HOW THE SOUTH WON

THE CIVIL WAR

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WAR

Oligarchy, **D**emocracy, and the

Continuing **F**ight for the

Soul of **A**merica

HEATHER COX RICHARDSON

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For Buddy Poland

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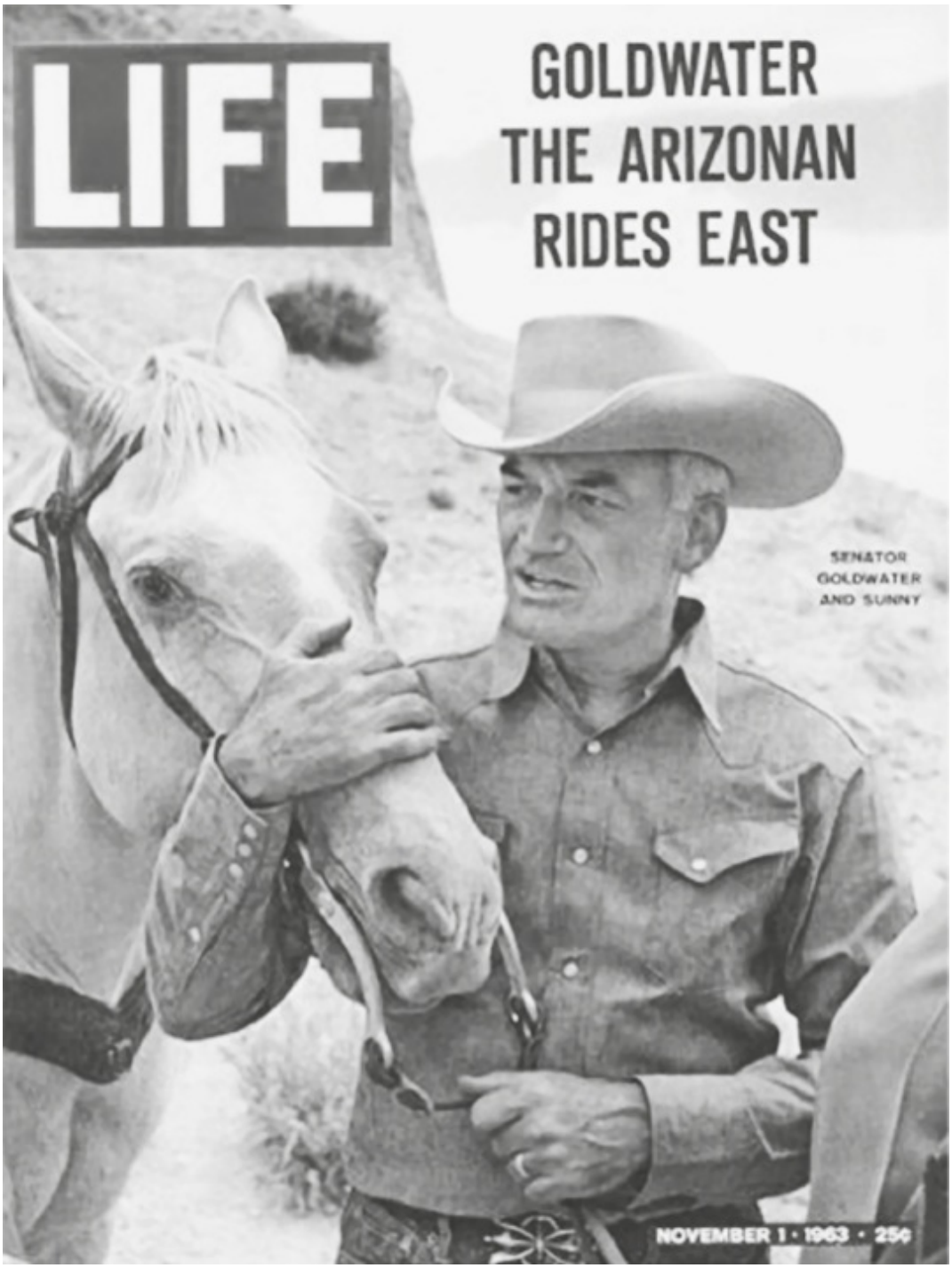

INTRODUCTION

The moment in July 1964 when Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater took the stage

at the Cow Palace outside San Francisco and beamed at the cheering

Republicans who had just nominated him for president is iconic—but not for the

reasons we remember. Goldwater delivered the line that became a rally cry for a

rising generation of conservatives in the Republican Party, saying that

"Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. And . . . moderation in the

pursuit of justice is no virtue." But the moment did much more than galvanize

activists. It marked the resurrection of an old political movement by a modern

political party. In Goldwater's time, people claiming to be embattled holdouts

defending American liberty called themselves "Movement Conservatives." A

century before, their predecessors had called themselves "Confederates."

