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Article Summary: A year-long battle over the appointment of a new Lincoln postmaster followed the election of Grover Cleveland. Eight major candidates supported by prominent Nebraska Democrats sought the position. At the last minute a previously unmentioned candidate with less service to the party emerged and won the job.

Cataloging Information:

Names: Grover Cleveland, J Sterling Morton, William Edwards Annin, William Jennings Bryan, Tobias Castor, Euclid Martin, Nathan S Harwood, Wilson S Bissell, A L Bixby

Candidates for Lincoln Postmaster: James D Calhoun, Howard J Whitmore, Isaac Oppenheimer, Albert Watkins, William McLaughlin, J M Burks, George B Skinner, D W Huff, J H Harley

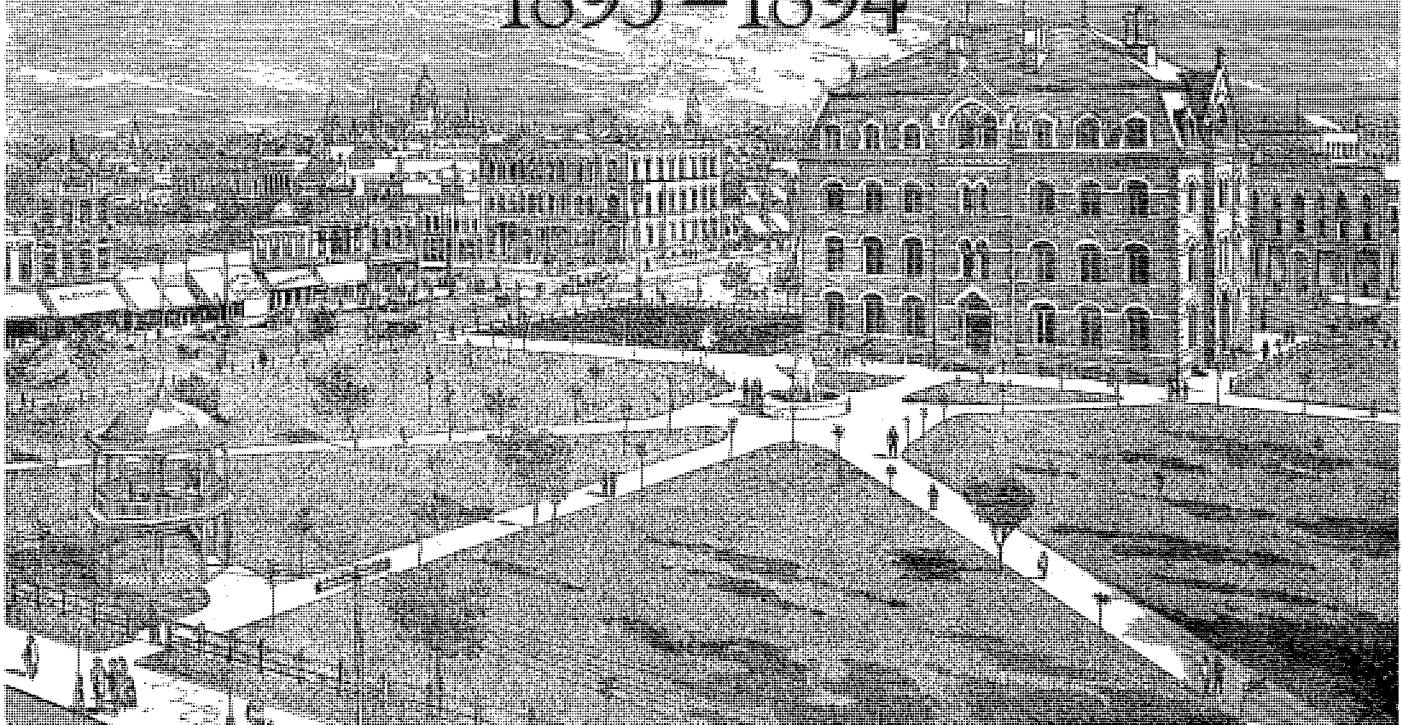
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Photographs / Images: US square and post office in Lincoln around 1893; William E Annin with army officers and an Indian scout at Camp Robinson, Nebraska, 1877; Isaac Oppenheimer, endorsed but not appointed postmaster; Tobias Castor, Democratic national committeeman from Nebraska; John S Harley, appointed postmaster in 1894

“Straight Politics Pays After All”

POLITICAL PATRONAGE AND THE LINCOLN POST-OFFICE FIGHT 1893–1894



By Patricia C. Gaster

Grover Cleveland's election to a second term as president in November of 1892 presented a welcome opportunity for Democratic seekers of federal jobs outside the classified civil service, including 28,324 employees in late 1893. The new president, said an unnamed U.S. senator in December, "will see to it that the democratic party secures what belongs to it. . . . He does not propose to show any mercy to republican officials outside the civil service, and for that matter republican

officials in the civil service will be tumbled out if they can be shown to be incompetent and lazy."¹ The application of this patronage system was nowhere more evident than in the U.S. post offices, as illustrated by the year-long battle over who would receive the appointment as postmaster for Lincoln, Nebraska.

Post-office jobs were then regarded as one of the first spoils of a party victory. Postal appointments for the four office classes (first, second, third, and fourth class, divided according to amount of revenue generated) were based on past service to the party in power. It wasn't until 1911 that President William Howard Taft placed all fourth-class post offices under the jurisdiction of the Civil Service Commission. On April 1, 1917,

during the Wilson administration, offices of the first, second, and third class were also made subject to civil service regulations, effectively removing them from politics.²

President Cleveland announced in January 1893 that he would deal with patronage only after he had selected the members of his cabinet. The selection of Nebraska's J. Sterling Morton, in February, as secretary of agriculture signaled the active start of the fight for the Lincoln postmastership and for many others across the state. Morton claimed no direct part in the dispensation of federal patronage outside his own department. However, it was widely understood that no federal appointments of which he specifically disapproved could be made for

The U.S. square and post office in Lincoln, as it appeared at the time of the 1893–94 battle over the postmastership. RG2158-PH: 655

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The Lincoln Post-office Fight

Nebraska. That included postmasters. According to Euclid Martin, chairman of the Nebraska Democratic state central committee, "Morton will have the power of final veto if he wishes to exercise."³

Lincoln had a number of competing newspapers during the era of the post-office fight. The largest, the Republican *Nebraska State Journal*, had an excellent Washington correspondent, William Edwards Annin, who reported the patronage battles of the second Cleveland administration as they affected Nebraskans. The Lincoln post-office fight

received extensive coverage as did the skirmishes over appointments in smaller post offices around the state. Annin was often able to predict the identities of new postmasters for the *Journal* several days before news of their actual appointments was released.⁴

Annin had a distinguished background that prepared him well for the kind of in-depth political reporting he did in the 1890s. Born in New Jersey, he was graduated from College of New Jersey (now Princeton) in 1877 and came west shortly afterward with a geological expedition from the college.

He settled in Omaha in December 1878, planning to become a lawyer, but in 1879 joined the editorial staff of the *Omaha Daily Bee*, where he served as associate editor under Edward Rosewater. He was for a time the *Bee's* chief correspondent in western Nebraska. He returned East as the private secretary to Algernon S. Paddock, who was reelected to the U.S. Senate in 1887. Annin left this job with Paddock in 1891 to practice journalism fulltime. During his subsequent newspaper career he served as Washington correspondent for the *Nebraska State Journal*.



