1974

Henry Watterson--A Study of Selected Speeches on Reconciliation in the Post-Bellum Period.

George Christopher Wharton
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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HENRY WATTERSON--A STUDY OF SELECTED SPEECHES
ON RECONCILIATION IN THE POST-BELLUM PERIOD

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech

by

George Christopher Wharton
B.A., William Penn College, 1967
M.A., University of South Dakota, 1969
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this investigation is to analyze rhetorically selected speeches delivered by Watterson during the period following the American Civil War. Analysis is made of eight speeches which represent eight types of audiences and occasions and eight stages in the chronological development of Watterson's campaign for reconciliation.

The study discusses, first, the period from 1865 to 1877, when the themes of North-South reconciliation and Henry Watterson became inseparable; the unique position of Kentucky as a mediator between the North and South, and the events precedent to the election of President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1877. Second, the study examines Watterson's speech personality. Finally, the study gives in-depth treatment to the constituents of Watterson's speaking: (1) his audiences and occasions; (2) the immediate response to his speeches; (3) his logical, emotional, and ethical appeals; (4) his methods of organization; (5) his special stylistic devices. Since six of the eight speeches are adaptations to ceremonial situations, the study concentrates on the means Watterson used to intensify emotions and increase identification and unity among his listeners.

The study reveals that the three most important factors shaping Watterson's speech personality were (1) his childhood in Washington, D. C., (2) his father's passion for the oratory of com-
promise, and (3) Watterson's theory of rhetorical criticism. Watterson's editorships in Cincinnati and Nashville brought him national recognition for his conciliatory journalism. His editorship of the Louisville *Courier-Journal* placed him in Kentucky, a state with a unique history as a mediator of sectional controversy. By dealing effectively with post-bellum problems in Kentucky, Watterson solidified the local support he needed to expand his reconciliation efforts into national politics. As a Congressional spokesman for the Tilden forces in 1877, he spoke in favor of a compromise plan to settle the disputed Presidential election.

Watterson's two short Congressional speeches relied chiefly on appeals to safety and security for persuasive effect. His six remaining speeches used the things he had in common with his audiences to increase identification and to intensify the feelings of his listeners. His four most visible points of identification were (1) his presence, (2) the flag, (3) the audience, and (4) the physical setting.

The chief virtue which Watterson magnified was a conciliatory and magnanimous spirit. He also aroused feelings and sentiments of attachment, veneration, patriotism, pride, loyalty, courage, and magnificence. He repeatedly used stylistic devices to increase vividness and impressiveness. His speech organization varied.

This study shows that at the heart of Watterson's strategy of amplification was his reconciliation creed. The creed had two
consistent themes, parts of which he developed in each of his reconciliation speeches. These themes were the Puritan and Cavalier myth and the Christ myth. Both myths were used by other Southern orators. Unlike other orators, Watterson rejected the validity of the Puritan and Cavalier myth and substituted an "Anglo-Saxon, Scotch-Irish" ancestry for North and South alike. Watterson also used the Protestant, or Christ, myth as a point of unity. He compared the concept of sin in the Old and New Testament to slavery in the history of the United States. He used these two myths because their wide acceptance in both sections made them effective devices to heighten emotional acceptance of reconciliation.

During the time period of the eight speeches in this study, Watterson rose from a reputation as a partisan Southern journalist to one of great national prominence as a reconciliation speaker.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1947, in the Quarterly Journal of Speech, Dallas C. Dickey called for expanded research in Southern oratory: "There are opportunities in Southern oratory, as in all American public address, for research on outstanding speakers not yet studied. Only a beginning has been made." Dickey also felt that "general and specific periods and special events in Southern history are available for study by the oratorical critic."¹

Although many studies in Southern oratory have been completed since 1947, none has met the needs posed by Dickey with regard to Henry Watterson and the period of reconciliation in Southern history.

The historical importance of Watterson's speaking is well documented. Alben W. Barkley, in his introduction to Watterson's biography, Henry Watterson: Reconstructed Rebel, calls Watterson a "history maker. . . . The economic and social foundations were being laid for the development of a civilization not hitherto known on this planet. . . . Into this setting Henry Watterson not only fitted, he helped create the setting."² Barkley felt Watterson's most vital role as a


"history maker" was in effecting reconciliation.

During the years before and leading up to the War Between the States, Watterson was devoted to the Union and its preservation. He was opposed to secession. Yet he joined the Confederate Army and was identified with the southern cause until the day of Appomattox. This very condition enabled him to speak for and to the people of both sections. He took advantage of this to use his great talents for reconciliation between the North and the South.  

Other speakers also championed reconciliation in the post-bellum period. Henry Grady's "New South" speech has become identified closely with the New South movement. Grady is even mistakenly credited with originating the movement. Despite Grady's acknowledged influence, many of Watterson's contemporaries as well as later historians placed Watterson as the first Southerner of prominence to carry on the campaign for sectional reconciliation.

The Baltimore Sun gave Watterson this testimonial when he retired from the Courier-Journal in 1918:

A valorous Confederate soldier, he was the first prominent Southerner to realize that the North and South must learn to live together in peace and love, and to use his pen and voice to the attainment of that end.

O. O. Stealey, in the North American Review, placed Watterson

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3 Ibid., p. xi.


5 For a list of references placing Watterson first or among the first in reconciliation, see footnote 4, page 194, Lena C. Logan, "Henry Watterson, the Border-Nationalist," (unpublished Ph.D. diss., Department of History, Indiana State University, 1942).

6 Baltimore Sun, quoted in The Literary Digest, Vol. 58, August 31, 1918, p. 85.
first in reconciliation:

He might be called 'the great pacificator,' for he antedated all others, except General Grant, in his appeals for sectional reconciliation, accepting and describing the last amendments to the Constitution as, 'The Treaty of Peace between the North and South,' passing to and fro between the two hostile political camps preaching justice to the negroes by the people of the South and justice to the South by the people of the North, and preparing the field for such sowers as Lamar and Grady, who came long after, the one his close associate and friend, the other his professed pupil and disciple. 7

In the "History of the Grand Army of the Republic" contained in Sparks from the Camp Fire, Watterson is acknowledged as a reconciliation leader:

We regret that space will not permit us to quote more largely from the address of this eloquent Southerner, whose efforts and whose life have probably done as much as any other man toward healing the animosities engendered by the war, drawing together the sections of our torn country, and building up a new patriotism knowing no South, nor North, nor East, nor West. 8

Recent historians, beginning with Virginius Dabney in Liberalism in the South, C. Van Woodward in Reunion and Reaction, and Paul M. Gaston in The New South Creed, have attested Watterson's success as a leader of reconciliation. Richard M. Weaver, in The Southern Tradition at Bay, stressed Watterson's importance:

No man was more eagerly heard in all sections than Henry Watterson, editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal. . . . After thirty years of speech making, North and South, in which he strove as resolutely as anyone to bury sectionalism as a political force, he published his discourses as The Compromises of Life. 9

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Closely akin to the historical importance of Watterson's reconciliation speeches is their importance to the scholarship of public address. One or more of Watterson's reconciliation speeches may be found in numerous speech anthologies. In addition, many of these speeches have been used as speech models or as examples by authors of speech texts. These speech scholars have deemed Watterson's reconciliation speeches important enough to include in their writings.

Despite Watterson's importance in the fields of speech and history, no studies have specifically answered Dickey's challenge with regard to the orator Watterson and the post-bellum period.

**Contributory Studies**

Several studies precede this one and bear directly upon it. Eulalia Klingbeil completed "Henry Watterson: The Personal Journalist" in 1941 at Vanderbilt in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's degree in journalism. This study is devoted to Watterson, the journalist, and is distinguished by an extensive bibliography oriented toward journalism. Leonard N. Plummer, in a Ph.D. dissertation (Uni-

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versity of Wisconsin, 1940) entitled "The Political Leadership of Henry Watterson," gives a political scientist's overview of Watterson's career. Two history dissertations, Lena C. Logan's "Henry Watterson, Border Nationalist" (Indiana, 1942) and Joseph Wall's *Henry Watterson: Reconstructed Rebel* (Columbia, 1951), add a historical point of view. Wall's dissertation was published by Oxford University Press in 1956 and remains Watterson's most complete biography.

While many dissertations in speech have dealt with post-Civil War speakers, the only one relating directly to Watterson is Huber W. Ellingsworth's "Southern Reconciliation Orators in the North" (Florida State University, 1955). In addition to Watterson, this dissertation studied Wade Hampton, Fitzhugh Lee, and John Brown Gordon. Ellingsworth took an overview of all the speeches Watterson made, North and South.

The dissertation was limited in two respects. First, Ellingsworth failed to give an in-depth treatment to such factors as Watterson's background and training, the integrity of Watterson's ideas, and the effects of Watterson's speaking—including a definitive synthesis of Watterson and the reconciliation movement. Ellingsworth concentrated on four of Watterson's speeches. The treatment was merely a recitation of important ideas in the speeches rather than an analysis of the interrelationship of the constituents of the speaking situation: speaker, speech, audience, and occasion.

The second limitation of Ellingsworth's study was the brevity caused by dividing the dissertation among four orators. In all, not more than forty pages were devoted to Watterson. A man of Watterson's
rhetorical stature deserves a more extensive study.

**The Problem**

The purpose of this study is to analyze rhetorically selected speeches delivered by Watterson during the period following the American Civil War. Eight representative speeches have been chosen for inclusion in this study. The speeches in chronological order are (1) "Hayes-Tilden Controversy," 1877; (2) "Electoral Commission Decision," 1877; (3) "Memorial Day Address," 1877; (4) "The New South," 1883; (5) "The Puritan and the Cavalier," 1894; (6) "A Welcome to the Grand Army," 1895; (7) "Abraham Lincoln," 1901; (8) "The Confederate Dead," 1904.

These speeches not only represent eight different types of audiences and occasions but also represent eight stages in the chronological development of Watterson's campaign for reconciliation. The theme, North-South reconciliation, is the chief concern of the study. In analyzing specific speeches, the paramount question will be the strategy Watterson used to influence and control the direction of thought, North and South, toward post-bellum reconciliation. In regard to this overriding strategy, the study will give in-depth treatment to five constituents of Watterson's speaking: (1) Watterson's audiences and occasions; (2) immediate response to Watterson's speak-

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12 Watterson left an enormous fund of speeches. He made two or three lecture tours almost every year from 1877 to 1921. These tours were in addition to his purely political and ceremonial speaking career, which began February 22, 1870, with his eulogy of George Prentice, delivered before the Hall of Representatives at Frankfort, Kentucky.
ing; (3) logical, emotional, and ethical appeals; (4) methods of organization; (5) special stylistic devices. His first two speeches before the House of Representatives represent an adaptation to legislative speaking, in which Watterson's end was persuasion. His six remaining speeches are adaptations to ceremonial or epideictic speaking situations in which his end was to intensify the emotions and increase identification and unity among his listeners.

The study will conclude with an analysis and synthesis of Watterson's reconciliation strategy.

Summary

While scholars in other disciplines have studied Henry Watterson, none in speech has met the needs first posed by Dallas C. Dickey in regard to Henry Watterson and the period of reconciliation in Southern history. This study will build upon the established historical importance of Watterson's reconciliation speaking to explore the unique interrelationship of speaker, speech, audience and occasion that were Henry Watterson's domain from the marriage of man and movement in 1865, through the victory of Watterson's reconciliation creed in 1895, to the passing of creed into mythology in 1904.
A SETTING FOR RECONCILIATION

This chapter presents an overview of the period from 1865 to 1877 when the themes of North-South reconciliation and Henry Watterson became inseparable. The unique position of Kentucky as a mediator between the North and South is discussed as well as events precedent to the election of President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1877.

Henry Watterson in Cincinnati

In the spring of 1865 a three-time Confederate soldier,¹ Henry Watterson, found himself in exile in Cincinnati, Ohio. After the Civil War Watterson had hoped to return to Nashville, Tennessee, where his wife-to-be was living with her family. In Watterson's words: "As soon as Parson Brownlow who was governor of Tennessee and making things lively for the returning rebels would allow, I

¹Joseph F. Wall in Henry Watterson: Reconstructed Rebel (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 35-44, states that in August, 1861 Watterson was a staff officer with General Leonidas Polk, C.S.A. Illness forced Watterson to leave the army by late September. In February, 1862, after a turn at newspaper work, Watterson reenlisted with Colonel Nathan B. Forrest's cavalry. In June of 1862 Watterson bowed out again to become editor of the Chattanooga Rebel. In early 1864 after a series of newspaper editorships were cut short by the advancing Federal army, Watterson again joined General Joe Johnston's army as chief of scouts.
was going to Nashville."²

Watterson's uncle, a prominent judge named Stanley Matthews, found the twenty-five year old Watterson a job as a substitute amusement editor for the Cincinnati Evening Times. The Evening Times was considered an exponent of Radical Republicanism. There was much discussion in Cincinnati as to how the rebel Watterson could assume such a post. Less than two years before his joining the Evening Times, Watterson had been editor of the Chattanooga Rebel which was the unofficial voice of the Confederate army. In September, 1863, after he left the Rebel, Watterson in turn wrote for the Atlanta Confederacy, the Memphis Appeal, and the Montgomery Mail. All of these papers were highly sympathetic to the Southern cause. The rival Cincinnati Gazette editorialized a picture of a once gallant Confederate soldier reduced to a mongrel whining around a Radical newspaper for a crumb of support.³ Equally unkind was the Cincinnati Commercial which renamed Watterson's paper the "Chattanooga-Cincinnati-Rebel Evening Times."⁴ This latter insult caused Watterson to ask the editor of the Commercial, Maurat Halstead, for fairness to one who was "the merest bird of passage," and who intended to return to Tennessee as


⁴Ibid., p. 67.
soon as possible. Halstead and Watterson had a drink together and became lifelong friends.

On April 15, 1865, Watterson wrote one of the most unusual and most debated editorials of his career. The occasion for this black-bordered editorial was President Lincoln's assassination. The editorial, entitled "The Murder of the President," was on the one hand a vanguard of the Lincoln myth: "Abraham Lincoln was the facsimile of thorough manhood enshrined in God's own image. . . . He was an exemplification of the three crowning glories of the human soul—faithful, hopeful, charitable." On the other hand Watterson did not limit his description to Lincoln's virtues. What plunged Watterson into the pit of controversy was his placing the blame for Lincoln's death on Jefferson Davis. Watterson described the assassination as a deed "too horrible for human conceit or contemplation." "That it had its origin in the depths of the Rebel camp, that it was stipulated and paid for by Jefferson Davis and that it was perpetrated by his emissaries, we do believe as truly as we believe that God lives and governs the world."

While blaming Davis for everything was a common enough practice among Southerners at the time, Watterson's calumny against his former Commander-in-Chief was incongruous with the Watterson who

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5 Watterson, I, p. 164.

6 Ibid., p. 165.

7 Cincinnati Times, April 15, 1865.
had castigated Lincoln many times in the Rebel. In a later editorial in the Times entitled "The Guilty and the Innocent," Watterson once more advocated punishment of Southern leaders for treason. Watterson's recent biographer, Joseph Wall, explains this chameleon-like change as the result of the initial shock "that the South had lost its greatest champion in the North for a fair and easy reconciliation within the union." Another less laudable but still plausible explanation might be that Watterson kept himself as well-informed as possible about national events. Immediately after Lincoln's assassination any well-informed person might reasonably have concluded that Davis was guilty. This was simply the best information Watterson had at the time.

Whatever the reason for his reversal of loyalties, Watterson in "The Guilty and the Innocent" provided the genesis for a new myth about Southern war guilt. The myth stated that the people of the South were guilty of rebellion but not of treason. This was so because, according to Watterson, "The bodies of men influenced by sophistry and excitement ought not to be stigmatized with the deliberate infamy which applies to the cruel and selfish plotter against the peace of society." Thus the people of the South could not be guilty of treason because the only treason was that of Southern leaders who betrayed their people by leading them into war. In es-

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8 Ibid., June 3, 1865.

9 Wall, p. 53.

10 Cincinnati Times, June 3, 1865.
sence, Watterson was elaborating on the old adage that the Civil War was a rich man's war but a poor man's fight.

Watterson concluded the editorial with a plea for reconciliation based on expiation of Southern sin through the sacrifice of the Southern leadership:

The lesson of the New Testament teaches us the doctrine of peace, and the lessons of patriotism, found in the inspired words which fell from the lips of the fathers of the Republic, teach us nationality. We can have neither if we continue the war further beyond the arbitration of arms than the just punishment of capital and representative culprits.\(^\text{11}\)

This was Watterson's first attempt to interweave the myth of the guilt of Southern leaders with a plea for reconciliation. If the Southern leaders were punished, then reconciliation would be possible.

During his stay in Cincinnati Watterson had made the change from ex-Confederate soldier and Rebel newspaper editor to a eulogizer of Lincoln and a debunker of Southern leadership. He had linked the guilt of Southern leadership with Southern prospects for reconciliation. However, he waited until his arrival in Nashville to elaborate fully his creed of reconciliation.

\textbf{Watterson Arrives in Nashville}

Watterson longed for a return to Nashville and to his beloved Rebecca Ewing.\(^\text{12}\) He had considered Governor Brownlow a nemesis, but in truth Brownlow was a good friend of Henry's father, Harvey Watter-

\(^{11}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{12}\text{Watterson, I, p. 165.}\)
Brownlow had been much drawn to Harvey's pro-Union stand during the war. With Brownlow's approval Watterson returned to Nashville where two of his old boyhood friends, Albert Roberts and George Purvis, had revived the Nashville Republican Banner. Watterson became coeditor of the Banner and within one year the Republican Banner had reduced its five competitors to one. Henry shared in the good financial health of the paper and was able to marry Rebecca.

Watterson's first editorial in the Banner laid a basis for building a creed of reconciliation: "The words and acts of wise and politic men must be directed to a state of peace: and . . . the chief purpose of good men everywhere, whatever their party ties or their personal opinions, is the restoration of a perfect system of order and union." In his editorials Watterson not only presented the creed of reconciliation but also provided some concrete suggestions to accomplish reunion:

The Government is our friend, and the Northern people are not our enemies. We must get out of the habit of thinking that they are --a war habit, illy suited to the purposes of peace--a bad habit which we ought never to have acquired.

However, Watterson thought that before building a creed of reconciliation there was still some demythologizing to do concerning

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13Wall, p. 58.

14Ibid.

15Republican Banner, September 27, 1865.

16Ibid., October 11, 1865.
the old South: "Thirty years of misrepresentation brought on the war, four years of invective kept it going and now in the face of such experience men still live who are blind to the fact that violence is ruin." This was an extension of Watterson's Cincinnati editorials condemning Southern leadership.

Watterson was not alone among new South advocates in debunking the myth of the righteousness of the old South leadership. William Danrah (Pig Iron) Kelley, John W. Johnston, and Walter Hines Page were three new South advocates sharing Watterson's quarrel with a euphoric vision of the Southern past. It was not until the 1890's that the first revisionist historians began to emphasize the complexity of and demagoguery by Northern and Southern leadership in starting and continuing the Civil War.

One of Watterson's favorite persuasive tricks in his strategy of reconciliation creed making was the use of loaded words. Those who opposed reconciliation became "only the cowards on both sides—who did nothing whilst danger lasted—who never heard the whistle of a bullet or caught a breath of exploding saltpetre—fellows of little, mean and spiteful gizzards and no heart at all—one passionate now, noisy and

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17 Ibid., September 27, 1865.


narrow minded." Words like "patience," "a civil tongue," "industry," "integrity," "free," "upright," and "working people" were reserved for the reconciliator. This two-valued orientation was probably an effective persuasive technique. Given this polarization, the reader was left with little freedom to decide whether or not to join Watterson and the reconciliators.

Watterson's editorial policy of moderation and reconciliation was not going unnoticed nationally. Watterson was supplying such papers as Manton Marble's New York World and Horace Greeley's Tribune with his best editorial thoughts. These editorials were in turn quoted by the respective New York editors.

In the spring of 1866, Watterson found he could support neither national political party. The Republican party was rapidly becoming the Radical party of Thaddeus Stevens. The Democrats bore the double handicap of an association with Copperheadism in the North and its two-thirds rule which Watterson believed would always exclude a Stephen Douglas for a Franklin Pierce. In a letter to President Johnson, Watterson suggested a National Administration party which would have sectional reconciliation as an objective. While Watterson's party was never to be, he had little time to contemplate its failure. By the summer of 1866, Watterson and his new bride of five months were off to Europe for a look at England and the Continent. Watterson returned

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20 Republican Banner, October 8, 1865; September 27, 1865.

21 Wall, p. 64.

22 Ibid., pp. 63-64.
to the United States in December of 1866 to find that Congressional reconstruction was about to begin.  

In Tennessee Watterson had advanced the evolution of his reconciliation creed by working out a way for Southern leadership to be sacrificed to promote sectional conciliation. In Nashville he introduced the use of loaded words as a persuasive technique. For the first time Watterson also gained a national audience for his reconciliation efforts.

Watterson Goes to Kentucky

Had Watterson been content to stay in middle Tennessee with its pro-South sentiment or in Cincinnati with its face to the North, he might never have become the champion of reconciliation that he did. As fate would have it, the spring of 1868 brought an offer from Isham Henderson, the major stockholder of the Louisville Journal, to become its editor. Prior to the Civil War, under the editorship of George Prentice, the Journal had become the major paper west of the Alleghenies.  

Prentice was seventy and in failing health.  Watterson accepted the position and headed North on the Louisville and Nashville railroad for the state that was to be his new home for the next fifty-three years. How successful Watterson was to be in Kentucky depended in large part on Kentucky's great tradition of recon-

23Wall, p. 68.

24Ibid., p. 89.

25Watterson, I, p. 169.
ciliation thinking. This tradition began long before the Civil War.

In *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, E. Merton Coulter found that Henry Clay "for almost fifty years moulded the composite mind of the state with such complete mastery as has, perhaps, never been equalled in any American State."[^26] What Clay said in his famous speech in the Senate, February 14, 1850, was said on behalf of all Kentuckians. Senator Henry S. Foote of Mississippi had lectured Clay on what his Southern allegiance should be as a representative of a Southern slave state. Clay replied:

> Sir, I have heard something said on this and on a former occasion about allegiance to the South. I know no South, no North, no East, no West, to which I owe any allegiance. I owe allegiance to two sovereignties and only two: one is to the sovereignty of this Union and the other is to the sovereignty of the State of Kentucky. My allegiance is to this American Union and to my own State. But if gentlemen suppose that they can extract from me an acknowledgment of allegiance to any ideal or future contemplated confederacy of the South, I here declare that I owe no allegiance to it, nor will I for one, come under any such allegiance if I can avoid it.[^27]

John J. Crittenden succeeded Clay in keeping the banner of Union flying. When Kentucky at first professed neutrality, according to James G. Blaine in his autobiography, it was Crittenden who "more than . . . any other man saved Kentucky from rebellion."[^28] Together, these two men exemplified the spirit of Kentucky before the Civil War.


Perhaps the best way to explain the Unionist strength in Kentucky is to examine Kentucky's stake in the issues dividing North and South prior to the Civil War. On the major issue of slavery, Coulter found that by 1860 "slavery was thus in reality relatively dying out." Only about 4.0 per cent of Kentuckians were slave owners in 1860, and every year since 1830 the proportion of slave owners to non-slave owners had decreased. In respect to preponderance of economic trade, origin of population, and geographical access, namely the Mississippi River, Kentucky was part of the South. 29 But due to increased trade with the East and North after 1830 and a military geography which made it easier to defend against a Southern rather than a Northern enemy, Kentuckians became more strongly allied with the North. As with any state citizens caught between two opposite sectional forces, Kentuckians wanted Union most. In the Presidential election of 1860 Kentucky turned her back on two favorite sons, Abraham Lincoln and John C. Breckinridge, to vote for John Bell of Tennessee of the Constitutional Union Party. 30 Perhaps no action of the Kentucky legislature expressed the wishes of the people more than the neutrality resolutions which were passed on May 24, 1861. 31

Needless to say, Kentucky was unable to maintain this neutrality as she was invaded from the South and occupied from the North. John J. Crittenden's family personified the fate of compromise when one

29Coulter, pp. 5-9.


31Coulter, p. 56.
of Crittenden's sons became a Union general and the other a Confederate general. In *Kentucky: Land of Contrast*, Thomas D. Clark reinforces the idea that the undertakers were the only victors in the war: "Approximately half of the Kentuckians who reached manhood during the decade 1850-1860 were either destroyed or disabled by the War." Clark finds the idea somewhat repugnant that one hundred years later men should dress up "like sleek overfed Union and Confederate soldiers playing at battle rather than thinking in the grisly terms of 30,000 Kentuckians whose lives had been snuffed out."

Since Louisville was occupied for four years by Federal troops, it was perhaps fortunate that a great mass of the people were pro-Union during the Civil War. Robert E. McDowell in his *City of Conflict* goes so far as to call Louisville the "heart of Unionist sentiment within the border states." McDowell finds that the seat of this sentiment was economic.

Louisville had a strategic location on the river trade route between Ohio and New Orleans. Louisville was situated just above a series of rapids in the Ohio River. There were three phases of capitalization on Louisville's geographic position. Before a canal was built, Louisville profited as a transfer point for cargo bound across

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33 Clark, p. 143.

34 Ibid.

the rapids. After a canal was built, exorbitant tolls were exacted. When Cincinnati built a railroad to Louisville, Louisville built the Louisville and Nashville Railroad to Nashville. Not only was this a different gage railroad than the one to Cincinnati necessitating freight transfer, but the L. and N. bridge across the Ohio was so low that it seriously impeded river traffic and forced shippers to use the L. and N. as a Southern trade route. During the war Louisville was very important as a marshalling area for Union supplies. From Louisville military supplies were shipped southward over the L. and N. to such an extent that profits for the railroad doubled to over two million dollars in the two years between 1862 and 1864.36

By the end of the war the same Federal army which had brought economic prosperity during the war became an army on the rampage. Robberies, murders, and mayhem were becoming common as front-line troops returned to be mustered out. Two waves of homeless ex-slaves descended upon the city, bringing with them the epidemics common to great numbers of people who lack food, sanitation, and medical facilities. The Louisville Journal asked: "What great sin has Louisville been guilty of that she must be thus fearfully punished?"37

Although Appomattox brought rejoicing to Kentuckians as a whole, three events were to lead to disharmony which caused the historian Coulter to note: "It was often remarked that she waited until


37Louisville Journal, quoted in McDowell, pp. 200-02.
after the war was over to secede. The three events were the ratification of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments which gave the slave freedom, citizenship, and suffrage; the capture of the Democratic party by Confederate sympathizers and their subsequent election victories in 1866; and the Freedmen's Bureau and its relations with the people. These three factors were very much issues of the day when Henry Watterson arrived in Louisville in 1868.

It was because of Kentucky's unique history on sectional controversy and because of Louisville's unique location as a trade nexus between North and South that Watterson was to find such a receptive audience for his reconciliation message. His success, however, in advocating this reconciliation creed would depend on a favorable climate for reunion. Such a favorable climate could only come about if Watterson were able to solve effectively the three most disquieting political problems in post-war Kentucky.

38 Coulter, p. 257; p. 439.


40 Thomas L. Connelly in "Neo-Confederatism or Power Vacuum: Post-War Kentucky Politics Reappraised," The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, LXIV, No. 4 (October, 1966), 257-269, has taken a different view of post-Civil War issues:

Thus the issues of the late 1860's and the 1870's were not between parties or between the two supposed sections of the Democrat party. Instead the state's power vacuum was contested by numerous geographical-economic interest groups. . . . Perhaps neo-Confederatism was a weapon and not a combatant in the post-war commercial struggle in Kentucky.
Watterson in Louisville

The Journal, Watterson's new editorial home, had a long and illustrious history. Begun in 1830 as the Daily Journal under the editorship of George Prentice, a transplanted Connecticut Whig, the Journal by 1832 was the most widely read paper in the state. In 1860 Prentice in his editorials helped pave the way for the Constitutional Union party victory in Kentucky. When Watterson arrived in Louisville, he found Prentice "a dirty unkempt old man living in the back room of the Journal office." Prentice, unhappy about the Emancipation Proclamation, had supported McClellan in 1864. With his wife and eldest son dead, Prentice looked to Watterson like the "stream had passed him by." Watterson took over the paper and the circulation jumped from 1,800 daily to 10,000 and from 1,500 to 50,000 for the weekly edition. Upon coming to Louisville, Watterson's old friend from Rebel days, Walter N. Haldeman, had offered Watterson a job on his paper, the Louisville Courier. Watterson counterproposed a merger of the Courier with the Journal. It was not until October that a chance meeting between Watterson and Haldeman resulted in the final consolidation of the two papers which became the Courier-Journal.

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41 Wall, pp. 77-79.
42 Watterson, I, 169.
43 Wall, p. 83.
44 Watterson, I, pp. 169-70.
The first problem confronting Watterson in his new editorship of the Courier-Journal was the result of the 1867 elections. In the special Congressional election held May 4, the rebel Democrats won nine Congressional seats by such handsome margins that one Radical stated:

Kentucky is today as effectually in the hands of the rebels as if they had every town and city garrisoned by their troops. . . . What is to become of the poor blacks and loyal white men God only knows.45

Where others saw conflict, Watterson saw opportunity for reconciliation. Watterson advocated making Kentucky government a test in Southern self-government. If the pro-South Democrats could keep cool in the face of Radical repression, then Kentucky could show the moderate men of the North that the South could indeed be trusted with self-government.46

In what ways were the Democrats to prove themselves? To Watterson the greatest show of Democrat magnanimity could be directed toward the Negro.47 The Freedmen's Bureau48 had been extended to Kentucky in December 26, 1865. It was established to protect the newly freed blacks and exercised judicial functions with the power

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45Cincinnati Commercial, May 13, 1867, quoted in Coulter, p. 323.
46Wall, p. 91.
47Ibid.
48For the genesis of the meaning of the Freedmen's Bureau as an aspect of reconstruction, see Vernon L. Wharton, "Reconstruction," Writing Southern History: Essays in Historiography in Honor of Fletcher M. Green, eds. Arthur S. Link and Rembert W. Patrick (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), pp. 295-315.
of the Federal army to enforce its directives.\textsuperscript{49} Watterson had de-
tested slavery but did not believe the freed slave had the political
education necessary to exercise the franchise. Watterson was against
universal suffrage, black or white. His editorial in the Nashville
\textbf{Republican Banner} describing the freedman as "incapable of exercising
the duties of political equality."\textsuperscript{50} was one expression of his aversion
to universal suffrage, not an aversion to human equality. By 1868,
Watterson was urging the South to accept the Fourteenth and Fifteenth
Amendments to the Constitution which gave the Negro citizenship and
the franchise in order to gain reconciliation with the rest of the
country.\textsuperscript{51} This was a victory of the public minded Watterson over
his private sentiments which probably remained opposed to universal
franchise.

