Black Populism: The Negro In The People's Party In Texas

Douglass Geraldyne Perry

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BLACK POPULISM: THE NEGRO IN THE
PEOPLE'S PARTY IN TEXAS

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1945
BLACK POPULISM: THE NEGRO IN THE
PEOPLE'S PARTY IN TEXAS

By
Douglas Geraldynne Perry

A Thesis in American History Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Science

In The
Graduate Division

of
Prairie View University
Prairie View, Texas
August, 1945
DEDICATION

To my mother and father whose encouragement in the preparation of this study has been invaluable.

Aug. 2, 1945  J. D. Dew  Education
Aug. 2, 1945  L. S. Dew  Education
Aug. 2, 1945  E. S. Dew  History
The writer wishes to express her grateful appreciation to Mr. C. H. Culliford, under whose direction this work was undertaken, for his good counsel, kindly patience and scholarly advice, and to Dr. J. W. Dee and Professor J. L. Brown for their helpful suggestions.

The writer wishes to thank, also, the Library Staff of the Beachy Library located at Galveston, Texas, the Library Staff of the Dunham Public Library located at Houston, Texas and the State Library located at Austin, Texas for their kindness in giving her their knowledge of the Negro in politics in Texas.

APPROVED BY:

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Date     Signature     Field Represented
Aug. 2, 1945
Aug. 2, 1945
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The writer wishes to express her grateful appreciation to Mr. G. R. Woolfolk, under whose direction this work was undertaken, for his good counsel, kindly patience and scholarly advice; and to Dr. J. M. Drew and Professor J. L. Brown for their helpful suggestions. The writer wishes to thank, also, the Library Staff of the Rosenberg Library located at Galveston, Texas, the Library Staff of the Houston Public Library located at Houston, Texas and the Library Staff of the State Library located at Austin, Texas for their kindness in making material available which pertained to the thesis. The writer is appreciative to Dr. E. W. Winkler, of the University of Texas for assisting her in finding material concerning the thesis problem. Finally, the writer wishes to thank Mrs. Susie J. Roligan and Mr. W. M. MacDonald for their kindness in revealing to her their knowledge of the Negro in politics in Texas.
BIography

The writer, a twin daughter of Willie and Edna Perry, was born at Coldspring, Texas. She received her elementary education in an elementary school at Coldspring, Texas; and received her high school education at Blackshear High, Groesbeck, Texas, and Phillis Wheatley High School, Houston, Texas. After graduating from high school, she entered Mary Allen Junior College. Later, she entered Prairie View State College, and graduated in August, 1943.

Her experience has been acquired in the field of elementary education. She taught the third and fourth grades in the elementary department of Lincoln High School at Coldspring, Texas.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

Among the third parties known in Texas is the People's Party, which wielded powerful influences in the last decade of the nineteenth century. A historical discussion of that party leads naturally to the same questions which arise with reference to any third party. What were the conditions from which grew the movement leading to the organization of the third party? What classes did it draw upon for its strength and what was the program with which it attracted disgruntled elements? What did the third party accomplish? In addition to the usual questions which Doctor Roscoe C. Martin of Alabama University has answered satisfactorily in his monograph The People's Party of Texas, the Negro student lists a number of queries which portray the Negro's interest in the third party movement in Texas. Among other things the student of Negro history desires to know what was the general trend of Negroes' participation in politics in Texas? What class of people participated in the third party movement? How were the Negroes organized? To be sure, the problem could not be isolated. It did not operate in a vacuum. Some of the age old questions which troubled the minds of history students had to be answered. The general conditions leading to the organization of the
third party could not be ignored; nor could the general background of Negroes participation in politics in Texas prior to the organization of the People's Party be omitted. In short, this thesis proposes to portray the manifestation of political behavior of Negroes in the third party movement; and to give consideration to the general conditions leading to the organization of the third party, and the historical background of Negroes in Texas.

Finally, this thesis seeks to demonstrate that Negroes were motivated to participate in the third party movement for individual gains. They were usually motivated by white populist candidates, who desired their votes. Sometimes Negroes were motivated by the tapping of a barrel of whiskey, by receiving a twenty-five cent coin and by gaining some local political office. There were few exceptions to this rule.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this thesis is to show the political behavior of Negroes in the third party, and to show that Negroes' behavior was influenced by external factors. This thesis is being written with the hope that the lessons of the past may aid in the chartering of a new course for the political activities of Negroes.

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1 An interview with W.M. MacDonald April 16, 1945.
Scope of Study

The root of this problem was conceived in the period of Reconstruction following the Civil War. Special interest will be concentrated on the brief interlude between 1891 and 1896. The frontier had passed, and the change produced by the passing of the frontier brought forth protest, particularly from agricultural classes. As a result, the agrarian protest was made.

The agrarian protest began with the Granger Movement. The Granger movement represented the first phase of the unfinished agrarian crusade. It portrayed the first attempt of an agricultural society to organize in an effort to become adjusted to the economic and social conditions made certain by the agricultural revolution and the new evolving industrial society. Such a movement had its origin in the needs in the Black and isolated East. Its founder, O. R. Colley, supposed that the distressing conditions in the West were fostered, if not caused by, lack of social opportunities. Therefore, he urged farmers...
CHAPTER II

POPULISTS' BATTLECRY

When the American frontier ceased to be a safety valve in which the steam of agricultural as well as industrial discontent was let off, the nation of independent farmers of which Jefferson dreamed had come to an end. A contented agrarian nation of farmers, whose transportation routes followed the lines of nature, no longer existed. The frontier had passed, and the change procured by the passing of the frontier brought forth protest, particularly from agricultural classes. As a result, the agrarian protest was begun.

The agrarian protest began with the Granger Movement. The Granger movement represented the first stage of the unfinished agrarian crusade. It portrayed the first attempt of an agricultural society to organize in an effort to become adjusted to the economic and social conditions made certain by the agricultural revolution and the new evolving industrial society. Such a movement had its origin in the sixties in the bleak and isolated West. Its founder, O. H. Kelley, decided that the distressing conditions in the West were fostered, if not caused by lack of social opportunities. Therefore, he urged farmers

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to organize into a national secret order for the purpose of social and intellectual advancement. Five farmers and a governmental employee heeded his call, and in the fall of 1867, the Grange was established. Having formed a constitution and adopted the motto "Esto Perpetua", the members of the Grange met on December 4, 1867 and constituted themselves the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry.

The Grange was started as a secret fraternal order of farmers which stressed social and educational objectives. The Grange grew slowly, when it was guided by these objectives. By 1870 the order had been planted in only nine states in the union. The hard times of the seventies, though, produced the stimuli necessary for the rapid growth of the organization. Consequently in 1873 and 1874 the Grange covered the entire agricultural West and South.

The rapid advancement of the Grange during the seventies can be explained in terms which eventually constituted the Populists' battle cry. The members of

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2 Ibid., p. 3.
the Grange began to cry out against the iniquities of monopolies and railroads. This cry was strengthened by the decrease in price of farm products and by the credit system by which the farmers operated. Prices of farm products decreased as the agricultural frontier advanced west and crop acreage increased. Also, farmers found themselves in an unparalleled dilemma. When their creditors demanded them to pay their debts, they were not able to do so. When the financial depression of 1873 came, farmers found it almost impossible to get short term loans or renew mortgages. The farmers, believing that the railroads, elevators and market facilities were means of their exploitation uttered their battle cry in full force during the hard times of the seventies. During the hard times that accompanied the depression of the seventies, the agrarian discontent even took a political turn and called for regulation of warehouses and railroads, control of monopolies, reduction of the farmers' tax burden, creation of a department of agriculture and broader government services for agriculture. The depression of the seventies, further, intensified the demand for cheap money. This demand was expressed politically in the Greenback Movement.

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5 Fainsod and Gordan, _op. cit._, p. 41.
The Grangers' success was shortlived. Its membership declined and much of the legislation which it sponsored was repealed during the latter years of the seventies. Before the Granger Movement reached the peak of its success, it was introduced in the state of Texas. R.A. Beard, a deputy of the National Grange, organized the first subordinate Grange in Texas at Salado, Bell County. The State Grange was organized at Dallas in 1873. J. B. Johnson was made worthy overseer.

The Texas State Grange's original objectives were closely akin to the initial aims of the National Grange. At the first regular meeting of the Grange at Austin, Texas, April 14-15, 1874, the delegates drafted a constitution and by-laws stating the purpose of the Order to be the education of the farmers, and denying any intention of entering politics. This idea was grasped immediately by the Texas farmers, and it was in this area that the

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6 Fainsod and Gordan, op. cit., p. 41.
8 Ibid., p. 297.
9 Ibid., p. 297.
most lasting work of the Grange was made. The Grangers' educational efforts were concentrated in the field of industrial education.

