

The **P**ALIMPSEST

OCTOBER 1928

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THE EDITOR

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

THE PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

Superintendent

THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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THE PALIMPSEST

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A Convention Stampeded

On the eve of the Republican State Convention in 1875, a lone locomotive raced over the Rock Island railroad from Des Moines to Iowa City. Besides the engineer and fireman, it carried Senator William B. Allison, his private secretary, Joseph Morgan, and Jacob Rich, a veteran Iowa journalist — all of Dubuque, prominent figures in the Republican party, and intimate friends of Samuel J. Kirkwood. If any one had observed this distinguished trio hurrying away from the seat of political activity on a mysterious mission to Iowa City he must have wondered about the devious methods of politicians. Why should they be apparently deserting the central scene at the most strategic moment? Why the imperative haste which required such unusual means of transportation? What was the significance of their destination? Who lived at Iowa City that these political leaders needed to consult? Not a hint

of the expedition appeared in the newspapers. Why was the trip shrouded in such secrecy?

It was generally thought, before the Republican State Convention met at Des Moines in 1875, that James B. Weaver of Bloomfield would be nominated for the office of Governor. Mr. Weaver had a record of distinguished service during the Civil War for which he had been breveted brigadier general. He was a man of unimpeachable character and recognized ability. In politics he had long been a leader in the Republican party, respected alike for his honesty and independence. His support in the campaign of 1875 came principally from the temperance element of the party—a faction which was never strong in Dubuque and other river cities.

Other names were mentioned for the Governorship in the preconvention discussion of available candidates. John Russell, a former Auditor of State, was an avowed rival of General Weaver, while John H. Gear, Robert Smythe, and W. B. Fairfield were known to be in a receptive mood. Earlier in the season Samuel J. Kirkwood had been suggested as a gubernatorial possibility. Indeed, Kirkwood was for many years a name to conjure with in Iowa politics. Having served two terms as Governor with eminent ability during the Civil War, his popularity seemed to grow from year to year. In party councils his advice carried great weight. For a year following his Governorship, before retiring to his farm near Iowa City, he had sat in the United States

Senate, and now eight years later he hoped to be returned for a full term. To accept a third term as Governor might eliminate him from the forthcoming senatorial election. At all events he had publicly announced that he would positively refuse to accept the nomination for Governor, even if it were tendered to him. With Kirkwood out of the race, it was generally supposed that a majority of the delegates to the State convention would support Weaver. On the day before the convention, while the mysterious locomotive was speeding toward Iowa City, his nomination seemed to be assured.

The convention opened on the morning of June 30th. Moore's Opera House in Des Moines was crowded to its full capacity and hundreds of visitors were unable to gain admission. The meeting was called to order by George C. Hiberling, chairman of the State central committee. William Loughridge was chosen temporary chairman and, before taking the chair, gracefully expressed his appreciation of the honor conferred upon him. In a few well-chosen words he referred to the "glorious record of the Republican party", alluded briefly to State and national questions, and closed by impressing upon the convention the necessity of wise action in selecting a candidate for Governor.

At the afternoon session H. O. Pratt, of Floyd County, presided as permanent chairman of the convention. Having been escorted to the chair, Congressman Pratt made an eloquent and impressive

speech which was received with enthusiastic and prolonged applause. He congratulated the Republicans of Iowa upon "this magnificent uprising of intelligent men", gathered from every quarter of the State, "for no holiday parade, but for earnest, thoughtful work in the cause of Republicanism, liberty and good government." He spoke in eulogistic terms of the record the party had made and predicted that even greater progress would be recorded in the future.

Thus the preliminary formalities and customary partisan oratory filled the morning session without relieving the tense and strangely expectant air that pervaded the convention. It was known that the "saloon element" had been canvassing the situation all night, but as yet no plan of thwarting the nomination of General Weaver was apparent.

Not until the middle of the afternoon did the convention reach the principal business of nominating a candidate for Governor. Then the names of General Weaver, John Russell, John H. Gear, Robert Smythe, and W. B. Fairfield were each presented.

After the last speech there was a momentary lull before the balloting began. It was a psychological moment in the political history of Iowa — a moment fraught with opportunity for one faction and with disappointment and defeat for the other.

At this juncture Dr. S. M. Ballard, a member of the Audubon County delegation who had been an early settler of Johnson County, arose at his seat.

The appearance of Mr. Ballard, "an aged man nearer seven than six feet tall, with a full white beard reaching to his waist", attracted immediate attention. For a moment he stood there, a veritable representative of the prophets of old. And then, in tones that penetrated to every corner of the theater, he pronounced the name of Samuel J. Kirkwood as a candidate for the office of Governor.

Throwing the name of Kirkwood into that convention was "like casting a lighted torch into a basin of gasoline — it set it aflame with enthusiasm." Instantly the whole assembly was in a commotion. The Dubuque County delegation, which was seated on the stage, was apparently the most excited of all. A hurried consultation was held. Then one of the Dubuque delegates walked down to the front of the stage and, "leaning over the foot-lights and pointing his hand at the Audubon County delegation, which sat in the parquette not far from the stage," demanded to know by what authority the name of Mr. Kirkwood was presented. Again Dr. Ballard arose and "in a voice of peculiar power and magnetism" he answered unequivocally: "By the authority of the great Republican party of the State of Iowa." Had he added the memorable words of Ethan Allen at Ticonderoga, the scene would not have been more dramatic or the excitement more intense. The vociferous applause lasted several minutes.