The period 1867-69 was a time of great lawlessness in Ken-
tucky. Coulter describes the situation:

Where apprehension was uncertain, and wrongs fancied and real,
private and public, seemed to need righting, individuals and
bands were certain to spring up to perform the task. Calling
themselves 'Regulators,' 'Rowzee's Band,' 'Skagg's Men,' and
various other names, bands of men set about a veritable reign

\textsuperscript{49}Coulter, p. 341.

\textsuperscript{50}\textbf{Republican Banner}, October 15, 1865.

\textsuperscript{51}Wall, p. 42. T. Harry Williams in \textit{Romance and Realism in
Southern Politics} (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 1961), p. 19,
has suggested a most intriguing interpretation of the reticence of the
South to integrate the freed slave into post-bellum society. Williams
feels that the South was not so much against integration as it was
against change. In this light, Watterson's greatest problem was advo-
cating change in a society addicted to the status quo.
of terror in various parts of the state. 52

At great personal risk Watterson publicly attacked the Regulators or Ku Klux Klan as they were sometimes known:

The desperado who, calling himself a Ku Klux, puts on a mask and mounts a horse at midnight to prowl about after the weak and unprotected is merely a brutal assassin, without one solitary picturesque or dramatic quality. He is an enemy of his race, a foe to society, a cruel monster who should be shot down in his tracks like any other wild animal. 53

One of the great obstacles to punishing the Regulators was that Negro testimony could not be admitted into a state court against a white man. Watterson also took a strong stand on this issue at great danger to himself. He finally was able to have Negro testimony admitted to court but not before "a generation of politicians were sent to the rear." 54

During this period Watterson began to answer threats to his safety with his famous statement that "I might not be able to hit a barn door at ten paces, but could shoot with any man in Kentucky across a pocket handkerchief, holding myself at all times answerable and accessible." 55 No one accepted his offer.

In summary, Watterson was able to deal effectively with the three great issues of Kentucky politics by appealing to the reconciliation instincts of the Kentucky section. Such success with the rec-

52Coulter, p. 359.

53Courier-Journal, March 1, 1871.

54Watterson, I, 178.

55Ibid.
conciliation creed on a state level gave Watterson a firm base for expansion into the national political arena.

**Watterson the Politician**

Watterson had decided by 1871 that conflict barring reconciliation could not be completely resolved as long as the politicians North and South could wave "the bloody shirt" in order to get votes. "What cared the professional agitator so his appeals to passion brought him his audience." 56

Watterson's answer to "bloody shirt oratory" was not counter-oratory but new oratory. The new orators were to come from the ranks of Liberal Republicans and conciliatory Democrats who joined forces to back Horace Greeley for President in 1872. "The logic of events was at length subduing the rodomontade of soap-box oratory. Empty rant was to yield to reason." 57

In May of 1872, a Liberal Republican convention assembled in Cincinnati, Ohio. The purpose of the convention was to unite the disaffected of the party in an attempt to prevent the reelection of President Ulysses S. Grant. However, the keynote speaker at the convention, Carl Schurz, felt a "beat Grant" label was demeaning to a convention assembled to secure a political regeneration of the Repub-


57 *Watterson, I*, 185.
lican party. Whatever the motives of the others convened, Watterson went to the convention with one thought in mind: a new nexus to reconciliation. In an editorial on April 3, 1872, Watterson had hinted in metaphorical language that a "New Departure Democrat" by any other name might be a "Liberal Republican." Up until convention time, Watterson still had doubts about intermingling his political ambitions with Republicans who, while of possible use to his reconciliation cause, were "not the men I had trained with, not my crowd."

Once at the convention, however, Watterson shed his guise of a Democrat journalist reporting on a Republican conclave and became the convention politician. He immediately attached himself to Horace White of the Chicago Tribune, Murat Halstead of the Cincinnati Commercial, and Sam Bowles of the Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican. The four men called themselves the "Quadrilateral" after the four impregnable fortress towns in the Italian Alps. Together they set out to protect the noble purposes of the convention from possible partisan adulteration. The Quadrilateral resolved to limit the Presidential nominations to either Charles Francis Adams or Lyman Trumbull.

Three years before the convention in 1869, Whitelaw Reid, an

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60 Watterson, I, 242.

61 Wall, p. 103.

62 Watterson, I, 243.
editor of the New York Tribune, had invited Watterson to dinner at Delmonico's. This was Watterson's introduction to New York society and he would not soon forget the favor. When Watterson and Reid met again at the convention, Reid asked Watterson to be included in the Quadrilateral. The other Quadrilateral members were against Reid's admission because Reid was only an agent of Horace Greeley, editor-in-chief of the Tribune, who was known to have political aspirations. Watterson pointed out that any nationally successful candidate would have to have the powerful Tribune behind him. Greeley was also thought to have no real chance for the nomination. Upon Watterson's entreaties Reid was admitted to the Quadrilateral.

The Quadrilateral quickly killed the Presidential prospects of Supreme Court Justice David Davis by exposing him as a "politician." This victory came so easily that the Quadrilateral became overconfident. One night while Watterson had gone across the Ohio River for some merriment, Reid made a deal with Governor Gratz Brown of Missouri. Before Watterson could return, the convention had nominated Greeley for President and Brown for Vice-President. Brown had thrown his support to Greeley, and the engineered stampede to Greeley that followed pushed aside the Presidential hopes of the

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63 Wall, p. 98.

64 Watterson, I, 243.

65 Ibid., p. 104.
Watterson, disappointed as he was, now turned all his editorial fury to secure the Democratic party's acceptance of Greeley. In his Editorials of Henry Watterson, Arthur Krock captures the spirit of Watterson's work for Greeley in three of Watterson's pro-Greeley editorials. The first editorial on May 17, 1872, shortly after Greeley was nominated, appealed to the South and the Democratic party as a whole. To the South, Watterson commended the line from the Liberal Republican platform which stated that Grant and his partisans "keep alive the passions and resentments of the late Civil War, that they may use them for their private ends." Greeley would restore peace to the South. Watterson tantalized the Democratic party as a whole with the prospect that the party could once again become national and victorious whereas the Republicans would be "past reconciling." Watterson's first editorial envisioned a national Democratic party uniting the sections in victory.

Grant was renominated by the Regular Republican party on June 5, 1872. Watterson now phrased his second editorial message using two-valued orientation. The people could either take Grant, "an iron-hearted, wooden-headed nutmeg, warranted to kill," or they could vote

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66 Ibid., p. 104.
68 Ibid., p. 36.
69 Wall, p. 111.
for Greeley. Watterson wrote that: "The rank old partyism of by-gone
times receives the deepest of gashes from the ascendancy of that Lib­
eralism which, defying antecedents and prejudices, takes Horace Greeley
as its sign and leader." Watterson gave his readers a choice between
Grant and "Liberalism." Watterson made it clear that "Liberalism"
transcended mere opposition to Radical reconstruction policy. It was
a "Liberalism" best defined by Greeley when he accepted the Liberal
Republican nomination: "I accept your nomination, in the confident
trust that the masses of our countrymen North and South are eager to
clasp hands across the bloody chasm which has too long divided them,
forgetting that they have been enemies in the joyous consciousness
that they are and must henceforth remain brethren." In other words,
Watterson saw in Greeley's "Liberalism" a positive clasping of hands
"across the bloody chasm" rather than just a negative reaction to
President Grant and his policies. Grant was a natural candidate for
the reconciliation creed.

The third representative campaign editorial appeared on July
3, 1872. In this editorial Watterson attacked those who waved the
"bloody shirt." In this editorial it was not the Northern shirt
which was bloody. He attached Robert Toombs and Alexander Stephens
with great venom. Watterson said the South needed "moral emancipa-


71Ulysses S. Grant, quoted in Ross, p. 175.
tion" or "moral enfranchisement" even more than legal emancipation which even Grant would bestow. "Moral enfranchisement" meant that the South must divest itself of Bourbon "bombast and venom" and gain an "identity with things national."\textsuperscript{72} Watterson felt it the greatest of folly for Southerners like Toombs and Stephens to wave the same stained shirt as their Radical brethren in the North. With this editorial Watterson extended his reconciliation creed to include a revolt against the Bourbon agitators.

Less than a month before election day, the issue of reconciliation had become a focal point of controversy. The pro-Grant Harper's Weekly magazine felt compelled to reply to Horace Greeley's Western speech which advocated reconciliation and reform. The article first asked: "What is meant by reconciliation?" The answer was couched in three rather disjointed lines of analysis. First, the article asserted that Greeley had not defined reconciliation so how could his listeners know that they did not already have reconciliation? Second, the article averred that reconciliation to the South was a code word for the denial of civil rights to blacks. Third, the article advanced Charles Sumner's theory that reconciliation meant removal of President Grant, the symbol of Southern defeat. This would mean that the South was now trying to win with deceit what they could not accomplish with honor on the battlefield. The Harper's article concluded that "'reconciliation' [meant] Democratic supremacy."\textsuperscript{73} Whatever else the cry of reconcilia-

\textsuperscript{72}Krock, pp. 39-41.

\textsuperscript{73}"The Cry of 'Reconciliation,'" Harper's Weekly, XVI (October 19, 1872), 602.
tion meant, it was not to be the slogan for a Democratic victory.

By mid-October the vote was beginning to come in and the Presidential hopes of Greeley were extinguished. Greeley died shortly after his defeat. Watterson saw Greeley's death as a martyrdom to the reconciliation creed: "His martyrdom shortened the distance across the bloody chasm; his coffin very nearly filled it." 74

In the period through 1872, Watterson gave additional meaning to the reconciliation creed by injecting reconciliation into partisan politics. Reconciliation now meant a victory for New Departure Democrats over Bourbonism, a victory for Liberal Republicanism over Grantism, and a Presidential victory for Horace Greeley over Ulysses S. Grant in the election of 1872. When these three events failed to occur, Watterson had to reappraise his reconciliation strategy.

Watterson and the Election of 1876

On May 10, 1873, Watterson and his family left for Europe. The trip was not so much an escape from Watterson's disappointment over the failure of "New Departure" politics as it was a fulfillment of Watterson's European social ambitions. Watterson continued to write dispatches for the Courier-Journal but instead of politics Watterson now discoursed on night life in France. When Watterson returned to the United States in the fall of 1873, it was to a very somber country. The post-war boom had failed and an economic depression was in full swing. Conditions might have been bad enough

74Watterson, I, 263; pp. 118-19.
but the local clergy in Louisville had misconstrued Watterson's European letters as evidence of drinking and gambling excess and were using their pulpits to create the myth of Watterson, the reprobate. Watterson won over the ministry by publishing more clergy notices in the *Courier-Journal* but the financial plight of the country was not so easily solved.

Watterson's part in the Congressional campaign of 1874 opened with his version of "A Plague on Both your Houses." The economic tensions of depression had caused both the major parties to split once again along sectional lines. Watterson chastised Democrats and Republicans alike, but saved special attention for the Democrats. When criticized for disloyalty to party, Watterson retorted:

> Things have come to a hell of a pass  
> When a man can't wallop his own jackass.  

Levity would not ease the financial plight of the South and Watterson turned from "jackass walloping" to a new strategy.

After many editorials warning of the dangers of a third term for Grant, Watterson suddenly proposed Grant as a possible savior of North and South. When pressed on the matter, Watterson recanted and by September was again opposed to a third term. Historian Lena Logan found that this sort of inconsistency on Watterson's part helped

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75Wall, pp. 116-21.  
76*Courier-Journal*, September 16, 1874.  
77Watterson, quoted in Logan, p. 329.  
78*Courier-Journal*, July 28, 1874.
obscure "his influence for sectional reconciliation." 79

In spite of Watterson's vacillation, economics defeated many incumbent Republicans and Democrats won a majority in the House of Representatives for the first time since the Civil War. 80 Watterson, in characteristic fashion, editorialized that nationalism as well as the Democrats had won a victory: "The election of a national Congress by a national party will be one beginning of a national revival such as was never experienced by any country after a civil war." 81

Democratic victory was only a few days old when Watterson first mentioned his old friend, Governor Samuel J. Tilden of New York, as a possible Democratic Presidential nominee. 82 Watterson had known Tilden since the Democratic convention in Baltimore in 1860 and had renewed his acquaintance after the war at the Manhattan Club in New York. 83 Watterson was principally attracted to Tilden by Tilden's "sound money" philosophy, his overthrow of the Tweed Ring in New York City, and his success as a Democratic politician in New York state. 84 No doubt also attractive was Tilden's great personal fortune which could have helped the party cause. Tilden, however, was to contribute

79Logan, pp. 335-36.
80Wall, p. 123.
81Courier-Journal, November 3, 1874.
82Ibid., November 5, 1874.
83Logan, p. 368.
84Watterson, I, 287.
hardly a dime of his own money, preferring instead to rely on funds his friends donated through him to the Democratic National Committee.  

Although he extolled Tilden in his autobiography as a paragon of political virtue, Watterson perhaps better expressed his true feelings on the man in his article in *Century Magazine*, written almost six years earlier. Watterson wrote that Tilden's greatest void "was the touch of the dramatic discoverable in most of the leaders of men: even in such leaders as William of Orange and Louis the XI, as Cromwell and Washington." Because Watterson felt this way about Tilden, he tried to supply some of the missing drama to the campaign himself.

Watterson saw his first task was to get Tilden nominated. His first editorial in the Tilden campaign was addressed to the South. He warned the South not to push the sectional question but to vote for a man who could secure the North. The South "should go to St. Louis resolved to see things as they are in the North, our political battleground, and to act in accordance thereto." To make sure the South would go to the Democratic convention in St. Louis and act on his advice, Watterson set about recruiting Kentucky Democrats to provide Southern leadership.

At the Kentucky state convention held on May 25, 1876, Watterson-

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85 Wall, p. 135

86 Watterson, I, pp. 284-85.


88 *Courier-Journal*, April 25, 1876.
son was elected a delegate-at-large. Watterson immediately perceived that "hard money" was not going to be an easy commodity to sell his fellow delegates. He wrote Tilden that he believed two-thirds of the delegates were for Tilden but discretion dictated that the "hard money question" was best postponed. 89

When Watterson arrived in St. Louis at the convention, he called a caucus of the Kentucky delegates which was to last for five hours. The New York Tribune credited a speech by Watterson with molding the entire delegation into a solid Tilden block by the end of the caucus. 90 Ballard Smith, writing in Harper's Weekly eleven years later, gave this description:

The majority of the Kentucky delegation was opposed to the nomination of Mr. Tilden to whose interests Mr. Watterson was warmly attached. The other Southern delegations held back, awaiting the action of Kentucky. There was, the day before the Convention met, an excited meeting of the Kentucky delegation. It can be stated of my personal knowledge that except for Mr. Watterson's efforts and appeal, the delegation would have voted for the nomination of General Hancock and the other Southern States would have followed its example, and that General Hancock in all probability would have been the nominee in 1876 instead of Mr. Tilden. 91

Turning the Kentucky delegation to Tilden's favor was only the beginning of Watterson's work at the convention. A Tammany group was sponsoring S. S. Cox as temporary chairman of the convention to checkmate the Tilden efforts. Reluctantly Watterson agreed to accept the

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89Wall, p. 129.

90New York Tribune, June 27, 1876.

chair to keep Cox from getting it.\footnote{Wall, p. 132.}

It was the job of the temporary chairman not only to make parliamentary rulings but also to give the keynote speech. Having only one evening to prepare his speech, Watterson was brief in his remarks. He not only indulged in the usual Democratic ceremonial strategy of recalling the pantheon of heroes--Clay, Jackson, and Webster--to inspire his listeners but also made an unorthodox attack on his own party. The problems besetting the nation were two: "Partisan misrule and sectional misdirection."

The Republicans, my friends, are not alone responsible. With them rests the disgrace; with us the folly. These twin agents of national mischance, working under the miserable rule of contraries, have kept the people of the North and South asunder and have supplied sustenance to corruption.\footnote{Official Proceedings of the National Democratic Convention (St. Louis: Woodward, Tierman and Hale, 1876), pp. 20-21.}

Watterson seemed to revert to his third party philosophy by exposing the inadequacies of Republican and Democrat to reconcile their country.

After elation over his first formal speech before a national audience had passed, Watterson began using his parliamentary advantage to help Tilden's cause. In Watterson's words, "never before or since did any deliberate body proceed under manual so startling and original."\footnote{Watterson, I, 290.} After surviving a threat of duel and other opposition tactics, Watterson was able to announce Tilden's nomination on the second bal-
On the night of July 5, a grand ratification meeting for Kentucky and Indiana Democrats was held at the courthouse in Louisville. Among the three speakers addressing the crowd simultaneously was Watterson speaking on his favorite theme of reconciliation. He appealed to all the sections to link together to form a new Union— "the union of sectional fellowship working out the problem of national reform."96

Office holding had never had much appeal for Watterson. When the Congressman from Louisville died in office, Watterson saw an opportunity to lend the stature of public office to his speech making for Tilden. In addition, in Watterson's words, "after a long uphill fight for personal and political recognition in Kentucky, an election put a kind of seal upon the victory I had won and enabled me in a way to triumph over my enemies."97 Between July 15 and the special election day on August 7, Watterson delivered as many speeches as time permitted, seven of which were reported in the Louisville Courier-Journal. The subject matter depended on the occasion. Reconciliation was stressed only once at La Grange, Kentucky.98 Watterson complimented the sophistication of his audience at La Grange by appealing to their highest motives. Although he knew that citizens of La Grange had had Confederate loyalties, Watterson still declared that "the

95Wall, p. 133.
96Courier-Journal, July 6, 1876.
97Watterson, II, pp. 21-22.
98Logan, p. 410.
people of the South are precisely like the people of the North, no
better and no worse." 99

Watterson was elected on August 7 and was sworn in before the
Congressional session ended. 100 From Washington, Watterson went to
New York to confer with Tilden and his managers. After a month of
political glad-handing, Watterson returned to Louisville only to set
out again on a speaking tour of northern Kentucky, southern Indiana,
and Ohio. 101 On this tour Watterson made several speeches, stressing
the reconciliation creed. Watterson also spoke on sectional under­
standing at Cooper Union in New York during September. 102 Since the
Republican candidate, Rutherford B. Hayes, had a reputation for hon­
esty to equal Tilden's, the only real issues of the campaign were a
revival of the bloody shirt by the Republicans and a rehashing of
"Grantism" by the Democrats. Watterson rose above such mudslinging
with repeated pleas for conciliation. By the end of the campaign,
however, "reconciliation" must have become suspect to the more astute
voter as a code word for a Tilden victory.

On November 6, the day before the election, Watterson pub­
lished an editorial far more clairvoyant than he had intended. Prob­
ably intended only as a parting slap at the Republicans, Watterson

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99 Courier-Journal, July 29, 1876.

100 Logan, p. 413.

101 Wall, pp. 135-36.

102 Logan, pp. 423-27.
predicted that in case of a victory for Tilden, the Republicans would try to inaugurate Hayes anyway. The jubilation over, the apparent Democratic victory the next day probably caused even Watterson himself to allay his fears of Republican election theft.

The circumstance that turned an apparent Tilden victory into a certain Tilden defeat was at the very least subject to a wide latitude of interpretation. On some aspects, however, there seems to be general agreement.

In the face of early returns showing a probable Tilden victory, William E. Chandler of New Hampshire and John C. Reid, managing editor of the Republican New York Times, woke Zach Chandler, national Republican chairman, to get permission to wire Republican officials in Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida to try to hold the states for Hayes. Without these states Tilden would have been short of victory and with these states Hayes would have won.

103 *Courier-Journal*, November 6, 1876.

104 Watterson asserted in "The Hayes-Tilden Contest for the Presidency," *Century Magazine*, LXXXVI (May, 1913), p. 3, that "the whole truth underlying the determinate incidents which led to the rejection of Tilden and the seating of Hayes will never be known." C. Vann Woodward, in *Reunion and Reaction: the Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951), p. 6, makes Watterson's statement the challenge of his book. Unfortunately, Vann Woodward, in retelling the incidents of the Hayes-Tilden controversy, fails to give adequate attention to Watterson's role in the affair. This may be in part due to Vann Woodward's preoccupation with the economic determinants of the dispute. There is little evidence to indicate that Watterson's role in the dispute was economically motivated.

105 Woodward, p. 17.
On the day after the election, the first edition of the *New York Times* left the election in doubt. Later that day the *Times* substituted editorials for one announcing the election of Hayes. Senator Chandler issued a message announcing Hayes's victory. Watterson, unwilling to so easily admit defeat, wired Tilden to personally confer with Hayes. Hayes and Tilden should then "unite upon a committee of eminent citizens composed in equal numbers of the friends of each, who should proceed at once to Louisiana, which appeared to be the objective point of greatest moment to the already contested result."\(^{106}\)

Had Tilden done as Watterson suggested at this point, he might have become President. Hayes, being an honest man, would have had no desire to give his name to the type of scheme his supporters had concocted. Tilden delayed any action, and Hayes soon became convinced by his advisors that he had won honorably. Tilden did adopt a unilateral "visiting statesmen" plan for Louisiana. However, with Democrats and Republicans sent to watch each other, there was no chance of bipartisan agreement except on the untrustworthiness of their opposites.\(^{107}\) Had Tilden gone to Hayes initially, the outcome could have been different.

Without waiting, Watterson departed for New Orleans. The Louisiana Returning Board was composed of four Republicans. For a price Watterson was offered the services of one or more of this board

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\(^{106}\) Watterson, I, pp. 294-96.

\(^{107}\) Wall, p. 141.
on various occasions. A "well-known State Senator" offered the whole board to Watterson for Tilden for $250,000. Watterson, in characteristic fashion, took the whole thing as a joke. 108

Watterson stayed in New Orleans until November 17, and continued to wire Tilden, urging a meeting with Hayes. While Tilden still demurred, the Republicans were busy winning an election. Woodward advances the theory that the old Whip philosophy had infiltrated Northern Republican and Southern Democratic thinking. This new Whiggery was making possible a North-South alliance spurred on by catalytic promises of internal improvements and railroad expansion. 109 According to Woodward's theory, the carpetbagger had become a political liability to the Republicans because he could not maintain a power base for a stable economy. A pro-business, pro-internal-improvements Southern Democrat would make a fine partner for the business-oriented Northern Republican. The Republicans were busy in November and December thinking of ways to woo their Southern Whiggish brothers. 110

The lame duck Congress which met on the first of December paid Watterson the honor of an important appointment to the Ways and Means Committee to handle proposals concerning the disputed election. Such high positions for a thirty-six year old freshman Congressman lends some support to Watterson's claim that he "was serving, in a


110 Ibid., p. 45.
The chief business before the Congress was to decide how to choose the next President. The Constitution was not very clear on this point: "The President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates and the votes shall then be counted." Did this mean that the President of the Senate, who was a Republican, was meant to count the votes? The Democrats, who had a House majority, said no. They maintained that Joint Congressional Rule 22 which gave either house of Congress the right to reject disputed electoral votes also gave them the right to reject the disputed votes of Louisiana, Florida, and South Carolina. The Senate maintained that since it had dropped Rule 22 in January, 1876, the rule could no longer be applied. The Congress had unparalleled confusion on its hands.

By this time Watterson was thoroughly at odds with Tilden's indecision. Robert M. McLane, an old friend of Tilden's, had agreed with Watterson's initial strategy of a Hayes-Tilden conference and happened to be at Tilden's Gramercy Park home in New York at the same time Watterson was paying Tilden a visit. Watterson sensed that McLane, like himself, was a man of action, and so when McLane tendered a plan Watterson listened closely. McLane had been in England at the

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111Watterson, Century Magazine, LXXXVI, 4.

112United States Constitution, as quoted in Wall, p. 147.

113Wall, p. 147.
Court of St. James during the excitement over the Reform Bill of 1832. He felt that the House of Lords had adopted the Reform Bill partly because of the coercion exerted by mass popular demonstrations in favor of the bill. Watterson agreed with McLane that there were analogous elements in the situation of the Tory House of Lords and in the situation facing the Republican Senate. Both also agreed that the way to arouse such a popular demonstration as confronted the Lords was by a suggestive speech. 114

Who could make the speech in this country? Tilden's New York campaign manager, Abram S. Hewitt, had proposed in December that a mass meeting be called "in every city, town and hamlet in the country on the 8th day of January next" 115 to consider the crisis. Tilden had vetoed this proposal because it might have endangered the official Democratic position of noninflammatory obedience to Constitutional law. Tilden agreed with the McLane-Watterson proposal as long as Watterson was willing to make the speech himself and take full responsibility for any consequences. In this way Tilden and the official Democratic position could remain unsullied, while Watterson would be on his own. 116

Watterson had intended to deliver his speech in the House of Representatives but a Jackson Day meeting at Ford's Opera House in Washington on January 8 presented a better opportunity. The appeal of

114 Watterson, I, pp. 301-02.

115 Abram S. Hewitt, quoted in Wall, p. 149.

116 Wall, p. 149.
the speech was pacific. The speech began with a warning of the type of force the present administration had in mind in exerting its will in the election. Watterson thought the best way to avert such a crisis of force was to have in Washington, on February 14, "a hundred thousand unarmed citizens exercising in their persons the freemen's right of petition." In an editorial written to coincide with his speech, Watterson declared that the Democrats "do not include civil war in the list of their resources." The editorial, however, also called for "at least ten thousand unarmed Kentuckians in this city on the coming 14th of February." Watterson was followed on the platform by a then unknown Democrat named Joseph Pulitzer who called for the hundred thousand to come armed and ready for business.

The next day the Republican press was howling for Watterson's blood. It was a simple matter to confuse the closing remarks of Pulitzer with Watterson's speech and make it appear that a prominent Democrat and confidant of Tilden was calling for an armed mob to take over Washington. President Grant even threatened martial law to control "any demonstration or warlike concentration of men threatening the peace of the city." The Democratic party spokesmen lay low while Watterson was left to face the partisan abuse. Although in years

118 Courier-Journal, January 8, 1877.
119 Logan, p. 450.
120 Woodward, p. 112.
to come Watterson was to vigorously protest that "no thought of violence ever entered his mind," there is some editorial evidence that he had forwarded a plan to seat Tilden by force on at least one occasion.

Whatever Watterson's motives, his speech did not bring 100,000 citizens to Washington. What action did the speech produce? One historian has suggested that the speech and subsequent rejoinder by Grant may have frightened Democrats and Republicans into ultimate compromise. The most evident result of the speech, however, was the permanent scar left on Watterson's reputation as a sectional conciliator. Because Watterson never tried to shift the blame for his speech to Tilden, he was always popularly pictured as Tom Nast of Harper's Weekly had cartooned him—a Southern fire-breather. Watterson the reconciliator suddenly found his reputation in need of redemption.

A chance to redeem Watterson's reputation was not long in coming. Tilden, having been flustered by the commotion caused by Watterson's speech, now proposed a much less dramatic plan than that of Watterson's "100,000." Tilden said that both houses had the right to determine the electoral vote. If the houses failed to agree, no

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121 Watterson, I, p. 304.


123 Logan, p. 468.

124 As late as 1951, C. Vann Woodward in Reunion and Reaction, pp. 110-11, wrote: "The spirit of violent resistance had its strongest Southern exponent in Henry Watterson's Louisville Courier-Journal."
candidate would have a majority. The Constitution stated that the election would then go to the House of Representatives. Tilden's plan had the advantage of advocating the status quo while placing the burden of unorthodox action on the Republicans who had no historical precedent for their claim that the President of the Senate should rightfully count the electoral votes.

The Republicans answered Tilden with a last desperate move, the Electoral Commission Plan. The plan, proposed by two Republicans, Representative George W. McCrary of Iowa and Senator George F. Edmunds of Vermont, was not guaranteed to make Hayes the President but it at least gave him a chance. The plan called for an electoral commission of fifteen. It was agreed that five members should be from the Senate—presumably three Republicans and two Democrats, five members from the House—three Democrats and two Republicans, and two Republicans and two Democrats from the Supreme Court, with a fifth Justice to be chosen by the other four. It was thought that the fifth Justice would be the independent Justice David Davis of Illinois. C. Vann Woodward gives several reasons for the Democrats' acceptance of the plan but feels the outstanding reason was that the "Democrats saw in the Electoral Commission a chance to win." Many Democrats, however, did not fully appreciate the probability of their success with this plan. It remained for Henry Watterson in his first reconciliation speech before a bi-

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125 Wall, p. 153.

126 Ibid., pp. 154-55.

127 Woodward, p. 152.
partisan national audience to advocate acceptance of the Congressional compromise plan. This compromise plan was the preface to a bipartisan negotiated settlement which, in the words of C. Vann Woodward, "marked the abandonment of principles and of force and a return to the traditional ways of expediency and concession."  

Summary

In the period between 1865 and 1877, Henry Watterson formulated a creed for the reconciliation of the North and South. This creed began as a response to Lincoln's assassination. Watterson used the alleged guilt of Southern leadership in the assassination to beg a pardon for the ex-Con federate yeoman.

As editor of the Nashville Republican Banner, Watterson again used alleged political blundering to maintain the myth of the common man's lack of animosity before, during, and after the Civil War. By extending the war guilt to include Northern leadership, Watterson expanded his creed across sectional boundaries and for the first time gained national recognition for his efforts.

As editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal, Watterson used Kentucky's unique history as a mediator of sectional controversy to build a base for his further reconciliation efforts. By dealing effectively with post-bellum problems in his own state, Watterson was able to gain the local support he needed to expand his reconciliation

128 Ibid., p. 3.
efforts into national politics.

Watterson placed his hopes for reconciliation on the success of Horace Greeley and the Liberal Republican movement in 1872. With the failure of Greeley and the Liberal Republicans in the Presidential election of that year, Watterson became convinced that the Democratic party held the only hope for reuniting the sections. After Democratic success in the Congressional election of 1874, Watterson did more and more reconciliation speaking on behalf of his party.

After an apparent victory for the Democrats in the Presidential election of 1876, Watterson made an ill-advised speech which almost cost him his reputation as a sectional conciliator. Watterson set about to redeem his reputation by speaking in favor of a compromise plan which would settle the disputed Presidential election. It is possible that the adoption of this compromise plan averted a second civil war.
CHAPTER III

WATTERSON'S SPEECH PERSONALITY

Edward P. Mitchell, who was to become editor of the New York Sun, was in the gallery when Watterson made his first speech in the House on the Tilden-Hayes controversy. Mitchell describes the scene in this way:

A spectator more sophisticated than myself whispered, 'Listen! That's young Watterson; he's going to fire off.' A moment later the Speaker's words confirmed the identification. 'The gentleman from Kentucky,' said Sam Randall.1

Mitchell then gives what he calls a "snapshot picture" of Watterson speaking. Mitchell's is probably the most perceptive description recorded by an eyewitness at any Watterson speech. He begins with his general feelings about Watterson, the speaker:

He has two peculiarities which perhaps distinguish him from the ordinary run of Congressmen. He does not begin to talk until he has something to say and when he has said it, he stops talking. His manner is a curious mixture of modest self-consciousness and bluster. The modest self-consciousness is evidently natural to the man. The bluster is natural to the man's circumstances. It is an attempt at self-assertion of one accustomed to think and write, but not accustomed to speak; who is sure of his thoughts but not quite sure of his success in giving them oratorical expression and who is therefore a little defiant.2

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2Ibid.
Two of Mitchell's observations are distinguished by their special perspicacity. First, there is the paradox of the defiant speaker concealing beneath his "bluster" a "modest self-consciousness." Second, Mitchell observes Watterson, the novice orator, who is far more practiced with pen than with tongue. In this way Mitchell helps clarify the apparent contradictory nature of Watterson's early oratorical career.

Mitchell then describes Watterson's physical appearance:

From a gallery point of view Mr. Watterson is a blond young man, apparently thirty-five but probably not older, with yellow moustache and imperial brow and chin rather more prominent than the neutral territory between, eyes indeterminate, top of head showing small veneration but considerable hair, of medium stature and loose gait. When he arises to speak his ingenuous face wears the deprecatory smile of a schoolboy about to spout a piece before critics of whom he is a little afraid. When he finishes his remarks, the deprecatory smile reappears, as if to disarm criticism, and he walks away from where he has been standing with a slight swing or swagger which says plainly: 'There! I suppose I've given myself away. Make the most of it.'

Mitchell does not limit himself to a description of Watterson's physical characteristics. He also illuminates some facets of Watterson's delivery:

His style of speaking is declamatory yet in tolerably good taste. His gestures are awkward and often inappropriate. He gives undue emphasis to unimportant words. Nobody would call him an orator but nine persons out of ten would hearken to him with pleasure, independently of the subject-matter, and even the tenth would find it hard to go to sleep while he was speaking.

Mitchell concludes with a few ideas about Watterson's style:

As printed in the Record, Mr. Watterson's longer speeches read

3 Ibid., pp. 48-49.
4 Ibid., p. 49.
like vigorous leaders and his shorter remarks like well-constructed editorial paragraphs. It is probable that he writes out what he has to say beforehand and, being a good editor, uses only the good ideas and consigns all others to the waste basket. His remarks are always to the point, always conveyed in strong, square-shouldered English, and always manly and sensible. I do not recall a Representative novice or veteran, who ever talked less buncombe to the thousand words than Henry Watterson of the Courier-Journal.5

Mitchell captures Watterson in this "snapshot picture" as Watterson was making his maiden and perhaps most important speech before Congress. But like a snapshot, Mitchell's picture captures Watterson, the orator, at only one moment in his life. As adroit as Mitchell is in picture-taking, he fails to examine the speech as an expression of what Thonssen, Baird, and Braden call the "speaker's personality"—that is, "as the culmination of his training, practical experience, reading, prior conditioning, aspiration, and goals."6 This chapter traces Watterson's speech personality beginning with the circumstance of his birth.

Watterson's Childhood

In 1839, James K. Polk left Congress to run for governor of Tennessee. That left the Bedford County district unrepresented in the House of Representatives. The Bedford County representative to the state legislature had been Harvey Watterson, a Whig turned Democrat. Harvey Watterson easily won Polk's seat in Congress. Harvey and his

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5Ibid.

wife Thalitha left for Washington in the fall of 1839.

On February 16, 1840, Harvey and Thalitha Watterson's first and only child was born. This child, born prophetically next door to a printing shop on Pennsylvania Avenue, was named Henry.  

Watterson, in later reminiscences, was to proclaim a sense of destiny in his birth. His maternal grandfather had told him that he was descended "in a straight line" from Daniel Black of Edinburgh who went to prison for proclaiming Elizabeth of England a harlot, and her cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, little better. Watterson was proud that he represented the juncture of two prosperous, even wealthy, families, the Blacks and the Wattersons. While Watterson might have felt that his success in life was assured by his nobility of birth, his public esteem in later years did nothing to make him question this assumption.

Watterson also described himself as "born in a party camp and grown to manhood on a political battlefield," "party camp" being the Democratic party in Washington. If this statement was intended to give a "school of hard knocks" aura to Watterson's childhood, it was a misrepresentation of the life young Watterson led. While there are many


9Watterson, I, p. 19.
discrepancies concerning Watterson's Washington childhood, some anecdotes bear the test of consensus.

In Washington Watterson's first influences were his early home and family environment. Watterson's paternal grandfather kept Watterson's father supplied with a lucrative allowance to supplement his congressional pay. The Wattersons lived well. Young Henry, however, was a sickly child. He had such terrible bouts with illness that at the age of eighteen months, his Irish Catholic nurse had him secretly baptized in the Roman Catholic church for fear he would die that day in damnation.

Watterson, like most children, loved to be read to. At the age of five, when most children begin reading on their own, Watterson suffered an attack of scarlet fever which left his eyes weakened. When Watterson was nine, he had an accident that left his right eye

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10For childhood accounts which are at variance on one or more points, see Watterson, I, pp. 24-26; Wall, pp. 6-20; Isaac F. Marcosson, Marse Henry (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co.), pp. 36-44; "Watterson the Inflamable," Current Literature, LII (March, 1912), pp. 277-78; Lena C. Logan, "Henry Watterson, the Border Nationalist" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Indiana State University, 1942), pp. 4-13; Tom Wallace, "Henry Watterson: a Man of Salient Characteristics," Southern Newspaper Publishers Association Bulletin Special (April 1, 1950), pp. 3-11; Courier-Journal, December 28, 1921; and the Louisville Times, May 20, 1933.


12Wall, p. 8.

13Courier-Journal, December 23, 1921.

14For a discussion of the possible causes of this accident, see Wall, p. 340, footnote 14.
completely sightless. It is said, however, that Watterson compensated for this blindness by being able to read a page at a single glance of his one poor eye. A more plausible explanation of Watterson's ability to function effectively with one poor eye is provided by Isaac F. Marcosson who gave this description of Watterson reading: "His reading was made less difficult by the use of a small telescopic tube with a magnifying glass that he swept back and forth across the printed page."

Three factors denied young Henry a formal education. Probably most important was Watterson's poor eyesight. It would have been difficult for Watterson to participate in normal school activities with such poor vision. The second factor mitigating against a formal education was the constant movement of the Watterson family from Tennessee to Washington and back. Harvey Watterson only served one two-year term in Congress but he enjoyed the Washington life so much that he went to Washington year after year only to return to Tennessee in the spring. Watterson later recalled that:

One of my earliest yearnings was for a home. I cannot recall the time when I was not sick and tired of our migration between Washington City and the two grandpaternal homesteads in Tennessee. A simple remedy for Henry's desire to stay put might have been a boarding school. Watterson's ill health prevented such an arrangement and was the final impediment to a formal education. As the result

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15 Marcosson, p. 38.
16 Wall, p. 9.
17 Marcosson, p. 241.
18 Watterson, I, p. 48.
of his frailty, Watterson, who might otherwise have cavorted with playmates, was thrown into his parents' company. It was from his parents and their circle of friends that he received most of his early education.\footnote{Marcosson is the only Watterson biographer to mention "private tutors" for Watterson, p. 36.}

The Washington environment held numerous educational opportunities for Watterson. As the son of the prominent Harvey Watterson, Henry dined at the White House with Presidents Polk and Taylor, had chats with his father about political gossip he had overheard, and played at being a page in the Congress of which his father had recently been a member.\footnote{Watterson, I, pp. 29-48.} Henry was too young to be an official page and seems to have served more as the House mascot. Watterson recalled in his autobiography that John Quincy Adams was fond of him and got him books to read from the Library of Congress. Sadly Watterson was also on the floor of the House when Adams "fell in his place" and was carried from the floor into the Speaker's room for the last time.\footnote{Ibid., p. 36.}

While young Watterson was no doubt audience to many great speeches in the House, the Senate seems to have been the real oratorical battleground during Watterson's minority. Ernest J. Wrage gives this analysis:

It had become rather common opinion that the Senate was vastly superior to the House in its make-up, interests and speaking. Between 1831 and 1852 Webster, Calhoun, Ewing, Crittenden, Clay-
ton, Cass and others gave brilliance to the body. It was an age when Thomas Hart Benton marshaled the victorious forces of Jack-
son against the most powerful array of speakers in the history of Congress while Clay led the opposition to Jackson, Van Buren and
Tyler.22

Although Watterson had a fond childhood memory of being "dan-
dled" in Andrew Jackson's arms, Jackson had already returned to Tennes-
see when Watterson roamed the Capitol listening to speeches. Watter-
son's early hero in war and oratory was General—then Senator--Lewis
Cass of Michigan. Henry's father was a close friend of the Casses,
and the General made Watterson "something of a pet."23 Cass's biogra-
pher, Frank Woodford, felt Cass lacked "the oratorical fire and warm
personal charm" of men like Webster and Clay.24 Nonetheless, in 1850,
E. L. Magoon chose Cass as one of the nine greatest living orators25
in America for inclusion in his book. Cass's reputation among his
contemporaries was made, in part, by his advocacy of "popular sover-
eignty."26 If indeed Cass's speaking lacked "fire," he still may
have impressed upon Watterson the importance of gentleness in speaking

22Ernest J. Wrage, "Henry Clay," A History and Criticism of
American Public Address, ed. William Norwood Brigance (New York:

23Watterson, I, p. 37.

24Frank B. Woodson, Lewis Cass (Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers

25E. L. Magoon, Living Orators in America (New York: Baker and
Scribner, 1850).

26Forest L. Whal, "Stephen A. Douglas," A History and Criti-
For a more recent opinion, see Walter W. Stevens, "A Study of Lewis
Cass and his United States Senate Speeches on Popular Sovereignty" (un-
to those who may disagree with your position.

The other great speakers having early influence on Watterson were Daniel Webster of Massachusetts and Henry Clay of Kentucky. Watterson recalled that, as a boy, Webster's "sonorous rhetoric" had captivated him. One day Henry told his father that he felt Webster was a better speaker than even Henry Clay. Watterson's father was angered by this remark and tried to set his son straight. Harvey impressed upon his son that although Clay's speeches might not read as well as those of Webster's, it was the speaker's ideas which were most important. Watterson's father believed that Clay espoused the cause of compromise, while he considered Webster an exponent of sectionalism. Thus, Watterson's father gave his son a passion for Clay's oratory even though Watterson admitted that he never saw or heard the "Great Commoner."  

Another early influence, perhaps second to politics in importance, was music. Watterson's mother began giving her son piano lessons at the age of four. By age ten, Watterson was taking lessons from "Professor" Schnell, a Prussian refugee living in Georgetown. Watterson had great aspirations as a pianist and as a composer but had to settle for "thumbing the keyboard" after a bone felon on the


28 Ibid., p. 55.

29 Wall, p. 12.
index finger of his left hand nipped his piano career in the bud.30

Watterson attributed his dexterity with language to his musical training:

Any facility I have for writing I attribute to my ear for music, my appreciation of cadence. I do not write by rule of thumb but by ear. If the sentence, the paragraph, the column has the right ring, it is the right thing.31

Watterson was not alone in applying a musical metaphor to his writing. Writing in Harper's Weekly, Daniel E. O'Sullivan also noticed a musical quality in Watterson's work. Describing Watterson's ascendency as a new editor of the Courier-Journal, O'Sullivan observed:

He [Watterson] wrote as he talked, with a grace, a cadence, a mastery of style, seemingly impetuous but earnest and forceful and with such infinite charm of expression and originality of thought that the old editor was quickly forgotten in the brilliance of his successor. I can best describe his editorial work as oratory set to music.32

When Watterson was twelve, his parents decided that, despite his bad eyesight, it was time to begin his formal education. He was sent to Protestant Episcopal Academy in Philadelphia. When Watterson arrived, the school was under the direction of George Emien Hare. E. Digby Baltzell, in his sociological treatment of Philadelphia, remarks that the Episcopal Academy was primarily a charity school until 1846, when George Hare became headmaster. Hare moved the academy to a new location convenient to the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood, about which the "gentry" of Philadelphia resided. By 1852, the year of Watterson's


arrival, attendance at the academy was a requisite for the socially prominent and those who aspired to prominence.33

Joseph Wall has conjectured that Watterson was probably unhappy at the school because of the rigid discipline imposed upon the students by the headmaster.34 All that is really known about his four years there is that he was elected editor of the school paper, The Ciceronian. He was so successful as editor that the rule against being editor for more than one term was relaxed so that Watterson could be editor all four years.35

In the fall of 1851, a year before Henry left for school, Harvey Watterson was asked to become assistant editor of the Washington Union, the voice of the Northern conservative wing of the Democratic party. When Franklin Pierce became President, the Union's fortunes improved. Harvey Watterson and Pierce had been close friends ever since they had been young Congressmen together. Pierce made the Union his official paper, awarding it all the printing contracts within his power. Harvey Watterson had been raised to the position of co-editor with A. O. P. Nicholson and linked his fortunes closely with the new administration. When Henry came home from school, he frequently accompanied his father on visits to the White House.36

34Wall, p. 17.
36Ibid., pp. 16-17.
What Henry was unable to learn first-hand in Washington, he was able to extract from his parents' friends who met daily at Brown's Hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue, the residence of Mrs. Clement C. Clay. Mrs. Clay, later Mrs. Clopson-Clay, wife of a distinguished Senator from Alabama, was a belle and hostess of Washington society during the administrations of Buchanan and Pierce. It was the custom of the day for the ladies of society to pass their leisure time by listening to speeches in the Senate galleries. Mrs. Clay recalled to her biographer that Watterson, a lad of fifteen, was often on hand when the ladies returned from the Capitol. He questioned them assiduously on who spoke, what bills were passed, and, in general, what took place. They answered his questions graciously, never realizing what fame lay ahead for him.37

In 1854, Harvey Watterson resigned as editor of the Union and returned to Tennessee. The Kansas-Nebraska bill, proposed by Stephen A. Douglas in January of 1854, was Harvey Watterson's undoing. He had editorialized against the bill after he felt its usefulness as a compromise measure had been destroyed by substitute clauses and an amendment to the bill which would specifically have repealed the Missouri Compromise. Rather than support such a bill, Watterson left Washington and took his family to the small town of McMinnville in Tennessee.38


38Wall, pp. 18-20.
Henry remained at the academy in Philadelphia for two years after his parents left Washington. Rather than send Henry, with his bad eyesight, to college, Watterson's parents acquired the services of James Poindexter to tutor him in rhetoric, English composition, and public speaking. Poindexter, a Presbyterian minister by profession, helped Henry organize a reading and dramatic club. The club numbered among its exercises gestured readings, drinking blackberry wine, and one public play. The play turned out to be a disaster when the leading lady forgot her lines. Watterson had the title role. Although he never acted in a formal production again, Watterson always took pride in being closely associated with theater people and their productions. 39

Since he spent only one season with Poindexter, 40 it is doubtful that Watterson's theories of speaking were molded after the style of a Presbyterian preacher. Watterson had, however, been influenced at an early age by religion. In his autobiography he went so far as to say: "Until I was twelve years old the enchantment of religion had complete possession of my understanding." 41

Watterson, at an early age, had been taken to hear Henry Bascom, the great Southern revivalist preacher. He was fascinated by the incongruity of "the revivalist preacher's delivering the Word of God with more or less of ignorant yet very often of very eloquent

39 Ibid., p. 22.

40 Watterson, Marse Henry, I, p. 54.

41 Ibid., p. 21.
and convincing fervor." It tantalized him that the sermons which "were appeals to the emotions" should produce dedication to such worthy ideals as "love of the Union and the Lord."\footnote{Ibid., pp. 20-21.}

In summary, the circumstances of Watterson's birth and childhood were important in forming his speech personality. His lack of formal education exposed him to the orator-statesmen of the day who were to serve him as future models. Watterson's next step was to learn to express himself fluently.

**Later Determinants of Watterson's Speech Education**

A noteworthy educational influence in Watterson's writing career occurred when he was working on the *Daily States*, a newspaper in Washington. At sixteen, Watterson had edited a small paper his father had bought for him in McMinnville, Tennessee. Two years later, after an unsuccessful stint with the *New York Times*, Watterson landed a job under Major John P. Heiss on the *Daily States*. Also employed on the *States* as a "leader writer" was Mrs. Jane Casneau. Watterson lavished praise on her in his autobiography:

> A braver, more intellectual woman never lived. . . . She must have been a beauty in her youth; was still comely at fifty; but a born insurrecto and a terror with her pen. . . . With Major Heiss she divided my newspaper education, her part of it being the writing part. Whatever I may have attained in that line I largely owe to her.\footnote{Ibid., p. 57.}

Although Watterson may have learned much from Mrs. Casneau's
style of writing, there is no evidence that he ever entertained any of Mrs. Casneau's unorthodox ideas, such as bringing Central America into the Union. However, Watterson's zest to fight for North-South reconciliation against great opposition may have been copied, in part, from Mrs. Casneau's uphill struggle.

No discussion of Watterson's informal education would be complete without some mention of his literary aspirations:

In my early life—as it were, my salad days—I aspired to becoming what old Simon Cameron called 'one of those damned literary fellows' and what Thomas Carlyle less profanely described as 'a literary celebrity.' But some malign fate always sat upon my ambitions in this regard.

There is some evidence that Watterson only accepted newspaper work so that he could have time and money for serious writing. At eighteen, he had already had a group of verses published by Harper's Magazine under a nom de plume. At nineteen, he was adapting James Fenimore Cooper's The Spy into a three-act play and had plans for the Great American Novel. Watterson never abandoned his literary hopes, and in 1866 he persuaded the English publisher, Alexander MacMillan, to accept his novel for publication. For an unexplained reason the novel was never published, and twenty years later, upon reexamining his masterpiece, Watterson was to exclaim: "The Lord has surely been good to me. If the 'boys' had ever got a peep at that novel, I had

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44 Ibid.
46 Marcossen, p. 44.
It seems that Watterson's literary bent served best as a spur to teaching himself how to write well. The great recognition he received as a journalist caused him to spend more and more time on this endeavor, to the point that his second book, \textit{A History of the Spanish American War}, was ghost-written for him. There seems to be no particular time in Watterson's life when he turned his back on a literary life. Rather, his literary abilities were gradually channeled into oratory and journalism. The paper and the platform became, primarily, outlets for his creativity.

\textbf{Watterson's Reading Habits}

Books were the final ingredient in Watterson's education. As previously indicated, Watterson was a voracious reader. Two large rooms on the second floor of his home at "Mansfield," outside of Louisville, were made into a library by him. The walls of the rooms are lined, ceiling to floor, with bookshelves, and several revolving bookshelves are strategically placed around the room for convenience.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{48}Marcossen, pp. 104-05.
\item \textsuperscript{49}Watterson's first book published in 1882 was Oddities of Southern Life and Character (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1883). This is a collection of anecdotes and humorous stories which Watterson edited rather than wrote.
\item \textsuperscript{50}Wall, p. 242.
\item \textsuperscript{51}For a picture of Watterson's library, see frontispiece, Henry Watterson, \textit{Marse Henry} (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1919), II, p. 120.
\end{itemize}
and overflow. An examination of Watterson's book collection reveals none of the usual "decorative sets" with unclipped pages. Most are well used, presumably by Watterson, since open public access to the books has been denied since his death. Watterson's books were of two sorts. One variety was collections of speeches by men whom he admired—men like George William Curtis, John Warwick Daniel, Mark Twain, William E. Russell, Joseph H. Choate, Theodore Roosevelt, and Richard H. Dana, Jr. Chauncey M. Depew, among others, autographed his eight-volume speech set to Watterson with his best regards. Watterson was probably too independent in his thinking to imitate the speeches of any of these men. They do, however, comprise a list of the orators whom Watterson regarded highly enough to include in his library. The other sort of book on speech was the elocutionary textbook. These texts lend evidence that Watterson was influenced in his early speaking years by the elocutionary movement. In his description of Watterson's 1877 Hayes-Tilden controversy speech, Edward P. Mitchell characterizes Watterson as "declamatory, yet in tolerably good taste. His gestures are awkward and often inappropriate. He gives undue emphasis to unimportant words." This observation alone might only mean that Mitchell thought Watterson to be a poor speaker. However, the five or six elocutionary textbooks found in Watterson's library suggest that he might have been self-educated to an elocution-

52 All Watterson library information is from my personal observation at "Mansfield" and at the Watterson Room of the Louisville Public Library, where the remainder of Watterson's library is set aside.

53 Mitchell, p. 49.
ary style characterized by the type of posturing disparaged by Mitch­
ell.

Watterson's Theory of Rhetoric

Watterson's father had instilled in his son a theory of rhetoric built around an ideal of compromise. Those orators who spoke for the issue of compromise before the Civil War and Reconciliation after the war practiced the oratorical art in its best form. This is a philosophy centered on the speaker's invention on ideas. Aside from this one rhetorical ideal, Watterson left no formal theory of rhetoric. If he had a consistent rhetorical theory, the best way to deduce it is to examine his rhetorical criticism for some general principles. Watterson had two thoughts about rhetorical criticism. He believed it should be constructive, and he believed true objective criticism was impossible. Unless it was constructive, Watterson was against the criticism of any of the arts—rhetorical, literary, or journalistic:

I believe my attitude toward writing is in that respect the attitude of most newspaper writers who succeed. No composer, no pianist or violinist or player upon the lute or flute could be improved by sharp criticism. The bludgeon would only depress and discourage him. Constructive criticism of an artist—and writing that is not art is not valuable—never should be destructive of the performer's self-respect. The preceptor must avoid wounding the amour propre of the pupil or fail in his effort to lead him to a higher plane of achievement.

Along with his belief in constructive criticism, Watterson

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54 Watterson, The Compromises of Life, pp. 29-58.

sensed a failure by journalists to be objective in their speech criticism:

I sometimes wonder shall we ever attain a journalism sufficiently upright in the treatment of current events to publish fully and fairly the utterances of our public men, and, except in cases of provable dishonor, to leave their motives and their personalities alone.56

These are noble sentiments, but Watterson's published speech-criticism abounds with the mark of the bludgeon. Watterson also freely attacks motives and personalities in criticising the speeches of public men. In his criticism, however, he does adhere to the proposition that conciliation is the noblest end of oratory.

The inconsistency of Watterson's critical theory with the practice of that theory is explained by several factors. First are Watterson's two a priori assumptions concerning oratory. Watterson was generally concerned only with speeches which had been reprinted in wire-service fed newspapers. As a result, he was interested in the effect of the speech on the wider national or regional audience rather than on the small group before whom the speech was presented. Second, Watterson would have ranked oratory as a means of propagating ideas equal with the newspaper editorial. In other words, he criticised speeches not as the product of a unique interaction of speaker, speech, and audience, but as effective persuasive composition. To Watterson it would have made no difference whether a speech was actually delivered or not. That it was published and widely read was all that mattered.

The dual assumption that a speech was preeminently a persuasive composition directed toward a regional or national audience cast Watterson in the role of defender of reconciliation rather than objective speech critic. Watterson acted as if each criticised speech were a personal attack or defense of his ideals. Faced with such an attack or defense, he could hardly be objective.

Watterson also had a dual standard of criticism. He seemed quite content with subjective criticism if he were the critic. He could not cry loudly enough for objective standards, however, if his speaking were at issue. His editorials are rife with examples of his subjective standard.

A survey of Watterson's criticism, on the editorial page, reveals the polemicist rather than the analytical critic. He was most interested in the speaker's integrity of ideas and least interested in the man's style, audience adjustment, or organization. Three examples of his criticism will illustrate his speech assumptions and critical ideals. Watterson's first opportunity for speech criticism was at Abraham Lincoln's first inauguration. Watterson had been hired by the Associated Press to help cover the inaugural ceremonies. It was his good fortune to be on the platform only a few feet from Lincoln as Lincoln rose to speak.57

If we are to believe that Watterson was indeed the author of the Associated Press dispatch that day, then his coverage of the speech left much to be desired. It included only the barest few sentences on

57Watterson, Marse Henry, I, p. 78.
the mild enthusiasm of the audience, coupled with a text of the speech which Watterson had received in advance. 58 Probably his most provocative comment was "... To do the rail-splitter justice, he read it well." 59 The dispatch makes no comment about the ideas in the speech. In 1909, in his article on Abraham Lincoln for Cosmopolitan Magazine, Watterson gave a far more detailed description of the event, including such details as Lincoln's expression—"serious"—and his voice—"a little high pitched." 60

In 1919, Watterson re-reviewed the first Lincoln inaugural and commented: "He delivered that inaugural address as if he had been delivering inaugural addresses all his life. Firm, resonant, earnest, it announced the coming of a man, of a leader of men..." 61 While it is improbable that Watterson felt Lincoln's voice was "high pitched" and "resonant" at the same time, 62 it need not be concluded that either voice assessment was misstated. The most probable explanation is that Watterson paid much more attention to the content of Lincoln's speech

58 New York Times, March 5, 1861.


61 Henry Watterson, Marse Henry, I, p. 78.

62 Watterson's is not the only ambiguous testimony concerning Lincoln's voice. For a full explication of the controversy about Lincoln's voice, see Waldo W. Braden, "Lincoln's Voice," Lincoln Herald, LXVII (Fall, 1965), pp. 111-16.
than to how it was delivered. After the speech was finished, Watterson talked over what had been said with Mr. Reverdy Johnson of Maryland and Mr. John Bell of Tennessee. Johnson and Bell were much impressed by Lincoln and thought he could save the country from war. Watterson, however, viewed what Lincoln said in the context of the times and prophesied war as a certainty.\(^63\) Watterson was more impressed by the reconciliatory context of the ideas Lincoln had to share than how those ideas were delivered.

A second example of Watterson's speech criticism shows a similar contextual preoccupation. In April of 1883, the Democrats in Chicago held a banquet to start a free-trade "boom" for the coming Presidential campaign. Being a free-trade advocate, Watterson reprinted all the speeches, save one, in a special supplement to the *Courier-Journal*. Included in this issue was Watterson's special brand of speech criticism. The speech and the criticism might have gone unnoticed had Watterson not made one mistake. He criticised the one speech he had not even read.

With good humored glee, the *New York Daily Tribune* caught Watterson's mistake. First, the *Tribune* reprinted the opening statement of the Watterson editorial:

Mr. Watterson began by saying that such an assemblage as that gathered at Chicago 'would be noticeable at any time and under any circumstances' and then remarked: 'No uncertain sound marred the matchless oratory, the statesmanlike precision, or the straightforward utterances of the bold videttes who from the very outposts sounded the rallying cry and gave the manliest challenges to the wildest of political foes.' Few of the 'videttes' displayed more 'statesmanlike precision' than the Mayor, and it must be

a source of genuine pleasure to Mr. Watterson to see how aptly he characterized the Mayor's speech before he had read it. After praising the eloquence of the 'courtly Bayard,' dubbing the gifted Vilas of Wisconsin the 'magician of oratory' and the 'later Wizard of the North,' and bestowing similarly generous compliments upon the other speakers, Mr. Watterson concludes with this prophetic deliverance: 'Criticism will follow the bold and manly utterances of last evening; discussion will follow criticism and enlightened discussion, and the people, the great and sovereign people, seeing and hearing, will begin to think what these earnest men have said, and then shall the battle be almost won, for not all of demagogy's wiles can long hoodwink a sober, thinking people.' Seldom has a prophecy been more speedily fulfilled than this has been. . . .

Watterson finally received a copy of the Mayor's speech on the Sunday after it was given. He was horrified to read what Mayor Harrison had really said. The following Monday, Watterson placed a column in the Courier-Journal disguised as a dispatch from Washington. In this "dispatch" Watterson now said Harrison had "made a howling blackguard of himself." The next day, Watterson printed another revelation wherein he quoted a "former admirer of Harrison's" as saying, "I don't see how he could make such a d——d fool of himself. . . . Confidential now, between you and me, it's my honest opinion that Harrison's election completely turned his head." It seems Watterson had discovered "the magician of oratory" to be "a howling blackguard" in two short days. Watterson never commented publicly on his mistake,

64 Courier-Journal, April 21, 1883, quoted in the New-York Daily Tribune, April 25, 1883.


and the Tribune had its fun. Watterson reasoned that, since Harrison
was a "Tilden Democrat" and Watterson was a "Tilden Democrat," then
not only Harrison's message but all constituents of the oratorical
situation must have been ideal. Unfortunately for Watterson's criti-
cal credibility, he was mistaken.

