

HANDOUT

1868 ELECTION



ULYSSES S. GRANT
and Schuyley Colfax

POPULAR VOTE: 3,012,833
ELECTORAL VOTE: 214

REPUBLICAN

General Grant was the **commander of Union forces** at the end of the Civil War.

Reconstruction was the primary issue in the election. Grant favored the **Radical Republican plan**, granting **voting rights** to all African Americans in the North and South.

Grant received half-a-million votes from newly **enfranchised** African American men, many of whom risked their jobs and even their lives by voting.

Both parties used **mudslinging** to discredit the opposition. Democrats painted Grant as a drunkard.

Grant **opposed paper money**, or “greenbacks,” a position which earned him the support of Eastern capitalists.

“Scratch a Democrat and you will find a rebel under his skin.”

-New York Tribune, 1868



Library of Congress
Prints & Photographs Division
[LC-B1862-4602 B]



HORATIO SEYMOUR
and Francis Blair

POPULAR VOTE: 2,703,249
ELECTORAL VOTE: 80

DEMOCRAT

Seymour was the **Governor of New York**.

Seymour and his overtly racist running mate, Francis Blair, **opposed voting rights** for African Americans, claiming that only whites were capable of self-government.

Nathan Bedford Forest, founder of the **Ku Klux Klan**, and the notorious **“Boss Tweed”** of New York City both attended the Democratic Convention.

The Democrats had the greatest support among **white voters** and **poor farmers**.

Republicans painted Seymour as a **Copperhead**, or rebel sympathizer.

Seymour won votes from Western farmers for his **support of “greenbacks,”** or “soft money.”

The Democrats advocated **less government spending** and fewer taxes.

Thomas Nast, perhaps the greatest cartoonist of the 19th century, relentlessly attacked the Democrats.

Both Democrats and Republicans organized spectacular **torchlight parades** with fireworks and thousands of marching Civil War veterans, harkening back to the excitement of the 1840 Log Cabin Campaign.

DID YOU KNOW? In March 1868 an Ohio man who had gone to Mississippi to help with Reconstruction was brutally attacked by the Ku Klux Klan and given ten days to leave the state. He reported the attack to the Federal authorities. An Army officer took his bloody nightshirt to Washington and gave it to Radical Republican Congressman Benjamin Butler. Butler waved the shirt above his head on the floor of Congress as he argued for proposed legislation to give the President the right to use the Federal Army to enforce law in the South. The phrase “waving the Bloody Shirt” became part of campaign slang used by Republican candidates whenever they wanted to blame the South for starting the war.