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# Battle Cry

Founded 1961,  
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table  
P.O. BOX 254702  
Sacramento, CA 95865-4702  
<http://sacramentocwrt.com/>



## President's Message

Blessings One and All,

We have much to look forward to this month. First up at the November 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, we have Tad Smith presenting us with "The Failed Struggle to Obtain Recognition of the Confederacy by England and France." I've always loved how our study of the Civil War leads us to examine so many varied aspects of our history. Diplomacy is an area we often don't know much about until well after the cataclysmic event. It occupies a world of logic, economics, shifting loyalties, and manners. Often portrayed as cool-headed and self-serving, diplomats are a breed apart; their passions masked with procedure and technique.

Immediately on the heels of the meeting, we will head down to our Annual West Coast Conference, this year in Tulare, November 13 - 15. It is still not too late to make plans to come. How nice to attend and just enjoy the speakers, the raffles, the book sales, and the all-around hanging out with nerds just like us. Our People. The lineup of speakers is impressive and the lectures are diverse enough to touch upon subjects we may never have studied before.

As we wind up the very end of the sesquicentennial anniversary of the American Civil War, I can't help but think back to those who fought to the end. While we, of course, honor the dead, it is the survivors who have my heart as I write this. One of my friends recently sent me a link to a video of Josh Groban singing "Bring Him Home" from the play LES MISERABLE. You can find it on YouTube. I cannot listen to it without crying. Most of the movies about the Civil War era portray the soldiers as grown men; think of William Holden and John Wayne in HORSE SOLDIERS. But the overwhelming numbers of them were so very, very young, as is the case in most wars. Our family had two of our boys deployed at the same time—one in Iraq and one in Afghanistan--we had much to pray about.

I was fortunate enough to read the diary of a soldier returning home to Michigan at the end of the Civil War. He'd seen his share of action and just wanted to go home. If he was lucky there might be a train or a friendly wagon ride. He mostly walked from Georgia to Michigan. He wrote of the long tramp and his adventures along the way. Nearly everyone was decent and shared what they had with him, giving him mail to deliver along the way. And that is how he went from town to town. When he finally reached home in November of 1865, he'd grown quite an impressive beard. His mother nearly didn't recognize him from a distance. He'd turned 20 three days before he walked through the front door of his parents' farmhouse.

Have the Happiest of Thanksgivings! And remember to use those diplomatic skills with those pesky college kids at the dinner table.

**Anne Peasley, President**

**MINUTES**  
**SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**  
**Wednesday, October 14, 2015**  
**HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, 2500 WATT AVENUE, SACRAMENTO**

**ATTENDANCE – 32**

**MEMBERS – 27:** Anne Peasley, President; Don Hayden, Vice President; Paul Ruud, Secretary; George W. Foxworth, Treasurer; Silver Williams, Program Director; Jim Armstrong, Roy Bishop, Harvey Cain, Marsha Jutovsky Cain, Ardith Cnota, Mitch Cnota, Monica Foxworth, Alan Geiken, Robert E. Hanley, IPP; Nina Henley, MAL; Wayne Henley, MAL; Christopher Highsmith, Dennis Kohlmann, Arnold Kunst, Barbara Leone, Rick A. Peasley, John Rice, Ed Rill, Nancy Samuelson, Nick Scivoletto, John Zasso, Vivian Zasso.