Watterson's focus on ideas in context is also illustrated in
his editorial titled "Thersites as a Comedian." As a background to
the editorial, Watterson had been miffed at Robert Toombs of Georgia.
Toombs had been oratorically waving "the bloody shirt" at the South.
Watterson replied to these "bloody-shirt" tactics with a criticism
of Toombs's speaking. In typical Watterson fashion, the editorial on
Toombs began with a physical description of the speaker. Rather than
objectively describing Toombs, Watterson turned the description into
an ad hominem refutation of Toombs's ideas:

Burly, brilliant, insolent, swaggering, audacious, he personifies
the actor, who, denied the legitimate stage on account of his
shocking ribaldry, betakes himself to the regions of that Bohemia
which, in politics not less than in literature, is full of vicious
inspirations and hopeless misdirection. 67

In other words, Watterson is saying that no great ideas could
issue from the mouth of one such as Toombs. Watterson goes on to con-
cede Toombs's power over audiences:

There is power in brazen impudence and abundant lungs; in a
big belly; in coarse invective. Mr. Toombs has this sort of pow-

67 Arthur Krock (ed.), The Editorials of Henry Watterson
er. It is the power of the mountebank who will roar you an' the groundlings will cry 'let him roar again.'

Again, this is characteristic of Watterson's style of *ad hominem* attack. He was completing the unstated analogy between Toombs and Thersites, the ugliest member of the Trojan army, who was an insolent brawler and demagogue. Thersites was slain by Achilles after he ridiculed Achilles' grief over the slain Amazon queen. In like manner Watterson wished to slay with his pen Toombs and all the "Bourbons" who mocked the South's grief with their cries of "bloody shirt" oratory. It was Watterson's strategy to make Toombs appear a clown. Watterson refused to dignify Toombs's oratory with a point-by-point refutation, but rather instructed that the tenets of "Bourbonism" insult the audience:

[Toombs's oratory] appeals to no intelligent, considerate or feeling set of people: it promises nothing but a destructiveness out of which Mr. Toombs will be pretty sure to profit, for he is, strange to say, a thrifty man, who, in spite of his political excesses, takes uncommon care of himself.

To read Watterson's invective against Toombs as personal malice is to miss the centrality of the speaker's ideas to Watterson's analysis. Watterson was really quite fond of Toombs and wrote warmly of him in his autobiography. It was "Bourbonism" pure and simple that Watterson criticised in his editorial. Since Toombs spoke for the "Bourbon" cause, then he was fair game for Watterson's pen.

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68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
Watterson's criticism of Lincoln, the Southern "bloody-shirt" orators, and Mayor Harrison, all have two things in common. The criticism is most concerned with the persuasive message and least concerned with the arrangement, style, delivery, and audience of the speech. The Harrison criticism is an ad absurdum case of Watterson's passion for suasive message. Watterson was willing to impute ideal oratorical characteristics to a speaker whose message he approved sight unseen.

In regard to all three speakers, Watterson's rhetorical position might be predicted, using a psychological balance theory\textsuperscript{71} or, in more traditional terms, the transfer effect.\textsuperscript{72} That is, Watterson generally had a positive attitude and imputed positive characteristics to those who expounded a message with which he agreed. In the case of the "bloody-shirt" oratory, the message was not to Watterson's liking, so no constituent of the speaking situation would be to his taste. In short, the speaker's message, good or bad, is all that matters. When the message is conciliatory or contributes to reconciliation, it is good; if it does not, then it is wrong.

\textbf{Watterson's Methods of Immediate Speech Preparation}

In his autobiography, Watterson recounted an "old friend's recipe for success in public life": "Whenever you get up to make


a speech,' he said, 'begin by proclaiming yourself the purest, the most disinterested of living men, and end by intimating that you are the bravest.'^73

Of course Watterson offered this recipe only in jest; he did well enough in public life by doing careful research on any speech topic he approached. This research was the key ingredient to Watterson's recipe for success in oratory. In an article in *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, Watterson described in detail how he prepared his Lincoln oration:

Toward the preparation of an address upon Abraham Lincoln, desired in 1895 by the Lincoln Union of Chicago, though I thought I understood his life and character very well, it seemed prudent to gather whatever I might of a biographic description. There could not have been fewer than half a thousand volumes and pamphlets. These were replete with contradictions and discrepancies. Even the epoch-making work of Nicolay and Hay was imperfect through lack of data discovered after it had gone to press. The 'call' for a complete life seemed as urgent as it was apparent and in 1896, believing that my exit from daily newspaper work would be final, I went to Geneva in Switzerland, where my children were in school, to obtain leisure and repose for the composition of such a volume or volumes. Subsequent events quite diverted me from my purpose, but I penetrated the subject at that time far enough to be struck by the mass of inconsistencies staring one in the face, and the need for a connected story separating the tangled web of fact and falsehood and partly at least removing the incongruities of prejudice and partisism.74

Although "Abraham Lincoln" was Watterson's only oration that might have become a book, Watterson was just as careful with his research and documentation on other speeches he gave. It was Watterson's custom to do his writing at his home in Louisville, Kentucky,


"Mansfield," where he had his 6,000-book library from which to draw information on his topics. His office in the Courier-Journal building was dark, cavernous, and sparsely furnished. The darkness alone would have prohibited its use by Watterson, who could see poorly even in the best of light.75

Edward P. Mitchell conjectured that Watterson heavily revised his speeches before they were delivered: "It is probable that he writes out what he has to say beforehand, and, being a good editor, uses only the good ideas and consigns all others to the waste basket."76 Two pieces of evidence seem to corroborate Mitchell's theory. Isaac F. Marcosson was an eyewitness to Watterson's speech preparation. In his Adventures in Interviewing, Marcosson recalled Watterson's normal speech-writing routine as well as Watterson's fabled memory:

Upon one occasion I was called in as understudy for Mr. Watterson's secretary and read the proof of a long editorial aloud to him. Half way through he suddenly halted me and said: 'Stop. The printer has used a "but" instead of an "and."' We sent for the copy and sure enough he was right.

Mr. Watterson pursued the same method with his speeches. He always wrote them out by hand and had them set up in galleys. He penned his famous lecture on 'The Compromises of Life' one day and delivered it the following evening without a single change from the text.77

75Marcosson, p. 241 and 255.

76Mitchell, Bookman, p. 49.

An examination of some of Watterson's speech manuscripts reveals that he corrected his completed speech manuscripts by crossing out and adding words where appropriate. It was from this text of additions and corrections that he addressed his audiences.\(^78\)

Watterson was accustomed to having copies of his speeches run off before the speech was given. These copies were sent to the Associated Press, to newspaper editors, and to the organization which sponsored his speech. Typical of this practice was a letter from Watterson to the Key Monument Association. Watterson was to speak at the dedication of a memorial to Francis Scott Key on August 9, 1898. Ten days before the ceremony, Watterson wrote to the Key Association, enclosing 300 copies of his speech but admonishing the association that, since the speech was to be in the afternoon, "in no event would matter of this kind be available or valuable for the afternoon papers. I shall be obliged then if it be held back for the morning papers..."\(^79\)

There were two reasons why the manuscript copies did not differ greatly from Watterson's delivered speech. First, Watterson's poor eyesight caused him to memorize all his speeches. The manuscript copy from which the speech was memorized was the copy

\(^78\) Filson Club Collection, Watterson MSS, Louisville, Kentucky.

\(^79\) Ibid.
that went to the newspapers. Watterson used the memory method with such regularity that he felt compelled in his memoirs to note an exception. Concerning his keynote address at the 1876 Democratic convention, Watterson wrote:

I had barely time to write the required keynote speech, but not enough to commit it to memory; nor sight to read it, even had I been willing to adopt that mode of delivery. . . . A friend, Col. J. Stoddard Johnston, who was familiar with my penmanship came to the rescue. Concealing my manuscript behind his hat he lined the words out to me between cheering, I having mastered a few opening sentences.80

Watterson's poor eyesight forced him to memorize his speeches but, had not his memory been almost perfect, his spoken words might have been at variance with their printed form. Watterson did, indeed, possess an amazing memory, to which his secretary later attested:

Henry Watterson as a speech maker possessed a marvelous memory. Clarence Walker, veteran stenographer, recalled yesterday. Mr. Walker said that Mr. Watterson's speeches never varied so much as a word from the original manuscripts. "I have been employed to "take" at least fifty of Mr. Watterson's speeches," Mr. Walker said. "I was never required to take a transcript, my only instructions being to preserve the notes. When a speech appeared in the paper I could for my own information compare it with my stenographic notes. "I always found the published speech entirely correct."81

Thus, Watterson's great memory compensated for his poor eyesight and allowed him to deliver the text of his manuscript without reference to it while speaking.

The remaining facet of Watterson's theory of speech criticism is concerned with the criticism of his speeches by others.

80Watterson, Marse Henry, pp. 289-90.

81Courier-Journal, December 23, 1921, p. 10.
It is probable that, when Watterson said criticism should be objective and constructive, he was addressing his own critics. He became sensitive when his speeches were criticised. One example will suffice: In November of 1913, Watterson was the subject of a short magazine insert called "A Literary Grandeur that is Passing." The satire poked good-natured fun at Watterson's alleged language style, oral and written. Among other things, the article said that Watterson was a source of "catachrestic inspiration."82

Watterson wrote to the editors of the magazine in a jovial but blunt tone. He wanted an apology. Three months later, the magazine printed Watterson's letter in a small piece entitled "An Abject Apology to Col. Watterson."83 The editor, Frank Crownenshield, wrote Watterson a private letter of apology. He said, among other things, that the article was based on speeches published in newspapers and it was the newspapers which had misquoted Watterson, not the author of the article.84

Watterson's sensitivity to criticism by others may have prompted him to call for a more objective critical standard. Whatever the reason, he never felt compelled to adhere to this standard in criticising others.


84 Watterson MS, November 29, 1913, Watterson Papers, Vol. 16.
Although Edward P. Mitchell gives a highly perceptive description of Watterson's maiden speech before Congress, Mitchell fails to examine the speech as a product of Watterson's "speech personality." Watterson's speech personality began with the circumstances of his birth. He believed that his alleged illustrious ancestors contributed to his success in life. Because his parents were prominent in Washington, young Watterson had access to many of the great orator-politicians of the day. He was denied a formal education because of ill health, poor vision, and constant travel with his parents between Washington and Tennessee. His informal education included being read to, reading, and association with his parents' friends. Watterson was impressed at an early age by the oratory of Lewis Cass, Daniel Webster, and Henry Clay. Watterson's father taught his son to judge oratory by the degree to which it contributed to compromise.

In addition to oratory, Watterson had an early passion for music and later attributed his skill with the pen to his knack for musical expression. He intended to have a literary career which would be subsidized by newspaper jobs. His newspaper work enhanced his abilities at self-expression, but left no time for other writing. He finally gave up serious writing in favor of his dual passions, speaking and journalism.

Watterson was an avid reader. The books in his library on speech are either collections of speeches or elocutionary textbooks. While his speech collections demonstrate his favorite orators, his elocutionary texts suggest that his speaking may have been influenced
by the elocutionary movement.

Watterson's theory of rhetoric is that the orator who speaks best speaks for compromise. He also expresses a distaste for a subjective, ad hominem style of rhetorical criticism. An examination of three examples of his speech criticism shows much subjectivity and ad hominem attack. This discrepancy between theory and application may be explained partly by Watterson's assumption that a speech is just another persuasive composition. If the speech sought to reconcile, as Lincoln's First Inaugural did, then it was to be praised. If the speech sought disunion, as did Toombs's speeches, then it was to be damned.

Watterson took any attack against conciliation as an attack against himself. In the case of self-defense, he reasoned, subjectivity was permissible. Whether Watterson became defensive or not depended upon the persuasive message. Other constituents of the rhetorical act were secondary.

Watterson's speech preparation began with careful reading and research. He wrote out what he was going to say, corrected it to his satisfaction, and had it printed. He memorized the printed speech copy and distributed copies to newspapers and to the Associated Press.

After Watterson had given a speech he became very sensitive to criticism. He believed in the ideas expressed in his speeches and took any uncomplimentary criticism as an insult. The paradox of his speech personality is his rigidity in facing criticism while advocating the rhetorical ideal of compromise.
CHAPTER IV

WATTERSON'S AUDIENCES AND OCCASIONS

This chapter presents a representative sample of Watterson's audiences and occasions for his reconciliation speeches. The following eight speeches with their audiences and occasions are included: House of Representatives—"Hayes-Tilden Controversy," "Electoral Commission Decision"; National Cemetery, Nashville—"Memorial Day Address"; American Bankers' Association Convention, Louisville—"The New South"; New England Society Dinner, New York—"The Puritan and the Cavalier"; Grand Army Encampment, Louisville—"A Welcome to the Grand Army"; Carnegie Hall, New York—"Abraham Lincoln"; Monument to the Confederate Soldier at Centennial Park, Nashville—"The Confederate Dead." Immediate response to Watterson's speaking on these occasions is also included.

House of Representatives

The Hayes-Tilden Controversy

To understand Watterson's speeches for Congressional compromise, it is necessary to understand the issues confronting the second session of the 44th United States Congress during the early months of 1877.

On January 18, 1877, Representative Henry B. Payne of Ohio re-
ported to the house from the Committee "to prepare and report a proper mode of counting the electoral votes for President and Vice President and of determining questions that may arise as to the legality and validity of returns made of such votes by the several states." Debate did not begin on Payne's Electoral Commission bill until January 25. Instead, the House was occupied with a prolonged debate on a set of resolutions reported by the committee, which had been directed to investigate and report upon the privileges, powers, and duties of the House in counting the electoral vote. This committee was chaired by Watterson's fellow Kentuckian, J. Proctor Knott. Knott zealously reported each day his committee's every thought. His colleagues shared the nation's preoccupation with the Payne Committee compromise plan and found Knott's garrulity more than tedious. The New York Times concurred in the feeling of the House about Knott by dismissing his conduct as that of a "bore." If Knott drove the members out into the blizzard that covered the East Coast by early January, the suffragettes were doing their best to warm things up. Every day saw some bill or petition relating to women's suffrage introduced in the House. By January 18, the National Women's Suffrage Convention had begun its ninth annual convention at the new Lincoln Hall. Petitions for a sixteenth amendment


3 For examples, see Congressional Record, 44th Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. V, pt. 1, pp. 663, 693, 752.
giving women the vote were said to be coming in at the rate of one thousand signatures a day. One suffrage delegate quipped that "by the time Mr. Watterson had his 100,000 unarmed Democrats here, they would have enough women to meet them."4

Suffrage and Knott were probably not the paramount issues of the January Congress. Two major symbiotic movements seemed to be dominating the Congressional mind;5 one movement was exposed, one covert. The surface activity concerned how a Democrat-dominated House could seek compromise with a Republican-dominated Senate to count the electoral vote for President and Vice President. Beneath the surface lay what C. Vann Woodward, in Reunion and Reaction, called "The Unknown Compromise."6

The known or surface compromise was well detailed by Paul Leland Haworth in The Hayes-Tilden Disputed Presidential Election of 1876. Haworth's basic thesis seems to be that the Democrats in Con-

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6 C. Vann Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, pp. 3-21.
gress feared that President Ulysses S. Grant would inaugurate Ruther-
ford B. Hayes under Army protection if some equitable compromise were 
not worked out. This conjured the specter of a second civil war, 
should Democrats also resort to force. The creation of an electoral 
commission to be composed of fifteen members—five from the Senate, 
five from the House, and five from the Supreme Court—received Demo-
ocratic approval for one or all of three reasons: Some Democrats 
favored the compromise because it was patriotic, since a Congression-
al election would produce the miscegenation of a Democratic President 
and a Republican Vice President. A second attraction of the compro-
mise, for Democrats, was that it would force the Republicans to tac-
itly abandon their claim that the President of the Senate should count 
the disputed votes. Thus the compromise would disarm the Republicans' 
best Constitutional argument, should Tilden be declared elected.

Perhaps the most important reason the Democrats favored the 
compromise, according to Haworth, was that they felt it assured a 
Tilden victory. There were several reasons for this assurance. Only 
one more electoral vote out of twenty in contention was needed to 
elect Tilden. Justice David Davis of Illinois was the fifth Justice 
on the compromise commission. He was thought by Republican and Demo-

7Haworth, The Hayes-Tilden Disputed Presidential Election of 
1876, p. 208.

8Ibid., p. 209.

crat alike to be an independent with Democratic leanings. Tilden felt Judge Davis offered him a "probability of success," and, on January 17, 1877, he approved the compromise plan because of Davis' selection to the Electoral Commission. Most Democrats reasoned that Judge Davis would find at least one vote out of twenty for Tilden and thus assure a Tilden victory.

The Republicans, according to Haworth, were less enthusiastic about the compromise plan. Every reason the Democrats had to favor the plan was a reason for Republicans to oppose it. Many Republicans, like Hayes, felt the plan unconstitutional. Hayes construed the Article 12 Constitutional provision that the certificates of the votes of the electoral colleges be transmitted sealed to the seat of government, "directed to the President of the Senate and that President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates, and the vote shall then be counted," to mean that the President of the Senate had the power to count the vote.

Other Republicans felt that Hayes would be elected if no compromise were agreed to. If one disputed vote, under the compromise plan, went to Tilden, then Tilden would be elected. The compromise

10Haworth, The Hayes-Tilden Disputed Election of 1876, p. 201.

11Hewitt, Selected Writings, ed. by Nevins, pp. 169-70.


13See Footnote 1, Haworth, p. 210, for citation of letters attesting to Hayes's feeling on the subject.
plan promised little and risked much. A final group of Hayes supporters felt the plan unpatriotic in that it might allow the Presidency to be delivered into the hands of men disloyal to the Union, i.e., the Party of former Confederates and their sympathizers.\textsuperscript{14} Many Republicans, including President Grant, supported the compromise proposal. Senator George F. Edmunds of Vermont, the Republican chairman of the Senate Election Committee, argued for the constitutionality of the bill.\textsuperscript{15} There is some evidence that Republicans privy to secret information felt that Judge Davis would support Hayes and, so, favored the plan.\textsuperscript{16} Haworth concludes from all evidence that most Democrats would favor the compromise plan when it came to a vote, and that most Republicans would oppose it. Haworth also notes the huge public petition response in favor of compromise. The vote on January 26, with the exception of a twenty-one-to-sixteen Republican defection in the Senate, tends to support Haworth's conclusion that voting patterns would coincide with party affiliation.\textsuperscript{17}

Haworth's thesis is not the only explanation surrounding the acceptance of the compromise plan. Watterson, in 1913, gave a chal-

\textsuperscript{14}Haworth, pp. 209-10.


\textsuperscript{16}Watterson quotes his uncle, Stanley Matthews, a leading Republican and kinsman of Hayes, as saying that Republicans wanted Davis as much as the Democrats: "Judge Davis was . . . safe for us." The Century Magazine, May, 1913, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{17}Haworth, p. 217.
lenge to future inquiry that "the truth underlying the determinate incidents which led to the rejection of Tilden and the seating of Hayes will never be known." 18 C. Vann Woodward acknowledged the challenge in 1951. 19

In Reunion and Reaction, Woodward advances a highly complex chain of causation for the Congressional acceptance of the compromise plan. Woodward traces the genesis of the compromise to what he calls the "Rejuvenation of Whigging." The "New Whigs" were a coalition of antebellum Unionists and Whigs, members of the Western Associated Press, such as Andrew J. Kellar, editor of the Memphis Avalanche, and Northern economic conservatives such as Hayes. The business community, North and South, feared talk of war and revolution. 20

The egalitarian abolitionist Republicans in the Southern states were losing control to the Southern Redeemers in state after state. Redeemer governors, Zebulon B. Vance of North Carolina, Augustus H. Garland of Arkansas, George F. Drew of Florida, John C. Brown and James G. Porter of Tennessee were all ex-Whigs. Congressmen Ben Hill and Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia, who sat with Watterson in the 44th Congress, were also Whigs. All these ex-Whigs now spoke for the same economic interests—railroad industries and business—as did the majority of Republicans in the North. Northern Democrats' opposition to Southern internal improvements such as rail-

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19 Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, p. 6.

20 Ibid., pp. 22-50.
roads and Mississippi levees also drove Southern Redeemer congressmen into alliance with Republicans who were more sympathetic to Southern desires.21

At the same time that the Southern Redeemers were making new alliances along economic rather than sectional lines, there was a great push for a railroad route from the South to the West Coast. Thomas A. Scott, Grenville M. Dodge, and several others, including two Republican Senators from the South, incorporated the Texas Pacific Railroad in 1871. The railroad was to run from Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana, through Texas, to San Diego, California. General Dodge, the famous chief engineer of the Union Pacific, and railroad lobbyist without equal, became chief engineer of the Texas Pacific. Within a year the Texas Pacific was changed to the Texas and Pacific. Dodge skillfully linked the railroad's completion with a sort of manifest destiny for the South. It became unpatriotic in the South not to favor the Texas and Pacific Railroad.22

The Texas and Pacific wanted the United States to guarantee payment of five-per-cent interest on the eighty-plus million dollars in railroad bonds. There were three groups in opposition to this plan. Collis P. Huntington of the Central Pacific Railroad wanted the Texas and Pacific's proposed route—or as much as he could get—so he opposed the Texas and Pacific subsidy. Congressman William S. Holman, Northern Democrat from Indiana and chairman of the House Com-

21Ibid., pp. 35-40; pp. 62-63.

22Ibid., pp. 70-98.
mittee on Appropriations, led the opposition in the House. Holman was a self-proclaimed guardian of the Treasury against railroad raiders. The final leading group in opposition were the Republican newspapers of New York and Chicago. Together, the newspapers, reform-minded congressmen, and Huntington's railroad lobby kept the Scott forces at bay during 1876.

At the heart of Woodward's thesis lies the "Scott Plan." The plan was outlined in a letter from General Henry Van Ness Boynton, a member of the Western Associated Press and a confederate of Thomas A. Scott of the Texas and Pacific, addressed to William Henry Smith, general agent of the Western Press Association, and Hayes's close friend. The letter promised that Scott could deliver the South for Hayes if Hayes would deliver his Congressional allies to help the Texas and Pacific Railroad.

The substance of our knowledge about Hayes's response to the offer lies in his diary on January 5, 1877, wherein he promised "internal improvements of a national character for the South." Could Scott deliver the South for Hayes? Woodward uses a letter of January 26, 1877, from General Boynton to William Henry Smith as proof that Boynton and Scott had turned the South to Hayes.

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23Ibid., pp. 82-147.
24Ibid., pp. 66-67.
First, Woodward cites Watterson as "the most belligerent of Southern congressmen" against selling out to Hayes. Then Woodward cites the letter from Boynton to Smith:

You could not guess in some time who was the first man to surrender without hesitation to Scott after the letter I wrote you about. You will hardly believe it but it was Watterson!

Woodward uses this letter as evidence that Scott converted Watterson from "the most belligerent and uncompromising of all the Southern congressmen and editors to one of the leading advocates of peace and deplovers of hotheads."

Did Scott influence Watterson so much that he changed the substance of his January 26th speech? A chronology of events may be helpful in answering this question. On January 14, 1877, Scott promised to go to work on the Southern Congressmen. On the evening of Tuesday, January 16, a Four Judge compromise plan was submitted to the Democratic Advisory Committee, meeting in the Speaker's Room. Watterson, a member of the committee, opposed the plan as a certain method of electing Hayes. His stand on the plan was exact-


ly like Tilden's stand. Thus, as of January 16, Watterson had not sold Tilden out.

The Democratic Advisory Committee met again on January 18. A new compromise plan, with Judge Davis as the fifth judge, had been submitted. Tilden, through his nephew, gave his cautious consent to the Five-Judge Plan. With Tilden's consent to the plan, it is probable that Watterson also supported it. According to Woodward, Tilden and the Democrats both saw a chance for victory in the bill. Watterson was still calling for armed resistance through the Courier-Journal, on January 24, rather than accept Hayes's "usurpation." Even after the last votes had been handed over to Hayes on February 16, Watterson continued to use the Courier-Journal as a rostrum to proclaim the "foul crime" against the people. If Watterson's speech on the 26th favored the compromise proposal because he had sold out to Scott, it seems unlikely that he would have kept up the editorial barrage against Hayes, Scott's alleged partner in the subterfuge.

To make the Scott plan the primary cause of Watterson's reversal on the Compromise Bill tends to ignore the multiplicity of other possible causes. One factor limiting the strength of the Scott-plan theory of causation is the complete failure of the Scott plan to achieve its desired results for Scott and his railroad. Woodward notes

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33 Ibid.


35 Watterson, *Courier-Journal*, January 24, 1877; February 17, 1877.
that, on January 29, there were at least a hundred railroad lobbyists and other outsiders on the floor of the House in a final attempt to bully Congressmen into passing Scott's Railroad Subsidy bill. The bill never made it to the floor, even with all this pressure. Scott's forces were defeated. Scott never did get a bill through Congress and was finally forced, in 1880, to sell his railroad to Jay Gould. Even Woodward admits that the Scott plan "illustrated and dramatized the cleavage" between the Southern and Northern Democrats, but "was only one among numerous issues that caused bad blood between the sectional wings of the Democratic Party."36 There were, at the very least, other issues on Watterson's mind as he prepared for his Compromise Speech. It is oversimplifying matters to view the Scott plan as the sole determinant of Watterson's oratorical position.

Since both Tilden and Scott backed the Five-Judge compromise plan, Watterson could have agreed with Scott on the plan without disloyalty to Tilden. Watterson certainly favored internal improvements for the South; so, he could also have gone along with Scott's proposed Texas and Pacific Railroad. Had Watterson sold out to Hayes, he would probably have toned down his anti-Hayes propaganda barrage. It would have been irrational for him to have written editorials greatly at variance with his speeches since his speeches were also reported to his constituency in the Courier-Journal.

Two historians, Haworth and Vann Woodward, wrote accounts about the days immediately precedent to Watterson's Compromise Speech.

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Haworth found that Republicans generally opposed the compromise plan while Democrats at large favored the plan. This analysis is supported by voting trends when the compromise bill came to a vote. Vann Woodward, in a more sophisticated analysis, finds that a deal made between the Hayes forces and Scott's Texas and Pacific Railroad lobbyists was the crucial issue in deciding the fate of the compromise proposal. A letter from Scott's confederate, Boynton, makes Watterson the first to yield to the Scott plan. Other evidence, such as Watterson's unrelenting editorial opposition to Hayes and his responsiveness to Tilden's wishes concerning the compromise plan, would question the effectiveness of Scott in changing Watterson's mind. Both Haworth and Vann Woodward, et al., explain the major preoccupation of Watterson's congressional audience.

The Immediate Speech Occasion

The Hayes-Tilden controversy, the railroad lobby, Watterson's reputation for conciliation, and Watterson's speech calling for "the 10,000" were all part of the Congressional milieu on January 26, 1877.

The House assembled at ten o'clock on the morning of the 26th, with few members in attendance. The galleries, however, were already filling and continued to do so until the close of the seven-hour session. The New York Times remarked that any points made during the ensuing debate were "stale and commonplace." Nearly all the speeches, however, had "a merit of compactness which was lacking in the unlimited

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speeches of the Senate." The two outsiders on the House floor whom the Times noted were Mr. George Bancroft, "the venerable historian of the country," and General William T. Sherman.38

The Speaker of the House, Samuel J. Randall, had much difficulty in keeping order, as "uninteresting speakers were giving reasons to their constituents at home for their votes on the bill." Congressman Benjamin H. Hill of Georgia had been elected to the Senate by his legislature to serve out a short term. When news of his election began to pass from mouth to mouth about the floor, members came to his seat at the front of the Chamber to congratulate him. Frank Hereford, Representative from West Virginia, even held an impromptu reception for Hill and his friends in one corner. Randall's constant gavelling did not have "very good success." Other spectators who appeared on the floor from time to time were Sir Edward Thornton, the British Minister, and the Danish Minister. Senator Oliver P. Morton of Indiana was carried onto the floor in his chair for the final vote.39

The House Chamber itself was ill-suited for debates in dead of winter. Chairman John Covode of the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds reported his committee's progress to the House on June 20, 1868. He made the following report:

Whereas, the confined and poisonous air in the Hall and corridors of the Representatives' wing of the Capitol has caused much sickness and even death among the members of the House and under present arrangements must continue to remain in poisonous condition:

Resolved, That the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds be


39 Ibid.
directed to examine at once and report to the House by what means a sufficient supply of pure air may be obtained for said Hall and that the committee be empowered to use the present means of ventilation to the best advantage at present and that they report by bill or otherwise.\textsuperscript{40}

The "poisonous condition" referred to was mainly the result of the burning of manufactured gas used to light the Chamber. To remedy this unhealthy situation, a plan was worked out whereby hot fresh air from the floor registers would be drawn out of the ceiling, thus wafting the poisonous air out of the top of the Chamber. There were problems with this system. First, the "fresh air" passing through the floor registers was "more or less contaminated by the refuse of tobacco and spittle which had accumulated in them, and the air which came into the room was offensive from that cause." The second problem with the new ventilation system was that the hot air rising failed to carry off the bad air. Instead, cold air descending from the vents in the roof kept the foul air on the floor of the Chamber. When fans were added to circulate the air, dust was driven into the Chamber, causing "much irritation and coughing among the members."\textsuperscript{41}

In 1876, ventilation was added to the men's gallery, and a commission was formed to study the whole question of improving the air of the Chamber. This committee did not make its report until


October of 1877, too late for Watterson's speech.\(^2\)

The Nation also found conditions in the House Chamber antithetical to good debate:

The essential difference between a debate in the Senate and a debate in the House lies in the fact that one is a debate and the other is not. The reasons generally given for this are physical: that the Senate Chamber is a smaller room, that a man possessed of ordinary lungs can make himself heard by everybody in it, and that there are a much smaller number of persons in it and consequently no continued din and clatter like that of the House, which is so great as to permit conversation of the most unrestrained kind among persons immediately behind the seats—conversation and laughter which, loud enough in itself, is lost in the general confusion of noises which drowns the members' speeches and even the Speaker's rulings.\(^3\)

On the morning of January 25, 1877, Speaker of the House Randall noted that "more than fifty members" had indicated a desire to speak on the compromise proposal. By the end of the morning's debate, the number had risen to seventy. Only two days had been allotted for debate; so a plan was agreed upon to limit individual speeches. All speakers were to be given one hour's time until noon of January 26. After noon, all speeches would be limited to ten minutes. An order of one pro-speech and one con-speech was also to be followed as closely as possible.\(^4\)

The previous day's debate had seen a barrage of support for the compromise resolution. There was only sporadic though nonetheless vociferous reply to the progenitors of the resolution. The day's

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 155.

