

Grant, Greeley, and the Popular Press: The Presidential Election of 1872

✱ THE PROBLEM ✱

By 1872, it appeared that Reconstruction was in serious trouble. Although Congress had increased the powers of military governors in the states of the former Confederacy, many southern whites remained fiercely unrepentant and resisted—sometimes violently—efforts to grant citizenship and voting rights to former slaves. For the most part African Americans remained landless and uneducated, making them highly vulnerable to white landowners and unscrupulous election officials. More serious, among northern white voters the zeal for reconstructing the South was beginning to wane, as new issues and concerns, such as government corruption, civil service reform, continued westward expansion and conflict with Native Americans, currency inflation, and the

rise of industry, vied with one another for people's attention.

In May 1872, a group of disillusioned men broke with the Grant administration and the Republican party and held their own convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. Calling themselves Liberal Republicans, they formally nominated the widely known and controversial New York *Tribune* editor Horace Greeley as the party's presidential candidate and Missouri Governor B. Gratz Brown as his running mate. In a letter accepting the convention's nomination, Greeley called for an end to the failed experiment of Reconstruction, asserting that he had "the confident trust that the masses of our countrymen North and South are eager to clasp hands across the bloody chasm which has too long divided

them. . . ."¹ Hoping to turn the Grant administration out of office, the Democrats also nominated Greeley and Brown.

What began as a contest over opposing philosophies and stands on issues such as Reconstruction, however, soon turned into one of the most vicious and personal presidential campaigns in American history. To be sure, some previous presidential contests had been ugly affairs as well (especially those of 1800 and 1828), but the campaign of 1872 seemed to descend to a new low in political vituperation and smear tactics. By November 1872, no office seeker was left unscathed.²

Although no one who participated in the 1872 presidential race escaped blame, two people in particular were among the most responsible: Thomas Nast and Matthew Somerville (Matt) Morgan. Nast (1840–1902) was the chief political cartoonist for the popular *Harper's Weekly*, while Morgan (1839–1890) was Nast's opposite on the rival *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. Two of the most talented illustrators of their time, Nast and

Morgan were in large part responsible for their respective weekly publications reaching circulations of 100,000 by 1872, the year that both men were at the zeniths of their power and influence.

Your tasks in this chapter are to analyze the political cartoons of both Thomas Nast and Matt Morgan, and then, using those cartoons, to answer the following questions:

1. How did each side attempt to portray the other? the respective presidential candidates (Grant and Greeley)?
2. What were the principal issues the cartoons attempted to address? Which issues did they *not* address or avoid addressing?
3. How did each side attempt to deal with Reconstruction in the presidential election of 1872?

For those who maintain that recent presidential contests have reached a new level of personal attacks and general nastiness, the 1872 election is a much-needed corrective.

1. For Greeley's acceptance letter see William Gillette, "Election of 1872," in Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., ed., *History of American Presidential Elections* (New York: Chelsea House, 1971), Vol. II, p. 1359.

2. An excellent book on the earliest "nasty" election is Bernard A. Weisberger's *America Afire: Jefferson, Adams, and the Revolutionary Election of 1800* (New York: William Morrow, 2000).

✻ BACKGROUND ✻

Although Radical Republicans³ outdid each other in oratorical eulogies to Abraham Lincoln, secretly they were not altogether displeased by the death of the president. Not only could the Radical Republicans then use Lincoln as a martyr for their own cause, but also they had reason to believe that Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson of Tennessee, would be more sympathetic to their plans than the late president had been. After all, Johnson had been a harsh military governor of Tennessee (1862-1864) who had said many times that treason "must be made odious, and the traitors must be punished and impoverished."⁴

Yet it did not take Radical Republicans long to realize that President Andrew Johnson was not one of them. Although he had spoken harshly, he pardoned around 13,000 former Confederates, who quickly captured control of southern state governments and congressional delegations. Many northerners were shocked to see former Confederate officers and officials, and even former Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens, returned to Washington. At the same time, the new southern state legislatures passed a series of laws, known collectively as black codes, that so se-

verely restricted the rights of former slaves that they were all but slaves again. Moreover, Johnson privately told southerners that he opposed the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, intended to confer full civil rights on the newly freed slaves. When Radical Republicans in Congress attempted to enact harsher measures, Johnson vetoed them and, simultaneously, appeared to do little to combat the widespread defiance of white southerners, including insulting federal troops, desecrating the American flag, and participating in organized resistance groups such as the Ku Klux Klan.

The congressional elections of 1866 gave Radical Republicans enough seats in Congress to override Johnson's vetoes. Beginning in March 1867, Congress passed a series of Reconstruction acts that divided the South into five military districts, to be ruled by military commanders under martial law. Southern states had to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment and institute African American suffrage before being allowed to take their formal places in the Union. The Freedmen's Bureau, founded in 1865, was given additional federal support to set up schools and hospitals for African Americans, negotiate labor contracts, and, with military assistance, monitor elections. When President Johnson attempted to block these acts and purposely violated the Tenure of Office Act and the Command of the Army Act (both of which were Radical Republican measures passed over his vetoes),

3. The Radical Republicans were the left wing of the Republican party. They favored the abolition of slavery, a harsher policy against the defeated South, and full equality for African Americans.

4. See his remarks on the fall of Richmond, April 3, 1865, in LeRoy P. Graf, ed., *The Papers of Andrew Johnson* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986), Vol. VII, p. 545.

he was impeached by Congress in 1868, but fell one vote short of the two-thirds required to remove him.

With the impotent Johnson left to serve out the final months of his term, Radical Republicans picked the popular war hero General Ulysses Grant as the Republican party's 1868 presidential nominee. Although it was not widely known at the time, Grant had harbored presidential ambitions as early as 1863. At war's end, he set out on a series of national tours on which he attended celebrations in his honor, received honorary degrees, delivered carefully written noncontroversial speeches, and attended funerals of his comrades. A far more wily politician than he was credited with being, Grant simultaneously stayed on good terms with Andrew Johnson while privately cultivating the president's enemies. Only in early 1868 did Johnson fully realize what Grant was doing. In a conversation with Gideon Welles, Welles told Johnson that "Grant is going over." Ruefully, Johnson replied, "Yes." The open break came in January of 1868.⁵ After Grant won the 1868 presidential race in a very close vote (versus the Democratic governor of New York, Horatio Seymour), Johnson bitterly refused to attend the new president's inauguration.

The political skills that helped Grant reach the presidency seemed to abandon him once he got there. A series of scandals rocked the administration, two of the most prominent occurring before 1872 and involving the

5. See William S. McFeely, *Grant: A Biography* (New York: Norton, 1981), p. 263. Gideon Welles (1802-1878) was U.S. Secretary of the Navy, 1861-1869.

president's brother-in-law in a scheme to corner the gold market and his vice president Schuyler Colfax who, along with some Republican congressmen, was linked to a fraudulent construction company (the Credit Mobilier) designed to skim off government funds appropriated for the Union Pacific Railroad (Colfax was dropped from the Republican ticket in 1872). In addition, the Grant administration increased tariff rates in 1870 (thus driving up the prices for certain goods), reinstated paper money in 1871 (to inflate the currency), opposed civil service reform, and advocated what one historian called a "farcical plan" to annex the Dominican Republic. As one disillusioned Republican said of Grant, the "rascals . . . know they can twist him around their thumb by flattering him."⁶ Reconstruction in the South seemed as if it would never end.

