CHAPTER SIX

Reconstruction and Deconstruction

In 1865, Salisbury was an occupied city. Thousands of Northern troops were camped in the environs of town for more than a year after Appomattox. General James Schofield, the district commander, made his headquarters in Salisbury. On the Fourth of July the troops made a demonstration of power and patriotism, parading past the general at the town square. Cannons were fired, and "a throng of citizens, soldiers, and freedmen" lined Corban Street. The "triumph of American principles" was said to be on display. After July 4th troops from the Second Division of the 23rd Corps—including the 26th Kentucky, the 99th New York, the 52nd Pennsylvania, and the 183rd Ohio—began the trek north to be discharged. By August more than 7,500 men had been mustered out, and only five companies of the 128th Indiana remained in a camp on the edge of town. There were tensions between the occupiers and the occupied. Early on some disputes arose when "a young lady asserts that she is still a rebel." In September there was so much disorder in the town that soldiers could only come into the business district "under permitted circumstances." The refugee camp at the site of the old Confederate prison was said to have 107 freemen. Drunkenness was rampant; a dozen men were found passed out on the downtown streets in a night. There were also small acts of singular defiance among Salisbury citizens. During the common prayers one October Sunday at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, when the President of the United States was prayed for, a woman held up a small Confederate flag.

The occupiers left in early 1866. "General Packard and the volunteer troops stationed here" left. Local citizens noted the chaos at the depot; as the troops embarked, "a number of women of both colors" left with them. It was noted that some couples were interracial, "a novelty in these parts."

Salisbury and Rowan County struggled in many ways to deal with the problems caused by the occupation. The many men arrested by General Stoneman's troops in April were still incarcerated well into the summer. More than a dozen died in captivity. Many, like Martin

Barger and Michael Litaker, had been members of the Senior Reserves that fought in the battle to stop Stoneman. There was want among many. Wounded Confederate veterans were still being cared for at some of the local wartime hospitals. One Confederate widow applied for food relief to the Yankee occupiers, but was turned away. Colonel C. S. Parish, the current commander, in pity "handed her a greenback." The public schoolhouse served as an example of the devastation found in parts of town. Not a window sash was left in the place; some observers said it looked "worse than slave cabins before the war." By the time of cold weather, the poor who had gathered in town were suffering for lack of food and shelter, and farmers in the county were complaining about the lack of horses, caused by Northern confiscations at the end of the war.

Early on, local leaders made efforts to restore order and prosperity to the teeming town. More than 350 men and women came to a mass meeting in May 1865. Dr. J. G. Ramsay, a Unionist from the Scotch-Irish community in western Rowan, alluded to the need for loyalty to the flag and the Constitution. Leading citizens present included Dr. Alexander Long, Dr. J. W. Hall, Samuel H. Wiley, Luke Blackmer, and A. J. Mock. Most had tended toward the Union in sentiment during the war. They elected Ramsay and Nathaniel Boyden to an upcoming state convention charged with bringing North Carolina back into compliance with the Union. To further order, "the military took hold of our municipal affairs," lamented J. J. Stewart, the newspaper editor. The occupiers replaced the old Confederate mayor, hotelier John I. Shaver, with druggist John H. Ennis. Aldermen were appointed for each ward, to allow resumption of town governance. They included S. R. Harrison and J. S. McCubbins of south ward. Ennis soon had baton-carrying "grave citizens" serving as vigilantes in the night "to curb moral filth and corruption." John F. Pace was appointed the first postbellum policeman for the town, and elections were scheduled for August.

Efforts to revive business in town kept pace with the struggle to bring order to the community. Trade picked up once railroads began to deliver wholesale goods. "The town abounds in fancy notions," observed the editor of the Union Banner, the newspaper set up to advance the occupation effort. Among the merchants of the day were Vaughn and Bancroft, who had set up shop in the old Jenkins corner on Main Street. By summer efforts were being made to repair the car shops of the Western North Carolina Railroad, and Dr. J. W. Hall was making brick for a building to replace the one on the square burnt by Stoneman's men. Soon "the burnt district" was "rising up on the wings of Dr. Hall." McNeely, Young, and Company were also active

merchants. M. L. Brown opened a private school in the old academy building, and Miss Bettie Wrenn was operating one for children in the building across from the courthouse. Mr. Utzman opened a saloon near the post office. By August, business was said to have revived to the level of "the happy times of old."

In the midst of all the changes and circumstances, the restructuring of the new postwar society—where slaves had been freed—was central to the whole community dynamic. In May 1865 a Salisbury resident contributed a piece to the new Union Banner newspaper on "the condition of the Negro." There was, he noted, "much perplexity . . . on the subject of the freedom of the slaves." What could they do? Not do? Where could they go, and What would happen when they did? Blacks, the writer had observed, were said to believe that they could go wherever they wanted and "take what they want." They were accused of often encroaching on the rights of their former masters. Some had demanded a distribution of the plantation property where they had been in bondage. Some claimed a right to half the property. There were "a dozen confrontations a day in this community."

The crux of the matter that time was the need for making a living for both whites and blacks. "Many whites cannot get along without them," noted the same observer, and had begun to make arrangements to hire their former slaves. The arrangement was often spelled out as an annual hire, with subsistence provided in the meantime by the employer. Often, these arrangements were handled through the offices of the Freedman's Bureau, a federal agency set up by Congress to help freedmen weather the transition to emancipation. Salisbury became headquarters for the district office of the agency.

Much of the turmoil and tension of the immediate postwar period was played out in the activities of the Freedman's Bureau. In the summer of 1865 it worked with the military occupiers to establish a refugee camp near the site of the old Confederate prison. Both rations and housing were provided through the army. Local whites found it had "comfortable shanties." Blacks in residence were helped to find employment within the city and out in the county. Often it did not go well. By laying by time—roughly the first weeks of August—it was reported that "a large number of farmers are turning away their colored help without any remuneration for their labors." Col. Charles Emery, head of the local Bureau, announced that employers must provide subsistence and shelter through the winter for those they had taken on. It was expected that farmers would "make fall distributions"

to their laborers. "The government will not permit you" to do otherwise, Emory emphasized.

