

The Confederate Minority in California

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INTRODUCTION

DURING the Civil War the majority of the people of California remained loyal to the Union; however, a small minority supported the Confederacy. Although their size and strength were exaggerated by alarmists, the Confederates were never organized to the degree of offering real resistance to Union control. Only seven per cent of California's population had migrated from the Southern states, and the possibility of the creation of a strong and disciplined Confederate minority was slight.¹ Nevertheless, the Southern sympathizers were active in small and loosely organized groups. They formed secret societies and disguised themselves as miners in an attempt to aid the Confederacy. There was some recruiting for the Confederate Army, and bandit parties and privateering enterprises were organized to capture California gold. Confederate propagandists used the press and pulpit to execrate the Union cause. They belittled the Union military effort and magnified the glory of Southern military victories. These varied activities of isolated groups of Confederates placed the Unionists continually on guard to render ineffective the attempts to aid the Secessionist cause. To counterattack these Confederate threats, federal troops were stationed in localities of Southerner sentiment, and "Union Clubs" and "Home Guards" were organized throughout California.

I. SECRET SOCIETIES

Two Confederate secret societies, the Knights of the Golden Circle and the Knights of the Columbian Star, terrified loyal Californians. One author has said, "... the primary object of the movement which numbered 100,000 men was to take the Presidio, Mint, and Custom House at Mare Island, and the Arsenal at Benicia."² This number was an exaggeration, but the plan to capture the various strategic posts was an actuality. A week before the gubernatorial election of September 4, 1861, the merchants of San Francisco petitioned Simon Cameron, the secretary of war, not to send men from California for service in Texas as they were needed at home to prevent secession. The merchants declared that the position of the state was too hazardous, and that a majority of the present state officials were avowed Secessionists. They stated that the Knights of the Golden Circle were 16,000 strong, and had allied themselves with the Mexicans by promising them a return of their stolen lands.³

The secret societies were particularly active in the southern part of the state, the Confederate stronghold, and even in the strongly Unionist city of San Francisco a secret order was instrumental in recruiting soldiers for the Confederate Army. Men were shipped on every steamer leaving the city for Mazatlan, from which port they proceeded to cross Mexico to Texas to fight for the Confederacy.⁴

Typical of the secret societies was the Knights of the Columbian Star. It was so well-guarded and cloaked in secrecy that not even its own members were aware of the entirety of the organization. Each locality had a "lieutenant-governor-general" and a "deputy-governor-general." A "governor-general" for the state attempted to coordinate the activities of the local units. The society was divided into three degrees, and each had its own signs, passwords, grips, and oaths so that members would be able to recognize one another.⁵

The meetings were small in order to avoid suspicion, and only officers and a few trusted members assembled to initiate recruits and to devise the work of the society. Before a candidate was invested with the secret codes, he was examined as to age, occupation, residence, birthplace, military service, and his political opinions regarding States' rights, slavery, and the right to resist "unconstitutional laws." After satisfactorily completing the examination, the candidate took a long and elaborate oath. He swore to resist the election of Lincoln even to the extent of using the force of arms. He also swore to obey his superior officers, to resist all attempts by federal authorities to execute laws considered "unconstitutional" by his officers, to adhere to and support the doctrine of States' rights, and to support the right of a state to maintain the institution of slavery.⁶

Upon accepting the obligations of the oath, the recruits were invested with the signs, passwords, and grips. A member of the first degree upon meeting a brother acted as if he was fitting his coat. This sign was answered by carelessly throwing the left hand to the back. This satisfied the requirement of recognition, and the challenger proceeded with the password as follows:

Q. Do you know Jones?

A. What Jones?

Q. Preacher Jones.

A. Yes.

Q. Have you the password?

A. I have.

Q. Will you give it to me?

A. That is not the way I obtained it.

Q. What will you do with it?

A. I will divide it with you.

Q. Well, you divide it, and begin.

A. No, you begin.

Q. No, you begin: the word is yours.

A. Death.

Q. To.

A. All.

Q. Traitors.⁷

The members of the second degree had laborious and ceremonious rituals when they met one another. After completing various grips, hand-shakes, and gestures, and saying, "Andalusia," "Eloi," "Brother," "Right," they both were satisfied that they were members of the second degree of the Knights of the Columbian Star. The society also had signs for special occasions. The sign of danger was to place the left hand upon the breast and the right hand vertically with the elbow as high as the shoulders. The sign of distress was to clasp the hands together, unlock the fingers, raise them to the chin, and say, "Santa Maria."⁸

