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THE DUNNING SCHOOL AND RECONSTRUCTION ACCORDING TO JIM CROW

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THE DUNNING SCHOOL AND
RECONSTRUCTION ACCORDING TO JIM CROW

by

John H. Hosmer

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
In the Graduate College
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

1983
As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read
the dissertation prepared by John H. Hosmer
entitled The Dunning School and Reconstruction According
to Jim Crow

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SIGNED: John H. Jones
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ABSTRACT

Between 1900 and 1925 a score of young Southern historians graduated from Columbia University and quickly became the leading authorities on the subject of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Students of the eminent historian William A. Dunning, they included such influential authors as U.B. Phillips, Walter Lynwood Fleming, Charles W. Ramsdell, James W. Garner, and Joseph G. deRoulhac Hamilton. Producing over one-hundred works on the post-Civil War era, these Dunning students depicted Reconstruction as a time of horror for the South. A vindictive group of Northern Republicans, they argued, forced through Congress a series of Reconstruction acts designed to allow the inferior black man, only a few years out of "barbarism," the right to vote and to hold political office. Horrified by the presence of freedmen in politics, Dunning and his students insisted that the newly enfranchised Negroes, along with Northern carpetbaggers and Southern scalawags, began a decade of misrule through the former Confederate states by imposing exorbitant taxes on the landowning class and by squandering state treasures for selfish and criminal purposes. White Southerners became prosperous again, they concluded, only after political power returned securely to white hands.
While the antipathy that these authors felt for American Negroes appeared frequently in their works, the major flaw in the writings of Dunning and his students lay not with their racial bias, but with their use of disreputable scholarship to justify that bias. Using history as a discipline to defend the status quo in 1900, members of the Dunning school distorted and fabricated factual information in order to exonerate the existence of segregation and disfranchisement during their lifetime. The historical scholarship of these authors, therefore, illustrates the enormous power historians exercise when justifying the contemporary beliefs of their era, but more importantly, it serves as a classic example of the problems inherent in presentist historical writing.
A PERSISTENT SPECTER: 
THE DUNNING SCHOOL AND 
RECONSTRUCTION HISTORIOGRAPHY

"[A]t long last," Richard Curry told his colleagues at the 1974 meeting of the Organization of American Historians, "the old Dunningite stereotype... has been consigned to the scrap heap of historical blindness and perversity--a fate it so richly deserved." For almost thirty years historians had attacked the Dunning interpretation of Reconstruction, and by the mid-1970s Curry insisted that "the massive outpouring of revisionist works" had delivered "the coup de grace" to the Dunning school. 

Significantly, however, while most historians subscribed to the revisionist argument, many appeared less willing to sound the death knell on the "blind and perverse" interpretation of Reconstruction. Indeed, despite thirty years of revisionist writing, William A. Dunning and his students not only continue to receive high praise for their "professional," "scholarly"

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2. Ibid.
work in Reconstruction history, but their interpretation has maintained a dedicated and strident following among a number of recent historians.

The Dunning school dominated the field of Southern history between 1900 and 1945 with a simple yet alluring interpretation of Reconstruction. Reflecting an unyielding belief in white supremacy, they insisted that a vindictive and revenge-minded group of Northern Republicans forced through Congress a series of Reconstruction acts designed to allow blacks, only a few years out of "barbarism," the right to vote and to hold political office in the South. The newly enfranchised freedmen, along with Northern carpetbaggers and Southern scalawags, according to Dunning, began a decade of misrule throughout the former Confederate states by imposing exorbitant taxes on the land-owning class and by squandering state treasuries for selfish and criminal purposes. Political, social, and economic conditions quickly became chaotic. Black freedmen wandered aimlessly around the countryside without restraint, thefts increased dramatically, and formerly loyal slaves became "obnoxious darkies." Moreover, the old planter aristocracy, which had always provided valuable leadership, now faced bankruptcy. In the minds of Dunning and his students, "the bottom rail was on top." Eventually, however, white Southerners, desperate for relief, united into secret organizations and forcefully
returned state government to the hands of "respectable white citizens."

Every student studying under Dunning at Columbia incorporated this interpretation into his work. Beginning with Edwin C. Woolley's brief sixty-page *The Reconstruction of Georgia* (1901) and continuing through James Garner's *Reconstruction in Mississippi* (1901), Walter Lynwood Fleming's *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* (1905), Charles W. Ramsdell's *Reconstruction in Texas* (1910), William Watson Davis's *Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida* (1913), J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton's *Reconstruction in North Carolina* (1914), C. Mildred Thompson's *Reconstruction in Georgia* (1915), and Thomas Staples's *Reconstruction in Arkansas* (1923), these students produced dissertations with remarkable similarity of thesis, methodology, and subject matter. Although Ulrich B. Phillips, Dunning's most famous student, concentrated on slavery in the antebellum South and discussed Reconstruction only occasionally, his view of Southern history conformed to the implications of the Dunning interpretation of Reconstruction.

United by a similar subject and thesis, Dunning and his students rose to positions of significant influence in the historical world. Between 1900 and 1945 every major Dunning student edited the journals, sat on the executive councils, or assumed the presidency of at least
two major historical associations. In addition, Dunning's most famous students published to wide acclaim more than one hundred books, six hundred articles, and a thousand book reviews.

Indeed, American historians in the early twentieth century acknowledged the influence these authors achieved by praising their historical works with such terms as "excellent," "profound," and "scientific." E. Benjamin Andrews, for example, stated in 1906 that "Mr. Dunning's book Reconstruction, Political and Economic is of extra-ordinary excellence." "His mastery of the subject and of its literature is ideally thorough...," Andrews said, and "His analysis of causes and situations is keen and correct." U.B. Phillips, like his mentor, also received in the early twentieth century continued praise for his scholarly efforts. The recipient of numerous awards, Phillips acquired a reputation as a "skillful professional," "Dean of Plantation History," and an "excellent scholar." Arthur C. Cole, for example, noted in 1914 that Phillips's biography of Robert Toombs "made him an acknowledged authority on the history of the antebellum South." This

particular monograph, Cole said, "shows itself in every way the result of sane, careful analysis," and in places "is...extremely brilliant."

Competing closely with Phillips for the laurels of Dunning's "best student," Walter Lynwood Fleming, Charles W. Ramsdell, James W. Garner, and Joseph G. deRoulhac Hamilton wrote dissertations on Reconstruction in their home states, each receiving unstinting praise for his efforts. In 1906, for example, David M. DeWitt remarked that Fleming's Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama rendered all similar works on Reconstruction history "forever vain." W.F. McCaleb, writing for the American Historical Review, insisted that among the studies on Reconstruction "hardly is there a better work than that of Professor Ramsdell's Reconstruction in Texas," and T.C. Smith noted in 1901 that "the thoroughness of research

4. Arthur C. Cole, Review of U.B. Phillips's Robert Toombs in the Mississippi Valley Historical Review, I (June, 1914), 151-52. In 1901 Phillips received the Justin Winsor Prize for his Georgia and State's Rights, and in 1928 his Life and Labor in the Old South received the Albert Kahn Award as an "outstanding work" in Southern history.


and accuracy of treatment" in James W. Garner's *Reconstruction in Mississippi* "is not likely to be surpassed...."

Although most of the major figures in the Dunning school died before 1940, professional encomiums for their work continued after their deaths. In 1939 Fred Landon urged young scholars "seeking a model for historical composition" to look to the "great scholar" U.B. Phillips as their guide. Two years earlier, Wood Gray, writing in the *Marcus Jernegan Essays in American Historiography*, termed Phillips's *American Negro Slavery* an "excellent" work, and remarked that as "long as historians turn to the study of the South, his work will stand as a landmark in the field." Similarly, Fletcher Green in 1936 pronounced Fleming's *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* one of the most "scientific studies of Reconstruction." Indeed, he continued, "no more thorough, scholarly and impartial account has yet appeared." Following


Ramsdell's death in 1942, Comer Vann Woodward remarked that the Texas historian's last book, *Behind the Lines of the Southern Confederacy*, represented a valuable contribution to the historical field and that Southern history would suffer because of Ramsdell's death.

Standing almost alone in the 1930s, W.E.B. DuBois strenuously objected to these dithyrambs accorded the Dunning school. Dunning and his students, wrote DuBois, deserved little respect as scientific historians because they allowed their virulent Negrophobia to distort the truth about Reconstruction. Characterizing their Columbia dissertations as pure "propaganda," DuBois insisted that the sympathy these authors showed for white Southerners and the contempt they displayed for the freedmen resulted in "thoroughly bad" scholarship. Far from rising above their racism when writing their state studies, Dunning and his students, according to DuBois, used their "scientific pose" to justify their Southern biases. They "select[ed] ...their facts and opinions," he said, "in order to prove that the South was right in Reconstruction, the North vengeful or deceived, and the Negro stupid." Truth eluded their grasp, DuBois concluded, because it was never their goal.

11. C. Vann Woodward, Review of Ramsdell's *Behind the Lines of the Southern Confederacy* in the *American Historical Review*, XLIX (July, 1944), 754.

This stinging condemnation of Dunning and his students went largely unheeded until American historians in the 1950s and 1960s began to abandon the Dunning concept of Negro inferiority and carpetbagger misrule. Influenced by the changing civil rights climate emerging after World War II, a new generation of historians re-examined Reconstruction with a highly favorable attitude toward the freedmen, carpetbaggers, and scalawags. Revisionists rejected the charges of corruption that Dunning leveled against the Southern Republican governments, insisting that the radicals operated no less economically than their Democratic opponents. In addition, revisionists praised the radicals for their efforts to enact important social, economic, and political reforms; and they insisted that far from destroying Southern culture, as the Dunning school claimed, radical policies actually increased educational and judicial opportunities for whites as well as for blacks. Although arguing among themselves about the intensity of the Republican commitment to Reconstruction, the revisionists nevertheless agreed that the violent overthrow of the radical governments by white conservatives curtailed democratic advancement in the South and inhibited racial progress for over one hundred years. By placing their emphasis on the beneficial results of Reconstruction, the revisionists had contradicted every major tenet held by the Dunning school.
Significantly, however, while the revisionists repudiated the racism of early twentieth-century historians, many continued to praise the scholarly reputation of Dunning and his students. Ignoring DuBois's admonition against taking the Dunning "propaganda" seriously, Bernard Weisberger, in his "Dark and Bloody Ground of Reconstruction Historiography," criticized the Dunning school for its Negrophobia, but insisted he meant no disparagement to the scholarship of those individuals. "[Although] their background predisposed them toward a dim view of so-called 'black Reconstruction,'" he wrote, "These men and women were fair-minded and thorough." "We who write history today," Weisberger said, "will do well to be as scrupulous."

The professional standing of Dunning's students also remained high in the eyes of John Higham and Don E. Fehrenbacher. In his influential History, Higham stated that although the Dunning school displayed marked racist beliefs, its members produced meritoriously scholarly works, and William A. Dunning's own books "were...outstanding" products of professional history. Equally laudatory, Don E. Fehrenbacher's 1962 essay "Disunion and Reunion"


contended that "the valuable monographs of Reconstruction in the individual states which issued from the Dunning group set high standards of scholarly thoroughness and restraint..."  

Like Fehrenbacher and Higham, Fletcher Green, in the 1965 reissue of William Watson Davis's *Civil War and Reconstruction* in Florida, also approved of the Dunning scholarship. Describing Dunning as a "scientific and scholarly" author, Green insisted that this Columbia professor and his students produced works which "are detailed, thorough, and generally accurate." Moreover, Green criticized revisionists for exaggerating "the sins" of these Southern historians. Contending that "the two schools of thought are not that far apart" on most issues, he noted that many revisionists still rely on the Dunning monographs for source material. Consequently, Green said, if, as critics claim, some members of the Dunning school had distortions in their works, those distortions "were evidently neither numerous nor significant."


Not all revisionists looked upon the Dunning school as enthusiastically as Green. Criticising their conservative thesis, their anti-Negro bias, and their occasional distortion of material, Vernon Wharton argued that these early historians often wrote with an eye to justifying the contemporary wisdom of their day. Wharton accused Fleming, for example, of selecting his sources to fit his thesis, and he labeled Hamilton's Reconstruction in North Carolina "a white Democratic broadside against Negroes, carpetbaggers...and every objective and procedure of congressional Reconstruction." Nevertheless, Wharton explained that once one takes into consideration the time and condition in which these individuals wrote, "most of [their works] ... were remarkably temperate and factual." "This was especially true," he said, for James W. Garner and C. Mildred Thompson. Although critical of Garner's racist interpretation of Mississippi Reconstruction, Wharton believed Garner at least headed in the right direction as he "tried to present an objective and balanced account of political, social, and economic developments in his native state." True, Garner's bias affected his interpretation of Reconstruction, according to Wharton, but

"Little that has been learned in the succeeding sixty years would serve greatly to alter or even to add to Garner's story."

C. Mildred Thompson received ever higher praise from Wharton. Thompson "was, if anything, even more cautious, judicious, and temperate than Garner," Wharton said, as "Her treatment of the work of the Freedmen's Bureau was sympathetic, or even generous." Enamored with the cogency of her analysis, Wharton referred to Thompson's work as "no simple tale of good versus evil [since] she recognized and attempted to analyze the complexities to be found in men and social change."

The scholarship of Garner and Thompson also received praise from two other revisionists in the 1960s. Introducing the 1968 reissue of Garner's Reconstruction in Mississippi, Richard Current insisted that in spite of Garner's anti-Negro feelings, his work continued to have merit for recent historians since it overcame a number of flaws inherent in the works of other Dunning state studies. In Current's view, Garner anticipated many of the revisionists' views of Reconstruction and "...departed a long way from conservative interpretations."

18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
"The next historian to produce a comprehensive study of Mississippi," Current said, "will do extremely well if he proves himself as thorough in his research, as accurate in his statements of fact...as Garner was two generations ago."

In Losing the Peace: Georgia Republicans and Reconstruction (1968), Elizabeth Nathans offered a similar appraisal of Thompson's Reconstruction in Georgia. According to Nathans, Thompson remained "moderate and fairminded" in her discussion of the Negro and the Republican regime. "It was one of the most outstanding of the 'Dunning' state studies of Reconstruction," she argued, "and remains the best book on its subject."

Even Alan Conway's 1965 work, The Reconstruction of Georgia, Nathans said, "adds little to Miss Thompson's findings about Reconstruction politics."

Although coming under increasing attack in the mid-1960s for his Southern bias, U.B. Phillips nevertheless retained his reputation as the foremost authority on Southern history. Indeed, Eugene Genovese, in the 1967 foreword to the reissue of Phillips's American Negro


Slavery, stated that although "Phillips was a racist," he came close to greatness as a historian, "perhaps as close as any historian this country has yet produced."

One other historian, writing in the early 1970s, has also termed the Dunning school racist but scholarly. Bert Loewenberg, in American History in American Thought (1972), announced that although these Columbia scholars displayed marked Southern biases, they rose above their prejudices and produced works on Reconstruction of remarkably high quality. "It was Dunning the teacher, as well as Dunning the scholar," Loewenberg said, "who made...ripe students into ripe scholars." Praising their diverse range of material, their "careful discrimination of [factual material]," and their "objective outlook" in the famed Reconstruction series, Loewenberg claimed that Dunning "vindicated...his reputation as a teacher of teachers," and his students' reputations as "objective scholars."

During the 1960s and early 1970s many historians clearly found the Dunning scholarship worthy of praise,


but even in the years since Richard Curry tolled the death knell on this older interpretation of Reconstruction, respect for William A. Dunning has continued to grow. Ironically, at the same time that Curry exorcised Dunning from the ranks of acceptable scholarship, the prestigious Journal of American History published Philip Muller's "Look Back Without Anger," in which Muller accorded respect to Dunning's pathbreaking scholarship, while defending him against charges of racism. Terming Dunning's Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction an important work in American history, Muller agreed with David Donald that "this book laid the groundwork for much of the best recent scholarship on Reconstruction." Even Dunning's more controversial Reconstruction: Political and Economic, Muller found worthy of praise. Although admitting that Reconstruction had "shortcomings in terms of research, language, intolerance, and over-characterization," he insisted nevertheless that it still made "major contributions to historical understanding of the period."

Muller not only defended Dunning's scholarly productivity, but he challenged those critics who labeled the "Old Chief" a racist. While agreeing with many.

revisionists that Dunning made several biased remarks in his writing, Muller asserted that Dunning "never developed a systematic theory of race...[and] was not... 'chiefly concerned with vindicating the South and its racial policies." On the contrary, "In class and private discussion..." Muller wrote, Dunning "successfully withdrew from consideration his own prejudices and opinions" and sought only "to promote literary styles and scientific methodology." His racist reputation resulted more from the haste in which he wrote Reconstruction, according to Muller, and from the prejudices inherent in the works of his students than from his own biases. Adhering strictly to their white racism, these Southern students wrote "as committed partisans," Muller said, and their association with Dunning tainted his reputation.

Three years after Muller exonerated Dunning's historical writing the Journal of American History published an article which had a similar effect on the scholarship of U.B. Phillips. Daniel Singal, in "U.B. Phillips: The Old South as the New," agreed with revisionist attacks on Phillips's reputation as a racist, but defended him against charges of being a pro-slavery apologist for the antebellum South. Although critical of the blatant

25. Ibid., 332, 334, 335-38.
Negrophobia exhibited in Phillips's work after 1928, Singal described the Georgia historian's early biases as "no more or less than the standard fare of his time." "In fact," Singal wrote, "when compared to his fellow Southerners in this respect, Phillips comes out looking much like a reformer."  

Singal also insisted that revisionists have erred in describing Phillips's view of the antebellum plantation system as a romantic glorification of the Old South. On the contrary, Phillips depicted the plantation system as an efficient, highly organized example of modern society, but, according to Singal, he never worshiped the plantation without reservations. In fact, his "willingness to acknowledge the more serious failings in a system he dearly loved," Singal insisted, "indicates how objective a scholar Phillips at the height of his career could be."  

Other recent revisionists have also written admiringly about the works produced by Dunning and his students. Herman Belz, for example, in Emancipation and Equal Rights (1978), referred to Dunning's Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction as "thoughtful and judicious."


27. Ibid., 887.
Although admitting that Dunning possessed "a moderately pro-Southern point of view," Belz added that his work "remains unrivaled...[for] its sense of political realism."

A similar endorsement of Dunning's scholarship appeared in Oscar Handlin's *Truth in History* (1979). Objecting to the racism inherent in Dunning's writing, Handlin insisted nevertheless that Dunning's works "were products of serious scholarship [which] has respectable scientific underpinnings, and earned respect as useful contributions to the solution of current problems."

Jerrell H. Shofner, in his revisionist state study, *Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction* (1974), also rejected many of the racial biases present in William Watson Davis's *Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida*, and yet he commended Davis's scholarship nonetheless. Praising *Reconstruction in Florida* as "a scholarly monograph," Shofner asserted that Davis's Southern viewpoint did affect his conclusions, but not to the point where he "was...consciously unfair."


"Quite the contrary," Shofner said, Davis "was a historian of considerable ability, who prided himself on his scholarly detachment."

Many professional historians less well known than Handlin, Belz, and Shofner have also applauded the Dunning school since 1974. Professor Ruth Crocker of Purdue University, for example, in an article published in Louisiana Studies, acknowledged Phillips's "ability to master an impressive amount of original material," his "solid scholarship," and his "impressive analysis of the social and economic institutions of the South." Although she objected to his racism, Crocker nevertheless contended that Phillips's Negrophobia represented a flaw "he shared with his age." Indeed, the "'gulf between [the modern reader] ...and Phillips,'" she quoted C. Vann Woodward as saying, "'is not necessarily one of intelligence, or charity, or sophistication, but one of time.'"

The University of South Carolina's Anthony Albanese and the University of New Mexico's Peter Kolchin,


32. Ibid., 129-30.
like Crocker, condemned Phillips's racism, but simultaneously insisted that his scholarship successfully rose above his prejudice. Albanese, for example, in The Plantation School (1976), remarked that Phillips, "the scholar," maintained a "captivating style and effective use of recourses" as he brought us to the edge of "profound insight" with his work on the plantation system. Although an advocate of white supremacy, Phillips felt no animus [toward blacks]," Albanese said, "since he...wrote with a felt understanding of the Negro." Peter Kolchin, reviewing Edgar Thompson's Plantation Societies, Race Relations, and the South, for the Reviews in American History, noted that it "is refreshing to read the plantation described [by Thompson] as an organic whole on which everyone...came to know what was expected of him and felt some sense of obligation to meet those expectations."

"Here one is reminded of the best of U.B. Phillips," Kolchin said, without his "distasteful" racism.

Besides defending the reputations of Dunning and Phillips, several recent historians have also applauded


the "valuable" work of Walter Lynwood Fleming. Robert Reid, for example, writing in the *Alabama Review*, defended Fleming's historical work and scholarly reputation by rebuking his detractors as much as by praising his scholarship. Agreeing with Dunning that Fleming showed "brilliance as a student and promise as a scholar" even while attending Columbia, Reid criticized recent historians as "too extreme" when they called Fleming "'one-sided and partisan to the last degree.'" Certainly Fleming had biases, Reid said, but all historians possess "pronounced biases." In any event, Fleming deserved commendation, according to this author, for "no one has...examin[ed] the history of Reconstruction with the degree of comprehensiveness [he] achieved...more than three-quarters of a century ago."


Reid's argument graphically illustrated how the revisionists have failed to overturn the work of Fleming and his colleagues and, therefore, have helped to contribute significantly to the longevity of the Dunning influence. Although revisionists produced a great quantity of material in the 1960s and early 1970s, they published little more than a score of monographs and fewer than thirty articles in major journals after 1974. Consequently, even extreme critics of the Dunning school, far from consigning them to the scrap heap, have grudgingly admitted that the older works remain "helpful" by necessity.

Acknowledging the significant position that the Dunning state studies still command in American historiography, Otto H. Olsen criticized revisionists for their failure to overturn the old Dunning monographs. In his 1975 review of Jerrell H. Shofner's *Nor Is It Over* in the *Review in American History*, Olsen lamented that "a radical version of Reconstruction history has been underway for two generations, [but] the standard studies of Southern states have remained white supremacist products of the Dunning school..." Olsen complained further that "the vast bulk of publications by a host of renowned scholars has not succeeded in displacing the state histories associated with such names as Davis, Fleming, Thompson,
"This fact," he wrote, "has constituted a serious flaw in Reconstruction historiography." Six years after Olsen penned these remarks, he illustrated the veracity of his point by stating in Reconstruction and Redemption in the South that Hamilton's 1915 Reconstruction in North Carolina still represented the "standard scholarly account" on Reconstruction in that state.

William Gillette also acknowledged the authoritative status the Dunning students continued to hold in 1979 when he praised Fleming's Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama as "helpful," although he added quickly that "a detailed study of state politics before


37. Olsen, "North Carolina: An Incongruous Presence," in Reconstruction and Redemption in the South, ed. Otto H. Olsen (Baton Rouge, 1980), p. 198. Like Olsen, John Hope Franklin also expressed concern over the decline in revisionist writing. In his "Mirror for Americans: A Century of Reconstruction Historiography," American Historical Review, LXXXV (February, 1980), 11-12, he said "One may wonder why at this particular junction in the nation's history, slavery has attracted so much interest and why...Reconstruction has attracted so little." La Wanda Cox similarly observed that "The revolution in Reconstruction history, which had its beginning in the 1930s, has only half-heartedly displaced the traditional Dunning school state histories of Reconstruction." Cox, Review of Joe Gray Taylor's Louisiana Reconstructed, 1863-1877, in the Journal of Southern History, XLII (August, 1975), 421.
1875 would be welcome." Furthermore, Gillette reluctantly affirmed the comprehensiveness of the Dunning school by noting that the "only study" prior to his own *Retreat From Reconstruction* which treated President Grant's attitude toward the post-war South "is Edwin C. Woolley's 1915 'Grant's Southern Policy.'"

Not only have the revisionists failed to replace the Dunning scholarship, as Olsen and Gillette illustrated, but more disconcerting, they have failed to eradicate the Dunning interpretation of Reconstruction. Indeed, two works appearing after 1974, ostensibly correctives to the Dunning state studies, ran counter to the revisionist thesis in many respects and actually reinforced the Dunning view of the postwar era. Praising James W. Garner's *Reconstruction in Mississippi* as a "fine account," William Harris launched his own state study of Mississippi, *Day of the Carpetbagger: Reconstruction in Mississippi* (1979), which differed only slightly from Garner's 1901 work. Garner, of course, had condemned Reconstruction on almost all levels. While he admitted that radical Republicans produced significant reforms in state education, Garner

39. Ibid.
accused the carpetbaggers and scalawags of squandering state funds, imposing high taxes on destitute landholders, and appointing unqualified or corrupt men to political office. Garner also blamed "the authors of the congressional policy of Reconstruction" for the violence that erupted in Mississippi after 1865, and he praised the overthrow of the Republican government in 1875 as a "revolution" which emancipated Mississippi from mismanagement, corruption and fraud.

Like Garner, Harris wrote from a decidedly anti-radical position. Adopting the viewpoint of white Mississippi Democrats during Reconstruction, Harris clearly favored the opponents of radical politics. He defended, for example, "prudent" men like James L. Alcorn for vetoing a railroad desegregation bill because of its "ambiguous and unenforceable" nature. On the other hand, relying on two Democratic newspapers as his source material, Harris criticized Governor Adelbert Ames for his "high-minded methods" while a Union general in the state, his "blatant partisanship," and his use of the military to ensure the success of his party.


In the area of radical financial matters, an area in which Garner criticized Republicans freely, Harris accepted as fact Democratic claims about radical mismanagement and charged the carpetbaggers with corrupt practices during their rule. In one instance he complained that "outright peculation in the collection and reporting of miscellaneous states taxes" occurred frequently.

On another occasion, Harris asserted that "overzealous and sometimes vindictive Republican assessors in a number of counties placed a value on real estate that was unrealistically high....," and still later he wrote that "boards and supervisors frequently abused their authority to appropriate money and to levy taxes...." Capsulizing his view of Republican corruption, Harris pointed to an example in Warren County where an "ambitious" carpetbagger took the position of sheriff and selected a group of "'totally unfit'" black subalterns for other offices.

Citing information obtained predominantly from Democratic newspapers to support his argument, he accused these Republicans of "milking Warren County of thousands of dollars."

42. Ibid., p. 335.
43. Ibid., pp. 297-98.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., p. 422; Even when Harris used Republican sources, he did so only when they showed radicals in a pejorative light. See p. 255.
The issue of terrorist acts committed against freedmen and carpetbaggers during Reconstruction represented another arena where Harris followed both Garner's interpretation and conservative methodology. Condemning the "defective testimony" in the *Ku Klux Klan* Report of 1872, Harris again utilized sources markedly opposed to Reconstruction to excuse violence toward Mississippi Republicans. Although he noted that terrorism reached "epidemic" proportions before 1875, he examined it only in counties "saddled with a slate of obnoxious appointed officials." The economic downturn experienced during this period, he said, combined with the high taxation policies of Republicans, continued to frustrate the white population, and yet, he added paradoxically, that this terrorist "epidemic" actually had little connection with the political affairs of the radicals.

Harris also accepted the language of Mississippi Democrats when discussing the redemption of the state from Radical rule in 1875. "Outraged" at Republican taxation policies and incensed by Ames's tolerance of "dishonest and opportunistic" men in the radical camp, conservatives began a "revolution," he said, intended to return "democratic reform" to Mississippi. Demanding

an end to radical corruption, the redeemers initiated a "populist thrust," Harris concluded, that overthrew radical rule.

Significantly, only one historian has risen to criticize the neo-Dunning flavor in Harris's writing. While Richard L. Hurne praised the Day of the Carpetbagger in the Journal of American History as "well argued" and impressive" and Jack P. Maddox applauded the monograph "as a thorough, comprehensive treatment," Richard Current, writing in the American Historical Review, questioned whether Harris had "add[ed] proportionally to historical truth," or even replaced Garner's Reconstruction in Mississippi. By referring to Northern carpetbaggers as "obnoxious" office holders and by emphasizing the economic grievances of white landowners, Current said, Harris allied himself with the Southern white view of Reconstruction. Although Harris objected strenuously to these remarks, Current reaffirmed his position in a spirited communication to the editor of the American Historical Review.

47. Ibid., pp. 620, 650, 675.

Review. Insisting that Day of the Carpetbagger diverged significantly from the revisionist interpretation, Current repeated his claim that "any careful reader...will see that...[Harris] did indeed follow 'the conservative line of the time.'"

More than just criticizing Harris's work, Current's review sounded an ominous note for revisionism. Although the conservative thesis presented in this work disturbed Current, he seemed more concerned with the unconscious way Harris adopted white Democratic rhetoric and then attempted to dress it in revisionist garb. Current clearly understood the tenuous appeal revisionism holds for some historians. Given the lack of a recent synthesis on Reconstruction and the paucity of writing on the post war era in the past decade, this rise of a neoconservative interpretation, particularly from those claiming to support revisionism, bodes ill for the revisionist cause.

Fortunately, not all state studies in the 1970s followed this conservative path. Joe Gray Taylor, for example, paid homage to neither the early Dunning state studies nor to their conservative interpretation of Reconstruction. Along with Jerrell H. Shofner, in Nor Is

It Over, Taylor in Louisiana Reconstructed, 1863-1877 described Reconstruction from the revisionist perspective. He emphasized, for example, that the Republicans in Louisiana displayed a responsible attitude toward the state's financial matters, and he claimed that they deserved credit for initiating valuable political and social reforms. Benjamin Butler, often described by the Dunning school as "a Beast," became "more humane than severe" in Taylor's eyes, and the hated Governor William Kellogg merited credit for initiating fiscal responsibility. The failure of Reconstruction, according to Taylor, resulted more from the terrorist activities of white Democrats than from radical corruption.

Despite the example set by Taylor, one other recent historian has presented a state study that adhered more closely to the Dunning than the revisionist interpretation of Reconstruction. George H. Thompson, in Arkansas and Reconstruction (1976), not only adopted Thomas Staples's conservative attitude toward radical Republicanism, but he cited Staples's 1923 Reconstruction in Arkansas over sixty times, revealing the significant influence this Dunning scholar still commanded in the 1970s. Like Staples, Thompson also wrote from the perspective of the

white Democrats during Reconstruction. Praising the opponents of radical Reconstruction as "men of integrity" and "political realists," he criticized Republicans for their political ineptness, financial corruption, and inability to ensure Arkansas's economic progress.

From his conservative viewpoint, Thompson also asserted that Republican adherence to "party principles rather than political idealism" alienated potential Democratic allies. He criticized the radicals' "distasteful" constitution of 1868 as an instrument that minimized the legislative power of white voters, and he complained that the election of 1868 produced "widespread reports of [Republican] fraud and misconduct," which the military failed to investigate fully. Small wonder, Thompson concluded, that "the disfranchised and their friends looked upon this government as alien and felt no moral obligation to support the constituted authority." Had the radicals acted more temperately, he implied, Reconstruction might have had a different outcome.


52. Ibid., pp. 75-78.
Thompson also agreed with Staples that Republican Reconstruction produced fiscal fraud and a high state debt which discredited the radical regime still further with respectable Arkansas citizens. Accepting the traditional Democratic assertion of Republican financial corruption and ignoring revisionist denials to the contrary, Thompson blamed radical "mismanagement" and the "dishonorable" action of a New York banking house for an "unjust" state debt which, he said, Arkansas incurred during radical rule. The "fraud associated with the debt" produced deep resentment among Arkansas's white citizens, Thompson said, and although "the people were willing to pay whatever was necessary to uphold the faith and credit of the state... they were unwilling to pay one cent toward any 'unjust' debt." In Thompson's mind the overthrow of Republican Reconstruction in Arkansas followed by Democratic repudiation of the state debt became the natural consequences of radical mismanagement.

Another work which utilized conservative sources and emphasized a conservative interpretation of Reconstruction appeared in 1977 as Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins published *The Scalawag in Alabama Politics, 1865-1881*. Wiggins insisted that she intended to dispel the old

Dunning interpretation of scalawags as "'local lepers,'" but her reliance on Democratic newspapers and her use of pejorative statements about scalawags from Republican speakers left her more closely aligned to the white conservatives of 1865 than revisionists of 1976. Wiggins, for example, commended General Wager T. Swayne of the Freedmen's Bureau for his "willingness to befriend the helpless," but added that Swayne and the bureau actually deserved praise for working 'diligently to maintain good relations with Alabama civil authorities...and for refusing to interfere unnecessarily in state policies." Using Democratic newspapers as her source material, she offered a subtle defense for those Alabama whites who attacked the bureau's activities. Swayne even realized, she wrote, that some subordinates in the bureau deserved criticism, but more importantly he "perceptively understood that much of...[the] tireless animosity directed toward the bureau was a release for men seeking to avenge themselves by 'any means other than violence for being stopped in doing wrong.'" Praising both Swayne and Alabama whites, she insisted that the general "was satisfied that such men did not represent the body of the community although they might appear to do so...."

On another occasion, Wiggins relied on Walter Lynwood Fleming's *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* for her description of Alabama's provisional governor Lewis Parson as a "man of sense" and a "wise" choice for the office even though he later opposed the constitution of 1867. A second scalawag governor, William Smith, also appeared as a "remarkable honest" man, according to Wiggins and the Democratic *New York Herald*, although he also opposed portions of the Republican constitution and refused to act against Ku Klux terrorism.

While Wiggins applauded the policies of conservative Republicans, she offered little praise to radical scalawags in Alabama. In fact, although calling them "realistic and perceptive men," she portrayed radical Republicans as corrupt politicians with little qualification for office. Utilizing Hilary Herbert's 1890 "campaign document," *Why the Solid South?* as a significant source in her discussion of Republican financial affairs, she accused several scalawags of bribery and fraud. J.C. Stanton, according to Wiggins, "sought and received a direct loan of $2,000,000 in state bonds...." To acquire those bonds, "Stanton bribed state legislators at his hotel rooms," she wrote, "while the bill was under consideration."

Wiggins also accepted the conservative notion that the 
Republicans lacked moral idealism, and she implied that 
they courted black voters only for their own political 
ends. Quoting one Republican bureau agent, she insisted 
that the carpetbaggers and scalawags used the Union League 
merely as a tool with which to "'organize...the darkies, 
to advantage.'" On another occasion, using two Democrati-
cally aligned newspapers, she referred to scalawag George 
Spencer as an "outrageous" politician and remarked that 
Spencer sought power only for his own ends. "Hardly was 
Spencer elected," she wrote, "before he initiated plans 
to manipulate the election of 1870 and federal patronage 
in Alabama to secure his reelection in 1872." 

Although Wiggins condemned Democratic fraud and 
Ku Klux terrorism, her portrait of the scalawags fighting 
among themselves for patronage and power contradicted 
the interpretation of Southern white Republicans held 
by most recent revisionist authors. Carpetbaggers and 
scalawags may have acted expediently, but Wiggins's 
reliance on Democratic newspapers to condemn them and her 
use of Republican sources to praise them when they 
eschewed radical goals, left her closely allied with the 
conservative view of Reconstruction. 

56. Ibid., pp. 135, 44, 21, 57, 117.
Thompson, Harris, and Wiggins represent only three in a growing number of historians since 1974 who, more than simply praising the scholarship of Dunning and his students, have actually adopted portions of that interpretation in their own work. Ironically, while Reconstruction has declined as a subject of serious study in monographs and major historical journals, it has retained great vitality in a number of state and local historical publications, where many historians continue to advance the Dunning interpretation enthusiastically.

Most notably, the Dunning thesis appeared prominently in the States and Nation Bicentennial Series published by the American Association for State and Local History. Each work in this fifty-part series traced the history of an individual state from its colonial origins through 1976, but, when discussing Reconstruction, the authors for the Southern states advanced, with few exceptions, the Dunning interpretation of the post-Civil War era.

Joe B. Frantz, for example, a former president of the Southern Historical Association, in Texas: A Bicentennial History, referred to Charles W. Ramsdell's Reconstruction in Texas as "a classic" study and then followed Ramsdell's lead by insisting that "the chaos of Reconstruction" affected white Texans so adversely that they "found themselves generally just barely holding
on." According to Frantz, the radicals relied heavily on tyrannical methods to sustain their rule. In fact, "the [Republican] police force contained men who were either criminals or had criminal intent," he wrote, "as evidenced by their occasional arresting men on little or no provocation, killing them in cold blood, starting riots and moving in to create a reign of terror, and misusing black policemen to stir up racial hatred."

William S. Powell also attacked radical Reconstruction in North Carolina: A Bicentennial History with an interpretation reminiscent of J.G. deRoulhac Hamilton's Reconstruction in North Carolina. Denouncing Republicans in severe terms, Powell portrayed white Southerners after the war as helpless victims of Northern tyranny. "Punishment became the watchword," he wrote, "humiliation was the objective; and obedience to congressional directives was essential if the Southern states expected to return to the Union." Powell added that "fraud, deceit, and dishonesty flourished." "Public funds were wasted," he wrote, "and a heavy state debt incurred."

Louis B. Wright also defended the Dunning thesis in his bicentennial work on South Carolina. Complaining


that Reconstruction represented the worst period in the Palmetto State's long history, Wright condemned the "vindictive" members of congress who passed the Reconstruction Acts in 1867. Particularly odious in Wright's eyes "was Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, a bitter old man whose hatred of all things Southern surpassed even that of Senator Charles Sumner." "Stevens wanted to treat Confederate states as conquered provinces," said a scornful Wright, solely to ensure the supremacy of the Republican party, but his "vindictiveness" only resulted in tragedy for all Southerners, white and black alike.

Like Wright, Powell, and Frantz, Ludwell Johnson followed Dunning's interpretation of Reconstruction by

   Significantly, Frantz, Powell, and Wright received highly favorable reviews for their works. Calling North Carolina a "miniature work of art," W. Edwin Hemphill noted in the Journal of Southern History, XLIV (August, 1978), 492, that Professor Powell "was well chosen" to write this work. Similarly, Ben Procter wrote in the Journal of American History, LXIV (December, 1977), 784-85, that Joe B. Frantz's historical account of Texas "furthered [the] understanding" of Texas and offered "keen insights" into the state's history. Warner Moore referred to Louis B. Wright's South Carolina as a "sensitive and individual history," and although he criticized the brevity of the book, Moore never questioned Wright's interpretation of Reconstruction. Moore, Journal of Southern History, LXIII (February, 1977), 146-47.
condemning radical Republicans for flagrantly abusing their constitutional power and by defending Andrew Johnson as a champion of the American Constitutional system. In 1907 Dunning based his own defense of Johnson on the President's sincere "reverence" for the federal constitution as well as his opposition to the "truculent, vindictive, and cynical" policies of men like Thaddeus Stevens, who intended to subvert the nation's highest law for his party's well-being. Ludwell Johnson argued a remarkably similar idea in his Division and Reunion, part of the American Republic series edited by Donald Fehrenbacher. According to this author, President Johnson showed his determination to preserve the American Constitution with his opposition to the Freedmen's Bureau bill, "an extraordinary measure," he said, because it gave the Republican party unlimited command over the freedmen, a role Johnson clearly felt belonged to the Southern whites. Calling the President's veto of the Bureau "cogent and temperate," Johnson insisted that the president "correctly pointed out [the opportunity it gave radicals] ... for enormous abuses of power."

In Andrew Johnson and the Use of Constitutional Power (1980), James E. Sefton also praised Johnson's

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defense of the American Constitution from abuses leveled against it by radical Republicans. Viewing Reconstruction less as an attempt to ameliorate the condition of Southern blacks and more as a ploy by "extremist[s]" in Congress to increase their power at the executive's expense, Sefton extolled Johnson's tenacious opposition to radical policy. Although he admitted that the President made mistakes while in office, Sefton nevertheless felt that his devotion to Jacksonian Democracy left him with little choice but to safeguard his office "when he saw it being attacked [by radical Republicans]."

To Sefton the abusive manner in which Republican "extremists" treated the president only confirmed the righteousness of Johnson's stand. Remarking that Johnson "did not pursue a rash headlong policy of blind opposition" to radical Reconstruction, Sefton applauded Johnson for "keeping his opposition within constitutional bounds."

On the other hand, Sefton rebuked radicals like Stevens, Butler, and Chandler who, he said, "trenched upon the

constitutional prerogatives of the president [in their quest for power]."

Albert Castel's *The Presidency of Andrew Johnson* (1979) offered yet another defense of the seventeenth president. Although admitting that Johnson lacked great ability and that his blunders played into the hands of the Republicans, Castel nevertheless praised Johnson "for his courage, for his unwavering adherence to his 'correct principles' and for upholding the integrity, if not always the dignity, of the presidency." For these reasons, Castel insisted, "he was a strong president in the personal sense."

Like Sefton, Castel rejected a revisionist contention that Johnson's Negrophobia played a major part of his

62. Ibid., pp. 154-55, 184.

The similarity between Sefton and Dunning on the issue of Johnson's impeachment first appeared in Sefton's article "The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson: A Century of Writing," in the *Civil War History*, XIV (June, 1968), 120-21, 145-146. Sefton wrote that "Dunning set a tone of antipathy toward the Radical Republicans" and "saw impeachment as a logical result of the struggle for hegemony in reconstruction policy-making which executive and legislature had begun in December, 1865." Summarizing his own feelings regarding impeachment, Sefton's similarity to Dunning became unmistakable. "Perhaps it would be best to think of impeachment as the last move," Sefton said, "...in a series of anti-Johnson actions...[by] the Thirty-ninth Congress" in which the radicals "topped off a two-year career of persistent perversity."

policies as president. Although admitting that his "anti
Negro prejudice...was indeed deplorable," Castel maintained,
however, that "[it] rarely--if ever--was decisive...in
determining his policies and conduct." Revisionist
historians who have attacked Johnson's racism, Castel
said, have failed to understand the impossibility of
finding "a quick solution, or even...any solution at all
64 to the 'American dilemma' of race." Instead, blame for

64. Ibid., pp. 225-226.
Two other recent historians praised Andrew Johnson
for his "courage" while president. See Gene Smith, High
Crimes and Misdemeanors: The Impeachment and Trial of
Andrew Johnson (New York, 1977), pp. 10-14, 99-112; and
George C. Rable, "Forces of Darkness, Forces of Light: The
Impeachment of Andrew Johnson and the Paranoid Style,"
Southern Studies, XVII (Summer, 1978), 152-57.
Castel's denunciation of revisionist historians
represented only one in a mounting number of attacks on
revisionist writing in the 1970s by those who have praised
or adopted the Dunning thesis. Grady McWhiney, for example,
beginning in 1973 with a defense of Walter Lynwood Fleming
as "the most careful of the Southern historians of Recon-
struction," attacked revisionism several years later for
its excessive bias in reporting American history. McWhiney
insisted that "What passes for standard American history is
Yankee history written by New England or their puppets to
glorify Yankee ideals and heroes." Controlling historical
journals and presses, he continued, "the Yankee version of
the American past became the history most often taught in
the colleges and in the public schools." Unfortunately, he
said, Yankee historians fell victim to the Black Power
movement in the 1970s, and historical truth suffered. See
McWhiney, Southerners and Other Americans (New York, 1973),
pp. 143, 184-85, and McWhiney, "Jefferson Davis--The
Several other historians who have written in a
Dunning style have also attacked the revisionist inter-
pretation of Reconstruction. Ludwell Johnson, for example,
condemned revisionists who "appear to be primarily concerned
with promulgating the moral, ethical, and ideological right-
ness of Congressional Reconstruction and its more extreme
proponents." Fortunately, Johnson said, "its days as the
the "tragedy" of Reconstruction, according to Castel, lay not with Johnson, but with those who aggravated an impossible situation, the Northern radicals and their Southern colleagues.

While Sefton, Johnson, and Castel offered refuge to the Dunning thesis in their monographs, a large number of professional historians have also advanced the Dunning interpretation through a host of Southern state journals.

new orthodoxy might be numbered." Jounson, Division and Reunion, p. 196. Similarly, Louis B. Wright accused revisionists of painting an erroneous portrait of Reconstruction. "Equipped with a fund of idealism and buckets of whitewash," Wright said, "a few of these revisionists have prettied up Reconstruction and given many phases of it virtues that not even the most sanctimonious carpet-bagger would have claimed." Wright, South Carolina, pp. 193-94.

