

"Hiram F. Hover's Attempts to Perfect the New South, 1885-1889"

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This paper builds on research originally published as "The 'Hoover Scare' in South Carolina, 1887: An Attempt to Organize Black Farm Labor" Labor History, 40:3 (August 1999): 261-82. Shortly after that article was published, Mr. John Seawright, of Athens, Georgia, sent me newspaper clippings documenting Hover's visit to Atlanta in 1889. These led me to discover further primary sources, most importantly the indictments mentioned below (pp.16ff).

I presented a much shorter version of this paper at the annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association in Atlanta, Georgia, on 4 October 2005. A somewhat longer version will be published under the title "The First Anarchist That Ever Came to Atlanta': Hiram F. Hover from New York to the New South" in Rachel Rubin, Christopher Green, and James Smethurst, eds., Radicalism in the South Since Reconstruction (New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, forthcoming 2006/2007).

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When Hiram F. Hover walked out of jail onto Watauga Street in Hickory, North Carolina, he must have known that he was leaving behind the work that had consumed him over the past four years, ever since he arrived in Knoxville in late 1885. This passion had cost him his wife, his friends, his right eye, and nearly his life. Hover had come to the South amidst the tumult of the 1880s, and the South had changed him, brought to the surface old ideas for which he had long found little use. With these ideas, acquired during a childhood in New York's Hudson River Valley, Hover tried to change the South to stem the forces that were grinding landholding farmers into tenants and pushing them into the brick mills sprouting up out of the Piedmont soil. Hover's plans inspired hundreds of workers in the Carolinas and Georgia, but they also inspired well-armed opposition from white landlords and employers. The changes Hover tried, and failed, to bring to the South provide an important link between two better-known periods of radicalism in the South--Reconstruction and Populism, and they also help us rethink the role of indigenous and outside sources of radical thought in the late-nineteenth-century South.¹

This essay tells the remarkable story of Hiram F. Hover's travels through the South between 1885 and 1889 in order to make two interconnected points about the history of radicalism in the South. The first concerns chronology and historiography; Hover's activities challenge the conventional periodization of radical challenges to the status quo that would mark the early years of Reconstruction as one peak, the establishment of the People's Party in 1891 as another peak, and most of the 1880s as a despondent trough between. Hover's challenge to the way power was distributed and exercised drew on traditions of activism developed during Reconstruction, and it fed directly into the agrarian insurgency of the 1890s. Second, Hover's

career compels us to think more carefully about the origins and development of radical thought in the South and about the region's relationship to the rest of the nation. Although the link remains tenuous, it seems most likely that Hover's ideas about how society should be ordered came from the Shaker community at Mount Lebanon, New York, near where he grew up. It was not until he arrived in the rapidly industrializing South of the 1880s, however, that these old ideas provided the basis for action. As a white man, but a Yankee, he was perhaps better able to see the region, its social structures and racial codes, with fresh eyes than could those who had lived through the previous decades disruptions, hopes, and disappointments. While earlier generations of southern historians have emphasized the indigenous roots of Southern radicalisms, we need also bear in mind that the South of the 1880s, especially, was a busy place, with individuals and ideas from all over coming and going. This distinctive social and economic environment encouraged the development of radical ideas, whatever their ultimate provenance. Along the way, Hover and his ill-fated organizing efforts provide a direct connection in one location between the Republican party of Reconstruction and the Colored Farmers Alliance, suggesting the possibility of similar organizational transitions in other locales.²

Any study of a roving labor organizer, especially one so loosely connected to major labor organizations as Hover, faces serious methodological problems. During the late 1880s when his activities were newsworthy, he is fairly easy to follow, but his habits were the sort that leave only the thinnest historical record. Quite a bit of what we know of Hover before 1886 relies on his own later comments, especially an 1886 letter to Knights of Labor Grand Master Workman Terence V. Powderly and an autobiographical letter published in an Atlanta newspaper in 1889. But Hover was prone to exaggeration, at times making inflated claims for the success of his organization, leading the historian to look askance at his other claims to have traveled from

Texas to New York to the Dakota Territory. Still, so long as we take Hover's statements with a grain of salt and corroborate as many of them as possible, we come out with a fascinating story that adds to our understanding of the complexity of social thought and labor activism in the late nineteenth century South.³

Hiram F. Hover claimed to have been raised at the Shaker community at Mount Lebanon, New York, though available sources have not conclusively placed him there.⁴ Born between 1845 and 1847, Hover may have entered the Shaker community along with other members of his family, though the community also took in orphans and children of parents who could not afford to care for them. Children also found their way to Mount Lebanon when parents indentured them, giving the child an opportunity to apprentice to a trade and giving the Shakers an opportunity to win a convert. Hover may have been one of the 211 children who joined the Mount Lebanon community between 1841 and 1860.⁵ Few of the children who joined the Shakers during this period stayed permanently.⁶

It should seem hardly surprising that a child growing up around a Shaker community in the 1850s would grow into an adult traveling the South promoting the virtues of cooperation in the 1880s. The Shakers originated as a branch of the Quakers in the English city of Manchester in the 1770s. Within a few years, the small group of "Shaking Quakers" had emigrated to America, and by 1787, the Shakers established a communitarian settlement at Mount Lebanon, New York, southeast of Albany near the Massachusetts border. Most of the Shakers' beliefs and practices went against the grain of nineteenth century America. At a time when the ideal of the home with its "separate spheres" was gaining ground in the rising middle class, Shakers lived in "families" of the spirit and practiced celibacy, while at least preaching, if not always practicing,

the spiritual and temporal equality of women and men.⁷ As the nation was transformed by the market revolution and argued over banks and currency, Shakers strived to “owe no man anything but love and goodwill.”⁸ Although they lived apart from “the World” in communities organized on principles of cooperation, Shakers were still involved in the broader economy, selling goods they produced, especially garden seeds, by means of a network of roving Shaker seed agents.⁹ Finally, Shaker life emphasized orderly, clean living, something essential to a successful communal experiment but increasingly difficult for America’s growing population of poor workers.¹⁰

While the story of Hover’s childhood is partly speculative, his early adulthood is little better. The 1860 census lists Hiram Hover as a fifteen year old farm laborer in Tivoli, New York, on the Hudson River.¹¹ Perhaps he had already left the Shaker community, or perhaps he joined it after this point. If Hover was a member of the Shaker community at Mount Lebanon after 1860, he probably left it when he reached the age of twenty-one in 1868 and had to decide whether to join the society permanently.¹² The 1870 census finds Hover as a young man managing a hotel owned by his mother-in-law in the town of Schodack, about fifteen miles from Mount Lebanon.¹³ By 1880, Hover and his wife were living in a boarding house in Milton, New York, still in the Hudson Valley but farther from Mount Lebanon. Here Hover’s occupation is listed as “sewing machine agent,” making it almost certain that this is the same individual who would be making his living as a dress cutter in the next few years.¹⁴

Hover’s life may have been even more complex during this period and may have given him a connection to the South. According to his wife’s 1889 divorce complaint and an 1887 newspaper account, Hover married Susan Florence Stockman in Aiken, South Carolina, in June 1877.¹⁵ Stockman was said to come from Aiken County, so it seems probable that Hover had

spent some time there courting her before the summer 1877 marriage. If this was the case, he managed to be in one of the most violent parts of the South in the last few months of Reconstruction. The Hamburg Massacre just fifteen miles from Aiken in July 1876 marked the beginning of the paramilitary campaign by white Democrats in South Carolina that drove the Reconstruction government from power.¹⁶ Any observer of this violent campaign would have a good idea of how determined southern whites were to maintain white supremacy and the effects that determination could have on African Americans and any others who stood in its way.