William E. Annin (seated, second from right) was photographed with army officers and an Indian scout at Camp Robinson, Nebraska, in the fall of 1877. At the time Annin was a partner in the post tradership with his brother-in-law, Benjamin S. Paddock. Courtesy of Sigrid Brudie

and the *Salt Lake Tribune* and was also associated with the *Omaha Bee* and the *Philadelphia Ledger*.⁵

During his Washington years Annin's astute reporting earned him the respect of politicians and the Washington press. His marriage in 1884 in Omaha to the daughter of Joseph W. Paddock, cousin of his later employer, Senator Paddock, had enhanced his social standing both in Nebraska and in the East. His coverage of the patronage battles over federal appointments in Nebraska during the second Cleveland administration was read, reprinted, and quoted throughout the state. Private correspondence to J. Sterling Morton from the participants in the Lincoln post-office fight supports most of Annin's informative and entertaining observations on the struggle.⁶

A Republican, he nevertheless sympathized with traditional Democrats such as his father-in-law. "Straight politics pays after all," Annin telegraphed Morton on February 18, 1893, upon learning of Morton's appointment as secretary of agriculture in Cleveland's cabinet. Many Republicans supported the appointment because they thought it would discourage fusion of the Democratic and Populist followings.

Annin professed personal friendship for William Jennings Bryan, congressman from Nebraska's First District, who, by tradition, would be entitled to recommend postmaster appointments from his district to the president. However, he thought Bryan was out of touch with influential Democratic Party leaders and that he had little influence with the Cleveland administration.⁷

The procedure followed by prospective Democratic postmasters in Nebraska in 1893 started with securing endorsements of character, ability, and length of service to the party. These endorsements were then submitted to the state central committee via the local party organization and its properly designated representative on the state committee. The committee reviewed and forwarded the papers to the Post Office Department at Washington. After review and recom-

mendations by postal officials there, the president made a final selection, subject to confirmation by the U.S. Senate. Annin noted in early May:

As far as Nebraska is concerned it might as well be understood that the disbursement of patronage is to be a matter of routine carried out by well defined rules laid down by the state central committee. Populists, half breeds, trimmers on matters which are considered essential parts of the democratic policy, malcontents and sneaks will not be recognized.⁸



Lincoln attorney and banker Nathan S. Harwood. RG2411-2221

In the middle of April, after the patronage battle was well underway, President Cleveland issued a ruling to the Post Office Department that all classes of postmasters should be permitted to serve out their terms unless sustainable charges were preferred. President-elect Benjamin Harrison had followed a similar course in 1888. It was hoped that such a policy would prevent interruption of current work in the department by demands for removals of Republican postmasters and for subsequent appointments of Democrats, and spread such changes over a longer

period of time. That this did not entirely succeed is indicated by complaints to Morton that immediately after the election a rush was made for the local post offices, sometimes by applicants who had only weak ties to the Democratic Party.⁹

Other forces within the Democratic Party affected post-office appointments. Congressman Bryan tried to influence appointments in his district without much success. Defeated Democratic candidates for Congress in 1892 influenced federal appointments in their districts and were reported to have been in Washington in early 1893 "attending to recommendations for office." Victor Vifquain, who ran unsuccessfully from Nebraska's fourth congressional district, was especially active in postmaster selection before his appointment as consul general to Panama in April of 1893.¹⁰

Ex-governor James E. Boyd worked to counter the influence of Morton and other Democrats in the distribution of patronage, including post-office appointments. On April 12, while in Washington D.C., he called on Fourth Assistant Postmaster General Robert A. Maxwell and asked that endorsements written before April 6 and signed by Euclid Martin and James B. Sheean, chairman and secretary, respectively, of the Nebraska Democratic state central committee, "should only be recognized as those of individuals, as should also those of defeated democratic candidates for congress in Nebraska."¹¹

Also in Washington in April of 1893 was Tobias Castor, the Democratic national committeeman from Nebraska, who relished the game of practical politics. He was close to Morton and was widely believed to be recommending appointees for Nebraska postmasterships. Annin reported on April 14 that Castor and Morton had visited the White House to confer with President Cleveland. Boyd, however, told Annin that Castor was "an unknown quantity here and will have very little pull with the administration."¹²

Lincoln Post-office Fight, 1893-94

Boyd left Washington shortly thereafter. Castor remained in the city and on April 15 visited Maxwell at the Post Office Department (as Boyd had done several days earlier), and, noted Annin, "emerged with a heavenly smile upon his face and a paper with nearly ninety names upon it." However, Castor refused to give Annin any information, insisting that he was in Washington on a pleasure trip.¹³

Euclid Martin joined the parade of Nebraska Democrats to visit Washington in April 1893. He arrived on the twenty-third with documents that he claimed could refute Boyd's charges that any member of the Nebraska state central committee had made unauthorized endorsements for postmasters. Martin conferred at the White House with Morton, U.S. Attorney General Richard Olney, and the president. Although Martin and Castor were presumed to be working in harmony to promote only those applicants for office approved by the party machinery, Martin later complained to Morton that Castor had not always been fair with the state organization and that his actions indicated more desire to benefit himself than the party.¹⁴

Nathan S. Harwood, a Lincoln attorney and banker who played a key role in the Lincoln post-office fight, was in Washington during the last of April and part of the first week in May. Harwood had been a well-known Republican until he left the party in 1888 over the tariff. As a Democrat, he supported the gold standard views of Morton, Castor, and Martin. Morton had asked Harwood to make suggestions regarding patronage in Nebraska, and in Washington Harwood had conferred with President Cleveland. But when asked by Annin for information on his talk with the president, Harwood was as reticent as Castor had been and replied that his conversation with Cleveland was "strictly private."¹⁵

By the first week in May disillusionment among the crowds of office seekers and hangers-on in Washington

was widespread. Many left the city because they could no longer afford to stay. The anxieties of those who had stayed at home were mounting as well. Widespread economic depression made a government office, even with a small salary, highly attractive. A job like the Lincoln postmastership, with a salary of \$3,300 a year in 1893, could provide a comfortable living for someone whose profession or business was stagnant.

Morton was besieged by letter writers



Howard J. Whitmore was among the many candidates who thought they deserved appointment as Lincoln postmaster.
RG2411-6049

pleading for help in the form of endorsements for federal jobs or introductions to private employers. Most, like Walt Mason, who wanted an introduction to Morton's editorial friends in Chicago and the West, were "miserably hard up." Lincoln businessman J. J. Imhoff, suffering from financial reverses and poor health, asked Morton to help him secure a foreign consulate so that he could leave the country for a year or two.¹⁶

James D. Calhoun, the fiercely pro-Bryan editor of the *Lincoln Weekly*

Herald and an unsuccessful applicant for the Lincoln postmastership during the first Cleveland administration, was probably the first candidate to enter the field. The *Nebraska State Journal* of Lincoln noted as early as December 6, 1892, a "rumor afloat that when the Lincoln post office falls by the wayside, Colonel J. D. Calhoun will be on hand to pick it up." The *Journal* further noted, "Members of his own party oppose him only on the ground that he was born in the sunny south and was for a time unreconstructed" (Calhoun was born in Georgia and served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War) but concluded that he had deported himself well after the war and was entitled to the postmastership.¹⁷

The *Journal* speculated on February 21, 1893, that the recent appointment of Morton as secretary of agriculture might result in a fight over the Lincoln post office: "Colonel Calhoun and H. J. Whitmore are supposed to be whetting knives." On March 11 Nebraska Congressman Bryan was reported to have endorsed Calhoun, "while J. Sterling Morton's friends are warmly favoring Albert Watkins. Mr. Bryan has the advantage of the position of being congressman resident and custom would permit him to dictate the appointment of his home postmaster." The *Journal* noted several weeks later that every indication was that Calhoun would get the job.¹⁸

