# Racial Drama In Politics

Foreign Born Run Most Big Cities by Their Votes.

*By Ernest McGaffey*

Author of "A Boy," "A Story of Hickory Ridge," "The Hickory Stick," "Poems Lyrical and Light," "Wild Life Near Home," "Poems Grave and Gay."

EVERY large city is mixed nationalities of late a rare opportunity for studying what may be well termed racial politics. To an outsider, the facts are of little not apparent enough to make it [illegible] but to a man on the inside the drama is one full of interest. As I had, and have, no axe to grind, neither against any race or creed, my experiences in municipal politics may be used as an extended course of lectures in foreign countries. I saw the different cults and lies of politics unfold themselves, viewing matters with a strictly impartial eye. There was nothing in it, but of course there was not in some way, either consciously or unconsciously, connected with the political game. Which might play at home and abroad, regardless of his washed up and frayed of the native Americans did this for foreign wards find time out. Then, when he made his coup of protest against existing conditions, he had no one but himself to blame.

The ward I lived in was for one [illegible] adventure of [illegible]. There were quite a number of Germans, a large array of Swedes, Norwegians and Danes, some Irish and Irish Americans, a strong colony of Poles, a few English and Welsh, some Bohemians and a contingent of Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Americans, Italians, Spanish, Chinese, Chinese, Greek. Race class and some Americans with an occasional Parisian or a native of the Cannibal Islands. But it was not one of those wards of the city where Alderman under the sun were represented and a few besides.

By and large the Irish Americans ran the ward. That is in our party. It was the smartest thing in the world. They were born politicians, taking to politics as a duck does to water, and having a real love for the game. They were ready speakers and sometimes good ones, they were miraculous workers, they knew all. Guided the ward meetings and semi-it held the offices. They were active in getting acquainted liberal in their per cent of their natural pay, the other cases and commercial. They were not too scrupulous in attaining a desired end, and they never, but least to defeat. They could and did rejoice in a victory, but they were never cast down when they lost. It's all well enough to talk about the ancient valiantly of the Irish race, but they make good salesmen, don't they? Well, there's a deal of discipline and silver military ingredients in political life, and while it is true that in the rural districts the American comes out strong for politics, in the majority of the cities big and little, the Irish American politician rules the roost.

You can find revolution Americans down in Kentucky, for instance, men who can trace their ancestors clear down to Daniel Boone in an unbroken line. You may find them indulging in such pleasantries as hurling cumbersome warehouses to shooting at each other from behind rail fences, for they are quite as handy with a rifle as Daniel was.

The Poles were a clannish nation and for one else could do anything in their wards. Where they represented only a smattering of strength they could be handled fairly well by the leaders in the ward, but they were "live members," and wanted some share in the "spoils" of office.

The Bohemians were also a combatively inclined people politically, and waged lively campaigns in the wards where they held the balance of the voting power. But they did not have the cohesiveness of the Poles, and candidates of other nationalities could occasionally squeeze in. The Bohemian, and in fact all of the foreign populated wards, were strong for personal liberty, and as near as possible for the social privileges they had enjoyed in Europe, minus any excesses of "the king business." The Scandinavian voters were apathetic mostly, only once in awhile producing an orator or a hustling politician. They were governed in their political judgments partly by party ties, partly by the question of personal fitness and somewhat by the question of nationality. But I give them credit for not being carried away entirely by either pride of race or demand of party. They really wanted good men, and the fact that a man was one of their race did not invariably get him their vote. Occasionally they nominated a man of their race for the express purpose of defeating him, because he had proved himself too small for the position.

The Germans were good, live politicians, and like as in other matters, somewhat Teutonic in their prejudices and tendencies. Clannish was hardly the word for their particular brand of political cohesion. Out of the ruck of many a particular defeat would emerge triumphant the form of some German candidate whose race vote had been adopted solidly for him, no matter what party he belonged to. To nominate a state, county or city ticket without the name of at least one representative German for one of the principal offices was something that no party convention either dared or dared to do. A good many of the Germans still spoke the language of the Fatherland, and even when there were spies about seeking to pick up crumbs of information they were usually baffled by "the vernacular." The Germans had good, solid, and eloquent speakers among them, and they were excellent campaigners.

Their particular wards elected German aldermen as a rule, and as a rule the German office-holders were good men. Occasionally they were absolutely independent when given appointive offices. To an against a mayor's wishes when placed in an appointive position is as much worse than lese majeste as murder is more of a crime than petty larceny. Yet on occasions the steady independence of the Teutonic mind bolted over. An alderman called on a German official with a request from a mayor (not in my time) to do something the official disapproved of. The official took the message with an expressive shrug of the shoulders. "I won't do it," was his answer. "But I've got the mayor's orders," replied the surprised and indignant city father. "I don't care what you've got," was the retort. "You didn't get me. Here, I can this office. I've got my resignation written and in my pocket. The mayor can have this office in ten minutes if he wants it, but he can't have me." So the alderman had to give it up, and the official remained.

