

## THE LIFE OF WILLIAM SUTTON MOORE: A WASHINGTON COUNTY EDITOR

JOSEPH WILLIAM MOORE

**A**s a child I was always interested in rummaging in the attic, the desks and any old trunks that looked inviting. A vast accumulation of these items was assembled both at the home of my parents in Pittsburgh and at the McKennan Farm, the home of my grandmother, the late Mrs. Martha McKennan Moore, in Little Washington. To prevent me from destroying or damaging any important papers, my father, the late William McKennan Moore, removed the desk of my great-grandfather, William Sutton Moore, from the house in Pittsburgh and stored it in the garage. There it remained locked for many years. In 1950 I found the key and furtively brought a few papers at a time to my study. Tired of this subterfuge I asked my father to bring the desk into the house so that I might examine the dusty papers in the comfort of my study. To my father, then, I respectfully dedicate this paper. To him I offer my appreciation for keeping this material from me until I was old enough to realize its value and sentiment.

The contents of the desk were sufficient to provide me with all but a few of the details to assemble this biography. The missing links in Moore's private and public life will have to be supplemented by further research.

### *The Philosophy of William S. Moore*

This is not the life of a great man in a political, military, economic or religious phase of life. It is, however, the life of a small county editor, who after holding many minor political offices, was elected to serve one term in the United States Congress. Even there he was not outstanding, but he was not so insignificant that his story is uninteresting.

Before beginning to unfold his story, his success and his failure, it would be well to present his philosophy of life. As an editor of various Washington County newspapers, he was kept busy with his

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daily routine until two o'clock in the morning so he had little time to write personal letters. When his daughter, Annie, was attending school, he occasionally wrote her. When he did write her, his letters, far from being chatty, were filled with his sage advice and his philosophy of life.

To Moore, human nature was so constituted that it was impossible for people " . . . to reach the higher attainments without toil and privation of a sort."<sup>1</sup> He believed that "whatever exalts us in the scale of being is truly represented as above us, while that which degrades us is to be found in the opposite direction . . ."<sup>2</sup>

In writing to his daughter, Moore stated that he regarded youth as

the season is which we should store our minds with the knowledge that is to fit us for acting well our part in the drama of active life, and unless it be improved, we on reaching maturity, find ourselves confronted by duties and responsibilities with which we are ill prepared to grapple, and then comes the bitter consciousness that we have misimproved our privileges and fettered away our opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

Continuing this letter, he wrote that what the world regarded as geniuses, he regarded as being "mainly the reward of patient and persevering toil."<sup>4</sup>

When he was in Philadelphia in August, 1877, he managed to write to his son Joseph, giving him helpful advice. To write at that time was especially painful because the insidious disease which was soon to end his life caused him extreme suffering and unpleasantness. Moore, nevertheless, advised his son to cultivate a taste for reading and study and to prepare himself "by mental training and discipline for the duties of life, but not to avoid the ordinary amusements" which Moore considered "not only innocent and proper, but necessary to a healthy moral and intellectual growth."<sup>5</sup>

To the end of his life he lived as he had recommended, a modest, active and unpretentious man.

### *Early Life*

William Sutton Moore, the son of James and Ann Sutton Moore, was born in Washington County on November 18, 1822. The exact place of his birth seems to be unknown. In the Centennial Issue of *The Washington Daily Reporter* his birthplace is given as Amwell

<sup>1</sup> William S. Moore to Annie Moore, September 3, 1869, William S. Moore Papers (in Moore Family Collection).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> William S. Moore to Joseph Henderson Moore, August 24, 1877, Moore Papers.

Township, near the village of Amity.<sup>6</sup> In reply to a request for biographical data, Moore wrote that he was born in West Bethlehem Township, Washington County.<sup>7</sup> This same information also appears in the *Congressional Directory* for the 43rd Congress,<sup>8</sup> although this biographical data was probably obtained from Moore himself.

When Moore was still quite young his mother died and his father entrusted him to the care of his Uncle Hugh and Aunt Sarah Moore. Neither his parents nor his guardians were wealthy. As he himself said, "I was born of 'poor but honest parents'—that is to say I believe they were honest; that they were poor I *know* . . ." <sup>9</sup>

After receiving the usual elementary education he entered Washington College—now Washington and Jefferson—in 1842. While there he exhibited a taste for writing, especially poetry. Moore stood very high scholastically, receiving the highest grades given, a figure "1," in "general conduct, supposed industry, and scholarship."<sup>10</sup> During his college years he followed an English course and made some progress in Latin and Greek. His graduation certificate, received in 1847, states that he was distinguished for "punctuality, diligence, good order and morality."<sup>11</sup> In the opinion of his instructors he was considered well qualified to teach English as it was taught in the common schools. Teaching, however, was not to be Moore's vocation.

It is interesting to note that four of the thirty-three members of his graduating class became members of the United States Congress. They were: James G. Blaine of Maine; John V. LeMoyne of Illinois; William H. M. Pusey of Iowa; and Moore himself.<sup>12</sup>

Prior to his graduation Moore began to study law under the Honorable Thomas McKean Thompson McKennan, and was admitted to the bar at the November term in 1848.<sup>13</sup> While he was still establishing a legal practice, he married Elizabeth Leamon Brownlee of Canton Township on January 23, 1850. They had three children, two girls, Annie and Alice, and one boy, Joseph Henderson.

6 *The Washington Daily Reporter*, August 15, 1908.

