

Florida's "Second Reconstruction": The Knights of Labor and Interracial Politics in Jacksonville, Florida, 1887-1889

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Paper delivered at the American Historical Association Annual Meeting
Washington DC, 3 Jan 2014

Introduction

In his 1933 autobiography, James Weldon Johnson, recalled of his boyhood hometown of Jacksonville, Florida that “most of the city policemen were Negroes; several members of the city council were Negroes” as well as “one or two of the justices of the peace.” He also remembered a fire station entirely “manned by Negroes.”ⁱ Johnson’s memories of Jacksonville dated from 1888, when he was 17 years old. That year, an interracial coalition of black Republicans and reform-minded white Democrats took control of the city council. Behind this coalition were the Knights of Labor, the first major union in the United States to accept African Americans as members. By 1887, the Jacksonville Knights enjoyed the support of more than 3,000 workers.ⁱⁱ For a time, the Knights of Labor became the gravitational center around which a labor-based interracial politics could orbit. While the Knights deserve praise for their official commitment to interracialism, I will argue that the remarkable interracial coalition of 1888 was only possible because black Jacksonvilleans were in a position to force their erstwhile white allies to behave like allies. And, when it fell apart, this happened because they lost that power.

More broadly speaking, I’d like to suggest that many, if not most examples of interracial politics are possible only when the following three conditions are met:

1. Black consent with the plans of white elites must be at a premium.
2. Organized black communities have the power to withhold that consent publicly and visibly, or otherwise disrupt the political or economic plans of potential white allies.

3. Withholding that consent is able to bring a group of white allies to the bargaining table to hammer out the terms of offering that consent via interracial negotiation.

This pattern can clearly be seen in the tumultuous political history of Jacksonville from 1887 to 1889.

Part One: The April 1887 election

The beginning of black Jacksonville's brief rise to power dates from April 4th, 1887. On that day, Colonel John Q. Burbridge defeated conservative Democrat William M. Dancy by a landslide margin. At the head of the Citizen's ticket, Burbridge had the backing of both progressive white Democrats and black Republicans. The Citizen's ticket swept the field, winning every office except one.ⁱⁱⁱ The night of the victory, Colonel Burbridge explicitly addressed his black supporters, declaring that "the Colored man can get justice from me as well as the white Why? Because ... they have rallied around the standard of good government Had it not been thus, the opposition would have over-ridden us and driven us from the field."^{iv}

This plain acknowledgement of the black vote made it clear that the Citizens' Ticket could not have won without black support. Twice previously, in 1884 and 1885, this same group of reformers had tried and failed to overcome the entrenched power of the local Bourbon Democrats.^v What had changed their fortune was the arrival of the Knights of Labor, who had rapidly organized a significant proportion of the city's electorate.^{vi}

Once in power, this new city government passed an unprecedented \$54,500 budget, most of which was earmarked for the expansion and repair of the city's old sewage system.^{vii} Yellow fever, which had last stalked the streets of Jacksonville in 1877, had recently struck Key West, Tampa and Palatka, a town less than a day's journey to the south. The terror of infection was so

great that when the fever reached Plant City, Florida, the entire municipality was evacuated and burned to the ground.^{viii} City sanitation and public health became their top priority.

What most worried the new mayor were the majority-black suburbs of Springfield and La Villa. Modernizing the city's sewer system would not protect Jacksonville's white population from diseases originating in the black neighborhoods that surrounded the city.^{ix} In order to extend control over what they saw as sites of urban disorder and vectors for infection, the new administration rewrote the city charter, annexing La Villa and Springfield.^x However, this also transformed Jacksonville into a majority-black city, confronting Jacksonville's white progressives with the dilemma of how to maintain white supremacy while securing the health of the city.

Prior to the annexation, black Jacksonvilleans had long accommodated themselves to white rule, willing to throw their political support to whichever political faction would help them secure some power over their place in the city. Although Democrats had sought black support as early as 1876, this did not necessarily translate into significant black political power.^{xi} With white Democrats firmly in control of city politics, black voters could do little but trade their votes for influence with the city's white leaders.^{xii} However, the 1887 annexation presented black Jacksonville an opportunity to wield direct political power.