Others made guarded inquiries about the postmaster's job. Lincolnite William H. H. Dunn wrote to Morton on March 21, 1893, asking for help in securing either the U.S. Marshal's job or the Lincoln postmastership. Dunn had a varied background as a livery stable manager, physician, and farmer between 1888 and 1893, according to Lincoln city directories. Apparently, Morton did not encourage him.¹⁹

A more credible candidate, Howard J. Whitmore, a Lincoln attorney, was a strong political supporter of Morton. In a candid letter on April 10, Whitmore said that he had been talking quietly to local

Democrats about asking for the postmastership for himself and requested Morton's advice. Whitmore also listed and described the other aspirants:

The [other] candidates are J. D. Calhoun, whose record you know. George Hagensick [Hagensick], a German grocer; Isaac Oppenheimer, Herbrew [sic] ex-merchant; William Gray, an architect; and K. K. Hayden, ex-cashier of the State National Bank. Mr. Albert Watkins may also enter the field though he has not decided.²⁰

Gray, in Whitmore's opinion, was "crazy on silver and is ignorant and uneducated." Hagensick had no particular qualifications for the job, although he claimed the support of Lincoln businessmen on March 23 when he sent Morton copies of local Democratic endorsements of him for the Lincoln postmastership and asked Morton for his support.²¹

Whitmore believed that Hayden, although an "ardent free-silverite," was qualified to be postmaster. Hayden had had a distinguished banking career in Lincoln and had already written to Morton on February 23, asking for a personal interview to discuss his aspirations for the Lincoln post office. However, by May he had been offered a national bank receivership, removing him from the post-office fight. Gray and Hagensick apparently did not meet with enough encouragement to continue their pursuit of the postmastership beyond the spring of 1893.²²

Isaac Oppenheimer and Albert Watkins, also mentioned as postmaster candidates by Whitmore on April 10, stayed in the year-long race to the finish. Oppenheimer, a Lincoln merchant, was prominent in the local Jewish community. His extended family (including a brother, Moses, who had relocated from Nebraska City to Lincoln in 1869) was also engaged in merchandising. Isaac Oppenheimer had supported the Democratic Party since his arrival in the city about 1870 and had run unsuccessfully for the Nebraska legislature on several occasions. Apparently he was early in the field for the Lincoln post-

mastership, collecting an impressive number of endorsements, including that of Lincoln attorney Andrew J. Sawyer. Watkins wrote to Morton that he considered Oppenheimer a "scoundrel" but conceded that he "has the best endorsements of any of the applicants for the Lincoln postoffice, the rest of whom are gentlemen. The president on examination of the papers would be justified in appointing him."²³

Watkins was an attorney and newspaperman, who had served as Lincoln postmaster from 1885 to 1889 under the first Cleveland administration. He had edged out Calhoun and others due to Morton's influence and was deeply interested in obtaining the job again in 1893. He had been offered the receivership of the Ponca national bank but hesitated to accept. He wrote to Morton on May 16 that the job at Ponca was far from Lincoln and less than he should have received, considering his long service to the party. The office Watkins really wanted was the Lincoln postmastership. He scorned rumors of President Cleveland's reluctance to give such jobs to those who had previously held them, observing that it was a "comedy of [civil service] reform . . . to say that a man is ineligible to an important office because he has made a record in that office." Although Watkins finally accepted the Ponca national bank receivership, he did not give up hope that he might still secure the more important, better-paying job at Lincoln.²⁴

Calhoun meanwhile continued to push his own candidacy for the Lincoln postmastership. In early May a petition for him, drawn up in Bryan's office and first signed by Bryan, was being circulated in Lincoln by Lorenzo D. Woodruff, Calhoun's business partner. Calhoun asked A. J. Sawyer, a gold Democrat and close personal friend, for assurance that Morton would not prevent Calhoun's appointment if he could garner sufficient support. Sawyer, a confidante of Morton, told Calhoun that to the best of his knowledge, Morton would not prevent Calhoun's

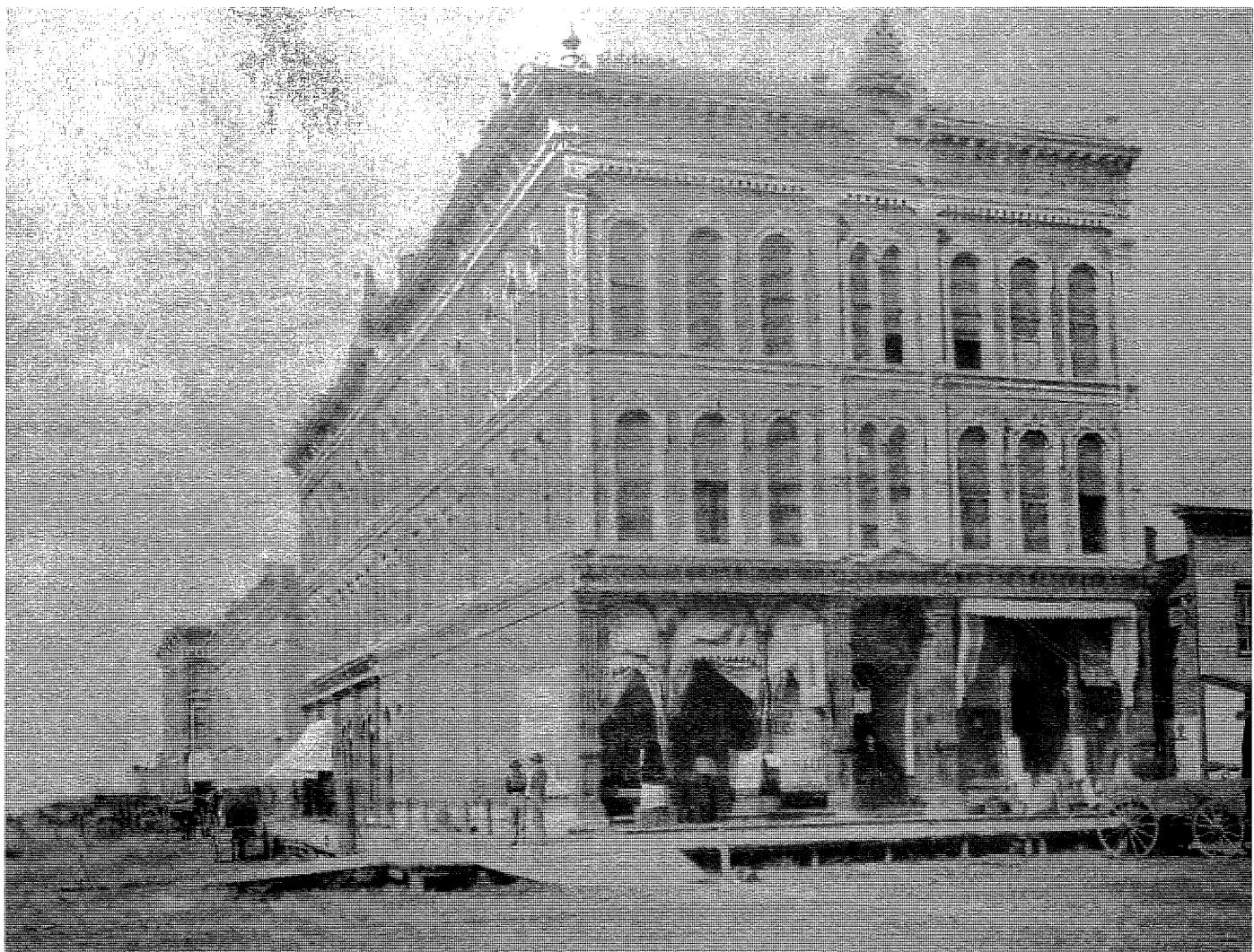
appointment if his endorsements and other papers were in order. Sawyer then asked Morton for confirmation of this point and noted in a postscript, "It may be good politics not to antagonize Bryan in the Lincoln P.O. I am somewhat in a quandary what should be done."²⁵