In late 1885, Hover emerged from obscurity at the same time that he got involved in the labor movement through the Knights of Labor. Hover's later claim that he had "traveled in all parts of the South for the last thirty years" was probably an exaggeration.¹⁷ In December 1885, Hover and his wife were "traveling . . . in the business of teaching dress cutting" and stopped in Knoxville, Tennessee.¹⁸ Knoxville was a logical place for such a venture since by the 1880s it had become a bustling distribution point for merchandise from factories in the North and Midwest to town merchants and country stores in a seven-state area.¹⁹ It was also a headquarters for industrialists coming from the North to buy up the timber and mineral wealth of the surrounding mountains.²⁰

Historians have long observed that rapid industrialization breeds social unrest and radicalism. Melvyn Dubofsky noted of the development of the mining industry in the American West that "the very rapidity of economic growth brought greater unrest, conflict, violence, and radicalism."²¹ By the mid-1880s, Knoxville and the Appalachian region generally could be characterized this way as extractive industries such as logging and mining became significant to the region's economy and new patterns of transportation and distribution of goods took hold. As

Ronald Eller points out, "industrialization, however, fragmented the region's social structure, creating a great and growing gulf between the lower-class laboring population and those above them."²² At its most extreme, the social tensions generated by this swift economic change could lead to endemic violence.²³

The Piedmont, where much of Hover's activity took place, was a key part of what Edward L. Ayers has called the "unstable and rapidly evolving world of the New South."²⁴ In the years during and after the Civil War, railroads had turned this from a region linked only distantly to coastal markets to an area with easy communication south to New Orleans and north to New York, paving the way for a new wave of commercialized agriculture and industrial development.²⁵ In this area, industrialization took the form primarily of cotton mills. As Jacquelyn Dowd Hall and her coauthors point out, "the 1880s marked a turning point for the southern textile industry."²⁶ The number of mills in North Carolina nearly doubled in that decade, while in South Carolina it increased by more than five times.²⁷

With the booming business in Knoxville came the organization of several Local Assemblies of the Knights of Labor.²⁸ Formed by Philadelphia tailors in 1869, the Knights of Labor began to grow into the first nationwide labor organization in 1883 and 1884, though it was not until 1885 that the order made significant progress in the South. That year, the Knights of Labor won an impressive victory in the Great Southwest Strike against railroad magnate Jay Gould, and the new credibility of the Knights appealed to workers across the cities and towns of the rapidly industrializing South.²⁹ However, despite its successes in urbanizing areas, the Knights of Labor struggled to reach the region's majority of agrarian workers, and, indeed, to find something to say to them.³⁰ The available evidence suggests that until his 1885 encounter with the Knights of Labor in Knoxville, Hover was just another "knight of the grip," traveling

the railroads and dusty roads of America, perhaps nagged at a deeply spiritual level by the problems of poverty and inequality he saw around him, but not devoting his energies specifically to alleviating those problems. But encountering the Knights of Labor seems to have blown fire back into the embers of idealism banked somewhere within Hover.³¹

When Hover encountered the Knights of Labor in 1885, he found an organization just beginning to enjoy substantial success at a national level, but one that retained many of its early characteristics as a ritualistic, secret organization. It is not insignificant for understanding Hover's experience that the Knights of Labor called themselves "The Noble and *Holy* Order of the Knights of Labor." The language and trappings of religion were a central part of Knights of Labor practices.³² On a surface level, the elaborate pageantry of the Knights would have evoked some comparison with Shaker worship, but it is at a structural level that we can see even more important parallels. The Knights of Labor deliberately set themselves apart from the mainstream of American life, defining their principles and goals in a written preamble and constitution in much the same way that Shakers delineated their differences from the World in Millennial Laws codified in 1821 and modified in 1845 and 1860.³³ Utopianism was central to both groups: the Shakers separated from the World in order to find perfection one community at a time, while the Knights of Labor sought to transform the entire world in which they found themselves. Both groups stressed the dignity and even holiness of labor.³⁴ Here was an organization that seemed to be working for many of the values Hover had been raised on, and the possibilities of the situation seem to have fueled an enthusiasm for the Knights of Labor that would eventually bring Hover into conflict with the official policies of the Knights of Labor.

After a few weeks in Knoxville, Hover moved east through the mountains to Asheville, North Carolina. With the arrival of the railroad in 1880, Asheville began its transformation into

a modern city oriented toward tourism, developing a national "reputation as a health and scenic resort." Though Asheville itself was unsuitable for industrial development, its resort hotel, opened in 1886, was intended in part "to lure northern capitalists to the mountains" so they might take advantage of investment opportunities in the region.³⁵ Once in Asheville, he quickly met and began working with the Knights of Labor Local Assembly. Hover was apparently an energetic Knight, going beyond the usual run of meetings and beyond the protocols of getting proper credentials to organize on behalf of the order. In February and March 1886, Hover traveled around the towns of central North Carolina speaking to workers and urging them to join the Knights of Labor.³⁶ Because he was getting so many requests for information, Hover printed up a broadside version of his standard speech, which allows us to see just what he was telling workers in North Carolina.³⁷

For the most part, Hover's speech represented the current principles of the Knights of Labor, but it differed in a few small yet significant ways.³⁸ The speech opened with a standard statement of "labor republicanism," warning that "our greatest danger to-day comes from monopolies, and the power for evil of aggregated wealth" and that "the same causes that destroyed the mighty empires of the past, if not removed, will destroy our great Republic."³⁹ Hover blamed the ills of the workers on "an unjust and ruinous system of usury" but suggested that the Knights of Labor had a solution to the problem. As Hover laid out the changes the Knights of Labor planned, his points echoed much of the 1885 "Preamble and declaration of principles of the Knights of Labor of America": bureaus of labor statistics were needed; companies should be forbidden to pay in scrip; a graduated income tax should be levied to counteract the growing disparities of wealth. In one item, we see the radical slant that Hover brought to the Knights of Labor platform, perhaps from his Shaker background. The Knights of

Labor demanded “that the public lands, the heritage of the people, be reserved for actual settlers; not another acre for railroads or speculators, and that all lands now held for speculative purposes be taxed to their full value.” Hover quoted this demand verbatim, but added “that the titles to all lands that have been obtained through fraud shall be nullified, and the lands restored to the public domain.” The Knights of Labor called for a change in policy to prevent future problems. Hover demanded the reversal of past actions and challenged land titles already issued to railroads and speculators. By demanding land confiscation and redistribution in the South, Hover was linking himself to one of the most radical proposals of Reconstruction. Though it remained more of a dream (or threat, depending on one's perspective) than a realized program, land reform inspired freed slaves as a route to security, and a plan that seemed far-fetched and of interest only to African Americans in the late 1860s was sounding better and better to all those farmers, black and white, who saw land slipping from their grasp by the late 1880s.⁴⁰

After running through nearly all of the Knights of Labor's demands, Hover went on to add two of his own that had a particular resonance in the South. “I denounce the poll-tax as a relic of barbarism,” Hover stated, “as an infamy and a fraud, and I want to see the Knights of Labor organized in every State, so as to send up a petition to each State Legislature demanding the repeal of this tax.” Hover opposed the poll tax because “all men have a right to exist without paying for the privilege to live.”⁴¹ Here, he seemed to anticipate the way southern states would rely on poll taxes as one of many devices to disfranchise the poor after 1890. “Another step for the good of all mankind,” suggested Hover, “will be to make universal education the basis of universal suffrage.” With this, Hover was striking at several of the most cherished principles of the New South. Only a few years before the wave of disfranchisement swept across the South, Hover called for universal suffrage, and in the absence of any qualifiers, listeners might have

justifiably understood this to include African Americans and even women.⁴² The call for universal education was nearly as great a challenge to the status quo, especially when promoted in the towns of the North Carolina Piedmont where farm children were making their way into cotton mills decades before compulsory education laws would be enacted. Hover's promise of "ten months' schooling in the year to every child" would leave little time for doffing yarn bobbins or picking cotton.

