

**THE POPULIST PARTY IN
FLORIDA**

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by
James Andrew Mead, III

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the
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This thesis was prepared under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor, Dr. Donald W. Curl, Department of History and has been approved by the members of his supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the College of Humanities and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis traces the history of the Populist Party in Florida from the first stirrings of agrarian discontent in that state to the election of 1896. The Independent movement, which was the antecedent to the Populist Party, is also dealt with. The political campaigns of 1892 and 1896 are especially stressed. Finally, some causes of the defeat of Populism are presented.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	vii
CHAPTER I: FARMER GRIEVANCES AND ATTEMPTED REMEDIES	1
CHAPTER II: INDEPENDENTISM: PRELUDE TO POPULISM	10
CHAPTER III: THE FLORIDA FARMER'S ALLIANCE	15
CHAPTER IV: Ocala: THE SEED IS PLANTED	21
CHAPTER V: THE PARTY IS BORN	28
CHAPTER VI: THE JACKSONVILLE CONVENTION OF 1892	42
CHAPTER VII: THE CONSERVATIVE PRESS AND THE CAMPAIGN	51
CHAPTER VIII: THE ELECTION OF 1896	67
CONCLUSIONS	81
APPENDIX A: THE Ocala DEMANDS, DECEMBER, 1890	84
APPENDIX B: ST. LOUIS PLATFORM, FEBRUARY, 1892	86
APPENDIX C: OMAHA PLATFORM, JULY, 1892	91
APPENDIX D: THE FLORIDA PEOPLE'S PARTY PLATFORM OF 1892	98
FOOTNOTES	101
BIBLIOGRAPHY	116

INTRODUCTION

The second half of the nineteenth century was characterized by great social and political upheavals in the United States. The agrarian sector of the nation was growing smaller and losing its grip on the powers that guided the nation's domestic and foreign affairs.

During the eighteen-nineties, the agrarian sector made one last desperate attempt to regain its lost position. Farmers from the West and South banded together to form a political organization known as the People's, or Populist party.

This thesis will trace the history of the Populist party in Florida from the beginning of agrarian unrest in that state until the election of 1896.

Chapter I

FARMER GRIEVANCES AND ATTEMPTED REMEDIES

The farmers have learned the secret that organization, unity of action, and continuity of purpose on their part, will in the end unite all sections, enrich all communities, and make every citizen equal before just laws. Nelson A. Dunning¹

The Populist movement in Florida had many similarities to the national movement, but it also contained some important differences. This thesis will trace the causes and development of the Florida Populist Party from the early farmer organizations to the end of the nineteenth century. To understand the motives that caused some Floridians to give up their old party allegiance, it is necessary to study the social and economic difficulties that the late nineteenth century Florida farmer faced.

As James O. Knauss pointed out, Florida may be divided into two almost equal agricultural sections. The half of the state north of a line drawn between the mouth of the Suwannee River on the Gulf of Mexico and Daytona Beach on the Atlantic Ocean is part of the South's great cotton belt. In the last decades of the nineteenth century this section faced severe economic difficulties due to declining world prices for cotton. The cotton problem led to the proliferation of mortgaged and abandoned farms in the South, and to the vicious crop lien system.²

Despite the falling cotton market, the southern farmer produced more almost every year. During the early eighties there was almost

uniform good weather throughout the South. This encouraged the farmer, and, hoping for an increase in cotton prices, he borrowed heavily during these years. In 1887 there was a severe drought, and the eastern monied interests began to call in even more mortgages.³

While there were fewer mortgaged farms in Florida than in the rest of the South, and the crop-lien system was minor, north Florida farmers were still affected by the decrease in cotton prices. At the end of the Civil War, the price of cotton had been high. After years of war and blockades, Florida farmers found that they could sell all the cotton that they could possibly grow for about fifty cents a bale. The farmers believed that King Cotton was their salvation, and they devoted all of their energies to its production. This overproduction, aided by monetary inflation, caused the market price of cotton to fall below the price of 1880. By 1894, the price had fallen to five cents a bale.⁴

Many Florida farmers began turning from cotton to tobacco because of the low price to the farmer. This change was to have later political significance.⁵

Between 1860 and 1890, the value of farms under cultivation in the United States nearly doubled. The value of southern farms, however, increased very little. With the exceptions of North Carolina, Texas, Arkansas, and Florida, southern farmland actually decreased in value during these years. Almost all of the increase in Florida during these decades was due to the large tracts of land brought under cultivation south of the Suwannee-Daytona line.⁶

The south Florida farmers, predominantly fruit growers, faced an entirely different set of problems from their north Florida counterparts.

The two main problems facing the south Florida fruit growers were getting their perishable produce to market, and attracting new settlers to the area.

In shipping fruit to northern markets, the farmer was usually at the mercy of the railroads. Most of the fruit grown in Florida was shipped to dealers in New York, Boston, and other northern cities. The trip to New York should have taken about sixty-seven hours with the railroad equipment of that time, but it often took up to eight days, during which time much of the fruit could spoil. A farmer complained in 1889 that "our fruit is given the same care as a bale of cotton or cordwood."⁷

Since the average Florida fruit grower could not travel to the north to transact business, he was often at the mercy of the buyer. The Florida Farmer and Fruit Grower, the state's leading agricultural newspaper, accused the northern buyer of receiving shipments of fruit and then reporting to the grower that they had not arrived.⁸

In 1873, the Florida Fruit Growers Association was organized by a group of farmers who hoped that collective action could solve some of their problems. A more sophisticated step was taken in 1885 when the Florida Fruit Exchange was founded. This organization sought to find more markets for fruit through the aid of northern commission merchants.⁹

Unfortunately this organization had only a limited effect on alleviating many of the grower's problems and by 1888 the Florida Farmer and Fruit Grower was urging farmers to form protective cooperatives.¹⁰

Such an organization was brought into existence the following year. In late July 1889, a movement began to establish a nationwide network of fruit growers and buyers. The specific purpose of this group was to

improve rail transportation. This organization, headed by Edward L. Goodsell of New York, was met with some animosity by Florida growers who feared it would mean northern domination. Goodsell went ahead with his plans, however, and on August 2, 1889, he met with a group of buyers and growers to form the Florida Orange Growers and Dealers Protective Association. Present at this meeting were representatives of Maxwell and Todd of New York and Snow and Company of Boston, W. D. Clark of Davidson and Company of Cincinnati; B. M. Baer of the Florida Fruit Exchange; Colonel M. R. Moran, former general superintendent of the Jacksonville, Tampa, and Key West Railroad; T. F. Huggins of Sanford, Florida; and Senator Austin S. Mann of Jacksonville. This organization proposed to eliminate the fruit spoilage problem by contracting with the Pennsylvania Railroad to run trains from Sanford to New York in seventy-two hours.¹¹

The following year, the organization developed a plan to insure more freedom for the fruit growers. The commission system of selling oranges was replaced by the auction system which was used by foreign growers. The objective of this plan was to control the trade by focusing sales in New York and Chicago. The plan replaced the competition among buyers with competition among sellers. The grower paid only a small commission, and this was to the Florida Fruit Exchange instead of to the buyer.¹²

These organizations had only limited success, as did the attempts to encourage immigration to south Florida. Although state and local officials encouraged immigration and advertised the advantages of the state at every opportunity, many south Florida farmers were not satisfied. The June Tropical Sun, the state's southernmost newspaper, warned in 1891 that legislators who did not support increased immigration were "not

likely to be returned" in the next election.¹³

The southern grower also tried to overcome his economic and immigration problems with the organization and the Indian River Agricultural and Immigration Society which later developed "natural and necessary offspring" such as the Indian River Orange Growers Association and the Lake Worth Pineapple Growers Association.¹⁴

Farmers in both north and south Florida felt threatened by the land speculator. Between 1866 and 1876 public lands in Florida as well as in the other states of the defeated Confederacy, had been reserved for sale to "loyal" homesteaders. This meant that only freemen and immigrants from the north could legally settle on public lands. When, after 1876, the land was opened to unrestricted sale, the land speculators moved quickly. Between 1876 and 1888, six northerners bought 64,243 acres of land in Florida, and twelve southerners bought 125,172 acres. The farmer also resented the sale and gifts of large tracts of land to the railroads. They overlooked the fact that these railroads often resold the land at reasonable rates in order to attract settlers and thereby create traffic along the lines.¹⁵

With all of his economic difficulties, the fruit grower in south Florida was probably better off than the cotton grower in the northern part of the state. Prior to 1860, the southern cotton farmer enjoyed a relatively high social as well as economic status. The plantation owners were the elite of southern society, and often wielded a considerable amount of local, state and even national political power. There was no well developed manufacturing or professional class in the south, and especially in Florida, to challenge their leadership.

By the 1880's the situation had changed drastically. Many of the ante-bellum farmers still had their land, but they had lost much of their social status and political power. The farmer generally controlled only those counties that had no large urban centers.¹⁶

Another factor that hurt the Florida cotton planter's feeling of self-esteem was the large number of Negroes who migrated to Florida after the Civil War. Between 1890 and 1900, the Negro to white ratio increased noticeably in Florida, while decreasing in several other southern states.¹⁷

The white cotton farmer still believed that he was racially superior to the ex-slave who was now an economic rival. The white farmer, even those who had lived in near poverty before the Civil War, began to create the myth that both he and the Negro had been more well off before 1860.

A writer in the Suwannee Review in 1894 claimed that:

These blacks are morally and intellectually inferior to their ante-bellum ancestors. All their old cheerful, happy nature, with its tinge of romance, has gone forever. The poverty and wretchedness of their present life has robbed it of all its beauty and interest, and the plantation negro of today is a mere object of pity.¹⁸

In Florida, the poor white farmer was referred to as a "cracker." His was the class hit hardest by falling cotton prices. He also had the most to fear from competition by Negro farmers. He thus formed the base of support for the Bourbon Democracy that sought to maintain the status quo in Florida after 1876. The poor white farmer lived at about the same level as the poor Negro farmer, but as a Republican politician noted, "it was a sentiment prevalent among the crackers, owing to their prejudice against the colored people, to hob-nob with the more educated

and cultivated class of whites."¹⁹

The north Florida farmers attempted to solve their social and economic problems in the same way as the south Florida farmer, they sought strength in numbers.

The Patrons of Husbandry, popularly known as the Grange, was founded in Florida in 1873. Soon there were over one hundred local Grange lodges. These local groups met in Monticello to form a State Grange, with B. F. Wardlaw as State Master. Like many members of the Grange, Wardlaw was a prominent man in his community. In 1874 he attended the annual meeting of the National Grange, where he played a prominent role. The Florida Grange was successful enough to establish its own newspaper, the Florida Agriculturist, with Charles Codrington as editor.²⁰

In 1874 the Grange began a campaign against produce and livestock thieves. Because so much cotton was stolen under the cover of darkness, the Grange convinced the state legislature to pass a bill in 1877 which forbade the selling of cotton between sunset and sunrise. The farmers found it more difficult to prevent the theft of hogs, cattle, and horses, and vigilante groups often provided the only solution.

The Grange attempted to help the condition of the farmer by eliminating the middleman. Unfortunately, mismanagement and financial abuses of some of these attempts tended to discredit the entire Grange. In 1875 the boldest of the Grange schemes, the Florida Cooperative Stock Company, was launched. This cooperative was established on the Rockdale Plan of paying patronage dividends. The company opened with the establishment of ten cooperative stores, but an average capital value of \$1,500 shows

that the idea never became very popular.²¹

Another reason that the cooperative failed was the bad business practices of the farmers who ran it. In his excellent study of the Grange, Solon Buck pointed out that the farmer of this era was used to living on an isolated farm, and had little experience in dealing with others. When their enterprises came into conflict with those of trained businessmen, the farmers lost. Another weakness that Buck saw was that the farmers had little foresight, that "they were unwilling to forego immediate and temporary gain for ultimate advantage."²²

The Grangers also advocated a number of somewhat reactionary policies. They opposed many internal improvements, such as river and harbor dredging, if the improvements did not directly benefit them. They looked upon almost all taxes and government expenditures as extravagances. The results of this narrow attitude were felt most heavily in the local educational systems.²³

Another major impediment to the continued success of the Grange was its liberal attitude toward women. They were allowed to participate in all Grange activity on an equal basis with men. The conservative Florida farmer viewed this policy with the same disdain that he would later have for female Populists such as Mrs. Lease.

Both the leaders of the Grange and its critics feared that the organization would turn into a political party. The Grange was opposed in principle to the practice of political activity. Its sole objectives were to protect property rights, replace cotton with diversified crops, eliminate the middleman in the buying and selling done by farmers, and to promote immigration into the state. The Grange began declining in

Florida and in the rest of the nation in the late seventies. By 1880 it had disappeared.²⁴

One more farm organization that appeared before the Farmer's Alliance bears mention. In March 1887, a series of local farmers' unions were begun in the northern tier of counties. In a few months farmers in at least twelve counties had formed unions. On October 11, representatives from the unions in Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Putnam, Levy, Duval, Citrus, and Baker counties met in Gainesville to form a state union. The representatives at this convention represented over 1700 members in thirty-five clubs. Robert F. Rogers was chosen president of the group. The Union was the last of the organizations that paved the way for more sophisticated agrarian protest by the Farmer's Alliance.²⁵

CHAPTER II

INDEPENDENTISM: PRELUDE TO POPULISM

I would as soon trust this government to the ignorant people as the educated....we shall rout the plundering Democrats from yonder Capital next November! - Frank Pope¹

While the farmers in Florida were first learning that there was strength in unity, a series of political developments were taking place in the state. These developments lead directly to the Independent movement of 1884, which was the forerunner to the state's Populist party.

Under the power and influence of Reconstruction Republicans, Florida normally Democratic, voted Republican in the elections of 1868 and 1872. But in 1876 the Democrats saw a glimmer of hope. The two parties were almost evenly divided in the number of votes that they hoped to control, and serious splits began to develop within the Republican ranks. The incumbent Republican Governor, Marcellus Lovejoy Stearns, realized that he was fighting for his and his party's political lives. Both sides engaged in physical, psychological and economic intimidation.²

The election results were so close that for weeks no one was sure who had won the gubernatorial seat and the state's electoral votes. It took a series of judicial actions to award the victory to the Democratic candidate, Drew. Though the state's electoral votes went to Hayes, there is ample evidence that they should have gone to Tilden, which would have given him the necessary majority to become president.³

Although local, state, and federal elections were relatively close

during the next few years, political control of the state had definitely been placed in the hands of the Bourbon Democracy.

After its victory in 1876, the Democratic party began to fall apart. William D. Bloxham, Secretary of State in the Drew administration, won the party's nomination for governor in 1880, and thereby alienated most of Drew's supporters. When Bloxham won and was inaugurated in January, 1881, the split became more pronounced. A Republican split developed at about the same time, when power-hungry carpetbaggers like ex-Governor Stearns were opposed by more responsible members of the party.⁴

A financial transaction took place during the Bloxham administration that led to an open revolt in the Democratic ranks. This transaction was the Disston land purchase.

In 1855 the Florida legislature approved a bill creating a committee to supervise all lands acquired by the state through the acts of Congress. The committee consisted of the governor and four other state officers. All money derived from the sale of these lands was put in an Internal Improvement Fund, to be used for no other purpose than such intended improvements as reclamation, drainage, and settlement of land. Soon the Fund was about \$1,000,000 in debt because of the policy of pledging land for internal improvement bonds.⁵

In June 1881, Governor Bloxham announced that an agreement had been reached between the state and Hamilton Disston, of Philadelphia, whereby the latter would buy 4,000,000 acres of "swamp land" for the price of twenty-five cents an acre. This purchase cleared the debt of the Internal Improvement Fund, and also spurred railroad and corporation growth in Florida as confidence in the state's economy increased.⁶

At the time, most of the state's newspapers heralded Bloxham for making the sale, although the Fernandina Mirror charged that all the land sold was not swampland. There were also numerous squatters who complained about being thrown off their land by the sale.⁷

By 1884 a groundswell of disapproval had developed against the sale. The Governor, it was charged, had cheated the small farmer in Florida by selling so much land to a wealthy northerner. Angered by the sale and by the already mentioned grievances against the railroads, many Democrats became disenchanted with their party.

On March 22, 1881, a group of Columbia County vegetable growers met to complain about unfair railroad rates. This meeting proved to be the antecedent to the Independent movement.

