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Geo. A. Halsey

HON. GEO. A. HALSEY,

REPRESENTATIVE FROM NEW JERSEY

ENGRAVED FOR BARNES HISTORY OF CONGRESS.

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

New Jersey Republican Convention,

HELD IN TRENTON, AUGUST 27, 1874.

WITH A SKETCH OF

HON. GEORGE A. HALSEY,

CANDIDATE FOR

GOVERNOR OF NEW JERSEY.



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PROCEEDINGS

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THE NEW JERSEY REPUBLICAN CONVENTION.

THE Republican Gubernatorial State Convention of New Jersey was held in Trenton, August 27, 1874, and was called to order by Hon. Frederic A. Potts, of Hunterdon County, and, on motion, J. Wyman Jones, of Bergen County, was elected temporary President. After the appointment of the committees, Hon. John Hill was elected permanent President. Hon. Thomas H. Dudley, from the Committee on Resolutions, reported the following, which were adopted with great applause:—

PLATFORM OF PRINCIPLES.

Resolved, That the Republicans of New Jersey, in entering upon a local contest for the political control of the State, at a time midway between two National elections, deem it unnecessary to advert to national questions, further than to declare—

1. That we approve and will continue to uphold the principles upon which the Republican party was founded, and which, during fourteen years of ascendancy in the National Government, have resulted in the preservation of the Union; in the extinction of slavery; in the reorganization of all the States; in securing equal political rights to all citizens; in the maintenance of the National credit; in the diminution of the public debt; in the reduction of taxes; in the honorable adjustment of foreign complications; in the advancement of the Nation in power and dignity abroad and prosperity at home; and in courageous efforts to expose official delinquencies, and promote integrity in public trusts.
2. That President Grant, who has borne so large a part in the producing these results by his skill in war and his wisdom in administration, deserves our unabated confidence.
3. That we are in favor of such National Legislation as will maintain inflexibly the faith of the Government to its creditors, and secure the speedy resumption of specie payments.
4. That, while not unmindful of the good of the whole country, we feel at liberty in this purely State contest to maintain especially the interests of New Jersey; to remember her peculiar position between two great manufacturing and commercial States in the path of our vast National traffic; to be justly proud of her mineral and agricultural wealth, her commercial facilities, her

great system of railroads, and her important manufacturing interests; and to be watchful against any form of National Legislation and any theories of political economy, which shall tend to lessen her advantages, to cripple her industries, or diminish her sources of wealth; and, therefore, we are in favor of such a tariff, and such equal internal taxation, as will afford protection to domestic manufactures, and best promote and encourage the industrial interests of the State. And for the same reasons we are in favor of the establishment of a Port of Entry at Jersey City in order to secure to New Jersey the just advantage of her unrivaled harbors, and to facilitate the flow of commerce in its natural channel through her territory.

Resolved, That in regard to State affairs, we commend and will pursue the measures and policy adopted by the Republican party during its control of the State Government, namely:

1. The general railroad system, and the consequent diminution of corrupting influences in legislation.
2. The judicious amendment of the State Constitution.
3. The generous support of our system of public education.
4. The wise management and liberal extension of our public institutions for penal, sanitary, and charitable purposes.
5. And the general promotion of the varied industries of the State so far as they lie within the sphere of State control.

The counties being called for nominations, every county named Hon. George A. Halsey, and he was nominated by acclamation.

The following is the letter of the committee appointed at the State Convention to notify Mr. Halsey of his nomination for Governor, together with his reply accepting the honor :

CAMDEN, *September 2, 1874.*

HON. GEORGE A. HALSEY, Newark, N. J.

DEAR SIR: We have the honor to inform you that you were unanimously selected by the Republican State Convention, held at Trenton on the 27th of August, as the nominee of the Republican party for Governor of New Jersey. In conveying to you this expression of the choice of the Convention, and of the party in this State which is so well represented, and asking your acceptance, we take occasion to express our confidence that the enthusiasm and unanimity with which that choice was made, may be accepted as prophetic of the success of the party in the coming canvass, in your triumphant election as the next Governor of New Jersey.

With sentiments of esteem, we are your obedient servants,

S. H. GREY,	BARTON F. THORN,
WM. J. MAGIE,	N. W. VOORHEES,
H. C. PITNEY,	JOHN Y. FOSTER,

J. M. CORNELISON,

Committee on behalf of the Convention.

MR. HALSEY'S REPLY.

NEWARK, *September 3, 1874.*

GENTLEMEN: Your letter of the 2d inst., informing me of my unanimous nomination for Governor by the Republican State Convention, has been received. I am profoundly grateful to its members for the generous manner in which it was conferred. As this nomination has been unsought on my part, I can the more readily accept it, with its duties and responsibilities. Free from all promises and pledges of whatever character, and determined to remain so, I shall, if elected, endeavor to administer the government of the State with an eye single to its honor and welfare. Firm in my own political convictions, and faithful to them within their true scope, I shall always regard the interests of the whole people as paramount to the claims of party, and ever strive so to act as to secure their prosperity and happiness, and the true progress and advantage of the State.

With the highest respect I am yours very truly,

SAMUEL H. GREY,

BARTON F. THORN,

WM. J. MAGIE, and others, Committee.

GEO. A. HALSEY.

SKETCH OF THE NOMINEE.

