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John W. Kern of Indiana

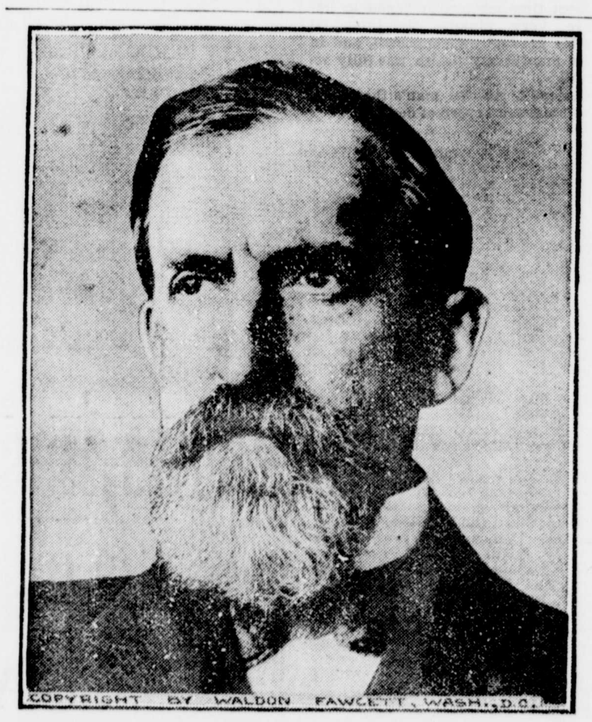
Bryan's Running Mate One of Democracy's Most Valiant Champions—A Man of High Ideals and Sterling Worth. Excellent Campaigner—A Stump Speaker Second to None In the Hoosier State.

By GEORGE H. PICARD.

JOHN WORTH KERN, the man who has been chosen by the Denver convention to be the running mate of William J. Bryan, is known as one of the most valiant champions of Democracy in the Hoosier State. It is true that in the majority of the political contests in which he has figured he has been on the losing side, but that has not had the effect of lessening his popularity or relegating him into the obscurity which is the usual fate of the oft defeated candidate for political honors.

It is admitted by all of those who are at all conversant with the political situation in Indiana that Mr. Kern is far and away the most popular Democrat in the state. This fact has been made apparent on numerous occasions. He has been twice honored by his party with the nomination for governor and has also been the Democratic candidate for United States senator.

It is not by his political associates alone that Mr. Kern is held in high repute. Men of all political creeds have learned to like him and to appreciate his sterling worth. Although ever since his entry into political life he has been accounted an extreme party man, he has never permitted himself even during the heat of a political campaign to indulge in personalities or descended to the abuse of any of his political antagonists. He is esteemed throughout the state as a man of high ideals and pure motives.


JOHN W. KERN.

In 1900 Mr. Kern received the nomination for governor, but he went down to defeat with Mr. Bryan. Again in 1904 he was given another opportunity, but the sorry political fortune of the previous campaign was repeated. Although he was regarded as one of Mr. Bryan's stanchest friends, he was the first Indiana man of any especial prominence to come out for Judge Alton B. Parker, whom he supported loyally without in any way endangering his friendship for the man from Nebraska. Thus it is that he is today one of Mr. Bryan's closest friends and admirers.

Mr. Kern is a native son of the Hoosier State, born in Howard county, near Kokomo, in 1849. He is of southern extraction, his father having emigrated from Virginia in 1836 and becoming one of the pioneers of Howard county, where he practiced medicine for several years. When John was five years of age his parents decided to remove to Iowa, and the family remained in that state until the lad was fifteen. Soon after the Kerns had returned to their old home their son entered the State Normal school and after a short period of preparation became a district school teacher in Howard county. After he had succeeded in saving a little money he entered the University of Michigan as a member of the freshman class.

His means were not sufficient to admit of regular attendance at the university, and he was obliged to take several long intermissions in order to earn the money necessary to complete his course. But he was resolute in the determination to obtain an education, and he permitted no hardship to turn him from his purpose. When he was graduated he carried off all the honors to which he was eligible, and his record was most gratifying of any member of the class.

Successful at an Early Age.

At a very early age Kern had decided to enter the legal profession, and when he returned home from college he set about the achievement of his heart's desire without delay. As soon as he was admitted to the bar he hung out his shingle in Kokomo and began business on his own hook. From the very first day he was a pronounced success in obtaining business, and his luck in bringing his cases to a favorable conclusion soon became proverbial. In an incredibly short time he established a business second to none in the prosperous county town, and his prospects were exceedingly bright.