Unfortunately, the national leadership of the Knights of Labor frowned upon this kind of freelance speaking and organizing. Concerned about uncontrolled growth and the dangers of unapproved rabble-rousers speaking on behalf of the Knights of Labor, Grand Master Workman Powderly began to crack down on Knights who recruited without the proper credentials.⁴³ Local Knights of Labor leaders condemned Hover's unauthorized organizing activity. The Master Workman of the Asheville Local Assembly wrote a letter published in at least two newspapers calling Hover "simply an imposter of the deepest dye" who spoke about "Communists and Nihilists." "The Knights of Labor," wrote the Master Workman, "do not approve of either."⁴⁴ The State Organizer for the Knights of Labor, John R. Ray, wrote a similar letter discrediting Hover and his "communistic revolutionary doctrines."⁴⁵ These charges of "communism" had much the same effect in 1886 as they would a few weeks later in the aftermath of the bombing at Haymarket in Chicago. As historian Heather Cox Richardson has pointed out, "communism" in reference to the Paris Commune of 1870 had also been one of the charges leveled at Reconstruction in the early 1870s.⁴⁶

The Knights of Labor in North Carolina could hardly afford to have speakers in its name bringing charges of "communism" in 1886. The Knights of Labor was expanding rapidly in the state, especially in the small industries of the Piedmont, but it was also making an important

foray into politics. The state's Master Workman, John Nichols, had been allied with the Radical Republicans during Reconstruction and held federal patronage appointments afterwards. In 1884, he joined the Knights of Labor, and in 1886, he used his position as a representative of the state's workers to run for Congress in the fourth district, which centered on Raleigh, where the Knights had their greatest strength.⁴⁷

Hover may have spent the rest of the spring wandering the western half of North Carolina, but by August 1886 he had decided to settle permanently in Hickory.⁴⁸ Like Knoxville but on a smaller scale, Hickory was a busy and growing town at a commercially significant crossroads. In the late 1860s, Hickory had used its location on the Western North Carolina Railroad at a ford in the Catawba River to become an important trading center for the area's tobacco and cotton crops, and over the next few years farmers from the mountains began bringing a variety of agricultural products to Hickory's markets. Most significant to the town's economy was the Piedmont Wagon Company, which employed seventy-five hands in 1885. Wagons were what Hickory was known for, and historian Gary R. Freeze argues that "the wagon works on the edge of Hickory became one of the most conspicuous examples of New South prosperity in North Carolina."⁴⁹

Effectively pushed out of the Knights of Labor, Hover decided to found his own organization more to his liking. Sometime around the beginning of January 1887, Hover gathered around him a small group of supporters and established the Co-operative Workers of America (CWA). The CWA drew up a "Preamble and Declaration of Principles" closely modeled on the Knights of Labor constitution, so much so that they acknowledged, "As much of our platform is identical with that of the Knights of Labor, many may ask what is the difference." The documents did differ, though, in some intriguing ways.⁵⁰ Much of the CWA document

followed the 1885 Knights of Labor document and Hover's 1886 revision of those principles. As in his 1886 broadside, Hover called for a repeal of the poll tax. He again claimed that universal education should be the basis of universal suffrage.

Unrestrained now by any allegiance to the Knights of Labor and Powderly's timidity, Hover infused the Knights of Labor ideas with radical notions that can be traced back to the Shakers. In the CWA document, Hover puts a much greater emphasis on cooperation as the basis for a new kind of society, one less influenced by the competitive individualism championed by Andrew Carnegie and one more like the communitarian world of Mount Lebanon. Hover demanded a variety of reforms from government, but in the post-Haymarket environment, he did not rest his hopes entirely on politics. Instead, he suggested that members of the CWA "will endeavor to associate our own labors to establish co-operative institutions such as will tend to supersede the wage system, by the introduction of a practical and scientific Cooperative Commercial and Industrial system, and to secure equal pay to both sexes for equal work." While such proposals echo the ideas of cooperation in the air at the time, for Hover they described not some utopian ideal that might be created in the future, but the cooperative world of the Shakers. Even the proposal for equal pay for the sexes has its roots for Hover in the spiritual equality of the Shaker community; the relative egalitarianism of his own marriage, where both partners worked as dress cutters; and the Knights of Labor, who had included an equal pay clause in their "Preamble and Declaration of Principles."⁵¹

Beyond just attempting to introduce Shaker cooperative principles through the CWA, Hover hoped to initiate a broader attack on private property. While the Knights of Labor based their ideas on a republican ideal of the small producer and sought to forestall greater inequalities in the distribution of private property, they did not seek to redistribute private property. Hover,

on the other hand, called for fundamental changes in the way property was held and distributed. He repeated his call for the revocation of “the titles to all lands that have been obtained through fraud,” but he went on to demand “that a limit be placed on the individual ownership of land.” Hover thought that the estates of the rich should be subject to a system of graduated forfeiture, capped at 20%. After suggesting such lofty goals, the CWA preamble ended by promising members the more immediate benefit of a system of cooperative stores, a particularly tempting idea to poor farmers and mill workers who found themselves in debt to merchants and landlords.⁵²

Hover's ideas, and what appears to have been a fairly charismatic personality, drew the attention of many who felt badly served by the status quo in the New South. Over a period of a few months, Hover enlisted a handful of white men from Hickory to help him restructure the South. His supporters in the CWA were a mix of locals from Hickory and other northerners with only shallow roots in North Carolina. Calvin L. Hawn seems to have been the most important of the local members (at least, he was the one who signed for the bonds of the others when they were later arrested). Born in 1846 just south of Hickory, Hawn received a limited education before enlisting in the Confederate army in 1864. After the war, he farmed before moving into Hickory to start a lumber business in April 1884.⁵³ The other local members were likewise fairly well-established and middle-aged. Robert B. Davis was a fifty-one year old farmer in 1887, “an experienced tobacco raiser of this place,” as a newspaper article described him, and John Bowles was a fifty-eight year old carpenter.⁵⁴ William R. Killian was thirty years old, a farmer and the son of a farmer.⁵⁵ Two members came from places other than North Carolina. The organization's General Secretary was John T. Ross; when his arrest warrant came in February, he had already left for New York.⁵⁶ Another northerner who left Catawba County ahead of the

arrest warrant was “M. Nolder,” who was “said to be in Pen.”⁵⁷ This is quite probably Marion Nolder, who was a twenty-nine year old miner in West Elizabeth, near Pittsburgh, in 1880.⁵⁸

Having founded the CWA in Hickory in early January, Hover decided to begin his organizing campaign in South Carolina. He had already been through many of the towns of Piedmont North Carolina before being thrown out of the Knights of Labor, and South Carolina, still relatively untouched by the Knights of Labor, offered better prospects. When Hover crossed from North Carolina into South Carolina, his audiences changed as well. Descriptions of his North Carolina speeches on behalf of the Knights of Labor make no mention of African Americans in the audiences, and as Hover was later to discover the hard way, white men making radical speeches to black audiences always attracted attention. In South Carolina, though, Hover spoke to racially mixed audiences, and, before he left the state a few weeks later, had moved toward addressing African Americans almost exclusively, and secretly.

Heading southwest from Hickory, Hover traveled through Spartanburg County, South Carolina, organizing a couple of locals at Campton and Campobello, near the North Carolina border, before continuing south to the city of Spartanburg.⁵⁹ There, in the second week of February 1887, Hover distributed handbills inviting townspeople to a speech on the town square. Beneath a statue of a Revolutionary War hero, Hover spoke to a mixed race crowd of several hundred people for over two hours. In addition to explaining the principals of the CWA, Hover took pains to differentiate his group from other organizations which had attempted to better the condition of southern workers. According to the Carolina Spartan, “He assailed the Knights of Labor because they, like the Grange, had squandered or stolen much of the money collected from the people” and “that Mr. Powderly had been bought over, or had acted with great weakness in certain transactions.”⁶⁰

Hover had not yet learned the value of discretion in his career as a labor organizer in the South, and the CWA soon drew unwelcome attention from the local press and authorities. But Hover had even more serious problems back home. By the time Hover made his speech in Spartanburg, a grand jury back in North Carolina had indicted him and the other members under an obscure 1870 conspiracy law, itself a relic of the time, nearly twenty years before, when whites and blacks had attempted to cooperate in the fight against terrorism during Reconstruction.

