been influenced by the intolerance of the Southern states." Within the historical profession, Taylor's work received limited attention. In a review for the *American Historical Review,* Carl Russell Fish favored the idea of studying Reconstruction from the point of view of African Americans, but criticized Taylor for being too critical of earlier histories of Reconstruction. White southern historians were less charitable. From the University of South Carolina, Yates Snowden later summarized writing on Reconstruction in South Carolina, adding to his correspondent, "I have not mentioned H. A. Taylor's [*sic*] book on 'The Negro in S.C. during Rec.,' pub'd by the A.S.N.L.H. for it is hardly worth considering."[11]

The first challenge to the Dunning school from white scholars came from two young historians from the Carolinas, Francis B. Simkins and Robert H. Woody. Simkins was born into an old Edgefield family in 1897, graduating from the University of South Carolina just in time to serve in World War I. He completed his M.A. and Ph.D. in history at Columbia University. In 1926 he began teaching at Emory University, and it was here that he met a promising undergraduate, Robert H. Woody. Born in western North Carolina and raised in Kentucky, Woody had arrived at Emory in 1923. Woody was in one of Simkins's classes, and in 1926 Simkins asked Woody to join him in writing a history of Reconstruction in South Carolina. The two spent the summers of 1927 and 1928 researching the book, and Woody used the topic for both his master's thesis and dissertation at Duke University. Woody wrote the chapters on economic and political matters, and Simkins worked on the first years of Reconstruction. In summer 1930 they put the book together and submitted it to the University of North Carolina Press. The readers' reports, coming primarily from South Carolina academicians, were favorable, claiming that the book "contain[ed] much that is new, much that has been neglected and . . . replac[ed] erroneous conceptions along certain lines, with truth." Even the curmudgeonly Yates Snowden expressed his approval, notwithstanding the fact that "some of his [Simkins's] conclusions [about African Americans] would meet with the warm approval of [NAACP cofounder] Oswald Garrison Villard!" The book was published in March 1932 and won the American Historical Association's John H. Dunning Prize.[12]

South Carolina during Reconstruction was a different sort of history of Reconstruction in several important ways. The authors signaled their break with the traditions of the Dunning school early in the preface, saying they would "forego the temptation of following in the footsteps of historians who have interpreted the period as only a glamorous but tragic melodrama of political intrigue." Simkins and Woody's portrayal of Af-

rican Americans during Reconstruction, while not as sympathetic as in the work of Du Bois or Taylor, was a great step forward compared to earlier histories of Reconstruction written by whites. They criticized rather than justified the Black Code. Where other authors highlighted the threat newly emancipated slaves posed to whites, Simkins and Woody argued that African Americans did not really seek social equality and thus were no threat to whites. The authors were not hesitant to give African Americans credit for significant progress in both religion and education. "The positive contributions of Reconstruction to the permanent life of the state were considerable," they pointed out. The final chapter ended by reassessing the standard interpretation of Reconstruction in South Carolina, point by point. Writers, argued Simkins and Woody, "have painted in deep colors the horrors of the political events of the period, but have given little attention to important economic and social changes. . . . The result is that the white people have come to believe that the horrors and humiliations of Reconstruction were greater than those of the Civil War."[13]

As significant as the content of *South Carolina during Reconstruction* was its methodological innovation, a story told in the footnotes. Earlier histories of Reconstruction had made little use of sources or secondary works by African Americans or northern whites allied to them, but Simkins and Woody "were simply trying to study the material and write what [they] learned." They drew on primary sources, such as memoirs by carpetbaggers, speeches by black and white Republicans, and accounts by northern missionaries, which earlier historians would never have considered worthwhile, since they came from individuals who did not share the belief in black inferiority that underlay Dunning-school histories. Simkins and Woody were familiar with the pioneering work of black historians, including George Washington Williams, Frances Rollin Whipper, Carter G. Woodson, Benjamin Brawley, A. A. Taylor, and Luther P. Jackson.[14]

In the closing pages of their book, Simkins and Woody took a final swing at the legendary campaign of 1876. The mythology of 1876 in South Carolina held that a long-suffering white population finally rose up spontaneously under the almost biblical leadership of Wade Hampton, throwing off the yoke of foreign oppression. The two young historians offered a subtly different view: the campaign had been based on a coolly measured plan, centrally coordinated and controlled, rather than on a pure people's war, as the stories had it. They made this argument simply by reproducing Martin W. Gary's "plan of the campaign of 1876," a strategy document produced early in the campaign that still is shocking in its brutality and frank dismissal of even the formalities of the democratic process. The docu-

