RICHMOND
After the War
1865–1890

MICHAEL B. CHESSON

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Roony Lee says "Beast" Butler was very kind to him while he was a prisoner; and the "Beast" has sent him back his war horse. The Lees are men enough to speak the truth of friend or enemy, not fearing consequences.

Mary Boykin Chesnut

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The immense Southern night would descend on us all and then the talk would start . . . ; our grandfather would tell us about the Civil War.

On and on. The Seven Days' Battle, the Wilderness . . . General Lee. The sound of the Yankees' pickaxes, digging under Petersburg. And Richmond, always Richmond. To save Richmond. It became a holy place to us, a place to be loved forever like Plymouth Rock and Valley Forge and the Mississippi River. On and on. . . . Whenever our grandfather had finished talking, we would sit on for a while, alone . . . in the great motionless night, and our hearts would nearly break within us. We had lost, we had lost.

Ben Robertson

7

Old City of the New South

1882–1890

THE 1880s in Richmond were frenetic. The city was "roaring with progress" and visitors were likely to be dusted with mortar from its new construction. Richmonders seemed about to embrace the New South promoters' hope that industrial growth and scientific agriculture would bring prosperity, sectional reconciliation, and racial harmony. Tobacco eased the city through a brief depression that momentarily slowed the economic recovery begun in 1878. Flour milling made modest advances after 1885, and new ironworks—including a large locomotive factory—were built. Richmond's wholesale market expanded through the South into the Midwest, and local retail and real estate sales reached unprecedented levels. "The new order has taken its place," *Harper's Weekly* reported in 1887, "and foremost among its promoters and supporters stands Richmond, a leader of the industrial South, as twenty-five years ago she was of the Confederate South."[1] Amid a swell of national patriotism, white Richmonders poised as though they might be ready to rejoin the Union and to accept political practices such as a two-party system and black voting. Temperance advocates and organized laborers challenged the city's Funder Democrat establishment, and a continued split within the Democratic party in Richmond gave black voters increased political power.

Despite these signs that the 1880s might break with the past, however, by 1890 Richmond had turned back. A passion for the Lost Cause became the vogue for white residents, who divided their allegiance between a dead nation and a living one and convinced themselves that they were both loyal Americans and steadfast rebels as they worshiped at Confederate shrines. By the 1890s, tradition, sentimentality, racism, and the collective weight of the past had eclipsed the progressive vision and the decline was complete. As the city's war with itself finally ended, Richmond became what it remained for decades: the old city of the New South.

• 1 •

"The most noted death of the year of 1884," the *Richmond Dispatch* proclaimed, "was . . . sectionalism." Although the comment was premature, journalistic diatribes against the North did appear less frequently, for nationalist sentiment had begun to blossom in Richmond after the Yorktown victory centennial observance of 1881. Newspaper writers remained touchy about the bloody shirt tactics of some northern politicians, or about what white Richmonders saw as northern interference with their handling of race relations, but the 1884 election of Grover Cleveland—the first Democratic president in a generation—further reduced animosities that lingered from the war and from the disputed 1876 presidential contest. While Union veterans flocked to the Confederate capital for tearful reunions with their former enemies, and while northern lecturers and conventioneers enjoyed the city's southern hospitality, Richmond's theater managers, hotel keepers, and restaurant owners tallied the profits from Yankee visitors. In 1885 the common council proclaimed an official day of mourning to mark Ulysses S. Grant's funeral, to which elite militia units accompanied the governor of Virginia. By the early 1890s Richmonders were far along the road to reunion; they rushed to serve in the Spanish-American War.[2]

And there were other, tentative signs that the city might be breaking with its past. To a reporter of the *New York Times* Richmond in 1887 was both "pregnant . . . with a new epoch" and "born again." Here was "a new Richmond, with snap and go, with push and enterprise, with commercial ambition, with industrial purpose, upon development intent." By 1890 hotels, banks, and office buildings began to hover over Jefferson's state Capitol and obscure it from view. The classical white structure, symbol of the statecraft of old Virginia, was being overshadowed by the symbols of the new Richmond. Emily Clark later claimed that Richmond's "political rulers were restrained by force from painting the statues of the great Virginians on the Washington Monument in the Square . . . a nice, new shiny black, to prove how truly progressive this new South has become."

The city government acted to keep up with progress. In 1884 the common council modified an ordinance that had allowed residents to tie off the streets so that traffic could not pass along a block in which someone was sick. The new law allowed a street to be roped off only for three days in cases of extreme illness certified by a doctor. This quaint custom was repealed entirely in 1887, to the relief of city merchants and manufacturers; at the end of 1890 the council voted to provide all-night ambulance service. Conscious of the image-making power of street names, the council changed those that seemed inappropriate or colloquial. The council passed laws to regulate horses, to keep farm animals from wandering in the city, and to prohibit hogs entirely. In 1885 the council moved a stone marker from Main Street to a less frequently traveled sidestreet: the stone had marked the level reached by flood waters in 1877.[3]

The fashion of making New Year's calls, originally copied from the North but long out of vogue there, was still followed in Richmond in the mid-1880s. The custom died out by 1891, and was replaced by another northern practice, the consumption of elaborate dinners at the city's leading hotels on New Year's Day. And, the 1880s saw the death of the duel when, in 1882, the Readjusters passed a strong law against duelling and made it stick. Two years later John S. Wise, a Confederate veteran, noted athlete, duelist, and prominent Readjuster Republican, publicly refused a challenge from Page McCarty, who in 1873 had killed his former friend John B. Mordecai in a duel over Mary Triplett. Wise's action effectively ended the resort to the field of honor, and newspaper publisher Joseph Bryan, a veteran of Mosby's Rangers, administered the coup de grace in 1893 when he refused a challenge from an irate Democratic politician and turned him over to the police.[4]

• 2 •

The general prosperity of 1880s Richmond showed in the real estate and construction boom of the city's ten building and loan associations. Only one had been established before 1880 and seven had been formed after 1886. Several of these enterprises had been organized by blacks, and together the building and loan associations boasted a total of $4.3 million in authorized capital. Hundreds of houses and stores were built each year. An 1883 police census found 5,297 brick and 4,917 frame houses in the city. The new houses were often constructed of more expensive materials, such as James River granite and West Virginia brownstone, but brick continued to be popular. Four hundred brick and eight hundred frame houses were erected in 1884, at a cost of $1 million. Four hundred houses were built in 1886, five hundred in 1887, and six hundred in 1889, including those in the town of Manchester across the James River.[5]

As new houses began to fill the outlying neighborhoods, the council authorized massive street improvements. West end streets were being paved by the end of 1884. In the spring of 1885 the council appropriated funds for cobblestones on major streets and terra-cotta pipes and sewers. Streets scheduled for improvement as much as six years earlier were completed. After 1885, the notations of street improvements alone filled six to ten pages annually in the records of the common council. The council also improved the city parks, and voted funds to purchase land for new parks in the outer wards. Despite this improvement program, urban boosters called for still more funds. Lewis D. Crenshaw, a rich and socially prominent miller, scoffed at the $40,000 approved by the council for streets in 1890. Agreeing with the *Richmond Dispatch* that the city needed more and better streets to sustain its economic boom, he called for the expenditure of $545,762. The council eventually appropriated $100,000.[6]

Richmond's population increased from 63,600 in 1880 to 81,388 by 1890. The movement of residents from the old central wards to the new outer wards was both a cause and a result of the expansion of the suburbs. By 1890 Clay and Jackson wards, created in 1867 and 1871 on the west and north sides of the city, were Richmond's largest. The adjacent old ward, Monroe, had between three and four thousand fewer residents. Marshall, another new ward created as a result of the 1867 annexation, had more inhabitants than either Jefferson or Madison, the central wards. Both the east and west ends benefited from shifting population and new house construction. Richmond also expanded northward beyond Bacons Quarter Branch into Laburnum, a real estate development financed by tobacco magnate Lewis Ginter, and Barton Heights. Suburban real estate prices rose throughout the 1880s.[7]

Wealth left the central city more slowly during the 1880s than did population. Real and personal property values were highest in Madison Ward. Jefferson Ward had less than half the wealth of its neighbor to the west, and Monroe, Clay, and Marshall wards followed. Jackson Ward, where 42 percent of the black population lived, trailed far behind.[8]

The growing west end population repeatedly demanded more city services. Both west and east end parents complained of inadequate school facilities. An 1881 letter to the *Richmond Dispatch* complained that the west end lacked a market house, and suggested that one would soon be built if only the councilmen from the three western wards united. Three years later residents organized as the Elba Market Association petitioned the council, and finally in 1888 the council voted funds for a market. Various delays occurred, however, and the new market was not completed until after 1890.[9]

Improved transportation aided suburban growth, but change came slowly because councilmen from the central city resisted innovation. Early in the decade the council restricted the speed of the horsecars that ran through central Richmond from the east to the west end. It also rejected a plan approved by the board of aldermen for the extension of the street railway and for terminal depots. By 1885 council sentiment had been brought to favor urban transportation systems, and the city of Manchester's streetcar network was allowed to connect with the Richmond City Railway via the free Ninth Street Bridge across the James River. The Richmond Union Passenger Railway began operation early in 1887 and, although it primarily served the area east of Shockoe Valley, the company competed successfully with the older City Railway. In the summer of 1887 the Manchester line was allowed to enter the city, and by September there was a brisk competition and exchange of passengers among all three lines.[10]