While Goldwater's supporters in 1964 talked generally about liberty, their

actual complaint was specific: the business regulation and social welfare

legislation of FDR's New Deal and Eisenhower's Middle Way had trampled

their rights. In the wake of the Great Depression, the U.S. government had focused on creating economic security and equality of opportunity. These widely

popular policies became known as the "liberal consensus," because most

Americans agreed that government should protect the country's most vulnerable

citizens and regulate the economy.

Movement Conservatives, however, maintained that the liberal consensus was

destroying America. People should be free to operate however they wished,

without interference from government bureaucrats and regulations. They hated

that the government had taken on popular projects since the 1930s. Highways,

dams, power plants, schools, hospitals, and social welfare legislation cost tax

dollars. This, they warned, amounted to a redistribution of wealth from

hardworking white men to the poor, often to poor people of color. Such a

dangerous trend toward an activist government had to be stopped before it

destroyed the liberty on which America was based.

Although Goldwater was a westerner through and through, it was the

delegation from South Carolina that put him over the top to win the 1964

Republican presidential nomination. This was no accident. Movement

Conservatives embraced the same ideas that, a century before, had led South

Carolina slave owners to attack the United States government.

Like elite slaveholders before the Civil War, they believed in a world defined

by hierarchies, where most people—dull, uneducated, black, female, weak, or

poor—needed the guidance of their betters. In turn, the wealth those lesser

people produced as they labored at menial work would funnel upward to the top

of society, accumulating in the hands of those who had the knowledge and skills

to use it most effectively. Those educated, wealthy, and connected men would

create progress. In 1858, a slaveholder put it this way: the upper class should rest

on the lower classes the same way a stately edifice rested on “mudsills”—

timbers driven into the ground for support.

That mudsill vision of the world stood against a very different set of principles

that lay at the heart of American democracy: equality and self-determination.

Those who embraced this vision believed that society moved forward because

self-reliant individuals produced and innovated far more effectively than a small

group of elites, whose wealth insulated them from the need to experiment.

These two ideologies were incompatible, yet they were woven together into

the fabric of America from its start.

*

America began with a great paradox: the same men who came up with the

radical idea of constructing a nation on the principle of equality also owned slaves, thought Indians were savages, and considered women inferior. This

apparent contradiction was not a flaw, though; it was a key feature of the new

democratic republic. For the Founders, the concept that "all men are created

equal" depended on the idea that the ringing phrase "all men" did not actually

include everyone. In 1776, it seemed self-evident to leaders that not every person

living in the British colonies was capable—or worthy—of self-determination. In

their minds, women, slaves, Indians, and paupers depended on the guidance of

men such as themselves. Those unable to make good decisions about their own

lives must be walled off from government to keep them from using political

power to indulge their irresponsible appetites. So long as these lesser people

played no role in the body politic, everyone within it could be equal. In the

Founders' minds, then, the principle of equality depended on inequality. That

central paradox—that freedom depended on racial, gender, and class inequality

—shaped American history as the cultural, religious, and social patterns of the

new nation grew around it.[1]

In the last half century, we have begun to pay attention to how the American

paradox has kept people of color and women from the full enjoyment of their

rights. But we have paid far less attention to the fact that it actually threatens all

Americans. It has given a small group of wealthy men the language they need to

undermine our democracy, and to replace it with an oligarchy.

As Republican Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich noted in 1995, "language

matters." Words drive stories, and stories drive politics by shaping the way

voters understand the world. Twice in our history, a small group of

extraordinarily wealthy men have taken over our government by using a

peculiarly American narrative, a corollary to the paradox: If equality depends on

inequality for women and minorities, the opposite should also be true. That is,

inclusion of women and minorities as equals in American society would, by

definition, destroy equality.

Thus, at times when it seems as if people of color or women will become

equal to white men, oligarchs are able to court white male voters by insisting

that universal equality will, in fact, reduce white men to subservience. Both

slaveholders in the 1850s and Movement Conservatives a century later

convinced white American men that equality for people of color and women

would destroy their freedom. Rallying their voters behind the idea that they were

protecting the country's founding principles, they took over the political system.

Once in control of Congress, the White House, and the courts, they used the

government to solidify their own control. Eventually class divisions emerged,

and the wealthy turned on the poorer white men who had fueled their rise to

power. Convinced they alone should rule, this minority set out to destroy democracy.

