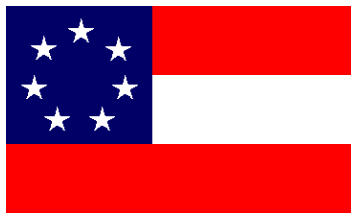
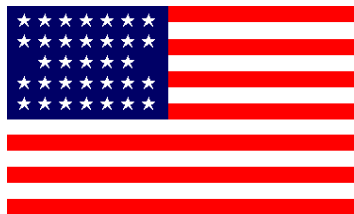


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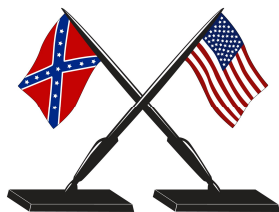


OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



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FROM THE AUTHOR



One month into the new year already! The weather is getting warmer here in Houston, but we're still getting cold spells from time to time. I'm sure it's nothing like the people suffering in the North with sub-freezing temperatures and blistering snowfalls. Our thoughts are with all of those who are enduring extreme weather, including the poor victims of the terrible Haiti earthquake. The country was devastated in January, and our thoughts and prayers are with those suffering people.

This month's newsletter focuses on the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson in 1868. After the Civil War ended, the radical faction of the Republican Party won supermajorities in both houses of Congress, and they bitterly opposed the policies of Johnson, Abraham Lincoln's successor. For the most part, Johnson only tried to continue the policies that Lincoln had started, but unlike Lincoln,

Johnson was not only a Democrat but a southerner. As such he was deeply mistrusted by most Republicans and despised by most radicals. As a result, Johnson's impeachment became one of the most bitterly partisan events in American history.

Also in this newsletter are articles I've written concerning our current state of affairs. Unfortunately, based on this administration's first year, our economic future doesn't look too good. We'll need a major policy turnaround to restore true prosperity, and I'm not sure if the current administration has it in them to do that. Only time will tell.

Regarding my next novel – *The Confederate Trust* is in its final draft stage. I hope to have it (finally) done by the end of February, and it will be sent to the publisher then. Look for it on Amazon in early spring or stay tuned on my website and newsletter for further updates. Thanks for your patience, and thanks as always for your support!

Until next time...

FEBRUARY 1862:

Federal Gains Hurt Southern Morale

At the outset of February 1862, cries were intensifying in the North for more aggressive action. President Abraham Lincoln had recently ordered a military offensive for all U.S. forces to begin by February 22, George Washington's Birthday. The Atlantic Monthly published a poem called "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Soon Julia Ward Howe put the words to music, and a new American anthem was born. There was general hope throughout the North that the "swift sword" would soon reunite the country.

Meanwhile concern was growing in the South. Many soldiers went home for the winter, spreading the Confederate forces thin. The Federals were preparing offensives on the coast of North Carolina and on the Gulf Coast, threatening Mobile and New Orleans. The defensive line through Kentucky had been broken, and Federals were about to launch attacks on the Mississippi, Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. There was growing doubt about the Confederates' ability to sustain their independence.

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“Unconditional Surrender” Grant

A bleak winter for the U.S. war effort was brightened in the Western Theater when the Army of the Tennessee captured the Confederate garrison at Fort Henry on the Tennessee River. The army was part of General Henry Halleck’s Department of the Tennessee, and it was commanded by a quiet, obscure general named Ulysses S. Grant. While most other U.S. armies were stagnant, Grant immediately planned a bolder move against a stronger fort.

On February 16, Grant captured the Confederate stronghold at Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River. Over 15,000 prisoners were taken after a sharp battle, making this the greatest military victory in U.S. history up to that time. Donelson’s capture opened the door for a U.S. invasion of the South through the Mississippi Valley. It also paved the way for the fall of Nashville.

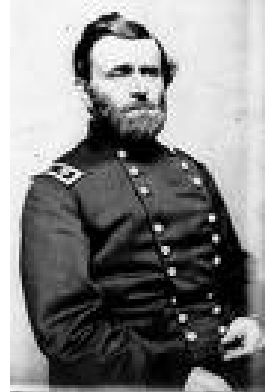
Grant became an instant hero in the North, not only for his victories but for his capitulation terms to the Confederate commander at Donelson: “No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted.” Many boasted that the “U.S.” in Grant’s name stood for “Unconditional Surrender.”

