

# SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society

Mark K. Bauman, *Editor*

MarkKBauman@aol.com

Bryan Edward Stone, *Managing Editor*

bstone@delmar.edu

Scott M. Langston, *Primary Sources Section Editor*

sclangston@charter.net

Stephen J. Whitfield, *Book Review Editor*

swhitfie@brandeis.edu

Jeremy Katz, *Exhibit and Film Review Editor*

jrkatz@thebreman.org

Shari Rabin, *Website Review Editor*

rabinsl@cofc.edu

Rachel Heimovics Braun, *Founding Managing Editor*

rheimovics@cfl.rr.com

2019

Volume 22



# Southern Jewish History

## Editorial Board

Ronald Bayor	Allison Schottenstein
Paul Finkelman	Lance Sussman
Karen Franklin	Marcia Synatt
Joshua Furman	Diane Vecchio
Jeffrey Gurock	Daniel Weinfeld
Adam Meyer	Lee Shai Weissbach
Stephen J. Whitfield	

*Southern Jewish History* is a publication of the Southern Jewish Historical Society available by subscription and a benefit of membership in the society. The opinions and statements expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the journal or of the Southern Jewish Historical Society.

Southern Jewish Historical Society OFFICERS: Phyllis Leffler, *President*; Jay Silverberg, *Vice President and President Elect*; Eric Goldstein, *Secretary*; David Meola, *Treasurer*; Shari Rabin, *Corresponding Secretary*; Dan Puckett, *Immediate Past President*. BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Ronald Bayor, Michael R. Cohen, Sharon Fahrer, Dana Herman, Jeremy Katz, Adam Meyer, Josh Parshall, Jim Pfeifer, Teri Tillman; Bernard Wax, *Board Member Emeritus*; Rachel Reagler Schulman, *Ex-Officio Board Member*.

For submission information and author guidelines, see <http://www.jewishsouth.org/submission-information-and-guidelines-authors>. For queries and all editorial matters: Mark K. Bauman, Editor, *Southern Jewish History*, 6856 Flagstone Way, Flowery Branch, GA 30542, e-mail: MarkKBauman@aol.com. For journal subscriptions and advertising: Bryan Edward Stone, Managing Editor, PO Box 271432, Corpus Christi, TX 78427, e-mail: bstone@delmar.edu. For membership and general information about the Southern Jewish Historical Society, visit [www.jewishsouth.org](http://www.jewishsouth.org) or write to PO Box 71601, Marietta, GA 30007-1601.

Articles appearing in *Southern Jewish History* are abstracted and/or indexed in *Historical Abstracts*; *America: History and Life*; *Index to Jewish Periodicals*; *Journal of American History*; *Journal of Southern History*; RAMBI-National Library of Israel; *Immigration and Ethnic History Society Newsletter*; and the *Berman Jewish Policy Archive* ([www.bjpa.org](http://www.bjpa.org)).

*Southern Jewish History* acknowledges with deep appreciation grants from the Helen Marie Stern Memorial Fund, the Jay & Dean Stein Foundation Trust, and the Deanne & Arnold Kaplan Foundation.

Copyright © 2019 by the Southern Jewish Historical Society

ISSN 1521-4206

## PERMISSION STATEMENT

Consent by the Southern Jewish Historical Society is given for private use of articles and images that have appeared in *Southern Jewish History*. Copying or distributing any journal, article, image, or portion thereof, for any use other than private, is forbidden without the written permission of *Southern Jewish History*. To obtain that permission, please contact the editors at [journal@jewishsouth.org](mailto:journal@jewishsouth.org).



# “Free From Proscription and Prejudice”: Politics and Race in the Election of One Jewish Mayor in Late Reconstruction Louisiana

by

Jacob Morrow-Spitzer\*

**A**fter the Civil War, much of Louisiana’s economy was left in ruins. Dealing with the loss of the war and the end of slavery, white Democrats in the Gulf South looked toward political leaders to reinstate a racial hierarchy and bring prosperity to their emptying coffers. Municipal politicians, charged with maintaining a balanced treasury and scheming new ways to bring wealth to their towns during an age of railroads and Gilded Age technologies and resources, became rallying figures of success. Local constituents challenged mayors to bring new industry and economic growth to their towns as well as uphold a racial hierarchy to which many white southerners desperately clung. The Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction South saw a surprising trend of Jewish municipal politicians in office and, in particular, an exceptionally long and mostly unstudied list of Jewish mayors who governed municipalities in the former Confederate states. Between 1865 and 1890, at least thirty Jewish mayors served in the former slave states (including Kentucky), with a particularly dense grouping of these civic leaders elected in Louisiana, which boasted at least ten during this era.<sup>1</sup> As a preliminary study, this essay will delve into the election story of one Jewish mayor, Edouard Weil of Alexandria, Louisiana, in Rapides Parish, who governed from 1875 through 1876.

Several studies have been written concerning Jews who immigrated to the United States in the wake of the 1848–49 revolutions in the German states. Most of these Jews had no political standing before the Civil War

---

\* The author may be contacted at [jacob.morrow-spitzer@yale.edu](mailto:jacob.morrow-spitzer@yale.edu).

## 6 SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

*John Langdon Ward, "View Above the Falls at Alexandria," c. 1880.*

*(Courtesy of the John Langdon Ward Magic Lantern Slides collection, mss. 4875, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, LA.)*

but nonetheless ended up in local offices in a region undergoing economic and political turmoil.<sup>2</sup> This essay expands on these earlier works with the study of another individual and further analysis. First, it examines the southern Jewish social and political place in the black and white press as a basis for understanding the level of Jewish acceptance in the early years of postbellum Louisiana. Then, through the example of Edouard Weil, a Bavarian immigrant, it investigates the Jewish involvement in municipal Reconstruction and early Redemption politics and challenges their allegiance to commonly held prescriptions of the Jewish place in the post-Civil War South. In doing so, it offers insight into the central southern issue of race relations as Reconstruction ended and the Republican Party lost political power to a party of white men that used unchecked power, violence, and intimidation to suppress black enfranchisement and opportunity.

Further, studying the relationship between Jewish mayors and local Reconstruction and Redemption politics adds a new layer of importance

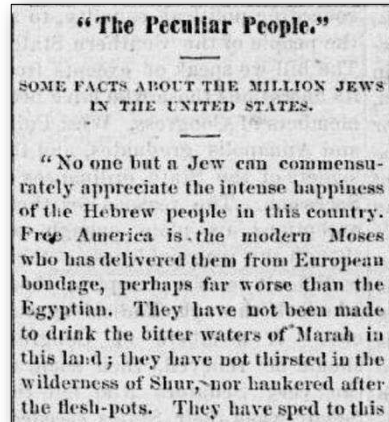
to our understanding of the era and the Jewish communities of the Deep South. In his discussion of the situation just three years before the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Brown v. the Board of Education*, C. Van Woodward argued that the return to white southern rule in the decades surrounding Reconstruction's failure had "laid the lasting foundations in matters of race, politics, economics, and law for the modern South."<sup>3</sup> By looking at one particular group during this era, we can supplement the narrative of the Jewish role in society during the foundational days of the New South. Moreover, we can better understand regional Reconstruction as a whole. Although dozens of books and articles have been written on politics from a macro perspective, studying the actions of a minority group on a local scale can provide a richer understanding of how Reconstruction transpired in towns across one of the most contested and tempestuous states in postbellum America. While federal and state politics—which in Louisiana remained in the hands of Republicans until the 1876 presidential election—controlled broader-reaching policies, the rhetoric surrounding municipal politics can spotlight the popularity of groups within a locality and among the citizens who make up the voting body for higher political offices.<sup>4</sup> Further, in the case of Louisiana, Reconstruction transpired differently—and failed earlier—at the local level than in most other states.

#### *Southern Perceptions of Jewish Louisianans*

In 1871, four years before a Jewish mayor was elected in the city of Alexandria, Louisiana, the local paper made particular note of Jewish attentiveness to local politics, commenting that "the Hebrews . . . carefully note and give countenance to every species of legislation, every doctrine of political economy, and every public act calling to extend liberty."<sup>5</sup> This sentiment demonstrates the Jewish interest in the politics of liberty and exemplifies the way Jews were depicted in the southern press.

As Jews moved into the Deep South in the years surrounding the Civil War, local and regional newspapers took great interest in branding the Jewish differentness. Just as credit agents often noted when their subject was a Jew, newspapers also commonly pointed out—often unrelated to the context of the article—if a person was Jewish.<sup>6</sup> In an article noting that a new tenant was moving into a store building in Alexandria, for example, the city's *Town Talk* specified that the new space "will be occupied

"The Peculiar People," Louisiana  
Democrat, April 19, 1871.  
(*Chronicling America,*  
*Library of Congress.*)



by Mr. Sam Iker, an Israelite." The article does not mention the landlord's religion.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, "jokes" with a Jew as the punchline or stories with a Jew as the antagonist were not uncommon in local town newspapers. As historian Anton Hieke points out, "daily conversation, literature, anti-Jewish charms, aphorisms, hymns, ballads, songs, tales, and other folklore . . . demonized Jews and Judaism" in the American South.<sup>8</sup> The front page of an 1875 issue of the *Louisiana Democrat*, the largest newspaper in Alexandria, published a poem with the first couplet reading "Old Neptune, who knew her, began to pursue her / In order to woo her — the wicked old Jew."<sup>9</sup> Other papers published more derogatory content directed at illiterate or uneducated Jews. A likely fictitious conversation on the cover of the newspaper of a nearby town, the *Donaldsonville Chief*, read: "'Did you know,' said a cunning Gentile to a Jew, 'that they hang Jews and jackasses together in Portland?' 'Indeed,' retorted Solomon, 'den it ish vell dat you and I ish not dere.'"<sup>10</sup> Regardless of any underlying anti-Jewish sentiment in these quips, they prove that the press differentiated the Jewish residents of southern towns from their non-Jewish neighbors.

