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TWO SONS OF NEW YORK IN IOWA

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Here and there in the histories and other records of Iowa are references to Ver Planck Van Antwerp. They give the impression that he was a man of some importance in the territorial days and in the first decades of the state; still the references are few and the information meagre. Perhaps it was the orotund sound of that good Dutch name that intrigued my interest. Perhaps the name stirred some deep down memories of my own Knickerbocker ancestry. Perhaps it was the statement by Stiles¹ that "he was a connection of Martin Van Buren," that prompted this research. It happens that I am a native of Columbia county, New York, and that I grew up there, where also Van Buren had his home; and that I have had no little interest in the little Dutchman of Kinderhook. If Van Antwerp were a relative of Van Buren, I wanted to know about it; and I wanted to know about Van Antwerp himself. As the story unfolded, it appeared that the story of his relationship to Van Buren had no basis in fact. In a speech in Fairfield in 1848 he explained that he had no blood kinship with the former president; and genealogical investigation indicates that there had been no intermarriage between the families.²

There was little to be found in the Iowa records, however; hence I wrote to my generous friend Joseph Gavit of The New York State Library in Albany. He discovered a rare work, *Portraits and Memoirs of Living Ameri-*

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¹*Recollections and Sketches*, by E. H. Stiles, p. 279 ff. *Iowa Through The Years*, by Cyrenus Cole p. 135.

²For this genealogical information I am appreciative of the help of Miss Edna Jacobsen of the New York State Library, Albany.

cans by John Livingston, in several volumes, published in 1854,³ in volume three of which (pp 337 ff) there is a sketch of Van Antwerp to the time of the publication of the work. There followed the generous loan of the volume in question, from which I have the most of the data concerning our subject's earlier years, supplemented by much other material.

Isaac Ver Planck Van Antwerp was born in Coeymans, New York,⁴ June 8, 1807, and was christened in the Dutch Reformed church there June 24th of that year.⁵ He was named for his maternal grandfather, Isaac Ver Planck; but somewhere along the line the Isaac was dropped. He was the son of Peter and Catherine Ver Planck Van Antwerp.⁶

Both sides of this parentage were of substantial old Dutch families of the Hudson river region. The Van Antwerp's early family name in the Low Countries was Fontair of French extraction; as their wordly estate in Holland increased, they became the Fontairs Van (of) Antwerp. The first emigrant of the name settled in New Netherlands; descendants emigrated up the Hudson to Albany and its vicinity. Garret Van Antwerp was the first town mayor of Schenectady.

The Ver Plancks came from Abraham Isaac Ver Planck who came to America about 1633, and settled at Pavonia, now Jersey City. When that settlement was destroyed by the Indians, he moved to New Amsterdam. The next generation began to move up the river. A son Gulian was the founder of Fishkill, New York. A later Gulian born in New York in 1751, educated at Kings College (now Columbia University) and in Holland, became a prominent political leader in the early history of the state after revolutionary times; he was one of the first regents of the University of the State of New York. Still another Gulian of the Fishkill branch of the family, born 1786, a graduate of Columbia and a lawyer, became

³Livingston seems to have been interested only in Democrats.

⁴Livingston, *op. cit.*

⁵From a letter courteously sent me by the Reverend Ernest Crounse of the Dutch Reformed Church in Coeymans.

⁶From Miss Jacobsen and Mr. Crounse.

known as an author, a representative in the congress (1825-1833) and a professor in the General Theological School in New York. He started out after the family political custom as a Federalist; but with the collapse of that party he lined up with Jackson, and then parted company with him over the bank issue and became a Whig, from whom again he parted company over the Anti-Masonic issue which he could not digest. He later became a member of the New York State Senate (1838-1841) and served as a regent of the State University (1826-70).⁷

An Isaac Ver Planck was one of the first members of the incorporation of Albany, as noted in the charter granted by Charles II of England; descendants of the family are still prominent there. The grandfather of our Ver Planck Van Antwerp took up his residence in Coeymans. The family generally were ardently colonial during the time of the revolution.

Ver Planck Van Antwerp's mother died when he was eleven years old, and he lived with his grandfather Major Isaac Ver Planck until he was fourteen, when he went to Albany to live with a bachelor uncle Cornelius Van Antwerp, and attended the Albany academy. There, according to Livingston, he was a schoolmate of Joseph Henry, the famous physicist, who was eight years his senior.

TO WEST POINT

In 1823, upon the recommendation of Martin Van Buren and Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer, he was appointed by John C. Calhoun, Secretary of War, to West Point, where the commandant was General W. J. Worth.⁸ Van Buren's oldest son Abraham was appointed at the same time. Charles Mason of New York, later Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Iowa Territory, appointed by President Van Buren in 1838; Robert E. Lee; and Jef-

⁷The *Dictionary of American Biography*, the *National Encyclopedia of American Biography*, and the *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*.

⁸General Worth was a native of Hudson, the county seat of Columbia county. He reached his greatest fame in the Mexican war. Worth county in Iowa is named for him.

erson C. Davis, entered in the military academy a year later. His roommate at West Point was a son of Robert Fulton. Van Antwerp resigned from the academy in 1826 and returned to Albany to study law. He was admitted to the bar in February 1829.

Political life had presented its allurements. He came from strong Jeffersonian ancestry, and from families which presented him with early friendships among the party leaders. In the spring of 1829 Van Buren, recently made secretary of state in Jackson's cabinet, sent him on a mission to the different governors of states and territories west of the Alleghenies, which had to do with Indian problems.

Upon his return to Albany he married Jane Van Ness Yates, the daughter of John Van Ness Yates and Elizabeth Ross Cunningham. Her father had been secretary of state in New York (1818-1826) and his father, Robert Yates, was one of New York's delegates to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787, and later Chief Justice of New York.⁹

UNITED WITH NEW YORK PIONEERS

The Yates family were among the earliest settlers of Albany and Schenectady, one Joseph Yates coming in 1664. His son Robert settled in Schenectady in 1711, and was about the only English speaking resident of that Dutch town. Both he and his father married Dutch girls. Robert, the chief justice, was his grandson. A cousin, Joseph Yates of Schenectady, was governor of New York (1823-25).

Robert Yates' wife was Jannetje (Jane) Van Ness, a sister of Judge Peter Van Ness of Columbia county, New York. Livingston goes no further in identifying Jannetje than to say that "she was of the Republican branch of the family" as distinguished from the Federal. That indicates Judge Peter of Kinderhook, and information kind-

⁹Yates with his colleague, John Lansing, withdrew from the convention in protest against its tendencies, as Hamilton had done earlier, leaving New York unrepresented. Hamilton was induced to return. Yates' notes on the proceedings of the convention while he was there constitute some of the sources of our knowledge of the story of the convention.

ly sent me by Miss Edna L. Jacobsen of the New York State Library confirms that conclusion.