When electric streetcars replaced horsecars on the Union line in the spring of 1888, Richmond became the first city in the country with an electric transit system successfully operating over a route of more than a few blocks. While the electric streetcar system suggests that Richmond's postwar character was modern and progressive rather than essentially conservative, this was not the case. The directors of the Richmond Union Passenger Railway, many of them Republicans, were not representative of the Richmond establishment; the old elite operated rival lines, tried to stop the Union plan, and ridiculed the electric railway when it first began operation.[11]

Within a few months of its inception in 1886, the Union Passenger Railway secured permission to use electricity to power its streetcars and hired New York engineer Frank Julian Sprague to lay out a route and install the necessary equipment. The councilmen approved the Union Passenger Railway proposal not because they believed in the unusual motive power but because they themselves were caught up in the expansive optimism of the 1880s. A wave of unregulated and unplanned development swept the city until it broke in the Panic of 1893. The council approved virtually every proposal, no matter how farfetched, submitted during this period; if a scheme represented something new and seemed likely to encourage the city's growth, it was approved. Not surprisingly, many never came to fruition. Just as wartime councilmen had taken unprecedented steps to meet critical needs in social welfare, so their sucessors felt that they were confronting vastly changed circumstances to which they had to respond.

The electric streetcar was only a part of the expansion process during the booming 1880s: pedestrian viaducts were built, bridges improved, interurban lines constructed, existing routes connected, and sewers and streets extended. Fortunes were made in real estate. Conservatives eventually recognized that there was money to be made in the development of new residential neighborhoods, and this was a powerful inducement for them to accept change. Yet, the more progressive, Republican businessmen often took the lead, secured outside capital, and risked bringing new technology to the city. Once it was shown to be practical, as with Sprague's successful electric streetcar, the conservatives followed. Later in 1888 both the Manchester system and the Richmond City Railway won approval to electrify their streetcar lines, and by 1889 the council had authorized the formation of several other electric streetcar companies. One was an interurban line that ran east to the hamlet of Seven Pines, where the city locomotive works maintained a recreation area for its workers.

The increasing number of streetcar companies caused problems. By the end of 1890 there were eight streetcar lines in Richmond, and another was being built. More than thirty-two miles of track had been laid, all of it double except in the black neighborhoods of Jackson Ward, where passengers had to wait from two to four times as long for a streetcar as white customers elsewhere. With many firms competing for a limited number of passengers, some companies failed to meet schedules, and there were many complaints about poor service. A consolidation bill was discussed in the General Assembly, but did not pass.[12]

The North Side Viaduct Company received permission in 1890 to run streetcars across a viaduct over Bacons Quarter Branch and to connect with one of the city lines south of the branch, and its viaduct opened in the spring of 1891. City council considered an even more daring plan, a bridge spanning the whole width of Shockoe Valley to carry Broad Street from the top of Shockoe Hill to the top of Church Hill, but the project was not carried out, at least partly because of the Panic of 1893.[13]

A majority of councilmen continued to oppose attempts to expand the city's boundaries. Manchester residents sought annexation in 1886, and an annexation plan approved by the Board of Public Interests found much support. But like similar proposals in 1871 and 1879, it was voted down by the council and the board of aldermen. Some councilmen felt that the city could not afford to expand its services into Manchester; others feared the potential impact that Manchester's largely working-class population might have on city politics. (In 1910, after streetcar service across the James improved sufficiently to allow Manchester residents to commute to jobs in Richmond and after the council decided that Manchester residents who worked in Richmond were escaping city taxes, annexation finally occurred.)

Some councilmen also resisted the efforts of west end residents to have their neighborhoods annexed. These members argued that much of the area annexed in 1867—Clay and Jackson as well as Jefferson and Marshall wards—lacked street improvements and city gas, water, and sewage service. The council majority was not rigidly opposed to annexation. An 1887 resolution to instruct the city's representatives in the legislature to oppose a bill extending the city limits was voted down because a majority feared that if the council took a firm stand against annexation, suburban developers might lay out new streets that would conflict with the city's own street plan. Other members of the council, like their friends in the Chamber of Commerce, hoped by annexation to raise Richmond's population to a higher rank among American cities in the upcoming census of 1890.[14]

• 2 •

In Richmond as in many other postwar southern cities, the 1880s witnessed conflict between the principles of laissez-faire and of municipal regulation—especially between existing city utilities and newer privately owned firms. The most important instance of this conflict involved electrical power. Private enterprise took the initiative in this new field in 1881 when the Virginia Electric Lighting Company was organized with an old-line Virginian, John H. Montague, as president. Two former councilmen, Charles E. Whitlock and Charles U. Williams; tobacconist Lewis Ginter; and the Vermont-born vice-president of the Richmond and Allegheny Railroad, Henry C. Parsons, were on the board of directors. The council, hoping that competition would bring lower rates and better service, chartered two more power companies in 1883, one of which was headed by a prominent confectioner, Andrew Pizzini, who was serving on the council. Then, in the mid-1880s, the city itself entered the electric business, substituting electric streetlights for gas lamps in 1884, and beginning work on a city power plant in 1885. No local firms submitted bids to build a city light system, and the council gave its contract to a Hartford, Connecticut, firm. In 1886 the city's major streets and some city parks were illuminated by electricity generated in the city's plant and, despite a council decision to keep some streetlights lit all night, after 1887 the private power companies' principal customers were the streetcar lines. As the demand for electricity increased, the city became a maze of wires: some companies used overhead lines, other buried cables beneath the streets. An electricity monopoly promised safer and more convenient power, although the council's decision to allow a simple private monopoly also was influenced by the inability of competing local firms to supply adequate electrical services. Chartered in 1890, the Richmond Railway and Electric Company promptly bought out four other power and streetcar firms.[15]

Richmond's telephone system was operated by a privately owned utility developed in the 1880s with the aid of northern capitalists. In 1879 Richmond got the country's third telephone exchange—a city switchboard operated by the Southern Bell Telephone Company (a lessee of American Bell Telephone Company), managed by Bostonian Charles E. McCluer, and financed by William H. Forbes and other Boston investors. In the 1880s almost all telephone customers were businesses, although the fire department had phone service by 1884. The city council initially granted Southern Bell a broad franchise such as local Bell affiliates received in other southern cities. At first the phone company hung its lines from private houses, but after it found that the costs of damages caused by its linesmen's climbing spikes were exceeding revenues, it asked for permission to erect telephone poles, and the council drew up a contract that was much more favorable to the city's interests. The agreement allowed the company to erect poles but stipulated that they also be used for Richmond's fire alarm and police telegraph system. In the face of opposition from the board of aldermen, the council failed to hold the phone company to other, even more restrictive, provisions. The American Bell Telephone Company absorbed Southern Bell late in the 1880s and linked Richmond with other cities before reorganizing into the American Telephone and Telegraph Corporation in 1899. Yet the council had not learned a lesson from its experience with competing power and streetcar companies: after receiving complaints about poor service from Southern Bell, the city allowed the Richmond Telephone Company to begin operations in the 1890s. The separate company was merged with the Bell System in 1903.[16]

The city gasworks continued to be the exception to the general rule about privately owned utilities in Richmond and the nation. The city gas plant was improved and enlarged in the 1880s. As a result, although complaints about the quantity and quality of gas persisted, in 1885 the works made a large profit—significantly higher than in earlier years. As in other southern cities, private firms attracted by the commercial potential of the municipal plant, and councilmen with interests in these various companies, proposed in 1888 that the gasworks be leased to a private corporation. Assertions that the city would derive even more revenue from leasing the works than it did from gas sales and that customers would get better service from a private contractor fell on deaf ears; a majority of the council suspected that a few of their colleagues were not acting in the public interest, and they voted against a private gas utility. Richmond's municipal gasworks remained a city-owned utility into the twentieth century—one of only five in the United States in 1902.[17]

A steady supply of good water proved more difficult to ensure than gas. New pumps upriver on the James were completed in 1883. They supplied a new waterworks, and the system was deemed adequate to keep the new reservoir full in any weather short of extreme drought. But the city's drinking water was still muddy, and efforts made in 1885 to devise a workable filter were unsuccessful. The various steam- and water-driven pumps needed almost constant repair or replacement. The council considered drilling for water to ensure a more reliable supply, and some areas went without city water. Eastern areas such as Fulton had no water mains as late as 1887.[18]

In December 1887 an accident endangered the water supply. Weakened by trains of the Richmond and Allegheny Railroad that ran atop the old towpath, the earthen bank of the old canal broke. Water and debris poured into the pump house, and the pumps and mains leading to the reservoir were broken. The city sued both the receivers of the ailing railroad and the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, which controlled the line. Until repairs could be made, the city depended entirely on its new upriver pumps. If they had failed or if the level of the river had gone down, the reservoir would quickly have been drained. Fortunately neither disaster occurred, and after much argument the controversy between the city and the railroad was settled in 1890. Under a complicated agreement the C. & O. agreed to pay part of the cost of repair without admitting that it had inherited the old canal company's legal obligation to supply Richmond with drinking water.[19]