\(^3\)Nation, February 1, 1877, XXIV, p. 70.

speeches divided the compromise resolution into one major and several minor issues.

George W. McCrary of Iowa began debate by discussing the major issue. The major issue couched as a major premise of hypothetical syllogism was:

If there is an irreconcilable difference as to the true interpretation of the Constitution, the true interpretation can only be settled and adjusted by legislation.

There is an irreconcilable difference as to the true interpretation of the Constitution.

Therefore, the true interpretation can only be settled and adjusted by legislation.

Representative McCrary attempted to prove his antecedent by inductive stare decisis. He quoted more than a dozen of his Congressional colleagues from 1821 to 1869 to prove that there truly were irreconcilable differences. Attempting to prove the consequent by a method of residues, he used precedent to show that other methods of settling the dispute, i.e., one House of Congress, acting alone, would be unconstitutional. McCrary left only one choice, adopt the consequent, i.e., pass the legislated Compromise Plan.45

The subordinate issues concerned the consequences of the proposed legislation. Granted the validity of the syllogism, what would be the consequences of passing the compromise plan? Would the passage of the bill give up House rights and prerogatives? Representative Eppa Hunton reviewed precedents from 1800 to 1877 and concluded that the House was relinquishing no more rights here than "the tellers ap-

45Ibid., pp. 933-34.
pointed under the precedents from 1800 down to the present time."\(^{46}\)

A second consequence of the compromise bill often mentioned in debate was that it would promote peace and justice. As Representative William M. Springer put it:

Let us settle our domestic differences with like honorable and peaceful methods . . . a great threatening calamity will have been averted. . . .\(^{47}\)

Almost every speaker appealed to the motives of safety and security.

A final issue debated concerned the use of the Supreme Court. Would they be biased? Representative John Goode, Jr., responded that any inherent political bias the court might have would "be overweighted a hundred-fold by the bias pressing them to preserve the dignity, honor, and weight of their judicial office. . . ."\(^{48}\)

Opponents of the bill used the same rhetorical categories as points at issue. Typical of the bill's opposition was Representative Eugene Hale of Maine. Hale used Congressional history with respect to the operation of the Electoral College to show that no action such as the compromise plan had ever been necessary before.\(^{49}\)

Representative James Monroe of Ohio also denied the constitutionality of the compromise plan. In addition, Monroe examined the

\(^{46}\)Ibid., p. 938.

\(^{47}\)Several Representatives favoring the bill expressed the opinion that the pending legislation was not a "compromise bill." Representative Goode said, "There is not a drop of compromise in it." And Representative Hewitt called it a plan "of settlement and not of compromise." (Congressional Record, 44th Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. V, pt. 1, pp. 941, 947, 962.)

\(^{48}\)Ibid., p. 941.

\(^{49}\)Ibid., pp. 943-45.
consequence of the passage of such a bill. The use the bill made of
the Supreme Court would politicize the court and thus impair "that un-
questioning confidence which the whole people have heretofore reposed
in the judges of their highest tribunal."  

Representative A. Herr Smith from Pennsylvania recited prece-
dents from George Washington forward, denying any ambiguity as to who
should count the vote. He then referred to Watterson's "100,000"
speech in denying that there was any real threat to the nation's secu-

The hundred thousand unarmed men that are to be brought here to
bull-doze the Senate and House, I do not fear.51

The debate on January 25th ended with areas of rhetorical opposition
well defined.

Charles E. Hooker of Mississippi began the debate on January
26. Hooker favored the compromise bill in that the bill would preserve
the Electoral College as well as retain the power of either House to
review the results. Julian Hartridge of Georgia followed with a call
for "wisdom, justice and moderation." Roger Q. Mills of Texas was the
first of the day to oppose the compromise. His doubts were similar to
those expressed the day before. He felt the bill unconstitutional as
well as an abrogation of the right of the House to reject a vote of a
state, independent of the Senate.52

50 Ibid., p. 949.
51 Ibid., p. 968.
52 Ibid., pp. 973-82.
The four hours of afternoon debate began at noon, with each speaker to receive ten minutes of speaking time. If the speaker so desired, a text of any longer remarks he might have would be printed in the Congressional Record. The first two speakers, L. Q. C. Lamar and John H. Baker, both took advantage of the right to longer printed speeches. It was now Watterson's time to speak.

Watterson's manner and dress no doubt attracted attention. A reporter for the Cincinnati Times described him as "one of the best dressed men in the House, nature and the necessary number of tailors having combined to make him a model. The average Congressman is wholly wanting in style, but he is quite stunning. Good looks, he is never accused of. His hair is tawny, his cheeks fat, and his squint and a way of settling the corners of his mouth makes him resemble the faces of grimacing satyrs in Gallic architecture." Watterson chose to have at least an hour's worth of speaking printed in the House Record, although he spoke for only ten minutes. He probably had intended to give the longer speech, as had his friend L. Q. C. Lamar. The full text of his ten-minute speech was printed in the New-York Daily Tribune and paraphrased in the New York Times. The staunchly Republican Times made much of Watterson's change of attitude toward the bill. The Times attributed this change to the Democratic Party: "... he is in the traces, and like any well-trained

53 Ibid., pp. 997-1005.

54 Cincinnati Times, January 17, 1877.

draft horse, pulls the way that is required. . . ." A few days later the Times correspondent, writing in "Occasional Washington Notes," moderated the Times' earlier position, saying "Mr. Watterson made an eloquent little speech." The Daily Tribune, no friend of the Democrats, was frank in its praise of Watterson: "One of the best speeches on the Democratic side in the recent debate was delivered in the House of Representatives on Friday by Mr. Henry Watterson." Representative Adlai E. Stevenson, later to become Vice President of the United States, had a still more favorable opinion of Watterson's speech:

His speech near the close, upon the bill creating an Electoral Commission to determine the Tilden-Hayes Presidential controversy, was listened to with earnest attention and at once gave him high place among the great debaters of that eventful Congress.

Watterson was followed by a dozen and a half more ten-minute speeches. The final vote on the bill sustained his conviction by 191 to 86. The New York Times, in their analysis of voting trends, showed New England Democrats solidly for the bill. Of the thirty-two Republicans who voted for the bill, all but two were from the North.

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56 Ibid., pp. 1-2; p. 1, February 4, 1877.


60 New York Times, January 27, 1877.
On January 29, President Grant approved the Electoral Commission bill as "... a wise and Constitutional means of escape ..." from "... the imminent peril to the institutions of the country. ...".61

**Electoral Commission Decision**

The case of the disputed Florida vote was decided on February 8. The commission decided along strict party lines to allow the four electoral votes of Florida to be counted for Hayes and Wheeler. On February 16, the commission awarded the votes of Louisiana to Hayes, again by an eight-to-seven vote.62 The Democrats sponsored a delaying action on February 17 to postpone the reading of the commission report until Monday, the 19th. On the morning of the 19th, the report of the commission as well as a long list of objections to the report was read.63 The House had experienced a series of recesses beginning on February 10, the day the findings of the Electoral Commission on the Florida case were officially announced. These recesses had the effect of a filibuster. The recesses slowed down greatly the progress of the electoral count.64

On the 19th, the House was recessed until the 20th. On the

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20th, Representative Randall L. Gibson of Louisiana moved that the Hayes-pledged electors from Louisiana "be not counted." Gibson's motion was followed by debate on the Louisiana question. There were several points of view expressed. The most radical Democrat was perhaps William M. Levy, also of Louisiana, who charged that by the Commission decision "Louisiana is robbed of her constitutional right and the true voice of the people suppressed." On the other side, the vindictiveness of Northern Republicans was voiced by Representative Charles H. Joyce of Vermont, who chided the Democratic Party as a pot calling the kettle black: "Why, sir, their whole policy, and their every act since 1854, has been one grand system of fraud and deception." A middle-of-the-road position was taken by Jeptha D. New, who, while sustaining the objections of the commission, also was in favor of "proceeding without unnecessary delay to the conclusion of the count." If the count was for Hayes, New favored submitting to "a minority President."

Representative William W. Crapo of Massachusetts made a speech chastising Louisianians for past wrongs. Samuel S. Cox then obtained the floor for ten minutes for Watterson. Watterson's short appeal for the commission findings induced a burst of applause from the Chamber. Watterson became the first of his region to stand by the decision of the Electoral Commission and against filibuster. His speech was apparently listened to with great interest. The Daily Tribune remarked:


66 Ibid., pp. 1689-90.
Henry Watterson is one of the few members who are listened to attentively whenever they speak upon any subject. His voice is so sympathetic, his style of oratory so eloquent and his manner so pleasing that whether he speaks on the right side or the wrong of any question, everybody likes to listen to him.°7

The next day the Daily Tribune chided Watterson, a famous wit, for the somber tone of his speech:

Mr. Watterson still loiters with the statesmen but in his speech of Tuesday there was so much more of sorrow than of anger that we feel quite certain he is on his way back to health and the mood of merriment. He too has had his hours of being borne down with the weight of the whole nation, and there have been times when he has felt that he could not stand it alone, but must have help from Kentucky. His condition improves with the progress of the count, and by the time the end is reached and Hayes inaugurated he will be as full of fun as ever.°8

The New York Times took a much dimmer editorial view of Watterson's sour grapes: "Mr. Watterson made a doleful reference to the 'Great Day of Reckoning' whose earthly counterpart has given him so much trouble."°9 Watterson, with a total Congressional speaking time of no more than twenty minutes, had been handsomely recognized for his eloquence. His friends and antagonists plied him with praise and satire.

The praise Watterson received notwithstanding, it is well to remember that Watterson's speaking had much improvement ahead. Edward Mitchell, writing about the February speech, noted:

It is but honest-Injin to mention the fact that in later years he developed a much more finished oratorical style than was credited to him in February of 1877, by a distant admirer who

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°8 Ibid., February 22, 1877, p. 4.
°9 New York Times, February 21, 1877, p. 4.
heard the young spokesman and trusted representative of the Tilden cause declaim in Congress when the pebbles were still in his mouth. 70

Pebbles or not, the influence of Watterson's oratory far exceeded the usual utterances of a freshman Congressman.

The question arises again and again, however: Did Watterson sell out to "minions of apostasy" headed by Tom Scott and his railroad gang? Did the Western Associated Press and the railroad lobby persuade Watterson, Lamar, Reagan, and Hill to sabotage the filibuster from its Democratic heart? Joseph Wall, in Henry Watterson: Reconstructed Rebel makes an analysis of the vote on each motion to recess or otherwise delay the count. He finds that "a larger proportion of the Southern and border-state Congressmen voted for delay than did the Northern Democrats." If Watterson and his fellow "hothead" turncoats sabotaged the filibuster, they were less than effective until March 1. On that day, Representative Levy assured his colleagues that Hayes had given his word to be conciliatory toward the South. Wall concluded from the voting patterns that there is no simple explanation of why each representative voted as he did. Pro- and anti-railroad forces voted alike at times and at other times opposed one another. 71

Another alleged proof of Watterson's apostasy is his change in editorial policy which accompanied his moderation in speaking before


Congress.\textsuperscript{72} The New-York Daily Tribune, however, was so much moved by Watterson's lack of moderation in his editorials as compared with his speaking that the Tribune felt moved to comment on the discrepancy:

"Mr. Watterson pursues a wise course. He makes moderate speeches in Congress and then unburdens his pent-up emotions in the Louisville Courier-Journal." The Tribune went on to compare Watterson's speech of February 20 with his editorial of the 18th to prove its point.\textsuperscript{73}

In summary, there is a lack of consistent patterns of causality in the etiological examination of the relationship of Scott's group to Watterson during the compromise debate.

Perhaps Watterson's potentially best speech during the compromise debates was never given. On February 24, 1877, the vote of the Electoral Commission on the Oregon elections was announced before a joint session of Congress.\textsuperscript{74} The possibility of an Oregon elector for Tilden was the last hope of the Tildenites.\textsuperscript{75} With this hope eliminated, a resignation to the inevitable seemed prudent. After a noon recess, the House reconvened to record objections to the Oregon decision. Many members wished to give objections. It was agreed to record these objections in the Record and then join with the Senate


\textsuperscript{73}New-York Daily Tribune, February 22, 1877, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{74}Congressional Record, 44th Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. V, pt. 3, p. 1887.

\textsuperscript{75}Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, p. 18.
to get on with the electoral count. 76

Watterson's written speech was in opposition to the filibuster. Watterson's words, "I hold that futile resistance is always to be avoided, particularly when the act of resistance has no objective point," 77 were immediately noted by the Tribune:

Sometime in the future the eighty or ninety fractious Democrats who are trying to make a revolution because they have lost a lawsuit may possibly, in turning over the pages of the Congressional Record of these days, come upon the speech which Henry Watterson, most gallant and staunchest of Democrats, delivered in the House after the decision of the Oregon case, and then they will wonder that they should have been such fools as not to recognize sense when they heard it. 78

Watterson's ideas were only symbolic of a trend. 79 The number of House members favoring a filibuster was almost halved from February 24th to the 26th. 80

Two days after Watterson's remarks were printed in the Record, he attended the famous Wormley Conference. The Wormley Conference was the site of the agreement between Hayes's representatives and the Southern Democrats. Watterson said he and his fellow Democrats extracted a Hayes promise to withdraw troops from the South in return


79 Reunion and Reaction, p. 199. Woodward quotes Watterson's "Oregon Speech" to further illustrate that "few of the 'Texas and Pacific force' ever broke ranks to join the filibuster."

80 Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, p. 198.
for Southern support for Hayes. C. Vann Woodward explains the Wormley Conference as merely reiterating the South's pledge to end the filibuster and to help elect Hayes's choice, James A. Garfield, as Speaker of the House. The South, in turn, was then promised the Texas and Pacific Railroad subsidy, the Cabinet position of Postmaster General, and money for internal improvements.

In the early morning hours of March 4, the last electoral vote was counted and Hayes was declared elected. Some wags called to Watterson for his "ten thousand," but such stale wit at 4:00 a.m. was met with acrimonious silence.

Hayes took the oath of office, and Watterson returned to Louisville. Watterson's conciliatory attitude during this period is not apparent in his editorials. There is no metaphor of the lamb, Tilden, sacrificed at the Wormley Conference to the higher deity, reunion. Only with two years' hindsight is Watterson able to see the Wormley Conference as a ratification of reconciliation. Speaking at a welcome-home banquet in Louisville, Watterson, in guarded optimism, hoped Hayes would pursue a policy of reconciliation and reform. He still held the only real deliverance from sectional strife to be

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82 Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, pp. 196; 187.
In summary, freshman Congressman Watterson made two conciliatory speeches during the debate over the Hayes-Tilden Compromise. Watterson's motives concerning his change of strategy immediately before his first speech have been questioned. The preponderance of evidence indicates a sincere wish by Watterson to please Tilden. Watterson may have changed the tone of his speeches, but not his strong editorial support for Tilden. Although not as polished as later efforts, these two persuasive speeches earned Watterson the national reputation as first in reconciliation.

**Memorial Day Address**

**National Cemetery in Nashville**

Watterson's next opportunity for a national audience for a reconciliation speech came on Memorial Day, May 30, 1877. Watterson was invited to speak at the Memorial Day ceremonies by Colonel Edward S. Jones, President of the National Monumental Association. In his acceptance letter dated May 1, to the Monumental Association, Watterson wrote:

I feel that the American soldier who gave up his life for his opinions was my comrade, no matter where he fought, and I know that the fame and honor of every brave soldier are dear to me. I shall bring to the performance of this duty at least a national spirit, proud of the achievements of the whole people on the battle field, and happy in a peace that joins all the people in a lasting union of free states.  

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On Sunday, May 27, the graves of the Confederate dead were decorated in Nashville, Tennessee. The Nashville Daily American estimated three thousand people placed flowers on the graves and generally had a good time. The day was not given to eulogy for the Lost Cause:

We have seldom seen so much enjoyment, with so little to mar a joy tempered by respect for a beautiful idea. There is no mourning and no occasion for it. The idea is one to create a holiday.

The fine weather and holiday atmosphere were to last for the decoration of graves at the National Cemetery on the following Wednesday, Memorial Day. On May 29, the American announced the elaborate plans for the occasion. Four trains would leave downtown Nashville at 1:00, 2:00, 3:30, and 4:00 p.m. for the short trip to the cemetery. Flags and flowers were to be given to each arriving trainload. Each trainload also had specific instructions as to where their decorations were to be placed. The program was to begin at 4:30, with band music, prayer, and singing led by Professor Von Strang. After Watterson's address, a musical arrangement was planned. There were no further formal activities, and returning trains were scheduled for 5:30, 6:00, and 7:00 p.m. Those who planned to attend the ceremonies were warned that "refreshments" and "breaking of shrubbery or plucking of flowers" were not allowed. Those who drove their carriages out dusty Gallatin Pike were admonished to pick up admission cards in advance.

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87 Nashville Daily American, May 29, 1877, p. 2.

88 Ibid., May 31, 1877, p. 4.
Two veterans groups having reunions at the Maxwell House in Nashville promised to be on hand. The largest group were the veterans of the Florida and Mexican Wars. The survivors of the War of 1812 formed the smaller contingent.89

The Daily American saw a great opportunity for reconciliation in the occasion and in Watterson's speech. On Memorial Day, the American expressed their sentiments in a page-1 editorial:

The decoration of the graves of Federal dead at the National Cemetery, today, should and doubtless will be largely attended. It is the first occasion as far as this cemetery is concerned, on which an ex-Confederate has been called on to testify the admiration and respect men have for valor and heroic deeds, by whomsoever they were done.

Hon. Henry Watterson will not fail to present something in matter, in dress, and in sentiment worthy of the occasion and well worthy the attention of those who appreciate a rich intellectual repast.

We hope the old Confederates will turn out 'en masse,' to make this era of reconciliation complete by their presence at a ceremonial where all—no matter on which side they fought—will be reminded that it is more patriotic to forgive and forget than to hate.90

Apparently the "old Confederates" turned out as requested.

"Decoration Day," crowed the American, "is one of the days in the year when the weather seems always propitious, and yesterday was no exception." About three thousand people were on hand. "Prominent men of both parties and of both sides in the late civil strife were present and mingled so that one could not be distinguished from another."91

89 Nashville Daily American, May 29, 1877, p. 2.


91 Ibid., May 31, 1877, p. 2.
If those on hand sought a message of conciliation, they were not disappointed. The American, on May 31, editorially applauded Watterson for his speech "opposed to the idea of sectionalism."

The address delivered yesterday at the National Cemetery was brief and in excellent taste. There are enough excellent ideas to have been elaborated into a half dozen addresses... Mr. Watterson delicately touched questions which were pertinent and general, interesting in the same way the Unionist and the Confederate, the Republican and Democrat.92

Watterson's plea against sectionalism was noticed and applauded in a national forum. The New-York Daily Tribune printed a long excerpt from Watterson's speech. In the same issue, the Tribune ran an editorial comparing Watterson's speech with that of ex-Senator G. S. Boutwell of Massachusetts:

Mr. Watterson represents the best class of public men in the Southern Democracy, the men who accept the settlements of war as final, who wish to reverse no step of our national progress, who hold it their first duty to encourage the reviving spirit of harmony and union.

Boutwell, who had been Secretary of the Treasury under Ulysses S. Grant, was cast as the unregenerate radical:

Mr. Boutwell has changed neither his opinions nor his temper. Although the war is over—for the present—he believes that the rebellious spirit of the South survives in all its wickedness and threatens the Union with a great and instant danger.93

The Tribune concluded that the nation would turn away from Boutwell's vindictive oratory:

Place this clamor for violence, this bitter outburst against the 'crimes,' the menaces, the hidden purposes, the 'secret and unscrupulous military organization' of the 'remnant of the slave-holding oligarchy,' alongside the ex-Confederate soldier at Nash-

92 Ibid., May 31, 1877, p. 4.

ville, and let the Country say which of the two speakers understands its heart.94

The best testimony to the immediate national impact of Watterson's speech comes from Samuel Bowles, editor of the Springfield (Mass.) Republican. Bowles, in a letter to Watterson, gives this analysis:

The Nashville address was a great success. The North is all reading it, loving you for it, and what is better, appreciating you and your people more intelligently. I think you have said as good things before in some of your congressional speeches—possibly even better. But this has the great advantage of coming at the right moment to be widely received and honestly judged. You see we printed it in both Daily and Weekly in full. It is the address of the week and will do all the good you have dreamed it might do.

Bowles, who admired Watterson's integrity before, could now admire Watterson's political philosophy, not as a Democrat but as an exponent of reconciliation. Thus Bowles concluded: "I will never quarrel with you as a bourbon any more..."95

Watterson came to Nashville at a critical time. The contested election and Grant's withdrawal of troops from the South were crucial issues. Watterson used amplification to allow a whole nation to participate in the finality of reunion that death exemplifies.

"The New South"

The American Bankers' Association Convention - Louisville

The Decoration Day address was the first of many Memorial Day addresses at which Watterson was to proclaim the creed of reconciliation.

94 Ibid., p. 4.

tion. His next few years were devoted to Tilden's renomination, which was unsuccessful, and a series of lecture tours, which were highly successful. Watterson's stated purpose for his lecture tours was to make money: "The discourse is pure humanistic, . . . the purpose—mercenary." 96

Watterson's 1877 lecture was called "Comicalities, Whimsicalities and Realities of Southern Life," 97 which was shortened to "The South in Light and Shade" when reproduced in Watterson's book, The Compromises of Life. 98 After lecturing through the Midwest, Watterson landed at New York's Chickering Hall, where the modest sum of fifty and seventy-five cents was charged for general admission and reserved seats respectively. 99 The lecture itself is a potpourri of Southern regional wit and rural-dialect stories. Watterson could not resist injecting his favorite theme, reconciliation, even into the most "mercenary" of efforts. "No people in the world are more homogeneous than the people of the United States. Where differences exist they are purely exterior." 100 This lecture became so famous that

96 Watterson to Reid, October 20, 1877, Whitelaw Reid Papers, quoted by J. F. Wall (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, New York, 1951), p. 236.


100 Watterson, The Compromises of Life, p. 97.
he was able to edit a book in 1883 on the humor of the antebellum South.\textsuperscript{101} The lecture was as popular at Dayton, Ohio, Soldiers' Home\textsuperscript{102} as it was in New York City.

Watterson received much national attention at the Democratic Editors' Convention, June 30, 1881, when he called for "a Restored Democracy." The speech was mostly concerned with reform in the Democratic Party and only tangentially referred to "North and South, good will to all!"\textsuperscript{103}

Watterson's next national forum on reconciliation was at the American Bankers' Association Convention at Louisville in October of 1883. The Bankers' meeting was set to coincide with Louisville's Southern Exposition. Atlanta had taken the lead in showing the nation that the South was committed to "Progress," with the International Cotton Exposition of 1881. C. Vann Woodward admirably captures the spirit of these expositions:

In their hall Southerners joined with millions of Yankee guests to invoke the spirit of Progress and worship the machine. Here they performed rituals of 'reconciliation' and nationalism, and held reunions of Blue and Gray—without which none of these affairs were complete.

Louisville had spared no expense in confronting banker and yeoman with the investment, imagination, and market potentials which the South had to offer.\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{101}Henry Watterson, \textit{The Oddities in Southern Life} (Boston, 1883).

\textsuperscript{102}\textit{New York Times}, June 9, 1878, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{103}\textit{New-York Daily Tribune}, July 1, 1881, p. 5.

The Southern Exposition opened at Louisville on August 1 and lasted one hundred days. Over two hundred and fifty thousand dollars was raised by the sale of stock to help underwrite the exposition. The central attraction at the fair was a building covering thirteen acres and costing $300,000. Almost 800,000 people passed through the exposition's gates during its three-months duration. 105

The bankers may well have been interested in what section of the country their capital should be invested. They were no doubt equally interested in what form their money would take—gold, silver, or paper.

The panic of 1873 and a search for ways to avert its recurrence had provided the impetus for the founding of the American Bankers' Association. In his address to the first bankers' conclave in 1875, C. B. Hall stressed two main points—elimination of the bank taxes and resumption of specie payments. Through the efforts of the Association, specie payments were resumed on January 1, 1879, when United States notes became redeemable in gold coin. In the spring of 1883, the bank tax laws were repealed.106

With the passage of the Bland-Allison Act of 1878, the American Bankers' Association had a new target—bimetallism. There were members of the association from silver-producing states who favored bimetallism. However, the association passed a resolution opposing the limited coinage of silver dollars. They found no demand to war—


rant this "deterioration of our standard of currency." The Association was split along sectional lines—not North and South, but East and West—over monometallism versus bimetallism.

Watterson was certainly not invited to the convention in 1883 to resolve this issue. The stories about Watterson's incompetence in his personal business affairs are legion. While Watterson personally engraved the words "tariff for revenue only" in the Democratic platform of 1880, he lacked even the rudimentary financial sophistication to form an opinion on currency issues. When he told the convention in his peroration:

It was not, however, to hear of banks and bankers and banking that you did me the honor to call me before you. I am told that to-day you are considering the problem which has so disturbed the politicians—the South—and that you wish me to talk to you about the South. The South! The South!

Watterson was not just "whistling Dixie."

The convention met in Louisville on October 10, at the Masonic

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108 It is worth noting that this rift was not over the issue of inflation. The wording of the Bland-Allison Act and the subsequent resumption of specie payments precluded both silver inflation and extended greenback inflation. The Bland-Allison Act also ignored the greenbacker's prescient awareness that money's form should be separated from its function. See Walter T. K. Nugent, Money and American Society, 1865-1880 (New York: The Free Press, 1968), especially pp. 243-50.


110 Ibid., p. 170.

111 It was not until the 1890's that Watterson gained the requisite awareness of the currency crisis to take a public stand. Watterson still did not understand that Jacksonian Doctrines of low tariff and hard money were not universally applicable in a changing world. See Wall, Henry Watterson: Reconstructed Rebel, p. 224.
Temple. About one hundred and fifty Eastern, Western, and Southern members were present. The convention was called to order and an appropriate prayer given by the Rev. Charles Craik of Christ Church, Louisville. President George S. Coe of New York delivered the opening address. He congratulated the organization on the repeal of the bank tax and attacked the coinage of silver, which had placed "the American eagle against justice and against the world." 113

After the treasurer's report, John J. Knox, Controller of the Currency and long-standing ally of the Bankers' Association, 114 expressed his faith in the continuation of the National Banking System. Senator Joseph R. Hawley of Connecticut pledged Congressional fealty to any decisions of the convention. J. H. Linderberger, president of the Merchants' National Bank of Louisville, introduced two resolutions—one to continue the National Banking System and one to retire United States legal tender notes—which resolutions were to be discussed at the following day's meeting. 115

Hawley and Knox were not the only "non-bankers" present at the convention. Governor J. Proctor Knott of Kentucky, Governor Crittenden of Missouri, Governor Murray of Utah, Governor Jarvis of North Carolina, and Governor Porter of Indiana were also on hand. 116

October 11 was "Southern Day" for the convention. After a pa-


per on bankruptcy laws, delivered by George M. Davie of Louisville, a resolution was passed affirming the need for national debtor-creditor laws. A digest of debtor-creditor laws was followed by reports from the South. Representatives from seven Southern states, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, Virginia, and Texas, each gave glowing reports of economic growth and prospects in their respective states but decried the lack of Northern capital. 117

After election of officers for the coming year, the acting President, First Vice President Logan C. Murray, praised Louisville as a convention site. This was the first convention not held in the Northeast, and Murray hailed the selection of Louisville as "a beginning of the era of a new life." Chairman George S. Coe introduced Watterson with the brief: "There is a gentleman whom Louisville is very proud to own as a citizen, and who is known all over the United States. I allude to the Hon. Henry Watterson." 118

Judging by the minutes, Watterson's speech was the best received of the day. Watterson's short, fifteen-minute speech was interrupted at least sixteen times with outbursts of applause, laughter, or both. The convention unanimously passed "a rising vote of thanks to Mr. Watterson." The next speaker, General A. G. Dodge—his New York carpet bag barely unpacked—prefaced his remarks with deference to Watterson, "I will not detain you more than two or three minutes, espe-

117 New-York Daily Tribune, October 12, 1883, p. 5.

cially as you have just heard the great monarch of eloquence, Mr. Watterson.”

The rest of the convention day emphasized problems in securing capital for the South and the national issue of currency expansion. The close of the day's activities marked the end of the convention.

Watterson lacked the financial expertise to make a sophisticated appeal to the bankers to channel their funds South. Instead, he used the theme of the "New South" to show that the South was ready for reconciliation and reunion. He thus transcended the superficial financial questions involved so that he could once again proclaim:

The truth is, the war is over and the country is whole again. The people, always homogeneous, have a common national interest.

Watterson was not only referring to financial interests but also to social, political, and geographic interests as well.

"The Puritan and the Cavalier"

New England Society - New York

Between 1883 and 1894, Watterson's reputation as an orator reached new plateaus of recognition. The New-York Daily Tribune's correspondent felt he had spotted Watterson's oratorical apogee when

119 Ibid., pp. 73-74.
120 Ibid., p. 75.
121 New-York Daily Tribune, October 12, 1883, p. 5.
Watterson gave the major address at the dedication of the Chicago World's Fair in 1892. The events of that October day must have seemed preternatural even to the ebullient Watterson.

