The Negro in the Populist movement in Alabama 1890-1896

Mary Louise Tucker
Atlanta University

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THE NEGRO IN THE
POPULIST MOVEMENT IN
ALABAMA
1890-1896

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
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BY
MARY LOUISE TUCKER

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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This study is an effort to show the significant role of the Negro in the Populist Movement which swept Alabama in the last decade of the 19th century. Similar studies have been made of the role of the Negro in the Populist Movement in Georgia and North Carolina. The overall movement has been studied extensively in Alabama, but the role of the Negro has not been emphasized. While this investigation covers the years from 1890-1896 when Populism was at its height, it also includes a discussion of its background which goes back into the Eighties. The Negro was an important factor in the movement, not as a member of the Populist party but as one whose vote was coveted by all factions. Sometimes he cooperated with the Populists; on one occasion he was repudiated. Often his vote was used fraudulently in the Black Belt by the Democrats, which led to an attempt by the Populists to disfranchise him. This effort culminated in 1902 when the Negro was legally disfranchised.

The writer has made extensive use of the newspaper and manuscript collection in the Alabama Department of Archives and History and of weekly and daily newspaper offices throughout the state. Unsuccessful attempts were made to locate copies of two Negro publications which it was felt would have added to the study. One was a Negro Republican weekly, the Monroe Review, published by Tony Davison of Tunnel Springs, Alabama; the other, The People's Choice, published by P. Lawrence of Opelika, Alabama. The latter was described as a neat, well-written weekly with emphasis on
news of interest to farmers. Much information was obtained from the county courthouse at Evergreen, Alabama. The writer is indebted to the personnel of all these offices for their assistance in the use of these materials. Finally, her appreciation is expressed to the library of the University of Alabama for the loan of books and unpublished material.

1 Editorial, The Forkland Progress, January 12, 1890, p. 4.
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CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF POPULISM

Economics and politics are often bound together in a cause and effect relationship. This was certainly the case of the Populist Movement which swept large sections of the United States in the early Nineties. This movement was fundamentally agrarian and resulted from accumulated grievances. The Populist party was a product of economic discontent; but it was not entirely economic, not just a debtors movement. There was a racial aspect to it as well.¹

Beginning with the year 1890, the people of Alabama passed through six years of economic distress and political upheaval never before or since equalled in ferocity.² For several years previous to 1890, there had been an increasing growth of economic discontent throughout the United States. It was felt that economic conditions were not as they should be, and that some agency might be created for bringing the desired changes. During this period, 1890-1896, there sprang up and flourished such organizations as the "Grange" and the "Farmer's Alliances." Out of the combined efforts of these two movements, came the only third party of significance since the formation of the Republican party.³

When non-political agencies, such as the Farmer's Alliances,

¹John B. Clarke, Populism in Alabama (Auburn, 1927), p. 23.
²Ibid.
³Albert B. Moore, History of Alabama (University, 1934), p. 603.
which had been formed for the relief of rural people often found that
their achievements fell short of their expectations, they entered poli-
tics. With the one-party system so thoroughly entrenched, they thus hoped
to obtain through political action what they had failed to accomplish other-
wise. It meant much to break away from the old party alignments. The Demo-
cratic party was sacred to the South, and especially sacred to the machine politicians. No thought of division could be tolerated. White supremacy
was ever emblazoned before the eyes of those who were tempted to break
away. A strong effort was made by the laborers and farmers through the
Alliance to win their aims within the Democratic party. Failing to ob-
tain relief or to break the power of the Democratic machine, the next step
was independent political action. This new group planned to fuse with all
opposition to the Democratic party, even the Negroes, to fight "organized democracy" as the regular Democrats were labeled.2

Unlearned in the sciences of economics and politics the white far-
mers in their isolation could not fathom the causes that led to their
economic distress. They struck out furiously in all directions, consider-
ing several forces hostile to their interests. Notwithstanding the much
boasted "Redemption of Democracy" of the middle Seventies, when control
of the state government was returned to local whites, thereby connoting
the return of "white supremacy," all was not entirely well in Alabama.3
Although political control was secured under white domination, the fear
of the "black ghost," the exaggerated spectre of Negro rule was ever
held up before the poor whites. This was done to keep them true to the

1Moore, op. cit., p. 607.
2Clarke, op. cit., p. 12.
party of their fathers.

Legally the Negro's political privileges equalled those of any white man. The very fact that the Negro was now the balance of power between the Democrats and the Republicans made him dangerous, for it was logical for him to side with the Republicans to whom he owed his freedom. But this was not the major danger. The greater danger was that the Democrats themselves might split and the Negro vote would indeed become the deciding factor. Fear of a return of Negro Republican domination held many discontented Democrats in line long after they had lost faith in the righteousness of their party. It was this fear which created such adhesive power in the Democratic party, despite the growing wrongs and desire for change on the part of some of the whites. It was the gradual cleavage of and schism within the Democratic ranks that culminated in the Populist party.

Then, there was also the bitter complaint against the Democratic State convention, the political boss, and Bourbon Democracy. The charge was made by the Evergreen Courant, the mouthpiece of one of the southern white counties, that notwithstanding the fact that the white voter of the hill counties had rescued the whites of the Black Belt from Negro domination in 1874, these counties had never since had their share of political influence in the state.

Representation, both in state legislatures and in party conven-

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1 Charles S. Mangum, Jr., The Legal Status of the Negro (Chapel Hill, 1940), p. 102.
2 Clarke, op. cit., p. 173.
3 Ibid., p. 11.
4 Editorial, July 12, 1890, p. 2.
tions, was based on population. Thus, representation was weighted in favor of the Black Belt, where Negroes, even though they had no share in the government, were counted in the representation base. Threats of revolt within Democratic lines were always met with appeals from Bourbon leadership to stand firm against the danger of a Negro balance of power. As the farmer's plight grew worse and the influence of the Alliance spread into the South, the revolt overrode such arguments as these. The Negro, the main issue used by the Bourbons, in some instances, joined forces with the group that later became the Populists.

It was charged that the rotten boroughs of England could never compare with those of Alabama; the dozen Black Belt counties with only a small white population had one-third the total number of delegates in the Democratic state convention. Machine politicians made it impossible to nominate any but professional politicians. These are causes that led the white farmer to forsake his old party, in nearly all instances the Democratic party, and to resort to the fortunes of a new party. Seldom after 1870 was there thorough political peace and harmony in the state. The so-called "redemption of 1874" was one-sided. Since then the Black Belt had manipulated the votes of the Negro in its favor. It was charged that the vote of the Negro was stolen and counted out in the local primaries, but that in conventions it was used against the white counties.

