

# Alexander R. Shepherd and the Race Issue in Washington

*John Richardson*

Alexander R. Shepherd (1835–1902) is a compelling figure in the history of the nation's capital. He is best known for his accomplishments during the Territorial Government, when from 1871 to 1873 he was vice president and de facto leader of the Board of Public Works. During his stewardship of the board, the physical infrastructure of modern Washington was developed, allowing the city to become the functioning capital of a fast-growing and internationally influential United States of America. But that same building program went far over budget, leading Congress to impose direct control over the District for the next hundred years.

Shepherd's story would be dramatic on these bases alone, but it is further complicated by racial politics during his active years in Washington, roughly 1861 to 1874. No one doubts the view, vigorously argued by Shepherd and supported by his actions, that his principal goal was the physical reconstruction and improvement of the city. But because the

outcome was detrimental to the political aspirations of Washington's black as well as white residents, we must try to understand Shepherd's personal views on race and how they compared to those held by other members of local society and the Republican Party of Reconstruction.

Few observers were neutral about Shepherd in his lifetime, and even today assessments of him vary widely. The most positive interpretation, that he was not only a development visionary but also a progressive social force in Washington, is based on his public embrace of Unionism and Lincoln Republicanism, as well as the views he expressed in an exchange of letters in 1871 with Howard University president Oliver O. Howard, a respected Union general and former head of the Freedmen's Bureau. Howard had invited Shepherd's comments on allegations by Washington's black leaders that Shepherd was "uniformly opposed to their interests" and to integrated public schools. Shepherd, who at the time was hoping to become the first governor of the Territory of the District of Columbia, knew that his response to Howard would be publicized and that he needed the general's influence with President Ulysses S. Grant to gain the presidential appointment.

---

*John Richardson is writing a biography of Governor Alexander R. Shepherd (1835–1902) of the District of Columbia and lives in Arlington, Virginia.*



*“Alexander R. Shepherd.” This photograph signed by Shepherd is probably from his Territorial Government period (1871–1874). Courtesy of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library.*

Shepherd responded that he was a “friend” of the black race who had actively supported the Republican Party and the “elevation” of blacks, and concluded with the assertion that he supported a “unified” school system and opposed “any discrimination in the form of race or color in the school or elsewhere.”<sup>1</sup> Having voted for a city council resolution the previous December calling for a unified board for black and white schools, Shepherd’s comments to Howard may not in fact have taken his own views farther than he had gone publicly. He was also silent on the question of black suffrage, which he had publicly opposed at earlier points in his political career.

At the other end of the spectrum is a harsh assessment of Shepherd’s racial attitudes by former Washington mayor Sayles J. Bowen in his own 1871 letters to Howard. After reminding Howard that he had long been a champion of equal rights for Washington blacks, Bowen charged Shepherd with being an “unrelenting and outspoken enemy of the education of colored children” and of having opposed “the regularly organized Republican Party” in Washington. Not all of Bowen’s allegations can be documented, and they can be read as the bitter attacks of a rival candidate for the governorship (neither man was appointed at the time).<sup>2</sup> But Bowen’s credentials as a supporter of equal rights for Washington’s black residents, particularly in education, were unassailable, and he had reason to fault Shepherd for insensitivity and condescension toward blacks.<sup>3</sup>

Although Shepherd held racist views by today’s standards, his main goal was the physical improvement of Washington and, in the process, strengthening property values. In historian Howard Gillette’s formulation of the struggle in Washington “between justice and beauty,” Shepherd consistently came down on the side of a functioning, elegant capital over civil rights and equal opportunities for blacks.<sup>4</sup> Shepherd knew that his goals ran counter to racial equality, but he seems not to have cared one way or another. Having denounced racial equality early in his career, he learned to sidestep the question until he had left the public eye.

On the eve of the Civil War, Washington was a slaveholding city wedged between two slaveholding states, Maryland and Virginia. Historian Margaret Leech has left a vivid portrait of the city’s character:

It was a southern town, without the picturesqueness, but with the indolence, the disorder and the want of sanitation. Its lounging Negroes startled Northern visitors with the reminder that slaves were

held in the capital. Hucksters abounded. Fish and oyster peddlers cried their wares and tooted their horns on the corners. Flocks of geese waddled on the Avenue, and hogs, of every size and color, roamed at large, making their muddy wallows on Capitol Hill and in Judiciary Square. People emptied slops and refuse in the gutters, and threw dead domestic animals into the canal. Most of the population still depended on the questionable water supply afforded by wells and by springs in the hills behind the city. Privies, in the absence of adequate sewage disposal, were plentiful in yards and dirty alleys, and every day the carts of night soil trundled out to the commons ten blocks north of the White House.<sup>5</sup>

In 1860, Washington had a population of 75,080, with 61,793 (81 percent) whites and 14,317 (19 percent) blacks, of whom 3,185 were slaves and 11,132 free.<sup>6</sup> The whites were mostly southern-born: 57 percent had been born in the city, 13 percent in Virginia, and 18 percent in Maryland.<sup>7</sup> Federal officials were also largely southerners. The two Democratic administrations preceding Abraham Lincoln's were dominated by southerners drawn to Washington for the numerous clerkships and other appointive federal positions. Historian Carl Abbott has noted the "easy social alliance" between southern politicians in Washington and Tidewater families; furthermore, members of Congress from the South were also more likely to bring their families to Washington than their northern counterparts, further reinforcing the southern ambiance of the city.<sup>8</sup>

Slavery defined race relations. Washington's so-called black codes—applied equally to free and enslaved blacks—imposed fines for being on the street after 10 p.m. or engaging in card games, as well as six-month jail sentences for anyone arrested at a "nightly and disorderly" meeting.<sup>9</sup> Despite these attempts to control

African Americans, two incidents in particular heightened the fears of Washington's white residents. The first, in 1835, was an attempt by a slave on the life of Mrs. William Thornton, widow of the architect of the U.S. Capitol, that triggered a mob assault on a free black restaurateur, Beverly Snow, and a three-day-long attack on Washington's black community.<sup>10</sup> The second incident, in 1848, was the bold escape attempt by seventy-six slaves aboard the schooner *Pearl*, led by the ship's abolitionist captain. The slaves' escape was short-lived, and they were brought back to jail and subsequent sale in the deep South, but in Washington whites stiffened the black codes and heightened surveillance of the black population. Despite these challenges, free blacks continued to increase in numbers and to establish a solid economic and cultural foothold.<sup>11</sup>