Amid the tumult of cheers, "Honest John Russell" arose and, "with the Scotch accent peculiar to

the man", declared that although his name had been presented to the convention, he would not be a candidate in opposition to the great War Governor, whom he was proud to esteem so highly that he preferred him for Governor above any and all other men. "My personal interests and ambitions", he said, "are nothing compared with the interests of my party. So I withdraw my name and second the motion of the gentleman from Audubon as evincing the will and wish of the great body of the Republicans of the State."

Mr. Gear likewise withdrew from the race, saying: "I most cordially second the motion to nominate the old War Governor, who sent seventy-five thousand of our Iowa boys in blue cheering to the front to help so potentially in subduing the rebellion, and give to Iowa a war record second to no other State in the Union." The brief speeches by the retiring candidates were delivered with fire and were followed by such tumultuous cheers as were never heard before in any political gathering in the State.

After the applause had subsided, Senator Frank T. Campbell had the temerity to inquire whether the friends of Mr. Kirkwood on the floor of the convention had not received word from him saying that he would not be a candidate. This was met by cries of "Don't care if they have" and "It don't make any difference".

Prompted by the prevailing enthusiasm, Dr. Ballard moved to nominate Governor Kirkwood by

acclamation. This motion met with decided opposition, however, and was withdrawn. A roll call of counties was then taken. Audubon County being near the head of the alphabetic list held a strategic position. Its demonstration in support of Kirkwood was followed by other counties and 268 of the 612 votes were cast for Kirkwood on the first ballot. Two hundred votes went to Weaver, 111 to Smythe, and 33 to Fairfield. Three hundred and seven were necessary for a choice. The convention therefore proceeded to take a formal ballot, but before the tellers could announce the results counties began to change their votes in support of Kirkwood, whereupon Captain John A. T. Hull, one of General Weaver's chief supporters, moved to make the nomination of Governor Kirkwood unanimous. The motion was greeted "with thundering applause" and adopted forthwith.

Rev. I. P. Teter, a member of the convention, moved that the secretary telegraph to Kirkwood asking if he would accept. The motion was met with a storm of protests. "Hon. John Y. Stone arose amid the tumult to say, 'Gov. Kirkwood *must* accept.' This was the signal for such wild applause that Mr. Teter withdrew his motion, saying he would substitute therefor a second to the positive declaration of Senator Stone."

While the convention was still in an uproar because of the unexpected "stampede" many messages were flashing over the telegraph wires from Des

Moines to Iowa City. "Kirkwood nominated for governor first ballot amid most tumultuous applause I ever witnessed", telegraphed James S. Clarkson to George G. Wright, who was then living in Iowa City. "Under no circumstances must he decline." To Kirkwood himself came a telegram signed by John H. Gear, William Larrabee, Ed. Wright, R. S. Finkbine, J. G. Foote, and J. Q. Tufts: "All candidates withdrawn in your favor. You are nominated by acclamation. You must accept. It will come out all right." From Nathaniel B. Baker, Adjutant General during the Civil War, came the friendly assurance, "It could not be helped. It was the only road out. And now, I think it does not hurt you on U. S. Senator." R. S. Finkbine was even more certain on this point, for he was confident that Kirkwood's election as Governor would give him "a hold on the party for the Senatorship, which neither *Hell* — nor *Harlan* could defeat."

Although he had apparently indicated to the secret emissaries of the locomotive expedition that he would accept the nomination, Kirkwood was slow in replying to the urgent messages of his friends. "Why in thunder don't you accept? Answer!" was the impatient telegram from Ed. Wright which reached Iowa City at 4:40 in the afternoon. Finally the candidate, with an air of reluctance, wired his consent: "If I must, say yes for me."

J. A. SWISHER

Hungry Indians

"Dec. 11, 1855. This has been a noted day to me. I have seen Indians today, something new", wrote Jane Bicknell in her diary. She was living with her parents and attending school in Cedar Falls at that time. "Mr. Daget came into the school room and sayed there were some Indians in town and we must go and see them, and so we did. The Indians had on blankets." How familiar the sight of Indians with blankets and without was destined to become! Before the spring of 1857 Jane Bicknell would have gone farther with even more alacrity to avoid them.

On September 21, 1856, Ambrose S. Mead "from Buena Vista County" visited at the Bicknell home in Cedar Falls. About the same time Christian Kirchner with his wife and ten children arrived from New York on his way to northwestern Iowa where his two sons, J. A. and Jacob Kirchner, had located claims and erected a log cabin earlier in the season. Mr. Mead and the Kirchners must have told glowing tales of the fertility of the soil and the wonderful opportunities on the frontier, for James Bicknell decided to join them. Having bought the Kirchner claim for two hundred and sixty dollars, he hastily packed his household possessions into a wagon and on September 30th, "Father, Mother, and I" started for the Little Sioux country. There were three

teams in the little caravan of pioneers that moved out across the prairies to face a winter of terrible hardship on the frontier in Clay County.

