

# The Ol' Pioneer

The Magazine of the Grand Canyon Historical Society

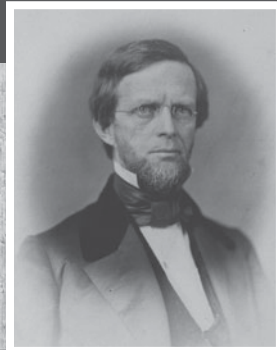
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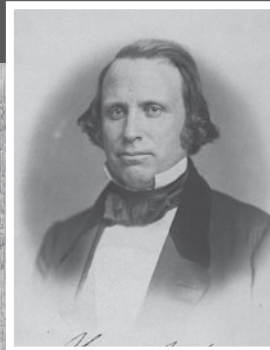
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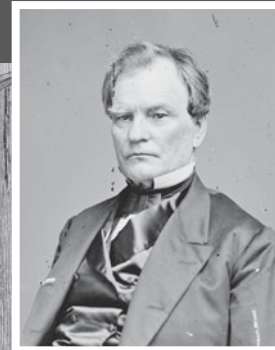
*General Ulysses S. Grant*



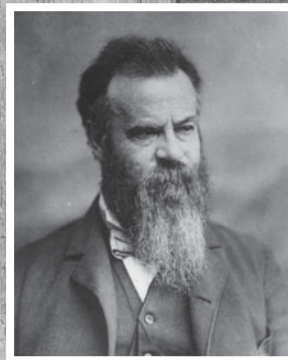
*Senator Lyman Trumbull*



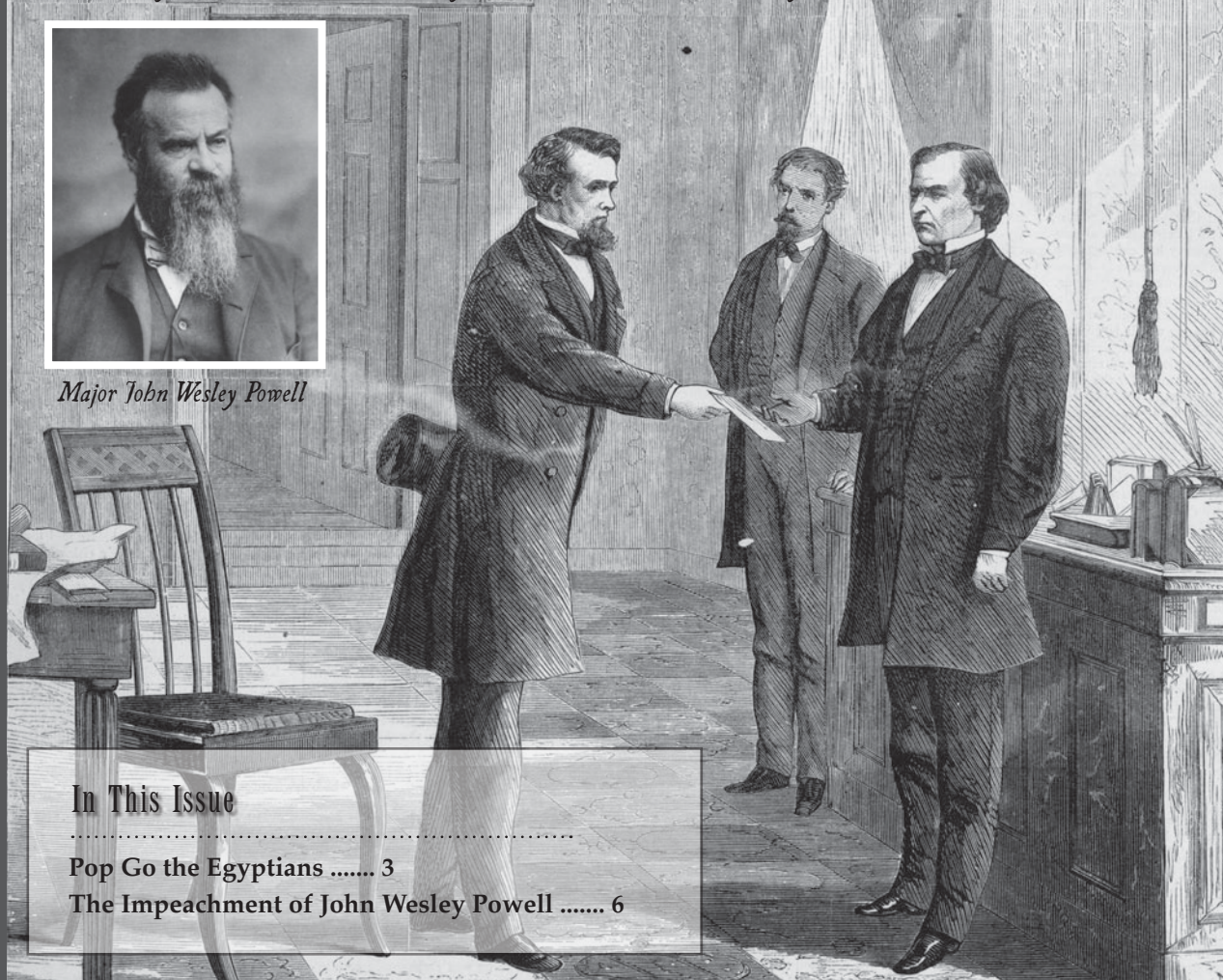
*Senator Henry Wilson*



*Senator Ben Wade*



*Major John Wesley Powell*



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*George T. Brown, sergeant-at-arms, serving the summons on President Johnson, 1868.*

# President's Letter

Happy New Year everyone! And 2012 is an especially happy year for Arizona and Grand Canyon historians. This year we celebrate Arizona's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday as a state (she looks pretty good for her age – must be the dry climate). This is also the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of the Kolb brothers historic river trip where they took the footage for their famous movie. But most importantly, this January we have our third Grand Canyon History Symposium at the south rim!

When we started initial planning for the symposium a year and a half ago, I thought that it was going to require a lot of time, effort, and hard work. I was wrong. I had way underestimated it. The actual carving of the Grand Canyon itself was fairly trivial by comparison. The poet Sam Walter Foss once famously wrote, "Give me men to match my mountains." Fortunately, in the unpaid volunteers of the historical society and its partners, we have superheroes to match our symposium. It has been truly gratifying over the last few months to watch the high degree of dedication and cooperation between the many people involved in making this happen. The line-up of presenters, tours, and banquet speakers is incredible and our registration has been sold out for weeks. This promises to be a great symposium, but it is only possible through great people.