By early 1872, a diverse group of editors, professional men, businessmen, disappointed office seekers, upper-class intellectuals, and reform-minded Republicans was determined to overthrow the Grant administration. Calling themselves Liberal Republicans, they gathered in Cincinnati in May 1872 to establish a new political party to oust the "stalwart" Republicans.

Deciding who would be the standard bearer of such a disparate conglomeration was no easy matter. U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase was available and eager, but he had been a perennial candidate who, it was felt, could never beat Grant. Venerable Senator Charles Sumner of Mas-

6. Gillette, "Election of 1872," pp. 1303, 1307.

CHAPTER 11

GRANT, GREELEY,
AND THE POPULAR
PRESS: THE
PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION OF 1872

sachusetts was in poor health and former Minister to Great Britain Charles Francis Adams (son of former President John Quincy Adams) was considered a poor campaigner and too aristocratic (he had opposed universal suffrage). Senator Carl Schurz of Missouri was one of the original founders of the Liberal Republicans, but he was ineligible because of his foreign birth (Germany). Missouri Governor B. Gratz Brown was widely known to be a heavy drinker, and U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice David Davis had written some court decisions that were unpopular. Finally, on the sixth ballot, the Cincinnati convention nominated New York *Tribune* editor Horace Greeley.

Horace Greeley had made no secret of the fact that he yearned to be the Liberal Republicans' presidential candidate. Born into a poor New Hampshire family in 1811, Greeley was considered a child prodigy in the tiny community of Amherst. But the family was evicted from its farm when Horace was nine years old, and he was unable to attend school past the age of thirteen. Apprenticed to a printer, he worked his way up from apprentice to journeyman to printer and finally to editor of a number of newspapers, most of which folded for lack of readers. In 1841, his fortune turned, as he became editor of the New York *Tribune* and built that paper into one of the largest and most influential in the nation. Greeley knew great talent when he saw it, employing at various times Charles Dana, Margaret Fuller, and George Ripley. Authors whose work was accepted for inclusion in the *Tribune* included Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Walt Whit-

man (first published in the *Tribune*), and Karl Marx (on the revolutions of 1848). A three-month term in the U.S. House of Representatives (filling out the term of a congressman removed from office) was the only office Greeley had held previously, although he had sought a seat in the U.S. Senate and the governorship of New York.

The Greeley candidacy had several liabilities. To begin with, over the years Greeley's editorials in the *Tribune* had made him many enemies. As early as 1853, he had confessed to William Seward that a man "says so many things in the course of thirty years that may be quoted against him. . . ."⁷ In addition, in his years at the *Tribune*, Greeley had advocated a number of causes, including prohibition (his father almost certainly was an alcoholic), vegetarianism, changing the name of the United States to Columbia, opposing women's corsets, and other ideas that made him appear to some people as an eccentric. Finally, Greeley was on record as criticizing the Democratic party, whose support he certainly would need to overthrow Grant, and being at odds with key provisions of his own party's platform. Hearing of Greeley's nomination, one politician exclaimed, "Six weeks ago I did not suppose that any considerable number of men, outside of a Lunatic Asylum, would nominate Greeley for President."⁸

No sooner had the Liberal Republicans' Cincinnati convention concluded than the nation's newspapers and

7. Glyndon G. Van Deusen, *Horace Greeley, Nineteenth-Century Crusader* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953), p. 414.

8. Gillette, "Election of 1872," p. 1316.

newsmagazines began to take aim at one presidential candidate or the other. By 1872, the illustrated weekly newspaper or newsmagazine was the most influential medium in the United States, and the editorial cartoonists or illustrators were the crown princes of that medium.

The first successful illustrated weekly newspaper in the United States was *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, whose first issue was published on December 15, 1855. The newspaper's founder, whose real name was Henry Carter, was born near London, England, in 1821. According to legend, Carter signed his illustrations with the pseudonym "Frank Leslie" so that his disapproving father would not discover that he had taken up a career in illustration. Immigrating to the United States in 1848 in search of more economic opportunity, Frank Leslie (as he now called himself) made a fortune publishing *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and other papers and magazines. At one time employing over a hundred artists, engravers, and printers, Leslie set the standards for illustrated newspapers and magazines that others followed. He brought in illustrator-cartoonist Matt Morgan from Great Britain specifically for the paper's coverage of the 1872 election.

Harper's Weekly was the brainchild of Fletcher Harper, one of four brothers who founded and operated Harper Brothers printing and publishing company.⁹ By 1830, Harper Brothers was the largest book publisher in the United States. In 1857, Fletcher Harper established *Harper's Weekly* and

in 1859, he lured illustrator-cartoonist Thomas Nast from rival Frank Leslie.

Born in the German Palatinate (one of the German states) in 1840, Nast immigrated with his family to New York City in 1846, and by the age of fifteen he was among Leslie's "stable" of artists. Throughout his career, Nast produced more than three thousand cartoons, book illustrations, and printings (he did 150 drawings for *Harper's Weekly* in 1872 alone). He is credited with originating the modern depiction of Santa Claus, the Republican elephant, and the Democratic donkey. Paid the princely sum of \$18,000 by *Harper's Weekly* in 1872, Nast had the complete support of owner-publisher Fletcher Harper, even when editor George William Curtis "begged the artist to hold his fire."¹⁰ When it came to holding his fire, Thomas Nast never did.

As you examine and analyze the political cartoons by Matt Morgan from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and Thomas Nast from *Harper's Weekly*, consider the following questions:

1. How did each side attempt to portray the other? the respective presidential candidates (Grant and Greeley)?
2. What were the principal issues the cartoons attempted to address? Which issues did they *not* address or avoid addressing?
3. How did each side attempt to deal with Reconstruction in the presidential election of 1872?

Be sure to take notes as you go along.

9. The Harper firm was founded in 1817. Fletcher Harper joined Harper Brothers in 1825.

10. J. Chal Vinson, *Thomas Nast, Political Cartoonist* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1967), p. 24.

* THE METHOD *

Although the presidential election of 1872 perhaps represents the zenith of the political cartoon as an influential art form, cartoons and caricatures had a long tradition of influence in both Europe and America before 1872. English artists established the cartoon style that eventually made *Punch* (founded in 1841) one of the liveliest periodicals on both sides of the Atlantic. In America, Benjamin Franklin is traditionally credited with publishing the first newspaper cartoon in the colonies, in 1754—the multided snake, each part of the snake representing one colony, with the ominous warning “Join or Die.” By the time Andrew Jackson sought the presidency in the 1820s, the political cartoon had become a regular and popular feature of American political life. Lacking modern sophistication, these cartoons nonetheless influenced people far more than the printed word.

Like the newspaper editorial, the political cartoon is intended to do much more than objectively report events. Instead, the political cartoon is meant to express an opinion, a point of view, an approval or disapproval. Political cartoonists want to catch people’s attention, make them laugh or feel angry, move them to action. In short, political cartoons do not depict exactly what is happening, but rather try to make people see what is happening from a particular point of view.

