

Chapter VIII

Reconstruction in Grenada and Yalobousha Counties

The immediate effect of the Civil War was to leave Mississippi, as well as the other Southern states, in political eclipse and economic ruin. These states had pledged and delivered to the Confederate Government most of their resources of manpower and wealth to be used in the struggle for southern independence. Mississippi had been very generous in her contributions to the government which was headed by one of her native sons. At the end of the war eighty thousand of her fine men were either buried in the cemeteries of every battlefield of the war, or so badly maimed as to be incapable of much physical activity. Her fields were barren; her railroad lines torn up and worn out, and neither recently freed slaves nor former slave owners knew how to adjust to the new relationship between former slaves and masters. There were plantations to be worked, and there were thousands of freed slaves to be absorbed into a new labor status. Many of the freed slaves, looking to the Freedman Bureau to feed, clothe and house them, refused to work under any inducements. Many of the former slave owners sought to re-employ slaves under conditions which was somewhat similar to peonage. Stringent laws called "Black Codes" were passed to try to place these former slaves under some sort of civil restraint. These "Black Codes" were to give radical members of Congress an excuse to pass harsh laws aimed at depriving the leading white people of political power, and by blanket enfranchisement of all adult Negroes, to shift political power from southern leaders to the Carpetbag and Scalawag led Negro majority which supported the radical Republican Party. Most southern white men were, at first, not allowed to vote if they had served the Confederate Government, or the seceded state governments in any capacity during the war years. Before these men could vote again they would have to apply for, and receive, a pardons from the Federal Government. The effect of the enfranchisement of all the illiterate Negroes was just as disastrous to honest and efficient local and state government, as the Civil Rights Laws of 1965, which enfranchised illiterate Negroes in only southern states, will be to those states and counties where this enforced Federal registration has taken place.

The grief and sorrow resulting from the loss of relatives and friends who fell fighting for the "Lost Cause" was natural, and the passage of time would tend to heal the scars left by these tragic losses. Soldiers who had fought to the last to sustain southern independence had respect for the fighting men of the Federal armies, and many of them had no bitter feelings which would not pass away in time. So the defeated soldiers returned home, defeated but not ashamed of the part which they had played in the tragedy of the civil war. They began to try to reconstruct the lives they had lived before the war, but the Congressional Reconstruction of the southern states by the vindictive Radical Republican majority in Congress inflicted new wounds, the scars of which would be generations in the healing. The war years had for the South their periods of glory, but the reconstruction years were years of bitterness and frustration for the southern white people.

Reconstruction in Grenada and Yalobousha counties pretty much followed the course of reconstruction in the other counties of Mississippi. Since Grenada county was not organized until 1870, the people of this county first experienced its effects while still a part of those counties from which the new county was to be created. A large part of the area which was to become Grenada county came from Yalobousha county. It seems necessary to discuss reconstruction of both Grenada and Yalobousha counties in order to give a representative description of the reconstruction imposed upon the people of the area which became Grenada county. In previous chapters of this work, most of the information given had been obtained from sources such as news-paper files, deed records, minutes of Board of Supervisors, and personal letters of the

period covered. Because of the destruction of some of these sources in the fires which destroyed courthouses in Yalobousha county, and the fact that newspaper files available of papers printed in Grenada county do not begin until 1881, much of the factual material in this chapter must come from the memory of men and women who lived through the reconstruction period. The passage of time may have dimmed the memory of some of the people who related the incidents which will partly make up information given here-after, but we may be sure that most of the information is substantially correct. In 1912 there was printed in Vol. 12 of the Mississippi Historical Publications a very fine article on "Reconstruction in Grenada and Yalobousha Counties." Miss Julia Brown was the author of the article, and it is to her fine work that we are indebted for a considerable amount of the factual information given hereafter. Miss Brown names sixteen individuals who supplied her with information, nine of these individuals being residents of the town of Grenada. They were W. H. Winter, a longtime Legislative representative from Grenada county; Tom Garner, who at one time served as Marshall of Grenada; Dr. T. F. Brown physician and County Health Officer; Mrs. P. S. Dudley, longtime teacher in the private and public schools of Grenada, and the sister of General Statham; Mr. W. E. Smith, Grenada Jeweler; Dr. Hughes, a Grenada druggist, and Captain M. P. L. Stephens, about whom we have no information other than he was at one time a resident of Water Valley.

