



BISHOP *David Anderson*
of *Rupert's Land*

MANIFEST DESTINY

in Minnesota's REPUBLICAN CAMPAIGN of 1860

BERTHA L. HEILBRON

IN THE critical presidential campaign of 1860, the new state of Minnesota played a role of significance quite out of proportion to its tender age. Although the Midwestern commonwealth was only two years old, the chief campaigner for Lincoln, Senator William H. Seward of New York, saw fit to carry the Republican banner to St. Paul, where on September 18 he delivered one of the ablest and most important speeches of the entire campaign. It has been suggested that Seward chose to deliver an

address of such wide impact in the "weakest and most inefficient of the Northwestern cluster of States" because he was flattered by the "attachment that the Minnesota Republicans had shown for him at the Chicago convention" in February. Certainly, too, the New Yorker was influenced by his deep faith in the political power of the Northwest; in his own words, he looked to its people "to finally decide whether this is to be a land of slavery or of freedom." When, from the steps of the Minnesota Capitol, he predicted that "the ultimate central seat of power of the North American people . . . will be found somewhere within a radius not very far from the very spot where I stand, at the head of navigation on the Mississippi

MISS HEILBRON is the editor of this magazine and the author of a pictorial history of Minnesota, *The Thirty-second State*, which appeared under the society's imprint in 1958.

river, and on the great Mediterranean Lakes," he doubtless added substantially to his party's following in the new state.¹

The story of Seward's visit to Minnesota in 1860 in company with two distinguished Bostonians, Charles Francis Adams and his son, Charles Francis Adams, Jr., has long been familiar; it was described in some detail in this magazine as long ago as 1927. Their journey northward from La Crosse by Mississippi steamboat, their arrival in St. Paul on Sunday, September 16, their excursion to the Falls of St. Anthony and Minnehaha on Monday, and their reception on Tuesday by a procession of "Wide Awakes" and "grand mass meeting of Republicans of Minnesota"—all have been recorded in colorful narrative. One incident of those three exciting days in the political life of the infant state has, however, been largely overlooked. It is Seward's meeting in St. Paul, on September 18, with the Right Reverend David Anderson, bishop of Rupert's Land. Their brief conference of a century ago still has special interest for its international overtones, since it touched upon Canadian annexation and continental union—the "Manifest Destiny" so dear to the hearts of pioneer Minnesotans.²

THE PRESENCE of the Anglican prelate from north of the border in the politically charged atmosphere of St. Paul on that raw and cloudy September day was purely a

¹ See Theodore C. Blegen, "Campaigning with Seward in 1860," in *Minnesota History*, 8:151, 152, 161 (June, 1927).

² Blegen, in *Minnesota History*, 8:150–171. See also Donald F. Warner, *The Idea of Continental Union: Agitation for the Annexation of Canada to the United States, 1849–1893*, viii (Lexington, Kentucky, 1960).

³ Harry Shave, "Centenary of a Diocese," in *The Beaver*, September, 1949, p. 6; "The Bishop's Return," in *The Nor'Wester* (Red River Settlement), October 15, 1860. The Minnesota Historical Society has microfilm copies of files of *The Nor'Wester* to be found in the provincial and public libraries of Winnipeg.

⁴ *Nor'Wester*, October 15, 1860.

⁵ Blegen, in *Minnesota History*, 8:150; Ramsey Diary, September 16 and 17, 1860, owned by the Minnesota Historical Society.

matter of accident. To take charge of a newly established "diocese extending from eastern Canada to the Rocky Mountains in the west, and from the international boundary to the Arctic," Anderson left his native England in 1849. As the spiritual head of the Protestant Episcopal church in that vast area, he had spent eleven years in the Red River Settlement near Fort Garry, where the city of Winnipeg now stands. His visit to St. Paul in 1860 was merely an incident in an extensive journey which had taken him to Montreal, Niagara, and Toronto, thence to Detroit and Milwaukee, and finally by way of La Crosse to the head of navigation on the Mississippi.³

