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A DECADE OF EAST TENNESSEE REPUBLICANISM 1867-1876*

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By the summer of 1867, the Radical Unionist party of East Tennessee with its supporters in other sections had gained complete control of the state, had adopted the name Republican, and was laying plans to become the majority party in Tennessee. In the August election of 1867, the Radical party won the governorship by a vote of three to one over their Conservative Unionist opponents. During the gubernatorial campaign the party was called the Unionist, Unconditional Unionist, Radical, Radical Unionist, and Republican party.[1] By the triumphant close of the campaign, the victors had proudly adopted the name Republican.[2]

The leaders of this new Republican party feared that it would not continue to be the majority party of the state. They realized that the overwhelming victory in the campaign was due to two laws passed by the Radical legislature, one which disfranchised ex-Confederates,[3] and the other which enfranchised the Negroes. Brownlow's paper claimed that there were 40,000 loyal whites in Tennessee who would vote the Republican ticket, and that enfranchisement of the Negroes added 40,000 more. It further contended that the opposition contained only about 80,000 voters, the great majority of whom were disfranchised and would continue to be for a number of years.[4] Democratic feeling on the question was expressed by the Nashville *Banner*, which declared after the disfranchising law was passed, "there are not 5,000 honest men in Tennessee who can vote under it." This condemnation was answered by a Radical paper in Nashville which contended that 82,000 men not only honest but also loyal could vote under the new law.[5] This question of which party was to be the majority party was to be decided in the political struggles over a period of some years and over many issues.

For a clear understanding of the position and desires of both parties it should be said at the outset that the Republican party was

*This is a continuation of an article, "The Origin of the Republican Party in East Tennessee," which appeared in *Publications* No. 13.

[1]Knoxville *Whig*, March 13, 1867.

[2]*Ibid.*, August 21, 1867.

[3]*Acts of Tennessee*, 34 General Assembly, 3 Session, 1866-67, p. 27 ff. The Republicans had polled in the August election, 74,034 votes as opposed to 22,550 for the Democrats.

[4]Knoxville *Whig*, April 25, 1867, and other issues during the campaign of 1867.

[5]*Ibid.*, April 25, 1867, quoting the Nashville *Press and Times*.

composed mainly of loyalists and a few others who had decided to cast their lot with the Republicans after the war.[6] They represented a minority of the people of the state and maintained control by questionable use of the ballot box, election laws, and the state militia.[7] This minority control helps to explain the bitterness which was almost sure to appear in every campaign even on minor issues. The Democrats were the "Disloyal." They had fought for or supported the Confederacy, had lost, and were in 1867 political outcasts. Nevertheless, the Republicans knew that according to existing law the main body of Democrats would regain the franchise in about four years and others would be re-enfranchised later; hence the aim of the Republicans was to build their party into a majority party before the Democrats came back to the ballot box. On the other hand the aim of the Democrats was to get back to the ballot box as soon as possible.

The material herein is concerned with the issues, men, and events within the Republican party during a decade. For the first two years of this decade the Republicans, mainly East Tennesseans, were in complete control of the state. For a year or so their position was not clear; they were not in control, nor were they out of office. For the remainder of the decade they were being forced into the position of a minority party due largely to poor leadership and sectional interest. This whole process of control and disintegration is best observed by a chronological account of the party through the decade.

A party in power makes friends or enemies by its stand on issues which concern the people. One of the first issues to confront the Republicans concerned the claims against the federal government for property destroyed during the war. Some people believed that property claims of loyalists would be recognized and paid by the federal government. The state government under the prodding of Brownlow, L. C. Houk, R. R. Butler and other East Tennesseans, and at a cost of approximately $125,000, got these claims together in order that Tennessee's representatives in Congress could aid in their collection. These claims show that a larger part of the destruction was caused by whichever army the residents called the enemy. The total property loss was about $6,000,000, of which the Union armies had destroyed less than $2,000,000 worth of property and the Confederates over $4,000,000. According to Republican political reasoning in 1867, all losses would be paid for by the federal government.

[6]James Ford Rhodes, *History of United States,* 1850-1877 (New York, 1906), VI, 200-202.

[7]Philip M. Hamer (ed.), *Tennessee: A History,* 1673-1932 (New York, 1933), I, 631-32.

East Tennessee was the most interested in these claims against the government. Four counties, Anderson, Cocke, Knox and Sequatchie, may be taken as typical. Sequatchie, a Democratic county, had a greater loss by the Federal army than by the Confederate army; in all others the reverse was true, as is shown by the following data:

Claims of Property Destroyed by War[8]

Anderson County		Knox County	
by Federals . .	$ 7,469	by Federals . .	51,361
by Confederates .	50,393	by Confederates .	132,140
Total . . .	57,862	Total . . .	183,501
Cocke County		**Sequatchie County**	
by Federals . .	3,280	by Federals . .	3,543
by Confederates .	176,297	by Confederates .	3,111
Total . . .	179,577	Total . . .	6,654

The first two counties, Anderson and Cocke, filed claims for considerably more than the total valuation of taxable property in those counties in 1860 exclusive of land and slaves.[9] There is no record of these claims ever having been paid. And, while of minor importance, it amounted to an anticipated political reward which turned into political disappointment and failure for the Republican party.

A second issue before the parties and one on which the party in power had to take a stand when it came into full control of the state was the question of Negro privileges.[10] The Negroes had been given the vote by the franchise law of February 25, 1867, but section sixteen of that law had denied them the right to sit on juries or hold office. During the campaign in Tennessee for the governorship in 1867, the Negroes severely criticized the section, which they called the "ojus" sixteenth section.

After the election, the Republicans, under a great deal of pressure from Negroes, Radical newspapers, and Tennessee's Republican congressional delegation, proceeded to change the unpopular section of the franchise law. Granting the Negroes more privileges was risky legislation. First, the Republicans of East Tennessee were ardently opposed to granting any favors to the freedmen. Republicans of Middle Tennessee and West Tennessee were not nearly

[8]Knoxville *Press and Herald,* January 8, 10, 1869.

[9]In Anderson County the value of taxable property in 1860 was $45,545. Anderson County claims totalled $57,862.00. Cocke County property valuation in 1860 was $59,169, and the county claims against the government totalled $179,577.00!

[10]Knoxville *Press and Herald,* April 11, 1865; ex-President Andrew Johnson in a strong speech showed that the Republicans all along had been interested only in securing the votes of the Negroes.

so hostile.[11] The party then being mainly an East Tennessee organization could not afford to go too far with this "political dynamite." Shortly after the legislature met, the Negroes of the state began to clamor for action which the legislature had promised; many Negro meetings were held and threats were made to the effect that the Negroes would "bust the party if that ojus sixteenth section is not eliminated." The Nashville *Press and Times* called upon the legislature "to carry out its promise to the colored voters." Some members of the party called a pressure convention on January 22, 1868 at Nashville to urge the legislature to repeal the sixteenth section of the franchise law. While the convention was being organized all Tennessee's congressmen except Senator David T. Patterson publicly urged the legislature to act on this section.[12]

The major opposition came from an East Tennessean, DeWitt C. Senter. However, on January 31, a law was passed giving the Negroes civil rights equal to those the whites enjoyed, including the right to hold office and to sit on juries. A short time later, an additional law was passed whereby Negroes could not be denied privileges offered to whites by common carriers or hotels. Thus there was on the statute book of Tennessee a civil rights law equal to anything suggested by Charles Sumner in the United States Senate, with the possible exception of joint education.[13]

This political and social triumph of the Negroes caused at least one writer to say: "The situation in Tennessee is intolerable for most of the people; the time are out of joint; the cup of woe has been drained. This state is the most discordant one in the Union."[14] One party effect of the Negro legislation was that the colored voters were confirmed in their political allegiance to the Republican party. The effect on the opposing party was to drive it into the *sub rosa* activities of the Ku Klux Klan and thereby to raise a third issue for the party in power to stumble over.

