

Governor Kirkwood's First Nomination

ISSN 0003-4827



Material in the public domain. No restrictions on use.

This work has been identified with a [Creative Commons Public Domain Mark 1.0](#).

Recommended Citation

"Governor Kirkwood's First Nomination." *The Annals of Iowa* 4 (1900), 547-548.

Available at: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/annals-of-iowa/vol4/iss7/15>

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](#)

future student must have recourse to this great work, which will undoubtedly become sufficiently comprehensive to obviate the necessity of consulting original publications. The materials are exceedingly well edited, showing the sources whence they were derived. In fact, the importance of the work can scarcely be overestimated. He who reads State or Western history which is written after this time will learn from the multitude of references and quotations that in Shambaugh's "Documentary Material" Senator Wilson's idea of the importance of studying the laws of a people to gain a knowledge of their history has been fully realized.

GOVERNOR KIRKWOOD'S FIRST NOMINATION.

Ralph P. Lowe succeeded James W. Grimes as Governor of Iowa in 1858. Mr. Lowe had served in the first Constitutional Convention (1844), and in other useful and honorable positions. His name is often met with in the public journals of early Iowa. He had become so generally known and esteemed that he was easily nominated for the Governorship by the Republicans in 1857. In this high office he made an excellent record, and had the "piping times of peace" promised to continue he would undoubtedly have been renominated for a second term, in accordance with the political precedents of those days. Personally, he combined a gentle graciousness of manner with high dignity. He immediately placed every one who came into his presence at ease. He was a reliable and abiding friend, wherever his friendship was bestowed. His portrait in the capitol, from the easel of George H. Yewell, shows a most kindly face and one to be wholly trusted. How he would have succeeded had he become the "War Governor" of Iowa can at this time be but a matter of opinion, and opinions upon the subject are not likely to be called out at this late day. Those, how-

ever, who knew him well had the highest confidence in his ability to meet any emergency likely to arise. But if the clouds of war were not already gathering in the Southern horizon when the State convention of the dominant party assembled at Des Moines in 1859, there were many alarming portents of the great crisis which came in 1861. Previous to its assemblage there had been some discussion relative to the fitness of Gov. Lowe for the stern emergencies not unlikely to arise. Kirkwood came into the State in 1855, but during these four years he had given evidence of the possession of great ability both in the State Senate and upon the stump. He had become in a large degree a popular representative of the feeling and determination of loyal Iowa. But Governor Lowe was not disposed to stand aside for any man. An early settler of the State, one who had been largely influential from the start, it seemed to him that in the matter of just deserts, no man ought to stand before him. In contrast with him Mr. Kirkwood was comparatively a new-comer. But the feeling in favor of Mr. Kirkwood developed very rapidly upon the gathering of the delegates in Des Moines. Among other influences, according to Henry W. Lathrop, his biographer, he had the powerful support of Ex-Governor Grimes. It soon became a matter of great doubt whether Mr. Lowe could be re-nominated—for the simple reason above stated. At this juncture his name was proposed for Judge of the Supreme Court and it immediately became apparent that if he would accept it there would be no question of his nomination. The matter was presented to him, and though he was at first most reluctant to yield his claims to the executive office, he finally gave his consent, and so both men were nominated—Mr. Kirkwood for Governor and Mr. Lowe for Judge of our highest court. In this latter position Governor Lowe drew the short term, and became Chief Justice January 12, 1860. He was re-elected in 1861, serving until January 1, 1868. He was Chief Justice in 1860-'61, '66 and '67.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.