

# Chapter 7

## The Bourbon Era, 1876-1900

### Chapter Preview

#### PEOPLE

J. M. Wesson, L. Q. C. Lamar,  
W. B. Higate, Annie Peyton, Frank  
Burkitt, Isaiah T. Montgomery,  
James Z. George

#### PLACES

Wesson, Lorman, Starkville,  
Columbus, Mound Bayou

#### TERMS

Bourbons; New Departure  
Democrats; convict lease system;  
monopoly; crop lien law;  
Black Exodus; normal school;  
Morrill Land Grant Act; Jim Crow  
laws; *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision;  
*Brown v. Board of Education*  
*of Topeka, Kansas*, decision;  
color-line politics; Farmers'  
Alliance; Constitution of 1890;  
literacy test; poll tax







**Above:** Riverboats line up along the Vicksburg wharf to take on cargo at the close of the nineteenth century. This was the twilight of the riverboat era. Railroads became the dominant mode of transportation for goods and people during this period.

**I**n some ways, the Bourbon era is the most difficult period of our history to understand. Even the term had various meanings. The term **Bourbons** referred to Mississippi politicians who did not accept the sweeping changes brought about by the Civil War. They were compared to the French Bourbon family that was restored to power after the French Revolution. The Bourbons tried to reestablish the social and political system that existed in France before the Revolution.

Some Mississippi Bourbons, who were also called **New Departure Democrats**, favored a “New South” and a “New Mississippi” based on economic diversification. As you can see, those New Departure Democrats had little in common with the Bourbons who favored the reestablishment of the cotton plantation system.

During the 1880s and 1890s, nostalgia for the Old South, the love for the “Lost Cause” and its fallen heroes, kept many white Mississippians from letting go of their past as they struggled to build their future. It was also during the Bourbon era that black Mississippians were isolated from the councils of state government and were unable to influence the important decisions that affected their lives and the future of their children.

During Reconstruction, Democratic leaders accused the Republican Party of waste and extravagance and pledged to reduce government expenditures. After they regained control of state government in 1875, Bourbons kept that promise. Many government positions were abolished, and salaries of many others were reduced. Even the governor’s annual salary was reduced from \$4,000 to \$3,000.

Mississippi Bourbons were also committed to white supremacy and one-party rule, even at the expense of poor whites. To guarantee its control of state government, the ruling elite drafted a new state constitution in 1890 that eliminated blacks and many poor whites from voting and holding office.



# Signs of the Times

## EXPANSION

In 1876, Colorado became our 38th state. By 1896, North and South Dakota, Montana, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, and Utah brought the count to 45. In 1900, the population of Mississippi was 1,551,270. The population of the U. S. was 76,212,168.

## ART

Impressionism, introduced as an artistic style in France in the 1860s, became popular in the U.S. in the 1880s. The Statue of Liberty, built in France, was installed on what is now Liberty Island in New York harbor and dedicated in 1886.

## MUSIC

John Philip Sousa, the "March King," composed many of his marches, including "The Stars and Stripes Forever." "My Darling Clementine" was a popular song.

## LITERATURE

Mark Twain published *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882) and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884). Popular books of the 1890s included Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's first Sherlock Holmes story, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*.

## ARCHITECTURE

The Home Insurance Building in Chicago, built in 1884, is considered the first true skyscraper. When it was built in 1889, the Eiffel Tower in Paris became the tallest man-made structure in the world.

## SCIENCE & INVENTIONS

Thomas Edison patented the phonograph, the light bulb, and the kinoscope (an early movie camera). In the 1890s, X-rays were discovered. The elements helium, neon, krypton, and xenon were discovered.

## SPORTS

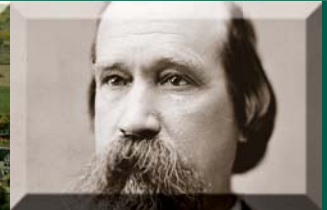
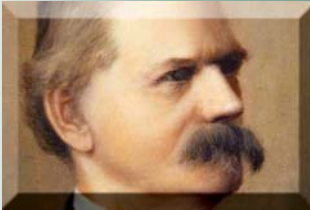
In 1896, the first Olympic Games of the modern era were held in Athens, Greece. In the 1900 Games held in Paris, women took part in Olympic events for the first time.

## TRANSPORTATION

The first automobile, the Benz Patent Motorwagen, was introduced in 1885.



# Figure 14 Timeline: 1876-1900



**1876**  
Bourbon Democrats came to power

**1877**  
Jackson College established at Natchez

**1878**  
Mississippi A&M established at Starkville

**1881**  
Legislature reduced governor's salary

**1882**  
New industries given ten-year tax-exempt status

**1884**  
Today's Mississippi University for Women established at Columbus

**1887**  
Campbell College established  
L. Q. C. Lamar nominated to U.S. Supreme Court

**1890**  
Shaw University changed name to Rust College  
Millsaps College established at Jackson  
4th state constitution

**1893**  
L. Q. C. Lamar died

1876

1880

1884

1888

1892

1896

1900

**1876**  
United States Centennial

**1879**  
Thomas Edison invented the light bulb

James Naismith invented basketball

**1885**  
Washington Monument dedicated

**1891**  
Sears-Roebuck opened mail-order business

**1895**

**1896**  
*Plessy v. Ferguson* decision

**1898**  
Spanish-American War

## FOOD

In 1886, Atlanta, Georgia, pharmacist John Pemberton mixed the flavorful syrup he had concocted with soda water to produce the first Coca-Cola.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Vaudeville shows—variety shows featuring acts by musicians, dancers, comedians, magicians, and animals—became popular in the 1880s.



# Section 1

## Mississippi's Postwar Economy

### As you read, look for

- the public scandal of the convict lease system;
- successes and problems of the railroad boom;
- the growth of the timber industry and of manufacturing;
- failures of the sharecropping system and the resulting Black Exodus;
- terms: **convict lease system, monopoly, crop lien law, Black Exodus.**

**Below:** The convict lease system was devised to save the state from the expense of keeping people in prison. In this illustration from *Harper's Weekly*, convicts are employed in rebuilding a levee on the Mississippi.

**The greatest loss suffered by Mississippi and the nation during the Civil War** was the 600,000 men who died during those four years. The second-greatest loss, especially to Mississippi, was the disruption of the economy. For several years, Mississippi's cotton fields lay in waste. Weeds





and bushes covered the southern landscape. The state also suffered from the destruction of railroads, factories, livestock, bridges, and buildings. Economic recovery had been a major goal of the Republicans during Reconstruction, but economic development was hampered by political and racial discord, and little progress was made. When the Bourbon Democrats came to power in 1876, they were not as distracted by those problems as the Republicans had been. Under the Bourbons, the state embarked on the long and difficult road to economic recovery.

### Convict Lease System

The most controversial cost-cutting scheme initiated by the Bourbons was the **convict lease system**, an arrangement by which prisoners were leased as laborers to private entities, which were responsible for their upkeep. To eliminate the expense of maintaining a state penitentiary, the state legislature authorized the Board of Public Works to lease the penitentiary to private citizens. Those citizens were allowed to hire out or lease the convicts to railroad companies, manufacturers, or planters for \$50 a year plus food, clothing, and housing. The convict lease system soon became a public scandal because the convicts were abused, overworked, underfed, ill-clothed, and ill-housed by the people to whom they were leased. When James K. Vardaman was elected governor in 1903, he discontinued this shameful system.

### Railroad Boom

One of the most significant industrial developments in postwar Mississippi was the railroad boom. The growth of Mississippi's railway system in the 1880s was spectacular. During that decade, railroad mileage increased from 1,118 to 2,366, an increase of over 110 percent. One of the major factors stimulating railroad construction in our state was the large-scale timber operations that used railroads as the primary means of transportation. Another factor was the development of vegetable farming in Copiah, Lincoln, and Lawrence Counties. Farmers shipped their produce by rail to large cities such as New Orleans, Memphis, St. Louis, and Chicago. The decline in water transportation was another factor. Many of the small rivers could no longer accommodate steamboats, and railroads soon replaced water transportation on all but the largest rivers.

