A paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Course 16:273 in the Department of History in the Graduate College of the State University of Iowa

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PREFACE

Several years ago this writer decided to undertake a study of the activities of Marcus M. Pomeroy, editor of the La Crosse Democrat, noted Wisconsin Copperhead organ. And, as such, this is the initial phase of that study. Much remains, of course, to be done on additional aspects of Pomeroy's life and actions.

Pomeroy's name had oft been mentioned in the river city where the writer lives. However, it generally was referred to in a derisive or ill-favored manner. Local elders could see little value in a man who tended to side with the Democrat extremists against Lincoln and the victorious Union as personified in the Republican Administration. Known for his fearless, trenchant and vindicative pen, Pomeroy, "at least, wrote in such a style that even his enemies could not resist buying his paper."

The ensuing paper deals primarily with the editor's La Crosse activities, especially those during the immediate Civil War period. It is not an attempted study of the Copperhead movement as such. Rather, it seeks the reason and explanation why Pomeroy, a Douglas Democrat, supported Lincoln in the beginning -- with qualifications -- and then became a bitter critic and attacker, reviling the party and cursing the leader.

It should be pointed out that although Pomeroy, in 1864, could voice a plea for Lincoln's assassination, such was not always the case.

1. Benjamin F. Bryant, Memoirs of La Crosse County, Madison, Western Historical Association, 1907, p. 178.

2. For Dagger Statement see La Crosse Democrat, August 24, 1864.
The La Crosse editor was not originally an avid adherent of that group which early caused Lincoln much consternation and which was referred to as "the fire in the rear." However, he was to affiliate himself with it and become a leading exponent.

Needless to say, Pomeroy was a picturesque figure, especially for a Middle Westerner. Relatively short with reddish blonde hair, he was born in the East and started his journalistic career at an early age. Moving to Wisconsin, he also spent some time in Washington before taking over the La Crosse Democrat. Later transferring his activities to New York City, he was associated with Boss Tweed, whom he soon came to dislike. He championed the Greenback cause, embarked on railroad and tunneling activities in the Rockies, turned to the publishing business, was married three times and ultimately died in Brooklyn.

While studying the journalistic attitudes of such a man -- or the editorial opinions of the period -- it should be remembered that libel laws were not as today, and a general backdrop of what might be called "Editorial Billingsgate" seemed to prevail. Discretion and fear of legal reprisal did not handcuff the flaming pens of zealous editors.

The study of editorial comments of the time is highly interesting and amusing. A spade was a spade and little else. The La Crosse Daily Republican likened the Copperhead Chicago convention of 1864 to "foul and dirty birds," claiming "the Copperhead is so lousy that nothing but a

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buzzard can clean his nest." This paper and other administrative mouthpieces continually roasted Pomeroy in their editorial columns. But Pomeroy wasn't the only victim; the area papers could deal in personalities as well. The La Crescent (Minnesota) Plain Dealer, speaking of Ostrander, editor of the nearby Hokah Chief, supposedly the oldest paper in the state, termed Ostrander "the spittoon of the Chief." 4

Much remains to be done on Pomeroy's life and adventures. This author hopes in the future to make a thorough check of the editor's early life, his New York, Western and Greenback activities. Work is currently being carried out through Colorado papers and Western historical societies. Another aspect being considered is his relation with General Benjamin F. 5 Butler of New Orleans fame.

For much aid and assistance, this writer is deeply indebted to the Wisconsin State Historical Society, La Crosse County Historical Society, particularly A. H. Sanford and the late Harry Hirshheimer of the latter institution, the La Crosse Public Library, New York City Public Library, Library of Congress and Newberry Library. To F. Hal Higgins of Walnut Creek, California, for making Pomeroy cartoons available to me; to Mrs.

4. See article by author on this general subject in the La Crosse Tribune, April 20, 1952.

5. Benjamin F. Butler, Butler's Book, Boston, A. M. Thayer and Company, 1892, p. 43. Pomeroy had tacked the epithet "Spoonfed" to the military man. The two also were involved in litigation when Butler represented one of Pomeroy's wives in a divorce action against the editor. Later, Butler said that he had been counsel "against the editor in another case in which Pomeroy was sued for grevious wrongs done to a young lady."
Joseph Trahern of Clarksville, Tennessee, for a large etching of Pomeroy; to my wife Trudy, for typing the paper; and to my father, managing editor of The La Crosse Tribune, who gave valuable information on certain journalistic matters and for checking the initial draft, I am appreciative.
During the late summer of 1864, when the presidential race was rapidly coming to a boil and political tempers were at white heat, the editor of the La Crosse (Wis.) Democrat, looking toward the possibility of a Republican victory, fervently expressed the hope that if Abraham Lincoln were re-elected President of the United States, "some bold hand will pierce his heart with a dagger point for the public good."

Thus exclaimed Marcus Mills Pomeroy, best known of Wisconsin's Copperheads, excoriating editor, moralizing and humorous writer, self-styled philosopher, tunnel-builder, defender "...of the poor, the working men..." presidential candidate and, as might be expected, seeker of notoriety.

Yet this very same individual could reply to a prospective biographer's request for background facts that "There is nothing in it different from the history of other self-made men; nothing of a startling nature that would please the public...It is simply a plain history."

Although Pomeroy claimed a non startling existence, he was not reluctant to add: "There are, however, with me in this office gentlemen who have known me from boyhood, who have been with me for years in dark hours and dangerous ones...."

1. La Crosse Weekly Democrat, Aug. 21, 1864.
3. Ibid.
Startling or not, Editor Pomeroy's actions were to make La Crosse one of the better known cities of the United States in the 1860's, although the Mississippi River community at that time counted less than five thousand inhabitants.

From the Civil War era to the latter part of the century, Pomeroy was at the height of his power. Nor was his influence confined solely to La Crosse, for he became a national figure both journalistically and politically. An attacker of Tammany after moving to New York, the La Crosse editor also was nominated for the presidency by the Greenback Party in 1881.

In the main, however, this paper is concerned with his actions during the Civil War period. For it was Pomeroy's attacks upon the Republican Administration, especially Lincoln, which brought him to national attention. His famous or infamous "dagger" editorial was not the first in which he derided the chief executive, nor was it to be the last. He had early tacked the epithet "The Widow Maker" unto the sorrowful man from Illinois and was to expend many adjectives in attempting to villify the party in power and its lanky leader.

In undertaking such a study, it should be pointed out that the vitriolic editor was possessed of another side, a facet often revealed even in the heat of political controversy. Able to invoke the anger of thousands and stir the hearts of fellow Copperheads, Pomeroy could write such

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1. La Crosse Tribune, July 21, 1938. This is from a reliable source. However, the official Greenback candidate that year was Benjamin F. Butler. Pomeroy, very active in Greenback affairs, might well have been put forth by a faction or separate entity. Another account states the date was 1880.
delightful, nonpolitical works as Sense, Nonsense, Reaching for Hearts, and could plead for temperance and good working conditions.

Pomeroy was admired and feared by friends and enemies alike. One of the better characterizations of the editor pictured him as follows:

...one of the most brilliant and erratic men who ever wielded the editorial pen in the state... He was clever, fearless and enthusiastic, but he was also unbalanced and vindictive. The fact that his paper, at one time, reached a circulation of 90,000 was due in part to his disregard of the conventions, which stimulated curiosity as to what he would do next, in part to his witty pen and in part to an appeal to those whom the stirring events of the times led to the extremes of controversy...

Not a Wisconsinite by birth, Pomeroy claimed to have been born in Elmira, Chemung County, New York, "on the morning of Christmas, 1833. At least so say the ones who ought to know and who wrote the event down in the family Bible."

His father, Hunt Pomeroy, was a watchmaker, and his mother was the former Orlina Rebecca White. Shortly after his birth the family moved to Tioga County, Pennsylvania, and the youth's mother died soon after his second birthday. His early years were spent in the usual fashion with grammar school, chores, hunting and fishing. According to his biographer, he was a lad who "read with wonder and admiration, the life of Franklin" at the age of four, and yielded himself "to the holy influence of the lives

5. Benjamin F. Bryant, Memoirs of La Crosse County, Madison, Western Historical Association, 1907, p. 115.

of Franklin and Washington."

As a youngster, Pomeroy clerked in a drug store, worked winters in nearby lumbering camps and spent many laborious hours performing the duties of a farmhand. However, "from the first I wanted to be a printer," and this caused parental objections since Father Pomeroy wished his son to become a merchant or banker.

Ultimately the younger Pomeroy won out. In April, 1850, he packed his few belongings and started the sixteen mile tramp across country to Corning, New York, "where there was a printing office, and in that printing office I was going to work, and sometime in the future I should have a newspaper."

The Corning Journal was published by Thomas Messenger, a native of Canada, and Pomeroy apprenticed himself to this man whom he soon grew to respect and admire. According to the agreement, Pomeroy would receive $30 the first year, $40 the second year and $60 the third year, in addition to board and washing. "That I was to be cared for when sick, and in return for this was to help about the house and garden nights and mornings at anything..."

After two years, Messenger sold his paper and moved to nearby Waverly where he started the Luminary. Pomeroy worked for the two new

9. Ibid., p. 52.
10. Ibid., p. 54.
Journal owners, but subsequently moved to Waverly to work under Messenger.

Life in the new community was quite turbulent. According to Pomeroy, Messenger had offended men engaged in the liquor and saloon business and they "prevailed upon some young woman in town to bring charges against him for immorality of conduct." Accompanied by Pomeroy, Messenger fled to Canada. And during the two ensuing years, Pomeroy tramped the countryside and worked in printing offices on both sides of the border.

In 1854, Pomeroy returned to Corning to become re-affiliated with the Journal. As the business prospered he decided he was worth more money but was refused a raise. Disgruntled, Pomeroy set out for New York with $20 to buy printing equipment and establish himself in business. After several fruitless attempts at credit he received a $600 advance on machinery and materials from a James Connor.

Returning to Corning to await the arrival of his equipment, he continued working for the Journal owners who were not aware of Pomeroy's intentions. The fact that they were embittered did not bother the youth and he embarked upon the new enterprise with zeal. "And here begins my experience at the printing business on my own account, and surely it has been of the most varied and tempestuous, in the effort to save the bark from the shoal and get out into deep water."

His job-printing endeavor was a success and, flushed with victory, Pomeroy soon began publication of the Sun, running off 1,000 free copies

of its initial issue. As it came out again and again it continued to be enlarged, for merchants found it profitable to advertise in the publication.

In 1854, at the age of 21, Pomeroy married Anna Amelia Wheeler. The following year he sold his paper and interests for $1,300. The new owner, the Rev. Ira C. Brown, was not punctual in paying off the debt and Pomeroy never collected the full amount owed.

The autumn of 1855 found Mr. and Mrs. Pomeroy in Athens, Pennsylvania, where he was publishing the Gazette. This undertaking lasted until the spring of 1857, when Pomeroy sold the paper and moved westward to Wisconsin.

The westward exodus was not made without some knowledge of the new territory. In fact in 1856 he made a rapid trip to Wisconsin to see how the area would receive a new newspaper editor. He left his paper in charge of the foreman.

Pomeroy's western destination was Horicon, Wisconsin, "a young Western town, under the plow, scraper and chain of the surveyor." Here were "houses and balloon frames which were to be houses or stores in a short time." He found "the pioneers wading around in the mud and plowed ground with their pants inside their boots, slouched hats on their heads, and themselves all full of growing expectations."

Horicon, at that time, was the western terminus of the La Crosse and Milwaukee Road, and the trip from the East had been made on a railroad pass. Free passage had been secured "with the understanding that I was to

write something descriptive of my trip, and call the attention of the traveling public to the road on which I should go and return." 13

Coming to Horicon at the behest of an eastern friend, John Hancock, then a Horicon lawyer, Pomeroy moved about the area and worked in printing offices to earn his keep. Expected money from the sale of his Pennsylvania paper did not arrive - the reason has been cited - and he was soon forced to return East.

One March morning in 1857, Pomeroy, accompanied by wife and baggage, set out for Milwaukee armed with railroad passes and $20.29 in cash. The trip was made without incident and the couple soon arrived at Horicon with the large sum of 5½ remaining to be spent.

For $600 Pomeroy was able to buy out the newspaper of P. E. Croft which had failed. Next he leased two rooms on the second floor above a drug store and named his paper the Horicon Argus. Aid was promised by Charles H. Larabee, circuit court justice, and Pomeroy set himself to the task of preparing the first edition.

Type faces were cleaned after stirring up his own soap mixture, the press was cleaned and over-hauled, page forms were readied and advertising secured. Now, however, he found trouble from this quarter, and it was only after much wrangling with Milwaukee concerns was he able to secure paper on credit. Finally the presses rolled; the Argus appeared "and was well received."

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13. Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 112.
Judge Larabee had attempted to censor a number of stories before they were inserted in the initial paper. Reading the page proofs he remarked "No," "This won't do" and other comments. However, Pomeroy reminded him as to the editor's identity and, although relations were momentarily strained, kept his friendship.

Within three weeks the new editor could claim a paid subscription list of 325 persons. Six-month rates were $1 and $2 for a year—in advance. "They bought copies to send away to friends, and subscribed on its novel terms...in advance or sent as an act of charity. Not wishing to be classed as objects of charity, those who called paid for the Argus in advance."

Pomeroy early ran into trouble from two papers at nearby Beaver Dam. However, working hard to meet his creditors, he found little time at first to strike back at the attempts made to annoy him and draw his literary fire.

Not too long after his arrival in Horicon, Pomeroy was appointed a deputy United States marshal, with Judge Larabee securing the position for him. In his new post, he was able to journey about the state, make new acquaintances and receive additional pay. However, much of the money received— if not all— was spent attempting to elect his benefactor to Congress from the Third Congressional District then composed of twenty-four counties.

15. Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 133.
Feeling himself now firmly entrenched, Pomeroy began to prepare for his editorial counter-blast against the larger town of Beaver Dam. He visited the community and felt "it was a town of wind, and that it had been greatly over-estimated and over-advertised." He soon penned a satire which was to earn him the nickname of "Brick." From that moment on, he was Brick Pomeroy.

In his description of Beaver Dam, Pomeroy explained it contained eighteen million inhabitants and was "situated in the midst of a highly-fertilized town" which "promises to be the largest place in this world or the next." It had been settled "by one beaver and twenty dams, but the fever and ague shook the beaver off, and it is now known as simply B. Dam." The community contained "immense stores at least 10 feet high" and erected "at a cost of $21.62 each." He added that Beaver Dam "had a fine water power last summer, but a stranger's horse drank it up, since then a boy has driven their immense machinery with a syringe."

Following additional retorts from the new editor's caustic pen, numerous leading citizens from the adjoining town paid a visit to Judge Larabee, acknowledged Pomeroy's superior talents and asked Larabee to "call off his dog."

16. Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 137. The satire was reprinted in the Louisville (Ky.) Journal, and the author was labeled a "perfect brick." However, some have tried to explain the sobriquet as being derived from the yellowish color of Pomeroy's hair, not unlike the cream tinge of Milwaukee bricks.

17. Ibid., pp. 136-137.
While at Horicon, Pomeroy, along with Andrew Jackson Turner of Portage, was one of the promoters of Wisconsin's first editorial convention held in 1857 at Portage. An association was founded and proceedings were recorded.

In 1858, Pomeroy got himself selected as a delegate to the Democratic Congressional Convention at Fond du Lac and then secured for himself the position of secretary of the convention. In this capacity he was able to victoriously campaign for Larabee's nomination. Taking an active part in the race— which included the buying of votes—Pomeroy helped his friend to a 1,000 vote majority in what was considered a Republican region.

Not long after the election, Pomeroy was prevailed upon to accept the position of city editor on the Milwaukee Daily News. The paper was owned by John R. Sharpstein and Joseph Lathrop. Pomeroy left his paper in charge of his foreman and took the Milwaukee job at $16 a week, "which was then considered a big thing."

After about one-half year in Milwaukee, Pomeroy cut himself adrift from the Argus and sold it to Curtis, his foreman. As city editor of a larger paper, he had found many more doors open to him, more liberaities and gifts proffered. He joined the Milwaukee Light Guard, continued to travel about the state on government business and expanded his acquaintances.


19. Pomeroy, op. cit., pp. 139-141.
However, by the end of the year, he was dissatisfied with his situation. Promised an interest in the paper when he started working, he now discovered it would not be forthcoming and terminated his service in November, 1859.

At about the same time, his adherence to the standard of Stephen A. Douglas caused him to lose his slice of the patronage pie. The marshalship fell into the hands of a Buchanan adherent.