In eastern Florida, many Black voters, led by former Congressman Josiah T. Walls, grew increasingly disenchanted with the Republican Party, in which the great majority of Negroes resided. They had voted Republican for years but got nothing in return. These Negroes were unwilling to join the Democratic party, which refused to share offices with them. They saw only one chance as the 1884 election approached. This was the Independent movement. A small group of liberal white Republicans were also growing dissatisfied with their party, but they too refused to vote Democratic. The Independent movement seemed like their only way out.

The Independents met in Live Oak on June 18, 1884. This was very near ex-Governor Drew's home at Ellaville, and many of the disgruntled Democrats present hoped to draft him into their movement. They soon found that Drew would have nothing to do with the group, and settled

down to the business of nominating a slate.

The contest for the Independent gubernatorial nomination was between Senator Frank Pope and Senator David L. McKinnon. Pope was elected on the fourth ballot, with Jonathan C. Greely, a Republican banker from Jacksonville, chosen as the nominee for the lieutenant governor. The principle plan in the platform condemned the Disston land sale. The Bourbon Democracy was accused of being unduly in favor of railroads. The platform also supported better education, a free ballot, a local option law, and a railroad commission.⁸

The Democrats held their convention a few days later in Pensacola. Even though the Democracy had been partially united by the action of the bolters, there was still some dissension at the convention. Neither Drew nor Bloxham were nominated. After close balloting, General Edward A. Perry received the nomination.⁹

With two viable parties contesting state offices, the election of 1884 proved to be quite lively. Senator Pope had, in his acceptance speech, promised to "Tear the mask of Democracy from the equally hideous face of its twin brother Bourbonism." He began to stump the state, telling farmers that Florida land should be broken into small lots and sold to actual settlers at twenty-five to fifty cents an acre.¹⁰

In the midst of the campaign, there were rumors of an Independent-Republican fusion. Republican State Committee Chairman, Edward M. Cheney, soon dispersed these rumors. He stated that his party neither wanted nor needed to form coalitions with any other party. Cheney realized that the Republicans would probably not win in 1884, but hoped to hold the party together for another attempt in the next election.¹¹

The state's Democratic newspapers began a campaign of castigating the Independents. The Fernandina Mirror charged that the only beneficiaries of the movement would be the Republican party. The Tampa Tribune called Independentism "Republicanism with a thin veil." The Independents were also blasted by conservative Republicans, who often resorted to attacks on Pope's personal life.

By the November election, the Independents had lost some of their supporters, but the balloting was, nevertheless, amazingly close. Perry received 31,957 votes to 27,680 for Pope.¹²

W. T. Cash, in his History of the Democratic Party in Florida, contended that if the election had been held immediately after the Democratic convention, the Independents might well have carried the state. But as the campaign progressed, many voters began flocking back to their old party. The Independents were representative of a deep political unrest in Florida, but they could not convince a majority of the voters to give up their fear that an Independent victory would bring Republican and Negro control over the state.¹³

The Independent movement died after the 1884 election. Some of its foremost members, including Senator McKinnon, later became Populists. Many others, however, including Pope, returned to the Democratic party and helped form a liberal wing of that party under United States Senator Wilkinson Call.¹⁴

Many Florida farmers still had grievances, but they were left without any viable political recourse until the creation of the Florida People's Party in 1892.

Chapter III

THE FLORIDA FARMER'S ALLIANCE

It has been truly said that agriculture is the basis of all wealth....its prosperity means the betterment of all -- its decline means the decline of all. - Leonidas L. Polk¹

The National Farmer's Alliance and Industrial Union, more commonly known as the Southern Alliance, began in Texas about 1874 or 1875. The primary objectives of the Texas farmers who founded the organization was to promote cooperation among their fellow agrarians in such matters as catching horse thieves, rounding up stray cattle, enabling farmers to purchase supplies at lower rates through collective buying, and protecting small farmers from land sharks who had preyed upon them for decades.²

By 1878 the Alliance proved so popular in Texas that a State Alliance was formed, with W. C. Macure as its first president. By becoming involved in the Greenback controversy, however, the Alliance was almost killed in its infancy. This convinced many leaders of the movement that partisan politics must be avoided at all costs.³

Even before the creation of the State Alliance in Texas, W. C. Macure had been actively engaged in spreading the concept to other southern states. At a local alliance meeting on January 20, 1887, he had authored a resolution calling for all Texas local alliances to meet with the newly formed Louisiana Farmers Alliance to form a national organization. This meeting took place on January 27, 1887, and the

National Farmers Alliance and Cooperative Union of America was formed with Macure as its president.⁴

Macure had already begun screening trained men to organize Alliances in other states. These men were required to pass a rigid examination to prove that they were qualified to be "sent out among strangers, to propagate the work." Working without salary, agents received fees for organizing new alliances.

In the spring of 1887, Macure sent organizers into the states of Missouri, North Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Georgia, Tennessee, and Florida. Two organizers, Oswald Wilson and James B. Young, were sent to Florida.⁵

Both men arrived in June. Wilson settled in Marianna, in the heart of Florida's cotton belt. Young went farther south, to Citrus County, on the border that agriculturally divides the state. Each founded a sub-alliance on June 15, thus marking the beginning of extensive drive to organize Florida farmers.

On October 4, sixty-five sub-Alliances, with a membership of over 2,000, met at Marianna and formed the Florida Farmer's Alliance. The counties of Bradford, Calhoun, Gadsden, Jackson, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Walton, Washington, Holmes, Citrus, and Duval were represented. These are mostly northern counties. James O. Knauss proposed three reasons for this uneven distribution of sub-Alliances. First, the Alliance came from Texas, which had problems similar to north Florida. Second, ground had been broken in several northern counties by the local Unions, which were very similar to the Alliance. Third, Wilson was probably a better organizer than Young.

Oswald Wilson was the prime mover of the Florida Alliance during its early years, and was chosen as the organization's first president. He was only twenty-eight years old at the time of his election, but had already been involved in Alliance activity for several years, having been closely associated with the Texas Alliance from its inception. Wilson was a man who possessed not only youth and enthusiasm, but also a thorough understanding of the problems that faced southern farmers during this period. His dogmatic fervor in striving to right the injustices to farmers sometimes made him seem like a rabid revolutionary to the conservative Democratic press of Florida. By 1890 he had left Florida to return to his native New York, where he became president of the National Farmers Exchange in that city.⁶

After the Marianna meeting, the Alliance moved forward at an even more rapid pace. By November, 1887, the sixty-five sub-alliances had increased to ninety-one. In January, 1888, it effected a consolidation with the 1,700 member Farmer's Union, after its president, Robert F. Rogers, declared that the two organizations had a common goal, and the Alliance had a national organization through which to work.

In March 1888, the Alliance formed a Farmer's Alliance Exchange in Jacksonville. The purpose of the Exchange was to

...conduct a general merchantile business...act as commission merchants or agents for the purchase and sale of all kinds of farm and orchard produce and general forwarding agents for all kinds of commodities....to erect, manage, and operate warehouses, stock yards, cotton yards, and packing establishments....to manufacture guano and other fertilizers.⁷

The Exchange proved to be a great disappointment for the Alliance. Soon after it began, a yellow fever epidemic broke out in Jacksonville, and the city was placed under quarantine. The leaders of the Alliance in Florida blamed the quarantine on the poor business done by the Alliance, but the National Economist reported that the greatest obstacle to the functioning of the Florida Exchange was "the lack of knowledge on the part of the membership of all business principles and just what the Alliance is and what it will do for them." Alliance leaders tried to overcome this handicap by sending lecturers into the field in order that "every man, woman and child...be given true Alliance doctrines." But their efforts failed.⁸

Despite the economic failure of the Exchange, the Florida Alliance continued to grow. By 1890 there were sub-alliances in every county except Franklin, Dade, Lee, and Monroe. Moreover, the Alliance controlled about half the voting population of the state. In the state Democratic convention of that year, Alliance men were in the majority, and the Democratic platform supported many Alliance principles.⁹

The Alliance had always strived to stay out of partisan politics, but this task became more difficult as the last decade of the century approached. Its official documents stressed that it was an organization composed solely of farmers, and went so far as to declare:

No person who is engaged in any business that does not harmonize with and operate as an auxillary to farming, is eligible to membership; therefore, those who are engaged in merchandising and farming together, or any kind of brokerage, banking, law, or commission business, will debar those engaged in the same from admission.¹⁰

The Alliance program had two parts. First, that the farmers should be taught to help themselves. Second, that this self-help should be complemented by state legislation. The second part of this program almost demanded that the Alliance engage in some type of political activity. It was this second part that led to the death of the Farmer's Alliance in Florida, and the birth of the state's Populist Party.¹¹

The transformation of the Alliance into a political organization was not an easy one. In the state Alliance election of 1889, Robert F. Rogers, former head of the Farmer's Union, gained the presidency. He narrowly defeated the radical Senator Mann for the office. Roberts was the last conservative to hold an important post in the Alliance. His secretary, A. P. Baskin, represented the radical west Florida wing of the Alliance, and he constantly endeavored to push Rogers into taking stands on major political issues.¹²

At the third annual meeting of the Alliance, held in January 1890, Rogers managed to have passed one last conservative resolution, that "no official of the Supreme Council....shall hold, accept, or solicit a nomination for any political office....during his term of office in the Alliance." This meeting marked the last time that it could be said that the Florida Alliance was trying "in a quiet unobtrusive way to gain its ends through the Democracy."¹³

After this meeting, the Alliance drift into politics increased. Alliance members began to threaten the Legislature and when that failed, they elected their own candidates.

For some unexplainable reason, no important member of the radical West Florida wing of the Alliance was elected to an important office at

the State Alliance meeting of January 1891. But after that meeting, the Alliance began to break up. Conservatives began dropping out of the organization, and West Floridians took their place. Perhaps if a compromise could have been reached between these two groups, the Alliance might have survived, but the annual meeting of the Southern Alliance held in Ocala in 1890 had ended all hope that the two factions could co-exist.¹⁴

Chapter IV

OCALA: THE SEED IS PLANTED

It is as needless as it would be criminal to attempt to disguise the fact that as an organization we have reached a critical point in our existence. Insidious and powerful influences are seeking to divert us from the high purposes and grand objectives for which we were organized.¹

As early as 1889, splits began to develop in the Farmer's Alliance. Soon after Roger's hard fought contest for the presidency of the Florida Alliance, he attended a meeting of the Northern and Southern Alliances at St. Louis. Although a hoped for consolidation of the Alliances failed to materialize, there was much exchange of thought between the delegates of the two Alliances. The radical members of both organizations used the meeting to propagandize their views.²

Florida was represented at St. Louis by Austin Mann, H. C. Randall, Oswald Wilson, and Rogers. Rogers was the only conservative member of the organization, and was shocked by the radicals that he encountered. He later said that the "....populist sentiment of Weaver of Iowa, Cobb of Alabama, Livingston [of] Georgia, Wardell of S. Dakota, Mrs. Lease of Kansas, and others was loudly proclaimed."³

As the St. Louis meeting neared its end, delegates from various states began vying for the honor of hosting the next Alliance convention. Pittsburgh, Richmond, Nashville, and Houston were all suggested and rejected. Finally, the Florida delegates suggested Jacksonville, and, to their surprise, it was accepted.

Problems arose when Jacksonville was unwilling to raise enough money to satisfy the Alliance. It appeared for a time that Florida would lose the convention altogether, but, in the words of Alliance historian, Nelson A. Dunning:

Taking advantage of [Jacksonville's] apathy, the bright little town of Ocala, many miles in the interior, made such flattering propositions that the executive committee changed the place of the meeting.

On the urging of Rogers, John F. Dunn, president of the Merchant's National Bank of Ocala, pledged \$5,000 toward securing the convention. The city of Ocala agreed to match that amount, and to allow free use of its Semi-Tropical Exposition Building. With these and other inducements the Ocala bid was worth about \$15,000. The townspeople of Ocala soon became very excited about playing host to such a large convention. The Ocala Banner proclaimed: "All eyes are turned to Ocala. Ocala's supreme moment has come and we must be equal to the occasion."⁴

State officials in Florida also saw the advantage that could be derived by hosting such a convention. The meeting would undoubtedly bring much publicity to the state, and, hopefully, many new settlers. Governor Francis P. Fleming commented that the convention "...will prove a potent factor in the cause of immigration and a permanent benefit to the State." The Florida legislature also offered inducements to bring the meeting to Florida. State funds were appropriated for such things as hiring a photographer to furnish pictures of the state to be displayed at the convention.⁵

Although the Ocala convention would result in a further split in

Florida Alliance, it was viewed in early 1890 as a means by which to unify the organization. Florida Alliance leaders also hoped that publicity from the convention would encourage South Floridians to join the Alliance.⁶

As the convention's opening date of December 3 approached, national attention focused on the several questions that would be considered by the delegates. At the St. Louis meeting, the Sub-Treasury plan had been proposed by Macure and others, but not passed by the delegates. It would be brought up again at Ocala. Another important question concerned a possible farm-labor coalition. Representatives from the Knights of Labor had been invited to attend the convention, and there was speculation that the organizations would consolidate.⁷

The most important question to be settled was over control of the convention. A battle between the radical and conservative elements of the Alliance could no longer be postponed.

The presidency of the Southern Alliance was held by Leonidas LaFayette Polk, who was elected in 1889. Polk was a moderate, but was not completely adverse to the idea of a third party to solve the farmers' problems. Shortly before the Ocala convention opened, he hinted that the Alliance might be forced into a more radical stance. "Congress must come closer to the people," he warned, "or the people will get closer to Congress." Macure was slightly more radical than Polk. He felt that a national third party was already needed, but like Polk, did not want to see the Alliance itself transformed into a political organization. Macure realized that most Southern farmers were not ready to bolt the Democratic party. He favored a propaganda program to convince them that their needs could

best be met through a new party.

There were other, far more radical, delegates to the convention. The leaders of the radical wing were mostly from Kansas. John Davis, Cuthbert, Herry, and Leo Vincint, and John H. Rice had agitated for political action in Kansas and hoped to spread their ideas to other Alliancemen in Ocala. Terrance V. Powderly, General Master Workman [president] of the Knights of Labor, and Ralph Beaumont, National Lecturer for that group, were also counted in the radical camp.⁸

On December 2, 1890, after months of speculation on how the political question would be settled, the Ocala convention was finally begun. One of the first addresses made was by President Polk. He carefully outlined the purposes of the Alliance in a very long speech. After telling of the conditions that caused the farmers severe economic hardship in the past years, he castigated the two major political parties for failing to come to the aid of the agrarian class.

Polk believed that the farmers' problems could be solved by economic reform. He told the assembled delegates that:

The great absorbing question....before the American people, is not whether the Democratic or Republican party, with their evident subserviency to the will of corporate and money power, shall be in the ascendancy; but the question is, whether under our republican form of government the citizen or the dollar shall be sovereign.⁹

He ended his speech by calling for a series of reforms that would come to be called the "Ocala Demands." (See Appendix A) These demands included:

1. Abolition of national banks and institution of a Sub-Treasury.

2. Laws ending the dealing in futures in agricultural products.
3. Free and unlimited coinage of silver.
4. Laws prohibiting ownership of land by foreigners and railroads.
5.
 - a. Government should favor no one industry over another.
 - b. Tariff reduction
 - c. "Just and equitable" income tax.
 - d. Reduction of government expenditures.
6. Government control, and, if necessary, ownership of public communication and transportation.
7. Direct election of United States Senators.¹⁰

These demands, although more extreme than anything that the Alliance had yet called for, did not satisfy the radicals. They drew up a call for a third party which was circulated among the delegates in Ocala. The call read:

Whereas in Unity there is strength, therefore it is desirable that there should be a union of all the variously named organizations that stand on common ground to this end. Each state to send one delegate. Each district to send one delegate at large, and each district organization to send not less than one to be chosen according to the customs of each representative organization in the month of January, 1891. Also that the editor of each newspaper is hereby invited as a delegate, that has advocated the principles of the St. Louis agreement and supported the Alliance candidates in 1890, the delegates to meet in Cincinnati, Ohio, February 23, 1891, at 2 P.M., for the purpose of forming a National Party based upon the fundamental ideas of finance, transportation, labor, and land, and in furtherance of the work already begun by those organizations and preparatory for a united struggle for the country and home in the great political conflict now pending, that they must decide who in this country is sovereign; the citizen or the dollar.¹¹

Although the Kansans, who had authored the call, used a part of Polk's speech in the document, the Alliance president felt that he could not sign it. When the call was brought before the convention, it was rejected as being too radical. On December 4, Macure presented a resolution calling for a third party conference for February, 1892. The resolution passed. Thus the Alliance was able to go on record in favor of a third party while waiting to see what the two major parties would do before the 1892 election.

