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THE POLITICAL LIFE OF A CARPETBAGGER:

STEPHEN W. DORSEY, 1873-1883

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

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May, 1976

SMC

Lowry, Sharon K., The Political Life of a Carpetbagger: Stephen W. Dorsey, 1873-1883. Master of Arts (History), May, 1976, 173 pp., 6 tables, bibliography, 109 titles.

This thesis investigates the political career of Stephen Dorsey, an Ohio industrialist who moved to Arkansas in 1871. Dorsey was elected to the U.S. Senate from Arkansas in 1873, served as secretary of the Republican National Committee for the election of 1880, and was tried twice, in 1882 and 1883, for the Star Route postal frauds. Although Dorsey was acquitted, the Star Route frauds ended his political career.

Separate chapters treat each phase of Dorsey's career. Major sources included the Daily Arkansas Gazette, the Congressional Record, the Garfield Papers, and the official transcripts of the Star Route trials. The thesis concludes that Dorsey's career was the product of Ulysses S. Grant's influence within the Republican party in the Gilded Age.

PREFACE

This thesis will examine the career of Stephen W. Dorsey from the time of his election to the United States Senate in January, 1873, until his acquittal in the second trial of the Star Route frauds in 1883. Dorsey served one term in the United States Senate from Arkansas, not seeking re-election after the Democrats regained control of that state. Before and after this brief period of political prominence Dorsey was an entrepreneur, at various times involved in manufacturing, railroad building, cattle ranching, and mining. As a senator, Dorsey was among the hundreds who have served in that body and left no mark; indeed, for most of the votes cast during his term Dorsey was not present on the Senate floor.

His position as a southern Republican involved him briefly in the negotiations surrounding the inauguration of President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1877. Dorsey's major political impact, however, came with his selection as secretary of the Republican National Committee for the campaign and election of 1880.

Like most of his contemporaries in Gilded Age politics, Dorsey left no papers. The only Dorsey correspondence of

any political significance available to historians is that preserved in the James A. Garfield Papers, and this correspondence covers only an eight-month span in Dorsey's career, from July, 1880, to March, 1881. Information concerning Dorsey is therefore scant, and biographers must sift through newspaper accounts, congressional investigations, and the testimony of witnesses in the Star Route trials, carefully allowing for the bias of a Democratic editor or a self-interested witness. The actual events which occurred during Dorsey's career are a matter of public record, having been treated extensively in memoirs, biographies, and monographs covering the period. Dorsey's involvement in those events, and possible motives for his behavior, remain in obscurity; these are the subject of this thesis.

Although Dorsey only achieved national prominence twice in an otherwise obscure political career, that career is worth study, for it allows an opportunity for examining generalizations widely held and cultivated among historians concerning Carpetbaggers, Radical Republicans, and politics in the Gilded Age.

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CHAPTER I

EMERGENCE OF A CARPETBAG POLITICIAN

The political career of Stephen W. Dorsey affords a look at the less idealistic, more practical and often more seamy side of politics in the Gilded Age. Through Dorsey one can see the opportunistic Carpetbagger, more concerned with increasing his own fortunes than with enhancing the life of his adopted state; the game of machine politics as it was played by the master machinists Roscoe Conkling and John A. Logan; and the political scandals of a scandal-ridden age as demonstrated in the Star Route frauds, for which Dorsey was never convicted but in which he was deeply involved.

Dorsey's public career occurred simultaneously with the period of Stalwart predominance in the national Republican party. He began his service in the United States Senate on the day Grant's second term officially began, and his spectacular demise at the hands of the Star Route investigators coincided with the disintegration of Stalwart power at the time of the assassination of James A. Garfield.

Dorsey was born in Vermont in 1842, but moved to Ohio as a child and considered that state his home. He was educated in the public schools in Oberlin, and attended the racially mixed Oberlin College. This education, by report, gave Dorsey a liberal attitude toward the Negro and integration, but his public life did not noticeably demonstrate this attitude.¹ At the outbreak of the Civil War he left Oberlin and enlisted in the 42nd Ohio Volunteers. Dorsey soon captured the attention of his superiors, and he became an officer under the command of General James A. Garfield. This association with Garfield later developed into a political alliance. Dorsey followed Garfield through the battles of Shiloh, Perryville, Stone River, Chattanooga, and Chickamauga. In 1864 Garfield, wounded at Chickamauga, left the Army and went to the United States Senate from Ohio. Dorsey was transferred to the Army of the Potomac, where he spent the remainder of the war under the command of another Ohioan, Ulysses S. Grant.²

After the Civil War Dorsey tried to use his influence in Ohio to gain a position within the United States Treasury

¹Memphis Daily Appeal, 12 January 1873.

²Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1961 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961), pp. 823-24.

Department.³ Failing in this attempt, he settled in Sandusky, Ohio, as a partner in the manufacturing firm of Allen, Dorsey and Tenney. Four years later Dorsey had gained controlling interest in the firm, and he merged it with the Sandusky Tool & Iron Company, which he was in the process of organizing. As plant superintendent, he built the Tool & Iron Company from "moderate and apparently uncertain beginnings" into a firm "of the first prominence" in only two years. This display of youthful energy coupled with a shrewd business sense led to his election, in 1871, as president of the newly-incorporated Arkansas Central Railway Company.⁴

The Arkansas Central Railway Company was incorporated in January, 1871, to build a railroad from Helena to Little Rock, Arkansas, with projected branches from Aberdeen to Clarendon, Aberdeen to Pine Bluff, and Clarendon through Pine Bluff and Camden to Shreveport, Louisiana.⁵ In February, 1871, Dorsey set up a working headquarters in

³ Samuel Plumb to Benjamin F. Wade, 2 May 1865, Benjamin F. Wade Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., vol. 11.

⁴ Sandusky [Ohio] Register reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 17 February 1871.

⁵ Clifton E. Hull, Shortline Railroads of Arkansas (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), p. 337.

Helena, Arkansas, and began energetically to solicit state, county and city aid for his railroad. He quickly acquired state aid at the rate of \$15,000 per mile from Helena to Little Rock, and counties in Arkansas rushed to offer county aid bonds to Dorsey in hope of bringing the Central through their communities.⁶

For his first few months in Arkansas, Dorsey apparently devoted his full energies to building the Central, with the enthusiastic support of Arkansas' Conservative Democrats through their organ, the Little Rock Daily Arkansas Gazette. The Gazette noted, for example, that Dorsey was the only railroad promoter who had actually laid some tracks with the state aid bonds issued during Reconstruction.⁷ Eight months after his arrival in Arkansas, however, Dorsey purchased controlling interest in the Helena Clarion, a Republican newspaper.⁸ The attitude of Arkansans toward Dorsey changed abruptly. The people of Arkansas had extended a warm welcome to the northern businessman who had come to their state to build a railroad; they had no use for another northern Republican.

⁶Daily Arkansas Gazette, 14 February 1871, 2 June 1871, 6 November 1871.

⁷Ibid., 21 August 1871, 27 August 1871.

⁸Ibid., 21 November 1871.

Overnight Dorsey's image was transformed, in the state's Democratic press, from an efficient businessman into a Radical Carpetbagger, and from then on he was attacked in a fashion previously reserved for the most disreputable members of this class. The Gazette began asking embarrassing questions, addressed to the editor of the Clarion, about how Dorsey had managed to obtain state aid for his railroad,⁹ and opposed a grant of \$100,000 to the Central from the City of Little Rock on the strength of rumors that Dorsey had bribed the Little Rock City Council to obtain the award.¹⁰

The first stretch of the Central, from Helena to Clarendon, opened with great fanfare and celebration late in September, 1872.¹¹ This evidence of progress on the railroad might have induced the railroad-hungry people of Arkansas to be more tolerant of Dorsey; the Gazette had commented editorially that the people were not concerned with the amount of profit a railroad promoter made, so long as the road was built.¹² But by the time of the opening

⁹ Ibid., 9 December 1871, 10 March 1872.

¹⁰ Ibid., 28 November 1871.

¹¹ Ibid., 29 September 1872.

¹² Ibid., 27 August 1871.

of the Central, Dorsey had begun to pursue an Arkansas political career in earnest--as a Radical Republican.

The Republican party which took control of the Arkansas state government under congressional Reconstruction was primarily a combination of native white Arkansans and northern white Carpetbaggers. This coalition was always tenuous at best, and in 1872 Arkansas Republicanism split into two factions: the "Minstrels," or the Radical faction, and the "Brindletails," the Liberal-Reform group. The Minstrels supported Carpetbagger-Governor Powell Clayton and President Ulysses S. Grant and were known in the Democratic press as the "state-house gang," of whom Conservative Democrats in Arkansas were trying desperately to rid themselves. The Brindletails were anti-Clayton and supported Horace Greeley in 1872. As a general rule, most native white Arkansans were Brindletails, while Arkansas Carpetbaggers were Minstrels. In the absence of a functioning Democracy during Reconstruction, most Democrats supported the Brindletails as the lesser evil. Dorsey was a latecomer to this tenuous Republican coalition; furthermore, he had the misfortune of becoming embroiled in Arkansas politics just as Arkansas Republicanism was disintegrating and the Democrats were mounting their final, successful struggle for Redemption.

In August, 1872, Dorsey attended the Phillips County Minstrel convention, held to elect delegates to the Minstrel state convention. The county convention split over the election of a permanent chairman, with the dissatisfied Minstrels bolting and holding their own convention.¹³ Demonstrating enviable political adaptability, Dorsey managed to get himself elected as a delegate to the state convention from both county Minstrel factions.¹⁴ At the state convention, Dorsey was appointed to the Republican State Central Committee, from which position he spent much of September and October of 1872 working with the Republican National Committee for the Grant ticket in Arkansas.¹⁵ Thus when the Central opened late in September Dorsey was in New York, trying to arrange for money and speakers to be sent to Arkansas in support of President Grant.¹⁶

In November, 1872, the Gazette announced that Dorsey was a "prominent candidate" in the January election for a

¹³The issue involved in this election was support or non-support of the Clayton faction in the state house. Ibid., 8 August 1872.

¹⁴Ibid., 10 August 1872.

¹⁵Dorsey to E.D. Morgan, 2 September 1872, William E. Chandler Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹⁶Dorsey to Chandler, 12 September 1872, 26 September 1872, Chandler Papers.

seat in the United States Senate from Arkansas.¹⁷ For the purposes of Arkansas Republicans, who in 1872 felt their power seriously threatened,¹⁸ Dorsey was the perfect man to send to the United States Senate. He was widely known throughout the state as the builder of the Arkansas Central, but was not well known politically. He was in sympathy with the Radical Republicans, but he had not been in the state long enough to be associated publicly with the hated Clayton regime of Arkansas Carpetbaggers. As the Gazette commented, "if he has stolen anything, stuffed any ballot-boxes, or been a party to any such conduct, or in any manner aided or abetted in oppressing the people, we have not heard of it."¹⁹ In fact, Clayton supported Dorsey's Republican opponent in the senatorial contest. The governor's opposition won Dorsey many Democratic supporters in that election.²⁰

Later, when Dorsey was embroiled in the battle for Arkansas Redemption, reports circulated that Dorsey had moved to Arkansas from Ohio specifically for the purpose of

¹⁷ Daily Arkansas Gazette, 15 November 1872.

¹⁸ Thomas S. Staples, Reconstruction in Arkansas, 1862-1874 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), pp. 393-95.

¹⁹ Daily Arkansas Gazette, 19 January 1873.

²⁰ Ibid.

becoming a United States senator.²¹ He had been active in Republican politics in Ohio, and had served for a time on the Sandusky City Council. When he moved to Arkansas, he attempted to secure his political position by carrying with him a letter of introduction from Ohio Governor Rutherford B. Hayes.²² And Dorsey's rise, once in the Senate, was too rapid to permit the assumption that he was not aided by powerful Senate connections.

But Dorsey's campaign for the United States Senate was probably not entirely motivated by a desire to serve the interests of Arkansas Republicanism. He might simply have grabbed at an opportunity to run for the Senate when the opportunity became available, and then used his Ohio connections for all they were worth once he actually got to the Senate. This explanation seems plausible in view of Dorsey's subsequent behavior. But whatever his motives in running for a seat in the Senate from Arkansas, the action undoubtedly had much more to do with the advancement of Stephen Dorsey than with that of the state of Arkansas.

²¹Chicago Tribune reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 6 June 1874; Daily Arkansas Gazette, 7 February 1875.

²²Rutherford B. Hayes, Diary and Letters of Rutherford Birchard Hayes, ed. Charles R. Williams, 5 vols. (Columbus, Ohio: The F.J. Hur Printing Co., 1924), 3:137.

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL DEATH IN ARKANSAS

On 18 January 1873 the Arkansas legislature elected Stephen Dorsey to the United States Senate. Reaction throughout Arkansas was mixed, the major objection to Dorsey's election being the indecent haste with which he had risen to power in Arkansas politics. He had been in the state for less than two years at the time of his election, and no one was certain that he had met the state's residence requirement for officeholders. There was also some question concerning Dorsey's involvement with the Arkansas Central Railway Company and the fact that he had been awarded, at a conservative estimate, \$1,549,977.04 in state and county bonds and had built only fifty-seven miles of railroad.¹ The Democratic Helena World was incensed at the elevation of "an iron-monger in Ohio, a native of Vermont, and an offshoot from Oberlin" to the United States Senate from Arkansas, and commented:

¹This estimate is based on the state auditor's report of levee bonds issued, Daily Arkansas Gazette, 1 March 1872, Governor O.A. Hadley's message on leaving office, Gazette, 10 January 1873, and \$200,000 of county aid bonds.

It will be remembered that Dorsey has been in our state only about two years all told. About half that time he was not a denizen, his family remaining in his cherished home--Oberlin, his alma mater He came here to promote his railroad interests; he commenced work upon the Central, and promised to make it a first class road; he obtained state, county and city aid under that most solemn pledge. By trickery, hocus-pocus or legerdemain, the gauge of the road was changed and today we have a wheelbarrow road from Helena to Clarendon, costing nothing in comparison to the intention he came here to further and carry through The labor and means expended on the Central have made [Dorsey], according to report, a man of wealth, enabling him to spend, to secure his election to the United States Senate, some sixty or seventy thousand dollars.²

Most of the state press reaction was not so violent as the World; nor was it so charitable as the Gazette, which observed that "those who know [Dorsey] best speak in the highest terms both of his integrity and ability."³ The Arkadelphia Standard described Dorsey as "a man of fair ability, indifferently honest as the times go, having never been caught stealing anything bigger than a railroad, a republican of the minstrel persuasion, and a warm supporter of the state and national administrations."⁴ The state press generally, however, followed the attitude adopted by the Fort Smith Herald: "In order to make the people satisfied

²Helena World reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 9 February 1873.

³Daily Arkansas Gazette, 19 January 1873.

⁴Arkadelphia Standard reprinted in ibid., 29 January 1873.

that Dorsey is an honest man--and we would not condemn him before he is tried--he must make his own reputation, and by his actions in the Senate prove that he is a representative of the people."⁵

The sincerity of those who expressed willingness to allow Dorsey to vindicate himself in the Senate is open to question;⁶ Dorsey's insistence upon being a Republican, and upon keeping the Republican party in power in Arkansas, soon ruined any chance he might have had. Dorsey had barely been in the Senate long enough to cast a vote when strange reversals began occurring in Arkansas' political alignments, and he spent most of his first two years in the Senate attempting to save the Republican party in Arkansas. This attempt caught Dorsey in the middle of a chain of events that spelled the end of his political career in that state.

These events began with the gubernatorial election of 1872. In that contest, the Minstrel Republicans nominated

⁵Fort Smith Herald reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 28 January 1873.

⁶Before Dorsey ever got to Washington, the papers were calling for an investigation into the manner of his election. See Daily Arkansas Gazette, 11 February 1873 (quoting Arkadelphia Standard), 13 February 1873, 20 February 1873 (quoting St. Louis Republican), 21 February 1873, 23 February 1873, 25 February 1873.

Elisha Baxter, with Dorsey being given some credit for engineering Baxter's nomination.⁷ The Brindletails chose Joseph Brooks, and the Democrats supported Brooks in lieu of selecting their own ticket. Amid changes and counter-charges of partisan voter registration, ballot box-stuffing, and ballot stealing, the state legislature declared Baxter elected.⁸ Baxter was inaugurated as governor on 6 January 1873. Immediately he began cultivating Brindletail and Democratic support by endorsing a proposed amendment to the state's constitution removing the last franchise restrictions from former Confederates.⁹

Baxter gained further Democratic support with his opposition to a bill introduced in the Arkansas state legislature that would release several railroads from their liability to the state.¹⁰ Popularly known as the "Railroad Steal Bill," this act would have netted certain railroads, among them the Arkansas Central, close to \$5,200,000.¹¹

⁷ Memphis Daily Appeal, 11 January 1873.

⁸ Thomas S. Staples, Reconstruction in Arkansas, 1862-1874 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), pp. 396-98, 400.

⁹ Ibid., p. 401.

¹⁰ Daily Arkansas Gazette, 25 March 1873.

¹¹ Ibid.

Although Dorsey published a statement in the Helena Clarion saying that he opposed the Railroad Steal and considered it "a swindle,"¹² it was rumored in the Gazette that Dorsey was working behind the scenes for the bill's passage. In May, 1873, the Railroad Steal bill failed to pass the Arkansas House of Representatives, presumably because of Baxter's opposition.¹³ At this point enough Republicans were sufficiently dissatisfied with Baxter that Brooks and a group of his partisans, who had never conceded the election to Baxter, saw an opportunity to act. On 2 June Brooks filed suit in the Supreme Court of Arkansas for Baxter's ouster, claiming that Brooks had actually been elected governor in 1872. The court ruled that it had no jurisdiction in the case, Chief Justice John McClure dissenting.¹⁴

Dorsey immediately telegraphed Baxter from Washington that "You have the unqualified support of myself and friends. The revolutionary proceedings instituted against you will not be sustained by the people."¹⁵ This telegram was apparently

¹² Helena Clarion reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 2 May 1873.

¹³ Little Rock Daily Republican, 5 May 1873.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 29 May 1873; Martha A. Ellenburg, "Carpetbagger Policies during Reconstruction in Arkansas" (M.A. thesis, North Texas State University, 1963), p. 91.

¹⁵ Daily Arkansas Gazette, 4 June 1873.

not enough to convince the St. Louis Republican, however, that Dorsey was not involved with Clayton and McClure in a plot to set up a dual government in Arkansas.¹⁶ Equally unconvincing to the Republican was an interview with Clayton, published in the Little Rock Daily Republican, that he knew of no plans to unseat Baxter.¹⁷ The Gazette, certainly no partisan of Dorsey, attempted to silence its St. Louis exchange by maintaining that no one was thinking of establishing a dual government in Arkansas.¹⁸

The Brooks-Baxter contest lay dormant for almost a year after the state supreme court decision of 4 June 1873, but Dorsey remained under fire. As late as 27 June 1873 the St. Louis Republican was still accusing him of trying to overthrow the government of Arkansas,¹⁹ and on 9 July the Gazette reported that Dorsey had put up \$200,000 in bonds of the Central to secure passage of the Railroad Steal.²⁰ In January, 1874, the Gazette issued another call for an

¹⁶ St. Louis Republican reprinted in *ibid.*, 14 June 1873.

¹⁷ Little Rock Daily Republican, 29 May 1873; Daily Arkansas Gazette, 8 June 1873, 29 October 1873, 21 November 1873.

¹⁸ Daily Arkansas Gazette, 14 June 1873.

¹⁹ St. Louis Republican reprinted in *ibid.*, 27 June 1873.

²⁰ Daily Arkansas Gazette, 9 July 1873.

investigation into the manner of Dorsey's elevation to the Senate.²¹

Less than a week later, it began to look as if those wishing for an investigation of Dorsey would be satisfied, but from another quarter. In December, 1873, Dorsey was appointed to the District of Columbia Committee of the Senate.²² On 30 January 1874 the Gazette reported:

And now Senator Dorsey's time, it seems, is coming. The Washington correspondent of the St. Louis Republican telegrams . . . that it is reported in Washington that among those who will be found implicated with the District of Columbia ring, when an investigation is had, will be Senator Dorsey . . . whose appointment on the District of Columbia Committee simultaneously with a large transaction with Shepherd, in Washington real estate, has given rise to a good deal of speculation.²³

In February, 1874, Congress passed a resolution appointing a committee to investigate affairs in the District of Columbia.²⁴ By the time of this investigation, however, the Brooks-Baxter contest was reviving, and this time Dorsey's involvement would be clear.

²¹ Ibid., 24 January 1874.

²² U.S., Congress, Senate, Congressional Record, 43rd Cong., Special sess., 12 March 1873, pp. 56-57.

²³ Daily Arkansas Gazette, 30 January 1874.

²⁴ Ibid., 3 February 1874.

Governor Baxter had continued his wholesale conversion to Democracy after the defeat of the Railroad Steal in May, 1873. Taking advantage of the adjournment of the Minstrel-controlled legislature, and in defiance of strict Minstrel policy, Baxter had appointed many Democrats to fill important state offices.²⁵ Since many of these Democrats served as legislators, a special election became necessary in November, 1873, to fill thirty-nine vacant seats in the legislature. In calling for this election, Baxter called also for a new voter registration, commensurate with the recently-passed amendment to the state's constitution removing the franchise restrictions from former Confederates.²⁶ The Democrats, seeing a chance to win control of the legislature, nominated candidates for all the vacancies, and began calling for a convention to rewrite the Carpetbagger constitution of 1868.²⁷ The Minstrel Republicans, relying on Baxter's promise not to call a special session of the legislature, made no concerted effort to prevent a new voter registration,

²⁵Ellenburg, "Carpetbagger Policies during Reconstruction," p. 92.

²⁶Staples, Reconstruction in Arkansas, pp. 405-06.