Unsure of the future, Pomeroy's thoughts turned to Washington where his friend, Judge Larabee, was sitting in Congress. The judge indicated that he might secure for Pomeroy a federal appointment or, if not that, at least a position on a Washington paper. Pomeroy grabbed at the chance and left for the capital.

Naive concerning Washington politics and the actual extent of Larabee's influence, Pomeroy was to find Washington a disappointing city where money was quickly spent and little received therefrom. He found Larabee disinterested in his future, failed to receive an appointment and found it difficult making ends meet. However, he did manage to meet his hero, Senator Douglas, and fell more under the Illinoian's influence.

Disheartened by Washington where "my eyes were unwillingly opened to the fact that national legislation is not conducted for the benefit of the people at large," Pomeroy returned to Wisconsin in the first months of 1860. He hoped to re-enter the newspaper business and to this end visited various Wisconsin cities to ascertain prospects. Ultimately he picked La Crosse as a city with a future.
Three papers were being published in La Crosse at this time, but not a single one was to be termed overly prosperous. Included were the Weekly National Democrat of A. P. Blakeslee and F. A. Moore and the Weekly Independent Republican of W. G. Rogers. Both papers attacked the Buchanan administration which was defended by A. P. Swineford and the Daily Union. Before Pomeroy appeared on the scene, Rogers sold his Republican to Leonard Lottridge and Charles Seymour.

Shortly before Pomeroy's arrival, the Union and Democrat also were consolidated and Charles P. Sykes, proprietor of a local hotel and a museum of curiosities, became part-owner.

Realizing that the newspaper business was not his forte, Sykes offered to sell out to Pomeroy and the latter accepted. The new editor's partners were Moore and Swineford. Moore had been with La Crosse papers for several years, while Swineford had published a paper at Albert Lea, Minnesota, and was later to be appointed governor of Alaska by President Grover Cleveland.

The firm was called Pomeroy and Company and, according to the new partner, had as its intention "to engage in and continue the newspaper and job printing business, pushing the circulation of the paper and the business of the office as far and fast as could be done by honest, earnestly-directed effort."

20. History of La Crosse County, Western Historical Company, Chicago, 1891, pp. 539, 543.


22. Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 159.
Pomeroy was to be editor-in-chief and general manager of the paper and its business; Swineford was to have charge of the mechanical department and its employees while Moore was to be local editor. Pomeroy assumed the position in April, with little in his pockets and a $1,500 debt.

The office was in a dirty state and much cleaning and scrubbing was necessary before it again assumed the outward appearance of a printing establishment. The three partners assisted in the operation and then transferred attention to the printing equipment.

In his autobiography, Pomeroy recalls that the machinery consisted of one upright Washington hand-press, "well-known, and a Ruggle's job-press that was so old that it was ashamed to tell its previous history, or at least it stuttered in its attempt thereat."

It was discovered that one press needed new material for its roller as well as cloth for a tympan (impression surface on an old press). Materials would cost a total of $2, but neither partner had the required funds. Cognizant of the fact that the paper was in a bad state as far as

23. Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 159. Pomeroy said he took over in April. However, the first edition to carry his name was May 3, 1860. A note on the editorial page announced: "...It is our aim and desire to make the Union and Democrat a first class, valuable and readable paper - to establish it firmly on a safe and secure basis," and asked that bills be paid. Speaking of the Republican, it added: "We trust that nothing will ever occur to alter their good opinion...In taking charge of a paper...we shall not be the first to break the rules of good breeding and editorial courtesy."

24. Ibid., p. 160.
credit was concerned, Pomeroy went out and made a personal loan from a waitress in a restaurant where he ate. The ensuing Christmas, not forgetting her generosity, he gave the girl a silk dress which was "considered a theme for unkind remarks."

As might be expected, a feud arose between Pomeroy's support of the Little Giant and Swineford's defense of Buchanan and his administration. Pomeroy went out of his way to promote the Douglas doctrine in the editorial columns and wherever people were gathered.

However, both men agreed upon one primary factor, and that was the sectional tinge of the newly-conceived Republican Party. Immediately following the Democrats' ill-fated and tempestuous Charlestown meeting, the Union and Democrat reported "the happy Republicans are in a queer state of preservation. It is a stroke of policy they cannot account for, and a move that upsets their entire program."

The paper was overly optimistic about the dangerous Democratic rupture. Or perhaps it was engaged in a bombastic form of whistling in the dark. It assured its readers that after hearing from their constituents and discerning the Republican candidates, the Democrats would then "reassemble, all the better for an intermission. The result will be that a man will be nominated who will receive the hearty support of the Democratic Party. That man will be he, who after consultation with the people,

will be the strongest man." As far as Pomeroy was concerned, "that man" was Douglas. The editor lauded the Wisconsin delegation for its support of Douglas at the Charlestown convention and presumed they would continue that line at the Baltimore gathering.

Thus, at the moment when the unity of the Democratic Party was rapidly splitting asunder, and when disunity would mean almost certain loss of the coming presidential election, the La Crosse paper could not or would not look at the coming events. To the editor's eyes, the only disorganized group was the Republican Party; and this because it was seemingly composed of such divergent elements:

The Republican Party is a sectional party - a meddling party - a Union destroying party - a party composed of all the odds and ends, the rag-tag and bobtail of all the parties that ever existed....Whoever got it up, took what was left of half a dozen parties, put a big Negro on top, called it a Union, liberty party, and are falling down to worship it.

Swineford and Pomeroy came to loggerheads on political questions many times before the partnership was terminated. On one occasion, Pomeroy had written an editorial and gone out to lunch. Returning, he found the press idle and the typesetters busily at work. He learned that Swineford had thrown out his Douglas-favoring item and was inserting one of his own. Pomeroy at once reminded Swineford that the inside of the paper - its editorial page - belonged to the editor. He then proceeded to discard Swineford's efforts which had the backing of local office-holders.

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27. Union and Democrat, May 4, May 12, 1860.
28. Ibid., May 5, 1860.
Business called Swineford out of town for several days and on his return he discovered the paper had printed numerous pieces favoring Douglas. He immediately composed a story, placed it on the front page and pointed out that he had not written the Douglas articles nor was he necessarily in favor of them. He said "they materially conflict with his (Swineford's) views on Democratic principles as well as policy." And, seemingly forgetting his own bias, he explained: "As an independent journal, devoted to the promulgation of Democratic principles -- we could not become the organ of an individual, at the expense of principle."^30

To this account Pomeroy replied: "So with us there will be an irrepressible conflict so long as we edit a paper."^31

The controversy had a surprise ending when the paper was closed down by its principal creditors, the Milwaukee firm of Noonan and McNab. The paper was suspended from May 16–25, and on the latter date Pomeroy announced that Swineford had withdrawn from the concern and pledged the publication would henceforth give unswerving support to Douglas. Moore continued as partner. Swineford had attempted to purchase Pomeroy's interest, and, failing, sold his own.^32

Although the paper did appear on May 25, announcing the change in ownership, it did not appear again until June 6, this time making known another interesting development. An arrangement had been made between

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30. Union and Democrat, May 15, 1860.
31. Ibid., May 16, 1860; Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 163.
32. Ibid., p. 164.
the Union and Democrat and the Independent Republican so that each would be issued tri-weekly instead of daily.

The Republican was the leading and most prosperous paper in La Crosse and Pomeroy admitted that the new arrangement was of far greater benefit to the Democrat than to Leonard Lottridge and Charles Seymour, editors of the Republican. "Without such an arrangement the Democrat could not have continued, while the Republican would have gone on slowly but steadily to prosperity." The negotiations had been carried to a successful conclusion despite the fact that Pomeroy and Seymour were not on speaking terms.

Under the new system both papers realized a saving and were able to secure additional advertising. The consolidation also meant that local citizens would be able to read daily telegraphic news. Annual subscription rates were $2 for one paper and $4 for both. The Union and Democrat was to appear on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, while the Republican was published Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Since Moore was easily dominated - and soon would retire - Pomeroy had come into his own. One of his favorite mottoes, "Punish enemies and reward friends," now began to appear at the top of page one of the Union and Democrat.


34. Ibid.; History of La Crosse County, op. cit., p. 544; Bryant, op. cit., p. 110; Union and Democrat, June 6, 1860. The paper now was called the La Crosse Tri-Weekly Union and Democrat. However, until further notice, it will be referred to as the Union and Democrat.
Both newspapers shared the third floor of the old Juneau Building, which was located quite near the Mississippi River. These quarters were mutually occupied until 1861, when Pomeroy commenced the construction of his Opera House at Main and Fourth Streets, still the city's main intersection.

The Republican was lodged in the "south room" and the Democrat was published in the "north room." As time passed, however, it might have been far more appropriate had their locations been reversed.

As might be expected, the proximity of the offices led to strange and unusual events. A fuel storage space was placed between them and there was continual bickering over its charge. During the state campaign of 1862, Pomeroy secretly secured 2,000 copies of a Republican edition from a Democratic pressman in the opposition's office. Before being printed, Pomeroy had arranged that one of his editorials be inserted, disparaging the Republican-favored candidate for Congress. Such tricks, however, were paid in kind.

Pomeroy was sitting with the press representatives that hot Monday morning, June 18, when the second Democratic convention opened in the Front Street Theater in Baltimore. He undoubtedly joined the Douglas-backers who hissed a resolution asking admission of all delegates of the convention as originally constituted at Charlestown—a move definitely favoring the Southerners.

35. History of La Crosse County, op. cit., pp. 543-549.

From its bad beginning the convention went on to worse. North, South, East, West, the delegates were divided and demanding their own ways. On Friday, June 22, most of the Southern states indicated their withdrawal from the ill-fated convention. The following day Douglas was nominated. On the first ballot, with $212\frac{1}{2}$ votes cast, he received $173\frac{3}{4}$; and on the second, $180\frac{1}{2}$.

Pomeroy's idol was now one of four presidential candidates in the important campaign. Boasting, the La Crosse editor proclaimed that "The nomination of Douglas seems to have met an enthusiasm in the Northwest, unequalled in any previous contest.... The democracy of the Northwest will present a solid column next November."

Terming the coming fight the time "to conquer or die," Pomeroy saw in Douglas' nomination "the dawning of a better day. It will be a day of labor - a day of danger - but the night will set on a victorious army." Unduly optimistic, he prophesied that Douglas would carry every Southern state, "even should Breckinridge contest with him, except South Carolina, Tennessee, Mississippi and Kentucky, and with an even chance of carrying Texas." Looking at the North, "Lincoln's election is out of the question."

Always a business man, Pomeroy quickly seized upon the forthcoming campaign to increase the subscription list of the paper. Above his editorial page flew a mat of a soaring eagle carrying the Stars and

37. Union and Democrat, June 27, 1860.
38. Ibid., June 29, 1860.
Stripes. Beneath it in bold letters was the statement: "For President — Douglas of Illinois. For Vice President — Johnson of Georgia." To this he added: "Clear the decks for action! The Union and Democrat for the Campaign! We almost give the paper away." Pomeroy explained that he would furnish the paper to clubs "at unprecedented rates." The prices ranged from eight copies delivered at the same address for $3 to forty copies for $13. This delivery would continue until after the election. Pomeroy reminded his readers to "send in your orders accompanied with the money as soon as possible. There is work to do and workmen to do it if we will organize and not suffer our enemies to sow tares while we sleep."

Throughout the remaining summer months and until the November election, Pomeroy was to busy himself with several closely related undertakings: Promote Douglas; woo Breckinridge votes; and attack Lincoln and the Republican Party.

He had a special plan for Wisconsin supporters of Breckinridge. Pomeroy conceived that they might vote for Douglas under protest, thus preserving the purity of their intentions. He promised to print them tickets declaring: "I ______, a true Democrat, hate Lincoln as I do the devil, and Douglas as I do Lincoln, but have concluded to vote for the Little Giant under protest, so, 'I shut my eyes and open my mouth, and take this pill for the good of the South.'"

40. Ibid., July 2, 1860.
Pomeroy worked zealously for the Douglas cause. Not limiting himself to editorials, he traveled about the area praising the Little Giant and deriding his opposition. Realizing that a military or semi-military organization stirs the pulse, he organized the Douglas Rangers and had himself elected captain.

Throughout the campaign the name of Douglas was kept before the readers' eyes. If the senator made a speech, Pomeroy was almost certain to reprint it in its entirety or at least have an extract.

He waxed strong on the question of popular sovereignty and the Dred Scott case:

So much has been said about the principle of popular sovereignty or self government, as advocated by Judge Douglas, being in opposition to the decision of the Supreme Court, in the Dred Scott case, that we are led to the belief that those asserting that such is the case are either ignorant of the points decided in that case or do it for the purpose of willfully misrepresenting Judge Douglas' position....

In this connection, Pomeroy cited Justice Taney's opinion that citizens of the United States who migrate to a territory belonging to the people of the United States "cannot be ruled as mere colonists, dependent upon the will of the general government and to be governed by any laws it may think proper to impose."

To this, Pomeroy triumphantly added that "the Hon. Reverdy Johnson of Maryland, one of the ablest jurists of the United States... holding to the same opinion...is laboring with all his powers of intellect

41. *Union and Democrat*, July 26, 1860.
for the election of Judge Douglas to the presidency."

Pomeroy was not reluctant to make use of the old strategy of "divide and conquer." Throughout October and into November an article entitled "Keep it before the people" appeared on the front page or in the editorial columns. It was designed to alienate voters of foreign extraction from the Lincoln following and turn them into the Douglas camp.

According to Pomeroy, the Chicago Press and Tribune, "the chief organ of Abraham Lincoln, uttered the following insult to all voters of foreign birth, in its issue of October 5." In describing a torchlight parade that had turned out to welcome Douglas and contained "3,000 Americans, 2,000 Irish, 2,000 Germans, and 2,500 divided among the Welsh, Scotch, Belgians, and Norwegians ...," the Tribune was quoted as stating:

Taken altogether, the Squatterite reception last evening fell far below what had been promised but furnished an instance of what a few determined wire pullers can do with a few hundred voting cattle, who are contented to vote either in Bridgeport, in any or all our city wards, or in some adjoining county, so that 'expenses are paid and whisky free.'

Also continuously quoted was a statement attributed to a Elijah A. Green: "We don't want to borrow any Dutch votes.... If they don't want to vote our ticket, let them go to Hell.... Neither do we want the Irish Catholics in our party." And, according to Pomeroy, T. J. Pickett, editor of a Rock Island (Ill.) Republican paper, said: "I detest the Pope and hate the papists, and detest the Irish Catholic voting

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42. Union and Democrat, September 17, 1860.
43. Ibid, see papers of October and early November.
cattle.... The Douglasites depend on the faithfulness and ignorance of their Irish Catholic allies." Another Rock Island man, R. W. Smith, was charged with declaring, "I hope to be eternally God-damned if I ever vote for a Catholic for any office."

To all this, Pomeroy added, "They speak the real feelings of that party, and all the sham resolves of the Republican Party, in favor of our foreign born citizens."

La Crosse at that time had a heavy German population and the group had as its tongue the language paper Nord Stern, published by John Ulrich. In late July the Nord Stern came out for Lincoln and this caused a split in the German ranks. More than eighty citizens protested the move and declared "...we will hold no communion or fellowship with one who has betrayed the confidence reposed in him heretofore, and that we know how and shall guard the honor of the German Democrats."

To stimulate interest in the election, Pomeroy announced that he had made a $3,500 wager with Lotbridge of the Republican that Douglas would carry Wisconsin and Illinois. The papers were supposedly drawn up and placed in the hands of a local bank president. Pomeroy explained that the bet would not affect publication of the paper, "beaten or not" and "our only wish is that we had a hundred such bets booked."

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44. Union and Democrat, October 31, 1860.
45. Ibid., August 1, 1860.
46. Ibid., July 23, 1860. It is doubtful if such a bet actually existed, save as an attempt to increase interest or circulation. No mention was made of its payment and, if Pomeroy had paid, he would have been forced to sell the paper.
La Crosse residents had a chance to see Senator William H. Seward during the early fall of 1860. The solon was on a tour of the Northwest and was telling audiences that the menace to the Union was unreal and false. Arriving in La Crosse on Friday, September 11, he said that the homogeneity of the American people furnished assurances for the future which enabled men to trample underfoot every threat of disunion, every apprehension of national dismemberment.

On hand to report the senator's speech, Pomeroy presented a rather humorous account of the proceedings. He related that Seward landed amid the roar of cannon and was greeted "by only 1,000 people." He spoke at Turner's Hall to about 2,500. Quoting large excerpts from the address, Pomeroy pointed out that the senator spoke rapidly "...but at his swiftest speed he found time to take out his silver snuff box and apply the contents to his Republican proboscis."