Along with the new year and the new symposium, the society also has a new logo! Professional graphic artist (and canyon enthusiast) James Hayford has donated his artistry and skills to produce a special logo graphic for the society featuring the Desert View Watchtower as well as another image of a canyon made of books and papers (representing the history of the canyon). Aside from use on our website and other official places, we are also going to be offering a variety of official Grand Canyon Historical Society t-shirts, coffee mugs, etc. for sale online featuring the images (all proceeds going to the society). The items are being offered through the CafePress website: [www.cafepress.com/gchs](http://www.cafepress.com/gchs)

Thank you and happy hiking!!!

Erik Berg  
GCHS President

*Don't forget*

## **2012 Grand Canyon History Symposium**

An Official Centennial Event, as sanctioned by the Arizona  
Centennial 2012 Foundation Sanctioned Events Committee!

**January 26-29, 2012**

Shrine of the Ages, Grand Canyon Village, Grand Canyon National Park

*The Ol' Pioneer* submission deadlines are going to be roughly January, April, July and October and we will publish either three or four issues a year, depending on content volume.

## The Ol' Pioneer

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Grand Canyon Historical Society

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The Historical Society was established in July 1984 as a non-profit corporation to develop and promote appreciation, under-standing and education of the earlier history of the inhabitants and important events of the Grand Canyon.

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Submissions to *The Bulletin* should be sent to Karen Greig, [kgreig@yahoo.com](mailto:kgreig@yahoo.com)

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# Pop Go the Egyptians

by Don Lago

In my Summer of 2009 *Ol' Pioneer* article about the origins of the myth of the Egyptian cave in the Grand Canyon, I reported that this myth had already taken a firm hold in the New Age community, and I predicted that it would continue appearing and evolving. In the last few years this myth has started showing up in popular culture, where it is gaining a much wider audience. Here are three developments.

In December, 2008, the SciFi Channel broadcast its original movie *Lost Treasure of the Grand Canyon*. It was filmed in the deep valley of Cache Creek in British Columbia, which is one of the few places in Canada with a desert environment, but otherwise Cache Creek was a poor impersonation of the Grand Canyon. The movie was a poor impersonation of an Indiana Jones movie, almost a parody of one, with bad acting, bad dialogue, a melodramatic plot, and cheap special effects, including a laughable quicksand scene.

The movie starts with a *Phoenix Gazette* reporter showing up at a Hopi ruin, where archaeologist Susan Jordan is conducting an excavation. Susan Jordan is the daughter of Dr. Samuel Jordan, who had led a Smithsonian expedition into the Grand Canyon to prove his theories that the ancient Egyptians had explored America. The *Phoenix Gazette* reporter had recently published a story on Dr. Jordan's discoveries, and was supposed to meet Dr. Jordan here today. But Dr. Jordan has disappeared. The reporter shows Susan some Egyptian artifacts that Dr. Jordan found in a Grand Canyon cave; the Hopis say these artifacts "come from a great pyramid hidden behind the canyon wall." Another archaeologist looks at these artifacts and declares that they are really Aztec.

They set out in search of Dr. Jordan,

and they find his dead horse and his diary, which includes an account of him trying to scale a canyon cliff. They find Aztec symbols painted on a cliff and push on it, and a secret doorway opens up, revealing a cave full of Aztec symbols. From the cave they emerge in a hidden canyon with an Aztec temple—and living Aztecs! The Aztecs are in the process of sacrificing members of Dr. Jordan's team; they cut out one man's heart and offer it to Quetzalcoatl, the Aztec god who turns out to be a flying, dragon-type monster. Susan and her friends come to the rescue, and then they flee and fight their way through a labyrinth of tunnels, where a booby-trap axe falls and cuts off one man's head, and the roof collapses. The *Phoenix Gazette* reporter is devoured by Quetzalcoatl. Dr. Jordan and Susan escape. Dr. Jordan never explains how he could have mistaken Aztec artifacts for Egyptian artifacts, or why the movie producers weren't content to fill the hidden canyon with evil Egyptian priests and mummies.

In 2009 appeared the science-fiction novel *Secrets of El Tovar Canyon*, by Michael Cole.

Rafters discover a golden tablet buried in the sand along the Colorado River at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. An archaeologist reads its hieroglyphs and map and realizes the tablet depicts the Great Pyramid of Giza and the Sphinx—and secret underground passageways. The archaeologist, Cheryl, then learns about Dr. Jordan's 1909 expedition, which left a rich trove of artifacts in the Smithsonian, including strange giant mummies. Cheryl travels to Egypt and discovers, in a secret chamber in the paw of the Sphinx, a similar golden tablet. It turns out that the pyramids weren't built by the Egyptians, but by superior, giant beings 10,000 years ago. The pyramids hid a powerful energy source that had allowed its creators to transport themselves between the pyramids

and a Grand Canyon cave. Cheryl travels, more conventionally, to the Grand Canyon, pursued by both the U.S. Air Force and a ruthless- Mafia-like collector of ancient artifacts. Cheryl rides mules to Phantom Ranch and then hikes six miles to the Egyptian cave. The cave holds time-travel technology with which future humans had tried to come back to the 20th century to warn people about the dangers of fossil fuels and global warming. But the time travelers had miscalculated and transported themselves back an extra 10,000 years. They then built the pyramids to hide their advanced technologies, which one day would provide humans with clean, abundant energy.

Also in 2009 appeared a novel by popular kid's novelist Dan Gutman. *The Return of the Homework Machine* was a sequel to Gutman's successful novel *The Homework Machine*, in which the fifth-grade kids at the Grand Canyon school use a computer superchip to build a machine that does their homework for them. To hide their secret they end up catapulting the homework machine into the canyon. In the sequel the kids realize that the superchip wasn't destroyed by its crash in the canyon. In the school library they run across the *Phoenix Gazette* article about the Egyptian cave, and along with their teacher Mr. Murphy they decide to go find it. But a bad kid steals the superchip and adds it to his GPS unit and goes to claim the Egyptian treasure for himself and an adult accomplice, Richard Milner. The kids and Mr. Murphy hike to Phantom Ranch and borrow a raft and head downstream to the Egyptian temples zone. They climb the cliffs and find the cave, which is full of Egyptian treasures and mummies—and the body of G. E. Kinkaid, who must have returned there and died there, perhaps from an Egyptian curse. They also find that their rivals have beaten them to the cave. Richard Milner

grabs a golden Egyptian sword and attacks Mr. Murphy, but Milner trips over Kinkaid's body and falls out of the cave mouth and down the cliff to

his death. The kids decide to leave the Egyptian cave a secret, especially since it seems to be cursed.

Now that a new generation is

growing up knowing all about the Grand Canyon's Egyptian cave, it is sure to continue mutating into new forms.

## The Impeachment of John Wesley Powell

by Don Lago

In the spring of 1868 John Wesley Powell was preparing for his second summer of leading a scientific expedition to explore the Rocky Mountains, and he was looking beyond that to leading an expedition down the Colorado River. For his first summer in the Rockies Powell had obtained support from several sources, including from General Ulysses S Grant. Grant issued an order allowing Powell to purchase supplies from military posts at a low price, and assigned a military escort for Powell in the Dakota Territory, which was troubled with Indian unrest. Powell changed his mind about going through the Dakota Territory and so never needed this military escort, but Grant's approval of it was a badge of legitimacy for Powell. Powell also obtained scientific instruments from the Smithsonian Institution.

