

MINNESOTA AS SEEN BY TRAVELERS

CAMPAIGNING WITH SEWARD IN 1860

The outstanding event of the political campaign of 1860 in Minnesota was the visit of William H. Seward, the Republican leader who, defeated by Lincoln for the presidential nomination, generously took the stump for his rival in a strenuous speech-making tour of the Northwest.

In the party that accompanied Seward were Charles Francis Adams, who was later appointed by Lincoln United States minister to Great Britain, and his son, Charles Francis Adams, Jr., who later became a distinguished historian and president of the Massachusetts Historical Society. The younger Adams tells in his autobiography of the visit paid by Seward to Boston and Quincy after his defeat at the Chicago convention. He was then planning a speaking tour through the Northwest and he desired both the elder and the younger Adams to join him. "I eagerly caught at the idea," writes the son, "and prevailed on my father to fall into it. We went, and it proved a considerable episode in my life. I saw the West for the first time, and moved among men."¹

The Seward party reached the upper Northwest by a steamboat journey up the Mississippi from Prairie du Chien and arrived at St. Paul early in the morning of Sunday, September 16, 1860. "Mr. Seward was conducted to the International Hotel," notes a contemporary newspaper. "He attended Church at Rev. Dr. Patterson's, and we believe, was allowed to spend the day in privacy."² The following day was devoted to an excursion to the Falls of St. Anthony and to Minnehaha Falls. A "grand mass meeting of the Republicans of Minnesota" was held on September 18, and this all-day celebration

¹ *Charles Francis Adams, 1835-1915: An Autobiography*, 52 (Boston and New York, 1916).

² *Pioneer and Democrat* (St. Paul), September 18, 1860.

reached its climax when Seward delivered a speech from the steps of the State Capitol in St. Paul, whence he had been escorted by a procession of "Wide Awakes."

Seward's speech was one of the ablest delivered by him during the campaign. The elder Adams was puzzled because Seward apparently regarded the upper Northwest as very important in the campaign. Doubtless Seward was much pleased by the attachment that the Minnesota Republicans had shown for him at the Chicago convention. But he seems to have had a conception of the rôle of the Northwest that Adams could scarcely understand. His theme was the political power of the West. "We look to you of the Northwest to finally decide whether this is to be a land of slavery or of freedom," he said. "The people of the Northwest are to be the arbiters of its destiny."³ It is interesting to turn from this remark of Seward's and read a study by a prominent American historian of our own time who believes that the Northwest was the critical contested area of the 1860 election and that the contest was won by the Republicans "only on a narrow margin by the votes of the foreigners whom the railroads poured in great numbers into the contested region."⁴

³ The full text of Seward's speech is printed in the *Daily Times* (St. Paul) for September 22, 1860, and is prefaced with this note by the editor: "The following speech was reported for the ST. PAUL DAILY TIMES, and was revised and corrected by Gov. Seward himself; it is therefore the only authenticated copy published either East or West." A much abridged version of the speech is published under the title "Political Equality the National Idea," in Seward's *Works*, 4: 330-347 (Baker edition, New York, 1853-61). Frederic Bancroft, in his *Life of William H. Seward*, 1: 547 (New York and London, 1900), writes: "There were two special features that gave Seward's addresses in the Northwest a powerful effect: his full appreciation of the stupendous growth and resources of that part of the country, and his ability to convince the inhabitants that they owed the possibility of that growth and the development of those resources to the exclusion of slave labor." A brief account of Seward's St. Paul visit appears in Frederick W. Seward, *Seward at Washington, as Senator and Secretary of State*, 463-465 (New York, 1891).

⁴ William E. Dodd, "The Fight for the Northwest, 1860," in *American Historical Review*, 16: 788 (July, 1911).

For Minnesotans the most interesting portion of Seward's speech was that occupied with prophecy of the future of the Northwest. On the journey up the great river, the New York statesman had apparently given much thought both to the beauty of his changing surroundings and to the destiny of the continent.

And then that beautiful Lake Pepin scene, at the close of the day, when the autumnal green of the shores was lost in a deep blue hue that emulated that of the heavens; the moistened atmosphere reflected the golden rays of the setting sun, and the skies above seemed to come down to complete the gorgeous drapery of the scene. It was a piece of upholstery such as no hand but that of nature could have made. This magnificent Lake, I said to myself, is a fitting vestibule to the Capital of the State of Minnesota.⁵

Minnesota to Seward was a point of vantage for a continental survey:

I find myself now, for the first time on the highlands in the centre of the continent of North America, equidistant from the waters of Hudson's Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, from the Atlantic Ocean to the ocean in which the sun sets. . . . Here is the central place where the agriculture of the richest regions of North America must begin its magnificent supplies to the whole world. (Applause.) On the East, all along the shore of Lake Superior, and on the West, stretching in one broad plain, in a belt quite across the Continent, is a country where State after State is yet to rise, and whence the productions for the support of human society in other crowded States must forever go forth. This is then a commanding field; but it is as commanding in regard to the commercial future, for power is not to reside permanently on the eastern slope of the Alleghany Mountains, nor in the sea ports of the Pacific. Seaports have always been controlled at last by the people of the interior. The people of the inland and of the upland, those who inhabit the sources of the mighty waters, are they who supply all States with the materials of wealth and power. The seaports will be the mouths by which we shall communicate and correspond with Europe, but the power that shall speak and shall communicate and express the will of men on this continent, is to be located in the Mississippi Valley, and at the source of the Mississippi and