Their rise depends on the successful divorce of image from reality in political

narrative. Oligarchs tap into the extraordinary strength of the ideology of

American freedom, the profoundly exciting, innovative, and principled notion

that has been encoded in our national DNA since Englishmen first began to

imagine a New World in the 1500s. That ideology asserts that individuals must

have control of their own destiny, succeeding or failing according to their skills

and effort. It speaks directly to the fundamental human condition, and rather than

bowing to the dictates of religion or tradition, it endows us all with the ability to

control our own fate. This ideology is the genius of America, and we have

embodied it in two distinctive archetypes: that of the independent yeoman farmer before the Civil War and that of the western cowboy afterward. In each period, those seeking oligarchic power have insisted they were defending the rights of those quintessential American individuals.

But the reality was that they were undermining individualism. While they promised to protect the status quo, and rallied support for doing so, as they gained control these men used their political influence to consolidate their own power. Their policies hurt ordinary Americans, creating a disaffected population ripe for leaders who promised easy solutions to their problems. They began to solidify their base by dividing society between those hardworking and quintessentially American individualists, on the one hand, and minorities, women, and, eventually, the poor on the other. Either silenced or afraid to be included in one of the demonized groups, Americans adjusted to this new normal. Religion, popular culture, and politics all reflected and got in line with the powerful, even as these leaders' vision became increasingly divorced from reality. 2

Over the course of a generation, both elite slave owners and Movement

Conservative leaders came to believe that they alone knew how to run the country. They saw it as imperative that others be kept from power. They suppressed voting, rigged the mechanics of government, silenced the opposition press, and dehumanized their opponents. At the same time, quite logically, they did not see themselves as bound by the law. As the only ones who truly understood what was good for everyone, they were above it. So long as they continued successfully to project the narrative that they were protecting democracy, their supporters ignored the reality that oligarchs were taking over.

*

They ignored it, that is, until it was too obvious to ignore any longer. The reassertion of democracy against oligarchy created the two greatest crises in American history. The first crisis came in the first half of the nineteenth century.

In the early years of the Republic, Americans had rallied around the idea of the yeoman farmer, an independent man who worked in his own fields, supported his wife and children, and promoted good policies when he voted to advance his own interests. In the 1830s, though, westward expansion into rich cotton lands in

what we now call the Deep South concentrated a great deal of wealth into the

hands of a very small group of slaveholding planters. As those men increasingly

controlled politics, culture, and the economy, upward mobility for poorer white

men stalled. Planters staved off popular distrust of their growing power by

insisting that those who opposed them were trying to make black people free. To

secure voters who were increasingly dissatisfied with their own economic

opportunities, slave owners steadily dehumanized black Americans and

ratcheted up their appeals to white supremacy.

Northerners were outraged at the slaveholders' attack on democracy. By 1856,

they had coalesced into the Republican Party and insisted on keeping slavery out

of western lands so that slaveholders could not accumulate enough wealth and

power to dominate the entire nation. As Abraham Lincoln mused, if slavery

depended on skin color, any man could be enslaved to a man with lighter skin

than his own. If it was based on intelligence, then any man could be enslaved to

a man with a better intellect. Lincoln saw where this argument led: "Say you, it

is a question of interest; and, if you can make it your interest, you have the right

to enslave another. Very well. And if he can make it his interest, he has the right

to enslave you." "I should like to know," he continued, "taking this old

Declaration of Independence, which declares that all men are equal upon

principle, and making exceptions to it, where will it stop?" 3

Elite slaveholders insisted that they, not the Republicans, were the ones

protecting ordinary citizens. Trying to limit the spread of slavery was, in their

telling, an attempt to uproot the democratic system by prohibiting poor white

men access to the cheapest labor that would enable them to rise. They insisted

that their opponents' ideas could only lead to forced "equality" between blacks

and whites and even intermarriage between former slaves and white women.

Where would that stop? As full participants in American society, black men

would use their newfound power to turn democracy into anarchy. They would

butcher white folks and take all their possessions for themselves. Slave owners

insisted that their opponents were trying not to prevent oligarchy, but rather to

destroy democracy.

Southern oligarchs fueled their rise with overt racism, but they won the political support of poor white men by leveraging the American paradox. Slaveholders tied racism, sexism, and eventually classism to the uplifting ideal that had inspired the Founders: faith in the possibilities of equality. Poor voters who backed the slaveholders were not either vicious racists or fervent democrats; they were both at the same time.