The Ku Klux Klan forced itself on the attention of the legislators and the people as it grew beyond a partisan political issue and resembled revolution. The organization began at Pulaski, Tennessee, as a fun-making institution and became, in a large measure, a *sub rosa* society dedicated to the purpose of controlling or destroying the state government.[15] It shortly reached such proportions that

[11]E. M. Coulter, *William G. Brownlow* (Chapel Hill, 1937), 331-40. The Knoxville *Whig* for the spring of 1867 shows this hostility by what it did and did not print about Negroes.

[12]Nashville *Republican Banner*, January 23, 25, 1868.

[13]Hamer, *op. cit.*, II, 632.

[14]*American Annual Cyclopaedia*, 1868, p. 721.

[15]Walter L. Fleming, *Documentary History of Reconstruction* (Cleveland, 1917), 347-49.

the state government had to take notice. By 1869 even some Conservatives were worried and opposed to the order. One Knoxville Democratic paper urged that if Democrats were going about the state at midnight in sheets to scare the Negroes, "The sooner the Negroes kill them off the better."[16] When bloodshed seemed imminent, the governor called the legislature into special session and charged that the Klan aimed to overthrow the government by force, enfranchise the rebels and disfranchise the Negroes.[17] He asked for a militia law that would give him power to handle the situation.

A group of ex-Confederates who were men of influence tried to reason with both sides. Such men as Nathan Bedford Forrest, Gideon Pillow, John C. Brown, B. F. Cheatham and W. B. Bate met with the military committee of the legislature and urged that a new militia law be not enacted.[18] But conciliation was not to be, for the Governor had announced: "Our council once for all is that whenever those vile miscreants make their appearance among us, mounted, booted and spurred, and however disguised let the white and colored Radicals meet them promptly, and in the spirit of their own lawless mission, and disperse them, and if need require this in dispersing them, exterminate them."[19]

The legislature sat week after week without voting on the Klan law or the new state guard bill. Finally, to accelerate action a convention was called to meet in Nashville, August 12 and 13. Horace Maynard, the presiding officer, addressed the convention at great length and demanded to know whether Tennessee had a real or a sham government.[20] Some four weeks later the legislature enacted two laws. One of the laws was called the Ku Klux Klan Act, which provided minimum penalties of $500 fine and five years imprisonment for belonging to or for aiding or encouraging the Klan or any similar organization. The other was an act providing for the second state guard, by which the governor could urge "every loyal man and good citizen to raise a troup of soldiers" and report to Nashville.[21] The party effects of these two laws would not be directly felt for some time, but they did not conciliate and win friends for the party in power; on the other hand they increased the bitterness and widened the gulf between the two parties.[22]

Another issue arose from the manner in which the legislature and governor increased the state debt and almost ruined the credit

[16]Knoxville *Press and Messenger*, June 25, 1868.
[17]Knoxville *Whig*, July 30, 1868.
[18]*Ibid.*, August 12, 1868.
[19]*Ibid.*, March 25, 1868.
[20]*Annual Cyclopaedia*, 1868, p. 722ff.
[21]*Acts of Tennessee*, 35 General Assembly, Extra Session, 1868, p. 19ff.
[22]Knoxville *Whig*, October 14, 1868.

of the state. Back in 1852 Tennessee had adopted a policy of aiding internal improvements, especially railroads. By this policy, the state had lent its credit to railroads to the extent of approximately $14,000,000 by the time the war began. There was an additional state debt of about $2,000,000, called the state debt proper. The point of complaint on the part of Democrats was that during a period of some three or four years immediately after the war the state debt was more than doubled and that at the end of reconstruction, so-called, there was little more to show for this $30,000,000 debt than the ownership of the Hermitage, a new Capitol, and a poor sort of penitentiary. Included in the total debt was additional aid to railroads amounting to about $14,000,000. This doubled the state's railroad debt. While there was much excuse for spending money on the railroads because they were in a run-down condition as a result of the war, much of this $14,000,000 was squandered and thrown away in graft.[23] It was estimated that out of the almost $5,000,000 worth of state bonds voted to the East Tennessee railroads, the roads or companies actually received only about $350,000 cash because the bonds were next to worthless.[24]

Another activity along the same line was the handling of the state school fund. In some rather miraculous way, Tennessee came out of the Civil War with some assets of the Bank of Tennessee which could be reclaimed as a school fund. This fund when recovered and returned to Tennessee amounted to some $600,000 in gold and other currency and securities.[25] The Governor fondly referred to this amount as "that sacred fund" and excoriated the Democrats unmercifully because it was not larger. This money was invested in United States bonds that amounted to about $650,000 in face value. It was to be under the direct supervision of the governor and the secretary of state. Late in 1868, a new bank was organized at Memphis with A. J. R. Rutter as president. This "financier" prevailed upon the secretary of state, R. L. Stanford of Knoxville, to turn over the school fund bonds to the bank and receive in return greenbacks from time to time.[26] Shortly afterward the bank became insolvent, and the $650,000 "sacred fund" was lost completely. Stanford resigned, was criticized by the Governor,

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[23]S. J. Folmsbee, "The Radicals and the Railroads," in Hamer, *op. cit.*, II, 660-73. See also *Senate Journal*, 41 General Assembly, 1 Session, Appendix, 176-78, for a hint as to how high state officials were corrupted.

[24]*Ibid.*, Appendix, 10-14.

[25]*Ibid.*, Appendix 291-326. The state's school fund had been made a part of the capital of the bank when the bank was created in 1838. The remainder of the bank's assets had been lost through investment in Confederate securities.

[26]Nashville *Banner*, February 3, 1869.

and ended his part by committing suicide.[27]

Partial effects of the school fund scandal may be seen in a quotation from an Ohio paper, the Cincinnati *Commercial*, a leading "Republican authority of the West." In an editorial entitled "Don't Ruin the Party," it declared:

> The recent school fund developments in the Tennessee House of Representatives that has driven its presiding officer into weeping "abdication" and implicated many conspicuous Radicals in transactions "defenseless" from *any* point of view will be turned to tremendous account by their political opponents.[28]

Any "turning to tremendous account" in a political way was not immediate, but once it started was of long duration.

The Tennessee Republicans were in power during the impeachment trial of President Andrew Johnson. Brownlow and Johnson had been political opponents all their lives with but one brief exception, during which, in their opposition to secession, they temporarily stood together. When Brownlow was released from jail at Knoxville and sent through the Confederate lines to Nashville, he and Johnson, then military governor of the state, fell into each others arms like long lost friends. Later, Johnson paved the way for Brownlow's regime in Tennessee.[29] Early in 1866, however, as Johnson's opposition to the Radical program in Congress became evident, Brownlow's attitude changed, and by fall the old bitter enmity had been revived. The complete break had come when Johnson opposed the Fourteenth Amendment.[30]

Johnson, throughout the ordeal of impeachment, retained many supporters in Tennessee among the Unionists, and by his stand against Radicalism he had gained support among ex-Confederates and Conservatives. The leading men of Tennessee who opposed him as military governor were now the outstanding leaders among his supporters in the state; and those who had supported and urged

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[27]*Ibid.*, February 18, 1869, an editorial, "The Unblushing Fraud of the Loyal Plunderers," commenting on a legislative investigating committee; *ibid.*, March, 1869; Knoxville *Press and Herald*, February, March, 1869.

[28]Quoted in Nashville *Banner*, February 10, 1869.

