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EDITORIAL

It has always been the policy of the *Alabama Historical Quarterly* to make available in print the local history and local color of Alabama. Too seldom are studies such as Mr. Madden's "Freedom Hills" or even longer articles available. As the face of Alabama changes, it will no longer be possible to observe such localities "in the flesh." Thus, the necessity for more and more detailed studies, becomes urgent.—P.A.B.

THE POLITICAL CARTOONS OF THE TUSKALOOSA *INDEPENDENT MONITOR* AND TUSKALOOSA *BLADE*, 1867-1873

by

Sarah Van V. Woolfolk

During Reconstruction in Alabama partisan journalism became the rule rather than the exception. One glance at a newspaper sufficed to know a paper's politics—Democratic or Republican. However, although this partisan journalism was always barbed and frequently bitter, most editors tempered their attacks on political opponents with such restraint as would befit responsible journalism. The most flagrant exception to this pattern was the editorial course of Ryland Randolph, who edited the *Independent Monitor*, 1867-1871, and subsequently the *Blade*, 1871-1875, both in Tuskaloosa.

Randolph came to Tuskaloosa in September, 1867, from Greene County. On October 16 he commenced publication of the *Independent Monitor* as a staunchly conservative Democratic newspaper. The motto on the front page immediately proclaimed its political disposition: "Here shall the press the people's rights maintain:—unawed by influence, and unbribed by gain."[1] Later a motto appeared on the second page, boasting "White man—right or wrong—still the white man! Against Negro equality,—socially or politically." Regularly, *Monitor* editorials violently assaulted the Republican party recently organized in Alabama.[2] The most successful attacks appeared as caricatures of political opponents accompanying the editorials. These annoymous, crudely-drawn wood-cuts grew more elaborate and more frequent as they increased in popularity among *Monitor* readers.

In 1867 when Randolph assumed publication of the *Monitor*, Alabama was reorganizing her government according to the requirements of the Reconstruction Acts. Delegates had been elected to a constitutional convention to open at Montgomery on November 5, 1867. This convention provided Randolph with

[1]Tuskaloosa *Independent Monitor*, October 16, 1867.
[2]*Ibid.*, January 22, 1868.

his first subject for journalistic assault. In the next months the vehemence of his criticism rapidly grew, while the advertising columns blossomed with notices of the business of the Ku Klux Klan, of which Randolph was said to be Grand Cyclops. Finally, in April, 1868, General George Meade, commander of the Third Military District, ordered the arrest and trial of persons who printed or circulated incendiary publications of secret organizations. Such arrested persons would be tried before a military commission and subject, if guilty, to fine and imprisonment. Shortly thereafter, Randolph fled Tuskaloosa, was arrested and held without bail. Charged with assault and battery with intent to murder a Negro freedman in Tuskaloosa in March, 1868, Randolph was brought in May before a military commission in Selma, which acquitted him. Alabama Conservatives regarded the episode as nothing less than a Republican attempt to gag the critical press of the state.[3]

Randolph's reaction to this effort to suppress criticism was to mount fresh assaults on his opponents. He launched a series on local Tuskaloosa authorities early in June when General Meade changed Tuskaloosa's mayor, aldermen, and marshal.

> A SMELLING COMMITTEE. The U.S. Congress has illustrated the great advantages to be derived from the organization of "Smelling Committees." . . . We suggest to the Rump Board of Aldermen to organize a "Smelling Committee" to nose out all violations of city ordinances and other unlawful transactions of which "Goat" Roberts[4] shall be constituted Chairman. We warrant that he will be a most active fellow in this capacity.[5]

A week later the first caricature appeared. The *Monitor* carried this commentary:

> We present, elsewhere, a pictorial wood-cut representing the flight of the Carpet-bagger after the next Presidential election.

---

[3]*Ibid.*, April 14, 28, May 5, 12, 19, 1868.

[4]"Goat" Roberts was Morris Roberts, a native white Republican appointed as Tuskaloosa alderman.

[5]Tuskaloosa *Independent Monitor*, June 9, 1868.

> We design showing up the wharf-rat Board of Aldermen by Wood-cuts so soon as we can make arrangements to do so. Look out! Woodruff, Roberts, Barnes, Whisky Lewis and Purcell, for your forthcoming dog-rytypes.[6] [See Plate 1.]

The next issue of the *Monitor* carried the first of a series of cartoon attacks on individual members of the Tuskaloosa government. This wood-cut depicted Marshal John Purcell, nick-naming him "Big Ugly."[7] [See Plate 2.] Accompanying the drawing was this explanation.

> The subject of the above shadow was born in the Old Dominion, though he is not an F.F.V.
>
> He immigrated hitherward from Ohio, where he was an indifferent farm hand, and "sot in" with his brother to learn the business of wood-butchering.
>
> He possesses now his third wife, and will rival "Blue Beard" if he keeps on beating his succeeding thoral incumbents.
>
> He has been, for a long time, a sort of satellite of "Old Pomposity's."[8] The latter flattered him into the idea, that he (Purcell) was quite learned, thereby inducing the consummate ignoramus to purchase his stagnant volumes. Purcell is yet "O.P.'s" best customer; buying about a sheet of paper a week upon which to write his "Marshull's notis."
>
> The above is a very accurate portrait of John, whilst wending his way through highways and hedges of the corporation, and frightening, by his horrible physiognomy, all the little urchins out of his path.

