

## WHARTON BARKER AND THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION OF 1880

BY FRANK B. EVANS\*

“I BELIEVE that when he comes back to the country he will come not only with the millions glad to see him, but with the anxious desire that *he will take the helm of the ship of state as it goes to destruction.*” The speaker was Simon Cameron; the occasion, a farewell dinner on May 17, 1877, for former President Grant, the day of his departure upon his world tour.<sup>1</sup>

The presidential campaign of 1880 was already under way. Upon his return, Grant would be a strong contender for the Republican nomination, backed by three of the most powerful political bosses in the country, Roscoe Conkling, John A. Logan, and Don Cameron. Grant's leading opponent would be James G. Blaine, the master politician from Maine, with John Sherman of Ohio cast in the role of a dark horse. Pennsylvania was to play a vital role in the struggles between these political giants, but in the end, none of these men was to win the nomination. Wharton Barker, an unknown Philadelphia banker and a political amateur, was to plan and direct a remarkable campaign which would result in one of the most unusual nominations in the annals of American political conventions.

Judged by any standards, Grant had been a failure as president, but the Stalwarts, the men who had achieved political prominence and power during Grant's years in the White House, were determined to secure a third term for their old commander. In the vanguard of this movement were the Camerons, father and son. Simon Cameron, disgraced as a result of his conduct of the War Department under Lincoln, had fought his way back into the

\*Mr. Evans, formerly a member of the Department of History at the Pennsylvania State University, is Senior Archivist in the Division of Public Records of the state Historical and Museum Commission. This paper was read at the afternoon session of the Pennsylvania Historical Association's convention in Bethlehem, October 16, 1959.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Lancaster *New Era*, March 6, 1880.

United States Senate by 1867. With the elevation of Grant to the presidency, he had become one of the President's leading advisors, and when Grant appointed his son, J. Donald Cameron, Secretary of War, Simon Cameron viewed his vindication as complete.

The Cameron ascendancy, however, was short-lived. Despite the fact that Don Cameron's use of federal troops in the South made possible his victory in the disputed election of 1876, Hayes did not retain the younger Cameron in his cabinet. When Hayes then appointed a personal enemy of Simon's as Secretary of State, adopted a lenient policy toward the South, and interfered with senators in the handling of patronage, Simon Cameron resigned from the Senate. The "Cameron Transfer Company," as its critics dubbed the state legislature, elected Don to serve the remainder of his father's term, and two years later returned Don to the Senate for a full term. But the Senate was not the cabinet, and Don Cameron's desire for vindication was as strong as his father's, and his commitment to a third term for Grant just as firm.<sup>2</sup>

The early Grant movement in Pennsylvania was primarily an "educational" one, conducted by the organs of the Cameron machine. To prove the need for Grant the Stalwarts waved the Bloody Shirt. Hayes' weak policies, they argued, had produced a solid South which could only be defeated by a solid North under the leadership of Grant. The man who had crushed the slaveholder's rebellion must again save the Union, this time by destroying "that evil development of political treason, the Democratic party."<sup>3</sup> Understanding the limitations of the public memory, the Stalwarts attempted to rehabilitate Grant's reputation. They praised his "innate greatness and personal polish," and—in the face of Grant's opinion that Venice could be a pretty city, if it were drained—they insisted he displayed the "broadest common sense" whenever he spoke.<sup>4</sup> By the time Grant returned, the

<sup>2</sup> Harrisburg *Patriot*, March 7, 1877; Harry Barnard, *Rutherford B. Hayes and His America* (Indianapolis, 1954), 415-419; A. Howard Meneely, "James Donald Cameron," "Simon Cameron," *Dictionary of American Biography*, Allen Johnson, Dumas Malone, and Robert L. Schuyler (eds.), 23 vols. (New York, 1928-1958), III, 435-436, 437-439.

<sup>3</sup> Harrisburg *Telegraph*, September 18, 1879; see also Harrisburg *Patriot*, March 28, 1878; Bellefonte *Democratic Watchman*, February 1, June 7, 14, 1878; Bellefonte *Republican*, July 10, 24, November 27-29, 1878, May 21, 1879; Harrisburg *Telegraph*, November 26, 1877; June 6, 12, July 8, December 4, 1878; May 6, September 20, 1879.

<sup>4</sup> Harrisburg *Telegraph*, January 15, July 14, 1879; cf. Bellefonte *Republican*, July 10, 1878.

