

MISSISSIPPI ELECTORAL POLITICS, 1903-1976:
THE EMERGING MODERNIZATION CONSENSUS

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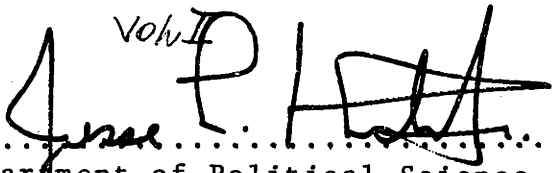
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ABSTRACT

The dissertation is a study of Mississippi's gubernatorial and senatorial elections from 1903 through 1976 and presidential races since 1952. Recognizing that most standard modes of electoral analysis fail to apply to Mississippi's "no-party, no-faction" system, the author employs the concept of "life-forms" as the principal analytical tool in the study. Life-forms, as defined by the author, are the persistent themes of campaign oratory and imagery. The study of life-forms involves two steps: one, a description of the campaign oratory and imagery of each major candidate in every election, and, two, the longitudinal, statistical relationships among the major candidates who represent these life-forms.

The author identifies four major life-forms which have determined electoral outcomes this century: agrarian class conflict, progressivism, race, and modernization. The operation of the life-forms has, in turn, defined four great eras of politics since 1903: Agrarian Class Conflict (1903-1922), the Emergence of the Modernization Consensus and Electoral Modulation Among Life-forms (1923-1943), the Arousal and Ascendancy of the Racial Consensus (1946-1964), and the Politics of Modernization (1967-1976).

The basic thesis of the paper is that modernization as a campaign theme was born in the Whitfield candidacy and election in 1923 and that the story of Mississippi politics since that time has been the gradual triumph of that consensus. The nature of the modernization consensus, which now provides the parameters and issues of electoral politics, has been profoundly affected by the other life-forms. The important development of party structure during the 1960s is examined in relation to the life-forms.

Part One presents the thesis, analytical approach, and scope of the study. Part Two Analyzes Era I; Part Three, Era II; Part Four, Era III; Part Five, Era IV. Part Six contains a retrospective look at the life-forms and presents the conclusions of the study.

Thesis Supervisor: Walter Dean Burnham, Professor of Political Science

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My long-suffering mother said recently that she was going to plant a tree when this dissertation was finished. If she had planted the tree when it was begun, she would now have a considerable oak. The fact that the dissertation was completed is a testament to the support of many friends and family. To all of them I express my deep gratitude.

~~It would be impossible~~ to state the debt I owe my mother and wife for their encouragement, help, and love. To my father goes posthumous tribute for his having opened my heart and mind to the world of politics and ideas. Many other family members and friends have continually expressed a genuine interest which has helped sustain the kind of effort necessary to issue forth a dissertation, however modest. Especially worthy of my thanks are these friends: Dr. Donald S. Vaughan, Chairman of the Department of Political Science at the University of Mississippi; William F. Winter, former Lieutenant Governor of Mississippi and my close associate and friend; and my present employer and friend, Senator John C. Stennis.

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CONTENTS

List of Figures 7

~~PART ONE~~

LIFE-FORMS AND ERAS IN MISSISSIPPI POLITICS . . . 14

Chapter

1. Life-Forms in Mississippi Electoral Politics . . . 16

2. The Problem of Electoral Order in Mississippi:
Scope, Method, and Sources 46

3. Tracing the Life-Forms and Delineating the
Eras 68

PART TWO

ERA I (1903-1922): AGRARIAN CLASS CONFLICT . . . 112

4. Background and Formation (1875-1910) 112

5. A Critical Election and Agrarian Class
Conflict (1911-1922) 142

6. Era I: Analysis and Conclusions 169

PART THREE

ERA II (1923-1943): THE EMERGENCE OF THE
MODERNIZATION CONSENSUS AND ELECTORAL
MODULATION AMONG LIFE-FORMS 186

7. 1923: A Transition Election 188

8. Electoral Modulation Among Life-Forms
(1927-1942) 213

9. The War and an Atypical Election 293

10. Era II: Analysis and Conclusions 309

	PART FOUR	
	ERA III (1946-1964): THE AROUSAL AND ASCENDANCY OF THE RACIAL CONSENSUS	343
11.	A Conservative Modulation among Life-Forms and the Arousal of the Racial Consensus (1946-1954)	347
12.	A Transition Election and the Ascendancy of the Racial Consensus (1955-1964)	385
13.	Era III: Analysis and Conclusions	442
	PART FIVE	
	ERA IV (1967-1976): THE POLITICS OF MODERNIZATION	464
14.	The Gubernatorial Election of 1967; The End of Racial Politics	464
15.	The Politics of Modernization (1971-1976)	498
16.	Era IV: Analysis and Conclusions	570
	PART SIX	
	CONCLUSION.	591
17.	A Retrospective Look at the Life-Forms and Conclusions	591
	Appendices	615
	Bibliography	625

LIST OF FIGURES

1.	Map of Major Geographical Regions in Mississippi.	17
2.	Votes for Disfranchising Provisions	26
3.	Correlation Coefficients Between Most Recent Elections of Candidates in 1939 Runoff and Their "Alliance Partners"	51
4.	Correlation Coefficients Between 1939 Runoff Candidates and Most Recent Elections of Their "Alliance Partners"	52
5.	Graph of Correlations between 1911 Senatorial Election and Subsequent Gubernatorial Runoffs, Expressed as Standard Scores	69
6.	Percentage of Total Number of Farmers in Mississippi Who Were White Tenants, 1910-1964	70
7.	Graph of Absolute Value of Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary Gubernatorial Candidates and Percentage White Tenancy, Expressed as Standard Scores, 1903-1975	71
8.	Graph of Absolute Value of Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary Gubernatorial Candidates and Percent Black, Expressed as Standard Scores, 1903-1975	73
9.	Graph of Rural, Urban, and Rural-Farm Population in Mississippi, 1900-1970	76
10.	Value Added by Manufacture, 1900-1972	79
11.	Total Manufacturing Wages, 1900-1972	80
12.	Savings Deposits in Banks and Trust Companies, 1910-1973	82
13.	Capitalization Authorized by the Mississippi Secretary of State for Selected Bienniums, 1900-1901 through 1971-1973	83
14.	Per Capita Personal Income, 1930-1975	85

15.	Average Number of School Days Attended per Pupil per Year, 1900-1975	88
16.	Per Capita State Expenditures on Secondary Education, 1900-1976	89
17.	Percentage of State Expenditures for Higher Education for Selected Bienniums, 1901- 1903 through 1975-1977	91
18.	The Production of Kilowatt Hours of Electric Energy, 1907-1973	93
19.	The Growth of the Bureaucracy: Departments, Agencies, Commissions, and Boards-- Vardaman through Finch Administrations	95
20.	Turnout in Gubernatorial First Primaries, 1903-1975	97
21.	Growth in Voting Age Population and Turnout in Gubernatorial First Primaries, Compared to 1900 and 1903 Respectively	99
22.	The Modernization Index: References to Modern- ization Issues in Inaugural Addresses of Governors, Vardaman through Finch	101
23.	Major Life-Forms and Eras in the Twentieth Century	105
24.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary Gubernatorial Candidates, Era I	169
25.	Correlation Coefficients between First Primary Gubernatorial Candidates, Era I	171
26.	Correlation Coefficients between First Primary and Second Primary Gubernatorial Candidates, Era I	172
27.	Correlation Coefficients between First Primary Gubernatorial and Senatorial Candidates, Era I	175
28.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary Gubernatorial and Senatorial Candidates, Era I	177

29.	Correlation Coefficients between Senatorial Candidates, Era I	178
30.	Correlation Coefficients between First Primary Gubernatorial Candidates and Certain Variables, Era I	179
31.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary Gubernatorial Candidates and Certain Variables, Era I	180
32.	Correlation Coefficients between Senatorial Candidates and Certain Variables, Era I	181
33.	Correlation Coefficients between First Primary Gubernatorial Candidates (1915-1927) and Vardaman's Senate Races	311
34.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary Gubernatorial Candidates (1919-1927) and Vardaman's Senate Races	313
35.	Correlation Coefficients between First Primary Gubernatorial Candidates, 1915-1927	314
36.	Correlation Coefficients between First Primary and Second Primary Gubernatorial Candidates, 1915-1927	315
37.	Average of Absolute Values of Correlation Coefficients in Quadrants Set Out in Figure 36	316
38.	Correlation Coefficients between First and Second Primary Gubernatorial Candidates and Certain Socio-Economic Variables, 1915-1927	317
39.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary Gubernatorial Candidates, Era II	320
40.	Second Primary Lineages in Era II	321
41.	Correlation Coefficients between First Primary Gubernatorial Candidates, Era II	322
42.	First Primary Lineages in Era II	323

43.	Correlation Coefficients between First Primary and Second Primary Gubernatorial Candidates, Era II	325
44.	Correlation Coefficients between First Primary and Second Primary Gubernatorial Candidates and Certain Socio-Economic Variables, Era II . .	331
45.	Correlation Coefficients between Senatorial Candidates, Era II	334
46.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary Gubernatorial and Senatorial Candidates, Era II	336
47.	Correlation Coefficients between First Primary Gubernatorial and Senatorial Candidates, Era II	337
48.	Correlation Coefficients between Senatorial Candidates and Certain Socio-Economic Variables, Era II	338
49.	Correlation Coefficients between First Primary Gubernatorial Candidates, Era III	443
50.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary Gubernatorial Candidates, Era III	445
51.	Correlation Coefficients between First Primary and Second Primary Gubernatorial Candidates Era III	447
52.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary and General Election Gubernatorial Candi- dates, Era III	448
53.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary, General Election Gubernatorial Candidates and Certain Socio-Economic and Political Variables, Era III	451
54.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary Gubernatorial and Senatorial Candidates, Era III	453
55.	Correlation Coefficients between Senatorial Candidates and Certain Socio-Economic and Political Variables, Era III	453

56.	Correlation Coefficients between Presidential Candidates, Era III	455
57.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary Gubernatorial and Presidential Candidates, Era III	457
58.	Correlation Coefficients between Senatorial and Presidential Candidates, Era III	458
59.	Correlation Coefficients between Presidential Candidates and Certain Socio-Economic and Political Variables, Era III	458
60.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary Gubernatorial Candidates, Era IV	570
61.	Correlation Coefficients between First Primary Gubernatorial Candidates, Era IV	571
62.	Correlation Coefficients between First Primary and Second Primary Gubernatorial Candidates, Era IV	572
63.	Correlation Coefficients between General Election Gubernatorial Candidates, Era IV	574
64.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary and General Election Gubernatorial Candidates, Era IV	575
65.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary, General Election Gubernatorial Candidates and Certain Socio-Economic Variables, Era IV	577
66.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary, General Election Gubernatorial Candidates and Senatorial Candidates, Era IV	579
67.	Correlation Coefficients between Senatorial Candidates and Certain Socio-Economic Variables, Era IV	579
68.	Correlation Coefficients between Senatorial Candidates, Era IV	580
69.	Correlation Coefficients between Second Primary, General Election Gubernatorial Candidates and Presidential Candidates, Era IV	582

70.	Correlation Coefficients between Presidential and Senatorial Candidates, Era IV	584
71.	Correlation Coefficients between Presidential Candidates and Certain Socio-Economic Variables, Era IV	584
72.	Matrix of "Connectedness Factors" Between Elections in Twenty Year Sequences	605
73.	Graphic Display of Connectedness Factors, Life-Forms, and Eras	606

PART ONE

LIFE-FORMS AND ERAS IN MISSISSIPPI POLITICS

Out of the ooze of Mississippi electoral politics four major life-forms have emerged in the twentieth century. One was a predominantly agrarian class conflict which was most intense during the first two decades of the century but which had life into the 1950s. The second was a strong consensus among whites on the "place" of blacks in the political order. The racial consensus was occasionally used as a demagogic campaign issue until the fifties, during which period it began to dominate genuinely the electoral affairs of the state. After the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 the racial consensus began to crumble. The third life-form was a struggle over the degree of commitment to what might generally be referred to as "progressivism." Closely related to aspects of class conflict in the early part of the century, progressivism embraced basic humanitarian programs, education and governmental reforms, and questions of morality. This life-form was strong throughout the first half of the century and lingers into the present. The fourth life-form, closely akin in some respects to progressivism, has been the gradual emergence of a "modernization consensus" which began in the 1920s and continued to develop-- buffeted along the way by the class conflict and racial

consensus--until it now defines the boundaries of the Mississippi electoral system.

Chapter 1 will discuss the four basic life-forms and spell out the thesis of this study. Chapter 2 will deal with the problems of discerning order in a no-party, no-faction political system, and discuss the scope, methodology, and sources of this study. Chapter 3 will attempt, first, to trace indicators of the life-forms throughout the century and, second, to define the major eras of Mississippi politics since 1903.

CHAPTER 1

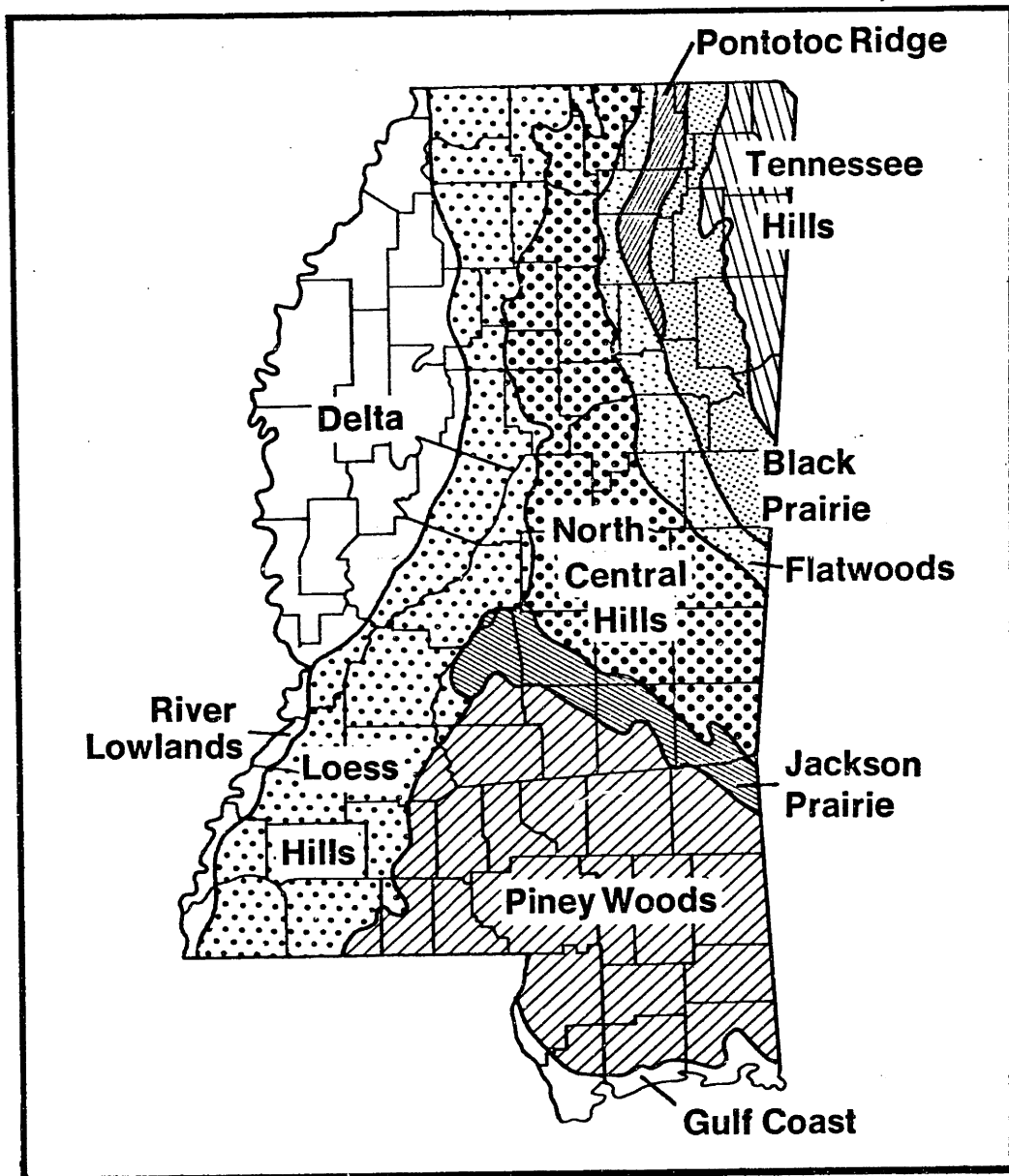
LIFE-FORMS IN MISSISSIPPI ELECTORAL POLITICS

The agrarian class conflict pitted, basically, the small farmers against the planters. In the case of Mississippi, this socio-economic division fell rather neatly along a geographic fault line--the Delta v. the Hills. In a masterful sentence, David Cohn described the geographic and social boundaries of the Delta: "The Mississippi Delta begins in the lobby of the Peabody Hotel in Memphis and ends on Catfish Row in Vicksburg."¹ As Figure 1 illustrates, the Delta is a crescent-shaped area in the northwestern corner of Mississippi. A great alluvial plain that stretches from the Mississippi River to the edge of the Hills, it is one of the most fertile regions in the United States. The Delta developed what was basically a plantation economy, with large farms owned by well-to-do whites and operated mostly by black laborers, share-croppers, and tenants. These counties

¹David Cohn, Where I was Born and Raised (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1948; First Paperback Edition, 1967), p. 12.

FIGURE 1

MAP OF MAJOR GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS IN MISSISSIPPI



SOURCE: James W. Loewen and Charles Sallis, eds., Mississippi: Conflict and Change (New York: Random House, 1974), p. 16.

had by far the highest percentage black population of any in the state. Having a similar economic base were the Black Prairie counties of northeast Mississippi (an extension of the Alabama black belt), the River Lowlands (in this area was found the antebellum plantation economy), and some of the Loess Hills counties (which had rich enough soil to support a plantation-type system before much of the land became depleted).²

In juxtaposition to the Delta are the "Hills" counties, including the Tennessee Hills, Pontotoc Ridge, Flatwoods, North Central Hills, and some of the Loess Hills. Added to these areas would be the Piney Woods section, which, although flat in terrain, was close to the Hills in poverty and political outlook. After the Civil War, these counties were inhabited mostly by white yeomen--including many white tenants--who, as a rule, squeezed out a minimal livelihood from small farms of poor quality land.³

V. O. Key made the classic statement of the Delta-Hills conflict in his celebrated work, Southern Politics:

²See Loewen and Sallis, Chapter 2; V. O. Key, Southern Politics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., Vintage Books, 1949), p. 231; Arthell Kelley, "The Geography," in Richard Aubrey McLemore, ed., A History of Mississippi, 2 vols. (Hattiesburg, Mississippi: University and College Press of Mississippi, 1973), vol. 1.

³Ibid.

"Mississippi politics may be regarded, if one keeps alert to the risks of oversimplification, as a battle between the delta planters and the rednecks."⁴ Stated generally, the position of the Delta white was as follows: a bed-rock consensus on the inferior status of the black, but with a dose of paternalism based partly on the landed gentry's sense of noblesse oblige but also on a pragmatic desire to keep the laborers healthy and productive; a friendliness to northern capital, especially in the form of railroads and, for lawyers, retainers; a laissez faire spirit which called for minimum government expenditures and taxation; and a somewhat more "liberal" life style which was tolerant of alcohol, for example, and less fundamental on religious issues.⁵

The Hills whites possessed, on the other hand, a more emotional form of racism--susceptible to demagoguery and given to violence at times--a more liberal philosophy of the role of government in areas like

⁴Key, p. 230.

⁵See Key, Chapter 11; Charles N. Fortenberry and F. Glenn Abney, "Mississippi: Unreconstructed and Unredeemed," in William C. Havard, ed., The Changing Politics of the South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972); and general histories of the postbellum South, especially C. Vann Woodward, The Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951; First Paperback Edition, 1966).

health and education, a suspicion of corporations and urban-industrial culture in general, and a religious fundamentalism which supported such causes as prohibition.⁶

Key correctly noted that the Delta-Hills division was really a geographic manifestation of the fundamental struggle between two agrarian classes: "'Delta planter' and 'redneck' come to be symbols something like 'capitalist' and 'worker' in an industrial society."⁷ The class conflict took shape during the relatively amorphous elections of the 1900s and sprang fully to life in the senate race of 1911. Class politics reigned fully during the period of the 1910s which was by far the most structured era of modern Mississippi political history. In the 1920s new issues and life-forms complicated the elections, but class remained a powerful force through the 1950s. Remnants of this life-form are clear even today.

The second life-form, the white consensus on the "place" of Negroes in the political order, is generally understood. For many journalists and scholars, however, the race issue has been the "alpha and omega" of Mississippi

⁶Ibid.

⁷Key, p. 231.

politics, and this paper will argue that it has been but one important life-form out of several.

Historically, the mythology of race had its powerful roots in the epochs of slavery and Reconstruction. Culturally, the overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon makeup of white Mississippi had a taproot to the British and their notions of race. Economically, the restoration of the plantation system after the Civil War (with Yankee assistance) demanded effective control over a huge labor force which had to be kept subservient and subsisting, especially in the rich Delta. Politically, Negroes were identified with the party of conquest over the South. Whatever divisions might exist among the whites, none was as powerful as the consensus among them that blacks should not participate in the political process.

Although the cultural homogeneity in Mississippi was always substantial, the economic picture was mixed. As noted above, a large majority of the people, both white and black, were not plantation owners, but were small farmers or tenants. As Key points out, this situation was common to the South; and it provided the basis for his brilliant analysis of the role of black county whites in the political order. Key's thesis, simply put, was that planter whites, having the greatest to lose economically and to fear politically from a liberated black population, forced a one-party, Democratic regime on white electorates by

exploiting the memories and myths of the Civil War, Reconstruction, and race. Such a strategy could not suppress political struggle among the whites, but it could keep the blacks out of the picture. An astounding and brilliant side effect was, as Key points out, to keep white political discontent unorganized and, thereby, ineffective.⁸

As long as the structure was basically unchallenged, the black county whites could actually seem to be more racially enlightened than their poor Hills cousins. Denunciations of racial violence and of vitriolic campaign rhetoric came most often from conservative presses. There was, no doubt, on the part of many a sense of noblesse oblige and, within the confines of a basically inhumane system, feelings of humanity toward the wretched blacks. To others, it was a pragmatic desire to keep the labor force at home and productive. As many sociologists have posited, the response of Hills whites to virulent and violent racist appeals--when, on the surface, it would appear that they had little to fear from the sparse black population surrounding them--was based not so much on economics or politics as on status. A lowly white dirt farmer, living in grinding poverty, or a white tenant or sharecropper had only one shred of self-esteem. He was, at least, better than any Negro. To this belief he held

⁸Key, Chapter 1.

tenaciously.

Black county whites behaved quite differently, however, if the fundamental order were threatened. Roles suddenly became reversed, and tactics far exceeding the buffoonery and racial demagoguery of redneck politicians were employed by black countians to preserve the status quo. They were on the front line of race--politically, economically, and socially. In addition, they believed the myths more strongly than did anyone else. Everything became instrumental to maintaining the threatened racial order. As Key points out, unquestioned fealty to the Democratic Party was the method of maintaining the order for decades. When the party began to change under Roosevelt and Truman, these planter whites were the first to defect. No principle was higher than racial caste.

The racial consensus was not aroused during the period 1903-1947 except in isolated elections, and even on these occasions it was purely a demagogic appeal. There was no reason that race should have been an issue, because the black man had been virtually excluded from the political process by the Constitution of 1890.⁹ In the new registration of

⁹For good treatments of the disfranchising convention see Woodward, Chapter 12; J. Morgan Kousser, The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 139-145. See also George W. Howell, mimeographed lecture notes for Political Science 317, University of Mississippi, 1976; and Albert D. Kirwan,

1892, for example, only 8615 Negro voters, or 11% of the registered electorate, were listed on the rolls. Even fewer voted. The Republican ticket in 1892 received 1500 votes (practically all of which must be assumed to have been black), as compared to 43,000 votes for Blaine in 1884,¹⁰

After 1890 there was never any serious discussion among whites about restoring the franchise to the Negroes. After the adoption of the direct primary in 1902, the State Democratic Executive Committee restricted participation to whites only.¹¹ The few registered blacks who voted thereafter were relegated to participating in largely meaningless general elections until the Supreme Court of the United States struck down the white primary in 1944. Soon thereafter, the chairman of the State Democratic Executive Committee warned blacks not to participate in the primaries, and in 1955 only 8000 Negroes attempted to vote.¹²

During this period when the racial issue was demagogically raised, it usually split the candidates between

Revolt of the Rednecks (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1951; reprint ed., New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1951; Harper Torchbook, 1965), Chapter 7.

¹⁰There was some white opposition to disfranchisement. For example, the Farmer's Alliance opposed property and educational requirements; and the Populist leader Frank Burkitt opposed disfranchising anyone and ultimately refused to sign the Constitution. Kousser, p. 142.

¹¹Kirwan, p. 131.

¹²Loewen and Sallis, p. 256.

the "race baiting" approach and the more restrained or "responsible" position, but there was never any fundamental disagreement over the basic racial consensus. In the 1940s and 1950s the racial consensus became genuinely aroused in the face of federal actions which threatened the very existence of the caste system. By the time of the late 1950s and early 1960s the life-form of race thoroughly dominated statewide elections. The response of the white political order to the threat was quick, decisive, and often brutal. For example, in 1952 there had been an estimated 22,000 blacks registered, but as a result of activity by the newly formed Citizens Councils and other pressures the number had actually declined, according to some estimates, to a level of roughly 12,000 in 1954.¹³ Blacks and outside organizers attempting registration drives were subject to intimidation, violence, and death on occasion. Despite five years of the most intense civil rights activity in the South, the percentage of blacks registered in 1965 was a mere 6.5%, as compared to 19.3% in Alabama, 24.7% in Georgia, and 37.3% in South Carolina.¹⁴

During the 1950s and 1960s the white electorate

¹³Jack Bass and Walter DeVries, The Transformation of Southern Politics (New York: The New American Library, A Meridian Book, 1976), p. 195.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 203.

overwhelmingly approved franchise qualifications designed to insure further black disfranchisement. In 1954 the voters approved a harsher literacy requirement; in 1960 they inserted a "good moral character" clause in the Constitution; and in the wake of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the electorate, in one last and desperate act, gave the Legislature the power to enact additional franchise requirements without constitutional change. A measure of the racial consensus during this period can be seen by the votes cast for these provisions:

FIGURE 2

VOTES FOR DISFRANCHISING PROVISIONS

<u>Constitutional Amendment</u>	<u>Vote For</u>	<u>Vote Against</u>	<u>% For</u>
1954 Literacy Test	75,488	15,718	82.8%
1960 Moral Character	161,352	61,836	72.3%
1965 Legislative Authority	137,236	50,748	73.0%

SOURCE: Mississippi, Secretary of State, Mississippi Official and Statistical Registers, 1956-60 and 1968-72.

After the federal civil rights legislation of the mid-1960s effectively ended the old order, the racial consensus began to crumble. Especially as blacks began to register and vote pursuant to the enforcement of the Voting

Rights Act, politics changed fundamentally. Today, the racial consensus has been replaced either by overt coalitional politics between the races or in far subtler forms of racial division.

The third life-form, progressivism, thrived alongside the agrarian class struggle, although the two were not synonymous. It was clearly a southern variety of progressivism, arising out of the radical agrarian Populism of the 1890's, but the ideas embraced by the movement were wide-ranging. In education, the progressives believed in more state support for public schools, the consolidation movement, and centralization of administration. There was a strong reform sentiment in the area of prisons and insane hospitals. A deep-seeded humanitarianism called for public health programs and facilities, charity hospitals, homes for delinquents, and state aid for the needy. Governmentally, the progressives believed in direct primaries, elective judiciaries, the direct elections of United States senators, the initiative and referendum, and generally "more democracy." They tended to support road building programs as well. Economically, Mississippi progressivism ranged from the radical anti-corporationism of former Populists to the more moderate, urban emphasis on enlightened capitalist development. With its overwhelmingly rural fabric, however, Mississippi did not experience the urban

progressivism as early as did other areas. There was also a strong dose of Puritanism among the state's progressives, who generally believed in prohibition, strict morality, and religious fundamentalism.¹⁵

The "bottom line" of progressivism was a belief in the active role of the state in making life better for its citizens--be it in the area of health, education, roads, morality, or good government. The lines of battle in the progressive life-form were not as neatly drawn as in the case of class competition. Practically all serious candidates after the turn of the century paid at least lip service to many progressive tenets, and the differences were those of emphasis. Yet, in many elections there was a reasonably clear choice in the voters' eyes between those candidates more committed to the "active state" and those less committed. This life-form was dominant during the first decade of the twentieth century and remained

¹⁵For a good treatment of progressivism in the South, see George B. Tindall, The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), Chapters 1 and 7; the major article by Arthur S. Link, "The Progressive Movement in the South, 1870-1914," North Carolina History Review, XXIII; and Sheldon Hackney, Populism to Progressivism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969). For treatments of progressivism in Mississippi, see Charles G. Hamilton, "Mississippi Politics in the Progressive Era, 1904-1920" (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1958); and John Richard Lewis, "Progressivism Revisited: A Reevaluation of Mississippi Politics, 1920-1930" (M.A. thesis, University of Southern Mississippi, 1977).

highly important through the period of World War II. Even today strong remnants of the life-form are visible in election campaigns.

The fourth life-form lies at the heart of this analysis. A modernization consensus began to emerge in Mississippi during the 1920s and 1930s and now is the dominant feature of electoral politics at the state level. The appearance and development of that consensus was not smooth and seldom, if ever, proceeded in a complete way, nor is the consensus yet fully matured. The modernization consensus interacted throughout the 1930s and 1940s with the agrarian class conflict; and, even though that pre-industrial life-form was of declining importance, it shaped and colored the modernization consensus in ways which still can be seen. The racial life-form also affected the modernization consensus by excluding the blacks and thereby severely restricting the possibilities of development. And, finally, modernization was related to--indeed, in some ways, an outgrowth of--progressivism. Democratization, advancements in education, building of roads and communications, increasing the health and vigor of the populace--all of these were shared dimensions of progressivism and modernization. However, the two life-forms were not synonymous. Modernization had its own independent and, in many ways, profounder dimensions--e.g., the emphasis

on higher education and technological training, the positive emphasis on commercial and industrial development, the advocacy of active state intervention in the economy, and a general concern with "modernity." Furthermore, there were aspects of progressivism either irrelevant to or actually antithetical to modernization--e.g., the anti-corporation feelings among radical agrarians, the concern with Puritanicalism, and the indifference about if not actual opposition to highly integrated governmental structures (one might say that progressivism advocated functional specificity and democratization but not structural integration).

The argument of this paper is that through all these interactions and modulations an ever-increasing range of development issues have grown in importance to the point that today modernization must be considered the dominant feature of the electoral landscape. The degree to which this life-form has given order to voting behavior will be considered in the course of this study. It will be the argument here that at the very least modernization has provided important parameters to voting behavior since World War II.

What is meant by a modernization consensus? As used here in a narrow sense, it refers to a basic agreement in the electorate on the need for Mississippi to

develop its economy. This agreement, which spread during the 1920s and 1930s, began to provide the parameters of electoral politics. In a broader sense, the degree to which other issues interacted with economic development and the degree to which the state began to grapple with the social, cultural, and governmental implications of economic modernization necessitated an ever-broadening modernization consensus into some difficult areas. The expanding modernization consensus provides the second and richer aspect of this story.

The definition of modernization is not simple and, sometimes in the literature, not even clear. This study will not attempt to formulate a precise definition, but will rely on a general notion of modernization as it is found in political science literature.

The term "modernization" refers broadly to that process which has produced the culture of the western world today and which is being adapted, to varying degrees, to fit current development in third world countries. Most authors agree that the hallmarks of modernization include the notion that man can make choices about and exercise control over his future (the universe is not deterministic), secular theories about the structure of the world, an attitude of inquiry and discovery, a ready acceptance of change, and a growing complexity in the social, economic,

and political organization of man.¹⁶ As David Apter states,

. . . modernization . . . originates when a culture embodies an attitude of inquiry and questioning about how men make choices--moral (or normative), social (or structural), and personal (or behavioral). The problem of choice is central for modern man.¹⁷

The economic aspect of modernization is generally regarded to have been the most compelling and tradition-shattering part of the process. "Modernization first occurred in the West through the twin processes of commercialization and industrialization."¹⁸ Apter goes so far as to suggest that ". . . one possible view is that modernity began when men gained insight into their economies . . . and thus, modernization as the process leading to the state of modernity begins when man tries to solve the allocation problem."¹⁹ Most writers agree that total economic growth (usually expressed as per capita gross national product) is the overall indicator of economic development. Under this general heading are often such indicators as industrialization, increased savings and investment, the development of

¹⁶See David E. Apter, The Politics of Modernization (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965; Phoenix Edition, 1967), Chapters 1 and 2; C.E. Black, The Dynamics of Modernization (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966; Harper Torchbook, 1967), Chapter 1.

¹⁷Apter, pp. 9-10.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 9.

monetary and fiscal institutions, the application of technology to the market place, and increased energy production.

The commercial and industrial revolutions were closely related to views about the nature of the universe which were radically different from those of the Middle Ages. Intellectually, the attitude that nature and man are explicable and susceptible to research led to the pursuit of science and, then, technology. As C. E. Black emphasizes, "the accumulation of knowledge, and the methods of rational explanation by which it was achieved, is no doubt the most generally recognized aspect of modernization, and as an attitude of mind it lies at the center of this process."²⁰

Socially, the process yielded a truly complex set of consequences as man changed from a rural-agrarian existence to an urban-industrial life. Migrations to the cities, breakdowns in traditional family structures, the explosive increase in communications, corporate agriculture, more education for more people, traditional social stratifications being supplemented by a plethora of modern roles--these are a part of the familiar scenario of the modern world. These changes produced, as Huntington argues, new attitudes, values, and expectations among people who became available for new forms of social behavior.²¹

²⁰Black, p. 11.

²¹Samuel Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, Paperback Ed., 1968), p. 32.

Apter, among others, sees the proliferation of new social roles as lying at the heart of modernization.

Huntington sees political modernization in terms of a more centralized and integrated state, a more complex government composed of differentiated and specialized functional units, and more citizen participation.²² Stability comes from political institutions being able (or "modern" enough) to handle increased participation and voter expectation. The following quote by Lucian Pye summarizes the view of the Social Science Research Council's Committee on Comparative Politics regarding the hallmarks of political modernization:

The key elements of political development involve, first, with respect to the population as a whole, a change from wide-spread subject status to an increasing number of contributing citizens, with an accompanying spread of mass participation, a greater sensitivity to the principles of equality, and a wider acceptance of universalistic laws. Second, with respect to governmental and general systemic performance, political development involves an increase in the capacity of the political system to manage public affairs, control controversy, and cope with popular demands. Finally, with respect to the organization of the polity, political development implies greater structural differentiation, greater functional specificity, and greater integration of all the participating institutions and organizations.²³

²²Huntington, p. 34.

²³Lucian W. Pye, "Introduction: Political Culture and Political Development," in Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba, eds. Political Culture and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965; Paperback Edition, 1969), p. 13.

It is often awkward, in a way, to apply modernization paradigms to the United States because of a wide-spread tendency among political development students to consider the North Atlantic democracies as the model itself for modernization. There has been too little historical analysis of the process of western modernization in terms of, one, how that process relates to the development efforts in the Third World today and, two, how that process is continuing in the model countries themselves.²⁴

Modernization concepts are applicable to Mississippi in terms of a relatively advanced stage in the process. No one would seriously argue that Mississippi, or any other sub-unit of the American system, is closely analagous to either a third world country or to a feudal society. Mississippians share the fundamental American ethos, and they have been, to varying degrees, participants in the economic system which arises out of that ethos. The social dimensions of the American ideology are what Mississippians have had the most trouble with, and, to a lesser degree,

²⁴There are some notable exceptions. See, for example, Huntington's essay entitled "Political Modernization: American v. Europe" in his book; Leonard Binder, et. al., eds., Crises and Sequences in Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971); scattered chapters in the series, "Studies in Political Development," published by Princeton University Press; and, in terms of electoral behavior, the work of Walter Dean Burnham, especially his Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1970).

the economic aspects. The story of voter adaptation to these features in the American system is much of the tale of modernization in Mississippi.

There are, then, two aspects to the notion of a modernizing Mississippi electorate. One, it is a part of a modernizing America. And, two, Mississippi voters present a study of modernization within the national parameters of modernity. It is this latter aspect which is the primary object of this study.

The life-forms are, of course, linked together. The linkage is found in the individual voter who functions as a part of several competing constellations of interests--economic, social, cultural, and racial.

The voters at the turn of the century were either impoverished white yeomen and tenants or relatively well-to-do planters. The planters comprised what might be called a "marginal aristocracy," at the core of which was a small, genuine upper class of wealthy land owners and attorneys. But, outside this core a substantial percentage of the larger farmers were themselves from "redneck" roots and had moved into the black belt areas from the Hills. The general depression of Mississippi's condition affected them as well. There was, finally, a nascent middle class of merchants and bankers in the towns and few cities, but their concerns were tied intimately to agricultural life.

They, too, came from mixed backgrounds--often tied to the landed class in the black belt and to the peasantry in the Hills.

This blurring of distinctions in a widely impoverished state accounted for both the ambiguous nature of many elections and also for the subtle shifts that occurred along the socio-economic margins which, in turn, moved majorities in and out of various life-forms. The Hills people and Delta people battled each other in the early decades over the substantive issues of taxation and government spending and over numerous style issues involving class. The planters were basically favorable to Eastern capital, especially railroad development, but were for low state taxation and minimum state expenditures. High taxation and expenditures would have redistributed some of the wealth through government services to the Hills. Quite naturally, the Hills favored these programs. The small farmers were also suspicious of and opposed to corporate wealth, a strong residue of Populism. Closely related were the style issues of campaigns, pitting the man of "common origins" against the well-heeled, well-educated patrician from the Delta.

Similar to the class conflict were the issues of progressivism. Most of the Hills people favored government reform which "democratized" the system, humanitarian

social services, education and road development, and moral fundamentalism. In keeping with their minimum government philosophy, the planters were less inclined to these positions, although the lines were not so clearly drawn. Many of the marginal aristocrats were genuine progressives, as were many of the urban middle class. In some areas, however, the merchants and plantation owners were either one and the same or so closely aligned that they would tend toward the cautious side of progressivism.

After the open primary law of 1902, the Delta never elected a true Bourbon governor, even though they usually held power in the Legislature. Men elected from the Delta (and there have been only three this century) were either "redneck" politicians in disguise (Vardaman, 1903), Progressives (Brewer, 1911), or moderate Deltans (Wright, 1947). The planter aristocracy was constrained, therefore, to hold on tenaciously to its legislative power and to back the "lesser evil" in gubernatorial races. The poverty of the state--impinging on marginal aristocrats as well as small farmers--plus the necessity for coalitional politics in the runoff primaries produced candidates different only in degree rather than in fundamentals.

Marginal elements in the Delta, "rednecks" liberated from the anti-corporation bias of Populism, the small middle class, and progressives among the aristocracy

responded to the vision of men like Henry Whitfield and Hugh White, both of whom saw that the only escape for Mississippi from economic peonage was the development of industry, commerce, and business. The first stirrings of modernization sprang partially from progressivism, at the core of which lay some of the foundations of development. Early modernizers like Whitfield highlighted those features of progressivism conducive to business and commercial development--education, transportation, health, and citizen participation. Dimensions unique to the modernization consensus itself--e.g., balanced state budgets and laws at least neutral to capital investment--distinguished their political platform from those of mere progressives. Modernization in the 1930s took a step beyond progressivism, balanced budgets, and laws favorable to capital investment; under High White government embraced the notion of direct state involvement in industrialization through tax incentives and bond issues to finance industrial facilities.

Many small farmers were torn between a susceptibility to anti-corporation appeals--an aspect of agrarian progressivism antithetical to development--and the lure of better paying manufacturing jobs secured at the price of following middle class, educated, pro-capital leadership in the political arena. Elements within the aristocracy

remained diehard agrarian conservatives, but others adapted to development by forging coalitions with the modernizers. Their motivation seemed to be participation in, if not control of, the industrialization and commercialization process, even if it meant compromising on certain small farmer demands and progressivist tenets. Their concern was not only to benefit from development but also to be in a position to protect their essential interests as planters.

The consensus for modernization had a long and difficult road to follow. Politicians frequently yielded to the temptation to make class appeals, and Bourbon stalwarts held power tightly in the Legislature. The ebb and flow of these forces produced an era of remarkable political modulation among life-forms during the decades of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s.

Even though race was not a legitimate issue until the era after World War II, the racial consensus formed the unalterable parameters of the electoral system. Politically, it meant that whenever the white counties agitated for basic constitutional reform the "fall back" position of the Bourbons was always the same and always effective--i.e., to raise the spectre of race, Republicanism, and Reconstruction. It was more a testament to the power of the racial consensus than to Bourbon political savvy that

the white counties never extracted significant concessions from the black counties in times of true racial crisis in return for their support of the fundamental caste order. The "bottom line" threat of the white counties entering political alliance with the black population was incredible, and everybody knew it.

Economically, the parameters of racism meant that the modernization consensus was also severely restricted. Every development-minded person knew, or should have known, that significant modernization in the economy could never occur with 40-50% of the population in inescapable poverty. And, yet, it was into the 1970s before an electoral majority in the state came to grips with that realization--and that only after the racial problem was fundamentally resolved by outside intervention and after a modernization consensus had long since become irresistible among the white population.

The process of federal intervention into the racial status quo resulted in an era in which race truly dominated state politics--roughly the years of the 1950s and 1960s. During these years the racial consensus not only provided the parameters of politics but also the stuff of electoral contests within those parameters. It was basically a contest among candidates who were more or less militant on the question of segregation and massive resistance to

the federal government. These contests produced lines which cut across the other life-forms and washed away distinctions like class and modernization. Ironically, it was also during this same period that the state was modernizing in the economy and in government policy at unprecedented levels.

The administrations of several development-minded governors--plus the accelerated pace of modernization due in large measure to the impact of World War II--committed the white electorate fully to economic modernization. When the federal government shattered the racial parameters of the system, the stage was set for modernization to provide a new set of boundaries. No serious candidate for statewide office has been able to ignore the major issues of economic development in recent elections, and one is finding more and more discussion about governmental modernization as well (e.g., the need for a new state constitution, more emphasis on development agencies, etc.). The enfranchisement of blacks and the resulting existence of an effective minority vote of roughly 25% on any given election day has "liberated" white politicians to compete for the black vote and to address the social implications of modernization. The rhetoric of campaigns now includes strong themes of involving all citizens in the mainstream of economic and political life. There has developed, in

a word, a consensus in the electorate for modernization.

The other life-forms have, however, substantially colored that consensus. Vestiges of the agrarian class struggle appear in the form of both style issues and hard issues within the consensus. A strong theme of the "common man" and attacks on the "establishment" are still powerful at the style level, while questions of tax structure, utilities regulation, expansion of the banking system, etc., are also important questions in campaigns. The diehard planter conservative is only a memory, and this position has even become passé within the Legislature. Racial issues are still present but in subtler ways, and many of them relate to federal programs (e.g., welfare, rural legal services, etc.).

New forms of class politics, progressivism, and race contained within the modernization consensus--along with issues of development--have produced, as in the past, a highly fluid electoral milieu at the present. There are issues relating to organized labor, a growing concern with environmental protection, more sophisticated industrial development, future directions in education, and the growing infiltration of the federal government into almost every aspect of the economy. The state's electorate--one of the most indigenous of any in the union--is comprised of voters who either lived and voted in prior eras or whose parents did. As a consequence, even

though the state is becoming increasingly obsessed with the issues facing any modern industrial state, the past is also ever-present. The economic establishment comes from planter roots, now a part of corporate agriculture and the industrial order, and from second and third generation industrial, commercial, and professional families; there are many new entrepreneurs who come from humbler, often rural origins; there are the blacks, with an emerging middle class of their own, but still with a huge component of poverty level families; and there are still many poorer whites. The blacks and poorer whites--once the most vicious opponents--now find themselves in coalitions behind candidates committed to fast-paced economic development, tax reform, state intervention in the economy to produce more jobs and lower interest rates, and regulation of utilities. And, yet, on issues of public v. private education (primarily segregation academies) and the role of the federal government in community development, these groups can easily end up in opposition to each other. Economic recession can produce job competition among the races and tension. On the other hand, the agricultural, commercial, professional, and industrial establishments often coalesce behind candidates more committed to conservative state policies vis-à-vis the economy, less state intervention, and opposition to many

federal programs and guidelines.

These tendencies and counter-tendencies produce fluid and shifting coalitions. This has always been the case in Mississippi. What has changed are the parameters. They were race until the late 1960s; now they are modernization.

These life-forms are really nothing more than the net aggregation of thousands of individual aspirations, viewpoints, and complaints into campaign themes and organizations. And, therein lies the tale of Mississippi electoral politics: it has been the triumph of the middle class ethos in statewide elections. One almost reaches for the phrase, "urban middle class man," but that is not entirely accurate. The majority in Mississippi today is largely middle class and "modern" in orientation, but the residue of agrarianism and racism color that portrait with special hues. Neither the Bourbon planters nor the red-neck farmers won the verdict of history. Rather, it has been the Henry Whitfield vision of 1924: a Mississippi heavily reliant on agriculture, but also a full participant in the urban, commercial, industrial, and--above all--"modern" world. A new urban class, transformed small farmers, and business-related planters--all seduced by the commercial-industrial-urban order of the twentieth century--now comprise the majority. But, within that modernization consensus, the past lingers on in strange ways.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROBLEM OF ELECTORAL ORDER IN MISSISSIPPI: SCOPE, METHOD, AND SOURCES

Electoral politics in Mississippi has occurred largely in a no-party, personalistic milieu. The search for order is, therefore, difficult and not easily susceptible to the tools of standard electoral analysis. Personality, friends-and-neighbors, localism, and ephemeral coalitions have produced a crazy-quilt pattern in which there seems to be little order. The following quote, dealing with the 1939 runoff primary for governor between Paul Johnson and Mike Conner, is a striking example:

. . . The changing political alliances which constitute Mississippi politics are well illustrated in this second primary. Senator Bilbo, who had opposed Johnson in 1935, was now actively for him. Conner, whom Johnson had supported in 1931, who had supported Johnson in 1935, and who had been supported for Senator by Johnson in 1936, was the second primary candidate against Johnson. White supported Conner, who had defeated him in 1931 and had opposed him in 1935. Harrison supported Conner, who had run against him in 1936. Stephens, whom Bilbo had defeated for the Senate, was with Bilbo for Johnson. Murphree, who had supported White in 1935, was elected lieutenant governor for

the third time in the 1939 primary and supported Johnson actively.¹

Political scientists generally discuss electoral order in terms of political party competition, and, failing that, bifactional politics. The democratic party model of rational voting behavior calls for a "forced choice" on the part of the voter between two parties which have identifiable issue positions and which can be held accountable at the next election. It is this institutional structure, in large measure, that "channels" voting and brings order to the electoral process. In the absence of party competition, bifactionalism may impart order to the process. Characterizing this system are two factions within the same party--one which holds power most of the time and a generalized opposition to the dominant faction. To bring order to voting behavior, the factions must have at least intermediate-range durability, be seen to stand for certain positions, have some degree of organizational structure, and be able to transfer to some extent their support from one leader to another.

Until recently, Mississippi had had neither party competition or bifactionalism. Looking first at the question of party competition, the average Democratic vote for

¹Charles G. Hamilton, "The Legislative Program of 1940-1944: A Legislator's Opinion" (M.A. thesis, University of Mississippi, 1947), p. 8.

governor this century has been 92% (up until the election of 1963 the average was 99%). Eleven of the nineteen races were uncontested. In the twenty-two senate races since the adoption of the Seventeenth Amendment, the Democratic nominee has received an average vote of 95% (fifteen elections were uncontested). In presidential elections, the average Democratic vote was 90% from 1900 through 1944 and 68% through 1976.²

Turnout also indicates the absence of significant party competition. The average percentage turnout in Democratic gubernatorial primaries, for example, has been 59% this century, while for general elections the average has been only 21%. In only one gubernatorial race (1971) has general election turnout exceeded Democratic primary turnout.³

²Computed from F. Glenn Abney, Mississippi Election Statistics (University, Mississippi: Bureau of Governmental Research, 1968) and from issues of In The Public Interest, I-IV, published by the Institute of Politics in Mississippi.

³Ibid. Turnout is defined generally in this paper as the number of votes cast divided by the voting age population (VAP). VAP is defined as follows:

1. white males over twenty-one through the election of 1919;
2. white population over twenty-one from 1920-1965;
3. total population over twenty-one from 1966-1970; and
4. total population over eighteen from the 1971 election on.

Until 1952 in presidential politics and until 1963 in statewide politics, everything occurred within the Democratic Party. It may appear exaggerated to term the system "no party" instead of "one-party"; however, until very recently the Democratic Party was almost nothing more than an umbrella label under which all politicians lived. It carried out few of the functions generally ascribed to a political party other than to elect a slate of delegates to the national convention, to man the largely functionless executive committees, and to conduct the primaries. There was no functioning organization, no professional staff, no party fund-raising, no recruitment, and no propagation of platform. The term "no party" highlights this organization weakness.

Bifactionalism has, likewise, been absent from the Mississippi political scene. V. O. Key saw this clearly:

. . . Mississippi's factionalism is poorly organized. . . . From campaign to campaign divisions among voters change--a consequence of confusion, localism, and other factors associated with a fluid factionalism.⁴

During this century, Mississippi has had an Index of Factionalism of .72 in its Democratic primaries (.50 would be a close indicator of bifactionalism). This

⁴Key, p. 246.

figure is higher than that for most other southern states with runoff primaries, and considerably higher than that for states with single primaries.⁵

The quote at the beginning of this chapter portrays the shifting and unstable factionalism in just one gubernatorial runoff, that of 1939. Although this study will demonstrate that most elections until recently in Mississippi have been highly multifactional, the 1939 second primary may at this point be taken as an example. It is revealing to look at the correlation coefficients among the candidates and their "alliance partners" in 1939. How strong were the alliances going into the election? The following chart shows (1) the alliances as outlined in the quote, and (2) the correlation coefficients across counties among the candidates' most recent elections and those of their alliance partners.

⁵Index of Factionalism = $1 - (\sum c^2)$, where c is a given candidate's percentage of the vote expressed as a decimal. Taken from Bradley Canon, "Isolating Causes of Factionalism in the South: A Revisitation of V.O. Key," an unpublished paper presented to the Citadel Symposium on Southern Politics, Charleston, S.C., 1978. Canon cites Douglas Rae, The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967) and Margaret T. Echols and Austin Ranney, "The Impact of Interparty Competition Reconsidered: The Case of Florida," Journal of Politics 38 (February 1976): 142-152. The figure, .72, is the average Index of Factionalism for all Mississippi gubernatorial first primaries from 1903-1976 as computed by the author.

FIGURE 3

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN MOST RECENT ELECTIONS OF CANDIDATES IN 1939 RUNOFF AND THEIR "ALLIANCE PARTNERS"

Alliances	Election Pairs	Coefficient
White + Conner	White '35 with Conner '31	-.60
	White '31 with Conner '31	-1.0
Harrison + Conner	Harrison (S) '36 with Conner '31	-.52
	Harrison (S) '36 with Conner (S) '36	-1.0
Bilbo + Johnson	Bilbo '27 with Johnson '35	+.29
	Bilbo (S) '34 with Johnson '35	+.30
Stephens + Johnson	Stephens (S) '34 with Johnson '35	-.30
Murphree + Johnson	Murphree '27 with Johnson '35	-.29

Figure 3 illustrates the historical weaknesses of the alliances in the runoff. Of the alliances cited, only Bilbo's support for Johnson had had a statistically positive history (and, in fact, Bilbo had opposed Johnson's election in 1935, even though the correlation between his 1934 Senate vote and Johnson's 1935 vote was +.30).

The election itself in 1939 confirmed the pattern. The following chart shows the 1939 returns as correlated with the most recent vote of the particular "alliance partner":

FIGURE 4

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN 1939 RUNOFF CANDIDATES AND MOST RECENT ELECTIONS OF THEIR "ALLIANCE PARTNERS"

Alliance	Election Pair	Coefficient
White + Conner	White '35 with Conner '39	-.44
Harrison + Conner	Harrison (S) '36 with Conner '39	+.37
Bilbo + Johnson	Bilbo (S) '34 with Johnson '39	+.52
Stephens + Johnson	Stephens (S) '34 with Johnson '39	-.52
Murphree + Johnson	Murphree '27 with Johnson '39	-.37

Figure 4 illustrates that the alliance partners were unable to "deliver" their votes, except in the case of Bilbo and Harrison. It is also interesting, and somewhat startling, to note that Conner's 1939 vote correlates with his own 1931 vote for governor $-.34$. Obviously, a radical shift in his own base of support had occurred in the eight intervening years. Even Johnson's 1939 vote correlates only $+.44$ with his 1935 gubernatorial vote, and this must be considered low given that the elections were back to back.

Looking, then, at conventional scholarship, the Index of Factionalism, and the gubernatorial election of 1939, one must conclude that bifactionalism has not existed in Mississippi as an order-producing instrumentality.⁶

⁶Most political scientists agree that factionalism in Mississippi is transitory and unsuitable as an analytical

Indeed, if by the term faction one implies any significant durability, the most accurate term for Mississippi might be a "no-party, no-faction" or a "no-party, personalistic" system. Temporary groupings organize around candidates during election years, but little organizational structure persists and that which does is always tied to the personality of a particular candidate.

The failure of traditional paradigms of electoral analysis to discover and explicate the order in Mississippi politics, if any, led to the search for a suitable technique which would. It led to the notion of life-forms.

The Concept of Life-Forms

The analytical concept used in this study is that of electoral "life-forms." Generally speaking, it is the attempt to find the relationships, if any, between the image projected by various candidates in campaigns and the voting returns. The term "image" is used here to

tool for explaining voting behavior over any extended period of time. See Charles N. Fortenberry and F. Glenn Abney, "Mississippi: Unreconstructed and Unredeemed," in Havard; and Gary H. Brooks and Walter C. Opello, Jr., "Socioeconomic Cleavages and Mississippi's New Political Era," an unpublished paper presented to the Citadel Symposium on Southern Politics, Charleston, S.C., 1978. A contrary view is presented in a paper delivered at the same Citadel Symposium by Dale Krane and Tip H. Allen, "Factional Durability in Mississippi's Gubernatorial Elections, 1927-1975." The merits of this dispute are dealt with in Appendix I.

denote the principal message a candidate is trying to project and includes hard issues, style issues, and personal characteristics. The dark side of the coin is important too--that is, the negative image a candidate acquires by virtue of attacks on him from other candidates. The data on image can be acquired through historical research. Secondary sources on political history are often available and, if not, can be supplemented with primary research into newspapers, documents, campaign files, and interviews. From the descriptive analysis of campaigns across time emerge "threads" of image--e.g., persistent social issues, economic issues, personal styles, or personal characteristics. These "threads of image" constitute the life-forms of electoral politics.

Once the major life-forms have been identified, two forms of statistical analysis can be attempted. One, general indicators of the life-form can be found which obtain across time. As anyone familiar with longitudinal social analysis can attest, such an exercise can become quite difficult the farther back in time one goes. If the data can be obtained, however, it can give the student a notion of how the life-form has operated in the general polity over time. For example, in this paper, the racial issue was identified as a major life-form, and a number of indicators were available--the total percentage black population

every ten years, the average black population across the eighty-two counties for every ten years, and the correlations between a candidate's vote and the percentage black across counties.

The second mode of analysis is to run correlations among the candidates and see how their votes tie together. Such an analysis, then, begins to define the relationships between campaign images and votes and completes the delineation of the life-forms. For example, if two candidates in different elections have similar images vis-à-vis the race issue and if their votes correlate positively, one can assume that some sort of racial life-form was highly operative in those elections. If, on the other hand, these two candidates had similar racial images and did not correlate or correlated negatively, the student would have to look for another life-form as an explanation. What emerges, then, instead of parties and factions as order-producing instrumentalities, is persistent campaign images, or life-forms, which have more or less identifiable constituencies across time.

As life-forms are born, triumph, fail, change, and die, eras are defined, vaguely in the same manner that Burnham and others argue eras in America's basically bipartisan history have been formed. Two techniques have been used to define eras in this study. One, indicators of the life-forms have been analyzed across the time

period (1903-1976), and individual elections described in terms of deviations from the century norm. Major shifts suggest a fundamentally different life-form at work in the electoral system. For example, if the correlation between a series of elections and percentage black has been above the century mean and if the correlation for a succeeding election drops suddenly below the norm, it would suggest a diminution of the racial life-form and its replacement by something else, thereby ending what might be termed "an era of racial politics."

A second statistical technique used to define eras is what one might call a "connectedness factor." This technique was employed in the final chapter in a retrospective look at the life-forms and eras. By a connectedness factor, one is simply referring to a measure of the overall degree of relationship or connectedness among elections. One takes the average of the absolute values of the correlation coefficients between the candidates in election X and election Y. In the case of second primaries, it is a single coefficient; in the case of first primaries it is the average of correlations among all candidates between the two elections; for an overall measure of the entire election, it is a weighted average of the first and second primary coefficients. As used here, elections are taken in six-election sequences--i.e., 1903

with 1907, 1911, 1915, 1919, and 1923, etc. A matrix of factors is thereby produced. The matrix average is then calculated and the connectedness factor between any two given elections expressed in terms of the deviation from the matrix mean.

Once the life-forms and the connectedness factors are graphed, other relevant variables can also be graphed and examined--e.g., overall turnout expressed as deviations from the century mean, correlations between candidates and turnout, etc. From these graphs, eras can be defined. At this point, statistical rigor breaks down, and informed judgment takes over. The graphs seldom produce unanimous results, although the degree of similarity can be noteworthy. Weighing the evidence, the student decides which factors are the most significant to his inquiry and defines the eras accordingly.

As one can see, the principal technique employed in the statistical analysis in this study is, at the most sophisticated, simple correlation analysis. There is no reason, however, that more advanced statistical techniques could not be employed to define and study life-forms and eras in no-party, no-factional systems of voting behavior. In this paper, unless otherwise specified, the correlations are across the eighty-two counties of Mississippi--i.e., the percentage black, the

percentage for candidate "X", the turnout percentage, etc., for the eighty-two counties as correlated with each other. A significance level of .05 was used throughout (although as a "fudge factor" some coefficients were used if they were greater than .05 but less than .06). Coefficients not significant at the .05 level or better were not reported in the charts. Coefficients were often averaged across time and individual factors expressed as deviations from a century mean. In these exercises, insignificant coefficients were counted as "zero" in computing means. The coefficients are the standard "Pearson's r" as computed on the Statistical Package for the Social Science. Other statistics, such as means and standard deviations, are standard usage.

Sources

In researching the campaign issues and images throughout the century, one finds that secondary sources are scarce. Although several works by historians make valuable contributions--particularly Kirwan's Revolt of the Rednecks, which concludes with the election of 1923--the political history of the state in the twentieth century is largely unrecorded in secondary

sources.⁷ There is, for example, no single-author history, other than textbooks, covering the period after 1925.

There are a number of theses and dissertations tucked away in universities which contribute to an understanding of various periods in Mississippi's political history.⁸

Numerous biographies, reminiscences, journalistic accounts, and personal observations contain useful political information,⁹ and the civil rights struggle in particular

⁷Exceptions include high school textbook histories, scattered chapters in edited works, and various articles on specific topics in scholarly journals. See, for example, John K. Bettersworth, Mississippi Yesterday and Today (Austin: Steck-Vaughn, 1964); Loewen and Sallis; The Journal of Mississippi History, published by the Mississippi Historical Society, Jackson, Mississippi (January 1939 to present).

⁸See bibliography for more complete listing. Some better examples include James S. Ferguson, "Agrarianism in Mississippi, 1871-1900: A Study in Nonconformity" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1958); and Hamilton dissertation.

⁹Bill R. Baker, Catch the Vision: The Life of Henry L. Whitfield of Mississippi (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1974); Willard F. Bond, I Had A Friend (Kansas City: E.L. Mendenhall, Inc., 1958); Hodding Carter, First Person Rural (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1963); Hodding Carter, Flood Crest (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1947); Hodding Carter, Southern Legacy (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1960); Hodding Carter, Where Main Street Meets the River (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1953); Cohn; J. Oliver Emmerich, Two Faces of Janus (Jackson: University and College Press of Mississippi, 1973); A. Wigfall Green, The Man Bilbo (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963); William F. Holmes, The White Chief: James Kimble Vardaman (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970); Willie Morris, North Toward Home (New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1967); George Coleman Osborn,

produced a body of literature describing the events and temper of the fifties and sixties.¹⁰

In the discipline of political science, the paucity of published material is startling. The most recent

John Sharp Williams: Planter Statesman of the Deep South (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1964); George Owens, I Was There (Fulton, Mississippi: Itawamba County Times, 1973); William Alexander Percy, Lanterns on the Levee (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941); Frank E. Smith, Congressman from Mississippi (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964; Capricorn Books, 1967).

¹⁰Russell H. Barrett, Integration at Ole Miss (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965); Sally Belfrage, Freedom Summer (New York: Viking Press, 1965); Jason Berry, Amazing Grace: With Charles Evers in Mississippi (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1973); Robert Canzoneri, "I Do So Politely" (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965); Hodding Carter, So the Heffners Left McComb (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1965); Hodding Carter, The South Strikes Back (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1959); Charles Evers, Evers (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1971); Bruce Hilton, The Delta Ministry (London: The Macmillan Company, 1969); Len Holt, The Summer That Didn't End (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1965); William Bradford Huie, Three Lives for Mississippi (New York: WCC Books, 1964); Walter Lord, The Past That Would Not Die (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965); William McCord, Mississippi: The Long Hot Summer (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1965); Neil R. McMillin, The Citizen's Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971); Anne Moody, Coming of Age in Mississippi (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1968); James W. Silver, Mississippi: The Closed Society (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., Harvest Books, 1965); Shirley Tucker, Mississippi From Within (New York: Arco Publishing, 1965); Nicholas Von Hoffman, Mississippi Notebook (New York: D. White, 1964); Pat Watters and Reese Cleghorn, Climbing Jacob's Ladder: the Arrival of Negroes in Southern Politics (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1964); Don Whitehead, Attack on Terror: The FBI Against the Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1970); Frederick M. Wirt, Politics of Southern Equality (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1970).

comprehensive textbook on Mississippi government and politics was published in 1954.¹¹ A small, edited paperback written in 1976 updates some specific topics but in no way serves as a substitute for an inclusive treatment of the state's political system.¹² The best political analysis must be found in chapters of larger works (usually regional), in scattered articles in scholarly journals, and in unpublished dissertations and theses.¹³ In addition, the field of sociology has contributed some interesting community studies, especially in the area of

¹¹Robert B. Highsaw and Charles N. Fortenberry, The Government and Administration of Mississippi (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1954).

¹²David M. Landry and Joseph B. Parker, eds., Mississippi Government and Politics in Transition (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1976).

¹³See, for example, Key, Chapter 11; Havard, Chapter 10; Bass and DeVries, Chapter 9. For journals check the Journal of Politics, published by the Southern Political Science Association, Gainesville, Florida (February 1939 to present); the American Political Science Review, published by the American Political Science Association, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (1906 to present); New South, published by the Southern Regional Council, Atlanta, Georgia (1946-1973). See also In the Public Interest; Public Administration Survey, published by the Bureau of Governmental Research, University of Mississippi. For theses and dissertations consult bibliography. See particularly F. Glenn Abney, "The Mississippi Voter: The Study of Voting Behavior in a One-Party, Multifactional System" (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1968); Lester M. Salamon, "Protest, Politics, and Modernization in the American South: Mississippi as a Developing Society" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1972).

the Mississippi Delta,¹⁴

In an area so blighted with limited research and analysis, any "find" has been embraced and evaluated for possible use. Sources of data have included the following: the limited secondary material referred to above; oral history interviews;¹⁵ personal interviews conducted by the author; doctoral dissertations, masters theses, and other unpublished papers; newspaper clippings and campaign literature;¹⁶ a few privately financed polls by recent candidates for public office;¹⁷ and personal

¹⁴See John Dollard, Caste and Class in a Southern Town (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937)--a study of Indianola, Mississippi; Hortence Powdermaker, After Freedom (New York: Viking Press, 1939); Allison Davis, Burleigh Gardner, and Mary Gardner, Deep South (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941)--a study of Natchez, Mississippi.

¹⁵The University of Southern Mississippi Oral History Program has the most extensive series of oral histories. They have over one hundred transcribed and available for use; unfortunately, several times that many have been recorded but are, as yet, untranscribed and unavailable for research. The Mississippi Department of Archives and History also has a more limited set of oral histories, as does the special collections division of the Mississippi State University Library.

¹⁶Mississippi State University Library has a very useful--if somewhat spotty--collection of campaign newspaper clippings covering much of this century and campaign advertising materials since 1948.

¹⁷Reliability was watched closely as to sampling method, instrument design, etc. Only reputable pollsters were relied upon--e.g., Peter Hart. Comparability across polls was a problem which prevented scientific use of the findings; however, they were examined for insights into voter perceptions and attitudes about candidates and issues.

observations by the author.¹⁸

To avoid drowning in a sea of primary historical research, a "hole-filling" research strategy was adopted. All secondary material was studied and evaluated; then oral histories, interviews, and unpublished papers were reviewed; and, finally, primary historical research into newspapers and documents "filled in the holes."

For the statistical data, numerous sources were consulted. A compilation of election data by F. Glenn Abney provided most of the voting returns.¹⁹ Publications of the Institute of Politics were utilized for post-1967 election data, as well as for some socio-economic statistics for counties. Publications and handouts of the Mississippi Secretary of State--particularly the "Blue Books"--also provided electoral and socio-economic data. The Mississippi Research and Development Center publishes valuable reports with county data, and they were frequently used. Data for early years in the century were taken from the Official and Statistical Registers, a precursor of the "Blue Book" and compiled by the state archivist. The United States censuses and statistical abstracts were the sources for

¹⁸It should be stated at this point that the author has been a participant-observer in Mississippi politics for a number of years.

¹⁹Abney, Mississippi Election Statistics: 1900-1967.

much of the aggregate state data, as well as county statistics. All of the data were stored at the University of Mississippi and compiled into a data base containing some 495 variables for the counties.

Scope of the Study

As an election analysis, the focus of this paper is on campaigns and voting returns. Issues, public policy, the legislature, and the record of office holders are studied to the degree that they are reflected in actual campaign issues, rhetoric, and advertising. Aspects of the records of incumbents or former incumbents seeking election will be addressed as they are deemed significant.

The analysis includes state-wide elections for governor, senator, and president. Only significant candidates and significant elections were included in the analysis. In the case of gubernatorial races, every second primary of the century was included (there were no runoffs in 1911, 1915, and 1947). For gubernatorial first primaries (every election year except 1911 in which there was no contest), only candidates who received 20% of the vote were, as a general rule, included.²⁰ There is a remarkable tendency throughout the century for candidates

²⁰For a discussion of the problem of using first-primary data, see Appendix II.

in the first primary either to achieve around 20% or better in the first or else be substantially down with a very small percentage. Exceptions to the 20% threshold were as follows: Martin Conner in 1923 with 19.1% (the next highest man had 14.7%), Paul B. Johnson in 1931 with 18.8% (this was close to the threshold, plus Johnson played major roles in the elections of 1935 and 1939) and Jimmy Swan in 1967 and 1971 with 18.2% and 16.9% respectively (the next highest percentage in 1967 was 11.1% and in 1971 6.0%, in addition to the fact that Swan tapped a major life-form in almost a pure form--racism). There was no gubernatorial contest in 1911, but there was the remarkable senate race, Vardaman v. Percy. For purposes of longitudinal indices, the senate race of 1911 was sometimes used in lieu of a gubernatorial race that year. The justification for the substitution should become clear as the story of that era is told. In the construction of first primary indices, the first primary correlations of both candidates in 1915 (Bilbo, Riley) and 1947 (Wright, Johnson) were used; whereas, for second primary analysis--so that coefficients could be obtained for every election--the coefficient for the leading candidate (Bilbo in 1915 and Wright in 1947) was used.

In Senate races, first primaries have been not nearly so important as in gubernatorial elections. As a result,

only two-man first primaries and runoffs were included in the senate analysis. This decision excluded the races of 1940, in which Bilbo won a first primary victory in a field of five, and 1947, in which John Stennis won with roughly 26% of the vote in a special election (he has not had a major campaign since). Two exceptions were made. The 1911 race was perhaps the single most important campaign of the century, and it was a three-man field in which Vardaman won in the first with 60%. In 1918 Vardaman was defeated in a field of three in another momentous election. In order to include these races in the analysis without getting into senatorial first primaries generally, the same convention was employed as that used for the 1915 and 1947 gubernatorial races. In 1911 Vardaman's vote was used v. Percy's/Alexander's; in 1918, Harrison v. Vardaman/Noel (for all practical purposes, it was a Harrison-Vardaman split, with Noel garnering but 6.2%). In addition, only those senate races were included which yielded a 60-40 or closer split, because a large number of the recent senatorial contests have been one-sided. An exception to this rule was the senatorial race of 1954 (Gartin against Eastland), which was included with a 62-38 split because there were so few contested senate races after World War II. Also, narrative description of some of the important races not included in the statistical

analysis was presented because of their importance to the unfolding story of Mississippi politics.

In presidential races, only elections since 1952 were included. Prior to that time, every election was a Democratic landslide of such proportions that no meaningful patterns existed. Beginning in 1952, all major candidates were included--e.g., Unpledged in 1956 and 1960 and Wallace in 1968, in addition to the Democratic-Republican slates.

For purposes of constructing longitudinal indices, gubernatorial second primaries were generally used for two reasons. One, there are statistical "contamination" problems with variable-field first primary correlations (see above reference to Appendix II). And, two, even though senatorial and presidential politics are often highly important, it is undeniable that gubernatorial races claim the major share of public attention and set the tone of politics in the state.

CHAPTER 3

TRACING THE LIFE-FORMS AND DELINEATING THE ERAS

What indicators of the four major life-forms can be found? Looking at these indicators longitudinally, do they define eras in the twentieth century electoral politics of Mississippi? If there has been an order to the state's voting behavior, what does it look like?

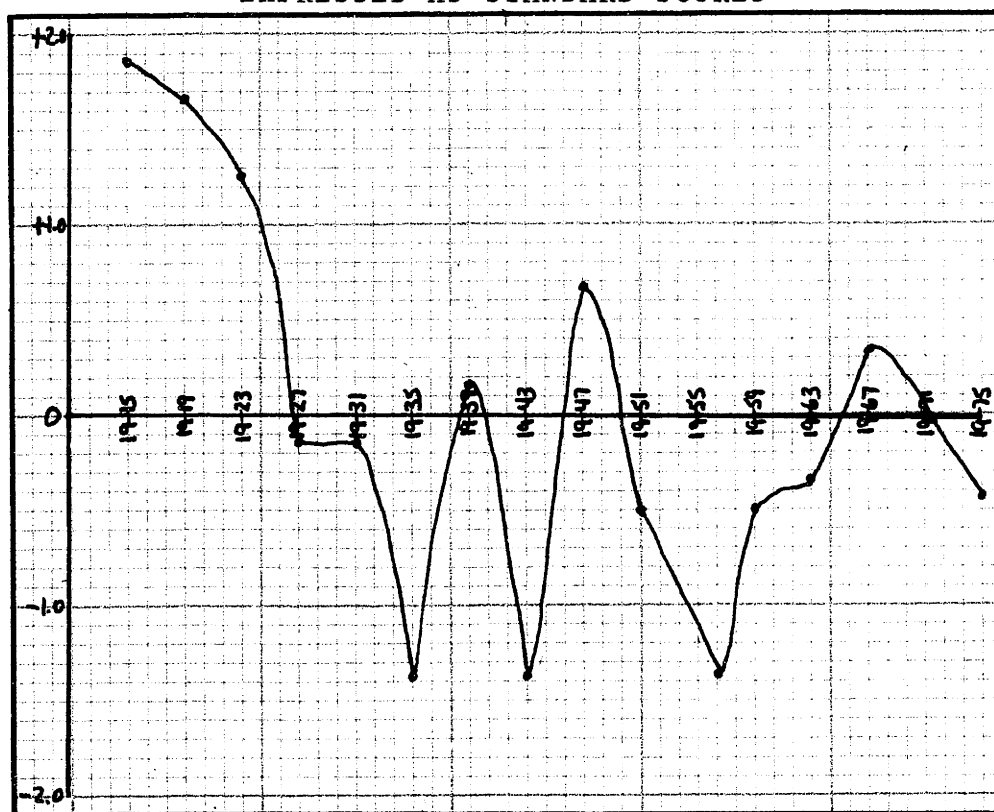
Regarding the agrarian class conflict, the senatorial election of 1911 is generally regarded as the quintessential election of that life-form. Former Governor James K. Vardaman, who had become champion of the Hills people (although from the Delta himself), ran against LeRoy Percy, wealthy planter from the heart of the Delta, corporation lawyer, thoroughgoing aristocrat. Percy's son, in his eloquent paen to deep South aristocrats, commented on the outcome of the election from the point of view of his class: "An old man wet with tobacco juice and furtive-eyed summed up the result: 'Wal, the bottom rail's on top and it's gwiner stay thar.' He wasn't much as a human being, but as a diagnostician and prophet he was

first-rate. It was my first sight of the rise of the masses, but not my last."¹

If one regards this election as the base-line contest of the agrarian class life-form, Figure 5 traces the strength of that struggle through time. The struggle was quite pronounced from 1911 to the late twenties. In the gubernatorial election of 1927, the strength of the

FIGURE 5

GRAPH OF CORRELATIONS BETWEEN 1911 SENATORIAL ELECTION AND SUBSEQUENT GUBERNATORIAL RUNOFFS, EXPRESSED AS STANDARD SCORES



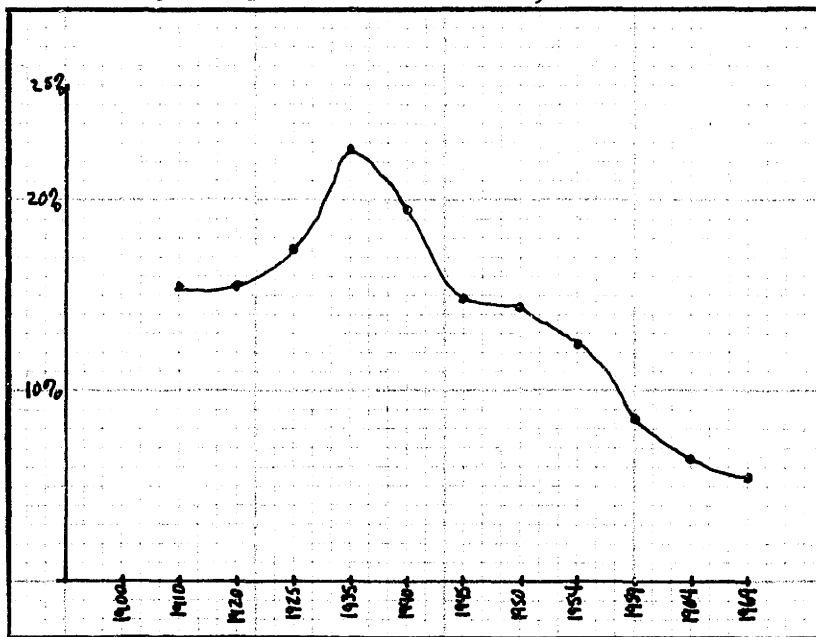
¹Percy, p. 153.

relationship fell slightly below the century norm, but re-emerged weakly in 1939 and then strongly in 1947.² After 1965 the enfranchisement of blacks caused the correlations to change in meaning.

A second measure of the agrarian class conflict is the percentage of farmers in each county who were white tenants. Figure 6 shows the statewide percentages during this century.

FIGURE 6

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL NUMBER OF FARMERS IN MISSISSIPPI WHO WERE WHITE TENANTS, 1910-1964



SOURCE: United States, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census of Agriculture, 1910, 1920, 1925, 1935, 1940, 1945, 1950, 1954, 1959, 1964, 1969.

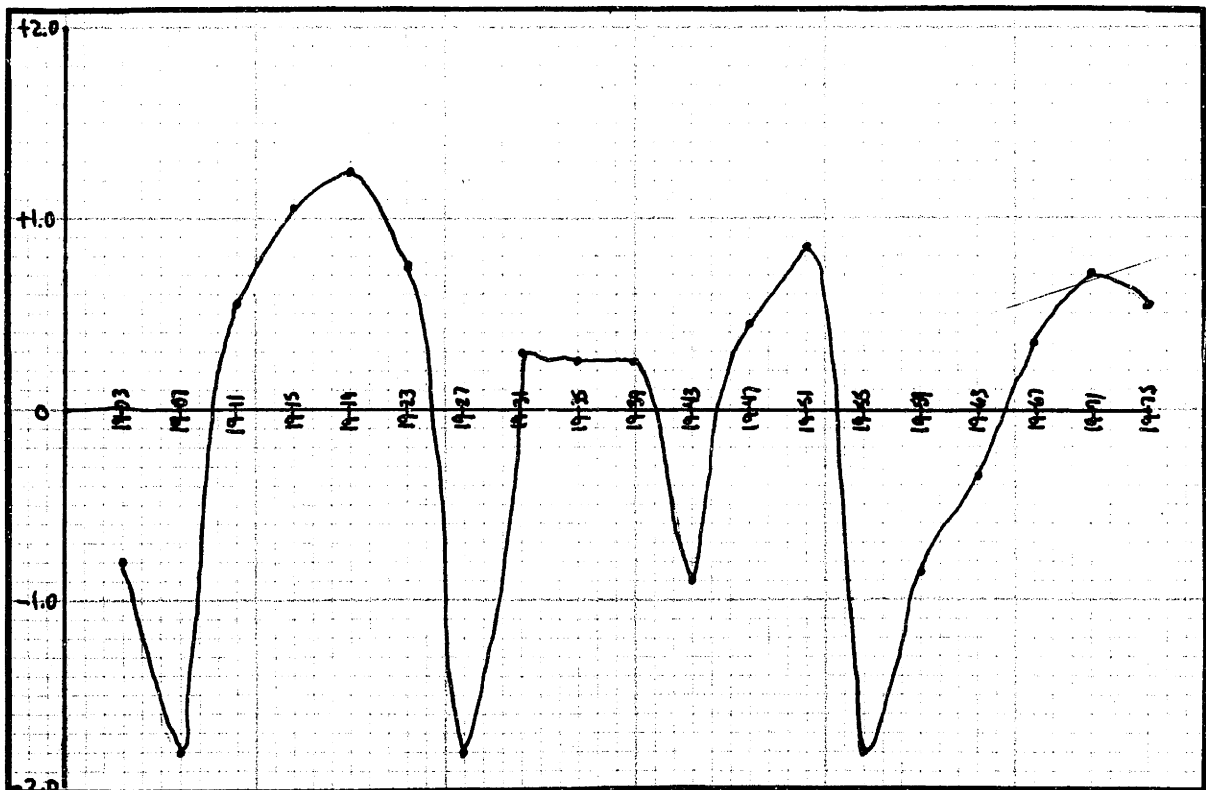
²Key also points to the 1947 election as an apparent return of the Delta-Hills pattern. Key, p. 236.

Figure 6 shows that white tenancy was around 15% during the first two decades of the century, then began to climb in 1925 and throughout the Depression. Only after World War II did the percentage begin a substantial decline which has continued until the present time. By 1964 there were only 7034 white tenants in the state, and 3923 in 1969. Figures were not reported by race in 1972.

Figure 7 graphs the absolute value of the correlations

FIGURE 7

GRAPH OF ABSOLUTE VALUE OF CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS
BETWEEN SECOND PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
AND PERCENTAGE WHITE TENANCY, EXPRESSED
AS STANDARD SCORES, 1903-1975



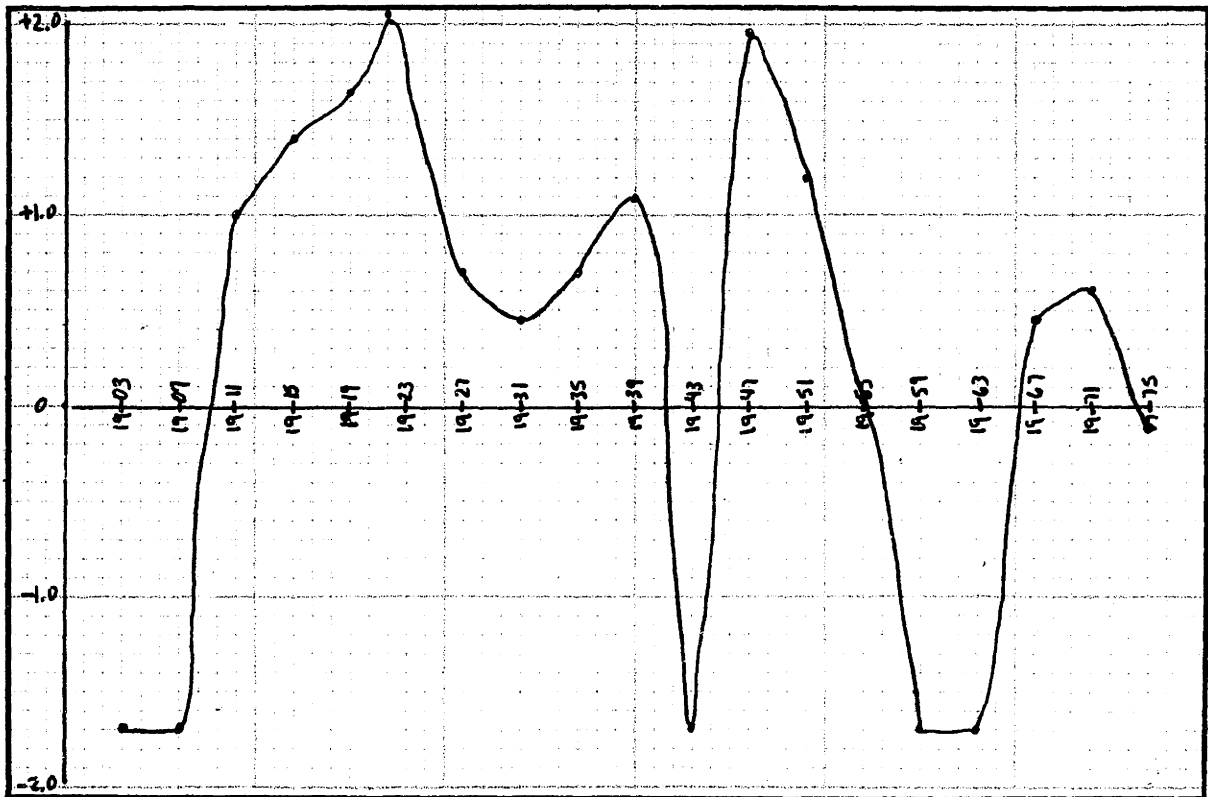
between second primary gubernatorial candidates and percentage white tenancy (as reported in the Census of Agriculture closest in time to the particular election and expressed as standard scores). With some variation, Figures 5 and 7 closely resemble each other. In the elections of 1911-1923 the battle was raging along the lines of white tenancy. In 1927 and 1943 the relationship vanishes and stabilizes just above the century mean in 1931, 1935, and 1939. In 1947 and 1951 white tenancy is again closely related to vote, declining for the elections of 1955-1963. In 1967, 1971, and 1975 the relationship returns, but by that time the number of white tenants in the state had become so small that one is unsure what the correlations mean. Taking the two indicators together (the election of 1911 and white tenancy), one can conclude that the class conflict was highly salient during the period 1911-1923 and thereafter declined to a mid-level or low-level importance except for occasional resurgences.³

Figure 8 traces both the racial consensus and the geographical manifestation of the agrarian class conflict. The graph presents the correlations between gubernatorial votes and percent black across the counties. Because the

³For a discussion of a minority view that the agrarian class conflict life-form still dominates Mississippi politics, see Appendix I.

FIGURE 8

GRAPH OF ABSOLUTE VALUE OF CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS
 BETWEEN SECOND PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
 AND PERCENT BLACK, EXPRESSED AS
 STANDARD SCORES, 1903-1975



percent black figure is a prime indicator of the economic differences between county types (i.e., high percentage black equals "Delta" and low percentage black equals "Hills"), strong relationships suggest a geographic manifestation of the agrarian class struggle, whereas weak relationships suggest an aroused racial consensus cutting across all types of counties.

The chart shows that percent black failed to relate to the elections of 1903 and 1907, strongly correlated with races during the period 1911-1923, dropped to a lower level of relationship from 1931 through 1935, fell dramatically in 1943, re-emerged strongly in 1947, and experienced a major decline beginning in 1951 and lasting through 1963. The correlations change in meaning, of course, after the massive enfranchisement of blacks beginning in 1966. Prior to 1965, the low points in the graph suggest periods in which an aroused racial consensus might have been cutting across socio-economic cleavages as measured by percent black; and high points, periods in which the electorate was dividing along the geographic fault line of agrarian class.

For purposes of utilizing indicators, modernization and progressivism can be considered together, since the two life-forms, as noted in Chapter 1, do share many similarities. What indicators might one use to determine the degree of modernization/progressivism in Mississippi? Distilling the writings of the major theorists in the field of development, this study shall adopt the following indicators:

1. Increasing urbanization and preoccupation with urban issues;
2. Increased industrialization and economic growth;

3. Advances in the spread of education and levels of technology;
4. Governmental centralization, complexity, and power; and,
5. Greater political participation.