Part Two: The December 1887 election

Annexation introduced hundreds of black voters to the electorate, who now commanded a majority of the votes in the city.^{xiii} To contain this threat to white rule, the reformers drew a new electoral map that concentrated black voting strength in just three wards, leaving the remaining six with securely white majorities.^{xiv}

The ultimate effectiveness of this racial gerrymander was tested on Dec 13, 1887 – during the elections made necessary by the new city charter.^{xv} As the election approached, the city’s white progressive leaders grew nervous over their ability to retain control and abandoned interracial politics to enter an alliance with their former foes. They rallied around Frank Pope, a conservative, white supremacist Democrat at the head of a now lily-white Citizen’s ticket. Against Pope, the interracial alliance – still centered in the Knights of Labor – supported progressive Republican C. B. Smith.^{xvi}

The December turnout was more than twice that of the April election. In the mayoral race, the Knights of Labor buried the Democrats by a three-to-one margin. Ten black candidates ran for office and five won. After the votes were counted, the Knights of Labor controlled thirteen of the eighteen city council seats.^{xvii} The white progressives lost control of the city, routed by their former allies. The astonishing strength of the Knights’ interracial coalition – its membership concentrated La Villa and Springfield – had taken the Citizens’ Ticket by surprise.^{xviii}

The Democrats may not have feared the interracial Knights of Labor given the recent history of the Knights in Richmond, Virginia. Though winning a similarly lopsided victory in 1886, once in power the white Knights allied with the remaining white Democrats on the city council and froze their black comrades out of any major decisions.^{xix} By contrast, the strength of the interracial labor coalition in Jacksonville appears to have been much greater. Although I have yet to find explicit evidence that the Knights intended to elect an interracial ticket, an examination of the election returns suggests a deliberate plan to do so.

Under the new city charter, the electoral map was divided into 9 wards. In each ward, the top two vote-getters won terms of four years and two years respectively. The majority-black

suburbs of Springfield and La Villa became Jacksonville's majority-black wards (2, 6, and 8). Had the city's electorate voted along strictly racial lines, these majority black districts would have elected two black candidates and the majority white districts, two white candidates. However, in both wards six and eight, voters elected two members of the Knights of Labor to the city council, one white and one black.^{xx} In these two wards, enough black voters were willing to forego sending two black candidates to the city council in order to support an interracial Knights-backed ticket.

Nevertheless, this did not mean that the city's racial politics were easily subsumed into the broadly progressive vision of the Knights of Labor. There appears to have been significant resistance to the Knights from within Jacksonville's new black electorate. In the two majority-black wards that elected interracial labor tickets, the white second place winner received considerably fewer votes than the black first place winner.^{xxi} Furthermore, the third majority-black ward appears to have engaged in a pattern of racial block voting, electing two black men, with only the top vote-getter, Benjamin Wright, being a member of the Knights. The second place candidate, Capius Vaught, beat out the third place white labor candidate by a healthy margin.^{xxii} Finally, the fifth black councilman elected, Emmanuel Fortune, was the only one to hail from a majority white district and was not a member of the Knights of Labor. It's possible that the 275 registered black voters engaged in single shot voting (declining to cast a second vote in the election) to give Fortune the 194 votes he needed to win first place in his district, narrowly beating out the second and third place candidates, who received 190 and 192 votes respectively.^{xxiii}

Jacksonville's interracial democracy was not necessarily an outgrowth of the Knights' interracialism. Rather, it was made possible by the power of a new black majority able to

compel these reformers to forge an alliance – an alliance that many African Americans appear to have mistrusted.

Despite these tensions, newly elected African American city councilors wielded significant power in the new government. Most significantly, the new city council granted African Americans significant control over the police and courts – long a flashpoint between black and white Jacksonvilleans. By summer of 1888, the city had hired eleven black police officers and appointed Alonzo Jones, a prominent African American businessman, as one of the three men on the newly established police commission.^{xxiv} In addition, they appointed AME minister Joseph E. Lee to the position of municipal judge.^{xxv}

Nevertheless, granting black men even partial control over the law and the courts generated considerable tensions within the coalition. Resenting the supervision of an African American commissioner, the white police chief soon convinced the mayor to remove Alonzo Jones from the police commission.^{xxvi} And when the Knights forwarded Joseph Lee's name for the judgeship of the new municipal court, the city council redrew the city boundaries to exclude Lee from eligibility. After Lee hired a crew of men to physically move his house inside the new city limits, he discovered that most serious criminal cases were diverted away from his court.^{xxvii}