Meanwhile Whitmore continued to quietly collect recommendations and to urge his own claim to the Lincoln post office on Morton. Morton suggested that Whitmore apply for an alternate position, but Whitmore wasn't interested. He told Morton that Watkins also had suggested another job: the receivership of the Ponca national bank because he (Watkins) could not afford to accept it. Whitmore was indignant: "I told him I did not see how I could afford to take the place if he could not as I am certainly earning more in the [legal] profession than he is."²⁶

Lincoln's postmastership was not the only one in dispute in Nebraska. There were skirmishes over post-office appointments in a number of smaller towns. One of the most colorful occurred in the spring and early summer of 1893 at Kearney, where the commission of the newly appointed Democratic postmaster, John F. Crocker, was delayed by challenges from Kearney businessman Juan Boyle. Boyle, backed by his local Catholic congregation, accused Crocker of membership in the anti-Catholic American Protective Association (later denied by the APA) and urged the appointment of a rival Democratic candidate.²⁷

In the columns of the *Nebraska State Journal* Annin criticized Boyle for what he called an unwarranted attempt to mingle religion with politics. He accused Boyle of using the issue of the Kearney postmastership to try to destroy Morton's influence in Washington. Amid a flurry of charges and countercharges, Annin secured private correspondence on the Crocker case written from Boyle and his friends to Postmaster General Wilson S. Bissell and published it. The resulting uproar in Kearney was settled

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Isaac Oppenheimer, who owned this clothing store at 110 Tenth Street, gained many endorsements for the postmaster's job, but was not appointed. RG2158-691

only when President Cleveland signed Crocker's commission as postmaster on June 27, 1893.²⁸

As the summer progressed, Lincoln postmaster candidates worked on. Whitmore was still accumulating letters of support. He reported to Morton on July 10 that he had called on Sawyer, hoping to persuade him to switch his endorsement from Oppenheimer. Instead Sawyer offered to endorse Whitmore for a job in the Lincoln land office. Whitmore declined; he wanted his friend, Lincoln attorney M. L.

Easterday, to be considered for the land office job. Besides, it didn't pay enough. "I have lately become engaged to be married," he wrote to Morton, "and feel the necessity of making greater exertions to add to my income than hitherto."²⁹

About the first of August, Tobias Castor was again in Washington with his "little hatchet [for cutting off the heads of Republican office holders] and black notebook," conferring with cabinet officials on Nebraska patronage. The independent Republican *Lincoln Daily*

Call reported that he had carried home to Lincoln the scalps of a number of Republican postmasters, seventy-four obtained in three days. Bryan, meanwhile, was reported to feel keenly his lack of influence in matters of patronage.³⁰

By the fall of 1893 the would-be Lincoln postmasters were becoming increasingly well-known. *Journal* correspondent Annin boosted Calhoun in his column from Washington, published October 8. Annin conceded that Calhoun may have written material

critical of the Cleveland administration but believed that Cleveland could gain politically by naming Calhoun postmaster at Lincoln.³¹

Castor, like Morton, Sawyer, and Watkins, favored offering Whitmore another federal job to remove him from the post-office fight. But Whitmore was not to be dissuaded. That he seemed to be carrying the day in November of 1893 is indicated by a long, angry letter from Watkins to Morton on November 24. Watkins had heard rumors that "Whitmore is to be your choice" and protested that although he had already accepted the Ponca bank receivership, the lesser job was not satisfactory, and that he still preferred and deserved the post-office appointment. Watkins wrote:

I have waited long in a spirit of deference for some available candidate for the postoffice to arise who might be as much or more entitled to it, or might do more with it than myself, but none has arisen. Of all the applicants McLaughlin and Whitmore alone should be considered at all, and while in point of party service and desert, the former has a stronger claim, Whitmore in a test would probably be thought the only one available.³²

William McLaughlin, mentioned as a candidate by Watkins, was in the real estate business at the time of the post-office fight and seems to have kept a low profile. His past as a liquor merchant and operator of the well-known Omaha Saloon gave him a less than sterling reputation with the dry elements of Lincoln society. He had first come to Lincoln from Des Moines about 1869 as a livestock dealer. His subsequent career in local Democratic politics over the years, including service on the Lincoln city council, earned him respect. McLaughlin was also known for his support of Irish causes in Nebraska, and was one of the original investors in the resettlement of Irish families in the state that gave rise to the town of O'Neill.³³

By December of 1893 the pot of post-office stew was beginning to boil. Harwood and Sawyer wrote to Morton on December 2 advocating the appointment of

your *assumed friend* J. D. Calhoun to one of the federal offices of this city. It is not thought advisable to elevate him to the office of Post master, but after carefully considering the whole question we have thought it would be to the best interest of the party to give him recognition.³⁴

Several new candidates entered the



Tobias Castor was the Democratic national committeeman from Nebraska.
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already crowded field of "grannies and nobodies" (Watkins's phrase) contending for the postmaster's job. Lincoln implement dealer J. M. Burks, an unsuccessful applicant during the first Cleveland administration, wrote to Morton on December 5 that he was applying for the position again. Burks had asked in April for a job in the federal hierarchy ("as good a one as I can get"), and he secured Bryan's endorsement for surveyor of customs in Lincoln. He had not previously entered the contest for postmaster because he had understood that "Mr. Calhoun had been agreed upon but I am now informed that perhaps such is not the case." Burks presented himself as a dark horse possibility for postmaster who would be agreeable to local Democrats as a com-

promise candidate. He was eliminated within a few weeks by the offer of the job for which he had been originally endorsed, U.S. custodian and surveyor of the Lincoln port.³⁵

About this time Lincoln livery stable owner George B. Skinner, who had earlier sought the U.S. Marshal's job, tried to have his endorsements for that office counted as recommendations for the post-office slot. Skinner was well known in Lincoln, where he had participated as an auctioneer in early state lot sales. His longtime presidency of the Red Ribbon temperance club earned him the unofficial title of "Bishop" Skinner, who was said to preside over his club meetings every Sunday afternoon with all the dignity and fervor of a regular bishop. He had been in Washington in April and had called on Bryan to ask for his help in getting the U.S. Marshal's job, but was refused. The financial panic in 1893 (as well as his late-in-life divorce the year before) had caused Skinner financial loss, and he (like most of the other would-be postmasters) needed the income from a federal job. Impediments to his appointment were the perception that in 1893 he was more Prohibitionist than Democratic and that his colorful personality and background might embarrass the party.³⁶

One of the last entrants, D. W. Huff, came to Lincoln from Michigan in 1870 and worked as a mercantile clerk and in the agricultural implement business before entering the real estate field. His record of Democratic Party service was either less extensive than that of other postmaster candidates or less widely publicized prior to 1893. (Watkins's later allusion to "the mush room bosses who have invented Mr. Huff" seems to indicate that Huff had not distinguished himself in Lincoln politics.) He was put forward by Castor (with the tacit support of N. S. Harwood) late in November or early December despite the strenuous objections of prominent local Democrats, including Watkins, Sawyer, and Whitmore.³⁷

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It is not entirely clear how or why Huff became a candidate. A November 17, 1893, endorsement by Louis Stull, cashier of Lincoln's Industrial Savings Bank, specializing in real estate loans, implied that choosing either Huff or Whitmore as the Lincoln postmaster would help local Democrats attract Republican support. Whitmore later speculated privately to Morton that perhaps Castor and Harwood secretly wished Calhoun to be appointed postmaster and that Huff was brought forward as a candidate by them to force President Cleveland to choose Calhoun as the less objectionable of the two.³⁸

The rest of the candidates, especially Calhoun, Watkins, and Whitmore, worked on. Castor arrived in Washington December 6, supposedly on another pleasure trip, although he admitted to an inquiring Annin that he might do a little political business while in the city. By December 8 Annin had narrowed the field to Huff or Whitmore, with Calhoun and Watkins "Believed to be Laid on the Shelf." Optimistically, he reported,

The Lincoln postoffice fight will in all probability be settled this week. It looks at present writing as if the plum would fall to either Huff or Whitmore. Calhoun is entirely out of the race and Watkins seems to be shelved. Isaac Oppenheimer is here working hard in his own behalf. He has plenty of papers on file and is hopeful of the result.