The emergence of a "New South"--much discussed by journalists and southern historians since the time of Henry Grady--is really the story of southern modernization. Mississippi has been a part of that movement, albeit belatedly so and with an enthusiasm that took more time to grow. Although this study is neither an economic nor a sociological analysis, some evidence of modernization as reflected in the five sets of indicators will be cited to show the degree to which Mississippi has been developing in the twentieth century.⁴

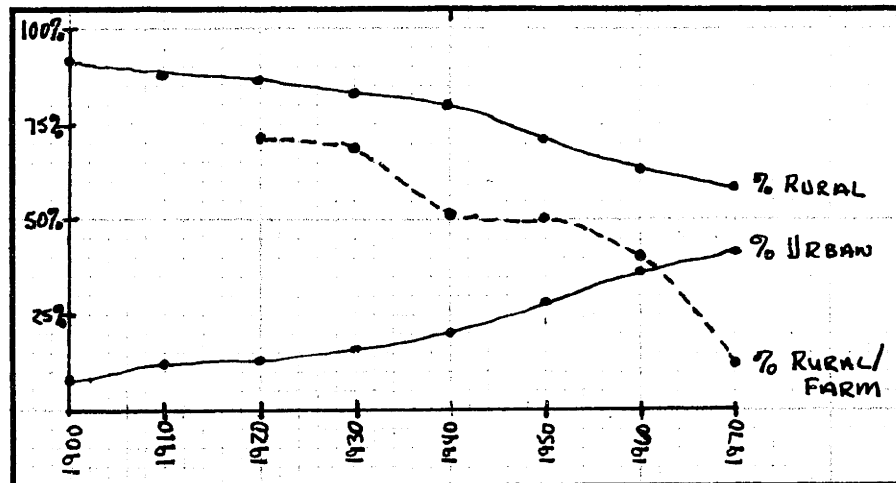
1. Urbanization--During the period 1900-1970 Mississippi's total population increased 143%, from 1,551,270 to 2,216,912. During that same time, the urban population increased 821%, from 120,035 in 1900 to 986,642

⁴Care was taken to find indicators which have been reported in more or less consistent form throughout this century. Anyone who has researched census data will appreciate the magnitude of the problem. With the exception of per capita personal income, all variables reported in this section meet a fairly rigorous test of comparability through the years. Data were taken from the Statistical Abstract of the United States (various years), U.S. Census data, and reports of Mississippi governmental agencies.

in 1970. The number of urban places grew from twenty-two in 1900 to eighty-three in 1970.⁵ The first S.M.A. (Standard Metropolitan Area) appeared in 1950, at which time 142,164 inhabitants were reported for the Jackson S.M.A. In 1970, the Biloxi-Gulfport S.M.A. was added, and together they accounted for about 18% of all Mississippians.⁶ Figure 9 shows the percentage urban and rural throughout the twentieth century, with the broken line tracing the percent rural-farm for the years it was reported.

FIGURE 9

GRAPH OF RURAL, URBAN, AND RURAL-FARM
POPULATION IN MISSISSIPPI, 1900-1970



SOURCE: United States, Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, General Characteristics of the Population, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970.

⁵John N. Burrus, "Urbanization in Mississippi, 1890-1970," in McLemore, vol. 1, p. 348.

⁶Ibid., pp. 362-364.

Figure 9 shows the continuous urbanization of the state during this century, from 8% urban in 1900 to 45% urban in 1970. Perhaps an even better indicator is the percentage rural-farm, a figure which began to be reported in 1920. Rural-farm percentages represent those persons who live and work in rural, farm environments, as opposed to persons who live in the country but work in cities (and whose political mind sets, one would assume, should be at least divided between urban and rural sympathies if not, indeed, more closely identified with urban man). This line shows that by 1970 Mississippi had the vast majority of its population living and/or working in urban environments.

2. Industrialization and Economic Growth--Written in 1969 and 1973 respectively, two reports by the Mississippi Research and Development Center (R. & D. Center) summarize the character of Mississippi's "changing economy":

...There is a definite trend, already well established, toward cultural and economic standards that provide an improved urban civilization and a better standard of living for all Mississippians.⁷

...Mississippi's social and economic trends in the past 20 years show a more industrialized work force, a move toward urban population centers, and decreasing dependence on agricultural employment and income. This change indicates

⁷John A. Hamilton and Kay King, Mississippi's Changing Economy (Jackson: Mississippi Research and Development Center, 1969), p. 1

the State's emergence from an agriculturally dependent economic structure to one which is nationally more conforming and economically more aggressive.⁸

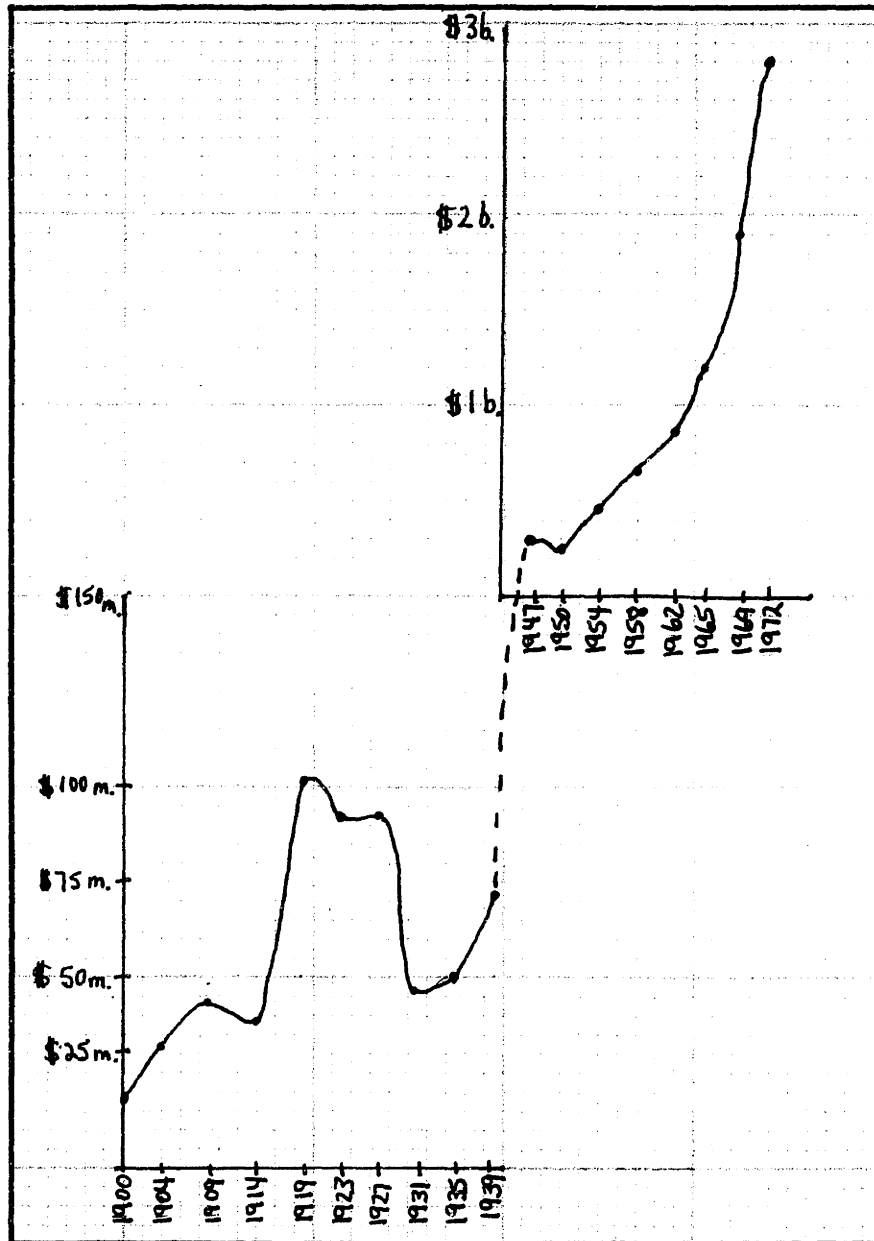
One can trace the economic development of the state through the century by using some indicators suggested in the modernization literature: increase in manufacturing production and wages, increases in capitalization, savings and investment growth, and overall economic growth as measured by per capita personal income.

Figures 10 and 11 trace the "Value Added by Manufacture" and the "Total Manufacturing Wages" through the century. Figure 10 illustrates the dramatic growth in the "value added" index from \$19 million in 1900 to \$3.5 billion in 1973. The same is true for manufacturing wages, shown in Figure 11, which grew from \$8 million in 1900 to \$1 billion in 1973. Both charts reveal periods of growth and plateaus. The period, 1900-1914, is of one order of magnitude, with an increase occurring to a second level of activity from 1919 through the twenties. The Depression undoubtedly accounted for the dip in manufacturing activity during the years 1931-1939. World War II launched the state into a fourth level of growth beginning on a

⁸ Marilyn Toner, Loy Moncrief, and Betty Brummett, Mississippi's Changing Economy, 1973 (Jackson: Mississippi Research and Development Center, 1974), p. 1.

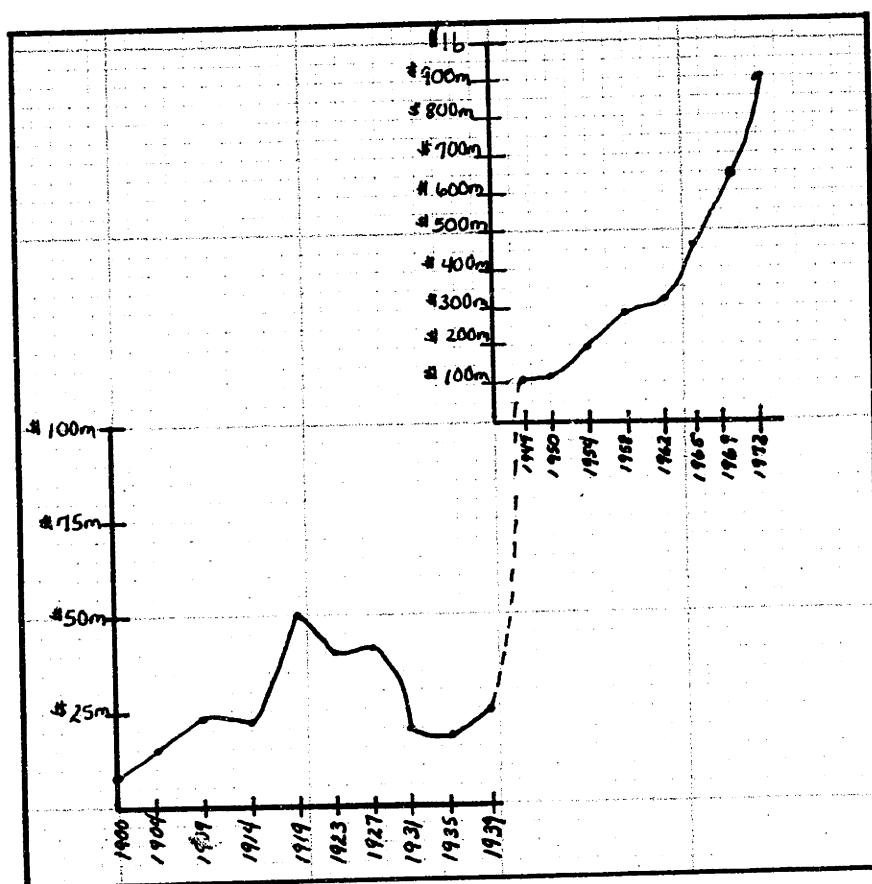
FIGURE 10

VALUE ADDED BY MANUFACTURE, 1900-1972



SOURCE: United States, Department of Commerce, Statistical Abstract of the United States, selected years.

FIGURE 11
TOTAL MANUFACTURING WAGES, 1900-1972



SOURCE: United States, Department of Commerce, Statistical Abstract of the United States, selected years.

much higher level in 1947 and continuing strongly through 1962, at which point a fifth and highly dramatic increase in the rate of growth began and continued, carrying the state well into the billion-dollar level of value added and total manufacturing wages.

C. E. Black discusses the importance of savings

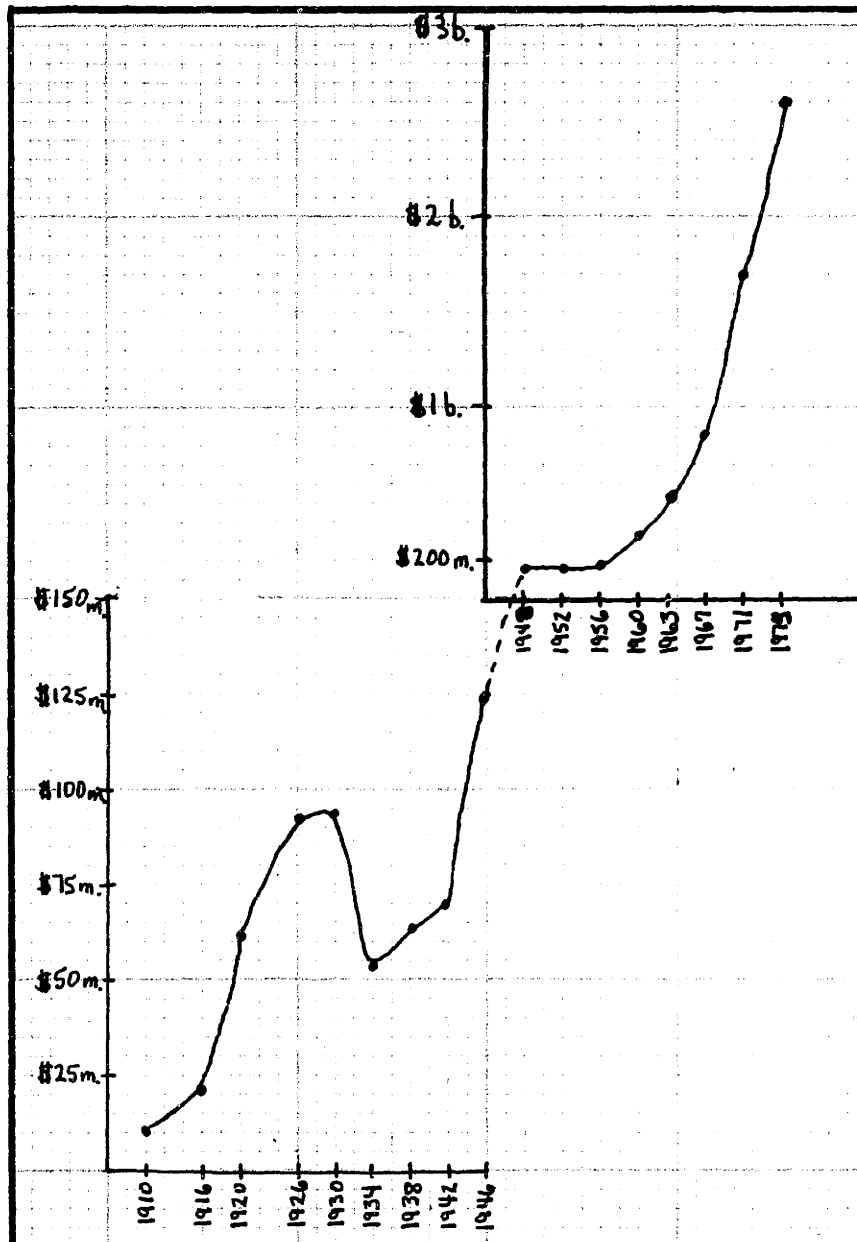
and investment as an indicator of economic growth. He states, "economic development may be discussed in terms of the two essential and interrelated functions of saving and investment. . . . The saving of resources for investment presupposes a net surplus per capita, and it is the availability of this surplus that makes development possible."⁹ The best available measure found of this index was the amount of time deposits and savings accounts in banks and trust companies as reported in the Statistical Abstract of the United States. Figure 12 traces these amounts from 1910 through 1975.

As the chart reveals, savings increased in Mississippi from \$10 million in 1910 to \$2.6 billion in 1973. The per capita savings figure went from \$5.56 to \$1,444.04 from 1910 to 1975. The movement of the savings curve closely resembles that of value added and manufacturing wages.

Another measure of growth more broadly taps the overall increase of corporate activity. The Secretary of State's annual reports list the total capitalization authorized in corporate charters granted through that office each year. Figure 13 traces these capitalization figures for each biennium since 1900 (except for 1910-11

⁹Black, p. 18.

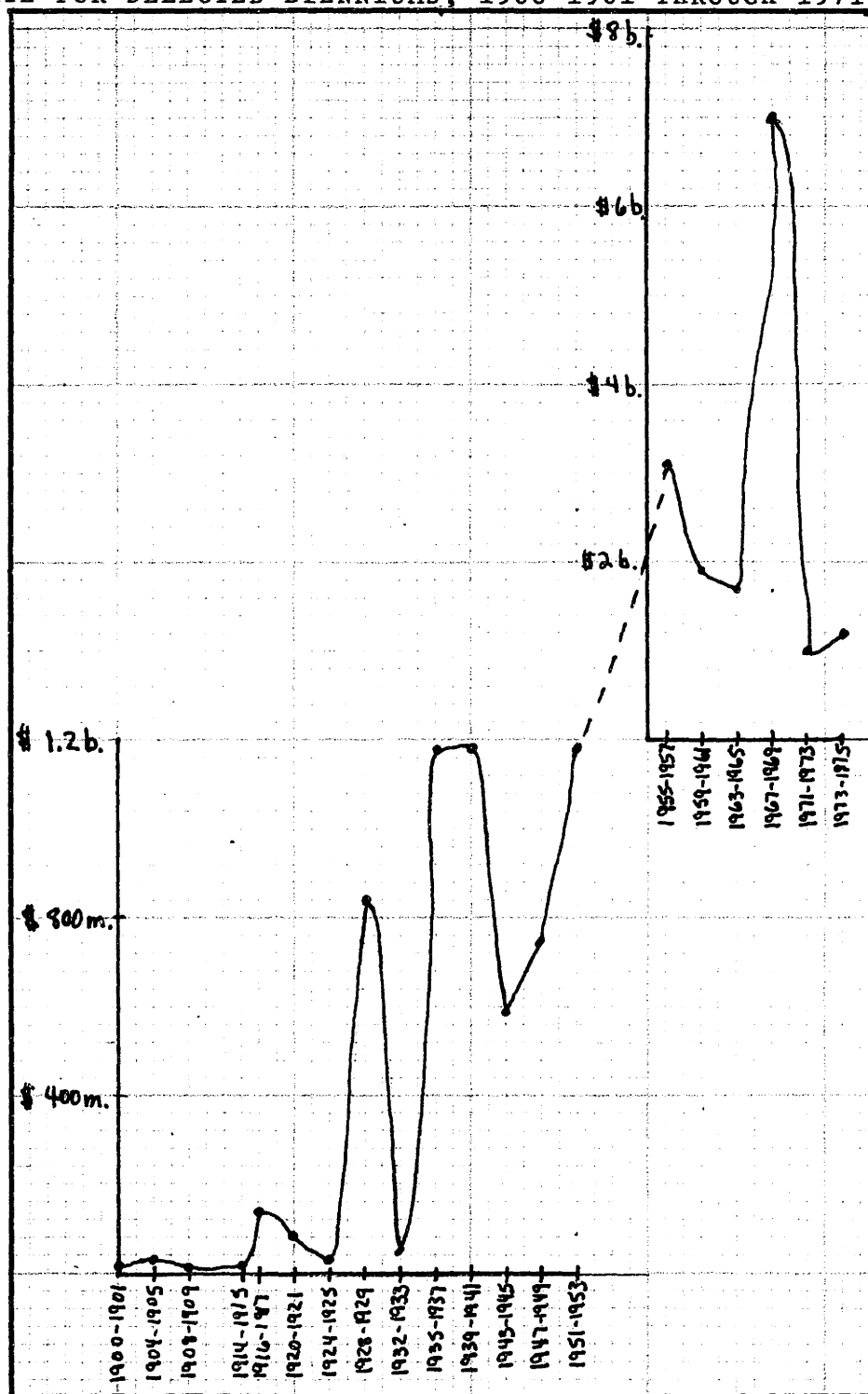
FIGURE 12

SAVINGS DEPOSITS IN BANKS AND
TRUST COMPANIES, 1910-1973

SOURCE: United States, Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, selected years.

FIGURE 13

CAPITALIZATION AUTHORIZED BY THE MISSISSIPPI SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SELECTED BIENNIUMS, 1900-1901 THROUGH 1971-1973



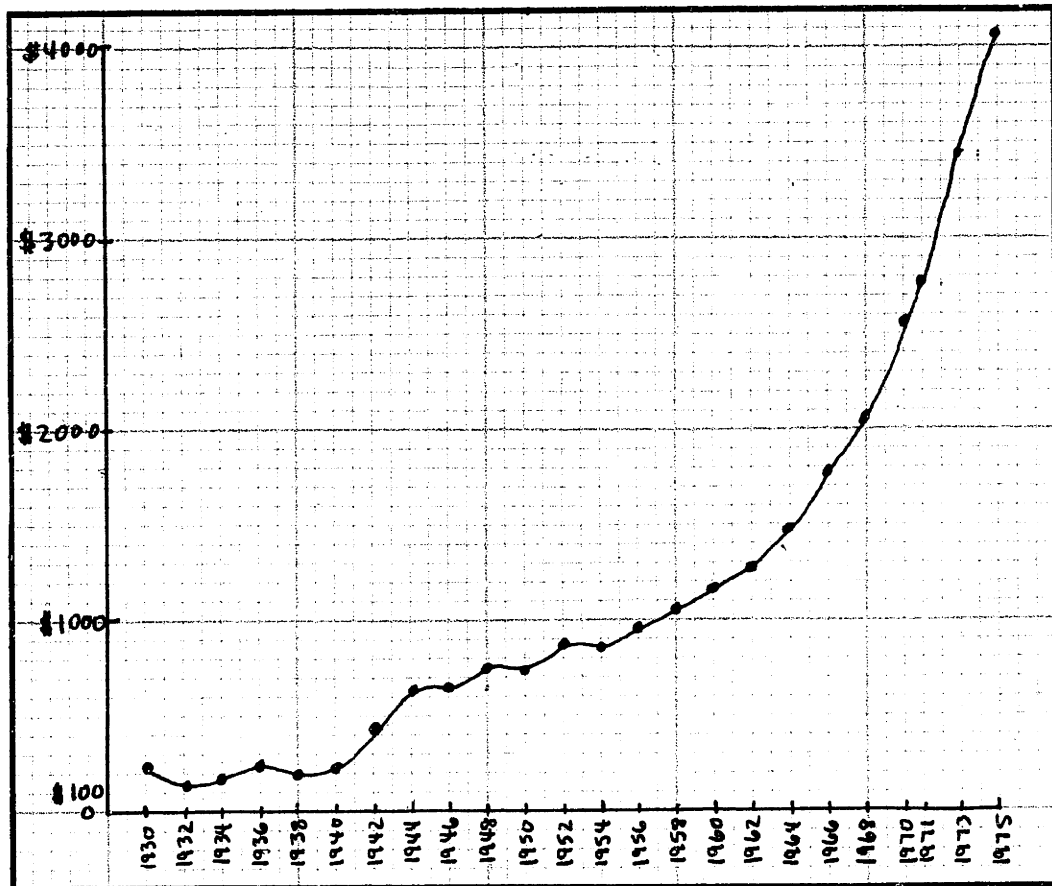
SOURCE: Mississippi, Secretary of State, Annual Report of the Secretary of State, selected years.

and 1912-13 for which no data could be found). The growth of corporate activity was dramatic throughout the century, but less even than the manufacturing and savings indicators. A huge increase in capitalization occurred in the midst of the Whitfield administration (1924-1928), and Mississippi stayed at the \$600 million to \$1 billion range through the mid-fifties, except for a dip in the Depression and early war years. A new period of consistent \$1 billion+ capitalization has maintained itself since that time with the strongest growth coming during and immediately after the Johnson, Jr., administration of 1964-1968. This growth was due in large measure to the large investments made by Litton Industries and Standard Oil on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Since most modernization theorists see overall economic output as the best general index of development, some indicator of that output was sought. On the national level, output is usually measured in terms of Gross National Product (G.N.P.), but no comparable figures exist for the states. The best available measure was per capita personal income, and this data was reported only for the period 1930-1975. Figure 14 graphs per capita personal income for Mississippi for this period.

The pattern is not dissimilar to that of other indicators of industrialization. The Depression years

FIGURE 14
PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME, 1930-1975



SOURCE: United States, Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, selected years.

yielded per capita incomes in the \$100 to \$200 range; World War II inaugurated an era of steady growth up to a figure of \$1285 in 1962; and, thereafter, an era of much steeper increase has obtained until the present day.

In summary, these indicators of economic growth and industrialization suggest a fairly low level of development during the first two decades of the twentieth century, although savings began to climb in the later part of the teens. There occurred dramatic growth in manufacturing indicators in 1919 (the end of the first Bilbo administration), which, despite slippage in 1921 (the midst of the Lee Russell administration), inaugurated a new plateau during the twenties. Capital investment jumped dramatically in the mid-twenties, as savings continued to increase. The growth of the twenties was reduced back to pre-1920 levels during the Depression, although savings maintained roughly the same level. The aftermath of World War II began a new and much higher plateau of economic development according to all indicators, with substantial rates of increase from 1947 to roughly 1963. Since 1963 the rate of growth has been unprecedentedly high.

3. Educational and Technological Advances--

C.E. Black states, ". . . if a definition is necessary, 'modernization' may be defined as the process by which historically evolved institutions are adapted to the rapidly changing functions that reflect the unprecedented increase in man's knowledge, permitting control over his

environment, that accompanied the scientific revolution."¹⁰ Science, technology, research, and education (especially higher education and technical training) lie at the intellectual heart of modernization.

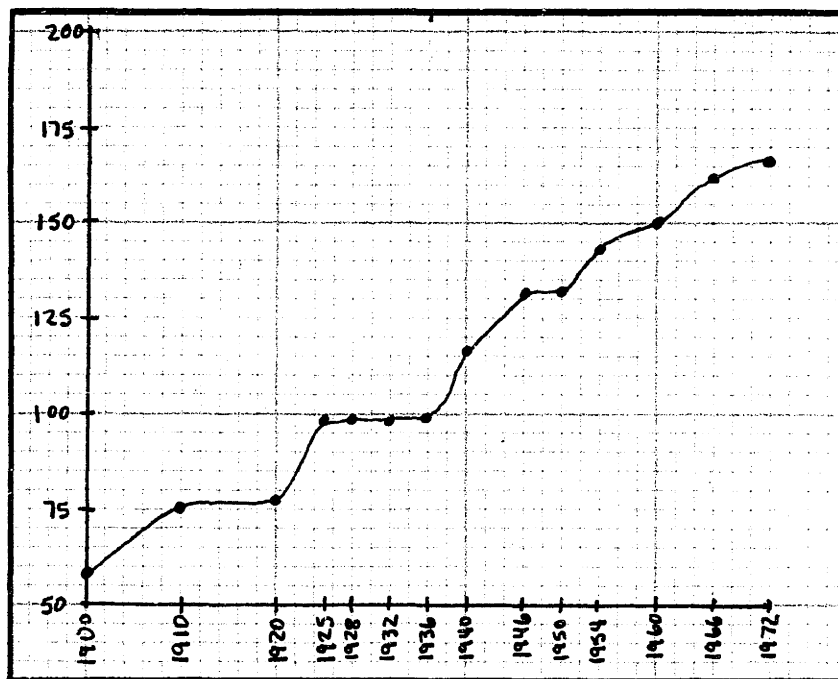
Secondary education has been a major if not the major issue in Mississippi politics throughout the century. In a way, it is more a measure of the general progressive instinct rather than of modernization. White Mississippians have been agreed on the need for secondary education for white children since the early part of this century. The battles have been fought over the degree of public education (usually expressed in length of school terms), the method of financing (local v. state), and the question of Negro education. Figure 15 shows that the average number of days attended per pupil has grown dramatically during this century.

The average number of school days attended per pupil has increased this century from fifty-nine in 1900 to a high of 166 in 1976. One level can be noted for the years 1900-1920, during which time the average never climbed above seventy-seven. In 1922 a new plateau was reached of between ninety-five and ninety-nine, a level maintained until 1938 when the figure began to grow again. This growth

¹⁰Ibid., p. 7.

FIGURE 15

AVERAGE NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS ATTENDED
PER PUPIL PER YEAR, 1900-1975



SOURCE: United States, Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, selected years.

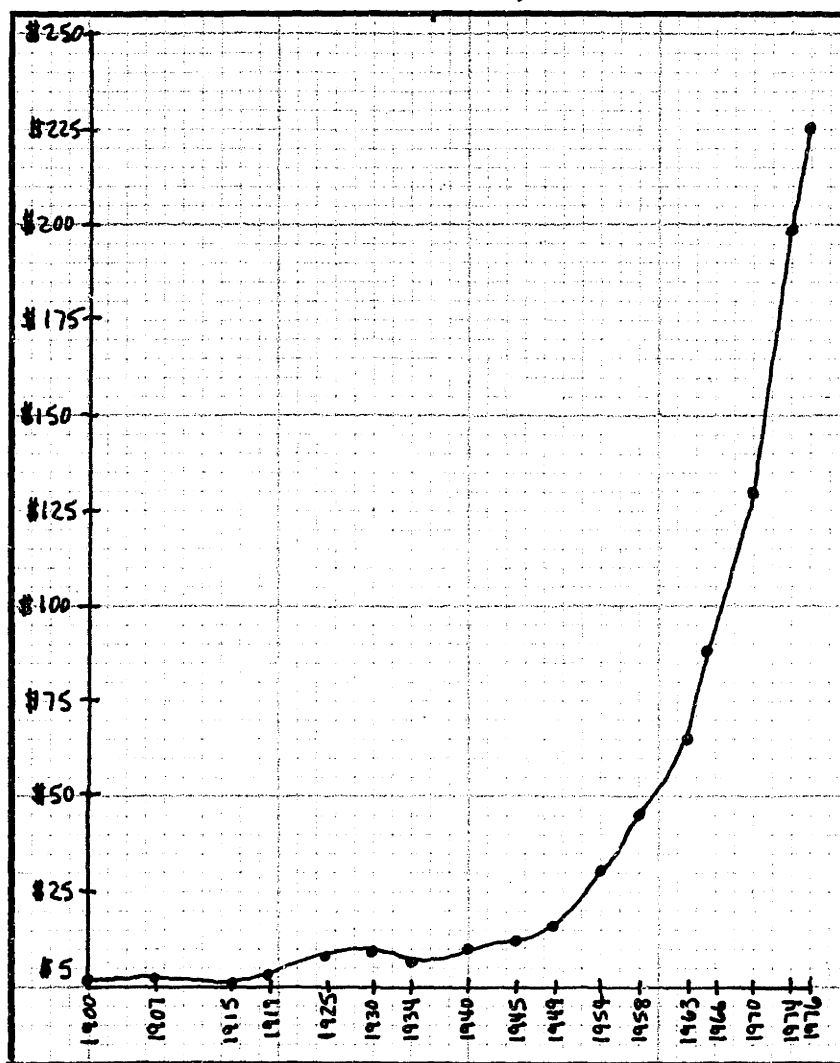
continued during the War to a third level beginning in 1946 and lasting to the present time with a range of from 136 to 166 school days per pupil per year.

The degree to which education has become a function of the centralized state can be seen in Figure 16, which traces the per capita state expenditure on secondary

education from 1900 to 1976. The growth in this figure was from \$1 in 1900 to \$218 in 1976. A low level of under \$10 was maintained until 1945 (due to limited state support and

FIGURE 16

PER CAPITA STATE EXPENDITURES ON
SECONDARY EDUCATION, 1900-1976



SOURCE: United States, Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, selected years.

to the small amount spent on black education), at which point the figure began to grow, because, in part, of the post-war effort to upgrade black education. This growth was steady and impressive until 1964, at which point the rate of increase climbed even more until the present time.

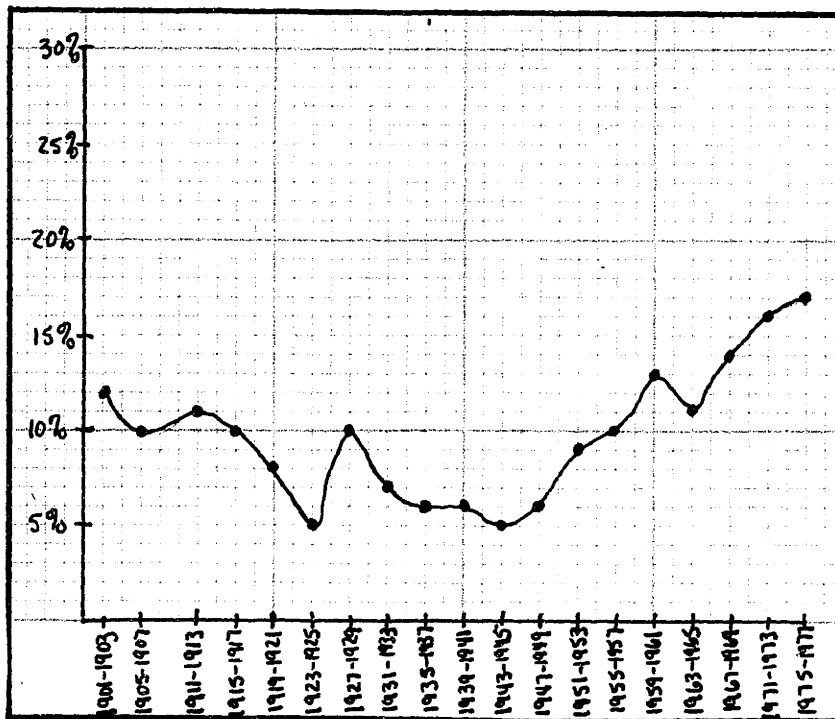
Higher education may be a better measure of modernization, because it is closely tied to scientific research, technology, and the training of personnel to staff the industrial order. Figure 17 traces the percentage of state expenditures going into higher education per biennium from 1900 to the present (excluding, because of comparability problems, junior college figures during this time).

Figure 17 suggests a much more variable trend line than other indicators cited so far. In fact, the higher education budget absorbed 10% of the state's expenditures during the first fifteen years of the century, only to decline for the next few years. A brief rally in the late twenties presaged a long-term decline to a level of between 5% and 9%. The year 1963 began a period of growth to the present level of 17%.

There might well be several explanations for the checkered pattern of support for higher education. First, in the early part of the century college education was seen as a privilege of the planter elite, and the masses

FIGURE 17

PERCENTAGE OF STATE EXPENDITURES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
FOR SELECTED BIENNIUMS, 1901-1903 THROUGH 1975-1977



SOURCE: Calculated from Mississippi, Auditor of Public Accounts, Annual Report (selected years).

wanted state dollars to be reallocated for secondary education. Hence, the decline in college and university percentages accompanied the "rise of the redneck" in state affairs. Second, in modernization terms, the type of industry attracted to Mississippi during the period through

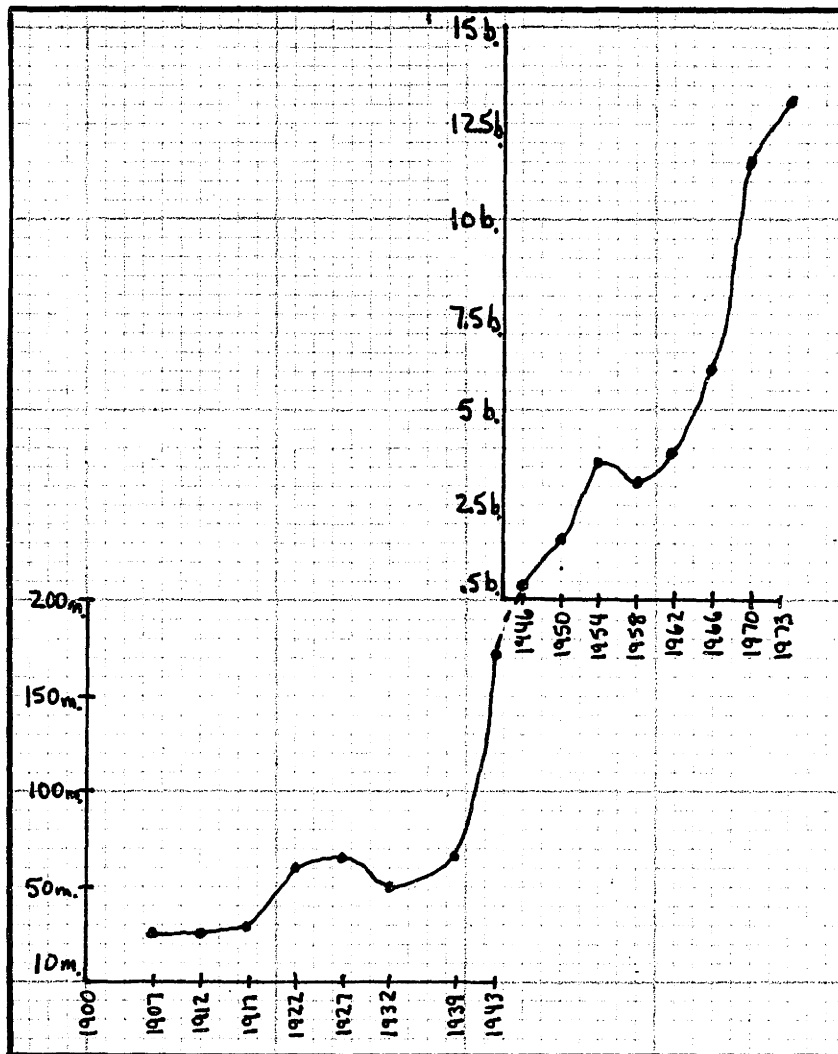
the forties was mostly low-skilled, labor-intensive plants (garment factories, pulpwood plants, sawmills, etc.); therefore, the need for a technological elite was not great. And, third, for this particular variable the linkage factor to the general American system was important, because technology and scientific development could be imported into Mississippi via the national companies investing there. That the state has been experiencing a recent upsurge in college and university support is a function of upward mobility in both the white and black population, the expanding egalitarianism which characterizes this era, and modernization needs, as Mississippi attempts to emphasize the development of more highly skilled and capital-intensive industries.

A specific indicator of the growth of technology can be seen in a measure of energy production. As Apter states, ". . . technology is a measure of the degree to which non-human energy is employed in the conduct of complex tasks. For this reason, it is the most strategic test of modernization, since it implies planning, allocating, and organizing resources around abstract principles that, when applied, will lead to desired results."¹¹ Figure 18 traces the production of electric energy in Mississippi

¹¹Apter, p. 72.

FIGURE 18

THE PRODUCTION OF KILOWATT HOURS OF
ELECTRIC ENERGY, 1907-1973



SOURCE: United States, Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, selected years.

from 1907 to 1973, expressed in terms of kilowatt hours of electricity produced (as reported in the Statistical Abstract of the United States).

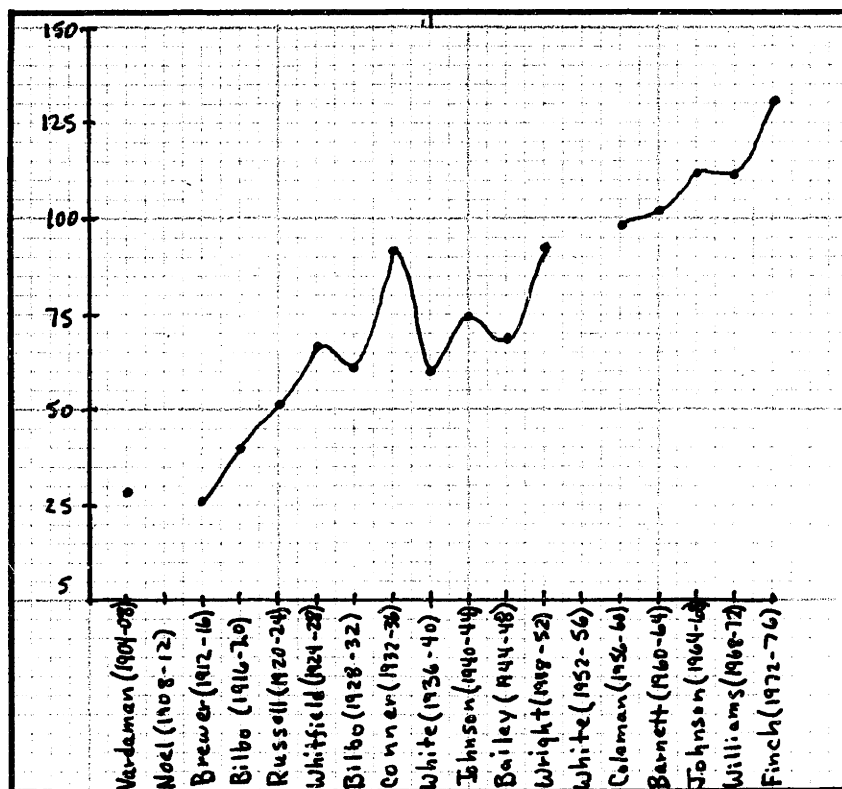
The patterns look familiar. A range of kilowatt hours from 25 million to 30 million obtained through the first two decades of the century. In the early twenties production increased to the 60 million k.w.h. range, dipped slightly in the Depression, and picked up dramatically in World War II. A steady increase occurred in a new order of magnitude (450 million to roughly 4 billion) from 1946 to the mid-fifties, at which time there was a levelling off until the early sixties. From 1962 on, a new level of dramatic increase took Mississippi electric energy production to its present 13 billion k.w.h. range. The increase from 26 million k.w.h. to 13 billion k.w.h. represents a 5000% increase in energy production.

4. Increased Governmental Centralization, Complexity, and Power--Figure 16, cited above, illustrates, in addition to the growth in per capita state expenditures on education, a phenomenon of increasing state centralization of functions. To further illustrate this trend in Mississippi, Figure 19, presented below, shows bureaucratization in the state.

This chart traces the growing bureaucracy in

FIGURE 19

THE GROWTH OF THE BUREAUCRACY: DEPARTMENTS,
AGENCIES, COMMISSIONS, AND BOARDS--VARDAMAN
THROUGH FINCH ADMINISTRATIONS



SOURCE: Calculated from Mississippi, Secretary of State, Blue Book (1902-03 through 1976-80).

Mississippi during the century. In addition to the state-wide elected officials (which at the present time consist of ten department heads and two three-man commissions), the Mississippi Blue Books have listed constitutional, statutory, and appointive commissions and boards. The

above chart traces the number of those bureaus listed in the Blue Book of each administration from the 1904-08 Vardaman term through the current Cliff Finch term.

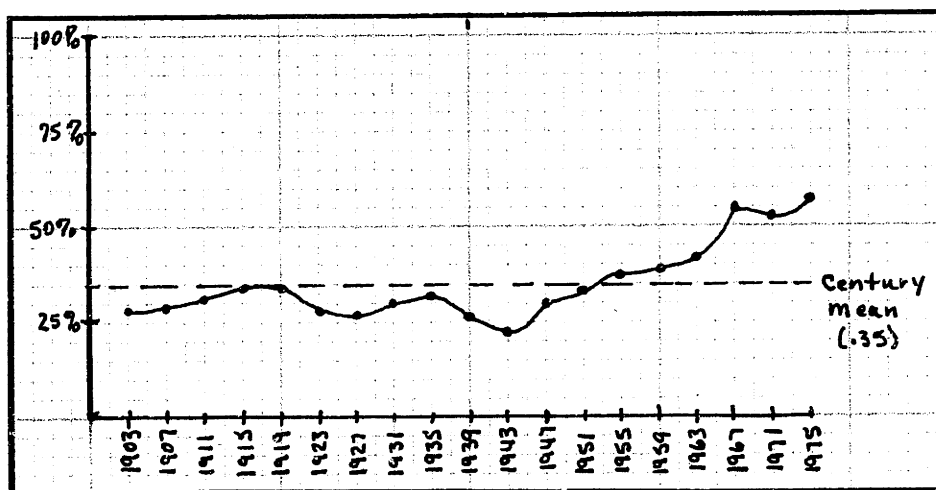
The number of commissions and boards has grown from twenty-nine in the Vardaman administration to 130 in the current Finch administration. The increase has been fairly steady through the years. Growth in the late twenties and early thirties and then heavy decline in the mid-thirties was due to the burgeoning number of separate boards of trustees of charity hospitals and funds. These were consolidated into one Board of Trustees of Eleemosynary Institutions during the Conner administration; hence the substantial decline in the period 1932-36. Other than this governmental reorganization, the number of bureaus, agencies, and commissions has continued to grow throughout the century.

5. Increasing Political Participation--As modern states increase the range, scope, and volume of their actions, it becomes more important for governments to maintain stronger and more constant linkages with the members of the body politic; therefore, most development analysts stress the importance of political participation. A primary mode of participation in democracies, of course, is voting.

If one defines participation as the percentage of potential voters who cast ballots in a given election,¹² Figure 20 shows the participation levels in Democratic first primaries for governor from 1903 through 1975. Participation rates remained relatively steady throughout the period 1903-1943, at which point there began a steady

FIGURE 20

TURNOUT IN GUBERNATORIAL FIRST PRIMARIES, 1903-1975



SOURCE: Calculated from United States Census, Abney, and In the Public Interest.

¹²See Chapter 2 for the definition of participation to be used generally in this paper. For this discussion, however, the potential electorate is defined as universal adult male suffrage until 1919, universal adult suffrage from 1923 through 1967, and universal suffrage for persons over 18 years of age from the 1971 election to the present.

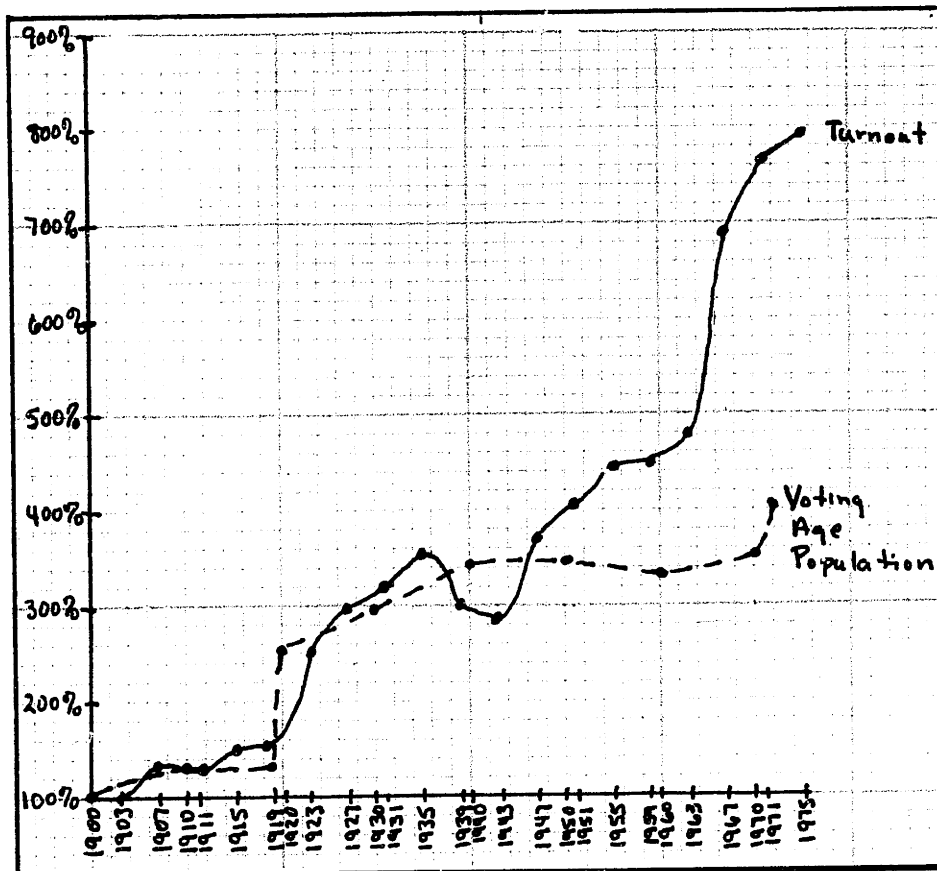
increase which maintained itself through the election of 1975. With a mean turnout of 35% in the nineteen elections, participation has been above the century average in every election since 1955 and climbed to a high of 56% in 1975. The large increase from 1963 to 1967 was due mostly to the beginning of massive black enfranchisement.

Figure 21 compares the increase in turnout with the increase in the potential electorate. Taking the election of 1903 and the potential electorate as reported in the 1900 Census as the base lines (= 100%), this chart traces the growth decennially of the potential electorate and the growth of turnout for every first primary of the century.

The growth of the electorate and turnout paralleled each other closely until the 1930s. In the 1931 and 1935 elections, participation increased slightly faster than did the electorate, but fell below during the war years. After 1947 participation began to increase at substantially faster rates than did the electorate, as compared to the base lines. Whereas the potential electorate expanded to 401% of the 1900 figure, actual voting in 1975 was 799% of that in 1903. In terms of participation, Mississippi was clearly continuing to develop,

FIGURE 21

GROWTH IN VOTING AGE POPULATION AND TURNOUT IN
GUBERNATORIAL FIRST PRIMARIES, COMPARED TO
1900 AND 1903 RESPECTIVELY



SOURCE: Calculated from Mississippi, Secretary of State, Blue Book (1902-03 through 1976-80).

In summary, the modernization indicators suggest five stages or levels of development during this century. One, the first two decades appear to have had relatively low levels of modernization but provided some of the bases

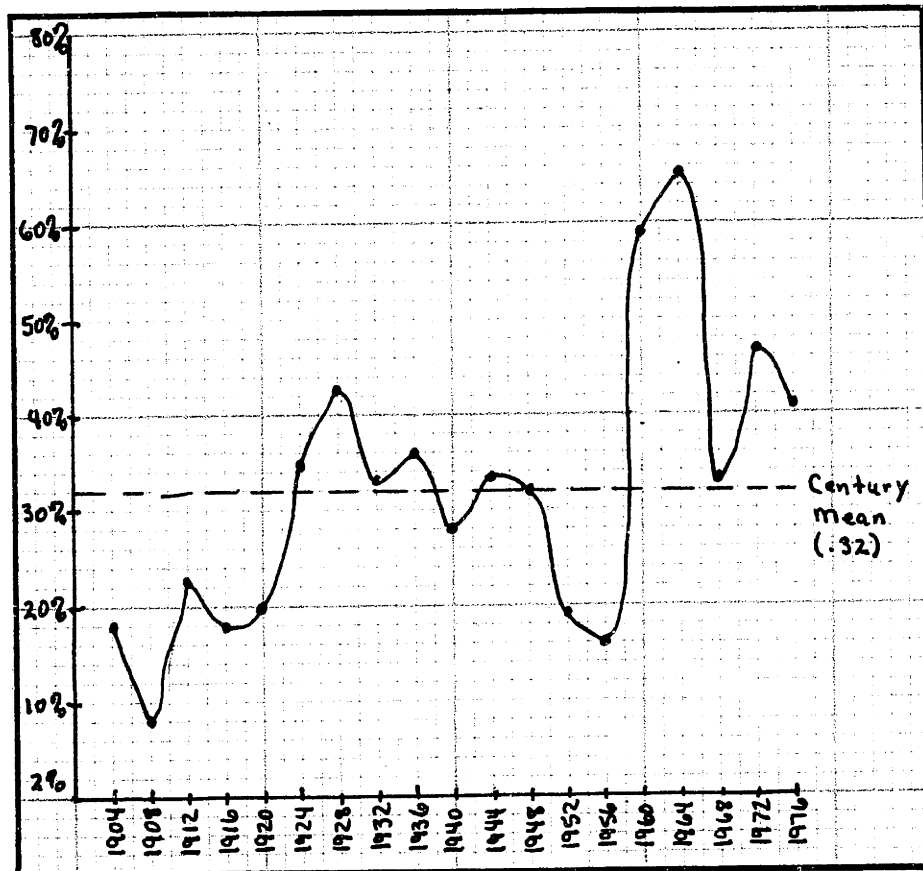
for future activity (the growing savings figure, for example). Two, the period of the 1920s was clearly the beginning of a modernization process which was stalled in most areas by the Depression of the 1930s. World War II was a period of recovery which led to a fourth and substantially higher level of modernization than had been experienced before. And, fifth, beginning in the 1960s, the rate of modernization "takes off" at unprecedented rates.

It is almost a truism that these indicators of modernization implied strong repercussions in the electoral system. What were the effects on campaigns and voting patterns?

One answer to that question can be found in the inaugural addresses of governors. Inaugural addresses are often revealing political documents, because they usually combine issues expressed in the just-past campaign with other concerns which the new governor considers important in the immediate future. They serve, as it were, as a type of "litmus test" of both popular political issues and governmental concerns. Figure 22 traces the theme of modernization through the inaugural addresses of all twentieth century governors. By using a "Modernization Index" this chart shows the percentage of modernization references made in each speech out of the

FIGURE 22

THE MODERNIZATION INDEX: REFERENCES TO MODERNIZATION
ISSUES IN INAUGURAL ADDRESSES OF GOVERNORS,
VARDAMAN THROUGH FINCH



SOURCE: Virginia Pace Cromwell, "A Content Analysis of the Inaugural Addresses of the Governors of Mississippi in the Twentieth Century" (M.A. thesis, University of Southern Mississippi, 1969). This chart is based on Ms. Cromwell's content analysis of the inaugural speeches from 1900 through 1968; therefore, the author employed Ms. Cromwell's method to content analyze the Waller and Finch speeches of 1972 and 1976 respectively. For the data used in this index and the method employed, see Appendix III.

total content of the speech. It is this chart which tells the degree to which the intellectual, economic, and social modernization analyzed above was being translated into a political issue in gubernatorial politics.

Modernization was not a major theme in inaugural speeches until the Whitfield address of 1924. The era 1924-1948 revealed a level of concern with modernization issues which hovered around the century-long mean of 32% (with Bilbo's speech of 1928 somewhat higher and Johnson's speech of 1940 lower). Extreme lows reappear in 1952 and 1956. In 1952, Hugh White, who had been the "father" of Mississippi's Balance Agriculture with Industry program in his first term (1936-1940), devoted much of the speech to agricultural development (which was not classified in the Modernization Index as a modernization issue, although perhaps it could have been in certain cases of agribusiness references); and, the Coleman speech of 1956 was dominated by a discussion of the 1954 Brown decision. Unprecedented highs were reached in the Barnett and Johnson, Jr., speeches of 1960 and 1964 respectively; Williams' speech returned to a mean-level range as he discussed the school integration crisis and defiance of the federal government; and a moderately high level of modernization content was found in the Waller and Finch speeches.

The Modernization Index has been selected, then, as the litmus test of the emerging modernization consensus in elections. The seeming inexorability of the economic and social development process along with the often curious and always complex manner in which modernization expressed itself electorally will be explored more in detail below. Suffice at this point to say that the emerging modernization phenomenon was occurring throughout the century, especially from the 1920s on, and that as a political life-form it was gaining strength.

Eras

Have there been crack points in the political history of Mississippi which have demarcated periods in which electoral politics was significantly different from that in other time frames? If so, what have they been and what have they represented?

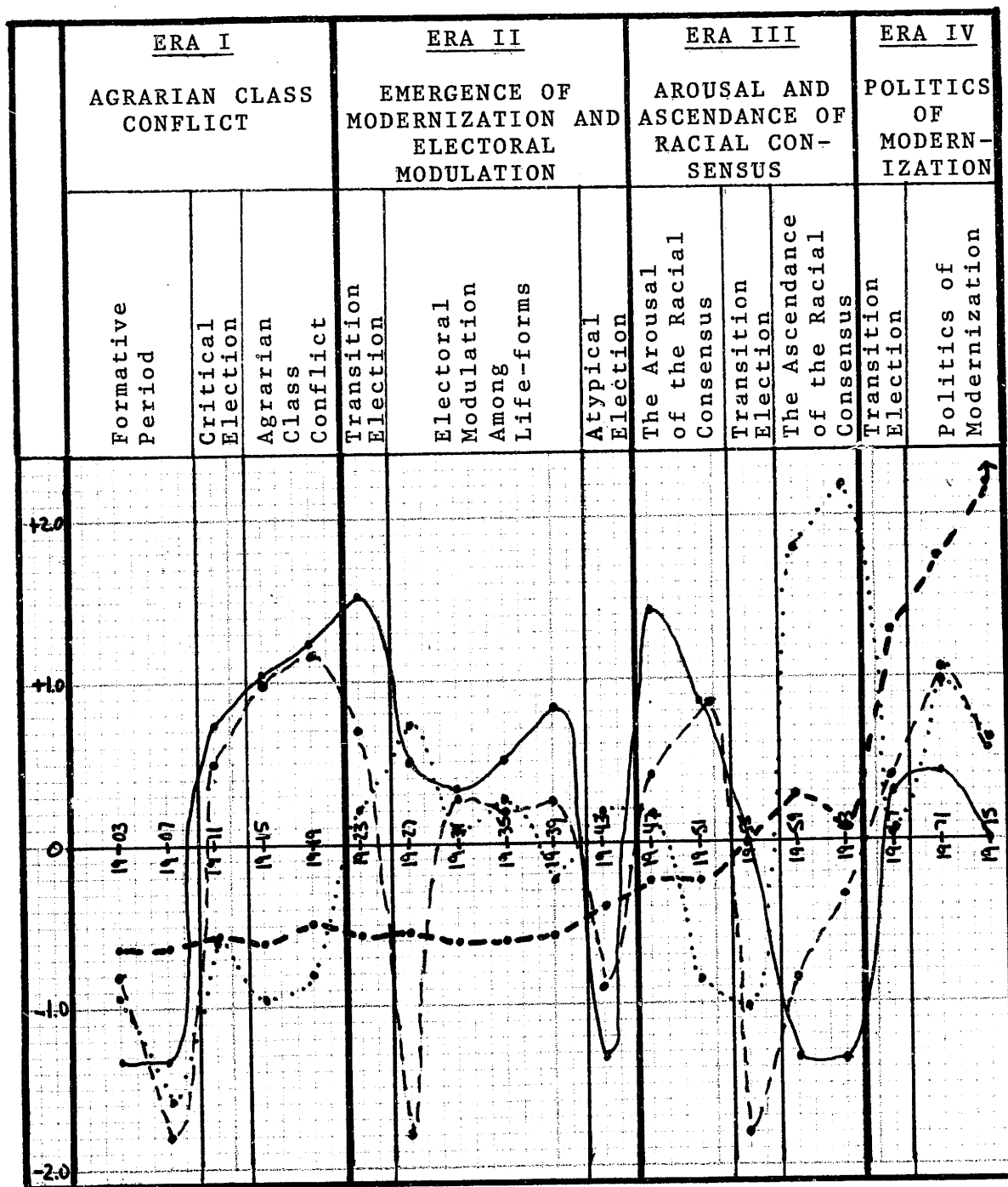
In answering that question for Mississippi there cannot be an application of rigorous realignment analysis in the tradition of Key, Burnham, and others. The institutional framework is too limited and the fluidity of factions too great for that form of analysis to be meaningful. One can speak, however, in terms of life-forms, eras, and transitions in voting behavior.

Figure 23 attempts to trace the life-forms together

across the century. The solid line (—————), representing the percent black variable, and the broken line (-----), representing the white tenancy variable, when examined jointly, trace the life-forms of agrarian class conflict and race. The white tenancy variable is a socio-economic expression of the agrarian class conflict, and the percent black variable a geographic expression of that life-form (Delta v. Hills). The percent black and white tenancy variables, when both are low and therefore not tapping the agrarian class division, represent an aroused racial consensus cutting across the major lines of state politics. When white tenancy is low and percent black high, it suggests, not an aroused racial consensus, but a racial issue cutting along geographic lines. This phenomenon happened only in 1927 and will be explored in the narrative section. When both variables are high, it suggests agrarian class conflict in both socio-economic and geographic forms, whereas a divergence indicates the life-form being mobilized along one dimension more than along the other. The dotted line (.....) is the modernization index and represents the strength of the modernization and progressivism life-forms. The heavy broken line (- - - - -) represents manufacturing wages and was selected to trace development within the economy. In using manufacturing wages, the figure for the election

FIGURE 23

MAJOR LIFE-FORMS AND ERAS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



LEGEND:

- (——) -- Percent Black
- (- - -) -- White Tenancy
- (.....) -- Modernization Index
- (— · —) -- Manufacturing Wages

year was chosen if available; if not, the figure for the closest preceding year. The figure for 1943 was an average between 1939 and 1947, because there was apparently no data reported during the war years.

The chart defines four major eras of Mississippi politics this century: 1903-1922, 1923-1943, 1946-1964, and 1967 to the present. The election of 1911 came as close as anything could in Mississippi's free-wheeling primary milieu to being a critical realignment; 1923, 1955, and 1967 were transition elections; and 1943 seemed to be unrelated to the politics of the period.

The gubernatorial primaries of 1903 and 1907 did not tap the life-forms of agrarian class conflict or modernization; but, as the narrative will demonstrate, these elections were clearly related to and formative of the critical senate race of 1911. The low percent black indicator also suggests that the racial consensus might well have been aroused in 1903 and 1907. The Vardaman-Percy contest restructured politics into a contest fought along the geographic lines (the percent black variable) and socio-economic lines (the white tenancy variable) of agrarian class conflict. Modernization concerns were generally low during Era I.

Whitfield's victory in 1923 was a crucial transition to a new era in which modernization became a major political concern. The important feature on the chart is the

crossing of the axis of the modernization index for the first time in the century. Except for three subsequent elections, the modernization index does not dip below the century mean. White tenancy also begins to decline as an indicator in 1923. The percent black variable remains high in 1923, in part, because Whitfield's protagonist was Theodore Bilbo, a chief architect of the Delta-Hills cleavage. This suggests that the geographic expression of the class life-form was more important in 1923 than the socio-economic expression (white tenancy) and that race was not a major issue.

Era II was characterized by an extraordinary modulation among the major life-forms. The modernization index hovers around the century norm except for a high in 1927 and a dip in 1939. The agrarian class life-form, as measured by percent black and white tenancy, had moderate strength throughout the era, except for a low in white tenancy in 1927 and a high in percent black in 1939. Modernization in the economy continued at about the same level throughout the era, beginning a slight rise toward the end. The war-time election of 1943 was related to Era II because the candidates and the rhetoric were basically of the era; however, the statistics of the primary, held in a war-depleted electorate, made the election atypical.

Era III has two periods, 1946-1954 and 1956-1964,

with the primary of 1955 as a transition between the two. The racial consensus began to arouse and grip the state in the first period; and modernization gives way to racial concerns expressed in inaugural addresses. The surge in percent black and white tenancy suggests, however, that the old agrarian class cleavage revitalized. Indeed, the arousing racial consensus found leadership among conservative candidates who were closer to the Delta tradition than to the Hills. The election of 1955 was a transition to a total racial obsession in the state, now under the leadership of Hills governors. Percent black and white tenancy plummet; racial concerns washed away traditional cleavages. At the same time the economy was modernizing rapidly, and governors dealt with modernization issues in their inaugural addresses.

Era III began with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the revolution it wrought in Mississippi politics. In 1967, the rhetoric was racism, and yet the massive influx of black voters, in a grand irony, restored some of the aggregate order to voting behavior along geographic lines. Modernization took an atypical dip in 1967 as a Mississippi governor railed in his inaugural speech for the last time about race. Concerns with modernization restore themselves in 1971 and 1975. The number of white

tenants was so small in Era IV that the meaning of the variable is suspect.

Several important structural changes have occurred in the political system since World War II that have profound implications for the future, and they, too, have been products of the life-forms. The first change has been the re-emergence of the Republican Party in presidential politics since 1952 and in state elections since 1963. Dead for all practical purposes since the "Restoration" of 1875, and especially since the Constitution of 1890, the Mississippi Republican Party fielded major candidates for governor in 1963, 1967, and 1975, ran a strong race against senior Senator James O. Eastland in 1972, and elected two out of the state's five Congressmen in that year.¹³ The second major change was the development within the Democratic Party of two warring factions in the mid-sixties and the tenuous reunification of the party in 1976. The third and perhaps most important topographical change has been the enfranchisement of black voters pursuant to the Voting Rights Act of 1965.¹⁴

¹³The average percentage vote for the Republican nominee in 1963, 1967, and 1975 was 38%. Carmichael got 39% against Eastland in the 1972 Senate race. The average Democratic vote for president during the period 1960-1976 was 29% as compared to 90% for the period 1900-1956.

¹⁴The Institute of Politics estimated that approximately 347,000 blacks were registered to vote in 1975. In the Public Interest, 4 (July 1975): 2-3.

A major part of the analysis of Era IV will be an assessment of the impact of these great structural changes in the system, how they were first produced by but now regulate the life-forms, and what sort of shape the emerging order in Mississippi electoral politics seems to be taking.

PART TWO

ERA I (1903-1922): AGRARIAN CLASS CONFLICT

CHAPTER 4

BACKGROUND AND FORMATION (1875-1910)

Background (1875-1902)

The groundwork for the great electoral struggle between the planter class and small farmers was laid during the era of Reconstruction and Restoration. This background era may be divided into two periods--the years after Reconstruction leading to the Constitution of 1890, and, second, the period 1890-1902. Mississippi's post-bellum history had much in common with that of the deep South generally but with some important differences. The political order had been "restored" in 1875 by leaders who shared many traits with their "Bourbon" cousins in sister states. This leadership was dominated by the "Bourbon triumvirate" of U.S. senators--L.Q.C. Lamar, J.Z. George, and Edward Walthall. Lamar was a national spokesman for the railroads, a member of the Cleveland cabinet, an architect of the 1876 Compromise, an opponent of the Bland Allison Silver Bill, and an advocate of the "New South."¹ George, the

¹James G. Revels, "Redeemers, Rednecks, and Racial Integrity," in McLemore, vol. 1, pp. 597-599.

Democratic party strategist who engineered the "revolution of 1875," had what was perhaps the largest corporate law practice in the state, although, of all the Bourbon rulers, he kept most in touch with the small farmers and retained their affections.² Walthall, a wealthy planter and railroad attorney, ". . . was the aristocrat among Mississippi's triumvirate of Redeemer senators."³ Upon his death Walthall was eulogized by U.S. House Minority Leader and Mississippian John Sharp Williams and termed ". . . the ideal gentleman."⁴ The two men who held the governorship from 1876-1896 were John M. Stone, whom Kirwan describes as "George's henchman,"⁵ and Robert Lowry, ". . . by far the most conservative and industrially oriented of Mississippi's Redeemers. . . ."⁶

There were differences, however, between Bourbon rule in Mississippi and elsewhere in the South. Even though in many southern states the Redeemers tended to be former Whigs, such was not the case in Mississippi. The Whigs had assumed leadership of the Republican Party during

²Kirwan, p. 48.

³Revels, p. 599.

⁴Osborn, p. 142.

⁵Kirwan, p. 89.

⁶Revels, pp. 596-597.

Reconstruction, but ". . . Mississippi's Redeemers were almost all antebellum Democrats who were returned to power following the overthrow of Republican rule."⁷ The roots of this phenomenon were in the politically disastrous Constitution of 1868, which, under authorship of the Republicans, barred from public office anyone who had supported secession or rebellion and also disenfranchised many whites. The extremeness of the document gave re-birth to the Democratic Party, as it campaigned against ratification, cut away any possible white middle ground (which former Whigs, like James Lusk Alcorn, occupied), and laid the groundwork for a century of memory and mythology about Reconstruction, Republicanism, and white solidarity.⁸ It provided a story oft to be told in the state's subsequent history.

Another difference in Mississippi's Bourbons was that the state was too massively rural, agrarian, and impoverished for the small farmer to be ignored altogether. Senator George, for example, earned the sobriquet, "The Commoner," because he championed a number of small farmer causes, such a soft money, lower tariffs, railroad

⁷Ibid., p. 595.

⁸William C. Harris, "The Reconstruction and the Commonwealth," in McLemore, vol. 1, pp. 562-568.

regulation, federal aid to public schools, protection for labor, and the calling of the Constitutional Convention of 1890.⁹ Even the aristocratic Walthall, far removed from the concerns of the small farmer, supported the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887, the Sherman Anti-trust Act of 1890, silver coinage, and lower tariffs.¹⁰ Governor Stone, especially in his second term, favored some agrarian causes, such as the Constitutional Convention of 1890, and he received the endorsement of the Farmers' Alliance.¹¹ In fact, one of the major reasons for the failure of the Populist Party in Mississippi was the tendency of Democratic rulers to accede to agrarian demands. As Revels states,

By 1887 Redeemers in Mississippi had begun to respond to the demands of radical agrarians. Democratic leaders did not wait until the Populist revolt was in full swing to begin espousing agrarian reforms, and perhaps this gesture by the Redeemers partly accounts for the absence of a powerful agrarian upheaval which characterized many states in the South and West during the 1890s.¹²

Related to this concern for the small farmer and his problems was the fact that Mississippi's redeemers seemed more generally attuned to preserving the agrarian

⁹Revels, pp. 598-599.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 600.

¹¹Ibid., p. 596.

¹²Ibid., pp. 611-612

order in the state than in fostering the full-blown Henry Grady vision of a "New South." To be sure, they generally favored railroad development and were certainly not antagonistic toward business and commercial interests. Their emphasis, however, seemed to be more on promoting agriculture than ushering in a new industrial age.

A third unique feature about Mississippi was the degree of racism and the early development of a determination and method to bring about black disfranchisement. Out of the complexities of politics in the post-Reconstruction era there emerged the racial consensus from two different directions. One was from the Bourbons, who had successfully kept black turnout low by fraud, manipulation, and intimidation, while at the same time using black votes in a bizarre pattern of "fusion" politics. The basic bargain in the "fusion" was that blacks would support local Democratic machine candidates in return for the cooperation of the Bourbon senators in federal patronage matters. Blacks would be free to vote Republican in presidential races. This complex arrangement was further confused by the ever-changing national Republican strategy--ranging from the Hayes approach of cooperating with Bourbon Democrats, to the Garfield theory of allying with blacks in the South, to the Chandler-Arthur strategy of allying with any anti-Bourbon faction,

especially Independents.¹³

Certain events in the 1880s, however, made the Bourbon leadership question the fusion strategy. As J. Morgan Kousser points out in his study of southern elections during the years 1880-1910, political life was more vigorous than some conventional scholarship has heretofore held. Far from being stifled by a Bourbon hegemony, politics and elections were often competitive during this period. In 1881, for example, Benjamin R. King, joint candidate for the Greenbackers, Independents, Republicans, and dissatisfied Democrats, polled 40.2% of the vote against the Democratic nominee, Robert Lowry.¹⁴ Kirwan traces, also, the contentious struggles within the Democratic Party during this period--from the defection of men like James R. Chalmers, who became head of the white Republicans after a personal dispute with Lamar, to the constant tension which existed between a governor's faction in county politics and the local politicians themselves, to the growing agrarian discontent within the party led by men like Ethelbert Barksdale, Putnam Darden (head of the state Grange), and Frank Burkitt, who ultimately left the party

¹³See Kirwan, Chapter 1; Woodward, Chapters 4 and 8.

¹⁴Kousser, p. 27; and Revels, pp. 6-7.

to lead the Populists.¹⁵

These challenges from outside and within the Democracy and the fact that the Republicans nominated a full slate of candidates in 1889 caused some Bourbons to re-evaluate their fusion policy. The "bottom line" seemed to be an awareness that " . . . the presence of a large potential Negro vote, which was for the most part alienated from the established order, tempted any enemy of those in power to bolt the Democrats."¹⁶ There was also a growing fear that the patent fraud and intimidation was putting "too great a strain on the public conscience" and that the new Republican majority in both houses of Congress might force on the South the "Lodge Force Bill."¹⁷ The solution to all these concerns was to disfranchise the black by legal means and kill the Republican Party once and for all.

From another direction many of the Hills people reached the same conclusion. Growing had been their resentment of Bourbon manipulation of the black vote, court house control of politics at the state level, and fear of the Lodge bill. As Woodward states, "it was not Negro

¹⁵See Kirwan, Chapters 1-4.

¹⁶Kousser, p. 18.

¹⁷Kirwan, p. 59.

domination but white domination from the Black Belt that the white counties of Mississippi sought to overthrow in 1890."¹⁸ Feeling that the Bourbons had controlled the state by manipulating the black vote, many small farmers believed ". . . that as long as the Negro was active in politics, white Mississippians would never be free to divide on the real economic and political issues."¹⁹ Although the primary motivation of many small farmers was economic and political reform, their susceptibility to emotional appeals of white solidarity was great; and the Constitutional Convention, once assembled, inexorably proceeded with its work of disfranchisement. It was the first of the South's "disfranchising constitutions."²⁰

In sum, by 1890 Mississippi had had a discernible "Bourbon elite" after Redemption which was more or less committed to a national policy of reconciliation with the business-minded Republican and Cleveland administrations. Unlike other states in the deep South, however, the Bourbons in Mississippi had been antebellum Democrats and were identified not only with a new planter-merchant-business class but also--at least some of the Bourbon

¹⁸Woodward, p. 329.

¹⁹Revels, p. 618.

²⁰Woodward, p. 321.

leaders--with the small farmer. Power was maintained by intimidation, fraud, and fusion politics. Growing agrarian discontent, a consensus to disenfranchise blacks, the tradition of white solidarity within the Democratic Party, and national developments led to the Constitution of 1890, which did its work of disenfranchisement and enshrined one-party rule within the Democracy.²¹ It also gave the small farmers the hope for something better.

The decade after the Constitution dashed their hopes. As Kirwan points out, "if the farmers of Mississippi thought to improve their lot by means of a new constitution they were not long in having their illusion dispelled."²² For one thing, the Hills people had lost control of the Convention, and it was thoroughly dominated by George. Of the 134 delegates, eighty-eight were from "black" counties; and on the crucial Committee on Elective Franchise,

²¹The black counties were of a divided mind initially about the advisability of writing a new constitution--torn between a resolve to disenfranchise blacks and fearful of radical white county reforms. Although historians are divided on this point, it was apparently a realization on George's part that a new constitution was inevitable, along with his genuine fear of the Force Bill, which triggered his crucial support for the convention. In fact, a study of the 1888 and 1890 Legislatures shows a shift of sentiment away from the convention among white county legislators and a shift in favor among black county solons. See Kousser, pp. 617-618. Apparently convinced of the need and/or inevitability of the convention, some Bourbon leaders decided to support and to control it. They succeeded substantially through the leadership of George.

²²Kirwan, p. 85.

Apportionment and Elections there were twenty-three of thirty-five members from black counties,²³

History revealed the Constitution to be an almost clairvoyant restructuring of the rules in favor of the black belt. For one thing, the franchise clauses, in addition to eliminating blacks from the political order, also eliminated many whites. In 1890 there were an estimated 120,000 qualified white voters; however, the new registration of 1892 showed only 68,000, or a 40% reduction. In 1888 Grover Cleveland had received 85,000 votes; in 1892, his vote was only 40,237.²⁴ This decline was attributed in large measure to the poll tax. Second, the electoral system still favored the black counties, because nominations occurred by state convention, the apportionment to which was stacked in favor of the few whites in the populous black counties. And, third, the rules of 1890 had a "clairvoyant" quality because the weak-executive, strong-legislative system with a constitutionally frozen apportionment meant that when the direct primary was enacted in 1902 the black belt retained control of the Legislature and, therefore, policy. As a result of these three factors, little policy change occurred in the decade

²³Howell lecture notes.

²⁴Kirwan, pp. 72-73.

after 1890 and Bourbon John Stone retained the Governorship through 1896.

Disappointment with the results of 1890 created more restiveness among the small farmers. This growing sentiment across the South manifested itself in the rise of Populism, but in Mississippi the 1890 enshrinement of one party Democracy precluded not only the Republicans but also the Populist from the prospects of holding power. Indeed, as Woodward notes, "Conservatives of neighboring states, grappling with powerful Populist opposition, eyed the results of the Mississippi Plan enviously."²⁵ In the elections of 1892 and 1894 the Populists elected no congressmen or senators. In 1895 Frank Burkitt, the popular nominee for governor on the Populist ticket, received only 30% of the vote. This election turned out to be the high-water mark for Populism. In 1899, the Populist nominee received only 6000 votes, or 12.5%.²⁶

The growing agrarian revolt did have an impact, if not on general elections, certainly on Democratic Party politics. The increasing militancy of white small farmers was being felt. For example, Anselm McLaurin, elected in 1895 from black belt Rankin County, "sensed more than

²⁵Woodward, pp. 321-322.

²⁶Kirwan, p. 100.

any other Mississippian of his time the growing political consciousness of the small farmer, and he catered to him."²⁷ Andrew Longino, elected governor in 1899, had moved into the east Delta from the Hills and also represented substantial Hills sentiment. He, for example, strongly supported the direct primary.²⁸ McLaurin and Longino represented transition governors between the Bourbon era and the coming "redneck revolt," made possible by the Direct Primary Law of 1902.

On first blush it seems strange that the Direct Primary Law of 1902 passed with but one dissenting vote in the House of Representatives and five in the Senate. Even though it was an obvious death warrant for black county candidates state-wide, many legislators from the black counties voted for it (a number from the Delta abstained). Both Kirwan and Hamilton agree that the issue had simply become too popular to resist.²⁹ The newly arrived Hills people in the eastern part of the Delta, which was opening up during this period, also favored the reform, so that the black belt itself was not united

²⁷Ibid., p. 118.

²⁸Hamilton dissertation, pp. 51 and 58.

²⁹Kirwan, pp. 131-132; Hamilton dissertation, pp. 54-58.

on the issue.³⁰ Another likely factor, mentioned above, was the knowledge by black belt politicians that they had written the rules of 1890 in such a way as to insure their control of the Legislature.

Political disappointment, growing agrarian discontent, the failure of the Populist Party in Mississippi, and a declining economy presaged the enactment in 1902 of a Direct Primary Law and, just as important, the coming of James K. Vardaman.

The Formative Period (1903-1910)

The gubernatorial and senatorial elections of 1903 and 1907 were dominated by the life-forms of race and progressivism and in an inchoate way the growing class conflict. Race was a fairly clear life-form in 1903, but otherwise the patterns were in a formative phase. Furthermore, the intense factionalism of 1890s--primarily pro- and anti-McLaurinism--confused the contours of electoral behavior during the first decade. Harbingers of things to come, however, were clear in all four elections.

James K. Vardaman, who became the prototypical "redneck" champion, actually sprang from Bourbon origins. His cousin, Congressman Hernando Desoto Money, had been

³⁰Hamilton dissertation, p. 58.

a protege of Senator George and a supporter of the Bourbon triumvirate. Moving to Greenwood, in the eastern Delta, in 1884, Vardaman became active in politics and aligned, ironically, with the Leroy Percy faction against the McLaurin machine. In eight years in the Legislature, including a term as Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and one as Speaker of the House, he voted down the line for the black county positions. Indeed, it is unlikely that he could have been elected Speaker had he not been a member of the Bourbon group. In the light of subsequent history, his votes and positions were filled with irony. He fought the Burkitt faction on fiscal policy, voted against an elective judiciary, defended railroad tax exemptions, fought the enactment of popular primaries, favored tax exemptions for state banks, and, as Speaker, removed the eighteen former Populists in the House from any positions of power.³¹

During these same years he ran for governor in 1895 and 1899, withdrawing in 1895 and being defeated at the state convention by Longino in 1899. It was probably during these unsuccessful campaigns that Vardaman began his transformation from a black county conservative in the 1890s to one of the most liberal United States senators

³¹Holmes, pp. 47-51.

in the first decade of the twentieth century.³² One thing that never changed in Vardaman was his vitriolic racism, learned from his mentor, Dr. B. F. Ward, and his political model, Hernando Money.

Vardaman, as editor of the Greenwood Commonwealth, was widely read on current events; and although he was always a Democratic loyalist, he was apparently influenced by Populist ideology. He was also captivated by William Jennings Bryan and impressed by the career of "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman of South Carolina.³³ National developments which he followed, the wide-spread agrarian discontent found in the 1895 and 1899 canvasses for governor, and his acute sense of theatrics prepared him for Mississippi's first popular primary.

The major feature of the 1903 campaign was not Vardaman's evolving radical economic philosophy, although traces of it were there, but his unrestrained racism. He called for the abolition of black education and at times went so far as to defend lynch law for suspected Negro rapists of white women.³⁴ He launched into diatribes

³²Vardaman's transformation is not satisfactorily detailed or explained in any historical work. The failure to analyze Vardaman's crucial change is the single major flaw in Holmes' otherwise excellent biography.

³³Hamilton dissertation, pp. 77-82.

³⁴Kirwan, pp. 146-147.

against President Roosevelt, especially for his having invited Booker T. Washington to dine at the White House. Roosevelt closed the Indianola post office after the local whites had forced a long-respected Negro postmistress to quit, and Vardaman inflamed the issue in his campaign.³⁵ No racial epithet went unused. His oratory, no doubt, worsened racial relations. "So violently did Vardaman appeal to anti-Negro sentiment that without a doubt he intensified Negro-phobia in Mississippi and encouraged racial lawlessness."³⁶

Race was Vardaman's principal appeal, but not his only one. Since the 1895 canvass he had begun to develop his radical form of progressivism by espousing popular Hills causes on the stump. He had spoken for the abolition of the iniquitous convict-leasing system at the state penitentiaries, a barbarous scheme whereby convicts, most of them Negro, were leased to large plantation owners for cheap labor. Since the victims of this inhumane procedure were blacks, Vardaman's crusade against it seems to have been inspired out of humanitarian concerns.

He had also found the school fund issue to be a

³⁵Holmes, p. 100.

³⁶Ibid., p. 109.

"hot" campaign topic among rednecks.³⁷ The school issue was a clear one between the Delta and the Hills. The poll tax collections were returned to counties for support of their common schools, based on the number of educables in the county. This formula obviously favored the heavily black counties, since they paid little poll tax, received back a large per capita sum (because of the number of black children), and then spent the money primarily for the education of a few white children. The opposite was true for the white counties. As a result, white counties felt that a huge disparity in the quality of education had developed between Delta and Hills counties based on the allocation of the school fund. What the rednecks wanted was a separate fund, or an "equalizing fund," to be distributed on need.³⁸

Vardaman also addressed other agrarian issues-- such as a uniform textbook law, an elective judiciary, better roads, an elected commissioner of agriculture, and local option for liquor. He campaigned against the "Jackson ring," a vaguely alluded to group of political bosses who allegedly had been running the state for years and who had been responsible for the farmers' woes. He stressed

³⁷Ibid., pp. 55-57.

³⁸Kirwan, pp. 136-139.

his origins as a humble man who stood against great wealth, and he urged the small farmers to reassert control over politics and their destinies.³⁹

Vardaman's two major opponents were Judge Frank Critz, from northeast Mississippi, and Edmund Noel, a Delta man. Critz agreed with Vardaman on a number of issues--e.g., a uniform textbook law, a state commissioner of agriculture, and more money for white secondary education--but disagreed on business development and race. Unlike Vardaman, who opposed tax exemptions for corporations, Critz favored them.⁴⁰ He also took a moderate position on the race issue, arguing that the Constitution of the United States had to be respected and that abolition of black education would be ruled unconstitutional.⁴¹ He feared that Vardaman's radical approach would drive good Negroes from the state (needed labor) and that it might trigger federal intervention.⁴²

Noel had been the author of the direct primary law, and he attempted to make an issue of Vardaman's earlier voting record in the House of Representatives. He, like

³⁹Holmes, p. 102.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 103.

⁴¹Nannie Pitts McLemore, "The Progressive Era," in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 35.

⁴²Kirwan, p. 151.

Critz, ridiculed Vardaman's school fund concept and also favored tax exemptions for corporations.⁴³

The race for U.S. senator was also under way, with Governor Longino challenging Senator Hernando Money, who had won the seat in 1897 when George died.⁴⁴ The lines were drawn similarly to those in the governor's race, with Longino taking a moderate position on the race issue and Money's platform being almost identical to that of Vardaman. In fact, Money's racist attacks on Longino matched Vardaman's rhetoric. Longino was accused of appointing Negroes in his administration, of being cordial with Teddy Roosevelt, and of having Negro blood in his veins.⁴⁵

Money won handily over Longino, 59,758 votes (62.3%) to 36,121 votes (37.7%).⁴⁶ In the gubernatorial primary, Vardaman led with 39,679 (40.2%) and faced in the run-off Critz, who had garnered 34,813 votes (35.2%).⁴⁷

Ideology, local factionalism, and personality could be seen in the runoff coalitions. Leroy Percy--who in

⁴³Ibid., pp. 150-151.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 104. Prior to the ratification of the Seventeenth Amendment, senatorial elections in Mississippi occurred in state election years and served as "mandates" to the Legislature of whom to select for the upcoming term.

⁴⁵Kirwan, p. 155.

⁴⁶Abney, p. 29.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 87.

1911 was destined to help crystallize the Delta-Hills division in his bitter race against Vardaman--supported Vardaman, as did other Deltans like Charles Scott. Former Populist Frank Burkitt also supported Vardaman, as did Senator Money after his first primary victory. Noel, eliminated in the first primary, announced his support for Critz, and it was widely reported that the McLaurin machine was actively campaigning for Critz as well.⁴⁸

The second primary appeals were more of the same. Negro circulars which endorsed Critz played into Vardaman's demagogic racial appeal.⁴⁹ Another Delta hero, Congressman John Sharp Williams, endorsed Vardaman in the runoff,⁵⁰ and Vardaman won the nomination by a margin of 53,032 (53.6%) to 46,249 (46.4%) for Critz.⁵¹

Editors and commentators of the time attributed Vardaman's success to several factors, including his indefatigable campaign style (he made over 700 speeches), the complex alignment of factions (especially the pro- and anti-McLaurin factions), his Populist appeals, and his

⁴⁸Hamilton dissertation, pp. 98-101.

⁴⁹Kirwan, p. 160.

⁵⁰Holmes, p. 111.