HON. GEORGE A. HALSEY, the Republican candidate for Governor, was born in Springfield, Union County, N. J., December 7, 1827. His ancestors had resided in that township and its immediate neighborhood for several generations, extending back to 1694. They were farmers in the truest acceptation of the term, and in his youth Mr. Halsey was accustomed to the labors of the field. The removal of the family to Newark changed his career. He entered himself as an apprentice with Messrs. Halsey & Tucker, and there mastered the details of the manufacturing business, in which he is now largely interested. An opportunity soon presented itself of his entering into the wholesale clothing business in connection with Southern houses, and it was embraced. He at once developed into a prudent, enterprising, and successful business man. The qualities which have since given him reputation and honor were early manifested, and he soon became connected with the banking and insurance institutions of Newark.

At the breaking out of the war in 1861, the firm of which he

was the head, met with severe reverses, its property being entirely swept away by the secession of the Southern States. Within a few months the labor of years was lost; but, notwithstanding this reverse, the obligations of the firm were finally met. Prompt in the fulfillment of every personal duty and obligation, his fellow citizens naturally turned to him for co-operation in public affairs. In 1860 he was sent to the Assembly from the district of the city of Newark in which he resided, then as now, alive with manufacturing industries. Notwithstanding his large Southern trade, and his intimate associations with business men at the South, he had been a strong and active Republican from the organization of that party in New Jersey. He formed one of a minority in the Assembly of his State; but even under such unfavorable auspices, his prompt business qualities, his sterling integrity and sound judgment, gave him a large degree of influence. Through the critical period of the opening scenes of the rebellion he was one of the strong aids of Gov. Olden. He was re-elected in 1861.

Upon the organization of the Internal Revenue Bureau in 1862, he was appointed Assessor for the Fifth District of New Jersey. His sphere of duties comprised one of the largest manufacturing districts in the United States. He was frequently consulted by the Commissioner in reference to the construction and revision of the law, and many of its harsher provisions were ameliorated through his influence. At the close of the war he was selected by the Commissioner to visit the Southern States, to instruct the newly appointed revenue officers in their duties, but the requirements of his own district obliged him to decline the appointment.

His services to the Government during these eventful years were not confined to the due performance of his official duties. He cordially sustained the administration of Mr. Lincoln in its prosecution of the war for the preservation of the Union, and to this end his labors and energies were fully given until its object was secured.

In 1866 Andrew Johnson sought to remove him, in common with many other faithful officers, from his official position, but the Senate refused to confirm the nomination of a successor, and Mr. Halsey

retained the Assessorship. This attempt, however, of the President, and the high esteem in which Mr. Halsey was held by his friends, naturally called the attention of the Republicans of his district to him as their best nomination for Congress. He was almost unanimously selected by the Convention, and, after a vigorous contest, was elected by a large majority. The district had heretofore been strongly Democratic. In Congress he maintained the high character he had previously acquired. He was consulted upon questions affecting the manufacturing and financial interests of the country, while his services to his district were constant and invaluable. These services were rendered alike to Democrats and Republicans, the question of party never entering into the discharge of duties affecting an entire constituency. He served on the Committee on the District of Columbia; was appointed on the Joint Select Committee on Retrenchment, and served with Senators Edmonds and Buckalew on the sub-committee of the same, "to examine the method of printing and issuing bonds, notes, and other securities," the results of which secured important reforms in the Treasury Department.

In 1868 Mr. Halsey was unanimously renominated for Congress, but was defeated. His popularity was attested by the fact that his vote in the district largely exceeded that of Gen. Grant. When the administration of the newly elected President was formed, and Mr. Boutwell assumed the position of Secretary of the Treasury, he tendered Mr. Halsey the important office of Register, thus marking his high appreciation of one with whom he had been associated in Congress. This position was declined by Mr. Halsey, as upon relinquishing his seat in Congress, he had actively resumed his business as a manufacturer of patent leather. In his comparative retiracy he was not, however, unmindful of the large interests which centered around him, and which naturally looked to him for protection and care. His knowledge of the wants of the district, and his services in securing them were so generally acknowledged, that he was again nominated for Congress in 1870, and elected by over three thousand majority.

This brilliant success brought him prominently before the country, and upon taking his seat in Congress he was assigned to the chairmanship of one of the most important committees, the duties of which he performed with signal fidelity. He was pre-eminently watchful of the interests of his District and State, it being largely due to his influence that the new Court-House and Post-office at Trenton, and Post-office at Jersey City, were secured. To him also are we mainly indebted for the improvements authorized in the Passaic and other rivers of this State. At the close of this Congress he received from the people of Hudson County a most gratifying and valuable testimonial, all the more esteemed because it was irrespective of party. In 1872 Mr. Halsey declined a nomination for Congress.

Private life did not, however, free Mr. Halsey from those duties which are of a really public character. Upon the retirement of Governor Ward he was immediately chosen President of the Newark Industrial Exposition, and it is no injustice to the other gentlemen associated in this great enterprise, to state that he has been its real head. In connection with Gov. Randolph and others he has been prominent in preserving to the future one of the few remaining landmarks of the past—Washington's Headquarters at Morristown—and during the present year he has been acting as one of the Commissioners of the new Lunatic Asylum, which will, when completed, be a noble monument, worthy in all respects of our State.

For the last year he has been prominently named in connection with the nomination for Governor, and this has at times, as is well known to many, caused him serious embarrassment. Grateful for the expression of confidence, he felt that the nomination must come to him from the freest expression of public sentiment, or he would not entertain it for a moment. His friends believed that he combined more of the qualities necessary to secure success than others, and with the highest appreciation of all the gentlemen named, they could not but urge his acceptance, if public opinion clearly manifested itself in his favor. Such has been the case, and his nomination has been made in a manner most honorable to him.