For those who did not comply, the Bureau had the power, under the military occupation, to become a tribunal to settle the dispute and force the issue. The tribunal had a full docket by laying by time. The court ordered that one Mary Jane "be sustained by her former master" after she was sent away without pay. There were also reports of violence between whites and blacks. A freedman named Jake said he was struck by an ax by his employer, D. W. Sharp. The officer of the court fined Sharp and gave him a three-month jail sentence. Wilson told the tribunal that he had been banned from the plantation of Thomas A. Patterson after he, Wilson, had gone to town for medicine for his wife. The Bureau ordered Patterson to support Wilson and his family through the growing season of 1866. Some of the disputes were over property rights. A freedman named Elias said whites tried to take away his gun. The tribunal said he had a right to own one.

The complaints could go both ways, with whites as the plaintiffs. John Freeze of southern Rowan complained that a Gabriel working for him threatened to poison his own wife, as well as all the Freezes. Gabriel was arrested. Jack, who had belonged to Jacob Fisher before the war, was arrested for stealing corn from a crib, as was Anderson, a former slave of W. F. Watson.

One of the most scandalous "outrages"—as they were called then—involved the case of "Martha a fine looking mulatto girl." She said she had gone to church despite being told she could not by her employer. "They had forbidden my going to church," and she claimed she was beaten as she tried to return to the farm, then was beaten again when she left to go to Salisbury to report the incident. James F. Parker, who had hired her to do carding and spinning, was said to have tied her up. Parker was given the choice of a $100 fine or six months in jail.

Most freed people of color found work on area farms or with families and firms in town. The best-known black entrepreneur of the day was William Valentine, a barber. "We see that Bill the gentlemanly colored barber was now at the Mansion House," noted a local editor. "Bill barberises without being barbarous." He clearly made money. "His shaving is never at a discount." But there were more bodies than jobs. Men were said to have crowded the street corners of downtown every day throughout that first postwar year. Yet, black life could be lively and communal in the immediate wake of war. In September of 1865 they held a picnic "in the neighborhood of Mr. Boyden's plantation." Organizers hoped that "as many Union gentlemen as can

be will be present." On New Year's Day 1866, blacks promenaded about town with "an air of indifference and unconcern, as to what was going on around them." according to one white observer.

On the other extreme, there were episodes of violence between the races. "A Negro boy belonging to the late George A. Locke" was brought before the military tribunal on a rape charge. He later escaped, was caught, then hanged. The victim was Mary Sloan, a white woman. A second charge of rape, out in the Scotch Irish area, led to the first postbellum lynching in Rowan County. In September Union patrols went to Cooleemee plantation to arrest a freedman. Numerous freedmen stood them off with gunshots. One was wounded. Salisbury became the change of venue for an interracial murder charge from Davie County. In July 1865 Mrs. Provo Neely weas in an altercation with a former slave. Her daughter, Temple Neely, shot the freedwoman through the heart. Miss Neely was found guilty of manslaughter, after Negro witnesses testified that the deceased had attacked Mrs. Neely. There had been "conflicted character of evidence," it was reported. Miss Neely was fined $1,000, but not incarcerated.

Then, there were just the oddities of the time. In September 1865, "a Negro was arrested for speeding on a horse."

In the midst of postwar discombobulation, Salisbury continued to move to restore order. Voters in November turned down the state's Unionist provisional government by total of 242 to 178, helping to elect the more conservative Jonathan Worth of Randolph County the first postbellum governor. Old Unionists still controlled local politics but were divided into factions. Dr. J. G. Ramsay led the voting for Congress, but D. L. Bringle lost in his bid to be elected to the state House of Representatives. Most opposed the idea, ventured by the local Union Banner, that blacks had the right to vote in "a restricted form of Negro suffrage." The Worth administration soon appointed new magistrates for the county. The new coterie was far more likely to have supported the Confederacy in the late war than had their 1865 predecessors. In Salisbury they included banker D. A. Davis, lawyer Archibald Henderson, and hotelier John I. Shaver.

The changes in authority emboldened some to speak out about social conditions. Negroes had to choose "whether to be a man or a beast." Either way, they were to be subservient to "the race of superior natural endowment." Luke Blackmer, the former Unionist, spoke at a freedman's celebration in May. The topic was what to do with their "new status." Blackmer emphasized that their African ancestors had been "heathens and savages." They had had "good and kind masters

who had taken care of them." These same elites, Blackmer promised, "will continue to be their friends, on good behavior." After all, their thinking went, freed people should be thankful they had been brought to the South.

Community life slowly but resourcefully moved ahead. The city built a new town hall. In 1866 St. Luke's Episcopal Church ring in the Lenten season on a daily basis. By the spring the Rowan Bible Society had been reformed. J. D. McNeely, William Overman, W. A. Walton, and Luke Blackmer were mainstays in the organization. The Rowan Medical Society was reestablished. Drs. J. G. Ramsay, C. A. Henderson, and J. J. Summerell led the effort. The Methodist, Lutheran, and Presbyterian congregations had a Sunday School picnic in "a beautiful grove" in the western edge of the city. The frolic included a brass band, evidence that the city had revived its antebellum performance group. The same band played for "a ladies feast" held at the new city hall. A Southern Vigilante Fire Company was formed.

Black community was given a boost with the establishment of a Freedman's Bureau school on Concord Road, in the south ward. Captain Charles Emory was in charge. The facility, paid for in part by the Freedman's Aid Society of Philadelphia, cost $2,000. The building was also to be used at a Baptist Church for black residents. The day school initially enrolled more than 200 scholars. More than 90 adults came to night school. Professors A. H. Ervin and J. P. Mendenhall were the teachers.

Politics remained problematic. Unionists like Lewis Hanes—who had moved to town from Davidson County to start the Old North State newspaper—called for support for a National Union Convention. Among the endorsers was Dr. J. W. Hall. Yet, the majority disagreed; voting for the more conservative state constitution by a 378 to 137 margin. Five men ran for the State House, under "no real party unlike olden days." Each voter was allowed to construct his own ticket. However, "a kind of sullen indifference has possessed the mind of the masses," and the vote in the fall was one-third the level of normal. Salisbury went for the conservative Worth for governor. In the county only Neely's Mill and Morgan beats went for Unionists.

