the future of the New South lay in an integrated industrial workforce. Traveling in Pennsylvania, she visited the Homestead steel mill and recalled with pride how black workers had come to be in the mills after a famous 1892 strike: "Hundreds of Afro-Americans . . . were sent for and employed. Some of these men retain their positions until to-day and many of the strikers were never more employed in the mills of Carnegie." Her comments on black strikebreakers shed light on the agonizing problem of the relationship between African Americans and white unions. Dudley Pettey came from a place where blacks were rapidly being excluded from industry, she pointed with pride to the strikebreakers for the most basic reasons: to prove to southern whites that African Americans were equal to and ready for the most difficult industrial work. Her strategy—to secure a toehold for African Americans through strikebreaking and to use their subsequent performance as evidence of their capabilities—later became a method by which both the Urban League and the NAACP sought to counteract union segregation after their efforts to gain the cooperation of organized labor had failed.[99] As she traveled in the North, Dudley Pettey noted that African Americans were losing jobs to "foreigners," who, she pointed out, "hardly lisp good English" before they seek to disfranchise black Americans.[100] Working-class solidarity meant little to people excluded from working at all.

In the South, African Americans faced competition for industrial jobs not from immigrants but from native-born poor whites pushed off their farms by the crop-lien system. African Americans pondering the future of the workforce could point to precedents for black industry in skilled trades and rudimentary factories. In the late 1880s, over 2,000 African Americans participated in segregated Knights of Labor chapters in the state, and blacks and whites held joint conventions.[101] Five and a half percent of North Carolina's African Americans worked in saw mills, in brick factories, as carpenters, or as stone and marble cutters.[102] The largest factory in Wilmington, the Sprunt Cotton Compress, employed several hundred African American workers, virtually all male.[103] The Ashley and Bailey silk factory in Fayetteville, a branch of a northern company, ran smoothly with a workforce of black women and children.[104]

Since northern capitalists could scarcely overlook such a numerous and cheap workforce, Charles Pettey reasoned that the future of the South would depend upon whether the "manufactories growing up in the South by the help of Northern capital employ . . . black labor."[105] African American slaves had furnished the primary labor force in some antebellum mills, and some southern capitalists mixed the races and the sexes in the new industries that developed after the war. Black and white men and women worked in the tobacco industry before mechanization, and African Americans remained in lower-paying jobs after the move to factories.[106] Black and white women worked side by side in commercial laundries.[107] It was vital that African Americans follow their work as it moved indoors. As Charles Pettey put it, "The washerwoman would now like to enter the steam laundry. The blacksmith would like to enter the foundry, where they are now molding the plow shares he made with the hammer."[108]

Much of the state's industrial growth, however, involved building cotton mills, and segregated cotton mills grew rapidly. By 1900, more than 30,000 white North Carolinians labored in cotton and knitting mills, more operatives than in any state except Massachusetts. Most workers were women, and 31 percent were under sixteen.[109] White mill promoters argued that employing African Americans presented a peculiar problem for two reasons: white women and children comprised the bulk of the workforce and needed to be protected from race mixing, and owners located the mills in isolated areas where they had to provide segregated housing. The rising tide of racial segregation washed over this new industry as owners invented job categories and designated particular jobs as suitable for men or women, for whites or blacks. Only a few of the dirtiest outdoor jobs fell to African Americans.

But rigid segregation in the cotton mills did not merely reflect the status quo; it was also a tool promoters used to tap growing white supremacist feelings and to offer racial exclusion as an employee benefit.[110] Cotton mill managers could dangle before poor white families something they lacked on the farm, giving them a glimpse of what increasingly defined white ladyhood: distance from all African Americans, with its implied protection from black men. A mill owners' apologist assured white workers: "The working of negroes, particularly negro men, beside white women within walls would not be tolerated. . . . The experience of the South with the 'unspeakable crime' has been bitter."[111] But, of course, integration was tolerated in many existing commercial and artisanal establishments. Moreover, poor white farm families neither worked within walls nor toiled in fields of racial purity. They often picked cotton, cured tobacco, and harvested squash side by side with African Americans and counted themselves lucky for the help. The cotton mill's promise of racial separation to poor white women represented new, pathetic bait in a Faustian bargain.

Once owners decided that only whites would work in southern cotton mills, they had to make the decision appear to be the only logical one. In order to suggest that the decision was natural, southern whites concocted notions that generally revolved around the idea that quick, crafty, Scotch-Irish mountaineers made good mill operatives whereas sluggish, crude African American cotton pickers did not. Anyone who gave a mill job to an African American jeopardized this fiction, and often during the late 1890s,

reports cropped up of African Americans working in cotton mills. The manager of Vesta Mills, a Charleston, South Carolina, knitting factory, was frustrated by high turnover in his white female workforce and appealed to black ministers to recommend women to replace them. After recruiting this new workforce, he fired 300 white women and hired black women and a black male supervisor. The white women's male relatives subsequently demanded their jobs back in a widely published petition that condemned the black supervisor. The mill manager, they argued, "should preclude him from competing with our mothers, wives, sons, and daughters in light pursuits of the country." The petitioners worried "that he must be put in dangerous proximity with our maidens or they be deprived of opportunities for his benefit." By ignoring the black women mill workers and focusing on their male supervisor, the petitioners sexualized what was actually an economic threat. White men wanted to put their female relatives to work, and they wanted black women out of the way.[112]

The *Atlanta Constitution* reflected white people's hopes that African Americans would prove biologically incapable of cotton mill work when it ran a story on Vesta Mills in 1900, replete with four screaming headlines. "Negro Labor in Cotton Mills," the lead warned. "Experiment at Charleston Is Being Watched," cautioned the second headline. "Not Such a Great Success," opined the next. "Black People Do Not Seem to Take to the Work—Takes Long Time to Instruct Them—Then Suddenly Leave Their Jobs," confided the last. The story failed to mention that the black women had been called in when white women's turnover rate became too high to run the mill.[113]

If white-owned mills came under pressure for employing African Americans, then black-owned mills might prove that they made good workers and create competition to boot.[114] Warren G. Coleman, a wealthy black man in Concord, set out to raise black capital, hire black overseers, train black operatives, and start a mill.[115] The Dudleys and the Petteys had been friends of Coleman's for years—when Edward Dudley walked away with a ribbon for his five-foot-tall pumpkin, Warren Coleman claimed another for his thirty-five-pound cantaloupe.[116] Sarah Dudley Pettey called Coleman Mill the best "monument yet erected to Negro thrift, industry and energy." To Dudley Pettey, the mill represented "the closing event of the nineteenth century, and the crowning effort of Negro aspirations, capabilities and manhood."[117] Coleman sent salespeople like Lulu Jenkins, a Concord teacher, throughout the state to sell stock in his new venture.[118] Jenkins visited the Petteys as she traveled in the eastern part of the state, initially taking pledges to buy stock and then returning to collect increments of 10 percent from subscribers.[119] Among the mill's incorporators were many friends of the Petteys, including Lawson Andrew Scruggs, now

a teacher at Leonard Medical School; E. A. Johnson, a Raleigh attorney whose sister married Sarah's brother Edward Richard Dudley III; and John Dancy, an AME Zion churchman who, with Charles Pettey, had built the *Star of Zion*.[120] Even with such prestigious backing and strong sales efforts, the mill remained undercapitalized. Apparently $50,000 to $100,000 was pledged, but only $23,000 was actually collected.[121]

Although Sarah Dudley Pettey believed that the industrialization she saw around her meant progress for blacks, it did not. She could not know at the time that automation and centralization of work in factories solidified economic differences between the races and built a new power structure that denied African Americans even the small chance a more agrarian economy had afforded them. After it took six years to build the Coleman Mill, it operated for only two years until Coleman's death in 1904. Coleman apparently spent his fortune and borrowed heavily from the Dukes of Durham to keep it afloat.[122]

Given white attempts to exclude African Americans from participation in the South's industrial awakening, Booker T. Washington's speech at the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta takes on new meaning. Washington took the stage in the midst of the commercial carnival. Through the exposition, the South, with slightly more than 10 percent of the nation's wealth, sought to shake off the recession of 1893, to trumpet its capabilities, and to prove to northern investors that the southern "Negro problem" would not be a bar to progress.[123]

Whites and blacks heard Washington say two different things that day. Washington's white auditors emphasized his abdication of classical education for African Americans and his acceptance of a separate black place in the agrarian South. Yet blacks heard his argument for the inclusion, not the exclusion, of African Americans in the urban industrial order. Washington challenged his audience: "It is in the South that the Negro is given a man's chance in the commercial world." Speaking in Atlanta, one of the South's most unionized cities in 1895, Washington, like Sarah Dudley Pettey in Homestead, sought to remind whites that blacks had worked "without strikes and labor wars."[124] Washington foresaw the impending industrialization of the region, but his solution—vocational education—replicated the world of the past instead of predicting that of the future.[125] That day in Atlanta, Washington faced white captains of industry and asked for a job; blacks will "run your factories," he predicted. Unfortunately, when he gave up claims to a classical education, he relinquished a right upon which the growth of the black middle class depended. Certainly the Petteys had learned useful skills at Scotia Seminary and Biddle Memorial Institute—Sarah's dormitory's cornerstone read "Head, Heart, and Hands," after all—but they had also learned Latin. The grateful fervor with which whites

embraced Washington's exposition speech soon made clear the one-sided nature of the Atlanta "Compromise."

Southern African Americans mounted vigorous opposition to the foreclosure of classical educations, the abdication of political power, and segregation.[126] Although the Atlanta Exposition is remembered primarily for Washington's speech, several discordant African American voices arose there, including Charles Pettey's and, oddly enough, Margaret Murray Washington's. Pettey answered Washington at the Negro Exhibition Hall, where it is doubtful that many, if any, white people heard him. As he began, perhaps Pettey remembered the day thirteen years earlier when, at Washington's invitation, he had addressed Tuskegee Institute's first class. Now he would strain those ties.[127]

The text of Pettey's Atlanta speech is lost, but another that reportedly echoed it that was given a short time later at Mobile, Alabama, has survived. It seems crafted as an answer to Washington. Pettey argued that full participation in economic progress required a complete education. "I would be the last one to discourage classical training," he said pointedly. Whereas Washington had recommended that African Americans narrow their horizons to succeed, Pettey exhorted his audience to "soar high, far beyond the cloudy pathway of all present astronomers and there blaze like the sun."[128] Only by receiving higher educations comparable to those of whites could African Americans have the chance to enter scientific fields. "Gentlemen, let the lamp of twenty five years experience be our guide," Pettey cautioned. "God forbid my saying one word against the Negro going to the topmost round of intellectual manhood."[129] Pettey held onto every shred of possibility and raised the stakes. He recommended no casting down of one's bucket where one stood, no settling for the right to work while bargaining away the right to vote. In exchange for Washington's clay-mired boots, Pettey offered wings.

Booker T. Washington's wife, Margaret Murray Washington, attended the Atlanta Exposition in her capacity as first vice president of the National Colored Woman's Congress, an event organized by the Woman's Auxiliary of the Negro Exhibition Hall. Lucy Hughes Brown, Sarah's old schoolmate, came as a delegate, as did many of the northern editors of the *Woman's Era*, the voice of the fledgling black club women's movement. The Woman's Congress issued a strongly worded set of resolutions on the state of southern race relations. Its resolves differ in principle from Washington's exposition address on at least one point. The women called "upon the Southern legislators, in the name of the common womanhood, to adopt a first and second class fare [on trains and streetcars], so that the womanhood of the race may be protected from every outrage and insult." Protesting Jim Crow cars by advocating that riders be separated on class lines

rather than race lines runs counter to the image that the Wizard hoped to convey. Moreover, there is a striking difference in style between Washington's remarks and the women's resolutions. Whereas he was vague, they were specific. Whereas he seemed to accept subordination, they struck out at injustice.[130]

Perhaps the Petteys and Booker T. Washington saw things differently because of the profound differences between North Carolina and Alabama. If Washington's homiletic concessions represented canny strategies in the deep South, that simply points up the absurdity of whites anointing him the only spokesperson for African Americans. A look around New Bern through the Petteys' eyes underscores the dramatic differences between the upper and lower South in the 1890s, differences that African Americans in North Carolina recognized and cherished.[131] Shortly after Washington's speech, a black newspaperman found himself on a New Bern–bound train among several elderly black men and women who had just experienced six years of debt peonage in Mississippi. They had left North Carolina for the promise of a better life in the deep South, but they quickly discovered to their horror that "escape" was the only route out of sharecropping in "those bottoms." Even then "they will hunt you, catch you and bring you back and give you a good thrashing, just as they used to do in slavery times," said one sharecropper. One old woman, Mrs. P. E. Sutton, "looked real pitiful" and told of being whipped until her "back was as raw as a piece of raw beef." The returning emigrants concluded, "We had no rights, not even the right to vote." The dismayed correspondent, unlike Booker T. Washington, saw compelling connections between political, economic, and civil rights: "We colored people in North Carolina have a right to feel proud that we escaped at the last election such laws as the Democrats have in Mississippi."[132] As the grizzled sharecroppers traveled by train to New Bern in 1895, no Jim Crow law assigned their seats after they crossed the North Carolina line.

Debt peonage, disfranchisement, and segregation laws enacted outside the state hung over black North Carolinians in the 1890s like the sword of Damocles, evoking relief at escaping disaster thus far. In the summer of 1893, black North Carolina college student William Fonvielle tossed a few clothes and a volume of Shakespeare into his valise and departed on a train trip through the lower South to experience these curiosities firsthand. Operating from the premise that there was "as much difference in North Carolina and her sisters south of her as there is in North Carolina and Massachusetts," he poked his head out of the window in the hopes of glimpsing a "native" when the train crossed the South Carolina line. Spot-

ting a one-gallused white man plowing behind an ox, Fonvielle "sat there and wondered if this tiller of the soil, this specimen of South Carolina manhood, had ever helped lynch anybody." He encountered "colored" and "white" waiting rooms for the first time in Spartanburg and pronounced Atlanta "a mean hole . . . chained down with prejudice." When he crossed the Georgia-Alabama line, he was forced to ride in his first Jim Crow car, which he dubbed a "pig-stye arrangement." As Fonvielle returned home through Tennessee, Jim Crow enforcement became spotty; some lines required it, but on others African Americans could "ride decently." Fonvielle's journey is like a snapshot from the eye of a hurricane: a calm view of segregation-in-progress. For William Fonvielle, at least, disfranchisement and Jim Crow represented anything but foregone conclusions in North Carolina.[133]

Other black North Carolinians, including Fonvielle's friend Sarah Dudley Pettey, cast anxious glances southward toward the stain of repression creeping in their direction. Two years after Fonvielle's journey, she condemned the owners of Atlanta's streetcar company for their "indiscreet and ungentlemanly execution of the power vested in them by a biased and prejudiced legislature"—in other words, for segregating the cars. Dudley Pettey endorsed a protest among black Atlanta women and urged them to go even further and boycott the lines.[134] Most black North Carolinians believed, however, that such repression could not happen in their state; they had progressed too far to turn back now. When the unfortunate Mississippi refugees finally walked freely along New Bern's streets, reassuring sights of black progress must have given them a feeling of relief akin to the relief Fonvielle experienced upon his homecoming. In the years just before and after Washington's speech, all eight barbers in New Bern were black, as were three butchers, two carpenters, and two general merchants. Three black lawyers practiced in the city, and eight black leaders organized the Mutual Aid Banking Company, the first black private bank in the state. School funds were distributed "pro rata per capita" to whites and blacks, and 4,293 black compared to 2,788 white children attended New Bern's public schools.

The Eastern North Carolina Industrial Stock and Fruit Fair, established in 1890 and staged annually by Craven County black leaders, prompted a white paper to comment, "It is to the credit of the colored citizens that the best of order was preserved everywhere," and the fair's secretary encouraged whites to attend in order to see members of the "colored race who are struggling to do something and be something." Besides watching the goat race and the alligator-wrestling competition, Sarah Dudley Pettey cheered as her children, sisters, and father took top honors for their paintings. Surely doing something and being something would count for something,

and North Carolina would be the dam that held back the rising tide of white supremacy.[135]

The week after the fair, through the agency of a white lawyer, the Petteys purchased a resort in rural Alexander County, North Carolina, across the mountain from the Wilkes County homeplace where Charles Pettey was born in slavery in 1849.[136] Amid gently rolling hills, with springs and creeks lacing the land, sat a fine two-story hotel. On the other side of the road sprawled a gazebo and dining hall.[137] The Petteys now owned All Healing Spring, one of the premier "Health Resort[s] and Pleasure Retreat[s]" in western North Carolina. The resort's patrons had always been and would remain white—always.

Photographs of All Healing Spring during the period capture the fairest flowers of white womanhood lounging on the hotel's veranda, and accounts of summer parties and dances abound in the oral tradition.[138] The surrounding community discovered that the Petteys were the new owners in short order. A local white woman dutifully recorded each of the spring's proprietors in her scrapbook from 1892 until 1912. Next to Charles Pettey's name, she wrote "(Col.)." What was clear to contemporaries became shrouded in legend in subsequent years, and local folklore transformed Pettey from an African American into a white Confederate colonel.[139] Now innkeepers themselves, Charles and Sarah Pettey had quite outgrown their assigned spots in Procrustes's bed. So had many of their peers, the women apace with the men.

two

RACE AND WOMANHOOD

"Women are . . . crowding the avenues once open only to men; they are entering the struggle and competing on equal terms," asserted Tena Nichols, a black Raleigh teacher, on a spring day in 1892. Nichols boasted to her listeners that women could be found "doing the actual work of the world . . . taking an active, intelligent, resolute part in the march and progress of humanity." She spoke that day on "higher education for women"—a "God-given privilege," as she put it. Educating women would prove to be a wise investment for everyone, she reassured the skeptical among her audience, and its yield included "virtue preserved, social ills remedied . . . and humanity blessed."[1]

Higher education prepared black women for the world's work, not simply by showing them better ways to work but by showing them a better world. Women left seminaries, normal schools, and colleges with much more than a finite body of knowledge or a set of skills; they departed imbued with a reformist zeal for racial "uplift" and armed with a full quiver of intellectual weapons to aim at poverty and discrimination.[2] Moreover, most black women and men attended school together, and the coeducational experience influenced gender relations among educated African Americans by encouraging more equitable domestic partnerships and an

active place for women in public life. Higher education produced strong female soldiers for the race. Soon, Nichols predicted, "young women of color will march to the front in one long unbroken line."

Upon graduation, black women teachers and activists shaped and reshaped strategies to outmaneuver the daily manifestations of racism they encountered on their way to the front. White supremacy has lasted so long because of its ability to make and remake itself. Black women tried to get out in front of racism, to anticipate an opportunity for interracial cooperation here, protest exclusion there, or, chameleonlike, to become invisible to whites and get on with things surreptitiously. Sometimes they fought straightforwardly, sometimes covertly, the open, ugly faces of segregation, racial violence, and economic exclusion, and they tried to peel away white supremacy's thousand disguises as well. Racism rolls along so smoothly because it seems to be impermeable. It is, however, a tightly wound tangle of individual strands, and black women set about unraveling them wherever they could. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) is a case in point. Because of a famous conflict between race leader Ida B. Wells and Union president Frances Willard, historians dismiss the WCTU as "racist." But that analysis overlooks the importance of the WCTU to southern black women and fails to recognize how its racial politics compared to racial politics in other organizations at home and abroad. It does not impart a sympathetic understanding of why, for a time, many of North Carolina's black women saw the WCTU as their best hope for building strong communities and securing interracial cooperation. Black women first forged their ideas of gender and race equity within their families; then their educational experiences and voluntary activities tested and refined those beliefs. Their concepts of woman's place were far from monolithic, but all were marked by the experience of exclusion and the challenge of meeting adversity.

Tena Nichols spoke at a singular moment. It was as if black southern educators, students, and parents were pausing in 1892 to consider their course. Several tributaries came together to produce this watershed: an educated generation had emerged with firsthand experience against which they weighed educational theories; black schools had produced a competent and increasingly female teaching force; African Americans now sought new funding sources since Reconstruction Era philanthropic aid had dwindled and southern whites stirred up frequent debates over the extent of state responsibility for black public education; African Americans argued over the future of coeducation; and curriculum disputes grew more intense as the decade wore on.

At the most fundamental level, the first generation of educated African

Americans born in freedom had completed college and had developed their own ideas about what an education should be. Rather than accepting uncritically northern missionaries' curricula and pedagogical methods, they could begin to retain what worked, reject what failed, and add new courses. Twenty years earlier, at the age of twenty-three, self-taught ex-slave Charles Pettey had entered a classroom for the first time and had taken his seat alongside city-schooled Charlotte boys of twelve or thirteen. His free-born wife Sarah had matriculated within a more regimented system: grade school, normal school, and seminary. From the 1880s until the tide of vocational training swamped them after 1900, African Americans began to formulate educational models based on their own postbellum experiences. Black men and women who went beyond grade school generally chose from among three courses of study: a classical curriculum that offered Latin and the humanities; a normal school program that included literature, history, math, basic science, and pedagogy; and a sprinkling of vocational courses to equip the student to pursue a profession, earn pin money, or simply provide for his or her family. In addition, black men could pursue a theological degree at church-supported schools, a separate course of study that included the Bible, exhortation, and Greek.

By 1892, most people knew some young woman from their own neighborhood, once a barefoot girl, perhaps the daughter of a freedwoman who could not read or write, who shone in the local school and then, through ingenuity, gumption, and luck, left home to pursue higher education.[3] These larger-than-life role models never made it look easy, but they placed education within the realm of the possible for the girls they left behind. Julia Sadgwar was a student at Gregory Normal Institute in Wilmington when her father suddenly died, and she eventually went on to Fisk University. Sadgwar recalled, "I found that I could not always wear whole shoes or dresses as some other girls did; . . . there were days when I would have only bread or perhaps a potato . . . but nothing stopped me."[4]

Sadgwar returned to North Carolina as a teacher, along with other women students, many transformed beyond recognition, who went back to their homes to fill the crying need for teachers in the fast-growing public school system. By the end of the 1890s, it became clear that women would dominate the teaching force. When Sarah Dudley went home to teach in New Bern in 1884, there were 2,231 black teachers in the state, of whom 731 were women. By 1890, black male teachers numbered 1,370 and female teachers 988; ten years later, as many women were teaching as men.[5] At the same time, African American men and women replaced whites as normal, seminary, and college professors in black institutions. To be sure, some elderly white women and men, veterans of Reconstruction, taught on, but an increasing number of black women and men joined them.

Financial support from Reconstruction Era constituencies faded in the early 1890s, and philanthropies with vocationally oriented agendas such as the General Education Board, the Anna T. Jeanes Fund, and the Rosenwald Foundation had not yet stepped in to fill the need, much less call the dance, as they ultimately would.[6] The Hampton Institute model of vocational training was merely one among many in 1892. It would be three years before Booker T. Washington successfully began to impose his personal experience and vision on his entire race, and almost a decade before northern white vocational philanthropists tightened their grip on southern black education into a choke hold.[7] It was not that African Americans did not want to learn useful skills; they did. But they also wanted to follow intellectual curiosity where it led. One only has to glance at the German drills in adolescent Charles Chesnutt's journals and read his accompanying self-admonishments to study harder to see how important classical education was to his sense of accomplishment and to understand how learning shaped his self-concept.[8] Nothing in Tena Nichols's speech decries learning practical pursuits, but it is doubtful that laundry classes came to mind when Nichols dreamed of her "God-given privilege."

The school "year" was fluid, lasting from four months at state expense to eight months with private supplementation. As poor as it was, the public school system in North Carolina outdistanced those of many other southern states.[9] Many whites hated paying a nickel for African American schooling. Perennially, African Americans would mount a court challenge to some white county functionary's decision to allocate tax dollars to schools separately on the basis of each race's local tax payments. An 1886 North Carolina Supreme Court ruling found these attempts to starve black education unconstitutional, which slowed the schemes a bit until after disfranchisement. Grudgingly, North Carolina's white majority helped fund black education, theoretically allocating dollars on a per-pupil basis and paying black teachers as much as whites until the late 1890s. This system—racially fair on its face—seldom proved equal in its execution. In a precariously balanced political climate, however, lip service counted for something.[10]

Even "equal" support was meager. Teacher Susie Rhone's rural one-room school accommodated pupils "rang[ing] from little tots of five years to great big folks of nineteen and twenty," sometimes seventy at once. Learning competed with farming, and many rural students attended only sporadically. Louise Dorr noted in late May 1886 that strawberry picking had kept students away for the past month. She struggled to lift her spirits even though sometimes it seemed "like trying to make tracks in the water to try to make impressions" on her students. The rewards of this attempt to walk on water could tide a teacher over for a term, however. Annie Day captured the exhilaration of teaching—any time, any place—when she

wrote, "I forget everything while I am there, but the eager questioning faces and what I would teach them."[11]

Accounts of the summer subscription schools are the stuff of legend: Charles Chesnutt organized one at fifteen; far from his Fisk University dorm room, the green schoolteacher Willie Du Bois lost his virginity to his summer landlady; teenaged Anna Julia Haywood launched her eighty-year teaching career at a Chatham County subscription school.[12] As soon as their own terms ended, African American normal and college students scoured the countryside to scare up parents who might pass the hat and combine the proceeds with any unspent tax money to fund a summer school. The young teachers lived with their students' families. Chesnutt, who had taught in the Charlotte graded city school during the regular term, described the haphazard process of organizing a summer school in 1874. On a "dull" Fourth of July, Chesnutt went "up town to look around and see the country folks about a school. Got on the track of one." He tracked down Charles Pettey, who he thought operated a school nearby, where he was preaching to get the names of the committeemen in charge of school funding. Pettey informed Chesnutt that "he had lost his school, that there was but $89.93 in the treasury for that school and that they were going to build a school-house with it, and that there was but $20.00 for the school I was on the track of." After walking twenty-three miles on another day attempting to find support for a school, Chesnutt called it quits and went home to live with his parents for the summer.[13]

Summer schools encouraged cultural exchanges between citified teachers and countrified students. Teenager Anna Julia Haywood, a student at Saint Augustine's College in bustling Raleigh, traveled to nearby, but profoundly rural, Chatham County to teach. She inspired one country boy, Simon Atkins, to come back with her to Saint Augustine's to launch his own educational career, one that culminated in a college presidency.[14] Du Bois's students' daily struggles for survival moved him to mourn in *The Souls of Black Folk*, "How hard a thing life is to the lowly!"[15] Charles Chesnutt's discovery that his wards at a South Carolina summer school and their parents believed in ghosts added another mile to the yawning distance between him and his rural African American pupils: "Well! uneducated people, are the most bigoted, superstitious, hardest headed people in the world! . . . All the eloquence of a Demosthenes, the logic of a Plato, the demonstrations of the most learned men in this world couldn't convince them of the falsity, the absurdity, the utter impossibility and unreasonableness of such things. Verily, education is a great thing."[16]

Seven American Missionary Association (AMA) schools, more than in any other state, were located strategically throughout North Carolina.[17] Many more had existed in the early days of Reconstruction, serving as the

only schools in many places, but by the 1890s, these institutions functioned mainly to extend the public school year and the number of grades. Some AMA schools operated for months after the public school year ended; others added grades to the public schools to make them high schools and normal schools. Entire families attended. Eula Wellmon Dunlap remembered that when her father heard about Lincoln Academy in Kings Mountain, he picked up everything and moved, building a house with his own hands at the edge of campus. She was three and her sister was five at the time: "For a while Father, Mother, sister, and I all went to school. . . . I spent most of my time marking on paper and playing with blocks. Several married couples went to school." She eventually completed high school there. Her father had to drop out to support the family but studied at night and became a teacher himself.[18]

At a time when mother, father, and toddlers learned in the same classroom, the southern white norm of single-sex institutions was out of the question. Even if it had been possible to make such a choice, it is doubtful that most African Americans would have chosen to separate the sexes in school. The idea of keeping ex-slave women in bondage to ignorance seemed wrongheaded to most freed people and to their northern champions, and women wanted to learn what men were taught. Moreover, by 1880, most African Americans realized that black women would probably work outside the home for a lifetime or at least temporarily. Equipping a woman with an education armed her for the wage-earning battle. Trades such as carpentry represented a relatively high-paying and semiautonomous alternative for black men that did not exist for black women. An uneducated black woman could support herself only as a domestic; an educated black woman might become a teacher.

Thus, although prescriptive literature and white northern teachers counseled a version of separate spheres for African American women and men, it was not the cult of southern ladyhood they advocated but rather an evangelically driven ethos of "usefulness." Pursuit of "usefulness" gave women a middle space between the spheres into which they might venture on the business of the race. At the same time, white southerners never extended the privileges of ladyhood to black women, forcing them to negotiate public space without the cloak of chivalry.[19] All of these factors meant that African Americans of both sexes entered Reconstruction valuing strength, initiative, and practicality among black women and that the system of higher education they constructed reflected those ideals, though sometimes more brightly than other times.[20]

As a result, African American college and teacher training in North Carolina took place mostly at coeducational institutions, giving black students academic experiences quite different from those of southern whites.

Even women like Sarah Dudley Pettey who attended single-sex seminaries first studied at coeducational normal schools where adult men and women sat side by side. Young men and women found themselves together on the same playing field, albeit under unequal conditions. Once together, men and women openly questioned southern white patriarchal norms. In addition, coeducation gave substantial numbers of black women access to a kind of learning that remained rare among white women in the South.

The contrast between black coeducational institutions of higher learning and southern white female academies in the 1870s and 1880s could not have been more stark.[21] Most upper-class white women's institutions kept young men, even brothers, at bay and offered primarily art, music, a smattering of literature, and "ornamental" languages, such as French. The occasional woman's college included a classical curriculum, but such offerings were rare in North Carolina until the late 1890s. Although it is tempting to minimize the importance of the two decades of lead time African American women enjoyed in acquiring higher education, it made a terrific difference. During that period, the state provided no opportunities for higher learning for poor or middling white women, apart from summer normal schools, which they could not attend without some private education past grade school. In the mountain counties, a small number of missionary schools admitted white women. A few smaller denominations, notably the Quakers, the Lutherans, and the Associated Reformed Presbyterian Church, began in the 1880s to allow a few female coreligionists to enter their schools. The white private colleges supported by mainstream denominations and the state university excluded women altogether. White North Carolinians opposed coeducation so vociferously that one educator noted in 1888, "No one would dare propose, with any hope of success, that [white] women be admitted to the University and leading denominational colleges of the state."[22]

Exclusion of women from white men's colleges meant more than separation from men; it also generally meant exclusion from classical educations, the core of traditional training for leadership. Mastery of the classical curriculum demonstrated intellectual equality with white men, by implication suggesting entitlement to power and prestige. Keeping it away from white women was the pedagogical equivalent of foot binding.[23] In 1892, after a long fight, the state funded a full-term normal school for white women in Greensboro. Soon, white women at the state's Normal and Industrial College began to see themselves as "New Women."[24]

By that time, as Tena Nichols's words remind us, African American women had been "New Women" since 1877, when a reluctant state legislature, wary of black voting strength and white legislators' fears of forced integration, had established a state-supported normal school in Fayette-

ville for African Americans, the first such school in the country. The state did not limit the black school to a few months in the summer as it did the white normal schools but allowed it to continue for up to nine months as long as funding held out.[25] Apparently, the legislature neglected explicitly to approve women's admission to Fayetteville Colored Normal School. Surprised when women made up the majority of the first class, some befuddled legislators apparently protested against using state funds to educate black women. Fayetteville's African American principal answered the naysayers: "The presence of females has a refining influence on the manners of males and their reciting together in the same classes creates lively interest." Fayetteville's women students were its "brightest students and most promising teachers," he argued.[26] It was here that Charles Chesnutt matriculated; later, he became principal. The Fayetteville model held, and by the 1890s, the state operated seven coeducational, two-term, residential normal schools for African Americans. Whites in the cities where the schools were located welcomed the institutions since they conducted elementary practice schools that replaced locally supported public schools.