Nashville and Political Interference

Confederates who escaped Fort Donelson before its capture straggled into Nashville, and preparations were made to defend the state capital. The state government relocated to Memphis, the Confederate army under General Albert Sidney Johnston pulled back to Murfreesboro, and Columbus, Kentucky on the Mississippi River was evacuated.

On February 26, the U.S. Army of the Cumberland under General Don Carlos Buell captured Nashville without a fight. This was the first Confederate state capital to fall, and its loss not only harmed southern morale but it meant the loss of tons of Confederate supplies stockpiled there. Nashville became a vital base for Federal forces, made possible by Grant’s capture of Fort Donelson.

However politics soon intervened as other generals became jealous of Grant’s success. After being promoted to major general of volunteers, rumors began circulating that Grant, who had a drinking problem while in the army before the war, was accused of drunkenness on duty. To this, Lincoln quipped, “Put whatever he’s drinking in barrels and give it to all my generals.” Grant was also accused of invading Buell’s territory, which was under a separate U.S. military department.



-- *Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant, new hero of the North*

Washington

On February 5, First Lady Mary Lincoln held an evening ball and was criticized for hosting such lavish festivities while the country was at war. However the social press heaped enormous praise on the event.

This month the Lincolns’ 12 year-old son Willie was struck with typhoid fever, possibly contracted by drinking polluted water. He lay critically ill for two weeks as his parents held a bedside vigil. On February 20, Willie died. His death devastated both President and Mrs. Lincoln, and it dampened the recent U.S. victories in the Western Theater.

Brigadier General Charles P. Stone was arrested in Washington and sent to Fort Lafayette in New York Harbor without specific charges. Stone had commanded the Federal disaster at Ball’s Bluff the previous October. He was never charged or brought to trial, and he was released on August 16 with his career virtually ruined. This unjust persecution was later blamed on Lincoln, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, and General George McClellan. Similarly Malcolm Ives, a correspondent for the New York *Herald*, was imprisoned by the War Department on spying charges.

President Lincoln signed the Loan and Treasury Act, or Legal Tender Act, into law. This established the first national paper currency in U.S. history—the U.S. note. This aimed to increase the money supply for the war effort, and the first \$150 million in notes began being issued in April. The new currency was financed by stock sales.

By this time the U.S. banking system was on the verge of collapse. Doubts about the Federals’ ability to win the war and possible European intervention on the Confederacy’s behalf had prompted panic buying of precious metals,

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resulting in a gold shortage. This shortage hindered U.S. efforts to obtain loans and cover debts. Thus the new paper currency was created, which was payable on demand by the U.S. Treasury even though it was not backed by gold or silver. The constitutionality of this act was highly questionable.

February 22 passed without the general military offensive that Lincoln had ordered, as General-in-Chief McClellan had essentially ignored his superior's order. Lincoln discussed this with his general, pushing McClellan to invade northern Virginia and move south to Richmond. However McClellan unveiled an elaborate plan to load his entire army on ships, sail them down the Virginia coast and land them on the peninsula between the York and James Rivers. The forces could then march the short distance to Richmond. Lincoln was skeptical, but since he was desperate for any action, he approved the plan.

Virginia

The first permanent Confederate Congress convened in Richmond. The fall elections had established a two-house legislature to replace the provisional one-house legislature that recently adjourned. Provisional President Jefferson Davis was inaugurated as the first permanent president of the Confederacy. According to the C.S. Constitution, Davis was to serve one six-year term. In his message to Congress, Davis emphasized that the war effort needed to be intensified. He also sought to establish a Confederate supreme court.

The Virginia House of Delegates debated enrolling free blacks in the Confederate Army. Meanwhile western Virginia was preparing to secede from the rest of the state by holding a state constitutional convention in Wheeling. A provision was adopted that prohibited slaves or free blacks from residing in the new state.

The month ended with a day of fasting and prayer for the Confederacy. Davis instructed General Joseph Johnston,

commander of forces in Virginia, to prepare for a U.S. attack in northern Virginia. Confederate generals began requesting that troops whose enlistments were about to expire to re-enlist.