These cartoons and editorials created concern among local Republicans (the *Monitor* reported that they began to "squirm") and amusement among Democrats.[9] With such initial success

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[6]*Ibid.*, June 16, 1868. D. Woodruff was Tuskaloosa mayor, while Morris Roberts, J. P. B. Burn, T. P. Lewis completed the board of aldermen. John Purcell was city marshal.

[7]Tuskaloosa *Independent Monitor*, June 23, 1868.

[8]"Old Pomposity" was the *Monitor's* name for D. Woodruff, Republican mayor of Tuskaloosa, who operated a bookstore.

[9]Tuskaloosa *Independent Monitor*, June 23, 1868.

the cartoons interrupted the series on local Tuskaloosa officials to ridicule a broader political topic—the political indecision of some native Alabamians. The July 14 *Monitor* carried a cartoon addressed to "Fence-straddlers" and captioned "Cuffee: Cum down off dat uncumfootable fence. I *nose* you's dare, kas I sees you!"[10] [See Plate 3.] The accompanying editorial expressed Democratic contempt for such individuals, asserting that they belonged to the family of a snake-tribe, were "very scaly," and sometimes developed into that "hideous creature known as the *scaly-wag*." Like the chameleon, the Scalawag assumed the color of surrounding objects, being black, white, or green, as necessity demanded, but as a rule, was very green. The *Monitor* concluded that the "fence-straddler" possessed the instincts of the bat at times, as illustrated in Aesop's fable of the war between the birds and beasts, always having a disposition to join the party that triumphed in political battle.[11]

The next issue of the *Monitor* again assaulted local Tuskaloosa officials, this time characterizing Alderman Morris Roberts as a goat. The *Monitor* explained that Roberts' "striking similitude" to the species known as the "Gulielmus Capricornus—vulgarly called William Goat" had won him the name "Goat." However, readers were cautioned against supposing that "Goat" ever owned such respectable clothing as the sketch might suggest.[12] [See Plate 4.]

Through the remainder of the summer the *Monitor's* editorials regularly attacked the native white Republicans of Alabama, the Scalawags, sometimes as a group, sometimes as individuals. Social and economic ostracism traditionally claimed by native white Republicans was quite real in Tuskaloosa. They were described as the "most anomalous creatures upon earth." The *Monitor* considered such a man unworthy of the race to which he belonged, proclaimed him an outlaw who had erected an "impassable barrier between himself and those with whom nature has associated him." Such a character was a "moral leper" who should be shunned as a "pest house."[13] The *Monitor*

[10]"Cuffee" was the Monitor's designation for *Negro*.
[11]Tuskaloosa *Independent Monitor*, July 14, 1868.
[12]*Ibid.*, July 21, 1868.
[13]*Ibid.*, August 4, 1868.

So-called Marshal Purcell, alias "Big Ugly."

[Plate 2]

After the Presidential Election.

Flight of the Carpet-Bagger! [Plate 1]

The Political "Fence-Straddler."

[Plate 3]

"Goat" as he appeared in the capacity of Chairman of the "Smelling Committee." [Plate 4]

urged Tuskaloosans to boycott the bookstore of Scalawag Mayor D. Woodruff and later gleefully noted that the business showed "signs of approaching failure." And when a new bookstore opened in Tuskaloosa, editorials encouraged its patronage rather than Woodruff's store.[14]

By September the popularity of the caricatures and accompanying editorials emboldened the *Monitor*. On September 1, 1868, there appeared the most famous (or notorious) of the wood-cuts, one widely copied in contemporary newspapers and frequently included in twentieth-century studies of Reconstruction. The scene depicted was in Tuskaloosa in March of the coming year, 1869, after the inauguration of a Democratic president. Below the wood-cut the *Monitor* explained the meaning of the figures in the cartoon. [See Plate 5.]

> The above cut represents the fate in store for those great pests of Southern society—the carpet-bagger and scallawag—if found in Dixie's Land after the break of day on the 4th of March next.
>
> The genus carpet-bagger is a man with a lank head of dry hair, a lank stomach and long legs, club knees and splay feet, dried legs and lank jaws, with eyes like a fish and mouth like a shark. Add to this a habit of sneaking and dodging about in unknown places—habiting with negroes in dark dens and back streets—a look like a hound and the smell of a polecat.
>
> Words are wanting to do full justice to the genus, scallawag. He is a cur with a contracted head, downward look, slinking and uneasy gait; sleeps in the woods, like old Crossland, at the bare idea of a Ku-Klux raid.
>
> Our scallawag is the local leper of the community. Unlike the carpet-bagger, he is native, which is so much the worse. Once he was respected in his circle; his head was level, and he would look his neighbor in the face. Now, possessed of the itch of office and the salt rheum of Radicalism, he is a mangy dog, slinking through the alleys, haunting the

[14]*Ibid.*, August 11, 18, 1868.