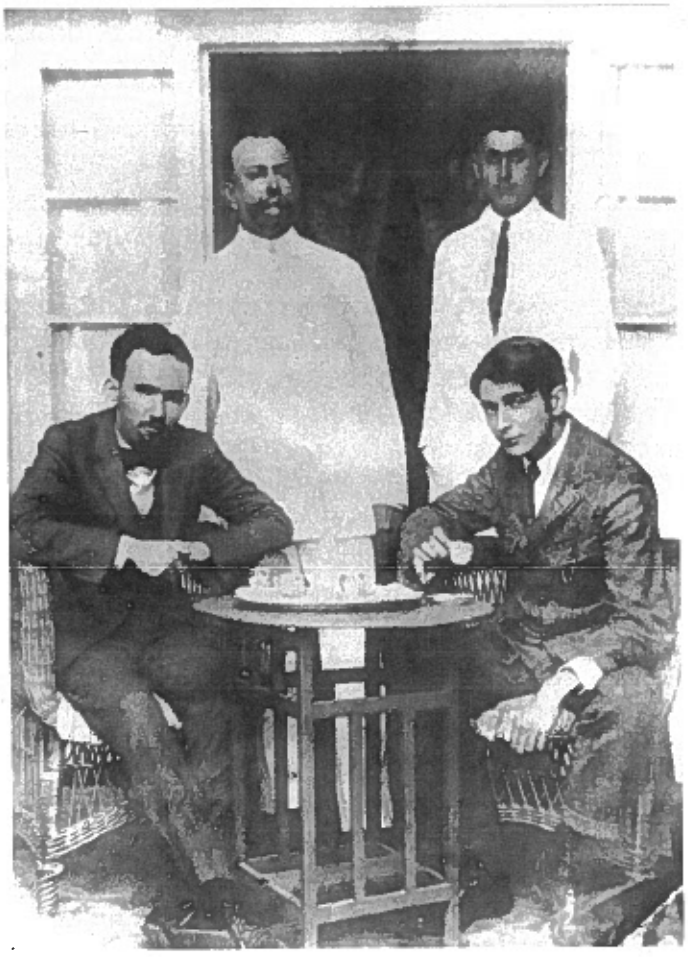
ment was "copied from the original in the possession of Mr. F. B. Gary of Columbia, South Carolina, and is given to us through the courtesy of Mr. Gary and the Hon. John Gary Evans, Spartanburg, South Carolina." Gary's plan was as detailed as any he had made for a military campaign as a Confederate general. In addition to providing instructions for county leaders, it told white Democrats to "feel honor bound to control the vote of at least one negro, by intimidation, purchase, keeping him away or as each individual may determine, how he may best accomplish it."[15]

Some reviewers recognized that *South Carolina during Reconstruction* was a different type of Reconstruction history, the beginning of a revision of the conclusions reached by the Dunning school. As Guion Griffis Johnson put it, "Unlike most students of the Reconstruction period, they have not found it totally bad." "Though written by two Southerners," commented another reviewer, "it is notably free from partisanship, from bitterness and even from that nostalgia which has so often been the refuge of Southern historians." Not only had Simkins and Woody presented an account that reevaluated the political aspects of Reconstruction, they had expanded the scope of their study to include the economic and social realms as well. Historian Howard K. Beale praised the book as "a model for rewriting Reconstruction history," yet scored it for not going further: "The book reveals an underlying philosophy of the propertied white," and "Nowhere is the possibility of social equality for cultivated Negroes seriously entertained."[16]

Southern readers mostly refused to believe that Simkins and Woody had changed the terms of debate on the history of Reconstruction. In an article announcing the publication of *South Carolina during Reconstruction*, for instance, Simkins's Edgefield friend Hortense Woodson played up the authors' connections to Edgefield, South Carolina, and the South, but played down the controversial elements of their history. Her synopsis reads much like any standard Dunning school account, though tucked away in a later paragraph is the warning that "the treatment of men and measures is calculated to arouse comment and perhaps enthusiastic approval or disapproval." Reviews in Raleigh and Richmond newspapers did more than tone down Simkins and Woody's new ideas. They assimilated this new work into the traditional white supremacist narrative of Reconstruction without missing a beat. This story was so entrenched that it would take something much more powerful than the first tentative stirrings of academic revisionism to dislodge it. Deeply held racist beliefs reinforced the white supremacist narrative of Reconstruction, and the white supremacist narrative of Reconstruction in turn validated those racist beliefs. It was almost a closed system.[17]

But white southerners could fly by the nets of the views of Reconstruction they grew up with, as an examination of the roots of Simkins and Woody's revisionism reveals. Certainly, nothing in Simkins's background suggested that he would begin to challenge the white supremacist view of Reconstruction. He recalled: "During my childhood here at Edgefield, the family history was preserved in a few relics, in the tales of the elders, and in a fat scrapbook . . . filled with Victorian fustian gathered from the reminiscences with which the fifty-odd newspapers of South Carolina were loaded during the fifty years following the fall of the Confederacy. A thousand other such families in the state possessed similar books. But such critical disillusionment never entered my mind until, as a young man, I had the experience of being contaminated by the skepticism of Columbia University." Woody explained in later years: "We were simply trying to study the material and write what we learned. . . . I don't think we were consciously looked on ourselves as revisionists, only trying to tell the full story. The fact is that I had never read much of Reconstruction in other states and I doubt if Simkins had. We were probably neither for nor against the Dunning school, just ignorant."[18]