The next entry in Jane's diary was on Sunday, November 23rd. Meanwhile they had arrived at their destination and found shelter in the Kirchner cabin — as many as twenty people in the one room. The Kirchners had chosen a new homestead across the Little Sioux about a half mile to the north where they erected another cabin. The town of Peterson now includes the site of this place, and the log cabin is still preserved.

Thanksgiving was celebrated with "rice pudding and elk meat for supper." The Kirchners had moved over to their new home, so that the Bicknells were alone for the first time on the last Sunday in November. Yet not entirely alone. "We have been visited by an Indian today," wrote Jane. "He came in without rapping, lit his pipe and commenced smoking. He called water 'meny' and we could not make out what he wanted until he made motions." Though she had not seen any other Indians she suspected that there were more in the neighborhood. "The one that was here had a blanket over his head." From that time on the presence of the Indians and their doings provided a constant refrain in Jane Bicknell's diary.

As soon as the Kirchners were settled across the river, Jacob Kirchner, in company with three other men, started to Cedar Falls for supplies. It was

late in the season to undertake such a trip, and doubtless the party would have gone earlier had it not been for the urgent need of completing the new log cabin. But food was becoming scarce. A new stock had to be obtained if these people were to live through the winter, even though they subsisted upon the barest necessities.

During the first part of December, Mr. Bicknell was busy building a partition in their cabin and making furniture. One day "Father made a lounge", and the next day he "made a chair, horse, and stool." The women cooked and washed and sewed. Jane and Mary Kirchner began "to read the Bible through".

Meanwhile the Indians were becoming more numerous. Following the course of the Little Sioux River, they were migrating slowly southward from Minnesota where game was scarce and the weather growing uncomfortably cold for them in their "tents made of cotton cloth". Scarcely a day passed when the cabins of the settlers were not visited by several hungry Sioux. But the meager provisions were invariably shared with the uninvited guests as though they were really welcome. If the savage instincts of the Indians should be provoked by any sign of hostility, they might not have stopped short of violence in appeasing their anger.

But the settlers were always on guard. When six Indians visited the Bicknell cabin, Gust Kirchner came over "because he thought we would be afraid."

He took the Indians home with him and gave them a loaf of bread and some pumpkins. What a neighborly act — to lure the Indians away at the price of precious food when the supply was rapidly becoming insufficient for the needs of a large family far off on the bleak frontier.

The next day another Indian came, and so did Gust. "They both ate dinner here. The Indian did not stop eating until he had eaten up everything there was on the table and then he smoked and went off." Bicknells were more fortunate than the Meads and Taylors, however, for eight Indians visited them.

December 9th was wash day. "About 10 o'clock the Indians commenced to come. I and mother were afraid and went to Mr. Kirchner's to have some of them come over here, so Gust came. When we got home there were 17 Indians here. We gave them something to eat and they went off and Gust went down in the woods". But three of them returned for supper. About dark Gust reported that fifty Indians were camped down by the river. "Gust, John, Phil, and I went down to see them." What a wash day!

Ironing day was scarcely better, however. "Had 11 Indians here to breakfast", recorded Miss Bicknell. "Father gave one of them his cap." A little later "Mary, Gust, John, Phil, and Mr. Kirchner came over to see how we were getting along with the Indians."

This party of Indians seems to have moved on, for no more were seen for a few days. But on December 15th, another wash day, five stalwart braves appeared at the Bicknell cabin. They were more tractable, however, than the squaw who came the next day. "I helped her take off her blanket", wrote Jane, "and she stayed here a spell and we gave her something to eat and then she did not go and she smelt so that we could not stand it and father went to Kirchner's to have Gust come over."

Gust Kirchner, by the way, had been across the plains to California, and had had more experience with Indians than any of the other neighbors, so he was considered a very able ally to have near. Mere Indian lore would scarcely explain the frequency of his visits to the Bicknell home, however. Perhaps the continual recurrence of his name in Jane's diary offers a more enlightening clue to his neighborly attentions.

On this occasion the resourceful Gust came over, the squaw was given some food to take with her, and then Gust told her "to 'pu-che-kee' which is the Indian for 'go'. Then he put on her bonnet and pinned her blanket around her. Father took her budget and carried it a little ways for her and then put it on her back, and then he came back." In spite of the obvious necessity of getting the old woman to move on, Jane adds a glint of pity. "We could hear her cry a great ways, for she was so lame she could scarcely go."

On December 22nd the Bicknells heard that the Indians had taken a pocketbook out of one of Mrs. Taylor's boxes "that had notes in it to the amount of \$700, also all of the flour she had." This was a grave loss. No one could eat the money, but out on the snow-covered prairie the loss of the flour bordered upon tragedy.