**GUESTS – 5:** Robert Bundy, Seanna Curler, Bill Johnson, Bret Lonsway, Don Zajic.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Anne Peasley.
2. John Zasso led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. John then sold last minute tickets and conducted the raffle – Mitch Cnota definitely had a hot hand with four winning tickets.
4. Our speaker, Robert Bundy, had been introduced to the membership in the recent Battle Cry. We learned that he was a co-founder of the Elk Grove CWRT of which he is a current member. The Columbia, South Carolina fire near the end of the War was the subject of Robert's presentation.
5. Residents of Columbia awoke to the heavy smell of smoke on February 18, 1865 and ultimately learned that one third of the City had been destroyed by fire. There is no one person or act that led to starting the fires – Union supporters lit some fires, Confederates departing their City and not wanting to leave anything for the invaders started some fires too. Looters invited the chaos.
6. General Sherman rolled into Columbia with limited resistance because when leaving Savannah, he had feinted going northeast toward Charleston or northwest toward Augusta. Feints were quite effective because there were legitimate Civil War reasons to attack either location. Yes, but Sherman went on to Columbia – why? South Carolina was the first State to secede from the Union and Columbia was its capitol.
7. As Sherman approached Columbia on February 17, 1865, evacuations were ordered – some people looted stores on their way out of town. General Hampton refused to surrender the City and cotton bales stocked for outbound shipments made fires easy to start – they of course spread beyond original intentions. White flags were finally raised by the mayor to surrender the City. Even after the formal surrender of the City, the lawlessness continued. Residents were in the streets drinking heavily and high winds rekindled the fires in many cotton bales—chaos ruled for many hours before control was restored on the morning of February 18.
8. Sherman was considered a monster by Southerners. He was accused after the War of burning Columbia to the ground intentionally. General Sherman insisted that had he intended to burn Columbia, the events would have unfolded quite differently.
9. President Peasley thanked Robert with kind words and good wine for an excellent presentation.
10. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM. The next Board Meeting will be Wednesday, November 11, 2015, 10:00 AM, at Brookfield's Restaurant. Come one, come all!

**Paul Ruud, Secretary**

**Treasurer's Report**

The cash balance following the October 14th meeting was \$4,866.90. Thanks to John Zasso, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$62.00.

**George W. Foxworth, Treasurer**

<b>Coming Programs for 2015 and 2016</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Topic</b>
November 11th	Tad Smith	"The Failed Struggle to Obtain Recognition of the Confederacy by England and France"
December 9th	Nicholas Scivoletto	"General Joseph E. Johnston"
January 13th	Paul G. Ruud	"Jefferson Finis Davis"
February 10th	Jim Lane	"Free State of Jones"
March 9th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
April 12th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
May 11th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined

### **NEWSLETTER CIVIL WAR ARTICLES**

Civil War articles/book reviews are welcome. The submission deadline is the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month for that month's **Battle Cry**. However, you can submit articles at anytime. Please submit your items in Microsoft Word or regular email to:

[gwfoxworth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gwfoxworth@sbcglobal.net)

Do not submit scanned files since I need to edit files to combine the **Battle Cry**.

The **Battle Cry** is the monthly newsletter of the Sacramento CWRT. Submissions are subject to availability of space and size limitations. Submissions do not necessarily reflect the views of the organization or the Editor. The official address of this organization is: Sacramento Civil War Round Table, Post Office Box 254702, Sacramento, CA 95865-4702. <http://www.sacramentocwrt.org> is the web site address. Check the web for past newsletter editions and information about the group.

### **ADDITIONAL HOTELS FOR THE 2015 WEST COAST CIVIL WAR CONFERENCE**

#### **Best Western Town & Country**

1051 North Blackstone Street  
Tulare, CA 93274-7376  
559-688-7537 (\$90 per night)

#### **Charter Inn & Suites**

1016 East Prosperity Avenue  
Tulare, CA 93274-2354  
559-685-9500 (\$86 per night)

#### **Fairfield Inn & Suites**

1225 Hillman Street  
Tulare, CA 93274-8057  
559-686-4700 (\$103 per night)

#### **La Quinta Inn & Suites**

1500 North Cherry Street  
Tulare, CA 93274-2233  
559-685-8900 (\$84 per night)

#### **Motel Six (6)**

1111 North Blackstone Street  
Tulare, CA 93274-2347  
559-686-1611 (\$52 per night)

#### **Quality Inn**

1010 East Prosperity Avenue  
Tulare, CA 93274-2354  
559-686-3432 (\$80 per night)

# WEST COAST CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

November 13 - 15, 2015

**\*\*TULARE HISTORICAL MUSEUM, 444 WEST TULARE AVENUE, TULARE, CA 93274-3831**

Note: Conference **Seating Limited to 107, so PLEASE REGISTER EARLY—1<sup>st</sup> come 1<sup>st</sup> served!**

**Hampton Inn, Tulare** offers a Conference rate for us of **\$85 per night**. Free Breakfast. 1100 North Cherry Street, (844) 814-1595 or (559) 686-8700. It is always full Saturday mornings so **book early!** (Highway 99—Use Prosperity Avenue off ramps.) The Hampton Inn is West of 99, behind Apple Annie's Restaurant (on Blackstone Street).