With the success of Powell's 1867 expedition his legitimacy as an expedition leader seemed proven, and he had every right to expect further support from Washington D. C..

But a great deal had changed in Washington since 1867. The nation was now gripped by one of the worst political crises in its history. The angry divisions that had led to the Civil War had been stirred anew by the policies of President Andrew Johnson. Most northerners felt that Johnson had betrayed the cause and the blood and the victory of Union armies and was allowing southerners to reassert their power, including brutal power over the freed slaves. On February 24, 1868, the U. S. house of representatives voted to impeach President Johnson. On March 30, the

senate began the impeachment trial. Both sides in the trial declared that the fate of American democracy was at stake.

One week before the impeachment trial began, John Wesley Powell left his home in Bloomington, Illinois, for Washington D. C. to enlist government support for his plans.<sup>1</sup> Powell's hopes would depend on the help of two men: General Grant, and Illinois Senator Lyman Trumbull. But both Grant and Trumbull became lightning rods for the anger swirling around Andrew Johnson. Many senators would be furious at Lyman Trumbull, blaming him for the failure of the impeachment, which was finally abandoned on May 26.

The day before that, on May 25, Lyman Trumbull stood up in the U. S. senate to advocate a trivial measure, which normally should have drawn little notice among numerous other, larger requests for government aid. But four pro-impeachment senators rose to challenge Trumbull and to criticize his petitioner, and the ensuing debate consumed probably about two hours of valuable senate time. Trumbull's petitioner was John Wesley Powell. The fate of the Powell expedition down the Colorado River would be decided by the furious waves and eddies of powerful historical forces.

In 1867 Powell had won federal support easily. He had traveled to Washington and consulted with General Grant, whom he had first met in 1861 at Cape Girardeau, Missouri, where Powell was an artillery captain. In 1867 Grant was General of the Army and an iconic hero with tremendous influence.

Powell submitted an official letter to Grant on April 29, 1867, asking "that the officers of the Commissary Department, on the route traveled by the party, may be instructed to sell supplies to it at government rates."<sup>2</sup> On that same date General Grant, or at least his staff officer George K. Leet, endorsed Powell's request, and Leet sent an endorsement to General Winfield S. Hancock, the army commander on Powell's route.

Nearly a year later, on April 2, 1868, Powell submitted a similar letter to General Grant. There was one difference. This time Powell wasn't asking for low-cost provisions, but free provisions: "I most respectfully request that the proper Officers be instructed to issue rations to this party while thus engaged, the party to consist of not more than twenty-five persons."<sup>3</sup>

The rest of Powell's letter shows that he was an astute politician. He tried to give his expedition high official status, identifying himself as the Secretary of the Illinois Natural History Society, and stating that the expedition was "under the auspices of the State Normal University of Illinois," where Powell was on the faculty.<sup>4</sup> In truth, both organizations were only ten years old and quite small and humble; Powell had been dismayed to find that their shared natural history collection was an amateurish mess. Powell's western expeditions were energized mainly by Powell's personal enthusiasm. Powell proposed to survey the Colorado River "from its source to the point where the survey made by Lieutenant Ives was stopped." Powell justified this survey as crucial science: "the grand cañon of the

Colorado will give the best geological section on the continent." Yet like NASA advocates a century later, Powell had no shame about justifying exploration in the name of national defense: "Nor is it necessary to plead the value to the War Department of a topographical survey of that wonderful region, inhabited as it is by powerful tribes of Indians that will doubtless become hostile as the prospector and the pioneer encroach upon their hunting grounds." Powell insisted that his financial request was "trivial" compared with the costs of other western surveys.<sup>5</sup>

The next day, General Grant endorsed Powell's request, noting: "The work is one of national interest."<sup>6</sup>

Three days later the War Department rejected Grant's request. Commissary General of Subsistence A. E. Eaton declared "that 'rations' cannot be 'issued' to the party as requested without the sanction of law, as its members are not the employees of or in the service of the United States." Eaton was willing for Powell to purchase supplies from army posts, "at the total cost to the United States," but only if local commanders decided they could spare such supplies. "If this is not deemed satisfactory to the principle of the party it is respectfully suggested that he should obtain the enactment of a law according him such other aid as he may seek."<sup>7</sup>

Commissary General Eaton's job did include guarding the military purse, but it was extraordinary for a War Department bureaucrat to overrule General Grant, especially for an expenditure that was indeed trivial. At least, this overruling would have been extraordinary only a year before, before General Grant became embroiled in the impeachment of Andrew Johnson.

Andrew Johnson faced the difficult task of succeeding Abraham Lincoln, who was rapidly being elevated to sainthood. Many Americans resented Johnson's mere presence in the White House, and Johnson gave them lots more to resent. In contrast with Lincoln's generous spirit, Johnson was a crude, pugnacious, and vindictive

man. Johnson was drunk at his vice presidential inauguration, made a shambles of his inaugural speech, and appalled everyone. Lincoln had chosen Johnson to be vice president in his second term because Lincoln wanted to reassure the South that they would be welcomed back into the Union. Johnson, a Tennessee senator, was the only southern senator who had remained loyal to the Union. But Johnson had retained many southern habits, including crude racism: he believed that blacks were an inferior race who didn't deserve equality with whites. Johnson was also a Democrat in a government dominated by the Republican Party, which had been founded to combat slavery.

With the end of the Civil War many northern congressmen were determined to reconstruct southern society, to break up its feudalistic social order, redistribute its plantation lands, and ensure equality for the freed slaves. White southerners began resisting, passing laws to restrict black rights and launching violence against blacks, violence that was soon widespread and well-organized. President Johnson refused to use federal authority to protect blacks, and in fact he tried to sabotage reconstruction efforts. Johnson was eager to see southern states reclaim their sovereignty, justifying it with the same language of states' rights that southerners had used to justify secession. Johnson gave wholesale pardons to Confederate leaders, whom many northerners wanted to see punished. Northern congressmen were appalled at the idea that ex-Confederate generals might soon arrive in Washington as U. S. senators and assert power over the nation they had tried to destroy on the battlefield.