Governor's office, defiling with tobacco juice the steps of the Capitol, stretching his lazy carcass in the sun on the Square, or the benches of the Mayor's Court.

He waiteth for the troubling of the political waters, to the end that he may step in and be healed of the itch by the ointment of office. For office he "bums" as a toper "bums" for the satisfying dram. For office, yet in prospective, he hath bartered respectablity; hath abandoned business, and ceased to labor with his hands, but employs his feet kicking out bootheels against lamp post and corner-curb, while discussing the question of office.

It requires no seer to foretell the inevitable events that are to result from the coming Fall election, throughout the Southern States.

The unprecedented reaction is moving onward with the swiftness of a velocipede, with the violence of a tornado, and with the crash of an avalanche—sweeping negroism from the face of the earth.

Woe, woe, woe to the inhabiters of Alabama, who have recently become squatter sovereigns, carpet-bags in hand, and they filled with dirty electioneering documents! And twenty times woe to those so-called Southrons, who have turned their narrow heads, infinitesimal hearts, and filthy hands against the land of their nativity!

Hereafter, when future generations shall contemplate the fate that these white-skinned wretches had in store for us, they will wonder at the extraordinary degree of forbearance manifested by us of the present dark day.

But the happy day of reckoning with these white-cuticle scoundrels approacheth rapidly. Each and every one who has so unblushingly essayed to lower the Caucasian to a degree even beneath the African race, will be regarded as *hostis sui generis,* and be dealt with accordingly, if found hereabout when the time is ripe for action.

The carpet-bagger already begins to sniff the coming ill-wind, and is sneaking out of the county *a la* Harrington, of Mobile. But we hope some boreal stragglers may be left

far from their "hums," to swing alongside of their meridional coadjutors in infamy.

We candidly believe, that the picture, given to our readers *ut supra,* correctly represents the attitude and altitude of all foreign and domestic foes of our land, who shall have the folly to remain "down South" after the ides of March. The contract for hanging will be given to the negro; who, having mounted the carpet-bagger and scallawag on the mule that he *didn't* draw at the elections, will tie them to a limb, and, leading the said mule from under them over the forty acres of ground that he also didn't get, will leave the vagabonds high in mid air, a feast for anthropophagous vermin.

P.S. It will be seen, that there is room left on the limb for the suspension of any bad Grant negro who may be found at the propitious moment.

Reaction to this cartoon was swift in Alabama and out of the state. Democrats feared this drawing, widely copied in the North, especially in Ohio, might endanger their success in the coming presidential election, because Ohio was a pivotal state. The Democratic Montgomery *Mail* lamented that the wood-cut was "good for the loss of five or ten thousand votes" and might lose Ohio for the Democrats.[15] The Democratic Montgomery *Advertiser* published a series of resolutions disavowing all sympathy with the drawing,[16] and the *Monitor* cartooned the *Advertiser's* reaction with the accompanying comment.[17] [See Plate 6.]