Let no one suppose that these settlers had been careless or unmindful of the danger of starvation. That was their omnipresent horror, and all efforts to obtain additional provisions proved fruitless. On December 23rd Jacob Kirchner returned from his trip to Cedar Falls for supplies. The party had reached the settlement on Lizard Creek west of the Des Moines River, where they had to leave their teams and wagons and proceed on foot. "They traveled night and day, lived three days with nothing to eat but raw fresh meat. There were three of them, and one of the men came very near freezing". Jake Kirchner froze his feet so badly that he was crippled for months, and was in such pain he could not sleep. The diary describes the home treatment vividly. "Mr. Kirchner was here to get some spirits of turpentine to put on Jake's feet where he froze them. He thinks his toe nails will all come off." Not till January 28th was he able to go across to the Bicknell cabin, when his feet were "almost well".

On the day following Jake's return, Gust Kirchner and six men set out to retrieve the abandoned supplies back on the Lizard. Taking a team of horses

and a sled loaded with hay and two yoke of oxen to break the way through, they made a desperate effort. But in the intense cold, with snow four feet deep on the level and far deeper in places, little progress could be made across the trackless waste. On January 1, 1857, the party returned, unable to secure the much-needed food. Hope of living through the winter well-nigh vanished.

Meanwhile, "Mr. Williams who lives 8 miles down the river was here after some flour; he says they have had nothing to eat but potatoes for 3 weeks. Teams have gone out for provisions, but the snow is so deep that they can not get in. We let him have 16 lbs. of flour."

H. H. Waterman's family, south of these settlers, was reported to have "no bread stuff at all", while it was said that "Mrs. Mead will not let her children have as much as they want to eat." E. Weaver and the Gillett brothers, a few miles up the river, were living on beef and frozen turnips. No wonder Jane's diary proclaims, "We are sure afraid we shall all starve to death."

For some weeks during January and February, there had been a respite from the fear of Indian visits, but on February 13th news came that a band was at Waterman's cabin. The Indians had made serious inroads on the settlers' provisions at the beginning of the winter. The small remnant of supplies could not last long against their insatiable appetites. Yet the white people dared not refuse to

share their food. "Father did not know what to do. He went over to see what Mr. Kirchner thought best to do. They thought it best for us to move over there, so we did. Mr. K., Gust, Mary, Jake, John and Phil came over and helped us, and in about two hours we were over there. There were 20 of us, all in their house together."

This hasty departure precluded taking all of their valuables or even the kitchen utensils and furniture, but the Bicknells knew how to bury flour and other provisions so that not even Indians could find them. A week later, when they considered it safe to return to their own cabin, they found the "partition torn down, tea-kettle gone," and the spider, the carpet, and the spinning wheel were also missing. Curiosity or vandalism, certainly not the desire to spin, must have prompted them to take "mother's wheel"!

In the meantime, Gust, Jake, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Shoots went down to Waterman's to see if the Indians had hurt him. There they discovered he had been "pounded with a stick of wood" and his wife's shawl stolen. Apparently the hungry savages were in no mood to tolerate resistance. On the morning of February 15th they "searched our house and Mr. K's. Took all the flour and Indian meal they had." Here the foresight of these pioneers saved them, for Jane adds in her diary, "We let Mr. K. have three hundred pounds that we had buried down cellar."

Mrs. Charlotte Kirchner Butler, who lives in

Peterson, was then a child of ten years, upon whose mind this terrible day's events were indelibly impressed. She tells that the family had agreed to be friendly with the Indians and to yield to their demands, unless they attempted to take the women or girls — then they would fight to the death. Accordingly, when they looked out, on the morning of February 15th and saw nine horribly painted Sioux warriors approaching, it was the signal for every one to be brave and calm.

Gust Kirchner, knowing most about Indian ways, opened the cabin door and stepped out to greet them. The beloved shepherd dog, who hated Indians, dashed out with him and just as the door closed a shot was heard.

"Oh, father," cried young John Kirchner, "they have shot Gust." But before this horror could be grasped, the door opened, and in walked Gust, smiling and cheerful, escorting the unwelcome guests. It was the poor dog whose life had been taken and his carcass later made a wonderful "stew" in the Indian camp!

"How in the world my brother Augustin could have such self-control, I never could understand, but he went out smiling and came back in smiling", declares Mrs. Butler.

One of the Kirchner oxen had died just before this, and the Indians, cutting huge chunks from the dead animal, made known that they wished the meat cooked at once. The young women very quickly had

the kettles boiling, but the Indians, from greed or preference, did not wait for the beef to be cooked. Snatching a piece from the kettle, still oozing blood, they cut it into chunks and, sitting down at the table where there was a bowl of sorghum, they dipped the bloody meat into the molasses and proceeded to gorge themselves.

During all these proceedings, Mrs. Kirchner had sat quietly watching the girls do the work. Her sitting still was mainly due to the fact that she had hastily hidden the one precious kitten, pet of the family, beneath her apron, fearing that the cat would share the fate of the dog. But, seeing things now moving satisfactorily, she arose, put the kitten gently beneath the counterpane of the bed, and began to assist in serving the raw meat. The whole family was in fear of the Indians, but probably the greatest apprehension in the mind of every one, at the time, was that the kitten might move! Instinct, however, or feline cunning, caused it to lie still, and its prized life was saved, to the great joy of the children.