How can we hope to analyze political cartoons that deal with issues, events, and people from over 125 years ago? To begin with, using your text,

The Problem and Background sections of this chapter, and assistance from your instructor, make a list of the most important issues having to do with the Reconstruction of the South, the Grant administration, the Liberal Republican revolt, and Horace Greeley himself. As you examine each of the cartoons in this chapter (seven cartoons from *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* and seven from *Harper’s Weekly*), try to determine what the artist is trying to say, what issue or event (or pseudo-issue or pseudo-event)¹¹ is being portrayed, and how the individuals are depicted. Sometimes a cartoon’s caption, dialogue, or other words or phrases can help you determine the cartoon’s focus.

Next, look closely at each cartoon for clues that will help you understand what Morgan or Nast was trying to say. People who saw these cartoons in 1872 did not have to study them so carefully—just as you do not have to spend a great deal of time studying contemporary political cartoons in today’s newspapers or newsmagazines. The individuals and events depicted in each cartoon were immediately familiar to people in 1872, and the messages were obvious. But you are a *historian*, and you will be using these cartoons as historical evidence to help

11. A pseudo-event is a sham event, one that never actually took place or took place as a staged event for the press. Both sets of cartoons are replete with such pseudo-events. Similarly, a pseudo-issue is a false issue, one that may have been created by the cartoonist or by other political partisans.

you understand the presidential election of 1872.

As you will see, both Matt Morgan and Thomas Nast were talented artists. Both cartoonists often used *symbolism* to make their respective points, sometimes in the form of *allegory*. In an allegory, familiar figures (such as Grant or Greeley) are portrayed in a setting or situation that everyone knows—see, for example, Sources 4 and 10 in the Evidence section of this chapter. Thus, by placing these familiar figures in a well-known setting (a Bible story, a piece of mythology, Aesop's fables, and so forth) a deeper meaning or depiction of the figures is communicated.

Other, less complicated symbolism was employed in the 1872 cartoons as well. Both the American flag and military uniforms were powerful images that could be used by each cartoonist. Similarly, Columbia (a tall woman wearing a long classical dress) was a common representation of the United

States itself, as was the emerging figure of Uncle Sam when it was used in cartoons in juxtaposition with such figures as Grant, Greeley, and others.

Both President Ulysses Grant and Liberal Republican-Democratic challenger Horace Greeley were instantly recognizable in both Morgan's and Nast's cartoons. How the two candidates were depicted in the cartoons will be crucially important to you as you attempt to analyze each cartoonist's approach to the presidential election of 1872. Other caricatures, however, will be less familiar to you. When identification of a caricatured individual is necessary for you to "read" a cartoon, it is provided in a footnote.

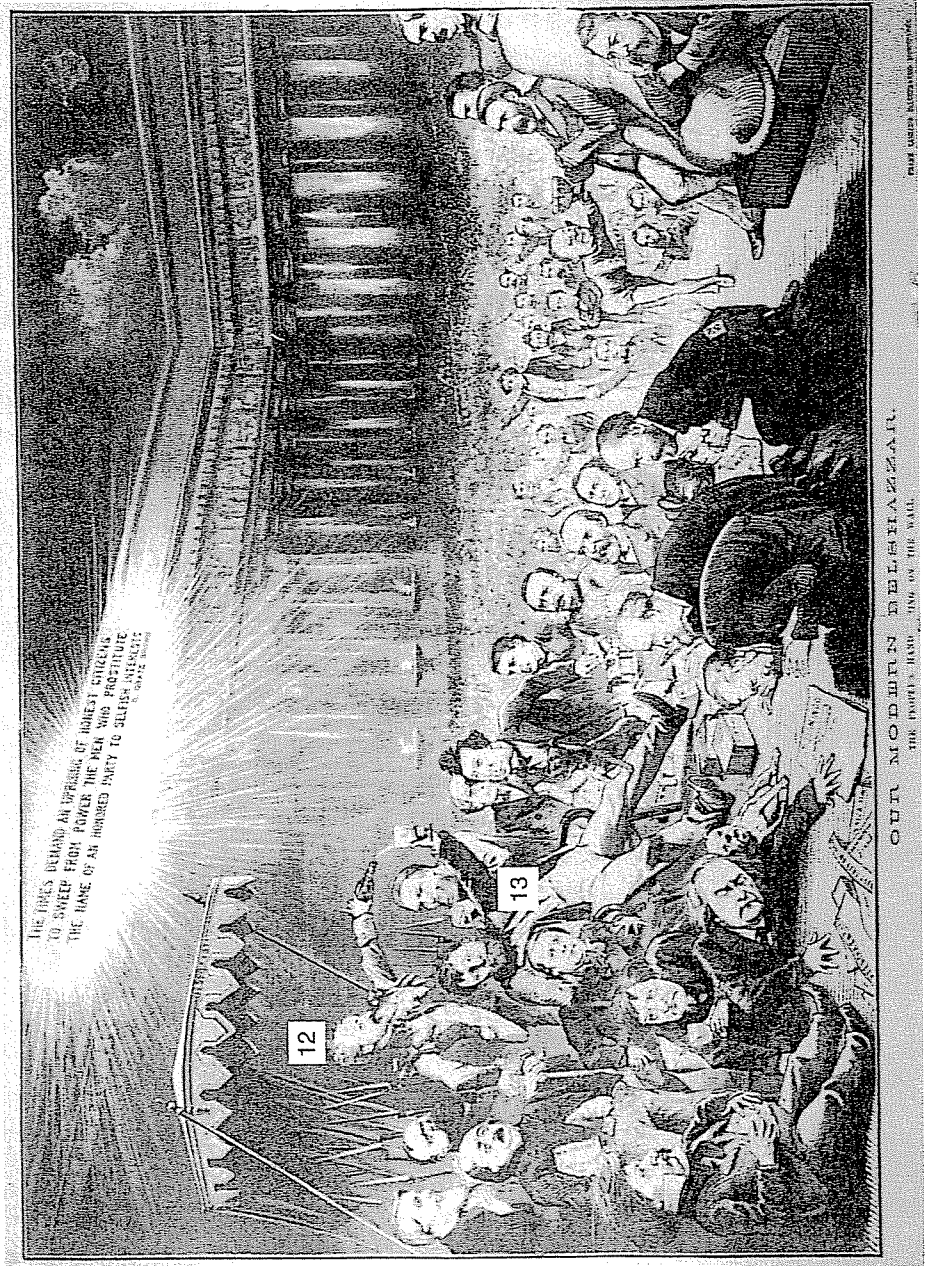
As you can see, a political cartoon must be analyzed in detail to get the full meaning the cartoonist was trying to convey. If you proceed with patience and care, you will be able to analyze the fourteen 1872 political cartoons and thereby to answer the three questions this chapter asks.