There are several other hotels in the immediate area, but all are near 99, while the Museum is in the West part of Tulare.

**CONFERENCE REGISTRATION:** Checks payable to San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table (SJVWCRT), \$150. (\*See below for dinners for non-registered persons.)

Send registration (<http://sjvcwrt.com>) to Ron Vaughan, 730 East Tulare Avenue, Tulare, CA 93274-4336.

Questions: Ron Vaughan (559) 686-3633 [ronvaughan@prodigy.net](mailto:ronvaughan@prodigy.net)

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

### FRIDAY

4:00--5:30-- Registration and Social Hour

5:30--6:00—Civil War Jeopardy, Ted Savas

6:00—7:00 --Dinner

7:00—8:00—Looking Back at the Causes of the Civil War, Michael Oddinino

### SATURDAY

8:30 --9:30— Forrest's Operations in 1865, Thomas Cartwright

9:30-- 10:30— CSS Shenandoah, Gary Joiner

10:30--11:30—Grant's Attempt to Take Petersburg, Edward Alexander

12:00—1:00-- Lunch

1:00—2:00— The Breakthrough at Petersburg, Edward Alexander

2:00—3:00--- Appomattox Surrender, Michael Oddinino

3:00--3:15-- Break

3:15-- 4:15—1865 Medicine, Dr. Brian Clague

4:15--5:15—Sherman's Carolina Campaign, Mike Green

5:15—6:00-- Break

6:00—7:00-- Dinner

7:00—8:00 -- 1865 Photos, Ron Perisho

8:00—9:00 – Battle of Palmito Ranch and Jo Shelby's Exodus, Ron Vaughan

### SUNDAY

8:30-9:30— CSA Veterans, Evan Jones

9:45-10:45--- Early Reconstruction 1865, Jim Stanbery

10:45- 11:45— Panel Discussion

11:45—12:00-- Raffle

12:00--1:00 --- Museum Tour

\*For non-registered dinner guests, the cost is \$20, but if Conference is sold out, there may not be a table space. We will do our best to accommodate you.

**\*\*Directions from hotel area to Museum:** Drive South on Highway 99, or Blackstone, or Cherry; go West on Tulare Avenue. The Parking Lot is North of the Museum, between "E" Street and "F" Street.

## Books and Culture

STEFAN KANFER

### A Semblance of Order

*Some rare truths about a controversial Civil War figure*, June 23, 2015

*Lincoln's Autocrat: The Life of Edwin Stanton* by William Marvel  
(University of North Carolina Press, 611 pp., \$35.) Submitted by Silver N. Williams.

According to his allies, Edwin Stanton was a gifted manager and a true patriot (until the late nineteenth century, only presidents appeared on U.S. postage stamps—with two exceptions, Benjamin Franklin and Stanton). To his enemies, however, he was a treacherous schemer, graceless in defeat, and malign in victory. *Lincoln's Autocrat* shows that both factions have enough ammunition to ignite a second Civil War. Biographer William Marvel spares no details as he tracks the short, asthmatic lawyer from Steubenville, Ohio to the corridors of the White House. En route, Stanton rises from obscurity, works his way through law school, marries, fathers two children, and becomes active in local politics. He truly mourns his young wife when she dies in childbirth; almost 16 years go by before he remarries, this time to a 26-year-old heiress who provides emotional and financial support on his ultimate ascent to power. With a combination of infighting, intelligence, and toadying to the prominent, Stanton becomes the lead attorney in a number of high-profile cases. Among these is an early use of the “insanity defense” to secure a not-guilty verdict for Daniel Sickles (later General Sickles) who had killed his wife’s lover. In another trial, Stanton represents the inventor of the [McCormick Reaper](#) in a patent suit. He wins handily, impressing an ambitious attorney who has watched the adroit legal tactics from his seat in the courtroom. That lawyer happened to be on his own climb from obscurity to ever-higher offices.

