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May 28 1917.

THE EARLY POLITICAL CAREER  
OF HENRY H. SIBLEY,  
1846 - 1853.

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE  
FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
BY  
ELEANOR FRANCES RAYMOND  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS  
J U N E,  
1917.

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REPORT  
of  
COMMITTEE ON EXAMINATION

This is to certify that we the undersigned, as a Committee of the Graduate School, have given ~~Mleanor Frances Raymond~~ final oral examination for the degree of Master of ~~Arts~~. We recommend that the degree of Master of ~~Arts~~ be conferred upon the candidate.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

May 30 1917

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## INTRODUCTION

For this attempt to trace, for a brief period of years, the public influence of Henry H. Sibley, the library of the Minnesota Historical Society has offered abundant material. This consists of the Sibley papers; the collection of early Minnesota newspapers; the published collections of the Society, especially the memoirs and reminiscences; and the pamphlets and documents relating to the early territorial period.

To give an account of the efforts of Mr. Sibley in securing the passage of the bill for organizing Minnesota Territory, and to show, if possible, his influence on its early political history, in as far as this is explained by the sources just mentioned, supplemented by the general histories of Minnesota - is the aim of this thesis.

(1)  
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, 1811-1846.

Henry Hastings Sibley was born February 20, 1811, in the city of Detroit, Michigan. His father, Solomon Sibley, of New England parentage, served the public in various capacities - as territorial delegate, member of the first territorial legislature of the Northwest, mayor of Detroit, trustee of the University of Michigan, territorial judge, and chief justice. His mother's parents and grandparents were pioneers of Ohio and Michigan.

He received, for that period, an excellent secondary and professional training, attending the academy at Detroit, and supplementing this with four more years of work, two in the study of Greek and Latin, and two in the study of law. Not wishing a career as a lawyer, he became a clerk in a sutler's store at Sault Ste. Marie, in 1828. At this time he accepted the charge of the affairs of a Mrs. Johnson, mother-in-law of Henry Schoolcraft, United States Indian Agent in that vicinity, and the widow of an

(1) The following sketch of the early life of Sibley is based upon the very full account by Nathaniel West, The Ancestry, Life, and Times of Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley, supplemented by: Baker, Lives of the Governors of Minnesota; Williams, Henry Hastings Sibley: A Memoir; and Sibley, "Reminiscences of the Early Days of Minnesota;" in Minnesota Historical Society Collections, 3: 242-277. Short accounts are given in: Minnesota in Three Centuries, 2:93-95; Neill, History of Minnesota, 497-498. A bibliography of biographies of Sibley is found in Minnesota Biographies, 1655-1912, compiled by Warren Upham and Mrs. R. B. Dunlap. No citation of pages will be given except when reference is made to material from sources other than West.

Indian trader. This business she had continued after her husband's death. In this position, Sibley became familiar with Indian trading. In 1829, he became clerk for the American Fur Company, at Mackinac, the central depot of the company. He remained in this position for five years. While here he was appointed justice of the peace for the "county of Michilimackinac" by the Governor of Michigan Territory. The commission is dated June 29, 1832, Mr. Sibley at that time being only twenty-one years of age. <sup>(1)</sup>

In 1834, a new corporation gained control of the American Fur Company, and Ramsey Crooks was chosen president. In the re-organization which followed, a co-partnership was formed, consisting of Hercules L. Dousman, Joseph Rolette, and Henry Sibley. Dousman took charge of affairs at the headquarters at Prairie du Chien, while Sibley was stationed at the junction of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. As agent in charge of this post, at that time called St. Peters, now Mendota, he was authorized to control the trade with the Sioux Indians "from Lake Pepin to the British line, and to the head waters of the Missouri." In making this agreement, he was influenced by Dousman, who knew that Sibley would enjoy the open, primitive life of early Minnesota. In this office he succeeded Alexis Bailly, who had been removed because of trouble with the United States Indian authorities on the charge of sale of liquor to the Sioux. <sup>(2)</sup> Accompanied by Bailly

(1) Commission of Henry H. Sibley as Justice of Peace for Michilimackinac County. Sibley Papers.

(2) Minnesota in Three Centuries, 2: 55, 94. Quotes from the records of Major Taliaferro.

he arrived at Mendota, where he lived in Bailly's home until the next year, when he purchased the latter's interest in the fur company. In 1836, with the aid of the company, he built a large warehouse and a stone residence, the first in Minnesota. Here he spent much of his time in studying the English classics and writing for eastern magazines. In this manner he developed his clear style of speaking and writing - a quality which was of decided advantage to him in his political career.

In 1838 Governor Chambers of Iowa Territory appointed him justice of the peace for Clayton County. He spoke of himself as being the only civil magistrate in the county, with the county seat some three hundred miles distant. His jurisdiction extended "from twenty miles south of Prairie du Chien to the British Boundary on the north, to the White River on the west, and to the Mississippi on the east. His prisoners could only be committed to Prairie du Chien. Boundary lines were very dimly indicated in those days. Minor magistrates were in no fear of being over-ruled by superior courts, and tradition asserts that the writs of Sibley's court often extended into Wisconsin and other jurisdictions." In this position he established for himself the reputation of having a well-balanced judgment and a responsible attitude toward matters of public trust. <sup>(1)</sup> As factor at Mendota, he was well liked by the

(1) His commission as justice of the peace for Clayton County, Iowa Territory, is dated October 30, 1838. Sibley Papers.

Reference also to Sibley, "Reminiscences of Early Days of Minnesota," in M.H.S.C., 3: 266.

Quotation from Flandrau, Charles E., "Lawyers and Courts of Minnesota Prior to and During its Territorial Period," in Minnesota Historical Society Collections, 8: 90.



Indians in his district. This friendship was helpful to him while assisting in the negotiation of the Sioux Treaty of 1851.

In 1843, Sibley married the sister of Franklin Steele, and his home became renowned for its hospitality. Here many distinguished persons were his guests. Among these were Lewis Cass, Henry Schoolcraft, Jean Nicolle, John C. Fremont, George Catlin, G. Featherstonhaugh, Marryat, and Governor Henry Dodge. It was during this earlier period, 1834-1846, that he was first associated with such other pioneer leaders of Minnesota as Joseph R. Brown, Franklin Steele, Martin McLeod, Norman Kittson, and Henry M. Rice.<sup>(1)</sup> These men play prominent parts in Mr. Sibley's political career.

#### Sibley's Part in the Organization of Minnesota Territory, 1846-1849.

Mr. Sibley became an important factor in Minnesota politics as early as 1848, as one of a group of men, most of whom resided in St. Croix County, who were interested in securing the limitation of Wisconsin territory at the time of its organization as a state, with the view to promoting the early organization of Minnesota Territory.<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Minnesota in Three Centuries, 2: 91.

(2) Flandrau, "Lawyers and Courts of Minnesota," in Minnesota Historical Society Collections, 8:90. "When Wisconsin was a territory, its part lying west of the St. Croix was in St. Croix County, which included St. Anthony Falls, Stillwater, Point Douglas, Marine Mills, Aucola, and St. Paul."

The explanation of this movement involves a survey of the history of the different jurisdictions placed over the land now known as Minnesota. The Treaty of 1763 divided this land into two parts. "The seventh article made the Mississippi from its source to about the 31st degree of north latitude the boundary between the English Colonies on this Continent and French Louisiana." Louisiana Territory, however, had passed into the possession of Spain by the secret treaty of Fountainebleau, 1762. It was not until 1803 that the two sections were united. At this time they came under the control of the Territory of Michigan. During the intervening period, 1763 to 1803, the eastern part passed from English possession into that of the United States, later, in turn, becoming part of the Northwest Territory, of Indiana, and of Illinois. The western part passed from French to Spanish, back to French dominion, and became a part of the United States in 1803. In 1808, both Minnesota East and West were included in the Territory of Wisconsin, remaining so for two years, when Iowa Territory was organized, including Minnesota West. In 1846, Iowa was admitted as a state, and the western part of Minnesota remained without any apparent jurisdiction until the territory was organized in 1849.

(1) Winchell, Alexander N., "Minnesota's Eastern, Southern and Western Boundaries," in Minnesota Historical Society Collections, 10 pt.2: 677-687. Mr. Winchell has traced the history of Minnesota's boundaries from a study of the Executive Documents, Moore, Treaties and Conventions, and the U.S. Statutes at Large. This summary is based upon this account, pages, 677-682.

In August, 1846, Congress passed an act enabling the people of Wisconsin to hold a constitutional convention. The first convention assembled October 5, 1846. In the debates in regard to Wisconsin's northwestern boundary, William Holcombe, representing the interests of St. Croix County, proposed that the western line should be so designated as to cut off a large portion of northwestern Wisconsin. The amendment reads: "Commencing at the head waters of the Montreal River, as marked by Captain Cram, thence southwest to a point a half degree north of the highest peak on Mountain Island, on the Mississippi River, thence due south over said Mountain Island to the center of the channel of the Mississippi." This amendment was rejected. A second line was proposed by Holcombe, and attached to the constitution adopted by the convention. The constitution itself was rejected, however, by the people of the Territory the following April. <sup>(1)</sup>

In the second constitutional convention, assembled at Madison, December, 1847, George W. Brownell represented St. Croix County. The president of the convention, Morgan L. Martin, favored the interests of this region. At this meeting the boundary line of the enabling act of 1846 was accepted, but in a memorial to Congress, the western and northwestern line preferred by the majority of the members of the convention was stated as that line which should leave "The aforesaid boundary line at the foot of the rapids of the St. Louis River, thence in a direct line, bearing southwest-

(1) Journal of the Convention to form a Constitution for the State of Wisconsin, Oct. 5, 1846. Holcombe's amendment, 349, Second amendment, 444, 449. Minnesota in Three Centuries, 2:340-342.

ly to the mouth of the Iskodewaba or Rum River, where the same empties into the Mississippi River; thence down the main channel of the said Mississippi River, as prescribed in the aforesaid boundary." This line which would have included in the State of Wisconsin all of the counties of Washington and Ramsey, and part of Anoka, Isanti, Chisago, Pine and Carlton, was vigorously opposed by Mr. Brownell who twice proposed a line much the same as that of the Holcombe amendment, previously quoted. He urged this line as a natural geographical division separating people of "different interests."

Congress rejected the Rum River proviso, and on May 29, 1848, Wisconsin was admitted into the union with the boundaries provided for in the act of 1846, a compromise of the two favored lines. In this rejection of the boundary preferred by the Constitutional Convention, it is thought that Congress was influenced by a memorial presented by settlers of the St. Croix Valley, and the vicinity of St. Paul. A public meeting was held January 24, 1848, at St. Paul, to consider the effect of these western boundaries on the "proposed new Territory of Minnesota." As a result of

(1) Winchell, "Minnesota's Eastern, Southern and Western Boundaries," in Minnesota Historical Society Collections, 10 pt. 2: 684, quoted in regard to the Rum River Boundary. Wisconsin Constitutional Convention, 1847-8. Journal of the Convention with a Sketch of the Debates, 62, also gives this line. Minnesota in Three Centuries, 2: 343, 346, 347.

(2) Boundaries of Wisconsin. Reasons why the Boundaries of Wisconsin, as Reported by the Committee for the Admission of that Territory into the Union as a State, should not be adopted.

(3) "Organization of Minnesota Territory," (From the "Annals" of 1851). Minnesota Historical Society Collections, 1:53.

(4) Minnesota in Three Centuries, 2: 347, 357. A copy of the proceedings of this meeting is said, by the editors, to be in the possession of the Minnesota State Historical Society.

this meeting to protest against the Rum River and St. Louis River lines, a memorial was presented in Congress. This has three hundred and forty-six signatures, including the names of H.H.Sibley, Joseph R. Brown, Franklin Steele, William R. Marshall, Alexander MacLeod, (1) H. M. Rice, and others interested in the organization of Minnesota.

The following extract from a letter from H. E. Dousman at Prairie du Chien, January 28, 1848, to Mr. Sibley, is a second indication of the point of view of the latter in regard to Wisconsin's boundary: "I am told by folks from St. Paul, that you are quite Savage, because our state has seen proper to fix the Northern Boundary at Rum River instead of the Mountain in the Water, as the St. Croix people wanted - I have done my utmost to get the Rum River boundary, as well as all the people of the Western Counties, for without it we will have no political influence in the State - The Convention have after a long debate unanimously (except Brownell of course) agreed on putting the boundary where it should have been in the first place and nothing can take it from there at present, for the People would vote down any line further south - I cannot see what interest you have in the matter- You are now sure to have the Seat of Govt. of the New Territory fixed on your side of the River and with the old boundary it would most unquestionably have been put on the East - The Govt. will be more anxious to treat for the county on the West than if the St. Croix had formed part of the New Territory & I certainly thought that I was promoting your inter-

(1) Memorial of Citizens of the United States, Residing within the limits of the Territory of Minnesota as defined in the Bill before Congress at the last session in relation to the boundary of that Territory, March 28, 1848. Senate Misc. Doc. No. 98, 30th Congress, 1st Session.

(1)

est as well as mine in urging this matter."

Mr. Sibley entered the field of national politics in 1848, as a delegate from that portion of Wisconsin Territory not included in the State of Wisconsin. He also received a special commission from representative citizens of Minnesota to endeavor to secure the early organization of Minnesota Territory. The first attempt toward organization was made in December, 1846, when Morgan L. Martin, delegate from Wisconsin Territory, introduced into the House of Representatives a "bill establishing the territorial government of Minnesota." In the House, some discussion in regard to the name of the territory took place, and the bill was passed. In the Senate, the question of the population of the territory arose. It was thought that this district had not sufficient numbers at that time for organization and that the bill was designed to create offices, so it was tabled. <sup>(2)</sup> This measure was supposed to have been instigated by Joseph R. Brown, that he first proposed the name of "Minnesota," and that Mr. Sibley was also interested in the scheme. <sup>(3)</sup> As early as April 13, 1847, D. G. Fenton, in writing to Sibley, suggests that he be governor. "Why will you not take the Governorship? You can get it for the asking." He also adds that there is no one better qualified. The next November, Fenton suggests that Sibley run for delegate. In a letter dated April 22, of that year, John McKusick, one of the leaders in the work of

(1) Unless otherwise stated, all letters cited are found in the Sibley Papers.

(2) Congressional Globe, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, 1846-47, 53, 71, 218, 441, 446, 540, 572.

(3) Minnesota in Three Centuries, 2: 350, 353.

organization, wrote to Sibley that he would support the latter because of his interest in the fur company, and that this association with the fur company would increase Sibley's influence with the Government. Another attempt was made early in 1848, when Senator Douglas introduced the second Minnesota bill in the Senate. Congress adjourned in August without having acted on this measure. (1)

Meanwhile the promoters were active on the subject. Mr. Sibley, in his "Reminiscences," tells of a meeting at Henry Jackson's store on Bench Street, St. Paul, which was probably the first held with the definite view of territorial organization. At this meeting, besides himself, were Auguste Larpenteur, Alexander McLeod, J.W. Bass, David Lambert, James McBoal, and several others. The assembly was organized, some speeches were made, and a resolution in favor of a convention of the people was passed. This meeting, according to Mr. Sibley, was probably held in May or June, 1848. (2)

On August 4, that same year, a call for a public meeting at Stillwater on August 26th, was issued, signed by H.H. Sibley, Joseph R. Brown, Franklin Steele, H.L. Moss, and others, as "citizens of Minnesota Territory." This called for a meeting of delegates appointed by the people of the several settlements in the proposed territory, at Stillwater, in order that the action

(1) Congressional Globe, 30th Congress, 1st Session, 136, 656, 772, 1052.

(2) "Reminiscences; Historical and Personal." Minnesota Historical Society Collections, 1: 395. Mr. Sibley states that this meeting was probably in May or June. Neill, History of Minnesota, 490, gives July. Minnesota in Three Centuries, 2:361, 362. July given as time of meeting. Page 362, a statement is made that the call for the convention is in the possession of the State Historical Society.

necessary for early organization might be taken. The convention of August 26th, temporarily organized, selected two committees, one to choose permanent officers, and a second to draw up two memorials, one to Congress and one to the President, urging the organization of Minnesota Territory, as the western portion of Wisconsin had been left without a government or officers. Among the resolutions which preceded the memorial was one calling for a "delegate to be sent to Washington during the ensuing session of Congress, to represent the interests of the proposed new territory and to urge immediate organization." On the first ballot, Mr. Sibley received a majority of all votes cast, and was declared to be elected unanimously. In accordance with the resolutions, he was furnished with a certificate of election by the convention. He also received copies of the memorials, and was instructed to use the term "Minnesota."<sup>(1)</sup>

Another plan was proposed in a letter dated August 22, from the Secretary of Wisconsin Territory, John Catlin. This letter is said to have been read at this second Stillwater meeting. It proposed that the Territory of Wisconsin be considered as still in existence in that portion which had been excluded by the boundaries of the state. With this letter was another written by James Buchanan, Secretary of State, in which the latter expressed the opinion that the laws of Wisconsin Territory were still in force

(1) "Organization of Minnesota Territory." Minnesota Historical Society Collections, 1:56, 57, 58, 59, 61. Mr. Sibley was a member of the committee to choose permanent officers.

Certificate as delegate of the Stillwater Convention.  
Sibley Papers.



in the excluded portion, and that all local officers residing within its limits might continue in their offices. Supported by this authority, Mr. Catlin proposed that he take up his residence within the District, and, as acting governor of Wisconsin Territory, appoint a day for an election of a delegate, when the present incumbent of that office had been induced to resign. This plan was carried out. Mr. Tweedy having resigned, Mr. Catlin issued a proclamation from Stillwater providing for a special election to be held on October 30, for a delegate from the territory north of St. Croix and east of the Mississippi River. (1)

September 4, J. D. Doty wrote to Mr. Sibley: - "I do not know on which side of the river you are, but I am confident if you will establish your residence on the east side - which you can easily do - you can be elected Delegate - Let me urge you to do so as nothing would please me more than your election." The same day, D. G. Fenton, also writing from Madison, notified him that "Governor" Catlin would issue the proclamation for election, and advised him to remove to St. Paul, so as to be eligible for candidacy. Later, in October, Mr. Doty wrote again to Mr. Sibley. Having examined the act to establish the territorial government of Wisconsin, he had reached the conclusion that neither delegate, governor, judges, or other officers, needed to be either citizens

(1) Folwell, Minnesota, The North Star State, 87. Minnesota in Three Centuries, 2: 364. No action was taken on the Catlin letter in this meeting. Refer also to "Organization of Minnesota Territory," Minnesota Historical Society Collections, 1: 33-34. John Catlin, November 21, 1848, letter to Sibley. H. L. Meas, September 4, and October 13, 1848. Letters to Sibley.

or residents of the surviving territory.

In the personal contest which followed, there were two candidates, Henry M. Rice, and Sibley. Mr. Rice, also a pioneer of Minnesota, and interested in one of the leading fur companies, at that time was a heavy investor in real estate in St. Paul and other Minnesota lands. Although Sibley had been regarded as the candidate for delegate since early in 1847, Rice, as the day for election drew nearer, steadily gained adherents. One reason for this was the idea, which became current, that Sibley was pledged to the removal of the land office from St. Croix Falls to St. Paul, although this place was the seat of Rice's influence. Mr. Rice used this to weaken Sibley's support in St. Croix Falls. Friends of Mr. Sibley talked at this time of compromising the demands of St. Paul and Stillwater, whereby the latter was to receive the land office, and St. Paul was to be rewarded later. Mr. Rice, regardless of this plan, was said to be pledged to support Stillwater in this question.

Election precincts were established at Stillwater, Marine, St. Paul, Prescott's and Pokegama. In the latter part of October, two new ones were located at Sauk Rapids and Crow Wing respectively. In these localities there were many unnaturalized French and half-breeds. Mr. Catlin, in his zeal to secure the organization of the territory, suggested to Mr. Sibley that the restrictions imposed upon the electors be relaxed so as to admit the vote of all who would be entitled to suffrage when the territory was organized. This would admit the unnaturalized French, friends of Mr. Sibley, as well as the employees of the company at Crow Wing, Mr. Rice's

(1)

men,- thus increasing the number of voters in the territory. Mr. Sibley's objection to this proposition, given in a letter to David Lambert, October 12, 1848, is here quoted in part:

"I received your est'd favor of 11th inst. a few moments since, and hasten to reply to it. I should be most happy, under ordinary circumstances to comply with the wishes of the Hon. Mr. Catlin, but the proposition contained in your note, involves objections of a grave character. In the first place, it is altogether probable that Congress will scrutinize more strictly than usual, the claim of the Delegate who may be elected from Wisconsin Territory, to be admitted to a seat. If anything can be found which can be construed into informality or a non-adherence to the Organic Law, the chance of his being elected will be diminished. Then again if Mr. E. should be defeated, he may choose to contest the seat on the ground of the illegality of the election. Another ground of objection is that my opponent has, either in his employ or under his immediate influence, a large number of men who are not legal voters, and who would to a man cast their votes for him, and thus neutralize those of the old settlers. To be sure the French portion of the population, are mostly in my favor, but many of them could not have a vote inasmuch as they have not yet declared their intentions. With all due respect therefore to Mr. Catlin, ....., I conceive it would be inexpedient to depart in this

(1) Minnesota in Three Centuries, 2: 97, 98. Statement of Mr. Rice's interest in St. Paul real estate. Pages 371, 373, Election precincts. H. L. Moss, Oct. 20, 1848. Jacob Fisher, Sept. 24, 1848. Letters to Sibley, contain statements in regard to the question of the land office, and election precincts.

case from the strict letter of the law. I give these as my views to you confidentially, that you may suggest these objections, as emanating from yourself, for were I to take open ground in the matter, my intentions would doubtless be misconstrued, and it would be made to appear by my opponents, that I was opposed to allowing the French to vote, & thus injure me with them which is by no means the case, as they are my friends, almost without exception. The reason of the comparatively small number of votes, can easily be explained by the Delegate elect, when the subject of the organization comes up before Congress, as having been caused by the stringent provision of the election law as it now exists.

"I am glad to learn that things are favorable on the St. Croix. I trust the 30th will show that it is the will of the people, that I should represent their interests in Congress, although I should have preferred that the election had been fixed at an earlier day, as several of my warm friends will be absent at Galena, who could wait until the 25th, but not later."<sup>(1)</sup>

Some of the conditions of this "squatter" election are given in two letters contained in the Sibley papers. The first, from William Dugas to Mr. Forbes, dated October 31, states that in the election in his precinct, Mr. Rice's friends used bribes, while Mr. Sibley's saved their money. The other compares the popularity of the two candidates. Joseph Brown, writing December 1st, tells Sibley that although he has found that the latter had

(1) Moss, Oct. 10, 1848. Letter to Sibley. In this he gives reasons for holding the election on October 30.

many friends among the Chippewa Indians, the people of Crow Wing were for Mr. Rice. The election, though closely contested, proved that Sibley's trust was not misplaced. A series of resolutions drawn up at a meeting held in St. Paul, probably some time in January, 1849, in support of Sibley, contains one in relation to this contest. This resolution, quoted below, represents the sentiment of the majority of the people of Minnesota after the election: "Be it therefore resolved; that the election held on the 30th of October last for Delegate to Congress was conducted without distinction of party. That the lines of national politics were not drawn; and that the Hon. Henry H. Sibley was elected to Congress by the votes of citizens of all political parties, simply because they reposed the fullest confidence in his integrity and abilities as a man, and thought him in all respects the best qualified to protect the interests of the people of Wisconsin Territory, and to procure for them an early Territorial organization."<sup>(1)</sup>

November 4, Mr. Catlin issued to Sibley a certificate of election as delegate from the Territory of Wisconsin. In a letter to the latter, November 21, he speaks of having written to several members of Congress about Sibley, to help him in gaining admission

(1) Gilfillan, Charles D., "The Early Political History of Minnesota" in Minnesota Historical Society Collections, 9: 167. Mr. Gilfillan describes this contest of 1848 as a "squatter" election. Series of Resolutions drawn up by a meeting of the citizens of St. Paul, convened at the office of David Lambert, Esq. Sibley Papers. No date given to these resolutions. Probably this is the meeting of January 25, 1849, the call for which, issued by Steele and Lambert, may be found in the Sibley Papers. The call states that the object of the meeting is to ask Congress to admit Sibley.

to the House. He also gives advice as to Sibley's conduct in applying for recognition, telling him that his greatest problem will be to get Congress to examine the case, and that his strongest arguments are, - the number of inhabitants and the amount of business in the district, and that a government cannot be repudiated, except by its own act. He then advises Sibley to try to have his credentials examined by a committee. <sup>(1)</sup>

For this mission to Congress Mr. Sibley possessed two certificates, - one authorizing him, as delegate, to represent the residuum of the Territory of Wisconsin, and the other, as agent, to represent the "people of Minnesota." <sup>(2)</sup>

In an address before the "Old Settlers' Association," June, 1858, Mr. Sibley gave an account of the difficulties attending the situation. Describing his emotions while enroute to Washington, he states: "I desire that none of you shall ever experience more doubt or distress of mind than I felt, when, as delegate elect from the Territory of Wisconsin, I took the route to Washington City, in 1848, with a view to securing a seat in the House of Representatives, and the subsequent passage of an act for the establishment of Minnesota. I was then an utter stranger to all except two or three of the public men of the country." <sup>(3)</sup>

(1) John Catlin, November 4, 1848. Letter to Sibley. States that he is enclosing his certificate of election as delegate from Wisconsin Territory.

(2) See previous reference to these certificates.

(3) "Organization of Minnesota Territory," in Minnesota Historical Society Collections, 1:41. Portion of this address given in a footnote.

When the second session of the Thirtieth Congress assembled in December, 1848, Mr. Sibley presented himself as a candidate for a seat in the House of Representatives and exhibited his credentials. His claim was referred to the Committee on Elections. January 2, Mr. Thompson submitted the report of the majority of this committee, and the following resolution: "Resolved, that Henry H. Sibley be admitted to a seat on the floor of the House of Representatives as a delegate from the Territory of Wisconsin." This report and resolution were laid on the table, and ordered to be printed. Mr. Thompson, on the fifteenth, moved the consideration of both the report and resolution of the majority, and the report of the minority of the committee. When these had been read, to avoid a debate, he moved the previous question on the adoption of the resolution of the majority. It was then passed by a vote of 124 to 62. Thus after a delay of six weeks, during which time Sibley was allowed the courtesy of occupying a seat in the House, but none of the privileges of a delegate, his claim was acknowledged.<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Congressional Globe, 30th Congress, 2nd Session, 1848-1849; 137, 259, 260. Account of the proceedings of Congress relative to the admission of Sibley as delegate from the residuum of Wisconsin Territory.

"First Address of Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley of Minnesota Territory, March 10, 1849," in West, Ancestry, Life and Times of Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley, Appendix 443. In this speech he gives an account of his admission. A printed copy may be found in the Sibley Papers.

In his speech before the Committee on Elections, delivered December 22, at the opening of the session, he reviews his arguments in defense of his position. He states that his certificate from the acting governor of the residuum of Wisconsin Territory is "prima facie evidence" of the legality of his election. He then proceeds to show that the people of this district were entitled to the same "rights and immunities which were secured to the people of the whole territory by organic law." To him, these rights were inalienable. Disposing of precedents cited, by those who denied his claim, as not being parallel to his case, he speaks of the material advantages which would be offered to its citizens if the territory were organized. He concludes eloquently: "But, believing as I do, before God, that my case, and the question whether there is any law in the Territory of Wisconsin, are intimately and indissolubly blended together, I trust that the house of representatives will, by its decision of the claim before it, establish the principle, which shall be as a landmark in all coming time, that citizens of this mighty republic, upon whom the right and immunities of a civil government have been once bestowed by an act of Congress, shall not be deprived of these without fault or agency of their own, unless under circumstances of grave and imperious necessity, involving the safety and well being of the whole country."<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) "Maiden Speech of Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley of Wisconsin Territory, Before the Committee on Elections, House of Representatives. Delivered December 22, 1846. Opening of Second Session, Thirtieth Congress." West, Ancestry, Life and Times of Henry Hastings Sibley, Appendix, 435, 437, 439, 449.  
Printed copy of this speech is found in the Sibley Papers.



Soon after his admission, a bill, introduced January 8, for an appropriation of \$10,500 for the officers of the Territory of Wisconsin, called forth a lengthy debate on the subject of the recognition of the residue of this territory. If this debate had occurred before Sibley's admission, it is quite probable that he would not have been favorably received. In this contest no objection was made to his residence west of the Mississippi and outside of the district represented. (1)

His acceptance as delegate is believed to have been due largely to his personal charm, which gained him many friends. His associates in Minnesota were not neglectful of him, many of them writing him in regard to his contest during this period. January 25, 1849, a public meeting was held at St. Paul to urge the organization of Minnesota Territory, to send instructions to the delegate, and to demonstrate to Congress the sympathy of his constituents with his efforts. (2)

(1) Congressional Globe, 30th Congress, 2nd Session, 1848-1849, 295-297.

(2) Williams, J. Fletcher, "Henry Hastings Sibley: A Memoir," in Minnesota Historical Society Collections, 6: 279. Mr. Williams tells of Sibley's popularity and pleasing personality.

An article, dated St. Paul, Nov. 25, 1848, signed "Spillman," appeared in the Washington City "Union," January 13th. This article, attacking Sibley, was at first believed to have been instigated by Rice. Later, William D. Phillips acknowledged its authorship, exonerating Rice. As a result of this attack a meeting was held in St. Paul at the office of David Lambert. At this time a series of resolutions in support of Sibley were formulated. In regard to this attack and these resolutions, see H. E. Moss, Feb. 11, 1849, letter to Sibley, and the "Series of Resolutions" in the Sibley Papers.

The final bill for the organization of Minnesota Territory was introduced in the Senate very early in this session by Senator Douglas. It was taken up for discussion January 18 and 19. This debate centered around several questions in regard to the new territory. The request for a statement of the number of citizens was answered by Mr. Douglas, who said that their number was between eight and ten thousand, including the people of the scattered settlements. When it was asked if these were not too far apart for government, Mr. Westcott, having had a conversation with the Delegate, was able to state that: "Contiguous to the falls of St. Anthony, I understand that there are about six thousand people located within about 100 sq. miles of the territory..... There are two or three other settlements ..... compact in their nature." From these remarks, Mr. Sibley seems to have spoken convincingly. Another question was why this territory to the St. Croix River had not been included by Wisconsin, the answer given being that the latter state was not permitted by its enabling act to include this district. On this day, January 19, the bill was read for the third time, and passed.

Transferred to the House, it was referred to the Committee on Territories. When reported back to this assembly with amendments, it finally came up for debate February 22 and 23. In this debate, Mr. Sibley made use of his privilege as territorial delegate by taking an active part in the discussion. The measure was eventually passed, amended in such a way as to take effect on March 10, 1849. This was voted by the Whig majority in the House, who desired that the new territorial officers should be appointed by President Taylor.

who would succeed President Polk on March 4. Being a Whig, he would probably secure, in the selection of the territorial officers, members of that party. The bill was returned to the Senate, and that body refused to agree to this amendment. When it was sent back to the House, its progress was delayed until late in the evening of March 3, the members of the latter assembly refusing to withdraw the objectionable amendment. Finally, on the motion of Mr. Sibley, they withdrew the amendment in controversy, and the bill organizing Minnesota Territory was passed, thereby becoming effective after March 3, the end of the session. (1)

This change of attitude on the part of the House was due to a bargain, brought about by Sibley, between that body and the Senate. Mr. Sibley gives the following account of this arrangement: "The bill for the formation of a new department, called the "Home" or "Interior" Department, passed the House; and towards the close of the session its fate was to be decided in the Senate. Several of the democratic senators, although not decided in their opposition, cared little whether a measure which bestowed upon the incoming administration a large additional amount of patronage, would be successful or not. It was while laboring under great apprehensions lest the Minnesota bill should be defeated, that I chanced to find myself in the Senate. I expressed my fears to several of the democratic senators, who were my personal friends, and they, to the number of five or six, authorized me to say to the Whig leaders in the House, that unless that body

(1) Congressional Globe, 30th Congress, 2nd Session, 1849-  
1849, 1, 286, 298, 299, 581, 617, 635, 693.

receded from its amendment, and thus permitted Minnesota to be organized, they would cast their votes against the bill for the formation of the Interior Department. I hastened back to the House, called together several of the prominent whig members, and informed them of the state of affairs. Satisfied that the votes of the senators I named would turn the whole scale for or against the measure they particularly desired would succeed, they went to work in the House, and produced so great a change in a short time that a motion to recede from their amendment to the senate bill was adopted the same evening, by a majority of some thirty or forty.<sup>(1)</sup>"

In spite of this withdrawal of the objectionable amendment, the Whigs had triumphed, for the appointment of the territorial officers was made by the new president. He, following the precedent, long established in connection with a change of administration, -"To the victor belongs the spoils"- made the usual territorial appointments from that party. Of these officials, only one, Henry L. Moss, who became Secretary of the Territory, resided in Minnesota before taking up his office. No doubt he owed his appointment largely to the influence of Sibley.<sup>(2)</sup>

During the action on the Minnesota Bill, Henry M. Rice was in Washington, helping Sibley in the work of promoting the measure. Personal rivalry had been set aside for greater effort

(1) "Organization of Minnesota Territory," Minnesota Historical Society Collections, 1:41. Portion of Sibley's speech given in a footnote.

(2) Minnesota in Three Centuries, 2: 425. H. L. Moss, Dec. 18, and 29, 1848. Two letters to Sibley in regard to his appointment.

(1)  
in behalf of the territory.

The success of Mr. Sibley in gaining admission to Congress as delegate from Wisconsin Territory, and his influence in promoting the Minnesota bill for organization, proved to the people of that region the wisdom of their choice. He was warmly received on his return in April, 1849, for, because of his popularity, aided by his good judgment, he had secured the early recognition of his territory.

(1) The letter of the 18th from Moss refers to Rice's activities in Washington.

(2) Minnesota Pioneer, Saturday, April 28, 1849. The return of Rice and Sibley are announced. This issue, the first of the Pioneer, is in the possession of the State Historical Society.

INFLUENCE ON TERRITORIAL POLITICS WHILE DELEGATE  
TO CONGRESS, 1849-1853.

As might be expected, the man who had labored so successfully for the admission of Minnesota Territory gained wide political influence throughout that district. The history of Minnesota politics during the first three or four years of the territorial period, is one of purely personal contest. It is true, the first Territorial Governor, Alexander Ramsey, was a Whig, - as were the other territorial officers who were appointed by President Taylor in accordance with the Organic Act, approved March 3, 1849.<sup>(1)</sup> It may also be admitted that there were many Whigs and Democrats in the Territory, - Mr. Sibley, the representative citizen, calling himself a "Democrat of the Jeffersonian School." In the various early elections, these terms, "Whig" and "Democrat," were continually used. Yet acknowledgment of party did not prevent either leaders or their supporters from changing their allegiance from time to time, for purely personal reasons. In his relation to territorial policies, Mr. Sibley, a Democrat in national matters, called himself a "neutral," and as such his

(1) Minnesota Legislative Manual, 1915. Part I, gives the Organic Act for the Territory of Minnesota. For the officers of the Territory, see Sections 2 and 3. This was published in the first number of the Minnesota Register on April 27, 1849. This issue was printed in Cincinnati and sent from thence by boat to St. Paul.

influence may be traced, - in the elections from 1849 to 1851; in the organization of the first and second sessions of the Territorial Legislature, and in other matters of a political nature. In his correspondence of that time many references to the "Sibley party" are found. <sup>(1)</sup> In 1853, this period of personal politics came to an end in the election of a territorial delegate in October, Sibley refused to be a candidate, and Henry M. Rice, whom Sibley favored, was elected in a contest between two regularly organized parties - Democratic and Whig. <sup>(2)</sup>

Governor Ramsey arrived in the new territory in May, 1849, and the provisions of the Organic Act were put into effect. June 1, he issued a proclamation announcing the act and the appointment of territorial officers. July 7, in the same manner, he provided for the division of the Territory into seven council districts, and ordered an election to be held August 1 to choose a delegate <sup>(3)</sup> to Congress, eighteen Representatives, and nine Councillors.

(1) Minnesota Pioneer, October 25, 1849. A letter from Sibley, read at the Democratic Mass Meeting held October 20, is published in this number. In this letter, he calls himself a Jeffersonian Democrat in national politics but a "neutral" in territorial politics.

(2) H. Dodge, in a letter to Sibley June 25th, 1853, regrets that the latter is not a nominee for delegate, and thinks that Sibley is right in favoring Rice to the other candidates. Other letters of this period mention his refusal to become a candidate.

Minnesota in Three Centuries, 2: 475. Mention is made here of the contest of political parties in 1853.

(3) For these proclamations refer to the Appendices of the Journal of the Council and House, 1st Territorial Legislature, 1849.

(1) In this election, Mr. Sibley was chosen Congressional delegate. There was no opposition to his candidacy at this time. James S. Morris writes, on July 22, to Mr. Sibley of a meeting to determine nominations, as follows: "Before you receive this it is probable you will have read an account of the transactions of our meeting held Saturday, in the Pioneer, as by a Resolution of the meeting a copy of the proceedings was to be forwarded to the editor of that paper for publication. The meeting was well attended and was characterized by the most friendly feeling so far as I am able to judge from the ballotings." He concludes with the statement that those present were unanimous in "pledging themselves to support (2) the Hon. H. H. Sibley as delegate to Congress the coming election." The members of the Legislature were chosen without regard to political affiliations, most of the persons named announcing themselves (3) as candidates independent of any party organization.

The First Legislature, chosen at this time, held its meeting in St. Paul from September 3 to November 1 of that year.

(1) Governor Ramsey issued his certificate of election, September 3, 1849. This certificate may be found in the Sibley Papers.

H.L. Moss, August 8, 1849, in writing to Sibley, congratulates him on the flattering vote he has received, "not only from Stillwater, but from other portions of the Territory."

(2) The Pioneer of July 12, 1849, is missing from the first volume. This meeting might have been reported in this number.

(3) H.L. Moss, July 14, 1849, Letter to Sibley. See also Gilfillan, "Early Political History of Minnesota," in Minnesota Historical Society Collections, 4: 167. On June 14, James Goodhus, editor of the Pioneer urges "no party lines."



Its chief work was the passing of acts relating to the organization of the Territory. In its "Acts of a General Character" is one determining the date of the general election. Chapter III, section 1, reads: "Be it enacted by the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Minnesota, That the first general election in this Territory shall be held on the fourth Monday in November next; but thereafter the general election shall be held on the first Monday in September in each and every year." Section 4 states: "There shall be elected a delegate to Congress from the Territory at the general election in A. D. 1850, and every two years thereafter."<sup>(1)</sup>

Among the members of this legislature were many of Sibley's friends, - William Dugas, J. R. Brown, J. S. Morris, Martin McLeod, and others. Although all were supposed to have been elected regardless of party lines, Brown, writing to Sibley, December 21, states that the Whig members were rather well organized.

Even though there was no active opposition to Sibley's candidacy in August, there is evidence that Mr. Rice and his friends were working for the ultimate success of the Rice faction. February 4, Brown writes to Sibley that Rice is looking forward to a "nomination by the Democratic party with a view to defeating you at all hazards." He also thinks that the apparent unanimity of the "Rice faction" and Sibley's friends will develop into an attempt at a definite party organization called Democratic.

(1) "An Act Regulating the time of holding General Elections and for other purposes." Laws of Minnesota Territory, 1st Session

July 13, Mr. Rice in writing to I. H. McKenny at Crow Wing, expresses a wish that a majority of Democrats will be sent to the Legislature by the August election. H.L. Moss, July 14, writes to Sibley: "Our Democratic friends have good reason to, and do suspect that the Whigs have a secret organization, - and some of them are desirous to bring out a democratic ticket in opposition, to the independent candidates, and I am advised from reliable sources that they (the Democrats) are intending to address you a series of questions; and that unless you declare yourself in favor of the democratic party, that they cannot support you as delegate- I am unable to say whether your friends in the democratic party (that have heretofore supported you) intend to adopt such a course; but I am in hopes that you will make us a visit, if for nothing else, than to reconcile all parties in your favor."

The movement toward establishing a Democratic party in Minnesota became evident to the public at large on October 4, 1849, when the Pioneer of that date printed a notice to the "Democrats of Minnesota," as follows: "At a Democratic caucus held at the house of Henry M. Rice on Monday evening, September the 24th, 1849, the undersigned were appointed a committee to call a Mass Meeting of the Democracy of the Territory of Minnesota.

"Believing that the safety and integrity of our party, and the permanent interests of our infant Territory, demand that the party lines be henceforth drawn, We extend a cordial invitation to the Democratic brethren in all parts of the Territory, to assemble in mass meeting at St. Paul, on Saturday the 20th day of October, to take measures to secure a permanent and thorough organ-

ization." This notice was signed by W. D. Phillips, John Rollins, J. S. Norris, S. Trask, H. N. Setzer and T.A. Homes.

The resolutions of the meeting of October 20, are published in the Pioneer for October 25. In brief these state the purpose of the convention. The members resolve: an intention on the part of the Democratic party to act "openly, publicly, and independently, in well defined principles;" that the "no party President" has made the Whig appointments; that the meeting has no confidence in the cry of neutrality in the territory; and that the Pioneer would be considered the Democratic party organ of the territory of Minnesota. At this meeting a letter from Sibley was read by W. D. Phillips. The "series of questions" referred to in Moss's letter are probably the cause of this definition of Sibley's position. In this letter he declines to take part in the proceedings of the meeting, and states that, having been elected by a united vote of both parties, he intends to occupy a neutral position. He defines his general political policy in the following words: "But I may be allowed the privilege accorded to every private citizen of stating my private individual sentiments. I am a Democrat of the Jeffersonian school." According to Brown, Rice had evidently thought that, by taking this neutral stand, Sibley would injure his standing with both parties.<sup>(1)</sup>

The result of the election of county officers, held on November 26, proved to Mr. Sibley's friends the success of his stand for neutrality in territorial politics, and to the friends of Rice, the fallacy of the latter's reasoning. Isaac Goodhue,

(1) Joseph R. Brown, Dec. 21, 1849. Letter to Sibley.

brother of the editor of the Pioneer, writes to Sibley on January 5: "I observe by the "Pioneer" of the 28th Oct. that the County Elections have gone neutral. <sup>(1)</sup> I also observe in the New York Herald that the "Territory has gone Whig all over." H.L. Moss, friend of Sibley, but a Whig, writes on December 4th: "You doubtless have heard the result of our election - As much as I have been opposed to party organisation here-to-fore, I am now more satisfied than ever, that it is bad policy, and detrimental to the best interests of our Territory, to have our communities divided by party." James M. Goodhue, editor of the "Democratic organ," in a rueful letter to Mr. Sibley, November 26, gives a very clear picture of conditions: "This is election day and I think our party is beautifully beaten throughout the Territory. The whole French vote here, has gone against us and for the amalgamation ticket. Is not that strange?

"Our ticket was not very well got up - that was a matter which I could not control. Phillips loaded himself onto the party for Register of deeds - that was no go - Irvine, candidate for sheriff, has been too conspicuous as a friend of Mr. Rice- in fact- the whole ticket had too much of the same character- and would not have received my support, but that it was 'regular'- and as the 'organ' I was bound to support it. But above all, we wanted you here to advise with Forbes, Roberts and Finley. It will teach our

(1) For the date of this election see Minnesota Territorial Laws, 1st Session, Chapter III, Sections 1 and 21. Isaac Goodhue refers to the result of this election as published in the Pioneer of Oct. 28. This is probably a mistake in the date of publication as the election was held November 26.

party something - and especially the necessity of having with us your influence. I only regret the result, on account of the impression that will go abroad, that this Territory is Whig. I hope you will early prepare your friends - the French vote- to be prepared to vote with our party next time - to be with us in Convention and after the Convention, at the polls. Another election like this will seal the political character of Minnesota, beyond even your aid."

The defeat of the "Rice faction" in the county election made it evident to Sibley's friends in Minnesota that he would be the leading candidate in the next election of Delegate. This election, held the first Monday in September, the 2nd, 1850, has been considered, by both contemporaries and historians, as the <sup>(1)</sup> "bitterest and most intensely personal ever known in Minnesota." It marks the height of Mr. Sibley's influence on personal politics in this early territorial period. There still being no party organization, Mr. Sibley was attacked principally in his relation to the discredited American Fur Company. His opponents railed against the company- now the firm of Pierre Chouteau and Company, as a <sup>(2)</sup> monopoly. Mr. Rice, the leader of the opposition, in the fall of

(1) Polwell, Minnesota, The North Star State, 106. The quotation in regard to the election of 1850 is taken from this account. For the date of the election refer to "An Act Regulating the time of holding General Elections and for other purposes," Minnesota Territorial Laws, 1st Session.

(2) An amusing circular of the period, found in the Sibley Papers, and very evidently modeled after Sibley's speech of July 29, 1850, satirically attacks him as representing the fur company in Congress. "Address by the Hon. Hal Squibble to the Dear People of Minnesota."

1849 had become involved in a quarrel with this company, resulting in his withdrawal, and opposition to its interests. At first it was thought that he would become the candidate against Sibley, but he finally contented himself with directing the opposing faction. <sup>(1)</sup>

The problem which was giving the greatest concern to Sibley's friends, from November until the following July, when he was announced as a candidate, was that of deciding on a suitable party platform on which to base his nomination. Goodhue, editor of the "organ", in his letter of November 26, at that time still faithful to his party, tells Sibley that he (Sibley) must ally himself with the Democratic party to secure its success. Later his editorials in the Pioneer demonstrate that he had become the leading exponent of the Sibley party and denouncer of the cry of "Monopoly." <sup>(2)</sup> Governor Ramsey, early in the campaign, lent his support and that of many of his Whig partisans, to Sibley, - probably because he thought he would need the aid of the latter in his relations with the Indians, and because he, like Sibley, objected to the famous "contract" which Rice had secured early in that year for the work of returning wandering Winnebagoes to their reserva-

(1) J. E. Fletcher, Oct. 12, 1849, letter to Ramsey. Ramsey Papers, 1849-1852. See also Minnesota in Three Centuries, 2: 447, for an account of Rice's trouble with the fur company.

S.D. Findley, Feb'y 24, 1850, and Joseph Brown, May 31, 1850, letters to Sibley. These tell of Rice's position as leader of the opposition to Sibley in 1850.

(2) Minnesota Pioneer, August 22, 1850. In an editorial entitled "Monopoly" this charge against the company is denied.

(1)  
 tions. S. D. Findley, February 24, wrote to Sibley and told him that it was thought at that time that he would decline becoming a candidate of either party, the "Whig" or the "Rice" Democratic party. He also states: "But we want you to run for next Term, let us know, as soon as you can. Anyhow, we have now secretly, a Sibley party organized; and are making preparations every day to war against both parties. We are determined once more, to carry the day as we did at the last fall election."

Apparently Sibley kept his friends in doubt for some time as to the expression of his candidacy, possibly in order to induce (2) the rival candidates to injure each other's chances of election. On July 24, John H. Stevens wrote to him: "Goodhue will bring you out tomorrow as an Independent candidate and we will try to put you through." July 29, Mr. Sibley publicly announced his candidacy by an address to the people of Minnesota Territory, issued from Washington. In this he reviews the attitude which he has previously taken in regard to party politics in Minnesota. He now states that he holds the same policy of strict neutrality, which he maintained the previous October, when elected by the united votes of Whigs

(1) Joseph Brown, May 31, 1850, writing to Sibley, suggests that Governor Ramsey in wishing to form a "Territorial alias Whig" party needs Sibley's personal influence.

See letters from Sibley to Ramsey, during the spring and summer of 1850, for the Rice contract. Sibley started an investigation in regard to this, in the House. No action was taken, however. Ramsey was also opposed to this contract, and thought that the Indian Agent had exceeded his authority in awarding it to Rice. Ramsey Papers.

(2) Brown, in his letter of May 31, suggest this policy to Sibley.

and Democrats. As a final word, he tells his constituents that he believes the postponement of a "division on party grounds" to be the "most prudent course that can be pursued" for the present interests of the territory.<sup>(1)</sup>

In this contest, there were at first four candidates. The leading opponent of Mr. Sibley was Colonel A. M. Mitchell. He had commanded an Ohio regiment in Mexico under the leadership of General Taylor, and had been Marshall of the territory since the previous August, having been appointed by the Whig administration. He was brought out by Rice and his Whig friends as the man most apt to oppose successfully the election of Sibley. He was nominated by a convention at St. Paul, July 31, on a neutral territorial platform.<sup>(2)</sup> The third candidate was David Olmstead. He was generally considered a Democrat in politics, was an Indian trader among the Winnebagoes, and had been a member of the first territorial legislature. He was nominated August 1, at St. Paul, by a group of men, dissatisfied with the meeting nominating Mitchell, also in favor of a neutral territorial platform. He

(1) "Address of Henry H. Sibley to the People of Minnesota Territory, Washington, July 29, 1850." West, Ancestry, Life and Times of Hon. Henry H. Sibley, 449, 451, 452. This address may also be found in the form of a pamphlet.

(2) D. T. Foster in a letter to Governor Ramsey, Sept. 14, 1850, encloses a "Communication" to the National Intelligence, Aug. 3, 1850. This clipping is very helpful in its outline of the political situation in Minnesota at that time. Other references in regard to Mitchell's candidacy, are, the announcement of Mitchell's nomination; and a letter from Rice to Ramsey, Feb. 25, 1850, stating that he will support Mitchell. All of these may be found in the Ramsey Papers, 1849-1852.



withdrew from the contest a few weeks before election, probably in favor of Rice's candidate. <sup>(1)</sup> The fourth candidate was Colonel N. Greene Wilcox, Receiver of the United States Land Office, located at Stillwater. He was nominated by a convention, August 10, at that place, composed of Whigs of the St. Croix region. He was, apparently, <sup>(2)</sup> not <sup>of</sup> much importance in the election.

The returns of the election indicated the closeness of the contest, Mr. Sibley receiving only about a hundred majority over Mitchell. A letter from Joseph Brown to his leader, on September 4, indicates the preference of the different precincts. According to this, Sibley was well supported at St. Croix Falls, Stillwater, and Cottage Grove. In St. Paul, he received two votes less than his opponent, "the small merchants" going against "Monopoly," and <sup>(3)</sup> the Upper Town being under Rice's influence.

The same spirit of bitter strife and personal contest was apparent in the session of the Second Territorial Legislature, January 1, to March 31, 1851. The correspondence of this time indicates a predominance still of the "Sibley" influence, but also the growth of the demand for a complete Democratic organization under Rice's leadership. M.A. Ames, January 10, writes to Sibley that the Territorial Legislature is organized with the "Sibley party too

(1) See Foster's clipping from the National Intelligence, previously mentioned, and the Chronicle and Register, for August 2, 1850. The latter publishes the announcement of Olmstead's nomination. Two letters to Sibley, one from M.A. Ames, Aug. 1850, and the other from Brown, August 28, of the same year, tell of Olmstead's withdrawal.

(2) Minnesota Pioneer, August 15, 1850. This number gives a notice of the Whig Convention at Stillwater, August 10.

(3) Pioneer, Sept. 5, 1850, gives the election returns. A notification of Sibley's election may be found in his papers.

many for the Whigs." He adds that a Whig party organization exists, although not openly, and thinks it is now time for a definite organization of the Democratic party. February 11, he writes again, telling Sibley that Robertson, editor of the Democrat, is advocating organization, probably for Rice. J. W. Furber, February 9, confirms this statement of Ames, adding that the Democrat wants a complete organization, and that in "less than a year all of the real ratified locofocoes will be completely organized under that banner, headed by H. M. Rice."<sup>(1)</sup>

A contest of the three leading newspapers, as candidates for the government printing, occurred during this session, the Pioneer being successful. A circular in protest of this, signed by leading Whigs, makes a statement which illustrates conditions. This endeavors to prove that the Chronicle and Register, supposed to be a Whig organ, was really Democratic in principles, under the secret control of Rice.<sup>(2)</sup>

The approach to definite party organization became even more evident in the election, October 14, 1851, of members of the Legislature. In this election, for the first time, a regular Democratic ticket was arranged. The opposition was spoken of as the Anti-organization or Coalition Party. This was a triumph for the latter party - which the Democrat spoke of as the coalition of the Sibley Fur Company interests and the Whigs.<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Letter Book, 1851. Sibley Papers.

(2) Circular. In regard to the bestowal of public printing, St. Paul, Jan. 30, 1851. This is found in the Sibley Papers. See also Heniss' Circular, Dec. 1, 1850, in the Ramsey Papers, 1849-1852.

(3) Minnesota Democrat, Sept. 20, 1851. In this number, the election is announced to be on Oct. 14. The issue of October 14, states the election was a "Coalition Triumph."

The final arrangement for party organization was accomplished in the Autumn of 1853, which H. M. Rice was elected congressional delegate as the candidate of the regular Democratic party, defeating a candidate proposed by the Whig party. Mr. Sibley's concurrence with this movement is given in a letter from Rice, February 3, 1853. He states that since 1849, no communication on political matters had taken place between them. In the fall of 1852, friends of both had worked together for a union of party. As a result, a regular Democratic ticket had been chosen, <sup>(1)</sup> At the time of writing the terms - "Sibley Democrat," "Rice," "Robertson" and "Organization" as applied to parties were said to be obsolete. This marks the end of the regime of purely personal politics in Minnesota. In this movement, which attempted to preserve a policy of no regular organization of parties, Mr. Sibley was the most conspicuous figure, because he was the most successful leader until 1852 and 1853.

No mention has been made in this paper of Mr. Sibley's service to his territory as delegate, after territorial organization, - that phase of his public activity being considered as generally irrelevant to its aim. Mr. West, in his eulogistic biography of Sibley has estimated that the appropriations for Minnesota, made by Congress during the five sessions of his activity, make a total of \$285,673.43. <sup>(2)</sup> This is a very concrete method of summing up the result of the innumerable petitions and memorials

(1) Minnesota in Three Centuries, 2:458. In this place a statement of the results of the election is given

(2) West, Ancestry, Life and Times of Hon. Henry H. Sibley, 202.

introduced by Sibley for Minnesota, which may be found in the volumes of the Congressional Globe, for the years of his congressional service.<sup>(1)</sup>

Possibly the service most outstanding in its relation to Minnesota politics of this period, was that rendered by him in securing the appropriations of 1850, which made possible the Sioux Treaty of the next year.<sup>(2)</sup> The two territorial legislatures had repeatedly memorialized Congress, through their medium, Mr. Sibley, in behalf of these treaties. The latter had pleaded eloquently the cause of the Indian, depicting his sufferings and his needs. These speeches were based upon his own knowledge of Indian affairs,<sup>(3)</sup> supplemented by the communications received from his constituents. It will be remembered that Governor Ramsey, in the election of 1850, had supported Sibley on account of the latter's influence in regard to the Indian problem. At this time he was looking to Sibley for its settlement.<sup>(4)</sup> In this attempt to secure the necessary appropriations, his political opponent, Mitchell, worked secretly against him.<sup>(5)</sup> In 1850, the general appropriation for Indian Treaties of that year, made provision for treaties with the Sioux of Minnesota.

(1) Congressional Globe, 1849-1853. 30th Congress, 2nd Session; 31st Congress, 1st and 2nd Sessions; 32nd Congress, 1st and 2nd Sessions.  
(2) Congressional Globe, 31st Congress, 1st Session. This is given under the current appropriations for Indian Treaties for 1851.  
(3) Orlando Brown, Department of Interior Office, Indian Affairs, March 28, 1850, in a letter to Sibley transmits copies of papers from Governor Ramsey, in regard to the Indians of Minnesota. See also a letter from Thos. Foster to Sibley, August 12, 1850.  
(4) Ramsey Crooks, Sept. 27, 1850, in a letter to Sibley congratulates him on his election, and tells him that genuine "Indian Reform" will be expected as a result.  
(5) Franklin Steele, Jan. 21, 1851, in a letter to Sibley explains Mitchell's influence in Congress.

Early in 1851, plans were made for their negotiation, which occurred that summer. During these proceedings, Sibley gave the help which was expected of him. <sup>(1)</sup> The treaties accomplished, in 1852 charges of conspiracy with intent to defraud the Indians during the negotiations, were made against Ramsey, by Madison Sweetzer and Robertson. Sweetzer was a trader with a rival of the Chouteau Company, while Robertson was the editor of the Democrat. Mr. Sibley was named as one of the accomplices. At his instigation a commission was appointed by the President to investigate the charges. Many witnesses testified to this commission. As a result of the investigation, Governor Ramsey's conduct in regard to his management of the funds appropriated was criticized by the commission, but no charges of guilt were made. Robertson, withdrawing his assertions, the matter was dropped. <sup>(2)</sup> This case is interesting from a political point of view as a survival of the old party animosity. Sibley had secured the appropriations, but was accused of selfish motives in the matter of the treaty.

In 1853, when Sibley refused to become a candidate for re-election in favor of Rice, an attempt was made by his friends to secure his appointment to succeed Governor Ramsey under the

(1) Luke Lea, April 2, 1851, in a letter to Sibley states that he, Lea, and Ramsey are to negotiate the Indian Treaty, and that Sibley's help is expected.

(2) Minnesota in Three Centuries, 2: 331-333. This case may be found in the "Report of the Senate Relative to the Allegations of Fraud by Alexander Ramsey," Ex. Doc. No. 29, 52nd Congress, 2nd Session.

(1)  
new Democratic administration. The plan was not successful, and  
in 1853 Sibley retired from public life.

(1) H. Doty, March 16, 1853, in a letter to Franklin  
Pierce, recommends the removal of Ramsey and the appointment of  
Sibley. See also a copy of the proceedings in the House to support  
Sibley as Governor. This latter paper is dated Feb. 21, 1853.  
Both of these may be found in the Sibley Papers.

(1)  
CONCLUSION.

This concludes what may be considered as but one period of Sibley's public career. After his retirement from Congress, Mr. Sibley held many offices of public trust. Most important among these may be mentioned, his services as member of the Territorial Legislature; as first Governor of the State of Minnesota; as a military leader of responsibility in the Sioux outbreaks of 1862 and 1863; as member of various commissions for the negotiation of Indian treaties; and as President of the Board of Regents of the Minnesota State University. In 1888, as a reward for his scholarly attainments, and services to the public, the trustees of Princeton College conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws. In brief, this account shows that his lifework was done in a succession of positions of public service.

(1) West, Ancestry, Life and Times of Gen. Henry H. Sibley, 362, 363. This biography furnishes the basis of this conclusion.

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Letters received by Ramsey, including copies of letters written by himself. This file contains letters written by Sibley, and references to his influence in Minnesota politics during this period. These papers are in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society.

## Sibley Papers, 1840-1850, 1850-1860.

Letters written to Sibley, and in many cases, copies of his replies. A special file contains documents, commissions, circulars, and valuable letters. This collection includes letter-books which contain Sibley's business correspondence. In the volume for 1851, a few letters written to him in regard to political affairs may be found. Mr. West, in his biography of Sibley, mentions a Manuscript Autobiography. This manuscript is not included in this collection, which is in the library of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Writings and Addresses of Henry H. Sibley.

Speech of Henry H. Sibley, of Minnesota, before the Committee on Elections of the House of Representatives, Delivered Dec. 22, 1848.



In this speech, printed in pamphlet form, Sibley gives his arguments before the Committee on Elections when contesting his right to a seat as Delegate from Wisconsin Territory. This pamphlet is in the Minnesota Historical Society Library.

**Address of Henry H. Sibley of Minnesota to the People of Minnesota Territory. Issued at Washington, March 10, 1849.**

This is a pamphlet, telling his constituents of his contest <sup>as</sup> delegate for a seat in the House of Representatives, which is found in the Minnesota Historical Society Library.

**Address of Henry H. Sibley of Minnesota to the People of Minnesota Territory. Washington City, July 29, 1850.**

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The first newspaper which was printed in Minnesota was the Pioneer. Its first issue was published on April 28, 1849. Its editor, James M. Goodhue, a native of New Hampshire, practiced law in the East, and edited a newspaper in Wisconsin for some time before coming to Minnesota. The Pioneer well illustrates the "intense personal journalism" of this period. Goodhue, a friend of Mr. Sibley, formed an alliance with the Democratic party as organized at the Mass Meeting, October 29, 1849. The Pioneer was for a time the "Democratic organ." Later, in 1850, its editor supported Sibley and the fur company. In the Second Territorial Assembly, the Pioneer was the successful candidate for the publication of the proceedings of the Territorial government. It is the only one of the early territorial newspapers which has survived. It is now known as the Saint Paul Pioneer Press.

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The Minnesota Chronicle was published in St. Paul by James Hughes, from May 31, until August 9, 1849, as a Whig paper. The Minnesota Register, first edited July 14, 1842, was the second Whig newspaper. For financial reasons the

two combined. The first number of the Chronicle and Register appeared August 25, 1849, edited by James Hughes and John Owens. In August, 1850, it was purchased by L. A. Babcock, who in turn sold it to Charles J. Hennis, who kept it from November, 1850, until February, 1851, when it was sold to the Minnesota Democrat. Its editor was charged with being under Democratic influence instead of a Whig. This paper attacks Sibley and the Fur Company.

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First issue of the Democrat was made December 10, 1850. This weekly was owned and edited by Colonel D. A. Robertson. On June 29, 1853, Robertson sold the paper to David Olmstead, and after that it was edited by both men. This paper supports Rice in the contest between Rice and Sibley.

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