The Vice President, the Mayor of Chicago, a half-dozen of the finest orators of the day, church prelates, and most of the diplomatic representatives to the United States stood up, cheering and applauding. Watterson advanced to the podium as the 5,000-voice choir broke out in the "Hallelujah Chorus." The crowd became so quiet that the loudest sound was Watterson's footsteps. Watterson addressed the audience, using their most cherished symbols such as the flag, country, and God. The audience responded by igniting in pandemonium. One hundred thousand jumped to their feet, cheering and giving vent to idolatrous frenzy. The overwrought choir, themselves past restraint, orchestrated the adulation with "The Star-Spangled Banner" as Watterson returned to his seat. The Tribune correspondent best captured the measure of this moment in Watterson's speaking career when he remarked that Watterson's ovation was "worthy to crown a lifetime of glory."123

This was but one plateau of glory for Watterson. When he was not on his frequent lecture tours, he was in great demand as a Democratic Party spokesman and as the voice of Tariff Reform. His expeditions knew no sectional bounds. He had spoken at Cooper Union in New York as early as 1876.124 By November of 1877, the New York

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123 *New-York Daily Tribune*, October 22, 1892, p. 11.

audience was said to be curious about Watterson's "face and manner" although even then his "name and political sentiments" were "so widely known."\(^\text{125}\) From then on, there were few years when he did not speak at least once in the city characterized by a contemporary, Byron K. Newton, as "crazed with avarice, lust and rum, New York, thy name's Delirium!"

One of the vanities of New York's elite during those years was the hosting of the Annual New England Society Dinner. The New England Society of New York was founded in 1805 by gentlemen of "leisure, culture and hospitality," such as President Timothy Dwight of Yale University and James Watson, the social arbiter of a colony of New Englanders living near Battery Park in New York City. The purposes of the society, according to its constitution, are "friendship, charity and mutual assistance."\(^\text{126}\)

Elihu Root's invitation to Watterson gave the impression that the society's constitutional mandate was still in effect in 1893. Root's letter, dated November 17, 1893, invited Watterson to "respond to a toast" at the 88th Annual Dinner of the New England Society on the 22nd of December.\(^\text{127}\)

Root described the society and the occasion. In doing so he made a persuasive case for Watterson to attend:

You can frame your toast to suit yourself. There will be a good dinner, there will be good fellows in plenty and there will

\(^\text{125}\) *New-York Daily Tribune*, November 21, 1877, p. 5.


be solid men of New York, all keenly awake to the living questions of the day.

It will be an interested and sympathetic audience, full of good understanding. The occasion is the most auspicious of all the gatherings of its kind during the year. The speeches are fully reprinted and published and are widely read.\textsuperscript{128}

It was well for Root to be persuasive. Watterson had turned down New England Society invitations on at least two previous occasions, possibly even the year that Henry Grady accepted.\textsuperscript{129} He found the winter lecture circuit much too lucrative and the receptions too enthusiastic to be enticed to New York.\textsuperscript{130} Also Watterson might have hesitated to accept Root's invitation because the audience and occasion were not all that Root alleged. There is evidence that these men, "full of good understanding," were more likely to be the epitome of the wealthy, conservative banker. These aristocrats of wealth were more interested in being stroked with the myths of their forebears than lashed with the evils of intra-sectional disharmony.\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{128}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{129}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{130}Watterson's 'Money and Morals' lecture announcement bespeaks success. The flyer gave excerpts from no less than eleven newspapers extolling Watterson's 1892-93 lecture, 'Money and Morals.' When he spoke in Washington, D.C., 'the President, the Cabinet and half of the Congress' were said to be present. A Washington paper is quoted as observing, 'The applause with which the lecture was approved time after time was not the sort that is marked in the manuscript release "insert."

In the list of 'Opinions of the Press,' many Southern and Western papers placed themselves in jeopardy by using up all the available expletives, saving none for the second coming. See "Money and Morals," descriptive pamphlet, Filson Club Collection.

canvas back and terrapin were more likely to be the highlight of the evening than his speech. Watterson, whatever his feelings, replied to Root on November 25. He explained that he had lecture commitments, but held out some hope that he might attend. Another year passed before he accepted Root's invitation.

The New York chapter of the New England Society met for a dinner on Saturday night, December 22, 1894. Chauncey Depew, a frequent attendant at such gatherings, was at the speaker's table with Watterson. Depew had attended the Brooklyn New England Society dinner the night before. If the prospect of Puritan praise two nights in succession was less than inviting, Depew did not show it. The orchestra toasted Depew with "The Bowery," as everyone sang and clapped in accompaniment. Chairman Elihu Root even referred to Depew as "Chauncey De Peach," much to the delight of all. The 368 men present sang such old favorites as "Annie Rooney" and "Sweet Marie" while "some surprise was expressed that the band had the temerity to play these shopworn songs."

The tables were arranged in the usual form of a comb and seven teeth, with decorations of red roses and smilax. As a concession to haute cuisine, the New Englanders allowed an "un-Puritan"

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134 Ibid., December 23, 1894, p. 1.
In his introductory remarks, Root bade welcome representatives from other New York societies as "intermingling with the blood of Puritans and Cavaliers, ... to produce a new and distinct type of American nationality." Root announced the total membership to be 1,587 and the treasury total, $95,000. He congratulated the New York Governor-elect and City Mayor-elect on their Society membership. Root climaxed a recitation of New England Society virtues by the toast, "Forefathers' Day," to which Dr. Henry A. Stimson responded.\footnote{Ibid., p. 135.}

After a eulogy to a departed member, followed by "Auld Lang Syne," Watterson was introduced by Root. Root's introduction contained the theme for Watterson's response—"The Puritan and the Cavalier."

Gentlemen, we are forced to recognize the truth of the observation that all the people of New England are not Puritans; we must admit an occasional exception. It is equally true, I am told, that all the people of the South are not Cavaliers; but there is one Cavalier without fear and without reproach, the splendid courage of whose convictions shows how close together the highest examples of different types can be among godlike men,—a Cavalier of the South, of Southern blood and Southern life, who carries in thought and in deed all the serious purpose and disinterested action that characterized the Pilgrim fathers whom we commemorate. He comes from an impressionist state where the grass is blue, where the men are either all white or all black, and where, we are told, quite often the settlements are painted red. He is a soldier, a statesman, a scholar, and above all, a lover, and among all the world which loves a lover, the descendants of those who, generation after generation, with tears and laughter, have sympathized with John Alden and Priscilla, cannot fail to open their hearts in sym-

\footnote{Ibid.}

\footnote{Ibid., p. 4.}
pathy to Henry Watterson and his star-eyed goddess. 137

In his introductory remarks, Watterson paid homage to "the first Southerner to speak at this board," Henry Grady. Grady had delivered his famous "New South Speech" to the New England Society eight years before. Watterson made allusion to Grady's character and work. He then promised to "take up the word where Grady left it off." 138 This is an oversimplification of Grady's relation to Watterson's speech.

The two themes that Watterson's speech and Grady's speech share are "The New South" and "The Puritan and the Cavalier." Neither of these themes was original with Grady or Watterson. Historian Paul Gaston has traced the term "New South" back to a newspaper designated to serve Federal troops in Georgia and South Carolina in 1862. Grady may have first used the term in 1874 in an editorial 139 but Watterson's "New South" speech antedated Grady's by three years. 140

Grady and Watterson also differed on the meaning of "New South." Soon after Grady delivered his "New South" speech, Watterson rebuked him for his mammonish tendencies. Watterson correctly


139 Gaston, New South Creed, p. 18.

140 Watterson's "New South" speech was delivered before the American Bankers' Association in Louisville on October 11, 1883; Grady delivered his speech of the same name on December 22, 1886.
decoded Grady's "New South" as an appeal for Northern industry. Wat­
terson warned that Grady's "New South" would be a place where "the
best blood of the South will feed the factories which grind out squal­
or to millions and millions to masters as cruel and rapacious as ever
trod New England soil. . . ." While Grady and Watterson were
agreed on most points, they differed markedly on economic visions of
a "New South."

The problem of "The Puritan and the Cavalier" is a different
matter. The "Puritan and Cavalier" myth was active before Watterson
and Grady were born. William R. Taylor, in Cavalier & Yankee, posits
the formative period of this myth as the 1820's and '30's. There
is no reason to believe that Grady or Watterson was particularly fond
of what Watterson calls "that twaddle about 'Puritans and Cava­
liers.'" Watterson and Grady were both confronted by classic
ceremonial speaking situations. To amplify the occasion for the au­
dience, they both used the handiest available symbols—the "New South"
creed and "The Puritan and the Cavalier." The two speakers' com­
mon background and their common audiences probably account for their

141Raymond B. Nixon, Henry W. Grady: Spokesman of the New

142William R. Taylor, Cavalier & Yankee (New York and Evanston,

143Watterson, Marse Henry, Vol. 1, p. x.

144They were probably inspired by Daniel Webster's example
when he faced a similar group of "neo-Puritans" over a half century
before. See Wilbur Samuel Howell and Hoyt Hopewell Hudson, "Daniel
Webster," A History and Criticism of American Public Address, ed. by
usage of a similar myth and creed more than an intentional imitation.

Watterson and Grady were both warmly received. Watterson recited a poem by John Greenleaf Whittier to close his speech. He was inundated with "applause and cheers." Congressman Charles A. Boutelle, who followed Watterson, reignited the applause after a long testament to Watterson's "splendid patriotism and matchless eloquence." Over and over in his speech, Boutelle referred to Watterson's eloquence and strength of character. Each mention of Watterson's virtues incited prolonged applause.\textsuperscript{145} Boutelle, who was expected to make a speech in his own right, spent the better part of his time praising Watterson. True to Root's word, the audience had been "full of good understanding."

The \textit{Tribune} succinctly summarized the dinner and the occasion:

The New England Dinners are among the most noteworthy of all the big dinners given every year in New York and are mighty pleasant affairs. They are particularly noteworthy because of the high standard of speeches made after the coffee. Last night's dinner was no exception to the rule.\textsuperscript{146}

Watterson was already well known to his New York audience when he spoke before the New England Society of New York. While he had given numerous lectures in New York, this was the first New York speech predominantly devoted to a reconciliation theme. Despite initial uncertainties about his reception, Watterson received all the understanding, interest, and publicity that Root had promised. Henry Grady had given a speech developing similar themes eight years before.

\textsuperscript{145}New-York \textit{Daily Tribune}, December 23, 1894, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{146}Ibid., p. 1.
Watterson, in his speech, attributed his themes to Grady. A more probable explanation for the coincidence of themes lies in the two speakers' common background and their common audience, the New England Society.

"A Welcome to the Grand Army"

Louisville - 1895

Even as Watterson was planning to attend the New England Society Banquet, he was also planning an even greater occasion for reconciliation. In October of 1891, he had responded to the toast, "The War is Over—Let Us Have Peace," before the Society of the Army of Tennessee, in Chicago.\textsuperscript{147} Watterson was not the lone ex-Confederate to address Union gatherings. After 1890, a new spirit of reunion was evident among veteran groups, North and South.\textsuperscript{148} The Grand Army of the Republic encamped at Baltimore in 1882. Baltimore, considered a pro-Southern city, welcomed the G.A.R. with enthusiasm. The G.A.R. responded with a volley of speeches proclaiming a new birth of brotherly love between the sections.\textsuperscript{149}

The next G.A.R. incursion into the South was to the borderland city of Pittsburgh, in 1894. Early in 1894, Louisville had begun her determined effort to have the 1895 encampment in Kentucky. The G.A.R. Department of Kentucky enlisted the aid of the Kentucky

\textsuperscript{147}Watterson, Compromises of Life, p. 294.


\textsuperscript{149}Buck, The Road to Reunion, p. 239.
Legislature in their convention drive. The premier Kentucky orator, Watterson, was dispatched to the Pittsburgh Encampment to plead the Kentucky case.

In Pittsburgh, Watterson stood on the platform at Old City Hall and presented his case:

Henry Watterson was introduced to present the plea of Louisville for the next encampment. The silver-tongued escort of the 'star-eyed goddess' was in his best mood. Among his hearers from the pit to gallery, laughter alternated with applause, and when, in a pathetic moment, he allowed a few tears to course down his cheeks, there was a lachrymose response that would have been appropriate to a funeral.

Before his peroration had been reached and success of the leading city of the Blue Grass was assured, and the orator retired amid such an ovation as a national encampment has rarely bestowed ever upon one of its favorite sons.

The victory was all Watterson's. Louisville was chosen ... not because it is the finest city in the Union, but because in that invitation, coming from representative men who stood for the Lost Cause, we see, as we never have seen before, the dawn of that day when every feeling of animosity upon the part of either section shall be lost and forever lost in that patriotic glow for one common country for which we are ready to die if necessary.

In Sparks from the Camp Fire, "History of the Grand Army of the Republic," Watterson's 1894 plea gained him a testimonial as the ... eloquent Southerner, whose efforts and whose life have probably done as much as any other one man toward healing the animosities engendered by war, drawing together the sections of our torn country, and building up a new patriotism knowing

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150 Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Encampment 1894, Department of Kentucky, Grand Army of the Republic (Covington, Ky., 1894), pp. 73-74.


Watterson could return to Louisville knowing that he had become the catalyst for a historic first meeting of Union soldiers on Southern ground.

One Union veteran expressed his belief that the Louisville Encampment "will do more to make this a united Republic than any one act that has been done since the surrender at Appomattox." Watterson, no doubt, shared similar hopes. The Executive Committee of the G.A.R. did not officially decide on the September 8th opening day of the Twenty-ninth National Encampment until December 20. The committee meeting, which was held in Louisville, was an occasion of brotherhood and rejoicing. At a reception in the Louisville Music Hall, the mayor welcomed the Grand Army. The Times nicely captured the spirit of the occasion:

... Other speeches were interspersed with Union and Confederate war songs, and the reception came to a close with all singing 'My Country, 'Tis of Thee.'

All was not to remain in such pastoral harmony. On May 2, 1895, Department Commander Joseph A. Thayer, G.A.R., Massachusetts, had taken vituperative exception to the erection of a monument to the Confederate dead at a Confederate cemetery in Chicago:

It was an outrage to every true Union man that the monument was even erected, but now, insult is added to injury, by the selection of our Grand Army Sabbath on which to consecrate a shaft

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set up to commemorate the memory of men who did all in their power to destroy the Government. ... 156

R. H. Steward, President of Camp 8, United Confederate Veterans, replied that Thayer was a "fool" for disturbing the G.A.R.—U.C.V. rapport for "... in Chicago there is perfect harmony between Grand Army of the Republic men and members of the ex-Confederate Association." 157

Thayer, under "severe criticism," later modified his position. He said that his real objection was to the "tattered clothes" and other evidence of maltreatment that the monument statue bore. He thought the monument gave a false impression of the condition of the Confederate soldier as he left the Federal prison camp. Thayer denied any "bloody shirt" intentions and admitted "perfect harmony in Massachusetts between the members of the Grand Army of the Republic and the ex-Confederates." However, Thayer, not content, added an incendiary conclusion: "I can forgive them but I cannot forget." 158

This was just enough to spark a contentious spirit which lasted through the convention. Twice, the New York Times felt compelled to editorialize against Thayer's remarks as convention time drew nearer and argument accelerated. Two Union generals joined the fray by planning to attend the monument's dedication on May 30. 159

Their show of sympathy no doubt helped polarize those who agreed with

157 Ibid.
158 Ibid., May 4, 1895, p. 1.
159 Ibid., May 13, 1895, p. 4.
Thayer and those who criticized him.

Plans went ahead for the encampment. The *New York Times*, on August 4, outlined what the "boys in blue" would find on their first trip South since the invasion thirty-one years before. The *Times* reviewed Kentucky's role in the Civil War and previewed some tourist attractions the G.A.R. visitors could expect to see. Patriotic shrines not to be missed included Louisville's National Cemetery, Henry Clay's birthplace, and the Perryville battlefield. Abraham Lincoln, sacred symbol of the Union, and his mother, "the modern Mary," could both be venerated at Lincoln's birthplace near Louisville. The *Times* singled out Watterson's "Lincoln Lecture" to be proof of Kentucky's recognition of Lincoln's birthplace, "a Mecca at which patriotism will worship." Two hundred thousand Louisville citizens extending Kentucky hospitality, not to mention the fifty thousand dollars raised to insure a happy time, made Louisville an inviting place for an encampment.\(^{160}\)

On September 8, Louisville was almost ready to greet her visitors:

The cherished plan of having the veterans of the Blue and Gray meet for once in good fellowship on Southern soil and together eat of the fruits of peace and good will that have ripened through three decades that have passed since the stirring days of the sixties is on the eve of realization, and gorgeously has Louisville arrayed herself for the occasion.\(^{161}\)

"Old Glory in tens of hundreds of thousands" were said to be

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\(^{160}\)Ibid., August 4, 1895, p. 25.

in striking contrast to the blue and gray bunting never before seen at a National Encampment. Pictures of Union heroes were in the foreground, while Confederate leaders were relegated to lesser exposure. A favorite decoration was a picture of a "Boy in Blue and a Boy in Gray" congratulating each other on reunion. Watterson's friend, Tom Nast, had tried to get Watterson to make Nast's painting of Lee and Grant shaking hands the official painting of the reunion. Nast hoped in this way to get his painting, titled "Peace in Union," a place in the National Capitol. The encampment was apparently more interested in the friendship of the common soldier than in the "Union" of generals.

On September 9, the veterans began to arrive, as many as 44,000 in one day. Housing was running smoothly, and special interest groups such as ex-prisoners of war, ex-sailors, and Ladies of the Grand Army all established separate headquarters. The influx continued, and by September 10, the population of Louisville had swelled by an estimated 100,000 to 250,000.

Much of the festive atmosphere of September 11 was palled by an explosion in a caisson which left four dead and many injured. The dawn explosion was blamed on a lighted cigar and the inexperience

162 Ibid.


165 Ibid., September 11, 1895, p. 10.

166 Ibid., September 12, 1895, p. 1.
of "volunteer soldiers" in handling such munitions. Despite this accident, the grand parade of 30,000 was held on schedule, with innumerable badges proclaiming "One Flag, One Country" to the 300,000 spectators. The day's festivities were highlighted by the evening's welcome at the Music Hall, at which Watterson was to be the featured speaker.  

Watterson had changed physically since his address to Congress in 1877. In 1891, one observer found him at middle age:

His grayish hair tumbles picturesquely over a broad, square forehead. His nose is straight, but aggressive, and his heavy mustache, changing from flaxen to gray, completely hides his mouth but allows you to read the story of a firm-set jaw. His voice is deep and pleasant.  

By 1895, Watterson's mustache had turned from its flaxen youth to almost white:

Mr. Watterson is an interesting figure on the platform. He is of medium height, with a well-knit, erect figure. He has overhanging eyebrows and blue eyes. His mustache and goatee are almost white, while his light-colored hair does not show the gray. . . . He wears his hair carelessly parted in the middle. His complexion is ruddy.  

Those who had not been chased home by the oppressive September heat heard a memorable speech. The speaker's platform was a pantheon of Grand Army deities: General Lew Wallace, author of the immensely popular Ben Hur; General Thomas C. Lawler, G.A.R. Commander-in-Chief; and not far away sat Mrs. John R. Logan, wife of one found-

167Ibid., p. 2.


169Ibid., May 15, 1895, p. 7.
er of the G.A.R., who only months before had passed on to "the final muster."

Mayor Tyler extended greetings of the city . . . then, amid a scene of wild enthusiasm, Henry Watterson was escorted to the footlights and addressed the grand encampment in a speech full of patriotism and good taste.

The scene that followed the closing word of the fervid oration of Henry Watterson was thrilling. The speaker was overcome with emotion. Men rose in their seats and cheered, yelled and hugged each other, and threw hats, fans and handkerchiefs in the air. Mrs. John A. Logan was seated a short distance back of the Commander-in-Chief's stand, and as Mr. Watterson walked away from the footlights with the tears coursing down his cheeks, General Lawler presented him to Mrs. Logan. Neither could speak for a moment, and then the white-haired woman took Mr. Watterson's hand in both of hers, and said tremulously, 'I am glad I have been permitted to live to hear your speech.' Then she sat down and wept.170

Lawler, Wallace, and Mrs. Logan all made impromptu responses. It would seem that Watterson's words had at last permanently bridged the "bloody chasm." There was still the matter of the Confederate Monument controversy. Could the spirit of Watterson's address stand the test of such an emotional issue?

On the following afternoon, the business session got underway. The controversy over the Confederate Memorial was not long in surfacing. The focal resolution was one condemning the "desecration" of "the most sacred day of the year" in Chicago.171 Watterson's words, however, had not gone unheeded.

One delegate pointed to what Mr. Watterson said yesterday that both the Confederate and the Federal dead were comrades on the 'other side of the dark river' now, and insisted that it was

170 *Springfield (Mass.) Republican*, September 13, 1895.

not appropriate for the encampment to notice such an incident.\textsuperscript{172}

The resolution was subsequently withdrawn. The \textit{Times}, in a later editorial, applauded the whole encampment in general, and the withdrawal of the Monument resolution in particular, as further evidence that the antagonism the war recalled had passed away.\textsuperscript{173}

Not all immediate reaction to the G.A.R. encampment was favorable. A lead story for the October issue of the \textit{Confederate Veteran} reviewed the events of the Louisville encampment and found the G.A.R. lacking in two respects. First, the \textit{Confederate Veteran} objected to the "array of blue tinsel" which "was quite similar to that worn South the third of a century ago."\textsuperscript{174} More importantly, the G.A.R. was censured for the response which Watterson's speech evoked. The \textit{Confederate Veteran} felt that, since Watterson was good enough to omit Southern patriots and read instead a veritable jeremiad of Union notables, the speakers who followed Watterson might have reciprocated. True, Abraham Lincoln and Henry Clay were mentioned, but "it is de­plored that some man was not called to the platform whose utterances would have been like those of the Union general and bishops at Chicago."\textsuperscript{175}

Most recent evaluations of the speech and occasion have been more favorable. All of Watterson's biographers point to the G.A.R.

\textsuperscript{172}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{173}\textit{New York Times}, September 18, 1895, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{174}\textit{Confederate Veteran}, October, 1895, III, p. 289.

\textsuperscript{175}Ibid., p. 291.
speech as the "zenith" of Watterson's struggle for reconciliation. As "a symbol for the culmination of this long struggle for sectional harmony," the speech was "a valediction to an era for Watterson." For the Union veteran, perhaps unknowingly, had crossed more than a sectional line in coming to Louisville. A new creed, the creed of reconciliation, had become "conventionalized" at the Louisville encampment. Never again would a Grand Army encampment be complete without a thorough rhetorical airing of Watterson's creed, just as the bloody shirt had once held sway on the Grand Army platform.

In 1894, Watterson's oratory had swayed the Grand Army to make camp in Louisville the following year, 1895. In the meantime, a controversy occurred over the erection of a Confederate monument in Chicago. The Grand Army encamped in September, 1895, in an atmosphere of intersectional camaraderie. Watterson's introduction of a new creed of reconciliation to replace the symbol of the bloody shirt heightened the spirit of reunion. The powerful effect of the speech mediated the Monument controversy. The creed of reconciliation became a permanent theme for future Grand Army Encampment oratory.


"Abraham Lincoln"

Carnegie Music Hall - New York

With respect to Abraham Lincoln, I as a Southern man and a Confederate soldier here render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, even as I would render unto God things that are God's.

Watterson prefaced his Cosmopolitan Magazine article on Abraham Lincoln with this Biblical metaphor.\textsuperscript{179} The preface might have served as well for Watterson's Lincoln lecture.

If the G.A.R. speech was a zenith of Watterson's reconciliation speaking, the Lincoln lecture served as an ongoing affirmation that the fight for reconciliation had indeed been won. Anytime Watterson spoke on Lincoln, the tears, cheers, and applause of his audiences, North and South, reminded him that he had a fine vehicle for his reconciliation theme. It was a vehicle of which his audiences never tired.

In 1895, the Lincoln Union of Chicago asked Watterson to prepare an address on Lincoln to be given on February 12, to honor Lincoln's birthday.\textsuperscript{180} Watterson's oratorical reputation undoubtedly influenced his being selected to lecture on Lincoln. His Society of Tennessee Banquet speech and his World's Fair speech had made him famous in Chicago. Watterson's dual credentials as an admirer of Lincoln and as an ex-Confederate soldier made him a fine choice to extol Lincoln with a Southern perspective.


\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., p. 366.
Watterson looked through "half a thousand volumes" in preparation for his speech and found them "replete with contradictions and discrepancies."

He prepared his lecture by ferreting out what he considered the best evidence available.

The Chicago audience received the lecture with enormous enthusiasm. Watterson was so warmed by the lecture's reception in Chicago that he took it on tour. In New York, he spoke before a full house at Plymouth Church, where Lincoln himself had worshipped the day before his famous Cooper Union speech. Watterson's New York audience fell under the same charm that had mesmerized the "Lincoln faithful" in Chicago.

Watterson's personal triumph at the Grand Army of the Republic Encampment in September of 1895 gave him a feeling that his Louisville labors might be drawing to an end. He had long considered Lincoln the apotheosis of reconciliation. At fifty-five, Watterson envisioned a retirement in Switzerland where he would write a definitive biography of his revered Lincoln. Robert T. Lincoln had written him a letter of thanks for his kind words about Robert's father. Watterson also had in mind editing a volume of Lincoln's speeches to be entitled "The Words of Lincoln." The proceeds of his work would go to preserve the

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181 Ibid.


house in which Lincoln died.\textsuperscript{185} With Robert Lincoln's support and the great reception of his lecture, Watterson set out for Europe, not doubting his ability to complete his Lincoln projects.

In 1896, the \textit{Courier-Journal} supported the "Stop Bryan movement." William Jennings Bryan was so popular in the Louisville region that the \textit{Courier-Journal} now faced extinction. Watterson cabled his business partner, Haldeman, to hold the anti-Bryan stand: "No compromise with dishonor. Stand firm."\textsuperscript{186}

Bryan's defeat in 1896 brought physical threats to the \textit{Courier-Journal}. Watterson was forced to sublimate his ambitions as a Lincoln scholar. He returned to Louisville and, for the next four years, worked to rebuild his newspaper.\textsuperscript{187} If he could not write the great Lincoln biography, Watterson had to be content refining and expanding his "Lincoln Lecture." While Watterson continued to give the other lectures in his repertory, his Lincoln lecture was by far his most popular, even among audiences in the Southern states.\textsuperscript{188} In 1901, Watterson was the natural choice to be featured speaker at a Lincoln birthday benefit at Carnegie Hall.

The benefit had been planned for the Lincoln Memorial University at Cumberland Gap, Tennessee. The program was to be highlighted

\textsuperscript{185}Watterson Papers, Vol. 2, Nos. 1338-39; 1341-42.

\textsuperscript{186}\textit{Editorials of Henry Watterson}, ed. by Arthur Krock (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1923), pp. 75-76.

\textsuperscript{187}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 87 and 75.

\textsuperscript{188}Publisher's note from Henry Watterson, \textit{Abraham Lincoln} (Louisville, Ky.: \textit{Courier-Journal} Job Printing Company, 1899).
by a patriotic recitation, musical solos, and the People's Choral Union of New York under the direction of Frank Damrosch. The patrons who had subscribed the benefit included most of the wealthy of New York, including J. Pierpont Morgan and Watterson's friend, Andrew Carnegie.189

The promised program failed to emphasize the team that was to dominate the evening—Henry Watterson introduced by Samuel L. Clemens. A Times editorial the day before the lecture did recommend Watterson to his prospective audience:

Mr. Watterson, whether as a speaker or in his personality, is one of the most interesting men the South has produced. His experience has been long, varied, and extensive. His mode of thought is original and vigorous and his mode of expression is picturesque, engaging and eloquent.190

An uncle of Clemens' had married an aunt of Watterson's. Watterson and Clemens made much mirth of being "blood-kin."191 Watterson had met Clemens in London. Even before they knew they were related, they became "life-time cronies."192 When asked to introduce Watterson, Clemens wrote to one of his friends: "Think of it! Two old rebels functioning there: I as president and Watterson as orator of the day! Things have changed somewhat in these forty years, thank God!"193

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190 Ibid., February 10, 1901, p. 18.
191 Watterson, Marse Henry, I, pp. 110-120.
192 Ibid., p. 119.
On February 11, the stage was set. The magnificent Music Hall that Carnegie built was less than ten years old. On Monday night, the hall was filled. The boxes were crowded. Had the hall burned that night and all perished, the New York Social Register would have been made void. The stage was decorated with flags, and stage center was dominated by a great marble bust of the martyred emancipator. Mark Twain, the presiding officer of the evening, was flanked on either side by no less than six generals—Blue and Gray. The first part of the program was musical. The Fifth United States Artillery Regiment Band played, the five-hundred-voice People's Choral Union sang, and the music ended with a soprano solo. After a letter from President McKinley was read, the "two former rebels, both reconstructed," as Twain put it, had their say. Twain, in a lengthy introduction which is considered by many to be one of his most witty speeches, told the audience the story of how Watterson saved the Union:

I was a Second Lieutenant in the Confederate Service—for a while. . . . This second cousin of mine, Colonel Watterson, the orator of this present occasion, was born and reared in a slave state, was a Colonel in the Confederate Service, and rendered me such assistance as he could in my self-appointed great task of annihilating the Federal armies and breaking up the Union. . . . I laid my plans with wisdom and foresight, and if Colonel Watterson had obeyed my orders, I should have succeeded in my giant undertaking. It was my intention to drive General Grant into the Pacific if I could get transportation—and I told Colonel Watterson to surround the Eastern armies and wait till I came. But he was insubordinate, and stood upon the punctilio of military etiquette; he refused to

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194*New York Herald*, February 12, 1901, p. 3.


196*New York Herald*, February 12, 1901, p. 3.
take orders from a Second Lieutenant—and the Union was saved.197 Watterson arose to speak amid the usual applause. "He began his speech in a low tone of voice. In a few minutes the audience was being swayed by the speaker."198 A drawing of the occasion shows Watterson speaking from the side of the podium.199 As all his lectures were memorized, the podium would have served no purpose but to distract.