More striking is that journalists often pointed to Protestants viewing Jews not necessarily as their peers, but instead as anachronisms residing in an unfamiliar landscape. In some instances, articles described Jews not



as modern Americans, but akin to biblical characters. In a column discussing whether the Jews would move to Palestine if the state guaranteed their protection, a Christian from Kentucky and Texas theorized that "they would go by the millions, for it is the essence of their faith and of their ambitious hopes again to be reunited there under the Messiah." His argument further drew on the Bible: "Ezekiel foretold, 'They shall say, this land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden—I the Lord have spoken it and I will do it.'"<sup>11</sup>

In the black press, the theoretical or biblical Jew was used for a popular comparison to the African American situation, particularly within a framework of slavery. As slaves, blacks incorporated the Exodus story as part of their historical narrative to give hope for a similar future as the Jews in Israel and, as one historian put it, to "[create] meaning and purpose out of the chaotic and senseless experience of slavery."<sup>12</sup> The front page of the May 18, 1872, edition of the *Weekly Louisianan*, a black Republican newspaper published in New Orleans, compared the liberation of the Jewish slaves in Egypt to "the brightest jewel in the crown of the Republic . . . the majority which secured the adoption of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments."<sup>13</sup> Three years later, the same newspaper compared the ongoing black struggle during Reconstruction to the Israelites who "were kept in a wilderness forty years" after the biblical emancipation.<sup>14</sup> The *Christian Recorder*, a black periodical headquartered in Philadelphia but distributed around the nation, observed in 1876 that "it is impossible to read the Jew's characteristics . . . and not recognize their counterparts in the American Colored people."<sup>15</sup>

In practice, no singular black narrative of southern Jews existed, and the relationship between the two groups remained complex. Historian Clive Webb suggests that Jews and blacks were overtly welcoming toward one another due to a mutual understanding that both groups were "scraping an existence on the margins of southern society."<sup>16</sup> Yet in many instances, a significant dichotomy existed between the black perception of Jews and the groups' actual interactions. By the end of Reconstruction, some blacks resented southern Jews for perceived economic ill-treatment and blamed the group for propelling them into perpetual debt. In an article in the April 1884 edition of the *Southern Workman*, a black writer remarking on Jews in Louisiana expressed deep animosity toward the

## 10 SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

Jewish community, which he believed was corrupting the former slaves and helping to sustain a power imbalance in the South:

The Jews have a grip upon the South of amazing strength, which has never here been shown, that makes masses of the ex-slaves worse off than ever, from the cruel "grind" and extortion under which they live. Food and clothing are sold them at a profit of two and three hundred per cent and their crops are swallowed up by ravenous traders who leave their victims in hopeless debt. Hundreds of [thousands] of the slaves in the Gulf States are, we believe, worse off, physically and morally, than when in slavery.<sup>17</sup>

The author's motive here is to blame Jewish merchants for selling whiskey to African Americans, inflaming the "curse" of alcoholism that sabotaged black communities and forced them to be "in debt and . . . not long before they are working on that 'store-keeper's' land, at his own price."<sup>18</sup> Others blamed Jews for alcohol and gambling addiction.<sup>19</sup> Booker T. Washington later worried that "we are getting our trade too much centered in the hands of a few Jews."<sup>20</sup> As we will see, a similar sentiment may have existed in the political sphere as well. While many blacks may have trusted the Jewish population to be a better alternative to non-Jewish local politicians, it became apparent during the Redemption era that not all Jewish mayors bolstered black advancement.

How did Jews transform from the anachronistic characters represented in the southern press into very real and controversial economic forces? In a recent groundbreaking study, historian Michael R. Cohen uncovers a complex niche economy that burgeoned after the Civil War and elevated Jews who formerly were merchants and peddlers into an affluent class of credit lenders. Although some Jewish firms faltered during an era of economic instability and natural disasters, Cohen demonstrates that ethnic networks to less affected financial centers including New York or London protected many Jewish lines of credit. Through the example of Lehman Brothers, he argues that international Jewish-run banks "brought European investment to America through largely Jewish networks," while Jewish wholesalers distributed products and extended their credit to smaller Jewish storeowners. With this financial stability from secure sources, Jewish merchants had the resources to sell credited goods to planters and sharecroppers alike, and, in doing so, became "the lifeblood" of southern capitalism.<sup>21</sup> While Cohen's important study provides a clear

link to Jewish advancement in the economic sector, further research is required to understand why many Jews became involved in local government and were accepted as municipal politicians.

*Louisiana's Jewish Mayors*

Although this study focuses on the election of Edouard Weil, he was not the first Jewish mayor to serve in Louisiana. Many of these early Reconstruction Jewish mayors sympathized with the Republican Party, although their commitment to black rights is not entirely clear. After Vidalia in Concordia Parish officially incorporated in 1870, its first mayor was Lewis Arnheim, a Jew.<sup>22</sup> Donaldsonville elected two Jewish mayors during Reconstruction, Marx Schoenberg in 1870 and Solomon Weinschenck in 1872 and 1874. Schoenberg's short and tragic term in office has been documented by Stuart Rockoff, who posits that he was a Republican who "reject[ed] the racial ideology of southern whiteness." Schoenberg had been appointed by Governor Henry C. Warmouth earlier that year and belonged to a Radical group composed of "strong supporters of black political rights in the parish." In the election of 1870, he endorsed a northern-born Republican lawyer for state senate who was unpopular among many whites of the town. After an election-night skirmish between an all-black militia and a local white mob, Schoenberg allegedly made a fatal mistake by removing the ballot box in an attempt to quell the angry crowd. The clash turned on him, and he was shot and brutally disfigured. According to Rockoff, the group responsible for his murder remains unknown.<sup>23</sup>

Death was not avoided during Shreveport Mayor Samuel Levy's short time in office either. In early 1873, Levy served as administrator of finance under a different Republican mayor. Following accusations of embezzlement and a violent courthouse scene, the previous mayor resigned, and Governor William Kellogg replaced him with Levy. Nearly a quarter of the city's population perished in ensuing months when yellow fever struck just days after his inauguration.<sup>24</sup> Previously, Levy had run for office on a Radical Republican ticket, but, like most of Shreveport's Jews, he had fought for the Confederacy a decade earlier.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, because of his affiliation with the Republican Party, the city's white Democratic majority criticized him as "notoriously incompetent," and a columnist remarked, "his election would be a grave calamity to the city."<sup>26</sup> Moreover,

## 12 SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

because of the timing of his appointment and the yellow fever outbreak, Levy only held office for a few months. During his term, the federal government evacuated its remaining soldiers and Reconstruction officials stationed in Shreveport. Consequently, white Democrats easily reclaimed the city's municipal offices after the end of his term, marking the beginning of the Redemption era some four years before Democrats retook the governor's office.<sup>27</sup>

These early 1870s mayors governed during the last years of the short era of Republican influence in municipal Louisiana. Although the state retained a Republican governor until the Hayes-Tilden agreement of 1877, the Democratic Party controlled many municipal offices much earlier through acts of voter suppression and intimidation. In Shreveport, for example, the year after federal troops abandoned the region in 1873 was one of the bloodiest on record for Caddo Parish. Homicides increased over 300 percent from the previous year, with nearly 86 percent targeting blacks. That year Caddo Parish had over a quarter of all homicides in Louisiana. Blacks were repeatedly "taken from their homes and either killed or forced to leave their homes, crops and everything they possessed," with many choosing to camp out in swamps or nearby woods to "escape the white fury."<sup>28</sup> Across the South in the 1874 midterm elections, Democrats walked away with overwhelming victories, securing two-thirds of the southern seats in Congress for their party.

At the local level, Levy was among the last documented Jewish Republican office holders in the state. By the mid-1870s, and particularly after the election of 1874, Jewish affiliation with the Democratic Party had become evident. In August 1876, the *Shreveport Times* reprinted sections of an *American Israelite* article explaining why Jews should vote for Democratic presidential candidate Samuel J. Tilden in the upcoming presidential election:

It is not in our power to organize a new and pure Democratic party, and nominate ideal candidates for the highest offices; hence we are left but one choice, viz., to defeat the Republican party by voting for the Democratic party. . . . You say the Democratic party in power will also steal, rob and annex; well, then, in four years we will change again, and change so long till honesty will be the policy also of politicians.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the fact that the *Israelite* did not consider itself a political paper, its editor, Isaac Mayer Wise, represented those Jewish leaders in

America who focused on policies rather than committing to party lines if parties abandoned their political platforms.<sup>30</sup> Regarding politics, Wise largely noted concern for government decentralization: "[If] Democrats are true to their principles they must, whenever in power, decentralize down to the original conceptions of State, municipal and personal rights, with the exception of the right of secession."<sup>31</sup> Although this manifesto had far different implications for northern Jews, in the South it meant that being accepted into the greater community was akin to aligning with white Democrats—even if Jews dissented on individual party platforms. At the time of its reprint in Shreveport, the *Times* even commented that "not a half dozen" Jews in the town would vote for the Republican ticket.<sup>32</sup> Yet as shall be demonstrated, Jews in other cities across Louisiana—whether with racist intent or not—became involved in the new political

**Town Election.**—The regular election for officers of the Corporation of Alexandria, which occurs by law every second year and is fixed for the 1st Monday in January, took place on Monday. The election was, like all ones here, conducted quietly and peaceably, not an unpleasant word or remark being heard to mar the harmony and good feeling exhibited on the occasion.

The following were the persons elected to fill the respective offices of the Town for the next two years:

Mayor:  
**EDOUARD WEIL.**

Treasurer:  
**B. C. DUKE.**

Comptroller:  
**A. HILTON.**

Councilmen:

Ward No. 1 ..... Jos. Boullotte  
 .. 2 ..... E. R. Blossat  
 .. 3 ..... Moses Rosenthal  
 .. 4 ..... M. Legras  
 .. 2 ..... W. W. Whittington, Jr.

