

JOHN WORTH KERN

The following concerning John Worth Kern, the democratic nominee for vice president, is taken from the Lincoln (Neb.) Evening News:

John Worth Kern, who is to be William Jennings Bryan's running mate in the Nebraskan's third contest for the presidency, is a democrat of the old type that has dominated the party in the Hoosier state since the days of "Old Hickory." His democracy is an inheritance that came through a Virginia ancestry, his forefathers having been friends and neighbors of Thomas Jefferson, the founder of the party. And in Indiana, the state of his birth, he was schooled in politics under such rockribbed democratic warriors as William H. English, the vice presidential candidate when General Winfield Scott Hancock ran for president against Garfield in 1880, Thomas A. Hendricks who, in 1884, shared the victory that came to his party with the first election of Grover Cleveland, and Daniel W. Voorhees, the "tall sycamore of the Wabash," as senator from Indiana.

With the passing of these men, a little more than two decades ago, Mr. Kern rose to the leadership of his party in the state. His powers as a speaker, his knowledge of public affairs, and his fidelity to his party's interests, made him the most popular democrat in the state. He has fought in every campaign since then, and after each battle—he lost oftener than he won—he emerged from the fight with unruffled spirit and, like Mr. Bryan, was ready to be "up and at them again."

The Miami Indian reservation in the east central part of Indiana was opened for settlement in 1846. By the time the last of the Indians had departed for new hunting grounds farther west the settlers began pouring in. Among the first to come was Dr. Jacob W. Kern, a native of Virginia, and his wife, who was Nancy Liggett before she married the doctor in Warren county, Ohio. The Kerns were pioneers. In a little while there was a clearing and a garden patch surrounding the little log cabin in Howard county about four miles southwest of the site of the city of Kokomo.

It was in this cabin, and amid these surroundings, that John Worth Kern was born December 20, 1849, and it was there the now vice presidential candidate spent the first five years of his life.

Prospects, however, were not bright to the pioneers of that wooded country. Many families, among them the Kerns, packed up their belongings and moved to Iowa, forming a set-

tlement known as the "Hoosier Row," in Warren county, about fifteen miles from Des Moines. There Dr. Kern practiced medicine as a country physician while the son, growing up, worked on the farm most of the year and went to school in the winter.

After ten years of residence in Iowa Mrs. Kern died. Dr. Kern took his little family—in the fall of 1864—back to the old home in Howard county, Indiana. The boy had made remarkable progress in school in Iowa, for the limited opportunities afforded. His father sent him to the Indiana Normal Institute, a private school, in Kokomo, two winters. Then he was sent to Ann Arbor, Mich. There he took three years in the English and law departments of the university of Michigan. At the age of nineteen he was graduated from the law department.

In the summer of 1869, before he had reached the age of twenty, John Worth Kern hung out a shingle and began practicing law in Kokomo. He was considered something of a prodigy. The lawyers at first were inclined to make sport of him. But they soon changed their minds. In spite of his youth he showed marked ability as a lawyer, and he soon became popular.

His entrance into politics, for which he had a liking, came soon after. He was nominated for the state legislature by the democrats. The district was hopelessly republican and Mr. Kern was defeated, though he had the satisfaction of carrying the city of Kokomo and cutting the republican majority in the district down to a few votes.

Mr. Kern's first public office was that of city attorney of Kokomo, which he held by election of the city council for six terms.

In 1884 Mr. Kern took a hand in the politics of the state. His party nominated him for reporter of the Indiana supreme court. It was the year of the victory of Grover Cleveland over James G. Blaine. The democratic ticket in Indiana was swept into power. Mr. Kern served four years as reporter of the supreme court. His work was done with a thoroughness such as has been characteristic of the man in everything he has undertaken.

Mr. Kern in Indianapolis has been active in every political campaign. He was nominated for state senator in the Indianapolis district in 1892, without solicitation on his part and was elected. He served four years. He also served as city attorney of Indianapolis. His popularity throughout the state made him the candidate

for governor in 1900 and again in 1904. But he was defeated at both elections.

When Charles Warren Fairbanks returned to Indianapolis in 1904, after he had received the nomination for the vice presidency in the republican convention in Chicago, the people of his home city turned out to greet him. One of the first men to grasp his hand was John W. Kern. In politics Mr. Kern and Mr. Fairbanks had been leaders of rival parties—political enemies they were—and in every campaign it was a fight to the "last ditch." But when Mr. Kern stood before that crowd and spoke a welcome to Mr. Fairbanks it was the heart expression of an old friend and neighbor.

"John was always that way," was the comment of a rampant democrat of the "Old Hickory" type, who couldn't understand how any democrat could say so many good things about a republican.