Residential sewer connections and large drainage culverts were constructed along with the new houses and streets throughout the 1880s. The work of enclosing Shockoe Creek, begun in the 1870s both as a sanitary measure and to prevent damage to streets and bridges in Shockoe Valley during the perennial freshets, continued. Like Jones Falls in Baltimore and other free-flowing urban creeks, Shockoe Creek had become a natural sewer fed by tributary culverts that drained most of the city. The council also enacted ordinances requiring home owners to connect flush toilets with the city sewer system and providing for proper traps and ventilation.[20]

Fire and police protection became increasingly important in the 1880s as the city expanded and as population increased. After two years of retrenchment, in 1882 the council's fire committee pleaded for new equipment on the grounds that the public safety was endangered: fire had destroyed the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad bridge, the Vulcan Iron Works, several of the largest tobacco factories, many houses, and caused half a million dollars in damage. The committee requested $12,215 for a new fire station, a hook and ladder truck, a steam fire engine, and hose. The council appropriated $9,000, referred the request for a firehouse to the building committee, and made no provision for the hook and ladder truck. But as the building boom continued, the council became more receptive to requests for increased fire protection. In 1885 it authorized one new hose company and reassigned another for duty in the congested area of docks and warehouses at Rocketts. It stiffened the building code, prohibiting any structure from being erected in the downtown area unless its walls were entirely of brick, stone, or other fireproof material. An 1890 clause required all buildings more than three stories high to have iron fire escapes, and another gave the fire department committee greater power over the approval of building permits. John Mitchell, Jr., the energetic black newspaper publisher from Jackson Ward, opposed the latter measure. He feared that blacks, who had but two representatives on the seven-man committee, might not be able to erect houses in conformity with the new building code and that the committee might favor permits requested by white realtors and contractors.[21]

Despite these advances, the council might have done far more for fire protection. Residents of the west end asked for a fire truck in 1888, but the council referred the matter to its finance committee, which took no action. A series of fires demonstrated the need for more firemen and equipment: a fire at the state penitentiary in 1888 threatened the lives of eight hundred convicts and caused twenty thousand dollars in damages at the prison shoe shop. Two years later fire destroyed a fertilizer company and two tobacco factories valued at a quarter of a million dollars. A fire at the locomotive works in 1891 put one hundred fifty men out of work and damaged the engines and boilers being built for the battleship *Texas*. When another quarter-million-dollar fire destroyed the cigarette factory of Allen and Ginter in 1893, a thousand women lost their jobs, but Lewis Ginter continued to pay their wages.[22]

Table 17

Republican Presidential Voting in Richmond, 1872–1892

(In Percentage of Total Ballots Cast)

	1872	1876	1880	(1880 Readjuster)	(1880 Combined)*	1884	1888	1892
Marshall Ward	48.4	43.4	25.2	(6.5)	(31.7)	39.6	39.3	24.5
Jefferson Ward	43.0	35.9	20.5	(6.5)	(27.0)	33.6	35.0	20.4
Madison Ward	44.3	37.7	21.0	(4.1)	(25.1)	34.3	33.8	20.0
Monroe Ward	47.5	37.6	21.1	(5.1)	(26.2)	36.5	36.4	17.3
Clay Ward	44.2	32.7	20.8	(7.2)	(28.0)	35.7	35.8	17.0
Jackson Ward	74.6	70.1	63.8	(3.2)	(67.0)	74.4	79.0	62.4
City-wide percentage	50.3	42.9	28.7	(5.4)	(34.2)	42.4	43.2	26.9
Percentage for predominantly white wards	45.5	37.5	21.7	(5.9)	(27.6)	35.9	36.1	19.8

SOURCE: Official vote printed in postelection issues of the *Richmond Daily Dispatch*.

*Percentage indicates combined Republican and Readjuster voting.

Like the fire department, the Richmond Bureau of Police had inadequate staff and funds during the 1880s. It was also buffeted by political turmoil throughout the decade. False economy and city politics explain the council's failure to increase the size of the police force between 1870 and 1888. The salaries of other city workers had been restored to the level of 1877, before wages had been cut in an economy move, but not until 1888 were police salaries restored and the department enlarged. In 1884 the council remedied one long-standing grievance by relieving patrolmen of the strenuous additional duty of lighting and extinguishing gas streetlamps, but this was a meaningless concession as the city was switching to electric streetlights. Even during Reconstruction, blacks never served on the police force—a circumstance common to all southern cities except a few such as

chill on way home

Table 18
Property Holding by Registered Voters in Richmond, 1880–1890

	Number of Registered Voters		Property Valuation per Registered Voter			
	1880	1890	Real 1880	Real 1890	Personal 1880	Personal 1890
Marshall Ward	1,795	2,568	$ 989	$ 952	$ 201	$ 224
Jefferson Ward	2,476	2,715	3,033	2,519	595	1,797
Madison Ward	1,612	1,925	4,875	4,674	1,609	3,945
Monroe Ward	2,145	2,691	2,736	2,771	1,145	1,013
Clay Ward	2,123	3,389	1,851	2,352	775	685
Jackson Ward	2,502	3,327	670	734	46	48
Total	12,653	16,616				
		Average	$2,359	$2,334	$ 729	$1,285

SOURCE: Richmond personal and real property tax books, 1880–1890, Archives Branch, Virginia State Library, Richmond; *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, 1 Jan. 1891.

Montgomery, Alabama, and Raleigh, North Carolina, which had Negro policemen. Because the force lacked black patrolmen and frequently had been charged with brutality, Councilman John Mitchell, Jr., opposed the 1888 police department bill, but he was alone in his opposition.[23]

While the common council had made some effort to expand and modernize city services in response to Richmond's growth, in general the *Richmond Dispatch*'s January 1888 indictment seems just: the editorial concluded that the council had failed to increase the police and fire departments in proportion to the city's population growth, failed to open and improve streets in the suburbs, and failed to maintain streets in the older areas.[24]

• 3 •

In politics the 1880s were years of tumult in which it seemed that Richmonders might embrace the two-party system. The Funders, conservatives who advocated paying the entire antebellum state debt, were challenged both by local Democratic factions and by Republicans. The Republican vote in Richmond's six wards increased from an average of 29 percent in 1880 to 43 percent in 1884 and 1888 (see table 17). The reasons for this increase are not entirely clear, but Republicans benefited from a continuing split in Democratic ranks, first between the

Funders and the Readjusters (who wanted to readjust the state debt), and later between the Funders and groups who supported unions and a local option on liquor sales.

Funder Democrats governed the city except for a brief period in 1886–1887 and had a majority in every ward except Jackson, where about three-quarters of the voters were black. There were only minor differences in the size of the Democratic majorities in the five white wards. Republicans always won in Jackson Ward; of the other wards, Marshall, with a large black population, always returned the most Republican votes. In the city as a whole, between a quarter and a third of the Republican voters were white. Ward organization as well as race may have affected party strength. Republican strength in Jackson and Marshall resulted in part from superior organization, for voter turnout was high in these wards (see table 18). Conversely, strong Democratic organizations in the city's central wards may have helped to reduce the size of the Republican vote, making a large Democratic turnout unnecessary.

It is clear that Republican strength increased in the mid-1880s, and that this change was not entirely a result of the Readjusters joining forces with the Republicans: the Republican vote increased by 14 percent between 1880 and 1884, but the Readjuster vote had been less than 6 percent. More than half of the Republican gain must have come either from new voters or from men who had abstained in 1880. A decline in Republican strength between 1888 and 1892 is also clear: while the Democrats united behind Grover Cleveland and increased their total vote by a quarter, the Republican party's total vote dropped by half, and Republicans lost ground in every ward (see table 17).[25]

This decline was the result of social pressure on white Republicans and widespread disfranchisement and intimidation of black voters. In the 1870s and 1880s conservative Democrats perfected tactics to reduce the black vote, particularly during city-wide elections for state and national office, while allowing the largely black population of Jackson Ward to elect Negro councilmen and aldermen. In 1876 petty larceny was added to the list of felonies that were grounds for disfranchisement in Virginia. About a thousand blacks were disfranchised in Richmond between 1870 and 1892 by conviction of petty larceny or felony in the city hustings court, while another thousand Negroes lost the vote after being convicted of petty larceny in the Richmond police court. Until the poll tax was abolished by the Readjusters in 1882, voters could also be disfranchised for failure to pay it. Despite appeals by the black *Virginia Star* and explanations of the intentionally complicated procedure for paying the tax, thousands of Negroes in Richmond neglected this duty. Such Democratic ploys had a cumulative effect, but the strategy was not immediately successful because of party factionalism in both the state and city. After 1888, however, the newly unified Democrats increased their efforts to prevent or impede Negro voting: thousands of blacks were kept waiting for hours at each election, even though they may have stood in line throughout the previous night, and election judges examined the black Republicans individually, asking legalistic or insulting questions. The city police threatened black voters, and white hoodlums tried to start riots so that black voters could be arrested. Then, after the election, charges were dropped and the blacks released. False ballots were issued to blacks, and eventually the Democrats resorted to running candidates with names similar or identical to those of Republican nominees. Typically, when the polls closed, hundreds of black Richmonders were still waiting to vote.[26]