Harrisburg *Telegraph* was claiming his administration had been notable for "efficiency, economy of public expenditure, a large reduction of the national debt, and rigid honesty."<sup>5</sup>

With the press campaign fully underway, the Stalwarts moved into action along other fronts. The Philadelphia city councils fixed the date of Grant's return to his "home city" as an official holiday. The state legislature appointed a joint committee to accompany Governor Hoyt to San Francisco, there to welcome Grant in the name of the Commonwealth. During the summer of 1879, "Grant for 1880" clubs appeared in several counties, and officeholders returning to Harrisburg and Washington reported Grant the overwhelming choice of the party in their sections of the state.<sup>6</sup> There did indeed appear to be, as the Stalwarts claimed, "a manifest disposition among the great mass of Republicans to re-nominate General Grant for the Presidency."<sup>7</sup>

On September 20, 1879, Grant landed in San Francisco. The Stalwart press had done its job well, and he was by far the most popular man in the country. Three months later he arrived in Pennsylvania; he visited Harrisburg and was entertained by the Camerons, and on December 16 returned to his "home city." "The triumph accorded to Roman Counsels [*sic*], and the ovations to the Caesars, were tame in comparison to the Philadelphia demonstration," exclaimed the Stalwart press.<sup>8</sup> For the next week, Grant was wined and dined by his friends of the White House days, and the climax of his reception was a Union League banquet. Twelve years before, the Union League of Philadelphia had been the first organized body in the country to endorse him for the presidency.<sup>9</sup>

Just as the Grant tide was at its height, however, a reaction set in. The Philadelphia reception alarmed many Republicans who had refused to take the Grant boom seriously, particularly the

<sup>5</sup> Harrisburg *Telegraph*, December 15, 1879; cf. David S. Muzzey, *James G. Blaine: A Political Idol of Other Days* (New York, 1935), 162.

<sup>6</sup> William B. Hesseltine, *Ulysses S. Grant: Politician* (New York, 1935), 433; Bellefonte *Democratic Watchman*, March 21, April 11, 18, 1879; Bellefonte *Republican*, May 14, August 13, 1879.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, April 30, 1879.

<sup>8</sup> Harrisburg *Telegraph*, December 17, 1879; Hesseltine, *Grant*, 427-434; cf. U. S. Grant to A. E. Borie, September 28, 1879, Borie Family MSS, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Harrisburg *Telegraph*, December 16, 1879.

<sup>9</sup> New York *World*, December 24, 1879; Harrisburg *Telegraph*, December 19, 22, 24, 1879; *Penn Monthly*, XI (January, 1880), 19-20.

supporters of the Pennsylvania-born James G. Blaine. The Camerons had helped to prevent Blaine's nomination in 1876, and the followers of the Plumed Knight were determined that he should not again be denied.<sup>10</sup> Blaine journals now claimed the majority of Republicans were opposed to a third term for any man. Grant's administration, in their view, had "strangled the Republican party—almost wrecked it," and the rank and file had not forgotten. Striking at the very heart of the Stalwart tactics, Blaine's friends proclaimed: "Hero worship is one thing but political preference quite another."<sup>11</sup> Convinced that Grant was suffering from overexposure, his managers bundled him off on another tour.

The election of a chairman for the Republican National Committee in mid-December, 1879, provided the first real test of strength between the factions of Grant and Blaine. Don Cameron wanted the post but William E. Chandler, Blaine's campaign manager, was certain he could prevent Don's election.<sup>12</sup> Chandler underestimated his opponents; when the national committee met, Conkling and Logan combined forces with John Sherman to make Don national chairman. The Stalwarts had won the opening battle.<sup>13</sup>

The Cameron machine now rapidly moved ahead with its program. At a meeting of the Republican State Committee on December 30, 1879, Matt Quay, Don Cameron's lieutenant, rammed through a resolution scheduling the state convention for Harrisburg on February 4, 1880, scarcely five weeks away.<sup>14</sup> Announcement of the early convention raised a storm of protest from the

<sup>10</sup> Lancaster *New Era*, July 6, 1878; *Penn Monthly*, IX (August, 1878), 577; *ibid.*, X (April, 1879), 251. The Blaine movement in the state was essentially a "strong popular movement without a leader." See *New York World*, February 4, 1880.

<sup>11</sup> Bellefonte *Republican*, December 24, 1879; *Penn Monthly*, XI (January, 1880), 19-20; Charles H. T. Collis to Elihu B. Washburne, January 14, 1880, Washburne MSS, Library of Congress; Hesseltine, *Grant*, 435.

<sup>12</sup> R. M. McCormick to Edward McPherson, November 29, 1879, McPherson MSS, Library of Congress; Thomas Y. Cooper to Uriah H. Painter, December 11, 1879. Painter MSS, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; William E. Chandler to James G. Blaine, December 13, 1879, Blaine MSS, Library of Congress.

<sup>13</sup> Harrisburg *Telegraph*, December 18, 1879; Bellefonte *Democratic Watchman*, December 19, 1879; Edgar E. Robinson, *The Evolution of American Political Parties: A Sketch of Party Development* (New York, 1924), 195; Chandler to Blaine, January 17, 1880, Blaine MSS.

<sup>14</sup> Lancaster *New Era*, January 3, 1880; Bellefonte, *Democratic Watchman*, January 2, 1880.