As their policies concentrated the South's lands and money into their own hands, wealthy slaveholders retained popular support by resorting to extraordinary claims that could succeed only if they made sure that voters could not check their propaganda against reality. So they stifled opposition media and invented stories that supported their own version of the world. Southern white men were not capitalists hustling to make money, one southern writer said, but a chivalrous aristocracy charged with overseeing their subordinates: women and slaves. White southerners were "a race of men. . . incapable of servility and selfishness." Wealthy slaveholders demanded utter adherence to orthodoxy on

the issue of slavery and bled anti-slavery opponents out of the Democratic Party,

which during the course of the 1840s and 1850s became ever more extreme on

the issue. Increasingly isolated from reality, a minority of southerners and an

even smaller minority of northerners came to believe that any popular move that

might in any way limit slavery was, by definition, an attack on their liberty. In

1857, in the *Dred Scott* decision, Chief Justice Roger Taney made their belief the law of the land. He declared that Congress could not regulate slavery because

it could not "exercise any more authority over [slaves] than it may

constitutionally exercise over property of any other kind."

Numbers finally overwhelmed elite southern planters in 1860, when voters,

appalled by the rise of an American oligarchy, split the Democratic Party and

elected to the White House the Republican Abraham Lincoln, who promised to

keep slavery from spreading into the West. Before Lincoln even took office,

southern slaveholders announced that their bonds to the Union were dissolved.

The Confederate States of America was based on the principle that the

Founders were wrong. Elite slave owners would resolve the American paradox

by shearing off the portion of it that endorsed equality. The idea that all men were created equal was an outdated fallacy that flew in the face of both natural law and God's law. Confederate leaders were proudly leading the way into the future with a government that conformed to the way God had actually made the world, and all other modern nations would someday follow. The "cornerstone" of the Confederacy, as Vice President Alexander Stephens put it, was that "the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth."

The slaveholders' attempt to destroy the nation failed. In the inferno of the Civil War, Americans tried to uproot oligarchy once and for all, and to cement democracy at the nation's heart. It seemed, briefly, as if they had indeed managed to give the nation what Lincoln called "a new birth of freedom."

*

But just as democracy seemed to triumph along with the Union troops, the

balance of power shifted. As soon as war broke out in 1861, the Union

government pushed west at an astonishing rate. Congress brought into the Union

the Territories of Colorado, Nevada, and Dakota (the last of which would be

split into North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming after the war), and in 1863

it added Idaho and Arizona Territories. In 1864, it created Montana Territory and

admitted Nevada to the Union as a state. By the end of the Civil War, the

political boundaries of the West looked much as they do today. Immediately

after the Civil War, Americans moved westward, to a land that had its own

history, quite different than that of the American East. In the West, Confederate

ideology took on a new life, and from there, over the course of the next 150

years, it came to dominate America.

American settlers in the West had written racial hierarchies into their laws

before the Civil War—taxing Mexican and Chinese miners more severely than

white miners, for example—and while people in the East had been promoting

equality during the war, most in the West were reinforcing racial distinctions. In

late summer 1862, Dakota Indians, starving because the U.S. government had

reneged on its treaty obligations, turned against settlers in Minnesota. This

“uprising,” coming at a moment when the Union’s military fortunes were at their

lowest ebb, convinced observers that western Indians were a profound threat to

the nation itself. In 1864, the Army forced Navajos on a deadly three-hundred-

mile march from Arizona to Bosque Redondo, a camp in New Mexico. Later

that year, a militia unit attacked a group of peaceful Cheyennes at Sand Creek in

Colorado. They butchered their victims, taking body parts as trophies.

After the war, Indian treaties, military actions, and territorial and state laws

limited land ownership, suffrage, and intermarriage by race. Western legislators

interpreted the Fourteenth Amendment, adopted in July 1868, to include only

African Americans. The amendment itself excluded Indians, and westerners

argued that Chinese and other immigrants fell under a law passed in 1802 that

established that enslaved immigrants were different from white immigrants. The

1802 law said only “free white” people could be citizens. Banished in the East,

the shadow of legal slavery continued to dim the West.

Angry southern Democrats, who hated that racial equality could be enforced by the government, saw the West as the only free place left in America. Republicans who passed laws to protect freed people were not advancing equality; they were destroying liberty. They were stealing money in the form of taxes from hardworking Americans and giving it to those who were too lazy to work. Republicans' vaunted "equality" was nothing more than theft.