* THE EVIDENCE *

Sources 1 through 7 from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, April 6, May 4, May 25, June 29, August 10, August 24, and November 2, 1872. Source 1: The Granger Collection. Sources 2 through 7: Courtesy of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

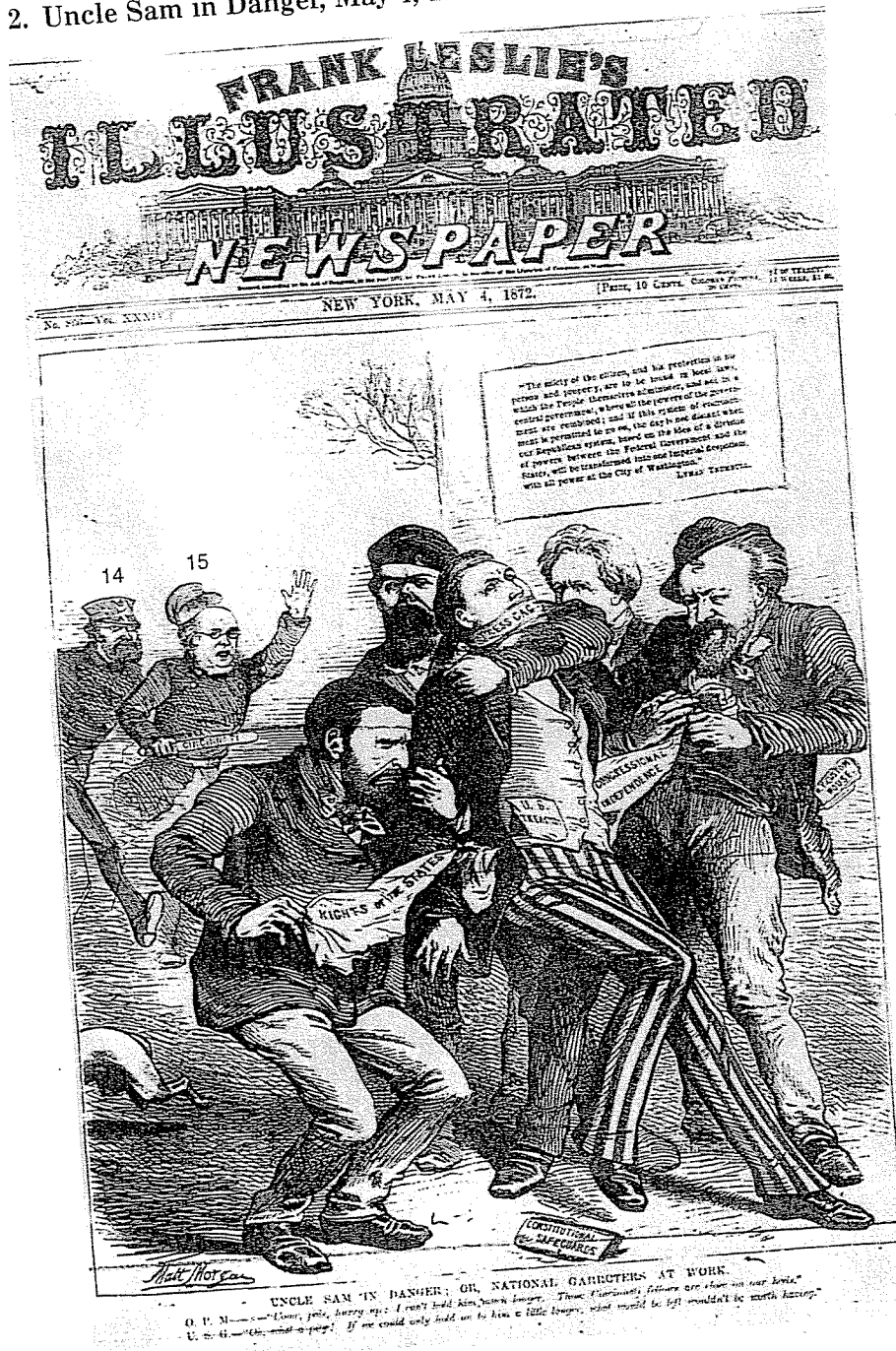
Political Cartoons by Matt Morgan

1. A Drunken Despot, April 6, 1872.



12. Roscoe Conkling (Republican, N.Y.), U.S. Senator.
13. President Ulysses Grant.

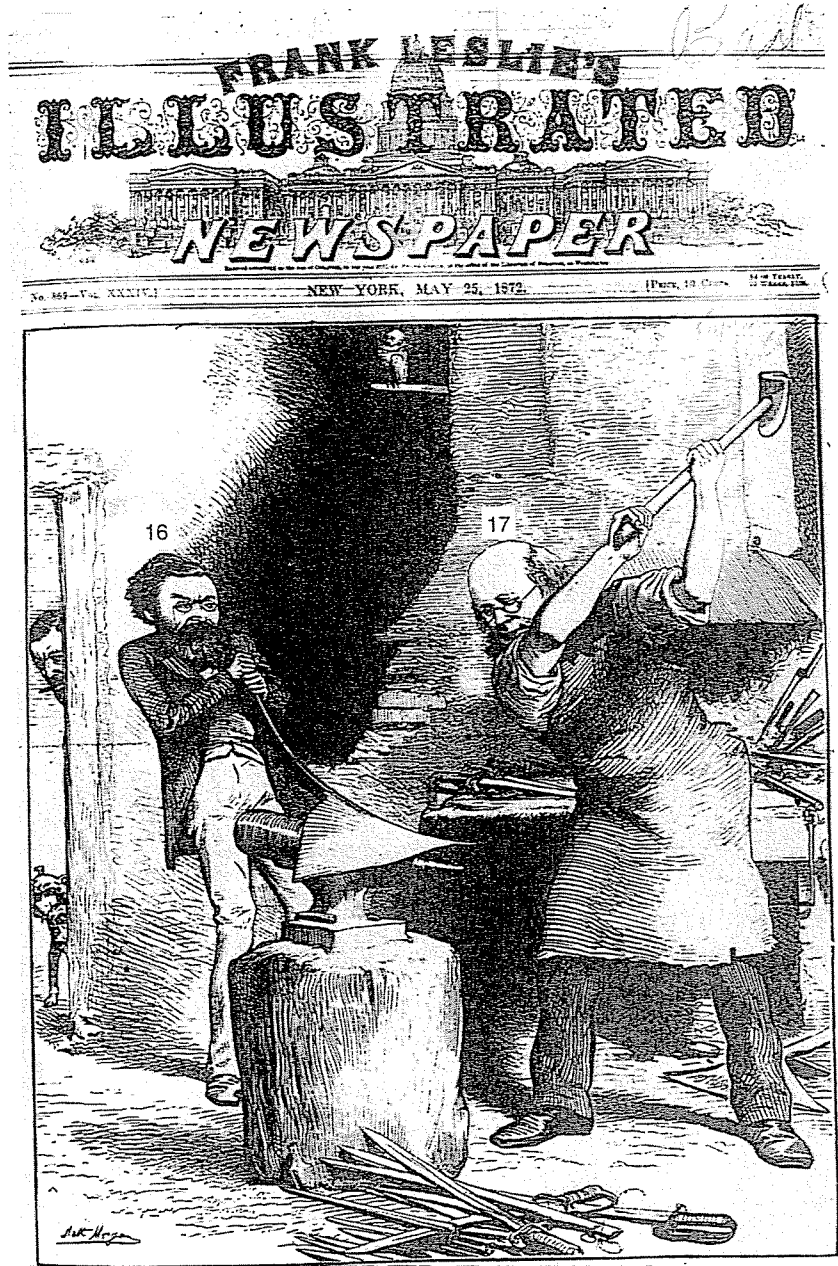
2. Uncle Sam in Danger, May 4, 1872.