[29]Knoxville *Whig*, April 7, 1869; When Johnson was made military governor of Tennessee he was given $100,000 to be used as he saw fit in the re-establishment of loyalty. Johnson gave Brownlow $1,500 of this money to help him get his famous *Whig and Rebel Ventilator* going in Knoxville after Burnside took the city. This fund or subsidy of course was never mentioned by Brownlow or anyone else until Johnson came back to Tennessee after his term as President. Then in campaigning the state he told how he had helped Browlow get his paper started. Brownlow answered by saying that it was not Johnson's money and that the *Whig* had never uttered a word that was not loyal and that was what Johnson was supposed to do with the money. An interesting side light on Johnson is that every dollar of the money was accounted for and about $85,000 of the $100,000 placed at his disposal was returned to the federal government.

[30]*Ibid.*, October 3, 1866; Coulter, *op. cit.*, 308-24.

him on as military governor were now his bitterest critics. This reversal was brought about in part by both Johnson and Brownlow: by Johnson because he had become a conservative when compared with the Radicals in Congress; by Brownlow because he was becoming more and more extreme in his local Radicalism.[31] After the news reached Tennessee that Johnson was acquitted, Brownlow wrote that "Tennesseans, including Johnson, Patterson and Fowler, have acted so treacherously that I am ashamed to ask the loyal North any longer to confide in any of us."[32] The trial served to draw a sharper line between factions in the Radical Republican party in Tennessee. The trial hardly affected the Democrats, who were still disfranchised and only partially reconciled to Johnson anyway.[33]

Another major problem facing the Republicans was that of conducting campaigns and elections while they were in control of the state. Their first responsibility in this direction came with the approaching presidential election of 1868. As early as December 6, 1867, the Republicans held

> a large and enthusiastic Union meeting composed of members of the Legislature, representing nearly every County in the State, and citizens in the Capitol at Nashville. After speeches by various gentlemen a resolution was adopted calling a State Convention of the Republican party to assemble in Nashville on the 22d day of January. The chief purpose of the Convention will be to select delegates to represent Tennessee in the Convention of the Union party to nominate candidates for the Presidency and Vice presidency.[34]

The Conservatives held two state conventions, one to choose men to send to the Democratic national convention, and another to condemn the Radicals for their methods of reconstruction in Southern states. As for Tennessee they condemned the Governor for taking from the state its republican form of government, and for working with the "minions and agents of the party now in possession of the government of the United States," in trying to bring about Negro supremacy in the South.[35]

The campaign was a sordid affair. A never-ending source of discouragement to the Democrats was the second state guard or militia, composed of both whites and blacks, which was used effectively by the party in power as a threat over the heads of any who wished to campaign or vote against the Republican candidates. The outcome in Tennessee was a surprise to no one. Grant received

[31]Knoxville *Whig*, May 13, 1868.
[32]Coulter, *op. cit.*, p. 351.
[33]James W. Patton, "Tennessee's Attitude Toward the Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson," in East Tennessee Historical Society's *Publications*, No. 9 (1937), 65-76.
[34]Knoxville *Whig*, December 11, 1867.
[35]Coulter, *op. cit.*, 364-65.

56,757 votes and Seymour 26,311. Grant received some 20,000 fewer votes than Brownlow had received in the gubernatorial election the year before. Seymour received only about 4,000 more than Emerson Etheridge, the Democratic candidate, had received in the same gubernatorial election. This change in strength is accounted for largely by the activities of the Ku Klux Klan, which doubtless had succeeded in scaring away from the polls a large number of Negroes.[36]

The election was not over in Tennessee with the counting of votes, for in the congressional election held at the same time two Conservatives won, along with six or seven Radicals.[37] The Governor proceeded to throw out enough votes to elect Radicals in the two congressional districts which had elected Conservatives. Congress, of course, was the final judge of these elections. The Conservatives took their complaint to Congress and that body counted and threw out the identical votes that Governor Brownlow had thrown out in Tennessee. The manner in which the campaign was conducted did not make any friends for the party. Especially is this true when one remembers that the men counted out of office in Middle and West Tennessee were Conservative Republicans and not Democrats.[38]

After the presidential election of 1868, the Republican party took a few more steps which proved to be inter-party and devisive. One of these steps was taken when Senator-elect Brownlow began making preparations to resign as governor and leave for Washington.[39] Some two years before there had been a deal between Brownlow's and Senter's followers to the effect that Brownlow should be elected senator, and Senter chosen speaker of the state Senate so that he would succeed to the governorship upon the resignation of Brownlow.[40] When the senatorial election was held, only W. B. Stokes had the hardihood to contest with Brownlow, although several other Republicans wanted this political plum. All others withdrew, but Stokes would not withdraw because he was ambitious to be senator and because he thought Brownlow too feeble to per-

[36]James W. Patton, *Unionism and Reconstruction in Tennessee* (Chapel Hill, 1934), 142-43.

[37]The number is indefinite because Tennessee under a Radical law elected an extra congressman because of Negro suffrage. Congress refused to seat the extra representative because representation had not been reapportioned. The sole authority to determine the number of representatives that Tennessee or any state should have belonged to Congress and not to the state.

[38]*Congressional Globe*, 41 Congress, 3 Session, 1220ff.

[39]Joseph A. Sharp, "The Downfall of the Radicals," in East Tennessee Historical Society's *Publications*, No. 5 (1931), p. 106.

[40]Knoxville *Whig*, July 29, 1868.

form any duty.[41] Brownlow defeated Stokes by a vote of 63 to 39. Reverberations of this senatorial election got under way as soon as Senter became governor, because he would have to wage a gubernatorial campaign before the year was out and Stokes planned to air his bitterness toward Brownlow against Senter as Brownlow's political heir.

When Brownlow took his place in the United States Senate, party politics took a sudden turn in Tennessee—a turn toward the conservative element of the state. After Senter became governor early in 1869, the next political move was an election of judges provided for by the legislature—the first for several years. This election was to be held on May 27, 1869. Early in May, Senter disbanded most of the state militia and sent General Joseph A. Cooper back to his farm. These movements pleased the ex-Confederates greatly, but they were still disfranchised according to the law and the Radical registration records. It is clear that Senter was at this time in sympathy with the disfranchisement, for in no case was he lax in enforcing the law for this election. Consequently, all the judgeships were filled by Republicans.[42] This turned out to be the last election won by the Radical Republicans under their East Tennessee leaders.

The climax of the inter-party strife came to the Republican party during the gubernatorial election of 1869 mentioned above. General William B. Stokes, a congressman, and his followers had decided that Senter should not succeed himself as governor. The pre-convention activities had eliminated all candidates except Senter and Stokes.[43] When the delegates met in Nashville on May 20, A. M. Cate, chairman of the Republican State Central Committee and a Stokes supporter, called, or attempted to call the meeting to order. Judge L. C. Houk of East Tennessee nominated T. H. Pearne for temporary chairman. Cate, refusing to recognise Houk, called for nominations and instantly recognized a Stokes man. This man nominated Roderick Random Butler as temporary chairman. The fight was on. Houk called on the convention to vote on Pearne's nomination and declared Pearne elected. Cate declared Butler elected. Both men went to the platform and claimed the chair. Cate would not give it up under these conditions. The convention adjourned until evening, but no organization could be

[41] *Ibid.*, October 30, 1867. It had been rumored that Brownlow could not live more than six or eight weeks. See also James W. Patton, "Senatorial Career of William G. Brownlow," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, Series II, Vol. I (April, 1931), pp. 153-64.

[42] Sharp, *op. cit.*, 108.