7 William S. Moore to R. A. Neilson (?), April 17, 1873, Moore Papers.

8 Ben: Perley Poore (comp.), *Congressional Directory 1st Session 43rd Congress* (Washington, 1874), 56.

9 Moore to Neilson (?), *op. cit.*

10 Washington College Report Cards, 1843 and 1846, Moore Papers.

11 Certificate from Washington College, 1847, Moore Papers.

12 *The Washington Daily Reporter*, August 15, 1908.

13 Boyd Crumrine, *The Courts of Justice Bench and Bar of Washington County, Pennsylvania* (Chicago, 1902), 288.

*Beginning of His Political Life*

Moore continued to practice law in Washington County until he was, on October 10, 1854, elected prothonotary of the county, under the Constitution of 1838. He received 4,002 votes.<sup>14</sup> He served in this capacity for three years from December 1, 1854, until he had to resign in 1857 because of impaired health. Thus began the insidious affliction, cancer of the throat, which eventually claimed his life in 1877.

Although he retired momentarily from the political scene he needed to find some means of livelihood. His inherent taste for writing caused him to search for an outlet in which to express himself. In 1857 he and Major Enos L. Christman became joint editors of the *Commonwealth*, which merged with the *Reporter* the following year.<sup>15</sup> By an agreement drawn up on March 31, 1858, Moore was to devote his entire time and labor to the management of the paper, while Christman was to be relieved of all connection with its publication. As a salary Moore was to receive 400 dollars annually and the profits left over were to be divided equally.<sup>16</sup> Moore continued to be affiliated with the *Reporter* from 1858 until he resigned because of his health two months before his death. He was associated with Robert F. Strean and Christman until April 1, 1860 when the *Reporter* and the *Tribune* consolidated and the firm became Moore, Purviance, and Armstrong.

In 1862, Moore was appointed county treasurer to fulfill the vacancy caused by the death of James Pollock, who died six weeks after he had been sworn into office.<sup>17</sup> Moore held this position from February 22, 1862 until November 13, 1863.<sup>18</sup>

*Character and Political Beliefs*

Before discussing Moore's political life as a congressman, it would be well to examine his character and some of his political beliefs, especially on Reconstruction and the Negro question. During his political life the "bloody shirt" was still being dragged across the American scene.

Moore was endowed with a kind, considerate and gentle disposition. He had the knack of thinking seriously on the one hand

14 Certificate of Election, October 10, 1854, Moore Papers.

15 Lewis C. Walkinshaw, *Annals of Southwestern Pennsylvania* (New York, 1939), III, 442.

16 Memorandum of Agreement Papers, March 31, 1858, Moore Papers.

17 *The Daily Evening Reporter*, December 31, 1877.

18 Crumrine, *op. cit.*, 319.

and an ability of finding humor in most situations on the other hand. That he was modest and unassuming by nature is evidenced by his reply to a request for biographical data. He replied to his inquirer that he had been in "blissful ignorance" of the existence of the proof sheets which accompanied the request. He wrote that he had been approached upon the subject of furnishing such information before, but that he had refused because as he said, ". . . if there was anything creditable in my history it was not becoming in me to speak of it, and whatever there was of an opposite character I felt justified in withholding under the well settled rule that a man is not bound to criminate himself."<sup>19</sup> In reply to a further request for a photograph, Moore stated that he had one which was taken long ago "when youthful innocence beamed in every feature" and he did not send any because he felt sure that his picture, instead of embellishing, ". . . would only mar [sic] the appearance of any publication . . ." that the inquirer had on hand.<sup>20</sup> Moore requested to be pardoned for suggesting that ". . . the work would be much better allowed to go to the world without . . ." his picture.<sup>21</sup> So it was with his tongue in his cheek that Moore did not leave any extensive autobiographical information for the future.

More important politically, however, are his views on Reconstruction. In 1866 Moore wrote to the Honorable George V. Lawrence, a member of the State Legislature of Pennsylvania intermittently from 1850 to 1896,<sup>22</sup> expressing his [Moore's] views on the president's policy. Moore believed that President Johnson's policy had proved to be a failure and that this feeling was shared by the "loyal people," with a few exceptions, of Little Washington. Nearly all the Republicans, he believed, were satisfied with the language of the last state convention which stated: "' . . . the liberal terms offered to the people of the South by the President, have not been accepted in the spirit in which they were tendered.'"<sup>23</sup> As Moore saw it, the people of the rebel states were far from being prepared for readmission to a participation in the government which ". . . they endeavored so recently to destroy."<sup>24</sup> As disastrous as the Civil War had been, Moore believed that it did a lot to educate the people

<sup>19</sup> Moore to Neilson (?), *op. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Herman P. Miller (comp.), *Smull's Legislative Hand Book and Manual of the State of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1917), 871, 889.

<sup>23</sup> Party platform quoted by William S. Moore to George V. Lawrence, February 1, 1866, Moore Papers.

<sup>24</sup> Moore to Lawrence, *op. cit.*

to throw aside the "illiberal" and "unchristian dogma" that this was a white-man's government.