1 Paul Lewinson, Race, Class and Party (New York, 1937), p. 73.
2 Ibid.
3 Brown, op. cit., p. 240.
4 Ibid., p. 249.
5 Ibid.
Later, the white counties and Populist sympathizers found it to their advantage to obtain the Negro vote, after it was made evident that relief could not be obtained through the Democratic party.

The various agricultural wheels, societies and alliances in the late 1880's were united into three great organizations, the National Farmer's Alliance or Northern Alliance, the Southern Alliance and the Colored Farmer's Alliance and Cooperative Union. The great interest of the Negro in the alliance movement and its rapid spread through the South soon made it imperative that the Southern Alliance win Negro farmers as allies in the struggle for reform. The virtual fusion of the two organizations made the Alliance a real force in Southern life, but it soon became evident that no major reforms could be effected unless it went into politics. The issue of political action created conflict between the Negro and white Alliances. Most southern Alliance leaders were Democratic and desired to win that party to the Alliance program. The Colored Alliance was hostile to Southern democracy and its platform of white supremacy. Negro alliancemen generally looked to the Republicans for political guidance, though there was a growing conviction that the party was turning from the Negro and his problems. Within both Alliances there were also substantial forces that favored the creation of an independent third party. This movement made rapid headway after 1890 when it became clear that neither the Democratic nor the Republican parties intended instituting a program of genuine reform.

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Under the leadership of Bourbon democracy, a very large majority of the white people of the South stood together as a political unit, regardless of civic or economic issues in national or local politics. They had given the small farmer little chance to air his grievances. The only question which the ruling class would permit the people to discuss was the real or imaginary issue of white supremacy. They seized the opportunity and took advantage of the situation with partisan astuteness, that marked them as masters of politics. Thus, they caused the radical to lose his battle for reform.¹

CHAPTER II
THE CAMPAIGN OF 1890

The unbroken front presented by the Democratic party in its fight for white supremacy was seriously threatened in 1890. For the first time in two decades the Democratic party faced disruption. The farmers had grievances and had decided that these grievances could be redressed only by direct political action. There were some alliancemen who even felt themselves ready to take the place of the old Bourbon leaders. Chief among these was Reuben F. Kolb. As leader of the Populist movement in Alabama, Kolb was an outstanding figure in politics throughout the turbulent Nineties.

As a pioneer leader of the Farmer's Alliance, Kolb rapidly advanced to the position of president. In 1887 he was appointed Commissioner of Agriculture. Utilizing the advantage of his position, Kolb became the outstanding agriculture leader of the state. The politically ambitious Kolb had a powerful organization of farmers back of him by 1890, who endorsed him for governor.

A convention of Farmer's Alliances was held at Auburn in August, 1889. Here Kolb launched his candidacy. The grievances of the farmers

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2 Moore, op. cit., p. 604.
3 Ibid., p. 605.
were given a thorough airing, and Kolb was proposed for the governorship. The convention enthusiastically endorsed him.\(^1\) Thus began the two most conspicuous aspects of the Populist Movement in Alabama, the candidacy of Kolb and the bitter opposition of the *Advertiser*, a leading newspaper in the state, to it. The fear of Negro domination was used by the newspapers to fight Kolb and his followers who were accused of attempting to organize a third party.

A national meeting of the Southern Farmer's Alliance and the Northwestern Farmer's Alliance was held in St. Louis in December, 1889.\(^2\) The Knights of Labor also called a convention at the same time and in the same place, and the three organizations cooperated in drawing up a platform that voiced the demands of the farmers and laborers. Kolb and seven other delegates from Alabama attended the convention.\(^3\)

After much discussion the three organizations drew a platform advocating the following:

1. More paper money
2. Abolition of the national banking system
3. Laws to prevent corners and trusts
4. Tariff reform
5. Free silver
6. Government ownership and operation of the means of transportation

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\(^1\)"Alliance Meets in Auburn," *Birmingham Age Herald*, August 21, 1889, p. 1.


\(^3\)Ibid.
7. The prohibition of alien ownership of land
8. The restriction of government land sales to actual settlers
9. The prohibition of speculation in futures of agricultural and mechanical production
10. A fair tax system
11. The establishment of a subtreasury by the government in which farmer's produce might be stored by farmers and a loan of paper money obtained on the produce up to 80 per cent of its value

The St. Louis Convention aroused a storm of protest in Alabama. The Montgomery Daily Advertiser led the attack, followed by the Mobile Register and the small-town weeklies. They pointed out that the provision requiring alliancemen to support politicians who favored the platform was an attempt to disrupt the Democratic party. The spectre of Negro domination through division among the whites was held up.

Kolb announced his candidacy December 22, 1889 in the Birmingham Age Herald. He sought the nomination on the Democratic ticket. The Advertiser, self-constituted guardian of the orthodox Democratic party, announced that it would be interesting to hear from Kolb on the platform adopted by the National Farmer's Alliance and Industrial Union as his announcement said nothing of those resolutions. Kolb denied having

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1 Ibid.
2 Clarke, op. cit., p. 91.
4 "Kolb and the St. Louis Platform," ibid., December 24, 1889, p. 4.
anything to do with the resolutions or knowing anything about them. He said he was a Democrat, believed in white supremacy and that there was no idea of a third party in the St. Louis Platform. In an address to the State Alliance, published in the Age Herald, he made the following statements:

No steps were taken, no measures either advised, discussed or adopted looking to the establishment of a third party. We will support for office, however, only such men as can be depended upon to enact these principles into statute laws uninfluenced by party caucus.

The reaction to the St. Louis platform by the local alliances varied. Many endorsed the resolution and Kolb's candidacy, while others opposed the "Amalgam," as the newspapers labeled the union, fearing it an attempt on the part of the Northern politicians to disrupt the Democratic party in the South and to throw the Alliance into politics. The latter was the reaction of the Black Belt County Alliances, where the conservative Democratic element was very strong. The Alliances stated their intention to resist all efforts to organize the Alliance into politics. They would try to aid the farmer but would repel every attempt to disrupt the Democratic party of the state. The Advertiser declared the platform a plot, subversive of white supremacy in Alabama. The Advertiser also stated that it was not attacking the Alliance but the new party, born at St. Louis. The Montgomery Advertiser, the Mobile Register, and many of

1"Kolb Replies on Platform," The Birmingham Age Herald, December 30, 1889, p. 4.
2Clarke, op. cit., p. 92.
3Ibid.
4"The St. Louis Platform and Democracy," The Montgomery Advertiser, January 12, 1890, p. 4.
the smaller conservative papers from the Black Belt attempted to defeat Kolb early in the race. They attacked the St. Louis platform and labeled Kolb and other prominent Alliance leaders as enemies of the Democratic party. These newspapers warned the people against the danger of Negro rule if the ranks of the Democrats should be divided, and flattered the farmers for their devotion to the Democratic party and the cause of white supremacy. Hammering incessantly on the race issue, the Advertiser reminded the people that there were numerous Republicans and other species of anti-Democrats in the Alliances, and that Negro Alliances were being organized. It was claimed by both papers that the Republican alliance-men were doing all that they could to promote a schism among the Democrats, and that the organization of the Negroes was a source of great danger. The newspapers also warned that the Negro Alliances would be what the old Union League had been to the race problem during Reconstruction.