Trade, too, continued to advance, but again conditions were potentially perilous. "The success or failure of the next crop hangs the most important consequences to us all," reported J. J. Bruner in the Carolina Watchman in spring 1866. One citizen claimed that local merchants were too tightfisted, that prices were better in nearby Charlotte, and that Salisbury needed to pay attention. Conditions continued to be up and down. "Greenbacks are scarce," it was reported

in April 1867. However, trade picked up in the summer. One observer saw lots of country people coming to town to sell "the usual produce." He visited with many "good-humored" merchants, as well as Col. Brown of the Boyden House hotel, Brown "the tanner," and Williford "the tailor."

Change, however, was in the winds.

A new phase of history entered Salisbury in early 1867, when the federal Congress passed a new Reconstruction Act that reinstalled military occupation to the whole South. Troops from the 8th U. S. Infantry were assigned to Salisbury. The commander initially was Col. J. R. Edie, who had political jurisdiction over most of the northwestern counties of the state. He was said to be "portly, calm, [and] dignified." Edie was also dedicated to a new order. Soon the ten bars in town were closed by the authorities, part of "severe exactions of [the] military commanders." Town leaders noted that before the arrival of troops, behavior had been good in the bars, and bar owners had paid vitally needed taxes.

More importantly, the new military occupiers in 1867 dedicated themselves to the integration of black men into the political arena. Congress dictated that black men were to be regarded as full-fledged citizens under the terms of the new Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. North Carolina had been ordered to start over in the Reconstruction process and write another constitution that superseded the one written right after the war. A new convention required new elections of delegates, and the military authorities announced that black men would be able to vote. The political landscape tilted irrevocably, it seemed to all concerned. One Rowan observer believed it did not have to be so bad, although there was "no hope for peace or Reconstruction." "The common people, the farmers, would have settled the business long ago but the leaders prevented it." He called upon Rowanites to accept the Congressional terms. Rowan, he said, "was tired of being ruled by rebels."

Local blacks responded enthusiastically. They held a rally on May Day. "The first day of May was observed by the colored people of this county as a festival," observed editor Lewis Hanes, himself a supporter of black involvement in politics. Hanes, a former outspoken Unionist, was one of the three white speakers to address the crowd at the courthouse. The others were Dr. J. W. Hall and Luke Blackmer. Significantly, there were two black speakers, the first to ever address a public crowd in county history: Jack Boyden, a former servant of Unionist Nathaniel Boyden, and Harry Cowan, the well-respected Baptist minister who had served General Joseph Johnston during the

Civil War. Two black organizations marched in tandem around town to the courthouse. One was the Union League, a national group set up to advance black political rights.

The Fourth in 1867 was celebrated with the same level of enthusiasm and demonstration of Unionist strength. Military authorities put up national flags on all the public buildings, and the Union League marched in procession about town. C. S. Moring, an Italian artist who had recently emigrated to town, was the speaker. His address was "extremely radical", according to J. J. Bruner, an indication that it pitched the new measures of political equality.

Soon after, voter registration for the upcoming convention election began, and blacks were included across the county. All males age 21 or over could register except those who "were public officers who took part in the rebellion." The change in the composition of the Salisbury electorate was notable; 366 whites and 381 blacks were soon registered. This represented an almost doubling of the voting population. At the same time that the Union League was making strides to include black voters, a backlash was evident in the attitudes of whites. "We learn," said J. J. Bruner of the Watchman, "that there is now organized in this county a secret political association known as the 'White Man's Party.'" Conversely, there were meetings held by a revived Red Strings, the old anti-Confederate organization from the war years. In Morgan beat, 44 old members showed up and enlisted four more.

Quickly, the factions took two names: Conservative for whites who had supported the Confederacy, and Radical for those who advocated for the new biracial order of politics. "The Radical watchword is progress," noted Bruner, and the leaders were C. S. Moring—who became known as the Salisbury Carpetbagger, a term denoting recent arrivals to town—and Allen Rose, a farmer who lived south of China Grove and had been involved in the Heroes of America during the Civil War. The HOA had been an anti-Confederate underground that helped deserters and outliers escape military service. Bruner observed that the Radical faction were often "people who heretofore have never been known as wise or prudent." They exhibited, he argued "utter unfitness for public trust."

In September 1867 the Union League held a formal meeting to approve all the Reconstruction Acts, including the franchise for all loyal subjects of the land. The biracial group disapproved a motion to call for confiscation of property of ex-Confederates, and redistribution to former slaves. Moring and Rose were nominated as the Radical candidates to be delegates at the constitutional convention.

Leading whites were outraged that the meeting would choose a Carpetbagger and a Scalawag to such a momentous task. The two were "utter[ly] destitute of any qualification," exclaimed J. J. Stewart, the editor. "They are rank radicals"! Another editor intoned that "the meeting and its pimps will be utterly repudicated" in the coming election. In fact, according to J. J. Bruner, the Union League would have been wiser to have elected leaders from the black delegates present: Joe Ballard and Jack Boyden. This was the first public acknowledgment of the organization of blacks within the county, as there had been grumbling that no black had been chosen a delegate.

Times grew tenser as the election approached. Blacks were said to have been drilling in the night. By October opponents of the "prescriptive and agrarian policy of the Radicals" met in convention. At the meeting, led by the old Unionist Luke Blackmer, "no issues of old party character" marred the proceedings. At a second meeting J. S. McCubbins was nominated as the local delegate to the convention.

Conservatives particularly vented their wrath at the resident Carpetbagger. They claimed that C. S. Moring was "akin to a jackass clad in a lion's skin to pass himself as king of the beasts!" Conservatives claimed he had not been a consistent Unionist during the war, where he lived in Knoxville, Tenn., not until 1863 when he "took the iron clad oath." The opportunist was said to be wanting to "control the colored vote with a view to promote to place and to power." In contrast, the Conservative candidates were touted by the Conservative press to be "liberty loving honest men."

