CHAPTER XXII
TILDEN-HAYES DISPUTED ELECTION
1876-1880


The Twelfth Democratic National Convention was held at St. Louis, June 27, 1876, two weeks after the nomination of Hayes and Wheeler by the Republicans. The call had been addressed to "Democrats, Conservatives and all other citizens irrespective of past political associations desiring to cooperate with the Democratic Party." The convention chose Henry Watterson for temporary, General John A. McClernand for permanent president. The speeches made in the convention stressed reform, and enthusiasm and applause marked the proceedings from first to last. The popularity of Tilden, Hancock and Hendricks was enhanced whenever any opportunity was given. The rules of the preceding convention were adopted, and mention of the two-thirds rule applauded. The delegates from the District of Columbia and the territories were given seats in the hall but no vote.

Two minority reports were submitted with the platform, one by Eastern men wishing to strengthen the hard money plank, and the other by the soft money advocates who desired to weaken it. The soft money amendment was voted down 515 to 219, the Ohio and neighboring states voting nay, the East and South mainly voting nay. The platform as submitted was then adopted, 651 to 83, Ohio and Indiana supplying 50 of the negative votes.

Thomas F. Bayard, Thomas A. Hendricks, Leon Abbeet, Joe Parker, Wm. Allen, General Hancock and Samuel J. Tilden were nominated. Senator Kerman of New York nominated Tilden and John Kelby made a speech against the nomination. There was a disposition on the part of many delegates to shout down the
Tilden-Hayes Disputed Election

Tilden's letter of acceptance was argumentative and discursive, and as a result it weakened the platform, but he was emphatic on the resumption and money questions.

The Democratic platform of 1876 has been called a masterpiece of political literature; the writing of it was attributed to Mantua Marble of the New York World, but a great deal of it is rhetoric is much like that of Henry Watterson's and the authorship of the tariff plank is credited to him. It was an able declaration of principles ably presented and its reading was punctuated with frequent and great applause. The Republican convention was held on June 14th in Cincinnati. The Congressional anti-third term resolution and Grant's letter on the subject had ended Grant's candidacy.

The first ballot gave Blaine 285 (77 from the South), Morton, 125; Bristow, 113; Conkling, 98; Hayes, 61. The seventh ballot was Hayes, 384; Blaine, 351; Bristow, 21. The nomination was made unanimous, and William A. Wheeler of New York named for second place on first ballot.

During the balloting the chair ruled that each delegate could vote his sentiments regardless of state instructions; this ruling was confirmed at the succeeding convention, and the unit rule has never since been observed at Republican national conventions.

The Prohibitionists nominated Green Clay Smith and G. T. Stewart.

The Independent National, or Greenback Party, at a convention presided over by Ignatius Donnelly nominated Peter Cooper and General S. F. Carey.

The American National Party nominated James B. Walker of Illinois and Donald Kirkpatrick of New York on a platform declaring God the author of civil government, and favoring Sabbath observance, prohibition, forfeiture of all charters granted secret societies, Bible in schools and direct vote for President.

Democratic Platform, 1876

Reform the immediate need of the country recently saved from recession and now to be saved from a corrupt centralism which had inflicted Carpet-bag government on the South and honeycombed the government with fraud.

Reform necessary to establish a sound currency.

Republican failure to redeem greenbacks, the wasting of vast sums instead of resuming specie payments, and the existing system of taxation denounced.

Reform in public expenditures, in preserving public lands except for settlers, in protection of citizens of foreign birth, in Chinese immigration and importation of women for immoral purposes demanded.
Hendricks, with his soft money views, hurt the ticket in the East; this may have lost the Democrats Connecticut and New Hampshire where Hayes' majorities were small; but he doubtless added strength in the West, and Indiana alone made up for the loss of the two States named. The state of Tilden's health gave the Vice-Presidency an unusual consideration in cautious minds.

Hayes' private character was unexceptional and his civil and war records excellent. He defeated Thurman for Governor in 1867, Pendleton in 1869, and William Allen in 1873. Wounded while leading his men in a charge against the Confederates at Mountain South, and bled major-General for courage, his war record was worth a million votes.

The President's contest in 1872 had been a weighing largely of the relative Presidential demerits of Grant and Greeley; in 1876 both candidates were recognized as fit and capable men and the issue was between the parties and their platforms, the Republican Party being on the defensive, but its candidate not. The Republicans, however, assumed the offensive by warring the Bloody Shirt. "A Bloody Shirt campaign with money and Indians is safe; a financial campaign with no money and we are beaten," so wrote an Indiana campaign manager to Hayes. Zack Chandler, Secretary of the Interior, and Republican national chairman, raised the money, partly by heavy assessments against office-holders, and a "Bloody Shirt campaign with, money" ensued. As any number of office-holders faced not only loss of position but possible disgrace and prison terms in case of Republican defeat, the money was forthcoming.

The Republicans made a powerful drive against the "Rebel Brigadier" and the "Second Rebellion," and Tammany and the Solid South were linked together as twin iniquities. Abram S. Hewitt, manager of the Democratic campaign, lofty-minded and scholarly, was no match in hard-boiled politics for Chandler. An examination of the vote indicates that on the whole the electorate voted on the real issues involved, except that sectionalism worked on enough voters to carry several Western and Midwestern States for the Republican ticket, Oregon by 1,000, California by less than 2,000, Ohio by less than two per cent.

The morning after the election every newspaper in the country announced Tilden's election, except the New York Times, which claimed that the result was in doubt. The Times gave Tilden 184, Hayes 181, with Florida's four votes doubtful; in an afternoon bulletin it claimed Florida for Hayes.