In addition to the normal schools, one state-supported and six denominational black colleges sprang up. In 1890, when Congress threatened to cut off funds to any state that failed to provide agricultural education to blacks, legislators scrambled to establish a state-supported African American college since they hoped to channel additional federal funds to a new agricultural school for whites. Unlike the new white school in Raleigh, the African American North Carolina Agricultural and Mechanical College (later the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College) accepted women students.[27] All six denominational colleges predated the Agricultural and Mechanical College, and only the Presbyterians separated men and women, sending men to Biddle Memorial Institute and women to Scotia Seminary.[28] During their early years, most functioned as secondary schools, adding college courses as the student body became ready for advanced work, at which time they divided the preparatory, normal, classical, and theological departments.

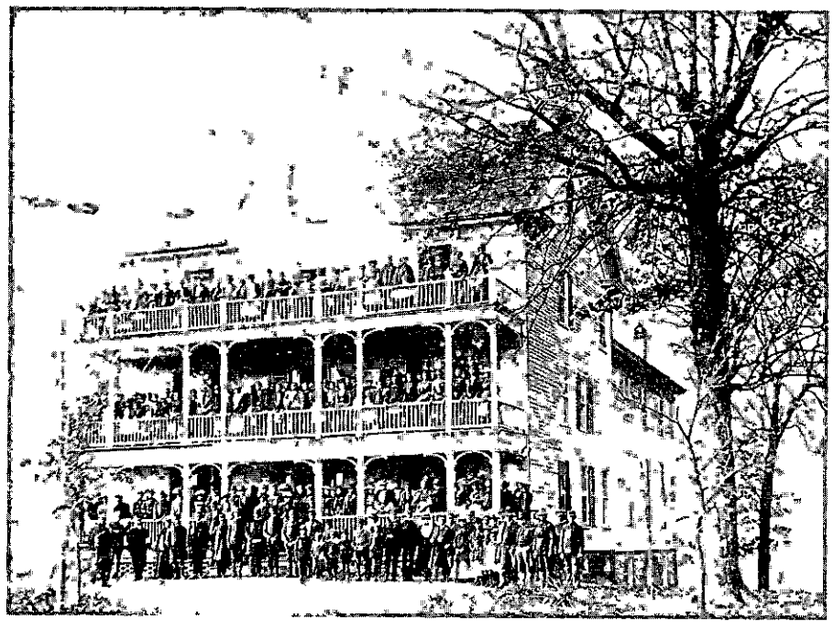
Since few southern models existed, the schools' approaches to integrating women into classrooms and extracurricular activities were individualized. The resulting quandaries resembled those confronted by northern and western colleges that introduced coeducation around the same time, but they were played out in a quite different context and with quite different social ramifications. The issues involved not only gender relations but also race and class relations. The question of how best to educate black women hung in the air, hashed out at church programs such as Tena Nichols's, discussed in heated debates at black colleges, and, most famously, recorded in the pages of *A Voice from the South*, a book published in 1892 by Anna Julia

Haywood Cooper, a Saint Augustine's graduate, who, like Tena Nichols, had once taught in Raleigh. Although Cooper herself was an extraordinary person, black women across the South shared the complaints she enumerated in *A Voice from the South*.[29] Her work captured the zeitgeist so well, she might have named it *Voices from the South*. Nichols's speech serves as a case in point; it predated *A Voice from the South* by a few months and examined many of the same issues in Cooper's own hometown.

Allowing women on campus was only a beginning, Cooper insisted. The first generation of women students at coeducational colleges fought difficult battles to gain equal treatment. Entering the preparatory department of coeducational Saint Augustine's at the age of nine, Cooper grew up resenting the school's unequal treatment of women. She remembered feeling "(as I suppose many an ambitious girl has felt) a thumping from within unanswered by any beckoning from without."[30] She particularly disdained the attention lavished on the male theological department. For instance, Saint Augustine's offered a Greek class designed for budding male ministers that was normally off-limits to women, but when Cooper insisted, the professor made an exception and allowed her to join. She summarized her complaints: "A boy, however meager his equipment and shallow his pretensions, had only to declare a floating intention to study theology and he could get all the support, encouragement and stimulus he needed." On the other hand, "a self-supporting girl had to struggle . . . against positive discouragements."[31] We know from Cooper's description that coeducational colleges were no utopias for women, but her comments hint at the opportunities open to black women who fought to get ahead. Cooper ultimately did manage to take Greek and found teaching positions in the summer to send herself through school. In *A Voice from the South*, she advocated an absolutely equal education for black women, a visionary proposition that Cooper could articulate only because she had caught a glimpse of men's opportunities. Coeducation gave her a chance to peek into their lives.

By the time Cooper published *A Voice from the South*, a second generation of black women had entered college under the tutelage of professors who created an explicit rationale for women's training in a coeducational context. Livingstone College in Salisbury was an institution that realized many women's hopes, probably because pioneering black women had educated many of its faculty members. Simon Atkins, one of Livingstone's most influential professors in its early years, began as Anna Julia Haywood Cooper's star pupil and became her coteacher in summer schools.[32]

One of two colleges in the state controlled and financed by an independent African American denomination—in Livingstone's case, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church—Livingstone College did not



The entire student body of Livingstone College in Salisbury assembled on the porches of Huntington Hall, circa 1890. Courtesy of the College Archives, Carnegie Library, Livingstone College, Salisbury, North Carolina.

have to cater to whites, either in the form of northern supporters or local coreligionists. Livingstone's founders based their policies on their notions of fairness and equality, which presupposed a public role for black women that was at odds with southern white gender norms. When it opened in 1880, Livingstone defined its mission as equipping young men and women for religious and educational work in the South and in Africa. As Joseph Price, the first president, put it, that goal necessitated training "of the Head, Hand, and Heart"—intellectual, practical, and spiritual.[33] The school included theological, classical, normal, and preparatory departments, and the college's first student was a woman. From the start, African American men and women taught together. Victoria Richardson, who had been teaching with Charles Chesnutt in Charlotte, was one of four original faculty members.[34] The first group of students graduated with bachelor of arts degrees from the classical department in 1888. Two women marched with eight men, the first black women to earn the bachelor's degree in the state.[35]

The Livingstone model did not go unchallenged among African Americans. Some advocated the adoption of white gender norms and the limitation of woman's sphere.[36] Those AME Zion parents who felt that Living-

Classical graduating class of Livingstone College, 1914. Courtesy of the College Archives, Carnegie Library, Livingstone College, Salisbury, North Carolina.

stone went too far in educating women like men sent their daughters instead to single-sex Presbyterian Scotia Seminary. One AME Zion father charged, "We do not believe in the coeducation of the sexes after they attain a certain age." Separation would be far "better and safer" and more in keeping with white gender norms, since, he pointed out, southern whites did not "mix" the sexes. He suggested that the AME Zion Church open a female seminary instead of forcing members who preferred single-sex education to send their daughters to Scotia, where they often married Presbyterian ministers and converted, "sapp[ing] [the AME Zion Church] of its very life—our best educated women."[37] The irritated father proffered two practical benefits to soothe the tempers of the Livingstone women he would exclude. If they left and went to a female academy, he told them, they could save money on clothes and spend less time "writing notes [to boys] and in socials."[38]

Socializing between men and women students took place under conditions much more stringent than this AME Zion father implied. For example, Livingstone College professors knew that dancing students drew the ire of Methodist parents, so for recreation, students assembled in single-sex formations, paired up, and marched around the room to music, without touching—or actually "dancing."[39] Scrutiny at Lincoln Academy may have been even more pervasive. "We would march, play games, but you didn't get a chance to sit and talk to a boy. The teachers would keep you moving," Eula Dunlap recalled. Students socialized with members of the opposite

sex only on one day of the year—Thanksgiving, "a great day"—when boys and girls lined up strategically and their teachers marched them up Kings Mountain two by two. "Then," Dunlap confided, "you would know who liked who, but there would be teachers in front, a few couples, then teachers, and so on."[40]

Fittingly, it was Cooper's protégé, Simon Atkins, who defended Livingstone against the move to purge its women.[41] Atkins and the forces he marshaled among his colleagues supported coeducation not by default but with a clear sense of purpose. They intended to produce women leaders. After the female seminary debate died down, the editor of the *Star of Zion* boasted, "Livingstone College is doing for women what no other institution is doing, bringing her up to be the equal of her eternal antagonist, man, in debate, in public spirit, in morals and thought; and side by side with him she determines to help solve the problems of human life."[42]

On Livingstone's campus, students redefined gender and self-consciously grappled with the implications of that redefinition. Women excelled academically and competed openly with men. Esther Carthey, at the top of the 1888 classical class, gave the valedictory in Latin as required, and through the 1890s, women continued to earn bachelor's degrees.[43] At commencement, female normal school graduates gave addresses entitled, "The Reformatory Movements of the Age," "Frivolous Society," and "How to Make a Living."[44] Lula Pettigrew earned the title "most voracious reader" in the college because she consumed every tome on the shelves, from *Lovers Once but Strangers Now* to *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*.[45] By the end of Ada Battle's first year, she had polished off all of the women in the composition competition and had earned a spot in the coeducational debate finals.[46] Women took leadership roles in single-sex and coeducational campus groups. For instance, an editorial staff of one man and two women founded the campus magazine, the *Living-Stone*.[47]

The seriousness with which Livingstone students debated gender roles indicates the importance they attached to working out their own models of manhood and womanhood. In the pages of the *Living-Stone*, students revealed their ideals of manly men and womanly women. Debater Ada Battle opened the discussion in an article she wrote on well-mannered men. Outspoken in an intellectual argument, Battle appreciated "the attentive glance, the quiet cordial bow, and the sweet disposition" in male students.[48] Cale Struggles responded by describing his ideal woman: "I like a modest, sweet tempered girl—one whom you can depend upon."[49] Although both sexes prized modesty and calm temperament, women students disagreed even among themselves on women's place after graduation. Charlotte Jordan found it unseemly for women to become lawyers, doctors, lecturers, and "politicians of the gentler sex" rather than wielding their influence

through male family members.[50] But Maggie Hood had the final word when she suggested that someone as outstanding as Anna Cooper should represent the entire race, not just its women.[51] Tongue in cheek, she forgave men for holding women back: "This keeping woman in a state of degradation, is not to be attributed to the heartlessness of men, for their hearts are generally tender and soft; but it is to be charged to the faults of their heads (which are also soft)."[52]

William Fonvielle, the Livingstone student who toured the South in search of Jim Crow, later counted the marriages among his classmates and remarked with pride, "Livingstone men make husbands; Livingstone women make wives."[53] Unlike white women of the period, black women did not usually have to choose between higher education and marriage or between teaching and marrying. White women risked passing prime marriageable age in single-sex schools. One-half of the white women in the new state normal school's 1896 graduating class never wed.[54] African American women often taught after marriage, whereas most public school committeemen would not allow married white women to teach.[55]

Moreover, the prevailing image of middle- and upper-class white southern womanhood in the postbellum period devalued scholarship and outspokenness among young women, whereas many African American men and women prized a different ideal.[56] For example, Maggie Hood's quick wit did not stand in the way of her popularity. When Sarah Dudley Pettey attended Hood's wedding, she described her as "a classical graduate of Livingstone College, a young lady of rare attainments, and a brilliant society belle." Hood's classical education had not crippled her for daily life, Dudley Pettey continued, since she was also "thoroughly conversant with domestic economy." Maggie Hood represented an example to be emulated, Dudley Pettey told her readers, using her coverage of Hood's wedding to inject this plug: "The church of to-day needs educated women as well as men in every city to formulate, regulate, and direct the trend of society."[57]

Hood's ability to combine intellectual pursuits, domestic life, and romance proved more the rule than the exception for black college women. As Fonvielle recalled, "Most of the young women I learned to respect and admire [at Livingstone] are wives and mothers now."[58] Anna Julia Haywood Cooper argued in 1892 that a black woman had "as many resources as men, as many activities beckon her on." The solution to making marriage an attractive choice among those activities lay not in the woman asking, "How shall I so cramp, stunt, simplify and nullify myself as to make me eligible to the honor of being swallowed up into some little man?" Rather it depended upon the man's ability to direct his own efforts into "the noblest, grandest and best achievements of which he is capable."[59]

By admonishing men to fulfill their potentials, Cooper executed an end run around patriarchy. Ideal patriarchy should not limit women; it only did so when the man in question was stunted. In fact, men could take women's striving as a useful early warning sign to encourage them to exercise patriarchy more strenuously. If women were gaining in the race of life, Cooper chided, men should run faster. Cooper never addressed the problem that her reasoning created—that is, if patriarchy ceases to limit women, is it still patriarchy?—by calling the hand of the patriarch. Allowing women to grow should push men to even loftier heights; they were, after all, capable of greatness, were they not? Educated black women sought to establish partnerships that maximized the potential and efficiency of both members, and they tended to do that by avoiding hierarchical ideas of male dominance and female subordination. Men and women were different, but they had complementary work to do; once trained for that work, women were anxious to establish domestic relationships that allowed them to get on with the job.

Southern white women would seek such marriages in growing numbers beginning in the Progressive Era, but they were still rare in the nineteenth century. This arrangement seems to resemble the much-chronicled sort of partnerships that a small group of well-educated northern white women formed, but its roots and stakes, and therefore its significance, differ markedly. Springing from slavery, poverty, religion, and black women's daily contact with men rather than distance from them, this civic partnership played out in a society that rested on the subordination of black men as well as black women. In this case, the stakes had something to do with the question of "woman's sphere" but much more to do with the day-to-day survival of every southern African American, male and female.[60]

Anna Julia Haywood found love as well as adversity at Saint Augustine's. At least one male faculty member valued smart women: Haywood married her Greek professor, George Cooper. When he died shortly after their marriage, she faced the world as a twenty-one-year-old widow. She went on to Oberlin College and upon graduation in 1886 landed a teaching position back at Saint Augustine's. Throughout her first year, administrators praised her work, but two days before graduation, they fired her due to "incompatibility of temperament." The fragmentary record offers no clues, but Cooper must have spoken out in a way that displeased the administration. Cooper went out fighting, unsuccessfully demanding a hearing and reporting the story to the press. Her supporters lamented her termination, insisting that the "fair name of Mrs. Cooper, her brilliant attainment, her superior skill as a teacher, cannot be dimmed."[61] At once, she landed a position at the M Street School in Washington, D.C., and set about writing *A Voice from the South*. Despite challenges such as those Anna Julia Cooper met,

black women flourished amid the rich mix of encouragement and adversity that coeducational colleges provided.

All of the preparation in the world, however, could not have readied black women for the realities of dealing with white women after graduation. Some had experienced close contact with white women teachers; Bennett College in Greensboro, Saint Augustine's College and Shaw University in Raleigh, and Scotia Seminary in Concord all had integrated faculties through the 1880s. Other students, such as those at Livingstone College, nestled on a campus that spared them much contact with whites. Neither model resembled the world at large. The white women who taught at black institutions represented anomalies in the South, often excluded from the rest of white society. They generally saw themselves as missionaries, and although they fervently maintained that "God's soul diamond in a black casket is as precious in His sight as the one in a white casket,"[62] many did not necessarily think their living students were yet their equals. Some thought they never would be.

Along with their diplomas, black women graduates marched off the stage flying class markers recognizable to whites. Their dress, deportment, piety, literacy, and concern for social progress matched similar characteristics of a tiny but growing group of white women. Educated black women expected whites to recognize class similarities across racial lines, and they sought forums that would bring them together with white women.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union joined women of both races who sought to impose new values on southern life. Drawing heavily from the ranks of Methodists and Baptists, the WCTU at last gave evangelical women an outlet to act on the ideals their mothers had embraced during the Second Great Awakening of the 1830s and 1840s. At that time, the southern slave system had worked against social reform, although some manifestations of new sensibilities had appeared in North Carolina. Interracial temperance societies sprang up across the state in the 1830s, temperance groups held mixed male/female meetings, and Wesleyan and Quaker ministers traveled across the state preaching abolition at the risk of losing their lives.[63] After the war, the WCTU tapped those evangelical values.

The roots of the organized African American temperance movement in the state went back to Reconstruction, when several black temperance clubs joined the Independent Order of Good Templars (IOGT), an international organization for both men and women. Headquartered in Great Britain, the IOGT already had active white chapters in North Carolina. When the newly formed black chapters petitioned the state organization for official recognition, however, the white members refused to grant them a charter and would not even divulge the secret Templar password. Stung by this exclusion, the black Templars forged ahead and formed lasting ties

with other white and black chapters throughout the world.[64] Black men and women joined the Templars in great numbers; the Raleigh chapter boasted 200 members.[65] In 1873, Sarah Dudley Pettey's father, Edward, presided over the statewide organization, and her mother, Caroline, joined the New Bern chapter.[66] The African American Templars recruited women as full members, elected them to office, and applauded their speeches at meetings. At a black IOGT meeting in Fayetteville in 1875, the keynote speaker recognized "the power of the females, and their duty in exercising it" within the organization.[67] Black women gained experience and self-confidence through their work in the Templars, and men came to admire their forcefulness and courage. When Sarah McLaurin gave a rousing speech to the Cape Fear lodge on New Year's Day in 1888, a male listener reported that "she addressed the house with as much bravery as did some of our modern heroes."[68]

While black men and women worked together as Templars, the monumental statewide prohibition referendum of 1881 set the stage for the WCTU's entry into the state.[69] In the midst of the 1881 prohibition campaign, Frances Willard visited Wilmington to mobilize women and encourage them to join the WCTU.[70] Willard worried about how southern white women would receive a northern woman, but her nervousness did not prevent her from advocating temperance work among African Americans. To Willard's surprise, southern white women embraced her suggestion with enthusiasm.[71] She observed: "Everywhere the Southern white people desired me to speak to the colored."[72] Willard was not the only white woman reaching out to black women; for example, when a "ladies' prohibition club" met at the Methodist church in Concord, the white women reported that "the galleries of the church were set apart for our colored friends."[73] Black men's votes and black women's political influence mattered in the temperance election.

Statewide prohibition failed in North Carolina in 1881, and many whites blamed blacks, despite the nearly unanimous endorsement of prohibition by the black press. Reports from across the state declared that African Americans had voted overwhelmingly in favor of whiskey, probably because many blacks kept small shops in which liquor sold briskly.[74] White prohibitionists, mostly Democrats, charged that liquor interests bought black votes to tip the election.[75] After 1881, temperance strategy centered on local-option elections, and the WCTU attempted to win prohibition town by town, county by county.[76] To that end, the white women began to organize and support black WCTU chapters throughout the state that reported to the white statewide officers.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union mattered so much to southern black women reformers of the late nineteenth century because it promoted a working model of finer womanhood that meshed with their own ideals.[77] The union joined black women's religious and class values to their activism, even as it provided a safe forum for agitation. Black women welcomed its legitimation of a public role for women, a role they knew would be necessary for racial uplift. Through the telescope of the WCTU, southern African Americans could gaze upward past vacuous white southern belles to solid white women such as Frances Willard, WCTU national president. For example, a black man who cited Sarah Dudley Pettey as an example of "womanly womanhood," capable of galvanizing mixed male and female audiences with her suffrage speeches, seized upon this comparison: "Mrs. Dudley Pettey is a brilliant Frances E. Willard."[78]

For black women and a growing number of educated white women from poor families, class identity was a lesson to be learned and one they bore a responsibility to teach, and the WCTU facilitated that task. Black women reformers tried to impose upon uneducated women and men sobriety, thrift, purity, and a love for learning; if a woman embraced those values, they embraced her, regardless of the trappings of her life or her origins. Abna Aggrey Lancaster, whose mother and father taught at Livingstone College, recalled that it was not money that made a difference between people—"we were all poor"—but "training."[79] Mary Lynch, who trained Lancaster in temperance, herself learned and taught class standing. Born just after Reconstruction to poor parents, Lynch attended Scotia Seminary and began teaching at Livingstone in 1891. One hundred years later, a male Livingstone student recalled her from the 1920s as the professor of "finer womanhood." Teaching and learning "finer womanhood" became a strategy black women deployed to counter white supremacy.

On the other hand, many southern white women initially found the WCTU's public duties a challenge to their sense of propriety. The WCTU asked its members to step beyond the pale of southern white ladyhood. It encouraged them not only to visit jails but to break bread with the prisoners, black and white; to spend Thanksgiving at the county poor farm with its biracial conglomeration of demented alcoholics, lice-ridden wayward girls, and toothless, tobacco-spitting old women; to throw up a beribboned gauntlet at that most raucous of masculine preserves, the polling place, buttonhole voters who tried to elbow past, and glare at them while they voted.[80] Once white women overcame their fears, WCTU work probably changed their lives a great deal more than they changed the lives of the recipients of their beneficence. One reflected on her lunch with two white and six black men in the Winston-Salem jail: "The power of the Holy Spirit rested upon all. . . . It was a melting time."[81]

In the 1880s and 1890s, the North Carolina WCTU undertook a novel experiment in interracial contact. Black women hoped to find common

Mary Lynch, circa 1895. Courtesy of the College Archives, Carnegie Library, Livingstone College, Salisbury, North Carolina.

ground with white women in the WCTU to construct a cooperative venture joined by class and gender ties, one capable of withstanding the winds of white supremacist rhetoric. For several years in the 1880s, women worked as members of separate black and white chapters within a single statewide structure, the first postbellum statewide biracial voluntary organization in North Carolina.[82] Under the heat of temperance fever, racial boundaries softened ever so slightly.

Historians have argued that the WCTU's chief attraction for women was its critique of the drunken father and husband and that its activism sprang from belief in "feminine moral superiority."[83] White female temperance activists linked drinking with male profligacy, domestic physical abuse, and women's economic dependence. They drew on the doctrine of separate spheres to confer on women moral authority in family matters, even if the exercise of that power necessitated a temporary foray into the public sphere. Thus, among whites, temperance became increasingly a woman's issue, an expression of "female consciousness."[84] Black women's participation in the WCTU, however, meant something more than "home protection."[85] Although domestic issues certainly mattered to southern African American women, participation in the WCTU also folded into the cause of racial uplift.[86]

To counteract whites' blindness to the realities of middle-class black life, African American women used the WCTU to point up black dignity, industriousness, and good citizenship. Since many whites predicted that the absence of the "civilizing" influence of slavery would result in the extinction of African Americans, occasions of black drunkenness generated self-satisfied notice among whites. When white southern tobacco farmers came to town to tie one on, no one suggested that their drinking sprees foretold the racial degeneracy of the Anglo-Saxon "race."[87] But a drunken black man staggering home from a saloon might inspire an "I-told-you-so" editorial in the local white newspaper replete with Darwinistic predictions of the extinction of the black race in a single generation.[88] Thus, black women temperance activists worried not just about the pernicious effects of alcohol on the family but also about the progress of the entire race, and temperance activities bolstered African Americans' contested claims to full membership in the polity.

Moreover, black women saw in the WCTU a chance to build a Christian community that could serve as a model of interracial cooperation on other fronts. If, through white women's recognition of common womanhood and shared class goals, black women could forge a structure that encouraged racial interaction, they might later build on that structure. The WCTU represented a place where women might see past skin color to recognize each other's humanity. One source of black women's optimism sprang from Frances Willard's family background. As a child, her abolitionist parents opened their home as a stop on the Underground Railway, and her father was a Free-Soiler. Willard had the confidence of Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison, both members of an older generation of abolitionists.[89]

White women, however, envisioned interracial cooperation as a partnership in which the women they referred to as "our sisters in black" were junior partners, participating in a segregated structure that reported to white women. They believed the power relations of a biracial WCTU should mirror the racial hierarchy of society at large. Nonetheless, founding a biracial organization, even one separated internally, required courage and a vision of the future that differed from the white male perspective. By organizing black WCTU chapters, white women recognized gender and class as binding forces that mitigated racial differences.

In the late nineteenth century, African Americans and whites used the term "interracial cooperation" to signify working across racial lines to solve common problems. Black women undertook interracial cooperation with-

out illusions of sisterhood because they believed racial progress depended on it as long as whites controlled southern institutions. Nothing about the term implied a common commitment to civil rights, to racial equality, to working together cheerfully, or even to working together with civility. There was never a point in the two decades of interracial cooperation within the WCTU when white women could not be characterized according to today's standards as "racist." Yet such a characterization reveals little about actual practice and obscures a more important truth: racism is never a static phenomenon. It waxes and wanes in response to a larger social context, sometimes perniciously defining the contours of daily life, sometimes receding as behavior and speech challenge the boundaries of racial constructs.[90]

It was black political power that convinced white women to work with African American women, whose support they needed in local-option campaigns. In 1883, Frances Willard returned to North Carolina, where she spoke again to black audiences, including one at Livingstone College, and brought the existing WCTU chapters into a statewide organization.[91] Within the state structure, "Work amongst the Colored People" became one of six departments, and all black chapters were subordinated to the white female department head.[92] Despite the separate chapters and the reporting structure, the biracial WCTU was a dramatic departure from the past. For a brief period, black and white women in the WCTU circumvented the racial conventions of their time.

Most of the white women who volunteered to organize black WCTU chapters were already involved in interracial educational or religious work. Rosa Steele, the wife of Wilbur Steele, the white president of Bennett College, an institution for African Americans, headed the statewide "Work amongst the Colored People" department. Steele bridged two worlds, and she had already earned a reputation among blacks as a "zealous" woman.[93] A Methodist and native New Englander, Rosa Steele lived in the college community surrounding Bennett. The Steeles regularly dined with African American friends, causing the white press to dub Wilbur "Social Equality Steele."[94] Rosa Steele found support among other white women connected with African American educational institutions. In Concord, for example, she turned to the wife of the white president of Presbyterian Scotia Seminary, which trained black women. Soon Scotia organized campus temperance activities as well as an African American WCTU chapter in the town.[95]

White women like Steele saw temperance work among African Americans as missionary labor, uplifting for the white women as well as the black women. Clearly Steele used the WCTU to promote her own agenda: "uplifting" the black race under white direction. The fact that black women continued to work for temperance without the supervision of white

women worried her. "They have many workers of their own and many teachers doing this temperance work among them," Steele noted, but she added that white women must take the lead by supervising chapters. She advised white women to attend "each meeting to keep the organization on its proper line of work."[96] Although her belief in the superiority of white leadership indicated the distance she perceived between herself and blacks, Steele's racial attitudes represented those of the most liberal white women in the South. Southern white communities generally ostracized white women who promoted black education, but the WCTU accepted and used their talents in order to achieve its goals.[97]

African American women drew upon their long experience in temperance, and they chafed at the patronizing missionary approach of whites. Steele's exhortations inspired white women who had never attempted interracial work to try to organize black WCTU chapters in their hometowns. They often complained that when they approached African American women, "they were looked upon suspiciously by those whom they desired to help."[98] The racial dynamics baffled white women, who could not fathom black women's reactions. The white women who wanted to bring African Americans to the temperance cause were not able to recognize black women's capabilities. The black women were understandably resentful, and the gap between them loomed large. To make matters worse, most white women approached black women only during local-option elections, neglecting the work the rest of the time. Steele admonished white women not to view African Americans opportunistically or to cultivate them just for political purposes. Temperance would succeed only if whites showed a "real live interest in the colored man, not born of a disire [*sic*] to win his vote at election time," she argued.[99]

In many cities and towns, however, no white women came forward to head the "Work amongst the Colored People," and black women organized their own WCTU chapters. The experience of Mary Lynch and the Charlotte chapter illustrates how African American women came to the temperance cause and built their own statewide organization. A student at Scotia Seminary in Concord during the prohibition campaign of 1881, Lynch was caught up in the fever of the biracial ladies' temperance meetings and influenced by her teachers' participation in the WCTU.[100] Upon graduation, she moved to Charlotte to teach in the graded school, where she joined a sixty-member black WCTU chapter that formed in 1886.[101] That year, the Charlotte chapter sent delegates to the state convention who addressed the assembled white women.[102]

Once a town had black and white chapters, WCTU women occasionally launched joint ventures in community welfare that proved the WCTU's cooperative potential. For example, in the final months of 1886, white and

black women united to build a hospital for African Americans in Charlotte. The white chapter held an art exhibition to raise funds for the cause, and the black chapter passed the hat at community meetings.[103] At the hospital's opening, the president of the white WCTU acknowledged, "We greatly appreciate the work of the (colored) W.C.T.U. in their co-operation with the White W.C.T.U."[104] The Charlotte white women realized the importance of black management of the hospital, and they pledged that African Americans would retain control of the work. Despite everyone's good intentions, funds ran out quickly, and both chapters struggled to support the hospital.[105] Ultimately, the cooperative hospital failed, and a separate group of white women, with funding from the Northern Episcopal Church, opened a larger facility for blacks under white women's management.[106]

In 1888, after five years of appealing to white women to organize black temperance chapters, Rosa Steele tried a new tactic that produced extraordinary results: she invited Sarah Jane Woodson Early, the African American superintendent of "Colored Work for the South" for the national WCTU, to North Carolina. Early spent five weeks in the state.[107] She entered the local prohibition battles raging in Raleigh and Concord and encouraged African American women to join the campaign.[108] One African American woman from Concord wrote that she had lobbied hard for black male votes and felt sure that "Christians will vote as they pray."[109] Early's African American audiences financed her trip, and by the time she left the state, fourteen black WCTU chapters stood on solid ground.[110]

The next year, building on Early's organizing campaign, African American WCTU leaders seceded from the state organization. Ultimately, black women found the racial hierarchy embedded in the WCTU structure contradictory on its face. If all WCTU members were temperance women, they must be equally worthy, sisters in the family of God. Because their temperance work involved multiple goals, African American women refused to trade equality for interaction. With secession, they rejected their status as a subordinate department under white direction. The black women made this clear when they named their organization the WCTU No. 2 and announced, "We cautiously avoided using the word colored . . . for we believe all men equal."[111] The white "Colored Work" committeewomen reported to their organization that the African Americans "desire to attain their full development and think this can best be done in an independent organization . . . with the department work under their own control." The new African American WCTU reported directly to the national WCTU and achieved organizational status equal to the white group, holding separate statewide conventions in 1890 and 1891.[112]

As North Carolina's black women organized the WCTU No. 2, black women across the South replicated their experience. Prior to the organization of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs in 1896, the WCTU represented the principal interdenominational voluntary association among black women. Black WCTU organizations flourished in the North and the West, and black women in five southern states managed statewide unions. Southern African American women traveled to national and international temperance conferences, published newspapers, and learned skills of self-presentation that they took back to their churches and women's clubs.[113]

Throughout the 1890s in North Carolina, the WCTU No. 2 continued under the direction of African American women. In 1891, when Mary Lynch became a professor at Livingstone College, she found the campus branch of the Young Woman's Christian Temperance Union (YWCTU) languishing. Lynch immediately revitalized it and invited Anna Julia Haywood Cooper to speak to the group.[114] From her post at Livingstone, Lynch threw herself into temperance work; within five years, she formed connections with the nation's leading African American women and became president of the WCTU No. 2. Meanwhile, the group that Lynch oversaw at Livingstone flourished. One of Lynch's protégées was Annie Kimball, a student in the classical department. Kimball led the union in early-morning Sunday prayer meetings. Peer pressure to join must have been strong, for an observer reported, "Every girl, without an exception, [who was a] boarder in the school . . . has signed the pledge and become a member." Each year, the group visited the almshouse, bringing box lunches, tracts, hymn books, and Bibles. Livingstone chronicler William Fonvielle marveled, "Young women who at first were too embarrassed to lead a prayer meeting can do so now with all of the earnestness necessary."[115]