It should be understood, further, that the early reform movements in Texas were not protest movements against monopolies. The battlecry of the agrarian rebels did not originate with the birth of the reform movement. The constitution of 1876 which was framed by a convention controlled by farmers contained no provisions against organized wealth. The Texas Grange operated like a social organization, until the Texas farmers became victims of the dull deadening pain which accompanied the Great Depression years. There is little doubt that the Texas farmers, too, had grievances. In fact their grievances were many. They were, also essentially a debtor class. They witnessed the decline in price of "King Cotton" and the

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Eugene W. Hilgard, "Report on Cotton Production in the United States" 10th Census-House Miscellaneous Document No. 42 Part 6 47th Congress 2nd Session, See Part III for Individual State Reports. "Credit system in Texas in 1870 was not prevalent in eleven counties. It did not exist to a very great extent in twenty six counties, but in all the other counties in Texas it prevailed usually from one half to three fourths and sometimes to the full crop value."
increase in the cost of commodities. Consequently, the discontented agrarians were willing to accept cheap money as a panacea for their economic ills. They were willing to cooperate in pursuit of economic and social justice. This cooperation was exemplified in the Granger Movement.

The Granger Movement disintegrated shortly after 1884, but the farmers continued to fight monopolies. They fought with much zeal and enthusiasm. James B. Weaver, an exponent of Populist Philosophy, identified the farmers' struggle with the crusade the fathers had fought in 1776 for their natural right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The farmers fought, because they still had grievances. They still were aware of the fact that something was wrong with the industrial system. They were conscious of the fact that the American Society was breeding two classes of people—millionaires and tramps, and that they were drifting into the latter group. The farmers were cognizant of bank foreclosures, held mortgages and the high cost of manufactured goods in comparison with the price of farm produce. The voice of the prophets, which pronounced their grievances could not escape their notice. Mrs. Lease's fam-

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ous utterance, "What you farmers need to raise is less corn and more Hell!" or the Kansas talk of mortgages, railroads, credits, trusts and National Bank, was not cast aside as worthless propaganda. The farmers organized the Alliances to eliminate such grievances. Texas claims the honor of organizing the first Alliance. It is generally conceded that the first Alliance was started about 1874 or 1875. The first organization was effected on Donaldson Creek upon the premises of John R. Allen. His premises was located about nine miles northwest of Lampasas Springs. It was located in a farming and stockraising district. These farmers and stockraisers were molested with horse thieves and cattle sharks. Allen urged the farmers of this precinct to organize for the purpose of catching the horse thieves, rounding up estrays, and purchasing supplies. The farmers and stockraisers did organize, but their organization grew slowly until 1884. In 1884 crops were so poor, mortgages so plentiful, and the farmers so sorely pressed

13 John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt, (Minneapolis, 1931), p. 97, 114. There were two Alliances. In the South the Southern Alliance did not admit Negroes to enter the Organization on equal terms with the other members. Hence the Colored Farmers Alliance was organized. It was organized in Houston, Texas under the leadership of R. M. Humphrey.

14 Galveston Daily News, August 19, 1895.
that it was necessary for them to look for some means of relief. In 1885 their conditions grew worse. Therefore, the Farmers' Alliance Exchange was organized at Dallas, Texas under the leadership of C. W. MacCune. A. L. Kessler, President of the Farmers' Alliance, gave nine objectives of the Farmers' Alliance Exchange in 1888. The objectives were designed to help the farmers of Texas live more comfortably on produce from the soil. The Farmers' Alliance, further, became a political organization. The Alliance demanded legislative regulation of income tax, the public school system, homestead exemption laws, coinage of silver and voting.

Finally, in January, 1887 the Farmers' Alliance of Texas and the Alliance of Louisiana fused. After the union of the two Alliances, an attempt was made to spread the movement throughout the South and Southwest. After the Alliance Movement had appeared in the South, Southwest and Northwest, there emerged another organization which crowned the Agrarian revolt. At the third convention of the Farmers' Alliance held in May, 1891, in Cincinnati,

15 R. L. Hunt, *A History of Farmer Movements in the Southwest* (No Co., no dates), p.30. "About 1885 cotton was selling from four to seven cents a pound and cotton seeds were often dumped out of the cotton gin as worthless."

16 *Galveston Daily News*, August 31, 1888. See Appendix A.
the members of the Alliance decided to form a national Party. At the fourth meeting of the Alliance at St. Louis February 22, 1892, the People's Party was launched. Its program of financial reform, government ownership of railroads and telegraphs and elimination of corporate and foreign ownership of land was issued to the Nation July 4, 1892.

In Texas a crumb of comfort was thrown to the disheartened Populists when the People's Party of Texas as symbolized by Thomas L. Nugent, continued to carry on a program of social, economic and educational welfare. The People's Party sponsored barbecues, picnics, clubs, and State Conventions. The Party became involved in politics and participated in political campaigns. In this connection the party sent colored and white lecturers all over the State to preach the doctrines of Populism. As a result, the People's Party in Texas increased in strength, until after the election of 1896. After the election, however, the power of the People's Party declined. Even though the political, social, educational and economic importance of the party waned, it had served an important purpose. It had taught the farmers that they could and must protect their welfare by organization.

Whatever the battle cry of the agrarian rebels was, it was stated by depressed people. It was a cry uttered by people, who were led by people with definite characteristics. In examining briefly some aspects of the lives of these men, it is possible to reach definite conclusions concerning the leaders of the People's Party in Texas, and to be prepared to accept the contributions that the leaders of the Party made to the farmers of Texas.

Charles W. MaCune, who is known as the leader of the Alliance Movement in Texas, was a native of Wisconsin. He represents an agrarian leader, who spent years trying to find himself. He lived in California, Kansas, and Texas before he finally made Texas his home. While living in Texas, he read law, practiced medicine and made his influence felt in agricultural matters. In 1886, MaCune was elected chairman of the executive committee of the Texas State Alliance. In 1887 he was elected president of the joint union of the Farmers' Alliance of Texas and the Industrial Union of Louisiana. In the same year MaCune suggested the organization of a Farmers' Alliance Exchange of Texas, with an authorized capital stock.

John R. Allen, the founder of the Alliance in Texas, played no important part, seemingly, in the agrarian revolt. Therefore, a short sketch of his life will be omitted. There were other People Party leaders in Texas, also, whose life sketches will not be included in this study. The Negro leaders will be discussed later in the thesis.
of $500,000. The Farmers' Exchange was opened in July, 1887 at Dallas, and MaCune was made business manager of it. Under the direction of MaCune, the Farmers' Exchange purchased supplies and commodities for the farmers. The Farmers' Exchange operated for about three years under MaCune's directions. By the expiration of the third year, the Farmers' Exchange was deeply in debt. The members of the Alliance were asked to pay two dollars in order that the debt might be paid, and MaCune was made official collector of the money. While acting in this capacity, he was accused of stealing the money. MaCune resigned permanently as business manager of the Farmers' Exchange and went to Washington to edit the organ of the Alliance, Wheel, and other agricultural organizations of the United States.

One of the greatest Texas Populists, ever eager and ready for a political battle, was James H. (Cyclone) Davis. Davis was born in South Carolina and reared in Texas. As a young man, he tried several professions, a-

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19 R. L. Hunt, op. cit., p. 36.
mong which were school teaching, politics, and newspaper work. As a newspaper man, he was editor of the Alliance Vindicator. He was, further, connected with the agrarian revolt by serving as Populist National Committeeman for five years and as one of its principal campaign speakers. As a Populist lecturer, he campaigned in twenty-seven states in the Populists' behalf. Davis campaigned at encampments, barbecues and state meetings. Wherever he lectured, his oratorical ability and stately appearance won for him much recognition and fame. Often when he would appear to declare the grievances of the farmers, the hushed silence of the audience would indicate that the cyclone of Texas had arrived. Davis began lecturing for the farmers' cause, when he was eighteen years old. He lectured for the Grangers. He continued to plead the farmers' cause in one farmers' organization or another throughout the nineteenth century. Since the nineteenth century, he has spoken for several organizations. For more than forty years he was a mem-

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22 Roscoe C. Martin, The People's Party in Texas, Bulletin No. 3308, University of Texas (Austin, 1933), p. 120.


24 Ibid., p. 59.
member of the group who pled the cause for the poor and needy.

The People's Party was able to personify the myth of righteousness in Thomas L. Nugent. Nugent, a native of Louisiana, was the son of religious parents. He inherited a religious inclination and received a college education. In 1861 he graduated with highest honors 25 from Centenary College in Louisiana. Immediately after graduation, Nugent came to Texas. He went back to Louisiana during the same year; but he returned in 1862 and settled permanently in Texas. Nugent had a varied career while living in Texas. He served in the Confederate Army. He taught school, practiced law and participated in politics as a Democrat and as a Populist respectively. As a Populist, he led the People's Party in Texas. He was a Populist candidate for governor in 1892 and in 1894. He would probably have been nominated for governor again in 1896, had he lived. He died December 4, 1895. A tribute to his memory which appeared in the Galveston Daily News, December 18, 1895, stated that the good people of Texas had lost a patriot, a statesman, a humanitarian; the bar had lost an honored and respected

member, While his family had lost a kind husband and
father.