At the outbreak of the Civil War Yalobousha was a large county. It had a population of 16,952 of whom 9,531 were Negro slaves. The county seat was located at Coffeeville. In 1873 a second Judicial District was formed in the county with Water Valley being the site of the Courthouse for that District. In 1870, the county had a population 13,254. This considerable decrease in population resulted not only from the ravages of war and reconstruction, but also from the fact that part of the county had been taken away to help create Grenada and Calhoun counties. During the course of the war much property had been destroyed. All business houses in Water Valley except two or three had been burned by the invading Federal forces. At Grenada, when it was realized that it would be impossible to hold the town against approaching Federal soldiers, much rolling stock of the Mississippi Central and Memphis & Tennessee Railroads had been burned by the retreating Confederate forces. The end of the war found the two railroads in desperate financial circumstances.

The returning soldiers of Yalobousha county found that the local government was still in the hands of white men. All five members of the Board of Supervisors were leading citizens. This condition was to prevail for only a short time. The Civil Rights legislation mentioned above soon eliminated a majority of the white electorate, and enfranchised every resident male Negro who was of requisite age. These Negroes were, for the most part, illiterate, and were easily controlled by northern adventures and native renegades. Behind these leaders was the power of the Federal government, exercised part of the period by military governors, who were backed by garrisons of Federal soldiers stationed at strategic points. Grenada was one such point. An officer of the Freedman Bureau was also stationed at Grenada, and his organization was the source of much trouble for the white people of the area. Very early during the reconstruction period a Federal infantry force made up the Federal garrison at Grenada. In 1866 a company of cavalry was sent to Grenada. Because of the mobility of this unit it was used to go out to investigate trouble developing in any of the nearby towns and communities. During much of the time General Pennypacker was in command of the garrison, although General Rosecrans and Major Allen served brief periods as garrison Commander. General Pennypacker was sympathetic with the white people in their period of trial, and did everything he could to make the military occupation tolerable. Rosecrans was respected, but Allen was hated. Either as a measure to further humiliate the white people of the area, or because those in authority did not realize the reaction of the white people to their action, the Federal Authorities sent in

a troop of Negro soldiers as part of the garrison. At first this force was under the command of a white officer, and during his tenure as unit commander, conditions were not too bad, but he was soon replaced by a Negro, Colonel Albert Floyd. He exercised very little restraint over his soldiers who delighted in insulting the inhabitants of the town. When these soldiers were on leave in town they would frequently line up, arm in arm, and walk down the sidewalks forcing all white people to go out into the street to avoid them. Any resistance offered to actions of the Federal soldiers and officials could be tried in military courts, and offenders imprisoned at the whim of such courts. These conditions brought on a near reign of terror in the town of Grenada and the area about Grenada. Although not a permanent citizen of Grenada, the Negro Colonel decided that he would vote in one of the elections being held in the town. He was told that he was not eligible but started in to vote despite the protest of the election official. Among the election officials, who were of course Republicans, was a Negro box guard. He evidently didn't like the overbearing Negro officer, and when Floyd attempted to go to the polls the guard ran him through the shoulder with a bayonet. It is reported that the Colonel never attempted to vote again so long as he was in Grenada, and that the Negro box guard was never punished.

When the Civil Rights Acts of 1866 became effective, the military governor of Mississippi revoked all office appointments which had been made, and ordered new elections for elective officials. With Carpetbaggers and Scalawag leaders and their responsive Negro majority making up the Republican party, that party came into control of state and local offices. Soon the majority of the Board of Supervisors of Yalobusha county was made up of Negroes. A Negro sheriff was elected. It was during this time that some respectable white men who had belonged to the Whig Party before the war decided that they had better become Democrats and aid the men of that party in their fight against the intolerable conditions prevailing at the time. Among the influential former Whigs who cast their lot with the Democrats were Judge Fisher, who was to become a judge of the Mississippi Supreme Court, and Dr. D. H. Staham, the father of deceased General Staham and of Mrs. P. S. Dudley. Judge Fairfield, a northern Whig who came to Grenada a few years before the outbreak of the war joined with the Republicans, and was appointed a Judge for one of the courts of the area. It seems that the Judge was a man of honor, and white citizens could obtain justice in his court. There seems to have been no considerable animosity directed toward him as was the case of other white men who affiliated with the Republican party. After a time, most of the adult white men regained the right to vote, but during the early years of overwhelming Negro registration the editor of the newspaper GRENADA VISITOR had this editorial comment: "The disgraceful exhibition of the utter trampling on all law, right and decency-known as registration in the city is still continued. More than half of the white citizens, fully qualified under the law, are turned away while every negro who applies is immediately accepted and registered. Naturalized citizens are not only required to produce their papers, but leave them with the registrars, with a very dim prospect of ever getting them back. Old citizens who have lived a quarter of a century, and who pay individually more taxes than the whole radical party in the state collectively, are turned away because they have, at some remote period of their lives, been school directors, or aldermen under city government and are suspected of having sympathized with the rebellion. But few naturalized citizens are registered on any terms except that of adherence to the Radicals. That virtue will purge all vices. Renagades who fought in the rebel ranks and deserted when the cause became desperate and joined the Radicals-even some who were punished by Butler and Banks for their rebellious excesses and who have the disqualification of having held Federal or State offices previous to the war are admitted to the honor (?) of registration without question."