White Republicans were subjected to almost universal scorn, even by small boys like John A. Cutchins, who confessed to his father that one of his playmates was the son of a Republican, "but he can't help that." The city's leading Republican in the late 1880s, John S. Wise, had been educated at the Virginia Military Institute and the University of Virginia law school and was a son of former governor Henry A. Wise. His attempt to organize Negro voters by walking through Jackson Ward and visiting them in their shops and stores infuriated conservative Democrats, who regarded him as a turncoat. Wise finally left Richmond for New York about 1890, largely because of the vilification of conservative newspapers and the threats made against him and his family. Most men of Wise's class drifted back into the Democratic party when the Readjusters disintegrated in the mid-1880s. White Republicans of the middle and lower classes who persisted in their affiliation were usually either of northern or foreign birth, and they usually adopted increasingly conservative racial views that reflected both the policy of the national party and the prevailing sentiment of the city.[27]

At first the battle between Funders and Readjusters that had split the Virginia Democratic party in the late 1870s had had little impact on Richmond, a center of Funder strength. The Readjusters had not won a majority in the General Assembly until 1879 and not until 1881 had they managed to elect their gubernatorial candidate. Once William E. Cameron had taken office in January 1882, however, the Readjusters had the power to deal with their enemies in Richmond. The two bills introduced to weaken Richmond's Funders were a metropolitan police bill that would have given appointive power over the city police to the state so that the Readjusters could remove conservatives on the Richmond police force as they had already done in Norfolk, and a bill to establish a state-owned gasworks in Richmond to compete with the city-owned utility. Both bills were defeated because of divisions among the leaders of the Readjuster party. Governor Cameron tried to remove Funders from the board of the Medical College so that he could install his own appointees, but the incumbents forcibly resisted the takeover attempt and called in the city police, who arrested one of the Readjusters. The Virginia Court of Appeals eventually ruled that the governor had exceeded his authority.[28]

The Readjusters had more success in other areas. Although George D. Wise, a Funder, was elected to represent the Richmond district in Congress in November 1882, his Readjuster cousin, John S. Wise, was elected as congressman-at-large. Readjusters won two municipal judgeships early in 1883, and in June the Readjuster-controlled State Board of Education used a technicality to remove Mayor William C. Carrington and other Funders from the city school board. Two blacks were among the Readjusters appointed to fill the vacancies.[29]

Outraged by these developments, the Funders allowed their opponents scant time to enjoy their triumph. Exploiting the deaths of several blacks and whites in a Danville race riot as evidence for the incompetence of the Readjuster government, Funder candidates won the election of November 1883 and brought a large majority to the General Assembly. The Funders removed the blacks and other Readjusters from Richmond's school board. A year later Grover Cleveland carried Richmond and the state against the opposition of the Readjusters, who supported Republican nominee Benjamin Harrison. The final blow to the Readjusters' power in Virginia came a year later, when Fitzhugh Lee defeated John S. Wise to succeed Governor Cameron.[30]

Funder control of Virginia at the state level was complete by the mid-1880s, but the conservatives in Richmond had to face new challenges. Organized labor had never been a force in city politics, but the national growth of the Knights of Labor stimulated a strong union movement. The first district assembly of the Knights in the South was founded in Richmond in 1885. Although estimates of their strength vary, the Richmond Knights eventually had several dozen locals in the two segregated district assemblies (the white number 84, and the black number 92), a cooperative soap factory, and plans for a building association and an underwear factory. The Knights claimed a city membership in 1886 of 7,692—more than three thousand whites and four thousand blacks—better than a third of the city's labor force in the late 1880s. Affiliation with the Knights of Labor, and the booming economy, encouraged Richmond unions to be more militant. More strikes occurred in Richmond in 1886 than in the previous five years combined. In 1886 and 1887 craftsmen staged nine strikes for higher pay or shorter hours. Seven succeeded.[31]

The oldest and perhaps the strongest of the city brotherhoods was the typographical union, which dated from 1856. It had conducted at least one successful strike during the Civil War, and in 1886 it blacklisted Baughman Brothers, the only nonunion printing firm in the city. The Knights supported the strike. They also organized a bitter, eight-month boycott of the Haxall-Crenshaw flour mills because the company used barrels made by penitentiary convicts rather than union coopers. Men of both races at the Old Dominion Iron and Nail Works staged a walkout that lasted for more than three months. The biracial stone quarrymen's strike in June 1886 was notable because white stonecutters in Richmond were regarded as particularly hostile to blacks.

Conservatives were naturally alarmed by this unusual degree of union activity, brought on in part by the failure of the Democratic machine to make overtures to labor leaders. City and state courts tried to crush the workers with injunctions and other legal actions, including conspiracy indictments, against organizers. The conservative press, in Richmond as in other cities, portrayed the local Knights as dangerous radicals unrepresentative of honest laborers. Either because they were trying to confuse the issue or because they were misled by the temperance policy of the national Knights of Labor, both the *Dispatch* and the *Richmond State* claimed that union men were receiving unexpected support from the city's growing number of prohibitionists. As the number of beer- and whiskey-drinking immigrants in Richmond declined, the advocates of prohibition had become relatively stronger, led by evangelical clergymen and even an Episcopal bishop. After the General Assembly passed a state local option law, Richmond's saloonkeepers formed the Liquor Dealers' Protective Association and collected 4,541 signatures on a petition requesting a referendum. The issue was decided in April 1886 with a voter turnout comparable to that of a presidential election. The wets defeated the drys, 8,940 to 3,260, partly because saloons, the headquarters of ward and precinct captains of both parties, were the indispensable focal points for political organization. At the same time, strong support for prohibition came from some conservative churchmen and wealthy whites who drank at home and did not frequent saloons. In an attempt to put the best face on the wet victory, the *Dispatch* argued that Negroes advocated prohibition and cited as evidence the Reverend John Jasper's dry stance. But it seems likely that most Richmond blacks followed state Republican boss William Mahone's instructions and voted with the wets. The wet victory aroused some resentment against the Democratic organization among drys, but more importantly it signaled the success of Mahone's plan to exploit at the city level a split among white Democrats over the labor and liquor questions.[32]

Shortly after the local option referendum, the white assemblies of the Knights of Labor organized a political party, nominated candidates for the common council and board of aldermen on a reform ticket (all but two of whom were longtime Democrats), and adopted a moderate labor platform. One issue in the 1886 campaign was the conservative council's failure to build a new city hall to replace the old structure, which had been demolished in 1874. Both skilled craftsmen and day laborers, eager for jobs, demanded that construction begin using only Richmond workers. The project had been delayed for years as the Democrats quarreled over architects and outside contractors. White and black Republicans, former Readjusters, and perhaps some angry temperance advocates aided the labor cause, and late in May 1886 the reform slate won the municipal election, electing its candidates in five of Richmond's six wards.

Although surprised by the results, the disappointed Democrats focused most of their ire on Republicans and Mahonites. Fearing to widen the split with the disaffected members of their party, the *Richmond Dispatch* merely referred to their "misguided" leaders, "captured by the reform idea," and argued that there was no justification for endangering party organization. There was no obvious attempt before or after the election to link the "Reformers" or "Workingmen's" party with the Haymarket riot of 4 May 1886, although the paper referred to "labor agitation" within the city as a factor in the election. The handing down of a decision in the locally sensational murder trial of Thomas J. Cluverius shortly after Haymarket overshadowed news of the Chicago troubles. The accounts of the riot carried in the *Dispatch* had a distinctly antilabor slant (as did some advertisements) but Terence Powderly's denunciation of the anarchists probably helped the Knights in the city.[33]

The labor candidates had been more liberal on many issues than the regular Democrats, but they proved just as conservative on racial matters. The biracial labor-Republican coalition broke down over the summer, leaving a mosaic of mutual distrust and suspicion, labor fear of association with blacks, petty bickering over the spoils of office, and white refusal to share patronage with black politicians. That fall, the three-way race for Richmond's district congressional seat ended in victory for George D. Wise, the conservative nominee, when labor candidate William Mullen, a Virginia native and district master workman for the Knights, withdrew and threw his support to the incumbent to deny victory to the Republican nominee, Edmund Waddill, Jr., whose backers were mostly black. After the November election, the reform councilmen announced that black workers would not be hired for the city hall project, but when the labor leaders lost their majority on the common council and board of aldermen, resurgent regular Democrats rejected their attempt to restrict construction jobs to local craftsmen and apprentices. By 1887 once prominent labor leaders were complaining that they and other union tradesmen had lost their jobs. The new city hall, begun during labor's brief control of the city government, was not completed until 1894. The total cost of the impressive granite structure was three times its original estimate, a fact that led to rumors of corruption but no formal charges, although conservatives boasted that it had been erected entirely by day laborers.[34]

Most Knights of Labor district assemblies were integrated, although some southern black locals were directly affiliated with the national general assembly. In Richmond, however, the black and white locals were segregated in the two district assemblies, largely because black workers wanted to elect their own leaders and control their own locals. Despite this policy of separation, the race issue undid the Knights of Labor in Richmond as elsewhere in the south. When the organization held its national convention in Richmond in October 1886, the delegation from New York's District Assembly 49 included a former Virginian, Frank J. Ferrell, who was the most prominent black leader in the Knights of Labor. Conservative Richmond whites were angered when the New Yorkers attended the Academy of Music in a body and were seated together in an obvious challenge to Richmond's policy of segregation. The following night a race riot almost occurred when the northerners sought admission to the Richmond Theater and were confronted by members of a white, antilabor group, the Law and Order Association.

