

ABSTRACT

KING, STEFANIE ALYSON. Consent and Coercion in the Central Piedmont of North Carolina during the Civil War Era. (Under the direction of Dr. Susanna Lee).

In recent years the study of Civil War loyalty has gained considerable scholarly attention. Most of these studies demonstrate that many in the North and South struggled to balance conflicting loyalties between nation, state, family, religion, and self-interest throughout the war. This thesis finds that while all of these factors contributed to dissent, an underlying element that created dissent and disloyalty during the Civil War era was the belief that the government was violating the principles of proper republican rule. This study focuses on white North Carolinians living in a small region in the piedmont of North Carolina that was known as a hotbed of Unionist sentiment during the Civil War. The study uses newspapers, correspondence, political speeches, and testimony from the Southern Claims Commission to analyze how these white North Carolinians rationalized their positions. White North Carolinians from the secession crisis, through the Civil War, and into Reconstruction consistently criticized the both the Union and the Confederate governments for abusing their power. They concentrated their criticism on the ideas of consent and coercion by claiming that the government was not relying on the consent of the governed and was also using coercive policies against its own residents. White North Carolinians in the piedmont resisted the perceived imposition of illegitimate government power by advocating a truly republican form of government. The rationale that the government was failing to represent the will and the good of the people was central to shaping disloyalty during the Civil War era. Nevertheless, as the threat of racial equality grew in the late war years and the Reconstruction period, many of these white North Carolinians shifted their efforts from a fight for government by consent to promote government based on white supremacy.

© Copyright 2015 by Stefanie Alyson King

All Rights Reserved

Consent and Coercion in the Central Piedmont of North Carolina during the Civil War Era

by
Stefanie Alyson King

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

History

Raleigh, North Carolina

2015

APPROVED BY:

Dr. Susanna Michele Lee
Committee Chair

Dr. Katherine Mellen Charron

Dr. Blair L.M. Kelley

BIOGRAPHY

Steffi King is proud to be from Silk Hope, North Carolina and to have graduated from N.C. State in 2013 with a B.S. in History. She is grateful for her abundantly supportive extended family; her Momma and Daddy, sister, Nikki, and Zack for their love, support, and patience; as well as love and support from Alex, Mary, and Jack; and for the wonderful inspiration Emily always provides. Steffi is also appreciative of the guidance Dr. Susanna Lee provided to her throughout her time at N.C. State. She is grateful for the steadfast love and support of her Lord and savior, and in particular the wisdom and encouragement He imparts in Philippians 4. Lastly, she is indebted to her grandfather, Gordon Thomas, who not only sparked her love for Southern history, but taught her that “if it was easy, anyone could do it.”

In the fall she intends to pursue a Ph.D. in History at the University of Kentucky.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: Coercion and the Conditions of Loyalty during the Secession Crisis	12
CHAPTER 2: Dissent and Disloyalty during the War Years	31
CHAPTER 3: Race and Republican Rule in the Reconstruction Era	53
CONCLUSION	82
REFERENCES	85

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Presidential Election, November, 1860.....	24
Figure 1.2 Convention Election, February 1861.....	25

INTRODUCTION

In 1864, Bryan Tyson, a Unionist from North Carolina, explained the position of white North Carolinians living under Confederate rule to a Northern audience, writing, “We may therefore safely infer that, as a general thing, they have enacted their part in this terrible war more through compulsion than voluntary free will.”¹ Tyson hailed from Moore County, North Carolina, a county located in the piedmont that was part of a Unionist stronghold during the Civil War. In this area, opposition to the Confederate government was strong, and many residents actively resisted Confederate rule. Tyson was arrested in 1862 for distributing multiple pamphlets that promoted pro-Union sentiment, and after publishing another pro-Union circular, Tyson sought refuge in the North.² In his pamphlets, Tyson encouraged North Carolinians to resist tyrannical Confederate government rule, even arguing that Confederate power was not legitimate because it was rooted in the illegal usurpation of power by secessionists that disregarded the consent of the governed.³ Additionally, he exposed and condemned the coercive and violent measures the Confederate government used on its own citizens. Tyson advocated peace and reunion with the United States. However, the protection of slavery was central to his vision of peace, and he severely criticized Abraham Lincoln for “prosecuting a war for the purpose of freeing the negroes rather than restoring the Union,” and instead demanded peace with the United States on a “constitutional basis,” meaning with

¹ Bryan Tyson, *The Object of the Administration in Prosecuting the War* (Washington, D.C.: McGill & Witherow, 1869), 7.

² William T. Auman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt: The Confederate Campaign against Peace Agitators, Deserters, and Draft Dodgers* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2014), 49.

³ Bryan Tyson, *Ray of Light, or, A Treatise on the Sectional Troubles, Religiously and Morally Considered* (Brower’s Mills, N.C.: B. Tyson, 1862), 30.

slavery intact.⁴ Thus, while Tyson promoted republican ideals, his vision of legitimate government relied on an oppressive racial hierarchy.

Tyson's ideas resonated strongly with white residents in the central piedmont of North Carolina. The area was a Unionist stronghold from secession, throughout the war, and into the Reconstruction era. The region is surrounded by the Coastal Plains counties to the east, the foothill and mountain counties to the west, the tobacco counties bordering Virginia to the north, and the cotton counties bordering South Carolina to the south. The circular region, as defined in this thesis, is comprised of twelve counties: Alamance, Chatham, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Guilford, Iredell, Montgomery, Moore, Orange, Randolph, and Rowan. These counties all had 3,000 residents or less and accounted for almost 20 percent of population of North Carolina. Slaves comprised less than 25 percent in all of the central Piedmont counties except Chatham and Orange. Thirty-three percent of Chatham County's population was enslaved, which was the highest in the region, while neighboring Randolph County had the smallest population of slaves at just under ten percent. Free black residents comprised nearly 25 percent of the population in these counties. Thus, the region was a "society with slaves," not a "slaveholding society," meaning that while slavery was present, the region did not depend on slavery for everyday operation.⁵ Landless white farmers comprised almost 30 percent of households, although the central piedmont was unique in North Carolina for its diversified economy. This region was the center of manufacturing in the state, with 30 cotton mills and nine woolen plants in 1860. The region also produced

⁴ Tyson, *The Object of the Administration in Prosecuting the War*, 3.

⁵ Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 230; Brown, "North Carolinian Ambivalence," 9.

tobacco, coal, iron, and turpentine. The area also had a strong class of artisans, including furniture makers and pottery makers. Lastly, it is important to note that the area was home to a strong, influential presence of Quakers, Methodists, and Moravians, all of whom did not support the war effort or the institution of slavery.⁶ All of these elements set the central piedmont apart as a region, and helped contribute to continued Union sentiment during the secession crisis and into the war.

White North Carolinians were hesitant to secede from the United States. A large part of the population advocated a “watch-and-wait” attitude towards Abraham Lincoln and the United States government.⁷ North Carolina had strong Unionist sentiment, as in many upper South states, most citizens were hoping for peaceful negotiation and reconciliation of the Union. Throughout the secession crisis a significant portion of North Carolinians insisted that state legislators and other secessionist leaders were advocating secession against the will of the people. Nevertheless, even most of these people advocated secession if Lincoln turned to the use of coercive force, which they also understood as a threat to the institution of slavery. As the war dragged on, Confederate policies alienated many North Carolinians, resulting in varying levels of dissent, disaffection and disloyalty towards the Confederacy.⁸ Opposition to the Confederacy was so prevalent in this region of the state that those loyal to the Union and

⁶ Auman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt*, 31-32. See also Victoria Bynum, “‘War Within a War’: Women’s Participation in the Revolt of the North Carolina Piedmont, 1863-1865,” *Frontiers* 9, no. 3 (1987), 45.

⁷ “Mr. Lincoln’s Inaugural,” *Raleigh Weekly Standard*, March 9, 1861; *Greensborough Patriot*, November 14, 1860.

⁸ David Brown, “North Carolinian Ambivalence: Rethinking Loyalty and Disaffection in the Civil War Piedmont,” in *North Carolinians in the Civil War and Reconstruction*, ed. Paul D. Escott (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008) 9; Amy E. Murrell, “‘Of Necessity and Public Benefit.’ Southern Families and their Appeals for Protection,” in *Southern Families at War: Loyalty and Conflict in the Civil War South*, ed. Catherine Clinton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 77-100.

those loyal to the Confederacy fought a violent “inner Civil War” that was never completely suppressed, despite the governor sending in military force to extinguish disloyal sentiment on seven separate occasions.⁹ However, as the reality of emancipation and racial equality became evident in the late war years and during Reconstruction, white North Carolinians in the central piedmont limited their support of government by consent in order to maintain the antebellum social order as best they could.

Both contemporaries and modern scholars have recognized the piedmont of North Carolina for its Union sentiment. An increasing number of scholars are analyzing conflicting loyalties during the Civil War and the impact these had on the war. These studies explore the various factors contributing to dissent including religion, family, class, and self-interest.¹⁰ In *The Long Shadow of the Civil War*, Victoria Bynum pays special attention to the population of Quakers in North Carolina and their religious dissent towards the Confederacy. Amy Murrell Taylor identifies the importance of the family and the hardships it faced during the Civil War in creating disaffection towards the Confederacy.¹¹ In Western North Carolina, a region that was well known for anti-Confederate sentiment during the war, John Inscoe and Gordon McKinney take this argument a step farther and contribute hardships on the home front as a primary reason for Confederate disloyalty, especially among deserters of the

⁹ See Auman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt*.

¹⁰ See Amy Murrell Taylor, *The Divided Family in Civil War America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2005), Paul D. Escott, *Many Excellent People* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), Judkin Browning, *Shifting Loyalties: the Union Occupation of Eastern North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

¹¹ See Amy Murrell Taylor, *The Divided Family in Civil War America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2005).

Confederate army.¹² Many scholars also recognize the importance of class tensions during the war as well, since poverty was widespread and many residents thought that Confederate policies unfairly burdened the poor. Paul Escott focuses many of his studies in Civil War North Carolina on the dissent that stemmed from class tensions and the government's struggle to resolve the problem.¹³ Additionally, some scholars attribute individual circumstances or self-interest to shaping loyalty. For example, in *Shifting Loyalties* Judkin Browning explains how most residents in occupied Eastern North Carolina simply professed loyalty to whichever cause was more convenient based on the situation. Jonathan Sarris argues that loyalty was determined by local circumstances and individual interests in the mountains of Northern Georgia.¹⁴ While economic interests and individual circumstances, as well as the hardships and pressures of war on the family, certainly generated disloyal sentiment during the war. This thesis establishes that for North Carolinians in the central piedmont, disloyal sentiment was grounded in political dissent.

As Morton Grodzins demonstrates in *The Loyal and the Disloyal*, people have multiple loyalties that they balance according to the demands of each. Nevertheless, there is limit on the amount of strain these loyalties can bear, and often, loyalty to non-national groups are the strongest because they are the most fundamental to everyday life.¹⁵ Grodzins

¹² Amy E. Murrell, "'Of Necessity and Public Benefit': Southern Families and their Appeals for Protection," in *Southern Families at War: Loyalty and Conflict in the Civil War South*, ed. Catherine Clinton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 77-100.

¹³ Paul Escott, "'The Cry of the Sufferers': The Problem of Welfare in the Confederacy," *Civil War History* 23, no.3 (Sept. 1977): 228-240; and Paul Escott, "The Moral Economy of the Crowd in Confederate North Carolina," *Maryland Historian* 13, (1982), 1-17.

¹⁴ Jonathan Dean Sarris, *A Separate Civil War: Communities in Conflict in the Mountain South* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006).

¹⁵ Morton Grodzins, *The Loyal and the Disloyal: Social Boundaries of Patriotism and Treason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 133.

calls this concept “limited loyalty,” a relationship in which the government understands that it can only strain the personal loyalties of an individual so much before the individual concludes that the government is antagonistic to their interests.¹⁶ Grodzins explains that while minor abuses of this bond are tolerable, “a long train of abuses and repeated injuries and usurpations may become destructive to the good of society and intolerable to individuals. The people may find that neither life nor liberty nor the pursuit of happiness is possible. Under such extreme circumstances, individuals and groups find it a right and a duty to disobey—or to discard—their government and to provide new guards for their future security.”¹⁷ Thus, the idea that the government has violated the terms of republican government can serve as foundation for disloyalty to that government.

Ideas about the nature of republican government were central to shaping North Carolinians’ loyalty to the government. As Margaret Levi skillfully demonstrates, citizens’ expectations of a government and the ability of a government to meet those expectations play an important role in maintaining support for the government. This is particularly true in democratic societies. The level of support for a government is based on the perceived fairness of a government’s policies and the ability of the government to reciprocate mutual obligations. In a republican government, the idea that a government must be operating according to the will of the people and for the good of the people is a primary factor for citizens to adhere to political obligations, including loyalty. The failure of a government to

¹⁶ Grodzins, *The Loyal and the Disloyal*, 252.

¹⁷ Grodzins, *The Loyal and the Disloyal*, 253.

meet these expectations results in decreased trust, increased dissent, and heightened charges of illegitimacy.¹⁸

During the Civil War era, white North Carolinians from the central piedmont focused their dissent on two specific aspects of government: consent and coercion. Analyzing the debate over consent and coercion in the piedmont of North Carolina during the Civil War era offers insight into citizens' beliefs about the nature of legitimate government. The majority of evidence represents the views of those who were formal political actors, which primarily consisted of white men. Nevertheless white women and African Americans in the piedmont of North Carolina had a significant influence on the war as they politicized their resistance to the Confederacy in response to hardships on the home front, as Stephanie McCurry masterfully demonstrates in *Confederate Reckoning*. The views of African American men are also reflected to a greater extent in the chapter on Reconstruction because of their officially recognized status as political actors and the heated debate over black suffrage during the Reconstruction era.

White North Carolinians expected government by consent because it was the fundamental principle of republican government. Throughout the secession crisis, Civil War, and Reconstruction, white North Carolinians based their dissent in the belief that the government in power was not representing the interests of the people. They also believed that coercion was fundamentally at odds with consent because it deprived a man of his liberty by interfering with his ability to act freely.¹⁹ During the Civil War era, white North Carolinians

¹⁸ Margaret Levi, *Consent, Dissent, and Patriotism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 208.

¹⁹ J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman, eds., *Coercion* (Chicago: Atherton, 1972), 5.

used the term coercion when they believed the government was imposing policies that did not represent the interests of the people, including the threat of abolishing slavery. White North Carolinians began to claim that the government's policies were not fair, and many refused to comply with them. Furthermore, these North Carolinians understood themselves as resisting the imposition of illegitimate government power.

The first chapter examines the secession crisis in North Carolina. Most North Carolinians were skeptical about secession and hoped for reconciliation with the United States. The majority of white North Carolinians advocated a "watch-and-wait" policy throughout secession winter and into April of 1861. Many also felt that a secessionist minority in power was precipitating the state out of the Union against the will of the people. North Carolinians however were vigilant should President Abraham Lincoln resort to coercion or the imposition of government force on the South. Only after Lincoln's call for troops did most white North Carolinians accept secession as the only option. A month later, the North Carolina General Assembly voted unanimously to secede. Nevertheless, many North Carolinians protested that this had been done without their consent. While white North Carolinians resisted Lincoln's attempt to force the seceded states back into the Union by calling for troops, which they understood as coercive, they also resented the lack of a popular referendum for secession. The loyalty of many North Carolinians to the Confederacy was fragile from the outset and formed a strong foundation for disloyalty to the Confederacy.

The second chapter analyzes disloyalty to the Confederacy in the piedmont of North Carolina. Although most residents of the Confederacy "swung Confederate" following secession, in the piedmont of North Carolina, this loyalty was still tentative. Early in the war,

policies instituted by the Confederate government alienated many North Carolinians, who viewed the measures as coercive, especially by a government to which they had never consented. Over time, many residents in the piedmont became disloyal to the Confederacy. As disloyal sentiment increased, Unionists, deserters, and draft dodgers fought an “inner civil war” with Confederate forces for the duration of the Civil War. The region also served as the center of the statewide Peace Movement in 1864. During the Civil War, dissent and disloyalty had many factors, and many white Unionists in the piedmont of North Carolina indicated the coercive policies of the Confederate government as the basis of their disloyal sentiment and criticized their lack of consent to these policies.

The third chapter details the shift in the demand for government by consent to adherence to white supremacist rule following the war. During Reconstruction, the Republican Party came to power early on, championing democracy and political equality for all men. In response, the Conservative Party, led by ex-Confederates, accused the Reconstruction government of being illegitimate because it disfranchised former Confederates, thus governing them without their consent. Additionally, the Klan became the coercive power by using violence to prevent Republicans, especially black citizens, from participating politically. Klan violence was rampant in the central piedmont, and members, often former Confederates, sought a return to Democratic “home rule” by coercing the opposition into silence or compliance. The violence effectively shifted focus away from a truly republican government to “white line politics.” The “redemption” of the state to home rule in 1872 confirmed that white North Carolinians were willing only to submit to rule by white North Carolinians.

James Kettner argues that in the antebellum United States, “As long as the central authority was exercised properly and with due regard for the powers reserved by the states, citizens owed obedience to the national government. But once the people—that is, a majority of citizens within the respective states—determined that national power had become tyrannical, they could appeal to the principles of 1776 and withdraw their allegiance.”²⁰ Throughout this era, white North Carolinians did just that by consistently claiming that those in power were not representing the will of the people. The allegation that the government was repudiating government by consent and implementing coercive measures was a major factor in promoting dissent. Many white North Carolinians in the central piedmont used this mindset from the secession crisis, through the war, and through Reconstruction in order to resist the United States government, the Confederate government, and the United States government, again. The belief that the government’s use of power was illegitimate because it violated the terms of republican government was the basis for dissent in the central piedmont.