There were, however, problems caused by railroad expansion. Basically, the problems stemmed from the fact that railroads were not regulated,

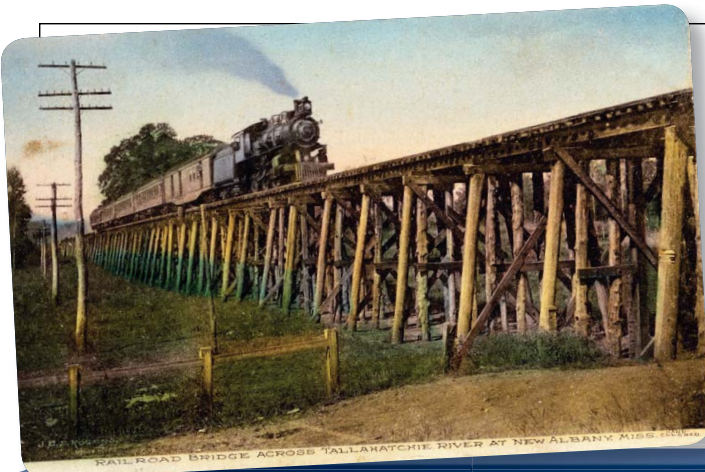
**Figure 15 Railroad Mileage in Mississippi, June 30, 1891**

Railroads	Miles
Illinois Central	636.06
Louisville, New Orleans and Texas	626.36
Mobile and Ohio	306.00
Georgia Pacific	241.31
New Orleans and Northeastern	153.04
Alabama and Vicksburg	143.49
Kansas City, Memphis and Birmingham	142.89
Louisville and Nashville	73.83
Gulf and Chicago (Narrow Gauge)	57.00
Memphis and Charleston	33.40
Alabama Great Southern	18.78
East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia	7.73
Gulf and Ship Island	7.00
Meridian, Brookhaven and Natchez	7.00
New Orleans and Northwestern	2.66

### Something Extra!

In 1883, more track was laid in Mississippi than in any other state.





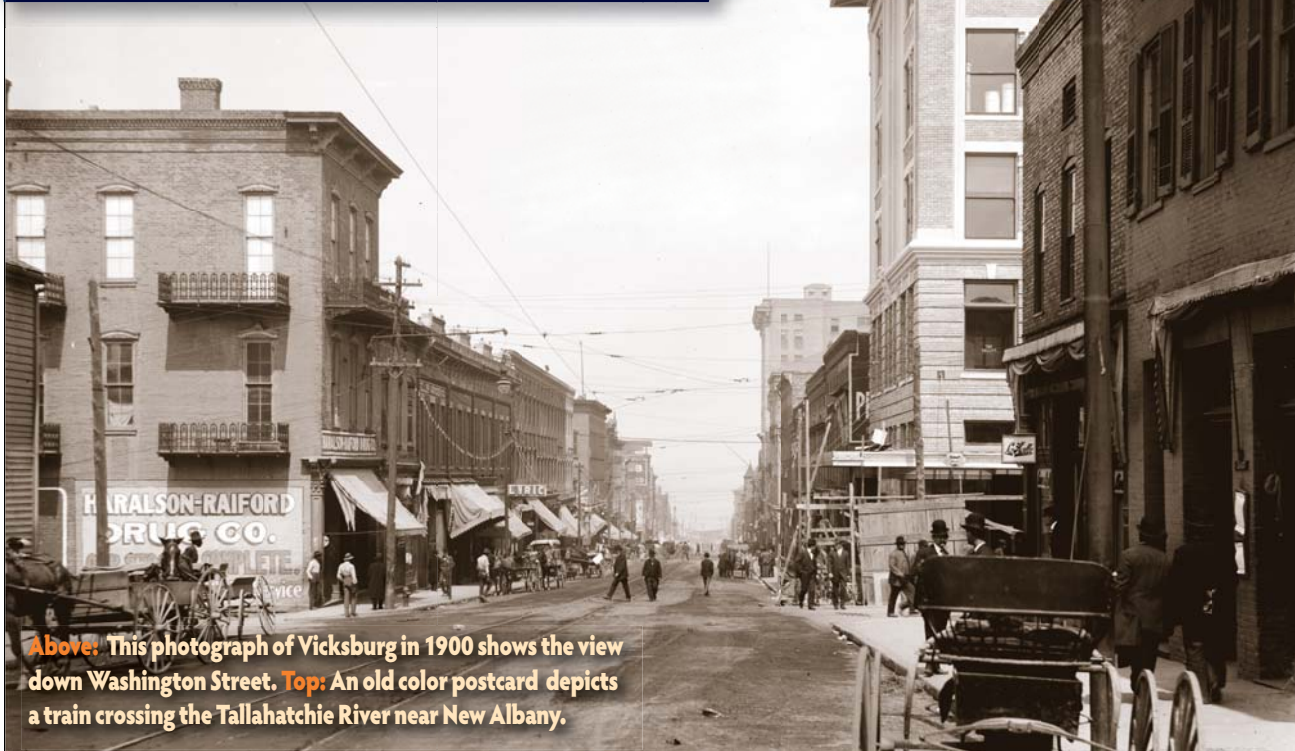
**Figure 16 Population of Towns and Cities**

TOWN	1860	1870	1880	1890
Columbus	3,308	4,812	3,955	4,559
Greenville	*	890	2,191	6,658
Jackson	3,191	4,234	5,204	5,920
Meridian	*	2,709	4,008	10,624
Natchez	6,612	9,057	7,058	10,101
Vicksburg	4,591	12,443	11,814	13,373

\*Not incorporated until later

and rail transportation was a cutthroat business. The larger lines did everything possible to drive the smaller lines out of business, and a few companies had a monopoly over rail service in certain parts of the state. A **monopoly** is the exclusive ownership or control of a product or industry by one company or group. Without any competition, these lines were free to raise their rates for shipping goods.

Mississippi farmers were caught in the middle of a rate war between several of the larger lines. Because of the long-haul and short-haul rate system, it cost a farmer more to ship his goods from Clinton to Vicksburg than it did to ship his goods from Vicksburg to St. Louis, Missouri. As you might expect, farmers were angered by this situation and demanded that the legislature regulate freight rates. Eventually, the legislature established the Railroad Commission and gave it the authority to regulate freight rates in Mississippi.



**Above:** This photograph of Vicksburg in 1900 shows the view down Washington Street. **Top:** An old color postcard depicts a train crossing the Tallahatchie River near New Albany.

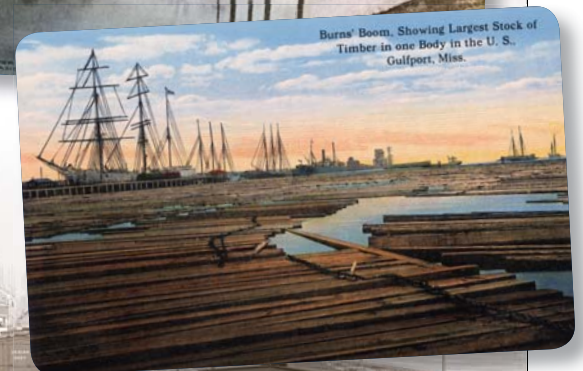


**Figure 17 Timber Production, 1870-1890**

	1870	1880	1890
<b>Number of Establishments</b>	265	295	338
<b>Capital Investment</b>	\$1,153,917	\$922,595	\$4,433,229
<b>Number of Workers</b>	1,954	1,170	4,434
<b>Total Wages</b>	\$580,056	\$97,867	\$1,287,391
<b>Total Value of Products</b>	\$2,160,667	\$1,920,335	\$5,670,774

### Timber Production

In 1865, over two-thirds of the land area of Mississippi was in timber. That virgin forest was a valuable natural resource that had not been developed in the antebellum period. After the Civil War, the state's timber resources were developed, and lumber production provided jobs and income to thousands of Mississippians. By 1890, there were 338 sawmills providing employment to 4,434 people. The total value of timber products more than doubled from 1870 to 1890.