At St. Paul, Bishop Anderson expected to board a stagecoach which would take him via St. Cloud to Georgetown on the Red River. There he planned to make connections with the "Pioneer," the steamboat which first plied the waters of the northward flowing stream under the name "Anson Northup" a year earlier. Upon arriving in the Minnesota capital, however, on Saturday, September 15, he found that J. C. Burbank and Company's coach had already left, and he would be forced to wait until the next Saturday for another. Obviously accustomed to such delays, the bishop began at once to participate in local activities, preaching on Sunday before two Episcopal congregations in St. Paul and one in White Bear.⁴

Unlike Anderson's unexpected visit, Seward's was fully premeditated and carefully planned. He reached St. Paul by steamboat early Sunday morning, registered at the International Hotel, and attended services at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. His arrival was noted in the diary of Governor Alexander Ramsey, who, with other Republican leaders of Minnesota, was prepared to take full advantage of Seward's presence in promoting the party interests. For example, on Monday evening, Governor and Mrs. Ramsey opened their home to a "large party" in the Senator's honor with "125 persons present."⁵



JAMES Wickes Taylor about 1860

Strangely enough, however, it remained for a Democrat to arrange the "interview between Church and State" that brought Seward and Anderson together. This was James Wickes Taylor, who was rapidly gaining a reputation as the "greatest American authority on western British America." Though he had lived in Minnesota only four years, he had already given evidence of his overwhelming interest in the state's relations with its British neighbor to the north. As early as 1857 he published a series of articles which earned for him the title of "Saskatchewan" Taylor, and two years later, with the blessing of Governor Henry H. Sibley, he went to the Red River Settlement to investigate the feasibility of an overland route via Pembina, the Fort Garry area, and the Saskatchewan Valley to the Fraser River gold fields. In 1859 also, with the support of Minnesota's Democratic Senator Henry M. Rice, Taylor obtained from the Buchanan administration an appointment as "special agent of the treasury department . . . particularly charged with

the investigation of reciprocal relations of trade and transportation between the United States and Canada."⁶ Thus by September, 1860, Taylor knew the Red River country at first hand, and there is every reason to believe that he was on friendly terms with its leading citizens, including Bishop Anderson. The Minnesotan was already looking longingly northward, confident that one day the British Northwest, including the Red River country, would become part of the United States.

Politically, too, Taylor had been active in Minnesota. Only two days before Anderson's arrival, on September 13, the annexation enthusiast had attended the St. Paul convention of pro-Southern Democrats who supported John C. Breckinridge for the presidency, as opposed both to the Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln, and the free-soil Democrats' nominee, Stephen A. Douglas. Taylor not only was named secretary of the Breckinridge convention, but he and Alonzo J. Edgerton, earlier a delegate to the party's national convention in Charleston, South Carolina, were nominated for seats in Congress. There is no evidence that Taylor campaigned for the office, and he received only 768 out of a total of some thirty-five thousand votes cast in the Minnesota election.⁷

That his identification with pro-slavery Democracy would not recommend him to the "most prominent Republican in the country, save one" must have been obvious to Taylor. On the other hand, he doubtless realized that the opportunity to bring to-

⁶ Theodore C. Blegen, "James Wickes Taylor: A Biographical Sketch," in *Minnesota History Bulletin*, 1:163, 169, 170, 172, 186 (November, 1915); Warner, *The Idea of Continental Union*, 109; *North Star*, September 20, 1860. Despite the Republican administrations that followed his appointment, Taylor retained his position as special agent until 1869. Some of his reports to the treasury department on *Relations between the United States and Northwest British America* were published in 1862 as 37 Congress, 3 session, *House Executive Documents*, no. 146 (serial 1138).

⁷ Minnesota Secretary of State, *Annual Report*, 1860, p. 13 (St. Paul, 1861); *Pioneer and Democrat* (St. Paul), September 14, 1860.

gether a leading American statesman and an influential Red River churchman for an interview that would of necessity involve his favorite subject might never again present itself. Perhaps the hope that a neutral setting would obviate political considerations caused Taylor to arrange for a public program in the Minnesota Historical Society's room in the Capitol. As a member of two years' standing and its vice-president, he was closely affiliated with the state's pioneer cultural institution. Thus he planned the session at the society's headquarters, which could be considered "common ground, where citizens of all parties can meet in the interest of literature and progress."⁸