By December 10 Annin believed Huff had the best chance for the job even though Castor had told him that nothing had yet been definitely decided and that some of Huff's papers and endorsements had only recently reached Washington.³⁹

Whitmore, who seemed to counter all opposition by redoubling his efforts, wrote to Morton on December 11 that he now had the endorsements of "about all the leading democrats of this city," including Sawyer (who had switched his allegiance from Oppenheimer) and Watkins (who was writing to Morton in behalf of his own candidacy). Bluntly Whitmore told Morton:

I am particularly opposed to Mr. Huff

and would much rather see Calhoun appointed, though Watkins is my first and only real choice (as an alternative to myself) and I should regard it as extremely unfortunate for the party if Calhoun should get the place.⁴⁰

Annin's optimism earlier in the month that the Lincoln post-office fight would shortly be settled proved unfounded. The December 12 *Nebraska State Journal* introduced Burks and Skinner to the public in Annin's column from Washington, with Castor's observation that if any more applicants turned up, it would be impossible to say just when a selection could be made. Dr. A. R. Mitchell wrote to Morton on December 5, "I have learned since writing an endorsement for Mr. Watkins first, and Whitmore second, that our old friend Skinner wants the job," and next suggested Solomon Schwab, a Lincoln clothing merchant, as a compromise candidate. Columnist A. L. Bixby observed in the *Journal*, "The more candidates there are for the Lincoln postoffice the larger the number of soreheads there will be on or about Christmas."⁴¹

Ex-governor Boyd made another trip to Washington in December to further the interests of his choices for several offices, including Calhoun for the Lincoln postmastership. The *Journal* reported on December 14 that Bryan appeared to be trying to conciliate the administration, which tended to increase Calhoun's chances. Annin noted, "Mr. Bryan . . . looks upon Cal's appointment as vital, because it would show that he is not entirely out of touch with the administration and is still recognized as being in the party ranks." But Annin also noted, "If I were a betting man at this stage of the game I should take Huff against the field."⁴²

By the next day Calhoun's chances appeared to Annin to be brighter. Bryan had visited with the president about the Lincoln postmastership, and Cleveland had appeared to recognize the congressman's recent conciliatory attitude. Annin thought that if both Morton and Castor would avoid interfering,

Cleveland would allow Bryan to name the postmaster in Lincoln, and Calhoun would get the job. However, the arrival shortly afterward in Washington of N. S. Harwood was interpreted by Annin as tipping the scales in favor of Huff, his protégé.⁴³

The last half of December saw almost daily press reports and speculation on who would soon fill the top job at the Lincoln post office. The *Lincoln Call* on December 17 reported that Bryan still expected his endorsement of Calhoun to be successful. The *Call* on December 22 reported that the post office would probably remain with Republican postmaster Charles H. Gere until after the holidays and then summarized the Democratic field:

It is generally conceded . . . that there is no one in it for the postoffice but Huff and Calhoun and that the land office will be held for the defeated postoffice applicant. The Oppenheimer forces have melted away; many who originally signed his papers having withdrawn their support. But very little is heard of Mr. Whitmore's application in these later days. . . . Huff is anxiously waiting like a bishop on a chessboard to see in what direction the parties who are using him will move him while Calhoun is resting on his oars confident in the justice of his claim and the integrity of his support.⁴⁴

Two days later, on December 24, a new twist occurred in the post-office tangle. A large scrapbook filled with clippings, purportedly from Calhoun's writings critical of the Cleveland administration, was delivered to Postmaster General Bissell. Although some of the clippings were said to be from newspapers other than Calhoun's *Lincoln Weekly Herald* or to date from Cal's days on the *State Journal* in the 1880s, the adverse impact on his post-office ambitions could hardly be exaggerated.⁴⁵

The situation had not changed a week later. Bissell was reported by the *Journal* on December 31 to be still studying the scrapbook and had not yet decided whom to recommend to the president for appointment. Calhoun had refused (as an alternative to the postmastership) to consider any job with the

Lincoln land office, Annin prophetically wrote that he thought it unwise for Calhoun to refuse the lesser appointment so vehemently lest it embarrass Bryan or antagonize opposition postmaster candidates to unite against him. Annin also noted that an antagonized President Cleveland might confront Bryan with the request to suggest a postmaster other than Calhoun.⁴⁶

The resumption of political business at Washington after the turn of the New Year did not bring a resolution of the post-office muddle in Lincoln. A discouraged Whitmore on January 1 sent Morton a signed withdrawal of his name for consideration as the Lincoln postmaster with instructions to send it to President Cleveland if he (Morton) felt that Whitmore had no chance of appointment. Almost daily thereafter the Lincoln press reported a lack of progress. On January 14 Annin reported to *Journal* readers from Washington that Calhoun had been definitely turned down and that D. W. Huff's name would probably be sent to the U.S. Senate for confirmation the following week by the president. Opposition to Calhoun had reportedly been growing since the last of December when the scrapbook appeared on Bissell's desk.⁴⁷

The possibility that D. W. Huff would be the new Lincoln postmaster prompted fresh outbursts from local Democrats. There were rumors of his financial irregularities. Whitmore scored Huff's "mental and physical decrepitude and his use of stimulants to an excessive degree." Skinner called Huff's prospective appointment a black eye to the Democratic Party and wrote to Morton: "I wrote a letter to Mr. Bissell stating that I was sorry that Huff and myself could not stand up in front of him for inspection and after the review if he gave Huff the Post Office then I would never apply for another office." Watkins on January 19 urged Morton "to get to the President's attention some showing of the gross impropriety, unfairness, and unfitness of Mr. Huff's appointment as postmaster."⁴⁸

Bryan continued to back Calhoun and on January 20 conferred with President Cleveland, asking again whether he would be permitted to exercise his rights as a congressman in naming the postmaster from his home



John S. Harley seemingly emerged out of nowhere to capture the coveted job as Lincoln postmaster in 1894. RG2411-6049

city. He was this time brusquely informed by the president that there was nothing in the U.S. Constitution or statutes giving congressmen the legal right to make such nominations. Shortly afterward Calhoun's newspaper friends put forth their final efforts in his behalf. The Nebraska Press Association telegraphed President Cleveland on January 25 from its annual state convention in Lincoln, urging him to appoint Calhoun postmaster at Lincoln.⁴⁹

