

# Morton's History of Nebraska

Authentic, Complete

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## CHAPTER VI CONTINUED (22)

The following letter from Acting Governor Cuming to President Pierce, dated December 13, 1854, illustrates the turmoil which these territorial organizers were plunged:

"Dear Sir:  
"I understand that petitions are in circulation asking my removal from the office of governor. These petitions have been prepared and are being distributed by speculators whose fortunes have been marred by the location of the capitol. My only request is that if any charges shall be made I may not be dealt with without the opportunity of answering them.

"You are aware that I have never sought my present position; but being called to it by the interposition of Providence I have not felt at liberty to neglect or postpone the organization of the territory. The protracted illness and unexpected decease of the lamented governor left but a short interval for the decision of the vexed questions connected with that organization. Hence some errors may have been committed; but I especially solicit that my conduct may be subjected to the test of the most rigid scrutiny.

"Great fortunes have been invested in rival points for the capitol, and the exasperation expressed and desperate persecution resorted to by the disappointed are not unnatural, and were not unexpected. I am prepared, however, to prove by letters and certificates that I have refused bribes and relinquished gratuities, and have located the capitol where my pecuniary interests were least considered, at a point which I believed would give satisfaction to the people and stability to the territorial organization.

"My enemies expect to have a governor appointed whom they can influence to veto an act establishing the capitol at that point. I am writing to you, General, with frankness and confidence, and I desire to say that ever since the death of Governor Burt I have hoped that someone might be appointed who would relieve me of the responsibility and risk confronting so many opposite and threatening interests. This has not been the case, and I have no alternative but to meet the storm and abide its results. Should another individual be chosen after those embarrassments have been surmounted their unpopularity incurred I trust that his appointment will not be permitted to be construed in a condemnation of my course, and shall be glad (if so requested) to present to you facts and certificates to overthrow the allegations of my enemies.

"Trusting that your administration may continue to be crowned (as I believe it will) with success and the approval of the people, and that the strength which it has added to the republic may be fortified by the uprightness and efficiency of your officers, I remain

"Very truly and sincerely yours,"

"T. B. CUMING."

On the 9th of January, 1855, another anti-Cuming convention was held at Bellevue which contained at least three delegates from the North Platte country, E. R. Doyle of Fontelle, Dr. B. Y. Shelley of Blackbird Hills, and J. C. Mitchell of Florence. The resolutions of the convention charged, among other things, that the acting governor was a non-resident of the territory, that his apportionment of representation was unjust, and demanded that the census be taken again and that the territory be restricted.

Mr. Mitchell, who was afterwards mollified by appointment as sole commissioner to locate the capitol in Omaha, made "a very interesting speech." He said that there was not population sufficient in Florence or in Burt or Dodge counties to entitle them to designation as an election precinct, and so the governor made it up by causing certificates to be made up and signed by loafers in Council Bluffs. "The officer who took the census in Dodge county enrolled numbers in the grog shops of Council Bluffs. Omaha was supplied in the same way." On the other hand, he said, census officers on the south side of the Platte were required to cut down their returns so that, notwithstanding that this section had the greater population, the majority of the representatives should be from the north side. But this precaution or basis for consistency with which Mr. Mitchell credit Cuming seems inconsistent with the facts as well as with our estimate of Cuming's characteristics and our knowledge of his methods.

According to the Nebraska Press of December 1, 1859, the following somewhat hackneyed story was still going the rounds of the eastern press. It is likely that it is a substantial statement of fact, and in any event it is typically true: "Mr. Purple, formerly conductor of the Western railroad and UNION HIST—Jan 31—Gal 7—Pasto a member of the first Nebraska legislature, tells his experience in western politics as follows: 'Secretary T. B. Cuming said to me one morning: 'Purple, we want a member from Burt county.' So I harnessed up and took nine fellows with me from Iowa, and we started for the woods, and when we thought we had got far enough for Burt county we unpacked our ballot box, and held an election (in Washington county), canvassed the vote, and it was astonishing to observe how great was the unanimity at the first election held in Burt

county.' Purple had every vote and was declared duly elected.

There were four delegates for the office of delegate to congress: Hadley D. Johnson of Council Bluffs—but by proxy of Omaha City—who, we have seen, had gone across the river to Bellevue in 1853, to be elected provisional delegate to congress; Bird B. Chapman, just arrived from Elyria, Ohio, in search of a political career; Napoleon B. Giddings of Savannah, Missouri, who, it is alleged by contemporaries, never even pretended to citizenship in Nebraska, and Joseph Dyson, who strove to create a wave of public sentiment which should carry him into the coveted office by exploiting more advantageous land laws. The abstract of the vote illustrates the early sectional alignment of voters, and also the fact that it did no harm to a candidate in our border counties to hail from Missouri.