Part Three: Lessons of the Fever

Jacksonville's interracial government lasted less than a year, undone by a catastrophic public health crisis. Rumors of yellow fever had caused perpetual anxiety over the summer of 1888.^{xxviii} On 28 July the first case of yellow fever was reported in Jacksonville. Within two weeks the city's health authorities uncovered eleven additional cases, two of which were fatal.^{xxix} Within a month, more than 100 had perished and everyone who had the resources to flee and could evade the quarantine had left the city.^{xxx} After the exodus, several thousand people –

mostly white – had left, leaving behind approximately 14,000 people, roughly three-quarters of whom were African American.^{xxxii} By the time the fever had run its course, 427 of those people had died.^{xxxiii}

Compounding the crisis was the virtual abdication of power by the duly elected city government. Mayor C. B. Smith was out of town when the epidemic struck and chose not to return to the stricken city.^{xxxiv} Additionally, eight city councilmen fled Jacksonville ahead of the quarantine, leaving only ten behind.^{xxxv} When two additional members were stricken by the fever in mid-September, the city council was left without a quorum. The city government was paralyzed.

At this juncture, the deposed white progressives pushed aside the elected city government to assume control over the day to day operations of the city.^{xxxvi} Founded less than two weeks after the fever hit the city, the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association, led by Jacquelin J. Daniels and Patrick McQuaid, began a nationwide fundraising campaign, raising nearly \$500,000. These funds paid for medical care, the administration of relief, the maintenance of a refugee camp, and the destruction of property deemed infected by the fever.^{xxxvii} Most of the relief funds raised were directed towards the white minority. The leaders of the white Sanitary Association refused to send medical assistance into black neighborhoods and those black Jacksonvilleans stricken by the fever had to show up in person to apply for assistance.^{xxxviii} African Americans faced vigilante violence as well. When it became apparent that recent white migrants to the city were dying at a rate three times greater than the local black population, tensions rose.^{xxxix} A month into the epidemic, white hoodlums attempted to burn down a black church, fearing it as a vector of infection.^{xxxix}

The city's black leaders responded by establishing the Colored Auxiliary Bureau, coordinating its efforts with the Sanitary Association. However, it had very little autonomous power. Controlling less than \$1,000 in relief funds, the primary function of the Colored Auxiliary was to mediate between the resources of the Sanitary Association and the needs of Jacksonville's black majority.^{xi} Besides disbursing aid, they tracked the progress of the disease through the black community and convinced healthy African Americans to relocate to refugee camps established outside of town.^{xii} In order to defuse the threat of anti-black violence, they also played a crucial role in policing the city's black working class population. In their official report published after the epidemic, the Sanitary Association praised the Colored Auxiliary for "quieting threatened troubles from the laboring element of the city's population the good influence of the Colored Auxiliary Bureau upon the colored people was largely instrumental in assisting to effect this condition."^{xiii}

One month into the epidemic, the city's elected black leaders found themselves unable to address the crisis as the locus of power shifted from the city council to the Sanitary Association. Although the duly elected city government still technically retained the sole power to pass legislation, the Sanitary Association commanded a budget six and half times the size of the city's.^{xliii} They began to assert control over Jacksonville's development.

In early August, at the beginning of the epidemic, the Sanitary Association used the crisis to attempt to remove three black tenement districts. With the assistance of Councilman Boyd, the homes of black tenants were purged of personal property deemed infected, their outhouses removed and burned, and many of them "induced to leave."^{xliv} Despite having been placed into office by Jacksonville's interracial Knights of Labor, Boyd proved willing to move against the black voters in his own district.^{xlv} These slum clearance efforts were so aggressive that the

Sanitary Association was obliged to release guidelines to “guard against the improper destruction of property” and to observe tenants’ property rights in future health inspections.^{xlvi}

The Sanitary Association also used their control of relief funds to force thousands of idled black workers to carry out their vision for the city’s future.^{xlvii} Responding to the city health officer’s complaint that “free rations have ruined our colored folk,” the Sanitary Association resolved “to *compel* [able-bodied men] to work, and to prevent laborers, or their direct families, from drawing rations when ... able to work.”^{xlviii} As food ran short, this effort to force black Jacksonvilleans to work in exchange for relief nearly led to violence. In mid-October, 1500 men – mostly African American – threatened to break into the warehouses where relief rations were stored and forcibly redistribute them.^{xlix}

Given their command over access to food and jobs during the crisis, the Sanitary Association was able to employ as many as 2,000 workers per week at wages low as sixty cents per day.¹ Besides addressing the immediate crises caused by the fever, these workers graded and paved roads, laid the foundation for the city’s streetcar system, drained swampy areas, improved the sewers, and beautified the city all in the explicit name of public health, property values and tourism.^{li} Importantly, each of these public works projects had been on the development agenda of the white progressives who had first annexed the city’s black suburbs.