Now the striking dissimilarity of so many races, and their segregations of one another in different parts of the city, produced a curious state of affairs from a social standpoint. There was a race from the south of Europe, exact, hasting, emotional, with its own particular customs and mode of life. Three blocks away might be a race from northern Europe, totally unlike them with creeds, schools, ways of living and every conceivable viewpoint, both mental and physical, absolutely separated from their neighbors.

What was the result? Why, it was like a lot of block-houses, each with its hostile or semi-hostile occupants. Dwellers in the same city? I say no! Dwellers in the same community. I

Shooting at Each Other from Behind Rail Fences.

grant, but so carved apart by nationality and environment as to compose foreign settlements.

Why did Rome from her seven hills rule the world? What makes Paris such a great city? What gives the distinctive touch to London, Berlin, Boston, Edinburgh? It is the sense of homogeneity that makes them as they are, the feeling among their inhabitants of a common interest, a uniformity of racial feeling and instinct, and kindred aims and aspirations. You tell me of a great city that has 40 or 50 different nationalities, dragging away in different directions? Not in a thousand years! Yet the reformers and dreamers, seeing no further than beyond their own noses, attempt to weld into a homogeneous mass, in a few years, what Rome intends to devote centuries into doing.

A slight study of racial politics will convince the most enthusiastic believer in having things his own way, that it "can't be did" in some cities. Racial prejudice, old-world customs, religion, suspicion, temperament, how many and how impregnable are the barriers which present themselves. To get along without any trouble with the representatives of all these different nationalities was not a hard task, provided you looked at mankind as being all lineal descendants of Adam, and not different in what they wanted, but only different in the way they went at it. The sanguine races gesticulated, grew eloquent, rapt, even poetical in asking for some small favor. The taciturn races expressed themselves briefly, and devoid of enthusiasm.

Racial politics concerned itself carefully as to the selection of the vari-

Sorting Out Petty Jobs.

ous ward halls in which to hold the meetings, the filling of hands, the employment of workers, the distribution of "ward patronage" and all the intricacies of municipal politics. "What's in a name?" Well, you can bet your ultimate sesterce that there was nearly everything in a name when it came to sorting out the petty jobs in a ward. Why, an estate ward superintendent (supposing he were an Irish American) would "turn down" with cold disdain the request to put on another man of his nationality on a job, if there already had been sufficient representation of the race on the job. It made a heap of difference what a man's name began or ended with in municipal politics.

Of course everyone cannot be satisfied, but favors must be distributed as near evenly as possible to keep a ward organization or a party "machine" in good running order. And weren't these "handy boys" on the lookout to see that there was no undue favoritism practiced? I should say. And they could tell you just how things stood in the ward, and they were "chimmy on the spot" if any "crooked work" was attempted.

When an approaching election was coming on the leaders of the party, of as many races as there were colors in Joseph's coat, would assemble to consider the personnel of the ticket. Not that I ever heard them use the word personnel. These meetings might take place in a hotel, or party headquarters, or if it was a straight ward meeting of leaders in the ward, it might take place in a, say, school house.

Then and there the various qualifications of the different prospective candidates would be discussed and argued, and "a slate," as it is called, would be agreed upon. Sometimes these "slates" went through on one evening day without a slip. Sometimes there were battles in the convention, and compromises effected.

I was present at one of these "caucuses" of leaders, when there was merely talk about the prospective ticket, but no settlement of the ticket. It was an informal gathering, accidental, but an earnest meeting nevertheless. The main office was spoken of. A prominent German-American was suggested. He was approved by all present. Another office was named, it was assigned to a well-known Irish American. A third office came up. After a little wrangling a popular Scandinavian was selected. A fourth office was mentioned. An influential Pole was the favorite. A fifth office became the topic of conversation and the name of a Bohemian citizen was proposed and a Hebrew who had been active in the party. Finally during the wrangle an Irish American politician said heatedly: "Well, what's the matter with giving it to a good American? I know just the man, and he's a corker." The leader of the group looked at him disgustedly and said: "Do you mean that?" "Sure, I mean it," was the reply. The leader laid his heavy hand down with a quiet force that made the glasses tilt as he said: "This is business, see! I want it distinctly understood that I'm in favor of no d——d experiments." That settled it.

ERNEST McGAFFEY.