Meanwhile, the Democratic State Executive Committee met at Montgomery February 13, 1890, and selected May 28 as the date and Montgomery as the city of the convention. The number of delegates was to be 541. Now the question of representation assumed great importance. The custom had been to apportion the delegates among the counties on the basis of the Democratic vote in the last election. Consequently, a prospective candidate could, usually, forecast his chances in advance of the convention. But the Democratic State Executive Committee which was to make the apportionment was anti-Kolb. For 1890 the apportionment was based on the

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1 Moore, op. cit., p. 602.
2 "Schism in the Ranks," The Montgomery Daily Advertiser, March 9, 1890, p. 4.
3 Joel C. Dubose, Alabama History (Atlanta, 1915), p. 61.
votes for Thomas Seay in 1888, the machine candidate for governor in that election.¹ Seay, a Bourbon Democrat, had received the largest number of votes from the Black Belt counties which had a smaller white population. For example, Dallas County, in the heart of the Black Belt, had 9,285 whites and 45,374 Negroes. Cherokee, a white hill county, had 18,080 whites and only 3,615 Negroes. While Dallas in the election of 1888 had cast 9,084 votes for Seay to Cherokee's 2,972, Dallas sent 30 delegates to the convention of 1890 and Cherokee sent 10. This was due to the fact that in the Black Belt Negroes were voted on the Democratic ticket by the whites whereas in the white counties the delegation was more accurately apportioned according to population.²

The delegates from the Black Belt felt that the whites who owned the property, paid taxes, built churches and schools were entitled to run the government. They contended that this necessitated the control of the Negroes by the whites.³ The dominant party's machinery had this to keep in mind, for the wealth of Alabama was concentrated in the Black Belt where the best soil of the state was found. The planters there in ante-bellum days were able to acquire a large number of slaves. Thus the Negro population outnumbered the whites many times. In the hill counties of Alabama, however, and in a few of the south Alabama counties lived the poorer white farmers. In ante-bellum, they had owned few, if any slaves. It was this group who had become discontented with their economic condition and the control of affairs by the machine politicians of

¹Ibid., p. 62.
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
The conservative Democrats were able to develop increasing opposition to Kolb by constantly reminding Kolb sympathizers of the dangers of disruption. Another powerful motive for the increasing opposition to Kolb is to be found in the conservative dread of the new type of leadership represented by Kolb although the fear of Negro domination was played up. Many "old line" Democrats who had become mildly favorable to Kolb hastily changed sides when they understood the aims of Kolb's leadership. The more clearly they saw what was actually happening, the more virulent became their denunciation of the movement. The disruption in the Democratic party was due to the opposition of the Bourbon "Brigadiers" or "courthouse clique" to a leader of the people who had not been sanctioned by the machine politicians. They regarded the Kolb movement as an uprising of illiterates who followed demagogues.

Earlier in the year, four other candidates entered the gubernatorial race. The four men were Judge William Richardson of Huntsville in Madison county; James Crook of Anniston in Calhoun county, a former member of the railroad commission; Captain Joseph F. Johnston of Jefferson county, a Birmingham banker; and Thomas G. Jones of Montgomery. Jones was regarded as the Advertiser and machine candidate. There were suggestions that with Kolb out of the way, political harmony could be restored between the Black Belt counties and the white counties by conceding the nomination to a governor from the northern part of the state;

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1 Summerselle, op. cit., p. 31.
2 Ibid., p. 32.
thus killing the third party in its inception. This would clearly remove the danger of the Negro vote by taking the balance of power out of his hands.

The convention was held on Thursday, May 28. After a report from the Credentials Committee, nominations were in order. Johnston was nominated by James Russell of Mobile, and Jones by his law partner, J. M. Faulkner; while Crook was nominated by W. H. Denson of Etowah, and Richardson by Samuel Blackwell of Morgan. At the end of the day the results stood—Kolb, 235; Johnston, 104; Richardson, 88; Crook, 52; and Jones, 45. As the roll was called again and again, the totals of the candidates changed, but the order remained the same: Kolb, Johnston, Richardson, Crook, and Jones. Thirty-four ballots were taken and the convention adjourned the second day without having selected a governor.

Friday night Kolb's opponents held a caucus. This was damaging to Kolb's cause because it showed that the St. Louis platform and the press attack had solidified conservative opposition to the extent that all four of the candidates were glad to surrender a possible nomination for the governorship in order to insure Kolb's defeat.

At the caucus a study was made of the strength of each candidate. It was found that Kolb had a plurality but not a majority of the delegates. It was possible to defeat him if the strength of all of his opponents could be concentrated on one of them. It was decided that neither Johnston nor Crook could win, because some of Richardson's and Jones' delegates would support Kolb if either Richardson or Jones

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1Ibid.

withdrew. It was also calculated that either Richardson or Jones could win if the others gave him their support. The large Montgomery delegation which was instructed for Jones would vote for Kolb if Jones withdrew. Jones, with the fewest of all delegates, was decided upon as the coalition candidate to defeat Kolb. It was Johnston himself who suggested this plan to prevent Kolb’s becoming the next governor of Alabama.

On Saturday morning when the convention assembled, the names of Johnston, Richardson and Crook were withdrawn. Jones was nominated on the next ballot. When it was seen that Jones had won, and before the convention chairman made the official announcement, H. D. Clayton, Kolb’s campaign manager, withdrew his nomination of Kolb. The final vote was 277 for Jones, 265 for Kolb.

Kolb was then selected to make the opening campaign speech. He ascended the stand, shook hands with Colonel Jones, and in his speech said:

The nomination you have just made closes one of the most memorable contests in the history of Alabama politics. To my friends who have stood by me from the beginning of the campaign to its close, to those delegates who have sat on the floor espousing my cause, I have no words to convey my deep gratitude. . . .