The tensions between President Johnson and congress mounted steadily, and they rose seriously when Johnson vetoed two major pieces of reconstruction legislation, the Freedmen's Bureau bill and the Civil Rights Act. The Freedmen's Bureau was an agency to protect and aid freed slaves, and the Civil Rights Act declared that blacks were

American citizens, with legal rights. Both pieces of legislation were authored by Senator Lyman Trumbull of Illinois, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Trumbull had also authored the Thirteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, which outlawed slavery. Congress failed to muster the two-thirds vote needed to override Johnson's veto of the Freedmen's Bureau bill, but by one vote it did override Johnson on the Civil Rights Act. Trumbull would help see that the core of the Civil Rights Act was soon cemented into the U. S. Constitution as the Fourteenth Amendment, which would be the foundation for much of the civil rights progress of the twentieth century. Lyman Trumbull was ahead of his times—the Civil Rights Act even declared that Native Americans and Chinese were American citizens—but his regard for equality was tempered by his regard for the U. S. Constitution. Radical Republicans—those most aggressively pushing reconstruction measures—were often annoyed at Trumbull for hedging on civil rights for the sake of constitutionality. But this meant that when Trumbull authored civil rights legislation, it was legally unquestionable.

President Johnson further heightened tensions by ousting some of Lincoln's cabinet choices and replacing them with his own supporters, and by firing military commanders who were enforcing reconstruction measures in the South. Congress tried to restrict Johnson's power with two major laws. One law required that any presidential orders to the military had to go through the General of the Army, Ulysses S Grant, who was now a determined opponent of Andrew Johnson. The other law, the Tenure of Office Act, required Johnson to get approval from congress before he removed any cabinet member or other federal executive whose appointment had required congressional approval to begin with. The Tenure of Office Act contained a trap, for it defined a violation of it as a "high misdemeanor," which should



fit the Constitution's requirements for a presidential impeachment, requirements defined as "high crimes and misdemeanors."

Trapped between congress and President Johnson was General Grant. As national anger mounted, Americans worried or hoped that the army would overthrow Johnson, or that Johnson would order the army to remove a treasonous congress. What would Grant do? At first Grant tried to be neutral. But Grant became more and more disgusted with Johnson and his policies. Grant hadn't led tens of thousands of men to their deaths in order to see their sacrifices betrayed, their enemies triumphant. Grant was appalled by the growing violence against the freed slaves, and by Johnson's indifference. Grant was furious when Johnson fired his friends, like General Phil Sheridan, because they were trying to enforce reconstruction measures in the southern states they commanded. Grant began resisting Johnson's efforts, first passively, then actively. Grant even disobeyed and countermanded Johnson's orders, as when Johnson wanted the army to take no further role in protecting blacks, but Grant ordered the army to arrest civil rights violators. Johnson called Grant a traitor. Johnson knew he couldn't fire a national hero, so he tried to get rid of Grant in other ways, such as by sending him on a long overseas diplomatic mission. Grant refused to go. Johnson tried to talk General William T. Sherman into replacing Grant as General of the Army, but Sherman refused. Johnson tried to appoint Grant interim Secretary of War, which would get rid of another Johnson opponent, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. Grant used some clever maneuvering to restore Stanton to his office.

Radical Republicans made several efforts to organize the impeachment of President Johnson, but their efforts floundered because their charges against Johnson were too nakedly political, too weak legally.

In late February, 1868, President Johnson walked right into the trap

in the Tenure of Office Act. He fired Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, who had been resisting Johnson's policies. But Stanton refused to go, and he barricaded himself in his office, where he would remain for three months, cooking meals in his office fireplace. Stanton even arranged for a judge to order the arrest of the adjutant-general Johnson had named to replace him, Lorenzo Thomas, whom Stanton branded an illegal imposter. Nearly three years of frustration and furor over Andrew Johnson now concentrated on the question of who controlled the War Department.

The firing of Stanton threw the nation into an uproar. There was rage in newspapers, pulpits, and taverns. There was talk of a new civil war, of armies marching from the South to support Johnson, or armies marching from the North to overthrow Johnson.

Radical Republicans declared that Johnson's violation of the Tenure of Office Act was the compelling legal grounds they needed for impeachment. Almost all of the articles of impeachment dealt with Johnson's attempted, illegal seizure of the War Department.

It was only a few weeks later that a War Department bureaucrat snubbed General Grant, refusing to honor his trivial request for Somebody Powell. Was this just another shot in the furious battle over who controlled the War Department?

Commissary General A. B. Eaton has left little trace in the historical record, so it's hard to gauge his motives in overruling Grant's request for Powell. Eaton was a West Pointer and career soldier who had spent a dozen years in the commissary department before becoming Commissary General in 1864. Grant's papers hold only a few, routine interactions with Eaton before 1868, and in the only interaction of significance Eaton and Grant were like-minded. In July of 1865 Eaton complained to Grant about excessive requests for requisitions being made by Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, to which large numbers of troops were being redeployed after the end of the

Civil War. Several generals agreed that the Indian unrest on the plains did not require such large numbers of troops. Upon receiving Eaton's complaint, Grant wrote to General William T. Sherman, who was in St. Louis and in charge of western operations: "Look into them and stop all unnecessary expenditures and reduce all necessary ones to actual requirements."<sup>8</sup> President Johnson had promoted Eaton to Brevet Major General in 1865, so was Eaton beholding to Johnson and taking his side against Grant? Then again, Grant retained Eaton in office through most of Grant's presidency.

After Eaton's insistence that it would take a law for Powell to obtain his requested aid, Powell had no choice but to go to congress. Powell went to his U.S. representative, Shelby Cullom, and to Senator Lyman Trumbull, who would become his advocate on the senate floor. Why did Powell turn to Trumbull and not the other senator from Illinois, Richard Yates? Yates was newly elected and held little influence, whereas Trumbull had been in the senate for a dozen years and, as the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, was a respected and powerful senator. Congressman Cullom was the protégé of Senator Trumbull, and they often worked together. Trumbull was one of two senate regents of the Smithsonian Institution; he cared about science and exploration. Powell had a ready link to Trumbull through Jesse Fell, a leading citizen of Bloomington, Illinois, and one of the founders of the State Normal University of Illinois, Powell's college. Fell was a high-powered political operative who was Lincoln's floor manager at the 1860 Republican convention and who helped manage Trumbull's tough 1866 re-election campaign. Trumbull's campaign had left him in debt and he'd appealed to Fell for help. A century after the Powell expedition, the proximity of Powell and Jesse Fell was still visible symbolically on the campus of (renamed) Illinois State University. Around the corner from the Jesse

Fell Memorial Gate was the science building, whose entryway held a plaque listing the college's first science faculty members, including John Wesley Powell and George Vasey (for whom Powell named a spring in the Grand Canyon), and in a hallway was a bighorn sheep collected by Powell in Colorado. And given Powell's abolitionist sentiments, Powell must have admired Trumbull for his civil rights initiatives.

At the time Powell went to Trumbull, Trumbull's intentions on the impeachment vote were still unknown. Most people assumed that Trumbull was a safe vote for impeachment, since Trumbull had authored many of the reconstruction measures Johnson had sabotaged. On the campaign trail in 1866 Trumbull had called for Johnson's impeachment. Shelby Cullom was confident Trumbull would vote for impeachment.