Conclusion:

The Sanitary Association became the vehicle for the city’s white progressive elite to assert their control over municipal development without having to seek the support of the city’s sizable black electorate. Though dependent upon a black working class to perform the most onerous work, they no longer had to regard them as political equals. Once the crisis passed, the

city's white progressives used their experience during the fever to argue for the removal of home rule from Jacksonville.

House Bill Number Four became law in May of 1889. It replaced the elected city government of Jacksonville with an all-white city commission appointed by the governor.^{lii} When this commission elected a mayor, they selected the vice president of the Sanitary Association, Patrick McQuaid.^{liii} Home rule would only return to Jacksonville in 1893, after the state legislature passed a poll tax disfranchising Jacksonville's black voters.^{liv} In the first election after the restoration of home rule, Duncan Upshaw Fletcher, was chosen as mayor. During his campaign, he called for the development of the city as a major commercial and shipping center.^{lv} Voters soon approved a \$1,000,000 bond referendum to initiate Mayor Fletcher's ambitious plans for city improvements, including the modernization of the waterworks and sewage systems.^{lvi} With the legal order of Jim Crow firmly in place, Jacksonville's white business and political elite could finally bring the city into the twentieth century without putting white supremacy at risk.

Jacksonville's interracial government could never have survived. Nonetheless, it reveals an alternate history of southern progressivism in which interracial urban politics was possible. However, this interracial politics only existed when black people had the power to force it into existence. Though there may have been white activists deeply committed to anti-racism, focusing on their efforts risks obscuring from view those black Jacksonvilleans who were able to compel respect from the city's white progressive elite. We risk erasing this entire history from view as we seek moments of interracial goodwill rather than moments in which African Americans have been able to force white allies to forsake their own privilege for the sake of racial justice.

ⁱ James Weldon Johnson, *Along This Way: the Autobiography of James Weldon Johnson* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), p. 45.

ⁱⁱ *The Journal of United Labor*, Vol VIII, No. 6 (Aug. 13, 1887), p. 2472 and Vol. VIII, No. 10 (Sep. 10, 1887), p. 2488.

ⁱⁱⁱ The final vote was 854 to 644. "Victory!" *Florida Times-Union*, 5 April 1887, p. 1; "Yesterday's Election," *Florida Times-Union*, 5 April 1887, p. 4. For more on the election and the history of black political power in Jacksonville, see T. Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity, 1513 to 1924* (St. Augustine, FL: The Florida Historical Society, 1925), pp.298-299; and Wayne J. Flynt, *Duncan Upshaw Fletcher: Dixie's Reluctant Progressive* (Tallahassee, Florida State University Press, 1971), pp. 12-14; Edward Akin, "When a Minority Becomes a Majority: Blacks in Jacksonville Politics, 1887-1907," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 53 (1974), pp. 123-145; Abel A. Bartley, *Keeping the Faith: Race, Politics, and Social Development in Jacksonville, Florida, 1940-1970* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), pp. 1-19; Barbara Richardson "A History of Blacks in Jacksonville, Florida, 1860-1895: A Socio-Economic and Political Study," Unpublished D. A. Dissertation (Pittsburgh, PA: Carnegie Mellon University, 1975); Patricia Drozd Kenney, "La Villa, Florida, 1866-1887: Reconstruction Dreams and the Formation of a Black Community," in *The African American Heritage of Florida*, edited by David R. Colburn and Jane L. Landers (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), pp. 185-206; and Robert Cassanello, *To Render Invisible: Jim Crow and Public Life in New South Jacksonville* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013), pp. 39-58.

^{iv} "Victory!" *Florida Times-Union*, 5 April 1887, p. 1.

^v The total number of voters in the two previous elections in which the Citizens' ticket fielded a slate of candidates were 1,215 in 1884 and 1,327 in 1885. However, the total turnout for the 1887 election was 1,498. See Davis, p. 298.

