



**XAVIER**  
UNIVERSITY of LOUISIANA

Xavier University of Louisiana  
**XULA Digital Commons**

---

Electronic Thesis and Dissertation

---

1943

## The Rise and Effect Of Social Organizations in Louisiana During Reconstruction

Bernice C. Allain  
*Xavier University of Louisiana*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.xula.edu/etd>



Part of the [Social History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Allain, Bernice C., "The Rise and Effect Of Social Organizations in Louisiana During Reconstruction" (1943). *Electronic Thesis and Dissertation*. 21.  
<https://digitalcommons.xula.edu/etd/21>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by XULA Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Thesis and Dissertation by an authorized administrator of XULA Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [ksiddell@xula.edu](mailto:ksiddell@xula.edu).

This thesis was conducted under the direction of  
Paul A. Kunkel as Major Professor, and  
was approved by Sister M. Leo as reader  
and by M. C. D'Argonne as Dean.



THE RISE AND EFFECT OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS  
IN LOUISIANA DURING RECONSTRUCTION

BY

BERENICE C. ALLAIN

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
OF XAVIER UNIVERSITY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE  
OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

Xavier University  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
1943

XAVIER UNIVERSITY LIBRARY  
NEW ORLEANS, LA. 70125

18  
57824  
A465  
1943

PREFACE

In treating this topic, The Rise and Effect of Social Organizations in Louisiana During Reconstruction, the author's object is to show how these organizations came into existence, their disrapture of the social order in the State, and their permanent effect on the social thought of Louisiana. There were hundreds of organizations and societies in Louisiana, but they were either absorbed in the larger associations or were identical in purpose and effect. The organizations which were most influential in the change of social thought in regard to the Negro in Louisiana, are the organizations herein treated.

The author wishes to thank all who have aided her in the writing of this thesis. Special acknowledgment is due to Dr. Paul Kunkel, whose patient direction is sincerely appreciated. The assistance rendered by Sister M. Redempta, the librarian, made the writing of this thesis possible. Without her aid it would have been almost impossible to secure certain valuable source material, obtained from the Tulane and Louisiana State University libraries.

Berenice C. Allain

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE.....	i
CHAPTERS	
I. Introduction.....	1
II. The Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana.....	6
III. The Union League in Louisiana..	23
IV. The Ku Klux Klan in Louisiana..	33
V. The Knights of the White Camelia in Louisiana.....	46
VI. The White League.....	53
VII. Results of the "Reconstruction" Organizations Upon the Political and Social Mind of Louisiana.....	73
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	86



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The Civil War was indeed a costly disaster. During the bitter, long, hard years of strife there was naturally a constant drain on all the resources of both sides. The once rich and prosperous South was prostrate at the close of the encounter. Southern homes were either completely burned or in ruins; southern fields were pillaged and robbed; and southern capital was absolutely worthless. This was the position in which the ex-Confederate States found themselves at the end of the Civil War.

Louisiana had suffered severely from the operations of the Union armies within her territory, and it was to be a difficult task to restore that prosperity the State had once enjoyed.<sup>1</sup> The ruins of burned houses and farm-buildings, the remains of work animals, flocks and herds, which had been killed when it was inconvenient for the pillaging Union armies to carry off alive

---

1. John R. Ficklen, Reconstruction in Louisiana, 102.

with them, and the many widows and orphans crying for aid in their destitution, were all evidence of the deplorable conditions of the State.<sup>2</sup>

With the beginning of reconstruction, Louisiana, the "bread-basket" of the Confederacy, was overrun with carpet-baggers. Hoping to profit by the confusion and uncertainty of the Negroes at this time and to use them as instruments in their schemes of obtaining quick, easy fortunes amid the ruins of the war-torn State, these carpet-baggers incited race frictions between the newly emancipated Negro and his former master. Slavery, which had existed since the early colonization of the State, was interwoven with the thoughts, habits and daily lives of both races,<sup>3</sup> and the too sudden change of relationship between master and ex-slave effected an atmosphere of inflammatory sensitiveness and expectancy.

The Negroes were required to join the secret political clubs organized by the carpet-baggers.<sup>4</sup>

---

2. Richard Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction, 236.

3. Ibid.

4. Walter Lynwood Fleming, Documentary History of Reconstruction, II, 28.

Through the medium of these organizations, the Negroes were taught to trust only those who had brought about their liberation--the Republicans, and to distrust, as their sworn enemies, their former masters, some of whom were anxious and willing to help their former slaves.

The provisions of disfranchisement in Louisiana, perhaps the most severe of all, had disqualified

all who had held military or civil office for as long as a year in the Confederacy, all who wrote or published newspaper articles or preached sermons 'in advocacy of treason', and all who had voted for or signed the ordinance of secession.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, a large majority of the white population of Louisiana was disfranchised.

Race riots were frequent, and were directly responsible for many of the conditions in Louisiana after the war.<sup>6</sup> Visualizing what might

---

5. William A. Dunning, Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction, 197.

6. Oscar H. Lestage, "The White League in Louisiana and its Participation in Reconstruction Riots", Louisiana Historical Quarterly, July, 1935, 619.



happen in the State. Governor H. W. Allen, in his farewell address at Shreveport on June 2, 1865, gave the following advice to his fellow Louisianans:

Until order shall be established and society with all its safeguards fully restored, I would advise that you form yourselves into companies and squads for the purpose of protecting your families from outrage and insult, and your property from spoliation-- a few bad men can do much mischief and destroy much property.<sup>7</sup>

Governor Allen, though only at the brink of the long period of reconstruction, foresaw the need for home organization if the northern victors were inclined to make capital out of the Negro's freedom. The whites of Louisiana, convinced that only by desperate means could Louisiana be wrested from the grasp of the carpet-baggers and Negroes,<sup>8</sup> organized into secret political associations and groups for protection. Some of these organizations will be treated later in this thesis.

Both sides were active in forming clubs, for there were hundreds of such federations formed

---

7. Lestage, op. cit., 619-620.

8. Fanny L. Bone, "Louisiana in the Disputed Election of 1876", Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XIV, 420.

throughout Louisiana. These clubs were similar in aims, methods, and habits; however, they did not have a continuous existence either locally or throughout Louisiana.<sup>9</sup>

Clubs originated as conditions required; and as necessities were local in many instances, so were the organizations.<sup>10</sup>

The secret organizations of both the Radical, or Republican, element and the Conservative, or Democratic, element of the State played a major role in the government, and consequently the reconstruction of the State of Louisiana. They were the direct cause of the change of social thought in regard to the Negro and his status in Louisiana society, and were, therefore, largely directly responsible for the widening gap of antagonism and distrust that came to exist in thought and feeling between the Negro and the white man.

---

9. Lestage, op. cit., 628.

10. Ibid.



## CHAPTER II

### THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU IN LOUISIANA

Toward the close of the Civil War the need of a central organization for the care, protection and rehabilitation of the freedmen was indeed evident to many, but was made the object of active concern by only a small portion<sup>1</sup> of those who realized the severe handicaps under which the emancipated Negro was obliged to carry on his existence. Of this small group of actively interested parties the representatives of various religious and benevolent societies of the North had made themselves prominent by their individual work and by their cooperation with the federal officials in their effort to relieve suffering and to promote industry, education and morality.<sup>2</sup>

The first of these voluntary organizations to turn its attention immediately after the Civil War to the needs of the freedmen and re-

---

1. Paul Peirce, The Freedmen's Bureau, 34.

2. Ficklen, op. cit., 134; Peirce, op. cit., 25; Fleming, Walter, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, Nos. 6 & 7, 3.

fugees in Louisiana, was the American Missionary Association, an organization formed about 1837,<sup>3</sup> with the relieving of human misery, destitution and need as one of its principal aims. Hundreds of relief societies, supported by churches and individual subscriptions, were scattered over the country, three of which extended their operations to Louisiana; namely, the New England Freedmen's Aid Society, the National Freedmen's Relief Association, and the American Missionary Association.<sup>4</sup> These relief societies were all entirely distinct and independent in organization, direction and action.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of their efforts timely relief had been given to the infirm, the sick, and the penniless in camps and on plantations.<sup>6</sup>

Six schools were established in Louisiana by benevolent societies,<sup>7</sup> and measures were taken

---

3. W.E.B. DuBois, Black Reconstruction, 77.

4. Peirce, op. cit., 27-28; DuBois, op. cit., 78.

5. Peirce, op. cit., 27-28.

6. Ibid., 32.

7. Executive Documents, 39th Congress, 1st sess., 1865-1866, Ex. Doc. No. XI, 3; Annual Cyclo-  
pedia, (1866), 337.

in some cases for the regulation of labor and the insuring of justice.<sup>8</sup>

Although these agencies brought relief to many and served a bewildered people at a time when they needed aid desperately; still, they were able to reach only a small portion of the mass of Negroes just freed from slavery. Sometimes, their purposes were defeated by corrupt and incompetent officials; however, their greatest limitation was the lack of a systematic, closely co-ordinated and centralized administration.<sup>9</sup> In spite of such handicaps, severe and trying as they were, these benevolent societies by the force and influence of their example and active interest, by their constant appeal to the public opinion of the nation, and by their persistent labors with the authorities in Washington, proved to be forceful factors in the creation of the Freedmen's Bureau<sup>10</sup>-- an establishment which was intended to aid in the adjustment of the Negro, but which, not long after its creation, carried with it all the baneful in-

---

8. Peirce, op. cit., 32.

9. Ibid., 33.

10. DuBois, op. cit., 220; Peirce, op. cit., 34.



fluence of a bureaucracy.

About a month before the surrender of General Lee, on March 3, 1865, Congress passed a bill which established the Freedmen's Bureau in the States of the late Confederacy, of which Louisiana had been a part. The Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana as well as the other ex-Confederate states, was thereupon created in accordance with the provisions of this bill, shortly after its passage by Congress. The functions and operations of the Bureau in Louisiana was largely similar to the functions and operations of the Bureau in the other southern states.

A Commissioner, appointed by the President, was to be the head of the Bureau, with an assistant commissioner for each ex-Confederate State. President Lincoln appointed General Oliver Howard head of the Freedmen's Bureau.<sup>11</sup>

Howard was neither a great administrator nor a great man, but he was a good man. He was sympathetic and humane and tried with endless application and desperate sacrifice to do a hard thankless duty.<sup>12</sup>

---

11. Executive Documents, 39th Congress, 1st sess., 1865-1866, Ex. Doc. No. XI, 40.

12. DuBois, op. cit., 223.

The assistant commissioner appointed for Louisiana was Rev. T.W.Conway, who had been in the army, but whose term of service had expired.<sup>13</sup> During the first year of the Bureau's operations in Louisiana, conflict in regard to policy and methods of administration arose between the military commanders and Bureau agents. Major General A.Baird, a Union general, then out of active service, applied for the post, and was appointed to take the place of Rev. Conway as assistant commissioner, or director, of the Bureau in Louisiana.<sup>14</sup> According to the provisions of the law establishing the Freedmen's Bureau, the official holding this office in each state (whose headquarters for Louisiana was in New Orleans), was to make quarterly reports to the head of the Bureau, and the latter, in turn, was to make a report at each session of Congress.<sup>15</sup>

---

13. Executive Documents, 39th Congress, 1st sess., 1865-1866, EX. Doc. No. XI, 46.

14. Executive Documents, 39th Congress, 1st sess., 1865-1866, Ex. Doc. No. XI, 38; Peirce, op. cit., 52.

15. Executive Documents, 39th Congress, 1st sess., 1865-1866, Ex. Doc. No. XI, 38; McPherson, Charles, History of Rebellion, 595.