**Above:** These late-nineteenth-century postcards illustrate the lumber business in Mississippi—an ox-drawn lumber wagon near Hattiesburg, in the Piney Woods region (top); the J. J. White Lumber Co. Yellow Pine Sawmill at McComb (middle); and Burns' Boom in Gulfport, "largest stock of timber in one body in the U.S." (bottom).  
**Left:** Timber for export is loaded on a lumber steamer at Gulfport.



**Below:** The spinning room at Magnolia Mills in Magnolia, Mississippi. Note how young some of the workers are.

**Bottom:** A postcard portrays Mississippi Mills in Wesson, the state's largest cotton mill.



## Manufacturing

Most of the state's factories were destroyed during the war, and industrial recovery was a slow and costly process. In 1882, in an effort to promote economic recovery and attract industry to Mississippi, new industries were given a ten-year tax-exempt status. By 1890, there were 16 cotton and woolen mills in Mississippi, which provided 2,266 jobs. The largest was a cotton mill

**Figure 18 Cotton Manufacturing, 1870-1890**

	1870	1880	1890
<b>Number of Mills</b>	5	8	9
<b>Capital Investment</b>	\$751,500	\$1,122,140	\$2,053,143
<b>Number of Spindles</b>	3,526	18,568	57,004
<b>Number of Workers</b>	265	722	1,184
<b>Total Wages</b>	\$61,833	\$133,214	\$290,981
<b>Total Value of Products</b>	\$234,445	\$679,093	\$1,333,398



**Figure 19 Woolen Manufacturing, 1870-1890**

	1870	1880	1890
<b>Number of Mills</b>	11	8	7
<b>Capital Investment</b>	\$195,250	\$331,500	\$1,553,455
<b>Number of Spindles</b>	344	3,734	9,196
<b>Number of Workers</b>	116	218	1,082
<b>Total Wages</b>	\$28,800	\$53,100	\$306,270
<b>Total Value of Products</b>	\$147,323	\$299,605	\$924,185

called Mississippi Mills, which was founded by J. M. Wesson and was located in the town that now bears his name. Most manufacturing establishments were directly related to agriculture.

### Sharecropping

The emancipation of Mississippi's black population and the disruption of Mississippi's banking system required a new credit system to finance farming operations. Farmers, large or small, almost never operate on their own money. They borrow money as they need it through the growing season and pay it back when they harvest their crop. When a Mississippi planter went to a banker to borrow money to make a crop, the banker was hesitant about lending him the money. He had reason to doubt that the planter could find enough laborers who would stay on the plantation long enough to make a crop. The banker would probably prefer to invest in something more promising —like a textile mill or a new railroad.

### Something Extra!

In 1880, just one year after Thomas Edison perfected the electric light, Mississippi Mills put lightbulbs to use.

It was said that passengers on the evening train would rush to the windows when passing through Wesson to see the marvelous lights in the mill.

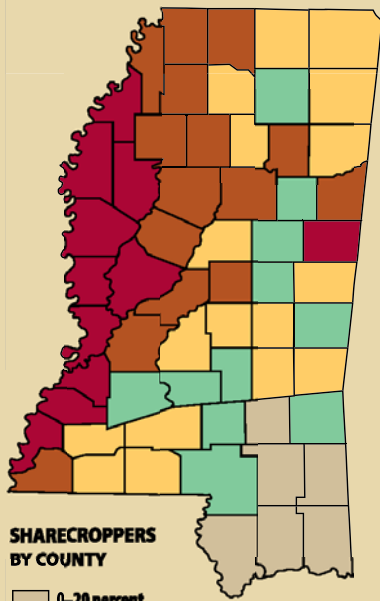
Cotton Picking Scene, Brookhaven, Miss.



**Left:** Many of Mississippi's former slaves had barely begun to enjoy their freedom when they found themselves trapped in a new form of economic bondage as sharecroppers.

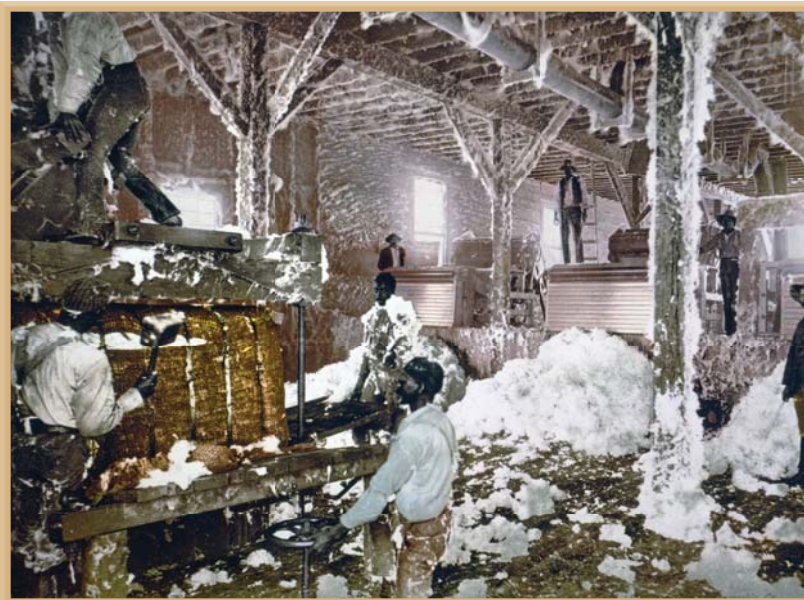


**Below:** The large cotton plantations employed paid laborers, many of whom were also sharecroppers. **Bottom:** This interior view of a cotton gin in Dahomey was taken in 1890.



If a planter was unable to establish credit with a banker, he would establish a line of credit with a local merchant. Within a few years after the Civil War, the local merchant became a key figure in Mississippi's agricultural operations. A local merchant would extend credit to a planter throughout the growing season with the understanding that the account would be paid in full when the crop was harvested. Under this arrangement, the planter resolved his credit problem. He could then turn to his other problem, finding laborers to make the crop.

In postwar Mississippi, there was a temporary shortage of labor caused by the fact that black men removed their wives and children from the labor force. Under slavery, fathers had no control over when their children started



## Map 38 Percentage of Sharecroppers by County

**Map Skill:** What was the percentage of sharecroppers in your county?





working or whether or not their wives worked. In freedom, the father controlled his family, and most black men did not allow their wives and children to work in the fields. Initially, this labor shortage worked to the advantage of Mississippi blacks. They could bargain from a position of strength because their labor was in great demand.

When a planter offered a black man a contract to work his land, the laborer could negotiate the terms of that contract. In most cases, the planter offered cash wages, but the black man usually suggested that the land be worked for a share of the crop. For the first time, blacks were in a position to demand a share of the fruits of their labor, a share of the land's bounty. Under this arrangement, sharecroppers were supplied with the necessary *furnishings* (a house, food, clothing, and medicine) by a planter during the growing season. When the crop was harvested, the cost of the furnishings was deducted from the worker's share of the crop; whatever remained from his share was paid in cash.

This system, however, did not measure up to the sharecroppers' expectations. Within a few years, the price of cotton began to decline. Sharecroppers soon found that the credit advances they received during the year amounted to more than their share of the crop. The planters and sharecroppers accumulated large debts to local merchants. Planters could settle their debts by deeding over some of their land to the merchant, but sharecroppers had no means of paying their debts. Consequently, the sharecroppers' debts were carried over from one year to the next, and they soon owed the merchant so much that they lost all hope of ever getting out of debt.



**Above: Postcards show aspects of the cotton industry—a cotton wagon on its way to market (top); a cotton compress in Amory (middle); and a cotton sample room, where buyers examined varieties of cotton (bottom).**



## Something Extra!

The black migrants who left southern states for Kansas were called "exodusters."