[43] *Cong. Globe*, 43 Cong., 2 Sess., 137.

effected. Afterwards the Stokes supporters nominated him as the Republican candidate for governor, and the Senter followers nominater Senter as the Republican candidate. Each man claimed in his acceptance letter to be the real Republican candidate, the true follower of the national Republican party and supporter of the national Republican platform of the previous year.[44]

The Conservative-Democrats did not nominate a candidate, but waited to see which of the two Republican candidates might offer the best bargain. The Nashville *Republican Banner*, early in the campaign, urged the election of a legislature that "will not be proscriptive – let it be non-partisan if possible [but] all know it will be Republican."[45]

The campaign was an interesting and momentous one for all Tennesseans. General William B. Stokes, the nominee of the extremists, was a native of North Carolina. He was fifty-five years old, large, bald, and hooked-nosed. On his farm in DeKalb County, he humored his special interest in horse-racing and in raising blooded stock. His political career had begun in 1849 when he became a member of the lower house of the state legislature. Ten years later he was elected to Congress on the Whig ticket. At the time the war came on, he was opposed to secession, but, like John Bell, upheld the right of revolution, and for a year he seemed to be with the Confederates. However, when Middle Tennessee fell to the Union forces, he cast his lot definitely with the Union army by organizing and heading the Fifth Tennessee Union Cavalry. At the end of the war, he was mustered out as a breveted brigadier-general.[46] At the time of his nomination for governor, he was a member of the lower house of Congress, and was still smarting under the defeat Brownlow had given him for the senatorship two years before.

Senter, on the other hand, was a young man, born in McMinn County of East Tennessee in 1834. At the time of this canvass he was only thirty-five years of age. He was "rotund, fresh, flushing, and handsome. His face was plump, rosy, and well set off by dark eyes, whiskers, and hair."[47] Senter's political career began in 1857, when he was elected to the lower house of the General Assembly. In 1859, he was re-elected, and, in 1861, he was admitted to the bar. At first he was a Whig. During the war he was a Union man. When hostilities began he was a member of the legislature. He continued to serve even after Tennessee had formed

[44]Sharp, *op. cit.*, 111-17.
[45]Nashville *Republican Banner*, June 3, 1869.
[46]Will T. Hale and Dixon L. Merritt, *A History of Tennessee and Tennesseans*, (Chicago and New York, 1913), III, 697-99.
[47]Sharp, *op. cit.*, 115n.

a military league with the Confederacy, but his efforts were always in opposition to what was being done by the majority. After the war, Senter was definitely a Radical, but he did not have a very high regard for Negroes. By his conduct as governor during the short time after February 28, Senter had gained favor with both Radicals and Conservatives.[48]

Stokes and Senter first met on the platform in Nashville on June 5, 1869 for the beginning of the joint canvass. The question in everybody's mind was what would be the stand of each candidate on universal suffrage. Stokes made the first speech and spent most of his time berating the Brownlow regime, the mounting state debt, the theft of the school fund, the railroad receivers, and the carpetbag office seekers. All of this pleased the Democrats and ex-Confederates. On suffrage, he proposed to stand on the Chicago Republican platform, and said he "favored gradual enfranchisement" to be accomplished by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly upon each individual disfranchised resident of Tennessee who could prove that he was peaceful and law-abiding.[49]

When Senter arose to speak, he seemed undecided and determined to say little about suffrage. Well along in his speech, Stokes interrupted and asked him if he favored universal suffrage. Senter's answer was a studied and deliberate "yes" and he elaborated by saying that if he were elected he would recommend to the next legislature the removal of all disabilities on those who were taxpayers.[50] This startling answer then and there put all Democrats, ex-Confederates, and many Republican conservatives on his side.

Senter, no doubt, had analyzed the situation and realized that such a statement would elect him if ex-Confederates could be permitted to vote in the gubernatorial election, while the same statement made by his opponent would have benefited Stokes but little. This paradoxical statement needs a word of explanation. A pledge for universal suffrage on Stokes' part would have turned the ex-Confederates against Senter but would not have enabled them to vote, because Senter, as governor, had complete control of the election machinery and could keep any but the Radicals from voting. The Radicals would have approved such a course by voting for Senter. On the other hand, Senter realized that he could open wide the registration lists and the ballot boxes and let many new voters take part. This he decided to do. And this extension of suffrage was

[48]J. H. Lockhart to L. C. Houk, April 9, 1869, Houk MSS. (McClung Collection, Lawson McGhee Library, Knoxville, Tennessee).

[49]Hamer, *op. cit.*, II,, 632-44.

[50]Sharp, *op. cit.*, 116.

carried to such an extent that, before the canvass was over, universal suffrage in Tennessee was again a reality.

This granting of universal suffrage was accomplished by Senter through the changing of registrars and election officials wherever necessary. He could make the changes under the election law of 1866, which gave the governor the powers of a dictator over the ballot box.[51] The Radicals were as desperate as the Democrats and ex-Confederates were jubilant. Radical leaders tried to get injunctions against the removal of registrars; foiled by the courts here, they threatened federal intervention.

In the campaign, Senter was accused of "having gone over to the democratic party," but he had the support of some Radicals like Brownlow and L. C. Houk. Brownlow did not participate directly in the campaign but Houk was active. Senter reassured Houk many times during and after the campaign that he was not and never would be anything politically but a Republican, saying in one letter: "Under no circumstances will I ever join hands with the rotten Defunct party known as the Democratic party; Harris Quarles Kirby Smith Whitthorn [Whitthorne] & half dozen more of that ilk. . . ."[52] The support of Brownlow and Houk, the leading East Tennessee Radicals, did much to allay Republican feeling that Senter had lined up with the Democrats.[53]

Senter was elected by the largest majority ever given a governor up to that time (120,333 to 55,056). But in the legislature only twenty-one Republicans of both the Stokes and the Senter factions were elected. Dr. P. M. Hamer, after analyzing the votes in the gubernatorial election, concluded that, if only Radicals had been permitted to vote, Stokes would have been elected.[54] It should be noted, however, that if Senter had campaigned on the enforcement of the disfranchising law many more Radicals would have voted for him, and by the same token Democrats and ex-Confederates would not and could not have voted for anyone. Any way the election may be analyzed or the outcome explained, the results were that Republican control of Tennessee would end with the next inauguration.[55]

Now that the Republican party's office holding days were

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[51]*Ibid.*, 119-22; Knoxville *Press and Messenger*, July 21, 1869.

[52]Senter to Houk, June 20, 1870, Houk MSS. Senter was protesting so ardently because during the campaign his Radicalism had so often been questioned by East Tennesseans.

[53]The only newspaper in the state owned and edited by a Negro, the Maryville *Republican*, deserted Stokes and declared for Senter.

[54]Hamer, *op. cit.*, II, 650.

[55]Knoxville *Press and Herald*, August 21, 1869; Nashville *Republican Banner*, August 1, 1869.

numbered, the Republican leaders made two last efforts to thwart the Democrats. Some Republican party workers hoped to void the gubernatorial election or to have Tennessee reconstructed by the Federal army. At the end of August, 1869, it was reported that a group of Radicals had met in Nashville and planned a conspiracy against the newly elected governor. Such men as Stokes, Horace Maynard, Alvin Hawkins, Lewis Tillman, several members of the legislature, and others attended this secret meeting and formulated a letter to Senter urging him to reconvene the legislature. Then they planned to have the legislature declare the last election void.[56] The plan failed, of course, when Senter refused to call a special session of the old legislature.

