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CARPETBAGGER INTRIGUES, BLACK LEADERSHIP, AND A SOUTHERN LOYALIST TRIUMPH: FLORIDA'S GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION OF 1872

by CANTER BROWN, JR.

CARPETBAGGER reputations suffered greatly for most of the century following the end of Reconstruction. Within the past few decades, however, historians have reexamined the careers of many of these individuals and discovered that they made more positive contributions to southern life than previously thought.¹ On the regional level this trend was exemplified by the 1988 publication of Richard N. Current's *Those Terrible Carpetbaggers: A Reinterpretation*. In Florida, revisionist study was launched in the 1960s and 1970s when Joe M. Richardson and Jerrell H. Shofner offered new and comprehensive treatments of the period.² Sarah Whitmer Foster and John T. Foster, Jr., among others, have furthered these efforts by focusing upon the achievements of ministers and adherents of the Northern Methodist Church and of teachers and social activists such as Chloe Merrick.³

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1. Richard Nelson Current, *Those Terrible Carpetbaggers: A Reinterpretation* (New York, 1988). See also Eric Foner, *Reconstruction, 1863-1877* (New York, 1988).
2. Joe M. Richardson, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Florida, 1865-1877* (Tallahassee, 1965; reprint ed., Tampa, 1973); Jerrell H. Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction, 1863-1877* (Gainesville, 1974).
3. John T. Foster, Jr., Herbert B. Whitmer, Jr., and Sarah W. Foster, "Tourism Was Not the Only Purpose: Jacksonville Republicans and Newark's *Sentinel of Freedom*," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 63 (January 1985), 318-24; John T. Foster, Jr., and Sarah W. Foster, "John Sanford Swaim: A Life at the Beginning of Modern Florida," *Methodist History* 26 (July 1988), 229-40; John T. Foster, Jr., and Sarah Whitmer Foster, "The Last Shall Be First: Northern Methodists in Reconstruction Jacksonville," *Florida Historical*



Governor Harrison Reed. Photograph courtesy Florida Photographic Collection, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee.

These studies have improved the carpetbaggers' image and undermined tales of "grotesque carnival[s] of corruption," but in some instances the point has been taken too far.⁴ Current's depiction of Florida governor Harrison Reed as an exemplar of maligned but basically honest and consistently well-intentioned political leadership is an example. During Reed's lifetime his reputation even among fellow Republicans included charges of mismanagement and corruption. T. Thomas Fortune, New York editor and son of Representative Emanuel Fortune, voiced the sentiments of many Florida blacks on the governor's qualities. "Gov. Reed never has succeeded at anything but getting himself, his friends and the Republican party in trouble," Fortune asserted in 1883, "[He] never did anything well in his life."⁵ Of northern-born leadership generally, he added, "The black voters of Florida and of all the South were true to the carpet-baggers and the national Republican machine, but the carpet-baggers, like true rogues, were true only to themselves."⁶

Fortune's animosity may be difficult to understand for persons aware that, for most of Reed's administration, his strongest and most reliable support came from black leaders. Reasons for this alienation relate directly to the policies pursued by Reed and other Florida carpetbaggers. Consideration of the events leading up to the 1872 gubernatorial election permits examination of these courses of conduct and affords a mirror against which Reed's reputation and those of other prominent carpet-baggers may be assessed.

Reed's 1872 political problems were grounded in events occurring in the first months of his administration. The overwhelming majority of the state's Republican voters consisted of blacks, although between 1,500 and 3,000 southern Loyalists and 400 to 500 "Northern men" also supported the party.⁷ Still, Reed

Quarterly 70 (January 1992), 265-80; and Sarah Whitmer Foster and John T. Foster, Jr., "Chloe Merrick Reed: Freedom's First Lady," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 71 (January 1993), 279-99.

4. Current, *Those Terrible Carpetbaggers*, foreword.

5. *New York Globe*, May 12, 1883.

6. *New York Freeman*, February 13, 1886.

7. William Watson Davis, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida* (New York, 1913; reprint ed., Gainesville, 1964) 479n; Patricia P. Clark, "Florida, 'Our Own Italy': James F. B. Marshall's Post-Civil War Letters to Edward Everett Hale," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 59 (July 1980), 53-71.

quickly appealed to white conservatives for support by appointing secessionists to key state and local offices, vetoing a civil rights bill, and subsequently revoking executive appointments for some black and southern Loyalist legislators who challenged his actions. "There are certain elements in the Republican party whose interests have not been subserved— who have not been treated with proper consideration," charged a Tampa man. "I refer to the colored people and what is known as the Southern Loyalists."⁸ Thereafter, Reed's policies tilted back and forth between white conservatives and Republicans according to his political needs.⁹

Factionalism within the carpetbag community contributed to the see-saw nature of Reed's policies. Within a few months of the 1868 advent of Republican rule, it had split into two camps. One, dependent upon the governor's powers of appointment, was centered upon Reed. The second—known as the Osborn Ring— consisted primarily of federal officeholders obligated to carpetbag United States Senator Thomas W. Osborn and his followers. The large block of southern Loyalist voters, informally led by Associate Supreme Court Justice Ossian Bingley Hart, complicated the situation. Membership of the various factions overlapped at times and could be quite volatile.¹⁰

The interplay among these factions and between the party and its Conservative or Democratic opposition on several occasions resulted in attempts to impeach Reed. One effort in 1870 was especially important. The Osborn Ring moved against Reed partly from the senator's frustration over Reed's veto of financial schemes and partly from resentments by Osborn ally and fellow carpetbagger William J. Purman at the governor's refusal to provide assistance in fighting widespread and increasingly violent attacks against Republicans. Their allegations charged that Reed had been corruptly involved with various railroad backers, including former Democratic United States Senator David Levy Yulee, North Carolina entrepreneur George W. Swepson, and

8. Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, 196-204; *New York Times*, August 13, 1868; *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, August 27, 1868.

9. See Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, 196.

10. See *Ibid.*; John Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule in Florida: The Inside Workings of the Reconstruction of Civil Government in Florida After the Close of the Civil War* (Jacksonville, 1888; reprint ed., Kennesaw, GA, 1959); and Davis, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida*.