The radicals were furious. They had been out-maneuvered by Macure. One of the radicals warned:

....we can't afford to wait for the action of the Alliance in 1892. They are going to see what one or the other of the great political parties is going to do for them. We haven't so much faith as they have. Their policy is too slow for us. We are not going to be held back by conservatism any longer.¹¹

The radicals held their own meeting in Cincinnati in 1891. At this meeting, the national People's party was created. A large part of the membership of the Alliance participated in this conference and went into the new party. The radicals were, therefore, the real winners at Ocala.

The Ocala convention had a lasting effect on the Florida Farmer's Alliance. Besides being associated with the radicals from Kansas and the Knights of Labor, the people of the state also played host to such important people as Henry George, editor of the New York Standard, and author of Progress and Poverty; W. Scott Morgan, editor of the National Economist, and author of The History of the Wheel and Alliance; Nelson A. Dunning, editor of the National Economist, and F. W. Hawthorne,

editor of the Florida Times-Union.¹³

These men carried the ideas of the delegates and the Ocala demands home with them, and the news of an impending third party was heard throughout Florida and the nation. Hawthorne, commenting on the third party agitation, said that there had been "talk of it everywhere outside the Alliance Hall."¹⁴

The Ocala convention placed the radical element of the Florida Alliance in firm control of the organization. The Florida delegation to the convention was composed almost completely of radicals, with the exception of Rogers. Rogers was soon out of power, however, when in 1891 he was replaced as president by Alonzo Baskin. The other two delegates from Florida, S. S. Harvey and Thomas Hinds, were later active in the Populist party.

The Ocala convention sounded the death blow for the Florida Alliance. Many Alliancemen either felt that the convention had done too much or too little. The radicals, even though they gained control of the organization, still felt the need for a third party. The conservatives began to drop out. Only two months after the convention ended the Sarasota Alliance dissolved itself because it could not endorse the Ocala demands.¹⁵

The convention occurred too late to affect Florida politics in 1890. But by 1892, the radicals were prepared to make the Alliance do their bidding. Rogers, who realized that he had lost his fight to keep the Alliance out of politics, commented on the radicalization of the Alliance: "That finished the influence and organization of the Farmer's Alliance in Florida. I did not go off with the populists, I never voted the ticket in my life."¹⁶

Chapter V

THE PARTY IS BORN

The farmers and laboring men have been educating themselves. They will go through the state and address the people. - Alonzo P. Baskin¹

Early in 1892, it became apparent that the state and local elections of that year would be lively if the Farmers' Alliance demands were not met by the democratic party. As early as January speculation began as to who would be the Democratic gubernatorial nominee. Judge Henry Mitchell, a conservative Democrat, was the name most often mentioned. Liberal elements of the party began a campaign to secure a candidate more to their liking. It was their belief that only a liberal candidate, in sympathy with the Ocala demands, could prevent a third party bolt.²

The liberal faction feared that a candidate like Mitchell would be nominated on the basis of his political influence, rather than because of his stand on the issues. The Florida Times-Union, spokesman for the liberal wing, repeatedly stressed in its editorials that all the possible nominees should speak out on the issues. On January 12, the newspaper's editor asked: "Who in the South—in Florida, for instance - ever heard of a democratic candidate campaign orator appealing to the intelligence of his hearers...?"³

On February 19, a group of disgruntled Democrats and Republicans met in Ocala. Very little is known of this meeting except that the groundwork was laid there for the Florida People's party. Though the

meeting was virtually ignored by the press, organizers were sent throughout the state to spread the news. The delegates decided to meet again in Ocala on June 1 to hold a party convention.⁴

Austin S. Mann, Alonzo P. Baskin, and S. S. Harvey were busy throughout the first half of 1892 in their attempts to radicalize the farmers. The ploy that they used most often was to spread discontent at meetings of the various farmer organizations in the state. On May 7, Harvey played an important part in the Florida Horticultural Society meeting in Ormond. There he stressed the need of farmers to band together to fight the forces that they believed were oppressing them.⁵

The largest and most successful of these meetings was the annual meeting of the Florida fruit growers at Gainesville on May 12-13. For two days the fruit growers met in the morning to hear speeches from Mann and Harvey. Then they met in secret all night conferences. The day after the meeting adjourned, the Florida Times-Union reported:

A second all night session was held last night, and probably all important business was transacted then. It is generally understood that the convention is a thin disguise for a third party movement, and it is hoped that some of the Farmers' Alliance might be attracted hereto; but the Farmers' Alliancemen are as solid as a stone wall for the democracy..."⁶

Despite the claims of the state's most important newspaper, some members of the Alliance were joining the new party. On May 8, about thirty Desoto county Alliancemen gathered in Arcadia to form a People's party. Those attending were mostly former Democrats, but a few dissatisfied Republicans were present. John W. Hendry, president of the county Alliance, was elected chairman of the meeting. W. H. Platt was

elected secretary, with William McGeehee as assistant secretary. The group endorsed the Ocala demands and the platform that the national People's party had drawn up in St. Louis. N. C. Platt, J. P. Childs, Wright Carlton, William McGeehee, John W. Hendry, D. D. Crews, and T. L. Bates were named as delegates to the state Populist convention in Ocala. The Florida Times-Union reported that the meeting was "harmonious," and "composed of good men."

The struggle between liberal and conservative Democrats and the forming of the new party dominated the political scene in Florida throughout the spring. The Republican party was virtually ignored. When, in April, the Republicans met in convention, there was little chance that they could elect a state ticket. The convention quickly adopted a platform castigating the Democrats and the eight-ballot box law. This law, passed by the legislature in 1889, required that separate ballots and ballot boxes be used for each of the eight state offices. Voters had to fill out each of the eight ballots, and place them in the appropriately marked box. Most of the Negro voters were Republican, and also illiterate, and the Democratic election officials refused to show them which box in which to place their ballots. The effect of this law was to virtually disenfranchise a large segment of the Republican vote.⁷

The Republican platform stated:

We denounce the Florida election laws as tyrannical in substance, and the methods and manner of carrying them into effect as infamous and equivocal to a total disenfranchisement of the total republican party of the state, and in the interest of good government and American manhood we demand the repeal of the present laws entire, and that just and equal rights be secured to all political parties in all elections.⁸

At the urging of Republican boss, Dennis Eagan, the delegates nominated no state ticket. Eagan had a dual motive: to further split the Democratic party, and to avoid inevitable defeat.⁹

Eagan's plan began to work very soon. With the Republican party out of the running, and the Populist party still in its infancy, liberal Democrats became more insistent that they elect a candidate to their liking. On May 3, the Taylor county Democratic party met in secret convention to name delegates to the Democratic convention to be held in Tampa in June. After the secret caucus, they met in open session and announced that three radicals would be sent to Tampa. These three were J. M. Jenkins, John F. McMullen, and K. M. Tedder.

On the same day, the Escambia county delegates announced that they would accept only a reform candidate for governor. A convention fight was shaping up that would aid the newly formed Populist party.¹⁰

When the Sumter county delegates arrived at Tampa for the convention, they made it clear that they would not support any candidate who did not endorse the Ocala demands and the St. Louis platform. Moreover, they warned that they would withdraw from the convention if their demands were not met.

The day before the convention opened also saw a caucus of radical Alliancemen. Forty of those present signed a resolution asking the convention to endorse the Ocala demands.

The next day, while the convention was in session, the Florida Times-Union interviewed a man described as "one of the most prominent Alliancemen in the state," who was a delegate at the convention. He explained that the fact that the Alliance favored the St. Louis platform

did not mean that they were necessarily Populists. He said that the Populist party at St. Louis merely "took up" the Ocala demands, "just as the democratic, republican, or any other party is at liberty to do." He then gave the Democracy an ultimatum:

All Alliancemen are essentially third-party men, on one condition, to wit: If the other political parties of the country refuse its demands to make equitable concessions, the alliance will be forced to appeal to the country in its own behalf. The salient features of Ocala platform will be presented to the convention for endorsement, and, if the democratic party in convention assembled does not make a just concession, there will be a third party in Florida, and the Alliance will welcome it. Some members will, of course, sever their connection with the order and vote with their old party, but the alliance as a body will go with the third party, if it cannot elsewhere gain its demands.¹²

The first problem confronting the Democrats in Tampa was the seating of delegates. Duval, Polk, Sumter, and Washington counties had sent both liberal and conservative sets of delegates to the convention. When the list of liberal Sumter county delegates was read to the convention, a man arose and claimed that all the men in that delegation had gone over to the Populist party. This and other challenges were referred to the credentials committee, which met until one o'clock next morning. This meeting was stormy and full of deals, and it was reported that "there seems to be the St. Louis platform in the whole affair and it is worrying all sides." The committee reported to the convention that the conservative delegates from each contested county would be seated. This action was based, according to the committee, on the pledges of several of the liberal delegates that they would not honor the conventions choice if it did not suit them.¹³

With this question settled, the convention took on a brief air of harmony, though there were still some liberals and radicals present. Judge Mitchell easily won the nomination, through a deal that would later be brought into the open. The other nominees were:

Secretary of State - John L. Crawford

Comptroller - William D. Bloxham

Attorney-General - William B. Lamar

State Treasurer - Clarence B. Collins

Superintendent of Public Instruction - William N. Sheats

Collins and Sheats were both Alliancemen, and were probably placed on the ticket to placate the Alliance. They were both conservatives, however, and unacceptable to the radical wing of the organization.¹⁴

The rift in the convention reopened when the platform committee retired to do its work. The majority of the members of the committee were conservative and designed the platform accordingly. The liberal minority, led by A. William Weeks, insisted that they be allowed to read their defeated platform to the convention even after it had been voted down. This minority platform would later be the platform of the Florida People's party, and years later, Weeks would be the standard bearer of that party.¹⁵

With its work completed, the Democratic convention adjourned. A group of Alliancemen remained in Tampa and met on June 4. They voiced their unhappiness at not having the minority platform accepted, and hinted that they might hold another convention to reconsider the platform. The meeting lasted until past midnight, with twenty-seven counties represented.

Baskin, Mann and Harvey guided the meeting. Also present were Senator Borden of the unseated Sumter delegation, and Weeks, who stated that the meeting "may or may not mean a third party." Those Alliancemen who favored the majority platform accused their brothers of bolting the party, and claimed that all those still in Tampa were only angry because they had not been nominated.¹⁶

Rumors began to spread on the streets of Tampa that an Independent candidate would be put in the field, supported by angry Democrats, Populists, and reform Republicans. The Florida Times-Union commented that such a combination might be "strong enough to elect their candidate, or at least give the democracy a hard fight."¹⁷

The Populist state convention, occurring simultaneously with the Tampa meeting, attracted very little attention. It was actually much less important to the future of the party than the events taking place at the Democratic convention, for the conservative stand taken by the Democracy at Tampa strengthened the Populist cause. Only nine counties were represented at Ocala. Otis Richardson of Levy county was elected chairman of the conclave, with R. W. Stoops of Walton county as secretary. The convention chose delegates to be sent to the national Populist convention to be held in Omaha in June (see Appendix C). The delegates named were T. J. Lloyd of Hernando, John W. Hendry of Desoto, F. H. Little of Marion, Henry Vantlatteu of Hernando, P. L. Jenkins of Volusia, W. R. Shields of Holmes, Richardson, and Stoops. Baskin and Mann nearly received enough votes to become delegates, even though they were in Tampa at the time as Democratic delegates. There is evidence, however, that both men were in close telegraphic contact with the leaders of the Ocala

meeting. After the delegates were chosen, the convention adjourned, planning to reconvene in August to name a state ticket and draw up a party platform.¹⁸

The majority of the conservative press in Florida attempted to ignore both the Populist party and the rift in the Democratic party. The Tallahassee Weekly Floridian went so far as to call the Tampa convention a "genuine old fashioned love feast."¹⁹

Despite this treatment from the mass media, the split within the Democratic ranks kept growing wider, and the Populists profited from it. Throughout the state, the party was growing in strength. On May 28 a group of farmers had gathered in Jasper to form a People's party and send delegates to the state convention. The unseated Sumter delegates returned home and began organizing the party in their county. They met with local Alliancemen on June 6 to map their strategy. On June 11, the Levy county Populists announced that they would meet in Bronson on June 18 to nominate a full county ticket. A Florida Times-Union correspondent in Bronson reported that a great many voters in the county were "on the fence," and would vote for the candidate rather than the party. The correspondent speculated that if the Populists nominated "the right men," they might carry the county.

On June 14, the political scene in Florida became even more complicated when the Prohibition party met in convention in Palatka. They nominated no ticket at this meeting, but adopted a party platform. The platform was remarkably similar to the Ocala demands and St. Louis platform. Various planks called for circulation of gold and silver treasury notes without the interference of national banks, government control of

railroad, curbs on speculation in stocks, an independent agency to study tariff reform, and direct election of the president, vice-president and senators. The Florida Times-Union commented after the convention that 1892 was "undoubtedly an alliance-third-party year in Florida." The newspaper also suggested that liberal Alliancemen and Democrats who could not stay in the Democratic party might join the Prohibitionists.²¹

Judge Mitchell opened his campaign in Tampa on June 17 by addressing a meeting of Confederate veterans meeting in that city. He was, at the time, the only gubernatorial candidate in the field. He would soon have a rival, however, because the Populist nominating convention date had been moved up to July 20, and the party was still growing at a rapid rate. Thirty Volusia county Populists met in Deland on June 16 to organize their party. They nominated a full county ticket and named delegates to attend the state convention, which would be held in Jacksonville. Speculation began that all forty-five counties would be represented at the convention.²²

Alonzo Baskin, though still nominally in the Democratic party, began to drift closer to the new party. In late June he met in Jacksonville with other dissatisfied Democrats, or "kickers," to chart a course of action. Baskin claimed that the Alliance had not asked to have Collins and Sheats on the Democratic ticket, as had been rumored. He maintained that the only thing the Alliance had wanted was to have the Ocala demands and St. Louis platform endorsed. In an interview conducted during the Jacksonville meeting, Baskin gave his version of the events at Tampa:

On the night that Judge Mitchell was nominated a determined effort was made by us for an adjournment in order to secure the adoption of a platform before the nomination of a governor. The managers among the Mitchell following came to us and said "Let the nomination go on. The platform shall contain the St. Louis demands." They pledged their word of honor that such would be the case. The alliancemen were sold out...²³

A prominent Mitchell backer, George B. Wilson, denied that any deal had been made at the convention. Baskin's charge was bolstered, however, when W. B. Watson of Jacksonville, one of the conservative Duval county delegates at Tampa, admitted that he had been the one who carried the offer of a deal from the Mitchell men to Baskin and the liberals. The argument was continued until late July in the form of letters to the editors of state newspapers. Austin Mann and H. W. Long, chairman of the credentials committee at Tampa, also joined in the argument.²⁴

Baskin and Weeks agreed to meet again in Jacksonville to decide their political futures. The proposed date of their meeting was July 14, but they changed the date to July 20 to coincide with the Populist convention. By the end of June, Baskin moved more into the open with his Populist sentiments. On June 20 he met with the People's party executive committee in Ocala. He became the party's counsellor "by special invitation." On June 24, speaking before a group of farmers at Eureka, he took the inevitable step. After reiterating his charges of a double-cross at Tampa, Baskin announced that he would bolt the Democratic Party. The Bradford County Telegraph of Starke commented:

Mr. Baskin, president of the state alliance, has notified the public that he has severed his connection with the democratic party. Well, the democratic party can stand all such little things

as that, and feel it no more than the ox feels the weight of the fly perched on his horn; but what in thunder is going to become of Baskin?²⁵

Florida Populism at last had a leader of merit. There was even speculation that Baskin would be the national Populist party's vice-presidential nominee.

The conservative press began a campaign to ridicule and defame Baskin. The Tallahassee Weekly Floridian claimed that he had helped create a "committee to act with the national third party executive committee." The newspaper also charged that he had helped author the St. Louis Platform under the pseudonym of A. P. Parkson.²⁶

Despite attacks on Baskin and other leading Populists, the party continued to grow. In Liberty county, a group of farmers met in late June to organize a local People's party. Most of them were older men, and many had been involved in the Greenback and Independent movements.