**Below:** The years after Reconstruction saw many freed slaves leaving Mississippi in search of a better life. Here, they are boarding a steamboat at Vicksburg. Many would eventually return.

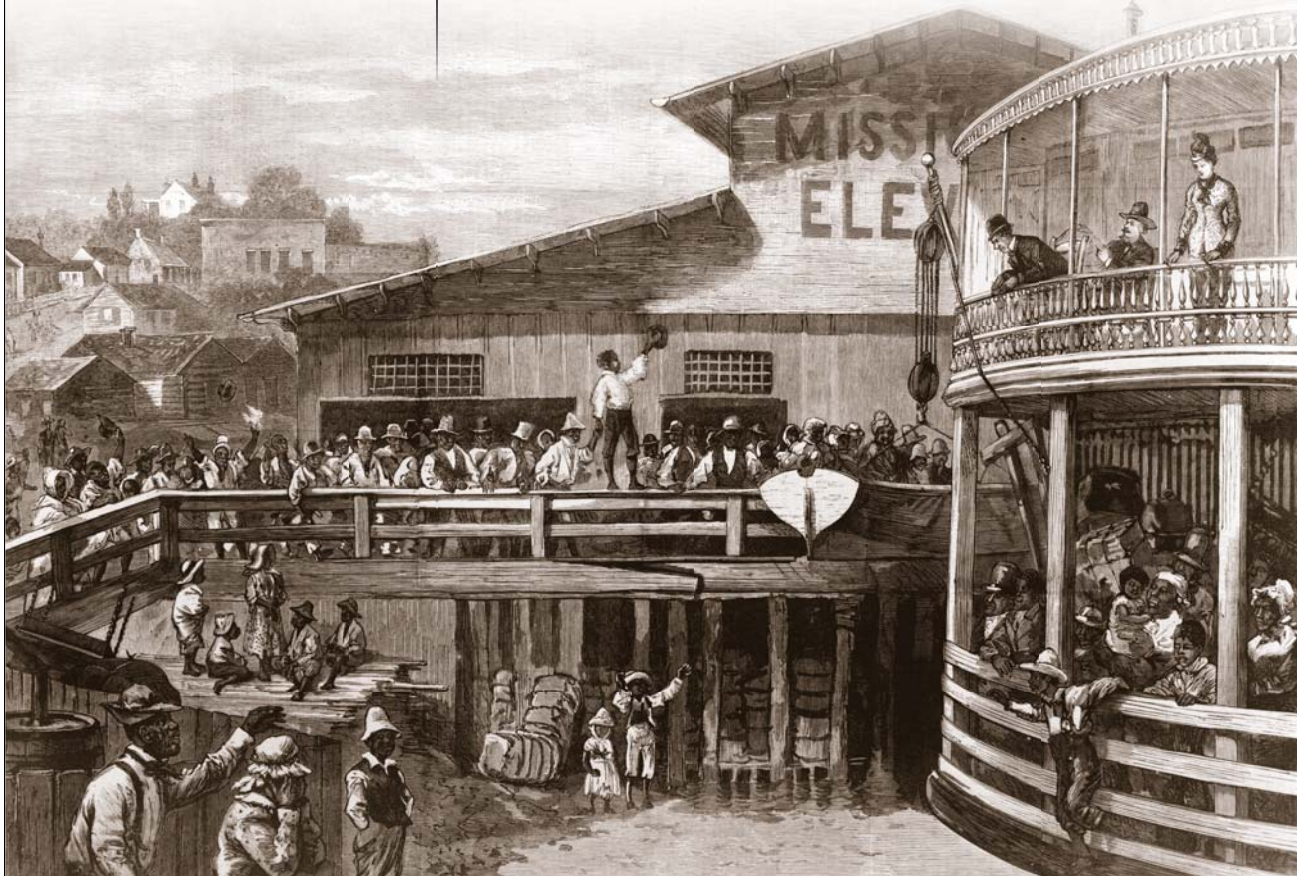
When a planter deeded some of his land to a merchant, the families working on that portion of his land signed a new agreement with the merchant. Usually, the merchant would not allow his sharecroppers to raise cows, hogs, or vegetables. Instead, he insisted that they buy food and other provisions from him. Under this arrangement, the merchant profited from the cotton his sharecroppers raised and from their purchase of food and supplies.

The sharecropping system, which blacks had initially favored, placed them in a form of bondage to the planters and merchants. Sharecroppers were required by a state law, called a **crop lien law**, to remain on the land until all their debts were paid in full. Because the price of cotton continued to decline, sharecroppers were rarely ever able to free themselves from their debt bondage. Generations of black Mississippians lived out their lives in hopeless poverty.

Although the sharecropping system and the agricultural depression of the 1880s hit blacks the hardest, many white farmers eventually lost their land and were reduced to sharecropping as a means of survival. The crop lien law applied to white sharecroppers as well as blacks. However, whites did have one advantage. They could take part in the political process: they could protest, and they could vote.

### Black Exodus

Within two or three years after Reconstruction, blacks began to leave Mississippi in such large numbers that this population shift was called the **Black Exodus**. Most of those in the exodus were farm workers who were being lured to Kansas and other midwestern states by promises of high-paying jobs.





The black migrants were recruited by fast-talking labor agents who told them that they would make such good wages they would soon be able to buy their own land. Those promises were greatly exaggerated, and the six thousand Mississippi blacks who moved to Kansas in the 1870s found only poverty and exploitation. One Mississippian wrote to his friends back home, “Negroes are not any more respected in Kansas than they are in Mississippi.” Another wrote to his friends and family, “You had better stay where you are.” Most Mississippians who moved to Kansas during this exodus eventually returned. There was another significant out-migration of Mississippi blacks in the 1920s and 1930s. We will study that population shift in Chapter 8.

## Something Extra!

The U.S. Census of 1880 listed fifty-one Chinese in Mississippi, mostly in Washington County.

### Attracting European and Chinese Immigrants

Many white planters and political leaders believed that the Black Exodus would create a critical labor shortage in the state. To offset a possible shortage, the Bourbons initiated a campaign to attract European and Chinese immigrants to Mississippi.

Brochures and pamphlets *touting* (talking up) the advantages of living in Mississippi were published in several foreign languages and distributed in Denmark, Norway, and other European countries. Those attempts were not successful, and only a few European immigrants came to Mississippi before the early 1900s.

The effort to attract Chinese laborers was only slightly more successful. Delta planters hired labor agents to recruit Chinese families on the West Coast. They even provided transportation for those who moved to Mississippi. Although several Chinese families moved to the Delta and initially worked as farm laborers, most of them soon became small merchants. The failure to attract a significant number of European and Chinese immigrants meant that blacks would continue to supply the labor for Mississippi’s large plantations.



**Above:** Most Chinese immigrants, like the family in this postcard, lived on the West Coast. Attempts to lure them to Mississippi as agricultural workers to replace the blacks who had left met with very little success.