As a forerunner to these criticisms of revisionism, Gerald N. Grob in his 1972 article "Reconstruction: An American Morality Play" in American History: Retrospects and Prospect, eds. George A. Billias and Gerald N. Grob (New York, 1972), pp. 218-21, 226-31, urged revisionist historians to begin emphasizing a different interpretation of Reconstruction. Revisionists, Grob said, had overplayed the moral aspect of Reconstruction, and as a result, moral issues had clouded their historical insight, especially since more had occurred in the 1870s than Black Reconstruction. Instead of using morality as a guide, Grob suggested that modern historians develop a more balanced, objective portrait of the era by adopting a methodological approach common in the social sciences. By seeking to eliminate morality with a more balanced view of the post war era, Grob has belittled the work of revisionists who objected to Ku Klux activities or who praised Republicans for demanding Civil Rights for freedmen. Grob, in effect, has asked revisionists to abandon a fundamental premis of revisionism.
The decade of the 1970s, in fact, has found Southern historical publications fertile ground for the Dunning thesis. As an example, William L. Richter, writing in *Louisiana Studies*, described Union soldiers occupying Texas after the Civil War as "the scum of society." Elizabeth Otto Donald also followed the Dunning line in her article, "The Ashburn Murder Case in Georgia Reconstruction" in the *Georgia Historical Quarterly* as she described the "vindictive mood" of Congress when it tried "to force the Southern states in line." Referring to Ashburn as a deeply hated man, she offered "justifiable homicide" as an excuse for those accused of his murder, saying that the people of Georgia, "saw Ashburn as the enemy in a time of war."

Radical tyranny and corruption appeared as a theme again in the work of two historians writing in the *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*. Editor of the Quarterly, Robert McBride, argued in "'Northern, Military, Corrupt, and Transitory,' August E. Alden, Nashville's Carpetbagger Mayor" that "in the dark days of Reconstruction, Nashville, 


Tennessee was, like much of the South, infested with radical Republicans and carpetbaggers...." Although carpet-bagger Alden displayed honorable motives while in Nashville, McBride wrote that many others came to Tennessee for more sinister reasons. Mary J. Delozier also condemned radical policies in terms reminiscent of the Dunning school. "The goal of the radicals," she said, "was to punish ex-confederates and deprive them of political power."

Radicals manipulated the black vote primarily "to maintain control of elective office in the state," Delozier added, while Governor Parson Brownlow "'whip[ped] up hate and revenge,'" on his way to becoming "virtually a dictator."

In the face of this continued emulation of the Dunning interpretation and unabashed adulation of the


Dunning scholarship, it seems ironic that many revisionists continue to take the death of the Dunning school for granted. Writing in *Reviews in American History*, Joseph Logsdon insisted that the historical profession has reached a point where it can "stop beating the dead horse of the Dunning school." Significantly, John Hope Franklin echoed this sentiment in his 1980 American Historical Association Presidential address, "Mirror for Americans: A Century of Reconstruction Historiography." Dismissing Dunning, Hamilton, and Fleming as outdated historians who wrote history to justify their own present, Franklin remarked that "the battle for revisionism is being won among the professional writing of monographs (if not textbooks)," and he asserted that recent scholarship had reached the point where scholars could discuss the Reconstruction era without the destructive emotionalism present in the Dunning state studies.

Despite Logdon's and Franklin's assurances, two recent historians have voiced their concern at the continuing influence of the Dunning scholarship. Charles Crow, in a 1974 issue of *Reviews in American History*,


warned historians of the subtle but pervasive racism endemic among professional historians, especially those who sang the praises of such "racist scholars" as U.B. Phillips. Six years later William Barney repeated Crowe's admonition, as he alerted his fellow historians to the dangers inherent in the works of Sefton and Castel, who seemed dedicated to reversing the gains of revisionism as they headed back "around the circle again."

Like the warning proffered by DuBois in 1935, the statements from Barney and Crowe have gone largely unheeded. American historians, while professing their revisionist loyalties, remain unwilling to consign Dunning's "blind and perverse" interpretation to the scrap heap. Indeed, in 1983 Dunning maintains a respected position among a pantheon of distinguished American historians for his "outstanding" writing. Whether following his thesis on Reconstruction or applauding his scholarship, many modern authors continue to hold William A. Dunning and his students of Reconstruction history in high esteem.


CHAPTER TWO

WILLIAM A. DUNNING
THE GREATEST HISTORIAN

Less than six months after Richard Curry "confined the Dunning School to the scrap heap," David Donald announced to the 1974 Organization of American Historians that "William A. Dunning remains one of the greatest historians in the field of Reconstruction." Asserting this same idea ten years earlier, Donald wrote that Dunning's Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction "was the best account of constitutional and legislative history in the reconstruction period."

Tribute of this type occurred often in Dunning's lifetime. Before his death in 1922 he became president of both the Political Science Association and the American Historical Association. He also served on the editorial boards of the Political Science Quarterly and the American


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Historical Review, as well as on the American Historical Association Executive Council. In addition, while holding the prestigious Lieber Chair of Political Science at Columbia University, he produced seven books, forty-three articles, and several hundred book reviews.

Even though historians in the 1960s and 1970s attacked Dunning for his racial bias, they continued to praise him for scholarly excellence. John Higham, for example, wrote that although Dunning displayed an anti-Negro bias, his Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction and Reconstruction: Political and Economic were "outstanding" products of professional history. Barry D. Karl, in a biography of Charles E. Merriam, also praised Dunning's scholarly objectivity. Dunning had an openness and a point of view, according to Karl, which made his personal approach to teaching and writing "more objective." Indeed, his unique historical philosophy, Karl continued, allowed him "a critical distance from his material."

Similarly, Philip Muller in the Journal of American History argued that Dunning showed significant historical


objectivity in his writing as a historian and political scientist. Praising "the Old Chief" as a scholar who successfully withdrew from his own prejudices both in personal conversation and in the classroom, Muller modified the charge of racism leveled against Dunning by recent scholars. Although acknowledging that Dunning made a few biased remarks, he insisted that those statements appeared mainly in Reconstruction and resulted from the haste in which he wrote this 1907 work. Had Dunning taken more time, Muller said, instead of racing to meet his editor's deadline, he "might have written a different book." In any event Dunning earned his scholarly reputation for his work as a political scientist, according to Muller, since his three volume History of Political Theories has become "a work of enduring value" to students in that field.6

Despite Muller's assessment of Political Theories, Dunning actually deserved little respect for his work as a political scientist. Far from having a lasting influence as Muller claimed, Political Theories had little impact during Dunning's own lifetime and has virtually none today. Indeed, critics at the turn of the twentieth century greeted his three volume series with polite but unenthusiastic reviews, complaining that his effort lacked analysis and

added "nothing new" to the field. Recent political scientists have also recognized the superficiality of Dunning's monographs by ignoring Political Theories in their own texts.

7. Writing for the Yale Review, W.W. Willoughby, for example, although insisting he meant no criticism of Dunning, remarked that Volume I added little substantial information to the field of political science. Complaining of the brevity with which Dunning treated important philosophers, Willoughby noted that only "eight pages are given to the account of Plato's Republic... [and] no allusion is made to the political views of Socrates." Willoughby also condemned Dunning's treatment of Roman constitutional practices as "especially unsatisfying." "To this large and complicated topic scarcely ten pages are granted," he wrote, which "is all the more to be regretted... [since other] recent research...has added so much that is new." Yale Review, XI (May, 1902), 106-7.

Nineteen years later, Willoughby complained of similar flaws in Volume III of Political Theories. Although he had praised Dunning as a "competent" author, Willoughby criticized the lack of analysis in this volume and insisted that the work fell short of satisfaction since it devoted "but a few pages to each" of forty philosophers. Unable to hide his disappointment in the work, Willoughby added that "we know that political literature would have been enriched if...[Dunning] had given us a discussion in a hundred or more pages of the general movements of political thoughts..." American Political Science Review, XV (May, 1921), 283-5.

A different appraisal of Volume I appeared in the Nation as one reviewer praised Dunning for his "admirably clear summary" of existing scholarly works, but admitted that Political Theories added "nothing new" to the field. Nation, LXXXIV (May 15, 1902), 386. On the other hand an anonymous reviewer for Athenaeum, I (June 7, 1902), 721 eschewed even this qualified approval and phrased his disappointment with Volume I more emphatically. Political Theories, according to this critic, lacked "historical imagination" and made no "serious addition to...what we knew before." For other similar statements regarding Volume I and II see reviews by James Sullivan, American Historical Review, VII (September, 1902), 747 and Isaac A. Loos, Yale Review, XV (November, 1906), 319.

Today Dunning has almost no influence as a political theorist. After 1941 his name never appears in the index of the Political Science Quarterly, the Journal of Politics,
Dunning deserved even less respect for his work on Reconstruction. Although an influential figure in the field of Southern history, his prestige resulted in large part from his blind acceptance of conservative ideas and traditions compatible with early twentieth-century America. These ideas included supporting the preservation of white supremacy and the maintenance of a mature racial caste system. But most important, Dunning deserved little scholarly respect because his support for the conventional wisdom of his day led him to use historical evidence carelessly, uncritically, and falsely.

the American Political Science Review, or the American Journal of Political Science. Furthermore, recent political theorists have either ignored Political Theories, or else mentioned it only in passing. George H. Sabine, for example, in his influential text, A History of Political Theory (New York, 1973), 4th edition, p. 57, allocated but one line to Dunning's work, while Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey in their award winning text, History of Political Philosophy (Chicago, 1963), omitted mentioning Dunning altogether. Similarly, Eugene J. Meehan's Contemporary Political Thought: A Critical Study (Homewood, Ill., 1967), Charles King and James A. McGilvray's Political and Social Philosophy (New York, 1973), Walter Ullmann's highly praised work, History of Political Thought: The Middle Ages (Baltimore, 1965), and Kenneth P. Dyson's The State Tradition in Western Europe (Oxford, 1980), also ignored Dunning's three volume study.

Dunning typified the new breed of professional historian at the turn of the century who viewed history as a discipline best examined through a scientific framework. Like the natural scientist, Dunning and his mentor John W. Burgess assumed that the scientific method would insure objectivity and truth in their discipline. He "seemed to fear nothing so much," Joseph G. deRoulhac Hamilton reported, "'as to be considered prejudiced, unbalanced, immature in judgment, reckless in conclusion.'"

In an effort to maintain this impersonality and objectivity, both Dunning and Burgess concentrated their historical studies not on individual personalities, but on the evolution of institutions. Institutional history exemplified their desire for objectivity by providing an impersonal and external framework for examining historical events. Studying institutions required tracing the structure of a society in the same way biologists examined the structure of organisms. For both men, history bound itself easily to the biological theory of evolution, and they used evolutionary metaphors often in their work. Burgess viewed the concept of the nation-state, for example, as a growing and evolving organism, and in his dissertation

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Dunning traced the metamorphosis of the American Constitution from its founding to the end of Reconstruction.  

In subtle ways, Dunning's Hegelian belief that history evolved gradually and instinctively had a fatalism about it that demanded non-interference and fitted well the basic conservatism of his life. Detailing his historical philosophy in "Truth in History," Dunning explained that the historian's single task involved describing only the causal nexus of historical happenings; Scientific scholars, Dunning said, should avoid presenting new facts which have no bearing on historical truth. Although acknowledging the importance of using primary material, Dunning emphasized that even the discovery of new information relating to some event in the past had little effect upon the whole historical truth. For truth, like institutions and organisms, had a life of its own. Therefore, in Dunning's eyes, the achievements of historical research in bringing to light the truth about individual events of the past changed only slightly the broad picture of history already known to humanity. Despite the uncovering of new historical facts, he wrote, "the current

9. See for example John W. Burgess, Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law (Boston, 1890), and William A. Dunning, The Constitution of the United States in the Civil War and Reconstruction (New York, 1885).
of humanity's past obstinately continued to move...in 10
the same old channel."

Necessarily, Dunning balked at the iconoclasm of younger historians who sought to overturn established theories in the historical field. They believed truth lay "in the laws of diminishing returns," he said, and although their skeptical questioning produced some astonishing results, "no long reflection is needed to detect the dangers that flow from exaggerating the new 11
truth in history."

With this philosophical position, Dunning allied himself snugly alongside all opponents of rapid change. By savoring old truths, Dunning, in effect, sought to perpetuate the status quo. Indeed, when events moved quickly, he exhibited considerable uneasiness. "Talk about the world upside down," he wrote Fredric Bancroft in 1901, "to us slow-going and peace-and-quiet-loving 12
stick in the muds, any change is horrible."

An opponent of rapid change, he naturally distrusted those individuals who "lead in agitation...and in reform." Equating reformers with bomb-throwing radicals, Dunning criticized their unreasonable desire

11. Ibid., 222, 227.
12. Dunning to Bancroft, October 5, 1901, Bancroft Collection, Columbia University, New York.
to "break away from their fellows in a wild scramble upward over tumbled boulders and through tangled forests after some ideal of the fancy, or downward into the morass after some alluring will of the wisp...." "Only when reason restores the balance," he wrote, "can the decent and orderly advance of humanity be resumed." 13

Clearly, in Dunning's mind, mankind required the conservative, orderly force of reason to counter the continuous, almost demented, desire that radicals and reformers exhibited for change. Noting that "At the danger points the rational man will stop, look, listen," while the emotionalists "will take the grade crossing on the high gear," he emphasized the need to "fill the ranks of the devoted band who shall guide and restrain the course of humanity by the light of reason." 14 Indeed, Dunning saw his job as a professor and Columbia's function as a university believed to produce rational, conservative graduates, who would help "reduce to the minimum the number of...relapses [by reformers] into the barbarism of unregulated emotion...." 15

14. Ibid., pp. 139-144.
Between 1913 and 1915 Dunning graphically exemplified his antipathy for social and political reformers. A group of reform-minded historians, convinced that a small elite "ring" controlled the American Historical Association, organized in 1913 to change the process of selecting the president of the organization and the editors of the American Historical Review. Frederic Bancroft, one of Dunning's closest friends and co-editor with him on the Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, played a leading role in the reform group. Always uneasy about change within any social institution, Dunning became especially upset with Bancroft's intentions to reform the Association and the Review. Condemning his friend's proposal, he announced curtly, "I am no great moral reformer,. [and] I think that you have suddenly been deprived by some malign influence of all your power to form...a rational judgment."
"If the reformers win this fight," he continued, "it will...end all possibility of harmonious cooperation among the best scholars of our country for the rest of our lives--that's the only prospect that keeps me awake at nights."

Strained by their different philosophies on reform, the long friendship between these two men ended a month before the 1915 American Historical Association convention. In the middle of the uproar Dunning explained his feelings to a former student, J.G. deRoulhac Hamilton. Grieving less over the loss of his friend than the damage he believed the reformers had done to the Association, he told Hamilton, "I am heartbroken over the serious rupture in the...organization." "After my quarter of a century of intimate friendship with Bancroft, Dunning said, "I did my best...to convince him...that [his attack on the Association] was unwarranted." Concluding on a bitter note, he insisted that Bancroft's persistence in this affair would only cause him humiliation. "That humiliation, I feel confident is bound to come; indeed if it does not come," he said, "there will be a great failure of justice."

Although denying that he intended to participate in humiliating Bancroft, Dunning embraced the opportunity when it arose. Appointed to an Association committee examining the reform issue, he assumed an aggressive attitude and rallied his colleagues against "that gang," as he termed the reformers, and directed the strategy to defeat their demands.

17. Dunning to Hamilton, November 18; December 3, 1915, Hamilton Collection.
18. Dunning to C.H. Hull, December 13, 1915, Hull Manuscript Collection, Cornell University, Itheca, N.Y.
 Whereas events in his personal life provide ample illustration of his deference to tradition, Dunning's intense desire to preserve the status quo also appeared in his two influential volumes on the Civil War and Reconstruction. In both Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction (1897) and Reconstruction: Political and Economic (1907) he bemoaned the revolutionary changes that resulted from the war and postwar era. To Dunning, 1861 represented a turning point in American constitutional history. Deploring the blatant disregard Republican leaders showed for traditional concepts of liberty, civil rights, and constitutional government, he complained that both the congress and the president violated the rights of life and liberty with great frequency, and he denounced their


In spite of his obvious conservatism, Dunning supported progressive Democrats in every presidential election. Disdaining "Jackass Chump Clark," he jubilantly praised William Jennings Bryan. Similarly, he chided "Old Bully," who merely danced to the tune of "pygmy" Mark Hanna, and he supported Woodrow Wilson in 1912 over "Humpty Dumpty." Nevertheless, while praising these liberal Democrats, he seldom endorsed their political reforms. Dunning's political philosophy, in fact, resulted less from his own desires than those of his father. "Father raised the boy to think as he did," Dunning's sister Mithilda said. "He would quiz the boy," she wrote, "and laugh at his answers, saying he can't be anything else." Raised as a Democrat, Dunning supported Democratic politicians even though their policies violated his personal philosophy of change. Mithilda Dunning to Charles E. Merriam, no date, ca. 1921-1924. Merriam Collection, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
resorting to "arrest without warrant, detention without hearing, and conviction without jury" in their quest for victory.

To Dunning, the revolutionary and unconstitutional changes begun in 1861 continued with a vengeance after Lee's surrender at Appomattox. The radicals, in his view, represented a vicious lot. Determined to inflict upon the South a "vindictive punishment," they wrenched the constitution "wholly away from its history" and imposed on the vanquished section a set of conditions never before seen in the history of republican governments.

Such continued abuse of the constitution reached its peak, according to Dunning, when Congress offered citizenship, civil rights, and the franchise to former slaves. Indeed, no act, in his view, threatened civilization more than the enfranchisement of the freedmen. Reiterating a theme prevalent in his History of Political


21. Ibid., p. 28.

22. Ibid., p. 132.

23. Ibid., pp. 132, 250.

Theories: Ancient to Medieval (1902), he noted that only the "Aryan race" had displayed the "intelligence and political capacity" necessary to develop a sophisticated constitutional society. By enfranchising the "ignorant," "shiftless," "barbarous" Negro race, Radical Republicans created a condition which ran "counter to the facts of history as well as the previous interpretation of our fundamental law." Dunning naturally condemned the irrational nature of such "revolutionary" statesmanship and sarcastically remarked that "standing the social pyramid on its apex was not the surest way to restore the shattered equilibrium in the South."

Equating Reconstruction with the revolutionary chaos of France in 1789, Dunning also accused radical congressmen not only of using their political power for partisan purposes, but of wishing to increase that power by "crush[ing] once and for all the independence of


27. Dunning, Essays, pp. 133-34, 250; Dunning, Reconstruction, p. 111.

When Andrew Johnson boldly opposed their partisan politics, this pack of "low devils," Dunning wrote, began impeachment proceedings against him. Praising "Johnson's reverence for the old time constitution," Dunning naturally agreed with the president's outrage at "the flouts and jeers with which radicals assailed that sacred law," and he remarked that the failure of Congress to remove him from office illustrated "the narrow margin by which the presidential element in our system escaped destruction."

In both Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction and Reconstruction: Political and Economic, Dunning stressed this theme that the war and its aftermath destroyed traditional American values and jarred America off her course established one hundred years earlier. Both books praised white Southerners as defenders of the American tradition, while blaming the "obnoxious" radicals for their revolutionary destruction of civilization. In

29. Ibid., p. 290.
31. Dunning, Reconstruction, p. 60.
32. Dunning, Essays, p. 303.
addition, both defended Andrew Johnson and disparaged black freedmen as "ignorant," "stupid," "inferior" beings whose rule of the South disrupted a sublime culture. Both works argued that redeeming the South from black rule was not only essential, but inevitable. Finally, they both agreed that violence, while unfortunate, was necessary to end the horrors of Reconstruction.

Despite the similarities in these two works, contemporary historians who have praised Dunning for his scholarship approved only Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction. They have ignored or belittled Reconstruction: Political and Economic because of its obvious anti-Negro bias. Philip Muller, for example, noted that "Dunning's Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction represents his most important contribution to historical understanding of the period." On the other hand, Reconstruction: Political and Economic "[was a] poorly researched and faulty work." Its hasty construction, according to Muller, created errors that led to his racist reputation and overshadowed the superior quality of Essays.

33. See for example, Philip Muller's "Look Back Without Anger," Journal of American History, p. 329; David Donald, "Introduction" to Dunning's Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Dunning certainly never felt that *Reconstruction* represented "a poorly researched and faulty work." In fact, he considered the monograph his best effort, and along with *Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction* he used it as the main source of his famous Columbia seminars. Totally convinced of the book's factual accuracy and scientific objectivity, he refused to change any aspect of it upon completion. "[A.B.] Hart made some scratching in the margin," he told Bancroft, "suggesting doubt [about his statements on Charles Sumner], but I just rubbed it out." Later he wrote a former student, "How I am busy! Trying to meet the demands of A.B. H. Am doing the final revise now, which consists chiefly in erasing the editor's suggestions for changes." In fact, Dunning seemed so sure of *Reconstruction*'s quality, that after sending the book to the publisher, he believed he had a sure hold on

35. Jeannette P. Nichols to Author, August 31, 1975.

36. Dunning to Bancroft, January 3, 1908, Bancroft Collection.

37. Dunning to Yates Snowden, February 17, 1906, Snowden Collection, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.

38. J.G. Hamilton, "Introduction" to Dunning's *Truth in History*, p. xvi. Hamilton stated that "Dunning... was the first to make a scientific and scholarly investigation of the period of Reconstruction." This interpretation represented a common assessment of Dunning's work during his lifetime.
the presidency of the American Historical Association, and he expressed deep disappointment when the Association chose A.B. Hart instead.

Ironically, while Dunning attained his historical reputation with *Essays and Reconstruction*, his view of the post-war era differed little from the interpretation of Reconstruction proffered by authors who had written before him. Indeed, between 1875 and 1905 over a dozen writers published widely accepted monographs similar to *Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction* and *Reconstruction: Political and Economic*. Beginning in 1875 with James Pike and running through James Ford Rhodes, a host of writers disparaged the Reconstruction era with great regularity. Although the quality of scholarship varied

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40. Ibid., January 4, 1909. "I really thought it would light on me," Dunning told Bancroft. "I'm glad you warned me where it would land," he continued, or "it would have been quite a shock."

41. Many authors writing before Dunning stressed a similar thesis. James Pike's *The Prostrate State: South Carolina under Negro Government* (New York, 1974), and Hilary Herbert's *Why the Solid South? or Reconstruction and its Results* (New York, 1969, originally published in New York in 1890) both argued that Reconstruction horrified whites in the South. John Wallace, a black Democratic politician, published in 1885 *Carpetbag Rule in Florida*, in which he supported emerging white rule in the state. Although disagreeing with Dunning on the cause of the war, both James Ford Rhodes and James Schouler saw Reconstruction as a time of national disgrace. Even Booker T. Washington's 1895 *Up From Slavery* (New York, 1901) vilified Reconstruction in a manner echoed in Dunning's work.
with each, the overall interpretation of the postwar era differed in no significant respect, and Dunning even admitted to Bancroft that his own interpretation offered little new information. "I'm going to get over and take the ground that the whole business was ethically, socially, and politically right," he wrote sarcastically. "That's the only way," he concluded, "in which a man can attract any attention now."

Despite the existence of several similar works, only Dunning's two books on the post-war era achieved recognition as the "first scientific" account of the period. Taking the concept of Reconstruction which existed in his day, he provided it with professional, scholarly sanction. Dunning did not alter the prevailing interpretation of the era; he only supported it for twentieth-century America, and for this effort he received continuous applause from his peers.

So influential had Dunning's reputation on Reconstruction become that scholars in both 1920 and 1981 recognized him more for his work in Southern history than in political science. Indeed, despite recent statements from Philip Muller to the contrary, Dunning's three-volume History of Political Theories has not salvaged his

42. Dunning to Bancroft, April 5, 1901, Bancroft Collection.
reputation as a political scientist and has no "enduring value for students in that field." Dunning realized in his own life that the work had numerous deficiencies, and he often expressed dissatisfaction with its quality. "I'm sorry, but not surprised that you didn't like my chapter on Rousseau," he wrote Bancroft in 1915, "I didn't either." After sending Volume III to the publisher, he wrote his former student Joseph G. deRoulhac Hamilton that the "silly mass of political theory I have been engaged in precipitating on a defenseless public [is nearly complete]." "My interest in it," he wrote wearily, "has dwindled to the vanishing point."

43. Muller, "Look Back Without Anger," 328.

44. Dunning wrote to Hamilton that American history "was his real love," and he said that even when working "on another volume of Political Theories...I find myself often drifting, when I ought ot to, into the old channel." "The Diary of Gideon Wells," Dunning continued, "never fails...to banish for a time all interest in Rousseau, Kant and...to revive in full force the problems and passions of that fascinating wartime." Dunning to Hamilton, quoted in Hamilton's "Introduction" to Dunning's Truth in History, p. xvii.

45. Dunning to Bancroft, August 17, 1910, Bancroft Collection.

46. Dunning to Hamilton, quoted in Hamilton's "Introduction" to Truth in History, p. xvii. Indeed, Dunning's interest in political theories declined after 1905. Publishing Volumes I and II in rapid succession, he worked only sporadically on Volume III over the next 15 years.
Political scientists at the turn of the century often agreed with Dunning's assessment of his work. In 1902 only a few journals reviewed Volume I of _History of Political Theories_ favorably, and one of those reviewers, Charles E. Merriam, had just completed his doctorate at Columbia under Dunning. Most criticism centered on Dunning's inability to add anything new to the field. "The book is...disappointing because the writer seems destitute of the historical imagination," one reviewer wrote. "We do not see that the book makes any serious addition to our knowledge," this review continued, "or throws any new light on what we knew before."

Today Dunning has no influence as a political theorist. Any examination of the major journals in political science reveals that his name never appears as a political scientist after 1941. On the other hand, all


48. Anon, _Athenaeum_, I (June 7, 1902), 721; Also _American Historical Review_, VIII (September, 1902), 748.

49. Since 1961 the _Political Science Quarterly_ has reviewed over 150 works dealing with European and American political theory. Less than twenty of those monographs, however, cited Dunning's _Political Theories_ in their bibliographies, and none found his work significant enough to discuss at length. George H. Sabine in _A History of Political Theory_ (New York, 1963), Third Edition, p. 46, did list Dunning's _Theories_ not for its influence on the field, but its erroneous interpretation of Plato's _Republic_. Edward R. Lewis's _A History of American Political Thought_ (New York, 1969), p. 173, on the other hand, completely ignored Dunning's work in political science, citing his more famous _Essays_ instead.
leading American historical journals frequently cite his influence on the field of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Further, the recent reprinting of his two famous books, *Reconstruction: Political and Economic* and *Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction* illustrates the influence his work still generates for American historians.

This historical influence included support for a thriving caste system. In his view, the tradition and heritage of America's culture demanded a system of race control in which two incompatible races could co-exist in the same society. The "ultimate trouble in the South," he wrote in *Essays*, "had been, not the institution of slavery, but the co-existence in one society of two races so distinct in character as to render coalescence impossible." Viewing slavery as merely a "modus vivendi... through which social life was possible," he agreed with those individuals who recognized "that, after its disappearance, its place must be taken by some set of conditions which, if more humane and beneficient in accidents must in essence express the same fact of racial inequality."

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51. Ibid. This statement originally appeared in Dunning's article "The Undoing of Reconstruction," *Atlantic Monthly*, LXXXVIII (October, 1901), 448-49. When Dunning revised *Essays* in 1905 for a second edition, he included this article as his concluding chapter.
By the end of the Civil War, white Southerners began establishing a "humane and benevolent" system where the "inferior class" had a position on the social ladder commensurate with its alleged moral, social, and intellectual capabilities. Dunning noted with amusement that even Northern military commanders during the war regarded a "benevolent despotism...[as] the best possible regime for the freedmen." Southerners had long known this fact, he said, and immediately following Appomattox they established a series of Black Codes designed to preserve social order and prevent chaos. Defending the codes as a realistic response to social conditions in 1865, Dunning insisted that even though the "set...restrictions and qualifications [on]...persons of color" and put the freedmen on a different plane from the whites, these restrictions "were justified by well established traits and habits of the negroes." Furthermore, he argued that "Problems common with blacks, such as destitution, idleness, and vice [of an] appalling magnitude" necessitated these laws. Although poorly timed, the Black Codes, in

53. Ibid.
Dunning's view, "were not...unwise." On the contrary, since "the freedmen could not for generations be on the same social, moral and intellectual plane with whites," Southerners wisely placed them in a separate class in the social order.

By 1900 caste had become firmly entrenched in the South, and Dunning praised the wisdom of maintaining such a "humane" institution in the twentieth century. In a review of William G. Brown's The Lower South (1902), Dunning agreed with Brown's "forceful" and "accurate" statement that wise men after 1900 recognized the mistake immediate emancipation had caused the nation. They understood that the Negro required generations of intellectual growth before he could advance along the social ladder, and therefore they accepted a system which kept "'blacks on the bottom and whites on top'" as the only solution to the immediate problem of race. In any event, Dunning wrote later, Negroes didn't seem to mind their subservient position, as long as they had "the unmolested possession of a watermelon on the sunny side of a board fence."

55. Ibid., p. 58-59.
56. Dunning, review of W.G. Brown's The Lower South in the Political Science Quarterly, XXV (December, 1902), 701, and Dunning's review of J. Biglow's Retrospection in the Political Science Quarterly, XXV (March, 1910), 139.
By arguing that this "humane and beneficent" institution represented the only solution to the race issue, Dunning merely echoed the reigning dogma of his own era. In 1944 Gunnar Myrdal contended convincingly in *An American Dilemma* that a mythology had developed from the reputed "horrors" of black-dominated Reconstruction governments. This mythology served a vital defense function for many white Americans in the twentieth century, emphasized the Negro's inferiority, and demanded racial control. Celebrating the establishment of this caste arrangement, Dunning uncritically mirrored the popularity among whites of racial subordination in his own day. Moreover, his endorsement of this institution in his historical studies must certainly have been an important factor in perpetuating acceptance of the system after 1900.

The enthusiasm with which Dunning accepted twentieth-century racial mores also showed itself clearly in his insistence on preserving the purity of the "Aryan" culture. Describing the problem of race purity as the

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South's greatest concern during the Civil War and Reconstruction, he remarked that "What animated the whites was pride in their race...and a dread...lest their institutions, traditions and ideals be...submerged."

Like a prisoner of tradition, Southerners endured twelve horrifying years under black rule, watching the walls of their cells close slowly in from day to day to crush them. "The [ir] fate...commands our sympathy," he wrote, "and their eventual overthrow of black dominance commands our appreciation on its merits."

To Dunning the danger of race mixing continued even in the twentieth century. Reviewing A.B. Hart's *The Southern South*, in his view "the best book" describing social conditions in the South, Dunning noted that "one of the most satisfactory features of Professor Hart's study is his unqualified condemnation of miscegenation."

"It is not rare," he wrote, "to hear in the North a cynical pseudo-philosophy that says: the mixture is bound to come." Speaking for himself as well as Hart, Dunning insisted that "racial purity must be preserved." Smugly

59. Dunning, Reconstruction, p. 213.

60. Dunning, Essays, p. 248.

61. Dunning, Review of A.B. Hart; The Southern South, Political Science Quarterly, XXV (September, 1910), 524.
shifting the blame for threats to purity, he contended that illicit amalgamation would only "come to an end, when the Negro woman receives the advances of a white man with the same feelings which the white woman now receives the advances of a Negro man."  

Maintaining racial purity and racial dominance, according to Dunning, often required violence. Remarkably that the "deep dread of Negro domination...impelled respectable whites to look for some means of mitigation, if not complete salvation, in the methods of secret societies," he agreed that the means Southerners used during Reconstruction "were but slight consequences compared to the end... [the preservation] of the white race."

Dunning also blamed twentieth century racial violence on a fear of black domination. Even thirty years

62. Ibid.
63. Dunning, Reconstruction, p. 122. Dunning tried to ignore and at the same time excuse Southern violence. Rationalizing violent actions, he quoted General George Sickles, who said,

personal encounters, assaults and difficulties between citizens, often resulting in serious wounds and death, have for years occurred without serious notice [in the South]...where it has hitherto seemed officious to arrest and punish citizens for assault upon each other, they can hardly be expected to yield with any grace to arrest for assaults and outrages upon Negroes.

Dunning continued, "Northern opinion tended to judge the rebel states by social standards that never had been fairly applicable to them."
after Reconstruction, he argued, many Republicans continued to demand political power for blacks in the South. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge exemplified this drive in 1890 by introducing into Congress an "extreme" force bill that would have imposed federal troops and black suffrage on Southerners again. Dunning insisted that its very existence reminded Southerners of the danger inherent in a Republican-Negro alliance.

Despite the failure of Lodge's Force Bill, Republican administrations, according to Dunning, flouted Southern traditions in other ways. One particularly irritating practice involved appointing blacks to political office in the South. A tragic example of this practice, Dunning said, occurred at Lake City, South Carolina, in 1898. "Ill feeling by the whites at the appointment of a Negro postmaster," he reported, "culminated in a terrible crime." Late at night a party of white men surrounded and set fire to the Negro's home. As he and his family attempted to escape the flames, the whites opened fire, Dunning continued, and "the postmaster and his baby were instantly killed." Although calling it a terrible crime, Dunning inferred that President McKinley, not the South Carolinians, should shoulder the blame for the incident.

64. Dunning, "Record," Political Science Quarterly, V (1890), 729.
65. Ibid., XIII (June, 1898), 375.
White Southerners, he had noted in *Essays* years earlier, demonstrated "that not even the government which had quelled the greatest rebellion in history could maintain the freedmen...on the necks of their former masters."

In his view, "The demonstration was slow, but it was effective and permanent." Therefore, when McKinley appointed this Negro to political office over the protests of Southern whites, he made violence the only possible result. If politicians genuinely cared about the black race, Dunning said in 1909, they would abandon their attempts to find a political solution to the race problem and allow the social forces already at work in the South to progress smoothly.

Although condemning violence as a general rule, Dunning seldom denounced the white participants of Southern racial violence. On the contrary, he criticized the opponents of Southern violence. In 1903, for example, John S. Bassett, professor of history at Trinity College, published a series of articles in the *South Atlantic Quarterly* condemning Southern racism, particularly mob violence.

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violence. Attacked vehemently from every position, Bassett discovered that very few colleagues openly supported him. Although Dunning had asserted his own opposition to violence and had written Bassett to say that if worse came to worst Columbia might find him a temporary position, he joined a majority of his fellow historians and remained silent during the furor.

When Trinity voted to support Bassett's right of free speech, Dunning denounced the whole affair with his usual sarcastic style. Describing "the noise" of the situation as "out of proportion to the occasion," he remarked to Bancroft that "Bassett must have known that

68. John S. Bassett, "Stirring up the Fires of Race Antipathy," South Atlantic Quarterly, II (October, 1903), 297-305. The line that caused such trouble for Bassett read, "[Booker T.] Washington is a great and good man, a Christian statesman, and take him all in all the greatest man, save General Lee, born in the South in a hundred years." Not wishing to extend this praise to all blacks, however, Bassett quickly qualified his remarks by saying that "[Washington] is not a typical negro...." Infact, Bassett added, "he...does not even represent the better class of negroes." p. 299.


70. Dunning to Bancroft, November 27, 1903, Bancroft Collection. Although watching the turmoil for three months, Dunning kept a low profile. Only five days before Bassett went before the Trustees of Trinity, Bancroft urged Dunning to action. "I am heart and soul in any scheme...for him," Dunning responded belatedly. "if you can suggest anything for me to do, let's hear it."
the dice were properly loaded when he made his throw."
"I suppose you noticed," he wrote, "that the trustees
stand for free speech so long as Bassett doesn't stand for
'social equality.' They are right of course."

Several years later he again discussed the Bassett
situation with Bancroft in a more sober tone. Exhibiting
once again his adherence to tradition at the expense of
change, he remarked, "I have long believed, and have given
advice accordingly in several cases, that the place for
scientifically trained history teachers of Southern origin
is in the South." If, however, these historians intend
to criticize Southern traditions, he continued, they must
"be critical without bringing eruptions and giving un-
necessary offense.

71. Ibid., December 3, 1903, Bancroft Collection.
72. Ibid., July 3, 1908, Bancroft Collection.

While praising Anglo-Saxon superiority, which he said
evolved from the forests of Germany, Dunning often slurred
many non-white groups. "The Japs," the American blacks,
the American Indians, and the natives in Southeast Asia,
he referred to as "barbarous" or "barbarians." Dunning,
Reconstruction, p. 212, Dunning to Bancroft, January 1,
1904, Bancroft Collection; Dunning, Reminiscences of Carl
Schurz, p. 236; Dunning, Bookman, XII (November, 19000, 264.

Philip Muller's argument notwithstanding, Dunning
used racial slurs against blacks frequently. For example,
in a review of William G. Brown's Lower South in the
Political Science Quarterly, XVII (December, 1902), 701,
he praised Brown who openly referred to blacks as "niggers"
or darkies." More often Dunning intended for his racial
remarks to have a humorous effect. Describing blacks
as mentally inferior, he wrote in Essays on the Civil War
and Reconstruction, p. 369, that the process of gerryman-
dering was "too intricate for the average Negro
intelligence..."
Dunning's acceptance of caste and violence clearly indicated support for the contemporary wisdom of 1900. This deference to the status quo ultimately destroyed his scholarship. For he did more than just accept the racial mores of his time; he falsified and distorted historical evidence that contradicted those beliefs.

An integral part of Dunning's Reconstruction thesis held that Southern blacks prospered under white rule, and he defended this notion by distorting historical evidence.

In South Carolina, the requirement that, with eight or more ballot boxes before him the voter must select the proper one for each ballot...furnished an effective means of neutralizing the ignorant black vote; for though the negroes, unable to read the lettering on the boxes, might acquire, by proper coaching, the power to discriminate among them by their relative positions, a moment's work by the whites in transposing the boxes would render useless an hour's laborious instruction.

On November 4, 1912, Dunning recounted for Bancroft the clever way one of his students described black marriages. "Davis does not lack a literary touch, and has the perceptible sense of humor," Dunning wrote. In "speaking about the readjustment of marital relations by the freedmen...he remarks: 'They shed wives, husbands and children with an ease and rapidity that make a modern divorce court seem like a conservative institution.'"

Similarly, on July 18, 1913, Dunning attempted to cheer the ailing Bancroft, suffering from sciatica. "Glad you've got Cy on the run. But he's a sly one, an' mebbe he jes' dodge roun' de cawner and come up quick an'ketch Freddie agin from behin'. Better be kefful."
to the contrary. On pages 139-140 of his highly acclaimed Essays, for example, Dunning wrote that by 1866 peace and calm had returned to the South. Southerners accepted their defeat, he said, and wanted only harmonious relations with the North and their former slaves.

[Although] the more violent radicals...[insisted] that the actual conditions in the South were intolerable...the weight of evidence pointed to the contrary. The reports of the army commanders and the commissioners of the Freedmen's Bureau for 1866 were almost uniformly of a reassuring tone. Abuse of freedmen and Union men was not only becoming less common, but was also receiving adequate attention from the ordinary state courts. 73

Dunning cited the "reports of the Secretary of War for 1866" as evidence that peace had returned to the South. The reports, however, flatly contradict his assertion. Even General Thomas J. Wood, who reported from Mississippi that "substantial justice is now administered through the state by the local judiciary tribunals to all classes of persons," had to acknowledge that "it is unfortunately too true that many outrages and crimes have been committed by the vicious and criminal on the weak and that these crimes have, in many cases, gone unpunished." 74

Similar statements appeared in the reports of Generals J.C. Davis in Kentucky and R.K. Scott in South

73. Dunning, Essays, 139-140.
74. Report of Thomas J. Wood, Reports to the Secretary of War, Second Session, 39th Congress, 1866, p. 54.
Carolina. Indeed, virtually every report echoed General R.K. Scott's statements to O.O. Howard of the Freedman's Bureau that "the state of South Carolina has suffered severely...from a disorganized condition, which has been such that bands of outlaws and desperados have traveled through some counties almost without interruption, terrifying the freed people and practicing upon them the most barbarous cruelties."

John W. Sprague, the district commander in Arkansas, also contradicted Dunning's argument, particularly his assertion that civil courts protected freedmen. Noting that although "The civil authorities have been invested with full power to secure order, protect peaceable citizens, and punish crimes," Sprague complained that they "have failed from some cause." Numerous crimes, he wrote, "including murder, [are] committed throughout the state of Arkansas against the freedmen, and the civil authorities almost universally neglect to take action or

75. O.O. Howard said, however, "Probably there has been less abuse of freedmen in Florida than any other of the extreme Southern states," but he did not say that Florida was free of violence. Ibid., p. 740.

76. R.K. Scott, "Report on South Carolina," Reports to the Secretary of War, 1866, pp. 737-38.
inflict punishment." Indeed, Sprague insisted that since "the first of March 1866,...crime against Union men and freedmen has been, and is rapidly increasing."

Besides misrepresenting the unsettled conditions in the South, Dunning distorted or ignored other evidence that showed white mistreatment of blacks. The 1866 New Orleans race riot, for example, offered a particularly striking example. "A street procession of Negroes," he wrote,

marching to a political meeting became involved in brawls with the crowds of hostile white spectators, and shots were exchanged. Thereupon, the police undertook to arrest the Negroes, who resisted, and a warm fight ensued. The white spectators joined with the police, and the Negroes fled into the building where the convention had met. Their pursuers stormed the building and shot down without mercy the blacks and many of their white sympathizers.

Northern radicals, he continued, exploited the event for their own purposes. They called it "a deliberate massacre," but they ignored "the abundant evidence of rash and

77. J.W. Sprague, "Report on Arkansas," Ibid., p. 749. General Jefferson C. Davis of Kentucky agreed. Bands of 'guerillas' and "Negro regulators" soon increased in numbers and audacity, and many "lawless acts have been perpetuated by them on defenseless and unoffending citizens, both black and white. The increase in robbery and lawlessness, and the ineffectual measures taken by civil authorities to suppress these bands," he continued, "rendered it my duty to offer to the citizens more protection from the military than I had before found necessary...and it will be necessary to continue their presence...," Davis, "Report on Kentucky," Ibid., p. 58.
unscrupulous procedure" which put much of the responsibility upon the Southern Republicans and their black allies. Dunning cited the House Reports of the Committees for the 39th Congress as evidence for his analysis of the event. Ignoring well over four hundred pages of testimony in that document, he utilized only the 23-page Democratic minority report to support his view of the riot. An examination of the entire document, however, refutes Dunning's interpretation of this incident. Out of seventy-four witnesses testifying before the select committee on the New Orleans Riot, only five stated that the black marchers fired the first shots or resisted arrest. Moreover, four of those five admitted that their information came from second-hand sources. On the other hand, fifty-two eye-witnesses denied that blacks resisted arrest or even carried weapons. In fact, their testimony clearly indicated that the marchers attempted unsuccessfully to surrender to the police on several occasions during

78. Dunning, Reconstruction, pp. 79-80.


80. On pages 227-228 of the Report, for example, Jacob Barker testified that blacks fired first and resisted arrest, but he admitted, "my information of it is derived from others; not from personal knowledge." "I did not attend any of their meetings," he added, "nor was I present at any part of the riot."
the riot. Typifying this kind of testimony, Steven F. Fish stated that

upon the first entrance to the hall, white handkerchiefs were waived, and the police were called upon not to fire; Mr. Horton had a large handkerchief and tied it upon a staff...and waved it to the policemen for them not to fire, stating that no resistance would be made; that they desired to be arrested and protected from violence, and that they were unarmed; but [the police] emptied their revolvers and continued to fire.81

In addition, more than twenty witnesses stated that prior to the riot they personally heard city officials and police officers discussing plans to "kill the Yankee nigger." "I went up to Lafayette Square," J.D. O'Connell testified, and

I remarked that it was not unusual for the police in New Orleans to be armed in that way. He told me laughingly that it meant work; that I would soon find out...but by and by we would be likely to have some fun.82

Finally, almost every witness testifying before this committee described the affair more as a massacre than a riot. Particularly graphic, but by no means unique, New York Times correspondent Edward F. Brooks, testified,

I saw the freedmen, as they would attempt to leave the rear end of the Institute or the side exits, shot [by police] as soon as they would show themselves. I saw them beaten after they had fallen with clubs by policemen, and I saw the policemen put revolvers

82. Ibid., p. 80.
to their heads and to their hearts, within a couple of inches, and fire into them. I saw a freedman climbing over the fence. I looked to see whether or not he would get away. I thought he would, but a bullet came... and he fell to the ground in the alley. Half a dozen policemen then rushed up... They beat him with their clubs and shot him with their pistols. He was attempting to beg for mercy, but he could not. 83

Just as he distorted evidence antagonistic to Southern whites, Dunning went to great lengths to disparage the abilities of black politicians, including using false information to defame their characters. In *Reconstruction* he wrote that D.H. Chamberlain received the 1876 gubernatorial nomination from South Carolina's Republican party.