I am at the call of the Democratic Executive Committee of Alabama during the coming campaign, and from the time it opens until it closes, you can count on me in any place you want to put me.

The campaign against the Republicans was not a hard-fought one.

Encouraged by the split in the Democratic party, the Republicans met in

1 Ibid.
3 “Kolb Opens Democratic Campaign,” The Evergreen Courant, June 5, 1890, p. 1.
Montgomery, June 5, and put out a full state ticket. The meeting was dominated to a great extent by William (Bill) Stevens, the Black and Tan leader of the Republicans. B. M. Long became the Republican candidate for governor.¹ In the August election the Democrats swept the state, carrying all but two counties, Lawrence and Winston.²

Thus, in the first contest between the old and new forces in the Democratic party, the conservatives were victorious. The Advertiser made the following statement: "The State is assured two years more of safe, conservative and prudent management of affairs. All is well."³ All was not well, however. In the next election Negroes joined ranks with the new forces and the Republicans cooperated.

¹"Republicans Convene," The Montgomery Daily Advertiser, June 6, 1890, p. 1.
²"Landslide," ibid., August 20, 1890, p. 1.
³"All is Well," ibid., August 20, 1890, p. 4.
CHAPTER III

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1892

In spite of his generous speech, Kolb believed himself cheated out of the nomination of 1890. Therefore, after the election of 1890, he plunged into a minute canvas of the states to succeed Jones as governor. His friends rallied to his support in order to vindicate and honor him, to abolish the party "machine" and to even scores with Jones.¹ A campaign followed of great interest with the cooperation of Negro Republicans. Political cunning, fraud, bribery, slander and press attacks were prominent features.²

The Ocala platform adopted by the Alliances in Florida was a major factor in the great quarrel in the Democratic family. It was intensified by the fact that the colored alliancemembers were charter members of the new party born at the Ocala convention. In December 1890, the Farmers Alliance, Farmers Mutual Benefit Association, the Colored Alliance, and the Knights of Labor met in convention at Ocala, Florida. Here they revised the St. Louis platform. The new features were: the extension of the subtreasury plan to cover loans upon real estate, and a "most rigid, honest and just" control and supervision of public communication and transportation by the state and national government, instead of public ownership. The consolidated body was to be governed by a supreme council

¹Abromowitz, op. cit., p. 260.
²Ibid.
in which each component organization was to have as many votes as it had legal voters. 1

The Bourbon journalists in Alabama lost no time in attacking the Ocala platform. Least acceptable to them was the affiliation with the Colored Alliance. The Birmingham Age Herald which had been friendly to Kolb was outspoken in its denunciation of the platform for its acceptance of the Colored Alliance. 2

The people were constantly reminded of the danger of a return to Negro rule. It was claimed that since the Negro alliancemen outnumbered the white alliancemen, the Negroes could outvote them in the supreme council of the affiliated alliances, with the support of Northern alliances. It was argued that they could force a program of government allotment of the lands of white farmers to the Negroes as well as secure the enactment of a "force bill" by Congress. The Mobile Register claimed in an editorial that if the government could do what the white alliancemen demanded of it, it could:

... take possession of the farms of the country and give every darky forty acres and a mule. Here is the old Loyal League back upon us again, with its yearning for the lands of the white man, with its secret ambition that the Federal flag float over every school house and over every ballot box. Here is the force bill again with its congressional troops and bayonets to decide elections for a free people. Here is the old secret society with its headquarters at Washington and its agents all over the South, going in and out with passwords. We can see the negroes entrenched side by side with the white alliancemen and the muzzle of their guns peeping over the earthenwork from which floats the banner of Kolb and Adam. 3

1 "Ocala Convention," The Birmingham Age Herald, December 21, 1890, p. 1.
2 Editorial, ibid., p. 2.
3 Editorial, The Mobile Register, January 12, 1892.
In spite of the extravagant rhetoric, the real fear was not of Negro domination but of the use to which the new leaders might put the Negro Alliance votes in order to oust the old. This troubled the Bourbon journalists more than the fear of Negro domination. But the latter was an effective means of keeping white voters from backing the new leaders.

The second race between Kolb and Jones, the campaign of 1892, was a contest between the old leaders and new, the conservatives and the radicals. Followers of Kolb called themselves Jeffersonian-Democrats. The campaign was the most exciting since the state was "redeemed" from radicalism in 1874 by the restoration of whites to power after Reconstruction. The white men were at last divided after standing side by side for a score of years since the Reconstruction period.¹

The Democratic Convention was called to meet at Montgomery, June 8, 1892. The Bourbon Democrats used the Ocala platform and the danger of division as their chief issues, while the Jeffersonian-Democrats discussed grievances of the common people, fraud in the convention of 1890, corporate domination and boss politics. Kolb called the campaign one between the common masses of the people and corporate power.²

There was much argument as to who was getting the larger part of the Negro vote. The Jones papers claimed that Kolb polled by far the larger part of it in counties outside the Black Belt. The Kolb supporters claimed that the Negro vote was used in the Black Belt in favor of Bourbon democracy. It was even charged that dead Negroes were voted for

¹Miller, op. cit., p. 288.
²Moore, op. cit., p. 621.
in the Black Belt and often a Negro was asked to "vote for Jim, who couldn't come."\(^1\) The Standard Gauge had this to say about elections:

Alabama must get down to honest elections. It has been believed that it was necessary in the Black Counties to resort to trickery and dishonest methods in order to control the negro, but such is not the case. Even if it were we could not afford to countenance dishonest methods and wholesale stealing of votes as it is said to be practiced in some counties.\(^2\)

At the Democratic convention Jones won by a large majority. The Advertiser announced 372 votes for Jones and 68 for Kolb.\(^3\) In his speech of acceptance, Governor Jones declared that the man who is not a Democrat is an enemy of the South and the Southern people. He went on to say that if one directly or indirectly gives aid or comfort to the Republican party he gives aid to Negro domination, to the disfranchisement of southern whites and to the rule of the bayonet. He admitted that reforms were needed, but claimed that this was not the fault of the Democratic party. In an effort to appeal to the discontented who had deserted the party Jones said that the Democratic party was concerned with the welfare of the farmer and the laboring class and would do its utmost to bring about better economic conditions.\(^4\)

Meanwhile, Jeffersonian-Democrats held a separate convention and together with the Populists and Republicans put out a fusion ticket with Kolb as their candidate. Kolb said that he was going over the heads of

\(^1\) "Honest Elections," The Standard Gauge (Brewton, Alabama), November 29, 1892, p. 2.