14. Carl Schurz (Liberal Republican, Mo.), U.S. Senator.
15. Horace Greeley.

CHAPTER 11
 GRANT, GREELEY,
 AND THE POPULAR
 PRESS: THE
 PRESIDENTIAL
 ELECTION OF 1872

3. Swords into Plowshares, May 25, 1872.



1869—1872.
 "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-knives: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."—Isaiah 2, 4.

16. Schurz.
 17. Greeley.

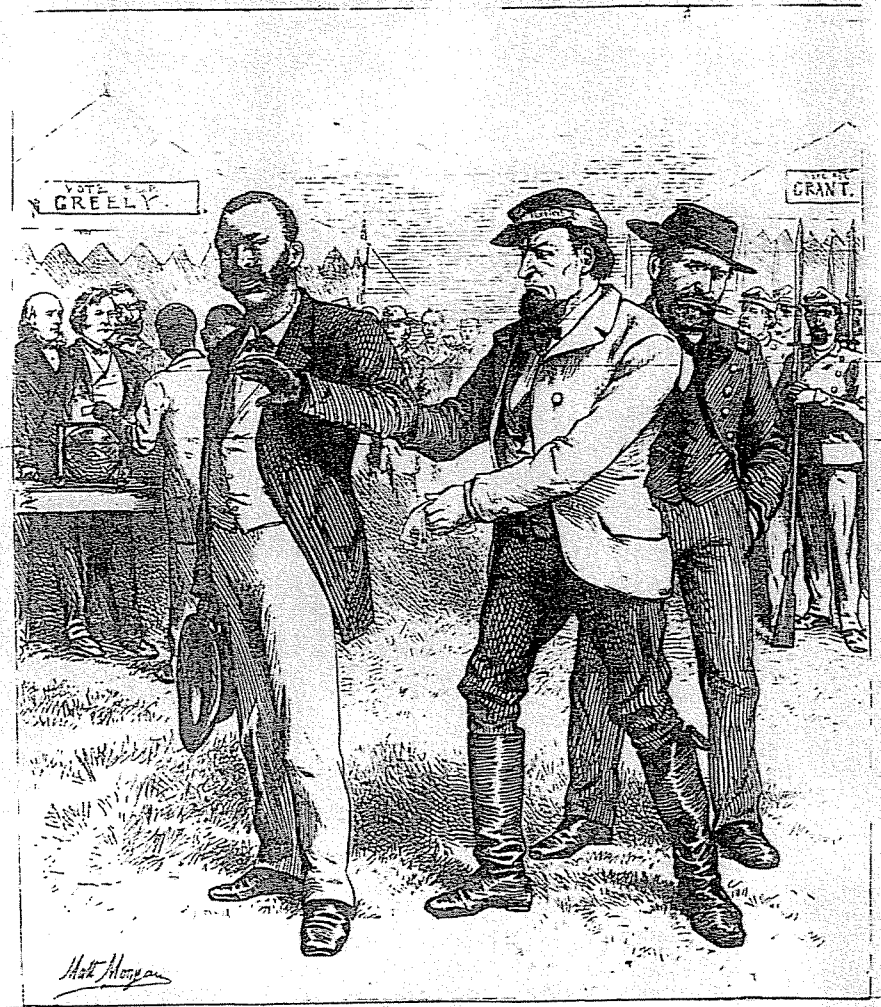
4. Our King Canute, June 29, 1872.



OUR KING CANUTE AND THE RISING TIDE

"King Canute caused his throne to be placed on the verge of the rocks, on the seashore, when the tide was rolling in, and said to his 'nobles': 'Thus far shall they go, and no further!' Finding that it did not obey him, he took off his crown, and never wore it again."

5. The Bribe Refused, August 10, 1872.



THE BRIBE REFUSED.
*Notwithstanding the large sums of money which have been sent by the Administration to North Carolina (under the pretense that it was to pay Court expenses), the more intelligent portion of the State are very indignant for Mr. Greeley, and have succeeded in making many converts. They exercise a very powerful influence among these converts, which is one of the most encouraging signs of the campaign.—EX-SERGEON DOUGLASS.

6. Sumner as a Modern Moses, August 24, 1872.



18. **MOSES TO HIS PEOPLE.**
"I have been to the Promised Land of equal rights to all, by the aid of this good man Horace, and I now commit you to his guardianship. I have seen that he will never deceive you!"
"I have seen Grant, except as a widow summoned by the terrible accident of war, never did anything against Slavery, nor has he at any time shown any sympathy with the colored race."
"and in following the promises of the Declaration of Independence, making all equal in rights."—SCHURZ'S LETTER TO THE CITIZENS OF WASHINGTON.

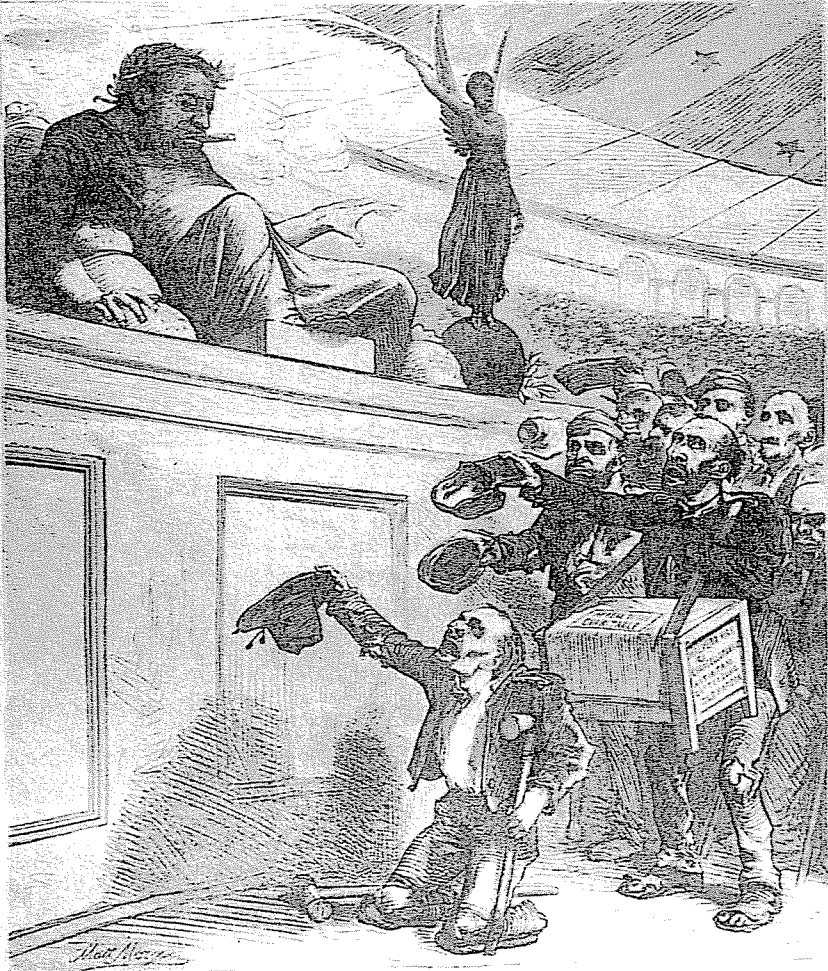
18. Charles Sumner (Republican, Mass.), Radical Republican; broke with Grant. To the right of Sumner are Schurz and Greeley.