When Grenada County was created in 1870, the Republican Party was still

dominant in politics. The first officials were appointed by Governor Alcorn. Among his appointees were L. French, Sheriff and J. B. Townsend. French was considered a Scalawag. Townsend seems to have maintained the respect of the people regardless of his affiliation with the Republican Party. Green Dubard and Bill Davis were among the other white men who became affiliated with the Republicans.

Grenada and Yalobousha counties were fortunate in having outstanding white citizens who, as soon as they could qualify to vote under the new regulations, began a gradual and cautious movement to drain away some of the more respectable Negroes from the enticement offered by the corrupt leaders of the Republican party. The large body of Negro voters were enrolled in the Loyal League, an organization set up to use Negro voters to maintain political control of the counties. Because of fear of white retaliation, the names of those enrolled in the League was kept secret at first. The white people never knew which Negroes with whom they came in contact were members of the League. This information was obtained through the loyalty of two Negroes to their former masters. Bob ("Banjo") Dudley, had belonged to the Dudley family, and became a member of the Democratic Party, and a leader of the Negro Democrats. Austin Dudley who had been a slave of Captain B. S. Dudley, husband of Mrs. P. S. Dudley, was induced, probably with the encouragement of Banjo Dudley, to become a member of the Loyal League for the purpose of revealing the names of the members to his white friends. This information was to prove very valuable when, a little later, continued intolerable conditions resulted in white robed Ku Klux Klan members visiting obnoxious members of the League.

Although the activities of the Klan had its effect in breaking the hold of the Republicans on the Negro voters, the respect which many of the Negroes had for a number of outstanding white leaders was, perhaps, more effective in attracting Negro voters to the Democratic party. For a considerable period of time the carpetbagger William Price was the leader of the Negro voters. He had a number of qualifications for this position. He first came to Grenada as the chaplain of a Negro regiment. He was a preacher of great oratorical power, and he associated freely with the Negroes. These three qualifications appealed to the illiterate Negro majority. Although not welcomed with open arms, Price was respected by the people of Grenada when he returned to the city after the termination of the Civil War. In some way he had come into the possession of a watch lost during the war by Colonel A. S. Pass who was a resident of Grenada. Price returned the watch to Colonel Pass, and this episode helped him gain a measure of acceptance by the white people of the area. Things looked so good for Price that he brought his whole family to Grenada. His two sons-in-law, Lincoln and Kelly became engaged in the same type of activity as that in which Price was engaged. After a time Price had his wife appointed as Postmaster at Grenada. He ran the office while Mrs. Price and her daughters engaged in the millinery business. Son-in-law Lincoln later became Chancery Clerk of the county. Things looked good for the members of the Price family for several years, but eventually the activity of Lincoln and Kelly in connection with the Loyal League became so notorious that they were visited by Klan members and advised to leave the city and state. They took this good advice and left Grenada to be followed soon by Price and his family. M. K. Mister was a Scalawag who later became Postmaster at Grenada. He was a native of the county and lived on a nearby plantation until he became Postmaster. It seems that his affiliation with the Republican Party was for the purpose of receiving Federal appointment and not adverse to the interests of the white people.