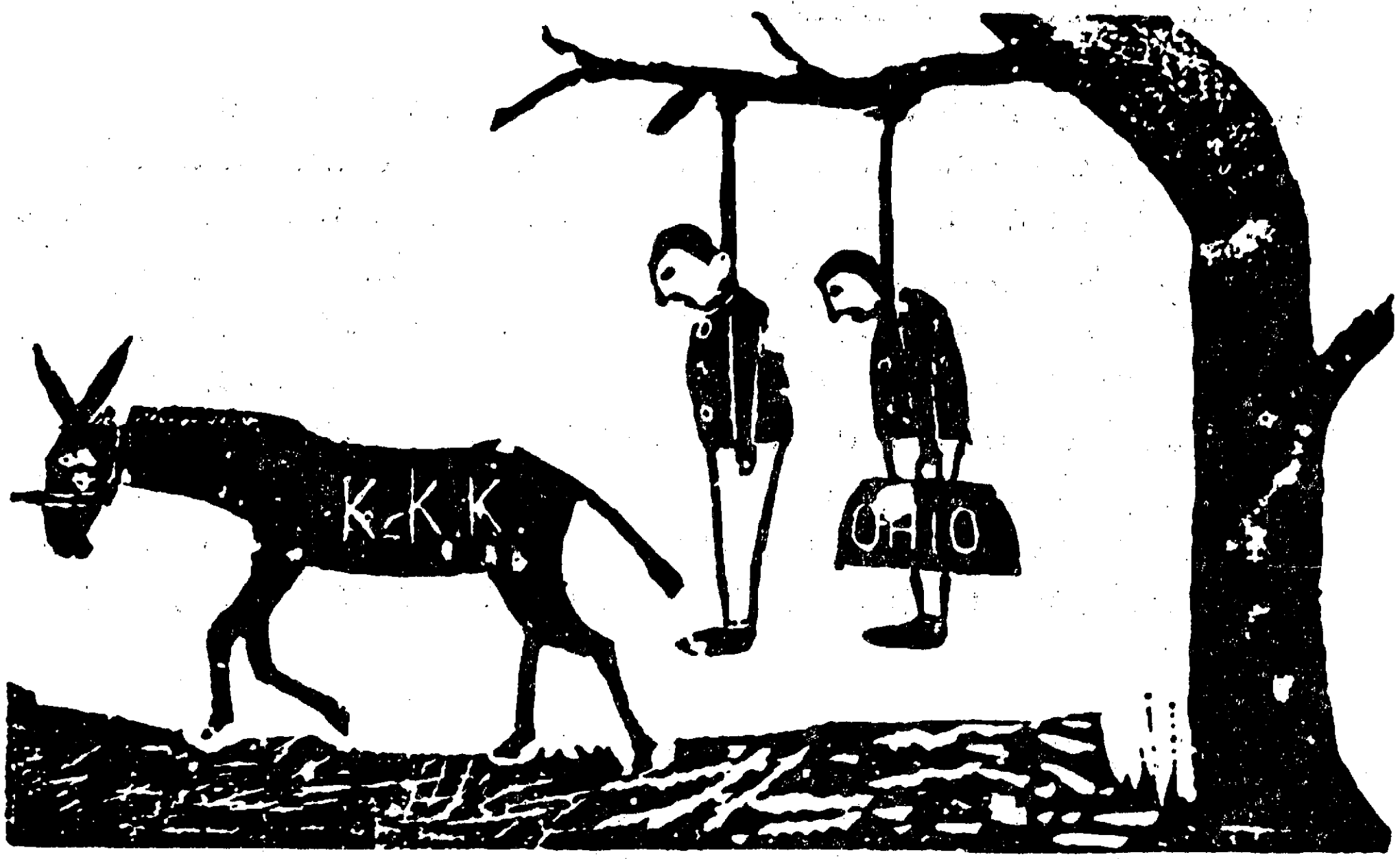
The above cut represents the shock created in the Montgomery *Advertiser's* office, upon reception of the Tuskaloosa *Monitor,* dated September 1, 1868.

Our artist, never having seen the editors of the save-the-state *Advertiser,* resorted to the wonderful new invention, called the planchette, for information as to the personal appearance of the worthies.

---

[15]Tuskaloosa *Independent Monitor,* October 6, 1868.
[16]*Ibid.,* September 8, 1868.
[17]*Ibid.,* September 22, 1868.

A Prospective Scene in the "City of Oaks," 4th of March, 1869.



"Hang, curs, hang! * * * * * Their complexion is perfect gallows. Stand fast, good fate, to their hanging! * * * * * If they be not born to be hanged, our case is miserable."
[Plate 5]

[Plate 6]

In answer to the query, "What do the editors of the *Advertiser* look like?" the planchette, of its own accord, marked with the pencil the *facsimile* of the above wooden engraving. Of course, we are not superstitious enough to believe that the eccentric manoeuvres of the planchette are supernatural; but it is singular that its scribblings are so correct and its drawings so exact.

Viewing the picture prefixed, we can almost imagine ourself in the *Advertiser's* sanctum, hurriedly holding to their nasal promontories a vinaigrette of chloroform, or some other powerful nepenthe or anaesthetic agent, in order to soothe their nerves, shattered by that shadowy vision of the carpet-bagger and scallawag a-swinging on paper.

At first the *Monitor* condemned its critics, declaring the *Advertiser* to be the "last paper in the State that should make war upon any Democrat or Democratic paper." The *Advertiser* had been guilty of the "timid policy" of making the best of the situation and "leaned so far over the fence which divided the two parties" as to suggest desertion to the Republicans. The *Monitor* advised the *Advertiser* to attend to its own business.[18] The fury of Democratic criticism so mounted that by October the *Monitor* reversed itself and moved to soothe ruffled Democratic feelings by treating the now famous cartoon as a joke. Explained the *Monitor:*

> For the information of our Northern friends, who may be shocked at the wood-cut, we inform them, that at the time that number of this paper was issued, there was in our village a coup of vagabonds — the one a scallawag, from Montgomery, Ala.; the other from Ohio — who came to take possession of the State University. In order to have fun at the expense of these migratory Radicals, the wood-cut was executed by a boy, and inserted.[19]