As he rose, Abraham Lincoln stayed in touch with the man who kept winning big settlements and earning nationwide press coverage. When Honest Abe became the sixteenth president, he decided to talk to Stanton about joining his cabinet. He didn’t have far to look. The previous President, James Buchanan, had already appointed Stanton as his Attorney General. By then Stanton had settled in Washington, and shortly after the cannons fired at Fort Sumter, Lincoln chose him to be his Secretary of War. The results were a mixture of competence and repression. Stanton brought discipline and order to his department, cleaned out the hacks and scapegraces, and saw to it that federal troops were decently clothed and fed.

But he was also in favor of the suspension of habeas corpus and backed his boss in other extra-democratic moves. Though military commissions had been used to try civilians early in the War, for example, under Stanton they became widespread. More than 13,000 citizens were arrested and charged with sedition. Some were surreptitiously aiding the Confederacy, but others were just speaking out against the trying of ordinary citizens by army and navy officers. The Secretary had the President’s ear, however, and this policy continued, observes Marvel, “until a federal judge’s ruling in a false-arrest suit opened the possibility that he might be held accountable for his actions.”

Yet Stanton also had a sense of occasion. He was with Lincoln when the martyred President drew his last breath. The Secretary is supposed to have uttered the famous epitaph, “Now he belongs to the ages.” In fact, that statement appears to have been spoken or written months afterward, possibly by a journalist. But one thing Stanton did do in the aftermath of the assassination was authenticated, and had great significance. His emotional detachment and domineering persona made him invaluable that night, Marvel notes. “With the government headless and the capital paralyzed, it may have been one of the few appropriate moments in American history for dictatorial leadership, and Stanton assumed that role with alacrity. He conveyed an air of control and a semblance of order that staved off absolute panic, inadvertently giving the country his best few hours of service.”

An *air of control*. A *semblance of order*. *His best few hours*. These are not kindly assessments, but they contribute to one of the most objective portraits ever written about a Washington figure. Fair-minded, scrupulous, undeceived, Marvel shows that Stanton was a parade of contradictions, arousing respect and resentment to the end. President Ulysses S. Grant, who couldn’t abide the man, nevertheless nominated him for the Supreme Court. The Senate gave its approval by a vote of 46 to 11. But the new judge never had a chance to serve.

Four days after he was confirmed, Edwin Stanton died of a coronary thrombosis, leaving his career and contradictions to the historians. Now he belongs to the pages.

***Stefan Kanfer, a City Journal contributing editor, is the author, most recently, of The Eskimo Hunts in the Twin Cities.***

## CSS *Alabama*

The USS *Kearsarge* sank the CSS *Alabama* on June 19, 1864, after a 70-minute battle off the coast of France. Since its construction in England and furtive purchase by the Confederacy in August 1861, the *Alabama* had: sailed 75,000 miles as a “raider” (some say “pirate”); been at sea 534 of her 657 days; captured or sank 69 unarmed merchant vessels valued at \$6.5 million; taken 2,000 prisoners; never visited a North American port; fought only one other battle against an armed opponent. That battle was with the antiquated, converted gunboat U.S.S. *Hatteras*, sunk near Galveston on January 11, 1863. This was an enviable record for a pirate ship, but not so for a warship.

The *Alabama* (Captain Semmes) entered the Cherbourg harbor on June 11 for repairs and recoaling. Hearing of this, the *Kearsarge* (Captain Winslow) blockaded the harbor; whereupon Semmes announced that he would fight his way out! The reasons for his decision to do battle are unclear, however, since the odds were rather good that the rebel vessel could easily have run out of the harbor on a dark and foggy night without an encounter. Was his act of bravado due to a troubled conscience, or was it for résumé enhancement purposes?

The table of comparison and photos show the many similarities between the two ships, but there were two significant differences unknown to Semmes at the time. The Federal ship was retrofitted with chain link armor, and it had heavier guns. *Kearsarge's* 11-inch Dahlgren smooth bore cannons could fire a 190-pound ball with awesome power and reasonable accuracy over the 700 to 400-yard range at which the battle was fought. Two other reasons that may also have contributed to the one-sidedness of the battle were the very poor marksmanship of the *Alabama's* international crew (though officered by Americans), as measured by number of shots fired (370) versus hits (38) and the possibly related gunpowder quality problems.