Kimball brought both racial and female consciousness to temperance work. She argued eloquently that where whites found black degeneracy, she found hope. The only trait becoming extinct among African Americans, she charged, was "the spirit of unmanly and unwomanly servility and fawning." Kimball exhorted her female classmates to lift "the banner of purity . . . around every home," and she predicted that the "dram-shop and all other places of ill-repute" would soon fall to "school houses, and churches of the living God." Then, she predicted, those whites who "maligned and slandered" blacks would be "utterly put down by a more enlightened and healthy public sentiment."[116] On a May day in 1894, Annie Kimball graduated as salutatorian of her class, gave the commencement address in Latin, and, that afternoon, married an AME Zion minister, George Clinton, whom Charles Pettey had taught thirty years earlier in South Carolina. The Clintons made their home in Charlotte, where she became state president of the YWCTU.[117]

After Annie Kimball Clinton moved to Charlotte, she joined a statewide network of African American women who had been active in the cause for over a decade. She could have attended any of several small WCTU group meetings in the city each week. In a single week in September 1897, one group met at the Congregational church, another at the Seventh Street Presbyterian Church, and the chapter at the Grace AME Zion Church kicked off its annual oratorical contest.[118] A "bicycle entertainment" raised almost $100 for "caring for the sick and needy and burying the dead."[119] To coordinate the separate groups, the citywide officers of the union met every Monday afternoon at a private home. Chapter activities included contemplative meetings, fund-raising, and outreach work among the intemperate at the jail and the hospital.[120] Annie Blackwell, a Charlotte public school teacher and wife of an AME Zion minister, edited the union's newspaper, the *W.C.T.U. Tidings*, which took as its motto, "The Lord giveth the word. The women that publish the tidings are a great host."[121]

When the WCTU No. 2 seceded, the white organization initially realized they should replace their outreach to African Americans with cooperation with the African American chapters. They appointed a committee to work with the black leaders, whom they called "genuine W.C.T.U. women."[122] But after a year, the whites again formed a committee on "Colored Work" that haltingly described its mission as "continu[ing] to work to assist in completing the work of organizing" African Americans. Two years later, the white superintendent entitled her report, "Home and Foreign Missionary Work among and through Afro-Americans." Did the switch to "Afro-Americans" indicate increased sensitivity, or was it a marketing ploy white organizers used to compete with the WCTU No. 2? Had "among and through" resulted from some sort of committee fight over whether to recognize black leaders by working "through" them? Whatever promise the new name held, "through" and "Afro-American" soon disappeared, and the white women returned to their work "amongst" the "colored people."[123]

White women knew about black women's activities, but apparently they refused to recognize black women's authority and competed with them to organize new African American WCTU chapters under local white control.[124] White women cryptically reported in 1895 that the " 'sisters in black' have an Independent Union in Charlotte, well officered and doing good work."[125] The new white state superintendent noted, "Naturally we look for co-operation among the colored women under auspices of Unions controlled by them and this gives us an open door of helpfulness in many ways."[126] Black women must have resented white women who sought "co-operation" while assuming they knew best. The white women's efforts found some success among African American youth, in schools or prisons,

all captive audiences, but only rarely did they form an organization of adult black women under white control after secession.[127]

Why did white women continue to try to establish black chapters even as they acknowledged the autonomy of the WCTU No. 2? There are at least two reasons. Except for a few leaders like Rosa Steele, most white women knew very little about, and discounted the abilities of, educated black women. Hence, they presumed that a black union would do better work under white leadership. Most importantly, however, the white women wanted very much to control the politics of the black temperance workers. They were not altogether sure that African Americans, because of their political allegiance to the Republican Party, could be trusted to vote for prohibition. Moreover, they believed that blacks proved easy prey for corrupt politicians and sinister forces. For example, after the formation of the WCTU No. 2, a white temperance worker announced an imminent Catholic peril among African Americans. She reported that Catholics, the archnemeses of prohibitionists, had spread out "propagating Catholicism among the *blacks* of the *South*." She asked, "Is it to *save souls* this new movement is made to Catholicise the negroes, or is it that he has a *vote* and now, that he is free, can aid in extending papal dominion in the United States?" (emphasis in original). White women reasoned that, left on their own, black women might not serve as political allies in local prohibition elections. Indeed, a primary duty of the white superintendents after secession was to distribute white ribbons signifying prohibition support to black women when a local-option election seemed threatening.[128]

Conflicts of race and politics surfaced in the national and international WCTU as well, and unraveling them reveals the importance of context in understanding women's divergent visions. The national WCTU's racial Armageddon began exactly where the North Carolina WCTU's secession crisis began: with the Good Templars' more perfect vision of equality. Predating the WCTU, the British Independent Order of Good Templars believed that "there are no classes or races, but one human brotherhood." African Americans like Edward Dudley became enthusiastic organizers. Across the South, white Templars, for their part, followed the North Carolina example and flatly refused to allow integrated lodges or biracial state organizations. The question split the international organization. One British faction would not abide individual segregated lodges, and some northern white and southern black U.S. chapters joined that group. Others affiliated with the rival sect, including some southern black lodges whose members concluded that temperance was worth the price of segregation. The two factions reconciled in 1886, and, amid tremendous controversy, the Good Templars decided to tolerate segregated lodges.[129]

The compromise crushed Catherine Impey, a British Good Templar

who had stood up for complete integration. Two years later, after talking with Frederick Douglass about conditions in the South, Impey founded the magazine *Anti-Caste*.[130] On the other side of the world, North Carolina black female Good Templars shared her vision of sex and race equality, but their reality differed greatly from hers. She could hold out for a radical future; they lived in an oppressive present. Therefore, many black IOGT women joined the WCTU, worked to enlarge its vision, and, when they were not allowed to do that as equals, withdrew to manage their own affairs while pursuing interracial cooperation locally and using the national WCTU structure to meet their own ends.

The vast distance between Catherine Impey and Mary Lynch left room for a figure between them, Ida B. Wells. Ida Wells resembled many other black women leaders in North Carolina: born in slavery, educated at Rust College, she was a teacher and journalist like Sarah Dudley Pettey. After the lynching of three black men in Memphis, Wells wrote editorials in her newspaper, *Free Speech*, that exploded the myth that lynching always punished the crime of rape, even as it suggested that all interracial liaisons between white women and black men were not necessarily rape. As a result, Wells became a woman without a country. She was visiting New York City on business when a white Memphis paper printed a condemnation of her writing, after which she could not return to Memphis without risking death. The horror of the lynchings and her permanent exile dictated her strategy henceforth: unable to work from within the South, where she might measure initiative by response and edge forward by degrees, she would attack the entire structure of southern white supremacy by focusing on its most barbaric manifestation, lynching. Catherine Impey met Wells through Frederick Douglass and arranged for her to visit Britain in 1893 and 1894 to speak against the rising tide of lynching in the United States.[131]

Ida B. Wells attacked Frances Willard for being soft on lynching precisely because Willard had a reputation for interracial cooperation, not because she was the worst example of white women's racism Wells could find. The controversy started when an audience member asked, "Well what about people we know to be Christian, such as Dwight Moody and Frances Willard? How do they strike back at lynching and segregation?" Dwight Moody, a traveling evangelist, operated a northern divinity school that accepted white and black, male and female students; Mary McLeod went there after she graduated from Scotia Seminary. Wells replied that both Moody and Willard tolerated segregation—Moody at his southern engagements and Willard in her southern WCTU chapters. The controversy grew. On the next trip, Wells tried to push Willard into a public condemnation of lynching, partly because she knew Willard would be a powerful ally and

partly because she had abandoned change by degree. She demanded justice, which, in her mind, could never be partial.[132]

Willard badly mishandled the situation by granting an interview in which she tried to condemn lynching while implying that it resulted from black-on-white rape. Willard would have done better simply to restate the national WCTU's 1893 resolution against lynching. She might have found it more difficult to respond to Wells's other criticism: "There is not a single colored woman admitted to the Southern WCTU, but still Miss Willard blames the Negro for the defeat of prohibition in the South." Any statement Willard could make about separate chapters but cojoined statewide unions, about the self-imposed secession of the WCTU No. 2, or about the value of delegate exchanges between white and black unions would have seemed limp indeed among the British radicals whose patronage both she and Wells courted. In the South, however, those seemingly conservative arguments would have been fodder for the cannons of white supremacists who waited to point out one by one the dangers of interracial cooperation.[133]

The controversy put southern black women like Mary Lynch in a very difficult position.[134] It was true that the 1893 national WCTU convention had condemned lynching, but at the same convention's main banquet, "a separate table had been assigned by the caterer, or somebody in higher authority, for the colored members." The black women refused to take the separate seats and sat down where they pleased. After someone asked them to go back to their table, "they got up and went out in a body; but their sisters had enough good sense and Christianity to call them back and treat them like sisters."[135] The informant in this account, published in an AME Zion journal from Salisbury, must have been Mary Lynch. Her analysis of the situation reveals a brilliant strategy well tailored to fit the limits of the possible. She laid the blame on the caterer or some addled functionary. No true WCTU woman could make such a mistake, she implies, even though she knew quite well this was not the case. "Someone" (no blame affixed here) tried to herd them to back to their seats. But the black women won, and Lynch concludes by reminding white women of their sisterhood, a sisterhood that she never neglected the opportunity to invoke, whether white women liked it or not.

The ideal of Christian sisterhood represented for Lynch a gender lifeline that she reached for even as a tide of white supremacy began to wash over the South in the 1890s.[136] Unlike Wells, Lynch swallowed her anger and sought balm in private for her pain, giving herself up to the WCTU because she thought it was the best chance she had to help her people. When she wrote to white WCTU national officials, she signed herself, "Yours for the

cause." And she was theirs—partly. When Frances Willard died in 1898, Mary Lynch sent flowers, and her loyalty to the WCTU lasted a lifetime.[137]

If part of her belonged to the "white" WCTU, another part, adept at walking the wavy line of contradiction in the South, belonged to intraracial black women's activism. Lynch's internal struggle repeated itself in black women's national forums. "History is made of little things, after all," a *Woman's Era* reporter noted as she painted a dramatic scene of Ida B. Wells-Barnett "gracefully" giving "her approval" to a resolution offered by national WCTU organizer Lucy Thurman that endorsed the WCTU at the founding meeting of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACWC) in 1896. Lynch must have breathed a sigh of relief when she heard that peace had been declared, and the next year she attended the national NACWC convention to deliver the address, "Temperance Reform in the Twentieth Century."[138]

Meanwhile, flawed but significant interracial contacts continued between black and white WCTU women in North Carolina. As a result of Wells-Barnett's antilynching crusade, North Carolina's white WCTU convention condemned lynching in 1896, a symbolic but nonetheless important gesture, particularly considering that more than twenty years would elapse before southern white women moved again in an organized way against lynching.[139] Delegate exchanges continued between the black and white WCTUs as well. For example, when the black women met in statewide convention in Salisbury in 1896, white WCTU delegates attended a session. That year, black women renamed their union the Lucy Thurman WCTU, honoring the black national organizer, and elected Mary Lynch state president. In 1897, Lynch presided over thirteen unions, attended the white state convention, and spoke at the national meeting, following Anthony Comstock and Anna Shaw.[140] The next year, she gave the opening prayer at the national WCTU convention marking the organization's twenty-fifth anniversary.[141]

In 1896, a black-supported coalition of Republicans and Populists won control of state government, giving African Americans their greatest political voice since Reconstruction and reordering the politics of temperance work. That year, Belle Kearney, a white Mississippian with North Carolina roots, delivered an address to the North Carolina white WCTU convention, the same one that condemned lynching, entitled, "Why the Wheels Are Clogged." Mary Lynch sat in the audience as a delegate from the Lucy Thurman WCTU and listened to Kearney tell the delegates that prohibition would never pass while 250,000 blacks voted in the South.[142] Quickly white women's local temperance strategies shifted to complement the Democratic Party's white supremacist platform. WCTU women helped organize mock elections limited to whites to demonstrate that prohibition would pass if blacks could not vote in temperance elections.[143] In 1898, the white WCTU ceased its work among African Americans forever, and delegate exchanges between the two WCTUs ended abruptly.[144] For the next few years, temperance, which had once held such promise for interracial understanding, would serve white supremacy.

It was a force beyond the control of women—party politics—that obliterated interracial contact within North Carolina's WCTU. Temperance was above all a political issue, and the WCTU solicited prohibition votes. As Democrats began to seek to exclude African Americans from the electoral process, white women were no longer concerned with black temperance and readily recast their former allies as part of the "Negro problem." Although the experience of the WCTU points up the difficulty of transcending difference, it also shows that as long as African Americans had political rights, women's interaction continued because black votes mattered. Electoral politics, then, had a powerful impact upon the lives of those normally cast as the group with the least direct involvement in the process—women. By the end of the decade, the political winds gathered strength until they swept through every corner of black women's lives, leaving few spaces untouched.

three

RACE AND MANHOOD

Rudyard Kipling thought he knew a man when he saw one. From his post in colonial India, he worked feverishly to explain why Indian men needed ruling and why the British were the men for the job. In the end, it all came down to self-control in the service of moderation. Unlike the darker races of the world, the Anglo-Saxon peoples had evolved far enough to bear up to adversity without crumbling; at the same time, they could handle success without resorting to excess. Darker people too often fell victim to their emotions; they were at best childlike and at worst animalistic, like Kipling's character Mowgli in *The Jungle Book*. In his instantly successful 1899 poem, "The White Man's Burden," Kipling described nonwhites as "fluttered folk and wild / . . . Half devil and half child."[1]

Halfway around the world, in North Carolina, white men and boys read Kipling's poetry as an endorsement of their own ideas of manhood and racial order. No one, they thought, had borne the "white man's burden" longer or more stoically than they. Suddenly the world was turning to their way of thinking. In the 1890s, southern middle-class white men embraced the racialization of manhood—so international, so scientific, so modern—and put it to work in their own backyards.[2] As one Charlottean, calling

himself "Anglo-Saxon," put it, "Why should any man think that North Carolina is destined to prove an exception to Herbert Spencer's law of the 'Survival of the Fittest.' . . . It is all tommy-rot . . . to charge that prejudice, on account of color, is the foundation upon which is predicated white men's objections to negro domination." To "Anglo-Saxon," white supremacy was more than skin deep. Race was not simply much ado about a silly thing like color; the order of the universe depended on race, and "white" and "black" were outward manifestations of inner constitution.[3]

Thirty years earlier, during Reconstruction, the fathers of the men now reading Kipling and Spencer had faced the exigencies of organizing a biracial society in the wake of defeat. Black enfranchisement and federal scrutiny had forced the men of that generation to reckon with black political power, even as they tried to limit it through violence, fraud, gerrymandering, and poll taxes. Along with those pernicious methods, however, they grudgingly employed a meritorious concept—the ideology of the Best Man—to reduce the number of black voters and officeholders.[4] According to this paradigm, only the Best Men should hold office, the men who, by faith and by works, exhibited benevolence, fair-mindedness, and gentility. Southern white men's belief in their own superiority gave them confidence that they could effectively manipulate the Best Man criteria to exclude most African Americans from officeholding, and the threat of federal oversight limited their choices in any event. Although it was inevitable that a few black men would be elected, the Best Man ideal could be used to hold them to the strictest of standards. Of course, not all white men who held office lived up to the model. The Best Man was not real but a theoretical device that worked to limit democracy by invoking the language of merit.

Although African Americans most often reasoned from a political ideology of natural rights, they seized upon the Best Man figure because it offered their only path to power. At the same time, it resonated with many educated African Americans' own religious beliefs and ideas of merit. The Best Man pursued higher education, married a pious woman, and fathered accomplished children. He participated in religious activities, embraced prohibition, and extended benevolence to the less fortunate. He could collaborate on social issues across racial lines, as the women of the WCTU did. He could hold a modest number of political offices. Edward Dudley certainly qualified as a Best Man in the eyes of African Americans, and his political career attests to the way in which the ideology could successfully be put into practice with a lifetime of careful calculation.[5] Such a steep path to power might prove arduous, but it constituted the only way African Americans could hope to gain a political hearing from whites.

Black Best Men believed that in order to continue to enjoy "manhood's rights," as they referred to the franchise and officeholding, they must conform to middle-class whites' definitions of manhood.[6] African Americans recognized the elusiveness of the Best Man definition and its dependence on whites' inclinations to privilege class status over racial lines. Reliance on the Best Man ideal meant that African Americans constantly had to prove their manhood in order to maintain civil rights, even if they could never prove it to whites' satisfaction.[7] If a certain black man led an exemplary life, whites still held him accountable for the conduct of his entire race. His Best Man status was measured not just by his own behavior but also by that of any random stranger who happened to be African American.

To the young white men whose fathers had forged the Best Man compromise, two events in the last decade of the nineteenth century underscored its current undesirability. First, an interracial coalition of Populists and Republicans gained control of the state legislature and moved to return many local offices to a popular vote. As a result, the number of black officeholders and appointees increased dramatically. Then, the Spanish-American/Cuban War forced ideologies of imperialism, race, and manhood to stand out in sharp relief as Afro-Cubans took the lead in their country's revolution. Black men rushed to prove their manhood and patriotism by enlisting in the Third North Carolina Regiment, the first in U.S. history commanded entirely by black officers.

As young white Democrats searched for ways to exclude African Americans from politics and power once and for all, international circumstances produced rhetoric that offered them a fresh rationale for white supremacy at the same time that it licensed their actions. After the Spanish-American/Cuban War, empire presented democracy with vexing representational problems. The closing of the frontier, a growing mass of impoverished wage workers, and increasing immigration shook many Americans' confidence in the broad extension of the franchise. Evolutionary theories exported wholesale from biology to society convinced many that progress was inevitable, though hard-won. Races, governments, and economies all moved forward in orderly, unavoidable "stages." It was up to those at the top to guide those below. These events and ideas gave rise to a new social language that implicitly authorized white supremacy in the South, while a modern international image of self-restrained, yet virile, white manhood lent urgency to the white supremacists' task.[8]

Seizing upon the language of empire, a new generation of white men—educated, urban, and bourgeois—used it in their effort to eclipse the possibility of the rise of a black Best Man. They plotted to replace the white Democrats of their fathers' generation within the party structure and to recapture power from the Populist/Republican coalition. Then the young white men would clean up the urban disorderliness and racial confusion in the state, chaos that demonstrated the need for firmer male control. They

openly disavowed the lip service their fathers had paid to black political participation and argued that only one kind of man was fit for politics, the New White Man.[9] The South's New White Man stated bluntly that the prerogatives of manhood—voting, sexual choice, freedom of public space—should be reserved for him alone. To claim his proper place, he must toss out black men completely and nudge his father aside.[10]

Thus, as North Carolina's New White Men read Kipling, they fancied that they saw themselves between the lines. If they liked Kipling's description of darker men, they loved his model of manhood illustrating ideals of self-restraint for a new generation of southern white men. Kipling's poem "If" serves as an example:

> If you can keep your head when all about you
> Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
> . . . . . .
> If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue
> Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
> If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
> If all men count with you, but none too much;
> If you can fill the unforgiving minute
> With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
> Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
> And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son![11]

Evolution rendered black men "half devil and half child" and inscribed on white men alone a tendency toward the "golden mean."[12] This biological balance meant that because of their constitutional forbearance only white men were capable of political participation and governance. Obviously, they must regain control of politics and then disfranchise black men for their own good and everyone else's.

Southern white men who came of age after the Civil War inherited by default their fathers' conflicting models of manhood. Evangelical religion had swept Piedmont North Carolina before the war, calling many yeomen to lives of temperance, moderation, hard work, and fear for their immortal souls. There, Quakers lived in peace in several counties among fervent Methodists and Baptists and alongside dour Presbyterians.[13] In the east, where plantations abounded, the ideal of self-restraint touched the antebellum white image of manliness less directly, and Episcopalians dominated. There men believed they should be chivalrous to women and avoid horrible cruelty to slaves, but reputation mattered more than character. Reputation was made through the display of wealth, the exercise of patriarchy, and the passionate protection of one's honor. In eastern North Carolina, however, planters—who were poorer, had fewer slaves, and

lived closer to towns—rarely ruled with the impunity of their lower South counterparts. In the west, the rugged mountains, sparsely populated with Scotch-Irish sometimes intermarried with Cherokees, nurtured a masculine culture that stressed agrarian self-sufficiency and rugged individualism.[14] These competing visions of manhood and honor contributed to North Carolina's reluctance to secede and, after the war, opened space for the Best Man compromise. There was no abrupt end to black officeholding with the departure of Federal troops, and the Republican Party remained viable. White men who had served the Confederacy sat in the state legislature with black representatives through the 1880s.

These men's sons, born in the 1850s and 1860s, lived their lives in a long denouement, their every act diminished by the climax of the Civil War. Their veneration of the war and disappointment at missing that ultimate test of manhood have been well documented, but their resentment of their fathers' generation has been less examined. Stirring stories of Stonewall Jackson had little tangible worth to the young white man trying to eke out a living in the rubble of the New South. Certainly it occurred to him that his father's recklessness had wrought catastrophe and humiliation. If victorious and sober Yankee men questioned their own masculinity in a rapidly industrializing and urbanizing culture, southern white men added a loser's shame and degrading poverty to that burden.

Despite the New White Man's eagerness to be on top—to rise economically by exercising self-mastery—his talk was democratic. He might have been a bit of a rube, but he was a smart one. He might have started in a humble home and traveled far, but he never forgot his origins. His road, however, led only one way: to town. The New White Man proposed to meet backward-looking agrarian unrest with forward-looking urban remedies. He sprang from North Carolina's failing farms, but he cast his lot with the state's rapidly growing cities.[15] As the price of a bale of cotton fell from ten cents in 1887 to five cents in 1894, many poor white people abandoned their land.[16] Cities remained small by national standards, but the rapidity of urbanization is still astonishing. From 1870 until 1900, the population of Greensboro grew from 497 to 10,035. Charlotte held the lead as the state's largest city throughout the thirty-year period, its population expanding from 4,473 to 18,091.[17]

Poor white families who abandoned their land in the 1890s discovered that they had arrived in town late. The New White Men had already been there a decade, hustling to make a living as lawyers, teaching in the graded schools, publishing newspapers, or subscribing stock to capitalize cotton mills. The latecomers' experiences ran counter to the language of prosperity that the New White Men broadcast like fertilizer, hoping that factories would spring up. New White Man Josephus Daniels, editor of the

Raleigh *News and Observer*, crowed about "Raleigh's Solid Boom . . . Not Noisy . . . But Sure." Everywhere he went in 1887, Daniels saw reason for optimism, and he concluded, "Raleigh is not over-modest and talks enough about itself, I reckon, but if there had been as much substantial progress in many other places I could name . . . the cry of 'booming' would go up to the clouds."[18] The same day, agrarian booster Leonidus Polk lamented in the *Progressive Farmer*, "If the towns, railroads, manufacturers, banks and all speculative enterprises flourish . . . and agriculture languishes under the same laws . . . something is radically wrong."[19] After the *Charlotte News* reported a "tremendous rain," the *Progressive Farmer*'s editor sniffed, "We can't recollect when Charlotte had anything that was not tremendous."[20] If things were bad for rural people in 1890, when one out of three white North Carolinians was sharecropping, conditions would grow progressively worse.[21]

If, in North Carolina, Josephus Daniels became the New White Man's mouth, future senator Furnifold Simmons became his brain, future governor Charles Brantley Aycock his heart, and author Thomas Dixon, Jr., his libido. Descended from modest farm stock rather than from planter families, men like Daniels, Aycock, and Dixon cultivated down-home manners and democratic rhetoric to reassure the folks back on the farm that they remained immune to the wiles of the white-cuffed railroad lawyers with whom they occasionally shared a whiskey in Raleigh. It was said that Charles Aycock "was born so close to the people that he could say whatsoever he liked . . . without giving offense."[22]

These supremely self-conscious young white men believed that the white-bearded Redeemers who controlled the state's Democratic Party spent most of their days in a catatonic stupor, growing progressively deaf to the cries of downwardly mobile whites. Convinced that the state would never attract industry under such leadership, they banded together in 1883 to form Raleigh's Watauga Club. At that precipitate moment in their lives—no man in the club was over thirty years old—the precocious Wataugans foreshadowed the methods of New White Men who would mature fifteen years later. They chose "Watauga," a name of Native American origins, because it sounded wholesome and rural and disguised the group's true purpose: to industrialize the state. Josephus Daniels joined, as did a young state legislator, Thomas Dixon, Jr. Walter Hines Page led the Wataugans until he left to launch a dazzling publishing career in New York City. From that distance, he sent home his famous "mummy" editorial in which he blasted the state's entrenched white leadership, declaring that "the world must have some corner in it where men sleep and sleep and dream and dream and North Carolina is as good a spot for that as any."[23] Charles Aycock, practicing law in Goldsboro with Daniels's older brother Frank,

praised Page's plain speaking, but many North Carolinians expressed their outrage at his cheekiness.[24]

The New White Man's carefully cultivated modernity sprang mainly from his economic aspirations, but his disappointment in his father and his bitterness about his mother's stunted life contributed to his rage for change. Although he would never have said so straightforwardly, when the New White Man cataloged his region's ills, he recognized his father's failings. New White Men could blame their fathers for losing the Civil War, retarding industry, neglecting public education, tolerating African Americans in politics, and creating a bottleneck in the Democratic Party. They had ample evidence that the older generation of men had mistreated white women by failing to provide for them after the Civil War. Charles Aycock remembered that his mother ran the farm while his father dabbled in politics. Even though she managed the family's affairs, Serena Aycock signed legal papers with an "X." Her son Charles vowed to build a better public school system to educate the state's poor white women.[25] Josephus Daniels's father died during the war, and his mother's life was no tale of moonlight and magnolias. She worked as the postmistress in Wilson, serving a biracial public from her front parlor.[26] Wataugan Thomas Dixon, Jr., nursed a grievance over his mother's treatment at his father's hands that drove him to write and rewrite the New White Man's (auto)biography.

Walter Hines Page's company published Dixon's *The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden, 1865–1900* and his sequel, *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*, which became the film, *The Birth of a Nation*. Northern and southern readers believed Dixon's accounts to be the inside—and true—story of Reconstruction and Thomas Dixon to be the ideal southern man. Dixon saw himself as the latest link in the evolution of a superman who, because of his personal racial purity, his experience in managing African Americans, and his triumph of will, could unify the nation.[27]

Born in 1864 nine miles north of Shelby, Dixon watched his parents give up on farming and move to town to wring a living out of operating a general store while his father preached at several poor Baptist churches. At sixteen, Dixon left home for Wake Forest College. In the fall of 1883, he entered graduate school at Johns Hopkins University to study political science and history.[28] Alongside classmate Woodrow Wilson, Dixon studied under Herbert Baxter Adams, whom he recalled as a "genius of the highest order."[29] Professor Adams combined the latest in evolutionary science with Victorian romanticism to construct his Teutonic germ theory. Adams believed that democracy sprang from the intellectual equivalent of a gene that made its way from German forests to Britain and then to colonial America. Moving only through pure bloodlines, it predisposed

some men for self-government. Adams's theory crested around the time Dixon entered Johns Hopkins.[30] The Teutonic germ theory lent Dixon an explanatory system that anointed the Reconstruction racism of his youth with scientific balm: because African Americans lacked the Teutonic germ, their voting and officeholding amounted to a cruel hoax. The earlier generation of white men should have limited African Americans' political participation more strictly.

Dixon's preoccupation with interracial sex demonstrates how closely the personal and political were linked for southern white men of his generation. For Dixon, the fathers' racial sins ran deep, even into the blood. In *The Crucible of Race*, historian Joel Williamson constructed an intricate analysis of Dixon's sensationalization of miscegenation.[31] Building a new understanding of Dixon's family life, Williamson notes that Dixon's mother married when she was thirteen and thus became "a curiosity." Dixon's internal personal struggle, according to Williamson, centered around his inability to come to grips with white women's sexuality, especially that of his mother. Dixon projected his own insecurity about the sexual penetration of the impenetrable southern white woman onto black men, whom he routinely portrayed as rapists. At the same time, Dixon never overtly resented his father, whom he portrays in his autobiography, *Southern Horizons*, as a tower of strength.[32]

A close reading of Dixon's little-known later work, *The Sins of the Father*, suggests that his fears of miscegenation sprang not only from his father's role in his mother's early sexual initiation but also from other sins of his father. After the publication of *The Leopard's Spots*, a biracial man who lived in New York City began to claim publicly and often that he was Thomas Dixon's half brother, the son of Baptist preacher Thomas Dixon, Sr. When confronted with this allegation, Thomas, Jr., replied, "Yes I know that darky, he is always getting himself into trouble and I have helped him a number of times. His mother was a cook in our family in N.C." Although African Americans circulated accounts of Dixon's purported half brother, whites buried the information.[33] Whites' treatment of the claim reflects the conspiracy of silence that obscured biracial people of the time from their white contemporaries and from the historical record. Biracial children were almost always the progeny of white men and black women. Yet in the 1890s, respectable whites would admit no such thing. Miscegenation presented an acute problem for the generation that came of age amid Darwinian science and the rhetoric of imperialism. Dixon filled a real cultural need for whites when he emphasized the menace of black men raping white women and predicted that a "mongrel breed" threatened the social order. Through this fiction, he explained away the biracial people abounding in the South and erased from historical memory white men's sexual liaisons

with and rape of black women. Whether in so doing he also deleted his personal memory of an intimate relationship between his father and the family cook will probably never be known.

Only once, in *The Sins of the Father*, did Dixon admit that most biracial people in the South resulted from white men's sexual exploitation of black women. *Sins* attempts to excuse white men of his father's generation for the part they played in miscegenation. In its pages, a promising young white man, Major Daniel Norton, returns from the Civil War, marries, and has a son. Life should be sweet, but his wife, whom he calls "little mother," suffers a wound in her throat, near her jugular vein, from thrashing about during the pain of childbirth. The wound threatens to erupt at any time, and if it does, little mother will bleed to death.[34] For a while, under the watchful eye of little mother's black Mammy, the family is happy. Then a servant, the octoroon Cleo, infiltrates the Nortons' home. Cleo tried to seduce Norton at his office, but he summoned the fortitude to fire her, so she slips into his house to help little mother after Mammy suffers a chill. One night Norton returns home to find little mother and Cleo playing with the baby. In the presence of both women, Norton is aroused only by Cleo. Cleo's "cheeks were flushed, eyes sparkling and red hair flying in waves of fiery beauty over her exquisite shoulders, every change of attitude a new picture of graceful abandon, every movement of her body a throb of savage music from a strange seductive orchestra hidden in the deep woods!" Norton later succumbs and has sex with Cleo.[35]

Little mother discovers the act and collapses, but others are quick to tell her not to blame Norton. The physician whom Norton calls to treat his hysterical wife exonerates him: "With that young animal playing at your feet in physical touch with your soul and body in the intimacies of your home, you never had a chance."[36] Even little mother shares responsibility because, like the "foolish wife" in the biblical story of Sarah and Hagar, she "brought a beautiful girl into her husband's house and then repented of her folly."[37] Little mother learns that her own father died in the arms of his mulatto mistress, and her mother urges her to understand Norton: "He isn't bad. He carried in his blood the inheritance of hundreds of years of lawless passion."[38] Little mother manages to forgive Norton but suffers a relapse and bleeds to death, asking only that he "rear our boy free from the curse."[39]

Cleo then bears her and Norton's daughter in secret. Now there is no escape from Norton's nightmare. He sends the daughter away, but because his motherless son loves Cleo so much, Norton allows her to become a house servant. For two decades, Norton and Cleo live together in blazing hatred; then Cleo entices the daughter to visit Norton's home in his absence. Young Thomas falls in love with her, not knowing she is black and

his half sister. As Major Norton tours North Carolina campaigning to disfranchise African Americans, his son and daughter secretly marry. Distraught at the news of his children's marriage—and as frantic about racial purity as he is about incest—Norton confesses all to his son Tom, and they carry out a suicide pact.[40] The major succeeds, but Tom clings to life, ultimately saved by Cleo's last-minute disclosure that Norton's real daughter died at birth, whereupon she substituted a white foundling. Tom Norton's new wife is neither his sister, nor black; thus, the marriage is saved.

