

THAT THIRD TERM

Washington Wouldn't Take It, But He Didn't Oppose the Idea

Tom Jefferson on the Other Hand Was Dead Set Against It; 'Old Hickory' Jackson a Single Six-Year Term; Hayes Indorsed It.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second in a series of three articles tracing the development in American history of the third term issue. What did Washington think about it? Jefferson? Andrew Jackson and others? The following article, especially pertinent during the present election year, is presented as a strictly impartial review of the third term subject, taking no stand for or against it.

II. PRECEDENTS AND VIEWS OF THE PRESIDENTS

IF YOU are opposed to the idea of any President seeking to have more than eight years in the White House, the chances are that you will cite the case of George Washington as your strongest argument.

"The father of our country declined to run for a third term. So why depart from the precedent which he established?" you will ask.

If, however, you believe that there is no real objection to having a Chief Executive serve more than two terms, you will also turn to the first President. You will point out that Washington retired after two terms not because he was opposed to a President serving more than eight years but because he was worn out with the labors in the service of the nation and looked forward to a peaceful old age at Mount Vernon.

Differed With Jefferson. More than that you will quote this letter which Washington wrote to Lafayette on April 28, 1788:

"Though I cannot have time or room to sum up the arguments in this letter, there cannot, in my judgment, be the least danger that the President will by any practicable intrigue ever be able to continue himself one moment in office, much less perpetuate himself in it, but in the last stage of corrupt morals and practical depravity, and even then there is as much danger that any species of domination would prevail. Though when a people have become incapable of governing themselves and fit for a master, it is of little consequence from what quarter he comes. Under any extended view of this part of the subject I can see no propriety in precluding ourselves from the services of any man who in some great emergency shall be deemed universally most capable of serving the public."

The President who, even more than Washington, established the "no third term" tradition was Thomas Jefferson.

Writing to Washington on May 2, 1788, in regard to the new Constitution, the "Sage of Monticello" expressed his dissatisfaction with "the perpetual re-eligibility of the President," because he feared that it would "make an office for life." So he said he hoped that "before there is danger of this change taking place in the office of President the good sense and free spirit of our countrymen will make the change necessary to prevent it."

Toward the close of his second term in office, when the legislatures of Vermont, New Jersey and Pennsylvania sent him resolutions asking him to be a candidate again, Jefferson replied to all of them with a letter which contained this paragraph:

"That I should lay down my charge at a proper period is as much a duty as to have borne it faithfully. If some termination to the services of the Chief Magistrate be not fixed by the Constitution, or supplied by practice, his office, nominally, four years, will in fact become for life, and history shows how easily that degenerates into an inheritance. Believing that a representative government responsible at short periods of election is that which produces the greatest sum of happiness to mankind, I feel it a duty to do no act which shall essentially impair that principle, and I should unwillingly be the person who, disregarding the sound precedent set by an illustrious predecessor (Washington) should furnish the first example of prolongation beyond the second term of office."

During "Old Hickory" Jackson's first administration, he sent a message to congress in 1829 recommending that the electoral college be abolished, that the President be elected by direct vote and that he be limited to a single term of either

four or six years. Five years later he sent another message to congress which contained this paragraph:

"All the reflection I have made upon the subject increases my conviction that the best interests of the country will be promoted by the adoption of some plan which will secure in all contingencies that important right of sovereignty to the direct control of the people. Could this be attained, and the terms of those officers be limited to a single period of either four or six years, I think our liberties would possess an additional safeguard."

Jackson's recommendation of a single six-year term for Presidents was echoed 40 years later when Rutherford B. Hayes in his inaugural address said, "In furtherance of the reform we seek, and in other important respects a change of great importance, I recommend an amendment to the Constitution prescribing a term of six years for the presidential office and forbidding a re-election."

In 1901 indiscreet friends of President McKinley began talking about his becoming a candidate again. Thereupon the President promptly scotched that talk by issuing a public statement in which he said:

"I regret that the suggestion of a third term has been made. I doubt whether I am called upon to give it notice, but there are now questions of the gravest importance before the administration and the country, and their just consideration should not be prejudiced in the public mind by even the suspicion of the thought of a third term. In view . . . of a long-settled conviction . . . I will not be a candidate for a third term. . . ."

The candidacy of Theodore Roosevelt on the Bull Moose ticket in 1912 revived agitation over a third term. One of the planks in the platform, adopted by the Democrats at Baltimore, favored a single presidential term and urged the adoption of an amendment to the Constitution, making the President ineligible for re-election and pledging their candidate to this principle. A short time before the inauguration of Woodrow Wilson, the senate passed a joint resolution proposing a constitutional amendment limiting the President to a single six-year term. While this resolution was pending in the house, Mr. Wilson wrote a letter to A. Mitchell Palmer, a representative from Pennsylvania, as follows:

"The question is simply this: Shall our Presidents be free, so far as the law is concerned, to seek a second term of four years, or shall they be limited by Constitutional amendment to a single term of four years or to a single term extended to six years?"

Admitted His Quandary.

"Four years is too long a term for a President who is not the true spokesman of the people, who is imposed upon and does not lead. It is too short for a President who is doing, or attempting a great work of reform, and who has not had time to finish it. To change the term to six years would be to increase the likelihood of its being too long without any assurance that it would, in happy cases, be long enough. A fixed constitutional limitation to a single term of office is highly arbitrary and unsatisfactory from every point of view."

Favored Two Terms. "Put the present customary limitation of two terms into the Constitution, if you do not trust the people to take care of themselves, but make it two terms (not one, because four years is often too long), and give the President a chance to win the full service by proving himself fit for it. . . ."

"As things stand now the people might more likely be cheated than served by further limitations of the President's eligibility. His fighting power in their behalf would be immensely weakened. No one will fear a President except those whom he can make fear the elections. "We singularly belie our own principles by seeking to determine by fixed constitutional provision what the people shall determine for themselves and are perfectly competent to determine for themselves. We cast a doubt upon the whole theory of popular government."

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HEARTS WALKING

Mrs. Harry Pugh Smith

CHAPTER IX

"Please make yourself comfortable," Janet said, smiling, as she took his hat. "I shall have to do something about food. We have no maid."

Steve Hill was staring around the living room, at the couch which Anne had covered with flowered chintz, at the ivory book shelves which Jim had built in between the windows, at the glass basket of zinnias on the drop leaf table by the easy-chair, at the colorful hooked rugs which Janet had made for the painted floors.

"Anybody home?" called Anne from the front door.

"Mother, this is Mr. Ryan's

snapped Anne, snatching at the box of baking soda.

Janet who was preparing the grapefruit for breakfast gave her mother a startled glance. It was unlike Anne to be irritable.

"You're worn out with the heat. You ought to take a month off and rest."

"With the August fur sale just beginning? Be your age, darling!"

"At least," muttered Janet, "you won't have to worry about dinner tonight."

"No?" murmured Anne uncertainly.

"You must wear your new ivory lace," Janet was saying. "It's

perfectly luscious on you."

believe everything you hear?" he asked lazily. "I've never got around yet to asking any woman to be my wife."

Janet had an infuriated conviction that he was amusing himself at her expense. "I don't believe Priscilla would take everything for granted unless she had something pretty definite to go on," she said hotly.

"Don't you?" drawled Tony Ryan as if he did not care at all what she believed.

The bridge game of the older guests broke up at eleven when Mr. Henry Leigh announced with a bleak smile that it was time for all good people to be in bed. Norma protested that it was barely the shank of the evening and Priscilla, preparing to dance again with Tony, agreed with her.

"Naturally the young folks aren't ready to go," murmured Mrs. Leigh and smiled poisonously at Anne. "That's our penalty for getting on."

Anne smiled. "I must admit we're not so skittish as we were."

She rose and Myra clutched Jim's arm. "You can't run off and leave me odd man."

"I've got to take my mother home," said Jim firmly and added under his breath, "thank the Lord!"

"I'm taking Mrs. Phillips home," observed Steve Hill pleasantly.

"But—" protested Jim, looking blank and crestfallen.

To his surprise Tony Ryan without a change of expression kicked Jim violently in the shin and tossed a bunch of keys at Steve Hill. "Use my car," he said.

"Thanks," said Steve and reached for Anne's short silver-brocaded evening wrap.

She was laughing softly when he tucked her into Tony's elongated black and silver machine. "I'm afraid you've made an enemy of Jennie Leigh," she said. "She doesn't approve of middle-aged widows who can still wear a size sixteen dress."

Steve smiled and put the big coupe in motion. "From the way you look now you were a mere child when your husband died."

"I was twenty-nine."



"He isn't the Stephen Decatur Hill!" cried Janet weakly.

friend, Stephen Hill," stammered Janet.

Anne smiled. "How do you do?" she said, putting out her hand.

It was not the words, it was her warm, gracious tone which removed all strain from the situation.

"How's for eating?" demanded Jim, banging the front door behind him.

"My brother, Mr. Hill," said Janet.

Jim started forward with outstretched hand and tripped over a lamp cord. "Sorry," he said with a grin. "I'm the blunderbuss of the family."

Janet's remaining qualms were dissipated by the unobtrusive manner in which her guest fitted in at their table. They sat for two hours after they finished eating. Janet's eyes glowing, Jim looking more relaxed than he had in weeks, Anne leaning forward, her cheeks bright, all of them wafted out of themselves on the Magic Carpet of Stephen Hill's fascinating drawl to the far and strange places of the earth, to the Peacock Throne and the lacy minaret of the Taj Mahal, to crocodile-infested tropic jungles, to Piccadilly on a balmy May afternoon, to the boulevards of Paris on a fantastic moonlit night.

"Isn't he wonderful?" cried Janet when he had gone. "I don't care if he is just another one of what the Earl of Jersey calls a bit of flotsam on the beach of fate, Steve's precious." Jim began to laugh. He laughed immoderately. "I can't help it," he pleaded, "it's just that when I think of you two determined to feed the crumbs of your divine charity to Stephen Hill, I get the giggles." He put an arm about each of them. "Dear sweet innocents," he explained, "don't you ever read the bylines in the newspapers, haven't you ever listened to the radio, did you ever see a travel book?"

"Oh, my sainted aunt!" cried Janet weakly. "He isn't the Stephen Decatur Hill!" Jim nodded and Anne clutched his arm. "The famous war correspondent?"

"The guy," said Jim, "who knows more celebrities intimately than any man in the world, the guy who's covered every important news event for twenty years."

"And we set him down at a patched tablecloth," mourned Janet.

"I don't believe he minded," said Anne with that odd breathless note in her voice.

The sixteenth day of August began unpleasantly for Anne Phillips. She had not slept well the night before. It was very hot and she rolled and tossed.

"If only I knew exactly what I am afraid of," she told herself. "You can fight anything after it comes out into the open."

She was nervous the next morning. She let the toast scorch, something she had not done in years, and burned her hand on the oven.

"The ingenuity with which you can do everything wrong on some days really should be utilized,"

Anne made a grimace. "If you can get my mind off how many coats we moved today and the minimum number of sales we have to make by the end of the week, and remember that a lady at a dinner party is expected to be a fount of inconsequential conversation, I'll be lucky."

There were sixteen around the Poole dinner table—a table that glittered with thin crystal and fine silver and gleaming damask. The centerpiece of exquisite pink asters completely screened Jim from Janet's view, but she did not need to see her brother's face. She knew exactly how furious he was, wedged in between the opulet and extremely décolleté figure of Mrs. Henry Leigh on one side and the gurgling Myra West on the other.

"Where have you been keeping yourself lately, Janet?" murmured Gordon Key.

Anne was having a marvelous time. She did not believe anyone could fail to be plucked out of the doldrums if Stephen Hill took a notion to dispel them.

Down the table Priscilla was leaning a little forward in order to transfix Janet with a peculiarly brilliant smile. "Darling," she said in a high, carrying voice, "I do hope you are doing right by our house."

Janet's hand had tightened on her glass. So they are engaged, Priscilla and Tony, she really is going to marry him and live in my house, Janet was thinking. All around the table there was one of those ghastly silences that happen even in the best society.

"I wouldn't know of course," said Janet at last in a slow painful voice, "exactly what you'd expect of your dream house, Priscilla."

Priscilla looked up into Tony Ryan's inscrutable blue eyes. "I suspect it's all right," she said. "I mean I could go for anything that includes Tony."

"Sure," he murmured with an ironical grin.

Janet turned a little blindly to Gordon. "You asked me if I'd save you every other dance," she said quite loudly, "I'd love to."

"Thanks," murmured Gordon in a startled voice. They danced to the radio. Janet wondered miserably why she had promised Gordon so many dances. He had asked her for them and she had refused. That was why he looked startled when she changed her mind, but she was certain that everyone present believed she had invented the request in order to clamp Gordon to her side.

Janet went on dancing with Gordon, wretchedly self-conscious because her friends beamed every time they looked at her in his embrace. Not one of them would have cut in for the world, but Tony Ryan did without even a by-your-leave. He merely tapped Gordon on the shoulder and waltzed off with Janet.

"I'm breaking the unwritten law taking you away from that bird, or so I've been given to understand," he said with a grin.

"I can stand it if you can make your peace with your fiancée," she stammered.

Tony glanced at Priscilla who was glowering at them. "Do you

"And you never remarried?" "No. There were several men who tried to be nice to me after I'd been widowed a couple of years," explained Anne. "Jim wasn't quite thirteen at the time. He began to act strangely. He's always thought me perfect, but he took to staying away from home as much as possible. Berenice on the other hand shunned her playmates. Janet was crying when I came home from the store one night. She told me that all the kids at school were making fun of her and Jim and Berenice. The other children had invented a song, you know how children do, and they chanted it at my children every time they got a chance. Something to the effect: Your mother's got a beau! Jim and Berenice's mother has got a beau-o!"

Steve Hill smothered an expletive. "Little savages!" "Yes," said Anne, "but it wasn't worth it. The candy and flowers and theater tickets, I mean."

Steve Hill chuckled and then his face sobered. "You're warning me that your children come first with you?"

"Yes." "But you can't keep them always. Have you never realized how lost you'll feel when they've left you?"

"I've been staring that in the face for quite a while," said Anne in a low voice.

He had stopped the car outside the flat building, but he sat there motionless gazing straight before him, a crease like a wound between his eyes. "There's no emptiness so ghastly," he said, "as having nobody to go on for. I had a son, Annie."

"Yes?"

"His mother died soon after he was born. I banked everything on the boy. I was a struggling young reporter in those days, having the devil of a time to get by. I had a dream of being able to retire some day. In the meanwhile I boarded him with a family, good people, only he wanted to be with me."

"When the war broke out and the paper sent me to the front I couldn't see him at all, of course. After the war I had my passage engaged to return to New York when the office called me to cover a flare-up in the Far East. Then before I knew it I was in Australia interviewing the Anzacs. It was four years before I saw the boy again, and I had lost him."

(To Be Continued)

Very Probable

Policeman (to tramp sitting in top of oak tree): "Hey! what are you doing up there?"

Tramp: "I don't know; I must have sat on an acorn."—Royal Arcanum Bulletin.

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