²⁷Ibid., p. 407.

nor did they put up candidates for all the vacant seats. Instead, they concentrated on controlling Baxter.²⁸

Shortly after the special election, however, it became apparent that Baxter himself favored constitutional revision, and that Minstrel efforts to control him would be ineffectual.²⁹ In March, 1874, Dorsey and Powell Clayton, whose election to the Senate had preceeded Dorsey's by two years, left Washington while Congress was in session and appeared in Little Rock. There was "considerable speculation as to the object of their visit to the capital at this time," but it was rumored, according to the Gazette, that the senators were in Little Rock "to fix up some scheme by which they can thwart the oft-expressed intention of Governor Baxter to have a fair registration and a fair election next November."³⁰ In a letter published in the New York Herald in April, 1874, Baxter reported that, through an agent, Dorsey and Clayton attempted to secure Baxter's complicity in election frauds and, failing this, offered Baxter a federal judgeship if he would vacate the office of governor.³¹ The agent, however,

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 406-07; Powell Clayton, Aftermath of the Civil War, in Arkansas (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1915), p. 351.

²⁹ Staples, Reconstruction in Arkansas, p. 403.

³⁰ Daily Arkansas Gazette, 17 March 1874, 24 March 1874.

³¹ Ibid., 30 April 1874.

later contradicted Baxter's letter in testimony before a House committee investigating the affairs of Arkansas. In July, 1874, Asa Hodges testified before the Poland committee that "at the request of Senator Clayton and Senator Dorsey, I . . . called to see [Baxter] for the purpose of inquiring whether or not he desired that they should secure an appointment for Mr. Brooks, in order to get [Brooks] out of the way in the [Brooks-Baxter] contest." In answer to a question over whether Dorsey had asked Hodges to induce Baxter to resign as governor, Hodges replied that "it was not Senator Dorsey's wish that Mr. Baxter should resign."³² If Hodges was correct, Dorsey changed his mind some time between 17 March and 15 April; Baxter's action in refusing more state aid to the Arkansas Central Railway Company, while Dorsey was in Little Rock, probably dictated this decision.

The new president of the Central, in which Dorsey still held an interest, had applied to Baxter for more state aid to his railroad.³³ Baxter not only refused the grant, but

³²U.S., Congress, House, Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the State of Arkansas, Affairs in Arkansas: Report by Mr. Poland, 43rd Cong., 2nd sess., 1875, House Report No. 2, pp. 439-40.

³³Concerning these bonds, one historian of the Brooks-Baxter War has commented that "rumor at the time said . . . that the leaders of the Republican party had called upon Governor Baxter to issue and sign some \$2,000,000 or more in

announced that all grants of state aid to railroads since 1869 had been illegal and unconstitutional, thus opening the way for the state's repudiation of this debt.³⁴ The Van Buren Press observed that Baxter's courageous decision in this matter was doubly commendable because Baxter had supported Dorsey for the Senate in 1873, and it remarked that "now we may expect to find Clayton and Dorsey arrayed in bitter hostility to the Governor."³⁵ It appeared that Baxter had completely deserted his Republican supporters and had gone over to the Democrats. The St. Louis Republican remarked on 5 April that "after their little trip to Arkansas, Clayton and Dorsey are convinced that the only way for Republicans to carry in November is for the Supreme Court [of Arkansas] to oust Baxter and install Brooks";³⁶ shortly after the senators returned to Washington, Brooks suddenly revived his efforts to reverse the results of the gubernatorial election of 1872.

state aid bonds, or other securities, to be used for some purpose, and out of which the party expected to get benefits." Benjamin S. Johnson, "The Brooks-Baxter War," Publications of the Arkansas Historical Association 2(1908):131.

³⁴ Daily Arkansas Gazette, 22 March 1874.

³⁵ Van Buren Press reprinted in *ibid.*, 27 March 1874.

³⁶ St. Louis Republican reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 5 April 1874.

After the state supreme court had ruled in June, 1873, that it had no jurisdiction in the matter of the 1872 election, Brooks took his case to the Pulaski County Circuit Court, apparently appealing the decision of the supreme court. No action had been taken in the circuit court at that time; but on 15 April 1874 Brooks, through his attorney W.G. Whipple, asked Pulaski County Circuit Judge John Whytock to rule on his suit. In the absence of Baxter's attorneys, Whytock reversed the decision of the supreme court and issued a writ declaring Joseph Brooks the legal governor of Arkansas. Supreme Court Chief Justice McClure hastily accepted this lower-court reversal of his own court's ruling and administered the oath of office to Brooks, who forcibly ejected Baxter from the state house. Both governors appealed to President Grant and called out the state militia, and the Brooks-Baxter War was on.³⁷

Within a period of slightly more than a year the political alignments in Arkansas had reversed. The Democrats and Brindletail Republicans, who had supported Brooks in 1872, were now solidly behind Baxter; the Minstrel Republicans,

³⁷ David Y. Thomas, ed., Arkansas and Its People: A History, 1541-1930, 4 vols. (New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1930), 1:159.

who had allegedly used every means imaginable to inaugurate Baxter in 1872, were now trying to oust him by force and install Brooks. Baxter's conversion to the Democracy placed Dorsey in a particularly awkward position, as Dorsey had helped to get Baxter nominated in 1872 and had supported Baxter in the first Brooks-Baxter contest in 1873. Dorsey now faced the choice between continuing to support Baxter and losing power in the Republican party, or switching to Brooks and losing power in Arkansas.

Dorsey chose the latter. He telegraphed congratulations to Brooks from Washington,³⁸ and then set about to persuade Grant to recognize Brooks. On 16 April 1874 Dorsey and the other members of the Republican congressional delegation from Arkansas called on Grant and Attorney General George Williams, "to confer with them regarding the troubles [in Arkansas]. Both the President and Judge Williams were assured that the question had already been settled in the courts and that in the view of the delegation this should be the final decision."³⁹ On the same day, Grant instructed the secretary of war to keep the federal troops in Arkansas

³⁸Little Rock Daily Republican, 17 April 1874.

³⁹New York Times, 17 April 1874, p. 5.

strictly neutral.⁴⁰ As the Memphis Avalanche pointed out, however, "President Grant's action in the Arkansas case, though not interference in one sense, is, in another, direct intervention; for it renders the Brooks revolution for a time a success" since federal troops stood between Baxter and the state house.⁴¹ Dorsey confirmed this view in a dispatch to the Little Rock Daily Republican, in which he stated that Grant's course was exactly the one desired by Brooks' friends.⁴²

On 21 April Dorsey and the Arkansas congressional delegation once again met with Grant, this time in the presence of the cabinet, to discuss the situation in Arkansas. "They urged the President to maintain the position he now occupies, to take all proper measures to prevent collision and bloodshed, and let the matter in controversy be settled by the courts."⁴³ Having the matter settled in the courts was Brooks' only hope of success in this coup, but there were

⁴⁰O.E. Babcock to the Secretary of War, 16 April 1874, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., series 2.

⁴¹Memphis Avalanche reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 25 April 1874.

⁴²Little Rock Daily Republican, 18 April 1874.

⁴³New York Times, 22 April 1874, p. 1.

some legal problems involved in this type of settlement. In the first place, the courts had no jurisdiction in this case. Under Article 6, section 19 of the Arkansas Constitution of 1868, the Arkansas General Assembly had exclusive jurisdiction in cases of contested elections for state offices.⁴⁴ In the second place, the action of the Pulaski County Circuit Court in overruling the Supreme Court of Arkansas was a highly irregular method of settling the matter in the courts.

Under the circumstances it was extremely unlikely that the opinion of the attorney general, if he were forced to give one to restore peace in Arkansas, would sustain Brooks. According to Secretary of State Hamilton Fish, Dorsey told Williams "with a good deal of feeling . . . that everything he had was involved in this decision, and had become excited and threatened [trouble] when told that the President would be obliged to recognize Baxter."⁴⁵ Thus on 9 May, in a last-ditch attempt to forestall federal intervention in the case, Dorsey and other representatives for Brooks met with

⁴⁴ Johnson, "The Brooks-Baxter War," pp. 127-28.

⁴⁵ Hamilton Fish Diary, 5 May 1874, in Allan Nevins, Hamilton Fish: The Inner History of the Grant Administration, 2 vols. (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1936), 2:742.

agents for Baxter in the office of Attorney General Williams, to effect a compromise by which both governors would disband their troops and end the fighting in Arkansas.⁴⁶ An agreement was worked out and Brooks was hastily advised to accept it, which he did; Baxter, however, refused to co-operate.⁴⁷

With the failure of this compromise, the federal government had no alternative but to intervene to restore order in Arkansas. On 15 May 1874 the attorney general delivered his opinion, and on the same day Grant issued a proclamation recognizing Baxter and ordering all troops in Arkansas to disperse.⁴⁸ The New York Times reported that Clayton and Dorsey were "in a rage" over Grant's decision "and breathing foul threats,"⁴⁹ and the St. Louis Republican quoted Dorsey that "the Proclamation issued today by the President is the death-knell of Republicanism in Arkansas."⁵⁰

⁴⁶New York Times, 10 May 1874, p. 1.

⁴⁷Johnson, "The Brooks-Baxter War," p. 164.

⁴⁸The Attorney General's opinion may be found in U.S., Congress, Senate, Affairs in Arkansas, Senate Ex. Doc. 25, 43rd. Cong., 2nd. sess., 1875, pp. 9-13. Grant's proclamation followed the argument of the attorney general almost to the letter. The proclamation is reprinted in Johnson, "The Brooks-Baxter War," p. 175.

⁴⁹New York Times, 16 May 1874, p. 1.

⁵⁰St. Louis Republican reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 19 May 1874.

Nonetheless, Dorsey had not exhausted all his resources. For the next few days he was busy in the House, lobbying for passage of a resolution to send a House committee to investigate matters in Arkansas, to "ascertain whether there was such a republican form of government there as the United States should recognize."⁵¹ This resolution was generally understood to be a direct challenge to Grant's recognition of Baxter.⁵² On 27 May the House created the Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the State of Arkansas, with Luke Poland of Vermont as chairman and composed of three Republicans and two Democrats.⁵³ The creation of this committee breathed new life into the Brooks forces, and Dorsey was optimistic that the Poland committee would reverse Grant's proclamation.⁵⁴

In Arkansas, Baxter's recently-convened legislature appointed a committee to investigate the conduct of the

⁵¹New York Times, 17 May 1874, p. 7, 18 May 1874, p. 4; St. Louis Times reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 21 May 1874.

⁵²St. Louis Times reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 21 May 1874.

⁵³U.S., Congress, House, Congressional Record, 43rd Cong., 1st sess., 27 May 1874, p. 4305.

⁵⁴New York Times, 19 May 1874, p. 1; Little Rock Daily Republican, 29 June 1874.

state's two United States senators with regard to the Brooks-Baxter contest. This action by the legislature was thought to signal "the commencement of charges against them to overthrow the State Government."⁵⁵ Friends of Baxter, meanwhile, were preparing to turn the House investigation of Arkansas into an investigation of the manner of Dorsey's election to the Senate. Baxter himself sent a telegram to Washington, stating that

Col. F.A. Terry will testify that Judge Bowen, who for a time was the opponent of Dorsey for the United States Senate, told him that Dorsey proposed to pay him (Bowen) the sum of \$36,000 in bonds of the Arkansas Central Railroad if he would withdraw from the contest; and further, that Bowen a day or two afterward withdrew and exhibited Dorsey's check for the sum mentioned. Dorsey afterward paid \$5,000 each to Hodges and his nephew, Chapman, for their influence in the Legislature, and other similar amounts have been paid. In conversation with me over a year ago, Dorsey stated that he deposited \$200,000 in Stoddard's bank here, for the purpose of bribing the Legislature.⁵⁶

In St. Louis it was reported that "the

the cheques given by Senator Dorsey to the members of the Arkansas Legislature for . . . their votes cast for him to be United States Senator, are in the

⁵⁵New York Times, 21 May 1874, p. 1; Daily Arkansas Gazette, 20 May 1874.

⁵⁶New York Times, 19 May 1874, p. 1. This might be the \$200,000 allegedly used by Dorsey to secure passage of the Railroad Steal bill (supra, pp. 13-15 and note 20), but this writer finds it improbable that Dorsey volunteered this information to Baxter.

hands of Gen. Albert Pike . . . who is a warm friend of Baxter. These he proposes to use against the Brooks ring in case the opportunity is offered.⁵⁷

On 28 May 1874 a black Republican from Arkansas sent a letter to Grant denouncing Dorsey as a fraud; this letter was submitted to the Poland committee as evidence.⁵⁸ In July, the convention meeting in Little Rock to draft a new constitution for Arkansas passed a resolution asking for the recall of the entire Republican congressional delegation from Arkansas.⁵⁹

In spite of all this, Dorsey managed to keep his seat in the Senate, from which he continued his attempts to salvage Arkansas Republicanism and his own fortunes. This task, made exceedingly difficult by Grant's recognition of Baxter, was made even more so by the ratification in September, 1874, of a new state constitution voiding the Carpetbagger document of 1868. Displaying a remarkable talent for flying in the face of overwhelming odds, Dorsey refused to concede the validity of the new constitution. He argued that since Baxter was not the legal governor, he could not legally

⁵⁷St. Louis Republican reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 21 May 1874.

⁵⁸W.H. Furbush to Grant, 28 May 1874, Senate Ex. Doc. 25, 43rd Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 23-24.

⁵⁹Daily Arkansas Gazette, 16 July 1874.

have called the special session of the legislature which had set up the constitutional convention, and thus the new constitution was null and void.⁶⁰ In a series of resolutions adopted at the Republican State Convention, of which Dorsey was chairman, the Republican party refused to put up candidates for the election of state officers to be held under the new constitution in October, 1874.⁶¹ By this tactic, the party hoped to gain national recognition of the illegality of Democratic rule in Arkansas.⁶² The state convention also selected Dorsey as a delegate to a convention of southern Republicans scheduled to meet in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in October, 1874, to explore the problems of southern Republicanism.⁶³

By the time this convention met, Arkansas was once more faced with the prospect of two governors. Refusing to concede the validity of the new constitution, the Republican

⁶⁰ These views are given in the Address to the Republican State Convention, 15 September 1874, adopted unanimously. The Address may be found in Senate Ex. Doc. 25, 43rd Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 76-94.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 94-96; Daily Arkansas Gazette, 16 September 1874.

⁶² St. Louis Republican reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 21 October 1874.

⁶³ Daily Arkansas Gazette, 16 September 1874.

party refused to recognize the legal title of Augustus H. Garland, elected governor under this constitution on 13 October. The St. Louis Republican claimed that the Republicans assembled at Chattanooga "propose to overturn the state government of Arkansas next winter," and outlined a plan of action which included Congress' re-opening of the Brooks-Baxter case on the ground that the 1874 constitution had not been legally ratified and that Garland could thus not have been legally elected governor.⁶⁴ Dorsey played a minor role in the Chattanooga convention; but when the opportunity came to put the plan of ousting Garland into effect, "Dorsey was left all alone at Washington . . . to conduct the case."⁶⁵

That opportunity came in November, 1874. The Republicans, having decided that the October election for state officers under the 1874 constitution was illegal, ran their candidates for state office on the November 3rd ballot. As the constitution of 1874 specified that the November election was to be exclusively for national congressmen, the Democratic election judges refused to count the votes cast for state legislators. At this point Volney Smith, who had been

⁶⁴ St. Louis Republican reprinted in *ibid.*, 21 October 1874.

⁶⁵ Memphis Avalanche reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 22 October 1874; Daily Arkansas Gazette, 19 November 1874.

Baxter's lieutenant governor but who had supported Brooks in the ouster attempt of 1874, appeared in Washington to lobby for recognition of the Republican legislature elected on 3 November. Apparently Arkansas was going to have two legislatures.⁶⁶

Approximately one week later, on 13 November 1874, Smith issued a proclamation claiming that he was governor of Arkansas. Under the 1868 constitution, which Smith claimed was still in force, the governor's term would not expire until 1876. In this view, Baxter's turning the governorship over to Garland on 11 November 1874 constituted abandonment of the office, which Smith as lieutenant governor was thus entitled to take over.⁶⁷

This last desperate attempt to salvage Arkansas Republicanism was grounded in fundamental illogic and was patently absurd. As lieutenant governor and presiding officer of the state senate, Smith had signed the order in May, 1874, calling for the constitutional convention; he had also served as a delegate to that convention.⁶⁸ These

⁶⁶Daily Arkansas Gazette, 6 November 1874, 17 November 1874.

⁶⁷Smith's proclamation is given in *ibid.*, 15 November 1874.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 26 November, 1874.

facts made it logically difficult for Smith to deny the validity of the new constitution--which had, incidentally, abolished the office of lieutenant governor--or to maintain that the 1868 document was still in effect.

Smith's support of Brooks in the Brooks-Baxter War created further logical problems for Smith's claim to the governorship. Smith had been elected on the same ticket with Baxter in 1872; but Brooks' case was based on the argument that Baxter had never been elected. If Baxter had not been elected, however, then neither had Smith; and if Baxter had not been elected, then he could not have abandoned the office. Taking any approach, Smith's title to the governorship of Arkansas was highly fanciful at best, and most of Arkansas took the whole affair as a big joke.⁶⁹

Stephen Dorsey and a few other die-hard Republicans, however, took it seriously. On the day of Smith's proclamation Dorsey wrote to Attorney General Williams, "by the authority of Governor V.V. Smith, of Arkansas," presenting Smith's case "up to the date of the inauguration of the revolutionary government under Garland" and alluding to "the necessity of the interposition of the General Government,"

⁶⁹Chicago Times reprinted in *ibid.*, 19 November 1874.

presumably to install Smith.⁷⁰ On 18 November, the Gazette printed a dispatch Dorsey had allegedly received from Henry M. Cooper, secretary of the Arkansas Republican State Central Committee, picturing mass mayhem and terror in Arkansas under Democratic rule. The dispatch added that Arkansas Republicans "unanimously sustain Governor Smith. The people do not sustain Garland We hope for relief from Washington; if we cannot get that, we must fight it out."⁷¹ Cooper immediately denied ever having sent such a dispatch to anyone, and the New York Sun claimed that there was "good authority for the statement that [it was] written in the room of Senator Dorsey . . . and very probably on paper for which the United States Senate has to pay."⁷² The Chicago Tribune commented that "the incident indicates what kind of tactics the advocates of Smith have been compelled to adopt."⁷³

Meanwhile, the Garland legislature created a committee to investigate the manner of Dorsey's election to the Senate,

⁷⁰Dorsey to Geo. H. Williams, 14 November 1874, Senate Ex. Doc. 25, 43rd Cong., 2nd sess., p. 28.

⁷¹Daily Arkansas Gazette, 18 November 1874.

⁷²Ibid., 19 November 1874; New York Sun reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 29 November 1874.

⁷³Chicago Tribune reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 29 November 1874.

and to report its findings to that body. Dorsey announced that he intended to ignore this investigation, which Garland's "ex parte mob" had no authority to make and which was merely intended to ruin Dorsey's effectiveness in "serving his constituents."⁷⁴ Less charitable sources speculated that Dorsey's enthusiastic support of Smith was governed by the hope that Grant would unseat the Garland government before it had a chance to unseat Dorsey.⁷⁵

Whether with contempt or foreboding, Dorsey continued to argue Smith's case. On 23 November he forwarded to the attorney general the Address and resolutions of the Republican state convention of September, 1874. Dorsey presented these documents to Williams to challenge the idea that the people of Arkansas accepted "the pretended constitution under which the Garland faction of the democratic party have usurped the government of the state."⁷⁶ Written before Smith's "accession" to the governorship, these documents had only dubious relevance, and as their major focus was

⁷⁴Little Rock Daily Republican, 24 November 1874, 26 November 1874 (quoting Washington Republican).

⁷⁵Chicago Times reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 21 November 1874.

⁷⁶Dorsey to Geo. H. Williams, 23 November 1874, Senate Ex. Doc. 25, 43rd Cong., 2nd sess., p. 76.

on the argument that Elisha Baxter had never been elected governor, they offered a somewhat illogical buttress for Smith's claims.

Tenuous as Smith's claim was, there was some basis for hope that the national government would recognize it. The Poland committee extended the scope of its investigations to include an inquiry into the legality of the constitution under which Garland was elected, and Grant was thought to oppose recognition of Garland.⁷⁷ Dorsey remained in Washington during the adjournment of Congress to continue his lobbying efforts on behalf of Smith.⁷⁸

In January, 1875, however, events occurred which rendered the merits of the case in Arkansas irrelevant to the solution of the problems of that state, and which rendered the success of Dorsey's cause hopeless. On 4 January a Brooks-Baxter-type of conflict erupted in Louisiana when Democrats attempted to prevent the organization of the Republican legislature in that state. To restore some semblance of order, Republican Governor William Pitt Kellogg summoned the state militia, and Grant dispatched

⁷⁷ Little Rock Daily Republican, 20 November 1874.
28 January 1875 (quoting St. Louis Times).

⁷⁸ Little Rock Daily Republican, 24 November 1874.

General Philip Sheridan with United States forces to protect Kellogg and the Republican legislature.

These events in Louisiana probably had more influence than the volumes of testimony gathered by the Poland committee in deciding the outcome of the various Arkansas gubernatorial contests. The logic of the situation dictated that either Kellogg or Smith would be recognized, but not both, and on 16 January the Washington correspondent of the St. Louis Republican reported that the sense of the congressional Republicans was that "the carpetbaggers in Arkansas are to be sacrificed that the Administration policy in Louisiana may be endorsed."⁷⁹ The correspondent added that Dorsey was "about ready to endorse the plan," perhaps in the hope that the Garland legislature would curtail its investigation of his election if he co-operated in the recognition of Garland, and speculated that the Poland committee report, when finally submitted, would endorse the Grant Administration while allowing all sides in Arkansas to save some face.

The report of the Poland committee, submitted to Congress on 6 February 1875, was suitably ambiguous. The committee backhandedly acknowledged that Joseph Brooks had actually

⁷⁹St. Louis Republican reprinted in *ibid.*, 19 January 1875.

been elected governor in 1872, but ruled, in effect, that it was too late to do anything about that. Concerning the 1874 constitution and Garland, the committee admitted that there were many irregularities in the framing and adoption of the constitution, but recommended that, in view of the fact that the constitution was republican in form and seemed agreeable to the majority of Arkansans, no governmental interference to unseat Garland was advisable.⁸⁰

The report of the Poland committee was signed by four of the committee's five members. The fifth member, Jasper D. Ward of Illinois, submitted a minority report holding that as Joseph Brooks had been elected governor of Arkansas and had been illegally deprived of his office, and as the constitution of 1868, having never been legally overthrown, was still in force, the national government should act to restore Joseph Brooks as the rightful governor of Arkansas.⁸¹

Two days after the submission of these reports to Congress, on 8 February, Grant sent a special message to Congress essentially supporting the Ward report and asking Congress to act quickly to restore the rightful government

⁸⁰ Daily Arkansas Gazette, 27 February 1875.

