

Past Democratic Convention

BY RUFUS ROCKWELL WILSON.

The Democratic convention which assembled in Denver on July 6th, will be the twenty-second national gathering of the representatives of that party. The first of these was held on May 12th, 1832, in Baltimore, and adopted two rules which have guided the actions of all subsequent conventions; one provided that the delegates, when so instructed, should cast the votes of their States as a unit, and the other that no candidate should be nominated without a two-thirds majority. Jackson was nominated for President and Van Buren for Vice President. They were elected. The second convention met on May 26th, 1836, at Baltimore, and nominated Van Buren for President and Richard M. Johnson for Vice President. The third convention, held on May 6th, 1840, in Baltimore, re-nominated Van Buren, but named no candidate for Vice President, leaving that to the several States. It also put forward the first complete platform ever adopted by the party. Parts of this platform were incorporated into the deliverance of every Democratic national convention prior to the civil war, and the leading ideas re-appeared in many of the party platforms of the last forty years.

THE FIRST DEMOCRATIC DARK HORSE.

When 1844 came around and the Democratic national convention again assembled at Baltimore, this time on May 27th, it was found that Van Buren had a majority of the instructed delegates for his nomination. James K. Polk was a candidate for Vice President, and Jackson, then almost on his dying bed, exerted all his influence for Van Buren and Polk. The annexation of Texas, however, was the burning issue of the hour, and Van Buren had expressed his opposition to it. Moreover, there had been developed in New York some hostility to him, and some of the politicians in that State were determined to beat him. Thus the question with the annexationists and the other enemies of Van Buren in the convention was, How could he be defeated? Again the two-thirds rule was introduced, and in spite of the fact that Van Buren had a majority of the convention instructed for him, it was adopted. Its adoption assured Van Buren's defeat.

Neither Cass, Johnson, nor Buchanan, the other prominent candidates, could compete successfully, and after three days' struggle all three were put aside and the nomination given to the selection of George M. Dallas, of Pennsylvania.

Polk, both in his Cabinet appointments and in the measures which he favored, had an eye to his own re-nomination; but his self-seeking led him to make the fatal blunder of connecting himself closely with one of the warring factions of the New York Democracy. On this ground it was manifest to the prudent long before the Democratic national convention at Baltimore, on May 22d, 1848, that Polk's candidacy was out of the question, and he, therefore, was put aside. Cass, of Michigan, Woodbury, of New Hampshire, and Buchanan, of Pennsylvania, each had a considerable following when the convention opened, but Cass was the favorite from the first, and on the fourth ballot received the votes of more than two-thirds of the delegates. With him was nominated William O. Butler, of Kentucky, for Vice President.

THE NOMINATION OF PIERCE AND BUCHANAN.

A dark horse won in the Democratic national convention held at Baltimore, June 1st, 1852. There were four prominent candidates: Buchanan, Marcy and Douglas. Cass' candidacy was burdened with the stigma of defeat; Buchanan had not an attached personal following. Marcy suffered from the war of action in his own State, and Douglas was hampered by the enmities and jealousies which his sudden rise into prominence had provoked. From these conditions resulted a stormy session of four days, the course of which forty-nine ballots were cast for President. Cass and Buchanan had the most votes at the beginning, but neither could obtain the necessary two-thirds. On the thirty-fifth ballot, Pierce, of New Hampshire, came up to that time, had not been publicly mentioned as a candidate, but months before it had been planned by Caleb Cushing, Benjamin F. Butler and other New England politicians, in anticipation of a deadlock at Baltimore, to spring his name at the critical moment and trust to a stampede to insure his nomination. This plan was now put into effect with success. Pierce's vote steadily increased until the forty-ninth and last ballot, when the convention gave him 223 votes, with only six scattering. William R. King, of Alabama, was nominated for Vice President but did not live to fill the office.

The Democratic national convention held at Cincinnati, on June 23, 1856, lasted four days. The nomination was contested for by President Pierce, Buchanan and Douglas. The Pierce and Douglas had taken in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise weighed against them, while Buchanan, who had been out of the country for several years as minister to England, had lost almost all the support that was disrupting his party. Moreover, it was urged in his behalf that he could carry the admittedly doubtful State of Pennsylvania. He led in every vote until the sixteenth ballot, when he received 161 votes to 121 for Douglas and six scattering. Then Douglas edged the battle by telegraphing that, as Buchanan was clearly the choice of his majority of the delegates, he would give him the necessary two-thirds vote. This was done on the next ballot and the convention completed its work by nominating John C. Breckinridge, of Kentucky, for Vice President.

THE CONVENTIONS OF THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD.

The Democratic national convention which met at Charleston, South Carolina, on April 23d, 1860, was symbolic of the times. No candidate was chosen, though the convention lasted many days, this because of a disagreement between the Northern and Southern sections of the party on the slavery question. The Southern end of the party, supported by a few delegates from the free States, insisted upon the adoption of the doctrine of absolute non-interference by Congress or any other authority with slavery in the territories, while an overwhelming majority of the Northern end of the party was committed to Douglas and his slogan of popular sovereignty. A long and desperate struggle revealed an impassable gulf between the factions, and when a majority of the delegates voted for a popular sovereignty platform, the representatives on which elections to the convention of the cotton States withdrew from the convention.