⁵¹Abney, p. 87.

attacks on the "Jackson Ring."⁵² Vardaman's Bourbon heritage and Delta residence, along with his Hills rhetoric, gave him strength in both areas. But, two characteristics of Vardaman stood out as the most impressive of the day. One was his use of the race issue. In fact, "it was generally agreed by the opposition that his election was due to the revival of the white supremacy question."⁵³ Even though it would have been difficult to pinpoint one issue as having been the decisive one, the exploitation of race was certainly a major part of his appeal. The second Vardaman trait to draw much comment was his thorough understanding of what the farmers wanted to hear and his oratorical style in expressing those desires. As Kirwan states, "his magnetism and his oratory drew them to his support. While his opponents were addressing their hundreds, he was speaking to thousands at county fairs and church festivals. He was simply a better actor and gave a better show than his adversaries."⁵⁴ And, in the words of Holmes, ". . . Vardaman's personal magnetism and ability to sway crowds with his oratory contributed heavily to his

⁵²Holmes, p. 115.

⁵³Kirwan, p. 160.

⁵⁴Kirwan, p. 161.

success."⁵⁵

In terms of life-forms, the temper of the times and the actions of a Republican president enabled Vardaman and Money to arouse Mississippi's racial consensus. It was also clear that the progressivism of Vardaman was making an impact and serving to crystallize a division between the Delta and the Hills, especially on the issue of the equalizing fund. The education issue during this period belonged to both the life-forms of agrarian class conflict and progressivism, and, as usual, it was bounded by the parameters of race. It was progressivism for whites only. The humanitarian feature of progressivism was present in the prison reform issue, as were the government reform issues on the question of an elective judiciary and commissioner of agriculture. Vardaman's opposition to business incentives, his attacks on the "Jackson ring," and his stand against great wealth showed the growing radicalism of his progressive rhetoric. To all of these appeals the small farmers responded, but the lines were blurred by factionalism and Vardaman's strength in both the Delta and the Hills.

The elections of 1907 emerged out of the Vardaman administration. Vardaman's term had been highlighted by

⁵⁵Holmes, p. 115.

his successful effort at prison reform, the enactment of Jim Crow laws, his assault on Negro education, increased appropriations for public schools, the continuation of his feud with the McLaurins, the loss of some his former allies (most notably Leroy Percy, who broke with Vardaman over a Delta appointment), and his surprising use of state force to prevent lynching and to fight "whitecapping." In addition, he more clearly defined his anti-corporation philosophy. He vetoed several railroad mergers and the raising of the state limitation on corporate holdings, got the legislature to raise privilege taxes on industries and railroads, and urged a legislative investigation of the lumber trusts. Despite the fact that the Legislature was controlled by black county conservatives, Vardaman did manage to pass several progressive measures--such as the abolition of the convict lease system and the creation of a state department of agriculture and state textbook commission. Although many of his progressive reforms failed to be enacted, Vardaman's election and administration were the dominant influences in setting the political agenda in Mississippi for many years to come.⁵⁶

⁵⁶For treatments of the Vardaman administration, see Holmes, Chapter 5; Kirwan, Chapter 14; Hamilton dissertation, pp. 112-127; Nannie Pitts McLemore in McLemore, vol. 2; and Clair Seal Lopez, "The Gubernatorial Career of James Kimble Vardaman" (M.A. Thesis, University of Southern Mississippi, 1964).

The senatorial race of 1907 overshadowed the gubernatorial. Money announced his retirement, and Governor Vardaman and Congressman John Sharp Williams entered the campaign for his seat. The factional fluidity of Mississippi politics was again evident, since both men had been anti-McLaurin allies for years and since Williams had supported Vardaman in 1903. Each had often spoken highly of the other in public.⁵⁷

Vardaman was running as a governor with a fairly clear record, and his campaign appeals were not inconsistent with his past positions. He inflamed the race issue as much as possible by his advocacy of repeal of the 14th and 15th Amendments and by his renewed attacks on Roosevelt.⁵⁸ Much was made of a letter written by a District of Columbia black man to a relative in Mississippi urging that Mississippi Negroes vote for Williams.⁵⁹ Vardaman supported William Jennings Bryan's platform fully and made an issue of Williams' opposition to the nationalization of the railroads.⁶⁰ Vardaman supporters accused

⁵⁷Kirwan, p. 179.

⁵⁸Holmes, p. 181.

⁵⁹The Weekly Clarion-Ledger, July 30, 1907.

⁶⁰Osborn, p. 149.

Williams of drunkardness⁶¹ and, worse, of having supported in Congress a federal pension for the despised Union General Miles, who had been the man to put Jefferson Davis in shackles.⁶² Populist Tom Watson wrote friends in Mississippi saying that Williams' election would represent a triumph for the trusts and corporations.⁶³ Ben Tillman came to Mississippi to endorse Vardaman's 15th Amendment repeal plan.⁶⁴

Williams, who had been serving as Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, was a patrician of the old school (educated in Europe, law school at the University of Virginia, plantation owner and corporation attorney, etc.). He was moderate by comparison on the race issue, denouncing as impossible and irresponsible Vardaman's plan to repeal the 14th and 15th Amendments.⁶⁵ He emphasized his experience, qualifications, and accomplishments in Congress and avoided issues as much as he could, probably knowing that some of his views would not find favor with the small Mississippi farmer. He did, however, oppose

⁶¹The Weekly Clarion-Ledger, July 25, 1907.

⁶²Osborn, pp. 161-162.

⁶³Kirwan, p. 180.

⁶⁴Holmes, p. 183.

⁶⁵Kirwan, pp. 179-181; Osborn, p. 154.

the nationalization of the railroads. He also favored lower tariffs, a mild income tax, and stricter railroad regulation.⁶⁶ He was often on the defensive, explaining allegations about the General Miles matter, his public drunkardness, and the Negro endorsement. Williams' supporters counter-attacked by accusing Vardaman of being a Populist,⁶⁷ and Williams repeatedly challenged Vardaman to public debates.⁶⁸ The one and only debate of the campaign in Meridian clearly proved to Vardaman that he was out-classed by Williams in such a forum and proved to Williams that Vardaman had a hold on the small farmers which he had badly underestimated.⁶⁹ Thereafter, Williams increased the intensity of his campaign effort.

It was interesting and probably significant that all of the daily newspapers of the state, except one, endorsed Williams, whereas Vardaman received the endorsement of about 50% of the weeklies.⁷⁰ The outcome of the election was so close that the results were not known for eight days. Williams was declared the winner by 648

⁶⁶Holmes, pp. 179-180.

⁶⁷Kirwan, p. 180.

⁶⁸Holmes, p. 181.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 189; Osborn, p. 166.

⁷⁰Hamilton dissertation, p. 136.

votes out of a total of 118,344.⁷¹ The contest, though bitter, had not become personal between Vardaman and Williams; and Vardaman, despite the protestations of many of his supporters who cried "fraud," was gracious in defeat.⁷²

The issues had really not emerged with clarity, except for race and the railroads. Both candidates, and especially Williams, fudged on the issues, and the campaign became, in large measure, a personality contest. Despite this lack of clarity, however, the returns showed that Vardaman was tightening his grip over the hearts and minds of the "rednecks" as he ran as one of the good "us" against the evil and plutocratic "them."

The gubernatorial primary was less interesting and clear than the senate race. The candidates were Charles Scott of Bolivar County (in the Delta), Earl Brewer of Coahoma County (also a Delta county), Jeff Truly of Jefferson County (a Mississippi River county), Edmund Noel (from Holmes County, split between the Delta and Hills), E. N. Thomas from Washington County (heart of the Delta), and T.W. Sisson of Montgomery County (in the Hills).⁷³

⁷¹Kirwan, p. 184.

⁷²Holmes, p. 191.

⁷³Kirwan, p. 185.

All of the candidates ran on what was basically a reform platform. Vardaman, not closely aligned with any of them, endorsed Scott in the first primary, largely because they shared a strong anti-McLaurin background and because Scott had backed him in 1903.⁷⁴ Truly was apparently the McLaurin-backed candidate.⁷⁵ From the murky field of the first primary emerged Noel and Brewer with 29,222 votes and 28,111 votes respectively.⁷⁶

The second primary was also devoid of major issues. Vardaman, extracting a pledge from Noel not to run for the U.S. senate but unable to get such a promise from Brewer, threw his support to Noel.⁷⁷ Scott, eliminated in the first primary, endorsed Noel.⁷⁸ Both candidates embraced most of Vardaman's progressive platform,⁷⁹ and the major non-issue was the effort of each candidate to put the "railroad tag" on the other. Noel accused Brewer of having as his campaign chairman a prominent railroad attorney and of embracing into his retinue numerous attorneys and

⁷⁴Holmes, p. 183.

⁷⁵Hamilton dissertation, p. 133.

⁷⁶Abney, p. 87.

⁷⁷Holmes, p. 192.

⁷⁸The Weekly Clarion-Ledger, August 15, 1907.

⁷⁹Hamilton dissertation, p. 133.

spokesmen for public utilities. For good measure, he also accused Brewer of being a McLaurin man.⁸⁰ Brewer counter-charged that Noel was running a dirty campaign and attempted to tie Noel to liquor interests.⁸¹ Perhaps the Jackson Clarion-Ledger summed up the election in the editorial in which they stated that both were good men and that the editors could not choose between them.⁸²

Amid charges of fraud and corruption, the electorate chose Noel over Brewer, 58,407 (50.9%) to 56,405 (49.1%).⁸³

The gubernatorial election of 1907, though unexciting, signaled the consolidation of the progressivist position in state politics. It was, in fact, a race among progressives, most of them from the black belt and all committed in greater and lesser degrees to Vardaman's program. Between Noel and Brewer the differences were those of degree. Race died down as an operative life-form. Strong hints of the agrarian class life-form were present in Noel's and Brewer's attempt to paint the other as a tool of corporations, trusts, and great wealth.

⁸⁰The Weekly Clarion-Ledger, August 22, 1907.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²The Weekly Clarion Ledger, August 15, 1907.

⁸³Abney, p. 87.

The senate race more deeply tapped the growing cleavage between the classes. Although still making strong racist appeals, Vardaman began in 1907 to place more emphasis on his radical economic philosophy. In terms of style, the difference between him and the patrician Williams was clear. Vardaman's progressive record as governor also positioned him firmly within that life-form. The lines were smudged, however, by the withering remnants of factionalism and by the style of the campaign which allowed Williams to hedge his positions--a luxury not afforded another Delta candidate for many years to come.

CHAPTER 5

A CRITICAL ELECTION AND AGRARIAN CLASS CONFLICT (1911-1922)

The Senate Race of 1911

The agrarian class life-form was crystallized by the notorious "Secret Caucus" during the progressive administration of Edmund Noel. A genuine progressive, though personally uncolorful and conventional, Noel submitted more than one hundred specific reform measures to the Legislature, many of which were enacted.¹ The Secret Caucus occurred during the third year of his term.

The Secret Caucus was triggered by the death of Senator McLaurin during Christmas of 1909. With two years remaining in the senatorial term, Governor Noel decided that the Legislature in January 1910 should select a successor to fill the unexpired term. The electorate was then to vote in 1911 for the next full term to begin in January, 1912.² A cabal developed to halt Vardaman in his sure drive for the seat by entering so many candidates

¹Hamilton dissertation, pp. 145-146.

²Kirwan, p. 191.

that Vardaman would be denied a majority. When the Legislature voted, in apparent violation of the spirit and perhaps the letter of U.S. law, to make the selection in caucus by secret ballot rather than in open legislative session, the press began using the term "Secret Caucus." After six bitter weeks of balloting, midst charges of wide-spread bribery and chicanery on all sides, Leroy Percy was elected on the 58th ballot, the result of a large field of anti-Vardaman candidates who, as the winnowing process concluded, agreed on Percy as the standard bearer.³

The effect on the state was electric. As Hamilton states, "the 'Secret Caucus' of 1910 was a turning point in the political history of the state."⁴ The "little people" of the state saw their champion robbed of his due by an unholy alliance of politicians, corporations, and special interests in favor of an aloof Delta planter, legal counsel for the Southern Railroad, Illinois Central Railroad, both telegraph systems, a telephone company, a large bank, and an oil mill trust.⁵ As Green states, "the

³For treatments of the "Secret Caucus" see Kirwan, Chapter 16; Hamilton dissertation, pp. 196-210; Green, pp. 29-36; Nannie Pitts McLemore in McLemore, pp. 49-52; Key, pp. 238-239; Holmes, Chapter 8; Percy, pp. 143-146.

⁴Hamilton dissertation, p. 213.

⁵Green, p. 25.

official action of many legislators of supposed integrity was viewed with such distrust and the unofficial action in the secret caucus was such a patent fraud, that the wrath of the people was kindled."⁶ Immediately after the caucus was concluded, Vardaman held a mass rally in Jackson and announced his plans to run for the full term in 1911.⁷ The anti-Vardaman forces in the state had made a monumental blunder.

The "Secret Caucus" not only solidified Vardaman's hold on the small farmers; it also created Theodore Bilbo. A first term state senator from deep in the Piney Woods of south Mississippi, Bilbo announced that he had received a \$645 bribe to vote for Percy from Lorraine Dulaney, Delta planter and engineer for the McLaurin machine, which, in another ironic twist of history, had been helping Percy. Grand jury and Mississippi Senate investigations followed. Bilbo escaped expulsion from the senate by one vote (28-15) but was condemned by his fellow senators as "unfit to sit with honest upright men in a respectable legislative body" and asked to resign by a vote of 25-1.⁸ Bilbo took no notice. The Senate then adopted a resolution 28-0

⁶Ibid., p. 30.

⁷Kirwan, p. 197.

⁸Ibid., p. 206.

exonerating the entire process by which Percy had been selected. The Vardaman men voted against the expulsion resolution and abstained on the others, and the votes were almost identical to those taken in open session over procedural matters during the "Secret Caucus."⁹ In a court trial, Dulaney was acquitted and Bilbo further discredited in the eyes of everyone except the "rednecks."

From this time on, Bilbo became known in the conservative press as the "self-confessed bribe taker" and in the "redneck" press as a champion of the little people who was being persecuted and hounded by the establishment. It was the first of many times that Bilbo was to take scandal and turn it to his benefit.¹⁰

In light of this turbulent history, it is curious that 1911 produced the only uncontested gubernatorial primary of the twentieth century. Earl Brewer, the impressive young "comer" of 1907, was the favorite in 1911, and no one announced against him. The important contests were the senatorial race, which pitted Vardaman against Percy, and the race for lieutenant governor, the office for which Bilbo, the man just declared "unfit to sit with honest upright men," boldly announced his candidacy.

⁹Hamilton dissertation, p. 207.

¹⁰For accounts of the Bilbo-Dulaney affair, see same sources as cited above for the Secret Caucus.

The dominant campaign issue was, of course, the Secret Caucus. It proved to be a powerful catalyst in the developing chemistry of state politics. The newcomer Bilbo made the caucus the centerpiece of his campaign oratory in the summer of 1910 with a speech entitled "Jim Vardaman, the Radical; Leroy Percy, the Conservative; Grandma Noel, the Sissy; Sen. Bilbo, the Liar."¹¹ He had studied the speeches of Ben Tillman and Tom Watson,¹² and if anything, surpassed even Vardaman himself in his ability to understand every crevice and cranny of the "redneck" mind and to stir by his oratory every deep, and often dark, emotion in the mind of the alienated small farmer. In a word, "Bilbo was political dynamite."¹³

The following year, 1911, when Vardaman himself went on the hustings, he stressed the caucus. But, Vardaman also discussed his economic philosophy in an environment, created by the caucus, which made his message not only acceptable to the "rednecks" but explosive. Even though he did not ignore the race issue, he supplanted it by a class appeal--"us" v. "them"--as the emotional dimension in his oratory. Vardaman said that Mississippi needed a

¹¹Holmes, p. 239.

¹²Hamilton dissertation, p. 222.

¹³Holmes, p. 239.

spokesman for the small farmer, the laborer, and small merchant. He called for lower tariffs, stricter regulation of railroads, abolition of subsidies to shipping companies, enactment of a graduated income tax, a stronger banking system with all currency being federally issued, the end of U.S. imperialism, a strict national prohibition, and direct popular election of U.S. senators and federal judges.¹⁴ He denounced large standing armies as possible instruments of suppression of the working classes.¹⁵ He also praised the labor movement, saying that ". . . if labor would survive it must organize for its own protection and see to it that men are sent to the legislature and to congress who will enact laws that vouchsafe to every citizen an equal chance in the race of life."¹⁶ He cried out against concentrations of wealth and stated that the contest was "between the man whose toil produces the wealth of the country, and the favored few who reap the profit of that toil."¹⁷ Throughout his speeches, the Secret Caucus stood in peoples' minds as evidence of the truth of Vardaman's message.

¹⁴Holmes, p. 250.

¹⁵Hamilton dissertation, p. 215.

¹⁶Kirwan, p. 214.

¹⁷Ibid.

Percy and Carlton Alexander, a moderate progressive and third man in the race, were helpless against this groundswell. The caucus precluded the possibility of another man of aristocratic stature slipping into the U.S. Senate by fudging his positions, as John Sharp Williams had done in 1907. The Percy and Alexander supporters and papers denounced Vardaman as a Populist, Socialist, and Anarchist and rejected as unrealistic his plank to repeal the Reconstruction amendments to the Constitution.¹⁸ Percy discussed national issues and stressed his experience and sound business head. He charged that Vardaman's extremism would make him ineffective in Washington. His emphasis was on responsible control of corporate wealth and a strategy of letting the race issue alone. In general, Percy was a dull campaigner and made long, boring speeches.¹⁹

Percy and Alexander also played into Vardaman's hands. While castigating Vardaman and Bilbo, they treated each other with respect, thereby lending credence to the charge that, reminiscent of the caucus, the two conservative candidates were ganging up against Vardaman. Vardaman and Bilbo responded by calling them the "gold dust twins."²⁰

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 214-215.

¹⁹Holmes, pp. 235-237.

²⁰Ibid., p. 233-234.

Percy encountered heckling at many of his stump appearances, and, losing his temper at Lauderdale Springs, made the mistake of calling the crowd "cattle." While the conservative press of the state exulted in Percy's scathing denunciation of the crowd, Vardaman and Bilbo picked up on the phrase and never let Percy forget the words.²¹

The results of the primary were staggering. Vardaman received 60% of the vote against both candidates in a record turnout.²² He endorsed a full slate of state candidates and legislative candidates in most counties.²³ Most of the Vardaman men were elected, whereas only five of the eighty-seven Percy legislators from the caucus were returned.²⁴ Bilbo was elected by a margin very close to that of Vardaman. Vardaman's control of the state seemed to be complete.

Vardaman's biographer, William F. Holmes, capsules the effect of the Secret Caucus and the election of 1911:

²¹Hamilton dissertation, p. 216. For a view of the events as seen from the eyes of Percy's son, see Percy, Lanterns on the Levee, pp. 149-151.

²²Abney, p. 29.

²³Hamilton dissertation, p. 212.

²⁴Ibid., p. 225.

While anti-Vardaman men now were more thoroughly convinced that there had been no bribery in the caucus, Vardaman followers considered the trial, like the Senate's investigation, just another attempt to whitewash Dulaney and destroy Bilbo. It was this belief--that corruption had marred the caucus and that the legislature, the governor, and even the courts were trying to protect the guilty--that drove the electorate into a political uprising the likes of which Mississippi had never known before or has experienced since. . . .

In fact, the election represented a political uprising. It brought into the open a division of whites along class lines--small farmers and laborers rallied behind Vardaman and Bilbo, while most businessmen, lawyers, and planters supported Percy and Alexander. The political alignment that the Populists had tried unsuccessfully to achieve two decades earlier finally came to fruition.²⁵

The life-form of agrarian class conflict reigned supreme in 1911. Progressivism flourished alongside, but it contained the radical anti-establishment dimension to which Vardaman became increasingly committed. Elections in Mississippi were never the same again.

Agrarian Class Conflict (1915-1922)

The gubernatorial election of 1915 was a direct descendent of the 1911 senatorial race and the Brewer administration. Brewer's term as governor had been marked by a continuation of progressive legislation, on the one hand, and by growing political warfare between the governor and Lieutenant Governor Bilbo, on the other.

²⁵Holmes, pp. 228-229.

The most important policy to come out of the Brewer administration was the ratification of a series of amendments to the Constitution of 1890, the most important of which provided for the initiative and referendum and the popular election of judges. This action was in response to the passage in 1912 of the school equalization fund--dear to the hearts of the small farmers--only to have the act declared unconstitutional by the state Supreme Court. The entire judicial structure was becoming increasingly regarded as a holdover bastion of establishment protectionism, and this decision confirmed the verdict in the minds of the farmers. The 1914 session wasted little time in proposing the package of constitutional amendments, and they were ratified handily by the electorate. More than any other issue during the Brewer administration, the school fund controversy and the constitutional amendments tapped the life-form of agrarian class conflict.²⁶

The growing feud between Brewer and Bilbo--began when Brewer launched an investigation into the state penitentiary which implicated some Bilbo cronies--culminated in the spectacular Steve Castleman affair. Bilbo and a state senator friend were indicted and tried--on evidence

²⁶George Howell, "Legislation By Direct Democracy," Public Administration Survey 12 (January 1975): 1-5.

allegedly gathered by Brewer operatives--for accepting bribes from Castleman to affect the fate of a bill before the Legislature.²⁷ As Bilbo had done in 1911, he again boldly announced for governor with the Castleman bribery trial in process. Conviction or acquittal probably would have mattered little to his followers, who saw in the whole affair just another conspiracy to ruin their hero. After his acquittal, at a victory rally in Jackson, a spokesman from Tallahatchie County reported that 750 armed men were prepared to remove Bilbo from jail had he been convicted.²⁸

The old planter faction did not field a candidate in 1915, so complete had been the Vardaman-Bilbo rout of 1911. All of those who ran had been associated with the Vardaman group in the past: Bilbo, W. M. Reily of Natchez, P.S. Stovall and H.M. Quinn of Jackson, and J. R. Tally of Hattiesburg.²⁹ It soon became evident that it was the field against Bilbo, with all of his opponents unsuccessfully challenging him to debates and attempting to drive a wedge between him and Vardaman.³⁰ The conservative rump

²⁷For a good account of the Castleman affair, see Kirwan, pp. 241-251.

²⁸Ibid., p. 251.

²⁹Hamilton dissertation, pp. 298-299.

³⁰Kirwan, pp. 252-253.

generally lined up behind Reily;³¹ and Brewer, who wanted only to defeat Bilbo, campaigned vigorously against him, trying to make the Castleman affair a death blow.³² Despite the efforts of the anti-Bilbo press to convey the impression that Vardaman was not supporting him, the senator seems to have backed Bilbo and his running mate for lieutenant governor, Lee Russell.³³

Specific issues were not salient in the campaign. It turned largely around the personality of Bilbo and the scandals surrounding him. To the opponents of Bilbo no epithet was too strong. They called him over and over "the self-confessed bribe taker."³⁴ Vardaman's opponents saw in him some idealism and statesmanship mixed in with his demagoguery; his character had, at least, complexity. Not so with Bilbo. "To them he was evil incarnate, and they were never able to understand the hold which he gained on the people of the state."³⁵ Whereas Percy, for example, "rather liked Vardaman,"³⁶ his son, William

³¹Hamilton dissertation, p. 300.

³²Green, p. 51.

³³Hamilton dissertation, p. 300.

³⁴Kirwan, p. 255.

³⁵Ibid., p. 240.

³⁶Percy, p. 144.

Alexander Percy, who refused even to mention Bilbo's name, recounted his impression:

The man responsible for tearing Father's reputation to tatters and saddening three lives was a pert little monster, glib and shameless, with that sort of cunning common to criminals which passes for intelligence. The people loved him. They loved him not because they were deceived in him, but because they understood him thoroughly; they said of him proudly, 'He's a slick little bastard.' He was one of them and he had risen from obscurity to the fame of glittering infamy-- it was as if they themselves had crashed the headlines.³⁷

Bilbo did not use the race issue as had Vardaman. He appealed to voters instead on a broad program of progressive reform in the tradition of recent governors. On the emotional level, he appealed to them as a crusader against the oligarchy at the very time the oligarchs were attempting to destroy him.³⁸ Bilbo was elected in the first primary with 50.4% of the votes in a field of five with a record turnout.

Political history has recorded few examples of a political demise which would match that of Vardaman in the senate race of 1918. From the pinnacle of power in 1911, with a control over state politics never before exerted, Vardaman lost his bid for re-election in 1918 and was

³⁷Ibid., p. 148.

³⁸Kirwan, p. 253.

never elected to public office in Mississippi again. The reason was his conscience.

Vardaman joined the liberal-progressive bloc in the Senate led by LaFollette and Norris.³⁹ During his tenure he favored the enactment of the first U.S. income tax (and led a bolt from the Democratic caucus in an effort to get higher rates for the rich), supported enactment of the Federal Reserve Banking System, voted for the Clayton Anti-Trust bill (with regrets that it was not stronger), worked actively for the Child Labor Law (one of the few southern senators to do so), spoke often in favor of larger agricultural appropriations and more postal savings banks, fought for the Flood Control Act, and opposed American imperialism.⁴⁰

Vardaman's racist positions continued, as was evidenced in his anti-imperialism arguments and opposition to female enfranchisement (only because it would enfranchise black women too). He spoke against funds for Negro education in the Smith-Level Act and campaigned for national

³⁹Ibid., p. 277.

⁴⁰He felt that no nation had the right to rule another people who wanted to be free and that the only reason the U.S. stayed in the Philippines was because of timber and mineral interests. For an excellent treatment of Vardaman's Senate career, see Holmes, Chapters 10 and 11. The material in this section is taken from same.

disenfranchisement of black voters. Consistent with his past, however, he also spoke out against anti-Semitism and supported vigorously the confirmation of Brandeis to the Supreme Court.⁴¹ For these positions, he received much praise in the Mississippi press.

Vardaman's undoing was his opposition to American entry into World War I. He originally supported Wilson's policy of strict neutrality; but after the Lusitania crisis converted Wilson to a policy of preparedness, Vardaman began to break with the administration. He saw preparedness as the enemy of democracy, large standing armies as a threat to the people. The frenzy for military build-up had come, he reasoned, from greedy businessmen and financiers who would profit from their military contracts. He continued to oppose preparedness measures, joined five others in voting against the declaration of war, and subsequently opposed the draft. It was his position that if the "plain, honest people, the masses who are to bear the burden of taxation and fight the Nation's battles were consulted, there would be no fighting."⁴²

The senatorial race does not require much analysis. Congressman Pat Harrison announced against Vardaman and

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Holmes, p. 318.

ran almost exclusively on the issue of Vardaman's opposition to the war. Using his considerable oratorical skills, Harrison painted Vardaman into an untenable corner. Despite Vardaman's valiant attempt to portray the war as a false issue and as a new manifestation of the old Percy-establishment tactic of destroying the "White Chief," this time he could not overcome the national issue of war and patriotism. Harrison won by 56,715 votes to Vardaman's 44,254. "Granny" Noel came in a distant third with 6730.⁴³ A widely published letter from President Wilson calling for his defeat and an estrangement between him and Bilbo were important factors in Vardaman's demise.⁴⁴ Governor Bilbo himself, running for Harrison's congressional seat, was badly defeated.

Regarding the elections of 1915 and 1918, the gubernatorial primary of 1915 found the life-form of agrarian class conflict dominant, both in terms of style and hard issues. The initiative and referendum and school fund controversy demonstrated the willingness and ability of the Hills to alter the structure of government and the distribution of state funds along class lines. In terms of style, Bilbo was the quintessential "redneck" candidate

⁴³Kirwan, pp. 287-288.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 290.

which the Delta loathed and the Hills embraced. The planters and moderate progressives opposed Bilbo; the small farmers followed him joyously. The degree to which the lines even in this race were blurred was due to two factors: the ever-present personal factionalism which often pitted candidates of similar ideological bent against each other, and the fact that the hard-core Bourbons were forced to support the lesser progressive and pro-Hills candidate rather than a clearly defined advocate of the black belt.

In the extraordinary senate race of 1918 the class cleavage was still strong but was blurred considerably by the issue of patriotism and the war. Vardaman handed the black belt a great gift with his stance on the war. On that issue alone, enough small farmers shifted their support to Harrison to enable a candidate very acceptable to the Delta to build an electoral majority. The issue of patriotism, however, eclipsed the life-form of class but did not permanently impair it.

The 1919 gubernatorial election was closely tied to the Bilbo administration. Despite dire expectations to the contrary, Bilbo had had an extraordinarily successful term. No less eminent a historian than George B. Tindall declares that "His programs . . . marked the climax of the progressive era in Mississippi. . . . He was unique in this positive phase of progressivism. No other leader

of the plebeian masses in the teens had either a program or a record to equal his."⁴⁵ Outstanding in his reform package were two programs which were deeply set in the life-forms of class and progressivism--state taxation procedures and secondary education.⁴⁶

In reforming the state taxation procedures, Bilbo reciprocated to the black counties their feeling for him. With state revenues based predominantly on the property tax, a deficit had been growing for years because of counties' abuse of the system. Under the tax laws the Legislature would set the levy, but the counties would assess the property within their boundaries. In order to avoid state tax, the Boards of Supervisors would under-assess property, while at the same time the Legislature was forced repeatedly to raise the levy. With the levy at nine mills in 1916, Bilbo inherited a state debt of \$2.5 million. The Delta and River Counties were the worst

⁴⁵Tindall, p. 224.

⁴⁶For treatments of the first Bilbo administration, see Kirwan, Chapter 20; McCain in McLemore, vol. 2; Green, pp. 56-63; Hamilton dissertation, pp. 312-361; William D. McCain, "Theodore Gilmore Bilbo and the Mississippi Delta," Journal of Mississippi History (February 1969); 1-27; Howell, "Legislation by Direct Democracy"; and William Neil Washburn, "Progressive Education Reform in Mississippi During the First Bilbo Administration, 1916-1920," (M.A. Thesis, University of Mississippi, 1962).

offenders.⁴⁷

Under the Kyle Law of 1916 there was created a central board of equalization (precursor of the present State Tax Commission) which had the vast power of revising any county assessments which it deemed unrealistic. Within a year of its creation, the assessments on railroads and public service corporations increased \$40 million. In sixty-five of the poorer counties the assessments were reduced, while assessments in most Delta and River counties were increased dramatically. Within a year the budget was balanced and, at Bilbo's urging, the levy was reduced to four mills. The lower millage, however, produced another deficit in 1918 and the rate had to be raised to six mills.⁴⁸ This was all done midst ". . . howls of protest from the Delta where low assessments on realty were coupled with leniency toward corporations."⁴⁹

Advances in education represented another major achievement for the administration.⁵⁰ The 1918 Legislature submitted to the people a school equalization law under the initiative and referendum, and in the November election

⁴⁷Kirwan, pp. 261-263.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 263-264.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 263.

⁵⁰Hamilton dissertation, p. 342.

of 1919 it was adopted 27,454 to 5954, carrying all forty-two of the Hills counties and seventeen of the forty black counties.⁵¹ The Legislature also enacted much of the rewritten education code, including a compulsory school attendance law.⁵² There were even some beginnings in the long and slow process of improving Negro education.⁵³ During the Bilbo administration the number of students increased by about 100,000, 600 new high schools were formed, 295 consolidated school districts were created, the average term increased from five to six months, and there was a 50% increase in state appropriations for secondary education. The United States Commissioner of Education reported that Mississippi had made more progress in public education than had any other state in the preceeding decade.⁵⁴

It is also interesting to note that there was not present in the Bilbo administration the same anti-corporation sentiment as was found in Vardaman's. Bilbo, in fact,

⁵¹Howell, p. 6.

⁵²Washburn, p. 78.

⁵³Hamilton reports, for example, that for the first time in many years Negro representatives had appeared at the Legislature to plea for more agricultural high schools and consolidated schools. Hamilton dissertation, p. 355.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 359.

proposed some pro-business development ideas, such as tax exemptions for ship building in the state and for new hotels.⁵⁵

In spite of the achievements of the administration, which even the conservative press was forced to praise, there were also the inevitable Bilbo scandals. The scandals during his term as governor revolved around, not political trickery, but his moral life. He had long had the reputation of being a "ladies' man," a reputation which began, in part, during the Dulaney bribery scandal of 1910.⁵⁶

During his first term an investigating committee was established to probe into wide-spread reports that Bilbo was visiting the Beauvoir Home for Confederate Veterans because of the nurses and that he had sired an illegitimate child by one of them. "No proof of a moral lapse was presented, but Bilbo's violence and empty verbosity suggest that the committee had sounded him on a sore spot."⁵⁷

The most spectacular scandal involved the state insane hospital, where reports in the press suggested

⁵⁵McCain in McLemore, vol. 2, pp. 66.

⁵⁶Kirwan, p. 199.

⁵⁷Green, p. 60.

wide-spread immorality among the nurses. Under the new direction of a Bilbo crony, Dr. R. M. Butler, the asylum was found by a legislative investigating committee to be in a deplorable condition with graft and wide-spread immorality the rule among staff. The report called for the impeachment of Butler, whom Bilbo defended fully until he finally resigned.⁵⁸ There was the constant implication that Bilbo himself was involved in the orgies, and "again he threw up a bulwark of words, not denying his midnight prowls in the training school for nurses, not pretending to be ignorant of what was going on, not acknowledging his duty as chief state official to restrain licentiousness in state institutions."⁵⁹ At least, the Jackson Daily News had learned a lesson. Remembering how Bilbo had turned the Dulaney and Castleman bribery scandals to his advantage, the Daily News disagreed with those who wanted to impeach Bilbo as well as Butler and suggested that they leave "his fate in the hands of the Lord."⁶⁰

From the reform and scandal emerged Lieutenant Governor Russell, who had been Bilbo's faithful leader of the Mississippi Senate. He was clearly the choice of

⁵⁸Kirwan, pp. 267-270.

⁵⁹Green, p. 63.

⁶⁰Kirwan, p. 269.

Bilbo; and later in the campaign Vardaman also endorsed him, contending that the election represented another episode in the eternal struggle of the rich against the poor.⁶¹ Perhaps buoyed by the personal scandal surrounding Bilbo, the black belt counties had a bona fide candidate in Oscar Johnston of Coahoma County, who had been a leader of the Delta forces in the Legislature.⁶² Attorney General Ross Collins, a Vardaman man who was elected in the sweep of 1911 and subsequently split with Bilbo, and former Governor Longino, who entered the field late, completed the list of candidates.⁶³

The campaign was reported to have been dull and lethargic. The most attention was paid to sensational charges by Collins that Russell planned to appoint Bilbo president of the Industrial Institute and College for Women at Columbus, if elected. The anti-Bilbo press picked up on the charge and professed shock at the prospect of placing ". . . the defender and alleged participant in the insane asylum . . . scandal of lust at the head of the State Female College."⁶⁴ Character attacks among the

⁶¹Kirwan, p. 295.

⁶²Ibid., p. 292.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 293.

candidates were traded freely.

On the issues there was one clear division along the geographic fault line of the class conflict. Russell defended and promised to strengthen the state tax commission, and Johnston promised to abolish it. There was the same division on the question of the Pardon Board.⁶⁵

Longino contributed little to the campaign. Despite the low level of interest, almost 150,000 votes were cast and threw Johnston and Russell into a runoff.⁶⁶

The second primary sharpened the Russell attack on Johnston as being the rich man's candidate. It also sharpened the Tax Commission dispute. Russell proclaimed that "if the Tax Commission is repealed valuation in the Delta will drop one hundred million dollars, and the lumber trust will put its timber assessment down. . . . This would put the burden of taxation largely upon the hill counties of the state."⁶⁷ Johnston was denounced as anti-democratic, based on his legislative opposition to the initiative and referendum and popular election of judges. He was charged with being ". . . the right hand man of Earl Brewer, 'Oily

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 292.

⁶⁶Abney, p. 88.

⁶⁷"The Issue Print," Russell Campaign Hand-out, 1919, in the Special Collections of the Mississippi State University.

Jack' Cutrer, and ex-Senator Leroy Percy. The people, that is the great mass of the common people, can expect nothing at the hands of Oscar Johnston."⁶⁸

If the black counties had hoped to capitalize on the Bilbo scandal, their opportunity was lost when the conservative votes were split between Johnston and Longino in the first primary. In the runoff, the "rednecks" still reigned, as Russell won 77,427 (52.7%) to 69,565 (47.3%).⁶⁹

Vardaman attempted a comeback in 1922 by running for the senate seat vacated by John Sharp Williams. After his defeat in 1918, Vardaman had returned to editorship of a Jackson-based weekly, this time called the Vardaman Weekly, and had attacked Williams consistently for inebriety. He had also continued his attacks on the trusts and corporate wealth, saying that it was the rich capitalists who had painted him as pro-German in 1918. He defended the labor movement in his columns, saying that he ". . . should like to know how long the capitalists would enjoy the luxuries of life if it were not for the products of the hands that toil."⁷⁰

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Abney, p. 88.

⁷⁰Kirwan, p. 300.

Vardaman's opponent was the colorless Hubert Stephens, who attacked Vardaman for his radical views and his disloyalty during the war. He charged that Vardaman's main supporters were "I.W.W.'s, Communists, Bolshevists, radical-Socialists, pro-Germans, men who refused to subscribe to Liberty Loan drives, draft obstructors, and confidants of Lenin or Trotsky."⁷¹

Vardaman made but one speech during the campaign, and "it was known that Vardaman's absence from the stump was due to mental illness."⁷² His pitiful condition was openly remarked on by the press, and in this dire circumstance his old ally Bilbo, despite their estrangement, took to the stump in his behalf. Even though Vardaman was unable to speak for himself, his faithful following gave him a lead in the first primary with 74,573 votes (30,000 more than he had gotten in 1918). He lost the runoff, however, to Stephens by a margin of 52.3% to 47.6%.⁷³ Vardaman ". . . was taken to the home of a daughter in Birmingham, Alabama, where he spent the remaining years of his life secluded and perhaps unconscious

⁷¹Ibid., p. 301.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Abney, p. 29.

of his and his faction's disintegration."⁷⁴

The hard issue of the 1919 race was the tax equalization law implemented by Bilbo, a clear division between the black and white counties. This was in addition, of course, to the style differences between Russell, Bilbo's protege from deep in the Hills of Lafayette County, and Johnston, patrician planter from equally deep in the Delta.

In 1922 the class division was powerful, but again the planter class was blessed with the memories of Vardaman's war record and his obviously failing mental health. It is a testament to the strength of the life-form that despite these debilitating impairments the "White Chief" led the first primary with a substantial margin.

⁷⁴Kirwan, p. 303.

CHAPTER 6

ERA I: ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Figure 24 presents a matrix of correlation coefficients of the votes among the second-primary candidates for governor.

FIGURE 24

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES ERA I

		<u>1903</u>		<u>1907</u>		<u>1919</u>	
		CRITZ	VARDAMAN	BREWER	NOEL	RUSSELL	JOHNSTON
1903	CRITZ		-1.0				
	VARDAMAN						
1907	BREWER				-1.0		
	NOEL						
1919	RUSSELL						-1.0
	JOHNSTON						

It is surprising on first blush that there are no coefficients significant at the .05 level or better. One

would ordinarily expect some degree of relationship among runoffs in temporally close elections. The matrix simply reflects, however, the formative nature of 1903 and 1907 and how those second primaries were unrelated to the only other runoff of the era (1919). The elections of 1903 and 1907 were rather amorphous in terms of issues and were highly influenced by the complex array of factions still surrounding the McLaurin machine. The Delta-Hills life-form was only developing, awaiting to be crystallized by the senatorial race of 1911. There was, of course, no election in 1911 and no runoff in 1915 (Bilbo-Riley); and the 1919 runoff does not relate significantly to the pre-1911 gubernatorial runoffs.

Figure 25 illustrates the inter-relationship among the first primary votes of the two leading candidates. The first primary matrix illustrates the weak and formative nature of the 1903 election. The Vardaman-Critz race correlates weakly with the subsequent election of 1907 but with no others of the era (except for the weak relationship between Critz and Johnston in 1919). This is, no doubt, due to the confused perception of Vardaman in that race as a man firmly from the Bourbon tradition but talking "redneck" and also to the predominance of factional alignments. The lack of a real choice between fellow progressives Noel and Brewer in 1907 can also be seen,

FIGURE 25

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN FIRST PRIMARY
GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
ERA I

		1903		1907		1915		1919	
		CRITZ	VARDAMAN	BREWER	NOEL	BILBO	RILEY	RUSSELL	JOHNSTON
1903	CRITZ		-.65	-.18	-.18				+.19
	VARDAMAN				-.32				
1907	BREWER				-.28	+.35	-.23	+.21	
	NOEL					+.31	-.41		-.45
1915	BILBO						-.77	+.59	-.66
	RILEY							-.43	+.69
1919	RUSSELL								-.55
	JOHNSTON								

first, in the fact that their own votes correlate only -.28 with each other, and, second, that they both correlate the same way with other candidates (negatively with Noel, positively with Bilbo, negatively with Riley, etc.). It is also a commentary on the inability of politicians even in this era to "deliver" votes when one notices that Brewer correlates +.35 with Bilbo, against whom he campaigned so vigorously.

The cleavages are much clearer in the 1915 and 1919 races, with the Bilbo/Riley correlation being an era high between first-primary opponents of $-.77$. The Bilbo-Russell alliance is clearly demonstrated, as is the position of Johnston as the most clearly defined Delta candidate of the era.

Figure 26 is a correlation matrix matching first primary votes with second primary votes, and is suggestive of the differences between basic support of a candidate

FIGURE 26
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN FIRST
PRIMARY AND SECOND PRIMARY
GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
ERA I

		1st Primary								
		1903		1907		1915		1919		
		CRITZ	VARDAMAN	BREWER	NOEL	BILBO	RILEY	RUSSELL	JOHNS.	
2nd Primary	1903	CRITZ	+ .69 - .90	-.23	+.24			-.21		
	VARDAMAN	-.69	+ .90	+.23	-.24			+.21		
	1907	BREWER			+.64	-.58			+.19	
	NOEL			-.64	+.58			-.19		
	1919	RUSSELL			+.27	+.29	+.78	-.69	+.81	-.80
	JOHNSTON			-.27	-.29	-.78	+.69	-.81	+.80	

(first primary vote) and his coalition support (second primary vote).

Looking at Figures 24, 25, and 26 together, Critz's first-primary support did not seem to be a base for other first-primary candidates, nor did it serve as a predictor for any subsequent coalitional, or second-primary, votes. Critz's coalition in the second primary of 1903 does relate negatively to the Noel-Brewer and Russell-Johnston first primary votes, suggesting, thereby, that in his second-primary coalition were to be found the seeds, albeit weak, of future first-primary candidacies. It is interesting that whereas Noel's first primary vote correlates negatively with both Critz and Vardaman, it flips to a positive relationship with Critz's runoff coalition. The pattern with Vardaman in 1903 is close to the reverse of Critz's, except that it is even less distinct. It does suggest that Brewer was, in fact, more in the tradition of Vardaman's coalition of 1903 than was Noel.

The charts also surprise one with the importance of the Noel-Brewer race of 1907. Even though the first and second primary matrices taken alone suggest a common base of support, the first-primary-second-primary matrix suggests that Noel arose out of the Critz coalition and Brewer out of the Vardaman. The Noel and Brewer second primary coalitions do not relate to the Bilbo-Riley votes

of 1915, but their first-primary votes do. Their common base of first primary support reappears as they both relate positively to Bilbo and negatively to Riley. The same is true of their relationship to Russell-Johnston--both correlate positively with Russell. In the case of Russell, however, the different nature of Noel's and Brewer's second-primary coalitions can be seen as Brewer relates to Russell positively and Noel to him negatively.

The confusion of the first two elections is matched by the relative clarity of the 1915 and 1919 races. Figure 26 shows how strongly Bilbo's base correlates with Russell's base and his coalition, as does Riley's vote with that of Johnston.

The importance of the senatorial election of 1911 as a clarifying and structuring political event can be seen in Figure 27, which displays matrices of coefficients among first gubernatorial primaries and senate races. It shows the weak relationship of the Money-Longino race to subsequent gubernatorial first primaries. One is also surprised by the low level of relationship between Vardaman's 1903 vote and that of his cousin, Money. Both were using almost identical racial appeals, but it might well have been that the more radical "redneck" rhetoric of Vardaman accounted for the differences in their bases of support. The senate race of 1907 (Vardaman-Williams) began to bring

FIGURE 27

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN FIRST
PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL AND SENATORIAL
CANDIDATES, ERA I

		1903		GUBERNATORIAL				1919	
		CRITZ	VARDAMAN	1907		1915		RUSSELL	JOHNSTON
SENATORIAL	1903								
	MONEY	-.19	+.29	X	X	X	X	X	X
	LONGINO	+.19	-.29	X	X	X	X	X	X
	1907								
	VARDAMAN	-.27	+.20	+.52	X	+.58	-.40	+.57	-.40
	WILLIAMS	+.27	-.20	-.52	X	-.57	+.40	-.57	+.40
	1911								
	VARDAMAN	-.20	X	+.32	+.25	+.95	-.70	+.64	-.72
	PERCY/ ALEXANDER	+.20	X	-.32	-.25	-.85	+.70	-.64	+.72
	1918								
VARDAMAN	-.29	X	+.38	+.36	+.73	-.60	+.60	-.60	
HARRISON	+.29	X	-.38	-.36	-.73	+.60	-.60	+.60	
1922									
VARDAMAN	X	X	+.22	+.25	+.77	-.65	X	-.71	
STEPHENS	X	X	-.22	-.25	-.77	+.65	X	+.71	

elements of order. The relationship with Brewer is strong, even though there is none with Noel (reading the matrix down the Brewer-Noel columns further illustrates their common base of support). The relationships of the 1907 senate race to subsequent gubernatorial first primaries is in the range of $|.40|$ to $|.58|$.

The matrix shows great strength and order, however, in the lower right-hand quadrant, in which the correlations between Vardaman-Percy/Alexander and subsequent gubernatorial races are displayed. The average of the possible coefficients, taken as an absolute value, between the 1911 senate race and subsequent first primaries is .75. There are also rich and strong relationships among the subsequent senate races of the era and the gubernatorial first primaries. In terms of the relationship between senatorial votes and first-primary votes in the governor's races, 1911 was clearly a crucial, order-producing election.

The same can be seen in Figure 28, which examines the relationship between senatorial votes and second-primary (or coalitional) votes in the governors' races. The 1903 election is weakly related to subsequent second primaries; the 1907 Vardaman-Williams contest adds strength to the order; and the 1911 race, and subsequent senate elections, have strong relationships to subsequent second primary coalitions. As in the case of the first-primary-second-primary gubernatorial matrix, the Critz and Vardaman second primary coalitions relate more strongly to senate races than do their first primary votes. The Brewer-Noel coalitions wash out in the matrix. It is also interesting to note that Vardaman's second primary

FIGURE 28

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND
PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL AND
SENATORIAL CANDIDATES
ERA I

		GUBERNATORIAL					
		1903		1907		1919	
		CRITZ	VARDAMAN	BREWER	NOEL	RUSSELL	JOHNSTON
1903	MONEY	- .19	+ .19				
	LONGINO	+ .19	- .19				
1907	VARDAMAN	- .35	+ .35	+ .22	- .22	+ .59	- .59
	WILLIAMS	+ .35	- .35	- .22	+ .22	- .59	+ .59
1911	VARDAMAN	- .24	+ .24			+ .80	- .80
	PERCY/ ALEXAND.	+ .24	- .24			- .80	+ .80
1918	VARDAMAN	- .21	+ .21			+ .74	- .74
	HARRISON	+ .21	- .21			- .74	+ .74
1922	VARDAMAN					+ .85	- .85
	STEPHENS					- .85	+ .85

vote in 1903 provided a base, although weak at times and non-existent in 1922, for his senate races, whereas his first primary support in 1903 relates only to his 1907 senate race.

Figure 29 matrix shows the inter-relationships among the senate races themselves and will not require commentary.

FIGURE 29
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN
SENATORIAL CANDIDATES
ERA I

		1903		1907		1911		1918		1922	
		MONEY	LONGINO	VARDAMAN	WILLIAMS	VARDAMAN	PERCY/ ALEXANDER	VARDAMAN	HARRISON	VARDAMAN	STEPHENS
1903	MONEY		-1.0								
1903	LONGINO										
1907	VARDAMAN				-1.0	+0.70	-0.70	+0.62	-0.62	+0.54	-0.54
1907	WILLIAMS					+1.0	+0.70	-0.62	+0.62	-0.54	+0.54
1911	VARDAMAN						-1.0	+0.69	-0.69	+0.72	-0.72
1911	PERCY/ ALEXAND.							-0.69	+0.69	-0.72	+0.72
1918	VARDAMAN								-1.0	+0.79	-0.79
1918	HARRISON									-0.79	+0.79
1922	VARDAMAN										-1.0
1922	STEPHENS										

Figures 30, 31, and 32 explore the relationship between candidates' votes and certain turnout, socio-economic, and referendum variables. In each chart, Row 1 reports the correlations between turnout and votes; Row 2, the correlations between votes and percentage black, population density (population in census closest in time to the

FIGURE 30

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN FIRST
PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
AND CERTAIN VARIABLES
ERA I

	1903		1907		1915		1919	
	CRITZ	WARDAMAN	BREWER	NOEL	BILBO	RILEY	RUSSELL	JOHNSTON
1. TURNOUT	-.21	X	X	X	+ .55	-.39	+ .37	-.33
2. % BLACK	X	X	-.20	-.36	-.62	+ .72	-.37	+ .61
DENSITY	-.29	+ .37	X	-.20	-.37	+ .29	-.25	+ .46
WHITE TENANCY	-.22	X	+ .47	+ .26	+ .57	-.59	+ .41	-.41
3. SCHOOL FUND	X	X	+ .21	+ .30	+ .56	-.65	+ .38	-.59

given election divided by county area), and percentage white tenancy; and Row 3, the correlations between candidates' votes and the vote on the school fund referendum.

Row 1 in all three charts indicates that turnout, when related to voting, clearly favored the agrarian masses, especially after the realigning election of 1911. Row 2 shows that the percentage black and percentage white tenancy variables behave as one would expect--that is, percent black correlates negatively with "redneck"

FIGURE 31

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND
PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
AND CERTAIN VARIABLES
ERA I

	1903		1907		1919	
	CRITZ	VARDAMAN	BREWER	NOEL	RUSSELL	JOHNSTON
1. TURNOUT	X	X	X	X	+ .54	- .54
2. % BLACK	X	X	X	X	- .67	+ .67
DENSITY	-.36	+.36	X	X	-.44	+.44
WHITE TENANCY	-.20	+.20	X	X	+.61	-.61
3. SCHOOL FUND	X	X	X	X	+.61	-.61

candidates and positively with Bourbons, and vice versa with percentage white tenancy. The two socio-economic variables generally move together, though inversely, throughout the era. In one case in Figure 30, Johnston's first primary vote correlates substantially higher with percentage black than with percentage white tenancy, suggesting that he, of the gubernatorial candidates in Era I, was the quintessential representative of the Delta. Density in these early decades of the twentieth

FIGURE 32

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN
 SENATORIAL CANDIDATES AND
 CERTAIN VARIABLES
 ERA I

	1903		1907		1911		1918		1922	
	MONEY	LONGINO	VARDAMAN	WILLIAMS	VARDAMAN	PERCY/ ALEXANDER	VARDAMAN	HARRISON	VARDAMAN	STEPHENS
1. TURNOUT	not available		+ .34	- .34	+ .29	- .29	+ .63	- .63	+ .33	- .33
2. % BLACK	X		- .30	+ .30	- .54	+ .54	- .44	+ .44	- .59	+ .59
DENSITY	X		X		- .28	+ .28	- .20	+ .20	- .38	+ .38
WHITE TENANCY	- .19	+ .19	+ .44	- .44	+ .47	- .47	+ .64	- .64	+ .56	- .56
3. SCHOOL FUND	X		+ .27	- .27	+ .53	- .53	+ .42	- .42	+ .51	- .51

century was more a measure of planter counties (which were more populous) than of urbanization, and this variable behaves with few surprises.

Row 3 shows the clear, positive relationship between small farmer candidates and the vote in favor of the school equalizing fund referendum. In all three charts, the formative nature of 1903 and 1907 is confirmed. Agrarian class conflict sprang to life full-grown in the senatorial race of 1911, an event which brought extraordinary order to the era.

Conclusion

The first decade of the twentieth century witnessed in Mississippi politics an emerging struggle between the planters and the agrarian masses. The history of the period 1875-1903 had laid the foundation for this electoral cleavage, but it had also blurred sharp distinctions. In 1903, Vardaman, as the candidate, was not universally perceived as an advocate in a sharply defined class struggle. His administration and his 1907 senate race against John Sharp Williams clarified that image greatly. In the gubernatorial race of 1907, the class division was expressed in terms of more progressive or less progressive candidates.

The growing tension between more progressive elements in the system and the Bourbon-rooted conservatives burst out in the Secret Caucus of 1910, a political event which radically crystallized the agrarian class cleavage and made it the predominant life-form giving order to electoral behavior. It was, in fact, at this one juncture in Mississippi history, more than at any other in the twentieth century, that state politics had the possibility of re-ordering itself into a bifactional system. Given the unprecedented power Vardaman had in 1911, it seems likely that he could have built a cohesive organization and possible that he could have gone so far as to restructure

some of the rules of 1890. Vardaman, however, did not have much sense of political organization--". . . his vote remained a personal rather than an organizational matter."¹ Furthermore, he did not have a governor beholden to him during the term 1912-1916, because Brewer had been elected without opposition. Especially given Brewer's feud with Bilbo, it is likely that the governor would have fought too great a consolidation of Vardaman's power. A third factor was a certain jealousy that existed between Vardaman and Bilbo, a factor which could have made Bilbo reluctant to restructure the rules until his own power had been consolidated. A fourth factor was, of course, Vardaman's political demise as a result of his war stance.

If the 1911 uprising did not create a new political machine, it did give clear order to voting behavior in subsequent elections of the era. The agrarian class life-form was strongly felt in the gubernatorial races of 1915 and 1919 and in the senatorial elections of 1918 and 1922. Bilbo continued to accentuate the cleavage, because he knew enough arithmetic to know where the majority was. He translated the electoral cleavage into policy by helping pass the Tax Commission law and thereby helped keep the life-form alive and healthy. The same was true

¹Hamilton dissertation, p. 85.

with Lee Russell. In senatorial politics, which was unique in Era I because of the degree to which it gave order to all elections, the more conservative elements were more successful. One seat was retained by Williams and then Stephens, and the other, except for Vardaman's one term, was held by Percy and Pat Harrison.²

As with many large social-political movements, the Vardaman phenomenon had in it the seeds of its own change and ultimate demise. The agrarian class life-form, so compelling a distinction during Era I, was by the early twenties losing some of its vitality. A changing world was making the basis on which the life-form rested less relevant to peoples' concerns--a sure harbinger of death for any political form. Bilbo, the heir to Vardaman and his "rednecks," continued to be the "stormy petrel" of Mississippi politics for years to come, but his strut was on a changing stage, which he, in part, had helped to build.

²This tendency of the Mississippi electorate to prefer senatorial candidates of a more patrician and conservative background than that of their gubernatorial nominees can be seen to the present day.

PART THREE

ERA II (1923-1943): THE EMERGENCE OF THE
MODERNIZATION CONSENSUS AND ELECTORAL
MODULATION AMONG LIFE-FORMS

The main feature of Era II was the emergence of modernization as a major life-form. But, as is the case with all substantial political phenomena, it did not burst upon the scene unheralded. In the inaugural addresses and policies of the governors of Era I there were clear seeds of the modernization consensus. As has been noted above, progressivism itself was closely akin to modernization, especially the more moderate, urban progressivism of men like Noel, Brewer, and even Bilbo. The radical anti-corporationism of Vardaman began to evolve into more moderate progressivism under Noel and Brewer, and this trend might well have continued even at the electoral level were it not for the Secret Caucus. That cataclysmic event re-radicalized the rhetoric of electoral politics, most notably in the person of Theodore Bilbo. But, in his governance, as distinct from his campaigns, Bilbo himself was a moderate progressive and even something of a modernizer. Two strong modernization themes, for example, are evident in his inaugural address--the need to centralize state power and the need to attract outside capital. Lee Russell, winning the governorship as Bilbo's heir apparent, launched his administration on a similar tone. Yet, none of the governors of Era I was willing to make a major campaign issue or policy priority of the

repeal of Mississippi's anti-corporation statutes. This was to be the legacy of Henry Whitfield and the herald of a new major life-form--modernization.

Unlike Era I--in which one particular life-form (namely, agrarian class conflict) emerged to dominate electoral politics--Era II produced a remarkable modulation among all the life-forms. Strong remnants of class conflict were seen in most elections; progressivism likewise flourished; race became involved in several of the contests; and the modernization consensus continued to build strength throughout the period. World War II produced not only an atypical gubernatorial election (1943) but also enormous social and economic impact on the political system. The Bourbon class and the "redneck" class continued to change throughout the era, as they interacted with, became partially absorbed by, and unmistakably colored the growing middle class.

Part Three shall first deal with the transition election of 1923, during which modernization emerged as a clear electoral life-form. Chapter 8 will then examine the period 1927-1942, followed by Chapter 9 on the atypical election of 1943. Chapter 10 shall present the statistical analysis of the period and the conclusions.

CHAPTER 7

1923: A TRANSITION ELECTION

The election of Henry Whitfield in 1923 has been viewed by many analysts as a victory for conservatism. Abney states, for example, that "the election of H.L. Whitfield in 1923 brought to a halt the period of reform in Mississippi politics."¹ Hamilton sees the Whitfield administration as the end of the progressive era, an acceptance of a "Warren G. Harding atmosphere," a settling in of public apathy, and a resurgence of the power of corporations in state affairs.² Another student calls the election "a revival of conservatism in Mississippi politics."³ Throughout is the assumption that 1923 marked a victory for the Delta or conservative element in the same struggle that had been underway since

¹Abney dissertation, p. 153.

²Hamilton dissertation, p. 362.

³See Robert Larry Brown, "A Revival of Conservatism in Mississippi Politics: The Administration of Henry L. Whitfield, 1924-1927" (M.A. thesis, University of Southern Mississippi, 1977).

1903.⁴ This paper rejects this view that the Whitfield election was merely a conservative victory in the on-going agrarian class conflict.

Another school of thought places Whitfield in the line of progressive governors but sees him as representing a more conservative and business-oriented form of progressivism.⁵ George B. Tindall delineates three types of progressive southern governors during the first three decades of the century. The "Bryanized" Democrats of the 1890s and early 1900s arose out of the radical agrarianism of the West and would include in the case of Mississippi James K. Vardaman. After 1912 many southern Democrats became "Wilsonized," and while retaining a strong sense of reform and a vision of the positive state, they tended more toward the middle class form of progressivism. To some degree, men like Noel and Brewer seemed to fit into this progressive mold. A third type of progressive typified the decade of the twenties and exhibited "neo-whiggish

⁴Fortenberry and Abney, for one, seem to see politics during the period 1900-1943 as theme and variation on the Delta-Hills dispute. They say, for example, "So welcome have these industries been that within each community the old politics of the 1900-43 era has almost disappeared." Fortenberry and Abney in Havard, p. 518.

⁵See Jon Richard Lewis, "Progressivism Revisited: A Re-evaluation of Mississippi Politics, 1920-1930" (M.A. thesis, University of Southern Mississippi, 1977).

trends." They were ". . . business progressive governors, a relatively colorless group on the whole, respectable and circumspect in demeanor, 'constructive' in their approach to public problems. They stormed no citadels of entrenched 'privilege,' but carried forward the new public services that had gained acceptance in the progressive era, especially good roads and schools. Good government was for them almost a fetish."⁶

The argument of this paper is more compatible with this second school of interpretation and would classify Whitfield--even though Tindall does not mention him--as a modified progressive, a combination of Tindall's type two and three. But, the argument here goes further and contends that in this new type of progressive were found the seeds of the modernization consensus and that in Whitfield's victory of 1923 was found the bridge between an old, dying era and a new, emerging one.

The contentious administration of Russell (1920-1924) had much to do with this transition. Despite the progressive--and, in some cases, even pro-business--tone of his inaugural address, Russell's performance as governor was erratic and divisive. He became involved in confrontations with corporations which harkened back to the

⁶Tindall, p. 224. See Chapters 1 and 7.

Vardaman days. Russell instigated and supported several anti-trust suits against old line fire insurance companies in Mississippi that resulted in their withdrawal, and his litigation against Ford Motor Company caused all the dealerships in the state to close for a period of six weeks.⁷ His fight with the fire insurance companies became so bitter that Russell accused them of masterminding the sensational Frances Birkhead scandal in order to destroy him.⁸

The transformation of Russell from a positive progressive to a negative, bitter governor can be seen in his farewell address to the Legislature in 1924. Russell devoted much of his speech to personal attacks on groups and individuals who had opposed him. He railed against "the lobbyists for the predatory interests and special interests

⁷Ibid., p. 234.

⁸Birkhead, a former secretary of Russell, filed a \$100,000 suit against the governor, accusing him of repeated seduction under false pretense of marriage. Russell counter-charged that it was a conspiracy to ruin him politically, and at the trial Birkhead's story was discredited. In the process, Bilbo and Russell split. Bilbo, who had acted at one point as Russell's attorney, was now accused by Russell of having engineered "the most damnable black mail conspiracy in the history of Mississippi." Bilbo refused to answer a subpoena to testify in the trial and was sentenced to ten days in the Oxford jail. Upon his release, he announced for governor from the jail house steps. Tindall, p. 234; Kirwan, pp. 297-298.

of various kinds."⁹ He charged that "at the last session of the Legislature there was fostered here one of the most pernicious lobbies ever known in this state. . . . This was the lobby in the infamous fire insurance legislation."¹⁰

The fire insurance company controversy led him to a discussion of trusts, saying that "until recent years the average Mississippian thought little about trusts and combines. The recent fire insurance trust has awakened our people to the danger from this public enemy."¹¹ Russell asserted that Mississippi did not want business if the price was to be predatory trust practices. If the state were ". . . to make concessions to big business by making our small and honest tax payers assume the burden of taxation and let these big fellows go free, then we want them to understand that we do not want such big business. We have enough dead-heads and tax-dodgers already."¹²

Russell went on in his speech to deliver personal attacks on Bilbo, Revenue Agent W. J. Miller, who had just

⁹"Biennial Message to the Legislature of Mississippi by Governor Lee M. Russell, 1924,"p. 40.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 41.

¹¹Ibid., p. 43.

¹²Ibid., p. 46.

been elected because ". . . the insurance trusts and almost every insurance agent in the State was for him" as well as "practically all the lumber interests, the big officials of railroads, express companies, telephone companies, the banks and the corporations and big interests of all kinds."¹³

In response to a question much discussed during that era--namely, "what is the matter with Mississippi?"-- Russell claimed that nothing was wrong with the state except the propaganda being put out by the trusts. Spokesmen for business had been claiming in speeches that the laws against corporations were too drastic and that they were driving capital out of the state. Russell fulminated that "we have Chambers of Commerce in this and other States sending out propaganda all along this line. We have a number of hired newspapers, in fact a very large number in Mississippi, who either publish for pay or without pay this sort of damaging misinformation. All these are base slanderers. . . . The answer, therefore, ladies and gentlemen, to "What's the matter with Mississippi?" is the dirty criminal newspapers of this sort."¹⁴ It was certainly the the most violently anti-business rhetoric since Vardaman

¹³Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 81-83.

and a far cry from Russell's inaugural plea that the state "should lose no opportunity to encourage big business."

Russell in his campaign of 1919 had been the clear protégé of Bilbo; but in his administration he broke from the moderate-progressive line and harkened back to Vardaman. It could be argued that Russell's anti-corporation crusade helped account for the decline in several development indicators during the years, 1920-1924. It no doubt helped lay the groundwork for the transition election of 1923.

The Birkhead affair ". . . left a nauseating stench in the nostrils of many Mississippians."¹⁵ It was obvious, too, from Russell's farewell address, delivered after the campaign of 1923, that the question of "what was wrong with Mississippi" had been an issue, as had been the question of trusts.¹⁶ The scandal and radical anti-corporation stance of the Russell term had become a key issue in 1923.

The candidates in 1923 had all been Vardaman men at one time. Lester Franklin, a Delta farmer, was running

¹⁵Kirwan, p. 299.

¹⁶Russell stated that ". . . we have had Candidates for Governor of Mississippi and other candidates REFUSING to state whether they favor trusts or the people. The candidate or the official who remains silent in the face of present conditions should be looked upon with suspicion." "Biennial Address of the Governor, 1924 Regular Session," p. 45.

as the "Russell man" with the governor's public endorsement and active support. He was seen as the most radical candidate in the race. Martin Stennet "Mike" Conner --"wiz kid" of Mississippi politics, University of Mississippi graduate at age fourteen, cum laude graduate of Yale Law School, elected Speaker of the House of Representatives at age twenty-five, and now candidate for governor at thirty-two--was from Covington County in south Mississippi, had been "Bilbo's Speaker" but had broken with him, and had a somewhat blurred image in this, his first state-wide race. In general, the more conservative elements tended to support Conner in this particular field. Percy Bell tried to steer a middle course between the pro- and anti-Vardaman faction and seems to have gotten support from both quarters. Bilbo entered the field late, after his stint in the Oxford jail, and tried to unite his following; but his late announcement meant that many commitments had already been made.¹⁷ The Delta conservatives did not field a candidate.

The fifth candidate, who seemed destined to share the conservative-progressive vote with Conner, was Henry L. Whitfield. In 1898 Whitfield had been appointed state superintendent of education by fellow Rankin countian,

¹⁷Based on Kirwan, p. 303; Brown thesis, p. 3.

Governor McLaurin, and had been re-elected twice. During his term he did much to improve public education in Mississippi before moving to the presidency of Mississippi Industrial Institute and College, the state college for women. There he made an excellent record until he ran afoul of politics. In 1919 Whitfield declined to follow a Bilbo directive that he and the faculty campaign for Russell, and thereafter Russell had him fired.¹⁸

Conner ran more or less against the Varlaman-Bilbo following and specifically rejected Russell's "Utopian platforms."¹⁹ He campaigned on a platform of rigid economy in government and a balanced budget. He favored the removal of politics from higher education and was for a "fair shake" for both labor and business. He also supported the school equalizing fund.²⁰ He proposed state elections for bond issues and spoke out in favor of the recall for public officials.²¹

Franklin carried more of a curse than a blessing

¹⁸This sketch of Whitfield was based on Baker, Chapters 1 and 2.

¹⁹Brown thesis, p. 6.

²⁰Annie Kate Hollingsworth Jackson, "The Political Rise of Martin Stennet Conner" (M.A. thesis, Mississippi State University, 1950), pp. 36-38.

²¹Memphis Commercial Appeal, April 7, 1923.

in Russell's endorsement. As Brewer had been discredited by the Castleman bribery scandal in 1915, so had Russell been hopelessly scarred by the Birkhead affair and his open warfare with Bilbo. Franklin used themes which Russell stressed in his farewell speech--namely, attacks on the trusts, defense of the state revenue agent, and open support for organized labor. He also promised to name women to significant positions in government and to support education for all people.²² Franklin, although a Delta planter, was originally from Choctaw County, deep in the northeast Hills, and he pitched his appeals to the "rednecks." He, for example, was strongly in favor of prohibition.²³

Judge Bell from Greenville was another "comer" in state politics, having become the youngest Chancery Judge in the state's history. His announcement stated that he had begun in politics as a Vardaman man but had broken with the radical wing of the party. He campaigned for educational improvement, the conservation of natural resources,²⁴ and an end to the corruption and scandal which had plagued

²²Ibid.

²³Brown thesis, pp. 3-4.

²⁴Ibid., p. 5.

Mississippi politics for the past decade.²⁵ He also wanted to end the liquor traffic, remove higher education from politics, utilize cooperative marketing of agricultural goods, and give capital and labor square deals.²⁶

Whitfield made a strong appeal for an end to bitter factionalism and spoke of a "let's-get-together spirit" in politics. His platform included the following planks: equal rights for all and special privilege for none, economy in government and a balanced budget, a state system for marketing farm products, an image and a policy of welcoming capital investment into the state, removal of the entire educational process from politics (he spoke of his own political firing at the hands of Russell), strong support for women, and more law enforcement, especially of the prohibition laws.²⁷ He campaigned as an independent free of any faction and was usually introduced by a graduate of the women's college over which he had served as president. He praised school teachers and the newly enfranchised women voters, promised efficient government, but was candid enough to warn of possible tax increases in order to balance the budget.²⁸

²⁵Ibid., pp. 20-21.

²⁶Memphis Commerical Appeal, April 7, 1923.

²⁷Baker, pp. 79-80.

²⁸Brown thesis, p. 18.

Bilbo's late entrance into the race added flair and color, if not dignity. In terms of his platform, he promised a basically progressive program, but did not emphasize the new role of women or the need for outside capital.²⁹ The two centerpieces of his platform were the construction of a vitrified brick plant to be owned by the state and manned by convicts, the bricks to be used to build roads, and a state press to print free textbooks for school children.³⁰ He also cited the accomplishments of his first administration.

The main effect of Bilbo's entrance was to lower the tenor of the race. He ridiculed Whitfield as a "good old man," who was certainly not qualified to be governor simply because "he had been up at I.I. and C. teaching a bunch of young ladies to crochet."³¹ The Bilbo papers also accused Whitfield of being favorable to corporations and moneyed interests.³² Bilbo turned his most scathing attacks on Conner, accusing him repeatedly of being a "slacker" during World War I and, incredibly, of being

²⁹Baker, p. 83.

³⁰Kirwan, p. 304.

³¹Baker, p. 86.

³²Ibid., p. 93.

linked to various scandals during his own administration.³³

The campaign degenerated quickly as charges began to fly back and forth. Conner reciprocated the Bilbo attack by accusing the former governor of increasing the state's indebtedness³⁴ and of creating state jobs for his cronies and political hacks.³⁵ Conner denounced Franklin for being the "crown prince" of the discredited Russell, and Franklin linked Conner with past scandals in his role as Speaker of the House. Conner did not attack Whitfield.³⁶ All candidates, except Franklin, attacked the record of the Russell administration, and the entire field was agreed on a basically progressive reform.

The first primary results showed Whitfield leading with 85,328 votes (33.6%) and Bilbo second with 65,105 (25.6%). Conner was third with 48,739 votes (19.1%), Franklin fourth with 37,245 (14.7%), and Bell last with 17,724 (7.0%).³⁷ It was estimated that approximately

³³Brown thesis, p. 11.

³⁴Jackson thesis, p. 40.

³⁵Brown thesis, p. 11.

³⁶Ibid., p. 14.

³⁷Abney, p. 88.

65,000 women voted for the first time.³⁸

The political "establishment" lined up behind Whitfield in the runoff. Senators Williams and Stephens supported him, as did one of the remaining McLaurin brothers and former governor Brewer. Eliminated in the first primary, Conner and Bell endorsed Whitfield in the second. It was also estimated that 80% of the state newspapers editorially supported his candidacy in the second primary.³⁹ Whitfield refused to debate Bilbo and apparently continued to emphasize his first primary platform.⁴⁰

Franklin, somewhat surprisingly, endorsed Bilbo in the runoff. Bilbo's press attacked Whitfield as inexperienced, pro-corporation, and in favor of higher taxes.⁴¹ Bilbo himself challenged Whitfield to debates and continued to emphasize his proposals for a vitrified brick plant and state printing press. He also antagonized much of the new female vote by his unkind remarks about Whitfield, who was widely remembered as the beloved president of the women's college.⁴²

³⁸Kirwan, p. 304.

³⁹Baker, p. 92.

⁴⁰Brown thesis, p. 25.

⁴¹Baker, p. 93.

⁴²Ibid., p. 90.

As president of I. I. and C. Whitfield had established a reputation of social equality among the girls. The University was seen as the school for the patricians, and Mississippi A. and M. as the "redneck" college; but, Whitfield would not allow social sororities, made all the girls wear identical uniforms and live in dormitories together, and steadfastly refused to recognize social distinction. In the campaign of 1923, he had at least one woman spokesman in each county who testified to Whitfield's record of progressive education and social egalitarianism. In a rare lapse, Bilbo misread the sentiment of a majority of the people and fanned the flames of loyalty for Whitfield by his attacks on him.⁴³

Whitfield won decisively, garnering 134,715 votes (53.3%) to Bilbo's 118,143 (46.7%).⁴⁴

Whitfield's inaugural address clearly demonstrated his understanding of and commitment to modernization. It went beyond the need for industrialization, even though that was an important part of his program, to the very intellectual heart of modernity. The following quote from his inaugural address in 1924 illustrates the point:

⁴³Ibid., pp. 87-90.

⁴⁴Abney, p. 88.

The State is just now emerging from the pioneer condition that marks a stage in the life of every civilized people in their struggle for progress. Our perspective has been limited. We have adopted the simplest processes and used the most primitive machinery in our work; and we have failed to apply scientific facts to the solution of the problems connected with the various activities of life. . . . Of necessity this simple life has come to an end. . . .

Mississippi has remained rural and agricultural while other states have become urban and industrial. We are living, my friends, in an industrial and mechanical age, yet here in Mississippi we have failed to foster and develop industry, and to utilize to the fullest extent the marvelous mechanical devices which increase the productivity and lighten the labor of man.

In this crisis we must have the wisdom to avail ourselves of world experience.⁴⁵ (Emphasis added.)

The governor went on in his address to call for a new taxation scheme which would remove the burden ". . . as far as possible from property and put on privileges and luxuries, on incomes, and on profits."⁴⁶ This vision of a new tax structure to replace the old agrarian one entailed a modern concept of the state financed by the wealth-producing segments. Yet, at the same time, ". . . due regard must be had to the development of those essential industries, to the fostering of agriculture and of manufacture, for on these our future prosperity must depend. We must not

⁴⁵"Inaugural Message of Governor Henry L. Whitfield to the Mississippi Legislature," January 22, 1924, pp. 4-6.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 7.

kill the goose that lays the golden egg."⁴⁷ Specifically, the governor recommended increased privilege taxes on tobacco and soft drinks, an amusements tax, an increase in the gasoline tax, a sales tax on automobiles and accessories, a graduated income tax, a severance tax on timber instead of the ad valorem tax, and progressive taxes on inheritances and estates.⁴⁸

Whitfield renewed his call for fiscal integrity, a requisite condition for attracting capital investment into the state. For too long the operating budget of the state had exceeded revenues, and deficits had been met through bond issues. Whitfield stated, "It is unthinkable that we will again allow the appropriations for the current expenses to exceed revenues for any one year. . . . I am firmly committed to the principle of keeping the appropriations within the revenues. I want to state firmly and clearly at the very beginning of my term, my fixed intention to keep faith with the people in this matter."⁴⁹

In addition to tax reform and sound fiscal policy, Whitfield emphasized three other important modernization issues: a moderate racial policy, centralization of power,

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 9-11.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 8-9.

and government policy toward industrial development.

In the inner recesses of his mind, every white Mississippian who had thought with any depth about developing the state must have realized that the role of blacks in the polity would be the most troublesome aspect of an expanding modernization consensus. For his time, Whitfield met the problem forthrightly. The Governor couched his remarks in a veil of pragmatism, decrying first the exodus of black labor from the state, ". . . leaving us face to face with a critical labor shortage at a time of greatest need."⁵⁰ He complimented the framers of the Constitution of 1890 for their wisdom when they ". . . provided for the preservation of Anglo-Saxon government and the integrity of the white race. This, then, is no longer a political question, and passion and prejudice should no longer enter into a discussion of it."⁵¹ By the standards of the 1970s Whitfield's remarks on racial relations seem hopelessly paternalistic; but, in the 1920s in Mississippi, at a time of Klan resurgence and wide-spread lynching, the following quote must be seen as extremely enlightened, if not courageous:

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 15.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 16.

If we would hold these laborers in the South, we must compete with the Northern employer on his own terms. We must improve working and living conditions, look after the negro's health, foster manual training and modern agricultural methods, and see to it that at all times the less favored black man shall get a square deal in his business relations and in the courts. Our own self interest prompts it; humanitarian considerations demand it; our Christian duty as a more favored people enjoins this upon us.⁵²

Whitfield saw clearly and spoke about the fact that no society can expect to develop itself very far if 50% of the people are kept in economic chattels. He said, "Any plans for a new era, any change in our economic life, any re-organization of our agriculture or industry which leaves them out, is doomed to failure."⁵³ It was a theme caught somewhere between the agrarian and industrial orders--a call for maintaining a healthy, productive, contented, black agricultural labor force for the plantations, and, the need to educate blacks and involve them in the new commercial and industrial order. This duality--obvious and inescapable in the case of Mississippi--gave the modernization consensus its unique configuration and development.

The new governor carried forward Bilbo's theme of centralization, this time with respect to the distribution of tax dollars. Citing a ratio of \$33/\$5 local/state tax

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

collected from the average citizen, Whitfield complained that ". . . the state is called upon to perform an increasingly large percentage of the total governmental activities on a relatively small percentage of the total tax levy." The ratio was ". . . hopelessly out of harmony . . .," and the question was one ". . . to which the legislature must give its earnest attention."⁵⁴

The topic receiving the greatest amount of attention in Whitfield's address was industrialization. He called for a permanent industrial policy and, in a startling statement for a governor of an overwhelmingly agricultural state, said, "Even a varied and scientific agriculture will not bring us that full measure of prosperity which we seek."⁵⁵ In a statement which could have come from the Mississippi Research and Development Center of the 1970s, he stated the following: "The time has come when Mississippi cotton must be made into cloth in Mississippi; when Mississippi hardwoods, clays, cement rock, minerals, and other forms of natural wealth, must be transformed into finished products within our own borders. . . . It is respectfully urged that the Legislature put our State affairs in order so that we may participate in the benefits of a

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 14.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 18.

great but belated industrial awakening, already manifest in many of the Southern states."⁵⁶ The key to all this, he argued, was capital, and ". . . we must make honest capital feel secure in Mississippi."⁵⁷ Industry must be expected to abide by the laws and to be fair with the state, but it cannot be harassed by the government and it must expect a reasonable profit.

In many areas Whitfield's administration carried through on the rhetoric of his inaugural address. Much of the anti-corporation legislation of an earlier day was repealed--for example, the limitation on corporate land holdings--and mergers between railroads domiciled in Mississippi were made easier. A law was passed allowing one corporation to own capital stock in another, and certain new industries were given tax exemptions for five years (e.g., paper plants, hardwood carbonizing and distillation plants, etc.). Whitfield called his program a "square deal for capital."⁵⁸ One of the most substantial contributions to industrial development was his realization of the importance of energy. Whitfield called together thirty businessmen to discuss and plan for the development

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 18-19.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 19.

⁵⁸Baker, pp. 126-129.

of electric power facilities in Mississippi.⁵⁹ Legislation favorable to power development (e.g., granting hydro-electric power companies the right of eminent domain) helped to propel the consolidation and centralization of electric power facilities. In 1923, for example, the Mississippi Power and Light Company was formed out of a merger of the Jackson, Greenville, and Vicksburg power companies; and, in 1924, a similar consolidation produced the Mississippi Power Company on the Gulf Coast.⁶⁰

Whitfield's endorsement of pro-business legislation was far from mindless, as could be seen from his inaugural speech. He insisted that business be responsible and contributing members of the state community. During his administration, for example, laws were passed regulating timber and insurance companies, making resident agents of foreign companies liable for the actions of the trustees, requiring reports to the state from common carriers, regulating interest rates and freight rates, and further regulating child labor. The governor tried unsuccessfully to get a workmen's compensation bill, as well.⁶¹

The legislature enacted much of the governor's tax

⁵⁹Brown thesis, p. 44.

⁶⁰Lewis thesis, p. 64.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 81-86.

reform package--such as increases in the income tax on a graduated basis, an inheritance tax, amusement and luxury taxes, a gasoline tax, and, over the protest of business interests, some sixty-one new privilege taxes.⁶² The office of revenue agent was abolished and replaced by a new State Tax Commission. As a result of these measures, plus a reduction in appropriations, Mississippi paid its operating bills for the first time in years without having to float a bond issue.⁶³

What had happened in 1923 was, in one sense, a rather remarkable quirk of history. Had it not been for the quixotic and undisciplined administration of Lee Russell, the meaning and, therefore, implications of the Whitfield victory might have been less forceful. After 1911 there existed a divergence between campaign rhetoric and actual policy--the rhetoric was radical, according to the script of the Secret Caucus, and the policy was progressive and moderate, according to the governmental inclinations of men like Brewer and Bilbo. What happened in the Russell administration, to some degree, was that policy began to match campaign rhetoric, and it was

⁶²Brown thesis, p. 40; Lewis thesis, p. 70.

⁶³Baker, p. 125. For treatments of the Whitfield administration, see Baker, Chapter 3; Brown thesis, pp. 31-93; McCain in McLemore, vol. 2; Lewis thesis, pp. 37-89.

unacceptable to the majority of the state. Anti-establishment and anti-capital tirades made for good entertainment in campaigns and touched raw nerves in the electorate; however, the prospects of actually stunting economic progress and development was perceived in the inner recesses of even many "redneck" minds as anti-thetical to their interests. Russell's radical rhetoric as governor and his bitter feuds with business paved the way for Whitfield's clear renunciation of the radicalism of Vardaman and the proclamation of development as a campaign issue. Because a principal candidate in the 1923 primary was Bilbo and because electorally Bilbo was a product of 1911, the statistics of 1923 do not demonstrate a major realignment. Thus, it was not only Whitfield's campaign rhetoric that ushered in a new era but also his statements and policy as governor. His campaign plus the language and action of his government raised up in the electorate's consciousness the issues of modernization to the point that thereafter it was either a major or the dominant life-form in almost every election.

Whitfield had mobilized an electoral majority in 1923 based on the need to modernize the state's finances, distribution of governmental power, and industrial policy. He carried through on many of those concepts in his

administration and seemed to set the state on a firm course of political and economic development. But, lurking in the wings was the political magician, Bilbo. And, therein lay much of the tale of electoral modulation throughout this era.

CHAPTER 8

ELECTORAL MODULATION AMONG LIFE-FORMS (1927-1942)

As a result of Whitfield's election and administration, four major life-forms were flourishing in the politics of the late 1920s and 1930s. Class distinctions were still powerful, though no longer decisive; progressivism continued to stir the hearts and minds of many voters; and modernization had acquired a major importance in the rhetoric of candidates. Race provided the boundaries and, in at least one instance, the substance of gubernatorial and senatorial primaries. This chapter shall trace the gubernatorial elections of 1927, 1931, 1935, and 1939, and the senatorial races of 1928, 1934, 1936, 1940, and 1942. (Descriptive analysis only is presented for the senate races of 1936 and 1940.)

The Gubernatorial Election of 1927

On its face the election of 1927 seemed to be a reversion to the politics of Era I. The principal candidates were Bilbo, Conner, and Dennis Murphree, who as lieutenant governor had succeeded to the governorship upon Whitfield's death.

It was clear that Murphree was running on the merits of the past administration. In his opening speech of the campaign, he praised Whitfield for restoring the good name of the state and pledged, if elected, to continue his sound policies. In particular, he would ". . . favor liberal and just laws for capital within the confines of our state."¹ He applauded the record of the Whitfield administration in balancing the budget and cutting unneeded appropriations. At the kick-off rally he was introduced by the same lady who had introduced Whitfield in 1923.² The tie between Murphree and Whitfield as a campaign appeal had been signaled as early as April, only a month after Murphree had succeeded to the governorship, when Joseph W. George of Greenwood was appointed campaign chairman. George had been active in Whitfield's campaign and as chairman of House Ways and Means Committee instrumental in passing much of Whitfield's legislative program.³

Murphree apparently tried to mobilize Whitfield's 1923 majority. In visiting the Delta, for example, he appeared on the platform with Oscar Johnston, reminding the audience that he had supported Johnston in his 1919

¹Memphis Commercial Appeal, May 17, 1927.

²Ibid.

³Memphis Commercial Appeal, April 15, 1927.

race against Russell, and predicted that he would sweep the Delta.⁴ He also pointed out that he ". . . was the only man who can beat Bilbo in the second primary for governor."⁵ By having prominent Whitfield women introduce him, Murphree attempted to appeal to the female vote. Coming himself from Calhoun County in the Hills of north Mississippi, he stressed his common origins, hoping thereby to cut into Bilbo's vote among the small farmers. For example, in defending Whitfield's income tax, he pointed out that while the tax had generated \$2.25 million for the state only eighty-five farmers had had to pay any income tax at all the year before, and Calhoun County residents had paid a total income tax of only \$923.41.⁶

Murphree encountered three major problems with his campaign. One, he had previously announced for lieutenant governor, and his last-minute switch to the governor's race upon Whitfield's death was portrayed as an opportunistic move. Conner, for example, worried in his speeches that "Dennis had been talked into running" by self-serving friends and reminded his audiences that Murphree had repeatedly abjured any interest in running

⁴Memphis Commercial Appeal, July 20, 1927.

⁵Memphis Commercial Appeal, July 21, 1927.

⁶Memphis Commercial Appeal, July 5, 1927.

for governor the year before. Bilbo had laid down the gauntlet, and it had been Conner, not Murphree, who had picked it up.⁷ A second problem was the devastating Mississippi River flood of 1927. As governor, Murphree had to devote much of his time in April and May to relief work, away from the campaign trail, in an area in which he was already strong. A third and, some have said, fatal problem was his action in calling out the National Guard twice during his brief tenure as governor to protect Negroes from lynchings. "Despite the fact that he had no choice in either instance, the whole matter was used from one end of the state to the other to arouse prejudice and inflame hatred."⁸

Mike Conner was making a second attempt for the governorship after his brilliant beginning in the Legislature. His platform was similar to that of 1923, generally conservative in tone, stressing "adequate" support for state programs but also emphasizing the fiscal integrity of state government.⁹ He promised to continue to give capital a "square deal" and to pursue the industrial

⁷Daily Clarion Ledger, April 3, 1927.

⁸William D. McCain, "The Life and Labor of Dennis Murphree," Journal of Mississippi History, 12 (October, 1950): 187.