As the last of January and the first week in February passed, the Lincoln post-office fight moved into its final phase. Whitmore was married to Myrta May Osborne of Lincoln, no doubt with

lingering hopes that the postmaster appointment would soon materialize. The *Journal* reported on February 6 that Bryan's friends in Washington were abandoning Calhoun and that a compromise candidate was likely to be selected. Finally on February 8 Lincolniters learned the identity of their new postmaster: J. H. Harley, a local druggist.⁵⁰

Although Harley was well known and liked in Lincoln, where he had resided since 1871, the first public reaction to his appointment was disbelief. He had not been publicly associated with the post-office fight, and his selection over the other candidates appeared little short of astounding. *Journal* columnist A. L. Bixby expressed the general reaction: "Good gracious! Don't that take your breath? And ain't it a surprise! That Harley beats them all to death! And carries off the prize?"⁵¹

Annin reported from Washington the political maneuvering that resulted in Harley's last-minute ascent to the postmaster's job. Harley, a warm personal friend of Bryan who was also known as an administration Democrat, had been suggested (probably by N. S. Harwood) to President Cleveland as a compromise candidate as early as January 2. However, Bryan had continued to urge the appointment of Calhoun until February 3, when the president "positively refused to appoint Calhoun to the Lincoln postmastership or anything else." During a subsequent conference with Cleveland and Morton, Bryan was asked to name an alternate to Calhoun who was not one of the other avowed candidates. This eliminated Huff as well as the other contenders. After ascertaining that Harley would accept the job if it were offered to him, Bryan formally nominated Harley. Bryan told the *Journal* that he had supported Calhoun until he was told that the president would positively not appoint him.⁵²

The *Omaha Bee* gave a slightly differing version of the behind-the-scenes politicking by depicting Bryan as being deceived by Harwood and Morton, who

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presented Harley's name to the president and to Bryan separately to pave the way for Harley's selection. Trumpeted a *Bee* headline: "Poor Old Calhoun Left Out in the Cold, and Bryan Roped in by the Administration in the Hope of Maintaining Harmony." That Harwood and Morton played key roles is certain.

Harwood wrote on February 10 to Morton of the fulfillment of his (Harwood's) "prediction that if Bryan was required to name an entirely new man he would name Harley" and noted "for keeping that suggestion before the President the credit is entirely due to you [Morton]."⁵³

Harley's appointment, intended as a compromise that would restore harmony among the various factions of the Democratic Party in Nebraska, particularly in Lincoln and Lancaster County, was variously interpreted by the state's press. Although the Democratic *Omaha World-Herald* saw it as a victory for Bryan, who had secured his second choice for postmaster, others felt that Cleveland (and Morton) had prevailed in forcing Bryan to drop his first choice, Calhoun. The Republican *Journal*, after acknowledging that Harley had once been a Republican, believed that both factions of the Democratic Party could claim a victory and said on February 11: "Mr. Bryan, in thinking it over, has come to the conclusion that it was a great victory after all. True he did not get what he wanted, but neither did the friends of D. W. Huff."⁵⁴

Harley was notified of his good fortune by a telegram from Bryan, informing him that his name was being sent by the president to the Senate for confirmation, and he was soon the object of good wishes and congratulations. Harwood wrote to Morton the following day, "It [the new appointment] is well received by everybody except Calhoun and some of the other candidates. . . . Our friend Calhoun is fairly furious."⁵⁵

D. W. Huff must have been similarly disappointed. Huff was noted by the *Lincoln Call* after Harley's appointment as "not in shape for an interview." The

Call noted on February 28 that it failed to see that National Committeeman Castor had had any hand in the appointment of Harley. Castor several weeks later was noted by Annin to have learned from Harley's appointment that the president made his own decisions. "Tobe takes his chances on such mishaps."⁵⁶

Albert Watkins, who certainly felt the disappointment of his own ambitions as deeply as any candidate, wrote to Morton on March 20 that he still considered the promotion of Huff to have been "wholly indefensible" and regretted that a true Democrat (not a former Republican like Harley) had not been chosen for the postmastership. On April 13 Watkins expressed his resentment of Castor and Harwood and their political maneuvering that he thought had "shelved" his own hopes and left him nothing but "condolence and sneers for having been 'turned down.'"⁵⁷

Although the state press expressed considerable sympathy for Calhoun, he and the rest of the rejected applicants were also the objects of a good deal of ridicule during the days succeeding the surprising conclusion of the post-office fight. Lincoln's *Saturday Morning Courier* depicted "Major Calhoun, along with Mr. Huff and Mr. Whitmore and Mr. Oppenheimer and the rest, . . . hanging on hooks in the political cooling room," while Cleveland was appointing Harley. Editorial paragraphers and newspaper poets such as A. L. Bixby for the *Journal* and Walt Mason of the *Lincoln Call* found the post-office fight and its participants a wonderful target. "If you happen to be a poet, you can write up the Lincoln post office case in great style," noted the *Beatrice Daily Express*.⁵⁸

Harley did not take possession of the Lincoln post office until March 19. Several days before he did so, the deputy postmastership was awarded to Thomas S. Allen, a young Lincoln attorney connected prominently with congressman Bryan's political career. (Allen later married Bryan's sister, Mary Elizabeth). Thomas D. Worrall,

postmaster at Valparaiso during part of President Cleveland's first administration and later known for his struggle against the grain monopoly in Nebraska, was appointed superintendent of carriers. Lesser positions were covered by civil service regulations.⁵⁹

The secondary appointments caused a brief flurry of dismay among Lancaster County supporters of the Cleveland administration. Whitmore denounced Allen, Worrall, and M. L. Blackburn, hired for the money order department at the post office, as "Bryan strikers" and noted that all three were openly critical of Cleveland. Castor urged on August 6, 1894, that in preparation for the upcoming Lancaster County Democratic convention, a postal inspector be sent to Lincoln, apparently to keep Allen and Worrall occupied with work and away from the convention. Harley managed to rise above local politics; he served as postmaster for four years, until 1898, when Republican H. M. Bushnell assumed the office as an appointee of the Republican McKinley administration.⁶⁰

The images associated with the post-office fight lingered for years: Tobe Castor's little black book with names of those he favored for appointments; his imaginary headsman's ax; and the famous scrapbook of Calhoun editorials, that so dismayed Bissell and Cleveland. But perhaps the most memorable image that arose from the post-office fight stemmed from an 1893 speech in which Bryan promised to "expire in the last ditch rather than surrender a single conviction." But, remarked Bixby in the *Journal*, "when the ditch came along he dropped Calhoun into it and left him there to die alone." References to dying (or failing to die) in a ditch reappeared in *Journal* editorial columns almost daily for months thereafter.⁶¹

Perhaps as a reaction to their perceived loss, several of the defeated candidates left Lincoln shortly after Harley took office. Isaac Oppenheimer went to New York state, where he died of diabetes in 1897. D. W. Huff, after

being passed over for the top position in both the Lincoln post office and the Lincoln land office (William B. Morrison, Bryan's nominee, became land office receiver), resettled in California. He returned to Nebraska several years before he died in Lincoln in 1902. Calhoun sold the *Lincoln Weekly Herald* and moved from Lincoln to Tampa, Florida, where he built a second career in newspaper work and then the U.S. Customs Service. He died in 1915.⁶²

Of those who remained in Lincoln, Bishop Skinner was perhaps the feeblest. He died after a long illness in February of 1895, about a year after Harley's appointment. He had never been a strong candidate for the postmastership, but he appealed for Morton's help with more energy and passion than any other candidate.⁶³

William McLaughlin outlived much of the unsavory reputation that had accrued to him through his ownership of the Omaha Saloon during his early years in Lincoln. He served as Lancaster County Treasurer from 1900 to 1902 and again from 1910 to 1912. He died in March 1912 with the respectability that political success and long residence in a community often give.⁶⁴