One of the Negro leaders in the struggle for political power was a mulatto by the name of Schurlock. He was the Federal patronage referee for the appointment of federal offices in the area. He was the reputed son of a white northern teacher who conducted schools in Yalobousha county in the period before the Civil War. Schurlock was aggressive and arrogant, but very popular with the

Negro voters. He was much in evidence at the various political speakings when candidates of the different parties were contending for votes. He usually had with him large numbers of Negroes who, at his instigation, heckled the speakers who were Democratic candidates for office. Once, at a speaking near Coffeetown, he moved up his mob to engage in this practice. He was met by Captain Roland W. Jones, who caught him by the collar of his shirt, pulled out a knife and told Shurlock "If you don't lead that mob away from this speaking I will cut your throat." Evidently Shurlock took this statement at face value, for he removed his followers from the site of the speaking. At one time Negro leaders moved a colony of about five hundred Negroes into the fringes of the town of Coffeetown with the stated intention of taking control of the local government of that town. This move was met by the town officials reestablishing the boundaries of the town so as to exclude most of the area in which the Negroes had settled. It was during this period of reconstruction that the Negroes were able, for a brief period, to elect a Negro Mayor of Grenada, and several members of the Board of Supervisors of Grenada County.

Other white leaders of Grenada County who were able to appeal to the Negroes were General E. C. Walthall, Major William Barksdale, Captain John Powell, James Crowder and R. H. Golladay. Major Barksdale had a considerable following, but did not pamper them. On one occasion, while speaking at a political rally he told them: "You negroes think that we'll let you smite us on one cheek and then turn and let you smite us on the other, but I tell you that we will have an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." On another occasion, a political speaking at Spring Lake, he spoke for the Democratic candidate while Roland Collins, a Negro leader and former slave of the Barksdale family, spoke for the Republican candidate. As an indication of the respect which the Negro leader had for his opposing speaker he made this statement during his speech: "Marse Billy I learnt you to walk and to talk. I learnt you to read. I learnt you to hoe corn and cotton, and Marse Billy you's do bes' man I nows." Some of the negro Democrats who stood by the white people were Ben Staham, John Golding, Bob Reed, John Cooley and Frank Mayhew. They were probably attracted to the party because of their admiration and affection for men like Major Barksdale. One very amusing incident occurred at another speaking when Judge Fairfield and William Price were running for different offices on the Republican ticket. Although Fairfield, an old line Whig, had joined the Republican ranks he still maintained the respect and friendship of many of the white residents of the town. As the time for the speaking drew near, one of these friends offered the Judge a drink of whiskey. Other drinks followed and, in the spirit of good fellowship engendered by these drinks, the friend confided to the Judge that he had great respect for the Judge who was honest in following his political principles, but had nothing but contempt for his fellow Republican Price. Basking in the glow of the approval of his friend, and remembering that the friend had no respect for Fairfield's fellow Republican Price, the Judge began his speech by stating his own qualifications for the office which he was seeking, but then said: "That fellow Price is the grandest rascal in the county." Price was surprised and crestfallen, but most of the white people agreed with the Judge's befuddled statement.

During the period of heated political rivalry between the negro and white voters there was a near riot in Grenada. On this occasion an election was being held in the store building then used as a courthouse. This building was located on the north-west corner of the lot just north of the city square. Some of the white leaders of the Republican Party, fearing that they would be outvoted in the election, lined up a large crowd of negroes and instructed them to crowd around the polls and prevent white voters from entering. Thirty or forty white men had brought guns with them to the polling place, but in the interest of peace, had been induced to store their guns in a nearby store building. In the vicinity of the courthouse was a small cannon, perhaps a relic of the Civil War, which was used to fire salutes on the fourth of July and other

