

days after Andrew Jackson and his Democratic Republicans adopted the name "Democrats."

### Clay's Whigs

Historians refer to Clay's whigs as "an organized incompatibility." They were cemented in hatred of Jackson. They were a "hodge-podge of protectionists, free traders, Southern nullifiers (later secessionists), Northern nationalists, rich Southern planters and poor Northern farmers."

The Whigs, deserted by the Southern wing in the election of 1852, were shattered in defeat. Franklin Pierce, Democrat, gratefully made Jefferson Davis, Whig of Mississippi, secretary of war.

Whig elements were powerful in the post-Civil War Democratic Party. They described themselves as "of necessity" Democrats. These powerful "Democrats" were presidents of railroads, coal and iron mines, and so on. "The king" of these was Colonel Arthur S. Colyar. Henry Watterson, of Louisville, complained in the early 1870's that six prominent newspapers in the South, though owned by "Democrats," supported "every Republican and opposed every Democratic policy."

It was this group, later joined by the pragmatic Watterson, who led the Southern wing of the Democratic party to the steal of the 1876 election from the Democratic nominee, Samuel J. Tilden, to put the Republican Rutherford B. Hayes in the White House.

The price was the end of Reconstruction, the return of the race problem to the states (the U.S. Constitution to the contrary notwithstanding) and some financial shares in the building of rail lines in the South and Westward. (These "shares" later

were to tarnish several reputations, including that of the heroic General John B. Gordon.) "The Redeemers," as the Democrats called themselves, left a record of corruption and theft equal to the scandalous steals of the Reconstruction itself.

### Other Divisions

There were other divisions. There was no love lost then between the Black Belt planters and self-styled aristocrats and the "hillbillies" of the Piedmont and mountain areas. A Delta planter, writing of the hill people, said of them that they were "the most unprepossessing breed on the broad face of the ill-populated earth — intellectually and spiritually they are inferior to the Negro, whom they hate."

It was this group of poor white farmers who were to fuel the demagoguery of Tillman, Vardaman, Bilbo, and others of like violence and racial hatreds.

The history of the Southern "Democratic Party" has been one replete with revolt against the principles of the national party — of bolts and walkouts.

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## Ralph McGill

### 'Southern Democrats'

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(That of the Republican minority was even more sordidly "opportunistic.")

The present picture of both parties in the Southern states, competitively using racist policies, cannot continue. The cost to Southern decency, prestige and education and to law and order is too great a burden to bear. Any "party" built on such foundations assuredly is built on sand.

Now, at another turning point in history, it is possible that young Democrats and young Republican may create a true two-party system.

## RALPH Mc GILL

### 'Southern Democrats'

That the South has not been truly a "one-party" region but a no-party region, ruled by a



bloc that included factions often fiercely contesting, is evident in the political traumas of our time — many of them tragic, comic and preposterous when measured against the national interests.

A bit of history is needed.

In the September 19, 1883, issue of the Jackson (Mississippi) Clarion, the editor wrote of the Southern Democrats: "A few years after the war (Civil War) all lovers of good government in the South concluded to celebrate a marriage. The contracting parties were Whiggism and Democracy and the ceremony took place in 1875, though the betrothal may antedate that time. . . . As is usual in such cases the parties now have one and the same name, but the Whig party is no more dead than is one of our fair damsels because she has cast her lot with the man of her choice for weal or woe."

The Whigs were so named in 1834. Henry Clay, heading the National Republicans, chose the name "Whig" out of the old