United States Senator Thomas Ward Osborn. *Photograph courtesy Florida Photographic Collection, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee.*



Governor Ossian Bingley Hart. *Photograph courtesy Florida Photographic Collection, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee.*

Swepson's associate and Reed's friend former Union General Milton S. Littlefield.¹¹

Impeachment maneuverings proved complex and personal. House Speaker and Osborn Ring member Marcellus Stearns led the pro-impeachment forces, but black and Loyalist leaders supportive of the governor beat them back. Reportedly, a liberal distribution of railroad funds ensured the outcome. Perhaps more significantly, the truce arrived at between the Reed and Osborn men seemingly anticipated the governor's approval of massive state land grants to internal improvement companies controlled by Osborn, Reed, Purman, Stearns, and other carpet-baggers. Osborn's Great Southern Railway, intended as a line down the interior of the Florida peninsula, constituted one of the larger projects.¹²

Popular indignation at apparent corruption surrounding the land-grant schemes was exacerbated in May 1870 when Reed convened a special session of the legislature to aid Swepson's and Littlefield's interests and, thereafter, transferred to them \$4,000,000 in bonds. By summer's end even many northern-born citizens were disgusted with the avaricious scramble. "Taxes are getting to be enormous," wrote one such man, "and all to enrich a lot of thieves who for the sake of office call themselves Republicans."¹³ Added a Jacksonville resident, "Reed is already reaping the reward of his corruption and his thievings. He . . . is held in utter contempt by men of every party, class or color."¹⁴

The public uproar jeopardized Republican prospects in the November 1870 elections. Black leaders particularly were

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11. Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, 211-12; *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, April 5, October 30, November 27, 1879. The April 5, 1879, reference is found in a clipping in box 38, David Levy Yulee Papers, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville.
 12. *Savannah Daily Republican*, March 11, 1870; *Laws of Florida* (1870), 54-58; *Tallahassee Sentinel*, April 15, 29, 1871.
 13. Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, 212-13, 247; Jonathan Daniels, *Prince of Carpet-baggers* (Philadelphia, 1958), 87-92, 250-51; *Savannah Morning News*, March 8, 10, 1870; *Savannah Daily Republican*, June 7, 9, 1870; and Ambrose B. Hart to "My dear Bro. Ed," September 2, 1870, Ambrose B. Hart Letters, P. K. Yonge Library.
 14. *Savannah Morning News*, October 11, 1870. For more on Swepson and Littlefield, see Paul E. Fenlon, "The Notorious Swepson-Littlefield Fraud: Railroad Financing in Florida, 1868- 1871," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 32 (April 1954), 231-61.

alarmed, and at the state party convention in August an independent block of their delegates coalesced around African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church elder and state senator Charles H. Pearce. They exerted their influence against Osborn- and Purman-backed candidates and threw the congressional nomination to black state senator Josiah Walls of Alachua County. They also influenced the nomination of southern Loyalist Samuel T. Day to fill a lieutenant governor's office vacancy. The two Republicans faced, respectively, Democrats Silas Niblack and William D. Bloxham.¹⁵

The campaign was marked by violence and fraud, and the outcome found Republicans with a slim legislative majority. Walls and Day claimed victory, but the Democrats refused to concede and contested both elections. Osborn Ring men, likely in response to Pearce's August opposition to their candidates, thereafter filed charges against the senator for bribery during the 1870 impeachment fight. He was convicted, but, through Day's intercession, a Ring attempt to strip him of his senate seat was diverted. Pearce appealed his conviction to the supreme court.¹⁶

Also in the election's aftermath, Reed made good on a commitment to Yulee. In return for Yulee's January anti-impeachment efforts, the governor arranged for the state not to defend against a federal court suit by investor Francis Vose, who feared that his state-backed bonds would never be repaid in light of the 1870 land giveaways. Vose, in December 1870, obtained by default an injunction against transfer of state lands except for cash, which frustrated proposed internal improvement schemes in favor of Yulee's existing railroad interests.¹⁷

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15. Peter D. Klingman, *Josiah Walls: Florida's Black Congressman of Reconstruction* (Gainesville, 1976), 33-36.
 16. Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, 214-16; Dorothy Dodd, "'Bishop' Pearce and the Reconstruction of Leon County," *Apalachee* (1946), 9-10.
 17. "Copy of Record in the Supreme Court of the County and State of New York, *Francis Vose, Plaintiff vs. The Florida Railroad Company, David L. Yulee, Edward N. Dickerson, Marshall O. Roberts, and Isaac K. Roberts*," 23, 28, in case file, "*Francis Vose, Plaintiff vs. David L. Yulee, Defendant*," A416, Common Law Case Files, U.S. Circuit Court for the Southern District of New York, NA-Northeast Region, Bayonne, NJ; Francis Vose to D. S. Walker, May 20, 1868, and "Notice of Motion for Injunction, *Francis Vose vs. Harrison Reed, et. al., Trustees, Int. Imp. Fund*," in Papers and Documents Relating to the Suit of *Francis Vose v. Trustees I. I. Fund*, Land Records and Titles Section, Florida Department of Natural Resources, Tallahassee; Tampa *Sunland Tribune*, July 10, 1879; and Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, December 13, 1870.

The narrow 1870 election results temporarily quelled political warfare between the Reed and Osborn factions. The peace exploded in May 1871, though, when, in violation of the Vose injunction, Reed prompted Internal Improvement Trust Fund trustees to deed most of the state's public lands to Littlefield in return for a promise of future payments of about \$400,000 and completion of a rail line from Quincy to Mobile, Alabama. One Democratic editor labeled the arrangement "the crowning act of fraud."¹⁸ Osborn and his allies realized with indignation the transfer's impact on their own schemes, while Yulee felt betrayed as well. Black leaders, already angered at Osborn by the Ring's attack upon Pearce, saw the Littlefield sale as a last straw against Reed. They had patiently waited for the governor to honor his commitments to them. Instead he had kept them from enacting a civil rights law; had given them few major appointments while courting the "vilest and bitterest rebels"; had permitted the prosecution of their leader Pearce; and—importantly for some—had excluded them from participation in the internal improvement land grants. In these circumstances all factions fell to feuding.¹⁹ By December a gleeful Democrat reported, "The carpet-bag, dynasty of Florida is crumbling."²⁰

As the 1872 legislative session approached, Osborn and his allies increasingly desired Reed's impeachment. The fact that the senator's term of office would expire in March 1873 was of immediate concern, and Osborn needed control of the executive department's powers to ensure election of a friendly governor and a compliant legislative majority. In early January he gathered his leading supporters at Jacksonville to chart their course. Among them, interestingly, was Littlefield. Why the governor's patron joined with Osborn is unknown, although a legislator later claimed that his price was "two millions more of railroad bonds."²¹ At the meeting several Ring members offered themselves as Reed's successor. Stearns was considered, but the house speaker was "found wanting in political strength." Eventually,

18. Daniels, *Prince of Carpetbaggers*, 268-72; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, November 11, 1879; Current, *Those Terrible Carpetbaggers*, 149-50.