occasions of celebration when such action was deemed seemly. As the negroes came marching up Green street, some one shouted "fill the cannon with buckshot." Men nearby ran to the gun and began either serious or pretended activity in that regard. The head of the marching rank of negroes heard the order and saw the activity. They began a rearward movement which became a rout as they shouted to those in the rear ranks "they are loading the cannon with buckshot." At this juncture the men who had stored their guns in the store building ran into the building to reclaim their guns, probably with the intention of expediting the hasty withdrawal of the negroes. General E. C. Walthall, realizing that such action might precipitate a race war, had the door of the store closed and locked before the men could get back on the street. It should be said in defense of the newly freed, and mostly illiterate negroes that in most cases of similar trouble, the negroes were usually incited by some of their white leaders. Some of the negro leaders were men of more integrity and respectability than most of their white leaders. One of these better class negro leaders was a lawyer George W. Jones, not to be confused with George Washington Jones, nephew of Levin Lake, confederate soldier and Grenada Business man. In 1883, when the Republican Party still was strong, this negro lawyer was elected an Alderman from the West Ward of Grenada. He brought up some sort of a charge against a Mr. Ferguson who was serving as Street Commissioner. The Street Commissioner became angry and tendered his resignation. Angry at the accusation made against Ferguson, Max Ginsburg resigned his place as an alderman. In a subsequent meeting of the Board of Aldermen Ferguson was induced to withdraw his resignation, but some of the white people, angered at what they termed "the presumption of a negro in accusing a white man of misconduct", began a movement to induce Jones to leave town. In July, 1885 Jones announced that he had received an anonymous letter in which he was directed to leave town in four days and never return to the town. He refused to leave, and there is no record that he ever received any physical violence, but it is very probable that the incident, and the letter, ruined his political career as a member of the Board of Aldermen. In October of 1886 the GRENADA SENTINEL reported that Jones had been defeated for a seat as a member of the Board of Aldermen. These incidents are good proof that white political supremacy was not achieved in the first few years following the beginning of reconstruction. In fact such supremacy was not completely established until the adoption of the Mississippi Constitution of 1890, and its acceptance by the Federal Government. It is interesting to note that the one man most responsible for the acceptance of that constitution by the Federal Government was a Carroll County U. S. Senator, James Z. George.

Another erroneous belief held by many people is that, during the entire period of reconstruction, the political fight was between the Democrats and the Republicans. As a matter of fact, this was true only during the period from 1865 to 1875. By the time this ten year period had elapsed many of the negroes had become dissatisfied with the achievements of the Republican Party which they had been lead to believe would furnish each able-bodied negro with a mule and forty acres of land, and other evidences of the love of the Republican Party for the former slaves. The years of the next decade were years of political unrest and the formation of splinter parties which drew strength from the dissatisfied elements of both old parties. The Greenback Party attracted many dissatisfied voters, both white and colored. Various combinations of the Greenback with so called political independents became, from 1876 to 1885, a stronger rival of the Democrats than the discredited local Republican organization. The promises of the Greenback and Independent candidates became more attractive to negro voters than the unfulfilled promises of the Republicans. This desertion of the Republican party by many of the negroes was the beginning of the end of political control of local government by the combination of Carpetbaggers, Scalawags and Negroes. Some of the better negroes remained faithful to the Republican Party. One of these faithful few was E. E. Pettibone. He, so far as we have been able to learn, never sought public

office for himself. For many years after the period of Republican control of local affairs in Grenada had passed Pettibone attended the National Conventions of the Party as a delegate from Mississippi. He was respected by his white contemporaries. Recovery of a measure of political control over local affairs did not entirely remove from the minds of the white people the possibility of racial trouble. This uneasy feeling is reflected by an editorial statement found in the June 23, 1883, issue of the GRENADA SENTINEL: "A dangerous colored society is in existence around Grenada, which is something on the order of the jesuitical order, each member swearing to stick by the other no matter what happens." This was a period when the politically illiterate negroes, feeling that they had the backing of the Federal Government, had the most extravagant ideas relative to their capacity to obtain everything which had been enjoyed by white men. The Grenada Sentinel of April 11, 1885, quotes the following statement made by a negro member of the Massachusetts Legislature: "If a notice should be placed over the gates of hell forbidding negroes to enter, we would not be satisfied until we got in." In the same paper appears an item without editorial comment: "Two negroes, convicted of the murder of a peddler, were taken away from the Sheriff and hanged on a persimmon tree just across the Bogue by a mob of seventy five men."

After a brief period under William L. Sharkey, appointed Provisional Governor by President Andrew Johnson, Governor B. C. Humphreys who was elected at the first election held after the termination of the war, was removed from office and Mississippi placed him under military control of the Federal Government. Humphreys had been a Brigadier General in the Confederate service, and the Legislature elected along with him made the mistake of passing some very strict laws governing the employment and conduct of the freed negroes. These two facts gave the Radicals in Congress the excuse which they sought to refuse to accept Mississippi representatives in the Federal Congress, and thereby refuse to accept the state back into the Union. For a period of over three years Mississippi was under the political and military control of a series of Federal Military officers. The first such official appointed was General E. O. C. Ord who in charge of the Fourth Military District of which Mississippi was a part. General Ord had his headquarters at Vicksburg. Next came General Alvan C. Gillem who had little sympathy with the excesses in the use of military power for political purposes. Because General Gillem would not go along with the Republican Radicals in overruling an election in which a state constitution, made to order to favor the Republicans and to perpetuate their hold on state government. General Gillem was removed and the obnoxious General Ames placed in charge. This was the darkest period of the long dark period of reconstruction.

