

THE PALIMPSEST

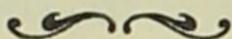
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Three "No Men"

In a democracy, men in places of authority are frequently criticized for being "yes men". They may follow too assiduously the policies outlined by other men, and fail to assert their own personality and leadership. Indeed, the pages of history are replete with shortcomings of "yes men". But in Iowa, as it was one hundred years ago, there is a timely story about three "no men".

On Monday, October 7, 1844, a convention had met in what is now the Old Stone Capitol in Iowa City to prepare a constitution for the future State of Iowa. Plans had been carefully laid; able and courageous men had been selected as delegates. One of the chief issues before the convention had centered around the question of boundaries. And the venerable Robert Lucas, twice elected Governor of Ohio and later appointed Governor of the Territory of Iowa, had sought to solve the question by suggesting boundaries that would extend from the Mississippi River west-

ward along the northern boundary of the State of Missouri to the Missouri River, up that river to the mouth of the Big Sioux River, then northeastward to the junction of the Watonwan and St. Peter's (now the Minnesota) rivers, and then down the St. Peter's to the Mississippi River which was to form the eastern boundary. These boundaries would have given Iowa an area of about 60,000 square miles. After careful deliberation the so-called Lucas boundaries were adopted and the first constitution of Iowa was signed by members of the convention. But the questions of boundaries and statehood were not yet settled.

This constitution contained the provision, Article XIII, Section 6, that it should be submitted to the Congress of the United States and that it should subsequently be ratified or rejected by the people with whatever changes Congress might impose. On March 3, 1845, Congress adopted an act which changed the western boundary of Iowa so that the new State would have included an area only about two-thirds as large as the originally proposed State. Augustus Caesar Dodge, Iowa's Delegate to Congress, who had sponsored the bill for admission and had argued for the larger boundaries, now assumed a defeatist's attitude and urged his constituents to accept the proposals of Congress and permit Iowa to become a State

with the greatly reduced boundaries. He insisted that Iowa would never be able under any circumstances to obtain *one square mile more* of area.

There was much opposition to the disheartening proposal of Congress, in spite of the urgent recommendation of Delegate Dodge. Iowans had envisioned their State as a great agricultural area extending from river to river and northward to embrace part of the rich valley of the Minnesota River. They were unwilling to accept the changes proposed by Congress.

Originally the adoption of a State constitution had been favored by leaders of the Democratic Party and had been generally opposed by members of the Whig Party. But leading members of the Democratic Party now put loyalty to State interests above party affiliations and decided to reject the constitution as amended. Upon the question of accepting statehood with the lesser territorial boundaries, three young Democrats in particular — Enoch W. Eastman, Theodore S. Parvin, and Frederick D. Mills — became active and aggressive "no men".

The eldest of the trio was Enoch W. Eastman, born in Rockingham County, New Hampshire, on April 15, 1810. His grandfather had been a soldier in the Revolutionary army and his father became a lieutenant in the War of 1812. Young

Eastman was thus prepared by inheritance for difficult tasks. His father was not a man of wealth, and Enoch was obliged to rely upon his own resources to a great extent in obtaining an education. As a youth he worked on his father's farm and in a sawmill, and attended the district school. Later he taught school while he was studying law, and in 1840 was admitted to the bar at Concord, New Hampshire.

Before Horace Greeley gave young men the famous admonition, "Go West", young Eastman had already crossed the Mississippi River, arriving at Burlington in 1844. He remained in Burlington until 1847, when he removed to Oskaloosa, where he practiced his profession with renewed success until 1857. At that time he removed to Eldora, where he resided until his death on January 9, 1885.

During his professional career, Eastman occupied a leading position, and was engaged in many important legal cases in the State. In the long-to-be remembered county seat contest between Eldora and Point Pleasant, he was the leading attorney for Eldora, and he was successful in having the county seat retained at Eldora.

During his early career Mr. Eastman was a staunch Democrat. In the late fifties, however, because of his attitude against the extension of

slavery, he left the Democratic Party and became a Republican.

At one time during the Civil War there was talk of a reconstruction plan which would have left New England out of the Union. Mr. Eastman voiced a vigorous protest. In an address at Eldora on February 22, 1863, he said:

"And there is now a scheme on foot in Congress, and in some of the states, to reconstruct the government, connect the west with the south and leave New England out. I have no desire to survive the day when I cannot claim Boston, Lexington and Bunker Hill as a part of my country. No! Come war and poverty, distress and persecution, and death, come what may, I never will cut loose from my own native New England. Where it goes, I will go, where it lies, if fall it must, I will lie, and her people shall be my people, and her God my God."

Eastman aspired always to be a statesman not a politician. He never sought office, but in 1863 he was nominated for the office of Lieutenant Governor, to be the running-mate of William M. Stone, candidate for Governor on the Republican ticket, and was elected by a large majority — leading the State ticket. In 1884 he represented Hardin and Grundy counties in the Senate of the Twentieth General Assembly.

Two incidents stand out preëminently in the life and activities of Mr. Eastman. When the Washington monument was projected in Washington, D. C., the State of Iowa was invited to furnish a stone to be used therein, with an inscription indicative of Iowa culture. It was Enoch W. Eastman who supplied the chosen phrase: "Iowa: the affections of her people, like the rivers of her borders, flow to an inseparable Union." Because of limited space on the stone the phrase was reduced to read: "Iowa. Her affections, like the rivers of her borders, flow to an inseparable Union." Thus the words of Mr. Eastman live in the walls of the Washington Monument and in the minds of thousands of admiring Iowans.