The perceived imposition of government power and lack of popular consent to that force was central to shaping loyalty during the secession crisis and the war. During the secession crisis, many North Carolinians in the piedmont felt that both the Union and Confederate governments overlooked government by consent. White North Carolinians increasingly viewed Confederate policies as unfair and undemocratic, and responded with a Peace Movement demanding government by consent. However, as the threat of black equality grew toward the end of the Civil War, many white North Carolinians considered the

²⁰ James Kettner, *The Development of American Citizenship, 1608-1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 335.

coercive policies of the Ku Klux Klan justified since the Reconstruction government also neglected government by consent by disfranchising former Confederates. At the same time, the response by the North Carolina government to the Klan was condemned as another use of coercive force. Many white Confederate residents eventually abandoned their wartime vision of legitimate government as government by consent in favor of white supremacist rule.

CHAPTER 1: Coercion and the Conditions of Loyalty during the Secession Crisis

In early April 1861, several young men in downtown Raleigh raised a Confederate flag, and stood guard around the flagpole bearing arms. The flag drew a crowd, and the *Raleigh Banner* reported that onlookers were insulted, and some even considered it a “declaration of war.” The majority of North Carolinians were still hoping for reconciliation with the United States, and many felt there was no just cause for secession. After the flag had flown for a few hours, an older man “procured an old musket, and after pointing it in the direction of those about the pole until the ground was cleared, elevated it and fired at the flag.”²¹ The newspaper reported that the young men likely flew the flag for the purpose of instigating conflict, which they did successfully. Although many people in Raleigh disapproved of the young men’s actions, the older man was so offended that, in return, he militantly defended North Carolina’s rightful position within the United States. Nevertheless, barely a month later, on May 20th, 1861, North Carolina became the last state to secede from the Union and join the Confederate States of America. How was such strong Union sentiment overthrown in just a little over a month?

The secession crisis in North Carolina has received little scholarly attention. The most thorough and influential work on the topic was written by Joseph Carlyle Sitterson in 1939. Nevertheless, his outdated interpretation is pro-Confederate and pro-secession. Sitterson refers to secessionists as “positive forces striving for Southern nationalism” and calls the secession movement as the “Southern Rights movement.”²² Sitterson repeatedly rejects the

²¹ “The Scenes on Wednesday Evening,” *Raleigh Ad Valorem Banner*, April 5, 1861.

²² Joseph Carlyle Sitterson, *The Secession Movement in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939), 1.

existence of a Unionist majority in the state, claiming that white North Carolinians had been considering secession since John Brown's attack on the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry in October of 1859 and that most people in the state began to support secession following Lincoln's election and the secession of South Carolina and the gulf states.²³ He argues that secession was necessary to protect "Southern Rights" and that North Carolina had no choice but to secede after Abraham Lincoln's call for troops in April of 1861, which "forced" the state out of the Union.²⁴

More recent studies seek to overcome this interpretation and restore the significance of Unionists to their rightful place in secession studies. Daniel Crofts' 1989 study *Reluctant Confederates* focuses on secession politics in the Upper South states of Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina, all of which remained in the Union until after Lincoln's call for troops, and demonstrates that the majority of white North Carolinians supported reconciliation into April of 1861. He emphasizes the importance of the two-party system in creating resistance to secession and recognizes that support for secession or unionism varied strongly by local and regional concerns.

The election of 1860 intensified sectionalism throughout the country, the South, and North Carolina. The campaign of Constitutional Union candidate John Bell rested on preserving the Union, the Constitution, and states' rights, and gained much support in North Carolina.²⁵ The platform of John Breckenridge, the candidate for the Southern faction of the

²³ Sitterson, *The Secession Movement in North Carolina*, 148, 204.

²⁴ Sitterson, *The Secession Movement in North Carolina*, 249.

²⁵ Daniel Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists during the Secession Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 76.

Democrat Party, had substantial support as well, especially in the more heavily slaveholding East of the state. Breckenridge is often remembered as the secessionist candidate, but in North Carolina, his supporters repeatedly denied that he was a disunionist. The vote was split almost evenly between the two, with Breckenridge receiving 50.4% of the vote, and Bell receiving 46.8% of the vote. Stephen Douglas, the Northern Democratic candidate, received the remaining portion of the vote. Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party did not appear on the ballot in North Carolina.²⁶

Following the election of 1860, the majority of white North Carolinians advocated a “watch-and-wait” attitude towards Abraham Lincoln and the United States government.²⁷ White North Carolinians were dismayed by the results of the election, but saw no immediate cause for secession. Despite the secession of South Carolina and seven other Southern states by January of 1861, the majority of white North Carolinians continued to hope for peace and reunion. In February, the North Carolina voters rejected a secession convention, and many Unionists expressed the belief that the minority of secessionists in power were precipitating secession despite the will of the people to remain in the Union. Nevertheless, white residents also made it clear that their attitude would likely change if Lincoln interfered with the constitutional rights of the states, especially slavery, or tried to coerce them in any way.

White North Carolinians at the time believed that the Constitution protected slavery. Therefore, they did not think President Lincoln could single-handedly eliminate the

²⁶ Ralph A. Wooster, *The Secession Conventions of the South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 191.

²⁷ “Mr. Lincoln’s Inaugural,” *Raleigh Weekly Standard*, March 9, 1861.; *Greensborough Patriot*, November 14, 1860.

institution without violating their rights. Additionally, white North Carolinians resisted the coercion of the seceded Southern states because they believed it interfered with the right of people to govern themselves.²⁸ Furthermore, coercion would force North Carolina to choose sides, eliminating their ability to act freely.²⁹ As Marc Kruman demonstrates, North Carolinians were willing to remain in the Union as long as Lincoln and the United States used legitimate power.³⁰ However, if Lincoln resorted to the use of illegitimate power through coercion, or violated their constitutional rights, particularly the right to own slaves, white North Carolinians threatened to revoke their support of the United States government.

Following the firing on Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for troops, many North Carolinians felt Lincoln had betrayed them by failing to recognize Southern interests, denying men the right to determine their own government, and by coercing them to fight against the seceded South. By resorting to coercion, Lincoln had abused his power. In response to his act of coercion, the North Carolina General Assembly voted unanimously to secede from the Union and join the Confederate States of America. Nevertheless, this was done without popular consent, and as a result loyalty to the Confederacy was cautious. In the piedmont of North Carolina, there was already a strong concentration of Union sentiment when the war began. However, for many white North Carolinians in the piedmont, the preservation of slavery and racial hierarchy was also an important determinant of their

²⁸ Marc Kruman, *Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 214.

²⁹ Levi, *Consent, Dissent, and Patriotism*, 205.

³⁰ Kruman, *Parties and Politics in North Carolina*, 201.

political support. The basis of this sentiment was political and formed the foundation for widespread Confederate dissent throughout the war.

The results of the national election disappointed white North Carolinians, but few saw it as cause enough to secede.³¹ The *Raleigh Standard* asserted that it was “better to bear the ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of,” and encouraged North Carolinians to “Watch and Wait.”³² The *Fayetteville Observer* was disappointed by Lincoln’s election, but reminded voters that participants in the democratic election had the duty to abide by the result.³³ The writer emphasized the various protections offered by the Constitution that would prevent Lincoln’s misuse of power, in particular checks and balances between the three branches of government. The article cautioned, “let us not prostrate in the dust the fairest fabric of Government ever devised by the wisdom of man by yielding to the advice of those whose sensibilities outrun their judgements.”³⁴ The article also implied that secessionist leaders have an ulterior motive and advised readers not to acquiesce to the will of the secessionist minority. While many were skeptical of the Republican president, devotion to the Union was more important, and North Carolinians were not yet willing to abandon their government.

Despite popular belief in North Carolina that compromise was still attainable, on November 20th, Governor John Ellis proposed that the North Carolina General Assembly call a convention in North Carolina to discuss the sectional crisis and organize a conference of

³¹ Sitterson, *The Secession Movement in North Carolina*, 177.

³² *Greensborough Patriot*, November 14, 1860.

³³ “How the Result is Received,” *Fayetteville Observer*, November 12, 1860.

³⁴ “How the Result is Received,” *Fayetteville Observer*, November 12, 1860.

Southern states to discuss the issue as well.³⁵ Ellis was leaning toward secession and was beginning to steer the state in that direction. Many North Carolinians decried his actions as precipitous and claimed that he was acting against the will of the people. The *Greensboro Times* hoped that:

the people of North Carolina will think and act for themselves in this matter; they will not be led by Governor Ellis. If on calm and sober reflection, they should think it best to go out of the Union, they will go, but if they should come to the conclusion to remain, they will do so, and if Gov. Ellis is not satisfied to remain with them, why he can take his departure.³⁶

North Carolinians complained that secessionists were in the minority, but since this minority was in power, they were able to advance their own selfish desires. In effect, many white residents in the central piedmont believed that the minority was trying to rule for the majority and resisted this as a violation of government by the people. The *Raleigh Standard* accused secessionists of being “a clique who care nothing for the people... a clique who, to advance their unholy ends, would rush this state into the vortex of disunion.”³⁷ Young politician Zebulon Vance was of this opinion too, writing, “the leaders in the disunion move are scorning every suggestion of compromise and rushing everything with ruinous and indecent haste... they are ‘precipitating’ the people into a revolution without giving them time to think.”³⁸ The debate over whether or not to call a state convention to discuss secession so consumed the General Assembly that they did not pass a single act in the entire month

³⁵ W. Buck Years and John G. Barrett, ed., *North Carolina Civil War Documentary* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 5.

³⁶ *Greensboro Times*, November 11, 1860.

³⁷ *Raleigh Weekly Standard*, December 12, 1860.

³⁸ Zeb Vance to William Dickson, December 11, 1860 in W. Buck Years and John G. Barrett, ed., *North Carolina Civil War Documentary* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 14.

between Ellis' speech and the Christmas recess.³⁹ A few days later, South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union, intensifying the sectional crisis.

During the secession winter, Union meetings across the central piedmont passed resolutions reaffirming that disunion was not yet an option. A list of resolutions adopted by Unionists in Hillsborough in January insisted that "reasonable time should be allowed and all remedies consistent with continuance of the Union exhausted before the abandonment of the Constitution."⁴⁰ North Carolina Unionists cautioned that secession remained the last resort, and there were still several possibilities for compromise.

While most North Carolinians saw no cause for immediate secession, conditional Unionists established that the line was drawn at "coercion."⁴¹ For white North Carolinians, this meant interference with constitutional rights or the use of coercive force. These two forms of coercion were widely accepted as conditions for Unionism in North Carolina. The *Raleigh Standard* hailed, "There is only one evil greater than disunion, and that is the loss of honor and constitutional right. That evil the people of the South will never submit to."⁴² The *Wilmington Daily Herald* seconded, "we would never... suffer a Southern State to be driven into subjection by armed force, as long as we could stagger a musket."⁴³ Coercion violated white North Carolinian's expectations for a republican government and undermined their

³⁹ Sitterson, *The Secession Movement in North Carolina*, 187.

⁴⁰ *Semi-Weekly Raleigh Register*, January 5, 1861. Several other Union meetings in the piedmont published resolutions with similar wording, including Winston, Forsyth County and Moore County. See *Semi-Weekly Raleigh Register*, January 9, 1861, and the *Fayetteville Observer*, January 15, 1861, respectively.

⁴¹ Sitterson, *The Secession Movement in North Carolina*, 196.

⁴² "Disunion for Existing Causes," *Raleigh Weekly Standard*, December 1, 1860.

⁴³ "A Few Reflections on Coercion," *Wilmington Daily Herald*, January 3, 1861.

trust in the ability of the federal government to meet the demands of Southerners, including the protection of slavery.

A group of conditional Unionists meeting in Hillsborough in late December indicated both types of coercion as factors that would necessitate secession. In regards to interference with constitutional rights, these citizens vowed to promptly “make resistance to encroachments, if any shall be attempted by him, on the rights and interests of slavery as an established institution of the Southern states, protected by the Constitution of the Union.”⁴⁴

Many white Americans at the time, including these men, believed that the Three-Fifths Clause supported the constitutionality of slavery. Many white Southerners also believed that Lincoln could not interfere with this right without violating the democratic system of checks and balances, a violation that would also push North Carolinians toward secession.

These citizens also explained their resistance to coercion by the United States government, declaring that they recognized “the right of resistance by force to unauthorized injustice and oppression, and if the incoming administration shall pervert the powers of the Government to destroy or otherwise interfere with the rights of slavery, none will be more ready than ourselves to recur to this extreme remedy.”⁴⁵ These citizens were prepared to invoke their right to revolution and self-determination if the Federal government violated what white North Carolinians perceived to be the principles of republican government.

⁴⁴ “Resolutions of a Hillsborough Mass Meeting,” December 26, 1860, in *The Papers of William Alexander Graham*, Vol. V, 1857-1863, edited by Max R. Williams and J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton (Raleigh: North Carolina Offices of Archives and History, 1973), 201.

⁴⁵ “Resolutions of a Hillsborough Mass Meeting,” *The Papers of William Alexander Graham*, Vol. V, 202.

This set of resolutions also highlights a central concern for many conditional Unionists: the preservation of slavery. For many Unionists, the protection of slavery was the contingent condition for their continued loyalty to the United States government. The perceived threat to the institution of slavery was the primary factor contributing to caution over Lincoln's election, the defense of Constitutional rights, and the fear of coercion by the United States government.⁴⁶ Both types of coercion, interference with the believed right to own slaves and the forced subjugation of seceded Southern states, ultimately threatened the racial order. Thus, while white North Carolinians desired to remain in the United States, they were more concerned with the protection of slavery. As long as the United States protected slavery and the existing racial hierarchy, white North Carolinians were willing to comply with the government. Coercion threatened the existing racial hierarchy.

Even as white North Carolinians established boundaries for their continued support of the federal government, they hoped for reconciliation. The *Raleigh Standard* avowed, "if [North Carolinians'] rights should be assailed they will defend them. But if they should not be assailed, and if we can preserve the government with safety and honor to ourselves, in the name of all that is sacred let us do so."⁴⁷ While the results of Lincoln's election made North Carolinians cautious, during the secession winter few North Carolinians were convinced that coercion was an imminent threat necessitating immediate secession.

When the North Carolina General Assembly reconvened in January, legislators resumed their debate on whether or not to call a secession convention. After three weeks, and

⁴⁶ Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 21.

⁴⁷ "Disunion for Existing Causes," *Raleigh Weekly Standard*, December 1, 1860.

the secession of six more Southern states, they approved a bill calling for an election to vote on whether or not a convention should be held and for delegates to send to that convention. Any measures adopted at the convention were required to be submitted to the people for approval. They scheduled the election for February 28th, 1861. The Unionist newspaper the *Carolina Watchman* responded to the news of the convention, protesting, “Oh! what madness!—and all the work of partizan leaders!”⁴⁸ The majority of North Carolinians still advocated peace and reunion, and many felt that the call for a convention was a conspiracy by secessionist Democrats to force North Carolina out of the Union.⁴⁹

As the convention election approached, residents of the central piedmont continued to believe that a small faction of secessionists was instigating “disunion for disunion’s sake” despite widespread popular support of compromise and reunion.⁵⁰ State Senator Jonathan Worth addressed the citizens of Randolph and Alamance to encourage them to vote against the convention, arguing that North Carolinians “have not yet exhausted constitutional remedies” and that the only goal of the convention was to destroy the Union.⁵¹ As demonstrated by historian Daniel Crofts, the numbers at the poll indicated “unusual intensity of popular feeling,” in which areas with Unionist sentiment reported unusually large ballot returns.⁵² Reports throughout the central piedmont mention that the convention vote was the most important vote in recent memory, and many of those who normally neglected their right

⁴⁸ “A Word to Disunionists,” *Carolina Watchman*, February 26, 1861.

⁴⁹ Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*, 111.

⁵⁰ “Civil War will be Abolition,” *Raleigh Standard*, February 5, 1861.

⁵¹ Jonathan Worth, “To my Constituents of the Counties of Randolph and Alamance,” in W. Buck Years and John G. Barrett, ed., *North Carolina Civil War Documentary* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 17.

⁵² Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*, 154.

to vote cast ballots. For example, Randolph County rarely cast as many as 2,000 votes, but in the convention election, citizens in Randolph County cast over 2,500 votes. Unionist newspapers across the state printed articles warning that the true aim of the convention was secession and urged their readers to vote against it.

When Unionists claimed that the convention was only to debate Union or Disunion, secessionists replied, “The question is not Union or Disunion... *What shall [North Carolina] do to protect herself?*”⁵³ Secessionists feared interference by the federal government and believed disunion may become necessary for defense or the protection of slavery. Nevertheless, many North Carolinians still did not see cause enough to act, and Unionists argued that North Carolina would be better off in the Union. One newspaper reported, “The secession of seven Cotton States makes up for us no necessity to go out. On the contrary so far as the security of property, and civil and religious freedom are concerned, our chances are ten fold more favorable to remain just where we are than to go off with the seceders.”⁵⁴ Many in North Carolina and the rest of upper South still thought it was in their best interest to remain in the Union. Most white North Carolinians saw no economic advantage in joining the Confederate States of America, especially as the economy in the upper South became more aligned with that of the North. White residents in the upper South also argued that the institution of slavery was protected in the United States and that war could result in abolition. Finally, they emphasized that the government of the United States was the best form of

⁵³ *State Journal*, February 13, 1861.