At the grand session of the convention Governor Fitzhugh Lee refused to be introduced by Ferrell, whom the Knights had picked as a speaker in a show of biracial solidarity. The labor leaders reached a compromise with the governor. Ferrell introduced Knights president Terence V. Powderly, and Powderly in turn presented Lee to the delegates. But Ferrell, who had been refused admission to Murphy's Hotel upon his arrival in Richmond, irritated white Richmonders by referring to southern "racial superstitions" in his opening speech. Many of the Knights had to stay in private boardinghouses and black hotels, and a ball scheduled for the end of the convention was canceled when the black delegates insisted on their right to attend on terms of social equality. Even without any racial problems, the union men would have had difficulty contending with large manufacturers and businessmen, who organized the Law and Order Association and used court injunctions, lockouts, and other tactics to intimidate workers. The Knights were excluded from the cornerstone-laying ceremony for the new city hall, a building that might never have been started without the impetus provided by the labor council. The speaker chosen for the occasion was a lawyer known for antiunion sentiments and poor oratory, the chief marshal of the parade was a judge known for his injunctions against the Knights, and other marshals were prominent leaders of the Law and Order Association.[35]

In time, however, larger political concerns, such as the restitution and maintenance of Democratic control of the city government, reunited the labor and conservative wings of the party in Richmond. In 1888, when William C. Carrington, mayor since 1876, decided to retire because of poor health, the labor and conservative leaders sought a compromise mayoral candidate to succeed Carrington. They chose J. Taylor Ellyson who had served as head of the school board and who was the son of former mayor Henry K. Ellyson. Ellyson held more progressive views of labor matters than his predecessor, but he was conservative on race and other political issues and was thus acceptable both to businessmen and to labor and conservative Democrats. The Democrats united to elect Ellyson, and black and white Republicans were removed from some city offices and denied city jobs. In the fall of 1888 the Democrats again carried the city for President Cleveland in his unsuccessful bid for reelection, and Republicans, particularly the blacks, began to lose what power they had enjoyed during the 1880s.[36]

Many more allegations of dishonesty in Richmond government were made during the 1880s than during the early period of Reconstruction, which is popularly regarded as a time of continuous scandal. Conservative Democrats brought corruption to city government. No municipal scandal surfaced during the brief tenure of the labor party. Most of the corruption involved the misuse of city funds. In 1882, for instance, a member of the board of aldermen charged that four councilmen,

Table 19

Richmond Males, Twenty-one Years of Age or Older, 1890

	Total	Percentage Registered to Vote	Native-born	Foreign-born	Black
Marshall Ward	2,706	94.9	1,776 (65.6%)	163 (6.0%)	767 (28.3%)
Jefferson Ward	3,054	88.9	1,865 (61.0%)	372 (12.2%)	817 (26.8%)
Madison Ward	2,780	69.2	1,833 (65.9%)	303 (10.9%)	644 (23.2%)
Monroe Ward	4,232	63.6	2,343 (55.3%)	323 (7.6%)	1,566 (37.0%)
Clay Ward	4,642	73.0	3,355 (72.3%)	355 (7.6%)	932 (20.1%)
Jackson Ward	4,272	77.9	784 (18.3%)	214 (5.0%)	3,274 (76.6%)
City-wide total	21,686	77.9	11,956 (55.1%)	1,730 (8.0%)	8,000 (36.9%)
Total for predominantly white wards	17,414	76.6	11,172 (64.2%)	1,516 (8.7%)	4,726 (27.1%)

SOURCE: U.S., Bureau of the Census, *Compendium of the Eleventh Census, 1890, I* (Washington, D.C., 1896), 850.

including the former chairman of the poor committee and the longtime almshouse superintendent, had misappropriated funds paid the city by Henrico County for the use of Richmond's facilities for the poor. John M. Higgins, a member of the council for many years, called for a complete investigation but was ruled out of order. Higgins also charged that a member of the council had pocketed a commission on the sale of city bonds. An alderman charged that merchants on the council, some of whom allegedly spent hundreds or thousands of dollars to get elected, persuaded the city department heads to buy from their stores and prevented their competitors from getting city business. On a unanimous vote, the council finally authorized an investigation to be directed by the alderman who had made the initial charges. No report was ever made. Another scandal was the 1885 investigation of embezzlement in the city auditor's office, for which no report was ever released. When the local brick manufacturers' association charged that some councilmen had competed, in violation of law, to supply bricks for the city hall and for sewers, Lewis D. Crenshaw, a prominent civic leader, miller, alderman, and chairman of the investigating committee, declined to pursue the charges because the brick manufacturers, aware of the laws against slander, would not name those whom they suspected of wrongdoing.[37]

Perhaps the most spectacular case of dishonesty in Richmond's government—and one of the few in this period in which the city took action—was the embezzlement of at least $38,270 by Aylett R. Woodson, collector of city taxes from 1876 to 1887. The council approved the city attorney's recommendation that suit be brought against Woodson's estate. But among the items needed for the investigation was a special ledger kept by Woodson. It was the key to the whole affair, and it had been carried away after his death by an associate, who was also dead. The ledger was never found. Other ledgers revealed that Woodson's accounts for street paving were irregular between 1882 and 1887 and that he had stopped listing them at all from 1884 until his death in February 1887. No records could be found for delinquent gas bills or collections from 1884 and 1885. The main deficit appeared to be in tax collections from 1883 to 1887. Throughout the surviving records are systematic errors in addition, all against the city and all in Woodson's handwriting. The council minutes do not reveal the result of this case.[38] A careful student of Richmond politics in the 1890s concluded that

> the city's government was inefficient, tainted with corruption, and the object of countless investigations. . . . As the *Dispatch* admitted, "it is seldom that one hears a kind word spoken of the average councilman, . . . he is the object of constant criticism and the target of many idle and malicious shafts." . . . Although the corruption in Richmond was on a relatively petty scale, many citizens rightly suspected that the city was poorly managed and that the council dispensed contracts, franchises, and other favors for a price.[39]

This description of the nineties fits the eighties equally well.

• 4 •

Blacks in Richmond had considerable power during the early 1880s as a result of the Readjuster challenge to conservative Democrats. This was reflected in the number of Richmond blacks appointed to federal jobs by the Republican administration of Chester A. Arthur at the instigation of the Readjusters. A few blacks were appointed to office during Democratic administrations, and state and city Democrats occasionally chose black party members—as when they appointed Isaac Hunter to the board of directors of the state's Central Lunatic Asylum for Negroes—but patronage rewards for black politicians were always greatest when the Republicans were in power. In 1879, for example, there was only one black, Josiah Crump, among fourteen post office clerks, and of sixteen mailmen, five were black. Governor Cameron later appointed Crump to the asylum board. In 1882 all six clerks in the mailing department were black and two more were hired in 1883; three additional black mailmen were appointed in 1882, and by 1883 nine of the twenty carriers were black. That blacks comprised about half the workers in the Richmond post office—jobs that could easily have been filled with white Readjusters and Republicans—is the clearest indication of the black community's political power in Richmond. But in 1884 the Democrats elected Grover Cleveland and during the next four years regained control of both the state and city governments. They promptly cut the number of blacks in office, and by 1888 no mailmen and only two of seven mailing clerks were black. An exodus of blacks who left the city for better opportunities in the North also weakened their community's influence.[40]

Richmond was an exception to the population trends of the postwar urban South. Richmond and Atlanta were the only large southern cities in which the black percentage of the total population declined before 1900: in 1870 Richmond's population had been 45 percent black; in 1880, 44 percent; in 1890, 40 percent; and in 1900, 38 percent. The black population had been growing slowly—by 20 percent in the 1870s and by 16 percent in the 1880s—but the absolute number of blacks in Richmond dropped during the 1890s.

In terms of the ability to elect city officials, black political power in Richmond was confined to Jackson Ward, where the electorate was 77 percent black (see table 19) and where nearly half the city's black population resided. In some years, such as 1888 and 1889, the ward's five members of the common council and two of the three aldermen were black, but black councilmen or aldermen were not elected from any other ward, for the wards had been gerrymandered in 1871 and blacks comprised only 20 to 37 percent of the population in each of the others.[41]

The presence of black representatives from Jackson Ward on the common council did accomplish some things. Grave robbing, which was committed principally in black cemeteries, was ended in the early 1880s when, after a black janitor at the Medical College and several white medical students were arrested with cadavers, the state agreed to supply both the Medical College and the University of Virginia medical school with unclaimed bodies from the poorhouse and the city hospital.