Admittedly impressed by the senator's ability, Pomeroy said, "He is a generalizer and philosopher, and can discuss human rights and human freedom as few Americans can, and yet there is a catch somewhere."

Looking about him at the close of September, the La Crosse editor saw only victory for the Douglas forces. "All over the land," he wrote, "have the honest, working democracy taken up the cry of 'Douglas and Victory' -- and with bared arms they are going into the fight to win."

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148. Ibid., September 17, 1860.
149. Ibid., September 26, 1860.
At the eve of the election, Pomeroy told the Democratic faithful that they had "a little job to do." The Republicans were a foe that asked no mercy and showed none. Tuesday, November 6, was the Democrats chance to "crush out fanaticism and sectionalism from our midst." However, the Republicans were a scheming group and the Democrats were urged to follow the following instructions:

Go to the polls early and vote. Appoint some man to challenge those who would be guilty of fraud. Then go for those who are still absent. See that the lame, the sick, the lazy, the aged and the careless ones are all at the polls and that they all vote. Insult or browbeat no man — nor let no man do the same to you. Don't begin a fight — but once in never come out until carried out on a board.

Tuesday, November 5, was election day and Pomeroy told the public the Democrat offices would be open all day and all night to handle news of the returns in Wisconsin and across the country. He added that he was glad to be able to say "that with this number of this paper, the bitter political campaign so long engaged in, is ended — till another season, and from now on, our paper will be devoted to matters more interesting to the general reader..."

Wednesday and it was all over, the Democrats had lost, Pomeroy's hero had been defeated. The City of La Crosse had gone for Lincoln 463 to 297, with Breckinridge receiving 23 votes and Bell, 17. On the county level, Lincoln, 1,677; Douglas, 765; Breckinridge, 65; and Bell, 18.

50. Union and Democrat, November 1, 1860.
51. Ibid.
Though defeated at the polls, Pomeroy was able to concede with a humorous, yet bitter, touch. The day after the election, he wrote:

Yesterday was election day — that is, for the Republicans and sinners — Democrats didn't vote — it wasn't their day. The wicked have triumphed — all the slaves are to be liberated — rails will be at a premium, slavery is to be abolished on the 5th of March — white men will take back seats and the rail-splitter, oh we forgot — Mr. Lincoln will preside over the destinies of this country. We have met the enemy and we are theirs. Be merciful to us poor sinners. We went in like lions and came out like lambs. Oh treat us not revengefully. We intended to scoop them out and they scooped us. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.... We valiantly marched up the hill and we can run down again. Come my beloved, let us go forth into the fields.... P.S. — we don't like to read the returns as they come in!

Pomeroy reminded his readers that they would have the next four years to study the cause of the Democratic defeat, "and learn that a few old leaders like Buchanan can't dictate to the working men of the party."

Here was the culprit, James Buchanan, the incumbent chief executive, he was to blame and Pomeroy would scourge him again and again until he had left the office in March of the coming year. If the Democracy was dead, "Buchanan had killed it" and "little is the political respect we have for him."

Though Douglas had been beaten, Pomeroy was still undiscouraged as to the Little Giant's future. No sooner were the returns tabulated than Douglas of Illinois was again above the Democrat's editorial columns — for president in 1864.

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53. Union and Democrat, November 7, 1860.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
Mid-November saw Pomeroy off to New York to buy printing equipment and, undoubtedly, to engage in some political activity. However, before his stay was over, he was to be called back to La Crosse to save the Union and Democrat from the hands of over-zealous creditors. No papers were issued from November 11-28, and only on the later date did Pomeroy indicate what had happened.

As he explains it, two chattel mortgages were held, one for $200 by a local person and another for $490 by a Milwaukeean. On October 15, Edward Miller of Milwaukee renewed his note and said only $300 was left outstanding and Pomeroy paid $100 of this. Pomeroy then left for the East and Swineford, his former partner, "industriously circulated the lie that we had absconded never to return; that we had collected from $1,000 to $10,000 in money, and had left our creditors to collect their claims as best they could." Swineford then obtained possession of the notes, "and as the law of Wisconsin reads that the holder of notes secured by a chattel mortgage, if he deems himself insecure, may take possession of the mortgaged property, and sell after 10 days notice."

However, Pomeroy received word and "returned just in time to break up his sharp game." It later developed that Leonard Lottridge, editor of the competing Republican, had told Swineford that he would buy the paper and return it to Pomeroy. "For this noble act," declared Pomeroy, "Mr. Lottridge has our deep and heartfelt thanks..."

56. Union and Democrat, November 13, 28, December 3, 1860
Such dangers as related were not few and far between for the intrepid and adventurous editor of the Union and Democrat. Looking back upon his days in La Crosse, he recalled that "every few weeks, or months as furthest," the sheriff or officer of the law would come in to lay an attachment upon the property on behalf of its old creditors, "some of whom, as they saw that the concern was making a little something, were over-anxious to be the first ones in to strip the bush of its young berries before they should ripen."

According to Pomeroy, this process was repeated nine times in one year, and, on each occasion, "I would have to go into the streets and ask some business men to go my security in order to replevin the property and bring it back to the office and usefulness, thereby gaining time to earn and borrow money with which to pay old claims." This later became a standing joke and men offered to bet "cigars and soda water" as to when the office would next be "cleaned out."

November 28, 1860, marked the date when Pomeroy became sole owner of the Union and Democrat — save, of course, for its numerous creditors. Moore's reason from withdrawing from the paper was given as the "want of sufficient pecuniary inducement to remain." He had grown sick of hunting for local items, receiving little or no profit from the office and continually meeting up with a creditor. He recalled that he had "worn the harness much longer than any of the other remaining editorial

57. Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 165.
58. Ibid.
"brethren" and "we are glad for a time, to unhitch the traces." His partner parted "with regret," promising that Moore and all "our brethren of the Quill, should they ever call around, shall have the freedom of the city, and the best 'refreshments' the place affords."

The name of the paper was changed on December 3, 1860, and Pomeroy headed the La Crosse Democrat, debt-encumbered and circulation dwindling. He explained the reason for the name-change, pointing out that it had resulted from the consolidation. Now, however, there was only one owner and the name of the paper was too long. "Besides," he added, "there is still another reason. The Union part of it has been a curse to the party."

As the Civil War's approach gained increasing momentum, Pomeroy -- for once -- agreed with Buchanan that "neither Congressional nor State legislation is the chief cause of the terrible discontent at the South."

The redoubtable "Brick" took a firm stand in opposition to the secession of the Southern states and to Buchanan's "weak-kneed" policy. When South Carolina voted to secede on December 20, Pomeroy reported "South Carolina gone to Hell" and termed it "the first step toward the

59. Union and Democrat, November 28, 1860; History of La Crosse County, op. cit., p. 545.


61. Democrat, December 10, 1860.
breaking of bonds that have bound a union for over four score years..." He angrily contended that "no state has the right to secede — has no right to declare herself free from the laws that govern the Union."

However, Pomeroy also admitted that there are "circumstances which materially alter cases... If the Administration comes into power solely on principles deadly antagonistic to any state... then that state must suffer." And he stressed that the people of South Carolina "are proud, high-spirited and jealous" and have the "right to judge...though they may not have the right to put the verdict into practice..."

And Pomeroy mellowed even further as the weeks passed. In early January he reasoned that if South Carolina wanted to get out of the Union "and fish for herself," the Union should "let her go."

With South Carolina out of the Union and other states ready to jump into the pond, Pomeroy railed at Buchanan for his vacillating tactics. "What a weak, imbecilic old fool Jim Buchanan is," he wrote. "There he sits in his soft-bottomed chair, day after day, permitting secession, treason and disunion to grow under his very eyes, and makes no move to quell it... Buchanan is a traitor to his country — a traitor to his party — a traitor to his own word." And if that wasn't enough, Pomeroy added that the President presented the "sad and sickening picture


63. Ibid.

64. Ibid., January 11, 1861. Somewhat similar to Greeley's famed statement.
of an obstinate old dotard," who was "despised in the North and despised in the South." And if the country survived the shock of Buchanan's administration, "Lincoln...nor the devil can ever harm it."

Editor Lottridge of the Republican again came to Pomeroy's aid in the first month of 1861. Creditors seized the mortgaged press and the Democrat was printed by the Republican's machinery. Come what may, the fiery young editor would get his paper out on the streets.

In the hope of settling the North-South dispute, Senator John J. Crittenden of Kentucky had offered the famous Crittenden Compromise which, among other articles, predicated the extension of the Missouri Compromise line of 36° 30' to the West Coast, and prohibited Congress from interfering with slavery in certain specified areas. Of this, though opposed by Lincoln, Pomeroy wrote in favor. He pointed out that, in his estimation, the North received more territory, and asked: "Can the North do any better at the end of a Civil War?"

Pomeroy had refrained from attacking Lincoln following the November election. It was to be several months after the start of war before the chief executive was to become the target for the Wisconsin editor's bitter attacks. However, Pomeroy did take a "dig" at the President's trip through Baltimore, Maryland, near the end of February, en route

66. Ibid., January 23, 1861.
to Washington.

According to reports, Lincoln was in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, when he was told of a rumored assassination attempt which would be made while he passed through Baltimore. At the insistence of friends, he traveled through the night, incognito, and safely reached Washington.

Pomeroy immediately seized upon this event to cast aspersions upon the President's courage. Complimenting Lincoln for passing through Baltimore, he then asked: "But how much more courage did he exhibit when he left his wife and friends to ride on the train that was sworn to destruction?... He was willing to sacrifice a dozen office-seekers and Mrs. Lincoln for the good of his country..."

Reminding his audience that Lincoln had kissed little Grace Bedell, the young child who prompted him to grow whiskers, Pomeroy satirically declared that "...he wished to marry her and get Mrs. Lincoln out of the way. His political ambition satisfied, love steps forth with its demand... If cowardice denotes statesmanship, then Abraham Lincoln is the first statesman in America."

To his statements, Pomeroy also appended the following poem:

Behold the conquering hero flies!  
Wrapped like a woman in disguises!  
In military cloak and woman's shawl,  
The Indian fighter o'er six feet tall,  
In shirttail stood and fiercely swore  
Come life or death he'd pass Baltimore!  
An ancient Roman once gave up his son,  
For his country, nor wept the deed once done.  
But Lincoln, who doubtless read the Roman's life,  
More patriotic still would offer up his wife.

68. Nevins, op. cit., p. 151; Democrat, February 27, March 1, 1861

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid.
On March 4, the date of Lincoln’s inauguration, Pomeroy delivered his last broadside against Buchanan and his minions. It indicted the administration for its gross corruption and was to sound quite similar to statements which would be made almost eighty-one years later:

The inconceivable venality that has marked the history of the declining administration, developing itself in fraudulent sales of fort sites, fraudulent purchases of public property, corrupt contracts for coal for the use of the navy; corrupt contracts for army supplies and transportation; the shameless award of contracts to party favorites over the heads of lower bidders; the illegal interference of government officers in local elections, the unblushing proffer of lucrative posts, and patronage to members of Congress and journalists to secure their votes and their support for administration measures and reaching its climax in the monster fraud of the Indian bonds theft is this that makes our cheeks redden with shame...

The evils of an erroneous policy may be arrested by the inauguration of a better one; the injury resulting from the rule of a misguided party may be corrected by turning that party out of power and promoting another in its stead; but a persistent venality, which, commencing at the fountain head of power, poisons and defiles all the streams of social life, debauches virtue, paralyzes honesty and sets public examples of corruption and bribery, is calamity which no material reform can repair.

La Crosse eagerly awaited news of the new President’s inaugural message. The address began to arrive over the clacking telegraph, but the flow of words was stopped near the middle of the speech by a mechanical fault.

Pomeroy greeted Lincoln’s pronouncements with enthusiasm. "No message for the last 20 years," he wrote, "has given more general satisfaction... The tongue must be corrupt indeed that will not say Godspeed
South Carolina's assault upon Fort Sumpter brought war, between the states, "the melancholy spectacle of the United States warring with each other." Pomeroy termed the firing upon Sumpter "an act without a parallel in the annals of history" and classified the Southerners — once thought of as "chivalrous and honorable" — as "desperados neither human or American."

Disgusted with the South, the Democrat's editor also was disgusted with the North, "with the past administration — with the present one." Buchanan had watched the problem grow, but only "sat and hesitated what course to take." Lincoln "is not the man for the hour," he added, comparing the new President to Mr. Micawber, waiting "for something to turn up."

After castigating those responsible for the present conflict, Pomeroy shouted "If a few thieving rebels want to fight, for Heaven's sake let them be satisfied." Although at odds with the administration on political issues and "deploring the existence of a sectional party," Pomeroy promised aid in the speedy prosecution of the civil strife.

In a subsequent edition of the paper, Pomeroy further outlined his position. He chided the Southerners for thinking that Northern Democrats would join with the rebels against the Republicans. "In that they

72. Democrat, March 11, 1861.

73. Democrat, April 17, 1861; William D. Love, Wisconsin in the War of the Rebellion, Chicago, Church and Goodman, 1866, p. 1142.
have been mistaken, and will soon find it out to their cost." However, he
warned that "We are a Democrat — we have no sympathy with Republicans; we
have fought them for years, all the time loyal to the United States..."

Pomeroy's patriotic enthusiasm remaineded at a high pitch during the early months of the war. During the latter part of April he proclaimed
organization of the "Wisconsin Tigers," a volunteer company, and issued a
call for 217 men to comprise it. The volunteer group would be on the order
of the horse zouves, gray pants, red shirts with low collars and a gray
mantle. The men would be armed with two revolvers, a sabre and a minnie
rifle, would enlist for the entire war and would become as famous as
Marion's Men.

Reports poured in from fired-up Badgers and Pomeroy soon could report 181 men on the muster. All save 50 were "over six feet tall," and
Pomeroy promised them all the excitement they could handle. However, his
dream of the Tigers was to vanish into obscurity. A May communication from
the state adjutant general's office said no cavalry troops were then needed.
A later Washington statement to the same effect dispelled the Tigers.

Pomeroy wrote that friends urged him to accept a commission in
the Union forces and a Wisconsin Senator wrote in his behalf. However,
the government, while agreeing, asked that he should refrain from "any
criticism of the administration" and give the "endorsement of a newspaper

74. Democrat, April 24, 1861.
75. Ibid., April 29, 1861.
76. Ibid., May 6, May 10, 1861.
which did not in any way indorse that which was known as Abolitionism or Republicanism." Pomeroy immediately informed the War Department that "I could not accept the commission upon such terms."

Like many Northerners, the La Crosse newspaperman looked for an early victory over the South. He pointed out that the rebel states had neither powder nor flour, "and they are disappointed in the vigorous measures the administration is taking for the support of its position."

He added the Southerners also were disappointed because Northern Democrats "will not help them to forcibly wrest the Government from the Republicans," and said decisive action, such as carried on by the administration, "will save much bloodshed."

Shocked to hear of Douglas' death on June 3 at Chicago, Pomeroy mourned "He is gone. We have no word to say of his life. It is written on the history of his country in living lines, and is embalmed in the hearts of his countrymen." The cut proclaiming Douglas for the presidency in 1861 was removed from the Democrat's editorial page.

In general, Pomeroy left politics alone during the month of June. He made a trip East and most of his articles were concerned with places visited, men met, accounts of incidental happenings and speculative talk.

Back in the harness again by July, one of his first moves was to urge an early Democratic state convention in the fall. While promising no quarter for traitors, he urged his fellow Wisconsin Democrats to promote

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77. Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 167.

78. Democrat, May 1, 1861.

79. Ibid., June 5, 1861.
a platform standing for support of the Union and "the Constitution as it is." To the principles of Jackson, Jefferson and Douglas; having a regard for Constitutional rights and strict compliance with the decisions of the Supreme Court.

In this statement, Pomeroy was contributing a clear-cut indication of how he would react to later administrative actions. While desiring to support the government, he would bitterly take issue with many of Lincoln's acts which to him appeared to be promulgated by a dictator.

But this was not the moment Pomeroy turned his face from support of the administration's war effort. After the Union debacle at the first Battle of Bull Run, when the victorious hopes of "On to Richmond" had been dashed by gray cannon balls, Pomeroy spoke out against those who were murmuring against the government and its actions.

A vigilance committee had been organized in La Crosse to guard against traitors. The editor termed them "stout, armed, watchful, determined men...who are pledged to hold to the strictest account those...who may...openly avow their sympathy with traitors." If it is right "for people to talk," Pomeroy added, "it is right for the vigilance committee to act."