⁵ All the passages here quoted from Seward's speech are taken from the version published in the *Times* for September 22, 1860.

the St. Lawrence. (Loud applause.) In other days, studying what might perhaps have seemed to others a visionary subject, I have cast about for the future, the ultimate central seat of power of the North American people. I have looked at Quebec and at New Orleans, at Washington and at San Francisco, at Cincinnati and at St. Louis, and it has been the result of my best conjecture that the seat of power for North America would yet be found in the Valley of Mexico; that the glories of the Aztec Capitol would be renewed, and that city would become ultimately the Capitol of the United States of America. But I have corrected that view, and I now believe that the last seat of power on the great continent 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 river, and on the great Mediterranean Lakes. (Loud applause.)

It may be interesting to note that in this speech of 1860 Seward touched prophetically on the possible acquisition of Alaska by the United States:

Standing here and looking far off into the North-West, I see 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, and I can say "Go on and build up your outposts all along the coast up even to the Arctic Ocean — they will yet become the outposts of my own country — monuments of the civilization of the United States in the North-West."⁶

Seward must have breathed the air of "Manifest Destiny" as he journeyed into the wilderness of the Northwest. His imperial vision was by no means limited to Alaska. He also took occasion in his St. Paul speech to predict the incorporation of Prince Rupert's Land and Canada into the American domain, and he even looked toward the reorganization of the South American republics "in free, equal and self governing members of the United States of America."

Seward saw the West as a harmonizer of sections and races, and he particularly commented on the place of the foreign-born in the Northwest, pointing out that "while society is convulsed with rivalries and jealousies between native and foreign born

⁶ On Seward as a prophet of territorial expansion, see Bancroft, *Seward*, 2: 470-474.

in our Atlantic cities and on our Pacific Coast, and tormented with the rivalries and jealousies produced by difference of birth, of language, and of religion, here, in the central point of the Republic, the German, and the Irishman, and the Italian, and the Frenchman, the Hollander and the Norwegian, becomes in spite of himself, almost completely in his own day, and entirely in his own children, an American citizen."

The documents herewith printed are records of the Seward campaign in Minnesota from the pens respectively of Charles Francis Adams and his son. In 1900 the son, then president of the Massachusetts Historical Society, participated in the exercises at the dedication in Madison of the new building of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, and on this occasion Adams quoted a number of interesting passages both from his father's diary and from a contemporary record of his own relating to the visit made to Madison forty years earlier.⁷ Samuel R. Thayer of Minneapolis, greatly interested in these two historical records, ventured to ask Adams for copies of the passages relating to the journey beyond Madison—to the Mississippi River and to Minnesota. In a letter to Thayer written on December 3, 1900, Adams made this response:⁸

You may remember sometime ago expressing a wish to have the record of my father and myself made during our trip to the Northwest in 1860, being a continuation of the passages I quoted at Madison.

I need not remind you that our trip was in connection with Mr. Seward's quite famous political canvass of 1860, during which he made his speech at St. Paul, prophesying the future greatness of the place.

Enclosed I send you the two narratives referred to. My own was written immediately on my return home after the trip was over, partly from notes made during the trip, and partly from recollection. My father's was apparently a record made almost day by day during the experience.

⁷ Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., *The State Historical Society of Wisconsin: Exercises at the Dedication of Its New Building, October 19, 1900, 25-28* (Madison, 1901).

⁸ A copy of this letter is in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society.

The records have a certain interest, and you are welcome to make such use of them, either with your Historical Society, or otherwise, as may commend itself to you.

I should in any event have been glad to oblige you by making these extracts, but in my own case it came in somewhat handily, as my record was one which I was then looking over with a view to destroying it. It has, since making these extracts, been reduced to ashes, as I found it contained little worth preserving.

The story back of the destruction of his youthful diary Adams tells in his autobiography. It appears that he kept a diary until, at the age of twenty-five, he entered the army for Civil War service. The volumes of the diary were sealed up in a package that Adams did not open until many years later. The shock of the revelation of himself as a young man caused Adams, after re-reading the record, to groan over "its unmistakable, unconscious immaturity and ineptitude, its conceit, its weakness and its cant." Adams saw himself "face to face through fifty years" and was thoroughly disillusioned. "It was with difficulty I forced myself to read through that dreadful record; and, as I finished each volume, it went into the fire; and I stood over it until the last leaf was ashes." Adams, with something of the spirit of his brother, Henry Adams, sums the matter up with the comment, "It was a tough lesson; but a useful one."⁹

If the extract presented by Adams to Thayer and printed in these pages is a fair example of the diary, it may be doubted whether the world will agree with Adams's severe castigation of the young man who was himself some thirty or forty years earlier. It is more likely to pronounce him a shrewd observer whose journal, written with unusual clarity, portrays both men and events with precision and vividness. Certainly Minnesotans will be thankful that the family conscience relented when Adams reached that part of his diary which tells of the Northwest journey. The original was devoured by the flames, to be sure, but a copy of the record has been preserved. It possesses an interest far transcending that of the circle of Min-

⁹ Adams, *Autobiography*, 27.

nesota readers. To Minnesotans the record is a document of Minnesota history. It must not be forgotten, however, that this document and also that kept by the elder Adams are interesting contemporary records of the national campaign that put Abraham Lincoln into the presidential chair, and that the central figure in these records was the most prominent Republican in the country, save one. It is therefore believed that the two documents herewith printed have a national historical interest. Even if they did not deal with the campaign of 1860 or with Seward, they would possess a national interest because they are records from the pens of Charles Francis Adams and Charles Francis Adams, Jr.