The 1870 North Carolina law and the 1887 indictment provide a useful example of how legal structures put in place during Reconstruction could later be used to suppress, rather than protect, political agitation by workers. In the late 1860s, the Ku Klux Klan spread rapidly throughout the South, serving, in Allen W. Trelease's words, as the "terrorist arm of the Democratic party."⁶¹ As Scott Reynolds Nelson has shown in his study of southern railroads and Reconstruction violence, the Ku Klux Klan's worst attacks were directed against black men exerting new political and economic power in parts of the Piedmont transformed by the coming of the railroad. As Klan terrorism spun out of control in 1870, the Republican governor called in state militia to round up suspects, a confrontation known as the Kirk-Holden War. As part of the crackdown on the Klan, the North Carolina legislature passed the Shoffner Act, authorizing the governor to suspend the writ of habeas corpus. When Democrats regained control of the state later that year, they repealed the Shoffner Act and replaced it with an act designed to suppress secret societies such as the Ku Klux Klan.⁶² That was the announced intention. In fact, the new act would give the state too little power to put down a full-scale insurgency such as the Ku Klux Klan had been in the late 1860s, but more than enough to strangle labor unions and any other nascent organizations that might challenge Democratic elite rule. The key to the law was its

emphasis on secrecy, but in a period when most labor organizations could be charged with conspiracy or subjected to harsh economic and violent reprisals, a degree of secrecy, at least in the beginning, was essential to any labor organization.⁶³ Under this law, a grand jury in Hickory, spurred on by the owner of the city's wagon factory, charged Hover and other CWA members with organizing “a certain oath-bound secret political organization” designed to carry on such illegal acts as “furthering a change in the laws of the State of North Carolina upon the subject of usury . . . [and] taxation contrary to the form of the statute in such cases made and provided and against the peace and dignity of the State.”⁶⁴

Indictment did not slow Hover's organizing, though it provided another good reason to organize in South Carolina rather than North Carolina. His growing success at drawing African American supporters, even as his support among whites was on the wane, must have provided further encouragement. In the first week of March, he appeared in Greenville, South Carolina, and gave an interview to the newspaper there.⁶⁵ After Hover came through in March, the city had perhaps fifteen different CWA "clubs" with five hundred members, mostly African Americans. One mass meeting drew as many as three hundred people. The two leaders were both African American men: a young barber named Lee Minor and an older blacksmith named Tom Briar. Briar had been a local leader of the Republican party during Reconstruction, but when he began to advocate the CWA in 1887, he almost came to blows with a white Republican who thought the movement ill-advised.⁶⁶

The indictment of the CWA and the outcry over his interracial appeals did make Hover more cautious in his methods of organizing. Instead of making public speeches as he had in Spartanburg a few weeks earlier, Hover now cultivated a network of local leaders who then carried out the legwork of creating local CWA branches. These local organizers, all African

American men, fanned out across the southern ends of Spartanburg County and Greenville County and northern Laurens County, “talking to the colored people wherever he could find them alone, in the fields or in the houses . . . and read[ing] the labor catechism and constitution to his hearers.”⁶⁷ The organizer formed the recruits into “clubs” of as few as five people, electing officers and collecting initial fees to be forwarded back to headquarters in Hickory. One of the organizers was the son of a man prominent for his resistance to the Ku Klux Klan during Reconstruction; he would go on to graduate from Lincoln University and pursue a career as a minister. Three of the others were middle-aged farm laborers with large families.⁶⁸

Hover’s work in South Carolina began to unravel around the beginning of July, but his problems began earlier. In late March, he continued to Oconee County in the western corner of South Carolina to organize locals. The authorities there promptly arrested him for vagrancy, and during a lunch break in his trial—with a wink and a nod—Hover took the hint that he might have better prospects in Georgia. The court concluded that “the prisoner’s mode and habit of life as a vagrant was so irresistible that he was still ‘roving’ at large in parts unknown.”⁶⁹ In Georgia, Hover continued his practice of traveling from town to town organizing CWA locals and speaking to African American audiences.⁷⁰ Before one such speech in Warrenton, Georgia, on May 19, an irate group of white landowners warned him that they would not tolerate his incendiary ideas. Hover spoke anyway. In the middle of his talk, “a number of men robed in white and masked, rode up to the window and shot through it at the agitator, the shot lodging in the left side of his face and back of his ear, and putting out his right eye completely.”⁷¹ Hover was carried to the hospital in Augusta and then returned to Madison, Georgia, where his wife was staying.⁷² She convinced locals there not to lynch him, and after recovering for a few days, Hover and his wife returned to Hickory.⁷³ As soon as he arrived, he was arrested for running his

cooperative store without a license. Hover gave bond to appear at the next term of court.⁷⁴

Things were going no better for the CWA locals Hover and his organizers had set up in South Carolina. Even though Hover himself spoke openly about the organization, the local organizers had a better understanding of the practicalities of organizing African Americans in the South in the 1880s. They made sure that the locals remained secret, and unlike Hover's public speeches in larger towns, they did not invite rural white workers to join, fearing that interracial organizing in the countryside would make them too vulnerable to retaliation. Almost inevitably, the existence of a network of perhaps a few dozen locals scattered across parts of four counties drew the attention of the local white elite. In late June, rumors of these "Hoover clubs" began to circulate and enter the newspapers. Within days, a full-scale panic was at hand as the rumors triggered whites' ingrained fear of a "Negro insurrection." In response to reports that black workers were meeting secretly at night, protected by armed sentries, a number of residents wrote to the state adjutant general seeking permission (and guns) to form their own militia company to put down the threat. To bring calm to the area, the adjutant general issued arms to the cavalry company that residents in northern Laurens County had already created and enlisted the group as part of the state militia.⁷⁵

Once things calmed down in Laurens County, a similar panic started nearby in southern Greenville County. Responding to rumors of the CWA's existence passed along by black women, white landowners formed a vigilance committee to respond to the threat. On June 29, armed whites rode around the countryside bringing all the suspected leaders of the CWA to an inquisition at Fairview Presbyterian Church. Individuals were questioned one by one and told to disband the CWA locals. Similar inquisitions in other communities occurred over the next few days, and the CWA ceased to exist in the rural area where Spartanburg, Greenville, and Laurens

Counties meet.⁷⁶ Despite the organization's initial strength among Greenville's black laborers, the "Hoover Scare" persuaded Lee Minor not to make a speech on July 4 in the next county and seems to have stalled the organization.⁷⁷

The liquidation of his CWA locals and his brush with death soured Hover on the South. In August 1887, once Hover had returned to Hickory, editor J. F. Murrill did his best to make the agitator feel unwelcome. In an editorial in the Hickory Western Carolinian headlined "Hoverism!" Murrill attacked both the CWA's plans and Hover's motivations. "Why should Missionary Hover leave the thousands of poor, ignorant and down-trodden white people in his own native State and section and come into these semi-barbarous Southern States, at the risk of his own life, to 'organize' the negroes, and stir up enmity, hatred and malice between them and their old masters and neighbors, their best friends?" Murrill wondered. "Is there no call for his labors at home? Where is his home any way?"⁷⁸ The following week, Murrill dissected Hover's plans for cooperative stores. Detailing the dues and fees that would be paid to establish a store, Murrill judged it a scheme "for the swindling of these classes out of their little hard earnings," comparing it to "the 'Freedmans Savings Bank,' established by some sharp yankees to cheat 'the poor ignorant and downtrodden' negroes out of their earnings."⁷⁹ Hover wrote back, defending his plan and blaming its failure on the antagonism of southern whites like Murrill. "Everybody knows," wrote Hover, "to let a stranger go into any part of the south and dare to get up and publicly speak against any of their cherished ideas or their petted [*sic*] institutions and the red hand of assassination is at once raised against him by the score or the thousand and by the multitude of the so called best citizens."⁸⁰ A day or two after writing this, Hover left Hickory behind for New York.⁸¹ And so Hover returns to obscurity, but only temporarily.

On 9 March 1889, the Atlanta Journal headlined its lead story, “Preaching Anarchy: A White Man Who Talks In Secret To The Colored People Of Atlanta.” Hoover had arrived by himself in Atlanta around the beginning of February, taking a room in a boardinghouse. During the days, he went about his business of selling dress charts and teaching dress cutting. At the same time, he had circulars printed up advertising evening lectures, and he “left [the circulars] around at the negro restaurants and barber shops and billiard rooms,” advertising his lectures to Atlanta’s African American working people but doing so more covertly than he had during his time in Georgia two years earlier. Some lectures were held at community halls and others at African American churches.⁸² Eventually, the police and newspapers became aware of the meetings, and a mole was sent in to infiltrate one of the meetings and report back on “Anarchist Hoover.”