When time combined with realism began to cool the patriotic and victory-seeing ardor of the North, Brick Pomeroy's patriotic zeal also lost its fiery hue. Wherever he looked, the Wisconsin editor began to

80. Democrat, July 10, 1861

81. Ibid., July 26, 1861; History of La Crosse County, op. cit., p. 522; Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 158.
see the lengthening shadows of Abolitionism creeping across the land, as if the Republican Party were held fast in its fanatic clutches.

Looking upon the blackening scene, the Wisconsin editor issued a warning:

There is not today half the enthusiasm in the country there was two months since... A chill has already set in... We are willing to fight till death for the common good of a common people, but will not be forced into a fight to free the slaves. The real traitors in the North are the Abolitionists, and they are the ones who will do more to put off the day of peace than all the soldiers of the South.

As he was to later write, Pomeroy found "day by day, little by little, first the creation, and then the widening of a gulf between Democrats and Republicans, who were for the time being charged with the preservation of the Constitution" and the American Republic. And he began to fear that those in control of the government would ultimately set up a system which would reduce him and the Democratic ranks to a position of "slavery."

Endorsing a non-partisan ticket in the county elections, Pomeroy still espoused the Democratic slate in the state contest. Slowly it dawned on him, however, that the so-called Union Party ticket represented Republican Party strategy, and he denounced it as a political swindle—a political feast wherein Lincoln's party took the turkey and gave the Democrats the buzzard.

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82. Democrat, August 19, 1861.
84. Democrat, September 6, 20, 1861; Klement, op. cit., p. 108.
Taking great pains to be annoying to the Abolitionists, Pomeroy directed many of his attacks against Sherman M. Booth of Milwaukee. One of the particulars in the case of Ableman vs. Booth, a famous fugitive slave litigation, Booth also edited the emancipation-asking Milwaukee Daily Life during the early Civil War period. Booth "is to respectable people," wrote the La Crosse editor, "what a blooming pole cat would be in a ballroom."

He also took delight in shaming local Abolitionists or those whom he felt tainted with the dread disease. On one occasion he derisively remarked that one family "is so in love with the nigger that even the hair of some of their kinks like curled wool." While this family damned the North and damned the South "and all who do not go in for abolition... neither father or son goes to war or gives a cent to any war fund or to encourage volunteers." To Pomeroy's line of thinking, "There should be a separate hell for such blatant meddlers."

One of the Negroes in La Crosse was named "Sam," and when his wife died only five black men and one white appeared in the funeral cortege. "As Sam is a pure blood," wrote Pomeroy, "blacker than night, we supposed the whole order of Leaguers [Union League] would assist him in his great trouble and pay the respects they pretend the Negro has a right to claim." Sam had been drafted and his wife "had died of a broken heart.

85. Democrat, September 27, 1861; Klement, op. cit., p. 108.
86. Democrat, May 10, 1864.
for there were no Abolitionists who would pay to exempt her husband, save Pomeroys who said he would contribute $100." Mentoning the names of several local figures, the editor caustically added, "what hollow mockery is their love."

For some length of time, Pomeroys had hopes that Lincoln would thwart "the mad abolition policy of emancipation or separation." He praised the chief executive for his stand, pointing out that it "will strengthen his Administration at the North." It indicated a "more cordial and earnest co-operation between the administration and the Army" and would aid in developing and encouraging "to action the loyal feeling of the South." Freemantle's proclamation and the subsequent Emancipation Proclamation were several of the measures which would change Pomeroys thinking and helped turn him from Democrat to arch-Copperhead.

Lincoln had early set the egotistical John C. Fremantle as commander of the Western Department. The first Republican candidate commanded the support of the anti-slavery wing of the Republican party, and more or less believed that Lincoln had given him "carte blanche" to conduct the war in his sphere as he saw fit. These factors, coupled with his desire to strike a blow at that "peculiar institution" of the South, caused him to set up as a policy maker. On August 30, 1861, he issued a proclamation establishing martial law in Missouri, one section of which freed the slaves of all persons resisting the government. Realizing that such an order would alienate the border states as well as many northerners,
Lincoln publicly revoked the Pathfinder’s ukase.

Pomeroy did not let the opportunity pass without some mention.

"What a satire there is in the simple fact that when Fremant should have been issuing orders...he was in the seclusion of his inner chamber, writing a proclamation to free niggers—thinking more of the beslaving praise of abolitionists than of the perpituity of the Union..."

And when Charles Sumner dared to issue a tract on the Negro question, Pomeroy immediately termed him "a crazy, foolish, destroyer of law and order. If you and your kindred nigger worshippers want the slaves free, why don't you shoulder a musket and go in?"

While not endorsing slavery as a favorable institution, Pomeroy saw it as an existing situation which abolitionism would not cure. Furthermore, the national government lacked authority to intervene when the sovereign states accepted and protected it. And as an advocate of the laboring man, Pomeroy did not look with pleasure upon the northward movement of freed Negro workers.

Pomeroy was in the gigantic group of Northern citizens who called for action from the Union forces. Throughout the North, voices were raised in protest at the lack of movement along the fronts and Lincoln soon was to be forced to write McClellan that "You must act."


89. Democrat, October 9, 1861.

90. Ibid., November 27, 1861.
Unconfident McClellan's faults were transferred to the chief executive, as far as the far-away Wisconsin editor was concerned. "When, in the name of God, is the army to move," he asked. "We have been told in Abraham's jocose way... that the Army would make a forward movement in a few days..." He hit at officers who attended parties instead of taking advantage of roads and weather and then issued his own orders for an all-out advance.

Appointment of Edwin Stanton as secretary of war to replace the inefficient and bungling Simon Cameron was greeted as a huge joke by Pomeroy. "Wonders will never cease," he said, and complained that the new secretary was an "ardent Breckinridge Democrat — a personal and political friend of Buchanan... We predict peace within sixty days, and withdrawal of our troops from Southern soil."

Pomeroy's attitudes began to take on a more decided Copperhead tone in the late spring and early summer of 1862. He began to feel that the Abolitionists now held almost complete control of the government and took issue with Lincoln over the draft question.

Speaking of Congress, he charged:

Nigger is the big thing. Congress has for months been laboring for the nigger... Nigger is a never-ending theme... Taxes


92. Democrat, January 17, 1862. The total evaluation was greatly in error.

93. Ibid., May 5, 1862.
are nothing, if for the nigger. War is a feast of reason and flow of soul, if for the nigger. Death, disease and suffering are the choicest of blessings, if for the nigger... Congress has no time to pass tax bills — no talent for raising a revenue — no ambition — no voice — no hope — no aim beyond the curley-headed and down-trodden nigger, who, today, is most contentedly hoeing corn and cotton, while our philanthropy is going to the devil. When this will end, God only knows, and the revolutionists in Congress do not care.

From the outset of the war, the vast bulk of the Union forces consisted of specially recruited units of volunteers. In addition, the regular army was increased, first by presidential fiat, then by an act of Congress.

Lincoln's first call, April 15, 1861, was for the militia of the several states of the Union to the number of 75,000. Approximately 80,000 troops were raised under this call. If, however, the government was to continue to use the militia as an efficient instrument, it was necessary to adapt it to the purposes of national army-making. With this in view there was passed an unsatisfactory measure known as the militia act of July 17, 1862. This provided that the President might specify the period of service (not to exceed nine months) and issue regulations for enrolling the militia and putting the act into execution where this should be necessary to cover defects in state laws. Universal military liability was recognized in the act by the provision that the militia "shall...include all able-bodied male citizens between the ages of eighteen and forty-five," thus becoming a national conscription.

This was the first of Lincoln's drafts and it was to cause Pomeroy to attack the president and the administration again and again as call after call was issued. "There is a difference of opinion as to drafting troops to fill the president's call," Pomeroy wrote. He pointed out that "the Northern heart is as loyal today as ever — there are a half a million men ready to fight if it can be proved business is meant."

Asking that the President turn his back to the Abolitionists, Pomeroy indicated a rather new slant on the Secretary of War, Stanton: "Were Stanton removed, 10,000 men would volunteer in Wisconsin before September."

As one can readily see, these statements are quite mild. The Wisconsin editor was simply stating that a difference of opinion existed between himself and the chief executive. However, as will be seen, the mood would undergo a marked change and Pomeroy would soon term Lincoln "The Widow-Maker."

Thus at this period — the late summer and early fall of 1862 — Pomeroy still had hopes that Lincoln might turn out to be the type of man needed to direct the nation's destiny through the perilous crisis. When Edward G. Ryan, noted Wisconsin lawyer, came forth with the famed Ryan Address in the Democratic state convention that September, Pomeroy spoke out against him and refused to publish the Address in the Democrat.

Ryan had written the Jacksonian anti-bank clause into the proposed state constitution of 1846 and, as chief justice of the Wisconsin

Supreme Court, was to render in 1874 the greatest of the state decisions against the railroads.

In his speech before the convention of September 3, 1862, the man who was to lead the state's Copperhead clan drew a distinction between loyalty to the administration and loyalty to the Constitution. "The Constitution is the Union... blind submission to the administration is not devotion to the country or the Constitution," he charged. "The administration is not the government. The government is established by the Constitution and rests on its provisions... When the administration violates the Constitution, loyalty to the administration becomes disloyalty to the Union."

Ryan believed that slavery was "a misfortune, not a crime." The only crime was "the presence of the African race upon the continent." However, "now that the niggers are here, their inferiority and unfitness for freedom must be recognized." And Pomeroy — though disagreeing at the time with the first portion of the address — would say "amen" to this last statement.

Pomeroy was visibly disturbed by Ryan's statements which became part of the state platform. "This is no time for drawing party lines," the La Crosse editor pleaded. "Partisan agitation will not subdue the


98. Ibid.
rebellion." Unfortunately, Pomeroy was to forget his pleadings in the Ryan case as the war continued and he became more and more positive that the Lincoln administration wished only to perpetuate itself in power and maintain a "crusade for cotton and the niggers."

Pomeroy's endorsement of the war obviously was not the blanket type — even at the early stages. The suspension of the writ of habeas corpus and the wholesale arbitrary arrests drew criticism. He expressed disgust with Lincoln's "bungling" and "experimenting." McClellan's removal seemed to be based upon political motives and the pressure of the Radical Republicans. Soldier voting-in-the-field drew a barrage from the editor, for it was a political maneuver which stifled the Democratic revival: "The whole thing of this army voting is a most consumate humbug... The scheme is like a jug handle — on one side."

However, it was to be a three-week tour of the St. Louis sector of the war and a two-month period in Arkansas at the headquarters of the Army of the South which were to ultimately undermine Pomeroy's devotion to war and destroy — with other factors aiding — his flagging respects for the Lincoln administration. It ended, eventually, his qualified support of the effort to subdue the South by military might. It was to change Pomeroy from a protestor into a full-fledged Copperhead, and one of the most vocal in the state — if not the nation.

99. Democrat, September 8, 1862.

Pomeroy left for St. Louis on November 21, 1862, and returned to La Crosse in mid-December, suffering from a mild form of small pox. After his recovery, and on January 1, 1863, he left for Helena, Arkansas, to serve in an unofficial capacity upon the staff of General Willis A. Gorman, a friend from Minnesota. Pomeroy arrived in Helena on January 15, 1863, and, sometime later, his commission arrived. The first lieutenant's commission, signed by Governor Edward G. Salomon, contained a note on its margin: "By request of M. K. Pomeroy no pay chargeable against the State under this commission." The commission assigned the editor to no specific military organization. It was, in fact, little more than a roving-news­paperman's pass. When the governor later revoked the commission, Pomeroy denied it was a commission, insisted that he had never accepted it, and claimed that revocation of something which was non-existent bordered on absurdity.

While at St. Louis the touring editor had become acquainted with Army contractors and quartermasters who had cooperated to build private fortunes — "making money by the cord." Discontented officers and friends explained army politics and related practices to the eager editor and unloaded upon willing Copperhead-tending ears their tales of political patronage, rank favoritism and widespread frauds.

Pomeroy was quick to note the demoralizing aspects of army life — "hordes of unlawful wives and prostitutes accompanying the army," gambling

102. Democrat, December 9, 1862.
condoned on every hand, liquor shipments and sales at every base and stealing sanctioned under the guise of confiscation. "The horrors of war will not end on the battlefield," he wrote his readers through the Democrat's news columns, "nor will habits so easily formed by a large mass of officers and men ever be shaken off."

Visiting the area hospitals and making trips to the front lines, Pomeroy saw dying men, shell-broken bodies and caught the permeating spell of disillusionment. "Now a hospital strips the damnable crimson glory from a soldier," he wrote. Watching a shipload of 500 pine coffins being unloaded at the St. Louis wharf brought the following reaction:

These rough, brown, cheap, worm-eaten coffins, piled up there like oyster cans, silently waiting to fold their wooden arms about our sons, brothers and fathers, rather took the poetry out of the shoulder straps and gold-covered cord to be seen strutting around, giving orders to the glory-hunters in plain blue.

His experiences at the Helena headquarters of the Army of the Southwest added to his misgivings.

Pomeroy was able to make the trip because the office was beginning to prosper and was in good hands. Harvey D. Rumsey, one of La Crosse's wealthiest men — and a Democrat — aided Pomeroy by furnishing sums of money whenever needed. An agent of the La Crosse and Milwaukee

103. Democrat, December 16, 1862.
104. Ibid., December 9, 1862.
105. Ibid.
Railroad and holding an interest in several Mississippi River steamers, Ramsey directed much business to the door of the Democrat.

To run his paper in his absence, he had developed a fairly capable staff of editorial writers and counting house employees. Heading the pen-men was Charles Lobdell, a former Bridgeport, Connecticut newspaperman, who was destined to die in a railroad disaster at Angola, New York in the late 1860's. Others included Mark Kellog, who was killed with General Custer; James Healey; and Judge Joseph P. Flannery of Malone, New York. The latter had been imprisoned at Seward's order, but was released in February, 1862. According to Pomeroy, the judge's newspaper salary was $1,000 a year.

The trip to the Helena district was made by railroad and river packet. From La Crosse to Chicago and thence to St. Louis by rail, and down the Father of Waters on the Silver Wave, a small stern-wheeler. Getting off at Memphis, Pomeroy made his way to the little village of Helena on the eastern banks of the Mississippi.

Upon arriving, Pomeroy found that General Gorman was up river at Clarendon and that General Benjamin M. Prentiss, who had surrendered at Shiloh, had come to Helena to replace Gorman. Pomeroy immediately took passage up the White River in an attempt to reach Clarendon and

106 Pomeroy, op. cit., pp. 181-182. The Democrat, as might be expected, became the railroad's foremost proponent.

107 Ibid., p. 179; La Crosse Chronicle, December 5, 1897; La Crosse Tribune, July 21, 1938.
locate his friend.

After a tedious journey he reached his destination to find everything hurry, bustle and confusion. He wrote the following account of the encampment for Democrat publication:

A few inches of snow had fallen upon a bed of mud. All about the little village...were fires burning by which soldiers in the twilight were making coffee and cooking chickens, pigs, hogs and beef that had been overtaken and slaughtered indiscriminately on the occupation of Clarendon by troops.

By the time Pomeroy reached Clarendon, General Gorman had pushed on up the White River, leaving behind the second Wisconsin, one company of which had been recruited in La Crosse. There were a number of Pomeroy's personal acquaintances in the regiment and they initiated him "in the slap-dab of war."

The day following his arrival he accompanied members of the regiment on a skirmish or, as the soldiers themselves more aptly put it, "a turkey hunt." The destination was a plantation "and into the house went the soldiers, pell-mell, without so much as by your leave, treating the inmates civilly, but giving them to understand that one portion of the Army of the United States was in the vicinity." The lady of the house said she had no cotton available, but the soldiers nabbed a Negro boy and declared "that if he did not tell them where they could find some cotton they would hang him to a tree." Subsequently three bales of the desired commodity were found in a corn crib and the soldiers returned to deal with

108. Pomeroy, op. cit., pp. 182-183. Gorman was former governor of neighboring Minnesota.
the pleading and almost hysterical Southern woman. Ransacking the house "from corner to corner," the soldiers made off with all they needed and carried the cotton to Clarendon. It was then sent to Helena, "where, with other bales thus obtained, it was sold for the benefit of the officers."

Pomeroy spent considerable time attending cotton-raids and confiscation parties in the Clarendon sector. According to the editor, "it was lawful at this time for anyone to purchase cotton, provided he had a permit from the Secretary of the Treasury, who was issuing permits...on payment of twenty-five cents tax for each bale of cotton the purchaser wished to buy." Pomeroy told of one man's purchasing 4,000 bales of cotton, shipped free by government boat and costing $1,000 for paying the tax.

