

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT AT VARIOUS TIMES IN BUSY LIFE

Interesting Sidelights on the Character of the Man Who Will Be Nominated for President of the United States by the Republican National Convention at Chicago During the Week

THE varying features of William Howard Taft, outlined in the accompanying group photograph, form an interesting study. Here are traced the development of the boy and the man—the "Willie" of childhood, the "young Bill" of school days in Cincinnati and at Yale, and the "Big Bill" Taft of mature years. They outline the strong, wholesome, manly boy, who had a full share of the fun of his day and gave and received some of the hard knocks of boyhood; the fearless judge, the peace-maker of the Philippines and of Cuba, the war secretary, Panama canal builder, globe-trotter and campaigner.

Secretary Taft is a peculiarly attractive personality. He is warm-hearted, approachable, frank, and blessed with the saving grace of humor, and at the same time he has always the strength and courage of his sound convictions. His "yes" means yes and his "no" precisely what it spells. All along the path of this man from the boyhood to now, from the bulking youth who outwitted every one at Yale to the "quick-footed fighting elephant of our modern politics," ready to run for the presidency if his party so decrees, one may gather incidents, which speak of his courage, his strength, his self-sacrifice, his endurance, his patience, and his intense humaneness. "He shows us," writes Walter Wellman, "a convincing example that a man may smile and smile and still be strong as a giant and firm as a rock. He shows us how true was that word of the late Senator Hoar 'that the best boy has something manly about him, and the best man has much of the boy in him.' Taft is a man many of whose ways are those of the boy, a big, husky, rollicking boy, ever ready for a laugh or a joke or a prank, yet never overstepping the bounds of dignity, mixing jest and laughter with work, always bright and sunny, yet always a marvel of industry and achievement."

The Taft family spring from New England stock, both father and mother tracing their ancestry back to the earliest colonial times. Shortly before her death last December Mrs. Louisa M. Taft, mother of the secretary of war, completed a genealogical history of the Tafts and of her own family, the Torreyes, tracing the former back to Robert Taft, who settled in Menton, Mass., in 1669, and the latter to William Torrey, an Englishman, who settled in Weymouth, Mass., in 1640.

According to this record, the first American Taft had five sons, one of whom, Joseph, born in 1680, married Elizabeth Emerson, the granddaughter of the first minister of Menton.

Joseph's second son was Captain Peter Taft, born in 1715; Captain Peter's third son was Aaron, born in 1743. He was fitted for Princeton, but had to leave college before he had finished, although he had already established a reputation as a scholar.

He settled at Uxbridge, Mass., but removed to Townsend, Vt., where he died in 1808. He married Rhoda Rawson, the great-great-granddaughter of Edward Rawson, secretary of the Massachusetts Bay colony from 1650 to 1686.

Peter Rawson, the third son of Aaron, born in 1788, married Sylvia Howard in 1810. He taught school and was admitted to the bar. He became judge of the common pleas, judge of the probate court, judge of the county court of Windham county, was one of the county commissioners and was for many years a member of the legislature.

He removed to Cincinnati in 1841, where he died in 1867, leaving one son, Alphonso.

Alphonso Taft, father of the secretary of war, was born in 1810 in Townsend, Vt., and was graduated from Yale in 1833. He taught for two years in an academy in Ellington, Conn., and then became a tutor at Yale.

He was admitted to the bar in 1838 and went to Cincinnati the next year. In 1857 he argued before the United States supreme court the claim of the city for the bequest of Charles McMicken, which secured the nucleus of the endowment fund for the University of Cincinnati.

Mrs. Taft wrote concerning her husband's reputation while he was judge of the superior court:

"No young man was ever turned away because his case was considered too small for the judge's patience; no experienced lawyer ever felt his case too large or the questions involved too intricate for the judge's capacity and learning. His most important case was the 'Bible in the Public Schools.'"

"The Catholics and Jews, who formed a large proportion of the citizens of Cincinnati, complained on the introduction of religious instruction into the public schools as violating the spirit of the constitution. The school board stopped the reading of the Bible. The court was appealed to on the ground that the board had no power."

"There was a violent contest and feeling ran high. To Judge Taft there was no question of the right of the board to take action. It was not in his nature to consider for a moment popular clamor or the effect of his decision on his career."

"The two other judges decided against the board. Judge Taft delivered an elaborate dissenting opinion. When the case was taken to the supreme court of Ohio this opinion was sustained by the unanimous court of five judges, and it has since become the law throughout the United States."