The Indians helped themselves to many things — food and articles of clothing — until finally Mrs. Kirchner, seeing the choicest of her pillow slips used for bags and her children's clothing being taken, grabbed the articles from the Indians and said in German, "I want that for my papoose." Strange to say, this action was not resented and the band soon left, having harmed no one. The Kirchner family

always attributed their immunity from serious harm at the hands of the Sioux to the fact that they spoke German all the time. The Sioux were friendly to the French traders and may have mistaken the German language for French.

For several days the Indians remained in the neighborhood. They killed a cow and devoured most of the meat. At intervals they returned to the Kirchner cabin and searched for food and ammunition, but without finding the supplies and weapons hidden in a snow-drift.

When they broke camp and moved east along the river toward the Mead and Taylor cabin, Gust and Jacob Kirchner followed them, hoping to be of some aid to these families, since Mr. Mead was not at home. But the Indians threatened them with guns and knives. They took Jake's pistol away from him, so that the two men could do nothing but watch while the Indians searched the house, took what they wanted, drove off the ponies, and killed two oxen, a dog, and the chickens. The warriors seemed to be growing more violent, for they smashed the furniture, knocked the people about, and finally took Mrs. Taylor and Harriet Mead to their camp and made them stay all night. In the morning, however, they were released and Inkipaduta proceeded up the river with his band of painted warriors, killing live stock and playing havoc in the cabins of the settlers. "They killed all of Mr. Frink's cattle, took everything he had in his house, emptied the feather beds,

and broke out the windows." From Ezrâ Wilcox they stole five horses. Every day they seemed to grow more violent and bloodthirsty.

Evidently Harriet Mead was not overcome by her sojourn with the Indians, however, for on February 25th Jane Bicknell "went over to Mr. K's with Mary and Harriet. Stayed all day and learned how to make wheel collars." What a blessing, that after all of the horrors they had experienced these girls could compose their nerves, and spend a day tatting wheels for collars!

By the first of March, the settlers along the Little Sioux were so incensed against the Indians that E. Weaver and the Gillett brothers started for Fort Dodge "to get men to come in and take the Indians." They lost their way on the prairie, however, and finally reached a settlement on the Coon River where they mustered about twenty men and started north. At Kirchner's they wanted "Gust and Jake to go with them up to Spirit Lake in pursuit of the Indians." After going as far as Spencer, without seeing any Indians, the company turned homeward on March 8th, the very day of the massacre at Spirit Lake. "How thankful we ought to feel that our lives were so miraculously spared from the band of armed savages", wrote Jane in her diary when she heard of the awful tragedy.

After these harrowing experiences with Indians, hunger, and cold, it would seem that these brave people deserved peace and an early spring. But the

snow was slow in melting. On March 16th, when Jane went up to Mead's, the snow crust broke at almost every step so that she "had a fine time of it." Even after the first of April it was "very cold" and the incessant wind blew "very hard", though the snow was "nearly all gone". Two weeks later the water in the Little Sioux was so high that the boat in which Jake and Gust tried to cross capsized. "They were in nearly an hour" and when they finally reached the Bicknell cabin "they were so cold they could scarcely speak." By April 24th the weather was milder and Jane was busy boiling sap. That day she "made 60 lbs. of sugar."

Apparently all was calm and serene, but on April 25th, when she went over to the neighbors, "Father Kirchner came home and sayed, 'Jane go home. The Indians are up on the Des Moines River and are going to come down to kill us.' " Within two hours the Meads, Kirchners, and Bicknells were on their way to the Coon. On the following afternoon they reached "Stormy Lake" where they were joined by other neighbors and camped for the night. The refugees then numbered thirty-five. At Sac City they paused, and "spies were sent out to see if there were any Indians around." In a few days they were convinced that their hasty flight had been occasioned by a false alarm. Thereupon the families returned to their cabins on the Little Sioux, put in their crops, and raised enough grain and vegetables so that starvation never stared them in the face again.

On October 17, 1857, Jane Bicknell and Gust Kirchner were married. They "went to Fort Dodge with one ox-team" on their honeymoon, "and were gone from home 7 days." Just one month after the wedding they moved onto their own claim of three hundred and twenty acres "and commenced keeping house" in a log cabin twenty-four by sixteen feet. They had "a span of horses, a yoke of oxen, 2 pigs, 3 chickens, one breaking plow, one common plow, a table, chairs, a stove, and 60 yds. of cotton cloth." After all that had happened during her first year on the frontier, who could question Jane's final statement in her diary: "I think we are well situated."