These examples illustrate the secrecy, preciseness, and precaution of the Confederate societies. The fact of secrecy left contemporaries in the dark as to the membership of the Knights of the Columbian Star, but one investigator had evidence to believe that Beriah Brown, editor of the *Democratic Press* of San Francisco, was "governor-general" of California, and Charles L. Weller was "lieutenant-governor-general." This investigator also revealed the existence of a plan to elect a "governor-general" of the Pacific Coast who was to have control over the activities of the order in California, Nevada, and Idaho. The investigator believed that Joseph P. Hoge of San Francisco was to receive this position.⁹

The organization of the Knights of the Golden Circle was similar. Members were recruited; took oaths of secrecy, and were armed. The members of the society were often in disguise as Union men, cattle herders, and miners.¹⁰

The Confederate secret societies were considered as a threat to the security of the southern part of the state. Their widespread organization encouraged expression of Confederate sympathy, and resulted in outbursts of hostilities which were annoying to the Unionists. The federal government took precautionary measures to counteract the activities of the Confederate societies in southern California, and the region was heavily guarded by federal troops throughout the period of the war.

II. MILITARY PREPARATIONS AND BANDITRY

Another matter, giving consternation to the Unionists, was the machinations of groups of miners who congregated in the Bear and Holcomb valleys and in the hills of San Bernardino County. The strength of the pseudo-miners was estimated to be from 1,000 to 1,800 men. Union alarmists asserted that the miners were concentrating in large groups in readiness for sudden participation in guerrilla warfare and banditry. Various charges were made

that the miners also planned to invade Mexico to prepare the way for the conquest of California by a Confederate army.¹¹

Although many of these assertions were exaggerations, they created a great deal of fear and anxiety. Confederates openly expressed their sympathies, and the exaggerations by alarmists served only to make the adherents of the Secessionist cause appear stronger than they actually were. Nevertheless, the Confederates did cause various disturbances. Attempts to form Union Clubs at San Bernardino and El Monte failed, and during the nights the streets rang with cheers for Jeff Davis and the Stars and Bars. Occasionally, Southern sympathizers and federal soldiers engaged in street fights in which a few soldiers were killed. Thus, to maintain order, it was necessary to station troops at San Bernardino until the termination of the war and to make intermittent encampments at El Monte.

Despite their organizations, the Southern sympathizers failed to cope with a constant military occupation by federal troops of strategic points in California, and they were unable to act. By the middle of 1863, the possibility of a successful armed uprising was lessened, but the organizations remained intact until late in 1864. The miners continued to congregate in the San Bernardino mountains, and the canyons were filled with camps of idle men who sustained themselves by hunting, trapping, and mining in hope that they might find a way to aid the Confederacy.¹²

Some recruiting for the Confederate Army occurred in California, and a few young Southern sympathizers left the state for the South. The route used from southern California was by way of Temecula, Warner's Ranch, and across the desert to Yuma. The journey was easily made since most of the residents along the route were of Southern sentiment. Thus to prevent the sending of expeditions from California and to frustrate any attempted invasion of California, Fort Yuma was made a strong military post and prison by the federal government.¹³

The threat of a Confederate invasion of California was one reason for stationing federal troops in southern California and Arizona. Although minor skirmishes occurred in Arizona, the Confederacy was too involved with the war in the East to consider an engagement in the Far West. Nevertheless, Judge Lansford W. Hastings of Los Angeles presented Jefferson Davis with a plan to raise an army in California, and though the Confederate government refused his proposal, it is pertinent to the story, since the scheme was to make use of the pseudo-miners in southern California. Fake mining companies of Southern partisans were to be organized, and the secret societies were to distribute propaganda pamphlets for recruiting. After thousands of troops were raised in California, the Southerners were to reduce Fort Yuma. The army was then to attack Fort Buchanan, and enter Texas to join the Confederate Army.¹⁴

In a letter written from City Point, Virginia, on January 8, 1865, Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant warned Major General Irwin McDowell, the commander of the Department of the Pacific, to be prepared to cope with an intended invasion of California from Mexico. William McKendree Gwin, the former Senator and political leader of California, was active in Sonora in the service of Emperor Maximilian. Apprehensive of Gwin's designs, General Grant wrote, "May it not be his intentions to entice into Sonora the dissatisfied spirits of California, and if the opportunity occurs, organize them and invade the State?"¹⁵ Grant closed his letters by saying that if the invasion occurred, it would justify the restoration of the legitimate government in Mexico by Union forces. However, an invasion was improbable by this time when the Confederacy was struggling to live, and when in California the Confederate organizations were decidedly weaker.