Other Operations

On the Atlantic Coast, U.S. General Ambrose Burnside and Admiral Louis Goldsborough moved vessels over Hatteras Inlet and captured Roanoke Island after overwhelming the Confederate forces. Although the fight was small, the island's capture and occupation of Pamlico Sound meant that the Federals now had a coastal base of operations for an offensive against North Carolina. This also opened a back door to Richmond. The Confederate government considered this defeat a major disaster, especially coming right after the fall of Fort Henry.

Up the Rio Grande Valley in New Mexico Territory, Confederate forces under General H.H. Sibley defeated a U.S. force under Colonel E.R.S. Canby at Valverde. The Federals retreated to Fort Craig and the Confederates moved on to Santa Fe.

In the Western Theater, General John Pope assumed command of the U.S. Army of the Mississippi in Halleck's military department. Pope's forces moved along the Mississippi River from Commerce to New Madrid, Missouri. This was intended to be another move into the southern heartland; however Confederate batteries protected New Madrid from Island Number Ten on the river.

In England, Queen Victoria lifted all prohibitions on the shipping of gunpowder, arms, ammunition and military supplies from the United Kingdom. This enabled the British, though technically neutral, to provide much-needed supplies to the Confederacy.

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U.S. HISTORY:

Andrew Johnson Becomes the First U.S. President to be Impeached



-- Andrew Johnson, 17th President
of the United States

On February 24, 1868, the House of Representatives voted 126 to 47 in favor of impeaching President Andrew Johnson for “high crimes and misdemeanors.” This marked the first time that an American president had ever been impeached, and it set the stage for one of the most politically biased episodes in the nation’s history.

Background

After the Confederacy was defeated to end the Civil War, there were many questions regarding how to restore the United States. Even before the war ended, President Abraham Lincoln had initiated a lenient restoration policy whereby southern citizens could reform their state governments if they swore allegiance to the Union, denounced secession, repudiated the Confederate debt and recognized the abolition of slavery.

When Lincoln was assassinated in April 1865, he was succeeded by Vice President Andrew Johnson. In an effort to reunite the country during the 1864 elections, the Republican Lincoln had selected Johnson, a southern Democrat, to be his running mate. Now that Lincoln was gone, Johnson was mistrusted by many Republicans. He was especially mistrusted by the extremists, or radicals, in the Republican Party who wished to punish the South for supposedly starting the war.

The radical majority in Congress passed a series of laws intended to subjugate the southern states by placing them under direct federal control. Johnson vetoed much of this legislation, but his vetoes were often overridden by two-thirds majorities. Even so, many radicals came to believe that Johnson was obstructing their political agenda, and they set out to remove this impediment.

The Impeachment Process

An “impeachment” is an accusation of wrongdoing, much like an indictment in a criminal court. All impeachment proceedings must begin in the House of Representatives. The House Judiciary Committee determines if a president deserves impeachment, and if so, submits the charges (or “articles”) to the full House for a vote. If the full House votes in favor of impeachment, a trial is held in the Senate.

The chief justice of the Supreme Court presides over the Senate trial. House members (or “managers”) are selected to serve as prosecutors for the case, while the defendant can obtain counsel for his defense. After hearing arguments for and against impeachment, the senators must vote on guilt or innocence. Two-thirds of the senators must vote “guilty” to obtain a conviction. If the necessary two-thirds majority is secured, then the accused is removed from office.

The Tenure of Office Act

In 1867, Congress passed the Tenure of Office Act, which prohibited the president from removing executive officials without Senate approval. On February 21, 1868, President Johnson directly challenged this act by firing Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and replacing him with Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas. Stanton defied Johnson’s order by refusing to leave his office and having Thomas arrested. Thomas was quickly released on bail, mainly because he could have argued in court that the Tenure of Office Act was unconstitutional.

By firing Stanton, Johnson played right into the radicals’ hands. The radicals in Congress had made earlier impeachment attempts on vague premises, but they now believed they had a legitimate charge to use. Three days after Johnson fired Stanton, the full House (without even going through the Judiciary Committee) voted in favor of impeaching Johnson. The impeachment articles had not even been drafted before the vote.