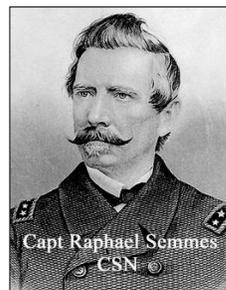
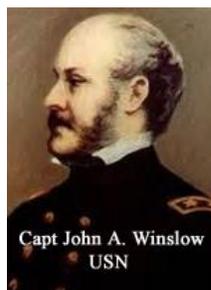
Semmes' later stated that the powder problems might have resulted from the ships' seawater-to-freshwater distillation device that vented some steam into the adjacent powder magazine. In other words, “He didn't keep his powder dry.” Or perhaps it was because his powder had deteriorated over time for lack of use, since not much would have been needed to capture and burn unarmed ships.

The *Kearsarge*, assisted by two harbor pilot boats, rescued most of the *Alabama's* surviving crew members and a few officers; while Semmes, most officers and a few crew members were rescued by the *Deerhound*, a private English steam yacht which carried them directly to England and permitting their escape. This latter act created considerable irate from Captain Winslow.

The Lincoln administration considered the *Kearsarge's* triumph a sweet moral and political victory over the British, who had built and armed the *Alabama*, as well as the Confederacy. Captain Winslow was voted the “Thanks of Congress” and was promoted to Commodore. He retired as Rear Admiral in 1873.

Captain Semmes also returned as a hero, notwithstanding that he had lost his ship. He was promoted to Rear Admiral and in February 1865 was given command of the CSA James River Squadron, consisting of the ironclads *Virginia II*, *Fredericksburg*, and *Richmond*, plus escort gunboats. On the morning of April 3, upon the evacuation of the city of Richmond,

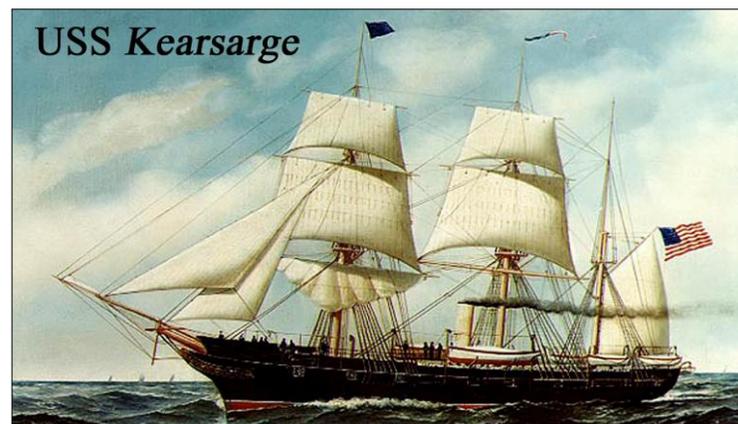
## versus USS *Kearsarge*



he ordered the iron clads then in the vicinity of Drewry's Bluff eight miles down river to be blown up. Forming their crews as infantry units he joined Johnston's Army in North Carolina. Upon surrendering, he signed

his parole as Rear Admiral and Brigadier General, his final opportunity for résumé embellishment.

In December 1865, Raphael Semmes was imprisoned while Union authorities considered charging him with treason and piracy. This was not done, however, and he was released in April 1866. He became a maritime attorney.