Those who remained proceeded to ballot for President. Fifty-seven ballots were taken in three days with Douglas always in the lead, but the previous adoption of the two-thirds rule made a choice impossible and on May 14 the convention adjourned to meet in Baltimore on June 18th. When the convention met in that place at that time there was a new agenda which this time included most of the delegations which had repudiated the previous decisions from the Southern States. Then, after taking two ballots, the convention decided that two-thirds of the votes should nominate, and Douglas was declared the candidate. Herschell V. Johnson, of Georgia, was afterwards put on the ticket for Vice President by the national committee, Benjamin Fitzpatrick, of Alabama, nominated by the convention, having declined to serve as a candidate.

Those who bolted at Charleston met in another hall in that city, adopted an extreme pro-slavery platform and decided to meet in Richmond the following Monday in June. From that date they adjourned to June 21st. Meanwhile the seceders from the Baltimore convention organized a second convention in that city, and adopted an ultra Southern platform, nominated John C. Breckinridge, of Kentucky, for President, and Joseph Lane, of Oregon, for Vice President. These nominations were endorsed by the Charleston seceders in their national session at Richmond.

The main purpose for holding the Democratic national convention which met in Chicago on August 14th, 1860, before the meeting of the Charleston Lincoln said to a friend: "They must nominate a Peace Democrat on a war platform or a War Democrat on a peace platform." The convention chose the second of these alternatives. It adopted a platform which declared the war a failure and it nominated for President the best known of all War Democrats, George R. McClellan. The nomination for Vice President after a brief contest, was given to George H. Pendleton, of Ohio. Only three States ratified the convention's action.

WHEN SEYMOUR WAS MADE AN UNWILLING CANDIDATE.

The unexpected happened in the Democratic national convention which met in New York on July 4th, 1868. Months before the convention assembled it had been decided by Horatio Seymour and other Democratic leaders that Simon F. Chase, of New York, should be nominated for President, and save for one man's craft, this plan would have been carried into execution. That man was Samuel J. Tilden, who decided that the candidacy of Chase would spell defeat. Instead, he planned with subtle strategy to nominate Seymour. It had been arranged that Seymour, who had been chosen president of the convention, should rise to the chair to nominate Chase. The moment was chosen by Tilden for the fulfillment of his purpose, and when Seymour called another to preside, an Ohio delegate, selected by Tilden, sprang to his feet, and in an impressive speech demanded the nomination of Seymour, the confessed leader of the Democracy. Instantly men in other delegations, previously assigned to their task, rose and rallied the support for Seymour, and when some of the New York delegates joined in the cheering the candidate became evident to all. "Your candidate I cannot be," said Seymour, in a startling way, and the wave sped on and he was made the nominee by a practically unanimous vote. Before that there had been twenty-one ballots, in which Pendleton, Hancock and Hendricks, the leading competitors, it was then that the nomination of Chase was expected to be made, just as the nomination of Seymour was made, on the generalship of Tilden. The subject reluctantly submitted to the result thus achieved, and the convention completed its work by nominating Frank P. Blair, of Missouri, for Vice President.

THE NOMINATION OF GENERAL HANCOCK.

The adroit sleight-of-hand work of William C. Whitney, laboring in the interests of his father-in-law, Henry B. Payne, of Ohio, alone prevented the re-nomination of Tilden in the Democratic national convention, held on June 2d, 1880, at Cincinnati. Whitney's efforts, however bore no reward, for he met opposition where he had not expected to find it, and that was in the Ohio delegation, which refused to present Payne's name unanimously. With Tilden out of the race, and Payne's candidacy strangled at birth, the nomination of Thomas F. Bayard, or Samuel J. Randall seemed probable; but again the unexpected befel Daniel Dougherty, who had journeyed to Cincinnati solely as a spectator, at the eleventh hour obtained the proxy of a Pennsylvania delegate and presented the name of Winfield S. Hancock in a speech of such beauty and impressiveness that it swept the convention off its feet, and Hancock was nominated on the first ballot. He had not a majority when the ballot closed, but changes made before the result was announced gave him the requisite two-thirds vote. With him

was nominated William H. English, of Indiana, for Vice President. An interesting condition of affairs confronted the Democratic national convention, held at Chicago on July 8th, 1884. Tilden's falling health forbade his candidacy, and there were numerous entries in the scrub race that followed, including Bayard, McDonald, Thurman, Carlisle, Hooley and Randall, but all these veteran leaders were put aside for a man who four years before had been practically unknown outside his own town. In 1882, Grover Cleveland, while mayor of Buffalo, was elected Governor of New York by a plurality of 130,000, due almost entirely to a bitter factional fight within the Republican party.