Alexander Shepherd was born in this southern city in 1835, and he absorbed its attitudes toward blacks. Forebears on both sides of his family had for generations been slaveholding tobacco farmers in Charles County, Maryland. Shepherd's paternal grandfather, Thomas Shepherd, owned nine slaves at his death in 1817, and his maternal grandfather, Townley Robey, owned eighteen slaves at his death in 1844.<sup>12</sup> About 1822, Shepherd's father, then a young man also named Alexander, moved from Charles County to Washington, where he became a prosperous lumber and coal merchant, with yards on the Washington Canal (now Constitution Avenue) and wharves on the Potomac River near Maryland Avenue, SW, and Long Bridge (today's 14th St. Bridge). The elder Alexander Shepherd was also a slaveowner; the 1840 District of Columbia census recorded five in his household.<sup>13</sup> In 1841 he sold a thirteen-year-old slave on the understanding that the boy would be manumitted at age twenty-five.<sup>14</sup> The remaining slaves likely worked in Shepherd's coal and lumber operations. This conformed to the general urban pattern of a few slaves per family, with the men handling heavy outdoor work.<sup>15</sup>

In 1842, Shepherd moved to a farm in Washington County near Rock Creek Cemetery, with his wife Susan and their seven children, including the eldest, Alexander Robey Shepherd. The following year the elder Shepherd unconditionally manumitted another slave, Noah Biass.<sup>16</sup> At his death in 1845, Shepherd still owned seven slaves, although he left instructions for their eventual manumission.<sup>17</sup> There is no record of whether, when, or to what extent his wishes concerning manumission were carried out.

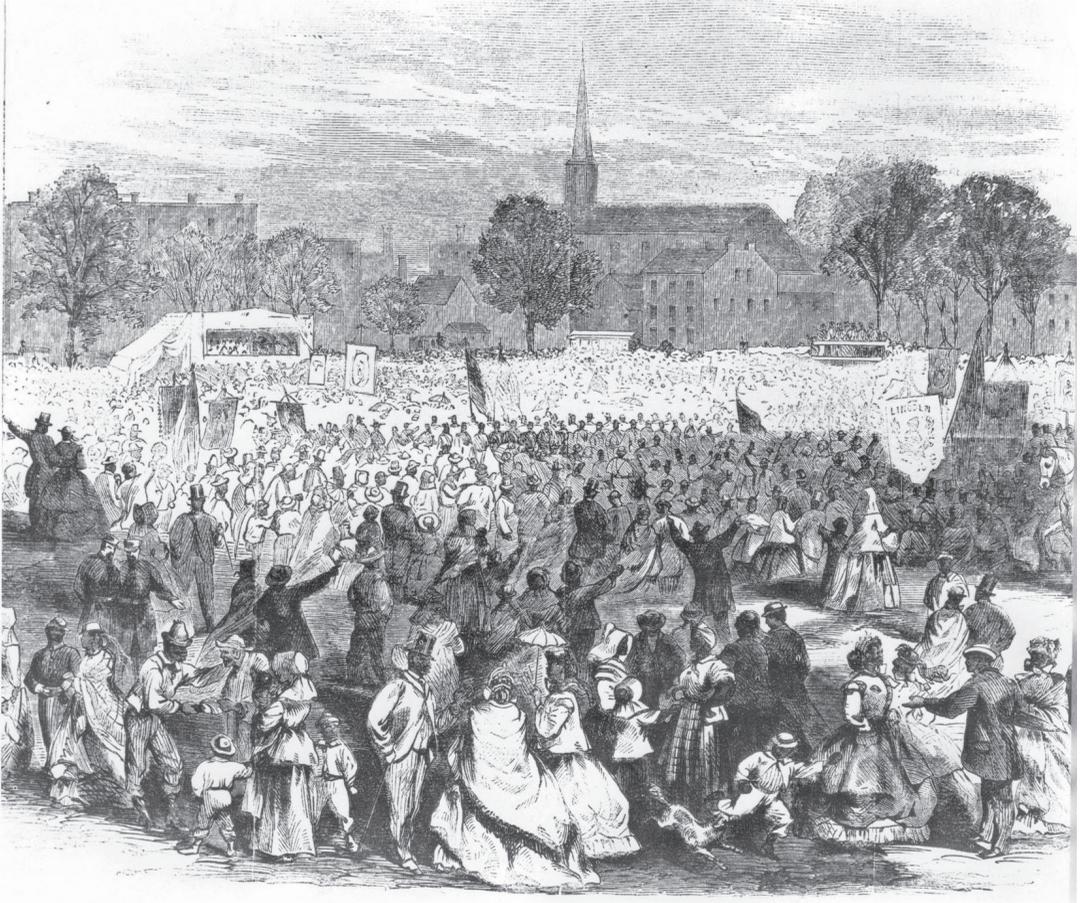
Lacking details, it is difficult to assess the elder Shepherd's motives in manumitting his slaves. Washington County followed a Maryland Act of 1796 by which any slave owner could manumit by last will and testament, either at his death or by a set term. Manumitted slaves had to be under forty-five years of age and able to work at commencement of their freedom. According to Letitia Woods Brown, "Slaveowners in the District who provided for the manumission of their slaves rarely expressed ideological justification for their acts. Neither did they evince any particular qualms over the use of slave labor."<sup>18</sup> Brown adds, "Manumission by will did not necessarily indicate clear-cut anti-slavery or pro-slavery sentiments on the part of the owner."<sup>19</sup>

If the elder Shepherd's death meant eventual freedom for his slaves, it meant hardship for his eldest son. The senior Shepherd's will, completed a month before his death, included a \$4,000 advance (\$114,000 in current dollars) for young Alexander for business upon reaching the age of twenty-one, but for reasons unknown the estate was mismanaged, and Alexander dropped out of school at thirteen to help support the family. The business acumen seen by his father was soon evident, and within a few years Alexander had not only joined but become a junior partner in the J. W. Thompson plumbing and gasfitting firm in Washington. He would become sole owner of the firm in 1865.<sup>20</sup>

In April 1861, after the Confederate at-

tack on Fort Sumter, President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to put down the rebellion. The twenty-six-year-old Shepherd and his younger brother Thomas answered the call, enlisting in a local militia unit, the National Rifles. The unit served with distinction in the opening days of the war, crossing to the Virginia side of Long Bridge with the first Union troops. Shepherd was a member of a militia detachment that went to Annapolis at the end of May and escorted the 8th New York and 7th Massachusetts regiments safely to Washington by train.<sup>21</sup> In June, before the end of his ninety-day enlistment, Shepherd entered the political arena for the first time and won a seat in the Washington Common Council as a candidate of the "Unconditional Union" slate.<sup>22</sup> Emphasizing union, rather than anti-slavery, Shepherd made loyalty oaths for District officials a staple of his early career on the Common Council.

