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## Some Social and Economic Phases of Reconstruction in East Tennessee, 1864-1869

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by James Bernard Campbell entitled "Some Social and Economic Phases of Reconstruction in East Tennessee, 1864-1869." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.

Stanley Folmsbee, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

LeRoy P. Graf, J. Lewis Hall

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)



August 1, 1946

To the Committee on Graduate Study:

I am submitting to you a thesis written by James Bernard Campbell entitled "Some Social and Economic Phases of Reconstruction in East Tennessee, 1864-1869." I recommend that it be accepted for nine quarter hours credit in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.

S. J. Tolson  
Major Professor

We have read this thesis  
and recommend its acceptance:

Le Roy P. Kraf  
John D. Hall

Accepted for the Committee

T. P. Smith  
Dean of the Graduate School

SOME SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PHASES OF RECONSTRUCTION  
IN EAST TENNESSEE, 1864-1869

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A THESIS

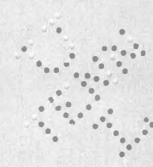
Submitted to  
The Committee on Graduate Study  
of  
The University of Tennessee  
in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the degree of  
Master of Arts

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by

James Bernard Campbell

August 1946



## PREFACE

The reconstruction period in Tennessee was dominated by the Unionists of the eastern part of the state. It is the purpose of this study to show the results of this domination as reflected in social and economic conditions, education, and the status of the Negro in the home region of the East Tennessee leaders.

The writer is greatly indebted to Professor Stanley J. Folmsbee for many helpful suggestions and criticisms in the preparation of this study and for the use of a chapter in his unpublished history of the University of Tennessee. The librarians of the McClung Collection, Lawson McGhee Library, were also extremely helpful in locating pertinent source material.



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## CHAPTER I

BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE: SEPTEMBER 1863 TO MARCH 1865

Thirty counties<sup>1</sup> of the eastern portion of Tennessee bounded on the west by the westerly limits of Scott, Morgan, Roane, Rhea, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, and Marion counties have been traditionally referred to as "East Tennessee." More than the usual degree of sectional differentiation has been implied in the use of this term. East Tennessee has differed at many times and in many ways from the other parts of the state. Its history has shown such dissimilar trends that it sometimes seems almost miraculous that it remains to this writing a part of the same state with Middle and West Tennessee.

This situation followed naturally from geographical factors. Mountainous terrain over most of East Tennessee made small holdings the dominant mode of land ownership here. Slavery and the plantation system never achieved supremacy over the social and economic life of this region as they did in the other parts of the state and in the South as a whole. Antislavery movements flourished here from the beginning of statehood until the decade prior to the Civil War. Popular education had its strongest champions here. Movements toward a free-labor capitalistic economy arose as early as the 1840's.

When the "inevitable conflict" approached in the 1850's East Tennessee was a bulwark of Unionism. Its representatives in Congress favored

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<sup>1</sup> The number has varied as formation of new counties and mergers have occurred. At this writing the number is thirty-two.



compromise measures to avert secession movements. It supported Bell in the campaign of 1860. When the Harris government of the state sponsored referendums on the secession issue East Tennessee twice voted overwhelmingly for the Union, the last time being after the fall of Fort Sumter, in the election of June 8, 1861.

Overruled by the avalanche of secessionist votes from Middle and West Tennessee in June, 1861, the leaders of East Tennessee still did not yield. They met in convention at Greeneville on June 17, 1861, denounced the election of June 8 as fraudulent, and memorialized the state legislature to permit the withdrawal of East Tennessee from the rest of the state. This move failing, East Tennesseans adopted a program of obstructing the Confederate war effort and appealing to President Lincoln for military aid. In the congressional elections of 1861, held after Tennessee had affiliated with the Confederacy, all three successful candidates in East Tennessee were Unionists. All three tried to take their seats in Washington, and two were eventually successful. Meanwhile Andrew Johnson retained his seat in the United States Senate. William G. Brownlow, who had consistently and uncompromisingly wielded his editorial pen for the cause of the Union in pre-war years, continued to publish "treason" to the Confederacy in his Knoxville Whig. Armed bands formed and drilled secretly, and thousands made their way to Kentucky to join the Federal army. Escaped Yankee prisoners were aided in traversing an "underground railroad" through Knoxville.<sup>2</sup> A scheme for destroying bridges on the important railways was concocted and partially carried out.

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<sup>2</sup> W. B. Hesseltine, "The Underground Railroad from Confederate Prisons to East Tennessee," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications No. 3 (Knoxville, 1930), p. 61.

Such activities led to the occupation of East Tennessee by Confederate troops and a gradually sharpened terror against Unionists. Bridge burners were hanged, and hundreds of lesser offenders found their way into local jails or the Confederate prison at Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Supporters of the Confederacy in East Tennessee were in the minority,<sup>3</sup> but they had power and influence greatly disproportionate to their numbers. In the main they were of the wealthy and aristocratic classes living in or near the towns and cities. The Unionists, on the other hand, came from the yeomanry of the rural and mountainous regions. Since there had developed no city working class of any proportions, in many respects the war in East Tennessee assumed the character of a class struggle between the rural small holders and the plantation owners of the towns and cities. Such economic factors added to the bitterness of the conflict. Slaveholders regarded Unionists as elements desirous of upsetting sacred property relations, as levellers, the equivalent of modern communists and socialists.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the Unionists, while not so clear-cut in their position, tended to regard the slaveowners as their exploiters. "We can never live in a southern confederacy and be made the hewers of wood and drawers of water for a set of aristocrats and overbearing tyrants," said Parson Brownlow, who was the outstanding spokesman for the Unionists.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the term "Civil War" was probably more applicable to what took place in East Tennessee than to any other phase of the war.

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<sup>3</sup> J. W. Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction in Tennessee, 1860-1869 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 57.



In September, 1863, the long efforts of Andrew Johnson, Horace Maynard, and other East Tennessee leaders bore fruit in the occupation of Knoxville by General Ambrose E. Burnside. The reception of the latter was enthusiastic. News of his coming had spread over the countryside. People drifted into Knoxville from distances of up to twenty-five miles on foot, on horseback, and in wagons. Many carried some delicacies in the form of canned goods, dried fruit, and smoked meat to distribute among their Yankee deliverers. A Baptist clergyman living nine miles from Knoxville, hearing of Burnside's approach late at night, arose, dressed, aroused his neighbors, and led a parade of welcomers that arrived in Knoxville before sunrise.<sup>5</sup> As Burnside's troops entered the city unopposed, crowds lined the streets, "waving flags they had concealed under their beds and under the floors of their dwellings for that purpose."<sup>6</sup> Chattanooga was soon in the hands of the Federals and reconstruction in East Tennessee had begun. After a brief attempt by Longstreet to regain Knoxville, Confederate forces retired to the extreme northeastern section of East Tennessee and never seriously threatened again during the course of the war.

In the meantime preparations were in progress toward the transition to peace under Unionist auspices backed by Federal arms. William G. Brownlow came back on the heels of Burnside's army. Army ambulances were furnished

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<sup>5</sup> Report to the Contributors to the Pennsylvania Relief Association for East Tennessee by a Commission Sent by the Executive Committee to Visit that Region and Forward Supplies to the Loyal and Suffering Inhabitants (Philadelphia: Printed for the Association, 1864), p. 16. Hereafter cited as Pennsylvania Relief Report.

<sup>6</sup> Brownlow's Knoxville Whig and Rebel Ventilator, January 30, 1864.



by direct order of Secretary of War Stanton to convey his family and that of Horace Maynard from Cincinnati to Knoxville.<sup>7</sup> Realizing the propaganda power of the zealous Parson's editorial pen, the Federal army took special steps to rehabilitate him in the newspaper business. The long, low brick building in which he had formerly published the Whig had been converted into stables and a sort of gun factory.<sup>8</sup> The printing apparatus was either missing or unusable. This lack was soon remedied. A Federal brigadier removed a press, type, and ink from Alexandria in Middle Tennessee and sent them to Brownlow.<sup>9</sup> In addition the government subsidized the Unionist editor with \$1500 cash and allotted five army transport wagons to bring paper and other supplies from Cincinnati.<sup>10</sup>

Such confidence was not misplaced. Brownlow soon demonstrated that his persecution and imprisonment during the Confederate occupation had not impaired his power of invective against his enemies. In fact his physical deterioration seemed to have sharpened his intellectual faculties. His courage, of course, had never wavered. He changed the name of his paper from Brownlow's Knoxville Whig and Independent Journal to Brownlow's Knoxville Whig and Rebel Ventilator. Reprinting the defiant editorial with

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<sup>7</sup> The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Vol. XXX, Part III (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1893), p. 745. Hereafter cited as O.R.

<sup>8</sup> Samuel M. Arnell, The Southern Unionist (unpublished manuscript in the possession of Mrs. B. F. Farrar, Knoxville, Tennessee), p. 243.

<sup>9</sup> E. M. Coulter, William G. Brownlow, Fighting Parson of the Southern Highlands (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), p. 250.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 250.

which he had suspended publication in 1861, he launched on a campaign of editorial counter-terror against the Confederates and their sympathizers. Before the war Andrew Johnson had been the foremost employer of the class angle in political propaganda. Now Brownlow assumed the Johnson toga and wore it with greater consistency. Typical of his class appeal is the following:

We belong to the "low flung" party of Unionists, and don't aspire to any higher class of associates. We have always despised in our hearts of hearts, a hateful aristocracy in this country, based on the ownership of a few ashy negroes, and arrogating to themselves all the decency, all the talents, and all the respectability of the social circle.

The "low flung," aye, the "mudsills" of society, the hard-fisted yeomanry of this country are going to govern it, and the respectability of the land may prepare to meet their humiliation. Educated Labor is to take the place of your slave-ocracy, and it will not be long until it will be looked upon as no disgrace for a man to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow.<sup>11</sup>

Later the logic of his position was to lead him to bring the formerly-despised Negro into his united front against aristocratic privilege. He was helped greatly in this development by his contacts with abolitionists and other liberals in the North. One evidence of their influence was the position he took on pay for the common soldier in the Union army. Following a Cincinnati meeting on the subject, Brownlow came out editorially for raising the pay of privates to \$20 per month and proportionate raises for non-commissioned officers.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Brownlow's Knoxville Whig and Rebel Ventilator, November 11, 1863; in February, 1866, this paper's name was shortened to "Knoxville Whig." Hereafter Brownlow's paper and its successors will be cited as Whig.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., January 9, 1864.

The Whig, occupying as it did a semi-official status, soon surpassed in influence, if not in circulation, its pre-war record. As a Morristown Conservative put it, "The rabble have it as their guide and textbook; and as they see no other journal conclude that it is the only one published on the continent and a true exponent of the old union doctrines. I am so situated that I can see the result of its influence."<sup>13</sup>

This power was turned full blast on the leading Confederates of East Tennessee, particularly those who had had a part in the terror against Unionists. The Whig repeatedly stated that such militant Confederates as Sneed, Swan, Crozier, Sperry, Haynes, and Campbell Wallace could never live in East Tennessee again. Union men who had suffered at their hands would be "justified in shooting them down on sight, and we shall regard hundreds of them as wanting in courage and in resentment if they do not dispatch them wherever they meet their rotten carcasses." The killing of East Tennessee Unionists, the destruction of houses, barns, and fences; and the plundering of stock and grain were urged in justification of such summary action. "Let the Imps of Hell," advised the Fighting Parson, "die the death of traitors and upon the shortest possible notice."<sup>14</sup> Even this treatment did not seem adequately severe for former members of Rebel drumhead courts-martial.<sup>15</sup>

While calling on others to avenge their wrongs, Brownlow was not

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<sup>13</sup> Bird Manard to T. A. R. Nelson, June 28, 1865, Nelson Papers (McClung Collection, Lawson McGhee Library).

<sup>14</sup> Whig, January 9, 1864.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., April 9, 1864.



remiss in practicing what he preached. He attributed most of his personal misfortunes to certain Confederate leaders in Knoxville who assisted in arresting and imprisoning Unionists during the war. In January, 1864, he brought suit against three of these leaders for \$25,000.<sup>16</sup> When the case came up in circuit court the jury returned a judgment for the full \$25,000 in Brownlow's favor after only five minutes' deliberation.<sup>17</sup> The defendants got an annulment of this decision in 1867, but they lost their rents collected during Brownlow's possession and also were held liable for taxes for the same period.<sup>18</sup> Brownlow then threatened new action for \$40,000, but apparently he never actually got around to filing the suit.<sup>19</sup>

Other Unionists were urged to follow Brownlow's example, and many did so. T. A. R. Nelson, who had the confidence of the Confederates, received frequent requests to represent persons being sued for damages. In one such case the Confederate commanding officer of the post at Jonesboro was sued for \$5000 on the ground that he had imprisoned a Unionist for two days. The same man was subjected to another suit for \$50,000 for imprisoning another Unionist for thirty-seven days.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Whig, January 9, 1864.

<sup>17</sup> Coulter, Brownlow, p. 254.

<sup>18</sup> David A. Deaderick, Register of Events and Facts Recorded Annually, 1825--1873 (McClung Collection, Lawson McGhee Library), p. 80.

<sup>19</sup> Coulter, Brownlow, p. 275.

<sup>20</sup> James A Rhea to T. A. R. Nelson, October 10, 1865, Nelson Papers.

In January, 1864, Rebel prisoners held in Knoxville were ordered sent North. The officers were quartered at the home of a Knoxville physician. Visitors were permitted to see them on the Saturday evening before their departure. Confederate sympathizers brought liquors and wines for the farewell celebration. The next day, according to Brownlow, "the rebels" made a "bold, impudent and flirting demonstration" as the officer prisoners passed along Gay Street on their way to the depot.<sup>21</sup>

This led the Parson to use strong words about the Confederate-sympathizing ladies of Knoxville. He recognized two kinds: "the prudent, quiet kind (which are few and far between)" and the more numerous class, "brazen as the Devil, full of impudence, with but little sense, and less prudence, flirting about, meddling in everybody's affairs, and seeking notoriety by acting and talking as a well raised lady would be ashamed to act or talk." Brownlow advocated sending the latter group south to remain for the duration of the war.<sup>22</sup> Rebel preachers also felt the effect of his wrathful pen. There was nothing purely theoretical about such attacks. The Parson believed in the union of theory and practice. During January and February, 1864, numerous persons of Confederate sympathies were deported to the cotton states by way of Chattanooga. Among these were at least five women and three preachers from Knoxville.<sup>23</sup>

East Tennessee Rebels did not wither away at the wave of Brownlow's editorial wand, however. Guerilla bands of Confederates remained active in

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<sup>21</sup> Whig, January 16, 1864.

<sup>22</sup> Whig, January 9, 1864.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., January 30, and February 6, 1864.

many counties. Bushwhacking was common on both sides. Rebel guerrillas were charged with forcing Union men to serve as covering guides in order to shield them from Unionist bushwhackers.<sup>24</sup> A favorite sport of Rebel bushwhackers was to hide in trees along the railroads and shoot at Yankee soldiers and Unionists on the trains. To counteract this the Federals set out to clear the timber from the sides of the railways for a distance of one-half mile on each side. This served the dual purpose of removing cover for bushwhackers and providing fuel for locomotives, wood being commonly used at that time instead of coal.<sup>25</sup>

Warning notices frequently appeared on trees and buildings threatening dire happenings to opposing guerrillas. One such, signed "Old Soldier," was found near New Market. "All damned rebels," it proclaimed, "are hereby notified to leave at once." Charging that the Confederates had promulgated the rule that Union men and Confederates could not live together, "Old Soldier" stated that local Unionists had adopted the rule with reverse implications; that "thieving, Godforsaken, hell-deserving rebels" would now have to move.<sup>26</sup>

In some cases men of property who had been Confederate sympathizers made their peace with the Unionist authorities but had sons who still participated in guerrilla activity against loyalists. This was particularly

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<sup>24</sup> Whig, January 11, 1865.

<sup>25</sup> Brig. Gen. W. D. Whipple to W. J. Stevens and A. A. Talmadge to J. H. Magill, February 8, 1865, Nelson Papers.

<sup>26</sup> Handbill dated July 24, 1865. A copy of original is found in the Nelson Papers.



true in Blount and Jefferson counties. Brownlow urged that the guerrilla off-spring be punished by the seizure and appropriation or destruction of their parents' property. "Throughout the length and breadth of East Tennessee, where roads are destroyed and Union property is taken, let rebel property be reduced to ashes, and their livestock appropriated."<sup>27</sup> As for the guerrillas themselves, Brownlow suggested that they be captured and "disposed of" without being imprisoned.<sup>28</sup>

Another solution suggested by the fertile-brained Parson was to draft twenty thousand men into the militia of the state in order to protect property. He advocated making the Rebels come into this organization or be driven from the state.<sup>29</sup>

One tragedy of the transition period was the burning of the home of the eminent Tennessee historian, J. G. M. Ransey. The flames that destroyed "Mecklenburg" also consumed a valuable manuscript on Tennessee history. The physician-historian himself was compelled to flee beyond the Confederate lines and did not return until after the ousting of the Radical regime.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Whig, September 3, 1864.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., January 11, 1865.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., September 3, 1865.

<sup>30</sup> William Rule, ed., Standard History of Knoxville, Tennessee, with Full Outline of the Natural Advantages, Early Settlement, Territorial Government, Indian Troubles, and General and Particular History of the City down to the Present Time (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1900), p. 506.

To the exiled Confederates from East Tennessee it appeared that "the bottom rails were on top" and that the "worst part of the Union element was uppermost."<sup>31</sup> Vigilante activities became so destructive of law and order that the Federal provost marshal for East Tennessee, Brigadier General S. P. Carter, was moved to issue orders against Union sympathizers, punishing Rebel sympathizers. Patience was urged on Unionists. Appropriate punishment was promised for wrongs committed by Confederates, but officers and soldiers were ordered to arrest anyone attempting to take the law into his own hands.<sup>32</sup>

Troubles of equal magnitude beset East Tennessee in the economic field. Both armies had traversed almost the whole length of the region four times, living in the main off the countryside. In many cases bands of outlaws had followed in the track of the armies. The last Confederate retreat before Burnside had been particularly disastrous. Thinking they were seeing East Tennessee for the last time, the retreating Rebels seized as much livestock and movable property as they could carry with them. Persons of known Unionist sympathies were deliberately plundered of everything they had. Barns, dwellings, and pastures were stripped. Even such items as blankets and shoes were requisitioned forcibly from their owners.<sup>33</sup> Around Knoxville a great deal of what reserve the farmers had managed to retain

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<sup>31</sup> Walter L. Fleming, ed., Documentary History of Reconstruction, Vol. I (Cleveland: A. H. Clark Co., 1906), pp. 40-41.

<sup>32</sup> Whig, January 16, 1864.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., March 5, 1864.



after the occupation of both armies was used by Burnside while he was being besieged by Longstreet in November, 1863. According to Brownlow, Burnside's army received daily during the siege more than one hundred wagon loads of flour and forage, "and every night they [the farmers] floated boat loads of provisions down the river, through the fog and darkness, past the pickets of the enemy."<sup>34</sup>

In the cities and towns conditions were equally bad. Shops when still open had little on their shelves. Many articles of common use disappeared from the market. Prices rose so high that only a few had the means to buy anything. Typical Knoxville prices in February, 1864, were flour, \$20 per barrel; butter, \$1.00 per pound; Irish potatoes, \$3.00 per bushel; and corn meal, \$3.00 per bushel.<sup>35</sup> Some comparison of prices before the war with those of 1864 will show the rise in living cost more clearly. Coffee rose from fourteen cents to \$1.00 a pound; salt from two and one-half cents to thirty cents; brown sugar, from twelve and one-half cents to seventy cents. Calico cloth rose 800% and all clothing in proportion. Gold and silver almost passed out of circulation, and barter became a common mode of trade. Debtors eagerly paid their debts in the depreciated currency.<sup>36</sup>

Concern over the disastrous economic situation led to public meetings in order to discuss ways and means of alleviating conditions. One

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., January 30, 1864.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., February 13, 1864.