Shortly before Ames was appointed Military Governor, Congress had declared vacant all civil offices in the state, thereby giving the new Military Governor the right to appoint almost two thousand men to these vacant offices. Greed for appointment to these positions caused some of the white men who had previously voted the Democratic ticket to change their allegiance to the Republican Party. Among those who deemed it expedient to change parties was James. L. Alcorn. In his case he was not abandoning his early political philosophy, but merely seeking a new political home. He had been a Whig before the war, but that party had, because of the rise of the Republican Party, and the almost total revision of Mississippi Whigs to the Democratic Party after the election of Lincoln, disappeared so far as to be of any significant political importance. Alcorn became affiliated with the Republican Party, and was elected Governor of Mississippi in the first valid election after Mississippi was re-admitted to the Union on February 17, 1870. The Republicans made a clean sweep of major state offices electing beside Governor Alcorn, General Ames and Hiram R. Revels as United States Senators from Mississippi. Ames was the hated former Military Governor, while Hiram Revels was a negro who later became President of Alcorn College which was established for negro students. In 1873, Alcorn

who had been elected to the United States Senate before the end of his term as Governor, and Ames who had been elected to the Senate later than Alcorn, both resigned and came back to Mississippi to run for the office of Governor. Although both the Senators were members of the Republican Party, Ames was able to get the support of the Republican nominating Convention. Alcorn and his scalawag following bolted the party, and Alcorn ran as an independent. Since the Democrats distrusted Alcorn, they mostly refrained from voting, and Ames was elected, and ushered in the most corrupt period of reconstruction. In order to win the election, the carpetbaggers who worked with the negro Republican majority had to agree to have three negroes on the state ticket. These three, candidate for Lieutenant Governor A. K. Davis, candidate for Secretary of State Jim Hill, and candidate for State Superintendent of Education T. W. Cordosa, were elected to state office along with sixty four other negroes, most of whom were illiterate, to the State Legislature. Both Davis and Cordosa, by their conduct brought discredit on the whole administration. Their action was compounded by the thorough mess the negro members made as legislators. It is of interest to note that the negro Lieutenant Governor had once been a Grenada barber.

It was during this period of almost complete political control by the Republicans that the people of Grenada county were to be forced to stand aside and observe the corrupt regime of selfish white men and ignorant negroes ruining the economy of the area. Helpless at first, because of the iron grip of occupying military forces, there was born in the minds of the leading citizens the belief that they must use any sort of weapon to regain control over local affairs. Some of the methods used were not very nice; some were actually illegal, but all were deemed justified on the ground that the end would justify the means. As heretofore related, the ranks of the Loyal League had been infiltrated, and the names of its members were available to those who wanted to influence these members. Different kinds of "influence" were used. At times a former master would approach some of the better class members of the League and reason with them to convince them that they were in the wrong Party: Sometimes members would be issued warnings relative to their conduct, and on a number of occasions, physical violence was resorted to. The formation and development of the Ku Klux Klan gave the white resistance group a very potent weapon against the superstitious negroes. Often a parade of white-sheeted klansmen was enough to put the fear of God into the heart of people, white and colored, who were out of line with the convictions of the better element of people in a community. A visit by the Klan was usually a warning, which might be followed by an order for a person to leave the community, and if these visits were not effective, physical violence was certain to follow. As long as the membership of the Klan was secret the local officials and Federal Military force could not move against the klansmen. If physical violence was to be resorted to, it was customary for the local klansmen to send out to request that members of some other out of town klan group should ride in to give the physical punishment. This, of course, lessened the possibility of some of the men being recognized.