⁵⁴ “The True Issue,” *Carolina Watchman*, February 26, 1861.

government ever created and that the civil liberties guaranteed to them by the Constitution may not be guaranteed otherwise.⁵⁵

Unionists feared that if North Carolina and the remaining slave states seceded, war would ensue, along with a centralized military government instead of a democracy, and an increased threat of abolition. The week of the convention election, the Unionist *Carolina Watchman* pleaded:

People of North Carolina, do you desire to place yourselves under such a rickety, rotten concern as that offered to you by secessionists, with all attendant horrors, war, *high taxes*, and lastly, a *military despotism* of the most damnable kind! If not, put your seal of condemnation on the disturbers of your peace, your prosperity and the security of your life and that of your wives and children, on Thursday the 28th instant.⁵⁶

Many Unionists remained skeptical of the benefits of seceding and joining the Confederacy, when the United States had yet to violate the constitutional rights of North Carolina or North Carolinians. Furthermore, many North Carolinians believed that the Peace Conference in Washington, D.C. would produce a solution, which encouraged Union support and suppressed secession sentiment in the election.⁵⁷

North Carolina voters rejected the call for a convention 47,323 to 46,672.⁵⁸ Although the margin of the vote for a convention was small, the majority of delegates elected throughout the state were Unionists. When viewed by county, however, the results of the convention election are clearly sectional. Voters in the extreme eastern counties voted for

⁵⁵ “Civil War will be Abolition,” *North Carolina Standard*, February 5, 1861; “Rumors from Washington,” *Raleigh Weekly Standard*, April 17, 1861.

⁵⁶ “Who are the Submissionists?” *Carolina Watchman*, February 26, 1861.

⁵⁷ Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*, 208.

⁵⁸ Wooster, *The Secession Conventions of the South*, 193.

Unionists, as did the northeastern counties, the central piedmont, and the mountain counties. The Coastal Plain region and the southwestern and border piedmont were overwhelmingly secessionist. Of the counties of Alamance, Randolph, Rowan, Moore, Montgomery, Guilford and Chatham combined, only 1,832 of the 11,410 votes were for a convention. These counties are located in the central piedmont, a Unionist stronghold during the sectional crisis.⁵⁹

The results of the convention election are also illuminating when compared to the results from the 1860 presidential election. Although not all Breckenridge supporters voted for him to support secession, the correlation between presidential candidate and convention delegation is striking. A comparison of these maps also illustrates that the central piedmont was home to the most heavily concentrated area of Unionists. The influence of Quakers, the importance of manufacturing, and the relative lack of reliance on slavery all contributed to Union sentiment in the region.

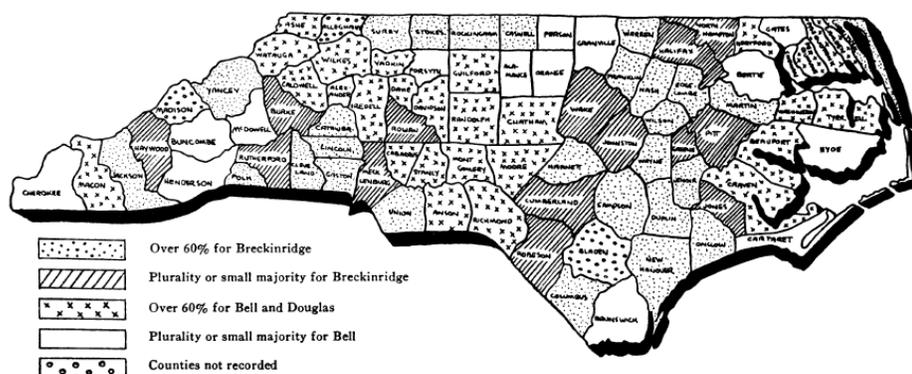


Figure 1.1 Presidential Election, November 1860. Joseph Carlyle Sitterson, *The Secession Movement in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 176.

⁵⁹ The counties in the central Piedmont are: Alamance, Chatham, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Guilford, Iredell, Montgomery, Moore, Orange, Randolph, Rowan and Stanly.

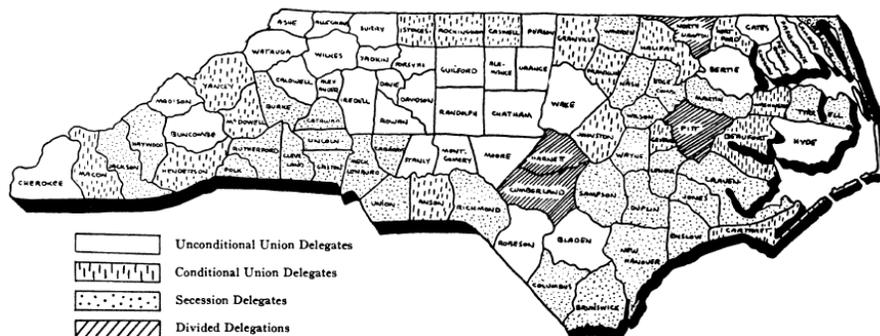


Figure 1.2 Convention Election, February 1861. Joseph Carlyle Sitterson, *The Secession Movement in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 228.

Unionists throughout the state and the piedmont thought that the convention results were the final say on the topic—the “death blow” to secession.⁶⁰ Newspapers in the central piedmont applauded the Unionists in the state, saying, “If the Union ticket has prevailed in this state, as we believe it has, it has been emphatically the work of the people; for the politicians have fought for disunion with all the desperation of drowning men.”⁶¹ Many residents in the central piedmont continued to believe that the will of the majority was being overlooked, especially as secessionists continued to provoke what many Unionists felt was a settled subject. This may have been because the men in the North Carolina General Assembly had more at stake during the secession crisis than the average white North Carolinian, including political success and a direct interest in the protection of slavery. In 1861, over 80 percent of the members of the General Assembly owned slaves.⁶²

⁶⁰ Wooster, *The Secession Conventions of the South*, 194.

⁶¹ *Raleigh Weekly Standard*, March 6, 1861. Reprinted from the *Raleigh Ad Valorem Banner*.

⁶² Kruman, *Parties and Politics in North Carolina*, 202.

Unionists still viewed secessionists as a faction of agitators, and believed that the majority of the people did not support secession. The *Raleigh Standard* stressed the importance of the will of the people in government, saying that secessionist leaders in the state legislature “may as well hang up their fiddles... The people will keep step to no tune of their playing.”⁶³ North Carolinians felt that the convention vote clearly demonstrated that the majority of the people desired to remain in the Union, despite the instigation of those in power. In early April, North Carolina, and especially the central piedmont, was still dominated by Union sentiment.

Unionists continued to support and hope for compromise, but the line was still firmly drawn at coercion. News of the firing on Fort Sumter in South Carolina on April 13th brought tension to a head. Two days later, Lincoln issued a proclamation calling for 75,000 troops to “suppress” the seceded Southern states. Secretary of War Simon Cameron sent Governor Ellis a telegram requesting two regiments from North Carolina. Ellis replied:

Your dispatch is received, and if genuine which its extraordinary character leads one to doubt, I have to say in reply, that I regard the levy of troops made by the Administration for the purposes of subjugating the States of the South, as in violation of the Constitution, and as a gross usurpation of power. I can be no part to this wicked violation of the laws of the Country and to this war upon the liberties of a free people. You can get no troops from North Carolina.⁶⁴

Lincoln had resorted to coercion despite North Carolina’s attempts to compromise, and North Carolinians understood his proclamation as a betrayal.⁶⁵

⁶³ *Raleigh Weekly Standard*, April 4, 1861.

⁶⁴ John W. Ellis. “Reply by Governor Ellis to request by United States Secretary of War for troops from North Carolina,” April 14, 1861.

⁶⁵ Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*, 338; Harris, *North Carolina and the Coming of the Civil War*, 54.

Following Lincoln's call for troops, most North Carolinians accepted secession as the only remaining alternative. In the eyes of white North Carolinians, the United States government had failed to protect their rights and represent their interests, especially slavery. Jonathan Worth wrote that Lincoln "could have devised no scheme more effectual than the one he has pursued, to overthrow the friends of Union here. . . . he is the most efficient auxiliary of the secessionists."⁶⁶ Lincoln's proclamation caused many North Carolinians to take sides with the secessionists. Zebulon Vance was giving a speech in support of remaining in the Union when he received word of Lincoln's proclamation, speaking with his arms raised. He wrote that as his arm came down, "it fell slowly and sadly by the side of a secessionist."⁶⁷ Thus, newfound secession sentiment in North Carolina was based on necessity and duty, and was not accompanied with the widespread enthusiasm that overtook most newly Confederate states.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, some Unionists continued to hope for peace over war. The *Raleigh Standard* reported, "The mission of the border States is to command the peace, if possible, and to maintain their rights in the Union. If they cannot check and control the two extremes no other power can."⁶⁹ Some North Carolinians, including Zeb Vance, envisioned the possibility of the border slave states and border free states uniting to form a Middle Confederacy that, much like a middle sibling, would be able to mediate and reconcile the

⁶⁶ Jonathan Worth to Sprungs, Oak & Co. May 13, 1861 in J.G. de Roulhac. Hamilton, ed., *The Correspondence of Jonathan Worth, Volume I*, (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1909).

⁶⁷ Zebulon Baird Vance, "Lecture Before the Andrew Post, No. 15 of the Grand Army," in Yearn, W. Buck and John G. Barrett, ed. *North Carolina Civil War Documentary* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 22.

⁶⁸ Wooster, *The Secession Conventions of the South*, 190.

⁶⁹ "Rumors from Washington," *Raleigh Weekly Standard*, April 17, 1861; see also "The Border States must Unite and Act," *Raleigh Weekly Standard*, April 20, 1861.

North with the Southern Confederacy.⁷⁰ The formerly pro-Union *Raleigh Banner* now advocated secession, but was skeptical about joining the Southern Confederacy, saying, “It does not necessarily follow that because we secede we shall join the Southern Confederacy... Give us the Stars and Stripes, which are ours, and which we love, and we will fight under them to the death.”⁷¹ Even once secession seemed imminent, becoming Confederate did not.

On May 1st, the North Carolina General Assembly passed Governor Ellis’ bill calling for a secession convention. This convention would have unlimited power, and the actions of the convention would not have to be submitted to the people. Only three men, all State Senators from the central piedmont, opposed granting the convention unlimited power.⁷² A week before the election, citizens voted for delegates to the convention. On the day of the convention election, Jonathan Worth wrote a letter to his brothers, lamenting, “Popular government is proving itself a fallacy and delusion. Virtue and order are unequal to a contest with ambition and selfishness.”⁷³ Low voter turnout across the state indicated a lack of enthusiasm, and many secessionists ran unopposed, since many North Carolinians already anticipated the results.⁷⁴

On May 20th, 1861, the convention delegates unanimously passed measures to both secede from North Carolina and join the Confederate States of America.⁷⁵ R.P. Dick,

⁷⁰ Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*, 109; Sitterson, *The Secession Movement in North Carolina*, 199.

⁷¹ *Raleigh Ad Valorem Banner*, April 25, 1861.

⁷² Sitterson, *The Secession Movement in North Carolina*, 243. These delegates represented Iredell, Orange, Randolph and Alamance counties.

⁷³ Jonathan Worth to T.C. and B.G. Worth, May 13, 1861 in J.G. de Roulhac. Hamilton, ed., *The Correspondence of Jonathan Worth, Volume I*, (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1909).

⁷⁴ Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*, 341.

⁷⁵ Sitterson, *The Secession Movement in North Carolina*, 248.

representing Guilford County, proposed a motion that would put the secession ordinance to the people for a vote.⁷⁶ Twenty of the 22 delegates from the central piedmont counties voted in favor of submitting the bill for a popular referendum. This indicates that support for secession in this area was not as strong and that these delegates wanted to secure the consent of North Carolina voters. Nevertheless, the motion was denied 39 to 64.⁷⁷ Unionists in North Carolina had consistently claimed secession was only the desire of Governor Ellis and his “faction” of supporters, and that they had advocated a secession agenda despite the will of the people since before the election of 1860. Failure to put the secession ordinance to the people of the state for a vote strengthened their claim.

Ultimately, North Carolina seceded from the Union in an undemocratic and unenthusiastic fashion. In early May of 1861, one North Carolina man reported that “the people of Guilford, Randolph and other adjoining counties are unshaken in their devotion to the stars and stripes.”⁷⁸ North Carolina had substantial Union presence up until the events of mid-April. But North Carolinians had always been more opposed to coercion than they were secession, and after these events, the majority of North Carolinians felt the state had no other alternative and were “forced” out of the Union. The *Raleigh Standard* wrote, “United action in defence of the sovereignty of North Carolina, and of the rights of the South, now becomes the duty of all.”⁷⁹ North Carolinians became Confederate citizens only reluctantly, and the

⁷⁶ *Journal of the Convention of the People of North Carolina, Held on the 20th Day of May, A.D. 1861*, (Raleigh: Jno. W. Syme, Convention Printer, 1862), 17.

⁷⁷ Harris, *North Carolina and the Coming of the Civil War*, 56; Sitterson, *The Secession Movement in North Carolina*, 248.

⁷⁸ Jesse Wheeler to Benjamin S. Hedrick, May 6, 1861, Benjamin Sherwood Hedrick Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

⁷⁹ *Raleigh Weekly Standard*, April 24, 1861.

failure to guarantee popular support to secede from the Union and join the Confederacy would lay the groundwork for dissent in the years to come.

CHAPTER 2: Dissent and Disloyalty during the War Years

Loyalty to the Confederacy was fragile from the onset in the piedmont due to the absence of a popular referendum obtaining the consent of the people to secede from the Union and join the Confederate States of America. The coercive measures instituted by the Confederate government shortly after would only generate more disloyalty. As disloyalty rose, the Confederate government instituted more coercive policies, and disloyalty increased again. By 1863, North Carolina became the only Confederate state to adopt a peace movement, which emphasized North Carolinians lack of support for the government and its wartime policies.

Many historians have recognized that Confederate residents confronted conflicting loyalties throughout the war. Historians often attribute these conflicting loyalties to self-preservation, family, religion, or local circumstances. Nevertheless, in the central piedmont of North Carolina, dissent was politically motivated as well. Ideas about government were central to shaping the loyalty of Confederate residents in the piedmont of North Carolina; in particular, the idea that power was derived from the consent of the governed.

Georgia Lee Tatum became the first to discuss Confederate loyalty in a 1934 book that she funded the publication of herself because scholars at the time were disinterested in the subject. In *Disloyalty in the Confederacy* Tatum distinguishes three classes of disloyal Confederates—Unionists, who were strongly opposed to secession from the onset; the disloyal, who refused to support the Confederacy once it was established and were willing to

actively discourage Confederate rule, sometimes using violence; and the disaffected, who resisted Confederate rule in a more passive and generalized manner.⁸⁰

Historians after Tatum, however, neglected Southern Unionism for years, until Revisionist interpretations, like *The Other South* by Carl Degler, again turned to wartime loyalty. Loyalty in the Confederacy is a complex subject, and historians all too often describe residents using the dichotomy of “Unionist” and “Confederate.”⁸¹ Nevertheless, many residents of the Confederacy do not fit neatly within the categories of “Unionist” and “Confederate” because their loyalty wavered between the two sides at some point during the war. Scholars of wartime loyalty have since identified areas of strong Union sentiment, like Tennessee, and supported the idea that loyalty during the Civil War was fluid and elastic, in response to the hardships of war.

In an analysis of the people living in Union-occupied eastern North Carolina, Judkin Browning argues that the allegiance of Confederate residents was like that of a sliding scale. Confederate residents harbored “flexible loyalties” that were “liable to be more pro-Union or pro-Confederate at any given time, depending on their individual circumstances.”⁸² Browning shows how white Confederate residents created a pattern of “alternately accepting and rejecting Union occupation depending on the policies instituted.”⁸³ In Union-occupied North Carolina, residents based their loyalties on individual circumstances and in response to

⁸⁰ Georgia Lee Tatum, *Disloyalty in the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1934).

⁸¹ John Sacher, “The Loyal Draft Dodger? A Reexamination of Confederate Substitution,” *Civil War History* 57, no. 2 (June 2011): 154.

⁸² Judkin Browning, *Shifting Loyalties: the Union Occupation of Eastern North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 4.

⁸³ Browning, *Shifting Loyalties*, 7.

practical needs. Similarly, North Carolinians in the piedmont, though free of Union troops until the last months of the war, had “flexible loyalties” as well, which responded and reacted to Confederate policies throughout the war.

Although disloyalty to the Confederacy is more well-known in western North Carolina than in most of the Confederacy, some scholars have suggested that Union sentiment was in fact more strong in the piedmont of the state.⁸⁴ Victoria Bynum identifies the influence of Quakers as part of the reason for such strong Union sentiment.⁸⁵ Both Bynum and Stephanie McCurry investigate the development of a public voice for women on the Confederate home front in response to Confederate policies. They identify causes of disaffection among piedmont residents and expressions of dissent, but do not provide an analysis of loyalty or consent. David Brown focuses on the loyalties of piedmont residents during the Civil War and criticizes the “false dichotomy” of Union and Confederate, arguing instead that most citizens were ambivalent during the war.⁸⁶ Ambivalent residents were part of a group “whose loyalty fluctuated, who equivocated, and who did what was best for themselves and their families.”⁸⁷ Again, wartime loyalties are based on individual circumstances and family. While these explain various causes and expressions of Confederate disloyalty, these studies are most often centered on individual circumstances, rather than political motivation for political dissent.

⁸⁴ David Brown, “North Carolinian Ambivalence: Rethinking Loyalty and Disaffection in the Civil War Piedmont,” in *North Carolinians in the Civil War and Reconstruction*, ed. Paul D. Escott (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Auman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt*, 7.