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) "Jones Nominated," The Montgomery Daily Advertiser, June 12, 1892, p. 1.

\(^4\) Ibid.
the bosses directly to the people.

The Populist rally opened at Opelika on July 10, and was attended by 6,000 whites and 2,000 Negroes. As Kolb told the convention of his mistreatment at the hands of the party bosses, he was greeted enthusiastically. He charged that the Jones crowd had cheated the people out of their choice for governor in 1890. A strong bid was made for the Negro vote and the platform promising equal rights was quite appealing.

Weekly papers in the Black Belt counties like the dailies put up a strong fight for "organized democracy." The Monroe Journal declared that the political situation was worse than that of the dark days of Reconstruction. The usual appeal was made for unity because of fear of Negro domination. The Monroe Journal went on to say:

These fears are not new. For the past two decades they have continually threatened us, but have been staved off by the Democratic party's presenting an unbroken fight for preservation of white supremacy and home rule. The serious aspect of the case today lies in the fact that the Democratic party is threatened with disruption in order to satisfy the selfish ambition of a demagogue's aspiration for governor of Alabama. Mr. Kolb refused to submit his claims to the Democratic state convention and accepted a nomination which he himself dictated and is parading over the state as the nominee of the Jeffersonian-Democracy seeking the support of negro Republicans on a platform pledging them equal rights and privileges. He realizes his chances of success at the hands of the white voters are hopeless, hence he is working the negro racket for all it is worth.

A letter to the editor of the Monroe Journal, by a certain James P. Lockwood apparently revealed the attitude of a large portion of the voters of Monroe County.

1"Kolb Charges Fraud," The Birmingham Age Herald, June 11, 1892, p. 2.


I thought the issue was peoples' rights versus machine rule, but this is an error; the issue is whether we, the Southern White people will submit to the opinions and rulings of state executive committees, though they may take away some of our rights; or whether we will persist in our determination to elect Mr. Kolb, tear down our solid south democracy and white supremacy to "smithereens" and bring upon ourselves and posterity all the outrages mentioned in the force bill. For my part I cheerfully submit to the former and call upon my Democratic friends to join me.1

An appeal was made to the voters to cease fighting for principles for a while and fight the danger of division. 2 In a letter to the editor of the Monroe Journal, a certain W. H. Richardson asked the voters to forget personal ambition because the entire southern way of life was endangered. He went on to say that they were not asked to surrender their principles, merely to cease fighting for them until the danger of division was over.3

In the meantime, there was much talk about the Populist organization of "Gideon's Bands." The Advertiser stated that this was a select political order organized within the Farmer's Alliance, and of a higher rank than that of the main body. This group was composed of thirty chosen men within a county, with three captains who selected candidates for all the offices.4 It was said that the membership had signs for communication with each other and that death was imposed for disclosing its secrets. The Gideon's bands were accused of threats to shoot Negroes if they voted for Jones. Just as grave was the accusation that money was

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1"Letters to the Editor," ibid., July 14, 1892, p. 2.
2Ibid.
3Ibid.
received from Republicans to bribe Negroes who could not be intimidated.  

The Populist campaign in Monroe County of the Black Belt was opened by W. L. Mims, campaign manager there. The opening speech of the campaign was carried by the Monroe Journal in which Mims was reported to have made the following statements:

There is no difference between a poor white man and a negro. Old Jake and I have been making crops together on green apples and roasting ears. You can't tell me from Jake: we smell alike, walk alike and feel alike. I have been through one war and am ready to go into another. The merchants have threatened to close out the negroes, if they vote for Kolb. Let them close, they won't get nothing but a few old mustang ponies.

The Journal also stated that at this rally, Dr. W. J. Mason, a minister and ardent supporter of Kolb, advised the Negroes to carry guns to the polls. One Negro is reported to have said that there would be fifty guns at the polls in Monroeville on election day and that Kolb would be elected and "all the rich people's stuff would be divided among the poor."  

The Bourbon press continually reminded the people that Kolb could not succeed without the united support of the Republicans of the state, and therefore if elected his administration would be dominated by the radical party, which during the period from 1865-1874, had bankrupted the state, piled up debts, increased the burdens and occasioned money panic. The state had not yet recovered from the evil effects.  

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1 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
the Mobile Register, the passage of the Force Bill by Congress would speedily follow Kolb's election and would permanently establish the radical party in power with a million bayonets to do its bidding. The legislature would be filled with ignorant Negroes, the courts presided over by Negro judges, civil and social rights bills enacted and enforced.¹ The Register went on to say that the Republicans believed Kolb's election would be a longer stride in that direction than a straight-out Republican victory.²

August came and the heated campaign was over. On August 1, the polls were opened and nearly 250,000 votes were counted for governor. Jones received a majority of 11,225 over Kolb. Kolb carried eight more counties than Jones, but he polled a majority in only one county in the Black Belt.³ Kolb's men did not accept the official returns. Kolb claimed that he carried the state by 40,000 votes. He asserted that he had been cheated out of the election by ballot box stuffing.

Many explanations have been offered to explain the election results in the Black Belt, assuming that the Negro actually voted for his most rabid enemy, the Democrat. Among them are ignorance, bribery, drunkenness. The truth is, however, no one knows with any degree of certainty how the Negroes voted, since most of the ballot boxes were tampered with.⁴ It was a common practice to enter the names of Negroes on the polls and count them as voters for the Democratic ticket even when they

¹Editorial, The Mobile Register, July 12, 1892, p. 4.
²Ibid.
³"Jones Victory," ibid.
⁴Skaggs, op. cit., p. 121.
never went near the polling place on the day of election.\footnote{Ibid.}

A leader of the Populists and of the reform movement in Hale County of the Black Belt section testified that in precinct number 7 of Hale County, there were 58 registered voters as officially stated by the Judge of Probate and the Registrar of the county. The falsified returns from that beat vote gave a vote of 504, a steal of 446 votes in the interest of the Democratic ticket. Another witness from Hale County testified that he remained at the polling place of the voting precinct in which he resided from the time the polls opened until the time they closed, and that 52 voters and no more entered the polling place. But the falsified official returns from that precinct showed a total of 368 votes, a majority of 360 votes for the Democratic candidate.\footnote{Moore, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 624.}

The Kolb forces were belligerent but there was no opportunity for contesting the election in the legislature. The legislature had failed to make provisions for contesting elections.\footnote{Ibid.}

In the meanwhile, the Jeffersonian-Democrats, Populists and Republicans nominated fusion candidates for Congress and would not allow the Democrats to settle down in peace. One fusion candidate was a Negro, Tony Davison, from the Black Belt County of Monroe. The \textit{Monroe Journal} made a plea to all the "blue blood of the straight-haired, gray-eyed men of destiny of Monroe," to turn out like brave white men showing their

\footnotesize

\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{Ibid.}
  \item \footnote{Moore, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 624.}
  \item \footnote{Ibid.}
\end{itemize}
devotion to white supremacy. The Democrats won all the seats in Congress. The fusion candidates for Congress, however, polled a large vote in most of the districts and the vote was close between them and the Democratic candidate in the fifth and seventh districts. 