J. H. Harley died in July 1916, and if press reports are to be believed, was greatly beloved by Lincolnenites. He had not after all made enemies in the post-office fight, having entered the struggle only at the end. Albert Watkins, by the time of his death in 1923, had become better known as a historian and editor of the Morton-Watkins history of Nebraska than as a politician and seeker of post-office appointments. However, his obituary in the Democratic *Lincoln Star* recalled him prominently as a former postmaster of Lincoln during the first Cleveland administration.⁶⁵

John M. Burks, whose last-minute bid as a compromise candidate for the postmastership failed, was known as one of Lincoln's oldest businessmen at the time of his death at the age of ninety-two in 1924. Perhaps the longest surviving participant in the post-office

fight was Howard J. Whitmore, who died in 1942. "Judge Whitmore" was by then remembered largely for his long legal career in Lincoln and Lancaster County. The federal appointment he received in 1894 was not that of postmaster, as he had wished, but that of national bank examiner, a job he held until 1901.⁶⁶

William Edwards Annin, whose brilliant dispatches from Washington illuminated the post-office fight that both entertained and dismayed Nebraskans, died in 1903 of tuberculosis. His health had deteriorated by 1899 to the extent that he left newspaper work and went west to Denver, where he spent his few remaining years working for the U.S. Post Office! Annin's work as chief of the western division of the new rural free delivery system was praised by his postal superiors in Washington, who seem to have borne no grudge over his former role in publicizing a fight over post-office patronage.⁶⁷

Notes

¹ *The Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln) (hereafter *NSJ*), Nov. 29, 1893, Dec. 18, 1894.

² J. Dennis McGuire, "Post Office Primaries: An Experiment in Direct Democracy and Postal Reform," *Nebraska History* 58 (Fall 1977): 307, 308, 320.

³ *NSJ*, Jan. 15, May 11, 1893; *Omaha World-Herald*, May 7, 1893.

⁴ Hugh G. McVicker, "Evolution of Forty Years in the Journal Office," *Sunday State Journal*, July 24, 1927.

⁵ William Edwards Annin Undergraduate File, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey; *Omaha Daily Bee*, June 19, 1889, Mar. 17, 1903; *NSJ*, Mar. 27, 1903; "Algernon Sidney Paddock." *Nebraska State Historical Society Proceedings and Collections* 5 (Lincoln, 1902), 189.

⁶ Annin Undergraduate File; J. Sterling Morton and Albert Watkins, *Illustrated History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: Western Publishing and Engraving Company, 1913), 1:315, 3C:506; "Paddock," *Proceedings*, 187, 189.

⁷ William Edwards Annin to J. Sterling Morton, Feb. 18, 1893, J. Sterling Morton Papers, MS7, Nebraska State Historical Society (hereafter Morton Papers); *NSJ*, Feb. 18, Apr. 15, 1893.

⁸ *NSJ*, Apr. 30, May 7, 1893.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Nov. 9, 1888, Apr. 18, Nov. 26, 29, 1893; C. G. Barnes to Morton, Apr. 29, 1893, Morton Papers.

¹⁰ *NSJ*, Apr. 2, 13, 23, 1893.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Apr. 13, 1893.

¹² *Ibid.*, Apr. 15, 1893; Morton-Watkins, *History*, 1:613.

¹³ *NSJ*, Apr. 16, 1893. Castor was as reticent in Nebraska as he was in Washington. W. D. McHugh wrote to Morton on Mar. 9, 1894, "I do not know Mr. Castor's plans, as he does not discuss them with any of the democrats in Omaha, unless it be Dr. Miller." Morton Papers.

¹⁴ *NSJ*, Apr. 24, 26, 1893; Euclid Martin to Morton, Apr. 12, 1894, Morton Papers.

¹⁵ *NSJ*, Apr. 30, May 7, 1893, Jan. 6, 1900.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Mar. 19, 1893; Walt Mason to Morton, Sept. 14, 1893, J. J. Imhoff to Morton, Dec. 28, 1893, both Morton Papers; *United States Official Postal Guide* (Philadelphia: Geo. F. Lasher, printer, 1894), 754.

Imhoff did not receive a consular appointment. After he left Lincoln, he lived in Ohio and Pennsylvania. *Lincoln Star*, Nov. 11, 1908. For more information on Imhoff's career in Nebraska prior to his financial troubles in the early 1890s, see Jim McKee's, "Imhoff in the Wings During Lincoln's Beginnings," *Lincoln Journal Star*, Feb. 17, 2002.

¹⁷ *NSJ*, Dec. 6, 1892; Patricia C. Gaster, "From Brownville to Bryan, Journalist James D. Calhoun in Nebraska, 1869-1894," *Nebraska History* 81(Fall 2000):116-27.

¹⁸ *Semi-Weekly State Journal*, Feb. 21, 1893; *NSJ*, Mar. 11, 24, 1893.

¹⁹ W. H. H. Dunn to Morton, Mar. 21, 1893, Morton Papers. Dunn farmed and operated a home factory near Havelock before leaving the area about 1900. *NSJ*, Sept. 27, 1912.

²⁰ H. J. Whitmore to Morton, Apr. 10, 1893, Morton Papers.

²¹ *Ibid.*, G. A. Hagensick to Morton, Mar. 4, 1893, Morton Papers. Gray was an architect until 1898, when he invented the Wonder grain grader. A later invention, an improved pressure cooker, was manufactured in Omaha. *Lincoln Star*, Jan. 20, 1927. William Gray Papers, MS252, Nebraska State Historical Society.

Hagensick, who had come to Lincoln in 1876, eventually went into real estate. He died in 1931. *Lincoln Star*, July 27, 1931.

²² Whitmore to Morton, Apr. 10, May 10, 1893, K. K. Hayden to Morton, Feb. 23, 1893, all Morton Papers. A. B. Hayes and Sam D. Cox, *History of the City of Lincoln, Nebraska* (Lincoln: State Journal Company, 1889), 365-68. At the time of his death in 1898 Hayden was still a national bank receiver in Lincoln. *NSJ*, July 14, 1898.

²³ *Lincoln Weekly News*, June 20, 1889; *NSJ*, May 27, 1897; Whitmore to Morton, July 10, 1893,

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Watkins to Morton, Nov. 14, 1893, both Morton Papers; Raymond E. Dale, comp., *Otoe County Pioneers, A Biographical Dictionary* 7 (Lincoln, 1964), 1945; Ella Fleishman Auerbach, "The Jewish Settlement in Nebraska" (Unpublished typescript, Nebraska State Historical Society, 1927), 125. Watkins's disapproval of Oppenheimer (and McLaughlin) may have stemmed from the fact that both had once sold liquor.

²⁴ Hayes and Cox, *History*, 379; *NSJ*, Oct. 20, 1885, Mar. 11, May 16, 1893; James C. Olson, *J. Sterling Morton* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1942), 321; Watkins to Morton, May 16, Nov. 24, 1893, Morton Papers.

²⁵ Sawyer to Morton, May 9, 1893, Morton Papers.

²⁶ Whitmore to Morton, May 10, 1893, Morton Papers.

²⁷ *NSJ*, May 25, 27, 28, 29, 31, June 2, 5, 7, 11, 18, 29, July 2, 1893.

²⁸ Ibid. Annin charged that anti-Morton Democrats, including Boyd, used Boyle and his attempt to unseat Crocker to embarrass Morton politically.

²⁹ Whitmore to Morton, July 10, Aug. 2, 1893, Morton Papers.