Few incidents of Confederate banditry occurred in California, but one is unique and merits attention. During the evening of June 30, 1864, the down stage of the Pioneer Stage Company from Virginia City was robbed by six armed men near Sportsman's Hall, about thirteen miles above Placerville.¹⁶ After looting the gold bullion belonging to Wells Fargo & Company, the captain of the band gave the driver of the stage at the time of the escape a receipt which read as follows:

This is to certify that I have received from Wells, Fargo & Co., the sum of \$. cash, for the purpose of outfitting recruits enlisted in California for the confederate states' army. R. Henry Ingram, captain commanding company, C.S.A.¹⁷

The following day the bandits went to the Somerset House. Here they encountered the agents of the law, and a fight ensued in which the deputy sheriff of El Dorado County, Joseph M. Staples, was killed. Some of the bandits were captured, but a few managed to escape. Later it was revealed that the robbery was connected with a scheme in Santa Clara County to recruit and equip soldiers for the Confederate Army. In July, others were captured by a sheriff's posse near San Jose. The confession of one of the captured bandits led to the arrest of the remaining members of the band. Of these a few were arrested at a Democratic meeting in San Jose, and a Unionist newspaper describing the arrest reported as follows:

There can be but little doubt that this band of robbers was organized about the first of May last, for the purpose . . . of procuring volunteers for Jeff Davis in this State. Money, also, was wanted; and to get it they went into the legitimate business of Copperhead guerrillas, robbing and cutting throats on the highway. Every man of them is known to be a "Constitutional Democrat." How execrable in the eyes of all good men should be that party which yields murderers and assassins, thieves and highway robbers to the common jails of the State by the dozen at a haul!¹⁸

During the July term, the El Dorado County grand jury indicted ten of the brigands for the murder of Sheriff Staples. One of these was Thomas B. Poole, who in the previous year had been a participant in an ill-fated Confederate privateering venture which was attempted at San Francisco. The

defendants pleaded not guilty, and were given separate trials. Poole was sentenced to be hanged. An appeal to the State Supreme Court was rejected, and he was executed on September 10, 1865, at Placerville. A second bandit received a twenty year sentence in the State Prison at San Quentin, and the others were released on legal technicalities.¹⁹

III. PRIVATEERING

Confederates early conceived the idea of preventing California from trading with the North, and the lure of gold in Pacific waters resulted in attempted privateering ventures. It was readily conceivable that a stoppage of the flow of gold from the mines of California would weaken the credit and purchasing power of the Union, and the large annual shipments of gold and silver from San Francisco to Northern and European ports appeared as rich prizes to Confederate adventurers. Asbury Harpending and Ridgley Greathouse, natives of Kentucky, planned a large scale attack on United States commerce in the Pacific. In 1863 their enterprise was launched at San Francisco. This incident is known as the "*Chapman Affair*."²⁰

Harpending went to Richmond, and procured letters of marque from the Confederate government which authorized him to burn, bond, or capture United States vessels. He returned to San Francisco in either January or February of 1863, and began preparations for the enterprise. A young Englishman, Alfred Rubery by name, joined the adventurers. Harpending hired William C. Law, a sea captain who had been employed by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. Greathouse, the financier of the enterprise, purchased the *J. M. Chapman*, a swift ninety-ton vessel. The ship was converted into a privateer. A crew was hired, and arms and ammunition were concealed aboard the vessel.²¹

Harpending devised extensive plans which would include the occupation of an island rendezvous off Mexico, and the capture of larger vessels with the intent of having a formidable fleet of privateers flying the Stars and Bars in Pacific waters. The adventurers cleared the ship at the customhouse, disguising themselves as merchants who intended to engage in coastal trade with Mexican ports. However, the federal authorities became aware of the plans by the betrayal of William C. Law who revealed the enterprise of which he was captain. In the meantime, federal agents kept a daily watch of the proceedings of the privateers, and when they attempted an escape to sea on the morning of March 15, 1863, the Confederates were captured by customhouse and naval officers.²²

The "*Chapman Affair*" was but one of the many attempts at privateering on California commerce. The other incidents were also frustrated by the federal government. They ended in the same, if not more, futile manner. Yet the attempts at privateering indicate the strong desire of a Confederate minority in a Unionist stronghold to aid a cause which they believed to be justified.

IV. PROPAGANDA THROUGH THE PRESS

The newspaper was the most important propaganda vehicle supporting the Confederate cause in California. After the Unionists won control of California, the Secessionist newspapers were few in number and expressed the feelings of only a small proportion of the population. Their number and influence have been exaggerated because of the suppression of Democratic newspapers by the Unionist and military authorities. Many Democratic newspapers which opposed the war and Lincoln's administration have been classified as the "Copperhead" press, but they were not Confederate and did not outrightly support the Confederacy. Some were suppressed for the slightest opposition to the administration and have been incorrectly labeled Confederate.