Sins can be read as an apologia for a generation of white men who had sex with black women, perhaps an apologia for Dixon's own father's sins, and as a brief for segregation and disfranchisement. Dixon explains Norton's temptation and fall in the most sympathetic terms. As for Norton's simultaneous hatred for the African American race and attraction to Cleo: "The history of the South and the history of slavery made such a paradox inevitable. The long association with the individual negro in the intimacy of home life had broken down barriers of personal race repugnance."[41] While Norton's lust is natural, Cleo's is supernatural, "the sinister purpose of a mad love that had leaped full grown from the deeps of her powerful animal nature."[42] To absolve southern white men, Dixon had to make black women Jezebels. In fiction, Dixon dealt with the troubling reality of the family cook's biracial son by absolving Thomas Dixon, Sr., from his sins, real or imagined. But even as Dixon offered forgiveness to the father in *Sins*, he made him pay for it by subjecting him to a hellish existence from which suicide offered the only escape. Never able consciously to hold his real father responsible, Dixon created a fictional father who kills himself. Norton's death freed his son Tom from the taint of racial impurity and made him a born-again white man.

Secret interracial liaisons between white men and black women before the turn of the century may have been less dramatic in real life than in Dixon's fiction, but perhaps just barely. African Americans hated hypocritical white men who surreptitiously kept black mistresses or who frequented the houses of black prostitutes. David Fulton, a black writer who grew up in Wilmington, remembered, "When I was boy in the south, the most popular Negro woman (among the whites) of my town was the courtesan." Fulton deplored the fact that some houses of prostitution run by black women catered only to white men and that the houses' madams could "enter any store and receive more attention than the wife of a Negro legislator."[43] Likewise, Fulton berated the African American woman who secretly accepted a white man as her lover. Black women must avoid "the man of a race that seeks her only under cover of darkness, to bask in her smiles, flatter her into sin; or in public places shun her as a viper."[44]

Black Best Men tried to patrol interracial sex. In Concord, home of the

Coleman Cotton Mill and Scotia Seminary, a group of African American men and boys formed a vigilante group to put an end to such secret liaisons. They roamed the streets with whips. When they found a white man "in company" with a black woman, they flogged them both. For some time, the whippings occurred nightly.[45] Such direct action was extremely risky and relatively rare. Most black critics wrote and preached against clandestine affairs rather than intervening in them, whip in hand.

Among the Reconstruction generation, whites and blacks alike overlooked the occasional white man and black woman who lived openly in a long-term domestic arrangement. These couples could not marry since interracial marriage remained illegal in North Carolina. In Wilmington, Robert H. Bunting, a white man who served as U.S. commissioner, lived with his African American companion in peace until 1898. In New Bern, E. W. Carpenter lived for many years with an African American woman and their large family. Only when he ran for clerk of the superior court did whites complain.[46] Cohabitation between white men and black women presented problems for African Americans as well since black men felt that such arrangements exploited black women. They were more likely than whites, however, to accept them as common-law marriages. Elsewhere, African Americans worked to overturn state bans on interracial marriages, a move quickly swamped by a growing pro-eugenics movement. At the 1898 meeting of the Afro-American Council in New York City, delegates proposed uniform laws across the nation allowing interracial marriage. When news of the Afro-American Council's proposal filtered back to North Carolina, whites seized upon the fact that one of the state's most outstanding black men, John Dancy, collector at the port of Wilmington, had attended the meeting. Here was proof of black Best Men's aspirations. Whites argued that they proposed such laws in order to marry white women themselves rather than to legitimate existing relationships between white men and black women.[47]

Intimate interracial relationships, tolerated through the 1880s, became intolerable to New White Men because interracial sex violated evolutionary principles and demonstrated an appalling lack of self-control among white men that could ultimately jeopardize political power. No longer was a white man who slept with a black woman demonstrating his strength; instead, he was proving his weakness. Such liaisons resulted in mixed-race progeny who slipped back and forth across the color line and defied social control. Thomas Dixon put this speech in the mouth of a leading character in *The Leopard's Spots*: "The future American must be an Anglo-Saxon or a Mulatto! We are now deciding which it shall be. . . . This Republic can have no future if racial lines are broken, and its proud citizenship sinks to the level of a mongrel breed."[48]

If New White Men wanted to regulate whiteness in public and private social relations, they would have to put force behind their haphazard efforts to police poor white women's sexuality. White men had always excluded black women from definitions of purity and spoke in rapturous terms of southern white women, generally ignoring "unruly" poor white women.[49] Now, however, New White Men set out to naturalize white women's purity, just as they naturalized black men's impurity. White women should now be chaste, regardless of their class, manners, or living conditions. The assumption of purity must be implicit, essential to all white women. Such purity was central to Aycock's definition of progress: "I would have all our people believe in the possibilities of North Carolina; in the strength of her men and the purity of her women."[50]

Eventually, the assumption of poor white women's purity would constitute more than just a tool for racial solidarity; it would become an integral part of an exchange for poor men's votes. If their men put race over class at the polling place, the Democrats promised, poor white women could be boosted up to the pedestal. At the same time, assuming white women's purity made it easy to draw clear lines in rape cases involving black men and white women. Henceforth, there could be no consensual interracial sex between white women and black men. White women would be incapable of it.

Despite the urgency of their task, New White Men had chosen an inauspicious moment to insist on poor white women's purity. Poverty, rapid urbanization, and industrialization exposed working women to new social codes and opportunities, broke the ties of patriarchal authority, and made poor white women more visible than ever before.[51] Southern towns had always harbored white prostitutes, but they had long remained out of sight and unspoken of by whites. Much of our evidence of them comes from African Americans such as Rose Leary Love, whose father John Leary practiced law in Charlotte. Love recalled the white prostitutes who took up residence in the best black residential district. "They were always dressed in expensive negligees or some other fancy dress." In addition to heavy makeup on their "very pretty" faces, "nearly all of them had a white poodle dog trailing along."[52] Locating white prostitutes in black neighborhoods served two purposes: it hid them from other white women, and it blackened the prostitutes, reading them out of the white race. If they were metaphorically black, white men could visit them without guilt and white women need not care about their reformation.

As North Carolina's towns grew, however, it became more difficult to overlook the white prostitutes, wayward girls, and drunken women who elbowed their way down the sidewalk beside the dignified white maidens

and matrons. Although white southerners rarely left records of poor southern white women's departures from ladylike decorum, northerners were often struck by their habits. One transplanted northerner commented on the crowd at a dance: "All the men drunk and all the women dipping snuff or chewing tobacco."[53] Early in 1898, a northern woman visiting New Bern published a piece in a national magazine entitled, "Poor White Women of Our Southern Cities." She urged that northern charity be redirected from freedmen and mountain whites to the debauched poor white women of southern towns. "They are not an attractive or hopeful class," she wrote, but "feeble of body . . . weak of mind, sodden with snuff . . . not only utterly illiterate, but untrained . . . entirely without that romantic charm . . . dull, uninviting, thankless . . . material." Prostitution represented the only occupation open to these women "too sluggish and dull witted for factory work."[54]

It was fortunate for this writer that she returned North before her article appeared because her words had an explosive effect in New Bern. Certain that nothing could remedy the harm she had already done, New Bernians condemned her as "either totally depraved herself or . . . of unsound mind" and "not a southern woman." Moreover, they argued that no southern white woman would be so deranged as to take up prostitution simply to starve to death since such a "boundless state of immorality . . . does not and could not possibly exist in the South." At the next city council meeting, members accused the author of libel. More telling, at the same meeting, the council approved this ordinance: "Any lewd woman who shall be found on the streets or alleys soliciting male persons, drinking, sitting on the streets in front of or lounging about bar rooms, or conducting herself in a forward or improper manner shall be deemed guilty of a nuisance . . . and fined."[55]

The difficulty of patrolling white women's sexuality in public went hand in glove with other urban problems. Not only had the white fathers failed to uphold racial purity in their personal lives, but also they had tolerated racial impurity and social chaos in public life. In the 1890s, questions of racial segregation remained unsettled in North Carolina's towns.[56] Although New Bern residents sometimes observed the color line, it wavered in certain places: the station waiting room, the post office, and the revenue department, for example. Moreover, racial boundaries faded at periodic public attractions ranging from circuses to church services. Black and white New Bernians congregated to see Mille Christine, billed as "the two headed girl" but actually cojoined African American twins.[57] When Nora Clarette Avery, the "colored girl preacher," came to Sarah Dudley Pettey's church, whites sat on the right and blacks on the left, and the white section stayed packed throughout her revival.[58] Just as whites attended functions

hosted by African Americans, African Americans joined whites at citywide functions. A photograph of the 1897 New Bern Fish, Oyster, and Game Fair reveals a knot of white women chatting with each other, while a few feet away, a black teenager stares at the camera in wonder. Nearby, Charles Pettey, in a silk top hat, stands beside his carriage.[59]

Increasingly in the 1890s, the growing commercial class of white men took such urban disorder to indicate a failure of manhood, and they worried about how such chaos looked to investors. When a Baltimore lawyer and a Swedish industrialist toured the state, looking to invest and relocate, what they saw appalled them. In Weldon, they sniffed "something rotten under the surface" and thought the town seemed "20 years behind the times." The problem, it seemed, was "Negro rule." The "old darkey" who served their dinner served as well on the city council. The train ride to Wilmington revealed a land "desolate" and "lying idle"; a "great desert with a few scrubby pines" just waiting for good Teutons—"thrifty German and Scandinavian families"—to transform it into a Garden of Eden. Finally, in Wilmington, they saw a plethora of black policemen and listened to whites bemoaning disorder in the streets. Alas, the visitors' "dream of a Florida at the mouth of the Cape Fear" must be deferred as long as "negroes guid[e] your Legislature and municipal bodies."[60] The idea of losing a "Florida at the mouth of the Cape Fear" must have been unbearable for the state's New White Men.

Such interracial proximity meant that social relations had to be negotiated and renegotiated each time a person walked down the street. Since Reconstruction, African Americans had strongly contested any attempt to limit their claims to manhood and womanhood in public. In 1882, when who would count as a man or woman in Charlotte was anyone's guess, two African American teenagers, Laura Lomax and her suitor, Jim Harris, set out on a stroll. A cultured and educated young woman, the daughter of an AME Zion bishop, Laura was her brothers' pride. On a narrow sidewalk, the couple brushed past old Doc Jones, a white herb doctor. Jones turned back and "insulted and struck" Laura Lomax. Jim Harris ran into a nearby barber shop, borrowed a gun, and pistol-whipped the offending white man. Despite the fact that Jones claimed the incident resulted from his affliction with "St. Vitus' dance," that night, a dozen young black men, including two of Laura Lomax's brothers, broke into Doc Jones's house and beat him up a second time. In their eagerness to avenge the insult, the men made no attempt to disguise their identities. Quickly police hauled Harris and Jones before a magistrate. Harris paid a twenty-five dollar fine for carrying a gun, but the magistrate made no ruling on the assault. The Lomax brothers stood trial and went free for payment of court costs. Even though her boyfriend and brothers had by now thoroughly pulverized Doc Jones,

Laura Lomax pressed the issue and ultimately won a verdict against him for assault.[61]

In addition to the free-flowing urban turbulence this tale reveals, it points up the fact that some African Americans, those who saw themselves as Best Men and Best Women, demanded that class serve as a marker of manhood and womanhood. When the editor of a white newspaper referred to Laura Lomax as Harris's "sweetheart" and "a colored girl," the editor of the black newspaper was quick to take exception: "We will remind [the white editor] that she is a respectable young lady, whose family is more prominent and wealthy than his." Then he invoked the Best Man bargain: "We want our ladies respected. . . . White men make us respect white ladies, and they must make white men respect ours. . . . They must not look upon us *all* as boys and wenches."[62] This threat, not so thinly veiled, depends on class recognition across racial lines. A translation: if you want us to use our influence on the "boys and wenches" among our race to protect *your* ladies, then you'd better use your influence on the crackers among your race to protect *our* ladies.[63]

Many black Best Men who lived in those rowdy towns and cities watched the growing disorder around them with great concern. An integral piece of the Best Man compromise was the requirement that leading African Americans influence for the better the behavior of poor blacks. For that reason, and because of their own embrace of Victorian manners and morals, middle-class black men and women worried constantly about poor black people's public activities. Urban avenues provided a stage upon which African Americans acted out the rituals of courtship while exercising the freedom and enjoying the relative anonymity that city life conferred. African American leaders of both sexes fretted, despaired, and condemned the unfolding tableau. Fifteen years after the Lomax affair, an African American in Charlotte glanced out of his office window to see a group of black men and women flirting, laughing, and eating ice cream on the corner. He castigated the men, calling them "corner-loafers and suckers who strut like a peacock, assume the air of a turkey gobbler, have the cunning of a fox, the grin of a possum, the cowardice of a cat, and are the boss liars of town."[64]

Black women's behavior gave race leaders pause as well. The novelty of urban amusements lured black women away from home and church and into danger, sometimes in interracial settings. In addition to generating negative images that middle-class black women and men wanted to keep out of whites' sight, these rambunctious women jeopardized racial politics when they put themselves beyond male protection.[65] One black man condemned the "thousands of young girls and women who are daily going down to degradation . . . in peanut galleries in theatres." The man who

commented on the "boss liars" meted out strong words to the women on the corner as well. Only "soft women" stood around eating ice cream, he scolded, and "giddy-head girls" who gave their "money to these street dudes in order to have them keep their company" would earn only sorrow as interest on their investment. Two weeks later, he fumed at seeing "a young mulatto woman and two white women . . . smoking cigars on the streets." "What next?" he gasped.[66]

Middle-class African Americans worried not just about poor people but also about young people, many of them educated and from good homes, who seemed deliberately to tweak Victorian sensibilities. "Puck," a young African American man in Charlotte, offered a rare view of his teenage peers' style. He comically described the "masher," who "hangs about on street corners," the "vapid" young man "who parts his hair in the middle and cultivates about fifteen hairs on his upper lip," and the "boaster."[67] Most often, in youthful cultural signification, the provocateur does not completely understand the implications of the provocation, but black elders thought *they* did, and they did not like what they saw. Getting a clear view of these young people from the distance of a century is extremely difficult, partly because the black middle class controlled the African American press and wanted to present a united front of purpose and dignity, and partly because what grated on adults was youths' "attitude," a quality rarely recovered in archives. One place to look for "attitude" is in white complaints about blacks, which rose to a crescendo in the 1890s. "The Negro," whites sighed, is not what he or she used to be. These observations complemented explanations of racial degeneracy that contributed to the redefinition of manhood as white.[68]

What whites were seeing, of course, was not biological degeneracy but a rising African American youth culture that proffered a competing image of manhood. The black "community"—even the African American middle class—was not monolithic. A new assertive generation of middle-class African Americans believed that the only way to guarantee rights was to exercise them in daily actions. Some in the rising generation demanded instantly the same level of respect that the Best Men had so carefully earned over a lifetime. While black Best Men screened their private lives behind lace curtains, young African Americans were public men: "corner-loafers" and "street dudes." Whites would have to take them into account if only because they loomed so large. Black middle-class elders wanted to sweep away this masculine counterimage because they believed such men wildly miscalculated the power dynamic. To black Best Men, the vote was the wellspring of all possibility. Exercising the franchise carefully would bring about a time when African American manhood would no longer have to prove itself. They could not understand or abide young black men who

believed that African American manhood did not have to prove itself to whites at all.

African American men could not know how chimerical their claims to manhood would prove in the closing years of the nineteenth century. The New White Men sought to remove black men from politics altogether and to reorder the public and private social landscape. To succeed, they would have to take control of the Democratic Party from their fathers' generation. Politics had begun to unravel for the old Redeemers in 1890 when Leonidus Polk, president of the state Farmers' Alliance, pressured the Democratic Party to endorse the farmers' ideals hammered out in a series of platforms at national Alliance conventions. The legislature of 1891, known as the "farmers' legislature," authorized a railroad commission, funded the full-year normal school for white women, and increased the school tax, but the battles these reforms sparked deepened the rifts in the party.[69] The national Democratic endorsement of the gold standard exacerbated the state Democratic leadership's problems with farmers, and even New Bern's Furnifold Simmons, the 1892 state party chairman, supported free silver that year.[70] Fed up with the "Old Stagers" who tightly grasped power, Polk, who described himself as a "young man's man," was ready to revolt.[71] On Simmons's watch and much to his distress, Polk's state party liaison Marion Butler led Alliance members out of the Democratic Party and formed a vigorous third party in the state.[72] Polk died suddenly just before the national Populist Party convention in Omaha, Nebraska, leaving North Carolina Populists to campaign for the party's national ticket without their native son at its head.[73]

A delicate power balance existed between the Democrats and Republicans, and a third party would surely tip the scales. Since Reconstruction, the Democrats had monopolized the governor's seat, but the margins of victory in those races ranged from 6,000 to 20,000 votes in a pool of 250,000 registered voters.[74] Alert to the danger, the leading Democratic newspaper immediately condemned the Populist Party as a "bastard political interloper" and predicted that its policies would "paralize [*sic*] business and . . . black the wheels of progress."[75] Charles Aycock hit the road to deliver fiery speeches for the Democrats. The party narrowly averted a disaster, held onto the governor's office, and sent a majority to the legislature. But two years later, in the midst of the 1894 depression, Simmons no longer headed the executive committee, and the situation looked grim. The ranking U.S. senator, fossilized Matthew Ransom, asleep up in Washington, D.C., did nothing.[76]

The election of 1894 was an utter disaster for the Democrats, whom

Daniels described as "thunderstruck."[77] For the first time since 1876, the North Carolina state senate lacked a Democratic majority, and Populists and Republicans could combine to outnumber the Democrats in the house. Worse yet, the legislature elected Populist Marion Butler and Republican Jeter B. Pritchard to the U.S. Senate.[78] Then the representatives struck the provision that required the legislature to appoint local officers and returned to home rule, resulting in the election in 1896 of numerous African Americans, particularly in sixteen eastern counties where black voters were in the majority.[79] A white New Bern man recalled that, as a result, Craven County had twenty-seven black justices of the peace, three black deputies, black school committeemen, a black register of deeds, black constables, and a black city attorney. African Americans also won election to the board of aldermen and the county commission.[80] One of the school committeemen was Edward R. Dudley.[81] What whites deplored, African Americans celebrated. Charles Pettey, commenting on this situation, bragged, "We have had colored coroners and State's attorneys elected by a majority of white votes. Our representative in Congress is a colored man, George H. White, my neighbor. Throughout the State there are over 100 petty magistracies filled by colored men."[82]

In statewide elections in 1896, the Republicans and Populists formally "fused" and together steamrolled the Democratic house and senate candidates. Out of 169 legislative seats, the Democrats won only 45.[83] Republican Daniel Russell captured the governor's seat. Charles Aycock despaired that his party "seemed on the eve of disintegration."[84] The Democratic Old Stagers found themselves buried in the debris as the New White Men dismantled the party hierarchy, and Furnifold Simmons ascended for a second time to the chairmanship of the state executive committee. As tensions with Spain over Cuba occupied white and black North Carolinians, Simmons and Aycock holed up in New Bern's Chatawka Hotel to plot their next step.[85]

North Carolina's black men saw the Spanish-American/Cuban War as an opportunity to prove their manhood by mobilizing black troops commanded totally by black officers. Two months after the United States entered the war in April 1898, the *Star of Zion* triumphantly proclaimed, "Cuba will be a Negro Republic," thus reordering the stakes of the war to give its African American readers reason to support the cause.[86] Some African Americans were quick to celebrate Afro-Cuban leaders in the conflict, to call Cubans "Negroes," and to depict their struggle as that of a vibrant, young race of darker men, burning to be free from hierarchical, dissipated Spain. If Cuba succeeded as a "Negro Republic," its democratic example

would remind nearby southern states that African American men had the "genius" for self-government as well. Sarah Dudley Pettey recognized the stakes as early as 1896 and termed the insurgents "brave and patriotic" in the face of "beast-like brutality." She cheered, "*Vivant insurgents! Vivant Cuba!*" Once the United States entered the fray and white Americans died overseas to guarantee dark Cubans' political liberation, it would become more difficult for those at home to deny dark Americans' rights.[87] Finally, the war represented a chance to prove African American manhood through heroism in the heat of battle. Spain, the *Star of Zion*'s editor predicted, will "fight like a coward. . . . That she will lose Cuba the civilized world regards . . . as certain."[88] This African American Best Man, at least, stood squarely on the side of the brave, the civilized, world.

Others doubted that even heroism could arrest the theft of manhood already under way. A Kentucky black man reproved such jingoism with the admonition: "Don't rush to war. . . . [The African American] has nothing to fight for. . . . The white man says to him to-day, 'You are not a man, sir, and you are to serve and take such punishment as I see fit to give you.' " "Where is the Negro's head?" he asked. "Let the Negro stop and think and not rush too fast into battle unless he sees he is going to be treated better after it is over."[89] But others labeled such men "shoestring fellows" and predicted confidently that when the military needed real men, "They will call us."[90]

As he called up troops, President William McKinley sought to mitigate fears of the regular army's power and to raise support on the home front by commissioning existing state volunteer militias. By involving the civilian populace in the war, McKinley could offer upward career mobility and perhaps even extend federal benefits to state political figures. Thus, McKinley asked each governor for large numbers of troops, more than he expected to need. The issue of black volunteers came up immediately because even in southern states some militias included pre-existing black companies. Upon hearing of the declaration of war, other black men also rushed to form volunteer companies.[91]

In North Carolina, the Charlotte Light Infantry Company constituted the only black company in the state militia. Commissioned by a Democratic governor in 1887, the company by 1898 was led by C. S. L. A. Taylor and members carried state-issued guns at their mostly ceremonial functions. For example, they marched proudly past the reviewing stand on the occasion of Republican governor Daniel Russell's inauguration in Raleigh in 1896 and, a year later, paraded each day at the Negro State Fair.[92] Following the declaration of war, other black men around the state quickly organized companies of neighbors. The newly formed New Berne Riflemen, Colored, elected James Dudley, Sarah Dudley Pettey's uncle, as their captain.[93] When the state adjutant general telegraphed Dudley to ask whether he

could raise eighty men to report to duty at a week's notice, Dudley fired back, "The Riflemen are all earnest men and show by their behavior that they mean business and are prepared to go to the war when called."[94]

Republican governor Daniel Russell's political debts to African Americans ran deep and wide, and he wanted to include black volunteer troops in the state's mobilization quotas.[95] Russell lobbied Washington, D.C., for authorization to create a black battalion under his primary black adviser, James H. Young. Permission was granted, and the black battalion became the second in the country commanded by black officers.[96] By June, Russell's political machinations in Washington, D.C., generated another call for troops, and the battalion grew to the Third North Carolina Volunteer Regiment. Young, promoted to colonel, commanded, and C. S. L. A. Taylor backed him up at the rank of lieutenant colonel. Kansas, Illinois, and Virginia also formed black regiments under black officers at a time when only one black officer served in the entire regular army.[97]

North Carolina black men clamored to enlist. Nine hundred recruits joined ten companies and boarded trains headed for Fort Macon, a fortification dating back to the 1820s located on a barren island off Morehead City.[98] Volunteers assembled by the first of June, then spent the summer marching up and down dunes in the blistering heat, swatting sand fleas, and picking sandspurs out of their flesh. At first, whites supported this African American rush to arms. "The reports that the colored man is weakening about enlisting, up country, is [*sic*] not seen here," boasted the *New Berne Journal*. As cars full of black men streamed toward Fort Macon, "All the men seemed in good spirits and showed no signs of not wanting to go to war."[99] Sarah Dudley Pettey, Charles Pettey, and Edward Dudley traveled to Fort Macon at that time and sent back glowing reports. At the center of camp life, a Young Men's Christian Association tent provided games and stationery along with daily prayers. The men, she thought, were in a high state of readiness.[100]

By August, the troops still sat, pickling in the thick, briny air. Their spirits lifted when they shipped out to Knoxville, Tennessee, to await mobilization to the Pacific. There, at Fort Poland, they found themselves with the Sixth Virginia Regiment, which had black officers under a white colonel. When the white colonel fired all of his black officers and replaced them with whites, the Sixth refused to obey them and courts-martial followed. Then the short war ended, and after spending three months in Tennessee, both black regiments deployed to Fort Haskell outside of Macon, Georgia, to await further orders. Georgia whites could not abide the idea of black soldiers with guns under the command of black officers. North Carolina black men, unused to Jim Crow laws, could not abide Macon's streetcar segregation. Trouble started whenever black soldiers went into Macon. In separate incidents, local whites killed four black North Carolinians. Juries acquitted all four murderers.[101] The entire fall, the black troops continued to hope they would be posted to Cuba, even for garrison duty.[102] From Georgia, shocking tales of racial injustice traveled home to North Carolina with furloughed soldiers.

Back home, Democrats had to counter the image of uniformed black soldiers that inconveniently belied their propaganda that African American men in power threatened the polity. To invert the patriotic symbolism of a black man in uniform, the Democrats portrayed the black troops as impostors, as sheep in wolves' clothing. Press coverage of black soldiers across the state shifted enormously between April, when local white editors praised blacks' enlistment, and October, when the white supremacy campaign centralized the party line and asserted that blacks were incapable of voting and officeholding.

The Democrats tailored the international language of racialized manhood to fit situations in their own backyards. Whites infantilized the soldiers on the one hand and portrayed them as animals on the other. To invoke the trope of the African American as evolutionary child, whites argued that dressing up black men in uniforms only served to point up the absurdity of their manly posturing, much like dressing up children in cowboy costumes. Suddenly, the soldiers were not men but Russell's "pets." They did not drill, they "frolicked." Newspapers began putting "soldiers" in quotation marks whenever they mentioned black troops. Complaining that the soldiers on trains "stood in the aisles, occupied two seats each, and took off their shoes," whites recommended that these "creatures" be transported in "cattle cars."[103]

When black soldiers came to town on leave, they carried themselves with confidence and brimmed with happiness at being home, irritating whites even further. To transform black soldiers from home protectors into sexual predators, whites portrayed them as swaggering phallic symbols. Furloughed black troops were "conspicuous by their important walk, the puffing of big cigars, and gallantry to the opposite sex of the Negro race."[104] This chivalrous treatment had a pernicious effect on black women, in turn unleashing their excesses: "These 'soldiers' were met by crowds of their female friends. . . . [The women] were so important at having their acquaintances in uniform that some of them felt entitled in making themselves offensive to the white people in the waiting rooms."[105] Everyone was out of place in this picture, whites thought, and they yearned to put black men and women back where they belonged. "Cotton will soon be ready to pick, sweet potatoes are growing in the hills, these are their duties," one white

man complained. If the black troops would only come home, then "the white manhood of North Carolina . . . would stand at the head of the sisterhood of states in responding to the call of duty."[106]

Traveling by rail exposed black troops to white gangs who boarded the trains when they stopped. In collusion with the trainmen, who wired ahead that they should "do up the niggers" at the next stop, local whites would jump on the trains, start fistfights, and, if the going got tough, signal to pull out so that they could jump off and make their escape.[107] After finally being mustered out of the army in February 1899, the Third North Carolina had a particularly difficult time getting home from Macon. When they disembarked in Atlanta, members of the regiment were met by police who "very promptly clubbed [them] into submission." Whites lauded the action, saying the troops had "displayed the same ruffianism and brutality that characterized [them] while in service."[108]

The state's black Best Men and the troops themselves were heartbroken. Back in Knoxville, when the Third learned that the war had ended, they "wept like babies" at losing the chance to prove themselves in battle.[109] Edward A. Johnson, a Raleigh alderman whose sister married Sarah Dudley Pettey's brother, rushed to press with a laudatory history of black troops' wartime activities to refute the libel and slander that flew about them.[110] But many soldiers seemed numbed, like Early Hicks of Company D, the Third North Carolina Volunteers, who wrote home from Macon shortly before the troops were mustered out. Hicks said he knew that white supremacists such as Ben Tillman of South Carolina and Rebecca Latimer Felton of Georgia had captured the imaginations of "poor, blinded creatures" back home, but he placed his faith in the triumph of good over evil: "The ideal and truly great man and great woman are they who try to write their names in deeds of love and sympathy in the hearts and lives of mankind."[111] Deeds of love and sympathy would be in short supply as North Carolina's New White Men jockeyed for power.[112]

In the gendered complexities exacerbated by rapid industrialization and urbanization, Simmons, Daniels, and Aycock found the glue to join the black Best Men to street dudes, the brave soldiers to rapists. In 1898, the Democrats chose Furnifold Simmons to orchestrate the campaign to recapture a majority in the state legislature. Simmons knew that he must find an overarching issue to insure Democratic success in widely scattered races that often turned on local personalities and issues. He chose to make protection of white women the centerpiece of the campaign. By emphasizing sexuality, the Democrats placed race over class and spun a yarn in which

white women of all classes highly prized their chastity and black men of all classes barely controlled their sexuality. By positing lust for white women as a universal trait in black men, whites explained away black Best Men's good behavior by arguing that they sought success simply to get close to white women. Likewise, when a poor black man stood accused of rape, the New White Men argued that the rapist had been stimulated by the black Best Man's elevated position. Black progress of any sort meant a move toward social equality, a code word for sexual equality.[113] Josephus Daniels demonstrated a gift for turning black men's good intentions into rape metaphors. For example, Daniels's newspaper depicted black Colonel James H. Young discharging his duties as director of the School for the Blind by peeping into a white blind girl's room.[114]

No matter what black Best Men did, their accomplishments constituted the brief for their prosecution. When the *New Berne Journal* argued that black officeholders sought "social equality with the Caucasian," Charles Pettey replied that since white men were "not accustomed to recogniz[ing] Negro manhood," they had no inkling of black men's motivations. As for penetrating the "social" barrier, Pettey stated bluntly, "More ill-bred white men have crossed this barrier to demoralize society than Negroes." African Americans wanted civil and political rights, not social equality, Pettey argued.[115] Nonetheless, whites continued to maintain that black elected officials hoped to "be brought into the social sphere of the higher classes."[116] The New White Men tucked all black men into Procrustes's bed, where they were damned if they stretched and damned if they shrank.