In the election, the Radicals largely triumphed. "The people are broken hearted, bowed down, crushed by the iron heel of government," lamented Bruner. Conservatives had eked out a win in Rowan itself, the vote being J. S. McCubbins 1,115 and Allen Rose 1,046. However, Rowan was paired with Davie and Davidson counties as a district, and in those two counties the Radicals carried the day. Eventually, McCubbins was selected to the convention to replace another winner from Davidson County, by order of the military authorities, and he joined Rose in the convention.

How much Rose and McCubbins were influential in Raleigh is not known. Rose was said to have been in favor of integrated public schools. Locals in Salisbury were shocked at the idea of mixing races with schools open to all. The measure did not become part of the Constitution. However, the new document extended the franchise to all males age 21 or over, mandated public schools in every county, set up a township system with magistrates to be elected by residents, and created the office of county commission to handle only fiscal and

other local administration. Overall, it represented a new direction for how North Carolina was to be governed, and who had a voice in that direction. As one Salisburyian noted, there was to be "radically" new approaches to "the whole structure of our state government."

Reaction in Salisbury was highly negative among Conservatives about "the new Negro equality constitution." "We hear of whole neighborhoods where they are abandoning the radical platform and ranging themselves under the banner of white supremacy." The coming battle, Bruner said, would be between "the conservative coalition of the past versus the upstarts." At a Conservative rally in April 1868 a new coalition of more moderate Unionists and old Confederates emerged. Young lawyers John S. Henderson and Kerr Craige joined Lewis W. Hanes in condemning the new government system. Both were sons of antebellum Congressmen. A few "well behaving black men" joined in the largely white crowd to oppose "its leveling ideas." At a second rally the White Man's Conservative Club paraded on horseback in a "variety of fancy costumes both as ladies and gentlemen." Former Confederate governor Zebulon B. Vance of Charlotte spoke to them about the perils of the new constitution. Soon after there appeared in the Carolina Watchman an article detailing the founding of a new organization in Pulaski, Tenn., called the Ku Klux Klan. Tensions were higher. Within the space of a month, four barns throughout the county were torched by arsonists. Members of the Union League were blamed by many Conservatives.

Little is known about the Ku Klux Klan in Rowan in those days. One local tradition says that the statewide Klan was founded in 1867 in Salisbury by A. H. Boyden, son of Nathaniel Boyden, the old Unionist. "Baldy" Boyden had served in the Confederacy, despite his father's sentiments. The other local founder was said to have been Kerr Craige, son of the Confederate congressman. Whether the actual organization was for the whole state or just the county cannot be documented, nor are there local stories about "outrages" committed on black and white Radicals. There was a notice put in the window of a downtown store in 1868 that "The Ku Klux Is About" but it is not reported where they went or what they did. The only public display of open hostility came with a meeting of "the White Men in council in Salisbury" in March 1868. Conservative Francis E. Shober chaired the meeting aimed at "maintaining the superiority of their race." The only report of an outrage came in some congressional investigations conducted under the Klan Act of 1870. The Klan, including members from Cabarrus County, had run two Radicals out of Litaker township. What they had done to offend anyone was not recorded.

The military occupiers on May 30, 1868, ordered that the graves of federal troops who had died in the Confederate prison be decorated, "A large procession consisting mainly of colored persons" marched behind a band from downtown to the grave sites near the old prison grounds. This was the first time that locals had observed this postwar custom known as Decoration Day. Among the black leaders who participated was Joseph Ballard, who had just been appointed to the state executive committee of the state's newly organized Republican Party. He was one of six blacks statewide to be appointed.

The new constitutional order, complete with townships across the county, was soon put into place. W. H. Howerton, Anthony Bencini, and F. H. Sprague were appointed the temporary magistrates for the township of Salisbury. Both sides geared up for the coming permanent election in fall of 1868. The Horatio Seymour Club, the organization for the national Democratic ticket, made efforts to enlist black members by promising to "procure employment" for them in return for loyalty. Dr. J. W. Hall was among the backers of that effort. Merchant Thomas Henderson, a freedman, became secretary of the colored club. Barber Burt McNeely was president. In turn, Radical elements in town aligned themselves with the Republican Party.

It was a confusing and complicated time for political labels, since neither the Democrats or Republicans were strongly rooted locally. The one to suffer the most from this mishmash was the old Whig Nathaniel Boyden, who had been elected to Congress in the temporary election of 1867. The effete Boyden, who had opposed the Confederacy openly during the war, nevertheless would not countenance the leveling aspects of the Radical agenda. He opposed the new Constitution. J. J. Stewart, the editor, observed that Boyden was caught between two extremes, "radical Democrats and radical Republicans." More conservative figures like attorneys William M. Robert and F. E. Shober opposed him for not becoming openly conservative. So did Dr. J. W. Hall, who helped lead the Conservative processional on the eve of the election.

In the election Rowan went conservative, 1,530 to 1,333. (Figures for Salisbury itself were not published.) Nevertheless, Boyden rewon his seat in Congress, as Davie, Davidson, and other counties in the district went radical. It was said that "old Whigs and old Union men" voted for him.

In contrast, Radicals made progress in the municipal election for Salisbury in January 1869. Republicans Thomas B. Long became mayor, and C. S. Moring became an alderman. The majority remained Conservative. Mayor Long in July recommended that both factions

celebrate the Fourth of July together, but the factions could not agree. Instead, there was a Radical procession made up of "a respectable number of colored people and fourteen white men." None of the orators invited attended.

Meanwhile, there were changes to the appearance of Salisbury. In December of 1868 the Freedman's Bureau sold the old Civil War prison site, including its remaining huts, and auctioned off the eight buildings of the old hospital complex near the depot. There were eight tenement houses, eight infirmaries, and a barn.