It appeared to the editor "as though every one in the army was intent upon gobbling somehow." He saw cattle shot down in the fields where they were quietly feeding, "many of them being left there to die, of no use to those who had killed them, the slaughterers declaring that it was right and proper to kill everything on which the wives and families of rebels subsist." This seemed hard to Pomeroy, but when he protested against it "they laughed and said I was a booby."

Pomeroy got into trouble on one cotton-confiscating expedition.

109. Pomeroy, op. cit., pp. 183-184. In this sector, cotton was selling at $4.00 a bale and confiscation was a handy method to become wealthy.

110. Ibid., p. 184.

111. Ibid.
was accused of stealing the precious material and ran afoul of General Prentiss, "formerly a dishonest steamboat agent at Quincy." Regiments from Illinois and Wisconsin had taken cotton from a seller named Pike. He complained and was informed — according to Pomeroy's version of the story — that a "Major Pomeroy" was the culprit. While in Helena, a detachment of soldiers seized the La Crosse editor and took him before the area provost marshal. Pike's charge was refuted by Pomeroy, who demanded a trial. This was promised and Pomeroy was released under the condition that he would appear every morning at the provost marshal's headquarters until the day of the trial arrived. "So it was that I improved the time by going from place to place in Helena, and occasionally running the lines or slipping out without a pass into the country adjacent, the city being surrounded by a chain of picket guards."

Pomeroy busied himself writing and visiting while awaiting his trial. Angered and saddened at what he was seeing, he cursed the "devilish vandalism of the soldiery" and declared: "If the enemy is to be conquered, why in God's name do we not march troops to battle instead of cotton fields?" The army could not fight and steal at the same time, and Pomeroy did not spare General Prentiss in his castigating reports to local readers.

At the trial, "it took but a few minutes to prove, by unimpeachable witnesses...that I had nothing whatever to do with the raid,"


113. Ibid.; Democrat, February 17, March 17, 1863.
except to sit on a horse to see what was going on." The court absolved
the editor from any blame and Pomeroy looked forward to watching more

cotton raids, horse stealing, gossip and playing poker. Such, however,
was not to be the case.

A few days after the trial there came down the river from La
Crosse a bundle of newspapers, copies of the Democrat. A military post­
master opened the bundle and read one of the stories belaboring General
Prentiss. The paper was submitted to the general "whose rage was nearly
equal to his greed for plunder." Pomeroy was ordered brought before
Prentiss "at the point of a bayonet" and it was out of the frying pan
and into the fire.

The guilty copy of the Democrat was read before the assemblage
"so as to bring out the full beauty, or enormity, of the treason it con­
tained...great care being taken to put in points that had been omitted
by the punctuator." Pomeroy admitted authorship and then proceeded to
boldly enumerate instances of military graft and corruption, taking pains
to cite Prentiss whenever possible. Prentiss' action was quick. He or­
dered his adjutant to write out order Number 19, as follows, which was
later to receive considerable space in Republican papers:

114. Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 107. Republican papers were to circulate the
report that Pomeroy had been drummed out of the sector for dealing
in confiscated cotton and playing poker with a government paymaster
and inveigling him out of government funds.

115. Ibid., p. 108.

116. Ibid., pp. 108-109
That M. H. Pomeroy, a citizen of Wisconsin, having been found within these lines as the owner and correspondent of a newspaper to which he had written things that had a tendency to demoralize loyal sentiment and discourage enlistments; that the said person was commanded to leave that military department on the steamer Kenton, at four o'clock in the afternoon, and that he was to be sent North, under penalty of arrest and death should he ever be found again within the lines of the army, or department commanded by Brig. Gen. Benjamin M. Prentiss.

Pomeroy had managed to "confiscate" a silver-plated revolver from Prentiss' office while the charge was being read. Afterwards, he traded it for four bottles of wine and consumed the contents with friends before going aboard the Kenton. He arrived before the designated hour and Prentiss was not able to parade Pomeroy through the streets at the head of a bayonet-poking military guard. "Thus I went within the lines of the army and thus came out, returning to La Crosse after thirteen weeks' absence, during which time I became convinced that fighting for one's country was one thing, and stealing from one's countrymen was another."

Pomeroy returned to La Crosse in the early spring of 1863, a confirmed Copperhead. No longer was there any wavering on his part, any indecision - Lincoln and the Republicans were destroying the Union. The war had degenerated into a "murderous crusade for cotton and the niggers."

His obsession drove Pomeroy to the very brink of treason. He recognized that Patrick Henry's pronouncement "If this be treason, make the most of it" -- a statement made a hundred years earlier -- paralleled

117. Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 194.
118. Democrat, March 17, 1863.
his own:

The people do not want this war. Taxpayers do not wish it. Widows, orphans and overtaxed working people do not ask or need this waste of men, blood and treasure. There is no glory to be won in a civil war, no more than in a family quarrel. If politicians would let this matter come before the people there would be an honorable peace within sixty days. But so long as blind leaders govern and fanaticism rules the day, so long will there be wars, tears and desolation. It might be treason to write this. But we cannot help it. If the truth be treason, this is the height (sic) of it, but such treason will find a cordial "Amen" in the thousands of hearts both in and out of the army.

Henceforth he had only one aim in life. The Republican politicians must go. In every Lincoln action he saw a threat to freedom. Lincoln and the Abolitionists were to blame for everything.

At this moment it might be well to discuss Midwestern Copperheadism, that movement to which Pomeroy was heart, soul and pen attaching himself. In his excellent paper on the subject, Frank L. Klement points out that it was compounded out of "a half dozen complex ingredients." Democratic partisans flavored it with political opportunism and sordid party tactics. Religious hopes and fears "served as a condiment, for a tinge of Know-Nothings colored the Republican party and drove Irish and German Catholics into the ranks of the opposition."

The movement also possessed social aspects. The designation "Butternut," used interchangeably with the term "Copperhead," indicated its rural and democratic basis. It was, in the main, a small farmer


120. See Frank L. Klement's article in the Mississippi Valley Historical Review, previously cited.
movement — for the Copperhead country was characterized by small homesteads, poor soils and widespread illiteracy.

Western sectionalism played its part. The westerner was desirous of promoting his section's economic welfare, political aspirations and cultural development. The westerners distrusted and were jealous of the banking and Puritan East. They could recite a long list of economic grievances including collapse of banking systems; closing of the much-needed Mississippi River trade which forced farm prices downward and also tended to throw the farmers to the mercy of the eastern railroads and their high rates; objectionable tariffs which tended to benefit Eastern manufacturers; all these things tending to crystallize thinking and form the background for the Granger movement which would subsequently envelop the area.

One of his first quarrels with Lincolnian practices after returning to La Crosse was the Conscription Act of 1863. According to this act all able-bodied male citizens between twenty and forty-five, besides alien declarants, were "to constitute the national forces." Exemptions were extended to mentally or physically unfit, certain high government officials on state and federal levels, the only son of a dependent widow and the only son of infirm parents. Service was not to exceed three years. If a drafted man furnished a substitute he might be exempt from service; such exemption could also be bought outright for $300.

Under this ill-devised statute a Federal provost marshal general's bureau was set up and a vast national network of enrolling officials

121. Randall, Civil War and Reconstruction, op. cit., pp. 610-611.
was spread over the country. Though in the long run its results were small, this elaborate machinery reached into every locality and into every home that included able-bodied men of military age. The thankless and dangerous business of these officials was to list the men liable to service, examine state credits, equalize the burden by a process that resembled higher mathematics, determine exemptions, conduct the draft, make arrangements in the matter of substitutes and commutation money, and bear up as best as they could against pressure and tricks to defeat their work.

The very moment of adoption of national conscription was one of depression. Volunteering had subsided, there were many desertions, defeats and setbacks were fresh in the public mind. Operations against Vicksburg had been thwarted, Charleston had withstood Federal attacks, the gloom of Fredericksburg still prevailed; and in that vicinity Lee was soon to win another triumph.

The provision of the Draft Act regarding the payment of $300 in commutation money was highly impractical and greatly undemocratic. Pomeroy would have much to say against it, especially as discriminatory against the poor. The State of Delaware voted to pay the commutation money of all its drafted citizens and many areas followed this lead. While financially profitable, it did not raise an army. According to one authority, the result was that the draft law, instead of settling everyone's duty and introducing the quiet and order of European war-time,

created three and one-half million recruiting agents combined into groups of varying sizes, calculating the amount they could pay to escape service, or could secure for serving.

While charging that the conscription commutation clause fell heavily upon the poor, Pomeroy at first did not think it inconsistent to applaud the very same clause. Without it the draft would take "brains, which cannot be replaced, as well as brawn which can be replaced... The nation will then suffer, business will stop." However, since brains might possibly be found among the poor, and to save those who didn't want to go to war from service — in addition to pandering to the public's whim — Pomeroy espoused the idea of the commutation pools already alluded to. Since "there isn't a man in La Crosse County who wishes to join the army, either as a conscript or a volunteer," Pomeroy urged that the rich pay their own $300 exemption fees, while the County Board should be authorized to raise a fund by taxation to "exempt the poor who cannot afford to pay and must either run away...or go to war." However, the city experienced great trouble in this and it was unsuccessful.

As draft rolls continued to be drawn up during 1863, Pomeroy was to term the act "a most damnable humbug" and compare it to the slave auction block. "Then! oh when will the powers that are now ruling fall back upon the love of the people, and not make slaves of its defenders."

123. See C. R. Fish, "Conscription in the Civil War," American Historical Review, XXI.
124. Democrat, June 2 and 3, 1863.
The July draft riots in New York were termed "a taste of war in the North," and were the "result of disobedience to law for which the Administration... is more responsible than the rank and file." His most bitter words were reserved for a later date.

At four o'clock on the morning of June 3, 1863, Federal troops, acting on orders of General Ambrose Burnside, marched into the office of the Chicago Times, stopped the press, told all employees to leave, and took possession of the establishment.

Seizure of the Times was the climax of public agitation that had been growing for some months. On June 25, 1862, Governor Oliver P. Morton of Indiana singled out Wilbur Fiske Storey's paper as one against which the administration should act. Governor Richard Yates of Illinois asked for its suppression. Storey had termed the Emancipation Proclamation "...the most wicked, atrocious and revolting deed recorded in the annals of civilization." Advocating peace, he declared soldier's lives were sacrificed without cause and responsibility for all further conflict should rest upon Lincoln.

Pomeroy, upon hearing of the action, editorially rushed to Storey's aid. Terming Burnside's work "an outrage none but a petty tyrant would be guilty of," he claimed "...the United States court is ignored, and great, free, enlightened America is disgraced from the rotten center at Washington

125. Democrat, July 17, September 10, December 2, 17, 1863.
He added:

Has the President no regard for the people? Has he determined to declare himself dictator? Are the bayonets of our brothers to be thrust into the hearts of those whose only offence is loving the laws and the Constitution?...Have the people any rights left or must we submit to the shoulder strap dictator with bowed head and closed mouth like dogs?

Pomeroy warned that the Northwest "will not long stand such acts of outrage, tyranny and despotism. There is an element in this country no armed force can ever put down — no military orders can ever kill — it is the element of freedom." "Where are our boasted guarantees," he asked. "Where are the courts — the laws? What is the administration...?" If this continued, Pomeroy wrote, civil strife might start in the North.

Burnside's directions for suppression of the Chicago Times also excluded the New York World from the Ohio Department. Lincoln was "embarrassed" by the general's actions. While he desired to do right by the military and give it every support, he was faced by the question of liberty of the press. After reflection and considerable advice and pressure from Republican and Democratic sources, he ordered Burnside, on June 4, to revoke the seizure order.

Pomeroy praised the President upon learning that he had revoked

127. Democrat, June 4, 1863.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
"the order issued by the upstart, Burnside..." The La Crosse editor explained that "by this act the President gains a stronger hold upon a large mass of loyal people who were fast losing all faith in him... He is a man of too strong sense to allow fanatical fools to ruin the country by such Jackassical proceedings."

During the preceding month, the annual meeting of the Wisconsin newspaper association had been held in La Crosse. The fact that Pomeroy still kept a weather eye open for all angles of newspaper work can be gained from the following resolution which he presented and had adopted:

Resolved: That any member of this Association who will consent to or offer to do any kind of advertising at less than rates prescribed by law, be formally read out of the Association at the next annual meeting as a rat; provided that the accused shall have the opportunity of being heard in his own defense.

With attention being focused upon the Democrat, and the name of Pomeroy being heard more often in newspaper and political circles, the La Crosse editor took time out from attacks on the administration to laugh at himself. Scanning the various sheets which lay on his exchange table and, no doubt, drawing many ideas from the letters he received, Pomeroy came up with the following self-description:

In all human probabilities the most persistently wickedly ambitious chap in all Christendom, is a very mean man, known only in the world in which he lives, as Brick Pomeroy. According to the papers...he should be extinguished at once. His characteristics are:

131. Democrat, June 5, 1863.
132. Quaife, op. cit., p. 574.
133. Democrat, July 1, 1863.
He is bankrupt without a dollar in the world.
He controls the La Crosse and Milwaukee Railroad.
He has not the least influence.
He controls the La Crosse and St. Paul Packet Company.
He is dishonest, deceitful, unscrupulous and
dreadfully wicked.
He will lie, steal, rob, plunder, cheat, swindle
and swear to it.
He goes naked through the streets on the Fourth
of July.
And no one will swear out a complaint against him.
He is kept caged, has a keeper and can be seen at
any hour of the day or night at his cage, when
not up to some terrible devilment.

To Pomeroy, the arrest of Clement L. Vallandigham, prominent
Ohio Democrat, indicated the extension of tyranny, and his military
trial represented the army's invasion of judicial fields. "The President,"
said Pomeroy, "has no more power or authority to arrest Vallandigham...
than he had to suppress a newspaper." And after the Ohioan's release and
flight to Canada, Pomeroy added: "It seems indeed singular that a free
American citizen should be compelled to seek refuge under the flag this
country battled against so many years -- under the flag of a monarchy."
Furthermore, Pomeroy advocated the "martyr candidate for governor of Ohio."

Benjamin F. Butler also drew Pomeroy's wrath. One of the dar­
lings of the Radical Republicans, Pomeroy often pictured "Beast Butler"
in cartoons and engravings. He was also responsible for the turbulent
135
general being popularly known as "Spoon" Butler.

134. Democrat, June 10, July 21, 1863.

135. Clement, Wisconsin Magazine of History, op. cit., p. 111; La Crosse
Chronicle, December 5, 1897. Pomeroy was one of the first area news­
papermen to employ an engraver, and he used many cuts in his paper.
As the Union forces labored in seemingly fruitless manner before Vicksburg and Lee was beginning to thrust up through Pennsylvania, the Copperhead Milwaukee News reported that hope in Grant was daily dying and rhetorically asked: "How long, O'Lord, how long?" Upon reading this the editor of the Madison Journal commented "It takes very little to discourage such men of that sheet," and caused the following satirically bitter retort from Pomeroy:

What a pity all are not like this Mark Tapley of the Journal. We really think the News has no cause for discouragement! The war has not as yet been a long one! The original call for 75,000 men failed to do the work, but what of it? Half a million men have been killed, but that is nothing. The rebels are marching into Pennsylvania, invading the sacred soil of the North, but that is nothing! The people of the north are disgruntled with the management of the war, but that is nothing to feel blue over. There is no head to the army (and the tail is winding away rapidly) but what of it. We do not think the editor of the News should be discouraged at trifles like these — by the cherished Administrative hope of African happiness through forcible emancipation... There is no cause for discouragement. We are going on right merrily for a funeral.

The victory Mead won at Gettysburg lifted Pomeroy's hopes momentarily. Urging immediate pursuit of Lee to speed the ultimate victory, Pomeroy also praised Grant's work at now-conquered Vicksburg. "Vicksburg is ours. Glory to God — to General Grant and to the brave men who with him have made the natal day of America brighter and more honored than ever before." Perhaps anticipating Grant's shift to the Potomac sector, Pomeroy predicted that "He will yet be first in Richmond."

136. Democrat, June 30, 1863.
137. Ibid., July 10, 1863.
Miss E. T. Greenfield, the famed "Black Swan," appeared in La Crosse in mid-July of 1863, and quickly captured the city. Surprisingly enough, Pomeroy was one of her hailers. "We are not an admirer of colored persons as a general thing," he explained. "But in this instance the presence of such a wonderful genius for song forces us to give her praise."