"Chamberlain succeeded in securing the coveted nomination of his party," Dunning said, "but his associates on the ticket included some of the most disreputable Negro politicians that the radical regime had produced." 84

Dunning cited a dissertation prepared under his direction at Columbia as evidence for this charge. "Paul L. Haworth and his authorities," Dunning wrote, proved that Chamberlain's Negro associates "included some of the most disreputable politicians" in the state. On page 135 of Haworth's *Hayes Tilden Election*, Haworth wrote that Chamberlain "secured his own nomination... but unfortunately he was unable to prevent the convention from putting


Robert B. Elliott, T.C. Dunn, and others of the most corrupt element in the party on the ticket. Haworth's authorities, which Dunning also cited, included Walter Allen's *Governor Chamberlain's Administration in South Carolina*, pp. 360 and 504-505, and Chamberlain's article "South Carolina Reconstruction" in the 1906 *Atlantic Monthly*. Yet Allen stated only that Elliott and Dunn "had been pronounced and bitter enemies of reform and of Governor Chamberlain's policies," and that "Elliott's bare presence on the ticket justly gave offense to some honest men in both races."

Although these quotes reveal hostility among Elliott, Dunn, and Chamberlain, nothing indicated that the men represented the most "disreputable Negro politicians in the party." In fact, Chamberlain's article in the *Atlantic Monthly* contradicted the idea entirely. In the 1901 *Atlantic Monthly*, not 1906 as stated in Haworth's footnote, Chamberlain made only one reference to Elliott and ignored Dunn entirely. Far from calling Elliott disreputable, Chamberlain praised the former Congressman as "the most adroit as well as the ablest Negro in the


state." In the article Chamberlain never discussed corrupt elements of any type, as Haworth claimed, nor did he mention other blacks running on the Republican ticket, as Dunning alleged.

With his opposition to blacks so pronounced, Dunning necessarily disparaged their white allies in Congress. Indeed, his animus toward radical Republicans motivated his misrepresentation of evidence against them. Radical "aims", he wrote in Reconstruction, "included the proscription of the Confederate leaders,

extensive confiscation of plantations in the South, the disfranchisement of the freedmen and the postponement of political reorganization of the states till the continued ascendency of the Union party could be insured. 88

87. D.H. Chamberlain, "Reconstruction in South Carolina," Atlantic Monthly, 1901, 479. Incorrect or falsified citations occurred several times in Dunning's work. In Reconstruction on page 110, he cited J.G. deRoulhac Hamilton's Reconstruction in North Carolina, p. 170, for proof that the rejection of the "Fourteenth Amendment was considered as merely a dignified result... of their own humiliation and shame." Hamilton on page 170 of his book, however, discussed only the tax collection in North Carolina and the idea that Northern military commanders were "animated by a desire for peace."

On page 85 of Reconstruction, Dunning said that the "leading radicals in Congress repudiated any obligation to stand by the pledge" they had made to end Reconstruction with the Fourteenth Amendment. He cited E.I. Pierce's Sumner, p. 312, as proof for this statement. On page 312 of Pierce's work, however, the author discussed Sumner's career in 1856 and mentioned nothing about the Fourteenth Amendment.

88. Dunning, Reconstruction, p. 42; Essays, pp. 178, 251.
Again Dunning cited the work of a former student as his single source for this argument. Walter Lynwood Fleming, in his *Documentary History of Reconstruction*, reproduced speeches of four radicals, Garrett Smith, Samuel Chase, Thaddeus Stevens, and Charles Sumner. Far from agreeing on a policy for Reconstruction, these Republicans differed markedly on their postwar policies. None of the speeches anthologized in the *Documentary History*, for example, urged any type of punishment for Confederate leaders. In fact, Garrett Smith clearly contradicted Dunning. "I shall be asked," Smith said, "if I would have none of the rebels, not even their guiltiest leader, doomed to death? I answer no—not any of them; nor any of them to imprisonment; or any of them to banishment... how blessed would be the consequence of a wise and kind treatment of that enemy... The South has suffered enough, and she deserves to be soothed and comforted, and no more affected by us." 89

Regarding enfranchisement of blacks, Smith stated, "I do not say that I would have all black men vote." "I certainly would," he continued, "were the rebels allowed to vote, [but] I would be quite content that none, black or white, who cannot read their vote, should be permitted to cast it." 90


90. Ibid.
None of the Republicans cited in Fleming's Documentary supported enfranchisement of freedmen to support a Republican Party in the South. Indeed, as Smith's statement indicated, the radical position on black suffrage appeared ambivalent at best. Furthermore, of the four men cited, only Stevens urged any type of land redistribution for the freedmen.

Despite all his pretensions to scientific training, Dunning failed to divorce his Southern bias from his research. He accepted the contemporary attitudes of 1900, which held radicals responsible for the destruction of Southern culture through enfranchisement of the "black hordes," and he distorted evidence to the contrary.

Not only did Dunning vilify Republicans for their political policies, but he also indicted them on charges of corruption. Complaining that Republican leaders smothered the South with military edicts, he also accused them of gratifying their own greed through various illicit means. "The sudden and dramatic exposure of [corruption]" during Grant's administration, he wrote in Reconstruction, "gave a sharp stimulus to the inquisition to which the House committees were subjecting the executive departments."

"Name, place and date was established," he continued,

91. Ibid., pp. 143-154.
"for practically every species of maladministration that had been vaguely charged."

Dunning's proof that established "name, place and date" came from three reports for the 44th Congress. These reports, however, actually contradicted his accusations. In Report 789, for example, Congress investigated allegations that Secretary of the Navy George Roberson illegally provided federal funds to the Jay Cooke Company even though Roberson knew that Cooke faced bankruptcy. The Democratic majority asserted that Roberson had defrauded the Federal government of over $400,000 to help Jay Cooke pay his creditors.

Significantly, the Democrats published their findings before hearing all the evidence, even before Secretary Roberson had testified. The entire testimony in Report 789, however, never established Roberson's guilt. Although the Secretary lent Jay Cooke $400,000, he produced evidence at the investigation that prior to extending the loan he received over $800,000 in collateral from Cooke. Consequently, when the Cooke enterprises collapsed, the federal treasury actually accrued an additional $400,000. Although the


93. House Reports, 44th Congress, 1st Session, Number 788, 789, pp. 11-14.
Democrats claimed scandal, no maladministration existed in this instance.

Occasionally, Dunning used rumor and innuendo as historical fact to indict Republican Congressmen on charges of corruption. When the United States purchased Alaska from the Russian Czar, he wrote in the *Political Science Quarterly*, several leading Republicans received bribes from the Russians to expedite the sale. As proof of this, Dunning cited an unsigned note in the Andrew

94. Dunning misstated factual information numerous times. In *Reconstruction*, p. 208, while discussing corruption in the South, he stated that the combined debt of all Southern states during Reconstruction reached $131,000,000. The Republicans, he continued, left the South in a state of bankruptcy for years. His citation confirming this assertion was *The House Report*, 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, Number 22, p. 213. The report showed that the sum of $131,000,000 represented only liabilities "contingent and prospective," not actual state debts. Under the heading of "All existing and contingent liabilities," the Republican debt for all Southern states consisted of only $70,000,000.

In addition, much of the fraud that Dunning cited never existed. "Charges of fraud, bribery and stealing constituted the burden of political discussion in every state," he wrote in *Reconstruction* on page 215. "Reed of Florida," he said, "was acquitted, not apparently so much on the ground of innocence as for the purpose of preventing the succession of a conservative." Dunning cited Hilary Herbert's *Why the Solid South?*, which he admitted served a purely partisan purpose. Even Dunning's own student, William Watson Davis, in his *Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida*, (Gainesville, Florida, 1964, originally published in New York in 1913), pp. 548-49, refuted Dunning's argument. In a rare contradiction of the master's work, Davis said that the "charges made [against Reed]... were grave...[but] no good evidence was ever forth-coming substantiating any of the charges." "The state account," Davis continued, "up to that time did not yield proof of executive embezzlement."
Johnson manuscript collection which he claimed bore the unmistakable hand of President Johnson. The note alleged that Secretary of State Seward told Johnson $20,000 was paid to R.J. Walker and F.P. Stanton for their services... N.P. Banks, chairman of the committee on foreign relations, $8,000, and that the incorruptible Thaddeus Stevens received as his 'sop' the moderate sum of $10,000."

Dunning never doubted the veracity of this note. Although he admitted that "this account of what happened is...hearsay in the second degree," he concluded his article by saying that "while it must be admitted the... [evidence] does not prove any corruption in the case of ...Stevens, it is hard to conceive that the statements... were concocted by Seward or Johnson." In fact, he continued with an air of assurance,

there are reasons for suspecting that the truth of the matter was probably something like this: Russia's Minister Stoeckl was exceedingly delighted when the appropriation bill became law. His joy was expressed without reserve, and ...it manifested itself in a large access of pecuniary generosity... and it is quite possible that in the far-reaching gratitude of the minister, he expressed a wish or a purpose to 'do something' for Banks and Stevens, whose support of the appropriation had been so effective.96

95. Dunning, "Paying for Alaska," Political Science Quarterly, XXVII (June, 1912), 386.
96. Ibid., pp. 387, 398. Ironically, on page 317 of Reconstruction Dunning accused Republican politicians of using "rumor and unsupported assertions" when campaigning in 1876.
After completing the article, Dunning experienced considerable embarrassment over his conclusion. Hoping to publish his findings before anyone else, he hurriedly sent his article to Bancroft for approval. His friend, however, jolted him by stating the obvious. "Paying for Alaska" had no proof; it merely argued from innuendo and rumor. Defensively, Dunning tried to explain his position. "I don't think there was corruption either," he wrote, but the only way to hold the attention of the reader in this type of article "is to put the most interesting part...which points clearly to corruption, first,"

Despite Bancroft's criticism, Dunning actually believed the Republicans guilty as charged. "No patriotic citizen," he wrote in the article "can read [Johnson's memo] without a feeling of shame." In addition, several months before publishing the article, Dunning reported jubilantly to Bancroft that he had "come across some perfectly delicious material, showing up...Secretary of State [Seward], in a most interesting way." Even though Seward had become a staunch Johnson conservative by 1866, Dunning condemned him along with the other Republicans.

97. Dunning to Bancroft, June 1, 1912, Bancroft Collection.


99. Dunning to Bancroft, April 10, 1912, Bancroft Collection.
Knowing "how lightly the Secretary of State regarded the proprieties of high political station," Dunning wrote, "it would not be utterly wild conjecture that, if either Banks or Stevens actually received a gift from Stoeckl, the agent through whom it was transmitted was not other than William H. Seward himself."

Clearly, Dunning's tone and inference in the article indicated that he believed a conspiracy existed. If, however, he actually felt Stevens and the other Republicans innocent of any wrongdoing, his insistence on publishing this type of innuendo and hearsay in "the second degree" represented disreputable scholarship. On the other hand, if he actually believed that Stevens took a bribe, as the entire tone of the article indicated, he not only misled his friend, but he stretched the definition of scholarly evidence to unreasonable limits.


101. Dunning indeed seemed determined to get his story into print. He sent the article to the North American Review and Century Magazine, but each publication rejected it. Finally, Dunning settled on the Political Science Quarterly. "I begin to suspect," he told Bancroft after his second rejection, "that the PSQ, which can't help itself, is my ultimate destination." Dunning to Bancroft, May 23, 1912, Bancroft Collection.

Dunning often made blanket statements without proof. On page 242 of Essays he discussed at length the Democratic expulsion of Blacks from the Georgia legislature. After expelling the Negroes, he wrote, white conservatives changed their minds and "petitioned Governor Bullock to summon a special session of the legislature and
Ironically, while preparing his presidential address, "Truth in History," for the 1913 American Historical Association, Dunning asked his friend Bancroft to "think of a good illustration of deliberate falsification of history in the South." "When you do think of one," he said, "let's have it." If Bancroft saw the irony of this request, he never acknowledged it.

give it an opportunity to reseat the colored members. The governor, however, refused." Dunning offered no citation proving that the Democrats ever petitioned Bullock for this purpose. In fact, no evidence of this event exists. The conservatives did send Bullock a statement after their action. The statement, far from petitioning for a second chance at reseating black solons, stated that despite Bullock's protestation over their expulsion of the Negroes, "they are judges of...membership" in the legislature. C. Mildred Thompson, Reconstruction in Georgia (New York, 1915), p. 214.

On one occasion Dunning admitted that he accepted hearsay and innuendo as truth. In Reconstruction, p. 287, he wrote that "graft...pervaded the lower ranks of Federal officials." Convincing "indications of it appeared in many investigations," but he admitted, "the one precise legal evidence was naturally rare." Ironically, when Northerners complained of Southern violence, he called it exaggerated rhetoric.

Dunning seemed willing to believe almost any rumor against the radicals. While reviewing James Ford Rhodes's History of the United States for the Political Science Quarterly, XIV (March, 1914), 375, he remarked that General Grant intended to replace General Benjamin Butler during the war, but didn't do it because Butler had "some hold" on Grant. Dunning admitted that no hard evidence existed supporting this assertion, but immediately he speculated that Butler probably used the same hold on Grant during the Johnson-Stanton quarrel, forcing Grant to side with Stanton.
CHAPTER THREE
THE DUNNING SCHOOL:
A BENEVOLENT DESPOTISM

In December, 1913, Dunning delivered his presidential address "Truth in History" to the American Historical Association, and a large number of his former students traveled to Charleston, South Carolina, for the occasion. Barely able to contain his excitement during Dunning's speech, one student exclaimed that "the scholarly and scintillating address was so great that we had to relieve ourselves by pounding someone on the back and knees." "As we couldn't quite reach each other," Mildridge Bonham said, "Professor A.B. Moore had to bear the brunt [and] he swore that never again would he sit between two Dunningites when Dunning was speaking." 1

Bonham described admiringly the feelings Dunning evoked in his students. On the eve of his presidential address, they gathered in Charleston to toast their mentor and present him with a volume of essays prepared in his

honor. Having worked for two years on the project, each Dunning student contributed an original article to show his deep appreciation of "The Old Chief." Seldom had an American professor received such an award, and seldom had a teacher acquired students as loyal and devoted as Dunning's.

Predominantly Southerners, these young men had entered Columbia's graduate program eager to study the Civil War and Reconstruction from a scientific point of view, and under Dunning's careful tutorship, they seldom returned home disappointed. Describing Dunning as "a great man," J.G. deRoulhac Hamilton remarked that "He asked searching questions calculated to arouse a spirit of inquiry." James Garner, Dunning's first graduate student, called his mentor a "master who not only knew his subject, but had the rare gift of presenting it in an attractive and forceful manner." U.B. Phillips, perhaps Dunning's most famous student, agreed wholeheartedly, urging younger students to drop their "tommyrot" sociology courses and enroll in Dunning's seminar instead.


3. Ibid., p. xvii.

Not only Dunning's students, but historians after World War II as well admired Dunning's skills in the classroom. Wendell Holmes Stephenson, for example, repeated the traditional theme that Dunning had performed masterfully as a teacher, creating a unique school of thought on the subject of Reconstruction. Bert Loewenberg, in 1972, called him one of the premier seminar instructors, and he noted that Dunning "had turned raw students into ripe scholars." Also, Barry D. Karl asserted in his work, Charles E. Merriam, that Dunning's teaching affected Merriam so profoundly it remained a major influence throughout his life.

Two recent historians, however, have rejected the idea that Dunning greatly affected his students, arguing that the notion of a Dunning School "is misleading." Both David Donald and Philip Muller asserted that Dunning had, at best, only superficial contact with his students. "In general," Donald wrote, Dunning "cannot be justly praised, or blamed, for the work of graduate students who


have studied under him." Dunning "belonged to the 'sink or swim' school of graduate instruction," Donald continued, "and had little to do with dissertations until they were submitted in virtually finished form."

Notwithstanding Donald's view, Dunning built and nurtured a graduate school with considerable care. His efforts, however, did little to justify a reputation as a great teacher. Although he taught a scientific method for analyzing historical evidence, Dunning enveloped his seminar teaching in a philosophy devoid of skepticism and critical thought. His philosophic conservatism rejected the iconoclastic impulse of Northern reformers and condoned the conventional wisdom of 1900 instead. Naturally, Dunning's Southern students grasped this philosophy enthusiastically, and dressed in their "scientific costumes," they used it to preserve Southern myths and defend the South from criticism.


Ironically, Dunning's reputation as a great teacher resulted largely from accident. Three universities in 1900 boasted strong graduate programs in history. Johns Hopkins, under Herbert Baxter Adams, had the strongest reputation, followed by Harvard and Columbia. Most Southern students tried first to attain admittance into Hopkins. Walter Lynwood Fleming, for example, wrote Adams in 1900 asking for a graduate fellowship, but Adams's prolonged illness and death in 1902 essentially eliminated Johns Hopkins from consideration by many students. Harvard's history department, headed by Albert Bushnell Hart, accepted blacks into its graduate program, and Hart's reputation as a defender of the New England abolitionists also discouraged Southerners from applying. His abolitionist reputation so disturbed Fleming that, when his close friend William O. Scroggs obtained admission only to Harvard, Fleming expressed deep disappointment. Describing Hart and Chaney as "N[o] G[ood]," he wrote

11. Walter Lynwood Fleming to George B. Adams, April 13, 1900, George B. Adams Collection, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland.
George Petrie, his former teacher in Alabama, "I wish I had known sooner, I would have put in a lick for Scroggs with Dunning."

Columbia University, on the other hand, boasted the presence of John W. Burgess and his former student, William A. Dunning. Burgess's credentials in 1900 equaled those of Hart and Adams, but Dunning had just begun to acquire a reputation in teaching. Adams's death and Hart's abolitionist policies, however, left Southerners with little option but to enroll in Columbia.

Although many Southerners came to New York to study with Burgess, they quickly abandoned him for Dunning. The two men differed little in substance, but measurably in style. Burgess, aloof and sober, maintained an inflexible attitude toward his students. He became something that they endured and puzzled over like an Old Testament deity. Consoling a young Dunning student who had taken political theory from Burgess, U.B. Phillips agreed that "Burgess is certainly exasperating." "It was


probably only a sense of humor (on my part, not on his)," Phillips wrote, "which prevented a challenge from me similar to that of the Southerner of last year who asked him if he really believed what he said." After entering the classroom, Burgess signaled to a student to close the windows, a sign that the class had begun, and proceeded to read his carefully prepared lecture. Dunning, on the other hand, created a relaxed classroom atmosphere with his sense of humor and an intense desire to help his students. "I advise you to pick up Dunning's lectures," Phillips wrote Yates Snowden as the young South Carolinian prepared for fall classes. "You will find," Phillips said, that "Dunning believes he is there to be used."

These young men who praised Dunning's teaching skills so enthusiastically came predominantly from the South. In fact, while many Northerners graduated from his seminar, the most prominent members of the Dunning School journeyed to Columbia from Southern states. For example,

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18. Phillips to Snowden, September 20, 1904, Snowden Collection. See also Karl, Charles E. Merriam, pp. 30-34; Stephenson, Southern History in the Making, pp. 149-153; and Bert Lowenberg, American History In American Thought, pp. 429-433.
James W. Garner, Dunning's most productive student with a score of books and several hundred articles, came to Columbia from Mississippi. Ulrich B. Phillips, Charles Woolley, and C. Mildred Thompson grew up in Georgia, while Walter Lynwood Fleming left Montgomery, Alabama, to attend Carolina, William W. Davis of Florida, and Charles W. Ramsdell from Texas all left their home states to study Reconstruction under the critical eye of William A. Dunning.

Traveling into what they had always considered hostile Yankee territory, most of these Southern students had few close friends. Living in school dormitories, which one described as "small boxes" with little heat, they sat through many cold, drizzling afternoons thinking of home. "If I ever get out of Yankeedom," Fleming wrote a friend in Alabama, "I'll never come back--the weather is so frightful." To another friend he complained that "A man in New York is about the size of thirty cents." "I have met no one," he said, "worth as much as a man from

19. Lesser known Southern students included Yates Snowden, M.C. Bonham, and Roy Smith of South Carolina, David Y. Thomas and Thomas Staples of Arkansas, and W.W. Pierson of North Carolina. A number of Dunning students originated from Northern states. The most famous of these included Paul Leland Haworth of Indiana, Charles E. Merriam and O.B. Clark of Iowa, Herbert Stebbins of New York, and Harriette Dilla from Michigan.
Cold eastern winters and the lack of friends made each Southerner especially susceptible to Dunning's warmth and charm. Enamored by "the Old Chief's" gracious style, a young John A. Krout recalled, "I never knew how he managed to do it; he gave unbelievably of his time to his students, meticulously going over papers and reciting information for them." "He would talk with us for hours," continued Krout, "guiding and encouraging each one." This personal attention gave Dunning's Southern students sense of well-being and played a large role in welding the Dunning School together.

Though different in style, Dunning and Burgess conducted their seminars along similar methodological lines. History, for both men, embodied the Hegelian process of cumulative evolutionary change, operating through an endless chain of causes and effects. The historian


22. Dunning felt equally as strongly about his students. To one young graduate he wrote, "You have become associated in my mind inseparably with the Thursday evening seminar, and I often find myself on entering the subway unconsciously looking around to speak to you." "Thus you see," Dunning continued, "you have left behind you an influence in this great city." Dunning to Yates Snowden, February 28, 1908, Snowden Collection.

reduced every moment of time to a link in the chain,
Dunning believed, and then made each link intelligible by
discovering its connection with what went before and after
it. Finding and gathering these links or facts from
primary sources, Dunning said, increased the historian's
objectivity. The scientific historian "must know it from
the original contemporary sources." A secondary or derived
account of an event "must be presumed to be false."

Dunning relished examining primary documents, and
he passed this enthusiasm on to his students. "I don't
believe," he told his wife, after discovering an error in
the Andrew Johnson Manuscript Collection, "you can form
any idea of the pleasure it gives me to have discovered
this little historical fact." After agreeing to research


25. Ibid. Ideally, the scientific historian believed that students banished their preconceptions and confronted the search for truth with nothing but the facts. By examining only primary documents, they felt that the truth about a particular historical question would emerge inductively. In this way, scientifically trained historians asserted that they made direct contact with reality and came closer to the truth than ever before. See George B. Adams' "History and the Philosophy of History," American Historical Review, XIV (January, 1910), 221; Deborah L. Haines, "Scientific History as a Teaching Method," LXIII (March, 1977), Journal of American History: Jurgen Herbst, The German Historical School in American Scholarship (Ithica, New York, 1965), and Veysey, The Emergence of the American University, pp. 122-125.

26. Dunning to his wife, April 23, 1905, Dunning Manuscript Collection, Columbia University.
the career of Carl Schurz, he wrote his friend Frederic Bancroft, "I greatly rejoice at the chance to go through the [Schurz] papers," and later he expressed a similar thrill for one of his students. "You must have had a joyous time going through the [Freedmen's Bureau] files," he wrote to J.G. deRoulhac Hamilton. Emphasizing again the importance of examining primary documents, he added that "That is, as you say, the real historical stuff."

Following his lead, Dunning's students examined and collected their own primary data zealously. Phillips, for example, spent a decade gathering antebellum plantation records and writing friends about new material they might have acquired. Fleming ran advertisements in Southern newspapers at his own expense, seeking information regarding the Ku Klux Klan, as well as personal letters written by Jefferson Davis. He even began a one-man campaign to

27. Dunning to Bancroft, August 5, 1907, Bancroft Collection, Columbia University.

28. Dunning to Joseph G. deRoulhac Hamilton, August 13, 1909, Hamilton Manuscript Collection, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina. In the seminar Dunning had his students present papers based on their primary documents. Charles E. Merriam's biographer, for example, noted that Merriam prepared weekly papers, which Dunning critiqued with "exceeding thoroughness," Barry D. Karl to Author, August 31, 1976, and Barry D. Karl, Charles E. Merriam, p. 37.
collect original documents relating to Reconstruction, which he believed would help eliminate conflicting interpretations on the era.

Like Fleming and Phillips, James W. Garner wrote to numerous individuals throughout the country for manuscript material, and Joseph G. deRoulhac Hamilton published a plea to all Southerners to dig out old letters and contribute them to a Southern historical collection, where they would better serve the South. "Never has there been a time," Hamilton wrote, "when the preservation and study of Southern history was more important or could contribute more splendidly in securing for the South its rightful place in national history." Fleming agreed and wrote another Dunning student for information on starting a historical society to house all of his documentary collections. "I want you to tell me about the organization of your Trinity College Historical Society,"

Fleming told William K. Boyd. "History has been at a low ebb here," he said, "and I have to build from the bottom up."

Although Dunning successfully taught his students to collect factual evidence, his most important contribution to their seminar training had little connection with primary documents or scientific methodology. The common denominator uniting Dunning and his students was not science, but the Dunning personality. Indeed, "The Old Chief" influenced his graduates so thoroughly that they accepted his ideas, interpretation and philosophy without question, and many of them never functioned as fully independent thinkers. Charles E. Merriam, for example, seldom made


Virtually every member of the Dunning School participated in the founding of a historical society in his home state. U.B. Phillips helped initiate the Georgia Historical Society, while Fleming, along with his friend Thomas Owens, began the Alabama Historical Association, and J.G. Hamilton founded the North Carolina Historical Society. Charles Ramsdell likewise initiated the Southwestern Historical Association and along with Hamilton participated in the Founding of the Southern Historical Collection located in Chapel Hill.
a major decision regarding publications or professional advancement without first seeking Dunning's advice. Other students also showed their continued dependence on Dunning's thinking as well as their avid devotion to his philosophy. Attempting to remain abreast of Dunning's most recent pronouncements on Reconstruction, Hamilton, for example, tried to borrow a set of Dunning's latest lecture notes from a young student who had just graduated from Columbia. Several years later when the Scott-Foresman company rejected his manuscript on Abraham Lincoln, Hamilton displayed his continuing acceptance of the Dunning thesis by indignantly announcing to the publisher, "My position is in toto that of Professor William A. Dunning, easily the established authority in the field."

31. Dunning to Charles E. Merriam, March 6, 1902; May 13, 1903; June 8, 1904, Merriam Collection, University of Chicago. When Merriam faced difficulty over job advancement, for example, he wrote Dunning seeking advice. Always concerned about the professional standing of his students, Dunning responded quickly, "I think that you would do well to go to Illinois unless Chicago will give you an advance to professorial rank at once." "As a professor at Chicago," he continued, "you would be all right; as an associate, you had better get out...." Dunning concluded his fatherly advice by saying, "If Chicago promotes you now it will be well worth your while to stay there." Dunning to Merriam, June 8, 1904, Merriam Collection, University of Chicago.


33. Hamilton to Gilbert W. Kelly, November 12, 1921, Hamilton Collection.
Perhaps John A. Krout best explained the attraction Dunning's students maintained for their mentor when he wrote fifty years after graduating from Columbia, "As you can tell, I still worship at his shrine."

In most cases, Dunning's students rigorously adhered to his historical philosophy, but if they ever departed from the accepted line of truth, Dunning gently nudged them back into place. Several years after leaving Columbia, for example, Hamilton sent a series of unpublished manuscript materials to Dunning for critical analysis, and "The Old Chief" examined each one carefully. "I am returning your first two chapters," he wrote Hamilton after examining the first part of Reconstruction in North Carolina. "As you can see, my criticisms are over details," he said, "not the general substance of the work."

Several weeks later, Hamilton received other carefully examined chapters, including a favorable critique of the bibliography and table of contents. A decade later, however, Dunning began his criticism of another Hamilton work by saying, "Now, I have a large bone to pick with you." Annoyed at Hamilton for disagreeing with information in his

35. Dunning to Hamilton, October 20, 1905, Hamilton Collection.
own Reconstruction: Political and Economic, he remarked that "In a certain notable volume containing a contribution by Professor Hamilton, I find this statement [which] is a pretty distinct contradiction of...[my] Reconstruction."

Outlining his disagreement with this former student regarding the legality of free blacks owning property in antebellum Mississippi, Dunning concluded his critique by announcing coolly, "On the basis of the above exhibits, I...maintain that your assertion is not established." Slightly embarrassed, Hamilton immediately apologized for contradicting Dunning's work and promised to follow his advice in "running down the truth of the matter."

Only one student openly contradicted the Dunning School's interpretation of the South and Southern history. For his defiance, Dunning and "his gang," as Walter Lynwood Fleming fondly referred to them, summarily dismissed him from their ranks. Paul Leland Haworth, while studying at Columbia, wrote an article in which he criticized Louisiana politicians for disenfranchising


38. Dunning to Hamilton, Marcy 29, 1916. In 1906 Hamilton sent Dunning an article he prepared for publication, but Dunning criticized it severely and extensively. He accused Hamilton of misusing his evidence and misstating the facts. Dunning concluded his long and detailed criticism by saying, "As I look at the proof again, how would this do?", and he proceeded to rewrite several passages for Hamilton.
Negroes in that state. Although not advocating universal suffrage, Haworth, a native of Indiana, urged Louisiana officials to allow a few well-qualified Negroes to vote. This relatively mild attack on Southern race practices produced immediate hostility in the seminar. Failing to appreciate Haworth's "yankee" attitude, Fleming and Hamilton quickly leaped to the defense of their respective states. In fact, one Thursday evening Hamilton actually jumped across the seminar table at Haworth, and a serious disturbance ensued.

For years afterward, the bitterness between Haworth and the rest of the Dunning School remained acute. After leaving Columbia, Fleming, for example, made it clear he wanted no part of "such d__ f___s" as Haworth. "If he thinks Negroes and himself are about equal," Fleming said, "I guess he is about right....To my mind, he is the embodiment of most of the things that a history man should not be." When Garner and Hamilton made plans in 1913

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to honor Dunning with a series of essays written by his former students, they conveniently omitted asking Haworth to participate on the grounds that the project should consist solely of "Southern men." "I am glad to see," Fleming wrote later, that "his name does not appear in the Dunning volume."

Nothing in Dunning's writings or the manuscripts of his students indicated that Dunning ever inquired into Haworth's absence from the Festschrift. Although he always expressed a deep interest in every other student, he never discussed Haworth, never corresponded with him, and never inquired as to his well-being with any former student. Haworth himself admitted in 1915 that it had been several years since Dunning had communicated with him. A decade after leaving Columbia, Hamilton learned that of all Dunning's students, Haworth alone had no teaching job and no prospect of one. He had abandoned Reconstruction as a field of study and turned to writing a biography of George Washington for a livelihood.

42. Ibid. Significantly, however, Garner asked Charles Merriam from Iowa and Sidney Brummer from New York to contribute articles, and both men consented without protest from any other participant.


The only correspondence between Hamilton and Haworth revealed a defensive Haworth who did not mention the Festschrift, but obviously felt ostracized. Admitting that he had lost contact with Dunning, he told Hamilton, "I know very little of what goes on at Columbia; I saw Dunning for the
After nurturing and weeding his school, Dunning chose topics for his students and encouraged them to publish. Directing Charles Merriam to a new field of study, he wrote his former student, "I am surprised to hear you say that there is no good book on [municipal] governments...[since] that is the one subject that everybody is taking a hack at nowadays...." "Why don't you look into the comparative constitutional law of the states of the Union," he suggested, "for it is absolutely untouched." Two years later Dunning expressed satisfaction at the progress Merriam had made on comparative constitutional law. Similarly, John Krout noted that Dunning advised him to investigate the Andrew Johnson papers, and "he even helped prepare one part of them for publication." "Dunning was almost as excited as I was," Krout noted, "when we sent them to the publisher." Every Christmas at the American Historical Association Convention Dunning reunited his school, and

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last time there in May, 1911." Haworth also mentioned that he had taught only one year since leaving Columbia. Unable to find another job, he had moved onto a small farm in Indiana where he spent his time researching the bucolic side of George Washington.

44. Dunning to Merriam, March 6, 1902, Merriam Collection.

45. Ibid., May 13, 1904.

as in the days at Columbia, he talked and laughed with his students, all the while encouraging them to write, "even if they threw most of their work in the wastebasket."

Furthermore, Dunning used his influence to see that his students' work received favorable recognition in the historical world. As editor of the *Political Science Quarterly*, he made sure that his students appears prominently in each issue. Between 1900 and 1917, every volume of the Quarterly had at least five different articles or book reviews from members of the Dunning School. In addition, as the program chairman of the American Historical Association for several years, he encouraged his students to participate in the Association's annual meetings. Each year from 1902 to 1914 a member of his graduate seminars delivered papers at one or more sessions. Especially for his younger graduates, these meetings provided a valuable introduction to the historical community. Further, Dunning encouraged those students who did not present a paper to attend the Association meetings. "The Historical Association has decided to go next year to


48. For example, Garner, Fleming, Ramsdell, Phillips, Merriam, Staples and Kendrick appeared frequently in the Quarterly. Holland Thompson, David Thomas, Paul L. Haworth and Charles Cehike also appeared on occasion.
Cleveland," he told Hamilton, "and I hope you will [attend]."
Illustrating how seriously he took his relationship with
former students, Dunning confided to Hamilton that "It
would be a genuine joy to explore the department stores
of Cleveland together as we did those of Cincinnati."
"History has its uses in this way," he said, "that are not
recorded in the books."

Dunning's influence in the historical world not
only provided a platform for his students to gain national
recognition, but it also offered him an opportunity to
further his own historical reputation. "That _Bookman_
review is...the most worthy notice that the great work
has received," he wrote Bancroft regarding a review of his
own _Political Theories_. "You see Merriam [the reviewer]
is my pet Ph.D., studied with me for three years, and so is
qualified to know a good thing...when he sees it." "I
told Peck the [editor of the _Bookman_]," Dunning continued,
"that Merriam was the only man in the United States
qualified to handle the book and the results fully
justified my opinion."

49. Dunning to Hamilton, December 26, 1905, and
March 19, 1919, Hamilton Manuscript Collection.

50. Dunning to Bancroft, August 21, 1902,
Bancroft Collection.
Whenever the Quarterly reviewed works of a friend or a student, Dunning chose their reviewers carefully. Geihide, a classmate of Merriam's in Dunning's seminar, "is certainly as cordial and eulogistic as you could wish for," Dunning told Merriam regarding a review of the young graduate's first publication. To his friend Bancroft he displayed even more generosity. "Choose your man," Dunning told him when Bancroft submitted his biography of William Seward for review. "Whomever you want to do you in the Quarterly," Dunning continued, "he's yours."

Following Dunning's lead, many other editors asked a Dunning student to review a classmate's work. Garner, for example, reviewed Fleming's Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama, and Fleming, in turn, reviewed both Hamilton's Reconstruction in North Carolina and Ramsdell's Reconstruction in Texas. This practice occurred often in various journals and favorably enhanced the reputations of the


52. Dunning to Bancroft, January 19, 1900, Bancroft Collection.
young authors, as well as Dunning's interpretation of Reconstruction.

Long after they had left the seminar, Dunning's students remained bonded through frequent correspondence, reviews, and annual conventions. Indeed, the friendship among these men was close and unbroken. They realized that they belonged to a "great intellectual family," as one student phrased it, and that "they...were one of the

53. A few examples include Fleming's review of Hamilton's Reconstruction in North Carolina, in the American Historical Review, XII (July, 1907), 911; Hamilton's review of Fleming's Documents on Reconstruction in the American Historical Review, XII (April, 1907), 700; William K. Boyd also reviewed Hamilton's Reconstruction in North Carolina in the American Historical Review, XX (July, 1915), 869, Ramsdell reviewed Haworth's America in Ferment in the Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XIX (October, 1915), 207; Ramsdell review ed. U.B. Phillip's Robert Toumbs in the Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XVII (April, 1914), 428; and Thomas Staples review ed. David Y. Thomas's Arkansas in War and Reconstruction in the American Historical Review, XXXII (July, 1928), 938.

The authors of the state studies of Reconstruction all became department chairmen in the universities where they taught. With his students in key positions, Dunning had an easy time finding jobs for his younger graduates completing their degrees at Columbia. Even when North Carolina, for example, had a full staff, Dunning persuaded Hamilton to hire a promising student. "I am glad to hear that [W.W.] Pierson is working out," he wrote in 1915. When an opening did occur in their departments, his students wrote him first for a replacement. See Dunning to Boyd, February 13, 1920; October, 1917; May 3, 1911, Boyd Collection, Duke University.

Other historians also realized that Dunning's students belonged to a "great intellectual family." While Hamilton researched Reconstruction in North Carolina, Fleming taught at West Virginia with George Holden, the son of North Carolina's Reconstruction Governor, William W. Holden. Knowing the close relationship between Dunning students, the young Holden "avoids me like a plague," Fleming told Hamilton. Fleming to Hamilton, N.D. (Ca. 1904), Hamilton Collection.

55. Garner to Hamilton, March 1, 1913, Hamilton Collection.

56. Veysey, The Emergence of the American University, p. 134.
ideas antithetical to their liking. Unable to detach themselves from long-held beliefs, they began their research, like Dunning, with prior conclusions and sought factual evidence to support their views.

Actually, by the turn of the century, Dunning and the members of his school had lost faith in the value of scientific history. In fact, despite his international reputation as a scientific historian, Dunning privately belittled the scientific methodology. "Facts have as much to do with history as milk has to do with fodder," he told Bancroft, "but you'll be read out of the American Historical Association if you approve of that...Beware!"

Later he encouraged Bancroft to write a favorable review of the Gideon Welles Diary, and he told his friend, "Put on your best scientific costume and do a good job on the old man." Dunning's distress over the unity of science and history resulted largely from the "dangerous"

57. Dunning to Bancroft, April 27, 1906, Bancroft Collection. In 1904 the Congress of Arts and Letters invited over two hundred of the world's leading scientists to meet in St. Louis to discuss science and its application in the modern world. The Congress asked Dunning to attend as a representative of the history field. When he returned from St. Louis, Dunning told Bancroft he had bored his colleagues and indicated that they bored him. Dunning to Bancroft, October 17, 1904, Bancroft Collection.

58. Dunning to Bancroft, April 27, 1906, Bancroft Collection.
direction he believed scientific history had taken after 1900. As a conservative, he abhorred the iconoclastic tendencies of younger historians. They doubted and scoffed at long-held beliefs, he told his colleagues, and were responsible for putting the "hiss into history."

Especially in the seminar, Dunning rejected scientific skepticism. Although he taught his students to examine and collect primary documents, he expected them to wrap those documents exclusively around his interpretation of Reconstruction. Indeed, in 1901, James Garner revealed that Dunning lectured almost verbatim from Essays and Reconstruction, and Jeannette Nichols noted that his seminars "were merely a rehashing of his two main works" on Reconstruction. Despite his admonition to the contrary, Dunning seldom presented any conflicting interpretation or entertained criticism of his own opinion.

The most graphic example of Dunning's rejection of scientific skepticism appeared in his unquestioning


60. Garner lecture notes, September, 1900, Garner Collection. Jeannette Nichols to Author, August 31, 1976. Yet, in "Truth in History" Dunning wrote that "a secondary or derived account of an event must be presumed false." "The longer such an account has been accepted as true," he said, "the more likely it is false." Dunning, "Truth in History," 218-219.
acceptance of the prevailing racial attitudes of twentieth-century America. Certainly, nothing in Dunning's teaching prepared his students to challenge their own racial beliefs. Neither he nor his students indicated the slightest familiarity, for example, with fellow Columbian Franz Boas's work on racial equality. Instead, Dunning's view of white supremacy encouraged the racial stereotypes of his students. In his writing and personal correspondence, he made it clear that he considered "Aryans" the superior race. He referred to blacks as "barbarous" people, and the natives of Latin America he termed "an inferior race" of "dagoes."

61. Dunning to Bancroft, February 9, 1901, Bancroft Collection; Dunning, Reconstruction Economic and Political, p. 201-202.

Philip Muller has argued that Dunning "never developed a systematic theory of race. Where Burgess abstractly defended imperialism as a positive expression of 'Teutonic' superiority," Muller said, "Dunning tended toward simple observation with his own ideas poorly thought out." Muller, "Look Back Without Anger," 338.

Burgess had argued that "the nation state, the creation of Teutonic political genius stamps the Teutonic nations as the political nations per excellence and authorizes them in the economy of the world to assume the leadership and administration of states." Referring to the third world as "The Teuton's burden," Burgess insisted that this "burden...justifies the use of force [among non-Aryan nations] because there is no right to the status of barbarism." Should a barbaric population resist "the exercise of force in imposing organization," he continued, "the civilized states may clear the territory of their presence." John W. Burgess, Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law (Boston, 1890), p. 39.

Although Dunning never promulgated his own racial theories as Burgess did, he nevertheless accepted Burgess's assessment of "Aryan" supremacy without qualification. Only the "Aryan race," wrote Dunning in 1902, possessed the
Dunning even laughed about his reputation as a white supremacist. Describing for Bancroft one particularly "delightful" moment at the 1901 American Historical meeting, he remarked that A.B. Hart had become embroiled in a dispute over the South's treatment of blacks. Hart had delivered an address on Reconstruction in which he "whooped it up" for all his radical ancestors from New England, Dunning said, but Northern newspapers mistakenly "reported [that] Professor Hart of Harvard would legalize burning Negroes at the stake!!" Much to Dunning's amusement, the outraged Hart defended himself by saying, genius to have created a sophisticated political consciousness. Believing that the "Aryan civilization" had a mission to civilize mankind, he insisted that the United States, as "the most perfect type of advanced democracy," had a role, indeed a burden, toward this end which "can't be escaped."

Although ambivalent at first about America's pursuit of empire, Dunning's uneasiness dissolved quickly. "I'm against annexing anything but Cuba," he said immediately after the war erupted in 1898. By 1901, however, he not only accepted imperialism, he demanded it. He echoed almost verbatim the Burgess line of "Aryan superiority." "Those dagoes are going to be on the war path against us within five years, if not five months," he wrote Bancroft about the Cuban rebels who objected to American interference in their affairs. "Our benevolent purpose, to regulate this...sphere, has got to be carried out," he continued, "and if the inferior races don't like it, we'll have to teach them to." Dunning to Bancroft, February 9, 1901, Bancroft Collection. Two years later when the Panama Canal issue flared, he jumped into the imperialistic argument with full force. "We'll show those dagoes what's what," he said. "International law be damned," he wrote later, "we're going to have a canal, see." Dunning to Bancroft, undated letters ca. December, 1903, Bancroft Collection.
"Dunning sets forth his hard hearted views as to the races and no one says a word. I speak for the philanthropists, and I am pillioned [?] throughout the country as a burner of Negroes."

Dunning's students jubilantly accepted their mentor's defense of Southern racism. Hamilton, for example, cited one particular incident in the seminar as proof of "the Old Chief's" sense of humor on the race issue. "When a student asked him to comment on possible Supreme Court response to segregation of blacks in the South," Hamilton wrote, "Dunning responded wryly, 'Hasn't it been your experience, as it has been my observation, that Southern legislators are entirely competent to disfranchise Negroes without discommoding the Supreme Court in the slightest degree?'"

62. Dunning to Bancroft, February 9, 1901, Bancroft Collection.

Ironically, every Dunning student wanted to help build the South into a thriving section. They put their faith in the overall capabilities of "the better class of whites" to lead the march of progress. Dunning believed his chief task as a teacher was to produce this better class of leaders. As usual, deferring to traditions, Dunning asserted in 1914 that Columbia graduates "must fill the ranks of the devoted band who shall guide and restrain the course of humanity." Because they belonged to a "special class of humanity," Dunning added, his students had "a responsibility to their community" to lead it smoothly. Dunning, Truth in History, pp. 139-140.

This idea coincided with the paternalistic attitude many of his Southern students already had about their role in the New South. They came to Columbia to learn methods
Dunning's belief in racial inferiority fitted well the views of his Southern students and facilitated their defense of Southern tradition. Although they wanted to build a new, modern South, they refused to abandon the sectional beliefs of their fathers. "I am the son and grandson of Confederate soldiers," Hamilton wrote a friend. "I am proud," he said, "deeply proud, of that fact."