Trade continued to flourish, despite all the political hullabaloo. "Salisbury is the place" for commerce, extolled editor Stewart. More than a dozen merchants had thriving businesses downtown, including Bingham & Co., A. J. Mock & Co., and John M. Knox & Co. Joseph Horah was the jeweler. Charles M. Price, John Stockton, and Jesse A. Williford were the tailors. Anthony Bencini ran a confectionary store. John H. Verble's tan yard continued to prosper, and Dr. J. W. Hall's "Gothic building" lent a new grace to downtown. R. J. Holmes was joining him in building new store buildings on Main Street. Billy Henderson, a Radical from Davidson County, took over the Internal Revenue Office in town. Local leaders held several meetings about the possibility of funding a railroad from Salisbury to Cheraw, S. C., which would make the city a true crossroads for transportation. In 1869 Salisbury leaders made a bid to have the new Central State Prison located just outside of town.

Community continued be built up. Local leaders, including John I. Shaver, formed a Cemetery Association to restore the two graveyards in town. Seven ministers were resident in the town in 1868. Jethro Rumple, Presbyterian; Calvin Plyler, Methodist; J. H. Tillinghast, Episcopalian; and W. H. Cone, Lutheran, served white congregations. William M. Dorland, Presbyterian; Thomas Henderson, Methodist; and Harry Cowan, Baptist, were the "colored" pastors.

In July 1869 each township in the county met to organize itself under the terms of the new state constitution. They were principally to elect their magistrates, a first for North Carolina. Most townships elected Conservatives to office. In Salisbury, however, the Radical ticket took the day. C. S. Moring, T. B. Long, D. L. Bringle, and Samuel H. Wiley were among the Republicans elected.

These elections were held in the midst of continued tensions. In April 1869 a scheme to "allow no one to vote who did not pay taxes" in Salisbury was "got up by certain clique." Even Conservatives called it unconstitutional. About a barn a month was lost to arson, and often

the targets were local elites. In Salisbury township John I. Shaver, Michael Brown, and the Mansion House hotel were victims during July and August.

The Klan's presence and other countermeasures must have had effect, for in the municipal election of 1870 the Conservatives carried Salisbury, "partly to want of confidence in the Radical candidate for mayor." All new policemen were appointed. Under its leadership, the public school in Salisbury was opened for the first time since the War. More than 900 children were eligible to attend. That summer Conservatives were elected to be the first County Commission. Conservative leaders included John S. Henderson, D. A. Davis, T. G. Haughton, and J. G. Fleming, the latter from Scotch Irish township. The opposition remained strong, however. The leaders of the Radicals continued to include C. S. Moring, T. B. Long, Joe Ballard, and Pink Hall, a black local barkeeper.

The divisions remained stark. "Debt, taxation, and discord threaten to crush the people," lamented J. J. Stewart. Only blacks celebrated July 4 in 1870. They held a fair downtown. In the August elections for the state legislature, Conservatives carried the county, 1,459 to 955, but Salisbury went Radical by a ratio of 4 to 3. Forty-five per cent of Radical votes in Rowan County came from Salisbury township. When state troops from Unionist counties in the western part of the state passed through town on the Western Railroad train, locals fired upon them.

In the midst of such tensions,Salisburyians built up their town. "New buildings are being erected almost daily." In the census of 1870 the township was home to 3,300 thousand people, most of whom lived in town. The Methodists held a revival that converted 85, including "some of the oldest men in town." Some blacks were attending a day school run by the colored Presbyterian church on Church Street. S. C. Love was running it in 1871. Ten circuses came to town in a year. A local temperance society was founded under the leadership of T. F. Kluttz. T. W. Keen helped found a fair association which attracted a regional crowd. J. D. McNeely led the effect to establish an Odd Fellows lodge, which met at his meeting hall. Miss Jennie Caldwell ran a private school for young girls. One of the key signs of local prosperity was the remodeling done at St. John's Lutheran Church in 1871. The repairs included at new pulpit and frescoed walls, constructed under the direction of "our talented townsman" C. S. Moring. The interior was to be gas lit. When it was found that the congregation was $130 short on the bill, more than $100 was raised immediately. That year the Lutherans had 33 in their confirmation

class. Rev. J. G. Neiffer was installed as pastor. Soon after, town leaders started an effort to enclose the Lutheran Cemetery, making it effectively the town cemetery.

Black community grew as well. The A. M. E. Zion Church added 60 to its rolls about the same time; the Elder John Moore led a revival that baptized 29. "Our colored friends are doing well," it was reported. Blacks returned to the federal cemetery on Decoration Day, marching from the Market House downtown to the graves. White Republicans T. B. Long and W. F. Henderson addressed the crowd. A colored fair was held on July 4, led by barber Burt McNeely.

Salisbury retained some of its statewide prestige in the midst of Reconstruction. The venerable Nathaniel Boyden, a former Congressman and legislator, was appointed to the State Supreme Court. Boyden would serve until his death in 1873. (The year proved to be the one for the deaths of Dr. J. W. Hall, John I. Shaver, and Burton Craige, as well.)

Politics in 1871 focused on the recent resurgence of Conservatism in the state and the attendant call for another convention to reform the 1868 reconstruction of the state. "The stump will be convention versus anti-convention this year," noted J. J. Stewart. More precisely the division was one of party and race, with Republicans for and Conservatives against. John S. Henderson, just emerging as a conservative leader, was for the new convention; Dr. J. G. Ramsay was opposed. In August Salisbury voted 330 to 328 to not have the convention. The county vote showed a Conservative majority, 1,308 to 1,003, with Unity, Mt. Ulla, and Scotch Irish townships voting no.

Scandal ripped apart the local Republican Party in early 1872. H. H. Helper, the postmaster, got into a tussle with party bigwig T. B. Long, and Long "severely caned" him. Both were arrested. Other Republicans soon published a letter calling for Helper to resign for "financial malfeasance." They wanted what they called "a true Republican" who had been one when "it took nerve to be so." Their candidate was D. L. Bringle. In the Watchman, Bruner declared "the Republican clique" to be a "nasty mess." Helper referred to it as "scurvy business." In the midst of the complaining, African American leader Joe Ballard wrote a letter "in behalf of the colored men" to Senator John Poole asking for black participation in any new decision. Helper was eventually replaced by Bringle.