"The Bible in Public Schools" case arose in his path several times later, and probably prevented his being governor of Ohio. When, however, the storm of prejudice and bigotry had subsided and the people had time to consider the matter Judge Taft's reputation as a judge who knew neither fear nor favor inevitably increased."

Judge Taft's first wife, Fanny Phelps, was a daughter of Judge Charles Phelps of Townsend, Vt. She died in 1851. Three children were born to her, one of whom died in infancy.

Charles Phelps Taft, the second son, is the proprietor of the Cincinnati Times-Star. The third son, Peter Rawson, died in 1888. Judge Taft married Louisa Maria Torrey in 1853. Her first son, Samuel Davenport Torrey, died in infancy. Secretary Taft was the second son, born September 15, 1857, Henry Waters Taft of New York the third, Horace Dutton Taft the fourth, and the fifth child is her daughter, Fanny Louise, wife of Dr. William A. Edwards of Los Angeles, Cal.

A striking similarity may be traced in the public careers of father and son. Indeed the son has followed to a large extent the trail of honor and usefulness blazed by the father. Both graduated from Yale college. Both were judges of courts and secretaries of war. The father had more varied and extended experience as American minister to courts of Europe, while the son's experience was limited to negotiating a settlement of the prior lands controversy at the Vatican, and personal visits during last year's tour of the world. The judicial firmness, scholarship, executive ability and diplomatic skill stamped in the career of the father shine with even greater luster in the son because of his wider range of experience in dealing with governmental problems and diverse peoples. The son is one of the few men, if not the only one, who has declined a seat on the bench of the federal supreme court.

"It has become axiomatic in Washington," writes Walter Wellman, "that whenever trouble occurs anywhere in the world beyond the power of ordinary agencies to deal with, Taft is the man who must be sent to straighten it out. Not only did he bring order out of chaos in the Philippines, but he averted civil war and anarchy in Cuba, settled the difficult problem of the friars' lands by a visit to the Vatican, started the vast activity at Panama in effective fashion, and then went back again to adjust a threatened struggle between two jarring states. Though the secretary of peace, he carried on the War department with a strong grip upon its details, helped reorganize the army and create a general staff, and incidentally found



1. Mr. Taft at age of 3. 2. At the age of 8. 3. At the age of 11. 4. At the age of 15. 5. About 20 in his Junior year at Yale. 6. As Judge of Circuit Court in Ohio. 7. As Governor of the Philippines. 8. As Governor of Cuba. 9. Yale Alumnus. 10. Mr. Taft at the present time as Secretary of War and Presidential Candidate.

FIFTY PHOTOGRAPHS OF WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT, TAKEN AT DIFFERENT TIMES DURING HIS REMARKABLY ACTIVE CAREER.

time to make a tour of the world and to travel all over the country as a fast rising favorite for the presidency. It is not surprising, in view of his achievements, his record as a getter of results, as a doer, that President Roosevelt says of him: "Taft is the biggest going concern in the country." He keeps going all the time. He works from 8 o'clock in the morning till midnight. He not only works hard, but plays hard, laughs hard, sleeps hard, eats hard, and sometimes hits hard when roused."

When he entered Yale college in 1874, young Taft settled down to capture all the honors, which industry and ability could reach. His father was then a member of Grant's cabinet, but that did not bother "Big Bill." And he got the honors, too, without being a grind. As William Allen White says, "He danced well, sang well, wrestled well, wore his clothes well, and probably loafed well, but never forgot the main business of life—to get an education. And he did the job well, finished it up, rounded it off, put in good measure and quit the second man in a class of 120 boys."

Near the close of his college life young Taft showed the fine sense of honor, which later prompted him to stack and dethrone Boss Cox as the political dictator of Cincinnati and decline all compromises with Senator Foraker. The class of 1878 had a spirited election to choose the class orator, and Taft was elected by a single vote. But after the election charges were made that some of Taft's overenthusiastic supporters had resorted to means to gain votes, which might legitimately be criticized. Taft promptly resigned the honor. Students appealed to him to reconsider his decision, insisting that he was honestly elected, but Taft had only one answer. "As long as there is a single blot upon my title, I won't take it." So the class held another election and he was chosen almost unanimously. Strangely enough the future Secretary of War chose as the subject of his oration, "The Vitality of the Democratic Party." Those who heard that oration still say that as an exposition of the theory of politics in a dramatic form of government it was unsurpassed.