Fleming also wanted a new South, but he refused to abandon long held traditions. Criticizing the emphasis for improving conditions at home, and they wanted to participate in the social and political reform necessary to advance the South. David Y. Thomas, for example, immersed himself in leading a political fight for the ratification of the Initiative and Referendum amendments to the Arkansas Constitution, and at the same time urged Arkansas citizens to end their policy of lynching suspected Negro rapists. The local court system, Thomas said, could do a more respectable job of executing black criminals.

Fleming, considering himself a progressive Democrat, publically urged the country to repeal the 15th Amendment and worked to prevent "Old Bully-T.R." from winning the deep South in 1904, and J. G. Hamilton advocated "constitutional reform" in North Carolina "to undo the problems of the Reconstruction Constitution of 1868." Dunning applauded the efforts of his students in these matters. Praising Hamilton's desire for a constitutional convention, he wrote that "It would certainly be most interesting and useful to your state if your project of taking part in the proposed constitutional convention should go through."


64. Hamilton to C. Minor, August 7, 1909, Hamilton Collection.
many Southerners had placed on progress when it compromised their heritage, he complained to an associate that "The Southern people are so busy making money they are likely to forget that some of their grandads were very good in their way, and that was a pretty good way." 

Dunning's uncritical deference to tradition found willing disciples in his Southern students. Fleming, for example, never questioned his Southern values. Instead, he used his scientific training as a weapon to tear into the enemies of the Old South. "When are the damned Yankess going to quit reforming the South?" he angrily wrote a friend in Alabama. "Have you read Walter H. Page's article in the May Atlantic? He says the United Daughters of the Confederacy are a reactionary force in Southern life." "I hope," Fleming concluded, "he will be lynched." Similarly, when John S. Bassett criticized racial practices in the South, arguing that Southerners had to alter their racial prejudice in order to enter the 20th century, Fleming denounced him perfunctorily. Referring to "Bassett and his people...[as] cranky" Southerners, Fleming denounced

65. Fleming to Cozart, December 24, 1905, Cozart Collection.

66. Ibid., April 22, 1902.
"their martyrological, superior, new southern, jackassical attitude," and condemned them for "assuming to know all things of the 'Old South.'" "Bassett and company," he concluded curtly, "need to learn the truth of the [matter]."  

Especially in their scholarly writings, prepared under Dunning's direction, these students continued collecting information in order to defend their Southern tradition. In 1903, for instance, while Fleming prepared his dissertation, he wrote his friend Yates Snowden that he wanted to examine the labor problems in the post-war South. He asked Snowden for material on free Negro labor and then remarked, "As you probably know, the books on that are not worth anything, and I am anxious to knock another stone out of the foundation of the abolitionist theory that the free Negro is worth more than the slave as a worker." While collecting information for his Documents on Reconstruction, he told Thomas Owens that he had just found some "hot stuff" on the Negro, and he requested from him a "few freak decisions" on the Negro from the Alabama Supreme Court. Later he asked Hamilton

67. Fleming to Hamilton, October 22, 1903, Hamilton Collection.
68. Fleming to Snowden, March 18, 1907, Snowden Collection.
to collect "some of the most spicy" material he could find on the Negro, take the juiciest parts for his own work, and send the rest to him. When Thomas Dixon published his highly inflammatory Klansman defending Southern racial practices, Fleming wrote jubilantly, "Ain't the Klansman a dousy? T.D. had my documents." 71

In each incident Fleming had formed his conclusions before beginning his research, and Dunning seldom questioned his student's research methods or his conclusions. In fact, Dunning enthusiastically approved of Fleming's historical contribution. When Bancroft criticized the young student's zealous defense of Southern traditions, Dunning responded immediately that Fleming "isn't any too much reconstructed," but added that his student "represented one point of view in the matter and... therefore he is doing good work in presenting that element of the situation." 72

The Dunning School's scientific defense of the South consisted in large part of blaming contemporary


71. Fleming to Owen, March 10, 1905, Owen Collection

72. Dunning to Bancroft, April 11, 1904, and May 16, 1907, Bancroft Collection.
Southern problems on Reconstruction, and they set out in their "scientific costumes" to gather information to that end. "The key to understanding the South and Reconstruction," Dunning wrote in 1907, and Phillips repeated in his article "The Central Theme of Southern History," "was... the co-existence in one society of two races so distinct in character as to render co-existence impossible." The ante-bellum South had resolved this problem, Dunning's students felt, but the Civil War and Reconstruction aggravated it severely.

"I agree unreservedly," Hamilton wrote, that the "evil effect of Reconstruction on the race issue in the South was... a political crime almost unparalleled." Fleming naturally agreed. In his eyes "Reconstruction... was not a delightful period for study and work." "We see so much of the remnants of the thing," he said, "the work is quite unpleasant." Later he told Hamilton that he hoped Thaddeus Stevens and his radical colleagues spent eternity in hell. "It will be hard for them to get their just desserts," Fleming said, "no matter how hot it may be."

74. Hamilton to Editor of Dearborn Independent, May 11, 1926, Hamilton Collection.
75. Fleming to Hamilton, April 6, 1912, Hamilton Collection.
Like Fleming and Hamilton, each Dunning student entered Columbia with a preconceived notion of Southern history, and under Dunning's watchful eye they received scholarly, scientific sanction for their ideas. Dunning polished their beliefs, guided their research, and sent each one out to prove their "well-known truths." Although many Americans held identical views, Dunning's students alone wrapped their values in scientific garb. It was this act of sanctioning their Southern mores in his seminar that did the most to create a Dunning School of thought.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE DUNNING SCHOOL'S
SOUTHERN STATE STUDIES OF RECONSTRUCTION

"I am really quite interested in the progress of your work," William A. Dunning wrote his student Joseph G. deRoulhac Hamilton, "and I shall read what you grind out with much zest." "I am expecting Mr. Haworth's Manuscript now at any moment, and the final chapter of Fleming's dissertation," he added, "...is already in the printer's hands."

This encouraging letter from Dunning to one of his favorite graduates furnishes a glimpse not only of the interest he showed in his students' dissertations, but also of the quantity of material produced under his direction. More than anything else, the Dunning school attained its reputation from the numerous state studies of Reconstruction emanating from Dunning's seminars at Columbia University. Between 1901 and 1922 he trained a

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score of Southern historians whose works on the Civil War and Reconstruction gave rise to the famous Dunning school.

Beginning with James W. Garner's *Reconstruction in Mississippi* and Charles Woolley's *Reconstruction in Georgia* (1901), Dunning's students produced in rapid succession a series of works on the post-war era which gained vast popularity and drew considerable professional respect. Dunning's most famous Southern student, Ulrich B. Phillips, completed his *States Rights in Georgia* in 1902, while Walter Lynwood Fleming followed quickly with *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* (1905). Between 1910 and 1915 four more dissertations reached Dunning's hands. Charles W. Ramsdell presented *Reconstruction in Texas* (1910); William Watson Davis finished his mammoth *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida* (1913); Joseph G. deRoulhac Hamilton published *Reconstruction in North Carolina* in 1914, and one year later C. Mildred Thompson completed *Reconstruction in Georgia*. Thomas Staples's 1923 *Reconstruction in Arkansas* and Thomas S. Barclay's *Liberal Republicans in Missouri* (1926), the last two dissertations on Reconstruction in the South, brought
to a close the state study series of William Dunning's graduate students.

In their analysis of the Civil War and Reconstruction, these Southern historians attempted to utilize scientific inquiry as a methodology. Stressing the importance of examining their evidence in a clinical, detached manner, they anticipated producing a fully objective history of Reconstruction. Actually, however, Dunning's students never escaped the influence of their own childhood legends, and their histories only wrapped a romantic view of the Old South in gossamer scientific cloth.

2. Between 1915 and 1922 two other students began state studies on South Carolina and Louisiana. Neither finished his dissertation, and, consequently, no Dunning state study exists for those states. Several other Dunning students also investigated the Reconstruction era although their works fell outside the range of the state studies. Mary Scrugham, for example, began her Peaceable Americans of 1860-1861 (New York, 1921) as a study of Kentucky during Reconstruction, but at Dunning's suggestion changed it to a discussion of public opinion before and shortly after the 1860 election. Paul Leland Haworth's The Hayes-Tilden Election of 1876 (New York, 1905), W.W. Pierson's Texas vs. White (New York, 1919), Holland Thompson, The New South (New Haven, 1919), Benjamin B. Kendrick's Committee of Fifteen (New York, 1911) also examined issues central to Reconstruction. Although not falling into the category of state studies, these works, nevertheless, echoed the Dunning interpretation of the era.

Historians sometimes mistakenly include Ella Lonn's Reconstruction in Louisiana After 1868 (New York, 1918), Hamilton James Eckenrode's The Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction (Baltimore, 1904), and John S. Reynolds' The Civil War and Reconstruction in South Carolina (Columbia, South Carolina, 1905) in the Dunning group. These three historians, although contemporaries of Dunning's students, did their graduate work at other Eastern universities.
This combination of science and nostalgia resulted in significant contradictions as well as methodological inconsistencies in their works. On one hand, they praised educational, industrial, and democratic reforms for the South. On the other hand, they asserted that progress and reform required the exclusion of American blacks from those same ideals, and they argued that only when the South segregated and disfranchised Negroes, could it begin to enjoy the fruits of progress so visible in the North. Far from aiding any cause of reform as their authors professedly intended, the Dunning state studies justified Southern demands for stability based on racial subordination. In short, these monographs from Dunning's students classically illustrate the problems inherent in presentist historical writing.

Originating in Dunning's seminar, the state studies possessed remarkable similarities in style, organization, methodology, and thesis. James W. Garner argued that "the process and results of Reconstruction in one state were essentially the same in all," and under Dunning's scrutinizing eye, Garner's dissertation on Mississippi served as a model for other students who followed. Indeed, Thomas Staples's *Reconstruction in Mississippi* 3

Arkansas, one of the last state studies, conformed remarkably in both format and interpretation to Garner's work published almost twenty-five years earlier.

Beginning with a brief summary of the ante-bellum era, each author insisted that abolitionists in the North caused the Civil War. Davis, for example, reported that anti-slavery fanatics had assumed control of the Republican party by 1860 and had "driven [Southerners] to the wall." The election of President Lincoln, Fleming insisted, revealed that a sectional party, hostile to slavery, had grown strong enough to destroy the constitution and utterly deprive the Southern people of their right to property. "All seemed to agree," he continued, that "the present state of affairs was unbearable, and that secession was the only remedy."

As the indirect cause of the war, slavery received considerable attention from Dunning's students. Although every author agreed that abolition benefited the nation, they denied vehemently that slavery perniciously affected


blacks. Illustrating this point, Phillips argued that slavery introduced African Negroes to the benefits of western civilization and assured that they lived comfortably and securely under the concerned direction of their white masters. Concurring with Phillips's assessment of the peculiar institution, Fleming wrote that "the sounds of fiddle and banjo, songs, and laughter were always heard in the 'quarters' after work was done, though Saturday night was the great time for merrymaking." "In July and August, after the crops were 'laid by,'" he reiterated, "the Negroes had barbecues and picnics...[and] were, on the whole, happy and content."


Besides slavery, the Dunning state studies also analyzed extensively the political division between Whigs and Democrats. Whigs, Phillips contended, represented the planter aristocracy, while the Democrats exemplified "the Andrew Jackson type" of common man. Furthermore, the Whigs, according to Dunning's students, after the dissolution of their party in the 1850s "entered the Constitutional Union Party." Ex-Whigs opposed secession and later became the backbone of the Union sympathizers during the war. In 1868 the Whigs joined the Republican party where they remained until forced into the arms of their old enemy by the policies of the Northern Radicals. See Phillips, States Rights, pp. 87, 97, 166; Hamilton's Reconstruction in North Carolina, pp. 120, 139, 242, and 280; and Fleming's Reconstruction in Alabama, p. 130.
In an effort to protect their slave heritage, Southerners seceded from the Union, according to Dunning's students, only to face overwhelming defeat by the Northern war machine. Union troops destroyed and pillaged the entire South, leaving her economy and social system in turmoil. Emancipated blacks ran free and uncontrolled, while Confederate soldiers and their families faced certain starvation. "The desolation," Garner noted sorrowfully, "was appalling" and filled "the stoutest heart with despair."

Surprisingly, Dunning's students approved of military rule immediately following the war. Ramsdell, for example, asserted that although Union commanders often interfered needlessly in civil affairs, they performed a necessary task, supervising the establishment of new constitutions and providing stability for a war-torn society. In their estimation the Freedmen's Bureau, a stepchild of the military, unfortunately overturned the valuable work of the regular army.

10. Charles W. Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas (New York, 1910), pp. 74-77. Also see Davis's Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida, p. 465; Garner's Reconstruction in Mississippi, p. 107; and Fleming's Reconstruction in Alabama, p. 405. The only exception, they asserted, occurred when the military arbitrarily assumed judicial authority and prevented civil courts from performing their constitutional functions. "The existence of martial law, the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus and what was practically a dual executive," Garner wrote, necessarily "led to confusion and conflicts."
No institution received more withering criticism from the Dunning School than the Bureau. Following Garner's lead, each student dedicated an entire chapter to its operations. While the Bureau ostensibly protected the welfare of the freedmen, a job these authors felt Southern whites should have assumed, Bureau officials quickly turned the agency into a political arm of the Republican party. Using its position and influence with the "gullible Negro," the Bureau alienated blacks from their former masters, Fleming charges, "by telling them not to work," and filling their "heads with ideas of social and political equality from which the South has yet to recover." Together with the "obnoxious" Union League, "the Freedmen's Bureau," according to Hamilton, "remained a symbol of all that was evil in Reconstruction."

Defining Negroes as naturally shiftless and lazy, Dunning's students unanimously agreed that newly freed blacks posed a particularly troublesome problem for the South in 1865. Refusing to work, they collected in towns and quickly fell victim to disease and vice, and only then did Southern legislatures "wisely" enact a series of

Black Codes designed to restrict the pernicious influence of freedom on the newly emancipated blacks. Thompson noted that Southern whites recognized the need for some "action to be taken to prevent a large part of the Negro population from lapsing into permanent vagabondage...and the only possible method, apparently, was...some scheme of compulsory labor." Garner concurred and insisted that "the condition of things seemed to demand the immediate adoption of measures to check the demoralization of the freedmen and compel them to labor."

To Dunning and his students these Black Codes offered a plausible solution to most of the social and political problems arising in the South after the Civil War, but vindictive Northerners, still hoping to punish disloyal rebels, began looking for an excuse to impose Republican control over the conquered territory. In March of 1867, Dunning students argued, radicals in Congress overthrew the weak but well-intentioned Johnson and forced

13. Ibid., 156-57; Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, p. 118; Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, pp. 70-72; Davis, Reconstruction in Florida, pp. 411-12.


their own plan of Reconstruction on the South. Revolutionizing the political, economic, and social structure in the Confederate states, these Republicans demanded the formation of new state constitutions and new state legislatures, and they extended the suffrage to the recently emancipated freedmen. Congressional Reconstruction, Davis wrote, put "the bottom rail on top" and began the greatest social and political revolution in the history of western civilization.

Viewing this radical legislation disdainfully, the Dunning school averred that the "crude elements" in society controlled the South, and they insisted that by 1868 corruption abounded. Florida, Davis wrote, "was robbed of valuable resources in land, timber, and franchises." Bloody lawlessness increased, and "ballot-box stuffing became the order of the day." Under radical rule, he continued, a malicious lot of "self-seeking, reckless, shrewd and grafting politicians...entered into local


politics for all they could squeeze out of it."

Hamilton agreed and remarked in characteristic Dunning fashion that "Crime and violence of every sort ran unchecked until a large part of the South became a veritable hell through misrule which approximated to anarchy."

"[U]nprincipled adventurers," he added, "lifted into political power by the negro vote...unconsciously set about the destruction of civilization in the South."

Under the yoke of such tyranny, white Southerners delighted the Dunning school by finally asserting their natural dominance and overthrowing radical rule. Organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan and the Order of the White Camellia resorted to "comparatively harmless pranks" to frighten freedmen or expel "obnoxious northerners" and return political power to white hands. Intimidated by these night riders and disgusted with their Northern allies, blacks quickly abandoned the political arena.


Carpetbaggers also lost interest in politics and fled the South. After twelve years of tyranny, Dunning's students proudly explained, white Southerners successfully overturned the most tragic revolution in world history.

The members of the Dunning school presented this portrait of Reconstruction as an "objective," "scientific," and truthful interpretation of the period. Even though Southern-born, each historian believed he could identify his own biases and, having done so, exclude those biases from his thinking. His research, thus, would result in an accurate portrayal of the post-war era. Expressing his belief in these scientific principles, James W. Garner explained in his dissertation that although he felt "keenly his own prejudices," he had made "an earnest effort to divest himself of every influence arising from early environment or from later education that would tend to swerve him from a plain and unprejudiced statement of the truth." U.B. Phillips also described his Georgia and States Rights as a thorough scientific treatment of the subject. Claiming that his "method is that of the


investigator rather than the literary historian," he added that "My effort has been to seek out the cause of things, and to follow developments to their conclusions...

Despite their claims of neutrality, these young authors actually used their dissertations to make a special appeal for the South. Believing that their section had a history uniquely its own, Dunning's students worked to identify that uniqueness and explain it to others. "The South is a baffling puzzle to all outsiders," Phillips wrote, and "must remain so until insiders explain it."

Claiming that "the history of the United States has too long been written by Boston and largely written wrong," Phillips urged the South to "do its part before the final portrait of truth is presented."

Garner also emphasized the importance of Southerners writing their own history when he told an audience in 1901 that "the South has had a history peculiarly its own," but "a great deal of malignity, vilification and obloquy have been attached to her." Denying

26. Phillips, Georgia and States Rights, p. 5; See also Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina, p. v; Davis, Reconstruction in Florida, p. vii.

these charges, he claimed that "authentic records...will reveal the facts that the South has been rich in patriotism, heroes, [and] intellectual force," and he demanded that Southerners use these records to restore their section "to her proper place in...this great American commonwealth."

Certainly, "insiders" might provide a more accurate perspective on the South, as Phillips and Garner contended, but these Dunning students invariably substituted Southern mythology in the place of objective analysis. Indeed, several recent historians have remarked that most Southern authors born in the post-Civil War era heard their elders discuss on numerous occasions the glorious days before the war and the horrors that followed. Whenever describing

28. Garner, "Civil War Address," Garner Manuscript Collection. As part of the process of examining facts, the Dunning School gathered mountains of material and included much of it in their work. Indeed, they filled their dissertations with factual information on every aspect of Southern life in the 1870's, regardless of its effect on the political side of Reconstruction. C. Mildred Thompson, for example in Reconstruction in Georgia, p. 305, devoted an entire chapter to the economy of Georgia, even though she admitted that the political side of Reconstruction had no effect on Georgia's economy. In her chapter she included such items as the amount of railroad mileage, banking profits, and even shipping schedules. Sandwiched between discussions of political events, such facts often needlessly disrupted the continuity of the authors' narratives.

the antebellum South, therefore, Dunning's students invariably saturated their writing with romantic prose.

Davis's Reconstruction in Florida illustrates so well the nostalgic effect antebellum mythology had on the Dunning school that it bears quoting at length.

[The Old South] was a fair and far away region with broad and blooming fields, so rich...[and] so peaceful that people there were naively trustful of human nature and jails grew musty from long disuse; so beautiful that the sweetest songs of the nation tell of their placid experience. [The cotton fields] were...well tilled and ever expanding beneath the kindly sky...watched over by a wise and urbane and happy aristocracy and worked by contented Negroes. 30

After the Confederate defeat in 1865, Davis lamented,

The South was crushed. The conflict had swept over the Confederacy like some hideous flood...Its blood and sinew had been sucked under in the maelstrom,... [and] great changes had taken place. Weed-choked fields, desolate gardens, charred and blasted towns, ravished homes attested the reality of the change.... Many strong men wept like children...[and as] they journeyed homeward toward their veiled and stricken women, they passed wearily among the flowers and tender grasses of the spring. 31

The frequent appearances in the state studies of this deep-seated romanticism hindered these historians from effectively making a clinical search for historical truth. By believing in a fanciful mythology of their childhood, they accepted uncritically the honor, wisdom, and honesty of their fellow white Southerners. Oral reports


31. Ibid., 319-20.
and written stories by white authors or politicians of the Reconstruction period assumed a mystical sanctity. Fleming, for example, discovering that Hilary Herbert's "political document" Why the Solid South? contained material he wished to include in his own Reconstruction in Alabama, contacted Herbert about several citations for his book. A leading Alabama Democrat, Herbert admitted his inability to provide Fleming with the sources, but he wrote assuringly that though he no longer knew the sources of his statements, "I can consciously state that I made no assertion of the truth of which I did not have before me at the time satisfactory evidence." With no other guarantee of factual accuracy, Fleming proceeded to cite Why the Solid South? over fifty times in his dissertation.

32. Oswald Garrison Villard, author of John Brown 1800-1859 (Boston, 1910), complained of this trait when he offered a light hearted criticism of Hamilton's Life of Lee (New York, 1917). I...think you have succeeded extremely well with your task," Villard wrote the author. "Of course your task has become very easy since you have assumed the absolute rightness of secession and insist" that Lee and his Southern comrades "who quarreled with the federal government were beyond criticism." Villard to Hamilton, November 16, 1917, Hamilton Manuscript Collection.

33. Hilary Herbert to Walter Lynwood Fleming, October 11, 1902, Fleming Manuscript Collection, New York Public Library. Similarly, Hamilton, while discussing the "obnoxious" Freedmen's Bureau, states that the Bureau deliberately stirred trouble among all ranks of blacks, urging them to quit working for the white planter. Hamilton noted that his proof for this charge came "from many persons of entire reliability." Hamilton Reconstruction in North Carolina, p. 319.
This belief in Southern authorities extended even to politically affiliated newspapers, or "newspapers of good standing," as Thompson called them. Although these organs openly referred to freedmen as "darkies" and to carpetbaggers as "obnoxious Northerners," the Dunning students cited them unskeptically. Garner, for example, spent only ten days in Mississippi doing research for his dissertation. While there, he examined several Democratically aligned newspapers and selected two for the bulk of his supporting evidence on radical rule in Mississippi.

Although they used Southern white sources cavalierly, Dunning's students rejected virtually all evidence that originated from Republican sources. "The 1871 Ku Klux committee of Congress was a very one-sided affair," Fleming wrote, and "the testimony is practically without value for the historian on account of the immense proportion of hearsay reports and manufactured tales

34. Thompson, Reconstruction in Georgia, p. 347; See the Selma Messinger, Selma, Alabama, October 10, 12, and December 20, 22, 1867; The Montgomery Mail, Montgomery, Alabama, January 30, 1868, as cited in Fleming, Reconstruction in Alabama, p. 516.

35. William A. Dunning to Frederic Bancroft, April 5, 1901, Bancroft Manuscript Collection (Columbia University, New York). Garner's two newspapers were the Jackson Clarion and the Vicksburg Herald.
embraced in it." Also rejecting Republican evidence, Davis complained that radical claims were always "unsupported by citation of facts, and the facts when cited have the peculiar flavor of lies."

This acceptance of antebellum legends clearly forced the Dunning school to view Southern Republicans and Northern politicians with deep skepticism. Justification perhaps existed for such skepticism, but Dunning's students carried it to the point of abusing their evidence. Hamilton, for example, boldly accused the Freedmen's Bureau of extorting money from Southern planters. Deep in his footnotes, however, he admitted that although "this charge was widespread...the author has never been able to substantiate it." Later, chastizing North Carolina's Republican superintendent of education for favoring integrated schools,

36. Fleming, Reconstruction in Alabama, pp. 701-703; Hamilton Reconstruction in North Carolina, p. 573. For a similar statement regarding the Committee of Fifteen see Garner's Reconstruction in Mississippi, p. 153. Ironically, when Fleming did use this source, he often distorted its contents. Charging Alabama Republicans with corruption in the theft of money from railroad land sales, he wrote that "one railroad agent pocketed $33,447.99 received from fraudulent sales of this land." "The state," he said, "never received a cent." Fleming's principle source for this charge, the Ku Klux Report, p. 173 made no mention whatsoever of Republican corruption in Alabama. Fleming, Reconstruction in Alabama, p. 600.

Hamilton complained, "If the charge that he was of Negro
descent be true," his desire for integrated schools "was
not at all unnatural."

Garner and Ramsdell also distorted their historical
evidence. In Reconstruction in Mississippi Garner wrote
that military commanders in 1867 rarely tolerated freedom
of speech. One Mississippi native, Garner noted, "was tried
before the military commission and given ninety days hard
labor...for allowing himself in the heat of passion to say
that if it were in his power he would blow the old govern-
ment to atoms." Another man, according to Garner, "was
given two years for 'insulting the flag.'" The list of
punishments handed down by military courts in the Fourth
Military District, however, did not include the offenses
Garner listed. One man received ninety days for "disloyal

38. Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina, pp. 308, 611. An obvious example of poor scholarship
appeared on pages 366-367 of Hamilton's Reconstruction in
North Carolina. Referring to a political rally attended
by Republican Governor Holden, Hamilton remarked that
the speech of J.W. Holden, as reported, was very
violent. A part of it follows....'Go to the polls,
armed with guns, pistols and bludgeons and vote.
Implore the god of turpentine to shower down torches
or flames upon the dwellings of the rebels.'

In a footnote, Hamilton failed to cite his source
for this speech. Instead, he merely said, "Holden
absolutely denied saying anything of the sort, and there
is no doubt that he did not intend to do so."
utterances and assaulting a Negro," but contrary to Garner's claim, no person received "two years in prison for assaulting the flag."

Similarly, in discussing the legal status of Texas freedmen in 1865, Ramsdell wrote in Reconstruction in Texas, "General Granger declared that in accordance with the Presidential proclamation all slaves were free, and that this involved an absolute equality of personal and property rights." Ramsdell's source, Appleton's Annual Cyclopedia (1868), however, hardly suggested such "absolute equality." According to the Cyclopedia, Granger actually said, "No persons formerly slaves will be permitted to travel on public thoroughfares without passes or permits from their employer or to congregate in buildings or camps at or adjacent to any military post or towns."

Thompson also abused evidence by using innuendo and rumor without proof. Accusing the radicals in Georgia of corruption, she noted that the Democratic committee investigating bribery in Georgia "was able to put its


finger on little direct evidence of corruption."

Nevertheless, she said later, a strong suspicion existed 41 that "there must have been corruption somewhere...."

Dunning's students' unquestioned acceptance of Southern mythology not only led them to distort evidence, but also caused confusion about the meaning of important words. Nothing evoked as much emotion in these authors as did the terms "radical" and "carpetbagger," but neither Dunning nor his students ever adequately defined these epithets. Early in their works they categorized most non-secessionists as radical; later they applied the term to opponents of the provisional governments, then to all Southern Republicans, and finally to anyone who supported black equality. Carpetbaggers they defined as only those Northerners who traveled South to take advantage of the political chaos during Reconstruction, but they quickly attached the label to every Northerner living in the South whether he participated in politics or not. 42

Inconsistently used, these terms of opprobrium became meaningless in their works. In her Reconstruction in Georgia, for example, Thompson claimed that Governor

41. Thompson, Reconstruction in Georgia, pp. 237, 231, 246.

42. For a clear example of this inconsistency, see Fleming's Reconstruction in Alabama, pp. 398, 400, 351.
Rufus Bullock of Georgia surrounded himself with radical cronies, but she admitted that his allies failed to support the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Carpetbaggers, she continued, came to Georgia with the Union army and remained after the war to make their fortunes in politics. Immediately, however, she applied the term to Governor Bullock, even though the governor arrived in Georgia in 1859 and fought with the Confederate army during the war.

This a priori acceptance of Southern mythology not only distorted important terminology, but often blinded the Dunning School to internal contradictions in its own thesis. One example, which every student used, involved the Northerner who came South to take advantage of the cheap land prices after the war. According to these historians, Northern carpetbaggers invariably failed as farmers, not because they lacked experience in agriculture, but because they never understood the character of their African laborers. Astonished that the carpetbaggers "dealt with the negro as if he were a New Englander with a black skin," Fleming remarked that "They would not listen to southern advice" on how to handle the freedmen. Consequently, "in a few years the farmer was financially ruined" and

44. Ibid., 192.
turned his attention from farming to politics. "Both as employer and as manager, the northern men failed to control negro labor," and the Negroes themselves, Fleming added, soon became "disgusted with northern employers."

On the other hand, Dunning's students insisted that the Southern plantation owner "had the love and affection of the African," and controlled "him the only way that the negro can be controlled." As a result, slaves "remained faithful, even unto death." During the war, the loyal and loving Negro, Garner wrote, had every opportunity to escape, but instead he "slept in his log cabin by night and protected his master's interests by day, ever watching and waiting anxiously for his return."

Incredibly, however, these devoted and loyal blacks left their secure plantation after the war and fell under the spell of the same Northerners who earlier had "filled them with disgust." Now high officials in the Republican party, the "carpetbaggers," succeeded in luring the freedmen away from their loving masters, according to this


46. Fleming, Reconstruction in Alabama, p. 207.

Dunning scenario, by threatening to re-enslave any freedmen who voted Democratic."

Ironically, the same romanticism that permeated the state studies also stirred Dunning's students to seek reform for the New South. Studying in New York, these Southerners became acutely conscious of the South's parochial attitudes, and under Dunning's direction came to believe that they had a responsibility as enlightened scholars to help move the South toward orderly reform. Hamilton, for example, supported women's suffrage in North Carolina, saying that "the forward-looking friends of progress" in the state must rally to the women's cause and not allow North Carolina's commitment "to educational and social progress...waver." At the same time, Fleming, one of the most conservative members of the Dunning school, sought to alleviate "the appalling ignorance" in his state with an intensive campaign to reform Alabama education. Each summer Fleming held classes for high school teachers, preparing long bibliographies and detailed


lectures for their use in local schools. Similarly, C. Mildred Thompson, considering herself "a liberal Democrat," supported educational reform in Georgia and later served as a delegate on the Conference to Establish the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Despite their interest in these various reform issues, Dunning's students uniformly insisted that the key to progress in the South depended on a permanent solution to the "Negro problem." "The whole sorry scheme of things in the South," Phillips told a Northern audience in 1903, "hangs upon the status of the Negro, who remains the puzzled and passive ward of the nation." Describing the Negro as lazy, barbarous, and inferior to whites, Phillips blamed black Americans for hampering Southern progress.


Fleming wrote his good friend John DuBose that he found the ignorance in Alabama "appalling," and he intended to do something to change it. Ramsdell also worked to eliminate ignorance in Texas. Along with Hamilton he authored a textbook for Texas school children. Hamilton also published a biography of Henry Ford, Robert E. Lee, Abraham Lincoln, and Thomas Jefferson which he had written specifically for the youth of North Carolina. He intended, he told Henry Ford, to raise the educational as well as the moral quality of life for children in the state.

52. Thompson, "Introduction," Reconstruction in Georgia.

Paul Leland Haworth, concurring with this gloomy pronouncement, maintained that blacks in the 20th Century still retarded immigration of Europeans into the South, while Fleming asserted that "it was the Negro rather than slavery that prevented and still prevents" Southern economic advancement.

Faced with the stagnating effect of the "huge black blight," Dunning's students viewed the future of race relations in the South pessimistically. It might require centuries, Dunning himself had inferred, before blacks could assume a position of equality with whites, and in the meantime Southerners needed relief from an unbearable situation. Eschewing equality, these historians argued that disfranchisement, segregation, and caste offered the most acceptable answer to the "Negro problem."

54. Paul Leland Haworth, The United States in Our Own Times (Chicago, 1920), p. 507; also see Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina, p. 201.


56. Haworth, America in Ferment, p. 156.

Invariably, Dunning's students couched their quest for racial subordination in reformist terms, and constitutional reform became their primary aim. Indeed, early in the twentieth century Southern legislators began amending their state constitutions specifically to disfranchise black voters, and several of these Dunning students expressed their support for this important work. David Y. Thomas, for example, encouraged the adoption of the Initiative and Referendum in Arkansas's constitutional convention as two measures which would facilitate growth and progress for the state, and yet he also supported a constitutional provision that allowed blacks to participate in politics only when they paid a poll tax. Similarly, Fleming couched his request for constitutional changes in reformist terms, claiming that democracy would flourish in the South only after the nation repealed the Fifteenth Amendment. Overturning this constitutional amendment, he said, would end the fears Southerners held of black domination generated during Reconstruction and encourage more diversification in the solid white South.

58. David Y. Thomas, "Reform and share system," Address delivered at the University of Arkansas, 1931, Thomas Manuscript Collection (University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas).

Not surprisingly, the most enthusiastic support for constitutional reform of this type came from the pen of J.G. deRoulhac Hamilton. Deeply inspired by Woodrow Wilson's presidential candidacy in 1912, Hamilton eagerly joined the mainstream of New Freedom politicians in North Carolina who advocated reform on social, economic, and political levels. In a series of newspaper articles written between 1912 and 1913 he insisted that "it is time for progress [and] ...for the cause of enlightened government" in the state, and he demanded the creation of a new constitution which would guarantee woman's rights, restrict the influence of the rich, and insure workman's compensation in North Carolina's nascent industrial system. Hamilton, however, made it clear that he sought

Garner's "The Fourteenth Amendment and Southern Representation," South Atlantic Quarterly, IV (July, 1905), 214; and Holland Thompson's New South, pp. 56, 203.

60. Hamilton campaigned vigorously for Wilson during the 1912 election. When Chapel Hill Democrats held their precinct meeting on May 18, 1912, for example, Hamilton proposed that the delegates to the state convention support Wilson in the Democratic national convention, and during the campaign he wrote scores of letters supporting Wilson's candidacy. See the minutes of the Democratic precinct meeting, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, May 18, 1912, Hamilton Manuscript Collection. Also see letters from Clarence Poe to Hamilton, December 18, 1912, Hamilton Manuscript Collection, and Thomas J. Jarvas to Hamilton, December 24, 1912, Hamilton Manuscript Collection.

these constitutional reforms for whites only. Inferring that black participation in the political process inhibited progress, he proposed eliminating the threat of black domination by rewriting the old 1868 constitution. An "alien" work, the Reconstruction constitution "was forced upon the state...," according to Hamilton, "at the point of the bayonet" by a combination of federal power and votes of the "newly-emancipated ignorant negroes." In the hands of the carpetbaggers and scalawags, this "evil" and "misbegotten" document became a tool to integrate Southern schools, enfranchise black freedmen, levy exorbitant taxes, and legitimize inter-racial marriages. As a result, progress stopped, wrote Hamilton, chaos reigned, and North Carolina stagnated. Although he applauded the work of Democratic redeemers in 1875 who repealed the most "obnoxious" aspects of the "alien" law, he characterized their constitutional amendments as insufficient, since "North Carolina still endures the curse and burden of the carpetbagger's work." Using his interpretation of Reconstruction as a lever to convince white Southerners of the need for a constitutional convention, he concluded his denunciation of blacks and their Republican constitution with a thinly disguised plea for disfranchisement, segregation, and caste. "Make a determined effort...," he

62. Ibid., December 15, and December 22, 1912.
urged his fellow citizens, "to free yourself from the hindrances which retard you every day, to remove the obstacles which...confront and thwart your representatives...and thus to secure a new opportunity for yourselves, your children, and your well-loved state."

After constitutional conventions, educational reform became one of the Dunning school's chief goals. Considering themselves enlightened, these Southerners opposed demagogues like Ben Tillman and James K. Vardaman who sought an end to all black education. Instead, they argued that the prosperity and stability of the South depended upon the "education of its mass of illiterate population, white and black." Insisting that "Ignorance is not the cure for the race ills of the South," Garner remarked that "no greater calamity could befall the South than to adopt a policy based on that view." Blacks, he repeated often, can and do learn from education. In an obvious rebuttal to Vardaman, he added that "everyone who has studied the question must admit that our schools...have elevated the standards and morals of the Negro race." Phillips agreed. "The task of the present generation of Southerners," he said in 1903, "has

63. Ibid., January 19, 1913.

been to counteract and to subject again the forces of ignorance."

Nevertheless, the Dunning school made it clear that black education in the 20th Century should bind the Negro into, not out of, his second-class status. Blacks had to learn, wrote Holland Thompson, a Dunning student whose works concentrated more on the 20th Century South than on Reconstruction, that education did not eliminate them from labor, and that classical Northern education offered little for them in the 20th Century. "The Negro still thinks that the purpose of education is to free him from manual labor," Thompson asserted, but fortunately men like Booker T. Washington knew better. Indeed, according to Paul Leland Haworth, Washington wisely ignored the radical ideas of his inflammatory Northern contemporaries, and recognized that "the great black blight" covering the South could only "be removed by training...the race to do intelligent and honest work." By stressing industrial training and delaying their quest for racial equality, Haworth said, Washington and his followers "pointed the way, the one best for the Negro and the Whites."

66. Holland Thompson, New South, p. 177.
67. Haworth, America in Ferment, p. 156.
The insistence by Dunning's students on second-class education for blacks appeared not only in their writings on the 20th Century but in their various studies of the Reconstruction period as well. Hamilton, for example, insisted that the action of Northern teachers in 1867 had "hampered Southern progress ever since." In his view, "they opened no new fields for the activities of the negro, and, in far too many instances entirely unfitted him for the sphere for which his circumstances, as well as his nature and capabilities, best prepared him." Similarly, Fleming described "Yankee" education during Reconstruction as "almost wholly bad." The freedmen "were encouraged to believe that all knowledge was within their reach...and with it they would be the white man's equal." Disgusted by "obnoxious" northern educators, Fleming condemned northerners for teaching the freedman "that he must distrust the whites and give up all habits and customs that would remind him of his former condition; he must not say master and mistress, nor take off his hat when speaking to a white person." "In teaching him not to be servile," Fleming complained, "they taught him to be insolent."


70. Fleming, Reconstruction in Alabama, pp. 465-469.
Clearly, education for the Dunning school represented a tool not to elevate the Negro, but "to...secure control over [him]." In the 20th Century, as well as during Reconstruction, education, according to Fleming, had become an absolute necessity "to keep him from stealing, from idleness and from a return to barbarism." "It was necessary," he added, "to substitute the discipline of education for the discipline of slavery," and like other members of the Dunning school he used his dissertation to illustrate that idea.

They also used their state studies to register approval of disfranchisement occurring throughout the South. Indeed, their interpretation of Reconstruction must have helped justify the disfranchisement movement during their lifetime. In his Reconstruction in Florida, for example, Davis described the Southern whites in Florida as "helpless" as they watched "the national government bind...the burden of negro suffrage on the country," and Fleming asserted in his own Reconstruction in Alabama that Northern Radicals made a mockery out of the democratic process by giving the suffrage to bewildered Negroes. Insisting that freedmen "did not know what voting was," Fleming belittled black suffrage by saying, "for what or

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for whom they were voting they knew not--they were simply obeying the orders of the Bureau chiefs." Hamilton agreed. Portraying blacks as incompetent voters, he remarked that their gullibility in politics encouraged corruption among radical Republicans. Consequently, when the Southern states eventually disfranchised black voters, Fleming concluded, they performed a badly needed service.

Disfranchisement, however, was not enough. The Dunning students insisted, both in their state studies and in their writings on contemporary events, that Southern progress required subordinating blacks firmly into a subservient place on the social ladder. Garner led the attack for this reform. "Slavery," he said in a 1901 address, restrained blacks before 1860, but emancipation allowed Negroes to congregate in urban areas, far removed "from the rural communities, where their ideals conditions are best attained." In his estimation urban Negroes, especially after 1900, had grown more dangerous. Disturbed by their "loaf[ing] about the street," Garner argued that the freedmen's propensity for crime required their

restrictions from "towns and cities and their segregation in particular localities."

In their state studies Dunning's students reaffirmed this point with dramatic emphasis. According to Ramsdell, freedmen in 1865 required some type of restraints to insure their own safety and the stability of society. "The social and economic condition of the freedmen during 1865 and 1866," Hamilton continued, "might well [have] excited pity." Unable and often unwilling to care for themselves, they loafed about a town falling victim to vice and disease. Crime, destitution, and sickness became so general, Hamilton added, that Southern legislatures finally enacted a series of laws forcing blacks back to the plantation.

Garner also proclaimed the wisdom of legislation that regulated the freedmen's activities. In his

Haworth reiterated this idea in his United States in Our Own Times. "Among the wisest men of both races," he wrote, "there seems to be a growing consensus that the two races should be kept separate, that there should be race distinction but not race discrimination." Haworth, U.S. In Our Own Times, p. 510.

75. Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, p. 72.

76. Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina, pp. 156-57; Thompson, Reconstruction in Georgia, p. 49. Thompson admitted that Georgia was fortunate during Reconstruction to have a union commander that required the freedmen to work, preventing their idleness.
Reconstruction in Mississippi, he noted that shortly after Appomattox the freedmen came "to believe that liberty meant license." Unscrupulous Bureau agents and Negro soldiers told him not to work for a white master, Garner asserted, and, as a result, the freedman abandoned his plantation for a life of leisure. Contending that "robery and larceny grew alarmingly after 1865, Garner accused the freedmen of stealing from neighboring farms without the slightest remorse. Such chaotic social conditions, he said, demanded the immediate adoption of Black Codes "which...did not work an injustice to the Negro." They merely forced him to cease his roving and become a producer.

To these authors the criminal tendency among blacks not only required Black Codes following the Civil War but often necessitated forceful action in the 20th Century as well. Although they condemned the violent tactics of poor, "prejudiced whites," these historians, nevertheless, felt that black atrocities understandably inflamed even the most tolerant white Southerner. Admitting that mobs of poor whites "have so often stained the reputation of the South by defiance of the law and by horrible cruelty" to blacks, Holland Thompson, nevertheless, asserted that "it must not

77. Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, p. 118.
be forgotten that over certain parts of the South a nameless dread is always hovering." In some areas conditions had become so bad that an unaccompanied white woman "dislikes to walk through an unlighted village street at night," according to Thompson, "...and she does not dare to walk through the woods alone." Claiming that "The rural districts are poorly policed," he added that "...the ears of the farmer working in the field are always alert for the sound of the bell or the horn calling for help, perhaps from his own home." "Occasionally," Thompson said, "in spite of all percautions, some human animal, inflamed by brooding upon the unattainable, leaves a victim outraged and dead, or worse than dean."

Thompson, quite clearly, intended for his reader to infer that white Southerners hardly deserved blame if they reacted angrily to such atrocities. Indeed, Dunning students often exonerated Southerners for using violent means to end the horrors of Reconstruction. To Fleming, the chaotic and destructive nature of radical rule made "some type of police power...necessary," and white Southerners wisely resorted to extralegal organizations "to protect white citizens and to bring some order out of

social chaos." Similarly, Hamilton insisted that Northern radicals had "destroyed any possibility of ... control[ling]...the lower race except by force," and he praised the Ku Klux Klan for its part in restoring democracy and majority rule to the South. Describing the Klan as an instrument of reform, Fleming noted with satisfaction how this society "kept the negro quiet and freed them to some extent from the baleful influence of alien leaders." "People slept safely at night; women and children," according to Fleming, "were again somewhat safe when walking abroad...'bad niggers' ceased to be bad."

In addition, he said, "carpetbaggers and scalawags ceased to batten on the Southern communities, and the worst ones were driven from the country." Concluding on a sober note, he wrote that whenever "people find themselves persecuted by aliens, or by the law, they will find some means outside the law for protecting themselves."

These contemporary opinions of Dunning's students easily found their way into the various state studies.


81. Fleming, Reconstruction in Alabama, pp. 689, 709.
Although presentism affects every historical work, these "enlightened" Southerners employed their distinctive versions of the past to propagandize for racial subordination in the early 20th Century. Complete with distortions of factual evidence, they wove into their dissertations justifications for caste, disfranchisement, and segregation; and the historical profession rewarded their efforts with thunderous applause.
CHAPTER FIVE.