The “small man, one-eyed, [with] dark hair and dark complexion” who wore “a green shade over one eye” entered the church and, after a couple of hymns and an opening prayer, addressed the few dozen African American men and women in the audience. He opened his speech with Scripture: “Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy; ride them out of the hand of the wicked.”⁸³ To Hoover, the “poor and needy” were the “poor colored people, who sit before me to-night,” and the “wicked” were “the so-called ‘good people,’ ‘the best people of the south.’” Contrasting the living conditions of poor black workers in Atlanta to the wealth of Peachtree Street, Hoover announced that he had a system for overcoming such problems. When he had presented his system to “a few of the leading colored men,” however, they had dismissed it. “The gold bugs and plutocrats have corrupted your leaders with their ill-gotten money,” Hoover claimed, “and they can’t be depended on.” He explained the principles of the CWA and distinguished between its immediate aims of

setting up cooperative stores and its ultimate goal of “the equal distribution of wealth, which is accumulated in the hands of a few, among the several members of society; BY LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENT IF POSSIBLE, BY REVOLUTION IF NEED BE.”⁸⁴

Hover might have guessed how the authorities would react to such statements. He was relentlessly denounced in both of Atlanta’s major newspapers: “Anarchist Hoover Talks Incendiarism And Equal Rights To The Negroes” read one headline, before describing Hover for their readers: “A one-eyed anarchist! A real, shrewd, living anarchist. In all probability he is the first anarchist that ever came to Atlanta—certainly the only one that ever staid here for any length of time.”⁸⁵ Journalists described his “bloodthirsty sermon” in which “Hover would talk anarchism and anti-povertyism and equal rights, frequently calling by name some prominent and well-to-do citizen and telling the negroes that all this money was blood money and bread taken from the mouths of negro children.”⁸⁶ After Hover had a tinsmith manufacture some suspicious small metal canisters for him that he claimed were catarrh inhalers but that Atlantans fearful of a repeat of Haymarket thought might be bomb shells, the police searched his room, finding a quantity of printed material but, disappointingly, no dynamite.⁸⁷

In reply to his critics, Hover wrote a lengthy statement to clarify his background, his beliefs, and his activities. “I am no anarchist and my name is not Hoover,” he pointed out. “Anarchy means the abolition of government,” Hover pointed out. “I don’t preach anarchy. The system under which the Co-Operative Workers of America is run has been in operation in this country for one hundred and one years. . . . At Mount Lebanon, New York. It is a Shaker community where I was raised. That there has been no great spread of the co-operation is due to the fact that there the system is hemmed in by hide-bound religion.” Hover repeated his criticisms of the unequal distribution of wealth in the country, tying it more specifically to the

exploitation of black labor in the South. He went on to attack the South's intolerance of any proposals for change, especially change that would benefit black workers: "You have reveled in the rosy lake of leisure and luxury so long on the profits of his labor that . . . you fight anything and everything that can possibly benefit him."⁸⁸ Despite his protests, Hover seems to have abandoned Atlanta shortly after this, disappearing for a few months before surfacing again in Greenville in late June 1889.

Things had not been standing still in the Greenville area since Hover had last been there. Amazingly enough, the CWA had almost two thousand members in Spartanburg and actually opened a cooperative store there in September 1887, though it remains unclear how long the store was in operation or whether it persisted until Hover's return in 1889.⁸⁹ Other aspects of the organization had not fared so well. Lee Minor, the leader of the CWA in Greenville, was unable to keep the organization going because of his own problems. In the wake of the spring 1887 organization of Greenville's African Americans in the CWA, they had become the decisive voting bloc in a municipal election that fall that pitted "wet" and "dry" Democrats against one another. Minor was a leading supporter of the incumbent mayor, and on the evening of the election, he was involved in a fight during a torchlight procession and shot another African American man. In the middle of his trial, he jumped bond and fled Greenville. He was recaptured in Boston in January 1889 and upon his return to Greenville was convicted of assault and battery with intent to kill and of a high and aggravated nature, drawing a two-year sentence in the state penitentiary.⁹⁰

Hover returned to Greenville at the beginning of July 1889 and advertised a meeting for "all old members of the C. W. of A., and their friends . . . to discuss cause of failure and future possibilities of the order."⁹¹ The meeting began with about 20 whites and 150 blacks in

attendance, but conflict quickly broke out between the peripatetic agitator and some of the leaders who had remained behind to bear the brunt of the reaction against the CWA. Hover tried to have Tom Briar thrown out of the meeting, charging him with being “a traitor to his race” who was friends with “the captain of the Ku-Klux.”⁹² Briar refused to leave unless voted out by a majority of those at the meeting and claimed that while “the Ku-Klux was a thing of the past, you (Hover) are here, a present thief.” In hindsight, Briar claimed that two years earlier “I pronounced you then a down-east Yankee thief, and that you was here for no other purpose than to plunder and rob the ignorant colored people of their hard earnings.”⁹³ Such a charge was certainly understandable from one who had squandered some of his dwindling political capital on Hover’s schemes only to find himself abandoned, and it is one of the perplexing dilemmas of this case that it remains impossible to conclusively dismiss Briar’s charges. Whether he was a “down-east Yankee thief” or just an impractical dreamer, Hover was certainly not an effective labor leader, even by the standards of that difficult time and place.

The conflict between Briar and Hover went deeper than just a sense of personal disillusionment; it touched on an emerging rift in the nature and direction of leadership in the African American community in the South. Briar charged that when Hover had appeared earlier, he had been advised to “get such men as Wilson, Cook, Williamson, Donaldson and Briar in your order, and you remarked that they were the very men you were fighting, and that they were as much opposed to the colored laborer as the white race.”⁹⁴ While the identities of “Williamson” and “Donaldson” are unclear, Wilson Cook was an African American who represented Greenville in the state legislature during Reconstruction, and all were among the established leaders of Greenville’s black community.⁹⁵ The note of animosity toward these leaders was apparent in Hover’s Atlanta speeches as well, and one report suggested that “the

better class of negroes themselves are heartily in the feeling against Hoover.”⁹⁶ Historians have long noted that in the period of Jim Crow some African Americans consciously pursued a strategy of adopting values acceptable to the white elites and deprecating the African American working class as a drag on the race. More recently, Brian Kelly has argued that we should think of Booker T. Washington and other proponents of this approach not as leaders of a monolithic “black community,” but rather as representatives of an “increasingly conservative black middle class, now convinced of the futility of political agitation and increasingly enamored with the Gospel of Wealth.”⁹⁷ The conflict between Hoover and Briar is an early harbinger of the kinds of class divisions among African Americans that would take on greater importance in the next few years.