⁸¹ Little Rock Daily Republican, 9 February 1875.

in Arkansas, "to relieve the Executive from acting."⁸² Two cabinet members who opposed Grant's message, Secretary of State Fish and Treasury Secretary Benjamin Bristow, suspected that Dorsey had induced Grant to write it.⁸³ If so, this is the last reported action Dorsey took in the matter. On 2 March the majority report of the Poland committee was adopted as Dorsey remained silent, thus rendering plausible the St. Louis Republican's speculation that Dorsey would be induced to trade his own position in Arkansas for the greater good of the national Republican party.

This writer finds unacceptable, however, the Republican's theory that Dorsey acquiesced in this bargain because he feared the results of the Garland legislature's investigation of his Senate seat. For one thing, even if the investigation proved that Dorsey held his seat by fraud, it was highly unlikely that the Republican Senate would depose him.⁸⁴ Also, the investigation was proceeding anything but vigorously, perhaps because the legislature feared implicating the many

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Nevins, Hamilton Fish, 2:758; Ross A. Webb, Benjamin Helm Bristow: Border State Politician (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1969), pp. 162-63.

⁸⁴ Washington Chronicle reprinted in Little Rock Daily Republican, 5 December 1874.

Democratic legislators who had voted to send Dorsey to the Senate in 1873.⁸⁵ Finally, as Dorsey seems to have spent his entire Senate career and beyond courting investigation by one congressional committee after another, it is difficult to believe that he had any great fear of legislative investigations.

A more plausible motive for Dorsey's seeming abandonment of his efforts in Arkansas lies within the national Republican party itself, and in Dorsey's ambition to rise therein. It was generally acknowledged that Dorsey had moved from Ohio to Arkansas for the specific purpose of becoming a United States senator;⁸⁶ his appointment to the Post Office Committee, the District of Columbia Committee, and the Appropriations Committee in his first year demonstrated powerful Senate connections. It is inconceivable that Dorsey sacrificed any chance of re-election without some hope of a return for his sacrifice.

A plausible hypothesis might be that the return was Dorsey's appointment as secretary of the Republican National Committee in 1880. This prestigious post was not ordinarily

⁸⁵ Little Rock Daily Republican, 19 January 1875.

⁸⁶ Chicago Tribune reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 6 June 1874; Daily Arkansas Gazette, 7 February 1875.

given to a man whose only service to the party was one term as a lame-duck Carpetbagger senator. Dorsey's appointment came at the insistence of John Logan of Illinois;⁸⁷ it was also Logan who dictated the abandonment of Arkansas and the recognition of Kellogg in Louisiana in 1875.⁸⁸ The promise of the National Committee appointment in 1880, which Logan was in a position to make, might have been offered to Dorsey in an effort to compensate for having sacrificed his interests in Arkansas. It could of course be coincidence, but it is possible that Dorsey's appearance as secretary of the Republican National Committee in 1880 was the consummation of arrangements made in 1875 to induce Dorsey to abandon his efforts to retain a Republican power base in Arkansas.

⁸⁷ John Murray Forbes, Letters and Recollections of John Murray Forbes, ed. Sarah Forbes Hughes, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1899), 2:196-98; David M. Jordan, Roscoe Conkling of New York: Voice in the Senate (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 349.

⁸⁸ Little Rock Daily Republican, 16 January 1875; St. Louis Republican reprinted in Little Rock Daily Republican, 19 January 1875.

CHAPTER III

DORSEY IN THE SENATE, 1873-1879

On 4 March 1873 Stephen Dorsey began what was destined to be his only term as a Republican United States senator from Arkansas. His record in Congress was singularly unspectacular, distinguished for the most part by frequent absence. Dorsey was in the Senate for the Forty-third, the Forty-fourth, and the Forty-fifth Congresses; in the Forty-third and Forty-fourth Congresses he was absent for nearly sixty per cent of the votes cast. But though he seldom voted, Dorsey was involved in much that surrounded a final vote on the floor, and in much that occurred outside the Senate chambers. His career thus exemplifies many of the political fortunes of his period, a period in which the cloakroom counted more than the cast ballot, and friends meant more than constituents.

The political chaos in Arkansas which determined that Dorsey would serve only one Senate term also caused that term to be unremarkable. Having made the decision to try to salvage his political base in Arkansas, Dorsey absented himself from Washington for most of the Forty-third Congress,

his first. During that time he should have been making the contacts and developing the influence to which membership on the District of Columbia Committee, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads would ordinarily have entitled him. As it was, Dorsey's initial mistake of trying to rescue Arkansas Republicanism doomed his Senate career to obscurity.

Dorsey introduced four bills in his first session, only one of which survived referral to committee. That bill, to organize the Territory of Oklahoma and to provide for governing the Indian tribes there, was acted upon only to the extent that the Committee on Territories passed a resolution to investigate conditions in Oklahoma.¹ His legislative record, like that of most first-term senators in the Gilded Age, was thus unimpressive.

On only one issue affecting the Forty-third Congress, currency and banking, did Dorsey cast enough votes to permit analysis, and that analysis suggests that his stand was an ambiguous one. In September, 1873, the failure of Jay Cooke's bank in New York touched off the first post-war panic.

¹U.S., Congress, Senate, Congressional Record, 43rd Cong., 1st sess., 19 June 1874, p. 5189. Hereafter cited as Congressional Record. Unless otherwise specified, all subsequent references to the Congressional Record will be to the Senate portions.

As the economy deteriorated, the idea of issuing irredeemable paper money, or greenbacks, became popular. Treasury Secretary William Richardson issued \$26,000,000 in greenbacks on his own initiative and without any authority from Congress to do so, and it was uncertain whether fiscal conservatives in Congress would allow Congress to authorize the issue of this currency retroactively.²

When the Forty-third Congress reconvened in December, 1873, the economy was thus an immediate and explosive issue, and a bill was offered in the Senate to issue \$400,000,000 in greenbacks, which would also have the effect of legitimizing Richardson's issue. During debate on this bill, Dorsey voted against an amendment reducing the amount of greenbacks to be issued, thereby apparently supporting paper money.³ Dorsey voted also to override Grant's veto of this inflationary bill.⁴ He voted against increasing the principal of the public debt, however, and on a later bill he voted to redeem the bonds of the District of Columbia in gold on

²David M. Jordan, Roscoe Conkling of New York: Voice in the Senate (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 206.

³Congressional Record, 43rd Cong., 1st sess., 6 April 1874, pp. 2829-35.

⁴Ibid., 28 April 1874, p. 3436.

the grounds that this would increase their market value.⁵ Dorsey thus seemed to support an increase in the monetary supply, but he opposed an inflationary economy. In this approach to economics he followed the lack of philosophical direction that characterized other railroad investors of the early 1870's.⁶

Dorsey's legislative initiative in the second session of the Forty-third Congress was confined exclusively to matters dealing with the Post Office Department. Two of his proposals were for the creation of postal routes in Arkansas, which were undoubtedly aimed at maintaining the Republican party in that state, as well as transporting the mails.⁷ Dorsey also offered several proposals for cutting down the expenses of the Post Office Department, much to the chagrin of some of his patronage-conscious colleagues. It is ironic that Dorsey, later accused of organizing a post office swindle of major proportions, expended so much of his

⁵ Ibid., 43rd Cong., 2nd sess., 3 March 1875, p. 2151; Appendix, p. 202.

⁶ Irwin Unger, The Greenback Era: A Social and Political History of American Finance, 1865-1879 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 60-61.

⁷ Ibid., 2 February 1875, p. 907, 3 February 1875, p. 922.

energy during his first term in fighting soaring post office costs. In one strictly party-line vote, for example, Dorsey went against more than three-fourths of his Republican colleagues in voting to reduce the weight of a piece of third-class mail. Dorsey argued that this reduction would save the Post Office Department over \$6,000,000 annually.⁸ He sought further savings in the Post Office Department by opposing unlimited franking privileges for members of Congress.⁹

In addition to trying to economize the operations of the Post Office Department, Dorsey tried to prevent that department from giving unfair advantage to business. He offered a proposal that telegraph lines be for personal use, as the mails were, and not a medium for transmitting commercial information. The proposal would have equalized telegraph rates, and required all telegrams to be sent in the order of their arrival at the telegraph office unless a certain time for sending was specified by the sender.¹⁰ Senate opposition to this measure was so overwhelming that

⁸ Ibid., 22 February 1875, pp. 1588-89.

⁹ Ibid., p. 1586.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 1590.

Dorsey was unable even to get a roll call vote on its rejection.¹¹

During the last few weeks of the Forty-third Congress, the St. Louis Dispatch printed a review of Dorsey's performance as a freshman senator. The paper characterized Dorsey as "simply a nonentity . . . ever the tool of his master of intellect and diplomacy, Clayton, and . . . of little use either to his friends or to his party."¹² As a reflection of national power, this evaluation might have been an accurate one. The reporter failed to notice, however, that Dorsey had struck a responsive chord among his Arkansas constituency with his Oklahoma Territory bill. Furthermore, Dorsey would have shuddered at the thought of being a tool of Powell Clayton, whom he later described as a bitter enemy. Dorsey's voting record for the Forty-third Congress reveals that there were other influences at work besides subservience to Clayton, and that any alliance between Clayton and Dorsey was probably simply a function of coincidence.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² St. Louis Dispatch reprinted in Daily Arkansas Gazette, 26 February 1875.

Dorsey cast a vote, or expressed an opinion, on 194 of 430 votes taken in the Forty-third Congress,¹³ and he and Clayton agreed on approximately eighty-five per cent of their common votes. This does not make Dorsey the docile tool of Clayton, however, unless one is willing to assume that Henry Pease of Mississippi, John Patterson of South Carolina, and George Spencer of Alabama, who also voted with Dorsey regularly, were also Clayton's agents. Instead, a comparison of those who voted together most often in the Forty-third Congress reveals a loose community of interest among all southern Republicans, and not a simple alliance of Dorsey and Clayton.

The comparison also shows that while Dorsey was very much a party regular, he belonged to no particular faction of the Republican party. Wherever the influence came from to place Dorsey on three potentially powerful committees,

¹³ Pairing on an issue was not the same as voting on the issue, since both senators of a pair had to be absent from the Senate floor in order for their votes to be paired. On most of his votes, Dorsey paired and did not actually vote, but for the purposes of this analysis a paired vote was treated as an actual vote. Only votes in which Dorsey participated, either by voting or by being paired, were used for this comparison. Since Dorsey's attendance in the 43rd and 44th Congresses was minimal, this criterion produces an eccentric selection of votes for analysis. This chapter attempts merely to analyze Dorsey, however, and not the entire Senate for the period under consideration.

it did not come from the senators representing Dorsey's native state of Ohio: Sherman of Ohio opposed Dorsey on over half of their common votes. Of the Senate Republican leadership in the Forty-third Congress, Dorsey sided most frequently with Oliver Morton of Indiana, John Logan of Illinois, and Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania. Dorsey possibly aligned himself with the leadership of the Grant wing of the Republican party in Congress, and Roscoe Conkling, the titular leader of this faction, may have led where no one followed. Dorsey, at least, disagreed with Conkling forty-three per cent of the time.

In one of its last acts, in February, 1875, the Forty-third Congress voted to accept the majority report of the Poland committee investigating Arkansas, thereby pronouncing the last rites over Dorsey's former political base. Meeting in special session in March, 1875, the Forty-fourth Congress followed this process to its logical conclusion by voting to recognize William Pitt Kellogg as governor of Louisiana and to accept the credentials of P.B.S. Pinchback as that state's senator.

Although Dorsey would continue to work with Republicans in Arkansas, and to attempt to pass legislation for the benefit of that state, he did not spend his time during the

recess of the Forty-fourth Congress, from March to December, 1875, mending political fences in Arkansas. Rather, he remained in Washington to seek political revenge.

Dorsey was convinced that President Grant had originally supported his attempt to install Volney V. Smith as governor of Arkansas, and later had succumbed to adverse cabinet pressure in withdrawing that support. Dorsey focused much of the blame for this pressure on Treasury Secretary Benjamin Bristow, and during the recess of the Forty-fourth Congress he set about to have Bristow removed from the cabinet. His campaign against Bristow involved Dorsey peripherally in the final stages of the investigation and exposure of the Whiskey Ring frauds.

Briwtow's office, suspicious of the operations of certain Internal Revenue agents, particularly in St. Louis, had sent special investigators to inspect the books of the St. Louis office. These investigators were perilously close to discovering and exposing the entire Whiskey Ring operation, and John McDonald, supervisor of Internal Revenue for the St. Louis district, after submitting his resignation in case it was needed, travelled to Washington in an attempt to squelch the inquiry.¹⁴ One of the first persons McDonald

¹⁴General John McDonald, Secrets of the Great Whiskey Ring (St. Louis: W.S. Bryan, 1880), pp. 138, 153-55.

encountered in Washington was Dorsey. Without revealing the complete story, McDonald told Dorsey that Bristow was giving him trouble in St. Louis and must be stopped. This suited Dorsey perfectly, and "the Senator advised [McDonald] to join him in a determined effort to dismiss Bristow,"¹⁵ but McDonald had other plans and left Dorsey to his own campaign. Nevertheless, McDonald and Dorsey used each other in their efforts against the secretary: McDonald applied pressure on Bristow with thinly-veiled threats of powerful Senate opposition, and Dorsey bombarded Grant with urgent demands that he dismiss Bristow to save McDonald.¹⁶

Dorsey's involvement in the Whiskey Ring investigation was typical of his singular talent for panic diplomacy. A second team of special investigators for the Treasury Department reached St. Louis on 10 May 1875; on 8 May Dorsey wrote to Grant from St. Louis advising the president not to accept McDonald's resignation because the supervisor was doing so much good for the Republican party in St. Louis.¹⁷ Only the utmost desperation, or the purest naiveté, could have

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 132.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 140, 273, 277.

¹⁷ Dorsey to Grant, 8 May 1875, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., series 1B.

induced Dorsey to write such a letter, because resigning was McDonald's only hope of avoiding prosecution once the investigators reached St. Louis.

Dorsey was never implicated in the Whiskey Ring frauds, but his behavior has left open the question of whether he was involved. His prosecution of McDonald's cause, even after that cause had clearly become hopeless, was more energetic than could have been expected from someone not fully aware of the issues at stake. On the other hand, Dorsey retained an animosity for Bristow long after the exposure of the Whiskey Ring; he never forgave Bristow once he had conceived the fantastic notion that Bristow was responsible for the loss of Arkansas. That Dorsey could have blamed the secretary for a development that was so clearly inevitable shows the unsophisticated level of Dorsey's political thought.

Another evidence of this political shortsightedness was Dorsey's failure to support Conkling on an issue which, if carried, could have saved Dorsey and the Republican party much grief later. Because of the rate at which the southern states were returning to Democratic control, Republican leaders in the Forty-third Congress foresaw that theirs would be the last Congress in which the Republicans

controlled both houses. Anticipating a problem with the southern states' electoral votes in the forthcoming presidential election, Conkling argued forcefully that a new method of counting electoral votes must be devised while the Republican party still controlled Congress.¹⁸ Under the Twenty-second Joint Rule then in effect, both houses had to agree to the electoral vote of a state before that state's vote could be counted.¹⁹ Before the Forty-third Congress adjourned, a new bill was offered which provided that the electoral vote of any state would be counted unless both houses joined in rejecting it.²⁰ This would protect the electoral vote of a state which offered only one set of returns, but did not provide for choosing between two sets of returns. Conkling, the most ardent advocate of revision of the Twenty-second Joint Rule, tried hard to convince his Senate colleagues that this particular variety of revision was inadequate, but he was able to carry only seven senators with him, and Dorsey was not among them.²¹ The election of 1876 showed

¹⁸Jordan, Roscoe Conkling, p. 219.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Congressional Record, 43rd Cong., 2nd sess., 25 February 1875, p. 1786.

²¹Ibid.

that Conkling had been correct in his apprehension, but the majority of the Republican party, including Dorsey, either did not recognize the danger or refused to acknowledge Conkling's leadership.

By the time the Forty-fourth Congress convened, the Redemption of Arkansas had rendered Dorsey a lame duck. For much of this Congress Dorsey was managing a newly-acquired cattle ranch in New Mexico, indicating that he no longer considered Arkansas as anything other than a place from which he could be elected as a delegate to Republican party functions.²² But while he attended the Forty-fourth Congress irregularly, Dorsey was much more active in his second Congress, and much of his activity was on behalf of Arkansas. Curiously, Dorsey worked harder for Arkansas as a lame duck than he had while the Republicans had controlled that state.

Dorsey spoke on behalf of the residents of the Hot Springs Reservation area in their fight to purchase the land and facilities of the springs. By an act of Congress, the proprietors of Hot Springs were required to pay rent to the federal government for the facilities at the resort.

²²Dorsey to Garfield, 16 May 1881, 18 May 1881, James A. Garfield Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., series 4.

The residents of the Hot Springs area resented paying rent to the national government for land that they felt belonged properly to them, and they bombarded Dorsey with petitions to use his influence to change the law under which the rent was paid.²³

On 6 January 1876 Dorsey offered a bill in the Senate allowing the residents of Hot Springs to purchase the reservation from the government, and during the course of the Forty-fourth Congress he presented supplementary evidence in support of this measure.²⁴ In August, 1876, he got the matter of the Springs placed before the Senate Judiciary Committee, which reported out another bill authorizing the purchase of the reservation.²⁵ After the Forty-fourth Congress failed to enact corrective legislation, Dorsey continued his efforts for Hot Springs in the Forty-fifth. The battle moved to the Senate floor, where Dorsey finally succeeded in passing a law permitting Hot Springs area

²³ See, for example, Congressional Record, 44th Cong., 1st sess., 3 May 1876, p. 2899; 44th Cong., 2nd sess., 3 January 1877, p. 393, 6 January 1877, p. 471.

²⁴ Ibid., 44th Cong., 2nd sess., 5 January 1877, p. 274; 44th Cong., 1st sess., 3 May 1876, p. 2899, 4 May 1876, p. 2969.

²⁵ Ibid., 44th Cong., 1st sess., 1 August 1876, p. 5035, 3 August 1876, p. 5096.

residents to purchase the land on which they were settled.²⁶

On one issue coming before the Forty-fourth Congress, Dorsey went against the majority of his Republican colleagues in supporting the position of the Arkansas Redeemers. A Reconstruction statute of 1866 allowed only homesteaders to use the public lands in five southern states, including Arkansas. The land in question was uniformly uncultivable and valuable only as timber land. Southerners believed that the intent of the statute was to keep the South in economic bondage by preventing lumber companies from exploiting this timber.²⁷ In the Forty-fourth Congress Powell Clayton offered a bill in the Senate repealing the homestead restriction, and Dorsey, usually silent on the Senate floor, joined in the debate for the bill's passage.²⁸

²⁶ Ibid., 44th Cong., 2nd sess., 16 February 1877, p. 1623, 22 February 1877, pp. 1803-05, 23 February 1877, pp. 1846-51, 1869-74; 45th Cong., 2nd sess., 10 January 1878, p. 252, 22 January 1878, p. 453, 13 March 1878, pp. 1717-31, 21 March 1878, pp. 1929-30, 4 April 1878, p. 2258, 18 April 1878, p. 2629, 17 June 1878, pp. 4728-32.

²⁷ C. Vann Woodward, Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1951), pp. 53-54.

²⁸ Congressional Record, 44th Cong., 1st sess., 3 February 1876, p. 853, 15 February 1876, p. 1090.

Clayton's bill passed with the votes of the southern Republicans, aligned with the Democrats, providing the margin of victory.²⁹

Dorsey's support of the Redeemers' position is particularly curious in view of Dorsey's status as a lame duck, the Redeemers' continued efforts to have him unseated, and the fact that his votes on this issue were two of the only five times Dorsey voted against the majority of his party during the entire Forty-fourth Congress. The votes of the southern Republicans for Clayton's bill might have heralded that Redeemer-Republican business alliance that first surfaced in the Compromise of 1877.³⁰

In the Forty-fourth Congress, the loose community of interest among Carpetbaggers evident in the Forty-third Congress hardened into a tight coalition, with the added factor that those Republican senators with the greatest degree of variance from the Carpetbagger vote were native southerners. All of the Carpetbaggers were in almost perfect agreement with Dorsey on their common votes,

²⁹Congressional Record, 44th Cong., 1st sess., 15 February 1876, p. 1090; Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, p. 54.

³⁰For example, see Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, pp. 145-49.

with the greatest divergence being only 10.26 per cent.³¹

Indeed, party discipline generally was much tighter in the Forty-fourth Congress than in the Forty-third. In the Forty-third Congress, the percentage of variance from the strict party line ranged from 6.38 to 64.18. In the Forty-fourth Congress that range had closed to from 2.86 to 40.0. Significantly, the senators with the best records on party loyalty in the Forty-fourth Congress were Carpetbaggers, and those with the worst records on party loyalty in that Congress were native southerners. The average Republican in the Forty-fourth Congress disagreed with the majority of his party on 14.23 per cent of party votes cast; the average Carpetbagger disagreed only 6.85 per cent, and Dorsey disagreed 5.15 per cent. In the Forty-third Congress, the average divergence had been 21.75 per cent, the average Carpetbag variance 23.47 per cent, and Dorsey's record 22.02 per cent. One factor influencing this hardening of ideological lines in the Forty-fourth Congress might have been the presidential campaign of 1876.

³¹Patterson of S. Carolina had the greatest index of disagreement with Dorsey among Carpetbaggers, 10.26%. Robertson of S. Carolina and Hamilton of Texas, both native southerners, had indexes of 37.40 and 38.60, respectively.