The area unit of the Klan which was active in Grenada and Yalobusha counties from 1867 to 1875 was led by M. D. L. Stephens of Water Valley who was the "Grand Cyclop". Captain John Powell was the leader in Grenada. Hal Fisher, son of Judge Fisher, was the leader of the Tallahatchie county clan. The Judge and his son lived in that part of Tallahatchie County which became a part of Grenada county in 1870. James M. Taylor was leader at Coffeeville and W. H. Winter led the Pea Ridge den. Tom Garner who lived in Grenada during the reconstruction years, related that the Grenada den was organized by seven men in a bank located directly over a barber shop. This would have been either the Lake Brothers Bank or the N. C. Snider Bank. The only serious encounter between klansmen and negroes occurred near Grenada when some white officers of the Loyal League were drilling a crowd of about five hundred negroes at a point near Grenada. Thirty Klansmen from Panola county rode down and fired

upon the negro group killing two officers and wounding a number of the negroes:

In order to obtain the names of klansmen the Federal officials used the same infiltrating tactics which had been used earlier by the klansmen in order to obtain the names of the members of the Loyal League. Green Dubard is reported to have joined the klan and betrayed the members to the Federal officials. At Coffeeville Bud Green acted in a similar capacity to betray the klansmen of that den. Dubard seems to have escaped physical punishment by the men of the klan, probably because they were not certain that he had betrayed them, but Green was not so fortunate. He went to Jackson to give his information to Federal officials and, on his return to Coffeeville was assassinated. Someone connected with the Federal officials, whose name has never been revealed, tipped off the klan leaders, and many of them left the vicinity for a period. Hal Fisher left Mississippi and made his home in Texas. He remained there, becoming a judge of one of the courts of that state. Many years later his son, a prominent lawyer practicing his profession in Texas, made a visit to relatives living in the northwestern part of Grenada county.

The Klan served to make the negro leaders and their negro following more cautious in their political activities, but it took several years after that organization ceased activity before their political power was neutralized by increased registration of white voters, and bolder white measures to decrease the interest of negroes in participating in political activities. After a few years the enthusiasm of the Federal Government for feeding and housing a vast hoard of idle negroes began to diminish, and the idle negro adults began to realize that they were going to have to look to the white people to provide homes and employment. These employers put pressure on their employees to discourage active participation in politics. On election days men would ride up to the polls twirling ropes which had hangman nooses already tied. On nights before a large negro political rally, men would take an old blacksmith anvil and fill the recess in it with powder. When this was exploded near the meeting place it usually broke up the rally. Another method of discouraging negro voting was called "rushing the voter". When the negro came to the polls he would be greeted in a friendly manner by two white men standing near the door who, on the pretense of directing the voter to the proper place to vote, would take him by the arm, pass the poll box, and shove the potential voter out the back door. After this experience few of the voters thus treated would return for a second try. James Crowder and Crawford Staham were two of the most efficient "rushers" serving at the Grenada voting precinct. Despite all of these discouraging activities on the part of the white people, the continued threat of the use of the still large negro vote to the detriment of the good of the community, continued to harass the minds of the white leaders until the adoption of the Mississippi Constitution of 1890 with its poll tax and educational provisions. Left alone, the negro interest in voting would have been relatively small, but unscrupulous white men, both native and newcomers, did not scruple to use the negro vote for their personal advantage.

An editorial in the Grenada Sentinel of October 29, 1881, is a good example of the appeal which was made to the negroes to realize that their best interest would be served by alignment with native whites. That editorial reads: "The colored men of Grenada county are not fools, and at this particular crisis, are not going to be gulled into a wicked opposition to the Democratic-Conservative party to gratify the wishes of a few men for the sake of office. These men, if elected could be of little service to them, and they know it. They are every year becoming sensible of their dependence on their white friends. They know that next year will be a hard year, and that hundreds of them will be severely pinched, even for the necessities of life. To whom can they look but to their white friends for support? Who will furnish the meat and bread they will need, but the very men they are called upon to vote against in the coming election? The white people of Grenada county are the best friends the

colored people have, and are always willing to help the honest, industrious and respectful of their color. The white people own the bulk of the property of the county. They pay taxes to educate the colored people's children. They wish to see them thrifty, good citizens, and will give the helping hand at all times. Can it be possible the colored people will vote a ticket hostile to the interest of their white friends. They are not so blind to their own interests. We will not believe it. We shall see."