<sup>36</sup> Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction in Tennessee, p. 71.

such meeting at Knoxville resulted in the organization of the East Tennessee Relief Association. This organization immediately memorialized the Federal government for aid. Payment was asked for claims for property destroyed during the war. The government was asked to furnish transportation for any relief supplies that might be obtained. A more long-range suggestion was made; namely, that the Federal government subsidize the completion of the railroad from Cincinnati to Knoxville, which had already been projected and begun.<sup>37</sup>

Nathaniel G. Taylor was appointed to represent the association in the northeastern states in an appeal for funds from private citizens.<sup>38</sup> Taylor proceeded to Cincinnati where he addressed a public meeting and received several hundred dollars to finance his further relief activities. Letters of endorsement were procured for him from Andrew Johnson and President Lincoln before he went to Philadelphia. At the latter city he addressed another meeting and helped organize a Pennsylvania chapter of the East Tennessee Relief Association, which was officered by some of the most prominent men in the state. Over \$15,000 was subscribed in Philadelphia almost immediately.<sup>39</sup>

From Philadelphia, Taylor proceeded to Boston. There he addressed a gathering of prominent citizens in Faneuil Hall. An association was formed that included Edward Everett, the governor of Massachusetts, and the

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<sup>37</sup> Pennsylvania Relief Report, pp. 34-36.

<sup>38</sup> Whig, February 13, 1864.

<sup>39</sup> T. W. Humes, The Loyal Mountaineers of Tennessee (Knoxville: Ogden Brothers, 1888), pp. 309-310.

mayor of Boston among its officers. Everett gave an eloquent introduction to Taylor, in which he praised highly the land and the people in East Tennessee.<sup>40</sup> Taylor followed with a long address in which he recounted the sacrifices East Tennesseans had made for the Union cause. When he had finished a letter was read from General Frank P. Blair in which he said that he had led an army to the relief of Burnside in Knoxville through East Tennessee, and knew that the country had been traversed by both armies several times; that the region had suffered particularly under the Confederate occupation because of the loyal sentiments of its inhabitants; and that although his own forces had been compelled to live off the country, "the people came out to meet us, bringing with them their scant supplies, and freely offered them to our soldiers."<sup>41</sup>

The meeting then passed resolutions petitioning the Massachusetts legislature to appropriate funds for aid to East Tennessee. On the next day the president of the Boston association received a contribution of three dollars from one who signed himself "A Teacher in a Public School." From this humble beginning contributions to the Massachusetts fund reached a total of \$100,000 by June 4, following. Most of these donations came from Boston and its suburbs, but some came from other states and even from outside the United States. J. L. Motley, Jr., United States Minister to Vienna, sent \$200 in a letter that stated that "few episodes more moving

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<sup>40</sup> Whig, March 12, 1864.

<sup>41</sup> Whig, March 5, 1864.

or more instructive" will be found in history "than the record of those Tennesseans who have so long sustained the Republic and its principles, amid such trial and at such sacrifices."

Later, in the spring of 1864, Taylor visited Maine and received \$11,000 from the governor of that state and a relief association at Portland. From there he went to New York where he enlisted the aid of the poet William Cullen Bryant to promote the collection of funds in that state.<sup>42</sup>

While Taylor continued his tour the Pennsylvania relief organization, which had been organized as a result of his Philadelphia appearance, sent two commissioners to Tennessee. They met the agent of the Knoxville association at Cincinnati. The three then purchased large quantities of flour, bacon, rice, molasses, sugar, salt, and soda and sent them on their way to Knoxville by way of Nashville and Chattanooga. On the suggestion of the Sanitary Commission representative at Chattanooga, \$250 worth of garden seeds were included in the shipment to be distributed from Chattanooga and Knoxville.<sup>43</sup>

The commissioners preceded the shipment to Knoxville and there conferred with the local relief association officials. The Pennsylvanians suggested that the supplies should be sold in all cases in which the applicants were able to pay. No one would be turned away because of lack of money, however. Priorities in distribution should be on the following basis:

<sup>42</sup> Humes, Loyal Mountaineers, pp. 316, 317, 393.

<sup>43</sup> Pennsylvania Relief Report, pp. 8, 9, 11.



Union families who have suffered at the hands of rebels on account of loyalty should have the first and largest portion. After them other families who have adhered throughout to the Federal Government. Next, such as, whatever their past conduct, do now adhere to the same; and, lastly, to the old men, women, and children of such families as now have representatives in the so-called Confederate army. In our view, no part of this bounty was intended for secessionists of the fighting age.<sup>44</sup>

Before the relief shipments began to arrive economic conditions had become worse. During the winter of 1864, ten thousand army animals died in East Tennessee for lack of feed and forage. Many civilians were forced to let their horses and cattle die for the same reason. Travelers in the spring of 1864 commented on the scarcity of the stock and the emaciated condition of the few seen. Barns looked empty, almost no fences were still standing, and hogs and poultry were rare sights. Flour had gone up to \$30 per barrel, coffee to \$1.50 per pound, and other commodities in proportion. Even the thrifty settlement of Quakers in Blount County, formerly one of the most prosperous communities in East Tennessee, was forced to apply to the army for quartermaster rations.<sup>45</sup>

Little prospect for improvement was promised for the next year. Wheat sowings were only five to ten per cent of the pre-war average. Practically no oats or potatoes were left for seed, and observers estimated the probable corn crop as no more than twenty per cent of the usual acreage and yield.<sup>46</sup>

Steps were taken by civilian and military authorities to stimulate farm production. A campaign was launched to stop the current practice of

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

Federal troops of using the ~~farmers'~~ rail fences for fuel. Brownlow asked the military authorities to stop impressment of grain, horses and mules in East Tennessee. He contended that the recent reopening of railway communication with Nashville rendered such procedure unnecessary. The practice had already been discontinued in Nashville. "Why should the rebels of Nashville be treated better than the loyal people of East Tennessee?" Brownlow asked.<sup>47</sup>

Major General Schofield ordered all army animals unfit for military service to be loaned to East Tennessee farmers until called for by the chief quartermaster.<sup>48</sup> In order to mitigate the fear of a renewal of Confederate invasions the government offered its guarantee of protection to all farmers planting crops in those parts of East Tennessee which were within Federal lines.<sup>49</sup> The agent of the Western Sanitary Commission in Chattanooga planted one hundred acres in vegetables and distributed many early garden seeds in that area.<sup>50</sup>

As spring merged into summer conditions tended to improve. Relief supplies began to arrive in volume sufficient to alleviate destitution perceptibly. Shoes and other clothing arrived as well as food. Shipments continued through the fall. During December, 1864, there was a temporary

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<sup>47</sup> Whig, March 5, 1864.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., April 16, 1864.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., April 23, 1864.

<sup>50</sup> Pennsylvania Relief Report, p. 26.

interruption due to Hood's attempt to take Nashville.<sup>51</sup> Over \$10,000 worth of shoes and woolen goods destined for East Tennessee was purposely burned by the Federal army for fear the shipment would be seized by Hood.<sup>52</sup> After General Thomas' victory at Nashville the railroad was reopened to Chattanooga. Flour was shipped to Knoxville in great quantities. For a time the storehouses there became so full that there was a problem of what to do with the flour. Bad roads into the hinterland prevented county agents from the more remote areas from applying and removing their quotas. This led to a temporary policy of the East Tennessee Relief Association of giving larger distribution in the immediate environs of Knoxville. In this way Knox and the adjoining counties were largely relieved of acute distress during the early part of 1865.

The spring of 1865 brought easier communication, and the surrender of Lee removed any military barrier to the extreme northeastern counties. On March 15, 1865, the association had already decided to distribute two-thirds of its supplies to the more remote counties, since Knox County and its immediate neighbors had received heretofore a disproportionate share and were now on the road to economic recovery. On August 1, Knoxville ceased operation as a local distributing center, retaining as its only local activity the furnishing of a physician for a refugee camp set up by the Federal army south of the river at Knoxville.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Whig, May 23, 1866.

<sup>52</sup> Humes, Loyal Mountaineers, p. 328.

<sup>53</sup> Whig, May 23, 1866.



It had been the original intention to discontinue all activities of the East Tennessee Relief Association in the summer of 1865. However, extreme destitution in the northeastern corner of the region delayed suspension until the summer of 1868, but the amount of supplies distributed after the spring of 1867 was not great. After the latter date funds were expended for purposes other than direct local relief. For example, \$500 was sent to victims of a fire in Portland, Maine.<sup>54</sup> The sum of \$2000 was turned over to two doctors in order to start a hospital at Knoxville. This grant was made with the understanding that the hospital would be named after Edward Everett and that half of the beds should be reserved for charity patients.<sup>55</sup> When the books of the association were closed in 1868, the balance was donated to this hospital to be used for the care of the "sick poor" in East Tennessee.<sup>56</sup>

The East Tennessee Relief Association, in addition to its humanitarian work in relieving physical distress, attempted to assemble and preserve the original records of the war period and appealed to all who had had any connection with events that might be of historical interest, and that happened in East Tennessee, to put the experience in writing and deposit with the association.<sup>57</sup>

The power wielded by Brownlow during the transition period

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<sup>54</sup> Nearly \$8000 had been received by the association from Portland in 1864.

<sup>55</sup> T. W. Humes, Third and Fourth Reports to the East Tennessee Relief Association at Knoxville (Knoxville: Brownlow and Haws, 1868), p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>57</sup> Whig, April 23, June 18, 1864.



can hardly be overestimated. Not the least of the sources of this power lay in his holding a special agency under the United States Treasury Department. This position was given him originally in early 1863, before East Tennessee had been liberated. His headquarters were in Nashville, and his duty was "to permit or prohibit ordinary trading and commercial activities of all classes of people, powerful or insignificant, and especially to keep close watch on all cotton which should come into the possession of the Federal army, to guard it from the cupidity of speculators, whether private or officer."<sup>58</sup>

When Burnside occupied Knoxville, Brownlow had his position transferred to East Tennessee with Knoxville as his headquarters. He then set out to see that all trade carried on in his district would be done by persons of unconditional loyalty to the Union. Almost unlimited authority for achieving this end apparently was granted him. His duty was to regulate all sale of goods, to seize all smuggled goods, and to seize and confiscate all "loose and perishable property left by rebels who have abandoned their homes and gone with the rebel army for protection."<sup>59</sup> His authority was backed to the limit by the provost marshal for East Tennessee, Brigadier General S. P. Carter.<sup>60</sup>

By early February Special-Treasury-Agent Brownlow was ready to announce some rules which experience had shown him would be necessary if the

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<sup>58</sup> Coulter, Brownlow, p. 246.

<sup>59</sup> Whig, January 9, 1864.

<sup>60</sup> Whig, January 16, 1864.

desired ends were to be achieved. Trade permits were to be issued only to East Tennesseans. The maximum monthly gross business for one trader was to be \$3000. No permits would be issued for selling distilled liquors. The army alone would handle this problem. Goods consigned to a certain place for sale must actually be sold in the place indicated on the permit. If smuggled goods were found in any shipment, the whole shipment was liable to confiscation, and the offender would have his permit revoked. Sutlers were allowed to sell as much as \$2500 worth of goods per month to soldiers, but they could not sell to civilians. No Confederate could get a permit, no matter how many oaths he might have sworn. Traders with secret Rebel partners were liable to confiscation of their goods and the revocation of their permits.<sup>61</sup>

Brownlow was the sole judge of a person's loyalty, and there was no appeal. He was also custodian of abandoned Rebel farms, plantations, and other property. These he offered to rent or lease to persons properly qualified and of unconditional loyalty.<sup>62</sup>

By late February the Parson took stock of his administration as treasury agent and decided that he had been too lenient up to that point. He apologized to the loyal public for this fault and promised to pursue a stricter policy in the future. Implying that Rebels had been carrying on trade through dummy partners with loyal records, he promised prompt confiscation of goods handled in this way. No permits would be granted for the

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<sup>61</sup> Whig, February 20, 1864.

<sup>62</sup> Coulter, Brownlow, pp. 254, 255.

time being except in Knoxville, Loudon, Kingston, Clinton, and Jonesboro. Goods brought into other centers would be promptly seized. No further towns would be opened to trade until after conferences between Brownlow and the military leaders.<sup>63</sup>

In April Brownlow retreated slightly on the liquor question. He announced that permits would be given to drug stores to bring liquor into East Tennessee for medicinal purposes, provided the druggists were known to him. At the same time he reiterated his refusal to grant permits to others. Considerable drunkenness on the streets of Knoxville both by civilians and soldiers was noted. This condition led the Parson to suggest that the military authorities close all liquor shops. Needless to say, this suggestion went unheeded.<sup>64</sup>

While Brownlow carried out his duties as custodian of abandoned Rebel properties without undue timidity, he did not go so far as his editorials in this respect. Editorially he advocated outright confiscation of all Rebel properties "within the limits of loyal territory and of all conquered territories," which properties should be given to Union men of the same section to compensate them for their losses during the war. Any surplus, he suggested, might be applied to the Federal war debt.<sup>65</sup>

One abandoned piece of property Brownlow found it necessary to take over was the rebel-owned ferry over the Clinch River at Clinton. This he

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<sup>63</sup> Whig, February 27, 1864.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., April 16, 1864.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., April 9, 1864.



rented to his fellow Unionist, Leonidas C. Houk. Under the terms of the contract entered into by Houk and Brownlow the former was to pay the government \$250 per year as rent. The expenses of upkeep and operation of the ferry were to be borne by the renter. Houk was to ferry all military personnel and supplies free and also to give priority to military over civilian traffic.<sup>66</sup>

While wielding his trade dictatorship Editor Brownlow used his newspaper to further various economic ends. For one thing he desired that Knoxville and East Tennessee look to Cincinnati as the source of imports and rejoiced that this city was replacing Richmond and Lynchburg in this field.<sup>67</sup> He criticized the military authorities for attempting to fix prices and advocated letting supply and demand be the determining factors.<sup>68</sup> On the other hand he complained of sky-rocketing rents. Stores, Brownlow charged, were renting at three times the prices they should command. He hinted that a little rent control by the military authorities might be justified.<sup>69</sup> Traders were encouraged by the Whig to go to Kentucky, buy hogs at seven to eight cents per pound, and drive them to Knoxville. There the hogs would bring at least fifteen cents per pound. Thus, a good profit would be made and the public interest would be served at the same time, since there was a serious shortage of pork in East Tennessee at that time.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., April 23, 1864.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., April 2, 1864.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., March 3, 1864.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., March 17, 1864.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., October 5, 1864.

In early 1865 a tendency became apparent for holders of trade permits to speculate on their businesses. Brownlow quickly propounded rules designed to inhibit such activity. He stated that when a trader sold his business the permit would have to go with the business. The seller would then have to retire. A similar rule applied to rebel property rented to qualified loyalists. When a renter ceased to use the property it would revert immediately to the treasury agent. These rules largely eliminated speculation and subletting.<sup>71</sup>

Brownlow resigned as treasury agent after his election to the governorship of the state in March, 1865. His son, John Bell Brownlow, succeeded him and continued in the office until the end of 1865. At that time the office was discontinued and such of its functions as were still necessary were taken over by the Freedmen's Bureau.<sup>72</sup>

One interesting phase of the transition period was the reorganization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in East Tennessee. Parson Brownlow played a leading role in this, as in all other phases of the period. In order to understand this development it will be necessary to review the pre-war situation briefly.

Prior to the heated controversies of the 1840's and 1850's the Methodist Episcopal Church of East Tennessee had a "reasonably consistent" record of opposition to slavery. When the church split in 1844 the dominant elements in the Holston Conference were pro-slavery, and they succeeded in leading the conference into affiliation with the Methodist Episcopal

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., February 15, 1865.

<sup>72</sup> Coulter, Brownlow, p.263.

Church, South. A sizeable minority of its ministers, however, continued to oppose slavery, and no disciplinary action was taken against them until after secession.<sup>73</sup>

During the war the leadership of the Holston Conference took a strong stand in support of the Confederacy. They did this on the ground that it was the duty of a Christian to be "subject to the supreme authority where they may reside". Definite scriptural authority was cited for this position. Going a step further in the annual Holston Conference at Athens in October, 1862, the ruling body asserted its duty to discipline ministers who failed to use "all laudable means to enjoin obedience" to the established powers (the Confederate government).<sup>74</sup> Disciplinary action was brought against a considerable number of ministers. After trials several were expelled or suspended, and others were placed on probation.

Brownlow and the Unionist Methodists were infuriated by this action. As soon as there was a good prospect of Federal liberation for East Tennessee, they began negotiations with Bishop Mathew Simpson of the northern church. After the occupation of Knoxville by Burnside the first issue of the Whig contained a blistering attack on the southern church. Its members were worldly, according to Brownlow, and indulged in dancing

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<sup>73</sup> W. B. Hesseltine, "Methodism and Reconstruction in East Tennessee", East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications, No. 3 (Knoxville, 1931), pp.43-44.

<sup>74</sup> Whig, February 13, 1864.



and card-playing at their Sunday school picnics. This was "typical of the "rebel" church. There had been no religion in East Tennessee since "we Christians" had been driven into Kentucky.<sup>75</sup>

Bishop Simpson used his influence in Washington to get an order from Secretary of War Stanton placing "all houses of worship belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in which a loyal preacher appointed by a loyal bishop does not now officiate", at the disposal of the northern Methodist organization. The wording of this order was such that no building was secure in the possession of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Armed with this economic advantage, Bishop Simpson proceeded to Tennessee in January, 1864. At Chattanooga he made arrangements with two Federal chaplains to reestablish the Methodist Episcopal Church in East Tennessee. The chaplains immediately began receiving loyal preachers into the Kentucky Conference of the church. They also made contact with Brownlow and arranged for a meeting at Knoxville for the purpose of re-organizing the Holston Conference.<sup>76</sup>

The Knoxville meeting was held on July 7, 1864. Fifty-five delegates were present, of whom twenty-seven were preachers. Delegates' reports indicated that there were 112 loyal Methodist preachers in East Tennessee, sixty of whom were ordained. Forty more were vouched for but were not named due to fear of Confederate reprisals in the area in which they lived.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Whig, November 11, 1863.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., February 20, 1864.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., July 23, 1864.

Brownlow was made chairman of the general committee of the meeting. The report submitted by this committee declared the determination of loyal Methodists to "no longer live under the iron rule of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." Return to the fold of the Methodist Episcopal Church was recommended. The report declared that loyal members were entitled to all property of the Holston Annual Conference; that, in fact, the loyalists were the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Holston. The General Conference prohibition of slavery was accepted. A petition was framed to the General Conference to reorganize the Holston Annual Conference. The committee suggested, however, that this be done with native East Tennesseans in the leading positions.<sup>78</sup>

During the following year a strong propaganda campaign was carried on in East Tennessee to get endorsements for the resolutions adopted in Knoxville. This was widely successful and resulted in another meeting at Athens in June, 1865. There the Holston Annual Conference was reorganized around a nucleus of forty East Tennessee preachers and six imported from other conferences. At the close of the meeting the conference claimed a lay membership of 6494 with fifty-three preachers.<sup>79</sup>

Attempts were made to get the membership and clergy of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to come over in a body to the parent church. This was only partially successful. Many churches were seized from the Southern church, however, and in many cases the evicted membership had to meet in public halls, private dwellings, and groves.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Whig, July 23, 1864.

<sup>79</sup> Hesseltine, "Methodism," p. 52.

<sup>80</sup> Coulter, Brownlow, p. 300.