During the succeeding two years, while studying law at the Cincinnati Law school, Taft earned pocket money and gained much valuable experience as a reporter, an occupation he followed regularly for nearly a year after securing his sheepskin. He worked for a while under Murat Halstead, and they do say that he made things hum, while pushing the reportorial pencil. He had a fond-

ness for writing sketches of life "over the Rhine," a section of Cincinnati, where the Wurzburger flows and where the thought of a "lid" was the forerunner of treason. For a while he reported the courts, and one day, to use his own language, he "pulled off a big story," which went into the paper double-leaded and with big headlines. Unfortunately he got his facts twisted, and on the following day he was summoned into court for contempt and received a lecture from the judge that he never forgot.

This early though brief experience in newspaper life and the spirit of camaraderie it engendered no doubt now moves the secretary to greet newspaper men with a welcoming smile, which makes everyone of the boys feel that he is a jolly good fellow, whether he has a bunch of news to give away or not. The latchstring of his door hangs outside for the boys, and they are welcome at any reasonable hour. An amusing incident which illustrates this feeling is related. Reaching his office late one afternoon the secretary was greeted by a number of newspaper men. "Good evening, gentlemen," said the secretary, and he shed his coat. The men looked at each other, wondering if the secretary was preparing to settle accounts with some correspondent guilty of printing "fake" stories about the Panama canal. "I don't believe I have any news tonight," said the secretary, pleasantly, and he slipped out of his waistcoat. "I did hear one little item. Civil Engineer Smith has resigned from the canal work to accept a higher salary nearer home," and the secretary wriggled out of his trousers. The youthful correspondent of a foreign paper blushed violently, while the secretary whisked a pair of riding breeches from his suit case, and then Mr. Taft explained. "I am fifteen minutes late for an appointment I have to go riding with the president," he said, "and it was a case of seeing you while I got into my riding togs or of not seeing you at all, and I would not willingly forego that pleasure," and as he struggled into his riding jacket he started at a log trot for the courtyard where his steed stood waiting.

In the early days of his political career Taft, (as William Allen White pictures him) was "a hulking six-footer just under 30, moon-faced, good-natured, who threw off work by the ton, without sweating, but with that merry threat that maketh a glad countenance. Incidentally, he had a fighting record. He had ground a blacksmith's face into the sidewalk for libeling Judge Taft, he had whipped a ward

heeler for intimidating voters at the primaries, and he had taken a ward boss by the scruff of the neck and the reef of his trousers and had literally thrown him out of a convention. He had the blind, roaring, inexorable wrath of a big man of peace. And in those days, when he was still a boy to the old men, and only a boy to the young men, he was to the clan of his kind that loved him, still "old Bill." He was what slang calls a mixer. He fought the gang on the floor of the convention and was never too nice to get down in the primaries and work at the polls. And when he came rolling down the street like a good-natured porpoise, or when he banged his big flat on the bench as he sat in court, he was still "old Bill," much to be respected, little to be feared, save by the unrighteous, and always to be loved. He had but one weakness for a politician—work. He kept his docket clean. His traces never scraped the wheel; his shoulders always were in the collar, and withal he never turned a hair. Work was his whisky, his cards, his revelry by night. If he had ever set out to sow wild oats he would have harvested them by the car-load. But he sowed no wild oats, and turned into his thirties a clean-skinned, clear-eyed, sharp-brained, hard-muscled, soft-hearted, well-read, well-bred young gentleman, whom the younger men were pointing to with some pride, and their ambitious elders, seeing him climb, were viewing with some alarm."

For twentyseven years he has served the public in various stations as may be seen from this data:

January, 1881—Assistant public prosecutor.
March, 1882—Resigned and became United States internal revenue collector. (Resigned March, 1883.)
January, 1885—Assistant county solicitor.
March, 1887—Resigned and appointed judge of the supreme court.
April, 1888—Elected to the same position.
February, 1890—Resigned and became solicitor-general of the United States.
March, 1892—Resigned and became judge of the United States court for the sixth judicial circuit.
March, 1900—Resigned and became president of the Philippine commission.
July 4, 1901—Inaugurated first civil governor of the Philippines.
December, 1901—Visited the United States by order of the Secretary of War.
July, 1902—Conferred with Pope Leo XIII and committee of

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