For Dorsey, the campaign meant a return to Arkansas in April, 1876, to organize the Republican effort. The issues surrounding the Brooks-Baxter War had divided Arkansas Republicans, and the schism remained. Furthermore, Dorsey, as chairman of the State Central Committee, might have controlled some Radicals, but he could not speak for all Arkansas Republicans. In what was perhaps a fit of nostalgia, since they knew there was no way their ticket could win a Democratically controlled election, the State Central Committee Republicans placed Joseph Brooks at the head of their ticket with the nomination for governor.³² Those members of the Grand Old Party who had never supported the Carpetbaggers ignored the State Central Committee and nominated their own state ticket.³³

The State Central Committee had its own problems, focusing on a rift between Clayton and Dorsey, who had never worked well together, over support of a presidential candidate. With Grant out of the running because of the tradition against a third term, the field of Republican candidates was wide open. A few favorite sons entered the

³² New York Times, 28 April 1876, p. 1, 11 August 1876, p. 1.

³³ Ibid., 9 May 1876, p. 1, 30 June 1876, p. 5, 28 July 1876, p. 4.

race with scattered support, among them Pennsylvania Governor John F. Hantraft and Postmaster General Marshall P. Jewell. Governor Rutherford B. Hayes of Ohio, backed by the powerful John Sherman, entered the field as a favorite son, but by the time of the national convention Hayes had gathered the support of many delegations who would vote for him as their second choice if the convention deadlocked. Those Republicans for whom reform was the paramount issue supported the candidacy of Benjamin H. Bristow, Grant's secretary of the treasury who had exposed and prosecuted the Whiskey Ring frauds.³⁴

The support of the Grant wing of the party was divided between candidates Roscoe Conkling of New York and Oliver Morton of Indiana, each of whom detested the other.³⁵ Conkling was not in the race for the purpose of electing Conkling; he intended to deadlock the convention sufficiently so that Grant would emerge as the nominee. Conkling viewed Morton's candidacy as a vehicle for siphoning off enough Grant votes to give the nomination to James G. Blaine of Maine.³⁶ Morton saw his own candidacy as a way to keep the

³⁴ Jordan, Roscoe Conkling, pp. 229-30, 237.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 230.

³⁶ Ibid.

nomination from going to Blaine, and viewed Conkling's candidacy as an expensive nuisance which was draining Morton's support.³⁷

Blaine, the "plumed knight" of Robert G. Ingersoll's oratory, entered Cincinnati with the most first-ballot support. His supporters included those people who had little use for reformers, as well as those who had even less use for Grant. For many years Speaker of the House, Blaine had a large following drawn by the sheer force of his personality. His celebrated hatred of Roscoe Conkling brought him much additional support from those disgusted with Conkling's pompous egotism and the high-handed methods with which he ran the New York party machinery.³⁸

As the election tide rolled high and states began holding their conventions to elect delegates to the national nominating convention in Cincinnati, Blaine's candidacy was dealt a major blow by reports released in the newspapers of shady transactions in which Blaine had allegedly engaged as House Speaker, culminating in the so-called "Mulligan Letters." According to the reports, Blaine had made some rulings from the chair as Speaker designed to favor the

³⁷ Ibid., p. 234.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 230-239-40.

Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad. He had then sold worthless bonds of this road to some of his friends for an exorbitant sum, at which point the Union Pacific Railroad had bought the bonds back from these friends before Blaine could be prosecuted for fraud. The Mulligan Letters were highly incriminating letters Blaine had written to his broker during these alleged transactions.

These reports cast serious doubts on Blaine's honesty, and he made a melodramatic but not altogether successful attempt on the floor of the House to clear himself of these charges.³⁹ Blaine was convinced that the exposure of the Mulligan Letters had been the work of Dorsey and some of his confederates, who were trying to get revenge for Blaine's support of the Poland committee report concerning the Democratic takeover of Arkansas. According to Blaine, Dorsey was trying to ruin Blaine's presidential candidacy by showing a connection between his support of the Poland committee report and his interest in the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad.⁴⁰ Whether the exposure of the Mulligan Letters was actually Dorsey's work was never determined,

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 235-37.

⁴⁰ Theodore Clarke Smith, The Life and Letters of James Abram Garfield (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), pp. 598-99.

although logic, and Dorsey's well-known antipathy toward Blaine, make it at least a likely possibility that he was involved.

Dorsey arrived in Little Rock ten days before the Arkansas state convention was to meet, in an attempt to line up convention support for Conkling.⁴¹ When he got there, however, he found that Clayton had preceeded him and was busy gathering Morton delegates. Neither side had a majority of the delegates when the convention met.⁴² Clayton attempted to run a resolution through the convention instructing the delegates to Cincinnati to support Morton. He succeeded in having a resolution passed that "Oliver P. Morton is the choice of Republicans in Arkansas for President of the United States," but the Dorsey forces managed to strike that portion of the resolution instructing the delegates.⁴³ With the balance of power in the state convention held by delegates who supported neither Morton nor Conkling, Clayton and Dorsey worked out a compromise whereby Clayton led two-thirds of the Arkansas delegation to Cincinnati pledged to Morton, and Dorsey led one-third of the delegation for Conkling.⁴⁴

⁴¹ New York Times, 9 May 1876, p. 1.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 28 April 1876, p. 1.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 9 May 1876.

In spite of the Mulligan Letters, Blaine easily led the first ballot in Cincinnati with 285 votes, to Morton's 124, Conkling's 99, Bristow's 113, and Hayes' 61. These totals held fairly firmly through four ballots; on the fifth and sixth ballots Hayes picked up enough second-choice votes to make the outcome clear, and on the seventh ballot, in an "anything to beat Blaine" effort, Morton's, Conkling's, and Bristow's votes went to Hayes to give him the nomination.⁴⁵

Getting Hayes elected, however, was another matter. Hayes was forced to run on the record of the scandal-ridden Grant years, while his opponent, Samuel B. Tilden of New York, was a popular reformer who had made his reputation by breaking up the notorious Tweed Ring of Tammany Hall. Additionally, by 1876 the Democrats had redeemed all but three southern states, and Republican power in these states, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida, was sustained only by the odious presence of federal troops. The election was thus hotly contested, and November came and went with no clear victor established.

The problem was that in the three states still controlled by federal troops, the Republican canvassing boards had

⁴⁵Jordan, Roscoe Conkling, pp. 240-41.

the Redeemers seeing a chance for federal assistance in building the road, projected branches of the Texas and Pacific appeared overnight, to the point where the mileage of the branches exceeded the mileage of the original road.⁵⁷ The company incorporated to build one of these branches, the Memphis, Pine Bluff and Shreveport Railway (Projected) Company, had Dorsey as its president and Powell Clayton, Dorsey's Arkansas Carpetbagger Senate colleague, on its board of directors.⁵⁸ If Hayes promised and delivered a federal subsidy to the Texas and Pacific, Dorsey's corporation stood to be suddenly worth \$9,150,000.00.⁵⁹

Dorsey had fought for a Texas and Pacific subsidy bill, which would have included his projected Memphis branch, in the Forty-fourth Congress, and Lucius Q. Lamar of Mississippi had been nursing a Texas and Pacific subsidy bill in the House for years.⁶⁰ As part of the bargain to elect Hayes, it was agreed that in the Forty-fifth Congress Lamar would report his bill out of committee and to the floor of the House,

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 84-86, 131.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 86.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 129.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 127-33; Congressional Record, 44th Cong., 2nd sess., 14 February 1877, p. 1549.

certified the electoral vote for Hayes, and Democratic state officials had returned a slate of electors for Tilden. To compound matters, these three states held the balance of the electoral college: if the votes were counted for Hayes, he would be elected, and the same held true for Tilden. Since neither the Constitution nor the Twenty-second Joint Rule specified the final authority in a disputed electoral vote count, an argument arose in Congress over whether the president of the Senate, a Republican, or the Speaker of the House, a Democrat, should certify the final count.

The debate over who would count the electoral votes occupied all of the second session of the Forty-fourth Congress. Immediately after the election, the chairmen of the Republican and Democratic National Committees sent delegations of partisans to the disputed southern states to supervise the work of the returning boards; when Congress reconvened the Senate passed resolutions asking that the Committee on Privileges and Elections investigate the returns from these southern states.⁴⁶ But the Senate prohibited the committee from going behind the returning boards and inquiring into actual election fraud, so it was not going to be able to solve the problem of who had in fact been

⁴⁶Congressional Record, 44th Cong., 2nd sess., 5 December 1876, pp. 18-19.

elected.⁴⁷ In an attempt to find a compromise solution, Roscoe Conkling, who reportedly believed that the election properly belonged to Tilden, proposed the creation of a bipartisan Electoral Commission.⁴⁸ This commission would hear arguments from both sides and then make the final determination of which electoral votes would be counted.

As one of the few remaining Senate Carpetbaggers, Dorsey was in an uncomfortable position. It is impossible to say whether he believed Hayes or Tilden had actually been elected, although, curiously, he voted with a small minority in the Senate to make the Electoral Commission hearings public.⁴⁹ He stated publicly that Tilden would be preferable if Hayes intended to place Bristow in his cabinet, as it was rumored he might.⁵⁰ Dorsey would not have profited by the election of Tilden, but he did not trust Hayes. After the Redemption of Arkansas, Dorsey's only hope of political power lay in the national Republican party and the patronage

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 40.

⁴⁸ Jordan, Roscoe Conkling, pp. 254-55.

⁴⁹ Congressional Record, 44th Cong., 2nd sess., 24 January 1877, p. 912.

⁵⁰ Ross A. Webb, Benjamin Helm Bristow: Border State Politician (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1969), p. 262.

it could bestow; Dorsey feared that Hayes, in his desire for conciliation, would repudiate Dorsey and his Carpetbagger colleagues.⁵¹ Dorsey thus opposed the creation of the Electoral Commission, believing that the Republican party should hold out for the Senate's right to count the electoral vote.⁵² Dorsey possibly wanted Hayes to feel accountable to Senate Republicans for his election, and not to some compromise group of Republicans and Democrats.

Surrounding the congressional debate on the creation of the Electoral Commission, negotiations were taking place between Hayes' leaders and the Conservative Democratic leaders of the South, designed to siphon off enough southern Democratic support from Tilden to assure the election of Hayes. At the end of these negotiations the so-called Compromise of 1877 was reached, whereby Hayes promised to remove the last remaining federal troops from the South in return for the southern electoral vote and the South's promise to treat the Negro fairly. The Democratic leaders also promised to let the Republicans organize the next House

⁵¹Rutherford B. Hayes, The Diary of a President, ed. T. Harry Williams (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1964), p. 58; Smith, Garfield, p. 626.

⁵²Congressional Record, 44th Cong., 2nd sess., 24 January 1877, pp. 888-913.

of Representatives and to elect James A. Garfield, a Republican, as Speaker; Hayes promised to appoint David M. Key, a Democrat, as postmaster general and to secure Republican support for a federal subsidy for the Texas and Pacific Railroad.⁵³

Dorsey was not involved in the political aspects of this Compromise. Perhaps seeing his political career in Arkansas as ended, Dorsey voted to confirm Key's appointment when it came before the Senate, even though this meant that Arkansas postmasterships would now fall into Democratic hands.⁵⁴ Dorsey's immediate concern was that portion of the Compromise covering federal subsidies for the Texas and Pacific Railroad.

When the Texas and Pacific bill had first come before Congress in 1871, it had provided simply for a railroad to be built from Marshall, Texas to San Diego, California.⁵⁵ The panic of 1873 had forced the building of the road to a halt before the tracks had reached Fort Worth.⁵⁶ Now, with

⁵³ Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, discusses the Compromise and the intricate maneuvering necessary to achieve it.

⁵⁴ U.S., Congress, Senate, Journal, 45th Cong., Special sess., 10 March 1877, p. 21.

⁵⁵ Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, p. 71.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 76.

and that Dorsey would pilot a similar bill through the Senate. To this end, when the Forty-fifth Congress convened Dorsey resigned from the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads and was transferred to the Committee on Railroads, which would consider the Texas and Pacific bill in the Senate.⁶¹

The Texas and Pacific subsidy bill was possibly intended as an opportunity for Hayes to show his good faith toward the Carpetbaggers, as well as a chance for Dorsey to enrich himself while salvaging his slender reputation as a railroad builder among southern Conservatives. Whatever the purpose, however, the plan failed. Southern Democrats considered Hayes' inaugural address too weak on the subject of internal improvements, and they thought Hayes was being dilatory about removing the southern garrisons. House Democrats thereupon refused to allow the Republicans to organize the House, and elected a Democrat as Speaker in place of Garfield. Seeing the Democrats renege on an important part of their bargain, House and Senate Republicans thereupon refused to vote subsidies for the Texas and Pacific and Lamar's and Dorsey's bills died.⁶²

⁶¹Congressional Record, 45th Cong., Special sess., 8 March 1877, p. 39.

⁶²Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, pp. 229-37.

Thus as the Forty-fifth Congress began, Hayes had already demonstrated that he could neither honor a personal commitment nor keep his party in line, and the Republican party, the weakest it had been since the Civil War, was badly divided. As a southern Republican, Dorsey was in the awkward position of having been repudiated by his southern state and his Republican president, and he took his seat in the Forty-fifth Congress with no tangible constituency.

In the Forty-fifth Congress, Dorsey kept his seats on the Railroads and Appropriations Committees, and was chairman of the District of Columbia Committee. At this time the District of Columbia was administered by Congress, with the House and Senate District of Columbia Committees bearing the major burden of this administration. Consequently Dorsey, as chairman of the Senate committee, spent much of his time during the Forty-fifth Congress simply governing the District of Columbia.

Dorsey also continued his efforts on behalf of Arkansas, working for the Hot Springs Reservation bill and moving for some rivers and harbors improvements and some additional post routes. The major burden of looking out for Arkansas, however, passed in the Forty-fifth Congress to Democrat Augustus Garland, elected to succeed Powell Clayton, and

Dorsey adopted the Territory of New Mexico as his constituent base. This was perhaps natural, now that Dorsey was a large landholder in that territory, and since New Mexico did not have a senator at this time, Dorsey was considered most likely to represent the interests of the territory.⁶³ Dorsey re-introduced his bill for the organization of the Territory of Oklahoma and for the governing of the Indian tribes, this time not for the benefit of Arkansas, but of New Mexico.⁶⁴ Dorsey's attitude toward Indians indicated the change in Dorsey's perception of his constituency, from Arkansas to New Mexico: while he was theoretically representing Arkansas, Dorsey took a moderately liberal attitude toward Indians, arguing, for example, that they should not be forced to move to Indian Territory.⁶⁵ But when he took New Mexico as his constituency, Dorsey became intolerant of Indian depredations

⁶³Citizens of New Mexico occasionally sent petitions to Dorsey which they expected him to act upon; see, for example, Congressional Record, 45th Cong., 2nd sess., 14 January 1878, p. 299, 11 March 1878, p. 1626. Dorsey also sponsored bills for the establishment of postal routes in New Mexico; Congressional Record, 45th Cong., 2nd sess., 14 December 1877, p. 210.

⁶⁴Congressional Record, 45th Cong., 2nd sess., 16 April 1878, p. 353.

⁶⁵Ibid., 44th Cong., 2nd sess., 20 January 1877, p. 764, 27 January 1877, p. 1056.

and began fighting for the removal of Indians away from the white settlements of New Mexico.⁶⁶

One of the major issues coming before the Forty-fifth Congress concerned inflation and the coinage of silver. The greenbacks that had been authorized by the Forty-third Congress were scheduled for resumption--retirement and redemption at face value in coin--in March, 1877. The depression which had called forth these greenbacks in 1873 had not abated in 1877, and the effect of resumption would be to aggravate an already severe currency shortage, because there was hardly enough gold in the treasury to redeem all the outstanding greenbacks at par value. Resumption would also make credit, already extremely tight, even harder to obtain. Those hardest hit by the currency shortage were referring to resumption as the "Crime of 1873" and clamoring for more inflation.⁶⁷

Those arguing for more inflation, as well as those who feared the deflationary effect of resumption in gold, sought relief in the great silver mines opened in Nevada late in

⁶⁶ Ibid., 45th Cong., 3rd sess., 10 January 1879, pp. 401-03, 45th Cong., 2nd sess., 11 December 1877, p. 120.

⁶⁷ Paolo E. Coletta, "Greenbackers, Goldbugs, and Silverites: Currency Reform and Policy, 1860-1897," in H. Wayne Morgan, ed., The Gilded Age: A Reappraisal (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1963), pp. 118-19.

the 1860's. These mines were producing vast quantities of silver annually which, if coined, could supply enough specie to provide for resumption, while it offered the potential for unrestrained currency inflation. But while coining all the available silver and putting it into circulation would solve the currency shortage, it would not increase the dwindling value of silver, which was the miners' foremost concern. Congress had the power to increase that value through the ratio it established for silver and gold coinage.⁶⁸

The ratio at issue concerned the number of grains of metal necessary to coin silver and gold dollars of the same absolute value. The ratio of sixteen to one indicated that it required sixteen times as many grains to coin a silver dollar worth a dollar as it took to coin a gold dollar of equal value. The silver mine owners wanted the ratio of silver to gold fixed by law at sixteen to one, whereas by 1877 silver had decreased in value relative to gold and was worth only seventeen to one.⁶⁹ By the time of the Forty-fifth Congress, therefore, the silver interests in Congress

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 119-22.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 120.

had formed an uneasy alliance with the inflation interests, and were prepared to do battle for free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of sixteen to one.⁷⁰

The slightly ambiguous stand that Dorsey had taken on the currency issue in the Forty-third Congress hardened, in the Forty-fifth Congress, into a firm commitment to bimetallism. Throughout the currency debates in the Forty-fifth Congress Dorsey voted consistently for an expanded currency, and resisted attempts to limit the legal tender status of silver currency and thus preserve the gold standard.⁷¹ But although he voted against the majority of his party to consider a bill forbidding the retirement of greenbacks, Dorsey was not an inflationist.⁷² He supported the amendment to the Bland-Allison Act which limited the amount of silver to be coined monthly, indicating that he did not favor unabashed inflation.⁷³ Rather, Dorsey joined with those

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 121-22.

⁷¹ Congressional Record, 45th Cong., 1st sess., 6 December 1877, p. 46, 10 December 1877, p. 94, 25 January 1878, p. 558, 15 February 1878, pp. 1073-1112, 28 February 1878, p. 2141.

⁷² Congressional Record, 45th Cong., 2nd sess., 7 May 1878, p. 3227.

⁷³ The Bland-Allison Act required the United States Treasury to purchase silver for coinage at the rate of from \$2,000,000 to \$4,000,000 monthly. The act as it originally

business interests who welcomed silver as a chance to increase the supply of currency without risking the hazards of unredeemable paper. Silver for Dorsey was thus not a means for inflation, but was a method for expanding the currency without inflating the economy.⁷⁴

Silver was widely popular in the agrarian South and West, as well as among practically all business interests west of the Alleghenies. Ohio politicians in particular, especially Hayes, Garfield, and Sherman, had to walk a careful line to avoid antagonizing either their solid gold principles or their pro-silver constituents.⁷⁵ Under these circumstances, with his Ohio heritage, his Arkansas and New Mexico constituencies, and his self-interest as an entrepreneur all pulling him in the same direction, it would have been remarkable if Dorsey had not voted consistently for silver.

For the Forth-fifth Congress Dorsey reversed his attendance pattern of the Forth-third and Forty-fourth Congresses, and was present for over seventy per cent of the votes cast. He possibly believed that he was the only one

⁷⁴ came to the Senate provided for unlimited coinage; the monthly amounts were added as a Senate amendment.

⁷⁴ Unger, The Greenback Era, pp. 342-43.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 333-34, 338-39, 345, 348-49.

who could be trusted to vote in his interest, since few Carpetbaggers were left in the Senate and the Republican president was not in sympathy with the Carpetbaggers' position. Also, for the Forth-fifth Congress Dorsey's Arkansas senate colleague was Democrat Augustus Garland, elected to fill the seat vacated by the expiration of Powell Clayton's term. Garland's presence might have contributed to the improvement of Dorsey's attendance record in the Forty-fifth Congress, for they opposed each other on fifty-seven per cent of their common votes. Dorsey might have felt compelled to be present to cast his vote so that Garland's vote would be cancelled.

The tight Republican party discipline of the Forty-fourth Congress had considerably relaxed, if not totally evaporated, by the Forth-fifth. The Carpetbagger coalition disappeared entirely, as had most of the Carpetbaggers by this time. Apparently, without a sympathetic president in the White House, the Carpetbaggers saw it necessary to go their own ways, which they had not done with Grant as president.

Dorsey's record on party votes in the Forty-fifth Congress was slightly better than average: he disagreed with the majority of his party 17.71 per cent of the time,

against a party average of 19.43 per cent. Dorsey and Conkling came no closer to agreeing than they ever had, even though by the time of the Forty-fifth Congress both were firmly committed to the re-election of Grant in 1880.

Conkling's rise to party leadership is one of the curious phenomena of the Forty-fifth Congress. He had been on the fringes of the party in the Forty-third and Forty-fourth Congresses, with indexes of disagreement with the majority of his party of forty-three and twenty-seven per cent, respectively. Suddenly in the Forty-fifth Congress Conkling, who had absolutely no respect for Hayes and referred to him as "His Fraudulency,"⁷⁶ voted only a 9.84 per cent variance from the party line. It was not that Conkling changed so abruptly, but that the Republican party moved closer to Conkling's position in the Forty-fifth Congress. In the Forty-third and Forty-fourth Congresses, while Grant was in the White House, Logan, Morton, and Cameron had been in the main stream of the Republican party in the Senate; in the Forty-fifth Congress, with Grant, Logan, and Morton gone, and the Republican position threatened by the timorous Hayes, the Republican party was without direction. Senate Republicans apparently decided that Conkling had been correct, and he

⁷⁶Jordan, Roscoe Conkling, p. 280.

became the party's spokesman. Two years later, in 1881, opponents of the New Yorker would gain control of the Republican party, and they would force his retirement from politics.

When the Arkansas state legislature met in February, 1879, no one was surprised that Dorsey's name was not offered as a choice to succeed himself in his Senate seat.⁷⁷ He thus faded out of a Senate he had occupied as at best a mediocrity. Dorsey's political career, however, and his power within the Republican party, did not diminish with his exit from the Senate halls; in fact, that power increased. Slightly more than a year after Dorsey left the Senate, he was elevated into the inner circle of the Republican hierarchy as secretary of the Republican National Committee for the campaign and election of 1880. In this position Dorsey exercised the most power he attained throughout his political career, and he made himself indispensable to the Republican victory of 1880.