In regard to the functions of the Bureau, we find that the military commanders, treasury agents and benevolent societies working in Louisiana had already become familiar with all the essential elements in the problem with which the Freedmen's Bureau was to deal; namely, the matter of abandoned and confiscated lands, the problems of the destitute and fugitive Negroes, and the difficulty created by the influx of white refugees.<sup>16</sup>

In accordance with the provisions of the bill of March 3, 1865, the Bureau in Louisiana was to supervise and manage all abandoned lands, i.e., lands taken by the government while their lawful owner was voluntarily absent from them, whether engaged in fighting for the Confederacy, or otherwise aiding or encouraging the rebellion.<sup>17</sup> The Commissioner, or head of the Bureau, under direction of the President, was given authority to:

set apart for the use of loyal refugees and freedmen such tracts of land within the insurrectionary States as shall have been abandoned, or to which the United States

---

16. Peirce, op. cit., 32.

17. Executive Documents, 39th Congress, 1st sess., 1865-1866, Ex. Doc. No. XI, 40; McPherson, op. cit., 594-595.

shall have acquired title by confiscation, or sale, or otherwise.<sup>18</sup>

These tracts of land were to consist of not more than forty acres. The tenants were to be protected in the use of the land for three years at an annual rent not exceeding six percent of its appraised value for taxation by the State authorities in 1860.<sup>19</sup> At the termination of the three years rental, or at any time within the period, the land could be purchased by the tenants at its appraised value, previously fixed when the annual rent was determined.<sup>20</sup>

To meet the crisis presented by the absolute destitution of the freedmen and the refugees throughout the States of the late Confederacy, the bill of March 3, 1865, gave the Bureau control of all matters in which freedmen and refugees from the ex-Confederate States were concerned, under

---

18. Executive Documents, 39th Congress, 1st sess., 1865-1866, Ex. Doc. No. XI, 41; McPherson, op. cit., 595.

19. Ibid.

20. Executive Documents, 39th Congress, 1st sess., 1865-1866, Ex. Doc. No. XI, 41; McPherson, op. cit., 595.

rules approved by the President,<sup>21</sup> and authorized by the Secretary of War to :

direct such issues of provisions, clothing and fuel as he may deem needful for the immediate and temporary shelter and supply of destitute and suffering refugees and freedmen and their wives and children under such rules and regulations as he may direct.<sup>22</sup>

Besides these functions, the Bureau in Louisiana also acted in a judiciary capacity. Freedmen's courts, or boards of arbitration, were organized and maintained by the Bureau in all parts of the State where it was thought that the interests of the freedmen could not safely be entrusted to the local courts.<sup>23</sup>

The relief work of the Bureau in Louisiana can be divided into three classifications: (1) caring for the sick; (2) feeding, clothing, and sheltering the destitute; (3) transporting Negro and white refugees to their homes and to

---

21. Executive Documents, 39th Congress, 1st. sess., 1865-1866, Ex. Doc. No. XI, 41; McPherson, op. cit., 595.

22. Executive Documents, 39th Congress., 1st. sess., 1865-1866, Ex. Doc. No. XI, 40; McPherson, op. cit., 595.

23. Executive Documents, 39th Congress, 1st sess., 1865-1866, Ex. Doc. No. XI, 22-23.



better fields of labor, as well as teachers and officers, or agents of the Bureau to their places of work.<sup>24</sup> The already existent hospitals, asylums, and colonies were maintained and enlarged by the Bureau.<sup>25</sup> The colonies, established in districts populated by Negroes, were infirmaries consisting of a hospital and several cabins for the orphaned and helpless, and were used as places of transit for persons seeking their homes. There were four such colonies in Louisiana; namely, the McHatton at Baton Rouge, the Rost and McCutcheon in St. Charles Parish, the Sparks in Jefferson Parish, and the General Bragg in Lafourche Parish. The dependents placed in these colonies numbered 1,902 persons, 609 of whom were sick. The colonies were organized with a superintendent, a physician, a cultivator of land, and a clerk.<sup>26</sup> In Louisiana the number of hospitals under control of the Bureau was unusually small:

---

24. Executive Documents, 39th Congress, 1st sess., 1865-1866, Ex. Doc. No. XI, 14.

25. Ibid., 44.

26. Peirce, op. cit., 88; Ficklen, op. cit., 135.

one in 1865; two in 1866; two in 1867; one in 1868; and none after that year.<sup>27</sup> Asylums for the aged and infirm Negroes, and for orphan Negro children under Bureau control numbered five in 1865; five in 1866; two in 1867; three in 1868; and none after that year.<sup>28</sup> The total number of persons receiving aid from the Bureau in Louisiana in 1865 was 1,459.<sup>29</sup>

According to the bill of March 3, 1865, the Freedmen's Bureau was to operate during the Civil War and for one year thereafter. However, Congress recognized the urgent need for the continuance of the Bureau if the reconstruction of the southern States was to succeed, and passed amendments which provided for the continuance of the Freedmen's Bureau,<sup>30</sup> and the increasing of the institution's powers in its fields of en-

---

27. Peirce, op. cit., 92.

28. Ibid.

29. Report of General Howard, Annual Cyclopedic, (1865), 377.

30. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, Nos. 6 & 7, 3.

deavor.<sup>31</sup>

In the beginning of its existence in Louisiana, the Bureau issued large quantities of rations to loyal refugees, dependent freedmen, certain citizen employees and officers, and citizens laboring voluntarily for the freedmen.<sup>32</sup> However, after October, 1866, it was ordered that

the issue of rations be discontinued, except to the sick in regularly organized hospitals and to orphan asylums for refugees and freedmen already existing and that state officials who may be responsible for the care of the poor be carefully notified of this order, so that they may assume charge of such indigent refugees and freedmen as are not embraced in the above exception.<sup>33</sup>

About the year 1867, the Bureau's work in Louisiana became chiefly educational.<sup>34</sup> There were 141 schools in the state with 19,000 pupils and 265 teachers.<sup>35</sup> Some of these schools were

---

31. McPherson, Edward, History of Reconstruction, 349.

32. Peirce, op. cit., 94.

33. Peirce, op. cit., 96.

34. Annual Cyclopaedia, (1870), 316.

35. Executive Documents, 39th Congress, 1st sess., 1865-1866, Ex. Doc. No. XI, 29, 38.



organized and taught by teachers employed and paid by benevolent societies.<sup>36</sup> "So great was the desire of the blacks for education",<sup>37</sup> that at the close of each term the schools were generally kept open throughout the summer vacation. The institution furnishing day and night schools, industrial schools, and Sunday schools.<sup>38</sup>

The Bureau in Louisiana had begun its work with an

idea which was fatal to its success: that the Negro was a poor oppressed creature who was to be treated as the nation's ward, and that the white was a hardened tyrant who had to be restrained.<sup>39</sup>

The officials of the Bureau were of various kinds:

honest men--more or less fair-minded and wise; honest men, hopelessly prejudiced and bigoted; and men without honesty, wisdom, or any other qualification.<sup>40</sup>

---

36. Annual Cyclopaedia. (1865). 376.

37. Ibid., (1870), 316

38. DuBois, op. cit., 226.

39. Thomas N. Page, "The Southern People During Reconstruction", Atlantic Monthly, LXXXVIII, Sept., 1901, 296.

40. Ibid.

Unfortunately, the largest, or at least the most active, element among the officials was the last group, which consisted of men bent on selfish gain, who recognized in the newly freed Negro the most promising instrument at hand for their purpose, and used the Freedmen's Bureau as a means to that end.<sup>41</sup>

There was a lack of tact, conciliation, and sound judgment on the part of some of the agents of the Bureau in Louisiana, and in many cases they caused an

inverterate enmity between the whites and the blacks, instead of bringing about the good understanding and respect that their mutual interests required.<sup>42</sup>

In some instances the Negro in Louisiana suffered great injustice and wrong at the hands of some officials of the Bureau, who used their powers and opportunities for their own aggrandizement.<sup>43</sup>

The Negroes were required to register at the

---

41. Page, "The Southern People During Reconstruction", Atlantic Monthly, LXXXVIII, Sept., 1901, 296-297.

42. Report of General J. Fullerton, Dec. 2, 1865; Fleming, Documentary History of Reconstruction, I, 340.

43. Annual Cyclopedia, (1866), 337; Ficklen, op. cit., 134.

Bureau, and planters in turn would apply for whatever laborers they needed. The Bureau supplied the planters with Negro workers, collected their wages for them, and saw to it that the contracts made with the Negroes were carried out.<sup>44</sup> But, the corrupt officials stole the Negroes wages, "leaving their wards to get along the best" they could; they compelled the Negroes to work for them without compensation, and to accept bribes from their former masters.<sup>45</sup> The acts of a few agents of the Bureau, "done through a mistaken notion of kindness to the blacks", were such as to destroy the confidence that should have existed between those planters of Louisiana who were endeavoring to give labor and the freedmen, who worked in their fields, an impartial trial.<sup>46</sup>

---

44. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, Nos. 6 & 7, 24-26; Letter of Giulio Adamoli, New Orleans, March 1, 1867, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, VI, 278.

45. Letter of Giulio Adamoli, New Orleans, March 1, 1867, in ibid., VI, 278.

46. Report of General Fullerton, Dec. 2, 1865, Fleming, Documentary History of Reconstruction, I, 340; Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, Nos. 6 & 7, 35.



By 1868, the Bureau in Louisiana, as well as in all the states where it existed, had decidedly entered into politics.<sup>47</sup> The organization was widely exercised for political profit, and served as a convenient political machine in the organization and management of the Negroes.<sup>48</sup> It was made an active engine in the election of governors, legislators, members of Congress, and United States Senators for Louisiana. Public money and property of the State was used freely for these purposes.<sup>49</sup> In general, the political operations of the Bureau were carried on through the

instrumentality of the officers and willing agents of the bureau, the freedmen's schools and teachers, the missionaries sent out by the American Missionary Society, and the Freedmen's Savings Bank<sup>50</sup>

in Louisiana. Officers and agents of the Bureau were to be found at every state election exer-

---

47. James Rhodes, History of the United States, VI, 185; Damer Eyre, When the Ku Klux Rode, 36.

48. Peirce, op. cit., 170.

49. Fleming, Documentary History of Reconstruction, I, 371-372.

50. Ibid., 372.

cising their political influence on the Negroes. In many cases the candidates for the principal offices of the State were the "self-nominated representatives of the Freedmen's Bureau".<sup>51</sup>

"The success or failure of the Bureau in a community depended on the character of the agent in charge".<sup>52</sup> The Bureau's "most permanent influence" in Louisiana was the fixing of new party lines.<sup>53</sup> Before the establishment of the Freedmen's Bureau the Negro had no politics.