Peter Van Ness lived in the northern part of the town of Claverack, later set off as the town of Ghent. He commanded a company of Continental soldiers under Montgomery in the movement against Canada in 1776; and he was in command of a regiment at Saratoga. In the 1780's he moved to the adjoining town of Kinderhook, where about two miles down the old post road from the village of Kinderhook he built in 1787 a brick house. A tubby-shaped, tow-haired boy had been born to the tavern keeper in Kinderhook in 1782, who, as he grew up, developed a genius for political interest and insight; the Van Ness family took him under their wing and encouraged his ambitions. Time was to come when he was to out-distance all of them and attain to high place in political life and finally to make the Van Ness place, his own home. His name was Martin Van Buren.¹⁰

Peter Van Ness had three sons, second cousins of Mrs. Van Antwerp, who came to important places in the first half of the last century. John, born in 1770, was a graduate of Columbia, practiced law in Claverack, and was elected to the congress in 1800. While in Washington he married Marcia Burns (1802), whose father sold to the government the land where the White House stands. John Van Ness continued to live in Washington in a house just back of the president's house. He was mayor of Washington for many years (that city had a mayor in those days). The orphan asylum and the site of St. Paul's church were gifts of the family.

William P. Van Ness, born 1778, read law with Edward Livingston¹¹ and then started his own practice in New

¹⁰Van Buren bought the place April 1, 1839. It passed out of Van Ness ownership many years before. Peter Van Ness built the brick house in 1797; Van Buren enlarged it and redecorated it when he returned from Washington in 1841. I am indebted for this information to Mrs. W. B. Van Alstyne, of Kinderhook. Van Buren named the place "Lindenwald"; the Van Ness family called it "Kleirood"—*The American Tallyrand*, by Alexander, p. 357.

¹¹Edward Livingston, born in Clermont, the Livingston family seat in Columbia county, New York, was a brother of Chancellor Robert R. Livingston. He rose to high position professionally and politically in New York City. Through the dishonesty of a clerk in his office as U. S. district attorney, his affairs became seriously embarrassed. He settled the affairs of the clerk; moved to New Orleans, newly in the United States, where he again rose to high position professionally and politically. He went to congress, to the senate, became Jackson's

York. The young Van Buren studied in his friend Billy Van Ness' law office, and nearly starved to death in the process, for the Van Burens had no money to spend on a law student's career. Billy Van Ness was an ardent friend and supporter of Aaron Burr in those days of political strife within the party, as well as with the dis-appearing Federalists. He acted as Burr's second in the famous duel with Hamilton in 1804, and had to go into hiding for a time afterwards. When the fuss and fury died down, he returned to his law practice; in 1810 Madison appointed him a judge of the Federal district court, where he served until his death.

The third son, Cornelius P., was born in 1782. He read law in Williams' office and was admitted to the bar in 1804. He moved to Vermont, living first in St. Albans and then in Burlington. He served successively as United States District Attorney, Collector of Customs, in the Vermont General Assembly four years, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Governor of Vermont three terms; and in 1829 Jackson made him United States Minister to Spain. He later removed to New York where he practiced law until his death. His daughter married Judge James Roosevelt.¹²

To their Kinderhook home came a friend of the sons of the family, Washington Irving, after the death of Matilda Hoffman (1809), his fiancee, to recover from that blow. He was there on other occasions; and there he put the finishing touches on his Knickerbocker's History of New York. The local school teacher, Jesse Merwin, became the prototype of Irving's Ichabod Crane. Irving also visited there as a guest of Van Buren.¹³

After his marriage Van Antwerp entered upon the practice of law in partnership with his father-in-law in

Secretary of State in succession to Van Buren, in which office he wrote Jackson's famous anti-nullification paper. He afterwards became Minister to France, and from that appointment he returned to spend the remaining few months of his life on the banks of the Hudson.

¹²For the Van Nesses—See Note 7. *A Group of Great Lawyers*, by Miller (p. 128f.) For Van Buren's early relations with Peter Van Ness and his sons, see *An Epoch and A Man*, by Lynch (pp. 89 ff.) and *Van Buren's Autobiography* (p. 74)

¹³Hellman, *Washington Irving Esquire* (p. 7, p. 71)—Shepard, *Martin Van Buren* (p. 398)

Albany. In the summer of 1832 he went to Ohio to explore a route for a railroad across that state from Sandusky to Cincinnati, according to Livingston the first railroad project ever undertaken west of the Allegheny mountains.¹⁴ He went back to New York to raise money and to organize a company for the construction of the road; but New York financiers thought it was a foolish scheme.

The west had got into this New York Dutchman's spirit and he established a residence in Indianapolis, where he lived for about five years, engaged in law and in politics. In the latter he strongly supported Van Buren both for the presidential nomination and election in 1836 and supported Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky in the hotly contested nomination for vice-president that year.¹⁵ In the summer of 1836 he was appointed by Lewis Cass, Secretary of War, as a member of the board of visitors to West Point. In 1837 he was made secretary of a commission to treat with the Chippewa Indians at Fort Snelling, where he met and started a life-long friendship and close association with Henry C. Dodge of Wisconsin, who was a member of the commission. Later that year and in 1838 he was associated for the government with the removal of the Cherokee Indians from Tennessee and Alabama and with the removal of the Pottawatomies west of the Missouri.

BECOMES AN IOWA OFFICIAL

With the organization of the territory of Iowa President Van Buren appointed Van Antwerp Receiver of Public Moneys at the land office in Burlington,¹⁶ in which office he served until the new Whig administration in 1841 replaced him. During his residence in Burlington Governor Lucas made him the first adjutant general of the militia of the territory; wherefrom the title of general stuck to him the rest of his life.

¹⁴The Mohawk and Hudson railroad had been inaugurated between Albany and Schenectady August 10, 1831. Van Antwerp evidently had his inspiration from that recent event. It was an evidence of his pioneering intuitions.

¹⁵Johnson was hotly opposed by a large section of the Democratic party; enough electoral votes were cast for other men to throw the election into the senate—the only incident of the kind in our constitutional history.

¹⁶A. C. Dodge was the Register of the Land Office.

With the expiration of his term of office in Burlington Van Antwerp turned his attention to newspaper work; and before the end of the year his name is associated with papers both in St. Louis and in Iowa City, with the latter place winning his attention for the time being. The following citation is taken from¹⁷ *Early St. Louis Newspapers*, by Dorothy Grace Brown, Washington University, Department of History, p. 51-55:

In August (1841) Abel Rathbone Corbin emerged from his retirement and purchased the *Argus*. He did so at the request of the Democratic party in St. Louis, to prevent its falling into the hands of an unsympathetic editor. Arrangements were made with William Gilpin to continue as editor of the paper until after the presidential election of that year.