⁷⁷Daily Arkansas Gazette, 22 January 1879.

CHAPTER IV

THE CAMPAIGN AND ELECTION OF 1880

The convention which met in Chicago in June, 1880, to nominate Republican candidates for president and vice-president represented a seriously divided party. Hayes' announcement in 1877 that he would not seek re-election led most party leaders to ignore him politically, and left the field wide-open for Republican presidential aspirants.

While professional politicians tended to ignore Hayes, the American people accepted him as a welcome relief from the sordid years of the Grant Administration. Hayes had practiced a hands-off policy toward the South, and had also begun some minor civil service reform. Thus while Hayes had done little to excite enthusiasm among Republican followers, he had done nothing to offend them.

Hayes and civil service reform, however, mortally offended Roscoe Conkling, the New York leader of the Stalwarts, as the Grant wing of the Republican party was called. Hayes did not respect Stalwart preferences when making patronage appointments; the result of this disrespect was that while the Stalwarts still controlled much of the party machinery,

they were in trouble in three key states: New York, Illinois, and Pennsylvania. The Stalwart leaders in these states, Conkling, John Logan, and J. Don Cameron, thus determined that for them to revive their sagging political power, the re-election of Grant in 1880 was essential.¹

After the inauguration of Hayes in 1877, the country had been allowed to forget the scandals that had rocked Grant's second term. Shortly after leaving office, Grant embarked on a world tour, where he was treated as an equal by kings and idolized by the cheering multitudes. A full account of Grant's triumphs reached the American people daily through the columns of the New York Herald, and Grant once again became the hero of Appomattox and the savior of the Union.²

As Grant returned to San Francisco in September, 1879, speculation was already rising in the press concerning a possible third term. This speculation Grant carefully ignored, while his managers guarded a nascent Grant boom equally carefully.³ In the spring of 1880 Grant toured the

¹Robert D. Marcus, Grand Old Party: Political Structure in the Gilded Age (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 24-34.

²David M. Jordan, Roscoe Conkling of New York: Voice in the Senate (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), pp. 338-40.

³Ibid., pp. 321-22.

South, ostensibly for his health, but the timing of his appearances in the southern states co-incided with the Republican state conventions.⁴ Grant emerged from this excursion with much popularity in the South, but this popularity was of questionable value because there was little hope of the Republicans carrying the South in November.

In response to the Grant boom, an "anything to beat Grant" movement developed under the unofficial leadership of James G. Blaine of Maine. Blaine had been a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in 1876, before the unfortunate scandal of the Mulligan Letters had ruined his chances. He was not certain, in 1880, that he could survive another presidential contest in which the Mulligan Letters were certain to be an issue, but he was convinced that the country could not survive another four years of Grant.⁵ He thus remained in the background, allowing others to use his name in an effort to pull convention delegates away from Grant.⁶

⁴William B. Hesseltine, Ulysses S. Grant, Politician (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1935), p. 436; Dorsey to Thomas W. King, 9 April 1880, James A. Garfield Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., series 4.

⁵H. Wayne Morgan, From Hayes to McKinley: National Party Politics, 1877-1896 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1969), p. 70.

⁶Ibid., p. 71.

As the convention approached, six candidates competed for the Republican nomination. Grant and Blaine went to Chicago with most of the convention divided between them. John Sherman of Ohio, who had been a mainstay of the Republican party for years and the architect of Republican fiscal policy, decided that it was his turn to be the presidential nominee. Intricate problems of finance were not the stuff of which campaigns were fashioned, however, and no one was drawn to Sherman by the force of his personality. Sherman's largest asset in his race for the nomination in 1880 was his campaign manager, James A. Garfield, a popular war hero who had worked for years mastering the science of politics. George Edmunds of Vermont, the choice of Republican reformers, was a reluctant candidate who had been persuaded to enter the contest by the prospect of being able to exercise the presidential power of veto if he won. William Windom of Minnesota, soon to be secretary of the Treasury, and Elihu B. Washburne, at one time a Grant sponsor, were in the contest to be available for selection if the convention deadlocked.⁷

The Grant forces lost an early round at the convention with the selection of George F. Hoar as convention chairman.

⁷ Leon B. Richardson, William E. Chandler, Republican (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1940), pp. 250-52.

Hoar was an Edmunds supporter who refused to acknowledge the unit rule,⁸ and unless the unit rule were enforced, Grant would lose about fifty votes from delegations pledged to him under that rule. With the unit rule, he would have the nomination, or be very close to it, on the first ballot.⁹ Thus when Hoar refused to enforce the unit rule, the Grant forces took their fight to the convention floor, where they lost by a vote of 449 to 306.¹⁰

With the defeat of the unit rule, the convention settled into long, weary hours of balloting. The delegates had demonstrated that they had the strength to defeat Grant, but they had settled nothing else, and Conkling would not allow Grant's name to be withdrawn. Occasionally someone voted for Conkling, and Garfield, Sherman's campaign manager, got a few consistent votes on every ballot.¹¹ But as ballot after ballot continued with virtually the same result, it was obvious that the convention was deadlocked and that none of the current candidates was going to emerge as the Republican presidential nominee.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Jordan, Roscoe Conkling, p. 332.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 338-40.

The break came on the thirty-fourth ballot, when Wisconsin moved its votes from Windom to Garfield. Garfield, an early leader of the anti-Grant coalition, made a fumbling attempt to decline these votes, but by this time the exhausted delegates were willing to accept anything that looked like a change from the monotony of the first thirty-three ballots.¹² On the thirty-fifth ballot more states followed the example of Wisconsin, and the deadlock appeared broken.

Finally, on the thirty-sixth ballot the landslide started for Garfield, and Conkling worked the floor in a last, desperate attempt to muster all of Grant's strength. And on this ballot, in the face of an obvious stampede to Garfield, 306 votes held for Grant, the legendary "306" for whom medals were later struck commemorating their loyalty.¹³ With Garfield nominated, Conkling immediately moved that the nomination be made unanimous, and then stalked out of the convention.¹⁴

¹² Ibid.; Morgan, From Hayes to McKinley, p. 93.

¹³ Thomas C. Platt, The Autobiography of Thomas Collier Platt, ed. Louis Lang (New York: B.W. Dodge and Co., 1910), p. 251. Much of the Arkansas delegation was among the 306, including Dorsey; Platt, Autobiography, p. 332.

¹⁴ Jordan, Roscoe Conkling, p. 340.

To appease Conkling, and with the hope of bringing the crucial state of New York into line behind the Republican ticket, Garfield's managers cast about for a vice-presidential candidate from New York. Their first choice was banker Levi P. Morton, who consulted with Conkling. After submitting to a verbal blistering on the subject of political loyalty, Morton decided that Conkling would not be appeased by Morton's candidacy, and he declined the offer. The vice-presidency was then tendered to Stewart Woodford, who repeated Morton's behavior, with the same result.¹⁵ In desperation, Garfield's managers finally approached Chester A. Arthur, a Conkling lieutenant who had been involved in a New York Customs House scandal during the Hayes Administration.¹⁶ Defying Conkling, Arthur accepted the nomination, and the Republicans finally had a ticket.¹⁷

The defeated Grant forces immediately staged a coup in an attempt to gain control of the campaign, if not the candidate. The day after the convention adjourned, Cameron called a meeting of the Republican National Committee to

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 341-42.

¹⁶ Richardson, Chandler, p. 253.

¹⁷ For an account of the scene between Conkling and Arthur, see Jordan, Roscoe Conkling, p. 342.

elect officers and organize the upcoming campaign. The Grant supporters were instructed to come early, so that they could name the officers of the committee before any opposition arrived. Chandler got word of this scheme, however, and arrived at the meeting in sufficient time to foil it.¹⁸ The committee then adjourned until 1 July, at which time officers would be elected at a meeting to be held in New York.

The intervening weeks did nothing to heal the rift in the Republican ranks, and Cameron's attempted coup only served to harden the anti-Stalwart opposition. When the National Committee reassembled on 1 July, the Blaine-Garfield forces were determined that no Stalwart, and particularly not Cameron, would be named chairman.¹⁹ But they could not afford simply to ignore the Grant wing of the party, which controlled the party machinery of three essential states. Thus a sub-committee consisting of Chandler, a Blaine supporter, Logan, a Stalwart, and John Murray Forbes,

¹⁸Richardson, Chandler, p. 257; John Murray Forbes, Letters and Recollections of John Murray Forbes, ed. Sarah Forbes Hughes (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1899), 2 vols., 2:195.

¹⁹Chandler to Garfield, 14 June 1880, Forbes to Chandler, 25 June 1880, William E. Chandler Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

an independent, was instructed to nominate the chairman and the secretary of the National Committee, which choices the committee would then ratify.²⁰

In the subcommittee, Logan pressed hard for the selection of Thomas Platt, a Conkling lieutenant, as chairman, but Chandler and Forbes would not hear of this and instead named Marshall P. Jewell of Connecticut, "the only man on Garfield's list who would accept."²¹ Jewell was reported to be a good fund-raiser, was generally innocuous, and was prone to indecisiveness at critical moments. Jewell was apparently not expected to exercise much leadership on the committee, and he served in his position as a somewhat petulant figurehead.²²

Jewell's selection was supposed to balance the various party factions. Logan, however, was far from satisfied, and announced that if the Blaine men wanted to run the campaign, then they could do so without Stalwart help. This sent Chandler and Forbes into a panic, and they pleaded with Logan to remain. After some importuning, Logan let

²⁰Forbes, Letters and Recollections, 2:196.

²¹Richardson, Chandler, p. 258.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 259; Chandler to Garfield, 14 June 1880, Forbes to Chandler, 25 June 1880, Chandler Papers.

the Solid South and concentrating on getting out the Republican vote in the crucial states of New York and Indiana.²⁵

The campaign in New York was off to a rocky start after the Chicago convention. Roscoe Conkling did not take his losses lightly, had no respect for Garfield, and gave every indication that he would be at least neutral in the campaign, if not openly hostile.²⁶ Without Conkling's active support, the political machine in New York would not extend itself to produce the Republican vote, and much of the money needed to finance the campaign would not be forthcoming.²⁷ It was thus necessary that Conkling be induced to support the Republican ticket; Arthur's nomination, intended for this purpose, had not been demonstrably effective in achieving this result.

Dorsey's position at the outset of the campaign was thus far from enviable. A member of the "306," he had been named as secretary of the National Committee to appease the Grant wing of the party. Dorsey owed his position to Logan, however, and was not of that group who swore allegiance to

²⁵E.C. Hubbard to Garfield, 4 August 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

²⁶Morgan, From Hayes to McKinley, pp. 102-03.

²⁷Whitelaw Reid to Garfield, 30 July 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

himself be persuaded to name the national secretary, and after considering further he named Dorsey.²³

Logan's choice probably came as something of a surprise to Chandler and Forbes, although Forbes, at least, had considered Dorsey within the realm of Stalwart possibilities for the post. Chandler, recalling Platt's boast that pledges would be exacted from Garfield before the Stalwarts entered into active campaigning, required a promise from Dorsey that the secretary would do nothing to "crowd or annoy" the candidate. Obtaining this promise, Chandler joined with Forbes in ratifying Logan's selection.²⁴

As the campaign commenced, it was estimated that with the departure of federal troops from the southern states, the South would go solidly Democratic; the electoral votes of New York and Indiana added to those of the Solid South and the border states would give the Democrats the election. Furthermore, New York and Indiana were considered doubtful states that could go either way. Some National Committee members, and Garfield, advised campaigning for at least one of the southern states to offset possible Republican defeats in the North. Perhaps from painful experience in Democratically controlled elections in Arkansas, Dorsey advised writing off

²³Forbes, Letters and Recollections, 2:196-97.

²⁴Richardson, Chandler, p. 259.

Roscoe Conkling. With Conkling's attitude it was going to be difficult for anyone, let alone an outsider, to persuade him to activate his New York machinery on behalf of the Republican ticket. Dorsey was thus in a position of having to reconcile Garfield to Conkling while having no real influence with either.

After discussing the situation in New York with Conkling lieutenants Arthur, Alonzo B. Cornell, and Platt, Dorsey decided that the only possible hope of persuading the senator to come out of retirement for the duration of the campaign was to arrange a meeting between Conkling and the candidate.²⁸ Dorsey also realized, however, that a private meeting between Conkling and Garfield, whatever the outcome, would inevitably be publicized and would lead to unfortunate speculation in the press. He thus decided to camouflage the meeting behind a general conference of the Republican National Committee, the chairmen of the Republican State Central Committees, the Congressional Republican Committee, and any other party dignitaries not included in any of these, ostensibly to plan the strategy of the campaign.²⁹ Amid such a gathering, a meeting of Garfield and Conkling would appear to be natural.

²⁸Jordan, Roscoe Conkling, p. 349.

²⁹Dorsey to Garfield, 25 July 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

The conference was scheduled for 5 August at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, headquarters of the Republican National Committee.

Garfield and some of his friends, including Chairman Jewell, were not convinced that a meeting between Garfield and Conkling was necessary, or that it would be wise for the candidate to go to New York. Whitelaw Reid suggested that Arthur's nomination had appeased the Conkling forces sufficiently, and that it would be beneath the dignity of a presidential candidate to make a special trip to confer with the senator from New York.³⁰ Carl Schurz thought that Conkling's ill will could be tolerated, since most of the senator's following appeared willing to work for the ticket.³¹ The candidate was inclined to agree with these views, and he communicated them to Dorsey in a letter asking why this conference was necessary.³²

Dorsey swiftly lost patience with those who were advising the candidate to boycott the conference. On 25 July he wrote to Garfield:

³⁰ Reid to Garfield, 19 July 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

³¹ Marcus, Grand Old Party, p. 46.

³² Garfield Diary, 27 July 1880, Garfield Papers, series 1.

I am informed that some friends of yours, much nearer to you than I ever was or ever expect to be, insist that you ought not to come. I submit, without questioning the good judgment and honest desire of those friends to serve you, that in the nature of the case they are wholly incompetent to judge whether it is best for you to come or not, because they know nothing about the facts in the case; and I submit, also, that advice given you by however capable and earnest friends without knowledge of all the difficulties in the way should not affect your course one way or the other. I believe I as earnestly desire your election as any of them, and I think I understand the situation a good deal better than all of them, and I insist that, in my judgment, our success depends upon your being here on the 5th of August.³³

The next day, after hearing further objection to the meeting from Chairman Jewell, Dorsey's impatience was less restrained:

I repeat with all the earnestness I have that in my judgment it is a duty which you owe to yourself and to the Republican party to be here on the 5th of August regardless of what Mr. Jewell says or Mr. George Curtis or Mr. anybody else I cannot see for the life of me what good Gov. Jewell can do you or the party by running out to Mentor on next Friday and bustling about the country and producing none of those results which you and I and every practical man knows to be the essentials of success.³⁴

Garfield straddled the fence, advising Dorsey to go ahead with his plans for the conference but not yet committing himself to attending.³⁵ He sought further advice.

³³ Dorsey to Garfield, 25 July 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

³⁴ Dorsey to Garfield, 26 July 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

³⁵ Garfield to Dorsey, 28 July 1880, Garfield Papers, series 6A.

Chairman Jewell advised him that he was still seeking counsel, but that he would "within a week have an opinion, and perhaps a definite one."³⁶ Former Secretary Chandler was also still trying to make up his mind. He was slowly coming to the view that the votes of New York were probably worth the trip; what bothered Chandler was the high-handedness with which Dorsey had arranged the conference without consulting with Jewell. Chandler was not pleased by Dorsey's having presented the National Committee with a fait accompli, but he finally advised, grudgingly, that since the plans had gone as far as they had, Garfield had no real choice but to attend.³⁷

Against his better judgment, Garfield reluctantly agreed to appear in New York on 5 August.³⁸ Then another problem developed. On 1 August, too late to cancel the conference, Conkling, whom Dorsey apparently had also not consulted in making his plans for the conference, announced that he had no intention of meeting with Garfield. He did not trust Garfield to remember any conversation accurately,

³⁶ Marcus, Grand Old Party, p. 42.

³⁷ Chandler to Garfield, 28 July 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

³⁸ Morgan, From Hayes to McKinley, p. 108.

so he saw no point in conferring with the candidate.³⁹ Seeing his grand design suddenly collapsing around him, Dorsey tried to bargain. When Conkling remained adamant in his refusal to appear at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, Dorsey proposed the compromise solution of having Conkling meet the candidate's train in Buffalo. This, finally, the Senator agreed to do--provided that the invitation to join the train came from Garfield. Dorsey was sure that he could arrange this, and, with the major problem solved, continued with the final preparations for the conference.

Again, however, Dorsey had not anticipated the candidate's feelings. Garfield had reluctantly agreed to make the trip to New York; he steadfastly refused to budge on the idea of placating Conkling. When Dorsey asked if it would be acceptable to Garfield for Conkling to meet him en route from Ohio to New York, the candidate replied yes, but "since the Committee is making all the arrangements, I don't think I should send an invitation."⁴⁰ This was after Garfield had already telegraphed an invitation to Logan,

³⁹Jordan, Roscoe Conkling, p. 351; Robert G. Caldwell, James A. Garfield, Party Chieftain (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1931), p. 300.

⁴⁰Garfield to Dorsey, 1 August 1880, Garfield Papers, series 6B.

so obviously the issue of who would send the invitations to meet the candidate's train was not at stake.⁴¹ At this point Dorsey must have felt sorely tried. Garfield could have not chosen a more unfortunate moment to elect to stand on his pride. Now he was threatening Dorsey's entire strategy, and with it, the secretary firmly believed, the success of the campaign.

Even those who had adamantly opposed Garfield's trip to New York were forced to admit that it was a resounding success for the candidate. He was greeted by enthusiastic crowds wherever he stopped on the way to the city, and his route to the Fifth Avenue Hotel was lined with cheering throngs of New Yorkers.⁴² Only one cloud appeared to mar the otherwise flawless horizon of the conference: the arrogant Conkling disdained to make his appearance.

A number of explanations have been offered for the senator's absence, the most charitable of these being that Conkling did not want to give rise to speculation in the press concerning possible deals made.⁴³ Whatever the reason,

⁴¹Garfield to Logan, 1 August 1880, John A. Logan Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁴²Morgan, From Hayes to McKinley, p. 109.

⁴³Boston Herald, 9 August 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

and although Dorsey might have been warned to expect such behavior, Dorsey must have appeared shamefaced as he explained to the candidate that the meeting which Dorsey had ridden roughshod over everyone to arrange, toward which he had applied such heavy pressure on Garfield, would not occur.⁴⁴ Only the jubilant letters of his friends over the success of the conference must have assuaged Garfield's anger at this affront to his dignity, and Dorsey's ever-precarious position must have suffered following his failure to bring about the much-heralded meeting upon which he had staked the success of the campaign.⁴⁵

As the result of the apparent failure of his summit, Dorsey remained in his original position of having to mediate between Garfield and Conkling, and Conkling, at least, had not demonstrated an overwhelming desire to co-operate with the Stalwart secretary. But although the Fifth Avenue Conference had failed on the surface to achieve Dorsey's aims, it had apparently made his task easier. Within a week of the conference Conkling appeared at the offices of the National Committee, had a lengthy meeting with Dorsey,

⁴⁴Caldwell, Garfield, p. 301.

⁴⁵Forbes to Garfield, 13 August 1880, Jewell to Garfield, 13 August 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4; Reid to Garfield, 13 August 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4A.

and then announced that he was ready to put his affairs in order and commence work on the campaign.⁴⁶ Dorsey's work in planning the Fifth Avenue Conference was finally justified.

Not, however, to Chairman Jewell and his friends who resented Dorsey's behavior in carrying out this elaborate strategy over the head of the chairman. Dorsey defended his actions by saying that those who confided in him did so only on the condition that he not confide in Jewell.⁴⁷ This was probably true, but Dorsey was not going to promote harmony in the National Committee by continuing to ride roughshod over its chairman. Jewell lamented to Chandler that he was left all alone, and friends complained heatedly to Garfield that Dorsey was usurping the role of the chairman.⁴⁸ Jewell might have been able to salvage some of his authority, had he been inclined to do so, had Dorsey's summit conference collapsed, for then he would have been vindicated. But self-assertiveness was not one of Jewell's strongest characteristics, and Dorsey had emerged triumphant, if a bit weathered, from the Fifth Avenue Conference.

⁴⁶McCormick to Chandler, 13 August 1880, Chandler Papers.

⁴⁷Dorsey to Garfield, 26 July 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

⁴⁸Richardson, Chandler, p. 262.

Belatedly, Jewell tried to reassert his control over the campaign. With the idea that a friendly newspaper could probably convert more voters than could a sheaf of obviously propagandistic campaign documents, Dorsey had authorized the distribution of the New York Tribune among doubtful voters in the states of Indiana and New York. Now, a week after the Fifth Avenue Conference, Jewell rescinded this authorization and announced that the National Committee would not reimburse the Tribune for those 15,000 newspapers already distributed.⁴⁹ Furious, Dorsey stormed into the National Committee offices and confronted Jewell, but the chairman stood his ground in the heated debate that ensued. Dorsey thereupon stalked out "in disgust," and made plans to go to Chicago to supervise the canvass of Indiana.⁵⁰

The idea that Dorsey take personal charge of the Indiana campaign was probably his own. Given the personalities of the secretary and the chairman, the intense drive of Dorsey and the indecisiveness of Jewell, the two were inevitably going to clash. Furthermore, neither one trusted the other: in Dorsey's view Jewell was politically untrustworthy; in

⁴⁹ A.P. Miller to Filkins, 14 August 1880, Dorsey to Garfield, 18 August 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

⁵⁰ Reid to Garfield, 13 August 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4A.

the chairman's view, Dorsey was financially suspect. The secretary was dynamic and extravagant, and cared not how much something cost so long as it would work; Jewell saw himself as the guardian of the committee's funds and was never quite sure that Dorsey wasn't putting these vast sums into his pocket. Such, anyway, was Dorsey's reputation.⁵¹ Whatever the circumstances, it was readily apparent that the two would not work well in harness, and it was probably best for the conduct of the campaign that Dorsey found something to do outside New York.