19. *Savannah Morning News*, September 29, 1871; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, September 26, 1871; *Savannah Daily Republican*, July 14, 1871.

20. *Savannah Morning News*, December 8, 1871.

21. *Savannah Daily Republican*, January 12, 1872; Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule*, 142.

the decision went to former Lieutenant Governor William H. Gleason.²²

Their candidate agreed upon, the Ring men set their impeachment plan in motion. When the legislature met a few days later, Stearns and Purman worked the Republican membership for impeachment commitments. The speaker also approached former Governor David S. Walker for Democratic support. Walker, in turn, organized "a movement of the Conservative element of both parties."²³ During the second week of January they secured passage of resolutions "declaring gigantic frauds to have been committed in diversion of the proceeds of bonds issued . . . to the J., P. & M. Railroad," barring the Governor from issuing new bonds, and establishing an investigative committee.²⁴ The panel's report charged Reed with illegal activities involving Littlefield, Yulee, and others. On February 10 the house impeached the governor for, as a correspondent noted, "high crimes and misdemeanors, in the overissue of bonds, embezzlement of the public funds, bribery, and corruption in office." Reed was suspended pending senate trial.²⁵

The house action surprised some senate Democrats. "Everyone outside the Assembly, except Governor Walker, regrets impeachment and considers it a blow to our prospects," reported an "astonished" Senator George P. Raney.²⁶ In the circumstances Hillsborough County's John A. Henderson led the Democrats in pushing for a senate recess. Two Republicans, Pearce and carpetbagger Liberty Billings, supported the effort.²⁷ Although the recess permitted Democrats time to consider their

22. *Savannah Morning News*, December 8, 1871; *Jacksonville Evening Metropolis*, December 12, 1908.

23. Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule*, 143; John Tyler, Jr., to Thomas W. Osborn, March 18, 1872, Department of the Treasury, Applications for Positions as Internal Revenue Collectors & Assessors, box 2, entry 258, "Florida," RG 56, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; W. W. Van Ness to Henry S. Sanford, January 12, 1872, Henry Shelton Sanford Papers, General H. S. Sanford Memorial Library, Sanford, Florida (microfilm available at P. K. Yonge Library).

24. Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule*, 154; Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, 219.

25. Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule*, 159-66; *Savannah Daily Republican*, February 14, 1872.

26. G. P. Raney to E. M. L'Engle, February 8, 1872, E. M. L'Engle Papers, folder 61, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

27. *Savannah Daily Republican*, February 13, 1872.

options, the party's senators could not agree. Some supported impeachment as long as references to Yulee were dropped. Others wanted adjournment without a trial. Under that plan Lieutenant Governor Day, a Ring opponent, would become acting governor, and more time would be afforded to consider the desirability of a trial. The latter option prevailed. On February 13 Day proclaimed himself governor, and a bipartisan coalition elected Billings president pro tempore of the senate. Three Democrats then joined seven Republicans to force adjournment.²⁸

This political gamesmanship sundered the Republican party, and the damage by no means was limited to the Reed and Osborn split. At a "boisterous and stormy" caucus held at Tallahassee on January 11, Purman and Pearce faced off. Purman attacked Pearce's ambition for higher office, asserting that the senator had "a diarrhoea for Congress." Pearce countered. "This was the signal," a report declared, "for an onslaught on Purman, and it is said that Pearce and others literally 'chawed' the Senator from Jackson up."²⁹ Then, the senate under Billings's leadership defeated yet another attempt to pass a civil rights act. When it did, black house member Daniel McInnis of Jacksonville offered a resolution condemning Billings and other carpetbaggers. "We, the colored members, and those who honestly sympathize with us," the measure read, "do unhesitatingly repudiate such friendship, and do now and henceforth withdraw from and decline from ever affiliating with, politically, or to aid in electing any such man or men who have so basely misrepresented our people." Stearns ruled the resolution out of order, but the point was made. That the sentiment applied to Reed, as well as other carpetbaggers, was clarified when the governor's long-time house defender, AME minister John R. Scott of Jacksonville, voted for impeachment.³⁰

These disruptions led to more political intrigue in subsequent months as candidates quickly prepared for the governor's race. Perhaps the first candidate was Stearns, although the *St. Augustine Examiner* promoted Florida's former military governor John T.

28. Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, 220-21; Raney to L'Engle, February 8, 1872; *Savannah Daily Republican*, February 14, 1872.

29. *Savannah Morning News*, January 19, 1872.

30. Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule*, 154, 159.

Sprague for the post. Meanwhile Republicans gathered in every county to elect delegates to a party convention, which, in turn, would choose delegates to the national Republican convention. By the first of April, a trend was discernable. "Nearly every county convention that has been held," one report noted, "[has] utterly repudiated the Osborn ring."³¹

At this juncture Reed, who had retired to Jacksonville to await developments, stepped back upon the political stage. His chance came when Day traveled to Jacksonville preliminary to the party convention. "Now it seems that Governor Reed, up to within a day or two past, has been 'lying low and chewing poke root,'" a Tallahassee man explained on April 8, "when to the great astonishment of Day and his myrmidons, the old Governor put in appearance [at Tallahassee], and to-day resumed the office of chief magistrate."³² After issuing a proclamation declaring Day's acts illegal and void, Reed returned to Jacksonville where he proposed to Day that they submit the issue to the state supreme court. Day ignored the offer, but Reed petitioned the court nonetheless.³³

The party convention opened on April 10, and Reed's actions were the foremost topic of conversation. "Had a thunderbolt from heaven fallen in their midst, or an immense bombshell exploded at their feet," remarked an observer, "greater consternation could not have been manifested than was apparent."³⁴ Reed's grasp for power had shocked Ring adherents, but black delegates led by Pearce and Scott saw a window of opportunity. They seized control of the convention organization and used the assembly as a forum for denouncing carpetbaggers in general and for asserting their political power at Ring expense. For example, Leon County's John W. Wyatt delivered "the worst scoring for their thievish villainy [the carpetbaggers] ever received." Others followed, and by evening "the Convention was apparently at a white heat."³⁵

31. *Savannah Morning News*, March 2, 1872; *Tallahassee Weekly Floridian*, March 26, 1872; *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, April 2, 1872.