To refute the charge that Judge Kinney was ineligible to the office of delegate to Congress because he was not a resident of the territory, the Nebraska City News calls attention to the fact that the organic act required only that a delegate should be a citizen of the United States. The News then makes the following statement as to the residence of Chapman and Giddings when they were candidates for the office in question: "The 'Oldest Inhabitants' of the territory will doubtless recollect that two delegates from this territory had no other qualification. N. B. Giddings, the first delegate, was a citizen of Missouri, and came into the territory only about two weeks before the election, and then brought no other property with him except a carpet-bag. Bird B. Chapman, the second representative of the territory, was at the time of his election a citizen of Elyria, Ohio. He never resided here at all. As far as citizenship here was concerned he had none; he represented us entirely on the strength of being a citizen of the United States."

A contemporaneous account of the "Quincy colony"—the first name of the settlement at Fontenelle—incidentally explains the curiously sold vote of Dodge county for Abner W. Hollister; and at the same time illustrates the isolation of the various early settlements:

"To the credit of the interesting colony their election was carried on without the aid of intoxicating drinks and hence the unanimity that prevailed. The good people of Fontenelle, not having heard of the withdrawal of Mr. Hollister from the canvass, voted for him as a representative of the interest which they are laboring to secure."

Our Puritan editor characterized these colonists as "enlightened and influential men, and above all, men of high moral endowment." Governor Cuming gave this solid fourteen a representation in the legislature of one councilman and two members of the house. It may be doubted that our censor of the Palladium would have made his certificate of character quite so sweeping after two of the three members from Fontenelle had voted to locate the capital at Omaha. He was justified, however, to the extent that J. W. Richardson, the secretary of the colony, and who, we may assume, was representative of its peculiar virtue, voted against Omaha and so against his section.

The editor of the first newspaper printed in Nebraska was temperamentally fitted for feeling that he carried the full weight of responsibility for the task of properly laying the foundations of the new state. This is shown in his account of the coming and the pathetic leaving of the first chief magistrate. The governor and his party arrived at Bellevue on the 6th of October.

"His arrival was unheralded and unostentatious—his dress, equipage, manner, and appearance indicated a disposition to respect those fundamental principles of republican simplicity which constitute the groundwork, strength and beauty of our political and social system. The governor is apparently nearly fifty years of age—a little above the medium height, well proportioned, simple and easy in his manners and expression. His countenance indicates the possession of those peculiar traits of character needed to secure the confidence and respect of the people who come to build up the institutions of liberty, harmony and Christianity upon this virgin soil, for so many ages past held in undisputed possession by its aboriginal owners—the children of the forest.

"The governor was hospitably entertained by I. H. Bennet, esq., of this place. The governor took lodgings at the office of the Indian agency."

The fact that the entertainer of the governor of the commonwealth was the blacksmith of the Omaha agency must have satisfied the editor's exacting democracy.

A meeting of citizens, of which George W. Hollister was chairman and Stephen Decatur secretary, was convened, and Lieut. Hiram P. Downs, Isalah H. Bennet, and Stephen Decatur were appointed a committee to tender the governor a hearty welcome. The committee soon reported that the governor would be pleased to meet his friends on the following Monday. At the second meeting, on Monday, Abner W. Hollister reported that the governor was too ill to attend, whereupon Col. Joseph L. Sharp, "of Iowa," Hiram P. Bennet, also "of Iowa,"

Rev. William Hamilton, and Maj. George Hepner made appropriate speeches.

The same issue of the Palladium gives this information:

"The governor reached Bellevue in an enfeebled condition, . . . his complaint being a derangement of the biliary system. After his arrival his complaint continued to increase in malignancy, until it was thought advisable to call for medical aid. Accordingly a messenger was dispatched to Messrs. McMahon & Williams, of Bluff City, who immediately sent Dr. A. B. Malcolm, an accomplished physician, connected with them in his profession. . . . The governor is now convalescent and it is hoped will soon recover from his prostration."

On the 18th of October the Palladium announces that "the governor was slowly recovering from his prostration until the 12th instant when from improper annoyance from visitors, and perhaps unnecessary exposure of himself while in his enfeebled condition, his fever returned with an aspect sufficiently threatening to make it necessary to send for his physician." The public is assured that "the governor is comfortably situated at the Oteo and Omaha mission." On the 25th of October the Palladium gives an account of the governor's funeral. After the singing of an appropriate hymn Secretary Cuming, "evidently under the deepest emotions of grief," made some appropriate remarks, and he was followed by Chief Justice Ferguson and Rev. William Hamilton, who conducted the services. On the 20th an escort started with the body "for burial at the family residence in South Carolina."