The Confederate newspapers were short-lived and found conditions unfavorable in California for the dissemination of their propaganda. Nevertheless, they were both sensational and dramatic, and being minority papers they appear novel and ridiculous today. However, the majority of the Unionists found them irritating and disturbing, and their reaction was to suppress and destroy the newspapers.

Most vociferous of the Confederate newspapers was the *Visalia Equal Rights Expositor*. Its editorials urged support of secession, fought against Unionist coercion, discouraged enlistment in the Union Army, magnified Union defeats, belittled Union victories, and ridiculed President Lincoln as "a narrow-minded bigot," "an unprincipled demagogue," "a drivelling, idiotic, imbecile creature," who is "... regarded with pity approaching contempt by the whole world, and will die universally execrated."²³

Visalia was a veritable hot-bed of Secessionist sentiment. It has been said that there were more Confederates in proportion to population in Tulare County than anywhere else outside the Confederacy.²⁴ Every day the Confederates rode through the streets of Visalia, and gave cheers for Jeff Davis and Stonewall Jackson. Dr. W. A. Russell, a typical "Secesh" leader of Visalia, after paying his license, posted it in a conspicuous place in his office and wrote under it the words: "I pay this license to help murder my people."²⁵

In the local elections the "Anti-coercion" party triumphed over the Union party, and it was only natural that a Confederate newspaper would receive support and circulation in Visalia.²⁶ In such an atmosphere Lovick P. Hall and S. J. Garrison, two ardent Confederate journalists, saw the opportunity for the expression of their sympathies. In the fall of 1862, they purchased the *Visalia Tulare Post* and gave it the more appropriate name of *Equal Rights Expositor*.²⁷

Lovick Pierce Hall, named by his journalistic companions as "Long Primer" Hall, was born in Mississippi. He learned the newspaper business

in the 1830's, and his subsequent career was as a Democratic editor. He came to California in the 1850's, and edited the *Butte Record* and the *Placer Democrat*. In 1857, he appeared in Oregon as a journalist urging the adoption of slavery. In 1860, he returned to California and wrote for various Democratic organs.²⁸ It is in connection with his writings in the *Expositor* at Visalia that his career becomes of relevant interest.

Experience made Hall a very able writer, and he clearly and vigorously justified the principles of the secession philosophy by blending logic with emotion. He carefully presented the arguments for States' rights in a logical fashion, but he was at his best in writing inflammatory editorials in violent denunciation of Lincoln's administration and its prosecution of war against the Confederacy.

In one of its first editorials the *Expositor* justified the right of the Confederate states in secession: "So far as the present unhappy civil war is concerned, we neither fear nor hesitate to express the belief that the South stands justified before God and before the world, for the position she has assumed."²⁹

In their Thanksgiving Day issue of November 29, 1862, the Confederate editors magnified Union defeats and gave thanks for Confederate victories in the following mimic prayer:

O Lord, we thank thee for letting the rebels wallop us at the battle of Pittsburg Landing—for letting them smite us hip and thigh, even unto the destruction of 9,600 of our good loyal soldiers, and 463 of our officers; and for giving speed to their legs through the awful swamps of Chickahominy; and, O Lord, most especially do we thank thee for the licking they gave us at Bull Run the second, and assisting our flight from that fatal field; and, O Lord, never while we live will we forget Antietam, where we had 200,000 and they only 70,000—if they, O Lord, had a happened to a had as many men as we, we'd have been a done gone in—and that friendly creek between us, the mountain that kept our men from running—and, O God of Isaac and Jacob, your special providence in sending night to our aid saved us. For the battle of Perrysville, O God, when we lost 20,000 and the rebels only 2,500, we thank thee also.³⁰

Both the person and the acts of Lincoln were condemned and ridiculed in the various issues of the *Expositor*. Lincoln was described as the President of a few manufacturing corporations. His election was regarded as accidental. His cabinet and Congress were called: "the most tyrannical and corrupt crew that ever polluted the earth,"³¹ and once Lincoln was referred to as, "the cadaverous, long shanked, mule-countenanced rail splitter of Illinois."³²

The *Expositor* attempted to weaken the Union cause by various propaganda techniques. The war that the "Abolition Congress" or the "Black Republican Congress" was prosecuting was described as unnecessary and unconstitutional. The war was regarded as an unrelenting war against an unoffending people who were denied the right of self-government. The liberties of the white man were depicted as being disregarded and made sub-

servient to the interests of the black man. Victory for the South was forecast, and it was said that the North would stand a monument of disgrace.³³