. . . Corbin had agreed to resume and maintain control of the *Argus* only until such as a successor could be obtained possessed of sufficient political integrity and editorial ability to do justice to the Democratic cause, and from whom the "good old democratic republican cause" would not be likely to suffer detriment. Such men were found in Shadrach Penn, Jr. from Louisville, Kentucky, and General V. P. Van Antwerp from Burlington, Iowa Territory, to whom Corbin sold the establishment in October, 1841

Penn and Van Antwerp had received the sanction of the Democrats in St. Louis and were adjudged competent to run the chief organ of their party. Penn had been at the head of a Democratic press in Louisville for more than twenty years, during which time he had gained recognition as a capable and competent editor. Van Antwerp, also, was an experienced and ready writer. Although not attached to a newspaper in Burlington, he had gained distinction as an industrious and able business man, an invaluable asset to a newspaper.

Under these new editors the *Missouri Argus* was allowed to expire, and in its place arose the *Missouri Reporter*. The *Reporter* did not make its appearance in St. Louis until December 1841.

The *Davenport Gazette*, a Whig organ, for April third, 1842, reprints an attack on Van Antwerp in the *St. Louis Reporter* and adds a few sentences of its own scolding, heading the article, *Van Antwerp's True Character Exposed*. The burden of the complaint was that he had left the new paper in St. Louis to go to Iowa City, and that in the four months that he had been publishing the *Iowa*

¹⁷I am indebted to Miss Stella M. Drumm of the Missouri Historical Society for this quotation.

City Capitol Reporter "there had been no exchange since he retreated to Iowa."

The first issue of the *Iowa City Capitol Reporter* appeared December 4, 1841. It was to appear every Saturday. The motto under which it announced its purpose was "He is a freeman whom the truth makes free."¹⁸ His venture was furthered by leaders of the Democrats who wanted a responsible journal at the territorial capital city. A Dr. Nathaniel Jackson was publishing the *Argus*, which he had begun in July of 1841; but his tone and attitude did not commend him to the Democratic leaders.¹⁹ He sold out to Van Antwerp early in 1842.²⁰ A dispute afterward arose, which may have been more newspaper sound and fury than reality. The *Davenport Gazette* for March 24th, with its pen dipped in Whig ink, gloats over a report from Iowa City that Van Antwerp "had purchased Dr. Jackson's *Argus* for \$2000, which was treble its value." There was a verbal understanding that Jackson would cease publishing in Iowa City, but there was no written contract. Jackson was "now gone for new materials." Van Antwerp was quoted as saying "the only object in purchasing the *Argus* establishment was that there should be a single Democratic paper here at the seat of government. As to its doing any material or lasting injury to this paper or to the Democratic cause, we have never for a moment believed." Jackson dropped out of the picture and Van Antwerp had other troubles.

The same issue of the *Davenport Gazette* (March 24, 1842) has a letter signed "The Hawkeye", relating what purports to be the story of a personal encounter between Van Antwerp and M. Bainbridge, member of the Territorial Council from Dubuque in the 3rd and 4th sessions of the Territorial Legislature. It seems that the *Reporter* had published certain criticisms of Bainbridge. On February 7th the two men met in the lobby between the two legislative chambers in the Old Capitol. Bainbridge opened up the subject, calling Van Antwerp "a dam

¹⁸*The Old Capitol Remembers*, by Benjamin F. Shambaugh (p. 24)

¹⁹Jackson came from Lafayette, Indiana—Shambaugh, op. cit.

²⁰ANNALS OF IOWA, Vol. 16, p. 189.

puppy and scoundrel" and threatened to follow him through the territory to kick him. Van Antwerp suggested "perhaps they better do it now." The letter goes on to indicate that Van Antwerp cooled down and tried to effect a reconciliation. Bainbridge moved to a physical attack and Van Antwerp drew his pistol from his pocket. Bainbridge, violently angry and with increasing violence of language, seized the gun and beat Van Antwerp about the head. Considerable blood flowed. The *Gazette* refers to all of this as a Democratic quarrel and prints a short editorial comment entitled "Disgraceful." The reader, however, must make allowances for the political and editorial customs of the time.

SHARP EXCHANGE OF EPITHETS

Those customs are indicated by certain passages of arms between Van Antwerp and his Iowa City competitor William Crum of the *Standard*.²¹ In one exchange of amenities Crum produced the brilliant piece of fire works frequently quoted, "My Lord Pomposity Van Antwerp. He must be either a knave or a fool, or both." Van Antwerp in reply referred to his neighbor as "a lean, skulking, irresponsible editor." On another occasion Crum remarked of Van Antwerp—"The thing that says it edits that filthy and demagogical slice of local locofoism, the *Reporter*." Van Antwerp's reply was "Silly Billy, the last crum of creation."²²

Van Antwerp was in Iowa City less than two years.²³ The *Davenport Gazette* for October 18, 1843 announces the birth of the *Missourian*, established at St. Louis by the Van Buren-Benton Free Trade Democrats, to be edited by Gen. Van Antwerp, ex-editor of the *Iowa City*

²¹Crum had started his paper in Bloomington (Muscatine) earlier in 1841. He moved it to Iowa City in June by ox team. He sold out to A. P. Wood in 1842. The paper continued under other names until 1916. Shambaugh, op. cit. ANNALS OF IOWA, Vol. 16, p. 224.

²²Shambaugh, op. cit. (p. 160). Cole, op. cit. (p. 278)

²³Van Antwerp sold the paper to Jesse Williams in 1844. In 1846 it was sold to A. H. and G. D. Palmer. In 1850 to Edgar and Edmond Harrison, who changed the name to the *Iowa State Reporter*. In 1860 a stock company took it over and renamed it the *State Democratic Press*. In 1864 it became the *Iowa State Press* with the famous John P. Irish as editor and proprietor. After 1882 it passed through several hands until 1920 it was merged with the *Daily Citizen* and became the *Press-Citizen* of today with Merritt C. Speidel as the proprietor. ANNALS OF IOWA, Vol. 16, p. 224.

Capitol Reporter and James M. Morgan, ex-editor of the *Burlington Gazette*. It seems, however, from Miss Brown's work, already cited, that the *Missourian* did not actually start until March 25, 1844 "under the editorship of General Van Antwerp whose interest in the *Reporter* (St. Louis) had terminated shortly after its commencement. In September Van Antwerp formed a partnership with Joseph A. Dougherty and they continued to publish the *Missourian* until it was sold to Loren Pickering."

