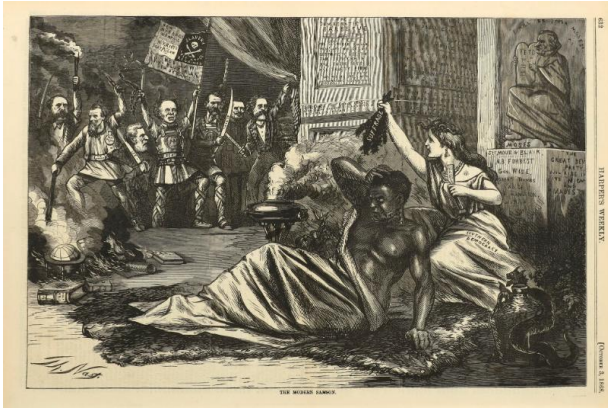


# Basic Detail Report

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## The Modern Samson, from "Harper's Weekly"

### Date

published October 3, 1868

### Primary Maker

Thomas Nast

### Medium

Wood engraving on newsprint

### Description

American Reconstruction Era. "In March 1876, Congress ratified the first Reconstruction Act and the fourteen Confederate states were forced to comply with the legislation. One of the stipulations of the Act was black male suffrage. Though giving black males the right to vote was unpopular among southerners, all but three states complied. The resistance of many politicians to grant this right is the subject of this image, which Nast based upon the Old Testament story of the Israelite hero, Samson. Samson had superhuman strength because he obeyed all of God's rules, abstained from alcohol, did not eat unclean meat, and never cut his hair. Samson's lover, Delilah, cut his hair in his sleep, causing Samson to lose his strength, which led to his capture by the Philistines. Nast depicts an African-American Samson, and a white Delilah who personifies Southern Democracy. Delilah cuts Samson's hair, in this case stripping the freed slave of his rights. This image is one of very few in which Nast portrays women in a negative light. A group of Democratic politicians and Ku Klux Klan members, including presidential candidate Horatio Seymour, protest the end of slavery and the 14th Amendment. The stature of Moses bears a striking resemblance to Andrew Johnson, who was considered the Moses of black Americans, even though he vetoes giving suffrage to African-American men. In this case, instead of the Ten Commandments, Johnson holds a tablet that says, "Veto," emphasizing his hypocrisy." (SOURCE: Susanna White, "Emancipation and Denigration: Thomas Nast Pictures Black America", 2008)

### Dimensions

Composition: 9 1/8 x 13 3/4 in. (23.2 x 34.9 cm) Sheet: 15 3/4 x 10 5/8 in. (40 x 27 cm)