

Morton's History of Nebraska

Authentic, Complete

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CHAPTER VII CONTINUED (25)

The new governor had taken the oath of office December 23, 1854, in the city of Washington, before Judge John A. Campbell, associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. He resided at Mt. Vernon, St. Francis county, Arkansas, and his appointment was due to the influence of Senator Sebastian of that state. The Helena (Arkansas) Star in noticing his appointment admitted that he was "not endowed with shining talents," and the governor's Nebraska contemporaries still living are not heard to dissent from the admission. He was doubtless a fair sample of the overplus of the mass of aspirants for place with which southern dispensers of patronage must have been infested, and for whom, in the emergency, such long-distance provision must be made. Since Secretary Cuming, a quasi-resident, was himself an aspirant for the office in question, we may presume that his sympathetic reference—in introducing his successful rival to the legislature—to the carpetbagger's "long and toilsome journey" in reaching Nebraska was not innocent of malicious irony. Izard was scarcely competent to properly perform the duties of his office. His short career gave evidence of this, no less than the implied admission of his friends when they said he "meant well."

Governor Izard was not inclined to miss a chance to distinguish himself as a maker of state papers, so he gave himself the benefit of the doubt whether a second message was called for, and delivered one to the two houses February 27. He had discovered his lack of discretion and sense of propriety in his address of the 20th by saying that "in the discharge of my official duties as your chief executive I shall endeavor to carry out the wishes of the national administration." In his message to the all but sovereign legislature he betrayed his ignorance of the limitations of the province of the executive by expressing regret that he was not "sufficiently familiar with the progress already made to indicate a course of policy for the government of your future action." He recommended in the message the adoption of the code of Iowa for temporary purposes, "as a large portion of our citizens at present are from that state, and are more or less familiar with its system"; that provision be made for all local officers to be elected by the people; that the interest of settlers on lands they had occupied, not yet surveyed under the act of Congress of July 22, 1854, be treated as taxable property; and he followed Acting Governor Cuming in wisely urging general instead of special legislation as far as possible. These first legislators were true to their type in that practical politics was their first care, and house file No. 1, offered January 18, by Robertson of Burt county, was a joint resolution as follows:

"Resolved, That we herewith endorse the principles enunciated in the bill organizing the territories of Kansas and Nebraska; that we rejoice that the geographical line between the northern and southern states has been erased, leaving the people of every state and territory free to control their domestic institutions; and that we commend the firm and patriotic course of the men, without distinction of party, who have aided in establishing the sound constitutional principles of the compromise of 1850, and

"Resolved, furthermore, that we pledge ourselves to oppose any unfair discriminations, such as those of the late Missouri compromise, but to protect and defend the rights of the states and the union of states, and to advance and perpetuate the doctrine of popular sovereignty."

On the 23d of January Mr. Rogers of Douglas county offered in the council a more concise resolution of a like purport, but especially thanking Douglas and Richardson for maintaining the principles of popular sovereignty; but this gave way to the broad resolution. On the 30th Mr. Bradford of Pierce county, from the select committee to which the house resolutions had been referred, made a minority report condemning in strong language the repeal of the Missouri compromise and the acts of the principals in procuring it, and opposing the passage of the resolutions. On the 24th of January they had passed the house on motion of Mr. Poppleton, by a vote of 21 to 4, the four nays being Davis of Douglas, Kempton and Thompson of Cass, and Purple of Burt. On the 1st of February, on motion of Mr. Rogers, they passed the council by a vote of 9 to 4, the nays being Bennet, Bradford, and Cowles of Pierce, and Mitchell of Washington.

The momentous contest of the session was opened by the introduction of bills for the location of the seat of government—one in the council, January 24, by Richardson of Douglas county; and one in the house on the 25th of the same month by Latham of Cass county. A motion by Nuckolls of Cass to insert the words "Plattsmouth, Cass county" in the council bill was carried by a vote of 7 to 6, Bennet, Bradford, and Cowles of Pierce, Brown of Forney, Nuckolls of Cass, Mitchell of Washington, and Sharp of Richardson voting aye—all of the South Platte except Mitchell. All the nays were from the North Platte section. On the 25th a motion by Clark of Dodge county to insert the name of Bellevue was lost, 4 to 9. Richardson, the general of the Omaha

forces, then began dilatory tactics and procured a reference of the bill to the committee on public buildings by a vote of 8 to 5. On the 29th, on motion of Richardson, the house bill, which had passed that body on the 26th, was taken up, and, after Mitchell had moved to insert Plattsmouth, Richardson procured its reference to the committee of the whole as a substitute by a vote of 7 to 6, and then secured postponement for two days. In the meantime Mitchell had seen a sign. The next day Richardson moved to reconsider the postponement for two days, and Mitchell voting with him for the first time, the motion was carried by 7 to 6. Mitchell withdrew his amendment to insert Plattsmouth in place of Omaha City, and then moved to amend so as to locate the capital about two and one-half miles north of Omaha; then Richardson gave notice that on some future day he would introduce a resolution making Mitchell "sole commissioner to locate the capitol buildings" and Mitchell withdrew his last amendment. Richardson's task was now easy, and, in spite of Bennet's dilatory motions, the bill was passed by 7 to 6, the same vote which on the 25th had opposed Nuckoll's motion for Plattsmouth, with Mitchell added.

