

CHAPTER XVII

PARTIES POLITICAL

Before the time of the Revolutionary war there was no such thing as a political party in this country. Following the discontent of the people in regard to the old country, the people divided and organized what was known as tories and whigs. The whig party resisting the demands of England and the tories advocating submission. About the time that the colonists gained their independence, the whig party became divided, one branch calling themselves the federal party and the other the republican party. The federal party was led by Alexander Hamilton, who had the endorsement of Washington. Both advocated a strong centralized form of government. The republican party, led by Thomas Jefferson, maintained and stood for state rights. Those parties became almost a thing of the past in 1816, James Monroe being elected over Rufus King, a federalist, receiving all the votes but three states, which were Delaware, Massachusetts and Connecticut. With this election ended the federal party and James Monroe was reelected in 1820 with but one vote against him which was cast for John Quincy Adams.

The presidential election four years later was a personal one as there was no real organized political parties at this time. This was the campaign when there were four candidates in the field for the presidency. They were Henry Clay, John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson and William H. Crawford. The result of that election showed that neither candidate had received a majority of the electoral votes cast and this threw the election into the House of Representatives, which elected John Quincy Adams.

It was during this time that the whig party had been organizing to succeed the federal party, being led by Henry Clay. The vote cast for him was the action of this new party.

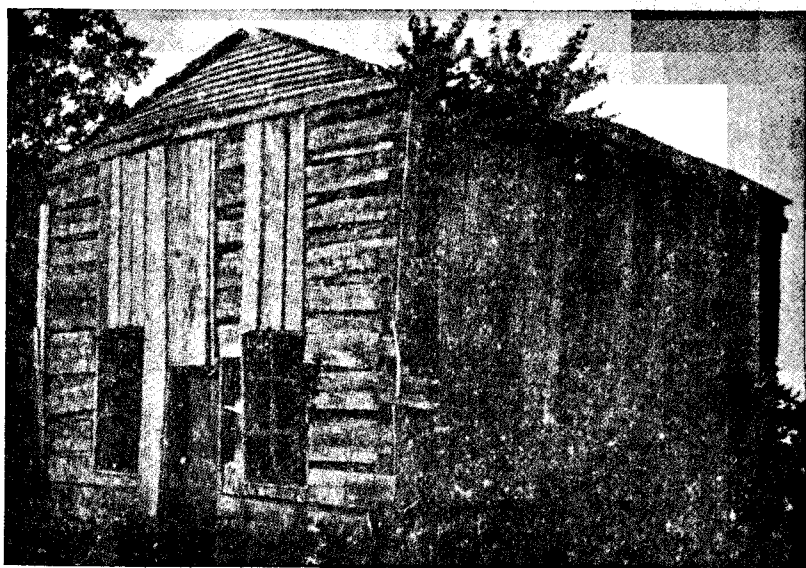
The democrats in 1828 during that campaign came into existence as the successors of the old original republican party. Sometimes it was called the Jeffersonian party under the leadership of Andrew Jackson, who was elected President in that year, and the whig party came into existence under the leadership of Henry Clay.

The whig party is a name of Scottish origin and was at first supposed to mean peasantry, which was given to the covenanters when they took up arms against the oppression of the Government.

After Jackson's first election in 1828 the democratic party was

ushered into existence under that name, and has been known by that name from that day until the present time, showing a greater tenacity of strength and power of endurance than any other party within the history of this country.

This party has never given up. Although many times beaten, it always appears upon the scene at each election, putting on a brave front, showing the greatest confidence, a courage only belonging to a party with grand hopes before them. The whig party had existed since 1824, but was not regularly organized until four years later. It continued its party organization until the year of 1854, when it was succeeded by the republican party, which has gone through many vicissitudes and endured many ups and downs all along until the present day.



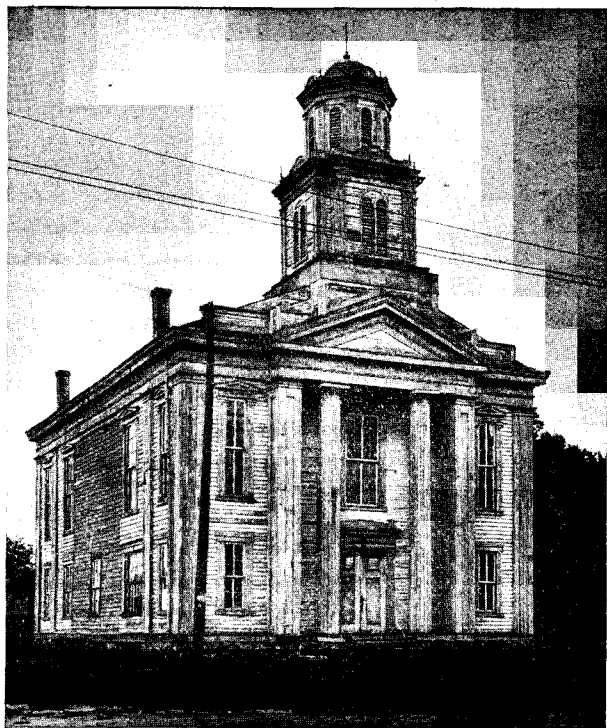
STARKE COUNTY'S FIRST COURTHOUSE

Then there was the know nothing party, who were strictly opposed to foreigners voting until they had resided and been citizens for a period of twenty-one years in this country. It was organized under that name in the year of 1852 and four years later, 1856, Millard Fillmore was introduced as the candidate for the presidency for that party. This party never elected a candidate during their short existence, for in the next campaign the party had gone out of existence.