THEODORE C. BLEGEN

FROM THE DIARY OF CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS ¹⁰

[Typed copy in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society]

Visit of William H. Seward, and party, to Minnesota, in September, 1860, during the Presidential canvass of that year.

Extracts from the Diary of Charles Francis Adams, who then accompanied Mr. Seward. In May, 1844, Mr. Adams had been at Galena, coming up the Mississippi from St. Louis, and thence had crossed to Chicago by stage, but had not revisited that region during the intervening time. On the present occasion the party had come from Chicago to Milwaukee and Madison, and thence had reached the Mississippi River at Prairie du Chien, where they took the Steamboat for St. Paul at 9 P.M. on Thursday, September 13th. Mr. Adams's record then begins: ¹¹

¹⁰ A brief biography of *Charles Francis Adams* by Charles Francis Adams, Jr., is published in the *American Statesmen* series (Boston and New York, 1900). The campaign of 1860 is dismissed with a paragraph in this biography. "Mr. Adams was no stump speaker or campaign orator," writes his son. "It was not in him to 'move the masses;' but, in the long exciting canvass which now ensued, he took a somewhat active part, accompanying Governor Seward in his memorable electioneering journey through the States of the Northwest, going as far as St. Paul. Renominated to Congress without opposition, he was elected by a majority of some 3000 votes." Adams, *Charles Francis Adams*, 115.

¹¹ This introductory material was presumably written by Charles Francis Adams, Jr.

Friday, September 14, 1860: I slept very indifferently, and was up soon after five. The steamer was drawn up against the bank of the stream, waiting for a suitable hour to reach Lacrosse, the town where the Governor was to be received. This was not in the original programme, but it had been admitted on the earnest solicitation of Mr. C. C. Washburn who came with us. It is his residence; a new and small town of perhaps four thousand souls. Here the Governor was received in due form by the Wide Awakes, and escorted into the town. Carriages were then procured, and we drove out to see the vicinity, which was poor and cheerless enough. The only incident that amused us grew out of a visit at my desire to a brewery of lager beer, where we examined the whole process of manufacture, and the vaults in which the article is kept. The owner, who is a German, would not permit us to go without drinking three glasses apiece of his beer. As he is inclining to Republicanism we felt afraid to decline his civility. At last we got back to the steamer and dined. Then came the procession to the place of speaking. It was an inclosed space with a building used by the Germans for a gymnasium. A scaffolding was made against one window. The crowd, which might have consisted of twelve hundred persons, was there packed together directly under the influence of the Speakers. Governor Seward began, and made I think the most easy and agreeable address I ever heard from him.¹² The cry was then for Mr. Nye, when I was arranged to follow.¹³ This annoyed me, as I knew the impatience people feel in having a speaker put in whom they do not want to hear at a time when he shuts out a favorite. So I insisted upon Gen. Nye's responding at once. He made a good deal of difficulty, but I was so earnest about it that he took precedence at last. His speech was better than usual, and satisfied the people; so I came on without any difficulty. Next came Mr. Doolittle who was clear and forcible. The meeting then adjourned until

¹² An extract from this speech appears in Seward's *Works*, 4:421. In a biographical memoir at the beginning of the same volume is printed the text of a brief address that Seward delivered on the boat at La Crosse. *Works*, 4:93.

¹³ In addition to the two Adams, the Seward party included George W. Patterson and James W. Nye of New York, Rufus King of Wisconsin, and various others.

evening, and we went by invitation to dine with Mr. Washburn. The company consisted of himself, a Mr. and Mrs. Nevins and another lady, I presume his sister, Governor Seward, his daughter and Miss Perry, myself and son, Mr. Baker, Mr. Doolittle, Mr. Wilkinson, and Mr. Goodrich.¹⁴ In the midst of dinner a thunder storm came on, and it continued to rain until late. No provision had been made for this, so we sat until midnight in the mortal discomfort of exhausted conversation. An omnibus then stopped for us, and we got home to the steamer at or near one o'clock.

Saturday, 15th September: We travelled all night and at about six this morning I arose, and found myself looking at an Autumn sky, with a fresh northwesterly wind, and bright sun. As the day advanced it grew warmer, and I made use of the greater part of it in observing the peculiar scenery of the river. All the way on each side are conical elevations so similar as almost to become monotonous, with more or less of timber all the way up. The water is low so that the boat had difficulty in keeping the sinous channel. Yet the effect is far superior to anything I have seen elsewhere in the West. Occasionally we were interrupted by the sharp report of our piece of artillery, which was the signal for a visit to some town, and the usual formulas of acknowledgment from Governor Seward, Mr. Nye and myself. This happened at Winona, at Wabashaw, and at Redwing. At the entrance of Lake Pepin a sudden change took place in the atmosphere, and a thunder-storm came on to give a striking variety to the scene. It was highly picturesque.