The general intellectual tumult produced by World War I undoubtedly fed into Simkins's willingness to question the version of Reconstruction history he had grown up with and upon which the nation's leading historians agreed, but Simkins's experience at Columbia University was also critical. In the anthropology department, Franz Boas was dismantling theories of scientific racism that were the intellectual underpinning of the world of segregation in which Simkins had grown up. Historian Frank Tannenbaum was writing *The Darker Phases of the South,* indicting the region for such anachronisms as child labor and the chain gang. After Simkins left Columbia, one of his teachers from the University of South Carolina observed that he was "self assertive; has a passion for novelty, and in his desire to free himself from parochialism and 'Southern prejudices' he sometimes, especially in his studies of the negro, 'out-Herods Herod.'" The first part of Simkins's graduate career saw him torn between studying Latin American history with William R. Shepherd and studying the place he knew so well, South Carolina. In 1921 he contributed a two-part article to the *South Atlantic Quarterly* titled "Race Legislation in South Carolina since 1865" (his M.A. thesis), and then followed with a two-part article titled "The Election of 1876 in South Carolina." Simkins turned his energies toward Latin American history next, publishing "Latin-American Opinion of Pan-Americanism" in 1923. The next year Simkins published a biographical sketch of a nineteenth-century Venezuelan leader.[19]



Francis Butler Simkins (left) and Gilberto Freyre (right), taken during Simkins's visit to Freyre's home in Brazil, summer 1924. (Courtesy of Chip Simkins).

A more profound influence on Simkins was his friendship with Gilberto Freyre. This young Brazilian had come to Columbia to study history, and his M.A. thesis, "Social Life in Brazil in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century," introduced a new way of looking at the Brazilian past. Freyre's portrayal of slaves, while patronizing and inaccurate by modern standards, nonetheless did not blame them for the nation's backwardness. He also argued that since the Portuguese had been dominated by the dark-skinned Moors, they did not harbor so strong a prejudice against Africans as North Americans did. Simkins read Freyre's thesis and was "drawn . . . to Brazil, to the Brazilian past, to the mystery of Brazil." In the summer of

1924, Simkins visited Freyre in Brazil to see the country firsthand. When Simkins returned to the United States to take up a teaching position at Randolph-Macon Woman's College in fall 1924, he turned his attention away from Latin America and back to the American South, writing a dissertation on the Tillman movement in South Carolina, which he dedicated to Freyre, "a foreign friend who taught me to appreciate the past of my native state." Freyre's ideas had "revolutionized his approach to the history of his own country," and the result would be seen most clearly in Simkins's study of Reconstruction a few years later. It was southern history, but it incorporated new ideas on race emerging not only from the North, but from south of the South as well.[20]

Simkins's liberalized thinking on race led him to attempt early in his career to bring Negro history to the attention of white historians and the lay public as well. In April 1924 Simkins reviewed Carter G. Woodson's *The Negro in Our History* in the *Columbia State*. "I have long since come to the conclusion," wrote Simkins, "that we as Southerners are too ignorant of the life and achievements of our black citizens, although we often take pride in our alleged knowledge. We know little beyond the everyday achievements of the negro and almost nothing of his inner feelings." Sending Woodson a clipping of the review by way of introduction, the young historian explained, "My object has been to place before a group which knows little of the negro, the white South, a book which I regard as worthy." A few weeks later, just before leaving for Brazil to visit Freyre, Simkins had a conversation with Woodson in Washington, and he hoped he might secure a position as the ASNLH's "agent for research work in the South," a prospect he relished more than teaching. While Simkins's early relationship with Woodson did not result in such an appointment, it established a connection that would prove significant to Simkins's future work and the historiography of Reconstruction.[21]

Rather than a steady rapprochement between white historians and the ASNLH, the next major advance in shaping a black radical historiography of Reconstruction would come through stark intellectual conflict. When Claude G. Bowers published *The Tragic Era* in 1929, the white public heralded it as a masterpiece, but for African Americans, Bowers's book was a "lynching in prose," threatening to increase intolerance and racial animosity at a point when African Americans were gaining a foothold outside the South and building political power and cultural credibility. African America leaders called on their intellectual champion, W. E. B. Du Bois, to revisit his earlier scholarship on Reconstruction and challenge Bowers's misrepresentations. To write a history of Reconstruction, Du Bois sought