On April 16 Congressman Cullom introduced joint resolution HR 251, authorizing the War Department to provide John Wesley Powell with army supplies. Without any discussion the bill was sent to the House Committee on Military Affairs, chaired by Ohio Congressman James Garfield. Garfield would become an important Powell ally for years to come; it was Garfield who would persuade Powell to write a popular book about his expedition. Garfield would also be elected president of the United States in 1880.

It was Garfield who on May 11 submitted HR 251 to the house of representatives. Garfield presented Powell's request letter to Grant, and Grant's endorsement, and Eaton's refusal. Garfield added an April 21 letter from Joseph Henry, the director of the Smithsonian Institution.

Henry said that Powell's expedition had "the entire approval of the Smithsonian Institution," which would supply it with scientific instruments. Henry emphasized that Powell was not pursuing any monetary or personal interest but serving natural history. But Henry had plenty of experience at selling science to

money-minded congressmen, so he promised some Teflon-and-Tang spinoffs: "Though the object of the exploration is the advance of science, its results will be of much practical value. The professor intends to give special attention to the hydrology of the mountain system in relation to agriculture."<sup>9</sup>

There was no debate over Powell's request, and no one called for a recording of the yeas and nays. The resolution was passed by voice vote. If anyone voted against Powell, there is no record of it.

The next day, May 12, the house of representatives sent Powell's resolution to the senate. The senate referred the Powell resolution to the Senate Committee on Military Affairs.

The senate had scheduled its first vote on impeachment for May 16. There were eleven articles of impeachment, and the senate would vote first on the eleventh article, since that was judged the most general and the one most likely to pass. Impeachment required the votes of two-thirds of the senate, and the vote was expected to be very close.

Lyman Trumbull loathed Andrew Johnson and his policies, but as the impeachment process went on, Trumbull had more and more misgivings about it. Trumbull had served as a justice on the Illinois Supreme Court, and now he was chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and his judicial mind honored the importance of law and the Constitution. The Constitution said that impeachment might be justified by "high crimes and misdemeanors," which was rather vague, but clearly it implied criminal actions, not political actions. And clearly, Johnson was being impeached for political actions. The Tenure of Office Act might be law, but it was a dubious law. If Johnson could be removed for his policies, it would be like a coup d'état, permanently weakening the presidency and American democracy.

In a closed senate session on May 11, the same day the house of representatives was voting on the Powell resolution, Lyman Trumbull

announced that, reluctantly, he had to vote against impeachment. His fellow senators gasped.

The next night, thousands of people gathered in the streets of Chicago to denounce Lyman Trumbull. Anti-Trumbull meetings were held all over Illinois. The Illinois Republican congressional delegation prepared a letter demanding that Trumbull resign from office. Thousands of angry letters poured in, accusing Trumbull of being a traitor, another Benedict Arnold, a madman who belonged in a lunatic asylum. Some people threatened physical harm: if Trumbull showed up on the streets of Chicago, he'd be lynched from the nearest lamppost. Newspapers around the country denounced Trumbull. When the *Chicago Tribune*, a longtime Trumbull supporter, said that Trumbull's vote might be regrettable but it remained honorable, subscribers and advertisers bombarded the newspaper with outrage.

But in contrast with a few of the other Republican senators who would vote against impeachment, Lyman Trumbull was not accused of taking bribes for his vote. Trumbull was too respected for that, which was why his decision against impeachment was so threatening to the pro-impeachment side. Trumbull created safe cover for other Republican senators to oppose impeachment.

The first vote on impeachment was taken on May 16, and it came up one vote short. Thirty-five senators voted for impeachment, and nineteen against, including seven Republicans.

Congress adjourned for a week so that members could attend the Republican National Convention, which would nominate Ulysses S Grant for president. The convention also offered a good chance to pressure the defecting Republican senators. The next vote on further articles of impeachment was scheduled for May 26. The prosecutors were still hoping to find one vote to shift, but it looked bleak.

On May 25, Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts rose to introduce HR

251, authorizing the War Department to grant supplies to John Wesley Powell. Like James Garfield in the house, Wilson was the chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs in the senate. It may have been protocol for the chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs to introduce a bill his committee had approved, but it was also smart politics. Henry Wilson was a highly respected senator, whom Ulysses S Grant would choose to be his vice president in his second term. Wilson had become respected for his role as a watchdog over military spending during the war; no one could accuse Wilson of encouraging wasteful raids on military supplies. Wilson was also pro-impeachment. Wilson made a brief introduction of the Powell resolution, but when it was challenged by other senators, Wilson turned over its defense to Lyman Trumbull.

There may have been another reason why it was Wilson and not Trumbull who introduced the Powell resolution. Senator Ben Wade, the president pro tem of the senate, who controlled access to the senate floor and thus the ability to introduce legislation, was furious at Lyman Trumbull. Wade was a firebrand abolitionist and a leader of the impeachment. At that time the office of senate president pro tem was next in line after the vice president to succeed to the presidency. Because there was no vice president under Andrew Johnson, a Johnson impeachment would have made Ben Wade president. "Benjamin F. Wade never forgave Trumbull," wrote Trumbull biographer Ralph J. Roske. "He took a revenge against Trumbull that was stained with smallness. As Senate presiding officer, during the remainder of the session, he never saw Trumbull when the Illinoisan asked for recognition."<sup>10</sup> If Wade's ostracism of Trumbull had already begun, someone else needed to introduce the Powell resolution.

Four senators rose to criticize the Powell resolution, all of them pro-impeachment: George Edmunds of Vermont, John Sherman of Ohio,

Timothy Howe of Wisconsin, and Lot Morrill of Maine. Lyman Trumbull offered most of the defense, but then he was joined by John Conness of California, who was pro-impeachment but also pro-western exploration. "I know it is difficult," declared Conness, "for gentlemen who live in the East to understand or sufficiently estimate the extent of that West belonging to their own country which is not yet understood. It is only twenty-five years since... Frémont was authorized to explore what is at this day as well understood as the city of Washington, but was then unknown to this country. Now portions of it may be said to be teeming with population, industry, and civilization, but it is the result in part of the exploration that he made."<sup>11</sup>

The debate over Powell totaled about 9,000 words, which probably took about two hours.

The attacking senators seemed embarrassed by the time and energy they were devoting to Professor Powell; they knew they were engaging in overkill. The leading attacker, George Edmunds, repeatedly belittled his own objections: "Here is a private party, for some purpose, undoubtedly a good one—I have nothing to say about that, for I do not know anything about it...," "...to be sure it is a small matter...," "To be sure it is a picayune matter...," "...of course, as everyone says, this is a very small matter...," "Of course, I sympathize with the object of the expedition...," "Professor Powell, with that accuracy and modesty which almost always characterize learned men and true men, merely applies to the War Department for rations for twenty-five men, which is a trifling thing... General Grant thinks that is a trifling matter..." "I do not know but that the Senate has cost the United States more in talking about this bill than it would have given the rations..." Senator Howe called it: "...this little resolution, no bigger than a grain of mustard..."<sup>12</sup>

But the attacking senators refused to stop attacking.