⁹Jackson thesis, p. 46.

and agricultural development of the state. He proposed a comprehensive survey of the state's resources which would then be circulated to industrialists nationally in hopes of luring them to Mississippi.¹⁰ Conner spent much of his time, apparently, attacking the other candidates, particularly Bilbo, and holding himself out as the only warrior capable of slaying the demagogue and thereby ending "Bilboism" in Mississippi forever.¹¹

Bilbo had been planning to run ever since his defeat in 1923, after which he moved to Jackson and began publication of a weekly newspaper, The Mississippi Free Lance.¹² In the tradition of Vardaman when out of power, Bilbo used the pages of his paper to set the stage for a political comeback. In the columns of the Free Lance one could see the contours of his next race. His attacks on Whitfield began almost immediately after the 1924 inauguration. He assailed the new governor for granting a pardon to a liquor law violator and for not appointing women to positions in government. Realizing his miscalculation in 1923, Bilbo gave over one entire page of the paper to women's affairs and began to court them as

¹⁰Memphis Commercial Appeal, July 16, 1927.

¹¹Daily Clarion Ledger, April 10, 1927.

¹²Green, p. 69.

vigorously as he had their husbands before.¹³ A more sinister attack was Bilbo's charge that Whitfield was catering to the blacks, and that the governor seemed to exhibit ". . . a dear fondness for Mississippi's Ethiopian products. . . ." ¹⁴ The race issue was stirred by Bilbo in his columns and awakened emotions which, at least in recent campaigns, had been allowed to sleep.¹⁵

In the Free Lance Bilbo announced for governor in July of 1925. He issued a thirteen-point platform, the centerpieces of which were, as in 1923, the vitrified brick plant and a state printing press.¹⁶ These two planks were emphasized in every speech. Bilbo would often wave over his head a school book and a brick for emphasis. He promised to use the bricks to build a major, hard-surface road system and the printing press to provide free textbooks to Mississippi school children. Said Bilbo about his bricks, "My countrymen, we can lay these vitrified bricks on one side and use them for 100 years. Then we

¹³Lynda Lawrence Blackwelder, "Theodore Gilmore Bilbo: The Mississippi Free Lance Years, 1923-1927" (M.A. thesis, University of Southern Mississippi, 1975), pp. 44-46.

¹⁴Quoted in Baker, p. 109.

¹⁵Blackwelder thesis, p. 47.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 52-60.

can turn them over and use them for another hundred years. And then we can stand them on end and use them right up to Kingdom come."¹⁷ Perceiving another Whitfield success to have been his "clean politics," Bilbo made the amazing announcement that he would run a "high level" campaign without personal attacks on other candidates. He proclaimed the end of demagoguery and seemed for a while to run as a respectable former governor.¹⁸

This unnatural state of affairs was not to endure. Conner sharply attacked Bilbo's political and personal character, bringing up many of the past scandals.¹⁹ He repeatedly challenged Bilbo to public debates, unsuccessfully.²⁰ Murphree also attacked Bilbo's record and made much of the Free Lance's assaults on the just-fallen Governor Whitfield.²¹ Accusing Murphree and Conner of running the "dirtiest campaign in history,"²² Bilbo could not restrain himself and soon fell back into the old

¹⁷Emmerich, p. 64-65.

¹⁸Blackwelder thesis, pp. 61-66.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 64.

²⁰Jackson thesis, p. 46.

²¹Memphis Commercial Appeal, May 17, 1927.

²²Memphis Commercial Appeal, July 14, 1927.

campaign style of which he was the master.²³ He accused both Conner and Murphree of being tools of big moneyed interests and corporations.²⁴ Bilbo partisans continued to speak of the infamous "Jackson Ring and its schemes and efforts to control and exploit the governmental affairs of Mississippi."²⁵ Bilbo ridiculed Murphree, in particular, for being a jackal of the "Jackson Ring" and tool of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company.²⁶ He fanned the racial flames by arguing that no Mississippi Negro was worth calling out the Guard for. Bilbo repeatedly ridiculed Conner for his failure to serve in World War I--the nemesis of Conner's career. Murphree's conservative voting record was also the object of Bilbo's invective.²⁷

Conner and Murphree also traded attacks, Murphree accusing Conner of coming from "high origins"²⁸ and having as a campaign spokesman ". . . a corporation lawyer, who

²³Blackwelder thesis, p. 70.

²⁴Memphis Commercial Appeal, July 14, 1927.

²⁵Daily Clarion Ledger, May 1, 1927.

²⁶Reinhard H. Luthin, American Demagogues (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1954), p. 57.

²⁷Daily Clarion Ledger, May 26, 1927.

²⁸Jackson thesis, p. 51.

represents the large insurance companies on the coast";²⁹ and Conner spokesmen attempted to prove that Murphree had not really been a supporter of Whitfield.³⁰

The returns of the first primary showed Bilbo with a staggering lead of 46.9% of the vote to Murphree's 25%. Conner was third with 19.9% and a fourth candidate, A.C. Anderson, had 8.2%.³¹ With a lead of this magnitude the runoff was a foregone conclusion; and despite endorsements for Murphree from John Sharp Williams, Senator Stephens, Congressmen Lowry and Johnson, Mike Conner, Tom Bailey, Oscar Johnston, and Lee Russell, Bilbo won the second primary by a margin of 52.8% to 47.1% for Murphree. It was noteworthy, however, that from the first to the second primary Bilbo picked up only 18,603 votes whereas Murphree picked up 65,294.³²

Bilbo's stunning return to power bewildered the "better elements" of the state. Was it a clear repudiation of the Whitfield coalition and vision of 1923? Bilbo's success was most likely a combination of several factors: the weakness of his opponents (Murphree ran for governor

²⁹Memphis Commercial Appeal, July 21, 1927.

³⁰Memphis Commercial Appeal, July 22, 1927.

³¹Abney, p. 88.

³²Ibid.

three times and was never elected while Conner ran five times and was elected once); Bilbo's matchless oratorical style; the fact that he had been actively pursuing the office for four years; and the racial issue which Bilbo managed to stir up. The Daily Clarion Ledger in an editorial the following year credited Murphree with helping create an atmosphere in the state which had led to fewer lynchings and cited his actions as governor in calling out the Guard. The editorial went on to say, "That beat him for the high office of Governor of Mississippi."³³ As the statistical analysis shall reveal, this judgment was correct. In a rare occurrence in Mississippi during Era II, race as an issue played alongside modernization, class, and progressivism to determine the outcome. The Whitfield coalition of 1923 did not hold in 1927, but it would be incorrect to interpret that fact as a clear rejection of his politics or his vision.

As can be seen in the Modernization Index, Bilbo's concern with modernization issues was pronounced. In his inaugural address, Bilbo stressed the need for outside capital in order to develop the state economically. He also called for a truly balanced budget, which compared

³³Daily Clarion Ledger, June 10, 1928.

"all the assets of the state with all the liabilities."

One of the two major emphases of the address was his call for an extensive program of road development and maintenance, a dimension of both progressivism and modernization. He also presented an extensive series of progressive proposals relating to public health and education.³⁴

Bilbo's second term, however, was far less productive than his first. He publicly opposed the election of Tom Bailey as Speaker of the House of Representatives and endorsed Hugh Barr Miller of Copiah County. Bailey was elected on the first ballot 82-53 and appointed Joseph George of Leflore County as Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Walter Sillers of Bolivar County as Chairman of Judiciary, and Laurence Kennedy of Adams County as Chairman of Appropriations. These three chairmen, all from Delta and River counties, and Bailey comprised the so-called "Big Four" of the House, and they were all Bilbo opponents. According to a Bilbo apologist, "That result sounded the death knell of the programs advocated by Bilbo and for practically all other progressive legislation which might be proposed during the next four years."³⁵

³⁴See "Inaugural Address of Governor Theo. G. Bilbo Delivered Before the Senate and House of Representatives of the State Mississippi," January 17, 1928.

³⁵McCain in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 85.

In major battles in both regular and special sessions, Bilbo failed to get any of his major campaign programs enacted. In his messages to the legislature, however, was to be found much of the political agenda for years to come--such as a unified board of trustees for the University and colleges, a county unit system for road construction and maintenance, a retirement fund for teachers, and a general sales tax.³⁶ The two major points of his inaugural were the state printing press and highway program. Neither passed, but the highway program was realized by Hugh White (1936-1940) and his dream of free textbooks for school children by Paul Johnson, Sr. (1940-1944).

Bilbo's administration was clouded by his disastrous relations with the Legislature, by scandal, and by the Depression. With the black belt firmly in control of the House, he was singularly unsuccessful with the Legislature. A scandal broke over the Highway Commission in which Bilbo was implicated in a \$60,000 short-fall of funds.³⁷ There were also wide-spread rumors that Bilbo was selling pardons, a practice charged against former governors as well; and it was a fact that at the end of

³⁶"Inaugural Address of Governor Theo. G. Bilbo."

³⁷Green, pp. 80-81; and McCain in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 89.

his second term he had granted nearly one thousand pardons, as compared to 327 in his first term.³⁸ His personal morality was also the subject of widespread speculation, confirmed in the minds of many when Mrs. Bilbo left him in October of 1931.³⁹

No political scandal during Bilbo's second term shook the state as much as the loss of accreditation of the state University and colleges. One of Bilbo's major planks had been the removal of the University of Mississippi from Oxford to Jackson, a proposal which sparked the open and active opposition of the University's administration. This open and successful defiance of the governor convinced Bilbo that he had to gain control of the higher educational system; and as he acquired majorities on the various boards of trustees, Bilbo had the University chancellor and every college president fired except one. Massive dismissals of faculty and administrators followed, and replacements often were made with Bilbo loyalists. The University and state colleges, with the exception of Delta State Teachers College, lost their accreditation.⁴⁰

³⁸Green, pp. 80-85.

³⁹Ibid., p. 87.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 73-77; McCain in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 92; Tindall, p. 234.

1928 Senate Election

In the 1928 federal elections, Bilbo took to the stump for his candidates, Al Smith, Democratic nominee for President, and Webber Wilson, candidate for the U.S. Senate against Hubert Stephens.⁴¹ Despite the fact that Smith was wet and Catholic, at a time of KKK resurgence aimed primarily against Catholics, most Mississippi political leaders supported the ticket. Bilbo accused Hoover of dancing with a Negro woman from Mound Bayou in such a way that Hoover could not respond.⁴² The "bottom line" seemed to be summed up by former Senator John Sharp Williams: "I shall support the Democratic nominee because I am a Democrat and a white man."⁴³ While five southern states defected to Hoover, Mississippi voted 151,591 for Smith to 26,244 for Hoover.⁴⁴

In the senatorial primary, in which Bilbo actively supported Wilson, Senator Stephens and Congressman Wilson attacked each other's records. Wilson, a widely noted

⁴¹Bidwell Adam, University of Southern Mississippi Oral History Program, May 19, 1971, p. 23.

⁴²Green, pp. 77-78.

⁴³Donald Brooks Kelley, "Of God, Liquor, and Politics: The Mississippi Press in the Presidential Election of 1928," (M.A. thesis, University of Mississippi, 1962), p. 78.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 100.

orator, accused Stephens of having a lackluster, do-nothing career in the Senate. Regarding flood relief legislation for the Delta, Wilson charged that Stephens had compromised and allowed the burden for financing relief to fall on the recipients.⁴⁵ Stephens was also charged with voting against the popular election of senators, against congressional resolutions to investigate certain trusts, against labor, and against children.⁴⁶ Wilson's most spectacular charge against Stephens regarded federal patronage. Accusations were rife that Negro Republicans had been selling patronage positions, and a widely publicized trial of Perry Howard, head of Mississippi's Republican Party, was going on in Biloxi on that matter.⁴⁷ Wilson raged that Stephens could have stopped these confirmations in the Senate, but, instead, "Hubert Stephens has been conferring with them and voting to ratify their actions."⁴⁸ A Wilson ad fanned the flames of race by announcing that Stephens should be defeated "Because he [Stephens] has fraternized with power-controlling negroes so long that he is not in position to come out and make a

⁴⁵Daily Clarion Ledger, July 24, 1928.

⁴⁶Daily Clarion Ledger, August 19, 1928.

⁴⁷Daily Clarion Ledger, July 18, 1928.

⁴⁸Daily Clarion Ledger, August 1, 1928.

fight in behalf of decent white men and women of our state of Mississippi."⁴⁹ An editorial bemoaned the fact that ". . . Congressman Wilson is running over the state hollering 'nigger, nigger, nigger' in the hope that Mississippi may step back a quarter of a century and elect another high official on prejudice."⁵⁰ Wilson's general attack seemed to be to paint Stephens as colorless, weak, politically impotent and soft on the race issue.

Stephen's personality seemed to be summed up in the words of one of his newspaper ads: "If you want oratory get a speaker; if you want action, get a clam. A clam may not be 'up to snuff' in modern rhetoric; he may be slow, but he is safe and sure."⁵¹ Stephens defended his reticence in the Senate on the grounds that action was better than words, and he also explained and extolled his voting record. He pointed with pride to his work on flood legislation and responded on the patronage question by stating that if Wilson, as a congressman, had known of wrong-doing he had a duty to do something about it himself.⁵² He vigorously attacked Wilson's record in Congress

⁴⁹Daily Clarion Ledger, August 19, 1928.

⁵⁰Daily Clarion Ledger, July 18, 1928.

⁵¹Daily Clarion Ledger, July 7, 1928.

⁵²Daily Clarion Ledger, July 24, 1928.

as being empty of achievement. By and large, however, Stephen's speeches seemed to be long and somewhat tedious. The campaign amounted to little more than charge, counter-charge, and self-serving defense.

Bilbo made some fifty speeches for Wilson and helped him raise campaign money. Despite this support, Wilson's superior oratorical style, and the injection of race into the campaign, Stephens squeezed out a victory 62,850 (52.6%) to 56,641 (47.4%).⁵³

Race was the predominant life-form in 1928, although another life-form, heretofore not discussed, was important as well--namely, personal characteristics. Though not classified as a major life-form in this paper and though, almost by definition, amorphous in content, the personal qualities of a candidate were always important and, in the case of every Hubert Stephens race, nearly decisive. In a word, he seemed weak. Overweight, sickly, boring, and without charisma--these deficiencies are damaging in any electoral system, but particularly in a rural-frontier state like Mississippi. Much of politics was entertainment, and the electorate responded to vigorous, humorous, charismatic orators. The fact that Webber Wilson--by far the more talented and vigorous orator and

⁵³Abney, 29.

more convincingly hard-line on the race issue--was unable to defeat Stephens in 1928 was another example of Mississippi's long-term tendency to elect to the U.S. Senate more cautious, conservative, and patrician types than they do governor.

The Gubernatorial Election of 1931

By the time of the 1931 election Mississippi was in the grips of the Depression, and state government was in disarray. Bilbo was to leave a balance of \$1,326.17 in the treasury with outstanding warrants and certificates in the amount of almost \$13 million. The bonded debt of the state had increased from \$5,884,500 in 1920 to \$50,006,250 in 1932, while at the same time the source of state revenue had diminished because of lower property assessments. Teachers were forced to discount their state warrants as much as 20%. The economic basis of the state collapsed with the crash of cotton prices and the evaporation of credit, and farm tenancy and land forfeiture rose dramatically.⁵⁴

Against this backdrop of governmental deadlock, economic chaos, and memories of the ever-present Bilbo scandals, four candidates entered the field for governor

⁵⁴Oliver Emmerich, "Collapse and Recovery," in McLemore, vol. 2, pp. 97-98.

in 1931. Mike Conner was making his third try for the office. Paul Johnson of Hattiesburg also announced. Johnson had been a circuit judge and had defeated Bilbo for Congress in 1918, only to retire after two terms in Washington and return to practice law in his home town.⁵⁵ Another candidate was Hugh White, native of McComb and then mayor of Columbia, Mississippi.⁵⁶ The fourth candidate was George Mitchell, who had been attorney general during the Bilbo administration.

Conner attempted to appeal to the "common man" more than in the past. After Bilbo's debacle with college accreditation, Conner renewed his pledge to remove higher education from politics. He came out more strongly for a road program to be financed by automobile privilege and gasoline taxes along with federal funds. He opposed, however, any massive bond issue to pay for a highway construction plan. He was also bitterly opposed to any increase in property tax.⁵⁷ Conner, as was his style, attacked his opponents more vigorously than he enunciated his own platform. He denounced factionalism and called

⁵⁵Hamilton thesis, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁶Curtis Norban Cochran, "Hugh L. White and the Inauguration of the BAWI Program in Mississippi" (M.A. thesis, Mississippi State University, 1950), p. 10.

⁵⁷Jackson thesis, pp. 55-56.

for an era of political harmony. He said that he "never wore a blind bridle for any factional boss and I never will."⁵⁸

Hugh White was a millionaire industrialist, and his candidacy itself was to say much about the state of Mississippi electoral politics. Born in McComb, Mississippi, in 1882, White's father was a prosperous sawmill owner and entrepreneur. He amassed over 72,000 acres of land, built the first tram railroad to haul logs in the area, and established numerous successful business ventures in the Pike County area. In 1909 the young Hugh White moved his family enterprises to Columbia, Mississippi, in Marion County, and built the business empire to the point where it employed over one thousand Mississippians in several towns. Elected mayor in 1926, White was determined to improve the economic condition of his fellow citizens. Realizing that industrial employment was the bootstrap to economic advancement, the mayor persuaded the Reliance Manufacturing Company of Chicago to locate a factory in Columbia in return for the town's pledge to finance the building of the physical plant. White, himself, offered to put up a personal bond of \$1 million to insure an adequate labor supply. Reliance was skeptical that a town of

⁵⁸Daily Clarion Ledger, July 31, 1931.

5000 could supply the work force, but White was confident that the labor force could easily be found in the rural population. The project was highly successful and provided the basis for White's BAWI program when he was elected governor in 1935.⁵⁹

White's campaign called for a business approach to government and a program of economic development for the state based on the Columbia experiment.⁶⁰ He also emphasized the fact that he had not been involved in state-wide politics and was not, therefore, a part of the sordid factionalism of the past.⁶¹ White included in his platform an appeal for retrenchment in state expenditures, property tax equalization among counties, a realistic highway construction plan, the regulation of utilities, a workmen's compensation act, and the removal of politics from higher education.⁶² His speeches tended to be humorless and without colorful attacks on other candidates. He emphasized that Mississippi needed an experienced business leader, not an orator.⁶³

⁵⁹Emmerich in McLemore, vol. 2, pp. 112-113.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Jackson thesis, p. 60.

⁶²Jackson Daily News, undated.

⁶³Daily Clarion-Ledger, July 30, 1931.

The main plank in Johnson's platform was free textbooks for all school children through the eighth grade, to be financed by a severance tax on gas and oil.⁶⁴ He assailed the cotton seed trust and promised to break it up.⁶⁵ Johnson also supported bringing capital into the state and urged the development and exploitation of Mississippi's many natural resources. He stated that Mississippi must have a good business atmosphere, that higher education should be insulated from politics, and that women needed more recognition in state government. He emphasized the need for farm to market roads and proposed the establishment of charity wards in private hospitals to treat the indigent. He firmly opposed bond issues to cover operating expenses of state government and any proposal for a workmen's compensation law.⁶⁶

Mitchell was the Bilbo candidate, and the governor stumped the state for him, often making from three to five speeches a day.⁶⁷ Bilbo spent most of his speeches

⁶⁴Jackson thesis, p. 60.

⁶⁵Campaign Circular for Paul Johnson, Hattiesburg Headquarters, 1931, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁶⁶Campaign Circular for Paul Johnson, 1931, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁶⁷Green, p. 86.

attacking everyone but Mitchell. He said that Conner had never done an "honest-to-God" day's work in his life. The big corporations had dropped him because he couldn't win and had adopted Hugh White. "Old Millionaire White" was in political bed with editor Fred Sullens, of the Jackson Daily News, Bilbo charged, and "the Negroes in the Delta are getting the same paper without charge."⁶⁸ Bilbo hit Conner repeatedly for being a "slacker" in World War I, calling him "Conner of World War fame."⁶⁹ Mitchell himself appeared more conservative than did Bilbo, calling, for example, for a cut in state expenditures and no extravagant bond issues. He claimed to be the only good businessman in the race.⁷⁰ He also cited his work in getting the new Code of 1928 adopted as evidence of the fact that he could work with all factions.⁷¹

The ideological divergence between Bilbo and Mitchell and Mitchell's avoidance of factional labels lent credence to Senator Stephen's charge that Bilbo had made a deal whereby he would elect Mitchell governor in return for Mitchell's promise to appoint Bilbo to the Senate should

⁶⁸Daily Clarion Ledger, August 4, 1931.

⁶⁹Daily Clarion Ledger, July 28, 1931.

⁷⁰Daily Clarion Ledger, July 31, 1931.

⁷¹Daily Clarion Ledger, July 11, 1931.

Stephens die (Stephens was seriously ill at the time in a Memphis hospital).⁷² Bilbo cried back, "I may want to wear his senatorial toga for political purposes, but I had much rather take it from a live senator than a dead one."⁷³ Bilbo was to do exactly that a few years later.

As before, there were charges and counter-charges. Much was made of the fact that White was a millionaire. Conner accused him of being a part of the "Whitfield faction" and asserted that the election was one "between money and property rights on one side and men, women, and human rights on the other."⁷⁴ Johnson, likewise, criticized White's wealth, accusing him of letting the regular folk eat "bullneck and biscuit" after a Columbia rally, while White took his monied friends home for a "fancy buffet."⁷⁵

White reciprocated by denouncing Johnson's free textbook scheme as unrealistic, because it would add \$1 million to the tax burden at a time when the state was bankrupt.⁷⁶ When Bilbo and Mitchell attacked White for

⁷²Daily Clarion Ledger, August 2, 1931.

⁷³Daily Clarion Ledger, August 3, 1931.

⁷⁴Abney dissertation, p. 154.

⁷⁵Daily Clarion Ledger, July 30, 1931.

⁷⁶Memphis Commercial Appeal, May 1, 1931.

being a political "greenhorn," as well as a millionaire, White responded that he was proud to be a successful businessman and not a professional politician.⁷⁷ Mitchell injected race in his attack on the free textbook plan of Johnson, saying that "it would cost the white tax-payers three and one-quarter million dollars to furnish the Negroes with books. . . ."78

The returns of the first primary revealed a total defeat for Bilbo. Mitchell finished last with 17.3% of the vote; and Lieutenant Governor Bidwell Adam, who as a political novice had been elected in 1927 solely as "Bilbo's man," was defeated in his bid for re-election.⁷⁹ White led the ticket with 34.5%, and Conner was second with 29.4%. Johnson finished third with 18.8%.⁸⁰ The people also spoke to the Legislature: only nineteen of the 140 House members returned to Jackson in 1932.⁸¹

In a particularly bitter runoff, many of the Johnson

⁷⁷Cochran thesis, p. 12.

⁷⁸Daily Clarion Ledger, July 31, 1931.

⁷⁹Michael Brunson Wallace, "Legislative Government in Mississippi," unpublished honors thesis at Harvard University, 1973, p. 48.

⁸⁰Abney, p. 88.

⁸¹McCain in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 96.

supporters seemed to turn to Conner,⁸² although Johnson's campaign manager joined the Hugh White camp.⁸³ Despite the long standing rivalry between Bilbo and Conner, there also seemed to be a movement of Bilbo-Mitchell voters to Conner. As one student has observed, "It was evident that the Bilbo faction would prefer Conner with all his anti-Bilbo principles, to White with his millions."⁸⁴ Huey Long became an issue in the runoff when it was revealed that he was assisting Conner. T. Harry Williams, Long's biographer, reports that the "Kingfish" sent two of his best lieutenants into Mississippi to help Conner organize and that he made numerous personal phone calls on Conner's behalf. When the story broke, Hugh White raged in public about outside interference and tried to make Long a campaign issue. According to Williams, Long supported Conner because of a personal rapport between the two men and because even though "both were conservative . . . White was more consistently and loudly conservative . . . and Conner was more flexible, more receptive to new issues."⁸⁵

White's millions and the Huey Long issue enabled

⁸²Hamilton thesis, p. 3.

⁸³Daily Clarion Ledger, August 9, 1931.

⁸⁴Jackson thesis, p. 63.

⁸⁵T. Harry Williams, Huey Long (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), p. 534.

Conner to capture much of the small farmer vote in the 1931 runoff, whereas throughout the rest of his political career he was associated with the more conservative side of the party. Long's statement denying a direct endorsement of Conner fitted perfectly into this strategy: "I have not made any reply to the multi-millionaire candidate for governor, Hugh L. White. Poor devils like myself are gun shy in engaging in controversies with these gold-spending politicians. It is enough for me to beat his kind in Louisiana. I can only hope to see Mike Conner as able to take care of the gold of Croesus rulers in Mississippi as well as I have in Louisiana."⁸⁶ Always referring to White as the "millionaire lumberman candidate," Conner claimed that this race pitted "proof v. promises, special interests v. the people, and a million dollars v. a lifetime of education, training, and experience in governmental affairs."⁸⁷ "The fight is one of money against the people," cried Conner.⁸⁸ It was this unusual situation of having a millionaire opponent and the endorsement of Long that enabled Conner to lay claim to a vote in 1931 which he never before or after enjoyed--the small farmers

⁸⁶Daily Clarion Ledger, August 13, 1931.

⁸⁷Daily Clarion Ledger, August 16, 1931.

⁸⁸Daily Clarion Ledger, August 14, 1931.

of the Hills of Mississippi. While Conner was castigating wealth and special interests, Delta barons like Will Percy, Walter Sillers, and Alf Stone lined up their support for him as well.⁸⁹

When the returns were in, a second place finisher in the first primary had won the runoff for the first time in the century. Conner's vote was 170,663 (54.0%), and White's was 145,519 (46.0%).⁹⁰

The 1931 gubernatorial race said much about the state of electoral politics. Two dramatic testaments to the growing power of the modernization consensus were clear. One, a millionaire industrialist led the first primary! This was a long way, indeed, from the politics of Vardaman and Bilbo in Era I. Much of the reason had to be Hugh White's promise of a plan to bring industrial jobs to Mississippians based on the Columbia experiment. And, second, the candidacy of Paul Johnson, Sr., made a considerable statement about what had happened to "redneck" politicians. Johnson was the most acutely defined candidate of the Hills and small farmers throughout the 1930s. And, yet, in the 1931 campaign, as was to be the case in 1935 and 1939, Johnson was firm in his commitment to

⁸⁹Daily Clarion Ledger, August 23, 1931.

⁹⁰Abney, p. 88.

attracting outside capital investment into Mississippi and in the need for balanced budgets. The heir to Vardaman and Bilbo fought his battles within the confines of the modernization consensus. Johnson's appeals to the Hills lay in his expansive humanitarianism--especially the charity hospital and free textbooks plans he espoused.

Despite the clear impact of Whitfield's modernization vision on politics, the life-forms of class and race were also quite strong in this election. White's millionaire status, Long's endorsement of Conner, and Conner's more explicit appeal to the Hills enabled him to portray the runoff with White as a class conflict. Bilbo had, likewise, managed to stir the racial consensus by his attacks on White and the Jackson newspapers.

The Conner administration concerned itself principally with the financial integrity of the state. Much of Conner's addresses to the legislature dealt with fiscal matters, such as retrenchment in some programs, a policy of taxation before appropriation, and governmental reorganization for efficiency at both the state and local levels. There were also strong themes of industrial development, the need for capital in Mississippi, assistance to farmers, and state regulation of utilities.⁹¹

⁹¹See "Message of Gov. Martin Stennet Conner Delivered Before the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi," January 3, 1934.

Undoubtedly, the most important accomplishment of the Conner administration was the passage of a general sales tax, which resulted from a bitterly fought battle that inflamed passions all over the state. The leading proponents were Conner, the "Big Four," who still controlled the Legislature, and the well-organized efforts of educators. State Superintendent of Education Willard F. Bond and other friends of secondary and higher education saw in the sales tax the only vehicle for keeping the public school system operating. The opposition included a wide assortment of individuals and groups, especially merchants who felt that the burden of tax collection would fall on them. Conner brought the race issue into the controversy, contending that a general sales tax would require Negroes to pay their fair share of government costs. Little discussion occurred about the tax's regressivity, and it did not seem to become a class issue. Mississippi was the first state to enact the general sales tax, and it would be remembered as the most monumental accomplishment of the Conner administration.⁹²

The Senatorial Race of 1934

Heber Ladner--present Secretary of State, one of the last Bilbo disciples still to hold public office in

⁹²Emmerich in McLemore, vol. 2, pp. 102-104.

Mississippi, and a native of Bilbo's own Pearl River County--says of the 1934 senate race: "The most phenomenal race, in my judgement, that was run in the state of Mississippi during my lifetime. . . ."93 Ladner points out that not only was Bilbo running against an incumbent, but he also had the opposition of the Conner administration and that of Senator Pat Harrison with his use of federal patronage.94 In addition, Bilbo had, in his second term, presided over the beginning of the Depression and had left the state in chaotic condition. His victory in 1934 warranted the sweeping judgement made by Ladner almost forty years later.

After leaving office in January, 1932, Bilbo had revived the Free Lance, but it collapsed under the indebtedness which accompanied all of Bilbo's enterprises. He also made a half-hearted effort to practice law, but soon was plagued with debts, lawsuits, cancellation of policies, and repossessions.95 For a period in 1932 it appeared likely that the federal courts would void Mississippi's

⁹³Heber Ladner, University of Southern Mississippi Oral History Program, July 21, 1972, p. 39.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Robert G. Bailey, "Theodore G. Bilbo: Prelude to a Senate Career, 1932-1934" (M.A. thesis, University of Southern Mississippi, 1971), pp. 5-8.

congressional districting plan and order state at-large elections, and Bilbo campaigned for an at-large seat in Congress. When the imbroglio was resolved in favor of the state plan, Bilbo withdrew.⁹⁶ Pat Harrison then obtained for Bilbo a sinecure in the Department of Agriculture--it was rumored in order to get Bilbo out of Mississippi and Harrison's political hair--and Bilbo spent about a year in Washington.⁹⁷ Weary of being the "Pastemaster General," as Mississippi's anti-Bilbo press scornfully termed his job, and unable to get commitments from Harrison or President Roosevelt for a better position, Bilbo returned to Mississippi in March 1934 to run against Hubert Stephens.⁹⁸ A last minute effort by Harrison and FDR to keep Bilbo out of the race failed.⁹⁹

As Vardaman's economic rhetoric had become more radical in his senatorial career, so now did Bilbo's. He railed against "an invisible empire which dominates government affairs for the benefit of a favored few and the monied interests."¹⁰⁰ His twenty-seven point program included

⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 12-27.

⁹⁷Green, p. 90.

⁹⁸Bailey thesis, pp. 36-49.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 50.

¹⁰⁰Memphis Commercial Appeal, May 18, 1934.

a strong endorsement of the New Deal, cheaper money for farm mortgage relief, removal of all limits on farm production, federal control and ownership of the Federal Reserve Banks, an old age pension program, shorter hours and more pay for labor, unemployment insurance, a competitive tariff, a separate air service in the armed forces, more highway aid to the states, publication of lobbyists' names, and disclosure of income tax information.¹⁰¹

Stephens had never been colorful by Mississippi political standards and had narrowly defeated Vardaman in 1922 solely on the war issue. Webber Wilson had given him a close race in 1928, in part because Stephens did not seem to keep his political fences well-mended. The senator's denunciations of political conditions in Mississippi could sound intemperate, especially for an incumbent United States senator.¹⁰² In addition, Stephens was not well and could not campaign with the vigor of his opponents. He did not begin the campaign until July, extremely late in Mississippi. Stephens' friend, Pat Harrison, endorsed him publicly, "passed the word" to his own supporters, but did not actively stump for Stephens during the race.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹Jackson Daily News, September 7, 1934.

¹⁰²Green, p. 90.

¹⁰³Purser Hewitt, University of Southern Mississippi Oral History Program, August 28, 1975, p. 26.

Stephens claimed that he would support Roosevelt and the New Deal 100% and made this promise the centerpiece of his campaign. He also recited his record in the Senate, emphasizing his chairmanship of the Senate Commerce Committee. Reports of his speeches indicate that they tended to be long and uncolorful lectures on the legislative process.¹⁰⁴ With rumors rife of Stephens' frail health, his supporters made much of the fact that he was vigorous and of powerful voice.¹⁰⁵ At the same time, however, there were reports that "Stephens continued his quiet little visits over the state" while the opponents were stumping vigorously.¹⁰⁶

The third major candidate was Congressman Ross Collins of Meridian. Collins spoke in favor of extending the recently enacted railroad workers retirement scheme to all workers, advocated a federal old age pension,¹⁰⁷ and praised FDR for taking America off the gold standard.¹⁰⁸ Collins set the first-primary pace with an average of five

¹⁰⁴Daily Clarion Ledger, July 5, 1934.

¹⁰⁵Daily Clarion Ledger, July 27, 1934.

¹⁰⁶Daily Clarion Ledger, August 5, 1934.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Daily Clarion Ledger, August 24, 1934.

to six speeches per week.¹⁰⁹

Charges and insults were bandied about generously. In keeping with his "invisible empire" theme, Bilbo attacked Collins and Stephens for not having exposed and fought that empire in Washington. In particular, he denounced the multi-million dollar subsidies given to major shipping companies by the federal government, and he called names-- United Fruit, Tampa Inter-Ocean Steamship, South Atlantic Steamship, etc. While these corporations were getting rich through federal subsidy, Bilbo fulminated, ten million Americans were unemployed. Stephens and Collins were partially to blame.¹¹⁰ Stephens and Collins traded attacks. When the senator was summoned to Washington for a conference with the President, Collins charged that Stephens had solicited the invitation in an effort to make it appear as though the administration were endorsing him. Stephens hotly denied the charge and produced a telegram from the White House stating that he had, in fact, been invited by the President.¹¹¹ Rumors circulated widely about Stephens' health and Collins' endorsement of a Negro for the position of elevator operator in the Jackson

¹⁰⁹Daily Clarion Ledger, August 12, 1934.

¹¹⁰Daily Clarion Ledger, July 24, 1934.

¹¹¹Daily Clarion Ledger, July 24, 1934.

Post Office, a charge which Collins denied and denounced.¹¹²

Stephens barely led the first primary, 37.3% to 37.2% for Bilbo. Collins came in third with 24.6% in a very low turnout race (171,582 votes cast compared to 312,987 in the 1931 gubernatorial first primary).¹¹³

In the runoff Bilbo hammered away at Stephens. He made a major issue of the fact that Stephens had voted against a veterans bonus bill. Claiming that he would get "ninety-nine and three-fifths" of the veterans vote, Bilbo warned that Stephens had never voted for the "soldier boys" and that if he were re-elected the bonus bill might not even be re-introduced.¹¹⁴ Bilbo boldly promised to quit the race if anyone could produce one piece of legislation that Stephens had gotten passed to help America's suffering people. He termed Stephens' loud support for the New Deal nothing but a "deathbed repentence."¹¹⁵ Bilbo renewed his charge that Stephens had done nothing to prevent the subsidies "rip off" by the shipping firms and that he had voted against unemployment relief and the St. Laurence

¹¹²Daily Clarion Ledger, August 24, 1934.

¹¹³Abney, p. 30.

¹¹⁴Daily Clarion Ledger, September 11, 1934.

¹¹⁵Daily Clarion Ledger, September 7, 1934.

Waterway Treaty, an issue close to the heart of FDR.¹¹⁶ Continuing to portray Stephens as weak, sick, and luke-warm on the New Deal, Bilbo stated, "If you want somebody who has no vision, no ideas, no fight, then vote for Stephens."¹¹⁷ If Bilbo had been lower-key than usual in the first primary, he flowered into his old form in the second. On September 13 he set a Mississippi record by making eight speeches in six counties.¹¹⁸ His biographer says that "Bilbo whipped through Mississippi like a tornado. . . ,"¹¹⁹ and Key recalled that "In 1934 Bilbo brought into play his genius for rough-and-tumble campaigning."¹²⁰

The enfeebled Stephens struggled against the "Stormy Petrel." He tried to defend his votes on the veterans bonus and subsidies,¹²¹ but he was clearly on the defensive. Stephens attacked, in return, Bilbo's scandal-ridden administrations.¹²²

¹¹⁶Daily Clarion Ledger, September 11, 1934.

¹¹⁷Daily Clarion Ledger, September 12, 1934.

¹¹⁸Daily Clarion Ledger, September 14, 1934.

¹¹⁹Green, p. 91.

¹²⁰Key, p. 242.

¹²¹Daily Clarion Ledger, September 11, 1934.

¹²²Daily Clarion Ledger, September 14, 1934.

The position of the candidates on the New Deal provided an interesting and a subtle study. Even though Stephens was running as a New Dealer, it is conventional wisdom in Mississippi that he was defeated for being soft in his support for the Roosevelt administration. Frank Smith states in his book Congressman from Mississippi that "The state campaign I remember best was in 1934, when Senator Stephens was turned out of office for not being a wholehearted New Dealer. . . . That year, Mississippi voters wanted someone who would help Franklin Roosevelt end the Depression. Bilbo promised to be a '100 percent New Dealer,' and that was enough."¹²³ A reading of the capital city's morning newspaper, the Daily Clarion Ledger, sheds some light on the seeming contradiction.¹²⁴

Some of Bilbo's remarks hardly conform to the conventional notion that he "out-New-Dealed" Stephens. He

¹²³Smith, pp. 37-38.

¹²⁴It should be noted at this point that the reporting techniques of the Daily Clarion Ledger were blatantly biased in favor of its candidates. The paper, for example, would often give no coverage at all to candidates they opposed, or limited coverage hidden deep in the issue, while their favorites, especially Paul Johnson, would receive daily front page coverage, including frequent banner headlines. In fairness, it should be said that many newspapers of the day were more openly biased than they are today. The Daily Clarion Ledger was never a supporter of Bilbo, and it gave him practically no coverage at all in the 1934 first primary. Second primary coverage improved and could be said to be close to equal with that of Stephens.

took Stephens' platform that he would support FDR 100% and called him the "rubber stamp senator." Bilbo said that the state might as well order a stamp from Sears and Roebuck and send it up to the Secretary of the Senate.¹²⁵ Bilbo further threatened a purge of administration appointees in Mississippi, saying "the members of the New Deal in this state might as well pack up and move out."¹²⁶ In another speech he called Roosevelt a "New York Yankee" but a "good damn Yankee," and promised to "raise Hell" once he got to Washington. The conservative press painted these remarks as anti-Roosevelt.¹²⁷

It is the opinion of this writer that out of the seeming confusion on who supported the New Deal more strongly, Bilbo had hit a subtle nerve of deep South politics. The Mississippi voters did not want a "me too" weakling for their senator, and this was exactly the image that Bilbo managed to place on Stephens. Bilbo pledged to support Roosevelt and the New Deal fully (which he did once he got to Washington), and the voters believed him.¹²⁸ Stephens' obviously poor physical condition, along

¹²⁵Daily Clarion Ledger, September 14, 1934.

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Daily Clarion Ledger, September 16, 1934.

¹²⁸Daily Clarion Ledger, September 14, 1934.

with his colorless and weak image, especially when contrasted to Bilbo, made his type of appeal disastrous. The Mississippi rednecks had never forgiven Stephens for his defeat of Vardaman in 1922 and his intemperate outbursts against Bilbo in 1931; and enough of the "swing vote" was convinced by Bilbo's vigorous campaign that Mississippi should have a strong, if undeniably colorful, man in the Senate. "The Man" pasted together a bare majority of 51.8%.¹²⁹

Personality was the major life-form operating in this sensational race, although loyalty to Roosevelt and the New Deal was also an obvious issue. The fact that Stephens had defeated Vardaman in his last race--plus his inability to be a "hale fellow well met"--meant that the life-form of class was undoubtedly tapped on the style level. Bilbo's attacks on the "invisible empire" of wealth and power rang as true to many in the Depression as had Vardaman's attacks on the patricians in the wake of the Secret Caucus twenty years before. Class antagonisms seemed to surface in these tragic years, and Bilbo knew exactly how to exploit them.

The Gubernatorial Election of 1935

The enactment of the sales tax, the restoration of

¹²⁹Abney, p. 31.

the state's financial integrity, retrenchment and budget balancing, the New Deal programs, and the defeat of Conner's highway reorganization bill--against these legacies of the Conner administration five candidates announced for governor in 1935. Johnson and White were making their second races for the office. Dennis Murphree was running again, as was Lester Franklin, the "Russell man" of 1923. A fifth, minor candidate was A. E. Copeland.

As was the case in 1923, Franklin seemed to be the most "left-wing" candidate in the race, running on a share-the-wealth platform.¹³⁰ Next along the spectrum, from left to right, would have been Johnson. Johnson was running on the type of humanitarian platform reminiscent of Era I governors. His principal issue was free textbooks, but he also called for free hospitalization for the poor, a strong homestead exemption law, more support for the state sanitorium, the building of a state home for incurables, the completion of the Natchez Trace Parkway, the establishment of bonded warehouses, and continued industrial development. He made an issue of the surplus in the treasury left by Conner, thereby seeming to attack the degree to which fiscal integrity had been stressed at the expense of human needs. Said Johnson, "I will never

¹³⁰Cochran thesis, p. 9.

reduce the appropriation for hospitals to create a surplus in the treasury."¹³¹ He also endorsed old age pensions, better teacher salaries, and the New Deal.¹³²

As free textbooks comprised the centerpiece of Johnson's platform, the balance-agriculture-with-industry concept was White's key issue. He also supported rural electrification, a highway program, refinancing of county debts, a homestead exemption law, old age pensions, and more state aid for charity wards in hospitals. In an apparent reversal of his 1931 positions, he now came out against a workmen's compensation law and in favor of free textbooks for school children.¹³³ One notable aspect of the platforms was their similarity. They all agreed on the need for some program of free textbooks, homestead exemption, more paved roads, cheaper auto tags, and fiscal integrity. The differences were those of emphasis.¹³⁴

The candidates, as they were wont to do in Era II, devoted as much if not more of their speeches to attacks on each other as to a presentation of their platforms. Johnson repeatedly decried the "deal of 1927" between

¹³¹Paul Johnson Campaign Brochure, 1935, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

¹³²Ibid., p. 4.

¹³³Cochran thesis, p. 16.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 17.

White and Murphree. Murphree admitted that White had given him \$15,000 in 1927 for the race against Bilbo, and in a surprising attack White accused Murphree of "short-changing" him. White claimed the actual amount to have been \$16,700 and said that Murphree was biting the hand that fed him.¹³⁵ In a full-page ad entitled "MONEY, MONEY," Johnson cited the "money deal" as evidence of the pernicious role that White's millions was playing in the campaign.¹³⁶

The "deal of 1927" issue seemed to produce a new type of campaign by White. He had carefully presented himself in 1931 and in 1935, up to this point, as the "clean" candidate who refused to indulge in the old style of political demagoguery and mud-slinging. With his attack on Murphree, as the Daily Clarion Ledger noted, "White Drops His Gloved Hand. . . ."¹³⁷ He severely criticized Murphree for going back on a pledge not to run against him and accused him of being an ingrate. Murphree responded that since he had not run in 1931 White had gotten full value for his money, and that it was, in fact, White who in 1932 had promised not to run in

¹³⁵Daily Clarion Ledger, July 21, 1935.

¹³⁶Daily Clarion Ledger, August 4, 1935.

¹³⁷Daily Clarion Ledger, July 20, 1935.

1935.¹³⁸

Johnson also attacked Murphree as the "highway machine candidate," referring often to his connections with big highway contractors. Murphree, using the highway issue himself, proudly claimed credit for killing Conner's "highway dictator" bill, and also charged that Conner had "sent word" down through some fifty state agencies to oppose him.¹³⁹ Murphree accused all of his opponents of spreading rumors about his health. Johnson asserted that rumors had circulated widely that he was Roman Catholic. In re-affirming his Methodism, he said, however, that as governor he "would know no creed or sect in the discharge of the duties. . . ." ¹⁴⁰ Johnson also asserted that Bilbo was riding Hugh White around the state, but said that was "o.k. because Jesus rode a jackass into Jerusalem."¹⁴¹

The first primary gave Johnson a narrow lead, with 31.4% of the vote. White was second with 31.3%, followed by Murphree with 26.2%, Franklin with 9.8% and Copeland with 1.3%.¹⁴²

¹³⁸Daily Clarion Ledger, July 16, 1935.

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Daily Clarion Ledger, August 6, 1935.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²Abney, p. 89.

The runoff was one of the bitterest in memory. White's wealth remained a hot issue, with Johnson calling him "old millionaire White." He accused White of trying to "buy" the election and said that the issue was control of the state by millionaires v. him,¹⁴³ For good measure, he accused White of being a closet Republican,¹⁴⁴ and of stirring up the religious issue by putting out rumors that he (Johnson) was a Roman Catholic.¹⁴⁵

Huey Long became the overriding issue in the runoff. White returned Johnson's attack in full measure by accusing him of being the puppet of the Kingfish. White clearly laid down the gauntlet in his opening statement of the runoff. He candidly stated that the only real difference between his platform and that of Johnson was the degree of tax exemptions for business. He then went on to state the real issue in the second primary: "The issue now is whether the voters of this state shall permit Huey P. Long of Louisiana to dictate the election of their governor."¹⁴⁶ White's campaign literature carried screaming headlines which said, "Shall the People Rule or Shall Huey Long

¹⁴³Cochran thesis, pp. 24 and 28-29.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁴⁶Daily Clarion Ledger, August 9, 1935.

and Paul Johnson Dictate?"¹⁴⁷

In factional alliances which set new records for the bizarre Bilbo was actively supporting White.¹⁴⁸ This was probably due to three factors: (1) White had supported Bilbo in his 1934 senate race, (2) Bilbo and Long had become bitter rivals, (3) Bilbo had a debt to repay to Johnson for his 1918 congressional defeat. Franklin and Murphree supported White in the runoff,¹⁴⁹ while Conner supported Johnson.¹⁵⁰

It was Bilbo's colorful oratory which fanned the flames of the Long issue. He called Long the "dictator" of Louisiana and accused him of wanting to control Mississippi through his puppet, Johnson. Louisiana Lieutenant Governor, Jimmy Noe, had, according to Bilbo, revealed the Long plot to him.¹⁵¹ It was all part of a plot, Bilbo charged, to get Mississippi's delegates to the next Democratic National Convention pledged to Long instead of FDR. Thus, Bilbo was also able to portray the election as a referendum on the beloved president.

¹⁴⁷Hugh White Campaign Tabloid, 1935, in Mississippi State University Special Collections.

¹⁴⁸Cochran thesis, p. 23.

¹⁴⁹Hamilton thesis, p. 5.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁵¹Jackson Daily News, August 25, 1935.

Long himself played into Bilbo's hands by issuing a statement which said that he was mobilizing his 602 Share-the-Wealth societies in Mississippi because "I don't want poor people penalized with a rapacious millionaire type like Hugh White serving as governor."¹⁵² Bilbo pleaded, "Let me ask you not to take any of that Huey Long money that's being passed out in this campaign. But if you must take it, for God's sake don't let it influence your votes. Take the money--but vote for Hugh White anyway."¹⁵³

The race issue was also injected into the campaign and connected with the alleged Long-Johnson axis. Bilbo charged that the "Share-the-Wealth" societies being formed in Mississippi were fronts for Negro registration and manipulation by Long and Johnson.¹⁵⁴ Banner headlines in White's campaign material read, "Do You Want Negroes to Vote in Mississippi?" and went on to assert that Long had registered blacks in Louisiana and wanted to do the same in Mississippi.¹⁵⁵ Bilbo and White both unleashed scathing attacks on Long, Bilbo calling him "Public Enemy Number

¹⁵²Daily Clarion Ledger, August 11, 1935.

¹⁵³Jackson Daily News, August 25, 1935.

¹⁵⁴Cochran thesis, p. 33.

¹⁵⁵Hugh White Campaign Tabloid, 1935, in Mississippi State University Special Collections.

One" and White accusing him of a plan to send in 500 cars to cruise the state on election day.¹⁵⁶

Johnson responded by calling White the "dirtiest white man" ever to offer for public office in Mississippi and by accusing Bilbo of promising WPA jobs in return for votes for White. Mrs. Bilbo, estranged from the senator, stumped the state for Johnson, accusing her husband of insincerity in his support for millionaire White and calling his tactics the dirtiest in Mississippi history. As the campaign reached a fever pitch, there were numerous cases of violence reported, a throat-cutting at Glendale, and several deaths.¹⁵⁷ With widespread reports of fraud, violence, and vote-buying, a special session was convened after the election to enact a new Corrupt Practices Act for the state.¹⁵⁸

The results were 182,807 for White (51.7%) to 170,702 for Johnson (48.3%).¹⁵⁹ In a classic political message, as well as a revelation about Bilbo's lack of ideological purity, Senator Bilbo sent a telegram to Paul Johnson. In 1918 Johnson had defeated Bilbo for Congress by ringing

¹⁵⁶Cochran thesis, p. 34.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 32-37.

¹⁵⁸Hamilton thesis, p. 6.

¹⁵⁹Abney, p. 89.

a cow bell at all his speeches to remind voters that Bilbo, as governor, had put the hated "cattle dipping" law on the farmers. Bilbo sent the following wire to Johnson after his loss to White: "You took a cow bell and beat me for Congress. Now I have taken a dumb bell and beat you for Governor. We are now even, now I am ready to help you."¹⁶⁰ In 1939 Bilbo did, indeed, help Johnson get elected.

White's brief inaugural address did not contain the details of the monumental Balance Agriculture with Industry program (BAWI) which was to be enacted later at a special session, but he did make the same type of strong call for industrial development as had Whitfield in 1924. Speaking of the vast wealth of the United States, White said, "If we are to share in a reasonable measure that wealth, we must develop industries within the bounds of our beloved state. We must balance agriculture with industry."¹⁶¹ He then pledged to continue the type of program first begun with the Reliance Manufacturing Company experiment in Columbia.

The major point in White's inaugural was his advocacy of a comprehensive highway program, an issue within

¹⁶⁰Quoted in Owens, p. 157.

¹⁶¹"Message of Governor Hugh L. White to the Legislature of Mississippi," 1936, p. 4.

progressivism and an aspect of a modernizing economy. He told the legislature that, "My sole desire in this matter is to see that we are gotten out of the mud, dust, and gravel as quickly as possible. . . . If nothing else worthwhile should be accomplished during the next four years, I feel that the completion of a hard surfaced highway system will mark our administration as a splendid success."¹⁶² The brevity of his speech highlighted more dramatically the emphasis White placed upon highway construction and industrial development. As it turned out, these two programs were to be the hallmarks of his administration.

A split among the black belt legislators ended the reign of the Big Four and insured the defeat of Tom Bailey as speaker. A coalition of more moderate Deltans, like Fielding Wright of Sharkey County, and the Bilboites, like Heber Ladner, supported Governor White's candidate for speaker, Horace Stansel. The disappointed Bailey stepped aside when it was obvious he could not win, and Stansel was elected unanimously. It was a good augury for White.¹⁶³

¹⁶²Ibid.

¹⁶³For accounts of this important speaker's contest, see Ownes, pp. 135-138; and Elbert Riley Hilliard, "A Biography of Fielding Wright: Mississippi's Mr. States Rights" (M.A. thesis, Mississippi State University, 1959), pp. 38-40.

A \$42.5 million highway program was passed and signed into law by White within ten days of his inauguration, and this was expanded later in his administration to a \$100 million program. The state bonds were financed out of the gasoline tax, set at six cents per gallon. During White's term of office the hard surfaced roads increased from 922 miles to approximately 4000. It was the foundation of Mississippi's modern highway system.¹⁶⁴

White's BAWI program was submitted to a special session called for that purpose in September 1936. The plan, drafted by a task force of Jackson attorneys, authorized localities to float bond issues for the financing of industrial plant construction. The facilities would then be leased to manufacturing concerns and the bonds amortized with the rent. This procedure had strict requirements and safeguards built in, including the passage of the bond issue by a 2/3's vote in public referendum and prior approval of the issue by a state agency. Despite severe constitutional problems and cries that the program was socialistic, the legislation passed at the special session; and localities began utilizing the legislation enthusiastically.¹⁶⁵ As was the case with White's highway

¹⁶⁴Emmerich in McLemore, vol. 2, pp. 114-116.

¹⁶⁵For a description of the passage and provisions of the BAWI legislation, see Cochran thesis, pp. 46-74.

program, the BAWI plan was to provide the basis for much of the state's future industrial growth.

Other achievements of White's administration included a homestead exemption law, ". . . regarded as the most humane aspect of his administration."¹⁶⁶ There were also considerable advances made in the field of agriculture through the efforts of White, Commissioner of Agriculture J. C. Holton, and the Mississippi State Agricultural Extension Service.¹⁶⁷

In many ways the election and administration of Hugh White was as important as that of Whitfield. As was the case in 1923 the impact of the administration was more profound on the developing modernization consensus than was the election itself, which had an ambiguous quality about it. The class life-form was highly visible in 1935, but it had the same "freak" quality as in 1931, when Mike Conner laid claim to much of the small farmer vote because of who his opponent was. In 1935 "old millionaire White"--who had made Yale-educated, arrogant, generally conservative Mike Conner look "redneck" by comparison in 1931--now garnered enough marginal "redneck" support himself to be elected because of Bilbo's active

¹⁶⁶Emmerich in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 118.

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

support and because of the "outside interference" issue. He and Bilbo also exploited the race issue. Johnson, always the progressive and humanitarian, maintained his 1931 industrial development plank but backed away from the emphasis on a balanced budget. The general image of Johnson in 1935 as compared to that of 1931 was a candidate more committed to social legislation than to business development. White's clear call for the BAWI program made this difference striking. So, one could say that the election outcome of 1935 was a victory for modernization, but it was also highly influenced by the life-forms of race and class and the issue of outside interference.

White's administration, on the other hand, was a clear triumph for modernization, as he advanced the concept to a new level in the political arena. Moving from the pro-business attitude of Whitfield, Governor White called for active state promotion of industrialization by a program that some called "socialistic." To this program the state responded enthusiastically. It expanded forever the boundaries of the modernization consensus.

The Senatorial Race of 1936

The 1936 senatorial race is not included in the statistical analysis; however, a brief sketch of the campaign will shed light on the chaotic alignments of the 1930s.

Mississippi's two senators, Harrison and Bilbo, had never been allies, but a major break came in 1936 when Harrison refused to take down the nomination of Judge Holmes to the Circuit Court of Appeals. Holmes was the man who had jailed Bilbo in Oxford during the Birkhead scandal.¹⁶⁸ After the confirmation, Bilbo announced to the press, "I'm in the market for a colleague who will show some respect for me." Regarding Harrison, he said "I'll fight him from hell to breakfast."¹⁶⁹ Bilbo thereupon turned his support to his old enemy, Mike Conner, who was to make a disastrous race against Harrison.

Harrison had become one of the most respected and powerful members of the United States Senate. He had been instrumental in the nomination of Roosevelt in 1932, was chairman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, and missed being elected majority leader by one vote (Bilbo voted against him). In 1939 he was to be voted the most influential man in the Senate by the Washington press corps.¹⁷⁰ Many of Bilbo's friends questioned his wisdom in trying to defeat so powerful and popular a member

¹⁶⁸Adam, p. 19.

¹⁶⁹Green, p. 92.

¹⁷⁰Martha H. Swain, "The Lion and the Fox: The Relationship of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Senator Pat Harrison," Journal of Mississippi History 38 (November, 1976): 333-359.

of the Senate, especially with his old enemy, Conner. His lieutenant governor and long-time supporter Bidwell Adam says today, for example, "That was a political mistake of the worst type."¹⁷¹ Adam's own theory now is that Bilbo was trying to kill Conner politically: "I've always thought that Bilbo knew Conner couldn't beat Pat Harrison. . . . Bilbo supported Conner knowing that Conner couldn't win."¹⁷² Another lifelong supporter, Hansford Simmons, admits that "I never did understand that [Bilbo's campaign for Conner]. . . ." ¹⁷³ On that occasion, Simmons split with Bilbo and supported Harrison. So did many others in the Bilbo following.

Bilbo stumped for Conner, but was unable to generate much excitement or support. He attempted to make an issue of the fact that Harrison had learned "high-falutin'" habits in Washington, especially the aristocratic game of golf.¹⁷⁴ Roosevelt was convinced that the election was a referendum on his administration, and he did all that he could for Harrison.¹⁷⁵ To Conner's charge--made,

¹⁷¹Adam, p. 19.

¹⁷²Ibid., pp. 73-74.

¹⁷³Hansford Simmons, University of Southern Mississippi Oral History Program, July 22, 1975, p. 40.

¹⁷⁴Green, p. 93.

¹⁷⁵Swain, p. 347.

no doubt, on the advice of his new-found ally, Bilbo-- that Harrison was a "rubber stamp" to FDR (a charge reminiscent of Bilbo's attack on Stephens), Harrison answered, "I am proud of it."¹⁷⁶ Harrison questioned Conner's commitment to the New Deal, the President, and the Democratic Party.¹⁷⁷

The alliances were, as usual for the time, queer. The strangest was, of course, Bilbo's support for Conner. However, Johnson was also supporting Conner. White and Bilbo, allies in 1935, now split, and Governor White gave his full backing to Harrison.¹⁷⁸

The election was not close. Harrison won 65.5% to Conner's 33.2%.¹⁷⁹

The Gubernatorial Election of 1939

Hugh White's extraordinary administration, plus the senate race of 1936, set the stage for the 1939 gubernatorial election. The field included some familiar names: Johnson, making his third race; Conner, running again after his devastating loss to Harrison in 1936; Lester

¹⁷⁶Daily Clarion Ledger, August 23, 1936.

¹⁷⁷Ibid.

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

¹⁷⁹Abney, p. 30.

Franklin; and Thomas L. Bailey, former speaker of the House, now making his first race for the governorship. Other minor candidates included M.W. Gantt, George Ritchey, and Lieutenant Governor Billy Snider.

The election seemed to center around three issues: Conner's record as governor, Johnson's free textbook plan, and the New Deal. Johnson continued to appeal to the small farmers--he called them the "runt pigs" of the state. His platform included three dollar car tags, an eight month school term, better pay for teachers, and a system of farm to market roads.¹⁸⁰ But, the main plank identified with Johnson, as before, was his call for free textbooks for Mississippi school children. He attacked Conner and Bailey for having been part of the political establishment for twenty years which failed to enact a free textbook law.¹⁸¹

Johnson also criticized Conner's record as governor, ridiculing his claim to have balanced the budget. Johnson contended that it had been Roosevelt's New Deal money which had restored Mississippi's solvency. He continued his 1935 attack on Conner's retrenchment in the areas of teacher salaries, confederate pensions, and

¹⁸⁰John Ray Skates, "World War II and Its Effects," in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 129.

¹⁸¹Daily Clarion Ledger, August 3, 1939.

support for charity hospitals. "I will never balance the state's budget at the expense of suffering humanity. I am more interested in people than in treasury surpluses."¹⁸²

Conner ran on a defense of his record, contending that Mississippi would not be in a position to do anything for her citizens had he not put the financial affairs of the state in order. He played heavily on his experience and accused Johnson of being just a "promiser." He claimed credit for many of the popular reforms of the time, such as the homestead exemption law and road program, neither of which had passed during his administration.¹⁸³ Conner's immodest claims, as usual, provided fodder for those who claimed he was a conceited "Yale man" who had come from high origins. Conner never had the common touch. As an admirer said, "Mike Conner had everything needful, it seems, to be the most outstanding man Mississippi had ever produced except the ability to draw the masses of people close to him."¹⁸⁴

¹⁸²Quoted in Hamilton thesis, p. 9. The irony of this charge was that Johnson was the governor who finally paid off the bond issues which the state had floated for years in order to pay operating expenses. It was he who finally put Mississippi on a pay-as-you-go, balanced-budget basis.

¹⁸³Daily Clarion Ledger, August 3, 1939.

¹⁸⁴Jackson thesis, pp. 13-14.

Tom Bailey, originally from Webster County deep in the northeast Hills but then a long-time resident of Meridian, did have a common touch. During his long career in the Legislature, in which he was associated with the Delta "old guard," he had built a reputation of fairness and approachability.¹⁸⁵ He had run unsuccessfully once for Congress, but this was his first bid for the governorship. He ran as a "clean" candidate on an eighteen-point platform which seemed to emphasize the needs of agriculture. He promised a better road system, emphasizing farm to market arteries, a program of farm cooperatives, laws standardizing certain farm products, and a joint effort with other southern governors to equalize interstate freight rates. Claimed Bailey, "Agriculture is our greatest enterprise."¹⁸⁶ He also believed that "free textbooks are coming" and advocated a state program of vocational education.¹⁸⁷

The first primary produced a substantial lead for Johnson. He polled 33.7% to Conner's 25.2%. Bailey was third with 19.6% of the vote, Franklin fourth with 10.4%,

¹⁸⁵Hewitt, p. 27.

¹⁸⁶Daily Clarion Ledger, August 1, 1939.

¹⁸⁷Daily Clarion Ledger, July 30, 1939.

and Snider a distant fifth with 7.9%.¹⁸⁸

The runoff focused more on the issue of the New Deal. Despite his protestations of support for Roosevelt, Conner was being seen more and more as an opponent of the President's domestic program. (Conner, in fact, had opposed FDR's nomination in the 1932 Democratic Convention.) Harrison was backing Conner, and the senator had split with FDR over many issues in the President's second and more radical phase of the New Deal--e.g., the court-packing plan and the wealth-redistribution taxes. Despite their initial cordiality, Roosevelt had backed Barkley in the majority leader's race against Harrison, and this had begun the break.¹⁸⁹ Senator Bilbo, on the other hand, had an almost perfect record of support for the President, and Bilbo was backing Johnson in the runoff. The issue of the New Deal became further joined.¹⁹⁰ Franklin and Snider endorsed Johnson, as did Bailey's campaign manager, who stated that the race had become one between the pro-New Deal and anti-New Deal forces.¹⁹¹

Conner attempted to ridicule Johnson's program as

¹⁸⁸Abney, p. 89.

¹⁸⁹Swain thesis, pp. 343-352.

¹⁹⁰Daily Clarion Ledger, August 14, 1939.

¹⁹¹Daily Clarion Ledger, August 11, 12, and 13, 1939.

demagogic and imperiously told the people, "If you vote for a man like that for governor, you would deserve what you got if he were elected."¹⁹² Johnson returned the attacks, accusing Conner of claiming to support FDR when everyone knew the contrary to be true. He picked up his attack on Conner's administration, reminding the voters that Conner had burdened them with the sales tax "tokens."¹⁹³ Conner demanded that Johnson explain how he planned to finance his programs and reminded the voters that "if the people want economic and business management of state offices, they know who can and will give it to them."¹⁹⁴ Johnson portrayed the race as one between the masses and classes. He reminded them that he had always stood for the average man.¹⁹⁵

Johnson won the runoff with 54.7% to Conner's 45.3%.¹⁹⁶

Johnson had a successful, progressive administration. He got the free textbooks program, increased appropriations for the Department of Welfare, a raise in the

¹⁹²Daily Clarion Ledger, August 17, 1939.

¹⁹³Daily Clarion Ledger, August 18, 1939.

¹⁹⁴Daily Clarion Ledger, August 19, 1939.

¹⁹⁵Daily Clarion Ledger, August 20, 1939.

¹⁹⁶Abney, p. 89.

homestead exemption, and an amendment to the Constitution which further insulated the University and colleges from politics.¹⁹⁷ Johnson also had a harmonious administration with Mississippi blacks. The free textbook program applied to Negro children as well as white, and he helped bring the financially troubled Jackson College (now Jackson State University) under state control. A group of blacks presented Johnson with a portrait inscribed, "Presented to the Honorable Paul Burney Johnson, Governor of All the People of the State of Mississippi, by the Negro Citizens of Mississippi."¹⁹⁸

In the area of modernization, Johnson had a mixed record. On the one hand, he supported the enactment of a long-sought timber severance tax. Timber thereupon became subject to tax only at the time of its cutting and not to ad valorem assessments as had been the case before. This tax, along with a renewed emphasis on reforestation and conservation, laid the groundwork for Mississippi's modern timber business. Companies like Georgia Pacific, St. Regis, Weyerhaeuser, and International Paper have large investments in Mississippi and generate thousands of jobs and millions of dollars worth

¹⁹⁷Skates in McLemore, vol. 2, pp. 129-130.

¹⁹⁸Loewen and Sallis, p. 212.

of economic activity.¹⁹⁹ On the other hand, Johnson made a radical break with the prior administration by killing White's BAWI program. Not renewing the legislation in 1940, the Legislature replaced the defunct Advertising and Industrial Commissions and the Planning Board with a Mississippi Board of Development. Its main functions were industrial advertising and promotion, but gone was the heart of BAWI--namely, the bonding authority for localities.²⁰⁰

Paul Johnson's victory of 1939 marked a reassertion of agrarian class conflict as the predominant life-form. Espousing the cause of the "runt pigs" of the state, Johnson made his appeal on progressive issues, most notably the free textbook plan. The old marriage between class appeal and strong progressivism resurfaced. Mike Conner, swept up by the memories of his own triumph in 1931 and highly acclaimed administration, fell prey to those aspects of his personality which damaged him politically--imperiousness, aloofness, and egocentricity. Conner's inability to restrain those characteristics made

¹⁹⁹For an account of the history of the timber industry in Mississippi, see Nollie Hickman, "Mississippi Forests," in McLemore, vol. 2, Chapter 30.

²⁰⁰Ralph Rogers, "The Effort to Industrialize," in McLemore, vol. 2, pp. 242-243.

the contrast between him and Johnson look strangely like some of the choices in Era I runoffs. The perceived differences between them on the New Deal reinforced this contrast. In terms of modernization, Conner would have been more clearly seen in the lineage of Whitfield and White, but this distinction was blurred slightly by Johnson's continued espousal of industrial development.

Johnson's administration was a temporary setback for modernization, although, in a way, his death blow to the BAWI program set the stage for a later election which served as a public referendum on the concept. In this election, the public spoke unmistakably in favor of modernization, thereby enshrining it further in the architecture of Mississippi politics.

The Senatorial Races of 1940 and 1942

White suffered a debilitating heart attack during the last year of his term, but decided to announce against Bilbo for the Senate in 1940.²⁰¹ Confusing alliances continued to be the order of the day. White, supported by Bilbo in 1935, was now his opponent. Johnson, opposed by Bilbo in 1935 but supported by him in 1939, now endorsed

²⁰¹Emmerich in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 118.

the senator's re-election.²⁰²

White was running as an outgoing governor with a clear record. Bilbo's six years in the Senate did not seem to change his image substantially with the voters. In Washington he had been a firm and constant supporter of the New Deal²⁰³ at the same time that Harrison was breaking with Roosevelt. Some of Bilbo's legislative activity during the first term had been typical of any senator--e.g., sponsoring flood control aid for the Mississippi River, co-sponsoring appropriations for the elimination of the bollworm, and support for money to build a bridge over the Pearl River. In other areas he was an advocate of preparedness--in contrast to his mentor, Vardaman--being one of the first senators to urge the stockpiling of strategic materials in the face of what he saw as a growing German and Japanese threat. In still other areas he was his idiosyncratic self, calling, for example, for legislation to provide gratis new cotton mattresses to every poor family in the country--Bilbo's solution for a cotton surplus. On one occasion during his first term he rose to legislative greatness, proposing and supporting legislation for the federal establishment

²⁰²Simmons, p. 60.

²⁰³Hewitt, p. 21.

of regional centers to research new and improved uses for agricultural products and natural resources. Roosevelt praised the idea, and it became law.²⁰⁴ An admirer calls it today ". . . one of the greatest accomplishments of any senator."²⁰⁵

One issue was gaining more and more prominence in the mind of Bilbo, and it reflected a gathering storm cloud which was to hang over southern politics for the next three decades--race. The migration of many blacks from the South to northern cities, where they voted, began to change the political calculations of the two national parties during the 1930s. The familiar story of the Democratic Party's evolution from a southern dominated party to one based more and more on a northern, urban, ethnic, and black base does not need rehearsing here, except to say that the transition began to be felt in policy issues during the late thirties. In particular, an anti-lynch law debated in Congress in 1937 created a storm of outrage in the South.²⁰⁶

Bilbo responded quickly and firmly to the rising

²⁰⁴Green, pp. 94-95.

²⁰⁵Ladner, p. 15.

²⁰⁶William M. Simpson, "The 'Loyalist Democrats' of Mississippi: Challenge to a White Majority, 1965-1972" (Ph.D. dissertation, Mississippi State University, 1974), pp. 5-6.

issue of race in the Congress. He enthusiastically joined the filibuster against the anti-lynch bill. It was also during this time that Bilbo publicly proclaimed his plan, in all seriousness, to send American Negroes back to Africa. He proposed to use relief funds to transport some 2,000,000 blacks to Liberia, and later endorsed a plan for the voluntary resettlement of 12,000,000 blacks in a new African state to be formed out of lands ceded by Great Britain and France in lieu of their war debts. He introduced three bills in the Senate to accomplish this plan.²⁰⁷ His increasing obsession with the national racial problem was becoming a hallmark. Through it all ". . . he went further and fanned the flames of antagonism by delivering anti-minority addresses, often to vacant seats in the Senate, merely to send copies of the addresses and further appeal to his followers at home."²⁰⁸ It was with a record of support for New Deal legislation and opposition to federal civil rights activity that Bilbo approached his race with White.

Overriding these considerations, however, was World War II. Headlines of every paper centered on the war in Europe and the growing threat to America. This

²⁰⁷Green, pp. 94-95.

²⁰⁸Ibid., p. 99.

situation alone would have presented a difficult political situation to White, especially given the fact that Bilbo had been one of the earliest advocates of preparedness. The war also made for a highly unusual campaign. Bilbo "stayed on the post" in Washington until three weeks before the election, and White promised not to campaign as long as Bilbo was out of the state.²⁰⁹

It might well have been a ploy by White to keep the titanic campaigner Bilbo in Washington. By offering not to campaign himself as long as Bilbo stayed in the Senate fulfilling his duties, White might have hoped to go right up to the election without a campaign. As a successful and just-retired governor, he might have thought this ploy to be his best hope of defeating Bilbo. It failed.

Three weeks before the election, on the pretext that a rumor campaign had been started by White, Bilbo returned to Mississippi to barnstorm the state. Challenging White to a series of thirty-nine debates, Bilbo declared that but for the rumors he "had planned to remain at my post of duty on account of the perilous condition of our country and the importance of the defense legislation now pending before Congress."²¹⁰ White declined the

²⁰⁹Daily Clarion Ledger, August 6, 1940.

²¹⁰Ibid.

invitation and encouraged Bilbo to stay in Washington if he felt he needed to.²¹¹

Bilbo mixed his old style of colorful attack with a clever "don't rock the boat during war time" argument. He even went so far as to bury the hatchet with his old foe, Harrison--publicly at least. Bilbo contended that they made a good team during perilous times. "We've had our differences, and we've struck our blows. But that is over now. He says he's going to vote for Hugh White, and I can't say that I blame him. White is an old friend of his. But he is not taking sides in this campaign."²¹² Harrison did, in fact, issue a low key statement pledging "hands off" the race, even though he planned to vote for White.²¹³ Bilbo mixed his new "senatorial image" with a blistering attack on White's record as governor. He accused White of trying to buy the election, of showing monumental ingratitude for his support in 1935, of having pushed the homestead exemption act at an eleventh-hour special session only when he had decided to run against Bilbo for the Senate,²¹⁴ of breaking his promise to the people about

²¹¹Daily Clarion Ledger, August 7, 1940.

²¹²Daily Clarion Ledger, August 13, 1940.

²¹³Daily Clarion Ledger, August 11, 1940.

²¹⁴Daily Clarion Ledger, August 13, 1940.

one dollar car tags,²¹⁵ of mismanagement of a multi-million dollar bond issue which was uncallable, and of offering land patents to cronies while declaring a general moratorium.²¹⁶ On the positive side, Bilbo stressed his record as governor and particularly cited his record on military preparedness while in the Senate. He assured Mississippi mothers that should war come the country would be well prepared and their sons well-trained.²¹⁷ Bilbo also pointed to his important committee assignments on Commerce and Agriculture as reasons for his re-election.²¹⁸

White charged that Bilbo had returned to the state only because he was afraid of losing. He attacked Bilbo for bankrupting the state in his second term. White cited the poll of Washington press correspondents who had voted Bilbo the "second most useless member of the Senate."²¹⁹ He accused Bilbo of "striking a dagger" into Mississippi's heart when he voted against Harrison for majority leader, thereby allowing Barkley to win by one

²¹⁵Daily Clarion Ledger, August 17, 1940.

²¹⁶Daily Clarion Ledger, August 14, 1940.

²¹⁷Daily Clarion Ledger, August 16, 1940.

²¹⁸Daily Clarion Ledger, August 13, 1940.

²¹⁹Ibid.

vote. He also criticized him for allowing Louisiana to get the regional research center.²²⁰ White tried to inject the race issue into the campaign by explaining his opposition to the 1938 federal-aid-to-education bill on grounds that it did not discriminate between white and black education.²²¹ In the racial vein, he also cited Bilbo's statements in favor of repealing the poll tax: "Bilbo wants to repeal the poll tax which would let the Negroes vote."²²² He further charged that Bilbo had deliberately tried to destroy the Works Progress Administration.²²³ In a positive vein, White recited his impressive record as governor, especially the passage of the homestead exemption law.²²⁴

Bilbo responded, turning the poll tax issue back on White. Having secured the elimination of blacks from the Democratic primary, the poll tax served only to disfranchise poor whites. "Hugh White does not want the poor white people of the state to vote."²²⁵ Regarding the charge

²²⁰Daily Clarion Ledger, August 14, 1940.

²²¹Daily Clarion Ledger, August 17, 1940.

²²²Daily Clarion Ledger, August 24, 1940.

²²³Daily Clarion Ledger, August 21, 1940.

²²⁴Daily Clarion Ledger, August 18, 1940.

²²⁵Daily Clarion Ledger, August 20, 1940.

that he was destroying W.P.A. by having its director fired, Bilbo responded, "Since I had Hugh White's buddy, Roland Wall, bounced out of the state and broke up what might have slipped into a neat political machine, they are saying Bilbo is against W.P.A. Well, everybody knows that's one of the biggest lies of the campaign."²²⁶

As champion of white supremacy, a 100% New Dealer, and an early advocate of military preparedness, Bilbo won the largest victory of his career. He polled 59.4% to White's 40.8%.²²⁷

The senatorial race of 1942 was caused by the death of Pat Harrison in 1941. Governor Johnson offered his old friend and fellow Scott Countian Woods Eastland the ninety-day interim appointment. Eastland declined, but prevailed on the governor to appoint his son, James O. Eastland.²²⁸ Young Eastland accepted but announced that he would not run at the end of the ninety days. In a bitter special election Congressman Wall Doxey, with the help of Bilbo, defeated Congressman Ross Collins.

The next regular election was less than a year away

²²⁶Daily Clarion Ledger, August 21, 1940.

²²⁷Abney, p. 30.

²²⁸Thomas P. Brady, University of Southern Mississippi Oral History Program, March 4, 1972, p. 25.

and found in the field Doxey, Collins, and Eastland. Two minor candidates were D. R. Smith and Roland Wall. Eastland had managed to attract considerable attention from the cotton growers during his ninety-day term. He had opposed the administration's plan to put a price ceiling on cotton seed oil, earning him the nickname "Cotton Seed Jim,"²²⁹ and he also helped stop the government's plan to dump cotton stocks on the market. Eastland cited articles in the national press which had given him credit for having saved southern cotton farmers millions of dollars.²³⁰ Much of his campaign was negative, however, with bitter attacks on Collins, Doxey, and Bilbo. He attacked Doxey for having voted for the "infamous pension grab." A pension for senators had apparently been added to a bill and "slipped through" until public attention to the matter caused the Senate to rescind its action. Eastland accused Doxey of making his maiden speech in the Senate in favor of the pension and then voting against it when the matter became public knowledge.²³¹ He also charged that Doxey did not have a deep understanding

²²⁹David Leon Chandler, The Natural Superiority of Southern Politicians (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1977), p. 303.

²³⁰Daily Clarion Ledger, August 4, 1942.

²³¹Daily Clarion Ledger, August 1, 1942.

of agricultural policy and that he was too weak, for example, to push through the "gateway through the tariff wall" concept. Whereas Doxey "gave up" on the issue, Eastland promised to push it through.²³²

Eastland seemed to attack Bilbo as much as his actual opponents. The Eastland family had been Bilbo supporters, but Bilbo was anti-Collins and had supported Doxey fully in the 1941 special election. Now, he was stumping for Doxey for the full term.²³³ Eastland attacked Bilbo savagely for deserting his post in Washington during the war to come "meddle" in home politics. He said that Bilbo should "either stay on the job in Washington and protect the interests of his country, or resign in disgrace."²³⁴ In a clever allusion to "dictatorship," Eastland accused Bilbo of trying to establish one in Mississippi: "While Americans fight dictatorship on four continents of this earth and while thousands of American soldiers are giving their precious lives for Democracy, our senior Senator parades over Mississippi with two armed body guards in a brazen attempt to create

²³²Daily Clarion Ledger, August 15, 1942.

²³³Simmons, p. 52.

²³⁴Daily Clarion Ledger, August 12, 1942.

a dictatorship at home."²³⁵ He referred to Bilbo as the "dream house builder" and charged him with spending time at his Poplarville estate when he should have been in Washington. Eastland also cited Bilbo's vote for the "infamous pension grab" as a further discredit.²³⁶

Collins came in for his share of Eastland's rhetoric, primarily on the war issue. Collins had attracted favorable national attention in the 1930s for his battles with the War Department over wasteful weapons systems. He had also been an early advocate of the development of air power.²³⁷ In 1934 Bilbo had accused Collins of being a "know-it-all" on military matters, and Eastland picked up on this line of attack in 1942. It was even more effective in the midst of the war. Eastland cited specific examples in the Congressional Record in which Collins had fought administration requests. He accused Collins of voting to reduce the President's request for military aircraft, of being against the two-ocean navy, of fighting the passage of the Selective Service Act, of supporting the "Communist-backed Ludlow amendment," and of belittling

²³⁵Ibid.

²³⁶Daily Clarion Ledger, August 15, 1942.

²³⁷Smith, 37.

MacArthur's calls for preparedness.²³⁸

Collins' campaign was based primarily on a positive interpretation of his preparedness record. He claimed that his had been the correct concept of preparedness and if the Congress had followed his advice for the past ten years and had "armed itself accordingly, there would be no great war raging today."²³⁹ He cited a statement made by Congressman McCormick that Collins had been the first spokesman for a modern, mechanized army and that he had been years ahead of his time in this area.²⁴⁰ He repeatedly expressed his desire to be Mississippi's "war senator."²⁴¹

Doxey campaigned on his record in the Senate, but also attacked Eastland and Collins. He claimed that the war should not become an issue, because all the candidates were agreed, yet he still found room to attack Collins' record in the same way as did Eastland. He accused Collins of being a "self-styled expert" on the military and Eastland of being a "self-styled economic expert." He said that Eastland had not passed "one bill"

²³⁸Daily Clarion Ledger, August 2, 1942.

²³⁹Daily Clarion Ledger, August 4, 1942.

²⁴⁰Daily Clarion Ledger, August 8, 1942.

²⁴¹Daily Clarion Ledger, August 4, 1942.

while in the Senate and had nothing but a negative approach.²⁴² Doxey's advertisements had a simple message: "No Time to Change-- Doxey is On the Job . . . Keep Him There."²⁴³

The first primary results gave Eastland a substantial lead of 37.6% to Doxey's 28.3%. Collins was third with 27.4%, and Roland Wall a distant fourth with 6.0%.²⁴⁴

Because the Collins-Doxey race had been bitter and close in both 1941 and the just-concluded primary, the arithmetic of the runoff was clearly in Eastland's favor. Eastland played on this fact in his advertisements. He reminded Collins supporters that he had backed their candidate in 1941.²⁴⁵ Eastland clearly had the better shot at disaffected Collins supporters. Soon after the results of the first primary were known, it was announced that Collins' manager, Judge J. M. Forman, was joining the Eastland campaign.²⁴⁶

In the second primary, Eastland renewed his attacks

²⁴²Daily Clarion Ledger, August 13, 1942.

²⁴³Daily Clarion Ledger, August 24, 1942.

²⁴⁴Abney, p. 30.

²⁴⁵Clarion Ledger, September 9, 1942.

²⁴⁶Clarion Ledger, September 1, 1942.

on Bilbo and Doxey. He accused Bilbo again of trying to "dictate" elections in Mississippi and Doxey of being Bilbo's "little echo." His attacks continued to be directed as much against Bilbo as his opponent.²⁴⁷ Roland Wall, however, in announcing for Doxey, said that Eastland had always been a Bilbo man and for the public not to be "taken in" by Eastland's attacks. Wall said that if elected Eastland would ally with Bilbo "at the first opportunity."²⁴⁸

One of Eastland's issues heralded a major change in Mississippi's campaign oratory. For the first time in Mississippi political history a major candidate was making a heavy attack on organized labor. While defending the laboring man, Eastland cried out against "labor racketeering" and demanded federal legislation to prevent strikes in time of national emergency.²⁴⁹ He was especially strong in his denunciation of the C.I.O. and accused it of pouring money into the state in an effort to defeat him. Eastland contended that "big labor" had a man staying in a Jackson hotel with a "slush fund" for Doxey.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷Clarion Ledger, September 2, 1942.

²⁴⁸Ibid.

²⁴⁹Ibid.

²⁵⁰Clarion Ledger, September 9, 1942.

He further charged Doxey with supporting "CIO bills" while in the Senate.²⁵¹

This anti-union attitude was a major departure from the rhetoric of Vardaman and the support given unions by Mississippi governors through Paul Johnson. The degree to which the union movement was supporting civil rights legislation, widely publicized strikes during the war, and the growing concern with Communism--all of these national developments made it possible for Eastland to galvanize the electorate of Mississippi around a new sentiment of anti-unionism. It was a major departure from the past and was to become a new campaign issue for the 1950s and 1960s.

Doxey accused Eastland of being totally unprepared to be a United States Senator. Doxey pointed to his own thirteen years in the House and listed his accomplishments while there and in the Senate, especially in the realm of agriculture.²⁵² He termed Eastland his "rich young opponent" and continued to attack his lack of public service in the past.²⁵³

With turnout the lowest for a regular senatorial

²⁵¹Clarion Ledger, September 10, 1942.

²⁵²Clarion Ledger, September 1, 1942.

²⁵³Clarion Ledger, September 8, 1942.

election since 1928, due in large measure to the war, Eastland won the runoff with 56.8% to Doxey's 43.2%.

These two senate races were clear harbingers of a changing political milieu. Taken together, they reflected the electorate's growing concern with racial issues and with a newly emerging life-form which might be termed "new conservatism." The new conservatism included Eastland's path-breaking issue of anti-unionism and a growing denunciation of Communism and left-wing ideologies--both closely tied to race. These two elections revealed the first genuine arousal of Mississippi's dormant racial consensus. They also included the life-forms of class (especially the 1940 race) and patriotism.

CHAPTER 9

THE WAR AND AN ATYPICAL ELECTION

World War II was a period of change in Mississippi. Economically, substantial development occurred in most sectors, as can be seen in the charts of Chapter 3. Value added by manufacture, total manufacturing wages, per capita personal income and electric energy production increased dramatically.¹ Over seven hundred new manufacturing establishments opened during the period 1939-1947, and manufacturing employment rose by 25,000 jobs.² Giant military bases made boom towns out of Hattiesburg and Biloxi, as did Ingalls Shipyard of Pascagoula. Training camps, air fields, and hospitals dotted the state and brought infusions of new money and economic life.³

In agriculture a new era was dawning with crop diversification and farm mechanization. Black farm laborers,

¹See Figures 10, 11 and 14, Chapter 3.

²Skates in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 128.

³Ibid., pp. 122-123.

given a taste of economic opportunity during the war, migrated out of the state; and many of the returning whites had gained experience, training, and insight into complex machinery. The dual pressures led to mechanization.⁴ From 1935 to 1950 farm tenancy decreased from 70% to 52%. During the period 1940-1945, the farm population of the state fell approximately 350,000, and the number of farms decreased by about 27,500. Greater efficiency and mechanization increased the yield and income. Cotton was still king, but agriculture was diversifying rapidly into poultry, livestock, and other cash crops.⁵

Sociologically, the war shook Mississippi's rural provincialism. Women entered the industrial work force to relieve manpower shortages. Race relations were stirred as black soldiers stationed in Mississippi threatened the rigid lines of Jim Crow. Explosive racial incidents occurred, for example, at Camp Van Dorn and Camp McCain.⁶ Approximately 238,000 Mississippians entered the armed services during World War II, and most of them were exposed to a world far different from their homes.⁷ The

⁴William Lincoln Giles, "Agricultural Revolution," in McLemore, vol. 2, pp. 203-204.

⁵Skates in McLemore, vol. 2, pp. 127-128.

⁶Ibid., p. 125.

⁷Loewen and Sallis, p. 244.

rate of urbanization reached a century high during the war period.⁸

The male-depleted electorate and the rigors of wartime produced the strange gubernatorial election of 1943. The candidates were all the familiar faces of Era II (Conner, Bailey, Murphree, and Franklin), and yet, in an odd and ironic way the election was atypical of the era and seemingly unrelated to the modulating life-forms.

Bailey was running as a "good man" unscarred by the factionalism and scandal of the past. His first emphasis was agriculture: "Tom Bailey knows that Mississippi is an agricultural state." His platform included better teacher salaries, the establishment of a teacher retirement fund, old age assistance of \$30 per month, a policy of not making a "business" out of pardoning prisoners or granting land patents, and, finally, a defense of local self-government and white supremacy.⁹ Reviewing his record as speaker, Bailey promised the voters, "I will give you a safe, sane, business administration of the state's affairs."¹⁰ Bailey's record and platform were

⁸See Figure 9, Chapter 3.

⁹Clarion Ledger, August 1, 1943.