The second effort was a movement put under way to have Tennessee reconstructed by the Federal army. In July, 1869, while the canvass was on, Roderick Random Butler, a Stokes supporter from the beginning and a national representative from East Tennessee, urged Grant "to have federal office-holders sustaining Senter removed." Grant agreed to lay the request before the cabinet "with his approval." At the same time Stokes, also a member of the national House, was telling his audiences throughout the state how he would return to Washington, if defeated for the governorship, and have the state put under military government.[57] When Congress convened in December, 1869, J. M. Smith introduced a resolution asking that the late election in Tennessee be annulled. By the middle of January, all the Tennessee delegation at Washington, except Isaac R. Hawkins and Joseph S. Fowler, were for having Tennessee reconstructed by the Federal army. Even Brownlow, who had supported Senter, was now protesting that the election was a fraud.[58]

Tennesseans made two efforts to ward off this proposed calamity. Senter called for state troops to protect the rights of loyal citizens. And the new legislature, controlled by the Democrats and Senter Republicans, adopted a resolution proposed by Emerson Etheridge, which said in part:

> That the thanks of the people of the State are eminently due President Grant for his refusal to adopt the counsels of those who have so long resisted our attempts to secure equal and impartial freedom to all the citizens of the State, without regard to color, former political opinions, race, or previous condition.

This resolution, to thank their President for not taking the advice

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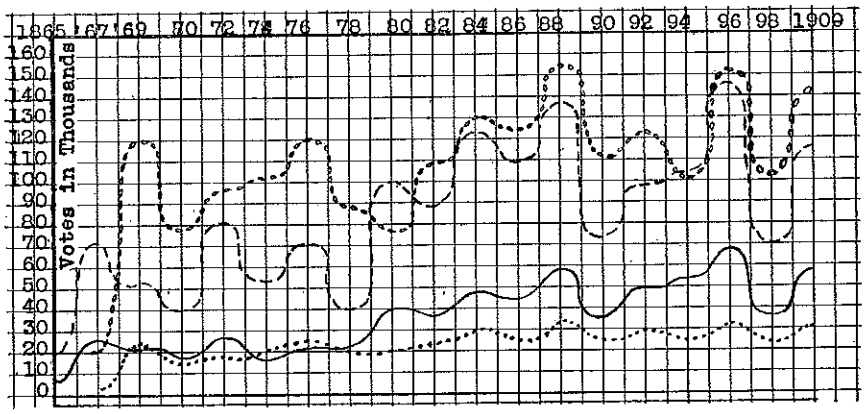
[56]Knoxville *Press and Herald,* August 31, 1869.

[57]*Ibid.,* July 8, 1869.

[58]Nashville *Republican Banner,* January 18, 1869; Knoxville *Press and Herald,* January 14, 1870.

of their congressmen, was adopted unanimously by the General Assembly.[59]

By this time the Tennessee constitutional convention was in session and was methodically undoing all the Radical laws passed since 1865, except the Negro enfranchisement act. On this question, the convention was especially level-headed. At the time the question was being considered, the Tennessee Republicans at Washington were trying to get the state reconstructed by Congress. No doubt the convention took this Radical attempt into consideration when they decided to retain Negro suffrage. All ex-Confederates were, of course, made eligible to vote. Among the other changes made was the denial to the governor of the right to abrogate *habeas corpus* or to call out the state militia. Also, the payment of any poll tax assessed was made a prerequisite for voting. The work of the convention was more conciliatory than the defeated party expected.[60] But by the new constitution, the Democrats had regained the ballot and through the ballot the control of the state, while the Republicans were relegated to the position of being a minority party in the state as a whole, although still able to maintain a position of dominance in East Tennessee.



Republican votes in Tennessee elections 1865-1900

The Republican party did not reach its status and become reconciled to a minority position without considerable struggle. In all

[59] *Senate Journal*, 36 General Assembly, 1 Session, 298; Nashville *Republican Banner*, January 14, March 24, 1870.

[60] *Journal of the Constitutional Convention* of 1870, p. 8ff.

the elections from 1870 to 1876, inclusive, the party's fortunes steadily declined, even going so far as to include the loss of East Tennessee in two elections. The graph above shows this to be the low ebb of the party in both East Tennessee and the state.[61] This occurrence within the Republican party may best be studied by a brief consideration of the elections throughout the period and by looking for the explanation of the results in the leadership and the party position on issues of those days.

The decline of the Republican party is shown by total figures for the different elections. The figures for 1870 show that both parties had a small poll. The smallness of the vote may be accounted for in several ways. For one thing, 1870 was an off year so far as national offices were concerned. The whole attitude was expressed by the Knoxville *Chronicle* after the election when it lamented thus: "Tennessee feels relieved, that there is not to be another general election until 1872. . . . Not less than seven thousand voters in this Congressional District kept themselves away from the polls on the day of election."[62] Then, too, many Democrats were still disqualified as voters by the disfranchising act. Also, many Republicans did not vote because of a natural reaction against Republican rule which had been unwholesome and corrupt during the past five years. Many voters in both parties were at that time disqualified and have ever since been disqualified by the poll tax requirement which was inaugurated by the new constitution. Finally, the Republican candidate for governor, William H. Wisener, was not a strong man.

This first comparatively free two-party election shows the relationship between the parties. The Republican party stood only about half as strong as the Democratic party in the state as a whole, but in East Tennessee the Republicans were slightly more numerous than the Democrats. Not only was John C. Brown elected governor by an almost two to one majority, but the legislature became Democratic by an even greater margin. In the state Senate the Democrats had twenty members to five for the Republicans, and in the lower house there were sixty Democrats and fifteen Republicans.[63]

The next election year, 1872, was a presidential year; hence, the vote was much larger. The proportions for the state as a whole

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[61]Figures for making the graph were taken from the Nashville *Daily Union*, April 5, 1865; Nashville *Union* and *Dispatch*, August 17, 1867; Nashville *Union* and *American*, November 12, 1872; Nashville *Republican Banner*, November 16, 1872; after 1872 from the election returns, Secretary of State's Office, Nashville.

[62]Knoxville *Chronicle*, November 27, 1870.

[63]*Ibid.*, November 15, 1870.

remained about the same. In this election, many Republicans wanted to follow what they called "the passive policy," which meant naming no candidates. This seemed to be a good policy, because the Democrats were so divided that the Republicans, by voting as a unit, might have named the governor. This program was disrupted by A. A. Freeman and Horace Maynard,[64] Republicans who might have known that their party was in as poor a condition for a state-wide election as the Democrats.

The Republican convention at Nashville was described as the smallest ever held. Thirty counties were not represented, and about one third of the others were represented by proxies. One third of the delegates were Negroes. Houk, speaking for almost all East Tennesseans, insisted that "to name a ticket would divide the Republican party, unite the Democrats, and reduce Grant's vote."[65] Maynard, who insisted on a ticket, had guessed the situation correctly. He became a candidate for the lower house of Congress from the state at large in an interesting three-way campaign against Andrew Johnson and B. F. Cheatham, and won the election. By winning, Maynard eliminated any possibility of the Republicans working with the Johnson men, as some had suggested. In the gubernatorial campaign the Republican candidate, A. A. Freeman, received 83,869 votes to the Democratic candidate's 97,700.[66] Although Brown was re-elected governor, his majority was much smaller than in 1870.