On June 28, nearly 10,000 people gathered in front of the city's Fellowship Hall in Ocala for a giant political rally. T. W. Laine, who bolted the Democratic party along with Baskin, was the main speaker. Also present was S. S. Savage, president of the Marion county Alliance and a prominent Populist. These men claimed that a full three-fourths of the crowd were Populists. Refreshments were sold at the rally to send Benjamin Freymouth, a delegate-at-large from Marion county, to the Omaha convention.²⁷

Populists were also organizing in Levy and Alachua counties. In the latter, a correspondent reported that "the woods are full of disgruntled grangers and lively times are anticipated next fall." On July 9 a

Populist party local chapter was officially inaugurated in Ocala, the birthplace of the movement.²⁸

The young party had setbacks as well as advances. At a Bradford county Alliance meeting, a manifesto sent by Baskin and Weeks was read to the assembled farmers. The manifesto called on the Alliance to join in the third party. The paper was met with hostility, and condemned by the Bradford Alliance. The president of the group said that it "....endorses a platform that places its adherents in line with communism besides which the rankest republicanism is more respectable and much preferable." The Bradford County Telegraph reported the incident, and commented that "our good citizens are not going to be led by ex-republican leaders to any large extent," although both Baskin and Weeks had been Democrats prior to their bolt.²⁹

Another setback to the Populists occurred in Sumter county that would re-occur across the state as the election drew nearer. The Sumter county Populists were among the first to organize after the Tampa and Ocala conventions. It appeared in early June that the party would sweep the county. By mid July, however, the Populists could count on only about one-half of the county's votes. Apparently many people who joined the new party soon became either disillusioned or felt the need to return to their old, more stable party.³⁰

As the Populist convention drew nearer, both the Democrats and the Populists increased their efforts to win the approval of the masses. When a massive Populist rally to choose delegates to the Jacksonville convention was held at Lake Butler, the Bradford County Telegraph charged that most of those present were not Populists but merely "sight-seers and onlookers." Editorializing about the meeting, the editor said:

....the democratic air of Bradford county is so pure that no bolter can breathe it and live (politically)Judge Cessna [a Republican turned Populist] was there, an associate of that infamous rascal Oswald Wilson; he may be an innocent man but he was in mighty bad company; in fact, if our farming friends will take a square look at the leaders of this movement, they will find that they are all men who live by the sweat of their ingenuity instead of the face, and that the horny hand with which they toil is swung to some other person's shoulder.³¹

In the final days before the convention in Jacksonville, Populist activity reached a fever pitch. On July 15, Washington county Populists met in Vernon and named six delegates to the convention. William Weeks, now definitely in the Populist party, was among the delegates named. On July 16, a group of Hernando county Populists met in Brooksville to name eight delegates to Jacksonville. A correspondent present at the meeting reported that "....the people's party is...growing rapidly in Hernando county."

On the same day, Pasco county Populists met in San Antonio and nominated a full county ticket. The correspondent present at that meeting commented: "The leaders of the new party claim a decided majority of the voters, and the nominees of the democratic ticket are said to be correspondingly unhappy."³²

Also that day, Marion county Populists gathered in the Ocala Courthouse. There were eighty-four people present. Baskin, who lived in nearby Anthony, was elected chairman of the meeting. J. B. Sutton, editor of the Populist oriented Ocala Demands, was elected to the post of secretary. The meeting was composed of some of the most prominent and successful farmers in the county. Nine of them had been former members of the Marion county Democratic executive committee. No Negro

delegates were present, which was unusual for a Populist gathering. The farmers denounced the eight-ballot box law, and by resolution announced that they would not be frightened by the force bill or the "nigger bugaboo." Thirty-eight delegates were chosen to attend the Jacksonville meeting. The Ocala meeting then adjourned until August 28, when local candidates would be named.³³

On June 18, thirty-eight Desoto county Populists met in Arcadia. There were a few prominent ex-Republicans in attendance, but the majority of those present were former Democrats. They nominated a county ticket composed of "many good men," and named seven delegates to the Jacksonville convention. Among those chosen was John W. Hendry, who had been present at the Omaha convention. The meeting also decided to meet with representatives from Manatee county to nominate a candidate for the state senate.³⁴

The Populists had proven adept at organizing on the local level. They then went to Jacksonville to name a state ticket and to determine whether or not they could put together a workable statewide party machine.

During the first half of 1892, a series of events had taken place that would alter the politics of the state for many years. The old Bourbon democracy finally had an effective challenger. The Populist party had captured the imagination of the Florida farmers with much more success than the Independent movement. Now the small farmer on his Florida farm was told that he was a part of an important agrarian revolution, and was made to feel, for perhaps the first time, that he could accomplish his goals.

Chapter VI

THE JACKSONVILLE CONVENTION OF 1892

This assembly will mark an era that has never
existed since the revolution....

- Otis Richardson¹

On July 19, Populist delegates from all over the state began gathering at Jacksonville. Editors Shields of the Alliance Farmer and Sutton of the Ocala Demands, two of the most prominent delegates present, were interviewed by the Florida Times-Union. They assured their interviewer that the Populist state convention was not a bluff to frighten the Democracy. They also made it clear that the convention would not be a rubber stamp. Sutton said that a ticket had already been planned, with Alonzo Baskin at its head, but that that ticket could be smashed.²

Two days before the convention opened, the Florida Times-Union received a letter from N. A. Patterson, a prominent Putnam county Democrat and Allianceman. Patterson warned that if Austin Mann received the Populist gubernatorial nomination, he would release information that would smear Mann. This letter probably had some effect on the delegates who had come to place Mann's name before the convention.³

At 10:30 Wednesday morning, July 20, the convention was called to order by Otis Richardson in the Sub-Tropical Building. He read the convention call, and noted that several labor organizations from Jacksonville and the rest of the state were present in the hall. At this first

session there were not more than 150 people in the hall. The counties not represented were Clay, Columbia, Dade, Franklin, Osceola, Polk, St. Johns, Suwanee, Jackson, Jefferson, LaFayette, Levy, Lee, Madison Monroe, Taylor and Wakulla. Many of these counties were represented later in the convention as more delegates arrived.

The first order of business was the creation of a temporary organization. Otis Richardson was chosen as the convention's temporary chairman, with William Weeks as its temporary secretary. Although there were no contesting delegations present, a credentials committee was organized to make a roll of the delegates. The members of the committee were: W. F. Hewitt, of Alahua county; J. L. Reed, of Baker county; William H. Pinholster, of Bradford county; H. V. Goss, of Brevard county; Judge W. K. Cessna, of Duval county; J. W. Putnam, of Hamilton county; James Ford, of Lake county; William J. Folks, of Marion county; J. B. Booth, of Nassau county; O. N. Williams, of Orange County; B. F. McGraw, of Putnam county; Charles Bevil, of Sumter county; James Robinson, of Citrus county; J. P. Child, of Desoto county; S. S. Harvey, of Escambia county; O. E. Higgins, of Hernando county; M. M. Carroll, of Holmes county; James Hughes, of Levy county; W. E. Stephens, of Manatee county; C. H. Blocker, of Pasco county; W. K. Coleson, of Santa Rosa county; James P. Land, of Walton county; William Weeks, of Washington county; and W. S. Summers, of Liberty county.

When the credentials committee retired to make its report, several informal speeches were made to the rest of the delegates. Thomas P. Lloyd was the first speaker. He told the delegates of his trip to the Omaha convention. He also slashed out at monopolies and "the laws

which foster them" Lloyd then said that he would follow an idiot as leader if he "had the cause tacked on his banner." He ended with an attempt at humor charging that the "dogmatic" Democratic party was "a damned sight more dog than matic."

After Lloyd finished speaking, there came cries from the delegates for Austin Mann to take the rostrum. Feeling that the time was not right, Mann only smiled and kept his seat. Several other delegates spoke, until a heavy rain which caused leaks in the roof forced the convention to recess until the afternoon.

When the convention reassembled, there were quite a few more delegates present. The first order of business was the presentation of the credentials committee report by S. S. Harvey. Otis Richardson and Harvey were then nominated for the post of permanent convention chairman. A roll call ballot was taken, and Harvey won, by a vote of 149 to eighty. A. T. Copenhagen was chosen as permanent secretary without opposition, with J. B. Booth as his assistant.

Judge Cessna moved that a Platform committee composed of one delegate from each county be chosen to form a platform and a set of resolutions to be ruled upon by the convention. Lloyd offered an amendment to the motion that the committee be required to incorporate the St. Louis platform into the present platform. After a few delegates objected to this amendment, it was withdrawn, and the motion passed.

The convention resolved to send its greetings to the Georgia Populist party, which was then in session. The committee on rules made its report, and speeches were made by Mann and Hendry. The convention then recessed until the evening session.

The convention reconvened at 8:30 Wednesday evening. Senator Borden, Chairman of the Platform and Resolutions Committee, announced that he was ready to make the committee's report. The platform called for a return to the principles of Jefferson, Jackson, and Calhoun. The other salient points were:

1. Endorsement of the Omaha platform.
2. Repeal of the poll tax and other unjust election laws, and adoption of the Australian ballot.
3. Local self-government and equal proportion of election supervisors.
4. Court settlement on any disputes between labor and capital which could not be settled by the parties involved.
5. Limits on the private remuneration that an elected official may receive.
6. Condemnation of the convict labor system.

The resolutions included:

1. A demand for a protective tariff be levied on all imports of oranges, cotton, and tobacco.
2. A demand for a bill to outlaw such organizations as the Pinkerton detectives.

During the reading of the platform and resolutions, almost every sentence was met with wild cheers from the delegates. After very little discussion they were adopted by a vote of 360 to three. (See Appendix D).

The next order of business was the nomination of presidential electors. The rules committee had decided that one elector would be

chosen from each of the two congressional districts, and two from the state at large. The only nominations made by the entire convention were two at large electors. Baker county nominated Weeks for the honor, and Lake county nominated Thomas Hind. Both men were chosen by acclamation. Weeks spoke to the convention, assuring it that he would cast his vote for Weaver and Field, the Populist presidential and vice-presidential nominees.

The convention then came to the most important nomination, that of governor. Alachua nominated John Hendry, and Baker county nominated Alonzo Baskin. In seconding Baskin's nomination, Judge Goss of Marion county said that every Negro in the state would support him. Almost every other county's delegation seconded Baskin's nomination, and Hendry withdrew his name from consideration. Sutton's conjecture that Baskin would be crushed proved wrong as he was nominated by acclamation, and given three rousing cheers. In his acceptance speech, Baskin said that he stood strongly behind every plank of the platform, and also the Omaha platform and Ocala demands. He admitted to have voted for the eight ballot box law when he was a state senator in 1889, but assured the delegates that he had seen the error of his ways. He called for a fair election and a fair count, espoused his belief in Jacksonian and Jeffersonian democracy, and charged the present Democracy with abandoning the principle which guaranteed "equal rights to all and special privileges to none." Baskin finished speaking at 1:20 A.M. and the convention recessed.⁴

At 9:00 Thursday morning, the convention reconvened. A roll call was taken to elect a state executive committee. Those chosen were J. J.

McDade, Weeks, T. J. Williams, S. S. Harvey, and J. P. Childs. Mann then moved that the convention ask Florida's representatives to do all in their power to collect the Indian war claims due Florida from the federal government. The motion was tabled because it was felt that the matter was too important to be entrusted to the present representatives. A resolution introduced by H. K. Colson endorsing Weaver and Fields was passed unanimously.

Nominations for Secretary of State being in order, Duval County, through Mann, nominated Alfred Montsalvatge of Key West. There were numerous seconds, and no opposition as he was approved. Alachua county nominated A. N. Chelf for state treasurer, and he too won without opposition.

The only real contest of the convention was over the nomination for superintendent of public instruction. Nassau county nominated H. C. Martin, who was Marion county's superintendent. Alachua county nominated O. N. Williams of Orange county. Since Williams was practically unknown, he was called upon to make a speech. He charged that the present school system favored schools in urban areas, while those in rural areas suffered. Martin spoke next, recounting his record of increasing the number of Marion county schools. He also attacked Sheats, the Democratic nominee for the office. After the speeches, Martin withdrew his name from consideration because the delegates seemed to favor Williams. Senator Borden's name was mentioned, but he declined the nomination. Williams was then nominated by acclamation. Daniel J. McKinnon was unanimously nominated for the Florida Supreme Court. John W. Hendry received the nomination for Commissioner of Agriculture. The

task of nominating an Attorney-General was referred to the executive committee because there were so few lawyers present who could qualify for the office.

On a special motion, J. L. Moore, president of the Colored Farmer's Alliance, was named to the executive committee. He made a short speech, pledging the votes of his fellow Black Alliantment to the Populist candidates.

As the convention ended, a motion was introduced thanking the hotels and railroads for reduced rates to delegates. This motion brought about a heated argument on the part of several delegates who said they did not believe the railroads had done anything to deserve thanks. The motion was amended to "thank the hotels for the reduced rates given, the railroads for the little that they have done, and the Lord for things not being worse."

Immediately after the convention ended, the two congressional districts met in different parts of the building. The convention of the First Congressional District elected John W. Hendry as its chairman and John H. Riley as secretary. The meeting lasted only one hour, a decision being made to meet again in Gainesville in September to choose a presidential elector and a candidate for Congress. S. S. Harvey, T. J. McDade, J. W. Weeks, T. J. Williams, and J. P. Childs were named to the district's executive committee.⁵

The delegates of the Second Congressional District elected Senator Borden as their chairman with W. H. Blue of Marion county as secretary. They immediately approved the convention's platform and resolutions. Several nominations were made for presidential elector, but after a

short fight, all but F. E. Hughes were withdrawn "in the interest of party harmony." Hughes was nominated by acclamation. The next order of business was the nomination of a candidate for Congress. Alachua county nominated W. T. Lane of Lake county. Baker county nominated Austin Mann. Both men received many seconds. A vote was taken, and Mann won by a large majority. Before the results were announced, Lake county moved to make his nomination unanimous, which was done with "wild enthusiasm." The matter of selecting an executive committee was left up to Mann, and the meeting was adjourned.

At 8:00 that night the delegates held a final rally in the Traveler's Hotel. All of the delegates still in the city gathered to hear a brass band and speeches. Baskin appeared on the hotel's veranda to make the first speech, and was greeted by much applause. He spoke for about one-half hour on the silver question, the state's newspapers, and the eight ballot box law. W. T. Lane and John W. Hendry followed and spoke on the same topics.

F. E. Hughes delivered a tirade against the railroads and corporations. Mann was the next speaker, followed by Weeks, who read a letter from Weaver expressing his hope that "no stone in Florida would be left unturned to secure the results desired." Otis Richardson traced the Populist party's history for the delegates, and Thomas Hind made a few short remarks before the rally ended.⁶

The Florida Times-Union commented rather favorably on the results of the convention when it said:

There are those among the ground-floor people's partyites participating in the recent state convention in this city who feel that the wire-pullers-

that is, the place hunting politicians - captured the body early in its deliberations. And so it looked from the start. But a glance at the ticket finally made up reveals the names of only two men who had heretofore figured in politics or public affairs to any extent. These two are Baskins [sic] and Mann....the others are men fresh from the people.⁷

The convention was either ignored or viewed with distain by many other newspapers. The Bradford County Telegraph said:

The mask is thrown off the people's party now. The assembling of the state convention of this party in Jacksonville the 20th of this month reveals the hideous republican features of its organization, and when the constituent elements of the party, and its principles, are considered, there can be no doubt that it is the same "old republican coon" that has been infesting the swamps of Florida for years past.⁸

Thus the Populist candidates received a taste of the hostility that they would be subjected to as the campaign began in earnest.

Chapter VII

THE CONSERVATIVE PRESS AND THE CAMPAIGN

There was a time in early August when I thought
our chances for carrying the State were good.
S. S. Harvey¹

Soon after the Jacksonville convention ended, the state executive committee met in the same city. S. S. Harvey was named chairman of the committee, and decided to use Ocala as his base of operations. Harvey was in good spirits, and thought, as the above quote indicates, that a well devised campaign would result in a Populist victory in October.²

Harvey had had a taste of the hatred that would be vented upon the Populists by the conservative press, but he was obviously not prepared for the constant attacks that they would receive in the months ahead. He had also not yet perceived the pattern of quick gains for the party followed by a decline that had begun in Sumter county.

This chapter will deal with the campaign conducted by the People's party in the election of 1892, and attempt to explain why its nominees made such a poor showing at the polls.

The Florida Times-Union, which had been at least fair to the Populists in the months before the Jacksonville convention, led off the campaign with an editorial asking Baskin to withdraw from the race. The newspaper's editor, still in the liberal Democratic camp, attempted to convince the bolters that Mitchell was a suitable candidate:

Judge Mitchell and Brother Baskin are both for the free coinage of silver. No contest there.