They attacked the necessity of Powell's explorations. Senator Sherman, who had heard from General William Palmer about his encounter with James White, declared that the whole of the Colorado River had already been explored by James White, and that the river's lower region was then being surveyed by General Palmer. Trumbull was befuddled by this, having heard nothing about White, and he replied that Senator Sherman's own brother, General William T. Sherman, had in 1867 endorsed Powell's efforts. Senator Conness explained that General Palmer had merely surveyed a line that crossed the Colorado River, that "He was not in this region at all. But it is very essential to their further operations that they ascertain as much as they can of this region."<sup>13</sup> Senator Edmonds twice suggested that the Colorado River was of value only if it was navigable, and Lieutenant Ives "had gone as far up the Colorado as it seemed to be useful to the interests of man or of government that anybody could go."<sup>14</sup> Senator Conness conceded that the Colorado was unnavigable but that "it is nevertheless important to ascertain and determine the course of the river, and not only that but to determine the country adjacent to it." Senator Howe seemed to be admitting that Powell's plans had practical value when he said: "But this river, I understand, runs through a territory supposed to be rich in mines and not very much explored," but then Howe said that "enterprising mining companies should take it into their heads that this was a good opportunity to employ Professor Powell to make surveys in their interest..."<sup>15</sup> Thus, Powell didn't need government help.

The attacking senators repeatedly questioned Powell's credentials and character. Senator Edmunds demanded to know if Powell was a trained geologist and a salaried professor, and if he had any government authority. Senator Wilson replied: "I do not personally know him: but I understand that he is a gentleman of capacity and



character, a learned man..."<sup>16</sup> Senator Conness called Powell "one of the best men in the nation."<sup>17</sup> Senator Edmunds played along with this, saying that "I admire and respect [Powell] as much as my friend from Illinois does—that is not what I am combating by any means." But when the pro-Powell senators made it clear that Powell's was a private party without government authority, the other senators took this as further reason to oppose him. Powell had no right to government aid. The pro-Powell senators insisted that Powell's private status made his expedition a bargain. Senator Conness: "If the Government should organize an expedition to make the exploration in which Professor Powell is engaged it would probably cost \$100,000 before it were done, while in all human probability the expenditures to be made under this resolution, if it shall pass, will not reach more than a few thousand dollars."<sup>18</sup> But Senator Howe answered that since the government had no control over Powell, he could use his explorations of a region "rich in mines" for personal gain, and the government shouldn't help him do so: "That it would be so used of course I cannot know. That it would not be so used nobody can know who does not know thoroughly the character of Professor Powell."<sup>19</sup> Senator Morrill complained that not only would the government have no control over Powell's explorations or results, it couldn't even limit the amount of supplies Powell took. This would be, said Morrill, up to "the judgment of Professor Powell, over which the government has not the slightest control...How much that may be nobody here sees and nobody can know, of course. How well defined the expedition is I do not know, and I have not heard it stated. Any one can see that if the expedition is to expand to the extent of exploring the entire river on a grand scale... that your quartermaster's stores and commissary stores will be called on to a very great amount."<sup>20</sup> Senator Edmunds emphasized that

everyone in Washington and the country was calling out for better economy in government spending, but "it is always some other bill, some abstraction that may come up hereafter that we are to be economical about."<sup>21</sup> Edmunds insisted that this economy might as well begin with Powell's request.

The curious thing about senators Edmunds and Howe is that after all the fuss they made against Powell's request, they didn't even bother to vote on it. But Powell's four critics were quite successful at bedeviling Lyman Trumbull, which may have been their primary impulse.

Powell's critics were also probably motivated by an impulse and a target larger than Lyman Trumbull. The impeachment had been triggered by the intense fight over who controlled the War Department: Congress or President Johnson. Now, with the failure of the first vote on impeachment, it was pretty clear that Johnson had won. The day after the senate debated the Powell resolution, the senate voted on another article of impeachment, and it too failed, by the same vote totals. Impeachment supporters gave up, and that afternoon Edwin Stanton abandoned his office at the War Department and let President Johnson take it over. The Powell resolution too was all about the authority of the War Department. The anti-Powell senators were bothered that the War Department was being given the authority to 'give away the store,' and they were trying to impose congressional control over the War Department—President Johnson's War Department. Controlling Powell's supplies might be a trivial victory indeed compared with controlling reconstruction policy, but it might offer some symbolic satisfaction. Repeatedly in the debate, the anti-Powell senators claimed that they didn't oppose Professor Powell or the idea of exploration or the "trifling" sums involved, but they did oppose giving the War Department a free hand. Senator Edmunds: "Then, what kind of bill do we get here? We get a bill which says that the

War Department is authorized and directed to furnish to the expedition, without limit as to the number of men, all the quartermaster's stores and commissary stores, which includes a great deal more than the rations, that may be necessary for the expedition to prosecute its work."<sup>22</sup> Senator Morrill: "It [his objections] is in regard to the unlimited character of this resolution. The Secretary of War is authorized and empowered to issue indefinitely commissary stores for this expedition...there is not the slightest limitation; all the resources of the Government put at the command of this expedition."<sup>23</sup> By opposing Powell, pro-impeachment senators could take a jab at both Lyman Trumbull and the War Department that Trumbull had helped surrender to President Johnson.

In the end Powell's supporters agreed to amend the resolution to limit it to supplies for twenty-five men, which is all that Powell had requested and that Grant had endorsed to begin with.

The yeas and nays were called. Twenty-five senators voted in favor of Powell and seven voted against. Twenty-two senators did not vote. Five of the seven votes against Powell were pro-impeachment senators.

The vote tally offers some statistical support, but only mild support, to the theory that votes against Powell were motivated by pro-impeachment sentiments. Among senators voting against impeachment, only 10.5% voted against Powell. Among senators voting for impeachment, 14.2% voted against Powell. If Edmunds and Howe had bothered to vote, this would have been 20%. To put it another way, 64.8% of senators voted in favor of impeachment, but among the senators voting against Powell, 71.4% were in favor of impeachment. If Edmunds and Howe had bothered to vote, this would have been 77.7%. Perhaps the absence of Edmunds and Howe proves that they never really cared much about Powell to begin with.

A stronger factor than impeachment sentiments was

regional loyalties. All senators from west of the Mississippi River, if they voted, voted in favor of Powell. Four of the seven votes against Powell were from New England. Five New England senators voted for Powell, meaning that New England was 45% against Powell. The other three anti-Powell votes were from New York, Ohio, and Kentucky.