**B**lack Washingtonians had different goals. The District attracted slaves escaping from plantations in Maryland and Virginia as well as elsewhere in the Confederacy; consequently, the number of escaped or "contraband" blacks in the District mounted steadily throughout the war. The black population, less than 20 percent of all inhabitants in 1860, grew dramatically by the war's end with blacks, now all freedmen, constituting 33 percent of the total population of 132,000.<sup>23</sup> Whereas most contrabands were illiterate, having served primarily as plantation field hands, the District's freedmen had already established a self-conscious community that sought education and commercial opportunity whenever opportunities presented themselves. As demands for goods and services skyrocketed during the war, a number of the city's black residents became prosperous businessmen and property owners.<sup>24</sup> Blacks also were represented in government clerkships and after its founding in 1867 had access to higher education at Howard University. After receiving the vote, they



*This image is entitled “Blacks Celebrate Emancipation.” Which occasion—the District’s emancipation law of April 1862, the issuance of President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation following the battle of Antietam in September, or its effective date of January 1, 1863—is unspecified. Courtesy of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library.*

sought to translate this material success into increased liberty.

Despite the presence of an elected local government, Congress retained constitutional authority to “exercise exclusive Legislation in all cases whatsoever” over the nation’s seat of government.<sup>25</sup> With the departure of southern congressmen at the outbreak of war, Republican members welcomed the opportunity to make the District of Columbia a testing ground for the type of social and political engineering they hoped to apply to the states of the Confederacy once they were subdued. Known as Radical Republicans, they some-

times proposed racial policies for the District that were still illegal or politically impossible in their home states. Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts was the most persistent congressional advocate not only for emancipating blacks in the nation’s capital but also for providing black children with educational opportunities equal to and integrated with the District’s white children. Even after being brutally caned on the Senate floor in 1856 by Congressman Preston Brooks of South Carolina for anti-slavery remarks, Sumner continued to introduce progressive legislation for black rights in Washington until his death in 1874.

The most dramatic early demonstration of Radical Republican political clout was the passage of a bill freeing all blacks in the District of Columbia as of April 16, 1862, eight months before President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. The new law, joyously welcomed by Washington's black residents, had been anticipated by many white Washingtonians with a mixture of dread and apprehension. Local politicians began to speak up in protest shortly after Senator Lot Morrill (R-Maine), Chairman of the Senate District Committee, introduced the bill in February. Historian Robert Harrison has observed that "no effort was made to seek the consent of local electors. Whether influenced by abolitionist pressure at home, an awareness of the new political conditions created by the war, or the demands of their own consciences, congressional Republicans took a step that not only initiated a wider legislative war against slavery but also marked a decisive change in the practical relationship between the national government and the capital city in which it sat."<sup>26</sup>

Shepherd was among the opponents. At the end of March, he joined a 14–4 Common Council majority in passing a joint resolution with the Board of Aldermen opposing the congressional emancipation bill.<sup>27</sup> That spring, Shepherd also weighed in on race questions during Common Council debates on at least two other occasions. In early March he recorded his first commentary on race, following resolutions by the Metropolitan Police Board requesting repeal of Washington and Georgetown black codes restricting the movements of blacks after 10:00 p.m. Shepherd introduced an unsuccessful amendment for review of the ordinances, noting that he "did not desire to stir up agitation on the subject, nor to offend any member of the Board." During discussion, Shepherd said that his resolution "did not anticipate repeal of the board but was intended to show respect for the police."<sup>28</sup> The intent of his amendment is not clear, but in proposing a review of police ordinances, Shepherd may

have been raising the question of whether the police had the authority to call for revision of the black codes, all of which were repealed later that spring.<sup>29</sup>

In April, during a council debate over another member's proposed addition of language specifying "white students" for an education bill, Shepherd observed that "he was in hope that the discussion on the negro question in this city was at an end," adding that he considered the subject a "hobby [horse]" that politicians ought not to "ride" in seeking office, and that he wished to see "agitation" on this subject ended.<sup>30</sup>

Shepherd's wish to bury the question of race may have reflected his own satisfaction with the status quo. He was not only re-elected to the Common Council in 1862, again on the Unconditional Union ticket, but was also elected its president. Still a young man of twenty-seven who had not completed secondary school, he was by then a partner in the plumbing firm of J. W. Thompson, his principal occupation and source of his growing wealth. In his inaugural address to the council, Shepherd took the high road, stressing the theme of unconditional support for the Union while counseling against "unnecessary agitation" and "divisions detrimental to the interests of the Metropolis we represent." After listing the most pressing local issues—schools, the fire department, drainage, and streets and highways—Shepherd added another theme that was to resonate through all his efforts on behalf of the city: "Let us in all things uphold our government and by our acts and discussions secure the aid of our national legislature in the great work of improving and beautifying our beloved city."<sup>31</sup>

In support of these themes, Shepherd had already made clear his strong view that property owners should be the voices heard most clearly in deciding the city's future. In this respect he did not distinguish between poor whites and poor blacks; he considered property-less people of any race unqualified to make

critical decisions about municipal funding and management. During an earlier debate about a proposal to require only a six-month residency for District voters, he objected on the grounds that it would be “unjust” to property-holders since “it would be abused by a class, such as teamsters, etc.,” who would take advantage of it “for whiskey and money.”<sup>32</sup>

Thus, within a year of his arrival on the scene as a political and business figure in the District of Columbia, Shepherd had put on the record themes that would be repeated again and again in his public life: a belief that men of property should dominate policy decisions; a commitment to building the District’s urban infrastructure; and a conviction that Congress must pay its fair share of the costs of maintaining the nation’s capital. On the race question, Shepherd had made clear his preference not to let it become a distraction and, if possible, to avoid it altogether. Since at this point Washington’s black residents had just been emancipated and did not have the vote, Shepherd did not dwell on that issue. Yet events were progressing, and before the war’s end he had not only pointed toward his vision of the future—a single-government structure for the District—but had also made clear that he saw no place in it for the black vote.

Shepherd’s principal goal was to make large-scale public works improvements in the nation’s capital. His years on the Common Council had persuaded him that this would require both federal assistance and an administratively unified District of Columbia.<sup>33</sup> Shortly after the inauguration of the 61st Washington City Council in June 1863 and his election to a third term on the Common Council, Shepherd unveiled a proposal for dramatic revision of the Washington City charter, so that the city could generate sufficient tax revenue to support aggressive public improvements.<sup>34</sup> Although his later championing of a restricted franchise was coupled with District of Columbia consolidation, achieving governmental efficiency was his dominant motivation.

Even as he sharpened his arguments in favor of public improvements for the District, Shepherd laid down a hard line opposing the black suffrage movement that had been gaining ground among Radical Republicans in Congress. He made one of his most unequivocal statements on the black vote in 1864, in response to reports that he supported a congressional bill to provide the franchise for adult male residents of the District, regardless of race. According to the press, Shepherd

was opposed to the principle of allowing negroes to vote, *in toto*. A certain class of people were now trying to force the negroes to sit in the [horse] cars, with white people, but he . . . was not quite up to that standard. This negro-equality question was now being forced upon the people by the red-mouthed abolitionists in the United States. He . . . could not favor it, and yet he considered that his unionism was of a high standard. He was in favor of the President’s proclamation to free the slaves, but he was not in favor of putting them on an equality with white men.<sup>35</sup>

Shepherd was committed to the Union cause, eager to use government to boost his native city, and willing to accept emancipation. But in keeping with his roots, Shepherd resisted racial equality.