THE DUNNING SCHOOL

AND

THE NORTHERN STATE STUDIES OF RECONSTRUCTION

The Southern state studies have become synonymous with the Dunning school and represent its best known works, but Dunning also produced a group of Northern students who examined the Civil War and Reconstruction from a different perspective. David Donald noted that their studies included some outstanding products of historical work, and James C. Mohr asserted that Dunning's Northern state studies remained unsurpassed for over sixty years. Dunning himself proudly noted to a friend in 1910, "I have several students working on the various states, including Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan, ... and it will not be very long before some of these monographs begin to appear."


Compared with twenty-two Southern students, however, only six Northerners completed their degrees under Dunning. Beginning in 1910, Sidney Brummer produced his *Political History of New York State During the Civil War*, followed quickly by George H. Porter's *Ohio Politics During the Civil War Period* (1911), O.B. Clark's *The Politics of Iowa During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (1911), Homer Stebbins's *Political History of the State of New York 1865-1869* (1912), Harriette Dilla's *The Politics of Michigan 1865-1878* (1914), and Edith Ware's *Public Opinion in Massachusetts During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (1914).

Remarkably similar in methodology, thesis, and writing style, the Northern state studies, like their Southern counterparts, examined national events from the perspective of their individual states, but unlike their Southern colleagues, they eschewed sectionalism and wrapped their studies in a nationalistic framework. Inspired by both the Germanic philosophy of William A. Dunning and the intense nationalism of the Spanish-American War, these authors viewed the Civil War as a grave threat not only to the Union, but to its conservative tradition of constitutional rule, and they praised Abraham Lincoln's unrelenting efforts to preserve the Union.

7, 1910, Bancroft Manuscript Collection, Columbia University, New York, New York.
Although rejoicing at the successful conclusion of the war, Dunning's students described the post-war era as another time of trial for the nation. In their eyes, the "sane" policy for reconstruction offered by Lincoln and Johnson ended abruptly when radical Republicans changed their party's focus from one of healing the nation to one of oppressing the South. Referring to the radicals as "vengeful" men whose policies served not to soothe, but to reopen old war wounds, they condemned Republican attempts to enfranchise blacks in the North and punish Confederates in the South.

Despite the nationalistic theme presented in the Northern state studies, these Dunning students clearly had much in common with their Southern colleagues. Indeed, their portrait of the Civil War and Reconstruction as a desperate struggle to preserve America's traditional ideals of liberty and democracy had a hypocritical if not dishonest hue to it. On one hand these students praised Lincoln's preservation of the Union with its constitutional heritage, but on the other they eschewed condemnation of slaveholders, black codes, and Ku Klux violence. Moreover, while applauding every effort which helped preserve America's constitutional heritage, they withheld their support for any measure that offered democracy and constitutional equality to Northern or
Southern blacks. Far from presenting a fresh analysis of the era, therefore, Dunning's Northern students merely reinforced the interpretation proffered by their Southern counterparts and published works that served as little more than a Northern apology for the Southern thesis of Reconstruction.

The nationalistic theme appearing in these Northern state studies received its scholarly form in the Burgess and Dunning seminars. Both John W. Burgess and William A. Dunning held strong nationalistic feelings. The Civil War, for example, still smoldered in Burgess's memory, and he expressed to his students the importance of the war in solidifying a divided nation. Dunning, although trained by Burgess, deemphasized the emotional side of his mentor's nationalism, much to the liking of his Southern students, but his belief in the Hegelian ideal of the nation-state as an organic whole, the product of centuries of development, encouraged his Northern students to view the Civil War as merely one stage in the consolidation of the nation.


Charles E. Merriam, Dunning's first political science graduate, capsulized this philosophy in his 1901 dissertation. Describing the modern political state in evolutionary terms, he wrote that a democratic nation "is not a [contractual] agreement among men," but an "instinctive" historical process that has developed over a long period of time. To Merriam, therefore, democracy, "was...not a right equally enjoyed by all [cultures]," but a political system "dependent upon the degree of civilization reached by a given people, [which]...increases as this [civilization] advances."

Accepting the United States as the highest product of this evolutionary process, Dunning's Northern students discussed the Civil War in terms of uniting "the country [to preserve]...Union, nationality and democracy." Naturally, they approved of every patriotic gesture during the war that facilitated reunion. Brummer, for example, insisted that for a few months after Fort Sumter, New Yorkers offered a "noble" demonstration of support for the


7. Edith Ware, Public Opinion in Massachusetts During the Civil War and Reconstruction (New York, 1914), p. 198.
President, rallying behind their state as it prepared for war. Maintaining that "These were the days when great Union-saving meetings...were common through the North," he praised both Republicans and Democrats for joining together in a common cause. Ware agreed. While applauding those Republicans who stood for "Union and the uncompromising support of the administration," she also congratulated the Democrats in Massachusetts who "demanded vigorous prosecution of the war." The "unanimity of sentiment in which all partisan differences were forgotten" indicated, in her view, that the state had "no issue between the parties; politicians differed only upon incidentals." "Fundamentally," she wrote, "their aim was the same--Union."

This nationalistic fervor showed with exceptional clarity in Brummer's work when he attacked Northern


Of course, Republicans who supported Lincoln received great praise, but the Dunning students also lavishly praised Democrats who abandoned their differences of opinion long enough to unite behind the administration in this crisis. Thomas Alvard, Brummer wrote, represented one such Democrat. Even though a high ranking Democrat, Alvard "merged into the Union party," and, according to Brummer, "heartily supported the war measures of the administration." Brummer, Political History of New York, pp. 166-167.

9. Ware, Public Opinion in Massachusetts, pp. 82, 70. In Iowa, Clark said, the danger to the Union united Americans so firmly that parties became needless. Clark, Politics of Iowa, p. 104.
Democrats who opposed Lincoln's handling of the war. "Alas," Brummer wrote, "...the noble impulse to bury party action during the country's crisis soon spent its force," as the Democrats "deliberately rejected the opportunity to continue the unanimity of sentiment which the fall of Fort Sumter had brought about." Democratic Mayor Fernando Wood and Governor Horatio Seymour deliberately "refused to go into the Union party," according to Brummer, but sought instead to further their own political ambition by encouraging resistance to Lincoln's call for a draft and the sale of war bonds. Describing Wood as a "demagogue," Brummer noted that the mayor's "former connection with the Southern fire-eaters" and his plan to establish an independent city of New York made him a constant irritant to the national administration. Seymour's patriotic attitude, while not disloyal, "approached that of...Wood['s]," according to Brummer, as he resisted forming a "strong patriotic bond of cooperation [with the national administration] which Lincoln aimed at." Entering the path of opposition "in the midst of a gigantic national struggle for life," Seymour emerged a small man in Brummer's

10. Brummer, Political History of New York, pp. 150, 154. Also see Dilla, Politics of Michigan, pp. 26, 36; and Porter, Ohio Politics, p. 42.
eyes, "while Lincoln's tact and firmness gave renewed proof of his statesmanship."

Similarly, Porter and Ware also criticized Democrats who failed to aid the administration at a time when "the life of the nation was in peril." Ware noted that after a short period of time, enthusiasm for the war cooled as "sullen" Democrats objected to the confiscation of Southern slaves and to the conscription of Northern soldiers. Although acknowledging that "the majority of Massachusetts citizens saw beyond personal interests" and believed the draft represented "a wise policy," she nevertheless lamented that the Democratic "demands for peace and criticism of Lincoln grew louder and louder" during the war. Porter criticized Ohio "copperheads" not only for their refusal to support the Union, but also for their objection to Lincoln's suspension of constitutional rights during the war. In a rare departure from Dunning's teaching

11. Ibid., pp. 176, 256, 444-46.

12. Ware, Public Opinion in Massachusetts, pp. 74, 113, 126-29. Agreeing with Ware, Dilla noted that "the personal and local elements in Michigan...overshadowed the more important issues of the war and preservation of the Union." In Michigan, factionalism resulted, she complained, because the Republicans zealously committed themselves to supporting "the strong if not violent Senator [Zuchariah Chandler]," and it forced those who opposed his style and manner into the Democratic party.

13. Ibid., pp. 131, 136.
he accepted the curtailment of habeas corpus as a necessary, although unfortunate act to preserve the Union, and he viewed Democratic critics such as Clement L. Vallandigham as "constitut[ing]...a dangerous opposition" to the war effort. While acknowledging that "the Democrats...were right...in their stand against arbitrary arrest," Porter noted that they failed, nevertheless, to see the urgent need for such policies. In his eyes, criticism of Lincoln's actions by Vallandigham and his fellow Democrats "had to be put aside."

Not only the Democrats but also Republicans who participated in political obstructionism received condemnation from Dunning's Northern students. Both Brummer and Stebbins, for example, displayed considerable ire at the political antics of Republicans like Thurlow Weed. Complaining that Weed had "sold out" to the "gods of expediency" when he attempted to oust Lincoln as party

14. Porter, Ohio Politics, p. 199. Dunning had written that Lincoln abused his power as President. During the war, he argued, Lincoln twisted the function of the federal government for his own political ends and "liberty and self-government" disappeared. Dunning, "Fundamental Concepts of the Nineteenth Century Politics," quoted in Truth in History (New York, 1937), 72. Similarly, Brummer noted that the suppression of habeas corpus represented a serious digression in constitutional law; nevertheless, he criticized the "treasonous" Democrats in New York for "...harping on the constitution and personal rights and advocating peace." Censuring Horatio Seymour, he wrote that the governor picked the "most inopportune time" to "haggle...over constitutional rights." Brummer, Political History of New York, pp. 125, 154, 322.
leader in 1864, Brummer wrote that this "evil genius" lost a very real opportunity of rising to the level of a national statesman by exacerbating the internal divisions among Republicans. Stebbins also criticized Weed's opportunistic nature, insisting that he "was largely responsible for the split in the administration forces during the Civil War." "Certainly Weed's constant use of expediency," Stebbins wrote, "tended to promote division and kept Weed from rising above the plane of a politician."

Despite their intense criticism of Lincoln's Northern opponents, these Dunning students wrote their state studies from a position less antagonistic to the South than their nationalistic rhetoric indicated at first glance. Their anger, for example, at Democratic politicians resulted not from a disagreement over the conservative values expressed by the Democrats, but from the methods that the peace candidates advanced to perpetuate those values. The portrait these authors offered of Lincoln also assumed an extremely conservative tone as they praised the president for preserving a Union that posed no threat to the South and for championing the cause not of blacks and emancipation, but of the "common [white]"

people." Divorcing Lincoln from any abolitionist tendency, they attacked the anti-slavery sentiment in the North as "given to action rather than reflection," and they criticized abolitionists for threatening the evolutionary heritage of the nation.

Indeed, in the eyes of these authors, the abolitionists represented the real villains during the war and posed the greatest threat to the American tradition of liberty and democracy. Brummer, for instance, classified the anti-slavery editor Horace Greeley as a "foolish" and

17. Merriam, A History of Political Theories, p.204. In Dunning's seminar, these students learned the important role that both reason and emotion played in Western civilization. Reason, Dunning had taught them, became the necessary ingredient for a healthy, prosperous society. Reason and rational thinking formed the foundation of American constitutional government and had grown hand in hand with democratic thought. Reason, however, had a powerful enemy. Emotion, Dunning wrote, appealed to man's darker nature and worked against the salubrious effects of evolution and rationality. Emotionalists ignored all sense of propriety and tradition in a society, often desiring change and reform without careful consideration of its effects. Dunning, "University as Rationalizer," Truth in History, p. 137, 139, 143.

Dunning's students, adhering closely to their mentor's argument, chose Lincoln and his policies as the standard for rationalism in America. Only the president's calm and steady hand could guide the nation through this time of peril, they repeated frequently. Unfortunately, his death in 1865 allowed the radicals to pursue their own unrestrained desires. Without Lincoln's sense of reason and destiny, they wrote, the extremists in Congress dictated disastrous terms for Reconstruction. Indeed, according to these students, "extremists" in the North threatened the nation's evolutionary traditions and posed a greater danger to the Union than the Southern rebels.
unstable man. He insisted that Greeley committed a "colossal blunder" by objecting to Lincoln's position on secession and by arguing that the Southern states had a right to secede and should go in peace. Porter also chided Ohio Republicans such as Benjamin Wade and Governor Henry Dennison for their abolitionist tendencies during the war. By disobeying Lincoln's directive to return fugitive slaves to Kentucky, Dennison only sharpened factional lines in Ohio, wrote Porter, at a time when factions endangered the cause of nationalism. Similarly, Ware criticized "extremists" in Massachusetts not only for refusing to support the national administration, but for preventing loyal citizens from supporting the war. Even though many citizens "were loyal to the Union," she wrote, "their hatred for the abolitionists was so strong that they were loath to join themselves to the Republicans for they felt that the war had resulted in a measure from abolitionist agitation."


19. Porter, Ohio Politics, p. 42. Porter also noted that loyal Ohio Republicans not only eschewed abolitionism, they helped Democrats defeat a radical referendum calling for emancipation in 1860, p. 35. Brummer went a step further and intimated that the election of 1860 showed the South that the Republicans posed no threat to Southern interests. In New York, Lincoln won the election handily, he said, but a constitutional amendment allowing blacks to vote lost by 140,000 votes. Brummer, p. 98.

20. Ware, Public Opinion in Massachusetts, p. 74.
Like many of Ware's loyal citizens, the Dunning students also held Northern abolitionists responsible for starting the war. Merriam presented this standard Dunning argument in his 1901 political science dissertation by indicting abolitionists for their incorrigible attitude toward the South. Southern slaveholders, he wrote, correctly declared that "liberty can be given only to those who have the political sophistication enough to use it, and they were also right in maintaining that two greatly unequal races cannot exist side by side on terms of perfect equality."

Consequently, when the abolitionists demanded that blacks "should immediately...be placed in full possession of the highest political rights," their demands, according to Merriam, forced the slaveowner into a defensive position, precluding compromise and rational discussion. Following Merriam's outline, Porter stated that Ohio citizens regarded slavery with disdain, but believed, nevertheless, "that the abolitionists were to blame for the [nation's] existing trouble." Similarly, O.B. Clark noted that although Iowa's citizens reacted "against the evils of slavery," they held a dim view of the

22. Ibid., p. 204.
abolitionists. According to Clark, the anti-slavery men "felt that they had a mission ..., [and] moved somewhat by the spirit of the crusader they extended their propaganda into every nook and corner of the state, making proselytes to their sacred cause." This cause, he reminded his reader, would result in "the greatest crisis in the country's history."  

Ware also agreed that the abolitionists constituted a threat to the South, but unlike the Southern students, she went to great lengths to divorce the Republican party in Massachusetts from the abolitionist cause. Uncomfortable with the reputation her state had acquired as a stronghold of emancipation, she asserted that only a small minority of Republicans had anti-slavery leanings, and only the most "extreme" favored the policies of "fanatics" like John Brown. Indeed, the majority of Republicans in her work eschewed abolitionist ideals. They believed in rational discussion and compromise, and, like Lincoln, they worked


By adopting this nationalistic perspective, with its inherent antipathy for radicals, the Dunning school fell into a methodological dilemma. On one hand they believed that irrepressible evolutionary forces brought North and South into conflict, but on the other they accused Northern abolitionists of starting the war. Following the Dunning thesis that stressed the Civil War as an inevitable, even necessary, step in the ultimate evolutionary growth of the Union, they nevertheless could not resist blaming abolitionists for causing the war.
solely to preserve the Union. Portraying Republicans as willing to listen to Southern complaints, she insisted that they eagerly sought a compromise with the South in 1860 in order to forestall disunion. Republicans, Ware quoted one party leader as saying, felt that a "'free... interchange of ideas from different parts of the Union could exercise a beneficial influence.'" "Naturally," she concluded, "any concession was loudly attacked by the radical...abolitionists."

Of course, these authors objected to emancipation except as a military necessity. Belittling freedom for blacks on moral grounds, Dilla wrote that "liberation of the slaves would be tolerated, if at all, only as a war measure, for the alienation of loyal slave-owners was... to be avoided." Ware added that freedom for Southern slaves "was never regarded as the main end of the war by the majority in [Massachusetts]." Although noting that emancipation satisfied the "anti-slavery idealism and scruples of some," she accepted abolition only as "a policy of expediency for the accomplishment of the great purpose—the preservation of the Union and the perpetuation of

25. Ware, Public Opinion in Massachusetts, pp. 53-4.
"Union, not abolition," she concluded, "was the watchword of Massachusetts."

Although portraying the abolitionists and their ideas as a threat to the Union, these authors praised Lincoln for successfully holding the "extremists" in check throughout his administration. After his death, however, radical Republicans, according to Dilla, Stebbins, and Ware, secured control of the Union party, abandoned the cause of reunification, and spread their hatred for all things Southern across the nation. Referring to the "extremists" in New York as "rash" and "vengeful," Stebbins displayed his anger at the Republican Party's postwar policy by criticizing the radicals in the Empire State for failing to give "aid to the national administration to help achieve a speedy settlement of the Reconstruction problem." In addition, he condemned the radicals for their "obnoxious" legislation and for their constant attacks on the presidency, but he praised Andrew Johnson as a sincere man and his supporters as "genuine" unionists.

27. Ware, Public Opinion in Massachusetts, p. 83.
28. Ibid., p. 108. Also see Porter, Ohio Politics, pp. 35, 42.
30. Ibid., p. 407.
31. Ibid., p. 132-35.
Dilla also noted that Republican "extremists" pursued a policy of "vengeance bent on banishment and confiscation in the South," and, like Stebbins, she condemned them for declaring "against speedy restoration and amnesty." In her opinion, Michigan suffered greatly at the hands of "odious" and "violent" radicals like Zacharia Chandler. Symbolizing the worst qualities of radical Reconstruction, Chandler used his "absolute and arbitrary" leadership, his "hostility to amnesty and Southern rights," and his "bitterness toward...Southern interests," according to Dilla, to perpetuate "unfortunate animosities [between North and South] for an unnecessarily long period of time..."

Although critical of radical philosophy regarding reunification, Dunning's Northern students expressed their greatest displeasure at Republican plans to provide civil

32. Dilla, Politics of Michigan, pp. 92, 184.

33. Ibid., p. 88. Ware, although more conciliatory to the majority of Republicans in Massachusetts, also attacked radicals tenaciously. Most party members remained faithful to their original goals of reuniting the nation, she wrote, but the "ultra-radical was bent upon two policies: punishment and confiscation...." Portraying the extreme radicals as paranoid, she ridiculed them for viewing Johnson as a "'dangerous and desperate man,'" who wanted to enter "into a conspiracy with disloyal men, North and South, 'to place the country permanently into the hands of dangerous enemies of the government.'" Ware, Public Opinion in Massachusetts, pp. 153, 162, 166.
rights to black Americans. Like their Southern colleagues, these historians viewed blacks as an inferior race, and they criticized Republican attempts to grant universal male suffrage to the "ignorant" freedmen. Merriam, for example, had referred to blacks as "unequal" and argued that the freedmen possessed too little sophistication to participate successfully in American democracy. Like Merriam, Dilla displayed an anti-Negro bias by noting that during the antebellum era, Michigan "had a small percentage of negroes in the population" which reduced the need for "social...restrictive legislation." Chiding radicals after Appomattox for having "Africanized" the political situation in the North and South, she agreed with Michigan Democrats that blacks should not receive the suffrage until they became "sufficiently advanced 'to appreciate something of the duty and obligation of citizens.'"

34. Dilla, Politics of Michigan, p. 29.


36. Dilla, Politics of Michigan, p. 30. Clark agreed and noted that blacks constituted a nuisance as they wandered into Iowa after emancipation. Clark, Politics of Iowa, p. 143.

37. Ibid., p. 56.

Stebbins also agreed that the radicals deserved condemnation for advocating universal suffrage, not only because blacks had little qualification to vote, but because the radicals planned to exploit the black voter for their own political purposes.
Ware also viewed blacks as inferior and, like Dilla, she opposed radical demands for universal suffrage. Accepting the conservative Republican attitude that "making immediate voters of the freedmen was both absurd and dangerous," she applauded Massachusetts Governor John A. Andrew's proposal for restricting the black vote. In his "far-sighted," "sane," and "judicious" plan, Andrew, according to Ware, opposed "reorganization [of the South] by the colored vote," since it would almost surely produce "anarchy and chaos." Instead, the governor urged Congress to consider a literacy requirement for all black voters. Unfortunately, in Ware's eyes, the wisdom of this "far-reaching" plan received scant attention from national "would be savers of the Union," who pushed forward with their own constitutional amendment designed solely "to preserve the fruits of victory." Repeating her theme that Massachusetts Republicans largely ignored extremists' causes, she noted that when the Fifteenth Amendment finally became law, Republicans in her state met it with little enthusiasm. Indeed, they "expressed...satisfaction" at the new law only because the amendment finally "put an end" to Reconstruction. Even the Democrats willingly accepted the

38. Ware, *Public Opinion in Massachusetts*, p. 155.
amendment, Ware said, in order to end the whole affair and move on to new issues.

While Reconstruction may have ended tamely in Massachusetts with the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, it took the constant revelations of fraud and corruption, according to Dilla, to overturn Republican rule in Michigan. Corruption, she maintained, had reached epidemic proportions. Complaining of a great lack of "morality in politics," she accused the Republican Commissioner of State Land Office of gross impropriety in office and insisted that his fraudulent activities warranted impeachment. She also accused Senator Chandler of helping to "cheat... [the Democratic party] of its rightful victory" in the 1876 presidential election. Agreeing with Democratic spokesmen that Chandler's "political methods...were well known to everybody," she argued that "it was not strange" that Chandler figured prominently in the "unscrupulous manipulation of the returns from the dubious Southern states."

This type of Republican chicanery, she wrote, when combined with high taxation "of the public for private gain" and

40. Ibid., p. 181.


42. Ibid., pp. 192, 214.
fraud at the election booths, eventually angered even the most loyal citizens sufficiently to overturn Republican rule.

Stebbins described the end of Reconstruction in New York in a similar fashion. Intitling one chapter of his work "Wall Street and the Legislature," he argued that no state had a "more bare-faced case of financial or legislative debauchery than New York's Republican assembly." "[It] may be safely said," he wrote, "that the New York legislature, at that time, was corrupt." Indeed, when the legislature issued railroad stock, several Republican assemblemen received bribes, according to Stebbins, while the assembly ignored the entire affair. Eventually, however, "the leadership of men like Stevens, Sumner and Greeley, the treatment of Reconstruction to the exclusion of other matters of national interest, [and] the loss of faith in the Republican state party because of corruption in office...made a stench in the public nostrils," Stebbins said, so that loyal New Yorkers finally demanded an end to radical rule.

43. Ibid., pp. 121, 184.
44. Stebbins, Political History of New York, 279, 302.
45. Ibid., pp. 410-11.
Summarizing the Northern students' interpretation of Reconstruction in his state study on New York, Stebbins illustrated how closely the Northern thesis resembled that of their Southern counterparts. Had the conservative Republicans or Democrats controlled Congress, instead of the radicals, he said, "it is fair to assume that certain of the Reconstruction Acts...would have been abrogated and that the readjustment of the difficult situation in the South would have followed more natural lines." Disappointed that Horatio Seymour failed to win the presidential election in 1868, Stebbins remarked that a Democratic victory would certainly have produced "less bloodshed, less sectional hatred, and saner and speedier conception of what was for the best interest of the nation as a whole."

Despite their Northern approach, these Dunning students clearly adopted a pro-Southern interpretation of Reconstruction, and, like the Southern graduates, they attempted to sustain their thesis with a questionable use of historical evidence. Although meticulously accurate about citing their evidence, they often condemned radical Reconstruction with no substantiating information or else with predominantly anti-Republican sources. Stebbins, for example, relied on conservative editorials when he wrote that "there can be no doubt of the corruption rampant in

46. Ibid., p. 40.
the Republican legislature of 1868..." Accusing Senator Abner C. Mattoon, in particular, of taking a bribe, he argued that "this worthy Solon gave an excellent though disgusting example of a legislator for sale. Stebbins, however, offered no conclusive evidence for his charge, admitting later that a "senate report of that year found no proof of the actual bribery of any senator." Undaunted, nevertheless, he spurned the Senate's investigation and termed its report a "whitewash." Similarly, in her discussion of the impeachment of Land Commissioner Charles A. Edmonds, Dilla condemned aspects of Michigan Reconstruction without offering proof for her charges. Although the state senate acquitted Edmonds on all counts, she insisted that "it was generally conceded that the testimony was so damaging that he ought in all decency to resign."

Relying on conservative editorials, she presented no evidence of her own to substantiate Edmonds's guilt, and yet she felt justified in condemning his acquittal. In another example, Dilla used rumor and innuendo to cast aspersions on Senator Chandler. Citing a Democratic

47. Ibid., p. 298.
48. Ibid., p. 281.
49. Ibid., p. 302.
newspaper in her discussion of the senatorial election of 1868, she wrote that "there were charges of bribery brought against Chandler from various sources...", but she failed to substantiate their validity. Later, she added, still without any corroboration, that Chandler's "want of financial scruples in campaign work was not always exaggerated by the opposition."

Another troublesome area for Dunning's Northern students appeared in their use of significant terms such as "extremist" or "radical." Applying these terms capriciously, they varied the definitions without explanation until the words became almost meaningless. Porter, for example, referred to radicals in Ohio as Republicans who had abolitionist leanings, yet he admitted that several "Ohio radicals" voted for black exclusion laws and opposed universal suffrage, while several conservative Republicans voted for ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment. Dilla referred to a radical as any Republican supporting the "hyper-emotional," Senator Chandler, and yet she reported that several Michigan "radicals" opposed Chandler's endorsement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

51. Ibid., pp. 100, 179.
52. Porter, Ohio Politics, pp. 20, 60, 236, 254.
53. Dilla, Politics of Michigan, pp. 88, 199.
Besides these methodological problems, Dunning's students also diminished the value of their state studies by presenting factual material without interpretation. Products of the Dunning seminar, they patterned their monographs on the scientific principles they learned at Columbia, but on several occasions they interpreted the scientific approach to mean the collecting and reporting of events without analysis. In many cases, therefore, their dissertations became little more than a compilation of reports, resolutions, and editorials. Avoiding manuscripts and personal interviews, these authors relied almost totally on newspaper sources, piling one fact upon another, with a resulting encyclopedic effect. Ironically, when presenting their interpretation of Reconstruction, they omitted substantiation; when recording factual material, they eliminated historical analysis.

54. See Stebbins, Political History of New York, p. 8; Brummer, Political History of New York, pp. 5-6; Porter, Ohio Politics, p. 5.

55. See for example, Clark, "Party Politics in 1860" Politics in Iowa, pp. 14-53. This chapter consists almost totally of editorial remarks, voting records, and convention reports taken from three Iowa newspapers. Porter's chapter, "Party Conventions and Campaign of 1860," Ohio Politics, also typified this approach to writing history. In his initial paragraph, for example, Porter wrote,

The first convention of the year 1860 was held by the Democrats on January 5th, to select delegates to the national convention. The resolutions as adopted expressed approval of the Cincinnati platform of 1856, endorsed Douglas for the Presidency, declared for the non-intervention of Congress in reference to
Unlike the Southern students, Dunning's Northern graduates obviously lacked enthusiasm for their subject; in fact, indignation appeared contrived. The smoldering fires that once inflamed John Burgess's imagination regarding constitutional questions about the war and Reconstruction had become anachronistic and uninteresting to the younger generation. O.B. Clark, for example, calling his work *The Political History of Iowa in the Civil War and Reconstruction*, ended his narrative with an unenthusiastic discussion of the year 1863. Charles E. Merriam, perhaps Dunning's most zealous political science student, also seemed bored with these issues. In a 1901 letter to

slavery in the states and territories, and called for the execution of the laws for the suppression of the African slave trade and the rendition of fugitive slaves. The vote on the Douglas resolution was taken by counties and carried, two hundred and forty-two to ninety-four....In the committee on resolutions an attempt was made to insert a plank endorsing the administration of President Buchanan, but it was lost, seven to fourteen....A compromise substitute was finally accepted, which endorsed the administration in certain specific things, such as the adjustment of the difficulties with Great Britain in regard to the right of search, the enforcement of the neutrality laws, and the impartial execution of the acts of Congress for the suppression of the African slave trade and for the rendition of fugitive slaves. In choosing delegates-at-large, the nominees were all made to pledge support to Douglas. A selection was made as follows: George E. Pugh, whose term in the Senate was just about to expire; D.P. Rhodes, a cousin of Douglas; George W. McCook, once attorney-general of the state; and H.J. Jewett, a former United States district attorney. The district delegates included....
Dunning he apologized for his lack of interest in continuing an investigation of nineteenth-century political and constitutional issues, and he asked his mentor to suggest a new topic for investigation. Even Dunning himself appeared uninterested in Northern Reconstruction. In fact, while his enthusiasm for the Southern state studies always remained high, he did not accept or encourage another Northern study after 1914. Two students began researching Illinois and Indiana in 1910, but their works never reached him, and he abandoned the idea of beginning others.

Not surprisingly, Dunning's Northern historians failed to attain the scholarly recognition of his Southern students. In fact, after leaving Columbia they virtually disappeared. In contrast to their Southern colleagues, none of these authors attained significant historical recognition, participated in historical conventions, reviewed other books, or joined historical societies in their home states. Only Ware published a second monograph.

Significantly, these uninspiring and tedious state studies remained virtually unchallenged for almost seventy

56. Merriam to Dunning, October 17, 1901, Charles E. Merriam Manuscript Collection, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

57. Dunning to Bancroft, May 7, 1910, Bancroft Collection.

58. In 1934 Ware edited a publication for the federal government. Ware, The Study of International Relations in the United States, Survey for 1934 (New York, 1934).
years. Recent revisionists, including James C. Mohr, Richard Abbott, and George M. Blackburn, have rejected the Dunning school's emphasis on political expediency as a motive for radical Reconstruction and have instead presented Northern radicals as idealists acting in many cases from altruistic motives. Focusing mainly on education, health, and prison reforms in the 1860s and 1870s, these revisionists painted Reconstruction as differing little from other reform eras in American history. George M. Blackburn, for example, in his examination of Michigan, completely ignored Reconstruction on the national level and discussed railroad construction, canal building, and agricultural education as the key issues in Michigan politics after the war.


These recent revisionists, however, despite their stated intention, actually lent proof to the Dunning argument that most Northern radicals acted from expediency, not altruism. In New York, for example, James C. Mohr insisted that the radicals sponsored fire and sanitation measures for idealistic reasons. Mohr noted later, however, that radicals began their "program of civil and institutional reforms as a possible solution to their political dilemmas." Like Mohr, Richard Abbott reported that Massachusetts Republicans sought to enfranchise blacks on humanitarian grounds, but he also admitted that these same Republicans refused to extend the vote to Irish immigrants for fear the newcomers would vote Democratic.

In addition, these revisionists, much like Dunning's Northern students, actually characterized many leading Republicans in a pejorative light. Abbott called Massachusetts's Benjamin Butler "ambitious," "over-bearing," and "unscrupulous," and he claimed that Butler's "positions on leading questions were often as compromising and ambiguous as those of the party he attacked." Similarly,

64. Ibid., pp. 18-19. Also see Ware, Public Opinion, pp. 193, 199.
Blackburn, echoing Dilla's account of Chandler, referred to Michigan's senior senator as "intolerant, narrow and partisan," complete with messianic delusions about himself.

Despite the similarities between Dunning's Northern graduates and recent revisionists, the importance of the Northern state studies lies less in their explanation of Reconstruction than their support for Dunning's Southern version of the post-war period. By emphasizing white supremacy as part of this nation's democratic heritage, these Northern students merely reinforced the concept of Reconstruction proffered by their Southern colleagues. Surely, white Southerners at the turn of the century, who had begun a campaign of disfranchisement and who hoped for acceptance from the North, must have taken heart from these works. Playing little more than ancillary role in building the Dunning school's interpretation of Reconstruction, the Northern state studies, therefore, served mainly to enhance the prestige of Dunning's more famous Southern graduates.

65. Blackburn, "Quickening Government," Radical Republicans in the North, p. 120.

These revisionists also failed to define "radicalism" any more successfully than Dunning's students. Mohr, for example, characterized radicals as those Republicans in New York favoring black suffrage, but he admitted later that the only time the radicals united on an issue "was in their support for reform measures aimed at further reducing Democratic strength in the metropolitan area." Mohr, Radical Republicans and Reform, p. 85.
PART II

THE PAST AS PRESENT,
THREE EXAMPLES

With the publication of the Northern and Southern state studies, Dunning's Columbia graduates emerged as preeminent authorities on Southern history. Producing over one hundred major works during their careers, these authors became highly influential in the history field, receiving wide recognition and numerous honors from their fellow historians. Awards, for example, such as the Albert Kahn Fellowship, given to the best original work in American history, went to U.B. Phillips's Life and Labor in the Old South (1928), while Louisiana State University honored Walter Lynwood Fleming posthumously with a prestigious lecture series in his name. In addition, no less than ten members of the Dunning school served as presidents or sat on the executive councils of the major historical and political science associations. Nine of


2. Two members of the Dunning school, Dunning and U.B. Phillips, presided over the American Historical Association in 1913 and 1928 respectively, while Charles W. Ramsdell, in 1928, held the same position in the Mississippi Valley Historical Association. Between 1921 and 1934 Dunning, James W. Garner, and Charles E. Merriam also

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Dunning's students also held seventeen different editorial positions in the academic world, and virtually all Dunning's graduates appeared at various historical conventions to present papers dealing with Southern history.

served as president of the Political Science Association, and in 1941 and 1944 two other Dunning students, B.B. Kindrick and J.G. deRoulhac Hamilton became president of the Southern Historical Association.

In addition, five members of the Dunning school, Ramsdell, Fleming, Dunning, Kindrick, and William K. Boyd, sat on the executive council of the American Historical Association, while David Y. Thomas, in 1941, served in the same capacity for the Southern Historical Association.

3. Between 1891 and 1900 Dunning edited the Political Science Quarterly and, along with Fleming, sat on the editorial board of the American Historical Review from 1914 to 1920. At the same time Fleming and Ramsdell served on the Mississippi Valley Historical Review, William K. Boyd edited the South Atlantic Quarterly, and Garner and Merriam assisted with the editorial duties on the American Political Science Review. Phillips, Thomas, Hamilton, Ramsdell, Fleming, and Boyd also participated in the founding or editing of the historical associations in their home states. Hamilton and Boyd, for example, helped initiate the North Carolina Historical Association; Phillips, along with several Georgia philanthropists, restructured the Georgia Historical Association; Fleming assisted his friend Thomas M. Owen at the Alabama Historical Association; David Y. Thomas worked as an editor on the Arkansas Historical Quarterly, while Ramsdell performed similar duties on the Southwestern Historical Quarterly.

As renowned authors and as editors of prestigious historical journals, these students defended the Dunning interpretation of Southern history and increased their own influence by also serving as frequent reviewers on various historical journals. Always supporting each other's work, they condemned historians who opposed their "historical truth." Fleming, for example, praised Hamilton's Reconstruction in North Carolina (New York, 1906) in the American Historical Review, XII (July, 1907), 911; Hamilton in turn applauded Fleming's Documents of Reconstruction (Cleveland, 1907) in the American Historical Review XIII (October, 1907), 167. Similarly, Boyd acclaimed Hamilton's
The prestige of these individuals also extended into the major American colleges and universities. Teaching in a large number of influential schools, ten of Dunning's students became department chairmen and two served as deans in their respective colleges. From these positions of prominence they trained hundreds of students, passing along "the torch of knowledge," as Dunning phrased it, to an entire generation of younger scholars.


On the other hand, they criticized as "confused" and "Biased" historians who emphasized the positive aspects of Reconstruction or black accomplishment. Examples of this trend appeared in Fleming's review of W.E.B. DuBois's The Negro Church, A Social Study (Atlanta, 1903), Political Science Quarterly, XIX (December, 1904), 702-703; and Fleming's review of Carter G. Woodson's The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861 (New York, 1915), Mississippi Valley Historical Review, II (March, 1916), 586-87; and Hamilton's review of Herbert Aptheker's American Negro Slave Revolts (New York, 1943), American Historical Review, IXL (April, 1944), 505.

4. Those members of the Dunning school who served as department chairmen included Dunning at Columbia, Thomas at the University of Arkansas, Phillips at the University of Michigan, Garner at the University of Illinois, Merriam at the University of Chicago, Milledge L. Bonham at Louisiana State University, Holland Thompson at New York City College, and William Watson Davis at the University of Kansas. Fleming and Thomas S. Staples served as department chairmen as well as administrative deans at Vanderbilt University and Hendrix College respectively.

Some of the Dunning school's more influential students included Chauncey S. Boucher, Charles Sydnor, Wendell Holmes Stephenson, James W. Patton, David Potter, and Fletcher M. Green. These students in turn then trained influential students of their own. Rembert W. Patrick, James B. Sellers, Vernon L. Wharton, and George B. Tindall
Although all of Dunning's graduates wrote with a similar thesis and methodology, three of the authors of state studies of Reconstruction distinguished themselves beyond their colleagues and achieved even greater recognition for their writing on Southern history. Walter Lynwood Fleming, James W. Garner, and Charles W. Ramsdell served either as president or high official in almost every major historical or political science association, accrued numerous honors, and published well over fifty percent of the work attributed to the Dunning school. Fleming, for example, authored eight major books, fifty-one articles, and scores of book reviews. Easily the most conservative member of the group, he remained the only student interested in Reconstruction throughout his entire life, and his writings on the postwar era, particularly *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* and *Documents on Reconstruction*, have remained standard works cited frequently in historical texts today. James W. Garner, on

represented only a few of the intellectual descendentsof Dunning's Columbia students.

the other hand, became the only Dunning student to write his dissertation on Reconstruction and then abandon Southern history for a career in political science. A prolific writer, he published over thirty major monographs and three hundred articles, while serving as president or editor of two major political science associations. Despite his work as a political scientist, Garner's influence in the historical field remained considerable. Initiating Dunning's state study series with *Reconstruction in Mississippi*, he established the tone and style adopted by all of Dunning's other students, and even though his dissertation appeared in 1901, it continued to receive recognition in the 1960s and 1970s. Unlike Garner, Ramsdell published only two major books, and yet he held more positions of prestige than any other Dunning graduate. Referred to as "the Dean of Southern History," he served as president of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, the Southern Historical Association, and secretary-treasurer of the

6. See bibliography of Dunning and his students in Appendix A.

Southwestern Historical Association, and he assisted on the editorial board of the *Journal of Southern History*, the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, and the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*.

As major figures in the Dunning school, Garner, Fleming, and Ramsdell require closer examination not merely because their works offered a revealing glimpse into the minds of four influential Southerners at the turn of the twentieth century, but because they illustrated the ease with which scholars have used historical evidence to justify the contemporary wisdom of their day. Faithful adherents to the myths and legends of the Old South, these students attempted to examine the Civil War and Reconstruction in a way that remained compatible with both their scientific training and their Southern heritage. Their unquestioning belief in black inferiority, white supremacy, and Southern righteousness, however, predetermined the outcome of their examination and allowed them to excuse the disfranchisement and segregation occurring in the twentieth-century South. Ultimately, therefore, a discussion of these three men

reveals as much about the enormous power historians have to manipulate their present as it reveals about the interpretation Dunning and his students proffered for Reconstruction and the South.
CHAPTER SIX

WALTER LYNWOOD FLEMING:
"ONE OF THE VERY BEST MEN...EVER"

After reading Walter Lynwood Fleming's dissertation, The Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama (1905), Frederic Bancroft remarked to William A. Dunning that this young historian certainly displayed enthusiasm as he zealously defended the white South during Reconstruction. "You are right," Dunning responded, "Fleming isn't any too much reconstructed," but despite his partisan point of view, "he is doing good work to present [his side] of the situation." Always protective of his students, Dunning took a special interest in justifying Fleming's work. Of all his Columbia graduates, Fleming accepted and promulgated Dunning's philosophy of Reconstruction most ferociously, and for his efforts Dunning proclaimed him "one of the very best men that ever attended Columbia."

During Fleming's lifetime, American historians agreed with Dunning's accolade, calling this Alabama author


2. Thomas M. Owen to Walter Lynwood Fleming, March 1, 1905, Thomas M. Owen Collection, University of Alabama, University, Ala.

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"an excellent scholar" and referring to his work as "careful and painstaking research...." His first book,

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4. William O. Scroggs, Review of Fleming's Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama (New York, 1905), American Historical Review, XI (July, 1906), 943. By the time of his death in 1932 Fleming had published eight books and fifty-one articles, contributed to three encyclopedias, become graduate dean at Vanderbilt University, served as a member on the executive council of the American Historical Association, and edited the Mississippi Valley Historical Review as well as the South in the Building of the Nation series.

Although Fleming received several of these honors late in his life, he had published most of his historical work before 1915. Eleven chapters of the Freedmen's Savings Bank (1928), for example, appeared in pamphlet form in 1911; similarly, ten chapters in his posthumously published Louisiana State University appeared by 1914.

Fleming's failure to publish extensively after 1915 resulted from his increasing work load at Louisiana State University and his declining health. Offered a position at Louisiana in 1907 by his father-in-law, the president of the university, he soon found himself burdened by work. Teaching courses each semester in sociology, political science, United States history, and American biography, as well as chairing numerous academic committees, he soon discovered that he had little time for research. "I am convinced that you are not as busy as I am," he complained to his friend Joseph G. deRoulhac Hamilton after moving to Baton Rouge. "I have...18 [course] hours a week of work..." he added, a family to raise, and research to begin. Although he started work on a biography of Jefferson Davis, a monograph on the Freedmen's Savings Bank, and a history of Louisiana State University, his hectic schedule interfered considerably with his writing. The biography of Davis, for example, became only a few randomly published articles, while his history of L.S.U. dissolved into a series of pamphlets. Fleming did manage to publish six articles on Southern labor conditions, but three of them came directly from his dissertation and two others had no documentation. Indeed, seventeen of the articles...
The Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama, wrote David M. DeWitt in 1906, rendered all similar efforts at Reconstruction history "forever vain." Contending in 1921 that The Sequel of Appomattox established Fleming as the highest authority on the subject of Reconstruction, Ellis Daxson Oberholtzer declared that The Sequel "may be commended without reserve."


Anticipating relief from his heavy work load, Fleming accepted a position at Vanderbilt University in 1917, but quickly discovered that demands on his time remained as great as ever. In fact, according to one close friend, his strenuous academic schedule not only curtailed his research, it shortened his life. At Vanderbilt, wrote Milledge L. Bonham,

"Fleming was soon saddled with administrative work as he had been at Louisiana. He became Dean of the College of Arts and Science and director of graduate school in 1923. That his conduct in these departments was a success is axiomatic, but those of us who knew him well felt that it was a sinful waste....Fleming should have been saved for teaching and research. His fidelity to duty in the face of poor health was his undoing."


After his death, professional encomiums continued for Fleming's work. In 1939 Milledge L. Bonham, a classmate of Fleming's at Columbia, described his work as "indispensable" to students studying Reconstruction, adding that Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama represented "the most scholarly of the works on Reconstruction which emanated from Dunning seminars." Almost simultaneously, Fletcher Green pronounced Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama one of the most "scientific" studies of the postwar era. Indeed, he stated that "no more thorough, scholarly and impartial account has yet appeared." Repeating this assessment thirty years later, Green remarked in 1965 that Fleming's work remained of value to historians, since his Reconstruction in Alabama "was...nearly error free, containing neither numerous nor significant distortions."

As exemplified by Green's statement, Fleming's reputation for brilliance persisted even into the 1960s.


Despite mounting criticism of the racism and Southern apologetics in his writing, historians continued to applaud his industry and scholarship. Vernon L. Wharton, for example, although displeased with Fleming's racism, praised the Alabaman nevertheless for his skillful writing. Fleming's Sequel of Appomattox, according to Wharton, shows considerable "hostility toward the Negro," while his influential Documentary History of Reconstruction "consists of a great number of brief extracts taken, inevitably, out of context." Denouncing Fleming's "methods of selection and labeling" his documents, Wharton insisted that "his brief extracts, used as 'sources,' are not genuine sources at all," but merely "slivers of information which one man chose to regard as significant." Nevertheless, Wharton noted that though Fleming's Civil War and Reconstruction showed a "marked Southern bias," it represented a "product of tremendous labor, wide research, and great historical skill."