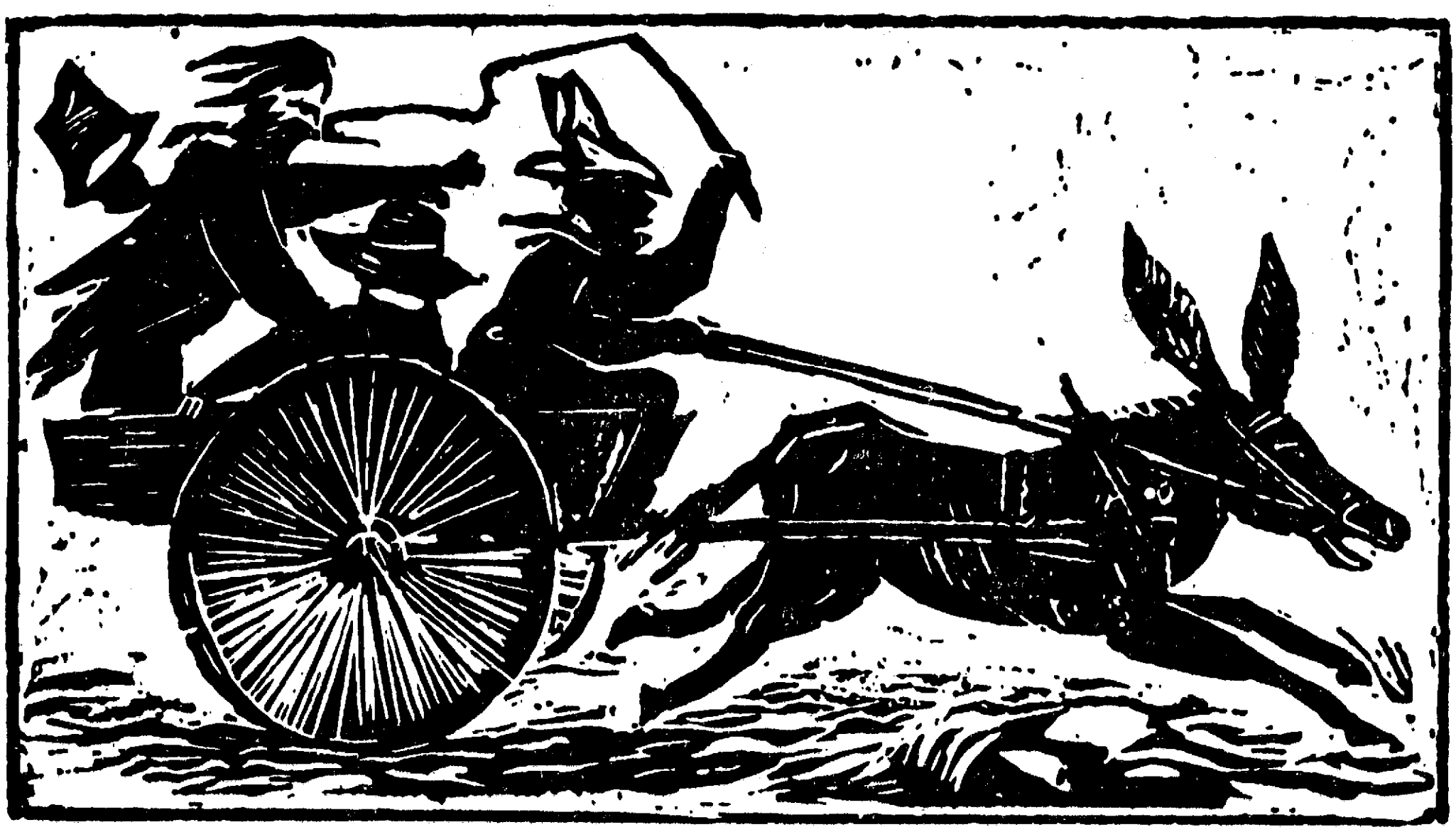
Editor Randolph wrote the editor of the Cincinnati *Enquirer* that the sketch was understood in Tuskaloosa as a "piece of pleasantry gotten up, in a spirit of fun," as a "scare crow" for Ohio Carpetbagger A. S. Lakin and Montgomery Scalawag

[18]*Ibid.*, September 8, 1868.
[19]*Ibid.*, October 6, 1868.

Hays and Warner (*arcades ambo*) in Tuskaloosa, Oct. 28.

[Plate 7]