The southern Holston Conference held its own annual meeting in September, 1865, at Marion, Virginia. This body took a moderate and conciliatory course. It declared its loyalty to the United States government. The suspension and expulsion of Unionist pastors accomplished at Athens in 1862 was reconsidered. The conference admitted that this action had been hasty and petitioned the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to restore the victims of the purge to their former status. Since most of the "victims" had already affiliated with the northern church, this petition was scarcely more than a gesture.<sup>81</sup> The conference instructed all its ministers to take the amnesty oath and to accept the abolition of slavery as an accomplished fact and a closed issue.<sup>82</sup>

This conciliatory attitude on the part of the southern branch of the church did not endure for long, and it was never accepted by Brownlow and his followers. The Whig continued to attack southern Methodists in almost every issue. In McMinn County southern Methodist ministers were ridden on rails. On the other hand, the Klan warned "carpetbag" Methodist preachers to leave the region. In Washington County a controversy was waged over the remains of a deceased Methodist, rival preachers contending for the right to pronounce the final ceremonial prayer. The bitterness continued throughout

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<sup>81</sup> Isaac P. Martin, Methodism in Holston (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1945), pp. 90, 92.

<sup>82</sup> Whig, November 1, 1865.

the reconstruction period, and issues were never even approximately settled before the middle 1870's.<sup>83</sup>

By April, 1865, considerable progress had been made in East Tennessee along the road to economic recovery. In all except the extreme northeast portion the threat of famine had been eliminated, and agricultural production was returning to normalcy. The bitterness between neighbors who had fought on opposing sides during the war had not subsided appreciably, however, and this bitterness continued to poison social relations throughout the reconstruction period and for long afterward.

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<sup>83</sup> Hesseltine, "Methodism," pp. 57, 58, 61.

## CHAPTER II

### SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS DURING

#### THE RADICAL REGIME: 1865 - 1869

By the fall of 1864 Andrew Johnson and the unconditional Loyalists of Tennessee felt themselves in a sufficiently strong position to proceed with the restoration of normal civil government in the State. A meeting to prepare the way for a constitutional convention was called at Nashville in December. Hood's attempt to retake Nashville caused a postponement until January.

Delegates were chosen in various ways, principally by mass meeting, but many came with scarcely any more authority than their own interest and desire to attend. East Tennesseans dominated the meeting. Only those with unconditionally loyal records were seated.

While the original purpose of the meeting as announced was merely to lay the ground work and issue the call for a constitutional convention, the delegates decided to constitute themselves the constitutional convention. They drew up amendments abolishing slavery and prohibiting its reestablishment. Then a schedule was prepared to accompany the amendments in the first election. This included a declaration that all the acts of the Harris legislature enacted after May 6, 1861, were null and void, including of course, the "Declaration of Independence and Ordinance Dissolving the Federal Relations between the State of Tennessee and the United States." The schedule further ratified all of Johnson's acts as military governor and delegated the right to set voting qualifications to the first elected assembly following. The election for ratification of the amendments and appended schedule was then set for February 22, 1865.



Having accomplished its work as a constitutional convention, the Nashville meeting metamorphosed itself into a nominating convention and prepared a list of candidates from every county for the legislature and headed the list with the name of William G. Brownlow, for governor. All names were put on a general ticket to be voted on throughout the state on March 4, 1865. The amendments and schedules were ratified, and the general ticket candidates were elected on the dates set. The new legislature met in April and Brownlow was inaugurated shortly before Lee's surrender at Appomattox. Thus Tennessee had a native-controlled civil government before the official end of the Civil War.<sup>1</sup>

This "scalawag" government remained largely intact until the elections of 1869. During all this period it was dominated by its East Tennessee members. During its tenure much of its legislation was designed to prevent the return to power of ex-Confederates. Other acts, while inspired by the same motive in the main, were constructive in their implications. In the latter category might be placed the acts granting Negroes the right to testify in court, to vote, and to hold office and sit on juries. One piece of legislation is thought by most objective historians of the period to have had outstanding merit. This was the school law of 1867. Its worst legislation in the opinion of most historians was that in which aid to railroads was involved. But perhaps the condemnation of that phase has been too severe. Certainly the relation between railroad magnates and the

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<sup>1</sup> Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction in Tennessee, pp. 48-50; Philip M. Hamer, Tennessee, A History, 1673-1932 (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1933), Vol. II, Ch. XXXVII.

Tennessee state government was no worse than the average relation between such elements in the period of rapid railroad expansion throughout the country.

But while legislators passed laws in Nashville, people elsewhere had to live their ordinary work-a-day lives. It is the purpose of this chapter to give a few glimpses of such daily living as it took place in East Tennessee.

By the spring of 1865 the regions between Knoxville and Chattanooga were on the road to recovery. Farmers were beginning to plant normal crops and trade was on a sharp upswing in the towns. The wheat crop while not bountiful was almost sufficient for home consumption. The oat crop was comparable to almost any of the pre-war years. Hay and corn were also abundant.<sup>2</sup>

This happy condition, however, did not prevail in the northeast corner of the region. There Confederate occupation, or the threat of it, had impeded steps toward rehabilitation until after Appomattox. Greene, Johnson, Carter, Washington, Hawkins, and Sullivan counties still had the denuded appearance that followed the passing of armies. The East Tennessee Relief Association concentrated its activities in this section, and thousands of dollars worth of food and clothing were distributed from the main centers. In some cases the need was so great that impatience and disorder attended the distribution. This was notably true at Rogersville, Greeneville, and Elizabethton. At the latter place an attempt was made to sell the relief

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<sup>2</sup> Whig., July 19, 1865.

supplies to those who were able to pay before making a free distribution. The hungry crowd would have none of this. They demanded that the agents give the goods away without delay, and their manner was so forceful that the agents complied.<sup>3</sup> Not until after the harvests of 1866 did this section recover sufficiently to feed itself.<sup>4</sup>

This period saw a considerable influx of population to the principal towns, Knoxville and Chattanooga. Laboring people sought employment there, while wealthier elements, many of whom had pro-Confederate records, were safer in the cities from the Unionist counter-terror than they would have been in the rural areas.<sup>5</sup> City life in these places was quite primitive by modern standards, although Knoxville seems to have been somewhat ahead of Chattanooga in urban refinements.

Chattanooga's main street, Market, was described as scarcely more than a long mudhole as late as 1868. There was no street lighting of any sort until a jeweler put up a coal-oil lamp on a post at his own expense.<sup>6</sup> In dry weather this metropolitan thoroughfare changed from a sea of mud to a sea of dust. This situation was ameliorated somewhat when a public-spirited and enterprising gentleman contracted with businessmen affected to spray the street daily between the hours of 1:30 and 7:00 in the morning.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Humes, Relief Reports, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Paul A. Counce, The Social and Economic History of Kingsport before 1908 (Master's thesis, University of Tennessee, 1939), p. 78.

<sup>6</sup> J. W. Livingood, "Chattanooga, Tennessee: Its Economic History in the Years Immediately Following Appomattox," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications, No. 15 (Knoxville, 1943), p. 39.

<sup>7</sup> Chattanooga American Union, March 29, 1868.



Nevertheless, with all these lighting and sprinkling systems, the Chattanooga Daily Republican was moved to say as late as 1869 that Market Street's appearance indicated "wealth to doctors and bankruptcy to life insurance companies."<sup>8</sup> At this time there were few stores, and most of those that were operating were carried on in converted government warehouses. The residences were described as mostly dingy, unpainted frame shanties.<sup>9</sup> Only in rare cases were sidewalks found. These dated from the flood in 1867 and were constructed more as bridges than as what we would normally consider sidewalks. Constructed of planks, they constituted a strong temptation to seekers for fuel and lumber. Hence, many gaps appeared, to the dire peril of nocturnal pedestrians.<sup>10</sup>

In 1868 there was a mild controversy between the editors of the Athens Post and the Chattanooga Daily Republican over the degree of unimpressiveness of Chattanooga's appearance. The Athens editor, on a visit to Chattanooga, said that the "spirit of improvement does not seem to be exercising control," and that "a portion of the buildings begin to look time-worn and seedy." This, the Chattanooga editor did not challenge, but when the critic went on to say that two-thirds of Chattanooga houses were

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<sup>8</sup> Livingood, "Chattanooga," p. 39.

<sup>9</sup> Goodspeed Publishing Company, History of Tennessee, Hamilton County Edition (Nashville, 1887), p. 868.

<sup>10</sup> American Union, February 18, 1868.

miserable board shanties with clay chimneys, some argument was offered as to the correctness of the proportion.<sup>11</sup>

Lawlessness was common, and the city court dockets were usually crowded. Keepers of bawdy houses flourished. The local police policy was to bring these offenders in once a week in order to collect a five-dollar fine. This, in effect, amounted to a licensing system with a fee of five dollars per week. On one occasion, a local newspaper reported that five bawdy house keepers came in to pay their fines in one day. One of these kept two houses with eight girls in each. The newspaper pointed out that these were not all, that more were to be notified by the police to come in and pay the fine.<sup>12</sup>

The condition of the city jail should have kept prospective lawbreakers on the straight and narrow path. A correspondent of a local newspaper in late 1867 described it as being completely devoid of stoves and panes of glass. In the upper story he found over a dozen women in one room without a single chair, bench, or bed visible. There were holes in the ceiling, and the roof was badly in need of repair.<sup>13</sup>

The laboring man scarcely lived off the fat of the land. Unskilled labor received from 75 cents to \$1.50 per day.<sup>14</sup> The city paid a little

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<sup>11</sup> Livingood, "Chattanooga," p. 38.

<sup>12</sup> American Union, March 12, 1868.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., November 1, 1867.

<sup>14</sup> Facts and Figures Concerning the Climate, Manufacturing Advantages and the Agricultural and Mineral Resources of East Tennessee (Knoxville: Knoxville Industrial Association, 1869), p. 17.

more than the scale in private industry. In March, 1868, the city council set a schedule under which laborers would receive \$1.75 per day; mechanics, \$2.50; teams, \$3.00; foremen, \$2.00; and quarry men, \$1.50.<sup>15</sup> If the worker lived in a boarding house he would not have much left from his pay check for liquor and riotous living. A typical rate for board was \$25 per month, \$5 per week, and 35 cents per individual meal.<sup>16</sup> The constant threat of unemployment also limited the working man's security during this period.<sup>17</sup>

However, there was a rosier side to the picture of the Mountain City. If one had money he could live in comfort and even enjoy some luxuries. In the income tax returns submitted to the Federal internal revenue department for 1867 were the names of 53 residents of Hamilton County, most of whom were Chattanoogaans. While the highest taxable income listed was only \$6582.83, it is to be assumed that the actual income in each case was considerably greater than that declared to the government.<sup>18</sup>

There were opportunities to spend money on luxury goods and entertainment. Several dealers carried such food items as dates, oranges, lemons, and oysters.<sup>19</sup> There were billiard parlors, saloons, bowling alleys, and

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<sup>15</sup> American Union, March 11, 1868.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., April 4, 1868.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., February 4, 1868.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., April 4, 1868.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., January 7, 1868.



houses featuring intriguing gambling devices.<sup>20</sup> A summer resort was opened on Lookout Mountain in 1865.<sup>21</sup> Circuses and traveling shows were frequent occurrences.<sup>22</sup> Baseball was played during most of the year, and Chattanooga had several clubs, one of which, the Mountain City, played games against representatives of Knoxville, Nashville, and Memphis.<sup>23</sup> For those with more refined tastes there were frequent musical programs and performances by amateur players.<sup>24</sup>

Chattanooga had had a good bridge across the Tennessee (constructed by the Federal army) prior to the flood of 1867. After this was swept away a crude ferry was the only means of crossing the river. No improved roads extended into the hinterland, and such dirt roads as existed became impassable in bad weather.<sup>25</sup> When Chattanoogaans went to the county seat at Harrison, about 14 miles away, they preferred to go by steamer on the river.<sup>26</sup>

Knoxville entered the period of the Radical regime greatly damaged by the occupation of both armies. It was still a country town. Boys

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., February 29, 1868.

<sup>21</sup> Whig, August 16, 1865.

<sup>22</sup> American Union, November 1, 1867, January 15, 1868.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., March 10, 1868.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., December 8, 1867, February 9, 1868.

<sup>25</sup> Livingood, "Chattanooga," p. 39.

<sup>26</sup> American Union, February 4, 1868.

frequently chased rabbits through its streets and gardens, and a gentleman caught a large opossum under his house in the heart of the city as late as the fall of 1868.<sup>27</sup> Garbage disposal was the responsibility of the individual citizen, and apparently said citizen did not always assume his responsibility. The city council passed an ordinance in 1868 requiring residents to remove all offensive material from their premises under pain of having it removed by the city marshal at the expense of the property holder. The same council meeting recorded a petition signed by a large number of citizens requesting an ordinance to prohibit "hogs running loose in the streets."<sup>28</sup> But Knoxville's growth and development was more rapid and more even than that of Chattanooga. Its population steadily advanced during the period.<sup>29</sup> While the city had been left fenceless and with most of its buildings either destroyed or damaged in 1864, its recovery in this respect was unbelievably rapid.<sup>30</sup> By 1867 the building boom had made progress to the extent that 400 houses were erected during the year. These were by no means board shanties. Most of them were "commodious houses of brick, or large frame dwellings, or neat cottages."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Knoxville Press and Herald, December 1, 1868.

<sup>28</sup> Whig, March 11, 1868.

<sup>29</sup> Facts and Figures, p. 20.

<sup>30</sup> Knoxville Free Press, August 22, 1867.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., November 5, 1867.

John Fleming, whose hatred of the Radical regime led him to decry the "evil times upon which our people have fallen" said editorially of Knoxville:

But Knoxville seems to be a wonderful exception to the general rule. In all directions, as if by magic, factories, machine shops, storehouses, dwelling houses, and buildings of every description are springing up. Business, in all its varieties, seems to be thriving. The people, generally, seem to have remunerative occupations--at least they dress well, look well, and appear to be healthy.<sup>32</sup>

An early campaign was sponsored by the Whig to get street lighting,<sup>33</sup> but the result was not achieved until September, 1867.<sup>34</sup> The Knoxville Gas Company submitted a bill for over \$200 for October, the first month of operation, for gas used in public lamps. While this was deemed exorbitant by the city council, and negotiations were carried on in order to reduce it, the amount seems to indicate rather extensive street lighting.<sup>35</sup>

A rather modern fire department was in operation. The city bought a steam fire engine, 1200 feet of hose, and a hose carriage in January, 1868, at an expense of over \$8,000.<sup>36</sup> During the latter part of the same year, a home was built for the new fire engine at the head of Market Square. This was a brick building 40 feet square and having two stories. The fire engine occupied the lower floor, while the municipal offices were located upstairs.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Press and Herald, October 24, 1868.

<sup>33</sup> Whig., March 5, 1864.

<sup>34</sup> Free Press, September 1, 1867.

<sup>35</sup> Knoxville Herald, November 9, 1867.

<sup>36</sup> Rule, Knoxville, p. 106.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 106-107.



Law enforcement seems to have been a little more efficient in Knoxville than in Chattanooga. Prostitutes were barred from the city by ordinance. However, the suburbs were not distant, and there, according to the Free Press<sup>38</sup> they could "be seen walking the streets at almost all hours of the day and night, plying their infamous vocation."

Several of the streets were graded and had curbs, and a few were macadamized.<sup>39</sup> The entering roads were considerably superior to the corresponding ones into Chattanooga. There were a number of turnpike companies that promoted the building of such roads. Most prominent among these were the Tazewell and Kingston. The Kingston Turnpike Company was chartered by the legislature in 1866. It raised funds by subscription in order to build and macadamize the first five miles. From there on, the plan was, "pay as you go." A toll gate was erected and fees were thus collected to build another five miles.<sup>40</sup>

A traveler on the Tazewell Pike in 1867 saw six miles of road lined with stone for macadamizing. Many workers were engaged in pounding the large stones into small ones. It was estimated that the Pike would be macadamized nine miles out of Knoxville by the spring of 1868.<sup>41</sup>

The wage scale in Knoxville was about the same as in Chattanooga, except that the city council seems to have paid a slightly lower rate.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> September 5, 1867.

<sup>39</sup> Whig, June 10, 1867, September 30, 1869.

<sup>40</sup> Rule, Knoxville, pp. 272-273. State aid was granted to the turnpike companies in 1866. Acts of Tennessee, 1865-1866, p. 266.

<sup>41</sup> Herald, November 8, 1867.

<sup>42</sup> Whig, March 11, 1868.

Apparently Knoxville had only one labor union during reconstruction. It was a branch of the typographical union and was organized November 9, 1867. This was no militant or radical organization. It aroused no fears, apparently, in the breasts of the newspaper owners. The union called for a ten-hour day and a minimum wage of \$16 per week.<sup>43</sup> The Knoxville Free Press assumed an attitude of benevolent paternalism toward the union and gave the members an editorial pat on the back as follows:

The terms laid down by the Knoxville "Union" are no higher than those already allowed, we believe, by all the proprietors. We wish the boys a pleasant time and trust they may prosper in carrying out the legitimate objects of their "Union."<sup>44</sup>

Rents were so high in 1866 that Brownlow thought nearly all dwelling houses were out of the reach of the "mechanic or the man of small capital."<sup>45</sup>

Retail prices for food, however, began to decline in 1865, and by late 1866 they had reached a level comparable with pre-war normal. Variety was on the increase, and gradually imported foods and delicacies appeared in quantity in the stores. Raisins, tea, lemons, and spices were on the shelves of Knoxville shops by February, 1866.<sup>46</sup> Such terms as cudbear, logwood, madder, and copperas appeared often in the market advertisements.<sup>47</sup> These substances were used in dyeing cloth, a practice still common in rural homes.

<sup>43</sup> Herald, November 12, 1867.

<sup>44</sup> Free Press, November 14, 1867.

<sup>45</sup> Whig., December 12, 1866.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., February 7, 1866.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., February 7, 1866, July 7, 1869.

Ginseng was sold on the general market for medicinal purposes. Furs were also prominent on market list advertisements, particularly fox, coon, mink, muskrat, otter, and opossum, with prices ranging from \$2.50 to \$3.00 for an otter skin to five cents for an opossum fur.<sup>48</sup> Eggs, chickens, turkeys, and ducks were plentiful and cheap after 1866, and venison was on the market most of the time. Sugar, candy, and coal-oil were expensive items, the latter ranging from 75 cents to \$2.50 per gallon.<sup>49</sup>

For leisure time Knoxville offered many recreational opportunities. There were a number of saloons and billiard parlors, in some cases the two in combination. One advertised itself as "directly in rear of the Press and Herald office where you can read the news or drink the dews."<sup>50</sup> An ice cream parlor was opened on Market Square in the spring of 1865.<sup>51</sup> A dancing club was organized in 1868 and sponsored dances regularly in the local auditorium.<sup>52</sup> Circuses passed through frequently, and shows featuring freaks were common.<sup>53</sup> Baseball was extremely popular and Knoxville had at least five teams at one time, not counting the colored teams.<sup>54</sup> A baseball tournament held in the fall of 1867 was said to have been witnessed by "14,141 of Knoxville's fairest, bravest, smallest, largest, and blackest."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Knoxville, Commercial, March 13, 1866.

<sup>49</sup> Whig, July 7, 19, 1869.

<sup>50</sup> Press and Herald, October 14, 1868.

<sup>51</sup> Whig, May 10, 1865.

<sup>52</sup> Press and Herald, November 5, 1868.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., October 6, 1868.

<sup>54</sup> Free Press, September 4, 1867.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., November 6, 1867.



An auditorium was begun in the fall of 1867 and was completed the following year. According to its published plans the structure could seat 1500 persons and was lighted with gas and heated with hot air pipes.<sup>56</sup> About the same time Professor Knabe, the local music teacher, organized a chorus and orchestra into the Philharmonic Society.<sup>57</sup> The society gave a concert of classical and semi-classical music in the fall of 1868, and the Press and Herald<sup>58</sup> carried a long review of the performance. The critic thought the orchestra work generally good, but thought the lady pianist a little too delicate in her touch for performance in an auditorium. Some pieces were too long, he complained, and he suggested that it would have been more appropriate to have interspersed some old popular music with the classical.