¹⁰Clarion Ledger, July 25, 1943.

generally placed in the "conservative" tradition of politics.¹¹

Conner, making a fifth race for governor, praised his own past administration, especially his program which had saved the state from bankruptcy. He claimed to be the best qualified for the job.¹² Conner constantly referred to the three achievements of which he was the proudest: the homestead exemption law, old age assistance, and the sales tax.¹³ The increasing spectre of the race issue could be seen in one Conner ad which said, "Upon the next governor of Mississippi will fall responsibilities the like of which we have not had since the dark days of reconstruction." Mississippi must be led, it said, by someone who can maintain "states' rights and white political and social supremacy in Mississippi." Conner, of course, held himself out to be that man.¹⁴ He struck a chord which was to be dominant in Mississippi during Era III, namely, states' rights v. centralization of power in Washington. The positive planks of his platform included increased appropriations for the needy,

¹¹Clarion Ledger, August 5, 1943

¹²Clarion Ledger, August 2, 1943.

¹³Clarion Ledger, July 30, 1943.

¹⁴Clarion Ledger, July 28, 1943.

a larger state guard, a teacher retirement system, more support for public health and hospitals, and an increase in the homestead exemption.¹⁵

Murphree ran a confident campaign on the theme that "it's time to give a good man a promotion." A Murphree advertisement said that "This faithful official, Lieutenant Governor Dennis Murphree, deserves promotion," and cited extensive Biblical verse about rewarding the worthy.¹⁶ He recited the complimentary remarks made by Governor Johnson about Murphree's leadership in the Senate on such issues as free textbooks. He was introduced as a great "liberal" and "humanitarian" in an obvious attempt to distinguish him from Conner and Bailey. He emphasized his record as an organizer of such popular laws as the tax exemption for livestock.¹⁷ Consistent with his image of confidence, he declined to attack other candidates, especially Franklin and Bailey. "I have nothing to say against them--they are good boys. I want their friends to support me in the second primary."¹⁸

¹⁵Clarion Ledger, July 30, 1943.

¹⁶Clarion Ledger, August 1, 1943.

¹⁷Clarion Ledger, July 31, 1943.

¹⁸Clarion Ledger, July 27, 1943.

Bailey was not so kind with Conner, although the "mud slinging" does seem to have been less in this campaign than in others.¹⁹ Bailey said that Conner's claim to be the father of the workmen's compensation law was "the most absurd and shocking" he had ever heard.²⁰ He brought up, again, Conner's lack of a war record and charged that certain interests had drafted Conner into this governor's race, "which is more than the entire U.S. Army could do in 1918."²¹ Taking off the gloves in the last days of the campaign, Murphree joined the attack on Conner, saying that it was "unimaginable" that the "slacker of World War I" would be elected to lead the state during World War II.²²

Murphree's confidence was misplaced. He came in third with 24.0% of the vote behind Bailey with 24.1%. Conner had a huge lead of nearly 42,000 votes, having garnered 38.8%. Franklin received his customary range of

¹⁹It was probably a testament to the male-depleted electorate that the campaign was conducted on a higher plane, that Murphree quoted the Bible in his ads, and that all candidates paid much attention to the problems of the aged.

²⁰Clarion Ledger, July 28, 1943.

²¹Clarion Ledger, July 31, 1942.

²²Clarion Ledger, August 2, 1943.

support, this time 13.0%.²³ Conner's lead appeared to be insurmountable.

Bailey came out vigorously in the second. Claiming that he would get 90% of the Murphree and Franklin vote, Bailey continued to portray himself as a "good man," while at the same time launching blistering attacks on Conner. Bailey made the claim, familiar to Mississippi ears, that unprecedented sums of money were being spent to defeat him. Conner's victory would mean "a government of predatory wealth and selfish interests."²⁴ Bailey touched the old Conner soft spot, his arrogance. "He is a man full of vain glory and egotism. He takes credit for all beneficial legislation passed by the Legislature." Again, Bailey called Conner "a Yale man, full of vain glory and egotism."²⁵ In the eleventh hour of the runoff, Bailey also violently attacked the Clarion Ledger for refusing to accept one of his ads. Comparing the paper to "Hirohito, Mr. Hitler and that gang," Bailey became the first of a number of modern candidates who made the powerful Hederman family of Jackson a campaign issue.²⁶

²³Abney, p. 89.

²⁴Clarion Ledger, August 9, 1943.

²⁵Clarion Ledger, August 15, 1943.

²⁶Clarion Ledger, August 22, 1943.

It was curious that Bailey and the Clarion Ledger split, because Johnson, the political favorite of the Hedermans, endorsed Bailey.²⁷ Murphree also announced that he would vote for Bailey but would not take an active role in the runoff.²⁸

In terms of his platform, Bailey continued to emphasize his first primary themes--e.g., concern for the farmers, teacher retirement, old age pensions, etc. He also emphasized states' rights and the race issue, saying that he was dedicated to "white supremacy and racial purity first, last, and always." He would not "tolerate any crackpot theories seeking to bring about equality between the races."²⁹

Conner began his second primary in a confident, low key manner. Proclaiming the vote to be an endorsement of his administration, Conner pointed out that he had led in sixty-nine counties. He promised to continue to run a clean campaign, and his strategy seemed to be cautious and conservative, as one would expect of a candidate with so large a first-primary lead. Conner did not, in fact, make any speeches until a week and a half into the three-week

²⁷Clarion Ledger, August 18, 1943.

²⁸Clarion Ledger, August 12, 1943.

²⁹Clarion Ledger, August 22, 1943.

period of the runoff.³⁰ Responding to Bailey's mounting attacks, however, Conner finally denounced Bailey for lowering the campaign. He accused Bailey of demagoguery "of the most degraded and shameful form." Bailey had been a "good but a weak man," who had let his advisors lead him into a demagogic style, the adoption of which had caused him to forfeit any claim to political "goodness." He assailed Bailey's record in the legislature as devoid of accomplishment for the poor.³¹ He continued to praise his own administration as governor and promised the voters, "I'll give you a business-like, economical administration."³² Conner also played on the race issue, claiming that civil rights agitation was a Communist plot to foist social equality on the nation. He proclaimed himself to be a "states' rights democrat and devout believer in self-government."³³ Backing Conner in the runoff were Hugh White, Joe Brown (Eastland's campaign manager), and Forest Jackson.³⁴

³⁰Clarion Ledger, August 12, 1943.

³¹Clarion Ledger, August 15, 1943.

³²Clarion Ledger, August 21, 1943.

³³Clarion Ledger, August 22, 1943.

³⁴Clarion Ledger, August 11, 1943.

At the last hour of the campaign, Bilbo threw his support and influence behind the dark horse Bailey. It was the lesser of two evils to Bilbo.³⁵ It was also reported that President Roosevelt became involved, sending in a large sum of money for Bailey. Conner's increasingly vocal anti-Roosevelt and anti-New Deal sentiments during recent years had made the national administration look on this governor's race as a referendum on the President during time of war.³⁶ In an incredible upset, Bailey won the runoff with 53.2% to Conner's 46.8%. A long and frustrating curtain closed on Mike Conner.³⁷

The primary of 1943 found the life-forms of Era II in disarray. Over a quarter million Mississippians were away from the state in the armed services, and apparently only a small percentage of those voted by absentee ballot. The remaining electorate, depleted of young and middle-aged males, was concerned more with the war than with traditional political issues. Furthermore, the candidates did not present a clear contrast along any of the dimensions of Era II life-forms--progressivism, class, race,

³⁵Key, pp. 250-251.

³⁶Interview with Courtney Pace, Washington, D. C., October 24, 1978.

³⁷Abney, p. 89.

or modernization. All three major candidates--Murphree, Conner, and Bailey--had been more or less identified with the conservative side of the party, and Franklin was unable to escape his role as a minor figure in the campaign. Murphree, who had less identification as a conservative and more potential for tapping the "redneck" vote, forsook issues and ran on the rather bizarre appeal of deserving a promotion. In the sensational runoff were pitted two candidates firmly connected with the Delta "Old Guard." The election became little more than a popularity contest between Bailey and Conner, and in such a situation Conner was hopeless. Furthermore, his World War I record acquired additional importance during this wartime campaign. Despite the familiar faces of Era II and the perfunctory rhetoric of the life-forms, the election turned on personality, patriotism, and quirk. It was atypical.

In terms of the life-forms, Bailey's administration was mixed. In some ways his election and administration seemed to be a victory for the old patrician order. He supported the election of Walter Sillers, a prototypical Delta baron, as Speaker of the House. Sillers had been a member of the House for thirty years and was to serve as speaker for twenty before his death in 1963. No other

man this century has had a comparable impact on public policy.³⁸ Bailey also made agricultural policy the primary emphasis of his inaugural address, stating that "Agriculture is our first and greatest business."³⁹ He appreciated the changing demands which would be made on the agrarian work force by mechanization, and in the inaugural address called for the establishment of the Mississippi Vocational College for Negroes in the Delta (now Mississippi Valley State University).⁴⁰ As an indication of how deeply he understood the labor needs of the black belt, he decried the alleged tendencies of certain Negro colleges to teach humanities. Especially was Alcorn A. & M. College, according to rumors, "inclining decidedly away from agricultural and vocational education." The trend, if true, must be stopped because "our best hope for future years lies in a sound agricultural development." He also called for the establishment of a veterinary science school and a forestry curriculum at Mississippi State University.⁴¹

A second way in which Bailey harkened back to the

³⁸Wallace, p. 50.

³⁹Mississippi, Secretary of the Senate, Journal of the Mississippi State Senate, 1944 Regular Session, p. 53.

⁴⁰Skates in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 132.

⁴¹Journal, p. 56.

old Bourbon days was in his attitude toward centralization of state power. Unlike many former governors who had battled to wrest power from the counties, Bailey praised local government and called for tax relief from the state:

I urge that you give thought and study to the plight of local governments and give to them . . . the greatest additional relief possible by a more sympathetic attitude toward them in all matters affecting their operation. We should ever remember that local self-government is one of the best blessings of our way of life.⁴²

In addition, he proposed a county road system to be financed in part with state aid, and during his term the first \$5 million was appropriated. The county road idea was a function of both local governmental control and the increasing agricultural transportation needs.⁴³

Yet, Bailey was far from a Bourbon "mossback." In the progressive vein, he saw the beginning of the long-sought "great central hospital" in Jackson with the enactment of legislation establishing the University Medical Center and Hospital. The historic teacher retirement system was enacted at Bailey's urging, as were reforms in the parole system and penitentiary board. Most significantly of all, however, the B.A.W.I. program was re-enacted

⁴²Journal, 1944, p. 58.

⁴³Skates in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 132.

with Bailey's leadership and reorganized under the Mississippi Agricultural and Industrial Board.⁴⁴ It was a test of the spreading modernization consensus that the most agrarian and planter oriented governor in decades found the notion of industrialization, vocational training, and improved transportation an irresistible part of the movement of history.

During Bailey's term, which was cut short by his death in November 1946, an important political event occurred. The presidential election of 1944 provided the setting for the strange tale of the "bolting electors." It was also a serious harbinger of new directions in the federal politics of the state. Mississippi's loyalty to the Democratic Party in presidential elections had been unswerving, even in 1928. In Roosevelt's unprecedented third-term election of 1940, Mississippi had given him over 95% of the vote. Yet, the seeds of discontent were growing. The racial liberalism of the Democratic Party--seen in anti-lynch bills in Congress, the Federal Employment Practices Committee, and Mrs. Roosevelt's words and deeds--pitted against each other two principles which were becoming increasingly antithetical in the southern mind--namely, loyalty to the party and belief in white

⁴⁴Ibid.

supremacy. Whenever a choice was seen to be forced, as was the case in 1948, the decision of the deep south white was quickly made.

Incipient stirrings of these cross-currents had been building for years, but they publicly appeared in 1944 in a dramatic way. Anti-New Deal forces gained control of the state Democratic Convention which was held in early June. The assembly passed a measure of support for the President's war efforts, but also issued four guiding principles for the delegates to Chicago. They included total opposition to any equality plank in the Democratic Platform, opposition to any assault on the poll tax, support for a strong states' rights plank, and support for restoring the 2/3s rule. And, finally, they passed a resolution absolving electors from supporting the Democratic nominee if the four principles did not prevail at Chicago.

The "anti's" had organized and taken the state convention by surprise, but the pro-FDR forces soon rallied. Governor Bailey, Senators Eastland and Bilbo, and much of the leadership of the state denounced several electors who declared that they would vote for Byrd of Virginia instead of Roosevelt. Bailey called a special session on November 1, and with only two dissenting votes in the House and one in the Senate the Legislature passed a

special law creating a new "loyalist" slate of electors. The Highway Patrol distributed the special pink ballots over the state at the eleventh hour; and Bailey, Eastland, and Bilbo spoke on state wide radio in support of the "pink slate." Editorial support was strongly in favor of the loyalist electors, and they carried 88% of the vote. There were no comments from the "bolters" once the political leadership of the state openly supported the President. In the bolting electors, however, were the seeds of the Dixiecrat movement of 1948.⁴⁵

⁴⁵This account of the "bolting electors" is taken from Roy H. Ruby, "The Presidential Election of 1944 in Mississippi: The Bolting Electors," (M.A. thesis, Mississippi State University, 1966).

CHAPTER 10

ERA II: ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The politics of Era II seem like a bewildering drama. To some degree, it was. In gubernatorial politics, the twenty-year drama was dominated by six actors who appeared in different combinations as if on a revolving stage. In the six gubernatorial elections Mike Conner was a candidate in five of them and was elected once. Bilbo ran twice before moving to the senatorial stage, which he dominated from 1934 to 1947. Dennis Murphree ran unsuccessfully three times, while Paul Johnson was elected once in three attempts. White and Bailey ran twice, and each was successful on his second try. The factionalism which arose out of this competition could be chaotic and highly personal. Endorsements and support for some of the actors by other actors were most often made on the basis of past grudges or future advantage. The patterns of support and opposition shifted from election to election, and to make matters worse, there were few substantive issue disagreements among these principal actors. Much of the campaign consisted of attacks on each

other's personality and qualifications. Differences were those of issue emphasis and candidate style. It is only here that any hope for pattern and order can be found.¹ This chapter shall consider first the election of 1923 as a transition, then the statistics of the entire period 1923-1943, and finally the conclusions that can be drawn from this analysis.

The Transition Election of 1923

Because one of the chief protagonists in the agrarian class struggle of Era I was a candidate in 1923, the statistics of that election do not show as dramatic a break as one would expect in, say, a critical realignment election. The context of the election and subsequent history help prove the case for interpreting Whitfield's victory as a transition election between eras; however, the statistics are suggestive of a break point. The gubernatorial elections of 1915-1927 can be analyzed to

¹In a moment of candor Bilbo summed it up: "It is always a family fight down here, and a family fight is best of all. We're all Democrats, and we have to deal in personalities because there are no issues--we're all in favor of the same things. So you don't show the other is in favor of this or against that, you just show he's a low-down blankety blank." Quoted in Roman J. Zorn, "Theodore G. Bilbo: Shibboleths for Statesmanship," in J.T. Salter, ed., Public Men In and Out of Office (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946), p. 284.

to see if 1923 was, in fact, a transition election. If little seems to have changed after 1923, then the case for that having been a critical transition year is weakened. If, on the other hand, the election of 1923 seems to act as a statistical "bridge" between two different levels of relationship, the case is strengthened.

Figure 33 displays the relationships between the Vardaman senate races of Era I and gubernatorial first primary votes from 1915 through 1927. The votes of Bilbo, who was the only gubernatorial candidate to make races

FIGURE 33
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN FIRST PRIMARY
GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES (1915-1927) AND
VARDAMAN'S SENATE RACES

		GUBERNATORIAL							
		1915		1919		1923		1927	
		BILBO	RILEY	RUSSELL	JOHNSTON	BILBO	WHITFIELD	BILBO	MURPHREE
SENATORIAL	1911 VARDAMAN	+ .85	- .70	+ .64	- .72	+ .54	- .36	+ .29	- .22
	1911 PERCY/ ALEXANDER	- .85	+ .70	- .64	+ .72	- .54	+ .36	- .29	+ .22
	1918 VARDAMAN	+ .73	- .60	+ .60	- .60	+ .25	- .28		
	1918 HARRISON	- .73	+ .60	- .60	+ .60	- .25	+ .28		
	1922 VARDAMAN	+ .77	- .65		- .71	+ .46	- .48	+ .32	- .35
	1922 STEPHENS	- .77	+ .65		+ .71	- .46	+ .48	- .32	+ .35

during both eras, indicate that 1923 was a transition to a new and substantially lower level of relationship to the former life-form. The correlation of Bilbo's vote in 1915 and 1923 with that of Vardaman in 1911 shows a marked decline--from +.85 in 1915 to +.54 in 1923. Looking ahead to Bilbo's 1927 first primary, the correlation of that vote with the 1911 senate race is only +.29. The same declining relationship appears in the matrix with respect to subsequent Vardaman senate races in Era I; and, furthermore, this uniform decline does not appear to be a function of the passage of time.

The same pattern of decreasing relationship can be seen in Figure 34, a matrix of second primary gubernatorial and senatorial votes. Although the decline is less striking in the coalitional politics of runoffs, the strength of association between the senatorial politics of Era I and gubernatorial second primaries during the transition showed a decline in 1923 and then a sharp decline in 1927.

A look at the inter-relationships among gubernatorial races during this transition confirms the pattern. Figure 35 is a matrix of first primary gubernatorial candidates. Again, 1923 appears as a sort of bridge to a different level of coefficient from that of Era I. For example, Bilbo's 1915 vote correlates higher with Russell's

FIGURE 34

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND PRIMARY
GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES (1919-1927) AND
VARDAMAN'S SENATE RACES

		GUBERNATORIAL					
		1919		1923		1927	
		RUSSELL	JOHNSTON	BILBO	WHITFIELD	BILBO	MURPHREE
SENATORIAL	1911 VARDAMAN	+ .80	- .80	+ .69	- .69	+ .33	- .33
	1911 PERCY/ ALEXANDER	- .80	+ .80	- .69	+ .69	- .33	+ .33
	1918 VARDAMAN	+ .74	- .74	+ .58	- .58	X	X
	1918 HARRISON	- .74	+ .74	- .58	+ .58	X	X
	1922 VARDAMAN	+ .85	- .85	+ .77	- .77	+ .41	- .41
	1922 STEPHENS	- .85	+ .85	- .77	+ .77	- .41	+ .41

(+.59) than with his own subsequent vote in 1923 (+.56) and much higher than with his own 1927 vote (+.34). Russell's strong relationship to Bilbo's 1915 election (+.59) does not hold up when his vote is correlated with Bilbo's 1923 race (+.42) or his 1927 race (+.29).

Figure 36 displays the interrelationships among gubernatorial first and second primaries during the transition period. Special note can again be taken of the Bilbo races. His first primary (or base) votes in 1915, 1923, and 1927 confirm the pattern. His 1915 base

FIGURE 35

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN FIRST PRIMARY
GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
1915-1927

		1915		1919		1923		1927	
		BILBO	RILEY	RUSSELL	JOHNSTON	BILBO	WHITFIELD	BILBO	MURPHREE
1915	BILBO	/	-.77	+ .59	-.66	+ .56	-.37	+ .34	-.26
	RILEY		/	-.43	+ .69	-.60	+ .45	-.35	+ .39
1919	RUSSELL			/	-.55	+ .42	-.46	+ .29	X
	JOHNSTON				/	-.56	+ .38	-.41	+ .33
1923	BILBO					/	-.60	+ .76	-.55
	WHITFIELD						/	-.46	+ .47
1927	BILBO							/	-.51
	MURPHREE								/

vote correlates high with Russell's second primary vote and then lower with his own 1923 and 1927 second primary vote. On the other hand, Bilbo's 1923 base vote correlates much more highly with his own 1927 second primary vote than with Russell's 1919 vote. The same is true for the 1927 race, in which Bilbo's base vote correlates +.61 with his 1923 runoff and +.39 with Russell's.

Looking at Bilbo's second primary (or coalition)

FIGURE 36

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN FIRST PRIMARY AND
SECOND PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
1915-1927

		1915		1919		1st Primary		1923		1927					
		BILBO	RILEY	RUSSELL	JOHNSTON			BILBO	WHITFIELD	BILBO	MURPHREE				
2nd Primary	1919	RUSSELL	I	+ .78	-.69	+ .81	-.80			+ .58	-.52	+ .39	-.35	II	
		JOHNSTON		-.78	+ .69	-.81	+ .80			-.58	+ .52	-.39	+ .35		
	1923	BILBO		+ .74	-.72	+ .65	-.68			+ .82	-.74	+ .61	-.55		
		WHITFIELD	III		-.74	+ .72	-.65	+ .68			-.82	+ .74	-.61	+ .55	IV
	1927	BILBO		+ .39	-.35	+ .31	-.43			+ .73	-.50	+ .95	-.63		
		MURPHREE			-.39	+ .35	-.31	+ .43			-.73	+ .50	-.95	+ .63	

vote, the pattern is somewhat less distinct. His second primary vote in 1927 correlates much more highly with his 1923 first primary (+.73) than with his 1915 vote (+.39); however, in the 1923 race his coalition vote more strongly associates with 1915 (+.74) than with 1927 (+.61). This suggests, possibly, that whereas Bilbo's first primary vote in 1923 looked ahead to the new era, his coalition vote in the runoff was more closely associated with Era I. By 1927, however, both his base vote and coalition vote were more strongly associated with the new era.

Figure 36 has been divided into four quadrants, marked I, II, III, and IV. Another test of the degree to which 1923 was a transition is to average the absolute values of the coefficients within each quadrant. If the hypothesis is true that 1923 broke with the past and looked to a new mode of electoral behavior, the averages in quadrants I and IV should be higher than those in II and III. The following matrix displays the averages and demonstrates, in this way, the validity of the hypothesis:

FIGURE 37

AVERAGE OF ABSOLUTE VALUES OF CORRELATION
COEFFICIENTS IN QUADRANTS SET OUT
IN FIGURE 36

I	II
.77	.46
III	IV
.53	.69

Figure 38 explores the relationship of elections during the transition period to turnout, percent black, population density, and percentage white tenancy. The turnout variable demonstrates a clear transition from Era I, in which turnout was strongly and positively related to the Hills candidates, to 1923 and 1927 in which

FIGURE 38

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN FIRST PRIMARY
AND SECOND PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
AND CERTAIN SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES
1915-1927

		1.	2.	3.	4.	
		TURNOUT	% BLACK	DENSITY	WHITE TENANCY	
1st Primary	1915 BILBO	+ .55	-.62	-.37	+ .57	
	1915 RILEY	X	+ .72	+ .29	-.59	
	1919 RUSSELL	+ .37	-.37	-.25	+ .41	
	1919 JOHNSTON	-.33	+ .61	+ .46	-.41	
	1923 BILBO	X	-.61	-.41	+ .31	
	1923 WHITFIELD	X	+ .45	+ .22	-.28	
	1927 BILBO	X	-.44	-.34	X	
	1927 MURPHREE	X	+ .43	+ .22	X	
	2nd Primary	1919 RUSSELL	+ .54	-.67	-.44	+ .61
		1919 JOHNSTON	-.54	+ .67	+ .44	-.61
		1923 BILBO	X	-.75	-.43	+ .51
1923 WHITFIELD		X	+ .75	+ .43	-.51	
1927 BILBO		X	-.48	-.32	X	
1927 MURPHREE		X	+ .48	+ .32	X	

the relationship entirely disappears. Percent black, density, and white tenancy suggest that the agrarian class division was still present in 1923, but the drop in 1927 indicates that 1923 might have been its last strong showing.

Russell was thoroughly discredited in the election of 1923 and through him to some degree his mentor, Bilbo. Although Bilbo and Russell had feuded in public during the last part of the latter's administration, Russell had in 1919 inherited the Vardaman-Bilbo mantle; and, Franklin had been the sole candidate eliminated in the first primary to endorse Bilbo in the second. It is puzzling that historians have largely neglected the Russell administration, for it is the contention of this paper that his term laid much of the groundwork for the electoral transition of 1923. The rhetoric of elections during Era I, molded largely by the senate race of 1911, had been at variance with the basically "Wilsonian progressivist" administrations of the same period. In turning his administration into a vitriolic fight with corporate interests and the major press of the state, Russell forced a confluence of policy and campaign life-forms in 1923. The choice in 1923 was between a man unscarred by past battles in Era I, a fiscal conservative, progressive in many ways, and business-minded in his vision for an economically developing Mississippi, on the one hand, and, on the other, a man

who had arisen out of the ashes of the Secret Caucus, had used its rhetoric throughout the 1910s and, because of the actions of his chosen successor, now aroused fears that the policy of his administration might match his radical rhetoric. The Delta conservatives found a palatable candidate in Whitfield; and enough of the marginal "rednecks," many of whom were becoming more urbanized and educated, shifted their loyalty to the new modernization candidates so that a potential new majority in state affairs was created.

The Era, 1923-1943

The figures in this section deal with all the races of the period 1923-1943. The statistics show the relationship of 1923 to the remainder of the period, and, in many cases, the degree to which 1943 was unrelated.

Figure 39 is a matrix of the correlations among all second primary gubernatorial candidates. All of the races show substantial inter-connectedness except for the 1943 Conner-Bailey race. It should be noted, however, that many of the coefficients are relatively low. Only 26% of the sixty significant coefficients are above an absolute of value of .50. Nevertheless, the matrix reveals an era more orderly than the reading of campaign

FIGURE 39

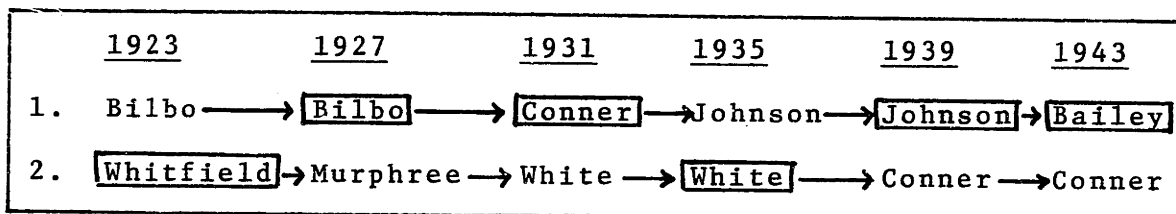
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND PRIMARY
GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
ERA II

		1923		1927		1931		1935		1939		1943	
		BILBO	WHITFIELD	BILBO	MURPHREE	CONNER	WHITE	JOHNSON	WHITE	JOHNSON	CONNER	CONNER	BAILEY
1923	BILBO	-1.0	+0.64	-0.64	+0.51	-0.51	+0.33	-0.33	+0.56	-0.56			
	WHITFIELD		-0.64	+0.64	-0.51	+0.51	-0.33	+0.33	-0.56	+0.56			
1927	BILBO			-1.0	+0.25	-0.25	+0.29	-0.29	+0.39	-0.39	+0.27	-0.27	
	MURPHREE				-0.25	+0.25	-0.29	+0.29	-0.39	+0.39	-0.27	+0.27	
1931	CONNER					-1.0	+0.60	-0.60	+0.34	-0.34			
	WHITE						-0.60	+0.60	-0.34	+0.34			
1935	JOHNSON							-1.0	+0.44	-0.44			
	WHITE								-0.44	+0.44			
1939	JOHNSON									-1.0	-0.31	+0.31	
	CONNER										+0.31	-0.31	
1943	CONNER												-1.0
	BAILEY												

history would suggest. There are, for example, two fairly distinct lineages of runoff candidates (victors are boxed):

FIGURE 40

SECOND PRIMARY LINEAGES IN ERA II

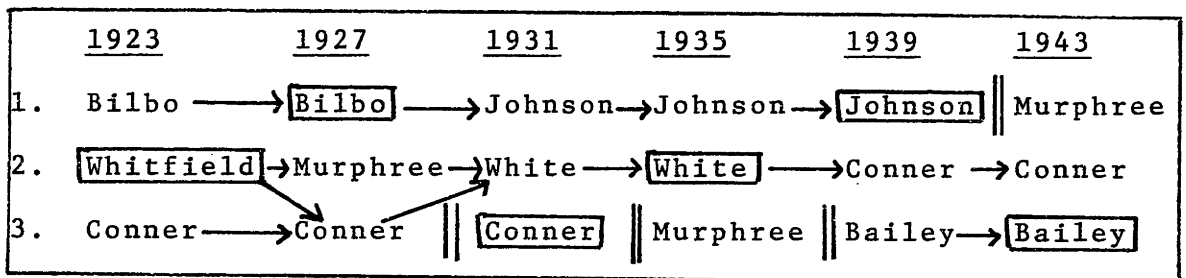


It is interesting to note that except for Bilbo's support for White in 1935 the longitudinal patterns coincide with the alliances formed in these elections. In the case of lineage 1, Bilbo did not support anyone in the 1931 runoff, Conner supported Johnson in 1935, and Johnson supported Bailey in 1943. Regarding lineage 2, Murphree ran as the "Whitfield candidate" in 1927, Murphree supported White in 1931, and White supported Conner in 1939. The elements of disorder were Bilbo's support for White in 1935 and Conner's switch from lineage 1 to lineage 2 after 1931. Conner's switch was a genuine element of disorder, but Bilbo's support for White does not seem to have carried his voters across the lineage (Bilbo's 1923 vote correlates $-.33$ with White 1935, and Bilbo 1927 and White 1935 $-.29$).

Figure 41 is a matrix of coefficients among the top three candidates in gubernatorial first primaries. Approximately 67% of the 153 possible coefficients are significant at the .05 level or better. As would be

expected in multi-candidate fields, the order is less clear than in the case of runoffs. However, two fairly distinct lineages and one disjointed lineage emerge from the matrix (victors are boxed):

FIGURE 42
FIRST PRIMARY LINEAGES IN ERA II



The Bilbo-Johnson lineage is clear, as is the Whitfield-Murphree-White-Conner lineage. The third line is a disjointed or non-lineage. It shows the Conner switch (Conner's 1927 and 1931 first primary votes do not correlate), the isolated Murphree candidacies of 1935 and 1943, and the fresh emergence of Bailey in 1939.

Looking at both the first and second primary matrices and lineages, one can see both order and confusion. The Bilbo-Johnson pattern is clear in both, as is the Whitfield-Murphree-White-Conner connection. Conner's quixotic electoral career is evidenced by the fact that he does correlate with Bilbo and Johnson in the second primary

matrix but not in the first. Murphree's later two races are unconnected to other votes, and whereas Bailey falls into the Bilbo-Conner-Johnson lineage in the second primary matrix, he is unrelated to other candidates in his first primary votes.

Figure 43 explicates the inter-relationships between the first and second primary matrices. The relationship between Bilbo's 1923 and 1927 races is clear. His 1923 first primary vote correlates with his 1927 first and second primary votes $+0.76$ and $+0.73$ respectively, whereas his 1923 second primary vote correlates $+0.61$ and $+0.64$ with the 1927 vote. These figures suggest that Bilbo's 1923 first primary vote was a slightly more powerful predictor of his 1927 race than was his 1923 second primary vote. It is clear, however, that Bilbo's support remained fairly cohesive from 1923 to 1927.

Murphree's and Conner's vote in 1927 draws from shared bases of support from 1923. Whitfield's 1923 vote correlates with Murphree moderately strongly (first-to-first primary = $+0.47$, second-to-second primary = $+0.64$, Whitfield-first-to-Murphree-second = $+0.50$, Whitfield-second-to-Murphree-first = $+0.64$). However, Whitfield's vote also correlates with Conner's 1927 vote, especially Whitfield's second primary and Conner's first ($r = +0.53$). Furthermore, Conner maintains much of his first primary

FIGURE 43

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN FIRST PRIMARY AND
SECOND PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
ERA II

	1923		1927		1931		1935		1939		1943		
	BILBO	WHITFIELD	BILBO	MURPHREE	CONNER	WHITE	JOHNSON	WHITE	JOHNSON	CONNER	CONNER	BAILLY	
1923	BILBO	+ .82	-.82	+ .73	-.73	+ .35	-.35	+ .23	-.23	+ .43	-.43	+ .21	-.21
	WHITFIELD	-.74	+ .74	-.50	+ .50	-.42	+ .42	-.26	+ .26	-.27	+ .27	-.27	+ .27
	CONNER	-.21	+ .21	X	X	X	X	X	X	-.22	+ .22	+ .24	-.24
1927	BILBO	+ .61	-.61	+ .95	-.95	+ .24	-.24	+ .25	-.25	+ .38	-.38	+ .23	-.23
	MURPHREE	-.55	+ .55	-.63	+ .63	-.20	+ .20	-.35	+ .35	-.27	+ .27	-.35	+ .35
	CONNER	-.53	+ .53	-.23	+ .23	-.29	+ .29	-.20	+ .20	-.47	+ .47	X	X
1931	CONNER	X	X	X	X	+ .69	-.69	+ .33	-.33	X	X	X	X
	WHITE	-.58	+ .58	-.27	+ .27	-.86	+ .86	-.63	+ .63	-.50	+ .50	X	X
	JOHNSON	+ .49	-.49	+ .45	-.45	+ .42	-.42	+ .57	-.57	+ .63	-.63	X	X
1935	JOHNSON	+ .34	-.34	+ .38	-.38	+ .31	-.31	+ .68	-.68	+ .29	-.29	+ .19	-.19
	WHITE	X	X	X	X	-.54	+ .54	-.54	+ .54	-.33	+ .33	+ .39	-.39
	MURPHREE	-.26	+ .26	-.56	+ .56	X	X	X	X	X	X	-.39	+ .39
1939	JOHNSON	+ .62	-.62	+ .44	-.44	+ .28	-.28	+ .37	-.37	+ .68	-.68	X	X
	CONNER	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-.46	+ .46	+ .58	-.58
	BAILLY	-.47	+ .47	-.33	+ .33	-.33	+ .33	-.19	+ .19	-.27	+ .27	-.39	+ .39
1943	CONNER	X	X	+ .26	-.26	X	X	X	X	-.44	+ .44	+ .85	-.85
	BAILLY	+ .39	-.39	-.32	+ .32	X	X	X	X	X	X	-.52	+ .52
	MURPHREE	X	X	X	X	+ .22	-.22	X	X	+ .32	-.32	-.18	+ .18

support from 1923 to 1927 ($r = +.53$), but does not give support to Murphree. What apparently happened in 1927 was that Whitfield's 1923 coalition split in the first primary between Murphree and Conner and did not re-coalesce in the runoff. This hemorrhaging of the Whitfield coalition, plus a coattail effect from Bilbo's huge first primary lead, contributed to the defeat of Murphree.

In 1931 Johnson inherited much of the 1927 Bilbo support in the first primary ($r = +.43$), White's first primary vote correlates with both Murphree and Conner, although the coefficients are not high. The curious phenomenon in 1931 is the candidacy of Conner, who seems to begin "anew" in politics. His first primary vote in 1931 is unrelated to any 1927 vote, including his own, or to any 1923 vote, including his own. To the degree that Conner's 1927 vote seems "to go" anywhere, it is to White in the first primary ($r = +.35$). In the 1931 runoff, Conner draws on the Bilbo votes of both the first and second primaries of 1927, plus he picks up much of the Johnson first primary support ($r = +.42$). Substantial Bilbo support was apparently channeled through Johnson in the first primary to Conner in the second. White's second primary vote seems to come from his own first primary base, plus support from Conner and Murphree voters. The "new Conner" of 1931, one could speculate, arose because

"millionaire White" was perceived as being to the right of Conner and because Conner made a more calculated appeal to the "Hills" vote. Long's endorsement of Conner in the runoff and the sharpened contrast between him and White gave the voters a choice, unique to Conner's career, in which Conner appeared to be the less conservative candidate. Whereas his first primary vote may have come from a new configuration of voters frightened by the Depression and weary of the Bilbo scandals, his second primary coalition added to that base elements of the Bilbo core and strong support from the new adherents of Paul Johnson. While the election was not a victory for the Whitfield coalition, neither was it a clear rejection of that lineage. Conner's confused image, plus the fact that after 1931 he was to revert to his pre-1931 image, meant that if anything Conner's victory was something of a freak.

In 1935 Johnson drew heavily on his own 1931 vote (first-to-first primary = +.57, second-to-second primary = +.57), but also on the Conner vote (first-to-first primary = +.31, second-to-second primary = +.60). White's vote in both primaries relates only to his 1931 votes, and Murphree seems unrelated to the politics of 1931. Remnants of the Whitfield-Murphree lineage of 1923-1927 flowed to White in 1931 and 1935, although it is interesting to note that the relatively low coefficients suggest

that a sense of "newness" accompanied White's candidacy. Regarding Murphree, his own "core" support remained remarkably in tact. Murphree's 1927 first primary and 1935 first primary correlate $+0.71$, and the 1927 second primary and 1935 first primary correlate $+0.56$. Apparently Murphree had a devoted following who supported him whenever he ran but who otherwise randomly supported other candidates when he was not in the race.

Where did White get the majority in 1935 that had eluded him in 1931? Were the voters responding to his BAWI appeal (which would have evoked the Whitfield majority in some new form), to the Huey Long issue (which might suggest another freak election), or to the related issue of race (which would indicate the stirring of the racial consensus)? It is an impossible question to answer without survey data. Bilbo was supporting White; and, although there are no positive coefficients from that second primary lineage to White, looking at the matrices carefully reveals that the relationship of Bilbo's 1923 and 1927 race to the 1935 election was less clear than to other races of the era. Bilbo's 1923 first primary vote correlates $+0.35$ with Johnson but does not correlate at all with White. Bilbo's 1927 first primary vote correlates $+0.34$ with Johnson but also $+0.18$ with White. Although White was not in the Bilbo-Johnson lineage, he apparently was able

to siphon off enough of those votes, based on Bilbo's support and the Long issue, to create a majority. White's BAWI appeal created a new core of support committed to his view of the state as an agent of industrial growth. This core included elements of the old Whitfield majority, but new elements as well. His marginal "redneck" support in the second put him over.

The election of 1939 saw Johnson hold on to his own base of support in the first primary. It also saw Conner switch again and a new candidate, Tom Bailey, appear. Conner was related both to his old 1923 and 1927 candidacy and to the 1935 vote for White. Bailey was weakly related to White's second primary as well. White's second primary vote in 1935 was, therefore, split between Bailey and Conner in the 1939 first. In the runoff, it is interesting that Conner does not relate to White's second primary vote, although he does relate to White's first primary vote. This suggests that the "redneck" elements in White's coalition probably shifted back to Johnson in 1939. With the election being portrayed as a referendum on the New Deal and with Johnson as the ardent "FDR man," the majority shifted to his favor.

In 1943 Johnson's coalition of 1939 correlates weakly with Murphree (who had been his lieutenant governor), but the tight Bilbo-Johnson lineage of 1927-1939

weakens greatly. One can speculate that the war depleted the ranks of their voters more so than other groups. Conner's candidacy related strongly to his 1939 race (first-to-first primary = $+0.70$). Bailey, likewise, related strongly to his 1939 race (first-to-first primary = $+0.70$). But, otherwise, few relationships are significant. The race question, which had become salient in the campaign, did not seem to be an issue between them in substance, rhetoric, or style. Conner's World War I record, Bilbo's support for Bailey, and the transference of certain Johnson and Muphrree support to Bailey made possible his electoral majority.

Figure 44 displays the relationship of vote to turnout, percent black, population density, and white tenancy. Rows 1 and 5 contain the turnout analysis, and it is obvious that 1923 had, in fact, been a transitional election from an era in which turnout was a correlate of voting to one in which the relationship largely vanished. The socio-economic variables also correlate in a mid- to low-range after 1923. The statistics of 1923 reveal a larger divergence between the percent black and white tenancy variable (rows 2, 4 and 6, 8 respectively) than in any other race except for that of 1927. The lower correlation with tenancy and higher with percent black suggest that the Bilbo-Whitfield contest split more along Delta-

FIGURE 44

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN FIRST PRIMARY AND
SECOND PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES AND
CERTAIN SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES
ERA II

	1st Primary				2nd Primary			
	1. TURNOUT	2. % BLACK	3. DENSITY	4. WHITE TENANCY	5. TURNOUT	6. % BLACK	7. DENSITY	8. WHITE TENANCY
1923 BILBO	X	-.61	-.41	+.31	X	-.75	-.43	+.51
1923 WHITFIELD	X	+.45	+.22	-.28	X	+.75	+.43	-.51
CONNER	X	+.25	X	-.37	VOID			
1927 BILBO	X	-.44	-.34	X	X	-.48	-.43	X
1927 MURPHREE	X	+.43	+.22	X	X	+.48	+.43	X
CONNER	X	+.52	+.28	-.43	VOID			
CONNER	X	X	X	X	+.21	-.43	-.32	+.42
1931 WHITE	-.24	+.52	+.27	-.61	-.21	+.43	+.32	-.42
JOHNSON	+.25	-.52	-.33	+.38	VOID			
1935 JOHNSON	X	-.39	X	+.25	X	-.48	-.27	+.41
1935 WHITE	X	+.26	X	-.47	X	+.48	+.27	-.41
MURPHREE	X	+.18	X	X	VOID			
1939 JOHNSON	+.18	-.50	-.37	+.39	+.20	-.56	-.38	+.49
1939 CONNER	-.18	X	X	X	-.20	+.56	+.38	-.49
BAILEY	X	X	X	-.21	VOID			
CONNER	X	X	X	-.35	X	X	X	-.18
1943 BAILEY	X	+.31	+.23	X	X	X	X	X
MURPHREE	X	-.24	-.32	+.36	VOID			

Hills lines than along agrarian class lines. The Delta was vehemently anti-Bilbo (and perforce, therefore, pro-Whitfield in the runoff), but enough white tenants in the Hills supported Whitfield to keep his negative correlation with that variable reasonably low. The statistics suggest that his vote was, indeed, a combination of a Delta core and marginal "redneck" elements.

The case of 1927 is interesting and unique in the century. The absence of relationship between vote and white tenancy, along with the presence of a moderately strong relationship with percent black, indicate that the vote was cutting almost totally along geographic lines (Delta v. the Hills). This suggests the possibility of a racial issue which was creating different responses among planter whites and Hills whites. Bilbo's attempt to make race an issue in 1927 apparently "played" in Hills counties but was seen as demagogic and dangerous in planter counties. Bilbo's appeal was more a function of the "blackness" of counties than of "white tenancy." The remainder of the matrix shows that the three socio-economic variables do not significantly diverge in subsequent elections.

Several longitudinal patterns are interesting. Murphree's Delta support declined from +.43 in 1927, to +.18 in 1935, to -.24 in 1943. These figures support the suggestion that Murphree, although generally seen throughout

the 1920s and 1930s as a part of the conservative wing of the party, was viewed in 1943 more in progressive-agrarian line by comparison to Bailey and Conner. Also, one can see the dramatic Conner shift in his second primary correlations with percent black and white tenancy--from $-.43$ and $+.51$ respectively in 1931, to $+.56$ and $-.49$ respectively in 1939, to no relationship in 1943. None of Conner's first primary votes in 1931 and after relate to percent black, whereas the ones prior to 1931 do. The same is true for white tenancy, except for 1943 in which Conner and white tenancy correlate $-.35$. These figures suggest that Conner's defeat of Hugh White in 1931 and his subsequent race against Senator Harrison cost him support in the Delta and that when he also lost his Hills support of 1931 he was left with an indistinct core. It is interesting also to note in the charts how 1943 is less related to the variables, especially in the runoff.

In senatorial politics the patterns are reasonably clear. Figure 45 is a matrix of coefficients among candidates during the era, and they coincide with the accounts of the time. The high correlations between 1928 and 1934 are consistent with Bilbo's support for Wilson in 1928 and then his own race against the same opponent four years later. Bilbo's 1940 vote correlates positively with his 1934 vote, but it is much lower than

FIGURE 45

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN
SENATORIAL CANDIDATES
ERA II

		1928		1934		1940		1942	
		WILSON	STEPHENS	BILBO	STEPHENS	BILBO	WHITE	DOXEY	EASTLAND
1928	WILSON	-1.0	+0.63	-0.63	+0.24	-0.24			
	STEPHENS			-0.63	+0.63	-0.24	+0.24		
1934	BILBO				-1.0	+0.35	-0.35		
	STEPHENS					-0.35	+0.35		
1940	BILBO						-1.0	+0.32	-0.32
	WHITE							-0.32	+0.32
1942	DOXEY								-1.0
	EASTLAND								

usual for Bilbo/Bilbo correlations. This statistical aberration testifies to Bilbo's expanded appeal in 1940 as the "war senator" who had been an early advocate of preparedness and a strong supporter of the President. Bilbo's support for Doxey can be seen in the +.32 correlation between Bilbo 1940 and Doxey 1942. It is interesting to note that the Doxey-Eastland race does not correlate with the 1934 Bilbo-Stephens race. This would suggest

that the war-depleted electorate related more to the issues of 1940 than to the economic issues of the early 1930s.

Figure 46 examines the relationship of gubernatorial second primaries to senatorial races. Again, there are no surprises. Bilbo's 1934 race was more "pure Bilbo" than his 1940 race, as evidenced by the declining coefficients between 1923,1927/1934 and 1923,1927/1940. The chart also shows the Conner switches. The "Conners of 1931 and 1943" correlate the same way with senatorial candidates of 1928 and 1934, but the "Conner of 1939" correlates the opposite with those same senatorial candidates. The "Conner of 1943" does not correlate significantly with senatorial candidates after 1934, nor does the "Conner of 1939" after 1940. Hugh White's senatorial vote correlates weakly with his 1935 gubernatorial vote ($r = +.29$) but more strongly with his 1931 vote ($r = +.50$). It shows the erosion of his support from the gubernatorial election of 1935 to his feeble race against Bilbo in 1940. The Eastland-Doxey race does not seem to be related at all to the gubernatorial runoffs of the era. Bilbo's correlation with Doxey was apparently based on Bilbo's new 1940 senatorial constituency, not his old gubernatorial core.

Figure 47 displays the coefficients among gubernatorial first primary and senatorial candidates. The findings conform to those arising out of Figures 45 and 46.

FIGURE 46

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND PRIMARY
GUBERNATORIAL AND SENATORIAL CANDIDATES
ERA II

		GUBERNATORIAL												
		1923		1927		1931		1935		1939		1943		
		BILBO	WHITFIELD	BILBO	MURPHREE	CONNER	WHITE	JOHNSON	WHITE	JOHNSON	CONNER	CONNER	BAILEY	
SENATORIAL	1928	WILSON	+ .59	- .59	+ .56	- .56	+ .38	- .38	+ .28	- .28	+ .30	- .30	+ .29	- .29
		STEPHENS	- .59	+ .59	- .56	+ .56	- .38	+ .38	- .28	+ .28	- .30	+ .30	- .29	+ .29
	1934	BILBO	+ .84	- .84	+ .75	- .75	+ .35	- .35	+ .30	- .30	+ .52	- .52	+ .18	- .18
		STEPHENS	- .84	+ .84	- .75	+ .75	- .35	+ .35	- .30	+ .30	- .52	+ .52	- .18	+ .18
	1940	BILBO	+ .38	- .38	+ .29	- .29	+ .50	- .50	+ .29	- .29	+ .41	- .41		
		WHITE	- .38	+ .38	- .29	+ .29	- .50	+ .50	- .29	+ .29	- .41	+ .41		
	1942	DOXEY	+ .24	- .24										
		EASTLAND	- .24	+ .24										

It is interesting, however, that whereas Bilbo usually correlates negatively with White, the Bilbo '34 and White '35 first primary vote do not correlate. This absence of relation suggests that some of Bilbo's 1934 support might have gone to White in the 1935 first primary. Bailey's positive correlations with Stephens and Eastland suggest that whereas the 1943 gubernatorial runoff is generally indistinct in terms of senatorial and gubernatorial politics,

FIGURE 47

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN FIRST PRIMARY
GUBERNATORIAL AND SENATORIAL CANDIDATES
ERA II

	SENATORIAL								
	1928		1934		1940		1942		
	WILSON	STEPHENS	BILBO	STEPHENS	BILBO	WHITE	DOXEY	EASTLAND	
1923	BILBO	+ .58	- .58	+ .84	- .84	+ .33	- .33	+ .20	- .20
	WHITFIELD	- .57	+ .57	- .60	+ .60	- .36	+ .36		
	CONNER								
1927	BILBO	+ .54	- .54	+ .73	- .73	+ .24	- .24		
	MURPHREE	- .43	+ .43	- .62	+ .62				
	CONNER			- .36	+ .36	- .37	+ .37	- .32	+ .32
1931	CONNER	+ .27	- .27			+ .32	- .32		
	WHITE	- .39	+ .39	- .41	+ .41	- .58	+ .58		
	JOHNSON	+ .35	- .35	+ .47	- .47	+ .24	- .24		
1935	JOHNSON	+ .26	- .26	+ .40	- .40				
	WHITE					- .29	+ .29		
	MURPHREE	- .36	+ .36	- .45	+ .45			+ .22	- .22
1939	JOHNSON	+ .40	- .40	+ .65	- .65	+ .31	- .31		
	CONNER								
	BAILEY	- .42	+ .42	- .42	+ .42	- .51	+ .51	- .34	+ .34
1943	CONNER	+ .24	- .24			+ .21	- .21		
	BAILEY	- .39	+ .39	- .47	+ .47	- .28	+ .28	- .29	+ .29
	MURPHREE					+ .41	- .41	+ .42	- .42

Bailey's first primary or core support shared common sources with conservative senatorial candidates like Stephens and Eastland.

Figure 48 shows the moderate persistence of the agrarian class division in senatorial politics during the era, with the exception of 1934 in which the life-form appeared strong. It declined sharply in 1940 and 1942.

FIGURE 48

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SENATORIAL CANDIDATES
AND CERTAIN SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES
ERA II

	1928		1934		1940		1942	
	WILSON	STEPHENS	BILBO	STEPHENS	BILBO	WHITE	DOXEY	EASTLAND
PERCENT BLACK	-.33	+.33	-.66	+.66	-.34	+.34	-.22	+.22
DENSITY	-.38	+.38	-.47	+.47	-.29	+.29	-.24	+.24
WHITE TENANCY	X	X	+.44	-.44	-.34	+.34	X	X

Conclusions

What does all of this mean in terms of life-forms? The agrarian class life-form persisted throughout Era II, although it declined in importance. It was often a contest during Era II elections to see who could best paint his

opponent as the candidate of "predatory wealth" and the "trusts." White's millionaire status was always a campaign issue, as was Murphree's relation to highway contractors, and Conner's haughty personality and privileged background. Yet, the incipient modernization consensus of 1923 did not die. The voters did elect Hugh White and Mike Conner, and they could not have misperceived the basic business orientation of them both. Even the "Bilbo of 1927" was something different from the Bilbo of the past. The matrices of Eras I and II show that his 1927 race almost uniformly related lower to other races of the period than did his 1915 or 1923 vote. Even though Bilbo's rhetoric was couched in strongly anti-establishment terms, his platform called for the same type of progressive and humanitarian reforms of his earlier career. In fact, this could be said of all the candidates of Era II. Their rhetoric was sometimes radical; their actual platforms progressive and even moderate. With the possible exception of Franklin, no candidate of Era II seriously challenged the evolving modernization consensus. Furthermore, the administrations of Conner and White were clearly modernizing, and even the Bilbo and Johnson administrations had modernizing features. The only major setback for modernization came in 1940 when Johnson allowed the BAWI program to die, and this had not

been a part of his campaign.

It is fair to say that Bilbo and Johnson fit somewhere into the tradition of "Hills" governors of Era I based on their identification with the small farmers and their progressivism. It is also fair to say that Conner and White could not have acquired majorities without the "freakish" elements and odd alliances which allowed them to add to their base support elements of the "redneck" vote. At the same time, however, no election of Era II was a clear repudiation of Whitfield's policies. Even 1927 was not a clear repudiation because of the race issue and also because of the splintering of Whitfield's support in the first primary and then the weakness of Murphree as a candidate in the second. Furthermore, White's candidacy in 1931 and 1935 represented an evolution of Whitfield's vision of the "unprejudiced state" to a positive view of the state's active role in industrial development. A new constituency accepting this view contained elements of the Whitfield, Murphree, and Conner following, but it also seemed to have a "new life" of its own. Johnson's policies repudiated White's view of the modernizing state; his campaign had not. And, then Bailey restored the White policy. The majority of the electorate remained committed to modernization, but often

in a style which seemed to cloud or even compromise that commitment.

The rhetoric of Era I, symbolized by the Secret Caucus, left a strong residue which persists to this day. In a state that has remained the poorest in the nation, a majority of the voters have continued to be suspicious of candidates of wealth, great education, too much social grace, or any hint of aloofness from the common man. Yet, at the same time, they have understood and supported the imperative of economic development. The chore of the candidate in Era II was to prove that he was "one of them" who could lead them to the promise of a better day.

Along side the life-forms of modernization and agrarian class conflict flourished progressivism. The humanitarian appeal of Paul Johnson was clearly within that life-form, as was, to a lesser degree, Murphree's. And, finally, race became an issue in 1927 and, to a lesser degree, in 1935. In a word, Era II was a period of remarkable political modulation in which the cross-currents of Mississippi's four political life-forms met and clashed.

PART FOUR

ERA III (1946-1964): THE AROUSAL AND ASCENDANCY
OF THE RACIAL CONSENSUS

World War II profoundly affected all of the life-forms. It hastened the decline of agrarian class struggles and drew the curtain nearer shut on the old progressivism. The war also accelerated economic development and deepened modernization concerns in the electorate. And, finally, it aroused the racial consensus to a level unmatched since the Civil War.

During the period 1946-1954 Mississippi returned to a modulation among life-forms, somewhat akin to Era II politics but with important differences. Agrarian class struggles and progressivism continued to be important issues in gubernatorial elections, but they seemed to lose the ability to produce the majority. Modernization and race had both strengthened during the war to the point at which candidates seen as "safe" on these issues could turn the majority even if they were on the conservative side of the class and progressivism. World War II had produced the freak election of 1943 in which a basically Old Guard candidate (Bailey) was elected governor. This election, combined with the Eastland victory of 1942, signaled the triumph of a modified type of Bourbon, i.e., a candidate on the conservative side of class and progressivism and yet reliably committed to the Hugh White

vision of economic development and to the Bourbon militancy on the issue of race. Bailey's emphasis on agriculture and local government reminded one somewhat of the old Bourbon scheme of alliance between the governor and powerful "court house crowds" in the protection of the economic and racial interests of the black belt farmers, who at the same time embraced the need for economic development, but on their own basically conservative terms. The poverty of Mississippi and the fluidity of her politics blurred this portrait considerably, yet there was a clear sense in which a majority of the electorate embraced conservative leadership on modernization and race rather than uncertain alternatives. This trend continued in the elections of 1947 and 1951.

The period 1946-1954 also seems like a transition period during which race began to loom larger and larger as the predominant life-form of politics. What ignited the spreading conflagration was a series of events and pressures outside the boundaries of the state, since, quite naturally, it was unimaginable that the indigenous white electorate would challenge the caste order. The exogenous force which wrought the racial crisis was the federal government and its growing commitment to a national enforcement of black civil rights. The exogenous force also produced a curious "gap" in the aroused racial

consensus between federal elections in which it appeared immediately after the war and state elections in which the obsession with race built more slowly. As a result, for example, one could see the racial consensus dominating the senatorial campaign of 1946, yet playing little role in the gubernatorial race the following year.

The arousal of the racial consensus and the electorate's embrace of more conservative leadership during the years immediately after the war presaged the period 1955-1964, during which time race became the total obsession of the state. The gubernatorial race of 1955 was a sort of bridge between the period of the arousing racial consensus, in which other life-forms interacted with race to determine electoral outcomes, to the period of total obsession with the racial issue (1959-1964). During this latter phase, the racial consensus washed away all other distinctions, and the state was in the grips of racial hysteria. James Silver traces how the obsession with racial politics proceeds, and it is a good summary of the era:

The all-pervading doctrine, then and now, has been white supremacy. . . rationalized by a professed belief in states rights and bolstered by a religious fundamentalism. In such a society a never-ceasing propagation of the 'true faith' must go on relentlessly. . . . This then is the essence of the closed society. For whatever reason, the community sets up the orthodox view. Its people are constantly indoctrinated. . . .

When there is no effective challenge to the code, a mild toleration of dissent is evident. . . . But, with a substantial challenge from the outside . . . the society tightly closes its ranks, becomes inflexible and stubborn, and lets no scruples, legal or ethical, stand in the way of the enforcement of the orthodoxy. The voice of reason is stilled and the moderate either goes along or is eliminated. Those in control during such times are certain to be extremists. . . . The likelihood of intelligent decisions is thus being reduced, and eventual disaster is predictable.¹

Part Four will trace the arousing racial consensus carried out initially under black belt leadership and then the ascendancy of race as the "alpha and omega" of electoral politics. Chapter 11 will describe the elections of the period 1946-1954; Chapter 12, the transition election of 1955 and the racial period of 1959-1964; and Chapter 13 will present the statistical analysis and conclusions.

¹Silver, p. 6.

CHAPTER 11

A CONSERVATIVE MODULATION AMONG LIFE-FORMS, AND THE AROUSAL OF THE RACIAL CONSENSUS (1946-1954)

The Senatorial Election of 1946

A clear barometer of the aroused racial consensus could be seen in the senatorial campaign of 1946. Although not included in the statistical analysis, the race is important because it was Bilbo's last and because in his greatest victory since 1915 one could see the aroused racial consensus. It was during Bilbo's second term in the Senate that he cemented his image as a fanatical racist and, in the words of Senator Taft, "a disgrace to the Senate."¹ With much coverage from the national media, Bilbo successfully led a filibuster against anti-poll tax legislation in 1942 and again in 1944.²

In February 1944 he became Chairman of the District of Columbia Committee and proclaimed himself "Mayor of Washington." Using the position to emphasize racial issues,

¹Quoted in Luthin, p. 70.

²Zorn in Salter, pp. 291-293.

he was often the object of critical stories in the Washington Post and New York Times.³ Bilbo's national notoriety reached such proportions that he actually became an issue in the 1945 mayoralty campaign in New York City. The major candidates called on the New York senators to help oust Bilbo from the Senate. In May of 1946, Life magazine called Bilbo the "worst man in the Senate."⁴

Bilbo's national critics and domestic enemies were, as usual, outsmarted at the polls, but now for the last time. The 1946 senatorial election was the first exhibition of a "siege mentality" on the part of white Mississippians--a mentality which was to be the hallmark of deep South politics in the 1950s and 1960s. The national headlines condemning Bilbo galvanized much of the state behind him--including elements which had never supported him before. To those who switched to Bilbo it was as if they were participating in a referendum on Bilbo's ideas, with which they agreed, rather than on his personality or style, which they detested. It was reported that some \$50,000 had been sent into the state to defeat him.⁵ This further fanned the flames of resentment.

³Ibid., p. 288.

⁴Luthin, pp. 69-70.

⁵Ibid., p. 71.

Bilbo's opponents were Ross Collins, making his fourth race for the Senate, Tom Q. Ellis, Clerk of the Supreme Court, and two minor figures, F. H. Harper and N. T. Levings. Amid headlines of the Senate's investigation into Bilbo's relationship with wartime contractors, the senator waged a vigorous campaign. He played heavily on the race issue and denounced the attacks on him by "negro-loving, social-equality magazines of the North."⁶ Collins and Bilbo traded bitter attacks. Collins accused Bilbo of being a "common grafter" in connection with his payoff from war contractors, and Bilbo, contending that the money was for the Doxey campaign, counter-charged that Collins had received \$14,000 of it himself. Collins threatened court action.⁷

Bilbo knew that he had hit a nerve on the issue of race and outside interference. He said that Mississippi was facing "new reconstruction, new carpetbagger days." Carried away with words that would later haunt him, Bilbo said, ". . . go to any extreme to keep the negroes from voting July 2. . . . But, remember that the best way to keep the negro from voting is to see him the night before."⁸

⁶Clarion Ledger, June 28, 1946.

⁷Clarion Ledger, June 29, 1946.

⁸Clarion Ledger, June 28, 1946.

Bilbo won in the first primary with 51% of the vote. Tom Q. Ellis garnered 30.2%, Collins a dismal 9.8%, Levings 8.2%, and Harper 0.7%.⁹ A measure of the aroused racial consensus was seen in the fact that Bilbo carried the Delta. Said a despairing editorial in Hodding Carter's Delta Democrat Times, "The Delta, the self-conscious and self-praising Delta, which never before gave Bilbo a majority, or even a plurality, had a great part in electing him this time. Here, frightened or angry people, lacking the forgivable handicap of ignorance, listened to the siren song of hate and fear."¹⁰

Bilbo never took his seat for a third term. The Congressional War Investigating Committee reported that Bilbo had accepted between \$57,000 and \$88,000 in benefits from war contractors, and a Senate committee held widely publicized hearings into his call for intimidation of blacks. With Republicans and Democrats competing for northern black votes and with the Republicans now in control of the Senate, Bilbo got little support except from the southern senators who threatened to filibuster the seating of any senator rather than see Bilbo denied his.

⁹Abney, p. 31.

¹⁰Quoted in McCain, "Theodore Gilmore Bilbo and the Mississippi Delta," p. 23.

The imbroglio was settled when Bilbo's credentials were "tabled without prejudice," pending the restoration of his health. He remained on the payroll as a senator but was not sworn in. A few days later he returned to Oschner's Clinic in New Orleans and died on August 21, 1947. The cause of Bilbo's death is one of the ironies of American political history--cancer of the mouth.¹¹

Thus passed from the scene the "stormy petrel of Mississippi politics," a man whose electoral feats are without parallel in Mississippi history. He was also unsurpassed in the complexity of his character. He had come a long way from being proclaimed by George Tindall as the greatest of the southern progressive governors--to the disgrace of being denied his seat in the U.S. Senate. And, yet, that is where he entered--in 1910, when the Mississippi Senate declared him "unfit to sit in a body of honest upright men" and asked him to resign. His personal life would have destroyed practically any other politician in Bible-belt Mississippi; yet, the repeated scandals did not seem to injure his majority, at least not permanently. He repeatedly took scandal and turned it to triumph. For a man who ended his career as one of the nation's most notorious and ridiculed racists, he had begun it forty

¹¹Green, pp. 110-119.

years before with a notable avoidance of the race question. His genius lay in an innate sense of what a majority of "his" people wanted to hear. He never tried to be all things to all men, and he seldom won by large majorities. He knew that his base was among the "rednecks." He knew them thoroughly, for he was of them. There is both truth and hyperbole in the final words of his biographer:

The truth is that though Bilbo is dead, the breed is not, and it will spring up wherever conditions are favorable, whether it be in Massachusetts or Mississippi or Wisconsin or Washington. Wherever men are held in intellectual or economic or political bondage, wherever men endeavor to shackle other men, or submit to being shackled, the Bilbos will thrive. And the people, claiming the reward, must also pay the penalty.¹²

The Gubernatorial Election of 1947

An unexpected turn in history laid the groundwork for the 1947 race. In late 1946 Governor Bailey died and Lieutenant Governor Fielding Wright succeeded him with a full year left in the term. Wright was from Sharkey County, in the Delta, and had served as both speaker of the House and lieutenant governor. While basically in the Delta bloc, he had opposed Sillers and others on occasion (e.g., he fought Conner's "highway dictator bill"), and had supported Hugh White's man, Horace Stancel, for speaker in

¹²Green, p. 125.

1936 against Tom Bailey. A Hugh White supporter, Wright had been elected speaker at the special "BAWI session" of 1936 after the death of Stancel. In 1939 he retired to his law practice in Rolling Fork and Vicksburg and amassed considerable wealth in the field of oil law. In 1943 he was elected lieutenant governor over Sam Lumpkin, despite the opposition of Bilbo and Johnson and charges that Wright was a "wet."¹³

In early 1947, Governor Wright called a special session to deal with four issues. One, the session enacted legislation which permitted Mississippi to receive federal money in the school lunch program. Second, the Legislature appropriated \$2.5 million for increased teacher salaries and \$175,000 for increases in junior college salaries. The third concern was a major rewriting of Mississippi's election laws to prevent what was feared to be massive Negro voting in the Democratic primary. The revised laws permitted county executive committees to hold new registrations and required registrants to be in agreement with Mississippi Democratic Party principles. Wright's fourth issue was the repeal of Mississippi's infamous "black market tax," a war-time tax on illegal whisky. This was a popular Hills cause, but was the only defeat suffered by

¹³Hilliard thesis, pp. 36-51.

Wright in the special session.¹⁴

Wright's special session was a telling example of the power of incumbency. By calling the session he was acting "gubernatorial." He was able to take credit for the school lunch program and to solidify the support of the politically potent secondary and junior college teachers. And, finally, in his call for the repeal of the black market tax, Wright took the edge off his "Delta image" and tried to appeal to the Hills. By the time of the 1947 gubernatorial primary, he was a clear front-runner.

The only other major contender in the primary was Paul Johnson, Jr., son of the late governor and Marine Corps veteran returning from World War II. Minor candidates included Jesse M. Byrd, Lycurgus Spinks, and F.L. Jacobs.

It was a clear case of the field against Wright. In a full year as governor, Wright had managed to consolidate his position to the point where practically all of the major interests were behind him. It was apparently hoped in some quarters that a repeat of 1911 might occur, in which Wright would either have only token opposition or no opposition at all in the primary. Some of the Wright

¹⁴Skates in McLemore, vol. 2, pp. 133-134.

people approached Johnson with the idea of his running for lieutenant governor--an office for which his chances would have been excellent based on the name alone--so that Wright might have a relatively clear field.¹⁵

Paul Johnson, Jr., only thirty-one years old, felt he had a chance for the governorship for two reasons. One, returning veterans had made a strong impact on the federal elections of 1946. Several veteran congressmen encountered the strongest challenges of their careers and in one district war veteran John Bell Williams unseated Congressman Dan McGehee. Johnson felt that his image as a vigorous, young veteran returning from the Pacific Theater would be popular with the voters. And, two, if Johnson could force Wright into a runoff, the "Hills" might unite against a Delta candidate.¹⁶

Johnson claimed to speak for the "little people" of Mississippi, as had his father. He emphasized the family tradition, but also stressed that he was his "own man" with his own programs. Johnson made prohibition the principle issue, stating categorically that he would veto any attempts to legalize liquor in Mississippi or to soften enforcement of prohibition. He accused Wright of being

¹⁵Interview with Frank Barber, Washington, D.C., September 7, 28; October 5, 8, 16, 28, 1978.

¹⁶Ibid.

a "wet" and cited his voting record in the Legislature as proof.¹⁷ Johnson continued to call prohibition the "number one issue" in the campaign and accused Wright of not taking a clear stand on the issue.¹⁸ Other planks in Johnson's platform called for \$2400/year teacher salaries, better farm-to-market roads, state warehouses and cold storage facilities for farmers, a large state-operated laboratory to test new products for industrial development, upgrading the eleemosynary institutions, \$30/month old age assistance, and \$3.00 car tags.¹⁹

Johnson played heavily on his youth and vigor. He stressed his service as a Marine during the war, using the occasion to paint vivid pictures of combat in the Pacific. He also reminded the voters that the last two governors, including his father, had died in office and that Hugh White had had a debilitating heart attack in the last year of his term. It was time to elect a qualified man on his first try while he still possessed the vigor of youth. In a most unlikely grouping of examples, he cited the youthful achievements of Thomas Jefferson, Alexander the Great, Pat Harrison, Theodore Bilbo, and

¹⁷Clarion Ledger, July 6, 1947.

¹⁸Clarion Ledger, July 22, 1947.

¹⁹Clarion Ledger, August 3, 1947.

Jesus Christ. Johnson's vigor was seen in his rigorous schedule of speeches and the forceful, magnetic style of his oratory.²⁰

Johnson appeared to the "left" of Wright because of his emphasis on "common man" issues. He attacked the inhumane conditions at Parchman Penitentiary, the inadequate facilities at Whitfield State Hospital, and an education system which allowed some 400,000 school-age children to be unenrolled in the public school system. He also criticized Wright's votes against labor, especially the proposal to create a Department of Labor and legislation to prohibit sit-down strikes.²¹

Johnson spent much of his time attacking Wright, calling him the "acting governor" or "accidental governor." He centered his assault on three areas. One, he accused Wright of having opposed the Homestead Exemption Law throughout his legislative career.²² Second, he accused Wright of being a wet. And, third, Johnson charged Wright with being a "tool" of big oil companies. Johnson charged that Wright had successfully lobbied for the big oil companies to delay enactment of his father's oil severance

²⁰An article from the Memphis Press-Scimitar reprinted in the Clarion Ledger, July 30, 1947.

²¹Ibid.

²²Clarion Ledger, August 3, 1947.

tax, "which meant millions of dollars to our people."²³ Johnson said that the oil companies were fighting him because he was calling for "sealed gauges" and other devices to insure that royalty owners and the state got their fair share of the production.²⁴

As the frontrunner, Wright ran a more cautious and somewhat more conservative campaign. In his speeches, he would often recite the achievements of Conner, White, Johnson, and Bailey and would outline his role in these administrations. Emphasizing the sound financial policies of these administrations, Wright promised to continue this record if elected. Said Wright, "In 1932, Mississippi started on its march of progress out of the depression and today it occupies its most enviable position since statehood."²⁵ He especially praised the administration of Tom Bailey, whom he had succeeded, and, as had Bailey in 1943, made agriculture the first plank in his platform. Proclaiming that "Mississippi is primarily an agricultural state," Wright called for completion of the Farmers Market in Jackson and a statewide marketing program for farm products.²⁶ He also supported "whatever amount is necessary"

²³Clarion Ledger, July 29, 1947.

²⁴Meridian Star, July 20, 1947.

²⁵Clarion Ledger, August 1, 1947.

²⁶Clarion Ledger, July 23, 1947.

for old age support, a policy of "belt-tightening" in state finances, the exemption of feeds from the sales tax, completion of a farm to market road system, support for public health programs, conservation of natural resources, and full support for veterans.²⁷

Regarding the prohibition issue, Wright stated that he would follow the 1934 referendum mandate of the people and would oppose any effort to weaken or repeal the prohibition statutes.²⁸ Wright seemed to take much more seriously Johnson's charge that he had opposed the Homestead Exemption Law, and advertisements of the campaign showed Wright devoting much attention to refuting this charge. He printed a long statement from Hugh White in which the former governor praised Wright for his instrumental role in passing the law and stated that it would not have been enacted without Wright's support.²⁹

On the issue of education, Wright could point to the special session and the manner in which he had worked with the Mississippi Education Association.³⁰ One can surmise that it was by lining up substantial support from

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Starkville Daily News, July 11, 1947.

³⁰Clarion Ledger, August 1, 1947.

the school and junior college constituency, by taking the "correct" stand on prohibition, by championing farm issues, and by staking out the "hard" position on the race issue that this Delta candidate built wide-spread first primary appeal.

Race, interestingly enough, was not a salient issue. An aid in Johnson's campaign states today that in 1947 the race issue was "nothing. The race issue was completely dormant in Mississippi."³¹ Nevertheless, the final plank in Wright's platform was one entitled "Outside Interference." Under this heading, Wright cited the election law revision at the special session and warned that a constant vigil would have to be maintained in the face of "unrelenting agitation from outside sources."³² Johnson did not stress the race issue, except to announce his full support for Bilbo's seating in Congress.³³ It seems odd that race and the federal government were not issues in the campaign, given the predominant role they played in Bilbo's 1946 campaign and in light of Wright's Dixiecrat activity a year later. This diminution of the race question must be attributed to Wright's lead and his lack of need for a

³¹Barber.

³²Clarion Ledger, July 23, 1947.

³³Clarion Ledger, July 30, 1947.

demagogic issue, and to Johnson's failure to raise it as the underdog. Given the absence of race as an emotional campaign issue, Wright's leadership in the special session probably gave him the votes of those who felt the need for a strong and effective stand on the question.

Alliances were important. Hugh White was openly supporting Fielding Wright, as was Eastland supporting Johnson. In a bizarre development, Wright got the last-minute help of Bilbo in return for a pledge to reappoint him to the Senate should he not be seated. Even though Bilbo supporters obviously split, it was another way that Wright managed to cut into the Hills support.³⁴

Despite Johnson's aggressive campaign, Wright won in the first with 55.3% to Johnson's 30.8%. The absence of a strong third candidate was obvious--Jesse Byrd, running as an open "wet," got only 10.4%.³⁵ It was the first time since 1915 that a nominee had been selected in the first primary.

In terms of life-forms, they were all flourishing in 1947, unlike in 1946 when race was the overwhelming issue. Johnson evoked the progressivism of his father in raising issues such as the condition of the state

³⁴Key, p. 236.

³⁵Abney, p. 89.

eleemosynary institutions, old age assistance, cheap car tags, reform at the penitentiary, the condition of Mississippi roads, and secondary education reforms. In making prohibition the centerpiece of his platform, Johnson was clearly harkening back to the moral fundamentalism of early progressives like Noel. Aspects of the old agrarian class conflict were also strongly felt in the campaign on both the style and hard level. Johnson attacked Wright as being a tool of big oil companies and defended the organized labor movement. The contrast between the Populist-talking son of a political descendent of Vardaman and Bilbo, on the one hand, and a wealthy corporation lawyer from the Delta who had come from the bosom of the Legislature, on the other, was the sharpest in decades in terms of agrarian class conflict.

Race was also operative in 1947, though it does not seem prominent in the rhetoric or advertising of the campaign. Paul Johnson, Jr., did not address the issue in a major way, and thus it must be assumed that he inherited the relatively liberal racial image of his father. Wright, on the other hand, had guided the electoral reform through the special session and had promised to reappoint Bilbo to the Senate in case of his expulsion. Given the highly charged racial atmosphere in 1946 and the Bilbo hearings in early 1947, it is inconceivable that the racial consensus

was not aroused at least subliminally in the electorate; and to the degree that it was, Wright clearly was the more militantly status quo of the two major candidates.

And, finally, modernization was an issue in an equally subtle way. Even though neither candidate seemed to spend a great deal of time addressing modernization issues, the contrast was, again, relatively clear between the son of the man who had killed the B.A.W.I. program and the lieutenant governor who had helped revive it some years later. In openly proclaiming himself in the tradition of White, Conner, and Bailey, Fielding Wright most assuredly laid claim to the votes of those who were concerned that Paul Johnson, Jr., might have attacked the industrial development program in the same way as his father had done seven years before.

The gubernatorial primary of 1947 resembled Era II in the degree to which the four great life-forms were all alive and interacting with each other. The choice was between a candidate who used the appealing rhetoric of an Era II progressive and the image of an Era I "redneck" and, yet, who was young and unproven, on the one hand, and a scion of the political establishment, tainted with the image of being a patrician, and yet who was proven and safe on the issues of modernization and race on the other. Wright's victory was a testament to both the growing modernization

consensus and the aroused racial consensus, even though issues of progressivism and class were present as well. A majority now clearly chose the "correct" position on modernization and race, even at the expense of having simultaneously to choose a Delta establishment politician.

The Presidential Election of 1948

A major expression of the aroused racial consensus was the 1948 Dixiecrat Movement. Truman had begun to appreciate the importance of black votes in his tough 1940 senatorial campaign, when the Negro vote in St. Louis provided the senator with his re-election margin. As President, Truman agreed with those who felt that the Democratic Party should build support among the growing black population in border and northern cities.³⁶ Southerners viewed with alarm Truman's statements and actions in behalf of civil rights, and the breach became open after the February 1948 special message calling for a permanent FEPC, an antilynching law, abolition of the poll tax for federal elections, and anti-discrimination measures in interstate transportation facilities. The southern

³⁶Monroe Lee Billington, The Political South in the Twentieth Century (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), pp. 88-89.

outcry was violent.³⁷

In Mississippi, Governor Wright had signaled the reaction in his own inaugural address, delivered on January 20, after the president's civil rights commission had reported but several weeks before the president's special message to Congress. In one paragraph Wright summarized the Delta position on the heretofore "sacred" Democratic Party, race, and the aroused racial consensus:

As a life-long Democrat, as a descendant of Democrats, as the governor of this nation's most Democratic State, I would regret to see the day come when Mississippi or the South should break with the Democratic party in a national election. But vital principles and eternal truths transcend party lines, and the day is now at hand when determined action must be taken.³⁸

As Frank Smith, who was a freshman state senator during that term, has written: "The Dixiecrat movement in 1948 was officially born at the beginning of our legislative session, and for the rest of our three months the Mississippi legislature was little more than a cheering section."³⁹ It has since been reported that Speaker Sillers, Delta baron from Bolivar County, collaborated closely with

³⁷Ibid., p. 96.

³⁸Mississippi, Secretary of the Senate, Journal of the Mississippi State Senate, 1948 Regular Session, p. 74.

³⁹Smith, pp. 72-73.

fellow Deltan Wright in framing the fiery inaugural speech.⁴⁰

On February 12, some four thousand "true white Jeffersonian Democrats" met in Jackson at the call of Governor Wright. Midst emotional calls for drastic action against the Democratic Party, resolutions were adopted condemning civil rights legislation, Truman, and the Democratic Party. The Legislature recessed to attend the rally en masse. One of the few voices of caution was that of newly elected Senator John Stennis. On May 10 another meeting in Jackson brought together representatives from ten southern states. South Carolina Governor Strom Thurmond was the keynote speaker, and the decision was made to have a post-Philadelphia convention of states rights Democrats should the national convention fail to go along with southern demands. The meeting was to be held in Birmingham.⁴¹

The course of Mississippi had been determined long before Philadelphia. According to Oliver Emmerich, who was an activist in the Dixiecrat effort, the third party campaign "late in 1947 was regarded as a certainty."⁴²

⁴⁰Confidential source.

⁴¹Winter in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 142.

⁴²Emmerich, p. 87.

Observer Frank Smith concurs, stating that a walk-out was a certainty and that the Mississippi delegation "spent the first three days at Philadelphia obsessed by the fear that they would have no excuse to walk out."⁴³ Hubert Humphrey and the adoption of the strong civil rights platform gave them the excuse. At the subsequent Birmingham convention, the states rights group adopted the expected platform and nominated Governor Strom Thurmond as President and Fielding Wright as Vice President. In a siege mentality, with a new racial orthodoxy gripping the state, and with the racial consensus aroused, the ticket led by Thurmond and native son Wright swept Mississippi with 87% of the vote.⁴⁴ What had for half a century been unthinkable suddenly became the order of the day. The orthodoxy suddenly shifted and made radically new demands on a compliant electorate.

The Gubernatorial Election of 1951

Former Governor Hugh White led the walkout at Philadelphia in 1948, an action which helped lay the groundwork for his 1951 gubernatorial campaign. The field was unusually heavy with eight candidates. Paul Johnson, Jr.,

⁴³Smith, p. 74.

⁴⁴Abney, p. 2.

and Jesse Byrd were making their second races for the office. Making first attempts were Jackson attorney Ross Barnett, Lieutenant Governor Sam Lumpkin, newspaper editor Mary Cain, Kelly Hammond, and Jimmie Walker.

In the first primary, White emphasized his B.A.W.I. plan and promised to further the industrial development of Mississippi. He also reminded voters of the Homestead Exemption Law enacted during his first term and pledged to resist any attempts to weaken the law. White endorsed the program of rural electrification and increased public welfare payments to the needy.⁴⁵ The former governor came out strongly on the race issue, but not militantly, by stressing his devotion to segregated schools, by promising an accelerated program of making Negro schools "separate but equal," and by supporting states rights. He reminded voters that he had "walked out" in 1948.⁴⁶

Johnson defended prohibition but did not make it his centerpiece issue, as had been the case in 1947. Johnson's first primary platform was reminiscent of his father's humanitarianism. With vigorous oratory, Johnson

⁴⁵William Hal Robbins, "The Mississippi Gubernatorial Campaign of 1951" (M.A. thesis, Mississippi State University, 1955), pp. 17-18.

⁴⁶Earl Black, Southern Governors and Civil Rights (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 39.

called for \$50.00/month minimum old age payments and maximum support for charity hospitals. In addition, he supported the establishment of health centers for every county. In the neo-populist vein, Johnson defended the right of labor to collective bargaining. He also had strong education planks, campaigning for \$150.00 per month minimum teacher retirement, \$2400.00/year teacher salaries, and the development of junior colleges for both races. He renewed his 1947 call for a just oil and gas severance tax and a better farm to market road system. Paying homage to the race issue, Johnson supported segregation and states rights and opposed Truman's civil rights proposals.⁴⁷

Lieutenant Governor Sam Lumpkin also had a basically humanitarian platform which was evocative of past progressive candidates. His planks included a reduction of taxes to eliminate the treasury surplus, support for the rural electrification program and expansion of rural telephone service, extension of social security benefits to state and local government employees, more support for the charity hospitals, expansion of the junior college system, establishment of a first offender camp at Parchman Penitentiary, an increase in old age assistance, and a fair

⁴⁷Robbins thesis, pp. 19-25; Barber.

attitude toward both labor and business.⁴⁸ Lumpkin stressed that he was the only person in the race who had actually worked for the Dixiecrat ticket in 1948.⁴⁹ He campaigned as the "real States Rights candidate" and promised to lead the fight again in 1952 against Harry Truman, if necessary.⁵⁰

Barnett's platform included a "Build Mississippi" program of business and industrial development and many educational and humanitarian planks similar to those of his opponents (e.g., higher teacher salaries, rural electrification, \$50.00/month old age assistance, and abolition of the black market tax): He mirrored the growing concern with Communism, as he called for an all-out fight against that ideology. Barnett also attacked his opponents--Byrd for wanting Mississippians to drink "30 million pints of whisky a year," Hammond and Johnson for being just "talkers," Lumpkin for espousing causes which he had fought for twenty years, and White for taking undue credit for past reforms.⁵¹ Barnett renewed the old attacks on White, calling him an "ivory-tower millionaire."⁵²

⁴⁸Robbins thesis, pp. 25-27.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 57.

⁵⁰Earl Black, p. 39.

⁵¹Barnett Campaign Tabloid entitled "Mississippi News" in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁵²Robbins thesis, p. 50.

Of the remaining candidates, the only notable campaign issue was Byrd's endorsement of legalization. The other candidates did not make significant impacts, except for the entertainment value of Mary Cain's vigorous and colorful oratory. In terms of alliances, Fielding Wright supported White and Eastland supported Johnson.

The first primary returns showed a close four-way split among White, Johnson, Barnett, and Lumpkin. White led with 23.3%, Johnson was second with 21.1%, Lumpkin third with 20.7%, and Barnett fourth with 20.0%.⁵³

In the runoff, race exploded as the predominant issue. White "took off the gloves" and campaigned in the manner that earned him the reputation, at least among some Johnson supporters, as the "dirtiest campaigner in the state."⁵⁴ He stressed his role in having "led" the 1948 walk-out from Philadelphia. He repeatedly attacked Johnson for having failed to support the Dixiecrat ticket, a charge which was true.⁵⁵ The limited black vote in the all-Negro boxes of Mound Bayou and Mount Carmel had gone overwhelmingly for Johnson in the first primary, and White

⁵³Abney, p. 90.

⁵⁴Barber.

⁵⁵Interview with Governor Paul Johnson, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, September 1, 1977.

used this as evidence for the charge that Johnson was the pro-Negro candidate. White's campaign manager, C. D. Fair, contended that the first primary returns "clearly indicate that Paul Johnson is the candidate annointed by the Trumancrats who advocate an end to segregation, the FEPC, and anti-lynch bills."⁵⁶ Said White himself, "It was the little black gang that defeated Sam Lumpkin and put Paul Johnson in the second primary."⁵⁷

Johnson, who had, in fact, supported the Truman ticket in 1948, was appointed assistant federal attorney, and some of his associates had been implicated in a widely publicized and notorious patronage selling scandal. The Jackson Daily News, an unrelenting opponent of the Johnson family, accused Johnson of having been closely associated with the principals in the scandal and of having roomed with Henry DeBrow. DeBrow and others had testified that they had not been "selling" patronage jobs but had been "fund raising" to help elect as governor of Mississippi a man who would not oppose the national administration. That man was to be Paul Johnson, Jr.⁵⁸

White launched a major attack on Johnson based on

⁵⁶Indianola Enterprise, August 20, 1951.

⁵⁷Quoted in Earl Black, p. 40.

⁵⁸Jackson Daily News, editorial, undated; and Barber.

the Truman issue. White warned, "If you turn Mississippi over to the Truman crowd, you have lost all hope for white supremacy. This is the most serious matter that has faced you since reconstruction."⁵⁹ White continued his unrestrained racist rhetoric:

There are 20,000 Negroes voting in Mississippi. In a few years there may be 50,000. Are you going to take chances on the Negro vote dominating elections in Mississippi? The issue in this campaign is not Hugh White but the customs and traditions of Mississippi and whether we will be returned to the National Democratic party under President Truman and the Civil Rights crowd. . . . If the Negro vote continues to play such an important part, it won't be long before the Negroes will be sitting next to you in public places, churches, and attending school with your children. A vote for Johnson is a vote for the Truman crowd and Civil Rights. Are you going to sell your birthright?⁶⁰

Earl Black, who classified all major southern gubernatorial candidates of the 1950s and 1960s according to their racial appeals, rated all the first primary candidates in 1951, including White, as "moderate segregationists." In the runoff, White became the first candidate in Mississippi, but certainly not the last, to be classified as a "strong segregationist."⁶¹

Johnson was put on the defensive. He attempted to

⁵⁹Quoted in Earl Black, p. 41.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 349.

blunt White's assault by accusing him of supporting abrogation of the two-thirds rule at the 1936 Democratic Convention. He also made militant statements on Truman himself: "I will not only bolt the Democratic Party, but will lead the bolt if Truman is the boss of the 1952 convention."⁶² Johnson, however, was clearly more moderate on the race issue. Johnson said that race was a false issue and that White was running a hate campaign. "For twenty years my opponent has known nothing to run on but prejudice, hate, fear and the Negro question," said Johnson. In what was clearly a moderate view by Mississippi standards, Johnson declared, "I don't want to win by making the Negro the whipping boy when he isn't even an issue in the race."⁶³

Johnson also continued to stress his neo-populist platform in the runoff. Calling White a "profiteer," Johnson stated that "the real issue is not States' Rights at all. It is selfish interests versus the people."⁶⁴ He further accused White of trying to "buy" the election by picking up the deficits and staffs of two candidates

⁶²Campaign Advertisement for Paul Johnson, 1951, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁶³Quoted in Earl Black, p. 41.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 40.

defeated in the first primary.⁶⁵ He continued to emphasize the crisis in public education and his support for higher teacher salaries and retirement benefits.⁶⁶

Dirty tricks "Mississippi style" were employed in the final days of the runoff. White forces "convinced" Percy Green, Negro editor of the Jackson Advocate, to make an eleventh-hour endorsement of Johnson. This endorsement ran on radio stations the weekend before the second primary.⁶⁷ With race the dominant issue of the second primary, White won with 51.2% to Johnson's 48.8%.⁶⁸

The Presidential Election of 1952

The irony of White's second administration, in light of his campaign rhetoric, was that he and Attorney General J. P. Coleman led Mississippi back into the bosom of the Democratic Party in 1952. Strong elements of the state's political leadership were hoping to repeat the 1948 bolt, if necessary, and a struggle developed within the state party for control of the delegation to Chicago.