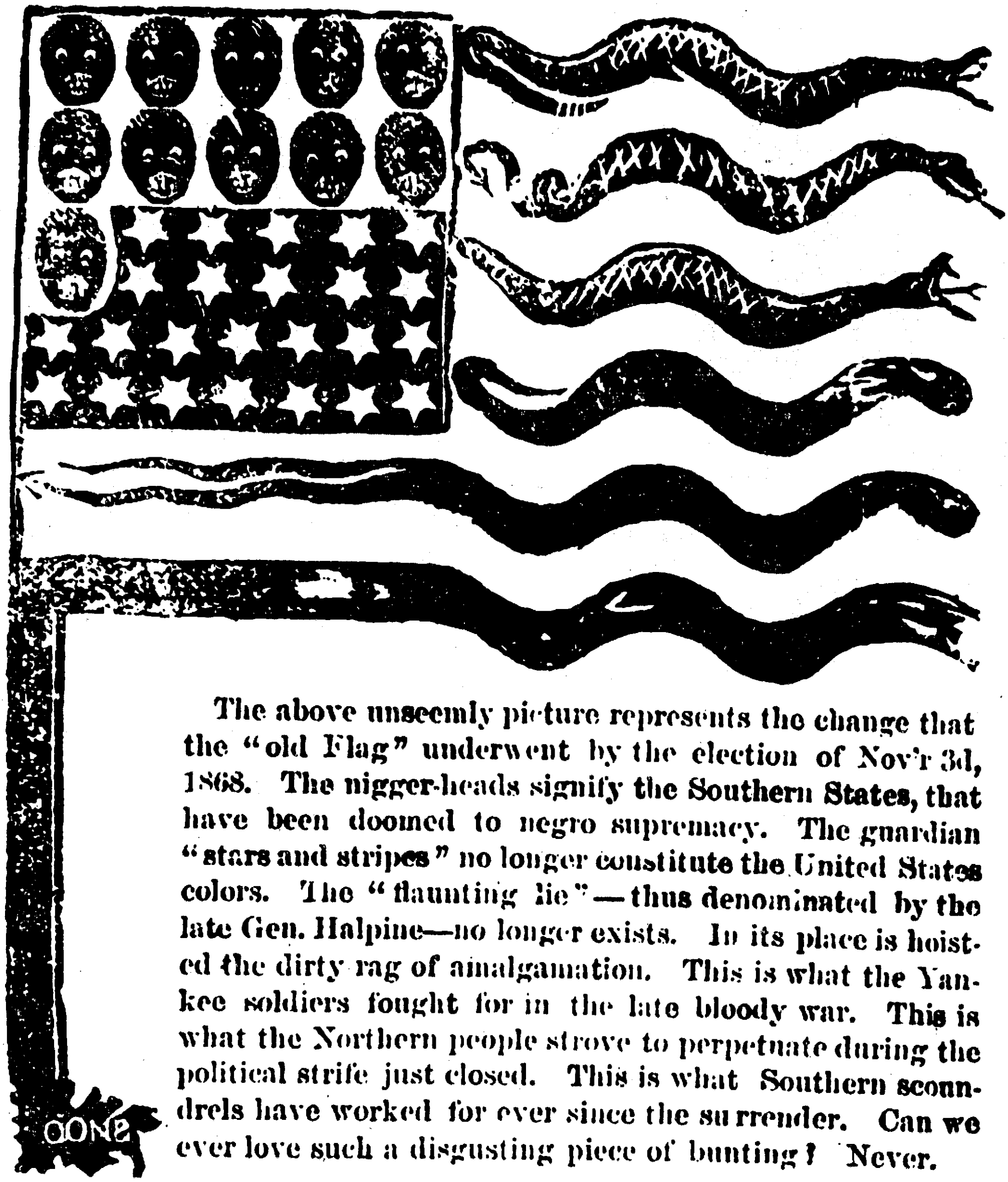
Radical Hegira.



"The Wicked fleeth when no man pursueth."

[Plate 8]

The Nigger-Spangled Banner, or the United States Flag as it is!

