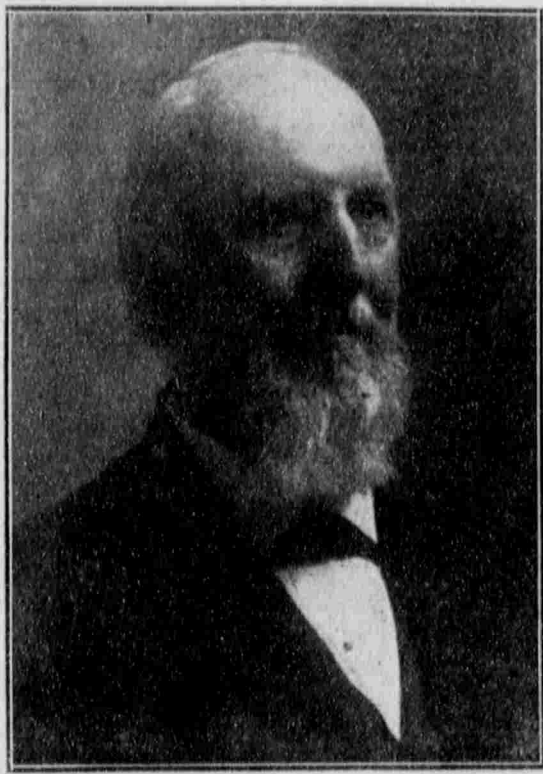


Thirty Years in the United States Senate.

(Special Correspondence of the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)



SENATOR COCKRELL AS HE LOOKS IN 1905.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 13.—This is the story of a farmer's boy who became United States senator; the story of a United States senator who understood his job well enough to hold the place for 30 years and who now, about to leave it, has so gained the respect and love of his fellows that the president gives him the choice of two of the highest positions in his administration. Both places carry big salaries. One is that of interstate commerce commissioner, the other is as commissioner of the Panama canal, the latter position bringing in \$12,500 a year.

The man I refer to is Francis Marion Cockrell, the senator from Missouri, who, like his great predecessor, Thomas H. Benton, has served that state continuously, as its senator, for 30 years. I believe the story will be helpful to the young men and boys of the country, who, by reading between its lines, may find suggestions toward their own success.

AT HOME WITH SENATOR COCKRELL.

I give the story through the mouth of the senator. It has been drawn out by many questions. Senator Cockrell is modest to a degree unknown to the average public man. His biography is one of the shortest in the congressional directory. It is told in seven lines, and it stands out in strong contrast to the long drawn out biographies of smaller men written by themselves.

My first questions were as to the senator's boyhood. He replied:

"My boyhood was like that of most boys of the west. My father was a farmer, who had been engaged in stock raising in Kentucky. He came to Missouri before I was born and took up a large tract of land away out there on the frontier. We had no railroad within hundreds of miles of us and our education was gotten in the common schools of the neighborhood. The school terms were short. I remember I moved about from uncle to uncle to keep near the schools which were held at different seasons in different parts of the country. After I had passed through these schools I went to Chapel Hill college near by and remained there until I graduated.

WESTERN COLLEGE LIFE IN 1850.

"What kind of a college was it, senator?"

"It was a good country college as colleges went then. The boys lived in dormitories. They came to school to get an education and they worked pretty hard. Our training was chiefly in the fundamentals. We studied Latin, Greek, mathematics, botany, rhetoric, physics, etc. After I graduated I remained one year as professor of languages. I taught Latin and Greek, and also French translations. The experience was an excellent one. When I came to teach I found out how little I really knew, and I had to study some things all over again. One has to know a thing in order to teach it."

"How about athletics in those days, senator? Were the college boys of then as strenuous as those of now?"