FIRST TO ARRIVE for the ceremony, which was scheduled for the noon hour, was Bishop Anderson, who was accompanied by several friends, including Judge Rensselaer R. Nelson, a Buchanan appointee to the United States district bench, the Reverend John Van Ingen of Christ Church, and Captain Russell Blakeley, widely known for his active promotion of transportation facilities in the Red River country. They were graciously received by the Reverend Edward D. Neill, secretary of the society. Then Governor Ramsey, who incidentally

was president of the society, entered with Seward, the elder Adams, and a "large following of Republican politicians, State and National," including a number of Minnesota celebrities. Among the latter was John W. North, who had been chairman of the Minnesota delegation to the Republican national convention in Chicago the previous February, and at its close had gone to Springfield with Governor Ramsey and other prominent Republicans to officially notify Lincoln of his nomination. Blakeley was selected to introduce the principals, and the program opened. The proceedings, as recalled by Taylor two years later, "were of 'admirable length'—certainly not exceeding fifteen minutes. And yet," he declared, "I have seldom witnessed a more striking *tableau vivant*."⁹

Bishop Anderson spoke first; he "adopted the English custom of such occasions, and read his remarks from a manuscript," according to Taylor, who apparently preserved the original. "From the position which I occupy in the Diocese of Rupert's Land," the prelate began, "I cannot but feel a deep and growing interest in the welfare of the United States, and more especially in that of Minnesota, which immediately adjoins our own territory. Whatever tends to advance your prosperity, would at the same time, I am convinced, advance also our own, and I trust that the bonds which unite us together, may be drawn closer year by year."¹⁰

The speaker went on to "gratefully acknowledge the very great benefits already received from your Government by our own distant and isolated land." He noted that "Much has been done during the last eleven years, of which alone I can speak, to diminish the distance which separates us from the home of our fathers. On my first arrival, thrice only a year could we expect to hear from England. We are now indebted to yourselves for a double mail each month. For this, in the name of every member of our community, I would express our deep and lasting gratitude."¹¹

⁸ *North Star*, September 20, 1860; Blegen, in *Minnesota History Bulletin*, 1:185; in *Minnesota History*, 8:156.

⁹ *St. Paul Daily Press*, January 30, 1862; Russell Blakeley, "Opening of the Red River of the North to Commerce and Civilization," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 8:58 (1898); Ramsey Diary, May 19, 1860; Carlton C. Qualey, "John Wesley North and the Minnesota Frontier," in *Minnesota History*, 35:115 (September, 1956).

¹⁰ The remarks of Anderson and Seward here quoted are from an account of the interview which, though unsigned, was obviously written by Taylor. See the *Press*, January 30, 1862; Blegen, in *Minnesota History Bulletin*, 1:186n.

¹¹ The Red River country depended almost entirely on Minnesota routes for its contact with eastern Canada and England. The bishop doubtless intended his comment as a special compliment to his friend Blakeley, who headed a transportation firm which carried mail and goods between St. Paul and Fort Garry. See obituary of Blakeley, in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 9:667 (1901).

Prospects for the future next drew the bishop's attention. "We would look beyond," he said, "to the opening, at no very remote period, of a Highway toward the Western Sea." The speaker doubtless had in mind the "overland mails and the telegraph on the Pembina and Saskatchewan route," as well as the "Continental railroad" ardently advocated by Taylor in a report submitted to Governor Ramsey earlier in the year.¹² Anderson expressed the hope that "both in your own possessions and the British Territory, a route toward the Pacific may ere long be completed, and a direct communication thus opened from Sea to Sea. In such enterprises, I would at the present time ask you to use whatever of weight and influence you may possess in your own Legislature, and I would in return assure you that any such efforts would meet with the earnest and hearty co-operation of those over whom the Providence of God has placed me." The speaker closed by praying "that this spirit of harmony and peace may ever exist between Britain and the United States."

As the prelate finished, Taylor records, "all eyes turned upon the statesman of New York," who "in a few words, fitly chosen but unluckily not preserved by a reporter . . . cordially reciprocated the sentiments of Dr. Anderson, closing the formalities of the interview by the Anglo-Saxon ceremony of shaking hands."

