

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommssen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer Bebel Proust
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke George
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Schiller Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Strachwitz Katharina II. von Rußland Bellamy Schilling Kralik Gibbon Tschchow
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpius
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Goedicke
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke
Nestroy Marie de France
Nietzsche Nansen Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht Ringelnatz
Marx Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz
von Ossietzky May vom Stein Lawrence Irving
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Fifty Years of Public Service

Shelby M. Cullom

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S. M. Cullom

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Theodore Roosevelt

Elihu Root

FOREWORD

"Oh, that mine adversary had written a book!"

Such was the exclamation of one who, through the centuries, has been held up to the world as the symbol of patience and long suffering endurance, and who believed that he thus expressed the surest method of confounding an enemy.

I have come to that age in life where I feel somewhat indifferent as to consequences, and, yielding to the suggestions and insistence of friends, I determined that I would undertake to write some recollections, as they occurred to me, of the men and events of my time.

Naturally, to me the history of the period covered by my life since 1829 is particularly interesting. I do not think that I am prejudiced when I assert that while this period has not been great in Art and Letters, from a material, scientific, and industrial standpoint it has been the most wonderful epoch in all the world's history.

About the period of my birth General Andrew Jackson was first elected President of the United States. Jackson to me has always been an interesting character. Theodore Roosevelt has declared very little respect for him, and has written deprecatingly—I might say, even abusively—of him. But the truth is, there were never two Presidents in the White House who, in many respects, resembled each other more nearly than Jackson and Roosevelt.

Jackson was sixty-one years old when elected President—an unusually old man to be elected to that high office; and he had served his country during the War of the Revolution. When I consider this the thought occurs to me, How young as a Nation we are, after all. Why, I date almost back to the Revolution! President Taft jocularly remarked to me recently: "Here's my old friend, Uncle Shelby. He comes nearer connecting the present with the days of Washington than any one whom I know." And I suppose there are few men in public life whose careers extend farther into the past than mine.

During my early life the survivors of the Revolutionary War, to say nothing of the War of 1812, were very numerous and abundantly in evidence. Up to that time, no man who had not served his

country in some capacity in the Revolutionary War had been elevated to the Presidency, and this was the case until the year 1843.

During the year 1829 the crown of Great Britain descended from King George IV to King William IV. That reign passed away, and I have lived to see the long reign of Victoria come and go, the reign of Edward VII come and go, and the accession of King George V. Charles X ruled in France, Francis I in Austria (the reign of Francis Joseph had not yet begun), Frederick William III in Prussia, Nicholas I in Russia; while Leo XII governed the Papal States, the Kingdom of Italy not yet having come into existence. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland had not yet a population of 24,000,000, all told.

From the dawn of this epoch may well date the practical beginning of a long cycle of political and intellectual upheaval, and the readjustment of relations which go to make up world-history, arriving at a culmination in our great Civil War.

In the last half-century – nay, I might say, within the last two decades – there has been a mighty impulse in the direction of scientific investigation, of mechanical invention, of preventive medicine, of economic improvement, and the like. Germany, in some respects, has led, but our own country has not been far behind. Independent research has been wonderfully productive, and rivalry has been keen. Often the mere suggestion of one scientist has been taken up and elaborated (or discredited) by other scientists; the idea of one inventor has been seized upon and bettered, or possibly proved valueless, by other inventors. The paths to the remote and inaccessible have been toiled over by rival explorers; new records have been made by rival aviators; while competitive and co-operative activities in every line have known a phenomenal growth. New names have been placed in the Pantheon of the immortals, new planets discovered in the solar system, new stars added to the clear skies of our nightly vision. Out of all the striving has come a sweeping advance in lingual requirements. In most departments of Science, Art, and Manufacture, the processes and methods of to-day are not those of yesterday, and the doers of new things have freely coined new words or given new meaning to old ones. The most complete and exhaustive encyclopaedia of yesterday is to-day

found not entirely adequate to the already increased wants. Upon all these momentous factors must these "Recollections," in one way or another, touch from time to time.

Shelby M. Cullom.

Washington, D. C. *July, 1911.*

FIFTY YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

CHAPTER I BIRTH TO ADMISSION TO THE BAR 1829 to 1855

Tides of migration set in about the close of the Revolutionary War, originating in the most populous of the late Colonies (now States), debouching from the western slopes of the mountain border-passes into the headwaters of Kentucky's rivers, and mingling at last in the fertile valley through which those rivers, in their lower reaches, find an outlet into the Ohio.

