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The Inside History of the Late P. S. of A. Campaign

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BY S. M. HAMILTON



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The Inside History of the Late P. S. of A. Campaign

S. M. HAMILTON

Long hours of research and assiduous application always await the individual who, either through love of labor or hope of reward, engages in the arduous task of compiling historical facts. Indeed, there are few exceptions since the ancient day when good old Job cried out in his anguish "Oh, that mine enemy would write a book," until this hour, when the author assumes the laborious duty of collecting and presenting to the philatelic world the many incidents of the recent contest.

The events already chronicled in the various stamp journals, are of little interest here, and the incidents yet unwritten are exceedingly hard to collect. Choicest bits of information must be omitted because the informant will not allow the use of his name as authority. In all fairness the author has adhered closely to the facts and no statements are made for which we have no absolute assurance and positive proof.

The period which I propose to review dates from the first of August, 1895, to the close of the same month of the succeeding year. For, indeed, the memorable campaign of which I write, really began at the close of the Denver convention, when certain members there announced their intentions for the coming year.

In order to fully understand the circumstances which will be narrated hereafter, a brief survey of the history of the society since its inception, is necessary.

On the 18th of August, 1893, the society was organized, in the office of J. A. Pierce, 191 South Clark street, Chicago. Mr. E. R. Aldrich, of Benson, Minn., called the first gathering

to order and the election of officers resulted as follows:

President, Clifford W. Kissinger.
Vice President, William M. Randall.
Secretary, Ralph W. Ashcroft.
Treasurer, Luther W. Mott.
International Secretary, Fred S. Fox.
Exchange Superintendent, Roy F. Greene.
Librarian, L. G. Quackenbush.
Attorney, John R. Keech.
Counterfeit Detector, L. Brodestone.
Trustees, C. E. Severn, J. P. Glass, Chris Peterson.
Official organ, Pennsylvania Philatelist.

Most of the thirty-one charter members had been members of the society, "Sons of Philatelia." They resigned because they thought their interests unsafe in the hands of older members who had just been elected to the most important offices in the S. of P.

By the amalgamation of the United Philatelic Society, the Philatelic Sons of America gained many members, which aided materially in the healthy growth which was to follow. By the time of the second convention, at Niagara Falls, 803 members had been enrolled, 670 of whom were in good standing. Since but a year had elapsed since the famous "bolt," the members were all agreeable and harmonious. Mr. Kissinger did not ask for a re-election, which, indeed, he could have had "for the asking," and the choice fell on Charles E. Severn, of Chicago. Among the officers chosen were: Randall, Fox, Mott, G. W. Greene, Brodestone, Wolsieffer, Quackenbush, Keech, R. F. Greene, with Doherty, Pierce and LeFever as trustees, all of Chicago.

Mr. Severn made a good President, and was regarded as one of the most conservative men in the society.

As early as the first of March, 1895, members began to speculate as to whom should fall the presidential honors at the coming convention. Since the first President had been an eastern man, the second had been chosen from the central states, it was natural that many should suppose that the third presiding officer should hail from out the great West. Public attention turned to the three great leaders there, who had been foremost in advancing the society throughout the Western Empire. These were: Ed. H. Wilkinson, Herbert C. Beardsley and Roy F. Greene. I shall not attempt to enumerate them in the order of their popularity. Each was held in highest esteem. Greene did not care to run for any office, and I do not know that either of the others did, but certainly their friends were active in their endeavor to secure, for their favorites, the coveted prize. There can be no doubt that plans were made relative to Mr. Wilkinson's campaign. His friends were many, and his enemies were few. Personally Mr. Wilkinson was taciturn, but aggressive and forceful. He was the philatelic Oliver Cromwell, of his day, and had he then consented to wage the battle for first honors undoubtedly, he would have been surrounded by a force as stubborn and as invincible as the historic "Iron-sides" themselves.

Wilkinson's boom had not been fairly launched when the announcement came that Mr. Clifford W. Kissinger, of Reading, Pa., again wanted the office of President. As will be remembered, Mr. Kissinger was then at the height of his power, and was exceedingly popular. The success of the society had borne him along on the crest of a wave of unprecedented philatelic enthusiasm. He had been an untrifling worker in the P. S. of A., and his position as editor of the official organ, had afforded exceptional opportunities for making friends. No one wanted to oppose him in a political encounter, and friends of all the western candidates abandoned the hope of the presidency.