Illustrative documents supporting the States' rights philosophy of government, such as the Kentucky Resolutions of 1798, were printed in the *Expositor*. When the news of proposals for the colonization of Negroes reached the *Expositor*, the editors urged as an alternative the colonization of abolitionists. In describing the news of a failure by Union soldiers to arrest a Secessionist editor, the larger type above the news article read: "FEDERAL TYRANNY RESISTED—ABOLITION VILLAINY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED."³⁴ Besides suppressing news unfavorable to the Confederacy, the *Expositor* fabricated news. The following is an example:

Lo The Poor White Man.—White troops are shivering with cold and suffering terrible exposure, in consequence of lack of proper and sufficient clothing, a contract for the manufacture of fifty thousand suits for the delicate contrabands has been awarded by the War Department to a firm in the city of New York. The negro is provided for, and comfortably clothed—the white soldiers are neglected.³⁵

On September 5, 1862, by order of General George Wright, commanding the Department of the Pacific, the *Expositor*, together with the *Stockton Argus* and *San Jose Tribune*, were denied the privilege of sending their sheets through the United States mails or express companies because of "disloyal practices." Later the *Placerville Mountain Democrat* and the *Stockton Democrat* were also excluded from the mails.³⁶ The Unionist journal and the rival of the *Expositor*, the *Visalia Delta*, undoubtedly welcomed General Wright's edict, but the *Expositor's* reaction to the edict was written as follows:

This act of despotism has by no means astonished us. We have waited in weekly expectation of it ever since we commenced our labors. A free press has never yet been tolerated by any power that conspired against the liberties of the people. Will any one now dare say that they live under a free government, that thus outrages the liberties of the press and of free speech? . . . Men who will continue their support of such a government steeped in infamy as it is, are fit only for slaves.³⁷

The order eliminating the disloyal newspapers from the mails increased the cost of their circulation. Hall and Garrison could not meet the additional cost, and it was only the voluntary contributions of their friends that made further publication possible. Wright's edict remained in effect until the following January, and during the period of its enforcement the women of Tulare County kept the *Expositor* alive by their contributions of more than \$300. It is of no wonder then that in appreciation of their support the editors published the following poem in the *Expositor*:

THE GIRLS OF TULARE

Hurrah for the matrons and maids of Tulare,
 Their hearts are as brave, as their faces fair;
 They are as warm and as bright as their own sunny clime,
 That land that they love, with devotion sublime;
 Oh who in the gloomy north can compare?
 With our own southern girls, the girls of Tulare?

CHORUS

Then hurrah for the matrons and maids of Tulare,
Their hearts are as brave as their faces are fair.
How flash their bright eyes with scorn and disdain,
Should any one dare of the south to complain;
Yet like the soft zephyrs that sigh through the cane,
They weep for their kindred, the wounded and slain,
They are gentle and kind, yet with courage so rare,
They could whip all the Union men of Tulare.

CHORUS

Their soft cheeks how they glow when the news, it doth come,
Of all the brave deeds that our hero's hath done.
For the cause, all they have they would freely bestow—
And nightly they pray for old Abe's overthrow.
Oh! may all the blessings that Heaven can spare,
Be theirs, the brave wives and maiden of Tulare.³⁸

On October 8, 1862, a military post, Camp Babbitt, was established about one mile north of Visalia with two companies from the Second Cavalry of the California Volunteers.³⁹ The soldiers were stationed there to prevent any danger to the government from the hands of the Confederates. Visalia was now threatened by a veritable civil war, and the Southerners continually insulted the soldiers and attempted to shoot the buttons off their coats. The soldiers were called, "Lincoln's hirelings," and were told that they wore, "Abe Lincoln's livery."⁴⁰ Fisticuffs between the citizens and soldiers were of daily occurrence, and on November 29, 1862, one soldier and two citizens were shot in a fight. The following day the soldier died from the wounds inflicted.⁴¹

Shortly after the establishment of Camp Babbitt, "Home Guards" were organized by the Union men of Visalia, and one man, apparently a Southerner said: "Some of them were distressingly loyal—so much so, that they did not think it right for Southern men, nor those that sympathized with the South to live."⁴² Since it was deprived of its postal privileges, the *Expositor* became more and more bitter in its abuse of the government, and in the words of the commander of the Second Cavalry at Visalia, "until it goes as far if not further than the vilest sheet published in Richmond." The commander demanded the arrest of the editors, Hall and Garrison, and said: ". . . if this paper is allowed to be published, as it has been . . . all the officers between here and the Potomac . . . cannot prevent frequent collisions between the soldiers and the citizens, the ultimate result of which will be civil war."⁴³