One of the lively political questions that kept the editors in Iowa stirred up was the new law by the Whig congress in the Tyler administration providing for the distribution of free land. In the *Capitol Reporter* of Jan. 22, 1842, Van Antwerp writes, "The Whig law is a most vicious law." The law refused preemption rights until the lands were surveyed. The only settlers eligible to land rights were those who had settled on surveyed land. It affected the sale of lots in the grant to the territory of the site of Iowa City, from which sale was to come the money for the new capitol building.²⁴

Livingston says that in 1845 Van Antwerp was recommended by Silas Wright, Henry C. Dodge, A. C. Dodge, Thomas H. Benton, and John Van Buren (son of the ex-president) for appointment as commissioner of the general land office, but President Polk did not see it that way. In that year he returned to Iowa as receiver of public moneys at the newly established land office at Fairfield, which took the place of the earlier one at Burlington, inasmuch as the areas of public lands left for settlement were now too much to the west for convenience from Burlington.²⁵

While Van Antwerp was in office in Fairfield, the Reverend Henry Scholte with four companions came that way, spying out the land for a place for their colony, having left the rest of the party in St. Louis to await

²⁴*Iowa Public Land Disposal*, by Roscoe Lokken (p. 90f.)

²⁵Stiles quotes J. W. Woods of Burlington and later of Hardin county as saying that Van Antwerp's return to Iowa was resented by such Democratic leaders as Governor James Clark, Charles Mason, A. C. Dodge, and that they gave him "the cold shoulder," as they felt the appointment should go to a resident instead of to a Missourian. There is nothing else in the record to confirm that story and it is of doubtful value.

their return. The receiver's Dutch name drew them to him and it was largely upon his recommendation that the site of Pella was chosen.²⁶

When Van Antwerp returned to Iowa, the agitation for the change from territorial status to statehood was active. The people had already three times rejected the proposal. In 1846 a newly written constitution was accepted; and the new state was officially established in December of that year. The First General Assembly was faced with the duty of electing United States senators and supreme court justices. Van Antwerp was one of the accepted Democratic candidates for senator, along with A. C. Dodge and Judge Wilson of Dubuque; but the partisan composition of the legislature was such that no elections could be reached either in the regular session or in the later special session called for that purpose. Iowa was without representation in the United States senate during the first two years of its history.

The national election of 1848 put a strain on Van Antwerp. His party cracked under the growing impact of the slavery problem; and his friend and mentor of earlier days, Martin Van Buren, accepted the nomination for president on the Free-Soil ticket. The Democrats meeting in Baltimore in May had nominated Lewis Cass of Michigan.²⁷ Two sets of delegates from New York had turned up at the convention, one set representing the Van Buren or Free-Soil sentiment; that faction was commonly called "The Barnburners"; and in the proceedings of the convention they are referred to as the Utica and Herkimer delegates, with reference to the places where conventions had been held. The other set, "The Hunkers," were the Syracuse and Albany delegates. The convention spent two days debating the problem of the contest,

²⁶A Baptist circuit rider, the Reverend M. H. Post, conducted a funeral service for a child of Merritt, while Scholte and his party were in Fairfield. Scholte was so impressed that he sought Mr. Post's acquaintance and engaged him to guide them to the region recommended by Van Antwerp; the result was Pella.—ANNALS OF IOWA, Vol. 3, p. 252ff.

²⁷The candidates balloted for in the convention were Cass, James Buchanan of Pennsylvania and Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire. Woodbury was at various times a United States senator; he served as Secretary of the Navy and as Secretary of the Treasury in Jackson's cabinet and later as an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Woodbury county in Iowa is named for him.

Yancey of Mississippi leading the fight for "The Hunkers." It was finally compromised by seating both factions with a half vote for each delegate; which resulted in New York casting no vote on any of the four ballots taken for president.²⁸

Van Antwerp had been present at the Baltimore convention and had accepted Cass as the candidate. When the Free-Soil ticket of Van Buren and Charles Francis Adams got in the field, a state convention was held in Iowa City in September, at which Van Antwerp was nominated as one of the four presidential electors for Iowa.²⁹ He was in an embarrassing position,³⁰ which he solved in a speech in Fairfield, which is largely quoted by Livingston. He alluded feelingly to the personal relations which, commencing with his boyhood, had existed between Mr. Van Buren and himself. "Towards Mr. Van Buren, though bound by no ties of consanguinity, I have felt, and now feel, much as a son feels towards a father. He has been my friend, has rendered me important services; I was reared by his side; have partaken often of his general hospitalities; and felt at times almost as if I were a member of his family. These considerations must forbid my warring by word or deed on Mr. Van Buren." But he felt bound by the convention in which he participated in Baltimore to support Mr. Cass, which he did more or less passively. It is evident, however, from later action and expression, that his sympathies were increasingly with the anti-southern wing of his party. In a state convention in Iowa City, June 30th, 1849, he supported a statement of Benton's view of the Wilmot Proviso; and as will appear later, he was an active war-democrat after the separation of the states was attempted.

²⁸There is a pamphlet copy of the proceedings of the convention in the library of the Iowa State Historical Society. Miss Ruth Gallaher of the Historical Society advises me that the Iowa delegates to the Baltimore convention were A. H. Palmer, E. W. Eastman, Hannibal Emerson and Ex-Governor James Clark.

See also Louis Pelzer in the *Iowa Journal of Politics and History* (April 1908) Vol. VI, p. 263 ff.

²⁹The Iowa Free Soil convention named as candidates for electors—Van Antwerp, William Penn Clark, William Miller, J. H. Bacon.

³⁰Gov. Henry C. Dodge of Wisconsin found himself in the same situation. The first suggestion of the Free Soil movement included Van Buren for President and Dodge for vice president. The governor had been a delegate to the Baltimore convention, and had acquiesced in the nomination of Cass. He declined the Free Soil designation and Charles Francis Adams of Massachusetts was substituted.

VAN ANTWERP RETIRES FROM OFFICE

With the election of Taylor in 1848 and the inauguration of the Whig administration Van Antwerp was removed from office. He returned to newspaper work. The *Davenport Gazette* of March 29, 1849 says "We understand that Mr. Doyle of the *Keokuk Dispatch* is about to be succeeded by Ver Planck Van Antwerp, formerly connected with the press of this state." In the Democratic convention of 1850 he was an active candidate for the nomination for governor. In the balloting of the convention Edward Johnstone of Keokuk, Stephen Hempstead of Dubuque, and Van Antwerp were the leading contenders. After the seventh ballot Johnstone withdrew and the most of his vote went to Hempstead, who was elected over James H. Thompson of Iowa City.