Some feelings of resentment were then engendered, which culminated in the mortal combat of the recent contest. During this campaign (of 1895) Mr. F. S. Fox, of Reading, resigned the office of Secretary. President Severn appointed W. H. Barnum to

the vacancy. Barnum was at the time a candidate for Secretary, subject to the decision of the Denver Conclave. His opponent was Mr. O. K. Carstarphen, of Denver. The appointment of Barnum was looked upon by the Carstarphen men as an unfair discrimination between two contestants, since it indicated plainly who would receive the eastern support. No doubt this served to augment the already existing enmity between eastern and western members. This contention lasted even during the campaign of which I write, and seems likely to break out anew, on the question of the location of the '95 convention. Omaha is already in the field, and the western advocates are making a strong argument, one of which is that the Trans-Mississippi Exposition will be held there at that time.

But the mere matter of presidential preferment was not the only reason for the sharp fighting and bitter rivalry which characterized the recent campaign. Concerning these, it is our purpose hereinafter to inquire.

The Denver convention was called to order by President Severn, on the 27th of August, 1895. The following were among the officers chosen:

President, C. W. Kissinger.

Vice President, S. M. Hamilton.

Secretary, W. H. Barnum.

Treasurer, L. W. Mott.

Trustees, H. G. Bartels, H. Moeller, W. L. MacMullin.

Other important offices fell to Drown, Brodestone, Ketcheson, Kramer, Edwards, Connor, Perrin, Wolsleffer, Becker, Keech, Hopkins, and Beardsley.

Of the twenty officers chosen, but seven lived west of the Mississippi, three of which were the trustees.

The secretary's report showed that there were 811 members in good standing, an increase of 141 members, since the last convention.

And now let us turn to the memorable campaign of 1895-6. And first the candidates. Roy F. Greene was first in the presidential field. He kept his aspirations secret, however, until January, 1896.

Carstarphen was laying wires at the Denver meet and as soon as that gathering adjourned, he entered the field in earnest.

Mr. Every Paget was also a candidate for president, but for some reason withdrew. That he did at one time entertain such intentions, is evidenced by a letter written to the ed-

itor of the Springfield Philatelist, on August 30, 1895. A portion of Mr. Paget's letter reads:

"I solicit your support for my campaign for president next year. I will be elected by a large majority, no matter who is in the field."

Matters had begun to assume some definite shape, when, to the surprise of western members who this year believed they would have an opportunity to choose solely among western men, Ralph W. Ashcroft announced his candidacy. Indeed, a contest between two such leaders as Greene and Carstarphen offered a strong temptation, and no doubt Mr. Ashcroft expected, while these two were wrangling, to walk away with the prize. The announcement of Greene's candidacy was first made in the Springfield Philatelist, at that time owned by J. W. Miller Schmitt, one of the brightest publishers, and one of the most resourceful campaigners of his day. The suspension of this paper, on account of Schmitt's collegiate course, was most unfortunate for Greene, and the loss was keenly felt. Subsequent charges and imputations remained unanswered, which fact doubtless cost Greene many votes.

Mr. Carstarphen was supported by the International, of which Mr. H. C. Beardsley was editor.

The recent defeat for Secretary, which Mr. Carstarphen sustained, did not in any way lessen his activity nor dampen his enthusiasm.

Mr. Ashcroft received complimentary notices by many of the leading papers.

By the first of January, 1896, the philatelic leaders and writers of influence had enlisted in the service of their favorites. Among the Ashcroft cortege were: Charles E. Severn, the philatelic Henry of Navarre, whose white plume is always seen at the head of the ranks; Charles Beamish, W. H. Barnum, P. S. Fox, H. P. Kaniner and a long train of others.

The followers of Mr. Carstarphen were none the less formidable. H. C. Beardsley, the nestor of philatelic journalism; John R. Keech, the "lion hearted." Every Paget, Roy Bradley and there were others.

Greene was not lacking in admirers: W. H. Thomas, Brodestone, Ben Morris, Kramer, Kessler, Schmitt, Murray, Mischler and Woolston.

In giving the above, I have omitted to indicate Mr. Kissinger's choice. I do not know whom he favored. But as he is always in evidence at a phil-

atelic gathering, the readers will wonder for whom he cast his proxies. Mr. Kissinger's letters to candidates were flattering alike to the several candidates, and were non-committal as a rule, designed, no doubt, to strengthen his chances for the A. P. A. Secretaryship.

Western members supposed that he favored Ashcroft. On April, 30, 1896, he wrote to John R. Keech, a part of which letter reads as follows:

Candidly speaking, Ashcroft will be elected (according to my opinion.)"

