

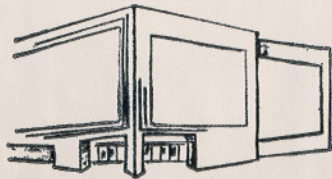
R. P. Boone

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Harry Hayden

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NEW HANOVER COUNTY
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Wilmington Book
The Story of

The Wilmington Rebellion

by

HARRY HAYDEN



Price \$1.00



First authentic account of the Wilmington Revolution of 1898, which resulted in the elimination of the Negro as a political factor in Wilmington and North Carolina and which led to the disfranchisement of the race throughout the South through the instrumentality of the "Grandfather Clause."

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Chapter I

THE WILMINGTON REBELLION

Smoke was curling languidly from the old pipe (Gunner Jessie Blake puffed upon as he reclined in an easy chair in the dimly lit drawing room of his mansion amid the pines, "Woodley-on-the-Sound", where the aged Confederate veteran, survivor of both bombardments of nearby Fort Fisher in the North-South war, was entertaining two young veterans of the late World war.

They had just finished supper, during which one of the guests had recounted his experiences with a black guard, a Negro trooper who had pointed a gun at him in ordering him out of a Negro camp near Vitrey, France, when he and his pal were foraging for turkeys and chickens that were to feature the menu of a banquet to be given by the members of the Wilmington Light Infantry on the eve of their departure for the front line trenches. One of the veterans had unwittingly offended the Negro by using the word "Nigger".

The two young veterans were ensconced in comfortable chairs, and with their host, formed a semi-circle in front of an open fireplace, in which flames leaped at all angles with abandon, diffusing heat, light and shadows across the spacious room.

"You boys were too young to remember much about the Wilmington Rebellion, November 10, 1898," began Mr. Blake, an unreconstructed Rebel who to this day **holds that the South fought for Independence, not for Slavery**, and who continues to use the ante and post-bellum by-word, damned-yank, as a single word without even dignifying the appellation with a capital "D".

"So, I am going to give you the inside story of this insurrection," he proceeded, "wherein the white people of Wilmington overthrew the constituted municipal authority overnight and substituted a reform rule, doing all this legally and with some needless bloodshed, to be sure, but at the same time they eliminated the Negroes from the political life of the city and the state. This Rebellion was the very beginning of Negro disfranchisement in the South and an important step in the establishment of 'White Shpremac'y' in the Southland."

When this Rebellion broke out both of Gunner Blake's guests were youths, scarcely in their teens; and, while meager reports of the racial conflict had come down to them by word-of-mouth, through tradition, yet they had never heard the inside story of the insurrection, as a veil of secrecy had necessarily been thrown around much of its ramifications in order to protect the leaders from possible prosecution.

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"The Rebellion was an organized resistance," Mr. Blake said, on the part of the white citizens of this community to the established government, which had long irked them because it was dominated by 'Carpet Baggers' and Negroes, and also because the better element here wished to establish 'White Supremacy' in the city, the state and throughout the South, and thereby remove the then stupid and ignorant Negroes from their numerically dominating position in the government."

Mr. Blake then went on to describe the conditions that existed in Wilmington and throughout the South during the last decade of the Nineteenth Century, or between 1890 and 1898 to be more specific. Thirty-five years had passed (in 1898) since Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had set the slaves free; and, as the years rolled on, the new generation of free born Negroes, evidently suffering from an inferiority complex in the mass and not sufficiently intelligent or educated individually to offset this complex, had become more and more arrogant in their conduct and attitude towards the whites, who constituted a small minority, or only 8,000 of Wilmington's 25,000 population.

From 1895 onward it became more and more dangerous for white girls and women to venture out of doors after dark, for black rapists prowled the streets of the city and countryside at night; and even in daylight hours white women without escorts were often crowded or shoved off the sidewalks into the gutters by insolent Negro men and women.

Negroes were given preference in the matter of employment, for most of the town's artisans were Negroes, and numerous white families in the city faced bitter want because their providers could get but little work as brickmasons, carpenters, mechanics; and this economic condition was aggravated considerably by the influx of many Negroes, and Wilmington was really becoming a Mecca for Negroes and a City of Lost Opportunities for the working class whites.

Several Negroes were members of the city's Board of Aldermen, Negro policemen patrolled beats within the town's limits, Negro firemen were crowding out the white fire laddies, finally disrupting the latter's volunteer department, which had been manned by high class German and Irish citizens. Negro lawyers were practicing in the state, city and federal courts, and a Negro, John Dancy, was Collector of Customs for the port of Wilmington.

The Negroes, jockeyed by 'Carpet Baggers' and unscrupulous politicians, held the balance of power in the city and in many other communities in the South during the '90's. but when Southern gentlemen realized that Negro Ignorance and not Southern Culture, was balancing the political fate of their beloved city, state and Southland, they revolted!

With the politicians, the 'Carpet Baggers', coddling the 'Coons' for their votes," Mr. Blake reported, continuing his narrative, "the Negroes became more and more intoxicated in their newly acquired freedom. Instead of enjoying their rights privately, many of them insisted on publicly

demonstrating their foolish belief that the uncultured and uneducated African was the social equal of the cultured whites.

"The political power in Wilmington was vested in four men, known as 'The Big Four', who were Dr. Silas P. Wright, the mayor; G. Z. French, former postmaster of Wilmington and acting sheriff of New Hanover county; W. H. Chadbourn, the postmaster; and F. W. Foster.

"The power of the 'Big Four' was supreme in this city, because they controlled the majority voters, the Negroes, who always voted the Republican ticket as that was the political faith of their emancipator, Abraham Lincoln. This control of the Negro vote assured these Republican office holders a continuity in office and local influence.

"Such a sad state of affairs," Mr. Blake said, "was regarded by the leading white citizens as not only demoralizing the morale of the citizenry, morally as well as economically, but it was also retarding the city's progress. Public funds were being dissipated, there were no street improvements save the Belgian block pavement on Front and Water streets, saw dust toppings from ice ships from Maine on some other thoroughfares, while Market street, the principal plaza boulevard, was paved with oyster shells. Sanitary conditions were intolerable, and buzzards swooped down in the streets for carrion.

"'Patty's Hollow', a district peopled by dusky harlots and frequented by degenerate whites and daring blacks, was flourishing near the site of the present Champion Compress, while brothels for whites and blacks were openly and defiantly operating in various parts of the city, the underworld exercising a baneful influence over the official and private lives of some of the city and county authorities. Swinging doors opened and shut for as many hours a day as the saloon keepers desired. There was an absence of rightful authority; it was a reign of license, not liberty.

"The older generation of Southern born men were at their wits' end. They had passed through the rigors of the North-South war and through the tyrannies of Reconstruction when Confiscation (the latter the most hated word in the conquered Confederacy next to damnedyankee) of properties without due process of law, was the rule rather than the exception. They had seen 'Forty Acres and a Mule' buy many a Negro's vote.

"Black rapists were attacking Southern girls and women. those pure and lovely creatures who graced the homes in Dixie Land, and the brutes were committing this dastardly crime with more frequency while the majority of them were escaping punishment through the influence of the powers that be.

"These old Southern gentlemen had calculated that time and time only would remove the terrors of Reconstruction, a condition that was imposed upon the conquered Southerners by the victorious Northerners, but they were not willing to sit supinely by and see their girls and women assaulted by beastly brutes.

"The better element among the Northerners in the North could not

have known of the tyranny that their representatives, the 'Carpet Baggers', were imposing upon Southerners, crushing under their dirty heels the finest Culture in the world, that of the South.

"These Southerners, it must be remembered, were a conquered people," Mr. Blake said, refilling and lighting his pipe, "or they would not have put up with the intolerable conditions of the time for a single day. However, the ordeals through which they had passed had made them fatalistic to a certain degree, while, of course, they naturally suffered from utter helplessness in civic matters. It was against the law for many of them to assemble, to hold indignation meetings, so they were placed in a stalemate condition.

"They had tried the Ku Klux Klan immediately after the war, and, while it had served its purpose in instilling fear into the hearts of some would be rapists, the organization finally became uncontrollable, becoming an instrument of hate and terror, which at times hanged and burned at the stake some of its own members as well as many innocent whites and Negroes.

"By way of illustrating the malice and disrespect shown by the Negroes on the streets of Wilmington in the days immediately preceding the Rebellion:—Mr. Hugh MacRae, a prominent citizen who operated a large cotton mill here, was standing in the intersection of Seventh and Market streets conversing with a friend one day. A dray, drawn by a fast stepping horse, was approaching. There was plenty of space for this two-wheeled vehicle to pass, but the Negro driver lashed his horse and snarled as he drove defiantly towards the white men, who had to step up on the sidewalk to keep from being run down.