*The Louisiana Democrat's  
 announcement of the Alexandria  
 elections of Edouard Weil and Moses  
 Rosenthal, January 6, 1875.  
 (Chronicling America, Library  
 of Congress.)*

## 14 SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

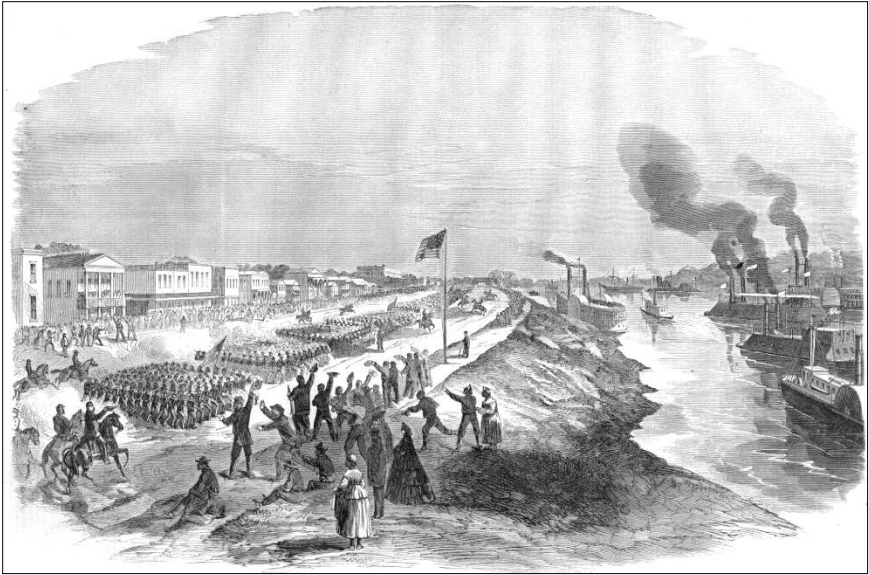
era of Redemption, taking politics back from the Republican Party and re-instituting white supremacy in government. One such mayor was Edouard Weil, who governed Alexandria from 1875 through 1876. Weil's election came during a major turning point in the Reconstruction South when many Republican and black officeholders were voted or forced out of office and replaced with Democrats. Although Reconstruction had not officially ended, the federal government's commitment to Reconstruction was faltering. In local elections, Redeemers pounced on the opportunity to reclaim white control. In the following pages, we take a step back to the years leading up to the election of 1874 and recount the campaign of Edouard Weil, bringing to light a case of Jewish involvement in the politics of a complex and crucial era in American history.

### *Postbellum Alexandria, Louisiana*

Nearly a decade after the end of the Civil War, much of central Louisiana remained deeply wounded by the structural, economic, and political upheaval brought on by the bloody sectional conflict. Although most towns needed considerable repair after 1865, Alexandria's landscape was particularly decimated by the destruction caused by the war. Not only were the nearly 15,400 enslaved blacks in Rapides Parish—over 60 percent of the parish's population—freed from captivity, but the Red River campaign in spring 1864, which attempted to cut off Confederate access to its late capital in Shreveport and the inland route to Texas, left the city substantially damaged.<sup>33</sup> The fighting left nine-tenths of the downtown burned and nearly every public record destroyed. The damage was so extensive that the city had to be given a new formal charter by the state of Louisiana in 1868.<sup>34</sup>

Before the fighting commenced, Alexandria and Rapides Parish housed some of the wealthiest plantations in the state and acted as a vital shipping hub for the region. According to Martin Hinchin's history of the Jewish community of Alexandria,

[the] prime advantages that made Alexandria develop over the years were: first, it was railroad center; second, it offered the possibility of becoming a manufacturing center since cotton was readily available; third, sugar refining was prevalent due to the abundance of cane grown; fourth, lumber mills were abundant due to the cutting and shipping of millions of board feet of the cut trees.<sup>35</sup>



*"Triumphal entry of the army of Major-General Banks into Alexandria, Louisiana, May 4, 1863," from a sketch by J. R. Hamilton. (Harper's Weekly, June 20, 1863).*

In the 1840s and 1850s, more than two dozen Jews settled in the Red River town in a pattern resembling similar Jewish migration across the region. Most emigrated from France and the German states, worked as peddlers and later as merchants, and often operated dry-goods and clothing stores. Members of the Jewish community enlisted and fought on the front lines for the Confederacy during the Civil War and returned to Alexandria after the conflict, creating a vibrant and closely knit community. Additionally, they began to establish themselves politically and opened businesses that helped recreate Alexandria as an important interior city during the Reconstruction era and beyond.<sup>36</sup> The first synagogue in the city, which housed Congregation Gemiluth Chassodim, was built in 1866. That same year, a rabbi from New Orleans officiated at Alexandria's first Jewish wedding. Eleven years later the Jewish citizens raised funds to build the first religious school, which enrolled thirty children.<sup>37</sup> Jews in

the town opened shops and wholesale warehouses, and they became vitally important to the town's economic well-being. By 1873, Jews owned nearly three-quarters of the commercial businesses in the city despite comprising just one-sixth of its two-thousand-person population.<sup>38</sup> By the mid-1870s, most of the area's Jews were either first- or second-generation Americans. A visitor who spoke to thirty members of a B'nai B'rith lodge in 1875 gave the lecture entirely in his native German, because "all members were of German extraction except for one."<sup>39</sup>

The Jews' status as foreigners did not seem to impede their economic ambitions in the postbellum South. Because many Louisiana towns were extensively damaged during the Civil War, Jews generally found open markets and a fertile economic climate. Many opened shops and embarked on new business ventures in the years after the war. Julius Levin, a Prussian immigrant who served in the Confederate army, established a mercantile business and then became heavily involved in the lumber industry. Benjamin Pressburg opened a small hotel that grew into a popular spot for traveling salesmen. Many invested in grocery and dry-goods stores and flourished as merchants in the town's downtown district.<sup>40</sup>

Despite this growth, Alexandria's Jewish community still encountered difficulty. Speaking for the Jewish population of Rapides Parish, Edouard Weil, a forty-four-year-old businessman, civic leader, prominent figure in the Jewish community, and Alexandria's first and only Jewish mayor, wrote in a letter to the *American Israelite*, "We have not yet recovered from the ravages of the war, and since its close, successive failures of our crops have shut us off from anything like prosperity." Yet, he added, "we are not discouraged and are still looking to a bright future."<sup>41</sup>

For Weil, the situation for the Jewish community during Reconstruction exemplified his personal and business misfortunes. Born in Ingenheim, Bavaria, in 1829, he was likely one of the earliest Jews in Rapides Parish. After migrating to America in 1849 in the wake of the German revolutions, he and his two brothers, Benjamin and John, ventured to the Red River town, purchased a wagon and a pair of horses, and traveled as peddlers like many other prewar Jews in the American South and nation. Using capital borrowed from Jewish-owned companies in New Orleans and New York, the brothers opened B. Weil & Bro., which sold, according to one newspaper advertisement, "clothing of all kinds, makes and shapes; Hosiery, French and English prints; boots, shoes, slippers,



*Advertisement for  
B. Weil & Bro., Louisiana  
Democrat, August 25, 1869.  
(Chronicling America,  
Library of Congress.)*

**TAKE NOTICE**  
—THAT—  
**B. Weil & Bro.,**  
Have just returned from New Orleans, where they have selected and purchased with great care, expressly for the Rapides market, a full stock of

**FALL AND WINTER GOODS,**  
comprising—  
Clothing of all kinds, makes and shapes;  
**Hosiery,**  
**FRENCH and ENGLISH PRINTS;**  
**BOOTS,**  
**SHOES,**  
**SLIPPERS,**  
Gaiters, a truly fine lot.  
**GROCERIES,**  
**A FINE AND CHOICE LOT.**

**CALL AND SEE!!**

All these they are selling at reduced rates for cash only. No more CREDIT, so be sure to bring your gold and greenbacks with you.  
**WALK IN LADIES AND GENTLE MEN.**  
oct 24, 1866, tf.

gaiters, a truly fine lot."<sup>42</sup> Like numerous similar establishments, the Weil enterprise linked the residents of the small isolated town and rural hinterland to national and even international marketplaces. The store closed briefly during the Civil War, during which Weil enlisted to fight for the Confederacy in the Third Regiment of the Louisiana Cavalry, reaching the rank of sergeant by the war's end.<sup>43</sup> In November 1865, the three brothers reopened B. Weil & Bro., which, according to R. G. Dun & Company records, contained a "good stock" worth between fifteen and twenty thousand dollars.<sup>44</sup> As farmers struggled with crop harvests in the late 1860s, the Weil brothers chiefly offered cash advances and traveled often to New

Orleans to purchase merchandise. Yet despite backing by out-of-town Jewish creditors, the firm fell into debt. By 1869, the store no longer sold merchandise on credit, and the following year it was “in bad repute” and was eventually sold.<sup>45</sup> In the 1870 census, Weil is listed as a retired dry-goods merchant with a personal estate valued at three thousand dollars and real estate valued at a considerable twelve thousand dollars.<sup>46</sup>

736

*Weil, Edward*

---

Co. *K*, 3 (Harrison's)  
**Louisiana Cavalry.**

The 3d (Harrison's) Regiment Louisiana Cavalry was first organized as a battalion about January, 1863, and was recognized as the 15 Battalion Louisiana Cavalry by the A. & I. G. O. in May, 1863. It was increased to a regiment in July or August, 1863, and was known in the Trans-Mississippi Department as the 3 Regiment Louisiana Cavalry. It appears to have been finally paroled, as the 3 and as Harrison's Regiment Louisiana Cavalry, at various places in West Louisiana.

(CONFEDERATE.)

---

*Private Sergeant*

REFERENCE SLIP.