On the 25th of January Mr. Latham of Cass county introduced house bill No. 8, to locate the seat of government, which passed its second reading. This bill left blanks for the insertion of the town and county, and Kempton's motion to insert Plattsmouth, Cass county, was lost—12 to 13. Wood's motion to insert Brownville also failed, by a vote of 8 to 17. Mr. Poppleton, general of the Omaha forces in the house, was not ready for battle, but his motion to refer the bill to a select committee of three was laid on the table. Forced to fight, he moved the insertion of Omaha; and, after various motions to postpone, the house adjourned until the afternoon. A vote on Poppleton's motion resulted 12 to 13 against Omaha. All the ayes were from the North Platte and all but one—Smith of Washington—voting nay were of the South Platte. Washington county, being a contestant for the capital was naturally against Omaha; but it will be remembered that the committee on privileges and elections had taken care of Arnold in his contest with Benjamin Winchester.

Latham now made another trial for Plattsmouth, losing by a tie vote. The same members who had just voted against Omaha now voted for Plattsmouth, and those who had voted for Omaha, with the speaker added, voted against Plattsmouth. This was Plattsmouth's last chance. It was a distressing case of "so near and yet so far" in both houses. Mr. Poppleton now renewed his motion for Omaha, which was carried by 14 to 11; and on the 26th the bill passed by the same vote. Latham and Kempton of Cass had voted to place the capital beyond the river of which J. Sterling Morton, as late as 1860, in his contest for the annexation of the South Platte section to Kansas, truly said, "It is almost impossible (and thus far has been perfectly so) to either ford, ferry, or bridge this stream." The question, why did these gentlemen from Cass not only vote against their own town and section, and so readily, but also to isolate them from the seat of government and the business metropolis which Omaha was made by their votes, forces upon us its only consistent answer.

The only contemporary comment on this important transaction put in print which, so far as is known, has been preserved, is naturally of sufficient interest to be introduced here. The Palladium of January 31 said:

"The question had been brought up in the council, a bill locating the capital at Plattsmouth had been introduced and passed the second reading, and there was every prospect that it would pass the council and become a law. The same question came up in the house, and upon the motion to insert Plattsmouth 12 were for and 13 against it. The second vote resulted in a tie, and according to the rules of the house, lost. At this stage of the proceedings the Cass county delegates wheeled into the Omaha ranks, and voted to insert Omaha in place of Plattsmouth.

"On the motion to insert Plattsmouth Mr. Latham, the bell-wether of that shameless delegation, led off in a flimsy, pointless harangue in favor of that place, asserting that it was the most central, the most widely known, and more likely to have the great Pacific railway run through it than any other place. There was the center of population, the focus of intelligence. The question to insert Omaha being up all the great reasons why the capital should be located at Plattsmouth vanished into thin air, and Omaha was the place for the capital par excellence. 'Like priest, like people.' If the people are like—or anywhere near it—the representatives which they have sent to the legislature, they don't deserve the capital.

"We respect the people of Omaha for voting for their own pet place. But what interest have the people of Cass county in locating the capital at Omaha City? What good can it do them? We say that the representatives of Cass county are either traitors to their constituents, or the people of that place are too besotted in ignorance to comprehend their own interests. We say the representatives did not do all they might do to carry the vote for their 'first choice place,' but

abandoned it without a struggle. No resistance was offered which would do credit to a school boy fifteen years old."

When Latham deserted his own county for Omaha Mr. Decker of Nebraska City charged him with having sold himself, and Smith of Washington said that the most disgraceful bribery and corruption had been practiced. Poppleton said that the census returns showed that a majority of the people were north of the Platte, while Decker said, "Everyone knows that the south has the largest number of votes, and will admit, if they are honest men, that the capital ought to be given to them."

In the council Nuckolls and Bennet had charged Sharp with the dereliction which had thrown the victory to Omaha, and even Mitchell had the hardihood to join in their assault. There is little risk in saying that Sharp had at the outset sold himself to the Omaha interests, but his honesty was of too unstable a character to stay bought, and before he received his price the Omaha managers became suspicious and repudiated their bargain with him. Sharp therefore lost his own soul nor gained the smallest part of the world.