Sunday, 16th September: At six o'clock this morning we were in sight of Saint Paul, the most northerly point of our journey. Its position is striking; but it has a more ragged, uninviting look than even Western towns commonly have. As it was Sunday, and we came so early there was no preparation to meet us, I quietly slipped up to the Hotel before anybody knew I had started. After

¹⁴ Morton Smith Wilkinson was United States senator from Minnesota from 1859 to 1865. Aaron Goodrich was chief justice of Minnesota Territory from 1849 to 1851 and was one of the founders of the Republican party in Minnesota. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., has much to say about his character and personality. See *post*, p. 165. Warren Upham and Mrs. Rose B. Dunlap, *Minnesota Biographies, 1655-1912*, 264, 858 (*Minnesota Historical Collections*, vol. 14).

dressing and breakfast I attended Divine service with Governor Seward and others of our party, at the Episcopal Church. A certain Dr. or Mr. Hall officiated. The house looked fresh and neat, which is more than I could say for the streets. The place is barely ten years old, and it has of course all the aspect of newness consequent upon this cause. The hotel however is built as if intended for a city of a hundred thousand people.

Monday, 17th September: A very fine clear morning that seemed to promise steady weather, but it clouded up and rained by two o'clock with every appearance of a long storm. Yet in the evening it was bright starlight. Arrangements had been made for an excursion to the falls of St. Anthony at eight this morning, but Mr. Goodrich left everybody in the lurch except Governor Seward, and we were in danger of faring ill but for the interference of Senator Wilkinson who assigned me to the care of Mr. Acker, a well known gentleman of the place.¹⁵ I went in his buggy, in advance of the rest of the party. We went up on the right bank as far as the ferry to Fort Snelling. Here we crossed in a boat swinging on a rope extended over the river, and, passing round the fort which is beautifully situated, travelled on a rich prairie to the falls of Minnehaha, a very picturesque little branch of the river, which with less power, somewhat resembles the smallest single fall at Niagara. We walked under the projection to the other bank without material inconvenience, and then drove off to the town of Minneapolis, at the fall of St. Anthony. This is the residence of Mr. Aldrich, the member from Minnesota. At his house we all stopped to take luncheon, and see his friends. Then we went down to see the fall. However it might have been in past time, there is now little worth seeing. So much has the shelf work been destroyed that the depth of fall has been reduced to twenty or thirty feet only, and the various saw-mills have drawn off water so as to diminish the volume in the same proportion. I regretted I had not executed my plan sixteen years ago. It was now only the ruins of a fall. Proceeding towards the suspension bridge, we found a large assemblage of people, some of whom were firing off a salute by charging an anvil. Then an address was made to

¹⁵ William H. Acker was adjutant general of Minnesota in 1860 and 1861. Upham and Dunlap, *Minnesota Biographies*, 3.

the Governor, which he answered, standing in his carriage. A call for me followed which I acknowledged in a few words; and then came General Nye.¹⁶ This over we proceeded over the suspension bridge to the other side, where the Wide Awakes were drawn up in expectation. But as it was beginning to rain, and we were in advance, Mr. Acker concluded with my assent to push right on, whereby I was saved from another speech. We got home by four o'clock. . . .¹⁷ We all went in the evening to Governor Ramsay's. A large company with a ball and supper. I found many intelligent and pleasant people, especially some ladies.¹⁸

Tuesday, September 18, 1860: Cloudy and raw, threatening rain, and looking highly unpropitious to the ceremony of the day. After breakfast, Mr. McLean came to see me and to ask me to ride to his house, situated on a high bluff as it is called here, or a hill as we should call it, though perhaps this is scarcely appropriate as the rise is commonly on the river side only, on the Southeasterly side of the city.¹⁹ He is a younger brother of Judge McLean, though himself seventy years old. He came here as a local officer in the administration of General Taylor, took up lands in the infancy of the city, and thus was induced to remain after he was removed. His position is a very fine one; and, during the rage of speculation he thought himself rich by his sales, but the revulsion came, and his lands returned to him. This is the fate of speculation in the West. There is little money capital, and there is a superfluity of land. Mortgages consequently constitute the substance of the personal property. But when based upon valuations made in the fever of speculation, they are made securities for

¹⁶ At Minneapolis Seward was welcomed in a speech by John Hutchinson, who described the guest as "the first living American statesman." See Seward, *Works*, 4: 688. An account of the Minneapolis reception is in the *Minnesota State News* (St. Anthony and Minneapolis), September 22, 1860.

¹⁷ This and all other omissions indicated in the document are made in the typewritten copy from which this is printed.

¹⁸ The evening's festivities included a parade of the "Wide Awakes" to the International Hotel in St. Paul, where Judge Goodrich, Seward, and Patterson spoke briefly. *Times*, September 18 and 19, 1860.