In the end, the scenario presented here is a plausible theory, but a few steps short of proven. It's not as if Commissary General Eaton admitted that he was refusing Powell because he was trying to snub Grant. It's not as if any senators announced they were voting against Powell because they were trying to snub Trumbull or President Johnson's War Department. It's not as if all the senators who voted for impeachment voted against Powell. The statistics on the vote lend support to this scenario, but only modest support. Clearly, regional differences played a larger role in the Powell vote than did impeachment differences. It is reasonable enough for senators to vote against dubious spending. However, it does stand out that after the house of representatives passed Powell's request without any comment, the senate spewed a lot of heat over it, all brought by pro-impeachment senators, who readily admitted how overdone their complaints were. The circumstances and timing of the opposition to Powell make it quite plausible that he was getting some backlash over the impeachment vote.

Yet among the senators who voted against Powell, we can find other, reasonable motives.

Ohio senator John Sherman can be forgiven for imagining that the entire West had been explored already. For twenty years John Sherman had been receiving letters from his brother William T. Sherman, who was traveling widely in the West. In 1848 William Sherman was in California during the gold rush and wrote to John that the California mountains were swarming with prospectors. In 1859 William was in Leavenworth, Kansas, and wrote to John that the prairie was

swarming with prospectors heading for the Pike's Peak gold rush. In 1868, during the impeachment trial, William was in New Mexico, dealing with Indian troubles, and wrote to John about his plans to resettle the Navajos in a remote area known to be worthless. Additionally, John Sherman's skepticism about Powell was fueled by his skepticism about previous surveys instigated by the railroads, surveys that cost millions of dollars and sometimes turned out to be irrelevant to the final construction route. "All these surveys," said Sherman in the senate debate, "are got up either for the purpose of furnishing jobs or for scientific display, and their reports are generally of very little practical value. I shall not vote for any bill of this kind."<sup>24</sup> John Sherman's distrust of railroads would help lead him to create the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890, a landmark law meant to limit the power of railroads and other monopolies.

The biggest exception to this scenario is that of Ohio's other senator, Ben Wade, who would have become president if Johnson were impeached. If anyone should have been mad enough at Lyman Trumbull to vote against Powell, it was Wade. Yet Wade voted for Powell.

Wade's life story offers good reasons why Powell's plans would have appealed to him. Ben Wade's father, a Revolutionary War soldier, moved Ben from Massachusetts to Ohio in 1821. Ohio was the frontier then, full of forests and log cabins, and Wade grew up thinking of himself as a frontiersman. He became a skilled rifleman, worked in cattle drives, and labored on the construction of the Erie Canal, which pointed west, the future of America. Wade adopted the rough manners of the frontier, especially swearing, which he employed famously against his fellow senators. In the senate Wade became chairman of the Committee on Territories, which meant he oversaw much of the exploration and settlement of the American West. Wade also saw the West as votes, pro-northern votes.

The admission of Nevada as a state in 1864 had added three electoral votes to Abraham Lincoln's re-election margin. Wade saw Colorado and Nebraska as potential counterweights to Andrew Johnson's power, though Wade found it hard to be enthusiastic about Colorado statehood after the Sand Creek massacre of Native Americans, still defended by Colorado's territorial governor. It was only when Andrew Johnson vetoed the Civil Rights Act of 1866—written by Lyman Trumbull—that Wade moved vigorously to win Colorado statehood. Wade even waited until late one night when the senate chamber was empty of opponents to bring Colorado statehood to a vote. But President Johnson vetoed Colorado statehood, and Wade couldn't rally the two-thirds vote needed to override Johnson's veto. If this Powell guy wanted to go explore Colorado, his findings might encourage settlement and statehood.

Wade soon got a confirmation that he had made the right vote on Powell. That summer his niece, Nellie Wade, headed for Colorado in a group headed by Schulyer Colfax, the speaker of the U. S. house of representatives and now Grant's running mate for vice president (Henry Wilson would replace Colfax as vice president in Grant's second term). Ben Wade and his wife shared a Washington D.C. house with Schulyer Colfax, and Nellie Wade soon married Schulyer Colfax. In Colorado the Colfax group ran into John Wesley Powell and his group, and Colfax and Nellie Wade were very impressed by Powell.

Another exception to this scenario is that of Senator William Pitt Fessenden of Maine. Fessenden voted against impeachment, and he also voted against Powell. Along with Lyman Trumbull, Fessenden was the other of two senate regents of the Smithsonian Institution, so he should have been friendly to science and exploration. But Fessenden was also a staunch guardian of the federal budget. Fessenden was the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and

then President Lincoln appointed him Secretary of the Treasury; Fessenden struggled to find money to fund the Civil War, and he was left well aware of the dangers of government debt. More significantly, Fessenden had become famous as a New England chauvinist who snubbed the West. "... most western Republican senators," wrote Fessenden biographer Robert J. Cook, "regarded him not only as an inveterate promoter of New England interests but also as an opponent of their own rapidly developing section...Personally, he had no great love for a region he had not visited since [1837] and which, in a sarcastic aside on the hyperbolic rhetoric of western politicians, he once referred to as 'the great West, the almighty West, the all-pervading West, the without-which-nothing-else-lives-in-the-world...West.'"<sup>25</sup>

There was at least one western senator who would come to regret his vote for Powell. Nevada's senator William Stewart was a silver mining baron and a true believer in Manifest Destiny, in the unlimited settlement and exploitation of the West, a national dream that John Wesley Powell would later challenge as unrealistic. Senator Stewart would become Powell's leading opponent.

When Powell first arrived in Colorado in 1867 it was an accident that one of the men he found to help his explorations was named Sumner, but it must have occurred to the politically astute Powell that it might come in handy to have a connection with the Sumner family. Jack Sumner was a distant relative of Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner. Charles Sumner was the most famous abolitionist senator, and he was Lyman Trumbull's main partner in authoring the Freedmen's Bureau bill. But in the 1868 senate vote on Powell, the Sumner connection didn't do Powell any good: Charles Sumner didn't bother to vote.

It was Powell's political astuteness that led him, in 1870, to name a prominent mountain near the Grand Canyon, Mount Trumbull. Powell knew how to thank his

patrons. Powell also named a nearby mountain Mount Logan, after Illinois congressman John Logan. Powell was playing both sides, as Trumbull and Logan were bitter political rivals. In 1866 John Logan had run against Lyman Trumbull when Trumbull was seeking re-election. In 1868 Logan was one of the congressmen-lawyers who prosecuted the Johnson impeachment case in the senate. Powell couldn't afford to annoy Logan. But he made sure that Trumbull's mountain was higher than Logan's mountain, by 163 feet.