Through its control of elections, it did much to secure to him the right of suffrage guaranteed by the fifteenth amendment. This service, together with the influence of the union league, confirmed him in that allegiance to the Republican party which the assurance of freedom and enjoyment of civil rights had already stimulated.<sup>54</sup>

Thus it was, the Freedmen's Bureau inaugurated many social and political factors heretofore unheard of in Louisiana, or any other

---

51. Fleming, Documentary History of Reconstruction, I, 373.

52. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, Nos. 6 & 7, 4.

53. Peirce, op. cit., 171.

54. Ibid.



southern state. Its work as an instrument in the reconstruction of the ex-Confederate States was completed. The organization had accomplished much good as well as much harm. Whether or not these two were balanced, or whether one outweighed the other is a debatable question. However, on June 30, 1872, the Freedmen's Bureau was abolished and its officers discharged.

speculators recognized in this group of people a powerful political force. If they were well organized and made to accept the carpet-bag philosophy. With this object in mind they began their campaign of Negro organization under the title of the Union League.

The Union League, sometimes called the Loyal League, was a secret society begun in the North in 1842, as a movement to organize and work effective loyal sentiment.<sup>1</sup> The movement spread with the federal armies, and as early as 1863 was extended to Louisiana as well as other southern states, among the southern white people, who

1. *Union*, 22, 213, 23.

2. Walter Fleming, *Reconstruction History of Reconstruction*, 11, 5.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE UNION LEAGUE IN LOUISIANA

Perplexed, and at the same time joyous, the Negroes were wandering around celebrating their new-found freedom. "As a body, the Negroes had been conducting themselves with propriety, and a good feeling prevailed."<sup>1</sup> However, carpet-bag speculators recognized in this group of people a powerful political force, if they were once organized and made to accept the carpet-bag philosophy. With this object in mind they began their campaign of Negro organization under the title of the Union League.

The Union League, sometimes called the Loyal League, was a secret society begun in the North in 1862, as a movement to organize and make effective loyal sentiment.<sup>2</sup> The movement spread with the federal armies, and as early as 1863 was extended to Louisiana as well as other southern states, among the southern unionists, who

---

1. Damer, op. cit., 36.

2. Walter Fleming, Documentary History of Reconstruction, II, 3.

had already formed small secret societies in Louisiana in opposition to the Confederacy.<sup>3</sup> These small orders were absorbed into the Union League with the hope that through this one large society an effective anti-Confederate political party would be organized in the State.<sup>4</sup> United States army officers, officials of the Freedmen's Bureau, "loyalists", or the Union element in the State, composed the membership of the Union League in Louisiana.<sup>5</sup>

During the period, 1866-68, the entire character of the order in Louisiana was changed by the admission of Negroes into the League.<sup>6</sup> When Negroes were admitted, the whites of Louisiana withdrew from the League. This was not, however, the case with the carpet-baggers belonging to the organization, for they recognized in the League a means of uniting the Negroes in-

---

3. Fleming, op. cit., II, 3; also, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. III, 3.

4. Fleming, op. cit., II, 3.

5. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. III, 3.

6. Fleming, op. cit., II, 3-4.



to a solid Republican group.<sup>7</sup> By the end of the year of 1867, a large percentage of the Negro population of Louisiana was under the control of the Union League.<sup>8</sup> The membership of the Order was now composed of the

disorderly element of the Negro population and was led and controlled by white men of the basest and meanest type.<sup>9</sup>

Conditions for admission to the organization were rather stringent for the times, and they were not always uniform. Those who wished to join the Union League in Louisiana were required to pay an application fee of five dollars, an initiation fee of five dollars, and a monthly due of not less than ten cents, or whatever the president of that council required. Charters for the organization cost five dollars, and whenever it was thought that a larger sum could be collected, the price of the charter was raised.<sup>10</sup>

The League was well organized. The National

---

7. Fleming, op. cit., II, 4; Rhodes, op. cit., VI, 180.

8. Fleming, op. cit., II, 4.

9. Lester, J. C., Ku Klux Klan, 39.

10. Fleming, op. cit., II, 28.

Grand Council in New York City was its supreme head. A State Grand Council with headquarters in New Orleans was established in Louisiana; while subordinate councils were formed under its direction throughout the various parishes of the State.<sup>11</sup> An annual report was made by the State Grand Council to the National organization as to the number of councils established in Louisiana, their location, membership, officers, and any other matters of consequence pertaining to the League in the State.<sup>12</sup>

The object of the Union League as given by the National Grand Council in 1869 was:

to preserve liberty and the Union of the United States of America; to maintain the Constitution thereof and the laws; to sustain the Government and assist in putting down its enemies; to protect, strengthen and defend all loyal men; without regard to sect, condition, or race; and to elect honest and reliable Union men to all offices of profit or trust in National, State, and local government; and secure equal civil and political rights to all men under the Government.<sup>13</sup>

---

11. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. III, 4.

12. Ibid., No. III, 9.

13. Ibid., No. III, 6.

Under the leadership of its carpet-bag officers, some of whom were also officers of the Freedmen's Bureau,<sup>14</sup> the Union League in Louisiana became the "machine of the Radical Republican Party".<sup>15</sup> Ostracism and intimidation in extreme degrees were used among the Negroes by Negro members of the League. Under no circumstances would the organization allow a Negro to assume an indifferent attitude towards its activities; and should a Negro join with the Democrats or Conservatives of Louisiana, he was forced to withdraw from the party and join the League because of the fines, threats, and beatings imposed on him by the League.<sup>16</sup> The Negroes were taught to avoid the native whites of Louisiana in all matters, the latter being represented as their natural enemies and the

---

14. Paul Peirce, The Freedmen's Bureau, 164.

15. Fleming, op. cit., II, 4.

16. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. III, 4; Oscar Lestage, "The White League in Louisiana and Its Participation in Reconstruction Riots", taken from Louisiana Historical Quarterly, July, 1935, 636.



Northern whites as their only friends.<sup>17</sup> A Negro who dared to accept the advice of his former master was persecuted by the League, whipped, and in some cases put to death.<sup>18</sup>

Night meetings of the councils were held once a week in the Negro churches and school-houses. The members went armed to the meetings and were there trained in military drill late into the night.<sup>19</sup> Threats of being returned to slavery, speeches by visiting agitators and Negro leaders, and promises of confiscation were made to keep the Negroes under the control of their radical leaders.<sup>20</sup> In order to further consolidate the Negroes, branches of the Union League for Negro women were formed in Louisiana. When the latter joined the society they pledged to discard their husbands or sweethearts who voted the Democratic

---

17. Willie M. Caskey, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, 186; Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. III, 4.

18. Walter Cook, Secret Political Societies in the South during the Period of Reconstruction, 19.

19. Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. III, 4; Picayune, July 1, 1874.

20. Fleming, op. cit., II, 4.

ticket. Negro Democrats in Louisiana were expelled from their churches and their wives ordered by the ministers to leave their Democratic husbands.<sup>21</sup> Members of the Union League were forbidden to listen to speeches made by Democrats, or by scalawags who did not belong to the Order. Candidates for office were nominated by the organization, usually officers of the League, and no member could vote for a candidate not endorsed by the association.<sup>22</sup> Thus was almost the entire Negro population of Louisiana fused into one political body.<sup>23</sup> The Order enforced the strictest possible discipline on its members, and personal injury, even death, was the penalty for voting a Democratic ticket.<sup>24</sup>

In Louisiana the League was used as a secret service bureau. The letters of its members were read aloud in the Negro churches,<sup>25</sup> and Negroes

---

21. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. III, 4.

22. Fleming, op. cit., II, 4.

23. Picayune, July 4, 1874.

24. Fleming, op. cit., II, 4.

25. Myrta Avary, Dixie After the War, 264-265.



working in homes and on the plantations of white owners told what political and social activities were carried on.<sup>26</sup>

The influence of unscrupulous white leaders in the League was responsible for much of the disorder created by the blacks.<sup>27</sup>

Insults, burnings, thefts, and murder throughout Louisiana were committed by members of this organization.<sup>28</sup> Crimes were committed against the persons, families and property of men whose sole offense had been that they had been in the Confederate Army.<sup>29</sup>

Parading and rioting, drunk and bent upon destruction, these leaguers became in one an abomination and a menace.<sup>30</sup>

There is no doubt that the fears of the whites in Louisiana in regard to the Union League were well founded, "for the men who controlled them had really nothing in view but public plunder."<sup>31</sup>

26. Avary, op. cit., 264.

27. Fleming, op. cit., II, 4; see Cook, op. cit., 17.

28. Lester, op. cit., 29; Phelps, A., Louisiana, 366.

29. Ibid., 80.

30. Cook, op. cit., 19.

31. Fleming, op. cit., II, 29.

On election days in Louisiana, companies of the Union League would march to the polls, surround the voting place, stack arms, and vote as many times as their leaders thought necessary to insure a Republican success.<sup>32</sup>

With the organization of the Ku Klux Klan and the Knights of the White Camelia in Louisiana, the activities of the Union League lessened and finally stopped entirely. The permanent result of its work in Louisiana was the alienation of the races; this, alone, made it possible for the carpet-baggers and scalawags to control the Negro vote, and draw the color line in politics.<sup>33</sup> However, "but for the strong organization and iron discipline of the order, the blacks would have been controlled and voted by the native whites."<sup>34</sup>

Motivated by selfish interests, the Union League in Louisiana tried to protect the Negro's

32. Cook, op. cit., 20.

33. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. III, 5.

34. Ibid., No. III, 4.

rights of freedom and citizenship;<sup>35</sup> but only succeeded by its shortsighted policy in driving a wedge between the Negro and his lawful rights as a citizen.

Many other organizations were formed at this time and at a later period embodying in its program the aims and objectives of the Union League. The latter, however, stands out in the vanguard of the movement. But what is of special significance in this consideration is that the Union League served as a model for most of the other Negro secret societies which were to develop in Louisiana and which were to contribute their influence to the widening of the gap of misunderstanding between the masses of the people as embodied in both racial groups.