In the same letter Mr. K. states that "Greene was a candidate before Carstarphen was a member." He scores Keech for asking if he "put Greene in the field to split the western vote."

On the 17th of June following, he again wrote Keech, and closed his letter with the words:

"If proxies and votes come in as they now do, until August 17th, I'll be able to elect the whole ticket."

(Signed) Merrily yours,

CLIFF."

His opinion that Ashcroft would be elected in the first letter when supplemented by the latter would lead one to infer that Ashcroft was his choice. Still, on July 1st, he wrote Roy F. Greene as follows:

"I am glad to see you in the race for the presidency, and I would rather see you president than any other member of the society.

(Signed) Very sincerely,

CLIFF."

On June 11th, a letter was written to a western member, concerning Carstarphen's campaign. The letter is signed by C. W. K., and was no doubt dictated by Mr. Kissinger to his Secretary, as also may have been some of the other letters referred to in this work. We quote only so much of the letter as will afford light as to whom Mr. K. favored for President. It reads:

"In the first place Ashcroft was nominated by a San Francisco party and he wrote me for his support. As I have known him for many years, and he is a personal friend of mine, I promised him I would help him, when I wrote you that I was working for Carstarphen, until he attacked me I told the truth. I would like to make a deal with you, as I want the convention to be harmonious, and I want to see every loyal member stand by it as they should. I can think of nothing outside of the following confidential suggestion: Let Greene and Ashcroft

stand as candidates. I have not promised either, my vote or influence. I will vote for and give Carstarphen my influence. This will elect him beyond a doubt. I know how many votes he will have, and I know how many I can give. In return for this, you will support me for Secretary of the A. P. A. and President of the S. of P. There is no earthly reason why I should make any deal, as I am fully satisfied that those whom I support will be elected. My object is to prevent any serious misunderstanding that may result at the convention. I am for peace and harmony, etc."

(Signed) Hastily,
C. W. K.

The months of January, February and March passed by uneventfully. The candidates did little but write personal letters soliciting support.

On April 6th the society was incorporated. The scheme, while a good one and beneficial in many respects, was decidedly unpopular. Not because, as had been alleged, the incorporation had been under the laws of any particular state, nor from any idea that Mr. Kissinger had gained any special advantage thereby. Perhaps the greatest objection was the cumulative system of voting. The power formerly lodged in the voting members, was transferred to a Board of Directors. As an example, there were several candidates voted on by the members for Vice President, not one of which was chosen. Greene, who was the choice of many members for President, was selected by the Directors, for International Secretary. Many more incidents with which the reader is familiar, might be mentioned.

The Portland Trustees, Herman Moeller and H. F. Bartels sent in their resignations immediately after the incorporation. When questioned as to the cause of their actions, one of the above named answered: "The Portland Trustees resigned from the P. S. of A. for several reasons, principal of which was the illegal incorporation of the society." Their resignations appeared in the June Pennsv. along with same from P. M. Welsieffer, the leading Chicago dealer. Mr. W. has, however, been reinstated.

The circumstances attending the incorporation are interesting, and have elicited much comment. The task of drafting necessary instruments was first undertaken by George W. Achard, of Minneapolis, but on account of sickness, he was compelled to abandon the

work. The matter was then "referred" by the committee appointed, to Messrs. Berger & Berger, of Camden, N. J., whose charge for securing a charter was \$65. At this time, Mr. D. J. McDermott, was a law student in the office of Attorney Becker, of Reading, and, being chairman of the committee which had the matter in charge, very naturally turned the work to his preceptor.

Becker secured the charter for \$45.00, \$11.30 of which appears to have been the fees of the attorney for petitioners. When the facts concerning the securing of the charter became current, many wondered why this matter was not referred to John R. Keech, the regularly constituted attorney for the society.

Mr. Keech had, indeed, made a wonderful record for collections, and was a capable attorney in every respect. The very fact that he had not been consulted about securing a charter, seemed to many as a reflection upon his abilities. But certain it is that whatever was written to Mr. Keech was in a general way, and nothing definite was known by him until after the charter had been secured. When the matter had been settled, Mr. Kissinger wrote Keech, in order that the latter might fully understand why he had not been permitted to secure the charter and stated that one of the reasons why the state of New York had not been selected was because he (Kissinger) had understood that the cost would be about \$100.00. Keech promptly replied that \$25.00 would have covered all the costs and is purported to have said, in a letter of April 7th, 1896:

"Why not come out frankly and say that expense had nothing to do with it but that the determination was that the incorporation was to be under your laws?"