After Hoover realized that he had no support in Greenville and left the meeting, Briar proposed that the meeting “hear from Mr. C. J. Holloway,” who “read the proceedings of the colored Farmers’ Alliance Association and urged the people to go into something that was known to be good, and had some substance.”⁹⁸ Cornelius J. Holloway was born free in Charleston and lived there and in Augusta, Georgia, before settling in Greenville in 1877, where he prospered as a barber.⁹⁹ Emerging as an adjunct to the segregated Farmers Alliance in 1886, the Colored Farmers National Alliance and Cooperative Union sought to help black southerners deal with the problems of sharecropping and debt peonage. Historian Omar Hamid Ali characterizes the Colored Alliance as one phase of a distinctive tradition of “Black Populism,” a “movement consist[ing] of virtually continuous organizing among rural African-Americans between 1886 and 1898” that “addressed a range of concerns” interconnected with white agrarian and Populist movements but possessing a trajectory and identity distinct from them.¹⁰⁰ In some ways, then, the CWA represents a direct organizational link between the Knights of

Labor's post-1886 focus on black farm workers and the Colored Farmers Alliance.¹⁰¹

The story of the CWA ends with the Greenville meeting, but Hover's story continues a little further on the same downward trajectory. Arrested for vagrancy in Greenville shortly after the ill-fated meeting, Hover was released a few days later "with the understanding that he leave the State, not to return to it again."¹⁰² Dispirited and intending to return to the North and give up the attempt to reorganize the CWA, Hover returned to Hickory. He knew that his wife had left him, but he may not have realized that she had filed for divorce earlier that year.¹⁰³ Claiming that she and Hover had separated on Christmas Eve, 1888, Susan F. Hover began divorce proceedings in March 1889, filing the complaint not long after Hover was chased out of South Carolina. Hover seems to have received the news when he turned up on his former doorstep in Hickory. His now ex-wife refused to let him in, but Hover forced his way into the house and beat her. Sentenced to thirty days in jail for the assault, with a few extra days for contempt of court, and unable to pay a two hundred dollar peace bond, Hover remained in jail until the middle of November. A document in the divorce file states that "on or about the 15th day of Nov. 1889 the complainant left the state," and here his trail goes cold again, this time for good.¹⁰⁴

Hiram F. Hover's attempt to reshape economic and racial hierarchies in the South in the late 1880s was at best quixotic, and, viewed less charitably, a distraction from more practical solutions to the pressing problems African American and poor white workers faced. He may even have been, as so many charged, a swindler, a rascal, and a "down-east Yankee thief."¹⁰⁵ Yet his thinly documented, confusing four-year sojourn through the New South raises important questions for the historian seeking to trace the history of radicalism in the South.

While evidence substantiating Hover's claim that the Shaker community at Mount Lebanon was "where [he] was raised" is elusive, his claim seems plausible in light of the available documentation and suggests that labor historians might need to give more thought to the connections between the Shakers and America's labor movement. One swallow does not a summer make, but Hover was only one of many people who passed through Shaker communities in the mid-nineteenth century. By the late 1860s, though radical sectarianism was in steep decline, a progressive wing of the Shakers "came to see themselves as agents for the transformation of American society."¹⁰⁶ Frederick W. Evans, a socialist and brother of land reformer George Henry Evans who turned to Shakerism, became the leading spokesman for this movement.¹⁰⁷ Publishing an autobiography as well as an influential article on the Shakers in 1869, Evans brought the principles of the Shakers to a broader audience at a time of great ferment in American life.¹⁰⁸ Further investigation or at least attention to the possibility might find that transient Shakers, especially those encountering the sect during the period when Evans and the progressive Shaker reformers were at the peak of their influence, did find much of value in the Shaker communitarian ideals and views on the value of labor if they were not "hemmed in by hide-bound religion."

Hover's activities from 1885 to 1889 provide a good summary of the labor movement in the South during these years, especially for African American workers and farm laborers. Earlier historians of the labor movement in the South noted that the Knights of Labor took off in the wake of the 1885 Great Southwestern strike, and it was at this point that Hover seems to have joined in Knoxville. Forced out of the Knights of Labor when their increasing membership was beginning to yield some political power in the form of the election of John Nichols to Congress, Hover turned his attention to organizing African Americans, just as the Knights of Labor in the

South became increasingly oriented toward African American rural laborers after the 1886 General Assembly meeting in Richmond challenged the South's color line.¹⁰⁹ More intriguingly, Hover's 1889 return to the South reveals the possibility that at least in some places the organization of the Colored Farmers Alliance rested on earlier organizational activity by black workers.¹¹⁰

Hover's work in the South reached further into the past than just the heyday of the Knights of Labor, and it sheds light on what became of Reconstruction radicalism after Redemption. Two points bear repeating here. First, Hover tapped into ideas and enthusiasms for radical social transformation that had their origins in Reconstruction. His calls for universal education, universal suffrage, and most powerfully, land reform, were echoes of twenty years before, and these ideas found many ready listeners among the South's working people, black and white. Hover's adventures also remind us that for many of Reconstruction's local leaders, especially African Americans such as Tom Briar, the years between 1865 and 1877 were not unique but part of life-long patterns of activism, even if that activism jettisoned its appeal to the black working class by the 1890s. Second, the crushing of the CWA demonstrates that the elites who brought down Reconstruction were able to use the same tactics and tools to stifle future challenges to their control of labor. The 1870 secret political societies law in North Carolina was the orderly side of this, but the armed riders in South Carolina, some of them veterans of the 1876 Red Shirts who overthrew Reconstruction, were the argument of final resort in this sort of confrontation.

Finally, Hover's 1889 attempts to resuscitate the CWA points toward the black middle class's abandonment of the black working class in their attempt to find a solution to the pressures that the industrializing New South brought to bear against its workers. Ultimately, Hiram F.

Hover is notable for his very persistence and the sheer improbability of what he tried to accomplish. He took a set of utopian religious ideals that had encountered substantial obstacles in separatist communities of religious devotees in one of the most socially tolerant and intellectually adventurous regions of the country and set out to apply them to a part of the country engulfed in an agricultural crisis and rapid industrialization for the benefit of a group of Americans scarcely twenty years removed from slavery. Most labor agitators would have considered the shotgun welcome Hover received in Georgia enough, called it a day, and attempted to plant the ideas of a “Cooperative Commercial and Industrial system” in a part of the country where lynching was not such a widely accepted means of expressing disagreement in debates over political economy. Even if we do not know what became of him after November 1889, Hover’s busy four years in the South help historians expand their understanding of the possibilities for and limitations on radical social change for the South’s most oppressed citizens.

NOTES

1. I am indebted to timely and helpful readings of this essay by Timothy Patrick McCarthy and Kieran Walsh Taylor. The late John Seawright of Athens, Georgia, sent me the clue that led to this revisiting of my earlier work on Hiram F. Hover.

2. By "radical" I understand a program of change that, if realized, would restructure in a thorough-going and lasting way relations of power—economic, social, and political—at all levels of a society. By that measure, I would include in an indicative (though, of course, arguable) list of radical movements and moments in the South since the end of the Civil War such things as the Reconstruction Acts, attempts at land reform during Reconstruction, the Farmers Alliance, the Brotherhood of Timber Workers, the Communist Party and affiliated labor organizations, the 1934 General Textile Strike, the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, the 1940s "civil rights unionism" in Winston-Salem, some aspects of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, and some community and environmental movements of the 1970s and 1980s. Selected works considering these topics and related questions of radicalism in the South which I have found helpful include Edward Magdol, A Right to the Land: Essays on the Freedmen's Community (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1977); Lawrence Goodwyn, Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); James R. Green, "The Brotherhood of Timber Workers, 1900-1913: A Radical Response to Industrial Capitalism in the Southern U.S.A.," Past and Present 60 (August 1973); Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, Defying Dixie: Southerners At War With White Supremacy, 1919-1948 (New York: Norton, forthcoming); Janet Irons, Testing the New Deal: The General Textile Strike of 1934 in the American South (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000); Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, Revolt Against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, rev. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Robert Rodgers Korstad, Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth-Century South (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); William P. Jones, "Black Workers, Organized Labor, and the Struggle for Civil Rights," Left History 8 (Spring 2003): 145-154; Lawrence Goodwyn, "The Cooperative Commonwealth and Other Abstractions," Marxist Perspectives 3:2 (1980): 8-42; Bryant Simon, "Rethinking Why There Are So Few Unions in the South," Georgia Historical Quarterly 81 (Summer 1997): 465-84.

3. Hover's autobiographical statements are found in H. F. Hover to Terence V. Powderly, 22 May 1886, Reel 16, Terence Vincent Powderly Papers (Glen Rock, N.J.: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1974); and Atlanta Constitution, 11 March 1889. Hover may have been only loosely affiliated with the Mount Lebanon community as his name does not appear in the membership records contained in The Shaker Collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society. Part A, Manuscript Materials (microfilm) (Glen Rock, N.J.: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1976-1977).