---

35. R. C. Mackall, (Ex-member of the Union League), "The Ku Klux Klan" in The Century Magazine, May-Oct. 1884, 949.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE KU KLUX KLAN IN LOUISIANA

The Ku Klux Klan originated near Pulaski, Tennessee, in May, 1866. Begun as a joke by a few young men debarred from entering any active business or professional pursuits and deprived of social life by the circumstances necessarily arising out of post-war conditions, the organization was essentially a means of diversion.<sup>1</sup> Strange and fantastic names, such as "Grand Cyclops", "Grand Magi", "Grand Turk", and "Grand Exchequer" were substituted for the terms president, vice-president, marshal, and treasurer, respectively, to increase the fun and secrecy.<sup>2</sup> The Klan, because of its secrecy and mystery, attracted much attention. Their night parades, in particular, caused much curiosity and comment; riding at night in costumes of white or black, clad in gowns or sheets, wearing tall

---

1. Lester, Ku Klux Klan, Its Origin, Growth, and Disbandment, 59; Avary, Dixie After the War, 268.

2. Lester, op. cit., 57.

conical pasteboard hats, flaunting sticks decorated with the skulls of men and beasts, and riding horses draped in white sheets with foot-mufflers<sup>3</sup> upon their hoofs--the Klan made a deep impression on all who saw them.

To the then superstitious Negro and some whites these unsightly figures were objects of harm, and, therefore, were feared. The fear and fame of the Ku Klux Klan spread to other countries and states, and a branch of the Order was formed in Louisiana shortly after its birth in Pulaski.<sup>4</sup>

In this early period of its history, the Ku Klux Klan in Louisiana was careful in regard to the character of the men admitted into the organization. Rash and imprudent men, who could not be confidently relied upon to respect the obligation of secrecy, and, also, those addicted to the use of intoxicants, were excluded.<sup>5</sup> The Klan enjoyed the baffled curiosity and the wild speculations of the mystified Louisianians even more

---

3. Avary, op. cit., 277.

4. Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 1st sess., Part II, 285.

5. Lester, op. cit., 65.

than the "rude sport afforded by the ludicrous initiations".<sup>6</sup> Such is the account of the Ku Klux Klan in Louisiana until about April, 1867.<sup>7</sup>

However, during this time the Klan was gradually adopting new features, not at first remotely contemplated by the originators of the Order: "features which finally transformed the Ku Klux Klan into a band of 'Regulators'".<sup>8</sup> Circumstances had made it evident that the measures and methods employed for sport might be effectually used to "suppress lawlessness and protect property."<sup>9</sup>

The existence of the Union League in the State was given as an explanation or "excuse" for the transformation of the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>10</sup> This is, however, only partly true. Under the leadership of white carpet-baggers and scoundrels, Negroes were led to commit acts of law-

---

6. Lester, op. cit., 71.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 74.

10. Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 1st sess., Part II, 284.



lessness and violence, and a state of disorder existed in Louisiana.<sup>11</sup> However, the vibrant sentiment of regret for "the lost cause" effected a strong desire to renew the contest in opposition to reconstruction, and played as great a role as did the Union League in the transformation of the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>12</sup> Its

great purpose being to establish a nucleus around which the adherents of the late rebellion, active or passive, might safely rally, thus establishing a grand political society, the future operations of which would be governed by circumstances fast developing in the then peculiar era of exciting public events.<sup>13</sup>

In the early summer of 1867, the Ku Klux Klan in Louisiana was virtually, though not yet professedly, a band of regulators, "honestly, but in an unjudicious and dangerous way, trying to protect property and preserve peace and order."<sup>14</sup>

---

11. Lester, op. cit., 78-80.

12. Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 1st sess., Part II, 284; "New Light on the Ku Klux Klan", Century Magazine, VI. (1884), July, 461.

13. Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 1st sess., Part II, 284.

14. Lester, op. cit., 75.

Until this time the movements of the Klan had, in the majority of cases, been characterized by prudence and discretion.<sup>15</sup> The danger which "the more prudent and thoughtful had apprehended as possible was now a reality."<sup>16</sup>

To avert further Ku Klux indiscretions, a convention was called at Nashville, Tennessee, in 1867, to which the "Grand Cyclops" of the Pulaski Den requested that all other dens then in existence send delegates.<sup>17</sup> At this convention the territory covered by the Klan, which included Louisiana, was termed the "Invisible Empire".<sup>18</sup> The "Invisible Empire" was subdivided into "realms" coterminus with the boundaries of the states; "realms" were subdivided into "dominions", corresponding to Congressional districts; the "dominions" into "provinces", coterminus with counties; and the "provinces" into "dens".<sup>19</sup> To

---

15. Lester, op. cit., 83.

16. Ibid.

17. Lester, op. cit., 84; Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. II, 5.

18. Prescript of the Order, as quoted in Lester, op. cit., 156.

19. Lester, op. cit., 85.

each of these departments were assigned officers. Thus was the Ku Klux Klan organized in Louisiana. One of the most important things done by this convention was to make a positive and emphatic declaration of the principles of the Order, which were defined thus:

We recognize our relations to the United States Government, the supremacy of the Constitution; the Constitutional laws thereof, and the union of States thereunder.<sup>20</sup>

The character and objects of the Order were defined and set forth as follows:

This is an institution of Chivalry, Humanity, Mercy, and Patriotism; embodying in its genius and its principles all that is chivalric in conduct, noble in sentiment, generous in manhood, and patriotic in purpose; its peculiar objects being:

First: To protect the weak, the innocent, and the defenseless, from the indignities, wrongs, and outrages of the lawless, the violent, and the brutal; to relieve the injured and oppressed; to succor the suffering and unfortunate, and especially the widows and orphans of Confederate soldiers.

Second: To protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, and all laws passed in conformity thereto, and to protect the States and the people thereof from all invasions from any source whatever.

---

20. Prescript of the Order, as quoted in Lester, op. cit., 154.



Third: To aid and assist in the execution of all constitutional laws, and to protect the people from unlawful seizure, and from trial except by their peers in conformity to the laws of the land.<sup>21</sup>

The hopes of some of the members of the Klan, that now, after this convention, the Klan would conduct its activities without violence, were rudely shattered. In Louisiana, official supervision grew less rigid, or was less regarded, and membership was steadily increasing, among which were "bad men" who were not controlled.<sup>22</sup>

In August, 1868, General Forrest, the "Grand Wizard", or the supreme head of the "Invisible Empire", stated that at one time the objects of the Ku Klux Klan were protection against Union Leagues and the Grand Army of the Republic.

'but after it (the Ku Klux Klan) became general it was found that political matters and interests could best be promoted within it, and it was then made a political organization, giving its support of course, to the Democratic party'.<sup>23</sup>

---

21. Fleming, Documentary History of Reconstruction, II, 347; Precript of the Order, as quoted in Lester, op. cit., 155.

22. Lester, op. cit., 100.

23. Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 1st sess., Part II, 285.

In each voting precinct of Louisiana was a captain, who, in addition to his other duties, was required to make a list of names of men in his precinct, "'giving all the Radicals and all the Democrats'" who were positively known; showing also, the "doubtful on both sides and of both colors".<sup>24</sup> This list of names was forwarded to the grand commissioner of the State, who was thus able to know who were friends of the Klan in Louisiana, and who were not.<sup>25</sup>

The condition of society in the more remote and sparsely settled Parishes of Louisiana was greatly disorganized. Ku Klux outrages and crimes of every description were perpetrated upon the Negroes.<sup>26</sup> Seldom did they attack a man until they had disarmed him, not daring to risk their own lives while taking the life of another. They could not afford to be killed, wounded, or captured, as exposure, trial, conviction, and punish-

---

24. Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 1st sess., Part II, 285.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., 295.

ment would follow; secrecy and mystery would have vanished, and the whole "conspiracy" exploded.<sup>27</sup> The character of the Louisiana magistracy was such as to permit the escape of the offenders, while some even participated in the outrages.<sup>28</sup> Many cases of brutal murder were given verdicts of justifiable homicide in self-defense when brought before the civil authorities.<sup>29</sup> The active members of the Klan were, as a rule, young men.<sup>30</sup> They were armed and completely organized throughout the State under the grand commissioner, so that they might be summoned by the call of one man.<sup>31</sup>

During the presidential campaign of 1868, the activity of the Ku Klux Klan in Louisiana increased and proved to be a reign of terror.

---

27. Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 1st sess., Part II, 299.

28. Ibid., 295; Report of Joint Select Committee-1872 on Conditions of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States, 21.

29. Ibid.

30. Lester, op. cit., 26.

31. Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 1st sess., Part II, 297.



The riot of 1868 in Opelousas grew out of an assault upon Emerson Bentley, a school teacher and editor of a Republican paper. Attacked in his school-room among the children, he was brutally beaten and warned away. The Ku Klux in Opelousas apprehended resistance by the Negroes and dispatched couriers to all parts of the Parish to gather their Klansmen, "who rallied to Opelousas in arms, killing as they came".<sup>32</sup> "The only attempt at self-defense by the Negroes was feeble and timid".<sup>33</sup> The results were: one white man was killed, several Negroes were killed, and thirteen were taken captives and lodged in the Parish jail to await judgment by the council of the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>34</sup> Two days later they were shot. All white Republican leaders who survived were driven from the Parish. Two thousand Negro Republicans were taken as captives of war, marked with badges of red flannel on their arms, enrolled in Democratic

---

32. Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 1st sess., Part II, 296.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

clubs, led to the ballot-box, and compelled to vote for the Democratic candidates, after which they were furnished with "protective papers" certifying that they had voted the Democratic ticket.<sup>35</sup>

In St. Bernard Parish a Negro was killed; a Negro mob then killed a white man. Three steamboats filled with armed "ruffians" left New Orleans for the scene of the riot and before the trouble could be composed, twelve or fifteen men were killed.<sup>36</sup>

In St. Mary Parish, the Ku Klux Klan assassinated Henry Pope, sheriff, and Valentine Chase, judge, who were both Republicans.<sup>37</sup>

One prairie in Attakapas was entirely deserted by the Negroes in fear of the Ku Klux; this, likewise, occurred in Lafayette Parish.<sup>38</sup>

In New Orleans several bloody scenes were

---

35. Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 1st sess., Part II, 296.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Fleming. op. cit.. 365.

enacted. Numbering about 15,000, the Ku Klux was called into action by taps of the fire-bells, indicating the place where they were wanted, and thus did they assemble to take part in the riots.<sup>39</sup> Ku Klux notices were scattered throughout the city, warning the Negroes not to vote, and riots prevailed for weeks, filling the city with scenes of blood.<sup>40</sup> The burning of schoolhouses and churches, midnight raids, secret murders, and open riots, kept the people in constant terror. Over 2,000 persons were killed, wounded, and otherwise injured within a few weeks of election.<sup>41</sup> Masses of Ku Klux would fire into the processions of Republicans with rifles and revolvers, hunt and chase Negroes through the public streets by day and by night, shooting them on sight, so that for days it was death for a Negro to appear in certain

---

39. Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 1st sess., Part II, 296.