Mr. Keech, however, gracefully acquiesced in the matter, and said, that he was satisfied that the work had been done all right. If Mr. Keech felt the sting of this gross injustice, certain it is that he did not reveal, to the philatelic world, at least, any signs of disappointment, by such whimperings and caterwaulings as would have come from others less rugged. The correspondence which passed between Kissinger and Keech, which could not fail to excite the admiration of every loyal member.

On April 6th, Mr. Kissinger wrote to Mr. Keech:

"I am glad to know that you are again a candidate for attorney, and you'll get it if it takes every straight vote I can use. I feel confident that you will not have any opposition. There is no other man in the society half so well qualified to fill the office. This comes from my heart, and you can rely on it.

(Signed) Very respectfully,
CLIFFORD W. KISSINGER."

The other candidates for attorney were Geo. A. Katzenberger, Chas. F. Bridge, Geo. J. Bailey, G. W. Achard and J. A. Wainwright.

In spite of the declaration above mentioned the editor of the *Penury* allowed Mr. Keech's name to be "starred" as a delinquent in the June number of the official organ. Keech sent in his dues June 4, but they either did not reach the officials in time, or if they did, were not forwarded to Mr. Stowell, the printer.

During the month of May the contest "waxed warm." Interest in affairs intensified and candidates settled down for a three months siege. At this time the writer saw a statement in the *Springfield Philatelist*, to the effect that, in case an eastern man was elected, the editor of the *International Philatelist* promised (in a recent number of his paper) to secede from his society and start a new one, as Kissinger did in 1893. Thereupon I issued an address to members, condemning such actions, and stating that if Mr. Carstarphen expected to win on those lines he would be disappointed, and stating that he should either deny these allegations or else admit its truth by silence. The address was printed in circular form and mailed to members, bearing my signature, for at that time I was Vice President of the society, and felt that no effort should be spared to keep the members harmonious.

In behalf of Mr. Carstarphen, Mr. Beardsley promptly denied that he had "ever made such a statement," and stated that Carstarphen had entertained no such intentions. Concerning this matter Mr. Carstarphen wrote me on April 17th, 1896, as follows:

"You misunderstand Beardsley. Although half a threat at disruption, still he means it not that way."

By this time the sentiment against an eastern man, which had been worked to a fever heat by western magazines and journals, reached its zenith. Mr. Ashcroft had long been intimately associated with what the

westerners were pleased to term the "Reading Ring." Rumors of secession and threats at disruption everywhere prevailed. Clouds were gathering which alarmed the most conservative. On July 1st, Kissinger wrote, in substance, to a certain Illinois member, that he had been "expecting such a movement." Concerning the rumor that in case Ashcroft was elected, certain members would leave the P. S. of A. and join the L. A. P. he wrote:

"I suppose you know the L. A. P. meet will be held at Minneapolis during the P. S. of A. meet. We can then see what can be done. Find out who signed the petition and who started the movement."

A week later he wrote to an eastern friend that he had "had" a copy of a petition, on that day, July 6, in which certain members had agreed to "boycott the P. S. of A. unless certain things happened. He asked: "Are you one of the members who signed it," etc. As no names were mentioned, the author was unable to learn more about it.

An adriot movement was made during the campaign, which, had it succeeded, would undoubtedly have elected Mr. Ashcroft. Whether it was with this in view, is not the business of the historian to inquire. It was this. Several officers had been resigning from the L. A. P. Mr. Kissinger wrote Mr. Kramer, the chairman of the trustees, and requested that he (Kissinger) be appointed Vice President, and made the suggestion that if Kramer then so desired he might resign from the Presidency, which would then allow Mr. Kissinger to become President. To the proposition, however, Mr. Kramer would not consent.

Mr. Ashcroft's campaign had been carried on almost exclusively by his friends. The stamp journals were unsparing of their praise and the matchless pen of Charles E. Severn rendered yeoman service. Ashcroft had taken little interest in society affairs for nearly a year, and his sudden appearance at so inopportune a moment rendered hopeless chances which, at other times, under other circumstances, would have proved most formidable. For, indeed, Ralph W. Ashcroft is, and has always been so regarded, the embodiment of all that redounds to America's young manhood. Carstarphen's campaign in the west was urged with unflinching zeal. He was confident of victory. He believed that the interests of the society at this crucial time, de-

mauded the election of a western member, and he was willing to be that member; even to the sacrifice of his time, business and individual interests. I am sure he would have preferred Greene to Ashcroft. In company with Beardsley, he had urged "reform" as his campaign cry. The members will certainly expect that some of these much needed reforms will, under his administration, be instituted and pursued with vigor.