In the campaign of 1892, Nugent endorsed a Plank
of the People's Party Platform, which expressed his atti-
tude toward Negroes. Nugent wanted Negroes to have sepa-
rate school laws, separate social laws and separate peni-
tentiaries. Even though Nugent is accredited with having
a negative attitude toward Negroes he is regarded as the
best leader who symbolized Populism in Texas.

Nugent's successor, a native of Arkansas, also
served in the armies of the Confederacy. Jerome Kearby,
who was one of the best known criminal lawyers in Texas
during the days of Populism, was a Democrat at the begin-
ing of his political career; but early in his political
career he threw off the Democratic yoke and became inde-
pendent in politics. Later, he became identified with the
People's Party. He slipped easily into the position va-
cated by Nugent. Kearby was nominated for governor at
Galveston by one of the largest and most enthusiastic
conventions ever held on August 5, 1896.

Kearby was by habits and attitudes different from

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26 Galveston Daily News, August 2, 1892.

27 Southern Mercury, August 13, 1896.
Nugent; but he adhered to the rules of Populism. It was he who denounced Hogg's and Culberson's administration by producing figures from the comptroller's office, showing the cost of their administration. Hogg's and Culberson's administration had cost the people of Texas $4,585,238, and tax rates had increased from 15% to 45% from Governor Roberts' administration to Governor Culberson's administration. According to C. M. Ferguson, a Negro member of the Populist campaign committee of 1896, Kearby was, also, a friend of the colored citizens. It was discovered, too, that with rare exceptions, in the campaign of 1896, most of the colored voters favored Kearby.

Jerome Kearby was nominated for governor at the Galveston Nominating Convention on August 5, 1896 and Harrison Sterling Price (Stump) Ashby was nominated for lieutenant governor. Ashby was a restless soul who never found his place in life. He, too, served in the armies of the Confederacy. Ashby came to Texas after the Civil War and tried amateur acting, school teaching, the life of a cowboy, farming and the ministry. While he was a

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farmer, he came in contact with the Alliance. He be-
came aware of the basic necessities of farmers' securi-
ty and progress. The People's Party was used as the or-
ganization in which political expressions pertaining to
farmers' demands were made. Ashby distinguished himself
in the party as a lecturer. Cyclone Davis was the only
man who was given credit for being a better lecturer.
Ashby's chief contribution to the People's Party was
made during his lecturing campaign. Yet, he served as
chairman of the People's Party State Executive Committee.

Harry Tracy, a leader of the People's Party was
more valuable as an organizer than a lecturer. He served
in the armies of the Confederacy and at the end of the war,
became a Texas farmer. About 1885 he began lecturing for
the Alliance. After 1891 he pledged allegiance to the
People's Party. In this connection he went up and down
the state organizing clubs and preaching Populism.

The disgruntled Populists, who led the people in
Texas in the political expression of their dissatisfaction
with existing conditions, used specific techniques to
achieve economic, educational and social reform. Each
type of reform had definite significance for the Populists.

The Populists waged three important campaigns in
Texas from 1892 to 1906. In 1892 and 1894 Thomas L. Nugent
ran a hopeless race for governor against Governor Hogg and
Culberson, the Democratic nominee. Jerome Kearby succeeded the late Thomas L. Nugent in 1896 and ran a hopeless race, also. Even though the People's Party was defeated in the three campaigns it presented a real challenge to the dominant party. The People's Party presented its first real challenge in 1892, when it polled a sizeable vote, Culberson defeated Nugent in 1894 by a vote of 207, 167 to 152, 731. Kearby was defeated by Culberson by a vote of 298, 528 to 238, 692. The Populists' political success, though, presents a brighter picture, if one turns to the Legislature or views local situations. In 1892, the Populists elected eight men to the lower House of the Legislature, and in 1894 the number increased to twenty two. Only six Populists were elected in 1896. The Populists elected one senator in 1892 and two senators in 1894. Most of these Congressmen were not born in Texas, and were either farmers or stockraisers. In 1892 all the Populists elected to the lower House were

31 The Houston Post, June 19, 1945.  
32 Ibid.  
33 Legislative Manual, 1897 (Austin, 1897).  
34 Roscoe C. Martin, op. cit., p. 211.
farmers. In 1892 sixteen of the twenty two elected to Congress were farmers and in 1896 seven of the eight elected were farmers. The People's Party elected many county and precinct officers in the territory east of Coke County to the Sabine River and North of Frio to the Red River.

The Populists Legislators in executing the theory "Equal rights to all and special privileges to none" asked for financial and social reforms.

Before the session of 1895 was over, one reform Legislator asked that County officials be put on salaries. This bill was defeated. Another bill set a limit on fees which county commissioners might collect as supervisors of public roads. This bill died in the Senate. The Representatives of the People's Party demanded that salaries of Legislators and Railway Commissioners be reduced, but these demands were not granted. Labor reform measures, as those aimed at regulating the hours of railroad employees and preventing convict labor from competing with free labor, were defeated.

The Third Party Movement in Texas was not a com-

36 Ibid., p. 163.
plete failure. The party had immediate and ultimate
social results. District meetings, county meetings, local
meetings and State Conventions possessed a social as well
as a business angle. Whenever a meeting was scheduled,
farmers would leave their fields, and travel in crowded
wagons to the place of the meeting. At the meetings, din-
ners, barbecues, lecturers and essays were the added at-
tractive features. Farmers always looked forward to
those meetings with great anticipation. On the other hand
the People's Party taught the farmers one of their most
valuable lessons. They learned that there was virtue in
organization.

The keynote of the People's Party propaganda cam-
37
paign was education. The Third Party operated on the theo-
ry that the farmers must be educated to the cause of Popu-
list. Before an election, Third Party men would stump the
state conducting campaigns of education. They would in-
doctrinate farmers with ideas of Populism. Newspapers
would circulate extensively as educational literature.

In 1893 a special committee of the People's Party pro-
posed to publish not less than 150 People's Party papers
for the educational work that would precede the campaign

37
Ibid., p. 163.
of 1894. Further, a semi-official, though privately maintained bureau, which served as the People's Party Clearing house, was established. The Texas Advance Library furnished at lowest price, pamphlets and books to reformers. It seems that no tangible educational program was advocated by the Populists; but its educational work consisted of informing farmers of their destituted economic conditions.

in January 1860, their votes have been influential factors in Texas politics. Negroes voting strength has enabled them to become office seekers and office holders. Political parties have not been slow to recognize the power of Negro votes. Since the days of the Greenback Party in Texas, political parties have been bidding for Negro votes. The Greenback party had at particular fanatical for Negroes, but the party desired the Negro's vote and was willing to take it on its terms. The Republican Party, Democratic Party and People's Party were, also, eager for Negroes votes. There is little doubt then, that Negroes had an opportunity to become integrated into Texas politics. In the brief interval between 1877 and the Civil War era, they became a vital force in the political history.
CHAPTER III
NEGROES PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN TEXAS

Negroes' participation in politics in Texas has been larger than is generally expected. Negroes played an important part in Texas politics from 1867 to 1898. The fact that Negroes have been able to participate in politics in Texas has been due largely to the power of the franchise. Since Negroes were first permitted to vote in Texas, in February 1868, their votes have been influential factors in Texas politics. Negroes voting strength has enabled them to become office seekers and office holders. Political parties have not been slow to recognize the power of Negro votes. Hence, since the days of the Greenback Party in Texas, political parties have been bidding for Negro votes. The Greenback party had no particular fondness for Negroes, but the party desired the Negroes' votes and was willing to make a strong bid for them.\(^1\) The Republican Party, Democratic Party and People's Party were, also, eager for Negroes votes. There is little doubt, then, that Negroes had an opportunity to become integrated into Texas politics. In the brief interlude between 1867 and the Twentieth century, they became a vital force in the political history.

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of Texas.

There were free Negroes in Texas before the Civil War. During the days of the Texas Republic there were slaves in Texas who purchased their freedom. Thomas Morgan, a Negro, who came to Texas as a slave in 1834, is an example of a slave securing her freedom by her own effort. There were other slaves who obtained their freedom by manumission. William McFarland is an example of a slave who was manumitted for meritorious service. In addition to those free persons mentioned previously in this thesis were the runaway slaves. Slaves came to Texas because the fugitive slave law did not operate here while Texas belonged to Mexico. Texas, then, became a place of refuge for oppressed Negro slaves. Finally, some free Negroes in Texas were Negroes who had migrated from the United States. The migration of Negroes to Texas was a

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3 Harold Schoen, "The Free Negro in the Republic of Texas", Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Vol. XL, No. 2 p. 85, (Austin, 1936-1937), "Liberty, Equality and fraternity characterized the spirit of the Mexican Revolution and provided the Mexicans with an aura of generosity and benevolence which seemed inseparable from reform movements. This philosophy expressed itself in laws designed to extend the blessing of liberty to all slaves."
part of the general westward expansion. Free-born Negroes, self-emancipated slaves and runaway slaves all came to Texas. They came with varying degrees of proof that they were close to the civilization they had adapted as it was moving west. It was from the descendants of these free Negroes as well as from the emancipated Negroes that the political strength of Negroes emerged.