Tilden's election had been conceded, and Republicans heed...
quarters closed and deserted, when a telegram from a Democratic leader came to the Times office at two o’clock in the morning asking information as to Florida, Louisiana and South Carolina. This gave the cue to the Times with the result that Chandler was roped from his bed, telegrams sent to the states named and victory claimed in the columns of the paper.

The returns showed a popular vote of 4,300,500 for Tilden, 4,036,238 for Hayes; Tilden 184 uncontested electoral votes, Hayes 165, with doubt as to South Carolina’s 7, Louisiana’s 8, Florida’s 4 and 1 of Oregon’s. To win Tilden needed one, Hayes all of the doubtful votes. The popular vote, as finally adjudicated after the action of the returning boards of Louisiana and Florida was, Tilden 4,326,892, Hayes 4,063,768, a majority of 263,124 for Tilden. Tilden carried New York by 23,000 votes. “Honest” John Kelly seems to have kept his promise to support the nominee.

Ill luck had pursued the Democrats; a few months before they consented to the admission of Colorado as a state; Colorado’s territorial delegate had been a Democrat, but her electors were Republicans and turned the scale.

The Democrats had a large popular majority and the small need of but one vote. They held the House, which in case of no election by the electors would elect the President; the Republicans controlled the Senate and the Executive and predominated on the Supreme Court. The twenty-second, under joint rule, a Republican measure recognized three times and enforced twice in the last three elections, would have enabled the House to shut out any vote it thought unlawful; but the Senate had refused to readopt that rule at its last organization. The Republican Senate not only refused to recognize the rule, but now set up the preposterous claim that the President pro tem of the Senate, (Vice-President Wilson was dead) had the sole power to count the electoral votes.

It all happened fifty years ago, yet it causes tears, idle tears to gather in Democratic eyes to read the story of the “Disputed Election.”

Public feeling was so intense that serious fears of violence arose. Henry Waterson said in a speech that 100,000 unarmed citizens would assemble in Washington to petition for the right, and this was distorted into a threat of armed resistance. President Grant ordered troops to protect the returning boards of Louisiana and Florida and stationed troops and a war vessel at Washington. He also invited a number of leading Republicans to go to the contested states and witness the canvass of the returns. Hewitt issued a like invitation to Democrats, and serve twenty-five Republicans and a like number of Democrats met on their missions in New Orleans, and all became known as “The Visiting Statesmen.”

These gentlemen witnessed the canvass of the Louisiana vote to the extent of being present when the returns were opened. When uncontested, the returns were sent to be tabulated by clerks in a private room where no visitors were present, statesmen or other kind. The visitors were allowed, too, to hear the evidence, such as it was, on the contested returns. The Democratic visiting statesmen suggested that the Republicans join with them in securing a fair hearing and decision, but the latter declined such “unconstitutional interferences” with the duties of the canvassers. The board rendered all decisions in secret session. Three days before they had officially completed the canvass, the United States marshal at New Orleans wired to Washington that he had seen Wells, and that the board would return Hayes electors; “Have no fear” the message concluded.

Wells, chairman of the board of canvassers, had in 1867 been denounced by General Phil Sheridan as “as dishonest and tricky as a snake.” Anderson, the other white member, had been convicted of a felony, and Kemper, another member, had been indicted for larceny. The constitution of Louisiana required Democratic representation on the Supreme Court, and the twenty-second; board refused to fill the vacancy occasioned by the Democratic member resigning.

The subsequent history of the members of the Louisiana returning board is interesting. Three members of Wells’ family were given positions in the New Orleans custom-house by the administration he assisted in establishing; Anderson, his white colleague, was made deputy collector of the port and three of his family connections given places in the custom-house; Kemper and two of his brothers were given positions; Cassanova, the other member, had a brother given a good place; Abell, the secretary, and Woodward, David, Green and Hill, clerks of the board, were all appointed to various offices under the Hayes administration.

The Louisiana returning board gave the Hayes electors majorities ranging from 4,626 to 4,712, whereas the returns had given Tilden electors majorities ranging from 6,300 to 8,957; 12,250 Democratic and 2,642 Republican votes were thrown out. There was evidence of fraud and intimidation by Democrats, but the fraud on the part of the Republicans was vastly greater and
further discussion, the committee, by a vote of 4, rejected the recommendation of the subcommittee, which recommended that the Power Corporation be appointed as the new power plant operator.

In the following meeting, the committee was divided on the matter, with the majority in favor of the appointment. The decision was made to appoint the Power Corporation as the new operator, but with the condition that they provide a detailed proposal for the operation of the plant within 30 days.

The appointment of the Power Corporation as the new operator was opposed by some members of the committee, who argued that the Power Corporation did not have the necessary expertise and experience to operate the plant effectively. However, the majority of the committee believed that the Power Corporation was the best choice for the job, and the appointment was made.

The Power Corporation was given 30 days to submit a detailed proposal for the operation of the plant, and the committee was satisfied that the proposal met their requirements. The Power Corporation was appointed as the new operator of the plant, and the committee was confident that they would be able to operate the plant effectively.

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TYPY ON THE DISTRIBUTION ELECTON

THE STORY OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY
The presentment reported that the United States government and the United Nations have agreed to cooperate in the promotion of peace and security. The agreement was reached during the recent meeting of the Security Council of the United Nations, which was attended by representatives from member states. The council has endorsed the proposal to establish a committee to study ways and means of achieving this goal. The committee will be composed of experts from various fields, including international law, economics, and diplomacy. The committee's report will be submitted to the council for review and action. The United States government has welcomed the proposal and is committed to working closely with the other member states to ensure its success.
CHAPTER XXII

THE PARTY OF THE DROPOUTS

The party of the dropout
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