CHAPTER 11
GRANT, GREELEY,
AND THE POPULAR
PRESS: THE
PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION OF 1872

7. A Useless Appeal, November 2, 1872.

FRANK LESLIE'S
ILLUSTRATED
NEWSPAPER

No. 592—Vol. XXXV. NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 2, 1872. Price, 10 Cents. 12 CENTS PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.



THE EVIDENCE

Sources 8 through 14 from *Harper's Weekly*, April 13, April 20, August 10, September 14, September 21, and October 12, 1872. Courtesy of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Political Cartoons by Thomas Nast

8. The Republic Is Not Ungrateful, April 13, 1872.



THE REPUBLIC IS NOT UNGRATEFUL

"It is not what is charged but what is proved that damages the party abundant. Any one may be accused of the most heinous offense; the Nation of mankind was not only attracted but convicted; but what of it? Facts alone are decisive."—*New York Tribune*, March 23, 1872.

9. Sumner as Robinson Crusoe, April 20, 1872.

April 20, 1872.

HARPER'S WEEKLY.

313



WILL ROBINSON CRUSOE (SUMNER) FORSAKE HIS MAN FRIDAY?
THE BOAT'S CREW THAT IS GOING OVER.

10. Any Thing to Get In, August 10, 1872.

HARPER'S WEEKLY.

A JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION.

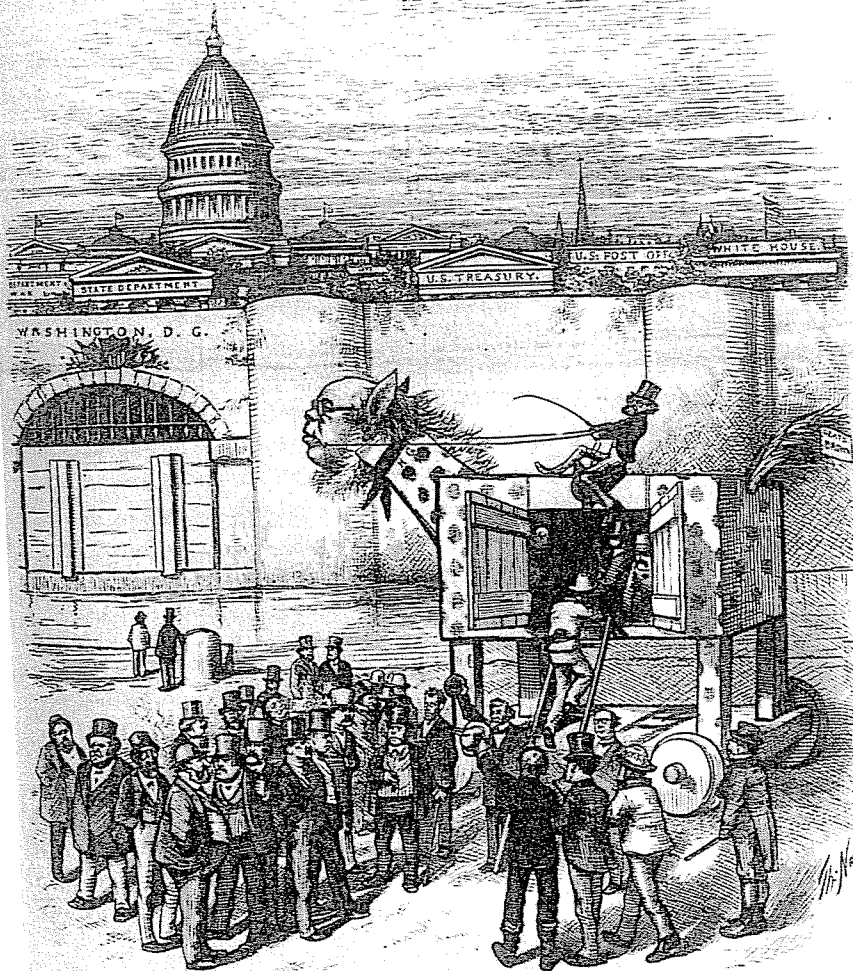
Vol. XVI.—No. 313.]

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, AUGUST 10, 1872.

[SINGLE COPIES TEN CENTS.]

[\$3 PER YEAR IN ADVANCE.]

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the Year 1857, by Harper & Brothers, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.



ANY THING TO GET IN.
YOU CAN'T PLAY THE OLD TROJAN HORSE GAME ON UNCLE SAM.—(See Next Page.)

11. Greeley and Booth, September 14, 1872.

HARPER'S WEEKLY

A JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION

Vol. XVI—No. 326.]

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1872.

SINGLE COPIES TEN CENTS.
\$4.00 PER YEAR IN ADVANCE.



THE DEED IS ORDER—ANY THING: OR, ANY THING!

19. John Wilkes Booth (1838–1865), assassin of President Lincoln.

12. General Orders, September 21, 1872.

HARPER'S WEEKLY

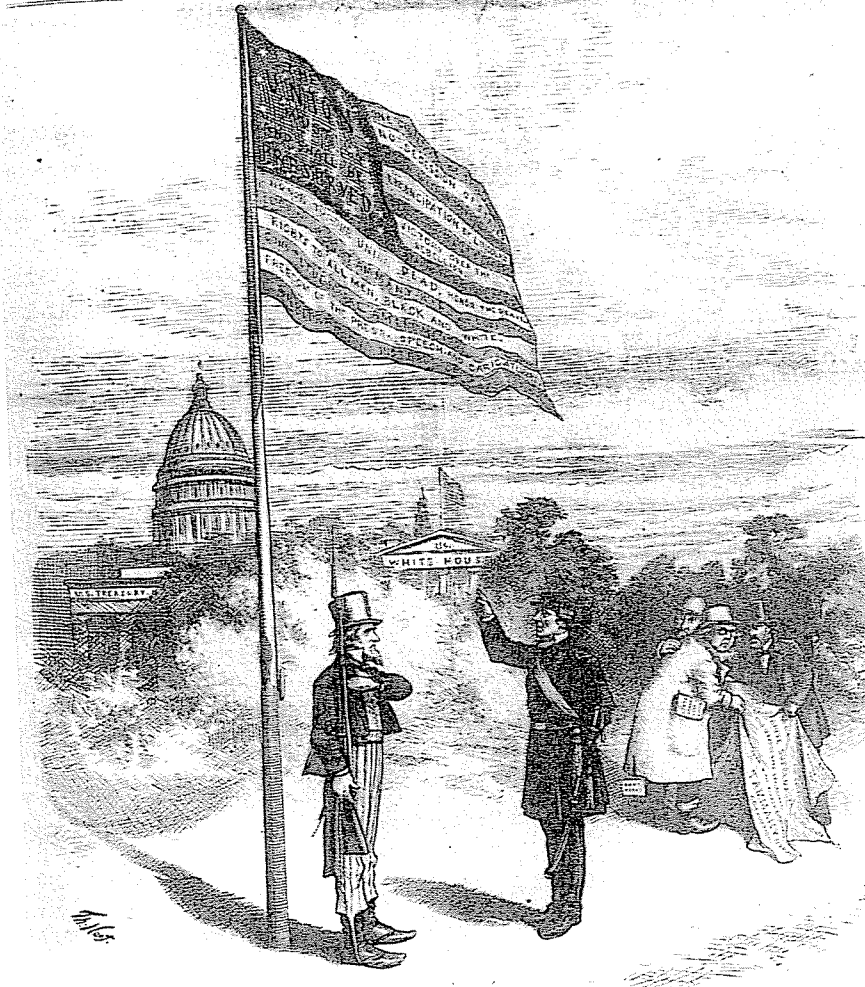
A JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION

Vol. XVI.—No. 521.]