### Reviewing the Section

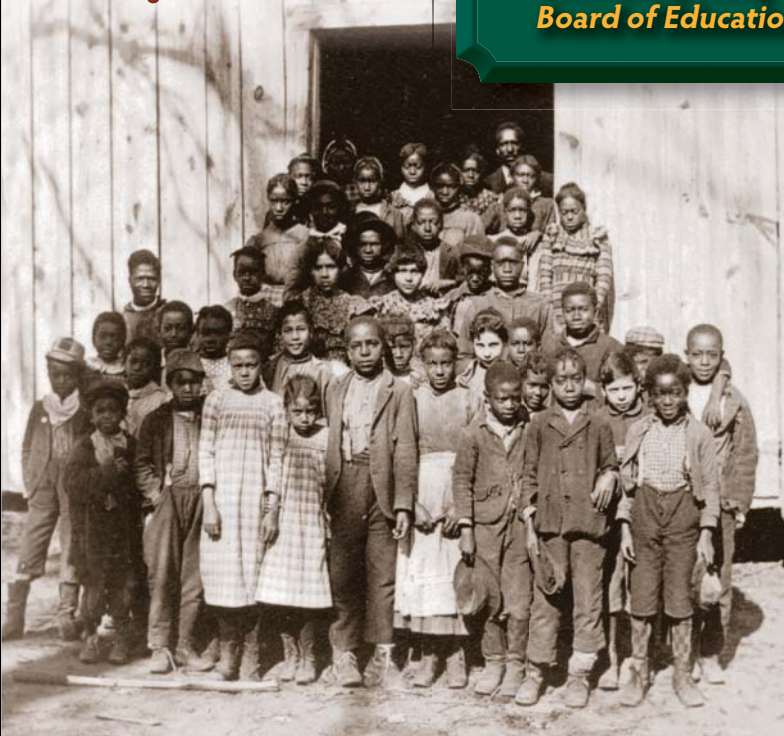
1. Define in sentence form: convict lease system, crop lien law, Black Exodus.
2. What factors led to the railroad boom in post-Civil War Mississippi?
3. Why was the Bourbons' campaign to attract immigrant laborers to Mississippi unsuccessful?



## Section 2

# Education in Postwar Mississippi

**Below:** The students and teachers of a black school in Sykes Chapel pose on the schoolhouse steps in this 1900 photograph. Spending on public education declined under the Bourbons, and there was even less enthusiasm for educating black children.



### As you read, look for

- declining expenditures for public education and increasing support for higher education during the Bourbon period;
  - the establishment of the nation's first agricultural and mechanical college for blacks and the first state college for women;
  - the enactment of the Morrill Land Grant Act and the resulting establishment of Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College;
  - the founding of other public and private universities in Mississippi;
- terms: **normal school; Morrill Land Grant Act; Jim Crow laws; Plessy v. Ferguson decision; Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, decision.**

**In the 1880s, there was a large surplus** in the federal treasury, and a bill was introduced to allocate some of those funds to the nation's common schools. Mississippi Senator L. Q. C. Lamar made an impassioned plea in support of the bill. "We have school houses; we have teachers," he said, "all that we need is the money. . . . This bill is a decided step toward the solution of the race problem. The problem of race in a large part is the problem of illiteracy." Unfortunately, the bill that would have brought millions of dollars to the southern school system was not passed, and Mississippi schools were underfunded.



## Public Education under the Bourbons

The efforts of Bourbon leaders to economize extended to almost every aspect of government services, including public education. The opposition to the education of blacks continued to hamper the public school system. During most of the Bourbon period, there was a declining enrollment in black schools. In 1890, less than half of the black school-age children attended school. Teachers' salaries and expenditures for both white and black schools also declined. In 1872, the Republican legislature appropriated approximately \$1,137,000 for public education in Mississippi. Ten years later, the Bourbon legislature appropriated only \$758,000.

## Higher Education under the Bourbons

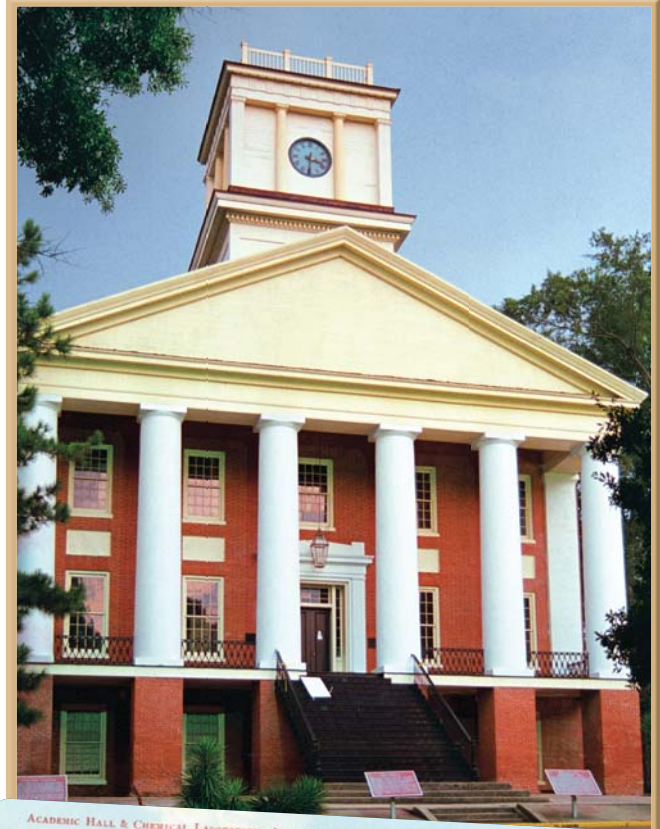
Colleges and universities received much more support during the Bourbon era than elementary and secondary schools. Mississippi established the nation's first agricultural and mechanical college for blacks and the first state college for women. From the end of the Civil War to the beginning of the twentieth century, four state institutions of higher learning and several private colleges were established in Mississippi.

### Alcorn State University

In 1871, the legislature established Alcorn University at Lorman and named it for Governor James L. Alcorn. Its name was changed to Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College (Alcorn A&M) in 1878 when it began receiving federal funds to educate young black men in the mechanical and agricultural arts. Alcorn A&M was the first agricultural and mechanical college for blacks in America. Although Alcorn A&M originally limited its enrollment to male students, it began admitting women unofficially in 1884 and officially in 1903. Over five hundred young women applied for admission when Alcorn became coeducational. In 1974, its name was again changed—to Alcorn State University.

### State Normal School at Holly Springs

State Normal School, a coeducational state teachers' college for blacks, was originally established in 1870 as a department at Shaw University in Holly Springs. **Normal school** is the traditional name for a teacher training school. Its enrollment grew rapidly, and it was separated from Shaw in 1873. State Normal President W. B. Higate was accused of encouraging his black students to be "uppity" and ambitious, and he was fired in 1886. State



**Top:** Alcorn University took over the campus of Oakland College, which had closed at the beginning of the Civil War. Oakland Memorial Chapel is one of the few original buildings. **Above:** This early postcard shows Alcorn's Academic Hall and Chemical Laboratory.





**Above:** In 2009, it was proposed that the name of the Mississippi University for Women in Columbus be changed to Reneau University in honor of Sallie Reneau, who originally proposed a state-supported college for women in 1856. However, the name change was opposed by some students and alumni and was never adopted.

## Something Extra!

The Mississippi University for Women campus is home to the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science, the state's only public, residential, co-educational high school for academically talented juniors and seniors.

Normal School survived this episode and was praised by Governor John M. Stone in 1896 as one of Mississippi's best investments in public education. In 1904, Governor James K. Vardaman urged the legislature to abolish the entire black school system because knowledge "inspires aspirations" in blacks that endanger white supremacy. After the legislature refused to abolish the black school system, Governor Vardaman vetoed the appropriation for State Normal School, and the institution that had trained two thousand black schoolteachers closed.

### Mississippi State University

In 1862, the U.S. Congress passed the **Morrill Land Grant Act** that granted each state a large area of federal land to be used in support of an agricultural and mechanical college. Originally, the land grant was made to The University of Mississippi at Oxford, which began offering agricultural courses in 1872. However, because only a few students enrolled in those courses, the need for college training in scientific agriculture was not being met. Consequently, in 1878, the state legislature chartered Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College (Mississippi A&M) and located the state's white land grant college at Starkville. This institution has made enormous contributions to the social and economic development of our state. In 1935, the name of Mississippi A&M was changed to Mississippi State College, and, in 1958, to Mississippi State University.

### Mississippi University for Women

As we learned in Chapter 5, Sallie Reneau persuaded the state legislature to establish a college for women, but the legislature did not appropriate funds for the institution. Although The University of Mississippi began



admitting women students in 1882, the movement for a separate women's college continued to gain support. In 1884, the state legislature established the Mississippi Industrial Institute and College for White Girls of Mississippi in Columbus. Annie Peyton, one of the state's leading advocates for the establishment of the Industrial Institute and College, was also one of the college's first woman teachers. The Industrial Institute was later renamed Mississippi State College for Women in 1920 and Mississippi University for Women in 1974. Under a federal court order, Mississippi University for Women began admitting male students in 1982.