The people were troubling themselves with the Negro problem whereas Moore believed that the perplexing question was what to do with the master, not the slave. Moore, who personally detested any kind of race prejudice, informed Lawrence that although his (Moore's) observations of race prejudices had been limited, those which he had observed were well expressed in the *Pittsburgh Daily Dispatch and Post* during the years 1863 and 1864 and taught him that, "' . . . the more ignorant and depraved a white man was, the more he was inclined to 'd—n the nigger,' and the more horrified he was at the idea of the black man being admitted to an equality with himself.'" <sup>25</sup>

As an answer to combating these detestable race hatreds, Moore suggested education. He believed that the idea of a superior race existed mainly in those sections of a country where education, if it was permitted to enter at all, fell only upon a favored few. He concluded his letter to Lawrence with the following observation: "What a commentary upon the boasted natural superiority of the Caucasian [*sic*] to be constantly insisting that disabilities shall be imposed upon the African lest in the race for distinction he leave us in the rear!" <sup>26</sup>

These were the sentiments of an editor who could influence the public through his paper; these were the beliefs and convictions of a man who represented the people in Congress from 1873 to 1875. His convictions appear sensible and not as completely irrational as others held by more famous members of the Radical Republican Party. While in Congress he never quite forgave the South which he referred to as the "rebels." <sup>27</sup>

### *Nomination and Election, 1872*

The county convention, about which more will be said later in regard to the congressional nomination of 1874, met to nominate a candidate to represent the 24th Congressional District, composed of Beaver, Greene, Lawrence and Washington Counties. Whether or not Moore actively campaigned for the nomination is not known. There is nothing to indicate that he did and there is a letter among his papers which indicates that he did not. This letter addressed to

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> William S. Moore to Elizabeth L. Moore, June 1, 1874, Moore Papers.

someone identified only as "My Esteemed Friend," merely expresses his thanks for the friend's "warm and hearty endorsement" of his "unexpected nomination."<sup>28</sup>

Being an editor and a party member of long standing, Moore received the support of the county papers of his district. An editorial in *The Beaver Radical*, published by Matthew S. Quay, called upon the voters to redeem the 24th Congressional District and exclaimed that "... with a Republican majority of fifteen hundred in the district. [sic] it is a burning shame that we are represented in Congress by a Democrat."<sup>29</sup> The Democrat to whom the editorial referred was William McClelland of Mount Jackson who defeated Republican J. B. Donely in 1870.<sup>30</sup> The paper added a reminder that a vote against Moore was almost as bad as a vote against Grant.

The same issue made capital out of the opinion of an opponent as to the merits of Moore. The editor of the Crawford *Democrat*, identified only as Grayson, had been a former resident of Washington County. In his paper he praised the recommendation of Moore to the nominating convention. After extolling Moore's virtues and qualifications, the editor said that "the least we can say is that the Republicans of Washington county have reflected credit upon themselves by unanimously recommending William S. Moore for Congress."<sup>31</sup>

The election was held on November 5, 1872 and when all the ballots were counted Moore was elected to the 43rd Congress. He received 14,195 votes as opposed to 13,169 for McClelland, the Democratic incumbent.<sup>32</sup> In Pennsylvania, Ulysses S. Grant received 349,589 as opposed to 212,041 for Horace Greeley. These figures were erroneously reported in the *Lawrence Guardian* as 349,689 and 211,691 respectively.<sup>33</sup>

During the interval between his election in 1872 and the first session of Congress on December 1st, 1873, Moore was busy straightening up his personal affairs. Prior to his election he had sent a letter to Christman requesting that the latter take charge of the newspaper in the advent of his [Moore's] election. Christman

28 William S. Moore to "My Esteemed Friend," August 12, 1872, Moore Papers.

29 *The Beaver Radical*, October 4, 1872.

30 Ben: Perley Poore (comp.), *Congressional Directory 2nd Session 42nd Congress* (Washington, 1873), 46.

31 Crawford *Democrat*, June 2, 1872, quoted in *The Beaver Radical*, October 4, 1872.

32 Poore (comp.), *Congressional Directory 1st Session 43rd Congress* (Washington, 1874), 56.

33 *Lawrence Guardian*, November 19, 1872.

wrote that he would agree to do so if he could be promised a salary of 1300 dollars a year. He suggested to Moore that the interest of the late James R. Kelley — a former speaker of the house of representatives of the state — who had been affiliated with the paper from 1869 until his death on August 9, 1871,<sup>34</sup> could be purchased in shares of 100 dollars by twelve or twenty members of the party. Although there would be more owners, Christman's idea was, however, that he and Moore could still control the establishment. In this letter Christman also indicated that he would like to experiment with publishing twice a week as this practice was, he assured Moore, ". . . in keeping with the spirit of the age" and could be done ". . . without increasing expenses."<sup>35</sup>

At this time Christman was working for *The American Republican*, self-styled as the oldest paper in West Chester County. Oddly enough, the proprietor of that organ was a man identified as E. B. Moore, no relation to William S. Moore.

For some unknown reason Moore did not reply after his election in November. Christman waited until the 10th before he wrote Moore again. Still no reply. Again Christman wrote but received no reply. On the 21st of November he wrote and requested Moore not to delay the business any longer.<sup>36</sup> A week passed without any response. Christman, impatient and annoyed, penned a rather lengthy letter in which he enumerated the various times he had written and to which he had received no reply. He stated that he would seek redress in the courts to protect his rights if necessary. When he received no reply to this letter, he wrote again and asked if a failure to answer was to be construed as the signal to proceed with the legal action.<sup>37</sup> Whatever reason Moore had for delaying to answer the previous letters of Christman, he must have written at last because a new partnership agreement was entered into on April 1, 1873.

By the terms of this new agreement, Moore was to be the owner of two-thirds and Christman the owner of one-third of the *Reporter*. The profits and expenses were to be shared in the same proportion ". . . provided however that the income of said Christman shall not be less than fifteen hundred dollars per annum for two years from the above date [April 1, 1873]."<sup>38</sup>

The terms of the agreement were better by 200 dollars than

<sup>34</sup> *The Washington Reporter*, August 16, 1871.