Asked to stay over in La Crosse and give additional concerts, Pomeroy described the Black Swan as "a dark brunette, with a sort of alboni figure, and with a voice of the most extraordinary depth, power, range and sweetness."

Needless to say, "she charmed and more than delighted" her audiences.

As July days passed and the Union forces did not follow up their victory at Gettysburg, Pomeroy again became discouraged and charged that the so-called victory had actually been a Federal defeat:

"Day rolls into night -- night unfolds itself into day, but through the darkness and the blackness thereof the morning sun brings no glimpse of light from the Army of the Potomac. The Government Lie Machine had promised a quick follow-up victory and defeat of Lee, but it comes not. The truth is the Gettysburg battle was a Federal defeat. If this is not so, the Federal managers are worse than traitors. Lee walked off from the scene of conflict like a lion..."

Pomeroy accused Lincoln of desiring the "Gettysburg defeat."

"We do not believe it is the policy of the Administration to push the Potomac Army into rebel territory," he charged. Without his favorite McClellan in command, the Army of the Potomac "is like the people of the North, sick and disgruntled at the tricks and deception practiced on them..."

138. Democrat, July 18, 20, 1863.

139. Ibid., August 1, 1863.
by the authorities in Washington." 

By reprinting articles from Copperhead sheets like the Chicago Times, New York World, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Cincinnati Enquirer and the Milwaukee News, Pomeroy was able to advocate his views through indirection. The Ryan Address which he had rejected the previous year, he now endorsed. However, when he spoke outright for himself, he claimed that if the Democrats lost the fall election it could be attributed to that same Address.

In La Crosse Unionists tried to combat Pomeroy's influence. They tied the tail of treason to his kite and used Copperhead as a smear term. Unsigned letters threatened his life, but it was to be some months before an actual attempt at destroying his property along with the editor was to crystallize.

Republicans urged "loyal men" to cancel their subscriptions to the Democrat and businessmen to cease advertising in its columns. Social boycotts, too, were the order of the day. A. P. Blakeslee launched the Democratic Journal to lure party members from Pomeroy's quarters and directed editorial attacks at the "treasonable doctrines of those who sympathize with the rebellion." Blakeslee warned that "Wisconsin Democracy has a few dangerous men, seeking to be leaders, whose counsels should be spurned." Even the courts were appealed to, for a certain Colonel R. C.

140. Democrat, August 1, 1863.
111. Ibid., August 16, September 13, 20, 23, November 3, 1863.
112. La Crosse Democratic Journal, June 17, 24, 1863.
Murphy was reportedly fusing Pomeroy for $10,000, on the charge that the La Crosse editor had called the colonel "a coward and a traitor."

Tactics of intimidation and the State election fever of 1863 spurred Pomeroy to increase his accusations and intensify his charges.

Brick tried his hand at the shrine of the poetic muse when he dedicated the following bitter lines to Lincoln and his administration:

We are coming, Abraham Lincoln,
    From mountain, wood and glen,
We are coming Abraham Lincoln,
    With the ghosts of murdered men.
Yes! We're coming Abraham Lincoln,
    With curses loud and deep,
That will haunt you in your waking,
    And disturb you in your sleep.

There's blood upon your garments,
    There's blood upon your soul,
For the lust of ruthless soldiers,
    You let loose without control,
Your dark and wicked doings,
    A God of mercy sees.
And the wail of homeless children,
    Is heard on every breeze.

There's sadness in our dwelling,
    And the cry of wild despair,
From broken hearts and ruined homes,
    Breaks on the midnight air:
While sorrow spreads her funeral pall
    O'er this once happy land,
For brothers meet, in deadly strife,
    A brother's battle brand.

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1\*3. Democrat, August 29, 1863. Pomeroy's paper was carrying much advertising from Milwaukee and other outlying cities, attesting to the fact that it was becoming widely circulated.

1\*4. Democrat, August 22, 1863, and reprinted in numerous succeeding issues.
67

With desolation all around,
Our dead lie on the plains.
You're coming Abraham Lincoln,
With manacles and chains,
To subjugate the white man,
And let the Negro free.
By the blood of all those murdered men,
This curse can never be.

You may call your black battalions,
To aid your stinking cause,
And substitute your vulgar jokes,
For liberty and laws.
No! By memory of our fathers,
By those green unmarked graves,
We'll perish on ten thousand fields
Ere we become your slaves.

The fact that thirty-three newspapers "have hoisted the Democratic ticket" in the State of Wisconsin," and "not less than seventy-thousand sheets are issued weekly in defense of old-fashioned democracy," meant to the La Crosse editor that the Wisconsin Democratic Party was much alive in the fall election. He pointed out that people were beginning to remember "Democracy has always taught us that every man was a traitor who would infringe upon, in the slightest manner, the sacred rights of the Constitution. Democracy never has done it and never will." However, the Republican Party -- state and national -- continually was destroying the rights of free-born people and must be voted out of office if the Constitution were to stand.

Members of the party in power were continually reminding the Wisconsin firebrand that he, too, had urged Democrats to "stand by the President," In his earlier editorials he had maintained "This is no time

145. Democrat, August 29, 1863.
for threats, defiant acts or positions. Loyal Democrats are true to the Union — the Constitution and the Laws."

Pomeroy readily admitted that he had stood by Lincoln "as he had promised to stand by the country." However, little by little he had watched despotism develop. "Tighter and still tighter he [Lincoln] drew the cord of tyranny about the necks of a willing people. One by one, sacred rights, dear to Americans, went by the board, cut away from the sacred temple by his acts..." The people protested — but in vain. The right of free speech was denied, the rights of the free press were ignored, and the chief executive further "poured cold water on patriotism" by use of the draft.

"When he returns to his duty," promised Pomeroy, "we will return our allegiance to him." However, "we will not leave 'Hail Columbia' for 'Old John Brown.'" If "Lincoln will stand by the Constitution — it is older than he — we will stand by him."

On the day of the state election, Pomeroy claimed that any Democratic loss could be charged to the Ryan Address, forgetting that he himself had adopted it through the back door and that his own exhortations and diatribes might be considered far worse. Awaiting the day's results, he set forth his position for the future. His stand would be to put down the rebellion by force of arms, preserve the union for posterity, and

116. Democrat, October 8, 1863.

117. Ibid., October 8, 24, 1863.
sustain the government regardless of cost in blood and treasure. However, these noble sentiments, as might be expected, were to be short-lived.

November 4, 1863, brought another defeat for the state Democratic organization. The La Crosse journalist headed a front page story "Gone -- Gone -- Gone" and commented: "Goodby and if forever, fare thee well! We have as a party met the enemy -- surrounded them from the center and shall consider ourselves prisoners of war. The Democratic Party of Wisconsin had died again."

According to Pomeroy, this is how the fatal accident took place:

"In 1863, the party...was found apparently dead in the wilderness, or at least so badly wounded as to fail recognition. It was well laid out and found nicely wrapped up in the Ryan Address, with E. G. [Ryan] himself sitting at the head of the corpse waving his head and chanting hysterically:

They say I'm self-willed -
The party I've killed -
Then I'll laugh in my joy
And sing in my glee
The corpse I will dress
In the Ryan Address
And laugh at the fools
In sweet mockery
Ha ha, ha ha, hee hee, hee hee
For the King of the Dead is Ryan, E. G.

When McClellan's name began to be bandied about as a possible Democratic candidate in the national 1864 election Pomeroy vaulted to the band wagon and praised the fallen idol. Pointing out that Little Mac

149. Ibid., November 4, 1863.
would get the soldier vote, Pomeroy cynically remarked that "Perhaps we had better fall back on honest Old Abe -- the elongated rail-splitter. The gander-chanked flatboat man... The long statesman -- measuring him by the duration of the war he promised to end in sixty days."

After reading McClellan's defense of his military actions, Pomeroy charged that he had been removed from command when upon the very threshold of victory. However, the jealous Lincoln administration was responsible and the American people now knew.

Shortly after the New Year, Pomeroy was able to buy out the weekly Democratic Journal, which had been established by Blakeslee as a special conservative Democratic organ for the previous state campaign. The addition, claimed Pomeroy, makes the "Democrat establishment...the most extensive printing office in the Northwest except for that of the Milwaukee Sentinel." The paper was "out of debt and money ahead," and the vigorous editor said more attention would be paid to "local, national and variety reading." "We shall support this Administration," he reiterated, "although we have not a bit of respect for it, for such is the duty of every editor and of every citizen."

The fact that Pomeroy's paper was growing and that he was gaining adherents throughout La Crosse and the surrounding territory was underscored during the initial week of 1861, when the daily Democrat was

150. Democrat, December 8, 1863.
151. Ibid., December 28, 1863.
152. Ibid., January 2, 1864.
made the city's official publication. Weeks later he announced that he
soon would begin publication of a German language weekly to be known as
the German Democrat. Subscription rates would be $1.50 a year in advance,
with special prices to clubs of ten or more members. On April 1, his
Democrat was expanded from seven columns to eight, and, to make his hopes
complete, La Crosse went democratic in its April city election. Pomeroy's
friend, Albert W. Pettibone, was re-elected mayor with a sixty-seven vote
majority. The prior election had put him in office with a single-vote
majority.

The draft came back to plague Pomeroy and he began to dismantle
it in his editorial columns. Lincoln had requested 500,000 men to be
raised in March and the La Crosse editor cried "They cannot be had. There
are not 500,000 more men in the North who will go to war." Looking about
him, Pomeroy stated "...there is not a man in this city pleased... We do
not know whether this...denotes a breaking down of the spirit of freedom --
a sort of meek submission to the powers that control, or a disposition to
rebel." As far as Pomeroy was concerned, Lincoln's call should be answered
by the Abolitionists, Wide Awakes and Union Leaguers "who would now have
their chance to rush to glory by way of an early grave."

Pomeroy had often felt the taunts of others. People shunned
him on the street, decried his name in conversations, and worked hard to
put him and his publication out of business. However, these machinations

153. Democrat, January 8, February 27, April 1, 6, 1864.
154. Ibid., February 4, 9, 1864.
did not reach the point of physical violence until the last day of March, 1864.

As the editor tells it, a young Army private came to see him and reported that La Crosse men had boarded a steamer at Winona. The river packet was laden with troops of the Third Minnesota Regiment en route to the Potomac. The local men plied the soldiers with liquor in the hopes "they would get the Democrat office and destroy its contents." According to Pomeroy, the reason for the young man's warning was that earlier he had aided the soldier's father.

After hearing the alarming news, about one dozen employees and friends of the paper gathered in the upstairs rooms of the Juneau Building to defend the Democrat from the expected attack. They were armed with revolvers, repeating rifles and "100 bottles of nitric acid," in case the fighting was at close quarters.

A mob of soldiers and civilians gathered about 10 p.m. near the Democratic stronghold and prepared to march. However, three factors interfered with completion of the avowed task. In the first place, Mayor Pettibone ordered the soldiers to desist and called their commander. Secondly, Republicans to whom Pomeroy owed money went about the rioters, urging them to refrain from destroying the property. Thirdly — and perhaps most important — a brewery was in the line of march and the stalwarts stopped.

156. Ibid., p. 196.
to quench their thirst, soon dismissing previous intentions from befuddled minds.

These threats infuriated Pomeroy. He feared no one — he would fight fire with fire. "When this office is visited by a mob of soldiers or civilians there will be trouble, and somebody will be killed dead," he warned. If an arson attempt was made upon the office, the editor promised "a hundred buildings in the city will keep it company in ruins. Matches are cheap!"

The national election was to be held in 1861, and Pomeroy was quite concerned over the selection of a suitable party candidate. "The country calls for true, earnest, patriotic, practical men," and personages like Buchanan, Vallandigham, Lincoln and Greeley "are not wanted." On the contrary, the nation was calling for "a patriot, a statesman, a man who loves his country better than Copperheadism, Abolitionism, or mis-cengenation. A man who believes in the Constitution... A man who will respect and enforce the laws of the land."

Pomeroy believed the nation's voters had three choices open to them. Those who believed in the abolition of slavery could vote for Fremont. Those "who believe in plunder, and who hold to principles only as

157. Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 196; Democrat, April 2, 1864. Pomeroy explains he "took especial pains to keep myself somewhat in debt to prominent Republicans...because they would not be so willing to destroy the business of a man who was in debt to them." This even if he did not need funds.

158. Democrat, April 2, 1864.

159. Ibid., April 23, 1864.
they are baited with office and a chance to steal," would vote for
Lincoln, if he were renominated. And, thirdly, those "who believe in
the Union — in the Constitution — in the laws and in the enforcement
thereof...will vote for neither one or the other of the Republican can-
didates, but for the nominee of the Democratic convention."

Republicans held their convention at Baltimore and Lincoln,
"the great American humorist," was re-elected. Pomeroy greeted the news
with dismay. "May Almighty God forbid that we are to have two terms of
the rottenist, most-stinking, ruin-working small-pox ever conceived by
fiends or mortals in the shape of two terms of Abe Lincoln's administra-
tion." Terming Baltimore [recalling 1860] a poor place to hold a presi-
dential convention, Pomeroy looked forward to the Democratic meeting
at Chicago, a "better" location. And, for the editor's pre-convention
money, Grant was the man to defeat Lincoln.

Although Pomeroy had expressed the belief that Grant could de-
feat Lincoln, he was not disappointed when the Democratic party selected
General McClellan as its candidate. Pomeroy lauded the military figure
"a noble patriot and gallant soldier," and declared the "insurgent's
tyrannical reign is arriving neigh to its close. The dawn has come and
in the future we again see peace and happiness restored to this distracted

160. Democrat, June 7, 1864.
161. Ibid., June 9, 1864.
162. Ibid., June 11, 1864.
The election campaign coupled with the draft and the continual berating of Democratic loyalty was to send Pomeroy off the deep end. He was to search the dictionary for denunciatory derivatives which might be applied against Republicans, the administration, and especially, the chief executive.

No sooner was the Democratic convention over than the local Republican paper termed it a collection of "foul and dirty birds," and such charges set Pomeroy seething.

It was on April 23, 1861, that Pomeroy appended the name "widow-maker" to Abraham Lincoln. In the months that followed it was to become one of the editor's favorite and most-used barbs. However, his attacks would not be limited by it. The height of denunciation was yet to be reached.

With Lincoln "calling for 500,000 more victims," Pomeroy thought it time "for the women to buy mourning clothes, for in a month or two there will not be money enough in the country to use for that purpose." Lincoln was demanding "human sheaves to run through his threshing or mangling machine. The widow-maker is bound to feed the freemen of the nation just fast enough to keep it running till his pets are enriched from the blood daily being spilled." As Pomeroy saw it, the situation had reached the point where "It is now revolt, Canada, or fight." He

163. Democrat, August 31, 1861.
164. La Crosse Daily Republican, September 5, 1861.
wondered what course the people would take.

The La Crosse editor injected economic and sectional appeals into his war against the draft. The poor were being trodden under by the draft machine. Men were told to "make arrangements to secure your fall crops by proxy." Looking eastward, Pomeroy charged that eastern states should fill their prescribed quotas instead of depending upon the west. "How much longer will the west submit to this cruel injustice?" he rhetorically asked.

When Lincoln set aside the fourth day of August as a period of fasting and prayer, Pomeroy proclaimed that the fifth day would be one of great sorrow for the "body snatcher" would begin collecting his victims. Playing up racial and class prejudices, he said the draft would "take the last stay and dependence from many a poor Irish and German family." The wealthiest La Crosse businessmen raised $7,000 to pay substitutes and left the "poor to shift for themselves and stand the raking fire of Lincoln's death-loaded cannon."

Negro suffrage as a policy was receiving numerous and bitter blasts. General Butler and Wendell Phillips shared Pomeroy's editorial

165. Democrat, July 19, 1861. Strangely enough Pomeroy had stated that he would pay $5 each to the first five volunteers for the draft, shortly before this attack. He asked others to do the same, but the measure fell through.

166. Ibid., July 19, 25, 1861. During much of the campaign, Pomeroy carried a one-column cut of Lincoln on page one, titled "The Widow-Maker."

167. Ibid., August 2, 1861.
abuse. And Lincoln was to blame for it all! Termed "Holl's vice regent on earth," Pomeroy claimed that the man who "votes for Lincoln now is a traitor," for the chief executive "is a traitor and a murderer. He who pretending to war for, wars against the Constitution."

The die was about to be cast for the La Crosse editor. From warm-hearted support of Lincoln at the early stage of the war he had rapidly cooled off. As the months passed and he began to believe he was witnessing the rise of an Abolition-Negro dictatorship, he was driven farther to the left by his sincerity, courage and zeal to be recognized. He had called Lincoln everything from a fool to "a tyrant's bastard."
The only phrases he had not uttered were those demanding the President's life and calling for a revolution, though he oft had hinted at the latter. These phrases, however, were not long in waiting to be mouthed.