### Jackson State University

Jackson College was established at Natchez in 1877 by the Baptist denomination. The college was moved to Jackson in 1882, and it became a state-supported institution in 1940. In 1974, Jackson College was renamed Jackson State University.

### Private Colleges

After their emancipation, blacks were eager to get an education, and several black private colleges were established in Mississippi soon after the war. Campbell College was established in 1887, with branches in Vicksburg and Friars Point. In 1898, the two branches were combined and transferred to Jackson. Campbell College, which was originally established by the African Methodist Episcopal Church, eventually merged with Jackson State University.

Shaw University was established at Holly Springs by the Mississippi Conference of the Methodist

**Below:** A postcard gives a bird's-eye view of the Rust College campus in Holly Springs. **Bottom:** Founded as Natchez Seminary in 1877 and moved to Jackson in 1882, Jackson State University now boasts a modern 125-acre campus.







**Above:** Millsaps College in Jackson was endowed by banker and philanthropist Reuben W. Millsaps, who, with James L. Alcorn, was one of the leaders of the scalawags.

Episcopal Church in 1866. Although Shaw University faced great financial difficulty, it survived; in 1890, its name was changed to Rust College.

Tougaloo College was established by the American Missionary Association at Jackson in 1869. A teacher education department was maintained at Tougaloo and received state aid until 1891. Since that time, Tougaloo has operated as a privately endowed college.

The Methodist denomination established two colleges for white women, the Port Gibson Institute (1869) and Grenada College (1882). This denomination had established Whitworth College for Women in Brookhaven just prior to the war in 1858. None of these colleges is still in existence. Blue Mountain (1869) and Belhaven (1883) were also women's colleges and were supported by the Baptists and Presbyterians. Both institutions are now coeducational. Millsaps College, a private coeducational institution, was founded in Jackson in 1890 by a gift from Reuben W. Millsaps. In later years, Millsaps College became affiliated with the Methodist Church.

### ***Plessy v. Ferguson***

In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation of public facilities did not violate the U.S. Constitution if the separate facilities were equal. The decision was rendered in a case involving a Louisiana law that segregated passengers on railroad cars. Mississippi and other southern states took full advantage of this decision and passed several laws known as **Jim Crow laws**, which segregated public schools and all other public facilities. The ***Plessy v. Ferguson* decision** remained in effect until the ***Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, decision*** overturned it in 1954.

### **Reviewing the Section**

- 1. Define in sentence form: normal school, Morrill Land Grant Act, *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision.**
- 2. In 1890, what percentage of black school-age children attended school?**
- 3. What were the historical "firsts" involving today's Alcorn State University and Mississippi University for Women?**



## Section 3

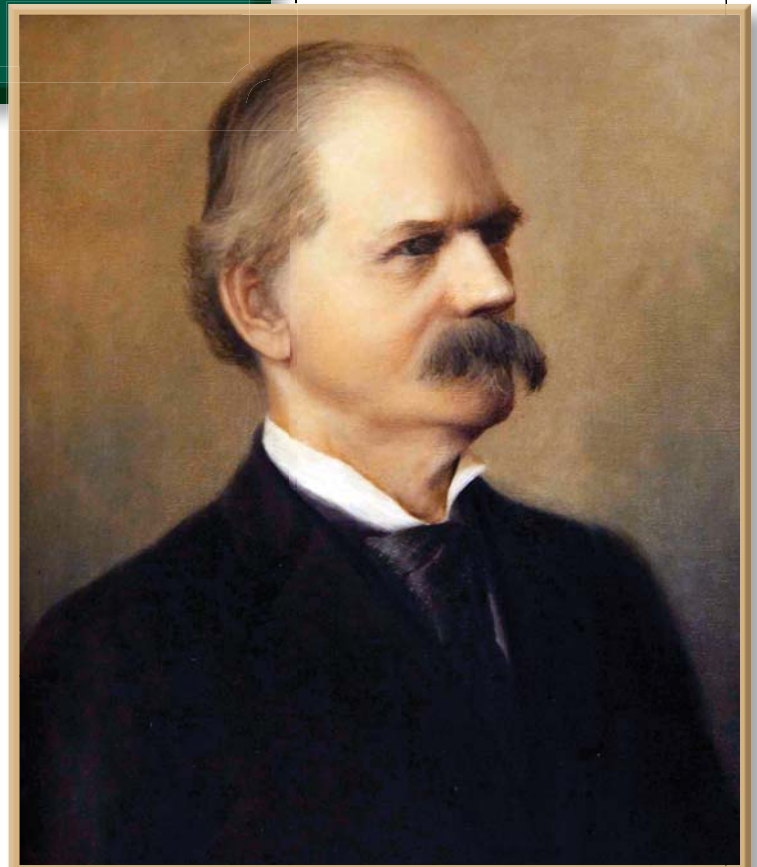
# Postwar Politics and the Constitution of 1890

### As you read, look for

- how Democratic officials used the one-party system and color-line politics to stay in power;
- the conditions that led white farmers to join the Farmers' Alliance;
- the motivations of Bourbon politicians for drafting a new constitution;
- provisions of the Mississippi Constitution of 1890;
- terms: **color-line politics, Farmers' Alliance, Constitution of 1890, literacy test, poll tax.**

As we learned in the last chapter, the Democratic politicians who engineered the defeat of the Republican Party in 1875 were sometimes called Redeemers by Mississippi newspapers—because they “redeemed” the state from the “evil and corruption” of Republicans during Reconstruction. This power elite controlled the Democratic Party and defeated all attempts to revive the Republican Party or to organize new parties. Their strategy to maintain political power was both clever and effective. It involved the creation of a one-party system and the establishment of **color-line politics**, which is the exclusion of blacks from political affairs solely on the basis of their color. The drafting of a new state constitution in 1890 was also designed to keep power in the hands of the Bourbons through the disfranchisement of black and poor white citizens.

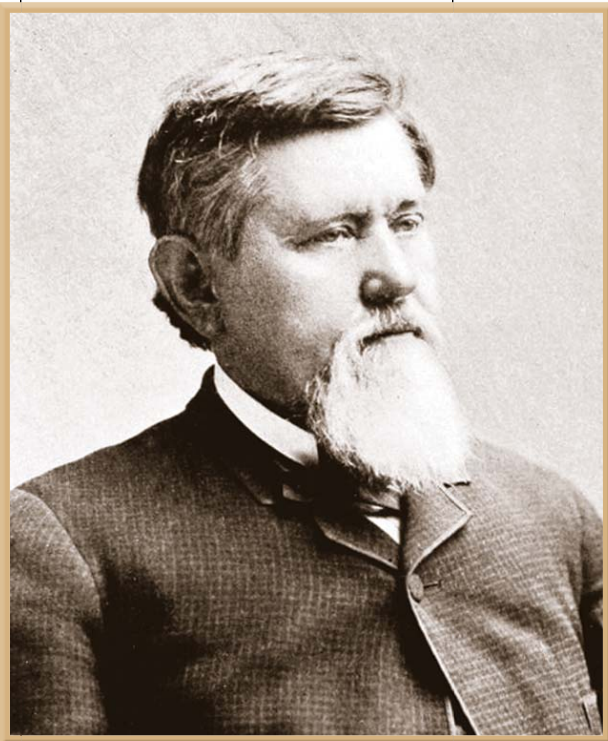
**Below:** John M. Stone became the governor of Mississippi upon the resignation of Adelbert Ames in 1876. He was elected to a full term the following year, and served a total of 12 years as governor, from 1876 to 1882, and from 1890 to 1896. He is Mississippi's longest-serving governor.





## Something Extra!

When Governor Stone left office, he was named president of the Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College at Starkville (now Mississippi State University), which had been established during his administration in 1878.