The Germans of Knoxville had their own cultural organization, the Turn Verein. This body gave musical and recreational programs frequently. One of these which the originators called a "Moonlight Promenade Concert" featured instrumental music, singing, dancing, and athletic feats.<sup>59</sup> Further proof that Knoxville was not indifferent to music lay in the prominence of advertisements for organs and pianos and also the fact that 147 pianos were reported on the tax list of 1867.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Herald, November 17, 1867.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., December 20, 1867.

<sup>58</sup> December 6, 1868.

<sup>59</sup> Whig, July 21, 1869.

<sup>60</sup> Rule, Knoxville, p. 107.

The emergence of East Tennessee as an industrial and mining region, prophesied by leaders from the time of Ezekiel Birdseye, began to take form in this period. It is true that not much momentum was gained before the 1870's, but the signs were unmistakable. Industrial associations and boards of trade were formed to promote the movement. These booster groups did not boast so much of achievements as of possibilities. One such organization, the Knoxville Industrial Association, published a pamphlet on the status of manufacturing, agriculture, and mining as of 1868. This pamphlet pointed out that with the exception of a few furnaces and foundries, a nail factory, a few cotton yarn factories, "a steam tannery or two, some plow factories, a soap factory, a few steam saw mills . . . one zinc establishment, a few rolling mills . . . we are just where we were fifty years ago;" and that there was only one woolen goods factory in the state and none for weaving any cotton cloth other than brown domestic.<sup>61</sup> The practice of importing so much was deplored as follows:

We import from other states all our reapers, mowers, threshers and engines, all of our chairs, axes, shovels, hoes, rakes, forks, wire, sheet-iron, iron pipes, hinges, scythes, picks, willow-ware and rope, and even our axe and pick handles and wagon spokes, most of our plows, brooms, furniture, wooden-ware, fire grates, stoves, corn shellers, horse shoes and horse shoe nails, domestic prints, woolens, boots, shoes, hats, clothing, and most of our carriages, and many of our wagons, besides hundreds of other articles. The average cost of transportation on thirty of these articles . . . is 17% as compared with the original cost.<sup>62</sup>

The pamphlet further deplored paying freight on reapers and mowers from Chicago; plows, axes, and horseshoes from Connecticut; stoves from Albany,

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<sup>61</sup> Facts and Figures, pp. 16-17.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

Philadelphia, and Cincinnati; carriages from New Hampshire, and brooms from New York.<sup>63</sup>

A more detailed catalog of the industry already started, however, seems a little more impressive than the Facts and Figures pamphlet would indicate. Knoxville and Chattanooga were, of course, the main centers of the rising new industry, but there were other centers of more than negligible importance.

By 1869 Knoxville had one establishment, (the Knoxville Iron Company,) which included a rolling mill, a foundry, a machine shop, a nail mill, and a railroad spike machine.<sup>64</sup> This company was formed by a carpetbagger who had been a Federal quartermaster, in partnership with some Welsh immigrants.<sup>65</sup> Under its auspices the first coal to be transported on the Knoxville and Kentucky Railroad was brought into Knoxville.<sup>66</sup> Other foundries were the Knoxville Foundry and Machine Shop, which, in addition to doing repair work for the railroads and other factories and mills, made plows, grates, hollow ware and circular saws for saw mills;<sup>67</sup> and the Cumberland, which made railroad castings, hollow ware, grates, and stoves.<sup>68</sup>

Knoxville also had four furniture factories (although nine-tenths of

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>64</sup> Helms' Knoxville City Directory, 1869 (Knoxville: T. Hawes and Co., 1869), pp. 45-46.

<sup>65</sup> Rule, Knoxville, p. 207.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 208.

<sup>67</sup> Whig, October 10, 1866.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.; Rule, Knoxville, p. 198.



her furniture was still imported from the North), a tannery, a pork factory that produced bacon and lard, a soap factory, two breweries, three planing mills which operated sash, door, and blind factories; a gas works which lighted the principal streets and a large share of the stores and private residences, seven flour mills, two saw mills, one pottery mill, one turning mill, four tin-working shops, and a paper mill.<sup>69</sup>

Chattanooga industry grew from 22 small industries employing 214 men in 1860 to 58 industrial establishments employing 850 workmen in 1870.<sup>70</sup> Retail and wholesale trade was still the main business in the Mountain City but there were several saw mills, grist mills, and two furniture factories in the city during this period. The latter made bureaus, beds, chairs, and school furniture.<sup>71</sup> Far more important was the incipient iron industry. In 1864 a rolling mill to reroll iron rails was built by the Federal government.<sup>72</sup> This property was leased to private citizens in October, 1865. The company failed in 1868 due to failure to get enough iron to operate at capacity,<sup>73</sup> and early in 1869 it was sold to J. T. Wilder, the greatest of the carpetbaggers to settle in East Tennessee, and was made a part of the Roane Iron Company. Wilder put in puddling furnaces and began making iron rails.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Commercial, August 1, 1866; Free Press, August 30, 1867; Helm's Knoxville Directory, pp. 46-47.

<sup>70</sup> Livingood, "Chattanooga," pp. 37-38.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>72</sup> Goodspeed, History of Tennessee, p. 262.

<sup>73</sup> Livingood, "Chattanooga," p. 45.

<sup>74</sup> Goodspeed, History of Tennessee, p. 262.

Wilder had served in the war as commander of a distinguished unit referred to as Wilder's Lightning Brigade. On release from the army he sought a milder climate because of poor health. East Tennessee's climate together with her resources in minerals caused him to decide to migrate here. He moved to Chattanooga at the age of 36. After prospecting about the region he found the right combination of coal and iron in Roane County. Joined by other capitalists he formed the Roane Iron Company in 1867.<sup>75</sup>

The Roane County plant was located at Oak Springs, four miles from the Tennessee River. The iron ore was dug about one-half mile from the furnace at a cost of 50 cents per ton and was hauled to the furnace on a small railway. Coal also was mined only one-half mile from the furnace. A high quality of iron was made and operating expenses were low.<sup>76</sup> Output was said to be 9000 tons per year in the beginning. The coal mine there was thought at the time by Wilder to be the thickest vein in the world. He stated that an air course driven through the vein indicated it to be over 100 feet thick, "more than twice the thickness of the largest bed of anthracite coal in Pennsylvania."<sup>77</sup>

In Polk County there was a copper-mining industry that supported a population of about 3000.<sup>78</sup> These mines in Copper Basin were said to yield

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<sup>75</sup> Samuel C. Williams, General John T. Wilder, Commander of the Lightning Brigade (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1936), pp. 40, 42.

<sup>76</sup> Goodspeed, History of Tennessee, p. 262.

<sup>77</sup> Whig, July 21, 1869.

<sup>78</sup> Bokum, Tennessee Handbook, p. 42.

more copper than any other in the United States with the exception of the Lake Superior mines.<sup>79</sup> The East Tennessee Zinc Company was located in Jefferson County at a mine with an ore vein five to six feet thick and said to be one of four of its kind in the United States. The operating machinery was powered by a turbine wheel. The company told Mr. Bokum, the state immigration commissioner, that it expected to make 2500 pounds of zinc oxide during 1868 and twice that amount during 1869.<sup>80</sup> Iron mines were operating in Greene County and lead mines in Bradley.<sup>81</sup> Much marble was quarried in Hawkins County near Rogersville. This area furnished marble for the state capitols of Ohio and South Carolina and for the National Capitol at Washington.<sup>82</sup>

Apparently the only factory manufacturing woolen cloth was at Kingsport. Set up by a gentleman who had formerly operated a cotton factory in Des Moines, Iowa, this factory sent out wagons to 12 counties in East Tennessee to exchange manufactured cloth and blankets for raw wool to make more cloth and blankets. Operated by water power, its machinery included carding machines, looms, and finishing machines. One loom could weave ten

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<sup>79</sup> Facts and Figures, p. 15.

<sup>80</sup> Bokum, Tennessee Handbook, p. 25.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 22.



to fifteen blankets per day. From eight to ten looms were used for weaving woolen cloth, each of which could weave 40 yards per day. Weavers were paid two and one-half cents per yard and, therefore, could make \$1.00 per day if they worked diligently. Ten women and five men were employed in the plant. Most of the cloth woven was either red and white striped, which was widely preferred for petticoats, or solid gray.<sup>83</sup>

A wool spinning factory was enough of a rarity to create something of a sensation at Elizabethton as late as 1869. According to the Whig<sup>84</sup> men, women and children came from miles around on horseback, on foot, in carriages and wagons to see it operate and to witness the results of rough wool "just as it was sheared from the backs of the sheep going through three or four processes and coming out into beautiful and finely spun threads as even and as uniform as the hairs in a horse's mane."

To emphasize the overwhelmingly rural nature of East Tennessee society in this period, only two towns, with the exception of Knoxville and Chattanooga, had populations of more than 1000. These were Greenville and Cleveland.<sup>85</sup> Most of the people lived on farms of from 20 to 100 acres. A few counties, notably Jefferson, Sullivan, Blount, Greene, Monroe, McMinn, and Rhea, had a substantial proportion of farms larger than 100 acres. There were 80 farms in East Tennessee of a size from 500 to 1000 acres, while only eleven in the whole region were larger than 1000 acres.<sup>86</sup> Knox, Greene, Washington, Roane, Blount, Hamilton, and Jefferson

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<sup>83</sup> Counce, Kingsport, pp. 79-80.

<sup>84</sup> June 10, 1869.

<sup>85</sup> Compendium of the Ninth U. S. Census, 1870, pp. 328-339.

<sup>86</sup> Ninth U. S. Census, 1870, Vol. III, p. 362.

were the wealthiest counties in the order given, as judged by the total value of their real and personal property, while Morgan, Scott, and Sequatchie were the poorest by the same criterion.<sup>87</sup>

Farming was more diversified than in any other section of the state. Very little cotton was grown, the total in 1869 amounting to a little over 2000 bales. Nearly all the counties raised substantial quantities of tobacco, Irish and sweet potatoes, winter wheat, corn, and oats. Lesser quantities of beans, hay, spring wheat, rye, barley, buckwheat, rice, hemp, flax, sorghum, butter, cheese, wine, maple sugar, wax, honey, apples, peaches, and pears were also produced.<sup>88</sup>

Livestock raised included horses, mules, asses, milk cows, working oxen, beef cattle, sheep, and hogs. In East Tennessee oxen were used far more extensively for draft purposes than mules. This was another respect in which the region differed from the rest of the state. Greene, Knox, and Jefferson were the greatest producers of livestock.<sup>89</sup>

Bottom lands along the creeks and rivers were said to yield upwards of 50 bushels of corn to the acre.<sup>90</sup> Land prices for these bottom lands ranged from \$50 to \$100 per acre. Other good improved farm lands could be bought for \$5 to \$25 per acre, while mountain lands sold for as little as

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., pp. 57-58.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., pp. 242-249.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Facts and Figures, p. 6.

30 cents per acre.<sup>91</sup> The average assessed valuation of land per acre ranged from 53 cents in Scott County to \$12.06 in Hamilton.<sup>92</sup>

From the beginning of the reconstruction period East Tennessee made efforts to attract immigrants to her soil. In this Parson Brownlow and the Radicals took the lead, but there was no disagreement on the part of the Conservatives and Democrats in this matter. Contact with northern troops in the Federal army, some of whom had remained to settle in Tennessee, was a factor in accelerating the movement for inducing northerners to come down with their capital or their labor power. The commissioners of the Pennsylvania Relief Association for East Tennessee lent their endorsement to the idea. They had visited with a planter near Loudon who had employed a discharged Yankee soldier to work for him. According to the commissioners the Loudon farmer was more than satisfied: "He said the soldier did more work in one day than any negro did in five."<sup>93</sup>

The commissioners also remarked in this report of their trip that "East Tennessee with its fertile lands, its rich mines, and valuable water power, presents a fine field for the application of northern labor and capital, and when this calamity is overpast, and a direct railroad communication with the North is secured, it will prosper as never before."<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>92</sup> Bokum, Tennessee Handbook, p. 52.

<sup>93</sup> Pennsylvania Relief Report, p. 22.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.



About the same time Brownlow began to wage an editorial campaign in the Whig on the subject of immigration. He said that East Tennessee needed tin and stove shops, carpenters, cabinet makers, boot and shoe shops, tanneries, tailors, blacksmiths, machinists, saddlers, harness makers, carriage makers, school teachers, and physicians. He invited loyal immigrants to come in and perform these jobs in place of the "rebel lick spittles" who had fled south. "The country now looks bad," concluded the Parson, "but the war over and everything will spring into life."<sup>95</sup>

In early 1866 the German Association of Knoxville had a bureau of immigration to promote the flow of German-born immigrants to East Tennessee. The association had already secured an agreement with the president of the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad to transport immigrants at half price. Travel was accomplished by steamer to Norfolk and then to Knoxville by rail. Julius Ochs, the president of the immigration bureau, said that many German families wished to come to East Tennessee.<sup>96</sup>

Newspapers, both Conservative and Radical, joined in the clamor for immigration, although the Radical press was a little more whole-hearted about the matter. "We want an emigration [sic] of enterprising men in all the avocations of life to hammer old fogysm out of all of us," stated the Jonesboro Union Flag (Radical).<sup>97</sup> The paper further said that East

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<sup>95</sup> Whig, January 16, 1864.

<sup>96</sup> Commercial, March 13, 1866.

<sup>97</sup> August 16, 1867.

Tennessee would do well to adopt the northern system of industry and education and that if this were done it would make the section one "boasting opulent and wealthy cities" and that East Tennessee would then "march on to her grand destiny amid the thunder roar of innumerable factories."

Whether as a result of the campaign or for other reasons, a sizeable number of immigrants did come to East Tennessee. Some of these were outstanding capitalists such as J. T. Wilder, H. S. Chamberlain, and William J. Ramage.<sup>98</sup> The Nashville Press and Times estimated that six to eight families per week were entering East Tennessee early in 1867.<sup>99</sup> The migration was more one of capital than of labor, however, few northern laborers finding the enticements attractive enough. What there was of the latter type of immigration, however, favored East Tennessee.<sup>100</sup>

There were some discordant notes mingled with the hymns of invitation, however, The Conservative press often found it necessary to use the carpet-bagger designation as a political weapon. For example, Horace Maynard was denounced as an "adventurer from Massachusetts who settled here several years ago."<sup>101</sup> Such attacks did not help attract other "adventurers." Then there was some tendency on the part of natives to exploit the newcomers.

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<sup>98</sup> Rule, Knoxville, p. 333.

<sup>99</sup> W. B. Hesseltine, "Tennessee's Invitation to Carpetbaggers," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications, No. 4 (Knoxville, 1932), p. 106.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., pp. 105-106.

<sup>101</sup> Commercial, August 1, 1866. Actually, Maynard had come to Tennessee long before the war and also long before the editor of the Commercial settled in the state.

The German Association sent a questionnaire to farmers asking the price of land. A Bradley County farmer replied that he had some uncleared land that he would be willing to part with at the rate of \$20 per acre. At this time such land could be bought in Minnesota for \$1.25 per acre. The Knoxville Herald<sup>102</sup> thought the Bradley farmer underestimated the native shrewdness of prospective German immigrants. "People won't come to Tennessee," it warned editorially, "to benefit the present inhabitants, but to make money and improve their own condition."

In December, 1867, the legislature created a state board of immigration,<sup>103</sup> and Hermann Bokum was chosen commissioner of immigration. His experience had included work with the United States Department of State Bureau of Immigration,<sup>104</sup> and he had also served for a time as agent of the Freedmen's Bureau in East Tennessee.<sup>105</sup> Shortly after Bokum's appointment the East Tennessee Immigration Society was formed at a convention of East Tennessee teachers.<sup>106</sup>

Bokum took his duties seriously. Early in 1868 he published a book extolling the attractions of Tennessee, in which book East Tennessee got a disproportionate share of space. The mineral and industrial possibilities were emphasized over the agricultural. In addition to his book Bokum wrote numerous letters to New York papers extolling the climate, resources, and

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<sup>102</sup> December 21, 1867.

<sup>103</sup> Hesseltine, "Invitation to Carpetbaggers," p. 108.

<sup>104</sup> Bokum, Tennessee Handbook, p. 3.

<sup>105</sup> Hesseltine, "Invitation to Carpetbaggers," p. 109.

<sup>106</sup> Herald, December 27, 1867.



freedom from lawlessness in East Tennessee.<sup>107</sup>

The following year the Knoxville Industrial Association published a pamphlet designed to promote immigration. This pamphlet also emphasized the industrial and mineral resources of the section. Additional enticements offered included cheap labor, equable climate, and freedom from disorder. On the latter point the pamphlet said: "The people of East Tennessee are at peace. The outrages of which strangers may read are in Middle and West Tennessee. There are no Ku Klux outrages here."<sup>108</sup> The association arranged for special railway rates for persons coming south in order to prospect for homes or investments.<sup>109</sup> The Knoxville city council cooperated by offering to buy 15 to 20 acres of land and give it to any capitalist willing to invest \$100,000 in a manufacturing enterprise.<sup>110</sup>

The Chattanooga Daily Republican carried an advertisement beginning December 8, 1868, and continuing for a month, with the heading "Wanted Immediately, Any Number of Carpetbaggers to Come to Chattanooga and settle." The advertisement went on to extol the climate, soil, minerals, and railroads of the region and to assure prospective immigrants that the jurisdiction of the "Ku Klux Klan and other vermin does not extend over these parts."<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Hesseltine, "Invitation to Carpetbaggers," p. 112.

<sup>108</sup> Facts and Figures, p. 11.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>110</sup> Whig, September 30, 1869.

<sup>111</sup> Livingood, "Chattanooga," p. 40.

The results of the various campaigns are difficult to evaluate. No doubt some of the migration of northern capital and labor were due to such propaganda. One-sixth of the property of Knoxville was owned by northern immigrants in 1869.<sup>112</sup> But some emigration from the section occurred during the period, particularly to Missouri.<sup>113</sup> In the fall elections of 1869 the Democrats won control of the State government, but no fundamental change in the policy of encouragement of immigration was brought about as a result. However, the emphasis was shifted perceptibly to European immigrants rather than northern capital.<sup>114</sup>

The railroads existing or being built during this period were the East Tennessee and Virginia, which ran from Knoxville to Bristol with a branch line to Rogersville; the East Tennessee and Georgia, which ran from Knoxville to Chattanooga with a branch extending to Dalton from Cleveland; the Knoxville and Kentucky, the Kentucky and Charleston, and the Cincinnati, Cumberland Gap, and Charleston.<sup>115</sup>

The East Tennessee and Georgia and the East Tennessee and Virginia had been completed before the war.<sup>116</sup> These two railroads made connections

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<sup>112</sup> Hesseltine, "Invitation to Carpetbaggers," p. 105.

<sup>113</sup> Whig, September 30, 1869.

<sup>114</sup> Hesseltine, "Invitation to Carpetbaggers," p. 115.

<sup>115</sup> Bokum, Tennessee Handbook, Frontispiece map.

<sup>116</sup> These roads were consolidated in 1869. R. O. Biggs, the Development of Railroad Transportation in East Tennessee During the Reconstruction Period (Master's thesis, University of Tennessee, 1934), pp. 140-141.

with Baltimore and New York. The trip from Knoxville to New York required fifty-two hours, and the fare was \$33.20. Freight for the same distance was at the rate of \$2.70 per hundred. The trip from Knoxville to Chattanooga took about nine hours,<sup>117</sup> which may have been due to stops at the eating houses on the way. Trains stopped full time for meals at Knoxville.<sup>118</sup> Eating houses were located at various towns between there and Chattanooga for the benefit of rail travelers, those at Loudon and Mouse Creek (Niota) being cited for their good meals.<sup>119</sup>

The Knoxville and Kentucky had been graded to Clinton before the war, and rails had been laid ten miles out of Knoxville. During the war, Joseph A. Mabry, the president of the company, used the line mainly to haul wood for the Confederates. By the end of the war less than six miles of track remained, and the main bridges were missing.<sup>120</sup> As early as late 1863 efforts were made to complete construction of the road to Lexington as a military project. Burnside prepared to construct it<sup>121</sup> and Brownlow urged Lincoln to press it on Congress in his next annual message.<sup>122</sup> Federal subsidy failed to materialize, but the state government was more kind. With lavish state

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<sup>117</sup> Whig, September 6, 1865, November 1, 1865.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., April 2, 1864.