Pomeroy's fantastic yet serious censure had won him national notoriety. He gloried in that publicity — it was food for his vanity. Thus it was that he reached the point where he became bold and abusive enough to ask for the President's death. On August 25, 1861, he printed the famous dagger editorial which was to ultimately call down the fire of the gods upon his blondish head. It charged:

He who calls and allures men to certain butchery, is a murderer, and Lincoln has done all this. Had any former Democratic president warred on the Constitution or trifled

168. Democrat, August 22, 25, 1861.

169. Ibid., August 25, 1861; La Crosse Chronicle, January 1, 1905; Klement, Wisconsin, op. cit., p. 113. The statement's ramifications were more thunderous following Lincoln's murder.
with the destinies of the nation as Lincoln has he would have been buried to perdition long since. And if he is elected to misgovern another four years, WE TRUST SOME BOLD HAND WILL PIERCE HIS HEART WITH A DAGGER POINT FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD.

Local and area reprisals and counterblasts greeted Pomeroy's attack upon the chief executive. However, it was not to gain its full national recognition until the President was slain. While Lincoln lay dying in Washington, Charles Seymour, editor of the Republican, sent a copy of the dagger editorial to Horace Greeley in New York, along with a dispatch charging Pomeroy with being the head of a treasonable organization known as the Knights of the Golden Circle. Greeley reproduced the editorial and Pomeroy gained more national attention, though this time he undoubtedly would have preferred avoiding the limelight.

The Republican castigated Pomeroy for his remarks, asking "what does this impious and base wretch mean by thus casting his filth and insolence upon his betters? Does he not know that he has outraged public decency in this community to a degree that has taxed the tolerance of his fellow citizens?" Deriding Pomeroy for recently divorcing his wife and abandoning her to "the cold hospitality of the world...and the child who had issued from his loins," the Republican's editor promised that "By the name of the God that made us, we will not permit such a vile character to defame the unsullied character of the chief magistrate of

170. La Crosse Tribune, July 21, 1936. However, according to this article, Pomeroy's editorial assistant, Charles Lobdell, wrote the dagger article. This seems unlikely since Pomeroy, later, more or less admits authorship.
the country of which we are humble citizens, without stripping from his loathsome carcass every rag that conceals his moral leprosy from public execration."

It was the personal malignity of "Mr. Lincoln" which was keeping 30,000 Union prisoners suffering needlessly in Southern prisons, said Pomeroy, using this fact as some of the justification for his dagger statement. The rebels were willing and desirous to make exchanges, he added and the President's lack of action "is reprehensible."

Because of the hellish acts of Lincoln and his minions, Pomeroy felt constrained to point out that the North was "rushing into the flood of a revolution... at a rate of speed few dream of." Democrats were urged to be ready for anything. When "they [Republicans] kill the humblest Democrat, let us slay the leader of that party, and destroy his habitation."

The only hope of the Union, as Pomeroy saw it, was a McClellan victory in November. He urged the Democrats to appear at the polls and cast their ballots for deliverance. Republicans were appealed to, and the La Crosse editor issued a special plea to the foreign-born. Harking back to his statements of Republican intolerance in the 1860 campaign,

171. La Crosse Republican, August 26, 1861.

172. Democrat, October 3, 1861. Pomeroy appeared to believe that Lincoln feared negotiating for the release of prisoners since they might vote against him. He apparently failed to realize that an exchange would greatly benefit the South's military potential.

173. Ibid., October 7, 1861.
Pomeroy told the new voters that they had come to this country to better their conditions and because they liked the nation's laws. Now, however, Lincoln "has broken the Constitution which he swore to protect... Ever since he became President the country has been in trouble... If you want peace... your sons and brothers to come home alive from this war... vote for McClaylen — and the Democratic ticket — the ticket of the people."  

An early November snowstorm knocked out telegraph communications between La Crosse and the rest of the nation as the river city anxiously awaited word of the election results. However, Pomeroy conjectured that there was "little, if any, doubt, but Lincoln is re-elected, though we do not admit the facts until we see the figures." If the incumbent was not re-elected the world would wonder, he added. "What with the great leverage of means in the hands of unprincipled men, and millions of dollars at his disposal, and the reign of terror his followers and advocates have spread over the land, no one will wonder if he be re-elected."  

The election results repudiated Pomeroy, McClaylen and the Copperhead-sponsored peace policy. The disconsolate editor regretted Lincoln's election "more than words can ever tell," and predicted that the Union of states "was gone forever," that the South "would never be subjugated," and that thieving army generals would be able to carry out their unscrupulous work with renewed effort. He again warned that the

174. Democrat, October 11, 1864.

175. Ibid., November 10, 1864.
nation was ripe for revolution and that a Northwestern Confederacy would be formed to join an alliance with the South.

Claiming the will of the people had been overwhelmed by executive patronage, Pomeroy looked "to those who voted for Lincoln and the continuance of this war to go to the front." And, he warned Lincoln that if the President ever stepped into the office of the La Crosse Democrat, "We'd shoot him quick as any man."

Shortly before the date of the November election, Pomeroy took leave of La Crosse for several months in the East. He had numerous friends and subscribers in this part of the country, especially in New York State and its principal city. He was absent until January 1865, and during this period the editorial guns of the Democrat were relatively stilled. After the election excitement abated, Pomeroy's principal contributions from the East were comments on Democratic notables, sight-seeing trips and human interest angles.

Returned to La Crosse, Pomeroy had a very short stay before again turning his steps eastward for a four-month circuitous tour of the East and Northeast. This jaunt began to dull the Copperhead's sharp criticism. He found the country not nearly as ruined nor war-weary as he had earlier imagined. And he even found time to pat Lincoln on the

176. Democrat, November 21, 1864.
177. Ibid., November 14, 1864.
178. Ibid., November 21, 1864.
179. In the Democrat of November 10, 1864, Pomeroy claimed a detective had been hired to follow him East. He had many friends in the New York area and was to start operations there at a future date.
back for removing "Beast" Butler. From New York he wrote that the "President has lifted himself several stories in our estimation..." by this action. Pomeroy was of the opinion that Butler's removal indicated that Lincoln "means business this year." If such were the case, the La Crosse editor promised "...ours will not be the pen to speak other than praise. Let him now weed out...other thick-headed citizen-generals who were better fitted to stir mush than to lead brave men to death."

About the most vitriolic statement made against the President in the last few weeks before his death actually was directed against his son, Robert Lincoln. As was to be the case in another great war, Pomeroy complained that Robert had been given "a soft job" in the Army. His appointment as an assistant adjutant general of volunteers with the rank of captain had been confirmed, and Pomeroy claimed he would be on Grant's staff "where he will be out of harm's way and can enjoy himself hugely. This patriotic example of the President's son should encourage every loyal young man in the North to offer his services at once as captain of somebody's staff."

Pomeroy was convinced that General Grant was dealing the Confederacy its death blow as he prepared to return to La Crosse during the latter part of March. And he was almost equally sure that the powder and blood had cleansed the Army of the corruptionists and plunderers.

180. _Democrat_, January 17, 1865, written January 10.
181. _Ibid._, March 2, 1865.
In early April, Pomeroy returned to La Crosse, and the Republican commented that it understood the editor of the Democrat was applying to the Legislature "to have his name changed to beans." During his absence, said the opposition paper, Pomeroy "...delivered 3,000 lectures, addressed sixteen million people, bored out over 800 oil wells, invested a quarter of a million dollars of his surplus capital in Ohio and Pennsylvania and secured a patent for securing people with gas cheaper than daylight."

A few days after his arrival, Lee and Grant settled their differences and Pomeroy considered the war over. Seeing only the beautiful lights of peace and happiness in the future, the editor ordered the bells to be rung, "not in exultation over a brave and fallen foe so much as for joy that the Union is restored. Glory to God and to the brave warriors of the North — to the immortal Trinity of American Military Genius — Grant, Sherman, Sheridan." And looking into the recent past, he declared:

When the energies of the nation are applied to conquering those in rebellion more than to suppressing newspapers, imprisoning editors, stealing cotton, robbing defenseless women and impoverished orphan children, God smiles approval... The day of peace draweth nigh and the Union will live. Rejoice!

The Republican rejoiced, too, but its happiness was due to the fact that the country "has not been ruined by its enemies." Turning to its city-rival, the paper said "let our rejoicing be tempered by well directed and fervent curses on all the northern men who have been

182. Republican, April 7, 1865.

183. Democrat, April 10, 1865. Like many others, he failed to see Lincoln’s military genius.
traitors to the loyal cause when it was in jeopardy, and who are now
traitors to the southern cause when it is irrevocably lost." The paper
advised: "You Skunk! [Pomeroy] Go and hang yourself, but do not mar the
music of freemen's cheers, with your heartless hooting over Federal
victories."

But there was to be little, if any, rejoicing. On the night
of April 14, Lincoln and Booth had their fateful meeting in Ford's
Theater, and the President died at an assassin's hand.

Even the irascible editor of the Democrat showed regret at
Lincoln's death. The newspaper was decked in mourning black and Pomeroy
proclaimed "We mourn with the people for a great man has fallen." Quali-
lying the statement, he pointed out "Lincoln was not a Napoleon -- was
not a Jackson -- was not a Webster -- was not a Douglas. But we believe
he was a man of genius -- a lover of his country -- an honest man -- a
statesman. He was too honest for the position if such things can be."

"For the last few months," he continued, "the President has been
more than ever endearing himself to the hearts of the people by his refusal
to listen to the wily politicians -- by his proven desire to hasten peace
and its blessings."

The nation demands the blood of the murderer, shouted the La
Crosse editor. "The culprit ought to be hung in chains to starve to

184. Republican, April 8, 1865.
185. Democrat, April 15, 1865.
186. Ibid.
death," Pomeroy suggested, adding that he suspected General Butler as
being behind the dastardly plot.

Lincoln's death left the nation without a head to guide its
destinies, he continued. The victors "are left with a drunken politician
to preside over the destinies of an afflicted people."

Though he attempted to point the finger of guilt at other
individuals, Pomeroy, too, was under suspicion. In an attempt, perhaps,
to divert suspicion from the door of the Democrat he called for a special
memorial service in La Crosse. "Let us all in sorrow follow him to the
grave, and pay a feeble tribute of respect to one so worthy of love..."
he said.

When a memorial meeting was held, the La Crosse editor appeared
"like Satan among the Sons of God, acted as one of the speakers and min­
gled his damned hypocritical whine of sorrow, with the honest grief of
loyal men."

Area and national newspapers began to whittle away at Pomeroy's
war-time excesses. The New York Tribune considered the Democrat "a speci­
enm of the spirit pervading a portion of the Democratic press." Accord­
ingly, the eastern organ continued, "...their names should be made known

187. Democrat, April 24, 1865.
188. Ibid., April 15, 1865.
189. Ibid., April 17, 1865.
190. Late Taylor in Prescott, Wisconsin Journal, quoted in Republican,
May 3, 1865. Taylor was wrong; Pomeroy attended service but did
not speak.
to the entire nation, and be handed down to posterity in company with
the perpetrators and accomplices of this foulest crime in the history of
the United States."

Seymour, editor of the local Republican, spoke pointedly to his rival. "Your work has been carried out," he told Pomeroy. "Abraham Lincoln is dead. Go and look at him, and as you stand beside his coffin think of what you said, and settle the question with your own conscience, whether the blood of a noble, great and good man is not on your garments."
The St. Paul Press named Pomeroy as one of the "primary originators and instigators of the damnable crime," and the Beaver Dam Argus suggested that he be immediately arrested and hanged.

Pomeroy offered weak denials of his editorial activities. With abuse piling upon his shoulders, he denied that he had "ever expressed a hope that some Brutus would free this unhappy country from its tyrant in the horrible manner President Lincoln was murdered." He explained that the Democrat "did at one time say that if a man was elected to misgovern this nation some bold hand should touch his heart with a dagger point for the public good."

The article in question, claimed Pomeroy, had been written at a time when "criminations and recriminations were fashionable -- when even members of the Republican Party [Wade and Davis] were opposed to certain

192. La Crosse Tribune, December 7, 1941.
193. Democrat, April 22, 1865.
acts of the Administration, and when certain events caused thousands of men all over the North to tremble for the perpetuity of civil and religious liberty." Although he had been critical, Pomeroy reminded his attackers that others, too, had been critical, and many of his own comments were products of "the heat of a fierce political campaign."

Even while issuing retractions, the vitriolic editor remained somewhat defiant. Reporting that more than one hundred papers were crying for his life, he went on to defend himself against his accusers and added: "We have written forcibly against men of the Democratic and Republican Party as in our judgement the urgencies of the case demanded, and shall continue so to do without fear or favor."

The capitulation of the Confederate forces to Generals Grant and Sherman cancelled, as well, the commissions of the Copperhead captains. The war discredited them as prophets, so Pomeroy and his compatriots stood disgraced. However, though in disgrace, his pen was not stilled, and he attempted to make the necessary re-adjustment to the new situation.

First terming President Andres Johnson a "drunken politician," Pomeroy began to reconsider his statements as he realized that Johnson would not fall under the influence of the radical Reconstructionists. When Johnson held, in opposition to Sumner, that a state went into the

194. Democrat, April 22, May 3, 1865.
195. Ibid., May 2, 1865.
rebellion as a state and continued to remain one, Pomeroy praised this as "important and sound." Naturally desiring mild treatment for his Southern democratic allies, he pointed out that "Out of this principle comes a bright hope of the restoration of the Union on a sound basis. Let him [Johnson] follow out these principles, and fanaticism will gain no comfort by his administration."Momentarily forgetting the cloud he was under, Pomeroy rashly suggested that Lincoln's death "has proved a blessing to the country. Hereafter we shall never question the wisdom and the greatness of the Deity."

Though the war was over, the La Crosse editor could not forget his unfavorable brush with the Union military. Watching the military tribunals in Washington, he called them a "ursurpation of power." The provisions of the Constitution were being flaunted, "and a dozen shoulder-strapped officers are allowed to usurp the place and prerogative of judge and juries... If they were being tried by due process of law all would be well."

Pomeroy's personal readjustment lay in turning toward the Green-back movement and, partially, to establishing a branch office of the Democrat in New York City. However, this was to mark his highest point and, the New York venture was to suddenly become a disastrous undertaking.

196. Democrat, May 5, June 16, 1865. Pomeroy seemingly never realized that Johnson was only trying to follow Lincoln's kind and mild conception of Reconstruction. It was not original with the new executive.

197. Democrat, May 25, 1865.
The fact that he was a Democrat and always had been somewhat interested in laboring conditions and the farm protests, may explain his adherence to the Greenback cause. His own conversion to Greenbackism was brought about, he explains, when he realized what the currency could do. He claimed that the Democrat "was the first paper in the United States that I know of, and certainly the first democratic paper in the country, that declared in favor of Greenback money."

Pomeroy made numerous trips throughout the South, lecturing, making himself known and drawing subscribers to the Democrat. The Mobile (Alabama) Advertiser reported him "very temperate until he touched upon the Puritanism of New England." It added that Pomeroy promised the South's day of deliverance would come through the efforts of the Democratic party of the North and Northwest. Commenting upon this, the local Republican stated "Brick makes as big a promise as the Devil did on the mountain, and he has just about as much hope of making his promise good as the Devil..."

By 1868, Pomeroy claimed to have a circulation of more than 100,000, "even his enemies could not resist buying his paper." The paper was circulating throughout the country, and the tremendous rise had necessitated his buying a new press to insure its appearance. Pomeroy claimed

198. Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 199.
199. As quoted in the Republican, March 26, 1867.
90,000 subscriptions were north of the Mason-Dixon Line.

Often an eastern visitor, Pomeroy, swelled with success, decided to open a branch office of the Democrat in New York City. While in New York City, Pomeroy had become acquainted with "Boss" Tweed, and it was at Tweed's insistence that the La Crosse editor decided to open the New York Democrat. To Pomeroy, Tweed was "a very companionable, genial, and warm-hearted man, and one who was thoroughly up in the arts of politicians... From the first I liked him, because of his activity of brain and his great determination to do something." However, to Pomeroy's dismay, he was soon to find that Tweed was far more active than he might have wished.