To drive black Best Men from politics and corral white Populist strays, Simmons, Aycock, and Daniels in 1898 created a local black-on-white rape scare, taking their cue from similar sensationalized reporting across the South. By the time they finished, they had racialized the definition of manhood and substituted race for class, the New White Man for the Best Man. Rhetorically, if not literally, Democrats embraced poor whites across class lines and politicized poor white men's personal lives, destroying the fragile black/white political alliance that had emerged with the Populist Party. The political machine exaggerated a series of sex crimes and allegations in order to strike terror into the hearts of white voters. It is difficult to determine how many of these incidents were actual crimes and how many sprang from collective fantasies inspired by Josephus Daniels's powerful manipulation of the media. The evidence suggests that the Democratic propaganda planted seeds of hysteria that ripened in the minds of an economically threatened people. From newspaper accounts across the state, eight instances emerge in which a black man stood accused of raping a white woman in the years 1897 and 1898. Juries sentenced four of the

accused black men to death. One black man was lynched in 1897, and two more in 1898.[117] The Democrats reported every rape or attempted rape as if the crime had not existed prior to fusion rule.[118]

The hysteria began in August 1897 near Asheville when Kittie Henderson, a twenty-year-old handicapped woman, accused Bob Brackett of raping her as she made her way to church. Brackett was black, Henderson, white. The sheriff captured Brackett in short order and, accompanied by a mob, took him to Henderson for identification. Upon seeing Bob, she screamed, "You may hang him or burn him." The sheriff managed to get him to the jail but could only hold him one night before men broke in, freed the other prisoners, and seized Brackett. The kidnappers rode around for a while with Brackett, making him repeatedly describe the rape's details to them. Then they picked up Kittie Henderson and she watched him hang.[119] Quickly, North Carolinians found themselves caught up in the moral panic sweeping the region. "There has been of late a perfect epidemic of the crime of assault upon white women by negroes. Various states have suffered from it. . . . Is this to be the only one, or is it the beginning of more of the same nature in North Carolina?" the *New Berne Journal* asked after the Asheville lynching.[120]

A few days later, the Vance County sheriff arrested George Brodie, a local black man, for the rape of Nannie Catlett, a white woman. A white eyewitness at the trial reported that the African American spectators "stood stolid, rather vengeful to my eye, during the whole heart-rending recital of Brodie's victim." "These negroes cannot see the heinousness of the crime," he opined. Moreover, they could not understand Anglo-Saxon law: "Punishment by hanging . . . leaves them with the sting of imagined injustice." He recommended lynching instead of due process since it left a "sense of shock upon the race which even then seems to receive it all too dully."[121] A jury that included three African Americans quickly sentenced Brodie to hang, and the state militia whisked him out of town to prevent a lynching. Brodie was executed less than a month later.[122]

The same week that thousands watched Brodie die, 8,000 people gathered in Snow Hill, a small community in the Piedmont, to witness the public hanging of African American Dock Black for raping an elderly white woman. As blacks and whites jostled for position, pistols and knives flashed. Many spectators carried clubs. Twice the African Americans rushed the gallows, only to be driven back by whites brandishing guns in their faces. Dock Black announced from the platform that he had committed the crime; tempers ran so high that the whites drove the blacks from town.[123]

In early December, John Evans, a newcomer to Rockingham, found himself accused of the rape of a white girl. At first she identified her rapist as a white man or "a very bright mulatto," but after several lineups, she fingered Evans, a dark-skinned African American.[124] Evans had an alibi that witnesses of both races corroborated, but the jury convicted him. The Republican sheriff of Richmond County saved Evans from lynching, and Governor Russell put off his hanging, hoping that new evidence would surface.[125] The Democratic Executive Committee, meeting a few days after Evans's temporary reprieve, shamelessly decided to exploit the rape reports. Simmons chose as the central metaphorical figure of the upcoming campaign the incubus—a winged demon that has sexual intercourse with women while they sleep. The Democrats charged that while white men slumbered, the incubus of black power visited their beds. They summed up their platform as "safety of the home."[126] Democratic rule would "restore to the white women of the state the security they felt under the twenty years of democracy inaugurated by the immortal Vance."[127]

Zebulon Vance, now dead several years, had been among the original Redeemers, a figure adored by white farmers and townspeople alike. As they condemned black men, the Democrats used Vance as a convenient symbol to convince poor white Populists that they had failed to uphold manhood's duties when they put economic interests over racial interests in their alliance with black Republicans. However, in contrast to their broadside attacks on black elites, the Democrats granted the white Populists the defense of ignorance and left room for Populist face-saving. An observer reported that everywhere Populists heard Aycock's speeches linking rape reports to fusion rule, they "arose as one with a frenzy of repentance . . . [and as the] call to manhood seemed to increase in force and intensity . . . [they felt] a painful sense of guilt and degradation."[128]

The violence continued as the campaign heated up. In February, a mob tried to lynch Gus Harmon, a black man whom Missie Cuthbertson accused of assaulting her in Marion, a small town in the western part of the state.[129] Then, in the summer of 1898, as tensions rose over the upcoming election, the most symbolic case of all occurred in Concord, the center of African American progress and home of the black-owned Coleman Cotton Mill and Scotia Seminary. A twelve-year-old girl was raped and murdered while her family attended church services. A mob rounded up African Americans Joe Kizer and Tom Johnstone, obtained confessions, and took them to jail. That evening, men overpowered the sheriff and took the suspects to the edge of town, where they hung them and then riddled their bodies with bullets. Journalists converged on Concord to speculate wildly about the causes of the crime. One linked the grisly murder to the breakdown of racial deference inspired by the Coleman Cotton Mill's success. Another blamed the familiarity between white female teachers at Scotia Seminary and their African American women students.[130] Finally, just be-

fore the November elections, a Brunswick County jury sentenced a black man to death for the rape of a white woman.[131]

Seven cases of rape in which African American men stood accused in two years probably did not represent any real increase in the crime of black-on-white rape. For the previous two years, 1895 and 1896, the attorney general had counted twenty-eight rapes statewide. Neither he nor his successors specified the race of the rapists. They did, however, list the race of those lynched and executed. In 1895 and 1896, one black man was lynched for attempted rape, and none executed. If we can assume that any black man accused of raping a white woman would have been either lynched or executed, that leaves twenty-seven cases that did not involve black-on-white rape. Many of those twenty-seven convicted rapists must have been white men who raped white women since black men's rapes of black women were less likely to be prosecuted and white men's rapes of black women rarely resulted in convictions.[132] During the next two-year period, roughly July 1896 through July 1898—the first two years of fusion rule—the number of rapes rose to forty-two.

Historians have used the attorney general's figures documenting the rise in rape cases from twenty-eight to forty-two as proof of a raping rampage by black men.[133] In fact, the attorney general identified only three of those forty-two cases as ones in which black men raped white women. The newspaper accounts push the number to seven. Thirty-five cases remain. They might have involved black men who raped black women, or white men who raped black women, but white men who raped white women must have accounted for a large part of the rape increase.[134] These numbers suggest several possibilities: perhaps the fusionist judges and magistrates held white men more stringently accountable for rape; the rape scare may have increased reporting of the crime in general; or perhaps the white supremacy folk pornography unleashed some sort of white beast rapist who has escaped historians' notice. Interestingly, the number of "assault with intent to rape" cases, a crime that could have increased dramatically because of the rape scare propaganda, stayed relatively constant throughout the period.[135]

Despite the swift punishment of black men accused of rape in 1897 and 1898, rumors circulated that black rapists went unpunished by Republican and Populist officials. Alfred M. Waddell, a Wilmington Old Stager whose imagination was so captured by the rape scare that he summoned up the energy for a political rebirth, "remembered": "Crimes of all sorts increased alarmingly, and went unpunished. Negro jurors who sat in every case that was tried refused, in the face of the most overwhelming and undisputed evidence, to convict Negro criminals guilty of outrageous offenses."[136]

Contrary to Waddell's rendition, in each rape or attempted rape reported in 1897 and 1898, punishment came swiftly and lawfully, except in the Asheville and Concord cases, in which whites broke the law. In some of the counties in which rapists were punished, Republicans controlled the sheriff's office, and in many, African Americans held political power.[137] Governor Daniel Russell, politically boneheaded as usual, played right into the Democrats' hands when, after the Concord lynchings, he declared: "They deserved what they got. The provocation was so great that the act of killing these brutes, although not permissible in law, was almost excusable in morals and in justice."[138]

In addition to blaming the black Best Men for the alleged outbreak of rape, whites tried to make them responsible for stopping it. An integral part of black Best Men's contract for sharing power with white men had been African Americans' responsibility for the poor of their race, and now Democratic propaganda accused black Best Men of deliberate inaction. "It is time for those who stand in authority among the colored people to pronounce in no uncertain terms against these assaults," one white man asserted. "The cure for this crime lies largely, if not altogether with the colored leaders, and upon their heads must the blame be placed, if they do not attempt to act."[139]

African American men walked a fine line as they tried to condemn rape without condoning lynching and condemn lynching without condoning rape.[140] Before the 1898 rape panic, many North Carolina black men spoke bluntly about lynching: "Red-handed lynchers [are] butchering the Negro for almost any offense. . . . There are bad, worthless Negroes in the South, and there are bad, worthless white men who commit grievous crimes." White men should remember that "the Negro race with bodies and feelings like other races will not always submit tamely to this cruelty and bloodshed."[141] Black Best Men knew that accusations of rape were often false. White women's accounts had always been difficult to counter, but now that poor white women's purity must go unquestioned, defense became impossible.[142] On the national level, the Afro-American Council, with Charles Pettey's friend Alexander Walters at its head, condemned lynching in 1897, as did the Negro Protective Association, with the support of North Carolina delegate John Dancy. At the same time, the National Association of Colored Women met in Chicago and passed resolutions against both lynching and the "despoiler of homes and the degraders of womanhood, be he white or black." With a delegation of leading African Americans, Charles Pettey visited William McKinley during his reelection campaign. The group tried to extract a strong pledge from McKinley to speak out against lynching. Instead, he mouthed platitudes designed to reassure them of their Best

Man status: "Your race has made . . . progress in all that goes to make men better . . . better citizenship, better husbands, better fathers, better men."[143]

After the Asheville lynching, African American ministers ascended their pulpits to condemn both rape and lynching and to assume leadership in the crisis, just as whites had suggested. James Young offered a resolution concerning rapists at the Wake County Colored Baptist Association meeting that stated, "We as pastors will assist in bringing to justice such lawless characters."[144] A Presbyterian minister in New Bern, more than 250 miles from Asheville, organized a community meeting on "lynching and its prime cause" and invited "the lawyers, school-teachers, ministers, politicians, and business men of the city."[145] R. S. Rives, pastor of Sarah Dudley Pettey's church, responded to the assertion that blame for such crimes lay upon black leaders' heads by agreeing that rape was a "heinous" crime but declaring that "if lynching is the proper remedy white men ought to be lynched for assault upon colored women, and the fact that white men do perpetrate this meanest of all crimes upon my race cannot be denied." Then he reminded whites of the Best Man compromise: "There are at least two grades of society into which each of our races may be classified, and as a better remedy than lynching, I suggest a . . . combination of sentiment and purpose between the best elements of both races." Rives closed his letter, "Yours for the greatest good to the greatest number and the defence and safety of our womanhood."[146] The New White Man, however, did not want Rives's help in safeguarding "our womanhood." The black Best Man was dead.

In order to make protection of white womanhood the centerpiece of the legislative elections of 1898, the New White Men had launched a coldly calculated effort to defame black men. The sensationalization of rape and allegations of rape represented the worst, but not the only, aspect of their media blitz. As Furnifold Simmons kicked off the campaign, his cohort Josephus Daniels used the Raleigh *News and Observer* to spread wildly exaggerated accounts of interracial clashes between average citizens on the streets of eastern North Carolina cities. Simmons recalled later that they "filled the papers . . . with portraits of Negro officers and candidates. . . . The newspapers carried numerous exposures of Negro insolence and violence." At first, some eastern North Carolinians laughed openly at the tactic. The *New Berne Journal* quipped: "The 'outrage' editor of the *News and Observer* is getting 'slow.' He has not reported a case in Craven County in three days." Simmons collected hefty monetary contributions from industrialists across the state to reprint Daniels's newspaper articles as broadsides and send them to county Democratic leaders to distribute to voters. At first, many white political bosses saw Simmons's salacious propaganda for what it was and refused to distribute it or threatened to burn it. As Simmons leaned on his county bosses, however, they slowly straightened up, and he saw in the party and the press "a change of mind, a getting into step."[147] The manner in which gender and politics interacted after the white Democrats got "into step" is the subject of the next chapter.

four

SEX AND VIOLENCE IN PROCRUSTES'S BED

Getting into step with Furnifold Simmons's 1898 effort to regain Democratic control of the legislature meant using the rape scare to generate heat and then watching steam build across the state. Simmons dispatched his agents everywhere.[1] They founded White Government Leagues, embellished local accounts of African American "outrages" for statewide broadcast, and reincarnated falsehoods in every Democratic rag. They even tried their hand at song:

Rise, ye sons of Carolina!
Proud Caucasians, one and all;
Be not deaf to Love's appealing—
Hear your wives and daughters call,
See their blanched and anxious faces,
Note their frail, but lovely forms
Rise, defend their spotless virtue
With your strong and manly arms.[2]

Legends of atrocities sprouted like mushrooms, but the stories were hard to pin down. They echoed each other, swept the state, and turned back again. If the situation appeared calm locally, reports circulated that the

white people in the next town had suffered outrages. If conditions in that town looked sleepy enough when one arrived, news came that trouble had broken out farther down the road. With the now avid collaboration of local correspondents, Simmons and Daniels concentrated on fabricating and exaggerating stories about black majority counties to feed to the Piedmont, where white Democrats had voted Populist, and to the west, where whites had voted Republican. It was a brilliant strategy. The Populist white man who had valued his farm above his race discovered with a shock that he had opened the gates of hell for some distant white woman. The Democrats' pressure swelled white men's egos and honed their indignation. An explosion seemed imminent.[3]

That it finally came two days *after* the election testifies to the inexorability of hatred unleashed. Historians have treated the Wilmington slaughter as a riot, a coup, or a massacre and have scoured the archives to locate minutia of municipal politics to explain the violence. It is usually a tale told from the top down narrowly. Repeating it from the perpetrators' point of view, however, inadvertently serves to reify their version.[4] Giving voice to the roles of white women, black women, and black men draws back the curtain to reveal a highly contested stage. It also serves to remind us that what happened in Wilmington was about more than party politics or economic jealousy or even racism. It was about how political rhetoric can license people to do evil in the name of good. It reminds us that murder's best work is done after the fact, when terror lives on in memory.[5]

Instead of tracing one-by-one the steps white men took, it is helpful to shift the focus onto others: white and black women and black men. The very name historians give to the race wars of the 1890s—white supremacy campaigns—assumes that all of the choices fell to the white supremacists. Granting agency to everyone involved yields a more nuanced view of southern history and reveals that white power was contingent, the master of a thousand subtle and not so subtle disguises.

The political culture of women, white and black, in the white supremacy campaigns has commanded little scholarly attention.[6] White women at the turn of the century have most often been portrayed in southern history as either homebound or venturing into public space on a progressive mission.[7] Certainly some white women stayed home and some white women went out to do good, but others eagerly abetted the repression of African Americans. Furnifold Simmons, Charles Aycock, Josephus Daniels, and their red-shirted allies sought to persuade white women that fusion rule endangered them so that they would actively try to influence their husbands' votes even as they served the campaign as symbols of purity.

The Democrats' campaign depended in large part upon white women's cooperation. On the one hand, it objectified women and portrayed them as

helpless; on the other, it celebrated their involvement. If a white woman rejected "protection" and went about her business in an integrated setting or refused to make her husband a red shirt with a butterfly collar to wear to the White Government League meeting, the entire Democratic project suffered. When the Democrats made "safety of the home" central to the campaign, they invited white women into politics. Once there, some white women seized upon their victimization—the attention that the rape scare focused upon them—to move into public roles and to wield political influence. They tried to turn their objectification into empowerment.

Some white women, on the other hand, rejected the tainted bait. Deploying their own language of domesticity, they reminded the white supremacists that African Americans did not threaten white home life but instead strengthened it by providing domestic labor. Sometimes, through all of the rhetoric, the heart still spoke. Some white women paid no attention at all to the New White Man's warnings and went on loving black men. A white woman did harm enough by rejecting victimization; if she eloped with a black man, she utterly betrayed the Democrats.

Black women's agency in the white supremacy campaign remains even more elusive, partly because both historical language and method obscure black women's political culture. In placing black women outside the political, in fashioning explanations for their actions entirely from ill-fitting historical constructions based on white women's experiences, in overlooking location as central to world view, historians have often missed the complexity and contingency of African American women's politics.[8] Redefining the political and shedding completely the white middle-class construct of "separate spheres" remove obstacles to viewing black women's activism on its own terms.[9]

When black women *are* included in southern history, the narrative most often posits their self-sacrificing community activism rolling inexorably toward the civil rights movement.[10] Although, in fact, black women did cleave to a common political culture, one that privileged communitarianism over individualism, their tactics—how they voiced their beliefs and the forums in which they chose to act—depended on their class, their age, and the centrality of gender to their thinking.

Finally, it is at this moment that African American men vanish from accounts of southern political history. This treatment creates an artificial vacuum, an eerie silence that hollows out a cavern where the New White Man's voice resounds too loudly. African Americans did not fall silent; rather, they filled the air with a cacophony of spirited and dispirited arguments. Nor did the New White Man herald the new era with total assurance. He whispered aloud that his victory might be temporary if the Supreme Court got wise to his tricks.

We can test these arguments in several settings. First, a close examination of New Bern, familiar terrain, finds white supremacist tactics agitating the citizens of that formerly peaceful city, while scattered incidents throughout the state as a whole reveal bubbling turmoil. Then Wilmington, the site of the racial massacre, takes center stage. Finally, statewide and national African American reactions to the events of 1898 belie the notion of black passivity.

Sarah Dudley Pettey did not get out on the streets of New Bern as much as usual in the summer and fall of 1898 since her fifth child, Theophytra, was born in March. But what she did see in her hometown disturbed her, although it was hard to judge the significance of the events. The preceding December, members of the Democratic Executive Committee met downtown at the Chatawka Hotel and determined to exploit "home protection" as their primary political strategy.[11] Then, two months later, the New Bern Ladies' Memorial Association became an official chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.[12] Three days after Theophytra's birth, the white men in the town formed a Young Men's Democratic League, an organization dedicated to the "overthrow of Russellism and restoring to decent ways the good old state." They chose as secretary a very young white man, Romulus Armistead Nunn. Fresh out of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Nunn read law with Furnifold Simmons.[13] During the winter and spring, the rape reportage aroused some controversy, but the press continued to publish African American responses and sustained a certain civility when writing about black officeholders in the city.

This general calm prevailed until August 1898, when Charles Brantley Aycock hit town. He orated; he hobnobbed; he promised patronage. Wherever he went, "he [gave] inspiration to . . . white men favoring the cause of good government in the state."[14] Suddenly the local paper seized upon Simmons's incubus metaphor and the threat to white women's purity. At once, the campaign's goal became "white man's rights [and] safety of the home." White men were admonished to stop their selfishness and remember "those whose interest they represent."[15] Their neglect of unfranchised white women became a major theme in Aycock's soon-to-be-famous white men's "guilt and degradation" speech, which he honed that August in New Bern and subsequently gave across the state.[16] New Bern's white men conspicuously lacked that sense of guilt and degradation prior to Aycock's arrival. By the time he ended his visit, white men realized "how vital" the 1898 election was to the state's white women: "For them it is everything whether negro supremacy is to continue."[17]

There is a certain element of truth in the statement that it mattered to

white women if African Americans participated in public affairs. The New White Men pushed for more stringent segregation just as southern white women sought a larger role in civic and commercial affairs. Combining higher standards of segregation with higher standards of female purity effectively constricted the space in which white women could move. To protect their virtue, white women must now be physically separated from black men. The idea of Josephus Daniels's mother serving black and white postal patrons from her front parlor had become unthinkable.

Despite New White Men's narrow demarcation of their paths, white women of all stations poured into public space, unsettling male confidence and demanding that everyone accommodate their presence. In ever-increasing numbers, they went to work outside of the home. In 1892, fewer than 1,000 women worked in the state's cotton mills. By 1900, 13,973 women were cotton mill workers, of whom only 1,474 were married. Of course, many of these single women lived under their fathers' roofs; even so, a young woman's ability to support herself threatened patriarchal authority.[18] Many mills operated in isolated company villages, but others flourished in urban areas, attracting women who lived outside of male "protection" altogether in boardinghouses or female-headed households.[19] At the same time, white women with a bit of education moved into teaching careers, newly regendered and rapidly expanding.[20] White women teachers imbued with missionary zeal poured out of the new state normal school to enlighten a benighted populace.[21]

While white women who worked whittled at patriarchy's veneer by gaining a modicum of independence, others who did not have to support themselves flocked to clubs and charitable organizations through which they entered public affairs.[22] Some among this group embraced and embellished the cult of the Confederacy, measuring the New White Man against his dead father's shadow and leading to the rapid growth of the United Daughters of the Confederacy in the 1890s.[23] The middle- and upper-class white women of the United Daughters of the Confederacy fictionalized the antebellum period as a time when white women had more of everything: more power, more money, more love, more protection. Just as modern blacks were not what their fathers had been as slaves, modern white men were not what their fathers had been as masters. If antebellum white men were giants, postbellum white men were pygmies. At a time when New White Men politely rejected their fathers' leadership, their wives and daughters came to idolize it.[24] The wages of the fantasy served as psychic compensation for the South's dire poverty. As twisted as this thinking was, southern white women used it to great effect. White women criticized modern men for impoverishing their families, for giving politics over to the rough and rowdy, for tolerating disorder in the streets, and for waffling

before liquor interests—all conditions the New White Men also deplored but blamed on others.[25]

Thus, even without the Democrats' impetus, it suited many middle-class white women to push African Americans out of their way. Whites poured into urban areas at greater rates than blacks, yet some whites felt threatened by African American visibility in urban space. With rural migration to urban areas, social relations transformed as people of both races encountered strangers for the first time in their lives.[26] White women delighted in the new freedom this public space allowed, but many expected to wear the private sphere's protective cocoon out onto busy city streets. Since many urban white women began their lives in rural communities or small towns, smugly confident of their status, they cloaked themselves in the certainty of being known. A lady, they reasoned, should be recognized as one wherever she went. She should be able to participate robustly in public life without losing her delicacy, to throw one leg over a bicycle seat and peddle away as black onlookers cleared a path with downcast eyes.

When white men created and exaggerated the danger of black rapists, they underscored white women's dependency on white men, a tactic that put both black men and white women in their places. White men invoked danger and restriction just when white women sought pleasure and freedom. Thus, as the white supremacy campaign reasserted the New White Man's power over black men, domination of white women became a by-product. Yet the rhetoric that worked to limit white women's public mobility by predicating their dependency also conferred on women a perverted sense of power. Now white women could demand certain behavior from white men, out loud and in a political forum where they might finally be heard.[27]

Given these circumstances, any interaction between African Americans and white women in the late 1890s was fraught with racial pitfalls. For example, when a young white woman arrived to pick up her shoes from a black New Bern cobbler, he charged her twenty-five cents for the repair. That was too much, she protested, insisting repeatedly that the last time the bill amounted to ten cents. Finally the exasperated cobbler retorted, "You are an infernal liar." The white woman ran crying from the store.[28] In a racially charged society, African Americans found it difficult to set and collect fair prices. One might read between the lines of this account and find a white woman accustomed to cheating her black cobbler. The cobbler, perhaps incensed by the white supremacists' inflammatory accounts of black insolence, decided her carping was the last straw. Whatever the "truth" might have been, Simmons's minions pounced on such incidents with delight and wrote them large.

At any point where white women's activities intersected with the government, they might meet an African American official, especially after the Republican/Populist successes of 1896. At the New Bern post office, the black mail clerk called out, "Good morning," from behind the counter. If a white woman dropped by the courthouse to check on her taxes, she found "seven . . . negroes in a row making out the tax list."[29] On her way out, she might have to step over "one of these darkies stretched at full length upon the steps, sound asleep." She awakened such a "loafer" at her own peril since these men were "by no means choice in their language." Whites knew where to lay the blame for these daily annoyances: on fusion rule. When Democrats were in charge, black men were not found sleeping on the steps of public buildings.[30]

If a white New Bern woman ran afoul of the law, she had to deal with Sheriff Joseph Hahn, "a great fat white man" surrounded by four African American deputies.[31] The deputies realized the precarious position they assumed when they tried to enforce their authority over white women. For example, when African American deputy Jesse Godette ventured out to the Hooker farm to repossess a foreclosed timber cart, Mrs. Hooker faced him down with a double-barreled shotgun. Godette returned to town empty-handed.[32] White supremacists used the incident to ridicule Godette as a coward and, conversely, as a dangerous man when given authority over white women.

Craven County had a number of African American magistrates, and white women's cases inevitably came before them. Mrs. Habicht's dilemma illustrates how whites collapsed class distinctions in the 1898 campaign to elevate white women of low status above black men of high rank—in this case constable John Stanly and magistrate Frederick Douglass. Mrs. Habicht, a newcomer, was married to a bartender at a saloon owned by a white Republican. The Habichts lived above the saloon and soon got into a brouhaha with their landlord and employer. After the Republican swore out a warrant on Mrs. Habicht for disturbing the peace, Stanly picked her up and Douglass bound her over for trial. Since she was unable to post bond, Stanly and Douglass escorted her to jail. On the way there, some white men saw them, became outraged, and put up the woman's bond.[33]

Similar situations must have abounded in the years preceding this incident, and incarcerated white women were no rarity in county jails. The same month, another white woman appeared before black magistrates in New Bern. Most whites had always resented any authority a black man exercised over a white woman, but Aycock's speeches and the white supremacy literature licensed average white people to voice their complaints at the same time that they provided a language for their expression. Moreover, the white supremacists imbued individual encounters with great meaning by linking personal incidents to politics at its highest level. Journalists clam-

ored to file stories on the "horrors of Negro rule." The Charlotte paper dispatched a reporter to New Bern to get the scoop. Josephus Daniels's *News and Observer* seized upon incidents such as the Habicht affair, printing the same story repeatedly, embroidering it more each time. After a while, flourishes abounded, and new details made shopworn tales fresh again.[34]

Populists derided the tactic, but they were whistling in the dark when they confidently vowed that their voters would never be swayed by such coverage. The Democrats "have jumped on the 'nigger' and are trying to ride into office on him," one Populist paper complained. Democrats' past treatment of poor white men was "only a foretaste" of what they would do if they regained power, Populists warned. "They . . . expect to overcome you by presenting negro, negro, all the time." If you "surrender your manhood" to the Democrats, you will "deserve all that you receive," another Populist cautioned.[35] But the Democrats' barrage of threats and insults drowned out Populist rebuttals. Populist senator Marion Butler took his life in his hands if he traveled in the eastern part of the state. The Democrats ridiculed the Populists as "impotent" and often referred to Marion Butler as "Mary Ann," a slang name for male homosexuals.[36] The paralyzed party floundered as its constituents flocked to Democratic clubs for repentant "Pops."[37]

Even as the white supremacy campaign inflamed Populist passions by posing white women as sexual prey of black men, it beckoned white women to an expanded forum. Women glided by in political parades, fashioned banners, peppered editors with letters, and decried "Negro rule" to mixed audiences at party rallies.[38] Their very presence counted. "The women are as deeply interested as the men," Democrats bragged, describing women as a "potent factor" in the campaign.[39] The White Government Leagues recruited male and female members, perhaps in an explicit attempt to compete with the Populist movement's culture. Both men and women had flocked to Populist rallies, day-long events consciously designed to commit the entire family to the cause by stressing the cooperative structure of rural life across gender and age boundaries.[40] The high level of female participation in White Government Leagues demonstrates women's key role in eroding Populist loyalty.

Organized by the Democrats in the spring of 1898, the White Government Leagues declared themselves open to all white men and women who believed in the superiority of their race. Charles Aycock's college buddy, Francis Winston, headed the group and called the leagues a haven for the "home loving." Winston constantly bowed to the women and boasted that "the white good women in North Carolina are unusually aroused."[41] Taking a fashion cue from Ben Tillman, the South Carolina governor who toured North Carolina at Simmons's invitation to speak for white supremacy, league members donned red shirts.[42] Organizers traveled to every county to set up chapters and stage rallies, using "an odd combination of modern appliances with oldtime southern ideas, for some of the red shirters came on bicycles and the telephone was used to hasten backward delegations." Terrorism had come a long way since "the Kuklux had no telephones and wheels."[43]

White women accompanied these men into public space, arguing that they did so only because they wished to be safe in their homes. At a meeting in Laurinburg, for example, "a large number of ladies graced the occasion with their presence and the men were attired in red shirts."[44] At a subsequent Red Shirt rally, Rebecca Strowd, "a highly intelligent and cultured young lady" who was unmarried and presumably virginal, addressed the assembly. Although the reporter took care to mention that she spoke with "womanly grace and modesty," her language was direct and provocative. As never before, Strowd said, "white men are called upon in the names of their wives and daughters . . . to speak out and let the world know where they stand." "There is a black vampire hovering over our beloved old North Carolina," she declared. To vanquish it, all white men must vote Democratic. If the men wavered, "the ladies are not only willing but stand ready to perform their part of this noble work." Rebecca Strowd capped her speech by unfurling a banner made by women league members. The day after the election, it would be given to the precinct that brought in the most Democratic votes.[45]

Strowd's image of the African American political presence as a "black vampire" recalls the supernatural power Furnifold Simmons invoked when he used the term "incubus." Democratic rhetoric endowed African Americans with a mythical force that, Democrats argued, warranted extraordinarily repressive methods. Shortly after Rebecca Strowd's speech, Daniels's cartoonist drew a black hand holding white Republican politicians in its grip. Long, sharp claws replaced human nails, and hair covered the back of the hand.[46] In speeches such as Strowd's, white women wondered aloud if their men could prove equal to doing battle with such a force.

Although many white women took an active role in the campaign, that role was to demonstrate their passivity. To be present at all, they first declared themselves incapable of standing alone. As wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters of white men, they observed patriarchy firsthand, and their relation to privilege made them "collaborators" in its exercise, even as they remained subordinate to it.[47]

As some white women reveled in their newfound political role, many black women brought to the fray a finely honed political culture. White southern

politicians responded to black women's challenges, sometimes overtly but more often by defining the limits of the possible, in ways that capitalized on local isolation and manipulated divisions among African Americans. The North Carolina white supremacy campaign and the Wilmington massacre are no exceptions. Even in white press accounts, political black women are ubiquitous.

The sources of black women's politics at the turn of the century go back to the antebellum period. Freedom, justice, and rights are relative concepts, and context conditions their meaning. Insightful historical interpretations of the slave community and the meaning of freedom upon emancipation indicate that the practice and perfection of government carried particular meanings for people such as Sarah Dudley Pettey.[48] Freedpeople used their prior experiences with power to craft ideals of community order, drawing on African institutions and their race's kidnapping, slavery, and deliverance with emancipation. In slavery, no one ever acted alone; any movement tugged at the entire web of enslavement. Furthermore, the slave market schooled African Americans in political economy.[49] Lockean liberalism posed "the preservation of their property" as "the great and chief end . . . of men's uniting into commonwealths and putting themselves under government," but such talk is nonsense to people who *themselves* had been property. Drawing from their own experiences, freedpeople could more easily envision a commonwealth as a cooperative venture coalescing around property interests.[50]

To their lived experiences in slavery African Americans added a powerful New Testament vision of the ideal community.[51] The idea of what they called the "brotherhood of man" especially gripped middle-class African American men and women who rose within denominational hierarchies and dedicated themselves to home missionary work, and it sustained them in their belief that they should act for the entire race. They saw themselves as shepherds responsible for their flocks' votes as well as for their flocks' souls.[52]

Certain freedpeople, of course, embraced bourgeois individualism, even as certain communitarians were more successful than others in acting out cooperative values.[53] In addition, growing differences in African Americans' material circumstances after emancipation gradually weakened the cooperative ideology. By 1900, a laundress, as a second-generation freedperson, might see Sarah Dudley Pettey's upward climb as class distance—as part of the problem—rather than as her own lifeline out of oppression. But even if she did, whites increasingly privileged "race" over all else and reminded her daily that she and Dudley Pettey rowed the same boat. Whites sharpened such reminders for Dudley Pettey's benefit, of course, rather than for the laundress's benefit. Whatever their purpose, whites' declassing

of upwardly mobile African Americans reinforced black cooperative civic culture.