"That evening Mr. MacRae was discussing conditions with his uncle, Mr. Walter MacRae, a well read gentleman, a graduate of Harvard and later a mayor of Wilmington. The latter declared:

"If something is not done to put down this surly and rebellious attitude of the Negroes towards the whites, we will have a repetition of the Sepoy (India) Rebellion, which was ended only after the British authorities had shot some of the mutinous leaders out of the mouths of cannon."

"While the younger Southerners appreciated the position and the fortitude of their forebears, they, the sons, thought differently from their fathers, as will be seen from a conversation I overheard between Colonel John D. Taylor, a Confederate veteran, and his son Mr. J. Allan Taylor." (Colonel Taylor, it should be noted, was the only officer, who, with 17 enlisted men, survived the bloody Battle of Bentonville, in which three hundred and fifty Confederates, known as 'The Red Infantry', made a desperate charge upon the Yankees. Three hundred and thirty-two Southerners were slain in this attack, and Colonel Taylor emerged from the battle with an arm missing.)

"The conversation I overheard a few months before the Rebellion

between Colonel Taylor and his son, to the best of my memory, is in effect as follows:

COLONEL JOHN D. TAYLOR:—"But Allan, you know law is law and this city's administration is backed by law in the application and misapplication of the laws . . . You say you and your friends are planning to overthrow the city government by force, if necessary. This will make you all liable to prosecution for inciting to rebellion. . . I know conditions are intolerable . . . Our children are abused on their way to school by insolent blacks . . . Our women are unsafe and are crowded off the sidewalks by impudent Negroes . . . And our homes are burglarized and their contents destroyed out of pure deviltry!

"I admit something should be done! Something must be done! What it is, I am not prepared to say. We Southerners realized this very thing was coming when we lost our fight for Independence. Had we won our fight, we would have established a civil government with the Constitution patterned after the Constitution of the United States, for we loved and still love the organic love of our forebears.

"We would have handled the race question in a manner that would never have resulted in such intolerable conditions as those that confront both races today . . . We would have placed the Negroes on probation when we freed them and made them qualify for their citizenship, just as we make foreigners qualify for their rights as American citizens today . . . And through education, natural racial pride would have been born in the hearts of all loyal Negroes after they had made this civic advancement, and we would have avoided the debacle that followed the enfranchisement of Ignorant Negroes.

"But we are a conquered people, without even the legal right to congregate in any large numbers to voice our indignation and protest against existing conditions . . . Yet the day is coming when Northerners will regard our cause, 'States Rights', as just . . . Meanwhile, however, we must make the best of the worst of things, and continue to grin and bear it!"

MR. J. ALLAN TAYLOR:—"Yes, I realize what you say is true . . . But my little daughter and young son, now in their teens, are representative of a new generation; and I am going to do my utmost to make Wilmington a clean, safe and happy place in which they may dwell in peace and happiness. And the time to do this is right now. . . I do

not want them and their little friends to grow up amid such conditions. . . .

“ ‘I do not want Southern girls growing into womanhood in fear of the Negro rapist.’

“Shortly after this conversation between Colonel Taylor and his son, a group of nine citizens met at the home of Mr. Hugh MacRae and there decided that the attitude and actions of the Negroes made it necessary for them to take some steps towards protecting their families and homes in their immediate neighborhood, Seventh and Market streets.

“These nine men, Messrs. Hugh MacRae, J. Allan Taylor, Hardy L. Fennell, W. A. Johnson, L. B. Sasser, William Gilchrist, P. B. Manning, E. S. Lathrop and Walter L. Parsley, a few nights later gathered at Mr. Parsley’s home, where they mapped out a city wide protective campaign that was to be conducted co-ordinately with the state-wide ‘White Supremacy’ movement that was being launched in North Carolina by the Hon. Furnifold M. Simmons, of New Bern, who later became North Carolina’s senior United States senator.

This group of citizens, who will hereafter be referred to as the ‘Secret Nine’, divided the city into sections, placing a responsible citizen as captain in charge of each area, and they named Messrs. Lathrop and Manning as their contact men, who were the only ones of the “Secret Nine” known to the divisional captains.

“With the ‘Big Four’ blocking every move the better element planned to gain relief from Negro impudence and domination, from grafting and from immoral conditions, the ‘Secret Nine’ and the white leaders marked time, hoping something would happen to arouse the citizenry to concerted action.

“Governor Daniel L. Russell, North Carolina’s chief executive, and Senator Marion L. Butler, the latter representing this district in the United States Senate and a candidate for re-election in opposition to Furnifold M. Simmons, were scheduled to speak in Wilmington in behalf of the Populist Party, which had fused with the Republicans in the approaching state-wide elections.

“However, as Governor Russell had infuriated the white citizens by appealing in a speech delivered here for the votes of the Negroes upon the basis of proffered social equality with the whites, a committee waited upon the governor and senator and persuaded them to stay away from Wilmington. This they did, the governor proceeding to his country home on the left bank of the Cape Fear river, down in Brunswick county, without even passing through this city.

“The Fusionists had made application to the Winchester Arms Company for 200 repeating rifles, it was charged, for the purpose of influencing the ballots with bullets, but the company referred this order to its North Carolina agent who promptly sent the communication to Wilmington, where it was published in the newspapers.

“Meanwhile, the white citizens had been arming themselves with repeating shot guns and rifles and pistols, and it is doubted if there ever was a community in the United States that had as many weapons per capita as here in Wilmington. The white leaders claimed that the order to the Winchester Company was a threat on the part of the Fusionists and they prepared to meet this overt act.

“But the ‘watch-and-wait policy’ of the ‘Secret Nine’ did not obtain for long, as during the latter part of October (1898) there appeared in the columns of The Wilmington (Negro) Daily Record an editorial, written by the Negro editor, Alex Manly, which aroused a state-wide revulsion to the city and state administrations then in the hands of the Republicans and Fusionists. The editorial attempted to justify the Negro rape fiends at the expense of the virtue of Southern womanhood”.

Mr. Blake walked over to the library table, stooped and picked up an old scrap book that was reposing on the table’s shelf, and then he read the following obnoxious editorial from The Wilmington Record:—

“ ‘Poor whites are careless in the matter of protecting their women, especially on the farms. They are careless of their conduct towards them, and our experience among the poor white people in the country teaches us that women of that race are not more particular in the matter of clandestine meetings with colored men, than are the white man and colored women.

“ ‘Meetings of this kind go on for some time until the woman’s infatuation or the man’s boldness, bring attention to them, and the man is lynched for rape.

“ ‘Every Negro lynched is called a ‘big, burly, black brute’, when in fact, many of those who have been thus dealt with had white men for their fathers, and were not only not ‘black’ and ‘burly’, but were sufficiently attractive for white girls of culture and refinement to fall in love with them, as is very well known to all.’

“That editorial,” Mr. Blake declared with some vehemence as he banged the closed scrap book with his fist, “is the straw that broke Mister Nigger’s political back in the Southland.” (It was also the theme of Thomas Dixon’s ‘Leopard Spots’.)

“The white citizens of Wilmington and North Carolina became enraged over this unwarranted attack by this ‘Smart-Aleck’ Manly upon the virtue and character of Southern womanhood, which indeed was in flower in the entire Southland. There was gallantry and courtliness, too, among the men of this Cape Fear region, as is evidenced by the toast that preceded the banquet of the Wilmington Light Infantry:

“ ‘The Old North State, the Home of Beauty, Courage, Honor, Industry, Virtue and Independence.’

“The ‘Secret Nine’ continued to hold meetings at the home of Mr.

Parsley on Market street, and there they planned the Revolution, which they scheduled to start on November 10, 1898, the day after the state-wide elections. . . Every member of this group realized the gravity of the situation, knowing full well that it was absolutely necessary to keep the existence of such a body secret, for had it been known that such a committee existed, every member would have been arrested and placed in durance vile to answer the charge of inciting to rebellion.

"The state elections were duly held, resulting in an astounding victory for the 'White Supremacy' ticket. Governor Russell and Senator Marion Butler were defeated, Charles B. Aycock being elected as North Carolina's chief executive and Furnifold M. Simmons winning the seat of Marion Butler in the United States Senate.

"Of course, there were some irregularities in this state-wide election, in this city and elsewhere in the state, but the white citizens realized that victory had to be won by hook or by crook, otherwise they would have to continue to live under the intolerable conditions of the time.

"Kerosene lamps were extinguished, some bowled over and others blown out by gun fire, in many polling places, and the ballot boxes were stuffed with favorable votes in many precincts." (Zacharias E. Woodall, a native North Carolinian who later became a prominent newspaper man in Richmond, Va., afterwards reported that he voted 19 times for Simmons in a little town in the Piedmont section of North Carolina during this election. Populist ballots, which had been printed on yellow paper, were ordered thrown out by Captain Jessie Price and other election officials at Southport as the law specifically required that the ballots should be printed on white paper.)