<sup>119</sup> Commercial, March 13, 1866.

<sup>120</sup> Biggs, Railroad Transportation, pp. 59, 61, 63.

<sup>121</sup> Coulter, Brownlow, pp. 249-250.

<sup>122</sup> O. R. Vol. XXXI, Series I, pt. 3, p. 278.



subsidies, the road was completed thirty-two miles out of Knoxville by March, 1866.<sup>123</sup> No more was completed until 1868 when seven more miles of track were laid. When thirty-two miles had been completed the cost had been at the rate of \$43,000 per mile, but when 39 miles had been completed the average cost had jumped to \$60,000 per mile.<sup>124</sup>

It is to be noted that the Radicals had no monopoly on support for Mabry and his railroad exploits and exploitations. The Conservative press in East Tennessee was as loud in its praise and support as the Whig. The Knoxville Free Press on November 22, 1867 praised the Omnibus Bill which appropriated \$800,000 to the Knoxville and Kentucky. "We are glad to see that Hon. D. C. Senter is strongly pressing the bill," the editorial continued. A week later, the same paper had the following to say about the matter:

Much praise is due alike to General Mabry, for the faithful and able manner in which he has presented the subject to the favorable notice of the Legislature, and also to the Legislature itself, for the wisdom, foresight and liberality they have evinced in their legislation in regard to the same.<sup>125</sup>

The Knoxville and Charleston was also aided by a state grant in 1866. It was completed to Maryville in 1868, the first train making the trip on August 3 of that year. Financial difficulties prevented further progress on this road.<sup>126</sup>

By the middle of 1866 the Cincinnati, Cumberland Gap, and Charleston

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<sup>123</sup> Report of the Joint Select Committee of the Tennessee General Assembly on the Knoxville and Kentucky Railroad (Nashville: Jones, Purvis and Co., 1870), p. 6.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>125</sup> Free Press, December 1, 1867.

<sup>126</sup> Biggs, Railroad Transportation, p. 38.

had been completed forty miles out of Morristown. Daily trains ran on this line, which connected with an Asheville stage line at Wolf Creek. Three hours and twenty minutes were required for the trip from Morristown to Wolf Creek.<sup>127</sup>

The other great means of transportation in East Tennessee was the Tennessee River. Many river craft plied the stream between Loudon and Chattanooga at all seasons of the year. Smaller craft reached Knoxville at all seasons, and ascended such tributary streams as the French Broad, the Little Tennessee, the Clinch, the Hiwassee, Sale Creek, and Emory River.<sup>128</sup> Much competition was carried on for the trade in produce along the river banks. The farmers along the upper river would pile their freight at the wharf. The first steamer to cover the freight with his tarpaulin was entitled by the law of the river to collect what he had covered on his return trip. Often there was a race for the wharves between competing steamers.<sup>129</sup>

Many new boats were built immediately after the war and others were purchased and brought from the Ohio and the Mississippi in order to meet the transport needs of the coal and iron mines being opened in the valley.<sup>130</sup> Iron was brought from mines in Roane, Rhea, and Meigs counties, and coal from Rockwood, Sale Creek, and Soddy.<sup>131</sup> Other boats carried on a sort of

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<sup>127</sup> Whig, July 21, 1866.

<sup>128</sup> Livingood, "Chattanooga," p. 41.

<sup>129</sup> T. J. Campbell, The Upper Tennessee (Chattanooga: Published by the Author, 1932), p. 58.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., pp. 57-58.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

peddling trade along the river, exchanging goods for poultry, eggs, butter, and other farm produce.<sup>132</sup> A typical load for a steamboat entering Chattanooga included 3500 bushels of corn, 1000 bushels of wheat, oats, butter, eggs, and potatoes, and 20 passengers.<sup>133</sup>

In March, 1867, the most disastrous flood in history occurred on the Tennessee River. Most of the bridges were destroyed, and thousands of dollars worth of property was swept away. A steamboat that made a trip to Loudon during the flood was able to go up a highway bed one and a half miles to the town of Washington in Rhea County. In Chattanooga the same boat steamed up Market Street five blocks and could have gone farther had the Mayor not urged return to the river bank, in order not to endanger the tottering foundations of the partially submerged frame buildings.<sup>134</sup>

The focussing of attention on the river that came as a result of the flood may have been an important factor in the movement that arose during the following year for river improvement. This movement seems to have originated in Chattanooga. In February a meeting was called there to discuss ways and means of getting Federal aid to remove obstructions to river traffic near Chattanooga and at Muscle Shoals, Alabama. It was decided to

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<sup>132</sup> Livingood, "Chattanooga," p. 41.

<sup>133</sup> American Union, January 30, 1868.

<sup>134</sup> Campbell, Upper Tennessee, pp. 63-64.



call on the county courts of the Tennessee valley to appoint delegations to an East Tennessee-wide convention. The meeting pointed out that such improvements would provide an outlet for East Tennessee mineral and farm products and at the same time make the importation of manufactured goods from the North and tropical foods cheaper and in greater volume.<sup>135</sup> Cities as well as county courts elected delegates to the larger convention. The Chattanooga City Council appointed 40 delegates and appropriated \$100 for their expenses.<sup>136</sup> The meeting was held on March 18, 1868, in the city hall at Chattanooga, and about 125 delegates were present. These represented Knox, Hamilton, Rhea, Monroe, Roane, Sullivan, and Marion counties in Tennessee, as well as the cities of Chattanooga and Knoxville. There were also delegates from Marshall County and the towns of Decatur, Tusculumbia, Bellefont, and Huntsville in Alabama. There was even one delegate representing the city of St. Louis. The Tennessee River Improvement Association was formed, and Colonel T. R. Stanley of Chattanooga was elected president.<sup>137</sup> This association started the agitation for Federal aid in river improvement which reached its ultimate fruition in the Tennessee Valley Authority.

While East Tennessee was still an overwhelmingly rural society in 1869, the first slow steps toward industrial development had been made. Thus were laid the first stones of the foundation for the exploitation of the region's abundant raw materials in the twentieth century.

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<sup>135</sup> American Union, February 8, 1868.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., March 15, 1868.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., March 19, 1868.

## CHAPTER III

### WHITE SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

During the war educational activity was practically suspended in East Tennessee. Such schools as were carried on were usually operated by one person in a private residence. An example of this type of school which continued to operate after the liberation of East Tennessee was that of Mrs. James Haire in Knoxville. Mrs. Haire taught classes on a twenty-week term basis, giving "instruction in the elementary branches of a good English education" for a tuition fee of \$16 per term.<sup>1</sup>

Later in the period private schools increased in number and importance. In many cases, however, these schools were forced to depend on churches or church basements for housing.<sup>2</sup> By 1869 there were several private schools in most of the counties. Calling themselves variously institutes, academies, and colleges, their curricula seldom indicated any more advanced work than that given in a modern junior high school. A college book list contained such titles as McGuffey's New Series Readers, Bullion's Grammar, Monteith and McNally's Geography Series; as well as Davis' Algebra, Quackenboss' Rhetoric, Parker's Philosophy, Silliman's Chemistry, Davis-Legendre's Geometry, and Cutler's Anatomy and Physiology.<sup>3</sup> Coeducation was

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<sup>1</sup> Whig, February 27, 1864.

<sup>2</sup> American Union, January 28, 1868; Free Press, August 30, 1867.

<sup>3</sup> Records of Holston College, Newmarket, 1838-1906 (Manuscript in McClung Collection, Lawson McGhee Library), Minutes of February 3, 1868.

rare, and many of the schools of the period used the term "Female" in their designations.<sup>4</sup> Many other school names indicated sponsorship by the Masonic order.<sup>5</sup>

The more prominent of the East Tennessee colleges of the period were Maryville College, East Tennessee Wesleyan University, Lookout Mountain Educational Institution, and East Tennessee University.<sup>6</sup> Maryville College, a school founded by the Presbyterian Church in 1819, had been almost completely destroyed during the war. Troops had used the buildings for barns and barracks.<sup>7</sup> The remains were sold for debt in 1864, and two-thirds of its endowment was lost. Nevertheless, the school opened in the fall of 1866 with 13 students.<sup>8</sup> In 1867 the college absorbed a local academy as a preparatory school and also set up a normal department in order to qualify teachers for the new state school system. In the same year coeducation was adopted as a policy.<sup>9</sup> T. J. Lamar led in the struggle for the rehabilitation of the college. Appeals were made to benevolent northern capitalists and to the Freedmen's Bureau, and aid was promised on condition that Negroes be admitted as students.

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<sup>4</sup> Whig, July 19, September 6, 1865.

<sup>5</sup> Acts of Tennessee, 1866-1867, p. 239; Kingston East Tennessean, July 2, 1868; Maryville Republican, October 23, 1869.

<sup>6</sup> John Eaton, Jr., First Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Tennessee, 1869 (Nashville: George E. Grisham, 1869), pp. cx-cxvii.

<sup>7</sup> Bokum, Tennessee Handbook, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> L. S. Merriam, ed., Higher Education in Tennessee (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1893), p. 234.

<sup>9</sup> Maryville Republican, November 2, 1867.



Maryville had had a long tradition of Unionism and opposition to slavery. A president of the college in 1832 had declared that anyone who silently thought of dissolving the Union ought to be hung, and, if he actually expressed his thought, some more severe punishment should be devised for him. Therefore, the Synod of Tennessee made no radical departure from the Maryville tradition when, in 1868, it adopted a resolution stating that "no person having the requisite moral and literary qualifications for admission to the privileges of Maryville College shall be excluded because of race or color."<sup>10</sup> This action cleared the way for a grant of \$16,000 from the Freedmen's Bureau, and about \$60,000 more was raised from private contributors, mostly in the North. In 1869 the college bought 65 acres of land and started a building program. The four buildings erected under this program included a professors' house, two large, three-story, frame dormitories, and a three-story brick building for college purposes. These buildings were not completed until 1871, but the college carried on with such facilities as were available.<sup>11</sup> In 1869 it had a faculty of three and a student body of 50, of which 10 were in the college course and 20 each in preparatory and normal work.<sup>12</sup> Only one student graduated from the college course during the reconstruction period.<sup>13</sup>

Before the war the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, conducted a women's college at Athens. In 1866 the property was acquired by the Holston

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<sup>10</sup> Merriam, Higher Education, pp. 232, 234.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 234-235.

<sup>12</sup> Eaton, Report, p. cxi.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Conference that had been reorganized under Unionist auspices, and East Tennessee Wesleyan University was formed. Prominent Radicals such as Brownlow, Thomas H. Pearne, and J. A. Hyden were among the original trustees of the college.<sup>14</sup> Apparently, for a time, Negro students were admitted to its classes, although there seems to be no evidence that this was true after 1869.<sup>15</sup> In that year the school had a faculty of five and a student body of 187. Of these 125 were taking the college course, but there were no graduates during this period.<sup>16</sup>

Probably the most interesting college of this period was the Lookout Mountain Educational Institution. During the war the Federal army had built a large hospital with eight permanent buildings on Lookout Mountain overlooking Chattanooga.<sup>17</sup> Christopher R. Robert, New York financier and philanthropist, conceived the idea of setting up a school for mountain whites at the abandoned hospital site.<sup>18</sup> He purchased the hospital buildings and 400 acres of land surrounding them and spent about \$35,000 to convert the facilities for educational use. By May, 1866, he had a faculty organized and sufficient buildings ready to open the institution.<sup>19</sup> The school was coeducational and non-denominational, although the superintendent and

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<sup>14</sup> Acts of Tennessee, 1866-1867, p. 166.

<sup>15</sup> Bokum, Tennessee Handbook, p. 39.

<sup>16</sup> Eaton, Report, p. cxvii.

<sup>17</sup> Bokum, Tennessee Handbook, p. 44.

<sup>18</sup> H. L. Swint, The Northern Teacher in the South (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1941), p. 57.

<sup>19</sup> Bokum, Tennessee Handbook, p. 44.

principal were of the Congregationalist faith.<sup>20</sup> College classes were small, most students being in either the preparatory or the normal course with a view to teaching under the new state school system.<sup>21</sup> There was a Female Department which may have been a pioneer in the field of home economics.<sup>22</sup>

There were accommodations at the institution for 200 students, but the enrollment never reached capacity, the highest during the period being 139.<sup>23</sup> Board and tuition for a five-month term was \$100, but many of those attending received scholarships covering their entire expenses.<sup>25</sup> Students in the 1868-1869 session came from Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Florida, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, New York, and Wisconsin.<sup>26</sup> The Peabody fund subsidized a special teacher in charge of teacher training at the institution, and more than 30 teachers were in training there during the 1868-1869 term.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Union Flag, October 9, 1868.

<sup>21</sup> Merriam, Higher Education, p. 238.

<sup>22</sup> Eaton, Report, p. cxii.

<sup>23</sup> Union Flag, October 9, 1868; American Union, March 29, 1868.

<sup>24</sup> Whig, June 12, 1867.

<sup>25</sup> American Union, March 29, 1868.

<sup>26</sup> Eaton, Report, p. cxii.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 19.



Mr. Robert was plagued with considerable litigation over the school property, and this led to the closing of the institution in June, 1872. The property was sold shortly thereafter, the proceeds being transferred to another philanthropic enterprise of the owner in Constantinople, Turkey. Thus ended a promising experiment in the education of southern mountain whites. During its six years' existence the institution handled nearly 1000 students, and its idealistic faculty members served as an inspiration to teachers throughout East Tennessee.<sup>28</sup>

East Tennessee University had been forced to suspend operations in the fall of 1861. The buildings were used as a barracks and hospital by the Confederates and later as a hospital by the Federals. An unsuccessful attempt was made to collect damages from the Confederate government in January, 1863, in order to repair and improve the plant. After the Federal occupation, claims were submitted to the United States government on March 19, 1864,<sup>29</sup> and were eventually approved in the amount of \$18,500.<sup>30</sup>

The two armies had left little on the campus except "uninclosed grounds and bare walls." Fortifications remained banked against the buildings, and the buildings themselves needed much rehabilitation. The trustees, in their meeting of July 10, 1865, elected Thomas W. Humes president of the

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<sup>28</sup> Merriam, Higher Education, p. 238.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>30</sup> S. J. Folmsbee, East Tennessee University: War and Reconstruction, 1861-1879 (A chapter in an unpublished history of the University of Tennessee, the manuscript being in the possession of the author), p. 7.

university. Rev. Humes, a former newspaper editor and current rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Knoxville, attacked his duties with energy and determination. The situation on the Hill was deemed impossible for reopening until some repairs had been made. Therefore, the university began classes in the spring of 1866 in the buildings of the Deaf and Dumb Asylum.<sup>31</sup> Only 20 students were present at the opening of the first post-war session, but by the time the closing exercises were held in the court house in July the enrollment had increased to 75. Two months later repairs were sufficiently advanced to permit reopening on the Hill. During this term the enrollment was swelled by returning veterans, several of whom were ex-lieutenants and captains. In the fall of 1867 the student body was further increased by an immigration of Alabama students, who came as a result of Rev. F. M. Grace's affiliation with the faculty.<sup>32</sup>

At this time East Tennesseans began efforts to obtain the Morrill Act grant for East Tennessee University. This act provided that each state should receive 30,000 acres of land for each member of Congress to be used to set up an agricultural and mechanical college. Tennessee became eligible for this grant, in spite of the lapse of the original option, by act of Congress in February, 1867.<sup>33</sup> Before Tennessee had formally accepted the grant, much lobbying took place over the location of the proposed college.

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<sup>31</sup> Merriam, Higher Education, p. 68.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>33</sup> Folmsbee, East Tennessee University, p. 14.

Professor J. K. Payne was sent to Nashville in November, 1867, with instructions to try to get one-third of the funds for East Tennessee University.<sup>34</sup>

A public meeting at the Knoxville court house was called for the special purpose of considering ways and means of getting part of the funds for the University.<sup>35</sup> This meeting sent word to J. A. Mabry and M. D. Bearden, who were already in Nashville for the purpose of lobbying for railroad loans, to do a little work for the university on the side.<sup>36</sup>

The Nashville Press and Times attempted to spike this lobbying by casting doubt on the loyalty of the trustees of East Tennessee University. It charged, that of the nineteen trustees, eight were "intense rebels," five were "Etheridge Conservatives," two of doubtful politics, and only four unconditional Unionists. The Knoxville Herald, while itself Conservative, found it expedient to defend the loyalty of the trustees. It replied that thirteen had been loyal throughout the war and that some of the others were members of the Loyal League.<sup>37</sup>

Apparently the Press and Times soon changed its mind. In early 1868, soon after Tennessee had formally accepted the Morrill Act grant, the Nashville Radical paper was quoted as saying:

As the Act of Congress creating agricultural colleges requires military tactics as an important branch of the studies to be pursued by the students, it is plain that in the view of the

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<sup>34</sup> Free Press, November 26, 1867.

<sup>35</sup> Herald, November 27, 1867.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., December 1, 1867.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., December 8, 1867.



past history of our State and country, and especially in view of the critical condition of our National affairs, the loyal men of the State will be putting a knife to their own throats if they allow this college to be located in a rebel community.<sup>38</sup>

Obviously, such an editorial did not help the Middle Tennessee candidate for the funds.

In January, 1869, the Knoxville city council decided to offer an inducement to get the funds for East Tennessee University. It appropriated \$15,000 for library purposes at the new agricultural college, provided it should be established permanently at Knoxville. This amount was to be paid in three equal installments. The first was to go to the university as soon as the agricultural college was located there, while the other two were to be paid annually thereafter.<sup>39</sup> The library was not built, however, and the university eventually had to sue the city in order to get the promised funds. In October, 1869, the library proper had only 1000 volumes, although there were small auxiliary libraries in the two dormitories which were owned by the literary societies.<sup>40</sup>

On January 16, 1869, the state legislature allocated the entire Morrill Act fund to East Tennessee University.<sup>41</sup> The Radical domination

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<sup>38</sup> American Union, March 12, 1868.

<sup>39</sup> Rule, Knoxville, p. 107.

<sup>40</sup> Merriam, Higher Education, p. 73.

<sup>41</sup> Report of the Board of Trustees of East Tennessee University to the First Session of the Thirty-Sixth General Assembly of Tennessee, 1869 (Knoxville: Ramage and Co., 1869), p. 3.

of the state legislature and the loyalty of East Tennessee during the war were the deciding factors in this decision.<sup>42</sup> The university trustees met, accepted the trust, and proceeded to comply with the requirements. The university already had 40 acres of land and six buildings on the Hill, but the new law required the purchase of 200 additional acres. A tract of 285 acres one-half mile west of the Hill was purchased for \$30,000.

In May evidence of compliance with requirements was furnished to the governor by the trustees. The governor declared himself satisfied and ordered the secretary of state to deliver the state bonds purchased with the Morrill Act scrip to the university. In July the secretary of state delivered 243 bonds, each with a par value of \$1000 and bearing six per cent interest, to the university treasurer. The state failed to pay the interest on the bonds, however. President Humes protested sharply about this situation and quoted the Federal act itself, which provided that the interest should "be paid over semi-annually, on the first day of July and the first day of January."<sup>43</sup>

In spite of financial difficulties Humes and the trustees proceeded to organize the new system. The organization was modelled after that of Cornell and the University of Illinois and called for three courses; namely, the agricultural, the scientific, and the classical.<sup>44</sup> Two preparatory schools were set up, one for the classical course and the other for the

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<sup>42</sup> Folmsbee, East Tennessee University, p. 23.

