

The classic history was written by C. Vann Woodward: *The Origins of the New South: 1877–1913*, published in 1951 by Louisiana State University Press. Sheldon Hackney, a Woodward student, hails the book but explains:



Nashville, Tennessee skyline

Of one thing we may be certain at the outset. The durability of *Origins of the New South* is not a result of its ennobling and uplifting message. It is the story of the decay and decline of the aristocracy, the suffering and betrayal of the poor whites, and the rise and transformation of a middle class. It is not a happy story. The Redeemers are revealed to be as venal as the carpetbaggers. The declining aristocracy are ineffectual and money hungry, and in the last analysis they subordinated the values of their political and social heritage in order to maintain control over the black population. The poor whites suffered from strange malignancies of racism and conspiracy-mindedness, and the rising middle class was timid and self-interested even in its reform movement. The most sympathetic characters in the whole sordid affair are simply those who are too powerless to be blamed for their actions.<sup>[3]</sup>

The New South campaign was championed by Southern elites often outside of the old planter class, in hopes of making a fresh ("new") start forming partnerships with Northern capitalists in order to modernize and speed the economic development of the South. From Henry Grady to black leader Booker T. Washington, New South advocates wanted southern economic regeneration, sectional reconciliation, racial harmony and believed in the gospel of work.

The rise of the New South involved the continued supremacy of whites over blacks, who had little or no political power. For example, Grady stated in an 1888 speech about the New South: "the supremacy of the white race of the South must be maintained forever, and the domination of the negro race resisted at all points and at all hazards, because the white race is the superior race ... [This declaration] shall run forever with the blood that feeds Anglo-Saxon hearts".<sup>[4]</sup>

## History

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### The Great Depression and World War II

The economic woes of the Great Depression dampened much New South enthusiasm as investment capital dried up and the rest of the nation began to view the South as a large economic failure. World War II ushered in a degree of economic prosperity as efforts to industrialize in support of the War effort were employed. In the southern mountains, the Tennessee Valley Authority built dams, and generated employment and electricity that affected numerous residents and manufacturers alike. Other southern industries, such as mining, steel, and ship building flourished during World War II and set the stage for increased industrialization, urban development, and economic prosperity in southern ports and cities in the second half of the 20th century.

### The Civil Rights era