The lecture was two hours long and generally well received. The audience was particularly responsive to two aspects of the speech. The first was Watterson's personal acquaintance with Lincoln as a reporter covering Lincoln's first inaugural address and as a journalist during Lincoln's Presidency. The second was Lincoln as a friend to the South. The New York Times observed that no part of Watterson's lecture was listened to with closer attention than "that in which he referred to Lincoln's relation to the people of the South."200 Part of the mystique of Watterson's Lincoln lecture lay in its being delivered by an ex-Confederate. The emotionally-charged conclusion always elicited tears and cheers from the listeners. The New York audience proved no exception.

By 1901, the theme of reconciliation had become more a touchstone of nostalgia than a force to heal the "wounds of sectional ani-

197Paine, Mark Twain: A Biography, III, p. 1123.


199New York Herald, February 12, 1901, p. 3.

mosity." There were few under forty who could now remember the Civil War. The *New York Times* no longer editorialized about the restorative powers of Watterson's lectures. Instead, the emphasis seemed to be archival.

Indeed it \[Watterson's Lincoln Lecture\] will be one of a rapidly lessening class of opportunities to hear an able, independent, patriotic Southern man speak of the momentous period in the history of the Republic in which the very existence of the Republic was decided.\[201\]

Watterson would continue to deliver his Lincoln lecture. Lincoln had become the undying symbol of reconciliation. But, for the War's second generation, reconciliation could not have the same meaning as it had for their fathers listening to Watterson in Congress twenty-five years before.

In November, 1911, Watterson received the most touching response his Lincoln lecture is known to have elicited. Although he did not know the author, he carefully preserved her eloquent letter:

Dear Mr. Watterson,

From the distance and silence I want to tell you how my loved but lost son Francis W. Cushman would have enjoyed your address on Lincoln. As I read it I could see his dear face aglow with pleasure and approval.

You may never have known him but he was one of your kind — chivalrous and true, and so his sad and lonely mother ventu­res to send this tribute of appreciation on his behalf.

Elizabeth N. Cushman
Fredonia, Iowa\[202\]

Watterson's lecture continued to be a poignant statement on a martyred


President even though the reconciliation aspects of the speech diminished in importance.

Watterson's Lincoln lecture was the longest and most popular that he ever gave. By using Lincoln as a symbol of reconciliation, he was able to continue his crusade after even the veterans of the war had bridged the "bloody chasm." The 1901 occasion for the Lincoln lecture was unique both in the patrician audience and in Mark Twain's presence on the platform. The reconciliation themes in the lecture had changed their meaning for the new audience born since the Civil War.

"The Confederate Dead"

Nashville - 1904

Between February, 1901, and June, 1904, Watterson's prestige as an orator was enhanced considerably. He gave lectures during those years on subjects as disparate as John Paul Jones and Ralph Waldo Emerson. When he gave his Lincoln lecture to a Confederate Veterans' group in New York, Watterson received front-page notice. Nineteen hundred and three was the year his book of lectures, speeches, and social observations was published. While the book got mixed reviews,

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203 Watterson, Compromises of Life, p. 181.


206 The Bookman reviewed Watterson's speeches solely as literature and found them lacking. See Harry T. Peck, "Henry Watterson," Bookman, February, 1904, XVIII, p. 635.
most critics echoed the New-York Daily Tribune in capturing the essence of Watterson's speech collection:

It is inspiring to note from these pages the fervor and devotion with which, ever since the Civil War, he has done all in his power to foster the growth of understanding and friendship between the North and the South.²⁰⁷

Watterson was invited in June of 1904 to be present at the laying of the cornerstone of a monument to the Private Confederate Soldier. It was quite fitting that Watterson, who could barely tolerate his honorary colonelcy, should speak at the dedication of a monument to the enlisted man. Two aspects make this speech essential to any representative sample of Watterson's oratory. First, this speech was presented on Southern soil, to a predominantly ex-Confederate audience. Watterson's oratorical triumphs in the North tend to obscure his speeches to Southern audiences, which were equally well received. Second, the speech was a eulogy to the Confederate dead. Watterson was often called on to praise the departed Confederates. The Nashville speech is fairly typical.

Nashville was host to many visitors in June, 1904. Members of the Masonic fraternity from East and West Tennessee had converged on centrally-located Nashville. The largest influx was by Confederate Veterans' groups. Not only were the United Confederate Veterans having their annual encampment but also the United Sons of Confederate Veterans, and the Confederated Southern Memorial Association, "Mothers of the Confederacy."²⁰⁸ These allied veterans' groups had


²⁰⁸ Confederate Veteran, June, 1904, XII, 261.
chosen Nashville because it was the only city to extend an invitation. This meant that Nashville agreed to underwrite food and lodging expenses. By 1904, the Veterans' Encampment no longer provided the free-spending tourists to line the host city's pockets. The Confederate Veteran still encouraged all camps to send representatives to Nashville:

Don't let your bravest and best soldiers fail to come from lack of means ... when they arrive we will feed them and provide them lodging absolutely free of expense.

The specter of a host of penniless veterans descending on Nashville could hardly have been pleasing to the Chamber of Commerce.

If the city objected to the veterans, they did not show it by a lack of hospitality. The chancellor at Vanderbilt University turned over the campus for an informal reunion and parade-staging area. Veterans were to meet at Vanderbilt on Wednesday afternoon, June 15. After sufficient socializing, they would gather by states to parade back to town from the suburban campus. Once safely downtown, they could enjoy the evening's planned entertainment at the Gospel Tabernacle.

To help ensure that the veterans made it out to Vanderbilt, a cornerstone laying was planned for the early afternoon. This was

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209 Ibid., July, 1904, XII, 266.
210 Ibid., June, 1904, XII, 261.
211 Ibid.
212 Ibid.
a joint venture of the Confederate veterans and the Masonic fraternity. A grand parade of 2,000 Masons, escorted by the colorfully-uniformed Knights Templar, marched from the Nashville Arcade to Union Station, where a special train took them to Centennial Park. Eight thousand veterans and their friends rode or marched out Broad Street to Centennial Park, site of the cornerstone laying. 213

Nashville had long claimed to be the "Athens of the South." The origins of this dubious chauvinism are unclear. The two manifestations of this ascribed Hellenism are the many institutions of higher education, estimated at eighty in 1904, and the "Parthenon," a concrete reproduction of its fallen sister on Acropolis hill. The Greeks probably did not feel threatened by such oracles as Draughan's Business College and the Tennessee Temple—which one well-traveled Nashvillian pronounced "superior because our Parthenon isn't all broken up." Nevertheless, Nashville in 1904 was extending her claim by welcoming the veterans to the "Athens of America." 214

It is fitting that the monument to the Confederate dead was to be located in Centennial Park, within sight of both Vanderbilt University and the Parthenon. The Confederate veterans and the Masons formed well-ordered lines on arrival at Centennial Park and followed the Tennessee Industrial School Band to a shady spot three hundred feet west of the Parthenon. There a platform had been set up to accommodate various Masonic officers, Veterans' officials, and Mayor Albert S. Williams.

213 Nashville American, June 16, 1904, p. 10.

214 Confederate Veteran, May, 1904, XII, 220.
On the rear of the platform sat the seventy-five-voice choir, which "added immensely to the attractiveness of the occasion."\(^{215}\)

After a series of musical selections, including "My Old Kentucky Home" in honor of Watterson, James L. Sloan, Grand Master of Tennessee, announced the purpose for assembling. The presiding officer, Major B. M. Hord, chairman of the Frank Cheatham Bivouac Monument Association, assumed the platform and abandoned all modesty in appreciating the generosity of the Masons—"the oldest, the grandest and the most benevolent fraternal organization known to man since the creation of the world." After the cornerstone was laid and an invocation given, Senator William B. Bate introduced Watterson, the featured speaker.\(^{217}\)

This was a true test of Watterson's adherence to his reconciliation theme. He was confronted by 10,000 fellow Southerners, mostly of the Civil-War generation. Watterson might easily have lapsed into giving what Paul Gaston calls "the knowledge of a proud past and a noble heritage,"\(^{218}\) poured on the audience with what Vann

\(^{215}\)Nashville American, June 16, 1904, p. 10.

\(^{216}\)Watterson was inevitably "treated" to this song, and well might have preferred some other air, as this anecdote about Sherman illustrates: "Once at a Grand Army encampment, General Sherman and I were seated together on the platform when the band began to play Marching Through Georgia, when the general said rather impatiently: 'I wish I had a dollar for every time I have had to listen to that tune.' And I answered: 'Well, there is another tune about which I might say the same thing,'" meaning "My Old Kentucky Home." See Watterson, Marse Henry, II, 156.

\(^{217}\)Nashville American, June 16, 1904, p. 10.

\(^{218}\)Gaston, The New South Creed, p. 186.
Woodward calls the "syrup of romanticism." While Watterson recalled a number of shibboleths and myths to intensify the beliefs of the audience, he endorsed over and over "perfect loyalty to the Union, to the flag and to those of our countrymen who successfully fought against us." This speech, with its predominant theme of reunion, was not unlike the speech he gave for the Union dead in Louisville five years before. The speech's unapologetic renunciation of sectionalism may have excluded it from the partisan pages of the *Confederate Veteran*, although more likely its exclusion was mere editorial oversight.

The veterans then crossed the street to the Vanderbilt campus where they queued up for the march to town. The evening's activities had a decisively Kentucky flavor. The Maid of Honor for the South, Miss Mary K. Ewell, sang "My Old Kentucky Home," at the Gospel Tabernacle:

> Her voice thrilled the great crowd that filled the Tabernacle, and the last note of the famous song had barely left her lips when the convention went wild with shouts of 'Louisville!' 'Louisville!' Louisville had won itself the U.C.V. Reunion for the following year—this time without Watterson's assistance.

The importance of the Nashville reunion was touted as "second to none in the history of the organization!" Probably a more hon-

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221 Watterson, *Compromises of Life*, pp. 344-47.
222 *New York Times*, June 16, 1904, p. 16.
223 *Confederate Veteran*, June, 1904, XII, 261.
est appraisal was the Confederate Veteran's comment that "it cannot be said of any particular one that it was 'the greatest' in the history of such gatherings. The last is always the best. . . ."\textsuperscript{224}

The veterans returned to their homes on trains costing only one cent per mile, with memories of the white-haired Watterson speaking in the shadow of the Parthenon and visions of "Louisville," "Louisville" the coming year.\textsuperscript{225}

Two aspects of the occasion were symbolic of Watterson’s speech. The monument to the Private Confederate Soldier depicted a weary yeoman in a seated position, with his gun resting between his legs.\textsuperscript{226} It is not the aggressive flower of Southern manhood challenging the enemy. If the war had passed into nostalgia, so had the pleas of those like Watterson who sought to heal its wounds. The weary statue was not susceptible to the old themes of reconciliation that had once turned away the wrath of the valiant.

A box was placed under the cornerstone, containing everything from a Chamber of Commerce Manual to a copy of Watterson’s speech.\textsuperscript{227} If the box is unearthed in 2004, perhaps the least interesting item will be Watterson’s plea for reconciliation. The theme of reconciliation was tied to a period, and when that period passed, no time capsule could preserve it. Watterson continued to speak on reconcilia-

\textsuperscript{224}Ibid., June, 1903, XI, 243.

\textsuperscript{225}Ibid., June, 1904, XII, 261.

\textsuperscript{226}Nashville Daily News, June 15, 1904, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{227}Ibid.
tion until on March 19, 1914, his secretary wrote sadly in answer to a speech request that "Mr. Watterson is more than seventy-four years of age and has announced that he will never speak in public again. He is conserving his strength for his duties on the Courier-Journal."^{228}

Watterson continued to give speeches after this, but they became a rare occasion in his remaining years. In 1920, he was eighty years old. Like the Nashville statue, now weathered on its pedestal, Watterson had lost much of the radiant polish for which he would be remembered. In 1921, he gathered his family round his bed and passed into "the dreamless sleep that kisses down his eyelids still."^{229}

Watterson's speech in Nashville on the "Confederate Dead" was typical of his reconciliation speeches before Southern audiences in praise of Southern heroes. Although replete with nostalgia, this ceremonial speech returned again and again to Watterson's favorite theme—reconciliation and reunion. As the Confederate Veteran proclaimed from its masthead:

> The Civil War was too long ago to be called the 'late' war, and when correspondents use that term the word 'great' will be substituted.^{230}

The "Late" War had passed into mythology as the "Great" War for Watterson's Veteran audience. His plea for reunion fell on ears more attuned to tales of fabled glory than to Watterson's creed. Wat-

^{228}Watterson Papers, Vol. 17, No. 4192.

^{229}Wall, Henry Watterson: Reconstructed Rebel, pp. 335-36.

^{230}Confederate Veteran, June, 1904, XII, 261.
terson's reconciliation creed had now been fully incorporated into
the "New South" myth. Much of Watterson's speech was directed toward
reconciling the two seemingly antithetical parts of the New South myth
—"the myth of the 'Great War' and the myth of 'post-war reunion."
Watterson continued to speak on reconciliation up until a few years
before his death.

Summary

Watterson's two speeches before the House of Representatives,
in 1877, begin his career as a national spokesman for the reconcilia-
tion creed. Watterson's stand on the Hayes-Tilden controversy has
caused some historians to doubt his loyalty to conviction. A close
examination of his speeches and editorials of the period show Watter-
son to have remained loyal to Tilden and true to his creed of recon-
ciliation.

In his Memorial Day address in Nashville, Watterson used am-
plification as a strategy for reconciliation. Hayes was elected
President and Grant had pulled the Federal troops out of the South.
This was a good occasion to use the image of death not only as a sym-
bol for the end of North-South animosity but also to symbolize the
reunion that death exemplifies. Watterson's Nashville efforts were
praised locally and nationally.

In Louisville, speaking before the American Bankers' Associ-
atation, in 1883, Watterson transcended financial issues, of which he
had little knowledge, to voice the reconciliation creed, on which he
was expert. Watterson, in stressing the unity of the nation, hoped
to increase the availability of capital for indigenous Southern ex-
pansion. Watterson did not welcome Northern industry because he
feared it to be exploitative.

When he spoke before the New England Society of New York,
Watterson was already well known to his prospective audience. In
addressing the Society, Watterson overtly developed the same themes
used by Henry Grady in his New South speech before the same society
eight years before. Watterson, however, disagreed with Grady's in-
terpretation of the New South creed. He used the same themes as
Grady only because of the two speakers' common background and their
common audience.

In 1895, Watterson may have felt his career as a reconcilia-
tion speaker fulfilled when he spoke before the Grand Army of the
Republic encampment in Louisville. He had personally invited the
Grand Army to Louisville, and their arrival marked the first Grand
Army incursion South since the Civil War. So great was the accept-
ance of Watterson's creed of reconciliation that the creed replaced
the symbol of the bloody shirt at future Grand Army encampments.

After the G.A.R. speech, Watterson had hoped to retire to
Switzerland to write a biography of his hero of compromise, Abraham
Lincoln. Financial problems at the Courier-Journal forced him to
return to Louisville. He sublimated his Lincoln biography ambitions
by expanding his Lincoln lecture, the most popular lecture he ever
gave. In 1901, Watterson shared the platform with Samuel Clemens,
his "blood-kin," at Carnegie Music Hall. There, Watterson gave his
lecture to the elect of New York Society. The lecture served as an
ongoing affirmation that the battle to inculcate the reconciliation creed had indeed been won. Lincoln became Watterson's undying symbol of the love of union and reconciliation.

By 1904, reconciliation had been accepted as part of the "New South" myth. Thus, in addressing Confederate veterans in Nashville, Watterson's suasive task was to reconcile a nostalgia for "the Great War" with an acceptance of the reunited sections. He did this by inextricably linking the war with reunion. Watterson impressed upon the veteran that reconciliation was the foreordained result of the conflict. There could be no nostalgia for the war without the celebration of its outcome, reunion.

By 1904, Watterson's reconciliation creed was becoming a relic of the past. His audience of 1877 was responsive to the first Southerner to gain a national reputation for the reconciliation creed. By 1904, this creed had been annexed by the mythology of the "New South." His audiences were no longer predominantly the Civil War generation, but the sons and daughters of those who lived during the war. Watterson's Lincoln lecture continued to proclaim the old creed, but the young audiences were now more interested in the "Lincoln" myth than a plea to "bridge the bloody chasm." The "Lincoln" myth could live on, but in the "New South" myth, reconciliation was already accomplished fact.
CHAPTER V

THE INTEGRITY OF WATTERSON'S IDEAS

This chapter sets forth Watterson's reconciliation creed\(^1\) as distilled from eight speeches considered in the present study. His adaptation of the creed for various audiences and occasions is also included. This study of adaptation focuses on emotional and stylistic devices used to gain emotional acceptance of the creed.

**Watterson's Reconciliation Creed**

Watterson's creed was his conscious attempt to influence and control the direction of post-bellum thought, North and South, toward reconciliation. His strategy was to posit reconciliation as accomplished fact. He was really expressing his hope that sectional animosities would be cast aside as soon as possible. When his audience accepted that reconciliation had been accomplished, then in a real

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\(^1\)Paul Gaston's distinction between "creed" and "myth" is important in this study. Gaston explains that, while both creed and myth concern beliefs, "the former is a conscious statement concerned primarily with how things ought to be, while the latter is a more generalized, unconsciously held belief in how things actually are or were." Watterson's first speech included in the study, in 1877, posited reconciliation as a "creed" or how things ought to be; his last speech included in the study, in 1904, treats reconciliation as accomplished fact or as "myth." This study deals with the dynamic process of creed becoming myth. See Paul M. Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), p. 9.
sense it would be accomplished, and his hope would be realized.

Watterson changed the amplification of his creed to adapt to his specific audiences and occasions. His creed itself had two consistent themes, parts of which he developed in all of his reconciliation speeches. These themes were the Puritan and Cavalier myth and the Christ myth.

The Puritan and Cavalier Myth

William R. Taylor has stated succinctly the Puritan and Cavalier myth:

... the North had been settled by one part to the English Civil War, the Roundheads, and the South by the other, the royal party or the Cavaliers. The Yankee was a direct descendent of the Puritan Roundhead and the Southern gentleman of the English Cavalier, and the difference between the two was at least partly a matter of blood. The terminology sometimes varied, but contemporaries generally settled upon some such distinction as "Saxon" or "Anglo-Saxon" for the North and "Norman" for the South. Under the stimulus of this divided heritage the North had developed a leveling, go-getting utilitarian society and the South had developed a society based on the values of the English country gentry. It was commonly felt, furthermore, that these two ways of life had been steadily diverging since colonial times, and there were many after 1861 who believed that these characteristic differences between North and South had brought on the Civil War.²

Taylor traced the genesis of the myth from William Wirt's discourse on the lives of Jefferson and Adams in 1826 to Charles Beard's inter-

pretation of American history in 1927.3

The most important aspect of the myth to Watterson's creed was the popular belief that it was the Puritan-Cavalier dichotomy that had caused the Civil War. Typical of this viewpoint was Southern partisan Edward A. Pollard, who noted in 1866 that the Puritan-Cavalier dichotomy was a cause of the war. Further, he could find nothing in history that would prevent continuation of "a North and a South: two political aliens existing in a Union imperfectly defined as a Confederation of States."4 Taylor found that this obsession with Puritan and Cavalier was no less important in the North after the war:

. . . the legend, far from dying away, was given a new lease on life and, in the North, probably enjoyed greater popularity and evoked more interest than at any other time.5

Since the Puritan-Cavalier dichotomy was perceived by Watterson's audiences as a cause of the war and a continuing source of intersectional division, Watterson debunked the myth as an obstacle to reconciliation. His method is best understood by reflecting upon his oratorical antecedents. Taylor mentions that Robert V. Hayne "cast himself as a passionate Cavalier," and Daniel Webster "was the tran-


5Taylor, Cavalier & Yankee, p. 341.
scendent Yankee," during the Webster–Hayne senate debates in 1830. Of greater influence on Watterson's theme was the oratorical history of the New England Society of New York City.

In her introduction to The New England Society Orations, Eveline Warner Brainerd noted a trend in the orations of the speakers preceding the Society's annual dinners. The orator was, from the inception of the recorded orations in 1820, expected to talk about Puritans: "The earliest [orations] deal primarily with the religious aspect and influence of the Plymouth settlement." As the threats of slavery and disunion became more critical, the themes of the orators also changed.

... the pressure of the hour more and more turned the speaker's thoughts from the deeds of the seventeenth century to the doings of their own time, to the contrasts between these two and the dangers lurking in change.

In the collected orations, the first speaker to address himself to the Puritan-Cavalier dichotomy as a source of disharmony was Robert Charles Winthrop. Winthrop, described as "a New Englander of New Englanders," who later "was to serve as Speaker of the House and, for a few months, as successor in the Senate to Mr. Webster," delivered his address at the Broadway Tabernacle in New York City in 1839. After dwelling at length on the history of England's colonizing of America, Winthrop began a plea for intersectional toleration:

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Let me not be thought, in this allusion and others like it in which I have already indulged, to slight the claims of the Virginia Colony, or to do designed injustice to its original settlers. . . . Least of all would any son of New England be found uttering a word in wanton disparagement of 'our noble, patriotic, sister-colony Virginia' as she was once justly termed by the Patriots of Faneuil Hall. There are circumstances of peculiar and beautiful correspondence in the careers of Virginia and New England, which must ever constitute a bond of sympathy, affection and pride between their children.8

Winthrop did not deny the Puritan-Cavalier dichotomy, but he emphasized the similarities of two ancestral groups: "A common history, a common language, a common blood, were, indeed, links of no ordinary strength, between the Atlantic Colonies and the Mother Country."9 He labeled the essence of this common ground "Anglo-Saxon."

. . . I cannot regard it, I cannot speak of it, as a mere lucky accident, that this Atlantic seaboard was settled by colonies of the Anglo-Saxon race10

In succeeding years, several speakers addressed the Society on the theme of North-South unity. Typical were the speeches of Daniel Webster in 1843, when he stressed the clear superiority of the "Anglo-American" race,11 and again in 1850, before the New England Society, when he spoke out against the destructive tendency of "localisms, North or South," and spoke for the uniting symbol of

9 Ibid., p. 250.
10 Brainerd, eds., New England Society Orations, I, p. 244.
"Anglo-Saxon American principles." In 1859 the Society members were so involved with "the pressures of the hour" that the custom of an annual address was suspended and resumed only after the war was over.

Henry W. Grady was the first Southerner to speak before the Society after the war. Grady expressed his belief that the Cavalier had been omitted from past Society orations:

Pardon me one word, Mr. President, spoken for the sole purpose of getting into the volumes that go out annually freighted with the rich eloquence of your speakers—the fact that the Cavalier as well as the Puritan was on the continent in its early days, and that he was 'up and able to be about.' I have read your books carefully and I find no mention of that fact...

While Grady failed to acknowledge the tributes to the Cavalier paid by Winthrop and Webster, he embellished their theme that the Puritan-Cavalier dichotomy, a potential source of disharmony, could also be thought of as a source of common ground:

Neither Puritan nor Cavalier long survived as such. The virtues and traditions of both happily still live for the inspiration of their sons and the saving of the old fashion. But both Puritan and Cavalier were lost in the storm of the first Revolution; and the American Citizen, supplanting both and stronger than either, took possession of the Republic bought by their common blood and fashioned to wisdom, and charged himself with teaching men government and establishing the voice of the people as the voice of God.

Like Winthrop and Webster, he used the myth of Puritan and Cavalier to

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13Ibid., I, p. viii.
15Ibid., p. 99.
emphasize the unity of the North and South, but Grady added a uniting symbol that was not available to Winthrop or Webster. That symbol was the beloved and martyred President Abraham Lincoln:

... from the union of these colonist Puritans and Cavaliers, from the straightening of their purpose and the crossing of their blood, slow perfecting through a century, came he who stands as the first typical American, the first who comprehended within himself all the strength and gentleness, all the majesty and grace of the Republic—Abraham Lincoln.16

When Watterson addressed the Society six years later, he promised to "take up the word where Grady left it off."17 However, unlike Grady, Watterson was openly contemptuous of "the twaddle about Puritans and Cavaliers."18 He explained that the Cavaliers were "men in silken hose who danced to music made by slaves—and called it freedom." The Puritans, equally disreputable, were "the men in bell-crowned hats, who led Hester Prynne to her shame—and called it religion." In short, the terms Puritan and Cavalier conjured "an effete sectionalism. ... I am much disposed to say, 'A plague o' both your houses!"19

To what heritage, then, could the audience turn if not to the Puritan and Cavalier? Watterson enlarged upon the mythmaking of Winthrop and Webster for the answer:

I don't mind telling you in confidence—that it was we Scotch-Irish who vanquished both of you—some of us in peace—others

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16Ibid., p. 99.


of us in war—supplying the missing link of adaptability—the
needed ingredient of common sense—the conservative principles
of creed and action, to which this generation of Americans
owes its intellectual and moral emancipation from frivolity and
pharisaism. . . .

Watterson realized that "Anglo-Saxon" might not include the ancestry
of all the members of his audience. He took care of possible exclu-
sions by adding the encompassing term "Scotch-Irish." The people who
signed the Declaration of Independence, framed the Constitution, and
ousted the British "... were not all, nor even generally, scions of
the British aristocracy; but they came, for the most part, of good
Anglo-Saxon and Scotch-Irish stock." It was this Anglo-Saxon and
Scotch-Irish blood that "welled up" to demand freedom and indepen-
dence.

Thus, although Watterson responded to the toast "Puritan and
Cavalier" at the New England Society dinner, he rejected the Puritan-
Cavalier myth as divisive. The following year a fellow border-stater,
Judge Henry C. Caldwell of Missouri, addressed the New England Society
of St. Louis, and in a speech humorous in intent, concluded that
"there remains neither Cavalier nor Puritan, but in their stead the
broad-gauge, brave and patriotic American." Virginia orator and
teacher, William Gordon McCabe, addressed the New England Society in
1899 and redefined the Puritan-Cavalier qualities as "the American

20Ibid., p. 322.

21Ibid., pp. 137, 284, and 456.

22Henry C. Caldwell, "A Blend of Cavalier and Puritan," in
Modern Eloquence, ed. by Ashley H. Thorndike, I, p. 208.
Both McCabe and Caldwell followed Grady's example. They accepted the Puritan-Cavalier dichotomy as a part of America's history which was no longer valid. Watterson rejected completely the historical validity of the myth and substituted an "Anglo-Saxon" heritage, which he felt was a more viable source of common ground for his audiences. If Watterson could debunk the Puritan-Cavalier dichotomy by substituting his own mythology, he would be destroying a continuing source of intersectional division and he could create a new source of union for his sectional audiences.

The Christ Myth

Watterson, in his crusade to reconcile the sections quickly, saw the importance of religion as a unifying force for his audiences, North and South. C. Vann Woodward acknowledged the religious bonds of America in the Civil War era: "The rupture between North and South had come earliest in the great Protestant sects, and there it was slowest to heal." The Reverend Atticus G. Haygood of Georgia, in 1880, expressed the belief that a religious reunion of the sections was basic to intersectional harmony:

... it is one of the wonders of history that people have, in so short a time—fifteen years is a very short time in the history of a nation—so far overcome the evil effects of one of the most bloody and desolating and exasperating wars ever waged

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in this world. And the facts speak worlds for our form of govern­
ment, and above all for our Protestant religion—a religion
which will yet show itself to be the best healer of national
wounds and the best reconciler of estranged brethren.25

Because of the great potential of Protestant mythology as a
unifying force, many Southern speakers in the post-bellum period re­
lied on the myth to attain their particular goals. Some, like Henry
Grady, used the Protestant mythology to defend the South's treatment
of blacks.26 Others, such as the speakers at Confederate Veteran re­
unions, used the myth to map a divine plan for the redemption of a de­
feated South.27 Watterson used the Protestant myth or Christ myth on
occasion for both these purposes. His overriding interest in recon­
ciliation, however, mitigated against these uses. He could hardly
promote a conciliatory spirit among Northern audiences with a myth
that vindicated antebellum, Southern racial attitudes or that re­
vealed God's plan for eventual Confederate victory. Watterson remold­
ed Protestant mythology into a form which he believed would make it
"the best healer of national wounds and the best reconciler of estrang­

25Atticus G. Haygood, "Thanksgiving Sermon," from Masterpieces

26Joel Chandler Harris, ed., Life of Henry W. Grady, Including
His Writings and Speeches (New York: 1890). See Grady's speeches at
Dallas in 1887 and at Boston in 1889.

27See Howard Dorgan, "Southern Apologetic Themes, As Expressed
in Selected Ceremonial Speaking of Confederate Veterans" (Ph.D. disserta­
tion, Louisiana State University, 1971).

28On the issue of race, Paul Gaston states that Henry Watter­
son, along with Walter Hines Page, belonged to a more liberal wing of
the New South movement than did Grady. See Gaston, The New South
Creed, pp. 142-144.
Watterson's Christ myth began with Adam and Eve. According to the Old Testament, Adam and Eve sinned against God and separated themselves from His grace by eating the forbidden fruit. God expelled man from the Garden of Eden but finally allowed him to enter into a contractual relationship by which man submitted to God's will and in turn received God's protection through the Ark of the Covenant.

The New Testament introduced Protestant mythology in the form of a "New Covenant." In the New Covenant, God gave His only Son Jesus Christ, who was martyred to atone for man's original sin, and thus gave man access to God's grace without the legalistic commandments of the Ark or the deeds required for grace by the Roman Catholic church.

Watterson translated this myth into national history. He viewed the Revolutionary period as a time of national innocence, a sort of American "Eden." The political leaders of the era were without fault: "... what pride of caste, what elegance of manner, what dignity and dominancy of character!" Likewise, the military men were heroes all: "... where shall we go to seek a more resplendent galaxy of field-marshals?" These inhabitants of an idyllic past dedicated themselves to one spirit—"nationalism and to nationalism alone." The leaders of Watterson's "Eden" were not only nationalistic but also were men of peace:

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The first half of the Republic's first half-century of existence the public men of America, distinguished for many things, were chiefly and almost universally distinguished for repose of bearing and sobriety of behavior.30

Adam and Eve had been tempted in the original Garden of Eden by the serpent. The leaders of the American "Eden" were tempted by slavery. Neither North nor South successfully resisted this temptation:

The North found out very early in the race that slave labor was not profitable. So, consulting a prudent sagacity, it sold its slaves, never failing to put the money it got for them in its pocket. . . . At length the politicians, seeing in it the materials for agitation, seized it, and for another quarter of a century, and on both sides, much perverted it.31

Once the sections succumbed to temptation, there was no return to paradise. The generation of the Revolution sought in vain to douse the fires of satanic slavery, but to no avail.