Soon radical congressmen, led by Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, drew up 11 articles of impeachment. Most of the articles concerned Johnson’s violation of the Tenure of Office Act. The tenth article accused Johnson

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of bringing disgrace upon the presidency. The eleventh was a clever summary of all charges, designed to be a catch-all in case any of the first 10 articles failed to convict. As Stevens explained, “If my article is inserted, what chance has Andrew Johnson to escape? Unfortunate man, thus surrounded, hampered, tangled in the meshes of his own wickedness—unfortunate, unhappy man, behold your doom.”

After having trouble finding lawyers to represent him, Johnson secured former Supreme Court Justice Benjamin R. Curtis, Attorney General Henry Stanberry, William S. Groesbeck, and William Evarts. They were given little time to prepare for the trial, which began on March 30.

The Senate Trial

The Senate created a court of impeachment to hear the charges against Johnson. If he was convicted, he would be replaced by Senate president pro tempore Benjamin Wade. Wade was so confident that Johnson would be convicted that he had selected his cabinet members before the impeachment trial even began. Many expressed shock that Wade did not recuse himself from the proceedings, considering that he would have personally gained by voting for conviction.

The most important issue in the trial was whether cabinet members were included in the Tenure of Office Act. The Senate sponsor insisted that they were not, which would mean that Johnson was not guilty, while the House sponsors insisted that they were, which would mean Johnson’s conviction. Cabinet members were not explicitly included in the legislation, and this gave Johnson a legitimate defense.

When the trial began the House managers, mostly radicals, presented their case against Johnson. Radical Benjamin Butler railed against southern atrocities that had little to do with Johnson; even some fellow radicals were embarrassed by the display. Other prosecutors tried to portray Johnson as a dictator plotting to overthrow the government.

Witnesses were bribed to testify against Johnson, and those supporting the president were denied testimony. Chief Justice Chase expressed shock at Senate shamelessness in excluding evidence “appropriate to enlighten the court as to the intent with which the act (of dismissing Stanton) was done.”

Meanwhile, Johnson’s defense attorneys argued two fundamental premises: 1) the Tenure of Office Act was not meant to include cabinet members, and even if it did, then 2) the Tenure of Office Act included the words “during the term of the President by whom he was appointed.” By this language, Johnson could not have violated the act because he

did not appoint Stanton to the job in the first place; Lincoln did.

As the trial went on, it became clear that there was no evidence of criminal intent by Johnson. Many radicals were disheartened because they knew they could not convict Johnson based on the evidence. However there was still a radical Republican supermajority in the Senate, which meant that conviction was still highly possible.

The Verdict and Precedent

If two-thirds (or 36) of the senators voted for conviction on any of the 11 articles, Johnson would be removed from office. Of the 11 articles, eight had been voted down during the trial, leaving only the second, third and eleventh (catch-all) article. It was decided to vote upon the catch-all eleventh article first.

The impeachers brought intimidators to Washington in an effort to force wavering senators to vote for conviction. Politicians canvassed the senators for votes against Johnson like a party caucus. On May 3, the odds were in favor of conviction, but by May 8 the odds were even. The radicals grew desperate because they knew their case was not strong enough to stand on its own merits. Corruption ran rampant on all sides, as allegations spread that a Democratic slush fund had been created to bribe senators to vote for acquittal.

On May 16, the votes were tallied on the eleventh article. The result was 35 to 19 in favor of conviction. This fell one vote short of the two-thirds majority needed to convict. No Democrats voted for conviction, and seven Republican senators defied their party by voting against conviction: William Fessenden of Maine, Joseph Fowler of Tennessee, James Grimes of Iowa, John Henderson of Missouri, Lyman Trumbull of Illinois, Peter Van Winkle of West Virginia, and Edmund Ross of Kansas.

Knowing that acquittal on the eleventh article meant that the other two articles would also fail, the radicals adjourned for 10 days, hoping for a miracle. When they reconvened on May 26, the votes on articles two and three were both 35 to 19 in favor of conviction, once again falling one vote short. As a result, Johnson was acquitted of all charges and was not removed from office.