^{vi} In the spring of 1886, the Knights led a newspaper strike and a widely supported boycott of merchants who continued to advertise in the struck papers. After the strike, progressive Democrats who supported the strike split from their party to forge a coalition with the Republicans under the Citizen's ballot line. Flynt, p. 11.

^{vii} Flynt, pp. 14-15.

^{viii} "Purging Plant City," *Florida Times-Union*, 14 July 1888, p. 8.

^{ix} See for example "La Villa Health," *Florida Times-Union*, 25 May 1887, p. 8; "Sanitary Affairs," *Florida Times-Union*, 26 May 1887, p. 8; and "Guarding Against Yellow Jack," *Florida Times-Union*, 27 May 1887, p. 5.

^x Kenney, pp. 201-203; Flynt, pp. 14-15.

^{xi} This political influence was, for example, one reason why African Americans had been an intermittent presence on the police force. In 1876, there were at least two black police officers on the city police force, Alonzo Jones and Robert Hearn. Cassanello, pp. 40-41, 61.

^{xii} The last black elected city official had been Thomas Lancaster, elected to the position of city tax assessor in 1875. Richardson, pp. 192-196.

^{xiii} After annexation there were 2,632 black voters and 2,268 white voters. "New Jacksonville," *Florida Times-Union*, 26 June 1887, p. 8.

^{xiv} "New Jacksonville," *Florida Times-Union*, 26 June 1887, p. 8; "City Politics," *Florida Times-Union*, 27 June 1887, p. 4; Barbara Richardson, "A History of Blacks in Jacksonville, Florida, 1860-1895: A Socio-Economic and Political Study," Unpublished D. A. Dissertation (Pittsburgh, PA: Carnegie Mellon University, 1975), pp. 203-205.

^{xv} Charles D. Farris, "The Re-Enfranchisement of Negroes in Florida," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Oct., 1954), p. 262, n. 10; Davis, pp. 287-288; Akin, p. 130.

^{xvi} Melton Alonza McLaurin, *The Knights of Labor in the South* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), p. 94. For more on the role of the Knights of Labor in the December election, see the extensive commentary in the *Florida Times-Union*, Dec 5-8, 1887.

^{xvii} The final tally was 2,394 votes for Smith and only 736 votes for Pope. "Smith Wins," *Florida Times-Union*, 14 December 1887, p. 8; Akin, pp. 131, 135; Flynt, p. 16.

^{xviii} Flynt, p. 13.

^{xix} See Peter Rachleff, *Black Labor in Richmond, 1865-1890* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), pp. 143-201; and McLaurin, pp. 89-92. In Richmond, the most important issue before the city council was the hiring of workers to build the new state capitol building. This same pattern was repeated in Lynchburg, VA in the spring of 1887 when a similar interracial coalition won eleven of fifteen city council positions. Once again, this alliance collapsed after white reformers united with the regular Democrats to keep patronage out of black hands. See McLaurin, pp. 91-92.

^{xx} "Smith Wins," *Florida Times-Union*, 14 December 1887, p. 8.

^{xxi} However, the white second place winner still received more votes than there were white registered voters in each ward indicating an interracial basis of support.

^{xxii} Akin, p. 131. (See his Table 2. December 1887, Election Results in Wards Which Elected Blacks to the Jacksonville City Council.) The Knights of Labor later nominated the white third place winner in the second ward to the police commission. See "City Politics," *Florida Times-Union*, 31 March 1888, p. 5; and "The Police Commissioners," *Florida Times-Union*, 12 July 1888, p. 8.

^{xxiii} Akin, pp. 131-134. Three of the black councilmen – Benjamin Wright, John E. Spearing, and Samuel Dennis – were listed as brickmasons in the city directory and were part of the labor voting bloc in the city council. The two remaining black councilmen often broke ranks with the Knights. These were Capius M. Vaught, who was both a brickmason and a minister, and Emmanuel Fortune, the father of *New York Freeman* editor T. Thomas Fortune, who owned a market on the east side of Jacksonville.

^{xxiv} Richardson, p. 206; Davis, p. 309.

^{xxv} Canter Brown Jr., *Florida's Black Public Officials, 1867-1924* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1998), pp. 103-104; Akin, p. 134.