Republicans remained strong into the early 1870s. A fellow traveler from Raleigh observed in mid-1872 that "no town can boast

of better or more zealous working Republicans than Salisbury. It is worth something to be a Republican here." There was "no place in the South where feeling runs higher." He listed J. L. Bailey, Dr. I. W. Jones, Dr. W. H. Howerton, W. F. Henderson, T. B. Long, and D. L. Bringle as the core of the party. No blacks were listed, although it was announced about the same time that a revival was going on among the "loyal" Union Leagues in the county. At the same time the new Rifle Guards militia unit was being organized by Conservative interests. The leaders included Leuco Mitchell, Robert W. Price, and John F. Pace, the latter a local policeman.

The controversies continued into the political campaign that year. The League was accused by Conservatives of importing more than 60 black voters from South Carolina. The Conservatives said that the rejuvenation of the League would be worse "than what the Klan does." There was tension within Republican ranks, with some going for the more liberal Presidential candidate Horace Greeley, and the majority still holding with the current President U. S Grant. Each faction was said to be threatening the other. By August there was a Greeley club in town, led by T. W. Keen, Dr. J. W. Hall, E. B. Neave, and Andrew Murphy. After one rally, a "drunken rabble of Radical negroes" had a near riot, where they marched through the colored churches. In turn, Conservatives for the first time since the war used the descriptor "democratic" for their meetings. Newcomers Kerr Craige was nominated for the state house by them, and Archibald H. Boyden for the State Senate.

In the gubernatorial election in August, Rowan went for the Conservative candidate 1,656 to 1118. (No return was noted for Salisbury itself.) The turnout was more than 300 new voters in two years, an indication of the influx of new residents into the area. However, statewide Republicans prevailed in key races, and that led to a boisterous celebration by black Republicans in Salisbury. A "drunken rabble of Radical negroes" led a procession through town. It was, said the conservative J. J. Bruner, "one of the most disgraceful scenes ever witnessed in Salisbury . . . hallooing, profane and sacred songs, the use of riotous and profane language . . . howling like demons." Bruner, as usual, blamed it on white party leaders. That was not the end of misbehavior by both sides. A group of Republicans sent a letter to President U. S. Grant in September 1872, calling for redress of "certain outrages" since the election. They demanded "the interposition of troops." Nothing came of it.

The town continued to grow. A visit to generally prosperous churches, stores, and shops was completed by J. J. Bruner at Christmas

in 1871. They included Overman, Holmes & Co., Meroney & Brother, V. Wallace, and Bingham & Co. J. K. Burke ran an auction house. William M. Barker continued to conduct a coach factory. J. J. Stewart, no longer an editor, ran the Salisbury Book Store. William Overman & Son sold shoes. It was noted that the firm of McCubbins & Sullivan had dissolved their partnership. Price & Brother had just opened a grocery at the old Jenkins corner. T. B. Long's boarding house advertised that it got a fresh shipment of sausage daily from Richmond, Va. Mrs. Alex Buis had just opened a boarding house in William N. Barker's "old house." The first Christmas tree mentioned in town records was erected at St. John's Lutheran. Merchants J. M. Knox and G. A. Bingham had new residences built side by side on Bank Street. Robert and Andrew Murphy returned to the ranks of merchants for the first time since the war. John I. Shaver resumed his ownership of the Manson House. He soon went to work "recovering its ancient renown." Edward Shaver, his son, was running it. By late 1872 Andrew Parker had opened a bakery that baked loaves kneaded at home. He later added an ice cream parlor. Some citizens formed a temperance society, including Miss J. R. Summerell, J. D. Gaskill, J. A. Ramsay, J. D. McNeely, and Miss Annie Rowsie. Dr. J. W. Hall went to work having the last old wall in "the burnt district" torn down. People began to have more money in town, as noted by the number of iron fences being put around family plots in the two town cemeteries. In winter 1872 there were the first reports of large amounts of cotton and hay were being brought to local markets. So much was brought to market here that the Richmond & Danville Railroad could not get enough boxcars here to ship it all. Sometimes goods lay about for two months. Editor Bruner led efforts calling for a hog ordinance that would limit livestock on the streets and the draining of the old McCay mill pond on the western edge of town. It was said to be a breeder of disease.

In 1873, changes seemed more the character of commerce and community. Trains brought in so many new goods from elsewhere that traditional artisans like the tinners and other mechanics suffered from low prices. The Mansion House, "under stress" to be suitable for railroad travelers, underwent renovation. So did the National Hotel on South Main Street, becoming the Salisbury House and taking in boarders. John A. Hedrick tore down the Jenkins Corner near the square, and replaced it with a new row of buildings. They had been "among the oldest in the place." The old McCay mill pond, spread out over 500 acres, was drained. So much grass had grown up in it that, dry, it resembled "a miniature prairie." It was soon mowed. The Rowan Bible Society was established, led by Rev. J. G. Neiffer of St. John's Lutheran Church. The organizers included Dr. J. W. Hall and editor J.

J. Bruner. "The depository is well stock with books," observed one visitor. Rev. Jethro Rumple, the Presbyterian minister, took a sabbatical to do missionary work in the North Carolina mountains. The city put walls around the Lutheran cemetery. Businessmen S. R. Harrison and J. A. Ramsay advanced the monies to do the construction, and were to be reimbursed by the city. In the black community, a split developed in the Baptist Church and Rev. Harry Cowan led the organization of a competing congregation.

By 1873 municipal elections had been moved from January to May, and the first one at the new date was a heated one. A "working man's ticket" arose to challenge the usual array of candidates of the two principal parties. Dr. J. A. Geoghegan, who had run the Mansion House for a while, headed it. P. A. Frercks, who had just opened a foundry near the train depot, was part of it, as was bar owner J. A. Snider. T. W. Keen, who owned a tobacco warehouse, was the candidate for mayor. P. N. Heilig, a merchant, and banker S. H. Wiley, the third. The three tickets—"mechanical, mercantile, and proprietary"—fast became "a nuisance", according to the Conservative J. J. Stewart. Keen and the working man's ticket won the day, although the aldermen came from all three factions. The new town board quickly began to address sanitary issues in the city, issuing new ordinances for the containment of livestock and the disposal of waste. City lots were soon being cleaned. The new board came down hard on the alcohol problem. It refused to renew the liquor licenses of J. A. Snider and Jason Hunt, saloon keepers. The board also called for an election on temperance. The Watchman claimed that more was done about street maintenance than at any time since the war.