⁸⁵ See Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁸⁶ Brown, “North Carolinian Ambivalence,” 8.

⁸⁷ Brown, “North Carolinian Ambivalence,” 8.

During the Civil War, many white residents in the central piedmont felt that the Confederacy violated the republican principles they expected from the government. Political dissent was rooted in the accusation that the Confederacy was not operating according to the will of the people. Instead, the Confederacy implemented policies without popular consent and forced people to comply—using violence, if necessary. Many of these policies did not have the interest of the majority of the people in mind. On the contrary, many of the policies benefitted only a select group of wealthy white Southerners. Conscription, tax-in-kind, impressment, and the suspension of habeas corpus are all examples of Confederate policies that increased disloyal sentiment.

These policies led many in this region to see the Confederate government as coercive and tyrannical. Disloyal sentiment and resistance to Confederate policies were widespread in the central piedmont of North Carolina. In response to increasing disloyalty, the Confederate government imposed additional policies to ensure order, and many white residents felt that these policies, such as armed deserter hunts, were coercive. These policies, in turn, increased disloyal sentiment. This cycle continued until the Peace Movement in 1864, in which the tension between government coercion and popular consent became the most clear. Nevertheless, this movement failed after its opponents successfully incited racial fear. Racial fear quickly became the central political issue of the election, rather than the consent of the governed. This shift reveals an important idea about the nature of government: that legitimate government was implicitly white, and maintaining white supremacist rule was more important than the democratic principle of government by consent.

The majority of Southerners, even in the central piedmont, swung Confederate following secession. During this era, it was common for citizens to cling to their allegiance for their state more strongly than their allegiance to the United States, and as a result, many Confederates who were opposed to secession chose to leave the Union when their state left and began to support the Confederacy.⁸⁸ Judkin Browning describes how North Carolinians dealt with this as “they simultaneously adhered to a sense of Southern nationalism while proclaiming an honest attachment to the Union.”⁸⁹ Marmaduke Temple, a farmer in Pittsboro, testified that he was loyal to the Union, “yet sympathized with [his] friends in the South.”⁹⁰ Temple is representative of a common dilemma in the Civil War South—the conflict of southern nationalism and allegiance to the United States.⁹¹

Though some proclaimed a stronger attachment to the Union than others, North Carolinians in the piedmont often distinguished that their loyalty to the Confederacy at the outset of war was “reluctant.”⁹² A.M. Carlton of Orange County “sympathized with the South after the state went out but he always thought it was wrong.”⁹³ Similarly, Robert Sturdivant asserted that he could not wish for the defeat of Confederate troops, although at the same

⁸⁸ Gordon B. McKinney, “Layers of Loyalty: Confederate Nationalism and Amnesty Letters from Western North Carolina,” *Civil War History* 51, no. 1 (2005): 18.

⁸⁹ Browning, *Shifting Loyalties*, 4.

⁹⁰ Marmaduke Temple (Chatham Co., North Carolina) claim, no. 6381. Barred and Disallowed Case Files, Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880. Records of the House of Representatives, Record Group 233. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

⁹¹ Browning, *Shifting Loyalties*, 4.

⁹² Isaiah Clegg, Amnesty Petition, June 16, 1865, Case Files of Applications from Former Confederates for Presidential Pardons (“Amnesty Papers”), 1865-67, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, 1780s-1917, Record Group 94, Publication M1003, National Archives, Washington, D.C. See also: William Crump from Chatham Co., N.C. and Val Hoover from Davidson Co., N.C.

⁹³ A.M. Carlton (Orange Co., North Carolina) claim, no. 11540. Barred and Disallowed Case Files, Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880. Records of the House of Representatives, Record Group 233. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

time he wished that North Carolina had always remained in the Union.⁹⁴ While residents of the central piedmont chose Southern nationhood over a Union that they felt had coerced them into war, their loyalty was tentative from the outset. Furthermore, this would be the strongest Confederate sentiment there ever was in the region, as despotic Confederate policies quickly alienated many North Carolinians from the Confederate government.

The first of these policies was conscription, which was the single act that contributed most to the rampant disloyalty in the central piedmont of North Carolina.⁹⁵ First enacted by the Confederate Congress in April of 1862, it made all men between 18 and 35 eligible for the draft and also passed a compulsory extension of the one-year enlistments of volunteers from 1861. After the draft was instituted, Randolph County Unionist Bryan Tyson wrote, “All that was lacking was for the stars and stripes to have been planted there, with a force sufficient to defend them. They would have enlisted under that banner almost unanimously.”⁹⁶ North Carolina Unionists interpreted the need for conscription as evidence that there was not popular support for the Confederate war effort, because with popular support, the draft would not be necessary.⁹⁷ The lack of popular consent to the war effort necessitated the draft, and as John Inscoe and Gordon McKinney argue, conscription also “undermined the legitimacy of the Confederacy” in the eyes of many reluctant Confederate supporters.⁹⁸ The *Salem People’s Press* criticized the policy that tore men away from their

⁹⁴ Robert Sturdivant (Chatham Co., North Carolina) claim, no. 19128. Barred and Disallowed Case Files, Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880. Records of the House of Representatives, Record Group 233. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

⁹⁵ Auman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt*, 50.

⁹⁶ Tyson, *Object of the Administration in Prosecuting the War*, 6.

⁹⁷ Inscoe and McKinney, *The Heart of Confederate Appalachia*, 141.

⁹⁸ Inscoe and McKinney, *The Heart of Confederate Appalachia*, 165.

families with the “strong arm of the law.”⁹⁹ When North Carolinians began to be conscripted into the Confederate Army in 1862, any conscripted men with Unionist feelings were faced with a limited number of choices: they could try to dodge the draft, risking imprisonment or death; they could avoid military service by serving in civil office; or they could “swallow their principles” and serve in the Confederate army.¹⁰⁰

North Carolinians in the central piedmont immediately opposed and resisted the Conscription Act. Widespread desertion reveals the extent of the opposition to conscription and the war effort in the piedmont. Hundreds of men in the central piedmont either deserted or avoided conscription, often by “lying out” in the woods. Outliers in the central piedmont lived in underground homes or caves.¹⁰¹ Outlier networks created complex systems of communication in order to know when it was safe to eat or visit family. These networks also alerted deserters and draft dodgers to deserter hunts led by the Home Guard. Women on the home front were vital to the success of outlier networks. They fed, clothed, and nursed deserters, and relayed important information to deserters. In the central piedmont, some outliers organized into armed gangs, most notoriously, the Bill Owens gang. These gangs defended their territory with force, and outliers would occasionally steal and pillage from nearby secessionists to provide food and supplies for their own families as well, deepening the divide between Unionist and Confederate residents.

⁹⁹ “Conscripts,” *Salem People’s Press*, August 1, 1862.

¹⁰⁰ Brown, “North Carolinian Ambivalence,” 21.

¹⁰¹ Ella Lonn, *Desertion during the Civil War*, introduction by William Blair (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 73.

Bill Owens deserted his Randolph County company and led a group of pro-Union guerillas ranging from 15 to 50 men over the course of the war, mostly other deserters and draft dodgers. He was a constant source of concern for Governor Vance, and Owens was a key target in most of Vance's military campaigns in the region. Nevertheless, Owens and his gang were more familiar with the area and were able to get away on multiple occasions. Confederate Lieutenant William Pugh reported, "The deserters and conscripts under a man named Wm. Owens began to get too sharp for me, as they knew the mountain paths better than I. So I supposed by taking their horses, on the promise of pardon when they returned to their allegiance, also to return their horses that I might be able to get through quicker I did so. I took Eighteen Horses the owners came in and the horses were delivered."¹⁰² Owens was only captured after Confederate soldiers tortured his wife, Adeline, until she gave up his location. After being arrested, a mob of Confederate vigilantes broke Owens out of the jail in Pittsboro, and shot him to death.¹⁰³

Confederate forces first arrived to quell disloyal sentiment and round up deserters in the piedmont in the fall of 1862.¹⁰⁴ Governor Vance dispatched two North Carolina companies to arrest deserters and draft-dodgers in Chatham County and then move on to Randolph and Moore counties to do the same.¹⁰⁵ On these deserter hunts, state and local militia tracked down deserters and recalcitrant conscripts, arrested them, and sent them into

¹⁰² Lt. William A. Pugh to Maj. Archer Anderson, July 1, 1863, Governors Papers, Zebulon Baird Vance, North Carolina State Archives.

¹⁰³ *Raleigh Weekly Conservative*, April 5, 1865.

¹⁰⁴ Auman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt*, 47.

¹⁰⁵ Auman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt*, 56.

armed service.¹⁰⁶ Another technique for arresting deserters was the illegal impressment of supplies and seizure of property from the deserter's home, which was held until the deserter turned himself in, as Lieutenant Pugh did with the horses belonging to Owens' band of deserters. For many families already facing food shortages and poverty, these supplies were critical, and the economic coercion applied by the Confederate government often worked.¹⁰⁷ The wanted men often resisted arrest, resulting in violence or abuse. Occasionally, the state troops encountered bands of deserters, and skirmishes broke out resulting in numerous deaths.¹⁰⁸ Deserters and draft-dodgers, by refusing to serve in the army, represent the conflict between consent and coercion. Despite attempts by the government to force them into military service, these men refused to fight for a country and a cause that they did not support and that increasingly did not represent their interests.

As resistance to the principle of conscription blossomed in the central piedmont, the Confederate Congress adapted their conscription law, contributing even more to disaffection in the area. In October of 1862, the Confederate Congress raised the conscription age to 45, increasing the burden on many poor whites who depended on these men for labor.¹⁰⁹ The measure allowed members of the Society of Friends to be exempt from military service, but only after paying a \$500 tax. Many Quakers could not afford this tax, and some refused to pay the tax since they believed that qualified as supporting the war effort. Jonathan Harris, a Quaker from Guilford County, wrote that he could not pay the tax in good conscience and

¹⁰⁶ Auman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt*, 54.

¹⁰⁷ Auman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt*, 115.

¹⁰⁸ Auman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt*, 58.

¹⁰⁹ Joe A. Mobley, *Weary of War: Life on the Confederate Home Front* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2008), 50.

argued that the Confederate Congress had become “perfectly wreckless & have lost all regard for conscientious religious liberty.”¹¹⁰ Harris is representative of the dissent stemming from conscription, and the belief that the Confederate government was interfering with Quakers’ freedom of religion by forcing them to support the Confederate war effort in some way.

Some Quakers were able to find work in civil service, such as serving as a postmaster or working in the salt mines, in order to avoid service. Quakers who could not afford the exemption tax or find civil work would be arrested and forced to serve. Those who refused to serve often faced physical violence or imprisonment, and those who escaped contributed to the desertion problem. Jackson Jones, a Quaker from Davidson County, was arrested under conscription law after refusing to pay the exemption tax and was forcibly enlisted in the Confederate Army. He refused to bear arms and “was knocked down again and again and pierced with a bayonet, and kept three days without food or water” by Confederate troops at Camp Holmes, near Raleigh. Once it became apparent that Jones would not cooperate, he was released. Jones spent the remainder of the war helping prisoners escape from Salisbury prison and feeding prisoners and deserters.¹¹¹ “War Quakers,” or men with Quaker principles but not official members of the Society of Friends, added to this problem as well. Many Quakers even escaped across Union lines, often resettling in Indiana. These expatriates

¹¹⁰ Jonathan Harris to J.B. Crenshaw, January 6, 1864, John Bacon Crenshaw Papers, Friends Historical Collection, Hege Library, Guilford College.

¹¹¹ Jackson Jones (Davidson Co., North Carolina) claim, no. 2797. Allowed Case Files, Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880. Settled Accounts and Claims, Third Auditor. Records of the Treasury Department Accounting Officers, Record Group 217. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

exhibit a lack of support for the Confederacy and a refusal to submit to government that they felt did not respect their religious freedom.¹¹²

Numerous other residents in the central piedmont also sought employment in civil service to avoid military service.¹¹³ For example, B.J. Howze from Chatham County avoided conscription until the conscription age was increased to 50 in 1864. His wife died in 1861, leaving him with four young children, so in 1864 he served as Rebel Tithe Assessor. Although he had opposed secession and the war, he took the position under the Confederate government in order to avoid military service and remain with his family. Howze wrote that in 1861 North Carolina had to make her move, but he “never became reconciled to the manner in which she took action.”¹¹⁴ Howze was skeptical of the Confederacy from the beginning, and his service to the Confederate government was coerced. Several other proclaimed Unionist petitioners from across the central Piedmont supplied the same explanation for their civilian service in the Confederacy—that they had no other option, and were only aiding the Confederacy as civilians in order to avoid military service.¹¹⁵

At the same time as the implementation of the Friends exemption tax, the Confederate Congress also added the controversial “Twenty Negro Law,” exempting one male for every

¹¹² Auman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt*, 46.

¹¹³ Andrew Johnson, “Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction,” May 29, 1865. Available online by UNC School of Education, Learn NC: North Carolina Digital History, <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-civilwar/4807> (accessed February 20, 2014).

¹¹⁴ B.J. Howze, Amnesty Petition, June 20, 1865, Case Files of Applications from Former Confederates for Presidential Pardons (“Amnesty Papers”), 1865-67, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, 1780s-1917, Record Group 94, Publication M1003, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹¹⁵ For examples, see the amnesty petitions of Jason C. Harriss from Randolph County, Bennett Nove from Davidson County, Calvin C. Hilliard from Montgomery County, and E.H. Scarborough from Montgomery County.

twenty slaves on a plantation.¹¹⁶ The option for draftees to hire substitutes, which was part of the original law, angered many white Southerners who could not afford a substitute.¹¹⁷ The “Twenty Negro Law,” the option to hire a substitute, and the Friends exemption tax led many white Southerners to charge that it was a “rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight.”¹¹⁸ These policies contributed to increasing disloyal sentiment in the central piedmont because they did not benefit the majority of the people. Martha Coletrane, a woman from Randolph County, wrote Governor Vance detailing the widespread poverty in her area, saying, “i appeal to you to look to the white cultivaters as strictly as cngress has to the slaveholders [sic].”¹¹⁹ White North Carolinians recognized that Confederate policies were unfair which resulted in decreased support. Confederate policies were benefitting a select group of wealthy white men at the expense and sacrifice of the majority of North Carolinians, and white North Carolinians in the central piedmont thought this was inconsistent with republican government.

Many white residents thought the “Twenty Negro Law” was unfair and were not afraid to voice their opposition. The *North Carolina Standard* argued that the exemption inflamed class tensions and violated democratic government by treating citizens unequally. Holden wrote that North Carolinians fought for a shared cause and believed that “it is as much the duty of one class to fight for it as another. Political equality is the corner stone of

¹¹⁶ Auman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt*, 43.

¹¹⁷ Mobley, *Weary of War*, 50.

¹¹⁸ Archie K. Davis, ““She Disdained to Pluck One Laurel from a Sister’s Brow’: Disloyalty in the Confederacy in North Carolina,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 88, no. 2 (April, 1980), 144; Tatum, *Disloyalty in the Confederacy*, 111.

¹¹⁹ Martha Coletrane to Zebulon Baird Vance, November, 18 1862, in Frontis Johnston, ed., *The Papers of Zebulon Baird Vance, Volume I* (Raleigh: North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, 1963) 278-280.

our government; but what justice, or what political equality can there be in providing that one portion of our people shall be subject to military duty, while another portion are exempt...?"¹²⁰ He also criticized the exemption tax on conscientious objectors, "who had no agency in involving the country in bloodshed," while slave owners were freely exempt.¹²¹ Additionally, the newspaper took a strong stand against such unfair government policies, declaring, "We are for right, justice, and the Constitution, happen what may; and we intend to stand, at all hazards, by the people and by the great principles of political equality."¹²² In the following weeks, multiple letters from throughout the central piedmont were published in the *Standard* confirming the popular sentiment in Holden's ideas, and many even began to promote peace.¹²³

Widespread poverty in the piedmont that accrued during the first year of the war only increased disaffection, especially on the home front. Rampant inflation was a major factor in contributing to poverty and was often accompanied by food shortages, speculation, and price gouging.¹²⁴ The impressment of supplies for Confederate use throughout the war, including items taken illegally, increased the burden on poor families. Tax-in-kind policies implemented later in the war were necessary to prevent further inflation, but increased frustration with Confederate government policies.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ "The Exemption Act," *North Carolina Standard*, October 29, 1862.

¹²¹ "The Exemption Act," *North Carolina Standard*, October 29, 1862.

¹²² "The Exemption Act," *North Carolina Standard*, October 29, 1862.

¹²³ See the *Raleigh Weekly Standard*, November 12, 1862 and December 10, 1862, and the *Raleigh Semi-Weekly Standard*, November 14, 1862, November 18, 1862, November 28, 1862 for examples.

¹²⁴ Mobley, *Weary of War*, 40.

¹²⁵ Mobley, *Weary of War*, 47.

Those left at home, especially women, became frustrated by Confederate policies that contributed to inflation and poverty rather than protecting its people from it. Although the government had never even considered asking women for consent to their policies, the lack of consent from white Confederate women adversely affected the war effort. Women in Salisbury were so desperate for basic provisions that a group of 75 or more, wielding axes and hatchets, stormed a government depot in 1863 and stole ten barrels of flour.¹²⁶ A few weeks later, a woman from Greensboro wrote Governor Vance informing him of the food shortages in the area due to the speculation of a few prominent men and wrote that several armed women in search of food had been arrested, while the speculators roamed free.¹²⁷

These women reveal the expectation of a moral economy as part of the mutual obligations between the government and its citizens. According to Paul Escott, “the failure of government to provide conditions that would sustain life” was central to women’s willingness to protest Confederate policies.¹²⁸ The majority of the women protesting were wives of Confederate soldiers. Scarcity at home was perceived as a lack of government promotion of welfare, particularly for the families of men who were away from home to fight for the Confederate government. Furthermore, the failure of the Confederate government to punish speculators intensified class antagonisms, since those who were exempt from fighting in the war were often the speculators. Many soldiers deserted the Confederate army to

¹²⁶ *Carolina Watchman*, March 23, 1863 in W. Buck Years and John G. Barrett, ed., *North Carolina Civil War Documentary* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 220.

