

# The Democratic Sentinel.

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## THE DEMOCRATIC SENTINEL.

DEMOCRATIC NEWSPAPER.

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BY

JAS. W. McEWEEN

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Three months ..... .50

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ATTORNEY-AT-LAW,

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Office Over Makeever's Bank.

May 21, 1885.

### WM. W. WATSON,

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### W. W. HARTSELL, M. D.

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### DR. I. B. WASHBURN,

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RENSELAER, INDIANA.

### A PERIOD OF TERROR.

Chicago Times: The people who remember the year 1864 in the history of Chicago will recall a time scarcely less frightful in many particulars than the reign of terror in France at the close of the last century. It was a year when the fortunes of the North had reached the lowest depths, and when the triumph of the seceding States was almost one of the probabilities of the situation.

It was also a presidential year, and the Democrats were presenting General McClellan as their candidate. The administration in power was determined to perpetuate itself, and to this end it spared no effort. It is not in the least an exaggeration nor an untruth to assert that a very large element in the party that supported the reelection of Mr. Lincoln preferred his success to that of the union cause. There is excellent and potential reasons for believing that had they been offered the choice of the success of the confederates and that of McClellan they would

have chosen the former. It was Lincoln, power, public plunder, everything, before the success of the Federal arms.

Hence, there was a persistent and vigorous effort to accomplish the defeat of the Democratic candidate. The same effort—that of defeating the Commander of the Army of the Potomac—had been commenced in 1862, when McClellan was wading thro, the swamps of the Chickahominy. The fear that he would then come before the people as a presidential candidate had taken possession of the Washington regime and its followers throughout the North, and it continued to influence their action up to the date of his nomination in Chicago in 1864. The fear then culminated in what was beyond question one of the most curious and startling events in the history of the war.

It is asserted that during the month of August, in which the Democratic convention met, a conspiracy was exposed which had for its purpose the releasing of the Confederate prisoners at Camp

Douglas. It is alleged that the movement began several months before in Canada under the management of Jacob Thompson; that several days before the assembling of the convention, large gatherings of rebel sympathizers, soldiers, and escaped prisoners took place in Canada, who, under guise of visitors to the convention were to reach Chicago. There they were to be joined by members of the Sons of Liberty, Knights of the Golden Circle, and the American Knights, already organized through the West and Northwest, which force, aided by the discontented elements, was to inaugurate insurrection release the prisoners, and burn and plunder Chicago.

Such was the alleged programme of the alleged conspirators. It is added in the so-called history of this affair that the commandant at Camp Douglas became informed of the movement through agents in Canada, and that, on learning what was intended, he telegraphed for reinforcements, in response to which two regiments were sent here, which remained during the session of the Democratic convention. It is asserted that the conspirators, seeing the preparation for their reception, abandoned their schemes, and no insurrection or disturbance of any kind occurred.

There were still further conspiracies. In October of the same year the Confederate prisoners made an attempt to escape from Camp Douglas, but were defeated, owing to the fact that they were betrayed by some of their own numbers. A few of them did escape—not more, however, than a score.

In November still another conspiracy was unearthed which originated in Canada, and which was to be commanded by the same Captain Hines who is alleged to have been assigned to the conduct of the original movement. Concerning its character and purposes, a so-called historical account says: "It was composed of the same elements as before, and was to be put into execution on the day of the presidential election, November 8. According to the confession of the rebel officer and others, the design was to attack Camp Douglas, to release the prisoners there; with them to seize the polls, allowing none but the copperhead ticket to be voted, and stuff the boxes sufficiently to secure the city; then to utterly sack the city, burning and destroying every species of property except what they could appropriate to their own use and that of their Southern brethren—to lay the city in waste and carry off its money and stores to Jeff Davis' dominions."

Such was the programme. Rebels from the South and copperheads living in Chicago were to seize the polls, stuff the ballot-boxes with copperhead votes, and then burn down the city. What use in controlling the votes of a city that was doomed to immediate destruction? And, again, what part was to be played by the copperheads of the city, many of whom were large property-owners? They are credited with conspiring to burn their own houses and destroy the homes of their wives and children. In this work of first stuffing the ballot-boxes and then destroying the city the command was to be given to "Brigadier General Chas. Walsh, of the Sons of Liberty."

All will recall the result of the military commission which assembled in Cincinnati and tried the Chicago conspirators. The men who were tried were Charles Walsh, Buckner S. Morris, Vincent Marmaduke, G. St. Leger Grenfel, and R. T. Semmes. In all, there were five of these conspirators, of whom two were citizens of Chicago. Of the five, two were found not guilty. This reduces the actual number of men engaged in it to three. These three were sentenced—one to death and two to short terms of imprisonment. In the case of these three none of the sentences were carried into effect.

This finding three men guilty out of the five, and then discharging of these three without any punishment, was the outcome of the third great "conspiracy" which occurred in 1864 in the Garden City.

Can anything more trivial and contemptible be imagined than this outcome of conspiracies which were to release prisoners, control the vote of a great city, annihilate Chicago, and inaugurate insurrection in the North? And yet this was all there was of this gigantic movement, and which, according to some authorities, except for the vigilance of the loyalists on guard at this point, could have given Chicago over to destruction, created a revolution in the West, and might have eventuated in the establishment of the independence of the South.

That there was a conspiracy at the time will not be disputed; but as to the authenticity of it there is opportunity for a diversity of opinion. The facts and logic of the situation amply justify the conclusion that such a conspiracy as there was concocted to defeat McClellan, and not in the least for the purpose ostensibly claimed, or as "confessed by rebel officers and others." How far this view of the case is plausible will be shown in the course of this article.

Much apparent stress is laid by those who affect to believe there was a real conspiracy or the existence of a secret order in Chicago. There was an order, it is true, but there has never been produced one particle of evidence that its purposes were inimical to the union. As a matter of fact its formation had no connection whatever with national affairs. It was known as the American Knights, and in it were some of the best citizens of Chicago, among whom were such men as Buckner S. Morris, John Garrick, the present Postmaster, S. Corning Judd, and others equally above suspicion of being tainted with treason. The order was instituted solely with reference to local abuses. It took no cognizance of national affairs; it concerned itself only with issues and events having bearing on matters in and about Chicago.

One not personally informed of the condition of affairs in Chicago during the years of the war can not possibly have any adequate idea of the persecutions, the insolences, the exactions, and the insults which prevailed. To be a Democrat was an offense as rank as treason. Such a man was a "copperhead," a "secessionist," a "traitor," and all else that was vile. He was tabooed in society and boycotted in business. He was abused in the public prints and was the subject of constant vituperation on the part of public speakers.

A case of business boycott may be mentioned as illustrative of the spirit which prevailed. One of the prominent men of that period was John Garrick, a well-known lumber merchant, and who was successful as a business man. He is a man against whose integrity there has never been a suspicion, and whose private and business life has always been above reproach. He was a Democrat when the war broke out, and continued to be so to the end, and is probably still firm in the faith at the present date. While a Democrat he was not a disunionist. He believed and argued—for he was an excellent public speaker—that slavery could be disposed of and all the difficulties involved in the war of secession could be settled and the Union preserved without a resort to coercion. For this he was made a target by the loyalists of Chicago. One of the headlines of the leading "loyal" newspaper of the city headed a report of one of his speeches with black letters like those of a poster: "Garrick, the Traitor! Spot him!"

When Lincoln was assassinated a meeting of the lumbermen was called to take action in the case of Garrick, and it was formally resolved by that body "that we will neither sell to, nor buy from said John Garrick, and that we pledge

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Buy Furniture at the new Furniture Store, opposite the Public Square, Rensselaer, Ind. W.&O.