Brother Baskin and Judge Mitchell are both for the abolition of national banks. There's no fight on this question.

Judge Mitchell and Brother Baskin are both for government control of railroads. They can't quarrel on that issue.

What can Mitchell and Baskin find to fight against anyway, in case they should take the stump together? Baskin should quit.³

Heartened by the jubilant rally that ended the Jacksonville convention, the delegates went home and redoubled their efforts to attract the voters to their party. S. S. Harvey and the executive committee traveled to Anthony the night of July 23 to officially notify Baskin of his nomination. They brought a brass band with them and practically the entire town turned out to cheer the candidate. Anthony was, at this time, solidly in the Populist camp.⁴

On July 24, Weeks held a mass rally at Bristol. Almost 200 people in that city listened to his speech, and he made many converts to the cause. On July 26, another rally was held in Anthony. Harvey told the crowd that he hated to leave the Democratic party, but the financial and commercial troubles of the country had driven him into a more radical stand. Two days later, rallies and nominating conventions were held in Ocala and Brooksville, with impressive numbers of people present at both.⁵

The Populists were even so bold as to go into Citrus County, where the Alliance and the People's party had both fared very poorly. Baskin and Mann talked to the few Alliances in that county and when they left a People's party was formed.⁶

To offset these rapid successes, the Bourbon Democracy launched a

counterattack on a racial basis. In a letter to the editor of the Florida Times-Union, a man who identified himself only as "Caucasian" warned that a Populist victory in Florida would return the state to the Negro domination that it had experienced during reconstruction. "We trust....that all of Florida," he concluded, "will join us in this fight for democratic supremacy and a continuation of a white man's government."⁷

A few days later, a correspondent reported from Bronson that the People's party was rapidly losing strength in that city. The correspondent speculated that the appointment of the Negro, J. T. Wall, to the party's executive committee had caused a large number of Populists to return to the Democratic party.

The Populists came to be known in the conservative press as "nigger-worshipers," and the "nigger party." When Baskin and Mann participated in a political rally in the Bethel Church in Monticello, they were shouted down by cries of "Nigger! Nigger! Nigger!"⁸

On August 5, Baskin and Mann spoke at Live Oak. They drew a fair sized crowd, but the press reported that most of those present were merely curiosity seekers. As part of its campaign against the Populists, the Jasper News published a list of many third parties in the state and nation which had failed. This was calculated to convince Populists that their party too would go down in defeat. On August 6, Charles W. DaCosta, the editor of the Tallahassee Weekly Floridian, leveled a charge at the People's party that would be often repeated as the campaign progressed. He said that the party was "....the offspring of the republican party." The very idea that the Populists were in any way connected with the

party that had ruled Florida under the reconstruction government was enough to force many voters back into the Democratic party.⁹

Seeking some way to overcome the unfavorable reporting of the conservative press, the People's party tried to raise enough funds to begin its own newspaper in Ocala. The Ocala Demands, which had heretofore supported the party, had begun to move to the right, and the Populists were left without any organ to express their views. Populist J. D. Goss accused Sutton of the Demands of selling the party out. He called the newspaper a "demo-republican sheet," that refused to print "simon-pure" doctrine. Although the Populists talked of an official paper throughout the campaign, it never materialized.

The entire campaign was marked by advances and setbacks for the People's party. On August 8 Mann spoke to 200 Nassau county Populists in Callahan. He defied any Democrat present to "show one particle of the old Jeffersonian democracy in your rank." He also refuted charges by C. B. Collins that he had told a group of Negroes in a Jacksonville speech to "use your shotguns," if denied the vote again. Mann met with Baskin in Sanderson the following day. Over 200 people turned out to hear them. Correspondents covering both rallies reported that quite a few people who had come to the meetings undecided left as converts to Populism. The next day Baskin received word that nearly four-fifths of the voters of Levy county had turned out to vote in the Democratic primaries in that county.¹⁰

On August 11 Baskin, Mann, and Hughes spoke in Jasper in Levy county. Baskin accused Mitchell of being a "corporation lawyer." He said that he (Baskin) had not left the Democratic party, it had left him.

An observer noted that many people in the crowd seemed offended by the speech. The Populists had counted on converting some of the Alliance members of that county, but the observer commented that the Levy Alliance seemed to be "played out."

On August 12, Baskin and Mann were to speak at Inverness. For some unexplained reason, Mann did not make an appearance, and only eighty people turned out to hear Baskin. He told the group that he now knew he was wrong when he voted for the eight-ballot box law, but they seemed unimpressed. A third party barbecue in Live Oak failed to materialize on August 13 when too few people came, and Baskin and Mann failed to appear at a scheduled meeting in Madison. A Democrat in Madison, after making reference to the recent heavy rain in that area, speculated that the rain had "...drowned the whole third party -- the negro appendage and all."¹¹

The Populists lost all hope of luring moderate Alliancesmen into the party when Robert F. Rogers denounced Baskin. Rogers said that Baskin should resign from the presidency of the Alliance because he had misrepresented himself in order to gain election. Some government officials who had converted to the Populist party were also asked to resign their offices. Senator Borden told a rally at Sumterville that he had been asked to leave public office, but had refused to do so.¹²

In some parts of Florida, there were Democrats and Republicans who left their old parties but felt that they could not join the Populists. Such a group existed in Jackson county. They met in Marianna on August 22 and formed an Independent party. This party was only organized on the local level and only concerned with local issues, but it still meant

fewer votes for the Populists. An Independent party was also begun in St. John's county, again based only on local issues. The Populists had better luck in Suwannee county, where J. O. Famell was nominated for state Senator by "republican-third party-independent combine."¹³

Whether the Populist leaders were met by large crowds or small; whether they had victories or defeats, the conservative press kept hammering away. The Indian River Advocate, a Democratic paper, went so far as to urge the Republicans to nominate a candidate to run against Mann for Congress. Assuring its readers that Mann would lose the election, the newspaper contended that with a Republican in the race "Mann will hardly get a vote in the district." Shortly before this article appeared, the Washington Star and the New Orleans Times-Democrat quoted Mann as saying that his election to Congress was assured. The newspapers also reported that Mann had said that he had made a deal with the Republican party, and that he planned to receive all the Republican votes of the area -- black and white.

Rumors of a Populist-Republican deal were heard during the entire campaign. When the Gainesville Sun asked "Why don't Baskin and Mann deal some of their heavy blows at the robber tariff instead of exclusively pounding the democratic party?" the Florida Times-Union replied:

The fact is that they can't and keep their pledge to the republican party leaders. The deal that they have made compels them to keep silent on.... the tariff.¹⁴

As the campaign progressed, it became evident that there was some type of deal afoot. The Republican leaders were afraid that they would

lose federal patronage if the Populist electoral candidates won in Florida and cast their votes for Harrison. The Republicans were especially fearful that Thomas Hind, a former Republican and now Populist elector, would win in the election and deliver his vote to the Republican presidential nominee.

William D. Chipley, a prominent West Florida Democrat and railroad owner, secured low rates for those attending the meeting. Amid growing concern, they held a leadership conference in Jacksonville on September 5. Although no Republican ticket emerged as a result of this meeting, it became evident that the Democracy would welcome the Republicans into the contest.¹⁵

Although no actual fusion of the Populist and Republican parties took place, many Republicans wanted to see a Populist victory even at the expense of federal patronage. Before the Republican conference in Jacksonville, J. N. Stripling, a prominent Republican, made a tour of the state in an attempt to raise funds for the Populist campaign. Stripling approached the conference in Jacksonville and asked it to appropriate \$2,500 to finance the Populists, and was summarily turned down.¹⁶

S. S. Harvey tried to end the speculation that he was receiving Republican money by writing letters to the editors of several state newspapers, but he was unable to shake the rumor that the Republicans were lending some type of support. Part of this failure was caused by an accident in the mails. Republican boss Dennis Eagan received a letter from a prominent Tallahassee Negro asking Eagan to clarify his position on the third party. The letter went by mistake to a white

Democrat with the same name, who released the letter to the press. The letter said in part, "...when the republican can vote intelligently, best to vote for the candidates of the third party...."¹⁷

If these rumors of a fusion were not enough to unify the Democracy, a letter from Grover Cleveland finished the work. Cleveland wrote:

I am not entirely insensible to the danger which a fusion between the republican and the third party may present to the democratic success in your state, but the wisdom and patriotism of the Florida people lead me to the belief that the work and enthusiasm which the democracy intends to throw into the campaign will be sufficient to dispel all doubt as to the result.¹⁸

Another matter that caused the Populists some consternation was the matter of election supervisors. The election supervisors of each county were chosen by local officials, and, in 1892, they were almost exclusively Democratic. The Populists feared that they would be cheated out of victory by corrupt supervisors, and began a campaign to get equal representation on the election boards. When the Populists in Bronson circulated a petition asking that one of the three supervisors in their county be a member of the People's party, they were turned down by county officials. The Democratic officials rationalized their ruling by claiming that if they allowed the Populists to have a supervisor, then the Republican and Prohibitionists would want one also, and there would be no room left for the Democratic party. A similar petition was circulated in Alachua county, with exactly the same results. As a last resort, Austin Mann appealed to Governor Fleming to secure representation for the People's party. Fleming refused to consider the matter, saying that it was a problem to be solved on the local level. In Putnam county

the Populists were allowed to have a supervisor, in the hope that it would make them seem less of an underdog to the voters.¹⁹

While the Populists were engaged in these and other struggles, their campaign was faring poorly. Although Baskin, Mann, and Hughes spoke to a group of about 250 people in Jasper on August 18, the Jasper News reported that "...at least 200 of them were merely onlookers, 40 were misled, and 10 were insane." While this obviously prejudiced report was untrue, it nevertheless made the Populists appear ridiculous to many.²⁰

Thomas Hind addressed a group of Populists at Pine Level on August 20. The ex-Republican often let his radicalism carry him away, and a speech he delivered to the Populists of Manatee county that day proved no exception. He made many untrue allegations about the state of the national economy, and charged that the railroad corporations of Florida had been robbing the farmers of that state for over 100 years. Most of the people present were knowledgeable enough to realize that he was making untrue allegations, since the first Florida railroad was built in 1854. Thoughtless radicalism of this nature convinced many members of the People's party that they should return to their old parties.²¹

The race question once again came to the fore when Baskin spoke in Crawfordville. He was challenged by a man who asked why the People's party had a Negro on its executive committee. Baskin had attempted to conduct the campaign without alienating either race, but now he realized that he would have to take the most politically expedient stand. He replied:

The democrats call us the nigger party, but I want you to understand that there is no nigger in it --

that the nigger will have no show any more than anybody -- that we don't take any more stock in him than the democrats do.²²

The Populist leaders of Florida were forced, as Thomas Watson of Georgia would later be forced, to take a more conservative, and sometimes even reactionary, stand on the race question in order to woo the southern white voter.

The Bourbon Democracy had pushed the Populists into this stand, and even more was in store for the Populists. On August 26, United States Senator Wilkinson Call entered the political battle. Call was a very liberal Democrat, who favored many Populist principles, but was forced in this election to strike out against the People's party. Speaking at Bartow, Call "...gave the sore-headed democrats and third partyites sound democratic advise," when he urged them to support the nominees of the Tampa convention. In reporting the event, W. F. Stovall, editor of the Polk County Times, editorialized:

Ye men of Polk who have followed off this third party craze, have you weighed well the matter? Especially you who have always been good democrats. What can you hope from this third party move? It can never succeed in this State. Look around at the crowd you have gotten into. Don't you find there the old radical element, the green-backers and disorganizers generally? That crowd can never become popular in Polk County nor in the state. Come back friends are [sic] you do your country and your friends serious injury.²³

William N. Sheats, who was ostensibly placed on the Democratic ticket to placate the Alliance, also entered into the attack on the Populists. He charged that Baskin, Weeks, Mann, et al had "willfully"

conspired to deceive the Alliancemen and thereby bring them into the People's party. Sheats cited the meeting of fruit growers in May as an example of the conspiracy.²⁴

William Weeks was finally made a candidate when he was nominated for the office of state senator from Washington county. The convention that nominated him was described as "unruly and split," and there was evidence even before his nomination that the People's party was losing ground so rapidly in Washington county that he could not be elected.²⁵

On September 17, the National Economist, published in Washington, D. C. by the Southern Alliance, reported that

The only Southern States in which any political stir exists are those in which the People's party is an active and menacing factor, Georgia, South and North Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, Tennessee and even staid old Virginia.²⁶

The name of Florida on this list is conspicuous by its absence. The National Economist generally spoke for the Populist party in the South. For the newspaper to fail to acknowledge that the Florida Populists were an "active and menacing factor" was an indication of how badly the campaign was going for the Populists.

S. S. Harvey still had one hope that the voters of Florida could be persuaded to abandon their old parties. This hope rested on the planned visit to Florida by Populist presidential nominee, James B. Weaver. He arrived in Florida on September 17 with James Field, his vice-presidential candidate. From Pensacola, the two men drafted their acceptance of the People's party nomination. On a trip through Georgia before arriving in Florida, Weaver and his party received very hostile

treatment. Beside Field, he was traveling with Mrs. Weaver, Lee Crandall of the National Tribune, and Mrs. Mary Lease, the "Kansas Pythoness." They were constantly attacked by the conservative press of Georgia, and were met by hostile crowds at almost every stop. Mrs. Lease would later say that Weaver "...was made a regular walking omelet by the Southern chivalry of Georgia."²⁷

Weaver and his party did not receive any better treatment from the Florida press, but the crowds he drew were much more responsive. Field became ill before he made any speeches in Florida, and had to cancel the rest of the trip. The rest of the group arrived in Jacksonville on the night of September 18. The following afternoon, Weaver spoke to about 600 people in that city. He held forth on the topics of sectionalism and the end of the old parties. Mrs. Lease spoke next, after being introduced by S. S. Harvey as "...the great woman orator who, after making over a hundred speeches in Kansas, succeeded in defeating Senator Ingalls." She delivered such a moving speech that when she finished "...but few dry eyes were in the audience." Another rally that night attracted over 1,200 people, and the speeches were met with great applause.

The Florida Times-Union chose the occasion of Weaver's visit to Jacksonville to publish a "victory issue." The entire issue was dedicated to smearing Weaver, Baskin, and Mann. The Duval county Populists were so inspired by Weaver's visit that they finally put a county ticket into the field, but the move came too late. Weaver's trip was also too late. The farmers of Florida were returning to the Democratic party in droves. Many Negroes, who had supported the Populists early in the

campaign, had now seemed to have lost interest.²⁸

S.M. Sparkman, chairman of the Democratic state executive committee, predicted at this point that the Populists would receive only about 5,000 votes in the October election. He assured the Democracy that "the People's Party may get a half-dozen legislators and may carry a few county tickets, but the state is safe."²⁹

The Tallahassee Weekly Floridian happily reported Sparkman's statement and said:

Of what the result [of the election] will be, there remains not the question of a doubt. Virtually, there has been only one party in the field, for the following which the abortive efforts of the third party leaders have been able to concentrate, will not be large enough to endanger the democratic ticket to any degree.

The newspaper admitted that Austin Mann had at one point stood a chance of carrying the Second District, but the large migration of Democrats back to their old party had dashed his hopes of victory.³⁰

Although the Populists were beaten, the conservative press would still not relent. When Weaver left Jacksonville for a speaking engagement in Tampa, William Nigh the "Wire-Grass Philosopher" of the Polk County Times, commented:

...I see from the daily newspapers that old Weaver, the third party candidate for president, but better known as the great South hater, will make one of his political speeches in Tampa soon. I trust that the patriotic citizens of South Florida's metropolis will give him a good dose of soiled eggs. Southern people there who have the love of their country at heart, should rise up and not allow such a man to speak. No decent man will say such things as he has about the democratic party. If it was customary at the present time to use the whipping post as a mode of punishment, it would be fair and just to take him there.³¹

The Populist state candidates seemed after this to have given up the campaign. On September 29, the Populists of Nassau county put a ticket into the field, and held a rally to hear Baskin speak. He failed to appear. The next day he missed a small rally held in his honor at Hampton. The Florida campaign of 1892 had, in effect, ended, and the state waited to see how much power the Populists had been able to retain.³²

A few days before the election, Dennis Eagan issued a circular urging all Republicans in the state to vote for the Populist nominees. He admitted, however, that because of the eight-ballot box law, only 6,000 Republicans had bothered to register and pay their poll tax.³³

October 4 brought, predictably, a Democratic sweep. Mitchell got almost 25,000 votes to Baskin's 8,000. Baskin carried Baker, Calhoun, Liberty, Taylor, and Walton counties, and a tie vote was recorded in Washington county. These were, however, mostly small, rural counties, and his margins were not great in any of them. In Baskin's home town of Anthony, once a bastion of Populist strength, Baskin lost to Mitchell by a vote of forty-seven to forty-three.³⁴

In the local elections, the Populists fared little better. They won a few races in various counties, but scored impressive victories in only Baker and Taylor. As election returns came in, it became evident that the Populists had not been able to attract many Republicans. Many Negroes refrained from voting. The Tallahassee Weekly Floridian speculated that "...the intelligent portion [of the Negro voters have] learned that their interests are identified with those of the ruling white race." A more correct observation probably came from the New York Times, which

justified low Negro turnout on their resentment at being "delivered" to the Populists.³⁵

In an interview with the Washington Star, S. S. Harvey explained the defeat:

....I'm not going to cry "fraud." That's a chestnut. For five weeks past I haven't had any idea that we would carry the state, but, to tell the truth, I did think that we would get a bigger vote.... We had positive assurances [that we would get some election supervisors] from many of the Democratic leaders. If that program had been carried out, it would have encouraged our people to register and pay their poll taxes, but when they found out that the Democrats were going to keep the count strictly in their own hands, they lost interest and got discouraged. Now I'm not saying that the count was fraudulent, but the refusal to allow us to participate in it kept down our vote many thousands throughout the state.