<sup>35</sup> Enos L. Christman to William S. Moore, October 23, 1872, Moore Papers.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, November 21, 1872, Moore Papers.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, November 27, 1872, Moore Papers.

<sup>38</sup> Memorandum of Agreement Papers, April 1, 1873, Moore Papers.



the salary requested by Christman as a condition for returning. Christman, under the agreement, was also protected until the end of Moore's term in Congress. With this last and most important detail arranged, Moore was able to go to the Capitol with the assurance that the paper was in capable hands.

*In Congress—1st Session*

The House of Representatives of the 43rd Congress which convened on December 1, 1873 was much as it had been described by an English traveler many years before. The members, instead of listening to the speaker, unless he was exceptionally good, busied themselves writing letters, "rapping the sand off the wet ink with their knuckles, rustling their newspapers, locking or unlocking their desk drawers, or moving up and down . . ." <sup>39</sup> the aisles strewn with documents and other papers. The only noticeable difference in 1873 was that the confusion and noise in the House had increased, the number of pages had been multiplied several times and the amount of rubbish on the floors had increased proportionally. In fact, the members, unruly and troublesome to the chair, would, if anything of interest attracted them away from the hall, leave it in such numbers that the House was often without a quorum, and the speaker was "forced to compell their attendance by the Sergeant-at-Arms." <sup>40</sup>

Moore, who arrived in Washington in time for the first roll call, was no exception to the typical Congressman. Although he made every effort to attend all the sessions when his health permitted, he did manage to write most of his letters to his wife while the House was in session discussing the revisions of the laws,<sup>41</sup> or while the President's Message of 1874 was being read. He took time to write his wife during this reading because he had been extremely busy and could "see it [the Message] in the papers." <sup>42</sup>

On December 5th, he was appointed to serve on the Committee on Revision of the Laws of the United States.<sup>43</sup> It was on this Committee, headed by Judge Luke P. Poland of Vermont, that Moore did most of his official work. Of his initial meeting with the Committee on December 13th, Moore wrote his wife that she

<sup>39</sup> Englishman's views quoted in Edward W. Martin, *Behind the Scenes in Washington* (Washington, D.C., 1873), 190.

<sup>40</sup> Martin, *op. cit.*, 191.

<sup>41</sup> William S. Moore to Elizabeth L. Moore, December 14, 1873, Moore Papers.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, December 7, 1873.

<sup>43</sup> *Congressional Record*, 43rd Cong., 1st Sess., 74.

" . . . should have seen how wise" he looked "sitting around the table with such men . . . " <sup>44</sup> as Judge Poland, Judge E. Rockwood Hoar of Massachusetts, R. Holland Duell of New York and J. Allen Barer of Wisconsin. When the Committee met again the following Wednesday, each member was assigned his share of the tedious and thankless task. The portion that fell to Moore was Title 38 of the Statutes, which dealt with currency.<sup>45</sup> They set at once to work on their arduous task.

Between working on the revision of the laws and dodging the "place hunters" who congregated " . . . around the hotels in the evening just to catch the members as they go to or return from supper . . . , " <sup>46</sup> Moore was kept busy. In the evening his room was filled with persons applying for offices until ten o'clock.

On the floor of the House Moore was kept busy presenting petitions to grant pensions, to increase pensions for ex-soldiers or their mothers, and the like. In all, he presented, during the first session, approximately eighteen petitions and bills of various types, ranging from a bill to reinstate Lieutenant George M. Book on the active list<sup>47</sup> to a petition of Finley Patterson requesting to be compensated for the erection of the capitol buildings in the Territory of Kansas.<sup>48</sup> His own constituents flooded him with requests for favors of one kind or another.

The House met in an evening session on March 18th, 1874 to resume consideration of the bill reported from the Committee on the revision of the laws. For the most part the changes, which were intended to clarify the laws, suggested by Moore were simple insertions or deletions of words or phrases: for example, he proposed that Section 3772, which required the executive department to publish in one of the daily newspapers a list of all contracts which had been solicited or proposed to it during the preceding week be stricken. He said, of that section, that " . . . it appears to be obsolete in operation. " <sup>49</sup>

A few weeks later he brought to the attention of the House one or two things which had escaped his notice in regard to his work. The most serious oversight that he discovered was in Section 3821 which stated that the Congressional Printer was to hold

<sup>44</sup> William S. Moore to Elizabeth L. Moore, December 14, 1873, Moore Papers.

<sup>45</sup> *Congressional Record*, *op. cit.*, 2252.

<sup>46</sup> William S. Moore to Elizabeth L. Moore, December 14, 1873, Moore Papers.

<sup>47</sup> *Congressional Record*, *op. cit.*, 589.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 3043.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 2252.

office for a term of two years commencing with the first day of each Congress. Moore pointed out that the phrase concerning the term of office conflicted with the Act of February 22, 1867 creating the Office of Congressional Printer, which simply provided that that office was to be chosen by the Senate, and made no provision whatever as to the length of time for which he should serve.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps this work, in the shadow of more sensational and newsworthy events, seemed dull, dry and uninteresting. But the revision of the Statutes was, as Judge Poland said, "... the largest single work ever done by any one Congress. Not one single hour of ordinary sessions was occupied with the revision. Every portion of time ordinarily devoted to business by Congress was given to that business." <sup>51</sup>