Cards filed with

*Weil, Edward*

*Confederate service record  
 for Edouard Weil.  
 (National Archives  
 via Fold3.com.)*

Weil engaged heavily in organized Jewish life after the war and became a prominent leader of Alexandria's Jewish community. He was devoted to the betterment of Congregation Gemiluth Chassodim, serving as its president from 1871 until 1882. During his tenure, the congregation—like many in 1870s America—switched from identifying as traditional to joining the new Reform movement that was sweeping across the nation. In addition to advocating for the temple, Weil served on the board of multiple Jewish organizations including at least two terms as president of the B'nai B'rith Rebecca Lodge No. 240 in 1875 and 1876 and

later as president of the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Rapides. He acted as the spokesperson for the Jewish community, announcing in the city's newspaper when all Jewish businesses closed for a Jewish holiday.<sup>47</sup> He also hosted Jewish visitors to the city including Charles Wessolowsky, a prominent journalist who traveled to cities across the South in 1879 to compile information on Jewish residents and communities.<sup>48</sup>

Many Jews were also active in secular political and civic organizations in Alexandria. Some volunteered as firefighters at multiple fire stations across town, and many others served as officers of Masonic lodges. Weil served twice as master (the first Jew in Alexandria to hold this position) and once as treasurer of the Masons' Oliver Lodge No. 84. He also was active in the formation of the Rapides Agriculture Fair Association, served as head of arrangements for the Grand May-Day Ball at the

*The Jewish Temple, Congregation Gemiluth Chassodim, Alexandria, Louisiana, 1911. This is the congregation's second building, not the original one Edouard Weil attended. (Courtesy of the Louisiana Postcard Collection, Mss. 3645, 3754, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, LA.)*

courthouse in 1872, and later on the Committee of Invitation for a Masonic Ball. Weil chaired the reception committee at a public ball organized by the Jewish community at the Town Hall to promote improvements for the temple.

After the war, several area Jews, almost all of whom supported the Democratic Party, became involved in local and state politics. In 1867, two of the four councilmen elected in Alexandria were Jews.<sup>49</sup> One was Weil; the other was Mires Rosenthal, who, besides Weil, was arguably the most active Jew in the city's politics.<sup>50</sup> In 1872, Weil was sent as a delegate to the state Democratic convention and later elected secretary of the city council. He sat on the police jury and served as the city wharfinger, overseeing day-to-day commerce at the city wharf. Simultaneously, he networked with prominent people in other sectors in Alexandria, providing connections that would help him become a public figure in the town during the ensuing years. In a letter in a March 1875 edition of the *American Israelite*, Weil was described as being "active in all charitable enterprises . . . an officer in several benevolent societies, has a host of friends in our community, among both Jews and Gentiles and is the right man in the right place" [in reference to his being mayor].<sup>51</sup> As shall be demonstrated, strategic networking led to support from the Democratic press, which in turn provided him with civic and economic endorsements during and after his run for office.<sup>52</sup>

Unlike in Mississippi, where the representatives of the national government initially barred most southern-sympathizing whites from voting, former Confederates in Louisiana found it relatively easy to regain voting privileges. Although the Republican government disenfranchised many southern white rebels in Louisiana after the war—"from newspaper editors and ministers who had advocated disunion to those who had voted for the secession ordinance"—any man willing to swear under oath that he supported radical reconstruction was reinstated. Additionally, to gain white support in the state, Republican governors eased the strictness of disenfranchisement. Governors appointed Democrats to local and state positions in attempts "to create an image of moderation and defuse fears of black or carpetbagger domination."<sup>53</sup> The reinstatement of white Democrats turned out to be a fatal blow to the livelihoods of black Republicans and resulted in an attack on the freedoms and rights granted them under the Reconstruction amendments.

Newspapers that closely covered political events provide the easiest way to follow Alexandria's elections. Nonetheless, as in most Gulf South towns, the surviving accessible newspapers from the mid-1870s in Alexandria all fervently opposed Reconstruction and therefore offer just one side to the election—a side that generally favored Democrats like Weil. One of the most widely distributed papers was the *Louisiana Democrat*, a partisan and politically focused publication with the slogan "The World is Governed Too Much." The paper's editor, Eugene Rene Biossat, opposed black voting rights and strongly disapproved of President Ulysses Grant's reconstruction policies.<sup>54</sup> Like many other



"The World is Governed Too Much," *Louisiana Democrat*, April 19, 1871;

"Truth Crushed to Earth Will Rise Again," *Caucasian*, April 4, 1874.

(*Chronicling America, Library of Congress; Newspapers.com.*)

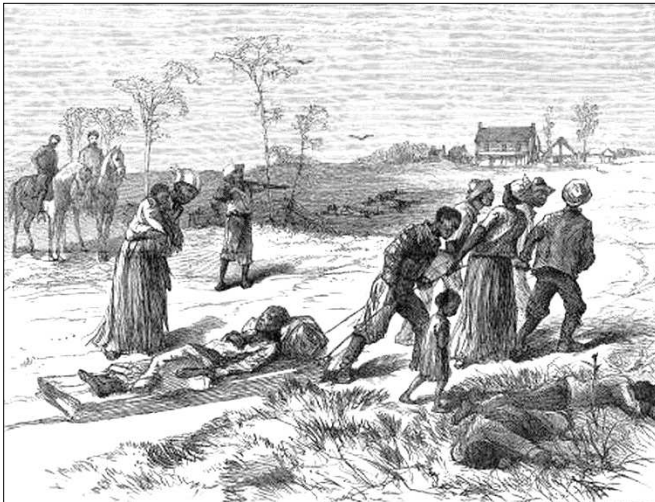
conservative Democratic papers during Reconstruction, nearly every issue overflowed with fervent objections, complaints, and hostility toward federal or Republican policies in the state. Biossat published opinions lamenting Radicals, even declaring that Democratic tickets for office were "better than any radical that ever lived," and he rebutted nearly every move by "carpetbagger" Republican governor William Pitt Kellogg.<sup>55</sup> The *Democrat* openly espoused racist ideologies and its support for secession, reminiscing on the utopian "Louisiana of 1861" in direct opposition to "her present degraded and abject condition."<sup>56</sup>

The other Alexandria paper that survived from the time of Weil's term in office was even more partisan than the *Democrat*. The *Caucasian*,

## 22 SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

rooted in white-supremacist and extremist anti-Republican ideology, was founded in 1874 as a direct response to the 1873 Colfax Massacre, a brutal and bloody conflict in which white Democrats murdered 150 African Americans protecting a courthouse a few miles upriver of Alexandria in Grant Parish.<sup>57</sup> The paper “reported on the prosecution of the massacre’s white participants” – some of whom lived in Alexandria – during its two years of publication and advocated for the White League and the city’s White Man’s Party.<sup>58</sup> W. F. Blackman and George W. Stafford, coeditors of the *Caucasian* and staunch Democrats and White Leaguers, advocated “the murdering of the republican candidates for the legislature . . . advising prompt action,” with Blackman volunteering to lead a mob to “carry out his proposition.”<sup>59</sup>

Beyond resisting civil rights for the millions of emancipated African Americans in the decades after the war, the Democratic newspapers also “devoted their energies to financial criticisms of Republican rule.” Despite the Republican leaders inheriting the southern states with “substantial public debts and empty treasuries,” many believed that they could fix a “backward South” and transform the region into a prosperous “society of booming factories, bustling towns, [and] diversified agriculture,” thereby



*Etching from Harper's Weekly, May 10, 1873, of black families gathering the dead after the Colfax Massacre in Grant Parish.*

*(Wikimedia Commons.)*

providing "abundant employment opportunities for black and white alike." Although some cooperation occurred at the local level between southern conservatives and Republicans, including efforts for railroad expansion, the local leaders generally pushed for a return to self-rule and warned against the dishonesty and corruption of Republican leadership.<sup>60</sup> The *Louisiana Democrat* ran a tongue-in-cheek article titled "The Kellogg Ballot Box," which insisted that the vote depository had to be "one of the most ingenious inventions of the age. The exterior looks like any ballot box, but after the votes have once been deposited you can open that box and bring out a majority for whichever side you please."<sup>61</sup> Similar sentiments appeared daily in the *Democrat* and the *Caucasian*, underscoring the press's strong position on Reconstruction politics.

With the clarity of the newspapers' ideologies and targeted audience in mind, we turn back to Edouard Weil's run for office in fall 1874. The two newspapers lightly covered the local vote itself, but more prominent was their endorsement and acclaim of Weil before and during the election. Weil fostered a personal relationship with the editors of the *Democrat*, all but guaranteeing him favorable press and likely bolstering his popularity among the voting public. In 1873, the paper thanked "our neighbor" Edouard Weil, who donated "several fine messes of ripe and juicy pears . . . grown on his famous two-crop bearing tree."<sup>62</sup> The paper's editors later recognized Weil for sending them "a package of the latest morning and evening papers" from New Orleans while he was on a business trip. They further informed their readers that they "drank a glass of sweet cider to [Weil's] health, with a fond wish that his shadow may never be dimmed."<sup>63</sup> Other Jews, including Jonas Weil (no known relation to Edouard), received the same commendation from the *Caucasian*, which called him "our and everybody's friend" and specifically endorsed his grocery store.<sup>64</sup> The paper complimented Mires Rosenthal's son, who seemed to hold a friendship with the *Democrat's* editor Biossat.<sup>65</sup> From the perspective of the newspapers, the men would run for office on the Democratic ticket under the assumption that they would fight for the reinstatement of home rule in the Red River city.

Sitting in office at the time of Weil's election was Robert L. Fox, a self-declared Independent. Contemporary partisan politics in Reconstruction-era Louisiana were more complicated than Republicans pitted

against Democrats when Fox was elected mayor of Alexandria in 1872.<sup>66</sup> A third faction, referred to as the "Fusion Party," consisted of a blend of sympathies between the two major parties. The *Democrat* described the new party's makeup in Rapides Parish two months before the 1872 election as a compromise to Radical control in the city: "the Liberals, Democrats and Reformers have agreed on a ticket which all Conservative citizens can support." The new party combined the more conservative Republicans, many of whom were disappointed with the party's leadership, with Democrats.<sup>67</sup> The *Democrat* enthusiastically remarked on the new ticket in its signature cynical manner: "We did not believe that honorable men would trifle in such a crisis as this. Hence we have refrained from abusing men who had opinions differing from ours as to the best means of saving the State."<sup>68</sup>

Despite this optimism about future politics, the Fusion Party merely represented a compromise ticket. It provided a step toward regaining home rule for conservative white Democrats and a catalyst for interest in local elections. The paper remarked, "if a single Conservative failed to register or to vote, we do know where he lives."<sup>69</sup> Confident that the compromise would be an avenue to allow conservative Democrats to regain control of parish and state offices in future elections, the *Democrat* optimistically declared, "the remainder of the journey will be easy indeed."<sup>70</sup> After the Fusion Party's victory in November 1872, the paper observed that if the rest of Louisiana voted as favorably for the ticket in other elections, then "our poor old State [would be] already ransomed, redeemed and disenthralled" from Radical rule.<sup>71</sup>

The *Louisiana Democrat* only half-heartedly endorsed Fox before he entered office in 1873. "We are almost sure he will come up to public estimation," the paper's columnist wrote, "[and] we give his incoming administration the *Democrat's* blessing, with a sincere good wish for the fulfillment of our Town's good rule and government."<sup>72</sup> However, Alexandria Democrats soon learned that their sanguine attitude was misguided, as redemption for the disgruntled whites would not come so easily. In the state election, the Fusion ticket lost, and Republican William Pitt Kellogg was sworn in as governor.

