

Ben Tillman and the Reconstruction of White Supremacy in Southern Politics

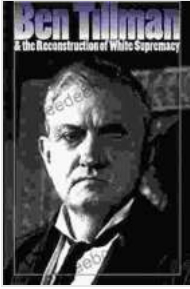


Ben Tillman was a prominent white supremacist and political figure in South Carolina during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He played a key role in the "Redemption" movement, which sought to restore white supremacy in the South after the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Ben Tillman and the Reconstruction of White Supremacy (Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies) by Stephen Kantrowitz

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
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Tillman's political career was characterized by his virulent racism and his use of violence and intimidation to suppress black voters. He was a leading advocate for disenfranchisement, segregation, and other forms of racial discrimination.

Early Life and Career

Ben Tillman was born on August 11, 1847, in Edgefield County, South Carolina. He was the son of a wealthy planter and grew up in a privileged environment.

Tillman attended the University of South Carolina but dropped out before graduating. He then served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. After the war, he returned to South Carolina and resumed his studies at the University of South Carolina, where he earned a law degree in 1868.

Tillman began his political career in 1877, when he was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives. He quickly gained a reputation as a fiery orator and a staunch defender of white supremacy.

The Redemption Movement

In the years after the Civil War, the South was a period of turmoil and upheaval. The federal government had imposed Reconstruction, which was an attempt to rebuild the South and protect the rights of freed slaves.

However, many white Southerners resented Reconstruction and sought to restore white supremacy. This movement, known as the "Redemption" movement, gained momentum in the late 1870s.

Ben Tillman was one of the leading figures in the Redemption movement in South Carolina. He was a vocal opponent of Reconstruction and advocated for the overthrow of black rule.

In 1878, Tillman was elected to the United States House of Representatives. He served in the House for six terms and was one of the most outspoken white supremacists in Congress.

White Supremacy and Violence

Throughout his political career, Tillman used violence and intimidation to suppress black voters and maintain white supremacy. He was a member of the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist organizations.

In 1890, Tillman was elected governor of South Carolina. During his governorship, he presided over a period of violence and racial terror. Black voters were disenfranchised, and black churches and businesses were burned down.

Tillman's policies were instrumental in establishing a system of white supremacy in South Carolina that lasted for decades. He was a key figure in the rise of Jim Crow laws and the segregation of Southern society.

Legacy

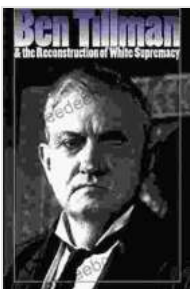
Ben Tillman died in 1917 at the age of 69. He is remembered as one of the most notorious white supremacists in American history. His legacy is one of racism, violence, and oppression.

However, Tillman's legacy is also one of resistance and struggle. His policies galvanized black communities and led to the rise of the civil rights movement.

Tillman's life is a reminder of the dark period of American history when white supremacy was the law of the land. It is also a reminder of the resilience and determination of those who fought against racism and oppression.

Ben Tillman was a complex and controversial figure. He was a brilliant orator and a skilled politician. But he was also a ruthless white supremacist who used violence and intimidation to maintain his power.

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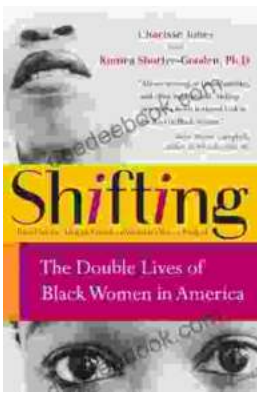
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