

ANNALS OF IOWA

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

THE MAKING OF SENATORS

United States senators are now elected in each and every state, and in Iowa are placed in nomination by parties in free primary elections. It was not always so. The fact will be recalled that Iowa was not represented in the United States senate during the first two years of statehood. This was due to the fact that the first General Assembly failed to elect. An effort was made to have the senators appointed by the governor, but this maneuver was not deemed wise at the time.

Finally the Second General Assembly elected as Iowa's first senators, George W. Jones and Augustus C. Dodge. As throwing some light on happenings of the times, there is found among authentic papers recently acquired from the private file of Benjamin F. Gue, for the state historical manuscript collection, a letter or signed memorandum, from Territorial Supreme Justice Thomas S. Wilson, of Dubuque, which is herewith published for its significant historical value:

Before the meeting of the session of the 2nd legislature Gen. Jones was appointed surveyor Genl & became a candidate for Senator. At the Dem. Caucus he beat me one vote, & that was the vote of John Evans a member of the house from Scott County. There was at the time of his election not a Democrat in that Co. who was favorable to Jones. My Democratic friends there first made the choice of Adrian Davenport the Sheriff, whose official term was about to expire, who was a warm friend, but he called upon me, saying that if I demanded it he would take the nomination, but he desired to remove to LeClaire in a short time & hoped I would excuse him and let Evans who would support me be the candidate. I replied that I did not wish to interfere with his business & that if we could rely upon Evans let him be nominated. He came to me with the assurance of Evans that I could thoroughly rely on him. But he proved traitor, voted for Jones & immediately after the adjournment of the legislature was appointed by Jones Clerk in the Sur. Genl's office. Dr. Sales a member from

Jones County did the same. He betrayed (violated) the promises which he made before his election & after the adjournment was appointed Register of one of the Land offices. The Democratic member from Clayton Co. was detained at home by the sickness of his family & could not attend the caucus. He would have voted for me. The spring before Congress made an appropriation of \$60,000 for public surveys here & several members of the legislature received profitable contracts.

At the time of the adjournment of the 1st legislature without electing Senators, Gov. Briggs offered to appoint Gen. Dodge & myself U. S. Senators, but I prevented his doing so, under the belief that the Senate would decide that there was no vacancy as no one before had ever held the office. Some time after this the Senate decided that such an appointment was valid. I am glad to give you any information in my power on the subject.

Your friend

T. S. WILSON

I would have answered your letter sooner, but was prevented from doing so by being engaged for over a week in trial of an important law suit. I intended to copy this part of the answer, but have not time.

CLAUDE R. COOK THE NEW CURATOR

The Board of Trustees of the Iowa State Department of History & Archives, at the June meeting, elected Claude R. Cook, of Red Oak, Iowa, as acting curator of the department, as the successor of Ora Williams retired. Mr. Cook is a native of Iowa, born on a farm near Kent, in Union county; educated at Kent and Simpson college and has enjoyed a varied editorial experience upon daily newspapers at Creston, Council Bluffs and Des Moines; was admitted to the Des Moines Conference of the M. E. church in 1914, serving as minister at Tabor, Pacific Junction, Gray, Randolph, Coin, Osceola, Carroll, Ottumwa and Marengo; voluntarily located at Red Oak as executive secretary of the Chamber of Commerce in 1944. He is married and has a son, W. R. Cook, Norfolk, Neb., an alumnus of Cornell college, Iowa, and a daughter, Marian E., alumnus of Grinnell college, now studying voice in Julliard School of Music in New York. Mr. Cook comes to the state position well equipped and assumed his duties July 1.

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