From a technical point of view, it was the free Negroes of Texas who were introduced to any form of politics. Many of the free colored families of the antebellum period did not find complete freedom in Texas. When the Constitution of the Lone Star State was formed, trouble for the free Negro had begun. One of the manifest intentions of the Constitutional Convention was to return Negroes to the same status they would have had, if they had remained in the slave States of the United States. Negroes were compelled to establish their legal right to freedom. The procedure was often long and technical. Many Negroes, with the aid, supervision and direction of members of the white group established their legal right to freedom. Later, after General Gordan

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5Ibid., p. 307
6Ibid., pp. 307-308
Granger's declaration on the nineteenth of June, 1865, that in accordance with the President's proclamation all slaves were free, Negroes had an opportunity to become a powerful political factor. Before Negroes exercised the new franchise, they served on registration boards.\(^8\) Negroes voted, first, for members of the Constitutional Convention in 1867. Negroes voted approximately seventy five per cent of their voting strength.\(^9\) The reason for such solidarity can be attributed to the fact that Negroes had been drilled for the election.\(^10\)

As Negroes attained full stature in Texas politics, there emerged Negro leaders who were pioneers in political activity. R. L. Smith, W. M. MacDonald, N. W. Cuney and J. B. Rayner were leaders of the Texas Negroes.\(^11\) These men believed that the salvation of Negroes was to be found largely in the proper use of the franchise. For that reason, they were typical of the general awareness of Negroes of that era.

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\(^8\) William Russ, Jr., "Radical Disfranchisement in Texas", *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 1 (Austin, 1934-1935), pp. 45-46. "In 1867 Texas had twice as many whites as colored people. Many incompetent Negro registrars were employed. As a result of the registration just 10,000 more whites registered than Negroes."


\(^10\) Ibid., p. 15

\(^11\) A brief sketch of the lives of these men will be revealed in logical order, except the life sketch of J. B. Rayner; Rayner's biography will appear later in the thesis.
R. L. Smith was a Republican politician, who migrated to Texas from South Carolina. He was free in South Carolina, but he left the state because of social pressure.\textsuperscript{12} After coming to Texas, he made definite contributions to the life of the Negro citizens. As an educational leader, he founded the Texas Oakland Normal School; he was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Anna T. Jeanes Foundation; and he was president of the Farmers' Improvement Agricultural School. It seems that R. L. Smith understood the problem of the rural farmers and the basic philosophy underlying agrarian discontent among Negroes. As a trial solution to the farmers' problem, R. L. Smith, with the support of J. B. Rayner, the Negro Populist leader, established the Farmers' Improvement Society.\textsuperscript{13} This society patterned its annual social meetings after those of the People's Party. R. L. Smith and his family would appear at these annual meetings, which featured singing, lecturing and barbecue. The society sponsored a farmers' bank at Waco, of which R. L. 

\textsuperscript{12}An interview with W. M. MacDonald, April 16, 1945, the only recognized colored politician who still lives, indicates that R. L. Smith, a mulatto, married a lady who had a dark complexion. The free Negroes in South Carolina objected to such marriage and contested his social prestige. He left South Carolina.

\textsuperscript{13} J. B. Rayner, M.S.S, now in possession of his daughter, Susie J. Roligan, Fort Worth, Texas.
Smith was president. When the Farmers' Improvement Society was established on December 20, 1890 in Colorado, Texas, its first object was to teach the farmers the art of economy. Although Smith attempted to solve the agrarian problem for Negroes by means of a Society rather than a political party, he engaged in politics. A pictorial list of Representatives in the Twenty-fourth Legislature reveals his picture. He was a member of the Legislature from 1895 to 1899.

William (Gooseneck Bill) MacDonald's position in the campaign of 1898 turned the tide of Negro votes for the Democracy. MacDonald, who is president of the Fraternal Bank and Trust Company of Fort Worth, Texas and Grand Worthy Master of the Masonic Lodge of Texas, campaigned the state in 1896 for the Democrats. MacDonald took ministerial training at Roger Williams Institute and exerted much influence on Negro life and development. He challenged the "Clark, Cuney, Coon's" concept of the Republican and People's Party of 1896, and as a result won many votes for the Democrats. Since 1928, MacDonald has refused to have anything to do with politics except vote for the nominee of the Republican Party.

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14 Ibid.
15 Letter to this writer from William M. MacDonald, November 24, 1944.
A mulatto, who was to become a renown leader of Texas Negroes was born in Waller County in 1846. An account of the Negro in any party in Texas would be incomplete without mentioning that fearless champion of Republican principles, racial equality and human rights. The height of Cuneys's political career was attained in the period from 1876 to 1880. During this period, he was appointed collector of customs at the Port of Galveston. Though an unsuccessful candidate for the legislature several times, Cuneys had the honor of serving as temporary chairman of the Republican State Convention in 1896. Cuneys aided the Republican Party, further by canvassing the state during many elections. It was said of Cuneys that he was the greatest political organizer and manager the Afro-American race has produced; assuredly he was one of the most generous and courageous, and at the time of his death no man of his race was known and trusted and loved by more of the national leaders of the Republican party than he.

16 Austin Daily Statesman, September 8, 1896, "Cuneys sought chairmanship against Charley Ferguson, a Negro. Eddie Green, white, also sought the state chairmanship. Green promised to tap a barrel, according to the report given the press by Negroes, and the Negroes said that they were eager for him to get about it. Ferguson said he would win, unless Green did open a barrel of whiskey and secure the Negro votes for Cuneys."

17 Maude Cuneys Hare, Norris Wright Cuneys, (New York City, 1913), p. 226.
Negro participation in Texas politics would not be fully explored, without mentioning the leaders of Negroes in Texas, who served as members of the Legislature. Negro Legislators represented twenty-nine counties in Texas during the period from 1868 to 1895. Negroes served, first in the Twelfth Legislature, which lasted from April 28, 1870 to August 15, 1870 in its first session, and from January 20, 1871 to May 31, 1871, in its second session. In this Legislature there were nine Negroes in the House and two in the Senate. Members of both House and Senate were active in offering resolutions, presenting petitions, and introducing bills. In 1873 six Negro Representatives and two Senators were elected as members of the Thirteenth Legislature. The two Senators continued active in presenting bills and resolutions to the Senate and in serving on various standing committees. The Fourteenth Legislature was composed of six Negro Representatives and one Senator. The Negro personnel of this Legislature was entirely new and a little less active in performing legislative duties. The Fifteenth Legislature in 1876 saw Negro membership declining. This Legislature was composed of only one Negro Senator and three Negro Representatives. W. H. Holland, a representative, was distinguished as the father of a bill which gave to the colored citizens of the state Prairie View
Some years later he and other Negroes memorialized the Texas Legislature for a school for the unfortunate deaf, dumb, and blind of the state. One Senator and seven Representatives represented the Negroes of Texas in the Sixteenth Legislature. Among the duties performed by Negroes of the Sixteenth Legislature was the introduction of a bill by Senator Burton, which provided for the better establishment of an Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas for the benefit of colored youths.

The year 1881 found Negro legislators decreasing in number. One Senator and four Representatives were found in that Legislature. Negro legislators' opportunities for presenting bills and offering resolutions and petitions were somewhat limited in this legislature, because Democrats were in control of both Houses. The Negroes, who were active in introducing bills, were elected to the Eighteenth Legislature. In the Nineteenth Legislature the number of Negro Representatives had decreased to three. Among the bills offered by the Negro Legislators was one providing for the making of funds

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18 J. Mason Brewer, op. cit., p. 73
19 Ibid., p. 73
20 Ibid., p. 76
available for the support of Prairie View. The Twenty First Legislature seated two Negroes. One Representative presented a petition from the Negroes of Dallas County against passage of a Senate Bill providing separate cars for white and colored passengers in the state of Texas.\textsuperscript{21} Ed Patton from Evergreen, Texas was seated in the Twenty Second Legislature, while N. H. Haller was seated in the Twenty Third Legislature. R. L. Smith and N. H. Haller represented the colored citizens of Texas in the Twenty Fourth Legislature. Consequently, from 1868 to 1895 Negroes were engaged in Legislative duties in Texas. The Twenty Fourth Legislature, which convened in 1895, was the last Legislature in which Negroes were seated. After 1895 Negroes' participation in politics was limited to voting. Negroes continued to have voting power until 1905. In 1905 the Democratic Primary, which was introduced by Judge A. W. Terrell of Travis County, took away the Negroes voting power. Rules governing the Democratic Primary barred Negroes from participation in it, and since the Democratic Party was the major party in Texas, Negroes wielded very little influence in local or state elections after 1905.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., p. 77.
CHAPTER IV

THE RISE OF BLACK POPULISM

The history of Black Populism in Texas reveals that a very few of the Negro Populists of Texas understood the philosophy underlying agrarian discontent. To be sure most of the colored citizens of Texas were subject to the abuses of capitalism and were victims of the economic depression of the nineties. Yet, few of the colored citizens interpreted the organization of the People's Party as a political expression of the low-income working groups for changes and progress. Most Negroes were stimulated to become identified with the People's Party by blind leadership and trite rewards. Perhaps, an examination of the colored Populist leaders and followers will disclose what populism meant to the colored citizens.