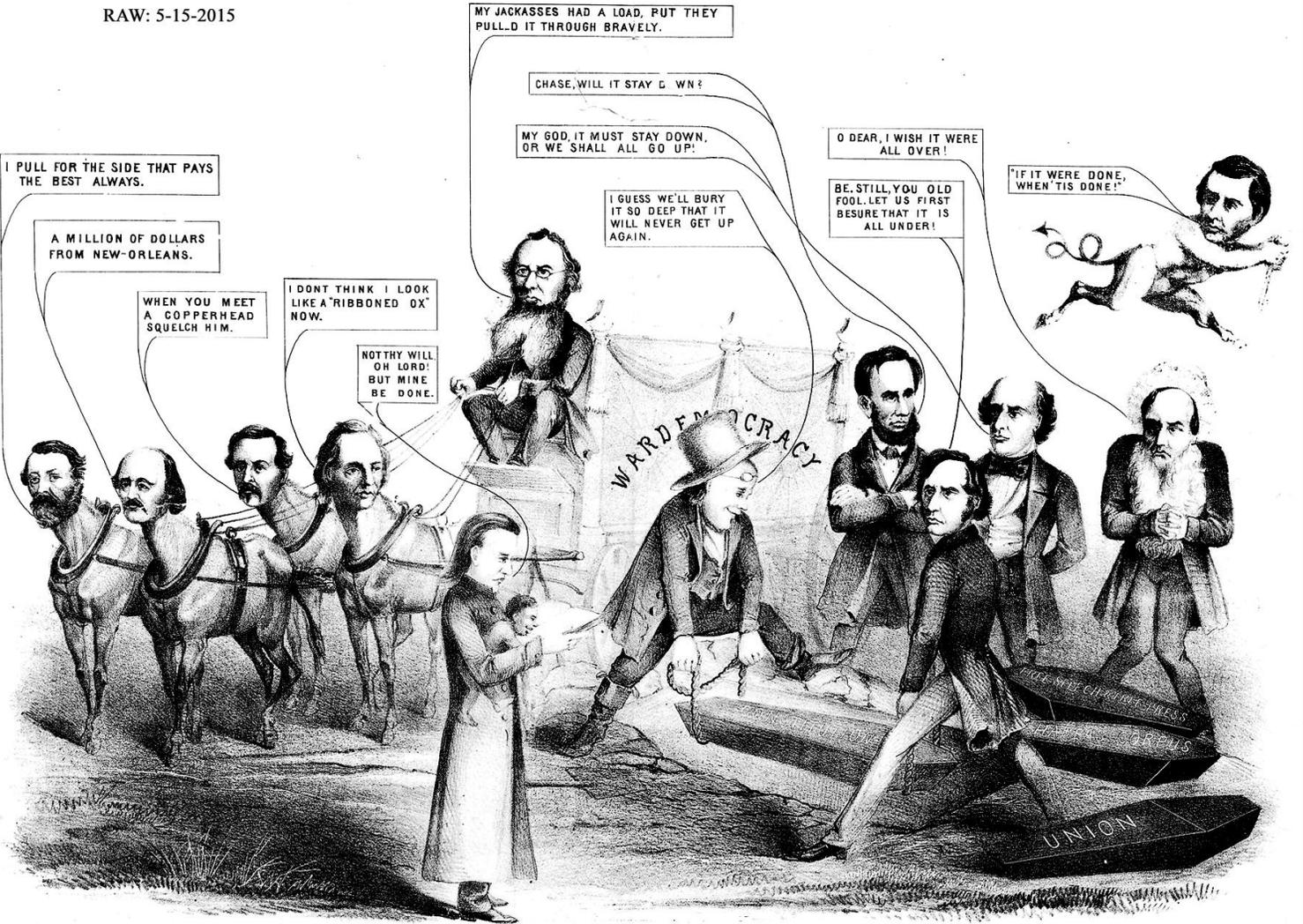
References; *Battles and Leaders*; Part IV, p 615; *ORN's*. Partial discussions in various volumes.

R. A. Williams; 3-07-03 rev. 6-25-15

Copy of an 1860's  
Political Cartoon

RAW: 5-15-2015

POLITICAL CARICATURE N° 1.



COCHRANE BUTLER MEAGHER DICKINSON BEECHER STANTON GREELY LINCOLN SUMNER CHASE WELLES SEWARD

THE GRAVE OF THE UNION.  
OR MAJOR JACK DOWNING'S DREAM, DRAWN BY ZEKE.

UNION SOLDIERS IN ANDERSONVILLE PRISON.

SICKNESS,—STARVATION,—DEATH.



AND THEN ON THIS!

SOLDIERS! HAVE YOU FOUGHT IN VAIN?

THE CONTRAST OF SUFFERING—ANDERSONVILLE & FORTRESS MONROE.



SOLDIERS! LOOK ON THIS PICTURE.

SHALL THE REBEL LEADERS BE RESTORED TO POWER?

TREASON MUST BE MADE ODDIOUS. ANDREW JOHNSON.

THE REBEL LEADER, JEFF DAVIS, AT FORTRESS MONROE.

HEALTH,—PLENTY,—LUXURY.