"Excitement reigned supreme on election day and the day following," Mr. Blake said, adding that "the tension between the races was at the breaking point, as two Pinkerton detectives, Negroes, had reported to their white employers that the Negro women, servants in the homes of white citizens, had agreed to set fire to the dwellings of their employers, and the Negro men had openly threatened to 'burn the town down' if the 'White Supremacy' issue was carried in the political contest. The very atmosphere was surcharged with tinder, and only a spark, a misstep by individuals of either race, was needed to set the whites and the blacks at each other's throats.

"When Mr. Hugh MacRae was sitting on his porch on Market street on the afternoon of the election, he saw a band of 'Red Shirts', fifty in number with blood in their eyes, mounted upon fiery and well caparisoned steeds and led by Mike Dowling, an Irishman, who had organized this band of vigilantes. The hot headed 'Red Shirts' paused in front of Mr. MacRae's home and the level headed Scotsman walked toward the group to learn what was amiss.

"Dowling told Mr. MacRae that they were headed for 'The Record' building to lynch Editor Manly and burn the structure. Mr. MacRae

pleaded with Dowling and his 'Red Shirts' to desist in their plans. Messrs. MacRae, Dowling and other leaders of the 'Red Shirts' repaired across the street to Sasser's Drug store and there he, Mr. MacRae, showed them a 'Declaration of White Independence' that he had drawn up for presentation at a mass meeting of white citizens the next day.

"The Red Shirts' were finally persuaded by Mr. MacRae to abandon their plans for the lynching, but only after Mr. MacRae had called up the newspapers on the telephone and dictated a call for a mass meeting of the citizens for the next morning.

Two large, gold framed pictures, one an enlarged photograph of Robert Bunting, the United States Commissioner here, and his black concubine, were suspended from two telephone poles on Market street, with large black letters on the big pieces of canvas heralding their miscegenation.

"The town was agog over a threat uttered by a Negro henchman for Governor Russell that he, the Negro, would wash his black hands in the red blood of some white man before nightfall. This threat, with the pictures of the United States Commissioner and his Negro mistress, together with the surliness of the Negroes at large after their defeat at the polls, enflamed the white citizens to action.

"A thousand or more white citizens, representative of all walks of life from the minister to the merchant, the mariner to the mendicant, attended the mass meeting in the New Hanover county court house the next morning, November 10, at 11 o'clock.

"Colonel Alfred Moore Waddell, a mild mannered Southern gentleman, noted for his extremely conservative tendencies, was called upon to preside over the gathering. In addressing this meeting, Colonel Waddell said:

"If there should be a race conflict (which God forbid), the first ones who should be held to strict accountability are the white leaders, who would be chiefly responsible, and work should begin at the top of the list. I scorn to leave any doubt as to whom I mean by that phrase. I mean the Governor (Russell) of this state, who is the engineer of all the deviltry and meanness."

Mr. Blake resumed reading from a yellowed clipping in the old scrap book which reported Colonel Waddell as saying:

"We will not live under these intolerable conditions. No society can stand it. We intend to change it, if we have to choke the current of Cape Fear River with (Negro) carcasses!"

"That declaration," Mr. Blake said, "brought forth tremendous applause from the large gathering of white men at the mass meeting. His speech, other than the two paragraphs I have just quoted, was largely a statement of facts, but he was a silver tongued orator and the crowd cheered this distinguished white haired and bearded Southern gentleman

throughout the course of his address." (He was as much respected by the Negroes as he was admired by the whites; his character was unimpeachable.)

"Colonel Waddell, in concluding his address, announced that he heartily approved the set of resolutions which had been prepared by Mr. Hugh MacRae and which included the latter's 'Declaration of White Independence'.

"These resolutions were unanimously approved by the meeting, followed by a wonderful demonstration, the assemblage rising to its feet and cheering: 'Right! Right! Right!' and there were cries of 'Fumigate the city with 'The Record'' and 'Lynch Manly'."

Mr. Blake then read the resolutions from the scrap book, as follows:

" 'Believing that the Constitution of the United States contemplated a government to be carried on by an enlightened people; believing that its framers did not anticipate the enfranchisement of an ignorant population of African origin, and believing that those men of the state of North Carolina, who joined in framing the union, did not contemplate for their descendants subjection to an inferior race.

" 'We, the undersigned citizens of the city of Wilmington and county of New Hanover, do hereby declare that we will no longer be ruled and will never again be ruled, by men of African origin.

" 'This condition we have in part endured because we felt that the consequences of the war of secession were such as to deprive us of the fair consideration of many of our countrymen.

" 'While we recognize the authority of the United States and will yield to it if exerted, we would not for a moment believe that it is the purpose of more than 60,000,000 of our own race to subject us permanently to a fate to which no Anglo-Saxon has ever been forced to submit.

" 'We, therefore, believing that we represent unequivocally the sentiments of the white people of this county and city, hereby for ourselves, and as representatives of them, proclaim:

1. That the time has come for the intelligent citizens of this community owning 95 per cent of the property and paying taxes in proportion, to end the rule by Negroes.
2. That we will not tolerate the action of unscrupulous white men in affiliating with the Negroes so that by means of their votes they can dominate the intelligent and thrifty element in the community, thus causing business to stagnate and progress to be out of the question.

3. That the Negro has demonstrated by antagonizing our interests in every way, and especially by his ballot, that he is incapable of realizing that his interests are and should be identical with those of the community.
4. That the progressive element in any community is the white population and that the giving of nearly all the employment to Negro laborers has been against the best interests of this county and city and is sufficient reason why the city of Wilmington, with its natural advantages, has not become a city of at least 50,000 inhabitants.
5. That we propose in the future to give to white men a large part of the employment heretofore given to Negroes because we realize that white families can not thrive here unless there are more opportunities for the employment of the different members of their families.
6. That we white men expect to live in this community peaceably; to have and provide absolute protection for our families, who shall be safe from insult or injury from all persons, whomsoever. We are prepared to treat the Negroes with justice in all matters which do not involve sacrifice of the intelligent and progressive portion of the community. But are equally prepared now and immediately to enforce what we know to be our rights.
7. That we have been, in our desire for harmony and peace, blinded both to our interests and our rights. A climax was reached when the Negro paper of this city published an article so vile and slanderous that it would in most communities have resulted in a lynching, and yet there is no punishment, provided by the courts, adequate for the offense. We, therefore, owe it to the people of this community and city, as a protection against such license in the future, that 'The Record' cease to be published and that its editor be banished from this community.
8. We demand that he leave the city forever within twenty-four hours after the issuance of this Proclamation. Second, that the printing press from which 'The Record' has been issued be shipped from the city without delay; that we be notified within 12 hours of the acceptance or rejection of this demand.

If the demand is agreed to we counsel forbearance on the part of the white men. If the demand is refused or no answer is given within the time mentioned, then the editor, Manly, will be expelled by force.'

"After these resolutions were read to the meeting," Mr. Blake stated, "George Rountree moved that a committee of five be appointed to study them and report back to the assemblage such changes as they deemed fit. This committee was composed of Mr. Rountree, Messrs. Iredell Meares, Hugh MacRae, Walker Taylor and S. H. Fishblate.

"While the committee was out the crowd yelled for a speech from Colonel Waddell, who said: 'Judging from the feeling manifested the pot needs no more fuel to set it to boiling. Our duty is to quietly and firmly consider the question. It is not necessary to violate the law and unnecessary to adopt violent measures, as the editor of 'The Record' will be dealt with.'

"Then there were shouts for 'Bellamy! Bellamy!' (John D.); and the Democratic Congressman-elect for this district said he was the only native Wilmingtonian who had ever been nominated and elected to Congress. Mr. Bellamy said it was proper for the meeting to take some action about the vile and slanderous defamer of white women and he was heart and soul in whatever it was necessary to do. He voiced the hope that there would be no violence, but that notice should be given the scoundrel, Alex Manly, to leave the city immediately:

"'He's gone now!' some one in the audience shouted.

"'Well then,' said Mr. Bellamy, 'Wilmington has been rid of the vilest slanderer in North Carolina. . . ,

"'I counsel moderation,' Mr. Bellamy said in conclusion.

"Short talks were then made by: Ex-mayor Fishblate, George Rountree, Iredell Meares, Junius Davis, P. B. Manning, William A. French, Jr., Nathanael Jacobi, G. J. Boney, John W. Reilly, Colonel Thomas W. Strange, Colonel Roger Moore and Frank McNeill, the last named from Fayetteville.

"Mr. Rountree reported for the committee considering the resolutions that they had been approved, the only change that was made in Mr. Hugh MacRae's draft having been that the figure 90 per cent, which referred to the proportion of the intelligent citizens owning property and paying taxes in proportion, was raised to 95 per cent.

"Mr. Rountree also said that the committee had considered the wretched misgovernment of the city and that a substitute would be reported for Mr. Fishblate's motion, the amended motion being unanimously adopted, as follows:

"'It is the sense of this meeting that Mayor S. P. Wright and Chief of Police J. R. Melton, having demonstrated their incapacity to give the city a decent government and to keep order therein, their continuance in office being a constant menace to the peace and welfare of the community, ought forthwith to resign.'