Democrats contrasted what they saw as a system of race-based wealth redistribution taking hold in the East with an image of the American West where hardworking men asked nothing of the government but to be left alone. They promoted the image of the western cowboy as a hardy individualist, carving his way in the world on his own. Ignoring the reality that American soldiers and cowboys were often men of color and that the government provided settlers with land, protected them from Indians, and helped develop the western economy, Democrats celebrated cowboys as brave heroes who worked their way to prosperity as they fought for freedom and American civilization against barbaric Indians, Chinese, and Mexicans. Although in reality the West also depended on

women, in the male-dominated world of the cowboy myth they were depicted as

either submissive wives or prostitutes.

The image of the western individualist changed American politics after 1880,

when the West took on new political significance. In that year, the Republican

Party lost control of the southern states, which went solidly Democratic in the

presidential election and would stay Democratic for a century. Without electoral

votes from the South, Republicans could not retain control of the White House, a

control they considered vital to the very survival of the nation.

They began to court western voters. To do so, they had to cater to the West's

racial hierarchies. In 1882, a Republican Congress bowed to pressure to

recognize racial distinctions and inscribed them back into American law with the

Chinese Exclusion Act, the first federal law in history that restricted

immigration. After Republicans nonetheless lost the 1884 election, at their first

opportunity they admitted six new states to the Union to bolster their numbers in

the Electoral College and the Senate.

Between 1889 and 1890, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Washington,

Idaho, and Wyoming joined the United States. Republicans believed the new

states would keep the Northeast in power, but they miscalculated. By 1890, the

West had an ideology more in common with that of the South than that of the

North. Both the South and the West had extractive economies that consolidated

wealth and power in a few hands. Those who controlled mining, oil, cattle,

railroads, irrigation, and agribusiness controlled the West. Just as the antebellum

cotton industry had done, these industries required huge capital investments —

and lots of unskilled workers.

Rather than working with eastern Republicans, western politicians instead

often worked with southern Democrats. Together, they pushed back on eastern

economic policies and worked to kill federal protection for black voting. Then

westerners created their own political organization to promote costly water

reclamation projects that would both irrigate the West and stop devastating

flooding in the South. Southern Democrats in Congress supported the West's

water plans; in turn, western congressmen helped southern Democrats kill anti-

lynching legislation.

Just as the image of the yeoman farmer in the East after the Revolution had

helped pave the way for the rise of southern planters, the image of the cowboy

helped spur a return to a caste system. In 1893, historian Frederick Jackson

Turner claimed that American democracy itself was continually reinvented in the

West, where ordinary men worked together and stood against the repressive

government back in the settled East.

The idea that the government should stand behind western individualism and

self-reliance took over American culture, bolstering the position of wealthy

white men across the country. In 1892, in both Wyoming's Johnson County War

and Idaho's Coeur D'Alene strike, industrialists successfully appealed to the

federal government to protect them first from small ranchers and workers, and

then from the local elected officials who took the people's side. Similarly, in

Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1898, white leaders launched a coup against a

biracial government. It did not matter that local officials had won office fairly; white men vowed they would "never again be ruled, by men of African origin,"

who were joining with unscrupulous white men to “dominate the intelligent and

thrifty element in the community.” At the turn of the century, the Supreme Court

cast racial categories into national law, creating the notion of “noncitizen

nationals.” Under this doctrine, the United States could acquire Puerto Rico,

Guam, and the Philippines as “unincorporated territories” without making their

inhabitants American citizens.

So the original American paradox of freedom based on inequality was

reestablished. That restoration relegated people of color to inequality, but it also

undercut the ability of oligarchs to destroy democracy. Black and brown people

were subordinate, so wealthy men could not convincingly argue that they were

commandeering government to redistribute wealth and destroy liberty. With that

rhetoric defanged, white Americans used the government to curb wealth and

power. From the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt in the early 1900s to that of

Franklin Delano Roosevelt thirty years later, Progressives regulated the

economy, protected social welfare, and promoted national infrastructure. That government activism, though, privileged white men over women and people of

color. Even the New Deal programs of the Depression, designed to lift the poor

out of desperation while reining in runaway capitalism, carefully maintained

distinctions between women and men, black and brown and white.

World War II forced a reckoning. Americans stood together against the rise of

fascism, a political theory based in the idea that some people were better than

others, and that those natural leaders must keep followers in line by stifling all

opposition. Fascists had actually taken some inspiration from America's own

racial laws, and during the war FDR felt obliged constantly to hammer home that

democracy was the superior system. Americans during the war championed

ordinary soldiers—the GIs—who were men and women from all backgrounds

and ethnicities. Churches, films, reformers, and government officials insisted

that Americans must not discriminate against people of different religions, races,

or ethnicities. As Superman—who took the nation by storm when he first

appeared in 1938—warned a group of schoolchildren shortly after the war

ended: "Remember, boys and girls, your school—like our country—is made up

of Americans of *many* different races, religions and national origins. So . . . if you hear anybody talk against a schoolmate or anyone else because of his

religion, race or national origin—don't wait: tell him that kind of talk is un-american."