^{xxvi} See "Commissioner Jones Suspended," *Florida Times-Union*, 11 July 1888, p. 8; "The Police Commissioners," *Florida Times-Union*, 12 July 1888, p. 8; and "The City Council Meeting," 18 July 1888, p. 8. During Jones's suspension hearing, he was formally charged with illegitimately "assuming authority" over the members of the police force. What seems likely is that a group of white officers and the white police chief resented the supervision of an African American commissioner on a brand new police commission created by the interracial city government in part to reduce tensions between white police and black neighborhoods. For the hearing, see "The Case of Jones," *Florida Times-Union*, 31 July 1888, p. 8; "City and Suburban News," 4 August 1888, p. 8; and "The City Council Meeting," 8 August 1888, p. 8.

^{xxvii} "City Politics," *Florida Times-Union*, 31 March 1888, p. 5; "City Politics," 2 April 1888, p. 1; "City Council Meeting," 3 April 1888, p. 1; "The City Election," *Florida Times-Union*, 4 April 1888, p. 8; "The Trial Justice," *Florida Times-Union*, 7 April 1888, p. 5; "Becoming A Citizen," *Florida Times-Union*, 12 April 1888, p. 8.

On the cases that typically appeared before Judge Lee, see “In the Municipal Court,” *Florida Times-Union*, 1 May 1888, p. 5; “Before Police Justice Lee,” *Florida Times-Union*, 2 May 1888, p. 5; “In the Municipal Court,” *Florida Times-Union*, 8 May 1888, p. 8; and “In the Municipal Court,” *Florida Times-Union*, 9 May 1888, p. 5. Despite being marginalized, Judge Lee’s court did serve an important function for Jacksonville’s black community. Nearly everyone convicted in the county courts was funneled into the convict-lease system. By contrast, African Americans convicted in Judge Lee’s court of vagrancy, public drunkenness, and disturbing the peace – precisely those misdemeanors that elsewhere feed black men into the maw of the convict-lease system – serve their time in the city jail and are released. On the county courts and the convict-lease, see “Working the County Prisoners,” *Florida Times-Union*, 29 June 1888, p. 8; and “Let Justice Be Done,” *Florida Times-Union*, 30 June 1888, p. 5.

^{xxviii} “Do Not Heed Rumors,” *Florida Times-Union*, 17 July 1888, p. 8; “Mr. Waterman’s Spell,” *Florida Times-Union*, 19 July 1888, p. 4.

^{xxix} “Off to the Sand-Hills,” *Florida Times-Union*, 9 August 1888, p. 8; “A Look at the Situation,” *Florida Times-Union*, 11 August 1888, p. 8.

^{xxx} “Only Four Deaths,” *Florida Times-Union*, 14 September 1888, p. 5. The society page of the *Florida Times-Union*, normally given to tracking the weddings and balls of the city’s elite families, during the crisis was given over to tracking their departure and consequent activities in exile. See for example, “In The World of Society,” *Florida Times-Union*, 12 August 1888, p. 5.

^{xxxi} “Depopulate the City,” *Florida Times-Union*, 8 September 1888, p. 4; “Executive Committee Work,” *Florida Times-Union*, 8 September 1888, p. 8. As of early September, there were 9,812 black residents and 3,945 white residents. See also Margaret C. Fairlie, “The Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1888 in Jacksonville,” *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Oct., 1940), p. 100.

^{xxxii} “Executive Committee Work,” *Florida Times-Union*, 18 August 1888, p. 8. On the numbers of dead and infected see Fairlie, p. 95; and Margaret Humphreys, *Yellow Fever and the South* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 5.

^{xxxiii} “Mayor Smith’s Poor Health,” *Florida Times-Union*, 9 September 1888, p. 4; “City Council Meeting,” *Florida Times-Union*, 13 September 1888, p. 8; “Did Mayor Smith Say It?,” *Florida Times-Union*, 21 September 1888, p. 4. According to letters from his doctor published in the *Times-Union* the mayor had fallen ill with pneumonia while visiting Cincinnati. It remains unknown whether Smith was actually ill or seeking an excuse to stay away from Jacksonville, but the repeated reports of the mayor’s poor health in the paper suggest that he may have had to respond to allegations that he had chosen to desert his post in the midst of the epidemic. After the fever had subsided, he faced charges of cowardice and abandoning his post, especially in comparison to the noble martyrdom of several members of the Sanitary Association who perished during the epidemic. See “Where Was the Mayor?” *Florida Times-Union*, 14 December 1888, p. 4; and “Mayor Smith Defended,” *Florida Times-Union*, 15 December 1888, p. 4.