With the end of the Civil War and the assassination of President Lincoln in April 1865, the United States struggled to establish a new equilibrium. Among the critical issues facing the nation were reintegration of the devastated former Confederacy into the national polity, and the future of millions of unskilled and vulnerable former slaves. Like the nation as a whole, the District of Columbia was reeling, with its inadequate streets churned into mud and dust by soldiers’ horses, its trees cut down for firewood, and former “secesh” resi-

dents straggling back to re-establish their lives in a hostile social environment. Blacks now made up one-third of the District's population. The stage had been set for the next act in the human drama.

Supported by Radical Republicans in Congress, black Washingtonians fought for the vote. More than 2,500 of the city's leading black residents petitioned Congress, arguing for political equality on the grounds that "we are intelligent enough to be industrious, to have accumulated property, to build and sustain churches and institutions of learning. . . . We are intelligent enough to be amenable to the same laws and punishable alike with others for the infraction of said laws. . . . Without the right of suffrage we are without protection and liable to combinations of outrage."<sup>36</sup> Partly in response to such pleas, the 39th Congress opened its first session in December 1865 with submission of bills in both houses to extend the franchise to all black male D.C. residents over the age of twenty-one.

White Washingtonians strenuously opposed the idea, and in a December 1865 plebiscite they voted resoundingly against it. In Washington City, whites voted 6,591 against and thirty-five in favor, while in Georgetown, the vote was 712 against, with only one in favor. Washington Mayor Richard Wallach complained that supporters of black voting rights had "little association, less sympathy, and no community of interest with the city of Washington," and described them as only temporary residents who "claim and invariably exercise the right of franchise elsewhere."<sup>37</sup> Such views outraged Radical Republicans in Congress. Rep. George Julian (R-Ind.) summarized the Radical perspective in a House speech. "The ballot should be given to the negroes as a matter of justice to them. It should also be done as a matter of retributive justice to the slaveholders and rebels. . . . That contempt for the negro and scorn of free industry which constituted the mainspring of the rebellion cropped out [in Washington] during the war in every form."<sup>38</sup>

Rather than argue directly against the black franchise, Shepherd sought to change the subject. Though no longer in elective politics, having lost his 1864 bid for a seat on the Board of Aldermen, he had gained prominence as a business and social leader in Washington. He now owned the former J. W. Thompson plumbing establishment, the largest in the city and the supplier to his extensive homebuilding operations. He was ready to take the next step toward local government consolidation, the starting point for a more efficient and manageable District of Columbia.

Shepherd's vehicle was the Washington Board of Trade, an organization whose birth he midwived in October 1865 with some twenty-one business firms and four dozen prominent businessmen. Shepherd's strategy at this point made no mention of the intended future form of a consolidated District government. With blacks still unable to vote, the question of leadership by appointed leaders or elected officials did not have immediate racial consequences. Class and politics did matter. As businessmen and loyal Republicans, members of the Board of Trade had the ear of Congress. Historian Kate Masur has argued that "as liberals, [the board] steered clear of racially inflammatory language and used the language of progress and prosperity to make their case against black voting rights and, more generally, against democratic government."<sup>39</sup> But it seems fairer to say that the board made no initial case for or against voting rights or democracy. Rather, its members just wanted a unified District.

Some board members thought even this was too much, that political change was not the job of a trade organization. But Shepherd defended the effort as "a business necessity" that "should not be mixed up in any degree with politics, negro suffrage, or anything else." He went on to add, "We have nothing to do with politics in this District, and they should never be dragged into matters of District interest."<sup>40</sup> Shepherd said he expected the "cry of politics"

to be raised “as is always so when something of benefit to the District of Columbia was proposed.” He insisted that consolidation was a “pure business” issue, “and if the municipalities were placed under one good man, and Congress [paid] the Government’s portion,” there would be positive results and reduced corruption. “As for political rights, we haven’t any, and are not as good as darkies. . . . All we can do is look to our business interests.”<sup>41</sup> He pointedly noted, “The city has few privileges, and Congress may at any time enact obnoxious laws, and it would therefore seem much better if Congress had entire control.”<sup>42</sup> With these assurances from its most forceful member, the board passed the resolution unanimously.

In December 1865, Lot Morrill, chairman of the Senate District Committee, introduced a bill calling for the District of Columbia to be governed by three presidentially appointed commissioners, thereby eliminating the franchise for all District voters, black and white. Given Shepherd’s familiarity with Congress, his ability to persuade, and his stated preference for a local government not encumbered with too much democracy, it is likely that he had a hand in the bill’s writing. With Congress divided, however, the bill did not move forward.<sup>43</sup>

Following their sweeping victory in the congressional elections of 1866, the Republicans at last achieved their goal of a veto-proof majority in both houses. That was critical, because Republicans expected President Andrew Johnson to veto Radical-supported legislation. In December, a bill extending the vote to all male inhabitants who had lived in the District for at least one year passed both houses after a short debate. As predicted, Johnson vetoed the measure in January 1867, and Congress easily overrode the veto.<sup>44</sup> Three years before the Fifteenth Amendment banned racial voting restrictions nationwide, Congress was eliminating them in the District.

Shepherd and his allies opposed the effort. In February 1867, the Board of Trade petitioned Congress to repeal the existing city charters and impose government by commissioner on the District of Columbia.<sup>45</sup> Shepherd demonstrated tactical flexibility with regard to his preferred form of restricted franchise for the District; e.g., in December 1867 he obtained agreement from the Levy Court of Washington County, on which he sat, to endorse a territorial form of government for the District.<sup>46</sup> (The standard “territorial” governing plan, familiar in the western U.S. territories, consisted of a governor appointed by the president, an elected legislature, and a non-voting delegate in Congress.)<sup>47</sup> In January 1868, Shepherd spelled out his personal preference for a no-franchise, commission form of government.