In 1886 blacks on the council also secured the end of the chain gang in Richmond. Readjuster legislation had abolished the whipping post four years earlier. Black historian Luther P. Jackson cites "considerable gains for the Negroes in Richmond"—such as a new school, fuel for the poor, an armory for the black militia, street improvements, and better lighting in black neighborhoods—but concludes, in a realistic if perhaps contradictory vein, that the presence of blacks on the common council and the board of aldermen "had but little effect in changing the policies of the dominant race."[42]

Even at the peak of their representation in Richmond government—when the black council members included aggressive John Mitchell, Jr., publisher of the *Richmond Planet*, as well as the more diplomatic Joseph E. Farrar, a building contractor—the black community lacked political clout. This relative weakness showed in the attempts to secure a building for the First Colored Battalion of the Virginia State Militia. Blacks introduced resolutions for such an armory in 1882, in 1883, and again in every year from 1885 to 1890. The proposals were either summarily rejected by the white majority, or, more often, pigeonholed in committee. After thirteen years of agitation, the armory finally erected in 1895 was a pitifully small structure in comparison with the enormous buildings the city built for such white units as the Richmond Grays (1881), Howitzers (1895), and Light Infantry Blues (1910). The blacks on the council failed to obtain a city park for Jackson Ward. By the mid-1880s every ward in the city except Jackson had a tastefully decorated and landscaped park in which children played and adults strolled, relaxed, and listened to band concerts on hot summer evenings. Jackson Ward never shared in this municipal largess. The council refused even to select a site for a park, although the subject was discussed at a dozen council meetings between 1884 and 1890. A park was never laid out in the ward, which was itself gerrymandered out of existence in 1903.[43]

The white-controlled city government continued the practice, instituted by radical Republicans during Reconstruction, of segregation in social welfare. In theory the system promised separate but equal treatment, but in reality blacks normally received far less from city institutions such as hospitals and almshouses than whites of any class. The council did continue to support the Friends' Colored Orphan Asylum, established in 1869 on a lot donated by the city, but it contributed the same amount to each of four white orphanages. The crowded black hospital, almshouse, and orphan and insane asylums had higher mortality rates, poorer facilities, and less money to spend per patient than the corresponding white institutions. Semipublic buildings, such as the separate YMCA founded because blacks were not admitted to the white association, were refused the free gas and water service that the council regularly voted to give white charitable and recreational institutions.[44]

Blacks achieved their greatest success in independent enterprises that they organized, supported, and controlled. The United Order of True Reformers, founded late in the 1870s in Richmond, flourished into the twentieth century. Its bank, founded in 1887, was the first black bank in the United States, antedating the more successful and enduring Saint Luke Penny Savings Bank administered by Maggie Lena Walker after 1900. The order ran groceries, clothing stores, and a one-hundred-fifty-room hotel that competed with two other black hotels, Flagg's and Harris's. The *Reformer,* the group's newspaper, had a circulation of five thousand, and the order also operated a home for the aged, a building and loan association, and a real estate firm. The city had, of course, many black institutions in addition to those run by the True Reformers. In the press, both the weekly *Virginia Star* and the later daily *Richmond Planet* spoke ably for the black community, and Joseph T. Wilson's monthly *Industrial Day* became a weekly in 1889.[45]

Richmond blacks supported a number of private schools. The Moore Street Industrial School, established in 1878 by members of a mission organization of the Second Baptist Church, was operating as an incorporated institution by 1887. Among its trustees and instructors were the most prominent blacks in the city, including John Oliver and Robert C. Hobson, who had been leaders during Reconstruction. By 1891 the school had sixty-two enrolled students: the boys learned carpentry and printing, the girls learned to use sewing machines to make clothing for women and children.[46]

The Reverend and Mrs. Joseph C. Hartshorn, of Rhode Island, founded Hartshorn Memorial College in 1883 with a gift of twenty thousand dollars for the education of young black women. By 1890 the college was training school teachers, church workers, housewives, and foreign missionaries. The school had no permanent endowment, but was supported by donations from the American Baptist Home Mission Society and the Woman's American Baptist Home Mission societies, of New England and of Michigan. Most of the instruction was at the normal-school level for teacher training, but the college offered higher-level classes in English and boasted many successful graduates including one who was appointed to the faculty of the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute for Negroes (now Virginia State University) in Petersburg.[47]

The number of black businessmen and professionals—men trained at such institutions as the University of Michigan medical school and the law schools of Howard and of Yale universities—increased in the 1880s: in 1880 Richmond had only one black physician and two black lawyers; by 1889 the city had five black doctors, four lawyers, and a dentist. The proportion of blacks among the city's morticians increased, from one-third to one-half, and black barbers and hairdressers continued to dominate their profession. Nursing was another area in which blacks found jobs; an 1883–1884 city directory listed ten black and no white nurses. There were almost as many Negro blacksmiths, wheelwrights, watchmakers, and jewelers as white.[48]

Richmond's whites generally preferred nonthreatening black leaders, but some Richmond blacks, such as the lawyer Giles B. Jackson, both tactfully won the respect of whites and continued to work effectively behind the scenes for the advancement of black interests. Postal clerk Josiah Crump, who served several terms on the board of aldermen, was another leader of high standing in the black community who was also respected by whites. The board of aldermen attended his funeral in a body in 1890—as it would have done for any white colleague—invited members of the common council to join them, and draped Crump's desk and chair in mourning for thirty days, a customary sign of respect not always extended to blacks. The crusading publisher John Mitchell, Jr., on the other hand, was the kind of black leader that white Richmonders hated and feared. Mitchell had had the audacity to ridicule the Confederacy and to campaign openly against the brutal and increasingly frequent practice of lynching.[49]

Race relations in Richmond, as in much of the South and the nation, began to worsen in the late 1880s. Blacks were disqualified from working on the city hall and from other city jobs, both because of their race and because they were Republicans. None of those laid off were rehired, despite John Mitchell's demand for an investigation. On 15 March 1889 a white preacher from Brooklyn delivered a sermon to black congregations that the *Dispatch* branded as "negrophilist." Because of the tension that resulted, the sermon was not printed until seven months later. Black military units had once marched in Confederate memorial parades, sometimes over the protests of unreconstructed rebels like Jubal Early, but by the end of the decade they refused to take part even if invited. In October 1887, for instance, when the black companies were asked, almost as an afterthought, to participate in the cornerstone-laying ceremony for a monument to Robert E. Lee, the members met and formally voted to accept the invitation, but then in an informal session decided not to march because the tardy invitation was an insult that did not allow them time to practice their drills or clean their uniforms. City leaders showed a total lack of regard for black feelings in the fall of 1890 when they extended Seventh Street across Bacons Quarter Branch to the new real estate developments on the city's north side: the street and viaduct cut through and tore up Richmond's historic black cemetery, in which many of the city's most famous slaves and free Negroes had been buried. Where the displaced remains were reinterred is still uncertain.[50]

John W. ("Justice John") Crutchfield, who presided over Richmond's police court from 1888 through the early years of the twentieth century, attracted national attention by baiting black defendants who appeared before him on misdemeanor charges. Some whites regarded the judge's behavior as appalling. Yet, he amused others, who fondly remembered his paternal attitude toward Negro children. A Progressive-era account of proceedings in his courtroom, written by a northern white reporter attracted by Crutchfield's notoriety, shows clearly that his justice did not amuse Richmond blacks:

> All the benches were occupied and many persons, white and black, were standing up. . . . The performance is more like a vaudeville show with the judge as headliner than like a serious tribunal. . . . At the back of the room, in what appeared to be a sort of steel cage, were assembled the prisoners, all of them, on this occasion, negroes; while at the head of the chamber behind the usual police-court bulwark, sat the judge—a white-haired, hook-nosed man of more than seventy, peering over the top of his eyeglasses with a look of shrewd, merciless divination. . . .
>
> THE JUDGE (severely)—Was—you—*drunk?*
>
> THE PRISONER—No, suh, Jedge. Ah was n't drunk. Ah don't think no man's drunk s' long 's he can navigate, Jedge. I don't—
>
> THE JUDGE—Oh, yes, he can be! He can navigate and navigate mighty mean!—Ten dollars. . . .
>
> (While the next prisoner is being brought up, the judge entertains his audience with one of the humorous monologues for which he is famous, and which, together with the summary "justice" he metes out, keeps ripples of laughter running through the room): I'm going to get drunk myself, some day, and see what it does to me. [Laughter.] Mebbe I'll take a little cocaine, too. . . .
>
> THE JUDGE (inspecting the prisoner sharply)— You ain't a Richmond nigger. I can tell that to look at you.
>
> THE PRISONER—No, suh, Jedge. That's right.
>
> THE JUDGE—Where you from? You're from No'th Ca'lina, ain't you?
>
> THE PRISONER—Yas, suh, Jedge.
>
> THE JUDGE—Six months!
>
> (A great laugh rises from the courtroom at this. On inquiry we learn that the "joke" depends upon the judge's well-known aversion for negroes from North Carolina.)[51]

The reporter, whose account was published in 1917, went on to say that when he later saw Walter C. Kelly's vaudeville performance of *The Virginia Judge,* he saw "a certain gentle side" in the vaudeville portrayal "of which I saw no signs in Judge Crutchfield."

White observers customarily attributed the high rate of infant and adult mortality among blacks to their innate weakness as a race and implied that they had been better cared for as slaves. They also blamed the city's large black population for Richmond's slow economic growth; the *Dispatch* thought it unfair to compare Richmond with northern cities because they had few Negroes and, therefore, almost all of their residents were productive members of society. The reverse of this argument was advanced in 1889 by Lewis Harvie Blair, an aristocratic Richmond reformer and critic of the prevailing social order in the South, in a book entitled *The Prosperity of the South Dependent Upon the Elevation of the Negro.* Blair argued, correctly, that racial discrimination prevented black southerners from making more significant contributions to the progress of their region, but Richmond's economic growth was slowed by other factors as well.[52]

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The city's business leaders liked to say that Richmond's growth, although unspectacular, was steady and not subject to the instability of northern cities. They also claimed that Richmond suffered fewer economic fluctuations than most cities because its large tobacco industry was "depression proof." In fact, Richmond's economy followed national trends in the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century: recovery for several years after 1878, recession from 1882 to 1885, and then further expansion until the Panic of 1893.