Had Ashcroft developed any unexpected strength at Minnetonka, Mr. Carstarphen would have favored an alliance with Greene, and a settlement of all the votes upon the one who should be found the choice of the west. The scheme, while impracticable, demonstrates the determination of westerners to prevent the election of an eastern President.

Greene's canvass had been carried on almost entirely by personal letters. I was satisfied that he was too much engrossed in literary matters to give his campaign the attention adequate to its necessities. As before mentioned, he was without an official organ, through which to answer the charges, and this class I have always regarded as irreparable. Greene was always a strong advocate of the young collector. In 1893, he had resigned an office in the S. of P. and joined the fortunes of the new society. So now he opposed the incorporation scheme mainly, I think, because it gave older members an advantage, in as much as they can better afford to buy up the stock and thus control elections. He declared that "The membership lists extending to all states and territories, as well as to the provinces of our northern colonial neighbor, and including all the struggling, progressive collectors that needed a philatelic home within its scope, has eclipsed everything before attempted in this line, and it seems a crime insensate to yield this vantage ground now and fall into the same errors that did our predecessor."

Perhaps one thing which worked defeat of Greene, more than any other, was the statement persistently made by the Carstarphen "quill pushers" that Greene was put in the field by the Ashcroft men, in order to split the western vote, and thus give Ashcroft the advantage. There was no truth in the statement, as Greene was first in the field, but it seems to have had its effect, and the truth of the statement

seemed at that time to rest upon the fact that it remained uncontradicted.

In July, Mr. Beardsley issued the long promised campaign number of the International. It consisted principally of a virulent attack upon Mr. Kissinger's actions. It charged him with duplicity toward L. M. Staebler, who made the race for Canadian Vice President one year ago. It touched upon the matter of Keech's dues; the \$188 debt which the society owed Kissinger; in fact, nearly every event or incident of interest was discussed.

The managers of Carstarphen's campaign well knew that they must arouse the feelings of the west against the east in order to defeat Ashcroft. Then they would allege that Greene was the subterfuge candidate of the "Reading Ring" and thus defeat him. The route was circuitous, the method questionable, but it served the purpose. Comment is unnecessary. The campaign number of Beardsley's paper disclosed the fact that the International had a correspondent at Reading who must have been familiar with Mr. Kissinger's manoeuvres, and been somewhat, on the "inside."

Both the Ashcroft and Carstarphen forces now saw an opportunity to open fire on Greene and they lost no time in taking advantage of it.

Greene had held for a long time the S. of P. library. He stood ready to turn it over whenever he could ascertain the proper functionaries, in the almost derelict S. of P. Indeed, it will be remembered that this society has had troubles of its own, in the way of querulous dissenters, and it would have been unsafe for any one in possession of anything belong to that society to yield it to one or the other of the contending factions, until matters could be satisfactorily adjusted. At one time Lewis M. Lang had written Greene, and demanded that the library be sent to him, because the society was in debt to him. Kissinger once advised Greene to hold the library. At another time he advised Greene to turn it over to the P. S. of A. on the inexorable plea that most of the books had been donated by members who had subsequently joined the P. S. of A. During the last summer, when he was running for President of the S. of P., Mr. Kissinger wrote Greene and demanded that the library be at once turned over to the S. of P., and manifested his surprise that it had been held so long. Mr.

Beamish also made the same request. Likewise Mr. Carstarphen.

Greene, as a matter of self-protection, did none of these things, because in any event, he was incurring the liabilities of a law suit. Besides the "orders" were contradictory, and those issuing the "commands" had no authority to do so. If the members of the Sons of Philatelia knew how anxious some of the above named P. S. of A. members were to serve the aforesaid, certainly they would have called some of the latter into service at the Gettysburg convention. The truth is plain. A political trick arranged for private purposes. Did it alienate the S. of P. members from Greene?

Many of the journals scored Greene, without knowing a shadow of the circumstances. The readers of the press presumed that the journals knew what they were publishing. Too many of our members imbibe all they read without considering the reasonableness of the claims. I shall not attempt to say whether the members are too credulous or the press too deceptive. The unsuspecting seem always looking for imposters, for when they meet them they are ready to be taken in. And, likewise, imposters are always looking for fools.