Behind the scenes and off the floor, Moore was busy with many duties. To him the most annoying case of the "daily gentry" who had "dull axes," concerned Charles F. Michener, a former Captain of the Civil War who had risen from the ranks.<sup>52</sup> Michener was accused of taking money from the dead letter office where he was employed. Before the Grand Jury took action on the case, the papers paraded the news "... that it was a 'conspiracy' against an innocent man," and even denounced the "detectives who furnished the information which led to his arrest."<sup>53</sup> Pending an investigation by the Grand Jury, Michener had been removed. When the Grand Jury failed to find a bill against him, his friends in the Pennsylvania Republican Association, of which he was an active member, demanded that he be restored. This committee wanted the whole Republican delegation from Pennsylvania, including Senators Simon Cameron and John Scott, to go in a body to the postmaster-general, Marshall Jewell, and demand Michener's restoration. In private interviews with Jewell, Moore learned that the former believed that Michener was guilty regardless of the action of the Grand Jury. While Jewell informed Moore that he would not, under any circumstances, restore Michener to his former position, he intimated that he might, if there was an opening somewhere else, place him there.<sup>54</sup>

Moore feared, however, that Michener's friends would not hear of anything except an outright restoration. Moore knew that he

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 2711.

<sup>51</sup> Judge Poland quoted in *The Daily Inter-Ocean*, February 16, 1874.

<sup>52</sup> Samuel P. Bates, *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861-5* (Harrisburg, 1870), III, 752.

<sup>53</sup> William S. Moore to Elizabeth L. Moore, January 25, 1874, Moore Papers.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

would be blamed for not accomplishing the impossible. He wrote, ". . . men who ought to know better think that a member of Congress can have everything his own way . . ." <sup>55</sup> The matter was closed as far as Moore was concerned.

The first session of the new congress was filled with the usual round of parties and social affairs. Moore, perhaps because of his Presbyterian beliefs, did not think too much of the social season. He was glad to see the end of the night life. He regarded the gossip that filled the papers as so much "twaddle" about ". . . the last 'reception' given by Judge this, or Senator that, or what the 'charming' Miss Jones, and the 'fascinating' Miss Brown had on." <sup>56</sup> For social life Moore attended concerts, lectures and enjoyed the church services on Sunday mornings. As he was a United Presbyterian, his tastes were plain and simple in all matters including religion. Upon being invited, however, he did, one Sunday, attend services at St. Paul's Church. As this was a high Episcopal Church, the service was extremely Romanistic to a Presbyterian. Of the service he wrote that ". . . there was more dress parade by far than I ever witnessed in any religious service before." <sup>57</sup> He referred to the vestments worn by the choir boys as "night-shirts."

Toward the close of the first session the Liberal Republicans lost one of their ablest men, Charles Sumner, senator from Massachusetts for over twenty-two years. On March 11, 1874 this tall, squarely-built man with a handsome and intellectual face died. Although Moore had seen but little of Sumner, Moore held a great respect for him. In commenting on his death Moore wrote that great respect was shown Sumner on account of his ". . . varied and profound learning, his purity of life, his incorruptible integrity and his steadfast devotion to the cause of freedom and humanity." <sup>58</sup> Moore included in this letter the opinion of Judge Poland, who had been in Washington for twelve years and who had, in Moore's opinion, a very keen insight into human nature. Poland said that Sumner ". . . never seemed to cultivate the society of any except those who were constantly 'burning incense' under his nostrils." <sup>59</sup> His unfortunate fault, Poland noted, was that once Sumner had a misunderstanding or fallout with anyone, he never would be reconciled afterwards. At the funeral services as Nellie Grant laid her

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, February 5, 1874.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, February 21, 1874.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, March 15, 1874.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

beautiful floral tribute on Sumner's grave, Moore said that everyone remarked that it was more than Sumner would have done for either her father or herself.

On June 23, 1874, after 204 days of session, the Congressmen packed up and left for home—and, they hoped, a little rest before beginning to battle for renomination.

### *The Fight for Renomination and Defeat*

In 1874 the Republican candidate for the 24th Congressional District, Moore's district, was to be selected or nominated by a County Convention composed of nine members, three from each of the counties of Beaver, Lawrence and Washington. The delegates to this convention were chosen by their respective county conferences. The voter in their respective counties indicated, by popular vote, their choice from the county. The local county committees then selected the three men to represent the wishes of the people at the district—or County Convention.

The delegates, or conferees as they were called, gathered together at the Union Depot Hotel in Pittsburgh on Wednesday, September 16, 1874.<sup>60</sup> The pre-convention feeling was not very exciting, for they expected that Moore, the incumbent, would be renominated according to the long established custom.<sup>61</sup> A man was entitled to a second term as long as he had not gone against the party or as long as his moral character was above reproach. Since Moore scored high on both points, they expected the convention to be a mere formality. Coming to the convention as the candidate from Beaver County was Major David Critchlow, a newcomer in the field of politics as well as journalism. State Senator James S. Rutan had endorsed Critchlow merely as a compliment.<sup>62</sup> The voters of Lawrence County chose the Honorable John W. Wallace, former Congressman, as their favorite son. He was not expected to present much of a threat because he had been nominated by the Lawrence County Republicans twice, elected once, and rejected for a second term.<sup>63</sup>

The nine conferees filed into the hotel hall assigned to them and settled down to the business at hand—nominating a candidate to represent the Republican party and the people in the November election. After setting up the organization, they proceeded to vote.

<sup>60</sup> *The Beaver Democrat*, October 9, 1874.

<sup>61</sup> *The Argus and Radical*, October 14, 1874.

<sup>62</sup> *The Beaver Democrat*, October 9, 1874.

<sup>63</sup> John Elder to William S. Moore, 1874, Moore Papers.