Our sole chronicler of these untoward events had taken on no western elasticity, and his exotic, puritanic temperament precluded him from the consolation of reflecting that, after all, everything is fair in a western capital war, and what had been done was predestined by circumstances. In the next issue after the tragedy, February 7, the Palladium reads more like special selections from the imprecations of the Hebrew prophets than a western frontier newspaper. It gives more than a column editorial denunciation of Cuming as arch-corruptionist and arch-traitor to his "plain duty." Furthermore, "All the political renegades from every state are by brotherly affection collected around the governor. O. D. Richardson of Michigan, Goodwill of New York, Folsom, ditto, et al., are by his aid foisted upon the people as Nebraska men, and are constituted lawmakers in Nebraska, while small braided knaves of large pretensions are put into the house of representatives for the same reasons and in the same way." Turning on the renegades from Cass he says, "They are looked upon as having sold the interests of their constituents and having put the price into their own pockets. The vote of these unprincipled tools turned the scale against the interest of Plattsmouth—against the interest of the whole region of country on both sides of the Platte river, and effectually crushed the hopes cherished that that place might be favored with the location of the capital." And then becoming specific:

"We repeat: Mr. Singleton (of Richardson county) was offered a donation of Omaha City scrip, imaginatively and nominally valued at \$4,000, and we repeat that the intention of the donors was to corrupt Mr. Singleton and secure his vote against the wishes of his constituents and the dictates of his own conscience. We add, after Mr. Singleton had shown this scrip and refused to vote for Omaha City he was called from his seat in the house of representatives to the room of the acting governor, by Mr. Smith, the private secretary, and that he then and there by request gave up to the donors the intended bribe. All that we have written we stand ready to prove, now, tomorrow, or at any time."

From a superficial view, at least, the Palladium was right, and Plattsmouth, or some other South Platte town, lost the capital through the sheer recreancy of her own representatives. For it is fair to presume that with a persistent vote in the house for Bellevue or Plattsmouth, Mitchell, in the council, could have been held away from Omaha by the same means at least by which he was gained. But perhaps deeper insight would conclude that, considering the susceptibility of members to the persuasive means which Omaha possessed far in excess of any other aspirant for the capital, and had no scruples in using it, was inevitable from the first that she would gain a majority. For example, if Mitchell had stood firm against Omaha, our friend of the Palladium has charged Sharp with sufficient perfidy in securing the presidency of the council to have yielded to Omaha's resulting necessity. For the reason given above we quote again from the Palladium:

"We are called upon by duty and by conscience, to announce in our columns, that the plans of the acting governor, T. B. Cuming, have succeeded, and that they have succeeded by the aid of that same corruption which conceived them, brought them forth, and had the impudence to advocate them. Men have been bought—four thousand dollars was offered to John M. Singleton of Richardson county if he would vote for the capital being located at Omaha City; and it was offered him by the private secretary of acting Governor Cuming. And thank God we have one honest man in the legislature—he refused the bribe, but not until he had exposed the scrip of the Omaha City company for \$4,000. But the capital has been located—located against the wish of the great majority of the people—located for the pecuniary and personal benefit of Tom Cuming and his brother bribers—located at a place without any natural advantages, and one totally barren of anything, save whisky shops and drunken politicians.

A suit asking for 10 million dollars actual damages and 30 million dollars tentative damages has been commenced in the United States circuit court by the Pennsylvania Sugar Refining company against the American Refining company. The action grows out of the failure of Adolph Segal in Philadelphia, whose bankruptcy, involving millions, was one of the financial sensations of last year, coupled, as it was, with the suicide of Frank S. Hipple, president of a Philadelphia trust company. The complaint alleges that the defendants conspired to prevent the plaintiff corporation from engaging in the refining of sugar and actually did succeed in preventing it from operating its plant. Because of this, it is set up, the plaintiff suffered an actual monetary loss of 10 million dollars. The federal statutes permit the plaintiff to sue for treble damages.

The postoffice department does not intend to draw the color line in the matter of white and negro railway mail clerks working together on the same runs. Although an intimation has been given that white clerks in the Middle West are preparing to request the department to effect a change so as to put the negroes on runs which will not bring them in proximity to the whites, it is stated that no such discrimination could or would be made. The particular objection of the white clerks is that the negro and white clerks are obliged to eat and sleep in the same car. At certain terminals there are provided dormitories in public buildings where the clerks may stay if they see fit to do so, but these are open to the negro clerks as well as the whites, and the department does not see wherein it has any province in the matter.