¹²⁷ Nancy Mangum to Z.B. Vance, April 9, 1863, in W. Buck Years and John G. Barrett, ed., *North Carolina Civil War Documentary* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 221.

¹²⁸ Paul Escott, “The Moral Economy of the Crowd in Confederate North Carolina,” *Maryland Historian* 13 (1982), 8.

provide for their families at home, often at the behest of their wives.¹²⁹ The Salem *People's Press* reported that speculation was the main cause of desertion, especially for those soldiers who had to return home to provide for their own families.¹³⁰ Thus, as women living in the Confederate piedmont became increasingly unsupportive of Confederate policies, they had an important influence on the war effort. Many white North Carolinians in the piedmont became disloyal when the government failed to fulfill its obligations to the people, particularly conscripted soldiers and their families who felt betrayed by the lack of mutual protection they expected from the government in return for their military service. The perception of massive suffering at the hands of a government to which the people had never consented only contributed to disloyal sentiment in the piedmont.

Actions like these that demonstrate women acting as citizens during the war, although they were generally viewed as non-political, and many African Americans did so as well. Women and African Americans resisted the Confederacy in many ways. For example, George Clark, a free black blacksmith from Davidson County, North Carolina, led a group of Union soldiers belonging to Stoneman's cavalry from his home near Lexington about thirty miles to Salem, and after doing so was forced to lay out in the woods for several days for his personal safety. He also regularly fed Union prisoners and Southern Unionists from Salisbury Prison.¹³¹ Women commonly fed and nursed deserters and draft dodgers, such as Elizabeth

¹²⁹ Amy Murrell Taylor, "'Of Necessity and Public Benefit': Southern Families and their Appeals for Protection," in *Southern Families at War: Loyalty and Conflict in the Civil War South*, ed. Catherine Clinton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 78.

¹³⁰ "How to Stop Desertion," Salem *People's Press*, October 16, 1863.

¹³¹ George Clark (Davidson Co., North Carolina) claim, no. 2708. Allowed Case Files, Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880. Settled Accounts and Claims, Third Auditor. Records of the Treasury Department Accounting Officers, Record Group 217. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

Mason, an aging widow from Rialto in Chatham County that was known to be outspoken against the war and the Confederacy, and the type that would feed deserters every time she had the chance. She considered the rebellion to be a “bad business” that would ruin the country beyond repair. She referred to the Confederacy as a tyranny, even wishing that “Jeff Davis could be forced into the army with the soldiers who were fighting, and that then... he would be willing to accept some terms” for reconciliation.¹³² Confederate leaders had not initially sought consent from women or African Americans, but their influence on the Confederate cause forced them to do so as the war progressed.

Troops completed their deserter hunt in December of 1862, but by January of 1863, Union deserters had become a problem again, and Governor Vance issued a proclamation that pardoned any soldiers who had deserted but would return.¹³³ Many soldiers did return to their positions, but by May of 1863, desertion had again gotten out of hand. Vance believed that desertion was a major threat in the state, writing, “our danger now lies in the disorganization produced by desertion.”¹³⁴ He issued a proclamation warning all deserters that they would face punishment for their “cowardly and treasonous conduct,” and warned against any of those who may consider helping deserters, primarily women and African Americans.¹³⁵ The *Raleigh Standard* printed the Proclamation under the headline “THE PEOPLE CALLED UPON TO ARREST AND SHOOT DESERTERS.” By August of 1863,

¹³² Elizabeth Mason (Chatham Co., North Carolina) claim, no. 9897. Allowed Case Files, Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880. Settled Accounts and Claims, Third Auditor. Records of the Treasury Department Accounting Officers, Record Group 217. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

¹³³ Auman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt*, 68.

¹³⁴ Zebulon Vance, “Proclamation of 11 May 1863,” Governor’s Papers, North Carolina State Archives.

¹³⁵ Zebulon Vance, “Proclamation of 11 May 1863,” Governor’s Papers, North Carolina State Archives.

the violence between the two factions reached its worst. A woman from Randolph County wrote Governor Vance, informing him that, “nearly all the deserters taken up during the Spring and Summer are here in the woods again, and there is a great number of them.”¹³⁶ Vance responded with another deserter hunt in the central piedmont using Confederate troops, which lasted five months and led to the arrest of over 3,000 deserters and draft-dodgers.¹³⁷

During this deserter hunt, the Confederate government changed its tactics. Troops recognized the importance of women to deserter networks and began to target women in order to diminish disloyal sentiment.¹³⁸ Troops would often jail or abuse the wives and children of deserters and draft-dodgers as bait to turn themselves in. For example, large groups of pregnant women from Chatham, Randolph, and Davidson were held for several weeks without due process of law until their husbands—deserters—turned themselves in. Some of these pregnant women miscarried as a result of their mistreatment in the hands of their own government.¹³⁹ Phoebe Crook, a woman from Randolph County that belonged to a notoriously Unionist family, reported that Confederate soldiers were hanging the children of deserters repeatedly to the point of losing consciousness in an effort to uncover the location of their fathers. These same soldiers were keeping wives and mothers of deserters under armed guard without food, torturing them for information on the whereabouts of deserters and draft dodgers, and keeping them separated from their children, in many cases separating

¹³⁶ Nancy Royal to Z.B. Vance, August 9, 1863, Governors Papers, North Carolina State Archives.

¹³⁷ Auman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt*, 113.

¹³⁸ McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 126.

¹³⁹ Thomas Settle to Z.B. Vance, October 4, 1864, Thomas Settle Letters, North Carolina State Archives.

new mothers from nursing infants.¹⁴⁰ Accusations of abuses such as these at the hands of the Confederate government infuriated the already dissatisfied residents of the piedmont.

Largely due to outrages such as these, disaffection and dissent towards the Confederacy only gained strength in the area for the remainder of the war. Residents supporting either side in the central piedmont condemned the use of coercion and torture on women and children in order to find deserters and recusant conscripts. The *Raleigh Standard* decried the suspension of habeas corpus in the cases of women and men suspected of aiding the enemy. The author complained, “in the name of humanity and civilization, we protest against the wholesale arrest of women and children which is now going on in various sections of the state by armed forces, under orders from the Executive Department. There is no law to authorize it, and it is an unmitigated outrage.” Furthermore, it indicated a “thorough disregard of civil law” and concluded that civil liberty no longer existed in that state.¹⁴¹ The *Standard* claimed that the state was under military rule, not the “civil power” of government, and warned that if the people did not defend their rights, “the sword will rule this people instead of the civil courts of the nation.”¹⁴² Coercive government policies instituted by a government to which the people had never consented generated rampant disloyalty in the piedmont of North Carolina.

It is not surprising, then, that a peace movement became popular in the piedmont in the summer of 1863, emphasizing the obligation of the state government to meet the needs of

¹⁴⁰ Phebe Crook to Gov. Vance, September 15, 1864, Governors Papers, Zebulon Baird Vance, North Carolina State Archives.

¹⁴¹ “Have we Any Civil Law in North Carolina?” *Raleigh Semi-Weekly Standard*, October 4, 1864.

¹⁴² “Have we Civil Liberty?” *Raleigh Semi-Weekly Standard*, November 4, 1864.

the people.¹⁴³ Newspaper editor W.W. Holden led the Peace Movement, declaring that since the majority of the residents of North Carolina wanted peace, the state government had an obligation to negotiate with the Confederate government on their behalf. If the Confederate government refused to consider peace, Holden advocated that North Carolina attempt to make peace with the Union on her own. Holden's program popularized the ideas published by Moore County Unionist Bryan Tyson in 1862. They emphasized the lack of popular consent for secession and the coercive policies of the Confederacy to argue that the government was not legitimate.¹⁴⁴ Holden offered a less treasonous version of Tyson's message, but one based on the same principles.

White North Carolinians throughout the central piedmont held numerous mass meetings supporting the peace movement in the summer of 1863. Residents in Davidson County stated, "we do most sincerely protest against all the encroachments of the Confederate government upon the rights and privileges of North Carolina."¹⁴⁵ The men felt that the Confederate government was demanding too much from North Carolinians and should cease excessive demands on Confederate residents. Residents in Guilford County expressed similar ideas when they resolved to "firmly and determinedly maintain their rights and resist the aggressions of tyranny or the imposition of despotism, be it from what source it may..."¹⁴⁶ These residents also added their belief that the Confederate government had "violated the right of the people, destroyed mutual confidence, and improperly evaded the

¹⁴³ Manning, *What This Cruel War was Over*, 136.

¹⁴⁴ Auman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt*, 57.

¹⁴⁵ "Public Meeting In Davidson County," *North Carolina Standard*, August 19, 1863.

¹⁴⁶ "Public Meeting in Guilford," *North Carolina Standard*, August 26, 1863.

accountability which is due from public servants to their constituents.”¹⁴⁷ Many white residents in the central piedmont desired peace and believed the Confederate government was required to acknowledge and address the concerns of North Carolina citizens. These white North Carolinians expressed the shared belief that the various policies instituted by the Confederate government had violated democratic norms through coercive policies and by ignoring the will of the people.

A group of citizens from Moore County declared, “that the course of the Confederate government towards North-Carolina from the beginning of the war, has been anything but fair and honorable” and “that in view of the bad treatment this State has received at the hands of the Confederate government... we deem it the duty of all North-Carolinians to demand their discontinuance, or we shall in self-defense be compelled to take a position where we can take care of ourselves.”¹⁴⁸ A mass meeting in Davidson County demanded peace and asserted that if that demand was not met, “North-Carolina has the right, and ought to use the same to assert her sovereignty.”¹⁴⁹ Ultimately, the Peace Movement in North Carolina sought to return political power to the hands of the people.

Despite widespread support of the Peace Movement in the central piedmont, the movement failed to gain political power in the 1864 Election. In the Gubernatorial Election William Woods Holden ran on the Peace platform against incumbent Zebulon Baird Vance. Vance won the election overwhelmingly. Holden won only three counties, one of which was

¹⁴⁷ “Public Meeting in Guilford,” *North Carolina Standard*, August 26, 1863.

¹⁴⁸ “Public Meeting in Moore County,” *North Carolina Standard*, August 5, 1863.

¹⁴⁹ “Public Meeting in Davidson County,” *Raleigh Semi-Weekly Standard*, August 18, 1863.

Randolph.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, as Chandra Manning demonstrates, the election results do not necessarily reveal support for the Confederacy, but rather the influence of racial fear on political position.¹⁵¹

Vance adopted a platform of peace with Confederate victory. Vance capitalized on the pervasive fear that reunion with the North would certainly mean the abolition of slavery and equality of the races in order to gain support of his peace with Confederate victory platform.¹⁵² In a speech to dissatisfied Confederate residents in April of 1864, Governor Vance warned his audience of the chaos that would result from abolition. He claimed that following emancipation, slaves and free blacks would “burn your homes and murder your families.”¹⁵³ In effect, North Carolinians were more content remaining under coercive Confederate rule than facing the probability of abolition and possibility of social equality following reunion with the United States. Despite a hard fought effort for government by popular consent, culminating in the Peace Movement of 1864, North Carolinians compromised on their political principles in favor of white supremacy—a decision foreshadowing the attitude of many North Carolinians during Reconstruction.

Throughout the Civil War, North Carolinians in the central piedmont struggled to balance the conflicting loyalties exposed by war. Lack of popular consent to Confederate government, and the coercive policies instituted by that government, remained a fundamental element in creating Confederate disloyalty in the region throughout the war. Nevertheless, residents of

¹⁵⁰ The other two counties were Wilkes, which is also in the Quaker Belt, and Johnston.

¹⁵¹ Manning, *What this Cruel War was Over*, 176.

¹⁵² Manning, *What this Cruel War was Over*, 172.

¹⁵³ Zebulon Vance, “Address of Gov. Vance on the Condition of the Country,” reprinted in the *Raleigh Daily Conservative*, April 16, 1864.

the North Carolina piedmont were willing to abandon their movement for government by the people in an attempt to ensure the existing social hierarchy.

CHAPTER 3: Race and Republican Rule

In early May 1865 a Union meeting attended by men from Guilford and Alamance counties passed a series of Resolutions declaring:

That while we would shed no more blood, we demand the punishment of the leaders in this rebellion... That being once basely betrayed by our public servants, we will support no man for any office in our gov't, who was a secessionist, or who aided to wrest the guaranties of civil liberty from the people, to crush them with oppressive burdens, or who persistently advocated rebellion and the prosecution of the war to the bitter end of utter poverty and the extinction of civil existence.¹⁵⁴

These Union men resented Confederate supporters not only for leading them into war without their consent, but for their increasingly despotic measures throughout the war, and the destruction of civil society. A primary concern for North Carolinians following the war was the restoration of legitimate government, and many Unionists did not want the same men who had abused democratic government in recent years to return to power. As the Civil War came to a close, Unionists from the central piedmont continued to harbor hostilities for Confederate supporters and their betrayal of legitimate government and anticipated that wartime loyalty would play a major role in post-bellum politics.

Limited scholarship exists on Reconstruction in North Carolina, and much of what does exist is rooted in the Dunning school, which is pro-Southern and racially biased. The Dunning school portrays white Southerners as the victims of Reconstruction, who became heroes when they “redeemed” the South from radical Republican rule. This interpretation of Reconstruction remained dominant until the late 1950s. J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton’s 1914

¹⁵⁴ “Public Meeting of the Citizens of Alamance and Guilford, Held at Boon Station,” *Raleigh Daily Standard*, May 3, 1865.

Reconstruction in North Carolina remains the most comprehensive work on the subject, despite embodying the same biased ideas as the Dunning school. Hamilton argues that if Congressional Reconstruction had never been implemented, North Carolina would have been solidly Republican following the Civil War, implying that the imposition of federal intervention caused widespread support for the Conservative Party.¹⁵⁵ While resentment of federal intervention was a major concern in postwar North Carolina, many citizens, especially wartime Unionists, supported the Republican Party until widespread KKK violence and coercion repressed the Republican vote and restored white supremacist rule.¹⁵⁶

Revisionist scholars emphasized the significant role of violence and white supremacy during Reconstruction, most notably Allen Trelease in *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction*. Trelease recognized that the Conservative Party benefitted from KKK violence and that the KKK sought to repress the Republican vote, primarily to ensure white supremacist rule. Deborah Ann Beckel highlights many important characteristics of North Carolina Reconstruction politics in *Radical Reform*, which focuses on interracial party politics in the state until the turn of the century. While race relations and violence are important for understanding the Reconstruction era, neither of these account for how ideas about the nature of government factored into postwar party politics.

¹⁵⁵ J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton, *Reconstruction in North Carolina* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith Publishing, 1964), 663.

¹⁵⁶ After the Civil War the Conservative Party was made up of mostly Democrats, but also some old-line Whigs, so the party refrained from calling themselves “Democrats.” The Conservative Party began calling itself the Democratic Party again in 1876. Richard Zuber, *North Carolina During Reconstruction* (Raleigh, NC: State Department of Archives and History, 1969), 50.

More recent works have begun to question the fate of wartime Unionism in the postwar South. Judkin Browning's *Shifting Loyalties: The Union Occupation of Eastern North Carolina* analyzes the response of eastern North Carolinians to Union occupation during the war and contends that white Southerners who initially welcomed Union troops began to resent federal presence, especially the protection of the rights of free people and freedpeople. In a study of postwar Kentucky and Missouri, Aaron Astor argues that widespread "conservative Unionism" was replaced with "belated Confederatism" as Union forces occupied the area and tried to ensure the safety and equality of freedpeople.¹⁵⁷ They, along with Revisionist scholars, recognize white supremacy and violence as a major factor in Reconstruction conflict, unlike Hamilton. They emphasize the importance in white Southerners' minds of maintaining racial supremacy following emancipation and the passage of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments. Furthermore, both Browning and Astor contend that white supremacy gradually began to replace Union sentiment during Reconstruction.

A shift similar to belated Confederatism took place in the piedmont of North Carolina. The area had strong Union support throughout the sectional crisis, and residents embraced the return to the Union. During the Civil War, many of the residents of the piedmont had become alienated from the Confederate cause by coercive government policies and widespread violence in the region. Many of those disaffected toward the Confederate cause initially supported Reconstruction measures and often supported the Republican Party.

¹⁵⁷ Aaron Astor, *Rebels on the Border: Civil War, Emancipation, and the Reconstruction of Kentucky and Missouri* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012), 9.

Republicans sought to keep ex-Confederates, who formed the majority of the Conservative party, from power, often remembering their anti-democratic actions during the war.

In an attempt to maintain antebellum social order, the Conservative Party developed a platform based on white supremacy. As historians like Astor have noted, white supremacy began to unite white Southerners and replaced the importance of wartime loyalties as the Reconstruction era went on. Nevertheless, in North Carolina, the Conservative Party was also forced to overcome the memory of their coercive and violent tactics during the war and began to campaign against the Republican Party as undemocratic and tyrannical. The Conservative Party platform in North Carolina centered on the idea that “black Republican rule” was illegitimate, not only because it enfranchised African Americans, but also because Conservatives considered federal intervention unconstitutional. Furthermore, the Conservative Party argued that the disfranchisement of many former Confederates was inconsistent with government by consent. Conservatives were primarily concerned about federal intervention involving black political rights and social equality, and depended on “white line politics” enforced by the violence and coercion of the KKK to repress the Republican vote and racial equality and ensure the “redemption” of the state to “home rule.”¹⁵⁸ Thus, the “redemption” of North Carolina rested not only on the idea of white supremacy, but the idea that legitimate government was implicitly white.