Blaine journals, but the Camerons refused to allow the convention to be rescheduled, and both factions concentrated on securing a majority of the delegates.<sup>15</sup>

Don Cameron had promised Conkling and Logan that he would control a delegation instructed for Grant and bound by the unit rule,<sup>16</sup> and the Cameron machine was performing at top efficiency to make that promise good. Because of the early convention, most of the delegates would have to be appointed by county committees, rather than elected by county conventions, and the county committees contained many Cameron supporters. Where county conventions did meet, the machine enforced the unit rule whenever its use could secure additional Grant delegates.<sup>17</sup> Blaine had hoped Pennsylvania would send an uninstructed delegation to the national convention, but Chandler convinced him that Don Cameron could then "coax, bribe, or frighten" enough delegates to gain a Grant majority, and Blaine finally agreed to have his supporters instructed for him.<sup>18</sup> The friends of Blaine, with grim determination, announced that the Harrisburg convention would decide "whether the machine politicians or the rank and file shall rule the destinies of the Republican party in Pennsylvania."<sup>19</sup>

On the evening of February 3, the Blaine delegates held a private caucus and adopted resolutions rejecting the unit rule and demanding popular election of district delegates to the national convention. Thus prepared to challenge the very foundations of the Cameron power, they joined the regular party caucus. The show-down came quickly, and by the narrow margin of thirteen votes the regular caucus rejected the Blaine resolutions and endorsed the unit rule and selection of district delegates by the state conven-

<sup>15</sup> Lancaster *New Era*, January 3, 10, 1880, summarize opinions of Blaine journals; see also Bellefonte *Republican*, January 7, 1880; Chandler to McPherson, January 22, 1880, McPherson MSS.

<sup>16</sup> John A. Logan to Washburne, January 15, 21, 1880, Washburne MSS; cf. Gaillard Hunt, comp., *Israel, Elihu and Cadwallader Washburne: A Chapter in American Biography* (New York, 1925), 270-272. Whitelaw Reid believed the Camerons would never support Sherman, since Sherman had voted against the confirmation of Simon Cameron as minister to Russia; see Whitelaw Reid to John Hay, January 29, 1880, quoted in Royal Cortissoz, *The Life of Whitelaw Reid* (New York, 1921), II, 20.

<sup>17</sup> Philadelphia *Inquirer*, February 5, 1880; Harrisburg *Telegraph*, January 12, 22, 1880; Lancaster *New Era*, January 31, 1880.

<sup>18</sup> Chandler to McPherson, January 30, 1880; J. C. Sturtevant to *id.*, January 20, 1880, McPherson MSS.

<sup>19</sup> Bellefonte *Republican*, February 4, 1880.

tion. Blaine's followers revolved to carry their fight into the convention; at stake were fifty-eight delegates to Chicago in June—the second largest delegation in the country—and this prize must not go by default.<sup>20</sup>

At noon of the following day, February 4, the state chairman, Colonel Frank C. Hooten, called the Republican state convention to order in the Harrisburg Opera House. What followed was a striking demonstration of the power of the Cameron machine. The Stalwarts controlled the organization of the convention, dominated its committees, and without any difficulty secured the adoption of their reports. When the Grant men moved the appointment of a committee of nine to select district delegates, Blaine's friends proposed a committee of twenty-seven, one from each of the state's congressional districts. The Blaine proposal was defeated by a three-to-two majority.

Pressing their advantage, the Stalwarts introduced a resolution instructing the delegates to the national convention to support Grant for the presidency and to vote as a unit on that and on all other questions that came before the convention. Blaine's supporters countered with a resolution denouncing the third term, then attempted to substitute Blaine's name for that of Grant in the original resolution. The substitute motion was defeated by a decisive vote of 154 to 95. The original resolution was then divided; by a vote of 133 to 113 the delegates to Chicago were instructed to support Grant and, by a voice vote, to abide by the unit rule. Through the committee of nine the Stalwarts appointed a majority of Grant supporters among the state's fifty-four district delegates, and as delegates-at-large they selected Lin Bartholomew, Christopher Magee, James McManes, and Matt Quay. Bartholomew, Magee, and McManes were, respectively, the leaders of the powerful Schuylkill, Allegheny, and Philadelphia county organizations.<sup>21</sup>

The Stalwart press hailed the convention as a great victory for Grant, but Blaine's friends claimed it was actually a victory for Blaine. The narrow margin of Don Cameron's triumph—twenty votes on the resolution to instruct for Grant—was not enough to

<sup>20</sup> *New York World*, February 4, 1880; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 5, 1880; cf. A. M. Gibson to Chandler, February 3, 1880, Chandler MSS.