Some voting for acquittal were disturbed by how the radicals had manipulated evidence; others were uncomfortable with the prospect of installing Wade as Johnson’s successor; and others simply felt that Johnson

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had not shown criminal intent. By voting for acquittal, the senators adhered to the prevailing public opinion which opposed a Republican expansion of the federal government.

Andrew Johnson had broken no laws, and in fact had more closely adhered to the Constitution than the Republicans in Congress. Johnson was further vindicated in 1926 when the Supreme Court finally ruled that the Tenure of Office Act was unconstitutional.

Had Johnson been removed, he would have been replaced by Wade, a radical, making both the executive and legislative branches uniform in ideology. This would have set a dangerous precedent that Congress could violate the separation of powers by removing a president not only for "high crimes and misdemeanors," but for purely political reasons as well.

BOOK REVIEW:

Impeached by David O. Stewart

Impeached explores one of the most controversial and bitterly partisan events in American political history: the impeachment of Abraham Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson. Johnson had attempted to continue Lincoln's lenient policy of restoring the southern states into the Union, but being a southerner, Johnson's motives were mistrusted by northern Republicans, especially the radical faction of the party.

Although Johnson had attempted to maintain a strict interpretation of the U.S. Constitution as intended by the founders, the radicals in Congress succeeded in impeaching him for "high crimes and misdemeanors," and Johnson came closer to being removed from office than any other president in history.

However while most historians denounce Johnson's

impeachment as a partisan attempt to weaken the presidency, Stewart provides evidence that during the impeachment trial, there was vast corruption taking place behind the scenes on Johnson's behalf. This included buying off senators to vote for acquittal. Meanwhile the radicals bickered and schemed to remove Johnson from office using corrupt means of their own.

Stewart winds through the tangled web of motives, maneuverings and backroom deals that turned the impeachment proceedings into a farce and almost resulted in removing a president from office. As Stewart summarizes, in 1868 none of the country's leaders were great, a few were good, all were angry, and far too many were despicable. Although he offers little analysis on the events, Stewart tells the story in a way it has not yet been told.

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RECENT ARTICLES

By Walter Coffey

WHAT OUR FUTURE COULD BRING

1/24/10

Unfortunately, if 2009 is any indication of how the Obama administration intends to address this nation's problems, the future could be very bleak.

Looking back at 2009 could offer insight into what our nation's future could bring. However if 2009 is any indication, our future could be quite bleak.

When Barack Obama assumed the presidency last year, it was hoped that he would be a new kind of leader who could transcend party politics and seek practical solutions to the country's problems. Unfortunately that has turned out not to be the case. After campaigning against excessive earmarks and pork-barrel government spending, Obama has signed numerous bills into law to the contrary. The result of this reckless spending is that the federal government is on the verge of bankruptcy.

When an effective solution to the economic crisis would have been to reduce corporate taxation, ease regulation and cut spending, the Obama administration has followed a completely opposite course. The result has been predictable: ballooning deficits, soaring unemployment, and a stagnant private sector. Unless the administration recognizes the error of its ways and changes course, the economic future does not bode well.

And instead of tackling these economic issues as top priority, Obama chose to hurry a "stimulus" plan through Congress, then spend the rest of the year focusing on health care reform. He did this in spite of the fact that not only are a vast majority of Americans satisfied with their current health care coverage, but they prefer the government to focus on the economy and jobs.

To make matters worse, the health care reform plan would have provided for massive government intrusion into the health care industry, despite overwhelming evidence that government intervention is what has caused health care costs to soar in the first place.

In addition, Obama has followed the course of all presidents before him by refusing to acknowledge that the primary source of our economic troubles rests with the organization empowered to control the nation's money supply: the Federal Reserve System. Since its inception in 1913, the Fed has printed currency and manipulated interest rates, creating a false prosperity and causing inflation to skyrocket over the past 97 years. Until we closely examine our financial system, beginning with the all too-powerful Fed, we will not be able to enjoy true economic stability.

To further stabilize the economy, the federal government must combat unsustainable expenditures. This would include cutting entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. However this would be highly unpopular, as many people have grown accustomed to entitlements and would be unwilling to sacrifice what they believe is rightfully theirs. Unfortunately President Obama (or any other politician) brave enough to support entitlement cuts would be committing political suicide.