32. *Savannah Morning News*, April 11, 1872.

33. Davis, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida*, 634-35.

34. *Tallahassee Weekly Floridian*, April 20, 1872.

35. *Savannah Daily Republican*, April 12, 1872; *Savannah Morning News*, April 12, 1872.

After the session's adjournment the turmoil moved into Jacksonville hotels, boarding houses, and homes. Osborn delegates worked through the night attempting to secure votes. When the convention met the next day "in wildest confusion," however, Scott upset their arrangements by demanding open voting. At that moment Purman decided to separate his political fortunes from those of his fellow carpetbaggers. He made "a vigorous, telling speech in which he gave his brother carpet-baggers a severe castigation, declaring their conduct all 'd- d foolishness,' and in which [he] avowed himself on the side of fair play." Gleason, forsaking his own alliance with Osborn, followed. In opposition to Ring demands for written balloting, he led the fight for voice voting. The motion carried "by a heavy vote."³⁶

Balloting for delegates proved as tumultuous as had the preceding debates. Sixteen whites and eight blacks were nominated for the six positions. Josiah Walls easily won the first vote. Although Pearce and Scott failed to be elected, their ally Josiah H. Armstrong was successful. Osborn and Stearns were not nominated, Purman received no votes, and Ring member Horatio Jenkins lost in a lopsided tally. The results overall were a major setback for the Ring. "The event showed," a correspondent commented, "the complete discomfiture of the infamous coalition that has done so much to disrupt the party."³⁷

The selections proved as discomfiting to southern Loyalists and their leader Justice Hart as to Ring members. An anti-Osborn man, Hiram W. Potter, was nominated for the sixth seat. The Ring thereupon attempted to co-opt Loyalist support against the black insurgency by nominating Hart. "Sensing . . . the struggle was to be a test of the real strength of 'the Ring' in the party," an onlooker declared, "the colored delegates . . . resolved to combine upon Mr. Potter and assure his election, demonstrating the overthrow of the power of 'the Ring.'"³⁸ As another man remarked, "This result was very unsatisfactory to the Southern Loyalists who were eager for Judge Hart."³⁹

36. *Savannah Morning News*, April 13, 1872.

37. *Ibid.*; Richardson, *Negro in the Reconstruction of Florida*, 193-94; *Tallahassee Sentinel*, April 20, 1872.

38. Jacksonville *Florida Union*, quoted in *Tallahassee Sentinel*, April 20, 1872.

39. *Tallahassee Sentinel*, April 20, 1872.

The political drama continued after the convention's adjournment. Its scene shifted to Tallahassee where the supreme court undertook to decide three matters of political importance, including Reed's petition against Day. Excitement filled the air as the politically involved crowded the capital city. Among the whispered possibilities was a report that "martial law is to be declared."⁴⁰

The full court met on April 17 and first heard Pearce's appeal of his bribery conviction. A unanimous panel, considering only a narrow legal point, upheld the lower court. The same day Acting Governor Day, apprehensive of the court's judgment in his dispute with Reed, called a special legislative session to try the governor. When the senate met, Pearce claimed his seat. Reed's friend Chief Justice Edwin M. Randall reacted angrily. Hart then defended Pearce. "A rather heated controversy" ensued, but Hart's argument influenced Randall.⁴¹ The senate expelled Pearce, but the chief justice joined the same day with Hart and other members of the state's pardoning board to grant Pearce "a full pardon."⁴²

The court on April 23 moved to consideration of Reed's petition. The previous day the legislature had failed to muster a quorum to convene its session. Day believed that Randall and Democrat James D. Westcott would rule against him, and so he anxiously awaited the arrival of friendly legislators. Tensions ran so high that one local man believed, "We are on the edge of civil war."⁴³ Arguments in the controversy consumed two days, and, when the court announced that it would render its decision the following week, speculation abounded. On April 29 the chambers again were crowded. "Day haunted the hall with muffled step and anxious visage," while a confident Reed "so certain that the result would be in his favor . . . had gone to Jacksonville."⁴⁴ The court's decision came as a shock to the governor.

40. *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, April 17, 1872; *Savannah Daily Republican*, April 20, 1872.

41. *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, April 18, 20, 1872; Dodd, " 'Bishop' Pearce," 10; Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule*, 185; *Savannah Daily Republican*, May 1, 1872.

42. Dodd, " 'Bishop' Pearce," 10; *Savannah Daily Republican*, May 5, 1872.

43. *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, April 20, May 4, 1872.

44. *Savannah Morning News*, April 28, 1872; Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule*, 184, 188; *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, May 4, 1872.

Westcott read an opinion, apparently written by Hart, in which the two justices denied that the court had jurisdiction. Randall dissented, but the majority had handed Day a victory.⁴⁵

Having won in the supreme court, Day and his supporters realized that, by convening the legislature, they had seriously erred. With the assembly in Tallahassee, Reed could force a senate trial and potentially obtain an acquittal. Osborn and Purman men fought for an adjournment to forestall the problem, but pro-Reed senators led by Democrats Henderson and John L. Crawford overcame their efforts. On May 6 Reed was acquitted, but the result emphasized anew divisions within both parties. Six Democrats and four Republicans sided with the governor; three Democrats and four Republicans opposed him.⁴⁶

Resolution of the impeachment controversy in Reed's favor broke the state's political stalemate and seemed to bode well for the governor. "The impeachers have slunk away and hid themselves," a commentator remarked, "while everybody is enthusiastic for Reed." Within a day, calm had been restored. "Everything has quieted down," the commentator added, "and the impeachers seem inclined to accept the situation."⁴⁷ Having been tested severely by the previous month's events, the supreme court recessed for three weeks.⁴⁸

When the court met again on May 28, the state still was recovering from the recent political explosions. A kind of lassitude even among the politically aware led to little expectation of important court decisions during the few remaining days of the term. On May 30, however, the panel scheduled arguments on Democrat Bloxham's claim to the position of lieutenant governor. The following morning Randall delivered a unanimous opinion declaring Bloxham the winner over Day by forty-five votes. "This decision rather took the community by surprise," a correspondent noted, "as it was not supposed that the case could be even submitted so soon."⁴⁹

45. Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, 221-22; *Savannah Morning News*, May 3, 1872; *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, May 4, 1872.

46. Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, 222.

47. *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, May 5, 1872.

48. Minutes of the Florida Supreme Court, vol. "October Term 1868-January Term 1878," 281-82, Florida Supreme Court, Tallahassee.

49. *Tallahassee Sentinel*, June 8, 1872.

The pro-Bloxham opinion was not the only important court decision rendered during the week. "Last Saturday," a Jacksonville man explained, "Judge [Philip] Fraser, of the United States District Court, threw a bombshell into the gypsies' camp of the largest dimensions and the most explosive qualities."⁵⁰ What Fraser did was to lose patience with the Internal Improvement Fund trustees in the matter of the Vose injunction. Their continuing refusal to abide by federal court orders prompted Fraser to appoint a receiver for the fund, thus taking away the governor's control of revenues from state land sales. The judge also ordered the trustees' arrest, pending the court's hearing of contempt charges in December. Each of the officials, including the governor, was required to post a \$5,000 bond.⁵¹

Unaware of Fraser's ruling and buoyed by his impeachment victory, Reed had decided to attack his enemies head on. He planned to demand that President Ulysses S. Grant remove Ring members from their federal offices. With Democratic support he fully expected to secure election over Osborn as United States senator during the 1873 legislative session. Accordingly, he traveled to Jacksonville to raise money to finance a trip to Washington. Instead, he was greeted with Fraser's order. Its implications were so politically profound that Reed was unable to borrow travel money even by mortgaging his home. Instead, he simply dispatched a letter to the president demanding the removal of "thieves and villains," including Marshal Sherman Conant, District Attorney Horatio Bisbee, Surveyor General Stearns, Revenue Collector Jenkins, and Revenue Assessor Purman.⁵²

As Reed launched his campaign against Osborn, the senator escalated the conflict. He had suffered political setbacks during the year, but on June 4 he achieved a major victory. That day Grant approved an Osborn bill to grant right-of-way through public lands for the Great Southern Railway. The measure required, though, that the route be settled within one year, an impossibility if the Vose injunction continued in force.⁵³ Osborn

50. *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, June 9, 1872.

51. *Tallahassee Sentinel*, June 8, 1872; *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, June 9, 1872.

52. *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, June 9, 16, 1872.

53. *United States Statutes at Large*, XVII (1872), 224-25.

thus urgently needed a governor who could and would satisfy the Vose claim.

With the governor announcing his senate intentions and Osborn finding added reasons to force Reed from office, the 1872 governor's race loomed as a complicated and wide-open affair. In these circumstances prospective candidates continued to surface. "[State Treasurer Simon P.] Conover is working hard for nomination of Gov.," recorded a Republican in late June. "Gen. John T. Sprague wants it & from what I can learn, it does not make much difference whether it comes from Demos or Repubs— Hart is spoken of by some. Day is not mentioned. Bisbee has a good many admirers— so we go." The man continued, "Reed says he will defeat any of the Ring even if he has to go for a Democrat."⁵⁴

The *Pensacola Weekly Express* in June started a movement to draft Justice Hart. It proclaimed, "The Southern loyalists must have a showing this fall."⁵⁵ At first the jurist's chances were discounted. "The Hart will be driven to his covert before the Convention meets," one man forecast.⁵⁶ His support soon broadened, however. He was backed by the *Gainesville Independent* and the *Key West Dispatch* in mid July, and, by month's end, he was considered one of three leading candidates. The reasons had to do with events occurring in Live Oak and Tallahassee.⁵⁷

"Bishop" Pearce had been removed from the state senate, but his influence among black Methodists remained strong. At this time he had achieved a personal goal by the construction of a "college for the education of colored ministers."⁵⁸ Dedication ceremonies for Brown's Theological Institute were held at Live Oak on July 4. Pearce, perhaps in gratitude for Hart's defense of the senator two months earlier, invited the supreme court justice as an honored guest. "Every carpet-bagger and politician of any prominence whatever was present," noted an attendee, "and the swarms of negroes blocking up the streets attested the impressiveness of the occasion."⁵⁹ According further honor,

54. J. C. Greeley to Henry S. Sanford, June 22, 1872, Sanford Papers.

55. *Pensacola Weekly Express*, quoted in *Savannah Morning News*, June 28, 1872.

56. *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, July 12, 1872.

57. *Ibid.*; *Tallahassee Weekly Floridian*, July 30, 1872.

58. *Philadelphia Times*, December 1, 1883.

59. *Tallahassee Sentinel*, July 6, 1872; *Philadelphia Times*, December 1, 1883.

Pearce invited Hart to speak immediately after his own remarks. "The Judge made a brief speech," an account read, "in which he returned thanks for the honor conferred on him and touched upon educational matters."⁶⁰

The display of friendship between Pearce and Hart foretold the potential of a political alliance. Already, the three principal contenders for the Republican gubernatorial nomination were emerging. Bitter memories of past wrongs barred Pearce from backing Stearns—the man eventually settled upon as the Ring candidate. On the other hand Conover, a carpetbagger of good reputation, enjoyed, as a Democrat put it, "in a great degree the support of the colored and mottled element."⁶¹ Pearce was among his supporters, but they were challenged for control of Leon County's convention delegation by Reed-ally Edmund C. Weeks. A party meeting in late July grew so violent that the city marshal dispersed the gathering. Both groups eventually sent delegations, but Conover's failure to control his base of support had weakened his candidacy. Pearce and his followers faced the possibility of needing another man to support.⁶²

Meanwhile Democrats anticipated a resumption of state government control. Their titular leader, Lieutenant Governor Bloxham, was poised for the race, and, under the guidance of Chairman David S. Walker, the party organized. One Democrat voiced the feelings of many party members. "The true men of the State have stood shoulder to shoulder through it all," he wrote in July, "and have treated with equal disdain the threats and the bribes of their oppressors, so that the Conservative party of Florida is stronger to-day than ever before."⁶³

The Republicans met first, in the Hall of Representatives at the state capitol on August 7. Osborn and Conant had set up headquarters the previous day at the City Hotel. "The delegates were taken one by one by the hand by Conant," one report noted, "and led into the Senator's sanctum, where they were indoctrinated in his policy, and gently admonished as to their duty in the premises."⁶⁴ The lobbying efforts, whether from the

60. *Tallahassee Sentinel*, July 6, 1872.