The Third General Assembly gave attention to that struggling project, the Des Moines river improvement. In 1846 the United States government by act of congress had granted to Iowa alternate sections of land in a space five miles wide each side of the river not otherwise disposed of, funds from the sale of which were to be used for the improvement of the Des Moines to make it navigable. A brave attempt was made by fits and starts.³¹ After Van Antwerp returned to Keokuk he was made president of the Des Moines River Improvement Company, a private organization got together to further the project. By act of the general assembly February 2, 1851 the Board of Public Works, established by the First General Assembly, was abolished and a Commissioner of Public Works and a Register were authorized. Governor Hempstead appointed Van Antwerp commissioner and George Gillaspay of Ottumwa as register.³² In January 1853 the law was changed to make these officers elective. Van Antwerp was not a candidate for this election. However, in 1853 his friends brought him out again for United States senator in succession to George W. Jones

³¹ANNALS OF IOWA, (Vol. 1, p. 351 ff.)

³²George Gillaspay was a Kentuckian who settled in Ottumwa in 1851. He became a first citizen there in business and in public affairs. He was the Democratic candidate for governor in 1869.

of Dubuque, whose term was about to expire, but Jones was re-elected by the legislature.

In 1855 a land office was opened in Fort Dodge, and Van Antwerp was called back to his old work as receiver, with William H. Merritt of Cedar Rapids as register.³³

It was in the first half of the 1850's that Livingston was writing of him. The author characterizes him as "an ardent and impulsive temperament; slender form, five feet ten inches in height, military bearing, courteous." Stiles³⁴ quoting from an older acquaintance of Van Antwerp says, "He was tall, thin, courtly, black hair and eyes, fair complexion. He was aristocratic, dignified, with a good deal of hauteur in his bearing, but lacking the stamina both physical and mental of his rougher colleagues"—however, that last phrase should be taken with its partisan angle. The steel engraving in the Livingston work shows a bearded man of eminently attractive appearance, certifying the first sentence of the quotation above.

Mrs. Van Antwerp was living the life of the frontier towns during the twenty years and more that they were in Iowa. Between occasions of moving from one place to another, and together with the household duties and with the care of her children, she found time for such undertakings in church and community as a woman born of her public spirited ancestry would find. She was an active Episcopalian, active in such social matters as existed for women ninety or a hundred years ago. When the Mount Vernon Ladies Association was organized in 1856 for the preservation of the Washington home, she became the first vice regent for Iowa and remained in that office until her death. About 1872³⁵ she was succeeded

³³W. H. Merritt was born in New York City Sept. 12, 1880; settled at Ivanhoe, Linn County, Iowa, in 1838 as manager of a store trading with Indians; elected enrolling clerk of Third Territorial Council which convened in 1840 in the Old Zion church in Burlington; became owner *Miner's Express*, a daily newspaper in Dubuque, in 1847; appointed first surveyor of Port of Dubuque in 1852; appointed register of U. S. Land office at Ft. Dodge in 1855; helped organize a company of 1st Iowa regiment U. S. Volunteers in Linn County and elected its captain; later became lieutenant colonel; served as colonel on Gen. McClelland's staff; was Democratic candidate for governor of Iowa in 1861; later residing in Des Moines was elected mayor in 1880, and in 1886 was appointed by President Cleveland as Des Moines' postmaster.

³⁴Stiles—op. cit.—p. 280.

³⁵ANNALS OF IOWA, Vol. XII, p. 364 ff.

by Mrs. John F. Dillon of Davenport, the wife of Judge John F. Dillon of the Iowa Supreme Court.³⁶

Van Antwerp was in Keokuk when the Civil war erupted. He did what Douglas asked his friends to do, what the aged Van Buren urged; he fought to preserve the union of the states. He asked for an opportunity in the army of the north. Governor Samuel J. Kirkwood recommended him for appointment as colonel of a regiment of infantry the Governor wanted to have authorized in 1861. Instead of that he was appointed to the staff of Brigadier General James G. Blunt, 1st Division Army of the Frontier, as Inspector General with the rank of major, in which position he was cited "for efficient services rendered." He was later assigned to the Department of the Missouri. He was breveted brigadier general Feb. 13, 1865, honorably mustered out July 1, 1866, and commissioned a captain as a military storekeeper July 28, 1866.³⁷

After the war he did not return to Iowa; but moved here and there as his army duties dictated. The *Daily Constitution* of Keokuk for Monday, December 6th, 1875 says:³⁸

Died—In Prince George county, Maryland, at the residence of his son-in-law, Mr. Gonzalvo Clagett, on the 24th of the present month (sic) General Ver Planck Van Antwerp, a well known former resident of this city.

At the breaking out of the Civil war, General Van Antwerp having received a military education at West Point, tendered his services to the federal government, which were accepted, and he joined the Union army and was in active service during the war. After the war ended, he was attached to the regular army as storekeeper. At one time he was stationed at Galveston, Texas, and assigned military judge. Afterward, he was made by the war department storekeeper at Philadelphia, and subsequently, at his own request, he was transferred to Baltimore, Maryland, in order to be near his daughter, at whose residence he died.

General Van Antwerp's health had been very poor for several

³⁶Mrs. Dillon was the daughter of Hiram Price, one of Davenport's most prominent citizens in its earlier days.

³⁷A letter courteously sent me by Lt. Col. Charles E. Lewis, acting librarian at the Army War College, Washington.

³⁸This citation came to me by way of the very kindly helpfulness of Miss Patricia Traylor of Keokuk.

years before his death, and he spent most of his time at his daughter's residence upon sick leave.

His numerous friends and acquaintances in this city and throughout the state will regret to hear of his death.

According to Livingston there had been eight children born to General and Mrs. Van Antwerp, but only three were living ("five died early"). The quotation from the *Daily Constitution* refers to Mrs. Clagett. In 1850 the older sister Kate married George H. Williams, another New Yorker, who stayed for a while in Iowa.

DESTINY TANGLES LADS' FUTURES

George H. Williams was born in New Lebanon, Columbia county, New York, March 26, 1823, the son of Taber D. Williams and Lydia Goodrich Williams, the fathers of both of whom were Revolutionary soldiers. Living nearby was a silent, serious-minded, homely boy, frail of body and precocious of mind, seven years old when this Williams baby was born; and none of the neighbors could have guessed that as the tangled threads of destiny were to be spun, it would come about fifty-four years later that the older boy would miss the presidency of the United States by the narrowest margin in the history of that office and that in the partisan maneuvers that engineered him to defeat the Williams baby would have a commanding part. The older lad's name was Samuel J. Tilden.