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# Prominent People

## BACK IN POLITICAL ARENA

Adlai E. Stevenson, vice-president of the United States during the second administration of Grover Cleveland, has emerged from the simple life he has been living for some time at Bloomington, Ill. At the recent primary election he won the Democratic nomination for the governorship of his state and he will make a strong fight for the office.

Besides being vice-president with Cleveland from 1893 to 1897, he has been more than a slight possibility himself at three or four different national Democratic conventions. He was talked of strongly in 1892, he was given a still stronger boost for the nomination in 1900 and it really looked as though he might land first place on the ticket in 1904. In 1900, however, he was placed on the ticket again only as a candidate for his old place of vice-president, and with Bryan went down in defeat at election time.

Mr. Stevenson is really what might be called today one of the Democrats of the old school, one of the type of which Col. Henry Watterson of Kentucky is another conspicuous example. Parties and platforms, aims and ideals, fads and philosophies have shifted and changed in a sort of kaleidoscopic whirl since Stevenson went actively into the political game, and yet there has never been a moment, in all probability, when it could fairly and consistently be charged that he was not "regular."

Before his term as vice-president he was in congress two separate times and four years each time. He was also first assistant postmaster general during the first Cleveland term.

## PLANNING AFRICAN TRIP

Frederick C. Selous, the famous British hunter, who knows the jungles of Africa as many men know sections of their own towns, is the man who is planning the coming African trip of President Roosevelt. Selous is one of the notable hunters of big game in the world. He was born in London on New Year's eve, 1851, of mixed French, Scotch and English blood, and with some of these he inherited also a roving disposition and a dislike for the humdrum existence of the upper class Englishmen.

Selous was 20 years old when he first left England for Africa. Starting at Matabeleland, he began a sort of endless half-aimless expedition, personally conducted, through the denser portions of central Africa, which continued for 20 years. During this time he made his living by elephant hunting and the collection of specimens of natural history, including some magnificent members of the jungle's animal royalty. In 1892 he returned to England, but in less than a year he was lonesome again for his savage play-land, and therefore he hurried back in time to get into the first Matabele war.

A number of books on various phases of his life and experiences in Africa have been published by Selous, and he has received many honors at the hands of the Royal Geographical society and other similar organizations. At present he is living in Surrey, England, where he occupies himself with shooting, cycling, hockey, cricket and thinking about the good old days in inner Africa.

## EXPLORER FOUND AGAIN

Dr. Sven Hedin, greatest of living travelers, is saved again. Since he began his explorations of interior Asia, Dr. Hedin has been reported lost many times, and in each instance just about the time the hunting expedition is getting ready to start out on the quest for his body the missing man turns up in a new and unexpected place.

Although a Swede, and a native of Stockholm, he is traveling under British protection, and that government has been much concerned over his latest disappearance, which was in Tibet.

Not only has Dr. Hedin been a judicious and daring explorer, but the results of his travels have been concrete. One of his discoveries has been a chain of mountains in Tibet over 2,000 miles long, representing also the last possible discovery of the kind, since there is no longer any territory so long remaining unexplored on the map. New rivers and gold fields have been found by him, and the stories of his adventures contain some strikingly thrilling incidents. On one occasion he traveled for 84 days in the drear solitude of an Arctic winter without seeing a single native.

The travels of the discoverer in Asia cover a space of 22 solid years, and it is doubtful whether any other man in the world has such a wonderful fund of information regarding that continent as he. He has written several books upon his discoveries and experiences, and has been a frequent contributor of much fascinating material to the magazines.

## LITTERATEUR AND LAWYER

Adrian H. Joline, receiver of the Metropolitan street railway system in New York city, has filed his first report in the courts there, and it contains some revelations concerning the condition of the road which proved sad reading for the innocent stockholder who paid fancy prices for stock in a bankrupt concern.

Joline is an attorney by profession and force of circumstances, but he has two distinct lines of endeavor in which his interest far outstrips that of the courts and musty tomes. One of these hobbies is railroads; the other, farthest possible removed from the first, is the gentle art of autograph collecting. As for the first, in addition to the street car receivership, he has annexed such titles as president of the Missouri, Kansas & Texas railroad, director of the G. H. & H. railroad, director of the United Traction & Electric Co., and others of like sort.

But as a collector of autographs, a gentle pursuit which interests the very elect of the scholarly few, Mr. Joline shines with a particular luster. His own collection is one of the most valuable of its kind in America.

For the benefit of the present day historian it might be added that this odd combination of litterateur and lawyer is 58 years old, a graduate of Princeton and Cornell and the author of two very charming semi-personal volumes called "Meditations of an Autograph Collector" and "Diversions of a Book Lover."