61. *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, July 23, August 3, 1872.

62. *Tallahassee Weekly Floridian*, July 30, August 6, 1872; *Savannah Morning News*, July 26, 1872.

63. *Savannah Morning News*, June 12, July 9, 1872.

64. *Tallahassee Sentinel*, August 10, 1872.

strength of Osborn's arguments or the generosity of his purse, initially appeared highly successful, a fact that riled the state treasurer. "Mr. Conover refused to allow his name to go before the convention," an onlooker explained, "being satisfied that the whole thing was a 'put up job,' and that only one of Osborne's tools would be allowed a showing."⁶⁵

Conover's fears seemed justified on the convention's first day. Despite floor fights led by Scott and other black leaders, Ring members carried early votes on organization and credentials. They attempted to deny the Conover-Pearce delegation any seats, but "in the interest of peace and harmony" they permitted both Leon factions to take part. Furious at what he took as an affront, Pearce and his Leon associates withdrew. The session ended, however, with a strong challenge to Ring control. James T. Magbee, a Loyalist with close ties to Hart, nominated Pearce for permanent chairman. The Osborn forces had settled upon AME minister and politician Robert Meacham as their man, but Magbee's action disrupted the plans amidst "much confusion." The Ring's temporary chairman quickly adjourned the session despite protestations by black leader David Montgomery.⁶⁶

Osborn's men once again worked through the night to garner support, and they utilized tools that had worked effectively over the previous five years. "Money was used lavishly by the ring, with whisky to back it up," recalled black legislator John Wallace, "and the average colored brother, who was of course now hungry, must be abundantly fed at once or his vote would be cast against the ring."⁶⁷ Had Osborn paid closer attention to the demands of legislators such as Pearce, Scott, and Montgomery, he might have understood that many blacks had determined to change state government and their role in it. The senator failed to heed the warnings, however, and he was about to pay the price.

When the convention opened on its second day, the Ring succeeded in electing Meacham as chairman. That the selection had stemmed more from Meacham's popularity than from Os-

65. *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, August 14, 1872.

66. Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, August 13, 1872; Canter Brown, Jr., "Where are now the hopes I cherished?" *The Life and Times of Robert Meacham*, *Florida Historical Quarterly* 69 (July 1990), 20-21.

67. Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule*, 2 14.

born's strength soon became evident when Scott blocked Ring efforts to appoint a platform committee. "An intense feeling against Stearns and other members of the ring" pervaded the atmosphere, and the Osborn allies found "their hands full running to and fro" attempting to hold their delegates in line.⁶⁸

At the time gubernatorial nominations commenced, the insurgent black leaders had yet to unite behind a candidate. Conover refused to allow his name to be presented, and Montgomery named Reed instead. Scott then put forward W. T. Garvin of Duval County, and a Ring official nominated Stearns. Only then did black Hillsborough County delegate Peter W. Bryant place Hart's name in contention. Several others followed. An informal ballot found Stearns leading with forty-four votes, Hart second with thirty-two, and Reed trailing with thirteen. The vote showed Hart with surprising strength among blacks. "The colored brother . . .," Wallace acknowledged, "was deserting [the Ring's] standard in large numbers and joining the anti-ring element."⁶⁹ Most of the other candidates withdrew after the informal poll, and a formal vote was taken. The outcome revealed Hart and Stearns virtually tied, but Ring officials—panicked by Hart's increasing black support—recorded a higher total for Stearns. One Leon County delegate then announced that the county's six-and-one-half votes had switched to the Ring man, and Meacham declared Stearns nominated.⁷⁰

The attempt "to count Stearns in" provoked pandemonium in the hall. "Many of the Hart men, mostly colored, became frantic," reported an observer. "They rushed about the room, mounted chairs, tables, desks, and everything else that would elevate them, and yelled, and bawled, and shouted, and swore they would not submit to such a nomination; they wanted Hart and intended to have him." The protesters were led by Scott and Josiah Armstrong, "who invited every dissatisfied delegate to leave the Convention . . . [to] form one of their own and nominate the people's man." His chances of election disappear-

68. Ibid.; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, August 13, 1872; Tallahassee *Sentinel*, August 10, 1872.

69. Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, August 13, 1872; Peter W. Bryant biographical materials, collection of Julius J. Gordon, Tampa; Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule*, 214.

70. Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, August 13, 1872.

ing, Stearns took the floor and withdrew. Purman moved Hart's nomination by acclamation, and the motion carried. In the excitement, another delegate urged that Stearns be rewarded "for his noble act of withdrawal" with the lieutenant governor nomination. Scott attempted to deflect the proposal, but in the excitement his candidate declined, and Stearns's selection was ratified.⁷¹

The Hart nomination was greeted by most active Republicans with relief and enthusiasm. "Despite the direct defection from the Democratic ranks which results from the personal popularity of Judge Hart," observed one Republican editor, "there will be a still greater one on account of the intense hatred of the people of the . . . 'ring.'" He added, "Judge Hart will also call out a large vote from among the old Whig and Union men who have taken no part in politics since the close of the war."⁷² In a state in which totals of white Democratic and black Republican voters virtually were the same, Hart's appeal to Loyalists and pre-war Unionists offered hopes of victory. Many potential backers lived in south Florida where the nominee had resided from 1843 to 1865, and Hart's popularity in Key West and among area cattlemen and cowhunters appeared key to the election. "There are strong hopes of securing, for the first time in the history of the State," wrote a local man, "Southern Florida for the Republican party." He added, "This is the stronghold of the enemy."⁷³

The relief felt by many Republicans was not shared by all. Nationally, the numbers of party members alienated by the Grant administration were so great that a third party movement had blossomed. Composed, as Eric Foner described, of "reformers, free traders, antislavery veterans . . . , and a considerable body of men who 'had been turned out of office or expected to get in,'" the movement coalesced as the Liberal Republican party. *New York Tribune* editor Horace Greeley emerged as its presidential candidate.⁷⁴

The national split was mirrored in Florida, and on August 14 a convention of the disaffected met at Jacksonville. Prominent

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid., October 12, 1872.