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2 Moore, op. cit., p. 626.
CHAPTER IV

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1894

Looking forward with high hopes to the gubernatorial campaign of 1894 the Populists drew up at committee meetings in September, 1893, two propositions to be presented to the Democratic party. The first proposition was that all white men who had left the party prior to the last state election would be allowed to participate in the Democratic primaries. The second was that only white men who were, or those that claimed to be, Democrats before the last state election would be able to participate. These propositions, if accepted by the Democrats, would have had a two-fold effect: it would have made it impossible for the whites to manipulate Negro votes in the Black Belt and the Populists would have given united support to Kolb, thus nominating him on the Democratic ticket. The Regular Democrats were divided on several candidates. The Linden Reporter stated:

Last year the Populists shouted that the organized democracy and Jones were going to take votes away from the colored people. Now they say, first 'let us back and no nigger shall vote in the beat meetings.' The Reporter contends that a negro who is entitled by law to vote and who has voted with the Democrats must and shall be protected in his suffrage.

The Chairman of the Democratic State Committee called a meeting

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1 "Another Insincere Proposition," The Montgomery Daily Advertiser, September 8, 1893, p. 4.

2 Editorial, September 24, 1893, p. 4. A "beat" is a political division within a county or city in Alabama.
for October 12, for the purpose of considering the Populist propositions. The proposals were firmly turned down. The reasons given were: (1) lack of power of the committee to accept the proposals, and (2) acceptance would only result in confusion and bitterness. The Democrats feared that the Populists through the machinery of their lodges, would unite in the nomination of one candidate while the Democratic masses would be divided on numerous candidates.

In the election year, 1894, the Populists were the first to call a party convention which was held in Birmingham on March 30. The Birmingham News called the convention a meeting of "Kolbites," "Populists," "Regular Republicans," and "Middle of the Road Democrats." The Jeffersonian-Democrats were invited to meet with Populists and they accepted.

Many Republicans attended the convention to watch the "turn of things." There were two factions of the Republican party in Alabama. One faction was led by William (Bill) Stevens, a Negro, the other by R. A. Mosely, a white man. In this convention, the Mosely faction of the Republican party decided to support the Populist ticket. When Stevens rose to endorse for the Negroes the Populist platform which had been adopted, he was driven out under police protection. The Stevens faction of the Republican party then decided to put out its own ticket. In the meantime,
Kolb was nominated by the Populists to head their ticket as candidate for governor.

Earlier the Democratic Executive Committee had set May 22 as the convention date and Montgomery as the convention city. There was to be one delegate for every 3,000 population or fraction thereof.\(^1\) This was an advantage for the Black Belt counties where the Negro vote was almost completely controlled by the Democrats.

The Democratic party leaders were extremely anxious to maintain party unity at all costs. They wished to prevent further breaking in the ranks of the "True Blues," as those who remained in the Democratic party called themselves. The newspapers lined up behind the Democrats and a hard fight was predicted. Eventually, Colonel William C. Oates, of Henry County, was nominated as candidate for governor, in the belief that he could maintain the desired unity in the party. Meanwhile Negro leaders held a meeting in Birmingham and drew up a program of legislation which was then presented to the Democratic Convention. With little debate the convention promised enactment.\(^2\)

The press now assumed the attitude that this was more than a fight between two men, that it had become a fight for law and order against anarchy and mob rule. Kolb was regarded as the leader of a mob which was seeking to gain control of the government of Alabama for the gratification of personal greed.\(^3\) As an example of this lawlessness,

\(^1\)"Democratic Executive Committee," The Montgomery Daily Advertiser, January 23, 1894, p. 4.


\(^3\)Summerselle, op. cit., p. 35.
wide publicity was given to a note posted on the door of a schoolhouse where a Negro was teaching. The note read as follows:

Professor D. D. Kaigler:

We are informed that you are hired by that d____d Lafayette crowd to work for Oates and if you are and we find it out we will make it hot for you and moreover we will give you five or ten days to get out of the settlement or you better keep quiet and don't mention Oates in this vicinity.

(Signed) R. F. Kolb Men

or yours to hear K. k. K. 1

A few days later it was reported that someone fired into the classroom but that no one was hurt. 2

Although the Populists had driven the Negroes out of the convention, it was reported that Kolb was urging the Negroes to register and vote in the counties which he carried in 1892. It was claimed that there were 50,000 Negroes in these counties without whose vote Kolb would hardly carry a single county. 3

The vote on August 6 stood 109,160 for Oates and 83,394 for Kolb. 4 The Advertiser rejoiced that Populism had run its race. Kolb cried fraud and intimated resistance. He finally did issue a manifesto to the people which was published in the People's Tribune on November 19, in which he declared that he would be sworn in as governor on December 1. 5

2"Negro Classroom Fired In," ibid., June 29, 1894, p. 4.
3Editorial, ibid., June 28, 1894, p. 4.
4"Election Returns," ibid., August 7, 1894, p. 4.
5"Manifesto to the People," The People's Tribune (Birmingham, Alabama), November 19, 1894, p. 1.
On inauguration day Oates was sworn in by the Chief Justice of Alabama's supreme court. Kolb and his friends, on the same day, held a futile inauguration from a wagon on Dexter Avenue in Montgomery.¹

It is evident that the returns of the August 6 election were fraudulent. White citizens had been appointed in practically every precinct in the state to watch the polls on election day. These poll watchers representing the Populists were not allowed to enter the polling places on election day but were able to determine the actual number of people who appeared at the polls during the election.² After the election, affidavits were made that proved the official returns were fraudulent in that they gave the Democratic ticket majorities largely in excess of the total number who appeared at the polls.³ In Lowndes County of the Black Belt, for example, where the Negro population was about six times that of the white, the falsified returns gave the official vote as 6,431. An affidavit of a poll watcher reported the number of persons who came there as 1,031.⁴

The attitude of a predominantly white county was summarized in an editorial in the Standard Gauge:

... God will not prosper any people who continue to countenance dishonest elections. We should feel justified in asking God's blessings on that we do, political acts not excepted. Besides the negro can be managed just as well without fraud. . . .⁵

¹Clarke, op. cit., p. 148.
²Skaggs, op. cit., p. 250.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid., p. 251.
⁵(Brewton, Alabama), November 29, 1894, p. 2.
Since they had been repudiated by the Populists, many Negroes apparently supported the Democrats. It is doubtful, however, that the Democrats polled the huge majorities in the Black Belt that they claimed, for many Negroes supported the ticket put out by the Stevens faction of the Republican party. Kolb finally realized that he could not beat the machine candidate and did not try for the governorship after 1894.
CHAPTER V

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1896

The all-absorbing issue in 1896 was the money question. Free silver clubs were organized and silver conferences held. Nevertheless, evidence soon appeared that there would be wide rifts in the ranks of the regular "true blue" democracy and that the Negro would figure prominently in the gubernatorial campaign. ¹

On January 5, Richard H. Clarke of Mobile announced his candidacy for governor, and the race for the Democratic nomination was on. Clarke, who favored the gold standard, was strongly supported by the mouthpiece of Bourbon Democracy, the Montgomery Daily Advertiser. ² One week later, on January 12, Joseph Johnston, a free silver man of Barbour County, entered the contest with the endorsement of the Birmingham State Herald. ³ Apparently not awed by the fact that this was an election year and that a similar proposition had been rejected by the Democrats in 1894, Johnston proposed to allow former Republicans, Populists and Negroes equal participation in the Democratic primaries. ⁴

In spite of bitter opposition by the Montgomery Daily Advertiser,

¹Clarke, op. cit., p. 165.
⁴Ibid., January 23, 1896, p. 2.
Johnston was successful in opening the primaries to all who wanted to return to the party of their fathers, including Negroes. This was done, apparently, to counteract the possibility of a Republican-Populist fusion. The Advertiser's opposition was expressed in an editorial:

Every negro voter in Alabama can participate in the Democratic primaries on April 11th, unless the Democratic county committees intervene and rule to the contrary. Captain Johnston wasn't sure of getting enough of the white opposition to secure his nomination, but wants all the negroes in the Democratic primaries also.

The Republicans called a meeting of their Executive Committee on January 23, the same day that the Populists were to meet and in the same city. It was evident that fusion was contemplated and this led the Daily Advertiser to speak of January 23 as "anti-Democratic day in Birmingham." Bill Stevens, the Negro Republican leader of Anniston, attended the executive committee meeting as did John C. Leftwich, a Negro from Montgomery who aspired to the office of chairman of the State Executive Committee. The Populists were generally in favor of fusion but the Republicans were divided. It was finally decided by both parties to table the question until it was known what the Democrats would do.

The Democratic Convention did not meet until April 21, in Montgomery. Joseph Johnston and the Democrats decided to use the issue of white supremacy in the campaign. That appeal to the white voters was the

1Ibid., p. 4.
3"Republican Committee Meeting," Ibid., January 24, 1896, p. 4.
4Ibid.
5Ibid.
consequence of the belief that the Populists were contemplating fusion with the Negro Republicans is shown by Johnston's opening campaign speech. In spite of the fact that he had earlier advocated opening the primaries to Negroes, he said:

... We do not believe in surrendering any section of our state to the control of the negro for bitter experience has shown that it would be fatal alike to the peace and prosperity of both races. We have no hostility for the colored man, nothing but kindness for him but we do not believe he is fitted by birth, education or experience to engage in making or executing laws for the people of Alabama...

The Republicans and Populists met in separate conventions on April 28th, one week after Johnston's nomination. The Populists met in the Old Opera House and the Republicans had planned to meet in the Hall of the House of Representatives. Unfortunately, the Republicans were divided into two factions, the followers of William McKinley and the followers of Thomas Reed who both aspired to the Republican presidential nomination.

The Reed faction was led by R. A. Mosely and the McKinley faction by Bill Stevens. It was rumored that if one faction was admitted to the Hall of Representatives and the other was not, the group not admitted would break in, and that there would be bloodshed. When Governor Oates heard of the serious division in the ranks he refused to give either faction the keys. The Mosely faction finally met in a warehouse and the Stevens group in a lodge hall. Negroes were in a majority in both groups. It was said that every Republican of note turned out to one or the other of the factional meetings. Many were said to have come thinking they could beat the serious division that had developed in the Democratic

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1"It is Johnston," The Birmingham State Herald, April 22, 1896, p. 4.
ranks over the money question.¹

The warehouse in which the Mosely faction met was spacious but contained no chairs. A box was found and used for the speaker's stand. The first show of friction came when John Wilson, a Montgomery Negro janitor, opposed the report of the Credentials Committee. He claimed that his beat was not given justice in Convention representation. He was calmed by Mosely who was definitely in command of the situation. James Hartwell, a Negro of Jefferson County, opposed making Judge Craig of Dallas County permanent chairman. Craig, however, had been slated for the position and was promptly elected. All through the convention session, speeches were punctuated by amens from the Negroes present.² At the meeting of the McKinley faction, Stevens took the floor and pleaded for the recognition of colored delegates. He reminded his fellow Republicans that if a Republican ticket was elected, it would have to be by the Negroes. Since no Negroes were on the ticket, they should at least have the cold comfort of convention crumbs. Herschel Cashin, a Negro of Decatur, spoke on the same theme.

The Populists sent a committee of nine to confer with both factions of the Republican Convention on the proposition of fusing and to propose candidates for nominations. Kolb, in a convention speech, asked that three Republicans be placed on the ticket. "Thus," he said, "we will unite and thoroughly unite all opposition to organized democracy." At midnight, however, the committee of nine had not returned to report.