The taxpayers of this city did not want elections of any kind, and had not wanted them for 20 years. If the people trifled with these petty little elections, the city never would come to anything. . . . We want an honest Board of Commissioners and no broken-down political demagogues. . . . A board of Commissioners of men of the right stamp could do better than any elected officials. . . . in ten years the oldest inhabitants would hardly recognize the city.<sup>48</sup>

Shepherd denied that the intent behind the commission bill was the disfranchisement of blacks. Senator Morrill, he maintained, had proposed it long before, “when colored suffrage was not a matter in question.” Shepherd told his Board of Trade audience the same month that he had had a long conversation with Morrill the night before and that the Senator had welcomed input from District taxpayers.<sup>49</sup>

Despite his conservative instincts, Shepherd avoided becoming involved in the bitter struggle between Radical Republicans and President Johnson over the latter’s determina-



*“The Georgetown Election – the Negro at the Ballot-Box,” Harper’s Weekly, March 16, 1867. Courtesy of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library.*

tion to block equality before the law for freed slaves. Johnson, in so doing, fatally alienated moderate and conservative Republicans who might otherwise have supported him as successor to the martyred Lincoln.<sup>50</sup> LaWanda Cox has pointed out that, although not all Republicans agreed on black suffrage, they did come together in supporting equality of rights for blacks in other civil matters, thus moving what had been a “radical” position to “moderate” by 1866.<sup>51</sup> “The overwhelming preponderance of Republican sentiment was behind a national guarantee for basic civil equality, short of suffrage, for the freedmen,” she noted, a view with which Alexander Shepherd was no doubt comfortable.<sup>52</sup>

Shepherd’s political activism in the four years after he left the Common Council in 1864 suggests that he had changed his tactics, if not his

strategy, toward black aspirations. Earlier, he had repeatedly unburdened himself on black-white issues, opposing the black franchise and attempts to give blacks social or electoral equality with whites. His use of what we would today consider racist language (e.g., “darkies”), while not uncommon at the time, suggests an underlying disdain. But as the 1860s drew to an end and the District’s black citizens obtained the vote, Shepherd sidestepped the race issue in his political initiatives by promoting District of Columbia charter consolidation. with a restricted franchise in the name of government efficiency and economic prosperity. His public separation of the issue of consolidation and the black vote obscures his personal attitudes toward race. Many District residents, particularly wealthy “old inhabitants” in Georgetown, supported the Democratic Party and openly op-

posed black voting rights. By contrast, Shepherd abandoned explicit calls for black subordination, even as he championed policies that would eliminate suffrage.

But the arrival of black suffrage in Washington in 1867 put social and political change in the District of Columbia on the fast track. Washington's black residents were almost unanimously Republican, reflecting their commitment to the party of Lincoln and to the Radical Republicans who passed the black suffrage law for the District. Ward-level Republican clubs were at the heart of black political activism and gave voice to black concerns about education, civil rights, and jobs.<sup>53</sup> Robert Harrison estimates that in 1868 there were four black Republican voters for every white Republican voter in the city, and the ratio was still two-to-one in 1871.<sup>54</sup> Significantly, Shepherd appeared to make almost no attempt to woo these black Republican voters through the ward political clubs. Apparently, he took the black vote for granted.

The first racially integrated Washington municipal elections took place in June 1867, and the first integrated mayoral election in 1868. The victor of the latter contest, Sayles J. Bowen, called for individual rights (in the form of improved conditions for blacks) and economic progress (via physical improvements for Washington that would generate economic development). For Washington's black population, Bowen was the virtually unanimous choice, and they let him know that they expected a fair share of contract work in street-building and other trades.<sup>55</sup>

Born in upstate New York, Bowen had worked in Washington since 1845, starting as a clerk in the Treasury Department, where as a white radical he was fired for circulating tracts against the expansion of slavery. He campaigned for Republican candidates in the 1856 and 1860 elections and was rewarded by President Lincoln with a series of appointments, culminating in that of postmaster of Washington in 1863. He also served

alongside Shepherd on Washington County's Levy Court.<sup>56</sup> His long record in support of schools for black children as well as integrated schools, along with his appointment of blacks to responsible positions and extension of their rights to serve as witnesses and jurors in courts of law, made him a hero to the black community.<sup>57</sup> Bowen also enjoyed support from white Republican businessmen, and he needed every vote, having won the election with a margin of just eighty-three votes out of 18,257 cast.<sup>58</sup>

In his inaugural address, Bowen approached the question of integrated schools with caution, claiming that "the colored people are opposed to it," but he did make good on his promise to create public jobs, mainly grading and graveling thoroughfares, that would benefit blacks, many of whom depended on municipal employment for their livelihoods. Bowen also signed into law an ordinance requiring equal treatment of blacks in public places.<sup>59</sup> But white "improvers"—a term used by Alan Lessoff to describe boosters of Washington's development—were disappointed when Congress failed to provide funds. By the end of his term, Bowen's ambitious public-works program had produced the promised jobs but little real improvement in the District's streets and sewers. Without congressional assistance, Bowen deepened the city's debt by over a million dollars, a 76 percent increase.<sup>60</sup> Except for the pro-Radical *Chronicle*, the local press turned against him.<sup>61</sup>

Despairing of getting help from Congress so long as Bowen was mayor, Shepherd and his allies stepped up pressure for a consolidated District of Columbia, but instead of calling for government by commission, they now promoted a territorial government.<sup>62</sup> Shepherd justified the proposal for an appointed governor and upper house as necessary "to obtain the cooperation of the federal authorities. . . . The United States had so many interests [in the District] as to justly entitle it to representation in the local government." He claimed that

“individually, he favored the election of all officers by the people” but thought Congress wouldn’t stand for it.<sup>63</sup> In a major political address, Shepherd claimed that “90 percent” of Washington Republicans wanted change, and took a swipe at black political judgment. “I make this declaration for the reason that here the experiment of universal suffrage was first made, and that (unfortunately) Sayles J. Bowen was placed in his present position as a representative man, to demonstrate that our colored citizens were capable of choosing proper men as rulers.” Shepherd then contrasted the “wealth” of Bowen’s promises with the “poverty” of results.<sup>64</sup>

Not surprisingly, the black community and its supporters saw a threat to their hard-won right to vote. The white D.C. attorney, William Cook, charged that “nine-tenths” of the participants at one of the consolidators’ meetings—most definitely including Shepherd—were “sworn enemies of the Republican Party.”<sup>65</sup> In fact, that party was splitting. Its founders had envisaged an increase in liberty as well as pursuit of personal and national wealth, but District of Columbia politics seemed to be making the two goals antithetical.<sup>66</sup>

Pro-business Republicans, self-styled as Reform Republicans, swept their candidate, Matthew G. Emery, to a resounding mayoral victory in June 1870. “The great questions of universal freedom and universal suffrage have been settled by the voice of the nation,” Emery proclaimed in his inaugural speech to the city council. “It is our duty to see that, so far as our power extends, the national voice is obeyed and the Constitution enforced. Further than this, we feel that these questions no longer concern us, and we are glad to be permitted to dismiss them and turn our attention to matters of more immediate local interest.”<sup>67</sup> By this reckoning, racial equality had been attained. Now it was time to get down to the business of building the city.