A national panic caused a recession during 1873, but trade remained robust locally. There were mentions of "the money crisis" by the fall, but only barkeeper Jack Hall announced bankruptcy. By early 1874 the effects finally began to be felt locally. Two leading firms, Mock & Brown and Gaskill & McCubbins, dissolved their partnerships. The Keen Brothers, who owned a tobacco warehouse, went bankrupt, the first outright victims, after their facility was burned. The county fair association also went bankrupt, and its land was sold. The 18 remaining storekeepers carried on slowly. "Our merchants are not gamblers in trade," intoned the Watchman. "Few towns can boast of a more cautious set of merchants." In addition to a cash shortage, there continued to be problems with shipping on the railroads; again, too many goods and not enough cars. In addition, local interests complained of higher than normal freight rates. They even sent a formal protest to the president of the North Carolina Railroad. In the midst of the recession local interests established a building and loan

association. Soon, more than $40,000 was invested, an indication that there was a lot of wealth in the town. Some of the more monied elements in the city discouraged it. They would not be able to make as many personal loans. One businessman was as busy as ever. Billy Valentine, the mulatto barber, claimed that he was shaving more than 10,000 men a year!

The municipal election for 1874 pitted the Keen "mechanics ticket" against a Conservative coalition led by Democrat J. J. Stewart and Republican D. L. Bringle. The challenge failed. "The whiskey men with the Radical vote carried the day," an interesting comment given previous efforts to suppress the trade by the same board. T. W. Keen was reelected mayor, but Bringle was elected an alderman. Race played a factor in the election. There were "three colored votes to one white polled," the Watchman claimed.

Blacks in town continued to assert their place in more ways than political. Willie Dodge ran a shoe shop. They celebrated May Day with a parade. "The Sons and Daughters of Zion" turned out in full regalia. "Their organization abounds in good works," J. J. Bruner observed. One black man challenged the social system by sitting in the pews during a service at the Methodist Church. He was "prevailed upon to leave with some difficulty."

White society also grew more complex in its organization and habits. The Salisbury Dramatic Club was started, and the cornet band got new instruments. The Rowan Rifle Guards, a militia unit, was reorganized. It had been an antebellum unit and fought through the War. Its members were said to be distinguished by their "sobriety and manly deport[ment]." The leading white churches continued to grow in size and influence. A Raleigh visitor noted in 1874 that "the Methodist Church is a small but neat edifice" which had hosted "a gracious reival." The Presbyterian Church's "peculiar advantages" included a pipe organ and "a small lecture hall . . . built in the corner of the church yard." The visitor noted that "the pastor Rev. J. Rumple, is a true and tried man." Of St. John's, the visitor, an obvious Methodist, noted that "its peculiarities had kept it from being the largest church in town. "It is limited generally to the German element." At the Epiiscopal Church, rector F. M. Murdoch "was an energetic worker . . . and for his age a talented preacer.." He was noted for "having communion sometimes at sunrise." He was favored in all the innovations of high church ritual by "his excellent parishioners."

In the state elections held in August 1874 Conservatives carried all the county and state level offices. Salisbury, however, went Republican in that election, 398 to 261. Salisburyian D. L. Bringle had

been the Republican candidate for sheriff. Businessman John A. Boyden had run for county clerk. Democrat J. S. McCubbins, who at the time was living at his farm in Millbridge, was elected to the state house. The Watchman published a cartoon, "the Radical Cemetery", listing J. G. Ramsay and others, with the note that "J. Ballard: gatekeeper and sexton" would be its guardian. The latter was a reference to black Republican leader Joe Ballard, who was emerging as a significant force in the black community.

The wider world continued to play with the town. The state railroad changed the gauge of its tracks. Because of politics, the Internal Revenue Service office, charged with collecting liquor taxes, was moved to Statesville. The town of Salisbury pledged more than $65,000 for a Yadkin railroad to be built to Wadesboro, but little came of the plan. People became more caught up in Christmas in late 1874; it was said that more presents and less liquor and gunpowder was sold than in years past. Over the winter thousands of cotton bales were sold in town, a sign of growing prosperity in the surrounding countryside. After quite a bit of reorganizations, the leading merchants of the city emerged: Kluttz, Graham, and Rendleman; McCubbins, Beal, and Julian; Sullivan & Co.; and Mock & Co. Despite the lingering effects of the national recession, local leaders continued to call for a new railroad, a new bank, a Grange store for farmers, and a cotton factory.

For the first time since the War, Easter was highlighted in the city. "Everybody went to church last Sunday." The Episcopalians and the Lutherans put on the most elaborate services. The new rector at St. Luke's, the Rev. Francis Murdoch, was said to be "a young man of brilliant parts, a preacher of no ordinary promise." St. John's practiced the "excellent old German" custom of "the feast of eggs." Each child was given three scarlet dyed eggs, to represent the Trinity. The Methodists and Presbyterians were said to have dispensed with such symbolisms.

Enthusiasm for the town was as bright as the colored eggs in the spring of 1875. "Salisbury is fast [re]gaining its ancient prestige. . . The skies are brightening . . . Our old town has touched bottom at last." It was reported that more than $1,000 a week was sent to Northern creditors through money orders at the post office. That May J. J. Stewart was elected Mayor without Radical opposition. All the aldermen were Conservatives. Stewart soon restored the mayor's court to keep order. The up and comers Kerr Craige and John S. Henderson were selected delegates to the state Conservative constitutional convention, which was to revise the 1868 structure of the state. Blacks in turn continued to celebrate Decoration Day, with a procession led

by Joe Ballard and speeches by leading white Republicans like T. B. Long and I. W. Jones. However, the Radical tide had receded, and the promise of Reconstruction thwarted, compared to past years. W. F. Henderson, speaking at the anti-convention rally, warned that Democrats wanted "to put them back into slavery like before the war." J. J. Bruner noted that "the poor Darwinian dupes believe such stuff," the first reference to that way of thinking to appear in the local papers. Bruner continued to disparage white Radicals, claiming that Pink Hall—a local black Republican leader—"would run as well as any of them."