Parts of the Coastal Plain and Mountain regions of North Carolina underwent wartime reconstruction after occupation by Union troops, but the central piedmont was unoccupied

¹⁵⁸ “White-line politics” is a term used to refer to the Conservative voting solidarity among the white electorate. “Redemption” was the term used to describe the restoration of the Conservative Party to power in North Carolina following Congressional Reconstruction.

until General Joseph Johnston's surrender at Bennett Place on April 26th, 1865. For over a month after the surrender, North Carolinians in the piedmont were unsure of their fate and their relationship to the federal government. In an edition meant especially to provide their "country friends" with the latest news in the state, the *People's Press* in Salem speculated that lingering hostilities between Unionists and Confederates might lead to retaliation and opined "all persons who having been advocates of the war, but who are now disposed to return to their allegiance to the United States government, and to become peaceable and quiet citizens, should be forgiven and their offense forgotten, at least so far as social relations are concerned."¹⁵⁹ The *People's Press* wanted peace and wanted social relations restored, but was less willing to restore political relations to their former condition. At a gathering in Alamance County, Union men rejected the political participation of ex-Confederates, proclaiming "the true Union men... put their veto on all men that have misled them; they desire not the council of those who have counceled them to stay out of the Union, up to the present time."¹⁶⁰ In April of 1865, Unionists from the central piedmont resented secessionists and their wartime transgressions and expected that ex-Confederates would not have a role in the restoration of government.

The *People's Press* anticipated that wartime loyalty would be an important factor in the restoration process for the state as whole, writing, "the sincerity of the loyal professions of the great mass of our people there can be no doubt. They have always been in favor of the Union."¹⁶¹ In *Pardon and Amnesty under Lincoln and Johnson*, J.T. Dorris calls North

¹⁵⁹ "Since our Last Regular Issue..." *Salem People's Press*, May 27, 1865.

¹⁶⁰ "Graham, N.C., May 3d, 1865," *Raleigh Daily Standard*, June 7, 1865.

¹⁶¹ "Public Sentiment," *People's Press*, May 27, 1865.

Carolina “the favored state,” that President Andrew Johnson gave “special consideration” and intended to be a model for restoration in the rest of the former Confederacy. He argues that Johnson was “doubtless influenced by the manifestations there of loyalty to the Union during the war.”¹⁶² Many North Carolinians expected the state’s reputation for Union sentiment to factor into the policy for the reconstruction of legitimate government in the state.

The plan for reconstruction in North Carolina was the first plan President Andrew Johnson announced, over a month after the surrender at Bennett Place. On May 29th, 1865, Johnson proclaimed that under the rebellion, citizens of North Carolina had been deprived of “all civil government” and outlined his plan for the restoration of North Carolina to “constitutional relations” with the federal government. He appointed wartime peace candidate William W. Holden as provisional governor. Holden was responsible for securing North Carolinians “the enjoyment of a Republican form of government.”¹⁶³ At the same time, Johnson issued the general amnesty proclamation, which pardoned all former Confederate citizens for participating in the rebellion, either “directly or indirectly,” except those belonging to fourteen classes.¹⁶⁴ Confederate citizens who were in one of the excepted

¹⁶² J.T. Dorris, *Pardon and Amnesty under Lincoln and Johnson: The Restoration of the Confederates to Their Rights and Privileges, 1861-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 187.

¹⁶³ Andrew Johnson, “Proclamation 135- Reorganizing a Constitutional Government in North Carolina,” May 29, 1865. Available online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=72403> (accessed 3 April 2014).

¹⁶⁴ Andrew Johnson, “Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction,” May 29, 1865. Available online by UNC School of Education, Learn NC: North Carolina Digital History, <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-civilwar/4807> (accessed February 20, 2014). The 14 classes of exception are: “1st, all who shall have been pretended civil or diplomatic officers or other domestic or foreign agency of the pretended Confederate government; 2nd, all who left judicial stations under the United States to aid the rebellion; 3d, all who shall have been military or naval officers of said pretended Confederate government above the rank of colonel in the army or lieutenant in the navy; 4th, all who left

classes were required to individually petition the President for clemency before the federal government would restore their political rights. Anyone who had not taken the oath or received a pardon did not belong to the class of “loyal men” and were unable to participate politically. Men who took the amnesty oath, regardless of race, were able to vote.¹⁶⁵

A month later, Governor Holden issued a proclamation to the citizens of North Carolina detailing his plan for “reconstructing the government, and in restoring the state to the protection, benefits and blessings of the Union.”¹⁶⁶ Holden’s plan for restoring republican government in the state included a convention to amend the state Constitution and an election for a new governor and members of the legislature, who would then elect two Senators for U.S. Congress. At some later date, an election for members of the U.S. House of

seats in the Congress of the United States to aid the rebellion; 5th, all who resigned or tendered resignations of their commissions in the army or navy of the United States to evade duty in resisting the rebellion; 6th, all who have engaged in any way in treating otherwise than lawfully as prisoners of war persons found in the United States service, as officers, soldiers, seamen, or in other capacities; 7th, all persons who have been, or are absentees from the United States for the purpose of aiding the rebellion; 8th, all military and naval officers in the rebel service, who were educated by the government in the Military Academy at West Point or the United States Naval Academy; 9th, all persons who held the pretended offices of governors of States in insurrection against the United States; 10th, all persons who left their homes within the jurisdiction and protection of the United States, and passed beyond the Federal military lines into the pretended Confederate States for the purpose of aiding the rebellion; 11th, all persons who have been engaged in the destruction of the commerce of the United States upon the high seas, and all persons who have made raids into the United States from Canada, or been engaged in destroying the commerce of the United States upon the lakes and rivers that separate the British Provinces from the United States; 12th, all persons who, at the time when they seek to obtain the benefits hereof by taking the oath herein prescribed, are in military, naval, or civil confinement, or custody, or under bonds of the civil, military, or naval authorities, or agents of the United States as prisoners of war, or persons detained for offenses of any kind, either before or after conviction; 13th, all persons who have voluntarily participated in said rebellion, and the estimated value of whose taxable property is over twenty thousand dollars; 14th, all persons who have taken the oath of amnesty as prescribed in the President’s proclamation of December 8th, A.D. 1863, or an oath of allegiance to the government of the United States since the date of said proclamation, and who have not thenceforward kept and maintained the same inviolate.”

¹⁶⁵ Andrew Johnson, “Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction,” May 29, 1865. Available online by UNC School of Education, Learn NC: North Carolina Digital History, <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-civilwar/4807> (accessed February 20, 2014).

¹⁶⁶ Horace Raper, ed., *The Papers of Williams Woods Holden, Volume I: 1841-1868* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources), 190.

Representatives would be held. In order to vote or be elected in the convention, Holden confirmed, citizens had to first take the amnesty oath. Holden created Justices of the Peace in each county who would administer the oath. Citizens were required to take the amnesty oath or be pardoned before their right to vote was restored. Thus, only those who pledged to be loyal to the United States could be involved in the remaking of legitimate government in the state.

The majority of citizens in North Carolina met the provisions of the general amnesty proclamation and were only required to take the amnesty oath before their political rights were restored. Holden proclaimed that no man “not well affected to the Federal government, and not loyal thereto,” would be allowed to take the oath, and therefore would not be able to vote in the upcoming convention election.¹⁶⁷ Many believed that their past loyalties were irrelevant as long as they promised to be faithful to the United States “henceforth,” as the amnesty oath, and Holden, required.¹⁶⁸ Petitioner Jesse Hargrave, for example, admitted that he had supported secession and cooperated with the Confederacy, but asserted “these questions all having been settled... it is his desire now to renew his allegiance as a good citizen to the United States.”¹⁶⁹ Even as an outright secessionist, Hargrave felt his commitment to the United States could be revived. Citizens in the North Carolina piedmont had exhibited varying levels of allegiance to the Confederate cause, but all of those who took

¹⁶⁷ Raper, *The Papers of W. W. Holden, Volume I*, 187.

¹⁶⁸ Andrew Johnson, “Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction,” May 29, 1865.

¹⁶⁹ Jesse H. Hargrave, Amnesty Petition, June 25, 1865, Case Files of Applications from Former Confederates for Presidential Pardons (“Amnesty Papers”), 1865-67, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, 1780s-1917, Record Group 94, Publication M1003, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

the amnesty oath and swore to loyally support the new government expected to be re-enfranchised.

Governor Holden, however, was known to be partial and frequently discouraged President Johnson from granting petitioners amnesty based on the likelihood of the petitioner supporting Holden's party and candidacy for governor.¹⁷⁰ For example, he recommended that Jesse Hargrave's pardon be postponed until January 1st, 1866—after the approaching election for governor—since Hargrave would likely vote Democratic.¹⁷¹ Holden had trusted informants in several counties that would advise him on petitioners' party politics, and he recommended pardon accordingly.¹⁷² Several such petitioners were “original Union men,” yet Holden delayed their pardons to ensure his own political success. Ex-Governor Alexander Graham, ex- United States congressman John A. Gilmer, and Josiah Turner, Jr. are three very prominent examples from the central piedmont. William A. Graham, who was a political leader and potential threat to Holden's career, did not receive his pardon until 1867 because Holden so insistently blocked his petition. There is also evidence that Holden did not even forward some amnesty petitions to Washington.¹⁷³ North Carolinians sought to restore their political rights through amnesty, and although wartime loyalty to the Union was not required, many powerful ex-Confederates remained disfranchised as the election of 1865 approached.

¹⁷⁰ Dorris, *Pardon and Amnesty under Lincoln and Johnson*, 194

¹⁷¹ Jesse H. Hargrave, Amnesty Petition, June 25, 1865, Case Files of Applications from Former Confederates for Presidential Pardons (“Amnesty Papers”), 1865-67, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s-1917, Record Group 94, Publication M1003, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁷² Dorris, *Pardon and Amnesty under Lincoln and Johnson*, 124.

¹⁷³ Dorris, *Pardon and Amnesty under Lincoln and Johnson*, 201.

In the election of 1865, provisional Governor Holden opposed Conservative candidate Jonathan Worth, who was elected by a majority of 5,937.¹⁷⁴ Only three counties in the central piedmont elected Holden, and they were those that saw the most violence as a result of the inner Civil War—Chatham, Moore, and Randolph.¹⁷⁵ The majority of the representatives and senators elected by North Carolinians to Congress belonged to the Conservative Party as well. Although many of these men had also been staunch Union men during the secession crisis, only one of the seven men elected to Congress could take the “iron-clad” oath, which the United States government required as proof that Confederate residents had maintained their Unionism during the war, and one of the men elected, Josiah Turner, had not yet been granted a pardon for his wartime involvement. Northerners, especially radical Republicans in Congress, perceived the election of these men as evidence that there was still support for rebellion in the state.¹⁷⁶ Congress saw their election, especially that of unpardoned Josiah Turner, Jr., as indicative of lingering disloyal sentiment and refused to seat the men in Congress, meaning the state could not be restored to the Union for two and a half more years.¹⁷⁷

The *Journal of Freedom*, an African American-owned newspaper in Raleigh was also critical of the representatives sent to Washington, writing, “the judgment of many

¹⁷⁴ Hamilton, *Reconstruction in North Carolina*, 139. Worth won with a majority of 5,937 out of almost 60,000 and carried 54 out of 89 counties. The election also passed both the amendments to the state Constitution, one that repealed the secession ordinance (20,870 to 1,983), and one that abolished slavery (19,039 to 3,970).

¹⁷⁵ *Hillsborough Recorder*, January 3, 1866.

¹⁷⁶ Hamilton, *Reconstruction in North Carolina*, 140.

¹⁷⁷ Josiah Turner, Jr. remained unpardoned until 1867 although he had been an original Union man. He was only unpardoned because he was a prominent and powerful Conservative, and Governor Holden went out of his way to insure Turner’s pardon would be withheld. See Zuber, *North Carolina during Reconstruction*, 5; Hamilton, *Reconstruction in North Carolina*, 140.

good men in the country will be biased by the acts of this faction, and the whole State will be held responsible for their doings.”¹⁷⁸ The newspaper also explained that ex-Confederates, especially those who had yet to receive a pardon, were traitors. The newspaper criticized that while white North Carolinians were fighting for the political rights of ex-Confederates, they continued to deny political participation to African Americans.

The newspaper had just been established in 1865, and laid out its political views in its first issue. The newspaper emphasized the theory of “consent of the governed” as the political foundation for legitimate government and argued that a government that truly believed in government by consent would allow African Americans to vote. The newspaper was founded to help foster “the establishment of laws based on principles of true equality, the education and elevation of our people, and the building up of the South on a firm and lasting basis of Republicanism.”¹⁷⁹ Thus, the African American community desired the right to participate politically and relied on the argument that legitimate government is based on the consent of the governed in order to advance their cause.

The seemingly disloyal representation chosen by white North Carolinians and most other ex-Confederate electorates in 1865 led many radical Republicans in Congress to call for more rigorous conditions for readmission to the Union. In 1866, Congress sent the 14th Amendment to the former Confederate states for approval in order to “test their loyalty.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ “The Recent Election,” *Journal of Freedom*, September 30, 1865.

¹⁷⁹ “Salutory,” *Journal of Freedom*, September 30, 1865.

¹⁸⁰ William A. Russ, Jr., “Radical Disfranchisement in North Carolina,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 11, no. 4 (Oct. 1934), 272.

While it was not yet an official condition, it was clear that a Southern state would not be readmitted until it ratified the 14th Amendment, which recognized African Americans as citizens and guaranteed them equal protection under the law.¹⁸¹ While the 14th Amendment increased rights for African Americans, it also disfranchised many former Confederates.

Section 3 of the Amendment states:

No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may, by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.¹⁸²

The disqualification of former Confederates from political office demonstrates the persistent issue of wartime loyalty to citizenship during Reconstruction. The disfranchisement of former Confederates would also be an important motivator in the Conservative Party's mission to redeem the state from what they believed to be illegitimate "black Republican rule."

The 14th Amendment was the major debate during the North Carolina gubernatorial election of 1866, when Republican and Fourteenth Amendment supporter Alfred Dockery was listed on the ballot against Conservative incumbent Governor Worth, who opposed the amendment.¹⁸³ It was during this election that the white supremacist Conservative party

¹⁸¹ Zuber, *North Carolina during Reconstruction*, 8.

¹⁸² *United States Statutes at Large*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, reprinted in Robert W. Johannsen, *Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (New York: Free Press, 1970).

¹⁸³ Alfred Dockery supported the Amendment, but did not want to be listed on the ballot. Zuber, *North Carolina during Reconstruction*, 9.

platform, branded as a return to “home rule,” emerged.¹⁸⁴ The Conservative Party rejected the Fourteenth Amendment for two reasons: they feared social equality between black and white, and they believed Section 3 to violate the right of individual states to determine their electorate.¹⁸⁵ Conservatives argued that the 14th Amendment violated the democratic principle of government by consent, which was only worsened by the simultaneous enfranchisement of African Americans. Thus, while the Republican Party focused on a republican form of government and consent of the governed for all men, they also benefitted from the lingering importance of wartime loyalty, specifically through the disqualification of former Confederates from office. At the same time, Conservatives were beginning to campaign against the legitimacy of federal intervention and rally around white supremacy in an attempt to unite white North Carolinians regardless of wartime loyalty.

Voter turnout was low, and Worth won the election by a majority of three to one.¹⁸⁶ The men elected to the North Carolina General Assembly were primarily Conservative and opposed the 14th Amendment. President Johnson warned Governor Holden that the results of the Election of 1865, when the representation chosen by North Carolinians signified lingering disloyal sentiment, had “greatly damaged the prospects of the State in the restoration of its governmental relations. Should the action and spirit of the legislature be in the same direction, it will greatly increase the mischief already done and might be fatal.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ States’ rights, for many, was a pretext for action that ensured white supremacy, whether legal or extralegal. See Allen Trelease, *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

¹⁸⁵ Russ, Jr., “Radical Disfranchisement in North Carolina,” 273.

¹⁸⁶ Zuber, *North Carolina during Reconstruction*, 9.

¹⁸⁷ Hamilton, *Reconstruction in North Carolina*, 141.

Nevertheless, the Conservative Party understood the enfranchisement of African American men and disfranchisement of ex-Confederate men as illegitimate, and when the General Assembly voted on the ratification of the amendment in late 1866, both houses overwhelmingly voted against the ratification of the amendment.¹⁸⁸

As predicted by President Johnson, Congress was troubled by the rejection of the 14th Amendment in the South, and in 1867 Congress passed a series of acts known as the Reconstruction Acts. Congress declared that “no legal State governments or adequate protection of life or property” existed in the former Confederate states, except for Tennessee.¹⁸⁹ The remaining Southern states were divided into five military districts and were told that their state must hold a convention creating a new state constitution that would be approved by Congress, and ratify the 14th amendment, before their state would be restored to the Union. Under the Reconstruction Acts, black men were also able to vote.¹⁹⁰ North Carolina was in the second military district along with South Carolina and was under the military rule of General E.R.S. Canby for the majority of Congressional Reconstruction. The unprecedented use of federal power shocked many Southerners, and the Conservative Party used it as evidence of rampant Republican misrule.