40. Report of Committee on Conditions of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States-1872, 21-22.

41. Report of Committee on Conditions of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States-1872, 21-22.



sections of the city.<sup>42</sup>

To add to the horror of this period in Louisiana, reckless men, not of the Ku Klux Order, who had private grudges to satisfy, imitated the Ku Klux disguises and borrowed their methods.<sup>43</sup>

It is estimated that were the whole truth known the total number of outrages against white and Negro Republicans in Louisiana in 1868, would be not less than 4,000.<sup>44</sup>

During this period of the Ku Klux Klan's existence, Carter Hill, Tennessee, the first Den of the Klan, was the central seat of authority.<sup>45</sup> After the campaign of 1868 the activity of the Ku Klux Klan in Louisiana lessened, and in 1869, the Order was disbanded.<sup>46</sup>

---

42. Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 1st sess., Part II, 296.

43. Woodrow Wilson, History of the American People, V, 62; John Ficklen, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, 218; Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. II, 5.

44. Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 1st sess., Part II, 296.

45. Susan Davis, Authentic History of Ku Klux Klan, 14.

46. Lester, op. cit., 5; Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. II, 5.

## CHAPTER V

### THE KNIGHTS OF THE WHITE CAMELIA

#### IN LOUISIANA

In 1867-1868 a secret society named the Knights of the White Camelia "sprang up like magic" in the southern part of Louisiana.<sup>1</sup> Its founder is said to have been Judge Alcibiade de Blanc of St. Mary Parish in Louisiana.<sup>2</sup> The Order spread rapidly throughout Louisiana and to the other States of the late Confederacy. The membership and territory embraced by the White Camelias were larger than any other similar organization.<sup>3</sup> In Franklin, Louisiana, the Order was organized as the White Man's or Caucasian Club as early as May 22, 1867.<sup>4</sup> In New Orleans, which was to be the headquarters of the Knights of the White Camelia, its formal organization

- 
1. John R. Ficklen, Reconstruction in Louisiana, 215.
  2. Ibid.; Carpet-bag Misrule in Louisiana, Louisiana State Museum Publication, Sept. 1, 1938, 22.
  3. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. I, 5.
  4. Ficklen, op. cit., 215.

dated from May 23, 1867.

In 1868 a convention of the Order met in New Orleans, framed an elaborate federal organization, and on June 4, 1868, promulgated a constitution and a ritual for the use of its officers.<sup>5</sup>

The Object of the Order was the

MAINTENANCE OF THE SUPREMACY OF THE WHITE RACE in this Republic.<sup>6</sup>

This purpose was generally interpreted by its members to be the "securing of white supremacy by an appeal to race pride".<sup>7</sup>

Members of the White Camelia were sworn to maintain and defend the superiority of the white race, to observe at all times a marked difference between the white and Negro or African race, to do all in their power to prevent any part of the political affairs of this country from passing into the hands of the Negro, to never marry any woman not belonging to the white race, to vote

---

5. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. I, 5.

6. Ibid., No. I, 25.

7. Ficklen, op. cit., 217.



against any person opposed to the principles of the Order who might be a candidate for any office, to obey the orders of those who by the statutes of the Order had the authority to give orders, to respond at all times--even at the peril of his life to a sign of distress or cry of alarm of a fellow member of the society, to defend and protect fellow members of the Order and do all in their power to assist them through life, to accept the society's obligation of secrecy, and to cherish the principles of the Knights of the White Camelia and instill them in the minds and hearts of others.<sup>8</sup> The White Camelia, also, enjoined its members

to respect the rights of the colored inhabitants of this Republic, and in every instance to give to them whatever lawfully belongs to them.<sup>9</sup>

The Order's "fair construction of a white man's duty towards" the Negroes was that White Camelias

---

8. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. I, 22-24; Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 1st sess., 1871, Part II, 297.

9. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. I, 28.

should not only respect and observe the acknowledged rights of the Negro, but also see that their rights were observed and respected by others.<sup>10</sup>

The Knights of the White Camelia was organized into a Supreme Council of the United States, which was established at New Orleans, and was composed of five delegates from the Grand Council of each State where the Knights of the White Camelia functioned,<sup>11</sup> and a central council in each Parish which was sub-divided into subordinate councils existent in the Parish.<sup>12</sup> The recollection of members of the society is to the effect that very little authority was really exercised by the Supreme Council. The Parish councils were fairly well maintained, however, and in most respects acted independently.<sup>13</sup> The authority of the commander of the Parish council was absolute, and his bidding was done by members unknown to the

---

10. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. 1, 28.

11. Ibid., No. 1, 8.

12. Ibid., No. 1, 13.

13. William H. Brown, "The Ku Klux Movement", Atlantic Monthly, LXXXVII, 640.

other members of the council.<sup>14</sup> The "work" for one community was done by a group of White Camelias from a different community.<sup>15</sup>

The personnel of the membership of the Knights of the White Camelia was better than that of the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>16</sup> Only white men, eighteen years of age, or older, were admitted into the Order.<sup>17</sup> All candidates for membership were voted on by the council which proposed to admit the candidate. If two ballots were cast against him he was rejected.<sup>17</sup> Most of the leading men of Louisiana joined the White Camelia, the principles of the Order being already deeply implanted in the breasts of the Louisiana whites.<sup>18</sup>

That the Knights of the White Camelia was not intended to be a political organization can be seen by the following article of their Constitution:

This Order shall not as a body, nomi-

14. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. I, 7.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., No. I, 16-17.

18. Ficklen, op. cit., 217.



nate, adopt or support any candidate for any office of honor, profit, or trust under the constitution of the United States, or of any State, Parish, County or Municipal Corporation whatever.<sup>19</sup>

However, the Order's "opposition to Negro rule naturally took a quasi-political character, and helped to consolidate the ranks of the Democratic party".<sup>20</sup>

The methods employed by the White Camelias "to enforce law and order were similar to those used by the Klan, but were not borrowed from it."<sup>21</sup> Playing upon the superstitions of the Negroes, the White Camelias rode silently at night, covered completely in white sheets. Violence was used whenever threats and warnings were not heeded and there were many cases of Negroes murdered by the White Camelia in Louisiana. The name and disguise of the Camelias were sometimes used by men, both whites and Negroes.

---

19. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. I, 18.

20. Ficklen, op. cit., 215.

21. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. I, 6.

not of the Order, to cover their crimes.<sup>22</sup> "The Knights of the White Camelia manifested their purpose and methods in Louisiana without much reserve",<sup>23</sup> and they considered the means used of slight consequence compared with their desired ends.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, less violence was committed by the White Camelias than was committed by the Ku Klux Klan in Louisiana.<sup>25</sup>

The White Camelia was a Black Belt organization, and rarely had branches in white parishes of the State. Hence, it did not encroach, to any great extent, upon the territory of the Ku Klux Klan, which was more active in the white parishes of Louisiana.<sup>26</sup>

After the exodus of the carpet-baggers from the State in 1877, the Knights of the White Camelia gradually disbanded.<sup>27</sup>

---

22. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. I, 7.

23. William Dunning, Reconstruction-Political and Economic, The American Nation Series, XXII, 122.

24. Ibid.

25. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. I, 7.

26. Ibid., No. I, 6.

27. Ibid., No. I, 7.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE WHITE LEAGUE

Still another organization was to write a chapter in this period of Louisiana history, the White League. This was a secret society which aimed at uniting the white people of the entire State of Louisiana in opposition to the radical regime of the carpet-baggers, scalawags, and some Negroes.<sup>1</sup> The initial move toward white unity was inaugurated by the establishment of the Caucasian in Alexandria "to fight the opposition in the name of white supremacy".<sup>2</sup> The Caucasian was soon joined by the Opelousas Courier, Bulletin, Shreveport Times, New Orleans Picayune, Times, the Morning Star, and the Catholic Messenger in advocating a white man's party.<sup>3</sup> Almost as soon as the press of the State

- 
1. W. O. Hart, "History of Events Leading up to the Battle of Sept. 14, 1874", Louisiana Historical Quarterly, VII, 576.
  2. Oscar Lestage, "The White League in Louisiana and its Participation in Reconstruction Riots", Louisiana Historical Quarterly, July, 1935, 637.
  3. Ibid., 640.



began to clamor for a united white man's party, the people of the State began to inaugurate one.

On April 27, 1874, the white citizens of St. Landry Parish met at the court house in Opelousas and formed the first white man's club, the object of which was "the election of honest white men to office and to unite upon one white man for each office". These resolutions were adopted:

WHEREAS, the colored people of the State of Louisiana, organized under the name of Republicans, have had undivided control of the legislation of the State since 1868, a period of six years, within which, although abundant opportunity has been given them to demonstrate their capacity as law makers, it can no longer be questioned that that capacity, whatever be its intellectual and moral measurement, has not been used for the good of the country, for its degradation--morally, socially, and politically; and,

WHEREAS, the Republican party being composed almost entirely of Negroes, without whose votes no one of the party could secure an office, they, the black people, are responsible for the abuse of office and corrupt legislation under which the State has become bankrupt and public virtue ostracized from among its members; and,

WHEREAS, further, every effect heretofore made by the white people to conciliate the negro and to induce him to act with them, without reference to party distinction, for the common good, has failed--whether he was appealed to by Democrats, Liberals, or Independents; and,

WHEREAS, finally, the very efforts we have made in this direction is the true cause of division among ourselves; therefore,

Be it resolved, 1st, That we hold the colored people responsible for most of the evils arising from fraudulent and corrupt legislation, of which they have been masters since 1868; and while we may readily believe and do believe that many colored men are upright and honest, still, as a class they have been made the instruments in the hands of designing men; both white and black, through which the white taxpayer must eventually be beggared and driven with his family from the State, a pauper;

Resolved, 2nd, That our experience with the colored people demonstrates their utter incapacity for good government while in ascendancy, and unless some effort be made to deprive them of their control of legislation in the State, the evils we suffer must continue and accumulate;

Resolved, 3rd, That the failure of our past efforts at conciliation forbid a renewal of any further attempts at compromise, and that we deem a temporizing policy on this subject as fatal to the substantial interests of the State, detrimental to public virtue, and destructive to our self-respect and manhood;

Resolved, 4th, That the issue in the next campaign is not between Republicans and Democrats or Liberals but between the whites and blacks, and that that issue is: Shall the white people of Louisiana govern Louisiana?-- in which we, whether we be Democrats, Liberals, or Independents, unhesitatingly declare for the ascendancy of the white man;

Resolved, 5th, That the conduct of the



black man, as a politician, alone has forced upon the white man the necessity of making the issue in self-defense; and though we may not have united hitherto as Democrats or Liberals, we can and will unite as a race to protect ourselves against the unmeasured public and private plunder of the other race;

Resolved, 6th. That in uniting as white men, pledged to labor for the ascendancy of the white race in the State, our object is to place the law-making power in the hands of those who will protect our property and not rob us through the medium of taxation, who can read and write and understand something about the rights of person and property, and not to abridge any rights the negro has under the laws. We leave him to vote as he chooses, and run for office if he wishes; but we shall tell him plainly that he cannot get our vote, and that we do not want him as a party or race to make our laws.