³⁰ *NSJ*, Aug. 6, Sept. 18, 1893; *Lincoln Daily Call*, Aug. 8, 1893.

³¹ *NSJ*, Oct. 8, 1893.

³² Tobias Castor to Morton, Oct. 18, 1893, Whitmore to Morton, Nov. 11, 1893, Watkins to Morton, Nov. 24, 1893, all Morton Papers.

³³ *Lincoln Star*, Mar. 16, 1912; Hayes and Cox, *City of Lincoln*, 177, 181; Addison E. Sheldon, *Nebraska the Land and the People* (Chicago/New York: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1931), 2:88; Alfred T. Andreas, comp., *History of the State of Nebraska* (1882; reprint, Evansville, Ind.: Unigraphic Inc., 1975), 985. Lincoln city directories from 1873 to 1885 listed McLaughlin as a saloon owner and/or liquor dealer; after 1888, he was listed in real estate. The *Lincoln Daily Call* of Feb. 10, 1890, noted him as an officer of the Lincoln branch of the Irish National League.

³⁴ Harwood and Sawyer to Morton, Dec. 2, 1893, Morton Papers. Harwood and Sawyer supposed that Calhoun might be persuaded to withdraw from the race with the offer of a lesser position and that President Cleveland would be willing to appoint him to such a job. Calhoun's refusal to withdraw or to accept any job other than that of postmaster helped wreck his chances. See *NSJ*, May 6, 1894, for Annin's postmortem on Calhoun's stubbornness.

³⁵ Watkins to Morton, Nov. 24, 1893, J. M. Burks

to Morton, Apr. 25, Dec. 5, 18, 1893, Whitmore to Morton, May 10, 1893, all Morton Papers. When Burks claimed a political reward for "40 years services" on April 25 he must have meant bipartisan services, for he had formerly been a Republican. Morton-Watkins, *History*, 3C:206; *NSJ*, Feb. 11, 1924.

³⁶ Sawyer to Morton, Mar. 18, 1893, Skinner to Morton, Jan. 12, 1894, both Morton Papers; *NSJ*, Dec. 7, 1892, Mar. 11, 19, Dec. 10, 1893, Feb. 8, 1895; Hayes and Cox, *City of Lincoln*, 168, 184, 349; *Portrait and Biographical Album of Lancaster County, Nebraska* (Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1888), 785-87; Andreas, *History of Nebraska*, 1079.

³⁷ Andreas, *History of Nebraska*, 1069; Watkins to Morton, Jan. 19, Mar. 20, 1894, George Skinner to Morton, Jan. 15, 1894, all Morton Papers; *Lincoln Call*, Dec. 22, 1893.

³⁸ Louis Stull to Morton, Nov. 17, 1893, Morton Papers. Stull noted, "[A]ny democratic gains in the city, have been, and will be owing to the better character of the candidates to draw intelligent and honorable republican support." Whitmore to Morton, Jan. 1, 1894, Morton Papers.

³⁹ *NSJ*, Dec. 7, 8, 10, 1893.

⁴⁰ Whitmore to Morton, Dec. 11, 1893, Morton Papers.

⁴¹ A. R. Mitchell to Morton, Dec. 5, 1893, Morton Papers. Schwab, Mitchell's father-in-law, was seeking a federal appointment, but had not applied specifically for the Lincoln postmaster's job. *NSJ*, Dec. 11, 16, 1893.

⁴² *NSJ*, Dec. 13, 14, 1893.

⁴³ Ibid., Dec. 16, 17, 1893.

⁴⁴ *Lincoln Call*, Dec. 17, 22, 1893.

⁴⁵ *NSJ*, Dec. 24, 1893. Lincoln financial broker Frank W. Lewis on December 15, 1893, wrote Morton that he had sent a "long list of clippings from the HERALD" to Postmaster General Bissell. It's possible that this refers to the fanned scrapbook, although Lewis does not mention in the letter to Morton that his clippings were sent in this form. Frank W. Lewis to Morton, Dec. 15, 1893, Morton Papers.

⁴⁶ *NSJ*, Dec. 31, 1893.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Jan. 4, 14, 16, 1894; Whitmore to Morton, Jan. 1, 1894, Morton Papers.

⁴⁸ Whitmore to Morton, Jan. 21, 1894, Skinner to Morton, Jan. 15, 1894, Watkins to Morton, Jan. 19, 21, 1894, all Morton Papers. *NSJ*, Jan. 19, 1894.

⁴⁹ *NSJ*, Jan. 22, 26, 1894; *Lincoln Weekly Call*, Jan. 26, 1894; *Lincoln Weekly News*, Feb. 1, 1894.

⁵⁰ *Lincoln Call*, Jan. 25, 1894; *NSJ*, Feb. 6, 1894; Whitmore to Morton, Jan. 21, 1894, Morton Papers.

⁵¹ *NSJ*, Feb. 9, 1894.

⁵² Ibid., Feb. 9, 1894. Whitmore essentially corroborated the *Journal* account, basing his private report to Morton on one by local Democrat Thomas S. Allen, Bryan's future brother-in-law. Whitmore to Morton, Feb. 10, 1894, Morton Papers. Allen was shortly afterward appointed Lincoln's assistant postmaster.

⁵³ *Omaha Evening Bee*, Feb. 8, 1894 (cited in *Lincoln Weekly News*, Feb. 15, 1894); *NSJ*, Feb. 9, 1894; Harwood to Morton, Feb. 10, 1894, Morton Papers.

⁵⁴ *Morning World-Herald*, Feb. 9, 1894; *NSJ*, Feb. 9, 11, 1894.

⁵⁵ *NSJ*, Feb. 9, 10, 1894; Harwood to Morton, Feb. 10, 1894, Morton Papers.

⁵⁶ *Lincoln Weekly Call*, Feb. 9, 28, 1894; *NSJ*, Mar. 18, 1894.

⁵⁷ Watkins to Morton, Mar. 20, Apr. 13, 1894, Morton Papers.

⁵⁸ *Saturday Morning Courier* (Lincoln), Feb. 24, 1894; *Beatrice Daily Express*, Feb. 10, 1893.

⁵⁹ *NSJ*, Mar. 16, 17, Apr. 3, 1894; Tobias Castor to Morton, Apr. 5, 1894, Morton Papers.

⁶⁰ Whitmore to Morton, Apr. 5, 1894, Castor to Morton, Aug. 6, 1894, both Morton Papers.

⁶¹ *NSJ*, Feb. 9, 14, 1894; see Apr. 19, 1893, for typical headline: "Many a Head Falls. Tobe Castor Swings an Ax With Lusty Vigor. Twenty-two New Nebraska Postmasters of Democratic Leanings."

⁶² Ibid., May 28, 1897, Apr. 5, 1902, May 6, 10, 1894; Gaster, "Journalist James D. Calhoun." The job as receiver of the Lincoln land office had been intended as a "consolation purse" for a loser in the post office fight. However, Calhoun had turned down in advance any job offer other than that of postmaster. Bryan nominated Morrison, who was accepted by Cleveland.

⁶³ *NSJ*, Feb. 8, 1895.

⁶⁴ *Lincoln Star*, Mar. 16, 1912.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Nov. 19, 1923.

⁶⁶ *NSJ*, Mar. 24, 1907, Mar. 24, 1914, Feb. 11, 1924; *Lincoln Star*, Dec. 5, 1942; Whitmore to Morton, Aug. 5, 1894, Morton Papers.

⁶⁷ Annin Undergraduate File; *Omaha Daily Bee*, Mar. 27, 1903; *NSJ*, Mar. 27, 1903.