Indiana was a "must" state for the Republicans to carry. Along with Ohio, Indiana held its elections for state officers in October and could thus influence the outcome of the November elections--particularly if the Republicans lost Blaine's state of Maine in September. If the Republicans won the October states the election might be saved, but if the October states went Democratic, the November election would likely find the voters jumping onto an apparent Democratic bandwagon. Indiana was thus a crucial state.

It was also, along with New York, doubtful. Both of these states had gone to the Democrats in 1876. At the

⁵¹See, for example, Mrs. H.S. Kimball to Garfield, 7 August 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

outset of the 1880 campaign, Indiana was conceded to have a Democratic majority of about 5,000 votes.⁵² A good, efficient and tightly-run Republican organization could probably turn out enough Republican votes to offset this majority, but the organization Dorsey found in Indiana, while impressive on paper, was totally unsuited to the purpose for which it was desperately needed.

Elections in Indiana were traditionally marked by the importation of voters from states with lax residence requirements for voting (thus enabling these voters to return home and vote again in November) and by the expenditure of large sums of money to secure the "floating vote," voters whose party affiliation was determined by the highest bidder.⁵³ It was with these two largely Democratic practices in mind that Dorsey fashioned his organization, while also attempting to maximize the Republican vote.

Dorsey began his work on the Indiana campaign organization immediately upon reaching that state. Within a week of his arrival in Indiana, armed with a request from the

⁵²Paul T. Smith, "Indiana's Last October Campaign," Indiana Magazine of History 19(December, 1923):337-38.

⁵³Smith, "Indiana's Last October Campaign," p. 338.

Republican State Central Committee to take over the management of the state's campaign, Dorsey was receiving reports from workers he had stationed all over the state.⁵⁴

Dorsey divided the state into sixteen districts, each district containing from three to eight counties. The head of each district, with Dorsey, was to select a man to take charge of each county. The district and county men were then to appoint a man in each town

to make immediate poll of every voter in their township, and to have that poll [in Dorsey's hands] by the 10th of September. They also report by name every doubtful voter and every floating vote, who the man is, what he is doing, and whether the Democracy is likely to buy him or not.⁵⁵

A second poll of every voter in every town in the state was to be taken and delivered to Dorsey ten days before the October election.⁵⁶

Dorsey had his fingers very firmly on the pulse of every level of his organization. In addition to the organization doing the actual work of polling the voters, Dorsey further divided the state into thirty groups of towns; the

⁵⁴Dorsey to Garfield, 18 August 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

⁵⁵Dorsey to David Swaim, 1 September 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

⁵⁶Ibid.

men in charge of these groups were to act as troubleshooters for the towns in their groups. These troubleshooters, and the men directing the polling of the sixteen state districts, were required to report to Dorsey daily.⁵⁷ Dorsey also received daily reports from the Pinkerton detectives he had stationed in "New York, Baltimore, Louisville, Indianapolis, Chicago, and elsewhere . . . especially to watch the tricks and schemes of our opponents."⁵⁸ The main task of the Pinkerton agents was apparently to infiltrate Democratic campaign organizations in the cities to which they were assigned.⁵⁹ With such an organization at work, Dorsey could justly claim that, although the Democrats were reported to have five dollars for every Republican dollar in Indiana, the Democrats could not spend \$25 anywhere in the state without Dorsey's knowing about it.⁶⁰

Dorsey also armed campaign workers and Pinkerton agents on the state's borders with census lists of qualified Indiana voters, obtained United States Supervisors to watch the

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ See reports of Pinkerton agents to Dorsey, 11-16 September 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

⁶⁰ Dorsey to Swaim, 1 September 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

polls, and secured the aid of friendly railroad officials to warn him of the migration of out-of-state voters. All of these measures were designed to minimize the importation of Democratic voters into Indiana. Dorsey was probably not unduly disturbed by reports that numbers of Republican voters were being imported.⁶¹

This was not an organization of volunteer workers, and obviously required vast sums of money to sustain it. Raising the money necessary to carry Indiana was the responsibility of the National Committee and of Levi P. Morton of New York, who had agreed at the Fifth Avenue Conference to raise a contingency fund, independent of the committee, to be used where it was needed.⁶² But contrary to popular rumor, the money Morton raised was not being sent exclusively to Indiana, and the National Committee was in the control of people who did not trust Dorsey with money.⁶³ Partly because he distrusted Dorsey, and still smarting from the setback he had received at the time of the Fifth Avenue Conference, Jewell summarily refused to honor drafts

⁶¹Jewell to Garfield, 8 October 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

⁶²Jordan, Roscoe Conkling, p. 353.

⁶³Reid to Garfield, 2 September 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

that Dorsey had authorized his chief campaign organizers to draw on the National Committee.⁶⁴ The chairman maintained that he would continue such refusal until he received an itemized statement of where and how the money was being spent.⁶⁵ In addition to being grossly insulting, such a proposal amounted to a demand for the surrender of control of the Indiana canvass to Jewell in New York. This would have been both impractical and totally unacceptable to Dorsey. He fired off a perfunctory letter to Jewell and then wrote to Garfield, setting forth the workings of the Indiana canvass and asking Garfield's assistance in wresting loose the necessary funds from New York.⁶⁶ This assistance the candidate promised and gave. In the meantime, Dorsey was driven to financing the Indiana campaign organization from his own bank account.⁶⁷

Dorsey's organization in Indiana was independent of the state Republican Central Committee, which guarded its

⁶⁴ Thomas M. Nichol to Garfield, 23 August 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

⁶⁵ Jewell to Garfield, 26 August 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

⁶⁶ Dorsey to Garfield, 31 August 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

⁶⁷ Garfield Diary, 2 September 1880, Garfield Papers, series 1; Dorsey to Swain, 1 September 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

prerogatives carefully. Their jealousy was further aroused as practically all of the money raised for Indiana was going to Dorsey's committee, while the state committee was left to ferret out ~~its own~~ resources.⁶⁸ As the campaign for Indiana progressed, rumors of conflict between Dorsey and the state committee increased, to the point where Jewell feared that the state would be lost if the campaign remained in the hands of "this double-headed committee."⁶⁹

By mid-September, to encourage efficiency and to pacify hurt feelings, Dorsey and the State Central Committee had arrived at a working division of labor. The state committee, under William Dudley, took over the work of getting out the Republican vote and hiring election supervisors, while Dorsey took charge of work "of a secret kind," the nature of which can only be conjectured upon.⁷⁰ It is uncertain whether Dorsey used the money for which he so loudly and consistently clamored in the outright purchase of votes, but

⁶⁸Jewell to Garfield, 1 September 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4; McCormick to Chandler, 5 October 1880, Chandler Papers.

⁶⁹Jewell to Garfield, 5 October 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

⁷⁰John C. New to Garfield, 4 September 1880, Dorsey to Garfield, 20 September 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

he was involved with the importation into Indiana of between 1,500 and 2,000 stave and barrel makers and a number of railroad personnel.⁷¹ While these immigrants were ostensibly practicing their professions in Indiana, their political influence and Republican votes had considerable impact in close counties on election day.⁷²

In September Dorsey and his confidence in the operation of the Indiana campaign received a serious shock at the hands of the Maine voters. In Maine, Blaine's home state which had been virtually guaranteed to the Republicans,⁷³ the Greenbackers organized a strong effort that drew off Republican votes and resulted in the election of the Democratic ticket. Dorsey's initial reaction to the Maine disaster was to continue in Indiana "as if nothing had happened."⁷⁴ Upon reflection, however, he decided to ask the advice of Garfield: "I must have some instructions as to

⁷¹Marcus, Grand Old Party, p. 55; Swaim to Dorsey, 9 September 1880, Garfield Papers, series 6A; Dorsey to Garfield, 20 September 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

⁷²Marcus, Grand Old Party, p. 56.

⁷³Garfield Diary, 2 September 1880, Garfield Papers, series 1.

⁷⁴Dorsey to Garfield, 14 September 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

whether to proceed along the same line that I have, or whether we are going to change our plan of battle."⁷⁵ One thing Dorsey decided to do, as a direct result of the Maine election, was begin discussion with Indiana Greenbacker leaders toward a possible fusion of the Republican and Greenbacker tickets. Dorsey had considered this action for some time, but had not proceeded because of a lack of support for the idea among his Republican colleagues. Now, with the lesson of Maine glaringly before him, Dorsey on his own initiative began the talks.⁷⁶

The October election returns for Indiana indicate that Dorsey's initiative toward the Greenbackers was both unproductive and unnecessary. The Greenbackers kept their ticket in the race and polled only slightly more than three per cent of the vote. The Republicans carried Indiana, but by a margin of only 7,953 votes, out of 470,738 votes cast. Thus Indiana proved on election day to be as difficult for the Republicans to carry as had been predicted, and the election results easily justified all the effort concentrated in that state.

⁷⁵Dorsey to Garfield, 15 September 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

⁷⁶Dorsey to Garfield, 17 September 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

His work done in Indiana, Dorsey did not stay to celebrate his victory. Three days after the Indiana election, he was on his way to Harrisburg, Philadelphia, and New York, to help with campaigns in the eastern states.⁷⁷ In a meeting at the National Committee headquarters in New York on 17 October 1880 it was decided that Dorsey's talents would be most useful in New Jersey, which Jewell characterized as "the hardest of all the states."⁷⁸ This determination made, the campaign organizers who had accompanied Dorsey eastward returned to Indiana to insure that the October victory carried into November, and Dorsey set himself to work in New Jersey.⁷⁹

The National Committee had thought that Dorsey would create in New Jersey a campaign organization similar to the one in Indiana. Exactly what type of arrangement Dorsey actually made in New Jersey is not clear, but he had the New Jersey organization together and functioning within days after his arrival in that state. Dorsey thus apparently

⁷⁷Dorsey to Garfield, 14 October 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

⁷⁸Jewell to Garfield, 18 October 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

⁷⁹Swaim to Garfield, 18 October 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

worked more within the existing state organization in New Jersey than he had in Indiana.⁸⁰

The New Jersey operation did not have the importance for Dorsey that he had attached to Indiana. The Indiana contest had put a severe strain on his health, and he did not do much work in New Jersey after the initial task of organization had been completed.⁸¹ In any event, Dorsey was not successful in salvaging New Jersey from the Democrats, who carried the state by 2,000 votes.

New Jersey was the only northern state lost to the Democrats in November, 1880. When the final results were in, Garfield had carried every state outside the South except New Jersey, California, and Nevada; Garfield had 214 electoral votes to Hancock's 155. But the popular vote was much closer, and it was not certain that Garfield had won until the final returns from New York were counted. It thus appeared that the work Dorsey had done, in unifying the campaign effort in New York and in organizing Indiana, was of vital importance in carrying the election of 1880.

⁸⁰ Swaim to Garfield, 19 October 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

⁸¹ Chauncey I. Filley to Garfield, 21 October 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4.

The election was over, but Dorsey's job was not yet finished. One of the first things Garfield tried to do, once elected, was select a cabinet. His first nomination was that of Blaine as secretary of state. Although this selection was supposed to be kept secret until the full cabinet could be announced, the news of Blaine's appointment reached Roscoe Conkling in New York.

Certain that Garfield could not have been elected without the active support of the Stalwarts, Conkling felt betrayed by Blaine's appointment and was determined to see that the Stalwarts, and New York, received their proper reward in the cabinet. With the Department of State assigned, Conkling focused his attention on the Treasury, the only post with the prestige and power to which Conkling thought New York was entitled. Based on reports from Platt and Morton, Conkling believed, furthermore, that the Treasury Department had been promised to New York at the Fifth Avenue Conference in August.⁸²

Garfield recalled no such promise; in fact, he prided himself on having escaped New York with no commitments made

⁸²Morton to Garfield, 17 January 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4.

to anyone.⁸³ Furthermore, if the Treasury Department were to go to New York, the most logical choice would be Morton, and Garfield had constitutional and moral scruples about assigning control of the Treasury Department to a New York banker.⁸⁴ Thus the president-elect was determined that the secretaryship of the Treasury would not go to New York, and the issue with Conkling was joined.

Perhaps because he had arranged the conference at which this apparent misunderstanding had occurred, Dorsey was asked once again to mediate between Garfield and the Conkling faction in New York. Summoned by the president-elect, Dorsey went to Menton to confer with Garfield on the cabinet.⁸⁵

⁸³ Garfield Diary, 9 August 1880, Garfield Papers, series 1. In spite of the cynicism of some modern historians, this writer is convinced that Garfield actually believed that he had not committed himself to Morton at the Fifth Avenue Conference. This is not to say that Garfield did not make the commitment, but only that Garfield left to himself some mental reservation by which he could reassure himself that he had not in fact said what everyone else in the room had heard. The thought probably never occurred to Garfield that his words could have been interpreted in the way that they obviously were.

⁸⁴ Swaim to Dorsey, 22 December 1880, Garfield Papers, series 7.

⁸⁵ Garfield Diary, 13 December 1880, 14 December 1880, Garfield Papers, series 1.

When he returned to New York he had a lengthy interview with Conkling at the New York senator's request. During this interview Conkling impressed upon Dorsey his desire to support the Garfield Administration. He then suggested that if, upon reflection, Garfield decided not to give the Treasury Department to New York, then perhaps Garfield should "say so distinctly so that there should be no mistake about it and then [the Conkling faction] would know better what to do."⁸⁶ Dorsey might have taken this interview as a declaration of impending war, but instead interpreted it as a peace offering and immediately fired off an enthusiastic account of it to Garfield.

Two days after this interview, on 20 December 1880, Garfield received some hope that he might be able, in one stroke, to salvage his own scruples, Morton's self-respect, and Conkling's good will. Hayes' secretary of the navy resigned suddenly, and Hayes offered Garfield the chance to fill the vacancy, with the appointment to be continued into Garfield's term. Garfield decided that this was an excellent opportunity to solve the New York situation, and asked Dorsey to inquire discreetly whether the appointment of Morton to

⁸⁶Dorsey to Swaim, 16 December 1880, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

the Navy Department would be acceptable in New York.⁸⁷

But Morton balked, and said that he would accept no cabinet position other than the Treasury.⁸⁸

At this point Dorsey, who never had supported Morton's claim to the Treasury Department,⁸⁹ decided to try another solution to New York's knotty problem by suggesting the appointment of Charles J. Folger, of the New York Court of Appeals, to the Treasury post.⁹⁰ This move was most likely an independent one on Dorsey's part, and perhaps another attempt to face Conkling with a fait accompli. For while he pointed out that once in the cabinet Folger would be loyal only to Garfield, Dorsey characterized the jurist as a Stalwart whom Conkling respected, and whose appointment would unify the Republican party in New York.⁹¹ Dorsey probably hoped that Conkling would have no choice but to

⁸⁷Garfield to Dorsey, 20 December 1880, Garfield Papers, series 6A.

⁸⁸W.B. Allison to Garfield, 2 January 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

⁸⁹Garfield Diary, 13 December 1880, Garfield Papers, series 1.

⁹⁰Dorsey to Garfield, 20 January 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4.

⁹¹Ibid.

be pacified with the appointment of Folger to the Treasury Department.

While Dorsey was campaigning for Folger, others decided that the solution to the problem of New York lay in the appointment of New York Postmaster Thomas James as postmaster general. Dorsey thereupon put the full force of his influence behind Folger, even making a special trip to Mentor in Folger's behalf.⁹² It was rumored that Dorsey's vigorous support of Folger was motivated by a desire to see anyone in the cabinet from New York except James, because James as postmaster general posed a threat to some deals which Dorsey had with the Post Office Department.⁹³

In the midst of these battles over Garfield's cabinet appointments, on 11 February 1881 a dinner honoring Dorsey was given at Delmonico's Restaurant in New York. The dinner was a Republican extravaganza, with almost all the leading party figures appearing either as guests or as speakers. Former President Grant presided over the occasion, and the invocation was given by Henry Ward Beecher. At the height of the festivities, which consisted of effusive tributes to

⁹²Garfield Diary, 11 February 1881, Garfield oPapers, series 1.

⁹³Jordan, Roscoe Conkling, pp. 374-75.

Dorsey's role in the Republican victory, Vice-President-elect Arthur rose to make the main speech of the evening.

"I don't think we had better go into the minute secrets of the campaign, so far as I know them, because I see reporters present, who are taking it all down Indiana was really, I suppose, a Democratic state. It had always been put down in the book as a State that might be carried by close and careful and perfect organization and a great deal of ----" Here he paused meaningfully, and someone in the audience shouted "soap!" as everyone laughed. "I see the reporters here, and therefore I will simply say that everyone showed a great deal of interest in the occasion, and distributed tracts and political documents all through the country. (laughter) If it were not for the reporters I would tell you the truth, because I know you are intimate⁹⁴ friends and devoted adherents to the Republican party."

Garfield, who had not been invited to the Delmonico dinner, was puzzled over its possible significance.⁹⁵ A person who had some knowledge of the planning of the event reported that the dinner was largely Dorsey's own creation, designed to facilitate his return to private life by giving him enough prestige to secure a rather large loan without much credit.⁹⁶ The timing of the Delmonico dinner, however,

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 375-76. Arthur's speech is quoted, with Jordan's comments, from these pages.

⁹⁵ Garfield to Reid, 14 February 1881, Garfield Papers, series 6A.

⁹⁶ Reid to Garfield, 20 February 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

gave rise to speculation among Dorsey's enemies that the dinner was designed to force Garfield to accept a cabinet of Dorsey's choice.

Chandler was furious at "the gross want of sense, propriety and taste which prepared a public celebration and glorification of the use of money to carry elections," and speculated:

The evidently desired sequel of all this apotheosis of corruption is to be the plunder of the government to reward those who boast that they did the deed. The "Star Service" is the grand prize which is to nourish them and to furnish the scandals of the next presidential fight. They are willing to have a cabinet nominally honest; but the lesser cabinet--the Assistant Secretaries and the Assistant Postmaster General, it would be unreasonable to refuse to a band of disinterested patriots who, as Mr. Beecher, speaking at the deification of corruption, said of Dorsey, have done their work in a manner "almost sublime." They may well expect to name the cabinet, select the assistants and get annual incomes from their influence with them!

Blaine agreed with Chandler in his analysis, but named the second assistant postmaster generalship as the specific position which Dorsey wished to control. Blaine pleaded with Garfield not to let Dorsey gain control of "the minor Cabinet which in the Post Office Department is even more important than the major."⁹⁸

⁹⁷Chandler to Garfield, 17 February 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

⁹⁸Blaine to Garfield, 13 February 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

Dorsey vehemently denied having "the slightest interest in any contract or business with the Post Office department or with any department of the government."⁹⁹ He also denied that he had any ulterior motives in opposing the appointment of James as postmaster general, saying that he opposed James only "because he is the merest tool of scheming men in [New York]."¹⁰⁰ Barely a month after James took office as postmaster general, however, massive frauds were uncovered in the Post Office Department, for which Dorsey was later prosecuted.

⁹⁹Dorsey to Garfield, 17 February 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4B.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

CHAPTER V

THE STAR ROUTE FRAUDS

In June, 1882, Dorsey and seven others, including his brother, his brother-in-law, his confidential assistant, and Second Assistant Postmaster General Thomas J. Brady, were tried in the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia for conspiracy to defraud the government in what became known as the Star Route frauds. One year and another trial later the ~~eight~~ were finally acquitted; this verdict has not prevented historians from assuming Dorsey's guilt, and from assuming further that Dorsey was the mastermind behind the entire system of frauds that supposedly robbed the Post Office Department of about four million dollars.

The postal "Star" service was established in 1876 to provide mail service to those communities not served by rail or steamboat. Star routes were designated in the Post Office Department books by three asterisks, indicating certainty, celerity, and security, from which they derived their name.¹ Contracts for carrying the mail over Star

¹Marshall Henry Cushing, The Story of Our Post Office: The Greatest Government Department in All Its Phases (Boston: A.M. Thayer and Co., 1893), p. 23.

routes were awarded on the basis of competitive bidding. A prospective contractor would certify to the Post Office Department that he could carry the mail along a given route a certain number of times per week for a stated amount of compensation. Two other persons would sign the bidder's application as sureties, or bondsmen, and the local postmaster would affirm that the sureties were good for a specified amount if the bidder failed to perform the service specified in his contract. The statutes governing the Star service also provided for an increase in the compensation on a route, at a flexible percentage of the amount of the original contract, for any increase in service on a route; the contracts for increased service were also to be awarded through competitive bidding.²

In 1878 indications began appearing that gross frauds were being perpetrated in the Star Route contracts. Suspicion focused on Second Assistant Postmaster General Thomas J. Brady, the official responsible for awarding these contracts, and on Stephen Dorsey, at that time still a United States

²Proceedings in the Trial of the Case of the United States vs. John W. Dorsey, John R. Miner, John M. Peck, Stephen W. Dorsey, Harvey M. Vaile, Montfort C. Rerdell, Thomas J. Brady, and William H. Turner for Conspiracy, 3 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1882), 1:60-77. Hereafter cited as Proceedings, first trial.

senator from Arkansas.³ It was alleged that Dorsey had sent Star Route bids to Little Rock Postmaster O.A. Hadley with instructions to secure two sureties to a bidder not named on the forms, in direct violation of postal regulations. It was further charged that after these bids were signed and returned to Washington, the names of John Peck, Dorsey's brother-in-law, John R. Miner, a former Ohio business associate, Thomas Bowen, a former Arkansas associate, and John Dorsey, the Senator's brother, were inserted, and further that the signature of Peck was a forgery.⁴

Senator Dorsey issued a vehement denial of these allegations as soon as they were aired in the press, and he gave an unsolicited statement in his defense to a House committee investigating mail contract frauds.⁵ This committee failed to produce any evidence that Dorsey had done anything illegitimate concerning these bids; in fact, his accusers failed to appear before the committee when they

³New York Times, 18 March 1878, p. 1; 21 March 1878, p. 1; 23 March 1878, p. 1.

⁴Ibid., 18 March 1878, p. 1.