¹⁹ Nathaniel McLean, a journalist, was born in New Jersey in 1787. He was Sioux agent at Fort Snelling from 1849 to 1853. Upham and Dunlap, *Minnesota Biographies*, 476.

sums which the lands do not actually represent. . . . Visit the Historical Society's rooms in the company of Governor Seward. So I went with him to the State House, where we found Governor Ramsay and a few other persons assembled. An address was here made to Mr. Seward by the English Bishop of Rupert's Land, far away to the north, which was briefly answered. Its substance was merely to hope that peace would be perpetual between the two countries.²⁰ The Society is in its infancy, but it seems to be doing well under the care of the Secretary, Mr. Neill.²¹ Thus passed the morning. Then came the procession of the Wide Awakes, and the march to the same edifice. The assemblage was very large, and there was some delay and difficulty about the preliminaries. At last it was settled that the Governor should speak from the steps of the front entrance. The spot was well chosen, but the mass was much too large to be reached by any ordinary voice. Mr. Seward however held the standing body for an hour and three quarters, with the most careful and elaborate effort he has yet made. I am a little at a loss to know why he laid so much stress upon this, at present at least, the weakest and most inefficient of the Northwestern cluster of States. But it has been all along evident to me that he cherishes it with more than a mere political affection, on account of the attachment manifested by its delegates to him at the Convention at Chicago. During his speech the clouds insensibly vanished, and the declining rays of the sun shed a soft light over the crowd collected below the steps as well as on the heights of the distant landscape, which produced an almost magical effect on my senses. It seemed much like intoxication. But it was plainly no time for me to go on. The people had been kept standing for hours, and it was just sunset. Mr. Seward had closed very eloquently, and the people clamored for me. I thought it wisest, however, after consultation with the principal persons, not to strain their patience, so I merely rose to excuse myself at the moment, and to promise to speak in the evening if they desired it.

²⁰ The bishop of Rupert's Land was the Right Reverend David Anderson. On this meeting see the *St. Paul Daily Press*, January 30, 1862; *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 8: 57; and Theodore C. Blegen, "James Wickes Taylor: A Biographical Sketch," *ante*, 1: 186.

²¹ Dr. Edward Duffield Neill was secretary of the Minnesota Historical Society from 1851 to 1863.

I was received with extraordinary favor. I have nowhere seen such fixed attention to the words of a speaker as they paid throughout this long session exceeding two hours. Here and at Lacrosse, open air meetings were exceptions to the ordinary rule. They were really impressible bodies of men, and not a mere pageant. We rode back under the escort of the Wide Awakes, and proceeded to dine by invitation of Mr. Goodrich at the Merchants' Hotel. . . . At eight we returned to the Hotel. The Wide Awakes marched down in force, making a very imposing appearance and drew up in the street in front which was densely packed.²² But the audience was by no means the same as before. It was tired, restless and noisy; so I changed my plan, and spoke only ten or fifteen minutes in the popular style. After which I went to bed, declining to go to a party at Mr. Oakes's.

St. Paul, Wednesday, 19th September: There seemed to be some doubt about our departure this morning, as the steamboat company had but one boat up here, and that the poorest on the line. The agent felt so ashamed of it that he wanted us to stay over, until tomorrow, But as the Governor's engagement at Dubuque was already hazarded by delay, it was decided that we should go. So at eight o'clock we took leave. The steamer "Alhambra" has been used mainly for a freight and emigrant boat. Old and bad at the best, she was now rendered still more uncomfortable by being surcharged with passengers. Yet she moved easily enough, and the day was so fine and the scenery so pleasing that I enjoyed our trip as much as any part of the whole excursion. Once indeed we ran over a log in the stream in such a manner as to make everybody on board believe she would sink forthwith. But the Captain mended the hole, assuring us that we owed our safety to

²² The following newspaper account, in the *Times* for September 19, 1860, gives some of the local color of this occasion:

In the evening the Wide Awakes assembled at Market Hall, and when in line, marched through some of the principal streets. Their numbers were greatly augmented by a large number of German Republicans (700) who made a handsome appearance and this, with fire rockets, royal lights, &c., which were set off during the movement of the procession, made a splendid appearance. The procession halted at the International Hotel, where Hon. C. F. Adams, was called for and made a most effective speech. At the conclusion of his remarks, Lt. Gov. Patterson of New York, was called out and elicited unbounded enthusiasm. . . .

Such a blaze of enthusiasm was never witnessed in this city before.

our dilapidated condition; for that had the frame been stiffer so as not to yield, the consequences would have been more serious. Almost my whole day was passed on the upper deck, partly to watch the scenery, and partly because the cabin was so crowded as to admit of no comfort. . . . We had two or three stops at small towns on the river, at which the usual process of speeches, and guns and hurrahs took place. By dark we reached Lake Pepin, thus having the advantage of seeing by daylight all the picturesque scenery of the upper Mississippi which in going up we had passed by night. .

Thursday, 20th September: The condition of the berths was so little dubious that I deemed it most prudent not to risk the reception of vermin. Hence I was awake most of the night. All the apparatus for washing, shaving was also deficient. Yet we had the opportunity of seeing by daylight all that portion of the river between Lacrosse and Prairie du Chien, which we missed by going up in the night. The only incident of any importance to us was that near Brownsville the current carried the boat into a raft, and broke it up, the timber drifting it directly upon an island in the midst of the river. At first we all supposed that the heavy timber would break in the feeble sides, but here again we were mistaken. The "Alhambra", after two hours spent in prying her off the head of the island floated into the current again, and went on as good as new. We were not destined to be drowned in this bark, feeble though she be. I kept on deck watching the scenery, the main defect of which is its uniformity and its want of culture. Some time or other, perhaps a couple of centuries hence, this difficulty will cease to exist, and the waste intervals may become the garden of America. We had not so many calls from the shore towns today, and got on better by the diminution of the passengers landing at different points. At Prairie du Chien we bid goodbye to the company of gunners and the four pound gun which has annoyed me by its incessant bark all the way. From this point to Dubuque we went down in the dark. With all the haste that the anxious officers made, we did not reach the place until half past nine o'clock. Yet here were the inevitable Wide Awakes, and not less than a thousand people waiting on the bank to receive the Governor. It was mentioned that thousands had been