Sarah Dudley Pettey believed that woman's place was in politics and that the middle class should lead the working classes to the benefit of all. She praised both strategies directly when black women protested the segregation of streetcars by an Atlanta rail company. "The Afro-American women of Atlanta, Ga., covered themselves with honor and glory when they met *en masse* and passed resolutions denouncing the action of the Atlanta Traction R.R.," she declared. A "biased and prejudiced legislature" had opened the door to such action, she declared, heaping praise upon the protesters: "These patriotic, liberty-loving women have sounded the proper keynote. . . . They have endeared themselves to the hearts of their fellow country-women by their bold and courageous stand." To break the back of the car company, she proposed "that the better class of Afro-Americans in Atlanta . . . make sacrifices and walk to and from their places of business."[54]

Dudley Pettey borrowed her language from the personification of patriarchy—those white men we call the "Founders"—but her definitions of honor, glory, patriotism, liberty, and courage would never have matched theirs. The truehearted citizens in her rendering were not Georgia's white male voters but her "fellow country-women," African American women without equal protection under the law or the franchise. At the moment that whites sought to impose segregation by law in the South, her words and actions offer a glimpse of African American women's civic strategies, which involved a delicate balance of gender relations, ever-adaptive interracial tactics shaped by place and circumstance, and an array of weapons sheathed in quivers bound by class position.

For most black women, politics began at home, blending the public and the private. Many African Americans worked to build domestic partnerships that allowed women to do race work outside the home, but their marriages played out in a society that rested on the subordination of black men as well as black women. Moreover, white society recognized no private sphere for black women and wanted them all to be available to serve whites' needs. In this case, the stakes of gender politics—being free to do race work in the home and in the world—had something to do with empowering women but much more to do with group progress.[55]

Because black women realized the practical importance of the group over the individual, whether black *men* could vote constituted the single most important variable in southern middle-class black women's political strategies, making theories borrowed from white women's suffrage experiences of little relevance. Prior to disfranchisement, the issue of woman suffrage hinged upon how black women prioritized issues of gender equity. Many women who cherished their right to vote in church conferences and

temperance organizations believed that since whites had preempted electoral politics as a male preserve, the most important thing was that they be represented there by a strong voice. Others, such as Sarah Dudley Pettey, fervently worked for woman suffrage.[56] In any case, being without the vote was not equivalent to being without political influence. As a black male North Carolinian put it in 1897, "The women of our race, though denied the suffrage, [are] a prime factor in the Republican party."[57]

Even though they might disagree on the importance of women's direct electoral participation, most middle-class black women agreed that they should speak to, and often for, the uneducated women of their race. "The new woman," Sarah Dudley Pettey commented approvingly in the 1896 election, "has enlisted as a thorough-going political campaigner. She and aid-de-camps dress as unpretentiously as possible and . . . select the crowded tenements and flats where the laboring classes dwell. . . . They bring important issues before the wives, sisters, and mothers, then urge them to influence their husbands, brothers, and sons."[58] Her rendering of black women's political culture assumes that middle-class women should take the lead, even as it assumes the activity's utility: that poor women had influence with their husbands, brothers, and sons.[59]

Educated black women tried to control the political tactics of two groups: poor, uneducated black women and young African Americans of all classes.[60] Convinced that they worked for the good of the race, middle-class black women saw uneducated women as dangerously unprepared to articulate their politics to a white power structure. At the same time, middle-class African Americans fretted about how whites might garner political currency from young African Americans' actions. They shuddered when Josephus Daniels fired off yet another story of African American "insolence."

How did young African Americans and uneducated black women exercise their rights and express their politics? Such an analysis can be spun only from the flimsiest strands of evidence given by the most unreliable of sources: whites' complaints about African American women's and girls' street behavior during the bombastic 1898 campaign.[61] The white press used these stories to demonstrate how African American political success translated into personal ordeals for white women in the hopes that white men would forsake interracial political coalitions. We can use them differently: as indications of young girls' and poor women's politics. In the midst of rhetoric that disparaged them and their families, anonymous black women and girls did not wait for middle-class women to represent them. They struck back in the language of the streets.

Four altercations serve as representative examples. In New Bern, the daughter of a prominent white family set out on a leisurely stroll down

Middle Street. She soon met two black girls, probably teenagers. According to the white press, they were "young and ignorant and therefore impudent [and] had heard of the 'rights' of their race." As the white woman approached, the young girls locked arms and forced her to step off the high sidewalk and into the street as they passed.[62] On another occasion, an altercation in New Bern became more "pointed." One sweltering afternoon, an example "of the loveliest of southern womanhood . . . dressed in white" walked out to get some air on a bridge. As she ambled across, she met a black laundress who thrust "the point of her umbrella into her side." The white woman kept walking, but as she turned to go back across the bridge, she saw the black woman coming toward her again. This time, the laundress poked her harder with the umbrella and shouted, "Oh, you think you are fine!"[63]

An incident in Wilmington involved both sidewalks and umbrellas. When several white women encountered a black woman deliberately standing in their way on the sidewalk, one of them "caught hold of the negress to shove her aside to prevent the intended collision, and the negro viciously attacked her with an umbrella." A black male bystander shouted encouragement: "That's right; damn it, give it to her."[64] Finally, two white Winston-Salem women were riding bicycles near the R. J. Reynolds stemmery when the shift ended and African American women were pouring into the streets. The cyclists "turned into a narrow path to avoid meeting" the crowd but ran smack into a knot of black women pedestrians. Instead of slowing down, the white woman in front sped up and "so brushed past." Then, according to Josephus Daniels, "one of the wenches . . . got right in the middle of the path, and [the second cyclist] had to dismount from her wheel and roll it around the impudent negro wench; and all the impudent wenches laughed loudly and clapped their hands." "Such exasperating occurrences," he moralized, "would not happen but for the fact that the negro party is in power in North Carolina."[65]

What is going on here? There are at least three possibilities. First, the stories may be completely or partially fabricated, urban legends on the order of poisoned wells intended to arouse white male voters. Second, the white women, inspired by the white supremacy campaign, may have been reporting incidents that heretofore had been commonplace but unreported. Third, the sidewalk altercations may represent a departure from normal interaction; the stories may be at least partially true, and the laughter, poking, and physical isolation of white women by black women may constitute political actions using "weapons of the weak."[66]

If we accept the premise that the stories contain a grain of truth, then in order to uncover that truth, we must retell them without approbation and invective. That means removing the angelic white dresses, the demure

manners, and the purported reluctance of the white women to cause a scene, all subjective attributes added by the newswriters. That done, we meet white women out in public space, getting into fights with black women. If we eliminate the subjectivity of the reportage on black women—the impudence, ignorance, and viciousness—they emerge standing up for their rights and abandoning deference. The African Americans in the stories are either young girls or working women going home with the laundry or leaving the tobacco factory. The white women are shopping, sashaying out for air, or riding bicycles. In almost every encounter, the black women comment—with either words or actions—on white women's freedom to pursue leisure in public while they have to work, even as they puncture the white women's superior demeanor.

Black and white women had met each other on the streets day in and day out since emancipation. What was different now? For one thing, the white women probably *were* putting on airs since the white supremacy campaign depicted them daily as virginal treasures under assault from "Negro domination" in politics. The black women understood these "airs" to result from the political winds. At the same time, the black women *were* more militant. In the months before the election of 1898, white editors slandered African American women openly, calling them wenches whenever possible, and concocted a bogus rape epidemic that implied that black men raped white women in part because black women were both ugly and immoral. Sarah Dudley Pettey's hometown white newspaper reported that a local black man had opined to his white New Bern neighbor that he looked forward to the legalization of interracial marriage because "we colored men can get white wives" but "it will not be so easy for white men to get good looking colored women."[67] In the streets, black women championed their right to hold political opinions and their husbands' right to vote, but they also struck back at a white supremacy campaign that made the political personal by encouraging white women to treat them shabbily in public and by defaming black women's morality and their husbands' characters. So, in a way, Josephus Daniels was right to blame black women's actions on "the negro party . . . in power."

These personal confrontations were just the sorts of incidents middle-class black women hoped to avoid by controlling the public actions of poor women and bumptious youths. In 1898, most educated black women thought their function as interpreters between the "folk" and the white supremacists had never been more critical since they hoped to hold on to what they deemed the race's most important right: the male franchise. Middle-class black women followed national and regional politics, understood lynching to be a political tool rather than random violence, and

believed that one false move could destroy their chances to maintain male suffrage. They knew that whites made political hay from any conduct other than appropriate Victorian behavior and grafted it onto pseudo-Darwinian prognostications. Middle-class black women saw street altercations as fuel for the fires of race prejudice.[68]

By October, the white supremacy campaign's focus had moved to the streets of Wilmington. Since Wilmington was a port city with a large black middle class and many African American officials, its white citizens were sitting ducks for Simmons's white supremacy rhetoric. After the Republicans and Populists won control of the state legislature in 1894, they returned county and local offices to "home rule." As a result, African Americans, white Republicans, and Populists won election to local posts previously held by Democrats appointed at the state level. In Wilmington's 1897 election, Republicans claimed the majority on the board of aldermen, and they chose one of their own as mayor. White Democrats promptly protested the method by which Wilmington had regained home rule, and the defeated board and mayor refused to yield city hall. Before it was over, yet a third board of aldermen constituted itself and elected yet another mayor. The case went to the state supreme court, which decided in favor of the duly elected Republicans.[69] If the situation was tense in 1897, it grew even more so in 1898.

In August, Alexander Manly printed an editorial on interracial liaisons in his newspaper, the *Daily Record*.[70] The *Record* was the only African American daily in the state, and Manly enjoyed a reputation for "aggressiveness in battling for race." He held a minor patronage position under the Republican town ring.[71] Manly took offense when the white *Wilmington Messenger* resuscitated a year-old speech that Rebecca Latimer Felton had given at a Georgia farmers' convention.[72] Felton blamed white men for the grinding poverty in which most rural white women lived. In her attempt to shame them into providing for their families, she declared white farmers to be soft on the rape of white women by black men. Neglectful white men had let things deteriorate to the point that lynching of black rapists was the only remedy, according to Felton.[73] She glorified the antebellum white man, denigrated the postbellum white man, and used the modern black man to goad all concerned. The white supremacists recognized that her speech would serve their "guilt and degradation" campaign and resurrected it.

To answer Felton, Manly fought fire with fire. First, he argued that at least half the time white women lied about being raped. Then he pointed out that white men both raped and seduced black women. Why was it

worse for a black man to be intimate with a white woman than for a white man to be intimate with a black woman, he wondered. African Americans had made such arguments before, but Manly added an indictment of white men's neglect of white women that built upon Felton's. "We suggest that the whites guard their women more closely, as Mrs. Felton says, thus giving no opportunity for the human fiend, be he white or black," Manly chided. "You leave your goods out of doors and then complain because they are taken away. Poor white men are careless in the manner of protecting their women." Thus, he accused white men of failing to live up to the demands of patriarchy, an accusation that Felton might make with impunity but that Manly made at considerable peril.

In the eyes of whites, Manly's great folly was his challenge to the monolithic purity of white women. When he suggested that poor white women often welcomed the attentions of black men, he played into the hands of Democrats who sought to win back poor rural Populist voters. Manly ventured, "The morals of the poor white people are on a par with their colored neighbors of like conditions." White women were not "any more particular in the matter of clandestine meetings with colored men, than are the white men with colored women." Manly spoke as a Best Man, as a member of the middle class discussing morality among poor people of both races. When he commented on white women's morality, he was not breaking new ground; Ida B. Wells-Barnett, for example, had been saying the same thing for years.[74]

It was the recontextualized political climate that gave Manly's words their explosive effect. Manly dared to equate the morals of poor white and poor black people. For Manly, class trumped race; poor white women were no better than poor black women. Before and after the Civil War, many interracial couples, including white women and black men, formed liaisons, some of which became the equivalent of common-law marriages.[75] Now, as Democrats sought to strengthen white purity for political purposes, such arrangements revealed white weakness and thus could not be admitted openly. Manly's best-aimed blow was the suggestion that some white women freely chose black men as lovers, which shook the new construction of whiteness. All white women were pure. All black men were animals or children. Therefore, no white woman could prefer a black man over a white man.

Reaction to the August editorial came swiftly. White newspapers reprinted the statement each day until the election, often as the lead-in for a new "outrage" report. Manly, very handsome himself, had commented that some black men were "sufficiently attractive for white girls of culture and refinement to fall in love with." To this whites added, "Here he tells of

his own experience, and he has been holding 'clandestine meetings' with poor white women, wives of white men." Manly's editorial became a "dirty defamation," a "sweeping insult to all respectable white women who are poor," and a "great slur."[76]

Sarah Dudley Pettey and her husband were friendly with Manly, and her silence at this moment speaks volumes. Dudley Pettey knew that when Ida B. Wells-Barnett had criticized the lynching of three Memphis men, she had been permanently exiled from the South for fear of her life. Dudley Pettey uncharacteristically restrained herself, but there are two hints of the Petteys' involvement behind the scenes. Parts of Manly's editorial echo Charles Pettey's response to an editorial in the *New Berne Journal* entitled "Mistakes of the Negro," in which he stated that white men crossed racial lines for sex. Later came Manly's cryptic statement: "Many of the points upon which the *Record* built its large success . . . were furnished to us by Bishop Pettey, who has ever shown himself to be one of our warmest friends and supporters." Manly added hastily, "Mrs. Pettey is no less distinguished than her renowned husband."[77]

The black Wilmington Ministerial Union helped Manly relocate his press after his white landlord evicted him. The Wilmington District Conference and Sunday School Convention endorsed his right to speak out, although it withheld explicit support for the editorial.[78] Tensions ran high as rumors circulated that whites were plotting to burn Manly's press.

Just before the election, "An Organization of Colored Ladies" delivered this threat: "Every negro who refuses to register his name next Saturday that he may vote, we shall make it our business to deal with him in a way that will not be pleasant. He shall be branded a white-livered coward who would sell his liberty." Whatever happened, these women would "teach our children to love the party of manhood's rights." The women published their resolution in Manly's paper, "the one medium that stood up for our rights when others have forsaken us."[79] The "Organization of Colored Ladies" was an example of what the *Washington Post* called Wilmington's "negro women republican aid societies," groups of black women who recognized that the white supremacy campaign threatened their rights.[80] Although Democrats considered white women's participation crucial, they expressed outrage that "negro women pass[ed] resolutions of ostracism against negroes who vote the democratic ticket." The Democrats used black women's participation in politics to goad white men for good measure, to point up that fusion had turned the world completely upside down. Black women, whom white men had always seen as powerless over even their own sexuality, were now fighting back. Just before the election, Democrats circulated the rumor that Congressman George White's wife had

received a shipment of rifles and that his daughter was circulating a petition to convince black women to abandon their positions as servants in white homes.[81]

In addition to the street incidents and the Organization of Colored Ladies' manifesto, other hints suggest that black women played active roles in Wilmington politics. One cause of tension, a white apologist argued, arose from "the audacious Negro grudge developing against the streetcar conductors because they did not help black women on and off the conveyance as they did white women."[82] Not only were African Americans riding in unsegregated streetcars, but black women were angry that the white drivers did not assist them in boarding and disembarking. As black women's outrage mounted, white men felt increasingly pressed to counter their demands. Wilmington's white men formed an organization of "Minute-Men" and vowed to put an end to three things: rising crime, poor policing, and "negro women parad[ing] the streets and insult[ing] men and ladies." Invoking Manassas and Chancellorsville, they armed themselves and let it be known that they "would welcome a little unpleasantness."[83]

Black women's involvement in these street incidents, their support of the *Daily Record*, and their demand for chivalry from streetcar operators all hint that African American women questioned their assigned place and that white men deplored their rebellion. Yet the white supremacists either minimized black women's agency, ignored them, or ridiculed them. While white supremacists argued that black men's bad behavior reflected evolutionary laggardness, they also asserted that defective African American homes contributed to the problem. It was in the Democrats' best interests, however, to avoid entirely a discourse on black women or to portray them as incapable of making good homes since the campaign focused on black men's lack of restraint. Moreover, since the campaign sought to arouse white women, questions of gender interests across racial lines had to be avoided. On that count, the white supremacists succeeded spectacularly with some white women and failed miserably with others.

The white women in Alfred Moore Waddell's family collaborated avidly in the white supremacy campaign, and from them he drew strength to lead a racial massacre. The tensions of the era—tensions created by changing gender roles, the hopelessness of southern poverty, and the challenge of African American success—came together in the Waddell family. A Confederate colonel and a moderate in race relations as a Reconstruction politician, Alfred Moore Waddell's political fortunes had ebbed for more than a decade when he emerged to lead Wilmington's White Government League in 1898. A cross-class alliance of white men, the group seized upon Manly's

editorial as proof of the social ramifications of African American political and economic success.[84] Armed to the teeth, the White Government League and its allies had been threatening the city's African Americans for weeks prior to the election. The inner circle of Democratic strategists had excluded Waddell, probably because of his age and his record for relative racial fairness during Reconstruction. One recalled, "The boys did not seem to want him to help. . . . They did not think he was of any value."[85] Determined to earn a place among the New White Men, Waddell began making speeches. He electrified his audiences with his reckless words: "We are going to protect our firesides and our loved ones or die in the attempt." He and his men would drive Manly and black politicians from Wilmington, Waddell promised, even if he had to "chok[e] the Cape Fear with the bodies of negroes."[86]

How did the women at Waddell's fireside feel about his words? At first they were surprised, then proud, then afraid. But they supported his strong stand. Waddell's wife, Gabrielle De Rosset, came from one of Wilmington's most distinguished families but had led a most difficult life. Her young parents took her to England during the Civil War, where her father appears to have been a profiteer and her mother played the gay southern belle. After Gabrielle's mother died from a self-administered opium overdose, her father sent her home to live with his parents and sisters, including the aunt whom she would call "Mother," Kate Meares. After the war, her father went to New York City, failed in business, and ended up as a grocery clerk in a one-horse Piedmont town, where he soon died. Gabrielle, forced to earn her living, became a governess in New England, quitting only when the family needed her to nurse her grandfather, whose face was being eaten away by cancer. After several months of horrific nursing duty, Gabrielle suffered a nervous breakdown and returned to Wilmington. She was now an old maid of thirty-two who had to support herself.[87]

The next year, she married Alfred Moore Waddell, already known around town as "old man Waddell."[88] He was a never-married Civil War veteran of sixty-two, and his promising career in politics had ended while Gabrielle was still a child. By the 1890s, Waddell could only cling to the shadow of his former glory, and his life at that point was a metaphor for the weakness white women saw in southern men at the turn of the century. The marriage seems to have been the last resort for an orphan past marriageable age whose only relatives were elderly. She always called him "colonel," even in her diary, and she often notes that the colonel was out late, after midnight. Waddell never mentioned his marriage in his autobiography.[89] The couple had no children. They were poor enough that Gabrielle had to teach music every day.

Gabrielle had made the best bargain she could for damaged goods.

Something was wrong with Alfred Waddell, but what was it? Archival material in the papers of the De Rosset and Waddell families offers no clue, but David Fulton does. Fulton was an African American from Wilmington who wrote a novel so factual that it barely qualifies as fiction. He tells us that Waddell drank and gambled to excess. In the years before he married Gabrielle, he lost his "palatial" home and moved to a humble house.[90] The marriage represented a second chance for both of them. For Alfred Waddell, the hypermasculine trappings of the white supremacy campaign provided an opportunity to act out his redemption upon a public stage.

Aunt Kate Meares described the impact Waddell's initial speech had on the family as "a surprise to me as to everybody else." They could scarcely believe the manly vigor that now gripped the old colonel. Meares feared that Waddell was now a "marked man" and reported to relatives that she implored Gabrielle to leave the city with her. "But she positively refuses to leave him—though he is really anxious for her to go," Meares worried. As for other white Wilmington families, "many believe there will be no trouble. . . . Others are sending their families in every direction. . . . One thing is sure the men [are] all thoroughly prepared for the worst—but so are the negroes, and the least spark may kindle a flame that will cost many lives before the thing is through."[91]

In the Piedmont, Waddell's cousin Rebecca Cameron gloried in the new role the white supremacy campaign extended to women. She wrote to Alfred on Church Periodical Club stationery to applaud his speech and to urge him to follow through on his threat to murder African Americans. "Where are the white men and the shotguns!" she exclaimed. "It is time for the oft quoted shotgun to play a part, and an active one, in the elections," Cameron told Waddell. She continued, "It has reached the point where blood letting is needed for the hearts of the common man and when the depletion commences *let it be thorough!* Solomon says, 'There is a Time to Kill.'" Finally, Cameron described the mood of the white women of Hillsboro: "We are aflame with anger here. . . . I wish you could see Anna. She is fairly impatient and blood thirsty. These blond women are terrible when their fighting blood is up."[92]

Waddell took Cameron's advice to heart. "What is the matter with us?" he queried white men at a Red Shirt rally. Waddell decided they were "afflicted with an excess of the virtue of forbearance." He alluded to the alleged rape epidemic as proof of "the ultimate ambition of the more aspiring members of that race." He condemned the "Organization of Colored Ladies" for calling whites who discharged black workers "demons."[93] The day before the election, he told a crowd, "You are Anglo-Saxons. You are armed and prepared, and you will do your duty. . . . 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." Waddell agreed with Cameron that it was time "for the shotgun to play a part" in the election: "We shall win to-morrow, if we have to do it with guns."[94] Waddell's threats were especially absurd since white businessmen had blackmailed Governor Russell into withdrawing Republican candidates for local Wilmington spots open in the election. Across the state, Democrats swept into office and took control of the legislature, effectively hamstringing Republican governor Daniel Russell for the two remaining years of his term. In Wilmington, Republicans now held only the offices of mayor and alderman, positions voted on in odd years.[95]

Waddell had talked awfully big. Now what was he to do? The day after the 8 November election, white Democrats called a mass meeting. The meeting's purpose eluded Waddell since he was out of the loop, but he used the younger Democratic plotters' organization just as they had used his bombast. The meeting ran away with its conveners, and the thousand men present clamored for Waddell to mount the stage. Then they demanded that a committee draw up a white declaration of independence. "We do hereby declare that we . . . will never again be ruled by men of African origin," the document began. It urged employers to fire black help and ordered Alexander Manly out of the city. Then whites demanded resignations from the chief of police and the Republican mayor, who had another year to serve.[96]

Manly had already escaped the city, but Waddell and the committee issued an ultimatum to black civic leaders to respond to the declaration by the next morning or else. Through a series of bumbling misadventures on both sides, the answer did not come, and the deadline inched closer. On the morning of 10 November, they had to make good on their threats. They were ready. Wilmington "businessmen" had purchased a Colt rapid-firing gun, and the office of the *Wilmington Messenger* resembled "a veritable arsenal."[97]

With Waddell in the lead, an army of men rampaged around the city. The mob burned Alexander Manly's press, then hunted down prominent black leaders and either shot them or ran them out of town. "What have we done, what have we done?" one African American man screamed. A white man, who moments before had telephoned to have the rapid-firing gun sent over, found himself unable to answer since "they had done nothing." The Wilmington Light Infantry joined the rioting legions. Company K of the infantry was fresh from mobilization in the Spanish-American/Cuban War, in which Wilmington's black soldiers still served.[98] The infantry substituted military "discipline" for raging individual mayhem and added two cannons to the fray. At the end of the day, more than ten African Americans lay dead in the streets, and Alfred Waddell seized the mayor's office.[99]

Gabrielle Waddell was an eyewitness to the riot, yet she oddly distanced herself from it. Her account in her diary reads: "Day of rioting and dangers. armed men shut down Record press. Col at head and feeding people from Brooklyn refuging at Baptist church. . . . Telegrams and phones Col elected mayor. he out all night. I didn't undress." And the next day, "We home at 6 a.m. all day receiving congratulations feeding men at Armory. . . . Col out till after midnight."[100] Brooklyn was the African American neighborhood devastated by the fighting and the subsequent house-to-house searches. While her husband was in Brooklyn killing people, apparently Gabrielle was at the Baptist church feeding those fortunate enough to have escaped his reign of terror.[101]

Living with such ambiguity could only be accomplished by someone as practiced at contradiction as Gabrielle Waddell. The child of failed, though distinguished, parents, raised in a poor but proud family, the young bride of a remote old man, she did the Lord's work even as her husband did the devil's. What did she think of the events of that day? We have a few clues, but like Gabrielle herself, they are contradictory. The white supremacy campaign propelled Gabrielle De Rosset Waddell into public life, but that public life was as contradictory as her role in the 1898 riot. She became the state president of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and in 1920, she was one of the North Carolina white women who attended the first southern women's meeting for interracial cooperation.[102]

Not every white woman believed the white supremacists' propaganda. Jane Cronly, like Gabrielle De Rosset the daughter of a prominent Wilmington family, surreptitiously tried to publish her own account of the riot. "My conscience has reproached me ever since [the riot] for not [telling] the truth," Cronly wrote in an editorial that she apparently never submitted for publication. "What spirit of evil entered into some of our best citizens that day, we can not conceive," Cronly continued. As African Americans recounted to her the events of the day, she came to believe that those who were killed had been "shot down like dogs."[103] She argued that Waddell's reasoning was absurd. Homes and families had not been in danger from African Americans; if that were true, why would they "have entrusted to them the care of their little children"?[104] Cronly argued that whites had wanted to follow Waddell's advice and mow down black voters at the polls with the Colt rapid-firing gun but that lawyers had advised separating the violence from election day so that their district would not lose its congressman as punishment. Cronly aptly observed that the murders' purpose was to teach African Americans an "object lesson" so that they would never vote again. Moreover, she pointed out that the attack came against people who owned property. But Jane Cronly must have been in the minority among the state's white women, for she reported ruefully that when whites talked about the violence against blacks that day, "females even . . . laugh over their sufferings."[105]

Wilmington's African American citizens fled the city. Those with horses sped to other towns to board trains headed North. Even then, getting away proved difficult. In New Bern, whites climbed up the railroad water tower so they could spot African Americans fleeing into town and shoot them.[106] Wilmington's poor black people, including more than 400 women and children, ran into the woods, where they lived for several days.[107] Survivors had no way of knowing whether more violence awaited them. Once they summoned the courage to return to their homes, it was difficult to know where the missing were: had they been driven away or killed?

Three days after the Wilmington massacre, an anonymous black woman sent a letter to President William McKinley begging for help. Why had he not sent troops; why had he left Wilmington's African Americans unprotected to "die like rats in a trap"? "We are loyal, we go where duty calls," she said, noting that many of Wilmington's young black men still served in the Third North Carolina Regiment. Now, with the damage done, McKinley could at least send a ship for the survivors, perhaps working out a way to take them to Africa, where "a number of us will gladly go." Then she hurled the rhetoric of patriotism back at the president of the United States: "Is this the land of the free and the home of the brave? How can the Negro sing my country tis of thee?" But to her heartbreaking complaint she added these words, equally heartbreaking: "The Negroes that have been banished are all property owners. . . . Had they been worthless Negroes, we would not care." Her cost accounting springs from the pathos of her predicament, so hopeless that we can scarcely imagine it. Is she less—or more—human for adding those class-biased words? She closed, "Today we are mourners in a strange land with no protection near. God help us. . . . I cannot sign my name and live."[108]

Black women had no forum and little recourse other than anonymous appeals to authorities outside the state, and no protection came. McKinley directed the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina to look into the affair, but the investigation bogged down. For his part, McKinley ignored a desperate Christmas Eve appeal from former Wilmingtonians R. H. Bunting and John R. Melton, white men who had been U.S. commissioner and police chief, respectively. Democrats especially hated Bunting because his common-law wife was black. The two begged McKinley for an audience and told of their banishment and the published death threat that hung over their heads.[109] Alfred Waddell settled in as mayor and began to be mentioned as a contender for the upcoming Senate seat. John

Dancy, the Petteys' friend who had been collector of the port of Wilmington, escaped to Salisbury.[110] Within a month after the riot, 1,400 African Americans left Wilmington. Six months later, prosperous African Americans were still departing by the scores in special rented cars attached to regular passenger trains going north and west.[111] Upon their departure, whites confiscated their property for unpaid taxes. The system worked so well that whites continued to fire black employees and hire whites, thus lending continuing momentum to the exodus.[112] Finally, the Third North Carolina Regiment returned home. From the North, Alexander Manly commented, "While the North Carolina negro troops were away fighting for the flag, the white man in the South rose up to drive the colored from the ballot box."[113]

Amid the turmoil of election week and the violence of the race riot, few people noticed an incident that recalled Alexander Manly's assertion that some rural white women freely loved black men. A week before the election, Mrs. Milton G. Brewer, the twenty-eight-year-old wife of a white farmer and the mother of four, ran away with Manly McCauley, a black day laborer who worked on her farm near Chapel Hill. Brewer and McCauley must have been madly in love and amazingly naive. They set out while her husband was away visiting a neighbor's farm. They spent four days together before a posse captured them less than sixty miles from home and took her to her father's house. Nothing was heard of McCauley's fate until his body was found four days later hanging from a tree beside a road.

Both Brewer's husband and her father were Republicans, apparently liberal on racial issues in politics. Whites concluded that Brewer's father had "reaped what he sowed" because years earlier he had confronted a mob chasing a black man accused of rape. In these parts, he had told the vigilantes, you could not tell about the white women; it might be rape or it might be love.[114] Josephus Daniels decided that this was one interracial incident best left unexploited. He held the story until after the election, and his coverage of it was brief. By the time the passion that Brewer and McCauley shared overwhelmed them, Alexander Manly had fled the state.[115]

The slaughter in Wilmington raised a storm of protest among African Americans across the nation as well as those in North Carolina. As soon as he heard of the massacre, author Charles Chesnutt wrote to publisher Walter Hines Page. By 1898 Chesnutt was an expatriate black North Carolinian living in Ohio; Page was an expatriate white North Carolinian living in New York City. Chesnutt poured out his anger: "It is an outbreak of pure, malignant and altogether indefensible race prejudice, which makes me feel personally humiliated, and ashamed for the country and the

state."[116] When Page's next letter arrived twelve days later, the publisher chose not to mention the recent events or respond to Chesnutt's outpouring.[117] Three years later, Chesnutt published a fictional account of the riot, remarkably true-to-life, complete with miscegenation, murder, ignorant whites, and strong black women. His contrapuntal themes reflect the conflicting political cultures of an educated black doctor who urges caution and a black stevedore who calls for militant resistance.[118]

Fears of another violent outbreak and rumors of impending disfranchisement challenged African Americans who remained in the state. Democrats repeatedly had promised illiterate whites that once in power they would *not* limit the franchise by imposing a literacy test.[119] Now disfranchisement headed their agenda. Josephus Daniels visited Louisiana to study that state's disfranchising amendment and returned full of enthusiasm for the project.[120] Republican Daniel Russell sat impotent in the governor's mansion for two more years.