"Colonel Waddell was authorized to appoint a 'Committee of Twenty-

five' citizens, and he named the following as members of this group: (Mr. Blake read the list from his scrap book, as follows:)

Rev. J. W. Kramer, G. L. Spencer, E. S. LATHROP, W. H. Northrop, Sr., Rev. J. W. S. Harvey, Joseph D. Smith, Gabriel Holmes, Preston L. Bridgers, Frank Maunder, HUGH MACRAE, F. H. Fechtig, F. A. Montgomery, Jos. R. Davis, John E. Crow, Junius Davis, W. F. Robertson, F. P. Skipper, J. ALLAN TAYLOR, A. B. Skelding, B. F. King, Dr. W. Galloway, Frank H. Stedman, Iredell Meares, Charles W. Worth.

"It will be noted," Mr. Blake remarked, "that three of the 'Secret Nine',—Messrs. Hugh MacRae, J. Alan Taylor and E. S. Lathrop,—were members of this newly appointed group, of which Colonel Alfred Moore Waddell was chairman and which called before it the following representative Negroes:

Dan Howard, John Holloway, Thomas Rivera, The Rev. Lee, Wm. A. Moore, Henry Green, John H. Brown, Brown & Pearson, James Green, Richard Ashe, Fred Sadgwar, John H. Howe, LAWYER SCOTT, Elijah Green, David Jacobs, H. C. Green, John Goins, John Carroll, Robert Reardon, Alex Mallett, Josh Green, Dr. J. H. Alston, Lawyer Henderson, J. T. Howe, T. C. Miller, Carter Peamon, Dr. T. R. Mask, R. S. Pickens, J. W. Lee, Isham Quick, Rev. J. W. Telfair, David Jones

"A number of the above mentioned Negroes attended the committee's meeting at 6 o'clock that evening (November 10) in the old aristocratic Cape Fear Club, which then occupied a large white dwelling as a clubhouse at the Northwest corner of Front and Chestnut streets (where the present Murchison Bank building is now located.)

"These representative Negro leaders came to this aristocratic club with their hats in their hands and with their hearts in their throats as they realized the day of Negro domination over white men in this staid old Southern city was ending. This was a most dramatic moment: 'King Numbers', or ignorant and majority rule by the blacks, was toppling, was bowing to a higher order, 'White Intelligence.'

"With the Negroes seated at one side of the long table and facing their white superiors, the conference proceeded. Colonel Waddell occupied the chair at the head of the table, and he solemnly read the mass meeting's ultimatum. He firmly explained this proclamation and announced there would be no discussion of its merits or demerits.

"The Rev. Lee, the pastor of St. Stephen's Negro church, reported he would advise Editor Manly to comply with the ultimatum. W. E. Henderson, a Negro lawyer, said he thought 'The Record' company, publishers of the Wilmington (Negro) Daily Record, could be prevailed upon to move its plant and equipment out of the city.

"Colonel Waddell informed the Negro leaders that his committee would give them until 7:30 o'clock next morning to bring a reply as to whether the mass meeting's ultimatum would be complied with without

the use of strong measures. The conference between the whites and the blacks then adjourned.

"The Negro leaders repaired to the barber shop of David Jacobs, the Negro Coroner, on Dock street between Water and Front streets, and after some deliberation, they drafted a favorable reply to the ultimatum. But this answer was unaccountably delayed it is said through intentional neglect on the part of the messenger, a Negro lawyer, A. W. Scott, (X) who is alleged to have mailed the letter instead of delivering it in person to Colonel Waddell's home at Fifth and Princess streets as had been ordered.

"The reply of the Negroes to the white ultimatum follows:

Hon. A. M. Waddell, Chairman Citizens' Committee
Wilmington, N. C.

Dear Sir:—We, the colored citizens to whom was referred the matter of expulsion from the community of the person and press of A. L. Manly, beg most respectfully to say that we are in no wise responsible for, nor in any way condone the obnoxious article that called forth your actions. Neither are we authorized to act for him in this matter; but in the interest of peace we will most willingly use our influence to have your wishes carried out.

Very respectfully,

Committee of Colored Citizens."

"Colonel Waddell waited in suspense the next morning (November 11, 1898) at his home," Mr. Blake explained, "for a reply to the ultimatum, but it was not forthcoming and he had not been advised of the favorable letter (quoted above) that had been written by the Negro committee, so at 8 o'clock that morning he proceeded to the Wilmington Light Infantry Armory, half a block from his home, where he was to report to the white citizens on the action of the Negroes in connection with the ultimatum.

"Before that hour citizens had been assembling at the Armory, each armed with a rifle and many also had pistols. It was an orderly assemblage, and there was no evidence of disorder, yet the determined men assembling there displayed a growing impatience that finally resulted in plain dissatisfaction over the failure of the Negroes to submit their reply to the ultimatum within the specified time.

"And as the minutes passed into an hour and still no response had been received, the white citizens began to grumble and to demand immediate action. They persuaded Colonel Waddell to take command and lead

X—Lawyer A. W. Scott, Negro, later became a District Judge of the United States District of Columbia Court in the city of Washington. He visited Wilmington in June 1936.

them out to 'The Record's' plant for the purpose of wrecking that establishment.

"Armed with a Winchester rifle, Colonel Waddell ordered the citizens to form in front of the Armory for an orderly procession out to 'The Record' plant, which was located in 'Free Love Hall', on Seventh between Nun and Church streets.

"As this band of silent yet determined men marched up Market street it passed the beautiful Colonial columned mansion, the Bellamy home. From the balcony of this mansion, a Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Salmon P. Chase, delivered an address shortly after Lincoln's tragic assassination, advocating Negro suffrage and thereby sowing the seeds that were now blossoming forth into a white rebellion.

"The printing press of 'The Record' was wrecked by the maddened white men, who also destroyed other equipment, and the type that had been used in producing the editorial that had reflected upon the virtue and character of Southern womanhood was scattered to the four winds by these men, who stood four-square for the virtue of their women and for the supremacy of the white race over the African.

"Some lamps that had been hanging from the ceiling of the plant were torn down and thrown upon the floor, which then became saturated with kerosene oil; and then a member of the band, struck a match, with the result that the two-story frame building was soon in flames.

"The leaders and most of the citizens had designed only to destroy the press," Mr. Blake averred, adding philosophically: "all of which proves that a mob, no matter how well disciplined, is no stronger than its weakest link.

"Colonel Waddell, plainly agitated over the firing of the building, immediately had the fire alarm sounded. Negro firemen responded to the alarm and extinguished the blaze after the greater part of the structure had been destroyed. And be it said to the everlasting credit of these Negro firemen," Mr. Blake mused, "they were the best disciplined firemen I have ever seen. Excitement reigned supreme throughout that Negro section and some of them grumbled over the burning of the plant. The white men stood stoically around the burning structure, not knowing what reaction their action would bring; and the black firemen, in their red shirts and firefighting togs, fought the flames as nonchalantly as if there were no rebellion brewing.

"The white citizens marched back in orderly formation to the W. L. I. Armory, where Colonel Waddell lined them up, stood upon the Armory stoop and said:

" 'Now you have performed the duty which you called on me to lead you to perform. Now let us go quietly to our homes, and about our business, and obey the law, unless we are forced, in self-defense, to do otherwise!'

NEGROES DRAW FIRST BLOOD

"The crowd of armed men, which had destroyed the plant and building of the nefarious Wilmington (Negro) Daily Record, dispersed, repairing peacefully to their respective homes," Mr. Blake said, continuing his narrative:

"But in about an hour the tension between the two races broke with the shooting of William H. (Bill) Mayo, a white citizen, who was wounded by the first shot that was fired in the Wilmington Rebellion as he was standing on the sidewalk near his home, Third and Harnett streets. Mayo's assailant, Dan Wright, was captured by members of the Wilmington Light Infantry and the Naval Reserves after he had been riddled by 13 bullets. Wright died next day in a hospital.

"Then the 'Red Shirts' began to ride and the Negroes began to run. . . . The Africans, or at least those Negroes who had foolishly believed in the remote possibility of social equality with the former masters of their parents, began to slink before the Caucasians. They, the Negroes, appeared to turn primal, slinking away like tigers at bay, snarling as they retreated before the bristling bayonets, barking guns and flaming 'Red Shirts'.

"Six Negroes were shot down near the corner of Fourth and Brunswick streets, the Negro casualties for the day—November 11, 1898—totaling nine. One of these, who had fired at the whites from a Negro dance hall, 'Manhattan', over in 'Brooklyn', was shot 15 or 20 times. A member of this shooting party later exclaimed:

"When we tu'nd him ovah, Misto Niggah had a look o' s'prise on his face, I ashure ye!