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4. Atlanta Constitution, 11 March 1889.
 5. Priscilla J. Brewer, Shaker Communities, Shaker Lives (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1986), 148.
 6. Brewer, Shaker Communities, 148, 160.
 7. Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," Journal of American History 75:1 (June 1988): 9-39; Brewer, Shaker Communities, 7.
 8. Stephen J. Stein, The Shaker Experience in America: A History of the United Society of Believers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 148; Charles Sellers, The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
 9. Stein, Shaker Experience in America, 136.
 10. Stein, Shaker Experience in America, 158.
 11. 1860 Federal Manuscript Census of Population, Hiram F. Hover, Tivoli Post Office, North East Township, Dutchess County, N.Y., p.1164.
 12. Judith A. Graham, "The New Lebanon Shaker Children's Order," Winterthur Portfolio 26:4 (Winter 1991), 218.
 13. 1870 Federal Manuscript Census of Population, Hiram F. Hover, Schodack Township, Rensselaer County, N.Y., p.378.
 14. 1880 Federal Manuscript Census of Population, Hiram F. Hover, Milton, Saratoga County, N.Y., p.239; Newspaper clipping enclosed with H. F. Hover to Terence V. Powderly, 22 May 1886, Terence Vincent Powderly Papers.
 15. Complaint, 1 August 1889, Susan F. Hover v. Hiram F. Hover, Divorce Records, Catawba County, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh. Hover's wife's last name is given as "Stockman" in the Spartanburg (S.C.) Carolina Spartan, 1 June 1887.
 16. Stephen Kantrowitz, Ben Tillman and the Reconstruction of White Supremacy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 64-71; Richard Zuczek, State of Rebellion: South Carolina During Reconstruction (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 163-65.
 17. Hickory (N.C.) Western Carolinian, 26 August 1887.
 18. Newspaper clipping enclosed with H. F. Hover to Terence V. Powderly, 22 May 1886, Terence Vincent Powderly Papers.
 19. Betsey Beeler Creekmore, Knoxville! (Knoxville: East Tennessee Historical Society, 1991),

103.

20. Ronald D. Eller, Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), 53.

21. Melvyn Dubofsky, We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1969), 19-27 (quotation 22).

22. Eller, Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers, 53.

23. William Lynwood Montell, Killings: Folk Justice in the Upper South (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 65-85, 116; Altina Waller, Feud: Hatfields, McCoys, and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860-1900 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 158-205; Gordon B. McKinney, "Industrialization and Violence in Appalachia in the 1890s," in Joel W. Williamson, ed., An Appalachian Symposium (Boone, N.C.: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1977), 131-44.

24. Edward L. Ayers, The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 116.

25. Allen Tullos, Habits of Industry: White Culture and the Transformation of the Carolina Piedmont (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 134-43; Scott Reynolds Nelson, Iron Confederacies: Southern Railways, Klan Violence, and Reconstruction (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), _____.

26. Jacquelyn Dowd Hall et al., Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 26.

27. Melton Alonza McLaurin, Paternalism and Protest: Southern Cotton Mill Workers and Organized Labor, 1875-1905 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1971), 10. For an older account of the growth of cotton mills, see Broadus Mitchell, The Rise of Cotton Mills in the South, introduction by David L. Carlton (1921; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001).

28. Jonathan Garlock, Guide to the Local Assemblies of the Knights of Labor (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 486.

29. Melton Alonza McLaurin, The Knights of Labor in the South (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1978), 38-48.

30. McLaurin, Knights of Labor in the South, 169-70; Laura F. Edwards, Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 240-44; Kenneth L. Kann, "The Knights of Labor and the Organization of Southern Black Workers," Labor History 18 (1977):49-70.

31. Kieran Walsh Taylor suggests that Hover may have been active in another trade union

before his encounter with the Knights, a distinct possibility that can be neither confirmed nor denied by the available evidence.

32. Robert E. Weir, Beyond Labor's Veil: The Culture of the Knights of Labor (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 27-30, 67-101.

33. Stein, Shaker Experience in America, 95, 198, 203.

34. Weir, Beyond Labor's Veil, 72-73.

35 Richard D. Starnes, "A Conspicuous Example of What is Termed the New South': Tourism and Urban Development in Asheville, North Carolina, 1880-1925," North Carolina Historical Review 80 (Jan. 2003), 56-57 (quotation 57).

36. Concord (N.C.) Times, 4 March 1887; Newspaper clipping enclosed with H. F. Hover to Terence V. Powderly, 22 May 1886, Terence Vincent Powderly Papers.

37. Broadside of Hover's speech included with H. F. Hover to Terence V. Powderly, 22 May 1886, Terence Vincent Powderly Papers.

38. The "Preamble and declaration of principles of the Knights of Labor of America" is from "HADC - Preamble and declaration of principles of the Knights of Labor of America" (ca. 1885) (<http://www.chicagohs.org/hadc/visuals/V0010.htm>) Chicago Historical Society <25 April 2004>.

39. For discussions of the ideas of labor republicanism, see Leon Fink, "The New Labor History and the Powers of Historical Pessimism: Consensus, Hegemony, and the Case of the Knights of Labor," Journal of American History 75:1 (June 1988): 115-136; and Daniel T. Rodgers, "Republicanism: The Career of a Concept," Journal of American History 79:1 (June 1992), 24-31.

40 On attempts at land reform during Reconstruction, see Edward Magdol, A Right to the Land: Essays on the Freedmen's Community (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1977); Carol K. Rothrock Bleser, The Promised Land: The History of the South Carolina Land Commission, 1869-1890 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1969); Eric Foner, Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 43-45, 55-56, 82-86.

41. As Herbert Aptheker noted, "From its beginnings, this levy has not been merely revenue producing, but has been associated, deliberately and clearly, with maintaining caste and class systems." Herbert Aptheker, "South Carolina Poll Tax, 1737-1895," Journal of Negro History 31:2 (April 1946), 131.

42. Female suffrage was a standard part of the program of the progressive Shakers. F. W. Evans, A Shaker's Views on the Land Limitation Scheme and Land Monopoly, and Mormon Prosecution ([n.p.]: Mt. Lebanon, Columbia Co., N.Y., [n.d.]), 2, item #108, The Shaker

Collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society. Part B, Printed Materials (microfiche) (Glen Rock, N.J.: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1976-1977).

43. McLaurin, Knights of Labor in the South, 49.

44. Concord (N.C.) Times, 15 April 1886.

45. Concord (N.C.) Times, 22 April 1886.

46. Heather Cox Richardson, The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 85-89, 185.

47. McLaurin, Knights of Labor in the South, 82-85.

48. Hickory (N.C.) Piedmont Press, 14 August 1886.

49. Gary R. Freeze, The Catawbans: Crafters of a North Carolina County, 1790-1900 (Newton, N.C.: Catawba County Historical Association, 1995), 265-82 (quotation 281).

50. "Preamble and Declaration of Principles of the Co-Operative Workers of America," undated broadside, "Secret Political Organization – 1887" folder, Superior Court, Catawba County, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh. The date of the organization's founding is taken from the indictment against the CWA members contained in the same folder and dated "January 1887 Term." For the 1884 Constitution of the Knights of Labor, see Norman J. Ware, The Labor Movement in the United States, 1860-1895, A Study in Democracy (1929; reprint Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959), 378-79.

51. Bruce E. Baker, "The 'Hoover Scare' in South Carolina, 1887: An Attempt to Organize Black Farm Labor," Labor History 40:3 (August 1999), 261; Knights of Labor, "Preamble and declaration of principles of the Knights of Labor of America," "HADC - Preamble and declaration of principles of the Knights of Labor of America" (ca. 1885) (<http://www.chicagohs.org/hadc/visuals/V0010.htm>) Chicago Historical Society <25 April 2004>.

52. "Preamble and Declaration of Principles of the Co-Operative Workers of America," undated broadside, "Secret Political Organization – 1887" folder, Superior Court, Catawba County, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

53. 1880 Federal Manuscript Census of Population, Calvin L. Hawn, Catawba County, N.C., p.390; George W. Hahn, The Catawba Soldier of the Civil War (Hickory, N.C.: Clay Printing Co., 1911), 247-48.

54. 1880 Federal Manuscript Census of Population, Robert B. Davis, Catawba County, N.C., p.377; Hickory (N.C.) Piedmont Press, 6 February 1886; 1880 Federal Manuscript Census of Population, John Bowles, Catawba County, N.C., p.368.