After World War II, veterans who had fought for their country came home to

fight their second-class status, and government officials supported their cause.

Presidents Truman and Eisenhower desegregated the military and contracting;

state courts declared racial housing covenants and then bans on interracial

marriage unconstitutional. Then, in 1954, the justices of the Supreme Court

unanimously declared school segregation unconstitutional. It appeared that

Americans had coalesced around the idea of using the government to achieve

equality of opportunity for all.

Instead, the use of the government to promote equality launched democracy's

second crisis. The new "liberal consensus," as it became known, challenged the

American paradox. Once again, oligarchs rolled out their corollary, that

inclusion destroys democracy. And this time they had a new base of support in

the West, to which resources and people had streamed during the war.

At first they had had little luck turning voters against the New Deal.

Organizing as Movement Conservatives, they declared war on the liberal consensus. They tried to convince voters to reject the laws that protected workers, promoted social welfare, and undertook national improvement projects such as the interstate highways. The New Deal government was tantamount to communism, they insisted. But their argument didn't work.

The Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and Eisenhower's enforcement of racial equality at Little Rock Central High three years later enabled Movement Conservatives to enlist racism in their cause. Just as slaveholders had done in the 1850s, they took the stance that no matter how popular an activist government was, it would eventually destroy America by destroying liberty. In an echo of Reconstruction, they warned that expanded voting enabled black people to elect leaders who promised "special interest" legislation. All appearances to the contrary, they said, this was not equality. It was tyranny. Making wealthier men pay for policies that would benefit poorer people undercut democracy because it was an attack on the nation's core principle: liberty. Movement Conservatives took as their standard the American cowboy, the western individualist who, according to legend, wanted nothing

from government but to be left alone.

The nomination of Goldwater in 1964 as the Republican candidate for president marked the ideological shift by the larger Republican Party toward the hierarchical ideology of the West. As Democrats centered their power in the East, Republican leaders chose to hold the 1964 nominating convention at the Cow Palace outside San Francisco, in recognition of the central importance of the West to the party's fortunes. At the convention, Goldwater supporters rejected what they called the "Eastern Establishment" and handed him the nomination. When Goldwater, who personified the post–Civil War western cowboy, picked up five states of the Deep South—Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina—the association of the West and the racial ideology of the southern slaveholders was complete.

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Between Goldwater and 2016 Republican nominee Donald J. Trump, every Republican presidential nominee except Gerald Ford (whose elevation did not come through usual channels) has associated himself with the region west of the Mississippi River. As party leaders gradually came to embrace the ideology of

Movement Conservatives, they undermined democracy, using the same pattern

their southern predecessors did. In 1968, Richard M. Nixon—once a

congressman from California—abandoned federal support for desegregation

with his “southern strategy,” and adopted the practice of building a base by

attacking people of color as lazy people who wanted handouts. By 1970, he had

also ostracized women who demanded government policies, including

reproductive rights, that would guarantee them equality before the law.

Movement Conservatives went further, stigmatizing women who advocated

equal rights as feminist bra burners, and demonizing them as baby killers.

Former actor and California governor Ronald Reagan deliberately assumed

the mantle of the cowboy. Running for the presidency in 1980, he wore boots

and a white Stetson, and warned that only the actions of a few good men were

holding back a redistribution of wealth. He championed the idea that America

was a land of equal opportunity at the same time that he promoted the myth of

the welfare queen, a grasping black woman who sucked tax dollars from

hardworking Americans. Once in office, Reagan began to shape policy

according to the Movement Conservative view, a process that would gradually

concentrate wealth at the top of society. In 1979, the top 1 percent of Americans

claimed 33.5 percent of the nation's capital income. By 2010, that same cohort

claimed 54 percent. Americans of color, workers, and women fell far behind

white men economically; they also suffered disproportionately from the structure

of criminal laws and policing.4

As their policies began to hurt even their own supporters, Movement

Conservatives first bled the Republican Party of those who didn't share their

ideology—traditional Republicans they called RINOs (Republicans In Name

Only)—and then manipulated the political system to stay in power. They insisted

that America was in danger of being overawed by the votes of the wrong people.