The 1874 party conditions prior to the election were almost exactly reversed when compared with 1872. In 1874, the Democrats were united in opposition to the Sumner Civil Rights Bill, while the Republicans were torn between party loyalty and sectional loyalty. The Democrats did not need a division in the Republican ranks in order to win state offices. They took advantage, however, of the disruption to gain local offices in East Tennessee.[67] When the votes were cast on November 3, 1874, Maynard as candidate for governor had lost East Tennessee to James D. Porter by 19,061 to 21,189, while his party lost the state by 55,847 to 105,061 votes.[68]

Preparatory to the election of 1876, a Republican convention met in Nashville late in May. Three men, Henry S. Foote, Emerson Etheridge, and George Maney dominated it, but no candidate was nominated for the governorship. In organizing the convention,

[64]Nelson's "Scrap Book" (McClung Collection, Lawson McGhee Library, Knoxville, Tennessee).
[65]*Ibid.*
[66]*Ibid.*, A. S. Colyar to T. A. R. Nelson, October 13, 1872.
[67]Knoxville *Press and Herald*, November 20, 1874.
[68]*Ibid.*, May 23, 1874; election returns, Secretary of State's Office, Nashville.

the old veteran, Brownlow, was nominated for two positions and lost both times.[69] After the convention, as well as before, General George Maney announced himself as an independent candidate. Later, Dorsey B. Thomas became an independent candidate and polled far more votes than Maney. Though Thomas had been once counted out of a place in Congress by Brownlow, by now many Republicans preferred him to Maney. Actually, the Republicans were not greatly interested in the state election. Again the color question rose to plague the party when a young Negro lawyer of Knoxville, William T. Yardley, announced himself as the Republican candidate for governor.[70]

In East Tennessee, the section that gave Negro suffrage to Tennessee, Yardley received 196 votes; in the whole state, 2,165. Maney received 4,164 in East Tennessee and 10,436 in the state. Thomas received 22,158 in East Tennessee and 73,695 in the state. James D. Porter, the Democratic candidate, received 26,905 in East Tennessee and 123,740 in the state.[71]

Thus, by 1876 the Republicans had reached rock bottom so far as securing results at the polls were concerned. They had traveled a long way from dominating the state government in all its branches to losing their own East Tennessee stronghold.

The Republican leaders had much to do with this decline. The party leaders of the 1870's were East Tennesseans, described by a contemporary newspaper as "controlled by 'ring' managers eager to retain the spoils of office. . . ."[72] Of most of the leaders in Middle and West Tennessee, little need be said. They attended the party conventions and orated about Republican party principles and distributed the mail at various postoffices, but as for exercising any control on the party, they had no effect. Two of these men were Samuel M. Arnell and W. B. Prosser. The former had been a "Confederate tanner, who was poorer than a church mouse." He served a term in Congress and left the halls with "a lot of stock in the Chattanooga rolling mills" and, according to the Knoxville *Press and Herald,* an opposition partisan paper, he got between $5,000 and $9,000 of the school fund.[73] He ended his political career when the Democrats regained control of the state. Prosser was given the postmastership at Nashville for a while, but was remov-

[69]Knoxville *Tribune,* May 29, 1876.

[70]*Ibid.,* September 17, 1876.

[71]Election returns, Secretary of State's Office, Nashville.

[72]Knoxville *Press and Herald,* September 5, 1874.

[73]*Ibid.,* June 2. 1870. He was a personal friend of Brownlow and also the chief sponsor in the legislature of 1865 of the first law disfranchising ex-Confederates in Tennessee.

ed by Grant. He was heard of last about 1874, when he got up a petition to Congress and secured approximately fifty signers, twenty-four from East Tennessee, to have the state reconstructed by Congress and the Federal army.[74]

The individual leaders of East Tennessee who had most to do with the party, aside from W. G. Brownlow, the original "King bee," were L. C. Houk, Horace Maynard, and Roderick Random Butler. Leonidas Campbell Houk was born in Sevier County on June 8, 1836. He attended school only about three months. While a boy, he learned the trade of cabinet-maker. When about twenty-one or twenty-two, he read law for a few months, passed the bar, and, in 1859, set himself up as an attorney in Clinton, Tennessee. He began his legal activities by collecting debts. When the war began, he ran away to Kentucky, but before long enlisted in an infantry company from Tennessee. He became colonel of his regiment but resigned in 1863 "because of ill health." At the close of the war, he returned to the practice of law. In 1866, he was elected to a circuit judgeship at a time when only Radicals could vote. After the judgeship was abolished, he moved to Knoxville, resumed the practice of law, and took part now and then in editing or running a newspaper. For a short time, he was claim agent for the federal government. Elected to Congress in 1878, he remained there until his death in 1890.[75]

This man's amazing political career most likely could not have happened in any place other than East Tennessee. He entered politics with the Brownlow regime and learned his lessons at Brownlow's feet. He would "bolt every convention he was ever in and run independently against the regular nominee,"[76] if he felt he could win. The *Chronicle,* a Republican paper of Knoxville, often refused to support him and said that "It is rule or ruin with him."[77] By 1884, he was commonly referred to as "Boss Houk." Shortly after his death, the Democratic Knoxville *Tribune* described the situation accurately by writing: "With Boss Houk's death, the last of the Republican Kings of East Tennessee is gone."[78]

As a congressman, his career was amazing for its lack of productiveness except for bills for relief, claims, and pensions. In the first session of the 46th Congress, he introduced thirty-three bills asking pensions and claims. As a Republican congressman, under

[74] *Ibid.,* October 15, 1874.
[75] O. P. Temple, *Notable Men of Tennessee From* 1833 *to* 1875 (New York, 1912), 128-36; *Congressional Directory,* 46 Cong.
[76] Chattanooga *Commercial,* quoted in *Press and Herald,* May 13, 1874.
[77] Knoxville *Chronicle,* August 26, 1874.
[78] Knoxville *Tribune,* July 2, 1891.

a Republican administration, he enjoyed the federal government's patronage for Tennessee. More than once he boasted of the men he had made and broken in the second district. He boasted that he was the man to be consulted as to "who does the milking of the Government cow in this district."[79]

His personal life, if newspapers and reports can be believed, was as amazing as his legal and political career. He at one time set out to be a preacher; he sometimes pretended to be a member of a temperance society. Yet it was charged that he resigned his commission in the army not because of ill health, but because of drunkenness. He admitted that he "liked mountain dew." He added that he was no "Joseph" in the "house of Potiphar"; "Let any of his accusers who were . . . cast the first stone."[80] The Nashville *Banner* probably described him accurately when it said: "[He] is a rough, rather popular fellow, outspoken, rude in speech, blunt in manner, with a ready, native wit, a rough humor, and plentiful powers of rude invective."[81]

Horace Maynard, another East Tennessee Republican leader, who stood high both in the state and in the national councils of his party, was something of a contrast to both Brownlow and Houk. He was a "scholar in politics" and was able to influence others by his ability and not by uncouthness or blustering or trickery, elements which he rarely used. Maynard was born in Massachusetts in 1814. A graduate of Amherst College, he came to Tennessee as a teacher at the East Tennessee University. The New York *Herald* described him as being

> a peculiar man. He does not, perhaps break any of the commandments outright; but he has a narrowness of charity, a longevity of resentment, an incapacity to look at any question in its broad bearings, a certainty to fix upon some small point and torture it so that it comes to embrace the whole issue. A volume might be composed of all Maynard's littlenesses and petty piques. He is a man without a positive vice and yet without a negative virtue.[82]

He is supposed to have said: "I esteem the herd of mankind, the human cattle, no better than other cattle, nor quite so good. I hold them in the utmost loathing and contempt."[83] Years after the war ended, he opposed any sort of amnesty, opposed any leniency toward the persons engaged in the rebellion. Over and over, he advocated "keeping the leaders of the South out of their former po-

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[79]*Ibid.*, August 1, 1882.
[80]Knoxville *Press and Herald*, January 24, 1869.
[81]Nashville *Banner*, August 21, 1879.
[82]Quoted in *ibid.*, November 1, 1874.
[83]Knoxville *Press and Herald*, September 14, 1872.