The leadership of Black Populism fell to disgruntles or adventurers from the Republican Party and to jealous and unsuccessful men who possessed a grudge against the existing order. Most of the politicians had been unsuccessful, even in the management of their private affairs. Indeed, most of them had no business, except that of politics. Practically all the politicians engaged in Populist campaigns prior to election days. They encouraged Negroes to go to the polls and vote the Populist ticket. Such leadership was characteristic

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1 An interview with W. M. MacDonald, April 16, 1945.
of Populist leadership, was limited to about five representatives, and only one can be classified as a true state representative. J. B. Rayner was an orator, organizer and author for the Populists' cause. A casual review of his career indicates that his life ran about the same political pattern as did the white Populist leadership.

J. B. Rayner of Robertson County, nominated for a place on the executive committee, was born in 1850 in Raleigh, North Carolina. He was born in slavery, was the property of Honorable Kenneth Rayner, of North Carolina; was a student of Shaw University and went to St. Augustine Collegiate Institute, but did not graduate; came to Texas fifteen years ago with his family and settled at Calvert and engaged in school teaching. He has been grand master of the United Brothers of Friendship. In 1892 he turned from the Republicans to the Populists. He never held office in Texas, but in North Carolina was constable, magistrate and deputy sheriff.2

As an advocate for Populism, Rayner went up and down the state encouraging Negroes to join the People's Party. Rayner spoke to both white and colored groups, wherever Populist sympathizers could be found. Rayner spoke to Populists in the bleak and dreary isolated sections of Texas, where railroad lines did not go. He particularly enjoyed speaking in rural sections. Having turned from the Republican Party, because it had become corrupt, Rayner was successful in convincing some colored citizens of Texas, that the Republican Party had nothing tangible to offer them. By 1896, Rayner had brought

2 Galveston Daily News, August 9, 1896.
25,000 Negroes to the People's Party.  

From 1892 to 1896 Rayner went all over Texas organizing Negroes into Populists' Clubs. He was accredited with having exceptional ability in organizing Negroes into working units. He was constantly helping Negroes in the same vein, but not quite as elaborate, as the members of the Freedmen's Bureau aided the emancipated slaves in the sixties. Rayner's generous spirit among unfortunate Negroes won for him much admiration by Negroes. This fact helped him in becoming a successful organizer of Negroes into Populist working units.

Finally Rayner employed the press as another technique to spread the doctrine of Populism. Rayner had two underlying philosophies which influenced his writing and which made members of the white group admire him. Rayner was, too, the author of the colored Populist catechism. As author of the Populist catechism, he portrayed the philosophy of Populism in such simple language as to be understood by Negroes who could barely read and write.

Rayner's reward as a Populist leader was that of serving on the executive committee in 1896. As a committee-

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4 Houston Daily News, August 9, 1896.

4 Rayner emphasized the facts, "That all the American Negro knew, he learned by observing the action of the best white people in Texas, and all that he (Rayner) wanted was for some good southern white people to rule over him."

5 Houston Daily Post, August 9, 1896.

6 The state executive committee was usually composed of thirty one members, who outlined the policy of election campaigns and managed the district elections for the governor.
man, he is not accredited with having made any specific contribution to the People's Party, except incite Negroes to vote the People's Party ticket on election day.

While J. B. Rayner was the real Negro Populist crusader, the names of Melvin Wade of Dallas, R. H. Hayes of Fort Worth, H. J. Jennings of McKinney and C. M. Ferguson of Houston should receive some recognition. Melvin Wade's chief contribution was that he canvassed Dallas County, Waxahachie, Ennis and North Texas for votes for the People's party. It seems that politics was his chief business, and he lived from one campaigning to another on the proceeds he received from the previous campaign. R. H. Hayes, who spoke for the Populist cause around Crockett and vicinity, was one of the two Negroes placed on the first executive committee of the People's Party August 18, 1891. H. J. J Jennings was placed on the executive committee along with R. H. Hayes in 1891. Both of these personalities were empowered to organize the colored vote of the state. C. M. Ferguson's chief contribution to the Populist's cause came in 1896, when fusion of the Republicans and Populists was a controversial issue. It was then, than Ferguson directed his energy toward promoting the political success of the People's Party. As early as 1892, however, he had favored Nugent as Governor of Texas. In 1896, also, Ferguson was

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7 An interview with W. M. MacDonald, April 16, 1945.
defeated as temporary chairman of the Republican convention, which convened at Fort Worth. Probably, the conclusion is tenable that Ferguson was a "middle of the road" politician. He was probably no more a Populist convert than he was a Republican politician. In 1896, Ferguson was accused of having abandoned the Republican Party and joined the People's Party.  

Local leadership was to be found in counties where Negroes were clustered, but this leadership was important only in the counties where it existed. There were local Negro leaders who presided over Populist clubs or who represented Negroes at white Populist meetings. The Negroes in the People's Party were poorly organized. Negroes had no separate state organization, but they participated in the activities of the People's Party in general. Negro delegates appeared at all state conventions from 1891 to 1896 inclusively. At the conventions, Negroes assembled with other members of the People's Party for the transaction of business. It was only in 1896 that Negroes met in a separate caucus; that was a voluntary meeting sponsored by J. E. Rayner. Negroes met, then, during the two hours of the midday recess to decide what party candidates they would support. At all other times, the colored Populist delegates participated in the activities of the general state convention.

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8 Houston Daily Post, September 16, 1896.
9 Houston Daily Post, August 7, 1896.
The nucleus of the People's Party organization was the Populist clubs, which did not bar Negroes from membership. ¹⁰ Negroes were usually found at all the club meetings, and sometimes they were elected as delegates to county or district meetings. It must not be assumed, however, that there were no Populist clubs, for J. B. Kayner succeeded in organizing some Populist clubs. In 1894, an unusual occurrence among the Negroes of Beaumont commanded much attention. The Post correspondent was reliably informed that there was a political organization of Negroes in the North end of Beaumont sponsored by a prominent white Populist. ¹¹ The object of the organization was not known at the time of its organization, but it was known that it was organized before election day.¹²

From 1891 to 1896, the People's Party welcomed Negroes in their organization, because Negroes could vote. At the State Convention in Dallas in 1891, two Negroes were placed on the executive committee, because the Negroes held the balance of political power in the state. The President of the convention argued that the Democrats had never given Negroes representation, but had always thought they could buy enough of their votes with liquor and money. The Republicans left the Negroes without a party. If the Negroes had a friend, it was the People's Party. He argued further,

¹⁰ An interview with W.M. MacDonald, April 16, 1945.
¹¹ Houston Daily Post, October 30, 1894
¹² Ibid.
that the People's Party wanted to do good to every citizen of the country, and Negroes were citizens. He concluded his argument with the thought that the Party which recognized the fact that Negroes were citizens would gain the colored vote of the south. After much discussion concerning the proper procedure to take to secure the votes of the colored citizens of Texas, two Negro delegates were nominated and elected to serve on the executive committee.

The campaign for Negro votes included letters published in the daily press. The People's Party wanted Negro votes regardless of the methods used to secure them, and the press was liberal enough to print letters encouraging Negroes to vote the Populist ticket.

The campaign speakers were no less eager to capture Negro votes. Sometimes their orations insulted members of the Republican and Democratic Party. Perhaps, "the worst insult" the people of Texas had to stand was attributed to General Paul Vandervoort, the Populist campaign speaker from Nebraska. Paul Vandervoort said that whenever the Democrats of Mississippi wanted to have a fair election, they would begin shooting a cannon several days before the time in the county seat. The Democrats, also, would go around firing guns and a Negro or two would manage to get

13 Dallas Morning News, August 18, 1891.
14 Galveston Daily News, July 2, 1892. See App. C
15 Houston Daily Post, November 3, 1896.
Killed. By election day the Negroes had gone visiting, and the Democrats could proclaim a fair ballot and an honest count. The Populist speaker said the same thing was happening in Tyler. A Negro was nearly killed there November 1, 1896, and the Democrats had begun firing cannons. Of course, the county chairman of the Democrats was from Mississippi. It seems that Negroes voted mostly either the People's Party Ticket or Republican ticket. Therefore, the Democrats wanted to keep them from the polls on election day. The act was a challenge to Negroes.