The westward flowing current brought with it two families—the Culloms of Maryland, and the Coffeys of North Carolina—who settled in a beautiful valley, not far from the banks of the Cumberland, which bore the euphonious name of Elk Spring Valley. Richard Northcraft Cullom, of the first-named family, married Elizabeth Coffey. They remained in Kentucky until seven children had been born to them, I being the seventh, the date of my birth occurring on the twenty-second day of November, 1829. We were a large family, but not extraordinarily numerous for those times, there being five brothers and seven sisters.

Kentucky was a Slave State, and my father did not believe in slavery. He was fairly well to do, and after considering the situation he determined to seek a home in a Free State and live there to the end of his days.

A treaty with the Indians in 1784, at Fort Stanwix, had secured from the Iroquois all claims to the lands which now make up the States of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. At the time of our removal the State of Illinois was only eleven years old, and but a small portion of it had any considerable settlements. These were mainly in the south half of the State. Chicago was then a small village, Fort Dearborn being at that time of more consequence than the village. Now Chicago is the second greatest city in the Union in population and business.

My father, together with Alfred Phillips and William Brown, his two brothers-in-law, entered land in the same portion of the County of Tazewell, and at once, on their arrival from Kentucky, pitched

their tents and began the erection of log cabins, in preparation for winter. Phillips was a large, vigorous man, both in body and mind. He was a man of the highest integrity, and soon became one of the leading citizens of Tazewell County, continuing so until his death. William Brown was a Methodist preacher and was a worthy example of the consistent minister of the Gospel of Christ. He was called upon by the people for many miles around to perform ceremonies on wedding occasions and, in time of sorrow, to preach at the funerals of departed friends.

My father lived longer than either Phillips or Brown. They both raised large families, and to-day the youngest son of Phillips— the Hon. Isaac N. Phillips—is recognized as one of the able lawyers of the State, and is the reporter of the Supreme Court of Illinois. My father was a farmer, but he always took great interest in the affairs of the country, and especially of the State in which he lived. He was a Whig, and believed in Henry Clay. He took an active part in political campaigns, and was several times a member of the House of Representatives of the State Legislature, and once of the State Senate.

Tazewell County, in which he resided, became a very strong Whig county, the Whigs having their own way until the Free-soil party, which soon became the Republican party, took its place as against the Democratic party. When that time came, Tazewell, like Sangamon, became Democratic. Sangamon County, in which I live, and Tazewell County, in which I was raised, were both strong Whig counties while the Whig party survived; but when it died, the population being largely from Kentucky and other Southern States, naturally sympathized with the South on the question of slavery. They drifted into the Democratic party in large numbers, and gave the control to the Democracy for a time; and the two parties still struggle for control in both counties.

My father became well acquainted with Abraham Lincoln while the latter was a young man. The first time I ever heard of Lincoln, was when two men came to my father's house to consult with him on the question of employing an attorney to attend to a law case for them at the approaching term of the Circuit Court. I remember hearing my father say to them that if Judge Stephen T. Logan should be

in attendance at court, they should employ him; but if he were not, a young man named Lincoln would be there, who would do just about as well. Readers will see by this that while Lincoln was yet a young man he was ranked among the foremost lawyers at the Bar. At that time Stephen A. Douglas was beginning to be heard from.

Judge Logan was one of the best lawyers of the Mississippi Valley. He was a Kentuckian by birth, and, as a lawyer, was a very great man. Douglas was a great statesman and a leader of men; a great debater, but, in my opinion, not a great lawyer. The law is a jealous mistress; there are no great lawyers who do not give undivided attention to its study, and Douglas devoted much time to public affairs.

On the arrival of my father at the grove where he had previously determined to locate his family, he pitched his tent near a little stream, then called Mud Creek, afterwards called Deer Creek, because it was a great resort for wild deer. He soon erected a log cabin and moved into it with his family. I was less than one year old when the family located in Illinois. We lived in the cabin for several years. It was not a single cabin, but there were two cabins connected together by a covered porch; which was a very pleasant arrangement in both summer and winter.

Finally, my father built a frame house. During all this time the wild deer were numerous, and often I have counted from the door from five to twenty deer feeding in a slough not a quarter of a mile away.

I never killed a deer. The beautiful animals always seemed to me so innocent that I had not the heart to shoot them.