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1872.

[5 CENTS PER COPY
\$2.50 PER YEAR IN ADVANCE]

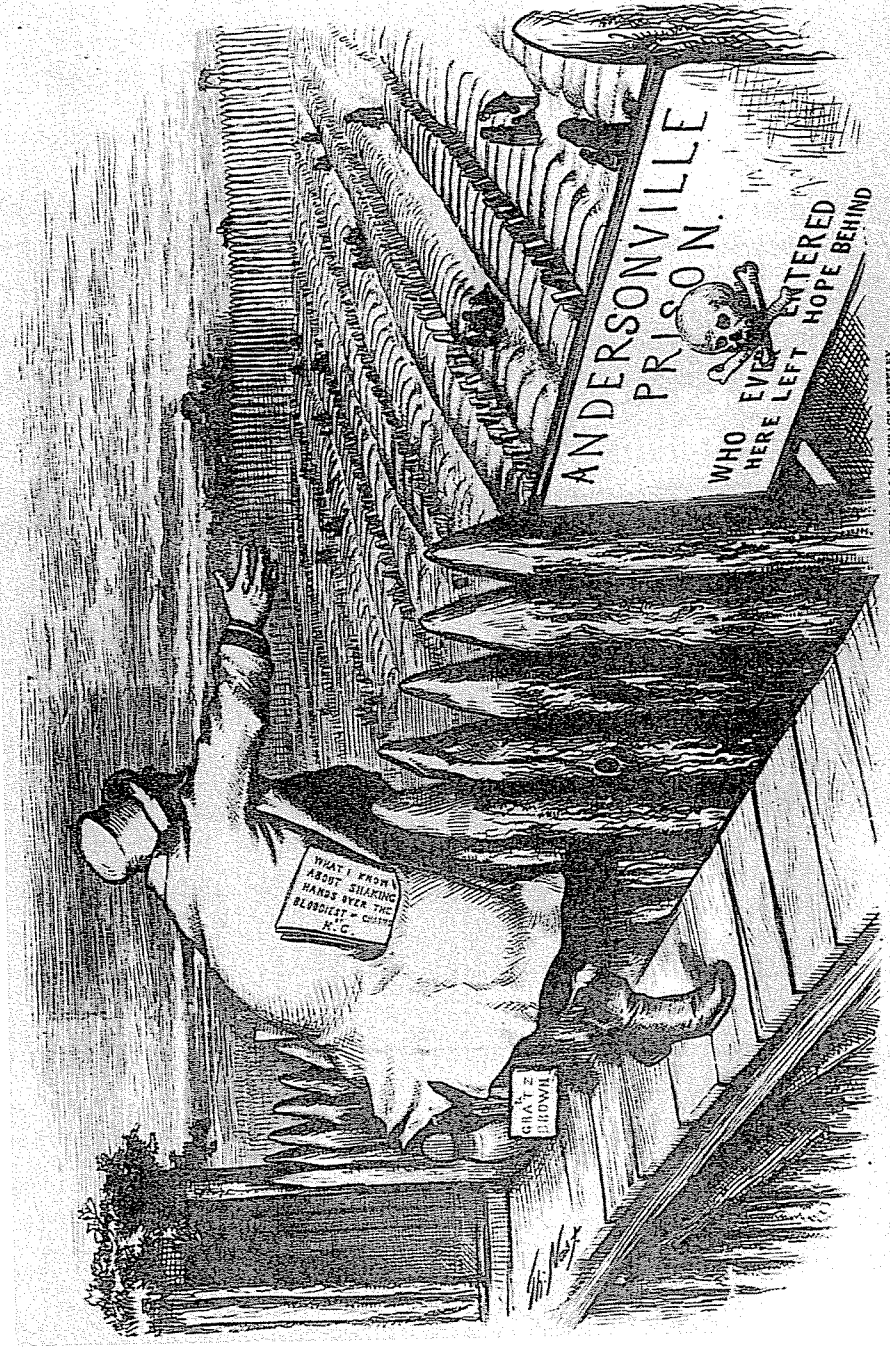
Entered according to Act of Congress, in the Year 1842, by Harper & Row, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.



GENERAL ORDERS.

General Dix. "If any Man attempts to haul down the American Flag. Shoot him on the Spot!"

13. "Let Us Clasp Hands over the Bloody Chasm," September 21, 1872.



"LET US CLASP HANDS OVER THE BLOODY CHASM."—HODACH GREELEY.

✻ QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ✻

Begin by reviewing your list of important issues having to do with Reconstruction, the Grant administration, the Liberal Republican revolt, and Horace Greeley himself. Then, starting with the seven Morgan cartoons from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (Source 1 through 7) and moving on to the seven Nast cartoons from *Harper's Weekly* (Sources 8 through 14), answer the following questions for each cartoon:

1. What issue (or event) is represented by this cartoon?
2. Who are the principal figures, and how are they portrayed?
3. What *imagery* is used?
4. Is the cartoon an *allegory*? If so, what is the basis of that allegory?
5. What *symbols* (flag, Columbia, and Uncle Sam, for example) are used, and how are they used?
6. How were Morgan and Nast trying to influence public opinion through their respective cartoons?

You may find that making a chart is the easiest way to sort your answers.

Morgan's cartoons in Sources 3, 5, and 6 deal with Greeley's, Liberal Republicans', and the Democratic party's views of Reconstruction. With regard to Reconstruction, what do these three cartoons advocate? How is Greeley portrayed in each cartoon (notice, in Source 5, he is standing behind the glass voting receptacle to the far left)? How are President Grant and the stalwart Republicans portrayed? Sources 4, 6, and 7 are all allegories. Who was the legendary King Canute

(Source 4)? Why is Grant portrayed as Canute? What is the allegory represented in Source 6 (from left to right, the caricatures depict Sumner, Schurz, and Greeley)? What is the message of this cartoon? Source 7 portrays Grant as a Roman emperor, apparently dispensing charity. Who are the beggars? What is the cartoon's message?

Grant is depicted in all but one of the Morgan cartoons (Source 6). How is he portrayed? Conversely, how is Greeley portrayed (see, especially, Sources 2, 3, 5, and 6)? What reasons does Morgan infer that voters should choose Greeley?

Now move on to the seven Nast cartoons from *Harper's Weekly* (Sources 8 through 14), again using the preceding six questions.

Nast's cartoons in Sources 9, 12, and 14 deal directly with Reconstruction (Sources 11 and 13 do so as well, albeit indirectly). Begin by examining Source 9, an allegory based on Daniel Defoe's 1719 novel *Robinson Crusoe*. You should notice almost immediately that Nast's cartoons are more filled with details than those of Morgan. In Source 9, Greeley is leading a party that is trying to lure respected abolitionist Charles Sumner of Massachusetts (Crusoe) away from the freed man (Friday) and into a rowboat that will take them to the ship "Democrat." Note that the original name of the ship, "Slavery," is crossed out. What do the four flags on the ship represent? Notice, too, that the papers in the African American man's hat are

titled "Emancipated by A. Lincoln" and "Protected by U.S. Grant," and that the schoolhouse in the background is named "Lincoln School." What is Nast saying in Source 9 about Greeley's stand on Reconstruction? See Sources 12 and 14 as well.