If anything, Alexander Shepherd believed even more strongly that the District needed a

more effective form of government. After winning the 1870 election for alderman from the Third Ward, Shepherd also took the high road on race. He amended city council bills that granted payments to charitable institutions to insure that they would provide social services without regard to race or color. He also voted for a resolution in city council to create a single governing board for black and white schools.<sup>68</sup> Whether indicative of a new approach to the race question or only window-dressing, Shepherd’s actions were intended to signal that he had embraced a less divisive position on race. His oft-quoted letter to General Howard in February 1871 is the most obvious case in point, since he knew that its contents would be shared widely with leading black Washingtonians. By advocating support for a “unified” public school system, as well as underscoring his opposition to racial discrimination in any form, Shepherd established a public standard against which he must be prepared to be judged. His willingness to establish such a standard also suggests that he saw his way clear to his goal—control of the process of massive public improvements in the District of Columbia—and could afford to be generous in a matter of the greatest social sensitivity.

In January 1871, Shepherd finally got the government he wished for, when Congress established the Territory of the District of Columbia and consolidated the formerly separate jurisdictions of Washington City, Georgetown, and Washington County. For most of this period, Shepherd said and did little concerning racial equality, although Washington’s black community made a direct connection between territorial government and the weakening of hard-won black suffrage: “As [Territorial proponents] cannot withdraw it, they seek to diminish if not destroy, the opportunities for its exercise.”<sup>69</sup>

Territorial government at last gave Alexander Shepherd the basis he had sought to make a modern capital out of Washington. Having engineered the transition to a territory—but



*"Seventh Street, Northwest." [1882] Courtesy of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library.*

denied the post of governor—Shepherd obtained an even more powerful position: Executive Vice President of the Board of Public Works, which under the legislation creating the territorial government had a virtual monopoly over what improvements would be made as well as how they would be financed. Washington had never experienced anything like Shepherd's drive and determination. Though his opponents fought a rear-guard action to thwart or at least slow his program, his massive, three-year whirlwind of public works creation left the city deep in debt. By June 1874, after Shepherd had become governor following the resignation of his predecessor in September 1873, Congress had had

enough and cancelled Washington's territorial government in favor of presidentially chosen commissioners—ironically, the original form of governance for the District of Columbia.

By that time, the black community had shifted to grudging approval of Shepherd's accomplishments, particularly since the public improvements also brought jobs to blacks. An 1872 editorial in a black-owned newspaper noted that results have "satisfied us that [the Board of Public Works] have not only faithfully consulted the best interests of the city" but also produced results far more than their cost.<sup>70</sup> Although little occurred during the 1871–1874 period of Shepherd's dominance as a public and political figure to alter his earlier views on

race, several developments late in the territorial period shed additional light on these views.

One episode in particular suggests how the triumph of Reform Republicans failed black Washingtonians. Founded in 1865 by congressional charter, the Freedmen's Savings Bank was at once the fiscal repository for the funds of many of the most prudent blacks and a symbol of the nation's commitment to encouraging thrift and economy among its black citizenry. For a time it was also an institution that brought black and white Republicans together. Alexander Shepherd was never an officer or a trustee of the Freedmen's Bank, but several of his closest friends and associates, including Henry D. Cooke, Lewis Clephane, W. S. Huntington, and General Howard himself were or had been on the bank's finance committee.

Until 1870, the bank invested only in conservative instruments like U.S. Treasury notes, but a change in policy authorized the officers to invest up to 50 percent of the deposits in riskier ventures. Perhaps the bank's most disastrous investment was in the Northern Pacific Railroad, owned by Jay Cooke, brother of District Governor Henry D. Cooke. Jay Cooke's inability to market his railroad bonds triggered the national depression of 1873. The bank's loan committee, including Henry Cooke, advanced money to the railroad from Freedmen's Bank at sub-market rates, and bank officers also loaned money to each other and to their friends and encouraged others to do so. In 1873 the bank also accepted certificates (in lieu of cash) issued by Shepherd's Board of Public Works at a time when the District was bankrupt from the board's public improvements program. Hit hard by irresponsible loans to white enterprises, the bank collapsed in 1874.<sup>71</sup> Shepherd was never accused of being a party to the collapse or of having benefited from it personally, but for this symbol of black pride to have been, in effect, looted and destroyed by a group of white men—

most with close ties to Shepherd—reflects at minimum a lack of concern on his part.

The collapse of Freedman's bank revealed a cruel joke that had been played on Frederick Douglass, the distinguished black champion of rights and dignity for America's black citizens, who had accepted the presidency of Freedman's Bank in 1874, when its managers knew that it had been hollowed out and would soon collapse. Under other circumstances, Douglass's appointment would have been considered a fitting honor. As it was, however, Douglass had clearly been set up by the bank's white managers to take the blame for an outcome they had set in motion themselves.

One might conclude that Alexander Shepherd and Frederick Douglass had little in common, but when Shepherd left Washington in 1880 to repair his fortunes in Mexico, Douglass attended his farewell banquet and graciously thanked Shepherd "for the fair way in which he had treated the colored race when he was in a position to help them by his influence."<sup>72</sup> He stressed Shepherd's "honesty" and closed with the somewhat ambiguous comment: "You may rely upon it that time, the great righter of human wrongs, will yet right the wrongs of Alexander Shepherd."<sup>73</sup>

By that time in his life, Douglass had traveled a long road and had seen great change in the status of blacks in America. He had also garnered honors not previously given to blacks, including an appointment to U.S. Marshall for the District of Columbia in 1877. When Douglass relocated to Washington in the summer of 1870 and took over as resident editor (and half-owner) of the weekly newspaper he renamed the *New National Era*, the paper had already shifted from a sharply critical view of Shepherd and his District of Columbia consolidation plans to grudging acceptance, while opposing the possible loss of black suffrage and urging generous federal assistance to the District. With issuance of the Board of Public Works' annual report in the fall of 1872, Douglass acknowledged editorially, "We have



"Newspaper Row, Washington, D.C." Looking north on 14th Street toward F Street from Pennsylvania Ave., NW. Courtesy of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library.

given no fulsome support to the board (of Public Works), and indeed . . . we have been rather a silent observer of their action than their interested champion." Douglass maintained that now, however, "we think that [the] Board of Public Works deserve the earnest, active support of the city, and the earnest, active, practical support of Congress."<sup>74</sup> Douglass, who had come to regard the problems facing the District of Columbia as the result of congressional and local conservative opposition, became a stalwart defender of Shepherd and development of the city.

After the resignation of Governor Cooke in 1873, Shepherd was appointed to replace him, but by then the territorial government was under investigation for overspending. In 1874, Congress replaced it with an appointed commission, thus taking away Shepherd's job. It is ironic that the commission system that Shepherd had so long advocated was installed after his political demise.