When young George was about four years old the Williams family moved to Onondaga county, New York, finally to the village of Pompey in that county, where Taber Williams worked at his trade as a shoemaker. Young George went to the Pompey academy, rather a famous institution in its day. Then he read law in the office of Daniel Gott and was admitted to the bar in 1844.³⁹ That summer he headed west with a few law books which had been given him and with some borrowed

³⁹See *The Grand Old Man of Oregon—The Life of George H. Williams*, by Oscar C. Christensen, University of Oregon Thesis, Series No. 5, a copy of which I had the privilege of reading through the courtesy of Miss Josephine Baumgartner of the Oregon State Library at Salem. See also the *Biographical Dictionary of Congress*, p. 1704, and the *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. 20, p. 262 and the *Encyclopedia of American Biography*, Vol. 4, p. 21.

money of issue of New York banks. Coming down the Ohio river, he left the boat at Cincinnati and tried to buy some food. His New York money was no good to the merchant, but he directed Williams to a broker who would exchange it for some type of acceptable currency. Someone had seen the small roll of paper, and when young Williams got to the place of exchange, he found that his pocket had been picked and he was without funds. He worked his way on the river boats on the Ohio and the Mississippi to Fort Madison in the Territory of Iowa. Leaving the boat there, he found the office of a justice of the peace named Solomon, of whom he got permission to leave his books for a while. His next stop was at the law office of Daniel F. Miller, to whom Williams presented his case and persuaded Miller to give him credit for room and board until he could earn some money. The next day Justice Solomon had a defendant before him who had no lawyer and Solomon sent out to find Williams to take the case. Miller appeared on the other side and Williams beat him. Miller was so impressed that he invited young Williams into partnership.⁴⁰

AN EARLY IOWA DISTRICT JUDGE

In 1846, when the official machinery of the new state of Iowa was set up, Williams was elected one of the first district judges, in which office he served one term of six years, refusing reelection. In 1847 he was a delegate to a meeting of an internal improvement association in Chicago, where he met Lincoln. That same year he bought the *Lee County Democrat* in Fort Madison.⁴¹ He continued his practice of law in Fort Madison, where he and Kate Van Antwerp established their home in 1850.

⁴⁰Daniel F. Miller was born in Maryland October 14, 1814. He came to Iowa in 1839 and settled in Fort Madison, where he quickly became a leader at the bar and in political life, known until his death in 1895 as one of the best trial lawyers in the state. He was elected to congress in 1848.

The *Biographical Dictionary of Congress*, p. 1312. Stiles, *op. cit.* p. 120.

⁴¹The *Lee County Democrat* was established as the *Fort Madison Courier* in July 1841 by R. W. Albright. In December of that year an interest was purchased by William E. Mason, a nephew of former Chief Justice Charles Mason, and the name changed to the *Lee County Democrat*. Williams bought it in 1847 and changed the name to the *Iowa Statesman*. He soon sold it however, and it became the *Plain Dealer*, as which it continued until 1897.—ANNALS OF IOWA, Vol. XVI, p. 192.

In 1852 he was a presidential elector for Iowa on the Pierce ticket, and the next year President Pierce, upon the recommendation of Stephen A. Douglas and Senators Dodge and Jones of Iowa, appointed him Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Oregon. Oregon was a long ways off and it took a long time to get there; but Kate Van Antwerp Williams had a good deal of the blood of her adventurous forebears, and she persuaded him to go. They made the trip by way of Panama, and settled in Salem, the capital, where they lived five years, or until he resigned in 1858.⁴²

Williams found some numerous earlier residents of Iowa in Oregon who had taken the trail before him. There were General Morton M. MacCarver, who with his two brothers-in-law, Simpson S. White and Amzi Doolittle, was the founder of Burlington in 1833.⁴³ MacCarver went to Oregon in 1842 and in 1844 was a member of the first legislative commission out there. In 1848 he moved south to the gold fields of California and helped lay out the city of Sacramento and was a member of the first constitutional convention of California. He returned to Oregon and later helped plan the city of Tacoma. He was a brother-in-law of Berryman Jennings, the first school teacher in Iowa, at the forgotten settlement of Nashville, near Keokuk who also took the Oregon trail. Samuel R. Thurston, a native of Maine and a Bowdoin graduate, had lived in Burlington for four years before he went to Oregon in 1849. He became that territory's first delegate in the congress. Delazon Smith, a native of New Boston, Chenango Co., New York, and a graduate of Oberlin, a lawyer and a newspaper man, came to Iowa in 1846 and entered the ministry. He went to Oregon in 1852, edited the *Oregon Democrat* and became one of the first United States senators from that state. W. W. Chapman, a Virginian, who came to Burlington in 1835, was made the first delegate from the Territory of Iowa to the congress in 1838. In 1847 he

⁴²Christensen, *op. cit.*

⁴³MacCarver was appointed Commissary General of the Territory by Governor Lucas in 1838.—ANNALS OF IOWA, Vol. VII, p. 554.

developed the frontier fever and started for Oregon. He was one of the founders of the *Portland Oregonian*, still a powerful organ on the west coast.⁴⁴

Williams was active in the agitation leading to statehood for Oregon and he was a member of the constitutional convention of 1857. The impact of the slavery problem was having an influence upon him and he was counted among the members of the convention who voted for the provision in the new constitution that prohibited slavery in the state. Upon his resignation as chief justice he moved to Portland, where he formed a partnership with A. C. Gibbs. He was a candidate as one of the first senators from the new state, but Delazon Smith beat him in the legislative vote. He supported Douglas in 1860; but by 1862 he was with the new Union party and in 1864 he was elected to the senate as a Republican.

SECOND MARRIAGE BROUGHT COMPLEXITIES

In July of 1864 Kate Van Antwerp Williams died.⁴⁵ In 1867 he married in Portland Mrs. Kate Hughes George, daughter of Ross B. Hughes of Keokuk,⁴⁶ and then his

⁴⁴The lure of Oregon took considerable hold on the adventurous souls who had got as far west as Iowa in the early 1840's. In April 1843 in Bloomington (Muscatine) the Oregon Emmigration Society was organized to promote travel to the far west. It is interesting to note also that the first attempt to set up law in the region where no political organization had yet been constituted, was undertaken by a volunteer body of early settlers at Champoeg, near Salem, May 12, 1843, meeting in a barn attached to a Methodist Mission settlement. A committee of nine was appointed to draft a plan and report at an adjourned meeting July 5th. The result was a series of resolutions, one of which provided that "the laws of Iowa Territory shall be the law of this territory in civil, military and criminal cases." No one knows why Iowa laws were selected, unless it happened that one of the group had a copy of the Laws of the First Territorial Legislature printed by Bussell and Reeves of Dubuque, which the resolutions specifically named.—Prof. F. I. Herriott in the ANNALS OF IOWA, Vol. VI, p. 455 ff.

⁴⁵Mrs. Williams had followed in her mother's footsteps in her interest in the Mt. Vernon movement; she was vice regent for Oregon, as her mother was for Iowa.

⁴⁶The following notation from *Yesterday's Reminiscences of Long Ago*, by Virginia Wilcox Ivins, a Keokuk book, is sent me by Miss Patricia Traylor of that city.