BESSIE L. LYON

Campaigning with Jackson

Horace Boies had twice been elected Governor of Iowa. His reputation both as a party leader and as an effective speaker had spread far beyond the limits of the State. In 1892 he had been almost the only Democrat who actively disputed the presidential candidacy with Grover Cleveland. Further than this, Mr. Boies had received the unanimous and enthusiastic endorsement of his party, and had been tendered the exceptional honor of a third nomination for the Governorship in 1893, despite his formal declination. To wage the campaign for the office of Governor against such a formidable candidate, the Republicans of Iowa selected Frank D. Jackson, of Butler County. From the moment he accepted the nomination the eyes of both friends and foes were anxiously turned upon him to see whether or not the popular young contestant would prove worthy of the Governor's steel.

Mr. Jackson opened his campaign at Sigourney with a carefully prepared speech in which he gave the general outlines of his canvass. The success of this meeting greatly encouraged his friends and put him in good heart. The next meeting was held at

[This contemporary description of the campaign of Frank D. Jackson for the office of Governor of Iowa in 1893 is adapted for THE PALIMPSEST from *The Midland Monthly*, Vol. I, pp. 169-176.
— THE EDITOR]

Columbus Junction, two days later. The accounts of this speech were sent to the daily papers by their local correspondents, who reported it merely as a news item, without regard to political effect. At once the party managers perceived that unless Mr. Jackson's meetings were systematically reported he would soon become isolated from the general movement of the campaign. In short, they decided that, by the aid of the press, Mr. Jackson should speak every day, not merely to those who might gather to hear him, but to the whole people of Iowa. It was to do this work of reporting that I accompanied the candidate throughout his canvass.

Every one in Iowa, from the small boy up to the most wily politician, is fully acquainted with the splendor and magnificence of the political rally — from the time when the speaker, with inspiring yet genial glance, descends from the train and delivers himself into the hands of the anxious committeeman and a coterie of his distinguished fellow-citizens, to the time when the last Roman candle is fired and the last of the out-of-town delegations stick their heads out of the car windows for a final triumphant shout. Still, in many respects the rally is theatrical, and, like the theater, has its "green room" and its "stage secrets".

Mr. Jackson thoroughly believed in the principles he advocated, and his genial disposition made the constant strain upon his good nature and cordiality as light as possible. Nevertheless, it can easily be

imagined that it was with a shrug of the shoulders that he pulled himself together at the call of a station and prepared to go through another "grand rally". To him it meant another thousand or more people to shake his weary hand, on the knuckles of which hard callouses had formed. It meant an interchange of civilities with half a hundred local leaders, each one apt to be jealous of a sign of preference shown another. It meant listening to the same tunes with variations according to the interpretation of each individual brass band. It meant a hundred smiling responses to the oft-repeated facetious compliment concerning "our next Governor". It meant another glee-club struggle with another original campaign song, in a vain attempt to make it keep step with "Marching through Georgia". It meant an hour and a half of impassioned oratory, involving an immense expenditure of vitality and nervous force. It meant another half hour of enthusiastic hand-shaking, with the perspiration oozing from every pore; and, finally, it meant several hours of conversation with local politicians who were loath to leave their guest.

Sometimes there were other features. A grand torchlight procession would be a part of the program, with brass bands, Roman candles, and transparencies as adjuncts. In this Mr. Jackson would be asked to participate by taking a seat in a carriage behind two fractious, plunging horses; while he, as the distinguished guest, was obliged to look calmly

pleased and dignified, although in mortal fear of life and limb. Still, all of this was not without a pleasurable effect upon the chief participant, as the kind assurances of cordial support, the good tidings of expected gains, and the many honors shown him could not fail to arouse his appreciation and gratitude.

The railroad journeys were, perhaps, the most quiet and restful parts of the trip. Even here, however, Fame pursued and claimed her victim! No sooner had Mr. Jackson settled down in the car seat for a short nap, than he was aroused by the conductor who was the advance guard of a number who had heard that Jackson was on the train and who wished to meet him. Perhaps just as he had finished with these visitors a station would be reached where an enthusiastic delegation, headed by the omnipresent brass band, would board the train en route to the place of his next meeting. It would not take them many minutes to ascertain that their favorite candidate was on board, and a general rush for him would take place. After fifteen minutes of handshaking, the band would take up its position as near the candidate as possible, "lift up its voice", and — play.

On other occasions, Mr. Jackson was fortunate in not having his identity become known. He was then subjected to another kind of experience. As the campaign excited great interest, it was apt to be the chief topic of conversation among travellers, and he heard himself discussed with every shade of criti-

cism, from warmest support to bitter denunciation.

On one occasion a travelling man seated opposite, said to his neighbor, "I heard Jackson last night."

"That so? Is he a good speaker?"

"First class, splendid."

"What kind of a looking man is he?"

"He's a fine appearing young man." Then, in a whisper which was, however, plainly audible, he added, pointing to Mr. Jackson, "He looks something like that fellow over there, but he's a good deal better looking man!"

Whereupon the candidate for Governor drew himself into his coat collar and begged us not to call him by name.

At another time we were seated at breakfast in Missouri Valley, having made an early morning run from Sioux City. Two gentlemen were talking across the table, one of them relating, with great gusto, that the engineer had just told him he had received orders that morning from the superintendent to hold the train for a few moments at every station, in order to let Mr. Jackson shake hands with the crowds. "But," the engineer added, "I didn't see anything alive but one old cow all the way down from Sioux City." In justice to Mr. Jackson, however, it must be stated that this was not his expected route, and no one in the various towns knew he was to pass through.