In addition to the Robinson Crusoe allegory in Source 9, Nast makes use of allegory in Source 10. What does the Trojan horse represent in Virgil's account of the war between Greece and Troy? What does the Trojan horse represent here? Who is getting into the Trojan horse? Notice that B. Gratz Brown, Greeley's running mate, is portrayed as a slip of paper attached to Greeley's tail (see also Sources 11 through 14). It was said at the time that Nast had no photograph of Brown from which to draw a caricature, so he portrayed him as an insignificant slip of paper.

Nast's portrayals of Greeley are vicious and withering. In Sources 11 and 13, he distorts a phrase from Greeley's acceptance letter beyond recognition: Greeley is shown "clasp[ing] hands over the bloody chasm," a comment Greeley intended as an offer of reconciliation between the North and South. How does Nast use Greeley's phrase? In an 1869 essay titled "What I Know of Farming," Greeley cele-

brated life in rural America. How does Nast twist that as well (see Sources 9, 11, 12, and 14)?

Like Morgan, Nast uses symbolism in his cartoons. How does Nast employ the symbols of the flag (in Sources 9 and, especially, 12) and Columbia (in Sources 8 and 14)? How does he use other symbols?

Grant is depicted in only one of the Nast cartoons (Source 8). How is he portrayed? What is the bust of Abraham Lincoln meant to represent? The feathers on the arrows aimed at Grant are labeled "slander," "malice," "misrepresentations," "insinuations," and "lies." How is Columbia protecting Grant? How, then, is Grant depicted by Nast?

Now put all your notes together to answer the three central questions of this chapter:

1. How did each side attempt to portray the other? the respective presidential candidates (Grant and Greeley)?
2. What were the principal issues the cartoons attempted to address? Which issues did they *not* address or avoid addressing?
3. How did each side attempt to deal with Reconstruction in the presidential election of 1872?

✻ EPILOGUE ✻

For Horace Greeley and Liberal Republicanism, the 1872 election campaign was a fiasco. As he himself had predicted, Greeley's comments in ear-

lier speeches and writings (especially his willingness in 1860 to let the South secede rather than fight a war, his 1867 offer to post a bond for Jefferson

Davis, and his advocacy of a quick and gentle reconstruction of the South) virtually doomed his candidacy in the northern states. For its part, the Republican party hired three hundred researchers to dig up material against Greeley and then feed that material to people such as Thomas Nast.

Realizing his candidacy was in deep trouble, Greeley embarked on a physically punishing speaking tour through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky, delivering around two hundred speeches in ten days. Increasingly intemperate, in a speech in Jeffersonville, Indiana, on September 23, he lashed out at African Americans for supporting Grant, even asserting that his opposition to slavery "might have been a mistake!"²⁰

The behavior of Greeley's running mate, B. Gratz Brown, did little to help the campaign. At a picnic, Brown became so intoxicated that he attempted to butter a watermelon. During a commencement address at Yale, his alma mater, Brown insulted the college, claimed he didn't know why he had gone there, and urged the graduates to vote for Greeley because "I believe he has the largest head in America."²¹ Later in the campaign, the inebriated Brown passed out while delivering a speech in New York City.

The election was a rout of Greeley. Backed by the interests of new businessmen, the Grand Army of the Republic (a group of northern Civil War veterans), African Americans, and voters outraged by Greeley, Grant won the election with almost 56 percent of

the popular vote and the electoral votes in all but six states (Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Tennessee, and Texas).

Although the voters appeared to reject the Reconstruction plans of Greeley and embrace Grant and the Radical Republicans, after the 1872 presidential race, Radical Reconstruction deteriorated rapidly. The Amnesty Act of 1872, passed by Congress and signed by Grant to deprive Greeley of a campaign issue, restored the rights to vote and hold office to all but a handful of former Confederates. With northern support of Reconstruction declining and the Grant administration (in spite of its 1872 promises) losing interest in forcing the white South to respect the Fourteenth Amendment, southern Democrats quickly regained control of southern states. By late 1876, only Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina had not been "redeemed," as southern Democrats referred to their recapture of the South. By the presidential election of 1876, it was clear that Reconstruction was almost over, as both major party candidates pledged to end it in 1877.

Greeley returned to New York from his speaking tour a physically and mentally exhausted man. Then, on October 30, one week before the election, his wife died after a lingering illness. It was the final blow, and Greeley himself died on November 29, two weeks after the election. In its eulogy to Greeley, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly* mourned that "his life was worn out in his struggle to restore love between the sections." In a final touch of irony, the paper predicted that over

20. Gillette, "Election of 1872," p. 1326.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 1327.

Greeley's grave "the sections 'will clasp hands.'"²²

As a gesture of good will and reconciliation, President Grant attended Greeley's funeral. But reconciliation would be long in coming. When Grant yearned for a third term in 1876, the abandonment of the Republican party by Greeley's supporters, combined with a fresh batch of second-term scandals, denied Grant the prize he so desperately sought. In retirement, he rushed to finish his memoirs (to provide for his wife Julia) before the throat cancer he had been diagnosed as having ultimately killed him. Grant died on July 23, 1885, and was interred in Central Park in New York City. In 1897, a magnificent tomb was dedicated to Grant and his remains were relocated there. When Julia died in 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt attended her funeral, and she was laid to rest in what grammatically should be called Grants' Tomb.²³

Fletcher Harper died in 1877, but his brothers and heirs continued *Harper's Weekly* and, later, *Harper's* magazine. For his part, Frank Leslie created a scandal of his own when in 1873 he divorced his wife to marry a woman who simultaneously had di-

vorced her husband. And when Leslie died in 1880 (like Grant, of throat cancer), his wife Miriam had her name legally changed to Frank Leslie. Soon after that, she married William Charles Wilde, the brother of Oscar Wilde, but they were divorced in 1893. When "Frank Leslie" (Miriam) died in 1914, she left her considerable estate to the cause of women's suffrage.

We know almost nothing about cartoonist-illustrator Matt Morgan after 1872, except that he died in 1890. But Thomas Nast is a different story. After the 1872 presidential election, Mark Twain told Nast that "you more than any other man have won a prodigious victory for Grant. . . . Those pictures were simply marvelous."²⁴ Taking advantage of his celebrity, Nast renegotiated his contract with *Harper's Weekly* and then went on a speaking tour that brought in \$40,000 in seven months.²⁵

But Nast was a spendthrift. Financially struggling, he appealed to friends, who ultimately influenced President Theodore Roosevelt to appoint him to a minor consular post in Ecuador. Nast died there of yellow fever in 1902.

22. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 14, 1872.

23. In 1913 the Grants's son, Ulysses S. Grant, Jr., married a woman named America Mills. They were constantly introduced as "U.S. and America Grant." McFeely, *Grant*, p. 520.

24. Morton Keller, *The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 77-78.

25. \$40,000 in 1873 would be approximately \$452,000 in 1991 dollars.