<sup>43</sup> Board of Trustees, pp. 4-6.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

agricultural and scientific courses. The former was taught at the Hampden Sidney Academy, the latter at the College Hill Grammar School.<sup>45</sup>

The law provided for the appointment by state legislators of three cadets from each county who were to be exempt from tuition payments. This system did not work very effectively at first. Only four state cadets were appointed in 1869, and each of these would have attended regardless of the exemption.<sup>46</sup> Cadets who were not appointed were charged a tuition of \$15 for a term of five months.<sup>47</sup> Other expenses included room rent, \$5 per year; incidentals, \$5 per year; board, \$2.50 to \$5 per week, and a small damage deposit. Dormitory rooms were available only to those of "quiet and orderly deportment." Two students were placed in a spacious room 16 by 18 feet with practically nothing furnished except grates. The students had to buy their own coal and furnish their own bedding, table, chairs, and lighting equipment.<sup>48</sup> The total expenses for one year were estimated at \$150 to \$200.<sup>49</sup>

Military training was required by law, and a uniform was provided by the university at wholesale rate. Some manual labor was also required by the trustees in accordance with the state law. It was hoped that the

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<sup>45</sup> Whig, September 30, 1869.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Eaton, Report, p. cxvi.

<sup>48</sup> Board of Trustees, p. 17.

<sup>49</sup> Merriam, Higher Education, p. 73.



"establishment of the rule that no student shall be exempt altogether from manual labor, or from military exercise, and that a uniform shall be worn by all" would prevent "the feeling of caste."<sup>50</sup> While the university was "not sectarian as regards religion" its atmosphere was rather similar to a less liberal church school of the present day. Students were required to attend church and Sunday school regularly.<sup>51</sup>

The overthrow of the Radical regime in the fall of 1869 almost resulted in the loss of the Morrill Act fund by East Tennessee University. The newly-elected Democratic legislature was in no mood of tolerance toward anything connected with Radicalism. A joint committee was soon appointed to investigate the university. This committee eventually made an ambiguous report, the effect of which was to encourage the removal of at least half of the fund. At the same time, a house committee composed entirely of Middle and West Tennesseans was carrying on a similar investigation. The report of this committee was quite clear. It found nothing praiseworthy about the university. <sup>Hypocritically?</sup> Hypocritically, it criticized the university for failing to "furnish separate apartments for the instruction of colored students."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Eaton, Report, p. cxv; Acts of Tennessee, 1868-1869, p. 13.

<sup>51</sup> Merriam, Higher Education, p. 74.

<sup>52</sup> Folmsbee, East Tennessee University, pp. 36-39. Section 13 of the act locating the state agricultural college at East Tennessee University says, "That no citizen of this state otherwise qualified, shall be excluded from the privileges of said University by reason of his race or color; provided, that it shall be the duty of the Trustees of said University, to make such provisions as may be necessary for the separate accommodations or instruction of any person of color, who may be entitled to admission." Acts of Tennessee, 1868-1869, p. 141.

The university trustees replied with logic and documentation, but the legislature was in no mood for being convinced. A bill providing for the removal of the Morrill Act fund from East Tennessee University and the establishment of three separate agricultural colleges passed both houses, and only the veto of Governor Senter saved the situation. An attempt was made to override the veto, but it failed to muster the requisite majority.<sup>53</sup>

Before the war the existence of the slave system was an effective barrier to the progress of public education. The poor were considered to need no education in order to perform manual labor. The wealthy were able to provide private education for their children.<sup>54</sup> But East Tennesseans differed somewhat in their attitudes toward the question of state-supported common schools. There were more citizens of intermediate economic status here, and the small farmers early became advocates of free schools. Andrew Johnson was their spokesman when he sponsored legislation in the interest of such schools during his governorship.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that the first whole-hearted attempt to establish an effective universal system of state-supported free schools was made during the reconstruction period, when the state government was dominated by East Tennesseans.

Action in this direction was indicated by the tenor of Brownlow's inaugural address as governor in April, 1865. He called attention to the

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp. 40-45.

<sup>54</sup> Eaton, Report, p. 87.

<sup>55</sup> Durham, Education During Reconstruction, p. 9.

illiteracy that had resulted from the lack of educational opportunity during the war years.<sup>56</sup> A few days later, J. A. Doughty, floterial representative of two East Tennessee counties, sponsored a resolution in the house to have the Committee on Education and Common Schools consider the matter of appointing a state superintendent of public instruction.<sup>57</sup> The senate likewise had its committee working on the public school question.

In July an educational convention met in Knoxville and organized a state teachers' association. John F. Spence, principal of the Knoxville Female Institute, was one of the organizers of the convention. In his published call he declared, "The education of the masses is the true 'life strata' that underlies the body politic, and like the heart, when it throbs with regular pulsations, the whole system is healthy and strong."<sup>58</sup> The state teachers' association "urged the Legislature to a liberal provision for education and pressed the doctrine that the property of the State should educate the children of the State." Recognizing the dearth of teaching personnel, the body advocated the organization of normal schools throughout the state. It also passed a resolution "advising the formation of auxiliary district and county teachers' associations."<sup>59</sup> M. C. Wilcox, a Knoxville private school head, was made secretary of the association,

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<sup>56</sup> House Journal, 1865-66, p. 28.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., pp. 46-47.

<sup>58</sup> Whig, July 19, 1865.

<sup>59</sup> Eaton, Report, p. 9.



and through him the proceedings of the educational meetings were published and distributed.<sup>60</sup>

After many delays the legislature finally passed the "Act to Provide for the Reorganization, Supervision, and Maintenance of Free Common Schools" on March 5, 1867. This law provided for a state superintendent of public instruction to have charge of coordinating and supervising all phases of the state system of education. He was to be assisted by county superintendents in each county. School districts were to be set up to correspond with the existing civil districts and were to be controlled by boards of education. The districts were divided into subdistricts consisting of the area which would furnish pupils to one school. The individual school would be under the control of local school directors.

A census of the school population, those between the ages of six and twenty, was required to be made in the month of May. School houses were to be procured and schools opened for Negroes and whites separately. Reports were then to be made by the teachers, the county superintendents, and the state superintendent.

The schools were to be financed by the school funds already provided by law and, in addition, the proceeds of an additional poll tax of twenty-five cents, a tax of two mills on property, and a tax of one-fourth of one cent per mile for each passenger transported by railroads within the state. To receive the state money, a school district had to maintain a school free

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

of tuition charges for at least a five-month term in each subdistrict.<sup>61</sup>

John Eaton, Jr., was elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction in August, 1867. A native of New Hampshire, he had formerly been, successively, superintendent of schools in Toledo, Ohio, a Federal chaplain, and superintendent of Negro affairs under General Grant.<sup>62</sup> A man of great energy, practical ability, and idealism, Eaton set to work to build a school system from the ground up. Before taking office he journeyed to Knoxville to address the third annual convention of the state teachers' association. The enthusiasm for free schools displayed there no doubt heartened him for the difficult tasks ahead.<sup>63</sup> After opening an office in the Capitol, he turned first to the selection and appointment of county superintendents. In some cases, he had to make seven appointments before getting anyone to serve.<sup>64</sup> In East Tennessee, however, he was more fortunate. In most counties able, conscientious private school men accepted county superintendencies. Among these were W. B. Rankin, Greene County, president of Washington Female College; T. J. Lamar, Blount County, a professor at Maryville College; M. C. Wilcox, Knox County, principal of the Hampden Sidney Academy; J. A. Hyden, McMinn County, a prominent Athens minister and a trustee of East Tennessee Wesleyan University;

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<sup>61</sup> Acts of Tennessee, 1866-67, pp. 33-48.

<sup>62</sup> Pierce, Freedmen's Bureau, p. 15.

<sup>63</sup> Free Press, August 22, 1867

<sup>64</sup> Eaton, Report, p. 9.

A. E. Blunt, Bradley County, superintendent of the Cleveland Masonic Female Institute; and E. O. Tade, Hamilton County, a Congregational missionary who was generally respected even by the Conservatives.<sup>65</sup>

Organizational work was carried on in the last two months of 1867. In December, an East Tennessee educational convention was held. On its program were discussions of the common school law of Tennessee; the best methods of teaching orthography, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and grammar; and the constitutions of the United States and Tennessee. Superintendent Eaton addressed the meeting on "Free Schools in Tennessee," and Barnas Sears of the Peabody Fund was also a speaker.<sup>66</sup>

In January, 1868, the new system was functioning on the classroom level in most parts of East Tennessee. In Hamilton County the public school children put on an exhibition for the public in the Chattanooga city hall on January 30.<sup>67</sup> At the Hamilton County Teachers' Association meeting in February, a chorus of white and Negro children performed on the program.<sup>68</sup> This opened the way to the use of the most effective weapon employed by Conservatives all over the section: the charge that the public schools were aiming at amalgamation of the races. The Chattanooga American Union stated it thus:<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. clxxxiv.

<sup>66</sup> Herald, December 20, 1867.

<sup>67</sup> American Union, January 29, 1868.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., February 22, 1868.

<sup>69</sup> The Committee referred to consisted of E. O. Tade, county superintendent of schools; D. C. Carr, mayor of Chattanooga; and J. E. McGowan.



Are the white fathers and mothers of Chattanooga satisfied in having their boys and girls associated with Negro children, fresh from the vices and immoralities which prevail so fearfully among the Negro parents? We think not. The recent Public Schools Convention has developed the fact that the free schools of Chattanooga are conducted in the interests of amalgamation and the furtherance of Radical ends. We overheard a gentleman, a prominent Radical, and a member of the School Executive Committee, for Hamilton County, affirm, in the presence of a white man and Negroes, that it would be a d----d good thing for white children if they were half as intelligent as the colored children in the schools.<sup>70</sup>

The same sort of propaganda against the public schools was circulated in Knoxville.<sup>71</sup>

The public schools that had opened up to this time were operating without any state funds to pay the teachers. The latter were teaching on faith, and sometimes this faith was mixed with doubt. E. O. Tade made a special trip to Nashville to confer with Eaton and the legislative committees on schools about the financial situation. On his return he issued a statement designed to reassure the teachers. The Chattanooga American Union<sup>72</sup> was not convinced. Its editorial declared the school money was being diverted to pay the interest on the state debt. Similar doubts were reported by the superintendents of Anderson, Bledsoe, Greene, McMinn, Meigs, Rhea, Jefferson, and Washington counties.<sup>73</sup>

An East Tennessee representative introduced a memorial in the senate on January 27, protesting the use of the school fund for current

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<sup>70</sup> American Union, February 25, 1868.

<sup>71</sup> Herald, December 6, 1867.

<sup>72</sup> January 29, 1868.

<sup>73</sup> Eaton, Report, pp. cxvii-cxccciv.

expenses of the state government and asking a revision of the revenue laws so as to facilitate the collection and distribution of taxes for the benefit of the common schools.<sup>74</sup> On March 24, the Board of Commissioners met with Governor Brownlow at his home in Knoxville. A resolution was passed at this meeting calling on the Finance Board to provide \$200,000 immediately to pay teachers and superintendents.<sup>75</sup>

The financial situation began to clear up after an amendment to the school law in April and the second enumeration of the scholastic population in May. In August money began to reach the teachers and superintendents.<sup>76</sup> This resulted in an upsurge of enthusiasm for the new schools. Anderson County reported schools organized in practically every subdistrict.<sup>77</sup> A citizen of Jefferson County gave permanent title to a new frame building to his local school board.<sup>78</sup> In Claiborne County, 47 schools were opened in July, August, and September, 1868.<sup>79</sup>

In Knox County schools began opening in May, 1868. By September, 1869, the county had 126 schools with an enrollment of nearly 7,000. During this time only 16 school buildings for whites had been constructed. Most of these were built by public subscription, and the land on which they were built was owned by individuals. Their construction was generally of

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<sup>74</sup> American Union, January 27, 1868.

<sup>75</sup> Eaton, Report, p. 11.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>77</sup> Whig, October 14, 1868.

<sup>78</sup> Eaton, Report, p. cxxv.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. cxxi.

hewn logs, but some were of unhewn logs with the bark on, and a few were frame structures. There was only one brick school in the county at this time. Superintendent Wilcox described the typical school interior as follows:

The schools of the county are generally without apparatus of any kind, not even blackboards or maps. The furniture is of the most primitive style--benches without backs being the soft side of an oak or poplar slab supported by wooden pegs, which often penetrate the upper surfaces, much to the annoyance of the pupils perched upon them; for they are generally too high for the majority of the scholars. A board placed horizontal on pins inserted in the wall answers all purposes, viz: General receptacle for hats, caps, bonnets, shawls, dinner-baskets, buckets, etc., also a place to write; the scholars taking turns for position.<sup>80</sup>

The first school district of Knox County was within the city limits of Knoxville. In 1868 the board of education of this district, although it had no buildings devoted to the sole use of the public schools, attempted to divide the schools into primary, intermediate, grammar, and high school grades. Examinations were required in order to pass to a higher grade. In the grammar and high school grades "the English branches," Latin, and modern languages were taught. No tuition was charged even for such "luxury" subjects as vocal music, drawing, and embroidery. The sexes were separated, the boys' primary and intermediate grades being taught in the Market Hall, the grammar and high school grades in the Hampden Sidney Academy building. The girls were taught in the Female Institute building.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. cxxvi-cxxvii.

<sup>81</sup> Press and Herald, October 18, 1868.



In January, 1869, the Peabody Fund donated \$2000 to the Knoxville schools. Before this donation was made, much of the money for fitting up the school buildings had been advanced from the personal funds of Superintendent Wilcox. By May, 1869, he had not been repaid for his outlay.<sup>83</sup> After the state supreme court voided the local taxation provision of the school law, Knoxville voted affirmatively for a three-mill tax. No assessment was made, however, and up to October, 1869, the city had contributed nothing to public schools. Wilcox described the resulting situation as follows:

After the decision of the Supreme Court and the non-appropriation of the city, the schools closed in the midst of a prosperous session and at the lowest estimate, five hundred children, whose parents are unable to keep them in private schools at the present high rates of tuition, are turned into the streets, there to grow up steeped in vice and ignorance, educated in the street school for crime's darkest pages, to be registered in the Recorder's books and in the Police reports as villains, rather than in moral and intellectual schools, receiving that instruction which would fit them for honest neighbors and good, enterprising citizens.<sup>84</sup>

In Claiborne County the schools were reported very popular in spite of poorly qualified teachers. Up to September 30, 1869, there had been 62 schools opened in the county. According to Superintendent Hollingsworth, more schools had been opened during the short life of the new system than during the entire pre-war history of public schools. This county erected 20 school buildings, during the first nine months of 1869. These, while

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. cxxxi.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. cxxviii.

not "noted for their elegance or comfort," were considerably superior to the pre-war type. Most of them were equipped with combination seats and desks, which replaced the "old slabs with wooden pegs, that had become as much of a fixture of our school houses as Webster's Elementary Speller." Hollingsworth thought that if the school law was continued, there would hardly be a child of school age in Claiborne County who could not read and write by 1871. "If the law is entirely repealed," he warned, "we may make up our minds to go back to barbarism."<sup>85</sup>

In Bradley County, A. E. Blunt reported the principal difficulties as the scarcity and poor quality of the school houses, the lack of qualified teachers, and the indifference of parents. Nevertheless, 45 schools operated in 1868, most of them for the full five-month term. Those in the city of Cleveland were open for ten months. The principal school there was conducted by R. D. Black. The Black school had opened in January, 1868, in an old academy building that was too small and without fence, outbuildings, blackboards, partitions, or doors that could be locked. With community co-operation and financial aid from the Peabody Fund, Rev. Black succeeded in equipping the building comfortably for 220 pupils.<sup>86</sup>

It is interesting to note that Scott County, although the poorest county, was the first in the state to report its schools organized and opened

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. cxxii.

<sup>86</sup> Whig, February 24, 1869.

in every district.<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, the prosperous town of Greeneville had no free school for whites as late as the spring of 1869, because of the "opposition on the part of the inhabitants to the Free School System."<sup>88</sup>

Opposition to the Eaton system was constant throughout its life. The attitude of conservative propertied individuals is exemplified by this communication to the Knoxville Press and Herald, which was published without editorial comment, implying editorial agreement:

To call a system "free" supported by onerous taxation, is a libel on the term and a swindle on the people. In fact, the whole system of the so-called "free schools" was conceived in corruption and brought forth in fraud . . . to educate the children of the State, money has been filched from them [the taxpayers], contrary to constitutional guarantees.<sup>89</sup>

During the life of the Eaton system, 1478 white schools were opened with an enrollment of 70,271.<sup>90</sup> The average expenditure for tuition was less than \$5 per pupil for a five-month term. Teachers' salaries ranged from \$16 to \$48 per month.<sup>91</sup> There were 212 school houses for whites built in East Tennessee during this period, which was nearly as many as were built in all the rest of the state combined.<sup>92</sup>

As organized opposition to the free schools gained in power, the local teachers' associations marshalled their forces for the defense. A

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<sup>87</sup> Eaton, Report, p. cxxdiii.

<sup>88</sup> Swint, "Reports of Educational Agents," p. 72.

<sup>89</sup> Press and Herald, October 21, 1868.

<sup>90</sup> Eaton, Report, p. clxxxiv.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>92</sup> Eaton, Report, pp. 143-144.



joint meeting of the Jefferson and Grainger Counties' Educational Association was held at Mt. Horeb on February 15, 1869. Claiming to represent a school population of 10,000 and an enrollment of 7,000 pupils, the meeting expressed fear of an effort to repeal or cripple the new school law. Such efforts were strongly opposed, and the new system was accorded a hearty endorsement.<sup>93</sup>

The worst fears of the school people were realized, however. In the elections of August, 1869, the Democrats, permitted to vote by Governor Senter in violation of the existing franchise law, won an overwhelming victory. On December 14, the new legislature completely repealed the school law.<sup>94</sup> In its place, a law was passed that remitted the whole question of public education to the counties without imposing any obligation to levy taxes for the support of the schools. The public schools quickly deteriorated. A Freedmen's Bureau official reporting in July, 1870, stated that Tennessee was paralyzed educationally. According to him, not a single county had taken any step toward providing funds for public education since the repeal of the 1867 law.<sup>95</sup>

East Tennesseans led in the demand for a better school law. Teachers' associations all over the state passed resolutions and proposed plans. Such

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<sup>93</sup> Whig, February 24, 1869.

<sup>94</sup> Durham, *Education During Reconstruction*, p. 73.

<sup>95</sup> Swint, "Reports of Educational Agents," pp. 166, 169.

agitation resulted in another law being passed in 1873, which was to a large extent a revival of the 1867 statute. Since the 1873 law is considered the "parent act" of the present public school system in Tennessee, it is clear that this system owes much to the Brownlow school law.<sup>96</sup>

In summary, it may be said that East Tennessee made a rapid educational recovery after the war. Notable progress was made during the reconstruction period toward a well-balanced system of public schools, private schools, and institutions of higher learning. The Brownlow school law was the greatest achievement of the period, and the credit for its passage belongs primarily to East Tennessee.

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<sup>96</sup> Durham, Education During Reconstruction, p. 96.

## CHAPTER IV

### BLACK RECONSTRUCTION IN EAST TENNESSEE

The key figure in East Tennessee reconstruction as elsewhere in the South was the Negro. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the lowly black man played a role of prime importance in the legislation and reforms of the period. He desired schools, the ballot, other civil rights, and economic opportunity. The Radicals, with a few idealistic exceptions, desired mainly to stay in power. It is the purpose of this chapter to relate some of the events that show how the Negro of East Tennessee participated in his own political, economic, and social uplift and how his new theoretical status worked out in practice.

The occupation of East Tennessee by the Federals practically terminated what slavery there was in the region. Pro-Confederate slaveowners fled to the cotton states. Some were successful in taking their Negroes with them. In other cases the slaves escaped and remained in the region or returned to it from other states. Some of these, intoxicated with the implications of the new freedom, migrated to Knoxville and Chattanooga. In Chattanooga a large settlement of the freedmen grew up near the location of the barracks of a Negro regiment and was called Little Africa.<sup>1</sup> In Knoxville the freedmen drew several editorial rebukes from Parson Brownlow. The latter stated that "they try how filthy and lazy they can be,"<sup>2</sup> and suggested that they go back to the farms.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Goodspeed, History of Tennessee, p. 868.