55. 1880 Federal Manuscript Census of Population, William R. Killian, Catawba County, N.C., p.392.

56. "Preamble and Declaration of Principles" and arrest warrant for John T. Ross, 17 February 1887, both in "Secret Political Organization – 1887" folder.

57. Arrest warrant for M. Nolder, 17 February 1887, in "Secret Political Organization – 1887" folder.

58. 1880 Federal Manuscript Census of Population, Marion Nolder, Allegheny County, Pa., p.41.

59. Greenville (S.C.) Enterprise and Mountaineer, 27 July 1887; Spartanburg (S.C.) Carolina Spartan, 20 July 1887.

60. Spartanburg (S.C.) Carolina Spartan, 16 February 1887.

61 Allen W. Trelease, White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), xlvi.

62. Horace W. Raper, William W. Holden: North Carolina's Political Enigma (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 155-98; J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1914), 559-60; Trelease, White Terror, 203-04. The law as passed is as follows:

Political Societies, Secret, Prohibited. The Code, Sec. 1095.

If any person, for the purpose of compassing or furthering any political object, or aiding the success of any political party or organization, or for resisting the laws, shall join, or in any way connect or unite himself with any oath-bound secret political or military organization, society or association of whatsoever name or character, or shall form or organize, or combine and agree with any other person or persons, to form or organize any such organization, or as a member of any secret political or military party or organization, shall use, or agree to use, any certain signs, or grips, or pass-words, or any disguise of the person or voice, or any disguise whatsoever for the advancement of its object, and shall take or administer any extra judicial oath, or any secret solemn pledge, or any like secret means, or if any two or more persons, for the purpose of compassing or furthering any political object, or aiding the success of any political party or organization, or for circumventing the laws, shall secretly assemble, combine or agree together, and the more effectually to accomplish such purposes, or any of them, shall use any certain signs, or grips, or pass-words, or any disguise of the person or voice, or other disguise whatsoever; or shall take or administer any extra-judicial oath, or other secret solemn pledge, or if any persons shall band together and assemble to muster, drill, or practice any military evolutions, except by virtue of the authority of an officer recognized by law, or of an instructor in institutions or schools in which such evolutions form a part of the course of instruction, or if any person shall knowingly permit any of the acts and things herein forbidden to be

had, done or performed on his premises, or on any premises under his control, or if any person by being a member of any such secret political or military organization, shall not at once abandon the same and separate himself entirely therefrom, every person so offending shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and fined not less than ten nor more than two hundred dollars, or be imprisoned, or both, at the discretion of the court.

M. N. Amis, The North Carolina Criminal Code and Digest (Raleigh: Edwards, Broughton, and Co. Law Publishers, 1886), 231-32.

63. For an example of an earlier union stymied by conspiracy laws, see Andrew Bernard Arnold, "Ordering Coal: Labor, Law, and Business in Central Pennsylvania, 1870-1900" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 2001), 112-16.

64. Indictment against H. F. Hover, *et al.*, "January Term 1887," in "Secret Political Organizaiton – 1887" folder; Greenville (S.C.) Enterprise and Mountaineer, 16 March 1887.

65. Pickens (S.C.) Sentinel, 10 March 1887.

66. Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle, 5 July 1887.

67. Charleston (S.C.) News and Courier, 3 July 1887 (quoting Greenville (S.C.) News, 1 July 1887).

68. Baker, "Hoover Scare," 266; ADD BIOGRAPHICAL ITEM ABOUT SHERMAN McCRARY

69. Wallhalla (S.C.) Keowee Courier, 24 March 1887.

70. Matthew Hild, "Organizing Across the Color Line: The Knights of Labor and Black Recruitment Efforts in Small-Town Georgia," Georgia Historical Quarterly 81:2 (1997), 298-304.

71. Athens (Ga.) Weekly Banner-Watchman, 24 May 1887.

72. Athens (Ga.) Weekly Banner-Watchman, 24 May 1887.

73. Spartanburg (S.C.) Carolina Spartan, 1 and 8 June 1887.

74. Greenville (S.C.) Enterprise and Mountaineer, 15 June 1887.

75. Baker, "Hoover Scare," 271-73.

76. Baker, "Hoover Scare," 273-76.

77. Baker, "Hoover Scare," 267-68, 276. This sort of panic over African American rural labor unions did not always turn out so well, as the Elaine Massacre of 1919 in Arkansas attests. See

Kieran Taylor, "'We Have Just Begun': Black Organizing and White Response in the Arkansas Delta, 1919," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 58 (Autumn 1999):264-84.

78. Hickory (N.C.) Western Carolinian, 12 August 1887.

79. Hickory (N.C.) Western Carolinian, 19 August 1887.

80. Hickory (N.C.) Western Carolinian, 26 August 1887.

81. Hickory (N.C.) Western Carolinian, 16 September 1887.

82. Atlanta Constitution, 11 March 1889.

83. Psalm 82:3-4 (KJV).

84. Atlanta Journal, 9 March 1889.

85. Atlanta Constitution, 11 March 1889.

86. Atlanta Constitution, 11 March 1889.

87. Atlanta Constitution, 12 March 1889; Atlanta Journal, 12 and 13 March 1889.

88. Atlanta Constitution, 11 March 1889.

89. Greenville (S.C.) Enterprise and Mountaineer, 28 September 1887; Spartanburg (S.C.) Carolina Spartan, 28 September 1887.

90. Greenville (S.C.) Enterprise and Mountaineer, 5 October 1887, 7 December 1887, 20 March 1889; Charleston News and Courier, 30 January 1889.

91. Atlanta Constitution, 2 July 1889.

92. Greenville (S.C.) Enterprise and Mountaineer, 3 July 1889.

93. Greenville (S.C.) Enterprise and Mountaineer, 3 July 1889.

94. Greenville (S.C.) Enterprise and Mountaineer, 3 July 1889.

95. Archie Vernon Huff, Greenville: The History of the City and County in the South Carolina Piedmont (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 166.

96. Atlanta Constitution, 11 March 1889.

97. Brian Kelly, "Sentinels for New South Industry: Booker T. Washington, Industrial Accommodation and Black Workers in the Jim Crow South," Labor History 44:3 (August 2003), 341.

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98. Greenville (S.C.) Enterprise and Mountaineer, 3 July 1889.
99. Elias Brown Holloway, "Sketch of the Life of Elias Brown Holloway. Greenville, S.C.," undated, Folder 10, Elias Brown Holloway Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.
100. Omar Hamid Ali, "Black Populism in the New South, 1886-1898" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2003), 6-7.
101. McLaurin, Knights of Labor in the South, 131-48.
102. Greenville (S.C.) Enterprise and Mountaineer, 10 July 1889.
103. Greenville (S.C.) Enterprise and Mountaineer, 3 July 1889; Complaint, 1 August 1889, Susan F. Hover v. Hiram F. Hover, Divorce Records, Superior Court, Catawba County, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.
104. Hickory (N.C.) Press and Carolinian, 29 August 1889; Susan F. Hover v. Hiram F. Hover, Divorce Records, Superior Court, Catawba County, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.
105. For a discussion of crooks and charlatans in the Knights of Labor, see Gregory S. Kealey and Bryan D. Palmer, Dreaming of What Might Be: The Knights of Labor in Ontario, 1880-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 173-203.
106. Stein, Shaker Experience in America, 304.
107. **Error! Main Document Only.** Stein, Shaker Experience in America, 205; John E. Murray, "Henry George and the Shakers: Evolution of Communal Attitudes Towards Land Ownership" American Journal of Economics and Sociology 55:2 (1996): 245-56.
108. Stein, Shaker Experience in America, 205.
109. McLaurin, Knights of Labor in the South, 159-68.
110. This point is argued at greater length in the work of Omar Hamid Ali (op cit). In my earlier article on Hover and the CWA, I suggested that the CWA's organization of African American laborers itself rested on Reconstruction-era organization of Union Leagues and militia companies. Baker, "'Hoover Scare,'" 264.