He came by his political creed very naturally. His father was a so called Democrat of the old school, having imbibed his political ideas in the atmosphere of Monticello, near which he was born. Thomas Jefferson was the elder Kern's political ideal, and he made a point of training his clever son in the same faith. Outside of his immediate home circle young Kern received little sympathy in his political predilections, for Howard county was overwhelmingly Republican, and a follower of any other party was in a hopeless minority. Thus it was that the young lawyer traveled a rather hard political road in his early days.

A Man of Nerve.

This preponderance of Republican sentiment in his immediate vicinity, however, did not discourage him. He realized that he was fortunate in having established a reputation for ability and uprightness in a community which was so opposed to him in political views, and he accepted the situation and devoted himself to the task of building up his business. It was not long until he had arrived at a legal eminence which seemed to him sufficient to warrant a flight into the political field. With this end in view he came out as a candidate for the legislature and at once entered on a vigorous campaign. Although the circumstances of the case did not seem to justify the experiment and all his friends were opposed to the venture, he actually came within a few votes of securing the election. He carried the city in which he lived, but could not secure the country districts. It was actually a great triumph for the young Democratic lawyer, and it added immensely to his reputation as a man of nerve without in any way detracting from his character.

In 1878 Kern was elected city attorney of Kokomo, and when his term expired he was accorded a re-election. While serving in this capacity he made an excellent record. During his two terms law and order were dominant, and it became a current saying in Kokomo that there was no necessity to bolt the door as long as Kern was on the watch.

In the state election of 1884 Mr. Kern was elected reporter of the supreme court on the Democratic ticket. In this responsible position he proved most efficient and conscientious and won many powerful friends. At the close of his term he settled in Indianapolis and soon became closely identified with the business interests and policies of that growing capital. He was elected to the state senate in 1892 and did admirable service in the legislature. From 1897 to 1901 Mr. Kern was city attorney of Indianapolis under Mayor Tom Taggart, the national chairman of the Democratic party. He took a very prominent part in the great political battle of 1896 and was identified with the fortunes of Mr. Bryan in the state of Indiana.

Successful at an Early Age.

The gubernatorial campaign of 1904, into which Mr. Kern was practically drafted by party demands, left him in an impaired physical condition, and he was obliged to relinquish his business activities for some time and go away from home to recuperate. He conducted a whirlwind campaign that year, making a great number of speeches and traveling over a greater part of the state. He is regarded as a redhot campaigner and is an orator of force and eloquence. He was the friend of Hendricks and Voorhees and served with those great political lights in many well fought battles.

Mr. Kern is above the middle height, of slight build and active nervous temperament. An able constitutional lawyer, he arraigns the present Republican administration severely for usurpation of power and the state administration for its enactment of the so called "ripper" bill, which he claims was used for partisan purposes by the Republican governor. Mr. Kern is dark haired and has a crop of flowing whiskers and is a most impressive personality generally.

Family Socially Prominent.

The Kern family is prominent socially in Indianapolis. Mrs. Kern is a brilliant woman, endowed with a lively wit, and the Kern home is the center of a refined circle composed of the most intellectual people of the notably intellectual capital of Indiana.

It is no secret that the Kern boom has been the particularly pet hobby of the Democratic chairman, Tom Taggart, who announced to his friends on the eve of his departure for Denver that he should never return unless John Kern were given the nomination for the vice presidency. It has long been known in Indiana political circles that Taggart has always considered his friend to be first class presidential timber, and he saw no especial reason why he should not be given first place on the ticket if the Nebraska man failed to make good. Taggart's determination to promote the advancement of his friend was the cause of much merriment at Denver, although those who are personally acquainted with the nominee are of the opinion that Kern is big enough to justify the chairman's admiration.

When His Aim Was Poor.

A story illustrative of Kern's disposition to grow restive under disappointment comes from Indianapolis. When he was a member of the state legislature he introduced a bill which was defeated. It was a matter in which he felt a great personal interest, and when the vote was counted against it he rose in his place, accused the speaker in no undecided terms of killing his bill, and, hurling a bulky typewritten copy of the measure at the head of the presiding officer, shouted, "If you won't pass it, eat it!" Fortunately for everybody the irate legislator's aim was defective and the ponderous missile went wide of the mark. The speaker saw the humor of the situation and was disposed to make a joke of it. So it happened that the hasty legislator did not suffer from the consequences of his indiscretion. It is altogether to his credit that a short time for reflection convinced him that he had been an offender and he lost no time in making the proper apology.