<sup>2</sup> Whig, January 23, 1864.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., September 27, 1865.



The old isolation of the slaves from ideas was broken somewhat. The former bondsmen got to talk freely with free Negroes, abolitionists, Yankee chaplains, and northern missionaries who had come south on a crusade to educate and uplift them.<sup>4</sup>

Some returned boldly to their old masters' plantations, moved into the manor houses, and staked out holdings. Hundreds are said to have migrated into East Tennessee from South Carolina because of the reputed ease of acquiring abandoned lands here. An owner of an abandoned farm in Greene County said that his former slaves had left their huts and moved into the plantation house after dividing the land among themselves. The same man had taken two slaves with him to South Carolina. These ran away, joined the Union army, and eventually turned up in Greene County to share in the distribution of their former master's estate.<sup>5</sup>

By the summer of 1866 the movement back to the farm was largely completed. M. J. R. Gentle, Knoxville Negro leader, reported to the state Negro convention in August of that year that 400 Negro hands were engaged in farming in Knox County, each tending an average of fifteen acres. Hands were paid \$10 to \$20 per month, while renters received from one-third to one-half of the crop, the planters furnishing the stock, tools, and seed.<sup>6</sup> Apparently the Freedmen's Bureau did not have much to do in East Tennessee

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<sup>4</sup> Swint, Northern Teacher, p. 57.

<sup>5</sup> O. R. Broyles to T. A. R. Nelson, August 15, 1865, Nelson Papers.

<sup>6</sup> A. A. Taylor, The Negro in Tennessee, 1865-1880 (Washington: Associated Publishers, Inc., 1941), p. 127.

in the way of guaranteeing fair contracts for Negroes. The colored people of this section seem to have handled their own contracts with their employers in most cases. The result was that the Conservative press was willing to praise the leading Bureau agents, those at Chattanooga and Knoxville.<sup>7</sup> It is true that there was some talk in the Conservative press about boycotting Negroes who joined the Loyal League. But this was merely a threat, and the acute labor shortage of the time prevented Conservative planters from carrying it out.<sup>8</sup>

The Negroes who remained in the towns seem to have taken up a surprising variety of occupations. The Knoxville city directory of 1869 listed 107 Negroes as laborers or of unknown occupations. But among those more definitely identified were ten or more each of shoemakers, blacksmiths, barbers, carpenters, and brickmasons. Other occupations listed were tanner, porter, hostler, preacher, moulder, saloon keeper, eating house proprietor, janitor, printing pressman, teacher, plasterer, teamster, cook, wagon maker, brick maker, office boy, drayman, brakeman, farmer, broom and basket maker, machinist, peddler, grocer, waterman, dressmaker, painter, fireman, broker, and physician.<sup>9</sup>

Slavery was officially abolished by state action in the referendum of February 22, 1865, Tennessee achieving the distinction of becoming the

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<sup>7</sup> American Union, December 19, 1867; Press and Herald, October 18, 1868.

<sup>8</sup> American Union, January 28, 1868.

<sup>9</sup> Helm's Knoxville City Directory, 1869, pp. 63-114.

only seceding state to be permitted to free its own slaves.<sup>10</sup> The legislature and governor were elected March 4, and the first post-war session of the general assembly met in early April. A petition from some Negroes claiming to represent the colored people of East Tennessee and asking that the protection of the law be extended to them was presented to the Senate in the opening days and was referred to a committee.<sup>11</sup> Neither Senate nor House showed much tendency to do anything for the Negro. Knoxville Negroes joined with those of Memphis and Nashville in calling a state convention for August 7, 1865. The convention met on the appointed date. M. J. R. Gentle was among the delegates from East Tennessee.<sup>12</sup> The convention demanded for Negroes the right to vote and protested against admission of any congressional delegation from Tennessee before the granting of this right.

The issue of Negro suffrage was a significant factor in the August congressional race in the second district. Horace Maynard, former East Tennessee University professor and congressman of New England nativity, opposed the former Union army officer and native East Tennessean, Leonidas C. Houk. The latter raised the race issue in a violent campaign handbill shortly before the election: "He (Maynard) is in favor of negro suffrage! He says no man can give a good reason why the negro shall not vote. I am

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<sup>10</sup> J. E. Walker, *The Negro in Tennessee During the Reconstruction Period* (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Tennessee, 1933), p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Taylor, *Negro*, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.



opposed to negroes and rebels voting!"<sup>13</sup> The fact that Maynard won the race seems to indicate the relative mildness of the East Tennessee Radicals' racial prejudice.

In October the state senate took up the Negro testimony bill, which made Negroes competent witnesses in the courts of the state. Frazier of Knox County and Senter of Grainger County spoke against the measure.<sup>14</sup> The bill finally passed, but East Tennessee senators voted three to two against it. Apparently several of the senators from this region were absent.<sup>15</sup> The bill later passed the house forty-one to thirty-one on January 25, 1866. East Tennesseans were evenly divided on this vote.<sup>16</sup> However, some of the most vocal opposition came from H. P. Murphy of Johnson County. He stated that the two races could not live together with equal rights and privileges. The granting of some rights to Negroes would, he thought, only whet their appetite for more until eventually they would try to get full social equality.<sup>17</sup> While the debate was in progress, a meeting at the court house in Knoxville adopted resolutions in favor of the testimony bill.<sup>18</sup> Brownlow strongly supported it. He pleaded with the citizens of East Tennessee to

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<sup>13</sup> Handbill, August 1, 1865, Houk Papers (McClung Collection, Lawson McGhee Library).

<sup>14</sup> Taylor, Negro, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> Senate Journal, Tennessee General Assembly, 1866-1867 (Nashville: S. C. Mercer, 1867), p. 70.

<sup>16</sup> House Journal, Tennessee General Assembly, 1865-1866 (Nashville: S. C. Mercer, 1866), p. 295.

<sup>17</sup> Taylor, Negro, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> Walker, Negro, p. 34.

give their support, admitting that he feared the defeat of the bill in the house through the votes of East Tennessee loyalists with the support of their constituents. The governor believed his fellow East Tennesseans mistaken as to their own best interest in the matter.<sup>19</sup> His efforts seem to have had some effect in the house. The final voting showed a more favorable attitude on the part of East Tennessee members than had been shown on a motion to table in early December, 1865.<sup>20</sup>

The testimony law failed to win wide acceptance in practice. In June, 1866, an attempt was made to introduce Negro testimony in a case in Knoxville. Both parties in the case, however, refused to accept such testimony, and it was ruled out by the court.<sup>21</sup>

During 1866 the Negroes continued their own efforts to extend their rights. The most notable effort in this direction was a state convention of colored citizens held at Nashville in August. M. J. R. Gentle of Knoxville was elected president of this convention, which was attended by seventy delegates from eighteen counties. This body organized an Equal Rights League and made demands on the state government for a "Republican form of government for Tennessee," public schools for Negroes, enrollment of Negroes in the militia, and Negro suffrage.<sup>22</sup>

In the next month Brownlow's speech in Philadelphia gave a forecast of fulfillment of the Negro's desire to vote. "We have but one more law

<sup>19</sup> Jonesboro Union Flag, December 22, 1865.

<sup>20</sup> House Journal, 1865-1866, p. 224.

<sup>21</sup> Walker, Negro, pp. 38-39.

<sup>22</sup> Taylor, Negro, p. 20.



to pass, and that is the law enfranchising the negroes, and we will do it next winter," he said.<sup>23</sup> This speech won for Brownlow the overwhelming support of the Negroes. Meetings took place in various parts of East Tennessee to endorse the governor and call for suffrage. At the Knoxville meeting every mention of Brownlow's name elicited prolonged applause. At Maryville resolutions were passed stating that the Negro population had furnished soldiers for the Union who had "fought and vanquished on the battlefield the bloody minions of the slaveholders' rebellion, and who are ready and willing to mete out justice to traitors at the ballot box."<sup>24</sup>

The Negro suffrage bill passed on February 25, 1867. It was marred, however, by the "odious" Section 16, which debarred Negroes from holding office or sitting on juries. The effect of the measure in East Tennessee was to heighten political activity of Negroes, to promote the growth of Loyal Leagues, and to solidify Negro support for Brownlow and the Radicals.

The Loyal or Union League organizations spread rapidly throughout East Tennessee in 1867. They served as the rallying point for the progressive element of the Republican party for the next several years. In them Negroes, carpetbaggers, and native whites cooperated politically. Advanced concepts of democracy were proclaimed in their rituals, some of their aims and principles being the following:

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<sup>23</sup> Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction in Tennessee, p. 132.

<sup>24</sup> Coulter, Brownlow, p. 329; Taylor, Negro, p. 45.



Complete ascendancy of the true principle of popular government; the establishment of equal liberty; the elevation and education of the toiling masses of the republic, ---the complete and final overthrow at the ballot box, as in the field, of the oligarchy of political leaders who sought to ruin when they could not rule, and through whose errors and wrongs our country has been baptized in blood; the establishment here of an asylum for the distressed of other lands---.<sup>25</sup>

Loyal League councils and Negro meetings throughout the section celebrated the enfranchisement of the black man. These meetings usually endorsed Brownlow for reelection.<sup>26</sup> At Jonesboro the town was full of Negroes on a day in early April, 1867, "shouting hurrahs to the Old Flag and praises to Almighty God." A parade was held with fifes and drums at the head, followed by a meeting in the basement of the court house where the main speaker was the local Freedmen's Bureau agent, a Negro minister from Connecticut. According to the newspaper report the speaker, Rev. Amos J. Beman, was well educated and a good orator: "No Copperhead in the county can touch him." The Radical program and candidates, including Brownlow, were unanimously endorsed.<sup>27</sup>

On April 5 a Loyal League meeting in Chattanooga was just as enthusiastic. Thomas King, a Negro leader, addressed the meeting, denouncing copperheads and praising Brownlow. A significant part of his address follows:

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<sup>25</sup> Free Press, July 26, 1867.

<sup>26</sup> W. T. Jordan, "The Freedmen's Bureau in Tennessee," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications, No. 11 (Knoxville, 1939), p. 60.

<sup>27</sup> Union Flag, April 5, 1867.

When Brownlow went into office he commenced to labor unceasingly for the elevation and education of the colore race. To him we owe the privilege of casting our votes to-day, and the colored man would be an ingrate indeed who would not cast his vote for the saviour of his political and educational freedom.

To-day, through the effort of the Union Party, and through it alone, we are freemen, we are enfranchised, we can inherit and transmit property, we can sue and be sued in courts, can make and enforce contracts, and can testify in the courts of the country. Those privileges are confirmed and can never be lost, except as punishment for crime, and it behooves us to support only those men who have invested us with this great boon, unless you wish to revolutionize our con ition and assume again the position of slaves upon the cotton plantations of our former oppressors. We must stand by the Constitution and the Union Party that has vindicated it.<sup>28</sup>

The chairman of this League meeting was a Negro, T. J. Johnson. Mr. Johnson proposed resolutions which were adopte . These held that while Leaguers would vote only for loyal men they would try to "entertain 'malice toward none, and charity for all,' so that peace and prosperity" might "once more bless every section of our common country." They thanked the legislature for the school law and "hailed with uplifted hats the coming of a hero, tried and found true," and promised to give their votes to this hero in the August gubernatorial election.<sup>29</sup>

Some of the whites tried to stop the Negro political activity, and even some of the Radicals tried to push their black allies well into the background. At Tazewell vigilante groups from Virginia were encouraged by the native Conservatives to ride into East Tennessee and threaten Radicals

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<sup>28</sup> Taylor, Negro, p. 52.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

in order to insure "that Negroes shall not register and vote."<sup>30</sup> At Greenville a Negro group and some Conservatives engaged in a fight in which shots were fired on both sides during the election campaign. One Conservative was killed and another wounded in the encounter.<sup>31</sup> The Whig omitted Negro names from a list of the arrangements committee for the Fourth of July celebration in Knoxville. On being taunted by Conservatives for this, Brownlow said that the omission was without his knowledge and blamed it on luke-warm Radicals. He ended his comment with, "if week-kneed Union men and their time serving partisans can't stand this, let them stay at home on the Fourth of July."<sup>32</sup>

✓ The August <sup>1867</sup> elections resulted in an overwhelming victory for Brownlow and the Radicals. Negroes of East Tennessee were jubilant and Negro-phobes embittered. The Kingston Loyal League council tried and expelled a member who had voted for Conservative candidates.<sup>33</sup> In Washington, then the county seat of Rhea County, some Negroes and whites became involved in an argument over the race issue in the election. The immediate result was the chasing of the Negroes out of town. The Loyal League came to the defense of the Negroes and entered the town with them on the following day. A running fight seems to have ensued which ended without decisive victory for either side.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Whig, June 12, 1867.

<sup>31</sup> Walker, Negro, p. 79.

<sup>32</sup> Coulter, Brownlow, p. 336.

<sup>33</sup> Free Press, August 22, 1867.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., August 31, 1867.



Knoxville Negroes decided that it was time to press for further gains. At a meeting there a call for a state Negro convention for September 24, 1867, was framed and signed by several prominent Negroes of Knoxville and vicinity. The call stated:

We have carried the elections by a vast majority, yet there remains much to be done, matters connected with our future welfare and happiness to be considered, and we hope and trust that every city, county, and district will be represented by delegates.<sup>35</sup>

That the Negroes had some white support in their drive for more rights is indicated by a letter of a correspondent of the Maryville Republican who signed himself "Will A." Will A. called Negro suffrage a noble work and asked the legislature to grant full rights to Negroes. He continued:

We find our colored citizens now as studious and industrious as are those of our own race. Why longer hesitate? Let us give them the privileges of holding office and sitting on juries, and forever hereafter declare them our equals in church and State, and sail on in the noble old ship of State as God intended that we should.<sup>36</sup>

In October, 1867, the legislature passed a law forbidding railroads and other common carriers to discriminate because of race. Offending railroads were subject to a fine of \$100, and employee offenders might be punished by fines of \$10 to \$50 and up to thirty days in jail.<sup>37</sup> This legislation stirred up a great deal of Conservative opposition on the ground that

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., September 1, 1867.

<sup>36</sup> Maryville Republican, November 2, 1867.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

it would establish that awful condition so long dreaded by Negrophobes called "social equality." The Maryville Republican, published by a Negro and edited by two white Loyal Leaguers, met this issue forthrightly and with a logic that was hard to refute:

A scrupulous search of the record, public and private, convinces us that it is not so much the negro himself they so abhorrently detest, but the position he occupies in the political society of the country. But to judge from the almost deafening hue and cry of the Democracy, the recent defenders of the slave system, make about negro equality, a man unacquainted with the custom of the country would think that he must, of a necessity, marry the first she-negro he sees, and that, too, on very short acquaintance. . . .

It is the power the negro possesses in the government as a free man, and not his kinky hair, his flat nose, his black skin, his long heel or the odor he emits, so much complained of as being so very offensive to the Democratic olfactories, that is so obnoxious to those of the Copperhead persuasion. It is his love of freedom and hatred of tyranny; his patriotic devotion to this country and his bitter enmity towards treason. It is truly soothing and pleasant to the Democratic mind to contemplate the negro in a state of perpetual and inhuman bondage, uneducated, except in barbarism and brutality, with even the smallest privilege to which man is entitled denied him; but place him in the position of a free man, clothed with all the rights of citizenship, and he at once becomes an abomination in the sight of Democracy. The proud autocrat could under the reign of slavery tolerate the negro on his farm, in his yard, and even in his house, not infrequently living with his slaves in a wicked state of concubinage without one feeling of the degrading influence of negro equality. Where the master reaped the benefits of the ceaseless toils of his victimized slave, we notice but little was said about the deleterious effects of equality. But when the bonds of slavery were broken asunder by the liberating hands of our country's glorious defenders, then were the supporters of tyrannical oppression taken possession of by a supernatural terror of negro equality.<sup>38</sup>

The campaign now went forward for the repeal of the "odious" Section

16. Candidates for all offices became subject to pressure to prove their

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

loyalty to Radical principles. In Chattanooga D. C. Trehwitt, a candidate for chancellor, told a mixed mass meeting in the city hall that he had been charged with disloyalty. He declared that he was a member of the Loyal League while his opponent for the nomination was not.<sup>39</sup> Apparently even this failed to convince his audience, and he was opposed in the general election by a young Negro blacksmith, who was supported by the Radical opponents of Trehwitt, as well as by the "white men's candidate."<sup>40</sup> Another instance of Negro pressure was a threat by Negroes to hang John Anderson, Hamilton County representative, for voting to table a motion to repeal Section 16. Anderson had promised to work for repeal.<sup>41</sup> Citizens of Hamilton County responded to pressure and sent a memorial to the state senate early in December asking the repeal of the offending clause.<sup>42</sup>

Chattanooga did not wait for the repeal of Section 16, however. A Negro clergyman, C. P. Letcher, was nominated by the Radicals for alderman and won in the election. When the city council met on January 6, 1868, all successful candidates were declared qualified except Letcher. His opponent claimed the seat on the ground that the state law barred Negroes from holding office. The case was turned over to the credentials committee for a report at the following meeting.<sup>43</sup> The next meeting was held on

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<sup>39</sup> American Union, November 17, 1867.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., December 1, 1867.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Walker, Negro, p. 43.

<sup>43</sup> American Union, January 7, 1868.



January 11. Two of the three members of the credentials committee recommended the seating of Letcher. This report was adopted by a vote of four to two, and Letcher was seated. The other member of the credentials committee made a minority report and moved that both reports be submitted for publication in the local press. This motion carried. Letcher was then appointed to one of the standing committees of the council.<sup>44</sup> Thus, Chattanooga had a Negro office-holder over two weeks before the state legislature removed the legal bars to Negro office-holding. Furthermore, the Radical party executive committee of the city was composed of three whites and two Negroes.<sup>45</sup>

On January 31, 1868, the legislature passed the law stating that "there shall be no disqualification for holding office, or sitting on juries, on account of race or color."<sup>46</sup> In the final senate debate on the measure Senator Mathews, an East Tennessean, "advocated the bill with energy and vehemence, declaring it to be an act of justice to clothe the colored man with the robes of office." No East Tennessean spoke against the bill on this date, although three senators from other parts of the state did so. East Tennesseans in the senate voted five to three in favor of the measure, while the total senate vote was sixteen to nine in favor.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., January 12, 1868.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., January 18, 1868.

<sup>46</sup> Acts of Tennessee, 1867-1868, p. 32.

<sup>47</sup> American Union, February 2, 1868.

A few weeks after the passage of the act, a Negro was elected constable in Bristol.<sup>48</sup> Later Maryville<sup>49</sup> and Knoxville<sup>50</sup> elected Negroes to the city council. Negro voters began to show increasing independence. In Hamilton County they held a separate convention at Harrison to nominate candidates of their own color for the March county elections,<sup>51</sup> but they were unable to agree among themselves and broke up without nominating.<sup>52</sup> C. P. Letcher, Chattanooga Negro councilman, chided his colleagues for absenteeism and threatened to introduce a resolution into the council making unexcused absence punishable by a five-dollar fine.<sup>53</sup>

There was more difficulty in the matter of jury service. The first attempt to use Negro jurors was made in Hamilton County. The circuit judge, W. L. Adams, although elected by Radical votes, refused to seat the Negro jurors before seeing a copy of the new state law. A Conservative presented him with a copy on February 28, 1868, apparently in order to put the Radical judge in an embarrassing position. Judge Adams reacted by declaring that no more jury cases would be tried in his court during that term. Several

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<sup>48</sup> Walker, Negro, p. 48

<sup>49</sup> Maryville Republican, October 23, 1869.

<sup>50</sup> Walker, Negro, p. 48.