"There is an old, rambling frame house at the corner of First and Bank streets where once lived one of the earliest settlers in Keokuk, his wife and two beautiful daughters, Major Ross B. Hughes, one of the writer's earliest friends. He came from southern Illinois to Keokuk absolutely penniless, not having even the wherewithal to bring his family. He found employment with Dr. Galland, and as he was an energetic and pleasant gentleman, it was not long before he was on the high road to wealth. As prosperity came, he found it necessary to employ a secretary, one Doctor Duryea, a shrewd and somewhat unprincipled man. Duryea planned well considered enterprises and Major Hughes carried them out with the net result that he very soon became a man of wealth and a power in the town. He was a large steamboat owner, carried on an immense cooperage plant which supplied the several pork packing houses, and had other large interests. His wife died shortly after the family came to Keokuk, and he married a second time. He gave his daughters every advantage, sent them to Monticello

troubles really began. Williams was not the only man, in public life or out of it, who became possessed of a socially ambitious wife whose aspirations knotted themselves into a complex which drove her to psychotic extremes, for which her husband paid a big price, as the senator from Oregon did. Mrs. Williams is described by Bowers in the *Tragic Era* (p. 256f.) as a "tall, shapely, handsome, brunette, the possessor of a fresh complexion and graceful carriage, who lived in some splendor in a great house on Rhode Island avenue where St. Marks is to stand."

Williams quickly became an influential member of the senate in those hectic days at the end of the Civil war. He was strongly interested in the problems of railroads⁴⁷ and of postroads to the far west. The commanding problems before the congress were those of reconstruction, and the newly constituted Republican threw himself into the ranks of the radicals. He was a member of the special joint committee on reconstruction, of which Senator Grimes of Iowa also was a member. In February of 1867 he introduced the Military Reconstruction bill, which President Johnson vetoed and which was passed over the veto. He prepared the fourteenth amendment, which passed the congress as he framed it. However, he doubted the wisdom of the fifteenth amendment. He introduced the Tenure of Office act, which finally brought impeachment charges against Johnson to a head. He voted yes in the trial of the Johnson impeachment case; in fact, it was he who moved the vote on the three articles of the impeachment on which votes were taken.⁴⁸

seminary and dressed them beautifully, and was frequently heard to assert that they were fitted to become the wives of any of our greatest men. He was not mistaken. The younger daughter, after a series of remarkable experiences, became the wife of Senator George H. Williams, of Oregon, later a federal Judge (sic) and a member of Grant's cabinet. But for the machinations of envious persons Senator Williams would have been appointed Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Mrs. Williams was a very remarkable woman whose history far outruns any romance of fiction. Ross B. Hughes took his wealth and his secretary to St. Louis where they succeeded in losing all he had (he died in 1858), leaving his wife, a most capable and devoted woman to earn her living as best she could."

⁴⁷Bowers in *The Tragic Era*, p. 371, says that Williams' appointment as Attorney General was a triumph for the westward pushing railroad interests in their land manipulations. Nevins (op. cit., p. 592 ff.) says that Williams was attorney for the Alaska Improvement Company, in which Grant was a stockholder.

⁴⁸Christensen—op. cit.—Also, James G. Blaine, *Twenty Years in Congress*. Volume II, p. 187 ff. See also *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. XX, p. 262.

At the end of his term in 1871 the Oregon legislature had become Democratic and he failed of reelection. While still in the senate Grant had appointed him one of the Joint High Commission to meet with Great Britain's commissioners to arbitrate our Civil war claims against that country, as well as the altercation for the northwest boundary.⁴⁹ In April of 1871 a month after the expiration of his term as senator, Grant appointed him Attorney General in succession to Amos T. Ackerman of Georgia; and he was immediately confirmed by the senate.

Those were the days of cynicism and of corruption in high places in Washington; a confused president did not know what was going on, nor that he was surrounded by a mass of men and women both in office and out who knew quite clearly what they wanted. The government of the United States reached its low mark in that post-war decade. As the fog clears away, there remains no evidence that Williams was in any way financially corrupt or that he profited personally in the welter of dirty business that included many another man in high place. The storm that had driven Vice-President Colfax to private life and that left numerous others badly smeared, broke around Williams when in December 1873 Grant appointed him Chief Justice of The Supreme Court in succession to Salmon P. Chase, who had died in March of that year. Then the tempest blew. All of the criticism that had been directed against the Grant administration for two years and more was centered on Williams. Numerous influential papers took up the cudgels against him. Items in the administration of his office at Attorney General were dug up and brushed off. A good deal was made of the expensive new home on Rhode Island avenue the Williams family had acquired in Washington, at an expense they said far beyond Williams' resources. The Attorney General's lady was riding around in a new landaulet with a fine team of horses, which, so they said, had been bought with funds allocated to his department.

⁴⁹Nevins (op. cit.) discusses the appointment and work of this commission at length. The commissioners were Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish; Williams; E. Rockwood Hoar of Massachusetts; Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Samuel Nelson of New York; Robert C. Schenck of Ohio.

Allan Nevins in his book *Hamilton Fish* (p. 662ff) says:

"A storm instantly arose in the Senate, now just convened, and the press . . . His wife was socially ambitious, and they had been living far beyond his meagre salary. Mrs. Williams had given orders for the purchase of an expensive carriage and liveries for two servants and it was said that the expenses for those had been paid out of the contingent fund of the Department of Justice; as were also the wages of the two men who were employed as private servants. It was also alleged that Judge Williams had mingled his accounts with those of the department, and that during the panic, when the banks were not paying private checks, it was said that the money for meeting the expenses of his house had been paid from the funds of the government; that it was understood it had all been made good, but that this appropriation of government funds was unjustifiable."

Here was where Williams paid for that second marriage. Every woman in Washington who resented Mrs. Williams' arrogance busied herself in the fracas. Mrs. Williams, until recently a senator's wife, when her husband became Attorney General, announced royally that senators' wives must call upon her first; and the senators' wives did not let their husbands forget that insult. She had taken a dislike to Senator Roscoe Conkling of New York, who was as arrogant as she was; and she spread wild stories about him.⁵⁰ Then Mrs. Grant's influence became apparent. Mrs. Williams was openly snubbed by the president's wife at a White House function. The former's gossiping tongue had said things that reached Mrs. Grant; and it developed later that several blackmailing letters had been sent to the president and his family and cabinet members, written by a chap named Whitley, who was an agent of Mrs. Williams.⁵¹

⁵⁰The most of those stories were probably true. She charged Conkling with using "the secret service money of her husband's department to gain his recent reelection" to the senate from New York. Mrs. Kate Chase Sprague, the handsome and haughty and ambitious daughter of the late chief justice, was a rival of Mrs. Williams for social leadership in Washington; and the Conkling-Mrs. Sprague scandal was already juicy gossip and ready ammunition for Mrs. Williams. Nevins, (op. cit., p. 662 ff.)