Resolved, 7th. That we recognize the necessity of union among ourselves upon one white man for each office, and that we earnestly invite all white men, without regard to former party affiliations, to unite with us under the banner of the 'White League', which alone can rescue us from dissention and defeat...

Alcée Dupré, President

A.P. Williams  
J. Frank Knox<sup>4</sup>  
Secretaries

---

4. Lestage, op. cit., Louisiana Historical Quarterly, July 1935, 640-642.



The movement for white unity spread rapidly throughout the State. Leagues were established in St. Landry, Lafayette, St. Martin, St. Mary Parishes, De Soto Parish at Mansfield, Caddo, Winn, Rapides, Natchitoches, Red River, Avoyelles, St. Tammany, Tensas, Terrebonne, New Orleans, and other Parishes.<sup>5</sup>

The New Orleans League, the "Crescent City White League" was "somewhat different from the Parish Leagues".<sup>6</sup> The original organization out of which the Crescent City White League grew, the "Crescent City Democratic Club", composed almost exclusively of young gentlemen of the most prominent families of the Fourth Municipal District, was organized in the summer of 1868 during the Seymour and Blair presidential campaign and numbered about three hundred members.<sup>7</sup> Prominent members of the Crescent City Democratic

---

5. Lestage, op. cit., Louisiana Historical Quarterly, July 1935, 643.

6. Ibid.

7. Letter of D. A. S. Vaught (original member of the White League), to John R. Ficklen, New Orleans, May 8, 1894, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXIII, 528.

Club were: Frederick Nash Ogden, president; W. J. Behan, W.T.Vaudry, R.B.Pleasants, S.B.Newman, Jr., John N. Payne, and Morgan Harrod, all of whom later became officers when the organization was transferred into a quasi-military body.<sup>8</sup>

This change wrought by the "inefficient character of the police, and the growing insolence of the negro population",<sup>9</sup> took place in October 1868. The Crescent City Democratic Club assumed charge of the city from Thalia Street to Napoleon Avenue and sent detachments as far as Carrollton.<sup>10</sup> This was the first military action

---

8. Letter of D.A.S.Vaught, (original member of the White League), to John R. Ficklen, New Orleans, May 8, 1894, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXIII, 528.

9. Ibid., 529; see The White League in Louisiana, by George Hoar, H. Wheeler, William Frye, 2,4.

10. Letter of D.A.S.Vaught, (original member of the White League), to John R.Ficklen, New Orleans, May 8, 1894, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXIII, 528.

of this organization.<sup>11</sup> When the campaign closed, the club was disbanded, December, 1868.

During the presidential campaign of 1872, the club was called together merely for the sake of organization; W.T.Vaudry was elected president, and the club took no active part in the campaign.<sup>12</sup>

With the growing unrest and frequent party and racial clashes in the City, a meeting of the old members of the Crescent City Democratic Club was called on June 23, 1874, and was held at Eagle Hall on the corner of Prytania and Felicity Streets.<sup>13</sup> The meeting was called to order at 7:30 P.M. with

11. The Seymour Legion, a similar organization of young men living in the First Municipal District, performed the same kind of military action in that part of the City from Thalia Street to Canal Street. Other similar clubs below Canal Street undertook to protect that section of the City. There was no general organization at that time, each club patrolled its own territory; but there was an agreement among the commanding officers of the various organizations to unite in case of necessity, by an arranged signal, on receipt of which the various clubs were to rendezvous at the Lafayette Square. Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXIII, 529.
12. Letter of Vaught to Ficklen, May 8, 1894, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXIII, 528.
13. Picayune, June 24, 1874.



Major Frederick Ogden in the chair, and a committee composed of Messrs. Sam Flower, James Buckner, John Payne, and F.M. Southmoyd.<sup>14</sup> At the suggestion of Mr. Southmoyd the club organized for the 1874 campaign under the title of the "Crescent City White League".<sup>15</sup> Captain Hodgson, president of the ex-Crescent City Democratic Club offered a resolution consolidating the Crescent City Democratic Club with the Crescent City White League, forming one organization under the title of the Crescent City White League.<sup>16</sup>

The first officers of the Crescent City White League were as follows: Frederick Nash Ogden, president; William J. Behan, first vice-president; Washington Irving Hodgson, second vice-president; Douglas Jenkins, recording secretary; Theodore Shute, corresponding secretary; William T. Vaudry, marshal; and John Payne and Harrison Watts, assistant marshals.<sup>17</sup>

---

14. Picayune, June 24, 1874.

15. Ibid.

16. Picayune, July 1, 1874.

17. Ibid.

On July 2, 1874, the platform of the Crescent City White League was published as an explanation to its retired members and to the people of New Orleans "of the motives of the change so seriously and so sadly suggestive".<sup>18</sup> The League presented the following platform, explaining itself as the:

inevitable result of that formidable oath-bound, and blindly obedient league of the blacks, which under the command of the most cunning and unscrupulous negroes in the State, may at any moment plunge us into a war of race--a conflict in which we are resolved that we and ours shall not be victims. Indeed, it is with some hope that a timely and proclaimed union of the whites as a race, and their efficient preparation for an emergency, may arrest the threatened horrors of a social war, and teach the blacks to beware of further insolence and aggression, that we call upon the men of our race to leave in abeyance all lesser considerations, to forget all differences of opinions, and all race prejudices of the past, and with no object in view but the common good of both races, to unite with us in an earnest effort to re-establish a white man's government in the City and the State.<sup>19</sup>

An observation of various White League resolutions reveals that in general there were no

---

18. Picayune, July 2, 1874.

19. Ibid., July 2, 1874; Fleming, Documentary History of Reconstruction, II, 359.

inter-Parish connections over the entire State.<sup>20</sup> Nearly all the Parish clubs termed themselves "White League", but some few had other names for their clubs. Besides differences in names each Parish had major and minor differences in aims, and no two sets of resolutions were the same in wording or in meaning.<sup>21</sup> "The resolutions of each club were apparently designed for purely local purposes and the State was to be affected only incidentally through local reform",<sup>22</sup> there being no record of a hierarchy above that of the Parish systems.<sup>23</sup> Nor were all the Parishes opposed to Negroes joining them in their fight for good, clean government, nor all Negroes opposed to the White League.<sup>24</sup> Franklin, Tensas, and St. Tammany Parishes invited Negroes to join the

---

20. Lestage, op. cit., Louisiana Historical Quarterly, July, 1935, 643.

21. Ibid., 643.

22. Ibid., 643.

23. Ibid., 643.

24. Louisiana Historical Quarterly, July, 1935, 644.



White League.<sup>25</sup>

In regard to organization nearly all Parish Clubs were similar. Each had local or ward clubs, with every ward represented in a central committee.

The White League, now a regular military body, "went steadily on preparing for the inevitable".<sup>26</sup> Money was collected and arms bought. The White League campaign of 1874 opened by an organized and systematic plan, began simultaneously throughout the State, to eject "by violence from their positions the lawfully appointed or elected parish officials".<sup>27</sup> The League "came to have something of the import attached to 'Ku Klux' four years earlier."<sup>28</sup>

On August 29, 1874, the White League tried, sentenced and hanged two Negroes.<sup>29</sup> At Browns-

---

25. Louisiana Historical Quarterly, July, 1935, 644.

26. Letter of Vaught to Ficklen, May 8, 1894, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXIII, 532.

27. H. Campbell, The White League Conspiracy Against Free Government, 5.

28. Wm. A. Dunning, Reconstruction Political and Economic, American Nation, Vol. 22, 269.

29. Annual Cyclopaedia-1874, 500.

ville, on August 28, three Negroes were shot and killed.<sup>30</sup> Another act of White League violence was committed when "two White Leaguers rode up to a negro cabin and called for a drink of water. When the old colored man turned to draw it they shot him in the back and killed him".<sup>31</sup> On August 31, in Coushatta of Red River Parish, six State and Parish officers--H.J. Twit-  
chell, tax collector; F.S. Edgerton, sheriff; Bob Dewees, tax collector; W.F. Howell, Parish attorney; M.C. Willis, Justice of the Peace; and Clark Holland, registrar, together with four Negroes, were taken under guard to be carried out of the State, but were deliberately murdered instead.<sup>32</sup>

In Caddo Parish, prior to the arrival of the United States troops, the White League forced the following to abdicate: Walsh, the mayor; Rapers, the sheriff; Wheaton, the clerk of the court; Durant, the recorder; and Ferguson and

---

30. Annual Cyclopedia-1874, 500.

31. Ibid.

32. Annual Cyclopedia-1874, 500; Campbell, op. cit., 5; Lestage, op. cit., Louisiana Historical Quarterly, July, 1935, 675.

Renfro, administrators. Two Negroes, who had given evidence in regard to the frauds committed in the Parish, were compelled to flee for their lives.<sup>33</sup>

In Bossier Parish, the White League attempted to force the abdication of Judge Baker, the United States Commissioner, and the Parish Judge, together with O'Neal, the sheriff, and Walker, the clerk of the court.<sup>34</sup> Judge Baker stated he was notified several times by the White League "that if he became a candidate on the Republican Party, he should not live till the election".<sup>35</sup>

In De Soto Parish, a resolution of the White League stated that they pledged themselves 'under no circumstances, after the coming election, to employ, rent land to, or in any other manner give aid, comfort, or credit to any man, white or black, who votes against the nominees of the White Man's party'.<sup>36</sup>

---

33. Annual Cyclopaedia-1874, 500.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.



In but few of the country Parishes was the law properly enforced, and in some of the Parishes the judges were unable to hold court. In all the country Parishes, especially in Red River, Teche, and the Parishes between the Red and Washita Rivers,<sup>37</sup> there were numerous cases of individuals murdered because of their political affiliations.

The League grew bolder and the Bulletin threatened United States soldiers with "torn uniforms and punched heads" should they interfere with the White Leaguers in their operations.<sup>38</sup> Threats of assassination of the Governor, returning officers, and various leaders of the Republican party were made openly throughout the summer of 1874, in the newspapers, on the streets, in hotels, and in all places of public resort.

