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AN EMBLEM FOR THE CONFEDERACY
or
Jefferson Davis' Choice

INTRODUCTION: The Confederate White House in Richmond. President Davis sits at his desk preening in front of a hand held mirror.

DAVIS: President Davis. President Jefferson Davis. His Excellency President Jefferson Davis. No, not good enough. King Jefferson Davis. King Jefferson Davis the First! No, no, no. Wait! I have it! Emperor Jefferson Davis the First. Almost, almost. His Worship Jefferson Davis the First Emperor of North America! Yes, that's a title worthy of someone of my talents!

(There is a knock on his door.)

DAVIS: Who disturbs my repose?

MESSENGER: A messenger from the front, sir.

DAVIS: You may enter.
(messenger enters)

DAVIS: What news of glorious successes do you bring me?

MESSENGER: The Union Army is advancing on the capital, Bragg is in retreat in the West, and a panel of physicians have declared General Stonewall Jackson to be utterly insane!

DAVIS: And how did the General react to these good doctors' diagnosis?

MESSENGER: He declared them to be traitors and had them all promptly shot.

DAVIS: (nodding) Yes. I can always depend upon General Jackson to act on his own initiative. Thank you. You are dismissed.

MESSENGER: What about the Union Army advancing on the capital? General Lee requests immediate directives.

DAVIS: I have critical matters of state to discuss with my secretary. I have no time for tomfoolery!
(messenger leaves, secretary enters)

DAVIS: Ah! I have been eagerly awaiting you, sir. Has the Congress finished their work?

SECRETARY: Yes, Mr. President. I have here a list of fauna submitted for your perusal.

DAVIS: (takes the paper) Excellent! I have always maintained that one of the great advantages that the Federals have over us, other than more industry, railroads, shipyards, and righteousness, is that they have that sublime eagle as their national emblem that inspires their people in times of peril. It is high time that we nullify that advantage by selecting a counterpart to the Federal eagle to represent our own Confederacy. A creature that will stimulate Southerners to greater sacrifices both on the battleline and on the home front.

SECRETARY: Yes, sir.

DAVIS: This is a rather comprehensive list! I'm certain we will not get all the way through it before we find a suitable candidate.

SECRETARY: Yes, sir.

DAVIS: Read off the first proposal. A noble avian to challenge the eagle for supremacy of the skies!

SECRETARY: The vulture.

DAVIS: The vulture? I would have not expected that! What is the reasoning behind such an uncharismatic bird to represent our Confederacy?

SECRETARY: Well, the vulture is majestic in flight.

DAVIS: That is so.

SECRETARY: And, just as the vulture feeds off the carcasses of dead animals, so does the Confederacy feed off the corpse of the destroyed Union.

DAVIS: Hmm. There is some thought put in that. But, no. I would prefer another creature. What's next on the list?

SECRETARY: The woodpecker.

DAVIS: An unusual candidate! What is the reasoning behind that submission?

SECRETARY: Just like the industrious woodpecker, we Southerners have hard heads.

DAVIS: There is an inherent flaw there, sir. While it is true that we Southrons are hardheaded we are definitely not industrious. We prefer to employ slaves to do our work for us.

SECRETARY: An astute observation, Mr. President.

DAVIS: Of course. That's why I am the President! Read on!

SECRETARY: The passenger pigeon.

DAVIS: An interesting candidate. Why ever should we choose that particular bird to represent our new nation?

SECRETARY: Passenger pigeons flock together like Southern men around a still. And, like the Confederacy, passenger pigeons will be around forever!

DAVIS: So true, so true. Yet I would prefer a different member of the feathered fraternity to grace our flags and seals. Next!

SECRETARY: The parrot.

DAVIS: The parrot? Why the parrot?

SECRETARY: Because parrots are associated with pirates.

DAVIS: Now why would that fact be relevant to the purpose of this discussion?

SECRETARY: We do employ commerce raiders like the Alabama.

DAVIS: An undeniable fact. But I need more if I am to choose the parrot as our national emblem.

SECRETARY: Well, a parrot will repeat whatever you teach it. And, just like the gullible population you rule, it is unable to distinguish truth from lies.

DAVIS: Indeed! We the planter class have been able to convince our poor white subjects that they have a stake in this war even though you and I know that it is simply a ploy to protect the institution of slavery from which they gain no benefit. And, not unlike a parrot, these naive dirt farmers and back woods hillbillies squawk about States' Rights without a clue about what they are talking.

SECRETARY: Then it is the parrot that we choose for our emblem?

DAVIS: Unfortunately, the parrot is more of a South American bird and not of this region. We're better off if we pick another.

SECRETARY: Superb reasoning, Mr. President. But I don't see another bird listed among the candidates. However, there is another avian, albeit not a fowl.