**Above:** James Z. George, a Confederate veteran and chief justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court, was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1880. He was an influential delegate to the 1890 constitutional convention, drafting Article 13 that provided for legislative apportionment.

## One-Party System

Bourbon politicians, who were strongly supported by most Mississippi newspapers, constantly talked about how bad Republican rule had been and how burdensome taxes had been during Reconstruction. They told the people that corruption and waste in state government had left them with an enormous public debt. They accused Republican officials of all sorts of things that were really not true. Newspapers echoed those accusations and added some of their own. The desired result of this political propaganda was to create in the minds of the people a great fear and dread of the Republican Party. The people believed and trusted their leaders and formed a distrust and disdain for the Republican Party. When other political parties were organized, Democratic officials told the people that those parties were Republicans in disguise. For nearly a century, the state of Mississippi maintained a one-party system.

No public figure in Mississippi better illustrates the results of a one-party system than John M. Stone. Between 1876 and 1900, Stone served as governor for 12 of those 24 years. He became governor following Adelbert Ames's resignation in 1876, then was elected to a full term in 1877 by the astounding vote of 97,729 to 16. Governor Stone served as governor longer than any other man in Mississippi history.

## Color-Line Politics

The second method that Democratic officials used to maintain their control over state government was to establish color-line politics in Mississippi. The chief architect of this strategy was L. Q. C. Lamar. As a U.S. senator and secretary of the interior, Lamar significantly influenced political appointments in Mississippi. Lamar used his influence to get minor appointments for black Republicans, but almost never appointed white Republicans. By not appointing whites, Lamar kept blacks in control of the Mississippi Republican Party. From the 1880s until the 1950s, the Mississippi Republican Party remained almost exclusively a black person's party.

## Politics of Personality

In a one-party system where all the candidates are in agreement on the major issues, factions and *cliques* (narrow, exclusive groups) will inevitably develop around a strong personality. This is one of the reasons that Mississippi has produced so many dramatic and *charismatic* (charming and appealing) politicians. If candidates do not differ on the issues, they must adopt the politics of personality, in which they capitalize on their personal charisma and *oratorical* (speechmaking) skills. During the Bourbon era, the most successful Mississippi politicians were those who could "cuss" the Republicans the loudest and were the most effective in promising to keep the blacks "in their place."



## Frank Burkitt and the Farmers' Protest

Because of the wretched conditions of agriculture in Mississippi in the 1880s, white farmers accused the Bourbons of neglecting their interests. Thousands of Mississippi farmers joined the **Farmers' Alliance** (a fraternal organization of white farmers that began in Texas in the mid-1870s and swept across the South during the late 1880s). This alliance encouraged cooperative buying and selling among farmers as a means of raising the price of their crops and holding down the cost of goods they bought. It also encouraged farmers to register to vote and to participate in political campaigns. The chief spokesman for white farmers was Frank Burkitt of Chickasaw County.

## A New Constitution in 1890

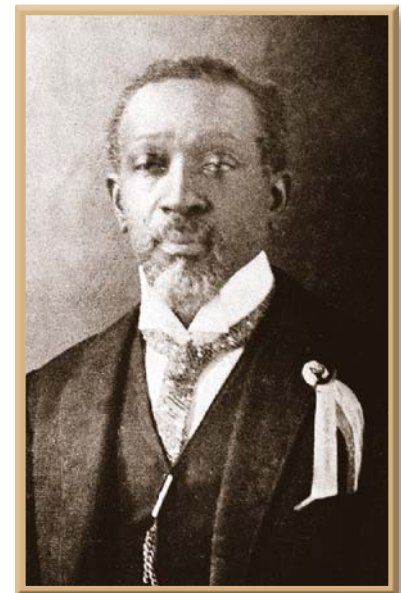
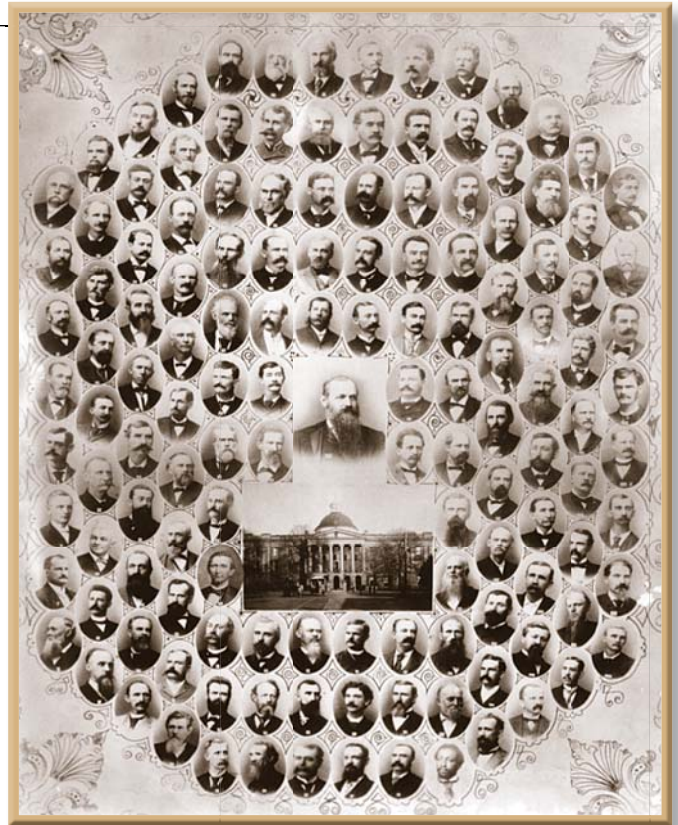
The increasing political unity among poor white farmers worried the Bourbons, and they decided that the best way to guarantee their continued control of state government, and to keep blacks in their place, was to draft a new state constitution. The **Mississippi Constitution of 1890**, which was drafted by the Bourbons, gave them control of the state legislature and disfranchised both blacks and poor whites, who were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the Bourbon rulers.

## Major Provisions of the Constitution of 1890

On August 17, 1890, a constitutional convention assembled in Jackson to write a new constitution. Of the 134 delegates, 130 were Democrats, 2 were Republicans, 1 was a conservative, and the other delegate was a member of a minor political party. Isaiah T. Montgomery, the founder of Mound Bayou, a small black community in Bolivar County, was the only black delegate. The most influential delegate at the convention was U.S. Senator James Z. George.

The voting requirements written into the new constitution included a **literacy test** (a test to determine whether a person could read or write before being allowed to vote). It also required the payment of \$2 as a **poll tax** (a tax that had to be paid before a person could vote). These two provisions were specifically designed to make it difficult for Mississippi blacks to register and virtually eliminated blacks as a major force in state politics. After the adoption of these new requirements, the number of black voters decreased from 142,000 in 1890 to 8,615 in 1892. These voting requirements also eliminated many poor white farmers.

The legislative apportionment drafted by Senator James Z. George was based on the total number of males over twenty-one years of age, black and white, in each county. This apportionment plan gave the majority black counties in the Delta and along the Mississippi River control over the legislature and the state Democratic Convention. Because those counties had



**Top:** This composite portrait of the delegates to the 1890 constitutional convention shows the the ratio of white to black was 133 to 1. **Above:** Isaiah T. Montgomery, founder of Mound Bayou, was the only black delegate to the 1890 constitutional convention.





**Above:** Delegates to the 1890 constitutional convention gathered for a reunion photograph on the steps of the new state capitol in the early 1900s.

## Something Extra!

Although the Constitution of 1890 remains in effect today, it has been amended so frequently that it bears little resemblance to its original forms and purposes.

large overall populations of adult males but small populations of voting black males, the voting white males in the counties elected a disproportionate number of the state's legislators. Consequently, the Democratic Party and the state legislature remained under Bourbon control for another twelve years.

### Other Provisions of the Constitution of 1890

The public school system with a four-month compulsory school term was continued under the 1890 Constitution. After the 1954 *Brown* decision ordering desegregation of the public schools, the Mississippi compulsory school attendance law was repealed.