Even in the 1970s Fleming's scholarly reputation continued to receive professional recognition. Never questioning the Negrophobia in his work, Bert Loewenberg in American History in American Thought called Fleming


11. Ibid.
"one of the most prolific of Southern historians" and noted that his writing typified the masterful products emanating from Dunning's Columbia seminars. Similar in effect, Robert Reid's "The Changing Interpretation of the Reconstruction Period in Alabama History" objected to Fleming's Negrophobia, but discounted recent criticism of Fleming's racism by insisting that all historians, not just Dunning students, have biases. Adding that certain critics "were...too extreme" when calling Fleming "one-sided and 'partisan to the last degree,'" he argued that despite his racism, Fleming deserved commendation for his work. "No one," Reid said, "has...examine[d] the history of Reconstruction with the degree of comprehensiveness [he] achieved...more than three-quarters of a century ago." Most recently, William Gillette, in Retreat from Reconstruction (1979), also denounced Fleming's racism, but agreed with Reid that American historians have yet to replace Fleming's "helpful" work on the Civil War era.

Obviously, many historians have felt they could repudiate the racism endemic in Fleming's writing without


sacrificing scholarly respect for Fleming himself. This Dunning student, however, practiced disreputable scholarship. That judgment rests not on an application of standards newly discovered in the 1980s, but rather on the timeless historical criterion of using documents accurately without distortion. Even if one grants that racism represented a legitimate concept for the time in which Fleming wrote, his reputation should still fall. His fault lay not with his Negrophobia, nor even with his support of disfranchisement and segregation occurring in the twentieth-century South, but with his disreputable scholarship. In order to justify his anti-Negro position, he used historical documents carelessly, inaccurately, and falsely.

Without question, Fleming viewed blacks as an inferior race. Negrophobia, in fact, so dominated his thinking that he frequently referred to freedmen as "darkies," belittling their "half savage" beliefs or their "barbarous" African heritage. In his view, Negroes possessed little ability to care for themselves and required constant white supervision. Intellectually dormant, they understood few

abstract ideas; and, he said, complex tasks befuddled them.

Ridiculing black intelligence, he wrote that

Some country negroes were given red tickets and told that they must not be persuaded to part with them, as each ticket was good for a piece of land. The poor negroes did not understand this figurative language and put the precious red tickets in their pockets and hurried home to locate the land. Another darky was given a ticket and told to vote—to put the ballot in the box. "Is dat votin'?" "Yes," "Nuttin' more, master?" "No." "I thought votin' was gettin' sumfin." 17

Capsulizing this view most clearly in a series of articles published between 1905 and 1909, Fleming defined the black personality as lazy, immoral, and dangerous. Laziness headed his list. "Negro men," he wrote, "spend much of their time in loafing around their homes, where

17. Ibid., p. 516.
Fleming made disparaging remarks about Jews as well as blacks. Indeed, on several occasions he criticized Jews for their "mean" dispositions and parsimonious habits. See, Fleming to Cozart, June 9, 1898, and January 1, 1900, Tocca Cozart Collection, University of Alabama, University, Alabama. Also see Fleming, "Industrial Reorganization in Alabama," American Journal of Sociology, 499.
they are supported by the work of their wives, mothers, or sweethearts." Irritated at their unwillingness to accept piece-meal work, Fleming complained that the typical black male preferred to gather in "the negro stores uptown waiting for some darky with a quarter who may buy a watermelon or a bag of crackers and a tin of meat and 'set up the crowd.'" Even those blacks who held jobs seldom produced valuable products, in Fleming's view. Portraying them as inherently irresponsible, he noted that "During the summer when green corn, melons, berries, fruits, revivals, and baptizing are plentiful, there is a genuine disposition among the darkies to refrain from working." Particularly noticeable among field hands, the typical share-cropper, according to Fleming, "...went to the field when it suited him to go, gazed frequently at the sun to see if it was time to stop for


One lady who possesses a lawn and garden...went up town, along the Black Side of the street, and asked a crowd of negroes in front of a negro store if any of them wanted the work, which would bring fifty cents and two meals a day. She counted twenty-two idle negro men sitting in front of the store on boxes.... None of them had any regular occupation, or any visible means of support; but not one of them would do the work." Fleming, "The Servant Problem," Sewanee Review, 4.

meals, went often to the spring for water, and spent much
time adjusting his plow or knocking dirt and pebbles
from his shoes."

Besides laziness, Fleming insisted that immorality and
dishonesty also characterized the black personality.
Describing black females as flirtatious by nature, he
condemned teenage nurses, in particular, for frequently
wandering away from their baby carriages in order to cul-
minate a romantic interlude "...with a couple of young [black]
bucks in the janitor's dark and stuffy basement room."
When not sexually engaged, other black servants spent their
time devising some means to steal articles of clothing or
pieces of jewelry from their white employers. Convinced
that the "typical negro" rarely desired to advance himself

21. Fleming, "Reorganization of the Industrial System
22. Fleming, "The Servant Problem," Sewanee Review,
5-6.

Fleming concentrated a great deal of attention and
criticism on the black nurses. Describing these teen-agers
as irresponsible and negligent, he wrote that "A nurse has
nothing to do but look after the baby...." Nevertheless,
while out walking the baby, "She is sure, instead of going
around by the sidewalks, to take the short cuts and pull the
baby, bumping in its carriage, over the stiles to the great
gain of its peace of mind and wholeness of body." "On
hilly sidewalks she likes to experiment with the carriage," he
continued, "turning it loose and running to catch it." Complaining that she occasionally takes the baby home and
feeds it the poisonous "Jimson" weed "to quiet" it, he
added that the young nurse then often falls asleep on the
back verandah and lets "the infants roll down the steps."
with honest labor, Fleming charged Southern blacks with preferring to steal from whites rather than work for what they wanted. Indeed, the Negroes had become so accustomed to stealing, he wrote, that they actually believed "... that taking from a white person is not stealing," and whites soon learned that "To hire a negro house-servant means to lose something by her light-fingeredness."

Ironically, at the same time that Fleming described twentieth-century blacks as shiftless thieves, he also portrayed them as politically dangerous. Easily "manipulated" by outside forces, the former slaves remained, in his eyes, a "menace" even in the twentieth century. Although pleased that Southern Democrats controlled the political situation in the South, Fleming nevertheless insisted that even after 1900 "there have been instances of negro domination..." in parts of the South. "For twenty-five years," he said, "the negro voters stood ready, under their few white leaders, to take advantage of any division among the whites," and Northern Republicans always remained alert for an

23. Ibid., p. 12.

24. Ibid., p. 7.

Naturally, Fleming said, "A certain amount had to be deducted, so to speak, from the cash wages in order to offset what the servant appropriated." Fleming, "The Servant Problem," Sewanee Review, 7.
opportunity, especially in the black belt region, to profit from Southern white quarreling and "run in the negroes...."

Angered by "...the manner in which the negroes have been manipulated..." and frightened by the specter of black dominance of Southern politics, Fleming agreed with Democratic demands for disfranchisement. Southern whites had grown "weary of the eternal 'negro in the woodpile,'" he said, and had therefore demanded "...a revision of the [Alabama] constitution in order to eliminate the mass of the negro voters...and to leave the whites free." Agreeing with these demands, Fleming gave his wholehearted support to "the necessity" for disfranchisement. "There was always the danger in the black belt," he said, "that the Republicans...would run in the negroes again." Consequently, Southern Democrats initiated the all-white primaries as one means of eliminating "race troubles in elections."


27. Fleming, Reconstruction in Alabama, p. 800-801.
Not surprisingly, Fleming also defended
degregationist policies enacted in the South. Rejecting
the idea "...that the negro's salvation must be in voting
with, going to school, and to the theater and dinner with
whites,..." he criticized Northern demands that the South
integrate its social and political institutions. Both
whites and blacks preferred to live with their own kind,
he wrote, in their own part of town, enjoying their own
individual life styles. Indeed, according to Fleming,
one black leader insisted that the "negroes must be
segregated from the whites...for the good of the blacks."

Although clearly supporting segregation, Fleming
worried, nevertheless, that separating the races ultimately
damaged the goal of race control. Particularly in the
area of religion, segregation had little value, he wrote,
not because it deprived blacks of important religious
experience, but because whites forfeited racial control in
a highly sensitive area. In their all-black churches,
Negroes chose for their leaders "...the smooth-tongued,

28. Fleming, Review of William A. Sinclair, The
Aftermath of Slavery: A Study of the Condition and Environ-
ment of the American Negro (Boston, 1905), Political
Science Quarterly, XXI (June, 1906), 345.

29. Fleming, "'Pap' Singleton, The Moses of the
Colored Exodus," American Journal of Sociology, XV (July,
1909), 63-64.

In Reconstruction in Alabama, p. 765, Fleming
added to this idea. Many blacks during Reconstruction,
he said, "...were displeased at the proposed Civil Rights
bill, thinking that it was meant to force the negro to
go among the whites."
ranting, emotional, immoral preachers who could stir congregations." Insisting that "...a large proportion of negro ministers are unfit to be moral leaders--debts, women, and drink being the chief stumbling blocks," he challenged Southern whites to regain control of the "half savage... congregations" and reverse "the damage" done by these smooth-talking ministers.

Naturally, Fleming's blatant negrophobia had a profound effect on his interpretation of Southern history. In his assessment of slavery, for example, he described the African slave as a helpless child who benefited greatly from his contact with white civilization. Referring to the Peculiar Institution as a "training school," he agreed with Jefferson Davis that "Slavery took idle, unmoral, barbarous blacks and gradually rooted out their savage traits, giving to them instead the white man's superior


Fleming reemphasized his disapproval of segregating Southern churches in Reconstruction in Alabama, pp. 650-51. "After thirty years' experience," he wrote, "most people who have knowledge of the subject agree that the religious interests of the negro have suffered from the separation of the races in the churches, and from the enforced withdrawal of the native whites from religious work among the blacks." "The influence of the master's family is no longer felt," he added, "and instead of the white minister came the negro preacher, with 'ninety-five superstitions to five eternal truths,'--superstitions, many of them reminiscences from Africa."
civilization—his religion, his language, his customs, 
31
his industry."

Totally unfit for freedom, Southern blacks, in 
his view, suffered greatly following emancipation. 
Wandering from place to place, they eventually gathered in 
large cities or army camps waiting for someone to care for 
them. Indeed, without any documentation for his views, 
Fleming wrote that "while in slavery the negro had been 
forced to keep regular hours and to take care of himself; 
he had plenty to eat and to wear, and...his health was 
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looked after by his master." Now all this changed. In-
sisting that freedmen had little ability to care for 
themselves, he remarked that they "...deteriorated much in 
personal appearance and dress; immorality increased; 
religion nearly died out; consumption and other diseases 
attacked..." them in large numbers. In addition, they 
tended "...to return to the barbarous customs of their 
African forefathers; witchcraft and hoodoo were practiced,


and in some cases human sacrifices made." Husbands began to desert their wives, he added, and as a result, "Children... began to be unwelcome and foeticide and child murder were common crimes."

From Fleming's perspective, "Anarchy...reigned," forcing white Southerners to move quickly to restore social order. Long believing that the freedmen's "family life, morals, and conduct" required strict regulation, he praised Alabama's political assemblymen for passing a series of Black Codes designed to secure peace, protect whites, and force the freedmen "to settle down" to work. The Black Codes, he wrote, "...with few exceptions, were timely and sensible, and in substance had long been and still are on the statute books of most of the states of the Union."

Unfortunately, in Fleming's view, a group of vengeful Republican congressmen, interested only in their

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In the Sequel of Appomattox Fleming added on page 116 that "...on the whole the recognition of negro rights [in the Black Codes] made...these laws...remarkably fair."
own political power, destroyed the progress Southern whites made in securing order. Demanding that the South suffer for its part in the war, congressmen such as the "vindictive," and "unscrupulous" Thaddeus Stevens rejected the Southern attempts to return to a peaceful productive life, he said, by passing a series of Reconstruction acts disfranchising Confederate sympathizers and handing Northern carpetbaggers and their black lackeys political power. Naturally, Fleming abhorred congressional Reconstruction, and he denounced it in classic Dunning fashion. "The government," he wrote,

imposed upon Alabama was administered by the most worthless and incompetent of whites—alien and native—and negroes. Heavy taxes were laid; the public debt was rapidly increased; the treasury was looted, public office was treated as private property. The government was weak and vicious; it gave no protection to person or property; it was powerless, or perhaps unwilling, to repress disorder;...the officials were notoriously corrupt and unjust in administration,... [and] there was...in some sections a reign of terror. The elections were corrupt, and the law was deliberately framed to protect ballot-box frauds...Justice, so called, was bought and sold....In short, there was anarchy, social and political and economic. As the negro said, 'The bottom rail is on top.'

After a decade of what Fleming saw as political misrule, agricultural decline, and social decay, Southern Democrats finally overthrew radical Reconstruction. Whites

throughout the South, he wrote, grew increasingly exasperated. According to Fleming, "They were tired of reconstruction, new amendments, force bills, Federal troops--tired of being ruled as conquered provinces by the incompetent and the dishonest," and, thus, by 1876 they overthrew black rule. Fleming approved force used in this manner, and he praised organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan for reestablishing social order. Working for the good of Southern blacks as well as whites, the Klan, in his view, returned the freedmen to their rightful place as laborers and servants, while discouraging outside interference in Southern affairs. It took almost a decade, he concluded, but white Southerners in Alabama finally brought the dreaded era of Reconstruction and black rule to an ignominious end.

Although clearly a defender of conservative rule, Fleming considered himself an objective historian. Indicating his sincere desire to maintain extreme accuracy and objectivity in his work, he told a close friend in 1902, "I am writing on reconstruction... [and] I want to do a careful piece of work and am taking my time about it."

38. Fleming, The Sequel of Appomattox, p. 279; also see Fleming, Reconstruction in Alabama, p. 767.


40. Fleming to Cozart, March 5, 1902, Cozart Collection.
Indeed, on numerous occasions he asked his friend Thomas Owens, an Alabama historian on whom he relied for large amounts of information, to help verify his historical data. "I am afraid the date [in one of my footnotes] is not correct," he wrote in 1903, "...but at present I have no means of verifying it--please check it for me." After completing his dissertation, he sent Owens the first draft with instructions to "...make suggestions for textual alterations, [and] call my attention to all errors of fact and opinion that you notice..." "I know," he said with uncharacteristic modesty, "that there are numerous ones."

Significantly, while searching for accurate evidence, Fleming never seriously entertained any other than the white Southern argument on Reconstruction. Convinced that only white Southerners understood the truth about this era, he remarked that Northerners, even when sincerely interested in presenting the Southern side of the story,

41. Fleming to Owen, December 11, 1903, Owen Collection.

42. Fleming to Owen, July 29, 1904, Owen Collection. In his concern for accurate information Fleming admitted to Hamilton that "You will often find that the newspaper correspondents of the New York papers are more reliable than Southern newspaper accounts." "At least," he added, "I found it so with Alabama." Fleming to Hamilton, November 9, 1907, Hamilton Manuscript Collection.
could not actually comprehend the total picture. Emphasizing this point to George Petrie, his undergraduate professor at Alabama Polytechnical Institute, he remarked that "Southern history had better be written by us than by others who might write from a different spirit."  

Those who did write from a "different spirit" Fleming criticized as "biased" and "unscientific." For example, he remarked that New Englander George Merriam in The Negro and the Nation (1906), while showing "kindly" intentions toward the South, failed as a historian because he misunderstood the Southern mind. Complaining that most Northerners had too little knowledge to write objectively about the South, Fleming added that "...in these days of many books on the race problem, a writer must first be fair-minded in order to write on Southern blacks and whites, and next he ought to be a negro or a Southern white." Later, reviewing works of black historians W.E.B. DuBois and Carter Woodson, however, he ignored his own statement that blacks would write objective history, and he condemned both DuBois and Woodson for their excessive "bias."

43. Fleming to Petrie, May 13, 1908, George Petrie Collection, Auburn University, Montgomery, Alabama.
45. Ibid.
46. Fleming, Review of DuBois, The Negro Church, Political Science Quarterly, 702-03; Fleming, Review of
By insisting that only white Southerners could write objectively about the South, Fleming revealed not only the intensity he felt for his Southern heritage, but his determination to use history as a tool justifying contemporary events. Indeed, in his works, history represented less a medium for studying the past than an instrument to influence the present. In 1906, for example, he complained to his friend and former classmate, Yates Snowden, that "The negroes down South have gone to the devil, good pay and no work." A short time later, he informed Snowden of his intention "...to make an exhaustive investigation of that transition period in agriculture from 1861 to 1880 with a view of determining the comparative values of free and slave negro labor." Choosing a topic in which he had predetermined his conclusion, Fleming obviously intended his work to serve as white Southern propaganda. "As you probably know," he told Snowden, "the books on that are not worth anything, and I am anxious to knock another stone out of the foundation of the abolitionist theory that the free negro is worth more than the slave as a worker,"

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Carter Woodson, The Education of the Negro prior to 1861 (New York, 1915), Mississippi Valley Historical Review, II (March, 1916), 586.

47. Fleming to Yates Snowden, September 17, 1906; March 18, 1907, Yates Snowden Manuscript Collection, University of South Carolina.

48. Ibid.
When written as propaganda, history lends itself easily to distortion of information, and Fleming, in his desire to justify the contemporary wisdom of 1900, frequently falsified his evidence. Although his distortion of sources took several forms, his most common misuse involved inaccurate paraphrasing. In a 1909 article entitled "The Economic Conditions during the Reconstruction," for example, he wrote that the share-cropping system which arose after the war failed because

Both the [Negro] tenant and the wage laborer had too many privileges for his own good and for the good of the planter. The negro should have been paid more money or given a larger proportion of the crop, and fewer privileges. He needed more control and supervision, and the result of giving him a vegetable garden, a truck patch, a pasture, and the right of hunting and fishing, was that the negro took less interest in the crop, for the privileges were about all he wanted.49

As one source supporting this conclusion, Fleming cited Robert Somers's journal, The Southern States Since the War, Actually, Somers, an English traveler, emphasized the flaws of the share system itself, not the freedmen's abuse of it. "I cannot think that the payment of field hands by shares of the crop, however liberal," Somers wrote,

is consistent either with the well-being of the Negroes or with the agricultural development of the South. It is more like a half-way slavery than any relating of capital and labour of an advanced type.\textsuperscript{50}

Later, Somers conceded that freedmen abused certain "privileges" at times, but the share system, not the blacks, bore Somers's blame. Clearly, Fleming misrepresented the Englishman's main point.

Fleming also distorted the statements of another English traveler, Sir George Campbell. Describing the educational system during carpetbagger rule, Fleming charged that Northern missionaries and the Freedmen's Bureau established schools for blacks, and "The results... were almost wholly bad." Northern teachers alienated the races from each other by teaching the idea of equality. "Unwise efforts," he wrote,

were made to teach the adult blacks, and they were encouraged to believe that all knowledge was within their reach; that without education they would be helpless, and with it they would be the white man's equal...All attempts to teach these older ones failed, and the failures caused grievous disappointment to many.\textsuperscript{51}

Citing Campbell's \textit{White and Black} as support for his statement, Fleming misrepresented the author's ideas. Throughout his journal, Campbell displayed sympathy for


the black race, stating several times that Southern blacks, victimized by their environment, seemed as qualified, alert, and industrious as any white. "During the last dozen years," he wrote,

the Negroes have had a very large share of political education. Considering the troubles and the ups and downs that they have gone through, it is, I think wonderful how beneficial this education has been to them and how much these people, so lately in the most debased condition of slavery, have acquired independent ideas, and, far from lapsing into anarchy, have become citizens with ideas of law and property and order. The white serfs of European countries took hundreds of years to rise to the level which these Negroes have attained in a dozen. 53

Although Campbell extended his use of the word education to include politics, his work in no way supported Fleming's contention that black education failed during Reconstruction.

A third example of misleading paraphrasing occurred in charges by Fleming that the radical delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1867 gerrymandered Alabama's one hundred counties to favor black representation and completely deprived three white counties of any participation in state politics. In support of this allegation, Fleming cited the Congressional Globe, particularly a

52. Sir George Campbell, White and Black: The Outcome of a Visit to the United States (New York, 1965, originally published in 1879), pp. 136-37, 139, 142-43, 144.

53. Ibid., p. 131.

54. Fleming, Reconstruction in Alabama, p. 537.
speech by Democratic Representative Michael Kerr of Indiana. Kerr did state that thirty-five white counties had only thirty-five representatives, and he also argued that the Republican convention completely disfranchised three small white counties, forcing their residents to vote in other areas.

Fleming, however, cited only Kerr's statement and ignored evidence contradicting his assertion. Indeed, Ohio's Republican Congressman, Halbert E. Paine, exposed Kerr's charges as false. Representation for the three disfranchised counties did not exist, Paine explained, because the three counties did not exist. Paine described how the Provisional Legislature in 1865-66 created the counties of Jones, Baine, and Colbert out of nine larger neighbors. In 1867, however, the Republican convention restored the old 1865 boundary lines, reducing from 103 to 100 the number of counties in Alabama. Turning next to Kerr's gerrymandering argument, Paine explained that Alabama had long based its representation in the state


56. The Alabama Encyclopedia—Book of Facts, 1965, I, 122-23, 128, 131. This work confirmed Congressman Paine's contention that the provisional legislature in 1866 created three counties. The Republican convention in November, 1867, however, abolished all three and returned their territory "...to the counties from which it was taken."
assembly on the formula of one legislator for every 1,658 voters. Of the thirty-five white counties which Kerr described as under-represented, "seventeen have actually... less than 1,658 voters each," Paine stated, "and eighteen have little more than that." Furthermore, Paine noted that several black counties which Kerr presented as over-represented actually had fewer representatives than their numbers allowed.

By citing only Congressman Kerr's arguments, Fleming pictured Alabama's Republican convention inaccurately, but he failed to hide all his distortions so cleverly. In an article entitled "The Ku Klux Testimony


58. Ibid., p. 2201. In addition, Fleming often cited sources which revealed no information pertaining to his topic. See, for example, page 573 in Reconstruction in Alabama, where he cited the U.S. Congress, House Testimony Taken by the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States: Alabama, House Report 22, 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, 1872, Serial set 1536, p. 340. This page was irrelevant to his discussion. On page 561 in Reconstruction in Alabama he cited J.C. Lester and D.L. Wilson's Ku Klux Klan (New York, 1905), pp. 45-46. These two pages contained no information of any kind on the Ku Klux Klan.

Fleming also distorted other evidence. On pages 547-48 in Reconstruction in Alabama, for example, he commented that Representative Farnsworth of Illinois estimated on March 18, 1868, that 20,000 white Union Leaguers lived in Alabama. The March 18, 1868 Congressional Globe, however, showed that Farnsworth made no such statement. On page 574 in Reconstruction in Alabama, Fleming displayed a table of receipts and expenditures of the state government for the year 1875. Congress, however, published two of his sources in 1871 and 1872.
Relating to Alabama," Fleming offered a classic illustration of his desire to use questionable evidence to defend his interpretation of Reconstruction. Discussing the Ku Klux Investigation issued by Congress in 1871, he noted that the attempt by the Republicans on the Committee "...to get a lot of campaign stories for the use of the Radical party in the coming elections," caused many historians to view the document as "a very one-sided affair...." Although Fleming agreed that "...there is much [in the report] that is worthless because untrue, and much that may be true but cannot be regarded because of the character of the witnesses whose statements are unsupported," he insisted, nevertheless, that the investigation contained "a mine of information" for the scholar who knew how to use it. For Fleming, using the Ku Klux Investigation

59. Fleming, "The Ku Klux Testimony Relating to Alabama," Gulf States Historical Magazine, II (November, 1903), 157; see also 155-156. In a related statement regarding historians' use of sources, Fleming explained in Reconstruction in Alabama, p. 376, that the Committee of Fifteen served only to produce propaganda and "campaign documents" for the radicals in Congress. On pages 305-306 in The Sequel of Appomattox, he stated that Hillary Herbert's Why the Solid South? or, Reconstruction and its Results (New York, 1969, originally published in 1890) "was written as a campaign document" also. Nevertheless, Fleming cited these sources uncritically over one hundred times in Reconstruction in Alabama.

meant recognizing that the Republican testimony originated mainly from "...a sorry class of witness, a large proportion of whom were ignorant negroes,..." while the Democratic spokesmen represented "...the most prominent men of [Alabama] ...who, on account of their positions, were intimately acquainted with the condition of affairs in the State," and who exposed "...the actual condition of affairs...from 1965 to 1871."

By dismissing most Republican evidence as "simply hearsay" and yet accepting unequivocally Democratic testimony, Fleming presented highly questionable statements as truth. Two specific examples in Reconstruction in Alabama illustrate his utilization of hearsay evidence as fact. Emphasizing the corruption of "scalawags" and "carpetbaggers" in the 1868 Republican legislature, Fleming charged that Harrington, the speaker, boasted that he received $1,700 for engineering a bill through the House. A lottery promoter said that it cost him only $600 to get his charter through the legislature, and that no radical, except one negro, refused the small bribe he offered. Senator Sibley held his vote on railroad measures at $500; Pennington, at $1,000; W.B. Jones, at $500. Hardy of Dallas received $35,000 to ease the passage of a railroad bond issue.64

61. Ibid., p. 157.
62. Ibid., p. 159.
63. Ibid.
64. Fleming, Reconstruction in Alabama, p. 740.
Fleming used as his source for this testimony the Ku Klux Investigation. Significantly, the witnesses he cited unanimously acknowledged the hearsay quality of their testimony or else flatly contradicted Fleming's story. For example, Democratic Governor Robert Lindsay admitted that a friend told him House Speaker Harrington had taken a bribe, and former Congressman Francis Lyon confessed that his evidence indicting Hardy came to him second-hand. State Assemblyman William M. Lowe, in testimony implicating John Sibley of bribery, contended that

Mr. Sibley...came back here after the meeting of the legislature and told that some man by the name of Carlisle— I think that was the name; anyhow, some minion of Stanton's— had given him $500 for a vote of his in the Senate. 66

65. U.S. Joint Select Committee on Alabama, Serial sets, 1536, 1538, pp. 231, 1424. Fleming referred to this document as the Ku Klux Investigation in Reconstruction in Alabama.

Fleming carefully avoided mentioning any Democrats tainted by charges of corruption. Robert Lindsay, Democratic Governor in 1872, received severe criticism from his opponents in Alabama for selling illegal bonds, but Fleming ignored this charge. See U.S. Joint Select Committee on Alabama, Serial Set 1538, p. 1468. In addition, in Reconstruction in Alabama Fleming mentioned corrupt practices by Republican superintendents of education. He did not explain, however, that the Democratic superintendent, J.H. Hodgson, misrepresented the number of students enrolled in Alabama schools in 1871 to increase the amount of money that he received from the state treasury.

66. Although Fleming saw John Sibley as an unscrupulous carpetbagger in Reconstruction in Alabama, he became confused about Sibley's home. On page 518, he claimed that Sibley resided in Massachusetts, but on page 526, he said Sibley was an Iowa man.
The question which Ku Klux investigators then asked Assemblyman Lowe revealed his inability to substantiate this charge.

By the chairman:
Question. Did you hear him [Sibley] make that statement?
Answer. No, sir.
Question. How do you know it to be true?
Answer. He made the statement to Colonel Bradley and Nick Davis.
Question. Did you hear him make it to Colonel Bradley or Nick Davis?
Answer. No, sir.
Question. How do you know he made it?
Answer. I heard Mr. Kennard say he made it to Mr. Bradley. 67

Such evidence hardly sustains the charges of corruption that Fleming leveled against these Alabama Republicans.

Again, while describing the corrupt tactics of black members of the Alabama State Assembly, Fleming charged "Bribery was common in the Legislature." "By custom," he wrote, "a room in the Capitol was set apart for the accommodation of those who wished to 'interview' Negro members." Incredibly, Fleming cited Southern "tradition" as the source for this fact. "Tradition," he claimed in his footnote, "says that what is now known as the Davis Memorial Room was the one thus used." 68

Fleming's discussion of the Eutaw Riot also rests on questionable testimony. According to Fleming, a radical

political meeting in Eutaw, Alabama, progressed smoothly until "the obnoxious" radical carpetbagger, Major Charles Hayes, rose to speak. At that moment several whites fired their pistols into the air to frighten a large crowd of blacks, wounding one black in the resulting confusion.

Fleming's documentation for this rendering of the riot consisted of two citations in the Ku Klux Investigation. Examination of the record reveals that one witness Fleming cited exonerated Hayes and his black colleagues from responsibility for the riot, while the other witness received his evidence second-hand. Democratic Governor Robert Lindsay, testifying at the request of the Democratic minority on the Committee, admitted that he "...was not present" during the riot, but, he added, "I have heard it described again and again, and of course with variations." Former Provisional Democratic Governor Lewis Parsons, Fleming's other anti-Reconstruction witness, refuted much of Fleming's story, saying that Major Hayes sought to adjourn the meeting when someone pulled him to the ground. Several blacks moved forward to protect him. "Mr. Hayes said nothing," Parsons continued, "but in an instant a pistol

69. Ibid., p. 686.
70. U.S., Joint Select Committee on Alabama, Serial set 1536, p. 221.
shot was fired.... Then about as quick as men could
draw their weapons...a general shooting commenced at the
71
crowd of Negroes that were in front."

A total of fourteen persons testified concerning
Eutaw. Twelve of these men either contradicted Fleming's
story or admitted that they learned of the riot from second-
hand evidence. Republican Senator Willard Warner, for
example, typified those eyewitnesses who contradicted
Fleming. Claiming that Major Hayes tried to prevent trouble,
Warner insisted that a group of whites, angered by the
Republican meeting, opened fire on the Negroes, wounding
72
fifty-four, four fatally. Without question Fleming

71. Ibid., p. 81.

72. Ibid., pp. 28-29. For the statements of those
witnesses who directly contradicted Fleming's argument
see the testimony of Charles Hayes, pp. 14-15, Serial set
1536; William Cockrell, pp. 44-45, Serial set 1536;
and Lewis Parsons, p. 81, Serial set 1536. For statements
from witnesses who admitted that they learned of the
riot from second-hand sources, see the testimony of William
Miller, pp. 5,10, Serial set 1536; Willard Warner, pp. 28-
29, Serial set 1536; Robert Lindsay, p. 221, Serial set
1536; James B. Clark, p. 261, Serial set 1536; Turner
Reavis, pp. 340, Serial set 1536; Joseph H. Speed, p. 423,
Serial set 1536; Reuben Meridith, p. 1784, Serial Set
1538; and Edward W. Smith, p. 1964, Serial set 1538.

Only two men, who witnessed the riot first hand,
supported Fleming's story that whites fired their guns into
the air. One of these men, however, John Pierce, remarked
that while he saw no white men firing, he did see several
"...arms sticking out of the door and firing from the door." Each time "these...arms" fired, a number of blacks stumbled
and fell to the floor. See p. 301-302, 317.
drew his account of the Eutaw riot solely from one side of the argument, relying upon evidence of dubious value. Besides inaccurate paraphrasing, he ignored statements within his source which contradicted his thesis.

Fleming also presented a distorted account of the Mobile Riot of 1867, but in this case his errors resulted more from incomplete research than literal misrepresentation. Republican meetings dominated by a handful of Northern men who dangled the promise of equality in front of Negroes "...to secure office and power for themselves," Fleming wrote, naturally irritated white Southerners, inevitably resulting in civil disturbances. On May 14, 1867, "Judge 'Pig Iron' Kelly of Pennsylvania," Fleming reported, spoke in Mobile to an audience of one hundred respectable whites and two thousand negroes, the latter armed. His language toward the whites was violent and insulting, and invitation for trouble, which inflamed both races. A riot ensued for which he was almost solely to blame. Several whites were killed or wounded, and one negro. From the guarded report of General Swayne, it is evident that the blame lay upon Kelly for exciting the negroes.73

Though he used the New York Herald extensively for other events, Fleming ignored its discussion of the Mobile Riot, relying instead upon the New York Tribune, The New

73. Fleming, Reconstruction in Alabama, p. 510.
74. Ibid., p. 509.
York Times, The New York World, and The Mobile Times. Of the New York papers, only the Herald had its own eyewitness correspondent present in Mobile, and his account contradicted Fleming's. The Herald's correspondent reported that local whites incited the disturbance which killed five blacks, wounding twenty others.

Furthermore, Fleming misrepresented Assistant District Commander Wagner Swayne's report of the riot, which actually affirmed Kelly's blamelessness. Rather, the report, actually issued by Colonel O.L. Shepard and not by Swayne, showed that "a small party of ruffians" interrupted Kelly several times, and as tensions increased, city police, sympathizing with the whites, allowed the situation to get out of control. Shepard concluded that these "ruffians" had acted in the "spirit of rebellion," greatly endangering order and freedom of speech.

75. The New Orleans Bee, May 21, 1867.
77. Annual Cyclopedia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1867, 1872, New York, VII, 22-23.

Besides making numerous scholarly errors, Fleming also made several careless and illogical statements. As an adjunct to his comments on the Mobile Riot, he wrote that "Negroes attended these meetings armed with clubs, pistols, muskets, and shotguns, most of which, of course, would not shoot; several hundred shots were fired, much to the alarm of the nearby dwellers." Reconstruction in Alabama, p. 506. On page 689 in Reconstruction in Alabama, he praised the work of the Ku Klux Klan as a noble society which purified the South by reinstating law and order. "'Bad niggers' ceased to be bad," he said, and carpetbaggers fled to other
Fleming not only distorted primary sources in his discussion of the Mobile and Eutaw riots, but he used secondary sources with equal carelessness. For instance, while commenting on Congressional motivations after the war, Fleming charged that Stevens lacked respect for the Constitution. Stevens, he wrote, regarded the Constitution as a "bit of worthless parchment." Citing Richard Taylor's *Destruction and Reconstruction*, Fleming misquoted the author's statement "a worthless bit of old parchment." The misquote in this case was unimportant, but Taylor's work contained no references validating Stevens's disparagement of the Constitution, whereas *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama*, in an effort to legitimize the allegation, cited *The Congressional Globe* for December 4, 1865, and March 10, 1866. *The Congressional Globe* for those dates, however, disclosed that Stevens did not characterize the Constitution as "a bit of worthless parchment." Rather, Stevens charged that, areas. As a general rule, he continued, the Klan stated that "if a black man lived with a white woman, he would be killed" and a "negro who aired his opinion on social equality was sure to be punished." Yet only one page later he reported that occasionally the Ku Klux dens fell "...into the hands of lawless men who used the name and disguise for lawless purposes."


by seceding, the South itself violated the Constitution, and that Andrew Johnson's demands for the readmission of Southern states mocked the instrument. Thus, not only did Fleming fail to link Taylor's quote to a primary source, but the particular reference he chose actually showed Stevens in the role of Constitutional defender, the very opposite of his intent.

Fleming, then, regularly violated recognized canons of historical scholarship. When, in 1914, William A. Dunning read his paper "Truth in History" to the American Historical Association, he reaffirmed the historian's belief in those standards. "The...relentless pursuit of the objective fact of the thing that actually happened in exactly the form and manner of its happening," Dunning said, "is the historian's primary task." Determined to support not only his interpretation of Reconstruction but also the contemporary wisdom of 1900, Fleming disregarded Dunning's advice. In his mind the obvious truth of the Southern situation transcended the need for a careful, accurate examination of the evidence.

80. Congressional Globe, December 4, 1865, p. 13; March 10, 1866, pp. 1308-1310.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CHARLES W. RAMSDELL: "THE DEAN OF SOUTHERN HISTORIANS"

By the 1930s Fleming's reputation in American history had earned him recognition as one of America's most skillful historians. So influential had his writings become that five years after his death Louisiana State University inaugurated the Walter Lynwood Fleming lectures dedicated to the pursuit of "excellence" in Southern history. Not by accident, Louisiana State selected Charles W. Ramsdell to initiate those lectures and conferred upon him the honorary title "Dean of Southern Historians." This honor fitted Ramsdell well, but he deserved this new title less for his scholarship or subject matter than for his Southern apologetics and anti-Negro bias.


2. Wendell Holmes Stephenson, Southern History in the Making (Baton Rouge, 1964), p. 184. When informing Ramsdell of the appointment, Stephenson wrote: It was not at all difficult for us to decide to whom the invitation should be issued the first year. Your enviable position in the historical profession together with the fact that you and the late Professor Fleming were both products of this Dunning School made our problem easy.
Inaugurating the Fleming lectures represented only one of many honors Ramsdell accrued during his lifetime. Before his death in 1942 he presided over both the Mississippi Valley Historical Association and the Southern Historical Association Executive Councils. In addition, while editing the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, he published five books, fifteen articles, and sixty book reviews.

A native Texan, Ramsdell attended Columbia University in 1904, where he worked on his Ph.D under Dunning's careful eye. With his first book, *Reconstruction in Texas* (1910), his evergrowing reputation as "a great teacher" and "a rare scholar" began. Among the studies on Reconstruction, W.F. McCaleb wrote in the *American Historical Review*, "...hardly is there a better [work] than that of Professor Ramsdell's...." Adding that "He has dealt in a searching and judicious way with his characters," McCaleb noted that Ramsdell remained "...extremely temperate in his expressions." Allan Nevins referred to *Reconstruction in Texas* as an "excellent" historical monograph, and

3. Ibid.
Walter Lynwood Fleming characterized the book as "temperate," "well done," and "among the best" of those state studies on the postwar era.

Ramsdell's reputation also remained high with more recent historians. For example, in his influential "Dark and Bloody Ground of Reconstruction Historiography" Bernard Weisberger insisted that he meant no disparagement to the scholarship of the Dunning students. Although their backgrounds predisposed them toward a dim view of so-called "black Reconstruction," Weisberger asserted that "These men and women were fair-minded and thorough." "We who write history today," he said, "will do well to be as scrupulous within our own limitations." Equally laudatory, Donald Fehrenbacher's essay in John Higham's Reconstruction of American History (1962) contended that Ramsdell's Reconstruction in Texas represented one of "The valuable monographs of Reconstruction in individual states which issued from the Dunning group...." These monographs, he added, "...set high standards of scholarly thoroughness.

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and restraint...[even though] they were written by Southerners...[who] perpetuated the Rhodes-Dunning interpretation." At approximately the same time, Wendell Holmes Stephenson's *Southern History in the Making* (1964) also praised Ramsdell's work. "The superior qualities of his mind, the logic of his thought, the soundness of his judgment," Stephenson wrote, explained scholars' high endorsements of Ramsdell.

Neither Fehrenbacher nor Stephenson, however, matched the type of praise W.C. Nunn accorded Ramsdell. Nunn's *Texas Under the Carpetbaggers* (1962), a dissertation directed by Ramsdell in 1939, relied heavily on *Reconstruction in Texas*. Although he never mentioned Ramsdell directly, Nunn found Ramsdell's work so impressive that he not only adopted his mentor's interpretation of the post-war era but also duplicated several sentences from the earlier work.


Although Nunn completed his dissertation in 1939, he delayed publication for almost twenty-five years. Even
In the late 1960s, Ramsdell's reputation for brilliance persisted even while opponents of white racism began a historical re-evaluation of Reconstruction. Revisionist historians, in fact, repudiated the racism of Ramsdell's era but continued to praise the scholarship of the period. Eugene Genovese, for example, although critical of Ramsdell's thesis in "The Natural Limits of Slavery Expansion," announced that he viewed Ramsdell's work "with due respect...and with full appreciation for the workmanlike manner in which he presented...[his] argument." Similarly, Kenneth Stampp wrote in his revisionist synthesis *Era of Reconstruction* (1965) that "Though anti-Negro and anti-radical, most of [the Dunning state studies]...have not yet been superseded and remain

in 1962, however, several reviewers still found his interpretation of Reconstruction convincing. For example, Vincent De Santis, in the prestigious *American Historical Review*, LXVIII (January, 1963), 486, said Nunn's *Texas Under the Carpetbaggers* represented "...a most important contribution to Reconstruction history, for by concentrating on this short and important period Nunn is able to provide a deeper and clearer understanding of what happened in Texas in the years following the Civil War." Similarly, Ben, H. Procter, writing for the *Journal of Southern History*, XXVIII (November, 1962), 516, reported that "Texas Under the Carpetbaggers...will surely be a standard reference work for Reconstruction."

valuable for factual detail," and, he added, Charles Ramsdell's Reconstruction in Texas "must still be consulted."

Even the decade of the 1970s saw several historians praise Ramsdell's scholarship. For example, Bert Loewenberg's American History in American Thought (1972) glorified Ramsdell and the other Dunning students for their significant contribution to Reconstruction scholarship. "It was Dunning the teacher as well as Dunning the scholar," Loewenberg said, "who made ... raw students into ripe scholars." Claiming that few other authors "... so completely altered historical opinion," as did Dunning's Columbia students, Loewenberg added that their diverse range of material and fresh documentations in the famed Reconstruction series vindicated their scholarly reputation. Similarly, James A. Baggett's 1974 "Birth of the Texas Republican Party," praised Ramsdell's scholarship without mentioning his racial bias. Although he complained that "... Ramsdell's interpretations are dated, lack documentation, and are little more than value judgments," Baggett nevertheless


insisted that his work "...provides a decided improvement over previous published partisan narratives...and contains remarkably few factual errors."

Clearly, American historians between 1905 and 1980 felt they could respect Ramsdell for his historical writing. Like Fleming, however, Charles W. Ramsdell failed to maintain the scholarly standards that merited such respect. Not only did he reinforce a mature racial caste system, but his commitment to Southern mores led him to use his historical evidence uncritically and falsely. In other words, Charles W. Ramsdell's work classically illustrates the problems of presentist historical writing.

Like all of Dunning's graduate students, Ramsdell viewed Southern history from the perspective of a white supremacist. Although he praised Southern industrial and agricultural achievements in the twentieth century, he never questioned the traditional belief in black inferiority. Accepting as inherently "valid" U.B. Phillips's assertion that the South would always remain "a white man's country,"


he referred to blacks in his professional writing as a "naive," "child-like" people only one generation removed from "savagery."

Unlike other Dunning students, however, Ramsdell avoided discussing his racial beliefs in newspaper or magazine articles, expressing his acceptance of white supremacy instead in his professional work and his personal correspondence with close friends. He left little doubt, for example, in a 1916 review of Godwin Woodson's Negro Education Prior to 1861 that he considered blacks incompetent if not inferior to whites. Beginning his review by praising Woodson for making an "important contribution" to Negro history, Ramsdell remarked, however, that "Of a negro it is hardly to be expected, perhaps, that he should write in scientific detachment, without racial bias," and he insisted that Negro Education offered ample testimony "of

16. Ramsdell to Stephenson, June 16, 1939, Stephenson Manuscript Collection; Ramsdell to Avery O. Craven, October 29, 1928, Ramsdell Manuscript Collection, University of Texas, Austin, Texas; Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas (Austin, 1910), p. 49; Ramsdell, "The Southern Heritage," Culture in the South, pp. 7, 9.

the failure to pass this test of historical scholarship."
Attacking Woodson's belief in racial equality, Ramsdell inferred that Woodson would have presented a more valid assessment of the black character had he focused his attention on "the condition of the negro in the African forest," instead of accusing Southern planters of reducing blacks "'to the plane of beasts.'" Ramsdell also strongly criticized Woodson for using statements from evangelist John Wesley as proof that "the African...is 'not only not inferior to the better inhabitants of Europe, but superior to some of them.'" Such a sentiment, he said, represented the ramblings of someone "who could have known but little of the race." Noticeably distressed also with Woodson's praise of Southern freedmen for providing "...the Southern states [with] their first effective system of free public schools" and with Woodson's condemnation of "the separation of whites and blacks in the public schools," Ramsdell concluded his review by dismissing Negro Education as a faulty and unscientific work, plagued by numerous errors.

White supremacy also played a significant factor in Ramsdell's choice of historians to write works for the

History of the South series. Along with his co-editor, Wendell Holmes Stephenson, he discussed numerous scholars for their ten-part project, and Francis B. Simkins emerged as the top candidate to write a volume on the New South. Having recently published his *Reconstruction in South Carolina* with Robert H. Woody as well as several works on South Carolina's Ben Tillman, Simkins had developed a reputation as one of the South's most promising young scholars. In his influential article "New Viewpoints of Southern Reconstruction," however, Simkins appeared to diverge sharply from Ramsdell's beliefs on race and Reconstruction. Criticizing Southern historians for using the post-Civil War era to justify segregation and disfranchisement, Simkins rejected the longstanding Dunning thesis that Republican policies during Reconstruction resulted in a time of "horror" for most Southerners, and he claimed that the freedmen, while often maligned for their role in Reconstruction, actually acted responsibly, seldom seeking social or racial equality. Always annoyed by

19. Ramsdell to Stephenson, April 7, 1938, Stephenson Collection.


21. Ibid., p. 52.
authors who deviated from the traditional interpretation of Southern history, Ramsdell dismissed Simkins's interpretation and removed him from their list of possible contributors. Telling Stephenson that the young author "...is a little inclined toward sensationalism," he insisted that Simkins's understanding of Southern history would "prevent a judicious handling of certain important questions, especially the race issue."