"I don't know," replied the senator, a smile creeping over his face as his soul slid back to the playgrounds of his boyhood. "We had some strenuous

A Chat With Senator Cockrell About Himself and Public Matters—He Tells Stories of His Boyhood and of Soldier Life in the South—How it Feels to be Shot—His Pardon and How He Came Back to the Union—A Speech That Made a Senator—His Elements of Success—A Story of General Burnside—Boodle in Congress—Folk as a Presidential Quantity—The Democratic Party Not Dead.

games and most strenuously we played them. We did such games as football or baseball, but we had games somewhat similar. One was town ball, and another was bull pen. In bull pen one of the clubs stood inside a ring, and its opponents on the corners outside. The man on the outside, who had the ball, threw it with all his might at the crowd within, trying to hit one of them. The men within tried to get the ball, and if one of them could throw it back and hit one of the men on the outside it was a stand-off. The game had its regular points and it was closely fought, although there were seldom physical injuries, such as are accompanied with the football of today. I think games a good thing for boys. I believe in athletics. They help to make good men."

"What did you do after you left college?"

"I studied law. I began to practise before I came of age, and really before I got my license, which was only granted at 21. I continued at the law until the war broke out. Then I entered the army, and remained in it until the close."

COCKRELL AS A SOLDIER.

"You went into the southern army as a colonel, did you not?"

"Bless you, no," said the senator. "I enlisted as a private in the old Missouri State Guard in 1861, and my company elected me captain. The next January I entered the confederate army, and was elected captain by my company there. I was promoted later on to be lieutenant colonel, then colonel, and then brigadier general, which rank I held during the latter part of the war."

"A curious thing occurred as to my promotion as colonel," continued Senator Cockrell. "This was that I was made such over my own colonel, and that my colonel served under me as lieutenant colonel without friction. Indeed, my colonel brought me then, then congratulating me, to my tent. I told him it must be a mistake, and that if I was promoted I wanted him to know I had had nothing to do with it. He replied that he knew that, and then congratulated me on my appointment. He said:

"You have served well under me, and have done what you could to make my work successful. I want you to know that I will do the same for you, and that cheerfully and loyally." He did so, and we were friends and comrades still, although I became his superior officer."

A FIGHTING CAREER.

"You were often under fire, general?"

"Yes; we were fighting all the time. We had many engagements in Missouri while I was acting in the state guard, and after that I was in almost constant action until the close of the war. The Missouri troops fought well, and my brigade was commended again and again. Here, by the way, is my military record, which Gen. Ainsworth has sent me, copied from the archives of the war department. You will notice that we fought all through the war, and I was captured by the Union forces at Blackly in April, 1865."

"Were you ever wounded?"

"Yes, several times. The first wound that drew blood made this." Here the senator showed me the third finger of his right hand, which is a half inch shorter than the others. It is stiff and bends slightly inward toward the palm. As I looked at it he continued:

"That finger was struck by a bullet at Wilson's Creek and broken and part of it carried away. When the surgeon treated it I told him I wanted him to set it in the position it would have when the hand is used for writing. He asked me why. I told him I expected to do a great deal of writing after the war was over and did not want a stiff finger to prevent me. He laughed and set the finger on the curve, as you see. This makes the injury almost imperceptible. My hand is in its natural shape, and when I wear gloves no one can tell that there is anything the matter with it. Had that finger been set straight it would have stood out stiff whenever I bent my hand, and would have been a deformity and obstruction all my life."

HOW IT FEELS TO BE SHOT.

"Where else were you wounded, senator?"

"I was once shot through the fleshy part of the forearm, but this was not serious and I was able to go on until the battle was over. I was shot through the leg at the battle of Franklin. The ball went through my right leg near the ankle, breaking the small bone. About the same time a ball went through my left leg not far from the ankle, just grazing the bone. When I got these wounds I was with my troops, right at the front and in the thick of the fire. I tried my leg and found I could manage to walk upon it, notwithstanding the broken bone, so I hobbled off of the field. Had I stayed I should have been riddled with bullets."

"How does it feel to be shot, senator?"