⁵¹Both Nevins and Bowers.

The storm became so fierce that Williams asked to have the nomination withdrawn, to which the president finally consented. A committee of the house of representatives made an investigation of the Attorney General's department and completely vindicated Williams of any financial dishonesty;⁵² but like the most of the others, including Fish, the Secretary of State, of whom Nevins is so laudatory, he was silent and acquiescent in the whole unpleasant mess that smelled so bad in Washington.

Williams resigned as Attorney General in April 1874 and started the private practice of law in Washington. When the Republicans saw a chance to gain the election of Hayes immediately after the election of 1876, by manipulating the vote of some of the southern states, Williams with William E. Chandler of New Hampshire and General Lew Wallace of *Ben Hur* fame were sent to Florida "to save the state for Hayes." It was saved; and what the neighbors in New Lebanon many years before could not have foreseen came to pass. One of the native sons was a party to a political crime towards another.

WILLIAMS JOURNEYS BACK TO OREGON

In 1881 the Williams family returned to Portland, where the former senator resumed his practice of law and engaged in banking, and of course in politics which was in his blood. Portland seemed to hold nothing against him for what had been said of him during the fury of the preceding decade in Washington. Twenty years after his return he was made mayor of Portland; and along about that time someone hailed him as "The Grand Old Man of Oregon," an epithet that stuck to him the rest of his life. Wilmette University and Pacific University decorated him with hoods as a Doctor of Laws, and numerous other honors fell his way from his neighbors in his old age.

⁵²Christensen (op. cit.). Nevins interprets the investigation differently. (p. 820) After all, in all of this stormy period Williams came out much better than W. W. Belknap of Iowa, Secretary of War in Grant's cabinet. He also had a wife of great social aspirations, who interfered in the affairs of her husband's office for compensation. Belknap was impeached, but he saved himself from a verdict of guilty by resigning and thus taking the trial of impeachment out of the jurisdiction of the senate.

It is said of him⁵³ in his prime that "he was rather striking in appearance, over six feet in height, of large frame and long limbs. His shoulders were broad and square but a little bent. He had a fair complexion, but his hair was black. He wore sideburns and a moustache. His forehead was high and broad, his jaws heavy. He would be picked out in a crowd as a man of distinction. His countenance wore a surly look, which however was only skin deep. His movements were slow and heavy. In conversation he was deliberate and thoughtful, but inclined to reticence."

With the collapse of the prospect of presiding over the supreme court and the subsequent resignation as Attorney General, Mrs. Williams' social status in Washington did not amount to much any more; Bowers, quoting from older sources, says that within two months after Williams had withdrawn his nomination as Chief Justice, "she took to her bed crushed and heart-broken." In the frontier city of Portland there was little opportunity for Mrs. Williams to show off. Her psychiatric exhibitionism must find some other outlet; she turned to spiritualism and rested her weary soul in seances. Once she went through a forty-day fast. She died early in the present century. The senator lived for about a decade after her, among his friends in a city grown greatly larger than he left it to go to Washington or than he found it when he returned in 1881. But Grant was gone, Blaine was gone, Garfield and Fish and Conkling; and Tilden, who also came from New Lebanon was gone; and the most of the others among whom he had moved in the dark colored days of three and four decades past—they were all gone. The pioneers from Iowa were gone. He was about the last leaf on the tree, when he died April 4, 1910. And now he is a forgotten pioneer and politician, who was swallowed up by the times in which he lived.

So it happened that these two New Yorkers added something to the history of Iowa, Van Antwerp in considerable measure, Williams only a little, for he stayed

⁵³Christensen (op. cit.).

but briefly and then moved on to help build another state on the far western coast.

Van Antwerp had inherited a measure of the sturdy, independent, far-seeing, ability of the Dutch race from which he sprang. It led him a-pioneering. With Van Antwerp was a woman of memorable ancestry who left what was accounted the top of civilization a hundred years ago back east to live with him on the raw edges of the frontiers—a woman with the inheritance of the Yates and the Van Ness families in her soul. There was strength in that inheritance and I think it fair to suggest that it sustained Ver Planck Van Antwerp in many an occasion and many a time, when the days were dreary. Ver Planck Van Antwerp just missed being one of the greater figures of Iowa's early history; I submit that what he did achieve was in no small part due to the daughter of the old families of New York.

George Williams became affectionately known as "The Grand Old Man of Oregon"; he would have been a greater man if he had struggled as zealously against the creators of the Tragic Era as he did against the recalcitrant states of the Rebellion. To speculate on what may have happened is an amiable pastime, but I suggest that Kate Van Antwerp Williams died too soon for her husband's best interests. Kate Hughes, who succeeded her, was one of the creators of the Tragic Era, that hectic period of cynicism, scandal, ugly competition, and arrogance, when public corruption was insolent and unashamed; of wild speculation and financial juggling which culminated in the panic of that grisly year 1873, in which George Williams was forced to forego his proud wife's high ambition fixed on the Supreme Court of The United States. She was of the same stripe as the predatory strangers who moved in and upon the war-torn southern states and reduced their people to desperation, or who moved in and upon Washington and turned the offices of government into a grim and dirty kaleidoscope of arrogance. Her father had taught her too deeply that she was "fitted to become the wife of any of our greatest men." She mar-

ried a senator of the United States who was not quite great enough to understand either the political processes in which he was caught or the ambition of a spoiled woman who, "after a series of remarkable experiences," married him for ambition's sake. Napoleon, Kate Williams, Mussolini, Kate Chase Sprague—the record is a long one. Her husband was one of the many in high places who were infected with the fever of the predatory days of "The Bloody Shirt." He was one of the scapegoats for worse men; he paid the price for her sins, as well.

KEPT ON CHOPPING TO THE END

A footnote to articles in the October number of *THE ANNALS* is provided by Bert B. Childs, of the National association of Civil war musicians, who recalls the high tribute by his comrades to the late Hon. Oley Nelson, at the national encampment at Madison, Wis., in 1937. An elaborate pageant was staged to illustrate the going away of Nelson's father in 1861. The father and son both started for the war in the same year, the former going first and the son later. At the 1937 encampment at the same place, two old coaches that had been in the service in 1861 were supplied by the Milwaukee railroad company and placed as near Camp Randall as possible. Then the whole body of the G. A. R. marched to the camp, with a hundred musicians, and the scene was re-enacted of the son bidding his father farewell. The pageant showed the boy "marching down to the train with the soldiers, carrying his father's gun and canteen, and when he turned them over to his father at the steps of the train he told him he would take good care of his mother and chop the wood." Well, Oley kept on chopping good wood for many years.

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