The Winter of 1830-31 was long remembered by the early settlers of Illinois, and of all the now so-called Middle States, as the "winter of the deep snow." For months it was impossible to pass from one community to another in the country.

My education was obtained at the local schools and at the seminary at Mount Morris two hundred miles distant from my father's home.

In my boyhood years there were no common schools. There were only such schools in the country as the people by subscription saw

proper to provide. The schoolhouse in the neighborhood in which I lived was built of logs, covered with thick boards, and supplied with rude benches on its puncheon floor for the scholars to sit upon. We sat bolt upright, there being nothing to lean against. There were no desks for our books; and had desks been obtainable there were but few books to use or care for. We boys whispered to the girls at our peril; but we took the risk occasionally.

It was my duty as a school-boy, after doing the chores and work inseparable from farm life, to walk every morning a long distance over rough country roads to school. After I had attained to a fair common-school education, I concluded that I could teach a country school, and was employed to teach in the neighborhood; first for three months at eighteen dollars per month, and then for a second term of three months at twenty. I think I have a right to assume that I did well as a teacher, since the patrons raised my wages for the second term two dollars per month.

My efforts in teaching school did not secure sufficient funds to enable me to remain at school away from home very long, and I determined to try another plan. My father had five yoke of oxen. I prevailed on him to lend them to me. I obtained a plough which cut a furrow eighteen to twenty inches wide, and with the oxen and plough I broke prairie for some months. I thereby secured sufficient money, with the additional sums which I made from the institution at Mount Morris at odd times, to enable me to remain at the Mount Morris Seminary for two years.

I never shall forget the journey from my home in Tazewell County to Mount Morris, when I first left home to enter the school. As it well illustrates the difficulties and hardships of travel in those early days in Illinois, I may be pardoned for giving it somewhat in detail.

It was in the Spring of the year. My father started with me on horseback from my home in Tazewell County to Peoria, a distance of fifteen miles. A sudden freeze had taken place after the frost had gone out of the ground, and this had caused an icy crust to form over the mud, but not of sufficient strength to bear the weight of a horse, whose hoofs would constantly break through. Whereupon I dismounted and told father that he had better take the horses back home, and that I would go to Peoria on foot, which I did.

The weather was cold, and I was certainly used up when I arrived in Peoria. I went to bed, departing early the following morning, by steamer, for Peru, a distance of twenty-five miles. From there I took the stage-coach to Dixon, a distance of twelve miles.

There came up another storm during the journey from Peru to Dixon, and the driver of the stage-coach lost his way and could not keep in the road. I ran along in front of the coach most of the way, in order to keep it in the road, the horses following me. From Dixon I crossed the river, proceeding to Mount Morris by private conveyance. I never had a more severe trip, and I felt its effects for very many years afterwards.

The days I spent in old Mount Morris Seminary were the pleasantest of my life. I was just at the age which might be termed the formative period of a young man's career. Had I been surrounded then by other companions, by other environment, my whole future might have been entirely different. Judged by the standard of the great Eastern institutions, Mount Morris was not even a third-class college; but it was a good school, attended by young men of an unusually high order. In those early days it was the leading institution of higher learning in Northern Illinois. I enjoyed Mount Morris, and the friendships formed there continued throughout my life.

I do not know whether I was a popular student or not, but I was president of the Amphictyon Society, and, according to the usual custom, was to deliver the address on retiring from the presidency. During the course of the address I fainted and was carried from the chapel, which was very hot and very crowded. I was rolled around in the snow a while and speedily revived. I was immediately asked to let one of the boys read the remainder of the address, but the heroic treatment to which I had been subjected stirred me to profane indifference respecting its fate. Later I was selected to deliver the valedictory. So I suppose I must have enjoyed a reasonable degree of popularity among my fellow students.

It was at Mount Morris that I first became intimate with the late Robert R. Hitt. He and his brother John, who recently died, were classmates of mine, their father being the resident Methodist preacher at Mount Morris. Robert R. Hitt remained my friend from our school days until his death. He was a candidate for the Senate

against me at one time, but he was no politician, and I defeated him so easily that he could not harbor a bitter feeling against me. He was quite a character, and enjoyed a long and distinguished public career in Illinois. One of the early shorthand reporters of the State, the reporter of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, he became intimate with Lincoln, and Lincoln was very fond of him. He filled numerous important positions at home and abroad, and married a most beautiful lady, who still survives. He was later appointed Secretary of Legation at Paris.