sitions of influence."[84] He earned for himself the appellation of Narragansett warrior, and he looked the part. Supposedly, he was part Indian; he had a "sickly yellow complexion"; dry, long, black, coarse hair; and was tall and lean in body. In demeanor, he was cold, sarcastic, and cruel.[85]

In politics, Maynard was willing to connive for his own welfare. In 1869, he joined with some other Radicals in an attempt to trick Senter into calling a special session of the old legislature so they could have it declare the recent election of legislature and governor null and void. He wrote the letter and secured the signatures of other congressmen from Tennessee, threatening the state with military reconstruction if it adopted the new constitution in 1870. In the gubernatorial campaign of 1874, Maynard tried to carry water on both shoulders. Although he pretended to favor a modified civil rights bill he had voted for the Sumner bill at every opportunity.[86] Out of his race for the governorship he secured an appointment as minister to the Turkish government. He returned from Turkey to become postmaster-general in Hayes' cabinet. In 1881, he was a candidate for United States senator, but was defeated. From his defeat for the senatorship until his death in 1882, he lived in Knoxville, where he busied himself with minor civic activities.[87]

The Republican politician, who, next to Houk, had most to do with shaping Republican party measures in East Tennessee and the state was Roderick Random Butler of the first district. Butler never came near Maynard in dignity, nor in national party affairs. His "talents" were used solely to manipulate state and district elections. He began his political career in 1859 by being elected to the lower house at Nashville. There he opposed secession. During the war he became a lieutenant colonel in the Union army. After the war, he spent his time serving as judge, legislator, and as a member of the lower house of Congress. Some of his activities were ludicrous.[88] The New York *Tribune* exposed a letter received in New York under his frank. The letter stated that "A young lady of talent and ability desires the love and correspondence of a nice young gentleman."[89] One wonders if this namesake of Smollet's novel could have been a practical joker.

Serious charges were brought against him from time to time, such as receiving $5,000 from some Bristol saloon keeper to fight

[84]*Cong. Globe,* 41 Cong., Appendix, 17.
[85]Knoxville *Press and Herald,* February 13, 1870; Temple *op. cit.,* 138-50.
[86]Knoxville *Press and Herald,* September 18, 1874. See also succeeding issues.
[87]Temple, *op. cit.;* Nashville *Banner,* October 6, 1874.
[88]Knoxville *Tribune,* May 21, 1876.
[89]Knoxville *Press and Herald,* March 25, 1870, quoting New York *Tribune.*

the prohibition movement,[90] of being a party to the state treasurer's absconding with some $500,000, of selling a cadetship to West Point, and of forgery in connection with pensions. Butler admitted that he sold a cadetship. He was cleared on the charge of forgery. In his strongly Republican district, Butler made fun of the charges and boasted that he could steal a horse each day and still beat his Democratic opponent in the election.[91] The *Daily American* said: "It must be confessed that nominating a man like Butler is not exactly the thing for a party enjoying a monopoly of great moral ideals" to do.[92] It seems clear that different and better leaders could have made the Republican party a majority party in the years of reconstruction. The opportunities were obvious and plentiful. A glance backward will bring them into relief. In 1871, A. A. Freeman wrote to L. C. Houk:

> You are right as to the future of the Republican party in Tennessee. The Democratic party is dead and it must be buried. The elements of success are all within our reach; there are thousands of honest men in Tennessee who were never Democrats at heart, men who are Conservatives in their feeling and have been driven to act with that party by what was regarded as the proscriptive policy of our party.[93]

Republican leadership alone defeated such hopes as Freeman here expressed.

The Nashville *Republican Banner,* probably the most influential paper in the state, was in 1870 in a position to be won over to an enlightened and honest, liberal Republican party. It quoted with approval the Lebanon *Herald,* which was strongly opposing the reorganization of the "old pre-war Democratic party."[94] In the three-way congressional campaign in 1872, the *Banner* supported Andrew Johnson instead of B. F. Cheatham, the regular Democratic nominee. It urged the "members of the Legislature to rise above party issues and work for the state."[95] In 1874, the Knoxville *Chronicle,* a rabid Republican paper, pointed an accusing finger at the *Banner* and said:

> About a year ago, [the *Banner*] was a pretty good radical paper. It winked very cunningly towards the Republicans and its editors and proprietors gave it out privately that their sympathies for Radicalism were very marked and strong; in fact, were stronger than for Democracy. That was when it proclaimed the latter dead.[96]

The *Chronicle,* with its considerable influence, especially in

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[90]Knoxville *Journal,* September 9, 1887.
[91]Knoxville *Tribune,* October 3, 1890.
[92]Knoxville *Chronicle,* November 12, 1870.
[93]*Ibid.,* December 27, 1871.
[94]Nashville *Banner,* July 22, 1870.
[95]*Ibid.,* November 3, 12, 1872.
[96]Knoxville *Chronicle,* May 29, 1874.

East Tennessee, saw the possibilities of building the Republican party into a majority party. It pleaded with Johnson men, urging: The truly Conservative men of Tennessee have it in their power to rescue the commonwealth from the unworthy hands that have controlled it for two years past. What is there now to longer divide us? Proscribed and driven from the party you placed in power, ostracized because of your devotion to the Union, trampled upon by ex-confederates who were preferred not because of fitness for office, but because of their military record you can not longer afford to permit them to prosecute their unjust war without hindrance.[97]

Johnson Democrats seemed inclined towards the Republicans, for they merely condemned the leadership of the Republican party and not the party.

Others, too, thought the Democratic party was dead in 1872. The Chattanooga *Times* wrote: "The [Democratic] party is on the wane; it won't be able to survive this election."[98] W. J. Hill wrote: "Johnson has killed the old secession, Cheatham Democracy, here, [Pulaski]. [I] have not heard three men speak of Cheatham since the election. Can we not unite in the next canvass, the Union Johnson Democrats, the old line Union Whigs, like yourself, and the Republicans, and forever control the state?"[99] Even Brownlow at Washington was for a minute or two conciliatory. He said he "hoped for some alliance between Johnson men and the Republicans. Andy is a patriot. Republicans feel very kind toward him. He has done a great work . . . he is true to the Union and the Nation."

Perhaps the Democrats deserve some party punishment if it could be administered. They reasoned that, since the Republicans had proscribed Democrats when they were running the government, now the latter should "get even" and if possible so "re-district the state" that during the next ten years no Republican could be elected to the state legislature. "The law of retribution is right," one Democrat declared.[101]

The Republicans practically refused to take advantage of the situation. The *Chronicle* gloated over the Johnson-Cheatham de-

[97]*Ibid.*, November 8, 1872.

[98]Chattanooga *Times*, November 12, 1872.

[99]J. W. Hill to T. A. R. Nelson, February 5, 1873, T. A. R. Nelson Papers (Lawson McGhee Library, Knoxville, Tennessee).

[100]Knoxville *Chronicle*, July 1, 1875, quoting Nashville *Daily American*. Brownlow was of course speaking for himself and what he felt was the feeling of other Tennessee Republicans.