<sup>21</sup> *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 5, 1880; *Lancaster New Era*, February 7, 1880; *Bellefonte Republican*, February 11, 1880.

justify going further with Grant as a candidate, according to Blaine's admirers. Furthermore, the Pennsylvania result would be of no value in influencing the action of other states.<sup>22</sup> The "Crown Prince of Lochiel," the "sovereign despot" of Pennsylvania, had "taken a contract in which he will not be able to deliver the goods," gloated one Blaine journal.<sup>23</sup>

Once again, Blaine's followers had misjudged the Camerons. To an inquirer Don Cameron wrote, "Do not give yourself any uneasiness about my position on the Grant question. I propose to remain true to that position until the Chicago Convention decides it."<sup>24</sup> When State Chairman Hooten endorsed a demand for a new convention, Hooten was quickly replaced with a reliable Stalwart.<sup>25</sup> Two weeks later, Edward McPherson, Blaine's chief lieutenant in the state, found himself without a job. As editor of the Philadelphia *Press* McPherson had made it the leading Blaine journal in Pennsylvania; he was now dismissed by the paper's owner on the grounds that he lacked "necessary training and experience in editorial management."<sup>26</sup> Blaine's friends were certain that McPherson's dismissal was the result of pressure by the Cameron machine.<sup>27</sup>

For the next three months, the rival camps waged war in Pennsylvania. Blaine journals detailed the scandals of the Grant years, conducted polls to prove Blaine was the popular choice, denounced the "un-Republican" unit rule, and heaped abuse on the Camerons.<sup>28</sup> The Stalwarts accused the "malcontents" of conspiring with the Democracy, called for party regularity, and waved the Bloody Shirt.<sup>29</sup> From Washington Chandler and McPherson directed efforts to persuade delegates to break the unit rule. In several counties they succeeded, but Don Cameron still controlled

<sup>22</sup> Harrisburg *Telegraph*, February 5, 1880. Lancaster *New Era*, February 7, 14, 1880, summarize anti-Grant press opinion of the convention.

<sup>23</sup> Lancaster *New Era*, February 7, 1880.

<sup>24</sup> J. D. Cameron to Alexander P. Brown, February 18, 1880, Autograph Collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>25</sup> Lancaster *New Era*, February 14, 21, 1880; Harrisburg *Telegraph*, February 14, 1880; Frank C. Hooten to McPherson, February 17, 1880, McPherson MSS.

<sup>26</sup> Calvin Wells to McPherson, February 18, February 23, 1880, *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> George William Curtis to McPherson, February 23, 1880, *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Lancaster *New Era*, February 14, 21, 28, March 6, 1880; Bellefonte *Republican*, February 25, March 17, May 19, 1880; cf. Bellefonte *Democratic Watchman*, March 12, April 30, 1880.

<sup>29</sup> See particularly Harrisburg *Telegraph*, February 5, 7, 25, March 2, 8, 28, April 1, 10, May 5, 21, 27, 29, 1880.

the delegation and was pledged to cast the entire vote of the state for Grant.<sup>30</sup>

In the midst of their fight against the Stalwarts, Blaine's friends received support from a quite unexpected source. A "Memorial" had appeared on the eve of the state convention, signed by almost two hundred Philadelphia business and professional men, appealing for a presidential candidate who would be acceptable to what was termed "the vast body of independent voters." No particular candidate was suggested and none condemned by name, but the lengthy descriptions of the types of men the signers declared they would not support were unmistakable characterizations of both Grant and Blaine.<sup>31</sup>

The convention had ignored this appeal, and on February 10 a printed letter announced the formation of the National Republican League, pledged to "control the personal ambitions which threaten disaster to the party and to the country." The officers of the League included men of such caliber as Samuel W. Pennypacker, Hampton L. Carson, Wayne MacVeagh, and Henry Charles Lea.<sup>32</sup> Lea, already prominent as publisher, historian, and municipal reformer, was the driving force behind these independent Republicans.<sup>33</sup> Experienced politicians attached little significance to this "sentimental organization of those gentlemen at 913 Walnut Street," as one critic described it. Another predicted it would "squeal" a little, "make a little fuss, and then submit."<sup>34</sup> But on February 25 a second printed letter appeared in which the League declared its objectives: "no third term—a party without a master

<sup>30</sup> *Bellefonte Republican*, February 25, 1880; Luther G. Sherman to McPherson, February 9, 1880, McPherson MSS; A. C. Light to Chandler, February 13, 1880; H. M. Turner to *id.*, March 4, 1880; Galusha A. Grow to *id.*, March 22, 1880; William H. Koontz to *id.*, May 27, 1880; S. P. Brown to *id.*, May 29, 1880, Chandler MSS. The Pennsylvania Stalwarts planned to support Logan if Grant could not secure the nomination. See Chester N. Farr to J. D. Cameron, April 14, 1880, Henry M. Hoyt Copybook, Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, Wilkes-Barre.

<sup>31</sup> Memorial dated January 20, 1880, J. Lapsley Wilson Scrapbook and MS, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; cf. *Philadelphia Times*, January 30, 1880.

<sup>32</sup> Printed letter dated February 10, 1880, Wilson Scrapbook and MS.

<sup>33</sup> Henry C. Lea to J. Lapsley Wilson, January 26, 1880, *ibid.*; Edward S. Bradley, *Henry Charles Lea: A Biography* (Philadelphia, 1931), 217.

<sup>34</sup> Hooten to McPherson, February 17, 1880, McPherson MSS; E. L. Godkin to Wayne MacVeagh, February 12, 1880; MacVeagh MSS, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; cf. *Lancaster New Era*, February 21, 1880.



