



# The New South

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# Bourbon Triumvirate

# The Bourbon Triumvirate

Bourbon was the name of castle and territory in France as well as a line of French kings who ruled for over two hundred years.

Triumvirate refers to a ruling body of three.

- The Bourbon Triumvirate was a group of three politicians who dominated Georgia politics for over 20 years.
- These men, who had all been key figures during the Civil War, were leaders of the Democratic party in Georgia and rotated positions as governor and U.S. Senator from the 1870s to the 1890s.

# The Bourbon Triumvirate

Joseph E. Brown



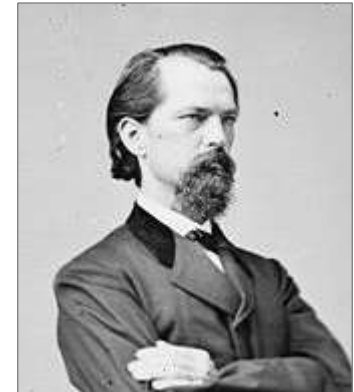
- Governor
  - 1857-1865
- U.S. Senator
  - 1880-1891

Alfred H.  
Colquitt



- Governor
  - 1877-1882
- U.S. Senator
  - 1883-1894

John B. Gordon



- Governor
  - 1886-1890
- U.S. Senator
  - 1891-1897

# The Bourbon Triumvirate

- Wanted stronger economic ties with the Industrial North in order to expand Georgia's economy
- Wanted to develop railroads and mining industry in Georgia
- Supported and took advantage of convict lease system
- Served interests of those men who were a part of the old antebellum planter class
- Wanted to keep old Southern traditions including white supremacy

# The Demise of the Bourbon Triumvirate

- The rise of the Farmers' Alliance to a position of strength within the Democratic Party in 1890, the rising influence of the popular U.S. representative Thomas Watson, and the passage of time essentially ended the era of the Bourbon Triumvirate.
- Brown and Colquitt both died in 1894, and Gordon retired from politics after completing his last term in the U.S. Senate in 1897.
- Never before and never since, however, has a trio of men collectively exercised such dominance over state politics.



Tom Watson

# Tom Watson and the Populists

- In 1891 the Populists were formed to represent agricultural interests.
- The populist political party claimed to represent the common people.
- Tom Watson was one of the most popular and controversial figures in Georgia history. He was a lawyer and a politician.
- In his early career, he fought for Georgia's poor and struggling farmers (sharecroppers and tenant farmers of both races).



# Political Career of Tom Watson

- He was elected to the Georgia General Assembly (1882), the U.S. House of Representatives (1890), and the U.S. Senate (1920).
- Nominated by the Populist Party as its vice presidential candidate in 1896.
- Ran for president as a Populist in 1904 and 1908.

# Tom Watson

- He supported the Farmer's Alliance and fought for...
  - Lower taxes on poor farmers
  - Better schools and roads
  - Regulation of railroads that charged farmers high rates to ship goods
  - Regulation of banks that charged farmers high interest rates on loans
- The Farmer's Alliance eventually became Populist Party.



# Tom Watson- RFD

- Most known for Rural Free Delivery Act- Required U.S. Postmaster to find a way to deliver mail to rural homes free of charge. Farm families would no longer need to travel to the nearest post office to get their mail.



Ed Jackson

A byproduct of RFD was the boom in the building of roads, bridges, and other improvements needed to deliver the mail to rural areas.

# Tom Watson

- Around 1904, Watson began to change his progressive views toward race and by the end of his career he was a avid white supremacists.
- He not only targeted African Americans but Catholics and Jews as well.
- He used his newspaper and magazine, *The Jeffersonian* to spread his political, social, and economic viewpoints throughout Georgia.
- He was out of political office for many years until 1920 when he was elected as one of Georgia's U.S. Senators. He died soon after.



Rebecca  
Latimer  
Felton

# Rebecca Latimer Felton

- Supported her husband's (William Felton) political causes.
- Used their family owned newspaper, The Cartersville Courant, to attack and promote their causes.
  - Battled the Bourbon Triumvirate (especially John B. Gordon) over what she called self-serving policies.
  - Fought to abolish Convict Lease System
  - Prohibition- legal act of prohibiting the manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcohol.
  - Most notable cause was Women's Suffrage (right to vote)
- Wrote a column for the Atlanta Journal

# Rebecca Latimer Felton

- After the death of Tom Watson, she was appointed to be the first female Senator in U.S. History. At age 87, she served 1 day. It was a symbolic gesture for her work for women's rights... to this day, she is the only Georgia woman to serve as a U.S. Senator.
- She was a white supremacist. Example- In her public speeches, she supported lynching "to protect" the white women of the South.