Mr. Kern may properly be called an idol of his party in Indiana. In Indianapolis, however, he is best loved as a citizen. In the twenty-four years of his residence there he has shown an interest in the well being of the city and has stood for a high standard of citizenship. He has been a member of the Indianapolis Commercial club and has served as its president, a position without emoluments, but one of honor in which he had opportunities to do work for his community. The Commercial club is non-partisan republicans.

Mrs. Kern is a leader in social circles and is widely known in literary and culture club work. Mr. and Mrs. Kern have three children Miss Julia Kern, the eldest, is a leader in the younger set of Indianapolis society. The other children are John W. Kern, Jr., nine years old, and William H. Kern, five years old.

John W. Kern is a supporter of the policies which have been advocated by William J. Bryan. He is a speaker of more than usual attractiveness.

The Commoner will be sent from now until Election Day for Twenty-five Cents.

MR. KERN WITH HIS HOME FOLKS

John W. Kern, democratic nominee for vice president, visited Mr. Bryan at Fairview Monday, July 13, returning to his home at Indianapolis, July 15. People at Indianapolis gave Mr. Kern a monster non-partisan reception. The Associated Press tells the story in this way:

Indianapolis, Ind., July 15.—The reception given John W. Kern, the newly selected democratic candidate for vice president of the United States, held in the court house yard at 8:30 o'clock was as hearty and spontaneous as the citizens of Indianapolis, regardless of politics, could make it. Fully 5,000 people gathered in Delaware street, and in the court house yard gave Mr. Kern a hearty welcome and cheered him enthusiastically tonight. The newly made candidate addressed the big crowd for about twenty minutes after being presented by Charles W. Fairbanks, vice president of the United States. Four years ago Mr. Kern presented Mr. Fairbanks to a big non-partisan gathering under similar conditions.

The crowd which received Mr. Kern was in a cheering mood, it cheered Mrs. Kern and William Kern and John W. Kern, Jr., when they came on the stand. Republicans applauded as loudly as the democrats.

Mr. Kern arrived in the city a little after 6 o'clock tonight and was escorted to his home by a large procession. Two hours later he went to the court house with Vice President Fairbanks. The crowd gathered early and while waiting for the exercises to begin the Indianapolis military band gave a concert of popular airs.

When the carriage in which Mr. Kern and Vice President Fairbanks arrived the band started "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." This

was the signal for a tumult of applause and when the two distinguished men alighted they were greeted by round after round of cheers. Mayor Bookwalter extended a greeting as Mr. Fairbanks and Mr. Kern ascended the platform.

Mr. Bookwalter with a few brief remarks presented Vice President Fairbanks. "We have met," the mayor said, "to do honor to a fellow citizen who has brought honor to all of us."

Tribute by Fairbanks

Vice President Fairbanks spoke for about ten minutes, paying a fine tribute to his friend and neighbor, John W. Kern.

Mr. Fairbanks spoke as follows: "Mayor Bookwalter and Fellow Citizens: The duty which you have assigned to me is a very unusual and a very agreeable one. The occasion does not impose upon me the necessity of indulging in any extended utterance. My function is to preside and not to engage in a speech beyond a word of greeting and felicitation to our friend in whose honor we are assembled.

"We have gathered here without regard to party alignment to welcome and congratulate a fellow citizen who has been greatly honored. We appreciate fully the fact that an honor which comes to one of our fellow citizens is an honor to our entire citizenship. It is a gratifying fact that although our city has grown in population and industrial and commercial strength, we have not lost our neighborly spirit. We still have an interest in each other's welfare and I hope that no matter how great our city may grow, we shall always continue to rejoice in each other's good fortune.

"Mr. Kern, I shall always remember with sincere appreciation the generous and hearty welcome extended to me four years ago. It is particularly gratifying now to me at this assemblage to perform a similar office for you.

"The honor which the Denver convention bestowed upon you seems of the greatest which can be conferred upon an American citizen by his political associates. Honor came to you in a manner to enhance it. It came through the unanimous judgment of a great convention.

"While we owe allegiance to two great political parties our difference of opinion has never disturbed our friendships nor marred our personal relations, I admire you as a friend, neighbor and fellow citizen and rejoice with you in the great distinction which your party has been pleased to confer upon you in nominating you for vice president of the United States. Here political partisanship frequently runs high. Our campaigns are usually waged with ardor upon both sides, but we never fail to applaud our neighbor though he differ with us, if he wins distinguished honors. We never withhold from him an expression of our neighborly appreciation.

"Your neighbors know that no matter how much men may disagree with your political views they respect your ability as a lawyer, your eminence as an orator, your integrity as a man, your uprightness as a neighbor and your admirable life within the sacred circle of home.

"I can not wish you success in your cause. I can, however, express the certain conviction that you will be crowned with the increased