When asked if Weaver's visit to Florida had helped or injured the Populists, Harvey answered: "Oh, it didn't injure it any. But I doubt it did much good. It was too late." Harvey assured his interviewer that the people's party had not yet given up hope on the Congressional race. He realized that the Populist ticket would not carry the state in November, but hoped to increase the number of votes received.

When Austin Mann and the Populist electors went down to defeat in November, the People's party was strangely silent. The leaders of the party began the hard task of determining what had gone wrong. Harvey once again blamed the poor showing on the absence of Populist election supervisors and the eight-ballot box law. There were unquestionably irregularities. The president of one of Florida's leading railroads, although he was a staunch Democrat, was so sickened by the corruption

by election officials that he wrote:

It is useless for my company to promote immigration to Florida any longer. All the great advantages of the country through which our line passes are offset by this abominable election. No Northern or Western man will bring his family here, especially his boys, to grow up where such a thing is looked upon as honorable. They absolutely refuse to live under a system which teaches personal truthfulness and strict integrity is business, but which winks at frauds in elections.... The system must be changed.³⁶

The election of 1892 in Florida shook up the Bourbon Democracy. Leading Democrats realized that they could no longer conduct campaigns by merely calling their opponents names.

Alonzo P. Baskin had been called "Anti-Progress," and "Almighty Presumptuous," and Austin S. Mann was referred to as "Ass" Mann. Sometimes the two men were lumped together with William Weeks and called "Baskin's Week Mann."³⁷

In the face of almost constant attacks and dishonesty, the People's party had presented a much more dangerous challenge to Florida's Bourbon Democracy than the Republicans had been able to do. Moreover, they had been able to build a workable party system on the local level that would last for several years. Unlike Frank Pope and the Independents, the Populists refused to give up their principles and return to their old parties. The Democratic party would be forced to contend with these radicals again in 1896.

Chapter VIII

THE ELECTION OF 1896

We have offered everything except our party organization in our efforts at a union of all the reform efforts. We have nothing more to offer. The country shall judge between us as to who has played the part of the patriot.

C. A. Post¹

The campaign of 1896 was as complicated as that of 1892 had been vicious. It was the last state election in Florida to be held separately from the national election in November, and the first election in Florida in which the Australian ballot was used.²

The election year began with a meeting of Republican leaders in Jacksonville. With the "fearfully and wonderfully made" eight-ballot box law now revoked, the Republican leadership felt that they once again could present an effective challenge to the Democracy. A few of those present favored a fusion with the People's party, but the majority were confident that they could conduct a viable campaign on their own. They met again on January 15, and Dennis Eagan announced that the Republican party would definitely nominate a state ticket to challenge the Democrats.³

As soon as the Republican bosses left Jacksonville, trouble began to develop within the party. E. R. Gunby, leader of the "lily-white" faction, informed Eagan that his followers had to be represented on any ticket that the party might nominate or they would bolt. Local Republicans in Duval and Leon Counties held separate conventions in early February, and the split in the party widened.⁴

There were also splits developing in the Democratic camp. In February, Fred E. Harris, Florida member of the Bimetallic Democratic National Committee, issued circulars in Ocala calling on silver Democrats to take control of their party before the fall elections. The circular said in part:

It is the purpose of this organization to secure a platform in harmony with these [free silver] principlesinasmuch as the present administration has opposed these policies.⁵

The Populists were also busy during the winter months. The first stirrings came from Washington county, when a group of Populists met in Vernon on February 1. This indication that the third party was still alive assured Florida of an exciting election year.⁶

By May, the state was assured of at least a three-way race when the Republican party began to make definite plans for a nominating convention. The "lily-white" faction met in Ocala at the end of that month to put a ticket into the field without any aid from the regular Republicans. They nominated E. R. Gunby of Tampa for the gubernatorial race, and drew up a party platform. They called for protection of industry, a larger army and navy, federal aid to education, and direct election of United States Senators. Only the latter seemed designed to woo disheartened Populists into the Republican ranks. Only one Negro participated in the convention, and the "lily-whites" made it clear that they would accept black support only on a white superiority basis.⁷

While the Republican party was going through these internal wars, the People's party was organizing across the state. Attention was soon turned from these two parties, however, as the Democrats met in Ocala

on June 16. The events at Ocala would determine the extent to which the Democratic party had been liberalized in the past four years.

The Democratic convention and the campaign of 1896 were influenced by outside factors to a greater extent than any election had been for the past twenty years. The major campaign issue was, superficially at least, between those who advocated a gold standard and those who favored the free coinage of silver. The Cleveland administration stood firmly behind gold, but there were rumblings from all corners of the national Democratic party for a silver platform. Liberal Democrats, especially in the Western states, were beginning to adopt Populist rhetoric in their speeches and writings.

This drama was played out on a smaller scale in Florida. Although the Florida Democratic party had advocated the free coinage of silver in their Tampa platform of 1892, the plank was never strenuously pushed. Feeling that the free coinage of silver would improve economic conditions in Florida, liberal elements of the party worked to make sure that the Florida Democracy made a real issue of the money question in the current election. The possibility of Republican opposition made them even more adamant.⁸

Florida Democrats also adopted much of the rhetoric fostered by such radical Western Populists as Ignatius ^DConnelly and "Sockless" Jerry Simpson. These men tended to view all the country's economic troubles as the result of a conspiracy between the Eastern monied classes and certain foreign Jewish bankers. The Ocala Banner, a staunch Democratic newspaper, moved clearly into the realm of Populist thought when it editorialized:

The Tory Hessins who managed the Massachusetts Republican convention under Rothschild's eastern general and dictator of the house of representatives defy the American people and mock at the calamities of a distressed country.⁹

Many of the delegates to the state Democratic convention in Ocala rejected this radical view. They were members of the party's old guard, and hoped to keep their party from going off on a radical tangent. Both Samuel Pasco and Wilkinson Call, Florida's United States Senators, had pleaded for free silver in the Senate, and the majority of Florida voters seemed to share their views. When the Democratic delegates finally assembled in Ocala, however, the gold men appeared to have the upper hand.

Ex-Governor William D. Bloxham, the man who had been responsible for the Disston land sale, was the conservatives' choice for the gubernatorial race. The silver faction of the party, led by the old Independent, Frank W. Pope, opposed Bloxham. Unfortunately, Pope's forces were too fragmented to present a real challenge. On the opening day of the convention, he challenged his fellow liberals:

Are you silver men in principle or as a mere matter of expediency? Will you stultify yourselves to vote for a gold-bug for governor....? Now is the time to stand together and stand firm.¹⁰

Pope and the silver advocates managed to have a platform drawn up that took a very strong stand on the money question, and requiring Florida's delegates to the national Democratic nominating convention to support a silver candidate. After a heated debate, a vote was taken and the result was 173 to 173. This tie vote caused the problem to be

rejected. A more conservative platform was then adopted. As a compromise measure, the convention sent four gold men and four silver men to the Chicago Democratic convention. The platform stated that the Florida Democracy would follow the lead of the national party on the money question.¹¹

This ambiguous stand by the Democrats caused a flurry of Populist activity across the state. On July 2, Clay county Populists met in Green Cove Springs to hold a nominating convention. Surprisingly, they endorsed two Republic nominees. The next day, Populists met in Middleburn and nominated a purely Populist slate. On July 5, a large Populist rally and barbecue were held in Palatka, and the Putnam county Populists made plans to nominate a full county slate.¹²

On July 7, the political picture in Florida became somewhat more complicated when the regular Republicans met in Ocala and nominated George B. Allen, a Key West banker, for governor. I. W. Purcell, a black Palatka lawyer was named chairman of the state committee. There were now three candidates running for the governor's seat, and the Populists hoped to profit from the splits in the two old parties.¹³

On July 9, Alonzo Baskin, William Folks, and S. S. Savage met with about 100 Populists in Ocala. They chose a set of delegates to represent Marion county in the Populist state convention to be held in Ocala on August 5. Baskin assured the group that the People's party could win the fall election if they received "....a fair ballot and an honest count."¹⁴

While the regular Republicans were meeting in Ocala, the national Democratic party was meeting in Chicago. William Jennings Bryan stampeded the convention with his "cross of gold" speech, and received the Democratic

nomination. Arthur Sewall, also a silverite, received the vice-presidential nomination. The silver wing of the Florida Democracy was jubilant. The old guard of the party began to talk openly of a split. Liberal Democrats hoped that placing their party squarely behind silver would simplify the campaign, making it a contest between silver Democrats and gold Republicans. B. B. Tatum, editor of the pro-silver Bartow Courier-Informant commented:

....we trust that there will be no other ticket in the field. The sound money men are talking about getting up an opposition ticket but we are opposed to the move and hopeful that the project will be abandoned. The Populists cannot consistently put a ticket in the field since the claims which they have advocated have been adopted by the democratic party. If they are true to their principles, and are not simply and purely after the spoils of office they will vote the democratic ticket and thus insure the success of their metal doctrines. The populists have nothing to sacrifice but a name....¹⁵

The People's party, however, refused to yield. On July 16 a group of Volusia county Populists met and nominated a county ticket. They overwhelmingly refused to endorse Bryan for the presidency. The next day, a huge political rally was held at the farm of Benjamin Freymouth, a Marion county Populist. Both Democratic and Populist speakers addressed the crowd. The Democratic speakers urged the Populists to return to their old party. Alonzo Baskin answered for the Populists, pointing out that in 1892 the members of his party had been called "cranks and fools" for supporting silver. He pointed out that the Democratic party had, in the past few years, voted against silver more times than for it. Baskin also declared that he would stay in "the middle of the road,"

that is, he would not allow the party to fuse with the Democracy.¹⁶

The leaders of the national People's party, meanwhile, had called a national nominating convention for July 22 in St. Louis. The majority of the delegates at that convention, including all seven of Florida's delegates, nominated William Jennings Bryan for the presidency. To avoid total fusion, Thomas Watson of Georgia was given the vice-presidential nomination.

The first occasion that the Florida Populist leadership had to express itself on this turn of events came on August 24. At a rally at Benjamin Freymouth's farm, Baskin and other Florida Populists had already gone on record as favoring Bryan, but they had objected to Sewell's candidacy. Thomas Watson was, however, completely acceptable.¹⁷

Most of the state's Populists seemed to feel that they could win quite a few county elections, run a close race in the state contest, and possibly send Bryan-Watson men to the electoral college.

The Populists of St. Johns county met on July 26 and issued a statement claiming that they would defeat both the Democratic and Republican party in the local election. They nominated a county slate, but decided not to announce the nominees until after the county Democratic convention to prevent a fusion. Populists were also active in Calhoun, Taylor, Washington, and Escambia counties.¹⁸

On July 30, William Bloxham declared himself completely in favor of free silver. Bloxham had been silent on the money question before his announcement, but was generally considered to be in the gold wing of the Democratic party. His swing to silver was probably caused by nomination of Bryan at the Chicago convention. This action caused some

Populists to return to the Democratic party, but the majority waited to see if the two national parties could come to some agreement of the vice-presidential nomination.¹⁹

Baskin and other "middle of the road" Populists were unaffected by Bloxham's statement, and continued to campaign against the Democracy. On July 31, Baskin debated Senator Call at a picnic in Blitchton. Once again, Baskin accused the Democratic party of "stealing thunder" from the People's party on the money question. Senator Call, in total agreement with Baskin on every point but this, defended his party.²⁰

The Populists were in high spirits when they met in state convention in Ocala on August 5. Only twenty-three counties were able to send delegates to Ocala, but many more were represented by proxy. They had held a conference the previous night to get a consensus of opinion on the issues to be decided at the convention. Rumors had spread before the conference that the Populists would endorse one or two of the Democratic nominees, but these rumors were quickly squelched by the "middle of the road" sentiment expressed at the conference.²¹

S. S. Harvey called the convention to order at 2:00 P.M., and Senator Borden was named chairman. Harvey moved that the platform committee be organized on the basis of one delegate from each county. The motion passed, the committee was chosen and retired to do their work. While they were out, "middle of the road" speeches were made by Thomas Hind, William Folks, and Alonzo Baskin. All three said that they would gladly accept Bryan if the national Democratic party would accept Watson.²²

W. R. Peterson was the next speaker. The Duval county radical

told the delegates that his county was unable to send more delegates to the convention because the country did not have a proper money medium. He advocated the use of force if the economic condition of the nation continued to suffer. In closing, Peterson predicted that if the People's party kept growing, it would soon be able to "bust up" the two major parties. After Peterson's speech, the state executive committee was named. The convention then adjourned for the day in order to allow the delegates from the two congressional districts to meet and organize.²³

When the convention reconvened the following morning, the delegates heard S. S. Harvey make a passionate nominating speech for William Weeks for governor. He was followed by S. S. Savage, who nominated Thomas Hind. Hind, realizing that Weeks was more popular with the delegates, withdrew his name.

When the nominations for Secretary of State were made, it appeared for a moment that at least a partial fusion might be achieved. S. S. Savage nominated Dr. John Crawford, the Democratic nominee for the office. Then J. T. Keller of Volusia county was nominated. A lively debate ensued until C. C. Post enjoined the delegates to "be consistent." Crawford was defeated by a vote of ninety-one to forty-one. Weeks and the rest of the candidates then were nominated by acclamation. The entire ticket was:

Governor - A. William Weeks

Secretary of State - J. T. Keller

Comptroller - P. W. Knapp

Treasurer - L. H. Calhoun

Attorney-General - Frank Harris

Supreme Court - D. L. McKinnon

Superintendent of Public Instruction - O. N. Williams

Commissioner of Agriculture - J. H. Richborg

Presidential electors: R. W. Storrs
C. C. Post
Alonzo Baskin
J. T. Hancock, Jr.