Although Richmond continued to decline as an entrepôt, it briefly dominated the wholesale markets in eight southern states and even penetrated the Midwest. Richmond's jobbing firms sent out hundreds of drummers, or wholesale salesmen, on railroads throughout the South to dispose of large consignments of groceries and liquor, as well as smaller quantities of coffee, dry goods, notions, boots and shoes, hardware, and drugs. Annual jobbing sales increased from $17 million in 1885 to better than $36 million by 1891. In 1892 jobbing sales surpassed the value of Richmond's manufacturing production for the first time.[53]

Midway between southern consumers and northeastern manufacturers, Richmond's merchants had several advantages that helped them to enter new markets in the 1880s. Their drummers had good rail connections to the south and west over the Atlantic Coast Line, the Richmond and Danville, and the Chesapeake and Ohio. In 1880 Richmond was one of only ten southern cities with a population of twenty-five thousand. Then, as the South became more urban in the eighties, Richmond lost some of its advantages to rival towns such as Lynchburg; Charlotte, Greensboro, and Asheville, North Carolina; and Bristol and Knoxville, Tennessee. This new competition and the Panic of 1893 caused a 20 percent drop in Richmond's jobbing sales in the 1890s.[54]

Richmond was also the financial center of the upper South in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Its ten banks had a total capital of about $2 million in 1890 and handled transactions amounting to $83 million—a figure that represents a level of financial activity in the city far greater than that in cities of the same size such as Syracuse, New York; Columbus, Ohio; or New Haven, Connecticut. Insurance companies were another component of Richmond's financial power. Five large firms, including two that were founded before the war, had headquarters in the city. The relative newcomer was the Life Insurance Company of Virginia, established in Petersburg in 1871, which helped the city through depressions by cashing checks and making loans to manufacturers.[55]

In the 1880s Richmond industry became more diversified: in 1871 the tobacco, flour, and iron industries accounted for 89 percent of the city's total manufactured product; in 1880 they contributed only 63 percent; in 1890, only 43 percent. The secondary industries—wooden products, drugs and chemicals, and foodstuffs—each produced goods worth more than $1 million in 1880. The Richmond Cedar Works was the largest woodworking plant in the world, with twelve hundred workers and shops covering twelve acres. The Richmond Chemical Works employed fifty workers in the manufacture of acids and fertilizers. Five coffee and spice manufacturers produced goods worth $241,000. Twenty bakers made $238,000 worth of bread and crackers. Thirteen confectioners supplied Richmonders with $151,000 in sweets. The Valentine Meat Juice Company sold bottled steak sauce worth $52,000. Leather goods, printing and publishing, paper manufacturing, and clothing and textile firms formed a third group of industries, each of which contributed $400,000 to $500,000 to Richmond's 1880 production. By 1890 the value of manufactured leather goods had reached almost $2 million and of paper products almost $1 million. The clothing and textile industry did not grow as fast, primarily because after 1880 women's clothing was imported from the North rather than made in Richmond.[56]

Although the processing of grain, iron ore, and tobacco continued to dominate the city's economy, each of these industries had serious problems in the 1880s. The milling industry reached its postwar peak of $3 million per year between 1881 and 1883. Flour production then fell to half that level by 1887, increased again to $2.5 million by 1892, and then went into its final decline, dropping below the $1 million level in 1897.

Flour exports to South America, traditionally the city's largest market, declined steadily after 1883. Of the three major mills, only one survived the century. The Haxall-Crenshaw mill had sent almost all of its flour to Brazil. When it lost its South American markets the company suffered financial difficulties and failed in 1891, after a century of continuous operation. The Gallego mill, which had exported flour both to South America and to England, went into receivership in 1900. Only the Dunlop mill, which marketed most of its flour in the southern and southwestern states and a small amount locally, continued to operate without serious difficulty.[57]

Richmond's decline as a port had crippled its milling industry and grain trade. The president of the grain and cotton exchange reported in 1890 that no wheat or cotton had been exported from the city during the previous year—it all had been shipped from Newport News or West Point. Since export wheat, the highest grade, was not marketed in the city, Richmond attracted fewer buyers, less interest was shown in the available lower grades, and this grain brought lower prices than it had in the past. In turn, low prices induced sellers to market their grain in cities where higher bids could be expected.[58]

Richmond's iron industry continued a slow decline from its 1881 level of $5.25 million—a figure just $.25 million below the city's 1872 total. Iron production dropped to $4.25 million in 1890. Although the Virginia iron industry did not peak until 1900, Richmond's iron industry was declining. The city's manufacturers had adequate supplies of limestone, coke, iron ore, and cheap labor in the 1880s. But most of its products were sold only in the South, and pig iron was the chief product (Virginia's ore contained too much phosphorous to be converted to steel by the Bessemer process). The opening of vast coal deposits in West Virginia helped Richmond remain marginally competitive in the industry, but the discovery of rich ore deposits on the Mesabi range near Lake Superior gave Pittsburgh a decisive national advantage, and in the southern market Richmond suffered from competition with Birmingham and the booming iron industry in Alabama.[59]

New ironworks were started in Richmond in the 1880s, and the older companies' products became more varied. Tredegar was still the city's largest employer, with five or six thousand men working on its thirty-acre site until the early 1890s. The Old Dominion Iron and Nail Works on Belle Isle remained the largest nail factory in the South, and at the Southern Stove Works, founded in the 1870s, a hundred workers turned out a specialty line of heating and cooking stoves through the early nineties. Talbott and Sons, the oldest engine works in Richmond, had three hundred workers by 1883 and a plant occupying two city blocks, but it weakened in the Panic of 1893 and failed in 1895. At full capacity the Tanner and Delaney Engine Company, which became the Richmond Locomotive Works in 1888 following an enlargement of its plant, had two thousand workers and could turn out two hundred locomotives a year. Purchased in the late 1890s by northern interests that sought to reduce its competition with their other regional factories, it did not survive the first decade of the new century.[60]

Tobacco manufacturing in Richmond during the 1880s never reached the $13 million peak set in 1876: the industry's product fell to $8.75 million in 1881, and $7.75 million in 1883, then gradually increased to $9.25 million in 1887. With the largest supply of raw material of the city's three big industries and a long tradition of successful manufacturing and exporting, it represented Richmond's best chance for economic greatness in the modern United States. The failure of Richmond's conservative manufacturers to adopt new technology sealed the city's fate as the economic vassal of outside interests. The industry changed radically in the 1880s, particularly in the manufacture of cigarettes. Mechanization glutted the market for tobacco products, and fierce competition ensued between the major companies in New York, North Carolina, and Richmond, all of whom sought to expand sales with advertisements and attractive packaging. Consumer demand for tobacco continued to increase, but the industry's growth rate declined.[61]

The most significant technological development was a device to manufacture cigarettes that was invented by a Virginian, James Bonsack, who patented it in 1881 and improved it during the next two years. The inventor organized the Bonsack Machine Company in 1883 and sent his first machines to Allen and Ginter, the largest cigarette manufacturer in Richmond and the South. After a brief trial, however, the Richmond company discarded the machines, claiming that machine-made cigarettes would never sell and that the device did not work perfectly. Such objections did not deter James B. Duke, of North Carolina, whose company began manufacturing cigarettes in 1881, six years after Allen and Ginter. Duke leased some of Bonsack's machines in 1883, improved them, and signed a favorable contract with the inventor in 1885. By the time Allen and Ginter resumed use of the Bonsack machine in 1887, Bonsack and Duke were closely allied.[62]

In 1888 and 1889 Bonsack's company secured control of the patents for the other two cigarette-making machines then in use, and Duke began to organize his American Tobacco Company, one of the first great holding companies in the United States. Lewis Ginter's Richmond firm was one of the five—which together manufactured 90 percent of all the cigarettes made in the United States—that joined the holding company. The founders disagreed over the division of stock in the new company. Ginter thought his share should be slightly larger than Duke's, but the smaller partners sided with Duke, who was elected president. After the General Assembly of Virginia refused to issue a charter for the new tobacco giant, Duke easily secured a charter in New Jersey and moved company headquarters to New York. Richmond, the great tobacco manufacturing center, became merely a large appendage of the American Tobacco Company.[63]

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Despite signs of modernity, conservative and reactionary values remained strong during the 1880s. The comte de Haussonville, perhaps a more perceptive observer of Richmond than the urban boosters quoted earlier, described the city as he saw it on his visit in 1887:

> The view [of Richmond] has nothing that might be considered particularly original, and no longer presents that air of prosperity and excitement which always, at least to my eyes, gives a certain charm to American towns. There are almost no vessels anchored along the docks; the wooden breakwaters fall in ruins; the streets that can be seen are in bad condition, the houses appear equally awful; no factories, nothing that betrays activity and life, but rather an appearance of poverty and decadence. One feels that this unfortunate town . . . formerly so flourishing, has not recovered from the events whose theater it was. . . . The first view of the town is melancholy enough, and while looking at it, I cannot keep myself from deploring the fate of this old Virginia.