"One 'Red Shirt' said he had seen six Negroes shot down near the Cape Fear Lumber Company's plant and that their bodies were buried in a ditch. . . . Another 'Red Shirt' described the killing of nine Negroes by a lone white man, who killed them one at a time with his Winchester rifle as they filed out of a shanty door in 'Brooklyn' and after they had fired on him. . . . Another told of how a Negro had been killed and his body thrown in Cape Fear river after he had approached two white men on the wharf. . . .

"When 'Bill' Mayo was shot," Mr. Blake said, "there naturally flocked to the vicinity of his home a number of white men bent upon vengeance and without any sort of organization. Realizing the vulnerable position which the whites occupied in the 'Brooklyn' district, as the majority of the residents of that area were Negroes, Mr. Hugh MacRae saw the urgent necessity of organizing the whites.

"It was at first suggested that Mr. MacRae's brother, Captain Donald MacRae, commander of the Wilmington Light Infantry just back from active service in the Spanish-American war, take charge of the situation. How-

ever, the leaders sensed the dangers involved in this, as Captain MacRae was still in the Federal service and his Company "K" had not been mustered out of the United States Army; they did not think it advisable to get the Federal government mixed up in a local revolt that might have serious ramifications, as Federal intervention would make the revolt futile.

"Mr. Hugh MacRae thereupon assumed charge of the citizens in the rioting area. Some representative Negroes, alarmed over the outbreak, went over to 'Brooklyn' to consult with Mr. MacRae and the other white leaders. They informed the Negro leaders that they had heard the Negroes were gathering in large numbers at the compress and they warned that it was the intention of the whites to march on the compress and disband the Negroes. The Negro leaders, however, insisted that fright was the only reason for the large assemblage of Negroes at the compress whereupon the white leaders detailed a committee to ascertain if this were true.

"Meanwhile," Mr. Blake said, "it was reported that a number of rowdy Negroes were assembling at Ninth and Nixon streets. Mr. MacRae detailed Mr. M. F. Heiskel Gouvenier, a Northern gentleman who had settled in Wilmington a few years previously, and several others to accompany Carter Peamon, a Negro, to investigate this report. Mr. Gouvenier and his comrades accompanied Peamon to the place of the black gathering. The Negroes at this intersection, Ninth and Nixon streets, decided that they now had an opportunity to retaliate against the whites by holding Mr. Gouvenier and his associates as hostages, but Carter Peamon rallied to their defense and after several hours of wrangling they were given their freedom and permitted to return and report on the gathering to Mr. MacRae.

"When the crowd of white men learned of the treatment that Mr. Gouvenier and his two white comrades had received at the hands of the Negro mob, they became rather unruly, demanding that Carter Peamon, the Negro who had really saved the lives of Gouvenier and his comrades, should be killed in retaliation. After much argument, Mr. MacRae convinced the angry men that this would be wrong, but they insisted that Peamon should be banished from the city because of his previous anti-white political activities. Peamon was thereupon escorted to the depot, placed aboard a switch engine, and was on his way to exile, when he leaped from the moving locomotive and was shot down by some unknown white man.

"Governor Russell, in the meantime, had ordered out the State Militia, placing Colonel Walker Taylor, a brother of J. Allan Taylor, in command of the troops, although Colonel George L. Morton was really the ranking military officer in the city. The Wilmington Light Infantry, with Captain T. C. James in command, and the Wilmington division, Naval Reserves, in charge of Lieut. H. M. Chase, patrolled the streets. Captain William R. Keenan, the father-in-law of Henry Flagler, millionaire developer of the state of Florida, and Lieut. Charles H. White were in command of the W. L. I.'s machine gun while Captain Harry McIlhenny commanded the machine gun squad of the 'Secret Nine.' These rapid fire rifles were mounted on

wagons, each drawn by a team of horses, and they were rushed to various sections of the city when conditions looked threatening.

"Other military units came to Wilmington to assist the white citizens in establishing 'White Supremacy' here, as follows: The Fayetteville (N. C.) Light Infantry, the Kinston division, Naval Reserves, Lieut. W. D. Pollock in command; the Maxton Guards, Captain G. B. Patterson, and the Sampson Light Infantry, Captain H. W. Hines commanding. Military organizations from as far South as New Orleans telegraphed offering to come here if their services were needed in the contest.

"When the Rebellion was in full blast 'The Committee of Twenty-five' appointed Frank H. Stedman and Charles W. Worth as a committee to call upon Mayor Silas P. Wright and the Board of Aldermen and demand that these officials resign. The mayor had expressed a willingness to quit, but not during the crisis. He changed his mind, however, when he saw white citizens walking the streets with revolvers in their hands. The Negroes, too, had suddenly turned submissive, they were carrying their hats in their hands. The African was cringing before the Caucasian!

"Mayor Wright in obedience to the demand of Messrs. Stedman and Worth called a meeting of the Board of Aldermen, and there were present: Mayor Wright and Aldermen Gore, Twining, Benson, Hewlett, and Norwood, the latter a Negro. Absent: Alderman B. F. Keith, Merrill, and Green, the last named a Negro.

"The Mayor explained the purpose of the session, the demanded resignation of himself and the entire board, and one by one the aldermen and the mayor resigned, after each had nominated and the board had elected his own successor as dictated by Messrs. Stedman and Worth, and thus was a new Board of Aldermen and a new Mayor elected by the ousted group.

"Colonel Alfred Moore Waddell was unanimously elected as Mayor, with the following as members of the Board of Aldermen:

"H. P. West, B. F. King, A. B. Skelding, Charles W. Worth, William H. Sprunt, Preston L. Bridgers, Rev. J. W. Kramer.

"Edgar G. Parmele was named Chief of Police by the new board, which named M. F. Heiskel Gouvenier as his assistant, with John J. Furlong being chosen as captain of police.

"African continued to cringe before Caucasian as the troops paraded the streets, as the guns barked and the bayonets flared, for a new municipal administration of the 'White Supremacy' persuasion had been established in a day! The old order of Negro domination over the white citizenry had ended.

"At this juncture the 'Secret Nine' inaugurated a banishment campaign, condemning to permanent exile certain individual, white and black agitators who were alleged to have stirred up strife between the two races.

"Captain Furlong, in obedience to the order of the 'Secret Nine' went to the home of Tom Miller, a Negro agitator who had been sentenced to exile. Miller at first declined to obey Captain Furlong's demand that he

accompany him to the jail for safe keeping that night, but when the police officer called two citizens, the Negro consented to accompany them to prison.

"Miller's daughter rushed to the side of the prisoner. She followed the wagon that was conveying her father to the city jail, wailing and moaning all the way. Enroute to the prison, Miller said he would rather be dead than to have to suffer such humiliation, whereupon one of his captors informed him that if he really had no desire to live, to leap from the wagon and his last wishes would be granted instantly.

"Robert Bunting, the United States Commissioner; John Melton, the ex-chief of police; A. I. Bryant, a butcher, and a man named Gilbert were also placed in jail for safe keeping. Had they been allowed to remain at large that night they most certainly would have been the dead victims of the infuriated 'Red Shirts'.

"As it was, during the night a band of 'Red Shirts' and a mob of other incensed citizens surrounded the jail, mixing and marching and demanding that the prisoners be handed over to them. They were met at the door by Captain Walter MacRae, the new sheriff, who told them firmly that he would not permit them to take any of the prisoners, whereupon the mob dispersed.

"Next morning," Mr. Blake continued: "the Light Infantry, which had guarded the jail that night, formed a hollow square around these five objectionable men—Bunting, Melton, Bryant, Gilbert and Miller—and marched them to the depot, where they presented them with railroad tickets to Norfolk and they were warned that they were being forever banished from the city of Wilmington.

"Dr. Silas P. Wright, the dapper mayor, had left the city under cover of darkness the night before. He had maintained an office on the North side of Fourth street bridge, on the fringe of 'Brooklyn'. He always wore a Prince Albert coat, a black felt hat and gloves, and he used to drive a pair of black prancing horses through the city. He wore gloves all the time, ostensibly to hide some blemish on his hands. (Dr. Wright, later located in Knoxville, Tenn., where Captain Furlong, who later became chief of police, declined an offer of a police officer in that city to meet the former mayor of Wilmington.)

"When G. Z. French, the former postmaster and acting sheriff, who had served in the latter capacity although Elijah Hewlett was the actual sheriff who had been elected by the people, was being escorted to the station, a mob of infuriated men had gathered, threatening to hang French from a telephone pole on Front street. A titular leader of this mob started to lead the angry citizens towards the train, where French was cringing on the floor between the seats in one of the coaches. Caucasian was cringing before Caucasian in this instance.

"But Frank H. Stedman, a brother of the late Charles Manly Stedman, the last Confederate veteran member of the United States Congress rallied to the defense of French, telling him:

“ ‘French, you are a Mason, and I am a Mason. I will protect your life with my life, if necessary, but only on condition that you leave town and agree to remain away from here for the rest of your life!