DAVIS: And what would that be, sir?

SECRETARY: The brown bat.

DAVIS: The brown bat? Now in what way does the brown bat symbolize our dear Confederacy?

SECRETARY: Just like a bat tends to get into a person's hair, so too do we get into the hair of the Yankees.

DAVIS: An amusing comparison. Anything else?

SECRETARY: Bats are blind just like the Greek poet Homer.

DAVIS: So?

SECRETARY: Homer represents the high culture that we Southern aristocrats aspire to.

DAVIS: While that is certainly sound reasoning we need to select a creature to which the common folk can relate to. What else have you?

SECRETARY: Only one more denizen of the air do I see on this list. The mosquito.

DAVIS: That is an unexpected candidate! Explain!

SECRETARY: Just as the mosquito feeds off the blood of others so too do we feed off the labor of our slaves.

DAVIS: Keep talking, I'm not persuaded yet.

SECRETARY: When a mosquito buzzes about your head, if you listen very carefully, it sounds quite a bit like someone humming "Dixie".

DAVIS: I never thought of that! Still, I require more of a southern animal. While we certainly have a sufficient number of mosquitoes down South here, they are also native to places like Wisconsin.

SECRETARY: The rest of our candidates are ground dwellers, Mr. President.

DAVIS: There's nothing wrong with that. The symbol of Imperial Russia is a bear. Great Britain reveres the lion. What animal do we have to match those noble creatures?

SECRETARY: The porcupine.

DAVIS: The porcupine? Why the porcupine?

SECRETARY: Its quills give it an impenetrable defense just like that employed by our armies and forts that guard our Confederacy. And porcupines are indigenous to the South.

DAVIS: Such a defense-orientated animal gives the wrong impression. We Southern men prefer offensive operations.

SECRETARY: Yes, we are widely considered offensive!

DAVIS: Throughout the civilized world, sir, throughout the civilized world.

SECRETARY: The next candidate certainly fits that description as well, Mr. President.

DAVIS: Let's hear it.

SECRETARY: The alligator.

DAVIS: Now we're getting somewhere! Nobody can deny that an alligator is a ferocious creature unique to the South.

SECRETARY: Indeed it is, Mr. President.

DAVIS: But, on second thought, an alligator is a sneaky creature that ambushes its prey. We Rebels prefer to throw ourselves recklessly into battle with suicidal unsubtleness.

SECRETARY: How about the anaconda?

DAVIS: Isn't that a snake?

SECRETARY: A very big snake, sir, powerful and fearsome. By choosing the anaconda as our national emblem we would be articulating our defiance of the Yankee's "anaconda plan" with which they hope to strangle the Confederacy.

DAVIS: Anything else?

SECRETARY: The anaconda has very colorful scales.

DAVIS: Sir, as you well know, "color" is not considered a virtue in Dixie.

SECRETARY: Then I assume that the anaconda is rejected.

DAVIS: You assume correctly, sir.

SECRETARY: There are only two more candidates listed here, Mr. President.

DAVIS: Proceed.

SECRETARY: The howler monkey.

DAVIS: Intriguing.

SECRETARY: The howler monkey bellows in a way reminiscent of our own politicians when they attempt to make a point in the Senate. And its cries are as mind-numbing as the cries our troops utter when they charge into battle.

DAVIS: Still, not a native species. What is the final choice?

SECRETARY: The rat.

DAVIS: The rat! Tell me more.

SECRETARY: Just as rats spread disease throughout the land so too do we Southrons spread the contagion of succession.

DAVIS: True enough.

SECRETARY: And even though you might attempt to hide the cheese in a cupboard or other secure place, the rat is sure to get it anyway. Likewise, we Southerners will find our independence no matter how hard the North tries to deny it to us.

DAVIS: I like that. Anything else?

SECRETARY: The rat has gray fur not unlike the color worn by our brave troops.

DAVIS: That clinches it!

SECRETARY: Then it's the rat?

DAVIS: Yes, the rat!

(At this point the two launch into a song.)

The rat!

The irrepressible rat.

Grungy, shaggy, rife with fleas,

No matter what he'll steal your cheese.

The rat! The rat!

The sniveling, muttering rat.

He's in your cellar, he's in your walls,

Once he's inside your house, your house must fall.

The rat! The rat!

The whiskered, bucktooth rat.

He runs about, disturbs your sleep,

He spoils what he cannot eat.

The rat! The rat!

The nasty, smelly rat.

His fur is gray, his eyes glow red,

And sometimes he has a copper head!

The rat! The rat!

The skulking, cowardly rat.

His disgusting habits offend all,

He squeaks with a distinctively southern drawl!

The rat! The rat!

The traitorous, loathesome rat.

The rat!

This is the "Rat Flag" made up to replace the Stars and Bars of the Confederacy