Haussonville had arrived at a steamship depot in Rocketts, one of the city's poor, unattractive neighborhoods, but after touring Richmond with local dignitaries his impression was somewhat more favorable. "The inhabitants . . . have in part repaired their ruins," he observed, "and today the town, without having entirely regained her former prosperity, is once again in the process of development and growth."[64]

Religious and ethnic tolerance seemed to continue in the 1880s. The council allowed the ladies of various Catholic churches to use the First Regiment Armory for their two-week-long charity fair. The *Richmond Dispatch* celebrated Pope Leo XIII's golden jubilee in a two-column article on the front page, and in 1885 Richmond Jews were routinely given permission to expand the Hebrew Cemetery north to Bacons Quarter Branch. By the end of the decade, however, conservative trends had become dominant again in Richmond. Religious fundamentalism and evangelism increased in the 1880s, among both whites and blacks. The Richmond Sabbath Association was organized in 1883, with Dr. J. L. M. Curry as president, and William Wirt Henry as vice-president, to secure a strict observance of Sunday, which Germans profaned by frequenting their beer gardens in the afternoon, and which Italian confectioners, Jewish merchants, and black barbers violated by opening their shops. Bishop John J. Keane, of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Richmond, disturbed the city's ecumenism and irritated Protestant divines by preaching to blacks and addressing them on terms of social and spiritual equality—something that Protestant ministers allegedly refused to do. In 1885 Dwight L. Moody launched a revival in Richmond that continued for months in the city's Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches. Moody's success was certain after he assured Moses D. Hoge, the city's most prominent minister, that he had never criticized Lee or Jackson. In 1890 Samuel P. Jones, another noted revivalist, and his choir of two hundred voices visited Richmond and claimed many converts. Advocates of prohibition grew ever stronger, and although they failed to close the saloons in the 1880s, they did secure passage of a law that provided a fine or a jail term for minors who drank in bars without parental consent.[65]

The council responded to the decline in the city's immigrant population by resolving to cease publication of municipal notices and advertisements in Richmond's German newspapers, but this action was vetoed by the board of aldermen in 1887. Cultural activities supported by the Germans and Irish, such as the weekly concerts of the Mozart Association, seemed to be at their peak in the late 1880s when the Academy of Music was completed. In the 1890s such entertainment began to decline in popularity, and music seemed of little importance in Richmond after 1900.[66]

Public schools gained popularity during the 1880s. Enrollments increased 78 percent, almost three times the rate of growth in the total population, and seven new schools were built to supplement the eleven in use in 1880. Sentiment against public education remained strong, however, and was reflected in the continued inadequacy of school facilities and in the council's apparently halfhearted commitment to public education. In 1885 the chairman of the school board told the councilmen that the schools were overcrowded, that many held half-day sessions, and that hundreds of white children and at least a thousand blacks had been denied admission. The council appropriated 80 percent of the chairman's funding request, but the amount proved insufficient. In the fall of 1886 the council again was told that eight hundred black and two hundred white children were still without schools. The council voted a small sum to provide temporary classrooms.[67]

Adherents of the New South creed held educational ideas unlike those of more traditional private school teachers in Richmond. John P. McGuire and W. Gordon McCabe, headmasters of the two most noted boys' schools in the postwar decades, emphasized character-building over intellectual training. The curricula of their schools were heavily weighted toward religion, ancient languages, and history—subjects that had been favored in the antebellum era—rather than economics, modern languages, and science.[68]

Beautiful young women continued to reign at the Virginia springs and at coastal resorts. Mary Triplett and Mattie Ould, the leading belles of the 1870s, were succeeded in the 1880s by May Handy and Irene Langhorne. Such women tended to marry rich—and even old or divorced—northerners, rather than impecunious young Richmonders, however long their family pedigree. Perceval Reniers observed that "belles of such a stature weren't marrying poor journalists," such as Page McCarty, who had fought a duel over Miss Triplett, "and sure enough, Miss Mary soon betrothed herself to one of those rare Southerners of substance, Mr. Philip Haxall, a gentleman with mills." Miss Ould wed wealthy northern-born editor Oliver J. Schoolcraft, while May Handy married a divorced New York banker, James Brown Potter. Irene Langhorne won the heart of Charles Dana Gibson and became his Gibson girl. "A path was being worn to the North by the feet of the premier belles, bound for the better marriages of bonanza land," Reniers concluded. "Before the crest of belledom began to break [in the mid–1890s] an exceptionally lovely lot was riding it. . . . Every one of them made a brilliant match. Four of the seven followed a path to the North; two of the four married millionaires."[69]

The renewed conservatism of Richmond society was evident not only in the continued glorification of southern womanhood but also in the hatred of Republicans, in the emigration of Richmond blacks, and in the absence of new blood—whether immigrant or Yankee. The atmosphere was changing, Richmond was becoming more like a city of the Old South than of the New. Richmond had failed to become a modern metropolis, and white Richmonders increasingly turned to the only thing that was unique to the city, its past.[70]

Chief among the conservative trends that developed in the 1880s was the cult of the Lost Cause. In the 1860s and 1870s Richmonders had been too poor and too busy recovering from the war and Reconstruction to celebrate their Confederate experience. They were unable even to care properly for the graves of Confederate dead in Hollywood and Oakwood cemeteries. Expensive monuments and elaborate parades during the depression of the 1870s had been out of the question. The statue of Stonewall Jackson that was erected in Capitol Square in 1875 was gratefully accepted by Richmond's whites, but it had been paid for by English gentlemen.

With the return of prosperity in the 1880s Confederate reunions increased in frequency and popularity. The generation gap that had separated old city politicians and young veterans during Reconstruction had diminished. Civil War soldiers, in their forties or older, were in their prime, holding positions of power in business and government. They liked to read about the South's heroes, who were being glorified in books and articles. The movement gained strength after the death of Jefferson Davis in December 1889. The city school board had acquired the Davis mansion in 1870 from a council that had no use for Confederate relics. After using and abusing the building for twenty years, the board proposed to raze the structrue and build a new school on the site, rather than buy another piece of property. The growth of Confederate sentiment, bolstered by Davis's timely death, saved the building. Organizations of veterans and ladies prevented its destruction, and it was turned over to the Confederate Memorial Literary Society in the 1890s as a museum of the Lost Cause.[71]

In 1890 Richmonders erected an equestrian statue of Robert E. Lee, the first of many Confederate monuments in the city that were paid for by the people throughout the South. At the insistence of Governor Fitzhugh Lee, the French sculptor Jean Antonin Mercié enlarged his design to equal the size of the statue of Washington in Capitol Square. Locating a site for the monument was another problem. To the consternation of many, the Lee Monument Association eventually chose a cornfield west of the city limits, which fell within a district annexed in 1892. The statue, shipped from Paris addressed to "General Lee" (an irony noted by Richmonders) arrived on the R. F. & P., and was hauled from the Elba Station at Broad and Pine streets by thousands of Richmonders, just as Thomas Crawford's statue of Washington had been dragged from the dock at Rocketts to Capitol Square in 1857.[72]

When the monument was unveiled before a huge crowd in May 1890, it was found that Lee's head rose more than sixteen inches higher than Washington's. The antebellum statue celebrated a great, victorious American who was venerated as the nation's principal hero by citizens everywhere. The new and larger statue was a tribute to a great, defeated Virginian who had not yet joined the American pantheon. At the time, only southerners unreservedly admired the man who was smaller in some ways than Washington, and who had taken Washington as his own model and yet fought to destroy his hero's creation. The dedication ceremonies did not go unnoticed in the northern press. Many papers, particularly the Republican ones, thought the statue offensive, since it honored a "traitor." Some demanded that Congress prohibit the erection of any additional monuments to former Confederates, and the *Boston Transcript* voiced especially virulent criticisms because the thousands of Confederate flags used in the dedication ceremony had been made by a Massachusetts company.[73]

For some prominent Richmonders the Lee statue became the object of a peculiar practice that epitomized sentiment in the city. The noted schoolmaster W. Gordon McCabe walked to the site at four each afternoon, winter and summer, to salute the equestrian figure. He taught his son to do the same thing. Decades later, the biographer and newspaper editor Douglas Southall Freeman saluted the statue each day on his way to work. Lee would not have approved of this idolatry.

It was the loyalty to the old over the new that young novelist Ellen Glasgow, born in Richmond in 1874, found stifling. The readiness to sentimentalize the past impeded development in the arts as surely as it retarded economic, social, and political growth. With the exception of the automobile, a white or black Richmonder of the 1890s would not have felt himself a stranger in Richmond during the Progressive era, the 1920s, or even the 1930s. Changes were of degree not kind. Statues of J. E. B. Stuart and Jefferson Davis were unveiled in 1907, during a week-long Confederate reunion attended by eighteen thousand veterans. A statue of Stonewall Jackson was put up in 1919, followed by one of Matthew Fontaine Maury in 1929. Not until 1932 was the final Richmond reunion held, attended by two thousand Confederate veterans who marched in the "The Last Parade."[74]