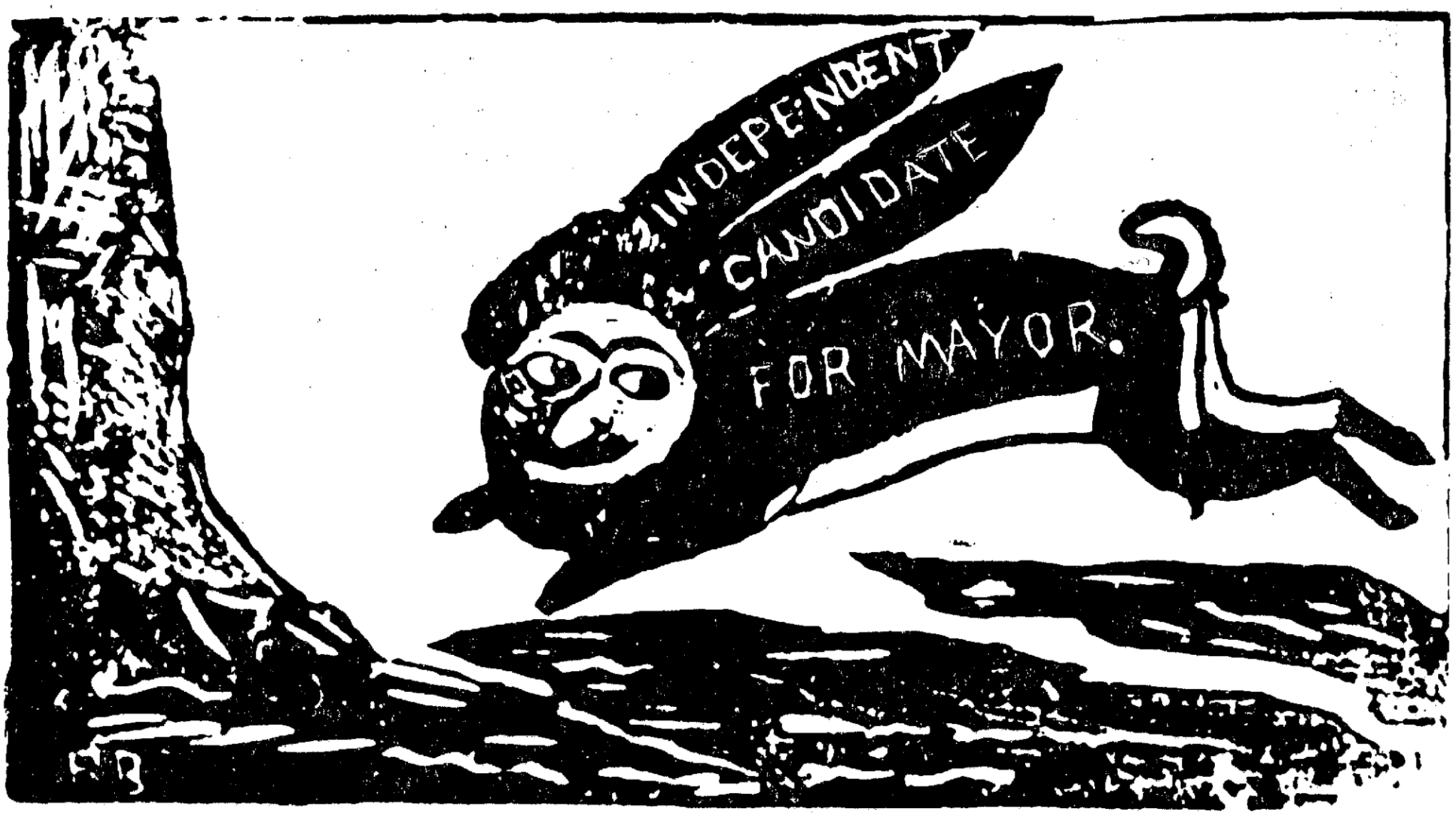


The above unseemly picture represents the change that the "old Flag" underwent by the election of Nov'r 3d, 1868. The nigger-heads signify the Southern States, that have been doomed to negro supremacy. The guardian "stars and stripes" no longer constitute the United States colors. The "flaunting lie"—thus denominated by the late Gen. Halpine—no longer exists. In its place is hoisted the dirty rag of amalgamation. This is what the Yankee soldiers fought for in the late bloody war. This is what the Northern people strove to perpetuate during the political strife just closed. This is what Southern scoundrels have worked for ever since the surrender. Can we ever love such a disgusting piece of bunting? Never.

[Plate 9]

A Sample Grant Voter.
[Plate 10]

O Shame, Where is thy Blush!
[Plate 11]



Buck Rabitte on the Rampage.
[Plate 12]

N. B. Cloud, who had been in Tuskaloosa at the time the cartoon had appeared. Had it been intended seriously, said Randolph, the cartoon would never have gone into the paper's columns. Because the wood-cut had been "basely perverted by bad men for party purposes," the State Democratic Executive Committee and the newspapers of Alabama, including the *Monitor*, repudiated all sympathy with what Randolph termed the misinterpretation of the cartoon.[20]

While the uproar over the September 1 cartoon quieted, there were no further wood-cuts until November 3, 1868, when two appeared. One caricatured a recent Republican meeting in Tuskaloosa. [See Plate 7.] As Congressman Charles Hayes and Senator Willard Warner addressed the meeting, guns were fired in the crowd, and a general panic occurred. Fortunately, no one was hurt. Republicans blamed Democrats for the disturbance, while Democrats accused Republicans of seeking "martyrdom and political capital.[21] A second cartoon in the November 3 issue depicted what Democrats expected would happen when the election returns came in.[22] [See Plate 8.]

The next two issues contained cartoons attacking general Republican Reconstruction rather than an individual Republican. The November 10 issue characterized Republican corruption of the U.S. flag with a short caption beneath the wood-cut. [See Plate 9.] The next issue on November 17 simply depicted a representative Grant voter in the recent 1868 presidential election in which the Republicans had carried Alabama. [See Plate 10.]

The last two caricatures of the year appeared December 15, 1868, returning the *Monitor's* attack upon individual Republicans—one a political figure and the other a Tuskaloosa merchant. One wood-cut reproduced the caricature of Marshal John Purcell ("Big Ugly") first printed June 23, 1868. [See Plate 11.] An accompanying editorial renewed the *Monitor's* verbal criticism of the policies of the local Tuskaloosa government. On another page of the same issue a wood-cut portrayed B. Rabbittee, owner of a dry goods store in Tuskaloosa. [See Plate 12.]

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[20]*Ibid.*

[21]Tuskaloosa *Independent Monitor*, November 3, 1868.

[22]*Ibid.*

[Plate 13]

[Plate 14]

The *Monitor's* artist was still for the first months of the next year, 1869, while state politics were quiet. On March 2 the *Monitor* printed the first of two cartoons returning to the topic of the famous September 1 caricature—Republicanism and the faculty of the University of Alabama. Democrats criticized the university as being swamped with Republicans unqualified for teaching. The March 2 issue caricatured Vernon Henry, newly appointed professor of history, logic, and metaphysics and commented editorially below the cartoon. [See Plate 13.]