Finally, Hall and Garrison were arrested for "disloyal practices,"⁴⁴ but upon taking the oath of loyalty they were released. Confederates in California had often taken these oaths of loyalty, but they paid little attention to them and called them either the "gag oath" or "military despotism oath."⁴⁵

Hall and Garrison continued to print disloyalty. There was no change in their editorial policy, and Hall wrote and printed four days after his arrest as follows: "As to the oath we have taken, it conflicts with no sentiment we before entertained, and the character of the paper will undergo no change. We believe the war to be wrong, and dishonoring to the government, and shall oppose it with all the zeal we can command."⁴⁶

On March 5, 1863, Hall published his last issue. An article which was abusive to volunteers in the army, entitled "California Cossacks,"⁴⁷ infuriated the Union men and soldiers of Visalia, and they decided to take matters into their own hands. On the night of March 5, 1863, shortly after nine o'clock, a mob of seventy or eighty Union men, led by soldiers from Camp Babbitt, took fifteen minutes to demolish completely the press and offices of the *Expositor*. They broke the doors and windows of the building. Then they broke the press, type, paper, and ink, and threw them into the street. Having finished their task, the self-styled vigilantes fired shots into the air, and shouted, "where's your secession paper now!"⁴⁸ The Unionists now paraded up Visalia's main street, stopped in front of the offices of the loyal newspaper, the *Delta*, and saluted it with three rousing cheers.

After the destruction of his newspaper, Hall joined the staff of the *Merced Banner*. In February 1864, this newspaper was also destroyed by mob action, and Hall left for Jackson where he wrote political articles for the *Amador Dispatch*. But soon he was arrested again and imprisoned in Fort Alcatraz where he remained until his release in September 1865, after the war had ended.⁴⁹

The *Expositor* was an exception in that it went to extremes in its support of the Confederacy. The other pro-Confederate journals were not so abrupt and outspoken. Nevertheless, they wrote vulgar accusations against Lincoln, and opposed the Emancipation Proclamation. They regarded the draft as a suppression of human liberty. News stories of graft in Federal departments were fabricated, and other tactics, already told, were used to win sympathy for the Confederacy. In condemning Lincoln for his Emancipation Proclamation, the *Merced Banner*, of Snelling, said:

President Lincoln sits in an easy chair at Washington and issues his proclamation, taking the property of the people without their consent, to pay for the freedom of the negro at the rate of \$300 a head, and to feed, clothe, and educate them, which means to excite their brute passions against their masters and mistresses, and instigate them to such massacres as we have witnessed. . . . Such things as these take place among us, and yet there are miserable, slavish dupes who uphold the President and say it is all right. What signifies that the man who usurps such power is called President? He is none the less a despot. Whoso supports a man or party who commits murder, is himself a participant in the crime.⁵⁰

Most of the newspapers of Confederate sympathy remained within the limits of Unionist toleration, and only reported the news from a Southern slant. For example, the *San Joaquin Republican* in describing the war in the

South, emphasized the unity and determination of the South in its efforts "to annihilate the invading foe," and it said, "the war is waged for the defence of Southern homes and firesides, of Southern nationality."⁵¹ The *Constitutional Democrat* of Ukiah and the *Marysville Express* violently opposed the Republican party and the Lincoln administration.⁵² The *Sonoma County Democrat* of Santa Rosa upheld States' rights.⁵³ Many short propaganda witticisms such as the following appeared under the main news articles of the *Merced Banner*: "A loyal *league* is defined to be the distance between an abolitionist and *any* battle field."⁵⁴

When the news was received of Lincoln's assassination on April 15, 1865, the people of San Francisco were shocked into an emotional despair, and they wandered restlessly through the city streets. Resentful mobs began to destroy the offices of several San Francisco newspapers which had occasionally opposed Lincoln's administration. A group of men entered the offices of the *Democratic Press*, and after a thorough job of general smashing, they threw all the type out of the window. The editor, Beriah Brown, immediately left for San Leandro. The police broke up the mob, but it assembled again and entered the offices of the Catholic newspaper, the *Monitor*. Again the mob administered a similar treatment. Not yet satisfied with their damages, they demolished the *News Letter*, edited by the Englishman, Frederick Marriott, and the *Occident*, published by the Secessionist, Zachariah Montgomery. After burning the printing cases of these newspapers in the streets, the mob prepared themselves for the invasion of the offices of the French newspaper, *Echo du Pacifique*. However, the crowd was pacified by Fred MacCrellich, the owner of the *Alta California*. He succeeded in saving the French journal which was in the same building as his newspaper. The police now arrived on the scene, and drove the mob back. General Irwin McDowell placed the city under martial law, and the United States troops guarded the streets of San Francisco. The mobs were dispersed, and by the next morning quiet was restored.⁵⁵