Short of revamping the financial system and cutting back, the government can only continue to print money (causing inflation), raising taxes on the citizenry (diminishing prosperity), and borrowing from foreign nations (straining our national credit and causing interest rates to rise). None of these options are good, but unless our current course is dramatically changed, our future is necessarily bleak.

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GOVERNMENT SPENDING IN 2009

1/12/10

Each American family will be responsible for nearly \$31,000 in 2010 due to this year's excessive, irresponsible and unsustainable government spending.

In the eight years of George W. Bush's presidency, he was continuously criticized for spending too much taxpayer money. And rightfully so. In those eight years, Bush raised the national debt by \$4 trillion, mostly to fund the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. However that figure pales in comparison to just the first 11 months of the Obama administration.

In 2009, Obama raised the national debt by \$3.2 trillion alone. In one year, he spent more than all other previous presidents combined. Let us examine the spending by the numbers to get a better perspective on how our tax dollars are being spent:

H.R. 1: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This "stimulus plan" supposedly allocated \$787 billion to create jobs and stimulate the economy, but unemployment is worse after Obama signed it into law. Studies have shown that most money went to favorable political districts as a thank-you for the 2008 elections. This cost roughly \$6,300 per family.

H.R. 1105: Omnibus Appropriations Act. This was a temporary spending bill to keep government running through September 2009. This should have been done in 2008 but Congress was late, most likely because in January the Democratic majorities took their seats and more money could be allocated to their districts and states. This bill contained over 9,000 pork barrel spending projects, and Obama signed it even though he said he would not sign pork-laden bills during his campaign. This cost roughly \$4,274 per family.

H.R. 2918: Continuing Appropriations for the Legislative Branch. Since the fiscal year began on October 1, 2009, and no spending bill had been passed to keep government running (the politicians must have been too busy overhauling the health care system), this was just a provisional bill to fund Congress until a bigger one could be passed. This cost roughly \$1,850 per family.

H.R. 2997: Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. This funds several food and agriculture-related bureaucracies through September 2010 at a cost of roughly \$1,200 per family.

H.R. 2982: Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act. This funds Homeland Security through September 2010 at a cost of roughly \$440 per family.

H.R. 3183: Department of Energy and Water Appropriations Act. This funds the wasteful Energy Department and other bureaucracies through September 2010 at a cost of roughly \$316 per family.

H.R. 2996: Department of the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. This funds several environmental bureaucracies through September 2010 at a cost of roughly \$320 per family.

H.R. 3288: Department of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The name of this bill is misleading; since Congress did nothing through November, members had to scramble to pass a "consolidated" spending bill that covered not only the bureaucracies mentioned in this bill, but several other bills that had not yet passed:

--> H.R. 2847: Department of Commerce, Justice and Science and Related Agencies. Cost \$665 per family.

--> H.R. 3081: Department of State and Foreign Operations and Related Agencies. Cost \$443 per family.

--> H.R. 3082: Military Construction and Veterans' Affairs. Cost \$1,200 per family.

--> H.R. 3170: Financial Services and General Appropriations. Cost \$430 per family.

--> H.R. 3288: The original Department of Transportation, HUD and Related Agencies. Cost \$1,250 per family.

--> H.R. 3293: Department of Labor, Education and Health and Human Services. Cost a whopping \$7,200 per family.

This "consolidated" spending bill, signed in December cost roughly \$11,188 per family.

H.R. 3326: Department of Defense Appropriations Act. The year ended with this bill, which was two-and-a-half months late. This also included many pork-barrel spending projects unrelated to defense. This cost roughly \$5,100 per family.

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When all these bills are added up, they cost nearly \$31,000 per family. This was hardly reported by the media in 2009, and even less coverage was given to the fact that this represents money the federal government does not have.

So how will the government come up with the money to fund these bills? It can only be done by taxing (thus raising taxes), printing more money (thus creating inflation) or borrowing from foreign nations (thus weakening credit and increasing debt).

This year looks no better. In fact, if the health care reform bill passes, it will add yet another \$15,650 per family. That means that each American taxpaying family will be responsible for \$46,650 thanks to profligate government spending. This is an ominous warning that 2010 could be a very difficult year.

Primary source: www.WashingtonWatch.com