In 1874, members of the Democratic Party showed greater excitement than in 1872 and perhaps the most since the end of the war. As in the previous election, the race for mayor went largely unreported because



**¶** There is something noble, grand, patriotic, patient in the status of a people, who for seven long years have been crushed, ground to the dust and persecuted all around, and yet are clinging to hope, are watching for the silver lining to the dark cloud, and above all are yet possessed of their manhood! Such a people right now, are we of Louisiana, 'of Rapides, and proud indeed are our thoughts and aspirations to know we are of that people, and that our fate is linked with theirs. Next Monday's sitting sun will decide whether we shall all be free together and enjoy the unmeasured blessing of that freedom. We believe, we know, that our people are prepared for the final issue, and it will be no fault of theirs if we fail. Courage, men, courage to the last, and at your work on Monday.

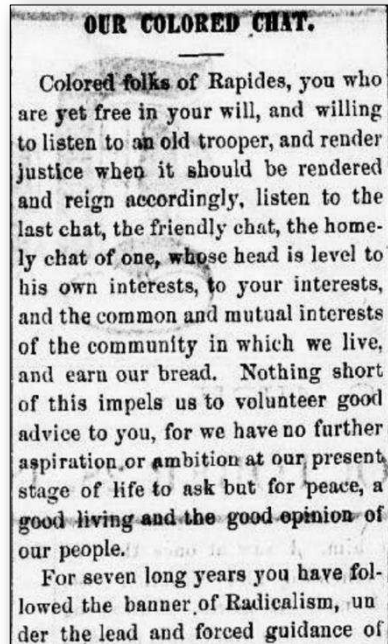
Louisiana Democrat,  
 October 28, 1874.  
 (*Chronicling America,*  
 Library of Congress.)

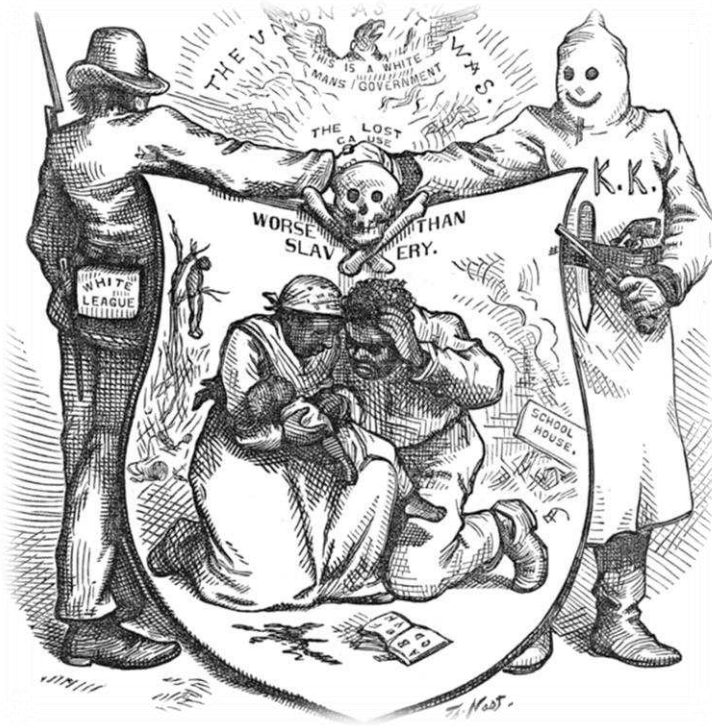
parish and state matters overshadowed the local vote. The highly contested elections, however, offer an important look at the political climate in Alexandria in late 1874 and 1875. To the city's readers, this election was a projection of principles: voting for the right candidate, according to the *Democrat*, meant voting for "the silver lining to the dark cloud" of Reconstruction.<sup>73</sup> In the municipal election, which occurred a few months after the parish and state elections, Edouard Weil would be the Democratic nominee for mayor. In the parish and state elections, Democrats pitted themselves against Republican and Republican spin-off parties. Somewhat ironically given the high volume of voter intimidation in this election, the newspaper spent considerable effort campaigning to black Alexandrians, who made up more than 55 percent of the population:

Colored folks of Rapides, you who are yet free in your will . . . for seven long years you have followed the banner of Radicalism, under the lead and forced guidance of the very men, white and black, who in the present campaign are again to the front as your leaders, your masters. . . . [Have] you not all the time hit your real friends, the white people, the land owners, many hard and undeserved blows? We believe you have, and in proportion as the bad you have helped have prospered and fattened, the good ones have staggered and suffered. . . . [You] are worse off than when you started in your new birthright, and in many regards, you have chilled the good feelings of the white people for you and your race. . . . [You] have nothing to risk, nothing to lose, but everything to gain.<sup>74</sup>

The article taunted, threatened, and pressured the black population to vote for the white conservative ticket, tacitly implying that the extrajudicial result of another Radical term would have a more toxic result than a Democratic victory.

Louisiana Democrat,  
 October 28, 1874.  
 (*Chronicling America, Library  
 of Congress.*)





Thomas Nast, "Worse than slavery," Harper's Weekly, October 24, 1874.

*In the image, the White League joins with the Ku Klux Klan to suppress the rights of former slaves. On the left, a lynching victim; on the right, a burning freedmen's school.*

*(Library of Congress.)*

Newspaper threats notwithstanding, a new organization was of increasing concern to the black voters of Rapides Parish. After the Colfax Massacre, branches of the White League formed across Louisiana and grew into "a substantial statewide operation." Differing from the Ku Klux Klan, which acted locally and unsystematically during this era, the White League, as described by historian Nicholas Lemann, "was something more: it was less secret, better organized, and more explicitly political in its aims. Its purpose was to use extralegal violence to remove the Republican Party from power, and then to disenfranchise black people."<sup>75</sup> An 1875 congressional report found that in almost every parish in Louisiana in the previous year, the White League was successful in intimidating and

terrorizing Republican voters. Beginning that summer, the White House received an unprecedented number of letters from across the southern states that white violence targeting blacks had become more rampant.<sup>76</sup> In fact, the report concluded that Rapides Parish operated on a tier far worse than most of the region: "There was never a greater reign of terror in any country or in any of the parishes of the State than that which existed in Rapides Parish." Further, it noted, "Since the massacre at Colfax . . . it became more intensified as time brought near the coming off of the election, the republicans avoiding all political gatherings, and scarcely feeling safe in the public highways passing from neighbor to neighbor."<sup>77</sup>

In an attempt to guard against ubiquitous voter intimidation, the Reconstruction government sent armed officers to Alexandria on the day of the 1874 election, and a voting commissioner and a federal supervisor manned the ballot boxes.<sup>78</sup> This proved to be insufficient, however, since White Leaguers went to every polling station in the city, armed with bowie knives and revolvers, and violently silenced Republican candidates from speaking publicly, and all but ensured that only White League votes were placed in ballot boxes. More likely out of fear than complicity, none of the election officers present attempted to stop the voter intimidation. In the words of one eyewitness to the violence: "It was worth a man's life to have given a protest."<sup>79</sup> Whites threatened that if a black man voted for any candidate in opposition to the White League ticket, he would lose his job, and black voters were reminded of the fate of the 150 men massacred at Colfax just a few years previously with little repercussion for the whites who carried out the attack.<sup>80</sup>

After the 1874 election, and despite a sizable black population advantage and an upward trend toward more black representation in state offices, nearly every position in the Rapides Parish government shifted to Democratic control largely due to White League intimidation.<sup>81</sup> Conservatives walked away with a convincing win, and the *Democrat* rejoiced with a sweeping victory against the Radical Party in the parish and Alexandria proper. The results pleased the paper's editor so greatly that he exclaimed in the first article of the local section that "this local feels so bully, that what's in him must come out or he will burst—so home folk just consider this copy [of the *Democrat*] to stop the leisure of our jubilant typos! More anon!! Let her rip!!!"<sup>82</sup> A *Caucasian* columnist wrote:

The campaign is over and Rapides has nobly done her duty. To-day there is general rejoicing all over the parish among colored people as well as the whites at our glorious success. The downfall of Radicalism in this parish is a terrible blow to the leaders of that party here but they had better give it up with as good grace as possible. No power on earth can help them now for the next two years to come. Hurrah, for Rapides!<sup>83</sup>

Both Democratic papers reported that "our friend" Edouard Weil was put on the Radical ticket as a Republican office seeker for the ward of Alexandria without his consent. According to the *Caucasian*, the soon-to-be mayor, "whose name the Radicals put on their ticket for Magistrate as a bait for the gudgeons, never authorized the use of his name by them for that or any other position" until the day of the election.<sup>84</sup> Although this oddity is not further reported on or elaborated by either paper, Weil's popularity among Democrats may have been seen as a motivating point for Republicans and a way to fool unsuspecting Democrats into voting for the Republican ticket.

A second article more clearly demonstrates Weil's popularity within the Democratic Party—as well as that of Alexandria's other Jews. Directly below the election results, the *Caucasian* noted that Jews actively

☞ The campaign is over and Rapides has nobly done her duty. To-day there is general rejoicing all over the parish among the colored people as well as the whites at our glorious success. The downfall of Radicalism in this parish is a terrible blow to the leaders of that party here but they had better give it up with as good grace as possible. No power on earth can help them now for the next two years to come. Hurrah, for Rapides! All honor to the colored people who threw off their shackles and voted with us!