The results of the first ballot were as expected—three votes for each of the favorite sons. A second ballot produced the same results; so did a third, a fourth and a fifth. After one hundred and twenty-four ballots had not broken the deadlock, the assembly moved to adjourn until Wednesday, September 23rd.<sup>64</sup> Discouraged and tired, the delegates returned home to confer with their respective county conferences.

The conferees reconvened at the National Hotel in Pittsburgh on the date set to renew the triangular struggle. The balloting continued all that day and the next with the conferees remaining loyal to their favorite son. On the second day, after running the number of ballots to 350<sup>65</sup>, they finally adjourned in utter desperation. More conferences and planning with the county conferences and the political bosses ensued before they met again at Huron House, New Brighton, on Tuesday, September 29th.<sup>66</sup>

At this meeting the Lawrence County conferees continued to assail Moore's renomination because they insisted that his vote on the financial question in 1873 would cause him to lose many Republican votes. The financial question to which they referred probably was the Public Credit Act of 1869 and the Resumption Act of 1875, on which Moore voted in favor of its passage.<sup>67</sup> To this charge the Washington County conferees replied that Moore had acted "in accordance with the platform of the National and State party" and that "his vote pleased the people of Washington county."<sup>68</sup> The session continued with ballot after ballot producing the same results—three votes for each candidate. Senator Rutan, who desired the nomination in 1876,<sup>69</sup> called upon Secretary of the Commonwealth Matthew S. Quay, to see what could be done to prevent Critchlow, who was not supposed to continue to stay in the race, from obtaining the nomination. They decided upon a plan. The County Convention finally adjourned at nine o'clock in the evening.

When they resumed the following morning, another assembly with an entirely different purpose—that of defeating Critchlow—was called by William S. Shallenberger, chairman of the Beaver County committee. Unknown to the regular convention these forty-

<sup>64</sup> *The Beaver Democrat*, October 9, 1874.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Edward McPherson, *A Hand-Book of Politics for 1874* (Washington, 1874), III, 121.

<sup>68</sup> *The Beaver Democrat*, *op. cit.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

two hand picked radical county committeemen assembled in the Grand Jury Room of the Court House at one o'clock and selected M. [?] Darragh of Bridgewater, M. [?] Weyand and D. [?] L. Imbrie of Beaver as Congressional Conferees to replace those appointed the day the convention met—George M. Fields, C. [?] M. Merrick and George S. Barker.<sup>70</sup> This group of "judiciously" picked guests also approved a resolution by a vote of 18 to 14 which stated that unless a nomination was made by the County Convention by nine o'clock of that day, September 30th, the appointed conferees were to consider themselves relieved from further powers. The newly appointed delegates were instructed to support Critchlow so long as there was any prospect for his nomination; then—and here is where Rutan's plan entered—they were to be guided in their actions as to their second choice by the will of the Republican voters of Beaver County as expressed at the primary meetings.<sup>71</sup> A copy of this resolution was rushed to the convention and handed to Secretary George S. Barker. The tired conferees heard the resolution and continued the balloting. At nine o'clock they adjourned after reaching ballot 504 still deadlocked.<sup>72</sup>

When the convention met in Pittsburgh on Monday, October 5th, the Washington conferees continued to support Moore against a new group of conferees from Beaver and Lawrence Counties. A rumor spread through the convention that the delegates from Washington intended to cast their vote for Critchlow in retaliation for the trick instituted by the Beaverites against their own candidate. The rumor was confirmed when the Washington conferees announced that unless the other counties would support Moore they would support Critchlow for two reasons: (1) Beaver County had been longer without a candidate than Lawrence County and had assisted in the nomination of Moore in 1872; and (2) Beaver County was an immediate neighbor and connected with Washington in the Senatorial district.<sup>73</sup> This announcement disturbed the new conferees from Beaver who had intended to desert Critchlow and vote for Wallace, assuming, of course, that Washington County would support Moore. Realizing that if this threat were carried out, Rutan's cherished plans would be defeated and his political aspirations for 1876 killed, the Beaverites managed to get the convention to ad-

<sup>70</sup> *The Beaver Democrat*, October 23, 1874.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, October 9, 1874.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, October 23, 1874.

jour without voting. They scurried home to consult with their political lords and masters.<sup>74</sup>

During the recess, the Washington County committee meeting in a special session passed their own resolution. After restating the qualifications of Moore, they promised not to ask for the office in that decade if Moore was nominated for a second term. If Moore failed to receive the nomination, the resolution predicted disastrous consequences not only for the county and the legislative tickets, but also for the congressional nominee himself.<sup>75</sup> The resolution was read at the convention when it reconvened on Friday, October 16th in Pittsburgh. That no notice was taken of it added fuel to the burning antagonism of the Washington County delegates.

Before the actual balloting began, a resolution to call the conferees alphabetically was made and passed, only Washington County voting negatively. Secretary Barker then proceeded to call the roll. The Washington County conferees cast their votes for Critchlow in accordance with their threat to avenge their county and their candidate. The Lawrence County conferees cast their three votes for Wallace. The tie could be broken by Weyand, Darragh and Imbrie—the selected followers of Rutan. They did not switch their votes immediately to Wallace, but distributed them among the three candidates: Weyand voted for Wallace; Darragh voted for Critchlow; and Imbrie voted for Moore. Another deadlock resulted. The chairman pounded for order as the second ballot began. On this last ballot, number 511, Beaver and Lawrence Counties joined to support Wallace. The struggle was over amid shouts of joy from all but the Washington conferees who remained quietly in their seats. To express their indignation they voted against a motion to declare the nomination unanimous and one to pledge themselves to support the nominee—Wallace.<sup>76</sup>