Before North Carolina could be readmitted to the Union, the state had to write a new Constitution that Congress would approve. In 1867, General Canby ordered an election on

¹⁸⁸ Zuber, *North Carolina during Reconstruction*, 9. The amendment was rejected by a vote of 93 to 10 in the House of Commons and 45 to 1 in the Senate. The only ex-Confederate state to approve the amendment was Tennessee.

¹⁸⁹ *United States Statutes at Large*, XIV, 428-29; XV, reprinted in Robert W. Johannsen, *Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (New York: Free Press, 1970), 91.

¹⁹⁰ *United States Statutes at Large*, XIV, 428-29; XV, reprinted in *Robert W. Johannsen, Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (New York: Free Press, 1970), 91. See Mark Bradley, *Bluecoats and Tarheels: Soldiers and Civilians in Reconstruction North Carolina* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2009).

whether to have a Constitutional Convention, and for delegates to the convention, should it take place. The Republican Party came to power in North Carolina during this election, under the slogan “Free Speech, Free Ballot, Free Labor, Free Schools.”¹⁹¹ There was a strong correlation between Union sentiment and Republican strength in North Carolina, and the majority of freed people and many poor whites in the piedmont of North Carolina strongly supported the Republican Party platform.¹⁹² Many white men had been denied political participation during the antebellum era, and like freedmen, joined the Republican Party because it was more egalitarian.¹⁹³

Albion Tourgée, a former Union soldier and “carpetbagger” from Ohio, was elected to represent Guilford County at the 1868 Constitutional Convention on a Republican platform. Tourgée guaranteed the right of all men to vote, except those who were disfranchised by the Fourteenth Amendment, and supported public education and a fair tax system. His broadside also exploited class inequalities from the antebellum era and accused the slaveholding “aristocracy” of repressing republican rule. Tourgée told his constituents that there are two options, and asked, “Shall the new State be an Oligarchy or a Republic? An Aristocracy or a Democracy? ... Shall we have a government of a few, by a few, and for a few? ... Do you choose to govern yourselves or be ruled by those who still crave the name of “master?”¹⁹⁴ Tourgée was appealing to his constituents’ memory of

¹⁹¹ Deborah Beckel, *Radical Reform: Interracial Politics in Post-Emancipation North Carolina* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 4.

¹⁹² James Lawrence Lancaster, “The Scalawags of North Carolina, 1850-1868,” (Ph.D. Diss.: Princeton University, 1974), 277.

¹⁹³ Beckel, *Radical Reform*, 3.

¹⁹⁴ “To the Voters of Guilford,” broadside, October 21, 1867, item 2428, Albion Winegar Tourgee Papers, Chataqua County Historical Society, in *Undaunted Radical: the Selected Writings and Speeches of Albion W. Tourgée*, edited by Mark Elliott and John David Smith (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010).

coercive, undemocratic policies instated by the former ruling elite, and encouraged them to choose republican government.

The Conservative Party rejected the call for a convention, claiming that federal interference, especially in regard to black political rights, was unconstitutional.¹⁹⁵ Central to the claim of illegitimate government under federal intervention was white supremacist rule. It is important to note that almost 12,000 former Confederates in the state, many of whom were Conservatives, were unable to vote in the election, whereas the newly enfranchised black population was predominantly Republican.¹⁹⁶ While the Conservative Party continued to build its campaign around claims of Republican illegitimacy and white supremacy, many former Confederate citizens still faced concerns about their loyalty, and the Republican Party continued to benefit from them.

During voter registration in Pittsboro, one citizen claimed that two black voters registered for every white voter, and that was because many white voters were unsure whether or not they could register to vote.¹⁹⁷ Conservatives “laid down the line of color as the dividing line” for political parties during this election, and also expected voters to adhere to strict “white-line” politics.¹⁹⁸ The Conservative Party expected all white voters to vote for Conservative candidates and reminded voters that “a full white vote in North Carolina is a Conservative victory.”¹⁹⁹ More than anything, the sudden enfranchisement of freedmen,

¹⁹⁵ Jonathan to D.G. Worth, October 24, 1867, in *The Correspondence of Jonathan Worth, Volume II*, The North Carolina Historical Commission, ed. (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1909), 1058.

¹⁹⁶ Beckel, *Radical Reform*, 60.

¹⁹⁷ J.J. Jackson to Jonathan Worth, August 27, 1867, in *The Correspondence of Jonathan Worth, Volume II*, 1045.

¹⁹⁸ Beckel, *Radical Reform*, 57.

¹⁹⁹ *Raleigh Sentinel*, November 19, 1867.

whom most whites deemed incapable of self-rule, along with the continued disfranchisement of former Confederates, led the Conservative Party's attempt to supplant wartime loyalty and reconstruct a government based on white supremacist rule.

Despite Conservative anticipation of a "full white vote," the Republican Party seized power in the election. The vote for a convention passed, and 102 of the 170 delegates elected were Republican. The majority of central piedmont counties voted overwhelming for a convention and elected predominantly Republican delegates.²⁰⁰ The Constitutional Convention met from January to March of 1868, and Conservatives throughout the state despised the convention and began to campaign furiously for victory in the spring election.²⁰¹ The *Raleigh Sentinel* always referred to the convention as the "so called convention" to mock the legitimacy of the convention, and other Conservative newspapers throughout the central piedmont followed suit.²⁰² Conservatives again alleged that the state was under "black Republican rule," with aid from carpetbaggers, and worked to reestablish "home rule," or rule by native white Southerners interested in maintaining the existing racial hierarchy. Many Conservatives argued that the disfranchisement of the former Confederate citizens who were "most fit" to rule resulted in "black Republican rule," which they believed to be illegitimate. Conservatives used the high expenses of the convention as evidence of Republican corruption

²⁰⁰ North Carolina, *Journal of the Constitutional Convention of the State of North-Carolina, at Its Session 1868* (Raleigh: Joseph W. Holden, Convention Printer, 1868), 114-118; Orange county was the only county in the region, and one of two counties in the state with a majority vote against a convention (the other county being Currituck).

²⁰¹ Edward Hobson McGee, "North Carolina Conservatives and Reconstruction" (Ph.D. Diss.: University of North Carolina, 1972), 257.

²⁰² *Raleigh Sentinel*, March 8, 1868. See also the *Salem People's Press*, April 3, 1868.

and incapability of political leadership.²⁰³ The Conservative Party continued to strengthen its platform based on white supremacy and Republican abuse of power.

Despite misuse of funds at the Convention, the Constitution of 1868 was actually incredibly progressive. The Constitution enfranchised a larger part of the citizenry than ever before, changed the governor's term to four years, vastly expanded the public school system in the state, and began reform programs for prisoners.²⁰⁴ The State Constitution received strong support from the Republican Party, and poor whites on either side of the political debate supported the egalitarian and democratic measures in the new state Constitution. Many Republicans also supported a clause that would disqualify former Confederates from office, but after much debate these restrictions were not included.²⁰⁵ Overall, the changes to the Constitution were more democratic and were meant to improve the well-being of each citizen.²⁰⁶

During the convention, Albion Tourg e gave a speech in favor of African American suffrage. Again, he emphasized the importance of government by consent in democratic societies, saying, "The question is not shall any race be excluded from suffrage, but shall any men be debarred from that privilege whether they be white or black and, if so, what men?" He reminded representatives of the past consequences of undemocratic rule in North

²⁰³ Hamilton, *Reconstruction in North Carolina*, 256.

²⁰⁴ Zuber, *North Carolina during Reconstruction*, 17.

²⁰⁵ Article VI, Section 5 of the North Carolina Constitution of 1868 reads: "The following classes of persons shall be disqualified for office: First, All persons who shall deny the being of Almighty God. Second; All persons who shall have been convicted of treason, perjury or of any other infamous crime, since becoming Citizens of the United States, or of corruption, or malpractice in office, unless such persons shall have been legally restored to the rights of citizenship." Accessed online 26 April 2014, http://www.ncleg.net/library/Documents/Constitution_1868.pdf.

²⁰⁶ Zuber, *North Carolina during Reconstruction*, 17. The Constitution of 1868 remained the basis for North Carolina government until a new Constitution was drawn up in 1971.

Carolina by attributing the war to an aristocracy maintained by slave labor. The underlying principle of the social hierarchy in the Old South was that “a few are born to rule, the rest of mankind to obey.” Tourgée declared, “the war from which we have just emerged was a struggle between Republicanism and Oligarchy, between the rights of the people and the usurpations of Aristocracy.” He hoped that in the aftermath of the war, the nation would finally be true to its democratic principles, particularly the idea of government by consent, by allowing all men to vote.²⁰⁷

Following the Convention, competition between Conservatives and Republicans was nearing its peak. There was an election in the spring of 1868 to approve the new Constitution and elect new state and national officers, and after the radical changes implemented by Republicans, Conservatives desperately needed to win the election. The Republican Party nominated W.W. Holden for Governor, who championed the new Constitution. Republicans emphasized that this Constitution was the first in the state to be submitted to the people, and that it enfranchised more citizens than had ever been enfranchised. These are just two of the twenty-one reasons in the “Address to the White Working-Men of North Carolina” explaining why white North Carolinians, especially lower class whites, should vote Republican.²⁰⁸ Holden’s newspaper, the *Raleigh Standard* also published Governor Vance’s 1863 “Proclamation against Deserters,” in every issue between March and November of 1868. The Proclamation headlined “THE PEOPLE CALLED

²⁰⁷ “Speech on Elective Franchise Delivered in Convention of 1868,” item 801, Albion Winegar Tourgee Papers, Chatauqua County Historical Society, in *Undaunted Radical: the Selected Writings and Speeches of Albion W. Tourgée*.

²⁰⁸ “Address to the White Working-Men of North Carolina,” *Raleigh Daily Standard*, March 25, 1868.

UPON TO ARREST AND SHOOT DESERTERS,” and served as a reminder to citizens in the central piedmont of wartime hostilities, and the suffering brought on by those loyal to the coercive Confederate government.²⁰⁹ Thus, the Republican Party combatted Conservative allegations of illegitimate rule by emphasizing the unprecedented democratic measures in the Constitution, and by reminding voters of the oppression experienced under the wartime power of many Conservative leaders.

Governor Holden ran against Conservative Party candidate Thomas Ashe, who rejected the Constitution and advocated a “white man’s party.”²¹⁰ Ashe was a secessionist and former Confederate Congressmen, and the *Raleigh Standard* warned that a vote for the Conservative Party was a vote “for another WAR!”²¹¹ Conservatives in the central piedmont, and much of North Carolina, feared “black Republican rule,” and complained that the men who were “most fit” to rule—former Confederates—remained disfranchised as the election approached.²¹² A farmer in Davidson County wrote Holden, saying, “rebels say they will not submit to the Helish desires of Holden and his Negro following.”²¹³ The Republican Party denied the existence of a “negro supremacy” and reminded voter that Conservatives were “endeavoring to hide their damning sins behind the black skin of the negro.”²¹⁴ As the Republican Party focused on wartime transgressions as central to postwar politics, the

²⁰⁹ Zebulon Vance, “Proclamation against Deserters,” May 11, 1863.

²¹⁰ Zuber, *North Carolina during Reconstruction*, 18.

²¹¹ “Beware of Rebel Frauds,” *Raleigh Daily Standard*, April 4, 1868.

²¹² Russ, Jr., “Radical Disfranchisement in North Carolina, 1867-1868,” 275.

²¹³ W.F. Henderson to Holden, July 17, 1868 in Raper, *The Papers of W.W. Holden*, 343.

²¹⁴ “Rebel Lies,” *Raleigh Daily Standard*, April 2, 1868.

Conservative Party continued to advocate white supremacist rule as the “great and paramount issue.”²¹⁵

Holden easily won the election, and the Constitution was approved by a vote of 93,000 to 74,000. When Holden took office, General Canby declared that federal intervention in the state was at an end, and North Carolina was readmitted to the Union in July of 1868. Although for many it was a joyous occasion, Conservatives were now more determined than ever to redeem the state.

At the same time as these controversial elections, from late 1867 through early 1868, the Ku Klux Klan had begun to organize in the state. In the piedmont of North Carolina, the Ku Klux Klan used coercive tactics to repress Republican rule and maintain the existing social hierarchy. The secret organization was based on white supremacy, and used violence to intimidate both black and white North Carolinians who supported Reconstruction measures or social equality for blacks. The KKK was most active in areas of the state with equal populations of black and white voters, and in some regions with a slight Republican or black majority.²¹⁶ Conservatives in areas with a strong black majority, like much of Eastern North Carolina, were more likely to cooperate with black voters because they depended on their votes.²¹⁷

Following the Republican rise to power, the Ku Klux Klan began to spread rapidly throughout the state, and the piedmont was a Klan stronghold. Orange County was the center

²¹⁵ “Rebel Lies,” *Raleigh Daily Standard*, April 2, 1868.

²¹⁶ Beckel, *Radical Reform*, 69.

²¹⁷ Paul Yandle, “Different Colored Currents at Sea: Reconstruction North Carolina, Mutuality, and the Political Roots of Jim Crow, 1872-1875,” in *North Carolinians in the Civil War and Reconstruction*, ed. Paul D. Escott (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 225.

of Klan activity in the state.²¹⁸ The strong Unionist sentiment in the area, along with the votes of freedmen, strengthened the Republican Party. The vote was nearly split between the two parties in most central piedmont counties as well, a common characteristic of counties with high Klan activity. In fact, the Klan was so effective that the impact of their “reign of terror” is evident between the spring and fall elections of 1868. Thirteen counties swung Conservative between the two elections. The only two counties in the state that gained Republican support between the spring and fall elections of 1868 were Alamance and Caswell—the two counties where Klan violence would become most intense.²¹⁹

The Klan in North Carolina operated in counties where the party vote was evenly split, and Klan outrages were committed almost entirely against Republicans, indicating that the Klan had a strong political agenda. Since most of the counties in the central piedmont were split near evenly between the two parties, the Klan operated around elections and sought to intimidate Republicans from voting. The Special Election for the Fourth Congressional District as held in 1870, for example, increased Klan violence in the central piedmont. John Manning, Jr., of Pittsboro, was running to fill the seat of resigned Republican John Dewese, and won. Following the election, the Klan directly threatened “Yankee” William Howle, a Chatham Railroad contractor who had canvassed and made speeches against Manning during the campaign. The Klan threatened Howle and his family for “meddling in their [North Carolina] politics,” and the family immediately moved away from Chatham County. Many Republicans, black and white, resorted to living in the woods as

²¹⁸ Trelease, *White Terror*, 206.

²¹⁹ Otto Olsen, “The Ku Klux Klan: A Study in Reconstruction Politics and Propaganda,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 39, no.2 (July 1962), 354.

Klan violence increased.²²⁰ The endorsement of the Klan by many prominent Conservative men, such as William A. Graham and Josiah Turner, Jr., further demonstrates the Klan's role as a political organization. The Klan continually worked to further the Conservative Party agenda in the central piedmont in an attempt to eliminate "black Republican rule" and redeem the state with "home rule." Klansmen made it clear that black men could not safely vote, and that white men who were willing to vote for the "black man's party" could not safely vote either.²²¹

The piedmont was the center of Klan activity in the state as they worked to restore white supremacy and "home rule" throughout the fall of 1869.²²² By March of 1869 the Justices of the Peace of Alamance County reported to Governor Holden that it was "impossible to maintain the peace in the county" due to rampant Klan violence.²²³ In October, Governor Holden warned citizens of Orange and Chatham counties that if the lawlessness continued, he would be forced to declare those counties in a state of insurrection. During this time, the Klan committed hundreds of outrages against white Republicans and African American residents throughout the central piedmont. Caswell Holt, from Graham, and Alonzo Corliss, from Company Shops, were two economically independent leaders in their communities that were assaulted, or "Ku-Kluxed," for their involvement with the

²²⁰ *Testimony taken by the Joint Select Committee to inquire into the Conditions of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States: North Carolina* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), 47, 63.

²²¹ *Raleigh Sentinel*, November 14, 1867.

²²² Trelease, *White Terror*, 206.

²²³ Justices of the Peace, Alamance County to W.W. Holden, March 22, 1869 cited in Jesse Parker Bogue, Jr., "Violence and Oppression in North Carolina during Reconstruction, 1865-1873" (Ph.D. Diss.: University of Maryland, 1973), 226.

Republican Party.²²⁴ Corliss had written Governor Holden in November of 1869 pleading for him to send in militia to help keep the peace and protect citizens, especially Republicans and the black community, but to no avail. Most outrages went unpunished.

One particularly noteworthy outrage committed by the KKK in the central piedmont was the assault on Essic Harris, a well-respected black man from Chatham County. Harris, who worked on the Chatham Railroad, lived with his wife, Ann, and six children in a modest house about seven miles outside of Pittsboro. One night while he and his family were sleeping, a group of about forty disguised, armed men arrived and began firing on his house. When two Klansmen tried to break down the door to see if Harris had been killed yet, Harris shot them both.²²⁵ The Klan fired upon the house for another hour and a half, and once they were convinced Harris must be dead, and with dawn breaking, the Klan dispersed. Miraculously, Harris' family was unhurt, and although Harris was shot nine times, the next day he walked ten miles to take the cars to Raleigh, where he reported the attack, returned with a warrant, and arrested a few of the Klansmen involved, including the two men he shot.²²⁶ Harris also testified that the men had told him that this was a "white man's country" and that the majority of the black population were afraid to vote since Klan violence was directed toward Republican voters.²²⁷ Thus, the Conservative Party had resorted to violence

²²⁴ Trelease, *White Terror*, 209.