> The above picture represents the arrival of Vernon Henry, &c., (so-called Professor of History, Logic, and Metaphysics, at the State University) in Tuskaloosa. Like himself, his puppies belong to a very poor breed of dogs. His double-barrelled shot-gun has been loaded so long, that he is afraid to shoot it off; and this fact may account for his failure to use it, as he once threatened. He may be seen, any day, when he is not drunk, leading his puppies through some of the by-streets, for exercise. These puppies are complained of, by negroes, because of their disposition to suck all the eggs in the neighborhood. Their master is a "sucker," but of a different sort. He swigs from a black bottle containing newly made tanglefoot whisky; said by some to be procured from the negro bar-room, near the Court-House. On yesterday week, this excellent and most learned apology for a professor, was sadly drunk on our streets—had to be taken by some one, for pure pity's sake, to a house near by, and put to bed. Just to think of it! A professor, naturally an oaf, and artificially a sot! Whew! Who can stand such a fellow?

The March 2 issue also editorially attacked another University of Alabama faculty member, V. H. Vaughan, but without an accompanying drawing.

The April 6 issue of the *Monitor* ridiculed J.F.D. Richards, still another new university professor, by cartoon and this explanation. [See Plate 14.]

> The above picture represents the meeting of soi-disant "Professor" J.F.D. Richards — he of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy — and Shandy Jones (negro), near the

latter's barber-shop, on Main street. The following paragraph, taken from the *Monitor* of the 23d March, ult., gives some idea of the character of old Richards, and of the manner of the famous meeting, also explained by a glance at the above wood-cut:

"WHAT SCARAMOUCH IS THIS?"—Why, it is old Richards, the reverend 'fessor of Natural Philosophy, who arrived about two weeks since, to assist in disgracing the new State University. He is the greatest rascal of them all, for he comes in the form of a wolf in sheep's clothing. He figured in the nigger Legislature very extensively as a supporter of all the most obnoxious measures that were introduced. He went for the elevation of the negro race, by belching forth vindictive harangues against "rebels," and by using his Yankee cuteness in pushing on those horrible bills, striking at the very existence of the Southern whites. The bare idea of such a depraved creature being in this vicinity, is enough to sicken honest men. He celebrated himself, soon after his arrival, by embracing the stinking buck gorilla — Shandy Jones — on the streets. It seems that these two were bed-fellows, when in Montgomery together. We purpose to have a wood-cut of this street-hugging scene very soon.

The young gorilla, to be seen climbing the barber's pole, is a son of the old gorilla Jones — said to be an applicant for admission into the new State University. Richards is, undoubtedly, a great scamp. We have not only his record to prove the assertion, but, what is more conclusive, his impudent, Yankee-looking, repulsive phiz. He is the best subject for Ku-Klux treatment we have ever seen. The old rascal dresses elegantly, and struts these streets with much importance, followed by his numerous Yankee progeny. If boys were anything like as mischievous as formerly, he would be driven off the streets with well-aimed rotten eggs. The sight of Richards and his little Richardses is disgusting in the extreme.

The above cartoon affords a true-to-life description of the hugging.

[Plate 15]

"12:40 on the Shell!"

"OUR LAST SHOT."

[Plate 16]

[Plate 17]

[Plate 18]

These pictorial assaults, plus regular editorial ones, on the Republican faculty of the university sufficiently annoyed the Republican government at Montgomery that they threatened to move the university out of Tuskaloosa unless the *Monitor* quieted down.[23]

The remaining cartoons published by the *Monitor* dealt with random subjects and appeared infrequently. In May, 1869, Governor William H. Smith dispatched his private secretary, D. L. Dalton, and Secretary of State Charles A. Miller to Tuskaloosa to investigate reports of Ku Klux Klan activity. The *Monitor* dubbed the investigation "Governor Smith's Smelling Committee" and sketched Carpetbagger Miller for its readers. A pledge of a future sketch of Scalawag Dalton was not fulfilled.[24] [See Plate 15.]

In June the *Monitor* attacked John G. Stokes, the editor of the Republican Montgomery *Alabama State Journal.* Stokes had denounced Randolph's assaults on Miller and Dalton, and now Randolph returned the compliment with a cartoon, an explanation and a poem.[25] [See Plate 16.]

> The above cartoon truthfully represents the appearance of Captain John G. Stokes, "of the Mule Marines," as he appeared in the charge that he made, solo, in the month of April, *from* the memorable battlefield of Shiloh. At that time, he had nothing like so much blubber upon his person as he has accumulated since; for Confederate rations were not of a quality and quantity to preserve obesity. We knew Stokes about the time that he reached Montgomery from the war path, and we vouch for the correctness of this picture. We have seen him since the war, after he had become pampered and bloated from high living and heavy drinking. The "critter" that he rode so unmercifully on the occasion dropped from exhaustion, soon after passing the 50 mile post; when the valiant Falstaffian "rebel" tried what speed there was in his own clumsy heels. He escaped, as a matter of course, after having such a long start. He is now engaged in moulding "bullets of the brain" for the

[23]Tuskaloosa *Independent Monitor,* March 2, 1869.
[24]*Ibid.,* May 18, 1869.
[25]*Ibid.,* June 8, 1869.