In the aftermath of the Wilmington violence, everyone looked to black congressman George White, who had won reelection from the "Black Second," to bring national scrutiny to bear on events in North Carolina.[121] People hoped that President William McKinley might condemn the violence in his December address before Congress, but he did not.[122] When Congress reconvened, White stood on the floor of the House, recounted the recent events in his state, and begged for "justice—simple justice."[123] The National Afro-American Council met in Washington, D.C., after Christmas. Council officers included Wilmington escapee John Dancy and Charlotte's George Clinton, still mourning the recent death of his young wife, Woman's Christian Temperance Union leader Annie Kimball Clinton. Ida B. Wells-Barnett gave a speech condemning the recent violence in Wilmington, and the council met with McKinley to beg him to speak out. Still McKinley remained silent and ignored his political debt to black Republicans.[124] With no word from McKinley to keep them in line, white Republicans at home panicked. Several called for a "lily-white" party at once, an action that African Americans characterized as the "blackest ingratitude."[125]

As these national political strategies came to naught, African Americans searched their own souls for explanations. Many black men blamed themselves for failing to live up to the requirements of being a Best Man, and their acceptance of that patriarchal ideal undercut their ability to mount an effective self-defense. John Dancy condemned Alexander Manly in the northern press for breaching manly standards. White men had reacted so strongly to Manly's editorial, Dancy argued, because they "will not permit their woman-hood to be slandered." Furthermore, Dancy said black leaders respected white men's protection of women and that chivalry worked

to African Americans' advantage because "the better sentiment in the white race commends an attitude of defense of our womanhood." Then, in a comment that many interpreted as supportive of the Wilmington murderers, Dancy concluded, "The manhood of a race that will not defend its womanhood is unworthy of the respect of that womanhood."[126] Among African Americans, northerners generally felt Dancy's denunciation to be cowardly, but southerners tended to agree with him.[127]

Some previously outspoken black men in the state sought cover from white wrath. The editor of the *Star of Zion*, which had long bristled with political news and opinions, asked a white childhood friend to vouch for him in an open letter to the *Charlotte Daily Observer*. The editor's white friend testified to his sterling character and apolitical nature: "He has kept the line of making his paper distinctly religious, and has eschewed all matter of the Manly type."[128]

For others, it was not simply a matter of failing in politics but a matter of failing God. Many African Americans made little distinction between the world beyond and the world at hand. Rather than seeing the church merely as a convenient structure for political mobilization, they believed that God literally determined the outcome of elections. God had delivered them from slavery, and until this moment, many African Americans had clung to their high hopes for earthly progress. Like Puritan newcomers to Massachusetts, African Americans who came of age during Reconstruction felt that the world and God watched their every move. Thus, black spirituality in politics cut two ways: it gave African Americans the courage of their convictions, but it also made many assume the blame for events out of their control. They saw electoral politics as an aspect of spiritual striving, not as a secular, profane activity. Ballots were tools for building an ideal community on earth. The church was a political structure, and politics was a practical means to a religious end. To fail one was to fail the other.[129]

Some black ministers mounted jeremiads to remind their congregations that God's will was all-powerful and in so doing created guilt where none was warranted. God had sanctioned such horror to teach African Americans "a plain object lesson" through "suffering." They were like the "children of Israel. . . . When . . . that people pleased the Lord, He made them to triumph over all difficulties; but they fell before their enemies when they turned their backs upon his services."[130] African Americans were "passing through a calamitous ordeal, and there must be a cause." Since "God still lives and reigns supreme," the recent events must have been punishment for African American "ingratitude, sinfulness, [or] wayward lives."[131]

How had black North Carolinians displeased God? First, one minister argued, when African Americans helped vote down prohibition almost

two decades earlier in 1881, they had lost their last chance to forge alliances with "the best white people." The alliance with the Populist Party had been "another great blunder." Inferior men had risen to the front, "irreligious, ignorant, and immoral political leaders." If they had united with the right kind of white men, those whites would "not have forsaken us when they could no longer use us."[132] Another commented, "What adds bitterness to our cup of woe is the sad fact that we brought it on ourselves"; "the Negro has been departing from God; Now God has departed from the Negro."[133] Their lament reveals both the empowerment and the bewilderment that come from believing that God is all-powerful.

What was left to do? Their strategy to seek the protection of the better class of whites had failed. Politics had failed. African Americans made one last direct appeal to God. The National Afro-American Council, with the support of leading ministers, declared a nationwide day of fasting, "a sincere, earnest probing of our own hearts, to see if there be any wicked way in us, a hearty confession of our own sins." After denouncing the evils of Jim Crow, disfranchisement, and lynching, the council appealed to "the operations of Providence to awaken us from our lethargy and bestir us to more manly endeavors as a people and as a race."[134] Charles Pettey signed the proclamation. Proud, political, and usually outspoken, the Petteys remained strangely silent after the Wilmington violence. Charles Pettey began to be ill more and more often. Congressman George White spoke for men like Pettey when he said, "I can no longer live in North Carolina and be a man."[135]

The white supremacy campaign taught many lessons even as it guaranteed white men their customary place at the top of the hierarchy. Middle- and upper-class white women learned that they would not be able to move into public space without the protection of white men. The New White Woman would act under the auspices of the New White Man, who promised her a role in state building as long as she pledged racial solidarity in return. White working-class men and women learned to pursue their racial rather than their class interests. Henceforth, they would have to live according to middle-class standards of propriety. If they failed to meet those expectations, the ever more intrusive power of the state would seek them out and shape them up.

African Americans learned that the new state would be biracial rather than interracial and that they would have to accept substandard and separate institutions. Black Best Men would have to leave North Carolina or outwardly conform to a place in society that was less than "manly." No government institutions remained that recognized class differences be-

tween African Americans, and the new Jim Crow laws deliberately obliterated class prerogatives.

Finally, there is a lesson for historians. Examining the race wars of the 1890s exclusively through the eyes of white supremacists does more than neglect the African American experience, it distorts the campaign's meaning by ignoring its context. What white men did and thought is important because they held the preponderance of power and used it so brutally. White men knew, however, what historians are discovering: that they did not act with impunity in a lily-white male world; rather, they reacted strategically in a racially and sexually mixed location. Moreover, the victories they won were not ordained or complete but began as precariously balanced compromises that papered over deep fissures in southern life. In fact, even the most committed leaders questioned what they had wrought. Charles Aycock acknowledged that the white supremacists had won a "glorious victory" but admitted that "the very extent of it frightens me."[136] In the end, white men may have constituted only half of the story. White women's support was crucial, as were the sophisticated political ideology, the complicated class and gender dynamics, and the rising resistance of African Americans. North Carolina's "white supremacy campaign" responded to black power even as it capitalized on black weakness.

five

NO MIDDLE GROUND

Political repression did more than alter black men's voting rights; it began to push African American men from the interracial public sphere. As citizens and as voters, African American men had represented their families in political and civic discourse. Silencing black men in public life changed their relationships with their families and their neighbors, with the Republican Party, with their churches, and with each other. Taking up the cause of disfranchisement after the violence of 1898, whites sought to impose a civil death sentence on both black men and black women. Once successful, whites came to see black men's disfranchisement as evidence of their unfitness for public life rather than as the cause of their exclusion from it. Precluded from participating in a rapidly changing "democratic" system, African Americans could no longer gain experience in self-government. After disfranchisement, whites could argue that it might be generations before African Americans acquired the requisite skills to become full citizens and thus "manly" men.

Concurrently, the Republican Party in North Carolina forcibly ejected African Americans from its ranks, snatching away their best weapon in the fight against the disfranchising amendment's effects. Their loss of party organization disrupted the core of black men's associational life. Since

expulsion from electoral politics and expulsion from party politics occurred simultaneously, African Americans not only lost the vote but also lost the best way to regain it.

African Americans realized at once that disfranchisement would mean more than exclusion from elections. One black North Carolinian, James E. Shepard, characterized the limbo that African Americans faced this way: "We recognize the fact that there can be no middle ground between freedom and slavery. We cannot see that the best way to make a good man is to unman him."[1] After the disfranchisement campaign of 1900, African Americans began searching for that middle ground, for a place to stand after the earth and sky fell away. The varieties of black response underscore the ways in which limiting analysis to the electoral sphere impoverishes political history and creates a false dichotomy between the public and the private spheres.[2] Contestation over how best to maintain civic personhood produced new leaders and marginalized old ones as black men and women tried to invent a politics that decentered polls and parties. African American political culture survived, and black men and women began to shape strategies to meet the challenges of the new regime.

The new Democratic state legislature began crafting the disfranchising amendment early in 1899. Under the law, in order to vote, all men would be required to pay a poll tax and, except for those whose ancestors had been eligible to vote prior to 1 January 1867, to pass a literacy test. The amendment would take effect on 1 July 1902, but white men (whose ancestors could have voted) would not have to take the literacy test until 1908. This exemption—the grandfather clause—inflicted the greatest insult on black voters, even as it fostered their greatest hope. It was insulting because it meant that illiterate white men could vote unchallenged for six years, whereas college-educated African Americans must pass a literacy examination. At the same time, it sparked hope because African Americans thought it unconstitutional.[3] The U.S. Supreme Court had upheld poll taxes and literacy requirements in *Williams v. Mississippi* in 1898, but the constitutionality of the grandfather clause remained moot.[4] If the clause was the Achilles' heel of the amendment, its inclusion might lead the Court to expunge the entire law. Unlike other states that had disfranchised through a special constitutional convention, North Carolina scheduled a special popular election on the amendment for August 1900, largely because Democratic gubernatorial candidate Charles Aycock insisted that the people vote on it.[5]

To highlight the unfairness of the grandfather clause, some African Americans acknowledged the value of equitably administered literacy tests

or property qualifications but declared that ancestral privilege as a voting qualification violated the Fifteenth Amendment. One black man remarked that it was "not the fault of the older class of voting Negroes that they are ignorant" since laws had forbidden their education under slavery. If the polity wanted the right kind of voters—those with good hearts and Christian intentions—he suggested, the legislature should enact a grandfather clause to disfranchise the descendants of those white slaveholders who had deliberately kept slaves illiterate.[6]

White Populists opposed the amendment on the grounds that one-fifth of the white voters of any party stripe could not read or write. Populist leaders were quick to point out that if the Court found the grandfather clause unconstitutional but let the literacy test stand, illiterate white men would lose the vote. It was a compelling argument, and it caused Furnifold Simmons to worry by the spring of 1900 that "the tide began to set alarmingly against us." The Democrats scrambled to call a special session of the legislature.[7] The solution they formulated was of dubious legal merit: the legislators announced that they intended to link the literacy test and the grandfather clause, come what may. They must "stand or fall together." In this way, the legislators tried to make clear their intentions so that if the federal judiciary struck the grandfather clause, it would have to strike the literacy test as well.[8] The effort might have meant little in a court test, but illiterate whites found it comforting and began to temper their opposition. In practice, it was the grandfather clause's short life—six years—that saved it. The clause would probably expire before the Supreme Court ruled on it. The six-year time limit also lent immediacy to Charles Aycock's proposed educational crusade for whites.[9] He later used the looming deadline as legislative blackmail to increase appropriations for public schooling. During the debates that produced the amendment, a few Democrats tried to extend the 1908 deadline to 1928, but when Aycock threatened to decline the party's nomination for governor if they did, talk of the extension died.[10]

When northerners questioned North Carolina's disfranchising amendment, the Democrats responded in reasoned tones that evoked good government and the integrity of the ballot.[11] With poor illiterate white men back home, however, the Democrats struck the same old note. To hell with constitutional issues, shouted Alfred Moore Waddell, stirring the embers of the 1898 conflagration. "The only issue is are you a white man or are you a negro?" he challenged the crowds. Waddell even conceded that North Carolina had violated the Fifteenth Amendment. That mattered little, he gloated, for "there aren't enough soldiers in the U.S. Army to make whites give up the vote."[12]

Aycock, the man with the common touch, left Waddell to rant in the east while he traveled to the west to gain support for the August referendum. In

a region where few African Americans lived and illiterate white mountaineers held civil rights dear, race baiting left Democratic traps empty. But Aycock had a deal up his sleeve. As he described it later, "I promised the illiterate poor man . . . that life should be brighter for him and the partner of his sorrows and joys. I pledged the wealth of the State to the education of his children."[13] The entire enterprise was a tough sell, east or west. One white man remarked that it seemed as if the Wilmington race riot had been started to "give old man Waddell bread and meat." According to his reasoning, the amendment fight was simply Waddell's dessert.[14]

Senator Marion Butler tried to defeat the amendment by pitting poor white Populists against middle-class black Republicans, a spectacularly unsuccessful strategy. "What class of negroes would be left to vote?" he inquired of the farmers who followed him. It would be "the trifling town negro . . . who talks loud and takes up all of the sidewalk" who passed the literacy test, not the good agrarian African American. Moreover, he reminded Populists that their whiteness went cheap; it bought only six years under the grandfather clause. Those white boys under twelve who could not learn to read and write would then be "put on a plane lower than the town darkey with his eye glasses and cocked hat," Butler predicted.[15]

African Americans tried to make common cause with poor white voters, especially Republicans in the western part of the state. They warned illiterate whites not to believe the Democrats' guarantees that disfranchisement would not exclude them. If whites wanted proof of Simmons's lack of trustworthiness, they might recall his 1898 promise not to disfranchise African Americans. One black writer taunted Simmons with the prospect that whites would soon realize that "if you will fool the illiterate Negroes . . . you will fool them also."[16]

Despite scattered efforts, African Americans could not mount an effective campaign against the amendment. Unfortunately, with the collapse of fusion and the 1898 terror, black leadership fell into disarray.[17] In 1899, only three African Americans served in the state legislature. The most outspoken was Isaac Smith, a flamboyant, hot-tempered, and often irrational New Bernian whom George White, the Dudleys, and the Petteys detested.[18] Smith led a black delegation to testify before the legislature, where they made matters worse. One delegate simply professed his wistful confidence in white men's wisdom. Another reported that of the 125,000 African Americans who voted in the state, perhaps 25,000 had the education to pass the literacy test. Therefore, the legislature should disfranchise the 100,000 and stop short of "persecution" of the other 25,000. When reports of the testimony surfaced, one black man complained, "They would have done . . . more good to have stayed at home and kept their mouths

shut." Such hypocritical men led African Americans "to political martyrdom with the wool over their eyes." If blacks had to "perish politically," he ventured, they should die "with their eyes open."[19] Horrified at the black delegates' testimony before the legislature, the *Star of Zion* promised to "make it warm for every Negro . . . that goes to Raleigh to misrepresent his race. This is not a time for Negro apologists."[20]

The major reason why North Carolina's African American leaders failed to mount effective opposition to the amendment, however, was that the Republican Party discouraged them from doing so.[21] When the amendment finally went to the people for a vote in August 1900, white Republicans advised African Americans to let them handle the opposition campaign. Republican governor Daniel Russell admitted that a Democratic "reign of terror" had targeted African Americans and that they remained "helpless" to register and vote down the amendment. He believed ratification was inevitable but held out hope that the courts would find the law unconstitutional.[22] Republican senator Jeter C. Pritchard, closely allied to black leaders, lay decidedly low.[23] He cautioned that any African American activism would spur a reaction that might retard their civil rights for a century.[24]

Part of the problem was the Republican Party's own lack of cohesion. White Republicans in western North Carolina and black Republicans in eastern North Carolina had reluctantly boarded the same party boat, and now whites tried to beat African Americans to the life rafts. Western Republicans saw the literacy requirement as Democratic revenge for their affiliation with eastern African Americans. The sooner the campaign was over the better. With the black man out of politics, they reasoned, whites in the rapidly industrializing Piedmont would begin to vote Republican. Across the west, Republican newspapers urged the party to expel black members.[25] In the east, the white party hierarchy, closely allied with black voters, feared that open African American opposition would increase western white Republicans' resolve.[26] In the end, many African Americans decided to stay out of it in the hope that enough whites would vote against the amendment in their own self-interest.[27] National reaction to disfranchisement was muted, partly because the federal government wanted to restrict suffrage in Hawaii and the Philippines. In fact, the national white press generally complimented North Carolina on its progressive attempt to revise suffrage.[28] No national African American organization existed that could challenge the amendment in the federal courts.[29]

The Democrats, however, left nothing to chance.[30] For weeks before the election, they armed New Bern whites to the hilt. The Naval Reserves drilled every night and concluded each evening by firing a volley at 11:00

P.M. During the day and early evening, random shots frequently rang out across the city. White republican William E. Clarke reported, "They had the negroes scared to death. I found it almost impossible to get anyone to distribute our tickets." On election day, in addition to armed intimidation, some registrars would allow only Democrats, not Republicans, to approach the polls. Boxes in some precincts were poorly labeled; in others, voters had to hand their ballots to a poll worker who put them into whichever box he chose. After the polls closed, a restless group of African Americans milled about the courthouse. Panicky Democratic election officials reported that the group "threatened to kill them unless they count[ed] their vote." Nonetheless, the registrars threw out three Republican precincts, making the crowd "cursing mad." When the results were in, the amendment triumphed in New Bern by 1,600 votes. Clarke commented sardonically that since the election was rigged anyway, the margin might have "been 16,000; but they had consciences. . . . It was a mockery from start to finish."[31]

Similar reports poured into Republican and Populist headquarters across the state. In Wilmington, for example, only 30 of 3,000 eligible African Americans registered to vote, and when their votes were "counted," only two had been cast against the amendment.[32] If African Americans had been allowed to vote in any numbers in the east, the amendment might have failed since it passed with only 59 percent of the votes statewide.[33] In New Bern, Clarke concluded that he could "not blame the negroes for not voting" since their votes would go uncounted anyway and the price of voting might be death. He held New Bern native Furnifold Simmons personally responsible for the "perfect farce of an election" and uttered disfranchisement's benediction: God will "exact a strict account of [Simmons] and he will have to pay it to the last penny."[34]

Awaiting the deferred retribution of a just God offered scant solace to African Americans, however, and they sought support outside the state. North Carolina's most prominent black leader, Congressman George White, announced that unless the Supreme Court quickly found the amendment unconstitutional, he would follow Moses's example and lead 50,000 of the state's African Americans to the North.[35] For White, who had started his career as the principal of the New Bern normal school with Sarah Dudley as his assistant, migration represented the only alternative to disfranchisement. He told the House, "They have spoken of my people as a thing to be managed. . . . Can they manage us like oxen?" he asked. "I want them to understand that, removed as we are thirty-five years from slavery, we are to day as you are, men."[36]

Even though white men discounted African American appeals to shared

manhood, white women might still recognize similar entreaties to shared womanhood, but only if they considered them outside the sphere of electoral politics. Just after the amendment passed, Mary Lynch addressed the international WCTU convention in Edinburgh, Scotland.[37] No longer able to work with white women in her hometown of Salisbury, Lynch had to travel across the Atlantic Ocean in order to discuss shared concerns. Lynch's journey is a metaphor for the problem of knitting gender and class ties across racial lines. Race had one meaning in Salisbury, where organizing for temperance brought up issues of political power and black voting, and another in Edinburgh, where white women could recognize Lynch as a missionary working fervently for women's issues.

Locally, few strategies emerged to combat disfranchisement. The black women of Edenton formed the Woman's Prayer and Consecration Society of America and planned to pray for "the poor colored man in his mighty struggle for his political rights."[38] Some tried direct intervention at the ballot box. In Lexington, a black attorney fell into an argument with a white registrar when he accompanied a group of black men to register for the November election. When the registrar began asking questions such as, "Have you been in the penitentiary?," the black attorney intervened and accused him of deliberately slowing down the process to prevent registration. A white Democratic "poll watcher" slugged the attorney on the spot and later hunted him down and murdered him.[39] After the murder, the regular November election passed quietly, Charles Aycock went to the governor's mansion in January 1901 with a solidly Democratic legislature behind him, and Furnifold Simmons left for the U.S. Senate. William Clarke in New Bern counted the Republicans lucky that they had been cheated out of only 1,000 votes in that election.[40] African Americans stopped patronizing white-owned stores when they could buy from black merchants, leading some black businessmen to conclude sardonically that "oppression has it[s] virtues."[41]

After the amendment took effect in 1902, the *News and Observer* crowed that only 4.6 percent of North Carolina's African Americans remained registered to vote. Josephus Daniels had every reason, however, to minimize the number of black voters to underscore the success of the amendment.[42] African Americans seemed to believe that their voting strength remained stronger. Indeed, they wanted to maximize the number of black voters to retain the illusion of political power. An editorial in the *Star of Zion* estimated that 65,000 North Carolina African Americans were literate and could retain the vote.[43] This guess was not far from the truth, since census figures later showed 59,597 literate blacks of voting age.[44] Fraud, violence, and fear prevented them from voting. No official records indicate the

actual numbers of blacks who managed to register in 1902, but the few surviving voter registration books reveal that the black voter was rare in that election and the next.[45]

As they watched the political turmoil climax in their hometown and state, the Petteys endured personal tragedy. In July, just as the amendment campaign heated up, Sarah Dudley Pettey and three of her children came down with a fever, and Charles fell ill a few weeks later. By November, ten family members had been stricken with the malady, diagnosed as malaria but probably yellow fever.[46] Despite their illnesses, both Charles and Sarah went north to the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion conference in September. For the first time during their travels in North Carolina, the Petteys rode on a Jim Crow car, the result of the 1899 legislature's segregation of the railroads.[47] At the conference, Sarah vanquished strong opposition to her reelection as secretary of the Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Society, the post through which she wrote her "Woman's Column." Most likely opposition to her reelection centered on the content of her columns, which everyone considered "spicy."[48] Charles fought a battle to increase the number of bishops within the church, lost, and left bitterly disappointed.[49]

Shortly after they returned home, Charles Pettey suffered a relapse. Yet, strangely, early in December he and Sarah insisted on traveling to a conference in his new South Carolina territory. AME Zion members assembled in Clio, the quietest place on earth. Although Clio was named for history's muse, history had forgotten Clio. It was just a road, really, where a few streets branched off unimaginatively at right angles and petered out in flat, sandy fields. Clio's black and white people separated themselves lackadaisically, simply by choosing opposite ends of the settlement. Down one of those short streets stood a white clapboard church surrounded by live oaks trailing wispy Spanish moss.

Arriving for the conference, Charles Pettey entered the packed church slowly, from the back, and made his way toward the main altar looming in front of him. His step faltered as he walked down the aisle with one hand on Sarah's arm. His other hand gripped the backs of the wooden pews. His skin was yellow. His bones were visible through his suit. People began to cry at the sight of him. Finally seated at the front, Pettey rested some moments, then leaned on Sarah's shoulder and pulled himself up out of his pew. In a weak voice, one that "did not even faintly resemble the trumpet voice" of which he had been so proud, Charles Pettey began to sing his favorite hymn. "Strong men wept like children" as he sang "When I am in my grave, weep not for me." Quickly, some men in the congregation swept

Sarah Dudley Pettey and her children, circa 1900. *Clockwise from left:* Theophytra, Charles, stepdaughters Sarah and Mamie, Calvin, Elveta, and Ethel. Courtesy of Corine Pettey, New York, New York.

him up and took him to a nearby house, where he lingered near death. Sarah Dudley Pettey took his place at the conference table, assigning ministers to new churches throughout the state. Slipping in and out of consciousness, Pettey called for George W. Clinton, the young Charlotte bishop who was his protégé, but Clinton arrived too late for Pettey to recognize him. Finally, on 8 December, Pettey struggled to sit up. Then he said clearly, "I will lay down here and put up my tools, believing that God doeth all things for the best. God bless my wife. God bless my dear wife and children." Then he fell back dead.[50]

Sarah was "almost frantic" on the long train ride back to New Bern with Charles's body. Two thousand people attended the funeral, where she and the children were "bathed in tears." The AME Zion Church declared thirty days of mourning, and across the nation, congregations gave freewill offerings for the widow and her seven children.[51] Some suggested that Sarah Dudley Pettey had earned a paying position in the church, perhaps that of financial secretary. Surely she was competent, and the church would be proving that it was "able to appreciate . . . intelligence and worth, whether in a woman or man, by thus honoring this accomplished woman."[52] But Sarah Dudley Pettey was not offered a position in the AME Zion Church. In fact, four years after her husband's death, she still had not received all of the back pay due to him.[53] She took the cash that she had and commissioned a large tombstone to mark Charles Pettey's grave. On it, she had carved these words: "Look up on high and remember that I am here when I am gone."[54]

If history were fiction, it would be tempting to draw a parallel between the political death of African Americans in North Carolina and the physical death of Charles Pettey. The novelist would surely create Pettey to represent the courage of the freedpeople, the embodiment of black patriotism, African American trust in democracy, and black Christians' belief in the sanctity of natural rights. If the novelist invented disfranchisement, she would have to write Pettey's death since such a figure could not live under those conditions. But the historian must limit her speculations to a more concrete sphere, one in which metaphorical leaps are fettered by the ropes of evidence. Still, it *is* difficult to imagine Charles Pettey living in the world the disfranchisers made. His death spared him that. From the mountains of postbellum North Carolina where he exchanged ferry rides to learn his letters, to the California settlement he pioneered in the 1880s, to Atlanta, where he answered Booker T. Washington, Charles Pettey had acted with courage and a sense of fairness. Now courage could bring death at a registrar's table and distorted standards of fairness excluded him. But if the waves of white supremacy crashed in to fill the void that Pettey's passing left in the public sphere, nothing could fill his place at home. Sarah

mourned his death profoundly, and she envisioned him in a "land of delight where no storm clouds rise, to disturb or distress a sainted one," far away from turbulent North Carolina.[55]

Postdisfranchisement North Carolina was turbulent. When black leaders looked to the Republican Party, it looked away. Two black Best Men, John Dancy, collector of the port of Wilmington, and James Young, commander of the Third North Carolina Regiment, arrived at the state Republican Executive Committee's 1901 meeting. Both men had served previously on the committee and had shepherded votes and dispensed patronage across the state, but Senator Pritchard had failed to invite them to the meeting. When they arrived uninvited, he jumped up and locked them out of the room.[56] Pritchard declared the Republican Party "lily-white" and called on all black federal officeholders in the state to resign their posts at once.[57] The next year, when duly-elected black delegates arrived at the 1902 convention, whites ejected them. As the dejected black men left the convention hall, the band played and the white delegates sang, "Coon, coon, coon, I wish my color would fade. . . . Morning, night or noon, It's better to be a white man, Than a coon, coon, coon."[58] Such actions prompted George White to blast Pritchard as "an evil one . . . whom I have helped to elevate from obscurity from the mountain crags of western North Carolina to his present position. . . . Truly a wolf in sheep's clothing."[59] Somehow, Pritchard and John Dancy came to terms since Dancy became Washington, D.C.'s, recorder of deeds, an ascent that needed Pritchard's propulsion.[60]

While Pritchard purged black voters, President Theodore Roosevelt promised Booker T. Washington that there would be no lily-white Republicanism. To add insult to injury, Pritchard traveled to Alabama, Washington's home ground, to extol the virtues of expelling African Americans from the party. Washington fired off a letter to John Dancy warning that Pritchard "has done a great deal of harm in this state" and wondering why Dancy had not led a ground swell of indignation against him in North Carolina. Washington considered it Dancy's responsibility to stop Pritchard, even if Dancy's "relations with Senator Pritchard" put him in "an awkward position." In his vaguely menacing way, Washington ordered Dancy to act "for your sake as well as for that of the race."[61] No fool, Dancy acted. He arranged a meeting between the president and Bishops George W. Clinton and Alexander Walters. Roosevelt promised them that black Republicans could attend southern conventions and retain federal offices.[62] Just ten days after Washington wrote to Dancy, black Raleigh Republicans brandished a letter from one of Roosevelt's top aides condemning Pritchard's lily-white policy.[63] After the 1902 elections, Roosevelt castigated lily-white

Republicanism more strongly and purged many of its supporters. He tried to force Pritchard to recant, but the senator hedged a bit, arguing that he could not support federal appointments of black officials over his constituents' protests. At the same time, he pledged all of North Carolina's Republican electors to Roosevelt's 1904 candidacy.[64]

Despite their banishment from the Republican Party, some African Americans tried to give the impression that blacks remained a political factor in the state. W. B. Crittendon of Salisbury formed the Colored Voters' League of North Carolina and proposed that blacks vote on issues across party lines. The *Star of Zion* crowed that African Americans' Democratic votes in the 1902 election would tip the balance of power against the Republicans, surely an exaggerated claim.[65] After Roosevelt's election in 1904, black Republicans suggested that he appoint a state executive committee of "true Republicans" and declare the lily-white organization a fraud.[66]

If the Republicans had not acted so quickly to exclude African Americans, they might have mitigated the effects of disfranchisement. One black leader compared disfranchisement to the "shock of an earthquake," arguing that the black man did not "know to what extent he is hurt. . . . Some are only waiting to see just how greatly they are damaged, before making a move."[67] As African Americans were trying to assess the damage, the organizing institution of black political life, the Republican Party, ousted them. Counterfactual analysis is a risky business, but it is useful to imagine how sustained black participation in the Republican Party might have affected the amendment's administration. The party had been a viable alternative in North Carolina for two generations, and almost half of the African American men of voting age were literate. Republican pressure might have mandated fair administration of the literacy test, resulting in black registration.[68] Continued black voting would have increased the chances of appointing Republican registrars, especially in places like New Bern, where there was a long history of interracial cooperation between the two parties.[69] Moreover, as Republicans, African Americans would have maintained political ties to national leaders and a venue for political debate.

African Americans took the Republicans' action as hard as they had taken the amendment's passage. William F. Fonvielle, roving correspondent for the *Star of Zion*, interviewed the man on the street after the 1902 convention. He approached black men throughout Greensboro, notebook in hand. Some were afraid to respond. One said, "Please say for me that I am more hurt than astounded." At the corner of Nile and Egypt streets, Fonvielle encountered a street musician strumming a guitar, a hat two sizes too small perched on his head. The musician opined that he tried to ignore politics and enigmatically sung, "I'm gwine live until I die," in answer to

Fonvielle's questions. At the train station, as Fonvielle watched the northbound train pull out, the black porter swung out of the car door and called back, "It's not my funeral, I live in Jersey."[70]

As it turned out, living in "Jersey" became the most attractive alternative to thousands of the state's African Americans. George White made good on his promise and founded a settlement in southern New Jersey known as Whitesboro.[71] Although historians have tended to consider black migration from the South during and after World War I as the "Great Migration," Carter Godwin Woodson, writing in 1918, dated the "Migration of the Talented Tenth" prior to that time.[72] Woodson argued that it was "the intelligent laboring class" that made up most of this early migration.[73] Woodson's periodization aptly characterizes the North Carolina situation. Between 1900 and 1910, 27,827 African Americans left the state, 14,792 men and 13,035 women. In the following decade, 1910 to 1920, 29,162 African Americans emigrated. Even with the upheaval and opportunity that World War I brought, the increase in black migration in the second decade of the century was less than 2,000 people. More men left the state in the first decade than in the second.[74] George White's words, "I cannot live in North Carolina and be a man," resonated for many other African American Best Men in the state.[75] Certainly economic factors and kinship networks affected emigration, but to many, the answer to the question, "Why are hundreds of the best Negroes . . . leaving this State?," was plain and simple. "It is because of the institution of jim crow cars, the passage of the disfranchise amendment, and the bitter political campaigns of 1898 and 1900," the *Star of Zion* responded.[76]

Those who were the first to leave were probably the best educated. In 1917, in an address to the Southern Sociological Congress, a white lawyer and racial philosopher from Winston-Salem noted the rapid black exodus from the state. He observed, however, that by that time the number of "young, collegebred negro men and women going north . . . is probably not as great, proportionately, as it was a decade ago." He attributed the decrease in the flow to the "constant insistence" of schools modeled upon Washingtonian ideas that "the south is the best section for the negro."[77] Indeed, Washington doggedly insisted that blacks could be more successful in the South, despite political and personal persecution. In a letter to W. E. B. Du Bois in 1910, Charles Chesnutt scoffed at Washington and termed him "a professional optimist." Chesnutt, the former North Carolinian, confided, "Personally, I have not been any farther South than Washington but once in twenty-seven years."[78]

It would be impossible to generalize about 27,827 individual decisions to

leave home, but a debate on a hot summer night in 1901 revealed the tensions over the issue among African Americans in Charlotte. Two young women, Addie Sagers and Laura Arnold, squared off on the topic, "Is the South the Best Home for the Negro?," at the Price Lyceum, a Chautauqua-style summer lecture series for African Americans. The issue engaged the entire community, including those who would ultimately stay behind, and women participated actively in the debate over the decision to move.