[101]*Ibid.*, March 22, 1872. The Knoxville *Press and Herald* supported the redistricting bill and pointed out that East Tennessee "enjoyed reduced representation" in the legislature because the East Tennessee Republicans had given the vote to Negroes. With the Negroes of the state voting, Shelby County could claim two senators instead of one—and could claim seven representatives instead of three as it had had before the "blessing of Negro suffrage had been forced on the state." See Knoxville *Press and Herald*, editorials, first half of March, 1872.

feat by Maynard. As usual, it was left for Brownlow to do the most damage. He boasted that "Now we have a loyal majority in Tennessee [due to the] able, just, and firm administration of President Grant. . . . The vigor and ability with which Maynard met Andrew Johnson and . . . vindicated the principles of the Republican party . . . have never been equaled in any canvass in Tennessee."[102]

Due to boastfulness on the part of Republican leaders and to a lack of harmony in their party the Republicans could not take advantage of the broken Democratic party. The *Banner,* in describing party situations in Tennessee in 1874, showed that the

> Republican party is divided and disorganized by personal greed and ambition—a feud in Nashville between [Horace H.]Harrison and Prosser—in the first district between Butler and Judge E. E. Gillenwaters, and in the second district between Houk and Montgomery Thornburgh, also a row between Brownlow and P. Mason Bartlett [president of Maryville College] over Negro equality.[103]

In 1874 all tendencies resembling party harmony were destroyed when the Civil Rights Bill struck Tennessee Republicans like a bolt of lightning. Brownlow, Houk, and Butler, the main lights of East Tennessee Republicanism, all opposed this party measure. The *Chronicle* decided to break with these party cohorts and support Horace Maynard, the regular Republican nominee for the governership.[104]

The party at first tried to confuse the issue by claiming that the Negroes did not favor the bill in its entirety. A group of Blount County Negroes, however, met, endorsed the bill, school clause and all, and called all Republicans who opposed the bill "Designing demagogues."[105] A Negro convention at Nashville "assaulted" Brownlow because of his stand against the bill.[106] Other Negroes demanded to know where Brownlow and the Republican party would be without their aid, and a young Negro lawyer in Knoxville became the spokesman for all by demanding that the Republican party recognize Negro rights.[107] Much of the whole story was told by the *Chronicle* when commenting on the changed attitude of the Nashville *Republican Banner*:

> About a year ago it [the *Banner*] was a pretty good radical paper . . . Now it is anxious to get back into the fold . . . It makes the civil rights bill

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[102]Knoxville *Chronicle,* November 10, 1872.

[103]Nashville *Republican Banner,* July 14, 1874.

[104]Knoxville *Chronicle,* October 6, 1874. This paper was successor of the *Whig* and almost as much of a Brownlow sheet as the *Whig* had been. Brownlow became senior editor of the *Chronicle* upon retiring from the Senate in 1875.

[105]Nashville *Republican Banner,* April 19, 1874; Knoxville *Chronicle,* May 21, 1874.

[106]*Ibid.,* May 13, 1874.

[107]Knoxville *Press and Herald,* January 14, 1874.

the pretext and is publishing more incendiary, meaner spirited articles on the subject than any paper in the South. . . . Its course is simply outrageous. The press of the South is nearer a unit against the civil rights bill than it ever has been on any subject. . . ."[108]

The *Chronicle* with all its staunch Republicanism did not advocate the bill, giving as an excuse that " it would incite race prejudice"; it spent its time ranting against other papers for writing against the bill.

The stand of Republicans on the Civil Rights Bill shows how party loyalty had to be placed before state or sectional interest. Brownlow knew that on such a question a choice would have to be made between the interest of East Tennessee and the Republican party, for, said he,

I tell the Republicans of all colors in Middle and West Tennessee that under no conceivable circumstances will East Tennessee Republicans support any man for any office who favors mixed schools. . . . The whole fabric of education in Tennessee will fall if the bill is passed. It is the sum of villainy and the quintessence of abominations.[109]

When the Republicans held their convention in Chattanooga they nominated Horace Maynard for the governorship because he was the only man of standing who would make the race without repudiating the state and the national Republican party's stand on civil rights. The platform adopted at this convention was ambiguous, saying in part:

We are in favor of the full and equal enjoyment of accomodations, advantages, rights and privileges by all citizens and other persons within the jurisdiction of United States, without regard to race, creed or color, and at the same time we deem it unnecessary and unwise to attempt by Congressional legislation or otherwise, to compel, as between such races, creeds or colors, the joint exercise of such accomodations, advantages, rights or privileges. . . ."[110]

In the campaign, Maynard tried to maintain that he was not for the bill without some changes. The Democratic papers answered this by publishing time after time the record of his votes in Congress on the bill. The *Chronicle,* the leading Republican paper, supported Maynard and the meaningless platform but asked the members of Congress "who read the *Chronicle*" to give their attention "to the inexpediency of legislation so far in advance of public sentiment. . . ."[111]

The disappointing awakening came to the East Tennessee Republicans on August 7, when the local election was held. The civil rights issue reached down even to the race for constables. The

[108]Knoxville *Chronicle,* May 29, 1874.
[109]Knoxville *Press and Herald,* February 14, 1874.
[110]Knoxville *Chronicle,* September 17, 1874.
[111]*Ibid.,* May 28, 1874.

Chronicle began its election news by saying that "the Republicans won two places in yesterday's election [in Knox County] by about three hundred votes each," and continued:

> The result of yesterday's election, which we give elsewhere, is as complete a surprise to the Democracy as it is to us. None of their most sanguine friends, figuring upon the votes by districts, hoped to do more than greatly reduce our majority of two years ago. But by a revolution almost unprecedented in the history of the country we report this morning the defeat of Messers. Gossett, McGuffey, Harris, Murphy, and probably Maloney.
>
> It takes but few words to explain the defeat. The excitement over the Civil Rights Bill. . . .[112]

The Civil Rights Bill had indeed caused excitement, and many Southern Republicans as well as all Democrats were determined that the party advocating it should be defeated.

Finally, on November 3, 1874, as has been pointed out, the Republicans lost both East Tennessee and the state, the latter by an almost two to one vote. The low ebb of the party was shown by a story circulated in Washington and Tennessee in 1875, that Senator Brownlow had voted the Democratic ticket in a recent election in Knoxville. His son, John B. Brownlow, explained: "The Republican party of Knoxville in a late municipal election had no candidate for mayor, because of its fearful demoralization [by] 'Summer's legacy', and the almost universal defeat of the party last November. . . ."[113] Henceforth, the Republicans of East Tennessee and the South were aware that the party could gain nothing by advocating Negro equality. The question was how long would this policy be forced on Republicans in the South by the party generally. The *Daily American* in 1876 argued that due to pressure from outside the South the Republicans of the South were "united against the intelligence and the best interests of the South."[114] This indeed seemed to have been the case, for East Tennessee Republicans had learned their lesson in 1874; but the national Republican platform of 1876 declared for equal "political, civic, and public rights" and pledged the Republicans to enforce such rights.[115] By this pledge, which was good politics for the Republican party in the North, the Negro equality question was placed on the doorsteps of Southern Republicans. This burden was carried to its logical extremity when a Negro, William T. Yardley, a member of the Republican

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[112]*Ibid.*, August 7, 1874. These men might be more fully identified by their initials and the offices for which they were running: V. F. Gossett, candidate for sheriff; C. D. McGuffey, for attorney-general; J. M. Harris, for county court clerk; J. M. Murphy, for tax collector; G. L. Maloney, for criminal court clerk.

[113]Knoxville *Chronicle*, February 2, 1875.

[114]Nashville *Daily American*, August 19, 1867, to November, ff.

[115]Edward Stanwood, *A History of the Presidency* (New York, 1904), I, 370.

executive committee, became a candidate for governor, and the extremity was tortured when the Democratic candidate "courteously invited him [Yardley] to meet him on the stump and discuss the issues of the day."[116] It is of little wonder that the aged Brownlow would lament that many "regard the prospect of a Republican success in November as hopeless."

Thus, largely because of the color question, the Republican party reached rock bottom in 1874 and floundered around under pressure of that same question for two or three years. Then, as other issues came to the fore, it recovered and has since maintained its majority in East Tennessee, but has been as consistently the minority party in the state.

[116]Nashville *Daily American*, September 5, 1876.