The incident of greatest importance to Iowa had, however, occurred earlier in the career of Mr. Eastman. In 1844 and 1845, when many of his Democratic friends were clamoring for statehood and urging the adoption of the constitution under the federal law which greatly reduced the area of Iowa, Eastman, though a Democrat, had the courage and initiative to become a leader of the "no men". With a few of his colleagues he stumped the Territory urging the people to vote against ratification of the 1844 constitution, in the hope that larger boundaries might be obtained later. It was only because of the aggressiveness

and persistence of these "no men" that the constitution of 1844 was finally rejected.

Another of the "no men" was Frederick D. Mills, also from New England. He was born in Connecticut, graduated at Yale College in 1840, and came to Iowa the following year. He became one of Burlington's ablest lawyers — a partner of J. C. Hall, often pitting his abilities against those of David Rorer and other able attorneys of that day. Soon after the Mexican War began, Mills was given a major's commission in the United States Army and served with the Fifteenth United States Infantry. He was with General Winfield Scott in the march to Mexico City. At the battle of Churubusco, Major Mills led a detachment in pursuit of General Antonio Santa Anna and was slain on August 20, 1847, after his horse had bolted and carried him into the ranks of the Mexican army.

The federal government had his name inscribed on a mural tablet in the chapel of the Military Academy at West Point as one of the heroes of Churubusco, and the Third General Assembly of Iowa recognized his services by naming an Iowa county in his honor.

But Frederick D. Mills may, perhaps, be remembered, not so much because a county was named for him, not for his brief and courageous

military services, not even for the fact that he made the supreme sacrifice, but because as a young man he lived courageously and triumphantly in the service of his beloved Iowa. Seeing the limitations that would be placed upon Iowa if the restricted boundaries proposed by the Congress were accepted, he cut through party lines and set aside political preferment in order that the constitution of 1844 might be defeated and new and more extensive State boundaries might be obtained. In the long run of years, history may decide that in this service Major Mills made his greatest contribution to the development and welfare of Iowa.

The contributions of Theodore S. Parvin to the history and culture of Iowa were numerous and noteworthy. He served as secretary to Governor Robert Lucas, was territorial librarian, United States district attorney, secretary to the territorial council, clerk of the United States District Court, county judge, register of the Iowa land office, librarian at the State University, professor of natural science at the State University, trustee of the State University, curator and secretary of the State Historical Society of Iowa, one of the founders of the Masonic order in Iowa, grand master and grand secretary of the Masonic Grand Lodge, and founder of the Masonic Library at

Cedar Rapids. Among the "men who made Iowa", Theodore S. Parvin certainly played an important rôle.

Parvin was born in Cumberland County, New Jersey, on January 15, 1817. He attended the public schools at Cincinnati, Ohio, and was graduated from Woodworth College in 1833. In 1835 he was given a teaching position in Cincinnati and at the same time studied law — graduating from the Cincinnati Law School in 1837. In 1838 he came to the Territory of Iowa as the private secretary of Governor Robert Lucas and soon thereafter was appointed territorial librarian. In November, 1838, Parvin was admitted to the practice of law by the Supreme Court of the Territory. It is reported that his first criminal case was tried on the day after his admission. Although his client was found guilty, Parvin succeeded in reducing the sentence from "ten years' imprisonment and \$1,000 fine" to "seven days' imprisonment and \$10 fine".

Early in his career, Parvin urged the necessity of establishing an adequate system of common schools for Iowa. In 1841 he was offered the position of Superintendent of Public Instruction, but declined the appointment. He was one of the organizers of the Iowa State Teachers' Association, and was its president in 1867.

His meteorological records for Muscatine and Johnson counties are the only accurate and reliable data of their kind for the early State. He was connected with the State University of Iowa for some sixteen years, during which time he made significant contributions to the field of higher education. Leaving the University in 1870, he devoted the remainder of his years to the promotion of Masonic interests in Iowa.

But, as in the case of Eastman and Mills, the most important service rendered by Mr. Parvin to the State of Iowa, at least the most far-reaching in its consequences, was his aid in defeating the constitution of 1844. If the reader will take any map of Iowa and rule off the western one-third of its territory, he will appreciate how many counties would be lacking had the constitution of 1844 been adopted. It required "stalwart courage", however, to oppose it. The adoption was vigorously urged by the leading political influences of the Territory, sustained and supported by the administration at Washington. There were seats in the United States Senate waiting to be filled when Iowa became a State, other "choice plums" were ready to be distributed, and men who were looking for promotion were in a hurry to see the Territory blossom into a State. Only men of broader vision saw the advantages that would be

gained by a postponement of statehood until larger boundaries could be obtained.

The entire credit for defeating the constitution of 1844 as amended by Congress cannot, of course, be given to any one man nor to any small group of men. It was a democratic movement sponsored and supported by farseeing, unselfish citizens. Among the leaders in this movement were James W. Woods, Shepherd Leffler, Edward Johnstone, and many other men of like character, but a major portion of the credit for defeating the constitution of 1844 and obtaining the larger boundaries may well be given to Enoch W. Eastman, Frederick D. Mills, and Theodore S. Parvin — three "no men".

JACOB A. SWISHER