In every county special efforts were made to secure Negro votes. Negroes were popularly called the bone of contention, because all parties tried to win their votes. The People's Party was especially active in trying to secure Negro votes in Fort Bend, Waller, Brazoria, Robertson, Wharton and Matagorda counties. Campaign speakers would deliver pep talks to the Negroes, which would explain why Negroes should vote the Populist ticket. The most fruitful method the Populists had of securing Negro votes was to bribe them with whiskey. A drink of whiskey was an assurance of a Populist vote. The People's Party made many attempts to capture the votes of the colored Texas citizens, by legal or illegal means.

16 Ibid.
17 An interview with W. M. MacDonald, April 16, 1945.
Early in 1890, a farmer editor from the west set forth the doctrine that the cranks always win. A backward glance at the history of Populism shows that the author was right. Many of the reforms that the Populists demanded won triumphantly in the end. To this degree Black Populism was a success. Black Populism, though, as a progressive program for Negroes' welfare, was a failure. In the first place, Black Populism helped erect the bugaboo of Negro domination, which proved disastrous. Black Populism failed, also, because most Negroes were loyal to the Republican Party. Negroes' loyalty to the Republican Party was due to several theories. Most Negroes felt that the Republican Party was the Moses that led them out of bondage, and they were going to stay in that party. Negroes were encouraged by Republican lecturers, and through letters which appeared in the press to stay with the Republican Party. Consequently, many influential Negroes stayed with the Republican Party. A few Negroes, though, were encouraged to join the Peoples Party. The People's Party had lecturers touring the state bribing Negroes to vote the People's Party ticket. Other Negroes joined the People's Party, because they disliked Cuneey. It was a settled creed among the minority of Negroes to oppose anything and everything that Cuneey favored. There were a few other trifles reasons

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20 Galveston Daily News, June 19, 1892. See App. D.
21 Cuneey was a member of the Republican Party.
22 Houston Daily Post, November 4, 1890
why Negroes joined the People's Party. One Negro exclaimed, "The Republicans are doing nothing for me and what good do the Republicans do any way? Therefore, I am going with the People's Party." Another Negro said, "I don't like the Democratic Party. The People's Party say they are against the Democratic Party. Therefore, I am going with the People's Party to destroy the Democratic Party." Still another said, "I want better prices for my cotton. I want monopolies put down. Therefore, I am going with the People's Party." The People's Party did house a few Negro disgruntles or Negro victims of political bribery, but these Negro Populists accomplished very little.

Negroes, seemingly, captured these important offices during the period of the Populist movement. R. H. Hayes and J. T. Jennings were placed on the State Executive Committee of the Populist's Party in 1896. In Nacogdoches County, Negroes served as Jurors. They were summoned by the sheriff of Nacogdoches County. The sheriff of Nacogdoches County was a member of the People's Party. When the said sheriff was a candidate for reelection on the People's Party ticket he was challenged to state his position. The Democrats

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23 Galveston Daily News, June 19, 1892. See App. D.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 The object of the executive committee has been cited previously in this study.
27 Houston Daily Post, October 19, 1894. See App. E.
were not in favor of Negro jurors. The only other political recognition Negroes received was that of serving as delegates to conventions. Negroes were not appointed as delegates on equal basis with that of other groups. There was no law which said that a certain per cent of the delegates should be Negroes. The number of Negro delegates appointed at any time from any place to serve in the State Conventions varied from one to five.

While Negroes served mostly as delegates of the Populist Party to State Conventions, a few attempts were made by Negroes to improve the economical and educational status of Negroes. At the Galveston Convention of 1896, C. H. Jenkins, white chairman of the committee on platforms, offered a resolution that all county convicts working out fines on roads, streets, or county farms be allowed fifty cents a day. Robert Allen, a colored delegate from Burleson, made a strong plea for the adoption of the resolution, because he said it meant much to his race. Allen knew of convicts being worked on farms from midnight to midnight, who only received thirty cents a day. When the resolution was adopted, Allen made the following remarks:

28 These attempts were few, and for the most part were made in 1896 when the strength of the People's Party had begun to wane.
29 Houston Daily Post, August 9, 1896.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
Bless God, Bless God. That pays for my staying here so long. Gentlemen of the newspapers, please say that Robert Allen of Burleson County, said that. I want the people to know about it.

At this same convention, Jenkins read a clause in the platform which pertained to education. When the clause was read, "That each race shall have its own pro-rata portion of the school fund and its own trustees to be elected by the people and control its own school", a Negro delegate wanted to know why the clause was not made to read that each race should elect its own trustees.33

At this time a Negro delegate from McLennan County informed the convention that the State Superintendent had ruled that each race should have a separate ballot box, but the tickets were all counted together and the selection of the trustees was joint. An amendment was then offered and adopted to make the clause read, "That each race shall have its own pro-rata portion of the school fund, and each race shall have its own trustees to be elected by each race respectively".34

A caucus of the Negro delegates was called by J. B. Rayner at this convention. This caucus passed a series of resolutions.35 The caucus decided that it would support McKinley, unless the Populists gave them a straight out

33 ibid.
34 ibid.
35 See Appendix D.
Populist ticket which meant Bryan and Watson. It seemed that the Colored Populists, too, were eager to enter a proposed fusion scheme and deliver the electoral vote of Texas to McKinley in the exchange for the election of Kearby, the People's Party candidate.

Finally, it should be pointed out that Black Populism produced unsatisfactory and temporary results for the Negro citizens of the state of Texas. Black Populism induced other political parties to seek for Negro votes by unfair means. As a result of the balance held by Black Populists, the art of Negro voting in block became more pronounced. Some Negroes became a little more disloyal to party affiliations. Perhaps Charlie Ferguson, who was accused of always staying with the most progressive party, was the best example of disloyalty practiced by Negroes. The social results of Black Populism were only temporary pleasures. As soon as county meetings, club

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36 H. Budd, op. cit., p. 108. "Governor Hogg, the Democratic Governor, was even zealous in ferreting criminals who had wantonly murdered Negroes."

37 Negroes voted in groups. A group of Negroes was usually made drunk by a certain party. Then, the group would be driven to the polls to vote for the candidate who had given them the whiskey.

38 The nearest approach the People's Party made of doing anything for the ultimate social well-being of Negroes was made in 1896. A plank for the People's Party Platform declared in favor of equal justice and protection of all citizens, regardless of race or nationality.
meetings or state conventions closed, the social significance of Black Populism ended. Consequently, Black Populism meant little positive to the Negro citizens of Texas.

The rise of a group of pioneer Settlements was begun in the land of opportunity, a settlement colony, and as a result of this labor a fair degree of prosperity. Then, as the result of the depression years of the Seventies, the settlers of these settlements and in the "settlement" colonies, obliged to put aside their just debts and make a decent living, the Populists reasoned that something was wrong with our financial system. Eventually, they gave the blame for the inability of the people to produce the wealth of the industrial manufacturers, the middle man, and others. All were supposed to be greedy, while the farmers and laborers were supposed to be good and honest. The Populists sought a solution by the "systemization" of the "exploitation" problem, shift interest, shift from law to legislation, and from "individualism" to "collectivism" or to the idea of social control through equality.

The Populist Movement in Texas, being not essentially different from the Populist movement in general, was opposed chiefly by disrupting and method various.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The latter part of the Nineteenth Century saw the rise of a group of pioneer democrats, who reasoned that the honest, willing worker should receive in this land of opportunity, a chance to work, and as a reward for his labor a fair degree of prosperity. When, as the result of the depression years of the seventies, the latter eighties and in the "heartbreaking" nineties, millions of men found themselves without work, or unable to pay their just debts and make a decent living, the Populists reasoned that something was wrong with our industrial system. Eventually, they fixed the blame for the situation upon the railroads, the manufacturers, the middle men, and all whose fortunes grew greater, while the farmers and honest willing laborers grew to know the meaning of want. As the west had ceased to be an asylum for the maintenance of the poverty stricken millions and industrial discontent, the Populists sought a new solution to the "exploitation" problem. Their interest shifted from free land to legislation, and from "individualism" to "collectivism" or to the ideal of social control through regulation by law.

The Populist Movement in Texas, being not essentially different from the Populist movement in general, was sponsored chiefly by disgruntled and bribed victims of
American society. The Negro citizenry of Texas was included in both groups, but for the most part was concentrated in the latter group. Under the disgruntled and paid leadership of J. B. Rayner, Melvin Wade, J. T. Jennings, R. H. Hayes and Charlie Ferguson, Negroes were induced to join the People's Party. The Negro citizens of Texas were encouraged with small rewards to vote the People's Party ticket on election day.