“William H. Bernard, a son of a distinguished Cape Fear journalist and a nephew of Stedman, also went to the assistance of French. The former postmaster of Wilmington, who had been accused of coddling the Negroes for their votes, continued to cringe beneath the seats as the train pulled out of Wilmington. (A short time afterwards President McKinley contemplated reappointing French as postmaster at Wilmington, but Mr. J. Allan Taylor protested so vigorously that McKinley dropped the matter like a red hot potato.)

“Estimates of the number of Negroes slain in this Rebellion range from 14 to 90, although there were only 14 coroner’s juries impanelled,” Mr. Blake reported, adding with a chuckle that the Coroner, David Jacobs, a Negro, gave the self-same verdict in all 14 killings, “that the deceased came to their death at the hands of unknown persons.” Colonel Waddell himself estimated that there were twenty (20) Negroes slain in the conflict. Judge George Rountree, and Messrs. J. Allan Taylor and Hugh MacRae termed the larger estimate, 90, a gross exaggeration. There are others, however, who contend that over one hundred (100) Negroes were slain in this struggle.

“Had it not been for the military, the Wilmington Light Infantry, the Naval Reserves and the other units from nearby towns and cities,” Mr. Blake mused, “together with the conservative tendencies of the ‘Secret Nine’, ‘The Committee of Twenty-five’ and Mayor Waddell, mob rule unrestrained would have obtained during the Rebellion.

“There would have been hangings and burnings at the stake by white men turned primitive in their justifiable anger at the Negroes, some of whom had attempted to turn civilization backward in their crazy attempt to establish social equality in North Carolina and in other Southern states.

“The Wilmington Light Infantry and the other military organizations maintained guards on the street corners throughout the revolt, the citizens also performing sentinel duty throughout the days and nights in their respective neighborhoods. Negro men and women were searched on the streets for weapons, and many razors, revolvers and brass knucks were removed from concealment on their persons by the guards, who frisked the lethal weapons often times from the stockings of the women and the socks of the men.

“The banishment policy of the ‘Secret Nine’ soon aroused some opposition among some of our good citizens,” Mr. Blake said, lighting his old pipe and yawning as the clock on the mantel chimed eleven times, “for it is a poor politician who can not drum up a corporal’s guard of

representative citizens to voice disapproval at almost anything in the way of reform or change in government.

“The ministers of several denominations, who were not aware that the Rebellion had been organized and directed from the start by a group of leading and conservative citizens, called a meeting of the ministers to voice their protests over the banishments. Mr. J. Allan Taylor addressed the ministers, telling them exactly what had been done and what the white leaders further proposed to do in connection with both white and black agitators.

“ ‘But that is not legal’, two clergymen protested.

“ ‘Of course, it is not legal! Nothing is legal here just now; that is exactly what we are trying to establish—legal, orderly and respectable government!’ Mr. Taylor replied.

“When the clergy learned the movement was being directed by substantial citizens, they withheld their opposition, and things quieted down to such an extent that Mayor Waddell, in addressing the newly formed Board of Aldermen on the subject of police protection immediately after the change of administration, stated:

“ ‘Gentlemen: I could patrol this city with six women, so quiet and peaceful and orderly it is. It is like Sunday all the time!’

“Of course, there were some ignorant whites, ‘poor-bockers’ or ‘poor white trash’ as they were and are still called down South, who did some dastardly deeds under the cloak of this Rebellion,” Mr. Blake complained with much feeling, saying: “These poor individuals, in their own ignorant and primal way, vented their spleen against innocent, ignorant and harmless Negroes, possibly thinking that brutality was a method of displaying their ‘White Supremacy’ over the blacks. But happily Mayor Waddell, the ‘Secret Nine’ and the ‘Committee of Twenty-five’ did all in their power to prevent these outbreaks that were based entirely upon racial hatreds and to protect the many innocent and loyal Negro men and women from molestation.

“The weather was cold and dreary during the Rebellion,” Mr. Blake said, in commenting on an article that appeared in ‘Collier’s Weekly’ which he had drawn from his scrap book reading bits from this article, as follows:

“ ‘A chilling rain was falling from a gray cast sky, dripping on shanty tops and pattering the sodden leaves and piney mast. . . In the woods and swamps hundreds of innocent and terrified Negroes, men, women and children, wandered about, fearing the vengeance of the whites, fearing violence and death. . . Without money or food, insufficiently clothed,

they had reverted to savagery; they had fled from civilization, and sought refuge in the wilderness. . .

“ ‘Draped in their mothers’ tattered shawls, the little pickaninnies whimpered in the darkness and rain. . . Crawling, crackling things of the night kept them company in the desolation of the woods. . . Fearing to light fires that would warm them and yet betray their whereabouts to the blood-thirsty element in the white race, they sat in the bleak woods and shivered, listening for chance footsteps on fallen twigs, shuddering and peering into the darkness of the long black night—waiting, waiting and praying for the dawn of a better day or for eternity.’

“One of the first official acts of Mayor Waddell was to send searching parties of kindly disposed white men into the woods to seek out these frightened refugees,” Mr. Blake explained, “and to bring them back to safety and comfort. Mayor Waddell issued a statement to the press upon the subject of this deplorable condition, saying:

“ ‘Self-appointed vigilantes are responsible for much of this misery, because of the indiscriminate way they have gone about banishing objectionable persons; and, in some instances, unscrupulous whites have gratified their personal spite in dealing with the Negroes.’

“In the woods, in the night, in the darkness of the pines, a child cried, a coarse voice crooned softly a mournful song:

“ ‘When de battle’s ovah
We kin wear a crown
In de new Jeru - - sa - - lum!’

“Next day I heard soldiers singing thoughtlessly, in the gaiety of their hearts, a savagely suggestive refrain,” Mr. Blake concluded:

“ ‘Oh, You Mistah Niggah. You had better lie low!’”

The Brooklyn Citizen sensed the real issue involved in the revolt, as will be noted from the following quotations from its editorial:

“ . . . Yesterday, in the loyal and highly cultured city of Wilmington, North Carolina, a bloody illustration of the evils of negro enfranchisement and the possibilities of negro domination in the south were illustrated. An armed collision over the control of the municipal government resulted in the killing of nine negroes, the wounding of three whites, the revolutionary wresting of the city offices from the colored men, and their assumption by the whites. . . . It requires no argument to prove that a white man will not consent to be ruled by a negro. Right

or wrong has nothing to do with the question at all. The fact exists. So deeply seated is the antagonistic feeling that it becomes a part of the mental and moral constitution of the white race of this country. The most uncompromising of the olden time abolitionists of the land were really no exception. Their hearts bled and their sympathies were excited over the sum of all villainies. But none of them was ever found so far advanced as to invite a future in which all of the civil offices of a locality should be filled by black men. Under the conditions existing in the South, where the negroes, as at Wilmington, are in the majority, just this condition of affairs exists. The negroes act as a body. They do not vote as citizens but as negroes. Their only party is the black party. It is all right to say that that is their right under the constitution and laws. That may be admitted. Constitution and laws are not always right. They are often unendurable. When that is so and no other redress is possible men appeal to another right, as sacred as any other human right, the right of revolution. If they fail they take the consequences. If they succeed they are not rebels or revolutionists, but the principles they establish by force become thereby constitutional rights and are such before the act of formulation.

“The people of the South will not submit to be governed by negroes. Before they will yield thereto they will do on a large scale what the white people of Wilmington did yesterday on a small scale—they will appeal to arms. The men who took down their shotguns and cleared the negroes out of office yesterday were not a mob of plug-uglies. They were men of property, intelligence, culture. What they have endured from the rule of the blacks may be imagined from the nature of the remedy they applied. They simply informed their fellow citizens of more favored localities that they preferred death to a continuance of the situation. Clergymen, lawyers, bankers, merchants, when acting under such circumstances, are not a mob. They are revolutionists asserting a sacred and recognized right. Black tyranny has no special privileges over that of a lighter color.

“The error that has led to this state of affairs was the enfranchisement of the negro in the first instance. For this no one man and no one party was responsible. There were deeply thinking and patriotic democrats who voted for it, believing that this was the road out of a national difficulty and that the gift of the ballot would work the wondrous transformation and change the colored barbarian into a civilized citizen. Men of all parties and individuals of none made the mistake of beginning at

the top to build downward. It was like putting a weapon in the hands of a savage. . . . The Negro was made a full fledged citizen before he knew the meaning of the term. The experience of years has demonstrated the error. Instead of lessening, the evil has increased. That it must be ended even at the expense of revolution is the opinion of those who have suffered most from it, and the men of Wilmington have shown their faith by their works, unfortunate though they be and repugnant as is the thought of bloodshed to all of us.

“ ‘And aside from the employment of force, what remedy have the people of the south? Evidently there is but one, and that is the undoing of the original mistake that placed the ballot in the hands of the blacks. The steps must be retraced. The Negro must be disfranchised. If an entire generation of liberty and the possession of the franchise has been ineffectual to prepare him for citizenship as the white American understands the term, the black man’s case is hopeless. His mental and moral characteristics are such as to render impossible his assimilation of the fundamental ideas on which our free institutions rest. A tremendous issue—this disfranchisement of the black man, but it is evidently a real one and not distant. That or worse, a thousand times worse. That or what took place at Wilmington on a scale as wide as the evil itself.—The Brooklyn Citizen.