THOUGH his immediate response to Bishop Anderson was brief, Seward must have recalled their exchange of ideas when he delivered his chief address of the day in mid-afternoon. Speaking in the open before a mass meeting "much too large to be reached by any ordinary voice," the New Yorker managed to hold his audience of some five thousand people for almost two hours as he presented the "most careful and elaborate effort" yet put forth in the Republican campaign. In it, he expressed ideas of Manifest Destiny that doubtless gave great satisfaction to annexation-minded Taylor. In Rupert's Land and Canada, Seward declared,

"an ingenious people, and a capable, enlightened government . . . are building excellent States to be hereafter admitted into the American Union." His expansionist views carried the speaker even farther afield; "looking far off into the North-West," he called up a picture of "the Russian, as he busily occupies himself in establishing seaports and towns and fortifications, on the verge of this continent, as the outposts of St. Petersburg." To the Muscovite in North America, Seward offered this prophetic message: "Go on and build up your outposts all along the coast up even to the Arctic Ocean — they will yet become outposts of my own country — monuments of the civilization of the United States in the North-West." That these remarks "might not have been uttered," at least in their precise form, had it not been for Seward's previous meeting with the prelate "whose spiritual jurisdiction includes the vast North Western Basin of the Winnipeg, the Saskatchewan, and the Mackenzie even to Russian America" was the conviction of the man who had brought them together — James Wickes Taylor of St. Paul.¹³

The homeward journey of the Red River churchman who apparently influenced at least some of Seward's remarks was marked by further adventures. After stopping to visit with Chaplain Ezekial G. Gear at Fort Ripley, he finally reached Georgetown by stage-coach from St. Cloud only to find that he had missed the boat. The Burbank firm, equal to the occasion, furnished the traveler with a wagon, which soon caught up with the "Pioneer" slowly making its way down the wind-

¹² Quoted by Blegen, in *Minnesota History Bulletin*, 1:170.

¹³ The full text of Seward's speech appears in the *Daily Times* of St. Paul for September 22, 1860. See also Ramsey Diary, September 18, 1860; Blegen, in *Minnesota History*, 8:151n., 153, 161; and the *Press*, January 30, 1862. Taylor's newspaper report includes evidence that Seward was influenced not only by Anderson, but by Joseph A. Wheelock, whose *Minnesota: Its Place among the States* appeared just before the New Yorker's visit. Some notes on Seward's speech, in Taylor's handwriting, are in the latter's papers, owned by the Minnesota Historical Society.

SEWARD spoke
on the steps of
this Capitol



ing stream. By October 3 Anderson was back in the Red River Settlement. He retained his ecclesiastical post there as bishop of Rupert's Land until 1864.¹⁴ Throughout his career he used his influence to promote favorable relations with his neighbors south of the border.

Taylor, too, returned to the Red River country, where he continued to serve as special agent of the treasury department until 1869. Then, in 1870, he received an appointment as United States consul at Winnipeg, a position that he held until his death in 1893. "I have accepted the Winnipeg Consulate," wrote Taylor in 1870, "believing that I can advance the Annexation policy." Though he did not succeed in this objective, he endeared himself to Minnesota's Canadian neighbors, and his name is still held in high esteem in the Manitoba capital.¹⁵

¹⁴ Nor'Wester, October 15, 1860; Shane, in *The Beaver*, September, 1949, p. 7.

¹⁵ Blegen, in *Minnesota History Bulletin*, 1:195-197, 208.

¹⁶ James Truslow Adams and R. V. Coleman, eds., *Dictionary of American History*, 1:46 (New York, 1940).

THE PICTURE of Bishop Anderson on page 54 is used through the courtesy of Mrs. Charles Millham of Stockholm, Saskatchewan, and the Hudson's Bay Company, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

It remained for Seward to successfully apply the expansionist policy defined in St. Paul in 1860. In his later career as secretary of state, it figured prominently, and with his purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867 the theory of continental unity inherent in Manifest Destiny at last approached reality.¹⁶

Memorials

THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY has a Memorial Fund to which contributions can be made upon the loss of a relative or friend.

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