In New Orleans a battle between the White League and the Metropolitan police took place on September 14, 1874. The steanship "Missis-

---

37. Annual Cyclopedia, -1874, 500.

38. Campbell, op. cit., 6.

sippi" with arms on board consigned to the White League, sailed from New York early in September and reached New Orleans on September 12. Kellogg, the governor of Louisiana at this time, determined to prevent, if possible, any action of the League to obtain its property on the ship, and had an order issued to that effect.<sup>39</sup>

On September 13, an announcement which called "upon the people to assemble at Clay Statue, Canal Street, and declare that they mean to be free,"<sup>40</sup> was printed on placards and posted throughout the City. On September 14, about 11:30 A.M. some five thousand white men assembled at Clay Statue in answer to the call. Mr. R.H. Marr read an address to the people, "showing the right the people had to bear arms".<sup>41</sup> He then read a series of resolutions which denounced the Kellogg administration, and demanded his abdication.<sup>42</sup> When Kellogg refused to abdicate, Mr. Marr again

---

39. Hart, op. cit., Louisiana Historical Quarterly, VII, 579.

40. Monument, at river end of Canal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana.

41. Picayune, September 14, 1874.

42. Phelps, Louisiana, 377.

addressed the people, "telling them to go home and get their arms and report at Canal Street at half-past two".<sup>43</sup>

About three o'clock, the White League and citizen forces were "pretty well organized all over Poydras Street".<sup>44</sup> At Camp Street, a barricade of barrels and logs was erected, strengthened by pulling up the pavement at the gutter, thus leaving a formidable ditch across the street. At Magazine Street, another formidable barricade was erected.<sup>45</sup>

General Longstreet, in supreme command of the Metropolitan forces, together with General Badger, commander of the Metropolitan police, had massed his forces in front of the Arsenal on St. Peter Street, extending his line towards the River in such a way as to intercept General Ogden, supreme commander of the White League and citizen forces.<sup>46</sup>

43. Phelps, op. cit., 377.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Letter of Vaught to Ficklen, May 8, 1894, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXIII, 534-535.



The officers of the White League and citizens forces were principally former Confederate soldiers and included such familiar names as:

Behan, Buck, Mitchell, Pleasants, McIntyre, Kilpatrick, Dennee, Selleck, Dupre, Tennison, Flood, Address, Allen, Phillips, and Vautier.<sup>47</sup>

On the other hand, the Kellogg government could dispose of a force superior in number, but "inferior in quality".<sup>48</sup>

At 4:15 P.M. Badger with his men and four large guns, marched forward on the Levee and continued their march until they had almost reached Gravier Street, when Companies A, B, and E of the Crescent City White League, headed by General Ogden and Captains Buck and Gallagher, and W.B. Pleasants, suddenly charged upon them.<sup>49</sup> The Metropolitans fired, and when their fire failed to stop the advancing forces of the White League, they scattered and rushed toward the

---

47. Monument at river end of Canal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana.

48. Hart, op. cit., Louisiana Historical Quarterly, VII, 581.

49. Picayune, September 15, 1874.

Custom-House, where Kellogg and his officials had already sought protection.<sup>50</sup> The Longstreet division marched up with a reinforcement during the fight, but then withdrew and retreated to Jackson Square, leaving behind to the citizens one Gatlin, two 12-pound Napoleon guns, and one howitzer.<sup>51</sup> About 7:00 P.M. the White Leaguers and the citizens were in complete possession of the City.<sup>52</sup>

The threats before the 1874 election by the White League to drive from the community all that voted the Republican ticket were carried out in most of the Parishes. During the winter of 1875 there were thousands of people of all ages, and sexes, wandering about without means to go elsewhere, unable to find other homes where they were, and on the verge of starvation in mid-winter.<sup>53</sup> The Coushatta riot, however, did bring about a return of white influence in Louisiana because it was instrumental in effecting the Wheeler Com-

---

50. Picayune, September 15, 1874.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Annual Cyclopedia-1874, 501.

promise.<sup>54</sup> For the election of November, 1876, the polls in New Orleans were watched day and night by members of the White League, and the election was held with no disturbances in the City and with very few in the country Parishes.<sup>55</sup>

On January 9, 1877, the White League in New Orleans assembled to about six thousand in numbers under the command of General Ogden, and took possession of the courts, police stations, and other official buildings which had been returned to the Kellogg administration when

United States troops took over the State Government and reinstated the usurpers, but the national election of November, 1876, recognized white supremacy in the South and gave us our State.<sup>56</sup>

Only once more was the White League ever assembled under arms, and this last occasion was on September 14, 1877, when in deference to the great popular demand to see the men who had served so long and had "accomplished" so much,

---

54. Lestage, op. cit., Louisiana Historical Quarterly, July, 1935, 693.

55. Alcee Fortier, A History of Louisiana, IV, 180-181.

56. Monument at river end of Canal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana.



a parade of the veterans took place, after which the White League disbanded and ceased to be a military organization.<sup>57</sup> The survivors were last called together on the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone of the monument of those who gave their lives on September 14, 1874. The monument, which stands at the river end of Canal Street, was completed and dedicated on November 1, 1891.

---

57. Letter of Vaught to Ficklen, May 8, 1894,  
Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXIII, 528.

CHAPTER VII  
RESULTS OF THE "RECONSTRUCTION" ORGANIZATIONS  
UPON THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MIND  
OF LOUISIANA

The various organizations dealt with in the preceding chapters--all created, it is true, with some good intent, whether for protecting or for helping the newly emancipated Negro--in one way or another were closely related to and interwoven in the general confused and hectic picture of reconstruction in Louisiana. The organization of one society, directly or indirectly, seemed to prompt the creation of an opposing society. All involved the Negro, either to help him or to use him. Each group was intensely conscious of the other's existence, and each determined to be the dominating organization in the State. The unexpected change in social relationship in regard to the Negro, created a situation for which neither the whites nor the Negroes were prepared. Their mental attitudes were too set to permit such a revolutionary situation to adjust itself smoothly and harmoniously.

It is almost impossible to accuse any one particular organization of generating the resultant social upheaval in Louisiana. It seems logical to assume that had not the societies organized by the carpet-baggers been permeated by a spirit of dominance and haughtiness, and had not their leaders been men interested in massing a quick fortune, regardless of means resorted to, and interested in the Negro solely as an instrument in gaining their desired ends and not as an individual, the other organizations formed to counteract this influence would not have resorted to such extreme degrees of violence.

On the other hand, there were many Louisiana whites who resented the Negro's new social status, and refused to recognize the legality of the Emancipation Proclamation and to comply with its provisions. When the Negroes began to realize the import attached to the Emancipation Proclamation and began deserting the plantations, it is also logical to assume that the whites would use force to sustain their control of the Negroes.



Hence, it is difficult to say just which organization caused or occasioned the establishment of its counterpart. They both developed mutually stimulating each other's activities, and each used every means afforded it to overthrow the other.

The social changes in Louisiana as a direct result of these organizations were indeed unfortunate and lasting ones. Before the reconstruction period in Louisiana there existed between master and slave a relationship difficult to explain and not easily understood. Constant contact usually results in understanding, and in some cases, sincere friendship and fondness. Such was the case of some masters and their slaves. In some homes the Negro "mammy" was regarded with respect and obedience by every member of the plantation household, and was second in authority to only the mistress of the home.<sup>1</sup> The loyalty of the slaves to their masters during the Civil War is evidence that there existed between them a certain bond of affection and faith-

---

1. Avery, Dixie After the War, 391.

fulness.

There was a state of mutual trust and confidence between employer and employee that has been seen nowhere else and at no time since between capital and labor.<sup>2</sup>

With the Emancipation Proclamation, the relationship between master and slave was suddenly changed; a change for which neither was prepared. Returning to his home, the Confederate plantation owner found his home and fields in ruin; which, when added to his great loss of capital in slave investments, left him in poverty. The Negro, totally unprepared for his new status in American life, was in a state of confusion and excitement because of his new found freedom and liberty.

The coming of the carpet-baggers to Louisiana marks the beginning of the real problem, or change of relationship between master and ex-slave. Desiring to get rich quickly and cognizant of the Negro's ignorance of the powers, or advantages, of his new status, these carpet-baggers determined to use the Negro in furthering their plans of self-aggrandizement. By organizing the Negroes into secret political societies, for

---

2. Avary, op. cit., 392.

the professed object of training them in their duties as citizens.<sup>3</sup> they succeeded in consolidating the Negroes into one political unit--the Union League. The methods employed by the League serve partly to explain why the Negroes were voted solidly for the Republican party.<sup>4</sup> in spite of attempts made by the whites of Louisiana to gain an influence over them. In this organization the Negroes were taught to trust no Southerners, as they were the Negro's enemies and to trust only the Northerners--their friends and liberators. If a Negro accepted the aid or advice of his former master, he was persecuted by the League.<sup>5</sup> Many former slave owners of Louisiana were willing and anxious to help their ex-slaves adjust themselves, and there was a growing disposition on the part of the planters to act justly and fairly toward the freedmen, and to secure to them the

---

3. Avary, op. cit., 263.

4. Fleming, Documentary History of Reconstruction, II, 5.

5. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. III, 4; Walter Cook, Secret Political Societies in the South during the Period of Reconstruction, 19.



exercise of their legal rights.<sup>6</sup>

The Confederate planter sought to hire the Negro to do as a paid worker the same work he had done as a slave.<sup>7</sup> Many Negroes began to return to work on these terms, and, seemingly, the question would have gradually settled itself.<sup>8</sup> But such was not the case when a third individual, the carpet-bagger, or Freedmen's Bureau agent, who was absolutely ignorant of the true relation between the former masters and slaves,<sup>9</sup> was introduced as the "middle man". The Bureau, created with good intent, was the "chief source of disagreement between the Negro and the white man and the chief cause of the Negroes' false elation and subsequent suffering".<sup>10</sup> The idea was constantly held out to the Negroes by their unprin-

- 
6. Report of General J.S. Fullerton, December 2, 1865, Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, Nos. 6 & 7, 35.
  7. Report of General Fullerton, December 2, 1865, Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, Nos. 6 & 7, 35; Albert Phelps, Louisiana, 338.
  8. Phelps, op. cit., 338.
  9. Thomas Page, "The Southern People during Reconstruction", Atlantic Monthly, LXXXVIII, 296.
  10. Phelps, op. cit., 337; Alcee Fortier, History of Louisiana, IV, 76.

cipled Republican leaders, of both the Bureau and the Union League

that they were a privileged people to be pampered and petted by the government, and the effect was most pernicious. It not only gave them expectations that could not be realized, but prevented them from securing civil rights that the laws of the State conferred upon them.<sup>11</sup>

The Negro, dazed and elated by this new state of affairs, was blindly incited by his unscrupulous leaders in League meetings to crime and pillage.<sup>12</sup>

There is no disputing the fact that the fears of the whites with reference to these leagues, were well founded; for the men who controlled them had really nothing in view but public plunder.<sup>13</sup>

The carpet-bagger and Negro rule in Louisiana was "intolerable".<sup>14</sup> Deprived of all legal

- 
11. Report of General Fullerton, Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, Nos. 6 & 7, 35.
  12. Fleming, Documentary History of Reconstruction, II. 4; Cook, op. cit., 17.
  13. Fleming, Documentary History of Reconstruction, II. 28.
  14. Century Magazine, VI, (1884), "The Ku Klux Klan", 949.