waiting all day, but had been obliged to return to their houses in the country. We were placed in carriages and escorted to the Julian House, where a dense crowd had gathered, demanding Seward. A good but rather too long address was made to him, and he briefly replied. The call then went on in succession, Nye, and Patterson and myself. The people were greedy for talk, and full of pert answers, the custom of the West. But we retired, and so they were compelled to. But the solicitation to the Governor was so powerful to remain here until tomorrow afternoon, and make a real speech, that he yielded, and thus things stood at about one o'clock of

Friday, 21st. I was very tired and slept well, yet was up early. The day was cool but fine. Soon after breakfast a crowd of gentlemen came to invite us to go out and see the environs. We drove out upon the bluff which gives a fine view of the place, and then to a shaft of a lead mine. This is the great product which sustains the place. The thing was not new to me however, as I had not only seen but had gone down into one of the shafts. The lead at Galena, which was the place of my exploit in 1844 is more generally diffused, but it is not quite so pure. The back country of Iowa is nearly all of it prairie, but what they call rolling prairie as distinguished from the flat of Illinois. The people here all look at this land for its productive quality, and expect you for that reason to admire its beauty. But flat country however fertile is to me monotonous and tiresome. At two we were at home, and the Wide Awakes escorted us to the public square, where was assembled a crowd of about two thousand people. The stand was good and the speaking was effective. The Governor spoke one hour and three quarters. Not so carefully methodized as at St. Paul, but with single passages of greater eloquence. I followed and held the people just as easily as I did at La Crosse. General Nye came next, and Governor Patterson closed. It was high time, as we had dinner to get and be off at half past seven. Thus closed my part of this excursion. I have made no prepared speech. At Kalamazoo, at Madison, at Lacrosse, at St. Paul and here I have tried to avoid repeating myself, by taking up a single topic at each place. The task has been easier than I expected. I have never wanted for words, have been able to interweave the remarks of others when they aided my object, and

have invariably responded, or rather retorted, when any interpellation came from the crowd. So I feel as if I had passed the ordeal of extempore speaking, in the West.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS, JR.²³

[Typed copy in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society]

Visit of William H. Seward, and his party, to Minnesota, in September, 1860, during the Presidential canvass of that year.

Written by Charles Francis Adams Jr., immediately on his return home from the journey, from recollection and notes made at the time.²⁴

Tuesday, September 10th [11th],²⁵ we set out for Madison. As I was waiting at the hotel in Milwaukee to pay my bill I saw in the hall a strange, comical-looking character, carrying his thumbs in the arm-holes of a not over clean white waistcoat, and with a tall black hat perched on the back of his head, perambulating thoughtfully up and down. I recognized him as a man who, two evenings before, had been pointed out to me at Chicago as Judge Goodrich, of Minnesota, and as a warm political friend of Governor Seward. I introduced myself to the Judge, and my doing so subsequently proved quite a stroke; for the Judge developed into by all odds the most original and amusing character I encountered in the whole trip, and, moreover, he was greatly pleased at my having made his acquaintance. He never forgot it; and, from that time, I became, next to Governor Seward, his guest of distinction in the party. The Judge here joined us, and at once became the life of the company. Not witty, he had a queer, humorous, scriptural form of speech, and he expressed himself in the oddest and most unexpected fashion. Full of stories and broad fun, he only asked for an audience; and, when he secured one, the more fastidious were apt to be shocked; for the Western average man is the reverse

²³ For a general account of the career of the younger Adams see his autobiography, previously cited, and the essay by Henry Cabot Lodge published in the same volume.

²⁴ This introductory material was probably written by Adams at the time when he had the copy made from his original diary.

²⁵ The dates of this and the two following entries obviously are incorrect; they should read September 11, 12, and 13.

of refined, and you are lucky if you escape those who mistake pure coarseness for wit. Judge Goodrich was not at all choice in his conversation, but he was indisputably humorous. In addition to these peculiarities, the Judge is also highly excitable, and, at bottom, I have an idea that he is not altogether sane; but he is always a Western original.

Wednesday, September 11th [12th], we drove out to a large farm of a Mr. Robbins, in the vicinity of Madison, a party of some 40, passing as we went a procession of wagons on their way to the meeting, to be held that afternoon. In the vehicle in which I found myself, were Judge Goodrich and Mr. Washburn, the representative of the district in Congress, beside the gentleman who drove us out, and myself. Goodrich was great. He had come out to Minnesota from New York, where he was born, by way of Tennessee, and he now got telling us of his political experiences in the latter State,—how he used to hold “discussions” with the opposing candidate, and go to the meetings “a walking magazine”, — with all his “tools” as he expressed it; — how he and his opponent used to “meet on warm days, in very full-skirted coats, well buttoned up, which, somehow, neither of them cared to unbutton.” And he recounted his various adventures with so much humor and in such an original way, that I felt it a misfortune that I alone from the East was there to enjoy it. Presently we met a wagon in which was seated a tall, strong-featured, close-shaven man, wearing a tall, white hat; when, suddenly, Goodrich seemed to grow crazy, and vehemently insisted on our team hauling up. He then incontinently tumbled out of our wagon, and into that of the stranger. We saw no more of him for the rest of the drive; but at the Robbins farm we found him again, and he then made us acquainted with his white-hatted friend, who turned out to be Senator Wilkinson, of Minnesota. He had, it seemed, come down to Madison to meet Gov. Seward. Of Wilkinson I afterwards during the trip saw a great deal. He is not a man of any considerable ability, and would hardly have got into the Senate except from a newly settled State; but I took naturally to him, and he apparently took to me.