In 1880, Shepherd left Washington hoping to recoup his lost fortune. After raising capital

in New York, he took charge of a silver-mining operation in the remote town of Batopilas, Chihuahua, in western Mexico, where he spent the last years of his life. He paid fair wages, established a system for workers' families to receive the wages before they could be squandered, and established schools and a hospital.<sup>75</sup> At the same time, though, Shepherd drew a bright line between the American employees and their families, and the Indians and Mexicans who worked for them. A granddaughter, born and raised at the *hacienda* (the mine's living area behind a high wall), recalled how her great-uncle Thomas Shepherd,<sup>76</sup> working as a silver convoy overseer, was banned from family social life for having taken a Mexican wife by whom he had two children.<sup>77</sup> Freed from the need to placate political opponents in Washington, Shepherd did try to help people of other races, but he did not consider them social equals.<sup>78</sup>

Shepherd's personality, unlike his bluntness when pursuing an agenda, was a mix of

contrasting elements. Despite bringing about the most dramatic changes in Washington since its creation, Shepherd was instinctively conservative and supportive of the established social order. But he was a self-made man, never accepted by Georgetown's conservative Democrats, who became his most bitter political opponents. Upwardly mobile, Shepherd used his fortune to speak for him in the absence of social credentials, but his inherent sense of social order and paternalism made him keenly aware of his place relative to those who would not accept him.

Scholars of American slavery identify the slaveholders' mindset as paternalistic. In the words of James Oakes, a paternalistic society is "a political order which is stable, hierarchical, indeed consciously elitist, and therefore fundamentally antithetical to liberalism. . . . A paternalist assumes an inherent inequality of men: some are born to rule, others to obey."<sup>79</sup> In both his Washington and Batopilas homes, Shepherd was a loving but authoritarian *pater familias* whose family, including three sons, made every effort to avoid their father's wrath.<sup>80</sup> In his politics, Shepherd was a paternalist as well. Despite his association with ambitious young capitalists, Shepherd's social instincts lay with the conservative society he was in the process of overturning.

Shepherd's views on race may not have changed significantly over time, but the context surrounding them did. Raised in a slave-owning home and descended from slaveholding southern Maryland tobacco farmers, Shepherd would naturally have seen blacks as dependent upon whites, not being allowed—or expecting to—make up their own minds. He came of age during Lincoln's revolutionary presidency and watched as the Republican Party emphasized the racial equality he dis-

trusted before moving back toward his own preference for economic development.<sup>81</sup> His suspicion of racial equality was hardly unique. Many Washington businessmen who supported Shepherd were Democrats and far less sympathetic to black hopes. Even in many northern and western states, a majority of whites voted against referenda for black suffrage.<sup>82</sup> In such a context, Shepherd did not have to be out of the mainstream to earn the condemnation of black leaders.

Yet racism was not the only motive behind Shepherd's opposition to black suffrage in Washington—he was not committed to suffrage for any race. In 1896, during a brief visit to Washington from Mexico, Shepherd argued that District residents had never deserved the vote. "The re-establishment of suffrage here is an impossibility, and a belief that it may be attained some time in the hereafter is an absurdity," he told a reporter. "The District of Columbia is really a big government reservation, and the people who come here take up their residence with the distinct understanding that the United States government is the controlling influence in the direction of its destiny."<sup>83</sup> A year earlier, on his way through Washington for a long visit to Europe with his wife, Shepherd had added a thinly disguised reference to black Washingtonians. "The difficulty with suffrage here is in the slum element. I do not mean that to insult the negroes, for there are many intelligent colored people in the capital, who are fully competent to have a voice in affairs, but in recent years there has grown up a large population who would dominate affairs if there were suffrage."<sup>84</sup> The man who so easily accepted the loss of self-government by his native city never understood what that loss meant to African Americans seeking freedom, equality, and full citizenship.

---

 NOTES
 

---

1. O. O. Howard to Shepherd, February 24, 1871, and response February 25, 1871, in O. O. Howard Papers, Bowdoin College Library, Brunswick, Maine.
2. Sayles J. Bowen to General O. O. Howard, February 25, 1871, and March 1, 1871, O. O. Howard Papers, Bowdoin College Library.
3. The Sayles J. Bowen Papers in the Library of Congress, while fragmentary, reveal a judgmental and unforgiving personality.
4. Howard Gillette, Jr., *Between Justice and Beauty: Race, Planning, and the Failure of Urban Policy in Washington, D.C.* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), passim.
5. Margaret Leech, *Reveille in Washington, 1860–1865* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1941), 9–10.
6. Alan Lessoff, *The Nation and Its City: Politics, "Corruption," and Progress in Washington, D.C., 1861–1902* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 18.
7. Bureau of the Census, "Recapitulation of the Tables of Population, Nativity, and Occupation," *The Eighth Census, 1860* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1864), 616–19.
8. Carl Abbott, *Political Terrain: Washington, D.C., from Tidewater Town to Global Metropolis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 64–65.
9. Constance McLaughlin Green, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 18.
10. Wilhelmus Bogart Bryan, *A History of the National Capital, Vol. II, 1815–1878* (New York: McMillan, 1914), 144–46.
11. *Ibid.*; Letitia Woods Brown, *Free Negroes in the District of Columbia, 1790–1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 13.
12. Estate of Thomas Shepherd, Accounts and Inventories, Thomas Shepherd, 1817, 312–14, and Townley Robey Inventory; Inventories 1844–1846, Charles County Courthouse, Charles County, Md.
13. 1840 Census Population Schedules, District of Columbia, Microfilm Roll #11, Microcopy T-5, p. 033, Martin Luther King Library, [Where? DC?]
14. Recorder of Deeds, Liber WB, folio #88/1841, Washington, D.C.
15. Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 21–23.
16. Manumission to Noah Biass, age 31; Shepherd, Alexander, Registration #2093 (March 1, 1843), Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C., Vol. 3, 471–72.
17. Last Will and Testament, Alexander Shepherd, Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C., 1845.
18. Brown, *Free Negroes in the District of Columbia*, 75–82.
19. *Ibid.*, 82–83.
20. Last Will and Testament of Alexander Shepherd, Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C., 1845; typescript in Library of Congress Alexander R. Shepherd Collection, most likely by his daughter, Grace S. Merchant; *Evening Star*, May 17, 1865.
21. "War History of the 'National Rifles' Company A, Third battalion, District of Columbia Volunteers, of 1861 (Wilmington, Del.: Ferris Brothers, 1887), 19–22, 26–31.
22. After the 1846 retrocession to Virginia of Alexandria County, the District of Columbia consisted of three separate jurisdictions: the City of Washington, the City of Georgetown, and Washington County (the area north of Florida Ave.). The City of Washington had an elected mayor and elected upper and lower legislative chambers. In 1871 the three regional jurisdictions were combined into the Territory of the District of Columbia, resembling the western territories. From 1874 to 1974 Con-

gress imposed a three-person commission government appointed by the president. Limited home rule commenced in 1974.