Now it was after the resumption of specie payment, which was in 1873, that the greenback party remembered so well by the writer sprung up. They were so much opposed to that measure of resuming specie payment, that they nominated a ticket and put it into the field at the next election, but were unsuccessful, and some years after they went with the people's party and the national party, which soon went to defeat and ceased to exist.

Next we have the prohibition party organized in the year of 1872. Their object was to prevent the manufacture and sale of all liquors and beverages, and has continued ever since, but never has been successful as a party, yet maintaining and holding to the principles of bettering and educating the people to a higher plane of morals from a political standard of principles. No one will accuse it of holding to anything but high and elevating principles.

During the last score years or more there have been a number of parties formed, as the socialist, the union labor party, the socialist labor party and the labor party, as well as the people's party, but all lying in the background, not showing any great degree of success. Then we have



OLD STARKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

the progressive party which swung into line perhaps through the influence of Theodore Roosevelt, who not receiving the republican nomination for president in 1912 has worked in that party with those followers up to the present time. The vote in Starke County, at the election, on the 3d day of November, 1914, showed the progressive vote to be 344 out of a total of 1,782 given for secretary of state by this county. In August of 1912 a convention was held in Chicago at which Theodore Roosevelt was nominated for President and Johnson for vice president. They received a larger vote than the regular republican candidates. It is a question what this party will do in years to come.

The democrats made good under the leadership of Andrew Jackson

from 1828 to 1832 and their success was repeated again in 1836 when they elected Martin VanBuren. But in the election of 1840 the whigs were successful, electing William H. Harrison over Martin VanBuren, who was running for re-election. Harrison was known as the log-cabin candidate and was frequently jeered as such by the democrats, who sometimes called him the backwoods candidate, using that as a campaign issue.

Many great public speakings and meetings were held during this campaign, hauling whole log cabins on wagons with barrels of hard cider and coons that were alive. Harrison was wrongfully accused by the democrats of cowardice at the battle of Tippecanoe. The whigs held a great rally at Tippecanoe, and some of our older citizens' parents often told about the barrels of hard cider and the log cabins and the coons very much alive, all using the phrase "Tippecanoe and Tyler too."

Harrison lived only about one month after he was inaugurated President and John Tyler, by virtue of his office, became the President. It is said that Tyler so confused and tyrannized the whigs that they lost the election in 1844, thereby making James K. Polk, a democrat, President in that year. Four years later, the whigs not giving up, nominated Zachariah Taylor, who was known as the hero of the Mexican war, and elected him as the President of the United States. But in 1852 the democrats were successful in electing Franklin Pierce. Then it was that the whig party died to rise no more and the republican party was organized in 1854. Then in 1856 John C. Fremont was the first republican candidate for the presidency, and the writer recollects Allen Richardson well, who sang in the Glee Club during that campaign.

The republicans put up a hard fight, but went down in defeat as James Buchanan was elected as the President of the United States at that election. Starke County has quite a number of citizens that will recollect that campaign as long as they live. Some are living in Knox now that can sit and talk about that eventful campaign for hours at a time. The writer has a faint remembrance of that campaign, can just recollect hearing the name of Buchanan mentioned, which was just after his parents moved to Starke County. In the year of 1856 the republicans held their first national convention, which was presided over by an Indiana man, Henry S. Lane, who was a brilliant speaker.

Mr. Pratt acted as secretary at the convention that nominated Abraham Lincoln in 1860. This was a three cornered campaign, but the republicans gained the day and Abraham Lincoln became the President on the 4th of March following. Starke County gave Lincoln a small majority of course. Had he got the full vote, it would have even been quite small, as at that time the county polled a small vote.

The Civil war of 1861 to 1865 wrought the whole nation into a state of turmoil. Many democrats advocating the cause of the republican party called themselves the union party, who were opposed to a division of the Union. The Legislature did not endorse Governor Morton's policy and that body adjourned without making any appropriations, thus em-

barrassing the state. Governor Morton did, however, borrow money to meet the state's obligations and came out victorious. In the campaign of 1864 Mr. Lincoln was re-elected over Gen. George B. McClellan. Ulysses S. Grant was elected in 1868 over Horatio Seymour, the democratic candidate, by a handsome majority. Starke County went democratic by a small majority. General Grant was re-elected in 1872.

In 1876 the republicans ran Hayes and Wheeler, while the democrats had nominated Tilden and Hendricks. In this election Hayes was declared elected by an electoral commission. Hayes was elected by one vote, although Samuel J. Tilden had a majority of the popular vote of the United States. Garfield and Hancock were the opposing candidates in 1880, but the republicans were successful and elected James A. Garfield as President.

Then in 1884 James G. Blaine was defeated by Grover Cleveland, who took up the reins of the National Government on the 4th of March, 1885. It was left for the campaign to turn the tide and elect Benjamin Harrison over Mr. Cleveland in 1888. In 1892 Mr. Cleveland defeated Mr. Harrison in that election and again administered the affairs of the Government. It was during that very exciting year of 1896 that William McKinley ran against that ever free-silver coinage sixteen to one democrat William J. Bryan for President. Mr. McKinley was elected and in 1900, four years later, Mr. Bryan was again defeated by the same William McKinley.

In 1904 Theodore Roosevelt was elected over Alton B. Parker. Then in 1908 William H. Taft took up the reins of the Government, having defeated William Jennings Bryan at the election in 1908. Woodrow Wilson was elected over Taft in 1912 on the democratic ticket.