22. Ramsdell to Stephenson, January 23, 1939, Stephenson Collection. Ironically, despite Ramsdell's protestations, Simkins's view of Southern history paralleled his own. Even as late as 1960, for example, Simkins showed his acceptance of discrimination and disfranchisement in the South. Declaring blacks an "exasperating" and submissive race, he asked why the South did not shed "...its democratic pretenses about race and class" and proclaim its "real passion for social distinctions." Simkins, "Tolerating the South's Past," The Everlasting South (Baton Rouge, 1963), p. 8; Simkins, "The South as a Region," The Everlasting South, pp. 31-32.

Ramsdell and Stephenson considered two other men, Holland Thompson and B.B. Kendrick, both Dunning students, for Simkins's position. Thompson rejected the offer, citing age and health reasons, and Kendrick declined, claiming prior commitments. Kendrick, however, suggested that Ramsdell offer the position to a young promising graduate, C. Vann Woodward. At first, Stephenson considered Woodward too great a risk, claiming that when Woodward submitted his Tom Watson article to the Journal of Southern History for publication it contained dozens of factual errors. Stephenson also insisted that Woodward showed signs of having a serious drinking problem which might hamper his work. After extensive consultation with Kendrick on these issues, however, both Ramsdell and Stephenson agreed to offer Woodward the contract. Ironically, Woodward's Origins of the New South has remained an important work on the history of the New South for over thirty years.

See Ramsdell's reviews of A.C. Cole's Irrepressible Conflict, 1850-1866: A History of American Life (New York,
Historians who defended white supremacy, on the other hand, Ramsdell praised highly. Daniel M. Robinson, for example, in a 1937 article, "From Tillman to Long: Some Striking Leaders of the Rural South," glorified politicians such as Ben Tillman, Theodore G. Bilbo, and James K. Vardaman for their zealous work in building a progressive New South. Describing these men as middle-class "reformers," Robinson insisted that they fought for individualism and democracy against the forces of conservatism and corruption. Ramsdell embraced this argument enthusiastically. Even though Robinson's heroes had supported lynching, disfranchisement, and segregation, Ramsdell told Stephenson that he "liked Robinson's article very much." Calling it "thoughtful and suggestive," he insisted that Robinson had opened "...the way for a

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general revision of current estimates of the work and significance of latter-day southern 'demagogues.'"

Understandably, Ramsdell's negrophobia played a significant role in his interpretation of the nineteenth-century South. Implying, for example, that blacks possessed limited mental capabilities and worked well only under white direction, he described their first months of freedom as a pitiful commentary on their state of civilization. "Large numbers collected around the towns," he wrote in his dissertation, "where, luxuriating in idleness and


Ramsdell often praised Southern authors who defended the nineteenth-century South. Reviewing U.B. Phillips's Life of Robert Toombs, for example, he applauded Phillips's decidedly Southern interpretation. Even though Phillips's "...Southern sympathies are very much in evidence throughout the book," Ramsdell wrote, "they are based upon a close study of Southern conditions; and the point of view which he sets forth is so generally unappreciated, that the reviewer feels no desire to criticize." Reaching a similar conclusion with E. Merton Coulter's William G. Brownlow: Fighting Parson of the Southern Highlands, he remarked that Coulter's perceptive account of this "vengeful" Republican erred only in its servility to Brownlow. The author, he said, used the Governor's own papers, leaving an account "...more favorable to the Parson than he deserved," but, Ramsdell added, the book remained "an excellent piece of work...." Ramsdell, "Review" of U.B. Phillips's Life of Robert Toombs (New York, 1913), Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XVIII (April, 1914), 428-30; and Ramsdell, "Review" of E. Merton Coulter's William G. Brownlow: Fighting Parson of the Southern Highlands (Chapel Hill, 1937), Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XLIV (October, 1938), 154-55.
heedless of the next winter, they eked out a meagre subsistence by petty thieving, begging, or doing occasional odd jobs." Inferring that these newly freed blacks had little innate capacity to care for themselves, he claimed that they "crowded together indiscriminately in small huts, [where] they rapidly fell victims to disease and vices of all sorts."

By enfranchising such "child-like" creatures during Reconstruction, Northern Republicans, according to Ramsdell, dealt the South a most bitter and humiliating blow. Not even the "plundering of the public treasuries" or the imposition of "exorbitant taxes" equaled, in his view, the "iniquitous humiliation" accorded white Southerners by the enfranchisement of blacks after the Civil War, and he applauded those white redeemers who overthrew "the arbitrary rule" of the radical Republicans and restored stability to the South.


Ramsdell showed his disdain for radicals and Reconstruction on many occasions, but one of the most interesting appeared in a letter to Stephenson regarding an article submitted to the Journal of Southern History for publication. Asked to critique T. Harry Williams's "The Committee on the Conduct of the War," he reported to Stephenson that although the article added little new information, he found it interesting because of Williams's interpretation of the radicals during the war. "I have read over twice Harry Williams," he said, "and I turned back to and read again W.W. Pierson's article on the same
Not only did Ramsdell's racial beliefs determine his interpretation of Reconstruction, but they also affected his view of slavery as an institution of racial control. Insisting that "...in 1831 many thousands of Negroes in the lower South were either natives of Africa or were but one generation removed from savagery," he remarked that "as long as these Negroes could be kept under the discipline of the plantation the danger of racial conflict would be minimized...." Although he acknowledged that the threat of servile uprising "...was far less than... [white Southerners] thought," he agreed with the Southern planters who worried that should the slaves "...be excited by abolitionist doctrine the consequences might be appalling."

subject and with the same title in the American Historical Review." Comparing the two articles, he noted that "I confess that I am personally more sympathetic with the attitude of Williams: I think Pierson was too easy on the damned rascals and especially on my pet hate, E.M. Stanton." Encouraging Stephenson to publish the article, even though "there are not enough additional facts to justify its publication," he claimed that "the chief justification of publishing the paper is the different interpretation and estimate of the value of the Committee's work." Ramsdell to Stephenson, June 16, 1939, Stephenson Collection.

28. Ramsdell, "The Southern Heritage," Culture in the South, p. 7. Not surprisingly, Ramsdell defended and glorified this white civilization in much of his work. Acknowledging in his dissertation that he felt "...naturally drawn into a sympathetic attitude toward the people whose social and political system was being 'reconstructed,'" he exemplified this sympathy by writing wistfully of the Old South. Although critical of many writers who openly
This fear of race conflict appeared as a theme several times in Ramsdell's work and, like all of Dunning's romanticized the pre-war era, he accepted the picture they often painted of Southern aristocrats as erudite slave owners whose homes "...were filled with light and laughter and whose prosperous fields were tilled only by happy, loyal and contented slaves," and he applauded their "modest living...good breeding...family honor, public responsibility, self-respect," as well as "a contempt for lying and cowardice." Far from being the tyrants described by anti-slavery fanatics, Ramsdell's plantation owners provided qualities that the nation, in his eyes, could ill afford to lose. Ramsdell, "The Southern Heritage," Culture in the South, p. 15; Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, p. 7.

Naturally, Ramsdell rejected the teachings of those historians whose views opposed his version of Southern history. In a review of Carl Sandburg's Lincoln: The Prairie Years, for example, he complained that Sandburg lacked sympathy for and knowledge of the South. "Mr. Sandburg knows little about the ante-bellum South and the Confederacy," Ramsdell wrote, "and understands little of what he knows." Complaining that Sandburg paid little attention to Southern feelings during the 1850s, Ramsdell insisted that "Except for such established characters as Lee and Jackson," Sandburg "...generally contributed to put something less than the best construction upon the actions and motives of Southerners."

Echoing this attitude twenty years later in a review of A. C. Cole's Irrepressible Conflict, Ramsdell expressed particular annoyance at Cole for failing to understand the dilemma black slaves posed for the white South. "In handling this subject," Ramsdell said, "the author betrays an attitude too closely akin to that of the anti-slavery propagandist of 1860." "For one thing," he said, "he falls in too much with the old habit of attributing the retarded economic and cultural development of the South solely to the institution of slavery." Terming this "...too easy an explanation," Ramsdell insisted that Cole ignored important factors in his assessment of slavery. "One who would understand the southern scene," he said, "should distinguish carefully between what was chargeable to slavery itself and what was the result of a difficult racial problem that handicapped the South long after slavery was gone." Ramsdell, "Review of A.C. Cole's The Irrepressible Conflict, 1850-1866: A History of American Life (New York, 1934), Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XX (September, 1935), 280."
students, he believed that the South required a system of racial control. In his famous "Natural Limits of Slavery Expansion," for example, he discussed not only the implausibility of expanding slavery beyond the limits of cotton production but also the importance of white domination over blacks. Many historians have debated his "Natural Limits" thesis; and yet, while arguing the question of slavery expansion, they have virtually ignored Ramsdell's central assumption that as slavery collapsed the South would naturally maintain its policy of racial control. Recognizing the impossibility of removing blacks from America, he remarked that for their "own interest and...the interest of the larger social order," free blacks should "remain under some form of control...." Prior to the Civil War, he wrote, most Southern states resolved their free Negro problem on the basis of existing laws which prevented freedmen from becoming a public danger. These "...codes for the control of the free negroes," in his view, "might easily, in the course of time, have removed the greatest

objection on the part of non-slaveowners to emancipation," but, unfortunately, the Civil War disrupted this "... adjustment of two intermingled but dissimilar races...."

Naturally, Ramsdell thought that following Appomattox the South's most pressing problem became the re-establishment of a normal balance of society by limiting the excessive liberties of the freedmen. "To men accustomed to dealing with the indolence of the negro in slavery," he said, "such a thing as successful free negro labor was absolutely unthinkable." In fact, Ramsdell added that "the experience of the summer of 1865 in Texas had been such as to warrant no other opinion," for without white control the freedmen survived by "petty thieving" and crowding together in small huts.

Southerners who understood the "child-like negro," Ramsdell explained, knew that compulsory labor "...under police regulations of a stringent character" provided for a "happy system [where] insolence was to be provided against on the one hand and injustice on the other."


31. Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, pp. 47, 70-71

32. Ibid., pp. 47, 49, 72.
1900 white Southerners had firmly established just such a "happy system" throughout Texas, and Ramsdell affirmed the wisdom of maintaining this system of race control in the twentieth century. "Whites and blacks," he added in 1935, "were able to work together on friendly terms, provided the Negro accept the role of dependent." Since "...the average Negro was always glad to attach himself to some white man to whom, as patron and protector, he could turn as a ready source of help in time of trouble," the caste system, according to Ramsdell, served the black race's interest as well as the natural determination of white Southerners "that the South should remain a 'white man's country.'"

By arguing that this color caste system produced "happy" results for the twentieth century, Ramsdell merely echoed the opinion of his own era. Gunnar Myrdal contended convincingly in *An American Dilemma* (1944) that the mythology which developed from the reputed "horrors of...'black-domination'" during Reconstruction served a vital defense function for white Southerners in the twentieth century. All Southerners, and particularly historians, he continued, emphasized the Negro's inferiority and applauded racist

Celebrating the establishment of this caste arrangement, Ramsdell uncritically mirrored the popularity of racial control in his own day, and his endorsement of the caste policy in his historical studies must certainly have helped perpetuate acceptance of the system after 1910.

The influence of contemporary conventional wisdom on Ramsdell showed plainly in his treatment of education during Reconstruction. Insisting that public schools before the Civil War "...were the fruit of the democratic movement..." he noted that carpetbagger governments in the 1870s wreaked "havoc" on public education with their ignorance of the Negro's potential and "...their ill-advised plan of mixing whites and blacks in the same school...." In "the light of over forty years' subsequent history," Ramsdell found it "highly diverting" to read the optimistic reports by these Northerners regarding the


Negro's capabilities. Only after Reconstruction, he concluded, did the South re-establish order by separating the races. Ramsdell never documented his charges that Reconstruction destroyed public education.

The enthusiasm with which Ramsdell accepted twentieth-century Southern mores also appeared with special clarity in his discussion of John H. Reagan's proposals for black suffrage. In 1865, Reagan, a Confederate officer and former state legislator, wrote an open letter to the citizens of Texas which Ramsdell found "truly remarkable," inherently sound, and strikingly prophetic. Reagan urged Texans to accept Northern demands for black emancipation and enfranchisement, but only until Congress restored civil

37. Charles W. Ramsdell, "Presidential Reconstruction in Texas," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XI (April, 1908), 291. The statement Ramsdell found amusing came from General Granger. Granger wrote, "The freedmen are, as a general thing, strongly impressed with religious sentiments, and their morals are equal if not superior to those of a majority of the better informed and educated." "We find them not only willing," Granger said, "but anxious to improve every opportunity offered for their moral and educational advancement." Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XI (April, 1908), 291. Ramsdell referred to this statement as "an example of the pathetic ignorance which some of these high officials had of their wards."


authority. "I have no doubt," Reagan wrote, "you can adopt a plan which will fully...satisfy Northern minds and requirements of the government without endangering good government." Maintaining that such a policy should establish intellectual, moral, and property tests for all persons wishing to vote, he insisted that prospective voters "...should be able to read the English language understandingly," as well as have paid taxes for the previous year. The enactment of these measures, he concluded, "...would secure your protection against...great and pending evils" by preventing the Negro from "...becoming an element of political agitation, strife and danger."

Unfortunately, in Ramsdell's view, many Texans, accustomed to seeing blacks only as slaves, misunderstood Reagan's purpose and criticized his plans for enfranchising freedmen. The "inherent soundness of these views...failed to find much support in Texas," Ramsdell added, and "Reagan was compelled to suffer for a time the opprobrium so often the lot of those who can see further into the future than their fellows."

40. San Antonio Herald, October 5, 1865.
Although many Texans in 1865 misunderstood Reagan's intentions, by the turn of the century most white leaders saw the advantages of his proposals. In 1903 and again in 1907 the Texas Assembly enacted the Terrell Election Law, designed to "purify the ballot box" by deliberately disfranchising black voters. The act required prospective voters to demonstrate a high standard of citizenship and to pay both a property and a poll tax. The Terrell Act unquestionably resembled John Reagan's 1865 proposals for purifying the ballot box, and Ramsdell's praise of Reagan's letter as "future" oriented and inherently sound reflected early twentieth-century attitudes toward black voters.

Significantly, the strength of Ramsdell's commitment to Southern mores made him indifferent to the use of historical evidence. Indeed, he often displayed a cavalier attitude toward his footnotes. Writing, for example, to his friend Wendell Holmes Stephenson to explain the long

42. Alwyn Barr, Reconstruction to Reform: Texas Politics, 1876-1906 (Austin, 1971), pp. 204-207.

43. Ramsdell, "Presidential Reconstruction in Texas," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, 294; Ramsdell, "The Southern Heritage," Culture in the South, p. 9. Excusing white Southerners after Reconstruction for disfranchising blacks, Ramsdell insisted that the elimination of "...the venal carpetbagger" also required "depriving the Negro of his political power."
delay in getting "Lincoln and Fort Sumter" to the *Journal of Southern History*, he stated, "I am having more trouble than I anticipated in whipping that...article into final shape." "[T]he thing that has slowed me up most," he said, "is hunting down the references." Admitting that he had "...mislaid some of the notes" and was "...having to run back and forth to the library a good deal," he comforted Stephenson by concluding, "I think I shall send you a patched-up copy instead of having the whole thing recopied after I am through...to save a little time." A year later, when Stephenson asked him to hurry with his Walter Lynwood Fleming lectures, Ramsdell again showed a causal attitude about his footnotes. Complaining that he had too little time to work on the project, he asked if he might "...be permitted to reduce the number of footnotes to a minimum." "I think," he said, "it would same me a great deal of time and trouble."

Considering his own stinging rebuke of Carter Woodson for lacking "scientific detachment," Ramsdell showed a surprisingly lackadaisical attitude for the scholarly process, a characteristic that those who worked most closely with him had long recognized. Wendell Holmes

44. Ramsdell to Stephenson, June 13, 1937; Ramsdell to Stephenson, December 9, 1938, Stephenson Manuscript Collection, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
Stephenson, for example, struggled to justify his own description of Ramsdell as "a great scholar and thinker." Admitting that the "Dean of Southern History" often promised but seldom completed important assignments on time, if at all, Stephenson noted that when Louisiana State selected Ramsdell to inaugurate the Fleming Lectures, he had written only Reconstruction in Texas, half of which he produced in Texas as his master's thesis. Describing this monograph as only "an adequate performance," Stephenson acknowledged that Ramsdell "...did not attain the broad perspective..." achieved by his contemporaries at Columbia.

Members of the University of Texas history department also appeared unenthusiastic about Ramsdell's scholarly abilities. Although promoting him from instructor to adjunct professor after five years on their faculty, they

45. Stephenson, Southern History in the Making, pp. 188-191. Stephenson also praised Ramsdell's teaching skills, saying that for thirty years he taught "...generations...of graduate students..." and had produced several "reputable historians." Significantly, however, Stephenson failed to mention any of Ramsdell's "reputable" students, while Ramsdell, on the other hand, seemed unenthusiastic, at best, about his students. Mentioning only two, Ike Moore, whom he described as his "best student," and Barnes F. Lathrope, he expressed dejection and boredom with the work of most dissertations. Complaining about the quality of work he received from several students, he told Stephenson regarding one dissertation, "It stinks. I wish I could persuade myself to write that verdict on it and return it." Stephenson, Southern History in the Making, pp. 184, 203; Ramsdell to Stephenson, May 16, 1935, February 20, 1937, December 9, 1938, March 8, 1939, Wendell Holmes Stephenson Manuscript Collection.
denied Ramsdell tenure for almost a decade and, much to his displeasure, restricted his teaching load to European history until 1915. Department Chairman Eugene C. Barker, moreover, referred to Ramsdell rather unenthusiastically as "a good teacher, not striking, but quite well up with the average, and perhaps a little better." Adding that he lacked "brilliant qualities," Barker remarked belatedly that Ramsdell nevertheless seemed "perfectly solid."

When combined with his intense desire to justify the racial mores of 1900, this lukewarm endorsement from his closest associates, as well as his own indifference to documentation, indicated a causal attitude, at best, on Ramsdell's part toward scholarly accuracy. Indeed, in his effort to support the racial beliefs of his own era, he distorted factual information on numerous occasions in his professional writing.

Attempting, for example, to prove the common Southern belief that black soldiers during Reconstruction terrorized white citizens, he wrote in Reconstruction in Texas that "By far the greatest complaint was against the colored troops...[who] roamed about the country robbing [46. Eugene C. Barker to U.B. Phillips, March 21, 1911, April 2, 1911, Eugene C. Barker Manuscript Collection, University of Texas, Austin, Texas; Stephenson, Southern History in the Making, p. 189.]}
plantations, insulting and sometimes outraging women, inciting the resident negroes to like conduct, and keeping the whole country in constant terror." Basing this charge on circumstantial evidence, Ramsdell cited a "petition and letters to Governor Hamilton."

In another discussion of black troops, Ramsdell ignored evidence which disputed his thesis and used only that information consistent with the racial beliefs of his day. Citing the Galveston, Texas, Flakes Bulletin, he stated that

Negro troops were quartered in Galveston in the winter, and were constantly giving trouble. In the later part of February they broke loose from all restraint and spread terror over the city. A young lady, a member of one of the most respected families, was assaulted and horribly treated, and several persons were attacked and shot at.48

The March 8, 1865, edition of the San Antonio Herald, a conservative Democratic paper which Ramsdell used with great frequency and which he cited on numerous occasions, challenged the accuracy of this Flakes Bulletin story. The Herald denied that a young lady had been "horribly treated." In fact, the paper reported that "...the

47. Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, pp. 82-83.
48. Ibid., p. 83.
outrage was never committed, and the young person is neither wounded nor dying."

Not all of Ramsdell's distortions of evidence, however, involved the black race. Committed to upholding Southern mythology, he frequently charged that Northern aggression initiated the Civil War. Indeed, on one occasion Ramsdell argued that Texas's own secession occurred because the federal government had refused to appropriate money and troops for the state's defense against Indian attacks, and he repeated a rumor commonly held in 1861 that the government had actually supplied the Indians with weapons and munitions to attack Texas citizens. As part of his evidence for this charge, he cited an 1855 speech to the United States Senate by Sam Houston.

In his address to the Senate a full six years before secession, Houston discussed the Indian problem in Texas. Never, however, did he claim that the federal government supplied Indians with arms and munitions, nor did he complain


52. Ibid., p. 72.
of insufficient federal protection for Texas citizens. In fact, Houston demanded that the federal government withdraw its army, not reinforce it as Ramsdell implied. "The white citizens in Texas..." Houston said, "are in constant dread lest the military...make a descent...upon the poor Indians." "If...such a descent should arrive," Houston continued, "...it will only be one of a thousand distresses which I have felt at the wrongs inflicted on the Indians." Houston added that the Indians in Texas only reacted to military aggression in self-defense, and he concluded, "I justify them in doing it."

Similarly, Ramsdell distorted evidence in his famous "Lincoln and Fort Sumter" article. Attempting to expose Abraham Lincoln as the aggressor in 1861, Ramsdell stated that Lincoln sent Ward Hill Lamon to Charleston, South Carolina, prior to the attack. "Lamon," Ramsdell said,

whether through innocence or guile, left the impression with the Governor, and also with Anderson whom he was permitted to visit, that the garrison [at Sumter] would soon be withdrawn and that his trip was merely to prepare the way for that event.54

Ramsdell cited only Lamon's *Recollections of Abraham Lincoln*


for evidence substantiating this statement. In Recollections, however, Lamon provided no evidence that he left any "impression" with Major Anderson or Governor Pickens that "the garrison would be withdrawn." On the contrary, Lamon indicated his belief that Lincoln would tolerate little interference in the matter of resupplying the fort and would oppose all plans for withdrawing troops. Although Lamon admitted that "Mr. Seward had given assurance, before and after Lincoln's inauguration, that no attempt would be made to reinforce the Southern forts..." he insisted, nevertheless, that such a policy "...made matters embarrassing, as Mr. Lincoln's administration had, on the contrary, adopted a policy of maintaining the federal authority at all points, and of tolerating no interference in the enforcement of that authority from any source whatever." 55 By failing to include evidence from either Major Anderson or Governor Pickens regarding their "impressions" of Lamon's visit, Ramsdell's statements stand as mere assertions. More important, however, by ignoring Lamon's belief in the President's determination to preserve federal property, Ramsdell even distorted the information in Recollections. Elsewhere in the "Ft. Sumter" article Ramsdell invented information to prove his argument that Lincoln

maneuvered the Confederates into attacking the fort.

Describing a meeting between Lincoln and Congressman John B. Baldwin, a Virginia Constitutional Unionist, on April 4, 1861, Ramsdell wrote,

Baldwin... urged the president to assure peace to the country and strengthen the border state Unionists by evacuating both Sumter and Pickens and calling upon the whole people to settle their differences in a national convention. Lincoln replied that his supporters would not permit him to withdraw the garrisons. Baldwin then warned him that if a fight started at Fort Sumter, no matter who started it, war would follow and Virginia would go out of the Union in forty-eight hours. Lincoln became greatly excited and exclaimed, 'Why was I not told this a week ago? You have come too late!'

Ramsdell cited the Joint Committee on Reconstruction for this testimony. In his testimony recorded in that report, however, Baldwin made no reference to Lincoln becoming "greatly excited" about the possibility of Virginia seceding if hostilities occurred at Sumter, nor did he testify that Lincoln asked "'Why was I not told this a week ago? You have come too late.'" These words simply do not exist in Baldwin's testimony regarding Fort Sumter. Instead, Baldwin testified that upon hearing that Virginia might secede, Lincoln said only "'Sir, That's impossible.'"


Furthermore, according to Baldwin, Lincoln never indicated, as Ramsdell stated, that Republican supporters "would not allow him to withdraw the garrisons" from Fort Sumter and Fort Pickens. Speaking before the Joint Committee, Baldwin admitted that his memory failed him on this subject. "Lincoln...said something or other," Baldwin testified, "I do not recollect what, but it created the impression upon me that he was looking with some apprehension to the idea that his friends would not be pleased with such a step, and I said to him, "Mr. President, for every one of your friends whom you would lose by such a policy you would gain ten who would rally to you and to the national standard of peace and union.'" Lincoln, however, immediately corrected Baldwin. Claiming to base his actions on principle rather than political expediency, Lincoln said, "'If I could be satisfied that I am right and that I do what is right, I do not care whether people stand by me or not.'"

Ramsdell's most egregious misuse of evidence occurred in Reconstruction in Texas as he attempted to

58. Ibid.

Discussing the "Fort Sumter" article with Stephenson, Ramsdell confessed that he did not expect to convince anyone north of the Mason-Dixon line about Lincoln's motives, but he expected "a furious kick back" on the paper from Northern critics. Ramsdell to Stephenson, July 10, 1937, Stephenson Collection.
exonerate the terrorist tactics of the Ku Klux Klan. Minimizing violent acts perpetrated against Union men by Klansmen, Ramsdell wrote that while "there were cases of unprovoked violence" against Union men and freedmen, "such occurrences were few and...most of these outrages were committed in the northern part of the state...."

Ramsdell's citation to testimony of Benjamin C. Truman "before the Reconstruction Committee of 1866" confirmed that Truman made the remark. In that report, however, five other witnesses contradicted Truman's statements, claiming that lawlessness abounded throughout the state. Typifying those who contradicted Ramsdell and Truman, General George Custer reported that freedmen and Union men faced constant danger in Texas without substantial army protection.

Elsewhere in Reconstruction in Texas Ramsdell wrote that bands of Ku Klux made their appearance in nearly all parts of the state, "frightening the superstitious freedmen out of their senses, but otherwise doing no harm." "Sometimes...the matter did not stop with these comparatively

59. Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas, p. 68.

harmless pranks," he admitted, for "Now and then negroes and Radical whites...received written warnings...and if the warnings went unheeded, the offender was likely to be taken out and whipped, or even murdered." Ramsdell added, though, that murder rarely occurred and murderers seldom belonged to the Klan.

To support this contention that the innocuous Klan brought peace to Texas, Ramsdell cited the "report of General J.J. Reynolds on affairs in Texas for 1868." In this report, however, Reynolds, commanding the Fifth Military District, actually refuted Ramsdell's contention. Claiming that "Armed organizations generally known as the 'Ku Klux Klan'...disarm, rob, and in many cases murder Union men and Negroes," Reynolds reported that "the civil law east of the Trinity River is almost a dead letter."

"In some counties," Reynolds added, "the civil officers are all, or a portion of them, members of the Klan." He concluded by noting that the Klan's "murder of Negroes is so common as to render it impossible to keep an accurate account of them."

These distortions of evidence should impugn Ramsdell's reputation as "Dean of Southern Historians." His acceptance

of the conventional racial wisdom of his day certainly constituted no scholarly fault in itself, but to support that wisdom he either willfully or blindly distorted the actual record.
CHAPTER EIGHT
JAMES W. GARNER:
SOUTHERNER AS LIBERAL

When Charles W. Ramsdell arrived at Columbia in 1904 to begin work on his doctorate, William A. Dunning had already trained five students and initiated his famous state study series on Reconstruction. Walter Lynwood Fleming, J.G. deRoulhac Hamilton, William A. Davis, U.B. Phillips, and James W. Garner all graduated between 1901 and 1905. With the exception of Phillips, they all produced remarkably similar dissertations, each reinforcing Dunning's philosophy of Southern history and each following the style and formula of the dissertation preceding it. Dunning's first student James W. Garner, established that style and formula with Reconstruction in Mississippi in 1901.

Garner's striking success in initiating the state study series stemmed largely from his attempt to give Southern history credibility by fusing science with history. Trained as a scientific historian, Garner believed that he could narrate the events of Reconstruction "with reasonable fairness and justice to all concerned." Although admitting he had "his own prejudices," he assured his reader that he had "made an earnest effort to divest
himself of every influence...that would tend to swerve him from a plain and unprejudiced statement of the truth."  

Both Northern and Southern critics accepted Garner's assessment of his work, praising him as an "objective" and a "temperate" scholar. Northerners found Reconstruction in Mississippi particularly satisfying, since Garner, as a native of Mississippi, portrayed Reconstruction less critically, in their view, than did earlier Southern authors. One Northern reviewer, in fact, referred to Garner as an American, not a Southern historian, who viewed the south from the perspective of "a patriot looking down from the vantage of high ground over which waves the universal flag of his country." Southern reviewers also admired Reconstruction


in Mississippi. Its use of the scientific method, they felt, moved Southern history out of the realm of propaganda and into the field of professional scholarship.

Praise for Garner's scholarly work appeared not only during his lifetime, but following his death as well. For example, Richard N. Current asserted in 1968 that Reconstruction in Mississippi "was, for 1901, an amazingly well-researched, accurate, and objective account of a portion of Mississippi history by a white Mississippian." Although critical of Garner's racial beliefs, Current noted that the book "remains indispensable for the modern student," insisting that "the next historian to produce a comprehensive study of Reconstruction in Mississippi will do extremely well if he proves himself as thorough in his research, as accurate in his statements of fact, and as nearly self-liberated from his prejudices as Garner was two generations ago." Similarly, Mississippi historian Vernon L. Wharton, while highly critical of Garner's anti-Negro statements, also found Garner's attempts at objectivity laudable.


Although Garner "assume[d] that Radical Reconstruction was wrong in principle and that the restoration of native-white rule was essential to the ...progress of Mississippi," Wharton argued, he did try "to present an objective and balanced account." Furthermore, Wharton insisted that "...the restoration of native-white rule was essential to the...progress of Mississippi." Wharton insisted, nevertheless, that Garner's Reconstruction in Mississippi, like most of the works of the Dunning School, was "remarkably temperate and factual." "Little that has been learned in the succeeding sixty years," he said, "would serve greatly to alter or even add to Garner's story."

Several historians in the 1970s also praised Garner's scholarship. For example, Bert Lowenberg, in American History in American Thought (1972), referred to Garner as "an unbiased scholar," and William C. Harris called Reconstruction in Mississippi a "fine" work. Similarly,

Jack T. Kirby, while complaining that "negrophobia and sectionalism" marred most of Dunning's Southern state studies, praised the works of Garner and C. Mildred Thompson as "balanced, enduring accounts."

Despite his reputation as a temperate, objective scholar, however, Garner actually deserves little respect for his historical work. His chief legacy to Southern history, in fact, rested less with his moderate, scientific interpretation of Reconstruction than with his use of history as a mirror to reflect the contemporary wisdom of 1900. A strong advocate of white supremacy, Garner portrayed Reconstruction in such a way as to affirm the righteousness of segregation and disfranchisement in the twentieth century South. He did more, however, than merely read his bias into history. In order to secure the contemporary view of Reconstruction, he fabricated and distorted his evidence, thereby forfeiting his credentials as a scholar in exchange for those of a myth-maker.

Garner's subsequent career led him far afield from his origins as initiator of the Columbia state study series. Leaving his home in Mississippi to teach international law at the University of Illinois, Garner dedicated his

professional energy almost exclusively to the study of political science. Of his twenty books, *Reconstruction in Mississippi* alone dealt with the South. Moreover, only eight of his 300 articles covered Southern issues; those eight concerned twentieth century topics.

Like his Columbia colleagues, Garner received numerous professional honors, but all his awards came for his work as a political scientist. He served as president of the Political Science Association and of the American Society of International Law and received the William C. Clark Fellowship in Political Science. For his contribution to French international law, he became a chevalier of the French Legion of Honor. Clearly an influential figure in the field of political science, Garner served as editor of the *American Political Science Review* and the *American Journal of International Law* and lectured extensively.


A quick look at Garner's bibliography reveals that after 1914 he became preoccupied with the issue of international law. According to historian Bruce Clayton, however, most Southern authors stopped discussing the South after 1914. Exhilarated by the election of Woodrow Wilson in 1912, they felt a sense of accomplishment and jubilation about the South's place in the Union, and, according to Clayton, after Wilson's inauguration they saw little need to argue Southern issues in print. Bruce Clayton, *The Savage Ideal: Intolerance and Intellectual Leadership in South, 1890-1914* (Baltimore, 1972), pp. 175-176.
outside the United States. Highly praised for his expertise in international law, he addressed foreign audiences in a dozen European and Asian universities.

In addition to his career outside the field of history, Garner differed from most of his colleagues from Columbia in his out-spoken defense of progressive causes. Calling himself a "liberal," he worked closely with former Dunning student Charles E. Merriam and lobbied for the passage of such progressive measures as the initiative, referendum, and recall, the direct election of senators, and the direct primary. Garner also supported Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom policies and devoted numerous hours to the formation of the Legislative Reference Bureau, a committee of qualified scholars who aided the Illinois State Assembly in legislation. Personally contacting dozens of influential politicians, Garner joined several progressive


13. Charles E. Merriam to James W. Garner, February 19, 1908, Charles E. Merriam Manuscript Collection, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois; Merriam to Garner, March 10, 1908, Merriam Manuscript Collection; Garner to Merriam, March 11, 1908, James W. Garner Manuscript Collection; Garner to Merriam, June 8, 1908 and July 15, 1908, Garner Manuscript Collection. Also see Garner's obituary notice in the American Historical Review, IVXL (April, 1939), 774; and John Fairlie, "Memorial Address," Garner Manuscript Collection.
organizations, including the National Municipal League, where he campaigned vigorously for a score of progressive causes.

Committed to reform as well as international law, Garner had little time for other activities. His failure to contribute to the second Dunning festschrift published in 1923 illustrated this fact clearly. After promising Merriam, the project editor, that he would write a chapter, Garner canceled at the last moment. "It now looks as if it will be utterly impossible for me to contribute to the chapter...which I promised," he told Merriam. Making a lecture tour to Calcutta, India, he had hoped to "dash something off" while on board ship, but preparations for the tour had "worked him to a frazzle." "I am truly,

- 14. Garner to Merriam, October 15, 1908; John Fairlie, "Memorial Address," Garner Manuscript Collection. Both favorites of Dunning, Garner and Merriam developed a close relationship between 1908 and 1924. Corresponding frequently, they discussed progressive issues, planned vacations, chose colleagues to sit on professional committees, and inquired about positions for their graduate students. When Garner went to Chicago, moreover, he lunched with Merriam at the prestigious City Club, where they met prominent progressives who stimulated their thinking on numerous reform issues. Indeed, these meetings proved exciting for both men, but they became especially important for Merriam, as he made political contacts which led to his own participation in Chicago politics, running successfully for alderman and unsuccessfully for mayor. Merriam to Garner, November 12, 1908, Garner Manuscript Collection; Garner to Merriam, October 15, 1908, Garner Manuscript Collection.
truly sorry," he told his friend, "but a chapter has become a physical impossibility."

Significantly, Garner's professional commitments also prevented him from working with graduate students. Before a cerebral hemorrhage caused his untimely death in 1938, he trained fewer than a dozen students. According to his close friend and colleague John Fairlie, all of them studied international law. Unlike the authors of the other state studies, Garner had students in his seminar at the University of Illinois who expressed little interest in Southern history.

Garner differed from the other Dunning graduates even in his assessment of the New South. In what must have


Garner always seemed willing to undertake a new project. Although only recently graduated from Columbia, he became eager to make his mark in the academic world and wrote his former professor, Frank Goodnow, seeking a spot on the 1904 Political Science Association's convention. Asking Goodnow, President of the Association, if he could prepare a paper for the committee on the State Police Administration, he admitted that he lacked expertise in that field, but wanted to prepare a paper anyway. "I cannot say that I have any special knowledge on the subject of state police..." he wrote, but "I am very much interested in the subject and have a few rather definite ideas about it." Indicating both tenacity and brashness in his request, he remarked, "I am willing therefore to undertake the preparation of a paper." Goodnow politely declined.

Garner to Goodnow, November 12, 1904, Frank J. Goodnow Manuscript Collection, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland.

appeared heresy to his Southern colleagues, he criticized the Solid South as undemocratic, and he referred to slavery as a "moral evil." He also chastised Southern demagogues for their needless racial hyperbole, at the same time advocating educational opportunities for Southern blacks. More surprisingly, Garner encouraged white Southerners to abandon their support for the one-party South and to vote for the policies and platforms of the Republican Party.

Perhaps most uncharacteristic of the Dunning school was Garner's intensely patriotic nationalism. While Fleming, Hamilton, and Ramsdell dedicated their professional lives to defending the South, Garner praised the United States in his professional work. Immediately following his

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20. Trained in Dunning's seminar during the highly emotional years of the Spanish American War, he adopted his mentor's philosophy of placing national unity ahead of sectional interests. According to the notes he took while at Columbia, Garner learned from Dunning that a nation-state consisted of numerous parts, each contributing in its own way to the formation of an organized, organic institution, the institution evolving steadily, rationally into the future. Nationalism represented a dynamic force to Garner and an absolute necessity for the advancement of democracy and reform. While Fleming and Hamilton chose to
graduation, for example, he addressed a gathering of former Confederate soldiers, admonishing them to abandon their sectional rhetoric and affirm their loyalty to America. "I pity you," he said, "if you cannot come here forgetting the animosity and hatred [of the Civil War], imbued with a sense of magnanimity and broadminded patriotism, with a willingness to show your loyalty and allegiance to our common country, as well as to shake the hand of your comrade in arms." Almost two decades later he reiterated this point, telling a group of New Mexico citizens that foreign immigrants, streaming into the United States after World War I, must abandon their European habits and assume those values that would make them "100% American." These new foreigners, he said, "Must learn the role of citizenship." They must give their obedience" without hesitation to emphasize the South's uniqueness within the American setting, Garner used Dunning's philosophy to view the South as a significant but only a contributing part of the nation-state. Garner, class notes from Dunning's 1899 Political Theory Seminar, Columbia University, Garner Manuscript Collection.

"to the United States...," he wrote, "to its government, to its institutions, and to its traditions." Garner also testified to his belief in national unity when he referred to Abraham Lincoln as the "greatest leader" in world history. While Fleming prepared a biography of Jefferson Davis and Ramsdell gathered material for Reconstruction in Texas, Garner wrote that Lincoln "was the best fitted individual...to guide the nation through its greatest crisis" and compared the president favorably to George Washington, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Julius Caesar. Lincoln's unyielding drive to reunite the North and South pleased Garner's sense of nationalism, but the president won special plaudits from Garner for his attitude toward the South. Always sympathetic toward "Old Dixie," Garner said, Lincoln attempted to reassure his Southern

22. Garner, Unpublished address on "Americanism," Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1920, Garner Manuscript Collection. Garner also showed his enthusiasm for America in 1907 when he combined forces with one of the South's most notorious adversaries, Henry Cabot Lodge, a Republican Senator from Massachusetts and author of the 1890 Force bill. Writing a two-volume history of the United States with Lodge, Garner used as his theme the growth of America from its fragmented beginning to its blooming as a world power. He symbolized his message by requesting that the publishers insert in the preface a picture of two soldiers, one Union and one Confederate, shaking hands.

friends that they had little to fear from his administration. The President opposed slavery, viewing it correctly, according to Garner, as a blemish on the national character. Yet Lincoln had no plan to interfere with the South's handling of its black wards. He resorted to emancipation only to preserve the Union. Sounding a note common among the Dunning students, Garner reported that had Lincoln survived 1865, "the long bitter struggle over Reconstruction would probably never have occurred, and the south would have been spared shame and ruin."

As he made apparent in his discussion of Lincoln, Garner praised the Union and yet remained a devoted Southern partisan. Indeed, while discussing America often in his professional work, he always glorified the South in his public addresses. Unsurpassed by any Dunning student in his nostalgic view of the Old South, Garner told a group of Southerners,

few things are more interesting than the Old South about which so many songs have been sung, so many stories told, so many fables written. I love to think of her proud old aristocracies, her peculiar institutions, her white cotton fields; her tobacco farms, her sugar plantations, her stately villas, her happy and prosperous people....These were the halcyon days of Southern history....Her climate was death to millionaires, plutocrats, and monopolists.... Her soil still retained its pristine virginity, her statesmen were able, dignified and sagacious....

24. Ibid.
She was the embodiment of gallantry, chivalry, hospitality and refinement.25

So uncharacteristic amidst his nationalistic pronouncements, these peans to Southern glory arose from Garner's commitment to white supremacy. Despite his belief in democracy, reform, and progress, he viewed America as "an Anglo-Saxon" nation portraying blacks as "poor deluded creatures" but one step from African savagery. Indeed, he abandoned his commitment to national unity and democracy when it conflicted with white supremacy. Criticizing the Solid South, for example, he complained that a one-party section defeated the purpose of democracy. Political solidarity destroyed "...the liberalizing current of contemporary life" and drove independent thinkers out of politics, he said, leaving the people prey to political demagogues.

Significantly, however, he accepted political solidarity when it preserved white supremacy, and he objected to the South's political isolation only when the


threat of black domination had disappeared. Insisting that Southern whites during Reconstruction "were justified" in uniting against Republican policy, he remarked that "to have divided their strength would have been fatal to the very existence of their white civilization." By 1905, however, he claimed that the Republican Party had abandoned its support for black suffrage and saw little justification for perpetuating the Solid South. Describing the threat of Negro domination as "a mere specter," he told white Southerners to "exercise...with moderation and justice" their undisputed control of Southern blacks, that white supremacy "may be perpetuated without hindrance to the end of time."

28. Ibid., pp. 374, 383.

29. Garner, "Recent Agitation of the Negro Question in the South," South Atlantic Quarterly, 20. Besides attacking the Solid South, Garner also viewed Southern demagogues as a hindrance to Southern progress, and he denounced them for perpetuating the fear of black domination. Significantly, however, he did not condemn their belief in black inferiority. Arguing that disfranchisement had eliminated blacks as a political threat, he belittled those politicians who continued to make the Negro question a political issue when "there...[were] so many other living issues the discussion of which would be of so much more real benefit to the people." "The ill-timed and violent diatribes which have recently marked some of the political campaigns of the South..." he wrote, "have only kept alive and perpetuated old animosities, aroused distrust, suspicion, and bitterness and hatred...." Particularly annoyed by the antics of Governor James K. Vardaman of Mississippi, Garner criticized Vardaman's demands to repeal the 15th Amendment, not because they denied blacks their constitutional rights or diminished the concept of
Instead of one moribund party, Garner favored a thriving two-party system, giving Southern white men freedom of choice. With a second party, he argued, Southern leadership would again dominate the national arena, the South would return to national prominence, and democracy would flourish. To this end, Garner proposed voting Republican.

Yet he wished to have a two-party South without jeopardizing white supremacy. In _The Savage Ideal_, historian

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democracy in the South, but because abolishing the 15th Amendment served little purpose. According to Garner, this amendment had "been a dead letter in Mississippi for a number of years and [would] ...continue to be in the future." Garner, "Southern Politics Since the Civil War," Studies in Southern History and Politics, p. 378; Garner, "Recent Agitation of the Negro Question in the South," South Atlantic Quarterly, 16, 20.

Similarly, in a letter to The Independent, LXX (April 27, 1911), 900, Garner denounced the demagogy of a Florida politician who had Professor E.M. Banks dismissed from his position at the University of Florida for speaking his mind on the cause of the Civil War. Although careful not to denigrate white supremacy, Garner wrote that it "seems almost incredible" that a university professor "...should, in this enlightened age and country, be compelled by the pressure of local public opinion to resign his chair on account of his view on secession...." "Unhappily," he said, parts of the South are still affected by a small class of politicians whose "...chief stock in trade is their ability to exploit the negro question and the issue of white supremacy, which, as everybody but themselves knows, is no longer a real issue."