On the morning of August 13th the convention at Minnetonka Beach was called to order. The President read his annual address. He reviewed the past year, dwelt at length on the incorporation, and other matters, and exhorted the members to activity and loyalty. His appointment of the Credentials Committee left the Carstarphen forces without a representative. This caused an objection, and Beamish withdrew. H. C. Beardsley was then appointed, and the committee stood: D. J. McDermott, L. T. Brodestone and H. C. Beardsley. When the ballots were counted, the following was found to be the vote for Directors:

C. W. Kissinger.....	486
O. K. Carstarphen.....	416
Chas. Beamish.....	354
R. W. Ashcroft.....	310
R. F. Greene.....	247
Geo. B. Klebes.....	209
I. E. Patterson.....	191
W. H. Kessler.....	75

The officers then chosen by the Directors were:

President, O. K. Carstarphen.
Vice President, R. W. Ashcroft.
Secretary, Charles Beamish.
Treasurer, C. W. Kissinger.

International Secretary, R. F. Greene.

Following were then selected:

Vice President for Canada, R. L. Hannington.

Exchange Superintendent, H. D. Ruchlman.

Auction Manager, H. C. Crowell.

Advertising Agent, L. T. Brodestone.

Purchasing Agent, W. F. Gregory.

Information Bureau, J. Henry

Thomas, I. E. Patterson, Every Paget.

Librarian, A. L. Becker.

Counterfeit Detector, S. B. Hopkins.

Attorney, G. A. Katzenberger.

Official Editor, F. B. Woolston.

Trustees, J. H. Makins, B. H. Henderson, Geo. M. Schiller.

As will be seen from the above, the west had achieved a victory. It had secured almost half of the officers chosen, including the President and Trustees. Like all conventions, it had its quota of surprises. Noticeable among which, was the defeat of Thurston, who is one of the brightest collectors in the west. His friends were confident of victory. His opponent, Mr. Ruchlman, of Sharon, Wis., is also a young man, but is active and enterprising. He has been a dealer for some years, and has a wide acquaintance. The department is safe in his hands.

The race for Auction Manager was spirited. Judson Burton was, perhaps, the best known of the contestants, but was beaten by a combination of Harry Crowell's popularity and Will Barnum's knowledge of politics. O. E. Klapp, of Ohio, was in the race. He is well known as one of the bright active sons of a great state. In the contest for Librarian, A. L. Becker secured the victory over H. S. Swenson, who was only a few votes behind. Those who attended the convention expected to see him elected, as he was seen quite often in company with Mr. Beamish, and this seemed to be an indication that the eastern vote would go to Swenson. William B. Murray, of Peoria, Ill., was also a contestant for this honor, but he was not quite so well known as the others. It is known to but few that Murray was the originator of some of the most adroit movements of the campaign. These, however, were in the interests of others, and in doing this he no doubt neglected his own interests.

For Attorney, Mr. George A. Katzenberger defeated John Roland Keech. This was no surprise, however, to

those familiar with the workings of the campaign, Keech's relations with Barnum and Kissinger were somewhat icy toward the close of the fight. He had favored Carstarphen for Secretary the year before, and could not look for much support from the Ohio leader. On the eve of his departure for Minnetonka, Mr. Kissinger wrote Keech and declared that he "would certainly be justified in doing all I can to defeat you." Then, too, in the matter of incorporation, no public explanation had ever been made as to why Keech was not allowed to secure the charter.

Like most all conventions, it was harmonious. The lively contentions which enlivened the summer's campaign, properly came to an end with the selection of Oney K. Carstarphen as President. The raising of the dues will not meet the approval of all. But time alone must say whether it was an act of wisdom. The recent election of Maj. McKinley seems to have restored confidence, and already encouraging signs indicate a revival of business.

Our society, which has held its own during the past few years, will surely prosper in the next.

In giving to the philatelic world the inside facts of the recent campaign, I realize that many things mentioned herein will not meet with the approval of some who are interested. But historical research is not the most humble respecter of persons. Our purpose is to supply the popular demand with a brief review of the mechanical and political workings of a contest in which all were so vitally concerned.

To those who have so liberally ordered the work in advance, I sincerely hope it will merit your approbation, as well as merit the favor of those whose good opinion I am most solicitous to obtain.

The history of our society is a history of progress. May it continue in its infinite progression till the last fading of the golden sunset of the last great day, shall find it still reluctant to yield its sacred charter.

Petersburg, Ill., Nov. 15, 1896.

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