23. In Lessoff, *The Nation and Its City*, 18.

24. Green, *The Secret City*, 89–90.

25. U.S. Constitution, Article I, section 8.

26. Robert Harrison, “An Experimental Station for Lawmaking: Congress and the District of Columbia, 1862–1878,” *Civil War History*, 53 (March 2007), no page number (on-line version).

27. *Washington Star*, April 1, 1862; *National Republican*, April 1, 1862.

28. *Washington Star*, March 11, 1862.

29. Green, *The Secret City*, 60.

30. *National Republican*, April 29, 1862.

31. *Washington Star*, June 9, 1862.

32. *Ibid.*, April 18, 1862.

33. The legislation creating the District of Columbia established four separate jurisdictions: Washington City, Georgetown, Washington County, and Alexandria (Congress gave Alexandria back to the State of Virginia in 1846). The remaining three jurisdictions had separate government systems and funding mechanisms, effectively fragmenting local decision-making until consolidation under the Territorial Government of 1971–1874.

34. Journal of the 61st Council, 25; *Washington Star*, June 30, 1863.

35. *National Republican*, March 22, 1864.

36. U.S. Senate Records, 38th Congress, District Committee, in James Whyte, *The Uncivil War: Washington during the Reconstruction 1875–1868* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1958), 50.

37. William Tindall, “A Sketch of Mayor Sayles J. Bowen,” *Records of Columbia Historical Society*, 18 (1915): 33–35.

38. Quoted in Green, *The Secret City*, 1967, 299.

39. Kate Masur, “Reconstructing the Nation’s Capital: The Politics of Race and Citizenship in the District of Columbia, 1862–1878” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2001), 292–93.

40. *Washington Star*, November 23, 1865.

41. *Ibid.*, December 8, 1865.

42. *National Intelligencer*, December 7, 1865.

43. Whyte, *Uncivil War*, 52.

44. *Ibid.*, 54–56.

45. *Ibid.*, 61.

46. *Washington Star*, December 2, 1867. The Levy Court was the presidentially appointed “legislature” for Washington County, consisting of justices of the peace and based on an old Maryland law. See William Tindall, *Origin and Government of the District of Columbia* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907), 28.

47. “Ordinance of 1787: The Northwest Territorial Government,” Confederate Congress, July 13, 1787 (uscode.house.gov).

48. *Washington Star*, January 16, 1868.

49. *Ibid.*, January 18, 1868.

50. LaWanda Cox, “Civil Rights: The Issue of Reconstruction,” in *Freedom, Racism, and Reconstruction: Collected Writings of LaWanda Cox*, Donald G. Nieman, ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 99. See also Michael Les Benedict, *A Compromise of Principle: Congressional Republicans and Reconstruction, 1863–69* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), 69.

51. Cox, “Civil Rights,” 105.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

53. Robert Harrison, “Race, Radicalism, and Reconstruction: Grassroots Republican Politics in Washington, D.C., 1867–74,” *American Nineteenth Century History* (Great Britain), 3 (2002): 74.

54. *Ibid.*, 79.

55. *Washington Star*, February 4, 1867, in Bryan, *A History of the National Capital, Vol. II*, 562.

56. indall, “A Sketch of Mayor Sayles J. Bowen,” 26–27.

57. *Ibid.*, 28.

58. Lessoff, *The Nation and Its City*, 41.

59. Message of Mayor Bowen, Journal of 67th Council, 88–90, in Whyte, *Uncivil War*, 73–76.

60. Bryan, *A History of the National Capital*, 568.

61. Lessoff, *The Nation and Its City*, 42–43.

62. Allan B. Slauson, ed., *A History of the City of Washington: Its Men and Institutions* (Washington: The Washington Post, 1903), 66.

63. *Washington Star*, January 18, 1870.

64. *Ibid.*, May 25, 1870.

65. *Ibid.*, February 3, 1870.
66. Lessoff, *The Nation and Its City*, 42; Masur, "Reconstructing the Nation's Capital," 309.
67. *Washington Star*, June 13, 1870.
68. Shepherd voted for inserting such language in bills for Children's Hospital/St. John's Hospital for Children and St. Ann's Infant Orphan Asylum (68<sup>th</sup> Council Journal, Vol. II, 764–65; *National Republican*, April 24, 1871); 68<sup>th</sup> Council Journal, Vol. I, 506.
69. *National Era*, January 27, 1870.
70. *New National Era*, December 12, 1872.
71. This summary of Freedman's Bank affairs is drawn mainly from the excellent study by Carl R. Osthaus, *Freedmen, Philanthropy, and Fraud: A History of the Freedman's Savings Bank* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), esp. 138–235 and passim.
72. *Washington Evening Star*, May 1, 1880.
73. *Washington Post*, May 1, 1880.
74. *New National Era*, December 12, 1872.
75. David M. Pletcher, *Rails, Mines, and Progress Seven American Promoters in Mexico 1867–1911* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958), 202–5.
76. Analysis of the Civil War Disability Pension file of Thomas Shepherd in the National Archives (RG 15, Certificate #893,510) confirms that the man described by Alexander Shepherd's granddaughter as her great-uncle Thomas Shepherd was not Alexander Shepherd's brother Thomas. Though certainly an American and probably a relative of Alexander Shepherd, his exact identity cannot be determined. D.C. city directories show Alexander Shepherd's brother, Thomas M. Shepherd, residing in Washington through the 1880s and 1890s. Above all, the "Uncle Tom" in Mexico had lost an arm in the Civil War, while Alexander Shepherd's brother Thomas had both arms and claimed his Civil War pension on the grounds of a double hernia only. The identity of "Uncle Tom" in Mexico does not alter the family assessment of Alexander Shepherd's social views.
77. Mrs. Ludson Worsham (granddaughter of Governor Shepherd), conversation with the author, La Jolla, Calif., August 1987.
78. A book by John Mason Hart, *The Silver of the Sierra Madre: John Robinson, Boss Shepherd, and the People of the Canyons* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008), lumps Shepherd in with other leading American entrepreneurs in Mexico during the Porfirio Diaz regime in the last third of the nineteenth century and condemns all for a lack of cultural sensitivity.
79. James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), xi, 193, 194. Oakes credits Eugene Genovese's *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), 80, with identifying paternalism, which Oakes expanded.
80. See, for example, anecdotes in Grant Shepherd, *The Silver Magnet: 30 Years in a Mexican Silver Mine* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1938).
81. Michael Les Benedict, "Reform Republicans and the Retreat from Reconstruction," in *The Facts of Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of John Hope Franklin*, Eric Anderson and Alfred Moss, eds. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 74.
82. LaWanda Cox, "Negro Suffrage and Republican Politics: The Problem of Motivation in Reconstruction Historiography," in *Freedom, Racism, and Reconstruction*, 137.
83. *Washington Star*, April 25, 1896, in Gillette, *Between Justice and Beauty*, 68.
84. *Washington Post*, July 15, 1895.