⁶⁵Johnson Campaign Tabloid, 1951, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁶⁶Johnson Campaign Tabloid, 1951, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁶⁷Barber.

⁶⁸Abney, p. 90.

The State Convention sent a delegation to Chicago committed to the nomination of Senator Richard Russell of Georgia, with a "wait and see" attitude as to other developments. A majority went with the intention of staying in, and, under the leadership of Coleman, they survived a credentials challenge from a group of Truman "loyalists."⁶⁹ It was apparently the conviction of White, Coleman, and others that the 1948 strategy had been a disastrous mistake for the South. There were, however, hot-head elements within the delegation who, as Coleman remembers, were "just buckin' and rarin' to walk out at every turn of the road. They were a minority, as it so happened, but they were very troublesome."⁷⁰ The relatively harmonious convention and the nomination of Alabama Senator John Sparkman as Vice President kept Mississippi in the party and smoothed to some degree the troubled political waters.⁷¹

What developed in 1952 was far more significant in the long run than the 1948 bolt. Much of the state leadership lined up behind the Democratic ticket--e.g., Governor White, Attorney General Coleman, and Senators Stennis and

⁶⁹Winter in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 148.

⁷⁰Interview with former Governor J. P. Coleman, Ackerman, Mississippi, August 29, 1977.

⁷¹Winter in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 148.

Eastland spoke for the ticket. However, for the first time since Reconstruction significant political leadership openly campaigned for the Republican ticket led by the popular war hero, Dwight Eisenhower.⁷² Former Lieutenant Governor Sam Lumpkin, Speaker of the House Walter Sillers, state Senator Earl Evans, E. O. Spencer, and others formed a "Democrats for Eisenhower" Committee and stumped the state for the Republican ticket. Many newspapers endorsed Eisenhower, and numerous local organizations sprang up to work for the Republican ticket. Such an open apostasy would have been unthinkable--indeed, suicidal--only eight years before.⁷³ By standards of history, the vote was close. Stevenson carried the state with 60.4% to

⁷²The Dixiecrats had, after all, been on the ballot as "Democrats" in 1948, and, thus, the "behaviorial leap" required of white Mississippians was not so traumatic as that of supporting a Republican.

⁷³Winter in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 149. Some Republicans today contend that this group was not really Republican in sentiment, but that among its founders and leaders were a number of "Eastland Democrats" who, realizing that Stevenson could not defeat Eisenhower, wanted to broker Eastland's influence over patronage with the new president, especially in the area of judicial appointments. E. O. Spencer, a founder of the "Democrats for Eisenhower," had, in fact, been Eastland's first campaign finance chairman in 1942. Spencer had also been a member of the national board of directors of the hotel owners association, for which Eisenhower's Attorney General, Herbert Brownell, had been counsel. After Eisenhower's election there were no changes in judicial patronage in Mississippi. It was "business as usual." Interview with Billy Mounger, Jackson, Mississippi, August 24, 1977; and with confidential source.

Eisenhower's 39.6%,⁷⁴

The elections of 1951 and 1952 demonstrated clearly the expanding modernization consensus and the aroused racial consensus. If any candidate had a clear image in 1951, it was Hugh White. As the father of B.A.W.I., he was clearly seen as the economic modernizer; and as leader of the 1948 walkout, the staunchest defender of the racial order. Johnson continued to project the image of the great humanitarian and progressive, moderate on the racial issue and uncertain in his commitment to industrial development. The choice of the electorate was similar to that of 1947-- they spoke in favor of industrial development and a militant defense of the caste order. The agrarian class conflict and progressivism continued to decline in importance vis-à-vis the growing life-forms of race and modernization. White's primary emphasis in the inaugural address was agricultural development, suggesting further that in the line of Bailey and Wright he too lived firmly within the planter-industrial elite.

In 1952 the degree of commitment to racial caste was demonstrated more dramatically than in 1948. Led by spokesmen from the black belt and their allies, a substantial portion of the white electorate openly campaigned

⁷⁴Abney, p. 2.

for a Republican for the first time since Reconstruction. As noted above, the black belt responded the most dramatically and speedily when the order became genuinely challenged. The degree to which loyalty to the Democratic Party had been little more than a vehicle for maintaining white supremacy became suddenly and starkly apparent. And, the genie of party loyalty, once loosed from the bottle, was never again replaced.

The Senatorial Election of 1954

The senatorial campaign of 1954 was the only significantly contested senatorial election between 1942 and 1972 (the special election of 1947, in which John Stennis was elected, was a freak, because under a law that was subsequently changed it was a winner-take-all contest in which Stennis had a plurality among six major candidates). It also tapped the increasingly aroused racial consensus.

At the urging of Governor Hugh White, Lieutenant Governor Carroll Gartin announced against the senior senator in 1954. Gartin, some felt, was being either "used" by the Hugh White "crowd" to settle old scores with Eastland (who had supported Johnson against White) or, more cynically, was being "set up" to clear the way for Coleman to run for governor in 1955.⁷⁵ Gartin's race was ill-fated

⁷⁵Interview with William Winter, Jackson, Mississippi, August 29, 1977; Johnson; Barber; Pace.

and, in incurring the enmity of the increasingly powerful Eastland group, adversely affected his political future.

The campaign occurred in the wake of the Brown decision. Eastland played heavily on his seniority and his ability to defend the South against all the forces of evil arrayed against it. Eastland's campaign brochure emphasized his tenure on the Senate Agriculture and Judiciary Committees and outlined his plan for a constitutional amendment to retain segregation in the public schools. It also attacked the C.I.O., as Eastland had done in 1942, this time for contributing \$75,000 to the NAACP "to aid them in their fight to break down segregation in the public schools."⁷⁶ In this same vein, the senator stressed his activity on the Senate Internal Security Committee and the fight against Communist sympathizers in the government.⁷⁷

In his kick-off speech, Eastland stressed his record in the Senate, particularly in the field of agriculture. After reciting the many beneficial laws for which he claimed full or partial authorship, he reminded the audience, "When the Democratic Party is returned to power, no member of the Senate will have more influence or

⁷⁶Eastland Campaign Brochure, 1954, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁷⁷Ibid.

control over agricultural policy than I will have."⁷⁸ Eastland also claimed credit for advances in the social security system, veterans benefits, T.V.A. and R.E.A.'s, and even labor benefits. Using somewhat tortured logic, with which his audience no doubt agreed, Eastland contended that "the Taft Hartley Act has helped and not hurt the laboring man."⁷⁹ Segregation was the last topic in his speech, but of it he spoke militantly. "My friends, what we face is tyranny," Eastland warned. Calm and quiet in face of the storm would be disastrous. "Those are the siren calls of defeat and death." Praising the A.F. of L. and the Railroad Brotherhood as "great" unions, he denounced the C.I.O. and N.A.A.C.P. as Mississippi's avowed enemies. He called for enactment of his proposed constitutional amendment and called for an organization to fight left-wing movements.⁸⁰ These themes were reflected throughout the campaign in Eastland's speeches and political advertising.

Gartin attacked Eastland's record, especially his absenteeism. In Gartin's opening speech, he promised to "stay on the job" and condemned Eastland's record as "one

⁷⁸Eastland Campaign Speech, 1954, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid.

of the most shocking examples of inattention to duty, of utter disregard for high trust" in the history of the Senate.⁸¹ He also charged the senator with the "1953 great western cotton steal," a measure reported from Eastland's subcommittee, which, according to Gartin, reduced Mississippi's cotton allotment by 600,000 acres to the advantage of California and Arizona and to the misery of thousands of small Mississippi farmers. Gartin also outlined a number of proposals to help farmers.⁸²

On the question of segregation, Gartin expressed shock at the Brown decision and promised to fight for segregation. In an obvious attempt to appeal to the "red-neck" vote, Gartin praised the late Senator Bilbo for his far-sighted warning on the impending racial crisis and attacked Eastland bitterly for deserting Bilbo in his hour of need. Many senators had spoken for Bilbo's seating, Gartin charged, while Eastland remained quiet. "It was a sorry day in the life of my opponent." When Bilbo had to leave Washington, "the great cause of white supremacy suffered a stunning defeat."⁸³ Gartin also scored Eastland,

⁸¹Gartin Campaign Speech, 1954, in Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

as a member of the Judiciary Committee, for not stopping the confirmation of liberals to the Supreme Court.

In his advertisements, Gartin played heavily on the theme of Eastland's absentee record and made innuendos about the senator's personal habits in Washington by stressing his own clean living habits and Christian life. He also took a shot at Eastland's wealth, saying that "you don't have to be rich or own a Delta plantation to get consideration from Carroll Gartin."⁸⁴

In time of a profound racial crisis, Mississippians did not want a major change in their Washington delegation, especially when the incumbent had built a solid reputation as a militant pro-segregationist and a fighter against Communism and other left-wing causes. And, in a state still dominated by agriculture, Gartin, who lived in one of Mississippi's larger cities, could not attack Eastland's agricultural record with plausibility. The vote was 137,836 for Eastland (62.2%) to 83,761 for Gartin (27.8%)⁸⁵

In Eastland's landslide victory in 1954 one could see further evidence of the conservative ascendancy in politics. A planter himself, Eastland was overwhelmingly elected

⁸⁴Itawamba County Times, July 12, 1954.

⁸⁵Abney, p. 31.

based on his militant defense of segregation and states rights and his espousal of agricultural causes. He was firmly in the Bourbon tradition, economically, racially, and politically.

CHAPTER 12

A TRANSITION ELECTION AND THE ASCENDANCY OF THE RACIAL CONSENSUS (1955-1964)

The Gubernatorial Race of 1955

It is not surprising to find that Professor Black classifies all of the major candidates in the 1955 gubernatorial campaign as "strong segregationists," even though two of them had been "moderate segregationists" only four years before (Barnett and Johnson).¹ The cloud of Brown still hung over the state like an all-encompassing pall. In addition to Barnett, making his second race, and Johnson, making his third, Attorney General J.P. Coleman announced, as did former Governor Fielding Wright. Mrs. Mary Cain was also making her second attempt.

The late entry of Wright into the race was a surprise, and he was immediately thought to be a front runner. Coleman and Wright shared much of the same support and were a part of what might be vaguely termed the "Hugh White crowd." Coleman felt that he had had an

¹Earl Black, p. 348.

understanding with Wright that the former governor would not seek re-election and would, in fact, support Coleman. With their old foe Paul Johnson in the race, however, some anti-Johnson leaders feared that Coleman, who had never made a statewide race (he had been appointed attorney general by Wright in 1946 and had had no opposition in 1947), could not defeat Johnson. They persuaded Wright to enter the race at the eleventh hour. It seemed to be a body blow to Coleman's chances, but he felt that it would be disastrous to withdraw.²

Fielding Wright announced a plan to maintain segregation by placing in the governor's hands all the authority and power of the school boards. The responsibility of defying court integration orders would then be on him, and Wright contended that no court would jail the sitting governor of a state.³ In advertisements headlined "A Message on Segregation to the MOTHERS OF MISSISSIPPI," Wright outlined his plan to place himself "between all School Trustees and School Boards and efforts by Federal Courts to punish them for obeying the Legislature." Wright contended that he was "the only candidate who has a morally right and legally tight plan to keep segregation

²Barber; Coleman; and Pace.

³Hilliard thesis, p. 102.

in our public schools."⁴ In addition to his segregation plan, Wright revealed a twenty-three point program which included farm-to-market road construction under the federal Gore bill, reactivation of the State Marketing Commission and other programs to help farmers, aid for cerebral palsey victims, \$55.00/month old age pensions, construction of Hill Burton hospitals, increase in workmen's compensation, and other standard humanitarian reforms.⁵ Wright discussed an industrialization plan, which included the creation of a research and development arm within the A & I Board and a revolving fund from which new industries could draw initial capital.⁶

Coleman, something of a dark horse, campaigned vigorously emphasizing his qualifications and experience.⁷ His platform called for support of public education, segregation, strong law enforcement, support for the recall, repeal of the black market tax, retention of homestead exemption, as much old age assistance as possible, effective regulation of utilities, an industrialization

⁴Wright Campaign Advertisement in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁵Jackson Daily News, May 6, 1955.

⁶Clarion Ledger, July 16, 1955.

⁷Coleman.

pattern to help revitalize Mississippi's small towns, support for T.V.A., and a fair deal for both labor and business. In terms of national politics, Coleman forthrightly said, "I am a Democrat."⁸

Even though the former Governor's recollection today is that the race issue was not overly important in 1955, a reading of the history of the campaign does not sustain that memory. Coleman handled the issue by, again, stressing his experience. Citing his success as attorney general in securing the execution of convicted Negro rapist Willie McGee and in thwarting plans to integrate the University of Mississippi, Coleman proclaimed in his advertisements, "He has been a mainspring in the fight against mixing the races in our public schools. . . . By all these things he has proven that he can and will preserve segregation."⁹ Having travelled once during the night as attorney general to help Vicksburg avert a desegregation effort, Coleman stated, "I am strong enough, skilled enough, and morally courageous enough to do some riding at night whenever and wherever necessary to protect our people from the haunting spectre of racial integration."¹⁰

⁸Coleman Tabloid entitled "The Case for Coleman" in the Mississippi State University Sepcial Collections.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Quoted in Earl Black, p. 60.

It is unclear whether the imagery of his "night riding" was intentional.

Coleman made the bold decision to concentrate almost solely in north Mississippi, in the heart of which was the seven-county judicial district which he had formerly served as district attorney and circuit judge. He reminded voters that the northeast Hills had not had a governor since Lee Russell. The strategy was to build up a huge lead in his area of strength and worry about second-primary tactics if he made the runoff. Although he made little effort in south Mississippi, Coleman generated support in many counties in which he never personally campaigned. Both Coleman and Johnson friends today attribute that phenomenon to his strong law and order record as attorney general, especially in fighting Gulf Coast crime. Johnson blundered by calling Coleman "Constable Coleman" and "Dick Tracey Coleman," and the ridicule backfired badly. This issue alone probably won Coleman thousands of votes in an area which he had "written off."¹¹ Coleman's vigorous campaign in northeast Mississippi, Johnson's traditional strong hold, his support in the Delta via Hugh White connections, and his surprising backing in south Mississippi counties made him formidable. His 6 foot 3 inch stature

¹¹Coleman; and Barber.

and great oratorical abilities were not to be gainsaid either.

Johnson shifted considerably to the right on the race issue, compared to 1947 and 1951. Johnson now proclaimed, "Negroes and whites will not go to school together" while he was governor. He advised Mississippi Negroes, "If these birds from the NAACP come around to collect a dollar or five dollars from you and say they're going to do something for you, don't believe them. You should see them in the night clubs in Washington spending your money on whisky and women."¹² However, he also discussed a number of other issues and did not make race the predominant first primary theme. For example, Johnson stressed the need for professionally drafted agricultural legislation to help the farmers and called for a Mississippi water policy so that the state could qualify for greater federal aid under the watershed program. He called for reform of the insurance laws and attacked the "fly-by-night companies" which, he claimed, were plaguing the state.¹³ Given that he had been the most clearly identifiable "neo-populist" in the post-war era, it was a testament to the spreading modernization that Johnson

¹²Quoted in Earl Black, p. 60.

¹³Clarion Ledger, July 16, 20, and 23, 1955.

wanted to lengthen the five year tax exemptions for new industries. Johnson claimed that five years was too short a time to attract new manufacturing plants to the state.¹⁴

Barnett's campaign seems to have been somewhat formless. He discussed the standard issues, but a central identifying theme did not emerge. He unveiled a "Mills for Mississippi" program to attract textile plants to the state and spent considerable time discussing the desegregation problem.¹⁵ Pointing to the suit in Vicksburg, Barnett denounced repeatedly the NAACP and lauded his own legal ability to lead the state through the complicated court battles which lay ahead. Barnett was widely regarded as one of the most able damage suit lawyers in the state.¹⁶

Johnson and Coleman were fine orators; Barnett was colorful; Wright was somewhat lacklustre. The candidates traded attacks and insults generously, with Coleman seeming to take the lead. He took Wright's claim that northern radicals were trying to defeat him because of his Dixiecrat activity and said: "It is an old trick for hack

¹⁴Clarion Ledger, July 15, 1955.

¹⁵Clarion Ledger, July 19, 1955.

¹⁶Clarion Ledger, July 20, 1955.

politicians to yell about 'outside interference' which exists nowhere but in their own imagination. . . . In any event the good people of Mississippi know that it was J. P. Coleman who fought and defeated the 'northern radicals' in both the Willie McGee case and the Democratic convention fight in Chicago."¹⁷ Turning to Barnett, Coleman made innuendos throughout the campaign that Barnett had the support of underworld elements: Ross Barnett "is tied up with Laz Quave, who serves as his Gulf Coast campaign manager, and who was the sheriff of Harrison County from 1948 to 1952 that turned the county wide open to gamblers. . . ."18

Johnson attacked Wright and Hugh White as the "Siamese twins" and warned that they were trying to establish a dynasty. Johnson said that the state must put a halt to the pattern of White-to-Wright-to-White-to-Wright. Said Johnson, "The mansion is not a duplex."¹⁹ Obviously feeling that Wright was the man to defeat, Johnson also attacked the former governor's call for a state police force as a "Black Shirt Gestapo" plan.²⁰

¹⁷Clarion Ledger, July 14, 1955.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Clarion Ledger, July 15 and 20, 1955.

²⁰Clarion Ledger, July 15, 1955.

He also attacked Barnett for his alleged connections with the "fly-by-night" insurance companies."²¹ Wright assailed all of his opponents for not supporting the Dixiecrat movement and for not being able to lead Mississippi through the troubled racial times ahead.²² Barnett did not discuss his opponents as much as the other three major contenders did.²³

In terms of alliances, Senator John Stennis announced his support for Coleman,²⁴ and Eastland gave his usual support to Johnson. There seems to be some confusion about the role of White in the first primary. Hilliard reports that White endorsed Wright but did not support him enthusiastically.²⁵ Others recollect that White did not make an endorsement, and Wright himself apparently felt that he had been "double crossed" by the "Hugh White crowd."²⁶ At any rate, caught in the situation of having two political allies in the first primary, it is probable that Governor White himself took little role.

²¹Clarion Ledger, July 23, 1955.

²²Clarion Ledger, July 14, 1955.

²³Hilliard thesis, p. 106.

²⁴"The Case for Coleman."

²⁵Hilliard thesis, p. 105.

²⁶Interview with former governor Ross Barnett, Jackson, Mississippi, August 23, 1977.

In a stunning upset, Wright failed to make the runoff. Johnson led with 28.1%, Coleman was second with 23.9%, and Barnett and Wright were virtually tied for third with 21.3% and 21.6% respectively.²⁷ It was a thorough vindication of Coleman's strategy.

Today Coleman recalls that when he made the runoff, "I knew it was over then. . . . At least I thought I knew it was over."²⁸ The assessment was based on the observation that Paul Johnson seldom received much support from eliminated first primary voters. There was a strong pro-Johnson following in the state, which was less than a majority, but a strong anti-Johnson feeling as well. Johnson himself recalls today that his opponents always tended to "gang up" on him in the runoff, especially the economic "powers that be" throughout the state.²⁹ In addition, the arithmetic of the runoff favored Coleman. From the Hills himself and very strong in the northeast, Coleman also had major ties with the Delta through his past association with White and Wright. It stood to reason that much of the Wright vote would go to Coleman in the second. Johnson also made a tactical blunder by continuing

²⁷Abney, p. 90.

²⁸Coleman.

²⁹Johnson.

his attack on Governor White in the runoff, after the Wright-White dynasty issue had been settled with Wright's elimination. It served to alienate White voters that might have supported Johnson.³⁰ A final factor was that much of the recent Delta migrations had come from Webster and Choctaw counties, and these people formed the nucleus of a fanatical Coleman organization.³¹

In terms of second primary issues, segregation seemed to dominate. In another miscalculation, Johnson attempted a major reversal of his positioning. Up until that time, Johnson was seen as the most liberal candidate in gubernatorial races, embracing some neo-populist rhetoric, defending his allegiance to the Democratic party, and down-playing the Negro issue. In the 1955 runoff, however, he tried to move to the right of Coleman, accusing his opponent of courting labor and left-wing support. He warned of the dangers of the national Democratic Party and of Coleman's loyalty to it.³² On the race issue, he said "Coleman and White are aligned with the soft-thinkers who tell us that integration is inevitable and that it is

³⁰Jackson Daily News, undated.

³¹Coleman; Barber; and Pace.

³²Fortenberry and Abney, p. 506.

the Christian thing to do."³³ The reversal did not seem plausible.

Coleman had the clear momentum with his surprising strength in the first, and he continued to stress the themes of experience, preparation, law and order, and his record of actually having defended the state on the segregation issue. He defeated Johnson handily, 55.6% to 44.4%. From the first to the second primary, Johnson picked up a little over 60,000 votes, whereas Coleman gained almost 130,000.³⁴ It had been a campaign infused with an unusually high degree of friends-and-neighbors politics, geographic calculations, tactical blunders by Johnson, and a brilliant strategy by Coleman. When Fielding Wright had entered the campaign, Coleman met with his key supporters and agreed that he had no chance. But, he felt that he would be discredited forever should he withdraw, so he launched a vigorous campaign in the face of what he thought would be certain defeat. Less than a year later, he was inaugurated governor.

Coleman, the Democratic loyalist, led the Mississippi delegation in 1956 to Chicago. Despite a degree of competition among Coleman people, Eastland people, and those

³³Quoted in Earl Black, p. 60.

³⁴Abney, p. 90.

of the old Dixiecrat mentality, the new governor controlled the delegation. With Stevenson a certain victor in the contest for the presidential nomination, most attention centered on the vice presidency. At Coleman's urging, Mississippi cast its first ballot for Albert Gore of Tennessee and thereafter supported John Kennedy of Massachusetts. The final nomination of Estes Kefauver of Tennessee was quite unpopular, because of his liberal civil rights record (nothing was more hated in the South than a turncoat).³⁵ So great was the dismay among the old Dixiecrat types that an unpledged elector movement was formed in Mississippi and South Carolina. Although Congressman John Bell Williams was the only prominent Mississippi office holder to campaign openly for the Independent Unpledged slate, the state leadership was less open and active in their support for the Stevenson-Kefauver ticket in 1956 than they had been for the Stevenson-Sparkman ticket in 1952.³⁶ The Democrats-for-Eisenhower campaigned for the president. The final outcome was 58.2% for the Democratic electors, 24.4% for both sets of Eisenhower electors (Black and Tan, and Lily White), and 17.4% for the Unpledged slate. It was

³⁵Winter; Barber; and Pace.

³⁶Barber; and Pace.

fairly obvious that Eisenhower's 39.6% in 1952 had been split between the Republican and Unpledged slate in 1956.³⁷

Another important electoral development occurred in 1956. The stage was set in that year for the final triumph of the Lily White faction of the Republican Party and its takeover by a group that began to build the party. Since 1890 the Republican Party had been largely a "rotten borough" with influence only at national conventions and in patronage matters. Perry Howard, a black man living in Washington but with his official residence in Mississippi, ran the rump party for years. Since 1928 there had existed a small group of Lily White Republicans under the leadership of G. L. Sheldon, and this faction had unsuccessfully battled the Perry Howard group every four years for credentials at the G.O.P. national conventions. Under a state law enacted in 1950, political parties in Mississippi had to re-register with the Secretary of State. It was a first-come-first-served procedure with exclusive proprietary rights to the party name. The Sheldon Lily Whites filed first for the name of Mississippi Republican Party, and the Mississippi Democratic Party (the official name used by the Dixiecrats) filed first

³⁷Abney, p. 2.

for the use of the Democratic label. Litigation which went all the way to the United States Supreme Court sustained the new law. The Democratic machinery under Governor White simply operated under the new name and retained recognition in 1952 from the national party. The G.O.P., on the other hand, had one faction with official use of the name "Republican Party" and another faction with national party recognition.³⁸

In 1952 the Howard faction went to the Republican National Convention pledged to Taft; the Sheldon faction, to Eisenhower. Although Howard was seated, the factions agreed after the convention to field one slate of Republican presidential electors for the first time in twenty years. With substantial white leadership, Eisenhower got an unprecedented 40% of Mississippi's vote, and the lesson was obviously not lost on Republican Party elders.³⁹ In 1956 some of the leaders of the Democrats-for-Eisenhower decided to take over the Lily White faction from Sheldon, and in a bloody state convention fight led by E. O. Spencer managed to elect a majority to the state executive committee. An attractive, young Jackson insurance agent, Wirt Yerger,

³⁸Based on Charles N. Fortenberry, "Party Responsibility and Mississippi Law," Public Administration Survey 2 (September 1954): 1-6.

³⁹Winter in McLemore, vol. 2, p. 149.

was elected chairman, and the Mississippi Republican Party was set on a new course. The 1956 Republican National Convention compromised the credentials fight by recognizing Yerger as the state chairman, while at the same time seating Howard and his group. The recognition of Yerger, however, was the death knell of the Black and Tans, and in 1960 the Lily Whites, now called the Mississippi Republican Party, won full and exclusive recognition.⁴⁰

The elections of 1955 and 1956 saw the racial consensus closing its grip on the state. The gubernatorial primary of 1955 was a transition from the post-war period which had been dominated by conservative governors and marked by the arousal of the racial issue to the later period in which race became the sole issue of the state under the leadership of Hills governors. Coleman had been an appointee of Fielding Wright and an ardent supporter of Hugh White and would have inherited, no doubt, their mantle in 1955 but for the candidacy of Fielding Wright. Wright's late and unexpected entry into the race spared Coleman the accusation of being the "dynasty candidate" and, in a sense, freed him to campaign as another candidate from the Hills. Wright's shocking defeat in the first

⁴⁰Interview with Wirt Yerger, Jackson, Mississippi, August 23, 1977.

primary was a function of his lack of enthusiasm for the race, his last minute entry after many supporters had already committed to other candidates, and the electorate's desire for a change. Coleman was from a county deep in the Hills (Choctaw), and he embraced much of the old progressivism. Being able to escape the "dynasty tag," Coleman adopted a brilliant first primary strategy, capitalized on Johnson's mistakes, and was elected governor in his first attempt.

Not only did 1955 represent a return to more clearly identifiable Hills governors, it also looked ahead to the era of total racial politics. All of the major candidates in 1955, as Professor Black notes, must be classified as "strong segregationists," yet the total obsession and restrained militancy of the racial consensus was not yet present in 1955. Especially in the first primary the most militantly pro-states rights and pro-segregation candidate, Fielding Wright, was eliminated. His image must have been clear, given the role he played in the Dixiecrat movement of 1948. Also, Coleman's bold statement, "I am a Democrat," was beginning to take on a moderate connotation on racial matters which was later to make that same tag the sure mark of death for a politician. So, Coleman was not the most militant on the race issue in the first primary. In the runoff, however, he was the more pro-segregationist, given his record as

attorney general and Johnson's past image as being "soft" on the issue.

In 1955 the life-forms of progressivism, agrarian class struggle, and modernization were present but weak. The runoff pitted two Hills candidates against each other with similar images on progressivism and agrarian class. In terms of modernization, Coleman was likely seen as the more pro-development because of his past association with Governor White.

The 1956 presidential election was further testimony to the lesson of 1952--i.e., that given a racial crisis, profound alterations in the institutional organization of the political system could occur. In 1952 the Democrats-for-Eisenhower led tens of thousands of white Mississippians to vote Republican for the first time in their lives. In 1956 this development was carried further as the Lily Whites succeeded in capturing the actual machinery of the Mississippi G.O.P. and began building it into a respectable, white party. Furthermore, the Unpledged Elector movement presaged an even more radical strategy of remaining outside the two parties in the hopes of building political strength with which to fight the racial battles which lay ahead.

These two elections were a bridge to the period 1959-1964 in which race was the only operative life-form.

The elections of 1959, 1960, 1963, and 1964 demonstrated the ascendancy of the racial consensus.

The Ascendancy of the Racial Consensus

The racial crisis deepened during the Coleman administration. An almost incomprehensible example of the degree to which the aroused racial consensus washed away all other issues was the passage in 1954 of a constitutional amendment, introduced by Walter Sillers, which gave the Legislature the right to abolish public education altogether. Remembering that the Delta had been the locus of restraint in support of public education, a Hills legislator warned, "The Resolution was conceived in the minds of men of wealth. It was planned to serve communities where the people have the money to send their children to private schools. This would bar 90 percent of the white children from going to school."⁴¹ Many in the Hills supported a position which would have been unthinkable for the past half century. After Brown, the resolution, already adopted by the Legislature, was overwhelmingly ratified by the electorate.

The school amendment, passed during the final year of the White administration with the governor's support,

⁴¹Owens, p. 193.

was a harbinger of the times ahead. Another event which occurred in 1954 was the organization in Sunflower County of the Citizens' Council. It was to grow in strength during the Coleman administration to the point of becoming the most tightly organized and powerful political force in the state. Its avowed aim was the preservation of segregation and states' rights, and the Councils became the chief engine of the racial orthodoxy.⁴²

Coleman had treated the growing racial crisis in moderate tones. For example, he declared the doctrine of interposition to be "legal poppycock," refused to make a statement on the Little Rock crisis, made a campaign tape for the racially moderate Congressman Wayne Hayes of Arkansas, and defeated the segregationist hero Governor Orval Faubus for Chairman of the Southern Governor's Conference. Judge Tom Brady, author of the racist diatribe *Black Monday*, began to denounce Coleman publicly in increasingly forceful terms as his administration came to an end. Brady was a founding father and spokesman for the Citizens' Council. With over 80,000 members in 1959, the Citizens' Councils, although disclaiming any overt

⁴²For treatments of the Citizens' Council movement, see Hodding Carter, *The South Strikes Back* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1959); and McMillen, *The Citizens' Councils: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction*.

role in electoral politics, were obviously going to be a major force in the upcoming elections.⁴³

Mississippi's attractive Lieutenant Governor Carroll Gartin was seen as the front runner in the 1959 gubernatorial campaign. His weak race against Eastland in 1954 had kept Gartin in the lieutenant governor's office for a second term, and he and Coleman had had a close relationship and friendship during the administration. Coleman opponents were reportedly looking for a strong candidate to defeat Gartin as early as the summer of 1958. These elements included leaders in the Dixiecrat movement, Fielding Wright's inner circle, and leaders in the Citizens' Councils. They were reportedly interested in Congressman John Bell Williams, former Governor White, Ross Barnett, and Stennis' confidant, R. D. Morrow.⁴⁴ The anti-Coleman right was obviously searching for someone to defeat Gartin.

They eventually settled on Ross Barnett, who would be making his third race for the governorship. Eastland, remembering Gartin's opposition in 1954, realized that without a strong third candidate Gartin would win in the first primary, as had Fielding Wright in 1947. Eastland,

⁴³Based on Carter, The South Strikes Back, Chapter III.

⁴⁴Memphis Commercial Appeal, July 13, 1958.

therefore, encouraged an attractive young district attorney from the Delta, Charles Sullivan, to make the race, and supported him fully in the first primary.⁴⁵

A fourth candidate was a plumber from south Mississippi, Robert F. "Blowtorch" Mason. A story making the rounds in Mississippi during this period was that Mason and his wife saved their money every four years for either a trip to Europe or a campaign for governor, both enterprises being equally enjoyable. Like much else in Mississippi politics, the story might or might not have been apocryphal.

It soon became obvious that segregation was the overwhelming issue in the campaign. A second issue was that of the White-Coleman-Gartin dynasty. Hugh White announced his support for Gartin early in the campaign, and the Coleman administration was actively backing the lieutenant governor. To further complicate matters, Coleman had decided to run for the Legislature, and there were rumors that he wanted to be speaker. Having alienated the Delta "Old Guard" during the later part of his term with an all-out push for a constitutional convention, anyone who was not a Coleman supporter began to fear

⁴⁵Barber; and Pace.

a Coleman-Gartin hegemony in state politics.⁴⁶ The dynasty and race issues dovetailed nicely for the Gartin opponents, as they attempted to portray Gartin as being part of a lineage "soft" on segregation. Gartin, coming from Laurel, one of the few substantially unionized cities in Mississippi (Masonite Corporation has a large plant there), was also open to the charge of being associated with the increasingly despised labor unions. In general, Gartin was a "sitting duck" for an attack from the right.

Barnett staked out the most militant position on segregation. His brochure proclaimed him to be a "vigorous segregationist" and contended in headlines that "Mississippi Wants A Segregationist As Governor, Not a Moderate."⁴⁷ An editorial in a Holly Springs paper as early as May lamented that Barnett had already "run the segregation issue into the ground."⁴⁸ By mid-June the Memphis Commercial Appeal reported that "Barnett Sets Fast Pace in Supporting Segregation."⁴⁹ Barnett himself says today in answer to the question, how did you try to appeal to the voters:

⁴⁶Memphis Commercial Appeal, November 16, 1958.

⁴⁷Barnett Campaign Brochure, 1959, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁴⁸Holly Springs South Reporter, May 28, 1959.

⁴⁹Memphis Commercial Appeal, June 14, 1959.

I was trying to make speeches that he [the voter] wanted to hear. . . . And back in those days it was segregation or you were nothing. . . . I would speak on segregation nearly every time I would speak. Sure would. I gave them one example: Egypt at one time excelled all other nations in literature, in music, in medicine, and other fine arts, but it had only a white race. Then, the Negroes began to come down the Nile and go into Egypt and dance with the whites and go to school with them. And, now, Egypt has a mongrel race, and can't ever recover. Is that the way you want America to end up?⁵⁰

Upon concluding the Egypt story, Barnett laughed heartily and said, "Wow, they would hoop and holler!"⁵¹ To Barnett's mind, segregation was the issue on which the election of 1959 turned.

Barnett also emphasized industrial development and the need to attract outside firms to Mississippi. The state's role in attracting more and better paying jobs was a part of his campaign theme.⁵² That he was acceptable to the economic establishment of the state could be seen in the person of John Greg, who had resigned as executive secretary of the Mississippi Manufacturer's Association to run the Barnett campaign. One of his planks was the reduction of the state income tax in order to attract outside industry. At the same time he was claiming to be

⁵⁰Barnett.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

the candidate of the "little man."⁵³ Another motif in Barnett's advertising and speech rhetoric was a virulent attack on organized labor and the labor bosses of America.

Gartin was running on his experience and record in public office. Favorable editorials in the first primary emphasized his training, compared to Barnett's and Sullivan's lack of any experience in state government. Gartin endorsed a highway construction program, plans for developing agriculture and industry, and \$300.00/month teacher salaries. Listed first in his brochure, however, was segregation. He obviously realized that on this issue the election might well turn.⁵⁴ Gartin, however, was put on the defensive by Barnett's militancy. News accounts of a Citizens' Council forum in which all candidates were asked questions about the race issue portrayed Gartin as having been decidedly more moderate.⁵⁵ Gartin said he would stand on his past record, which was "100 percent." Editorial support compared Gartin's approach to the cool-headed, effective handling of the race issue under Coleman. They also predicted that the economic development so effectively advanced by Coleman could best be continued under a moderate

⁵³Abney dissertation, p. 163.

⁵⁴Gartin Campaign Brochure, 1959, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁵⁵Memphis Commercial Appeal, July 6, 1959.

Gartin administration.⁵⁶ The aroused electorate, however, was in no mood for moderation.

Charles Sullivan created a sensation with his forthright call for a local option plan for legalizing liquor. The handsome articulate, young district attorney from Clarksdale "caught on" with the press and enjoyed wide coverage of his hastily organized campaign.⁵⁷ He was the first major candidate to utilize small aircraft for campaign travel, often piloting the planes himself. Sullivan's theme was that he was courageous enough to enter the race against the "professional politicians" who were trying to keep everyone out. Said Sullivan in his brochure:

For a while it looked as if Mississippians would not have a candidate for governor that they could enthusiastically support. Professional politicians and their highly paid henchmen worked day and night to keep candidates out of the race. A great majority of the people were not satisfied with damage suit double-talk and fence-straddling evasions of time worn politicians. The people wanted a free, forth-right, independent and courageous man, and they have that man now in Charles Sullivan. . . .⁵⁸

Sullivan's stands on controversial issues were proof of his

⁵⁶See, for example, Vicksburg Sunday Post, June 6, 1959, and Aberdeen Examiner, July 4, 1959.

⁵⁷Memphis Commercial Appeal, August 2, 1959.

⁵⁸Sullivan Campaign Brochure, 1959, in Mississippi State University Special Collections.

approach--such as the local option plan, repeal of the black market tax, and legislative reapportionment to insure fair representation for all counties. He also stood firmly for segregation, states' rights, and a bolt of the Democratic Party in 1960 should that become necessary. Unlike Barnett and Gartin, who had segregation listed in their brochures first, Sullivan dealt with the issue as the third item in his platform.⁵⁹ He also attacked labor unions and promised to veto any repeal of the right-to-work provisions: "He is committed to protect the laboring people of our state from the corrupt power-mad labor politicians whose stated purpose is to force the South into subserviant (sic) obedience to their socialistic and communistic dictatorship."⁶⁰ His late entry into the race meant that he had little time for organization, and many counties were unorganized formally.⁶¹

Attacks were traded freely, as both Barnett and Sullivan accused Gartin of having labor support. Sullivan charged that national labor unions were sending in campaign literature for Gartin,⁶² and Barnett's brochure

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Interview with former Lieutenant Governor Charles Sullivan, Clarksdale, Mississippi, August 26, 1977.

⁶²Memphis Commercial Appeal, August 2, 1959.

claimed in headlines that the "People Are Opposed to Machine Politics, Leftwing CIO Leaders."⁶³ Barnett and Sullivan also dwelled on the alleged "Coleman machine," of which Gartin was an integral part. Barnett had some clever jingles which became popular, one of which was "Big Daddy, Tall Daddy, Little Boy Blue." Big Daddy was White; Tall Daddy, Coleman; and Little Boy Blue, Gartin. White's and Coleman's support for Gartin played into the appeal.⁶⁴ William Winter, running for the less visible office of state tax collector, recalls today that even he was accused by one of his opponents of being a part of a Coleman "ticket."⁶⁵

Barnett led the first primary with 35.3% to Gartin's 34.2%. Sullivan, in his first race, garnered an impressive 29.9%. "Blowtorch" got .6%.⁶⁶

In the runoff, Sullivan released his supporters. Eastland quietly swung his support to Barnett, as did others who had backed Sullivan in the first primary for a variety of reasons.⁶⁷ The rhetoric of the second primary

⁶³Barnett Campaign Brochure.

⁶⁴Barnett.

⁶⁵Winter.

⁶⁶Abney, p. 90.

⁶⁷Barber.

was more of the same. Barnett continued to label Gartin the "machine candidate," implied that he had AFL-CIO backing (COPE did, in fact, endorse Gartin), and called him a racial "moderate." Incredibly, the term had become one of opprobrium and political death in Mississippi campaigns. The orthodoxy was becoming complete. Gartin did not answer the charges convincingly and never was able to take an offensive position. Gartin's attempt to put the "big labor label" on Barnett by exposing on television an alleged meeting between Barnett and Teamster leaders in the "Pearl River swamp" was too little, too late, and too incredible.⁶⁸ Gartin's campaign was not effectively run in the view of many in the Coleman camp.⁶⁹

Barnett won handily in the runoff, with 54.3% to Gartin's 45.7%.⁷⁰ The moderate policies of Coleman and Gartin fell before the aroused racial consensus, intent now on a militant and uncompromising approach to the question of segregation and states' rights. No group was more pleased than the Citizens' Councils, which, it would certainly stand to reason, had much to do with Barnett's

⁶⁸Reprint of Mississippi Labor Federation newspaper, 1959, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁶⁹Coleman.

⁷⁰Abney, p. 90.

victory.

The Councils claimed the spoils. According to McMillen,

Although lacking influence with either Governors White or Coleman, the Citizens' Council enjoyed apparently limitless access to the corridors of state power during the administration of Governor Ross Barnett (1960-1964). Indeed, by forging political alliances and adroitly manipulating public opinion, it managed so thoroughly to obscure all distinctions between public and private authority that by the early sixties the organization was the almost unchallenged arbiter of Mississippi politics. . . . the Council's professional staff, from its regional headquarters directly adjacent to the governor's mansion, comprised a kind of staff extraordinary for racial affairs.⁷¹

Under the Barnett administration, the State Sovereignty Commission, which had been created under Coleman as a publicity arm of the state on racial matters, stepped up its propoganda functions and also became an investigative agency. It is estimated now that the Commission, which worked on a daily basis with the Citizens' Council, compiled dossiers on some 250 organizations and 10,000 individuals suspected of being "racial agitators." State funds were channeled from the Sovereignty Commission to the Citizens' Council to help underwrite the cost of its weekly television program.⁷²

⁷¹Neil R. McMillen, "Development of Civil Rights, 1956-1970," in McLemore, vol. 2, pp. 159-160.

⁷²Ibid., p. 159.

It was not surprising, given these circumstances, to find the Barnett-controlled delegation to the National Democratic Convention in 1960 in a rebellious mood. There was some division within the delegation, with Senators Eastland and Stennis urging the delegation to cast its votes for their majority leader, Lyndon Johnson. On the other side were the Barnett forces led by Brady and the Congressional delegation, all of whom wanted Mississippi to vote for the governor as a favorite son. They carried the day,⁷³ and the nation was treated to the spectacle of Judge Tom Brady, author of Black Monday, nominating for President of the United States a man who only two years later was to provoke the most serious challenge to federal union since the Civil War.

Three weeks after the nomination of the Kennedy-Johnson ticket, the Mississippi Democratic Executive Committee narrowly voted in favor of fielding and supporting a slate of unpledged electors. State Senator Frank Barber, from Hattiesburg, who argued the case for the loyalist position, recalls that the vote was close, with only a one or two vote margin against those supporting the Democratic nominees.⁷⁴ Barnett led the campaign for the

⁷³Barber.

⁷⁴Ibid.

unpledged slate with the assistance of men like Judge Brady and Charles Sullivan, who in addition to being an unpledged elector in Mississippi was also the presidential nominee for the Constitution Party in Texas. Unlike 1948, however, a serious campaign was mounted for the regular ticket. Coleman met with Bobby Kennedy and other southern leaders for the Democratic ticket in Shreveport to help plot strategy. Soon thereafter Armis Hawkins--attorney from Houston, Mississippi, Coleman loyalist, and unsuccessful candidate for lieutenant governor in 1959--was named state campaign manager for Kennedy-Johnson. Coleman, spearheading the campaign, was disappointed and discouraged at the timid and belated support given the ticket by the two senators, although they did endorse the Democratic slate.⁷⁵ State Tax Collector William Winter actively stumped the state on behalf of Kennedy and Johnson; and Eastland, Stennis, Coleman, Winter, Secretary of State Heber Ladner, and other prominent Democrats rode the "LBJ Special," a campaign train which carried the vice presidential nominee on a whistle-stop tour through the southern half of the state. Sam Lumpkin and the newly recognized white Republican party under Chairman Yerger mounted a

⁷⁵ Interview with Paul Pittman, Tylertown, Mississippi, September 1, 1977.

campaign for Nixon,⁷⁶

The unpledged slate barely carried Mississippi with 39.0% to the Democrats' 36.3% and Republicans' 24.7%.⁷⁷ Mississippi, thereupon, cast its electoral votes for Harry Byrd of Virginia.

Except for the unpledged elector movement, Barnett's administration concerned itself initially with industrial development. Working effectively with the Delta leadership in the Legislature, the governor passed his economic development package almost intact. At the heart of this program was Barnett's so-called "Bill of Rights for Business and Industry," an extensive set of incentives and tax breaks for industry locating in the state. Included in the approximately forty laws enacted by the Legislature were a reduction in state income tax from 6% to 3%, an act providing for industrial parks, a revenue bond act, lengthening the time period of ad valorem tax exemption for new plants, and placing the right-to-work law in the state constitution. Barnett made thirty-five industrial trips for the state, travelling over 50,000 miles. His "biggest catch" was the location of a Standard Oil Refinery in Pascagoula, Mississippi, a \$125,000,000 capital investment

⁷⁶Winter; Pittman; and Barber.

⁷⁷Abney, p. 2.

on the Gulf Coast.⁷⁸ Barnett might well have been remembered as an economic development governor had the race issue remained quiescent. Instead, he is remembered almost single-mindedly in terms of the James Meredith crisis at the University of Mississippi.

The presidential election of 1960 and the Meredith crisis of 1962 almost exclusively provided the frame of reference for the 1963 gubernatorial primary. Paul Johnson had been elected lieutenant governor in 1959 and was spokesman for the governor during one of the confrontations at the University of Mississippi. A news photo caught Johnson in a pose of turning back Meredith and federal marshall James McShane in their third try to enter the University. Johnson, who had never before had a powerful single issue in his campaign, found one for 1963.⁷⁹

Coleman had been elected to the House of Representatives in 1959. His old political rival Paul Johnson, as lieutenant governor, presided over the Senate, and many observers saw in the halls of the Capitol the beginning of

⁷⁸Barnett; Barber; Mississippi, Clerk of the House, Journal of the House of Representatives, First 1961 Extraordinary Session, pp. 1429-1450.

⁷⁹For accounts of the Meredith crisis, see Barrett, Integration at Ole Miss; Silver, Mississippi: The Closed Society; and Lord, The Past that Would not Die.

another Johnson-Coleman confrontation in 1963.⁸⁰ After the hysteria of the Meredith crisis died down, the moderate forces in the state, led by urban-business elements, realized with dismay what had happened. Coleman loyalists, moderates wanting to end the Barnett image of militant and defiant segregation, and anti-Johnson forces looking for a candidate urged the former governor to make the race. Coleman, realizing the super-charged atmosphere of anti-black and anti-Kennedy sentiment in the state, was reluctant, but felt a duty to his loyal friends who were insisting on his candidacy.⁸¹ He also realized that if he were to "stay alive" politically, he had to make another statewide race.⁸² Sullivan, after his impressive showing in 1959, merely "recessed the effort" until 1963. This time he planned to begin early, build organization, and solicit a sound financial base.⁸³ "Blowtorch" Mason also decided on another race, and he rounded out the field of four.

There were few subtleties in the campaign of 1963. The reaction of moderates to Barnett's performance at

⁸⁰Barber.

⁸¹Coleman.

⁸²Pittman.

⁸³Sullivan.

Ole Miss was still a weak voice, and Johnson and Sullivan knew that the majority of whites in the state were outraged at what they called the "federal occupation of Oxford." Sullivan opened the attack with his initial television program which showed film clips of Coleman endorsing and vouching for Kennedy in 1960. Sullivan had, of course, campaigned openly for the independent unpledged electors, and Johnson had remained strangely silent. Coleman was the only man in the race who not only had endorsed the hated Kennedy but had openly campaigned for him in Mississippi. The issue was clear from the first day.⁸⁴ Newspaper endorsements of Sullivan often mentioned the fact that "During 1960, when other candidates were either quiet or openly helping elect the Kennedy family to the White House, Charles Sullivan was on the platform fighting for the Southern Way of Life."⁸⁵ Sullivan's forthright stand on prohibition was also at the center of his platform, as it had been in 1959 when he called for a county-option plan for legalization. Although he discussed other issues--such as quality education and highways--prohibition and the Kennedy issue (a thin veil for race) were central.

⁸⁴Pittman.

⁸⁵Poplarville Weekly Democrat, July 4, 1963.

His attacks on Coleman were relentless.⁸⁶

Sullivan retained much of his 1959 image as the "fresh outsider" who attracted "up and coming" elements in the various counties who were seeking status and political recognition.⁸⁷ However, he had acquired two liabilities. One was a severe and irrevocable breach with Eastland, the origins of which are still shrouded in mystery, and second was the fact that, unlike 1959, Sullivan was now seen as a force to be reckoned with and consequently became the object of attack from other candidates. For example, when Sullivan shocked political observers by completely filling to capacity the Mississippi Coliseum for a rally--admittedly with the help of Grand Old Opry stars--Johnson strategists began to redirect a substantial part of their effort against Sullivan.⁸⁸

While Sullivan attacked Coleman for his support for Kennedy, Johnson tied the noose tighter. As a "hero" of the Ole Miss crisis, Johnson could and did draw the contrast between his "standing tall for Mississippi" against the Kennedy-controlled federal government and Coleman's support for the President. The Starkville Daily

⁸⁶Sullivan; and Pittman.

⁸⁷Pittman.

⁸⁸Barber.

News, for example, in an editorial endorsement praised Johnson as having "stood tall and unafraid . . . in defiance of federal aggression at Ole Miss." A national reaction was setting in, the paper argued, and Johnson's defeat "could break the back of this great Constitutional movement."⁸⁹ Johnson, himself, called Coleman "the Kennedy man" and said, "The real issue in this campaign is whether my stand at the University of Mississippi was right."⁹⁰ Johnson's campaign brochure included a large blow-up of the picture in which the lieutenant governor appeared to be holding up a clinched fist to McShane and Meredith, blocking their entrance to the University. The headline proclaimed, "PAUL JOHNSON STOOD UP FOR YOU AND MISSISSIPPI." The caption for the picture was, "PAUL JOHNSON in a bitter showdown at Oxford last September. Here Lieutenant Governor Johnson is shown blocking the way of U.S. Marshall McShane and James Meredith." Said the brochure:

When the going was tough and bitter, Paul Johnson as your Lieutenant Governor, went to Oxford, and personally blocked the entry of a Negro into the University of Mississippi. Because of this he has been cited for civil and criminal contempt by the Federal Courts and is today waiting for

⁸⁹Starkville Daily News, July 4, 1963.

⁹⁰Delta Democrat Times, August 21, 1963.

the Supreme Court to determine whether he will have a trial by jury.

In a special section on Coleman, the brochure stated,

Remember these things: J.P. Coleman endorsed, spoke and voted for Kennedy for President of the United States. . . . J.P. Coleman told Governor Ross Barnett to 'let Meredith register' as a student at Ole Miss without a fight--Newsweek Magazine (April 29, 1963) says . . . 'J.P. Coleman, a Kennedy man and a far less strident segregationist than incumbent Ross Barnett'--Yes, remember, J.P. Coleman would turn Mississippi over to the Kennedys--lock, stock, and barrell.⁹¹

Large newspaper advertisements repeated this picture and copy. Another ad showed a large picture of a bed in the Governor's Mansion with the caption, "JACK KENNEDY SLEPT HERE." In 1956, Senator Kennedy had spent the night at the mansion at Coleman's invitation. Johnson's ad went on to promise, "MAKE SURE THAT KENNEDY NEVER SLEEPS HERE AGAIN . . . NOR J. P. COLEMAN EITHER."⁹²

Johnson pledged to continue Barnett's record of industrial development and to push it further. He also paid his respects to other issues, such as efficiency in state government, more vocational education, and increased teacher pay without teacher evaluation tests.⁹³ But, as

⁹¹Johnson Campaign Brochure, 1963, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁹²Johnson advertisement, 1963, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁹³Johnson Campaign Brochure.

the campaign began to heat up, the Meredith crisis, the Kennedy issue, and states' rights were his overwhelming issues. It was the reverse of the man who had run for governor in 1947 and 1951 as a racial moderate and loyalist Democrat.

There was another new factor in Johnson's candidacy in 1963--he enjoyed for the first time the support of many elements in the economic "establishment" who had theretofore opposed him bitterly. For example, a political master-mind and owner of one of the state's largest advertising agencies, George Godwin, Sr., supported Johnson and handled his print advertising. Godwin was connected intimately with the utility establishment. Johnson, who had always been pitifully underfinanced in his campaigns, enjoyed a full war chest in 1963. For example, oil interests in the state, against whom Johnson had explicitly campaigned in 1947, began to support him in 1955 and supported him bountifully in 1963. Even more astonishing was the fact that a number of powerful Delta legislators, from a region always opposed to Johnson, now supported him actively. The explanation offered by Johnson confidants today is that the establishment learned not to fear Johnson's economic policies during his tenure as lieutenant governor.⁹⁴ Ties between the economic establishment

⁹⁴Barber.

and the Delta barons in the Legislature, for whom the racial orthodoxy had become to mean everything, were close. Johnson, seen now as safe economically, as the most skillful and militant defender of the racial caste system, and as the probable victor, enjoyed unprecedented conservative backing in 1963.

Coleman played on the themes that had worked in 1955--e.g., his experience, knowledge, expertise, record, and cool head. Said one of his ads, "J.P. Coleman is the only candidate for Governor who has had any experience in the successful protection of our domestic institutions against the federal government. This is the year you cannot afford to take a chance."⁹⁵ Another advertisement emphasized Coleman's "distinguished career," including his election to the chairmanship of the Southern Governors Conference. Still another emphasized his record and pictured him with former Governor Hugh White. These ads discussed Coleman's proposals for business development, youth opportunities, and agriculture.⁹⁶ He also attempted to resurrect the 1955 law-and-order appeal, charging in a television address that Louisiana gambling syndicates

⁹⁵Coleman Campaign Advertisement, 1963, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁹⁶Coleman Advertisements, 1963, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

were sending in money to defeat him, because he would drive out gambling from the Coast again should he be re-elected. Coleman attacked Johnson for being controlled by a small clique in Jackson, including a man (presumably Godwin) who was producing the anti-Coleman literature and who had gotten \$90,000 worth of state business from Barnett the year before.⁹⁷

Coleman, however, was on the defensive from the beginning. His advertisements were devoted to answering the devastating charges. Examples were, "WHERE DOES COLEMAN STAND ON THE KENNEDYS?" and "HERE IS WHAT J.P. COLEMAN SAID, 12 DAYS BEFORE OXFORD."⁹⁸ The former governor tried to move to a more militant stand and disclaim any future support for the Kennedys. He predicted that Kennedy could not possibly carry the state in 1964 and that he would be amenable to leading a "southern remedy." It would be futile for Mississippi to send delegates to the National Democratic Convention.⁹⁹ Coleman apologists reminded voters that Stennis, Eastland, and many other state leaders had endorsed the Kennedy-Johnson ticket, including some 108,000 Mississippians who had voted for

⁹⁷Delta Democrat Times, August 21, 1963.

⁹⁸Coleman Advertisements, 1963, Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁹⁹Ibid.

the slate.¹⁰⁰ Coleman warned, "Do not let some demagogue tell you that a vote for Coleman is a vote for Kennedy."¹⁰¹

On the defensive, being forced into uncomfortable political postures, unable to adapt to the modernizing campaign techniques of the 1960s, Coleman trailed Johnson in the first primary, 32.9% to 38.5%. Sullivan garnered 27.9%, about the same as in 1959.¹⁰²

The arithmetic of the runoff, hitherto always fatal to Johnson, was now in his obvious favor. Sullivan's vote in the first was likely to become Johnson's vote in the second, because of the constant Sullivan attack on Coleman. Furthermore, Eastland had become actively involved in plotting the strategy of Johnson's campaign,¹⁰³ and his unmatched cunning knew that Johnson's racist appeal would carry him in the black belt, an area where historically Johnson had been the weaker and Coleman the stronger. Coleman, understanding these calculations full well himself, reached an understanding with Sullivan for his endorsement. In a bizarre, tearful, half-hearted television

¹⁰⁰Tylertown Times, editorial, July 18, 1963.

¹⁰¹Coleman Advertisement.

¹⁰²Abney, p. 91.

¹⁰³Interview with Tom Riddell, Canton, Mississippi, August 25, 1977.

appearance, Sullivan endorsed Coleman. The strategy was obviously desperate, and the endorsement implausible. Many observers feel that it has hurt Sullivan to the present day.¹⁰⁴

The issue was clear in the runoff, and the rhetoric became even more militant. Johnson kept up the same line of advertising. It reached new peaks, however, as the race issue itself became more explicit. In a rally in Jackson, for example, supporters wearing rubber ape masks circulated through the crowd, and Johnson asked the crowd if they knew what "N.A.A.C.P." stood for. When they cried out "No," Johnson gave them the answer: "Niggers, Apes, Alligators, Coons, and Possums."¹⁰⁵ Apparently, even the memory of his father was sacrificed before the altar of the racial orthodoxy. Johnson, Sr., had had good relations with the black community and had responded to a request of FDR during World War II to work with leaders of both races in an effort to boost war morale. Frank Smith describes how that issue was handled by his son in 1963:

Paul Johnson, Jr.'s respect for his father apparently did not transcend his desire to be Governor of Mississippi. To make palatable campaign fodder in 1963, Paul Jr. turned the whole episode inside out, gutting the memory

¹⁰⁴Pace; and Pittman.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

of some of his father's fine qualities by declaring that the whole thing had been a massive FDR plot to capture the Negro vote which Paul Sr. had resisted.¹⁰⁶

Coleman tried in vain to escape the landslide. His campaign workers even sought out the photographer who had taken the famous Johnson picture at Oxford in 1962, and, looking through his files, they found another picture of Johnson shaking hands with McShane. Coleman ran large ads of the picture with the headline, "LET'S TELL THE WHOLE TRUTH, PAUL . . . THE HAND WENT OUT, AND MEREDITH WENT IN."¹⁰⁷

The results were a foregone conclusion. Johnson carried all but thirteen counties, including most in the Delta. His percentage was 57.3% to Coleman's 42.7%.¹⁰⁸

The year was historic in that a Republican made a serious race for governor for the first time in the twentieth century.¹⁰⁹ The Mississippi Republican Party under Yerger, fully in control and with exclusive recognition from the national party, capitalized on the anti-Kennedy

¹⁰⁶Smith, p. 100.

¹⁰⁷Coleman Advertisement, 1963, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections,

¹⁰⁸Abney, p. 91.

¹⁰⁹In 1947 G. L. Sheldon, head of the Lily Whites, ran and received 2.5% of the vote.

anti-National-Democratic-Party hysteria and fielded a well-known, widely respected, young, articulate, former Democratic office holder by the name of Rubel Phillips. Phillips had been elected Public Service Commissioner in 1955 at a very young age and had served as chairman. Some felt that he had missed a great opportunity to run for governor in 1959 at a time when the race was seen to be "wide open." Instead, he joined a law firm which practiced public utility law, an action which no doubt impaired his political future.¹¹⁰

Phillips claimed to be "the only candidate . . . who has no ties or obligations to the Kennedys or any part of the New Frontier." Proclaiming the G.O.P. to be the only truly conservative party, the Republicans issued the call: "Conservatives Unite . . . The Road to Progress . . . Keep Right." Phillips proclaimed himself a "staunch segregationist" and argued that the two party system would actually keep the Negro down. "Negroes are all Democrats . . .," and they made deals with various Democratic candidates. A strong Republican Party could expose this fraud, the Republican ticket argued. Reproduced copies of a Newsweek article which exposed the "deal" made between Kennedy and Barnett to allow Meredith in the University

¹¹⁰Barber.

after a dramatic show of force by the federal marshalls were distributed. Although other issues were addressed-- e.g., Phillips supported strict enforcement of prohibition but on a local option basis--the centerpiece of the Republican appeal was that they were not associated with the National Democratic Party and were the most committed defenders of Mississippi's "way of life."¹¹¹

It was one thing to support third parties and even Republicans in presidential campaigns, quite another to support local Republicans. State and local office holders began to worry that successful local Republicanism might mean eventual opposition for them. With a "safe" segregationist leading the ticket, the Democratic leadership pulled together behind the nominee of the Mississippi Democratic Party. Said the Johnson brochure published by the state party, "DANGER: Two-Party System in Mississippi Wou'd End Our Way of Life. Vote November 5 to Stamp Out Republicanism." Resurrecting the arguments of 1890, voters were warned that a two-party division would give "our minority" the balance of power. The Mississippi Democratic Party, voters were assured, "is entirely independent and is free

¹¹¹Based on various Republican Campaign Flyers, 1963, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

. . . from any national party."¹¹² Problems, however, had developed.

An unintended consequence of third-party voting, movements like Democrats-for-Eisenhower, and the constant tirades against the national party was that many white Mississippians had become "liberated" from their mental bondage to the Democrats. The genie, once out of the bottle, could not be so easily returned. The urban, business, and white collar elements had been thoroughly repulsed by Johnson's demagogic campaign style. Phillips, though espousing the same policies, campaigned with more polish, style, and restraint. In addition, these business progressives were finding that national Republican philosophy toward business and free enterprise was worth considering. And, finally, many Coleman loyalists, bitterly disappointed over the defeat of their candidate, silently voted for Phillips. On November 6, many Mississippians were shocked to learn that on the day before a Republican candidate for governor had received almost 40% of the vote (61.9% for Johnson to 38.1% for Phillips).¹¹³

Another important political development with far-reaching implications was the so-called "Freedom Vote of

¹¹²Democratic Campaign Brochure, 1963, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

¹¹³Abney, p. 91.

1963." Under the leadership of NAACP President Aaron Henry and civil rights volunteers primarily from Yale and Stanford, a remarkable "mock election" was held in which approximately 70,000 disfranchised blacks "registered" and voted for governor and lieutenant governor. On the ballot were the Democratic and Republican nominees and Aaron Henry for governor and Tougaloo chaplain Ed King for lieutenant governor. The mock election was designed as an educational and consciousness-raising experience for black people. From this experiment sprang the Freedom Democratic Party and the decision of civil rights organizations to sponsor the "Summer of 1964."¹¹⁴

The increasingly tense racial situation laid the backdrop for the presidential race of 1964. The assassination of Medgar Evers and the "Freedom Vote" in 1963, the "Freedom Summer" project of 1964, President Johnson's activism in the field of civil rights, passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other measures, the Philadelphia murders of three civil rights workers--all of these events escalated the level of racial tension. Johnson's surprisingly moderate administration (given the tenor of his campaign), his denunciation of and battle against the

¹¹⁴Holt, The Summer That Didn't End, p. 35; Bass and Devries, p. 204.

Ku Klux Klan, and his consistent call for all Mississippians to obey the law might well have been all that stood between the tenseness and sporadic violence of the mid-sixties and a racial conflagration.¹¹⁵

Surprisingly, Johnson had never participated in the caucuses and state conventions of the Mississippi Democratic Party, and in 1964 he relied for guidance on men like Brady. The state convention sent to the Democratic National Convention a white delegation opposed to civil rights, a loyalty oath, and LBJ. Their orders from the governor, who did not attend, were to make no compromises with any rival civil rights groups from Mississippi. Johnson loyalist Tom Riddell was sent along to report directly to the governor.¹¹⁶

Following the Freedom Summer project and the Freedom Vote of 1963, the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) decided to work with Mississippi black leaders in challenging the credentials of the regular state delegation to Atlantic City. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) was formed. The new party fielded candidates in the primaries against Stennis and three of the Congressmen,

¹¹⁵For a good account of Johnson's cooperation in fighting the Klan, see Whitehead, Attack on Terror.

¹¹⁶Barber; and Riddell.

but all were overwhelmed. MFDP leaders attempted to document as carefully as possible all incidents of harassment or intimidation of would-be black voters. In the June precinct caucuses of the Mississippi Democratic Party, blacks were routinely turned away and not allowed to participate. In many instances, the caucuses were simply not held as publicized. Again, documentation was kept. At the state convention of the regular party, blacks were again turned away. For their part, the MFDP held county conventions in 35 of the 82 counties and a state convention attended by 2500 people. Pledging their loyalty to the national party, the state convention elected sixty-six delegates and alternates to Atlantic City, four of whom were white. "Eating cheese and crackers and coca colas," in the words of Aaron Henry, the delegation traveled to Atlantic City.¹¹⁷

The televised credentials committee hearings burned an indelible image into America. A black peasant woman, youngest of twenty children, Sunflower County sharecropper, uneducated, but in her own way brilliant and powerful, Fannie Lou Hamer electrified the nation with her live testimony about the discrimination and physical violence

¹¹⁷Based on Holt, pp. 152-176; McMillen in McLemore vol. 2, pp. 170-171; Loewen and Sallis, pp. 276-277; Bass and DeVries, pp. 204-205; and Interview with Aaron Henry, Clarksdale, Mississippi, August 26, 1977.

she had suffered in trying to acquire her political rights. Johnson and the party leaders panicked. The President called a hasty press conference so that the broadcast of the proceedings at Atlantic City would be interrupted, but the impact of Hamer's testimony had been made. Undone was the administration's decision to deny any recognition or seating to the MFDP in return for a promise of future party reforms. The credentials committee voted to seat the regular delegation, but to give two at-large votes to Aaron Henry and Ed King and to welcome the rest of the MFDP delegation as "honored guests." An additional requirement was that the regular delegation had to sign a "loyalty oath" to support the nominees in November. On orders from the governor, the regular group walked out and returned to Mississippi, with the exception of four who signed the oath and remained. Despite pressure from Humphrey, Bayard Rustin, Martin Luther King, Wayne Morse, and other party liberals, the MFDP delegation, under radical SNCC leadership, voted to reject the plan as insufficient and paternalistic. This militancy shocked more moderate civil rights forces in the state and led to the demise of the MFDP.¹¹⁸

The white Mississippi electorate was in no mood to

¹¹⁸Ibid.; Riddell.

witness what had transpired at Atlantic City. The state leadership remained silent on the Johnson-Humphrey ticket, while many prominent Mississippians openly endorsed Goldwater. Governor Johnson, himself, made only one statement, and that was favorable to Goldwater. Ace Republican fund raiser Billy Mounger, who astonished party officials in 1964 by raising over \$130,000 for Goldwater in Hinds County alone, says today that his targeting in 1964 was simple: "If your face was white, you were for Goldwater."¹¹⁹ Congressman John Bell Williams, who had a long pedigree as a party defector, openly endorsed Goldwater on television. The other congressmen and senators were silent. Goldwater swept Mississippi with 87% of the vote, his banner state. In 1947 Fielding Wright had proclaimed that Mississippi was "this nation's most Democratic state." In 1964, it was the most Republican state in the union in terms of presidential politics.

The landslide carried with it the election of Mississippi's first Republican congressman since Reconstruction. Chicken farmer Prentiss Walker of Mize defeated incumbent Arthur Winstead. Republicans today look upon their failure in 1964 to field a full slate of candidates as a major mistake. Their feeling is that G.O.P candidates

¹¹⁹Mounger.

could have won a number of congressional seats and could have defeated Stennis. Recruitment of respectable candidates to run against the state Democratic establishment was apparently still a problem in 1964.¹²⁰

The MFDP held a second mock election, and Johnson-Humphrey won by a margin of approximately 63,000 to 17. Henry, Hamer, Victoria Gray, and Annie Devine were "elected" to Congress and went to Washington to contest the seating of the regularly elected congressmen. Congressman Colmer denounced the challenge as Communist-inspired, and it was not taken seriously at first. Mississippi was stunned when over one-third of the House voted against the temporary seating of the regular delegation, and when, after months of investigation, the vote to seat them permanently was only 228-143. For his open endorsement of Goldwater, plus his string of defections from the party beginning in 1948, John Bell Williams was stripped of seniority by the Democratic caucus.¹²¹

The aroused racial consensus thoroughly dominated the gubernatorial elections of this period. No other life-forms really mattered. It was always a question of who

¹²⁰Mounger; Yerger; Interview with Clarke Reed, Greenwood, Mississippi, August 25, 1977; Interview with Gil Carmichael, Meridian, Mississippi, August 29, 1977.

¹²¹McMillan in McLemore, vol. 2, pp. 170-171.

was the more uncompromising and fanatical in his degree of support for racial caste. In 1959, Barnett was able to tag Gartin as the more moderate candidate because of the lieutenant governor's association with the relatively moderate Coleman and because his home town had a strong union movement. It so happened that Barnett was also the "more Hills" type of the two, but this distinction did not seem critical. What 1959 did represent was a rejection by the electorate of the comparatively urbane, though never compromising, handling of the racial issue which the conservative governors from 1943 through 1955 had represented. The growing hysteria in Mississippi produced a bizarre contrast in which the black-belt approach to maintaining the order seemed weak by comparison to the radical, rabble-rousing, "redneck" approach. It was as if the state had returned to Vardaman of 1903, except that now the racial crisis was real.

The 1959 race and subsequent elections during Era III also saw the "new conservatism" as a vibrant life-form. Largely pioneered by Eastland in 1942, this life-form was an outgrowth of the racial crisis but included a wider range of issues--e.g., anti-Communism, anti-unionism, anti-Eastern Establishment, pro-fiscal conservatism, anti-National Democratic Party, militant patriotism, etc. The life-form had quietly grown during the years 1942-1956

and gained new vitality and visibility in the gubernatorial primary of 1959. Barnett managed to position himself to the right of Gartin not only on race but on the whole image of conservatism, and there lay the electoral majority.

By 1963 the hysterical side of race had reached the Delta, and for his performance during the Ole Miss crisis Paul Johnson, hitherto the arch enemy of the black belt, now received its support. Furthermore, Coleman had threatened the Delta in his administration by pushing for a new constitution. The rhetoric of 1963 also illustrated the degree to which the Democratic Party had become a hated symbol. Two decades before it was seen as the vehicle for maintaining the caste order; in 1963 no denunciation of it was too strong.

The racial consensus also caused major alternations in the institutional environment of politics. With the onset of respectability for presidential Republicanism, it was but one step further to voting Republican in state races. Seeing this development, a group of conservative white Mississippians gained control of the Republican Party and began to build it as a respectable electoral alternative. Without the aroused racial consensus, which was stronger than a century of loyalty to the Democratic Party, it is unlikely that this development would have occurred.

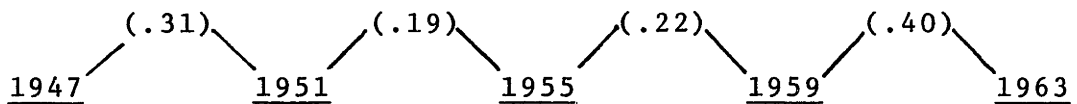
During this racial turmoil, however, the state was modernizing at unprecedented levels. Coleman, Barnett, and Johnson were all economic modernizers. The seizure of the racial consensus by "redneck" politicians in 1959 and 1963, however, made for an interesting confluence between modernization and race. A moderate reaction set in to the radicalism of Barnett and Johnson, and the elements leading this moderate movement were also those most interested in modernization--i.e., the commercial and professional elites. The radicalism of Johnson's 1963 racist campaign drove them to support Republican Rubel Phillips, and it established a pattern which persists until today. The Democratic-Republican split did not divide along any traditional cleavage line in Mississippi; it was an urban-rural split. The urbanizing and modernizing segments of the polity found in the Republican Party a natural vehicle for development and a more moderate and acceptable defense of the racial order.

In presidential politics the election of 1960 was the last serious campaign for the Democratic nominee among white Mississippians for over fifteen years. The unpledged movement carried the day, and in 1963 Coleman's support for Kennedy probably was the single most important reason for his massive defeat. In the 1964 presidential election Mississippi became the most Republican state in the union. Such was the grip of the aroused racial consensus.

CHAPTER 13

ERA III: ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Figure 49 is a matrix of coefficients among first primary candidates in Era III. It illustrates the connection between 1947 and 1951 (elections in the period of the arousing racial consensus under conservative leadership), the "bridge nature" of 1955, and the connection between 1959 and 1963 as elections decided by the aroused racial consensus under "Hills" leadership. If one takes the coefficients between adjacent elections and averages their absolute values, the following pattern appears:



The matrix also demonstrates some of the other developments during the era. First, the "Wright to White to Wright" dynasty issue had some validity according to the statistics. Wright correlates +.43 with White in 1951 and +.78 with himself in 1955. White in 1951 correlates +.32 with Wright in 1955. In each case, these

correlations are the highest between the given candidate and any other candidate in the subsequent election. Second, the "Big Daddy, Tall Daddy, Little Boy Blue" dynasty (White-Coleman-Gartin) is not so clear. Coleman in 1955 does not correlate with White's 1951 vote, but Gartin in 1959 does correlate $+0.58$ with Coleman's 1955 vote. The statistics confirm the Coleman-Gartin connection, but not with White. A third interesting feature of the matrix is the effect of Wright's entry into the 1955 race. Seen as a "death blow" by Coleman at first, it turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The numbers clearly show that Wright was the conservative candidate in the first primary and that Johnson and Coleman shared similar bases of support (most of their coefficients are like-signed). Without Wright in the race, Coleman most certainly would have been the conservative choice in the first primary, thereby damaging his chances in the runoff.

Figure 50 is a matrix of correlation coefficients among second primary candidates for governor. The high coefficients between 1959 and 1963 demonstrate that these two elections were influenced by the same life-form, i.e., the ascendant racial consensus. This can be seen further in the relationship of the Johnson and Barnett votes. Johnson's vote in the "transition" election of

FIGURE 50

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND
PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
ERA III

		1951		1955		1959		1963	
		JOHNSON	WHITE	JOHNSON	COLEMAN	BARNETT	GARTIN	JOHNSON	COLEMAN
1951	JOHNSON	-1.0	+0.43	-0.43				+0.24	-0.24
	WHITE			-0.43	+0.43			-0.24	+0.24
1955	JOHNSON			-1.0	+0.23	-0.23		+0.55	-0.55
	COLEMAN					-0.23	+0.23	-0.55	+0.55
1959	BARNETT					-1.0		+0.60	-0.60
	GARTIN							-0.60	+0.60
1963	JOHNSON								-1.0
	COLEMAN								

1955 relates to Barnett's vote in the "racial" election of 1959 only +.23, whereas Barnett's 1959 vote and Johnson's 1963 vote correlate +.60. The matrix also shows the changing Johnson. The racially radical Johnson of 1963 relates to the moderate Johnson of 1951 only +.24. The Johnson of 1955, still not radical but forced to be more militant on the segregation issue than in 1951, relates to the Johnson of 1963 +.55. And, finally, the racist Johnson of 1963 relates to the racist Barnett of 1959 +.60.

One final feature of the matrix proves that in terms of second primary politics, if not of first, the "Big Daddy, Tall Daddy, Little Boy Blue" dynasty was, in fact, real. White 1951 relates to Coleman 1955 $+ .43$ and Coleman 1955 relates to Gartin 1959 $+ .23$.

The relationship between first and second primary votes is displayed in Figure 51. The 1947 primary appears closely related to the 1951 runoff, as can be seen in the Johnson '47-Johnson '51 and the Wright '47-White '51 relationships ($+ .62$). It can also be seen how Coleman in 1955 inherited the Wright vote once the former governor was eliminated in the first primary. The 1951 first primary does not appear to have laid the groundwork for many runoff candidacies during the remainder of the era. Johnson's 1951 vote barely relates to his own 1955 runoff vote ($+ .27$) and does not relate to his 1963 runoff, further evidence that Johnson substantially changed his image on the racial question. It is interesting to note the degree to which Lumpkin's 1951 candidacy relates to subsequent conservative candidates (Coleman, Gartin, Coleman).

The 1955 first primary saw Johnson unrelated to the runoff candidates in 1959 and Coleman only moderately correlated with Gartin ($+ .27$). Although Barnett's 1955 candidacy appears to have been somewhat formless in terms

FIGURE 51

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN FIRST PRIMARY
AND SECOND PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
ERA III

	1951		2nd Primary				1963	
	JOHNSON	WHITE	JOHNSON	COLEMAN	BARNETT	GARTIN	JOHNSON	COLEMAN
1947	JOHNSON	+ .62 - .62	X	X	+ .29 - .29	X	+ .20 - .20	X
	WRIGHT	- .62 + .62	- .43 + .43	X	X	X	- .37 + .37	X
1951	JOHNSON	+ .71 - .71	+ .27 - .27	X	X	X	X	X
	WHITE	- .73 + .73	X	X	X	X	X	X
	BARNETT	+ .21 - .21	X	X	+ .54 - .54	X	X	X
1st Primary 1955	LUMPKIN	X	X	- .29 + .29	- .41 + .41	X	- .39 + .39	X
	JOHNSON	+ .52 - .52	+ .77 - .77	X	X	X	+ .47 - .47	X
	COLEMAN	X	X	- .69 + .69	- .27 + .27	X	- .42 + .42	X
	BARNETT	+ .26 - .26	+ .36 - .36	+ .55 - .55	- .55 + .55	+ .39 - .39	X	X
	WRIGHT	- .59 + .59	X	X	X	X	- .19 + .19	X
1959	BARNETT	X	X	X	+ .83 - .83	X	+ .44 - .44	X
	GARTIN	X	X	- .22 + .22	- .80 + .80	X	- .41 + .41	X
	SULLIVAN	- .24 + .24	X	X	- .30 + .30	X	- .19 + .19	X
1963	JOHNSON	+ .36 - .36	+ .38 - .38	+ .56 - .56	- .56 + .56	+ .82 - .82	X	X
	COLEMAN	X	X	- .59 + .59	- .49 + .49	- .89 + .89	X	X
	SULLIVAN	- .29 + .29	+ .22 - .22	X	X	X	X	X

of issues, the statistics show that his 1955 first primary helped lay the groundwork for his 1959 runoff coalition (+.55). Nor does it appear that the 1955 runoff vote divided in the 1959 first primary in any sort of systematic way. The 1959 runoff appears to have been highly related to first primary candidacies in 1963, Barnett's vote providing the base for Johnson and Gartin's for Coleman.

Figure 52 displays the relationship of Era III runoff primaries to the one general election of the period, 1963. Shown dramatically is the degree to which the 1963 general election was a function of the aroused racial consensus. The relationships of the general

FIGURE 52

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND PRIMARY
AND GENERAL ELECTION GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
ERA III

		1951		2nd Primary				1963	
		JOHNSON	WHITE	JOHNSON	COLEMAN	BARNETT	GARTIN	JOHNSON	COLEMAN
1963	JOHNSON	+ .22	- .22	+ .31	- .31	+ .72	- .72	+ .76	- .76
	PHILLIPS	- .22	+ .22	- .31	+ .31	- .72	+ .72	- .76	+ .76

election to the 1959 and 1963 primaries are much higher than to the 1951 and 1955 primaries. Comparing the matrix to Figure 50, one sees that the Barnett-Gartin runoff of 1959 is more related to the 1963 general election (+.72) than to the 1963 runoff primary (+.60).

Figure 53 displays the relationship of the gubernatorial runoffs and the general election of 1963 to certain socio-economic and political variables. Columns 1 and 3, the percent black and white tenancy variables respectively, test the agrarian class struggle and show that the life-form revived considerably in the elections of 1947 and 1951. Such a finding is consistent with the conclusions drawn from a contextual reading of the campaign rhetoric--i.e., that this was a period of conservative ascendancy based on modernization and race. The percent black variable falls in 1955 and vanishes in 1959 and 1963 as a correlate of vote. Basically the same pattern occurs with the white tenancy variable, as the aroused racial consensus washed away traditional cleavages.

The density variable (column 2) begins to take on a different meaning after World War II. Whereas in the early part of the century, it measured the more populous planter counties, beginning in Era III it begins to tap urbanization. For example, the correlation between density and percent city in 1960 is +.78 and in 1970, +.76.

Furthermore, the change in character of this variable can be seen in its relationship to percent black. Whereas in prior eras the two variables followed each other closely, they diverge significantly in Figure 53. One can see the degree to which urbanization was unimportant in the elections of 1947, 1951, and 1955, but increased in significance in 1959 and 1963. Gartin and Coleman (1963) were tapping the urban, moderate approach to dealing with the aroused racial consensus, whereas traditional cleavages failed to "cut." The 1963 general election tapped this division far more greatly than did the Democratic runoffs, thereby suggesting that the race question might well have been one of the bases of the Republican candidacy of Rubel Phillips.

Columns 4, 5, and 6 are political variables. Column 4 is the turnout variable, and it is seen to play a small role in the period of the conservative ascendancy but a greater role in the era of racist politics. One can note the degree to which turnout favored the radical segregationists, much as it had done the rabble-rousing "redneck" candidates in the early part of the century.

Column 5 displays the relationship of the candidates' votes to the referendum which would permit abolition of public education. This variable is a fascinating barometer of the arousing racial consensus during the

FIGURE 53

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND PRIMARY, GENERAL ELECTION GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES AND CERTAIN SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL VARIABLES, ERA III

		1. % BLACK	2. DENSITY	3. WHITE TENANCY		4. TURNOUT	5. ABOLISH SCHOOLS	6. GAIN JOHNSON
1947	JOHNSON	- .73	- .21	+ .45		+ .18	- .40	X
	WRIGHT	+ .73	+ .21	- .45		- .18	+ .40	X
1951	JOHNSON	- .58	- .20	+ .53		X	- .38	- .23
	WHITE	+ .58	+ .20	- .53		X	+ .38	+ .23
1955	JOHNSON	- .35	X	X		X	- .26	- .55
	COLEMAN	+ .35	X	X		X	+ .26	+ .55
1959	BARNETT	X	- .37	- .19		+ .48	+ .32	+ .33
	GARTIN	X	+ .37	+ .19		- .48	- .32	- .33
1963	JOHNSON	X	- .33	- .29		+ .37	X	+ .38
	COLEMAN	X	+ .33	+ .29		- .37	X	- .38
1963 (G)	JOHNSON	X	- .53	- .23		+ .55	+ .18	+ .41
	PHILLIPS	X	+ .53	+ .23		- .55	- .18	- .41

NOTE: For the 1947 primary the correlation coefficients of Wright with the socio-economic and political variables were selected, and Johnson was expressed as the reverse of Wright.

era. It shows that the arousing racial consensus followed conservative leadership in 1947 and 1951 (referendum with Wright = +.40, with White = +.38), that 1955 only marginally

tapped a difference (with the more conservative Coleman correlating $+0.26$ with the referendum), and that the ascendant racial consensus followed the "redneck" leadership of Barnett in 1959 ($+0.32$ with referendum).

Column 6 is a special variable which measures the pickup in Johnson's percentage vote from 1955 to 1963. The same two candidates (Johnson and Coleman) were in both runoffs, the first of which Coleman won handily and the second of which Johnson won by a landslide. To some degree, the voters who switched to Johnson between 1955 and 1963 represented those who were most affected by the aroused racial consensus. One could call this factor the "racist pickup." Again, the switch from pre-1955 to post-1955 patterns can be seen. White's vote in 1951 correlates $+0.23$ with the racist pickup, whereas in 1959 Barnett correlates $+0.33$ with the factor and Johnson $+0.38$ in 1963. Noteworthy, also, is what happened to Coleman's vote--his 1955 vote and the Johnson gain correlate $+0.55$. It shows the degree to which Johnson slashed into Coleman's vote in 1963 by virtue of the aroused racial consensus.

Figures 54 and 55 analyze the senatorial campaigns of the era. Figure 54 illustrates the degree to which Eastland's vote correlates with the racial position--e.g., positively with the conservative victors in 1951 and 1955 and positively with Barnett in 1959. The matrix is

FIGURE 54

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND PRIMARY
GUBERNATORIAL AND SENATORIAL CANDIDATES
ERA III

	GUBERNATORIAL										
	1951		1955			1959		1963		General 1963	
	JOHNSON	WHITE	JOHNSON	COLEMAN	BARNETT	GARTIN	JOHNSON	COLEMAN	JOHNSON	PHILLIPS	
1954 EASTLAND	-.29	+.29	-.23	+.23	+.31	-.31	X	X	X	X	
GARTIN	+.29	-.29	+.23	-.23	-.31	+.31	X	X	X	X	

FIGURE 55

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SENATORIAL
CANDIDATES AND CERTAIN SOCIO-ECONOMIC
AND POLITICAL VARIABLES, ERA III

	1. % BLACK	2. DENSITY	3. WHITE TENANCY		4. TURNOUT	5. ABOLISH SCHOOLS GAIN	6. JOHNSON
EASTLAND	+.69	X	X		X	+.51	X
GARTIN	-.69	X	X		X	-.51	X

also testimony to the surface chaos of Mississippi's factionalism in that Eastland correlates negatively with Johnson, the man whose father had created Eastland politically and whom Eastland had supported in every race the young Johnson made. Figure 55 displays the relationship of the 1954 races to the socio-economic and political variables and shows, not surprisingly, that the race tapped the agrarian class conflict, as well as the reaction in 1954 to the racial crisis.

Regarding presidential politics during Era III, Figure 56 is a matrix of coefficients among all major candidates. It shows fairly clearly that Stevenson's 1952 vote remained cohesive in 1956 (+.91), but that the Republican vote of 1952 split in 1956 between Eisenhower and the Unpledged slate. The figure also indicates that between 1956 and 1960 something happened which began to shake the pre-1956 pattern: the Democratic-Democratic and Republican-Republican correlations are not as high, in addition to the fact that Eisenhower in 1956 and Kennedy in 1960 do not correlate negatively. Whereas the Unpledged slate in 1956 was clearly drawing from the 1952 Republican vote, in 1960 it correlates negatively with Eisenhower in 1956. Race is beginning to wash out the patterns. The 1964 election shows the racial consensus fully ascendant. Johnson's vote barely correlates with Stevenson 1956 (+.21)

FIGURE 56

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN
PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES
ERA III

		1952		1956			1960			1964	
		STEVENSON	EISENHOWER	STEVENSON	EISENHOWER	UNPLEDGED	KENNEDY	NIXON	UNPLEDGED	JOHNSON	GOLDWATER
1952	STEVENSON		-1.0	+0.91	-0.62	-0.68	+0.53	-0.52			
	EISENHOWER			-0.91	+0.62	+0.68	-0.53	+0.52			
1956	STEVENSON				-0.59	-0.80	+0.57	-0.40	-0.27	+0.21	-0.21
	EISENHOWER							+0.48	-0.29	+0.33	-0.33
	UNPLEDGED						-0.72		+0.55	-0.50	+0.50
1960	KENNEDY								-0.80	+0.77	-0.77
	NIXON								-0.47		
	UNPLEDGED									-0.74	+0.74
1964	JOHNSON										-1.0
	GOLDWATER										

and does not correlate with Stevenson 1952. Goldwater does not correlate with Eisenhower 1952 and correlates negatively with Eisenhower 1956 (-0.33). The Unpledged slate of 1956 correlates +0.50 with Goldwater, whereas the 1960 Unpledged and Goldwater correlate +0.74. Therein lies the tale: the arousing racial consensus in 1952 was expressed in the black belt by Republican voting;

in 1956, the same was true, but with the added radical element of an Unpledged slate. By 1960 the Unpledged slate was mobilizing the racial vote across the state, a vote even further galvanized by Goldwater in 1964. The racial consensus in Era III managed to give birth to Republicanism, then third party militancy, and finally Goldwater.