Congress, First District - J. A. Williams

Congress, Second District - W. R. Peterson

When the platform committee reported, it recommended that the convention demand that Sewell resign his nomination in favor of Watson. The resolution would replace Bryan with Colonel S. F. Norton of the Florida Populist ballot if Sewell did not resign within thirty days. S. S. Harvey spoke to the convention before the resolution was voted upon and told the delegates that if they were too "middle of the road", they might fall over backwards. The resolution was defeated and a milder one placed before the convention, which was passed. The second resolution said:

In accepting Bryan, the democratic nominee, the populist party has done all that reason and justice can demand. We desire a union of all reform forces for this and a failure by the democrats to withdraw Sewell and substitute Watson places the onus of possible defeat of the reform forces upon the democratic party and not upon the populist party.²⁴

After passing the resolution and completing other minor business, the convention adjourned. The "middle of the road" spirit that had dominated the convention was reinforced the following week in a speech by Baskin. He accused the Democratic party of Florida of favoring gold,

and said that they were controlled by corporations. He also directed attacks against Henry Flagler and Henry B. Plant, two of the state's leading railroad magnates. Baskin pledged that his party would not fuse with any other, and vote for Bryan and Watson in November.²⁵

Now that there was another party in the field, the Democratic leadership made attempts to unify their party behind the silver standard. They had only moderate success. In Duval county, a group of gold Democrats met and urged all Democrats with like sentiments to leave their party. They charged that "...The national credit and honor is at stake." A few days later, the Leesburg county gold Democrats officially broke with the regular party. On August 22, gold Democrats met in Lake City and Green Cove Springs.²⁶

On August 25, Florida's gold Democrats held a state convention in Jacksonville. Leaders of the gold faction were somewhat disappointed when only sixteen counties were represented. They had planned to nominate a state ticket, but had to settle for merely sending delegates to the national gold Democratic convention in Indianapolis. Before the convention ended, the bolters decided to meet again at an unspecified time to nominate presidential electors.²⁷

As the campaign of 1896 progressed and grew more complicated, the People's party began to lose strength. When a group of gold Democrats met in Key West, a correspondent reported that some of those present were ex-Populists. In Nassau county, the People's party endorsed several Democratic nominees in spite of the determination of the party's state leaders to remain independent.²⁸

By the end of August, the Democratic party had given up any hope

it might have had of wooing Populists into the party. At a DeFuniak Springs political meeting, William Sheats castigated the Populists as "...so-called Jeffersonian democrats." Bloxham also joined the attack. He realized that he could not win over the old Independents in the People's party, so he began to glorify his role in the Disston land sale.²⁹

Many Populists who were disenchanted with their party found themselves in a quandry. The Republican party was out of the question for most of them, and the Democratic party seemed not to want them anymore. Many of these men found refuge in the local Independent parties which were springing up across the state. On September 2, Independent parties were formed in Deland and Orlando. Both groups were composed of Republicans, Democrats, and Populists who were dissatisfied with their parties. They both nominated county tickets. The Orlando group named itself the Free Silver Democratic party, while the Deland group simply called themselves Independents.³⁰

On September 7, the People's party executive committee met in a secret conference in Ocala. Several rumors spread around Ocala while they met. One of these rumors was that the Populists would "pull down" several of their county candidates if the Democrats would "boost" William Folks, a Populist candidate for the legislature. Another rumor was that the executive committee was meeting to give Marion county Populists permission to fuse with the Republicans of that county. However much trust these rumors contained, nothing came of them. The animosity among the parties concerned had become so great that deals and fusions were out of the question.³¹

As the state campaign neared an end, a factor surfaced that had

received very little attention. Speaking to a rally in Braidentown, Democrat William Sheats said that the real issue of the campaign was not the money question at all, but the race question. He threatened that if the Populists or Republicans won the October election, the supremacy of the white race in Florida would be threatened.³²

This issue was probably the one foremost in the minds of many white voters as they went to the polls on October 6. Whatever the case, the Democratic Party once again scored a landslide victory. The election results were Bloxham, 27,172; Gunby, 8,290; and Weeks, 5,270. Democrats were elected to all state offices, and swept most counties. Weeks won only in Calhoun and Taylor counties. Only one Populist state senator and two state representatives were elected.³³

Four days after the state election, the Florida Times-Union reported that the Populists wanted to fuse with the Democrats on the electoral ticket. The newspaper reported that the People's party was willing to ask Patterson to drop out of the congressional race if the Democrats would support Populist electors. Without knowing whether or not the report was true, the Democratic executive committee let it be known that it was too late for any fusion. C. C. Post, Populist campaign manager, stated on October 11 that his party was not willing to give up any of its candidates to effect a fusion with any party. He issued a statement saying:

The populists of the state have shown their willingness to sink everything personal that might be necessary to make certain the election of Mr. Bryan....the electoral vote of Florida will be secured to Bryan without the vote of the populists....This we concede in the face

of the election returns. Therefore, populists are released from all possible or impossible obligations to support the democratic electors, and should and will stand loyally by their nominees and their own electors.³⁴

The November election was a repeat of the one in October. The Populist congressional candidates and presidential electors went down in defeat, as did the Republican. The campaign of 1896 was strongly different from the one in 1892. In the latter the Populist candidates suffered from almost constant attacks from the conservative press, while in the former, they were virtually ignored.

After the 1896 election, the People's party in Florida, as in the rest of the nation, slowly fell apart. All except the most extreme radicals drifted back to the liberal wing of the Democratic party and played an important role in helping the liberals gain control of the party.³⁵

CONCLUSIONS

The Populists in Florida achieved fewer successes than their counterparts in almost every other Southern state. They had to appeal to radically divergent political views and economic desires because the state was so heterogeneous in the late nineteenth century. This they were unable to do. The counties of southern Florida were never brought completely into the Populist camp. The farm population in that half of the state was usually better off financially than the northern Florida farmers. The People's party in most of the South and West was an outgrowth of agrarian discontent. Only when the farmers felt severely threatened did they dare leave the security of their old parties. In southern Florida no such feeling developed.

In northern Florida, the farmers were worse off. While not as enslaved by heavy debts and the crop lien system as the farmers in most southern states, they still suffered from the economic depressions of the second half of the nineteenth century. But among the farmers of this area the Populists ran into another problem. The Democratic party had been Florida's redemption, saving it from the further horrors of reconstructionism. Many Florida voters remembered the hard (and dishonestly) won victory in 1876 that had spelled the end of the Republican era in Florida. These voters refused to leave the Democratic party and risk a return to Negro domination.

The Farmer's Alliance and like organizations achieved success in Florida only because they posed no threat to the Democracy. It was acceptable to work for better conditions for the farmer as long as the

work did not endanger the Democratic party. The high point of Populism in Florida also marked the beginning of its decline. When Florida played host to the Alliances in Ocala in 1890, the farmers of the state had never before, nor would they ever again, feel such unity. But the Ocala convention planted the seed of radicalism in Florida a segment of the farmers became politicized, and that politicalization killed the Farmer's Alliance, the only workable organization that the farmers possessed.

The first real rumblings of political dissent came in 1884, with the Independent movement. This was the first time that the Democratic party was faced with an opponent that came predominately from within the Democratic ranks. It was a warning to the Democratic party that reform was needed. The Democracy ignored the warning, and was faced with internal dissension for many years.

At the Democratic convention in Tampa in 1892, the dissension resurfaced. The convention marked the last opportunity that the Democratic party would have in the nineteenth century to purge itself of corruption and listen to the pleas of a large segment of the voters. If the minority report had been accepted in Tampa, the People's party would probably not have come into existence in Florida. Baskin, Weeks, and Mann knew the leaders of the Democratic party well. Months before the Tampa convention they realized that they had no hope of convincing these leaders to accept a liberal platform. As outlined in chapter V, they had already begun plans for a third party. Thus the People's party sprang almost fullblown onto the Florida political scene. Probably even the Populist leaders were surprised at the speed with which the party was organized across the state.

The determining factor in the election of 1892 was not, however, based on the issues that caused the Populists to bolt. Rather, the campaign centered around personal attacks on the Populist candidates and scare stories of the peril of a Populist victory. Although the Populist party was essentially a bolt from the Democratic party, the decision of the Republican party not to nominate candidates in 1892 allowed the conservative press to charge that the new party was merely the Republican party under a new name.

In the campaign of 1896, the Democratic party took a stand on the money question almost as radical as the Populists' stand in 1892. But it is apparent that the Florida Democratic party did not look upon the free coinage of silver as of primary importance to the state. The issue served two purposes; to provide a platform on which to castigate gold Republicans; and to woo Populists back into the fold. The Populists were in favor of silver because they believed that it would lessen the nation's economic problems. The Democrats favored silver because of political expediency. Complaints from the Populists that their platform had been stolen were of no avail, and the all-powerful Democratic party once again triumphed.

In the election of 1892, the People's party was the only party in the state or nation that offered a real alternative to the voters. When fusion came in 1896, many Populists charged that they had been sold out. Although the national People's party insisted on keeping Thomas Watson on the ballot, there was complete fusion in many states. But, as we have seen, the leaders of the People's party in Florida deemed it better to go down to defeat than to give up their principles.

Appendix A

THE OCALA DEMANDS, DECEMBER, 1890

1. a. We demand the abolition of national banks.
 b. We demand that the government shall establish sub-treasuries of depositories in several states, which shall loan money direct to the people at a low rate of interest, not to exceed two per cent per annum, on non-perishable farm products, and also upon real estate, with proper limitations upon the quantity of land and amount of money.
 c. We demand that the amount of the circulation medium be speedily increased to not less than \$50 per capita.
2. We demand that Congress shall pass such laws as will effectually prevent the dealing in futures of all agricultural and mechanical productions; providing a stringent system of procedure in trials that will secure the prompt conviction, and imposing such penalties as shall secure the most perfect compliance with the law.
3. We condemn the silver bill recently passed by Congress, and demand in lieu thereof the free and unlimited coinage of silver.
4. We demand the passage of laws prohibiting alien ownership of land, and that Congress take prompt action to devise some plan to obtain all lands now owned by aliens and foreign syndicates; and that all lands now held by railroads and other corporations in excess of such as is actually used and needed by them be reclaimed by the government and held for actual settlers only.
5. Believing in the doctrine of equal rights to all and special privileges to none, we demand -

- a. That our national legislation shall be so framed in the future as not to build up one industry at the expense of another.
 - b. We further demand a removal of the existing heavy tariff tax from the necessities of life, that the poor of our land must have.
 - c. We further demand a just and equitable system of graduated tax on incomes.
 - d. We believe that the money of the country should be kept as much as possible in the hands of the people, and hence we demand that all national and state revenues shall be limited to the necessary expenses of the government economically and honestly administered.
6. We demand the most rigid, honest and just state and national government control and supervision of the means of public communication and transportation, and if this control and supervision does not remove the abuse now existing, we demand the government ownership of such means of communication and transportation.
7. We demand that the Congress of the United States submit an amendment to the Constitution providing for the election of United States Senators by direct vote of the people of each state.

Appendix B

ST. LOUIS PLATFORM, FEBRUARY, 1892

Preamble

This, the first great labor conference of the United States, and of the world, representing all divisions of urban and rural organized industry, assembled in national congress, invoking upon its action the blessing and protection of Almighty God, puts forth, to and for the producers of the nation, this declaration of union and independence.

The conditions which surround us best justify our cooperation.

We meet in the midst of a nation brought to the verge of moral, political and material ruin. Corruption dominates the ballot box, the legislatures, the Congress, and touches even the ermine of the bench. The people are demoralized. Many of the States have been compelled to isolate the voters at the polling places in order to prevent universal intimidation or bribery. The newspapers are subsidized or muzzled; public opinion silenced; business prostrated, our homes covered with mortgages, labor impoverished, and the land concentrating in the hands of capitalists. The urban workmen are denied the right of organization for self-protection; imported pauperized labor beats down their wages; a hireling army, unrecognized by our laws, is established to shoot them down, and they are rapidly degenerating to European conditions. The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes, unprecedented in the history of the world, while their possessors despise the republic and endanger liberty. From the

same prolific womb of governmental injustice we breed two great classes - paupers and millionaires. The national power to create money is appropriated to enrich bondholders; silver, which has been accepted as coin since the dawn of history, has been demonetized to add to the purchasing power of gold by decreasing the value of all forms of property as well as human labor; and the supply of currency is purposely abridged to fatten usurers, bankrupt enterprise and enslave industry. A vast conspiracy against mankind has been organized on two continents and is taking possession of the world. If not met and overthrown at once it forbodes terrible social convulsions, the destruction of civilization, or the establishment of an absolute despotism.

In this crisis of human affairs the intelligent working people and producers of the United States have come together in the name of peace, order and society, to defend liberty, prosperity and justice.

We declare our union and independence. We assert one purpose to support the political organization which represents our principles.

We charge that the controlling influences dominating the old political parties have allowed the existing dreadful conditions to develop without serious effort to restrain or prevent them. They have agreed together to ignore in the coming campaign every issue but one. They propose to drown the out-cries of a plundered people with the uproar of a sham battle over the tariff, so that corporations, national banks, rings, trust, "watered sticks," the demonetization of silver, and the oppressions of usurers, may all be lost sight of. They propose to sacrifice our homes and children upon the altar of Mammon; to destroy the hopes of the multitude in order to secure corruption funds from the

great lords of plunder. We assert that a political organization, representing the political principles herein stated, is necessary to redress the grievances of which we complain.

Assembled on the anniversary of the birth of the illustrious man who led the first great revolution on this continent against oppression, filled with the sentiments which actuated that grand generation, we seek to restore the government of the republic to the hands of the "plain people," with whom it originated. Our doors are open to all points of the compass. We ask all men to join with us and help us.

In order to restrain the extortions of aggregated capital, to drive the money changers out of the temple, "to form a [more] perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity," we do ordain and establish the following platform of principles:

First -- We declare the union of the labor forces of the United States this day accomplished permanent and perpetual. May its spirit enter into all hearts for the salvation of the republic and the uplifting of mankind.

Second -- Wealth belongs to him who creates it. Every dollar taken from industry without an equivalent is robbery. If any one will not work, neither shall he eat. The interests of rural and urban labor are the same, their enemies are identical.

Platform

First -- We demand a national currency, safe, sound and flexible, issued by the general government only, a full legal tender for all debts

public and private; and that without the use of banking corporations a just, equitable and efficient means of distribution direct to the people at a tax not to exceed 2 per cent be provided as set forth in the sub-treasury plan of the Farmers' Alliance, or some better system; also, by payments in discharge of its obligations for public improvements.

a. We demand free and unlimited coinage of silver.

b. We demand that the amount of circulating medium be speedily increased to not less than \$50 per capita.

c. We demand a graduated income tax.

d. We believe that the money of the country should be kept as much as possible in the hands of the people, and hence we demand all national and state revenue shall be limited to the necessary expenses of the government, economically and honestly administered.

e. We demand that postal savings banks be established by the government for the safe deposit of the earnings of the people and to facilitate exchange.

Second -- The land, including all the national resources of wealth, is the heritage of all the people and should not be monopolized for speculative purposes, and alien ownership of land should be prohibited. All land now held by railroads and other corporations in excess of their actual needs, and all lands now owned by aliens, should be reclaimed by the government and held for actual settlers only.

Third -- Transportation being a means of exchange and a public necessity, the government should own and operate the railroads in the interests of the people.

a. The telegraph and telephone, like the postoffice system, being a necessity for transmission of news, should be owned and operated by

the government in the interest of the people.

Resolutions

Resolved, That the question of female suffrage be referred to the legislatures of the different States for favorable consideration.

Resolved, That the government should issue legal tender notes and pay the Union soldier the difference between the price of the depreciated money in which he was paid and gold.

Resolved, That we hail this conference as the consummation of a perfect union of hearts and hands of all sections of our common country. The men who wore gray and the men who the blue meet here to extinguish the last smoldering embers of civil war in the tears of joy of a united and happy people, and we agree to carry the stars and stripes forward to the highest point of national greatness.

Appendix C

OMAHA PLATFORM, JULY, 1892

Assembled upon the 116th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the People's Party of America, in their first national convention, invoking upon their action the blessing of Almighty God, puts forth, in the name and on behalf of the people of this country, the following preamble and declaration of principles:--

The conditions which surround us best justify our cooperation: we meet in the midst of a nation brought to the verge of moral, political, and material ruin. Corruption dominates the ballot-box, the legislatures, the Congress, and touches even the ermine of the bench. The people are demoralized; most of the States have been compelled to isolate the voters at the polling places to prevent universal intimidation or bribery. The newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled; public opinion silenced; business prostrated; our homes covered with mortgages; labor impoverished; and the land concentrating in the hands of the capitalists. The urban workmen are denied the right of organization for self-protection; imported pauperized labor beats down their wages; a hireling standing army, unrecognized by our laws, is established to shoot them down, and they are rapidly degenerating into European conditions. The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few, unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of these, in turn, despise the republic and endanger liberty. From the same prolific womb of governmental injustice we breed the two great classes -- tramps and millionaires.

The national power to create money is appropriated to enrich bondholders; a vast public debt, payable in legal tender currency, has been funded into gold-bearing bonds, thereby adding millions to the burdens of the people. Silver, which has been accepted as coin since the dawn of history, has been demonetized to add to the purchasing power of gold by decreasing the value of all forms of property as well as human labor; and the supply of currency is purposely abridged to fatten usurpers, bankrupt enterprise, and enslave industry. A vast conspiracy against mankind has been organized on two continents, and it is rapidly taking possession of the world. If not met and overthrown at once, it forebodes terrible social convulsions, the destruction of civilization, or the establishment of an absolute despotism.