Bob Hitt told me that he asked President Grant for the appointment, and the President at once said that he would give it to him. Washburne, who had been Secretary of State for a few days, and who was then minister at Paris, was much astonished when Hitt appeared and said that he had been appointed Secretary of Legation. Mr. Washburne denounced both President Grant and Secretary of State Fish for appointing anybody to fill such an intimate position without his consent.

Ambassadors and ministers, however, are not consulted as to who shall be appointed secretaries. These appointments are made by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate; but Mr. Washburne, as usual, thought that he was a bigger man than any one else, and that an exception should have been made in his case. But, when officially informed of the appointment, he submitted gracefully, and they got along together quite amicably. Strange to say, Hitt represented Washburne's old district in Congress for a number of years—many more years than Washburne himself represented it.

It was as a member of Congress that Mr. Hitt distinguished himself. He did what every man should do who expects to make a reputation as a national legislator; and that is to specialize, to become an expert in some particular branch. He was peculiarly fitted for foreign affairs. He was a man of education and culture, a student always, had served abroad for years, had mingled in the highest society, and it is not strange that in a comparatively few years he was recognized as the leading authority on all matters coming before the House pertaining to our foreign relations.

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the House is not nearly so important a committee as the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate, and I may be pardoned for saying that I am chairman of the latter committee myself.

The reason is this: the Constitution provides that treaties shall be made only with the advice and consent of the Senate; hence it is that all such treaties, and consequently the foreign policy of the general Government, must pass the scrutiny of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate while the House and its committees have nothing whatever to do with them.

But nevertheless of all the House committees, that of Foreign Affairs is at times the foremost, and it never had an abler chairman than Robert R. Hitt. He was certainly in the most remarkable degree what might be termed a specialist in legislation. He gave but scant attention to any other branch of legislation. He had little time or liking for the tariff, finance, appropriations, or for any branch of legislation that failed to come within his own especial province. He was, in fact, so indifferent to the general business of the House that he told me one day that he did not even take the trouble to select a regular seat; that when any question came up in which he was interested he would talk from the seat of some absent colleague. Hence it was that he was seldom seen on the floor of the House except when some question was raised concerning our foreign relations; at which time he was immediately sent for. And it is only justice to him to say that he was the only man in the House in his time, and no one has since appeared there, who could so successfully defend or attack the policy of an administration concerning its foreign affairs.

The late Senator Morgan of Alabama, a most extraordinary character, of whom I shall have something to say later, and Robert R. Hitt and myself were appointed members of a commission to frame a form of government for the Territory of Hawaii, which we had just acquired. We travelled to Hawaii together. No two more delightful, entertaining, or interesting men could be found. They are both dead, and it was my sad privilege to eulogize their public achievements in the Senate.

In what I am writing from time to time, now, as the months and years go by, when I have the leisure from my public duties to devote to it, and without knowing whether what I am writing will ever be published, I do not want to eulogize any one. If what I say about men and events shall offend their friends living, I can not help it. I want only to give my own estimate of the men whom I have known. Robert R. Hitt was a good man; his honesty and uprightness were never questioned; he never did a great deal for his district but he was one of the most useful legislators in his own line— foreign affairs—whom I have ever known during my service in Congress. I think this is a fair and just estimate of him.

But to return to Mount Morris, Professor D. J. Pinckney was president of the Seminary when I was a student there. He knew my father intimately, and naturally took more than ordinary interest in me. When I became ill at school, he took me into his own home and kept me there for a month or more, treating me with the greatest kindness and consideration.

Years after I left the institution he became interested in politics, and ran as an independent for Congress against Horatio C. Burchard, Republican (who was, by the way, a very excellent man and my friend). Burchard defeated him. When the campaign was on I was invited to go to Galena and make a speech for Mr. Burchard. It never occurred to me at the time that I was going into Pinckney's district; but when I discovered the truth, I could not very well back out. I made my speech, but was careful not to say a word against Professor Pinckney, simply advocating the election of Mr. Burchard as a good Republican. Professor Pinckney, however, took great offense, and was very cold toward me from that time until his death. I felt that he had been misled, that it would all come right, and that some day I would have a plain talk with him; but he died before we ever got together. He has a son now living in Chicago, a prominent circuit judge of Cook County.

Among other classmates of mine at Mount Morris, was the late
General

John A. Rawlins, who became a distinguished officer and was General

Grant's chief of staff. No better, no truer, man ever lived than