

Redeemer Democrats ^[1]

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by Robert F. Durden, 2006

See also: [Bourbons](#) ^[2]



"N.53.15.544 Zebulon B. Vance (1830-1894)."

Photo courtesy of the North Carolina Division of Archives & History.

^[3] "Redeemer Democrats" was a self-imposed term used by nineteenth-century southern Democrats fond of talking about "redeeming" their states from the alleged "misrule and corruption" wrought by Republican carpetbaggers, [scalawags](#) ^[4], and their black allies who assumed control as Congressional Reconstruction began in 1867-68. The [Ku Klux Klan](#) ^[5] and similar domestic terrorist organizations played an important role in helping the Democrats reach their goal, which was done at different times between 1869 and 1877 in various southern states. Many Redeemer Democrats, or Redeemers, such as [Zebulon B. Vance](#) ^[6] of North Carolina and Wade Hampton of South Carolina, had been [Whigs](#) ^[7] before the Civil War. During [Reconstruction](#) ^[8], Democrats (temporarily also called "Conservatives") sought to bring as many voters as possible into "the white man's party." By the 1890s the Redeemers lost control of the southern Democratic Party, and more rabid racists, intent on disfranchising black voters, gained control of the party and of the governments of southern states.

Reference:

C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (repr., 1971).

Image Credit:

"N.53.15.544 Zebulon B. Vance (1830-1894)." Photo courtesy of the North Carolina Division of Archives & History. Available from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/north-carolina-state-archives/4289021398/> ^[9] (accessed May 4, 2012).

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[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[13]

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