V. PROPAGANDA THROUGH THE PULPIT

The pulpit was another vehicle of propaganda used by Confederates in California. There were some Southern sympathizers in the Methodist South, Catholic, and Episcopal churches, but the churches as bodies were loyal to the Union.⁵⁶ A report of the committee on the "State of the Country" of the Methodist Church typifies the general feeling of churchmen in California. The report read as follows: "We are in favor of the most decisive blows, however painful their effects, as the most merciful solution of the dreadful problem which the seceding States have compelled us to grapple with."⁵⁷

However, a few ministers preaching their own opinions, not those of the churches, openly favored the South. Emissaries of the Methodist Church South, penetrating the rural districts of California and as far north as the

Columbia River in Oregon, stirred up a hatred for the Lincoln administration, and spread the gospel of pro-slavery politics. Methodist ministers were viewed suspiciously by the authorities, and when Bishop Kavanaugh of Georgia entered California under a Confederate pass, he was arrested. He was released only after assuring the authorities of his non-political affiliation and willingness to take an oath of loyalty.⁵⁸

The Rev. Sylvester Woodbridge, of Benicia, was an avowed Secessionist. He became a candidate for the State assembly on the John C. Breckinridge platform. The reaction was that his trustees resigned; his choir refused to sing; his Sunday school threatened to leave the church, and the congregation refused to receive the sacrament at his hands.⁵⁹

The Rev. L. D. Hargis, the pastor of the Methodist Church of Stockton, refused to follow the usual Fourth of July custom of ringing the church bell. Despite the pastor's refusal, the infuriated citizens of the city received permission from the church trustees to ring the bell. Determined not to permit the ringing, the pastor locked the doors of the church. The Secessionist group had boasted that the bell would not be rung at sundown on the Fourth. However, the Union men threatened to destroy the church, and on the afternoon of the third, they placed Captain Charles M. Weber's small cannon in front of it. Then they loaded the cannon with powder and scrap iron. On the morning of the Fourth, Stephen Davis, an ardent Unionist, crawled through the church widow, and at sunrise he began to ring the bell. Awakened by the ringing, the pastor hurried to the church. But when he attempted to stop the clanging, Davis twisted his wrist around the rope of the bell. Hargis cried out in pain, and the Union men cheered. Another Secessionist, Thomas Laspeyre, entered the church to aid the pastor, but he received a terrific blow in the face which sent him through the church door onto the sidewalk. Again the crowd cheered, and the incident proved to be a victory for the Unionists.⁶⁰

In San Francisco the Rev. William A. Scott, pastor of the Calvary Presbyterian Church on Bush Street, always offered prayers "for all presidents and rulers and all officers of the army and navy."⁶¹ Scott was a Southerner with a strong sectional feeling. In 1854, he came to San Francisco from New Orleans to fill a vacancy in the church. He became very influential with the congregation, but when war broke out, his popularity waned because of his expression of Confederate sympathy.⁶² He claimed that Jefferson Davis was no more of a traitor than George Washington, and the result was that mobs began to hold demonstrations in front of his church.

At one o'clock in the morning of September 22, 1861, a mob began to assemble in front of the church. American flags were placed on the church, and an effigy hanging by the neck and bearing the inscription, "Dr. Scott, the reverend traitor," was tied to the church building. By eight o'clock, some 2,000 people had assembled around the church. One woman removed

a flag from a lamp post, and a near riot began when a man believed to be a Secessionist was attacked by the crowd. Scott arrived at ten o'clock, and entered the church. A few groans came from the crowd, but they yelled with joy when one man threw an American flag over the entrance and forced the minister to walk beneath it. Scott read a doctrinal sermon, and indirectly dwelt on the fact that the church did not deal with politics, but rather with peace and good will toward men. Soon after the demonstration, Dr. Scott received several threatening letters. Popular demand forced him to resign. The church trustees accepted his resignation, and Scott sailed for Europe.⁶³

VI. OTHER ANTI-UNION SPEAKERS

The Confederates delivered disloyal speeches throughout California during the war period. Perhaps the most famous speech was one delivered by Edmund Randolph on August 5, 1861. Speaking at a Breckinridge convention in Sacramento, Randolph concluded his speech by saying:

My thoughts and my heart are not here tonight in this house. Far to the east, in the homes from which we came, tyranny and usurpation, with arms in its hands, is this night, perhaps slaughtering our fathers, our brothers, and our sisters, and outraging our homes in every conceivable way shocking to the heart of humanity and freedom. . . . For God's sake, tell me of battles fought and won. Tell me of the usurpers overthrown; that Missouri is again a free state, no longer crushed under the armed heel of a reckless, and odious despot. . . . If this be rebellion, then I am a rebel. Do you want a traitor? then I am a traitor. For God's sake speed the ball; may the lead go quick to his heart, and may our country be free from this despot usurper that now claims the name of the president of the United States.⁶⁴

This was Randolph's last public address, and William Rhodes, who attended the convention meeting in company with Judge Joseph G. Baldwin, has left a record of "the terrible invective." Randolph was a dying man, yet he spoke with ". . . the fury of an inflamed patriot and the frenzy of an inspired prophet." "Great God," exclaimed Judge Baldwin, "did you ever hear eloquence like that? Randolph seems to be on fire."⁶⁵ Randolph spoke with an intense passion and uttered hysterical shrieks, but it was a fruitless effort since California proved to be loyal to the Union.

Many Confederate sympathizers were arrested for delivering disloyal speeches. In October 1862, E. J. C. Kewen, an assemblyman from southern California, was arrested for the utterance of treasonable language, and was imprisoned in Fort Alcatraz.⁶⁶ In August 1864, Charles L. Weller, the "Copperhead" candidate for sheriff of San Francisco, was arrested for discouraging enlistment in the army and for urging resistance to a draft, whenever one would be instituted in California.⁶⁷ On June 1, 1865, John McCall was arrested at Potter Valley for using grossly abusive language in expressing in one speech his approval of Lincoln's assassination, and then for denying in another speech that Lee had surrendered or Lincoln had been

assassinated. McCall was brought 150 miles under military guard to Fort Alcatraz, where he was confined for six days and compelled to perform manual labor for committing "military offenses."⁶⁸

VII. FLAG WAVING AND BAND WAGON DRIVES

Flag-waving was another method by which the Confederate minority expressed their sympathy. On conspicuous buildings, especially on Federal property, Confederates placed Pacific Republic, Grizzly Bear, Lone Star, and Confederate flags in order to symbolize their belief in States' rights. The flags usually were left untouched in centers of Secessionist sentiment, but in a Unionist stronghold like San Francisco, they were immediately removed. In parades and demonstrations held by the Confederates, the Bear Flag was often seen in El Monte, San Bernardino, Merced, Buttle Mills, and Visalia.⁶⁹

During the early part of the war period, Confederate band-wagon drives gave color to the elections. As election time drew near in San Francisco, "democratic broom-rangers" paraded the streets to the tunes of "Dixie Land" and "Johnny Comes Marching Home."⁷⁰ In an election campaign of Merced County, Peter Dinwiddie Wigginton stumped the county, and spoke in favor of Secessionist candidates. Wigginton was always accompanied by Jim Wilson, who sang his favorite songs, "We'll Hang Abe Lincoln to a Tree," and "We'll Drive the Bloody Tyrant Lincoln From Our Dear Native Soil."⁷¹ However, these incidents were the exception, and as such they appeared annoying to the Unionists.

Confederate propaganda in California was of small magnitude. It was the unorganized effort of a minority to express their sympathies and to win support for a cause they believed justified. However, California proved to be overwhelmingly Unionist in sentiment. The reaction of the majority in California to Confederate propaganda is an indication of the minority status of the Confederates. Confederate sympathizers were arrested, and their civil liberties were suppressed. Many of these arrests were unnecessary, and, unfortunately, many innocent people were charged with disloyalty and treason.

NOTES

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6. *Ibid.*
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9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 1018-19.
11. *Ibid.*, Pt. I, pp. 614-15.
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22. Wilkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-82; *The Federal Cases: Comprising Cases Argued and Determined in the Circuit and District Courts of the United States* (St. Paul, 1894-1898), Case No. 15,254.
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27. Ralph Simpson Kuykendall, "A California State Rights Editor," *Grizzly Bear*, XXIV (January 1913), 3.
28. *Loc. cit.*
29. *Equal Rights Expositor*, August 30, 1862, as quoted in Earle, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
30. *Ibid.*, November 29, 1862, as quoted in Earle, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.
31. *Ibid.*, December 13, 1862, as quoted in Earle, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
32. *Ibid.*, October 25, 1862, as quoted in Earle, p. 45.
33. *Ibid.*, August 30, September 6, October 18, November 1, December 13, 1862, February 6, 1863, as quoted in Earle, *passim*.
34. *Ibid.*, February 6, 1863.
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