—and a candidate without a stain.” To achieve these ends it planned to enlarge its organization and to cooperate with like-minded groups and individuals.<sup>35</sup>

During the three months before the Chicago convention, the National Republican League distributed anti-Grant and civil service reform pamphlets throughout the country. It held meetings with the Young Republicans of Massachusetts and the Independent Association of New York, and it endorsed the resolutions of a National Anti-Third Term Convention which met in St. Louis in May. To fight for its objectives, it appointed a delegation to attend the Chicago Convention.<sup>36</sup> Many members of the League, however, became convinced that Grant could be defeated only by accepting Blaine, and late in May the League announced it would not, under any circumstances, support Grant if he were nominated—but would support any other nominee of the convention. Although uncommitted to any candidate, the National Republican League, through its fear of Grant, had become an unwilling ally of Blaine.<sup>37</sup>

As the Chicago convention drew near, Grant’s prospects for the nomination did appear to be growing stronger. Conkling and Logan had gained control of the New York and Illinois delegations, and Don Cameron was now boasting that Grant would be nominated by acclamation.<sup>38</sup> Personal appeals to the Camerons, including one from the aged Thurlow Weed, proved fruitless, and Blaine journals in Pennsylvania were abandoning what appeared to be a hopeless cause.<sup>39</sup> “The men running Grant intend to *own a President* if

<sup>35</sup> Printed letter dated February 25, 1880, Wilson Scrapbook and MS; copy in James A. Garfield MSS, Library of Congress.

<sup>36</sup> Samuel W. Pennypacker, *The Autobiography of a Pennsylvanian* (Philadelphia, 1918), 176; pamphlets in Wilson Scrapbook and MS; Wilson to Henry L. Van Duzen, April 17, 1880, *ibid.*; Henry Charles Lea to Wharton Barker, April 19, 1880, Barker MSS, Library of Congress; Harrisburg *Telegraph*, May 10, 1880; Bradley, *Lea*, 218.

<sup>37</sup> Minutes of National Republican League, February 14, 1880, Wilson Scrapbook and MS; Pennypacker, *Autobiography*, 176; J. P. Hale to E. Dunbar Lockwood, May 27, 1880; John R. Bricker to Hampton L. Carson, May 28, 1880, Hampton L. Carson MSS, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>38</sup> Harrisburg *Telegraph*, April 22, 1880; Lancaster *New Era*, April 24, 1880; cf. Muzzey, *Blaine*, 165; Donald B. Chidsey, *The Gentleman from New York: A Life of Roscoe Conkling* (New Haven, 1935), 280.

<sup>39</sup> Joseph Fell to Simon Cameron, April 26, 1880; Thurlow Weed to *id.*, April 29, 1880, Simon Cameron MSS, Library of Congress; Howard M. Jenkins to Chandler, May 22, 1880, Chandler MSS.

they can," cried one of Blaine's supporters,<sup>40</sup> but how were they to be stopped?

Wharton Barker believed he knew how it could be done.

A politically unknown Philadelphia banker, Wharton Barker had a plan, and if it succeeded, neither Grant nor Blaine would receive the nomination. There was little in Barker's background to justify confidence in him as a political strategist. A member of one of Philadelphia's oldest families—a descendant of 1629 Puritans and 1682 Quakers—he had taken no active part in politics before becoming a member of the National Republican League. He had expanded the family's banking firm, promoted social and cultural societies, served as financial agent of the Russian government in the United States, and spent some time in Russia as an advisor to the Czar on industrial development.<sup>41</sup>

Barker, however, was also a keen student of political and economic problems, and in 1870 he had established the *Penn Monthly* through which he had given voice to the growing dissatisfaction of "thoughtful and independent" Republicans with their party's leadership and policies.<sup>42</sup> Barker had been waging his own war against "stalwartism," which he defined as the "belief that the Republican party's war record is such that it can dispense with regard for decency and for public opinion," and he was vigorously opposed to the third-term project.<sup>43</sup> It was in the *Penn Monthly*, in May, 1879, that Barker had first declared James A. Garfield to be "more worthy" than either Grant or Blaine of the Republican presidential nomination. Garfield, according to Barker, was "a much better and safer candidate,—a man at once of fine courtesy, high principle and a good record."<sup>44</sup> Barker had then helped to remove what he considered a major obstacle to his plan—Garfield's membership in the free-trade Cobden Club. Garfield had been able to explain this apparent heresy to Barker's satisfac-

<sup>40</sup> William H. Kemble to Chandler, March 1, 1880, Chandler MSS; cf. S. P. Brown to *id.*, May 29, 1880; A. M. Rolfe to *id.*, May 31, 1880, *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> W. H. Grant, "Wharton Barker," *D.A.B.*, I, 606-607; Pennypacker, *Autobiography*, 124; Lewis R. Hamersly, ed., *Who's Who in Pennsylvania* (New York, 1904), 33; Charles R. Deacon, mgr., *A Biographical Album of Prominent Pennsylvanians* (Philadelphia, 1888-1890), II, 11-14. See also *New York Times*, April 9, 1921.