⁵U.S., Congress, House, Testimony Taken by the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, House of Representatives, in Reference to the Post Office Department, House Misc. Doc. 16, 45th Congress, 3rd Session, 1878, pp. 68-72.

learned that Dorsey planned to testify.⁶ Furthermore, the committee never proved that Stephen Dorsey had anything at all to do with the fraudulent bids: Hadley never specified which Dorsey, Stephen or John, had asked his assistance, and the letter instructing Hadley was not in the senator's handwriting.⁷ The only fact that the committee was able to determine about Stephen Dorsey in 1878 was that, at the request of his constituents, he had written letters to Brady and to Postmaster General Key requesting that certain postal routes be established in Arkansas.⁸

Dorsey served the balance of his Senate term with no further question raised concerning his post office associations, but the investigation was not forgotten. In July, 1879, after Dorsey was out of the Senate, he approached a newspaper editor in New Mexico with evidence that one of the Star routes in that area was fraudulent, and demanded that this information be published.⁹ Dorsey's story was duly

⁶Washington Post, 4 April 1878.

⁷House Misc. Doc. 16, 45th Congress, 3rd Session, pp. 5, 10; New York Times, 13 April 1878, p. 1.

⁸New York Times, 13 April 1878, p. 1.

⁹U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, Testimony Relating to Expenditures in the Department of Justice: The Star-Route Cases, House Misc. Doc. 38, 48th Congress, 1st Session, 1884, p. 381.

printed, but no attention was paid to it at that time, and nothing further was said about Dorsey's connection with any mail contract frauds. After the election of 1880, however, as Garfield was trying to select a cabinet, broad hints began circulating that Dorsey opposed the selection of Thomas L. James as postmaster general because he feared that once in office, James would discover and expose Dorsey's involvement in the Star Route frauds.¹⁰

These rumors were probably basically accurate. As long as there was a chance that Dorsey could circumvent James' appointment by engineering the nomination of Charles Folger of New York as secretary of the treasury, Dorsey applied heavy pressure on Garfield to appoint Folger. If Folger had been appointed, Garfield would not have appointed James, since both men were from New York. After it became clear that Folger would not accept a cabinet position, Dorsey became desperate in his efforts to stop James at all cost. As late as 4 March 1881 Dorsey was writing frantic notes to Garfield, pleading with him not to appoint James, and very unsubtly reminding the president that he owed his position

¹⁰Chandler to Garfield, 17 February 1881, Blaine to Garfield, 13 February 1881, James A. Garfield Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., series 4B.

to Dorsey.¹¹ But Garfield did appoint James, and on 9 March the president instructed him to conduct a full investigation of frauds in the Post Office Department.¹²

Approximately one month later, James, Attorney General Wayne McVeagh, and Postal Inspector P.H. Woodward called on Garfield and announced their discovery of massive frauds in the contract office of the Post Office Department. They further advised Garfield that vigorous prosecution of these frauds "may affect persons who claim that you are under obligation to them for services rendered in the last campaign--and one person in particular who asserts that without his management you could not have been elected."¹³ Having thus been warned that Dorsey might be personally involved in the frauds, Garfield ordered the investigation continued, but directed that no prosecution be begun without his personal authorization.¹⁴

The investigation proceeded. The Post Office Department sent special agents out to inspect all of the Star routes,

¹¹Dorsey to Garfield, 4 March 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4.

¹²House Misc. Doc. 38, 48th Congress, 1st Session, p. 2.

¹³Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁴Ibid.

while other agents went over the books of the second assistant postmaster general's office. One early result of their findings was that on 21 April, not quite two months after James had assumed office, he had gathered enough information on Brady for Garfield to ask for Brady's removal.¹⁵

On 25 April, 1881, the New York Times published on its front page a table of ninety-three Star routes in which fraud was alleged, thus climaxing a two-month press campaign against Brady and announcing to the world that investigation into the Star Route contracts had begun in earnest.¹⁶ Of these ninety-three routes, Miner, Peck, and Harvey M. Vaile, a postal contractor in Dorsey's employ, held nineteen. Following the appearance of this article, the Star Route investigators hired private detectives and assigned them the duty of following and reporting Dorsey's every move.¹⁷ Special agents of the Post Office Department toured Arkansas to inspect that state's postal system, and they spread the word that any postal official who held appointment by

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ New York Times, 25 April 1881, p. 1.

¹⁷ Dorsey to Garfield, May 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4.

Dorsey's recommendation would be removed.¹⁸ At this point Powell Clayton began a campaign for the removal of Little Rock Postmaster O.A. Hadley, a Dorsey protégé.¹⁹ Meanwhile, taking its cue from the New York Times, the press kept up a barrage of accusation and innuendo against Dorsey.

Dorsey felt persecuted, and protested that he did not deserve such treatment.²⁰ He prepared a complete statement of the activities in which he had engaged on behalf of his brother and his friends and gave it to Garfield, demanding that the president order a special investigation of Dorsey forthwith so that his name might be cleared.²¹ Garfield apparently promised that he would order such an investigation, but he became very dilatory about keeping this promise.²² Dorsey continued his pressure for an investigation, sending

¹⁸Dorsey to Garfield, 26 April 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4.

¹⁹Ibid.; Dorsey to Garfield, 26 May 1881, Dorsey to Garfield, 29 May 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4.

²⁰Dorsey to Garfield, 16 May 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4.

²¹House Misc. Doc. 38, 48th Congress, 1st Session, p. 68; Dorsey to Garfield, 29 April 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4.

²²Dorsey to Garfield, 29 April 1881, 5 May 1881, 27 May 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4.

a twenty-two-page explanation of his Star Route involvement to the attorney general and demanding that his innocence be proclaimed.²³ After being kept up all night by James and McVeagh, reviewing the Star Routes and Dorsey's connection with them, Garfield expressed "sympathy with [Dorsey] and some doubts [unspecified]," but still refused to order a special investigation.²⁴ James and McVeagh also refused to move in that direction, arguing that a separate investigation of Dorsey would unnecessarily divert the Star Route investigation and would leave gross frauds undiscovered.²⁵

In June, 1881, the Star Route investigations took an unforeseen turn, and turnabout. Powell Clayton, accompanied by James and Woodward, approached Montfort C. Rerdell, Dorsey's confidential assistant, who had been with Dorsey since before his campaign for the Senate in 1873.²⁶ Rerdell was apparently in possession of some very damaging information, and knew by the reports in the press that the government was

²³Dorsey to Wayne McVeagh, 12 May 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4.

²⁴Garfield Diary, 14 May 1881, Garfield Papers, series 1.

²⁵Ibid., 15 May 1881; Dorsey to Garfield, 27 May 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4.

²⁶House Misc. Doc. 38, 48th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 603, 611.

very close to uncovering the entire Star Route operation.²⁷

Faced with the prospect of full disclosure and possible indictment, Rerdell, encouraged by Clayton, produced Dorsey's letter-press books at an interview with James and McVeagh in which he made a complete statement concerning the operation of what became known as the "Dorsey combination."²⁸

Rerdell also apparently offered to secure Dorsey's financial records from New York to substantiate his statement.²⁹

Before Rerdell got to New York, however, word had travelled to Dorsey of Rerdell's behavior. Dorsey panicked, telling friends that Rerdell had "squealed,"³⁰ and he showered Rerdell with impassioned pleas on behalf of Mrs. Dorsey and the children not to smear Dorsey's reputation any further.³¹ Apparently before Rerdell was able to deliver Dorsey's records to James and McVeagh, Dorsey and his financial manager, J.W. Bosler, managed to get him to change his mind. They then worked out an affidavit, much of which Dorsey

²⁷ Ibid., p. 611.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 337.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 338, pp. 58-59.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 611-12.

composed, to be written and signed by Rerdell disavowing everything he had told the government.³² With this document in hand, Dorsey and his attorney, Robert G. Ingersoll, called on Garfield and demanded the resignations of James and McVeagh for subornation of perjury.³³ By this time Garfield was thoroughly disgusted with the whole proceeding, and told Dorsey that Rerdell had already pronounced himself a liar and a scoundrel and that the president did not believe a word Rerdell said in his recantation.³⁴

Dorsey thus failed to secure the resignations of James and McVeagh, and he had probably forfeited any sympathy the president might have held for him, but he relaxed considerably after Rerdell's credibility was destroyed.³⁵ He resumed his pressure for a separate investigation.³⁶ Then in July, 1881, Garfield was shot, moving the entire process of the Star Route investigations beyond the range of Dorsey's control.

³²Ibid., p. 611.

³³Ibid., p. 15.

³⁴Garfield Diary, 15 June 1881, Garfield Papers, series 1.

³⁵House Misc. Doc. 38, 48th Congress, 1st Session, p. 338.

³⁶Ibid., p. 15.

After Garfield's condition had stabilized somewhat, he was moved to Elberon in New Jersey to get him out of the unbearable climate of the Washington summer; from Elberon he conducted the essential business of the presidency. The Star Route investigators had almost completed preparations for criminal prosecution of Dorsey when Garfield was shot, and they were ready to lay certain of Dorsey's routes before a Washington grand jury for indictment when the president was removed to Elberon. The prosecutors thus travelled to Elberon to review the case with Garfield and to secure the president's approval to prosecute.³⁷ By the time the attorneys returned to Washington, however, the grand jury had been dismissed after sitting only three days of its scheduled four-month term, and by the time a new grand jury could be summoned, the statute of limitations would have expired on some of the key routes in the government's case.³⁸ District Attorney Corkhill, who had summarily dismissed the grand jury, maintained that he was unaware of any further business for which the jury would be required,³⁹ but it is possible that Corkhill owed his

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 102-03.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 102-03, 424.

position to Dorsey's influence as chairman of the District of Columbia Committee, and Corkhill might have released the grand jury at Dorsey's request.

Temporarily stymied, the prosecution tried to proceed on the basis of an information rather than an indictment. An information could be handed down by a justice of the peace and did not require a grand jury, so that with an information the government could go to trial without any further delay.⁴⁰ The justice of the peace in Washington ruled, however, that the crime of which Dorsey was accused came under the definition of an "infamous crime" in the District of Columbia statutes, and thus could be tried only by an indictment.⁴¹ This forced the government to abandon prosecution of some key Dorsey contracts, because the statute of limitations expired on these routes before a new grand jury could be summoned.

The government had not been able to get into court with the Star Route cases when Garfield died in September, 1881, and Chester A. Arthur assumed the presidency. Inheriting the prosecution of the Star Route frauds placed Arthur in an

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 103-05.

⁴¹ Ibid.

uncomfortable position. He had a very clear understanding of the influences that had placed the Republican party in the White House in 1880, and he had made an injudicious but widely publicized acknowledgement of the party's debt to Dorsey at the Delmonico dinner. On the other hand, Arthur as president had to live down the scandals in which he had been involved as collector of the Port of New York. Thus he could not afford to appear lenient in Dorsey's behalf, particularly since the press was howling for Dorsey's conviction and hinting darkly that Arthur would not have the courage to pursue the Star Route prosecutions to this end.

With a new and possibly sympathetic president now in control of the prosecution, Dorsey renewed his campaign to have James and McVeagh dismissed for subornation of perjury, and to secure a special investigation of his own activities.⁴² Arthur did not respond to Dorsey's importuning; perhaps he believed that the Star Route matter had gone so far that a public trial was necessary to satisfy everyone, and that a special investigation of Dorsey at this point would look like Arthur was trying to protect Dorsey.

⁴²Dorsey to Arthur, 26 September 1881, 6 October 1881, Chester A. Arthur Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

The fraud of which the eight were accused touched every level in the operation of the postal Star service. It was alleged that for the contract term beginning in July, 1878, Senator Dorsey submitted bids for Star Route contracts in the names of Miner, Peck, and John Dorsey, in violation of a law which forbade a member of Congress from holding an interest in any government contract. It was further alleged that these bids were ridiculously low--too low to put service on a route, but low enough to insure that his would be the low bids and that he would be awarded the contracts.

After the contracts were awarded on the basis of these low bids, the government's charge continued, the real fraud began. The prosecutors maintained that Dorsey had bid for these routes at speeds too slow for a horse to travel, so that when his contractors carried the mail at normal speeds Dorsey could petition the Post Office Department for additional compensation based on the faster rate of speed. Thus the original price of a Dorsey contract was immediately doubled before any special service was put on a route. At this point, according to government allegations, Dorsey applied pressure to the contractors and to the postmasters on the routes, telling them to secure petitions asking the

The government laid its abbreviated case before the Washington grand jury in the fall of 1881, and secured the indictment of Dorsey and his associates for conspiracy to defraud the United States Treasury. But Dorsey had not yet abandoned the attempt to keep the case from going to trial. Dorsey fought to have the indictments quashed on the grounds that they were improperly drawn, because they indicted the defendants by their initials instead of by their full names and because the grand jury which returned the indictments was illegally constituted.⁴³ The faulty indictments forced the government to go before the grand jury a second time to secure proper indictments; the prosecution did not react to the charge that the jury had been illegally constituted. In June, 1882, the government was ready to take its case to the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia, Dorsey had exhausted all his efforts to avoid prosecution, and United States vs. John W. Dorsey, John R. Miner, John M. Peck, Stephen W. Dorsey, Harvey M. Vaile, Montfort C. Rerdell, Thomas J. Brady, and William H. Turner for Conspiracy finally went to trial.

⁴³Proceedings, first trial, 1:1; House Misc. Doc. 38, 48th Congress, 1st Session, p. 80.

Post Office Department for totally unnecessary advances in the speed and in the frequency of mail delivery on his routes. Then Brady, for a price generally conceded to be one-third of the bonus, would increase the price of Dorsey's contracts at the maximum rate, based not on the original contract price, but on the value as it then stood, having already been doubled at least once. By this method, one Dorsey route for which the original contract price was \$2,000 had jumped to \$150,000 after only two months.⁴⁴

Postal inspectors testified that some of these routes did not exist, that others contained only one or two delivery points, and that still others were obsolete since the communities in question were being served by railroad.⁴⁵

Dorsey's defense was basically the one he had argued before a House committee in the Forty-fifth Congress and in his statements to Garfield and McVeagh. Dorsey maintained that he had assisted his brother, Miner, and Peck when they had come to him in 1878 with the idea of becoming postal contractors, but that he had advised strongly against the move at that time and had helped only when he discovered

⁴⁴Proceedings, first trial, 1:64-80; House Misc. Doc. 38, 48th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 63, 337, 740-42.

⁴⁵House Misc. Doc. 38, 48th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 246-47.

that they were determined to go ahead. He said that he had taken the routes over in 1879, after leaving the Senate, and then only to keep his brother and his friends from being declared failing contractors, and to prevent embarrassment to the bondsmen whom Dorsey had secured for their bids.⁴⁶

Dorsey held that instead of making an enormous profit on the Star Route contracts, he had done well to break even after sinking thousands of dollars into the routes in the effort to support his friends. He stated that he sold most of the routes to Vaile, an established postal contractor, keeping only a few routes to himself to recover the funds he had advanced to his brother, Miner, and Peck. The management of these routes he had immediately turned over to J.M. Bosler, and after having thus expended vast amounts of energy and money to salvage the reputations of his friends, Dorsey had washed his hands of the Post Office Department.⁴⁷

⁴⁶House Misc. Doc. 16, 45th Congress, 3rd Session, pp. 68-72; Dorsey to McVeagh, 12 May 1881, Garfield Papers, series 4.

⁴⁷Proceedings in the Second Trial of the Case of the United States vs. John W. Dorsey, John R. Miner, John M. Peck, Stephen W. Dorsey, Harvey M. Vaile, Montfort C. Rerdell, and Thomas J. Brady for Conspiracy, 4 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883), 3:3942-43, 3955. Hereafter cited as Proceedings, second trial.

The case was complicated, and in court it became more so. Because of the interdependence of the facts of the case, the only crime for which the eight could be tried was conspiracy. To prove conspiracy, however, the government had to prove the overt acts claimed in the indictment, and the trial judge forbade the introduction of any evidence bearing on the overt acts until the conspiracy itself was established.⁴⁸ To complicate matters even further, the government was attempting to prove overt acts in furtherance of a conspiracy on 134 different routes, which they expected a jury of ordinary citizens to keep straight in their minds.

The jury, understandably, became increasingly confused as the trial progressed. The only witness willing to testify concerning the existence of a conspiracy was Rerdell, who probably hoped for kind treatment for giving state's evidence. But this plan quickly backfired. After extended legal argument over the admissibility of Rerdell's testimony, the judge finally ruled that it would be admissible only as evidence against Rerdell, and not against any of the other defendants.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Proceedings, first trial, 1:297-98.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 2:1795-1805.

The jury, deliberating six months of testimony, decided that Rerdell was certainly guilty, even if they could not decide on the others. In a verdict that truly staggers the imagination, they ruled that Rerdell and Miner were guilty of conspiring with Stephen Dorsey, John Dorsey, Peck, Vaile, Brady, and Turner, and declared that these six defendants were innocent of conspiring with anyone.⁵⁰

Both Rerdell's attorney and the attorneys for the government immediately protested the absurdity of this verdict and asked that a new trial be ordered.⁵¹ Because one of the defendants convicted of conspiracy had appealed his conviction, the Fifth Amendment prohibition against double jeopardy was rendered inoperative as it affected Dorsey, and a second trial of all the Star Route defendants was set for June, 1883.

For the second trial Dorsey took no chances on a questionable verdict. While this trial was in preparation, he hired private detectives and stationed them at the railroad stations and the hotels of Washington to observe the arrival of government witnesses.⁵² He reportedly paid one government

⁵⁰ Ibid., 3:3236.

⁵¹ Ibid., 3:3241-86.

⁵² House Misc. Doc. 38, 48th Congress, 1st Session, p. 331.

witness \$100,000 to absent himself from Washington for the duration of the proceedings.⁵³ Informants close to the prosecution kept Dorsey advised on the progress of the government's case and the nature of their evidence.⁵⁴ While the trial was in progress, Dorsey was reported to have paid an agent to bribe certain jurors who were thought to be susceptible to such influence.⁵⁵

By June, 1883, most of the furor in Washington over the Star Routes had died, and the second trial was an anticlimax. Whether through subversion or because the jury honestly believed that the government had not proved its case, Dorsey and the other defendants in the Star Route cases, including Miner and Rerdell, were finally acquitted of all charges in September, 1883.⁵⁶

That verdict did not end the government's effort to recover money they were convinced Dorsey had stolen. The attorney general's office planned to institute civil proceedings against Dorsey, but they could never find him

⁵³Ibid., pp. 186-89, 966.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 202-03.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 962-99.

⁵⁶Proceedings, second trial, 4:5875-76.

for long enough to serve him with a summons.⁵⁷ Then Bosler, who had custody of Dorsey's books, died suddenly before the government had a chance to attach his property. Dorsey's records were then tied up indefinitely while Bosler's estate was probated, and the government finally abandoned its effort to make Dorsey pay for a crime of which two juries had acquitted him.⁵⁸

The question of whether Dorsey was in fact guilty in the Star Route frauds still remains open. He was probably innocent of the gross frauds of which he was accused; although the prosecutors at both trials tried hard to focus the jury's attention on Stephen Dorsey, most of the testimony in the cases related to John Dorsey, Miner, and Rerdell.⁵⁹ It is likely that Dorsey was telling the truth about the extent of his involvement in postal contracts; that is, that he gave some advice and a lot of money to help his brother, his brother-in-law, and some friends speculate in mail contracts. Had Dorsey let the investigation and trial take their natural course, he might have been acquitted

⁵⁷ House Misc. Doc. 38, 48th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 293-94, 954.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 945, 952-54.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 527, 530-39, 650.

without the necessity for legal maneuvering and jury-tampering, because there was no Post Office Department statute which the government could prove him guilty of violating.⁶⁰

Dorsey's acquittal has not saved his reputation in the eyes of historians because his behavior after the frauds became public showed clearly that he was covering something. Dorsey quite probably was not fully cognizant of all the ramifications of the Star Route contract business, and he panicked in the effort to save himself, his brother, and his friends from some unknown terror after the frauds were discovered. If the Star Route frauds can be divided into two parts, the actual fraud and the later attempt at concealment, Dorsey was probably not guilty of the first part, but he was certainly guilty of the second.

A concurrent hypothesis is that Rerdell was probably guilty as charged. Rerdell might have used his position within Dorsey's office to further his own interests and then, with the connivance of Powell Clayton, tried to pull Dorsey down with him when it became apparent that he was going to fall. There is too much evidence involving Rerdell, while at the same time indicating that Dorsey did not know what was going on, to support the government's contention that

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 537.

Dorsey was the director of a conspiracy in which Rerdell played only a minor role.⁶¹

Curiously, Dorsey's was the only combination ever tried in connection with the Star Route frauds, although the government had evidence against five other major combinations, and some minor ones, engaged in the same business.⁶² The questions must thus be raised concerning, first, why the government pursued Dorsey so vigorously to the exclusion of all other possible conspirators, and, second, why the prosecution was so anxious to ascribe the whole of the Star Route frauds to Dorsey. An answer to the second question is readily available: having made the decision to prosecute Dorsey, the government had to make it appear as though Dorsey was a significant part of the fraud and not simply a minor piece in a larger puzzle. The answer to the first question possibly lies in Dorsey's connection with the Grant wing of the Republican party.

⁶¹ See, for example, House Misc. Doc. 16, 45th Congress, 3rd Session, pp. 606-07, 609-10.

⁶² House Misc. Doc. 38, 48th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 59-60, 62.

CONCLUSION

The period of Stephen W. Dorsey's public life coincided almost exactly with the period of Stalwart predominance in the national Republican party. He began his service in the United States Senate on the day Grant's second term officially began, and his ~~dramatic disgrace~~ at the hands of the Star Route investigators coincided with the disintegration of Stalwart power at the time of the assassination of Garfield.

But while Dorsey's political career coincided with that of the Stalwarts, and Dorsey himself was a Stalwart, he was not a smooth cog in the national Republican machinery. He did not identify his own success with that of the Stalwart leaders. He allowed himself to be used for their purposes, but occasionally he moved in ways that they had not anticipated, as in his performance as secretary of the Republican National Committee.

Dorsey enjoyed being around power and being associated with power, but during his career he held very little power of his own. He spent most of his career as an obscure politician, only twice rising above mere local notoriety. In 1880 he achieved national party prominence as secretary of the Republican National Committee and manager of Garfield's

campaign for Indiana; for a brief period thereafter he enjoyed the status of being near the seats of the mighty as Garfield solicited his advice on cabinet appointments and his aid in reconciling different elements of the party to Garfield's administration. Dorsey achieved a measure of national prominence again in 1882-1883 when the malodorous Star Route frauds were aired in the national press.