The friendship between Taggart and Kern is really something out of the ordinary. At the St. Louis convention the latter might have been considered seriously as a vice presidential candidate but for his determination to put no obstacle in the way of Taggart's candidacy for the national chairmanship. When the party leaders went to Kern and almost importuned him to permit them to use his name in connection with the vice presidency he declared that he would not be mentioned for the place because he wanted Indiana's share of the glory to go to Taggart, who was a man that deserved all he could get. He even went to New York to urge Judge Parker to stand for Taggart for the chairmanship. He obtained a proxy from a western member of the committee, and he it was who placed Taggart in nomination at the meeting in New York at which his friend was made chairman.

A Free Silver Champion.

Perhaps the most telling charge which will be made against Kern in the coming campaign is his more or less sudden conversion from an ardent advocate of gold coinage into a champion of free silver at 16 to 1. It will be remembered that at the outset he was a gold advocate, speaking at a public meeting in Indianapolis in 1896 against what he then termed the "free silver craze." The leaders of the gold movement remembered Kern's "desertion," as they were pleased to term it, and when he ran for governor they withheld from him many of the votes which he might otherwise have controlled.

But in spite of his somewhat mixed political tendencies Mr. Kern is certain to find many warm friends in Indiana among the members of all parties. Personally he is liked by almost everybody.

Schoolboys' Weather Observations.

An interesting method of instructing boys in that part of nature study pertaining to the atmosphere has been devised by John Reid, the headmaster of the Reckleford Council school at Yeovil, in England. Each day of the school week several boys are sent to the corporation gas works to copy the records of barometer movements and rainfall there kept, one or two less experienced lads accompanying them. Meanwhile other boys note the direction of the wind and record the temperature from readings of thermometers hung in the open on the north and south sides of the school. The teacher of the class then enters the particulars on a sheet and encourages the scholars to make deductions from the collected data. The boys copy the results, and every Friday they write an account of their observations in the form of "general remarks" on the week's weather.

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An exceptionally handsome lot of fine Batiste Frantings, 30 inches wide, with space for tucking.

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Of colored and striped madras—also some in white crossbar dimimity and madras.

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Summer Schedule
(In effect June 27th, 1908, from Baltimore.)

Steamer will leave Pier 7 Light St. wharf, daily except Sunday, 2.30 A.M. weather permitting, for the following points:—Kent Island, Queenstown, Bogles, Spaniard's Point, Cliffs, Indiantown, Ashland, Quaker Neck, Booker's, Wilmer's, River Side, Rolph's, Piney Grove, arrive Chestertown 7 30 P. M.

Returning, Steamer will leave Chestertown for Baltimore daily except Sunday, 7 A. M., weather permitting stopping at the above landings, arriving at Baltimore about 12 noon.

Steamer leaves Baltimore, Pier 7, Light St., daily except Sunday at 3.30 P. M., weather permitting for Rock Hall.

Returning steamer will leave (weather permitting) daily except Sunday, Jackson's Creek, 7 A. M., Rock Hall, 8.30 A. M., arriving in Baltimore 11 A. M.

NOTE.—On account of change in Schedule, there will be no steamer leave Chestertown or Rock Hall for Baltimore, June 27, 1908.

WILLARD THOMSON, General Manager — T. MURDOUCH, Gen. Frt. & Pass. Agt.

SUMMER SCHEDULE.
(weather permitting.)
IN EFFECT MAY 30, 1908.

TOLCHESTER SCHEDULE

Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays—Steamer Louise leaves Tolchester at 10 30 A. M. and 7 P. M.; leaves Baltimore at 8.30 A. M. and 2.30 P. M.

Tuesdays, Thur days and Fridays—Leaves Baltimore at 8.30 A. M., 2.00 P. M. and 6.20 P. M; leaves Tolchester at 10.30 A. M., 4.10 P. M. and 8.30 P. M.

SASSAFRAS RIVER LINE
(Schedule in effect June 18.)

Leave Fredericktown week days except Saturday at 7 A. M., Betterton 8.15 A. M., Buck Neck 9.30 A. M. Returning leaves Baltimore week days except Friday and Saturday at 3.00 P. M., Saturday at 10.30 A. M. (Does not stop at Gale's and Buck Neck on Monday's and Wednesday's trip from Baltimore.)

PORT DEPOSIT AND HAVRE DE GRACE LINE

Leaves Port Deposit week days except Wednesday, 7 00 A.M., Havre de Grace 7.30 A.M., Betterton 8.45 A. M., stops at Tolchester on Fridays.

Returning leaves Baltimore Mondays 2.00 P. M., Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays 1.00 P. M., Fridays 3.30 P. M., stopping at Tolchester on Fridays.

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AND VIENNA

Respectfully,
J. F. Thompson.

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