<sup>42</sup> Frank L. Mott, *A History of American Magazines* (Cambridge, 1930-1957), III, 34-35; *Penn Monthly*, IX (August, 1878), 577; *ibid.*, X (April, 1879), 251.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, X (May, 1879), 329.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, X (May, 1879), 331; *ibid.*, X (September, 1879), 652.

tion, and Barker succeeded in convincing Pennsylvania's protectionist leaders that Garfield was basically sound on the vital tariff question.<sup>45</sup>

On February 18, 1880, Barker visited Garfield in Washington. He informed him of the creation of the National Republican League, and stated that he wanted Garfield to be the party's presidential nominee. Garfield replied he was not a candidate and did not want his name discussed in that connection. Only in the event of a deadlock could he receive the nomination, he explained, and he would do nothing to create such a deadlock. Furthermore, Garfield protested that he was working for the nomination of John Sherman, and would continue to do so. Sherman had helped Garfield win his Senate seat.<sup>46</sup> Ignoring Garfield's protests, Barker returned to Philadelphia and began making arrangements for Garfield's nomination. He established close relations with Garfield admirers in Connecticut and Massachusetts, and advised them to keep his intentions secret. He did, however, inform Garfield of his activities, again declaring his belief that only Garfield could lead the party to victory.<sup>47</sup>

Barker's immediate problem was to guarantee a deadlock in the convention. With the aid of Wayne MacVeagh, he therefore persuaded James McManes, delegate-at-large to Chicago and boss of the Philadelphia machine, to bolt the Grant instructions and the unit rule. McManes, suffering from real and fancied slights at the hands of Don Cameron, was determined to prove he carried more political weight than the domineering senator. Barker expected McManes would take with him enough Pennsylvania delegates to block Grant's nomination. Garfield's New England friends would then combine with the Stalwarts, if necessary, to block the nomination of Blaine. As he explained to Garfield, Barker hoped the nomination would then go "as we want to have it."<sup>48</sup>

On April 24, Barker visited President Hayes and once again

<sup>45</sup> Barker to Garfield, February 2, April 25, 1880, Garfield MSS. See Joseph Wharton to *id.*, February 14, April 10, 1880; Daniel J. Morrell to *id.*, March 23, 1880, *ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Garfield Diary, February 18, 1880, Library of Congress; cf. Robert G. Caldwell, *James A. Garfield: Party Chieftain* (New York, 1931), 278-279.

<sup>47</sup> Barker to Garfield, February 28, April 6, 1880, Garfield MSS. Copies of these letters are also in the Barker Copybook, Library of Congress.

<sup>48</sup> Barker to Garfield, April 19, May 18, 1880; *id.* to Lyden Harrison April 19, 1880, Barker Copybook. See Harold Zink, *City Bosses in the United States: A Study of Twenty Municipal Bosses* (Durham, 1930), 203.

talked with Garfield. Barker had learned that Hayes was convinced Sherman's candidacy was intended only to prevent the nomination of either Grant or Blaine; if they were eliminated, Hayes believed Sherman would give his support to Garfield. Again Barker outlined his plan for creating the necessary deadlock and its intended outcome. Garfield refused to believe it could succeed: "I should be greatly distressed if I thought otherwise," he confided to his diary.<sup>49</sup> The following day Garfield told his Philadelphia admirer he would have to find himself another candidate; at Sherman's request he had promised to go to Chicago as a delegate and place Sherman's name in nomination. Barker made no objection: "Your friends can do far more for you than you can do for yourself," he replied.<sup>50</sup>

Once more Barker returned to Philadelphia to do some further planning. He worked closely with the New England groups and with McManes, who was under heavy pressure from Don Cameron. Barker tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade Grant's Philadelphia friends to have the General announce he was not a candidate, and he visited New York to learn more of Conkling's intentions and to promote Garfield's interests.<sup>51</sup> His major efforts, however, were directed toward planning a draft of Garfield. Barker could not risk a formal nomination since Garfield, as Sherman's manager, would then be forced to forbid the use of his name. Barker therefore

<sup>49</sup> Garfield Diary, April 24, 1880.

<sup>50</sup> Wharton Barker, "The Secret History of Garfield's Nomination," *McCarson's Magazine*, XXXV (May, 1916), 438-439. In claiming that he and Garfield "came to an agreement" (p. 436) and that Garfield "approved" of his plans (p. 437), Barker errs in his reminiscences, written thirty-two years after the event. Caldwell, *Garfield*, 281 n., tends to discount these reminiscences almost completely. Admitting that Barker's activities are verified by Garfield's diary, he nevertheless concludes that Barker "undoubtedly overemphasized the importance of his own activities, for others, especially Pound of Wisconsin, Streight of Indiana, and Sheldon of Ohio were working quite openly for Garfield's nomination." An examination of all the available evidence, however, leads to the conclusion that whatever the activities of Garfield's friends in other states—and notwithstanding the errors in Barker's reminiscences—Barker's activities and his plan were the significant factors in the outcome of the convention. See Barker to F. Porter, March 9, 1882; *id.* to Garfield, June 8, June 15, 1880; *id.* to W. A. M. Grier, June 9, 1880, Barker Copybook; MacVeagh to Barker, June 9, 1880; A. T. Chur to *id.*, June 10, 1880, Barker MSS; Pennypacker, *Autobiography*, 176-178.