The white message about the times was encapsulated well in a speech given by Dr. J. L. Henderson at a convention rally in nearby Franklin Academy, just to the northwest of town. The 1868 Constitution was defective on the face of it because of who had written it: "Carpetbaggers, scalawags, and negroes," while good white men were still disfranchised because of the war. The tide was reversing, and the white men of Rowan were to be participants in the deconstruction of the older order, at least as much of the order as could be accomplished. John S. Henderson and Kerr Craige went on to vote for the changes once the Convention was approved by the voters. In the subsequent August election the county voted, 1,600 to 1,100, for the convention's recommendations. Salisbury, as was its wont during the time, split down the middle, 328 for, 330 against. Conservative lawyers John S. Henderson and F. E. Shober were elected delegates to the convention. (In the same vote, the county turned down the idea of subscribing to a new railroad, 1,582 to 694.) With the completion of the state revisions to the constitution, the thrust of Radical Reconstruction was considered to be over. "Oppression is at an end," declared the non-radical Republican postmaster D. L. Bringle.

It seemed that other times were picking up, if one was not a Radical. The Meroney Brothers sold 700 of their customized plows in 1875. The town clock was working again, for the first time since the War. Sidewalks were being repaired, and there was talk of repairing the courthouse. "Base ballists" began to play their game at the county fair. The fair itself was a revival of the recently bankrupted one, and Archibald H. Boyden, the manager, was praised for the improvements he brought to it. Catholics made plans to build a church. On the other hand, tramps crowded the town daily; barn burners continued to be active out in the countryside; and the city lacked water for sufficient fire protection. In December 1875 the city bought a Little Giant Fire Engine and erected a shed to house it, next to the Mayor's office. When there was talk of a monument being erected for Union troops in the federal cemetery, locals called for a Confederate equivalent. "We would

set it on Dunn's Mountain," suggested one townsman. (The federal monument was dedicated in early 1876, but nothing came of the Confederate idea.)

One living Confederate monument passed away during that time. Burton Craige, the former Congressman both in the U.S. and C.S. house, died while at court in late 1875. He had entered legislative service as the borough representative back in the 1830s, "in the brightest days of the Rowan Empire," noted lawyer J. M. McCorkle. The majority of the town met the train that brought the body back from nearby Concord.

Another passing was also publicly noted. Solomon Brown, while a slave, had been the carriage driver for the merchant Michael Brown before the War. Solomon was killed while trimming a tree. His burial was paid for by white citizens of the town.

1876 promised much that was new. The Mansion House was reroofed and repainted. A new bell was installed at St. Luke's Episcopal Church. The city walled the well on the public square with granite and erected a shed over it. A covered bridge went up where East Innes Street crossed the railroad. A Young Men's Christian Association was formed. For the first time since the War, townspeople planned a huge July 4 celebration to be connected to the national centennial observance. The parade proceeded from downtown to Henderson Grove in the western edge of town. Lee S. Overman, a recent graduate of Trinity College, was the orator for the occasion. Celebrant lit fire crackers well into the night. (Blacks were in the crowd for the event, but held a separate rally that evening on Union Hill in the western edge of town.)

The town, however, had its ragged edges. Hogs and cows roamed the streets and got in the way of the farm wagons coming in from the countryside. "Disgraced and abandoned women [were] living in the margin of the eastern ward," noted one townsman. "There are about 50 little negro boys on the streets who play marbles and get in the way" of shoppers and clerks. They were said "to live on what they steal." On the other end of the social spectrum, the supposed rabble found the elites to be too haughty "because they wear fine clothes and hats in the latest style." They were described as "the kid gloved gentry of the city."

Black community carried on, both in its customs and traditions. By 1876, a black festival on Decoration Day, May 30, had become an annual occasion that attracted participants from across the region. On that day excursion trains came from up and down the state

railroad. More than a thousand well-dressed blacks attended, with a band "composed of colored gentry." A biracial group did the public speaking on the steps of the courthouse, explaining that "the prime objective" of the late War had been "to free them from the chains of slavery." No whites were in the audience. As had become custom, black Radical leader Joe Ballard led the procession to the federal cemetery.

Although Radicalism was on the wane in the state and county, Radicals held a state convention in Salisbury in July 1876. Rev. J. M. Hood of the A. M. E. Zion Church was the chair of the meeting. Bruner, disdainful, asked his readers: "White Men. Who shall rule? America? Or Ethiopia?" Republicans from Iredell, Davie, and Rown rallied in August. Among the speakers was Pink Hall. "Mr. Hall was loudly called for." He "made an able and instructive address, called for National Republican support, and openly criticized" the oppostion.

Democrats, now leaving behind the Conservative moniker, assumed dominance throughout the political campaign that year. A Tilden and Vance club was formed—supporting the presidential and gubernatorial candidates—and a flag pole erected. Republicans soon responded. "John Ramsay put up the colors on the nigger pole," reported J. J. Bruner. The reforms of the 1875 convention had moved both state and federal elections to November. That month Democrats swept both the county and the city, although "there was a vigorous contest between parties all day" in Salisbury. In the end, Samuel Tilden the Democrat and Rutherford B. Hays the Republican were tied, 417 to 417 in the presidential race. A near riot ensued the following Saturday night, as former mayor T. W. Keen was arrested in a brawl. In one incident a black, George Anderson, voted for Tilden, and another black, Jim Grant, was arrested for harassing him. A poem, originating in Davie County, presumed that the great conflict was over, that the typical Radical now "looked like a baboon taking his rest."

Reconstruction, begun with such promise for some in the 1860s had ended with the success of the prejudices of the many in the 1870s. The county's politics were set for a generation, and the commerce and culture of the community were set upon an upward trajectory for most whites. Blacks continued as valiantly as they could into the next phase of local history.