²²⁵ *Testimony taken by the Joint Select Committee to inquire into the Conditions of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States: North Carolina* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), 90.

²²⁶ *Testimony taken by the Joint Select Committee to inquire into the Conditions of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States: North Carolina* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), 94.

²²⁷ *Testimony taken by the Joint Select Committee to inquire into the Conditions of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States: North Carolina* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), 95.

to repress the Republican vote and ensure the centrality of white supremacy in postwar politics.

Klan violence reached a climax in the state in the summer of 1870 in Alamance and Caswell Counties. In February of 1870, the Ku Klux Klan hanged Wyatt Outlaw, a prominent black businessman from Graham, from an oak tree across from the Alamance County courthouse. Outlaw had helped bring the Republican Party to power in the county and was also the head of the Union League.²²⁸ Outlaw's murder elicited quite a response throughout the state, and the murder of "scalawag" Republican leader John W. Stevens in the basement of neighboring Caswell County's Courthouse a few months later only created more disorder. In response to the continued Klan violence, Governor Holden declared the counties in a state of insurrection and sent in troops to enforce military rule under the direction of Colonel G. W. Kirk.²²⁹

Although no blood was shed, Governor Holden suspended the writ of habeas corpus for prisoners arrested for involvement with the Klan. Ironically, Klan members challenged the suspension under the provisions of the 14th Amendment, and officials determined that the Klansmen should be released.²³⁰ Following the so-called "Kirk-Holden War," Governor Holden was widely perceived as a tyrant and his actions were seen as another example of Republican abuse of power. The Conservative *Greensboro Patriot* alleged that Holden used military force to intimidate voters and that he exaggerated the violence "to make show of a rebellion which existed only in the corrupt heart of one whose hellish design is to perpetuate

²²⁸ Trelease, *White Terror*, 205.

²²⁹ Zuber, *North Carolina during Reconstruction*, 33; Trelease, *White Terror*, 213; Beckel, *Radical Reform*, 73.

²³⁰ Beckel, *Radical Reform*, 73.

his power and damn the State.”²³¹ The *People’s Press* agreed that Holden was attempting to “perpetuate his rapidly waning power.”²³² Conservatives in the region began to couple Holden’s extension of power with the federal interference during Reconstruction. They denounced the Republican ticket as undemocratic and said any man who voted Republican “votes to makes this government a Military despotism. He votes to make Holden KING of NORTH CAROLINA.”²³³ Ultimately, this perceived extension of power led to a drop in Republican support in the Election of 1870.²³⁴ Klan violence also discouraged both black and white Republicans from voting, while a white supremacist agenda and expectations of a “full white vote” attracted many Conservative voters to the polls.

The results of the election of 1870 demonstrate that white supremacist rule had gained control of state politics, and the Klan had successfully used coercion to suppress republican rule. Ten of fifteen counties in the central piedmont that swung Conservative in this election had Klan activity and won not due to an increase in Conservative votes, but a decrease in Republican votes.²³⁵ The resentment of military intervention, but more significantly, the large amount of Republican voters who were afraid to vote, resulted in a complete Conservative victory.²³⁶ The Conservative Party had been trying to come up with a way to impeach Holden since his “Republican Regime” came to power.²³⁷ Several black representatives in the state legislature warned black voters in 1870 that if Holden was

²³¹ “Voter Read,” *Greensboro Patriot*, August 1, 1870.

²³² *People’s Press*, July 8, 1870.

²³³ “Remember!!!,” *Greensboro Patriot*, August 1, 1870.

²³⁴ Otto Olsen, “The Ku Klux Klan,” 360.; Beckel, *Radical Reform*, 75.

²³⁵ Otto Olsen, “The Ku Klux Klan,” 360.

²³⁶ Beckel, *Radical Reform*, 76.

²³⁷ “Address to the Colored People of North Carolina,” Raleigh, December 19, 1870.

impeached, “those whom he protected will be the next victims... They are mad because the Reconstruction measures have triumphed, and we are permitted to represent you in this body. They are mad because we will not bow the knee to them.”²³⁸ With a majority in both houses of the General Assembly after the Election of 1870, the Conservative Party impeached Governor Holden.²³⁹ The Conservative Party was determined to restore “home rule” based on white supremacist government.

After these political victories, Klan violence declined in the central piedmont, mostly because Conservative rule had been restored, and the goals of the Ku Klux Klan had been achieved. The Election of 1872 was hotly contested as Republicans hoped to regain the support lost in the last election. The Republican candidate for governor, Tod R. Caldwell, won, but the Conservative Party carried the rest of the election.²⁴⁰ The state legislature worked to prevent social equality and constantly sought to call a constitutional convention. When the Conservatives received a majority again in 1875, they finally had enough support to call a Constitutional Convention. The delegates sought to overturn many of the progressive changes of the Constitution of 1868. The amendments to the Constitution passed by the Convention of 1875 were able to do just that, finally “redeeming” the state to “home rule.”

Following the end of the Civil War, the most important issue that former Confederate citizens faced was reestablishing legitimate government in the eyes of the United States. Under Johnson’s Reconstruction plan, former Confederates sought amnesty and restoration of political rights beginning in the summer of 1865. Wartime loyalty continued to play a

²³⁸ “Address to the Colored People of North Carolina,” Raleigh, December 19, 1870.

²³⁹ Beckel, *Radical Reform*, 77.

²⁴⁰ Zuber, *North Carolina during Reconstruction*, 47.

major role in shaping political opinion, as seen in the Elections of 1865 and 1866. The Conservative Party was beginning to advocate a “white man’s party,” but disorganization, disfranchisement and democratic appeal of the Republican Party to poor whites prevented their success. During the Election of 1867 and the Constitutional Convention of 1868 the importance of wartime loyalty in political platforms had declined, but its impact was still evident through the disfranchisement of 12,000 former Confederates. Conservatives established a platform based on white supremacist rule and condemned the new state government as illegitimate. At the same time, the Ku Klux Klan began enforcing white supremacy and solidarity on behalf of the Conservative Party. During the Election of 1868, the Conservative Party maintained white supremacist “home rule” as their primary goal, but the Republican Party continued to benefit from wartime loyalty and disfranchisement, reflecting that wartime loyalties were still important in defining who should be a citizen. The Republican Party advocated government by consent and true republican rule after decades of aristocratic rule, which garnered support from both white and black North Carolinians. When accompanied by the near unanimous support of the black population, the Republican Party was able to rise to power in North Carolina.

Although Republican victory in 1868 led to the progressive ideas in the North Carolina Constitution of 1868 and the ratification of all three amendments to the U.S. Constitution under Congressional Reconstruction, the rise of the coercive Ku Klux Klan quickly restored the Conservative Party to power. Growing resentment of the imposition of federal power in the state, especially regarding the 14th Amendment and the Kirk-Holden War, coupled with the “reign of terror” the Klan exercised in the central piedmont, led to a

drop in Republican votes. Although wartime loyalties had played an important role in postwar politics, by the Election of 1870, the primary political issue was that of white supremacy, and Conservatives enforced strict “white-line” politics. The Conservative victory in 1872 and finally the Conservative victory in amending the state Constitution in 1875 finalized the return of white supremacy to power in the state.

CONCLUSION

Political dissent formed the foundation for disloyalty in the central piedmont of North Carolina. Throughout the secession crisis, the Civil War, and Reconstruction, white North Carolinians had resisted what they considered to be the imposition of coercive government policies, both Union and Confederate. Furthermore, they regularly accused both Union and Confederate governments of abusing power, particularly by failing to represent the will of the people. For many North Carolinians, the election of wartime Governor Zeb Vance to the governorship in 1876 symbolized that after years of inner turmoil and divisions over the nature of government, North Carolina Conservatives had “redeemed” the state to “home rule.” The decline in the demand for republican government during the Reconstruction period coincided with the rise of the idea that white supremacist rule was legitimate rule.

During the secession crisis, most North Carolinians supported reconciliation with the Union, in spite of what many in the piedmont alleged was a secessionist minority working against the will of the people. Most North Carolinians desired to “watch-and-wait,” but were vigilant to ensure that Lincoln did not resort to what they considered coercion, including interference with the institution of slavery. In April of 1861, North Carolinians considered President Lincoln’s call for troops coercive, and felt that it “forced” them out of the Union. At the same time, many North Carolinians were wary of the state’s bond with the Confederacy, and resented the lack of popular consent before such a drastic move.

The imposition of Confederate power during the war caused disloyalty towards the Confederacy to grow, particularly in the central piedmont, and a cycle of coercive policies and rampant Confederate dissent began early on. Disloyalty to the Confederacy was so

widespread, that a Peace Movement based on the idea that North Carolina's bond to the Confederacy was illegitimate drew considerable strength in 1864. The Peace Movement demanded that the government adhere to republican principles and represent both the will and the good of the majority of the people. Governor Vance combatted this movement by emphasizing the dangers of abolition and instigating fears of life without a strict racial hierarchy. Nevertheless, North Carolinian's fear of racial equality under the Union resulted in the defeat of the Peace Movement, demonstrating that their commitment to white supremacy took precedence to their desire for government by consent.

Following the war, former Confederates who were disfranchised began to claim that the federal government's use of power was illegitimate. Many white North Carolinians resented that black men could vote, while many former Confederates were disfranchised, and claimed that this violated republican principles. Furthermore, the Ku Klux Klan maintained that their use of violence was justified because the federal government was operating without their consent and failing to represent their interests. The Conservative Party's use of racial fear further promoted the restoration of white supremacist "home rule."

In the central piedmont of North Carolina throughout the Civil War era, a debate over legitimate republican government formed the foundation for dissent and disloyalty. Ideas about the nature of republican government were central to this debate, specifically the role of consent and coercion. Following years of resistance to the imposition of government power that violated republican principles, white North Carolinians accepted a government based on white supremacy. The shift from legitimate government based on government by consent to the restoration of a legitimate government based on white supremacy established that

legitimate government was inherently white in the minds of white Southerners—an important mindset to recognize as the United States entered an age of imperialism.

REFERENCES

Primary Sources

Manuscript Collections

Benjamin Sherwood Hedrick Papers. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

John Bacon Crenshaw Papers. Friends Historical Collection, Hege Library, Guilford College.

John Willis Ellis. Governors Papers. State Archives of North Carolina.

Thomas Settle Letters. State Archives of North Carolina.

Zebulon Baird Vance. Governors Papers. State Archives of North Carolina.

Newspapers

Fayetteville Observer

Greensborough Patriot

Greensboro Times

Hillsborough Recorder

Journal of Freedom

Raleigh Ad Valorem Banner

Raleigh Daily Conservative

Raleigh Weekly Standard

Salem People's Press

Salisbury Carolina Watchman

Semi-Weekly Raleigh Register

Wilmington Daily Herald

Published Primary Sources

Williams, Max R. and J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton, ed. *The Papers of William Alexander Graham, Volume V: 1857-1863*. Raleigh: North Carolina Offices of Archives and History, 1973.

Hamilton, J.G. de Roulhac, ed. *The Correspondence of Jonathan Worth, Volume I*. Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1909.

---. *The Correspondence of Jonathan Worth, Volume II*. Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1909.

Johnston, Frontis, ed., *The Papers of Zebulon Baird Vance, Volume I: 1843-1862*. Raleigh: North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, 1963.

Raper, Horace, ed., *The Papers of Williams Woods Holden, Volume I: 1841-1868*. Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 2000.

Yeans, W. Buck and John G. Barrett, ed. *North Carolina Civil War Documentary*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980.

Government Documents, Political Speeches, and Pamphlets

Johnson, Andrew. "Proclamation 135- Reorganizing a Constitutional Government in North Carolina," May 29, 1865. Available online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=72403> (accessed 3 April 2014).

Johnson, Andrew. "Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction," May 29, 1865. Available online by UNC School of Education, Learn NC: North Carolina Digital History, <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-civilwar/4807> (accessed February 20, 2014).

Journal of the Constitutional Convention of the State of North-Carolina, at Its Session 1868. Raleigh: Joseph W. Holden, Convention Printer, 1868.

Journal of the Convention of the People of North Carolina, Held on the 20th Day of May, A.D. 1861. Raleigh: Jno. W. Syme, Convention Printer, 1862.

Mabson, Geo. "Address to the Colored People of North Carolina." Raleigh, N.C., 12/19/1870.

Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s-1917. Case Files of Applications from Former Confederates for Presidential Pardons ("Amnesty Papers"), 1865-67. Microfilm Publication M1003. Record Group 94. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Records of the United States House of Representatives, 1789-1990. Southern Claims Commission, Barred and Disallowed Claims, 1871-1880. Microfiche Publication M1407. Record Group 233. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

Testimony taken by the Joint Select Committee to inquire into the Conditions of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States: North Carolina. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872.

Tyson, Bryan. *The Object of the Administration in Prosecuting the War.* Washington, D.C.: McGill & Witherow, 1869.

---. *Ray of Light, or, A Treatise on the Sectional Troubles, Religiously and Morally Considered.* Brower's Mills, N.C.: B. Tyson, 1862.

Secondary Sources

Books

Astor, Aaron. *Rebels on the Border: Civil War, Emancipation, and the Reconstruction of Kentucky and Missouri.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012.

Auman, William T. *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt: The Confederate Campaign against Peace Agitators, Deserters, and Draft Dodgers.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2014.

Beckel, Deborah. *Radical Reform: Interracial Politics in Post-Emancipation North Carolina.* Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011.

Bradley, Mark. *Bluecoats and Tarheels: Soldiers and Civilians in Reconstruction North Carolina.* Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2009.

Browning, Judkin. *Shifting Loyalties: the Union Occupation of Eastern North Carolina.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

Bynum, Victoria E. *The Long Shadow of the Civil War: Southern Dissent and its Legacies.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

Clinton, Catherine, ed. *Southern Families at War: Loyalty and Conflict in the Civil War South.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Crofts, Daniel. *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists during the Secession Crisis.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

Degler, Carl. *The Other South: Southern Dissenters in the Nineteenth Century.* New York: Harper & Row, 1974.

- Dorris, Jonathon Truman. *Pardon and Amnesty under Lincoln and Johnson: The Restoration of the Confederates to Their Rights and Privileges, 1861-1898*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953.
- Escott, Paul D. *Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.
- . Ed. *North Carolinians in the Civil War and Reconstruction*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.
- Grodzins, Morton. *The Loyal and the Disloyal: Social Boundaries of Patriotism and Treason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956.
- Hamilton, J.G. de Roulhac. *Reconstruction in North Carolina*. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith Publishing, 1964.
- Harris, William C. *North Carolina and the Coming of the Civil War*. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Dept. of Cultural Resources, 1988.
- Inscoe, John and Gordon McKinney. *The Heart of Confederate Appalachia: Western North Carolina in the Civil War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Johannsen, Robert W. *Reconstruction, 1865-1877*. New York: Free Press, 1970.
- Kettner, James. *The Development of American Citizenship, 1608-1870*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978.
- Kruman, Marc. *Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983.
- Levi, Margaret. *Consent, Dissent, and Patriotism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Lonn, Ella. *Desertion during the Civil War*. Introduction by William Blair. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.
- McCurry, Stephanie. *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Mobley, Joe A. *Weary of War: Life on the Confederate Home Front*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2008.
- Pennock, J. Roland and John W. Chapman, eds. *Coercion*. Chicago: Atherton, 1972.

- Sarris, Jonathan Dean. *A Separate Civil War: Communities in Conflict in the Mountain South*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006.
- Sitterson, Joseph Carlyle. *The Secession Movement in North Carolina*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939.
- Tatum, Georgia Lee. *Disloyalty in the Confederacy*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1934.
- Taylor, Amy Murrell. *The Divided Family in Civil War America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2005.
- Trelease, Allen. *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction*. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
- Wooster, Ralph A. *The Secession Conventions of the South*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962.
- Zuber, Richard. *North Carolina During Reconstruction*. Raleigh, NC: State Department of Archives and History, 1969.

Journal Articles

- Bynum, Victoria E. "‘War Within a War’: Women’s Participation in the Revolt of the North Carolina Piedmont, 1863-1865." *Frontiers* 9, no. 3 (1987): 43-49.
- Davis, Archie K. "‘She Disdained to Pluck One Laurel from a Sister’s Brow’: Disloyalty in the Confederacy in North Carolina." *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 88, no. 2 (April, 1980): 131-147.
- Escott, Paul. "‘The Cry of the Sufferers’: The Problem of Welfare in the Confederacy." *Civil War History* 23, no.3 (Sept. 1977): 228-240.
- . "The Moral Economy of the Crowd in Confederate North Carolina." *Maryland Historian* 13 (1982): 1-18.
- McKinney, Gordon B. "Layers of Loyalty: Confederate Nationalism and Amnesty Letters from Western North Carolina." *Civil War History* 51, no. 1 (2005): 5-22.
- Olsen, Otto. "The Ku Klux Klan: A Study in Reconstruction Politics and Propaganda." *North Carolina Historical Review* 39, no.2 (July 1962): 341-362.

Russ, Jr., William A. "Radical Disfranchisement in North Carolina." *North Carolina Historical Review* 11, no. 4 (Oct. 1934): 271-283.

Sacher, John. "The Loyal Draft Dodger? A Reexamination of Confederate Substitution." *Civil War History* 57, no. 2 (June 2011): 153-178.

Dissertations

Bogue, Jr., Jesse Parker. "Violence and Oppression in North Carolina during Reconstruction, 1865-1873." PhD diss., University of Maryland, 1973.

Lancaster, James Lawrence. "The Scalawags of North Carolina, 1850-1868." PhD diss., Princeton University, 1974.

McGee, Edward Hobson. "North Carolina Conservatives and Reconstruction." PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 1972.