☞ Our Town merchants of the Israelite faith deserve and they have the thanks of our whole people for their affective services in canvassing for our ticket on Monday. They did good, noble work and have endeared themselves to all our people in such a manner as that they will not soon forget the obligations they owe to them. All honor to them!

campaigning for the Democratic Party and recognized the work of the Jewish community: "Our Town merchants of the Israelite faith deserve and they have the thanks of our whole people for their [effective] services in canvassing for our ticket on Monday. They did good, noble work and have endeared themselves to all our people in such a manner as that they will not soon forget the obligations they owe to them. All honor to them!"<sup>85</sup>

Although it is unclear how the Jewish merchants of Alexandria helped the Democratic Party aside from voting, this article demonstrates their significance to the outcome of the election and their recognition by those committed to the pro-white party. Jewish ties to the Democratic Party were evident in the results of the local election, which took place on January 4, 1875. Following a Democratic victory a few months prior in the parish and state elections, the white-man's party again gained seats in municipal offices. Weil won election as mayor "by a large majority," and Moses Rosenthal, Mires's brother, was elected alderman.<sup>86</sup> Both began their two-year term of "arduous and non-paying duties" on the twenty-fifth of the same month.<sup>87</sup>

Weil did not disappoint the local Democrats during his tenure in office. In at least one instance in his first year as mayor, his commitment to the extrajudicial actions of the Democratic Party was blatantly apparent, notably over a controversy involving the destruction of the Republican *Rapides Gazette* printing press in the city. On August 21, 1875, a group of individuals acted "with a premeditated determination" to destroy the *Gazette*, which congressional reports referred to as "the official organ of the Republican party in Rapides Parish."<sup>88</sup> The *Weekly Louisianan*, a New Orleans-based, African American-run Republican newspaper founded by former Governor P. B. S. Pinchback, reported that a group broke into the Alexandria press at night and pillaged the building, damaging at least ten thousand dollars' worth of equipment. The act was clearly partisan, as the *Gazette's* editor reported after the break-in that the newspaper was "warned [of] the coming of this villainous outrage through a newspaper in the interest of the Democratic Party a few weeks anterior to this wanton destruction of our property." The paper's editor further indicated that Democratic violence and "their habituated villainy" occurred "with as little fear of receiving the rewards of justice, as did they under Confederate rule." To add insult to injury, the *Gazette* had to rent space from the

staunchly Democratic and white supremacist *Caucasian* to keep the Republican press running.<sup>89</sup>

The Republican news editor proved correct in predicting that the criminals would be spared from the law. Attached to the *Louisianan* article is correspondence between the paper's editor and Mayor Weil. The *Gazette's* editor threatened legal action against the municipality for not protecting his press. Three days later, the mayor responded with a statement of denial, advising the editor that he is "badly informed in the matter. . . . [No] such destruction ever occurred here at the hands of any 'lawless persons' within our corporate limits."<sup>90</sup> Weil's denial of the significant damage to the *Gazette* marks a clear act of partisan collusion and misconduct, a trend that was becoming commonplace among southern Democrats as Reconstruction ended.

In this incident, as well as throughout the 1874 election, Weil acquiesced to racially charged Reconstruction-era politics. Despite this, the local Jewish history ignores Weil's participation in unjust municipal government in a parish filled with intimidation and white supremacist ideologies. Although it is unclear if Weil (or any Jew in the town) was directly involved in the White League, the Klan, or any of the other extrajudicial terrorist organizations that plagued southern towns through the waning years of Reconstruction, his support for the Democratic Party and the white Democratic press, at the very least, exhibits his complicity with dirty party politics.

After leaving office, Weil returned to his business ventures through the purchase of a wholesale warehouse.<sup>91</sup> The *Louisiana Democrat* wrote favorably about the ex-mayor, in the same month he left office, as "withal a good business man."<sup>92</sup> He remained in local politics, serving as police juror from 1879 to 1880 and in a second term as councilman from 1885 to 1887. He continued in his commitment to the Jewish community as well, housing visitors and serving as president of Gemiluth Chassodim congregation until 1882. He held executive positions in the Oliver and Rebecca Lodges of B'nai B'rith and remained active in both until his death in September 1891. In an obituary published in the *Weekly Town Talk*, members of the Oliver Lodge wrote that the community lost "a useful, quiet and law-a[b]iding citizen . . . a man of strong convictions, firmly attached to his friends, charitable to a fault."<sup>93</sup>

*The Jewish Place in Post-Civil War Southern Politics*

In his study of Franklin J. Moses, a Reconstruction-era Republican “scalawag” governor in South Carolina of Jewish descent, political scientist Benjamin Ginsberg argues that Moses sought out a partnership with southern blacks “because he believed that such a relationship would serve his political interests,” even though “it would require him to seek and win black support and to alienate himself from white society.” In doing so, Moses became “a star” for the black community of South Carolina, pushing for a politically equal playing field in the wake of the dissolution of slavery. Although Ginsberg asserts that predominantly, “Jews do not view blacks merely instrumentally,” as “victims of oppression and even slavery themselves, Jews cannot help but have a certain sympathy for blacks.” Closer examination shows that, by the end of Reconstruction, blacks in Louisiana could evaluate this relationship entirely differently.<sup>94</sup>

Like most members of the Democratic Party who were elected into power at the end of Reconstruction, there is little doubt that Edouard Weil benefited from the well-documented oppression of Alexandria’s black community. As is clear throughout the election of 1874, the Democratic press was unabashed in its commitment to suppressing black mobility in politics, and, during the years that followed, a special Congressional Report in the U.S. House of Representatives condemned the local government of Alexandria and Rapides Parish as notoriously unjust.<sup>95</sup>

Through the lens of the larger Jewish community, however, Weil’s election should be examined with careful nuance. While Jewish leaders like Weil may have espoused a commitment to the fraudulent suppression of the Republican vote, it is less clear if other Jews did as well. In fact, the same *Weekly Louisianan* article that criticized Weil for his indifference to the destruction of the Republican press admits: “Four-fifths of the business citizens of Alexandria are opposed to these lawless acts. The Israelites, who are a majority of the business men of the town, although Democrats in politics, abhor such lawlessness, and unhesitatingly condemn it.”<sup>96</sup>

Does this prove that Weil was an outlier from the Jewish community—a community of which he was the cultural spokesperson and president of the temple? Perhaps this may be a testament to internal differences within a Jewish community that, despite containing ideological



similarities, naturally did not always act in uniform fashion. Although "four-fifths" of the exceptionally large Jewish population of Alexandria may have maintained benevolent relationships with their black customers, Jews likely still benefited substantially from the racially partisan political climate at the end of Reconstruction. Louisianan Jews as a whole likely supported the Democratic Party, and Alexandria's Jews were active in canvassing for the party in the 1874 election. In turn, the white-supremacist press reveled in Weil's success.

As Reconstruction officially ended, evidence suggests that the Jewish commitment to the unjust actions of the Democratic Party only intensified. During an 1879 Republican convention in Waterproof, Louisiana, a small town situated on the Mississippi River some eighty miles northeast of Alexandria, a black candidate for Louisiana secretary of state, James D. Kennedy, wrote to the *New York Tribune* to inform the public that the town's Jewish mayor, a Democrat named A. S. Yamer, was not letting him speak to a crowd of black Republicans during his campaign for office. After the event, Kennedy asked the following questions:

When the white men of Waterproof and the surrounding country permit a Jew . . . to guide and direct them in a crusade against free speech and fair play, I think it is time for me to halt and ask the question. . . . When did the Jew free himself from proscription and prejudice? How long has it been since his race has had the right to disturb and agitate labor by more prejudice on account of color or of political faith?<sup>97</sup>

Kennedy's questions are ones that historians continue to grapple with today. As evidenced earlier in the *Southern Workman's* harsh denunciation of Jewish merchants who were believed to be at fault for the deep debt experienced by black customers, a far different narrative exists in the closing years of Reconstruction in the Deep South state of Louisiana, and one that starkly contrasts with Ginsberg's "certain sympathy" assertion.

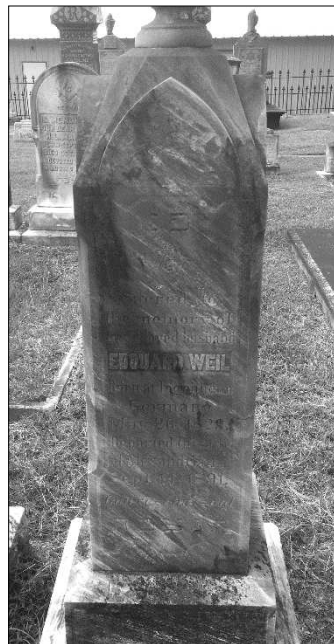
In other nearby cities including Shreveport, Louisiana, and Natchez, Mississippi, Jewish Democrats continued to be elected to the office of mayor into the new century, albeit less frequently, in part due to the shrinking Jewish populations in the rural South.<sup>98</sup> Again, while a thorough examination of each election is the only way to draw complete conclusions, one can assume that in the deeply studied Jim Crow-era South,

alignment with white Democratic policies was all but necessary to remain popular among voting constituents.

However, as we saw in the early years of Reconstruction, this was not uniformly true. Jews, like other white southerners, could be found on both sides of the political landscape during Reconstruction. In Louisiana alone, at least a few Republican Jewish mayors presided in towns like Shreveport and Donaldsonville in the early 1870s. In other places, such as the Carolinas, Jewish Republicans remained in office until later.<sup>99</sup> Yet as Redemption took root, and as exemplified by Edouard Weil, many if not most Jews became a part of—or at least acquiescent to—the solidifying South dominated by a Democratic Party wedded to the disenfranchisement and continued suppression of blacks.