We have witnessed for more than a quarter of a century the struggles of the two great political parties for power and plunder, while grievous wrongs have been inflicted upon the suffering people. We charge that the controlling influences dominating both these parties have permitted the existing dreadful conditions to develop without serious effort to prevent or restrain them. Neither do they now promise us any substantial reform. They have agreed together to ignore in the coming campaign every issue but one. They propose to drown the outcries of a plundered people with the uproar of a sham battle over the tariff, so that capitalists, corporations, national banks, rings, trusts, watered stock, the demonetization of silver, and the oppressions of the usurers may all be lost sight of. They propose to sacrifice our homes, lives and children on the altar of mammon; to destroy the multitude in order to secure corruption funds from the millionaires.

Assembled on the anniversary of the birthday of the nation, and filled with the spirit of the grand general and chieftain who established our independence, we seek to restore the government of the Republic to the hands of "the plain people," with whose class it originated. We assert our purposes to be identical with the purposes of the National Constitution, "to form a more perfect union and establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity." We declare that this republic can only endure as a free government while built upon the love of the whole people for each other and for the nation; that it cannot be pinned together by bayonets; that the civil war is over, and that every passion and resentment which grew out of it must die with it; and that we must in fact, as we are in name, one united brotherhood of freemen.

Our country finds itself confronted by conditions for which there is no precedent in the history of the world; our annual agricultural productions amount to billions of dollars in value, which must, within a few weeks or months, be exchanged for billions of commodities consumed in their production; the existing currency supply is wholly inadequate to make this exchange; the results are falling prices, the formation of combines and rings, the impoverishment of the producing class. We pledge ourselves, if given power, power, we will labor to correct there evils by wise and reasonable legislation, in accordance with the terms of our platform. We believe that the powers of government -- in other words, of the people -- should be expanded (as in the case of the postal service) as rapidly and as far as the good sense of an intelligent people and the

teachings of experience shall justify, to the end that oppression, injustice, and poverty shall eventually cease in the land.

While our sympathies as a party of reform are naturally upon the side of every proposition which will tend to make men intelligent, virtuous, and temperate, we nevertheless regard these questions -- important as they are -- as secondary to the great issues now pressing for solution, and upon which not only our individual prosperity but the very existence of free institutions depends; and we ask all men to first help us to determine whether we are to have a republic to administer before we differ as to the conditions upon which it is to be administered; believing that the forces of reform this day organized will never cease to move forward until every wrong is remedied, and equal rights and equal privileges securely established for all the men and women of this country.

We declare, therefore --

First. That the union of the labor forces of the United States this consummated shall be permanent and perpetual; may its spirit enter all hearts for the salvation of the republic and the uplifting of mankind!

Second. Wealth belongs to him who creates it, and every dollar taken from industry without an equivalent is robbery. "If any will not work, neither shall he eat." The interests of rural and civic labor are the same; their enemies are identical.

Third. We believe that the time has come when the railroad corporations will either own the people or the people must own the railroads; and, should the government enter upon the work of owning and managing all railroads, we should favor an amendment to the Constitution by which all persons engaged in the government service shall be placed

under a civil service regulation of the most rigid character, so as to prevent of the national administration by the use of the power of the national administration by the use of such additional government employees.

First, Money. We demand a national currency, safe, sound, and flexible, issued by the general government only, a full legal tender for all debts, public and private, and that without the use of banking corporations, a just, equitable, and efficient means of distribution direct to the people, at a tax not to exceed two per cent per annum, to be provided as set forth in the sub-treasury plan of the Farmer's Alliance, or a better system; also, by payments in discharge of its obligations for public improvements.

(a) We demand free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the present legal ratio of sixteen to one.

(b) We demand that the amount of circulating medium be speedily increased to not less than fifty dollars per capita.

(c) We demand a graduate income tax.

(d) We believe that the money of the country should be kept as much as possible in the hands of the people, and hence we demand that all state and national revenues shall be limited to the necessary expenses of the government economically and honestly administered.

(e) We demand that postal savings banks be established by the government for the safe deposit of the earnings of the people and to facilitate exchange.

Second, Transportation. Transportation being a means of exchange and a public necessity, the government should own and operate the rail-

roads in the interest of the people.

(a) The telegraph and telephone, like the post-office system, being a necessity for the transmission of news, should be owned and operated by the government in the interest of the people.

Third, Land. The land, including all the natural sources of wealth, is the heritage of the people, and should not be monopolized for speculative purposes, and alien ownership of land should be prohibited. All land now held by railroads and other corporations in excess of their actual needs, and all lands now owned by aliens, should be reclaimed by the government and held for actual settlers only.

Resolutions

Whereas, Other questions have been presented for our consideration, we hereby submit the following, not as a part of the sentiment of this convention.

1. Resolved, That we demand a free ballot and a fair count in all elections, and pledge ourselves to secure it to every legal voter without federal intervention, through the adoption by the States of the unpervverted Australian or secret ballot system.

2. Resolved, That the revenue derived from a graduated income tax should be applied to the reduction of the burden of taxation now resting upon the domestic industries of this country.

3. Resolved, That we pledge our support to fair and liberal pensions to ex-Union soldiers and sailors.

4. Resolved, That we condemn the fallacy of protecting American labor under the present system, which opens our ports to the pauper

and criminal classes of the world, and crowds out wage-earners; and we denounce the present ineffective laws against contract labor, and demand the further restriction of undesirable immigration.

5. Resolved, That we cordially sympathize with the efforts of organized workingmen to shorten the hours of labor, and demand rigid enforcement of the existing eight-hour law on government work, and ask that a penalty clause be added to the said law.

6. Resolved, That we regard the maintenance of a large standing army of mercenaries, known as the Pinkerton system, as a menace to our liberties, and we demand its abolition; and we condemn the recent invasion of the territory of Wyoming by the hired assassins of the plutocracy, assisted by federal officers.

7. Resolved, That we commend to the favorable consideration of the people and the reform press the legislative system known as initiative and referendum.

8. Resolved, That we favor a constitutional provision limiting the office of President and Vice-President to one term, and providing for the election of senators of the United States by a direct vote of the people.

9. Resolved, That we oppose any subsidy of national aid to any private corporation for any purpose.

10. Resolved, That this convention sympathizes with the Knights of Labor and their righteous contest with the tyrannical combine of clothing manufacturers in Rochester, and declares it to be the duty of all who hate tyranny and oppression to refuse to purchase the goods made by said manufacturers, or to patronize any merchants who sell such goods.

Appendix D

THE FLORIDA PEOPLE'S PARTY PLATFORM OF 1892

The Platform

Whereas, There exists today a deep feeling of unrest and discontent among the people of our state, who are looking to us for relief, and shose interests we are charged to protect. This condition we find is the result, in part, of laws enacted and at present in force in this state, passed to meet a condition supposed to exist at the time, and which are not suited to our present wants, and should be repealed. But the chief cause of discontent arise from the unjust financial system of our government, which discriminates against the wealth-producing class and tends to a centralization of all wealth in the hands of a few, and if not checked, it will destroy alike democratic principles and government of, for and by the people; and,

Whereas, We have a firm and abiding faith in the simple statesman-like democratic principles enunciated by Thomas Jefferson and adhered to by Andrew Jackson, John C. Calhoun, and all true democrats and friends of government of the people, for the people, by the people; and in order that we may return to these true principles in government, therefore be it

Resolved, first, That we ratify and adopt the preamble, platform and resolutions of the Omaha convention in their entirety and recommend the same to the careful consideration of the intelligent voters of the state,

Second-Believing [sic], as we do, in the God-given right of manhood suffrage, guaranteed to us by the constitution of our common country. (a) We demand the repeal of the poll-tax as a prerequisite to the exercise of the rights of suffrage. (b) We demand the unqualified repeal of all laws now regulating and governing elections in this state, and in their stead demand the passage of such laws regulating suffrage and the exercise thereof as will best conduce to a free ballot and a fair count, and to that end demand the enactment into law of what is commonly known as the Australian ballot system. (c) We demand that when there are two or more parties contending at any election, that the inspectors who conduct the same shall consist of one or more members from each contending party. (d) We demand a free, untrammelled expression of the will of the people at the ballot box, and that votes cast shall be honestly and fairly counted.

Third -- We demand for all the citizens of our state local self-government. (a) We demand the repeal of house bill No. 4 and all like legislation. (b) We demand such changes in the constitution by amendment as will restore to the people the right to elect all officers who are to serve them. (c) We particularly demand that the county commissioners for the several counties in this state shall be elected by the people of their respective commissioners' district.

Fourth -- We demand in the name of justice that all disputes between organized capital and organized labor that cannot be mutually adjusted shall be submitted for final settlement to properly constituted courts of arbitration.

Fifth -- We demand that all officials in this state receiving

remuneration through fees shall receive prerequisite and fees attached thereto not to exceed \$2,000 per annum - including clerk hire, and that all prerequisites and fees in excess thereof shall be deposited into the county treasury.

Sixth -- We condemn the present convict labor system and demand that such laws be enacted as will prevent competition between convict labor and free labor.

- ⁵ Ibid., January 1, 1892; May 8, 1892.
- ⁶ Ibid., May 13, 1892.
- ⁷ Tallahassee Weekly Floridian, April 16, 1892; James O. Knauss, "The Growth of Florida's Election Laws," Florida Historical Quarterly V, (July, 1926), 10.
- ⁸ Tallahassee Weekly Floridian, April 4, 1892.
- ⁹ Cash, Democratic Party, 88.
- ¹⁰ Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, May 4, 1892.
- ¹¹ Ibid., June 1, 1892.
- ¹² Ibid., June 2, 1892.
- ¹³ Ibid., June 3, 1892.
- ¹⁴ Cash, Democratic Party, 87.
- ¹⁵ Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, June 4, 1892.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., June 5, 1892; Jasper News, July 23, 1892.
- ¹⁷ Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, June 7, 1892.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., June 4, 1892.
- ¹⁹ Tallahassee Weekly Floridian, June 6, 1892.
- ²⁰ Jasper News, June 3, 1892; Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, June 12, 1892.

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¹ Nelson A. Dunning, ed., The Farmer's Alliance History and Agricultural Digest (Washington, D. C.: The Alliance Publishing Company), 7.

² James O. Knauss, "The Farmer's Alliance in Florida," South Atlantic Quarterly, XXV (July, 1926), 301.

³ Allen G. Bogue, Money at Interest: The Farm Mortgage on the Middle Border (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 146-50.

⁴ Hallie Farmer, "The Economic Background of Southern Populism," South Atlantic Quarterly, XXIX (January, 1930), 79-80.

⁵ Juno Tropical Sun, August 19, 1891.

⁶ Farmer, "Economic Background," 80.

⁷ New York Times, January 10, 1889.

⁸ Jacksonville Florida Farmer and Fruit Grower, March 21, 1888.

⁹ Knauss, "Farmer's Alliance," 301.

¹⁰ Jacksonville Florida Farmer and Fruit Grower, January 4, 1888; March 7, 1888.

¹¹ New York Times, July 28, 1889; July 30, 1889; August 2, 1889.

¹² Ibid., January 13, 1890.

¹³ Knauss, "Farmer's Alliance," 301; Juno Tropical Sun, April 8, 1891.

¹⁴ J. E. Dovell, Florida: Historic, Dramatic, Contemporary (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company) 633.

¹⁵ Charleton Tebeau, A History of Florida (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press), 294.

¹⁶ Benjamin B. Kendrick, "Agrarian Discontent in the South: 1880-1900," American Historical Association Annual Report, 1920, 267-68.

¹⁷ F. T. Carleton, "The South During the Last Decade, 1890-1900," Sewanee Review, XII (April, 1904), 176.

¹⁸ George F. Milton, "The Material Advancement of the Negro," Sewanee Review, III (November, 1894), 46.

¹⁹ Emory Fiske Skinner, Reminiscences (Chicago: Vestal Printing Company), 142.

²⁰ Dovell, Florida, 632; Charles M. Gardner, The Grange -- Friend of the Farmer (Washington, D. C.: The National Grange Publishing Company), 281; Tebeau, History of Florida, 297.

²¹ Ibid., 298.

²² Solon Justus Buck, The Granger Movement (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 274.

²³ John S. Spratt, The Road to Spindletop: Economic Change in

Texas: 1875-1901 (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press), 13-14.

²⁴ Gardner, The Grange, 281.

²⁵ Knauss, "Farmer's Alliance," 302.

Chapter II: Independentism Prelude to Populism

¹ Edward C. Williamson, "Independentism: A challenge to the Florida Democracy of 1884," Florida Historical Quarterly, XXVII (October, 1948), 146.

² Albert Hubbard Roberts, "Florida and Leon County in the Election of 1876," Tallahassee Historical Society Annual, IV 91939), 88; Jerrell H. Shofner, "Fraud and Intimidation in the Florida Election of 1876," Florida Historical Quarterly, XLII (April, 1963), 323-34.

³ Jerrell H. Shofner, "Florida in the Balance: The Electoral Count of 1876," Florida Historical Quarterly, XLVII (October, 1968), 149-50.

⁴ Samual Proctor, Napoleon Bonapart Broward: Florida's Fighting Democrat (Gainesville: University of Florida Press), 56; Emory Fiske Skinner, Reminiscences (Chicago: Vestal Printing Company), 166ff.

⁵ T. Frederick Davis, "The Disston Land Purchase," Florida Historical Quarterly, XVII (January, 1939), 203; J. E. Dovell, Florida: Historic, Dramatic, Contemporary (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company), 595.

⁶ Davis, "Land Purchase," 206-9.

⁷ Dovell, Florida, 644.

⁸ Williamson, "Independentism," 134-37.

⁹ William T. Cash, History of the Democratic Party in Florida (Live Oak: Florida Democratic Historical Foundation), 77.

¹⁰ Williamson, "Independentism," 138, 149.

¹¹ Ibid., 144.

¹² Ibid., 141, 154.

¹³ Cash, Democratic Party, 78; Charleton Tebeau, A History of Florida (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press), 293.

¹⁴ Williamson, "Independentism," 156.

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² John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmer's Alliance and the People's Party (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 104.

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⁴ Nelson A. Dunning, ed., The Farmer's Alliance History and Agricultural Digest (Washington, D. C.: The Alliance Publishing Company), 56.

⁵ Ibid., 64-65.

⁶ James O. Knauss, "The Farmer's Alliance in Florida," South Atlantic Quarterly, XXV (July, 1926), 301; "Farmer's Alliance in the Southeast," Harper's Weekly, XXXIV (December 13, 1890), 970.

⁷ Jacksonville Florida Farmer and Fruit Grower, March 28, 1888.

⁸ Washington, D. C. National Economist, July 13, 1889.

⁹ Kathryn T. Abbey, "Florida Versus the Principles of Populism," Journal of Southern History, IV (November, 1938), 462; Walter Lloyd Cory, "The Florida Farmer's Alliance, 1887-1892," (unpublished master's thesis, Florida State University, 1963), 79.

¹⁰ Working Bulletin of the Florida Farmer's Alliance, n.d., n.p.

¹¹ Cory, "Farmer's Alliance," 77.

¹² Ibid., 93.

¹³ Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, January 15, 1890; New York Times, September 15, 1890.

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⁴ Samuel Proctor, "The National Farmer's Alliance Convention and its 'Ocala Demands,'" Florida Historical Quarterly, (January, 1950), 162-63.

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⁶ Proctor, "Ocala Demands," 161.

⁷ "Farmer's Alliance in the Southeast," Harper's Weekly, December 13, 1890), 970.

⁸ Martin M. LaGodna, "Kansas and the Ocala Convention of 1890: Groundwork for the People's Party," (unpublished master's thesis, Florida State University), 8.

⁹ Proceedings, 10.

¹⁰ Ibid., 32-33.

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¹³ Ibid., 11-12.

¹⁴ Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, December 6, 1890.

¹⁵ Jacksonville Florida Dispatch, Farmer, and Fruit Grower, February 12, 1891.

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² William T. Cash, History of the Democratic Party in Florida (Live Oak: Florida Democratic Historical Foundation), 87.

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²² Ibid., June 6, 1892; June 18, 1892.

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²⁶ Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, July 16, 1892; Tallahassee Weekly Floridian, June 18, 1892.

²⁷ Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, June 28, 1892.

²⁸ Ibid., June 26, 1892, June 29, 1892.

²⁹ Starke Bradford County Telegraph, July 15, 1892.

³⁰ Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, July 15, 1892.

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³³ Ibid., July 17, 1892.

³⁴ Ibid., July 19, 1892.

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³ Ibid., July 18, 1892.

⁴ Ibid., July 21, 1896.

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⁷ Ibid., July 23, 1892.

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- 28 Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, September 20, 1892.
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¹⁰ Jacksonville Florida Times-Union, June 17, 1896.

¹¹ Ocala Banner, June 19, 1896; Jacksonville Florida Times-Union,
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