Sagers took the Washingtonian position. She pointed out that the only employment open to blacks in the North was as a "bell boy, waiter, a cook or a house maid. Even the drudgery work is done by foreigners." Few African Americans could hold professional positions in the North. For example, in Chicago, she claimed, there were only eleven black teachers. Unions also excluded African Americans, she argued. She might have used North Carolina expatriate Alexander Manly's plight as evidence, since he was forced to attempt to pass for white to find work as a painter in unionized Philadelphia.[79] Sagers pointed to the black-owned Richmond bank and Coleman Cotton Mill as enterprises that would have been impossible to build in the North. Then she tried to diffuse her opposition: "My opponents no doubt will say the Negro is being disfranchised in the South. I heartily cooperate with that law, because the Negroes see clearly the necessity of educating their children."[80]

Sagers's opponent, Laura Arnold, devastated her. "The South may be a 'land of flowers' for the Anglo-Saxon, but for the Negro—at his touch, the flowers fold their petals and wither away, and he finds himself, with bleeding hands grasping the prickly thorns," Arnold countered. She had little patience for the argument that blacks owned more land in the South since they could not enjoy security on that land. "Displease by look, word, or deed a white man," Arnold reminded her audience, "and if he so desires, before nightfall, your property is likely to be reduced to ashes, and the owner a mangled corpse." Lynching and segregation had increased while educational and employment opportunities had decreased, and the ultimate symbol of southern degradation was disfranchisement. The black southerner's "judges of his illiteracy are his enemies, one of whom recently said, no Negro could explain a clause of the Constitution to *his* satisfaction." If lucky enough to register, African Americans risked their lives to cast votes that went uncounted, Arnold noted.

Move North at once, Arnold urged, escape impending doom! She acknowledged that the unknown was frightening but argued that if the Puritans could cross the ocean in small boats, surely North Carolina's African Americans could board northbound trains. Even if God had intended that living in the South serve as a test of black faith, he never meant for things to go this far. The South was now a "crucible . . . [where] many of us . . . will be

burned to cinders." She concluded, "My friends! You sleep over a volcano, which may erupt at any moment, and only your lifeless bodies will attest that you believed the South to be the best home for the Negro." Arnold's masterpiece received more points than any other speech that night. Two weeks later, Arnold, who had been employed as the printer's "angel" at the *Star of Zion*, took her own advice and moved to Washington, D.C.[81]

Facing such emotionally charged issues without the traditional support of a party structure, North Carolina's black men and women cast about for new leaders with fresh styles. The glare of Booker T. Washington's immense personal power has eclipsed other black southern leaders and obscured his followers' understanding and practice of his philosophy.[82] The North Carolina case suggests that Washington secured his iron grip on southern African Americans partially by default. Black Best Men such as George White and Alexander Manly who were passionate about politics and functioned as the ideological counterweight to Washingtonianism left the South after disfranchisement.[83] At the same time, Reconstruction Era activists such as Charles Pettey passed from the scene. Certainly the lack of access to the formal electoral process diverted the attention of many who remained behind away from the political sphere and toward business development and religion.[84] For example, the pages of the *Star of Zion*, once packed with political news and opinion, became almost exclusively devoted to church affairs. The editorial page, a former hearth for fire-eating pundits, adopted a new masthead with a drawing of an open Bible.[85]

It is probable, however, that the silence in print provided white noise for a ferocious face-to-face debate. Many of those who remained went underground. As for the changes in the *Star of Zion*, a telling clue exists. John Dancy, writing from his safe post in Washington, D.C., passionately responded to an attempt to ban political discourse in the AME Zion Church. In the denominational magazine, he reminded his readers, "All we have and are, came through politics, and it is too late in the day to try to curry favor with somebody by declaring the opposite of a recognized truth." Dancy revealed what his church meant to him and to people like Charles Pettey: "Zion Church is and always has been an organized protest against religious, political and manhood inequality and injustice."[86]

As one might suspect, Sarah Dudley Pettey did not fit well into the postdisfranchisement, externally apolitical church. Since Charles died just after a quadrennial AME Zion conference, Sarah retained her editorship of the "Woman's Column" until 1904, but she wrote infrequently. She went north for some time to live with her friend Mary Small.[87] The church owed Pettey's estate more than $3,000, and Dudley Pettey now faced the diffi-

culty of supporting her large family. She sold All Healing Spring and traveled throughout the country speaking to churches for the money that could be collected from the congregation.[88] In 1904, Sarah spent part of Christmas with *Star* editor J. W. Smith's family, and he appealed to the bishops to approve a pension for "this struggling widow."[89] At the next conference in 1904, the activist women in the church adroitly allowed Dudley Pettey to remain in her unpaid position but added another secretary's seat that would encompass editorship of the "Woman's Column." That spot went to Annie Blackwell, who had edited the *WCTU Tidings*.[90]

In 1906, Sarah became quite ill and died in a matter of a few weeks. She was only thirty-seven years old. John Dancy recalled in her obituary that he had known her since she was a little girl. He lamented, "Mrs. Pettey has never been quite herself since [Pettey's] sudden demise. . . . They were quite wedded to each other, and their ambitions and hopes ran along the same channels." The Petteys, he continued, "were public spirited, yea high spirited. . . . They cared for money only as a means to provide their comforts and aid them in gratifying their ambitions." With her husband's death, Dancy added cryptically, "Mrs. Pettey realized fully her great loss, and was never entirely herself again."[91]

How could Sarah Dudley Pettey have remained "herself" amid the shambles of her dreams? In the space of a few years, she had gone from lecturing on woman suffrage and African Americans' civil rights at the side of her powerful husband to being alone in a world in which black men could not vote. Her dreams—her *self*—had died in 1900 with the death of Charles Pettey and the passage of disfranchisement. There is no tombstone beside Charles Pettey's to mark Sarah's grave—the money was gone by then—and we have no record of her last words as we do of his. But Sarah wrote her own valedictory in the bleak period after her husband's death: "Strive to live long; if not in years, live in manly acts and noble deeds, remembering ever that knowledge truly is life."[92] Dudley Pettey's noble deeds died with her, and she vanished from the written record—into a vortex of silence.

Disfranchisement and party expulsion abruptly whisked a people with a well-developed political heritage out of "politics" as traditionally defined. Did that mean that they ceased to act politically? In fact, it meant that their political activity increased. Artificially excluded from the electoral realm, African Americans found that the rest of life took on a more political cast. Disfranchisement seemed to spur whites to vilify the African American family, putting the "private" sphere in the middle of public life. As African Americans lost their own public voices, whites' cacophonous reports of

their lives and culture arose from the South to fill the vacuum. In a period when northern imaginations thrived on accounts of barbarity in the new territories and northern muscle flexed at the prospect of shouldering the "white man's burden" while counting the profits from pineapple and sugar plantations, white southerners breathed a sigh of relief at their intellectual redemption. Now all fair Americans of northern European heritage shared a common instructional task—uplifting darker peoples from barbarity. White southerners might even teach their countrymen a thing or two about it.[93]

But first the South had to establish its credentials on the subject. White southerners had to prove that black southerners had been and remained barbarians and that the South had dealt with this situation extremely well, given its limited resources and misguided northern interference at every turn. Perfecting this rationalization required that southern whites draw attention away from African American accomplishments and toward black shortcomings.[94] A ground swell of literature emerged to argue these points.

No one made the argument better than North Carolinian Thomas Dixon, Jr.[95] Living in New York, haunted by the black family cook's son's claims of kinship, in 1902 Dixon drew inspiration from the Wilmington massacre and the amendment campaign to write *The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden, 1865–1900*. Three years later, he followed up with *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*.[96] To write "fiction," Dixon had only to read the propaganda Furnifold Simmons had disseminated in the white supremacy and disfranchisement campaigns. What made Dixon's work so pernicious was that he told the truth—halfway—by appropriating pieces of reality. But he reversed the power dynamics and outcomes to make heroes villains, villains heroes, and lies truth.

As easily as he borrowed historical events, Dixon appropriated characters. In *The Leopard's Spots*, he simply changed the names of North Carolina political figures. His hero, Charlie Gaston, is Charles Aycock with a fictionalized love life, but he metamorphoses into Alfred Moore Waddell for a few pages to lead the Wilmington race riot. The rape and murder of little Flora Camp closely parallel the 1898 Concord rape and murder that Simmons's machine spent as political capital. Alexander Manly is in the pages, as are the women's sidewalk altercations and Lincoln Academy, the American Missionary Association school a few miles from Dixon's family home. Even Mrs. Habicht, the bartender's wife brought before New Bern's black magistrate for disturbing the peace, makes an appearance.[97]

Since many of the events actually occurred, readers could not separate fiction from fact and were unaware that Dixon had reversed the outcomes to make African Americans seem powerful and abusive. Dixon portrays 500 rioting black soldiers from the Third North Carolina Regiment invad-

ing Wilmington. There *was* violence between whites and black North Carolinians in uniform, but it was African Americans who bore the brunt of it. There *was* a riot in Wilmington, but Alfred Moore Waddell benefited from it, whereas Charles Gaston, his fictional counterpart, was a victim of it. When it was over, Waddell went to the mayor's office, not to the jail where Dixon imprisons the beleaguered and lovelorn Gaston.

When Dixon links North Carolina's racial "problem" with that facing the rest of the nation after the Spanish-American/Cuban War, he explicitly makes Simmons's point, with the new territories in mind. "Hear me, men of my race, Norman and Celt, Angle and Saxon, Dane and Frank, Huguenot and German martyr blood!" shouts Gaston/Aycock from the stump. "It took Spain eight hundred years to expel the Moors. When the time comes the Anglo-Saxon can do in one century what the Spaniard did in eight." Then Dixon resurrects poor, drunken Mrs. Habicht: "Shall we longer tolerate the arrest of white women by negro officers and their trial before negro magistrates? Let the manhood of the Aryan race with its four thousand years of authentic history answer that question!"[98]

Thomas Dixon fictionalized Furnifold Simmons's and Alfred Moore Waddell's political rhetoric and rearranged the power relations to make the white man the underdog. Dixon bragged that his old friend from Watauga Club days, publisher Walter Hines Page, found *The Leopard's Spots* so engrossing that he could not take his eyes off the manuscript long enough to cross a New York City street and walked into the path of a streetcar. Page did indeed find the work's gossip about his North Carolina acquaintances fascinating, but Dixon fabricated Page's collision with the streetcar.[99] Dixon, who was too pugnacious to fear libel, admitted himself that he wrote from reality and called himself a historian.[100] In a letter to Gabrielle De Rosset Waddell, Dixon wrote that he was an "ardent admirer" of Waddell and that the "Wilmington revolutionists did a very important work in the preservation of our civilization."[101] Dixon explored the same themes in *The Clansman*, the book that spawned the film *The Birth of a Nation*.

African Americans in North Carolina condemned *The Leopard's Spots* as "one of the meanest books."[102] Many white and black southerners saw it as a shameless attempt to capitalize on the recent political violence. Charles Chesnutt wrote to a congressman who admired the book, telling him that although Dixon drew on North Carolina's racial politics, he had gotten things backward. Dixon was right, Chesnutt acknowledged, in claiming that a great deal of "intermingling" of white and black blood had taken place, but it had "been done with the entire consent and cheerful cooperation of the white race."[103] Of course, African Americans offered Dixon's black alleged half brother as their prime example.[104]

At first, southern whites realized that Dixon had duped them also. In

1905, when a play adapted from *The Clansman* toured in the upper South, the press condemned the author for misrepresenting southern life and stirring up animosity. In Columbia, South Carolina, the audience hissed Dixon when he appeared on the stage, and "many prominent young [white] men" went to his hotel to call him out to fight. Everywhere people feared violence. Even in Wilmington, the press predicted that Dixon would be subjected to worse than hissing if the play continued to tour the South, and others thought that "innocent blood" might be shed as a result of it. The minister of a large Atlanta Baptist church called it a disgrace and begged Dixon to "give the negro a rest from abuse and incendiarism!" African Americans applauded this reaction and took it to mean that "hope is revived" and that the "Dixon stripe" was fading among whites.[105] To their dismay, however, in Atlanta life followed "art," and the city erupted into a vicious race riot shortly after *The Clansman* played there.[106]

Dixon quelled opposition to his play by soliciting the attendance of politicians who had a stake in the audiences' acceptance of the narrative as truth. He toured state capitols and sought the endorsement of governors. In Raleigh, Aycock's successor, Robert B. Glenn, called the play "great historical truth"; in Atlanta, Governor Joseph M. Terrell stood and applauded loudly at its conclusion.[107] These men, riding the white supremacy wave to power, needed to reconstruct Reconstruction in order to justify their own recent actions.

Dixon used the same strategy—preempting criticism by getting elected officials to endorse his work—when *The Clansman* became the film, *The Birth of a Nation*. He scheduled a showing at the White House for southerner and former Johns Hopkins classmate Woodrow Wilson. Dixon later recalled an audience of Supreme Court justices and congressmen watching a preliminary screening, and his mind reeled at their emotional and uncritical reactions. Dixon reported that he "realized for the first time . . . that we had not only discovered a new universal language of man, but that [the film] would be equally resistless to an audience of chauffeurs or a gathering of a thousand college professors."[108]

The Birth of a Nation became an overnight sensation, the highest grossing film to that date. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People organized boycotts against it in many cities, and municipal censors often found it incendiary.[109] When New York City censors tried to close *The Birth of a Nation* before its world premiere, Dixon's attorney argued that it had been shown in the White House; a hurried telephone call there answered by Woodrow Wilson's daughter verified that fact.[110] As it swept the nation in 1914, white audiences wept and cheered the story, and the film spurred the growth of the second Ku Klux Klan.[111] In fifteen years, white southerners had gone from pariahs to patriots in the national

imagination, and white northerners had taken up the "white man's burden." Dixon's blistering spotlight on North Carolina's past scorched the historical landscape beyond recognition.

Across the nation, African Americans lacked a forum to counteract such propaganda, and they found that whites listened only when racial portrayals fit racist stereotypes of debasement. Even well-meaning whites began to advocate the betterment of African American homes to turn back the supposed tide of black debauchery. Mary Helm, a southern white woman dedicated to missionary work among southern African Americans, argued that if disfranchisement "turned the Negro from politics to homebuilding it was a blessing to him as well as to the country."[112]

Whites argued that the purpose of black education should be to produce better homes. One white educator told the North Carolina legislature in 1901 that the state must appropriate money for elementary black education out of self-protection: "No two races live in peace together when one is enlightened and the other is semi-barbarous."[113] North Carolina's white superintendent of public instruction announced in 1902 that the "great and generous Anglo-Saxon race" now realized its error in educating the "child-race." "We have too often flung him the part of the money that the Constitution required us to give, and then left him without direction to waste it at his will," he declared.[114] Now whites would control black education.

There is a direct link between the fabricated discourse on black barbarity and the industrial education movement. As white writers crafted the image of debased black home life, they also embraced Booker T. Washington's popularization of the industrial education ideal.[115] The drive for home improvement featured the Hampton Institute industrial model of training and helped convert northern philanthropists to the cause. For almost four decades, many African Americans had rejected the Hampton model as oppressive, funding and attending colleges that offered classical curricula instead.[116] But after disfranchisement, those graduates watched as philanthropists tried to turn their alma maters into industrial training schools or set up new trade schools that drained contributions away from them. Black classical colleges declined after 1900 as dollars flowed to vocational schools.[117]

The industrial education ideal and reports of black debauchery were mutually reinforcing. When appropriations from northern philanthropists became contingent upon industrial education, educators increased their public condemnation of black home life to attract money. To obtain funding, educators of African Americans began to point out their students'

deficiencies rather than their accomplishments. Some black educators even began to emphasize their pupils' lack of basic living skills. Scotia Seminary in Concord now stressed its "domestic arts"; Saint Augustine's College in Raleigh boasted of new classes in printing, carpentry, and bricklaying. Shaw University, the home of law and medical schools, stated, "We do not teach trades, and make no pretensions to doing it, for we have no desire to inaugurate a trade school, but we do pretend to carry on industrial work along educational lines, and this work will be extended more and more as fast as financial means are obtained."[118]

Whereas previously they had extolled their students' proficiency in Latin and Greek as proof of African Americans' capability, now black colleges downplayed the fact that they offered classical courses. Charles Pettey's alma mater, Biddle University, made much of its rule that every student in preparatory and normal school spend at least an hour a day in required industrial courses.[119] It did not publicize the fact that Hebrew remained a requirement for future ministers. But white educators, often agents of northern philanthropists, actually patrolled black campuses. One white critic suggested that Biddle drop Hebrew and substitute instead "the languages of the Congo Valley and of Timbuctoo."[120] Many black schools invited white supremacists to give campus talks, and students made a big show of welcoming them. For example, just after the disfranchising amendment passed, Charles Aycock spoke at Shaw's medical and law school commencement, at which he warned graduates to stay out of politics and "was applauded to the echo." Little wonder that Edward A. Johnson, dean of the law school, left shortly for New York City to launch his political career from Harlem.[121]

Established black institutions found themselves competing with overnight wonders set up to attract philanthropists' dollars. James E. Shepard, who had complained that disfranchisement left "no middle ground" between slavery and freedom and that the best way to make a good man was not to "unman him," quickly reinvented himself. By 1903, he was saying that the black man "came to this country a slave and faithfully served his years of bondage, as all races before him had to do." Now he was "learning the lesson[s] of manhood: when these are acquired he will stand forth in power and glory."[122] Shepard's astonishing amnesia helped him forget the manhood he had so recently claimed, and within five years, he established a "National Religious Training School . . . devoted to the practical training of the Negro in Morals and Religion." He asked the "evil one," former senator Jeter Pritchard, to serve as president of the school's board. Shepard explained the advantages of wedding the industrial school and the religious school: "It awakens the sluggish, dormant energies of the individual. . . . It

lessens crime, reduces idleness, stops violence and teaches lessons of self-restraint."[123] Shepard found his middle ground by retreating behind a landscape of accommodation.

At Livingstone College, wholly supported by the AME Zion Church, students and professors realized the danger to their tradition at once. One professor argued that all of North Carolina's leaders, white and black, had classical training, and he recalled founder Joseph Price's description of education's purpose: teaching "the Head, Hand, and Heart."[124] On another occasion, Livingstone alumni rushed the stage at an Afro-American Council meeting when the organizers displayed a likeness of Booker T. Washington. They would not budge until a portrait of Joseph Price hung beside that of the Wizard of Tuskegee.[125]

They fought a losing battle, however, and quickly realized that if they wanted to survive, they would have to solicit northern dollars like their competitors. In 1902, Bishop Hood wrote to a representative of the Rockefeller-funded General Education Board asking for help: "The moral and intellectual training [at Livingstone] is not excelled by any," but "we have not been able to do what we have desired on industrial lines, because we have not had the means."[126] A Rockefeller agent visited the school and noted that Livingstone was "entitled to respect and sympathy," despite the fact that it suffered from the "misdirected efforts of negro churches to provide educational advantages."[127] Livingstone College merged with East Tennessee Industrial School in 1903 and quickly notified philanthropists of the move.[128] Future correspondence included photographs of the women in the "cooking department." When an agent of the General Education Board visited Livingstone, he found the entire female student body in the laundry, scrubbing away.[129] Yet Livingstone continued to graduate men and women who went on to be doctors, lawyers, teachers, and business leaders. Behind footlights that focused on industrial courses, the normal, classical, and theological schools continued to attract the overwhelming majority of students.[130]

Since home improvement must start with black women, the industrial education movement included the subtext of female moral reform. In 1900, William Hannibal Thomas, an African American, published a book that described unbridled immorality among black women.[131] Even though some white educators of African Americans condemned Thomas's premise, they attached caveats. The white president of Scotia Seminary defended his women pupils, describing them as "living virtuous lives," but he noted that many of the girls' mothers said to him, "I know I am not what I ought to be, but I don't want her to be like me." At least he added that immorality existed among the "uncared for masses . . . not because they are Negroes, but because they are uncared for." A Saint Augustine's professor

called Thomas's charge of unchecked morality an exaggeration but acknowledged that there was a grain of truth in it.[132] In this perverse way, black women now shouldered the blame for disfranchisement, which whites argued had been necessary because of the barbarity black mothers fostered by not teaching their sons right from wrong.

"Industrial" education for black women meant training to be servants since all industries except commercial laundries and tobacco factories remained closed to black women. In practice, such curricula directed philanthropists' dollars into courses for men, which required more expensive equipment; for example, printing presses cost considerably more than lye. Moreover, women's laundry, nursing, and cooking classes saved the schools money since students' uncompensated schoolwork replaced women's wage labor. Resourceful women students worked the system to accomplish their own goals. In the summer, many female students at industrial schools parlayed their training into relatively high-paying domestic jobs in northern cities. Others used their dressmaking or millinery skills at home to earn money for tuition. They made sure that class barriers remained fluid enough to allow a woman who worked her way through college as a summer domestic to become a teacher upon graduation.[133]

Despite black women's clever use of industrial education, the overall system was gendered in ways that disadvantaged women. It reinforced differences in men's and women's curricula after black women had battled for years for equal consideration in coeducation, and it drew money away from women's teacher-training programs. In North Carolina, whites closed four black state normal schools and diverted the money to establish industrial programs for men at the remaining three schools. The move displaced women students who had been in the majority at the closed institutions and reallocated scarce funds from teacher preparation to male students' manual training at the remaining schools.

The story of the end of coeducation at the state-supported North Carolina Agricultural and Mechanical College (A & M) illustrates how the industrial model could work against women. In 1900, the school's white trustees voted to exclude women in order to open up dormitory space for men. Defending their action, they argued, "It was doubtful [that the college] was even intended for women any more than white A. and M. college was intended for white girls." But a scarcity of dorm rooms was not the only reason for expelling the women, the trustees revealed. Governing the school had become difficult since "neither the girls or boys wanted to engage in the harder kinds of manual labor in the presence of the other sex, but would strive to dress up in fine clothes to impress the other."[134] This rhetoric about sacrificing the women to save the school came from A & M's staunchest white supporters. Its white enemies employed a sexualized

style to try to close the school completely. They alleged that coeducation had given rise to unbridled immorality at A & M, making it necessary to expel all of the students, women and men.[135]

No white person connected with A & M, friend or enemy, spoke for the excluded black women. They had to speak for themselves. The women of the African American teachers association pleaded with white officials that "special attention . . . be paid to our girls." It was a matter of fairness, the teachers pointed out: "The boys have the A. and M. college; the whites have the Normal and Industrial School for girls. . . . No provision has been made [for] . . . Negro girls."[136] Their protests fell on deaf ears, but for all of their mindful and unmindful attempts to eviscerate black women's education, whites had acted too late. The genie—love of knowledge—was out of the bottle. Two generations of African American women drew on their educations to resist racism and poured into the state's black public schools to train the next generation.[137]

Occasionally the talk of barbarity, immorality, and ignorance simply became unbearable, and African Americans struck back at their detractors, especially if the defamer was African American and close at hand. One such incident occurred in New Bern, where African Americans had attended public schools for forty years when A. L. E. Weeks came to town. A Shaw graduate and Baptist minister, Weeks started the New Bern Collegiate Industrial Institute.[138] He wasted no time in contacting the General Education Board, but the board remained unimpressed, calling him a "persistent beggar." Weeks *was* persistent, and he wrote to white Baptist ministers nationwide to describe alleged intolerable conditions among North Carolina's African Americans and to seek donations.[139]

A Seattle, Washington, minister passed the letter along to a reporter who used it as the basis for an article entitled, "N.C. Negroes Barbarous." Weeks claimed the city had no library or Young Men's Christian Association. He described Craven County as the most backward place in the "black belt" and said that he had discovered "within forty miles of this place an altar upon which burnt offerings are offered for sin." The sanctification wave had struck eastern North Carolina, and "more than three hundred thousand negroes are being more or less carried away by ignorant ideas of worship." Moreover, he continued, New Bernians were "doing absolutely nothing for the development of the negroes in changing these conditions industrially." Then he appealed for money.[140]

False news of their hometown's benightedness rankled some African Americans who had migrated from New Bern to the Pacific Northwest, and they sent clippings home. Black New Bernians called a protest meeting

at once. Weeks was denounced as "an ingrate of the blackest dye, [who] has attempted to disrupt the peace and posture of this state." New Bern's African Americans pointed to their forty years of graded public schools, their three private high schools, their rate of homeownership—the highest in the state—and added, "as for culture, refinement and moral standing, our citizens will compare favorably with any in the country."[141] They wrote to the editor of the *Seattle Times* and even penned a poem to express their outrage:

> What savages! So very green,
> That almost cane-grass can be seen,
> Twisting its roots around the brain,
> Enough to make us all insane.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Send with a sympathetic tear,
> Six thousand dollars in my care;
> Your confidence in me will bring
> A change among this heathen ring.[142]

The outrage of New Bern's black men could not compare to that of New Bern's black women. A "Committee of 50 Ladies in the So Called Black Belt" demanded that Weeks retract his statement, or "we will not be responsible for [what] your punishment will be." They mocked his use of the term "black belt" and compared him to a "black ball rolling in our midst loaded with slander and insults." They wanted an accounting of any money sent by "your northern friends" for "these poor little barefoot savages whose mothers are practicing heathen rites." They threatened, "We are not men we are the ribs and won't allow such insults."[143]

The reaction of New Bern's black women reflects a crafty use of their position in the political order. "We are not men we are the ribs and won't allow such insults" reveals their perception of the special place they held in civic life. Weary of being blamed for barbarity while they struggled to maintain Christian homes, they traded on their peculiar status as women. A man should refrain from insulting womanhood, and if he would not, the women planned to use informal power to convince him of the errors of his ways. The pressure worked, and Weeks spent two weeks apologizing and trying to clarify his letter.[144] Finally they forgave him, and he sighed, "Hell came open and I came out."[145]

Within a decade, the white supremacy campaign and disfranchisement had erased the image of the black middle class from the minds of white North Carolinians. What began as improbable political rhetoric became the domi-

nant version of of North Carolina culture as far away as London. In 1910, a British author just back from North Carolina reported that although white people paid taxes for schools, they were afraid to let their daughters "stir away from home unprotected" for fear of black rapists and therefore educated them at home, a patent absurdity.[146] African Americans had no platform from which to combat such lies. Black men no longer voted, participated in the Republican Party, or spoke out on issues, nor could they openly receive "white" educations. Black women stood accused of gross immorality and failing to provide comfortable homes that could produce law-abiding citizens.

An incident in 1906 in Salisbury, the home of Livingstone College, serves as a parable for the entire decade. Murderers broke into the home of a prosperous white farm family and killed Isaac Lyerly, his wife, and two of their children, then set their beds on fire. Apparently unaware that two daughters, Addie and Maggie, slept upstairs, the murderers left. Addie Lyerly found her family chopped to pieces downstairs, the fire in the beds only smoldering since it had been doused by blood. The baby was still alive. The two girls ran through the woods for help, past the house of their black tenants, the Dillinghams. The Dillinghams and another black tenant family, the Gillespies, had been feuding with the Lyerlys. Isaac had ordered them to sow wheat and they had refused. Isaac's wife had argued with Della Dillingham over Della's borrowing the washtubs and returning them dirty.[147]

Quickly the sheriff rounded up the Dillinghams and the Gillespies and threw them in jail, a structure beside the courthouse that was originally a private home.[148] The governor asked the sheriff if he could defend the jail in case of an attack, and the sheriff said he felt confident that he could and refused assistance. The next evening, a mob overwhelmed about twenty deputies, who fought back, even shooting a would-be lyncher in the buttocks. The guards did not, however, shoot to kill. When the mob broke through, the sheriff shouted, "They have got the prisoners and you men of property in Salisbury will suffer for it."[149]

The mob took three male prisoners from the jail, hung them, and then riddled their bodies with "thousands" of bullets. They then went to fetch Addie and Maggie Lyerly to see the bodies. Early reports of the lynching included the news that "women of this section of the State are thoroughly aroused and many approve of the lynching." In the carnage that followed the lynching, "one prominent woman who visited the scene . . . cut off an ear from one of the victims."[150] After the lynchings, the mob turned its fury toward Livingstone College, and cries of "Now let us go and burn up the nigger college!" went up. Only after cooler heads remembered the kindness of certain Livingstone professors to the community in the past did the crowd turn away from that mission.[151]

The governor sent troops, and a local grand jury charged the leaders of the mob, George Hall, a bootlegger, and G. H. Gentle, occupation unknown, both strangers to Salisbury, with murder. Local men who were arrested but not tried included Bud Bullabough, alias Bully Boy, alias Billy McConeyhead; John Cauble; Francis J. Cress, a drayman; and Henry Goodman, a clerk.[152] The two out-of-towners went to prison for their roles in the lynching, but Cress and Goodman continued to work in Salisbury for many years.[153] Bully Boy disappeared without a trace.

The white elite—the press, the governor, and most law enforcement officials—condemned the lynching, called it humiliating, and demanded that the lynchers be brought to justice.[154] They wondered out loud, "Who are lynchers in North Carolina?" "What class of citizens take the execution of criminals into their own hands in the face of the practically unanimous censure of the press and the condemnation of the governor, the officers and the best citizenship of the state?" They placed the lynchers in that class of whites who had been poor tenant farmers and were now earning good livings in the state's industries. "The sudden transition of North Carolina from a purely agricultural state . . . to a prosperous industrial state has lifted these people from penury and subservience into comfort and independence. They had not been prepared for this change." This class of white people could not be expected to have the "requisite finer sensibilities and nicer distinctions—reverence for law, respect for the rights of others . . . do not spring into being in a day." The problem was that "these people have been catered to by politicians, but they have not been led to think." To solve the problem, the "true manhood of this state [should] set itself to the task of uplifting and improving those unappreciative of our laws."[155]

This analysis—that lynching was the work of the lower class of whites, a class that needed to be controlled by more educated whites, or "true manhood"—became the accepted wisdom across the South. Racism among lower-class whites, so the story went, raged so virulently that the white middle class could barely contain it.[156] But it was poor whites who, as Populists, had united with African Americans ten years earlier in a fusion government to increase educational appropriations and make local government more responsive to its citizens; it was poor whites who had voted against the amendment. Then white farm families found themselves forced to work at cotton mills by the failure of the biracial agrarian and governmental reform they had supported as fusionists. The perpetrators of mob violence might have been hotheaded men like Bully Boy, but the lynchers merely acted out the logical extension of Furnifold Simmons's rhetoric.

In the 1898 white supremacy campaign, poor white Populists had accepted the white supremacist logic that their racial interests overrode their

class interests. They did so to prove their manhood by protecting their women, but now new class barriers within their race barred their claim to manliness. The fact that elite whites blamed the violence on poor white men and called for more control over their behavior recalls the prediction African Americans made about Simmons and illiterate whites: "If [he] will fool the illiterate Negroes . . . [he] will fool them also." North Carolina's impoverished white men traded their economic future for "manhood," only to find themselves forever consigned to the ranks of the good ol' boys.

A few days after the lynchings and violence in Salisbury, Jack McClay, an eleven-year-old white boy, appeared before the local magistrate in faraway Asheville. He was charged with looping a rope around his white playmate's neck, flinging it over a beam, and leaving the playmate dangling. The six-year-old thus hanged managed to free himself and ran home howling with angry red welts around his neck. The boys told the judge they had just been playing a game—a game they called "Salisbury."[157]

DIPLOMATIC WOMEN

After disfranchisement, "the Negro," white supremacists were fond of saying, was removed from politics. But even as African American men lost their rights, the political underwent a transformation. As state and local governments began to provide social services, an embryonic welfare state emerged. Henceforth, securing teeter-totters and playgrounds, fighting pellagra, or replacing a dusty neighborhood track with an oil-coated road would require political influence. Thus, at the same time that whites restricted the number of voters by excluding African Americans, the state created a new public role: that of the client who drew on its services.[1] Contemporaries and historians named this paradoxical period the Progressive Era.

From the debris of disfranchisement, black women discovered fresh approaches to serving their communities and crafted new tactics designed to dull the blade of white supremacy. The result was a greater role for black women in the interracial public sphere. As long as they could vote, it was black men who had most often brokered official state power and made interracial political contacts. After disfranchisement, however, the political culture black women had created through thirty years of work in temperance organizations, Republican Party aid societies, and churches furnished