"It comes like a great blow. The pain is not intense until afterward. The second wound, that of my left leg, I did not know about until the surgeon began to set my broken bone."

HOW COCKRELL RETURNED TO THE UNION.

"You were one of those who accepted the inevitable when the war closed?"

"Yes, when I was in prison toward the end of the war I settled my future. I saw that we must lose, and debated where the lines of my life should be laid after the war was over. I canvassed the other countries of the world as places for life work. I thought of Mexico, but I did not like Maximilian, who was then trying to be king, and told my friends in prison that I hoped the United States would send 100,000 men there to drive him out of the country. I thought of Brazil, but that was under Dom Pedro and had also a monarchial government. After careful consideration I came to the conclusion that the United States was the only country for me. It was my country, and in most respects it had what I regarded the ideal government. I wanted to stay with it and be a part of it."

I thereupon decided that I would go home as soon as I got out of prison, and take my punishment, whatever it might be, and then become a supporter of my new country. This I did and have never regretted it."

HOW ONE MAN WAS PARDONED.

"I applied to the president for pardon and here, by the way, is my pardon paper." With this the senator took an official document, a copy of his request for pardon, which had been furnished him from the war department, from one of the pigeonholes of his desk and read it to me.

The letter was addressed to President Andrew Johnson and in it General Cockrell stated that he had gone into the confederate army from a feeling of duty, believing that the principles of the confederate government were right, and that he had tried to do his whole duty as a soldier, faithfully and fearlessly, until the time of his capture. He said that he had done all he could since the surrender to restore peace, quiet and order throughout the land, inasmuch as he felt that the principles contended for by him had been finally settled by the decision of arms in which it was his duty to acquiesce. He asked to be restored to the full rights of citizenship, and said that if he was so restored he would feel the United States to be his government, and that he would support and defend the confederate states. The petition requested that executive clemency be extended to him with a full amnesty and pardon and restoration of the rights of property, and it was closed with the signature of F. M. Cockrell, brigadier general, late provisional army of the confederate states.

"My pardon was granted," said the senator, as he folded up the paper, "and since then I have done all I could to fulfill the rights and duties of my United States citizenship."

A SPEECH THAT MADE A SENATOR.

"How did you come to go to the senate, Mr. Cockrell?"

"I had refused to be a candidate for several offices, and in 1874 was brought forth by my friends as a candidate for the nomination as governor of Missouri. The contest was a close one, although perfectly friendly. There were but two candidates before the convention, and my opponent beat me by one-third of one vote. Each county has a certain number of votes allotted to it, but in the polling the whole county counted as one, so you see how the fractional part came in. I am not sure whether it was a sixth or a third of a vote which constituted the majority against me. As the result was announced I arose in the convention and made a speech asking that the nomination be made unanimous. I congratulated the delegates upon their selection of a candidate who was a better man than I was and who, I knew, would run well before the people. I said I wished to repeat what I had said beforehand, that if he were nominated I would be glad to do all I could to do in his election, and closed my speech with saying that I, for one,

was glad to throw up my hat and shout, "Three cheers for our candidate, the next governor of Missouri!" I had my slouch hat in my hand at the time, and in the enthusiasm of the moment, it somehow left it and flew up to the roof, and with that the convention broke out in cheers. You must remember that half of the men were my friends who had been fighting for me, and that our campaign had been so conducted that the remainder, although they preferred their own candidate, did not object to me. As it was, I captured the convention. My friends were still enthusiastically for me and my opponents were sorry that I had to be defeated in order that their candidate might succeed. They gathered around me and said: "Well, Cockrell, we'll take care of you; we'll make you senator." This they did, and I have been in the senate from then until now."

SOME ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS.

"How did you get along in the senate, Mr. Cockrell?"

"I was green at first, but I took up the work that came to me and did it as well as I could, at the same time trying to fit myself for that which might come. This has been one of the principles of my life. I have tried to do the duty which lies nearest me and fit myself for the future. When I was made captain I studied the tactics necessary for that position and at the same time those needed should I become colonel. While colonel I studied what was necessary to govern a brigade, and the result was that when the better places came or were thrust upon me I was able to fill them."