73. Washington [DC] *Daily Morning Chronicle*, August 8, 1872.

74. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 301-02.

in its deliberations were some southern Loyalists. Others also toyed with the movement. "In the crowd, quite a number of Republicans are comingled, many with hearts warm and earnest in the cause of reform . . .," a correspondent reported, "while others, not exactly committed, are here to make their auguries as to the prospects of the new born party." Reed, Purman, Conover, and Walls were among them.⁷⁵

The Liberal Republicans, despite their enthusiasm, represented so few voters that the party declined to nominate a state ticket. Rather, the delegates endorsed the Democratic slate which a separate Jacksonville meeting had just chosen. To no one's surprise, that party had opted for Bloxham as its gubernatorial candidate. For lieutenant governor, the nod had gone to former Confederate Brigadier General Robert Bullock. Florida had received a second seat in Congress after the 1870 census, and the Democrats selected Charles W. Jones and Silas Niblack to oppose Republicans Purman and Walls.⁷⁶

The political marriage of Democrats and Liberal Republicans was not as strange as it might seem. The national Democratic party had endorsed Greeley, and Bloxham Democrats made every effort to moderate the state party's image. Fifteen blacks attended their convention, and one was named a vice president. Bloxham himself disclaimed the importance of party, declaring that he would not be "the governor of a *party*, but of the *people*."⁷⁷ He argued that he wanted to bring all responsible factions together. "The men who followed with honor the banner of the Lost Cause," he proclaimed, "unite this evening with those who, with equal heroism, were led to victory under the Star Spangled Banner, and now cordially 'clasp hands across the bloody chasm.'"⁷⁸ His goals, Bloxham insisted, were to deliver the state from "the hands of wicked, designing men" and "to assert the equal political rights of all men of every color and condition and [to] see to it that they are ever preserved inviolate."⁷⁸

75. *Savannah Daily Republican*, August 16, 1872.

76. *Tallahassee Weekly Floridian*, August 20, 1872; *Savannah Daily Republican*, August 17, 1872; *Tallahassee Sentinel*, August 24, 1872.

77. Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, 280-81; *Savannah Daily Republican*, August 17, 1872; Ruby Leach Carson, "William Dunnington Bloxham, Florida's Two-Term Governor" (master's thesis, University of Florida, 1945), 76.

78. Carson, "Bloxham," 76-77.

Bloxham and Hart launched their campaigns at opposite ends of the state. The Republican began with a 2,000-man torchlight rally at Jacksonville on August 23. The occasion solemnized a political marriage between blacks and southern Loyalists who supported Hart and carpetbag leaders who were fighting for their political lives. Osborn, Reed, Purman, Stearns, Pearce, Scott, Montgomery, and others appeared and spoke. "Taken as a whole," bragged a party newspaper, "the affair was in point of numbers and enthusiasm, one of the grandest that has ever been seen in Florida."⁷⁹

The commencement of the Democratic campaign was not so auspicious. After the Jacksonville Republican rally an observer had asserted, "Democrats who witnessed it acknowledge that it is not within the power of the Democratic party of this State to get up such a manifestation of interest in the success of their candidates, no matter how much labor and zeal might be expended."⁸⁰ Along with weakness in the larger towns, chance also was a factor. When Bloxham held his first major appearance, in politically volatile Key West, the accidental discharge of a pistol caused a near riot, with spectators fleeing to cries of "Murder!" 'O Hell!' 'I'm cut' 'Somebody shot me!'"⁸¹

Style also hampered the Democrats. An Orlando Bloxham supporter recorded his impressions. "His manner is not that of a practised speaker," he wrote, "but rather of the philomaths and college societies. He looks, indeed like a recent graduate with a year's practice in the law upon it." He continued, "He was so careful to explain that he would be statistically dull that his explanation was duller than the statistics. Then, after he had refreshed us with figures, he was apologetically dull again, especially in anecdote."⁸² Some of Bloxham's supporters also harmed the ticket. "These indecent and blatant politicians went all over the State," remembered John Wallace, "not canvassing for votes, but denouncing 'niggers.'"⁸³

79. *Tallahassee Sentinel*, August 31, September 7, 1872; *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, September 4, 1872.

80. *Ibid.*

81. Jefferson B. Browne, *Key West: The Old and The New* (St. Augustine, 1912; reprint ed., Gainesville, 1973), 135.

82. *Cincinnati Commercial*, October 14, 1872.

83. Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule*, 216.

Despite these problems the Democrats waxed enthusiastic about their chances. The Liberal Republicans were with them, as were some other Republican leaders. Conover's newspaper, the *Lake City Herald*, endorsed Bloxham and stated of the Republican regulars, "Every man who loves his country and State will fight them to the death."⁸⁴ Reed made some appearances for the Republican ticket, but he also aided the Democrats. He placed supervision of voting and counting of returns, for instance, in Democratic hands in many key counties.⁸⁵ Many Republicans charged that the governor's actions had ulterior motives behind them. "Reed has asserted that he would use his power, to elect Bloxham, if it was necessary to *secure him a Senatorship*," stated Horatio Bisbee, "and he is . . . with the democrats to do this."⁸⁶ The governor also undercut Republican power to suppress election-related violence and fraud by demanding removal of District Attorney Bisbee and Marshal Conant. The effort eventually failed after intervention by Hart, Meacham, and other party leaders.⁸⁷

Just as Bloxham found some surprising allies, the Republican candidate too benefitted from support from former political opponents. Day, whom Hart had helped remove as lieutenant governor, canvassed for his "old personal friend" and fellow Loyalist.⁸⁸ Democratic judge William Archer Cocke, fired by Reed in the aftermath of an 1868 impeachment attempt, wrote "a series of letters" to newspapers endorsing Hart.⁸⁹ More importantly, black leaders such as Pearce, Walls, Scott, Meacham, Montgomery, McInnis, Armstrong, and Duval County's William Bradwell organized and orated on his behalf. At stake for these

84. *Tallahassee Sentinel*, October 26, 1872; *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, September 4, 1872.

85. Jerrell H. Shofner, *History of Jefferson County* (Tallahassee, 1976), 318; Jerrell H. Shofner, *Jackson County, Florida—A History* (Marianna, 1985), 299; *Savannah Morning News*, September 28, October 11, 24, 1872.

86. Horatio Bisbee, Jr., to Henry S. Sanford, October 7, 1872, Sanford Papers.

87. W. E. Chandler to "the President," September 24, 1872, O. B. Hart to U. S. Grant, October 9, 1872, William P. Dockray to Grant, October 6, 1872, and Robert Meacham to Grant, October 7, 1872, in Department of Justice, Records Relating to the Appointment of Federal Judges, Marshals, and Attorneys, 1853-1901, entry 350, box 212, RG 60, National Archives.