Bruce Clayton argued convincingly that although Southern liberals like Garner opposed the Solid South, they never meant for white Southerners to vote for a party that sponsored racial cooperation like "the Populists...or some other left-wing party." Populism, according to Clayton, violated Garner's value system by proposing a coalition between blacks and whites and by stressing the common interests of the two races. Rejecting the populists as a threat to white supremacy, Garner and his liberal allies in the South found themselves "psychologically unprepared," Clayton said, "to accept Populism's challenge to White Supremacy...." Therefore, Garner supported the lily-white Republicans, whose pristine attitude toward Southern racial traditions seemed an exciting yet safe alternative to the one-party South. Assuring Southern whites that the Republican party had abandoned its support of black political activity, Garner reported that "the return of the old humiliation and horror of Reconstruction is forever impossible." Even if blacks did manage to acquire political

power, he added quickly, Southern whites would find a way to disfranchise them again.

Garner's desire to secure democracy and reform for the South without sacrificing the color line involved not only disfranchisement but segregation as well. Although pleased that the New South had experienced significant growth in industrial and agricultural areas, Garner expressed alarm at the increasing migration of rural blacks into the Southern urban centers. In his view, this migration exacerbated "the whole problem of race relations" by drawing "the colored population away from their rural communities where their ideal conditions are best attained" and by decreasing the tenant farmers' dependence on white landowners. Praising sharecropping as "the best system" for


Garner also stressed disfranchisement in his article "The Fourteenth Amendment and Southern Representation," South Atlantic Quarterly, IV (July, 1905), 210-212, 214-216, in which he discussed the impracticality of enforcing the 14th and 15th Amendments and applauded the methods Southerners used to defeat the intent of these amendments. Claiming that the South seldom violated the spirit of these laws, he argued that Southern states did not prohibit blacks from voting. The poll taxes and literacy tests applied to whites as well as blacks, he said, and they forced an individual to take pride in himself and his community. If blacks chose not to display their pride, certainly no one could blame the white South.

controlling labor and capital, Garner insisted that once off the farm, the new breed of urban Negroes lost their manners and morals. Accusing them of "drunkenness, larceny, burglary,... rioting, crap-shooting, and other forms of petty gambling," he called for measures to control their lawlessness. Social segregation fitted his purpose. Until blacks elevated their race "to the same mental and moral plane as that occupied by the white race...," he said, "it will perhaps be better for both races that they should live apart socially." Adding that "equality in social matters...is not indispensable" to the healthy development of American blacks, he told white Southerners that "it... is...well worth considering whether some reasonable and effective measure might not be taken to prevent the movement of the Negroes to the towns and cities and their segregation in particular localities."

While disfranchisement and segregation established the perimeters of racial caste, lynch law set them in


36. Ibid., p. 875; Garner, "Recent Agitation of the Negro Question," South Atlantic Quarterly, 12.
concrete. Between 1880 and 1906, over 2770 lynchings occurred in the South, and only one Southern intellectual condemned them openly. Andrew Sledd, professor of Latin at Emory College, described the 1902 lynching of black sharecropper Sam Hoss as "the purest savagery." Castigating the cheering crowds of whites who burned their victim and then ransacked the ashes for souvenirs, he dismissed as hypocritical any idea that lynching represented a "righteous public sentiment" and insisted that such mobs knew nothing of justice.

Garner viewed Southern lynching quite differently. Publishing his own assessment of vigilante justice in 1906, he referred to lynch law as "barbaric." Yet he refused to criticize white Southerners for taking the law into their own hands, shifting the blame instead to the American court system. According to Garner, lynch mobs merely executed criminals that "ingenious" lawyers and blundering judges

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38. Ibid. For his attack Sledd paid a heavy price. Criticized extensively throughout the South, he resigned his position at Emory College and moved North to work on his doctorate at Yale University. Few intellectuals in the North openly supported his right to free speech; Garner remained conspicuously silent.
refused to punish. "Everywhere in this country...the reign of lawlessness is spreading and conditions are fast becoming intolerable," he said, due mainly to the failure of the judicial system to supply swift punishment to common criminals. Claiming that the legal system is hedged... with technicalities," he denounced the "loopholes of escape" it offered criminals. Especially in capital cases, friends of the victims express their disgust with the judicial system by taking "the law into their own hands...."

For example, when the United States Supreme Court allowed a Tennessee Negro "the right of appeal," a mob lynched him, Garner noted, fearing that he would escape punishment. Although admitting that mob violence represented an "outrage against the community and the State," he offered little criticism of those citizens who resorted to lynch law, insisting that "[only] swiftness of action and certainty of punishment...would...[eliminate the] disposition among Americans to resort to the barbaric method of self-help."

40. Ibid., 335.
41. Ibid., 333.
42. Ibid., 333-34.
43. Ibid., 333, 341.
Nevertheless, he said, "there is more than a modicum of truth in...[the] dictum that there are communities in the United States in which lynch law is better than any other."

Garner's view of lynching illustrated the extent to which he supported white supremacy. Naturally, such intense beliefs permeated his historical writing. In a 1901 address, for example, he portrayed slaves as "ignorant" creatures saved from the savagery of African jungles by a benovolent white society. Although he denounced slavery as a "moral wrong," he exonerated the South for perpetuating the Peculiar Institution. "No one," he said, "can blame one particular section or age for its existence...[since slavery] was brought here in accordance with that divine plan which drove the American Indians before the rolling tide of a superior civilization." Praising Southern whites for rescuing African blacks from a "burning prison where the sun...dwarfed [their] mental and physical manhood," he claimed that the most ill-treated slave in the South "was more of a man and nearer to God than the most absolute African emperor reigning in regal splendor of a palace guarded by Amazons." Little concerned that he placed Amazons on the wrong continent, Garner marvelled at the progress

44. Ibid., 341.
blacks had made under white supervision. Although insisting
that they retained inferior characteristics, he remarked
that "with the wonderful facility of imitating his superiors--
a dominant characteristic of the Ethiopian race--the Negro...
was lifted from a jibberish, muttering cannibal to a
degree of intelligence."

Like his interpretation of slavery, Garner's view of
Reconstruction arose from the perspective of a white supre-
macist. Although historians have praised his "temperate,"
"objective" assessment of the postwar era, his interpretation
actually differed little from the most conservative Southern
view of the period. Referring to Reconstruction as "rule of
the ignorant, the corrupt and the vicious..." he denounced
Radical Republicans for "enfranchising the colored race
and disqualifying a large number of the more influencial
whites." The slaves who received their freedom at the
end of the war, according to Garner, became the "pliant
dupes" of Northern carpetbaggers. Alongside their new
allies, they ruled the Southern states in a ruthless manner.

45. Garner, Unpublished address on "The Civil War
and Reconstruction," Garner Manuscript Collection.

46. Ibid.; Garner, The History of the Nations: The
United States, p. 868.

47. Ibid., p. 865; Garner, "The Civil War and
With the state and local governments controlled by "ignorant negroes and designing white men," Garner said, an era of extravagance, misrule and corruption set in, which in some instances amounted to outright robbery." Expressing his anger at Republicans for imposing taxes "out of all proportion to the impoverished condition of the people" and passing laws "favoring social equality," Garner also denounced carpetbagger governments for repealing old laws and replacing them with "bulky statutes, many of which bore the earmarks of animosity and oppression." Moreover, he accused radicals of re-christening counties "with names full of offense to Southern whites" and multiplying political offices "for the benefit of Republicans." Citing Louisiana as a classic example of radical misrule, he claimed that a Northern adventurer, H.C. Warmouth, "organized and controlled the negroes" so effectively that he completely dominated the state government, plundering the treasury and retiring from office "with a fortune of no mean amount." Garner, of course, gave his full approval to the suppression of the Republicans "Reign of terror." Southern whites, "driven almost to desperation," resorted to the use


49. Ibid., p. 868.
of secret societies like the Ku Klux Klan, he said, to rid the South of the negro incubus" and end "one of the most dangerous experiments ever undertaken by the law-makers of any country." Justifying the Klan's response to alleged corruption in Southern governments, he argued that "history abounds with illustrations of the truth that the secret conclave, the league, and the conspiracy are the sequences of political proscription and disfranchisement." Although admitting that the Klan resorted to violence, he praised the organization for returning control of the South to white hands. Fearing for their lives, "obnoxious" carpetbaggers left the South, and by 1876, Garner said, Republican "misrule, extravagance, ignorance, and oppression happily came to an end."

Garner's attitude toward the post-Civil War era not only mirrored his racial biases of 1900. He also used his interpretation of Reconstruction as a tool to justify 20th century racial beliefs common throughout the South. Writing in 1905 that Americans entertained "a natural feeling of prejudice" against blacks, he insisted that such


52. Ibid., pp. 873, 870.
prejudice "is not a matter that can be changed by legislation, and the futile attempts of the reconstructionists to...
[enforce social equality] showed how unavailing such legislation is."

A similar use of history for presentist purposes appeared in his defense of disfranchisement. "The right to vote and hold office in a democratic republic like ours," he wrote in 1905, "is a responsibility which cannot be safely entrusted to the ignorant, either in the North or in the South." He continued, "Those of the negro race who have not qualified themselves by education have no right to complain if they are denied the ballot." Using his interpretation of Reconstruction to justify these beliefs, Garner argued, "It is now universally admitted that the sudden investment of the great mass of ignorant blacks with political power so soon after their emancipation was the greatest blunder the reconstructionists committed," and

53. Ibid., p. 874.
54. Ibid.
concluded, "The sad years of misrule and plunder which followed in the South abundantly proved this."

In order to give unmistakable veracity to his interpretation of Reconstruction, Garner did more than merely read his biases back into history. He fabricated or distorted evidence in his dissertation to justify his racial and sectional beliefs. Distortion of evidence occurred often in his work, especially when he discussed emotional issues involving Republican corruption, Ku Klux violence, or Mississippi's admission to the Union.

For example, in Reconstruction in Mississippi, Garner discussed conditions in Mississippi shortly after Appomattox, arguing that "the status in the South was such as to justify the readmission of...[Mississippi] to the Union...." Although admitting that many Southerners

55. Ibid. One London newspaper used Garner's interpretation of Reconstruction to influence contemporary British thinking. Comparing the British situation in South Africa after the Boer War with the North's conquest of the South during Reconstruction, a reviewer for the London Pilot insisted that "politicians, journalists and others in the country, who have the opportunity of influencing the terms of the coming settlement in South Africa will be the better for reading Mr. Garner's book and laying its lesson to heart." "The moral of the outcome of Reconstruction policy pursued by the Federal government..." this reviewer said, "is that unnecessary harshness toward the vanquished has a tendency ultimately to defeat the aims of the conquerors...." Review of Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, London Pilot, (1901), Garner Manuscript Collection.

56. Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, pp. 149.
continued to believe in "the righteousness" of their lost cause, he said that "there was such 'universal acquiescence' in the authority of the national government as to make the mere presence of a military force, without regard to numbers, sufficient to maintain order." Indeed, "the people of Mississippi had reorganized their government," according to Garner, "and were yielding obedience to the laws and constitution of the United States with more willingness and greater promptitude than could reasonably be expected under the circumstances." Garner also insisted that Mississippi whites "evinced a laudable desire to renew their allegiance to the government, and to repair the devastation of war by a prompt and cheerful return to peaceful pursuits." While "the demoralizing effects of the war had occasioned disorders in some cases," Garner wrote, "...they were generally local in character and rapidly disappeared as the authority of the Civil law was extended and sustained."

As the basis for this argument, Garner cited reports to President Johnson from General U.S. Grant and Senator Carl Schurz, two Northerners who had visited several Southern states after the war, gathering information

57. Ibid., pp. 147, 148.
58. Ibid., p. 148.
for the President. While Grant observed in his four-page account that "there was universal acquiescence" in the results of the war, Schurz's one-hundred-page report contradicted Garner's argument completely. Charging that Mississippi citizens showed little willingness to accept federal authority, Schurz told President Johnson that most white Southerners greeted the test oath with "contempt,... ridicule" and "sneering remarks." Adding that the South "is still very far from showing satisfactory efficiency in the maintenance of order and security," he also contradicted Garner's claim that disorders "disappeared...as civil law...was sustained." Instead, Schurz noted that "robbing and plundering" occurred "with perfect impunity," as civil officers failed, through either inability or unwillingness," to enforce the laws."

Schurz also contradicted Garner's statement that Mississippi citizens sought "a prompt and cheerful return to peaceful pursuits." "[T]he moment the protection of United States troops was withdrawn..." Schurz said, "the state of affairs would be intolerable for all Union men,


all recent immigrants to the South, and all Negroes...."

Indeed, in his view, conditions for the freedmen had already become abominable. Although noting that "the freedman is no longer considered property...," he criticized Mississippi whites for considering him "the slave of society...."

White Southerners had little intention of emancipating the blacks, according to Schurz, but wanted instead "to install some type of peonage or serfdom to replace chattel slavery."

In another example of selective reading of evidence, Garner denigrated the honesty and integrity of Republican politicians in Vicksburg. Arguing that the radicals in Vicksburg had "squandered" city funds "in grants to railroad companies and in public improvements," he blamed them for increasing the city's debt from $13,000 in 1869 to an astonishing $1,400,000 by 1874. According to Garner, the Vicksburg Republicans had little character. Indeed, he argued that they nominated for political office "a white

61. Ibid., p. 8.

Schurz concluded his report to President Johnson by saying "I see no reason for believing that things have changed for the better since I left for the South...." "I would entreat you to take no irretraceable step toward relieving the states lately in rebellion from all national control," he added, "until such favorable changes are clearly and unmistakably ascertained." Schurz, "Report on Mississippi," Sen. Docs; Serial Set 1237, p. 46.

62. Ibid., p. 45.
man...who faced indictment for 23 offences...seven negroes of poor character and little intelligence, and one white man who could neither read nor write, and who was the keeper of a low grog shop."

For evidence sustaining his assessment of Republican characteristics and financial abilities, Garner cited the statements of a Democratic witness, Judge Frederick Speed, in the 1875 Congressional Investigating Committee for the Affairs of Vicksburg. Although describing the Republican nominee as "unfit" for office, Speed never discussed their intelligence, character, or occupations, as Garner indicated, nor did he accuse any Republican of facing criminal indictments. In his discussion of Vicksburg's financial status, moreover, Speed testified that he had only second-hand information regarding the city's debt. When asked by the committee about Vicksburg's incumbrance, he replied that "There is no possible means of ascertaining [it, but it]...is popularly believed to be...$1,400,000."


64. Testimony of Judge Frederick Speed, Vicksburg investigation committee, 2nd Ses. 43d Cong. No. 265, Serial set 1659, pp. 220, 223-224.

Even if Judge Speed had made such remarks, they would have constituted, at best, the most blatant form of circumstantial evidence. Significantly, however, earlier in Reconstruction in Mississippi, pp. 312-313, Garner cited W.H. Gibbs, state auditor, for his testimony on Vicksburg taxes. Gibbs testified that the debt for the entire state ran only to a little over $500,000. Ibid., p. 534.
Garner also distorted information in Charles Nordhoff's *Cotton States*, which he cited to verify his discussion of Republican corruption in Vicksburg. Nordhoff, an English visitor touring the South, held little sympathy for radical Reconstruction, but he refused to blame the Republican Party exclusively for Vicksburg's financial problems. In fact, Nordhoff found the Democrats equally culpable. "There is...a loud outcry about the enormous debt of Vicksburg," he said, "but of the money spent for street improvements, Democratic contractors got the most, and the money given to railroads was voted by Democrats and Republicans alike." Nordhoff also insisted that "if the Democratic leaders were fair," they would "tell their people that the expenses of state and county governments have necessarily increased, for the colored people, being free, give business to the courts and the officers and institutions of justice." While he believed that the Democrats had reason to "complain loudly of Republican rascality," he also remarked that "their own skirts are by no means clean." "There are Republican counties in which county warrants are at or near par," he said, "and there are Democratic counties where the warrants are at a heavy discount." Moreover, Nordhoff reported that the Democratic

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taxpayers' league, formed ostensibly in opposition to Republican spending, became a laughingstock when "it was discovered that one of the officers of the league had charged the town five hundred dollars for removing a safe from the landing of the courthouse."

Elsewhere in Reconstruction in Mississippi, Garner described an 1871 riot that occurred in Meridian, Mississippi, as a result of increasingly hostile relations between whites and blacks. Claiming that the "political condition" created by Reconstruction formed the "remote cause" of the riot, he fastened "immediate" blame on a Northern teacher and his black colleagues for assaulting "a deputy sheriff who had come over from Alabama to make some arrests."

While offering only a brief outline of significant details, he insisted that Meridian's black leaders, at the request of the town's white Republicans, had quickly journeyed to Jackson to discuss their problems with Governor Adelbert Ames, and on their return called a meeting of all blacks in the vicinity, urging them to "'take things into their own hands.'" Garner implied a direct connection between this rhetoric and a fire that began in the mayor's store an hour after the meeting adjourned. Although unclear

66. Ibid., pp. 76, 82.
about the origin of the fire, he noted that it spread quickly because the Negroes refused "to help extinguish it on the ground that it was a white man's fire." Meridian's police promptly arrested all Negro leaders, he said, and tried them on the charge of "'creating disorder.'" Garner provided little information about the trial of these black leaders, stating only that a tremendous shooting began in the courtroom. "Twenty or thirty shots rang out almost simultaneously," he said, and "when the smoke clearly away, several dead bodies were found."

For his sketchy account of the Meridian affair, Garner cited the entire first volume of the 1871 congressional report, Affairs in the Insurrectionary States, Mississippi. Ignoring details which contradicted his view of the riot, Garner distorted the bulk of the testimony in this work. For example, while he accused Meridian blacks of assaulting an Alabama deputy sheriff, he failed to mention that the man posing as the deputy had no legal authority in Mississippi, nor any validity as a deputy. Republican legislator O.C. French testified that the Mississippi State Assembly investigated this incident and "...found that the man who claimed to be a deputy sheriff had no requisition from anybody, and no official character

Furthermore, Garner ignored testimony in the report linking this deputy with the Alabama Ku Klux Klan. Postmaster J.R. Smith told the committee that "...Alabama democrats, finding that a great many of the colored men were leaving their country when they needed them there for the purpose of labor, were disposed to adopt some means to get them back there, and to stop them from going out in such numbers." "Therefore," Smith added, "they sent this deputy sheriff there to arrest some and carry them back, in order to make a kind of example of them and probably deter others from leaving."

In addition, while several witnesses stated that one black leader urged Meridian Negroes to take the law into their own hands, they testified that this speaker meant for the freedmen to defend themselves against the Alabama Klan. John W. Kizer told the committee that "the object of the meeting of the colored men...was to make some arrangements to keep out the Alabama Ku Klux and keep from being shot

68. Testimony of O.C. French, House Report, No. 22, pt. 10, 42nd Cong., 2nd Session, 1872, Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States: Mississippi, Serial set 1539, p. 8. See also pp. 29, 27, 64, 103, 105.

69. Testimony of J.R. Smith, House Report, No. 22, Inquiry into the Condition of the Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States, Serial set 1539, p. 79.
Similarly, another witness testified that he heard one black leader "say that they must take the matter in their own hands and fight it out, and not let the Alabamans come over here."

Several witnesses also contradicted Garner's inference that Meridian blacks set fire to the mayor's store. Not one person presented firsthand evidence that the blacks started the fire. The testimony, in fact, showed that the Republican mayor had a close, friendly relationship with Meridian blacks and that both races helped to extinguish the fire. Eyewitness P.S. Layton told the committee that while some blacks refused to help with the fire, "a good many of the colored people assisted." Other witnesses agreed, saying that although some blacks held back, "a large number of colored men worked very hard to extinguish the blaze." Although several witnesses testified that one black man said, "Let it burn--it's a white man's fire," most received their information at second hand. M.H. Whitaker

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71. Testimony of J.R. Smith, House Report, Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States: Mississippi, Serial Set 1539, p. 35. Also see pp. 52, 49-50.

72. Testimony of P.S. Layton, House Report, Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States: Mississippi, Serial Set 1539, p. 42. Also see pp. 67-68.
typified this type of witness, telling the committee that "as soon as the fire broke out...this man, Clopton, a colored man, took steps to prevent the negroes from aiding in extinguishing the fire...." Whitaker admitted, however, that "this information I gathered afterward, for I was not present at the fire."

Garner's greatest abuse of the committee's work came in his omission of information explaining the shooting in the Meridian courtroom. While stating that "a tremendous firing" began which killed several men, he failed to state that a dozen witnesses linked the shooting to the Alabama Ku Klux Klan. J.F. Session and O.C. French, for example, testified that they saw "numerous Alabamans at the trial." Although no one saw the first shot fired, testimony showed that all Southern whites at the scene escaped harm, while seven blacks and one white Republican died in the disturbance.

Ironically, while Garner made dozens of scholarly errors in his writing, William A. Dunning applauded his


historical skills. Writing to his friend Frederic Bancroft, Dunning described Garner as a "hustler" and insisted that his first student had "the makings of a real scholar in him."

Significantly, Dunning also expressed concern about the rapid pace with which Garner finished his work. Without question, Garner worked more quickly than any other Dunning student. Completing his course work at Columbia in 1900, he researched, wrote, and published his dissertation between 1900 and 1901. Dunning, while admiring Garner's hustle, hinted that this accelerated pace had its liabilities. Complaining to Bancroft, Dunning wrote that Garner spent only "10 days in Mississippi" collecting material, particularly newspaper articles, for the dissertation.

Despite this brief statement of concern about Garner's scholarly skills, Dunning paid his student a supreme compliment by using Reconstruction in Mississippi as a model for later graduate students. The legacy which Garner left the historical world, however, went beyond simply inaugurating the Columbia state study series.


77. Ibid.
Helping to provide Southern history with scientific credibility, he used his historical credentials to manipulate data, condemn black Reconstruction, and justify 20th century lynching, disfranchisement, and segregation. As the corner-stone of the Columbia state study series, therefore, Garner left the Dunning school a staggering legacy indeed.
CONCLUSION:
"TRUTH IN HISTORY"

In 1913, James W. Garner met with a score of Dunning students at the American Historical Association in Charleston, South Carolina, to pay tribute to the man who had guided them through Columbia University. Along with Garner, some of the most articulate and influential men in the academic world came to honor their mentor. Future presidents of historical and political science associations, editors of every major historical journal, as well as deans and professors from renowned universities, arrived in Charleston to present Dunning with a collection of their original essays.

A two-year project, this Festschrift honoring "the Old Chief," reiterated all that Dunning had taught his students in his seminars. Summarizing a decade of historical research, these essays once again emphasized the familiar theme that behind everything Southern stood the "sorry presence of the negro," the African savage who cast

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a black shadow across the land. Especially troublesome between 1865 and 1877, freedmen subjected the South to havoc and misrule, proving for all time the Southern axiom that black men would always remain hopelessly degenerate, a menace to democracy, and an unwanted, alien race among the Anglo-Saxons.

Dunning's students felt strongly that the Southern whites, who had to bear this burden, particularly after Reconstruction, justifiably needed to control black thought and action. In their eyes, the unfortunate impossibility of colonization forced Southerners to rely on segregation and political disfranchisement. A plantation caste system also served this end, and lynching, although a "barbarous" practice, occasionally became a necessary expedient. These measures, they concluded, represented the righteous response of a South determined to prevent the Negro from altering his status on the social ladder.


Ironically, although motivated by strong racial consciousness, Dunning's students eschewed the demagogic rhetoric of crude reactionaries and championed the cause of reform and progress in their home states. Poor men in a rich country, they grew to maturity witnessing rapid economic gains in the South. The changes occurring throughout the entire nation following the Civil War thrilled them. Representing the foremost academic and intellectual leaders in the South, they worked for Southern social, economic, and political reforms.

Their reforms, however, often neglected black interests and always encouraged racial subordination. Unable to dismiss the Negro from their world, they refused to include him in their paradigm for advancement. In politics, they sought greater democracy by urging adoption of the initiative, referendum, and recall, but demanded disfranchisement of black voters as a prerequisite. Similarly, although encouraging quality education in Southern schools, they insisted that blacks receive only technical

4. For example, David Y. Thomas worked for the Initiative, Referendum, and Recall in Arkansas; Hamilton worked for Prohibition in North Carolina, and Garner urged that educational reforms begin in Mississippi. Fleming and Phillips both insisted that they favored educational reforms in the South also. In the North, Charles E. Merriam ran for Mayor of Chicago on the progressive side of the Democratic party.
skills in the classroom. At the same time, they urged urban reforms which required segregating blacks in all social areas. Dunning's students, in short, wanted a progressive and democratic South, but insisted that it remain tied to a rigid color line.

Although they represented some of the best-educated and most articulate Southerners, these historians seemingly understood neither the destructive effects' racism had on blacks nor the roadblocks it placed in the way of Southern economic, social, and political goals. Bemoaning the Negro's inability to keep pace with the rest of the South, they blamed blacks for retarding progress, but at the same time insisted that the white South keep its wards ignorant, powerless, and segregated. Social salvation, in effect, necessitated oppression.

Dunning and his students obviously did more than simply rationalize racist beliefs. Not only did they accept without question the orthodoxy of their childhood, but they helped institutionalize it by deliberately manipulating and distorting factual evidence in their historical works. Wearing the mantle of scientific

scholars, they abused history to justify their own version of truth, and in so doing, encouraged the South to act upon, as well as to cling to, its racist beliefs. Segregation, disfranchisement, and caste became the concrete expressions of this Southern thinking and served as the lawful basis for the tyranny and murder that flowered under the guise of historical truth.

It is significant that fifty years after Dunning met his graduates for their gala party in Charleston, South Carolina, one of his most severe critics, W.E.B. DuBois, died a disgruntled ex-patriot. Angered by the intransigent racism flourishing in the United States, DuBois struggled for half a century against the "propaganda" promulgated by Dunning and accepted as truth by white Americans. Discouraged and infirm, he abandoned both his country and his cause, a testimony to the power and appeal of the "scientific truth" taught in the best American universities by men like Dunning.

Before leaving the United States, however, DuBois sounded an ominous warning. Historians, he insisted, frequently distort their evidence to support fictional

beliefs, and the historians of Reconstruction, particularly Dunning, Fleming, Garner, Hamilton, Ramsdell, and U.B. Phillips became the worst offenders. Posing as scientific scholars, they assumed "as axiomatic the endless inferiority of the Negro," he wrote, and deliberately ignored any facts that challenged or contradicted this assumption. The only real excuse for their attitude, wrote DuBois, "is loyalty to a lost cause, reverence for brave fathers... and fidelity to the ideals of a clan and a class." Such history, he reminded his readers, "may be fine romance, but its not science;" it "may be inspiring, but it is certainly not the truth, [and] beyond this it is dangerous." Indeed, he continued, it only breeds "lawlessness and the loss of democratic ideals." In the end, he wrote, it leads to "prejudice as a social salvation" from which contempt and hatred flourish.

Unfortunately, the Dunning School did not work along. Indeed, DuBois remarked, "in propaganda against the Negro since emancipation in this land, we face one of the most stupendous efforts the world ever saw to discredit human beings, an effort involving universities,

7. Ibid.
history, science, social life and religions." Almost fifty years after DuBois issued this indictment, one must wonder at the applause that continues for William A. Dunning and his school of Reconstruction historiography.

8. Ibid., pp. 727, 731.
APPENDIX I

THE DUNNING SCHOOL OF RECONSTRUCTION HISTORIOGRAPHY


Bonham, Milledge L. 1881-1941.

Hamilton College, Clinton, New York 1919-1941.

Boyd, William K. 1879-1941.

Editor of the South Atlantic Quarterly 1912-1929.
Executive Council of the American Historical Association 1925-1927.
Chairman of the Program Committee of the American Historical Association, 1929.

Brummer, Sidney D. 1880-1954.

Clark, Olynthus B. 1864-1936.

Drake University 1904-1932.

Davis, William Watson 1886-1944.

University of Kansas 1910-1936.


Dunning, William Archibald 1857-1922.

Columbia University 1890-1922.

President of the American Historical Association 1913.
President of the Political Science Association 1921.
Editor of the Political Science Quarterly 1891-1901.
Executive Council of the American Historical Association 1900-1903.

Fleming, Walter Lynwood 1874-1932.

University of West Virginia 1905-1907.
Louisiana State University 1907-1917.
Vanderbilt University 1917-1930.

Board of Editors Mississippi Valley Historical Review 1914-1920.
Executive Council of the American Historical Association.
Garner, James Wilford 1871-1938.

University of Illinois 1913-1938.
President of the Political Science Association 1924.
President of the American Society of International Law 1931.
President Institut International de Droit Public 1935.
Chevalier, French Legion of Honor 1935.
Editor in Chief of the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology 1910-1911.
Board of Editors of the American Journal of International Law 1924-1938.
Assistant Editor on the American Political Science Review 1907-1910.


University of North Carolina 1907-1956.
President of the Southern Historical Association, 1943.
Editor of the North Carolinian Historical Review 1912-1920.

Haworth, Paul Leland 1876-1938.

Kendrick, Benjamin Burks 1874-1946.

Columbia University 1920-1923.
North Carolina College for Women 1923-1945.
President of the Southern Historical Association, 1941.
Executive Council of the American Historical Association, 1941-1944.

Phillips, Ulrich Bonnell 1876-1934.

University of Wisconsin 1902-1908.
Tulane University 1909-1911.
University of Michigan 1911-1929
Yale University 1929-1934.

President of the Agricultural Historical Association 1925.
President of the American Historical Association 1928.
Executive Council of the American Historical Association 1927-1930.
Justin Winsor Prize 1902.
Albert Kahn Fellowship 1929.
Albert J. Beveridge Memorial Fellowship 1929-1930.

Porter, George H. 1878-1953.
Ramsdell, Charles William 1877-1942.

University of Texas 1910-1942.
Secretary-Treasurer for the Southwestern Historical Association 1907-1942.
Executive Council of the American Historical Association, 1931-34.
Editor of the Southwestern Historical Quarterly, 1907-1914
Assistant editor of the Southwestern Historical Quarterly 1914-1942.
President of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 1928.
President of the Southern Historical Association, 1935.

Scruggham, Mary 1885-1955.

Staples, Thomas S. 1882-1943.

Executive Council of the Southern Historical Association, 1937-1940.
Assistant editor Arkansas Historical Quarterly, 1940.

University of Arkansas, 1925-1940.

Stebbins, Homer 1884-1951.

Thomas, David Yancey 1876-1943.

University of Arkansas, 1904-1939.
University of Texas, 1940-1941.
Executive Board of the Southern Historical Association.
Assistant editor of the Arkansas Historical Quarterly.

Thompson, Clara Mildred 1881-1972.

University of Georgia, 1916-1944.

Thompson, Holland 1874-1940.

City College, New York, 1906-1935.

Ware, Edith 1882-1959.


University of Georgia 1901-1916.
APPENDIX II

MANUSCRIPT SOURCES
For the student of the Dunning School, a large number of manuscript collections exist that provide excellent primary information on Dunning and his students. The largest and richest collection of material pertaining to Dunning himself lies in the Frederic Bancroft Manuscript Collection at Columbia University's Butler Library. In this group of six hundred items, dating from 1890 to 1915, Dunning expressed his opinion on subjects ranging from American political philosophy to summer vacations around New York City. Fortunately, after 1912 "the Old Chief" typed all of his letters, offering relief from his distinctive but illegible handwriting. Often humorous, at times pedagogic, Dunning's candid statements make Bancroft's collection essential for anyone interested in this complex and surreptitious man.

Unfortunately, Dunning's only manuscript collection contains little useful information. Also located in the Butler Library at Columbia, this compilation of memos and documents has little to interest the student of the Dunning School. Besides a few letters to fellow colleagues and a congratulatory letter to Charles A. Beard, Dunning's papers contain a diary of his high school years in New Jersey and one letter from a former student, Milledge L. Bonham. Bonham wrote his mentor in 1915 to discuss his research interests and relate a humorous story about Walter
Lynwood Fleming. This collection also contains one handbill offering a two-dollar reward for the arrest of Dartmouth's president, Samuel D. Blartit. Blartit had expelled Dunning from Dartmouth in his freshman year for misconduct unbecoming to the school.

The Parker T. Moon Collection, the Monroe Smith Collection, and the E.R.A. Seligman Collection, also at Columbia, contain a smaller number of Dunning letters. Unlike the Bancroft Papers, these manuscripts add little to our understanding of Dunning or his students. Dunning congratulated Moon and Smith for their publications in the *Political Science Quarterly* and explained to Seligman, an economist and colleague at Columbia, his reasons for supporting Woodrow Wilson's presidential bid in 1912.

The Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina holds several important manuscripts that contribute greatly to an understanding of the Dunning School. Seldom used, but invaluable for its wealth of material on Dunning and his students, the Joseph Gregory deRoulhac Hamilton Papers at Chapel Hill contain over sixty letters from Dunning and an equal number from Dunning students. Like Dunning, Hamilton lingered over his correspondence, which he wrote with a distinctively graceful stroke. At his death in 1961, his family began preparation
of a biography based on his papers, but cancelled the plan and deposited his letters in the Southern Historical Collection. In Dunning's communications to Hamilton, "the Old Chief" expressed constant interest in Hamilton's affairs, offering encouragement, suggestions, and criticism of his work.

Letters to Hamilton from Fleming, Garner, Haworth, Merriam, Ramsdell, and Boyd, in addition to several hundred letters in Hamilton's own hand, make this collection the most valuable source for material on the Dunning School. Fleming and Hamilton, for example, corresponded often and frequently discussed other Dunning students. Of special interest are Fleming's remarks praising Dunning and defaming "the black Republican," Paul Leland Haworth. Unfortunately, a Hamilton diary, written between 1910 and 1950, remains unavailable for inspection at this time.

The Southern Historical Collection also contains a small group of U.B. Phillips's papers. Consisting largely of congratulatory letters for his publications, this collection has little to interest the student of the Dunning School. A large parcel of Phillips's letters written between 1903 and 1910, housed in the John S. Baldwin Collection, also at Chapel Hill, contains much more valuable information on Phillips's role in establishing
the Georgia Historical Association. A businessman in Georgia and an amateur historian, Baldwin encouraged Phillips to reorganize the Georgia Historical Society. Between 1903 and 1910, Phillips worked with Baldwin on this project, only to abandon the effort for lack of time and money. Phillips's correspondence to Baldwin reveals a young, talented, ambitious historian eager for the opportunity to establish his reputation in the historical world; eager also to promote historical consciousness in his native state. It discloses, too, the avocational interest of an equally ambitious businessman, Baldwin, who wanted to use Phillips to wrest control of the Georgia Historical Association from "Confederate Antiquarians."

The Sterling Library, at New Haven, Connecticut, has a small but important collection of Phillips's papers. Donated to Yale University by his family in 1933, this collection is a source of unexpected richness. Although it contains only a few personal letters, it holds Phillips's unpublished article "The Situation in the South in 1903," which represented his earliest statement on racial issues in America.

The Perkins Library at Duke University holds the William K. Boyd Papers, Wendell Holmes Stephenson Papers, and William G. Brown Papers, all useful in detailing the close relationship Dunning maintained with his students.
The most important of these collections, the Wendell Holmes Stephenson Papers, houses material from Hamilton, Boyd, Fleming, Phillips, and Ramsdell. A Phillips student at the University of Michigan and a founder of the Southern Historical Association, Stephenson often encouraged Hamilton and Ramsdell to contribute to the *Journal of Southern History* and requested their opinions on issues involving the South. Although Stephenson and Ramsdell became close friends and exchanged over three hundred letters between 1931 and 1941, their correspondence concentrated on affairs of the Southern Historical Association. These letters provided an excellent example of the impact Dunning's students had on the historical profession.

The William K. Boyd Papers contain letters in which Dunning praised Boyd's work as editor of the *South Atlantic Quarterly* and encouraged his student's interest in legal and constitutional questions concerning Reconstruction. Fleming, Garner, Hamilton, and Phillips also corresponded with Boyd. Close friends while in graduate school, Hamilton and Boyd communicated regularly for over a quarter of a century and discussed a wide variety of personal and professional subjects.

The William G. Brown Papers, the W.W. Ball Papers, and the Gerold Humphry Papers, also in the Perkins Library,
contain a small but significant group of letters from several members of the Dunning School. In these papers, Phillips and Fleming discussed their desire to promote the study of Southern history. Of special interest are Phillips's letters to Ball in which he remarked that Southerners needed to double their output of Southern history before Northern scholars totally dominated the field.

The University of Illinois Library at Urbana, Illinois, contains the James W. Garner Papers, another rich vein of information for the students of the Dunning school. This collection includes speeches, articles, and book reviews, as well as an informative set of lecture notes taken from Dunning's Civil War and Reconstruction course at Columbia. More important, the Garner Papers hold three unpublished speeches delivered between 1901 and 1920, which clearly outline Garner's philosophy on secession, slavery, and the Civil War. The collection also contains a diary by Mrs. James Garner and several interesting letters from Charles E. Merriam which discuss the quality of work appearing in the Dunning Festschrift.

The Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago holds the Charles E. Merriam Papers. One of Dunning's earliest political science students, Merriam corresponded
with his mentor for almost 20 years, and his collection shows as clearly as any other source the influence Dunning had on his students. Between 1902 and 1922 Dunning offered advice and instructions to his former student on several professional matters. In his 1903 letters, for example, Dunning outlined a series of subjects for Merriam to research and even suggested a change of jobs. Well organized, the Merriam Papers also contain several interesting exchanges between Merriam and Mithilda Dunning, Dunning's older sister, describing her brother's childhood in New Jersey.

In addition, this collection holds an exceptionally rich source of information for the student of the Progressive era. A Democratic alderman in Chicago between 1912 and 1920, Merriam ran unsuccessfully for mayor in 1920. His manuscripts contain hundreds of letters and documents from city officials and constituents alike. Dunning found Merriam's political activities fascinating, and he applauded his student's efforts in victory or defeat.

Also valuable in shedding light on Dunning's interaction with his students, the Yates Snowden Collection, located in the University of South Carolina Library, contains letters from Dunning to this former seminar student. Although never completing his Ph.D., Snowden taught at the University of South Carolina and corresponded frequently
with Dunning and several of his students. Dating from 1907 to 1915, Dunning's letters reveal the closeness and concern he felt for this student. In one remarkable letter, he expressed great sadness at learning of Snowden's departure from Columbia.

The Snowden Collection also contains a large number of letters from Hamilton, Phillips, and Fleming. Actively involved in locating and preserving material on Southern history, these men sought Snowden's help in obtaining documents on slavery and Reconstruction. Phillips, in particular, asked Snowden's assistance in locating plantation documents, but also offered the young South Carolinian advice on his studies at Columbia.

The Joint Universities Library in Nashville, Tennessee, holds the Walter Lynwood Fleming Papers, the Edwin Mimms Papers, and the Frank L. Owsley Papers. The small Fleming collection consists of bibliographic material Fleming distributed to his classes and a few memos that he wrote while dean at Vanderbilt. More interesting are Fleming's letters in the Edwin Mimms Papers. Mimms, a professor at Vanderbilt and a devotee of Jefferson Davis, exchanged views with Fleming on Davis's activities during the Civil War.

The collection of James W. Garner papers at the Department of Archives and History in Jacksonville,
Mississippi, and the Walter Lynwood Fleming Papers in the Manuscript Department of the New York Public Library shed light on the scholarly techniques of these two major Dunning students. Garner's Jackson Collection holds only a few letters from friends and colleagues, but it has several interesting communications from Adelbert Ames, Governor of Mississippi during Reconstruction. The Fleming Papers in New York contain early drafts of Fleming's dissertation, along with several letters from members of the Ku Klux Klan in Montgomery, Alabama, and one important letter from Hilary Herbert. Poorly organized, most of Fleming's notes appear on half sheets of paper, several torn and illegible. The collection also contains three-by-five note cards and twenty illustrations assembled for his biographical work on Jefferson Davis.

Information detailing the personal lives of several Dunning students appears in the Thomas M. Owen Papers and the Tocca Cozzart Papers at the Department of Archives and History in Montgomery, Alabama, as well as the George Petrie Papers at the Auburn University Library and the George P. Garrison Papers in the Eugene Barker Library at the University of Texas. The particularly useful Thomas M. Owen Collection holds several hundred letters from Fleming. Close friends, Fleming and Owens discussed
a wide variety of personal and family subjects; but Fleming also commented on the Ku Klux Klan, the Daughters of the Confederacy, and the works of novelist Thomas Dixon.

The Tocca Cozzart Collection also provides invaluable information of Fleming's life before graduating from Columbia. Childhood companions in Montgomery, Fleming candidly discussed his ideas on many issues with Cozzart. Of particular interest are his statements on the black platoon army officials assigned to his command during the Spanish-American War and the problems he encountered as a graduate student at Columbia.

Additional information on the personal lives of Fleming and Hamilton appears in the George Petrie Manuscript Collection at the Auburn University Library. Petrie, a professor of history at the Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Montgomery, Alabama, corresponded most often with his former student, Walter Lynwood Fleming. In a warm, patrician manner, Petrie inquired constantly into his student's health and well-being and on occasion offered friendly advice. Fleming responded frequently with denunciations of New York for its cold winters and unfriendly women.

The John Fairley Papers at the University of Illinois and the George P. Garrison Papers also provided
personal information on Dunning students. Garrison, department chairman at the University of Texas in 1904, taught the young Charles W. Ramsdell and corresponded frequently with his student while he attended Columbia. Ramsdell kept Garrison informed of his progress and of the academic opportunities at Columbia, discussed the calibre of his instructors as scholars and teachers, and the extra-curricular advantages of living in "this noisy quarter of the world."

Information relating to the professional activities of Dunning and his students appears in several manuscript collections at the Library of Congress. Over one hundred letters from Dunning and Phillips, for example, are in the American Historical Association Collection. Barely more than a sentence or two in length, Dunning's letters for the years 1911-1915 deal exclusively with Association business and articles for publication in the *American Historical Review*, panel selections for various conventions, or Association meeting sites. Similarly, Phillips's letters for the years 1927-1928 pertain to routine Association business, although they also include a copy of his "The Central Theme of Southern History."

The Charles W. Ramsdell Collection in the Barker Library at the University of Texas and the David Y. Thomas Collection at the University of Arkansas Library in
Fayetteville, Arkansas, all provided valuable information for the historian interested in Southern intellectuals. The largest of these collections, the Ramsdell Papers, contains correspondence from Garner and Hamilton who wrote to discuss the Dunning Festschrift. Most of the collection consists of notebooks, grade books, lecture notes, and articles relating to the Civil War in Texas. Ramsdell also has a number of routine administrative letters in the E.L.C. Barker Collection at Texas, dealing with business affairs in the Department of History at the University of Texas. The Barker Collection also contains one emotional letter from Dunning to Barker describing Ramsdell's qualifications as a scholar and teacher.

Like the Ramsdell Collection, the David Y. Thomas Collection in the University of Arkansas Library has very few personal letters, but contains several interesting newspaper articles by Thomas on criminal law, sharecropping, and taxation in Arkansas. An advocate of social reform in the South, Thomas revealed in his manuscript collection the problem Dunning's students faced when simultaneously advocating social reform and racial control.

The Huntington Library in San Moreno, California, the Eisenhower Library at Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Cornell Library in Ithaca, New York all
contain manuscripts pertinent to a study of the Dunning School. The Frederick Jackson Turner Papers in the Huntington Library have several interesting letters from Dunning, Garner, and Phillips. Dunning, for example, invited the eminent Wisconsin professor to speak at Columbia and assured him that following his speech, they would enjoy a memorable evening at the Century Club in New York City.

The Carl Becker Papers, the George Burr Papers, and the Charles Hull Papers, located at Cornell University, also have a few Dunning letters. Hull received instructions and encouragement from Dunning on their 1915 quarrel with Bancroft for control of the American Historical Association. Dated just a few days before the convention met, these letters reveal the remorse Dunning felt over his disagreement with Bancroft, but they also show his determination not to lose control of the association he had helped to build.

No manuscript material exists for several Dunning students. His Northern students, for example, left no papers. Similarly, William Watson Davis, B.B. Kendrick, Paul Leland Haworth, Milledge Bonham, Mary Scrugham, Holland Thompson, and Thomas Staples left little manuscript material. C. Mildred Thompson has a few folders of unorganized material in the possession of
her daughter which remain unavailable for inspection at this time, and Thomas S. Barclay, the sole surviving Dunning student, has no letters from any member of the Dunning School.
APPENDIX III

WORKS BY THE DUNNING SCHOOL
Works by the Dunning School on the Antebellum South, the Civil War, and the Reconstruction

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