"I suppose that has been one of the reasons of your success in life, senator?"

"I think so. I have not been backward in taking my share of the work, and have been willing to help the other fellow when I could do so. An important element of business success, it seems to me, is to avoid personal antagonisms and personalities. There is no use in making enemies where one can keep friends, and the march along the path of life can be made without bulldozing—if I might use that word—or forcing one's fellows into the bushes. In my senatorial career I have had but one personal altercation on the floors of congress. That was with General Burnside at the time he asked for an appropriation for the celebration at Yorktown."

"I opposed that bill and in my speech against it said the gentlemen on the other side of the chamber were always for the old flag and an appropriation. General Burnside took that as a reflection on his personal integrity, and he made a bitter speech in reply."

"As he sat down I got the floor. Several of the members feared there would be trouble and moved to adjourn. I replied that I had the right to sit as long as I intended to make my speech. I did make it, and in it I referred to Gen. Burnside, saying that no one in the United States would think of casting any reflection upon his honor, and as for myself I would be the last to do so. I complimented him in high terms and said that I was sorry that he had misinterpreted my remarks. As I sat down Lamar came over to me and threw his arms around my shoulder and said: "Cockrell! Do you know, I would give my skin if I could control my temper as you can yours."

"The next day Gen. Burnside apologized to me."

NO BOODLE IN CONGRESS.

The conversation here turned to Senator Cockrell's work in Congress. He was, you know, for six years one of the committee on claims and part of the

time its chairman. He has, I think been connected with the committee on military affairs throughout his career. He was put on the appropriation committee about 24 years ago, and has been the chief business of the senate and is known everywhere as one of its most efficient workers. He knows all about the ins and outs of legislation, how things are done, and by what means. During the talk I asked as to boodle in Congress, saying:

"Senator, you represent Missouri which has become known as a boodle taking and boodle-reforming state. I want to know about the senate. Is it an honest body?"

"I think it is," was the reply. "Have you ever, during your 30 years of experience here, been approached directly or indirectly, by any man or corporation with the offer of a bribe? No. Not once. I don't think much money is spent in influencing Congress in that way. If it is spent, it is wasted for whom it is intended. A senator's situation is one that obliges a certain amount of money to be paid for a seat in the senate. But for sympathy. As for sympathy, I do not believe it exists here."

FOLK AND THE BOODLE ISSUE.

"Will this anti-boodle issue grow to be a national one?"

"Who can tell? There is a great public sentiment against it and that sentiment is increasing. We may have a party of reform and the sentiment die down. Tell me about Folk, your new governor? Is he an honest man?"

"I think he is. He comes of a good family in Tennessee. One of his brothers is a state officer there, and another a preacher. Yes, I think he is honest."

"Will he be able to accomplish much as governor along the lines upon which he has been working?"

"He will do what he can, but you must remember that he is a Democrat, one branch of a divided legislature, and the Democratic party has some enemies among the Democrats, and I doubt whether he will have the support of the legislature for many of his reform ideas."

"Is Folk a presidential quantity?"

"Who can tell?"

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

"Has the recent election killed the Democratic party?"

"No, the Democratic party will never die. We shall always have two great parties in this country, and it should be so. The Democratic party is based upon principles enunciated by Thomas Jefferson. They are the right principles and they can be adapted to suit every change in our government and nation. The Democratic party may make mistakes, but as long as it holds to these principles it will rise again."

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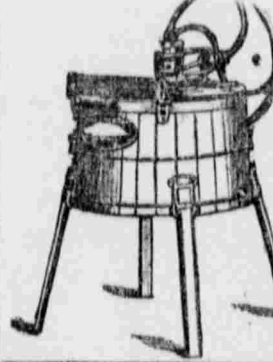
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