88. *New York Sun*, March 17, 1873.

89. *Savannah Morning News*, October 19, 1872.

men was real political power as opposed to political impotence. "If Bloxham is elected," Congressman Walls declared to one black audience, "it means the practical disfranchisement of the colored man." He added: "I would rather be defeated myself than see any one of the State ticket defeated. . . . It is your duty to support them as you do me, and it will be your fault if they are not elected."⁹⁰

The electoral campaign stirred the state. "Just now," a Jacksonville man reported in October, "politics is an all-absorbing theme to the exclusion of everything else."⁹¹ With the gubernatorial race so closely contested, Hart and Bloxham spent most of September and early October crisscrossing south Florida. The weather was poor, however, and the demands of travel in the underdeveloped and sparsely populated peninsula were great. Soon Bloxham, Bullock, Niblack, and Hart were ill with fevers. By early October Hart had to cancel several remaining stops on the tour and return home.⁹²

Hart arrived at his Jacksonville residence on October 9 "jaded and weary" but optimistic. "There are encouraging indications that our ticket in all of the counties will receive a larger vote than formerly," he recorded. "Democrats as well as republicans, who are electioneering for us, are very sanguine." He added a distressing note, however. "I am anxious to go [to west Florida]," he declared, "but have now an attack of pneumonia."⁹³ Within days word circulated that the illness "will forbid him taking any further part for the present in the canvass." Hart remained at home through election day.⁹⁴

Given their high expectations of victory, the final election results shocked Democrats. Most polls were peaceful and turnout ran high. Over 33,000 men voted in the gubernatorial race, exceeding totals in the last statewide election—the violent 1870 contests—by 8,000. Bloxham received about 3,500 more votes

90. *Tallahassee Sentinel*, September 21, 1872.

91. *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, October 20, 1872.

92. *Tallahassee Weekly Floridian*, September 10, 17, October 1, 15, 1872; *Cincinnati Commercial*, October 14, 1872; *Savannah Morning News*, October 1, 18, 1872; *Tallahassee Sentinel*, October 12, 1872.

93. O. B. Hart to H. S. Sanford, October 12, 1872, Sanford Papers.

94. *Tallahassee Sentinel*, October 12, 26, 1872; *Savannah Morning News*, October 22, 1872.

than he had in 1870, but Hart surpassed Day's total by 5,000. Most of the difference came from middle and north Florida's predominantly black counties. In Leon, Pearce's forces added almost 900 votes; in Jefferson, Meacham turned out an additional 861; and, in Duval County, Bradwell, Scott, and McInnis increased the tally by almost 600.⁹⁵ In the peninsula the day was "rainy, raw and disagreeable," a circumstance that Bloxham later blamed for his loss.⁹⁶ The Republicans gained strength in most of the area, adding 152 votes in Hillsborough alone. Only in Monroe did Bloxham fare relatively better, a fact resulting from the displeasure of Cuban voters over Grant administration policies.⁹⁷

Although the 1872 elections were a triumph for Hart and other Republicans, the results were not known for weeks. Because of the order in which returns filtered in, the outcome first appeared in Bloxham's favor. In late November the Democrat traveled to Washington as governor-elect while a still-ailing Hart remained at Jacksonville. Charges of fraud circulated as votes were counted, but even Democratic editor Charles Dyke later acknowledged that the election had been a fair one. By mid December Hart's victory was clear, however, and the state began to prepare for a southern Loyalist administration.⁹⁸

In 1872 Florida black and southern Loyalist leaders, distressed at broken promises, carpetbag mismanagement, and corruption, combined to oust Governor Harrison Reed from power. Their candidate, Ossian B. Hart, succeeded to the executive office on January 7, 1873. Within weeks Reed's fellow carpetbagger, Thomas W. Osborn, had been denied reelection to the

95. "The Florida Election [1872].— Official State Canvass" in Election Returns (1862-87), vol. 1, 70, RG 156, series 1258, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, December 27, 1870; *Savannah Daily News and Herald*, June 23, 1868; *Tallahassee Sentinel*, June 18, 1868.

96. *Cincinnati Commercial*, December 5, 1872; *Makers of America, Florida Edition*, 4 vols. (Atlanta, 1909), I, 111.

97. "The Florida Election [1872].— Official State Canvass"; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, December 27, 1870; *New York Daily Tribune*, October 16, 1872.

98. Washington [DC] *Daily Morning Chronicle*, November 7, 1872; *Savannah Daily Advertiser*, November 16, 1872; Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule*, 220; *Savannah Morning News*, December 21, 1872; *Tallahassee Sentinel*, December 7, 1872; *Tallahassee Weekly Floridian*, May 3, 1881; *Savannah Daily Republican*, December 14, 1872.

United States Senate, and Reeds senatorial ambitions had been blunted. In those early weeks Governor Hart likely took pleasure in distinguishing himself from his predecessor by the simple act of signing his first new law. It was entitled, "An Act to Protect all Citizens of the State of Florida in their Civil Rights and to Furnish the Means for their Vindication."⁹⁹

The events of 1872 and early 1873 present a poor image indeed of many of the state's leading carpetbag politicians. Rather, what emerges is a picture of self interest, duplicity, and, for Reed and Osborn, an apparent lack of real principle or sense of greater purpose. That is not to say, as Current, Richardson, Shofner, and the Fosters have pointed out, that many carpetbaggers did not make substantial and enduring contributions to the state. That would seem now beyond question. Nor is it meant to assert that Reed, Osborn, or their associates held entirely dishonorable intentions. Instead, they merely were individuals—like some leading Democrats— who were willing to compromise the integrity of the political process for their own ends, arguably believing all the while that what they were doing served some ultimately desirable end. But does a man such as Reed deserve reassessment as either honest or well intentioned? Certainly a good part of Florida's black, southern Loyalist, and even carpetbag populations did not think him well meaning in 1872, and there seems little reason to believe so now. If anyone's role is to be examined and reassessed in a positive manner, it is those blacks and southern Loyalists who, in 1872, turned away from what they perceived as corruption and demanded a government at once more representative and more honest.

99. Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, January 7, 1873; Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, 288-90; *Laws of Florida* (1873), 25-26.