Thursday, 12th [13th]. Leaving Madison in the afternoon we struck the Missouri [*Mississippi*] at Prairie du Chien, the party being now increased to about a car full. We reached Prairie du

Chien about 9 P.M. and, amid the blaze of the "Wide-awake" torches, and the cheers of the assembled crowd, I followed Gov. Seward under the flaming beacon-lights of the steamboat "Milwaukee", and, for the first time in my life, found myself on the deck of a Mississippi steamboat. After the speeches were delivered and the cheers had subsided, we fairly started up stream. To me, it all seemed strange and unreal, almost weird,—the broad river bottom, deep in shadow, with the high bluffs rising dim in the starlight. Presently I saw them wood-up while in motion, and the bright lights and deep shadows were wonderfully picturesque. A large flat-boat, piled up with wood, was lashed alongside, and, as the steamer pushed steadily up stream, the logs were thrown on board. As the hands, dressed in their red flannel shirts, hurried backward and forward, shipping the wood, the lurid flickerings from the steamer's "beacon-lights" cast a strong glare over their forms and faces, lighting up steamer, flat-boat and river, and bringing every feature and garment out in strong relief.

Saturday, 15th. A heavy rain during the night of the 14th was followed by as glorious a morning as ever broke on the upper Mississippi. The day proved bright and warm, with an almost cloudless sky; though, as evening approached and we were passing up Lake Pepin, there came on a shower. On the slope of the bluffs, and on the spurs and in the ravines, the foliage, just touched by the early frosts, was mellowed in tint, while the atmosphere shone with golden haze. I have rarely enjoyed a day more intensely. Morning strengthened into noon, and noon grew to evening; and the closing day found us still laboring up towards St. Paul. It was twilight before we were clear of Lake Pepin, where we encountered a thunder-shower; and then evening fell.

Sunday, 16th. We touched the levee at St. Paul at 6 o'clock of a gray, chill, September morning, dirty, cross and hungry; and at once hurried up to the hotel. In the afternoon I was taken out to drive across the unfenced and still half-settled prairie. Yet it is a beautiful country, and everything bears a highly prosperous aspect. Though the people are obviously not rich, none seem very poor. The city is well enough, though built mostly of wood; but business blocks of stone are in course of erection, while building material seems abundant. Had I money to invest, I certainly should not fear to put it in corner lots in St. Paul; for, though the

city at the head waters of the Mississippi will never be of the first class, much less what Seward in his speech here predicted, yet with its peculiar location and back country it can hardly fail to be permanently prosperous.

Monday, 17th. The party was driven over to the Falls of St. Anthony. I started out in a wagon with Senator Wilkinson, but at Minnehaha was shifted over into a wagon driven by Gen. King. Minnehaha is a picturesque little falls; but it looked tame and lifeless to one who only a few days before had been taking in Niagara. We all lunched at Col. Aldrich's;²⁶ after which followed speeches, and then the drive back to St. Paul through the rain,—chill and dull. In the evening there was a reception at Gov. Ramsay's, at which, of course, Gov. Seward was the centre of attraction.²⁷

Tuesday, 18th. This date was set apart for Seward's St. Paul speech. The day and audience were both good, but of the speech I heard only the earlier portion, that in which he predicted the great future of St. Paul. We were all to dine with Judge Goodrich, a dinner in honor of Gov. Seward. At the close of his speech I joined the party in Gov. Ramsay's room, and we were all marched off through an admiring throng to the hotel, where we were to dine. It was 6 o'clock when we got there, and we had to wait an hour and a half. I never saw Gov. Seward more elated than during that hour and a half. As was his custom when exhausted by speaking, he drank brandy and water, with some lumps of sugar in it, and he seemed overflowing with good-fellowship. He declared himself, and evidently was, well pleased with his speech and with its reception; and he told us that, since the day of the Chicago

²⁶ Cyrus Aldrich, who came to Minnesota in 1855, was a representative in Congress from 1859 to 1863. Upham and Dunlap, *Minnesota Biographies*, 7.

²⁷ Characteristically Adams either neglected to enter in his original journal or else he omits from this copy a report of a speech that he delivered in St. Paul after returning from the trip to the Falls of St. Anthony. "Notwithstanding the unpropitious state of the weather last evening," reports the *Times* on September 18, "the Wide Awakes met at their Headquarters at Market Hall, where after being called to order, they were addressed by Charles F. Adams, Jr., son of Hon. Charles F. Adams, in a very neat and pertinent speech, which called out rapturous applause."