37767

3 1303 00161 8272

methods of defense, and denied justice by the carpet-bagger State officials, the whites of Louisiana were placed at the mercy of "excited Negroes and their unprincipled instigators".<sup>15</sup> The preamble of the manual of the Knights of the White Camelia reveals that they were convinced 'that the Radical party, the freedmen, and the colored population have coalesced against the white race'.<sup>16</sup>

Naturally, the whites resented the political powers of their former slaves, who were in no way prepared for their new responsibility; while they, the once powerful group in the State, were disfranchised and unable to stop the misuse of power by both the carpet-baggers and the Negroes.

By all odds the bitterest draught held to the lips of the southern whites during reconstruction was their enforced subjection to the political control of their former slaves. Not even the imposition of exorbitant taxes and the plundering of the public treasuries by the carpet-baggers equalled in their eyes this iniquitous humiliation.<sup>17</sup>

---

15. Phelps, op. cit., 367.  
 16. John Ficklen, Reconstruction in Louisiana, 216.  
 17. W.T.Couch, Culture in the South, 9.



Embittered and humiliated, the attitude they assumed is clearly expressed in a resolution of the White League in Opelousas:

That we hold the colored people responsible for most of the evils, arising from fraudulent and corrupt legislation, of which they have been masters since 1868; and while we may readily believe and do believe that many colored men are upright and honest, still, as a class they have been made the instruments in the hands of designing men; both white and black, through which the white tax-payer must eventually be beggared and driven with his family from the State.<sup>18</sup>

With the professed purpose of protecting themselves against the exploitations of the Union League, the whites of Louisiana banded together into secret societies--hence, their adhesion to Ku Klux Klan, and their establishment of the Knights of the White Camelia, and the White League. The one question now uppermost in their minds was:

By what measures of violence shall this intolerable rule be thrown off?<sup>19</sup>

Violence is not easily measured, or the higher

---

18. Resolutions of Opelousas White League, as quoted in Lestage, *op. cit.*, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, July, 1935, 641.

19. Century Magazine, VI, "The Ku Klux Klan", 949.

law of self-preservation limited to its actual demands; the invariable law of revolution proves to be stronger.<sup>20</sup> Hence, Louisiana was thrown in a state of terror, murder, and plunder. The once understanding master and slave were now bitter enemies; the former fired by pride and self-preservation, and the latter by the incitings of their unscrupulous leaders. "That the conduct of the black man, as a politician alone... forced upon the white man the necessity of making the issue in self-defense",<sup>21</sup> is largely true, and can be traced directly to the destructive political training given the Negro by his Republican leaders. If these leaders had been men of principle, sincere and earnest in their sympathies and efforts to help the Negro adjust himself, it is unlikely that this situation would have developed.

The restoration of white supremacy in Louisiana was accomplished by "intimidation of the

---

20. Century Magazine, VI. (1884) "The Ku Klux Klan", 949.

21. Resolutions of Opelousas White League, as quoted in Lestage, op. cit., Louisiana Historical Quarterly, July, 1935, 642.

Negroes and corruption at the ballot-box".<sup>22</sup> Campaign issues were no longer a contest "between Republicans and Democrats or Liberals but between the whites and the blacks";<sup>23</sup> the real issue centered around this question: "Shall the white people of Louisiana govern Louisiana?"<sup>24</sup> The new Louisiana politicians were not the descendants of the old planter aristocracy, but were representatives of the yeoman farmers.<sup>25</sup> This group had long fostered a bitterness and hatred of the Negro; for as a slave, the Negro had held a monopoly on farm labor, which forced this class into a minor position of importance. They had followed the leadership of the slaveholders before the war, but now assumed political offices and determined to assert their power and authority.<sup>26</sup> The reign of terror,

---

22. William Hesselstine, A History of the South, 674.

23. Resolutions of Opelousas White League, as quoted by Lestage, op. cit., Louisiana Historical Quarterly, July, 1935, 641.

24. Ibid.

25. Hesselstine, op. cit., 674.

26. Ibid.



murder, and outrage in Louisiana might have been stilled had not this group "been fired by a general purpose to subjugate the blacks."<sup>27</sup> The exclusion of Negroes from the political activities of the State, naturally resulted in further discriminations in social and economic life.<sup>28</sup> The National Government, which had placed the Negroes in their new position, left them to defend themselves.<sup>29</sup>

By 1879 conditions in Louisiana had changed so much that "Negroes were denied political recognition, charged excessive rents, forced into practical peonage, and generally kept down in every way."<sup>30</sup>

All this was brought about by the Negro's misuse of power and liberty, when under the destructive leadership of the carpet-baggers.

---

27. Century Magazine, VI, (1884) "New Light on the Ku Klux Klan", 461.

28. Hesseltine, op. cit., 687.

29. Century Magazine, VI, (1884) "New Light on the Ku Klux Klan", 461.

30. Benjamin Brawley, A Short History of the American Negro, 129.

through the medium of their secret organizations. The permanent result of these organizations was the alienation of the Negroes and the whites, and the drawing of a color line in politics;<sup>31</sup> truly, a sad and costly misfortune.

[Faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page, listing various authors and titles.]

---

31. Fleming, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, No. III, 5; Fleming, Documentary History of Reconstruction, No. II, 5.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### I. BOOKS

- Avary, Myrta Lockett, Dixie After the War, New York, Doubleday, Page, and Company, 1906.
- Brewster, James, Sketches of Southern Mystery, Treason, and Murder, Milwaukee, Evening Wisconsin Company, 1903.
- Caskey, Willie Malvin, Secession and Restoration of Louisiana, Louisiana, Louisiana State University Press, 1938.
- Couch, W.T., Culture in the South, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1934.
- Damer, Eyre, When the Ku Klux Rode, New York, Neale Publishing Company, 1912.
- Davis, Susan Lawrence, Authentic History of the Ku Klux Klan, New York, Susan L. Davis, 1924.
- DuBois, W.E.B., Black Reconstruction, New York, Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1935.
- DuBois, W.E.B., The Negro, New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1915.
- Dunning, William A., Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction, New York, Macmillan Company, 1898.
- Dunning, William A., Reconstruction, Political and Economic, The American Nation Series, New York, Harper and Bros. Publishers, 1907, XXII.
- Evans, Clement A., Confederate Military History, Atlanta, Georgia, Confederate Publishing Company, 1899, XII.



- Ficklen, John Rose, History of Reconstruction in Louisiana, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1910.
- Fortier, Alcée, A History of Louisiana, New York, Manzi, Joyand and Company, 1904, IV.
- Hesseltine, William B., A History of the South 1607-1936, New York, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1941.
- Horn, Stanley F., Invisible Empire, Boston, Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1939.
- Lester, J.C. and Wilson, D.L., Ku Klux Klan, Its Origin, Growth and Disbandment, New York, Neale Publishing Company, 1905.
- Lonn, Ella, Reconstruction in Louisiana, After 1868, New York, G.P. Putman Sons, 1918.
- Peirce, Paul S., The Freedmen's Bureau, Iowa, Published by University of Iowa, 1904.
- Phelps, Albert, Louisiana, Boston, Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1905.
- Rhodes, James Ford, History of the United States, New York, Macmillan Company, 1906, VI.
- Sherman, Honorine Ann, The Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana, New Orleans, Tulane University, Master's Thesis, 1936.
- Taylor, Richard, Destruction and Reconstruction, New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1879.
- Wilson, Woodrow, History of the American People, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1901, V.

## II. PERIODICALS

- Appleton, Annual Cyclopedia, 1865-1866-1870-1874.

- Adamoli, Guilio, Letter dated March 1, 1867, New Orleans, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, VI.
- Bone, Fanny Z. Lovell, "Louisiana in the Disputed Election of 1876", Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XIV.
- Brown, William H., "The Ku Klux Movement", Atlantic Monthly, LXXXVIII, (September, 1901).
- DuBois, W.E.B., "The Freedmen's Bureau", Atlantic Monthly, LXXXVII, (1901).
- Hart, W.O., "History of Events Leading Up to the Battle of September 14, 1874", Louisiana Historical Quarterly, VII.
- Herbert, Hilary A., "The Conditions of the Reconstruction Problem", Atlantic Monthly, LXXXVII, (1901).
- "The Ku Klux Klan", Century Magazine, VI, (1884).
- Lestage, H. Oscar, "The White League in Louisiana and Its Participation in Reconstruction Riots", Louisiana Historical Quarterly, July, 1935.
- "New Light on the Ku Klux Klan", Century Magazine, VI, (1884).
- Page, Thomas N., "The Southern People During Reconstruction", Atlantic Monthly, LXXXVIII, (September, 1901).
- Vaught, D.A.S., Letter to John R. Ficklen, May 8, 1894, New Orleans, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXIII.
- Wilson, D.L., "The Ku Klux Klan, Its Origin, Growth and Disbandment", Century Magazine, VI, (1884).

## III. NEWSPAPERS AND PAMPHLETS

Campbell, General Hugh H., The White League Conspiracy Against Free Government, January 11, 1875, New Orleans, Louisiana, 11pp.

Carpet-bag Misrule in Louisiana, Louisiana State Museum Publication, September 1, 1938.

Cook, Walter Henry, Secret Political Societies in the South During the Period of Reconstruction, Press of Evangelical Publishing House, Cleveland, Ohio, 29 pp.

Hoar, George F., Wheeler, W.H., Frye, William P., The White League in Louisiana.

Picayune

June 24, 1874.

July 1, 1874.

July 2, 1874.

September 15, 1874.

## IV. DOCUMENTS

Congressional Globe.

42nd Congress, 1st session, Part II.

Executive Documents

39th Congress, 1st session, 1865-1866.

No. XI.

42nd Congress, 3rd session, 1872-1873.

No. 109.

Fleming, Walter Lynwood, Documentary History of Reconstruction, Cleveland, Ohio.

Arthur H. Clarke Company, 1906, I;  
1907, II.

Fleming, Walter Lynwood, Documents Relating to Reconstruction, Morgantown, West Virginia, 1904, Nos. I, II, VI, VII.



McPherson, Edward, Political History of the United States, During the Great Rebellion, Washington, Phelps and Solomons, 1865.

McPherson, Edward, The Political History of the United States, During Reconstruction, Washington, Solomons and Chapman, 1875.

Monument, at River end of Canal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Report of Joint Select Committee on Conditions of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States, Congress, February 19, 1872, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1872.

Speech of George S. Boutwell, of Massachusetts, in U.S. Senate, February 18, 1875, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1875.

Speech of John B. Gordon, of Georgia, in U.S. Senate, January 29, 1875, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1875.

Speech of Henry R. Pease, of Mississippi, in U.S. Senate, January 25 and 26, 1875, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1875.