The four-year term of the governor was also continued, but the chief executive was not allowed to succeed himself. Several other state officials, including the treasurer, auditor, and county sheriffs, were also prohibited from serving two terms

in succession. State judges were appointed by the governor under the new constitution. In the early twentieth century, the constitution was amended to provide for the election of all judicial officials.

### A New Political Faction

The 1890 Constitution was a disappointment to Mississippi's white farmers. They achieved virtually none of their goals. After the adoption of this new constitution, small farmers and day laborers in the Piney Woods and Northeast Hills formed a new political faction, known as the "rednecks," and eventually took control of state government. We will study this exciting period of Mississippi history in the next chapter.

### Reviewing the Section

1. Define in sentence form: Farmers' Alliance, literacy test, poll tax.
2. How did the Bourbon politicians bring about fear and dread of the Republican Party?
3. What provisions regarding elected officials and judges were included in the Constitution of 1890?



# Of Special Interest

## L. Q. C. Lamar

**Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus** Lamar is a singular figure in American history. He was one of the few men to serve in all three branches of the federal government, and his illustrious career spanned the great divide of Civil War. In January 1861, as a young professor at the state university, Lamar drafted Mississippi's Ordinance of Secession. In 1874, as a young congressman, Lamar eulogized Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner in a speech that began the healing of the nation.



Although born in Georgia and educated at Emory University, L. Q. C. Lamar is indelibly linked with Mississippi and its state university. Both his father-in-law, Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, and his son-in-law, Edward Mayes, were chancellors of The University of Mississippi. In 1851, while serving as assistant professor of mathematics at the university, Lamar debated U.S. Senator Henry Foote at a great rally on the Oxford Square. The young professor won the debate, and his exuberant students "wild with excitement and pride bore him away from the hustings upon their shoulders."

During the Civil War, Lamar served as a colonel in the 19th Mississippi Infantry and as judge advocate of General A. P. Hill's corps in the Army of Northern Virginia. After the Civil War, Lamar advised Mississippians to accept the results of the war and emancipation and to safeguard the rights and liberties of the former slaves.

In 1872, he was elected to the U.S. Congress. His eulogy of Senator Charles Sumner made Lamar one of the most influential Democrats in the country. As he concluded his eulogy, Congressman Lyman Trumain of New York exclaimed, "My God, what a speech, and how it will ring throughout the country." Another congressman said, "The House was electrified." The national press showered the former Confederate colonel with praise, and Lamar soon became the best known and

most admired "Rebel" north of the Mason-Dixon Line.

After serving two terms in the House of Representatives, Lamar was appointed to the U.S. Senate. During his second term in the Senate, President Grover Cleveland named Lamar secretary of the interior. In 1887, President Cleveland appointed Lamar to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Lamar's tenure on the Supreme Court, from January 1888 to January 1893, was plagued by his declining health and advancing age. In January 1893, on a journey from Washington to the Mississippi coast for a period of recuperation, Lamar died at the age of sixty-eight near his birthplace in Georgia. Henry W. Grady, the legendary editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, said of Lamar, "I believe no man from the South has ever been so perfectly equipped for public life as Lamar."

L. Q. C. Lamar now rests in peace, in a place of honor in St. Peter's Cemetery in Oxford, Mississippi. He is revered in death as he was loved in life.

# Chapter Review

## Chapter Summary

### Section 1 Mississippi's Postwar Economy

- The Civil War destroyed 600,000 lives and disrupted the economy of all states. Under the Bourbons, Mississippi worked toward recovery.
- The convict lease system became a public scandal because of abuses. Governor James K. Vardaman discontinued the system in 1903.
- During the 1880s, Mississippi's railroad mileage increased over 110 percent.
- Declining water transportation but increasing timber and vegetable production stimulated railroad construction.
- Larger rail lines could cut out competition and raise their rates; eventually the Railroad Commission regulated freight rates.
- Tax incentives brought cotton and woolen mills to Mississippi.
- A planter who couldn't borrow from a bank would establish credit with a merchant and pay him back after the harvest.
- Many black laborers were sharecroppers. When cotton prices fell, they couldn't repay their credit advances and became hopelessly in debt.
- The crop lien law required sharecroppers to remain on the land until debts were paid; many could never pay them.
- Some black Mississippians moved to Kansas and other midwestern states in the Black Exodus. Many found only poverty and exploitation and returned home.
- Bourbons weren't very successful in attracting European and Chinese laborers to Mississippi. The few Chinese in the Delta soon became merchants.

### Section 2 Education in Postwar Mississippi

- During the Bourbon period, black enrollment de-

clined. Public school expenditures decreased, but support for colleges and universities increased.

- Alcorn A&M was America's first agricultural and mechanical college for blacks.
- State Normal School was a coeducational state teachers' college for blacks.
- Mississippi A&M College (now Mississippi State University) was established at Starkville in 1878 with a Morrill Land Grant.
- In 1884, the legislature established what is now Mississippi University for Women.
- Private colleges for black students included Campbell College, Shaw University (now Rust College), and Tougaloo College. Church denominations sponsored Millsaps College and several women's colleges.
- The 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court ruling said that public facilities (including schools) could be "separate but equal."

### Section 3 Postwar Politics and the Constitution of 1890

- Bourbon politicians, supported by newspapers, accused Republicans of wrongdoings. This helped Democrats maintain a one-party system for nearly a century.
- L. Q. C. Lamar advanced color-line politics by appointing blacks to only minor positions.
- Candidates adopted the politics of personality, emphasizing charisma and oratorical skills.
- The Farmers' Alliance helped farmers through cooperative buying and selling and encouragement to participate in politics.
- The Bourbons' Constitution of 1890 gave them control of the state legislature and disfranchised blacks and poor whites with a literacy test and poll tax.
- A new legislative apportionment plan gave Delta and Mississippi River counties control over the legislature and Democratic Convention.



## Activities for Learning

### Understanding the Facts

1. Describe the Mississippi Bourbons.
2. What types of prisoner abuse resulted from the convict lease system?
3. What method was used to attract industry to Mississippi?
4. What was the largest cotton mill in Mississippi? Who was its founder?
5. What did the crop lien law require of debtors?
6. Identify four present-day Mississippi universities founded during the Bourbon era.
7. What U.S. Supreme Court case provided legal justification for the segregation of Mississippi's public schools and public facilities?
8. Which political party dominated politics in Mississippi during the Bourbon era?
9. Who is Mississippi's longest-serving governor?
10. Whom did the Mississippi Constitution of 1890 disfranchise?

### Developing Critical Thinking

1. How did sharecroppers often become deeply indebted to local merchants?
2. Compare and contrast the setbacks experienced by blacks and white farmers during the Bourbon era.

### Writing across the Curriculum

Using your imagination, step into the Sykes Chapel school photograph (page 198). Write about your educational experience at this school. For example, describe the schoolhouse, the furniture, the equipment, the length of the school day, the subjects you study, and your classmates and teacher.

## Exploring Mississippi on the Internet

1. Go to <http://www.msrailroads.com/Shortlines.htm>. Select any Mississippi short-line railroad and read the information and look at the map. What were the railroad's years of operation? Equipment used? How many stops on this railroad line?
2. Go to <http://digital.library.msstate.edu/collections/>. Search the collection using the words "sharecropping contracts," and read one of these digital documents. What are the terms of the contract?

## Building 21st-Century Skills: Interpreting Tables

Tables present numerical information in a brief, compact manner. They are especially useful when comparing actual numbers, dates, or amounts. When you first encounter a table, be sure to read the title and inspect the categories designated for the rows and columns. This should help you interpret the data.

**Examine the table** on page 190 (Figure 16) and answer the following questions:

1. What city was founded during the 1860s?
2. In what decade did Natchez's population decline?
3. What city's population tripled from 1880 to 1890?
4. How much did Vicksburg's population increase from 1860 to 1890?