There were other incidents of travel, such as a locomotive ride from Keosauqua to Mt. Zion, where

we raced with an excited horse which ran along the track for about a mile, while Mr. Jackson and I held on to the swaying engine for dear life, not knowing how disastrous the outcome of the race might prove to be. There were also several cross-country rides, on one of which the driver, whether because he was over-fond of Mr. Jackson's company, or because the presence of a real live candidate for Governor had turned his head, drove two tired men six miles out of the way, making our trip about twenty-four miles, the greater part of which was traversed in darkness.

Toward the end of the campaign the work became very fatiguing, and, to give some idea of the amount of labor involved, let the reader accompany us for a few of those last days. Leaving Sioux City between four and five o'clock in the morning, we went to Council Bluffs. After a stop of two or three hours we proceeded to Avoca, where a rousing meeting was held. Returning to Council Bluffs for supper, Mr. Jackson addressed a large audience in the evening. The next day we reached Glenwood at about one p. m., and there he spoke at a two-o'clock meeting. After concluding this speech he rested for a short time and was then whisked away for a ten-mile drive to Malvern. Wrapt in deep thought and three overcoats, with my soft hat drawn over his eyes, with all the blankets around him, and only the tip of his nose and the end of his cigar visible, our candidate made the trip in safety and almost with comfort.

We reached Malvern at five o'clock, where an audience of several hundred was patiently waiting. The candidate spoke for about half an hour and then took the train for Red Oak. Here there was an immense "rally". Colonel Joseph H. Sweney addressed a large overflow meeting while Mr. Jackson spoke at the opera house. They afterward exchanged places, and Mr. Jackson made his fourth speech that day!

Some days of this campaign fairly equaled the famous trips made by Governor William McKinley in Ohio. Indeed, they were much more fatiguing, for while the Ohio man rode at ease in a special train, the Iowan was subjected to all the inconveniences of travel in crowded day coaches. In all, Mr. Jackson made sixty-four speeches in fifty-seven different counties. He spoke in every county in the first and second districts, while along the main railroad lines, hardly a county seat was missed.

Perhaps the largest meeting of the campaign was held at Bedford in Taylor County. We reached that place about eight o'clock in the evening, having driven nine miles across country. As we approached the town, from a distance, the sky looked as though an immense conflagration was taking place. An extensive torchlight procession met the nominee at the outskirts of the city. When we reached the main streets we found them alive with people. The meeting was to have been held in the opera house, but as this was filled without making an appreciable differ-

ence in the size of the crowd in the streets, the committeemen urged Mr. Jackson to speak out of doors. He consented and the meeting was held in the courthouse square. From the steps of the court house, where the speaker stood, the spectacle seemed almost weird, as one looked out over the vast crowd, lighted up here and there by the glare of a torch until the dusky forms grew indistinct in the shadows of the trees.

An occurrence at Iowa City had its amusing side. The committee had been misinformed as to the hour of the candidate's arrival, and when the midnight train rolled in, a sub-committee with a fine turnout was in line awaiting the guest. An elderly and dignified gentleman alighted from the train, and was approached with the question: "Is this Mr. Jackson?" The query was as courteously answered in the affirmative. The gentleman addressed was handed into the carriage and without further ado driven to the St. James Hotel, where he registered and was shown to the room that had been assigned to his namesake.

The evening before, a committee of young ladies had gone to the room assigned to Mr. Jackson and elaborately decorated it with flowers, and upon the pillow had placed a horseshoe of roses. When shown to the room, thus decorated, the stranger remarked to the bell-boy that he wished to see the clerk, as there must be some mistake. The clerk asked if his name was Jackson. He said it was.

"Well," said the clerk, "this room has been engaged for you by your Republican friends."

"The devil it has!" said the elderly gentleman. "I'm not Frank Jackson. I'm a travelling man, and I vote in Illinois!"

He was shown to another room.

Early in the campaign Mr. Jackson and I had parted company at De Witt and were to meet at Ellsworth in Hamilton County, where he was to address an afternoon meeting. Arriving at Ellsworth I found Mr. Jackson had not yet made his appearance and, ten minutes before the last train was due, a telegram was received saying that on account of heavy rains he had missed his train and would be unable to fill the appointment. Thinking that there was nothing for me to do, I took the train intending to return to Des Moines. But at Jewell Junction, four miles distant, I met Sidney A. Foster, who was on his way to the northern part of the State, and told him he must get off and make a speech. I then explained that at Ellsworth there were over three thousand people expecting to hear Jackson, who was unable to come, and that Ralph Beaumont, a Populist speaker, was on the ground and if left alone he might do harm. After much urging, Mr. Foster consented to come. We drove over to the picnic grounds and I informed the committee that a speaker had been found who would take Jackson's place.