Figure 57 is a matrix of coefficients between presidential and gubernatorial second primary and general election candidates. It shows, again, the difference in pre-1955 and post-1955 reactions to the racial consensus. The Unpledged and Goldwater votes correlate positively with White, negatively with Johnson. The transitional election of 1955 fails to establish any clear pattern with presidential politics of the era, whereas the Unpledged and Goldwater votes correlate positively with Barnett in 1959 and Johnson in 1963. The Kennedy-Coleman correlation is very low (+.22), especially when one considers the degree to which that alliance damaged Coleman in 1963. In terms of the 1963 general election, Phillips' vote generally relates to presidential Republicanism, except in 1964 when the relationship reverses.

The relationship of the 1954 senate race to presidential politics is displayed in Figure 58 and will not require comment, except to note that Eastland's vote

FIGURE 57

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND PRIMARY
GUBERNATORIAL AND PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES
ERA III

	1951		GUBERNATORIAL				1963		1963 (G)		
	JOHNSON	WHITE	JOHNSON	COLEMAN	BARNETT	GARTIN	JOHNSON	COLEMAN	JOHNSON	PHILLIPS	
1952	STEVENSON	+ .53	-.53	X	X	+ .22	-.22	X	X	+ .27	-.27
	EISENHOWER	-.53	+ .53	X	X	-.22	+ .22	X	X	-.27	+ .27
1956	STEVENSON	+ .50	-.50	-.21	+ .21	X	X	X	X	X	X
	EISENHOWER	X	X	+ .39	-.39	-.45	+ .45	X	X	-.45	+ .45
	UNPLEDGED	-.54	+ .54	X	X	+ .29	-.29	X	X	+ .20	-.20
1960	KENNEDY	+ .51	-.51	X	X	-.34	+ .34	-.22	+ .22	-.22	+ .22
	NIXON	X	X	X	X	-.46	+ .46	-.36	+ .36	-.53	+ .53
	UNPLEDGED	-.37	+ .37	X	X	+ .58	-.58	+ .42	-.42	+ .52	-.52
1964	JOHNSON	+ .32	-.32	+ .19	-.19	-.46	+ .46	-.23	+ .23	-.36	+ .36
	GOLDWATER	-.32	+ .32	-.19	+ .19	+ .46	-.46	+ .23	-.23	+ .36	-.36

correlates uniformly with the militant side of racial voting throughout.

Figure 59 displays the relationship of presidential voting to the socio-economic and political variables. The white tenancy and percent black illustrate, almost to a surprising degree, the role of the black belt in the racial issue. In 1952 percent black correlates

FIGURE 58

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SENATORIAL AND PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, ERA III

	PRESIDENTIAL									
	1952		1956				1960		1964	
	STEVENSON	EISENHOWER	STEVENSON	EISENHOWER	UNPLEDGED	KENNEDY	NIXON	UNPLEDGED	JOHNSON	GOLDWATER
EASTLAND	-.26	+.26	-.31	-.24	+.56	-.37	X	+.26	-.30	+.30
GARTIN	+.26	-.26	+.31	+.24	-.56	+.37	X	-.26	+.30	-.30

FIGURE 59

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES AND CERTAIN SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL VARIABLES, ERA III

	1.	2.	3.		4.	5.	6.
	% BLACK	DENSITY	WHITE TENANCY		TURNOUT	ABOLISH SCHOOLS	GAIN JOHNSON
1952	STEVENSON	-.44	-.39	+.60		-.19	-.30
	EISENHOWER	+.44	+.39	-.60		+.19	+.30
1956	STEVENSON	-.41	-.34	+.59		X	-.33
	EISENHOWER	X	+.53	-.45		-.38	-.18
	UNPLEDGED	+.62	X	-.41		+.21	+.55
	KENNEDY	-.55	X	+.56		-.38	-.66
1960	NIXON	X	+.50	X		-.24	X
	UNPLEDGED	+.41	-.32	-.51		+.48	+.56
1964	JOHNSON	-.51	+.26	+.53		-.71	-.76
	GOLDWATER	+.51	-.26	-.53		+.71	+.76

positively with Eisenhower, in 1956 and 1960 positively with Unpledged, and in 1964 positively with Goldwater. The reverse is true of white tenancy. The referendum and gain Johnson variables (columns 5 and 6) demonstrate the degree to which this vote was the militant position on race. The density column (column 2) shows that Republicanism was, in fact, an urban phenomenon. The positive correlations hold up with Eisenhower and Nixon when most other variables begin to waver or disappear. The only exception is 1964. Turnout obviously favored the militant position on race.

In summary, Era III was fraught with important developments in terms of the life-forms and the institutional structure of Mississippi politics. After World War II electoral politics continued to modulate among the major life-forms, although dominated by the arousing racial consensus. It was not surprising that candidates in tune with black belt concerns led the state in its first genuine racial crisis since Reconstruction--Fielding Wright in 1947 and Hugh White in 1951. It was a testament to what had happened to black belt mentalities that these candidates were also the most clearly committed to modernization. Paul Johnson, Jr., kept alive the life-forms so eloquently championed by his father, namely, progressivism (including moral fundamentalism and humanitarianism) and

agrarian class struggle. However, Johnson's commitment to modernization and to protection of the racial caste were sufficiently unclear that the electorate chose the conservative alternatives in 1947 and 1951.

During this same decade the seeds of Republicanism were planted in the state, due almost entirely to the growing racial obsession. The state almost unanimously followed the third party strategy of 1948, albeit under the label of "Democratic," for reasons of race (although it is alleged that the money behind the Dixiecrat movement came from Texas oil interests who wanted to elect Eisenhower by denying Truman the South). In 1952 this disaffection with the National Democratic Party produced the first major Republican campaign in almost a century, although the state leadership mostly rallied behind the Democratic ticket.

The election of 1955 was something of a transition to the second part of Era III in which the aroused racial consensus totally dominated politics. In 1955 the electorate rejected the conservative leadership of the past decade (with Wright's elimination in the first primary) and selected J. P. Coleman. Coleman's image was not clear in the election, even though he had been clearly in the Wright-White lineage. The statistics of the runoff indicate a second primary somewhat akin to the

Noel-Brewer runoff of 1907. Both Coleman and Johnson were "Hills" candidates, but Coleman was more clearly seen as militant on the race issue and committed to modernization. He was a transition governor between the conservatives of the decade before and the "rednecks" of the decade after. The presidential race of 1956 also marked this transition to a more radical approach to race with the Unpledged slate of electors.

Barnett's victory in 1959 was a triumph for the aroused racial consensus. The votes cut across many traditional cleavages, most notably the Delta-Hills split. Many even in the black belt were responding to the rabble-rousing militancy of Hills politicians. The Unpledged Elector movement, which carried the state in 1960, was another indication that the aroused racial consensus was dictating electoral outcomes almost single-handedly.

Barnett's disastrous handling of the Meredith crisis of 1962 and the increasing threat of massive cut-offs in federal funds provoked a moderate reaction to the racial crisis. Yet, this force was incipient in 1963 and was completely overwhelmed in the Democratic primary by Paul Johnson, who, in a grand irony, had become the most militant and racist candidate of the entire era. Coleman, who in 1955 had presaged the ascendancy of this militant position, had by his administration disappointed

the racial radicals and had become in 1963 the moderate. For reasons of race, Coleman's loyalty to Mississippi's historically beloved Democratic Party had become the kiss of death.

The electorate's obsession with race led to the birth of the Mississippi Republican Party as a statewide electoral alternative in 1963. After gaining control of the machinery, the white conservative leaders of the party fielded Rubel Phillips as the first serious Republican gubernatorial candidate since Reconstruction. Middle class Mississippians who were opposed to the National Democratic Party's handling of race, yet who were for a more sophisticated handling of the issue within the state, responded to Phillips' candidacy. The state G.O.P. also appealed to those business elements committed to economic modernization and social conservatism. Although spawned by race, the Mississippi Republican Party was building on its historical foundation of urban middle class support. The Presidential election of 1964 saw the electorate galvanized again according to race, as the state voted 87% for Goldwater.

PART FIVE

ERA IV (1967-1976): THE POLITICS OF
MODERNIZATION

CHAPTER 14

THE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION OF 1967: THE END OF RACIAL POLITICS

The rhetoric of 1967 was different from that of 1963. The aroused racial consensus remained the critical life-form in this gubernatorial campaign (especially in the runoff); however, the blatant and vitriolic racial appeals made by Barnett in 1959 and Johnson in 1963 were muted in 1967. Racial issues were still highly salient, but they were often couched in terms at least once removed from the "gut level" rhetoric of prior elections. The voice of racial moderation had been growing throughout the Johnson administration, and in many ways the 1967 election represented a major battle between the old massive resistance mentality and this new, moderating force. In addition, other issues which had been neglected because of the state's preoccupation with race surfaced during this campaign. In terms of institutional structure, the party situation continued to develop in new and, in some cases, radically different ways.

The single most important reason for all of these developments in 1967 was the massive enfranchisement of

black voters pursuant to the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This event, taken alone, would have changed the electoral landscape of Mississippi forever. Its impact was almost incomprehensible to the politicians of the state. In one dramatic step, the assumptions and fiber of politics which had existed for a century were recast. School desegregation, public accommodations, and other federal action helped bring about the civil rights revolution in the South; but, none approached the political impact of giving blacks the right to vote. Much of the story of 1967 is the wrenching attempt of Mississippi politicians and voters to adapt to this new environment. This election provided a bridge between the politics of the 1960s and the new politics of the 1970s.

Ross Barnett's candidacy for a second term was seen as a certainty, yet few in the established political order, militant right or moderate, supported him. The Meredith debacle had given birth to a business-minded, moderate reaction against the massive resistance mentality. On the other side, the publication of tapes made by Robert Kennedy of conversations between him and Barnett during the crisis exposed the "deals" that the governor had attempted to make with the attorney general. The content of these tapes was published in Russell Barrett's Integration at Ole Miss and in other sources, and left the

militant right with a sense of betrayal and anger directed against Barnett. Few leaders of any persuasion trusted Barnett with the direction of the state for another term. Yet, they all feared him at the polls. Most moderate and some conservative elements felt that Lieutenant Governor Carroll Gartin would be the consensus candidate against Barnett. The state was, therefore, thrown into political disarray in December 1966 when Gartin died suddenly of a heart attack.¹

It was ironic that Gartin's death pulled both William Winter and John Bell Williams into the race. Winter--who had served in the Legislature and as state tax collector and state treasurer--had been a leader in the increasingly vocal moderate movement, to the point of triggering attacks on him from the Citizens' Councils and other right wing elements. Winter decided upon Gartin's death to move quickly into the governor's race in an effort to solidify both the moderate support and hopefully the anti-Barnett feeling among conservative elements. Congressman John Bell Williams--having failed to regain his seniority after the Democratic caucus stripped him for openly supporting Goldwater--also sensed the political vacuum left by Gartin's death and calculated

¹Winter; Pittman.

that the field was lacking an acceptable conservative. After receiving assurances from Sullivan that he intended to run for lieutenant governor, Williams announced in early 1967. Recalls Winter, "I was campaigning in north-east Mississippi, and was walking down the street in Baldwyn when I heard the news that John Bell had announced for governor, and I kind of felt my heart sink, because I knew he was going to be a strong candidate."²

A poll run by Winter after Williams' announcement showed that the congressman enjoyed almost a majority support at that time. A major problem for Winter was that some moderate leaders whose support he ordinarily would have enjoyed considered him incapable of defeating Barnett. So intense was their anti-Barnett stance that they backed Williams as the lesser of the two electable evils. J. P. Coleman, for example, was one who made this calculation; and despite his long-standing political alliance with Winter, he pledged his support to Williams in early 1967.³

Other candidates included Bill Waller, a district attorney representing Hinds, Madison, and Yazoo counties. He correctly sensed an "anti-establishment" feeling which

²Winter.

³Winter; Williams; Pittman.

Sullivan had tapped in his races and which Waller was to carry to victory in 1971, ironically against Sullivan. He announced even before Gartin's death. The "wild card" in the deck was a relatively unknown radio personality from south Mississippi, Jimmy Swan, who entered the race as an avowed white supremacist. Rounding out the field were two minor candidates, Vernon E. Brown and C. L. McKinley.⁴

Williams did not run an issue-oriented campaign and, in fact, did not publish a platform until shortly before the first primary. In a speech in early August, he summed up what had been the main thrust of his campaign all summer: even though other issues were important, Williams stated, the only real issue was whether Mississippi "is ready to surrender to the great society."⁵ He made race an issue by denouncing H.E.W. guidelines and the Democratic Party an issue by reminding voters that he had stood up for Mississippi in supporting Goldwater. Williams told the crowds that in 1964 Democratic Party leaders had promised him committee seniority in return for his support for the Johnson-Humphrey ticket. Crowded

⁴Interview with former Governor Bill Waller, Jackson, Mississippi, August 30, 1977; Memphis Commercial Appeal, November 20, 1966.

⁵Clarion Ledger, August 1, 1967.

Williams, "I told them you can take that committee and put it in a place where it would be physically uncomfortable."⁶ Throughout the campaign Williams denounced Winter as a "dedicated, demonstrated liberal," and warned that Winter would "surrender to the great society" because he was an "LBJ liberal."⁷ He further proved his dedication to the racial orthodoxy by claiming to have exposed the "shameful conditions in Washington schools" caused by "forced integration." Said his advertising, "The negro has demonstrated a sex attitude . . . that has greatly alarmed white parents."⁸ On another note, he promised to deal harshly with racial agitators and radicals and pledged to maintain "law and order" in the state.⁹

Williams recognized that it would be a contest between him and Barnett to represent the militant segregationist position in the runoff. He, therefore, devoted much of his attention to attacking Barnett, and the struggle between them became bitter. Williams made constant references to Barnett's "questionable deals" during the Meredith affair and pledged that there would

⁶Clarion Ledger, August 4, 1967.

⁷Clarion Ledger, August 1, 1967; Williams Campaign Tabloid in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁸Williams Tabloid.

⁹Ibid.

be no "secret deals" during his administration.¹⁰ The congressman further criticized Barnett's handling of the Meredith crisis by saying that the governor should have done like Governor Wallace in Alabama--that is, fight integration to the end, but then step aside when the inevitable came.¹¹ In keeping with his law and order plank, Williams accused Barnett of setting a "modern day record" for turning people out of the penitentiary.¹² Near the end of the first primary, Williams revealed that Barnett had purchased a \$325,000 parcel of land and asked the rhetorical question, "How did Ross afford this on a \$25,000/year salary?" To the implied charge of corruption Barnett reacted bitterly and demanded that Williams produce proof of the innuendo or apologize. Neither happened.¹³

Two other aspects of the Williams campaign deserve mention. One, he was the last of the great orators in the tradition of Vardaman, Harrison, Bilbo, Coleman, and the younger Johnson. His "stump" speeches were colorful

¹⁰Ibid.; Interview with former governor John Bell Williams, Jackson Mississippi, August 30, 1977.

¹¹Memphis Commercial Appeal, May 16, 1967.

¹²Clarion Ledger, August 2, 1967.

¹³Clarion Ledger, August 3, 1967.

and entertaining, and 1967 was probably the last campaign in which stump speaking managed to hold its own with media advertising.¹⁴ As Williams himself recalls today, his philosophy was that stump speaking was designed to "entertain and inflame" and television to "inform."¹⁵ He used both effectively. The second notable fact was Williams' effective use of his war disability. Williams had lost most of an arm in an airplane crash during World War II. During stump speeches under a sweltering Mississippi sun, Williams would rhetorically ask permission of the ladies in the audience to remove his coat, and the short-sleeve shirt underneath would clearly reveal his disability. Williams would often hit the amputated arm for emphasis during his remarks, drawing further attention to the war wound. Footage of these speeches would also be included in his television spots. In southern rural life there has always been a sympathy factor; and, in patriotic Mississippi, removed from World War II by only two decades, the vision which Williams created was a political plus with veterans groups.¹⁶

¹⁴Pittman.

¹⁵Williams.

¹⁶Waller; Clarion Ledger, August 1, 1967; Personal Recollections of the author. Regarding the "sympathy factor," for example, former Governor Waller spoke of this

Barnett ran on his record as governor, emphasizing the industrial development which occurred during his first term and his proven ability to be a staunch "defender of the faith." To the incredulity of the electorate, Barnett attacked Williams as a "lukewarm middle-of-the-roader" on issues of segregation and states' rights. Williams, he charged, should have stayed in Washington to represent the people of Mississippi and to earn his salary.¹⁷ He repeatedly criticized Williams for "foolishly throwing away" his seniority in Congress, which belonged to the people.¹⁸ He denounced but never effectively answered Williams' charges that he had made "secret deals" with the Kennedys during the Meredith crisis.¹⁹ Ridiculing Williams as "Johnny-Come-Lately Bell Williams," Barnett's advertising toward the end of the first primary

in reference to the 1967 race and told of his youth in Lafayette County: "Anyone that had a stroke or got injured in an automobile wreck or lost a leg in an accident or something, when I was a kid, ran for political office and was elected. . . . As in John Bell Williams' case, they felt sorrow for him." Waller. The author, who worked full-time in the Winter campaign, recalls failing to convince a close relative to vote for Winter because the relative was a veteran and shared sympathy for Williams.

¹⁷Amory Advertiser, June 15, 1967.

¹⁸Clarion Ledger, Barnett Advertisement, August 2, 1967.

¹⁹Memphis Commercial Appeal, April 21, 1967.

carried cartoons showing Williams drawing his large congressional salary while seeking another office. The former governor seemed to direct his attacks in the early part of the primary against Winter, but, realizing that his competition would be Williams and reacting bitterly to the congressman's charges against him, redirected his attacks in the last weeks of the first primary.

Barnett's attacks against Winter were in the same vein as those of Williams. From the beginning of the campaign Barnett said of Winter, "We cannot have a man in the governor's office who was put there by weak-kneed liberals in this state."²⁰ Referring to Winter throughout the primary as a "weak-kneed liberal," Barnett charged that "Kennedy money" was being sent into the state to defeat him and elect Winter.²¹ He cited as evidence a fund-raising cocktail party held by the Young Democrats in Boston and sponsored by Edward Kennedy. The alleged \$5000 raised there was being sent into the state to defeat him and elect Winter.²² Another line of attack on Winter was in his earlier role as state tax collector, an office which collected the infamous "black market tax" on illegal

²⁰Memphis Commercial Appeal, April 21, 1967.

²¹Amory Advertiser, June 15, 1967.

²²Choctaw Plaindealer, July 27, 1967.

liquor. Although it was Winter himself who had urged the Legislature to abolish the office, Barnett charged that "the bootleggers made him a millionaire."²³

On the positive side, Barnett emphasized his ability to lead the state again in industrial development. He also outlined programs for the development of Mississippi highways and county roads, youth programs, and educational improvement. Combining his role as a former governor with the race appeal, Barnett showed pictures of Governor Wallace and himself together. They were portrayed as close friends, working arm-in-arm together to preserve segregation. They were, indeed, "the nation's two staunchest segregationist governors. . . ."²⁴

Winter sent a tap root into the increasingly vocal, moderate, urban-business elements. Recognizing that the politics of a Barnett or the campaigns of a Johnson were "bad for business," they began to speak out during the Johnson administration, urged on, in part, by Johnson's own moderate administration. With an awareness of the importance of federal money in Mississippi, many school districts and other government entities began to sign

²³Clarion Ledger, Barnett Advertisement, August 1, 1967.

²⁴Barnett Campaign Brochures and Advertisements in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

civil rights compliance pledges with the federal government. The Mississippi Economic Council (MEC)--the state chamber of commerce--adopted a resolution in 1965 calling for compliance with federal law and support for the public school system. The Mississippi Manufacturers Association endorsed a similar resolution, as did some two dozen local chambers of commerce, state organizations like the Mississippi Bankers Association, and even local government officials in the Mississippi Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association, Circuit Clerks Association, and others.²⁵ At the University of Mississippi, scene of the Meredith riots, a group called the Mississippi Students for Responsible Citizenship was formed under the leadership of men like Winter and the aged Governor Hugh White. It was as if an historical parenthesis had been closed, when, in 1966 Robert Kennedy made a triumphant return to Ole Miss and spoke to thousands of cheering students. Ed Ellington, law student who introduced Kennedy to a standing ovation, proclaimed, "Let no one ever again say that Mississippi is a closed society."²⁶ It was this mixture of business-minded moderation, awareness of the need to keep federal dollars flowing to the state, and a dose of idealism and

²⁵McMillen in McLemore, vol. 2, pp. 164-165.

²⁶Personal recollection of author.

reform among many young voters that provided the base for Winter's candidacy.

The campaign, however, presented an impossible strategic dilemma for Winter. To mobilize this moderate force he could not respond to the charges that he was a "liberal" in a manner to satisfy the militant segregationists. Winter and his advisors feared that this group still constituted the majority, and they were correct. The decision was made, however, to pitch the campaign "high" (for example, not to call the name of any opponents) and to attempt to avoid the race issue as much as possible. In producing one of the most detailed platforms in the history of the state, Winter unveiled fifteen "Winter Plans." There were, for example, "The Winter Plan for Better Schools," "The Winter Plan for Better Paying Jobs," "The Winter Plan for the Aged and Economically Indigent," "The Winter Plan for Agriculture," etc. The centerpiece of his platform was education. A widely publicized study of Mississippi's school system the year before had revealed public education to be in a disastrous state of affairs, as compared to other states. Winter made educational improvement the key issue of his first-primary campaign. He stressed his long experience in state government and his training for the office, trying to convey the image that he was young, vigorous, intelligent, and able to

solve problems.²⁷

Winter attempted to handle the issue of his alleged "liberalism" and loyalty to the National Democratic Party by calling himself a "Jim Eastland, John Stennis Democrat." He claimed to favor segregation but stressed that a cool-headed, pragmatic approach to the problem was needed.²⁸ Without calling their names, Winter attacked Barnett's and Williams' records: ". . . in these trying times you don't need a man who has failed you and led you into blind alleys in the past. And, we don't need a man who shoots from the hip and then cuts and runs when the going gets tough like the man from Washington."²⁹ He continued to attack by reference Williams' inability to be effective in Washington and his failure to follow the lead of men like Stennis and Eastland, who "fought for the state" and yet managed to retain their seniority. Hoping to attract Gartin supporters, Winter ran endorsements from Raymond Gartin, the late lieutenant governor's brother. In the advertisement, Gartin stated, "This [the charge that Winter is a liberal] is a lot of hokum, the same political

²⁷Personal recollections and campaign files of author.

²⁸Memphis Commercial Appeal, May 16, 1967.

²⁹Clarion Ledger, August 1, 1967.

hokum they tried to pin on my brother Carroll."³⁰ In an effort to stress his moral rectitude, Winter promised that liquor would not be served in the mansion if he were elected. Having solidified much of the moderate business element in the state and having made valuable contacts with the financial community during his tenure as state treasurer, Winter financed the most expensive first primary campaign in history.³¹ Utilizing the organizational skills of the man who had managed Johnson's 1963 campaign and the first professionally produced television commercials, Winter pulled up from a low name identification and minimum support from the time of his announcement to the position of being the front-runner in the first primary.³²

Waller attracted considerable attention as a "new face" appealing to the more moderate elements in the state. As district attorney, he had received favorable publicity for his vigorous prosecution of Byron de la Beckwith, accused murderer of Medgar Evers and candidate for lieutenant governor in 1967. Although tagged by the state press as a "minor candidate," Waller was an indefatigable campaigner who raised and spent over \$100,000 in his first

³⁰Clarion Ledger, Winter Advertisement, August 2, 1967.

³¹Personal recollections of author.

³²Pittman; personal recollections of author.

statewide race. His major issues were better training for local law enforcement officers, sheriffs succession, reorganization of state government, and investment of idle state funds.³³

The "sleeper" in the race was the diminutive radio station operator and personality, Jimmy Swan of Hattiesburg. Swan, incredibly, got far to the right of even Williams and Barnett on the race issue, campaigning on a platform of racial purity and segregated, private schools for the white student population of Mississippi. The big issue, Swan told a Lauderdale County audience, was not roads or industry or quality education, but the "Communist conspiracy that's sweeping the world, the nation, Mississippi, and Lauderdale County." Swan proclaimed that he was not worried about the 180,000 newly registered black voters: "When I got into the race, I chose sides."³⁴ Swan retained as his campaign aid Ace Carter, who had been a speech writer for George Wallace. Citing Bilbo as his political hero, Swan conducted much of his campaign through fundamentalist, evangelical, rural churches of southern Mississippi.³⁵ Swan and his campaign entourage wore

³³Waller.

³⁴Hattiesburg American, July 7, 1967.

³⁵Sunday Clarion Ledger-Jackson Daily News, February 5, 1967.

all-white suits as a symbol of their political beliefs.

In terms of alliances, Coleman supported Williams, although he did not publicly endorse him. Neither senator made public endorsements, but Stennis was quietly supporting Winter and Eastland was backing Williams. Governor Johnson, making the race for lieutenant governor, was devastated by his failure even to make the runoff, and he played little role in gubernatorial politics in 1967.³⁶

In a stunning upset for Ross Barnett, the former governor finished fourth in the first primary with a mere 11.1% of the vote. His strength had been badly overestimated by the early analysts. Swan surprised the political establishment and disheartened moderate forces by finishing a strong third with almost 125,000 votes, or 18.2%. Congressman Williams was second with 28.9%, and Winter first with 32.5%. Waller received 8.8%, and the other two candidates less than 1% each.³⁷

For Winter the "handwriting was on the wall" in the runoff. Of those candidates eliminated in the first primary, only Waller had an image of moderation similar to that of Winter. The Barnett and Swan vote had to be considered militant segregationist and pro-states-rights.

³⁶Pittman; Winter; Williams; Barber.

³⁷Abney, p. 91.

As Winter recalls today, "it was a tough second primary, and all of the facade of the first primary dissolved-- it just got to be almost a black-white thing."³⁸ Receiving extreme pressure from some of his advisors, contributors, and friends, Winter attempted to move to the right to capture the Swan vote. Early in the second primary, he issued a statement praising Wallace and saying that he could support him for president. The statement did not sound credible and is now viewed by Winter as a mistake. Says Winter today, "During the second primary that pressure continued. I would just be harangued wherever I would go, that you've just got to give us something to take out here to tell these people that voted for Swan or somebody else in the first primary. You've just got to get off that white horse; and I think we did, but I don't think that it was effective. It cooled off some of our first primary supporters."³⁹

Williams seized on Winter's change of style and ran cartoons showing a tiger trying to wash off his spots with the caption, "Winter Attempts to Change his Spots." Williams' supporters distributed campaign sheets and ran advertisements displaying selected statistics to demonstrate that Winter

³⁸Winter.

³⁹Ibid.

had gotten the "block vote" (euphemism for black vote) in the first primary. Williams continued to refer to Winter as a "demonstrated, dedicated liberal," "the Lyndon Johnson candidate," and the "candidate of the block vote."⁴⁰

Because of the bitter first primary fight between Barnett and Williams, the former governor and some of his leaders supported Winter in the runoff. In addition, Waller tried to deliver to Winter as much of his organization as possible. Realizing that the battleground was the Barnett-Swan vote, Winter attempted to short-circuit the political appeal of Williams by emphasizing the morality issue, which, it was hoped, would appeal to the fundamentalist Swan voters. Capitalizing on rumors about Williams' excesses in Washington, Winter emphasized his own sobriety and made innuendos about Williams'. In one advertisement comparing Winter's record with that of Williams, a category labelled "moral life" praised Winter's role in the church and his stand on alcohol; by Williams' name appeared the remark, "No statement." Winter also continued to emphasize his platform, especially education reform, and to picture himself as the sure winner in the runoff.⁴¹

⁴⁰Williams; Winter; personal recollections of author; Campaign Sheet for Williams in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁴¹Winter; Waller; personal recollections and files of the author.

Winter's attempt to cut into the Barnett and Swan vote failed, despite Barnett's support and the morality issue. When the results were in, Williams won by a margin of almost 62,000 votes, 54.5% for Williams to 45.5% for Winter.⁴²

Rubel Phillips did not want to run again for governor in 1967. Fearing that John Bell Williams would be the Democratic nominee, he recognized that it would be impossible to get to Williams' right. Clark Reed (who had replaced Yerger as chairman in 1966 in a smooth transition), Mounger, and other Republicans pressured Phillips into making the race. They felt the need to keep alive the Republican image, and Phillips was the only credible standard-bearer available. Phillips' heart was apparently never in it.⁴³

What resulted from the recognition of Williams' impregnable position on the right, along with the existence of around 200,000 newly registered blacks, was a remarkable departure in Republican strategy. Phillips recognized that he must campaign to the "left" of Williams and apparently tried to build an electoral coalition of Winter-type whites and blacks. Sixty-four Republicans

⁴²Abney, p. 91.

⁴³Mounger; Reed; Carmichael.

were offering for election to offices from governor to county assessor; and fifty-two blacks were running as independents.⁴⁴ So, the prospects of a large, disgruntled, moderate white vote, plus a substantial black turnout made the Republican strategy look reasonable given the opponent. Had Phillips won, it could have placed the Mississippi Republican Party on a far different course from the generally right-wing one it has pursued.

Phillips launched the strategy by making a moderate television address on the race issue, especially as judged in the time and place. Some of the text of that address is as follows:

It is painfully clear that the race issue has retarded development of our human resources--and, therefore, has held back the expansion of our economy. . . . It is a fact that Negroes in Mississippi--with very few exceptions--do not produce as much as whites. It is also a fact that Negroes as a group never have had a chance to produce as much as whites. . . . You and I have got to make it possible for this switch to be made by tens of thousands of Negroes and poor whites. We have got to be willing to remove the barriers to their economic advancement, and we have got to be willing to make an investment in their future productivity.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Fifty-four blacks had run in the Democratic primary and eleven had been nominated for county offices; candidates of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party were unable to use the label "Democrat" on the ballot and had to run as "independents" in November. Memphis Commercial Appeal, July 11, 1967.

⁴⁵Rolling Fork Deer Creek Pilot, November 23, 1967.

It was almost as if Mississippi had finally gotten back to the Whitfield message of 1924. Yet, in 1967, it was hailed as a history-making address, so aroused had the racial consensus been for so long. The dean of the Jackson press corps, for example, reported it as ". . . the most direct appeal to racial conscience heard in this state."⁴⁶ A Phillips brochure invited voters to write for a copy of "Rubel's history-making address on the race issue."⁴⁷

Phillips followed the address on race with television speeches on education, in which he sounded more conservative on the issue of school integration, and on the need for political change. In the speech entitled "Change," Phillips denounced the "old guard establishment" as a "power monopoly" consisting of "self-perpetuating politicians . . . selfish money-grubbers . . . contract-seekers . . . influence-peddlers . . . thought-control artists . . . and miscellaneous hangers-on--and they are all held together by an interlocking pattern of financial and political self-interest." Opposed to all change, because they might be challenged, this "un-Democratic

⁴⁶New Orleans Times Picayune, October 8, 1967.

⁴⁷Phillips Campaign Brochure in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

establishment," as he called them, had been responsible for keeping Mississippi at the bottom. They refused to discuss the issues such as race and education, Phillips charged, and were uniting in November, not to help the people, but to maintain their own power. They seemed to be intent on getting thrown out at the next Democratic National Convention, thereby carrying out their "death wish." "Rubel Phillips believes that Mississippi ought to be fully represented in both national political parties. . . . When Rubel Phillips leads Mississippi's delegation to the Republican National Convention next year, your fellow citizens will be received--not with catcalls and abuse--but with courtesy . . . and honor."⁴⁸ In addition to his television speeches on race, education, and change, Phillips issued a series of press releases outlining his platform--to change the law barring women from service on juries, to reduce the residency requirement for voting, to abolish the Milk Commission, to adopt a strong compulsory school attendance law (violently opposed by militant segregationists), and to freeze all hiring of state employees.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Phillips Television Addresses, 1967, Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁴⁹Phillips Press Releases, 1967, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

The indications, however, were that Phillips' approach was not "catching on." Maureen Reagan and Winthrop Rockefeller came into the state to campaign, but the response was reported as "disappointing."⁵⁰ More basic, however, was simply the fact that Phillips was unable to draw Williams and the Democrats out of their secure corner and into a campaign. It was unlikely that substantial numbers of blacks would defect from their national allegiance to the Democratic Party for a local Republican; and, to make matters worse for Phillips, the leadership of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party endorsed him for his forthright discussion of the race issue. Phillips was constrained to denounce this "kiss of death" endorsement.⁵¹

Williams and the Democrats undertook only a modest campaign. Realizing his strong lead and the position of Phillips to his left, Williams played the part of front runner and refused to be drawn into a discussion of issues. Williams' advertising, what little there was of it, attacked Phillips' platform and contended that "effective government" would be possible only within the Democratic Party of Mississippi. So low key was the Democratic campaign that Williams spent several weeks prior to the election

⁵⁰Memphis Commercial Appeal, October 31, 1967.

⁵¹Clarion Ledger, November 1, 1967.

in the hospital for treatment of a leg problem,⁵² An advertisement in Jackson for Williams and Hinds County Democratic candidates said, "Stand United For John Bell Williams and the Conservative Democratic Team," and warned ominously, "If you don't vote . . . you know who will! You can be sure the liberal 'bloc vote' will vote in force."⁵³ A little over a week before the election, the Democratic Party held a "Gala" with 5000 people paying \$40 per ticket to hear top-flight entertainment and the entire congressional delegation and Governor Johnson endorse the ticket. Lieutenant Governor-elect Charles Sullivan introduced Williams, and most of Mississippi's "officialdom" was present. William Winter, whom Williams had defeated in the primary, was in New York City on state bond business and sent a telegram of support.⁵⁴

In the heaviest general election turnout of the century, Williams overwhelmed Phillips 70.3% to 29.7%. From 1963 to 1967 Phillips fell 8.4 percentage points, although his absolute vote fell only 5136 votes.⁵⁵

What had been the impact of black voting in 1967?

⁵²Clarion Ledger, November 1 and November 5, 1967.

⁵³Clarion Ledger, November 6, 1967.

⁵⁴Clarion Ledger, October 31, 1967.

⁵⁵Abney, p. 91.

Candidates were speaking of the black vote in the range of 180,000 during the campaign. A subsequent analysis contends that 264,000 blacks had registered by the August primary, of which 57,000 had been enrolled by federal examiners.⁵⁶ This estimate seems high in light of the turnout. If the additional votes cast in 1967 are assumed to have been entirely Negro, approximately 185,000 blacks voted in the first primary, 203,000 in the runoff, and 66,500 in the general election.⁵⁷ In the Democratic primary and general election, twenty-two blacks were elected to various county and legislative offices.⁵⁸

No candidate in the Democratic primary had made an overt appeal for black votes, and the results were split in the first primary. The Mississippi Voter Education and

⁵⁶Robert Sabin Montjoy, "The Negro and Mississippi Politics: The 1967 Democratic Primaries" (M.A. thesis, University of Alabama, 1973), p. 51.

⁵⁷Computed from Abney, pp. 90-91. From 1951 through 1963 the average growth rate in first primary turnout was computed at 5.2%, and 5.1% for second primaries. The 1963 turnouts were increased by this normal growth rate and then subtracted from the 1967 turnouts. Since there was no history of general elections, a normal growth rate of 5% was selected. These estimates of black voting are generous, because in addition to black enfranchisement after the Voting Rights Act there was a huge registration among whites as well. It is estimated that between 1964 and 1969 some 250,000 blacks registered, as well as 147,000 additional whites. It is highly probable that some of the abnormal increase in 1967 was due to new white voting. See Salamon dissertation, p. 626.

⁵⁸Memphis Commercial Appeal, November 12, 1967.

Registration League, formed by Charles Evers and NAACP leaders as a more moderate alternative to the MFDP, supported Waller in the first primary so that the returns would not show an obvious pattern of black support for their "real" choice, the racially moderate Winter. They rightly concluded that a clear pattern of black voting for Winter would be the "kiss of death" for Winter in the runoff. Heavy black counties under NAACP dominance (mostly River counties) did, in fact, show strong Negro support for Waller. The MFDP-dominated counties (mostly in the Delta) did not follow this strategy, and blacks voted heavily for Winter. It was to these boxes that Williams strategists pointed in the runoff as the evidence of the "liberal bloc vote." Black voting was largely for Winter in the runoff.⁵⁹

The formation of the Mississippi Voter Education and Registration League (MVERA) was an important development in the evolution of what came to be known as the "Loyalist Democrats." The moderate and more pragmatic black leadership had been disenchanted by the militant, uncompromising stance of the MFDP at Atlantic City in 1964. A struggle emerged during 1965 and 1966 between the Freedom Democrats and a coalition including elements of the NAACP under

⁵⁹Montjoy thesis, pp. 97-98.

Evers and Henry, the AFL-CIO under Claude Ramsay, the Young Democrats under Hodding Carter, Jr., and the black Mississippi Teachers' Association. In 1967, the moderate group generally participated in the regular Democratic primary, while MFDP candidates ran as independents in November. In 1968, Charles Evers helped effect a compromise by running for the congressional seat vacated by John Bell Williams and appointing as his campaign chairman Lawrence Guyot, a MFDP leader. It was an uneasy alliance between the MFDP and the moderates, formed now into MVERA, which prepared for the 1968 Democratic National Convention.⁶⁰ Their new name was the "Loyal Democrats of Mississippi."

Evers expressed hope that a seating challenge could be avoided at Chicago. The Loyalists demanded ten of the state's forty-six delegate seats, abandonment of the unit rule, a loyalty oath to the nominee, and a pledge of full black involvement in the party in the future. Three blacks, including Evers, had been elected delegate during the regular congressional caucuses, but wide-spread irregularities were reported throughout much of the state as Loyalist elements attempted to participate in the precinct, county, and district meetings. The state convention was thoroughly

⁶⁰This account based on Simpson dissertation, "The 'Loyalist Democrats' of Mississippi: Challenge to a White Majority, 1965-1972."

dominated by Williams' forces, and it adopted an unpromising attitude. Loyalists were shouted down, no black delegates elected, and the unit rule retained. A challenge seemed to be the only alternative, and the Loyalists held their own county and state conventions the following month. Delegates to the Chicago convention were chosen, and Humphrey, McCarthy, and McGovern all sent word that they would support the Loyalist challenge. Both delegations travelled to Chicago; and although some members of the regular group attempted to work out a compromise with the Loyalists, it was reported that Governor Williams gave little support to the effort. Taking an inflexible position, the regular delegation was denied credentials in favor of the Loyalists by a vote in the credentials committee of 90-84. The regular delegation walked out and returned to Mississippi.⁶¹

The delegation which now held the credentials for Mississippi broke the unit rule and cast 9 1/2 votes for Humphrey, 6 1/2 for McCarthy, 4 for McGovern, and 2 for Phillips. In the floor fight over the Vietnam plank, the delegation voted 22 to 19 1/2 in favor of the "dove" position. The voice of Mississippi in national convention politics was obviously and dramatically different than it

⁶¹Ibid.

had ever been before. The convention placed strains, however, on the shaky alliance between MFDP and MVERA elements. Fannie Lou Hamer denounced the performance of the delegation at the convention, and in March 1969 the MFDP pulled out of the coalition. What was left of their ranks, however, had become insignificant compared to the Evers-Henry-Carter group whose philosophy appealed to the mainstream of Mississippi blacks and who now quite convincingly held the power.⁶²

In September the executive committee of the Mississippi Democratic Party, which had become known as the "Regulars," unanimously voted to support the independent candidacy of George Wallace. Williams endorsed Wallace, as did many other state officials. Henry and Ramsey were co-chairmen of the Humphrey campaign, but it had become increasingly clear that the Democratic appeal would be restricted to mostly black voters and the miniscule number of liberal whites in the state at the time. The two senators and the congressmen remained silent throughout the campaign.⁶³ The Republicans had fallen on hard times after their "high" of 1964, when in 1966 Congressman Prentiss Walker decided to forsake the relatively safe seat he had

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.; Pace; Barber.

won two years before to run against Eastland. Against the almost unanimous advice of the Republican leadership, Walker announced against the senior senator because "God told me to run" and was overwhelmingly defeated. The Republicans lost their first and only congressman since Reconstruction. In 1968 Walker was attempting to regain his congressional seat as a Republican, and even he was openly endorsing Wallace.⁶⁴

The racial consensus, which had been highly aroused since 1959, remained so in 1968. Wallace carried the state with 63.5% to Humphrey's 23.0%. In what was probably a good test of the Republican "core," Nixon got 88,516 votes or 13.5%.⁶⁵ In 1968 Mississippi was Nixon's lowest state in the union; four years later, it was to be his highest.

The elections of 1967 and 1968 might seem to have more in common with the era of the ascendant racial consensus than with an era of coalitional politics; yet, they have a transitional quality about them. For one thing, the addition of several hundred thousand black voters to the rolls presaged an era of politics which would obviously

⁶⁴Clarion Ledger, November 3, 1968; Yerger; Reed; Pace; Barber.

⁶⁵In the Public Interest 2 (August 1972): 2.

be different from the past. Second, at least two candidates in 1967 attempted to appeal to the black vote-- Winter and Waller--by at least not employing segregationist rhetoric and code words. The Barnett and Swan campaigns clearly belonged to the past era. To a large degree, so did Williams'; however, his rhetoric avoided the blatantly anti-black phrases used by Johnson in 1963. Instead, he used code words like "liberal," "H.E.W. guidelines," and other symbols. It was an important change that the choice in 1963 was between a rabble-rousing segregationist and a proven, sophisticated one, whereas in 1967 it was between a rabble-rousing segregationist and an identifiable racial moderate.

The new conservatism was also important in 1967. The growing urban unrest among blacks and the demonstrations against the Viet Nam war were threatening to most white Mississippians, many of whom, it must be said, were becoming increasingly moderate and development-minded in terms of state politics. Williams played on these fears, as did Barnett and even Winter in the runoff, by denouncing "racial agitators" and "peaceniks" and by pledging strong law and order. Williams was the most militant in the runoff along this dimension.

The life-forms of progressivism and agrarian class were largely dormant in 1967, although in terms of style

Williams was undoubtedly seen more as a Hills candidate than was Winter. Winter's detailed platform included many issues dear to the hearts of old progressives, and he addressed many modernization issues as well (e.g., education, transportation, jobs, etc.). Williams' vague platform and his lack of a record in state-level politics apparently failed to provide a contrast in many voters' minds as to the differences between Winter and Williams. As a result, what little enthusiasm that developed over modernization and progressive issues was insufficient to overcome the life-form of race.

The bold Republican strategy of 1967 was ahead of its time, and the G.O.P. never tried it again. Phillips tried to take the Whitfield vision of 1923 a giant step forward into the era of coalitional politics between the races, and in this effort he tapped both the growing sentiment of racial moderation and a commitment to economic development which at long last included blacks. The alienation of blacks from the Republican Party nationally and the threatening message of Phillips' racial message to marginal white moderates doomed his strategy. The electorate, therefore, chose the last of its segregationist governors.

In the presidential race of 1968 the aroused racial consensus also determined the outcome. To white Mississippians

the candidacy of George Wallace was seen predominantly in terms of race, especially after the unseating of the regular white delegation by the Democratic National Convention. The new conservatism was also important in the aftermath of the tumultuous events of 1968. Humphrey's 23% was practically all new black votes, and Nixon's 13.5% represented the growing number of Republican identifiers.

CHAPTER 15

THE POLITICS OF MODERNIZATION (1971-1976)

As the elections of 1967 and 1968 demonstrated, the massive enfranchisement of blacks did not automatically eliminate racial politics. Yet, in 1971 Mississippi launched on a new era in which race was abandoned as a cutting issue among serious white political contenders. Overt appeals to race by major candidates were almost entirely missing in the 1971 Democratic primary, and in 1975 there were open alliances between the races. What had changed?

For one thing, the hottest racial issues had been resolved. The major battle during the Williams administration had been school desegregation; and, the state had somehow survived the massive desegregation orders of 1969 and 1970. By 1971 Mississippi schools were among the most thoroughly integrated in the nation.¹ A highly important development which accompanied massive desegregation was the flight of about 10% of the public school population

¹McMillen in McLemore, vol. 2., p. 175.

to private schools, most of them newly formed as segregated academies. Occurring mostly in Jackson and in counties with over 50% black population, this flight had the consequence of draining off the most threatened and, therefore, radical white parents and of depoliticizing, to some degree, the issue of public education vis-à-vis race. Many issues with racial overtones remained for both black and white--e.g., welfare issues, control of federal funds, local police practices, hiring, apportionment, etc.--but they were not the volatile "gut" issues of the sixties. Once the battle over the existence of the racial caste system itself had been resolved (by 1966) and the question of massive desegregation settled by federal courts (by 1970), race declined in importance as a vehicle for mobilizing--indeed, galvanizing--the white electorate.

A second and complementary development was the growing acceptance of the Whitfield-Phillips argument--namely, that blacks had to be made productive for Mississippi to advance economically. During the racial era, the state had been enjoying the most extraordinary economic development in its history, although the issues of development were overwhelmed by race in electoral politics. The charts in Chapter 3 reveal the growth in all levels of the economy during this period. The unprecedented growth which occurred from World War II to the early sixties was

eclipsed by the staggering growth rates during the Johnson and Williams administrations. This growth was a result of the large investments of Standard Oil and Litton on the Gulf Coast, the creation of the Research and Development Center under Johnson, general industrial location in the state as a result of Barnett's program of business incentives and tax breaks, the growing "sun belt" phenomenon nationwide, and the increasing location in Mississippi of federal government facilities as a result of the seniority of Stennis and Eastland.²

With racial caste a casualty of history, white businessmen and entrepreneurs no longer had a social and cultural investment to protect, the price of which had been comparatively low growth. The white middle class, except in pockets of the black belt, accepted with amazing speed and even, in many cases, grace the onset of a new racial era. A further and strong motivation was a yearning in the middle class for Mississippi to improve its "image" nationally both for the sake of pride and business. What was happening was the spread of the modernization consensus into the hitherto forbidden zone of race. The gubernatorial elections of 1971 and 1975 and the federal elections of 1972 and 1976 reflected this movement.

²See Chapter 3.

The Gubernatorial Election of 1971

Lieutenant Governor Sullivan was considered a sure candidate for governor in 1971. Much speculation also centered on Winter, who, after his 1967 defeat, had established a pioneering and lucrative bond practice in a large Jackson law firm. Winter decided to run for lieutenant governor, thereby clearing the way for fellow moderate Bill Waller to make his second race. Swan, buoyed by his surprising strength in 1967, also filed. State Senator Ed Pittman of Hattiesburg announced, as did former Highway Commissioner Roy Adams from the northeast Hills. Circuit Judge Marshall Perry of Grenada County, a segregationist more militant than Swan, and an unknown named Andrew Sullivan also qualified.

Fayette Mayor and civil rights leader Charles Evers entered the field as an independent. The Loyalist faction had met in convention in April and nominated Evers for governor, along with Freddie Washington of Moss Point as Secretary of State. The faction also endorsed the candidacy of some 110 local black candidates from nineteen counties.³ The Mississippi Legislature had enacted an open primary law which was pending Justice Department approval, and it was not until May that the law was

³Jackson Daily News, May 19, 1971.

rejected. The state thereupon reverted to the old primary law, and the Loyalists were not allowed to register as Democrats, even though the faction enjoyed National Democratic Party recognition. Evers announced that he would run as an independent in the November general election rather than in the August primaries. He began organizing his campaign in early summer, staffing it with volunteers and meagerly paid workers, and relying on fund raising outside the state.⁴

Sullivan was the front-runner, so much so that he was perceived almost as an incumbent. During the later years of the Williams administration, Sullivan had made a number of public appearances not only as lieutenant governor but also as acting governor on numerous occasions. By his own admission today, Sullivan had become overexposed.⁵ Sullivan's high visibility as a part of the Williams administration was particularly damaging considering the precipitous decline in the governor's popularity. Williams' controversial handling of public school desegregation, the "Jackson State incident" in which two black students were killed, the decision to purchase several

⁴For a full account of the Evers campaign, see Berry, Amazing Grace.

⁵Sullivan.

additional state office buildings from private sources to house an increasingly unpopular bureaucracy, and his constant feud with the media--all of these factors contributed to his declining popularity, but nothing more so than the infamous "fence." In the last year of the administration, Williams had built around the governor's mansion an expensive brick and iron fence, complete with guard houses and massive gates. The mansion had always been unfenced, and Mississippians with their Jacksonian mentalities liked its openness. The much publicized fence was made to seem even more ludicrous when shortly after its construction the mansion was condemned as unsafe to inhabit.⁶ To the degree that Sullivan was perceived as a part of the Williams administration was a major liability.

Sullivan was an example of what the passage of time can do to a political image. The fire was gone. His 1959 and 1963 image of being the courageous, exciting outsider was almost totally transformed to that of the safe, established insider. Nowhere was this change more dramatically symbolized than in the endorsement given

⁶A massive restoration had to be undertaken on the mansion, and the governor following Williams was able to inhabit the official residence only during the final months of his term. Sullivan; Waller; Berry, pp. 113-114.

him by the Hederman newspapers in Jackson. The establishment firm of Godwin Advertising Agency handled his media, and Sullivan enjoyed hitherto unknown support among the state's economic elite. Furthermore, he encountered all the organizational problems of a strong front-runner.⁷ Sullivan never developed an overwhelming issue, as he had in 1959 with legalization. His opening announcement stressed rather sanguinely the issues of better jobs, four lane highways, educational excellence, environmental protection, law and order, drug enforcement, and efficiency in state government.⁸ His campaign was not issue-oriented, but based on an image of Sullivan

⁷Sullivan; Waller. In multifunctional systems with strong friends-and-neighbors politics the organizational problem is severe for front-runners. For candidate with prior races, as was the case with Sullivan, there is a tendency for established county "leaders" to edge out the "tried and true" supporters who were with the candidate back when he was an unknown. This disheartens a large base of support. Second, with the competition strong at the county level for influence with the front-runner, the campaign often selects leaders who have "been around the track" so often that they are "scarred up" and unpopular with large segments of the county. The "fresh face" candidate has the option of selecting less known, "up and coming" elements in the county who have not made enemies from past campaigns. Sullivan, himself, pioneered this technique in his early races; but in 1971 he was hoist on his own petard by Waller, whose organization was brilliantly structured on these new elements within counties.

⁸Vicksburg Evening Post, May 20, 1971.

as the dignified, "silver-haired" statesman who would restore Mississippi's reputation and image nationally. Said his advertisements, "As Governor, Charles Sullivan will portray Mississippi in a manner of dignity, integrity, responsibility, and progressiveness. . . ."9

As the "candidate to beat," Sullivan also suffered from the concerted attacks on him from all the other contenders. Sullivan is convinced today that the race was "engineered" to defeat him by the unexpected announcement of Pittman, Perry, and Adams. From urban centers in northeast and south Mississippi, these candidates, according to Sullivan, were either directly or indirectly put into the race to split up the first primary vote, thereby changing an essentially three-man race between Sullivan-Waller-Swan into a multi-man contest. Recent Mississippi history had shown that front-runners without huge first primary margins were usually defeated in the runoff.10

Pittman's attacks on Sullivan were particularly

⁹Sullivan Campaign Tabloid, 1971, in the Mississippi State University Special Collection.

¹⁰Sullivan.

damaging. With a colorful style that attracted press attention, Pittman referred to Sullivan as "Charlie Bell" in an effort to highlight Sullivan's role in the Williams administration.¹¹ Because Sullivan had silver hair and often wore white suits, Pittman referred to him repeatedly as "the Man from Glad," a reference to a ridiculous figure in national advertisements for a toilet bowl cleanser. He also attacked Sullivan for being tied to the Jackson "establishment": "The people from Tunica to Jackson County believe that the Jackson banks, that the Jackson Hederman newspapers and the Godwin Advertising Agency in Jackson has (sic) had the governor long enough."¹² Pittman proved to be a major "spoiler" for Sullivan. By ridiculing the handsome, dignified lieutenant governor who was trying to build on that image, Pittman badly undercut Sullivan's media image.

Swan's campaign was similar to that of 1967, except that he was less singlemindedly racist in his appeals. His position as a white supremacist was well-known, however, and Ku Klux Klan leader Robert Shelton

¹¹Berry, p. 131.

¹²Jackson Daily News, June 26, 1971.

endorsed Swan at Lake Mississippi in May.¹³ Swan's kick-off speech called for a massive white registration to offset the Evers threat. He delivered his speech while holding a copy of Bilbo's Take Your Choice: Segregation or Mongrelization.¹⁴ Swan's campaign entourage travelled in a bus draped in an American and a Confederate flag with a large banner saying, "Save Our Children!"¹⁵ What was different from 1967, however, was a strong populist theme in Swan's oratory. He attacked the "capital street mentality," and called for a radical reduction in taxes.¹⁶ This anti-establishment message dovetailed with Pittman's attacks, and, again, Sullivan was the target. Said Swan, "I say that Jimmy Swan and only Jimmy Swan can take the fat cats off the gravy train in Jackson! Who's the only strong candidate without some fancy, frilly advertisin' company from Capitol Street or up in Memphis somewhere?"¹⁷

¹³Meridian Star, May 30, 1971.

¹⁴Jackson Daily News, June 13, 1971.

¹⁵Berry, p. 44.

¹⁶Sunday Clarion Ledger-Jackson Daily News, August 1, 1971.

¹⁷Quoted in Berry, p. 118.

After William Winter's decision to run for lieutenant governor, Bill Waller knew he would be a candidate for governor and knew that he would run on an "anti-establishment" appeal. He correctly sensed that Sullivan had been over-exposed and was fatally connected in the public mind with the Williams administration. One of his early decisions was to hire the Memphis advertising and polling firm of Delos Walker, a brilliant campaign media man who had engineered the Bumpers election in Arkansas. Walker specialized in "throw-the-rascals-out" messages and was one of the first advertising consultants to tap this powerful sentiment which swept the South in the 1960s and early 1970s. Another important decision was that of hiring "Sonny" MacDonald to build the county organizations. As a former state Jaycee president, MacDonald based the county organizations on his Jaycee contacts, who, almost by definition, were the up-and-coming leaders in communities across the state.¹⁸

Waller did not dwell on a long list of governmental issues, although he did include in his platform quality education, economic development, vocational education, drug abuse programs, strict enforcement of drug laws,

¹⁸Waller; Interview with Sonny MacDonald, Jackson, Mississippi, August 23, 1977.

development of tourism, and a major program of highway construction.¹⁹ But, the main appeal was captured in his campaign slogan: "Elect Bill Waller Governor--This Time, Let's Make a Change."²⁰ Following the Walker formula, a final ten-day media "blitz" hammered home the theme relentlessly. And, again, Sullivan was the target. Waller said at the annual Raleigh Tobacco Spitting Contest, "It's a political dictatorship that tries to appoint the governor every four years." He attacked Williams in addition to his opponents, promising the voters that he would not build any fences or buy any vacant buildings.²¹ Waller attributed Mississippi's underdevelopment to the fact that ". . . while we change the name of the governor, the same old political machine remains in power." He promised to take the governor's office away from the "Capitol Street gang" and return it to the people.²² Every time he attacked the establishment or the "Capitol Street gang," Waller reasoned that he was conjuring up not only images of the Jackson elite but also elites in every county and

¹⁹Jackson Daily News, May 26, 1971.

²⁰Waller Campaign Brochure, 1971, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

²¹Sunday Clarion Ledger-Jackson Daily News, August 1, 1971.

²²Memphis Commercial Appeal, July 6, 1971.

town across the state. Thus, both his media and his organizational approaches tapped deep resentments which were prevalent in the 1971 electorate.²³

Race was present in the campaign, but in a veiled and subtle form; and, it was not the cutting issue. It took the form of private v. public schools. Sullivan adopted a strong position early in the campaign in favor of preserving and improving public education and warned voters that there was no constitutional method of giving public money to support private education. Yet, he tried to straddle the issue somewhat by strongly defending the rights of parents to send their children to private schools, and reminded voters that he had helped finance the Clarksdale private academy. Waller, on the other hand, called for quality public education, but also flatly proclaimed, "I will defend to the hilt the right of private schools." It was a matter of emphasis and style, but the voters probably perceived Waller, whose children attended private schools in Jackson, as having the more militant pro-private school position.²⁴ Says Evers campaign activist Jason Berry, ". . . the idea of 'defending to the hilt' had the ring of past bluster, and plenty of whites liked to

²³Waller.

²⁴Berry, pp. 48-49.

hear it."²⁵ One of Waller's planks was also that he was "vigorously opposed" to forced busing. Barnett openly endorsed and supported Waller, a fact which gave Waller entr e and credibility among the 100,000+ militant right-wingers in the state.²⁶

One of the most bizarre developments of the first primary occurred in early June when Evers encouraged blacks to vote for Jimmy Swan. Evers told a stunned press conference that he wanted blacks to help elect Swan as the Democratic nominee so that the choice in November would be between the "worst and best," i.e., Swan and Evers. Evers felt that he could defeat Swan in November with the support of blacks and moderate whites. The ploy outraged many of Evers' allies in the Loyalist faction, and with Aaron Henry and other black leaders supporting Sullivan, the strategy backfired. The net effect was to hurt Sullivan, who was quietly soliciting black support. Evers today admits that it was a mistake. He did not think that Waller had a chance and would have preferred Sullivan as governor. The unintended consequence of his strategy was to pull black votes from Sullivan, to reduce his first

²⁵Ibid., p. 49.

²⁶Ibid., p. 94.

primary margin, and to "soften him up" for the runoff.²⁷

Sullivan's fears about the vote being splintered proved to be well-founded. No candidate received as much as 40%. Sullivan led the ticket with 37.8%, followed by Waller with 29.8%. Swan was third with 16.9% (128,946 votes), about the same as his 1967 showing. Behind the top three, the remaining four candidates trailed badly, but their total percentage amounted to 15.6%. Adams was fourth with 6.0%, Pittman fifth with 5.0%, Perry sixth with 2.4%, and Andrew Sullivan seventh with 2.2%.²⁸

The runoff was more of the same. Sullivan knew that the momentum was in Waller's favor and that the "Capitol Street gang" issue was hurting him. He attacked Waller's talk of a "mythical machine" and demanded that he name names. If there were any machines working in the campaign, Sullivan charged, it was the "Paul Johnson crowd" who was backing Waller.²⁹ Regarding the Hederman

²⁷Berry, pp. 119-123; Charles Evers, University of Southern Mississippi Oral History Program, December 3, 1971, pp. 54-56.

²⁸Mississippi, Secretary of State, Mississippi Official Statistical Register, 1972-1976, p. 448.

²⁹Jackson Daily News, August 17, 1971. In a monumental occurrence of bad luck, Johnson suffered a stroke on the same day that Sullivan attacked him. Waller capitalized on the affair by having his operatives persuade Mrs. Johnson to make a statement of regret about Sullivan's critical remarks. MacDonald.

endorsement, Sullivan accused Waller of having sought the endorsement himself.³⁰ Sullivan maintained his themes of the first primary--his experience, ability to represent the state with dignity, and a vision for leading Mississippi into a better tomorrow. But, his reaction to Waller's attacks demonstrated that he was on the defensive.

By the time of the runoff, key Eastland people had become alarmed over reports that Sullivan's campaign mastermind Bill Spell of the Godwin Agency had been planting anti-Eastland columns in county newspapers. Eastland, already on bad terms with Sullivan, feared that Sullivan would run against him in 1972 if he won a handsome victory in the gubernatorial race. When Sullivan came close to attacking Eastland in a speech in Meridian, Eastland began actively to oppose Sullivan in the runoff. Although some key Eastland people were already committed to Sullivan, the senator's support greatly facilitated Waller's fundraising and helped him with the court house politicians, most of whom had had their races settled in the first primary.³¹

In the early days of the runoff it was revealed that Swan was supporting Sullivan. Sullivan had set up

³⁰Jackson Daily News, August, 1971.

³¹page.

a special WATS line for Swan to use in contacting his supporters. As Sullivan's endorsement of Coleman in 1963 had seemed incredible, so now did Swan's support of Sullivan, the man he had attacked relentlessly in the first primary. In the meantime, Waller forces were lining up key backers of eliminated first primary candidates, but without any attendant publicity.³²

Waller kept up the attack, calling for a change, urging that the established order be overturned, and calling for the end of political control by the vaguely defined "political machine" in Jackson. Sullivan resisted strong advice to denounce the Williams administration and thereby disassociate himself from the governor, a personal choice by Sullivan based on conscience. The Hederman family, many of whom had been appointed to state boards by Williams, played into Waller's hands by over-reacting in their editorials and news stories. They condemned Waller for having a rally on the coast featuring beer and shrimp and wrote editorials denouncing him for campaigning on Sunday. Obviously biased news stories attempted to "expose" Delos Walker in his efforts to make Waller a carbon copy of Dale Bumpers. The Hederman over-reaction confirmed to many the charge that the Jackson press was a part of the

³²Berry, p. 177; MacDonald; Memphis Commercial Appeal, August 12, 1971.

"Capitol Street gang" and was attempting to make Sullivan "their" governor in 1971.³³

Sullivan's own advertising misjudged the mood of the electorate. His ads portrayed him as the urbane, educated, "silver-haired," distinguished statesman. He was always pictured immaculately dressed and often engaged in sports far removed from the average Mississippian-- e.g., tennis and water-skiing. Sullivan looked like the establishment.³⁴ To make matters worse, a major split developed within his own campaign organization, which ultimately required Sullivan's own intervention.³⁵ Waller's advertising, on the other hand, often showed the candidate in casual, seemingly unrehearsed situations. He appeared natural, friendly, a bit country. Nothing appeared "slick" about Waller, which today is the slickest accomplishment of an ad man.

A final problem for Sullivan was that Evers encouraged blacks to boycott the gubernatorial runoff altogether. Many of them probably would have voted for Sullivan. As it was, Sullivan lost the runoff by a margin

³³Confidential source; Berry, p. 194.

³⁴Sullivan Campaign Tabloid, 1971, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

³⁵MacDonald. This is downplayed by Sullivan but its importance is attested to by numerous participants.

of 54.2% for Waller to 45.8% for him.³⁶

The Republican Party did not field a candidate in the general election. Phillips' poor showing in 1967 and his lukewarm attitude made him an unlikely prospect, and the party did not have another candidate of sufficient stature. More important, however, was the presence of Evers in the general election. It was feared that a Republican and Democratic split might give the election to Evers, or at least resurrect the old Bourbon prophecies of blacks holding the balance of power between competing white parties. So intense was this fear that Gil Carmichael, who wanted to run against Winter for lieutenant governor, was discouraged from doing so. As a consequence, the general election was between Waller and Evers.³⁷

Evers campaigned on the theme, "Don't Vote for a Black Man. Or a White Man. Vote for the Best Man. Evers for Governor."³⁸ His strategy was to appeal to the disgruntled Sullivan moderates in addition to black voters. With a limited budget, he relied on free media by bringing in luminaries from outside Mississippi to campaign for him.

³⁶Mississippi, Secretary of State, Mississippi Official Statistical Register, 1972-1,76, p. 454.

³⁷Mounger; Carmichael; and Reed.

³⁸Evers Campaign Poster in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

Among those who came were Congressman John Conyers, Mayor Richard Hatcher, basketball player Bill Russell, and Mayor John Lindsay.³⁹

Evers' message was delivered largely to black audiences, in part because he received few invitations to traditionally white political gatherings. The message to blacks was simple and obvious: as governor, Evers can do for all blacks what he has done in Fayette as mayor. It was time, he said, to end the political and economic bondage of the past which had been carried out by the state party to which Waller belonged. The support for Waller from Barnett, Williams, Johnson, Stennis and Eastland all confirmed this message. Said Evers, ". . . we're sick of racism. We're tired of being pushed around. We're tired of living on the bottom of the barrell, and we're just not taking it any more."⁴⁰ The repression had hurt whites as well, Evers argued. Whenever he could, the Mayor would address white audiences. He spoke to a group of white and black woodcutters in south Mississippi and supported their strike against Masonite Corporation.⁴¹ He spoke to a group of 300 students at Millsaps College and

³⁹Berry, pp. 203, 239, and 271.

⁴⁰Jackson Daily News, September 16, 1971.

⁴¹Sunday Clarion Ledger-Jackson Daily News, September 19, 1971.

came away with some volunteer workers. At the University of Mississippi Law School, a skeptical audience warmed to Evers as he endorsed prison reform, tuition free colleges, and legalized gambling.⁴² By and large, however, Evers campaign was reaching mostly black audiences.

Waller took a rest from campaigning after the second primary, but MacDonald kept the organization intact and geared up for a full effort in November.⁴³ In early October Waller launched his general election campaign and pledged to visit every area of the state.⁴⁴ He campaigned on the issues of better education, defense of private schools, opposition to busing, vocational education, better highways for north Mississippi, and development of tourist industry. He largely dropped his "Capitol Street gang" theme since it no longer had any relevance to the new campaign situation.⁴⁵ The Democratic Party put on its customary unity rally prior to the general election, and Stennis, Williams, and Barnett all spoke in Waller's behalf.⁴⁶

⁴²Memphis Commercial Appeal, October 7 and 8, 1971.

⁴³MacDonald.

⁴⁴Jackson Daily News, October 5, 1971.

⁴⁵Jackson Daily News, September 8, 1971.

⁴⁶Jackson Daily News, October 29, 1971.

In September Evers filed a suit to have Waller disqualified. Mississippi's Corrupt Practices Act, repealed in 1971, had an archaic limit of \$50,000 per gubernatorial campaign. Since Waller's published expenditures far exceeded this amount, Evers sued. The repealed statute had never been approved by the Justice Department under the Voting Rights Act, and Evers contended that Waller was in violation of the old law.⁴⁷ Said Evers at his press conference, "If Bill is guilty, he's got to go to jail. An' I'll become governor."⁴⁸ The Democrats took the suit seriously enough that the old Citizens' Council warhorse, Judge Tom Brady, an avid Waller supporter, qualified for governor just in case the suit were upheld. When it became obvious that the suit would not be heard prior to the election, Brady urged that no one vote for him.⁴⁹

To Waller's credit, he never injected race into the campaign as an explicit issue. Of course, it was not necessary. In November, general election turnout exceeded primary turnout for the first time in the century. Waller

⁴⁷Jackson Daily News, September 20, 1971.

⁴⁸Berry, pp. 224-225.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 271.

won with 601,222 (77.0%) to 172,762 (22.1%) for Evers, and 6653 (.9%) for Brady.⁵⁰

The gubernatorial election of 1971 was pathbreaking in a number of respects. The old life-form of progressivism was largely defunct--issues of education, public health, roads, charitable institutions, and morality played relatively minor roles in the outcome. A radical transformation in the treatment of the race issue also occurred. Gone were the racial diatribes among major candidates, and if substantial racial feeling remained--and, indeed, it did--it was expressed in subtle ways or suppressed altogether in campaign rhetoric. The character of the two major candidates contributed substantially to this development, since it was not in Waller's basically moderate nature to run a racial campaign and since Sullivan was attempting to win the black vote. In the general election, there was no need for Waller to focus on race, because the physical appearance of the two candidates told the tale fully. The net effect of a full gubernatorial campaign run without appeal to racial prejudice was to seriously impair the racial consensus itself and help usher in an era in which overt coalition politics would be a possibility.

⁵⁰Mississippi, Secretary of State, Official Statistical Register, 1972-1976, p. 455.

The modernization consensus continued to spread. It was significant that there was no real perceived difference between Waller and Sullivan in terms of their commitment to industrialization and commercialization. Industrialization was not even an issue. What was new and profoundly important in 1971 was a new type of class conflict. But it was more than the old agrarian variety. Indeed, elements of the old agrarian class struggle could be seen in the images of Waller as the candidate from the Hills and Sullivan from the heart of the Delta; however, the distinction contained a new coloration of modernization itself--i.e., it was taking on urban and modern characteristics. Waller's "Capitol Street Gang" of 1971 had a lineage back to Vardaman's "Jackson Ring" of 1903. Yet, the attack had been broadened to include the new economic establishment allegedly ruling Mississippi--e.g., powerful attorneys, Mississippi business men, important and wealthy journalists, and economic elites in general. It was no longer an attack just on lawyers for foreign corporations and planters. In a word, the Waller strategy aimed at tapping the resentment of a class in a much more modern, urbanizing, industrializing society.

The contours of this class distinction were somewhat vague in 1971, and it would take future elections to crystallize it. However, the implications of a new and

modern class politics were profound for all the life-forms, not the least of which was racial. The spectre which had haunted the Bourbons a century before suddenly loomed in new garb, as a potentially powerful coalition of small farmers, blue collar workers, lower middle class whites, and blacks challenged the establishment. The candidacy of Evers and the decision by the Republican Party not to field a candidate postponed the development of this mode of politics, but in 1971 the seeds were sown.

1972 Federal Elections

Those who wanted to see the factions of the Democratic Party united had great hope that Waller would effect a merger. The new governor was from a different racial mold than his predecessors, and he had spoken openly about his desire to see the factions unified. Aaron Henry, as Chairman of the Loyalists, received the "call" to the convention and insisted that the Regulars would have to work through Loyalist channels. During December Waller seemed undecided on a strategy, and communications between him and Henry broke down. In the meantime, both factions proceeded with plans for caucuses and a state convention.⁵¹

⁵¹Simpson dissertation, pp. 120-122.

The Loyalists felt that the best procedure for unification would be for both groups to attend the same caucuses and participate in the same process leading to the state convention. Following National Democratic Party guidelines, one delegation would then be sent to Miami. Waller was undecided, and the Regular leadership denied permission for the Loyalists to hold their caucuses at the same time and place as their own. The Regulars scheduled caucuses for 10:00 a.m., and the Loyalists for 8:00 p.m. the same day. Loyalist leaders then urged Waller to encourage Regulars to attend the evening caucuses, but Waller had apparently decided by early January to attempt, instead, a negotiated merger after both factions followed their processes through to the end. Hodding Carter, III, a Loyalist leader, warned that the sides would be too inflexible by that time. It was a blow to the Loyalists' already narrow base of biracial support when AFL-CIO President Claude Ramsay supported the Waller position.⁵²

At the February state convention of the Regulars, ten delegate seats to Miami were held open as a negotiating item with the Loyalists, and a team of five members was

⁵²Ibid., pp. 124-127.

appointed to meet with the Loyalists. The convention was to reassemble on April 8 for a report and further action. The following day, February 27, the Loyalist convention assembled and proceeded with the completion of its delegate selection. Little came from the negotiations, even though the committees did meet. The Loyalists wanted parity in the delegation and on the state executive committee, adoption of the Loyalist constitution, and a loyalty oath to the nominee. Even though the Regulars had opened up their processes tremendously, compared to the past, lingering attitudes and pride made the acceptance of such demands unlikely. Carter had been correct: the positions had become hardened. On April 8 the Regulars reconvened and elected the remainder of their delegation.⁵³

The Regulars filed suit in federal court in an effort to deny the Loyalist faction recognition by the National Democratic Party. The court refused to order the seating of the Regulars but reaffirmed the sole proprietary right of the Regulars to the name "Mississippi Democratic Party." Waller went to Miami and made one final effort to negotiate a settlement. He offered a 60/40 split in the delegation and executive committee and the creation of a "minority council" to be dominated

⁵³Ibid., p. 129-133.

by Loyalists. Loyalist Pat Derian would remain as national committeewoman, but Evers would have to resign as national committeeman in favor of a Regular. A Regular would be chairman and a Loyalist vice-chairman. It was a good faith offer, and in an earlier phase it might have worked. However, at this late hour, the Loyalists rejected the offer for fear that the governor could not deliver. The Credentials Committee, chaired by Patricia Harris and vice-chaired by Hodding Carter himself, voted unanimously to reject the Regular challenge.⁵⁴

The National Democratic Convention nominated McGovern-Eagleton, and the Loyalist delegation returned to Mississippi still alienated from the political structure of the state. Waller denounced the Loyalists as a rump faction which did not represent the people of Mississippi. The Loyalists were unable to mount much campaign for McGovern, given his ultra-liberal image, the Eagleton fiasco, Nixon's southern strategy, and their own alienation from the political order of the state. It was a repeat of 1968 without Wallace. State Democratic leaders and office holders either remained silent or endorsed Nixon.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 136-153.

The more interesting and historic struggle of 1972 occurred at the congressional and senatorial level. The aged Congressman Bill Colmer of the fifth congressional district, Tom Abernathy of the second, and Charles Griffin of the fourth announced their retirements, thus opening up three of Mississippi's five seats. Seeing a parallel to the 1964 situation, which Republicans had regarded as a lost opportunity, they were determined to capitalize on what was going to be a sure Nixon landslide in the state. Two attractive young attorneys filed as Republican candidates in the fourth and fifth districts--Trent Lott, administrative assistant to Colmer, in the fifth, and Thad Cochran, with no prior political experience but with important family ties, in the fourth. Republican Carl Butler filed in the second. The Democratic primaries filled up with hopefuls for the open seats.

One difference between 1964 and 1972 was in the senatorial contest. In 1964 the Republicans would have had little compunction in running a candidate against Stennis, had one been available. In 1972, the White House was opposed to a Republican challenge against Eastland. Nixon and Eastland had had a cordial working relationship, and Eastland was, in fact, quietly helping Nixon behind the scenes in his reelection bid. Furthermore, the White House needed Eastland's help in the Senate during the next

term. Given the White House pressure and the fact that Eastland had just been elevated to President Pro-Tempore, the Republicans might well have avoided a race against Eastland except for one major problem. The always unpredictable James Meredith had returned to Mississippi and announced his intention to run against Eastland as a Republican. The party was suddenly faced with the prospect of having Meredith as the Republican standard bearer in November.⁵⁵

Party elders began the search for a candidate. One young attorney interviewed was John Arthur Eaves of Jackson, whom the search committee rejected and who is presently planning a race for governor in 1979 as a George Wallace-style Democrat. A Meridian car dealer named Gil Carmichael, who had been active in Republican Party affairs since his return to Mississippi in 1961, was a member of the search committee and agreed to make the race himself. His only prior electoral experience was two unsuccessful races for the Legislature as a Republican in Meridian. For the first time in Mississippi history the Republican Party had to hold a statewide primary, an educational experience in itself for the party.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Mounger; and Carmichael.

⁵⁶Carmichael; Reed; and Mounger.

In a low-key campaign in which race was not made an explicitly addressed issue, Carmichael received 18,379 votes to Meredith's 4,680.⁵⁷

The June primaries also saw a Democratic challenge to Eastland from Taylor Webb, former president of the Mississippi Economic Council. Webb had never made a state-wide race and ran an ineffective campaign. Eastland confidants feel today that Webb received encouragement and support from Republicans like Clark Reed, who made available to Webb some of their publicity resources, in an effort either to defeat Eastland or to "soften" him for the general election.⁵⁸ In a low turnout primary, Eastland won 203,847 votes (70.2%) to Webb's 67,656 (23.3%), and a third candidate's 6.5%.⁵⁹

After it became clear that the presidential race would pit McGovern against Nixon and after Eastland won so decisively over Webb, the White House, CREEP, and probably even state Republican leaders became convinced that Eastland would be re-elected. If Reed had been "floating a balloon" with the Webb challenge, it had been badly punctured. Eastland looked invincible, even in the face

⁵⁷In the Public Interest 2 (June 1972): 1.

⁵⁸pace.

⁵⁹In the Public Interest 2 (June 1972): 1.

of McGovern's certain landslide defeat in the state, and the White House put immense pressure on Carmichael and on state party leaders not to run a serious campaign against the senior senator. However, if the White House and state Republican leaders hoped that Carmichael would "play dead" after defeating Meredith in the primary, they were to be disappointed. Carmichael began a vigorous campaign.⁶⁰

The political fireworks for the general election began in early August at the legendary Neshoba County Fair. Republican electoral pioneer Rubel Phillips strongly endorsed Eastland, while at the same time pledging 100% for Nixon. The unspoken strategy of a Nixon-Eastland ticket was emerging. Eastland himself spoke of his close relationship with the President and told his audience that Nixon had had a special phone installed by Eastland's bed from the White House.⁶¹ Carmichael recalls today that when it became obvious that he was making a serious, all-out race, the White House phoned him and sent messages that he was ruining his future and that the President was upset.⁶² Nixon sent messages to the Mississippi

⁶⁰Carmichael; Mounger; and Reed.

⁶¹The Daily Corinthian, August 11, 1972.

⁶²Carmichael.

electorate as clearly as he could without openly endorsing Eastland. For example, in early October Attorney General Kleindienst visited Cleveland, Mississippi at the special request of Eastland. While attending a Chamber of Commerce banquet, Kleindienst openly endorsed Eastland and spent the night at the senator's home.⁶³ Just as incredible, a few weeks before, the Vice President had made a campaign stop in Jackson and specifically endorsed all the G.O.P. candidates except Carmichael. Adding insult to injury, Carmichael was the only Republican candidate not invited to sit on the platform. Reed issued a weak statement saying it was Agnew's policy not to campaign against incumbent senators.⁶⁴

Carmichael turned the heavy-handed Republican tactics to his advantage. He denounced the Phillips endorsement as "one of the ugliest political conspiracies in Mississippi politics," and charged that "the boss politicians are trying to deny the people of this state a choice in November."⁶⁵ Carmichael had to walk a delicate tight-rope by denouncing such events as the Agnew episode without denouncing the popular President and Vice

⁶³Pace; Jackson Daily News, October 5, 1972.

⁶⁴Jackson Daily News, August 30, 1972.

⁶⁵The Daily Corinthian, August 14, 1972.

President. He said that the Agnew affair had been engineered by a "bogus state Republican Party headed by Jim Eastland" and including such people as Rubel Phillips, White House assistant Fred Larue, and towboat magnate Jesse Brent of Greenville. He sympathized with Agnew for having been put in the awkward position by these "bogus Republicans." He also charged that Larue had threatened him with political and financial ruination if he did not cease campaigning.⁶⁶ Carmichael's theme was that the old machine in Mississippi, including "bogus Republicans" in the state G.O.P., was trying to maintain power by re-electing Eastland.

Carmichael attacked Eastland throughout the campaign as a boss politician who did nothing with his power except to help "about 400 fat cats."⁶⁷ He denigrated Eastland's seniority as a "false god" because Mississippi was still at the bottom.⁶⁸ Another attack was to link Eastland with the national Democrats, being led in 1972 by McGovern. Carmichael accused Eastland of being a "Republican type" while in Mississippi but hobnobbing with Kennedy and the

⁶⁶Jackson Daily News, September 30, 1972.

⁶⁷Yazoo City Herald, August 17, 1972.

⁶⁸Biloxi-Gulfport Daily-Herald, August 11, 1972.

other liberal Democrats while in Washington.⁶⁹ He further charged that Eastland was "90% responsible" for Mississippi's poor national image. Regarding the Kleindienst endorsement, Carmichael said that Eastland had gotten the attorney general his job and that Kleindienst was simply paying back a political debt.⁷⁰

Coming from his landslide victory over Webb and knowing of the White House attitude, Eastland did not take Carmichael seriously. The senator did make a number of speeches, had a functioning headquarters and field staff, and helped orchestrate "unity rallies" for Democratic nominees in each congressional district.⁷¹ Yet, for the most part he was aloof from the press and the campaign. On one occasion he ridiculed Carmichael by saying he did not realize that he had opposition.⁷² The most troubling thorn in Eastland's side was the constant questions about his relationship to the McGovern campaign. He steadfastly refused to commit his support in the presidential race, saying that he was running his own race, but at the same time expressing opposition to many of

⁶⁹Pascagoula Mississippi Press, September 29, 1972.

⁷⁰Vicksburg Evening Post, October 6, 1972.

⁷¹Pace; and Barber.

⁷²Memphis Commercial Appeal, October 7, 1972.

McGovern's programs and the Democratic Party platform.⁷³ Eastland stressed his seniority and position as President Pro-Tempore. His campaign brochure showed several pictures of Eastland and Nixon together and of Eastland presiding over the Senate Judiciary Committee. It traced his record in agriculture, portrayed him as an anti-New Dealer when he first came to Washington, recalled his anti-Communist crusades, and praised his effective opposition to civil rights legislation discriminatory to the South.⁷⁴

Carmichael got minimum support from the party hierarchy. His budget was about \$150,000, modest by Republican standards for a statewide race. Mounger was heavily involved in Thad Cochran's congressional campaign and did not turn loose his titanic fund-raising capabilities for Carmichael. Reed lent minimum support, as well. With a modest television budget, Carmichael had to rely on free media coverage and literature distribution.⁷⁵ On Eastland's side, Delos Walker continued to handle the senator's media as well as publicity for the unity rallies; but, Walker was heavily involved in more closely contested

⁷³Memphis Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1972.

⁷⁴Eastland Campaign Brochure, 1972, in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁷⁵Carmichael; and Mounger.

aces in other states. His work in 1972 was judged far less effective than it had been for Waller in 1971.⁷⁶

On election day, Carmichael surprised the pundits by polling 39% of the vote. Added to the votes of two minor independents (including the redoubtable Prentiss Walker), Eastland's percentage was held to 58.0%.⁷⁷ Given the open Nixon-Eastland alliance and given the fact that Eastland was President Pro-Tempore in a state that revered seniority, the results had to be considered a triumph in defeat for Carmichael personally and for the Mississippi Republican Party, despite their lack of enthusiasm for Carmichael's aggressive candidacy.

While Eastland was winning with 58%, Nixon swept the state with 78.2%, his banner state. McGovern received 19.6%, down almost 25,000 votes from that of Humphrey in 1968. Even the blacks were less enthusiastic about McGovern. On the same day, two out of the three contested congressional seats went Republican--the fourth to Cochran and the fifth to Lott.⁷⁸

Although Mississippi had rounded several political corners in 1971, the presidential election the following

⁷⁶pace.

⁷⁷In the Public Interest 2 (November 27, 1972): 1.

⁷⁸Ibid.

year illustrated the limited nature of the change. The largely white leadership could not bring itself to accept the terms necessary for merging the Democratic Party factions, and the white electorate found McGovern far too liberal. With presidential Republicanism having become acceptable, Nixon swept the state. The life-form of new conservatism was highly salient, so much so that even though the vote split primarily along racial lines McGovern's liberalism even dampened black enthusiasm.

In federal elections for the Congress the life-forms were confused. Blacks were largely Democratic in orientation, yet the nominee for the Senate was their arch enemy Jim Eastland. Many elements in the economic establishment who were otherwise becoming increasingly Republican had intimate ties to Eastland and his power in Washington. In addition, it was an open secret that the Republican heirarchy was actually opposing its own nominee, Carmichael. Absent an aroused racial consensus, the small farmers and rural people of Mississippi still tended to be Democratic, yet it was Carmichael who spoke much more in the neo-populist, anti-establishment terms than did Eastland. In short, the emerging configurations of 1971 were generally confused by these anomalies in 1972.

The Gubernatorial Election of 1975

Out of Waller's turbulent administration arose the elections of 1975. The governor's record had been mixed on almost every score. His relations with the Legislature were tempestuous and conflictful--e.g., he vetoed more bills in his first year than any governor since World War II had in an entire administration. Yet, he achieved some major successes, such as a large "corridor" highway program with accompanying financing legislation. He fought public battles with some of the major economic interests in the state, especially the large banks, while at the same time chartering some thirty-plus new banks. Waller proclaimed a statewide "Medgar Evers Day" and appointed blacks to visible positions in his administration; yet, he also opposed funding for public health programs and facilities under black control in Jackson and Mound Bayou. He also pardoned a Ku Klux Klan member convicted in the Vernon Dahmer bombing murder. Almost the entire "establishment" was thoroughly alienated from Waller by the end of his administration, and, as a result, one got the impression from the media that he had become as unpopular as Williams. However, Waller had retained a popularity and following among the "silent majority" of small farmers and other elements. Part of that residual popularity was due to his widely publicized battle with

some of the Legislature's powerful and unpopular leaders-- such as, Senator Bill Burgin, Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.⁷⁹

William Winter, a sure candidate in 1975, had become identified with the legislative establishment in his role as lieutenant governor. From the beginning of Waller's term Winter had all but announced his intention to seek the governorship in 1975. The racially moderate minority which he mobilized in 1967 had become the majority in the Waller-Sullivan race; and by 1975, Winter's image of the idealistic, "New South" moderate had been lost to history. In a way Sullivan and Winter had parallel careers: both moved from the outside in their early races to the center of the establishment.

Another sure candidate in 1975 was Cliff Finch, former district attorney from Batesville, Mississippi, who had run against Winter for lieutenant governor in 1971. Although Finch's candidacy was not taken seriously at first, he had spent the four years since 1971 indefatigably politicking. It was also felt that a "Waller candidate" would be in the race; and after considerable speculation and jockeying, Maurice Dantin, attractive

⁷⁹For a brief account of some aspects of the Waller administration, see Bass and DeVries, pp. 212-213.

young district attorney from Marion County in southwest Mississippi, emerged as the administration-backed candidate. The fourth candidate in the field was John Arthur Eaves, rebuffed by the Republicans in 1972 and now running as a Democrat. Four minor candidates were Leman Gandy, David Perkins, Karl Mertz, and Paul Oliver.