"Voter fraud," while statistically almost nonexistent, became a rallying cry for

those who opposed policies embraced by a majority. In 1998, Florida passed

legislation that disfranchised tens of thousands of voters, mostly Democrats, and

other states followed suit. After 2010, legislatures controlled by the Republican

Party gerrymandered districts and restricted voting to guarantee that its leaders

would remain in power, even as they lost a majority of voters. Entrepreneur

billionaire Peter Thiel summed up the changing political climate when he wrote,

“I no longer believe that freedom and democracy are compatible.” 5

To justify their continued control, Republicans used language that sounded

remarkably like that of slaveholders. They began to defend a society in which

wealthy elites should rule over the masses. Republican spokespeople harped on

“makers” (leaders who were “job-creators”) and “takers” (people whom 2012

presidential candidate Mitt Romney identified as the 47 percent who “are

dependent upon government . . . believe that they are entitled to health care, to

food, to housing, to you name it”). By 2016, Republicans had expanded this

category to include poor white people. In March 2016, *National Review*’s Kevin

Williamson claimed their problems were not a result of policies that

concentrated wealth upward but rather came about because they were dependent

on welfare, addicted to drugs and alcohol, had no family stability, and “whelp . .

. human children with all the respect and wisdom of a stray dog.” Anti-government activist Cliven Bundy made the principles of this ideology clear

when he speculated that African Americans might be “better off as slaves, picking cotton and having a family life,” rather than living “under government subsidy.” 6

In 2016, Trump stripped off whatever genteel veneer remained on Republican ideology, actively cultivating the support of white supremacist groups and declaring of his supporters, “I love the uneducated.” A leaked tape in which Trump boasted of sexual assault revealed his conviction that women were objects for the use of wealthy men, and the willingness of Republican leaders to overlook that language as “locker room talk” indicated that they shared Trump’s belief. Trump supporters talked openly of secession and perhaps even of revolution if their candidate did not win.

Once in office, President Trump and his allies in Congress reinforced this ideology by slashing taxes for the rich while gutting health care and government regulations. His supporters attacked minorities and women, and after deliberately creating an administration dominated by white men, he tried to preserve that bias in the future through the makeup of the judiciary. Of more than 150 judicial appointments in the first two years of his administration, for

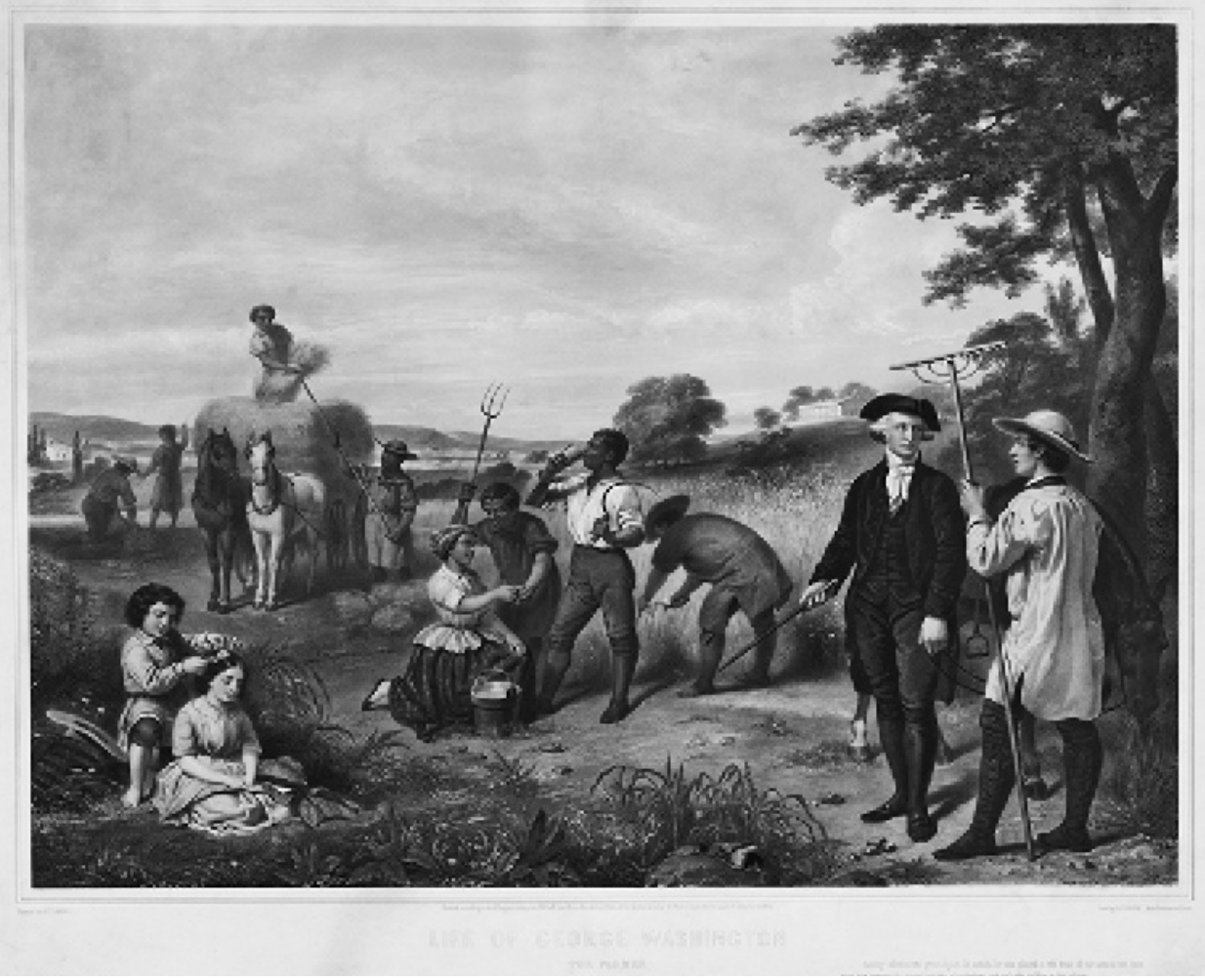
example, only three were African American, and he nominated no Latinos or African Americans to federal circuit courts. He nominated no African American women at all. His followers defended Confederate monuments and accepted the support of the Ku Klux Klan. The parallels between the antebellum Democrats and the modern-day Republican Party were clear.[7]