But most of his life Dorsey spent as an obscure party politician, what might ungenerously be termed a party hack. He could never have been the machine leader of the type of Blaine, Conkling, Chandler, or Logan: his selection as secretary of the Republican National Committee in 1880 was not a recognition of Dorsey's innate talents, but was a political pay-off, to bring the Grant wing of the party into Garfield's campaign.

Dorsey apparently had vast powers of persuasion, but he could not command the loyalty of subordinates; nor would he bow to titular superiors to whom he thought himself superior in intellect, drive, ambition, or talent. He was not arrogant, precisely; his was a driving, energetic personality which overrode even those who agreed with him, and easily lost patience with those who did not immediately see the wisdom of a course he had decided upon.

Dorsey was bright, shrewd, and fairly well educated. He was by no means brilliant. He was no long-range strategist, or even much of a tactician. He reacted to each situation as it arose, and there is some indication that he tended to react first, and think later. Under direct attack he reacted viciously, lashing out in all directions and digging himself more deeply into trouble by the force of his reactions. Subtlety was not among Dorsey's stronger qualities. He often did not have the vision to see how he fit into an overall scheme; he was not bright enough to realize that he was being used in situations in which he thought himself the master.

Dorsey was a political opportunist, and could also pretend to some measure of political realism. At thirty-two the youngest member ever to be elected to the Senate, he quickly adapted to the underlying power structure of that body--so quickly, in fact, as to lend credence to speculation that he had been sent to Arkansas by northern Stalwarts specifically to win a seat in the Senate. The pattern of his official behavior (if holding only two offices can establish a pattern) was of a man who worked desperately to demonstrate that he was actually qualified to fill positions acquired as the result of "trickery, hocus-pocus and legerdemain" or friends

in convenient places. He bought his way into the United States Senate and then tried to represent his Arkansas constituency, even after the Democrats regained control of that state; he was appointed to the Republican National Committee through the influence of John Logan, and then worked indefatigably for the election of the Republican presidential candidate.

In the matter of money Dorsey was loose and extravagant. He did not care particularly how he made it, although the easiest method was by far the most preferable. He believed himself too gifted for the more mundane pursuits of honest men, and he would never stoop to work which he considered beneath his station. He fancied himself as something of the leisurely country squire, and although his tenure in this position was short-lived at best, he had much of the forms of wealth, if not the actual substance. He entertained lavishly, and one gets the impression that Dorsey never had quite as much money as he spent. One gets the corresponding impression, however, that Dorsey never worried about it, but instead went right on spending in the blind expectation that things would work out for him. And they generally did.

The one exception in Dorsey's public life to things generally working out in his favor was his prosecution for

the Star Route frauds in 1882-1883. There might have been some poetic justice in Dorsey's being called to answer for the Star Route frauds after having succeeded in so much before, but of all the things for which Dorsey might have got caught, the Star Route frauds were the most ironic. Historians treating Dorsey have generally assumed that he was guilty in the Star Route matter, that everything the prosecutors said about him was true, and historians have extrapolated this picture backward over Dorsey's entire career. Examining Dorsey's life forward instead of backward reveals a somewhat different person at work in the Star Routes. Dorsey was actually in over his head in the Star Route association, and he really did not fully understand what was going on. Possibly Dorsey had the sense to realize that more was involved than he knew about, but he did not know how to react to that realization. In the Star Routes Dorsey was associated with a ring whose rules had been established before he joined, and Dorsey was never comfortable with someone else's rules. Only when he got caught did he begin to realize the magnitude of the Star Route operation. Dorsey was a convenient scapegoat for the prosecutors, but he was never involved as deeply or as nefariously as they tried, unsuccessfully, to make two juries believe.

Stephen Dorsey was at the pinnacle of his political career in the fall of 1880; by the spring of 1881 he was in disgrace. Since the Republican party of the Gilded Age was not in the habit of exposing to public pillory those who had put it into power, as Dorsey had in 1880, the reason that the party not only did not reward Dorsey, but left him vulnerable to criminal prosecution and possible imprisonment, must have been overwhelming.

There is obviously a large piece missing from the puzzle that was Dorsey's career in politics. After relatively insignificant service in the Civil War, Dorsey applied for a position in the United States Treasury Department. Not receiving this position, he settled down and developed a prosperous business in Ohio. Then, suddenly, he was elected president of the Arkansas Central Railway Company and went off to Arkansas with a moderate amount of money. He very quickly became a part of the Republican power elite in that state and was elected to the United States Senate after only two years' residence, over the heads of persons who, if not wiser or wealthier than Dorsey, had certainly been involved in Arkansas politics longer.

Dorsey arrived in Washington as a first-term senator, barely old enough to hold the office, from a state which the

Republicans must have known they could not hold much longer. He was immediately appointed to three of the most powerful committees in the Senate, and was moved to the Committee on Railroads as soon as a need arose for him to be there.

Sixteen months after the expiration of his uninspired Senate term, Dorsey was back in national politics in the highest position he attained throughout his political career. Then, almost immediately on the heels of this triumph, he was exiled from the seats of power, and he spent his remaining years, until his death in 1916, in New Mexico, Colorado, and California--a long way from Washington and New York.

The picture that emerges from all this is of a man with an extremely powerful sponsor, whose sponsor either lost power, deserted Dorsey, or turned on him after the inauguration of Garfield. This sponsor would have had to have known Dorsey before 1871, and have had enough influence with the Reconstruction legislature of Arkansas to be able to tell them whom to send to Washington as their senator. This sponsor must then have been in a position to influence the Senate leadership to treat Dorsey favorably; he must also have had enough power to be able to place Dorsey within the leadership of the Republican National Committee in 1880. Dorsey's political collapse after 1880 indicates that his

sponsor either lost his own power at this point, or that something Dorsey did, during the campaign or afterwards, so offended this sponsor that he withdrew his support from Dorsey.

The one person who meets all these specifications, who could have acted as Dorsey's political sponsor, was Ulysses S. Grant. Dorsey had been a staff officer under Grant's command during the Civil War, where he probably first came to Grant's attention. It is probable, although unproven, that Dorsey also filled some minor, functionary role in Ohio during Grant's first campaign for the presidency. It is certainly true that Dorsey worked hard for Grant in Arkansas in 1872--after which he became that state's United States senator. Dorsey served in the Senate during Grant's second term, so that Grant in the White House could have directed the Regular Republican leadership to be kind to Dorsey. In 1880, Dorsey led a solid Arkansas delegation to Chicago committed to Grant, and Dorsey went down, as did his delegation, with the famous 306 who stayed with Grant on the last ballot, when everyone else at the convention was bolting to Garfield. At this point, Grant still had enough power to have Dorsey placed on the Republican National Committee as his choice, through Logan.

It was after the election of 1880 that Dorsey's sponsor failed him. One could theorize simply that after Garfield's election, Grant no longer had the power to sustain Dorsey, and that enemies who had waited a long time in the wings suddenly seized the opportunity to get at Dorsey now that he was unprotected. And Dorsey, by this time, had certainly collected some powerful enemies, including Secretary of State Blaine, who might still have held the idea that Dorsey had been responsible for the exposure of the Mulligan Letters.

A second, less charitable theory is that Dorsey's behavior during the campaign of 1880 and afterwards so displeased Grant that he withdrew his favor from Dorsey, and possibly gave Dorsey's enemies the direction they needed. It is unlikely that charges which had been raised against Dorsey, and dropped, in 1878, would have been revived and invigorated in 1881, when Dorsey was at the peak of his power and influence, unless heavy pressure was being applied from somewhere. That pressure did not come from Garfield, and it probably did not come from Blaine. It is possible that Grant thought Dorsey needed a lesson in political loyalty: perhaps Grant placed Dorsey as secretary of the Republican National Committee expecting certain specific behavior, and Dorsey, being inexperienced enough to believe

that Grant was simply doing him a favor, did as he pleased on the committee, not realizing that he had any further obligations to Grant.

It is unlikely that Grant could have saved Dorsey after 1880 even if he had wanted to, but Grant probably did not want to save Dorsey. Grant took his defeat for the nomination in 1880 as a deep personal injury, which he might have expected Dorsey to assuage by making sure that the Stalwarts were properly recognized in Garfield's administration. When Dorsey failed to do this, and particularly when he failed to secure the appointment of Morton as secretary of the treasury, perhaps Grant decided that Dorsey should be taught the error of his ways.

There is another side to these theories, a side involving Dorsey's ambition and his political naiveté. Dorsey never really had to struggle for anything in politics; his road was always smoothly paved. He probably had never learned to realize what was involved in the payment of a political debt. In 1880, he thought that he was storing up favors for the future, and he might have believed that he was free to further his own political interests. Dorsey probably pictured himself, in his ambition, as one of the boys sitting around the card table and drinking bourbon with Grant. He

never quite made that status, but he was, for a short time, a trusted adviser of Garfield. During this period, when Garfield was taking his advice and seeking his counsel, Dorsey reached the height of his political ambition. That position, however, was necessarily short-lived, because Garfield had obligations to friends much closer and of much longer standing than Dorsey who did not want to be associated with the former senator. Thus Dorsey's career was caught in the irony that he had moved away from Grant to secure his position with Garfield, and he ended by having no position with either. He had lost a sponsor in Grant, but he had not gained one in Garfield.

As for what might have induced Grant originally to make Dorsey an object of his special favor, information is too sparse to allow even a guess. The only speculation possible with the limited information available is that at some time, perhaps during the campaign of 1868, Dorsey made a lasting impression on Grant, and Grant decided that he could use a loyal man in Arkansas and, after 1872, the Senate, to his advantage. But such pure speculation would require a volume more extensive than this thesis to substantiate.

Regardless of why Grant might have chosen Dorsey, if Dorsey went through the motions of his career as a personal protégé of Grant, then that career is of much more significance than the life of an obscure Senate Carpetbagger. His career as a Grant product becomes illustrative of the power of a political machine in the Gilded Age; more important, it becomes indicative of the philosophy and power of a Grant machine, a machine which no one has acknowledged existed. Historians of the Gilded Age have always assumed that Grant was a political lightweight who held power by the grace of Conkling, Logan, and Cameron. Dorsey's political career might indicate that Grant had a machine of his own that historians have not investigated, and that instead of being controlled by Conkling, Logan, and Cameron, Grant exercised a measure of control over them.

The Republican majority in the nation evident through Reconstruction dwindled as the 1880's approached, and Dorsey and all the political figures with whom he was associated during his career faded from national life early in the 1880's. By the time William McKinley ushered in the next real Republican majority in 1896, the face of the Republican party had changed. The Republican party of which Dorsey had been a part was a peculiarly personal political organism,

where the major issues were personalities and where a political machine controlled by one man could affect the course of an entire career. These forces never entirely disappear from politics, but the Republican party to which the Gilded Age surrendered control submerged personalities and became a national party focused on solving national problems. The political career of Stephen Dorsey was thus a particular product of the Gilded Age, for without the special nature of the personalities involved in that career, and without the personal direction of the Republican party during Dorsey's public life, that career would have been impossible.

APPENDIX

The methodology used in Chapter III to explain Dorsey's Senate votes is not strictly a quantified analysis, although some of the techniques of quantitative history were used. The original data for analysis come from the compilation of roll call votes from the Senate Journal and the Congressional Record done by the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research (ICPR) at the University of Michigan. This compilation is available in a form suitable for use with the Osiris package of computer programs for statistical analysis developed by ICPR.

Only votes in which Dorsey participated, either by voting or by being paired, were used for this comparison. Since Dorsey's attendance in the Forty-third and Forty-fourth Congresses was minimal, this criterion produces an eccentric selection of votes for analysis.

Senators who did not vote on at least half of the roll calls on which Dorsey voted were eliminated from the sample. Then, Dorsey's votes were compared with the votes of every other Republican senator. The number of times each senator disagreed with Dorsey was then divided by the number of votes in which that senator and Dorsey both participated. The

result is a simple index, by percentage, of disagreement with Dorsey.

This index of disagreement was used to determine Dorsey's position relative to individual Republican Senators. To discover Dorsey's position relative to the Republican party in the Senate as a whole, an index of party regularity was constructed, using much the same method as that used to compute the index of disagreement with Dorsey. Again, only those votes in which Dorsey participated were used, and those Senators were eliminated who did not vote on at least half of the party-line votes. For the purposes of this analysis, a party-line vote was defined as a vote in which over half of the Republicans opposed over half of the Democrats, with at least half of the members of each party voting on the issue.

At this point the votes of each Republican Senator were compared to the party majority on each vote. The number of times each Senator voted against the majority of his party was then divided by the number of party votes in which the Senator participated, to yield a simple index of party regularity.

TABLE I
 REPUBLICAN DISAGREEMENT WITH DORSEY,
 FORTY-THIRD CONGRESS

Per cent of Variance	Senator	State
12.38%	Pease	Mississippi
12.78	Ramsey	Minnesota
13.21	Patterson	South Carolina
14.29	Spencer	Alabama
14.56	Mitchell	Oregon
15.33	Clayton	Arkansas
16.67	Morton	Indiana
17.36	West	Louisiana
17.39	Harvey	Kansas
19.86%	Ferry	Michigan
20.00	Logan	Illinois
20.00	Boreman	West Virginia
20.00	Windom	Minnesota
21.91	Flanagan	Texas
22.00	Cameron, S.	Pennsylvania
24.11	Ingalls	Kansas
24.39	Hitchcock	Nebraska
28.29%	Pratt	Indiana
29.89	Robertson	South Carolina
31.16	Allison	Iowa
31.91	Oglesby	Illinois
34.44	Wright	Iowa
36.67	Hamlin	Maine
37.50	Scott	Pennsylvania
38.24	Morrill, L.	Maine
38.57	Frelinghuysen	New Jersey
39.68	Boutwell	Massachusetts
41.54%	Chandler	Michigan
42.50	Howe	Wisconsin
42.74	Anthony	Rhode Island
42.86	Conkling	New York
43.64	Stewart	Nevada
44.33	Alcorn	Mississippi
44.86	Wadleigh	New Hampshire

TABLE I--Continued

Per cent of Variance	Senator	State
45.88%	Sargent	California
47.17	Sprague	Rhode Island
48.65	Morrill, J.	Vermont
49.13	Edmunds	Vermont
54.07%	Sherman	Ohio
60.77	Hamilton	Texas
72.64	Schurz	Missouri
74.47%	Fenton	New York

TABLE II

REPUBLICAN VARIANCE FROM PARTY MAJORITY,
FORTY-THIRD CONGRESS

Per cent of Variance	Senator	State
66.38%	Ferry	Michigan
6.49	Morton	Indiana
7.50	Logan	Illinois
9.00	Wright	Iowa
9.09	West	Louisiana
9.84	Harvey	Kansas
11.36%	Ingalls	Kansas
11.70	Oglesby	Illinois
12.50	Allison	Iowa
12.50	Mitchell	Oregon
12.55	Washburn	Massachusetts
14.43	Scott	Pennsylvania
14.86	Hamlin	Maine
15.48	Boutwell	Massachusetts
15.56	Howe	Wisconsin
15.63	Pratt	Indiana
16.05	Ramsey	Minnesota
16.48	Windom	Minnesota
17.24	Boreman	West Virginia
17.86	Chandler	Michigan

TABLE II--Continued

Per cent of Variance	Senator	State
17.98%	Morrill, L.	Maine
18.28	Frelinghuysen	New Jersey
18.85	Pease	Mississippi
18.84	Cameron, S.	Pennsylvania
21.84%	Sherman	Ohio
22.02	Dorsey	Arkansas
22.22	Patterson	South Carolina
23.38	Edmunds	Vermont
23.46	Spencer	Alabama
23.47	Morrill, J.	Vermont
25.35	Anthony	Rhode Island
25.56	Clayton	Arkansas
26.05	Flanagan	Texas
26.32	Sargent	California
27.27	Conkling	New York
27.50%	Hitchcock	Nebraska
29.09	Canover	Florida
29.58	Wadleigh	New Hampshire
30.91	Robertson	South Carolina
33.33	Stewart	Nevada
34.92	Alcorn	Mississippi
34.55	Jones	Nevada
47.22%	Sprague	Rhode Island
54.12	Hamilton	Texas
64.18%	Schurz	Missouri

TABLE III

REPUBLICAN DISAGREEMENT WITH DORSEY,
FORTY-FOURTH CONGRESS

Per cent of Variance	Senator	State
2.36%	Spencer	Alabama
4.24	Bruce	Mississippi
6.77	West	Louisiana
9.38	Clayton	Arkansas

TABLE III--Continued

Per cent of Variance	Senator	State
10.26%	Patterson	South Carolina
10.39	Paddock	Nebraska
13.01%	Morton	Indiana
13.25	Mitchell	Oregon
14.29	Ingalls	Kansas
14.81	Logan	Illinois
15.44	Windom	Minnesota
15.69	McMillan	Minnesota
16.77	Ferry	Michigan
17.59	Cameron, S.	Pennsylvania
18.30	Boutwell	Massachusetts
18.40	Allison	Iowa
18.52	Hamlin	Maine
18.58	Oglesby	Illinois
18.66	Hitchcock	Nebraska
18.75	Howe	Wisconsin
19.23	Harvey	Kansas
19.53	Anthony	Rhode Island
20.83%	Frelinghuysen	New Jersey
21.43	Cameron, A.	Wisconsin
22.63	Conkling	New York
24.19	Christiency	Michigan
25.00	Sargent	California
27.00	Burnside	Rhode Island
28.87	Sherman	Ohio
29.13	Wadleigh	New Hampshire
29.66	Dawes	Massachusetts
29.93	Wright	Iowa
33.85%	Edmunds	Vermont
33.92	Morrill, J.	Vermont
37.50	Robertson	South Carolina
38.60%	Hamilton	Texas

TABLE IV
 REPUBLICAN VARIANCE FROM PARTY MAJORITY,
 FORTY-FOURTH CONGRESS

Per cent of Variance	Senator	State
2.86%	Bruce	Mississippi
4.82	Boutwell	Massachusetts
5.15	Dorsey	Arkansas
5.40	Hamlin	Maine
5.77	Jones	Nevada
6.33	West	Louisiana
6.60	Ingalls	Kansas
6.82	McMillan	Minnesota
7.14	Allison	Iowa
7.50	Spencer	Alabama
7.79	Morton	Indiana
7.79	Windom	Minnesota
8.33	Logan	Illinois
8.87	Howe	Wisconsin
9.38	Clayton	Arkansas
9.86	Patterson	South Carolina
9.88	Frelinghuysen	New Jersey
10.00	Morrill, L.	Maine
10.11	Ferry	Michigan
10.39	Conkling	New York
11.27	Anthony	Rhode Island
11.49	Cameron, A.	Wisconsin
12.05	Mitchell	Oregon
12.35	Paddock	Nebraska
12.70	Cameron, S.	Pennsylvania
13.64	Oglesby	Illinois
17.54%	Burnside	Rhode Island
19.49	Christiency	Michigan
20.25	Harvey	Kansas
20.45	Sargent	California
22.39	Dawes	Massachusetts
23.68	Wright	Iowa
24.66	Sherman	Ohio
25.93	Hitchcock	Nebraska
26.09	Morrill, J.	Vermont

TABLE IV--Continued

Per cent of Variance	Senator	State
26.67%	Edmunds	Vermont
28.81	Wadleigh	New Hampshire
34.72%	Robertson	South Carolina
40.00%	Hamilton	Texas

TABLE V

REPUBLICAN DISAGREEMENT WITH DORSEY,
FORTY-FIFTH CONGRESS

Per cent of Variance	Senator	State
17.09%	Cameron, J.	Pennsylvania
17.79	Bruce	Mississippi
17.92	Spencer	Alabama
18.81	Kirkwood	Iowa
19.05	Saunders	Nebraska
19.76	Paddock	Nebraska
20.00%	Ingalls	Kansas
20.66	Kellogg	Louisiana
21.07	Mitchell	Oregon
21.71	Allison	Iowa
22.41	Windom	Minnesota
23.44	Blaine	Maine
23.73	Teller	Colorado
24.01	Matthew	Ohio
25.41	Ferry	Michigan
25.53	Cameron, A.	Wisconsin
26.32	McMillan	Minnesota
26.32	Plumb	Kansas
27.57	Howe	Wisconsin
28.09	Dawes	Massachusetts
28.42	Conkling	New York
28.46	Conover	Florida
29.36	Hamlin	Maine

TABLE V--Continued

Per cent of Variance	Senator	State
30.13%	Rollins	New Hampshire
30.25	Burnside	Rhode Island
30.99	Oglesby	Illinois
31.94	Hoar	Massachusetts
33.33	Anthony	Rhode Island
33.88	Sargent	California
35.19	Patterson	South Carolina
38.02	Morrill, J.	Vermont
39.24	Wadleigh	New Hampshire
43.58%	Edmunds	Vermont
65.78%	Thurman	Ohio

TABLE VI

REPUBLICAN VARIANCE FROM PARTY MAJORITY,
FORTY-FIFTH CONGRESS

Per cent of Variance	Senator	State
6.67%	Hamlin	Maine
8.57	Rollins	New Hampshire
9.63	Dawes	Massachusetts
9.84	Conkling	New York
10.87	Saunders	Nebraska
11.11	McMillan	Minnesota
11.67	Anthony	Rhode Island
11.79	Allison	Iowa
11.90	Hoar	Massachusetts
12.14	Kirkwood	Iowa
13.74	Matthew	Ohio
13.82	Cameron, A.	Wisconsin
13.83	Ferry	Michigan
14.11	Burnside	Rhode Island
14.53	Blaine	Maine
15.15	Howe	Wisconsin
15.71	Paddock	Nebraska
15.93	Teller	Colorado

TABLE VI--Continued

Per cent of Variance	Senator	State
16.11%	Edmunds	Vermont
16.22	Windom	Minnesota
16.27	Bruce	Mississippi
16.53	Morrill, J.	Vermont
16.74	Mitchell	Oregon
17.71	Dorsey	Arkansas
19.50	Spencer	Alabama
19.79	Cameron, J.	Pennsylvania
19.89	Sargent	California
20.57	Wadleigh	New Hampshire
21.51	Ingalls	Kansas
23.36	Kellogg	Louisiana
23.81	Jones	Nevada
24.88	Oglesby	Illinois
25.61	Plumb	Kansas
43.01%	Conover	Florida
46.82	Patterson	South Carolina
90.71%	Thurman	Ohio

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