Pomeroy borrowed $25,000 from Tweed and secured another $30,000 from an insurance company, mortgaging a new office he was building in La Crosse, to establish the New York edition. One of his first actions was to publicize the venture. This was done by printing one hundred thousand of the following handbills:

DAWN IT
If You Will
BUT READ IT FIRST

RED HOT FOR THIEVES
The La Crosse Democrat
EVERY NEWS AGENT SELLS IT

200. Circulation figures vary. Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 205, states 100,000. Notes belonging to Harry Hirshheimer, noted authority on La Crosse history, give 90,000; William F. Raney, Wisconsin, op. cit., p. 251, says 300,000, which is far too great; History of La Crosse County, op. cit., sets the figure at 91,200; L. H. Parrish, Some Reminiscences of La Crosse and Vicinity, La Crosse, 1928, says 90,000; and Appleton's Annual Cyclopedia and Register & Important Events of the Year 1896, says 100,000, which is about the best figure available.

201. Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 215

In five weeks Pomeroy's paper had a circulation of 39,000, with more promised. He subsequently paid back his loans to Boss Tweed and the insurance company and advanced $17,500 for Seymour's victorious campaign for the 1868 New York gubernatorial election. For his party work, Tammany rewarded Pomeroy by making the Democrat an official paper of the City of New York, and Pomeroy began envisioning millions.

Wealth was turning Pomeroy's head. Before going to New York he conceived the idea of a model printing establishment and it was completed when he left for the East. A site at Fourth and Main Streets had been purchased, and he proposed to erect the nation's most glittering office. The people could easily forget some of his misdeeds and gathered weekly to attend the mammoth receptions of the "Great Editor."

But this was not enough. Imbued with a sense of culture and his own grandeur, Pomeroy decided La Crosse needed a new opera house. Thus came about what was known to a select few as "Pomeroy's Folly." He insisted on constructing the building according to his own ideas, and when nearly completed, it was discovered that there had been absolutely no provision made for its heating. This necessitated the tearing out of huge portions of the wall to make room for chimneys, entailed considerable financial drain and the editor was forced to borrow $100,000 to complete the building.

203. Pomeroy, op. cit., pp. 219, 225.
204. La Crosse Tribune, July 21, 1938.
The new structure was four stories high, and occupied a space of eighty by one hundred feet. Three stores took up the ground floor space fronting on Main Street, while the third and fourth floors were the opera house. The building was sold by the sheriff a few years after its construction, on a mortgage for $35,000. It was burned soon after.

With his characteristic facility for causing a stir, Pomeroy brashly had a hand clutching a dagger inscribed upon the opera house cornerstone. The motto implied that "No one touches me with impunity." This action caused trouble and guards were employed to secure the area. Pomeroy claims the design was simply "...suggestive of a man's willingness not to be fooled with, and his ability to strike in defense of himself, if nothing more."

An interesting sidelight, which gives additional evidence of Pomeroy's great ego, is the fact that he had numerous pictures of famous men upon his new counting house walls. Included were portraits of George and Martha Washington, Ben Franklin, Andrew Jackson, Thomas Jefferson, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, John Wilkes Booth, Horace Greeley, General FitzJohn Porter and M. M. Pomeroy.

Although he was the mouthpiece of the Tweed organization, Pomeroy soon found himself unable to march down the line with the New York

205. Sanford and Hirschheimer, op. cit., p. 194.

206. Hirshheimer's notes; Pomeroy, op. cit., p. 224. The motto on his opera house curtain declared: "By minding my own business I have made my fortune."

207. Democrat, November 20, 1867.
politician. The two men quarreled, Pomeroy undoubtedly feeling a pinch in his conscience coupled with the fact that Tweed was not fulfilling all of his promises, and the La Crosse editor began to attack the Big City Boss. His charges were carried on by other New York papers after the New York Democrat folded, and Tweed was exposed.

Pomeroy sold the La Crosse Democrat August 1, 1871, to John Symes and George W. Peck. The latter was to become governor of Wisconsin. The name was changed to the Liberal Democrat and the paper supported the Greeley campaign. Pomeroy, bereft of newspapers, threw himself into the Greenback movement.

Settling in Chicago, Pomeroy gathered about him his far-flung printing equipment and launched what was called Pomeroy's Democrat, a Greenback organ. His initial following was large and the first edition had 50,000 subscribers, as he became one of the top chieftans in the Greenback wigwam. Brick constituted himself president of the Greenback Clubs of America. He traveled throughout the Midwest organizing the units. The charters cost $3 a year, with the money entering the Pomeroy coffers. According to reports, he made subscription to his paper a condition of membership in the club. However, an estimated income of $81,000 was not sufficient to support him in the style to which he had some hopes of becoming accustomed to living.

208. La Crosse Chronicle, December 5, 1897. While in New York, the local edition of the Democrat was edited primarily by John and George Peck and Alfred Haven, see Bryant, op. cit., p. 118.

The erratic editor returned to La Crosse in 1878 and re-established the Democrat. Upon divorcing his first wife, he had given her control of the Pomeroy Building and he was to find himself renting office space in the palatial structure from his former spouse, then Mrs. Reed of Clinton, Iowa. His aura still hung about him, for in a short time his circulation topped 30,000.

However, Pomeroy's stay in La Crosse was to be short, and within a year he was to leave town under unfavorable circumstances. Returning to La Crosse, he had entered a partnership with Alpheus S. Foote of the city. According to an agreement, Foote was to furnish the office to the extent of $20,000, while Pomeroy supplied the paper.

About 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 1, 1880, the Democrat's managing editor, G. F. Huntsman, was working late and alone in the office. Needing some material, he passed through the various offices toward Pomeroy's personal sanctuary. While walking past the lavatory he noticed a cigarbox filled "with paper and other combustibles, in the middle of which stood a lighted candle." Realizing that this was seemingly an attempt to destroy the office and opera house, he snuffed out the candle and went in search of Charles Seymour, editor of the Republican. Suspicion pointed at Foote, and the two men, accompanied by the chief of police, arrested

210. Bryant, op. cit., p. 116; La Crosse Chronicle, December 5, 1897. The author of this latter account claims that he was renting from Pomeroy's former wife when the editor returned. Pomeroy secured the building on a lease, bid up the rent "so high that I had to move," and took over the office.
Since it was Saturday evening, Foote could not be brought before a justice until the following Monday. In the meantime, another angle developed which obscured the alleged arson attempt. A charge of forgery was brought against Foote. He was accused of forging his father-in-law's name, James Vincent, to notes amounting to $15,678. This had been known by some individuals, but, until that time, it had been kept quiet. Under the original agreement with Pomeroy, Foote had raised $2,000 in cash and presumably hoped to raise the remainder by devious means. The first forgery was a $5,200 payment to the Campbell Press Company, with the other notes to banks and individuals. Foote's trial was continued until the November term of circuit court. On November 21, 1880, he was sentenced to five years in the state prison.

This put Pomeroy under a cloud. The Republican and members of the community began to indirectly accuse him of having knowledge of the fire and, what is more, he was rendered suspect of having started the fire which wiped out the Republican office in 1865. In addition, it was reported that Pomeroy knew of the initial forgery within several days of its transpiring, and that he was aware of the rest. The editor was quick to see which way the wind was blowing, packed his bags, heeded Greeley's advice, and departed for the Far West.

211. History of La Crosse County, op. cit., pp. 446-447.
212. Ibid.
213. La Crosse Chronicle, December 5, 1897; also see Hirshheimer's notes.
In Denver, Colorado, Pomeroy edited the Great West, invested in mines, and re-established himself financially through organizing and promoting the Atlantic-Pacific Railway Tunnel Company. He left Denver during the latter part of 1880 to attend one of the Greenback conventions being held at St. Louis, intending to resign the presidency of the organization. However, he was enthusiastically greeted and was nominated as the Greenback candidate for the presidency of the United States.

Returning to Colorado, he continued his interest in the Tunnel firm which intended to burrow through the Rocky Mountains. He maintained and widely publicized the notion that the mineral wealth taken from the hole would not only pay for its construction, but also great dividends. Buying played out and deserted mines, Pomeroy sold huge shares of stock to whoever would buy into his organization. Though the scheme was destined to fail, he removed himself to New York City in 1890 and set himself up as President of the Atlantic and Pacific Tunnel Company, flooding the area with news of the tremendous undertaking.

In his plush New York offices, Pomeroy started Advance Thought, a journal and also the name of the publishing company to plug and publicize his ideas. Turning toward the philosophic mood, he began writing in the Horatio Alger manner, warning youths against sin and indolence and recapitulating his life and times in La Crosse. Almost every publication,

211. Here again the presidential candidacy question comes up. This is taken from the La Crosse Tribune, July 21, 1938. If this is true, it must be an offshoot of the Greenback-Labor party which held its 1880 convention in Chicago and named James Weaver of Iowa as standard bearer.
no matter the nature, contained extensive advertising of the tunnel projects.

The flamboyant editor died in Brooklyn on May 30, 1896, with his third wife, the former Emma Stimson, at his side. They had been married on September 2, 1876. Following the Tweed blow-up, the editor had momentarily taken Mrs. Louise N. Thomas of Cleveland as his mate. A former actress, she shortly deserted him to return to the stage. Pomperry, according to his wishes, was cremated, and his ashes were thrown to the four winds from atop the Brooklyn Bridge.

Had any of his former La Crosse enemies been present at his death, they might well have utilized an epitaph written about him in 1864. Termsing him "Manhood of the vilest type," an "outlaw in every social sense," and "pestilence that stalks with gloom," the author reported that the fiery editor now:

He sleeps at last lowly and lone,
A puff that ended in a groan;
The last dull rite is paid to him,
The world has lost — a rotten limb!
He lived — the shame of human kind —
Ambitious, reckless, fierce and blind —
Moved thru the world to plague and spoil,
From whose death-touch the damned recoil —
His soul the haunt where passions revel,
Himself the offspring of the devil.

215. For examples see his autobiography. This volume was the first of a contemplated two. The second was never published.


217. Republican, October 12, 1864, by E. F. Ring.
Let all true men his actions scan.
Report him — whether fiend or man,
And sculptured with a "brick" or bone,
The same on his sepulchral stone,
Roused — will the world his memo doom,
And plant the nightshade on a traitor's tomb.

In conclusion, it might be well to scan Pomeroy's record and, if possible, determine what influenced his participation in the Copperhead movement, deeming him "fiend or man."

Much of his participation in the radical Democratic group can be traced to his personality and to his predilections. His surprising audacity, courage and unconventionality — tending toward exhibitionism— were fathered by his vanity and search for notoriety. He was not adverse to complimenting himself in his own newspaper. "If they wish to read the opinion of a man who fears nothing but his God... the Democrat will suit them," he maintained. However, many believed this exhibitionism and impulsiveness came before anything else. "He neither means nor believes half what he says, politically, in the Democrat."

His political and social philosophy, too, drove him into the Copperhead camp. Essentially a Jeffersonian Democrat at heart, readily lending sympathy to the underdog, Pomeroy's individualism prompted him to stress personal rights and freedom of action. Human rights were superior to property rights. He claimed that employers were morally

218. La Crosse Chronicle, January 1, 1905; Bryant, op. cit., p. 116.
219. Democrat, September 12, 1861.
obligated to pay a living wage, that the sweatshops of New York were a national disgrace, and that God did not sanction the suppression of truth and justice by the money powers.

Like Jefferson, his great idol, Pomeroy had a swelling faith in man, a respect for constitutional government and a reverence for individual rights. This became so evident that it seemed Pomeroy would rather have the Union lose the war than win the conflict at the expense of certain infringed individual rights.

Opposed to war and a humanitarian at heart, the La Crosse editor was discouraged by his visits to the military hospitals and battlefields. "Truly war is frightful," he declared. "Its glories are those of death and grief -- its pomp and vanities, those of crazed ambition; of sorrow and ruin."

Sectionalism, too, exerted great pressure on his political direction. He regarded the Morrill tariff as a monstrous tax upon the agrarian West. He claimed that "rivers of blood" were being shed "mainly to extend and expand New England Puritanism by force upon an unwilling people." Furthermore, the West was furnishing the cannon fodder while the East, which had demanded the war, was not fulfilling its share of the manpower bargain. It was his loyalty to the debtor West which made mandatory his acceptance of the treasury notes in 1862, and which turned him


222. *Ibid.*, April 18, 1862; see autobiography.

into the Greenback pasture after the war.

Time and again Pomeroy had predicted that history would vindicate his views and sanction his course of action. The Copperheads were to be the true preservers of the Union against the dictatorial ambitions of Lincoln and the Radical Republicans. However, he little understood the force of nationalism. For in the popular mind of today he lives as Copperhead and traitor, Lincoln-villifier and obstructionist. A rival's evaluation dominates all others: "He out-jeffed Jeff Davis in treasonable utterances and out-deviled the Devil in deviltry."

224. History of La Crosse County, op. cit., p. 545.
APPENDIX A

CITY OFFICERS
La Crosse Aug. 8, 1867

Mayor—John H. Long, Democrat

City Clerk—H. E. Cameron, Republican

City Treasurer—Dr. Earnhardt, Rep.

City Attorney—John Cool, Democrat

City Attorney—J. J. Sproule, Democrat

Board of Aldermen

1st ward—G. Wright, Dem.

J. Banton

J. E. Smith, Rep.

2nd ward—J. B. Williams, Dem.

P. Emerson, Rep.

W. B. Kerin, Dem.

3rd ward—C. Michel, Dem.


H. M. Davis, Dem.

4th ward—F. D. Alman, Rep.


J. F. Long, Dem.

City Physician—D. C. Cameron, committed suicide Aug. 6, 1867.

A. This is an engraving of Pomeroy's handwriting. Taken from The La Crosse Tribune files.
B. Both pictures are from the files of The La Crosse Tribune. The picture at the left was taken about 1864, while the one at the right is from a mat in the Denver Post of 1900, but was probably taken about 1880. Engravings were transferred by Clayton Weber of The La Crosse Tribune.
The celebrated "Grecian Bond"—of which the honest masses have now been robbed—has been under the robber-rule of Black Republicans. This bond was issued after the close of the war, and was supposed to be a "pledge" to the people of the United States. It was a mortgage on the wealth of the country, and was intended to pay the debt incurred during the war. The bond was sold to the public at a premium, and was supposed to be a "pledge" to the people that it would be used for the benefit of the country.

The worst humbug of the present age is the "Pledge of Allegiance," which was issued by a Secretary of State in 1861. It was a "pledge" to the people that they would never again be asked to fight for the country. The "Pledge of Allegiance" was never meant to be a "pledge" to the people, but was a "pledge" to the government that it would never again ask the people to fight for it.

"Rampoced Radiealers"—who are now so severely burdened with taxes and other charges, and working men of the land—the New York Tribune—have discovered Radicalism in all its forms. They contend that this assumption on the part of the government is a "pledge" to the people that they will never again be asked to pay taxes.

The "Pledge of Allegiance" is a "pledge" to the people that they will never again be asked to pay taxes, and is a "pledge" to the government that it will never again ask the people to fight for it.

"Radicalism steals and sacrides, and tax-payers of the people, by these same loud-mouthed "national" Reformers (except those who were in office), have discovered Radicalism in all its forms. They contend that this assumption on the part of the government is a "pledge" to the people that they will never again be asked to pay taxes.

The "Pledge of Allegiance" is a "pledge" to the people that they will never again be asked to pay taxes, and is a "pledge" to the government that it will never again ask the people to fight for it.

"The worst humbug of the present age is the "Pledge of Allegiance," which was issued by a Secretary of State in 1861. It was a "pledge" to the people that they would never again be asked to fight for the country. The "Pledge of Allegiance" was never meant to be a "pledge" to the people, but was a "pledge" to the government that it would never again ask the people to fight for it. The "Pledge of Allegiance" is a "pledge" to the people that they will never again be asked to pay taxes, and is a "pledge" to the government that it will never again ask the people to fight for it.


15. Pomeroy, see separate listing.


Pomeroy's Works


27. *Soliloquies of the Bondholder, the Poor Farmer, the Soldier's Widow, the Political Preacher, the Poor Mechanic, the Freed Negro, the "Radical" Congressman, the Returned Soldier, the Southerner, and Other Political Articles*, New York, New York, 1866.
Magazines


Newspapers

31. Chatfield (Minnesota) Republican.

32. La Crosse Chronicle.

33. La Crosse Democrat.

34. La Crosse Democratic Journal.

35. La Crosse Republican.

36. La Crosse Tri-Weekly Union and Democrat.

37. La Crosse Tribune.

38. La Crosse Union and Democrat.


Special Sources

41. La Crosse City Business Directory, 1868-69.

42. Private notes of Harry J. Hirshheimer, secretary of La Crosse County Historical Society, and co-author of A History of La Crosse Wisconsin: 1841-1900.