The very prodigality of this majority fastened upon him the eyes of his party and caused Daniel Manning, one of the shrewdest of the politicians trained by Tilden, to fix upon him as the most available candidate for the presidential nomination. Manning began the canvass for Cleveland's nomination immediately after the latter's inauguration as Governor. This canvass was conducted with great skill, and in less than a year powerful combinations had been effected with the Democratic leaders in most of the Southern States. Moreover, Manning contrived, by the adoption of the unit rule, to carry the New York delegates solidly for Cleveland, though Tammany stoutly opposed him. Thus it became evident at an early stage of the convention that Cleveland would be the nominee. All that was needed to insure this result was the aid of the friends of Randall, who had a delegation from his own State strongly committed to his support, but whose pronounced protection views made him ineligible for the nomination. Randall, summoned by telegraph to Chicago on the morning of the last day of the convention, and after a brief conference with Manning, passed the word to his friends to support Cleveland. That settled the contest. More than two-thirds of the delegates voted for Cleveland on the second and final ballot; and his nomination was made unanimous on motion of Thomas A. Hendricks, who was subsequently named for Vice President.

THE SECOND AND THIRD CLEVELAND CONVENTIONS.

The Democratic convention held in St. Louis on June 7th, 1888, met to register a purpose fully agreed upon in advance. President Cleveland was re-nominated by a practically unanimous vote, and second place on the ticket was given to a dissenting voice, to Allen G. Thurman, of Ohio. But if the second Cleveland convention was a perfunctory affair, the one which met at Chicago on June 21st, 1892, was marked by a more acrimonious contest. Cleveland was a third time put forward as a candidate, but, strong with the people, he was also weak with the political leaders. The delegation from the State of New York was solidly opposed to him, and had a majority of the delegates from other States followed their personal inclinations he would have been defeated. Cleveland's nomination was effected solely by the support of William C. Whitney, whose work at Chicago was brilliant in the extreme. He outwitted the opposition at every point, instantly took advantage of every opportunity and from start to finish displayed the political generalship that never falters and never makes mistakes. Test votes were carefully avoided, and Cleveland handled as a single-ballot candidate, who, if not nominated at first, would not be nominated at all. It was only by this line of action by Whitney's strategy, the convention sat at night and far on in the morning hours, when Cleveland received 617 votes, just ten more than were needed to nominate him. Had he not been nominated at that ballot, his defeat would have been certain; and as it was, the nomination of Adlai E. Stevenson, of Illinois, for Vice President was made over his friends.

The Democratic national convention of 1896 was held at Chicago on July 7th, and continued its sessions through five days, nominating William J. Bryan, of Nebraska, for President, and Arthur Sewall, of Maine, for Vice President, upon a free silver platform. Bryan's nomination was the issue of a long and spirited struggle between a number of candidates, in which at the beginning Richard P. Bland, of Missouri, had the best position. Bryan made his first impression upon the convention at the third day of the session, owing to the illness of the chairman of the committee on platform, he was assigned to make the closing argument in support of the committee's recommendation. The maker of the class especially admired in the South and West, his oration, full of striking metaphor, held his twenty thousand hearers spell-bound. As the last period fell from Bryan's lips, it is said he pressed down upon the brow of labor that crown of thorns; you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold. There was an instant hush and then a storm burst forth which hurried onward to sweep everything before it. Tremendous cheers rent the air, while hats, flags, handkerchiefs and everything else that could be thrown aloft or waved wildly were brought into use. Bland resigned for many minutes, and even after an enforced lull it broke forth again at every mention of Bryan's name. On the following day, when the balloting began, the weaker candidates dropped out one by one. Bland's resignation for many minutes, and even after an enforced lull it broke forth again at every mention of Bryan's name. On the following day, when the balloting began, the weaker candidates dropped out one by one. Bland's resignation for many minutes, and even after an enforced lull it broke forth again at every mention of Bryan's name.

MISS LIZIE BLACKWOOD, of Orange County.

Durham, June 27.—Miss Lizzie Blackwood, of Orange county, died at the home of her brother, W. F. Blackwood, late yesterday afternoon. Miss Blackwood was 72 years of age and lived at Robeson station, Orange county. She had been here on a visit for some time and was as well as usual up to a short while before her death. Heart trouble was the cause. The remains were this morning taken to her old home in Orange county, and this afternoon the interment took place at the new Hope Presbyterian church, of which she was a member.

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Licking the Editor. Lordsburg (N. Mex.) Liberal. In some portions of the United States it has always been a favorite pastime, when a man was not satisfied with what appeared in the local paper, to go and lick the editor. Some unwise guy imported the scheme into the Southwest recently. It was tried in El Paso, and the editor is still doing business, while the man who wanted to lick him is buried in Oklahoma. Last week an Albuquerque policeman tried it. He was six inches taller and weighed fifty pounds more than the editor. The policeman was taken to the hospital in an ambulance and when he recovered consciousness

the nurse gave him a message from the mayor announcing that he was fired from the police force. It is probable that the editor of The Liberal and Col. Max Frost, of The New Mexican, are about the only editors in the Territory whom it would be safe for an ordinary man to try to lick.

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