After the convention the local newspapers took up the cry of deceit and fraud. Many of them speculated and ventured forth various reasons to explain why Moore was not renominated according to the long established custom. *The New Castle Gazette* attributed Moore's defeat to the fact that he was not a "Simon Cameron sycophant" and that he had "too much honesty in his heart and manhood in his character to consent to the bidding of Simon Cameron, the prince of American Corruptionists."<sup>77</sup> That this was a Demo-

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, October 9, 1874.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, October 23, 1874.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *The New Castle Gazette*, October 16, 1874.



cratic organ is evidenced by the fact that it further stated that as a radical politician, Moore had no right to listen " . . . to the dictates of his conscience and still less to weigh his personal considerations against the will or wishes" <sup>78</sup> of Cameron. There were, during the interval before the November election, many rumors, charges and counter charges that Moore was being approached, especially by the Democrats, to run as an independent candidate from his district.<sup>79</sup> The charges were refuted in *The New Castle Gazette* which intimated that although a letter had been addressed to Moore asking him to run, it doubted if the letter ever reached him.<sup>80</sup> The personal papers of Moore reveal that such a letter did reach him but there is no evidence that it was the work of Democrats. The letter signed by several citizens requested Moore to submit his name for reelection in protest against the deceit and fraud that accompanied the nomination of Wallace.<sup>81</sup>

The rumors that Moore would run independently were quieted when the *Reporter*, Moore's paper, placed at its head the name of Wallace as its candidate for Congress. In an editorial reprinted in other local papers, Moore begged his friends not to let their disappointment prevent them from making every "honorable effort" for the success of the ticket. The editorial stated that although Moore was naturally disappointed, and to say otherwise would be the sheerest affectation, he believed that no man was "of sufficient consequence to put himself in place of a cause . . ." <sup>82</sup> To those who still felt grieved, the article requested them to "take no thought of him, but remember the faith for which they are [were] contending, and do their duty accordingly." <sup>83</sup> Moore's support helped but little to soothe the ill-feeling of the Republican voters in Washington County.

All the predictions that the Republicans would lose because of the ill-feeling, however, did not materialize. For when all the votes were in, Wallace had a majority of 809 over his Democratic opponent, the Honorable George Miller. Washington and Beaver Counties were still sore over the treatment of their respective candidates.

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78 *Ibid.*

79 *The New Castle Courant*, October 23, 1874.

80 *The New Castle Gazette*, October 30, 1874.

81 John Elder to William S. Moore, 1874, Moore Papers.

82 *Reporter*, 1874, quoted in *The New Castle Courant*, October 23, 1874.

83 *Ibid.*

The vote for that election was:

	Wallace (R)	Miller (D)
Beaver	2,710	2,710
Lawrence	2,722	1,318
Washington	3,915	4,510
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	9,347	8,538 <sup>84</sup>

The state in general elected 10 Republicans and 14 Democrats to the 44th Congress as opposed to 22 Republicans and 5 Democrats for the 43rd Congress. The nation likewise represented a Republican loss. The 43rd Congress had 201 Republicans to 91 Democrats as opposed to 112 Republicans and 159 Democrats in the 44th Congress.<sup>85</sup> Thus, with the sweep of the "Tidal Wave" of 1874, the active political career of Moore came near to its dramatic end, only the second session remaining for Moore to play his last role on the political scene.

#### *In Congress—2nd Session*

When the second session got under way on December 7, 1874, the congressional elections of the previous month were a reality—the tidal wave had struck. The magic spell of the Republicans had been broken. The Democrats, who had not controlled the presidency or either house of Congress for fourteen long and lean years, overthrew the Republican two-thirds majority. They elected 169 Representatives to the Republicans' 109. At long last "the 'bloody shirt' had been waved in vain, betokening a decline in the potency of the war issues."<sup>86</sup> This "tidal wave" was partly due to the Panic of 1873, the scandals and the Salary Grab Act.

Soon after Moore reached the Capitol for the second—and his last—session, he became worried and vexed over the "lack of backbone on the part of the Republican leaders in the House."<sup>87</sup> He believed that the November election had utterly demoralized Henry L. Dawes of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, James A. Garfield of Hiram, Ohio, Judge Poland, John A. Kasson of Des Moines, Iowa, and others. He expressed his sorrow that he believed it was necessary to say that the results of the tidal wave even weakened his old classmate, James G. Blaine, a little. Of Ben Butler, Moore admitted

<sup>84</sup> *The Beaver Times*, November 12, 1874.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Wilfred E. Binkley, *American Political Parties, Their Natural History* (New York, 1949), 302.

<sup>87</sup> William S. Moore to Elizabeth L. Moore, February 24, 1875, Moore Papers.

that the former doubtless had his faults, " . . . but lack of courage" was "not one of them."<sup>88</sup>

Worried over the last election, Moore was still annoyed by the clamor of the job-seekers which was as bad as ever. From his arrival he was busy dodging them, although now the trouble was not so much with the people who were out and wanted in, but rather with those who held a job and wanted to be promoted.<sup>89</sup> His time was so taken up that he took time out to write his wife amid the jargon that characterized the first proceedings.<sup>90</sup>

In January of 1875 the House began what Moore termed as the most exciting days he had seen during either session. During that time he was only out of the House long enough to get something to eat. As the rules of the House stood, one-fifth could prevent action on any subject by dilatory motions; that is, "motions to adjourn—motions to adjourn to a day certain, and to amend by fixing a different day."<sup>91</sup> To each motion and to each amendment the members could demand a roll call of yeas and nays. This was the process which was repeated over and over again during the forty-six and a half hours that the House was in session. In all the roll was called some seventy-five times.