Whether turn-of-the-century policies and racial suppression reflected the actual beliefs of many southern Jews or were simply methods of “fitting in” remains to be determined. As has been demonstrated, Jews in the South were often treated in the press as social outsiders and biblical anachronisms. Some scholars have posited that southern Jews focused

*Edouard Weil's headstone in the Jewish Cemetery in Pineville, Louisiana. The caption reads, "Sacred to the memory of my beloved husband Edouard Weil. Born at Ingenheim, Germany, May 26, 1829. Departed this life at Alexandria, La., Sept. 14, 1891. God rest his soul." (User "trnsportr," FindaGrave.com.)*



their efforts more on personal and communal successes, regarding black rights as an afterthought (if at all). In Atlanta, for example, Mark K. Bauman demonstrates that urban Jews crafted their political sympathies as an expansion of their broader ethnic and economic interests, and their stance on black rights hinged on these sentiments.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, in his study of late-century antisemitic violence in rural Louisiana and Mississippi, Patrick Mason comments that Jews "generally had the support of community elites," because "their mercantile interests allied them with the southern middle class." To gain acceptance (and profitability), "Jews naturally gravitated toward the business elements of the New South which in turn showed affinity toward them."<sup>101</sup> In this case, the "affinity" shown by southern whites was likely contingent on an implicit agreement of upholding the racial status quo. In his study of the murder of Jewish mayor Marx Schoenberg in Donaldsonville, Stuart Rockoff more directly concludes that "the end of Reconstruction not only resulted in the failure of interracial democracy and the disfranchisement of the South's black population, but also narrowed the range of acceptable political views southern Jews could express."<sup>102</sup>

As the role of Jews in municipal politics becomes more apparent—as in the economic sphere—possibly no single narrative regarding the relationship to black voters and ties to white supremacy is sufficient to explain their role in the American South. Yet a burgeoning narrative of Jewish political alignment with the white man's Democratic Party at the crux of Reconstruction and Redemption points to a trend of complicity, if not participation, in perpetuating a deeply partisan and prejudicial society.

Even with a nuanced explanation of the Jewish involvement in Alexandria's politics, broader conclusions can be drawn with deeper significance concerning our understanding of the Jewish relationship to politics and power in the postbellum South. While the varying degrees of involvement with white supremacy and other forms of suppression may be limited to individual members of the Jewish community, this does not vindicate a community that, by the end of Reconstruction, was overwhelmingly affiliated with the Democratic Party. In Alexandria in particular, the Democratic press—particularly the *Caucasian*—did not hesitate to communicate its political and social motivations, and black and white Republicans openly expressed their disappointment with Jewish

leaders in Louisiana. To any involved citizen, there was no shadow of a doubt about the motives of southern Democrats.

The 1876 *American Israelite* article that implored Jews across the nation to vote for the party of “honesty” – which it concluded was the Democratic Party – overlooked any commitment to civil rights for southern blacks and instead suggested that anticorruption and government decentralization should take precedence over dispelling southern racism.<sup>103</sup> In doing so, it presented a nationwide acquiescence to Jews participating in the racially motivated elections that occurred just two years earlier in southern towns like Alexandria. Although more research into the municipal South is necessary to resolve these underlying questions of Jewish intent toward – and consideration of – blacks in the postbellum era, as well as the surprising level of Jewish political acceptance, a pattern of Jewish Democrats serving as mayors opens new doors for our understanding of the intersection of Jewish relationships with power and politics as southern democracy spiraled into nearly a century of racial oppression.

Like the stark contrast of Franklin Moses and Edouard Weil, individual examples may expose different Jewish sympathies. However a case like Weil’s – a successful merchant and a leading member of the local Jewish community – should not be overlooked when studying Jewish involvement in Reconstruction- and Redemption-era public life.

---

## NOTES

The author would like to deeply thank Jana Lipman and Michael R. Cohen of Tulane University for their revisions, edits, and mentorship. Research was aided by Josh Parshall at the Institute of Southern Jewish Life in Jackson and Adam Beauchamp at the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library in New Orleans. Also a special thank you to Carly Bryeans for her thoughtful and careful revisions. The Tulane Honors Department’s Jean Danielson Memorial Grant and Newcomb-Tulane College’s Liberal Arts Grant generously provided research funding.

<sup>1</sup> “Southern Jewish Mayors Throughout History,” Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL), accessed October 1, 2018, <http://www.isjl.org/jewish-mayors-in-the-south.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Historians have studied Jewish politicians in the late nineteenth-century South, albeit few in Louisiana. Most notably is Stuart Rockoff, “Carpetbaggers, Jacklegs, and Bolting Republicans: Jews in Reconstruction Politics in Ascension Parish, Louisiana,” *American Jewish History* 97 (March 2013): 39–65. Also see Leonard Rogoff, “A Tale of Two Cities: Race, Riots, and Religion in New Bern and Wilmington, North Carolina, 1898,” *Southern Jewish History*

14 (2011): 37–75; Scott M. Langston, "Being Jewish in Columbus, Georgia: The Business, Politics, and Religion of Jacob and Isaac Moses, 1828–1890," *Southern Jewish History* 18 (2015): 1–61; Daniel R. Weinfeld, "Samuel Fleishman: Tragedy in Reconstruction-Era Florida," *Southern Jewish History* 8 (2005): 31–76; Canter Brown, Jr., "Philip and Morris Dzialynski: Jewish Contributions to Rebuilding the South," in *Dixie Diaspora: An Anthology of Southern Jewish History*, ed. Mark K. Bauman (Tuscaloosa, 2006), 209–35; Benjamin Ginsberg, *Moses of South Carolina: A Jewish Scalawag During Radical Reconstruction* (Baltimore, 2010); Mark K. Bauman, "Factionalism and Ethnic Politics in Atlanta: German Jews from the Civil War through the Progressive Era," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 82 (Fall 1998): 533–58.

<sup>3</sup> C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913* (Baton Rouge, 1971), 22.

<sup>4</sup> In other places in Louisiana, mayors often abused their powers in "mayor's court," through which mayors presided over trials for low-level violations of city ordinances. Small offenses such as noise complaints often resulted in the mayor handing out a minor fine or jail sentence. In southern cities before the Civil War and later when white Democrats regained control of the mayors' offices, these courts could be systematically used as tools to legally oppress blacks and maintain a white power structure within the town. See Floyd A. Buras III, *The Louisiana Mayor's Court: An Overview and Its Constitutional Problems* (Bloomington, IN, 2016); and "2011 Louisiana Laws, Revised Statutes, TITLE 33—Municipalities and parishes; RS 33:441—Mayor's court" *Justia US Law*, accessed February 26, 2018, <https://law.justia.com/codes/louisiana/2011/rs/title33/rs33-441/>.

<sup>5</sup> "The Peculiar People," *Louisiana Democrat* (Alexandria, LA), April 19, 1871.

<sup>6</sup> Anton Hieke, *Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South: Ambivalence and Adaptation* (Berlin and Boston, 2013), 155.

<sup>7</sup> "To Remove Next Door," *Town Talk* (Alexandria, LA), September 29, 1896. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most newspapers referred to Jewish men using biblical terms such as *Israelites* and *Hebrew* while Jewish women were commonly referred to as *Jewesses*. Antiquated terms such as these, which Jews frequently used as well, were usually not meant to be offensive, but do offer insight into how the mainstream population perceived Jews as anachronisms in a heavily Protestant-dominated region.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Hieke, *Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South*, 115.

<sup>9</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, June 30, 1875.

<sup>10</sup> *Donaldsonville (LA) Chief*, February 15, 1873.

<sup>11</sup> "The Jews," *Shreveport (LA) Times*, September 13, 1881.

<sup>12</sup> Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The 'Invisible Institution' in the Antebellum South* (New York, 2004), 311.

<sup>13</sup> *Weekly Louisianan* (New Orleans), May 18, 1872.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, May 22, 1875.

<sup>15</sup> "Unitarian Review: Feb.," *Christian Recorder* (Philadelphia), March 2, 1876.

<sup>16</sup> Clive Webb, "Jewish Merchants and Black Customers in the Age of Jim Crow," *Southern Jewish History* 2 (1999), 59.

<sup>17</sup> *Southern Workman* (Hampton, VA), April 1, 1884.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Koppel Von Vloomborg [Jacob Voorsanger], "Lone Star Flashes: The Roos-Froment Murder Case," *American Israelite* (Cincinnati), March 23, 1883.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in David Goldfield, "A Sense of Place: Jews, Blacks, and White Gentiles in the American South" *Southern Cultures* 3 (1997): 74.

<sup>21</sup> Michael R. Cohen, *Cotton Capitalists: American Jewish Entrepreneurship in the Reconstruction Era* (New York, 2017), 124, 21.

<sup>22</sup> "An Act No. 34," *New Orleans Republican*, April 2, 1870; "Southern Jewish Mayors Throughout History," accessed March 31, 2019.

<sup>23</sup> Rockoff, "Carpetbaggers, Jacklegs, and Bolting Republicans," 43–50.

<sup>24</sup> "Shreveport, Louisiana," ISJL, *Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities*, accessed March 31, 2019, <https://www.isjl.org/louisiana-shreveport-encyclopedia.html>. See also, Howard Association, "Report of the Committee on the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1873 at Shreveport, Louisiana" (Shreveport, 1874).

<sup>25</sup> Gary D. Joiner and Cheryl White, *Shreveport's Historic Oakland Cemetery: Spirits of Pioneers and Heroes* (Charleston, SC, 2015), 99.

<sup>26</sup> *Shreveport Times*, October 30, 1872.

<sup>27</sup> Gary Joiner, "1873 Shreveport Yellow Fever Epidemic," filmed February 2012, C-Span video, 5:50, accessed February 28, 2018, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?304647-1/1873-shreveport-yellow-fever-epidemic>. For more on the failure of state-level Reconstruction politics in Louisiana, see George Rable, "Republican Albatross: The Louisiana Question, National Politics, and the Failure of Reconstruction," *Louisiana History* 23 (Spring 1982): 109–130.

<sup>28</sup> Statewide homicides actually decreased in 1874. The number in 1873 was particularly high as a result of the Colfax Massacre, which left nearly 150 blacks dead in a single violent outrage at the courthouse in Colfax. Gilles Vandal, "'Bloody Caddo': White Violence Against Blacks in a Louisiana Parish, 1865–1876," *Journal of Social History* 25 (December 1991), 374, 379.