In the Democratic primary in 1881 the Grenada county Democrats had nominated Dr. William McSwine their candidate for the Legislature, and Captain R. N. Hall as candidate for the office of Sheriff. J. J. Williams had been the previous Democratic representative in the Legislature but lost out to Dr. McSwine in the primary. Mr. Williams was an employee of the Grenada Sentinel. The owner and publisher of the paper was a young man of twenty six years of age by the name of John W. Buchanan who purchased the paper just three months before the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1878. Being very busy in running the business end of the publishing business, young Buchanan had employed Williams and gave him the important sounding title of "Senior Editor". Buchanan was a staunch Democrat, and had no patience with any native white men who voted Republican or independent tickets. Williams, making the political philosophy of his employer his own editorial policy, wrote strongly worded condemnations of any native white men who did not support the Democratic ticket. After his primary defeat by Dr. McSwine he wrote, relative to his victorious opponent: "Our nominee for the legislature, Dr. William McSwine, is a man in whose honor and capacity, the people can trust. Having been here from boyhood, no man has a better social, and none a finer political record. We do not hesitate to say that the interests of the county will suffer no detriment by want of his watchfulness or lack of ability, and that he will be elected is a foregone conclusion. "Rally round the flag boys!"

In the next issue of the paper Williams printed his own announcement as an independent candidate for the Legislature. On the same ticket was M. K. Mister as a candidate for Sheriff. After stating his qualifications for the office Mr. Williams continued in this manner: "It is well known that the small pay of \$400 for a legislative term would have been a wanton waste in his (McSwine's) superabundant coffers, so far as his necessities were concerned, while in mine it would be a welcome treasure, enabling me to stem the desolate winter now portending, in feeding and clothing the dependent and little ones that nestle like fledging birds in my affections). For this sum I can pay the state and county in honest, intelligent labor, and thus feel the pride and dignity of a man who has earned his money by considerations of value. While this is not, and never should be a qualification for office, all other things being equal in men asking public favor, it should never be recklessly ignored." Upon the publication of this letter by Williams, Editor Buchanan dismissed the former as an employee of the Sentinel. This dismissal led to a dispute between the two men, Williams claiming that he had resigned, and Buchanan contending that Williams turned in his letter of resignation after he had been informed that he had been fired. Someone inquired of Williams why he had written such vigorous Democratic editorials if he believed in the platform of the Independent party and he answered "for five dollars a week". Buchanan retorted that if a man could be bought to go against his political principles for five dollars a week he would prove to be a bad risk as a member of the Legislature. Five dollars per week seems a very small sum, even in the hard times of those days, as pay for a newspaper man. This leads to the presumption that Williams was a parttime employee, probably just writing some of the editorials. After this episode the Sentinel listed Buchanan as editor, as well as owner and publisher. Buchanan's parting shot at Williams was to print the letter which has been referred to above and to comment as follows: "If the above does not show Col. Williams to be the most utter inconsistent man on earth, what in the name of God does it show? Col., may the devil hereafter take a likening

to you, for we can assure you that a large majority of the voters of Grenada county never will."

In this general election of 1881 the Democratic Party elected its state ticket of State Office candidates. The ticket was headed by Robert Lowery who took over the Governor's office in January of 1882. In Grenada county the Democratic candidates were victorious. Hall was elected Sheriff by a majority of 310, while Dr. McSwine won by a majority of 297. This victory for the Democratic party completed the destruction of the Republican party as a factor in Mississippi politics for many years to come. That destruction had begun with the election of Governor Stone in 1876 in an election in which many of the Republican incumbents were defeated in their bid for re-election. Editor Buchanan was elated over the results of the election, and he expressed his feeling in these words: "Never was a style of organization more complete. Every county in the state was thoroughly canvassed, and the watchword was opposition to Democracy. Here the Greenbackers, the Independents, the Soreheads, and the old Radical himself, perhaps with the brow of Egypt, but certainly not Helen's beauty, met and mingled and kissed and swore to be true in opposition to Democracy. But, in the election of Tuesday last, this enemy, the unterrified Democracy met, as it has met in former years, the Radical hordes and scattered them like chaff in the wind. We have met the enemy on the strongest ground they could take. We have come off conquerors. The field is fairly won. The State has escaped a second captivity". The happy editor could not foresee that less than eighty five years later his beloved State, along with sister states, would be re-fighting the same battle against a Federal Government as arbitrary as the one which fastened the first reconstruction on Mississippi.