<sup>51</sup> Barker to Garfield, May 7, May 18, 1880, Garfield MSS; Barker to Lyden Harrison, May 17, May 24, 1880; *id.* to George W. Curtis, May 18, 1880; *id.* to Governor Long, May 18, 1880; *id.* to James McManes, May 19, 1880; *id.* to Carl Schurz, May 24, 1880, Barker Copybook.

persuaded a single Pennsylvania delegate, W. A. M. Grier of Hazleton, to vote for Garfield early in the balloting and thus put his name before the convention.<sup>52</sup>

Barker next went to Chicago where he met with Governor T. L. Pound of Wisconsin, another Garfield admirer. From Pound he secured a promise that when the proper time arrived Pound would transfer the vote of his state from Blaine to Garfield. With Pound's aid, he arranged for the Indiana delegation to switch to Garfield on the ballot following. Wisconsin was last on the list of states and Barker hoped its action, when followed by that of Indiana, would trigger the necessary stampede, particularly if Sherman then gave his support to Garfield.<sup>53</sup> To help matters along, Barker arranged for professional applauders to be located strategically in the galleries and on the floor of the convention, with instructions to demonstrate whenever Garfield entered or rose to speak. Finally, Barker secured a place for himself on the platform from which he could direct his plan.<sup>54</sup> Garfield knew nothing of these later arrangements; he continued to promote Sherman's interests with a clear conscience.<sup>55</sup>

The major threat to Barker's plan was the unit rule. As national chairman, Don Cameron would open the convention, and if he applied the unit rule to the voting for a temporary chairman, both the temporary chairman and the permanent chairman could continue to apply it throughout the convention. The nomination of Grant would probably result. However, when the Republican National Committee met in Chicago on June 1, Blaine's friends were fully aware of this danger. After a bitter struggle Conkling, representing the Stalwarts, finally agreed to a compromise. He would name the man who would serve as both temporary and permanent chairman of the convention, but would select him from three men designated by the anti-Grant members of the national committee. When Don Cameron refused to commit himself to this compromise, as an added precaution Blaine's friends secured from

<sup>52</sup> Pennypacker, *Autobiography*, 176-177; cf. Garfield Diary, April 7, 1881; Barker, "Secret History," 440.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 440; Caldwell, *Garfield*, 282.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 282-283; Barker, "Secret History," 435, 440; Theodore C. Smith, *The Life and Letters of James Abram Garfield* (New Haven, 1925), II, 966. Smith gives Barker and his activities no credit whatever for the nomination of Garfield; *ibid.*, 956.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 956, 987; Caldwell, *Garfield*, 278-279, 291.

the convention's sergeant-at-arms a promise to recognize whom-ever they designated to call the convention to order.<sup>56</sup>

With Barker's plan still threatened by the unit rule, at noon on June 2, 1880, the Republican National Convention opened in the Interstate Exposition Building in Chicago. Flags and pictures of Union heroes covered the walls and adorned the platform, bands played the marching songs of the Union Army, and many of Grant's old battle commanders were on hand, some in uniform. The convention was to be the last great battle of the Civil War. Don Cameron called the convention to order, he waved the Bloody Shirt, he called for the nomination of strong men—but he did not apply the unit rule to the voting for temporary chairman, and in accordance with the Conkling compromise, George F. Hoar of Massachusetts became both temporary and permanent chairman.<sup>57</sup>

For four days the giants of the party waged a bitter conflict over the convention preliminaries. The Stalwarts suffered their initial defeat on the second day, when Chairman Hoar refused to apply the unit rule to a roll call vote on a committee report. On the third day, the Stalwarts made one final bid for control of the convention. Conkling moved that every delegate pledge himself to support the convention's nominees, and when the motion received all but three votes, he moved the expulsion of the three dissenters. Garfield presented a masterful defense of their right to dissent, and this time the applause which rewarded him needed no encouragement from Barker's hirelings. Conkling withdrew his motion and the Stalwart bid had failed. The following day, the report of the Committee on Rules was adopted without a division.

<sup>56</sup> Harrisburg *Telegraph*, June 1-2, 1880; Lancaster *New Era*, June 5, 1880; Hesselstine, *Grant*, 438; William S. Myers, *The Republican Party: A History* (New York, 1928), 253-254; Leon B. Richardson, *William E. Chandler, Republican* (New York, 1940), 250-252; Alexander K. McClure, *Recollections of a Half Century* (Salem, 1902), 108-109; Frederick H. Gillett, *George Frisbie Hoar* (Boston, 1934), 101-103. Gillett continually confuses Don and Simon Cameron. For Hoar's version see George F. Hoar, *Autobiography of Seventy Years* (New York, 1903), I, 388-401.