¹"Two Republican Conventions," The Montgomery Daily Advertiser, May 1, 1896, p. 4.
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
Thereupon the Convention Chairman declared that he was humiliated by having to wait up until midnight for a Negro convention to tell him who to nominate for the vacant places on the ticket.¹

In 1892, Bill Stevens had not been permitted to endorse a platform already made. Now, four years later, he was asked to name the candidate. In 1896, neither faction of the Republican party was actually enthusiastic about the conditions of cooperation with the Populists but a full Populist-Republican state ticket was finally agreed upon with A. T. Goodwyn of Elmore County as standard-bearer. Three Republicans appeared on the state ticket and a number of Negroes on county tickets. The fusion party used the charge of fraud in the Black Belt as the campaign issue.²

The following editorial in the Birmingham State Herald was typical of the Democratic campaign:

... These leaders coquetted and jollied until they thought the old and natural hatred of the white voters in their ranks against the republican negro party had died out and it would be an easy matter to form a complete and compact alliance between the wooly-headed black-skinned negro republican and the blond blue-eyed Populists of Alabama. ... The rank and file of the Populist party now realize that if they continue in political opposition to the Democratic party they must do so under the banner of the republican party and accept into full recognition and political fellowship the negro voters in the state.³

Again, J. A. Grimmett, Republican candidate for the secretary of state was severely criticized as the Chairman of the Republican Exe-

¹Ibid.
³May 12, 1896, p. 4.
cutive Committee which had a Negro for secretary. Still another campaign issue used by the Democrats to appeal to the white voter was that Goodwyn had voted to seat a Negro, George W. Murray, in the 54th Congress, in a contested seat battle with one, Elliot, a white man.

Kolb attempted to justify the Populist position in the following statement:

If the negro vote will keep the white ballot thief out and put the honest white man in there is the same reason for refusing eggs laid by hens the negro owns.

This statement brought a storm of protest from white Democrats who said he might use the same argument in an effort to secure social equality for the Negro.

The race culminated on August 5, with victory for the Democrats. They, however, did not poll huge majorities in the Black Belt. This can possibly be accounted for by full cooperation in the election of Negro Republicans and Populists. Nevertheless, the Populists lost their fourth try for the governorship. Populism declined after 1896.

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1 Editorial, ibid., May 15, 1896, p. 4.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The press of the Populist era (1890-1896) strongly resembled that of Reconstruction days. The Negro was again the main political issue. In one sense, even greater outrage was expressed by the Democrats than in 1874. The paramount danger was due to schism among the Democrats themselves. This seriously threatened the Bourbon machine group who maintained that they were saving the state and upholding the "Solid South."¹

The Negro vote had indeed become an invaluable premium coveted by all parties. In 1874, the Democrats had scorned him and counted him out, even under peril of Federal troops; now he was catered to and his vote was counted in. Many politicians had risen by manipulating Negro votes in the Black Belt.

Under the leadership of Reuben F. Kolb, the Farmer's Alliances organized and entered politics under the name of the Jeffersonian-Democrats and later as the Populists. This group first attempted reforms within the Democratic party and sought nomination of its candidate, on the Democratic ticket. Unable to beat the machine candidate, the group then launched out on its own. The Democratic opposition was fought throughout the life of the movement by the influential newspapers of the state.

Kolb, in 1892, ran on the fusion ticket of Jeffersonian-Democrat

with the cooperation of Negro Republicans. Fraud in the Black Belt and intense fear of the loss of white supremacy resulted in defeat for the fusion party. The Jeffersonians were absorbed by the Populists and 1894 saw Kolb running on the Populist ticket. The Populists repudiated the Negroes entirely in the campaign of 1894 and proposed voting with the Democrats if Negroes were eliminated from the primaries. It was evident that Kolb won this election, but was counted out in the Black Belt.

Kolb's political aspirations ended in this election with the pitiful spectacle of his inauguration from a wagon, on Dexter Avenue in Montgomery. In 1896, the Republicans, composed mostly of Negroes, and the Populists fused and put out a full Populist Republican ticket. Appealing to the old fear of Negro domination, the Democrats again defeated the opposition.

Through the Populist party, farmers from the country sought to obtain the weight in southern politics that their numbers warranted but that the Bourbon dynasties had always denied them. In the struggle that ensued, both sides made every possible use of the Negro vote, and the fear of Negro domination was continually raised.

Although the alliance with Negroes was most important to Southern Populism, it was accompanied by many difficulties. The Democratic party, the party of white supremacy, had been most successful in controlling the Negro vote. A special difficulty of the Populist-Negro combination lay

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1 "Another Insincere Proposition," The Montgomery Daily Advertiser, September 8, 1893, p. 4.
2 Skaggs, op. cit., p. 120.
3 John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt (Minneapolis, 1931), p. 288.
in the historical position of the poor whites toward Negroes, an antagonism with its roots in slavery days. The regions where Populism made its strongest appeal were the regions that found it most difficult to overcome racial antagonism. Cooperation was difficult where it was needed most. After 1896 most of the Populists returned to the Democratic party. The problem of Negro voting was attacked with a solid front.

The Populists did not realize that they had lost a great opportunity, for when they united to disfranchise the Negro, they cut the voting power of the laboring class in two. However, many whites of the laboring class honestly believed that the disfranchisement of Negroes would eliminate the possibility of corrupt vote practices in the Black Belt and restore the northern counties to their rightful place in state politics. The leaders held up, above all others, three justifications for disfranchisement: (1) the removal of the Negro vote, they argued, would put an end to the corrupt elections that had long disgraced Southern politics; (2) the removal of the Negro as arbiter between white factions would enable the white men to divide freely on basic issues and enjoy a vigorous political life; (3) disfranchisement would force the Negro to abandon false hopes, find his rightful place and consequently race relations would improve.

There are many reasons given for the causes of the passing of the Populist party. The Populist party, based upon economic discontent,

3 Ibid., p. 348.
vanished the moment those ills were ameliorated. By 1896, there were numerous signs of prosperity and the press prophesied that hard times would soon be a thing of the past. Populism was also a revolt against class legislation and corporate power. By 1896, Alabama legislators had gone far towards satisfying the demands of agricultural and industrial labor. Diversified farming as well as general and technical education was encouraged.

The Negro played a significant role in the Populist movement in Alabama. First, because the Negro vote was controlled in the Black Belt, the movement was, in the beginning, retarded. Secondly, through fusion with the Negro Republican party in two campaigns, the movement reached its height. Finally, the Negro’s participation in the movement indirectly led to his disfranchisement.

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## APPENDIX

### TABLE 1

DELEGATES ALLOTTED TO THE BLACK BELT COUNTIES FOR THE ALABAMA DEMOCRATIC STATE CONVENTION IN 1894

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counties</th>
<th>Number of Delegates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Autauga</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbour</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullock</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarke</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lowndes</td>
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<td>Macon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marengo</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>146</strong></td>
</tr>
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TABLE 2
DELEGATES ALLOTTED TO THE WHITE COUNTIES
FOR THE ALABAMA DEMOCRATIC STATE
CONVENTION IN 1894*

<table>
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<th>County</th>
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<td>Blount</td>
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<td>Chambers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cherokee</td>
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<td>Chilton</td>
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<td>Choctaw</td>
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TABLE 2-Continued


*No information was given for the following counties: Houston, Butler, Geneva, and Franklin.
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