Convention he had not felt so much solicitude as to what he should say, and how express himself, as he had that morning. After dinner the "Wide-awakes" marched to the hotel, and we had more speeches and more enthusiasm. Finally we finished the evening at a small party given to the ladies of Gov. Seward's party, by Col. Oakes.

Wednesday, 19th. At 8 o'clock we bade farewell to St. Paul; and I must say that for hospitality and that generous spirit of welcome, which, however roughly expressed, go so far to make life pleasant, I have yet to meet the people who equal the Minnesotans. It seemed as if they could not do enough for us; and on a trip during which all were generous of their hospitalities, the people of Minnesota were most generous of all.

During the 18th and 19th we steamed down the river in the "Alhambra". The boat was in every respect a wretched one,—old, dirty and full of vermin. All day we glided down the river, sometimes grounding on a sandbank, and then again fouling a raft. The night was glorious, and the river not less so. The air was damp and chill; but, in a heavy overcoat I kept the deck till 3 A.M. briskly walking in the bright starlight. I saw the Great Bear drop to the horizon, and Castor and Pollux came forth with the sword of Orion; and, finally, Venus towards morning get brighter and brighter, till, when at last I left the guards, she cast my shadow distinctly against the white side of the steamer, much like a twilight moon. Finally we had a performance worth seeing, a boat-race on the Mississippi. We had left St. Paul that morning about ten minutes before the "Winona" of the opposition line,—and the competition was then bitter. Neither our boat nor the "Winona",—both old stern-wheelers,—could boast of much speed, and the only question between them was as to which was the worst. They were, nevertheless, good for a scrub race; and that we soon found. It was quite exciting. A little after 2 o'clock A.M. we heard strange noises behind us, and, looking over the stern of our boat, we made out the "Winona", close behind us and in full chase. There were her colored lanterns, her three tiers of lights, and from time to time when her furnace doors were opened to replenish her fires, lurid flashes lit up the river. The stream was so low and the channel so narrow that it was largely a question of pilotage; and, for some time, the two boats

sped along in line. Then, as the channel widened somewhat, the "Winona" tried to pass us. She did not succeed this time; for she only lapped the "Alhambra", and was again pushed, cut, and forced to fall behind. Again the channel widened, and now the "Winona" got half way by; and the two boats, both running at the top of their speed, moved along side by side, at times close together, at times thirty or forty feet apart, — sometimes one apparently gaining and sometimes the other. At last, as the channel broadened, the two got fairly alongside of each other, neck and neck, and so kept it up, slowly converging until separated by only some twelve or fifteen feet; and then they would again separate. Finally the channel apparently narrowed, and the interval was closed rapidly up until, with a bump, the two boats collided heavily, almost throwing me from my feet. The guards seemed to groan and tremble, but neither boat gave; and so the two rushed along with rubbing sides. I suddenly found myself standing face to face with a passenger on the other boat, and, somewhat apparently to his surprise, extended my hand, and wished him good morning. He shook my hand, remarking that he proposed to leave us; and so on the two boats went. I think we must have rushed along in this way for several minutes; but, finally, they shouldered us out of the channel, and, giving a triumphant whistle, shot ahead and down the river, leaving us to follow. Shortly after, being thoroughly tired, I rolled, overcoat and all, into my berth, and incontinently fell asleep. An hour or two later I was awakened by a loud noise of cracking and breaking. We had run into an immense lumber raft, smashing it to bits; while, to return the compliment, the raft had forced our boat hard aground.

The following day (20th) it was a very used-up party, — sleepy, peevish, unwashed. Even Judge Goodrich was under a cloud. I was the most philosophical; for, as the sun gained power, I rolled myself in my cloak, and dozed away several hours, lying on the deck with a log for a pillow. Finally, the Captain of the boat, in great mortification, woke me up and tried to insist on my taking his room. He couldn't express the regret he felt at our being on his boat. I politely declined his offer; and we steamed along. Still it was undeniably monotonous, and the hours passed slowly; but evening came at last, and at 10 o'clock we were all pleased when we heard the roaring of a cannon and saw the long line of

"Wide-awake" torches which told of our approach to Dubuque. Landing here, the party was escorted to a hotel, and the usual speeches followed. It was one o'clock before we were permitted to go to bed.

The party left Dubuque on the evening of the 22d, and at Mendota I saw the last of Judge Goodrich;²⁸ for my record says "he had come with us thus far on the road to Kansas; but for some days he had plainly been unwell, and his liveliness was departed. During the night, feeling very much the reverse of well, he got into a berth in the wretched device then doing service as a sleeping-car; and, when the party changed trains at Mendota he was left quietly asleep. We saw him no more. He and a Mr. Baker, who acted as Gov. Seward's secretary, had been left together. "The first we knew of them was a telegraphic message next morning, informing us that they were left, and pathetically asking 'when and where they should overtake us.' Mr. Baker caught up with us at Leavenworth; but poor Goodrich, — after cursing the conductor of the train on which he was left asleep with strange oaths, hurting himself in jumping from the car, running in the night time and in his slippers half a mile across country, having in his hurry forgotten to put on his boots, — felt discouraged as well as ill; so, after airing his whole varied stock of expletives, he gave up the chase in despair, and returned first to Chicago, and thence to St. Paul, — that "Apostolic City of his adoption", — as he was wont to term it."

²⁸ The quotation marks and interpolated matter in this last paragraph are printed without change from the copy of the document supplied by Thayer.



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