<sup>57</sup> Henry L. Stoddard, *Presidential Sweepstakes: The Story of Political Conventions and Campaigns*. Francis W. Leary, ed. (New York, 1948), 77-79; McClure, *Recollections*, 108-109; James D. McCabe, *Our Martyred President . . . Garfield . . .* (Philadelphia, 1881), 423-425; *Proceedings of the Republican National Convention Held at Chicago . . . 1880* (Chicago, 1881), 5. Don Cameron later singled out Hoar and the Massachusetts delegation as responsible for the Stalwart defeat; see Hoar, *Autobiography*, I, 398. Don's failure to invoke the unit rule was apparently due to his belief that the Stalwarts would win their fight in the Committee on Rules.

It included a provision that on a roll call vote, any delegate could demand that his delegation vote as individuals and have their votes so recorded. The unit rule had finally been rejected, and Barker's plan might yet succeed. That evening the nominations were made, but no ballots were taken. It was a Saturday evening, and the convention adjourned until the following Monday.<sup>58</sup>

Monday, June 7, the balloting began, with 379 votes necessary for a nomination. Without the unit rule, Grant received but 304 votes to 284 for Blaine on the first ballot, with Sherman running a poor third. Pennsylvania had voted 32 for Grant, 23 for Blaine, and 3 for Sherman. The second ballot produced no material change in the voting, but Grier had changed his vote from Sherman to Garfield, the first Garfield vote in the convention. The giants were deadlocked, and Barker's plan was in operation. Thirty-one more ballots were taken but the deadlock remained unbroken. Pennsylvania continued to epitomize the struggle between Grant and Blaine—and to point the way out of the deadlock, as on every ballot but five Grier voted for Garfield. Once he was joined by a delegate from Alabama, three times by a delegate from Maryland, but on no ballot did Garfield receive more than two votes.<sup>59</sup>

The balloting was now in its second day, the convention in its sixth. At the end of the deadlocked thirty-fourth ballot Governor Pound kept his promise to Barker; Wisconsin changed its vote from Blaine to Garfield. Garfield challenged the vote, claiming he had permitted no one to use his name before the convention, but Chairman Hoar ruled he was not raising a question of order and called for another ballot. On the thirty-fifth ballot Indiana kept its promise to Barker, and Garfield's total climbed to 50 votes. From Washington Sherman telegraphed the Ohio delegation to vote solid for Garfield when its vote would assure his nomination. The stampede was under way, and on the thirty-sixth ballot Garfield received 399 votes and the nomination. All but 42 of Garfield's votes had been transferred to him from Blaine; the

<sup>58</sup> *Proceedings of the Republican National Convention*, 21, 31-33, 64-124; *Harrisburg Telegraph*, June 3-6, 1880; Myers, *Republican Party*, 254-256; Francis Curtis, *The Republican Party: A History of its Fifty Years Existence and a Record of its Measures and Leaders, 1854-1904* (New York, 1904), II, 77-83.

<sup>59</sup> *Proceedings of the Republican National Convention*, 198-271; John Tweedy, *A History of the Republican National Conventions from 1856 to 1908* (Danbury, 1910), 196.

Stalwarts had fought to the very end, and on the final ballot the "Immortal 306," as they were to be known, had voted for Grant. On the decisive thirty-sixth ballot, Pennsylvania had voted 37 for Grant, 21 for Garfield.<sup>60</sup>

The chairman of the Pennsylvania delegation, General James A. Beaver, promised the convention that Garfield would receive a record majority in the state, and Garfield's friends offered to support the Stalwart Beaver for the vice presidential nomination. But Beaver explained that his nomination would not be good politics; furthermore, he had no desire to be relegated to political obscurity. With the naming of Chester A. Arthur of New York as Garfield's running mate, the convention finally adjourned.<sup>61</sup>

The long, bitter struggle was over. Grant and Blaine had both been denied the prize. The nominee was Garfield. Certainly no one individual was solely responsible for this result. Intentionally or unintentionally, Don Cameron, Conkling, Hoar, Pound, Grier, even Garfield himself, had contributed. The necessary votes had come chiefly from Blaine's supporters, frustrated by the Stalwarts' loyalty to Grant and their hostility to Blaine. Nevertheless, one man had planned the nomination of Garfield. His plan had involved many uncertainties; not all of them had been resolved exactly as he planned, but they had all been resolved to the advantage of his candidate. His plan had succeeded. In the face of a group of determined professional politicians, Wharton Barker, a political amateur, had masterminded one of the most remarkable presidential nominations in our history.

<sup>60</sup> Myers, *Republican Party*, 258-260; Curtis, *Republican Party*, II, 83; Caldwell, *Garfield*, 289-290. For the names of the "306" Stalwarts see *The Roll of Honor: A Historic Gem Containing the Names of 306 Delegates to the Chicago Republican Convention that Voted All the Time for General U. S. Grant . . .* (Boston, n.d.) in John A. Logan MSS, Library of Congress.

<sup>61</sup> McCabe, *Our Martyred President Garfield*, 476; John J. Serff, "The Life of James A. Beaver" (Unpublished dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 1955), 67-68.