Powell was politically astute enough that he should have known that there was another risk in giving the name of Trumbull to a mountain on the Arizona strip, which the Mormons regarded as part of their homeland. The Mormons hated Lyman Trumbull. Trumbull was one of the leading congressional voices advocating suppressing the Mormons, who largely had been left alone since the start of the Civil War. Trumbull had placed his former law partner, C. M. Hawley, as the federal judge in Utah, and Hawley was using his power to impose federal authority over Utah and to seek justice for the Mountain Meadows massacre. In mid-July of 1869, as the Powell expedition was approaching the Grand Canyon, Senator Trumbull arrived in Salt Lake City and had a confrontation with Mormon leader Brigham Young. Young threatened to expel from Utah any federal official who interfered with Mormon authority, and Trumbull threatened that President Grant would punish the Mormons for any such defiance.

After his 1869 Colorado River expedition, Powell planned to further explore the region, especially southern Utah. To accomplish this, Powell would be heavily dependent on the cooperation of the Mormons, including Brigham Young. Was Powell ignorant of Mormon feelings against Lyman Trumbull? It seems more likely that his debt to Trumbull and his needs for future federal funding were so great that Powell was willing to risk leaving the Mormons

feeling insulted.

(Endnotes)

1 Powell's departure date was stated in the Bloomington, Illinois, newspaper, *The Pantagraph*, March 24, 1868.

2 *Papers of Ulysses S Grant, Vol. 17, Jan 1-Sept 30 1867* (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991, p 406.

3 *Ibid*, p 407. Powell's 1868 letter and Grant's reply are included in the 1867 volume of Grant's papers, but not in the 1868 volume.

4 John Wesley Powell letter to General Grant, April 2, 1868, in *Congressional Globe*, May 25, 1868, p 2564.

5 *Ibid*.

6 *Ibid*. General Grant order of April 3, 1868.

7 *Ibid*. Letter of A. B. Eaton, Commissary General of Subsistence, April 6, 1868.

8 Letter from Grant to Sherman, July 28, 1865, in *Papers of Ulysses S Grant, Vol. 15*, p 287.

9 Letter of Joseph Henry to Congressman James Garfield, April 21, 1868, in *Congressional Globe*, May 11, 1868, p 3407-8.

10 Ralph J. Roske, *His Own Counsel: The Life and Times of Lyman Trumbull* (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1979) p 152.

11 *Congressional Globe*, May 25, 1868, p 2564.

12 *Ibid*, p 2563-2566.

13 *Ibid*, p 2564.

14 *Ibid*, p 2565.

15 *Ibid*, p 2564.

16 *Ibid*, p 2563.

17 *Ibid*, p 2564.

18 *Ibid*, p 2564.

19 *Ibid*, p 2564.

20 *Ibid*, p 2566.

21 *Ibid*, p 2565.

22 *Ibid*, p 2565.

23 *Ibid*, p 2566.

24 *ibid*, p 2563.

25 Robert J. Cook, *Civil War Senator: William Pitt Fessenden and the Fight to Save the American Republic* (Baton Rouge, La: Louisiana State University Press, 2011) p 148-149.

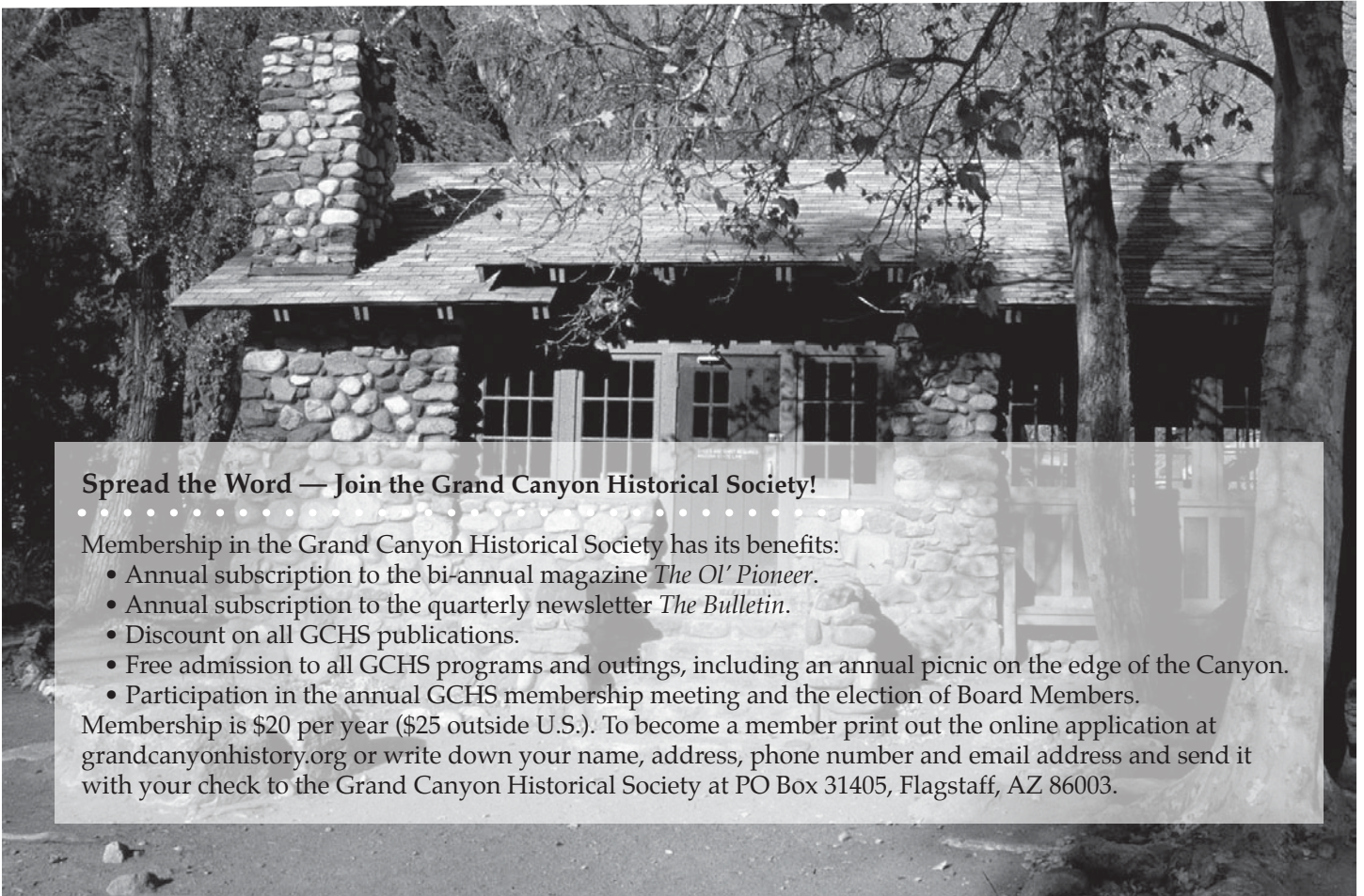


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