Other parts of the Northern press reacted very unfavorably to the Wilmington Rebellion as will be seen from the following excerpts:

“ . . . It is putting it very mildly to say merely that the outbreak between the two races in North Carolina is a disgrace to the whole country and a refutation of its claim to a capacity for self government. The city of Wilmington . . . has especially gone daft on the subject of white supremacy and yesterday an attempt was made to enforce that supremacy by shooting down negroes whenever they made even a mute protest against extermination. . . . The murderous white Democratic mob . . . was led by A. M. Waddell, who was a member of Congress about twenty years ago but unsuccessful candidate for United States Senator in 1889. . . . If there is any danger that the Filipinos may prove as untractable and as incapable of managing their local affairs as the people of North Carolina, it would be just as well for us to leave them to the tender mercies of themselves and the Spaniards.”—The New York Mail and Express.

“Meantime the abandoned black has had his compensations. Of these, one is that not only is his race rising, but that of his

oppressors falling, both in the intellectual and material plane. There is not one ‘New’ Southerner in public life today who so nearly approaches the mental standard of the Southern public man of ante-bellum days as does the negro, Booker T. Washington. The deterioration is not that which we may note in other sections, the relapse into what is called mediocrity in statesmanship which follows every great era like the war. The new Southern public man belongs to a race totally inferior to that of his predecessors. Without desiring to stigmatize and simply wishing to define, we may call him a degenerate. . . .”
—The New York Press.

Chapter III

NEGRO DISFRANCHISEMENT

"The immediate effect of the Wilmington Rebellion was the establishment of 'White Supremacy' in Wilmington, in North Carolina and throughout the South, for during the strife and immediately thereafter representatives from hundreds of Southern communities flocked to this city to learn how we had succeeded in eliminating the Negro from our political life," said Mr. Blake, in resuming his narrative for his two guests the next morning after a stroll over his beautiful estate overlooking the blue waters and green marshes of the sound.

"But the most salutary result of the whole Rebellion, Chief Joseph S. Lane, of the Wilmington Police Department, informed me yesterday," Mr. Blake reported, "is the cessation, in a large measure, of the many dastardly attacks Negroes had been making upon white girls and women, because when the 'Red Shirts' rode in Wilmington, in North Carolina and throughout other Southern states in 1898 the black man not only ran but he realized he had been mistaken in his fantastic belief of social equality with the whites and despite the fact that social equality in the strictest sense has never even been practiced by the whites among the whites. Furthermore:

"God's plan has never ordained that there should ever be a mixture of white and negro blood through miscegenation, as the slightest trace of Negro ancestry can be discovered by glancing at the fingernails of the products of such unions."

"Chief Lane also told me," Mr. Blake continued, "that the general conduct of the Negroes improved considerably immediately following the Rebellion; and he added that the two crimes now mostly charged against them are larceny and drunkenness, while intoxication is the offense with which the greatest number of whites of the present day (1936) are charged.

"The Rebellion also resulted, through Judge Rountree's 'Grandfather Clause', in removing the Negro forever, or at least until this act is repealed, as a political factor in this State and in the South.

"The Negro vote, which, as I have shown you, had decided practically all political contests from the beginning of black suffrage to the enactment of the 'Grandfather Clause', was always on the side of the Republican party. Now the Negro vote amounts to practically nothing, and this clause, which was enacted by the North Carolina General Assembly on Judge Rountree's suggestion in 1900, continues in effect to this date (1936) as the basis for electoral qualifications.

"When the Honorable George Rountree, a prominent attorney and later a Superior Court jurist, was nominated by the Democrats to the

North Carolina legislature shortly after the Wilmington Rebellion, a number of leading citizens asked him to study the question of imposing a qualification upon the Negro voters in North Carolina, who were trying to climb back into the political saddle of the state with a threatening majority that could be jockeyed to suit the whims of unprincipled politicians.

"Among the citizens who approached Judge Rountree for relief from the possibility of a repetition of the domination of the white through black ballots were the Rt. Rev. Robert Strange, D. D., Bishop of the (Episcopal) Diocese of Eastern Carolina; the Rt. Rev. Peyton H. Hogue then pastor of the First Presbyterian church, of which Woodrow Wilson's father, the late Rev. Joseph R. Wilson, D. D., was once pastor; and the Honorable Henry C. McQueen, a prominent Wilmington banker and Confederate veteran.

"After mature study," Mr. Blake continued, "Judge Rountree came to the conclusion that about the only honest method of eliminating the ignorant Negro from the politics of the state would be through the adoption of the 'Grandfather Clause' by the North Carolina legislature, which clause had just previously been adopted by the state of Louisiana.

"The Mississippi General Assembly had also adopted a constitutional provision on the suffrage which did not seem other than an election law that could be manipulated by election officials to serve the party of their choice, and this measure, although sustained by the United States Supreme Court, did not appeal to Judge Rountree and his conferees as a worthy method of handling the North Carolina situation.

"The judge and his associates thereupon sought other methods, his real purpose being to establish, as far as possible, an intelligence test for voters; and the only way of providing such a test, was through the reading and writing method, (the so-called literary test) which would prove very effective in disfranchising most of the Negroes as very few of them could read or write prior to and immediately following the Wilmington Rebellion.

"Then the question arose as to how this could be accomplished in law. It was perfectly clear at the time that if simply an intelligence test had been offered in the legislature (in 1900) that it would have been defeated by the General Assembly and the matter referred to the electorate, in which event the Negroes would have had the opportunity of voting upon and possibly killing the proposal to disfranchise them.

"So Judge Rountree went further into the intelligence test by providing that those individuals who were descendants from persons who were able to vote on or before January 1, 1866, would be qualified to register for voting within four to six years from the date of the enactment of the 'Grandfather Clause' and these individuals would not be subject to an intelligence test.

"Thus it will be seen," Mr. Blake said, "the 'Grandfather Clause',

which Judge Rountree introduced and piloted through the legislature in the stormy political days of 1900, with the assistance of his colleague, the Honorable Martin Willard, was nothing but a 'bridge' over which North Carolinians could advance from an unrestricted suffrage to a restricted electorate, which has been and is universally approved by thinking people.

"The North Carolina 'Grandfather Clause' was not intended solely to exclude ignorant and stupid Negroes from voting," Mr. Blake said, "but at the time it was thought there would be an influx of undesirable foreigners into this state. This latter contingency, however, did not develop, as North Carolina today has a very small percentage of foreign born citizens. Besides, there had been a number of free born Negroes who could vote prior to the enactment of the 'Grandfather Clause' and their descendants would also be entitled to the franchise under an exemption in this clause.

"But, of course, there were very few Negroes who dared exercise their right of suffrage at the polls after the racial whirlwind of 1898 had blown the ballots from the black hands of the ignorant members of their race. So widespread was the fear instilled into their hearts by the strong action taken against them in Wilmington, in North Carolina and throughout the South, that they dared not go to the polls in any numbers, with the result that the Negro vote has been a dead or negligible issue in the Southern States for over 30 years.

"The United States Supreme Court has decided that the 'Grandfather Clause' of Oklahoma is contrary to the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In that case, however, the clause was not used as a 'bridge' as it was and is employed in North Carolina, but the Oklahoma clause was an actual testing of the right of an individual to vote, as will be seen by comparing the two laws.

"The North Carolina Clause," Mr. Blake explained, "is in effect, a 'toll bridge', over which ignorant Negroes can not cross to the polls, but intelligent Negroes can cross this 'bridge' and cast their votes, if they have the temerity to do it, although, as I have stated, very few Negroes here in North Carolina have dared to take advantage of this exception. In some instances, educated Negroes have been denied the right to register and vote because they could not satisfy prejudiced registrars and poll holders as to their fitness to vote.

"Negro suffrage always has been dynamite in the South," Mr. Blake declared. "Even in the North it was a debatable question, and when it was seriously proposed during the administration of President Andrew Johnson, successor to Lincoln, whose assassination hastened the enfranchisement of the Negroes as retribution against the conquered Southerners, there were many Northern statesmen who forecast the 'Rule or Ruin' that followed its application in the South.

"Oliver P. Morton, Governor of Indiana during the North-South war then an idol of the Republican party and later idolized by the Federal sol-

diers returning from the fray, at first denounced the proposal of votes for Negroes without first putting them through a probationary and preparatory period," Mr. Blake recalled, adding that "Governor Morton had once declared that the admission of this 'mass of ignorance of the ballot' would bring about a war of the races.

"In stressing his opposition to the granting of suffrage to the Negroes, Governor Morton had pointed out:

" 'Why, perhaps not one in ten thousand can read!'