To be sure, Populism was a success, in that many of the reforms which the Populist demanded won triumphantly in the end. Black Populism, though, as a progressive program for the colored citizens of Texas was a failure. The few temporary gains made by Negro participants in the Populist Movement were valueless in comparison with the disastrous effect Black Populism had upon the colored citizens of Texas. Black Populism helped erect the bugaboo of Negro domination, through the balance of power in political party contest, which eventually led to the establishment of the Democratic Primary in 1905.

Since recent efforts to break the tradition of Negro non voting in Texas resorting to the highest constitutional authority have been successful, it is hoped that this study will serve both as a warning and a guide to those who would use the new power for political and social progress.
APPENDIX A

CHART OF THE ATLANETC EXCHANGE CO., INC.

August 21, 1939

To the Authority:

1. The object of this chart is to show the exchange of merchandise and the value of money in the business of dealing in such articles as are used by the public. The values given are for the purpose of showing the relative values of the different articles and the prices at which they are sold. The values given are for the purpose of showing the relative values of the different articles and the prices at which they are sold.

2. The object of this chart is to show the exchange of merchandise and the value of money in the business of dealing in such articles as are used by the public. The values given are for the purpose of showing the relative values of the different articles and the prices at which they are sold.

Appendices
APPENDIX A

OBJECTS OF THE ALLIANCE EXCHANGE OF TEXAS

August 31, 1888

To The Authorities:

1. The objects for which the Farmers Alliance Exchange was organized are to buy machinery, farming implements and such other articles as are used by the farmers generally, at the lowest possible prices and shipping rates so as to avoid all extra expense between the manufacturers and the purchasers; also to sell farm products to the best advantage directly to the consumer, charging only such percentage as will be sufficient to pay the expense of said Exchange and make it self-sustaining, the percentage in no case to exceed 2½%.

2. That all goods shall be bought through the central Exchange, and that farming implements shall be the only goods contracted for and kept in stock; all other classes of goods to be sold on commission.

3. That all farm products shall be disposed of through the Exchange or Commission, and in no case shall the central Exchange or any branch thereof buy any such products except on orders received.

4. Branches of this Exchange may be established at different points in the State when it may be practicable for the convenience, providing that said branches may be established upon the following conditions:

Sufficient lands for yards and building purposes shall be

1Galveston Daily News, August 31, 1888.
donated to the Farmers Alliance Exchange of Texas, in fee simple, and that one half of the money expended in buildings and other improvements shall be made up and paid by those to be benefited locally by said branch.

5. The Central Exchange, after the settlement of the accounts, now held, shall in no case hereafter deal directly with any individual member of sub-alliance, but only through County or district agents to whom all mortgages, notes or any documents or paper guaranteeing the payment of any goods individuals or sub-alliances, may purchase or buy on time; and should said agent or manager by oversight or neglect on his part fail to collect any of said accounts, he shall be held responsible to the said Exchange for all purchases made by him, and shall have a good bond to cover all purchases made by him, and he shall not be discharged from said bond until all goods purchased by him shall be accounted for. All goods shall be furnished to county and district agents at the same price as to branches.

The uniform rules shall be adopted for the government of said branch Exchanges and county business agencies, and the commission be so regulated that they may be self-sustaining under economical management; that the agents appointed for such branches shall be accountable to the central Exchange and may be removed at any time; that all such agents shall give good and sufficient bond for the faithful performance of their duties, the amount of such
bond to be affixed by the central Exchange, and the amount of such bond to be determined by the amount of business done by said agents, and the county business agents must meet their liabilities at maturity.

7. That the business agents of the different branches and companies shall in no case be allowed to charge exceeding 10% above cost on any goods, wares, implements, and machinery bought through the Alliance Exchange.

8. That upon all orders made by the Central Exchange upon branch Exchanges the charges for commissions for purchases shall not exceed 2½%; that upon all sales made by the Exchange for any branch exchange or county business agent the commission shall not exceed 2½%; and provided further that from time to time make such charges as the exigencies may demand.

9. Should any agent or manager of any branch of the Exchange, County or district agent buy any goods that are handled by the Exchange and share contracts from other source, such action shall be deemed sufficient cause for dismissal.

A. L. Kessler, President
APPENDIX B

COLORED DELEGATES' RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED
AT STATE CONVENTION

August 7, 1896

Whereas, the People's Party of Texas has been believed that the free coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1 would be a panacea for our present financial stringency and industrial stagnation, but only an auxiliary in the great work of reform to follow the repeal of our present national bank law and the constitutional prohibition of alien ownership of American soil and the government ownership of railroads, telephones, telegraphs, and the establishment of postal savings and the cities to own their street cars, waterworks, local telephones and electric lights and

Whereas, we believe that the only way to reform the finances and the industrial conditions of the country is by a gradual evolution in which the non-progressive conservatism will be eliminated and the plastic hands of reform to be placed upon the energies of industry and the empyrean fire of liberty to give us a system of finance purely American, and the assimilating of the old oppressive system into a perfect and sublime system, without dis-

1 Houston Daily Post, August 7, 1896.
turbine the equilibrium of business and

Whereas, we believed there is as much difference
between the free coinage methods of the Democrats and the
free coinage methods of the People's Party as there is be-
tween the religion of Judas Iscariot and the religion of
St. John and

Whereas, we believe that Democratic free coinage
will be a political spasm, a financial blight and an in-
dustrial stagnation and if carried into operation will
cause this country to pass through many "black Fridays"
and will plunge the finances and industries of this coun-
try into a pelagic malstrom of inky blackness of death
and destruction; and

Whereas, our National Convention lately assembled
at St. Louis, Missouri being unmindful of our mission and
methods of reform, did nominate W. J. Bryan for president
of the United States;

Whereas, the delegation to said convention did
not have the moral courage to appoint a committee to notify
the said W. J. Bryan of his nomination; and

Whereas, W. J. Bryan pays no attention to the no-
mination given him by the People's Party National Conven-
tion; therefore

Resolved, that, we the Colored delegates to the
State Convention now assembled, do now denounce and re-
pudiate with scorn and contempt the actions of our Nation-
al Convention and do reaffirm our allegiance in the doc-
trine of the Omaha platform of 1892 and do now make it our
ark of the covenant until other times and other people from
the East shall know what true reform means and will nomi-
nate suitable men;

Resolved that the two evils now before the American
people are Republican oppressive conservatism and Democratic
rashness, and that we know it is better for the country to
endure the former than to experience the latter, and that we
have more power to endure McKinley's oppressive conservatism
than we have temerity to try W.J. Bryan's rash chimerical em-
piricism.

Resolved, that if our National executive committee
does not repudiate W.J. Bryan's nomination and give us a
middle-of-the-road People's Party presidential nominee that
we head our state tickets with the name of William McKin-
ley and the Republican State electors, and we will give
the State to McKinley if the Texas Republicans will vote
for J. C. Kearby.

Resolved, that we heartily approve with pleasure
the conduct and work of our Texas delegates at the National
Convention for true Populism and middle-of-the-road candidates.

Resolved, that we will vote for the People's Party
ticket in Texas because we believe them to be our best friends.
APPENDIX C

LETTER TO THE COLORED CITIZENS OF TEXAS

July 2, 1892

Fellow Citizens:

You must be aware that any and all legislative enactment by our state or national Congress that redounds to the weal or woe of the white farmer or laborer is equally beneficial or oppressive to the colored farmer or laborer. We, therefore, honestly appeal to you in behalf of equal rights to every citizen under the law and we ask you to help us denounce and stop all special privileges being further granted to any citizen or class by the law. We appeal to you in the name and in the behalf of the white farmer and laborer and their professional and mercantile friends that we have represented in conventional assembly in the city of Dallas June 13, 1892; we appeal to your individual thought and action; we appeal to your independent manhood that you organize and in solid phalanx and march to the polls on November 8 next and deposit your franchise (while you yet have the right to do so) against the miscreant conspiracy of the leaders of the Republican and Democratic Parties that are slowly, but surely, forging the shackles of everlasting slavery to fasten on you and your children, and on the children of thirty millions of white farmers and laborers and their friends. Let us admonish you

\footnote{Galveston Daily News, July 2, 1892.}
as friends and fellow citizens that you be not persuaded by your party leaders to go to the polls and vote away your own franchise and the franchise of the poor white man, as the colored people of Mississippi were persuaded to do. Allow us to persuade you to never again go to the ballot box to vote your party prejudices; but go up as an American citizen and vote your manhood and patriotism and all will go well with you and the general welfare of all will be benefitted by your vote. We appeal to you to organize yourselves in clubs that you will be more able to educate yourselves in the science of economic and free government. Pay out no more of your hard earned money for old party purgers or their other literature for their leaders belong to and serve the will of the moneyed monopolies that seemed determined to force productive labor into the lowest depths of poverty; when it will be too late to help ourselves. Don't forget that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Listen to no council from your enemies. All are our enemies who are not in the ranks of the reform movement. Choose ye this day whether you serve God or mammon. Aid and assist your white brother farmers, laborers and their friends of other occupations, to throw off the yoke of oppression, of corporate monopoly, that have been established over and by class laws enacted by both the old parties. We are waging a just and noble war against the enemies of truth, justice and freedom. Will you help us?
APPENDIX D

HENRY CLAY GRAY'S LETTER TO THE NEGRO CITIZENS OF TEXAS

June 19, 1892

Because I believe my people are extra liable to be mistaught and misguided by the so-called People's Party; because I believe the theories of the so-called People's Party are pernicious in every essential particular; and because owing to continuous ill health I cannot take the platform to demonstrate all this, I ask you to print this for the instruction of all colored men who may want to know and act right irrespective of party allegiance or racial affiliations.

We, that are the colored people, are the numerical intellectual, financial and physical minority in this land, and therefore we cannot trifle with any of the prerogatives of free men without thereby calling down upon our heads a double portion of punishment. The night follows not more surely the day than, that we shall be made to pay the penalty of every hasty and inconsiderate act. Therefore, in every case of doubt the only philosophic course for us is that of do-nothing lookers on. The chief bones of contention between partisans, and above all between the so-called People's Party and the old established parties do not concern us; or at all events they will affect the dominating sovereigns of this land for good
and for ill long before we can know or feel anything of the change. We can afford to put up with what the minority of these dominating sovereigns must endure; but we can never wisely take the part of one or the other without first assuring ourselves beyond question of the rectitude, justice and wisdom both of our own and of the conduct of those whose interest we espouse. What man of us is ready to affirm that advocacy by us of the principles of the People's Party fulfill these conditions? I neither know nor have I heard of a reason why we should jump in and help these people. Does any other Negro know or hear more than I do?

The permanency and usefulness of the People's Party should be doubted on the grounds of its very nature. It is made of disgruntled and petty politicians out of all parties, if heterogeneous and divergent trade unions, of men untried in governmental harness, many of whom have signally failed in the management of their own private affairs. In the light of history, therefore, which is said to repeat itself, we are justified in supposing that this conglomerate of incongruities can never fuse about a code of civic principles. Once in power, then, they would fly to pieces like glass; for to do nothing they must mortally wound some of its votaries. Thus, the People's Party once in authority will be the most disappointed of all, because they will find action and inaction alike fatal to the life of their assump-
tions. We have a perfect right to suspect this People's Party of downright childlike disingenuousness or that they take the majority of the American people to be incapable of following a plain proposition to its logical conclusion. Their platform, their literature and their orators tell us glibly of the wonderful things they are going to do, but without the scintilla of indication of the plausible ways or means. We should want to inquire how just as often as what and why. We know by their saying what and why they want to do something, but much hunting fails to discover the ways and means they propose to employ. Take, for example, their proposition of government ownership of railways. What is the legitimate inference? The government must buy them or the government must confiscate them. Is any right thinking colored man in favor of either course? To buy them outright would bankrupt the government or at least entail upon prosperity an increased burden of taxation to last a thousand years. Who would do that? On the other hand confiscation is repulsive to the dictates of honor and justice. To begin it would be but to start the downfall of the republic infallibility. To tax us who own no railroads to pay those who do, while affording the sellers equal privileges with us who must pay the score, would be the same as buying a man's farm and giving him half the use of it. This would be good, the sellers would think, no doubt; but what must we say who have to pay? If confiscation is to set in who shall set the
bounds at which it must stop? If the government may confiscate my livestock, my chickens, my hogs, my cows and wheat and what not, is the case bettered if the government buy and pay for my railroads? The answer is: Not a whit. If the government may close me out the railroad business, why may it not with equal justice close me out of the cattle business? We cannot escape the conclusion, therefore, that either to buy or confiscate the railroads would be an act at war with the principles of good government.

They do indeed propose one other course as an alternative, but it is not worth wasting a second thought with. They tend to believe that this government or the government as they will make it is an infallible, omnipotent sovereign whose fiat not only can make things, but can make anything right. Children might be excused for uttering the like, but what thinking and read men can have for proclaiming such rank nonsense as the cardinal article of their political creed. I am at a loss to find out. Their magic wand or panacea is to be fiat (or Billy be damn) money. Now as a matter of fact rabbit money has been resorted to numberless times in the course of world history, and there is no record anywhere of even measurable success with it. These people may succeed where the world has tried often and failed as often, but no thinking man will be justified in giving the strength to try. A man, no matter how wise, how strong or how wealthy he may be, cannot live in open
defiance of the civic and social methods around him without imminent danger to his reputation, social standing and character. Governments are like men in this respect. Whenever a government chooses to outrage the social and civic methods of the society of nations, it is at once outlawed; and it has always been but a question of time when such a government has been brought to repentance of the outlaws penalty death. A man's business must conform to the accepted code of business law or he will fail; and with equal truth it may be maintained that our government will invite financial disaster by a radical and violent departure from what the family of nations regard as a reasonable effort at upright dealing. So much for their distinctive tenets.

I must assent further without fear of successful contradiction, that whatever else they advocate that looks reasonable or that ought to live is already set forth with equal or greater clearness by some other party. Successful and wise government presumes a multiplicity of interests to be attended to, but these People's Party afford us no idea of how it understands and will deal with any but two or three. Thus, it is an apt illustration of the paradox advocating too much and too little. The foregoing rests wholly upon economic and patriotic considerations and can therefore be maintained by black and white indifferently. But over and above all I have said, and even though it were not of value
to the extent and degree I imagine, still I have deeper reasons resting upon racial considerations which make me distrust and fear the People's Party.

In the first place they offer the country nothing that can be believed in save and only such as others already offer, and they offer the colored people no more. If Republicans or Democrats or Prohibitionists offer me as much and the country more, the law of benevolence requires that I help Republicans or Democrats or Prohibitionists. This is indisputable. In the second place, the heart and soul of the People's Party nestles about the trade unions, many of which outlaw the Negro.

The would be reasons which few colored men allege as an excuse for their affiliations with the People's Party are seen upon examination to be none or less grounded in misapprehension of some potent facts. One exclaims: "The Republicans are doing nothing for me and what good do the Republicans do anyway. Therefore I am going with the People's Party." Another says: I don't like the Democratic Party. The People's Party say they are against the Democratic Party. Therefore, I am going with the People's Party. Still another says, "I want better prices for my cotton. I want monopolies put down. Therefore, I am going with the People's Party and plenty of money." To the first I would answer, "It would be just as good logic to say 'The churches are doing nothing for me and what good do churches do anyway? Therefore, I am
going to hell." To the second brother, I would answer, "People have been breaking up the Democratic Party that way from time immemorial, and still it comes up smiling every now and then to be broken up again the same way." The simple truth is that with these third party communists out the Democratic Party is stronger and more respectable. If it keeps on at the rate at present it will soon be good enough for a colored man to vote with. To the third I would answer, "The People's Party proposes to replace all so-called monopolies by one big monopoly, whose character we know nothing of. The ribs and backbone, the hide and hair of the People's Party are monopolies, and we are foolish to expect it to act contrary to the laws of its own life. The People's Party must rob Peter to pay Paul, bankrupt the nation by taxation or engage in a system of wholesale confiscation. By this measure it must be weighed and be allowed to rise and fall, and not as they seem to think by the long and short of existing parties.

Henry Clay Gray
APPENDIX E

POPEULIST CHAIRMAN CHALLENGED TO STAGE HIS POSITION

Garrison, Texas
October 16, 1894

Hon. H. F. Dunson
Chairman People's Party Executive Committee
Nacogdoches Co.

Dear Sir:

In view of the fact that certain Negroes were summoned by the sheriff of Nacogdoches Co. to serve as jurors at the late term of the district court, said sheriff being a member of the People's Party and a candidate for reelection on the People's Party ticket, and believing that a fair and full expression on this subject by all political parties is right and proper, to the end that the voters of this county may be fully advised as to our principles and policies, I therefore announce for the Democratic Party of Nacogdoches Co., as its chairman, authorized to speak in its behalf, that we as a party and as individuals are entirely and unqualifiedly opposed to Negroes serving as jurors in any of the courts of this county. I now call upon you, as the chairman of the People's Party of Nacogdoches Co. to state clearly and plainly, the attitude of your party and yourself on this question, so that the voters of the Co. may fully understand, as they have a right to do, your true position in the matter.

Do you as a candidate, and does your party as a

1 Houston Daily Post, October 19, 1894.
party, favor Negro jurors, or mixed white and Negro jurors to serve in the courts of this county? Please answer yes or no. Your answer, as well as this letter, will be published in the county papers and the Houston Post to the end that every voter in the County may fully understand the attitude of our respective parties. In as much as the election is near at hand an immediate answer will be expected.

Very respectfully,

J. P. Ross
Chairman Democratic Executive Committee
Nacogdoches County
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