<sup>51</sup> American Union, February 15, 1868.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., February 16, 1868.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., February 23, 1868.

persons were left in jail awaiting trial as a result of this decision.<sup>54</sup> In Knoxville, also, Negroes were prevented by one means or another from sitting on juries.<sup>55</sup> In Marion County the sheriff called one Negro juror for the grand jury. The circuit judge ruled that he could not sit on the grand jury but might sit on the trial jury if there were no objections from fellow jurors. It developed that there were objections, and the judge refused to use the Negro.<sup>56</sup>

The Ku Klux Klan became active in East Tennessee early in 1868.<sup>57</sup> In Chattanooga cards were distributed signed by the "vice Grand Cyclops, Chickamauga Division No. 11, KKK," with fearsome symbols designed to frighten the colored. These were obligingly published by the Conservative American Union.<sup>58</sup> On one occasion a long piece of muslin was nailed to the front of the Chattanooga city hall, apparently signifying a shroud for Radicals and Negroes.<sup>59</sup> In Sullivan County a fight occurred between Klansmen and Loyal Leaguers. According to the Leaguers' report, the fight ended with the rout of the Klansmen.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> American Union, February 29, 1868.

<sup>55</sup> Kingston, East Tennesseean, July 2, 1868.

<sup>56</sup> Walker, Negro, p. 45.

<sup>57</sup> Coulter, Brownlow, p. 354.

<sup>58</sup> March 26, 27, 1868.

<sup>59</sup> American Union, March 31, 1868.

<sup>60</sup> Union Flag, May 29, 1868.



East Tennessee Negroes do not seem to have been deterred greatly from political activity by the Ku Klux terror. In May the Maryville Union League Council advocated that a colored man be sent to Congress from the State at large in order that the 40,000 Negro voters might be represented.<sup>61</sup> W. B. Scott, Sr., the Negro publisher of the Maryville Republican, made a campaign speech to the Negroes of Kingston on behalf of L. C. Houk, candidate for Congress.<sup>62</sup> In Chattanooga, C. P. Letcher was renominated for alderman, and another Negro was nominated for marshal.<sup>63</sup> In Knoxville the Negroes demanded a share in Radical party control commensurate with their numbers in the Loyal League.<sup>64</sup>

Negroes publicly protested mistreatment of members of their race. One protest of the beating of a Negro woman by a Knoxville policeman was published as an advertisement. It stated, in part: "I, with many others, would like to know whether this brutal outrage was perpetrated on account of color? for I have never seen a white woman, when under arrest, treated as that officer treated this black woman." The author of the advertisement urged colored voters to look well to the municipal elections, and concluded with, "Let us have men to rule who will rule our men and not our color."<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Minutes of the Maryville Council, Union League of America (McClung Collection, Lawson McGhee Library), Minutes of May 28, 1868.

<sup>62</sup> Kingston, East Tennessean, July 2, 1868.

<sup>63</sup> Press and Herald, December 4, 1868.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., December 6, 12, 1868.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., November 26, 1868.

Dr. J. B. Young, Knoxville Negro physician, ran for the legislature as floater for Knox and Sevier counties in 1869. His announcement was made as an advertisement in the Whig. In this, Young stated that he stood "square on the Stokes platform." In the same issue the Whig made an attack on Young's morals in a story headed "A Gay Lothario," alleging that the candidate was the recent father of an illegitimate child.<sup>66</sup>

During 1869 East Tennessee Negroes' political fortunes declined sharply. They were betrayed by Brownlow, by Senter, and by some of their own leaders. Brownlow supported Senter, Senter ignored the law and permitted ex-Confederates to vote, and the Negro proprietors of the Maryville Republican took an Uncle-Tom course, switching from Stokes to Senter.<sup>67</sup> The victory of Senter brought a period of Bourbon reaction, and most of the constructive legislation of the Radical regime was swept away. W. B. Scott, Jr., Negro editor of the Maryville Republican after its political shift, visited Nashville after the election. He was received cordially by Senter, Andrew Johnson, Dorsey B. Thomas, Henry Cooper, Asa Faulkner, and other Democrats and Conservatives. They gave him "every assurance of their appreciation of our course during the late political canvass."<sup>68</sup> Their appreciation was not expressed in tangible form, however; the Negroes not only did not receive anything from the Democratic legislature, but even that which they already had was largely taken away.

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<sup>66</sup> Whig, July 21, 1869.

<sup>67</sup> Taylor, Negro, pp. 69-70.

<sup>68</sup> Maryville Republican, October 23, 1869.

Negro education had its beginning in this period. Before the war, it had been illegal to teach a slave to read or write.<sup>69</sup> Nor had any steps been taken to educate the free Negro. The first steps to remedy this situation were taken by northern benevolent societies. Several of these began operating schools for freedmen in East Tennessee in 1864. An example of such activity was the United Presbyterian Mission in Knoxville. R. J. Creswell opened a school for freedmen in May, 1864, and enrolled more than one hundred pupils, teaching day and night classes. In the fall the United Presbyterian Church took over the responsibility for the school and employed Creswell's sister as an additional teacher. This school operated for five years and served as a sort of forerunner of Knoxville College. During its life, it encountered typical opposition and difficulties. Its classes were first held in the First Baptist Church on Gay Street. Compelled to vacate, the school moved to an old blacksmith shop for which a rental of \$20 per month was paid. In the fall of 1865 the mission board purchased an old government building for \$180, but before the school could be occupied, someone burned the building. The following year, a regular building was erected. Shortly thereafter, local Negrophobes warned Creswell to "close up his nigger school and go North." Instead, Creswell appealed to Governor Brownlow, and through his influence the leader of the g g who had warned Creswell was forced to apologize.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Waker, Negro, p. 22.

<sup>70</sup> Historical Sketch of the Freedmen's Missions of the United Presbyterian Church, 1862-1904 (Knoxville: Printing Department of Knoxville College, 1904), pp. 22-23.



Early in 1865 the Freedmen's Bureau was set up by Congress. One of its principal activities was the promotion of educational activities among Negroes. In order to do this, the Bureau cooperated with the various benevolent societies. Among those operating in East Tennessee were the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission (Cincinnati), the Northwestern Freedmen's Aid Commission (Chicago), the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association, the Old School Presbyterian Commission, the Indiana Freedmen's Commission, the United Presbyterian Freedmen's Association, the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, and the American Missionary Society. These organizations employed the teachers and paid their salaries.<sup>71</sup> The Freedmen's Bureau cooperated by helping the societies locate teachers, paying their transportation, and making provisions for school buildings, either by renting or building.<sup>72</sup> By late 1865 there were 24 teachers working for benevolent societies among the freedmen of East Tennessee. The number of pupils enrolled during August and September of this year was 1704.<sup>73</sup>

In 1866 the largest Negro school in Tennessee was located in Chattanooga. This was a normal or high school named for the head of the Freedmen's Bureau, General Howard. At the beginning of 1866 the school had an enrollment of nearly 1,000 pupils and employed fifteen teachers.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> H. L. Swint, ed., "Reports from Educational Agents of the Freedmen's Bureau in Tennessee, 1865-1870," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, Vol. I (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, 1942), p. 56.

<sup>72</sup> Pierce, Freedmen's Bureau, pp. 76, 99; Taylor, Negro, p. 170.

<sup>73</sup> Swint, "Reports of Educational Agents," p. 56.

<sup>74</sup> Taylor, Negro, p. 172.

The influx of so many missionaries was bound to irritate the natives somewhat. This feeling was not confined to ex-Confederates, or even to Conservatives. Brownlow himself was quoted by a Nashville paper as stating that "Union parents" were not prepared to see all their churches and school houses turned over to "upstarts from the North," who, being out of employment, conceived the idea of "immortalizing the negro."<sup>75</sup>

East Tennessee Negroes took a leading part in the agitation for public schools. One evidence of this is the following petition presented to the legislature by the colored citizens of Greeneville:

The war has set us free; but, as yet, we are without the means of making this freedom a blessing to us. In order to use our freedom for our own good, and for the good of society, we must be educated, christianized.

The first thing we need is a schoolmaster. Before that can possibly be obtained, we must have a schoolhouse. In order to get a schoolhouse, we are reduced to the necessity of building one. This, without aid, in our destitute condition, we cannot do. We would, therefore, humbly present ourselves before your honorable body as petitioners, and most respectfully ask your assistance in getting this new and most desirable state of things inaugurated.<sup>76</sup>

On March 5, 1867, the legislature passed the law entitled "An Act to Provide for the Re-organization, Supervision, and Maintenance of Free Common Schools." This act included a section which provided for the establishment of common schools for Negroes in districts having 25 or more Negro children of school age. If attendance fell below 15 in any one month, the

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<sup>75</sup> Durham, Education in Tennessee During Reconstruction, pp. 50-51.

<sup>76</sup> Senate Journal, 1866-1867, p. 200.

school was to be closed for a period not to exceed five months.<sup>77</sup>

The following year was one of great activity in an atmosphere of racial tension as far as schools were concerned. The Conservative press waged a rather cautious campaign against Negro schools. One of its tactics was to charge teachers of Negro schools with immorality.<sup>78</sup> Other tactics employed by the less subtle included burning schoolhouses, whipping and insulting teachers and forcing them to leave the communities where they taught.<sup>79</sup>

Some of the native white people were militant in their defense of education for Negroes, however. In the state teachers' convention held in November, 1867, J. A. Doughty, member of the lower house of the state legislature from Anderson and Campbell counties declared himself, according to the press, "for the most radical measures, letting expediency . . . go to the dogs." He said the Negro deserved to be admitted into "all our common schools." He concluded by saying that "We must come to recognize the colored folks as men and brothers, and not let a miserable prejudice keep asunder what God had joined together."<sup>80</sup> Another speaker at the convention was the Reverend J. A. Hyden, a preacher and teacher from Athens. He supported Doughty's position and said he did not believe in being expedient, "but went for the right regardless of the consequences." Since

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<sup>77</sup> Acts of Tennessee, 1866-1867, p. 39.

<sup>78</sup> Free Press, November 24, 1867.

<sup>79</sup> Eaton, Report, p. 14.

<sup>80</sup> Free Press, November 16, 1867.



education without distinction because of color was right, he felt it necessary to favor it.<sup>81</sup>

In 1868 there was a gradual shift of some of the Negro schools from the benevolent societies to the state common school system.<sup>82</sup> Both the Freedmen's Bureau and the benevolent societies continued to maintain contact with the schools they had nurtured.<sup>83</sup> The Freedmen's Bureau sent supervisors to inquire into the conditions of Negro education and to promote support for it among white teachers and citizens in general.

George L. White, a member of the faculty at Fisk and organizer of the original Fisk Jubilee Singers, served as visiting supervisor to East Tennessee in February, 1869. His report is probably the best description of Negro education in East Tennessee during reconstruction.<sup>84</sup>

White was instructed to visit the meeting of the East Tennessee Teachers' Association in Knoxville in order to consult with county superintendents and other persons interested in education and afterwards to visit whatever areas in East Tennessee might seem of most importance in the promotion of Negro schools. He arrived in Knoxville, February 9, and

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., November 16, 1867.

<sup>82</sup> Whig, September 16, 1868.

<sup>83</sup> Swint, Northern Teacher, p. 6.

<sup>84</sup> Swint, "Reports of Educational Agents." Unless otherwise indicated, the material of this and the next ten paragraphs is from White's report to the Freedmen's Bureau, February 25, 1869, pp. 70-74, in the article cited.

attended all sessions of the teachers' meeting, which lasted from Tuesday through the following Friday night. The Negro teachers were excluded from the meeting, but White arranged with the Knox County superintendent to have a meeting of the colored teachers for the purpose of organizing their own association. Only six or seven colored teachers were present, but this was good attendance, since there were only eight colored teachers in the public schools of the county.<sup>85</sup> The county superintendent and White addressed the teachers. Both urged organization, and White advised them to bring their advanced students into the teachers' organization. Another meeting was held with all colored people interested in education. This was described as a "rousing meeting," and was addressed by Professor Ogden of Fisk, a Mr. Waters of Chattanooga, and White.

White found three colored schools in Knoxville. Two of these were held in the basement of churches and the other was the Creswell School. The latter was in bad repair, and White recommended Bureau aid in rebuilding it.

From Knoxville, White went to Anderson County where he found but one colored school. This was taught by a colored teacher, Miss Daffin, who was described as "an energetic and faithful teacher, who is exerting, through her school, a wide influence for good among both white and colored people." There were 64 Negroes attending this school. Since Anderson County had a Negro scholastic population of 211, White held a meeting to urge the building and organization of two more schools.

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<sup>85</sup> Eaton, Report, p. clxxxiv.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. cciii.

In Greeneville, White found a large Negro school taught by two white ladies from New York. The local colored people had bought the lot, and the Freedmen's Bureau had helped them put up the building. The latter was still unfinished and lacked equipment. Over 100 pupils were enrolled, and many of these had to bring something to sit upon from home. Greene County had a Negro scholastic population of about 600, of which about 217 were in school. Two schools were being taught under the new state law in the county.

No school for colored had been opened in Jonesboro when White made his visit. However, there had been three schools opened in the county (Washington) under the state law. Sullivan County had but one colored school, although there was one in Virginia over the state line at Bristol. White held a meeting at Bristol and instructed the colored people on how to go about building a school house.

After returning to Knoxville White visited Maryville and addressed a large meeting of colored people in "the new school building, lately erected in part by aid from the Bureau." He also conferred with Professors Lamar<sup>87</sup> and Bartlett of Maryville College. This institution had applied to the Freedmen's Bureau for aid. In order to get consideration its board of trustees had opened the doors of the college to Negroes. Three colored students were in attendance at the time, but they were taught in separate classes from the whites. White diagnosed this situation as follows:

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<sup>87</sup> Lamar was also Blount County Superintendent of Schools. Eaton, Report, p. clxxxiv.



This<sup>88</sup> was accounted for to me by saying that there are no other students in the college of the same degree of advancement. This may be true in their case, but from conversation with members of the Board of Trustees and others interested in the school, I am led to believe that there is a disposition on the part of some of their members, as a matter of policy to make a distinction in the school in favor of the whites, which will be equivalent to shutting out the colored people. The professors in charge of the institution have taken the right stand in theory, and it is to be hoped that their wise command will prevail, that they may succeed practically, in putting the school on the sound, liberal basis proposed.<sup>89</sup>

White then visited Bradley and Hamilton counties. He found Superintendents A. E. Blunt of Bradley and E. O. Tade of Hamilton very cooperative. Bradley had three colored school houses, and five more were projected. Four Negro schools had operated in Bradley in the fall of 1868. Nearly half of the Negro scholastic population was attending school in both Bradley and Hamilton. While at Chattanooga White had an interview with J. T. Wilder, the iron magnate. The latter promised to build a combination church and school for his Negro employees at Rockwood.

The Negro school at Clinton was destroyed by an incendiary in March, 1869. Two nights later a citizens' meeting condemned the outrage and resolved to help the colored people rebuild their school. The sum of \$140 was subscribed at the meeting, and subsequent collections were supplemented

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<sup>88</sup> The segregation of negroes.

<sup>89</sup> A state law prohibiting co-racial education and aimed at Maryville College was passed in 1901. J. C. Battaglia, *The Social and Economic History of Maryville Since 1890* (Master's thesis, University of Tennessee, 1936), p. 56.

by the Freedmen's Bureau. The result was that the school was rebuilt, and classes were in progress again within a few weeks.<sup>90</sup>

By September, 1869, according to reports of county superintendents, 142 Negro schools had been opened in East Tennessee.<sup>91</sup> Over 6000<sup>92</sup> pupils had been enrolled out of a colored scholastic population of 13,534.<sup>93</sup>

One of the first acts of the Democratic legislature elected in August, 1869, was to repeal the Brownlow school law. Education in the common schools declined rapidly, and by the middle of 1870 there was not a free school for Negroes in East Tennessee.<sup>94</sup>

Apparently agreement was general on one subject. Everybody from abolitionist crusader to Conservative Negrophobe desired the Negro to be religious. The Conservatives thought of religion as a device to divert Negro energy and zeal from such dangerous things as political activity. Revivals were welcomed by the Conservative press, for in them a politically-inclined Negro might be moved to return to the submissive, Uncle-Tom attitude of pre-war days. In Knoxville the Press and Herald made this comment on a local revival:

The colored citizens of Eastpoint and Shieldstown have had a revival during the past week. A number of the ungodly were convinced of the enormities of their sins, and publicly

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<sup>90</sup> Swint, "Report of Educational Agents," p. 158.

<sup>91</sup> Eaton, Report, p. clxxxiv.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. ccv.

<sup>94</sup> Swint, "Report of Educational Agents," p. 166.

declared their intentions to withdraw from the [Loyal] league, and serve the Lord the rest of their life.<sup>95</sup>

For the Negroes themselves the churches presented opportunities for developing practical religion, which often meant politics. Before the war there had been no independent Negro religious organizations. Such organizations had been considered dangerous to the institution of slavery, especially since Negro ministers had been known to incite slaves against their masters in some instances.<sup>96</sup> During reconstruction independent organizations of many denominations came into being. In most cases aid was given by white church organizations in the North. Typical of such developments was the founding of the First Colored Presbyterian Church in Knoxville. In May, 1865, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, meeting in New York, sent a white minister to Knoxville. This minister organized the First Colored Presbyterian Church on September 4, 1865, with eleven members. A colored chaplain became pastor in February, 1866. For a time the congregation met in the First Presbyterian Church, vacated by a pro-Confederate pastor. Later a local businessman, Perez Dickinson, allowed the Negroes to hold services on his back porch and in his back yard. From there they moved to a private dwelling. Finally enough money was raised to erect a church building on Clinch Street at a cost of \$3500.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Press and Herald, October 10, 1868.

<sup>96</sup> Taylor, Negro, p. 205.

<sup>97</sup> Rule, Knoxville, pp. 434-435.



While Baptist and Congregational as well as Presbyterian Churches were formed in East Tennessee, the Methodists were the most numerous. The Tennessee Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was organized in Knoxville. Most of its members were in East Tennessee.<sup>98</sup> In 1867 it had 13 presiding elders, 33 deacons, 14 preachers, and 4,028 lay members and officers. Its first annual conference made plans for the establishment of a theological seminary at Knoxville.<sup>99</sup>

Perhaps the Negroes were attracted to the Methodist Church by its alleged liberalism. This was tested at the Knoxville meeting of the Holston Annual Conference in 1867. When the communion service was held some Negro Methodists present came forward and partook of the bread and wine. Conservative white Methodists were aghast, especially when Southern Methodists used the incident to belabor their Unionist co-religionists. The Methodist leaders met the attack with something less than forthrightness. Rev. Thomas Pearne excused the incident by saying that the Negroes took communion without invitation.<sup>100</sup>

Much has been made of the hostility of native whites of East Tennessee toward the Negro. A Freedmen's Bureau official reported that "among the bitterest opponents of the Negro in Tennessee are the intensely

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<sup>98</sup> Taylor, Negro, p. 214.

<sup>99</sup> Free Press, November 17, 1867.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., October 30, 1867.

radical loyalists in the mountain district."<sup>101</sup> General Fisk himself spoke of the extreme hostility of loyal East Tennesseans to the Negroes.<sup>102</sup> J. T. Trowbridge stated that "East Tennesseans, though opposed to slavery and secession, do not like niggers!"<sup>103</sup>

Such testimony seems to this writer to exaggerate the anti-Negro sentiment in East Tennessee. Such sentiment undoubtedly existed in some degree among most of the people. But to say that it existed to a greater degree--or even to an equal degree--here as compared with elsewhere in the state is to ignore the main currents of the evidence in the situation. East Tennesseans dominated the government that passed the reconstruction legislation favorable to the Negro. Apparently more native whites participated with Negroes in the Loyal Leagues of this section than was the case elsewhere in the state. There also seem to have been more cases of Negroes being elected to office in East Tennessee than elsewhere. Therefore, it would seem more consistent with the solid evidence, as opposed to mere anti-Negro gossip, to say that a more sizeable minority of native whites in East Tennessee were willing to grant the rights of citizenship to the Negro than in any other part of the state.

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<sup>101</sup> Walker, *Negro*, p. 14.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>103</sup> Fleming, *Documentary History*, Vol. I, p. 81.

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