Thus were completed the preliminaries for lodging local civil government in a vast and unexplored region, upon a soil that had been untried as to healthfulness through permanent occupancy by civilized man. And now in the crucible of these conditions the courage and constructive capacity of the pioneers are to be put to test, and though never so severe it is not to find them wanting. Many, or most of them, had surrendered good homes and the associations and endearments of kindred and friends in other communities. The privations of frontier life were voluntarily sought only by men and women who had the courage, spirit and ambition to give up agreeable environments in an old home for the purpose of founding a new one. From the days of the colonies in Virginia, New England and New York, the best types of mankind, physically and mentally, and the strongest individuals of those types—those gifted with self-reliance and inspired by the spirit of self-denial—have penetrated new countries and opened them to the institutions of civilization. The dependent, the habitually gregarious, never strike out from parents, kindred and the comfortable circumstances of settled social life to challenge the hardships of the wilderness. Only that civilization and those breeds of men capable of developing strong individuality and self-reliance can establish and maintain settlements remote from population centers. Self-reliance, self-control and stability among savages are merely sporadic; consequently we find no traces of voluntary migrations for establishing permanent sovereignty and settlements by the Indians who preceded us upon these plains. The strong characteristic of the pioneer is his ambition and zealous, enthusiastic work for tomorrow, his willingness cheerfully to endure hardships in the present that others may enjoy consummate satisfactions in future—satisfactions which he himself may never experience. There were genuine heroes among the openers and testers of the vast crust of soil which stretched from the river to the mountains. They worked tirelessly, with intelligence and directness, to demonstrate the value of its constant productivity. Already the great majority of that peaceful and heroic band who first planted these prairies have folded their tired arms and lain down to everlasting rest. The story of their humble lives, their useful labors, their sacrifices and their achievements has perished with their generation, and will not be told. As their cabins have been replaced by the mansions of followers, and the smoke of their chimneys has faded away into unknown skies, so have they gone from sight and remembrance. But their successes, achieved in that primitive and frugal past, are the foundations of all the industrial and commercial superstructures which our Present proudly enjoys. As we walk the streets of a thronged metropolis we look in wonder and with admiration upon the splendid triumphs of modern architecture. Magnificent palaces of industry, reaching into the clouds and embellished with all the symmetry and grace which skill and taste can evolve, attract and entrance the eye. But we seldom give a moment's thought to the broad and strong foundations laid and hidden deep in the earth, which, with unquaking and stupendous strength, uphold and sustain all. The citizen of this prosperous commonwealth today beholds the superstructure of a state, but very infrequently are the founders and the foundations upon which it is erected ever brought to mind.

TO BE CONTINUED

## A Woman's Work.

Perhaps no one understands—not the wife or mother herself—what a many-sided life the stay-at-home woman's is, says the Philadelphia Bulletin, and how important it is that she should be able to meet all her daily requirements. She who is an at-home woman holds more positions and transacts more business than many a man during her busy day.

She must be a financier, and know to a cent the expenditure of her little household, or that part of the machinery will be out of gear when settling up day arrives. She must be both a judge and jury, capable of settling all the differences in her small household, of adjusting matters, and of maintaining peace.

Often it is necessary she should be a capable designer and dressmaker, able to cut down and fit her own and her husband's old clothes for the little ones. She also has to be a preacher and schoolmistress to her young brood, teaching them manners and religion, watching the development of their young minds.

One of her greatest duties is that of queen and helpmate. She must, if success is to be hers, throw herself heart and soul into her husband's interests—share his fears, divide his responsibilities and multiply his joys.

Knowing that being a wife and mother means all this, there are yet some girls and women who sneer at and pity the ones who have chosen to do this work, which they undertook when they pledged their marriage vows, and to do it to the best of their ability.

Instead of sneering it would be wiser if each would-be bride were to seriously ask herself whether she is capable of carrying out all the various positions which in course of time will probably fall to her lot.

It is true nobility, worthy of the highest admiration when a mistress of a household strives to faithfully and cheerfully discharge all the various and petty tasks which from day to day fall upon her.

No newspapers will ring with her famous acts, with the great work she is doing, but those in her own circle—her husband, children, parents and friends—"will rise up and call her blessed," and "she will rejoice in time to come."