A few days prior to this long continuous session, the Republicans had made an effort to revoke this rule which would enable the Democrats to filibuster when the Civil Rights Bill was presented. The plan failed when some "weak-kneed Republicans would not join."<sup>92</sup> The strong supporters in favor of changing the rule regarding dilatory motions decided to sacrifice their comfort in an effort to demonstrate the need for modification. The long session demonstrated the need and the rules were accordingly modified.

To add to the excitement of this session, the Democrats became impudent as a result of their success in the last election, which especially gave new boldness to their men from the South. During the session, John Young Brown of Kentucky had to be censured for violating the privileges of debate when he attacked Butler. Brown referred to, but did not directly name, Butler. Brown drew an analogy relating a story about a Scotsman, "whose trade was murder, and who earned his livelihood by selling the bodies of his

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, February 6, 1875.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, December 7, 1875.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, February 6, 1875.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

victims for gold.”<sup>93</sup> Brown pointed out that the man’s name came to be linked with his crime, which came to be known as “Burking.” At this point the speaker interrupted Brown to ask him if he were referring to a member of the House. To this inquiry Brown replied, “No, Sir; I am describing an individual who is in my mind’s eye.”<sup>94</sup> The speaker of the House again posed the same question; and again Brown answered in the negative. Brown continued, “If I wished to describe all that was pusillanimous in war, inhuman in peace, forbidden in morals, and infamous in politics, I should call it ‘Butlerism’”<sup>95</sup> The commotion that followed this remark was, Moore said, “exciting in the extreme,” and the old members said it reminded them “of the days before the war.”<sup>96</sup>

When all the excitement died down, however, the Civil Rights Bill was passed by the House, and the rule was modified. Although a motion to expel Brown failed, he was brought before the House in the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms and censured.

As for the social events of the second session, Moore attended less than before. He stayed away from the Martha Washington Tea Party as well as the President’s reception for the King of The Hawaiian Islands—“Calico,” as they referred to him. Moore feared that he was “losing his taste for such things.”<sup>97</sup> He was not losing his taste, because he never particularly cared for the social aspects of a congressman’s life.

### *Retirement and Death*

Not much is known about Moore’s life between his return from the second session of Congress and his retirement due to ill health in October of 1877. In August of 1877 he journeyed to Philadelphia to seek the medical services of specialists. The doctors attempted every available means to conquer his affliction, cancer of the throat and mouth. He stayed there until about September 21st when he realized that the doctors could do nothing for him. He decided to return home because of the hopelessness of his ailment and because of the added expense of the treatments. During his last few months of life he grew steadily worse and was for three months unable to swallow solid foods.

On October 22nd, 1877 his paper, which he had been connected

<sup>93</sup> *Congressional Record*, 43rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 986.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> William S. Moore to Elizabeth L. Moore, February 6, 1875, Moore Papers.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, December 20, 1874.

with from 1858, carried his valedictory editorial. Because of his impaired health he sold his interest in the paper to his old classmate and friend, Alexander M. Gow, for 5000 dollars.<sup>98</sup> In this farewell address he thanked the members of the press who had treated him, he said, "with courtesy and fairness . . . even in the midst of heated campaigns, when partizan passions lend to estrangements."<sup>99</sup> The *Waynesburg Messenger*, a Democratic newspaper, noted Moore's retirement with sorrow. Although Moore had been, it stated, a Republican of the "'straightest sect,' he was ever courteous and gentlemanly with his opponents," and the "newspaper fraternity, without reference to party distinctions, will deeply regret his withdrawal."<sup>100</sup> With equal sentiment and sincerity *The Waynesburg Republican*<sup>101</sup> and *The New Castle Courant*<sup>102</sup> commented on his forced retirement.

From his retirement in October he continued to decline rapidly, but he bore his suffering with a patience and a submission to the will of God. Realizing that the insidious disease would, in a very brief period, terminate his life, he was, nevertheless, during all his suffering, kind, patient and often cheerful to the end. On Sunday afternoon at one o'clock, December 30, 1877, he died as he had lived, a quiet, modest and unassuming Christian man.<sup>103</sup>

One can not say that he was a great or famous man, either as a newspaper editor or as a congressman. No, Moore was not, and he would have been the first to object to such terms. He shunned the spotlight in political and private life. To the very end of his life he remained modest and unassuming. In one of his letters from Philadelphia he added this postscript to his wife: "When you address me leave off the 'Hon.'"<sup>104</sup>

In an age of famous and great men, such as Charles Sumner, General Grant and Ben Butler, many of whom were personal friends of Moore, he was just ordinary. He was not, as those mentioned above, a great orator or militarist, but he was a conscientious editor who never permitted his paper to contain indecent articles, an incorruptible officer who served his constituents faithfully, and a

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98 *The New Castle Courant*, October 26, 1877.

99 *The Daily Evening Reporter*, October 22, 1877.

100 *The Waynesburg Messenger*, October 24, 1877.

101 *The Waynesburg Republican*, October 24, 1877.

102 *The New Castle Courant*, October 26, 1877.

103 *The Daily Evening Reporter*, December 31, 1877.

104 William S. Moore to Elizabeth L. Moore, August 28, 1877, Moore Papers.

thoroughly reliable man. Let his epitaph be: " 'He died as he lived; an honest man, God's noblest work.' " <sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Newspaper clipping of Moore's death included in a letter from Thomas L. Hazzard to Annie Moore, 1877, Moore Papers.