<sup>29</sup> "The Political Questions of the Day," *American Israelite*, August 4, 1876, reprinted as "Why Israelites Should Vote the Democratic Ticket," *Shreveport Times*, August 12, 1876. This article was reprinted in other newspapers in the South as well, including on the front page of the *Louisiana Democrat* in Alexandria on August 23, 1876.

<sup>30</sup> In the *Shreveport Times* reprint, Wise is referred to as a "Liberal Republican in sentiment." In fact, by the post-Civil War era Wise was more accurately a "fervent States' Rights Democrat." See Jacob Rader Marcus, *The Americanization of Isaac Mayer Wise* (Cincinnati, 1931), 6.

<sup>31</sup> "Why Israelites Should Vote the Democratic Ticket."

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Rapides Parish, Louisiana.

<sup>34</sup> "The Red River Campaign," City of Alexandria, Louisiana, accessed February 5, 2018, <https://www.cityofalexandriala.com/history/red-river-campaign>.

<sup>35</sup> Martin I. Hinchin, *Fourscore and Eleven: A History of the Jews of Rapides Parish, 1828–1919* (Alexandria, LA, 1984), Introduction. This local history of the Jewish population is celebratory and romantic. Accordingly, I use the book only to identify factual information such as Edouard Weil's involvement in various political or religious groups.

<sup>36</sup> "Alexandria, Louisiana," ISJL, *Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities*, accessed March 21, 2018, <http://www.isjl.org/louisiana-alexandria-encyclopedia.html>; Anny Bloch-Raymond, *From the Banks of the Rhine to the Banks of the Mississippi: A History of Jewish Immigrants and Their Individual Stories*, trans. Catherine Temerson (Santa Maria, CA, 2014), 165.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Bressler Jackson, "Mires Rosenthal: A Brief Biography," Alexandria folder, ISJL, Jackson, MS.

<sup>38</sup> Jackson, "Mires Rosenthal," 3. As one historian points out, "it is important to remember, however, that the census did not count the large quantity of transient Jewish peddlers who sold dry goods, clothing, and jewelry. Some of these peddlers, and especially those who recorded great profits, eventually settled down in Alexandria." "Alexandria, Louisiana," ISJL. The *Louisiana Democrat* estimated the Jewish population to be nearly one-half of the town's total the following year, a figure that is likely exaggerated. "The Jewish Holidays," *Louisiana Democrat*, September 30, 1874.

<sup>39</sup> Hinchin, *Fourscore and Eleven*, 21.

<sup>40</sup> "Alexandria Notes," Alexandria folder, ISJL.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Hinchin, *Fourscore and Eleven*, 18.

<sup>42</sup> Cohen, *Cotton Capitalists*, 179–80; *Louisiana Democrat*, August 25, 1869.

<sup>43</sup> "Soldier Details: Weil, Edouard," National Park Service, *The Civil War*, accessed February 14, 2018, <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers-detail.htm?soldierId=314ADDDD-DC7A-DF11-BF36-B8AC6F5D926A>.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Cohen, *Cotton Capitalists*, 180.

<sup>45</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, August 25, 1869; Cohen, *Cotton Capitalists*, 180.

<sup>46</sup> Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Rapides Parish, Louisiana.

<sup>47</sup> For examples, see *Louisiana Democrat*, September 8, 1880, and September 7, 1881. Despite acculturating and affiliating with the Reform movement, the closing of Jewish stores remained a common practice across the South in the postbellum years. A contemporary sociologist studying Jewish storekeepers noted that southerners would remark, "if there is a Jewish holiday, you cannot buy a pair of socks in this whole country." Quoted in Webb, "Jewish Merchants and Black Customers," 56.

<sup>48</sup> Louis Schmier, ed., *Reflections of Southern Jewry: The Letters of Charles Wessolowsky, 1878–1879* (Macon, GA, 1982), 129.

<sup>49</sup> Hinchin, *Fourscore and Eleven*, 11.

<sup>50</sup> Rosenthal was also a charter member of Gemiluth Chassodim. See Jackson, "Mires Rosenthal."

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Hinchin, *Fourscore and Eleven*, 20.

<sup>52</sup> While sources such as Hinchin's *Fourscore and Eleven* make passing note that Weil was elected mayor, his tenure in local politics has largely gone unexamined. Charles Wessolowsky simply noted that Weil served "to the satisfaction of all." Schmier, *Reflections of Southern Jewry*, 130. No known sources examine his election in the political climate of Alexandria in the 1870s, his ties to white supremacy or the larger Democratic Party, or the rampant violence that occurred during his time in office.

<sup>53</sup> Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York, 1988), 333, 324, 347.

<sup>54</sup> "About the Louisiana Democrat. (Alexandria, La.) 1845-1918," *Chronicling America: Historical American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, accessed February 7, 2018, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003389/>.

<sup>55</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, November 15, 1876.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, January 27, 1875. The newspaper continued to refer to the South in 1874 as "the old sixteen slave States." *Ibid.*, December 30, 1874.

<sup>57</sup> See Charles Lane, *The Day Freedom Died: The Colfax Massacre, the Supreme Court, and the Betrayal of Reconstruction* (New York, 2008).

<sup>58</sup> "About The Caucasian. (Shreveport, La.) 1900-1922," *Chronicling America: Historical American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, accessed May 15, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064469/>. The *Louisiana Democrat* shared an equally blunt and inhumane sentiment regarding the massacre in Colfax. The newspaper vilified the "riotous, turbulent and bad negroes" who tormented the white "Colfax Prisoners" in 1873 and called for a violent uprising against the African Americans who were involved. Rather unequivocally, the newspaper wrote, "What is still better, the young men of our Town, whose sympathies are always in the right direction, propose giving a Theatrical performance for [the white "Colfax Prisoners"] benefit, which in due time will be made known. . . . Action, instant action in behalf of our persecuted citizens is what we urge and we hope never again to have to all due to their neglect." "The Colfax Prisoners," *Louisiana Democrat*, January 28, 1874.

<sup>59</sup> "Index to Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives for the Second Session of the Forty-Third Congress. 1874-1875" (Washington, DC, 1875), 91.

<sup>60</sup> Foner, *Reconstruction*, 399, 383, 379, 381.

<sup>61</sup> "The Kellogg Ballot Box," *Louisiana Democrat*, December 27, 1876.

<sup>62</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, July 30, 1873.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, February 13, 1878.

<sup>64</sup> *Caucasian* (Shreveport, LA), May 23, 1874.

<sup>65</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, January 6, 1875.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, October 30, 1872.

<sup>67</sup> Rockoff, "Carpetbaggers, Jacklegs, and Bolting Republicans," 46. This was perhaps the first stepping-stone to the "color-line" becoming the dividing factor between the two major parties during the postbellum era. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 550. For more on the breakdown of "biracial coalition politics," see Armstead L. Robinson, "Beyond the Realm of Social Consensus: New Meanings of Reconstruction for American History," *Journal of American History* 68 (September 1981): 276-97.

<sup>68</sup> "The Fusion Ticket," *Louisiana Democrat*, September 4, 1872.

<sup>69</sup> "The Result in Rapides," *Louisiana Democrat*, November 8, 1872.

<sup>70</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, September 4, 1872.

<sup>71</sup> "The Result in Rapides," *Louisiana Democrat*, November 8, 1872.

<sup>72</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, January 29, 1873.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, October 28, 1874.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Nicholas Lemann, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War* (New York, 2006), 76.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*



<sup>77</sup> "Index to Reports of Committees of the House," 90–91.

<sup>78</sup> *Caucasian*, November 7, 1874.

<sup>79</sup> "Index to Reports of Committees of the House," 97–98.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>81</sup> Foner, *Reconstruction*, 354.

<sup>82</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, November 4, 1874.

<sup>83</sup> *Caucasian*, November 7, 1874.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Hinchin, *Fourscore and Eleven*, 20.

<sup>87</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, January 27, 1875.

<sup>88</sup> "Miscellaneous Documents of the House of Representatives for the Third Session of the Forty-Fifth Congress, 1878–79," 4:31, Part 1 (Washington, DC, 1879), 955.

<sup>89</sup> "Peculiarity of the Cotton Kingdom," *Weekly Louisianan*, September 25, 1875.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> The 1880 census lists Weil's occupation as "Keeping Warehouse." Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Rapides Parish, Louisiana.

<sup>92</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, January 24, 1877.

<sup>93</sup> "Resolutions of Respect," *Weekly Town Talk*, September 19, 1891.

<sup>94</sup> Ginsberg, *Moses of South Carolina*, 8, 67, 7.

<sup>95</sup> "Index to Reports of Committees of the House."

<sup>96</sup> "Peculiarity of the Cotton Kingdom," *Weekly Louisianan*, September 25, 1875.

<sup>97</sup> "Yazooing in Louisiana," *New York Tribune*, November 21, 1879.

<sup>98</sup> "Southern Jewish Mayors Throughout History." In Natchez, wealthy business owner Isaac Lowenberg was elected as a popular Democrat in 1882. In Shreveport, Ben Holzman and Ernest Bernstein were elected in 1900 and 1906, respectively.

<sup>99</sup> Again, these cases were generally anomalies. In his essay on the Jewish connection to race and politics in New Bern and Wilmington, North Carolina, Leonard Rogoff notes that "North Carolina Jews involved in politics generally identified with the Democratic Party . . . sharing their neighbors' disdain for what they regarded as Republican radicalism." However, in the 1880s, some Jews were elected to Republican offices (and in some cases, with "overwhelming African American support"). See Rogoff, "A Tale of Two Cities," 42.

<sup>100</sup> "Race was as much a constant in these issues of factionalism," Bauman writes. For example, "circumstantial evidence points to the conservative side – and Jews – as far more benign (or arguably, paternalistic) than the Progressives." See Bauman, "Factionalism and Ethnic Politics," 554.

<sup>101</sup> Patrick Q. Mason, "Anti-Jewish Violence in the New South," *Southern Jewish History* 8 (2005): 99–100.

<sup>102</sup> Rockoff, "Carpetbaggers, Jacklegs, and Bolting Republicans," 64.

<sup>103</sup> "The Political Questions of the Day."