Wives and mothers should ever remember that the best work is not done in the center of a large stage over which rolls the note of public approbation and applause, but in a quiet little place, unseen and unnoticed except by those around us.

Of all the careers, professions, employments and work open to women there is none which gathers such a harvest of love as that of the housewife—be she wife, mother or sister.

## A Remarkable Voice.

Miss Bertha Bird, who has been delighting London and provincial audiences with her marvelously fine voice, has won for herself the reputation of being able to sing the highest top note in the world. Her voice has an extraordinary compass—five Cs, nearly two octaves higher than that of the average soprano, the upper notes moreover being of a pure flute-like timbre quite electrifying in effect. Operatic excerpts which in their original key are beyond the attainment of almost any living singer Miss Bird can sing as written, thus giving them the desired brilliancy and excitement.

Miss Bird is a native of Melbourne, Victoria, and showed remarkable musical ability at an early age. She made her first appearance in the Melbourne town hall on March 11, 1899, and immediately achieved conspicuous success, the critics comparing her voice to Jenny Lind's and to that of her fellow countrywoman, Mme. Melba. She then toured Australia with great success and made her first appearance in England in 1901. Since then Miss Bird has almost invariably been the premier at every entertainment where she has assisted.—Philadelphia Record.

## Rented Houses

The highest percentage of rented houses in the United States is found in Washington, D. C., says the New York Sun. Three-fourths of the private families in that city live in rented homes. Next to the District of Columbia the State with the largest percentage of rented homes is Rhode Island, and after that South Carolina. The Southern States all rank high as renters because of the negroes. The smallest percentage of rented homes is found in North Dakota, South Dakota and Oklahoma.



Willie—Gee! I can't understand dat baby talk dey're givin' me, and here I thought I was going ter learn de game of makin' love.

## Little Points of Table Etiquette.

"I have been invited to Mrs. Brown's to dinner. They are such nice people and I am so afraid I will not act right at the table that I almost hate to go." This is what I heard a girl say the other day, says a writer in the Washington Times. If she had "acted right" every day and at every meal at home, she doubtless would not feel this way. However, perhaps, if she will read carefully what is given here she may manage to get through the dinner without horrifying Mrs. Brown:

The spoon should never be in the cup while drinking, but should be left in the saucer. It should be used in eating fruit salads, small and large fruit, when served with cream, puddings, jellies and preserves.

Apples should be pared, cut into small pieces and eaten with the fingers. Cake is broken into pieces the size of a mouthful and eaten with a fork or with the fingers.

Celery should be eaten with the fingers.

Cheese should first be cut into small pieces, then placed on pieces of bread or cracker and lifted to the mouth with the fingers.

The fingers should be dipped in the water and gently rubbed together, and dried on the napkins, when the finger bowl is passed.

All raw fruit except melons, berries and grapefruit is eaten with the fingers. Canned fruits should be eaten with a spoon.

The knife is always held in the right hand, and is only used for cutting the food. The fork should be used in eating meat, fish, vegetables, ices, melons, salads, oysters and clams.

The knife should never be used to carry the food to the mouth. When in use, napkins are laid on the lap, and when finished are not folded up unless one is the guest for a day or two, but are laid on the table unfolded.

Olives are eaten with the fingers.

When oranges are served in divided sections, sweetened and the seeds removed, they should be eaten with the fork. If served whole, cut into suitable portions.

Pears are eaten with the fork.

Salted nuts are eaten with the fingers.

Soup should be taken from the side of the spoon without noise and without the plate being tipped.

Always eat with the mouth closed and do not take too much in the mouth at a time.

At an informal dinner a second helping is perfectly proper.

## Did He Wipe His Feet?

A Massachusetts man tells a story illustrating the ruling spirit of a Yankee housewife, says the New York Times.

Late one night her husband was awakened by mysterious noises on the lower floor of their house. Jumping out of bed, the husband took his revolver from a drawer and crept noiselessly to the head of the stairs. Presently the wife herself was awakened by a loud report, followed by a mad scurrying of feet. Much agitated she in turn sprang from bed and went to the door, where she met her husband returning from the scene of the disturbance and wearing a very disappointed expression.

"Richard," she stammered, "was it—was it—"

"Yes, it was a burglar."

"Did he—did he—"

"Yes, he got away."

"Oh, I don't care about that," was the wife's rejoinder. "What I want to know is, did he wipe his feet before he started upstairs?"

William Smith, of Arlington, Mass., is considered the oldest newspaper writer in the world. He is at present 98 and continues to employ his pen. He was the veteran among the newspapermen at the World's Press Parliament held in St. Louis in 1905.