"Yet despite his condemnation of Negro suffrage, Governor Morton afterwards about-faced and espoused this very cause. However, his prediction of racial warfare came true in many parts of the South, later in the North, and even in the capital of the United States, where, in the very shadow of the Capitol building, white drivers of 'White and Black' taxicabs fought a gory battle with some Washington Negroes.

"Time has proved," Mr. Blake mused, "that the enfranchisement of Negroes in the South came too early in the post bellum period for them to accept the innumerable responsibilities that were to follow. The economic, social and political problems in the South were too complex for the ignorant Negroes to understand, they knew only one thing that it was through the instrumentality of the Republican party that they had been emancipated and given the right to vote, and they voted for the Republican candidates as a solid block without giving any consideration to the issues that were involved in the campaigns. This condition aggravated the problems and retarded the rehabilitation of the Southland.

"But on top of all this," Mr. Blake continued, "as Woodrow Wilson has described in his 'History of the American People', 'Adventurers swarmed out of the North, as much the enemies of one race as of the other, to cozen beguile, and use the Negro. The white men (of the South) were aroused by a mere instinct of self preservation.' And these adventurers, 'Carpet Baggers,' stirred up racial strife by misleading ignorant Negroes into believing that the day of social equality with the whites had finally dawned for them.

"These 'Carpet Baggers,' (so-called because they carried satchels made of carpet when they came South), in addition to controlling the Negro vote also controlled the state legislatures in the South, with troopers from the Northern Army of Occupation standing guard in the assemblies and intimidating the white solons in the Reconstruction period.

"Through the instigation of the 'Carpet Baggers' the North Carolina general assembly issued over \$7,000,000 in bonds, the monies from these flotations being used fraudulently in the most part and the great State of North Carolina had to repudiate these bonds or go bankrupt. When the rule of the 'Carpet Baggers' had been brought to an end, a staggering total of \$300,000,000 had been added to the state debt of the Southern States through the 'Carpet Bag Bonds'.

"Harry Thurston Peck, in his 'Twenty Years of the Republic,' gives

luminous glimpses of the horrors that obtained during the days of 'Carpet Baggery.' For instance, he cites:

" 'There was seen the spectacle of Governors of States carrying with them to low orgies bundles of State Bonds of which they filled in the amounts according as they needed the money for debauchery. Legislative halls which had been honored by the presence of learned jurists and distinguished law-givers were filled with a rabble of plantation hands who yelled and jabbered like so many apes, while drunken wenches sprawled upon the dais before the speaker's rostrum.'

"Had the 'Carpet Baggers' been men of high character they would have advocated 'Human Equality' for the Negroes instead of 'Social Equality', Mr. Blake said, "for any fool can see that there was not then, nor is there now, such a thing as 'Social Equality' even among the white citizens themselves.

"I will admit," he added, "that the Negroes of the South have made some wonderful progress as a race in education, commerce, art, literature, and religion, yet I do not think they have advanced sufficiently as a race to admit them to the unrestricted use of the ballot, although the day is not distant when they will demand their suffrage in the South.

"Already they are organizing for this very purpose. as in the Spring of 1933 prominent Negroes from all parts of North Carolina gathered in Durham and formed the North Carolina Independent Voters League, the first organization of its kind in the South. The purpose of the League, according to an Associated Press story published at the time, 'is to demand that the Negroes be given an opportunity to exercise their political rights as guaranteed by the Federal Constitution, and to further promote the Negro's participation in politics and government by way of the ballot box.'

"There are some Southerners who are so prejudiced against the Negro that they do not like to hear anything good concerning them," Mr. Blake said. "And there are some who go so far as to say education does the Negro more harm than good, although it is not in the records of any police department as far as is known that any graduate of Tuskegee, Hampton and other Negro universities, has ever been accused of attempting to assault a white woman.

"However, it has been noted by some observers in the South that the young Negroes, who have been educated in the higher branches of learning, have assumed a 'Smart Aleck' attitude towards the white people, but Mr. Virginius Dabney, a Richmond newspaperman and author of 'Liberalism in the South', sees in this nothing short of an inferiority complex, a mass bluff or unconscions defense against the possibility that somebody will challenge them from the standpoint that their grandfathers were serfs.

"The Negro is entitled to justice, which, he is not getting altogether

in the South," Mr. Blake said, filling his old pipe and puffing away on it as he paused for a moment in his narrative. Then he reflected: "In many communities he is being treated as though he were the prototype of the slinking black criminal that stealthily crept amid the shadows in doing his dastardly deeds during the Reconstruction era, whereas, in reality, the Negro has evolved somewhat higher than we are inclined to admit.

"Illustrative of Southern injustice towards the Negro is the case that was tried before Judge A. M. Stack, in Superior Court at High Point, N. C., during May, 1933, wherein a white man was charged with killing a Negro, the homicide having been perpetrated in the latter's home.

"After a comparatively brief deliberation, the jury of white men returned a verdict of 'Not Guilty', whereupon Judge Stack castigated the jurors in words that plainly show that the Negro is not without champions in the South:

" 'Gentlemen of the Jury:—You have made a great mistake. Your verdict is an absolute miscarriage of justice. This defendant was clearly guilty of murder in the first degree, and your verdict is totally a miscarriage of justice.

" 'The defense set up was absolutely ridiculous, and his contentions about the matter are totally absurd. He got his pistol, and went there to kill that man deliberately, and did kill him. He was, therefore, guilty of murder in the first degree.

" 'I never have been so surprised in all my experiences at the bar or on the bench at a verdict of a jury as I am in this case. It looks like the law against capital punishment is enforced, as some one said not long ago, unfairly against the weak and the poor and helpless.

" 'That poor 'Darkey' was shot down in his own home, inside his own door, by a man who was mad at him and armed with a pistol, and yet the jury brings in a verdict of 'Not Guilty'. He goes down there and kills him. He claims that he went and got his pistol to kill a cow. That is absolutely absurd.

" 'The enforcement of the criminal law in some instances is a disgrace to the State, a disgrace in that juries render verdicts wholly and entirely contrary to all evidence in the case.'

"This case," Mr. Blake said in returning an editorial to his vest pocket, "proves my contention that the Negroes are not getting real justice in North Carolina. Had the victim in this instance been a white man, the defendant a Negro, he would have summarily been found guilty of murder in the first degree and he would have paid the penalty with his life for the crime.

"But do not get the idea from this citation of injustice that such

prejudice against the Negro race exists in the hearts and the minds of the better elements of the white race," Mr. Blake proceeded: "For in the hearts of all true Southerners there exists an affection that is almost akin to love or devotion for the 'old fashioned darkies', many of whom possessed 'white hearts' in black bodies; and they were loyal to a fault to their 'white folks,' ministering to their 'marsters' and 'missusses' and their families from the cradle to the grave and from one generation into another and still another generation.

"While the meals prepared by the old 'mammies', or Negro cooks, have rightfully been given a place in the songs and stories of the South, their services have been so constant and so consistent throughout the years that we Southerners have been inclined to take it all as a matter of fact. These old cooks and some of their descendents, prepared the finest foods for the finest of southern tables and thus they were a big factor in a chivalrous and hospitable age, known all over the world as 'Southern Hospitality.'

"Many of these old cooks received such meager wages that they were forced, through a system of economics over which they had no control whatever, to steal from the larders of their employers, in order to provide food for their families at home. The Negro race had to subsist, and doubtless this larceny of the larder was in a large measure responsible for it surviving through the rigors of the post bellum period.

"This, of course, proves the point that while the Negro was released from actual bondage by Lincoln's premature emancipation proclamation, the race was merely transferred thereby from one state of bondage to another state of serfdom, viz: 'Economic Slavery'. Many were placed in peonage by unscrupulous operators of general stores, who provided them with credit and charged them fabulous prices for the bare necessities of life. Of course, there were other store operators, who credited the Negroes and charged them reasonable prices for their purchases.

"William Jennings Bryan once quoted from a speech that was delivered in 1788 by William Pinkney before the Assembly of Maryland that 'The Lily and the Bramble might grow in social proximity, but Liberty and Slavery delight in separation': and we Southerners should see that this economic bondage, which has shackled the whites in the South even at this time (1936) should not be permitted to oppress the Negroes, the wards of the white men, any more than it oppresses ourselves.

"And finally," Mr. Blake mused, arising from his seat and walking slowly across the room, "we should see to it that the barbarous practice of lynching should be removed from the South. This throwback to barbarianism, this reversion to the primal, has reflected no credit and will never reflect any credit upon Southern men and is not approved by Southern women. It certainly does not augur for 'White Supremacy', for if this be the only way in which Southerners can prove their social superiority over the Negroes (and mind you there can be no such thing as social equality even among white folks) then vain indeed is the whole 'White Supremacy' idea.

Additional copies of this booklet are available
at \$1.00 each
upon application to Harry Hayden
Wilmington, N. C.

FOR REFERENCE

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM