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The Early Political Career  
of Ignatius Donnelly,  
1857-1863

A Thesis submitted to the  
Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
University of Minnesota

by

Franklin F. Holbrook

In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Master of Arts

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## FOREWORD

The political career of Ignatius Donnelly is of interest from several points of view. In the first place, Donnelly was something more than a politician, or even than a statesman. In the course of his life he achieved varying degrees of distinction as lawyer, business man, public speaker, poet, editor and author, as well as public official and political leader. How did the author of such works as The Great Cryptogram, Atlantis and Ragnarök comport himself in the practical duties of public life, in the mazes of political intrigue, and in the heat of political campaigns? In the second place, considering his political activities alone, he was a force to be reckoned with throughout most of his forty four years residence in Minnesota. As lieutenant governor, congressman, state senator, and state representative, and as leader of independent party movements he undoubtedly exerted an extensive influence. Finally, the motives and meaning of his political activities are matters of dispute. Was he an unusually determined self-seeking politician, a political nuisance, and a merely destructive force, or was he the disinterested advocate of a just cause, seeking to tear down in order, only, to build on broader and firmer foundations? The recent acquisition and orderly arrangement of a vast quantity of Donnelly's private papers by the Minnesota Historical Society makes possible an account of this unusual career. With these facts, queries, and wealth of material



before him, the writer has attempted an exhaustive and critical account of the first few years of Donnelly's political career, with the expectation of carrying it through the remaining years at some future date.

## INTRODUCTION

The political career of Ignatius Donnelly, properly speaking, began after his removal from Pennsylvania to Minnesota in 1857. It is true that before that time the young Philadelphia lawyer took an interest in the politics of the day and even had some part in them, but his other interests, and a growing dissatisfaction with his party, tended to withdraw him from active politics at that time. Still in his early twenties, time and new surroundings were to bring out the politician and statesman - to subordinate the lawyer, the business man, the poet and scholar. It was in Minnesota that he entered upon his career of active, and practically continuous participation in politics.

Born in Philadelphia in 1831,<sup>1</sup> of parents of Irish

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1 The following account, so far as it relates to Donnelly's life in Philadelphia, is based largely upon part 1 (pp.7-15,123-125) of Donnelliana: An Appendix to "Caesar's Column"; Excerpts from the Wit, Wisdom, Poetry and Eloquence of Ignatius Donnelly; selected and collated, with a biography, by Everett W. Fish, M.D. (Chicago, 1892). Briefer accounts are to be found in: Arnold, Poets and Poetry of Minnesota, 151; Hall, Biographical Sketches, 13; Upham and Dunlap, Minnesota Biographies, 182 (Minnesota Historical Collections, vol.140); Baker, Lives of the Governors, 339 (M.H.C., vol.13); Curtiss-Wedge, ed., History of Dakota and Goodhue Counties, 1:613; Shutter, Progressive Men of Minnesota, 414; United States Biographical Dictionary, 349; Poore, Congressional Directory, 373; Minnesota in Three Centuries, 3:86. Discrepancies and additions only will be noted in connection with isolated statements.

descent and of exceptional mental and moral caliber, the most gifted of a talented family, Donnelly received his formal education in the public schools of that city, and in the law office of Benjamin Harris Brewster, later Attorney General of the United States. He was admitted to the bar in 1852,<sup>1</sup> and soon built up an extensive practice. In 1855 he married Miss Katherine McCaffrey, principal of a boys' grammar school in Philadelphia, and, it is said, "the finest amateur singer of that old and cultured city". He moved in the society of men and women, many of whom were then or afterward became prominent in different spheres of life. Among them he did not pass unnoticed. In 1850 he published a volume of poetry entitled The Mourner's Vision, which with later occasional efforts displayed a taste and talent worthy, in the opinion of Oliver Wendell Holmes, of serious cultivation.<sup>2</sup> He held responsible positions in certain Philadelphia land companies.<sup>3</sup> He was early known for his ability as a public speaker, and in 1855 he delivered probably the first of his many Fourth of July orations from the steps of the old Court-house in Philadelphia, "from the very spot where the Declaration of Independence was first pro -

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1 The accounts disagree on this date. Dr. Fish and others give 1853, but Donnelly himself, writing but seven years later, refers to May, 1852 as the date of his admission. See Donnelly to Averill (copy) in a letter from J.A. Pears (copy), August 18, 1859.

2 Holmes to Donnelly, May 26, 1860.

3 Donnelly, Statement of the Basis of the Organization of the City of Nininger, Minnesota, 10 (Scrapbook). See also letters of December 11, 1856, May 8 and 15, 1857 (Letter-book 2, pp. 83, 97, 217). The question as to whether Donnelly's

mulgated in 1776".<sup>1</sup>

In politics, Donnelly started as a Democrat, and in 1855 he was nominated by his party for the state legislature. He accepted the honor,<sup>2</sup> but it seems unlikely that he pushed his candidacy with all the energy with which he was wont to apply himself to other pursuits. His marriage, about the time of the fall campaign,<sup>3</sup> may well have overshadowed other interests for the time being. Furthermore, it is not at all unlikely that he began thus early to be affected by those misgivings as to his party's course with reference to slavery, which later culminated in an open transfer of his allegiance from the Democratic to the Republican party. That change of front came, according to Donnelly's own testimony, while he was "writing editorials, during the great Fremont contest, for the leading Buchanan paper of Pennsylvania". It was brought about by the insight which he believed he then gained into the intentions and purposes of the two leading parties in regard to slavery. "I saw before me two paths", he wrote,

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connection with these companies was altogether honorable, has been disregarded as incapable of a positive answer on the basis of the evidence at hand. It may be remarked, however, that he was never called to account in court for any irregularities with which he may have been charged in common report. See letter last cited above.

1 A contemporary account of this is to be found in the Daily Pennsylvanian, April 4, 1856 (Scrapbook).

2 Dr. Fish states that Donnelly declined the nomination (Donnelliana, part 1, p. 14). On the other hand, Donnelly, writing but four years later, refers to the fact that he "ran in Phila: in 1855 for the State Legislature on the Democratic ticket" and that he was "constantly assailed and denounced as an infidel" at that time. Donnelly to Averill (copy) in a letter from J.A. Pears (copy), August 18, 1859.

3 September 10, 1855. Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p. 15.

"One led along the line defined by the founders of the Government: it was rough and stormy, but it pointed to the perpetuity of freedom and the safety of our institutions. The other lay before me broad and crowded and full of prosperity, but it went downward to darkness and ultimate disaster to the country. I chose the rough and stormy path. I proclaimed myself a Republican in the midst of the most Democratic County in our State . . ."<sup>1</sup> These words, written later by the full-fledged politician with a significance partly derived from the circumstances that then called them forth, may well give an exaggerated impression of the definiteness and importance of the step. It appears rather to have been a change incidental to the development of a many-sided and public-spirited man, before any serious thought of public office or political leadership had entered his head.

It was about this time, 1855 and 1856, that Donnelly became interested in the West and began to busy himself with those western projects which in a few months led to his settlement in Minnesota. Prospects at home seem to have been fair enough, but Philadelphia was dull, and business, stagnant.<sup>2</sup> The western fever was in the air. Donnelly therefore began to look to the West for opportunities offering freer play for his talents and brighter prospects of

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1 "Letter to the Foreign-Born Citizens of Minnesota", St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, August 4, 1859.

2 Frequent references in Donnelly's letters of this time indicate dissatisfaction with Philadelphia. For example see letters to John Nininger, September 25 and October 31, 1856, and to G.O. Robertson, October 3, 1856 (Letter-book 1).



fortune. He read all the books on the West that he could get.<sup>1</sup> Becoming more and more interested, but not too roughly convinced by report, he determined to go and see for himself what the new country had to offer. With this object in view, he made a tour of the middle west in April and May of 1856. After visiting Iowa, his original objective, he went to Minnesota. There, the character of the country, of the people, and of the opportunities apparently open to men of energy and ability, at once attracted him.<sup>2</sup> There it was that, with John Nininger, another Pennsylvanian, he joined in that famous and fated speculation, the founding of "Nininger City".<sup>3</sup>

If Nininger City had lived, it would appear on the map of Minnesota on the west bank of the Mississippi about twenty two miles below St. Paul, not far above Hastings.<sup>4</sup> It was here, in view of its supposed city-building possibilities, that a townsite was laid out, and that Nininger City grew up overnight. Others became interested and, let in on the ground floor, added capital and prestige to the movement. As the

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1 Donnelly, Nininger City, 7(Scrapbook).

2 Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, pp.15-21; Daily Pennsylvanian, April 4, 1856(Scrapbook); St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, May 31, 1856. The last contains the text of a speech he delivered in St. Paul at that time.

3 Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p.21. Further material on Donnelly's association with Nininger in this enterprise is to be found in the letters and papers of 1856 and 1857. See, for example, "Original Memo: Partnership between Mr. Nininger and myself", January 1, 1857, and Donnelly to Nininger, April 7, 1857(Letter-book 1).

4 For a map showing the location of the town, see Donnelly, Nininger City(Scrapbook).



town materialized, so did the project become more and more ambitious. Not only was Nininger to become a great city, with all the elements and accessories of a metropolis, but it was also to be the distributing center of a huge immigration scheme. To it were to be directed the westward bound streams of immigration. Such portions thereof as might fail to stop there were to be drawn to other townsites in which the promoters were interested. The tendency once fixed, intercommunicational facilities were to be established among the outlying towns, with Nininger City as the center. Above all, Nininger was to be advertised abroad as no other coming city had been advertised before.<sup>1</sup>

Donnelly, who was probably the originator of the project and undoubtedly supplied most of the brains and energy back of its advancement, now threw himself heart and soul into the enterprise. Altogether, between April, 1856 and February, 1857, he made three trips to Minnesota on Nininger City business and with a view to settling there.<sup>2</sup> His third

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1 The above summary statement of the beginnings and scope of the enterprise is based largely upon material to be found in Letter-book 1, the Papers for 1856 and 1857, and the Serapbook.

2 The first trip was made in April and May of 1856 (see page 5, note 2); the second, in July (Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, pp. 21, 23); the third, during the time between December 15, 1856 and February 24, 1857. See letters of the former date in Letter-book 2, and Donnelly to Robertson, March 2, 1857 (Letter-book 1). No letters are recorded in either book between December 15, 1856 and March 2, 1857.

visit, while the Territorial Legislature was in session (January 7 to March 7, 1857), was for the purpose of securing the incorporation of a proposed railroad from Nininger to St. Peter and westward, the organization of an emigrant aid society,<sup>1</sup> and the selection of Nininger as the county seat of Dakota County.<sup>2</sup> From his home in Philadelphia, in the intervals between trips, Donnelly carried on an active correspondence with the other promoters and with prospective residents. He contributed much of the energy and ingenuity which distinguished the promoting of Nininger from that of other boom towns of the period. He was largely responsible for the more ordinary agencies employed, such as pamphlets, circulars, cards and letterheads, in both English and German. To him, also, was probably due the advertisement of Nininger in the newspapers of some eighteen or more cities of the United States and Canada. The Emigrant Aid Journal, a newspaper started for the sole purpose of boosting the town, was his own special pride and care.<sup>3</sup> As a crowning effort, on

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1 Donnelly to Nininger, November 8, 1856; to Faver, March 3, 1857. In the Donnelly Papers there is a clipping from the St. Paul Pioneer and Democrat, January 23, 1857, containing a list of the names of the members of the territorial legislature, some of which have been checked, probably by Donnelly. See, also, "Original of Charter", January 28, 1857; acts of incorporation, March 4 and 7, 1857, in Minnesota, Session Laws, pp. 18, 58.

2 Donnelly to Faver, March 3, 1857; to Ames, March 11; to Caleff, March 11 (Letter-book 1). These letters were written after his return to Philadelphia, but appear to indicate an interest in the passage, before he left Minnesota, of an act relating to the location of the county seat, approved February 13, 1857. Minnesota, Sessions Laws, 261.

3 In reference to this paper Donnelly wrote, "I defy anything in the Territory to equal it". Letter to Nininger, September 25, 1856 (Letter-book 1). It may be noted in passing that

March 27, 1857, he delivered an address at a public meeting in Broadway Hall, New York City, assembled for the ostensible purpose of making known the advantages of Minnesota, but in reality to call particular attention to Nininger. All other interests - law, politics, poetry - were for the time swallowed up in the demands and promised rewards of this Minnesota venture.

In the midst of these activities, it was, that Donnelly closed up his affairs in Philadelphia, and in the summer of 1857 made Nininger City his permanent place of residence.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately for his interests then paramount, there came at that very time a nation-wide financial collapse which drained the West of money, checked immigration, and dealt

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Johnston, in his "Minnesota Journalism" in M.H.C., 10:319 (part 1), is in error as to the date and place of publication, and Fish, in Donnelliana, part 1, p.22, as to the date of publication of the first issue. Though dated at Nininger, December 1, 1856, this issue was printed in Philadelphia about November 11, 1856. Publication was then suspended pending the acquisition of printing facilities at Nininger. A comparative study of the following references makes this clear: "Circular to Advertisers", September 26, 1856 (Scrapbook); Donnelly to Rohr, November 10; to Campbell, November 11, 1856 (Letter-book 1); Emigrant Aid Journal, vol.1, no.1 (Scrapbook); Donnelly to McDonald, December 11, 1856; to King and Baird, March 5, 1857 (Letter-book 1).  
 1 He left Philadelphia on the fifteenth of May, 1857; arrived in St. Paul sometime before June 1; took up his quarters at the Fuller House while arrangements were being completed for his settlement at Nininger; and moved to the latter place probably some time in August. Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p.25; letters of May 15 in Letter-book 2; Falver to Donnelly, June 2, 1857; Burns to the same, June 8, 1857; Fuller House bill-of-fare, June 14, 1857 (Scrapbook); letters dated from Nininger, beginning August 28, 1857 (Letter-book 2).

Nininger City, together with many another fair project, a  
blow which before many months had passed ended its existence.<sup>1</sup>  
But before the full effects of the panic put an end to all  
hope for the town, Donnelly's unceasing and varied activi-  
ties in its behalf introduced him into associations, and  
gave him a prominence in his adopted state that were to stand  
him in good stead when compelled by this disappointment to  
look for success in other fields, and especially, as it  
turned out, in the field of politics.

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1 James F. Rhodes, United States, 2:281; William W. Folwell,  
Minnesota, 141-143; Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p.26.

## EARLY PROMINENCE IN MINNESOTA, 1857-58.

The rapid rise of this newcomer to state-wide notice and high office in Minnesota would appear more remarkable than it really was, if, in addition to an unusual equipment for a man of his years, there were not noted the varied acquaintance, the association with influential men, and the public activities of Donnelly, that, as by-products of the Nininger City enterprise, were then to become no small part of his political capital.

Donnelly was not the sort of man to pass unknowing and unknown anywhere.<sup>1</sup> An acquaintance begun during his first sojourn in St. Paul was extended with each succeeding visit to Minnesota. The last of these brought him into touch with members of the territorial legislature.<sup>2</sup> Later, when making St. Paul his temporary residence pending his location at Nininger City, he cannot well have missed some contact with members of the constitutional convention, a dual body containing some of the leading men of the territory.<sup>3</sup> All this,

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1 He was not only aggressive on principle, declaring to a friend that in this age "to hide ones light under a bushel is to extinguish it" (Letter to George S. Fox, April 15, 1857), but he was also of a sociable disposition (Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p. 24).

2 See page 8, and note 1.

3 The convention was in session from July 13 to August 29, 1857.



in addition to purely business relations with many in connection with the Nininger project, must have served to introduce him to no small portion of the representative men of Minnesota.

Still more to his advantage was to be his connection at this time with a few men of exceptional influence in the state. Pre-eminent among these was the man under whose favor, and in no small degree by reason of it, Donnelly was to win his spurs in politics - Alexander Ramsey, first governor of Minnesota Territory and one of the most influential men in the state.<sup>1</sup> Both were Pennsylvanians. Donnelly's partner,

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Ramsey was born near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, September 8, 1815. After receiving a varied education in school and in different practical occupations, he studied law and was admitted to practice in 1839. He soon engaged in politics. In those stirring times of the contest between the parties of Jackson and Clay, he "caught the contagion which the fervid genius of Clay evoked" and rose rapidly to prominence in the Whig party. In 1840 he was secretary of the electoral college, and in the following year, chief clerk of the House of Representatives. As a member of Congress for two terms he was a strong advocate of the Wilmot Proviso. Retiring voluntarily from Congress, he was made chairman of the Whig state central committee of Pennsylvania. In recognition of distinguished services in the last named position, Ramsey, in 1849, was made governor of the new Territory of Minnesota, and served in that capacity until 1853 when the Democrats recovered the federal patronage. During his administration, and largely through his efforts, were concluded the famous Treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota, by which the vast "Sioux domain" west of the Mississippi was opened to white settlement. After his retirement from the governorship, he held no official position, except as mayor of St. Paul in 1855, until he became governor of the state in 1860. In the meantime, reluctantly severing old but now useless political ties, he gradually came to throw the weight of his influence with the new Republican party, and in the first election of state officers he was the Republican candidate for governor. Carl Schurz, who met Ramsey in the campaign of 1859, characterized him in his Reminiscences (2:144) as "a man of moderate gifts, but blessed with one of those winning countenances which be-token sound sense, a quiet conscience, good humor, and a kind



John Nininger, was Ramsey's brother-in-law.<sup>1</sup> Ramsey himself was materially interested in Nininger City. He owned a hundred town lots, had an interest in the hotel, and was one of the incorporators of the Nininger, St. Peter and Western Railroad Company.<sup>2</sup> Toward the end of 1858, after Donnelly had resumed the practice of law, Ramsey employed him in a matter connected with his milling interests, intimating at the same time that he might have further occasion to call upon his services.<sup>3</sup> The intercourse resulting from this community of interests appears to have been so frequent and matter-of-fact as to leave little direct evidence.

Another profitable acquaintance made at this time, important in itself, but also furnishing an additional link with the Ramsey interest, was that of Dr. Thomas Foster,<sup>4</sup> one time

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heart for all men". Baker, Lives of the Governors, 3-14 (M. H. C., vol. 13); Upham and Dunlap, Minnesota Biographies, 624 (M. H. C., vol. 14); Smalley, Political History of Minnesota, 150, 267.

1 Upham and Dunlap, Minnesota Biographies, 550 (M. H. C., vol. 14).

2 Donnelly, Nininger City, 23 (Scrapbook); Daily Pennsylvanian, December 31, 1856 (Scrapbook); Donnelly to Nininger, September 25, 1856 (Letter-book 1); act approved March 4, 1857 in Minnesota, Session Laws, 18.

3 Ramsey to Donnelly, December 14, 1858.

4 Dr. Foster was born May 18, 1818, in Philadelphia. After attending a "classical pay school" and later, a "classical academy", he studied and practised medicine until his "voracious reading propensity" led him to enter the field of journalism. From that time, for a period of about twelve years, he was associated with one or another of several Whig papers in Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and other Pennsylvania cities. His newspaper work led to his appointment in 1848 as secretary of the Whig state central committee of which Ramsey was then chairman. Later, as secretary of the electoral college, he "had the honor of announcing to Gen'l Taylor" the result of its vote. In 1849 Foster came to Minnesota as Governor Ramsey's private secretary. The next year Ramsey made him superintendent of manual labor schools of the Winnebago Indians, at Long Prairie. In 1851 he took part in the Sioux treaty negotiations, again in a secretarial capacity.

Ramsey's private secretary, at this time associated with him in a milling enterprise near Hastings. Foster was also a Pennsylvanian, a native of Philadelphia. The fact of a common birthplace was probably favorable to a more than casual acquaintance. Then too Foster was associated with Donnelly in promoting one of the Nininger satellite towns.<sup>1</sup> The two served each other in a business way, Donnelly acting as Foster's lawyer, and Foster, as Donnelly's printer. They<sup>2</sup> appeared together in a public movement to revive immigration,<sup>3</sup> and held the same opinions on the slavery question. These various points of contact led to an intimacy out of which, other factors contributing, were to spring Donnelly's political aspirations and initial success.

Besides the advantage derived from this more or less intimate contact with individuals, Donnelly gained no little prominence before the general public. Locally, and possibly

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Later Ramsey appointed him government physician to the Upper Sioux near Sleepy Eye. At the time when Dr. Foster became a factor in Donnelly's fortunes, he was engaged in "building the great stone flouring mill - for Gov. Ramsey and himself - on the Vermillion water power near Hastings, twenty miles below St. Paul".- Manuscript autobiography in the files of the Minnesota Historical Society; Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p. 27.

1 They were both members of the Louisville Town Company, which was organized, as a part of the larger Nininger project, to establish a town on the south bank of the Minnesota River about fifty miles above its mouth. Column advertisement of Louisville town lots, St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, January 1, 1858; Foster to Donnelly, August 29, 1857; "Copy of notice of special meeting of Louisville Town Co.", December 4, 1858.

2 Foster to Donnelly, December 21, 1858; Donnelly to Foster, December 24 and 29, 1858 (Letter-book 3); St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, February 10, 1858.

3 See page 17.

beyond the limits of his own county, he was known for his activity in the organization of the Agricultural Association of Dakota County. He it was who elected, or was deputed, to invite Governor Sibley to give an address on the occasion of the association's first "Exhibition". Evidently he was a prime mover in the project, if not indeed its originator.<sup>1</sup>

To a larger public Donnelly came to be known as a public speaker. During his first visit to St. Paul in 1856, he made an address before the Minnesota Historical Society (May 27) which served to introduce him in this character.<sup>2</sup> Two years later he addressed a public meeting in St. Paul, under circumstances which, if correctly reported, show the reputation he already enjoyed, as well as the special prominence into which he was thrust on that occasion. A number of gentlemen, casually meeting together one February day in St. Paul, got into a discussion upon the question, then most vital to Minnesota, as to how immigration might best be revived. Donnelly, who happened to be present, was asked to prepare a lecture on the subject and deliver it before the citizens and the members of the legislature in the Hall of the House at the Capitol some time within the week. The lecture was accordingly delivered the following Saturday

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1 Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p. 29; Donnelly to Sibley (copy), March 8, 1858; Sibley to Donnelly, March 15, 1858.  
 2 St. Paul Pioneer and Democrat, May 31, 1856.

night (February 13, 1858) before a "large and respectable audience", Judge Goodrich, first chief justice of the territorial bench, presiding. Donnelly was well qualified for such a task, and, incidental to what he may have effected toward promoting the main object of the address, left an impression of himself not soon to be erased. To such as did not hear him was available the full text of his speech in one of the St. Paul dailies.<sup>1</sup>

Donnelly thus accumulated political capital by the way, before the full effects of the panic forced him to look for fortune elsewhere than in town lots. Though he was at the same time being drawn into Dakota County politics, the full value of these potential political assets was to be realized for the first time in his active pursuit of state office in 1859.

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<sup>1</sup> St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, February 10, 13, 15, 17 and 18, 1858.

## LEGISLATIVE CAMPAIGNS, 1857 and 1858.

Donnelly came to Minnesota at a time when the issue over the extension of slavery in the territories was coming to be more and more sharply drawn throughout the country. In the North, confidence in a permanent and peaceable settlement of the question through the compromise of 1850 had been severely shaken, if not shattered, by the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska act, the ensuing "attempt upon Kansas", and the Dred Scott decision. Opposition to the encroachments of the slave power had crystallized in a movement, under the leadership of the Republican party, to put a stop to the further extension of slavery. The new party had gained a strong foothold in Democratic Minnesota, and was now, in 1857, struggling to secure control of the new state and of its voice in national affairs.

Occupied as he was with his own affairs, Donnelly cannot have failed to take a keen interest in the contest. He had renounced his allegiance to the Democracy in his native state on account of his convictions with reference to the slavery question. But there is no evidence to show that his interest was less incidental and impersonal than that felt by many another busy but public-spirited citizen. In fact his correspondence during the weeks preceding the fall conventions of 1857 was full of private business matters with only occasional and incidental reference to politics.



These facts render plausible the only available account of the exact manner of Donnelly's induction into politics at this time. It appears from that account<sup>1</sup> that the first suggestion came from Dr. Foster. The two fell into conversation one day in the summer of 1857 on a steamer bound for St. Paul. Donnelly is said to have attracted the doctor's special interest by the emphatic statement that in twenty years it would be impossible to find in the United States any man who would acknowledge that he had ever defended, or even apologized for slavery. Asked if he were not, then, a Republican, Donnelly is quoted as replying, "I don't know about that. I have been a Democrat in Philadelphia, but I am no politician, all I know is that I am opposed to the spread of slavery over our new Territories". Donnelly is then said to have complied with Dr. Foster's urgent request that he join with the struggling and greatly outnumbered Republicans of Dakota County as a voluntary delegate to the county convention, with the result that, much to his surprise and against his wishes, he was nominated with Dr. Foster for the State Senate.

Whether or not this account of the cause and character of his connection with politics at this time be true, the undoubted fact is that Donnelly's name appeared in contemporary newspapers in connection with both state and county Republican organizations. He was named as one of the delegates from Dakota to the Republican state convention, held in St. Paul, September 9 and 10, 1857. There he was appointed temporary secretary of the convention, but was prevented

1. Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p. 27.



from continuing in the duties of that position, Dr. Foster explained, by sickness in his family.<sup>1</sup> Shortly after, at the Dakota County Republican convention, Donnelly and Foster<sup>2</sup> were chosen candidates for the state senate. Probably at this time also, Donnelly was made a member of the county central committee.<sup>3</sup>

How much of an effort Donnelly put forth in this campaign for his own or the party's success is uncertain.<sup>4</sup> There is no evidence that a very vigorous campaign was made, or that success or failure meant a great deal to him personally. The panic of August had not yet deprived him of an absorbing and pardonably selfish interest. Yet he recognized his candidacy, took an interest in its reception, and even, because "all is uncertainty in such matters", considered the possibility of his election. He does not appear, however, to<sup>5</sup> have been greatly disturbed over his ultimate defeat.

While the Republicans and Democrats, after a state-wide contest, were disputing, with charges and countercharges of fraud, the victory in the state at large,<sup>6</sup> Donnelly conceded the Democrats a "clean whip" in Dakota County, though here too, he believed, frauds had "no doubt been

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1 St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, September 10, 1857.

2 St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, September 25, 1857.

3 Stebbins to Donnelly, April 30, 1858.

4 Dr. Fish, in Donnelliana, part 1, p. 28, implies that Donnelly did not make a canvass this year.

5 Donnelly to Thompson, October 4[?], 1857; to Burns, October [ms illegible], and 23, 1857 (Letter-book 2).

6 Smalley, Political History of Minnesota, 162; Minnesota in Three Centuries, 3:57.

extensively practised".<sup>1</sup> Ramsey came within 240 votes of the governorship; the legislature-elect was forty six per cent Republican; but the official returns from Dakota County showed a Democratic majority of about 300 out of approximately 2100 votes for state senators.<sup>2</sup> Dakota was still under the rule of the "Sham Democracy".

The Republicans of the state renewed the struggle in the legislative elections in the fall of 1858, despite the fact that the legislature then to be elected might never convene. A curious combination of circumstances brought about this situation. Under the general provisions of a law passed by the first state legislature,<sup>3</sup> elections and sessions of the legislature were to be held and convened, respectively, in October and December of each year. An election was accordingly to be held in October 1858, of representatives, and of senators from the odd numbered districts. Under this rule, the legislators elected at that time would then convene in December of the same year, together with the senatorial remnant of the last legislature still in office.

1 Donnelly to Burns, October [ms illegible], 1857 (Letter-book 2).

2 Minnesota, Legislative Manual, 1915; Tribune Almanac, 1858; St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, November 5, 1857. The vote on governor, as canvassed, stood 17,790 for Sibley and 17,550 for Ramsey. The vote for senators, in Dakota County, was as follows:

Republicans

Democrats

Dr. Thomas Foster 919

D. W. C. Dunwell 1210

Ignatius Donnelly 918

Henry G. Bailey 1176

3 "An Act to provide for Sessions of the Legislature", approved, August 10, 1858. Minnesota, General Laws, 114.

But the same law also provided that there should be no further session until December, 1859, unless one was sooner called by the governor. The Republicans believed that, in the event of a Democratic victory in the fall elections, the Democratic governor, Sibley, would surely exercise that power, and that otherwise he would not.<sup>1</sup> A Republican victory, therefore, would at least carry with it the negative advantage of preventing the assembling of a Democratic legislature before the next elections, in 1859. That advantage would be doubly worth while in view of the fact that the next legislature, whether it convened before or after the elections of 1859, would choose a United States Senator to succeed Senator Shields, whose term of office was to expire in March, 1859.<sup>2</sup> A Democratic success at the polls in 1858 would mean a Democratic legislature, specially convened to elect a Democratic Senator. That office, unlike state offices, would then be beyond reach for six years. The senatorship was therefore the great prize at stake.

Under these circumstances a lively enough contest might have been expected over a senatorship sought merely as a political plum. In this case there was the added stimulus of a great national issue. Minnesota had her part to play

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1 "Address of the Republican State Central Committee" in St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, October 1, 1858.

2 James Shields had been elected to the short term on the admission of the state. The regular time for the election of his successor would be the first Tuesday in January, 1859. Otherwise the election would come within ten days after the assembling of a quorum at the next meeting of the legislature. "An Act to provide for the Election of United States Senators for the State of Minnesota," approved, December 18, 1857. Minnesota, General Laws, 1858, p. 273.

in the political struggle, then fast drawing to a conclusion, over slavery. Events seemed to indicate that the time was approaching when a single vote in the United States Senate might turn the scale one way or the other. That vote might be given by the senator-to-be from Minnesota. "God forbid it be cast for Democracy and Slavery", was the plea of the<sup>1</sup> Republicans of the state.

As one of the odd numbered districts designated by the<sup>2</sup> election law, Dakota County was to elect two state senators. Some little interest attached to the outcome of the struggle in that hitherto Democratic stronghold. In regard to it Ramsey wrote to Donnelly, "I feel confident that should we be so fortunate as to carry Dakota Co. this fall, the state<sup>3</sup> would be ours". In the hopes of such good fortune the Dakota Republicans met in convention at Hastings, September 14, and nominated a legislative ticket. Not too sanguine at the outset, their prospects were brightened by a misfortune that befell the Democracy. Factional differences among the Democrats resulted in a bolt from the Democratic county convention of October 2, and in two Democratic tickets.<sup>4</sup> In the three-cornered fight which followed, the Republicans saw a chance of snatching the victory.

1 "Address of the Republican State Central Committee" in St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, October 1, 1858.

2 Dakota County constituted the Third Senatorial District. Minnesota, General Laws, 1858, p.403.

3 Ramsey to Donnelly, September 27, 1858.

4 St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, September 18, October 5 and 7, 1858.

Donnelly was again one of the Republican candidates for the state senate. "This time", according to Dr. Fish,<sup>1</sup> "he decided to make a canvass, for the good of the cause". In company with a young lawyer friend, Archibald M. Hayes, of Hastings, he is said to have made a short stumping tour of the county. "They would ride sometimes for miles without seeing a house or a man; and the men they saw were often Indians . . . The white people were gathered in clusters at certain points, and here the young lawyers made what were probably the first political speeches ever made in that section". Shortly before the election a joint meeting of the Democrats and Republicans was to be held in connection with the county agricultural fair at Nininger. There, the principles of the two parties were to be discussed, and it was hoped by the Republicans that Alexander Ramsey would be present and make a few remarks. Unfortunately there is no available record of this meeting. Donnelly, as one of the senatorial candidates, and as the leading citizen of Nininger, undoubtedly took a prominent part on this occasion. Probably the meeting proved, as Donnelly anticipated,<sup>2</sup> "the greatest ever convened in the county".

Donnelly without a doubt had the success of the Republican party and its principles at heart. If, however, he had indeed begun by this time to aspire to political office for its own sake as well, no evidence of it appears. In

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1 Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p. 28.

2 Donnelly to Ramsey, September 23, 1858 (Ramsey Papers).



the absence of such proof one must accept at its face value, Donnelly's post-election statement that the Dakota County Republicans (including, of course, himself) had joined the cause "not for selfish aims of personal advancement, but in pursuance of our convictions that it embodies in itself the great moral and political advancement of the day - that movement which points to complete fulfillment of the purposes which made us a distinct nation".<sup>1</sup>

Despite the advantage of a split in the Democratic ranks, the Dakota Republicans succeeded in electing but one of their ticket - a representative. The senatorships, by a narrow margin, fell to the Democrats, one to each faction. Donnelly came third, losing by only twenty five votes. He ran ahead of the other two Democratic candidates, and left his Republican colleague seventy votes behind.<sup>2</sup> According to the Minnesotian, Donnelly would have been successful had it not been for the votes cast in favor of the bolting Democrat by the "sealy" Republicans of Hastings "from their local bias or interest", and for the illegal votes of between one hundred and fifty and two hundred non-resident Irishmen working on the Cedar Valley Railroad in Dakota County.<sup>3</sup> But the

1 St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, October 29, 1858.

2 St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, October 20, 1858, The official vote for senators is here given as follows:

Democrats		Independent Democrats	
A. H. Norris (elected)	609	D. W. C. Dunwell	455
John W. Doyle	514	Eli Robinson (elected)	602
		Republicans	

L. Aldrich	508
Ignatius Donnelly	578

3 St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, October 21, 1858.



latter statement, even if true, does not account for the fact that, according to the published official figures, the Republican vote in 1857 was forty three percent, while in 1858 it was only thirty two percent of the total vote for senators in each year respectively.<sup>1</sup>

The chief end of the Minnesota Republicans, however, was gained. They secured a majority in the House of Representatives, and could command a majority on a joint ballot<sup>2</sup> for United States Senator if this legislature were convened. As a matter of fact it was not convened,<sup>3</sup> but there was reason to believe, as the event proved, that in the next election they would be able not only to maintain their ground, but to make their triumph complete. In the rising tide of Republicanism even backward Dakota might be "redeemed".

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1 Compare note 2, page 19, with note 2, page 23.

2 Tribune Almanac, 1859.

3 The author of the account of the election of 1858 in Smalley, Political History of Minnesota, 164, is evidently under the mistaken impression that the legislature then elected convened before the election of 1859. See Minnesota, Legislative Manual, 1915, and Felwell, "The Five Million Loan" in M. H. C., 15:200. The senatorial election took place on December 15, 1859, after a new legislature had been elected. Minnesota in Three Centuries, 3:85.

## CAMPAIGN OF 1859

The year 1859 marks a turning point in the political history of Minnesota. In that year the Republican party secured a hold upon the state which it maintained practically unshaken for half a century. In that year, also, Minnesota as a state joined her northern sisters in a movement which, the following year, established the Republicans in the control of the national government.

A number of factors combined to make the campaign which effected that end in Minnesota one of unusual interest. Far-reaching and fundamental questions of policy and government, both state and national, were pressing for immediate solution. The slavery question loomed larger than ever. The Republicans maintained their original stand for the congressional prohibition of slavery in the territories. The great majority of Democrats upheld the doctrine of "squatter sovereignty," maintaining the right of a territory or state to decide for itself whether it would establish, retain, or abolish slavery within its limits. Both parties claimed to have originated and supported in Congress the proposition, embodied in the Homestead Bill, to give "lands to the landless". With these questions of national policy there vied for interest a new crop of purely local issues involving the character of the state government and intimately affecting the welfare of the

people.<sup>1</sup> The fall elections would largely determine, so far as Minnesota was concerned, the way in which those questions were to be answered. They involved the more important executive offices, including the governorship; most of the legislative branch; two seats in the national House of Representatives; and a seat in the United States Senate.

Republicans generally believed that the victory would be theirs. Previous years had marked a steady Republican advance. But one more mighty effort would carry the day. Two years of Democratic control had furnished them with the weapons necessary to strike that final blow. They were not slow to take this advantage. They accused the national Democratic administration of "truckling to the slave power"; of obstructing, in the interests of the slave-holders, the passage of the much desired Homestead Bill; of mismanagement and extravagance in the conduct of the national government. The Democratic state administration, said to have been based on fraud in the first place, was charged with inefficiency, extravagance, and corruption. It was responsible for the passage of unwise financial measures, the ruinous effects of which were already apparent. Unnecessary expenditures and out-and-out thefts had added an increased burden of taxation. To the influence of Democratic land office officials was ascribed a proclamation for a sale of public lands, which would, because of the hard times, deprive the "poor pre-emptor" of the fruits of his toil. On these grounds a strong appeal was made to the

<sup>1</sup> Republican and Democratic platforms. St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, August 4, 1859; St. Paul Weekly Pioneer and Democrat, August 19, 1859.

conscience and pocket of a liberty-loving and financially em-  
barrassed people.<sup>1</sup>

To be sure, the Republicans were not themselves altogether invulnerable, for they were at some pains to ward off the Democratic charges of Know Nothingism, which threatened their influence with the large number of naturalized citizens in the state.<sup>2</sup>

Both parties were apparently between Scylla and Charybdis so far as concerned the danger of the state having to make good by taxation its "loan of credit" to the railroad companies in the famous Five Million Loan, or else to repudiate its obligations in the matter altogether.<sup>3</sup> The great majority of

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1 "Address to the People of Minnesota" in St. Paul Weekly Minnesotian, September 3, 1859; continued in St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, September 2 and 5. The issue of the daily containing the first part of the address is not in the files of the Minnesota Historical Society.

2 This line of attack was anticipated by a series of open letters addressed to the foreign-born citizens in behalf of the Republican cause. St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, June 15; Weekly, July 16; Daily, July 19 and August 4, 1859.

3 In 1858 it became evident that the four land grant railroad companies of Minnesota could not, unaided, comply with the conditions of the state's assignment to them of the congressional land grant of 1857. Everyone wanted to see the beginning and early completion of the proposed railroads. The people of Minnesota, therefore, in the firm belief that in so doing they were not creating a debt which they might be called upon to pay, strongly endorsed an amendment to the state constitution which authorized a loan of the state's "credit" to the companies to the amount of five million dollars. State railroad bonds were accordingly issued, and the companies began construction work. But the plan proved a failure. When the campaign of 1859 was launched, construction had ceased and the railroads had all but defaulted. Not a rail had been laid, and but a few miles of grading had been done to show for the \$2,275,000 in bonds which had been issued. The supposedly ample securities were next to worthless. It looked as though the "loan of credit" would become a debt after all, to be liquidated only by taxation. Folwell, "The Five Million Loan," in M. H. C., 15:189-214; Rasmus S. Saby, "Railroad Legislation in

the people absolutely disowned the so-called "swindling bonds" which had been issued under the state's guarantee. They did not propose now to be taxed to pay for them. But an open appeal to this sentiment manifestly would not do, if only for the sake of the state's reputation abroad. The consequence was that, while both parties declared against any form of repudiation, neither appears to have been disposed to state clearly whether, if in power, it would or would not resort to taxation in the last extremity.<sup>1</sup> Ramsey, speaking for the Republicans, encouraged the hope that the need for taxation might not arise after all,<sup>2</sup> but when asked if, should such occasion arise, he would sign a tax bill, he answered with an evasion.<sup>3</sup> There appeared to be a disposition on all hands to emphasize less difficult and better vote-getting issues.

All things considered, Republican prospects were undoubtedly good. Republican nominations that year were likely to carry with them something more than a hard fight and empty honors. It is not surprising, then, that many who had formerly fought for the "cause" in the face of almost certain defeat, should now desire to lead in the hour of expected triumph, and to enjoy the personal rewards of office. But one nomination, that of Ramsey for governor, was a foregone conclusion. The others were open to the field.

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Minnesota, 1849 to 1875" in M.H.C., 15:30-49; "The Railroad Bonds," Hastings Independent, January 27, 1859.

1 Republican and Democratic platforms. St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, August 4, 1859; St. Paul Weekly Pioneer and Democrat, August 19, 1859.

2 Account of rally at Hastings. St. Paul Weekly Minnesotian, August 27, 1859.

3 St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, September 5, 1859.



Such, in the main, was the political outlook when Donnelly, apparently for the first time, entered the field of politics on his own initiative, and in active pursuit of political office. The appeal of great issues and the prospect of an exhilarating fight undoubtedly influenced him in the taking of this step, but there was also an element of necessity in his decision. The Nininger City project, hitherto his paramount interest, had by now dropped into the background. Toward the latter part of 1858, he had evidently given up all hope of making Nininger the metropolis of his dreams. He himself had barely managed to pull through the period of depression following the panic of 1857. He still owned enough land to make him rich when times changed, so he wrote, but he was land poor for the time being.<sup>1</sup> He was thus compelled to look about for opportunities offering fuller scope for his activities and more immediate returns. He appears at this time to have considered the possibility of becoming an editor, but was probably discouraged by his friend Foster's testimony that such work paid "barely enough."<sup>2</sup> An invitation to lecture in St. Paul during the winter of 1858-59 may have suggested the possibilities of the lecture platform.<sup>3</sup> However that may be, in November 1858 he was in fact "compelled to return to the

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1 Donnelly to Burns(copy), November 15, 1858; to same, January 7, 1859.

2 Foster to Donnelly, November 17, 1858.

3 Committee of the St. Paul Mercantile Library Association to Donnelly, November 11, 1858.

practice of law to earn a living!<sup>1</sup> It was at this time also that he began to look forward to and lay plans for securing a place on the Republican ticket in 1859.

In seeking opportunity in this direction, Donnelly could count on certain decided advantages. He was undoubtedly better fitted by training and experience than the average frontier statesman. The fact that he was a comparative newcomer might well be offset by advantages that he had acquired incidental to his promoting activities. In the short time that he had been in Minnesota, he had made a wide acquaintance, influential friends, and a reputation as a public speaker. He had also gained local prominence in his party. It remained now only to place his name prominently before the Republicans of the state as an able and devoted champion of their cause, and to set friendly influences at work in his behalf. With the backing of men on the inside, and a reputation with the party, he would stand a good chance of getting a place on the ticket.

The first step in the launching of a Donnelly boom took the form of a publicity campaign, which was apparently planned

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1 Donnelly to George L. and E.A. Otis, November 27, 1858.

Dr. Fish, in Donnelliana, part 1, p. 29, states that Donnelly at this time entered into a partnership with Archibald M. and Oren T. Hayes, of Hastings, under the firm name of Hayes, Donnelly and Hayes. No such firm was advertised in the Hastings Independent, but Donnelly's card appears there, beginning March 17, 1859 and continuing at least through the year 1862. Evidences of continued financial pressure appear from time to time in later letters. For example, see Mrs. Donnelly to Donnelly, July 26, 1859; Donnelly to O'Brien, June 22, 1859.

with some care. Soon after the elections of 1858, Donnelly wrote an open letter of encouragement to the defeated Republicans of Dakota County. "Remember", he wrote, "that although we may have met with local defeat, the principles of our great party are striding on at a pace no human arm can stay . . . Let us therefore hold together; let us next fall present an unbroken front to the distracted array of the enemy . . ." The letter was published in the Hastings Independent; and through the kind offices of Dr. Foster, as editor of the St. Paul Minneso-<sup>1</sup>tian, was copied in that paper under the heading, "A Man of Principle".<sup>2</sup> Upon it, Foster commented in part as follows: "In these times when men's principles are so often found regulated by their interests, it is consoling to our faith in human nature, to find men of first rate ability . . . proclaiming the faith that is in them, even though like the martyrs of old it should be from amidst the blaze of their own funeral fires". Other papers followed the example set, with comments in a similar vein. Foster thereupon apprised Donnelly that "'things is workin'".<sup>3</sup>

From time to time during the next few months, whenever occasion offered, special notice was given Donnelly in the columns of the Minnesotian. An account of Donnelly's lecture

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1 From October 19, 1857, to August 27, 1858, the Minnesotian was published by the firm of Foster and Moore. On the latter date the partnership was dissolved, Moore now being proprietor and publisher, Foster being retained as senior editor. Johnston, "Minnesota Journalism" in M.H.C., 10:263(part 1); St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, August 27, 1858.

2 October 29, 1858. The issue of the Hastings Independent referred to is not in the files of the Minnesota Historical Society.

3 Foster to Donnelly, November 17, 1858.

in St. Paul on January 17, spoke of the "fine audience" which crowded the Presbyterian Church on that occasion, and of the pronouncement that the lecture was "both able and entertaining".<sup>1</sup> In a notice of the April town elections in Dakota County, the triumphant election of Ignatius Donnelly, as chairman of the board of supervisors at Nininger, was given special mention.<sup>2</sup> That apparently innocent notices of this kind were not without their purpose and effect, witness Donnelly's own acknowledgment: "Thanks to yr. [Foster's] starting the idea, and yr. judicious puffs, my chances of strong support from this county in the state convention appear very good".<sup>3</sup>

In the latter part of May, about two months before the state convention, the Minnesotian published a list of "Persons named for the several offices." Donnelly was there mentioned, among others, both for secretary of state and for attorney general.<sup>4</sup>

In the issue of the Minnesotian for June 15, there appeared the first of a series of four long letters, signed by Ignatius Donnelly, to the foreign-born citizens of Minnesota. They were political in character. Three of them were published before the time set for the Republican state convention.<sup>5</sup>

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- 1 St. Paul Weekly Minnesotian, January 22, 1859; Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p. 30.
  - 2 St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, April 13, 1859; notice from clerk of town meeting to Donnelly, April 5, 1859.
  - 3 Donnelly to Foster, April 24, 1859.
  - 4 St. Paul Weekly Minnesotian, May 28, 1859.
  - 5 The convention assembled July 20. The letters appeared as follows: St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, June 15; Weekly, July 16; Daily, July 19, August 4, 1859.

By the time that body met Donnelly's name and some of his qualifications, at least, must have become familiar to most of the men there assembled.

Foster was able to further Donnelly's interests in other ways. The two were in frequent communication. What transpired in their conferences can, of course, only be surmised. But their correspondence shows that Foster acted in the capacity of adviser, as well as in that of advertising manager. He advised Donnelly, for the latter's political advantage, to practice law in St. Paul, but to keep up his residence at Nininger.<sup>1</sup> He also took occasion to caution Donnelly against the repetition, in his Hastings lecture, of a quotation from Emerson about going to bed Calvinists and waking up Liberalists. "You can take a hint, I know", he wrote.<sup>2</sup> Foster it was who first sounded the editor of the Hastings Independent and others in the county on the subject of Donnelly's candidacy.<sup>3</sup> It is probable also that Foster, being so closely associated with Ramsey, was instrumental in securing the latter's influence for Donnelly.<sup>4</sup> Finally, it was through Foster that Donnelly was given the opportunity to prepare, for adoption by the convention, the most important electioneering document of the campaign, the so-called "Address to the People of Minnesota".<sup>5</sup> Through

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1 Foster to Donnelly, November 17, 1858.

2 Foster to Donnelly, February 6, 1859.

3 Donnelly to Stebbins, July 28, 1859.

4 Donnelly to Foster, May 10, 1859. Donnelly here inquires if there is "anything new from the Governor".

5 Benson to Ramsey, June 15, July 8, 1859 (Ramsey Papers); St. Peter Free Press, July 27, 1859; for the "Address" see St. Paul Weekly Minnesotian, September 3, and Daily, September 2 and 5, 1859.



this elaborate and effective piece of work Donnelly undoubtedly gained standing with the recognized leaders of the party. Certainly his connection with it played no small part in the realization of his hopes.

In the meantime Donnelly and his friends were making an active personal campaign in Dakota County and in other parts of the state. Colonel John H. Stevens, though himself a Democrat, was speaking a good word for him among the Republicans of McLeod County. It was partly with a view to looking after his prospects in that locality that Donnelly thought some of making a trip up that way.<sup>1</sup> If a not too sympathetic correspondent is to be believed, he also had many conferences with leading politicians of the state.<sup>2</sup> About the first of May he started a Republican paper at Nininger, known as the Dakota<sup>3</sup> Sentinel, under the firm name of Lindergreen and Hoblitt. Five days before the <sup>county</sup> convention, Donnelly delivered a Fourth of July oration at Hastings. The address was not political, though politics might be read into it. In it he set forth an ideal of liberty and equality which holds no place for slavery in any form. In him might be seen an eloquent and effective champion of the cause which the Republican party had espoused.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Donnelly to Stevens, May 9, 1859.

<sup>2</sup> Stebbins to Donnelly, August 6, 1859.

<sup>3</sup> Donnelly to Stevens, May 9, 1859; Hastings Independent, May 12, 1859. No copies of the paper itself are available.

<sup>4</sup> The speech was printed in full in the Hastings Independent, July 14, 1859. It was probably with reference to this oration, or to the "Address to the People of Minnesota" that Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote to Donnelly: "You do not, like too many of our statesmen neglect the lessons of history and philosophy". August 12, 1859. On the other hand, Mrs. Donnelly criticized the oration as "too far-fetched"; plain people, she said, could not understand it. August 28, 1859.

All these factors helped to prepare the way for an open candidacy in the county and state conventions for some state office. The county convention was held at Hastings on July 9. The official account of the proceedings on that occasion gives little more than the choice of delegates to the state convention, of whom Donnelly was one. According to Columbus Stebbins, the editor of the Hastings Independent, Donnelly controlled the convention, and used it in a manner to further his own ends. Stebbins had no objections to Donnelly himself or to his candidacy, but "that a majority of the delegates in a County Convention of the Republican party should take their seats in that body wholly and entirely to carry out the private views of any individual, is what we do not and cannot approve. And that it is deemed of importance for the success of that candidate that principles and platforms should be ignored is almost a reason to our mind why he should not be nominated for . . . any office to which he aspires. Resolutions upon important questions of policy, both State and National, were prepared for presentation by delegates in that body, but it being evident that if presented, they would be voted down in obedience to the supposed individual interests of a candidate, they were quietly smothered and put out of sight . . . We think, therefore, that the candidate who, to advance his private ends, packs a convention to suppress a platform and ignore resolutions upon questions of public interest, is guilty of a suicidal policy which had better be carried no further . . . If the same policy should prevail in the state convention, it

will be disastrous to the cause . . ."<sup>1</sup>

As for the particular office to which Donnelly aspired, Stebbins' opinion was in the main correct, though put in an uncomplimentary form. Donnelly was "a candidate for some office, commencing at the head of the state ticket and ending at the tail, or in other words (that) he was a candidate for the best place, but rather than have nothing, he would take the least".<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, Donnelly first aimed at a nomination to Congress. So at least he wrote to Colonel Stevens, with the comment that "I may not succeed--but a cat can look at a king".<sup>3</sup> But apparently prospects in this direction became less and less promising,<sup>4</sup> for it was not long before the Minnesotian came out with its mention of Donnelly in connection with the offices of secretary of state and attorney general.<sup>5</sup> With what expectations in these or other directions Donnelly went to the state convention does not appear, but sometime before the last moment he decided to try for the lieutenant governor--

1 Hastings Independent, July 14, 1859; Donnelly to Stebbins, July 28, 1859; Stebbins to Donnelly, August 6, 1859. In Donnelly's letter the suggestion appears that Stebbins was disappointed in not getting a place on the delegation to the state convention. On the other hand, Stebbins gives as his reason for opposing Donnelly in the convention, that he thought he discovered a disposition on Donnelly's part at that time to "dodge the issue of the Loan Bill". Stebbins probably had an interest in the smothered resolutions.

2 Hastings Independent, July 14, 1859.

3 Donnelly to Stevens, May 9, 1859.

4 There were two congressional candidates to be nominated, but although the state was not yet divided into two districts, political considerations would leave but one nomination open to men of the northern part of the state. There were at least two other candidates for this nomination--Cyrus Aldrich, of Minneapolis, and Stephen Miller, of St. Cloud. The suggestion appears, in a letter from the latter, that Aldrich had set his heart on the nomination, and that his disappointment might injure Ramsey. Miller to Ramsey, February 25, 1859 (Ramsey Papers).

5 St. Paul Weekly Minnesotian, May 28, 1859.

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There is no evidence to show that Donnelly's name was put upon a "slate" prepared in advance by the leaders to be forced through the convention. Charges had indeed been made as early as January that plans were being devised in St. Paul to pack the state convention in the interests of a few gentlemen who "must be taken care of". Donnelly was one of the few named. The cast for the state ticket, it was intimated, would consist of Ramsey for governor, W.D. Babbitt for lieutenant governor, Foster for secretary of state, Donnelly for attorney general, William R. Marshall and Daniel Norton for congressmen, and David Cooper for senator. Attention was called especially to the fact that Ramsey, Foster and Donnelly were all from Pennsylvania. This "warning voice to Republicans", however, failed to create any general alarm for their freedom in the choice of candidates.

The Republican State Convention met in St. Paul on the morning of July 20. There was much to be done before nominations were in order. At the proper moment Donnelly arose and moved that a committee of six be appointed to prepare an address to accompany the platform, "to give to the world the reason upon which our faith and opinions are founded". The motion was carried and a committee appointed with Donnelly as chairman. The rest of the committee was composed of men not

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1 St. Paul Daily Times, January 19, 1859. The Times was a Republican paper and a rival of the Minnesotian, which enjoyed the advantage of being the central organ of the party. The latter replied to these insinuations with an emphatic denial (Weekly, February 12, 1859). The Faribault Central Republican, January 26, 1859, also took the Times to task.

generally known for their ability to handle such a task. Their duties, however, were largely honorary, for Donnelly had already done the work, and was ready to present the address shortly after the noon recess. The convention at that time referred it to the state central committee to be prepared as an electioneering document.

When the time came for making up the ticket, Ramsey was at once nominated for governor by acclamation. There followed then a spirited contest over the nomination for lieutenant governor. The candidates for that office were Ignatius Donnelly, Henry A. Swift, Charles T. Stearns, Thompson, and J.F. McKusick. Donnelly was placed in nomination by E.F. Parker, of Dakota County. The first ballot resulted in no choice, but gave Swift a lead of seventeen votes over Donnelly, his nearest competitor. The convention then adjourned till morning. The interruption apparently was fortunate for Donnelly, for he started in the next morning with a lead over Swift of thirteen votes, and on the third and final ballot won the victory, after which his nomination was declared unanimous.

Donnelly then made the customary speech of acceptance. In conclusion he remarked, "It may have been said that I am not sufficiently known throughout the state. Whatever merit I have lacked in this respect, in the past, I promise to make up in the future—after October next the charge shall not be repeated against me; for wherever in the State I can learn of a community which would like to hear Republican principles announced, between now and the election, it will be a great



pleasure to me to be with them".<sup>1</sup>

In view of the fact that Swift was at first the most formidable candidate before the convention for the office of lieutenant governor, and also that he deserved well of the party on account of the service he had rendered it in 1857 as a candidate for Congress,<sup>2</sup> Donnelly's success was remarkable. How it happened that a younger and less well known man supplanted Swift, was a question which called for comment and criticism from some quarters. Most of the Republican papers throughout the state, it is true, expressed varying degrees of satisfaction over Donnelly's nomination.<sup>3</sup> The Stillwater Messenger,<sup>4</sup> however, claiming to speak for many Republicans of the state, expressed dissatisfaction with the nomination of "Ignatius (Ignis Fatuus) Donnelly", and especially "with the manner in which it was done". It was claimed that "a determination on the part of the Mutual Admiration Society . . . led to a system of barter by no means beneficial to the party . . ." The St. Paul Weekly Pioneer and Democrat,<sup>6</sup> far from unwilling to eulogize a discarded Republican and discredit his party,

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1 St. Paul Daily Times, July 21, 1859; St. Paul Weekly Minnesotian, July 25, 1859. The vote on each ballot was as follows:

1. Donnelly 31, Swift 48, Stearns 22, Thompson 24

2. Donnelly 53, Swift 40, Stearns 22, Thompson 9

3. Donnelly 77, Swift 48, Thompson 2, McKusiok 1

2 J. Fletcher Williams, "Memoir of Ex-Governor Henry A. Swift" in M. H. C., 3:92.

3 For examples, see Falls Evening News (St. Anthony and Minneapolis), July 26; Faribault Central Republican, July 27;

Minnesota State News (St. Anthony and Minneapolis), July 29;

Mower County Mirror (Austin), August 4; St. Peter Free Press, July 27, 1859.

4 July 26, 1859.

5 Foster and Donnelly.

6 July 28 and August 4, 1859.

took Swift's part and attempted to explain the phenomenon. This paper first accredited Donnelly's nomination to Ramsey, who "dictated nominations to suit his own purpose". Later, with more light on the subject, it made much of an alleged conspiracy against Swift in the Republican convention. Donnelly and James H. Baker, with the aid of W.C. Dodge, it was charged, had prepared and passed around a "secret circular" which accused Swift of infidelity to the party, and prejudiced the convention against him.

There is little doubt that Ramsey's favor, and Foster's activities accounted for much of Donnelly's suddenly acquired strength in the convention. It is true, also, that efforts were made to ruin Swift's chances of the nomination, though there is no evidence that Donnelly had a hand in any such malicious scheme as that exposed in the Pioneer. Another advantage for Donnelly lay in the difference between the two men. Swift was not one to push himself forward; Donnelly was naturally aggressive. Donnelly's activity beforehand and his strategy in the convention placed him in a position to make full use of all his advantages. Nor should the weight of his qualifications be overlooked. He was an able writer and a brilliant speaker. The party had need of such. His nomination, therefore, came partly through a recognition of the fact that his services would help to ensure a Republican victory.

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1 Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p.31; Hastings Independent, July 28, 1859.

General William LeDuc, of Hastings, told the writer that Donnelly owed his nomination to Ramsey more than to anyone else. General LeDuc was at that time thirty six years old and a resident of Hastings (Upham and Dunlap, Minnesota Biographies,

The other nominees on the Republican ticket were, James H. Baker for secretary of state, Gordon E. Cole for attorney general, Charles Scheffer for treasurer, and Cyrus Aldrich and William Windom for Congress.<sup>1</sup> The Democratic convention met in St. Paul on August 17 and 18, and placed the following ticket in the field: George L. Becker for governor,<sup>2</sup> *Sylvanus B. Lowry for lieutenant governor,* Francis Baasen for secretary of state, John B. Brisbin for attorney general, Samuel Abbe for treasurer, and James M. Cavanaugh and Christopher Graham for Congress.<sup>2</sup>

In the campaign that followed personal differences were forgotten. Each party opposed to the other every ounce of talent and energy available. It was no ordinary campaign. The press bristled with argument, ridicule, and calumny; the platform resounded with the eloquence of a small army of orators. The state was stumped from east to west and north to south, in river town and frontier "city", in auditoriums, in barns, and under the open sky, in sunshine and rainy weather. Democratic and Republican orators followed upon one another's heels up one river, across country, and down, or up, the next. Pro-

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430--M. H. C., vol. 14). Due account, however, must be taken of the fact that the general holds Donnelly guilty of "betraying" Hamsey and other friends later on, and has little of good to say for him.

Three years later Foster wrote (to Donnelly, December 25, 1862): "when I helped him [Donnelly] to the Lieutenant Governorship, I felt that all he wanted was a fulcrum for his intellectual lever . . ."

W. C. Dodge, one of the alleged conspirators against Swift, wrote to Donnelly (November 10, 1859): "I suppose you are aware of the fact, that it was by my influence that Swift was taken out of your way at the convention".

1 St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, July 22, 1859.

2 St. Paul Weekly Pioneer and Democrat, August 19, 1859.

cessions with torches, bands and banners greeted them; a flood of "literature" was left in their wake. Local celebrities and great men of the nation alike were content to sleep in lofts and partake of rancid fare for the good of one or the other cause.

In energy, organization and array of talent, to say nothing of argument, the Republicans had the best of the contest. They were especially fortunate in having the services of a number of men of national reputation. Calusha A. Grow, author of the Homestead Bill, came to appeal to the "lands for the landless" sentiment among the new settlers of the frontier. Schuyler Colfax, afterward speaker of the House and vice-president of the United States, made a series of speeches on national questions. Frank P. Blair, Jr. came up from St. Louis, where he had made a gallant fight in behalf of the anti-slavery cause. Other big men took a part in the campaign, but among them all none raised greater expectations or contributed more of solid advantage to the Republican cause in Minnesota than did "the great German orator", Carl Schurz. Schurz had demonstrated his power of influencing the German element in Wisconsin. No small part of the foreign vote in Minnesota came from the Germans of the Minnesota Valley region. Not only did he labor with them, but also with the English-speaking people. In St. Paul he spoke for an hour and a half in German and an hour in English, "with tremendous effect".<sup>1</sup>

1 St. Paul Daily Minnesotian and St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat from the opening of the campaign, August 25, to the election, October 11, 1859; Rohrer to Donnelly, September 3, 1859; Schurz, Reminiscences, 2:143-152; Charles D. Gilfillan, "Early Political History of Minnesota," in M. H. C., 9:173; Smalley, Political History of Minnesota, 165.

Donnelly took an active part in this platform campaign. He more than made good the assurance given the convention that none could afterwards charge him with not being known in the state. In the course of the campaign, alone or in company with Ramsey, Windom and others, he visited every part of the settled portion of the state. He spoke in the prairie towns of southern Minnesota, in the Minnesota Valley settlements, in the Mississippi towns and cities from Brownsville to Sauk Rapids, and in the St. Croix valley. <sup>1</sup> "Ramsey", Dr. Fish relates, "took his family horses and carriage . . . and invited Mr. Donnelly and Hon. Aaron Goodrich (who had been the first Chief Justice of the Territory) to seats in it . . . They spoke in barns, sawmills, schoolhouses, halls, churches, and in the open air . . . They were for ten days in a frontier region so primitive that there was not a pair of stairs to be seen."<sup>2</sup>

Donnelly's speeches on these occasions, like those of many another in that campaign, were not reported. Why print words that everybody might hear? The papers were full of their own arguments, the speeches of the bigger men, and glowing descriptions of campaign rallies. Donnelly probably varied his

<sup>1</sup> Campaign schedules, St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, August 5, September 22, 1859; Rohrer to Donnelly, September 5 and 10; Donnelly to Foster, September 3; Hastings Independent, August 25; Winona Republican, August 31, quoted in St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, September 2; Mower County Mirror (Austin), September 8; Faribault Central Republican, September 21; St. Cloud Democrat, September 29, quoted in St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, October 4; St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, October 5; Stillwater Messenger, October 18, 1859.

<sup>2</sup> Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p. 31. The statement that they traveled in this way about two thousand miles, and made over sixty speeches each, is an exaggeration. To accomplish that, they must have traveled about fifty miles a day besides stopping more than once a day for speechmaking. The party did not keep together throughout the campaign. See note above.



subject as the occasion demanded, but the trend of his interest would make his choice the subject of slavery. On that subject he undoubtedly advanced substantially the same arguments that he put forward in his letters to the foreign-born citizens shortly before the convention. There he outlined the history of the government's relation to slavery, compared the attitudes of the Republican and Democratic parties toward its extension, and argued that its further spread would be a menace to the citizens even of free Minnesota. The constitutional compromise over slavery at the founding of our government, he said, had placed it in the position of a local evil transmitted from the past, apologized for by the South, and tolerated by the North in the hope that it would gradually expire. The institution had nevertheless thrived, and was now "a mass of logically arranged rights, based upon corrupt misconceptions of both history and religion--the dominant power of our Government, overrunning not only our free Territories, from which its growth is interdicted, but seeking to . . . let in upon us all the horrors of the slave trade . . ." This "proscribed curse" and "hideous abomination", the Republicans were determined to keep where it stood at the formation of the government. The Democratic party, on the other hand, had been "the pander and willing instrument of the encroachments of the South". It claimed now to be neither pro- nor anti-slavery--"a sort of political Colossus with one foot on freedom and the other on slavery". He then continued with an exposition of the character of the institution, and of its degrading effect both upon slaves and upon free white laboring men. In the latter form he presented

the question, "not in the guise of an abstract philanthropy, but as a present, pressing and unavoidable evil to the white race". "Slavery", he said, "tends to conditions wherein to be idle is to be elevated—to work, is to be degraded."<sup>1</sup>

Whatever may have been Donnelly's subjects, or his treatment of them, Republican testimony as to his ability and effectiveness steadily accumulated during his progress up and down the state. It is true that approval, in one instance, was accompanied by what may have been a mild thrust at Donnelly's youth,<sup>2</sup> But in most cases it exceeded the strict requirements of party necessity. Among the loudest in Donnelly's praise were the two papers which so severely criticised his activity in the county and state conventions. The Hastings Independent, in reporting the rally at that place, said "Mr. Donnelly, concise and argumentative as he always is, held the audience for half or three quarters of an hour, spell-bound by his eloquence . . ." The Stillwater Messenger, also reporting a local meeting, came out with the statement that "Mr. Donnelly . . . more than met the expectations of his friends by making one of the best and most effective speeches of the campaign." All accounts agree as to his clearness and forcefulness of expression, and one mentions that accomplishment for which he was later to become so well known, the ability, that is, to point his arguments with anecdotes, "not less convincing than racy put."<sup>3</sup>

1 The Republicans' emphasis of this issue called from Mrs. Donnelly the comment that "'free soil' is what the west will swallow—not slavery or any such talk". September 25, 1859.

2 The Winona Republican, August 31 (St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, September 2, 1859), after giving Donnelly all due credit, added: "He made a good impression on the minds of our children, to whom he has heretofore been a stranger".

3 See page 43, note 1.

The appearance of this young "Republican hurricane" called forth just a little more than his share of Democratic attention. For want of better weapons, the Democratic press resorted to ridicule, insinuation and abuse. Donnelly's youth, his red hair, his name, his Irish descent, his religion, his political relations, his public statements were all treated in ways best calculated to damage him politically. He was not to be taken seriously, it was asserted, for he was "yet in his clouts". His name offered especially alluring possibilities of laughing him off the field. Articles appeared under the heading, "Ignatius". The Pioneer readily picked up the "Ignus(sic) Fatuus"<sup>1</sup> of the disgruntled Stillwater Messenger. The Democrats took pains to make it clear that Donnelly was a Catholic and an Irishman. The Pioneer at once dubbed him "Ignatius Loyola", and soon found the means of hitting Donnelly through that name without alienating either Protestant or Catholic voters of its own party. This was accomplished by means of an article copied from the Hastings Ledger in which the writer insinuated that Donnelly had suppressed his middle name, Loyola, for political reasons. The obvious intent of the article was to place Donnelly in the light, on the one hand, of a disguised, and on the other, of a renegade Catholic. Much the same sort of advantage was taken of the fact that Donnelly was of Irish descent. The Pioneer published an open letter from John W. Doyle, "One of the

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1 Scott County Democrat (Shakopee), July 30, 1859; Minnesota Patriot (Wabasha), August 27; St. Paul Weekly Pioneer and Democrat, August 4. For reference to the Stillwater Messenger, see page 39.

'Foreign-Born' of Dakota County". Doyle took as his subject the three letters that Donnelly had then written to the foreign-born citizens. After proving to his own satisfaction that Republicans were Know Nothings, Doyle inquired: "Would it not look better for yourself, Mr.D., to return to your old love, the Democratic party, rather than act as 'stool pigeon' for those who, you must know, hate your Irish antecedents, and, if I understand rightly, your Catholic proclivities? . . . you well know Irishmen never sympathise with traitors".

Dr.Foster defended Donnelly from the accusations of the "crimes of being an Irishman and a Catholic" with the statement that "Mr.Donnelly is a native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and his religious sentiments are of a liberal character and totally divested of sectarianism". With special reference to Doyle's charges, Foster pointed to the significant fact that Doyle, in running for the state senate the year before was lowest on the Democratic ticket and had been outdistanced by the Republican, Donnelly. Donnelly himself replied indirectly in explanation of his motives for leaving the Democratic, and joining the Republican party. To that purpose he devoted most of his fourth and last letter to the foreign-born citizens.

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- 1 St.Paul Weekly Pioneer and Democrat, July 28, August 4; Daily, August 31, 1859.
  - 2 St.Paul Daily Minnesotian, July 22, 1859; "Letter to the Foreign-Born Citizens of Minnesota", St.Paul Daily Minnesotian, August 4, 1859. Mrs.Donnelly warned Donnelly not to "let that Dr.Foster with his ill timed remarks" defeat him. July 30, 1859. Later she expressed her regret that Donnelly was so eager in showing himself not a Catholic by "the exceeding infidel doctrines" he uttered. She also suggested that he might fare worse as an infidel than as a Catholic. August 28, 1859.

Donnelly's second letter to the foreign-born citizens was made the subject of violent attack. In this letter, to enforce his arguments that slavery was a menace to the white race, he stated that the gradual fusion of the black and white races in the South was already obliterating the distinction of color between slaves and freemen; that slaveholders were even then branding their "~~slaves~~<sup>white</sup> slaves" to distinguish them from white freemen; that white children were being kidnapped to be brought up in slavery. Such statements, according to George B. Clitherall and Girart Hewitt, were "a tissue of gross misrepresentations". Both spoke, they said, from long experience of life in the slave states. Hewitt, besides questioning Donnelly's veracity, made sarcastic allusion to Donnelly's manners. Clitherall challenged Donnelly to produce the evidence for his statements.<sup>1</sup>

Donnelly, though declaring himself reluctant to become involved in personal controversy, made immediate and direct reply. Accepting Clitherall's challenge, he offered evidence to substantiate some of his statements, and frankly admitting that he could not present precise proof for others, he appealed to common knowledge for support. At any rate, he maintained that his point was not invalidated "that in the South slavery does not depend on color". To Hewitt's personal attack, he replied in kind, intimating that envy was behind it, and questioning<sup>2</sup> Hewitt's right to pose as a "Southern Chesterfield".

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1 "Letter to the Foreign-Born Citizens of Minnesota", St. Paul Weekly Minnesotian, July 16, 1859; St. Paul Weekly Pioneer and Democrat, July 21, 1859.

2 St. Paul Weekly Minnesotian, July 23, 1859.



More serious charges were made against Donnelly, but with little effect. The statements that he was "one of the most unprincipled political tricksters in Minnesota" and that "his election would be a disgrace to our State" went unchallenged. The charge that he had defrauded the land companies with which he had been connected in Philadelphia, was made while he was at Lake City by one J.A. Jackson, formerly of Philadelphia. Donnelly refuted the charge on the spot and "offered 2 to 1 for every dollar proven as fraudulently received". The matter came up again in an apparent attempt at blackmail. Donnelly was quite wrought up over it for the moment, but nothing further came of it.<sup>1</sup>

Donnelly's opponent on the Democratic ticket was General Sylvanus B. Lowry, of St. Cloud, a man of southern birth. Lowry came to Minnesota in the early days and for several years traded among the Winnebago Indians on the upper Mississippi. His title was derived from a short service as adjutant general of Minnesota Territory in 1853. At the time of his nomination for lieutenant governor, he was engaged in real estate operations in and around St. Cloud, and was the "big man" of the upper Mississippi country. He was strongly pro-slavery in his views. No two candidates for the same office in that campaign more completely represented the antithesis between pro-slavery and anti-slavery views than did Lowry and Donnelly. Nor did other differences, no less striking, fail to appear in the

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1 Minnesota Patriot (Wabasha), July 30, 1859; Pears to Donnelly (copy), August 18, 1859; Averill to same, September 27, 1859.

course of the campaign.<sup>1</sup>

Jane G. Swisshelm, in her Half a Century,<sup>2</sup> presents a characterization of the man that is neither to be ignored nor paraphrased: General Lowry "lived in a semi-barbaric splendor, in an imposing house on the bank of the Mississippi, where he kept slaves, bringing them from and returning them to his Tennessee estate, at his convenience, and no man saying him nay.

"He owned immense tracts of land; had and disposed of all the government contracts he pleased; travelled over Europe with his salaried physician; said to this man 'go', and he went, to that 'come', and he came, and to a third 'do this' and it was done . . .

"Republicans on their arrival in his dominion, were converted to the Democratic faith, fast as sinners to Christianity in a Maffitt meeting, and those on whom the spirit fell not, kept very quiet. People had gone there to make homes, not to fight the Southern tiger, and any attempt against such overwhelming odds seemed madness, for Lowrie's dominion was largely legitimate. He was one of those who are born to command—of splendid physique and dignified bearing, superior intellect and mesmeric fascination. His natural advantages had been increased by a liberal education; he had been brought up among slaves, lived among Indians as agent and interpreter, felt his own superiority, and asserted it with the full force of honest conviction.

<sup>1</sup> Upham and Dunlap, Minnesota Biographies, 452 (M. H. C., vol. 14); William B. Mitchell, "St. Cloud in the Territorial Period" in M. H. C., 12:641.

<sup>2</sup> Pages 171-173. Mrs. Swisshelm wrote this account some twenty years after this time, with an evident attempt to be fair

"On all hands he was spoken of as Dictator, and there was both love and respect mingled with the fear by which he governed . . . He was the embodiment of the slave power. All its brute force, pious pretenses, plausibility, chivalry, all the good and bad of the Southern character; all the weapons of the army of despotism were concentrated in this man . . ."

The Pioneer pointed to the "striking contrast" between this "gentleman of culture and fine ability" and "his opponent, the 'Ignus Fatuus', of the St. Croix Republicans".<sup>1</sup> A verse from<sup>2</sup> one of the Democratic campaign songs conveyed the same idea. The Minnesotian heartily agreed to the "striking contrast", but claimed that it was all in Donnelly's favor, and was anxious to put the matter to test. Accordingly Lowry was challenged to a public discussion or debate with Donnelly, at any time after September 26, and at any place in northern Minnesota. The editor of the Pioneer, after making such a boast, as chairman of the Democratic state committee, could not, it was urged, refuse to take up the gauntlet for Lowry. By way of further aggravation, Lowry was referred to as "the Stearns County Moccasin", "the copper colored 'bay' of the Democracy"

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with the memory of a man at whose hands she believed she had suffered wrong. See page 53.

1 St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, August 20, 1859.

2 St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, August 28, 1859:

"Old Ramsey cheats the Indians  
And Baker Ohio  
But with Becker and Baasen  
We'll annihilate the foe.  
Ignatius writes himself an ass  
As other donkeys do,  
We hate a fool, so let him slide  
And Lowry here's to you."

and "ye Great Winnebago". If Lowry could not be prevailed upon<sup>1</sup> to enter the lists, any other Democrat might be substituted.

Neither Lowry nor any other Democrat could be tempted to face Donnelly on the platform, so the Minnesotian was forced to content itself with an elaborate analysis of Lowry's record and claims. His wealth was derived from "spoils of the heathen" of which he had made a "comfortable amount" as a trader among the Winnebagoes. His vaunted popularity amounted to nothing. His so-called prominence in territorial days, was but momentary and dependent on Henry M. Rice's favor and fortunes. It was proved on the testimony of one "Dave", of Sauk Rapids, that Lowry and other prominent Rice men had once joined a Know Nothing lodge at Watab. Worst of all, Lowry was "an extreme pro-slavery man", and as such, it was charged, had been responsible for the destruction of a printing press in St. Cloud, from which there had been issuing a strongly anti-slavery newspaper, the St. Cloud Visiter. The crime had been all the more outrageous from the fact that the editor and owner of the paper was a woman, Mrs. Jane G. Swisshelm.<sup>2</sup>

To these charges "Vindicator", of Stearns County, replied at length in the Pioneer. The Minnesotian's version of the destruction of Mrs. Swisshelm's press was especially scored as a "contemptible lie". Mr. Shepley, a lawyer, had destroyed the press, because Mrs. Swisshelm had offended him through an article published in her paper. Lowry had had nothing whatever to

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1 St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, August 27, 1859.

2 St. Paul Weekly Minnesotian, August 27; Daily, September 9 and 13, 1859.

do with it. Mrs. Swisshelm, herself, then made reply in the Minnesotian that "Lowry was present and did assist in that destruction".<sup>1</sup> The Republicans continued making much of Lowry's alleged participation in this episode. Donnelly, says Mrs. Swisshelm, "was not deterred by any super-refinement from

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1 St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, Septemebr 2, 1859; St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, September 13, 1859.

Mrs. Swisshelm, in her Half a Century (pp. 167-173, 178-195), tells the following story of her dealings with Lowry in those days. She came to St. Cloud in 1857. There she started publishing the St. Cloud Visiter, a paper devoted largely to promulgating anti-slavery views. On her arrival at St. Cloud, she had been warned that General Lowry would tolerate no abolitionists around there, and she soon received a letter from Lowry, himself, promising support for her paper if it would support Buchanan's administration, but also making it clear that any other course would encounter his strong opposition. Mrs. Swisshelm craftily promised to do as he desired, but the character of her "support" of the Buchanan administration was very damaging to it, and made the unsuspecting Lowry very wrathful. He sent a verbal message warning Mrs. Swisshelm to desist, but the next number of the "Buchanan organ" made matters worse by explaining Lowry's connection with the masquerade. Then came a public lecture on the subject "Woman", by a lawyer by the name of Shepley. The real object of the lecture was to insult Mrs. Swisshelm. The latter praised the lecture in the Visiter, but made certain suggestions which Mr. Shepley pretended to think reflected upon his wife. Lowry at once came chivalrously to the rescue, "to defend to the death a lady whom he had never seen". A plan to mob Mrs. Swisshelm was frustrated, but one night "the Visiter was visited by three men in the 'wee sma' hours, anent the twal', the press broken, some of the type thrown into the river, some scattered on the road, and this note left on the table: 'If you ever again attempt to publish a paper in St. Cloud, you yourself will be as summarily dealt with as your office has been. Vigilance.'" A public indignation meeting was called, and Mrs. Swisshelm, at the risk of being mobbed, there openly charged Lowry and two others with the deed. The Visiter was re-established by public subscription, and through the shrewdness of Mrs. Swisshelm, was saved the expense of a \$10,000 libel suit. She agreed that the Visiter should publish Shepley's statement assuming responsibility for the attack, and should never again refer to the matter in its columns. She then had her "Devils" get out the issue containing Shepley's card, and the Visiter ceased to appear. In its place appeared the St. Cloud Democrat which went on with the work of overthrowing Lowry's dictatorship. This woman apparently was immune from "border-ruffianism" and libel suits.



making the most of his opponent's reputation as the stealthy destroyer of a printing office, because he had made a bad bargain in buying its editor". To the same writer, naturally, "the canvass seemed to turn on the indorsement or repudiation<sup>1</sup> of border-ruffianism, press-breaking, woman-mobbing."

The result of the contest is well known. The Republicans elected their entire ticket, state, congressional, and legislative, with the exception of a mere handful of legislators. The achievement was primarily a party victory. Many able men helped to bring it about. It is therefore idle to speculate upon the proportionate amount of credit due to any one man. But Donnelly, through his published letters, his part in the framing of the Republican "Address", and his speeches, may safely be said to have contributed in no small degree to the success of the Republican ticket. A contemporary writer expressed the opinion that "No man or candidate during the campaign . . . rendered more real and effective service than our Lieutenant Governor elect, Ignatius Donnelly". Mrs. Swisshelm later spoke of Donnelly as "Governor Ramsey's right-hand man in bringing our state up from the slough of despond in which they found it floundering . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Donnelly's success was the more striking from the fact that his nomination "was thought by some, at the time it was made, to be a weak one". No such opinion was now anywhere recalled except to demonstrate its error. Those who had made hopeful

1 St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, September 23, 1859; Swisshelm, Half a Century, 197.

2 Minneapolis State Atlas, quoted in St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, November 29, 1859; Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, pp. 15, 32.

predictions at the outset, now took delight in saying "I told you so"; the sceptical accorded their acknowledgments with a good grace. Foster's "protege", as the doctor later jokingly called Donnelly, had amply justified his mentor's confidence and assistance. The activities of the "Mutual Admiration Society" were forgiven or forgotten. Henceforth neither Republican nor Democrat, in personal rivalry or party strife, could safely treat Donnelly as an undeserving upstart. It now remained for him to prove his fitness for the office to which he had been<sup>1</sup> elected.

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1 Minneapolis State Atlas, quoted in St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, November 29, 1859; Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p. 32; Foster to Donnelly, December 25, 1862. For a time during the first few weeks after the election it looked as though Donnelly were going to have an opportunity to return Dr. Foster's favors in forwarding a movement to elect Foster United States Senator. The movement, however, did not get very far. Foster to Donnelly, November 9, 1859; Fisk to same, November 18; Aldrich to same, December 21.

## LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, 1860-1861.

From the point of view of public position, political power, and material returns, the office of lieutenant governor was relatively of little consequence. To a young man of twenty-eight, just starting out on his official career, however, it would appear in the light of a no mean present acquisition, and the stepping stone to higher office.<sup>1</sup> In Donnelly's case a number of circumstances conspired to give the lieutenant governor unusual prominence before the public, and unexampled opportunities for having a part in the actual handling of public affairs.

In the first place Donnelly gained no little distinction as presiding officer of the state senate. For the duties of that position he made careful preparation.<sup>2</sup> Almost the moment that he took the chair, on January 2, 1860,<sup>3</sup> his ability as a parliamentarian was put to severe test. The legislature had then been in session almost a month.<sup>4</sup> In the state senate there had developed a situation in which a Democratic minority under a

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1 Such was Mrs. Donnelly's idea when she expressed the opinion that Donnelly's nomination was "excellent as a beginning" and would afford opportunity to obtain influence to answer his purpose again. "Next time you shall be Senator", she wrote. July 20 and 26, 1859.

2 Holcombe to Donnelly, November 14, 1859; Minnesota, Senate Journal, 1860, p.134.

3 Minnesota, Legislative Manual, 1915.

4 Since December 7, 1859. Minnesota, Legislative Manual, 1915.

Democratic presiding officer, Lieutenant Governor William Holcombe, were obstructing the will of the Republican majority. In the early part of the session the senate had "incautiously" adopted a set of standing rules which, among other things, provided that the rules could not be amended without a two thirds vote. This the Republicans lacked. The Democratic president had ruled against a majority vote to reconsider the rules, and had refused to allow an appeal to be taken from his decision. The result was a deadlock which was left for the incoming lieutenant governor to break. <sup>1</sup> The matter came to a head on January 6, with Donnelly in the chair. Under the assumption that the original rules had in fact been reconsidered, a motion was made that a committee be appointed to report permanent standing rules. The Democrats of course made objection. Donnelly, thereupon, overruled one objection after another, not arbitrarily as he might have done, but with a backing of argument and authority so convincing as to settle the question for once and for all. If, perchance there were flaws in his argument, no Democrat was parliamentarian enough to put his finger on them.

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1 General John B. Sanborn, then a member of the House, in his "Work of the Second State Legislature, 1859-1860", in M.H.C., 10:625(part 1), relates that "some of the Republicans became so incensed over certain rulings of Lieutenant Governor Holcombe's that they strove to induce the House to impeach him. Our Judiciary Committee promptly decided . . . that the House had no right to interfere with the business of the Senate . . ."

To a proposition of the enraged Republicans that Holcombe be thrown out of the second story window of the Capitol, Donnelly is said to have replied "that so far as Gov. Holcombe was individually concerned, he would not object very much, but that he did not want to see such a precedent established". Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p.33.

The Republicans assumed control without further question.<sup>1</sup>

On this occasion and throughout his term of service as presiding officer of the senate, Donnelly succeeded for the most part in maintaining the dignity, impartiality, and detachment proper to that position.<sup>2</sup> During his term of office there were two sessions of the legislature, in 1860 and 1861. At the end of the first session he was strongly endorsed, not only by recognized friends, but also by some who had had occasion to criticize him severely in other connections.<sup>3</sup> At the close of the second session, his old enemy, the Pioneer and Democrat, came out with a strong endorsement of the senate's recognition of his ability and impartiality as a presiding officer. It spoke of the senate's complimentary resolution as more than the usual formality, and pointed to the fact that no appeals had been made from Donnelly's decisions.<sup>4</sup>

Such testimony to his fairness as a presiding officer removes all suggestion of the possibility that Donnelly may have used his power to forward or obstruct any particular project. What the president of the senate, as such, thought about the various measures that failed or passed in those two sessions, did not, therefore, appear. But there was nothing to prevent

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1 Minnesota, Senate Journal, 1860, pp.34-39, 41-50, 140, 147-151; St. Paul Daily Minnesotian and Times, January 15, 1860; Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p.33.

2 It appears, however, that he showed some temper in connection with the discussion over the standing rules, January 6, 1860. Hall to Donnelly, January 7, 1860.

3 St. Paul Daily Press, March 10, 1861; Minneapolis State Atlas, March 17, 1860; Stillwater Messenger, March 27, 1860.

4 Minnesota, Senate Journal, 1861, p.364; St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, March 9, 1861.



him from taking sides and exerting his influence as he saw fit "out of hours". In this latter capacity, Donnelly did attract attention, more or less favorable, by his activities in connection with a number of measures before the legislature.

In the session of 1860 there came up for consideration a number of financial measures, popularly known as "relief laws". They were intended to alleviate the condition of those whom the hard times had compelled to mortgage their property, and to borrow money at ruinous rates of interest. Many were facing almost certain ruin under existing law and business practise. The "debtors" looked especially to three of these measures to bring them the desired relief: the so-called "Appraisement", "Stay", and "Interest" Laws.<sup>1</sup> The "Appraisement Law" proposed that, if mortgaged property, at the time of sale under foreclosure, would not bring, in cash, the amount due, the mortgagee should not have it even at its depreciated value. The "Stay", or "Three Years Exemption Law", proposed an extension of the time for the redemption of mortgage property from one to three years. The "Interest Law" proposed the establishment of legal rates of interest much lower than the rates commonly charged. The whole state debated the propositions. The moneyed class, as creditors, opposed them; the landed class, as debtors, generally sup-

ported them

1 "An act regulating the sale of real estate upon execution" (Appraisement Law). Minnesota, Senate Journal, 1860, pp. 139, 458; St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, February 10 and 12, 1860. "An Act to regulate the Foreclosure of Real Estate" (Stay Law). Minnesota, General Laws, 1860, p.275. "An Act Fixing the Rate of Interest" (Interest Law). Minnesota, General Laws, 1860, p.226.

ported them.<sup>1</sup> Donnelly took the side of the debtors, and thereby undoubtedly won the gratitude of the large majority of the people and legislators who favored the measures. To him is attributed the fable of "The Bear and the Bees" and other contributions to the Minnesotian and Times intended to emphasize the folly of pursuing any other policy than the one embodied in the proposed measures.<sup>2</sup> He was also given "credit" by one of the opponents of the relief laws, for labors amongst the members of the legislature. The Minneapolis State Atlas objected to his and other state officers' activities in this connection, not so much because the laws were "originated by them for the purpose of extricating themselves from bankruptcy incurred by unprofitable speculation", as because they were attempting to make the Republican party responsible for those "villainous" measures.<sup>3</sup> Less doubtful was the compliment which the Pioneer paid Don-

1 St. Paul Daily Minnesotian and Times, February 25, 1860; St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, January 29, February 3, 10, 12 and 15; Stillwater Messenger, February 7; New Era (Sauk Rapids), February 23; Hastings Independent, March 1; Goodhue County Republican (Red Wing), February 17; Winona Republican, February 29; Faribault Central Republican, March 21.

2 Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p. 38; St. Paul Daily Minnesotian and Times, February 15, 1860.

3 Minneapolis State Atlas, February 18, March 3, 1860. That Donnelly's motives were not entirely disinterested is probably true. Despite the relief gained in the passage of two of the laws in question, Donnelly was himself on the verge of bankruptcy in May, 1863. Donnelly to Nininger (copy), May 2, 1863.

In an anonymous pamphlet entitled Proceedings and Messages of the Governor of the Sovereigns of Minnesota, the "governor", speaking of the "Appraisement Law", is made to announce the following: "In order, however, to have this law carried into effect, so that our character shall not suffer, and so as to prevent any ruinous influx of capital, to the great prejudice and impoverishment of the people, I hereby appoint Thomas Foster and Ignatius Donnelly public appraisers, for the next two years, or what is the same thing, during their political existence".

nelly for his zeal for the passage of the Nebraska and Lake Superior Railroad bill in the session of 1861.<sup>1</sup>

Donnelly's services as a campaign orator in 1859 made him a recognized factor in the presidential campaign of 1860. That year brought the final nation-wide political struggle over the slavery issue. Four distinct parties then fought for as many different solutions: the Republicans, the Douglas Democrats, the Breckenridge Democrats, and the Constitutional Unionists. In Minnesota the issue lay for the most part between congressional prohibition of slavery in the territories and "squatter sovereignty". The Minnesota Republicans, though preferring William H. Seward for president, cheerfully accepted<sup>e</sup> Lincoln as their candidate.<sup>2</sup> A large majority of the Democrats supported Stephen A. Douglas.<sup>3</sup> The issue between the views which these two men represented had practically been decided, as far as Minnesota was concerned, in the sweeping victory of the year before. A campaign was made nevertheless by local candidates and a few others. Seward made a speech in St. Paul. But the campaign was much less vigorous and extensive than that of the previous year.<sup>4</sup>

1 St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, March 9, 1861.

2 St. Paul Daily Minnesotian and Times, February 23 and May 18, 1860. Ramsey's chances of a nomination in the national convention were evidently too slight for serious consideration. Jared Benson ascribed Ramsey's poor showing to his modesty. "Modesty will never make a President", he wrote. Stebbins to Donnelly, January 9, 1860; Donnelly to his wife, May 12, 1860; Benson to Ramsey, June 11, 1860 (Ramsey Papers).

3 St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, January 13, 1860.

4 St. Paul Daily Times, August 16, 23, September 19, 1860; Smalley, Political History of Minnesota, 166. One good reason why more was not done was that the Republican central committee and the speakers were all short of funds (Rohrer to Donnelly, September 5, 1860). Ramsey expressed the opinion that there was no use in speechmaking that fall. Ramsey to Donnelly, October, 22, 1860.

In this campaign Donnelly appeared as a recognized drawing card. Demands for his services came both from headquarters and from local workers.<sup>1</sup> So, in company with Ramsey and at Ramsey's expense, he made a tour of the upper Mississippi and the St. Croix Valley towns.<sup>2</sup> His most distinguished service, so far as the records show, was a speech on "The Practical Result of Squatter Sovereignty as applied to the Question of Slavery", delivered at "the Rail-Splitter's Wigwam", in St. Cloud, on October 29.<sup>3</sup> Ramsey had warned Donnelly to come prepared "to take the brunt of the contest" as he was very busy, so the occasion was Donnelly's own.<sup>4</sup> His speech was printed in full, with the comment that "This gentleman, like Mr. Windom, takes our folks by surprise as one whose abilities have not been fully appreciated".

Donnelly's speech on that occasion was both forceful and prophetic. He began with a philosophical demonstration of the

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1 Rohrer to Donnelly, September 5, 1860; Van Vorhes to same, October 2 and 10; Lindergreen to same, October 3; Ramsey to same, October 22. Donnelly would have been on the electoral ticket, had the plan been carried out, upon which, Stephen Miller heard, the leading men of the state had agreed. Miller to Ramsey, May 28, 1860 (Ramsey Papers).

2 St. Cloud Democrat, November 1, 1860; Taylor Falls Reporter, November 8, 1860. Donnelly missed connections in keeping an appointment at Stillwater, of which much was expected. Van Vorhes to Donnelly, October 2 and 10, 1860; Stillwater Messenger, October 23, 1860.

3 St. Cloud Democrat, November 1, 1860; Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p. 34. There appears to be no available record of a proposed debate between Donnelly and Ex-Governor Gorman, at the latter's challenge, at Stillwater, shortly before the election. Van Vorhes to Donnelly, October 29, 1860; Stillwater Messenger, November 6, 1860; the Messenger for the thirteenth is missing from the files of the Minnesota Historical Society, and other papers are taken up with election news.

4 Ramsey to Donnelly, October 22, 1860.

duty of every man to arrive at the truth of questions that concerned the progress of humanity through his own best judgment alone. He then proceeded to show the constitutional, moral and practical weaknesses of Douglas' proposed plan for dealing with slavery in the territories. The doctrine of squatter sovereignty, he said, was based upon a fundamental misconception of our government; it would substitute a democracy for a republic; it was without authority or precedent; it was a makeshift "which came like a salvation to the weak and like a respite to the desperate". Douglas was indifferent to the moral side of the slavery issue. "'Why', says Mr. Douglas, 'I care not if slavery be voted up or voted down!'" Placing Douglas, then, before the background of the world-old struggle for liberty in its various forms, Donnelly inquired, "Well, what says Mr. Douglas to the cause of Human Progress? Hear him--'Between the white man and the black man my sympathies are with the white man; between the black man and the crocodile, I rather prefer the black man'. . . Come forward old Father Time, lay aside your reaping machine, clear the hair out of your eyes, and behold the result of your labors. Step forth, shadow of the oppressed and by-gone Humanity, scarred with wounds, bent with sufferings, bloody with revolutions; come forward, clang the broken shackles at your wrists, and look, too, upon the results of your toil. There he stands! Stephen A. Douglas, the child of the past, the representative of liberty, the grand resultant and sum total of American institutions! He 'cares not whether slavery be voted up or down'; he thinks he 'rather prefers the black man to the crocodile!'" Worst of all, the practical



result of Douglas' policy would be "anarchy, war, bloodshed in the Territory, and eventually civil war in the nation at large". How expect a peaceable settlement in the territories in question, when slavery discussion is taboo in the free state of Pennsylvania? How expect such a result at the hands of men struggling for their pressing interests, when the question is one which "distracts the ablest deliberative body in the world, the American Congress, and which has disrupted the Democratic party, held together by old traditions and associations . . ." "True, my friend', he [Douglas] says in effect, 'we cannot settle this question here; our officers cannot keep order; our parliamentary rules amount to nothing; we will come to blows and murder each other, which would be neither respectable nor pleasant. There is a great region west of us. You Southerners pick out your best men; and you, Northerners, yours: send them forth and let them fight it out. For my part I don't care which wins.'" That is the sort of remedy that "heals the disease at its natural outlet that it may break forth with ten-fold virulence in another part . . ." In his concluding remarks Donnelly prophesied the coming of "that early day when . . . no human being shall wear the shackles of servitude". All through the speech were forebodings of impending civil war, though the hope was finally expressed that the Republican party might gain the victory without the shedding of blood.

But the conflict came, and incidentally brought Donnelly into local prominence in still another way—as acting governor. He had already received passing notice as "Governor ad Interim" during Ramsey's absence in the spring of 1860, but his duties

at that time were not spectacular.<sup>1</sup> After the outbreak of the war, however, the situation was quite different, for Governor Ramsey's frequent trips to Washington on patriotic errands,<sup>2</sup> left Donnelly with many important duties to perform at home.

On Saturday, April 6, 1861, Governor Ramsey left for Washington, and the following Monday, his private secretary notified Donnelly of the fact, and requested his presence in St. Paul.<sup>3</sup> Ramsey's trip was made with a view to looking after political appointments, and, probably, in anticipation of the outbreak of civil war. The whole country was aware of the strained condition of affairs in the South, especially in South Carolina, and Ramsey had been receiving foreboding accounts from Minnesotans in Washington. At any rate, he was in Washington at the time of the attack on Fort Sumter, and early Sunday morning (April 14), the day after Sumter's fall, he hastened to the war department and tendered a thousand men for the

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1 St. Paul Daily Minnesotian and Times, April 28, 1860. The Faribault Central Republican, May 2, 1860, wondered if Donnelly had been consulted by "his self-constituted guardian [Foster] . . . as to the propriety of allowing that silly announcement to appear in the columns of the 'organ'", and raised the question, "Can we have two Acting Governors at the same time?"

2 Altogether Ramsey was away from St. Paul during fourteen weeks of the year 1861. His absences, four in number, ranged from ten days to six weeks in length. Three trips to the East and to Washington occupied the time between the following approximate dates: April 6 to 23; May 4 to June 2; September 23 to November 5. A trip to the Sioux Reservation took him away from June 16 to 26. Jennison to Donnelly, April 8; St. Paul Daily Press, April 24, May 7, June 2; Ramsey to Donnelly, June 16; St. Paul Daily Press, June 27; Donnelly to his wife, September 23; Ramsey to Donnelly, September 29, October 8; St. Paul Daily Press, October 4, 30, November 5.

3 Foster to Ramsey, April 6, 1861 (Ramsey Papers); Jennison to Donnelly, April 8, 1861.

defense of the union. The offer was accepted the next day, and the governor at once sent the following telegram to his secretary, S.P.Jennison: "Have tendered the President one thousand men--Will not be wanted at present--I write Gen.Acker by mail--Is Governor Donnelly with you?"<sup>1</sup>

Donnelly was indeed with Jennison; he had anticipated such an eventuality; he was prepared to issue the necessary call for volunteers; he believed it would be his duty as lieutenant governor. When, therefore, as Donnelly avers, Ramsey ignored his existence there, and "sent two telegraphic despatches, the first to Jennison . . . and the last to Adjutant General Acker instructing him to issue a Proclamation in his, Ramsey's name," Donnelly informed Jennison that he held his office "by as good a title as Gov.Ramsey"<sup>2</sup> and proceeded to act accordingly. On April 16, he issued the following proclamation:

Whereas, the Government of the United States, in the due enforcement of the laws, has, for several months past, been resisted by armed organizations of citizens in several of the Southern States, who, precipitating the country into revolution, have seized upon and confiscated the property of the nation to the amount of many millions of dollars; have taken possession of its forts and arsenals; have fired upon its flag, and at last, consummating their treason, have, under circumstances of peculiar indignity and humiliation, assaulted and captured a Federal fort, occupied by Federal troops. And whereas, all these outrages, it is evident, are to be followed by an attempt to seize upon the National Capitol and the offices and archives of the Government. And whereas, the President of the United States, recurring in this extremity to the only resource left

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1 Miller to Ramsey, March 27, 1861(RamseyPapers); Folwell, Minnesota, 178; St.Paul Daily Press, April 24, 1861; telegram, Ramsey to Jennison, April 15, 1861(Ramsey Papers).  
 2 Donnelly to his wife, April 14 and 17, 1861.

him, the patriotism of a people who through three great wars, and all the changes of eighty-five years, have ever proved true to the cause of law, order and free institutions, has issued a requisition to the Governors of the several States for troops to support the Government.

Now therefore, in pursuance of law and of the requisition of the President of the United States, I do hereby give notice that volunteers will be received at the city of St. Paul, for one regiment of Infantry, etc.

Given under my hand and the great seal of the State, at St. Paul, this 16th day of April in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty-One.

Ignatius Donnelly, <sup>1</sup>  
Governor ad interim.

Busy and exciting days followed, Ramsey returned to see that the work of recruiting was well under way and to officer the new regiment, but was off again to Washington within two weeks. To Donnelly was left the general supervision of the hundred and one details that must be attended to before the First Minnesota and other regiments and companies would be ready for service. He had conferences with men of military training and experience. Matters connected with the recruiting and acceptance of volunteer companies all over the state required much of his attention. Food, shelter, and equipment must be provided for the gathering troops. He had a hand in the organization of the four regiments mustered in that year, though Ramsey attended to the appointment of field officers. Donnelly made trips to Fort Snelling to observe the work of drilling the raw recruits there, and he was instrumental in

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul Daily Press, April 18, 1861. In a preliminary draft of the proclamation, Donnelly's name appears in a more conspicuous position: "Now therefore, I, Ignatius Donnelly, Governor ad interim of the State of Minnesota, do hereby proclaim that . . . volunteers will be forthwith received," etc.

expediting the departure of regiments and companies for the  
<sup>1</sup>  
 front.

Dr. Fish, in his Donnelliana,<sup>2</sup> quotes from "a spy correspondence which, some years afterward, occurred between Gov. Donnelly and Hon. Gordon E. Cole", in which the former facetiously relates an incident of his administration as acting governor. While Ramsey was away at the Sioux reservation, an attempt was made, Donnelly states, to shut off competition and plunder the government in connection with the uniforming of the state troops (the Second Regiment). One "shoddy"<sup>3</sup> contract had already been consummated upon the First Regiment, when Donnelly arrived in St. Paul in response to Ramsey's summons. To save Ramsey from having to take the responsibility for a second such contract, Donnelly put his foot down and "compelled the publication of an advertisement for bidders, and the awarding the contract to the lowest bidder". When the adjutant general (John B. Sanborn) threatened to sign the contract himself, Donnelly replied in effect, "If you attempt anything of the kind, I shall remove you from your office so quick it will make your head swim!"

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1 Folwell, Minnesota, 179-184; Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p. 37; Dana to Donnelly, April 16, 1861; telegrams, Gorman, Markham, Baily, Hazzer and Boyle to Donnelly, June 21, 24, 25 and 26 (Ramsey Papers); Donnelly to his wife, May 13; telegrams, Donnelly to Boss and to Cameron, June 20 and 22 (Ramsey Papers); St. Paul Daily Press, May 14, October 22 and 26.

<sup>2</sup> Part 1, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Donnelly here referred to a report that "when the regiment made a charge over a fence, there was such a display of white flags that the enemy thought the regiment had surrendered in a body . . ."



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The general thereupon subsided.

Most of the time, however, Donnelly acted under instructions from Ramsey, and in co-operation with other responsible officials. Ramsey and Donnelly were in frequent communication by wire and by mail. The one gave directions as to what must be done; the other suggested, and at times strongly urged the doing of things that in his opinion ought to be done. At first, in the rush attendant upon getting the First Regiment into the field, Ramsey's orders became a bit peremptory, but they soon acquired the more perfunctory tone of routine business. Apparently, for the most part, the lieutenant governor acted promptly and according to instructions. On the other hand, Donnelly, if his own statement may be accepted, was on one occasion specially detained in St. Paul to advise the newly returned governor in the matter of military appointments. Of his volunteered suggestions one is interesting in the light of subsequent events. On April 13, 1861, he wrote to Ramsey, who was then in Washington, that the withdrawal of most of the United States troops in Minnesota in anticipation of civil war, had left the state practically defenceless against an apprehended attack by the Indians. An outbreak would stop immigration. He therefore urged that the war department authorize the occupation of the frontier forts by

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1 The account makes no specific mention of the Second Regiment, or of General Sanborn. The reference to Ramsey's trip to the Sioux Agency (June 16 to 26), however, places the incident shortly after the call was issued for a second regiment (June 14), and during Sanborn's term of office as adjutant general (May 24 to December 31, 1861). Ramsey to Donnelly, June 16, 1861; St. Paul Daily Press, June 27; Folwell, Minnesota, 181; Minnesota, Legislative Manual, 1915.

state troops under the direction, and in the pay of the general government. Nor were his apprehensions groundless for the Sioux Outbreak occurred the following year.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the details concerning Donnelly's activities as "governor ad interim" were, of course, unknown to the general public. But his name appeared occasionally in accounts of local military activities, and when Ramsey returned from his longest and final trip that year, the two leading St. Paul papers took occasion to compliment the lieutenant governor for his distinguished services as acting governor.<sup>2</sup>

In the midst of these many public activities Donnelly found time to consider his own future prospects. His term of office would not last forever. It is true, he might be re-elected, but he was dissatisfied with his present position, and was on the alert for better opportunities.<sup>3</sup> As the election of Lincoln

1 Donnelly to Ramsey (copy), April 13, 1861; same to Mrs. Donnelly, April 24; Ramsey to Donnelly, May 5; telegrams, Ramsey to Donnelly, May 10, 11, 13 (Ramsey Papers); telegram, Ramsey to Sanborn, May 14 (Ramsey Papers); St. Paul Daily Press, May 14; telegrams, Ramsey to Donnelly, May 16 and 17 (Ramsey Papers); St. Paul Daily Press, May 30; Ramsey to Donnelly, September 29, October 8; telegram, Donnelly to Ramsey, October 28 (Ramsey Papers); Donnelly to Ramsey, December 24 (Ramsey Papers). The Sioux Outbreak occurred in August, 1862. Fellwell, Minnesota, 197.

2 St. Paul Daily Press, November 5, 1861; St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, November 5, 1861. At the outbreak of the war, the Pioneer had loyally adopted the motto: "Our country, may it ever be right; but, right or wrong, our country!" At this time it was on the point of turning Republican. St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, April 17, November 19, 1861.

3 On May 12, 1860, he remarked in a letter to Mrs. Donnelly, "What a miserable thing this dignity without money is". In a list of committees for a mock legislature, Donnelly appeared as chairman of the committee on "per diem and mileage". The remark was added that "The committee is a large one (including members of both Houses) and so the chairmanship is quite a distinction". Proceedings and Message of the Governor of the Sovereigns of Minnesota.

in 1860 gave promise of a redistribution of the federal patronage, Donnelly entertained the hope of obtaining the position then held by James W. Taylor, as special agent of the treasury department in the investigation of reciprocal relations of trade and transportation between the United States and Canada. Accordingly, sometime before the inauguration, when the new administration was being organized, he wrote to Windom, member of Congress from Minnesota, requesting him to use his influence toward getting him an appointment to that position. Windom, in reply, promised his support, and said that he had spoken of the matter to Aldrich and Wilkinson, also of the Minnesota delegation. But on March 27 it was announced in the papers that Secretary Chase, of the treasury department, had reappointed Taylor. Evidently Donnelly and his friends were not discouraged by that report. Ramsey, upon leaving for Washington on April 6, is said to have expressed a determination to "change the arrangement" by which Taylor held that position, and Donnelly wrote to Ramsey in Washington on the subject. Windom, meanwhile, made ineffectual attempts to see Chase, and got only the opinion of Chase's first assistant that the office would be discontinued after Taylor made his report. If Windom then persisted in his efforts, as he promised, nothing came of them, for Taylor was retained, and he continued as special agent until 1869.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Windom to Donnelly, February 26, 1861; St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, March 27; Donnelly to his wife, April 11; Windom to Donnelly, April 30; Theodore C. Blegen, "James W. Taylor: a Biographical Sketch" in Minnesota History Bulletin, 1:171. Taylor was a personal friend of Chase, and was especially well qualified to perform the duties of his position.

For a short time in April, 1861, Donnelly had the management of the St. Paul Daily Press in the absence of William R. Marshall, the proprietor, and Joseph Wheelock, the editor, but was apparently disappointed in making his connection with that paper permanent, as he had hoped.<sup>1</sup>

He felt more certain of his chances of securing the colonelcy of one of the regiments, and as other prospects were doubtful, he set his heart on that. A colonelcy would bring twenty five hundred a year. He believed he could head the first regiment, and was certain of the second. The first regiment left under the command of Colonel Willis A. Gorman. When appointments for the second regiment were under consideration, Dr. Foster "edged in a word" for Donnelly, but reported that Ramsey was constant in his opinion that the civil life was Donnelly's great forte, and thought Donnelly "a dunce to propose any other walk". Donnelly lacked what Ramsey, in making his appointments, observed as one of the chief qualifications of a commander--military education and experience. This fact, however, did not prevent him from privately expressing his opinion of Ramsey in no complimentary terms. Further, if Ramsey did not appoint him, he would "make him regret it". But regiment after regiment went off under other commanders, and Donnelly was forced to make the most of his next best prospect, the possibility of his becoming governor.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Donnelly to his wife, April 14 and 17, 1861.

2 Donnelly to his wife, April 24, June 26, 1861; Hayes to Donnelly, June 24; Foster to same, July 17; "Ramsey's Military Appointments" in St. Paul Daily Press, November 8; Folwell, Minnesota, 179-185. Hayes reported a rumor that Donnelly and Ramsey had made a bargain; that Ramsey was to appoint Donnelly

The idea that he might succeed Ramsey as governor occurred to Donnelly early in his term of office as lieutenant governor, if not before. There was probably no desire on his part, at first, to supplant Ramsey, should he desire a re-nomination. There was no certainty that the governor would be willing or free to stand for re-election. Although Ramsey failed of a nomination in the national Republican convention in 1860, he, or at least his friends, looked forward to his appointment to a place in Lincoln's cabinet sometime before the fourth of March, 1861.<sup>1</sup> Donnelly must have been aware of this fact. In June 1860, Archibald M. Hayes made a trip up the Minnesota River, on which he took occasion to feel out the sentiment in that region in regard to candidates on the next state ticket. Without revealing Donnelly's intentions, he let it be known that Dakota County would probably present Donnelly's name for governor at the state convention the next year. Upon his return he reported to Donnelly that in his opinion the latter's prospects up that way were "first rate".<sup>2</sup>

Hayes and other friends probably kept Donnelly's interests in mind during the next few months, and spoke a word here and

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Colonel of the second regiment upon condition that Donnelly would not stand in his way for governor.

Donnelly's own opinion was that "the old'ouss'" was afraid "that anyone might interfere with his plans for the United States Senate in the future".

<sup>1</sup> Aldrich to Ramsey, December 23, 1860; Windom to same, December 25; Wilkinson to same, January 3, 1861; Colfax to same, January 11; Wilkinson, Aldrich and Windom to Lincoln (copy), January 28; North to Ramsey, February 24; Miller to same, February 26 (all in the Ramsey Papers). Windom mentions the secretaryship of the interior as the place desired.

<sup>2</sup> Hayes to Donnelly, June 7, 1860.



there where it would do the most good. It was yet too early to estimate the chances of success with any certainty, so there were no further communications on the subject until the spring of 1861. In March of that year, a Mr. Pell, during a short stay in Lake City, dropped in on the editor of the Lake City Weekly Journal and "had some conversation" with him on the subject of Donnelly's candidacy. The next number of the Journal came out with a strong endorsement of Donnelly for governor. It was understood, the article read, that Ramsey would not be a candidate for re-election, and, such being the case, there was no better man than Donnelly for the position. Apparently the announcement was regarded by Donnelly and his friends as a little premature, for Dr. Tefft, of Minneiska, informed Donnelly that Pell "of course never intended to have that gentleman come out so 'stiff' at this time", and Donnelly wrote to Simpson, the editor, to set him right on the subject. The announcement, however, proved of little moment for it had no wide circulation. <sup>1</sup>

Early in April, Dr. Foster advised Donnelly to run again for lieutenant governor, and to go in for the congressional nomination the next year. Though Donnelly agreed with the doctor that Aldrich and Windom had "laid themselves on the shelf", and perhaps for the moment considered the plan seriously, he kept his own counsel, and persisted in his gubernatorial aspirations. <sup>2</sup>

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1 Lake City Weekly Journal, March 16, 1861; Tefft to Donnelly, March 20; Simpson to same, March 26.

2 Donnelly to his wife, April 11, 1861. There is nothing in Foster's letters to Donnelly to show that he had any idea of the strength of Donnelly's determination to become governor.

Evidences of his popularity and the reports and assurances of his friends encouraged him. His belief that he was very popular in St. Paul was not diminished by an incident which occurred upon his arrival there when Ramsey first went to Washington. "The first man I met", he writes, "the toll-gatherer<sup>1</sup> at the end of the bridge—shook hands with me warmly and says he, 'We are going to make you the next Governor,' " At about the same time his friend Leonard reported a rumor at Rochester that Donnelly might be governor. The next day Dr. Tefft wrote of a plan formed by a number of members of the last legislature (1861) to place Donnelly's name at the head of the state ticket. Encouraging reports came in from a number of other active friends.

Up to this time, May 1861, it had been at least doubtful whether or not Ramsey would stand for re-election. It was now known that he would. Donnelly probably learned this directly, but if not, he was so advised by one of his friends, Myron Coloney, of Alexandria. Ramsey, Coloney wrote, had told him that events had led him to change his mind, and that he would be a candidate for re-nomination. Donnelly, however, persisted. He felt himself under no obligations to Ramsey inasmuch as Ramsey had refused to appoint him colonel of one of the regiments. He still looked to his friends to put the thing through in spite of the changed situation. As the time for the state convention approached, however, his friends became more and more doubtful of success, reports accumulated from influential sources that

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<sup>1</sup> Donnelly to his wife, April 11, 1861; Leonard to Donnelly, April 19; Tefft to same, April 20, May 2; Potter to same, May 17.

there was a tendency to renominate the whole ticket, and Donnelly<sup>1</sup> was forced to abandon the project.

The Republican state convention met in St. Paul, on September 4, 1861, and the result was as predicted. A resolution renominating the whole ticket was received "with loud cheers", and passed with but one dissenting voice. The following day, as the result of a movement to unite all parties for the support of the federal government and the suppression of the rebellion, the so-called "People's Union Convention" met in St. Paul, and placed a second ticket in the field. The Democrats followed on September 12 with a third. The Republican papers generally supported their party ticket, and the "No Party" movement was denounced as a scheme of certain Democrats, notably Earle S. Goodrich and Henry M. Rice, to recover their power in state politics. The movement proved a failure, and the ticket was withdrawn after fifteen days. The result of the election was then a foregone conclusion. The Pioneer refused to support the Democratic ticket, and the Democratic committee was forced to publish its platform in the Press as an advertise-

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1 Coloney to Donnelly, May 21, June 19, 1861; Leonard to same, May 21; Potter to same, July 30; Webber to same, August 2; Benson to same, May 12; Foster to same, July 17; St. Paul Daily Press, August 23. In Coloney's letters appears a suggestion that Donnelly may have sounded Coloney on a proposition to unite with the Democrats on a state ticket of which Donnelly would of course be the head.

ment for a few days before the election. No effort was required of the Republicans. The vote, on October 8, was light, and gave the Republican ticket an approximate majority of six thousand votes.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Smalley, Political History of Minnesota, 169-171; St. Paul Daily Press, July 21, August 4, 7, September 5, 6, 8, 13, 18, October 9, 15, 1861, January 9, 1862; St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, September 5, 13, 20, October 5, 1861; Tribune Almanac, 1862, p.62; Minnesota, Legislative Manual, 1915.

## SECOND TERM--THE CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN OF 1862

Donnelly was forced, for the time being, to content himself with his present subordinate position, but he by no means despised or neglected the unusual opportunities which the office of lieutenant governor continued to offer. By making good use of these opportunities he was able not only to serve his state and country, but also to increase his reputation as an able public servant, deserving, perhaps, of a larger field of usefulness.

As presiding officer of the state senate, during three sessions of the legislature, <sup>1</sup> he lost nothing of the unique reputation already acquired. As acting governor, during Ramsey's two months absence with the Minnesota regiments, <sup>2</sup> he again had general oversight of military affairs in the state. His most signal service in this connection was in the encouragement of recruiting to avoid the necessity of enforcing a draft. His proclamation of July 10, 1862 <sup>3</sup> was a forceful appeal to the men of Minnesota to volunteer not only for the suppression of the rebellion, but also for the defense of our independence against

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- 1 Besides the regular sessions of 1862 and 1863 there was an extra session in September, 1862.  
 2 Fisk to Donnelly, June 11, 1862; St. Paul Daily Press, July 6, 16, 19, 25, August 12, 1862.  
 3 Preliminary draft of proclamation, July 10, 1862; St. Paul Daily Press, July 11; St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, July 11.



the then not improbable intervention of European powers. The Press, reminded of its neglect to notice the proclamation by seeing it published in exchanges from distant states, stated that "No more forcible statement of the demands of the crisis and the duty of the people to rally to the support of the nation . . . has anywhere been made"<sup>1</sup>. To bring the appeal closer home, Donnelly urged that meetings be held in every county, and himself addressed a number of such gatherings.<sup>2</sup> One obstacle in the way of volunteering was the possibility that the proposed draft might operate without regard to that proportion of each county's quota supplied by volunteers. Donnelly did all that he could to reassure the people on this point. He could not answer for the view that Governor Ramsey might take of the matter, he said, but if a draft were to be ordered before Ramsey's return, and if the law then before Congress should leave the decision to the state executive, he would certainly feel disposed to exempt each county from the operation of the draft in proportion to the number of volunteers that county had by that time furnished.<sup>3</sup> When it became known that August 18 had been set as the date for the commencement of drafting, Donnelly appointed ten men as second lieutenants to act as recruiting officers and stimulate the work of volunteering. His selections for these positions met with the unqualified approbation of the

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1 St. Paul Daily Press, July 20, 1862.

2 St. Paul Daily Press, July 15, 1862.

3 St. Paul Daily Press, July 20, 1862. The Press remarked that this assurance was certainly just.

Press, as "they were distributed with a due regard to the different sections of the state".<sup>1</sup>

Ramsey's return from the South, shortly after, relieved Donnelly of further responsibility in this connection, but a new crisis soon arose which brought him to the front in still another capacity. In the midst of strenuous efforts to respond to the nation's call for troops, Minnesota (suddenly was) called upon to defend her own frontier from an uprising of the Indians. The Sioux, once the possessors of southern Minnesota, now confined to a narrow strip of land along the upper course of the Minnesota River, believed that they had been cheated in their dealings with the whites. A further cause of irritation was their failure this year to receive the annual payment at the usual time--a failure the more exasperating because the winter of 1861-62 had been a hard one and the Indians were in distress for want of food. They had reason also to believe that the "Great Father" was in trouble and would be unable to send soldiers to deal with them in case of an uprising. The murder of five settlers in Meeker County, on August 17, precipitated a general attack upon the frontier settlements in southwestern Minnesota. On the eighteenth, the lower Sioux agency was attacked and plundered; a relief party of soldiers from Fort Ridgley was ambushed and massacred; the surrounding country was raided and all white settlers met with were killed and their homes destroyed. New Ulm was attacked the next day, and other

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1 St. Paul Daily Press and St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, August 6, 1862.

towns, including even St. Peter, were threatened.<sup>1</sup>

News of the trouble reached St. Paul on the nineteenth of August. Ramsey at once placed ex-Governor Sibley in command of a relief expedition consisting of four companies of the Sixth Minnesota Infantry. Upon reaching St. Peter, August 22, Sibley learned that the whole Sioux nation was on the warpath, and sent back an urgent call for reinforcements.<sup>2</sup>

It was at this time, when the extent of the outbreak began to be fully appreciated in St. Paul, that Donnelly was sent off at haste to the scene of the disturbance as Ramsey's special agent. The main objects of his mission were, to keep the governor posted on the facts and the needs of the situation, and to restore confidence and quiet to the panic-stricken settlements. Proceeding southward by way of Belle Plaine, he joined Sibley at St. Peter on August 25, and the next day set out with the expedition for the relief of Fort Ridgley. In accordance with Ramsey's injunction, he sent back a number of detailed reports en route. In these letters he urged strongly that prompt measures be taken for the protection and relief of the settlers. He reported the country in a high state of excitement; there was a stream of fugitives on every road; Belle Plaine, St. Peter and Mankato were crowded with refugees. He urged that immediate relief be provided for the homeless and destitute, and that reinforcements to the number of one thousand men be sent to garrison the frontier towns while Sibley's force was dealing with the main body of the enemy. Colonel Sibley joined him in these

1 Felwell, Minnesota, 190-204.

2 Felwell, Minnesota, 211.

recommendations, which--as he put it--were not too strong. While at St. Peter, in pursuance of one of the main objects of his visit, Donnelly issued a proclamation reassuring the people with promises of help and protection from the state government. Apart from a natural desire to succor those in distress, the authorities feared a general exodus from that part of the <sup>t</sup>state with its almost certain disastrous effect upon immigration.

With the timely relief of Fort Ridgley Donnelly's presence with the expedition was apparently no longer necessary, for his last report, dated August 29, was despatched from that point. In this communication he dealt with all phases of the matter with characteristic thoroughness. Commencing with a description of the country and of the gruesome evidences of the Indians' handiwork, he went into a detailed history of the outbreak, and concluded with strong recommendations as to the course that ought to be pursued in the future. In publishing this report the Press not only endorsed Donnelly's suggestions, but took occasion to remark that he had accomplished the objects of his mission "with his usual tact and good judgment".<sup>1</sup>

Such in the main were the noteworthy duties that occupied Donnelly in his official capacity during the first half of his second term as lieutenant governor. At the same time he was

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1 St. Paul Daily Press, August 27, 28, 29, September 2, 1862; Ramsey to Donnelly, August 27, 1862. The report sent in from Fort Ridgley was later published with other accounts of the Sioux Outbreak in 37 Congress, 3 session, House Executive Documents, 2:203-212. Henry A. Swift, of St. Peter, wrote to Donnelly (September 3, 1862) pointing out a number of errors in his account of the New Ulm fight.

able to look after his own prospects, and to turn press and popular recognition to some account in the furthering of his political fortunes. For a time after the election of 1861 Dennelly looked forward to securing the governorship in 1863. Ramsey was talked of for the Senate, as Henry M. Rice's successor in March, 1863, and would probably not be in the way. But there was another, and more immediate possibility to which Dennelly began to give serious consideration in the early part of 1863. In the latter part of that year there was to be an election of a member of Congress from the northern district of Minnesota to succeed Cyrus Aldrich whose term of office would expire March 4, 1863. Dr. Foster, it may be remembered, had advised Dennelly to accept the lieutenant governorship and then to seek the congressional nomination. In January, 1863, H. G. O. Merrison, a close associate of Aldrich, wrote to Dennelly informing him that Ramsey and Aldrich would be prominent candidates for the United States Senatorship the next year. Besides this encouraging news, there was a hint of possible Aldrich support in Merrison's wish that he knew how much Dennelly was under obligations to Ramsey. Dennelly had previously expressed the opinion in private that Aldrich had laid himself "on the shelf", but whatever might have been his course had Aldrich aimed at re-election, it is certain that he was encouraged by the prospect of Aldrich's withdrawal from the congressional race and the possibility of his support. Shortly after the adjournment of the legislature in March, he began corresponding with prospective adherents, and on March 20, encouraged, probably, by Merrison's letter, he wrote to Aldrich requesting his support in securing the



congressional nomination. This move on Dennelly's part marks the beginning of negotiations between him and leaders of the "Aldrich faction", the successful outcome of which helped to ensure his nomination.<sup>1</sup>

Before an "understanding" could be effected, there were a number of matters to be settled, and it took weeks and months to accomplish that end. In the first place, it was not until the middle of May that Dennelly received full assurance that Aldrich would not run again for Congress. Aldrich himself was too busy to follow the matter closely and allowed William S. King and Merrison to speak for him. King was at that time postmaster of the House of Representatives, and Aldrich's right hand man. But while King stated one day that Aldrich would not be a candidate, Aldrich, a few days later wrote as if he were not yet certain as to the course he would pursue. By the eleventh of May, however, the matter was regarded as settled, for Aldrich's letter of that date assumed his withdrawal, and Merrison's of the same date positively reassured Dennelly that Aldrich was "for the Senate".<sup>2</sup>

There was also some uncertainty on the side of the Aldrich party. Senatorial prospects were closely related to the disposal of the congressional nomination. The main object of the Aldrich men was to support the man most likely to injure Ram-

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1 King to Dennelly, March 31, 1862; Heaton to same, January 10, March 18; Merrison to same, January 18; Mitchell to same, March 19; Dennelly to Aldrich(copy), March 20.

2 King to Dennelly, March 31, 1862; Aldrich to same, April 6, May 11; Merrison to same, May 11.

sey. Their candidate would be expected to use his influence with his friends to send Aldrich to the Senate. Furthermore he would be expected to do what he could toward the re-election to Congress of Windem from the southern district, in return for which Windem's friends would help him. Some difficulty was encountered in selecting just the man for this purpose. King himself wanted the place, but apparently lacked other necessary qualifications. Dennelly and James Smith, Jr., of St. Paul, were the two under serious consideration. Some of Aldrich's friends thought that Ramsey would be "hit harder with Smith". Aldrich himself, though reported as favoring Dennelly, wrote that his choice must be that of his friends, and directed Dennelly to talk matters over with them. Merrisen, he said, had authority to arrange matters if satisfactory to St. Paul friends. The friends proved hard to convince. Dennelly was apparently reluctant to go the length required. If, as is likely, he wrote, at Merrisen's request, "a frank confidential letter" to show to Aldrich's friends, it was not sufficient. Washburn, Barrett and Bend wanted a conference with him before committing themselves. It was probably at this conference, that Dennelly, according to Merrisen, pledged himself to do all that he could to help elect Aldrich to the Senate, in return for their help in securing him the congressional nomination. Even so, still further assurances were required. On June 15, Aldrich wrote to Dennelly: "Pledge yourself unequivocally to Merrisen and let him speak out confidently to the doubting". This apparently was done, for there was no further difficulty on that score. As for Dennelly's attitude toward Windem, there was some uncertainty on the part

of the Aldrich party, but by this time they were satisfied that he was all right. Donnelly was therefore assured of the united support of the Aldrich party and of Windom's friends.<sup>1</sup>

Before this definite and final understanding was reached, a number of Aldrich's friends and appointees had already begun to work for Donnelly, if their own statements are to be believed. They went about the work quietly, and took pains to avoid arousing suspicion that a "deal" was on foot. As Morrison expressed it, "It will not do for us to show our hands yet--You must be kept on your own hook as long as possible". The plan was to cultivate the impression that Aldrich was backing Smith. Morrison was "mum" when he was informed of a rumor to this effect. That the ruse was effective for a time, appears in a report from Stephen Miller, himself a candidate for the nomination, that "Smith was arranging matters so as to trade influence with Aldrich". In fact it was almost too convincing, for Donnelly himself had to be "set right" on that

head.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> King to Donnelly, March 31, May 7, 9, 1862; Morrison to same, May 11, 16, 19, June 4, 6, 13; Aldrich to same, April 6, May 11, June 15.

There were good grounds for the uncertainty and ultimate satisfaction of the Aldrich party over Donnelly's attitude toward Windom, for Donnelly, in fact, worked for James H. Baker as against Windom as long as Baker's chances looked good, or at least until such activities threatened to ruin his own prospects. There is no evidence to show that after satisfying the Aldrich-Windom party he worked for either candidate, though his sympathies remained with Baker. Baker to Donnelly, April 30, May 15, July 18; Potter to same, May 9; Leonard to same, June 7 and 11, 1862.

A statement of Morrison's seems to indicate that Donnelly had scruples about carrying out some part of the program: "You are precisely right", he wrote, "but we have to deal with men somewhat as they are". June 25, 1862.

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head.

In the meantime, Donnelly, as a seemingly unobligated candidate, was free to make what he could of the Ramsey party also. Of Ramsey himself Donnelly expected little from the outset. In common with Aldrich and his friends, he believed that Ramsey would support Stephen Miller. At the same time belief did not amount to certainty, and he tried one way and another to get Ramsey to commit himself. Ramsey denied that he was "running Stephen", but beyond that had no encouragement to offer. Reports continued to come in that Ramsey's friends were working for Miller. Baker expressed the opinion that Ramsey undoubtedly felt kindly towards Miller, but that he liked all three candidates (including Jared Benson of Anoka) about equally, and would never meddle. As a matter of fact, Miller was equally unsuccessful in getting Ramsey to choose, though he urged it on the ground that it was essential to Ramsey's own success. Ramsey had more than once expressed indifference to the senatorship, and at any rate appears to have been disposed to let matters take their own course.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Galbraith to Donnelly, April 4, 1862; Jordan to same, April 12, May 30; King to same, May 24, June 14; Morrison to same, May 25; Aldrich to same, June 15; Miller to Ramsey, May 8 (Ramsey Papers).

2 Ramsey to Elliott (copy), December 18, 1861 (Ramsey Papers); to Donnelly, May 7, 1862; Donnelly to Aldrich, March 20; to Morrison, March 24; to Ramsey, May 6 (Ramsey Papers); Miller to Ramsey, April 25, May 17, 25, June 14 (Ramsey Papers); Benson to same, May 21 (Ramsey Papers); Baker to Donnelly, May 21; Morrison to same, May 11, June 13; Jordan to same, May 30; McKusiok to same, June 30, 1862.

When F. R. E. Cornell, of Minneapolis, entered the contest about the first of June, it was assumed by the Aldrich party that Ramsey would drop Miller in his favor. There appears to have been no good ground for this belief. King to Donnelly, June 1, 14, 1862; Aldrich to same, June 15.

With some of Ramsey's friends Donnelly was more successful. Early in April Miller wrote to Ramsey: "Donnelly writes to my friends . . . and tells them that his course meets with the approbation of Governor Ramsey. He is evidently determined to secure the nomination as a special Ramsey champion, and favourite". Miller, of course, was not a disinterested critic, but the evidence furnished by Donnelly's correspondence seems to indicate that he was not altogether wrong. Unfortunately, only the replies to Donnelly's letters to Ramsey adherents are available, so it is impossible to state positively just how far Donnelly tried to create the impression that he was Ramsey's man. Certainly among the correspondents who promised him their support are to be found pronounced Ramsey men.

Another element from which Donnelly secured support was made up of men who, whether or not they favored Ramsey for the senate, were either opposed to or unlikely to help forward Aldrich's plans. Three of Donnelly's most active workers belonged in this category: David Heaton, a state senator from St. Anthony; Charles Scheffer, state treasurer; and James H. Baker, secretary of state. In none of their letters to Donnelly is there any indication that they knew of Donnelly's understanding with the Aldrich party, and in the cases of Heaton and Scheffer there is good evidence to the contrary. Heaton had been disappointed in securing an office through Aldrich and could hardly be counted upon to serve him knowingly. He

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1 Miller to Ramsey, April 5 (Ramsey Papers); Child to Donnelly, April 12; Fergus to same, June 8, 1862.



advised Donnelly against getting into any understanding with Aldrich when he heard that Aldrich supported him. That he was kept in ignorance of the arrangement actually effected, appears in a subsequent letter to Donnelly in which he stated that an attempt to prejudice Donnelly in St. Anthony by asserting that he and Aldrich's friends had formed a coalition had evidently been made "from transparent selfish motives". Scheffer, who was working for Donnelly at Stillwater, was evidently under the impression that the Aldrich party was backing Smith. Morrison, referring to an interview of his with Scheffer, wrote Donnelly that he was "cautious" with him.<sup>1</sup> In one case at least Donnelly assured his man that he was free from all entanglements. In reply to a letter written by Donnelly some time after the Aldrich-Donnelly agreement, Dr. E. D. Whiting, of Taylors Falls, expressed himself as glad to hear Donnelly say that he was fighting on his "own hook". "Let Col. Aldrich take care of his own interest," he wrote, and added that Donnelly would receive the vote of the St. Croix Valley delegation if they were assured that Donnelly's friends were not to be used to advance Aldrich's interest.<sup>2</sup>

The remainder of Donnelly's following consisted of a number of anti-Ramsey men, and of a large group of whom it cannot be

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1 Heaton to Donnelly, July 7, 1861, January 10, March 18, June 12, July 9, 10, 18, 27, 1862; Scheffer to same, May 7, 23, July 13, 19; Morrison to same, June 13; Baker to same, June 9; Bassett to same, July 17, 1862.

2 Whiting to Donnelly, July 15, 1862.

said that their support had any reference to the senatorial  
<sup>1</sup>  
 contest.

The surprising feature about all this is the fact that the arrangement between Donnelly and the Aldrich faction did not become generally known, and each element continued to work for Donnelly on its own understanding of his purpose. To be sure, a few of those more directly concerned acquired early knowledge of it, and as the time for the convention approached rumors of it gained currency in some localities. But the few who knew did nothing to give the facts a wide circulation, and to the general public rumors were only rumors, sometimes offset by counter-reports. Miller got wind of it about the time the negotiations were drawing to a close. At first merely suspicious, he shortly arrived at the conclusion that Donnelly was trying to get all the Aldrich support by selling Ramsey, and the Ramsey influence by saying that he was Ramsey's choice. Ramsey was kept informed of developments through Miller's frequent letters, and was finally assured that if Donnelly got the nomination he would be "betrayed and defeated". That Ramsey gave some weight to these, and possibly other reports, appears in a subsequent remark of Miller's that he was glad that Ramsey had "discovered the nice plot of Donnelly, Aldrich and Co."<sup>2</sup> But why, as it

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1 McLaren to Donnelly, March 26, 1862; Watson to same, April 2; Shelley to same, June 23; McKusick to same, June 30. Numerous letters from April 1 to July 30, the time of the convention, have reference to the congressional nomination alone.  
 2 Miller to Ramsey, May 17, 27, 31, June 4 (Ramsey Papers); to Donnelly, June 4; Heaton to Donnelly, June 12, 26; Whiting to same, July 15; Bassett to same, July 17; Stickney to same, July 19, 1862. In the last named it is stated that an impression existed to some extent in the St. Croix Valley that the Donnelly and Ramsey interests were to be made identical. Dr.

appears, Ramsey and his friends made no extensive use of this information in his interest can only be conjectured. Ramsey's indifference, Donnelly's strength, or uncertainty as to Donnelly's real purpose—one or more of these factors probably account for this inactivity.<sup>1</sup>

As Donnelly's strength increased, the outlook for the other candidates became correspondingly gloomy. Jared Benson, speaker of the state house of representatives, appears to have gotten little support from the outset. There was little hope for James Smith, Jr. after the Aldrich party chose Donnelly as their man. F.R.E. Cornell, entered late, and despite Ramsey's reputed support was never really in the running. Stephen Miller was regarded as Donnelly's strongest competitor. Miller, as lieutenant colonel of the First Minnesota Regiment, was unable to conduct his campaign on the ground, but had the advantage of complimentary press notices which Donnelly and his friends viewed with some apprehension. He had strong supporters in his home town, St. Cloud, and vicinity. He had an able and devoted advocate in his friend, Mrs. Swisshelm, of the St. Cloud Democrat. Her support took the form not only of advancing his claims, but also of minimizing Donnelly's claims to a seat in Congress. To be sure she allowed space in her columns to one "Fair Play" who claimed that Donnelly would run second to no

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Foster, writing from Indianapolis, advised Donnelly not to quarrel politically with Ramsey, "for with all his faults, not to say meannesses, he has no salient points of attack before the people . . ." June 30, 1862.

<sup>1</sup> Before the struggle over the congressional nomination was concluded, Horace Greeley wrote to Ramsey: "Do you happen to know that a secret and determined movement is on foot to send Mr. Cyrus Aldrich to the Senate . . . and this expressly on the ground of hostility to yrself?" July 22, 1862 (Ramsey Papers).

man in Stearns County, both because of his record, and because of his membership in the Catholic Church, which would strengthen him with the large Catholic-Democratic element. But she also replied, and in characteristic vein. "Religion succumbs to Railroads and Rebellion, and nobody cares whether a candidate is Catholic, quaker or covenanter". The very fact of Donnelly's having had office was against him, on the ground of the claims of locality. As an experienced man he would be desirable for governor, if Ramsey went to the senate, but that was the highest office the people owed him.<sup>1</sup>

Both Donnelly and Miller apparently lived up to an understanding, arrived at early in the contest, that each would keep out of the other's county in his efforts to secure adherents. But Aldrich men in Stearns County were not thus hampered and carried on an active campaign for Donnelly in the whole up-river region. Knowledge of their evidently successful efforts and of a general Donnelly-Aldrich coalition, led Miller, some weeks before the convention, to admit in private that it looked as though Donnelly would get the nomination. The possibility of running "independent", which he had early considered on account of the threatened dominance ~~of~~ in the party of the Aldrich element alone, recurred in the face of this more powerful combination. But Ramsey had advised against such a course

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<sup>1</sup> St. Paul Daily Press, March 18, June 19, 1862; St. Cloud Democrat, June 19; Donnelly to Morrison, March 24; Aldrich to Donnelly, April 6; Morrison to same, May 25, 1862. Miller later wrote Donnelly deprecating Mrs. Swisshelm's "impulsive" statements and assuring him that no personal attack was intended. July 27, 1862.

in the first instance, and though for a time on the point of breaking away, Miller contented himself with awaiting the decision of the party.<sup>1</sup>

On July 5, the Minnesota State News, St. Anthony and Minneapolis, published an article by Heaton in which Donnelly's name was presented for consideration in connection with the congressional nomination. Donnelly's record in office, his knowledge of state and national affairs, his popularity with the people, and his unfaltering devotion to the Union cause, marked him, it was said, as the ablest candidate to be found in the district. The article was the beginning of a newspaper campaign which, through the efforts of Donnelly and his friends, came to include most of the Republican papers of the district. Miller's name was withdrawn shortly before the convention, and on the day of the convention the State Atlas (William S. King) accredited Donnelly with the support of every county in the district except Ramsey, which supported Smith.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Miller to Donnelly, April 4, May 8; Gilman to Donnelly (on back of Mayhew to same, July 11), July 25; Miller to Ramsey, April 25, May 25, June 12, 1862 (Ramsey Papers); a letter from Mayhew to Donnelly, May 19, implies that Donnelly was willing to make capital of a report that Miller, until better advised by his friends, had intended to use a "spraint ankle" as an excuse for coming home and running for Congress.

2 Heaton to Donnelly, July 9, 11, 18, 1862; Tefft to same, July 18; McLaren to same, July 14, 21; St. Cloud Democrat, July 24; St. Paul Daily Press, July 26, 27, 29; State Atlas (Minneapolis), July 30.

Marshall, of the Press, refused to publish Heaton's article on the ground that, while it was proper for the local papers to give their preferences, it was better policy for the central organ of the party to remain neutral at that time. Marshall's personal opinion, according to Heaton, was that Donnelly's nomination was a fixed fact. Heaton to Donnelly, July 11, 1862.

Miller later wrote Donnelly that his friends had not been authorized to withdraw his name until the convention met, and that, in order to maintain his reputation for truth and consis-



The Republican district convention met in St. Paul, July 30. Precautions with regard to its proper organization and management, urged by Heaton, were probably observed. It sat but two hours. Its business was transacted with "unprecedented harmony and despatch". The names of Donnelly and Smith were presented, but Smith's name was shortly withdrawn by ~~one~~ of his supporters who then moved the nomination of Donnelly by acclamation. The motion was carried "without a dissenting voice amid great applause". In his speech of acceptance, Donnelly commended "the absence of all mere partizan spirit" in the resolutions adopted by the convention, and sounded the keynote of the campaign in an eloquent plea that every loyal citizen, regardless of party, stand upon the loyal (Republican) platform of unqualified support of the national administration in its efforts to suppress the rebellion.

The news of Donnelly's nomination called forth gratifying comments from Republican papers both within and outside of the district. The least superlative was still eulogistic. The Press placed a more satisfactory interpretation upon the way complete harmony had been achieved in the convention. "There

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tency with other friends, he was obliged to say this much in public. This end was accomplished by Mrs. Swisshelm's statement in the St. Cloud Democrat that the letter upon the authority of which she acted in withdrawing Miller's name had proved to be "a base forgery". Miller to Donnelly, August 15; St. Cloud Democrat, August 14, 1862.

<sup>1</sup> Heaton to Donnelly, July 21, 27, 1862; St. Paul Daily Press, July 31. Donnelly stated in a letter to his wife, July 30, that "Smith's strength was whittled down to ten votes out of eighty in the convention".

were members of the Convention", it stated, "whose choice was another than the gentleman nominated, yet upon meeting the other delegates, and learning unmistakably that Gov. Donnelly was the choice of a large majority of the delegates, and that the voice of the people so clearly indicated him as the standard bearer of the loyal masses in the approaching contest with treason sympathizers, they without hesitation made the nomination by acclamation . . . There was no forced submission to the power of the majority, but spontaneous and voluntary agreement". The hard-to-please Faribault Central Republican spoke of Donnelly's speech as having "the ring of true metal". The Rochester City Post went so far as to say that the Speaker of the House of Representatives would have "to look sharp after his honors" when Donnelly became a member.<sup>1</sup>

Donnelly's Democratic competitor was Major William J. Cullen, of St. Paul. T. M. Newson, in his Pen Pictures,<sup>2</sup> thus

1 St. Paul Daily Press, July 31, August 8, 9, 1862; Goodhue County Republican (Red Wing), August 1; Minnesota State News (St. Anthony and Minneapolis), August 2; State Atlas (Minneapolis), August 6; Faribault Central Republican, August 6; Rochester City Post quoted in St. Paul Daily Press, August 13.

The Press's interpretation of Donnelly's complete triumph probably did not represent the opinion of those who were in a position to get at some, at least, of the facts. Benson for one, was far from satisfied with regard to the character of Donnelly's support in the convention. In writing to Donnelly on the subject, he complained that the convention, honestly called to nominate a representative, had been used to elect a senator, and that all the federal appointees in the district were there as delegates or lobby men in the interests of Colonel Aldrich. He was troubled by the fact that both the Ramsey and the Aldrich interests were for Donnelly, and could not understand Donnelly's relations to the latter. But he had no objections to Donnelly, and professed to believe that Donnelly had done nothing "dishonorable or out of the way". Benson to Donnelly, August 5, 1862.

2 Page 688. A briefer characterization is to be found in Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p.45.

characterizes him: "Major Cullen was a somewhat remarkable and eccentric man. Large, energetic, full of fun and business, he filled an important niche in the early history of our city . . . He was a man of great force of character, self-reliant, original, positive, persuasive, ambitious, and he moved about more like a young elephant than an ordinary man. He had great courage, and was a good judge of human nature, hence he usually carried his measures. He was open, frank and pleasant in his manners; always ready to tell a story and a good one; had a large amount of sociability in his nature, and was generally liked by his fellow-men". He was "a little crude and not polished as a scholar yet he was a man of strong natural abilities and possessed many fine traits of character". Cullen had served as Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Minnesota in territorial days. He took a prominent part in the Sioux War (which interrupted both his and Donnelly's campaigns), first as captain and then as colonel of militia. His influence was strong in the upper Mississippi region, where, it was predicted, he would "put his moccasins on and come the 'Injine'" on Donnelly. He was reputed to be wealthy, and it was reported that he would spend his money freely to secure his election.<sup>1</sup>

The Republican campaign, so far as it was of a public nature, took the form of newspaper attacks on Cullen and his platform. In comparing the Major with Donnelly, the Press spoke of him as belonging "to the rattlesnake school of Indiana cross-

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1 Gale to Donnelly, July 10, 1862; Blakely to same, August 2; Benson to same, August 8.

roads politicians". He was "a roystering political Falstaff, the puppet of the Poins and Pistols of his party, whose chief devotion is to his sack". He was "a man who, in spite of an education so<sup>1</sup> limited that he could not pass a successful examination in the pictorial primer or the multiplication table, has managed in four years service as Indian Superintendent, upon a salary of two thousand a year, to amass an independent fortune". Cullen was charged both with having a traitorous platform to stand upon, and with not standing squarely upon that platform.<sup>2</sup> Much amusement was derived from an attempt of Cullen's to prove his patriotism. The Major proposed to Donnelly that they both stop running for Congress and go and enlist. Donnelly objected to this on the ground that it would make necessary two new conventions to nominate two new candidates, but made a counter-proposal that whichever was defeated should go at once and enter the ranks. The Major is said to have driven off "rather red in the face". The "absurdity" of the thing was regarded by the Press as "refreshing", and was turned into capital for Donnelly.<sup>3</sup>

1 St. Paul Daily Press, October 26, 1862. The story is told that when he was asked by an acquaintance to explain how he had managed to save so much out of so little, being a poor man when he came to Minnesota, the Major replied, with a wink and a chuckle, "I'll tell you, my friend, if you'll say nothing about it. We didn't keep any hired girl!" Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p.45.

2 St. Paul Daily Press, August 13, October 9, 1862. Bassett reported to Donnelly, August 7, that in a speech at St. Cloud Cullen "went the whole hog for the war" and said that "he was for putting down the rebellion if it took every nigger in Africa".

3 St. Paul Daily Press, August 8, 10, 1862; St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, August 9.



Donnelly's support from the Republican press, though on the whole strong, was not altogether satisfactory in some cases. The Pioneer and Democrat, professedly Republican, was forced only by the taunts of the Press to a grudging admission that in supporting the Republican platform it supported Donnelly, and this "in spite of all personal predilections and associations". In the course of the campaign, under pretense of giving each side a fair hearing, it took an ill-concealed delight in publishing letters and articles which placed Donnelly in an unfavorable or ridiculous light. The article which called for the loudest protests from the Press and other Republican papers, was a burlesque on Donnelly's part in the Sioux War, which the Pioneer copied from the St. Paul Journal (Democrat). Some idea of its purport and character may be inferred from the headlines: It "Tells all about the campaign of General Donnelly's 'Division of Non-Combatants'--Gives all of the General's Latest Despatches--The History of the great Boo-Boo Battle fought by Donnelly's army near St. Peter," etc. The satire was accompanied by an appreciative editorial in which it was suggested that the author, "Major Zebulon Sawyer", now "turn his attention to 'General' Donnelly's competitor . . . a most rare and fruitful subject".<sup>1</sup> The Press for the most part gave Donnelly unqualified support, but on one occasion appears to have wavered a moment in its allegiance. The Aldrich-Ramsey senatorial contest was beginning to come to the surface. The Press noted

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1 St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, July 31, August 8, 12, September 14, 20, 1862.



that one Aldrich paper, the Pioneer, ridiculed Donnelly, while another, the State Atlas, "hypocritically" claimed him "as the special and peculiar friend of Aldrich". "This arrangement", it added, "may be agreeable to Gov. Donnelly, but the Republican party of the state cannot afford to be thus sacrificed to the duplicity of the Aldrich clique . . ." But this sort of "support" appears to have done no very serious damage. The Pioneer was not influential among Republicans; the Press soon recovered its usual tone and limited its senatorial campaign to attacks<sup>1</sup> upon Aldrich and his recognized adherents.

An important part of the Republican campaign was the passage of a law enabling Minnesota soldiers, whose duties called them to distant parts of the state and to the South, to vote in the coming election, and in others thereafter during the period of the war. A special session of the legislature was convened

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul Daily Press, September 20, 27, October 4, 8, 22, 24, 30, 1862. Mrs. Donnelly wrote to Donnelly, September 22, and expressed the opinion that both papers, the Pioneer and the Press, were trying to do him all the damage they could. "See here--," she wrote, "No. 1 is the best and most faithful person in the world--take care of him--serve him and no one else".

Early in the campaign Mrs. Swisshelm wrote to Donnelly and proposed that he purchase the support of the St. Cloud Democrat in any one of three possible ways: by buying her out; by paying her "fair living wages" in case he was elected; or by guaranteeing her sufficient remuneration in the form of public printing. She was tired of "working sixteen hours a day to win office for friends who give all their patronage to enemies". Donnelly was unable to do anything at the time, but promised to do what he could for her if elected. Later on Mrs. Swisshelm wrote again: "Pres. Lincoln [by his preliminary emancipation proclamation, September 23] has placed your party where I must support it". She added that in Donnelly's case the duty was a pleasant one. Mrs. Swisshelm to Donnelly, August 13, October 26, 1862.

in September partly with this object in view. The presumption was that men who were loyal enough to fight for the Union would be equally ready to vote for the loyal (Republican) candidate for Congress. According to Mrs. Swisshelm, the volunteer system had drawn off the "loyal men" and left "rogues". Donnelly believed that the soldiers' vote would place his election beyond a doubt. The Democrats themselves acknowledged that the law would operate in favor of the Republicans by their opposition to its passage, but afterwards went to work on the contrary assumption.<sup>1</sup>

Both candidates now directed a good part of their efforts towards securing the soldiers' votes. Cullen labored with both soldiers and civilians on a tour of military posts in Minnesota, and had friends at work for him in the regiments in the South. The most noteworthy feature of his local campaign, as reported, was his freehanded distribution of money and beer.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Donnelly supplemented the work of his active supporters at home and in the distant regiments, by writing a large number of personal letters, and by distributing over the district and

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1 "An Act to enable the citizens of this State, who are or may be engaged in the Military or Naval service of the United States, to vote in the Election Districts where they reside, at the General Election to be held in the month of November, 1862, and at all subsequent General Elections, during the continuance of the present war", approved, September 27, 1862. Minnesota, General Laws, Extra Session, p.13. St. Paul Daily Press, August 24, September 18, 19, 23, 1862; Mrs. Swisshelm to Donnelly, August 13; Donnelly to his wife, August 28. The other main object of the extra session was to deal with the situation created by the Sioux War, then in progress.

2 Bassett to Donnelly, August 7, 1862; Richardson to same, October 15; Morrison to same, October 17; Snider to same, October 17; Densmore to same, October 21; Crosswell to same, October 23; Mrs. Swisshelm to same, October 26.

in the regiments numerous copies of the Republican Address, and of a circular which he and Windom got up together. He was especially active in expediting the work of getting the soldiers' votes under the new law. Commissioners had been appointed before the end of the special session to visit the regiments, hold elections, and send in the votes, but when Donnelly returned to St. Paul a few days later he found that nothing further had been done. No notice had been sent the commissioners, and none of them had yet started. There was less than a month left before election day. Whatever the cause of this "disposition at the Capitol to throw obstacles in the way of the soldiers voting", Donnelly and his friends succeeded in getting the commissioners despatched to the front. "If I had not come up here", he wrote his wife, "the whole business of soldiers voting would have gone by default"<sup>1</sup>. Even so, the delay was such that only a part of the soldiers' votes reached the proper election districts in time to be counted with the local votes on election day. The result of the soldiers' vote, being merged in the general result, cannot be stated in exact terms, but it is safe to say that it was strongly in favor of Donnelly.<sup>2</sup>

Donnelly won the election on November 4 by a majority of 2005 votes out of a total vote of 11,918.<sup>3</sup> On December 13, Major Cullen served notice on Donnelly that he intended to

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1 Windom to Donnelly, September 29, 1862; St. Paul Daily Press, September 30; Donnelly to his wife, October 8; Swift to Donnelly, October 18.

2 McClure to Donnelly, October 25, 1862; Burt to same, October 31; Windom to same, November 11; St. Paul Daily Press, October 28, 29, 31, November 5, 25.

3 Minnesota, Executive Documents, 1862, p.672.

contest the election. He took the ground that the "soldiers vote act" was unconstitutional; that the votes canvassed under that law were sufficient to control the election, "and therefore avoided the same"; that he would otherwise have been elected, and was therefore entitled to a seat in Congress; and that the commissioners did not visit all the companies and regiments, and receive all the votes. The absurd inconsistency of his argument that, while the whole election was void, he was nevertheless elected, was soon pointed out. He thereupon took his stand upon the unconstitutionality of the law, and stated that he expected another vote. Wheelock, of the Press, wrote to Donnelly with reference to Cullen's action, "I don't believe the old rascal intends to push the thing—I had a talk with him and he didn't seem to think it a matter of much moment—If he had any chance of your seat he might bother you—but under the circumstances I think by a little judicious argument the old fellow could be persuaded not to involve you in so much expense and trouble for nothing . . ." Nevertheless Donnelly wrote to Aldrich and Windom for information in regard to contested elections and the probable attitude of the next House toward Cullen's claims. He found that by law his answer must be served within thirty days after the receipt of Cullen's notice. Cullen, however, kindly withdrew from further prosecution of the contest at the last moment, and a reply was unnecessary.

1 St. Paul Daily Press, December 14, 19, 27, 1862, January 13, 1863; St. Paul Daily Pioneer, December 18; Wheelock to Donnelly, December 18; Donnelly to Aldrich, December 20; Windom to Donnelly, December 22, 1862.



Donnelly remained lieutenant governor until shortly before the close of the legislative session of 1863. In the senatorial election of January, and in the contest leading up to it, he had an opportunity to make good his pledge that he would do all he could to help elect Aldrich senator. Whether or not he adhered strictly to this promise is difficult to determine. The available facts must speak for themselves. He continued in communication with Aldrich and Morrison up to the time of the election. Aldrich's senatorial prospects were freely discussed. Donnelly gave advice as to the proper course to be pursued. Demands were made upon Donnelly's services on the evident assumption that he would comply therewith. In December Donnelly wrote a letter intended to be sent to Aldrich in which he made some strong statements with reference to Aldrich's injunction to his friends not to consider a third man. He desired, he said, to "forestall or counteract possible rumors" that he had any such intention, though he had been approached by two or three on the subject. "You will find me true to you as steel", he added. The following notation, however, may not be without significance: "The letter sent Col. Aldrich though like this in spirit very much changed in form--the committal sentences modified and reduced". In reply to this modified letter, Aldrich assured Donnelly that all their mutual friends had said and written to him that Donnelly was all right. At the same time a number of Ramsey men were writing Donnelly with regard to Ramsey's prospects on the apparent assumption that Donnelly was a Ramsey man. In none of the letters which he wrote (that are available) or received is there anything to show beyond



doubt that he actually worked for either candidate. At the time of the Republican caucuses, after all hope for Aldrich was gone, he is said to have supported Ramsey in preference to James Smith, Jr. Ramsey won the nomination and election after a long contest, January 13 and 14. Whatever may have been Donnelly's real attitude and relation toward the outcome of the contest, he retained the good will of both contestants after the election. Aldrich wrote thanking him for the "kind words and sympathy" which he had expressed over Aldrich's defeat; Ramsey wrote him several friendly letters on matters involved in their new relationship.

The senatorial contest was the last important incident during Donnelly's career as lieutenant governor. On March 3, 1863 he sent his resignation to the president pro tempore of the senate, Henry A. Swift, and its acceptance by the senate was accompanied by a resolution in recognition of the "uniform

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1 H.P. Hall's Observations, 56-60; Morrison to Donnelly, November 17, 19; Driscoll to same, November 27; Aldrich to Donnelly, December 18, 19, 28, 1862, January 21, 1863; Wheelock to same, December 18, 28, 1862, January 6, 1863; Donnelly to Aldrich (draft), December 20, 1862; Miller to Donnelly, December 23, 1862; Foster to same, December 25, 1862; Heaton to same, December 29, 1862; Ramsey to Donnelly, March 18, 27, April 30, 1863; Dana King to same, April 11, 1863.

Reports were in circulation some months later to the effect that in the senatorial contest Donnelly had carried water on both shoulders—that he was in the confidence of both parties, but helped neither, and simply worked for himself. Fletcher to Donnelly, December 24, 1863; Keith to same, January 13, 1864; Morrison to same, February 12, 1864.

courtesy, impartiality, dignity, and ability" with which he had presided over the senate, and expressing the "warmest wishes for his health and happiness".<sup>1</sup> He then entered upon a larger field of service as a member of Congress.

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1 St. Paul Daily Press, March 7, 1863.

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Manuscript Material

## Donnelly Papers.

These consist of letter-books, containing duplicates of letters written by Donnelly from September 25, 1856 to November 26, 1859; of letter files, containing a vast number of letters received by Donnelly from 1856 to the close of his life, copies, or drafts of letters written by himself, documents, and miscellany; and of scrapbooks, including one devoted largely to the preservation of material relating to the founding and promoting of Nininger City, Minnesota. The entire collection is in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society. All manuscript material referred to in the accompanying account, exceptions noted, will be found in this collection.

Foster, Dr. Thomas. Manuscript autobiography.

In the files of the Minnesota Historical Society.

## Ramsey Papers.

These include letters received by Ramsey, and copies of letters written by himself from 1849 to 1863. Letters from Donnelly, and references to Donnelly, are to be found here. The collection is in the files of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Writings of Ignatius Donnelly, 1856-1862.

Nininger City: a pamphlet by Ignatius Donnelly, of Philadelphia. Philadelphia, 1856.

Statement of the basis of the organization of the city of Nininger, Minnesota, intended for the information of the parties originally interested. Philadelphia, 1856.

"Private" printed on cover.

Minnesota: an address delivered before the Historical Society of Minnesota Territory, by Ignatius Donnelly, of Philadelphia, May 27, 1856. St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, May 31, 1856.

Minnesota: address delivered at the Broadway House, New York, on the 27th March, 1857, by Ignatius Donnelly, Esq. New York, 1857. Pamphlet.

Lecture of Mr. Donnelly on encouraging immigration. St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, February 17, 18, 1858.

The lecture was delivered in St. Paul, February 13, 1858.

A man of principle. St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, October 29, 1858.

The editorial under this heading introduces a letter written by Donnelly to the Republicans of Dakota County, dated at Nininger City, October 18, 1858.

The sonnets of Shakespeare: an essay by Ignatius Donnelly . . . Printed for private circulation. St. Paul, 1859.

Ignatius Donnelly to the foreign born citizens of Minnesota. . . St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, June 15; Weekly, July 16; Daily, July 19, August 4, 1859.

The above title was given to the first of a series of four letters. Unimportant variations in it occurred with each succeeding letter.

Address to the people of Minnesota. St. Paul Weekly Minnesotian, September 3; Daily, September 2 and 5, 1859.

An electioneering document which was used extensively in the Republican campaign of 1859. It was, for the most part at least, prepared by Donnelly.

Fourth of July oration, delivered at Hastings, July 4, 1859, by Ignatius Donnelly. Hastings Independent, July 14, 1859.

[Speech of acceptance upon his nomination for lieutenant governor, July 21, 1859] St. Paul Weekly Minnesotian, July 25, 1859.

Mr. Donnelly's reply to Hewitt and Clitherall. St. Paul Weekly Minnesotian, July 23, 1859.

[Parliamentary decision, January 6, 1860.] Minnesota, Senate Journal, 1860, pp. 147-151; St. Paul Daily Minnesotian and Times, January 15, 1860.

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The fable is unsigned, but its authorship is ascribed to Donnelly by Dr. Fish.

Speech of Hon. Ignatius Donnelly, Lieut. Governor of Minnesota, delivered at the Rail-Splitters' Wigwam, in St. Cloud, on Monday, October 29, 1860: The practical result of squatter sovereignty as applied to the question of slavery. St. Cloud Democrat, November 1, 1860; quoted in part in Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p. 34.

Proclamation by the governor. St. Paul Daily Press, April 18, 1861.

The proclamation, issued on April 16, by Donnelly as acting governor, was the first call issued for Minnesota volunteers.

[Extracts from a Fourth of July speech delivered at Northfield in 1861.] Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p.40.

[Extracts from Donnelly's correspondence with Gordon E. Cole] Fish, Donnelliana, part 1, p.37.

This correspondence has reference to Donnelly's activities as lieutenant governor in 1861. The inference to be drawn from Dr. Fish's statement with regard to it, is that it was written and published some years after that date.

Enlistments for the Sixth Regiment: correspondence with the governor in regard to quotas. St. Paul Daily Press, July 30, 1862.

This correspondence had reference to the operation of the draft in Minnesota. Donnelly was at this time acting governor.

Proclamation. St. Paul Daily Press, July 11, 1862.

An urgent call for volunteers in the crisis of that year.

[Reports on the Sioux War.] St. Paul Daily Press, August 27, 28, 29, September 2, 1862; 37 Congress, 3 session, House Executive Documents, 2:203-212.

[Speech of acceptance upon his nomination to Congress, July 30, 1862.] St. Paul Daily Press, July 31, 1862.

Speech of Lieut. Gov. Donnelly, delivered, October 23, 1862, at Hampton, Dakota County, before the agricultural fair of the counties of Rice, Goodhue, Dakota and Washington. St. Paul Daily Press, October 28, 1862.

### Newspapers

The newspapers cited in the accompanying account are to be found in the files of the Minnesota Historical Society. They were selected from a larger number of newspapers of the period under consideration for one or more of three reasons: as representative of opinion in the locality upon matters of general interest; as exceptional in character, contents or policy; as supplying accounts of events. Most of them were Republican in politics. The political history of Minnesota in the period following the Republican victory of 1859, is largely the history of intra-party politics. After the Civil War began, and the leading Democratic paper, the St. Paul Pioneer and Democrat, went over to the Republicans, the Democratic press in Minnesota was of little account, at least for the period under consideration.

Austin.

Mower County Mirror, 1859.



#### Faribault.

Faribault Central Republican, 1859-1862.

The editor of this paper was Orville Brown, known as "Awful Brown". He had the reputation of being hard to please politically.

#### Hastings.

Hastings Independent, 1859-1862.

The Independent supplies valuable information about Donnelly's activities in Dakota County. The editor, Columbus Stebbins, was a man of strong convictions to which he adhered without regard to personal or party claims. He severely criticised Donnelly's political methods, and withheld his support until satisfied that Donnelly stood for sound principles as he conceived them. In this connection he once wrote Donnelly (August 6, 1859) that it was "funny for an editor to talk of conscience, but I claim to have one". In 1861 he adhered to the last to the doomed "No Party" cause, protesting the while against the persistence of party spirit in the face of a national crisis. His editorials on all questions of public interest were deserving of consideration. A contemporary journalist, D.S.B. Johnston (Minnesota Historical Collections, 10:326--part 1), states that he "uplifted and bettered journalism whenever he used his pen".

#### Lake City.

Lake City Weekly Journal, 1861.

H.C. Simpson, the editor of this paper, is given a momentary prominence because of the part he played in connection with Donnelly's essay at the governorship in 1861.

#### Minneapolis.

State Atlas, 1859-1862.

The Atlas was established by William S. King. He and Foster of the Minnesotian were among the few who strenuously opposed the Five Million Loan in 1858. He was also in the minority in his attacks on the "relief laws" of 1860. Through the influence of Cyrus Aldrich, member of Congress from Minnesota, he became postmaster of the House of Representatives in 1861. He was closely identified with the Aldrich as against the Ramsey interest, and his paper was the mouth-piece of that faction during the senatorial contest of 1862-63, aided, toward the end by the St. Paul Union, a paper started wholly for that purpose. Donnelly, as Aldrich's candidate for Congress in 1862, received the support of the Atlas.

#### Nininger.

Emigrant Aid Journal, 1856.

A newspaper started by Donnelly in the interests of Nininger City, Minnesota. Only one issue, the first, is available (Donnelly's Scrapbook). For further details, see page 7, and note 3.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Daily Pennsylvanian, 1856.

Clippings from this paper, which throw light upon Donnelly's life in Philadelphia, are to be found in Donnelly's Scrapbook.

Red Wing.

Goodhue County Republican, 1860, 1862.

Rochester.

Rochester City Post, 1862.

A eulogistic article in this paper with reference to Donnelly's nomination to Congress was quoted by the St. Paul Daily Press, August 13, 1862. No copies of the paper itself are available.

St. Anthony and Minneapolis.

Falls Evening News, 1859.

Minnesota State News, 1859-1862.

Besides offering representative opinions and accounts of current events, this paper is notable from the fact that through it was launched Donnelly's press campaign for the congressional nomination in 1862. The editor was probably a friend of David Heaton who wrote the article that did the work.

St. Cloud.

St. Cloud Democrat, 1860-1862.

The name of this paper is one of the whimsicalities of its editor, Mrs. Jane G. Swisshelm. It was in fact a strong and effective exponent of Republican doctrines in a region predominantly Democratic. Mrs. Swisshelm was an exceptional woman. On questions of public policy she held advanced opinions and had the courage of her convictions. Her particular hobbies were the anti-slavery cause and woman's rights. Her editorials on these and other subjects were characterized by an aggressiveness and originality of which not a few of her contemporary male journalists could not boast. In party politics, she was governed largely by local and personal considerations.

St. Paul.

St. Paul Minnesotian (Daily and Weekly), 1857-1859.

The Minnesotian was the central organ of the Republican party during this period. It supplies information about Donnelly's earliest political activities in Dakota County, 1857-58, not to be found elsewhere, because local papers of those years are not available. From October 19, 1857 Dr. Foster, Donnelly's friend and political adviser, was part owner and editor. The Minnesotian played an important part in winning the state to the Republican cause, and, through Foster's kindness, in securing a place for Donnelly in the first Republican state administration. On December 17, 1859 the Minnesotian and Times were consolidated. But Newson, of the Times, and Foster proved impossible yoke-mates, and in

June 1860 the union was dissolved, the two papers then continuing separately.

St. Paul Minnesotian and Times, 1860

See St. Paul Minnesotian.

St. Paul Pioneer and Democrat (Daily and Weekly), 1856-1862.

Earle S. Goodrich was part owner, and from 1861, in association with his brothers Augustus J. and Frank, was the owner of this paper. Until the outbreak of the Civil War, the Pioneer was the principle press representative of the Douglas Democrats, but on November 19, 1861 became Republican in politics, and on September 25, 1862 dropped the and Democrat from its title. Its longstanding local political animosities, however, persisted. It wasted no affection on the Press, a Ramsey paper, and the latter returned the compliment to what it regarded as an Aldrich organ. As a Democratic paper, the Pioneer had vigorously assailed Donnelly in 1859, and the character of its "support" of him in 1862 is one of the interesting features of his congressional campaign.

St. Paul Daily Press, 1861-1862.

In January 1861 William R. Marshall purchased the Times and the Minnesotian and started the Press, which then became the leading Republican newspaper. With Marshall was associated Joseph A. Wheelock who was later to become one of the best known of Minnesota editors. The two were devoted to Ramsey, and the Press was known as a Ramsey paper. With the removal of Dr. Foster, Donnelly no longer had a special friend at court. The Press, except where Ramsey's interests were concerned, was neutral in the matter of personal rivalries within the party, but gave its support to the party's candidates. As such Donnelly received its support in his campaign for Congress in 1862. The Press' efforts to force the Pioneer into line for Donnelly enlivened the campaign of that year.

Minnesota Times (Daily and Weekly), 1859.

The Times, T.M. Newson, editor, was a Republican rival of the central organ of the party, the Minnesotian, and as such offered occasional criticisms of those on the "inside" which are suggestive. It is of use also in supplying facts where copies of the more important papers are not available. For a time in the early part of 1860, it was consolidated with the Minnesotian, and in January 1861 was absorbed, together with the latter, by the Press.

St. Peter.

St. Peter Free Press, 1859.

Sauk Rapids.

New Era, 1861.

Shakopee.

Scott County Democrat, 1859.

Supplies typical Democratic comments on Donnelly's candidacy for lieutenant governor.

Stillwater.

Stillwater Messenger, 1859-1862.

A record of events and opinion in an important region, the St. Croix Valley. The editor, Andrew J. VanVorhes, was prominent among party leaders and influential in his part of the state. His name was mentioned for a state office in 1859, and his influence was sought for Donnelly in the latter's efforts to secure the congressional nomination in 1862. His criticism of the manner of Donnelly's nomination for lieutenant governor in 1859, and his subsequent words of praise for Donnelly are suggestive with regard to Donnelly's political methods and of his abilities.

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Curtiss-Wedge, Franklin, editor-in-chief. History of Dakota and Goodhue Counties, Minnesota. 2 vols. Chicago, 1910. Volume one deals with Dakota County and contains a biographical sketch of Donnelly.

Fish, Everett W. Donnelliana: an appendix to "Caesar's Column"; excerpts from the wit, wisdom, poetry and eloquence of Ignatius Donnelly; selected and collated, with a biography. Chicago, 1892.

With part 2 of this volume the accompanying account is not concerned, as the "excerpts" belong to a later period, or else are of no particular significance for Donnelly's political career. Part 1, however, constitutes the most complete biography of Donnelly available. It is confessedly "but a feeble and imperfect sketch, prepared[at the request



of the publisher] in the hurry of other pursuits, and unworthy of both the writer and the subject". Yet the author enjoyed the advantage of a long continued and intimate association with Donnelly, and, through his collaborator, Judge John A. Giltinan, of "free access to all his papers". The use made of these advantages resulted, so far as Donnelly's political activities are concerned, in an interesting but too favorable account of the more striking events and features of Donnelly's political career. At the same time the volume contains source material not now otherwise available--extracts from Donnelly's private journal, for instance--together with incidents and anecdotes of use when in harmony with facts derived from less prejudiced sources.

Folwell, William Watts. *Minnesota, the north star state.* Boston and New York, 1908.

The most authoritative general history of the state available.

Folwell, William Watts. *The Five Million Loan.* Minnesota Historical Collections, 15:189-214 (1915).

Johnston, Daniel S.B. *Minnesota journalism in the territorial period, and, Minnesota journalism from 1858 to 1865.* Minnesota Historical Collections, 10:247-351--part 1 (1905), and, 12:183-262 (1908).

These two articles are composed of a series of papers which supply valuable information in regard to the ownership, editorship, and period of publication of most of the Minnesota papers extant within the dates named. Biographical sketches of many of the journalists of the period are included.

*Minnesota in three centuries, 1655-1908.* Board of editors: Lucius F. Hubbard, William P. Murray, James H. Baker, Warren Upham . . . Semi-centennial edition. 4 vols. New York, 1908.

Volume three deals with the period from 1858 to 1870, and is rich in biographical material.

Mitchell, W.H. *Dakota County: its past and present.* Minneapolis, 1868.

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The portion of this volume which deals with the political history of Minnesota is based largely upon newspaper material and is not wholly reliable. In cases where the facts have been correctly stated, it is sometimes convenient to refer to it to avoid lengthy citations of newspapers.

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Upham, Warren, and Dunlap, Mrs. Rose Barteau. Minnesota biographies. Minnesota Historical Collections, vol. 14.

Very valuable, especially as supplying readily accessible information about some of the less prominent figures in Minnesota history.

Williams, J.F. Memoir of Hon. Cyrus Aldrich. Minnesota Historical Collections, 3:213-221.

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#### Documents

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