^{xxxiv} “City Council Meeting,” *Florida Times-Union*, 13 September 1888, p. 8. To their credit, four of the five black city council members remained at their posts to stand with the people who elected them. Of the black councilmen, only Emmanuel Fortune left the city.

^{xxxv} “At The Citizens’ Meetings,” *Florida Times-Union*, 12 August 1888, p. 1; “Council Meeting Yesterday,” *Florida Times-Union*, 7 September 1888, p. 5; “City Items,” *Florida Times-Union*, 14 September 1888, p. 8.

^{xxxvi} For the official record of the work of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association, see *Report of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association Covering the Work of the Association During the Yellow Fever Epidemic, 1888*, Charles S. Adams, ed. (Jacksonville, FL: Times-Union Printers, 1889). For a complete accounting of the funds raised, see pp. 93-111, and Appendix, pp. 1-45.

^{xxxvii} "The Florida Season," *New York Age*, 19 Jan 1889, p. 2.

^{xxxviii} According to the *Report of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association* (pp. 46-54):

Out of 9,812 black Jacksonvilleans, 99 die of the fever - or 1%
Out of 3,945 white Jacksonvilleans, 320 die of the fever - or 8.1%.

Such extreme disparities between black and white mortality rates for yellow fever were common during yellow fever epidemics throughout much of the nineteenth century. For example, between 1820 and 1858, the city of Charleston, SC was hit repeatedly by yellow fever. Over that time, there were 2885 white fatalities and only 58 black fatalities. In the 1853 epidemic in New Orleans, 99% of the nearly 8,000 deaths were of white people who had contracted the disease. This same pattern holds after the Civil War as well. In 1876, the majority-black city of Savannah, GA was hit hard by yellow jack. However, only 114 black people died compared with 773 white people. In Memphis in 1878, roughly 11,000 African Americans were infected with 990 deaths (9%). Of the 6,000 infected white people, representing the entire white population, 4,204 died (70%). There is still considerable debate whether this is due to a genetic resistance to yellow fever, similar to inherited malarial resistance in populations of African descent or whether this immunity was acquired due to previous exposure. Kenneth F. Kiple and Virginia H. Kiple, "Black Yellow Fever Immunities, Innate and Acquired, as Revealed in the American South" *Social Science History*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Summer, 1977), 419-436. (Mortality rates given above are listed on pp. 424, 427-428.) See also K. David Patterson, "Yellow Fever Epidemics and Mortality in the United States, 1693-1905," *Social Science Medicine*, Vol. 34, No. 8 (1992), pp. 855-865.

^{xxxix} "City and Suburban News," *Florida Times-Union*, 25 August 1888, p. 5. For other panicked overreactions, see "City and Suburban News," *Florida Times-Union*, 17 August 1888, p. 5; and "Executive Committee Work," 18 August 1888, p. 8.

^{xl} According to JASA, the Colored Auxiliary Bureau managed to raise only \$891.96 by December of 1888. *Report of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association*, p. 229.

^{xli} Richardson, pp. 113-114; *Report of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association*, pp. 114, 228-229; "Card from Professor Artrell," *Florida-Times Union*, 27 Sept 1888, p. 4.

^{xlii} *Report of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association*, p. 230.

^{xliii} When the city attempted to raise its own funds, the Sanitary Association compelled the city council to officially surrender its authority to them for the duration of the epidemic. *Report of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association*, p. 152.

^{xliv} *Report of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association*, pp. 122-123.

^{xlv} Akin, p. 133, note 42.

^{xlvi} *Report of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association*, p. 123.

^{xlvii} "Executive Committee Work," *Florida Times-Union*, 14 November 1888, p. 8; "Are We Forgetful?" *Florida Times-Union*, 10 March 1889, p. 4. The Florida Times-Union reported that over \$500,000 come in. The official report of

the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association reported a total of \$345,440.13. This was augmented by an additional \$165,107.77 from the United States Marine Hospital Service. For a full accounting see, *Report of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association*, Appendix: Cash Donations, p. 40. See also Fairlie, p. 98

^{xlviii} Fairlie, 104; *Report of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association*, p. 117. Emphasis added.