Winter, enjoying the support of many old-line Democratic leaders who had opposed him in 1967, announced in late April. Winter did not produce a detailed platform, as he had in 1967, but instead relied on broad appeals. Feeling that there was widespread dissatisfaction with the appearance of chaos during Waller's administration, Winter projected himself as a candidate who had the experience and who knew how to get things done. In his announcement, for example, he reminded voters that he would not require any "on the job training" as governor.⁸⁰ He proclaimed a "fifth freedom" for Mississippians, "the freedom to enjoy some of the money we are working for." He called for trimming government and holding the line on taxes so that every man could enjoy the fruits of his labor. Realizing that government had become bloated at all levels, Winter promised that his administration would be sensitive to the average

⁸⁰Jackson Daily News, April 24, 1975.

man. He committed himself to improved education and to better paying jobs.⁸¹ The main theme of Winter's appeal, however, was his quiet competency and his experience: "Loud talk and frantic activity are not substitutes for competence and experience. We need . . . a man who knows how to get things done, who knows how to work with the Legislature and with other public officials, who can make things happen."⁸²

Winter did not capture a major issue, but rather emphasized his record in the areas of open government, reorganization, historic preservation, conservation, programs for the aged, and public ethics. His basically "soft" and low-key message was summed up in the Winter campaign brochure:

THE QUIET MAN NOBODY OWNS, EVERYBODY RESPECTS. William Winter is one of those easy, quiet men you read about in the history books. But seldom in the headlines. Not a grand-stander or a glad-hander, William Winter has always had more faith in hard work than loud talk. Now Winter is the only candidate in this Governor's race with the real experience and proven ability to do the job."⁸³

⁸¹North Mississippi Herald, undated.

⁸²"Statement by Lt. Gov. William Winter Announcing His Candidacy for Governor of Mississippi," April 23, 1975, in possession of author.

⁸³Winter Campaign Brochure, 1975, in the possession of author.

Winter was the clear front-runner and suffered in the same way that Sullivan had in 1971. Most of the other candidates began to attack him. The major assault came from Dantin, who was leading the Waller "ticket." Despite protestations to the contrary from the governor,⁸⁴ it was clear that Waller was supporting Dantin. Delos Walker, still close to Waller, handled Dantin's campaign. Dantin accused Winter of violating the state constitution by virtue of his law firm's bond practice. Winter had pioneered the lucrative bond practice in Mississippi; and since the office of Lieutenant Governor in Mississippi is part time, he had retained affiliation with the firm. Even though the charge was largely without merit, it was a highly complex issue and difficult to answer. Dantin made the charge in his speeches throughout the campaign and ran numerous television commercials in the closing weeks of the first primary attacking Winter. The lieutenant governor answered the charges in his press conferences and speeches, but it was no match for Dantin's saturation of paid media. Elmore Greaves, right-wing fanatic who always opposed Winter, filed a complaint with the Mississippi Democratic Executive Committee asking that Winter be disqualified for violating the state constitution.

⁸⁴Biloxi-Gulfport Daily Herald, July 3, 1975.

Even though the complaining was dismissed as a "politically inspired" ploy, it gave extra play to the charge.⁸⁵

Dantin also accused Winter of having made a "million dollars" from collecting the black market tax on "illegal whisky" while serving as state tax collector.⁸⁶ It fit together with Dantin's bond-practice charge and in his overall attack on "career politicians" who had profited at public expense for many years. Dantin's slogan played on this theme as well: "Dantin--More Than a Politician."⁸⁷ A telephone poll conducted by Winter's pollster, Peter Hart, the weekend after the first primary showed that Dantin's charges had severely damaged Winter's hitherto solid reputation for honesty and integrity.⁸⁸

Another attack on Winter was the accusation that he was weak and indecisive, an assertion stemming from Williams' 1967 campaign charge that Winter had held only "ladies' jobs" in government and confirmed in the minds of many by his formal and stiff performances in press conferences. Dantin repeatedly criticized Winter,

⁸⁵The Mississippi Press, July 31, 1975.

⁸⁶The Mississippi Press, July 29, 1975.

⁸⁷Dantin Campaign Brochure in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

⁸⁸Poll data, campaign notes, and personal recollection of the author.

for example, for having provided "weak leadership" to the state Senate as lieutenant governor.⁸⁹

Evers hurt Winter among the blacks. The Mayor had been denied permission to speak before the Mississippi Senate during Winter's term as lieutenant governor and despite the fact that Winter had been out of town when the incident occurred, Evers had held Winter personally responsible. Winter had radio spots especially produced to run on black stations, and Evers publicly attacked this practice, saying that Winter was "talking out of both sides of his mouth." Although Winter correctly noted that such practice was standard in campaigns and accused Evers of making "a mountain out of a molehill," the attack hurt Winter among some black elements.⁹⁰ Thus, even though Winter had been the "liberal hope" of the state during the turbulent 1960s and even though Evers himself was not a candidate in 1975, the volatile and unpredictable Mayor damaged Winter in a constituency which was expected to support him strongly.

No one took Cliff Finch seriously at first. He announced himself as "the working man's candidate" and devoted one day each week to working at various blue

⁸⁹Jackson Daily News, July 25, 1975.

⁹⁰Columbus Commercial Dispatch, July 4, 1975.

collar and farming jobs--e.g., driving a bulldozer in Jackson, operating a drag line in Greenwood, and plowing a field near his hometown of Batesville. These activities would attract free press and would also be incorporated into Finch's television ads.⁹¹ His entire campaign had a rough look to it, symbolized most notably in a crudely constructed brochure telling of Finch's life and program. A political column appearing in late June summed up the appraisal of most observers and participants at that point in the campaign:

While in the thick of the battle with Dantin for the runoff spot, Finch has given the campaign a circus-like atmosphere with his pitch to the "working men and women of Mississippi." Though personable and a hard campaigner, Finch has never been accused of being a heavyweight.

He has made news by plowing a field, working as a mechanic's helper in a tractor repair shop, operating a dragline, working in a service station, etc., in a sideshow which is hopefully underestimating the intelligence of Mississippi voters.⁹²

Finch had struck a chord, however, with Mississippi's silent, non-main-street majority, much the same as Waller had done in 1971. The difference was that Finch did not enjoy the support of any of the state's established

⁹¹Jackson Daily News, June 17, 1975; Clarksdale Press Register, June 28, 1975.

⁹²Wayne W. Weidie, Grenada Daily Sentinel-Star, June 27, 1975.

politicians--as Waller had had in 1971 with Eastland's support--and no one took him seriously until it was too late. In style and rhetoric, if not in issues, Finch orchestrated a brilliant appeal which pitted the classes against the masses, more explicitly so than even Waller had done in 1971.

Early in the campaign Winter played into Finch's hands in a disastrous error. In his kick-off rally, Winter had said, "I am convinced that the people do not want a clown or stuntman leading them for four years"; and a Winter campaign aide later identified Finch as the "clown."⁹³ Less than a week after the statement, Finch responded in what was to be a persistent theme of his speeches and advertising: Finch claimed not to feel that he was better than "anybody else who is working by the sweat of his brow. If they call them rednecks, clown, or whatever, then I'm proud to be one."⁹⁴ Finch repeated the theme throughout the campaign, "They laugh at us and call us clowns." It set up the "us-them" dichotomy that painted Winter as a part of the establishment. Furthermore, because of Dantin's savage attacks on Winter, Finch

⁹³Jackson Daily News, June 17, 1975.

⁹⁴Sunday Clarion Ledger-Jackson Daily News, June 17, 1975.

could play the "clean guy" role. He never had to attack his opponents.

Finch did not discuss specific governmental programs except in the vaguest terms. He continually referred to the needs of the "working men and women of Mississippi" and promised an administration sensitive to them. His main plank was the so-called MIDAS program (Mississippi Internal Development Assistance System), a roughly sketched proposal for financing industrial development in the state.⁹⁵ But, overall, his campaign was one of image and style, not issues. He stressed his humble origins, his identification with the working man and woman. The symbol of the Finch campaign was a lunch box and his slogan was "Elect Cliff Finch Governor: Working with You to Build Mississippi." Said his brochure,

Cliff is working with everyday men and women--the people he will work for when he is governor. A lot of folks talk about what they are going to do. Cliff Finch does it! You'll see him putting in full days (and nights) on the kinds of jobs most of us do for a living. We need a working man as governor--not just someone who talks a good game. We need a governor who works and thinks like we do!"⁹⁶

Winter calculated that Dantin was "the man to beat"

⁹⁵The Mississippi Press, July 31, 1975.

⁹⁶Finch Campaign Brochure in the Mississippi State University Special Collections.

in the runoff and paid little attention to Finch after the "clown" remark. Attempting to make the Delos Walker firm of Memphis an issue in the election, Winter accused Dantin of being an ad man's candidate and a "plastic man." Evers attacked Dantin repeatedly on this point as well, and it hurt Dantin considerably.⁹⁷ Regarding the bond charges, Winter defended himself as best he could and accused Dantin of mud-slinging and "pig pen politics."⁹⁸ Sensitive to the charge of weakness, Winter attempted to wage a "tough" campaign and to cite his record: "Winter has given the office of lieutenant governor added muscle, so much that there was a recent move to strip the position of some of its power. He'll bring the same decisive leadership to the Governor's office."⁹⁹

By the end of the first primary it was widely agreed that Finch had been underestimated. Finch's "silent organization" had dipped further down into the socio-economic strata of counties than had Waller in 1971 and had not been perceived by opposition camps until late in

⁹⁷Sunday Clarion-Ledger-Jackson Daily News, June 22, 1975; Biloxi-Gulfport Daily Herald, July 13, 1975.

⁹⁸Grenada Daily Sentinental Star, July 28, 1975.

⁹⁹Winter Campaign Brochure, 1975, in the possession of the author.

the first primary. Finch's advertising which seemed to pundits so crude and "gimmicky" was hitting a lower, alienated strata with impact. Winter's advertising, on the other hand, while not actually damaging as was Sullivan's in 1971, was seen as weak. It did not give the candidate any depth, which he badly needed, and portrayed him as everything to every man. His campaign slogan "Elect William Winter Governor--He's for Real," was so widely ridiculed that it had to be abandoned in the later stages of the campaign. Furthermore, Winter suffered all the disadvantages of incumbency and of being the front-runner: organizational problems, overstaffing at the upper levels of the campaign and understaffing at the "foot soldier" level, over-confidence and apathy among supporters, and a long record in government which could provide targets for attack. Dantin was damaged by the Delos Walker issue, and his constant attacks on Winter not only hurt his opponent but discredited him as well. It was widely felt that Dantin was the spoiler for Winter and himself, and Finch was the beneficiary.¹⁰⁰

The first primary results showed Dantin a distant third with 23% of the vote, Finch second with 32%, and

¹⁰⁰Personal recollections of author.

Winter leading the ticket with 36%.¹⁰¹ The psychological momentum was clearly with Finch as the underdog who had "come from nowhere" to enter the runoff with an impressive 253,829 votes.

Says Winter today, "It was obvious to me from the first primary on that we had a real uphill battle, and barring something that we could really nail Finch on, we probably couldn't be elected, and we were never able to put a glove on him."¹⁰² The one effort to "put a glove" on Finch was the issue of Finch's out-of-state connections. Amid rumors that Finch's campaign was receiving large amounts of New Orleans money, including support from organized crime, Wilson F. Minor, dean of the Jackson press corps, broke a story in the New Orleans Times Picayune revealing that Howard Netterville, a Louisiana hotel man, was in Mississippi working full-time for Finch. The article implicated Netterville's cousin, William Netterville, as an associate of New Orleans racketeer and alleged Mafia don Carlos Marcello. Netterville denied any connection with Marcello, however, and the issue did not "take."¹⁰³

¹⁰¹In the Public Interest 2 (August 1975): 2-3.

¹⁰²Winter.

¹⁰³New Orleans Times Picayune, undated; Jackson Daily News, August 26, 1975.

Winter mishandled a press question relating to the issue by saying his own campaign staff was investigating the charges. Finch turned the entire affair to his advantage by saying that Winter was engaging in eleventh-hour desperation tactics.

Finch kept up the same themes that he had used in the first primary. In the first day of the runoff he sacked groceries in a Jackson supermarket.¹⁰⁴ Winter, hopelessly tagged as the candidate of the establishment, still suffering among Swan-type voters from the image as a racial liberal, and with his own integrity now impugned by Dantin, suffered one of the worst second-primary defeats in Mississippi history. Finch won with 442,864 votes (57.7%) to Winter's 324,749 (42.3%).¹⁰⁵

Perhaps the best postmortem analysis of Winter's defeat came long before the campaign even opened in a memorandum written by his media consultants from Atlanta. They were outlining an advertising proposal and began with an assessment of Winter's strengths and weaknesses:

Since 1969 we have been deeply involved in six political races, resulting in one loss, five wins. Not one did we enter with such a decided lead as William Winter holds in Mississippi

¹⁰⁴Vicksburg Evening Post, August 6, 1975.

¹⁰⁵Mississippi, Secretary of State, Official Statistical Register 1976-1980, p. 465.

today. It's almost an embarrassment of riches. . . .

But as we see it, your very strengths can turn into weaknesses. The enemy is apathy. . . . Establishment-oriented candidates are an easy mark. Sooner or later somebody is going to level the charge that William Winter is a fat cat. He's tied in with big money, the special interests. He huddles with the high and mighty. We've used these tactics ourselves again and again with 100% success. In state politics we've found the rich guys get into the country club, but the lean and hungry ones get into the capitol. . . .

In summation, you are a thoroughly decent man. But so far the spark appears to be lacking. Your ties to wealth and power are suspect. Even from your decided lead, you are vulnerable.¹⁰⁶

Gil Carmichael announced his candidacy for governor early in 1975 and began campaigning while the Democratic primary was underway. In contrast to 1972, he was unopposed in the Republican primary and fully supported by the state Republican heirarchy. For example, Mounger unleashed his efforts for Carmichael, raising, according to his own claims, approximately \$250,000 singlehandedly.¹⁰⁷ Whereas Carmichael's 1972 budget was about \$150,000, in 1975 it was over \$700,000. Early in the race Carmichael made two controversial decisions: one, to run on hard

¹⁰⁶"An Advertising Proposal for William Winter" in possession of the author.

¹⁰⁷Mounger.

issues, and, two, to hire North Carolina consultant Walter DeVries to handle the polling and media. It was Carmichael's calculation that if he ran a bland campaign in which he did not differentiate himself from Finch, the electorate would choose the Democrat.¹⁰⁸

The issues he chose were, indeed, hard, especially in comparison to the basically no-issue Democratic primaries of 1971 and 1975. If one issue had to be chosen as the centerpiece of his candidacy it was Carmichael's call for a new constitution, a problem no Democrat had touched since Coleman. Carmichael's advertising during the summer played especially heavily on this issue. In line with constitutional revision was his call for major government reorganization and statewide property reassessment. Carmichael accused the Democrats of "pillow fighting" because they refused to discuss the hard issues.¹⁰⁹ He also endorsed an "Oregon type law" which would have decriminalized the possession of less than an ounce of marijuana but stiffened penalties for drug pushers.¹¹⁰ Carmichael took on another issue Democrats had avoided because of its racial overtones--namely, the

¹⁰⁸Carmichael.

¹⁰⁹Columbus Commercial Dispatch, July 4, 1975.

¹¹⁰Sun Herald, May 10, 1975.

endorsement of a compulsory school attendance law through the eighth grade. While calling for state aid for small business, he also attacked the "sacred" tax exemptions for new industries, saying it was time to quit giving business a free ride in Mississippi.¹¹¹ He endorsed the Equal Rights Amendment, a proposal that had never gotten out of committee in the Mississippi Legislature and which failed to get the support of a single woman serving in that body.¹¹² The most controversial stand Carmichael embraced, however, was his support for handgun registration.

To get his message across, Carmichael relied heavily on television and daily newspapers, a strategy which gave it an automatic urban bias. He ran some twenty-six different commercials stressing the various issue positions.¹¹³ In an effort to stress the honesty and openness issues--in addition, perhaps, to tapping the residual doubts about Finch's campaign connections--Carmichael went beyond the requirements of the law and disclosed all of his contributions above \$250, as well as his net worth and income tax returns.¹¹⁴ Organizationally, the Republican party machinery,

¹¹¹Natchez Democrat, May 13, 1975.

¹¹²Bass and DeVries, p. 216.

¹¹³Carmichael.

¹¹⁴Natchez Democrat, July 4, 1975.

as well as the supporters from 1972, were involved; and, again, the organization was strongest in urban environments where the party had mastered the techniques of canvassing, leafletting, etc. On the state level, another organizational effort was the "Democrats for Carmichael" set up specifically to appeal to disaffected Winter supporters and other Democratic moderates.¹¹⁵

Finch kept up the same style campaign that he used in the primary, stressing his working man's theme. One important difference was the open support for Finch from Charles Evers and Aaron Henry. In the primary, Evers had supported Finch, but Henry had been for Winter. The Finch appeal, which was based on a vague sense of class and not on any racial issue, had an appeal to blacks; and the support of the state's two most visible and important black leaders helped solidify that support. It also helped pave the way for a rapprochement between the two warring Democratic factions. In the fall of 1975 the Loyalists and Regulars discovered that they had a common enemy--the Republicans.¹¹⁶ Other signs of the emerging coalition between traditional Democrats and the new

¹¹⁵Meridian Star, October 3, 1975.

¹¹⁶Bass and DeVries, p. 216.

Loyalist elements could be seen in the AFL-CIO's strong endorsement of the Democratic ticket¹¹⁷ and in pledges of support from Stennis, Waller, Winter and other prominent Democrats.¹¹⁸ Eastland gave the strongest endorsement and supported Finch fully. Said the senior senator, "the people should beat every Republican in sight."¹¹⁹ Eastland's newfound Democratic loyalty might well have stemmed from the fall of 1972.

Although Finch did not inject any major new issues in the general election, he did attack some of those taken by Carmichael. He promised to "control criminals, not guns," argued that Mississippi did not need a new constitution, and said that the emphasis should be on "quality" education and not "compulsory" education.¹²⁰ Thus, the Mississippi electorate was treated to the rare political event of a hotly contested campaign in which there were clear differences among the candidates on major issues.

Mississippi and the nation were stunned on election day to find that Carmichael had come close to being elected governor. Finch won with 369,568 (52.2%) to 319,932 (45.2%)

¹¹⁷Biloxi-Gulfport Daily Herald, September 17, 1975.

¹¹⁸Sun Herald, September 27, 1975; Vicksburg Evening Post, September 13, 1975.

¹¹⁹Sunday Clarion Ledger-Jackson Daily News, October 5, 1975.

¹²⁰Meridian Star, October 28, 1975.

for Carmichael and 18,833 (2.6%) for Kirksey.¹²¹

Carmichael and Republican Party elders have radically different interpretations of his campaign. Mounger, Reed, and others feel that Carmichael had the race won and lost it with his gun control, marijuana, and constitution positions. Mounger, in particular, is bitter because, he claims, Carmichael would take no advice from anyone but DeVries. The party leaders warned Carmichael against these issues, but he persisted in espousing them. In Mounger's view, the gun control statement alone cost Carmichael 100,000 votes.¹²² Carmichael, on the other hand, claims that the issues got him as far as he got and that without them he would have made only a Phillips-level showing. According to the polls the gun registration position was a "wash," losing about 2.5% but picking up 3%. The only mistake, Carmichael concedes, is that he brought it out too late. According to Carmichael, the compulsory school attendance position became one of his most powerful issues and resulted in the state educational establishment backing him. Likewise, the constitution issue grew in popular support from about 8% when Carmichael

¹²¹Mississippi, Secretary of State, Official Statistical Register 1976-1980, p. 497.

¹²²Reed; Mounger; and Pickering.

first discussed the proposition to about 60% support by the end of the campaign. Carmichael conceded that he erred in not utilizing early morning radio to get his message to the rural whites and in not finding a good "black" issue. Carmichael feels that he got about 17% of the black vote and 60% of the white vote, mostly in urban areas. Any appreciable inroads into the blacks or rural whites would have resulted in victory.¹²³

The gubernatorial primary of 1975 sharpened the distinctions of 1971. Both elections lacked hard issues and were run on the style level. The racial consensus continued to crumble and decline as a cutting edge of campaigns, as did the old progressivism. The feature of the electoral landscape which emerged most dramatically was the new class cleavage, pioneered by Waller in 1971 and deepened by Finch's brilliant image campaign in 1975. In Finch's sharpened version, moreover, he took a further step away from the agrarian character of the conflict from which the life-form sprang and into the more industrial-urban notion of class. His appeal was to the "working men and women" of Mississippi who "shouldered the burdens of everyday life." Winter was painted by both Dantin and Finch, although in different ways, as a scion of the

¹²³Carmichael.

business-lawyer-political establishment. Finch's message came close to one of class suppression.

The urban-industrial as well as agricultural dimension of class conflict in 1975 placed this evolving life-form more clearly within the confines of the growing modernization consensus. Otherwise, both Winter and Finch were not highly differentiated on the issue of industrialization. Winter represented perhaps a more conservative pro-business mode of economic development, whereas Finch emphasized the concerns of laboring people within an expanding economy. Finch's commitment to industrial development, however, was never questioned and could be seen in his vague but effective MIDAS proposal.

Perhaps the most significant development of 1975 was the effect of the general election on the life-forms and, just as important, their relationship to political structure in the state. In the primary the class cleavage among whites was pronounced; however, the racial aspect of the vote clouded the total picture. Blacks generally divided their second primary support between Winter, supported by Aaron Henry, and Finch, backed fully by Charles Evers. Winter's base in the black community seemed to come from older Negroes who remembered him as the liberal hope of the sixties, whereas younger blacks without that memory opposed Winter because of Evers' attack on him and

supported Finch, based somewhat on his class appeal. These cross-currents sorted themselves out in the general election along party lines in what must be seen as one of the major institutional developments of the century.

Finch managed to bring together the old coalition dreaded by the Bourbons of the "rednecks" and "black-necks"--that is, the rural and urban lower class and the blacks. Carmichael and the Republicans, on the other hand, coalesced the basically white, urban middle class. Suddenly, a classic modernization conflict took place in a classic American institutional setting for the first time in Mississippi history: the middle class versus the lower urban and rural class, all of whom were committed to economic development and an expanding modernization consensus.

1976 Federal Elections

Finch had promised in the general election campaign to unify the Democratic Party.¹²⁴ Under his leadership and that of Aaron Henry the Mississippi Democratic Party was reunited in the presidential election of 1976, but the events had been moving in that direction since the election of Waller in 1971.

¹²⁴Meridian Star, October 28, 1975.

The disastrous showing of McGovern in 1972 proved that while the Loyalists had the "call" to convention their faction had little electoral base among the white electorate. This had also been true in 1968 for Humphrey and in 1971 for Evers. The Loyalists had a genuine electoral need for unification.¹²⁵ From the Regulars came a dual motivation: one, to regain participation and influence in presidential politics, and, two, to protect the seniority of the congressional delegation. The second factor was highly important, because Eastland's seniority rights had been accepted by the Democratic caucus in 1973 by a harrowing four-vote margin. Eastland, thereafter, began to push for a reconciliation between the factions.¹²⁶

The reconciliation efforts of 1972, though unsuccessful, were important steps in that direction. After the elections, Waller's intemperate public statements about the Loyalists and the federal court suit were irritants to progress, yet the momentum for reconciliation was coming from both sides. The Kansas City Mini-Convention

¹²⁵Paul Jeffrey Stekler, "The Unification of the Mississippi Democratic Party: Realignment and Reorientation in Mississippi Politics," an unpublished paper in possession of the author, unpaginated.

¹²⁶Bass and DeVries, p. 208.

of 1974 was an important step, because many Regulars participated at the urging of Governor Waller in the delegate-selection process held by the Loyalists. Wallace had also sent word from Alabama that he wanted as much representation in Kansas City as possible; therefore, many Wallace supporters participated in the caucuses. The Executive Committee of the Regulars repudiated Waller for his public call for participation in the Loyalists' caucus process, thus indicating a split between Waller and his own party leaders. The consensus for unity was not yet fully formed, and the effort to have Waller and Henry co-chair the delegation to Kansas City fell apart when Waller declined. The Regulars did, however, appoint one of their members to co-chair the delegation, and many state leaders had representation at the Mini-Convention. It was a large step toward unification.¹²⁷

The 1975 gubernatorial election provided the basis for the final merger of the factions, and the 1976 presidential race, the forum. Henry's and Evers' strong support for Finch in the November election produced the first governor since Reconstruction beholden to black voters, and the day after his election Finch pledged to unify the party. With strong support coming from D.N.C. Chairman

¹²⁷Steckler paper.

Robert Strauss and from Senator Eastland, the question became one of strategy and tactics. What was finally agreed up was a complex set of procedures to insure a fully representative selection process that would satisfy D.N.C. guidelines. It was further decided that the state executive committee would be expanded to 100 members and that the state party would have co-chairmen, presumably to come from each of the former factions. Finch pledged to use all of his influence to see that Henry and Riddell would be elected co-chairmen. With these understandings the Regular executive committee voted to call their caucuses at the same time as the Loyalists and at sites mutually agreed on by both factions.¹²⁸

Another factor which facilitated merger was the field of Democratic presidential hopefuls. The Iowa caucuses were on a Tuesday, the first in the country, and Mississippi's followed on Saturday. As a result, most of the major Democratic candidates had active campaign organizations in Mississippi for the first time in recent history. Furthermore, there was a candidate to represent every point of view in the party--from Fred Harris to George Wallace. Many of the unification-minded Loyalists and Regulars found Jimmy Carter an ideal candidate for

¹²⁸Ibid.

both groups. Finch supported an uncommitted slate; Eastland was backing Bentsen; Henry and other black leaders, plus some liberal whites, supported Shriver; and a small group of liberal whites ran the Harris campaign. Carter's campaign attracted a broad group of younger white and black moderates. George Wallace also had an active campaign, although he himself visited the state only once. Wallace received the endorsement of former governors Williams, Johnson, and Barnett. The entire process was new and complicated to Mississippians, as they were actively involved in caucus politics for the first time.¹²⁹

Through the precinct caucuses, county conventions, congressional district conventions, and state convention, the process worked remarkably well given its complexity. What resulted was a united party headed by Riddell and Henry, undergirded by a one-hundred-member executive committee consisting of 27 blacks, 53 Wallace supporters, and moderates. It was an innately unstable coalition held

¹²⁹Steckler paper; personal recollections of the author, who served as Carter's coordinator for north Mississippi. Hitherto, the caucuses involved little more than a few election workers and friends of the new governor who came to the appointed place on the appointed Saturday morning and made decisions over informal conversation and coffee. In the author's home precinct, for example, there had been about five or six voters to show up for the 1972 precinct caucus. In 1976 there were between eighty and ninety. This phenomenon occurred throughout the state.

together at the top by the force of men like Finch, Eastland, Riddell, and Henry. Many county committees had to have co-chairmen to satisfy both factions at the local level. Henry had difficulty holding suspicious and disaffected blacks in line, while Riddell was termed a "traitor" by many of the old militant Wallace types. Had the nominee of the Democratic Party been anyone other than Carter, it is unlikely that the unification would have survived the presidential race.¹³⁰

While the Democratic Party was undertaking this agonizing unification, the Republican Party in Mississippi was undergoing severe centripetal effects from the Reagan-Ford contest. As the Ford-Reagan contest tightened, Mississippi came to play an increasingly decisive role. Under the leadership of Clarke Reed, who had been Nixon's political kingpin in the deep South, the state convention of the Mississippi Republican Party had chosen its delegation to Kansas City without much control from the top. Reed apparently relied on his old "bet hedging" strategy: if it were a real contest Mississippi would go under the unit rule for the conservative (i.e., Reagan) and, if not, for the sure winner. Reed, however, had not controlled

¹³⁰Riddell; Henry; Steckler paper; personal recollections of the author.

the state convention carefully and had given up the chairmanship to a young state senator, Charles Pickering, from Laurel. Reed was still to lead the delegation to the Republican National Convention. Many of the delegates and alternates were selected from the "new" elements in the state party, some of whom had come out of the Carmichael campaign of 1975. Carmichael was committed to Ford, and as the nomination fight tightened nationwide Mississippi became a critical battleground. Carmichael and young Jackson City Commissioner Doug Shanks led the forces for Ford; Mounger and Pickering, for Reagan; and Reed tried to hedge his bets with both camps. Reagan and Schweiker visited Mississippi, as did the President himself. At Kansas City there was much talk of the Mississippi delegation, which had remained uncommitted, being the "kingmaker"; however, the indecision and weakness of Reed made Mississippi lose the opportunity. By "passing" on the roll call on rule 16-C--the test vote for Reagan on requiring all candidates to name in advance their vice-presidential choices--Mississippi allowed Florida to cast the decisive votes against the measure. Under the unit rule, Mississippi cast its thirty votes for the Ford position. The loss of 16-C ended any hopes for Reagan. Not only had Mississippi missed its opportunity to be "kingmaker," but the delegation had voted against the hearts

and minds of the rank-and-file Republicans in the state, who supported Reagan strongly. As was the case for the party nationally, in Mississippi it staggered away from Kansas City scarred and divided.¹³¹

Carter emerged with a huge advantage in Mississippi immediately after the conventions. He was the first deep South nominee for President in a century, had behind him a unified state party, and was faced by an opposing party wounded by dissension and bitterness. Both parties mounted the most thoroughly organized presidential campaigns in history. Danny Cupit, a young white attorney from Jackson, and Fred Banks, a young black member of the state Legislature, headed the Carter campaign. It was a sign of the tenuous unity that joint coordinators had to be appointed from the old factions both at the state level and in many counties. Another sign of the unstable coalition could be seen in the campaign literature--the national Carter/Mondale brochure was used among blacks and liberal whites, and a special Mississippi-produced brochure among the old Regulars. The Mississippi piece

¹³¹This account based on Jules Witcover, Marathon: The Pursuit of the Presidency, 1972-1976 (New York: The Viking Press, 1977), Chapters 30-33; Reed; Mounger; and Pickering.

made no mention of Mondale, showed pictures of Carter with Finch, Eastland, and Stennis, and stressed Carter's "southernness."¹³²

The Republican campaign was headed formally by Tommy Giordano, party activist from Rankin County who served as Chairman of the Ford-Dole Steering Committee in Mississippi. A vice chairman was Leon Bramlett, a former chairman of the Democratic Party and an obvious symbol for disaffected Democrats. The new chairman Charles Pickering provided the real political direction of the Ford Campaign with the assistance of the professional Mississippi Republican Party staff in Jackson.¹³³

Although several former Democratic congressmen (Griffin, Williams, Abernathy) supported their old colleague Gerald Ford, the Democratic officialdom supported the national party slate with a unanimity unseen in over three decades. Governor Finch headed the steering committee with four co-chairmen: Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Gandy, Mississippi's premier female politician and a protege of Bilbo; Democratic Party Co-Chairmen Tom Riddell and Aaron Henry; and Jack Shearer, Sr., an old warrior

¹³²Personal recollections of author and campaign material in author's possession.

¹³³Pickering.

of the far right. Most of the state's prominent Democratic politicians served on the Steering Committee. Stennis and Eastland appeared on numerous occasions for the ticket. Former Governor Ross Barnett, architect of the 1960 Unpledged Elector defection, supported Carter fully.

With almost unanimous support from the black community and heavy majorities among Hills whites, Carter barely carried the state with a margin of some 14,000 votes in the heaviest presidential turnout in history. Ford swept the urban areas and retained the support of many Delta whites. The final count was 381,309 for Carter (49.6%) to 366,846 for Ford (47.7%).

The new class politics of 1975 retained its vitality as a life-form in 1976. The split between Carter and Ford had the same "modern" characteristics as had the Carmichael-Finch vote--that is, the urban white population and well-to-do planter class voting Republican, and the blacks and lower income and small farmer whites voting Democratic. Furthermore, in 1976, the dichotomy became institutionalized in the newly unified Democratic Party. The Republican appeal was becoming more and more economically based and, therefore, stable. The well-to-do farming class and urban middle class were increasingly committed to fiscal conservatism, less government

intervention in and regulation of the economy, and lowered inflation as a number one priority. The Democratic coalition, on the other hand, was comprised of a more complex and, therefore, unstable mix of motivations. Blacks were for the most part committed to traditional Democratic economics--that is, substantial social spending, reduction of unemployment, and less concern with inflation if its reduction meant reduced social programs. Small farmer whites also had a more liberal policy toward the role of government, especially those in northeast Mississippi living in the Tennessee Valley Authority counties where governmental ownership of power had literally transformed the lives of the people. Many rural whites outside the T.V.A. area were more conservative economically, however, and were torn between the party which had been their salvation during the Depression and the party now espousing an economic philosophy more closely akin to their instincts. Furthermore, on social and cultural issues, most of the rural whites were very conservative, and on issues such as school prayer, abortion, pornography, and racial integration their conservatism often put them at odds with the mainstream of the National Democratic Party. Others were Democrats in 1976 primarily because it was the best way to protect congressional seniority and to amass power under a Democratic president. For them,

loyalty to the party was expedient. Still others felt that Jimmy Carter, southern Baptist from the bosom of rural Georgia, would take a "more reasonable" (i.e., conservative) approach to racial issues.

In brief, the coalitions of 1975 and 1976 were, for the Republicans, somewhat stable. For the Democrats, the "redneck-black" coalition was highly unstable and fraught with danger, although if sustained it could produce a party firmly within the developing politics of modernization.

CHAPTER 16

ERA IV: ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The second primary matrix presented in Figure 60 shows that the runoffs of Era IV were related, but not highly so. The racial and class appeal of Williams in 1967 correlates with Waller's and Finch's class-oriented campaigns of 1971 and 1975 respectively. Winter and

FIGURE 60

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES, ERA IV

		<u>1967</u>		<u>1971</u>		<u>1975</u>	
		WILLIAMS	WINTER	WALLER	SULLIVAN	FINCH	WINTER
<u>1967</u>	WILLIAMS		-1.0	+ .41	-.41	+ .44	-.44
	WINTER			-.41	+ .41	-.44	+ .44
<u>1971</u>	WALLER				-1.0	+ .44	-.44
	SULLIVAN					-.44	+ .44
<u>1975</u>	FINCH						-1.0
	WINTER						

are low, and the absence of correlation in some cases is surprising. Williams' first primary vote fails to correlate with any of the 1971 candidates, suggesting that a new life-form (class) was replacing race. The correlations between 1971 and 1975 are no higher, however. Swan's back-to-back first primary candidacies correlate only +.37, and Winter's 1967 and 1975 votes only +.39. Figures 60 and 61 generally do not indicate a very cohesive era.

Figure 62, a matrix of first and second primary coefficients, suggests several points. One, Williams' second primary vote drew so heavily from the Swan vote

FIGURE 62

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN FIRST PRIMARY AND SECOND PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES, ERA IV

		WILLIAMS	1967		1st Primary			1975		DANTIN
			WINTER	SWAN	WALLER	SULLIVAN	SWAN	FINCH	WINTER	
1967	WILLIAMS	X	-.67	+.60	+.18	-.32	+.32	+.23	-.47	+.22
	WINTER	X	+.67	-.60	-.18	+.32	-.32	-.23	+.47	-.22
1971	WALLER	X	-.34	+.38	+.55	-.77	+.28	+.27	-.40	X
	SULLIVAN	X	+.34	-.38	-.55	+.77	-.28	-.27	+.40	X
1975	FINCH	-.20	-.41	+.46	X	-.36	+.35	+.62	-.70	X
	WINTER	+.20	+.41	-.46	X	+.36	-.35	-.62	+.70	X

(+.60) that the pickup washed out the relationship to his own first primary vote, a phenomenon suggesting the highly racial content of Williams' runoff rhetoric. The runoff coalitions of 1967 seemed to lay the groundwork for the 1971 first primary in the following ways: Williams' vote divided between Waller and Swan, and Winter's vote went to help provide the base for Sullivan's candidacy. The first primary Swan vote in 1971 seemed "to go" to Waller in the runoff. Waller's runoff coalition provided a weak base of Finch's 1975 candidacy, and Sullivan's a stronger base for Winter (+.40). Dantin does not seem to have drawn from the 1971 runoff coalitions, but Figure 61 suggests that he inherited some of Swan's 1971 first primary vote (+.33). But, again, all of these coefficients are relatively weak.

Do the general elections provide a stronger matrix? Figure 63 displays the coefficients among general election candidates during Era IV, with the special inclusion in this case of the 1963 election. The party lineages show a consistent, but low, level of order. Phillips 1963, Phillips 1967, and Carmichael 1975 all correlate positively, as do the Democratic nominees. Given the absence of party politics for almost a century and the large element of chaos in Democratic primaries, it was not a foregone conclusion that the general elections would demonstrate

FIGURE 63

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN GENERAL ELECTION
GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES, ERA IV

		1963		1967		1971		1975	
		JOHNSON	PHILLIPS	WILLIAMS	PHILLIPS	WALLER	EVERS	FINCH	CARM'L.
1963	JOHNSON		-1.0	+ .37	-.37	X	X	+ .31	-.31
	PHILLIPS			-.37	+ .37	X	X	-.31	+ .31
1967	WILLIAMS				-1.0	+ .49	-.49	+ .41	-.41
	PHILLIPS					-.49	+ .49	-.41	+ .41
1971	WALLER						-1.0	X	X
	EVERS							X	X
1975	FINCH								-1.0
	CARM'L.								

even this level of rationality. At least a low to moderate level of consistent party voting behavior was present in Era IV. The 1971 general election, in which there was no Republican candidate, suggests that Phillips' "moderate gamble" of 1967 did, in fact, tap some black support. Phillips' 1967 vote correlates +.49 with Evers in 1971, and Williams and Waller correlate +.49. Otherwise, the 1971 general election is not related to the others of the era.

The interrelationships between second primary and

general election voting, shown in Figure 64, are predictable, but low. The runoff votes of the Democratic nominees correlate positively with their general election votes, although in some cases not very strongly. Waller's relatively low correlation between the second primary and general election (+.38) suggests that whereas class was a major determinant of the runoff, race was predominant in the general election, thereby altering the patterns. The Finch correlations (+.42) suggest that the class conflict in the Democratic primary was perhaps less crystallized

FIGURE 64

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND PRIMARY AND
GENERAL ELECTION GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
ERA IV

		1967		General		1975	
		WILLIAMS	PHILLIPS	WALLER	EVERS	FINCH	CARMICH.
2nd Primary	1967	WILLIAMS	+ .58 - .58	X	X	+ .29 - .29	
		WINTER	- .58 + .58	X	X	- .29 + .29	
	1971	WALLER	+ .48 - .48	+ .37 - .37	+ .27 - .27		
		SULLIVAN	- .48 + .48	- .37 + .37	- .27 + .27		
	1975	FINCH	X	X	+ .42 - .42		
		WINTER	X	X	- .42 + .42		

than in the general election. The highest correlation of the matrix is Williams' runoff and general election (+.58), testimony to the high saliency of race in both elections. The positive correlations between defeated runoff candidates and the Republican nominee in the general election suggests that many disaffected second primary voters turned to the Republican in November. All of these conclusions assume that basically the same electorates voted in primaries and general election. Since (except for 1971) primary turnout exceeded general election turnout, one can assume that there were few new voters to the November contests.

Figure 65 correlates the second primary and general election votes with turnout and five socio-economic variables. Column 2 is percent black; Column 3 is population density; Column 4 is median white income; Column 5 is percent white collar in the work force; and Column 6 is percentage of families below the poverty line. Percent white tenancy has been dropped from the analysis because of the very low numbers involved by 1967.

Turnout favored the anti-establishment candidates in 1971 and 1975. It is ironic that in terms of runoff primaries the newly enfranchised black vote favored economic conservatives (Winter and Sullivan) who were also perceived as more moderate on

FIGURE 65

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND PRIMARY,
GENERAL ELECTION GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES AND
CERTAIN SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES, ERA IV

		1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
		TURNOUT	% BLACK	DENSITY	WHITE MEDIAN INCOME	WHITE COLLAR	BELOW POVERTY
2nd Primary	1967 WILLIAMS	+ .35	-.43	-.20	-.41	+ .26	-.22
	1967 WINTER	-.35	+ .43	+ .20	+ .41	-.26	+ .22
	1971 WALLER	+ .38	-.45	X	-.26	X	-.34
	1971 SULLIVAN	-.38	+ .45	X	+ .26	X	+ .34
	1975 FINCH	+ .53	-.31	-.34	-.47	-.51	X
	1975 WINTER	-.53	+ .31	+ .34	+ .47	+ .51	X
General	1967 WILLIAMS	X	-.31	-.42	-.60	-.48	X
	1967 PHILLIPS	X	+ .31	+ .42	+ .60	+ .48	X
	1971 WALLER	X	-.88	X	-.30	X	-.71
	1971 EVERS	X	+ .88	X	+ .30	X	+ .71
	1975 FINCH	+ .36	X	-.61	-.55	-.62	+ .49
	1975 CARM'L.	-.43	X	+ .61	+ .55	+ .62	-.49

race. Percent black assumed from 1967 on a fundamentally different meaning, as the black belt continued to favor conservative candidates based on white proclivities plus

a considerable black attraction to the more racially moderate but establishment politicians such as Sullivan and Winter. This pattern held up even in the 1967 general election, but washed out in the 1975 general election in which many blacks who had backed Winter in the primary switched to Finch in the general.

Population density tended to favor the "establishment" candidacy of Winter in 1975 but vanished in 1971, perhaps because Bill Waller was himself a resident of Hinds County. In general elections, however, urbanization was obviously a Republican correlate, particularly in 1975. Likewise with median white income and percent white collar, Republicanism appeared to be a movement based in the white middle and upper professional class. The percent poverty variable tended to help the racial moderates in primaries (who also happened to be candidates acceptable to the black belt), whereas in 1975 the general election divided the affluent Republican counties against the poorer Democratic ones. The socio-economic data show that by 1975 the Republican-Democratic cleavage was taking on something of a classic form.

Figures 66 and 67 explore the one senate race during Era IV, the Eastland-Carmichael general election of 1972. The correlations between the senate race and the gubernatorial races are quite interesting, if somewhat

FIGURE 66

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND PRIMARY,
GENERAL ELECTION GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES AND
SENATORIAL CANDIDATES, ERA IV

		2nd Primary						General					
		WILLIAMS	WINTER	WALLER	SULLIVAN	FINCH	WINTER	WILLIAMS	PHILLIPS	WALLER	EVERS	FINCH	CARM'L.
.1972	EASTLAND	-.20	+.20	-.32	+.32	-.24	+.24	+.32	-.32	X	X	+.54	-.54
	CARM'L.	+.19	-.19	+.33	-.33	+.22	-.22	-.32	+.32	X	X	-.43	+.54

FIGURE 67

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SENATORIAL CANDIDATES
AND CERTAIN SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES
ERA IV

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
	TURNOUT	% BLACK	DENSITY	WHITE MEDIAN INCOME	WHITE COLLAR	BELOW POVERTY
EASTLAND	-.36	X	X	X	-.20	+.18
CARM'L.	+.36	X	X	X	+.24	-.24

low. In the Democratic runoffs, Eastland correlates lowly with the more patrician, less racist candidates like Winter and Sullivan. His negative correlations with Williams, Waller, and Finch, however, switch signs in

the general elections. His +.54 correlation with Finch's general election vote is striking, considering that they correlate -.24 in the primary. This finding suggests, again, the presence of a certain amount of party order in voting behavior. As Figure 67 demonstrates, however, the senate race did not tap the same socio-economic divisions that the gubernatorial elections tapped.

Figure 68 begins the exploration of presidential politics. Present are elements of both order and disorder.

FIGURE 68

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SENATORIAL CANDIDATES, ERA IV

		1968		1972		1976		1952	
		HUMPHREY		MCGOVERN		GARTER		STEVENSON	EISENHOWER
		NIXON	WALLACE	NIXON	NIXON	FORD			
1968	HUMPHREY	X	-.93	+.96	-.96	+.38	-.40	-.52	+.52
	NIXON		-.29	X	X	-.26	+.24	-.35	+.35
	WALLACE			-.87	+.87	-.27	+.30	+.62	-.62
1972	MCGOVERN				-1.0	+.45	-.45	-.47	+.47
	NIXON					-.45	+.45	+.48	-.48
1976	CARTER						-1.0	+.29	-.29
	FORD							-.24	+.24

Regarding rational party voting, the respective parties' nominees generally correlate positively, with the exception of Nixon's 1968 vote which fails to correlate with Nixon's 1972 vote. Wallace's vote in 1968 obviously "went" to Nixon in 1972 and, to a lesser degree, to Ford in 1976. The Stevenson-Eisenhower election of 1952 is included to illustrate what had happened to the original presidential cleavages in the intervening two decades. The original party patterns were largely reversed in 1968 and 1972, as the vote split along racial lines. The newly enfranchised blacks reversed Hills behavior and statistically altered Delta behavior as well. By 1976 the old pattern was being restored--a further indication of the possible emergence of a new class division in which many Hills whites tentatively returned to the Democratic Party, the urban content of counties began to determine Republican voting, and blacks in the planter counties replaced the disaffected whites as Democratic voters.

Figure 69 tells a rather dramatic tale about the gradual realignment of voting patterns along class lines. The matrix of coefficients between presidential and gubernatorial candidates shows that in Democratic runoffs the racial moderates correlate positively with the Democratic nominees for president, especially Humphrey and McGovern whose votes were almost entirely black. But,

FIGURE 69

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SECOND PRIMARY,
GENERAL ELECTION GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES
AND PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES
ERA IV

	GUBERNATORIAL													
	PRESIDENTIAL	WILLIAMS	2nd Primary								General			
			1967		1971		1975		1967		1971		1975	
			WINTER	WALLER	SULLIVAN	FINCH	WINTER	WILLIAMS	PHILLIPS	WALLER	EVERS	FINCH	CARMICHAEL	
1968	HUMPHREY	-.60	+.60	-.48	+.48	-.35	+.35	-.52	+.52	-.95	+.95			
	NIXON	-.27	+.27	-.21	+.21	-.46	+.46	-.43	+.43			-.47	+.47	
	WALLACE	+.66	-.66	+.53	-.53	+.48	-.48	+.63	-.63	+.84	-.84			
1972	MCGOVERN	-.56	+.56	-.41	+.41	-.28	+.28	-.53	+.53	-.94	+.94			
	NIXON	+.56	-.56	+.41	-.41	+.28	-.28	+.53	-.53	+.94	-.94			
1976	CARTER	-.39	+.39	-.27	+.27					-.27	+.27	+.69	-.69	
	FORD	+.39	-.39	+.31	-.31					+.27	-.27	-.69	+.69	

equally important are the positive (if lower) relationships between the gubernatorial moderates and the Republican nominee for president in 1968, suggesting that the votes of Democratic moderates included presidential Republicans. This relationship vanished in the two-man contest of 1972 in which voting occurred solely along racial lines. These correlations decline across time to the point at which the 1975 runoff and 1976 presidential race fail to correlate at all.

A contrary trend appears in the gubernatorial general election side of the matrix. In this case, the matrix strengthens across time. The early positive correlations between Humphrey and Phillips reflect black voting, whereas the Nixon-Phillips correlation reflects white Republicanism. The racial polarization of 1968 seems to have disappeared by 1975, but the Republican patterns hold. The racial polarization of 1972 vanishes in 1976, also. The Carter-Ford cleavage does not relate to the politics of 1967 and barely to that of 1971. It does, however, relate strongly to the Finch-Carmichael general election. The declining primary matrix and strengthening general election matrix suggests that presidential politics and state general election politics were converging by 1976 along somewhat similar class lines, whereas the order of Democratic runoff was crumbling.

The chaos and confusion of the 1972 senate race, especially in its relationship to the presidential campaign, can be seen in Figure 70. The Nixon-Eastland "ticket" so confused voting patterns that the two elections held on the same day fail to correlate. The senate race, in fact, looked ahead to the presidential cleavage of 1976.

Figure 71 displays the relationship between presidential voting and the socio-economic variables. Turnout

FIGURE 70

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN PRESIDENTIAL
AND SENATORIAL CANDIDATES, ERA IV

	HUMPHREY	PRESIDENTIAL				1976	
		1968	1972	1972	1972	CARTER	FORD
	NIXON	WALLACE	MCGOVERN	NIXON			
EASTLAND	X	X	X	X	X	X	+ .42 - .45
CARM'L.	X	X	X	X	X	X	- .42 + .45

FIGURE 71

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN PRESIDENTIAL
CANDIDATES AND CERTAIN SOCIO-ECONOMIC
VARIABLES, ERA IV

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
	TURNOUT	% BLACK	DENSITY	WHITE MEDIAN INCOME	WHITE COLLAR	BELOW POVERTY
HUMPHREY	+ .20	+ .86	X	+ .37	X	+ .67
1968 NIXON	- .44	X	+ .71	+ .49	+ .71	- .43
WALLACE	X	- .76	- .18	- .51	- .28	- .48
MCGOVERN	X	+ .81	X	+ .26	X	+ .67
1972 NIXON	X	- .82	X	- .28	X	- .67
CARTER	X	+ .26	- .40	- .37	- .49	+ .52
1976 FORD	X	- .28	+ .40	+ .32	+ .47	- .52

is not a strong correlate of these elections. The percent black variable shows that 1972 was a highly racial election, as were the candidacies of Humphrey and Wallace in 1968. Nixon's vote in 1968 emerges, not surprisingly, as a rather pure test of the emerging Republicanism. With the racial polarities absorbed by Wallace and Humphrey, Nixon's vote is a classic urban, white, upper class phenomenon. The urbanization, professional, and income variables correlate highly with him. This pattern crystallizes in 1976, in which percent black is a relatively low correlate compared to density, white median income, and white collar percentages. The highest correlate is poverty; however, the other class variables taken together with the poverty variable indicate a reasonably healthy and full-dimensional cleavage along class lines.

Three great structural changes occurred in the political system after World War II. One, Republican voting was reborn in presidential elections, the state party apparatus taken over by conservative whites, and the structure built to the point of becoming a viable electoral alternative in state elections. Two, the approximately 37% of the population which was black enjoyed the franchise for the first time since 1890. In statewide elections, with good black turnout, Negroes could be expected to cast from 20-25% of the vote. Three, the newly enfranchised

black electorate, failing to gain access to the regular Mississippi Democratic Party, formed their own Democratic faction; and these two factions warred for a decade prior to unification in 1976.

These structural changes interacted with the evolving life-forms of Era IV to produce fascinating and potentially long-range consequences. The old life-forms of progressivism and agrarian class struggle diminished greatly as determinants of electoral outcomes. The racial consensus changed into racial issues between black and white and also among elements within the white electorate. The enfranchisement of a largely impoverished black electorate gave birth to the dream (or, nightmare, from the opposite perspective) of a lower class coalition of poor whites and blacks against the upper classes. The story of Era IV is largely that of the transformation of politics from racial cleavage to class cleavage.

Equally as important as the emerging class cleavage was its relationship to party structure. In Mississippi, party politics was a new and strange phenomenon to most people, and, therefore, few of the traditions of party voting were present. For example, there was little sense of the primary as an exercise for party identifiers. Primary turnout, except for 1971, continued to exceed general election turnout, and massive numbers of voters

participated in Democratic primaries with no resulting sense of loyalty to the nominee. There was, in fact, a strong tendency among white voters who lost in the Democrat runoffs to support the Republican candidate in November. The reverse was not generally true of black voters, who, regardless of the outcome of the primary, would tend to support the Democrat (1971 being a notable exception).

The result of these developments and tendencies has been the tentative reorganization of politics along party lines based more or less on class. The electoral order of Democratic primary politics was relatively low during Era IV, at the same time that order in general elections was emerging more strongly, although independent candidacies like that of Wallace in 1968 and Evers in 1971 clouded this development somewhat. What Era IV produced was basically the restructuring of politics from outcomes governed by racial issues, fought out in the Democratic primary of 1967 and the general elections of 1968, 1971, and 1972, to outcomes governed by class as aggregated in the Republican and newly unified Democratic parties.

What of modernization? The significant feature of Era IV was the presence of issues within the modernization consensus rather than over it. No longer was there any serious discussion about the commitment of the state to

the modern world or, even, of the role that blacks would have to play in that world. The need to attract capital, to train an industrial elite and work force, to solve urban problems, and to advance economically through commercialization and industrialization was never seriously questioned. The campaign issues were those contained within the now dominant consensus--e.g., the conflict of classes, tax structures, the type of industrial development which the state should promote, government reorganization, and constitutional revision. Neither party, nor any factions within them, seriously questioned the commitment of the state to modernization, even though they did tend to take different positions on some modernization issues.

It was within some of the modernization issues and within the life-form of new conservatism that one could find considerable instability within the emerging party coalitions. Even though the Republican coalition was more stable, such questions as constitutional revision and the generally "liberal" positions taken by Carmichael in 1975 divided the party hotly. Neither of the parties stated well-defined positions on many of the modernization issues, such as tax revision and reorganization. The new conservatism, especially on the relationship of the federal government to the people of the state, contained the potential for strong centripetal

tendencies within the Democratic Party. Rural and lower class whites generally opposed the great social programs of the federal government, the same programs that their "alliance partners" in the Democratic Party (i.e., the blacks) vigorously supported. Likewise on the issue of federal enforcement of civil rights legislation--particularly, affirmative action in education and hiring, enforcement of the Voting Rights Act in such areas as the proposed open primary law, and integrated housing--could quickly split the "blacknecks" and the "rednecks." The blacks were also generally in favor of more government intervention in and regulation of the economy than were many rural whites. On these issues the rural and lower class whites could find themselves more in tune with conservative national Republicans (e.g., Reagan, Connally) than with national Democrats. The degree to which these national issues affected state politics would be, as in the past, a function of the degree to which national party labels affected local decisions. In short, the stability of the newly emerging class coalitions along party lines would depend on which acquired higher salience in given elections, class interests, the new conservatism, or even race itself.

PART SIX
CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 17

RETROSPECTIVE LOOK AT THE LIFE-FORMS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has argued that four great life-forms determined electoral outcomes in Mississippi during the period 1903-1976. From the description of the campaigns, a summary of the major and minor life-forms can now be outlined. Following is a list of the life-forms and a brief description of their component parts:

1. THE RACIAL CONSENSUS

A bedrock agreement among whites on the inferior status of blacks within the political and social order, the racial consensus provided the parameters of the electoral system until 1967. Prior to World War II the consensus was aroused only in a demagogic way - i.e., race-baiting for reasons of votes. From the period of World War II until the late 1960s harder issues developed within the consensus; however, the distinction among candidates was only in terms of the degree of militancy to status quo protectionism. In the 1970s the racial consensus crumbled, and the subtleties of race did not seem

to determine electoral outcomes. Within the racial consensus, one could see the following elements:

a. White supremacy, innate inferiority of blacks, race theory.

The vitriolic rhetoric of white supremacy and Negro inferiority was prevalent in the first two decades of the century, was present in slightly more restrained form throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, and was last seen in Jimmy Swan's campaign of 1971. In the era of agrarian class struggle, the life-form divided rabble-rousing "redneck" candidates from the patricians; in the racial era, it divided the racial radicals from the moderates.

b. Segregation, law and order.

Segregation and law and order became the code words of protectionism of the caste system after World War II. Maintaining segregation for the supposed benefit of both races and protecting the (white) populace against lawlessness (i.e., racial demonstrations) in the streets became the major tenets of racial caste, and candidates differentiated themselves in terms of their militancy on these issues.

c. States' rights, federalism, etc.

Closely related to segregation and law and order, this aspect of the racial consensus was the

constitutional cloak in which segregation was draped. It was also seen in the earlier part of the century, for example, in Vardaman's call for the repeal of the Reconstruction amendments. The radical rhetoric of states' rights in the 1950s and 1960s closely resembled that of the Civil War a century before. The moderates took a generally softer and more "pragmatic" approach.

d. The National Democratic Party.

The Democratic Party was the powerful symbol of racial politics until the New Deal. The solidarity of the state in behalf of Democratic nominees was based largely on the memories and mythologies of Reconstruction and Restoration. When the party began to embrace civil rights after World War II, the defections became frequent and massive. By the 1960s the National Democratic Party had become a hated symbol to most white Mississippians. Only the enfranchisement of the blacks led to the party's tentative reemergence in federal elections.

e. Outside interference.

Whenever the spectre of "outside influence" in elections was raised (Huey Long in 1935, Kennedy in 1963, the "Eastern Establishment" in 1967), it was usually a thin veil for a racial appeal. The "outside influence" was portrayed as a pro-Negro force.

2. AGRARIAN CLASS CONFLICT

This powerful division within the white electorate pitted the well-to-do farmers against the poorer yeomen and tenants. The life-form was crystallized in the election of 1911 and was dominant through the election of 1922. It remained highly operative until World War II and important into the 1950s. By the late 1960s and 1970s it was replaced by a new class cleavage, which had grown partially from the agrarian class struggle but also out of the modernization consensus. The life-form had political, economic, social, and geographic components:

a. Social.

The stylistic aspect of agrarian class struggle divided those candidates of relatively "high" origins from those of humble background—the well-heeled, well-educated, well-dressed, reserved, articulate, conservatively behaving v. the flamboyant, oratorically talented, less educated, and less polished. Some candidates were seen as representative of the classes, others as being of and for the masses. This distinction lives in the present, although today in a different context.

b. Economic.

The radical side of the economic dimension embraced in the early part of the century anti-corporationism, anti-trust tirades, and pro-labor rhetoric. The rhetoric

softened in later years and evolved into a call for more government regulation of business and utilities, progressive tax structures, and more government intervention in the economic life of the country. The conservative side stressed the dangers of radicalism, extolled free enterprise capitalism, called for a "fair-shake" for the laboring man, emphasized limited growth of government programs, and avoided taxation of the business sectors of the economy.

c. Political.

The political aspect of the agrarian class struggle pitted the rhetoric of the "anti's" against that of the "in's". The "anti's" railed against the court house crowds, the political establishment, the Jackson Ring, the Capitol Street Gang, and powerful newspapers. The "in's" stressed the need for responsible and experienced governors (at all levels) for the people.

d. Geographic.

The above three aspects broke along the Delta-Hills division in the first half of the century, with the planter counties representing the conservative or "in" side of the life-form and the white counties the "anti's". The division also had a certain "geographic life" of its own which at times transcended the socio-economic base on which it rested. Even today, there is a residue of the Delta-Hills division in state elections.

3. PROGRESSIVISM

In some ways this life-form served as a bridge between agrarian class conflict and modernization. In the first half of the century it contained many of the governmental issues which divided the classes, yet it also held fertile seeds from which the modernization consensus grew. Progressivism embraced the notion of the "positive state", the primary function of which was to help the mass of the people. The major dimensions of progressivism were as follows:

a. Humanitarianism.

This dimension of the life-form included a broad spectrum of reforms--from the removal of entrenched special privileges (such as the convict leasing system) to the establishment of state institutions for the needy (such as health programs, eleemosynary institutions, and homes for the delinquents) to programs of a general humanitarian nature (such as prison reform and homestead exemption). Although the electoral divisions were blurred, the Hills politicians generally were more unreservedly committed to humanitarian reform than were the conservatives, whose constituents were often the losers of the special privilege or who had to bear the tax burden of financing the humanitarian projects.

b. Public education.

If one had to identify the premier, non-racial political issue of the century, it would be primary and secondary education. In the early part of the century, candidates committed to longer school terms, more state support, the consolidation movement, and the school equalizing fund were differentiated from those either less supportive of these positions or actually opposed to them. In later years the battles were over teacher salaries, retirement funds and benefits, proficiency tests, public kindergartens, etc., and, again, the division was between the conservatives and liberals on the question of state spending.

c. Puritanicalism.

The moral fundamentalism found in the progressive movement was very important until the time of World War II. It was seen most dramatically in the prohibition controversy but could also be found in issues relating to the family (e.g., divorce laws and sex laws), gambling, and more recently pornography and questions of life-style. Puritanicalism has lost considerable vitality and now seldom affects electoral outcomes in decisive ways. To the degree that it still is present, puritanicalism probably fits more neatly into the life-form of "new conservatism."

d. Government reform.

This aspect of progressivism stressed reform in the structure and function of state and local government. Included within this dimension were such issues as the direct primary, wider political participation among whites, the initiative and referendum, de-politicization of higher education, the textbook commission, an elective judiciary, direct election of U. S. senators, and, more recently, reapportionment and constitutional revision. In the first half of the century the divisions on these issues, although vague in some cases, generally fell along agrarian class lines with the patrician counties less reform-minded than the Hills. In the era of modernization, government reform has taken on a decidedly more urban-rural flavor.

e. Roads, highways, transportation.

The "good roads" movement was a strong part of progressivism, and highways remain an important issue today. In the first part of the century the Hills candidates supported more public money for road construction than did the Delta candidates, but this issue quickly became as important to the life-form of modernization as to that of agrarian class conflict. By World War II a broad consensus had developed in favor of a modern highway system. The question of how much the state could afford and how the highways were

financed became the issues. Today the battle for better highways often involves sectional disputes, as well as serious questions of governmental reform.

4. MODERNIZATION

The modernization consensus can be summarized as the agreement in the electorate that Mississippi should be a full participant in the urban, industrial, modern world. Awakened in 1923, the concern with and eventual commitment to modernization went through several stages--from the repeal of the anti-corporation statutes under Whitfield, to Hugh White's B.A.W.I. concept, to the final recognition that the racial consensus itself had to be drastically altered in order to produce true economic development. In one sense, the story of Mississippi elections since 1923 has been the agonizing expansion of the modernization consensus. The early issues of modernization were so thoroughly settled that the resolutions eventually became new parameters of the electoral system. At that point--the triumph of the modernization consensus--new modernization issues began to develop, such as the new class cleavage. The main features of the modernization consensus as reflected in elections have been as follows:

a. Fiscal conservatism.

Rectifying the state's chaotic fiscal affairs was a constant theme until the 1930s, but as an issue it did little to affect electoral outcomes. Conner put the state on a solvent basis with his pioneering general sales tax, an innovation which endeared Conner to historians but not to the voters. Thereafter, the electorate seemed basically agreed on the need for balanced budgets, but the emphasis on and degree of commitment to fiscal conservatism differentiated candidates. The question of fiscal philosophy tapped some of the dimensions of progressivism and agrarian class struggle, but it was most notably an aspect of modernization. The soundly managed and fiscally conservative state became increasingly seen as a prerequisite of industrial development.

b. Industrialization.

The need for Mississippi to industrialize has always been at the heart of the expanding modernization consensus. It began with Whitfield's new attitude toward capital, took a giant step forward in White's vision of the participant state in industrialization, and could be seen in recent elections with Barnett's "Bill of Rights for Business" and Finch's MIDAS proposal. The degree of commitment to industrialization and the state's role in it

were issues prior to World War II; since that time, the attitude of the electorate toward these questions must be regarded as consensual.

c. New class politics.

The most dramatic electoral issue which has emerged since the triumph of the modernization consensus is the new class cleavage--e.g., the low income rural whites, blue collar whites, and blacks v. the urban and suburban white collar whites and well-to-do farmers. Although there is much instability in these cleavages, there is also considerable strength at the style level in the division between the "common man" candidates and the "establishment" candidates. Although the more specific issues of class are less well articulated, the broad images of candidates carry with them intimations about their attitudes on a range of economic issues. This "aura" is especially strong, it appears, in the increasingly important general elections.

5. PATRIOTISM

The life-form of patriotism has determined several electoral outcomes and influenced others. Nationalism, patriotism, and military preparedness have been strong agreements in the Mississippi electorate, and in several races there have been lively distinctions among the

candidates. Vardaman, Conner, Collins, and John Bell Williams were affected by the rhetoric of patriotism either beneficially or adversely.

6. NEW CONSERVATISM

Pioneered at the electoral level by Jim Eastland in 1942, this life-form contained elements of the other life-forms, especially the racial consensus and some of the emerging issues of modernization. As the racial consensus crumbled, its residue found refuge in this life-form. Likewise, some of the divisions within the modernization consensus fit into the rhetoric of new conservatism, and even the remnants of puritanicalism found a home here. The new conservatism embraced a broad attack on many of the "radical" developments of the modern world--e.g., Communism and left-wing ideology, unrestrained unionism, centralization of power at the federal level, generous welfare programs for the disadvantaged, federal intervention into matters of business and commerce, federal guidelines applying to education, "internationalism" in foreign affairs, liberalization of laws regarding the "new morality," less emphasis on strong law and order, affirmative action programs for minorities, and deficit spending by the federal government. The life-form is still extremely vigorous; it may well be growing in strength.

7. AGRICULTURE

Generally an assumed aspect of campaigns in the first half of the century, the commitment of candidates to agricultural development and prosperity seemed to "cut" in the senate race of 1942 and the gubernatorial elections of 1943 and 1947, when Eastland, Bailey, and Wright stressed farming issues in their respective campaigns. The creation of a Department of Agriculture had also been a progressive issue in the early part of the century. Since the 1950s, however, agriculture has not been an issue on which elections turned.

8. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

This life-form has existed alongside the others in a special way. It deals with those personal qualities in candidates to which the electorate has responded regardless of their position on issues. The electorate has without exception preferred white males for the office of governor, senator, and president. In addition, they have overwhelmingly chosen Protestants who were family men. They have generally insisted on a high level of respectability and moral rectitude, Theodore G. Bilbo being the notable exception. They have also preferred good orators and entertainers and men who exuded vigor and toughness. They have liked the "hale fellow, well met," who had some clown about

him, rather than the highly polished, well-educated, reserved candidate who was suspected of coming from "high origins."

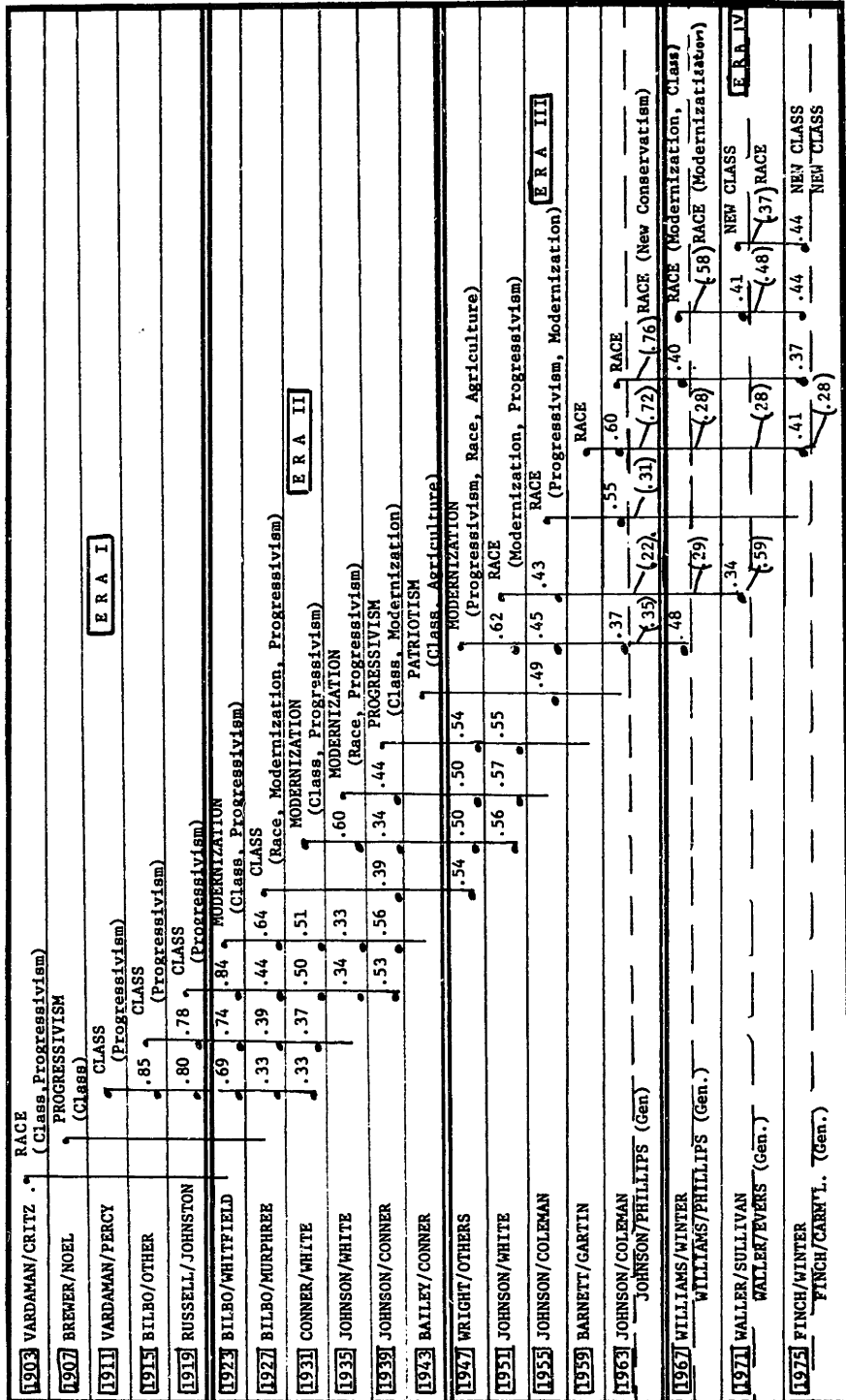
The next two figures attempt to take this inventory of life-forms and trace them across the century. Figure 72 is a matrix of "connectedness factors" between elections in twenty year sequences. The absolute values of the second primary correlations between election "x" and the succeeding five elections were arrayed in the matrix. Insignificant coefficients (.05 or below) were excluded, and a matrix average was then taken (matrix average = .32). Coefficients below .32 but significant at the .05 level or better were listed in parentheses.

Figure 73 displays graphically the connectedness factors in the six-election sequences. In addition, the chart contains the best estimate of the author as to which life-form determined the electoral outcome (in all-capital letters), along with the important secondary life-forms (in parentheses). Those coefficients above the matrix average are printed along the lines connecting the elections. The grand eras, as posited in Chapter 3, are also indicated.

Figure 73 generally conforms to the eras as laid out in the study. The formative nature of the 1903 and 1907 elections is starkly shown, as is the interconnectedness

FIGURE 73

GRAPHIC DISPLAY OF CONNECTEDNESS
FACTORS, LIFE-FORMS, AND ERAS



of 1911, 1915, and 1919. The election of 1923 appears to belong to Era I; but, as was noted above, the inclusion of 1923 in Era II was partially based on the fact that Whitfield's election added a new dimension to the rhetoric of politics which was destined to dominate the long-term future.

Era II seems to "hang together" in the chart, except for the election of 1927, adding further evidence to the argument that Bilbo's defeat of Murphree was a partial function of a unique racial issue. Bailey's victory in 1943 stands alone as an atypical election. One can see from the inclusion of almost all the major life-forms in every election that this era was one of extraordinary modulation.

Era III also conforms to the analysis rather well. The elections of 1947 and 1951 are clearly related, not only to each other but also back to the later part of Era II. This interesting relationship suggests two facts: one, that the primaries of 1947 and 1951 continued the pattern of electoral modulation and, two, that the relationship was a partial function of the dominance of conservative candidates who had arisen out of Era II. Coleman's victory of 1955 is not related strongly to 1951 and not at all to 1963, suggesting the transition nature of that race. The gubernatorial primaries of 1959 and 1963 are closely related.

Beginning in 1963, the figure also displays the relationship of the primaries to the general elections (shown in parentheses). The figure shows the weaker cohesion of primary politics in Era IV, but does demonstrate the relationship of 1971 and 1975 as primaries tapping the new class cleavage.

Neither Leroy Percy nor James K. Vardaman won the verdict of Mississippi's electoral history. Rather, it was the vision of Henry Whitfield in 1923. The electorate was quick to reject the Bourbon view of an agrarian state governed by patrician planters. It did so in 1911 and reaffirmed the decision in 1919 so decisively that no black belt politician even made a gubernatorial runoff prior to Fielding Wright's somewhat freakish first-primary victory in 1947. The electorate, likewise, refused to embrace the vehement anti-corporationism of Vardaman, a decision made in the watershed election of 1923. This decision was reaffirmed throughout the century, for the last time in the election of 1947 in which the voters chose a son of the Delta who was a known supporter of industrialization rather than the son of a former governor who had killed the B.A.W.I. program.

The decision of the electorate was an agonizing one, however, as could be seen in the remarkable politics of Era II. The stylistic residues of Vardamanism were strong,

and conservative modernizers like Mike Conner and Hugh White won through "hocus pocus" appeals to the "rednecks". Nevertheless, the decision of 1923 was never reversed; and when Paul Johnson rescinded it, not in his campaign oratory, but in his administration, the electorate exacted its revenge on his son by defeating him four successive times for statewide office. White's reelection in 1951 was a reaffirmation of his industrialization vision, and no serious contender for statewide office since World War II has questioned the commitment of the state to economic modernization.

Vardaman's vision was only partially rejected, however. His racism and progressivism were embraced to the bosom of the electorate. Whitfield's vision of modernization was a new synthesis between Vardaman's progressivism and his own business view of the world. Bilbo represented this synthesis, more in his governance than in his campaign rhetoric. In Era II the battles were among candidates more or less committed to progressivism (and, therefore, a modicum of wealth redistribution through government services) and increasingly committed to modernization. Men like Conner, Bailey, and White seemed the more conservative; Johnson, the more liberal; Dennis Murphree, somewhere in between. Part of the electorate's dilemma was that the conservatives were also modernizers.

Regarding race, when a genuine crisis began to loom after World War II the electorate chose the conservative leadership of Wright and White, based on their uncompromising commitment to the status quo and on their clear commitment to economic modernization. Paul Johnson, Jr., the opponent in both elections, had an unclear position on both issues. After the Brown decision and the transition election of 1955, a majority shifted to the "redneck" leadership of politicians like Barnett and Johnson. The rabble-rousing, massive resistance rhetoric of the Hills captured the imagination of the majority; and furthermore, Barnett's and Johnson's (1963) commitment to industrialization was secure.

When the racial consensus was shattered by the federal government in the middle sixties, the state awoke to the politics of modernization. Bourbon conservatism and agrarian radicalism in their pure forms were distant memories, and what had happened to each was a rather remarkable confluence of attitudes. The Bourbons had embraced conservative modernizers like Whitfield, Conner, and White, while the small farmers had embraced more "redneck" modernizers like Bilbo, Johnson, Jr., and Barnett. Underlying it all was a commitment to modernization, which meant support for governmental intervention in the economy to promote industrialization, economic advancement, and the requisites of growth.

The trauma of the racial era, however, had given birth to a new conservatism which profoundly complicated the politics of the state. The massive defections from the national party introduced a powerful element into campaigns that had for almost a century lain outside the parameters of the system--federal politics. The respectability of Republicanism seeped into electoral contests, first at the presidential level (since 1952), then at the gubernatorial level (since 1963), and finally at the congressional level (since 1964, but especially since 1972). In a very real sense, the politics of race opened Pandora's box of party politics, and from that time until now Mississippians have been influenced by the nexus of federal and state parties and issues in a new and complicating way.

The Republican Party at the state level was seen initially as a hope for protecting racial caste, but it soon acquired some rather traditional trappings of the Grand Old Party. It became the party of many business and professional people who were attracted to its pro-business orientation and more urbane handling of the racial issue (rabble-rousing massive resistance was finally seen to be bad for business). Left to their own devices, the two state parties might well have evolved into classic electoral alternatives--the Democrats representing the lower classes

within the modernization consensus, and the Republicans representing the upper middle class and professionals.

To some degree, this development has occurred in a tentative way in Mississippi. The gubernatorial election of 1975 and the presidential race of 1976 seemed to possess these characteristics. The impact of the new conservatism and the national parties, however, has added profound elements of instability to these coalitions, especially the Democratic Party.

To many of the rural and lower class whites, who might normally reside securely in the Democratic coalition, the Republican Party's notable embrace of the new conservatism is attractive. The candidacies of men like Goldwater and Reagan attest to this phenomenon. The "down side" of the National Democratic Party label is always a danger to state Democratic candidates. The basic confluence of economic interests between the rural and blue collar whites and the blacks can easily be short-circuited if an issue within the new conservative life-form acquires sufficient salience.

The net effect of these recent developments has been to produce a reasonably stable Republican base to which independent-minded voters and lower class whites can be added given the right circumstances. On the other hand, the Democratic Party is a shaky coalition of blacks and lower-class whites, bound together by economic interests but

still deeply separated socially, culturally, and philosophically.

In the Democratic Party primaries the electoral order--always tentative--seems to be crumbling. The new class cleavage appears to be the predominant life-form in the primaries, although the statistical relationships are low. To the degree that regularized cleavages exist, they are between candidates of the rural and urban industrial masses v. those of the establishment. Both are committed to modernization, but the former is more concerned with redistributive policies and egalitarianism in the economic system and the latter places more emphasis on a conservative state.

In brief, the story of Mississippi politics since 1903 is the triumph of the modernization consensus. Agrarian class conflict has been replaced by a new class politics within the confines of an increasingly urban-industrial state. Progressivism has been transformed into issues of the welfare state. The racial consensus has been shattered, but its remnants live on in the life-form it inspired, new conservatism. These life-forms have re-ordered themselves tentatively into party coalitions that appear more ordered than Democratic primary cleavages, but within those coalitions one finds much instability.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

IS THE DELTA-HILLS DIVISION ALIVE OR DEAD?

The geographical expression of the agrarian class struggle was the Delta-Hills division, as portrayed by Kirwan, Key, and others. Most analysts agree that this celebrated struggle has largely disappeared as a major feature on the electoral landscape. Fortenberry and Abney, for example, speak of the disappearance of this cleavage with the onset of the politics of race after World War II. (See Fortenberry and Abney in Havard, pp. 502-515.) Bass and DeVries concur in this judgment. (See Bass and DeVries, Chapter 9.) Brooks and Opello argue convincingly that the Delta-Hills cleavage is of little importance and cite as evidence the small additions made by a "Deltaness" measure to the R^2 's in multiple regression equations of recent gubernatorial elections. (See Brooks and Opello.)

Krane and Allen argue, however, that the cleavage re-emerged in vigorous health after the decline of racial politics in the late 1960s. (See Krane and Allen.) Using correlation coefficients between the vote of Hugh White in 1931 and every subsequent second primary victor, they interpret the re-establishment of significant "r's" in 1971 and 1975 as evidence of the resurrection of the Delta-Hills pattern. They state, "Reappearance of an increasingly

inverse relationship between the electoral support of contemporary neo-populist candidates and the classic conservative vote heralds not an era of a 'new Mississippi politics,' but the return of the state's historic political struggles." (Krane and Allen, p. 5.) Their lone view must be rejected for several reasons.

First, the statistics are interpreted without historical context. For example, the selection of Hugh White's 1931 vote as an anchor for conservative elections is dubious. This paper has interpreted White's candidacy as representing something different from the classic Delta position. To use terms like "neopopulist" and "classic conservative"-- terms used to describe politics at the turn of the century-- in the context of the 1970s is to ignore the development and movement of history, especially modernization.

Second, the mere existence of low to intermediate level correlation coefficients among runoff candidates across time is not sufficient evidence of meaningful patterns of voter response. Given the "forced choice" of runoff primaries, it is not surprising to find some level of relationship among the elections. However, to take a coefficient of $-.23$ between two elections separated in time by forty-four years and to use that as evidence of ". . . the return of the state's historic political struggles . . ." is open to much question.

A third and quite serious reason for questioning the Krane-Allen analysis is that they fail to make any interpretation of the post-1965 statistics in light of the black vote. The meaning of the "r's" changed profoundly with the addition of several hundred thousand black voters, but no mention is made of that seismic event.

APPENDIX II

THE PROBLEM OF INTERPRETING FIRST PRIMARY CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

Numerous coefficients involving first primary candidates are reported throughout this paper, and a note of caution should be expressed about them. The certainty with which first primary coefficients can be interpreted is less than with second primary and general election coefficients. The problem, which is readily apparent, is that the size of the field may affect the relationship--e.g., the same four candidates running one year in a six-man field and another year in an eight-man field might well correlate differently with a third, fixed variable. One cannot necessarily assume that a given candidate's first primary vote would be the same regardless of the opposition. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the additional votes "up for grabs" in a small-man field would distribute randomly among the candidates.

How severe is this problem? One cannot answer that question with certainty. Several tests run by the author suggest, however, that the problem is real. The following table lists the candidates who ran in more than one first primary together. The election year is shown, along with the size of the field. The coefficient between the candidates

IDENTICAL CANDIDATE PAIRS IN VARIABLE FIELD
AND SAME FIELD FIRST PRIMARIES

Identical Candidate Pairs in Variable Field First Primaries

1923 (5)	+.76	{	Bilbo	-	(X)	-	Conner	}	+.53
1927 (4)			Bilbo		(-.27)		Conner		
1931 (4)	+.57	{	Johnson	-	(-.50)	-	White	}	+.64
1935 (5)			Johnson		(X)		White		
1939 (7)	+.70	{	Conner	-	(-.21)	-	Bailey	}	+.70
1943 (4)			Conner		(-.43)		Bailey		
1951 (8)	+.58	{	Barnett	-	(X)	-	Johnson	}	+.49
1955 (5)			Barnett		(X)		Johnson		
1955 (5)	+.62	{	Coleman	-	(-.33)	-	Johnson	}	+.38
1963 (4)			Coleman		(-.56)		Johnson		

Identical Candidate Pairs in Same Field First Primaries

1927 (4)	+.36	{	Conner	--	(X)	-	Murphree	}	+.29
1943 (4)			Conner		(-.42)		Murphree		
1947 (5)	+.35	{	Johnson	-	(-.72)	-	Wright	}	+.78
1955 (5)			Johnson		(-.52)		Wright		

is shown in space between them, and the figure to the side is the correlation between the candidates' own votes (to test for any radical shift in core support).

As one can see, there appears to be a pattern of lower coefficients in larger fields. This is true in every pair of variable field races, except for Barnett/Johnson in which no relationship exists in either year. In the two cases of different elections with the same size field, one would posit that if field size exerted a systematic

effect on coefficient value the coefficients would be the same. Such is not the case; however, the Conner/Murphree elections were sixteen years apart. Furthermore, the candidates did not correlate highly with themselves, suggesting a shifting base of support.

To further test for the effect of field size on first primary coefficient level, the absolute values of the first primary coefficients were averaged (e.g., the coefficients among the three candidates in 1903, the three in 1907, the two in 1915, the four in 1919, etc.). These averages were plotted against field size and a regression run. The absolute value of the coefficients among first primary candidates in a given election and the size of the field in that election correlated $-.44$. This finding suggests that there probably is a systematic effect of field size on correlation coefficient value.

In a way, of course, the added randomness of large field first primaries is a real-life political phenomenon. The size of first primary fields does affect vote distribution and the manner in which candidates relate longitudinally. Therefore, in one sense, this contamination is not a serious problem. It is presented here, however, merely in a cautionary vein, so that the reader will not interpret the first primary coefficients with the same rigor as two-man fields.

APPENDIX III

DATA FOR THE MODERNIZATION INDEX

The Modernization Index was constructed from data contained in Virginia Pace Cromwell's thesis, "A Content Analysis of the Inaugural Addresses of the Governors of Mississippi in the Twentieth Century." The Index was constructed by summing the percentage of references in ten of Ms. Cromwell's twenty-six categories. These categories contained references to topics which, in the author's opinion, fit within the boundaries of the modernization consensus and were as follows: Aid to Municipalities; Higher Education; Public Education; Eleemosynary Institutions; Industry; Public Health; Publicity for State/Tourism; Public Roads/Highways; Agricultural and Industrial Board; Industrial and Technical, Research, Center, and Training. The chart below sets out the percentages within each category of the Modernization Index.

A weakness in Ms. Cromwell's analysis should be noted. Beginning with Coleman in 1956, governors began a practice of delivering two speeches, one the actual inaugural address which became increasingly a "media" message, and the second a subsequent address to the new Legislature which contained the specifics of their proposals. There

PERCENTAGE OF REFERENCES TO VARIOUS ELEMENTS
OF THE MODERNIZATION INDEX

ELECTION	Aid to Municipalities	Higher Education	Industrial and Technical, Research, Center, Training	Industry	Public Health (Housing)	Publicity for State/Tourism	Agricultural and Industrial Board	Public Roads/Highways (Transportation)	Public Education	Elementary Institutions	MODERNIZATION INDEX
1904	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	3	15	0	18
1908	0	0	0	8	0	0	-	0	0	0	8
1912	0	0	0	4	0	0	-	4	7	8	23
1916	0	2	0	0	0	2	-	5	8	1	18
1920	0	4	0	0	2	0	-	3	4	7	20
1924	0	9	0	17	0	0	-	2	5	2	35
1928	0	8	0	4	0	1	-	10	11	9	43
1932	2	8	0	4	1	3	-	7	4	4	33
1936	0	0	0	14	0	0	-	10	10	2	36
1940	0	2	0	6	2	0	-	2	8	8	28
1944	4	7	0	12	0	1	-	0	6	5	35
1948	1	5	0	4	9	0	3	4	4	4	34
1952	1	3	0	0	3	0	2	2	6	2	19
1956	0	0	0	4	0	0	5	0	7	0	16
1960	2	0	10	14	5	11	15	0	0	2	59
1964	0	0	34	5	0	0	26	0	0	0	65
1968	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	8	15	0	33
1972	0	2	3	9	0	8	2	20	3	0	47
1976	0	0	1	19	5	3	0	3	9	1	41

Modernization Index mean = 32%

was no attempt to rework the analysis by including these second addresses; however, in the case of Waller and Finch, both speeches were content analyzed according to the Cromwell categories. In addition, for these two addresses "transportation" references were added to the Public Roads/Highway category, and "housing" was added to the Public Health category.

To read the legislative speeches of Coleman (1956), Barnett (1960), Johnson (1964), and Williams (1968) is to conclude that if they had been content analyzed and added to Cromwell's analysis the Modernization Index would have been higher in each case. Coleman dealt mainly with fiscal affairs; Barnett exclusively with industrial development; Johnson with economic development, agricultural development, tourism, and the Stanford Report which led to the creation of the Mississippi Research and Development Center; and Williams with a major education reform package.

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