The American paradox has once again enabled oligarchs to threaten democracy. They have gained power by deploying the corollary to that paradox: equality for all will end liberty. This was the narrative an elite group of slaveholders used to take over the government in the 1850s. They were defeated on the battlefields, but their vision of America moved West after the Civil War, where it gathered the strength to regain power.

How the South Won the Civil War tells the story of the second rise of American oligarchy: the larger story behind the South Carolina delegates' putting western Senator Barry Goldwater over the top to win the Republican presidential nomination in 1964 and its logical conclusion in the present moment. It is the story of modern America.

HOW THE SOUTH WON

THE CIVIL WAR



CHAPTER 1

The Roots of Paradox

The wonder and exciting sense of potential that would eventually create the

American paradox was on full display at the Globe Theatre outside London's

city gates in summer 1612. The people coming to that "wooden O," picking their

way past brothels, gambling houses, and bear-baiting and cockfighting shows,

were there to leave behind the grimness of life and escape into a glorious new

world. 1

There was plenty to escape from. In the early 1600s, the wool industry that

supported the English economy had collapsed. In London, unemployed weavers

cast around for work to keep body and soul together, walking narrow cobbled

streets where rats nosed through slops tossed from windows and doorways

carrying the lice and fleas that always bit and sometimes carried the plague. The

disease was at bay in 1612, but Londoners knew that it was only a question of

time until someone with a headache would suddenly start to shiver, their swollen

lymph nodes blackening, and the city would grind to a halt until the plague

passed, leaving carts of dead in its wake. 2

But for all that early seventeenth-century London was cramped and dirty and

dangerous, it was also exciting, awash in innovations unimaginable only a

generation before. New seafaring technologies had opened up Atlantic ports, and

sailors brought to town new ideas, new money, new goods, and new languages.

In the streets, voyagers who had been to a land across the ocean exhibited

“savages” clad in animal skins, people the sailors claimed to have caught in virgin forests with trees that dwarfed those that remained in the British Isles.

Businessmen accumulated wealth and invested their money in new schemes;

scholars marveled at maps and the newly accessible scholarship that moved

along with trade goods. Printed books were for sale to those who were familiar

with the written word, and in new translations they introduced readers to Plato

and Aristotle, geometry and religion, and also told of shipwrecks on islands near

a continent Spanish explorers had discovered only a little over a hundred years

before. 3

Theater in Shakespeare’s day captured this magic, and in the summer of 1612,

audiences at the Globe might have seen Shakespeare’s last and most magical of

plays, *The Tempest*. Duke Prospero has been thrown out of power by his brother.

Cast adrift, he and his daughter, Miranda, are shipwrecked on an island, deserted

but for a savage man-beast whose name, Caliban, is an obvious anagram for

“cannibal,” and by a spirit named Ariel, whom Prospero binds to his service. The