^{xlix} Fairlie, p. 104. The official report of the Sanitary Association reported that: "It was also necessary to keep idle men employed, in order to control them, and prevent demoralization, lawlessness and violence. A feeling of restlessness, and a disposition to resort to violence, at one time manifested itself among a large number of unemployed colored men. They congregated on the streets, particularly near the headquarters of the Committee on Sanitation, and were pertinacious in their applications for employment, saying that they could not get work elsewhere within the quarantine lines established; that they were afraid to attempt to get into other communities, as "shot-gun quarantine" was more to be feared than starvation in Jacksonville, as long as the people of the country had so generously supplied their wants in money and provisions, which those who controlled the situation were wrongfully withholding from them, except in exchange for their labor." See *Report of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association*, pp. 129-130

^l Fairlie, p. 106; *Report of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association*, p. 116.

^{li} "A Grand Transformation," *Florida Times-Union*, 11 November 1888, p. 8; "Executive Committee Work," *Florida Times-Union*, 17 November 1888, p. 8. A complete list of the work performed by those on relief is listed in *Report of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association*. Weekly wages ranged between \$4 and \$5. See *Report of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association*, pp. 125, 131-133; Fairlie, p. 102.

^{lii} Davis, p. 301; Vigorously supporting the passage of House Bill Number Four, the *Florida Times-Union* followed the legislative debate over the bill very closely from its first introduction to its becoming law. See "The Legislature of Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, 4 April 1889, pp. 1, 4; "The Legislature of Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, 5 April 1889, p. 1; "The Legislature of Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, 6 April 1889, p. 1; "The Legislature of Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, 7 April 1889, p. 1; "The Legislature of Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, 9 April 1889, p. 1; "The Legislature of Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, 10 April 1889, p. 1; "The Senate Committee Sits," *Florida Times-Union*, 14 April 1889, p. 8; "The Legislature of Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, 16 April 1889, p. 1; "The Legislature of Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, 20 April 1889, pp. 1, 5; "The Legislature of Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, 27 April 1889, p. 1; "A Yancey Pleads," *Florida Times-Union*, 3 May 1889, pp. 1, 4; "The Legislature of Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, 4 May 1889, pp. 1, 4; "The Legislature of Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, 7 May 1889, p. 1; "The Legislature of Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, 8 May 1889, p. 1; "The Legislature of Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, 9 May 1889, p. 1; "The Legislature of Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, 10 May 1889, p. 1; "House Bill Number Four," *Florida Times-Union*, 7 May 1889, p. 1; and "The Legislature of Florida," *Florida Times-Union*, 17 May 1889, p. 1.

^{liii} *Report of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association*, p. 13; Davis, pp. 298-302.

^{liv} Flynt, p. 28. The probable impact of disfranchisement on the black vote in Jacksonville can be seen through a comparison of the results of the 1887 and 1893 elections. In the 1887 election that followed the annexation of Jacksonville's black suburbs, total voter turnout was 3,130 – more than twice the 1,498 voters who turned out during the April election before the annexation. In the December election, C. B. Smith, the Republican candidate supported by most of Jacksonville's black voters, received 2,394 votes - roughly 76%. By contrast, in the 1893 bond election only 945 voters cast a ballot. And, during the 1893 municipal election, the first one following the restoration of home rule, the Republican Party did not even run a mayoral candidate, focusing instead on city council elections. In that election, only 1,311 Jacksonvilleans cast a ballot, only 42% of the December 1887 turnout. The imposition of the Australian ballot, the poll tax and a multiple ballot-box system had removed more than 1,800 voters from the rolls. Vote totals are taken from Davis, pp. 298-302.

The power to impose a poll tax had been written into the 1885 state constitution, but the enabling legislation had been held up by a coalition of reform Democrats and black Republicans. By 1889, these white reformers – finally able to rid themselves of their reliance on the black vote, dropped their opposition to the poll tax allowing it to pass. Cassanello, p. 43; State of Florida, *Constitution* (1885), Article VI, section 8.

For the poll tax (\$1.00 annually for all men 21 and over) see State of Florida, *Acts and Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly of Florida* (1889), 2nd session, section 1, pp. 13-14. For the multiple ballot box law, see State of Florida, *Acts and Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly of Florida* (1889), 2nd session, section 26, p. 106.

^{lv} Flynt, p. 31.

^{lvi} Davis, p. 318; Flynt, pp. 31-32, 36. The passage of the referendum allowed the Fletcher administration to lower the tax rate by 2 mills in the same year that he unveiled his ambitious city development project, though future mill rates would have to increase to meet the city's bond obligations. See Davis, p. 320.