When Mr. Beaumont heard that he was to have opposition he determined, as was afterward evident,

that the second speaker must speak after nightfall if at all. It was a cold, rainy day, and after Mr. Beaumont had spoken for two hours the crowd, largely Republican, began to show signs of uneasiness, but the speaker was unrelenting. Mr. Foster grew nervous. The president of the meeting hemmed and hawed to attract the speaker's attention, and several impatient Republicans had their watches out to see that he did not run over time. Finally the longed-for moment came, and the anxious committeeman tugged at Beaumont's coat-tails and called "time"; but the speaker calmly turned and announced that according to his own watch he had nine minutes left. After this no further attempt was made to stop the flow of Populist oratory.

But all things have an end; and at last Mr. Foster took the platform. It was raining heavily at the time, and he only intended to pay his respects to the first speaker and sit down; but the crowd had become excited and shouted "Go on," "Go on," so the redoubtable "Sid", catching the inspiration of the moment, spoke for twenty minutes longer, utterly regardless of the rain-drops that spattered upon his wavy hair. Immediately after the speech we drove to Jewell Junction, and were soon en route for Des Moines, feeling conscious that a pretty good day's work had been done.

We entered upon our last week of the campaign with feelings of relief, checking off the meetings as a prisoner might count the last days of his captivity.

Finally the last day arrived, and the last meeting was held. It was at Cedar Rapids, and the Republicans there had determined upon making the meeting "the grandest rally of the campaign". There was no ostentatious display, no fireworks, no multiplicity of bands and glare of torches. But the immense crowd lining the streets for blocks and the band of Civil War veterans who escorted the young candidate to the opera house gave the occasion a dignity to which no amount of campaign pyrotechnics could have added. The wise ones, who always secure the best seats an hour or more in advance, were the only people, save his veteran escort, who heard Mr. Jackson that night, for when the crowd realized that it was time to go into the opera house they found a cordon of policemen barring the entry and turning the people from the door. Every inch of standing room was taken while the stage was occupied by a large body-guard of Union veterans. The old soldiers heartily joined in the war songs with which the meeting was opened, and when Mr. Jackson appeared they fairly went wild with shouts and cheers. The speaker stepped forward amidst an uproar of applause. It may have been the applause of the veterans behind him; it may have been the large audience in front; it may have been the sight of his wife and son, as they smiled encouragement to him from one of the boxes; or it may have been the thought that this was the last of the struggle, that the fight was nearly over, and the victory

all but won — which it was I can not tell — but at any rate Mr. Jackson fairly surpassed himself that evening. I had heard the speech, in substance, fully sixty times before, yet I found myself listening with eager interest to the old sentences which, that night, seemed clothed with a new energy and a new force and meaning.

Thus the campaign ended. On the following night, we waited with intense interest for the verdict of the people of Iowa, to learn whether those weeks of labor and anxiety had “told”, or had gone for naught. When the votes were counted it was found that Mr. Jackson had won by a plurality of more than thirty-two thousand over Governor Boies, the most popular Democrat in Iowa and a talked-of man in the nation.

F. W. MEYERS

Comment by the Editor

POLITICAL TECHNIQUE

This is the political season of the year. Candidates for public office, from the Presidency of the United States to township trustee, are striving to win favor with the sovereign voter. All of the wiles of time-honored practice are employed in the wooing of public opinion. Office seekers state their views on questions of the day as boldly or mildly as their temperament dictates or the exigencies of the campaign seem to warrant. Meanwhile their zealous adherents wax eloquent in behalf of some "vital issue" or try to throw dust in the eyes of the people. If it is no longer the fashion to

march in percessions, an' git up hooraws,
An' tramp thru the mud fer the good o' the cause,

other means of arousing the vox populi are just as effective though somewhat less juvenile. Newspaper comment has grown dignified and often sedate — quite in contrast to the bitter partisanship of earlier sheets. The radio is even now sounding the knell of appeals to class rancor and sectional interests.

Devices of practical politics tend to seek the level of current standards of popular intelligence and integrity. With national maturity has come a certain refinement and subtlety in political behavior. Cam-

paigns are less boisterous and more sincere; there is less platitudinous sophistry and more earnest discussion. Perhaps there is less downright dishonesty, though petty deceit and misrepresentation will probably always prevail. People are influenced far more by emotion than by reason: prejudice is more potent than logic and facts. A century of experience seems to substantiate the opinion of Fisher Ames that "political science will never become accurate in popular states; for in *them* the most salutary truths must be too offensive for currency or influence."

The major features of campaign strategy have always been fairly apparent, but only the political actors themselves know what has happened behind the scenes. Clever maneuvers have been executed by party leaders that even the active politicians knew nothing about: political destinies have been shaped in secret caucuses. The full significance of the action of a party convention is seldom revealed in the official proceedings. It was not until Senator Hoar published his autobiography that the real reason why William B. Allison missed the Presidency in 1888 became generally known. Students of Iowa politics sought in vain for an adequate explanation of Kirkwood's dramatic nomination for Governor in 1875, until Herbert Quick told the inside story in *The Invisible Woman*. And any one who supposes that such tactics are confined to the past should be counted a confirmed optimist.

J. E. B.

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