Hints from Boise as to startling land fraud disclosures at Lewiston, Idaho, tend to confirm reports from authentic sources that the government has for a year considered the land frauds in Idaho more gigantic than in either Oregon, Montana or Washington and that it is the intention of the government to sift them to the bottom bringing guilty ones to trial and then bring re-entrance proceedings, after conviction, to secure re-possession of the lands fraudulently secured from the United States. This latter step will mean great financial loss and perhaps absolute ruin to private individuals and banking institutions which are or have been, it is asserted, directly or indirectly connected with the handling or ownership of lands said to have been fraudulently acquired. It is known that the few indictments secured at Moscow at the last two terms of court are but a beginning. There are, it is said, other indictments to follow, which are to bring into the pale of the law men high in all walks of life and whose names so far have not been even suggested. It is asserted that evidence has been secured which when presented in court will prove astonishing to the general public.

Mrs. Russell Sage, through her counsel, Henry W. DeForest, has authorized the following statement in relation to the Sage foundation, a bill incorporating which has been introduced in the legislature: "I have set aside \$10,000,000 for the endowment of this foundation. Its object is the improvement of social and living conditions in the United States. It will be within the scope of such a foundation to investigate and study the causes of adverse social conditions, including ignorance, poverty and vice; to suggest how these conditions can be remedied or ameliorated, and to put in operation any appropriate means to that end. While having its headquarters in New York city, where Mr. Sage and I have lived, and where social problems are most pressing and complicated, partly by reason of its extent and partly because it is the port of entry for about 1,000,000 immigrants a year, the foundation will be national in its scope and in its activities. I have sought to select as my trustees men and women who are familiar with social problems and who can bring to their solution not only zeal and interest, but experience and judgment." The trustees named by Mrs. Sage to carry on the work are: Robert W. DeForest, Cleveland H. Dodge, Daniel C. Gillman, John M. Glenn, Miss Helen Gould, Mrs. William B. Rice and Miss Louisa L. Schuyler, all of whom have had wide experience in philanthropic works.

The best men have one principal word in their vocabulary, the word "ought."



Mrs. Newwed—I baked this pie myself. Won't you have a piece?

Mr. Newwed—No; my insurance policy ran out today, and I won't renew it until tomorrow.

The Most Extraordinary of Millionaires.

"In the matter of spending money on fine raiment, perhaps Miss Guila Morosini, daughter of G. P. Morosini, banker and former partner of Jay Gould, is admittedly the most extravagant of millionaires," says Anna Steese Richardson in Woman's Home Companion. "She confesses that she spends two hundred thousand dollars a year on clothes a year, and her interest in life is divided between her horses and the gowns that match her turn-outs. Miss Morosini's gowns are generally the sensation of the annual Horse Show at Madison Square Garden, and a daily study for sightseers along New York's million-dollar speedway. Every gown and hat she dons is built to harmonize with either vehicle or harness. To harmonize with one pigskin set of harness she wears a princess frock of tan-colored chiffon. For another pigskin harness, with blue satin rosettes and gold mountings, on chestnut horses, she wears a pale blue rough silk trimmed with Irish lace. Recently she decided that she wished to wear royal blue, so she sent to London for matching harness to be used when she drives with her famous three-breast team. The royal-blue harness is of finest kidskin dyed to match the roadcloth of her gown. Her basket-weave vehicle has wheels of ox-blooded, and when seated in this vehicle, Miss Morosini wears an onion-red chiffon satin. For each of these she has matching hats and shoes, many of the latter dyed to order, but with every harness she uses lines of white English web, and she wears only white suede gloves in elbow length."

"Mrs. Vanderbilt engaged 'The Wild Rose' company, playing at the Knickerbocker Theatre, in New York, to give a single performance on her lawn on an August night. For this single item of the entertainment she gave the management her check for seventeen hundred dollars," writes Anna Steese Richardson in Woman's Home Companion. "For the production she had erected a temporary theatre, which gave employment to a small army of carpenters for a full week, and enough electricians to wire a small Western city. The rough board walls were hidden by white and gold bunting, draped with gilt wicker baskets filled with real roses, and the florist's bill alone was said to be eight thousand dollars, and the caterer's bill even more. The driveway leading to the house from the street was converted into a Midway, conducted without charge to guests by fakirs fromoney Island.

"The first guests arrived shortly before eleven o'clock; the stage performance began at midnight; the cotillion followed on the heels of light opera, and just as the first cool white streak of dawn crept over the ocean, the guests and the player folks rose from their supper tables. During the inter-act forty-five thousand dollars had been expended in entertaining a hundred guests or more, and one thousand artists and players had been given employment. Forty-five thousand dollars for forty-five hours of pleasure—no Newport did not think it so remarkable, either."

Historic Days.

Mrs. Aughterbody—Weel, Sandie, on was a fine dry day we had last month.

Sandy—Deed, aye, it just put me in mind o' one we had when I was a bit laddie, but it was, if anything, fully trier.—Punch.

"There are lots of men able to govern women." "Yes, and they're all bachelors."—Houston Post.