No sooner had the campfires of the Revolution died out, than there began to burn, at first fitfully, then to blaze alarmingly in every direction, a succession of forest fires baffling the energies and resources of the good and brave men who fought to put them out.32

Like the men of the Old Testament seeking a restoration to God's grace, the men of the Revolution entered into their own covenant

30Watterson, Compromises of Life, pp. 138-39 and 281.

31For the purpose of ascertaining Watterson's reconciliation creed, I am using the full text of his first Electoral Commission Bill speech as printed in the Congressional Record and later reprinted in The Compromises of Life. There is ample evidence that Watterson would have given the full speech had not the ten-minute-per-speech limit been imposed. The Congressional Record version was instrumental in re-establishing Watterson's reputation with his Congressional colleagues, as well as with his eager national audience, as the chief Southern exponent of reconciliation. See The Compromises of Life, "The Electoral Commission Bill," p. 391.

32Watterson, Compromises of Life, p. 140.
or Constitution. This covenant had two fatal flaws: It failed to make explicit the federal nature of the Union and it failed to deal adequately with the original national sin—slavery.

When Hamilton and Madison agreed in supporting a Constitution wholly acceptable to neither of them, they compromised some differences and they left some other differences open to double construction; and among these latter, was the exact relation of the States to the General Government.33

Of more importance than the States' Rights issue in Watterson's allegory was that supreme "property interest"—slavery.

There was an organic question left fatally open by the authors of our Constitution. There was a property interest madly entangled with the moral nature of the time. There was no tribunal having power to determine the issue.34

The evils of slavery were infectious. Watterson blamed slavery for the "partyism" and the decline of manners in Congress. Slavery made Congress a "bear garden," and Congressional debate disintegrated into "the slovenly jargon of partisan controversy." Slavery destroyed the spirit of compromise. When slaver met abolitionist there was no middle ground.35

Clearly, the old covenant or Constitution was inadequate to deal with the nation's sin. Before there could be a new covenant, God would deal harshly with his people. God's wrath was visited upon the nation as civil war. Like a Calvinist haunted by the paradoxes of absolute predestination, Watterson at one time proclaimed the Civil

33Ibid., p. 315.
34Ibid., p. 279.
35Ibid., pp. 139-41.
War "irrepressible." At other times he predicted that "it will never be known . . . whether the War of Sections could have been averted." However, there was no mistake about the conduct of the war: "... it was the will of God." Indeed the war was a court of divine judgment. "The battlefield seemed the court of last resort. Into the dread tribunal each litigant brought the best that was in him."36

In Watterson's mind, the Southerner did not have adequate standing before God's "dread tribunal" because the South was weakened by the sin of slavery.37 The antebellum Southerner with "honest Anglo-Saxon blood" in his veins had shared in the national innocence of the Revolutionary era. Slavery had tempted the innocent Southerner, and he was thus beguiled. "... Behind the great ruffle the South wore to its shirt, there lay concealed a superb manhood. That this manhood was perverted, there is no doubt." The Southerner suffered for his sin: "God passed the rod across the land and smote the people." Watterson saw the North as equally burdened with sin: "The doctrine of secession was born at the North . . . the sin of slavery . . . belonged equally to the North and the South."38

God would not let the nation perish in the sins of slavery. Like Christ, Abraham Lincoln became Watterson's symbol of redemption. "God's own prophet" was sent to save the nation and the South. Because the South was so steeped in depravity, God both loved and pun-

36 Ibid., pp. 451-57.
37 Ibid., p. 388.
38 Ibid., pp. 289-90 and 455.
ished it. Because God loved the South, he sent Lincoln to intercede for it at the holy tribunal. By emphasizing Lincoln's Christ-like qualities, Watterson made his adoration of Lincoln acceptable to Southern audiences.

But let no Southern man point finger at me because I canonize Abraham Lincoln, for he was the one friend we had at court when friends were most in need . . . and as that God, of whom it has been said that 'whom He loveth He chasteneth,' meant that the South should be chastened. . . .

Lincoln emerged as the "suffering servant" whom God used to fulfill His will. In deifying Lincoln, Watterson rejected the "woods colt" theory of Lincoln's parentage. Watterson's Lincoln was a "common man" born to common parents:

Born as lowly as the Son of God, in a hovel; reared in penury, squalor, with no gleam of light or fair surrounding; without graces, actual or acquired; without name or fame or official training; it was reserved for this strange being, late in life, to be snatched from obscurity, raised to supreme command at a supreme moment, and entrusted with the destiny of a nation.

Watterson made it clear that Lincoln's whole life was part of God's grand design. "Surely, he was one of God's own; not in any sense a creature of circumstance, or accident." Just as Christ interceded for man at the heavenly tribunal, God's plan was for Lincoln to intercede for the nation's sin of slavery. This atonement would allow the North and South to become one again with God and in God's Union. Before the mediation was complete, God exacted a terrible retribution upon the South and the nation. Only by Lincoln's martyrdom could the

\[39\textit{Ibid.}, \textit{pp.} 166-67.\]

\[40\textit{Ibid.}, \textit{p.} 179.\]
nation achieve complete absolution.

It was the will of God that there should be, as God's own prophet had promised, 'a new birth of freedom,' and this could only be reached by the obliteration of the very idea of slavery. God struck Lincoln down in the moment of his triumph, to attain it. . . God's will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven.41

Watterson maintained an almost Biblical tension between the tragedy of Lincoln's death and the necessity of his death as fulfillment of prophecy: "The direct blow that could have been laid upon the prostrate South was delivered by the assassin's bullet that struck him down." Because Lincoln was a divine symbol, a bullet could end only his physical presence on earth. As one of the "inspired ones," Lincoln's spirit received immediate immortality.

They came, God's word upon their lips; they did their office, God's mantle about them; and they vanished, God's holy light between the world and them. . . .42

By making the conduct of the war the unfolding of God's will, Watterson gave meaning to the loss of life on both sides. Neither side was innocent in the eyes of God, so both sides had to pay with great human sacrifice. Such a sacrifice to God's glory and merciful will, to Watterson, could hardly be senseless.

. . . it was the will of God that there should be a mighty sacrifice, and let no man forget that the same God which struck down myriads of the best-beloved of the North struck down myriads of the best-beloved of the South. . . .

With the end of the war and the martyrdom of Lincoln, God's plan was complete. Man was still left to accept or reject God's judgment "that

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41 Ibid., pp. 166 and 178.
42 Ibid., pp. 164 and 179.
there should be a new birth of freedom . . . that Government of the people, by the people, and for the people should not perish from the earth."  

Just as Christ's martyrdom was extended to all who died for His cause, so Watterson demanded that Lincoln's martyrdom be extended to all those slain in combat. Watterson gave death three symbolic meanings: (1) death as a divine plan, (2) death as a consecration for the living, and (3) death as an end to sectionalism. In the first usage, Watterson linked the dead with a divine plan and thus turned aside the righteous indignation his listeners had for the men who gave their lives fighting for sectional concerns:

I had it in my mind to say that it is for us the living to decide whether the hundreds of thousands who fell on both sides during the battle were blessed martyrs to an end, shaped by a wisdom greater than ours, or whether they died in vain. . . . They did not die in vain.  

What was the divine plan or end of these "blessed martyrs"? Watterson said that the men of both sides had sacrificed themselves to a purpose transcending sectionalism:

The power, the divine power, which made for us a garden of swords, sowing the land broadcast with sorrow, will reap thence for us, and for the age, a nation truly divine. . . .

Watterson's second metaphor involved death as a consecration for the living. He turned the tables on those who wished to prolong

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43 Ibid., p. 455.

44 All three of these death metaphors can also be found in Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address," November 19, 1863.

45 Watterson, Compromises of Life, p. 287.

46 Ibid.
the feelings of hostility after the war, by waving the bloody shroud. If the Union and Confederate dead sacrificed their lives to a new Union, then any postwar sectional hostility would desecrate the memory of the fallen. Watterson explained the Southern sacrifice to the Confederate veterans:

... these are the guarantees which the men of the South give the men of the North; these the tokens by which we assure ourselves of our fidelity to the American Union. 47

By cleverly shifting the cause for which the soldiers died, from sectional to national, Watterson allowed both sides to pay homage to the dead of their recent enemy.

Watterson's third symbolic usage of the dead was as a metaphor for the death of sectionalism:

The war is over. It is for us to bury its passions with its dead; to bury them beneath a monument raised by the American people to American manhood and the American System. 48

Watterson found symbolism not only in the dead of the war but also in those who lived through the ordeal. He impressed upon the Northern veteran that the Northern veteran and his Confederate foe were but comrades-in-arms with different points of view and that the Confederate was no traitor to the Union. "The old feudal ideas of treason do not belong to our institutions or our epoch." To the Confederate veteran Watterson addressed the same message of transcendent comradeship: "... the same Anglo-Saxon and Scotch-Irish blood which welled up in the North welled up in us...." 49

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47 Ibid., p. 455.
48 Ibid., p. 278. 49 Ibid., pp. 279 and 456.
If the late enemy was in reality "a comrade in arms," then the enemy's hero leaders should be heroes for both sides. After eulogizing "the magnanimous spirit of dead heroes" of the North, Watterson reminded his G.A.R. auditors that "we, too, have our graves; we, too, had our heroes. All, all are comrades upon the other side..."\(^{50}\)

Watterson reminded the Confederate veteran that "Grant was the first peace-maker... Two Confederate generals wear the blue again, and the gray worships at its shrines, even as we worship this day."

Likewise the Northern veteran was admonished that:

It was our Lee who paid the honors of war to your Kearny. When the body of Morgan was borne to its last resting-place, soldiers of the Union, assembled by chance on the public square in Nashville, stood, soldier-like, uncovered as their fallen adversary passed.\(^{51}\)

Although Lincoln and the martyred dead continued to symbolize the expiation of a nation's sin, the reconciliation creed did not stop with Lincoln's death and the war's end. The creed had much to say about postwar hostility. This renewed antagonism represented honest mistake rather than the alienation that the sin of slavery had caused. Honest mistakes would wane once the mistaken parties had the benefits of intersectional travel. Watterson recommended travel to broaden the outlook of both sides:

If the people of the South could traverse the pleasant highways and byways of New England... they would recognize in the mingled obstinacy, narrowness, and goodwill of the New Engander much of their own exuberant spirit of provincial dogmatism. On the other hand, I maintain it to be true that wherever the New Engander has gone South with a fair purpose he has encountered

\(^{50}\)Ibid., p. 316. \(^{51}\)Ibid., pp. 456 and 280.
an honest welcome and has found a race of men and women kindred to his own.\textsuperscript{52}

When Watterson debunked the Puritan and Cavalier myth, he denied a lack of homogeneity among the "Anglo-Saxons" and "Scotch-Irish" of Revolutionary America. The sin of slavery had disrupted this homogeneity. The judgment of the war and the martyrdom of Lincoln had made it possible for the South to return to the virtues of Revolutionary society. The resident of the post-bellum South was innocent of war guilt and postwar hostility:

The present generation of Southern men is in no wise responsible for the acts of the last. It has no antecedents except those which illustrated its sincerity and its valor on the battle-field; its fidelity to its beliefs; its fidelity to its leaders; its fidelity to itself.\textsuperscript{53}

This "young manhood of the South," which yearned for national fellowship, harkened back to a time of national innocence. They had "no political antecedents" and were "in no wise responsible for our sectional war."\textsuperscript{54} The martyrdom of the martial dead and of Abraham Lincoln had removed the slavery sin of their fathers. Like the men of the Revolution, the present Southern generation were forwarded as the chosen people of a new Eden. Watterson did not hesitate to welcome the G.A.R. from this viewpoint: "It is therefore with a kind of exultation that I fling open the gates of this gateway to the South! I bid you welcome in the name of the people whose voice is the voice of God."\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., p. 389. \textsuperscript{53}Ibid., p. 282.

\textsuperscript{54}Ibid., pp. 281 and 397. \textsuperscript{55}Ibid., p. 316.
The residents of this post-bellum Eden were restored to the homogeneity of the Revolutionary period:

... the people of the North and South are one people, thoroughly homogeneous, differing only in those externals which, the universe over, distinguish several communities. ... 56

The myth was particularly useful for explaining away alleged sectional differences in the treatment of blacks and those who committed crimes against the black man. "Precisely the same system of indignation and humanity exists in one section that exists in the other." 57 If the sections were alike in their "system of civilization and humanity," one section could not logically criticize the system of the other.

This post-bellum homogeneity had many dimensions:

Familiar intercommunication between those who fought in it [the war] upon opposing sides; marriage and giving in marriage; the rearing of a common progeny; the ministrations of private friendship; the all-subduing influence of home and church and school, of wife and child, have culminated in such a closely knit web of interests and affections that none of us care to disentangle the threads that compose it, and few of us could do so if we would. 58

The result of this homogeneity was the most valuable national asset—union. As Watterson explained to the Union veteran:

You and I may fold our arms and go to sleep, leaving to younger men to hold and defend a property tenfold greater than that received by us, its ownership unclouded and its title-deeds recorded in Heaven! 59

Thus, just as the result of the Christ myth was the liberation of man for union with his God, so the resolution of Watterson's allegory was liberation of former partisans for an "American Union." Man

56 Ibid., p. 281. 57 Ibid., p. 394.
58 Ibid., pp. 313-14. 59 Ibid., pp. 315-16.
had come full cycle from the Eden of the pre-Revolutionary period to the New America, "its title-deeds recorded in Heaven."

While the Christ myth was shared with other New South orators, the widespread acceptance of the myth, North and South, made it a good device for Watterson to use in his campaign for emotional acceptance of reconciliation.

In summary, Watterson's reconciliation creed was the embodiment of his strategy to influence and control the direction of thought, North and South, toward post-bellum reconciliation. The creed had two consistent themes, parts of which Watterson developed in each of his reconciliation speeches. These themes were the Puritan and Cavalier myth and the Christ myth. Both myths were used by other Southern orators.

The Puritan and Cavalier myth concerned the alleged difference in ancestry between residents of the North and South. Because the Puritan-Cavalier difference was perceived by Watterson's audiences as a cause of the Civil War and a continuing source of intersectional division, Watterson debunked the myth as an obstacle to reconciliation. Unlike other Southern orators who accepted the dichotomy as a part of America's history which was no longer valid, Watterson rejected completely the historical validity of the myth and substituted an "Anglo-Saxon, Scotch-Irish" ancestry for North and South alike. This Anglo-Saxon, Scotch-Irish ancestry created a unifying symbol for Watterson's audiences and so helped gain emotional acceptance for reconciliation.
Watterson also saw the importance of religion as a unifying force for his audiences. To take advantage of this element, he wove an allegorical mosaic around the Protestant, or Christ, myth. According to Watterson's myth, the Revolutionary generation, like Adam and Eve, lived in a state of innocence. America's innocence was ended by the introduction of slavery, which brought sin into Paradise.

Watterson introduced Lincoln as a Christ figure to save the nation and the South from the sin of slavery. God struck Lincoln down in the hour of glory to attain this absolution. The dead of both North and South became martyrs to the cause of "a new birth of freedom." The dead were martyrs to a new Union similar to that enjoyed by their Revolutionary ancestors. It was the duty of the living to venerate the war's dead by celebrating their transcendent comradeship.

Watterson attributed any post-bellum animosity to honest mistake. The New South inhabitant was innocent of war guilt and yearned for national fellowship. The New South was the new Eden, and the voices of the New South were the voices of God. Like the Puritan and Cavalier myth, the Christ myth was also used by other New South orators. Watterson used the myth because its widespread acceptance, North and South, made it an effective device to gain emotional acceptance for reconciliation.
The Reconciliation Creed in Action

Parts of the reconciliation creed are developed in all of the speeches in this study. Watterson modified the creed according to the dictates of the specific audience and occasion. He varied in logical, emotional, and ethical appeal, method of organization, and special stylistic devices. His two speeches before the House of Representatives represent an adaptation of the creed to legislative speaking in which Watterson's end was persuasion. His six remaining speeches are adaptations of the creed to ceremonial or epideictic speaking situations in which his end was to intensify the emotions and increase identification and unity among his listeners.

House of Representatives

The Hayes-Tilden Controversy

In this study, Watterson's two speeches on the Electoral Compromise bill are unique because they are the only deliberative or legislative applications of the creed.

In the first speech, January 26, 1877, Watterson's credibility was in doubt. On the one hand, he was known as the fire-eater who had invited the "ten-thousand" to Washington; on the other, he had an established reputation, chiefly through his newspaper work, as a conciliator. Finally, it was rumored that he might be in league with the railroad lobby.
Because the speech was limited to ten minutes, Watterson was forced to constrain his efforts to re-establish his credibility as a conciliator. In the full version of the speech printed in the Congressional Record and in The Compromises of Life, Watterson sought to regain credibility by impressing his auditors with his own good will, humility, integrity, and intelligence.\(^\text{60}\) In the shorter version, he did manage to enhance his good will and integrity by cloaking his speech with only the highest motives: "I wish to inveigh against no party; to abuse nobody. . . ." He also demonstrated integrity by associating his cause with "... the God from whom we received our fair, free system, building wiser than we knew. . . ."\(^\text{61}\) His greatest success in re-establishing his credibility was probably found in the central thesis of the speech—the advocacy of the Compromise Plan.

Watterson organized his advocacy of compromise by offering (1) a need, (2) a plan to meet his need, and (3) a call for action. The

\(^{60}\) He demonstrated his good will by complimenting the "distinguished character and talents of the gentlemen who have preceded me." He showed humility by professing to be a "layman" in comparison with his House colleagues "who have made the consideration of problems in Constitutional law the business of their lives." He even suggested that he would change his opinion on the controversy after hearing the arguments of his more legally expert colleagues. He tried to re-establish his integrity by associating his opinions with "love of country," "the Anglo-Saxon heart," and "deeds of gentleness rather than violence." He attempted to establish his intelligence, or ability to speak on the subject at issue, by virtue of his "considerable migration . . . between the North and South, during the stress of weather encountered by our peculiar system the last two decades." See Compromises of Life, pp. 385-87.

\(^{61}\) New-York Daily Tribune, January 27, 1877, p. 3.
longer, printed version of his speech contained great detail for each of the three steps. The shorter, ten-minute, spoken version concentrated on an alleged need or danger, and a plan to satisfy the need and eliminate the danger. The need was for a means of averting the danger of possible civil war to settle the Hayes-Tilden controversy.

The plan that Watterson recommended was ratification of the Joint Committee to provide for and regulate the counting of the electoral vote. Rather than relating this plan to his need, he used the method of residues to get his plan accepted. "In other words, it is this [the Joint Committee] or the Senate or civil war. . . ." Watterson found none of these alternatives wholly acceptable but, "reduced to a choice of evils, I take this tribunal. . . ."

Watterson used previews and transitions but eschewed other internal organizational techniques such as signposts and summaries. It is probable that the brevity of the speech and the audience's familiarity with the points at issue partially ameliorated this lack of organization. In advocating the tribunal or Joint-Commission plan for compromise, Watterson first tried to establish the need for an Electoral Commission. In a conditional hypothetical syllogism the need might be stated as follows:

**Major Premise:** If one national party has the power to place its candidate in office despite the will of the people, then a civil war may develop.

**Minor Premise:** One national party does have the power

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62 Ibid.
to place its candidate in office despite the will of the people.

Conclusion: Civil war may develop.

Watterson supported this structurally valid syllogism by using historical induction to prove his major premise. The audience was forced to accept or reject Watterson's assertion that the Democratic party prior to the Civil War was in a position analogous to the Republicans in 1877. Whether Watterson's colleagues accepted his analogy is open to question.

Even if his alleged need were accepted, Watterson still had to prove the efficacy of his plan. He advanced no evidence that the plan would work or even meet the need of averting war. He merely asserted that it had bandwagon appeal—one-half of the voters were behind it—and that it was "both legal and just."63 Watterson gave no sources of his evidence concerning popular approval nor did he give backing for the justice and legality of the proposal. These appeals probably did little to persuade the dubious among his colleagues.

In his introduction Watterson made a powerful emotional appeal to safety and security. "It may not be true that grave dangers stare us in the face, threatening every public and private interest." This warning not only served as an attention-getting device but also as an emotional theme which pervaded the speech. Watterson repeatedly warned of the danger of a "cruel war" or, at the very least, "suspense, commo-

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63 *New-York Daily Tribune*, January 27, 1877, p. 3.
tion and discontent," should his proposed course of action not be adopted. These visions of chaos were probably stronger appeals than Watterson's unsubstantiated logic.

Watterson's use of the Christ myth and the Puritan and Cavalier myth was limited to the longer, printed version of his speech. For the latter myth, he interwove his belief in a common ancestry with an appeal to patriotism:

... I venture to hope that they may give on this floor some partial expression of that love of country and kind which warms the Anglo-Saxon heart in the United States to deeds of gentleness rather than violence, clearly indicating that we are the most homogeneous people on the face of the globe.®5

Watterson also took a pejorative swipe at the Puritan and Cavalier dichotomy:

The educated rascal in New England who forges paper and raises checks finds his counterpart in the Southern swashbuckler who wears a ruffled shirt and is handy with his revolver. Each .. . engages in that department of crime which he thinks safest.®6

Watterson's Christ myth also received an airing in print. It involved what he called "my reading of American history." That reading began with "... God from whom we received our fair, free system, building wiser than we knew." It included that dread day when "... the morality of slavery entered into party politics" and also "the Civil War, and all the evils which such experiences entail." Watterson's history ended with a return to innocence by "the men of my gen-

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®6 Ibid.
®5 Compromises of Life, p. 387.
®6 Ibid., pp. 394-95.
eration [who] were in no wise responsible for our sectional war."

Both themes were echoed in Watterson's often repeated idea that "there is no sectional line, no air-line or water-line in the country, east or west or north or south, which marks off separate species."\(^{67}\) Whatever unifying influence these themes might have had, Watterson's limited speaking time relegated them to his wider audience, the readership of the Congressional Record.

In summary, Watterson faced a problem of credibility when he rose to speak on the Commission plan. Replacing his image as a fire-eater with that of a conciliator, he became one of the first of the prominent Southerners to favor the Electoral Commission bill. His most powerful appeals were to the motives of safety and security. His logical appeal was so poorly evidenced that it was probably ineffective. Because of the shortness of speaking time, Watterson limited the enhancement of his credibility to three areas: (1) good will, (2) integrity, and (3) compromise—the theme of his speech.

**Electoral Commission Decision**

In his second speech in Congress, February 20, 1877, Watterson spoke briefly but emotionally. He divided his colleagues into two groups: (1) those who agreed with him and with the decision of the Electoral Commission and (2) those who disagreed with him and the Commission. In the former group, Watterson found "the acceptance of the inevitable . . . the rarest form of courage known among men," and those

who "illustrate the wisdom and grace of moderation." If these Watterson partisans had once opposed the Commission bill, they did so as "an earnest, manly, but temperate protest against what we believe a great and grievous wrong." Watterson found little virtue among the ranks of Commission opponents. This latter group stooped to "double dealing and foul play." They were engaged in "passionate outcry, at once impotent and childish."68

If this polarization of his colleagues was not persuasive, Watterson also included appeals to the facts, to nation, and to self:

In my judgment the latter [acceptance of the Commission Report] is our clear duty. We owe it to the necessities of the case, we owe it to the country, we owe it to ourselves.69

Watterson concluded in a tone of resignation, which the New York Times labeled "sour grapes."70

There are many things to live for yet in this rough world, and among the rest that day of reckoning—dies irae, dies eille—when the dark shall be light, and the wrong be made right.71

Many of Watterson's colleagues did not share the Times's sentiments. His speech represented the first call by a Southerner to stand by the decision of the Electoral Commission and against filibuster.

When Watterson sat down, a burst of applause rang out across the Chambers.72 C. Vann Woodward found a steady erosion of Southern support

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69Ibid.


for filibuster in the days following Watterson's speech. Whether the speech caused the erosion or was merely a first exposition of the growing antifilibuster sentiment cannot be determined. His second speech, however, did much to reinforce his image as a spokesman for moderation.

Watterson's first two speeches together with his "speech" on the Oregon Crisis, February 24, 1877, which was never given but printed in the Congressional Record, established his reputation as a leader among Southern reconciliationists. Although only the longer, printed versions of Watterson's Congressional speaking include the Puritan-Cavalier and Christ myths, these were the speech texts upon which he was adjudged a leader for compromise. The speech at Nashville was to be Watterson's first opportunity to expose these two myths to a live audience as well as before a national readership.

Memorial Day Address
National Cemetery in Nashville

Watterson's Nashville address was to be ceremonial or epideictic. This occasion dictated a different sort of speech from that required by his deliberative orations in Congress. Aristotle, in his

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Rhetoric, helped clarify the essential differences between these two occasions and types of speeches. Aristotle observed that there were "three kinds of speeches in Rhetoric, (1) deliberative, (2) forensic, and (3) epideictic." He further elaborated on epideictic speeches as "panegyrical or declamatory speeches in the nature of an exhibition or display, eulogies—in general, speeches of praise (or blame)." Aristotle found that the office of the deliberative speaker was to advise his audience on which course of action was most expedient, as Watterson did in advancing the Compromise plan in Congress. The epideictic speaker, on the other hand, uses praise to extol actions that are already admitted by the audience. As subject matter, he seeks those things already taken for granted by his listeners. He heightens or magnifies these objects of praise by associating them with "elements of virtue." Aristotle listed the following elements: "Justice, Courage, Temperance, Magnificence, Magnanimity, Liberality, Gentleness, Prudence, Wisdom." By imbuing his subject with beauty and magnificence, the speaker seeks impressiveness, or a sympathetic sensation of experience by the listener.77

A final term needs clarification. While Aristotle gave examples of topics for epideictic speeches, such as "when a man's performances exceed what we might expect," he failed to focus on the unifying elements of an epideictic speech that link the common background of a speaker and audience and provide a fund of topics for magnifica-

Kenneth Burke, in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, meets the need for such a focal point by introducing the concept of "identification." In the Burkean sense, identification is associated with persuasion. It is the communality of interests between a speaker and audience that a speaker uses to establish rapport with his auditors. The audience also recognizes this identity of interests and can be persuaded because of the unifying bond thus provided. Synonyms of identification are common ground, rapport, and consubstantiality.

Identification is useful not only for persuasion but also in epideictic speaking. In epideictic speaking, persuasion has already been accomplished and is taken for granted. The epideictic speaker, however, still recognizes this identity of interests, not as a persuasive device but as an area for magnification. For example, both Watterson and his audiences accepted the Christ myth; so, no persuasion was necessary. Nonetheless, the Christ myth was a strong point of identification for Watterson and his hearers. He used the identification of his audience with the Christ myth to intensify their feelings toward the virtues he emphasized; namely, magnanimity of the North and South. He magnified this conciliatory virtue by associating it with the already accepted virtues of the Christ myth. Through identifica-

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tion, the Christ myth became a stylistic device to increase unity among the audience and to intensify their emotions. 80

In discussing commemorative speaking, Gray and Braden state, "The central theme ordinarily stresses the importance of the day or the event." 81 At Nashville, Watterson stated that the central theme, or reason for assembling, was "to commemorate the patriotism and valor of the brave men who died to save the Union." In reality the whole speech answered the question: "What do we admire?" Watterson's answers were reconciliation and reunion. The veneration of the dead seemed only a subterfuge for the reconciliation of the living.

Points of Identification

Of all the visible symbols with which the audience could relate, perhaps the most conspicuous was Watterson himself. He began his speech with reference to "the exceptional circumstance of my coming. ... Herein, it has seemed to me, lies all that is good or fit in the occasion which brings us together." 82 Watterson's reputation as a spokesman for reconciliation had preceded him to Nashville. A page-one editorial of the Daily American prepared the audience not for


82 Compromises of Life, p. 277.
the fire-eater of January but for a speaker with sentiments "worthy of the occasion . . . to make this era of reconciliation complete. . ." 83 Twice, Watterson had stood at the forefront of compromise in Congress. It was for this Congressional spirit that the Daily American prepared his Nashville audience. Watterson became a visible point of identification for the spirit of reconciliation.

Other visible symbols were the flag, the dead, the physical setting, and the Union soldier in the audience. Watterson found in "your flag and my flag" an excellent source of common ground:

I come with a full heart and a steady hand to salute the flag that floats above me—my flag and your flag—the flag of the Union—the flag of the free heart's hope and home—the star-spangled banner of our fathers—the flag that, uplifted triumphantly over a few brave men, has never been obscured, destined by the God of the universe to waft on its ample folds the eternal song of freedom to all mankind, emblem of the power on earth which is to exceed that on which it was said the sun never went down. 84

His repetition of the word flag, a stylistic device called epanaphora, 85 was intended to increase identification among the listeners.

The dead—or their graves—were a second symbol visible to the Nashville throng. What did the dead symbolize? "Alas, it is the living who must go to the dead for instructions," lamented Watterson.

The instructions were simple:

The dead who lie here; the dead of all the battle-fields, the dead of the South and the North, comrades at last in the im-


84 Compromises of Life, p. 287.

85 According to Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, Speech Criticism, p. 504, "Epanaphora is a Figure in which the same word is gracefully and emphatically repeated. . . ."
mortality of the soul, can leave us, do leave us, this lesson only: That we are Americans; that we are republicans; that we are blessed in our condition; that we should cherish it and one another, for God's sake and for the honor of the flag.  

The dead and the flag became rallying points for reconciliation. Elsewhere in the speech Watterson used death to symbolize a burying of passions. With passions buried, all the dead soldiers and their admirers became patriots to a new freedom. This use of death allowed the audience to participate in the occasion, even an occasion with morbid overtones. The audience could only join with the dead in a living cause. Watterson provided the cause—a burying of passions so that those above and those below could participate in a common undertaking.

A third unifying influence was the physical setting. Watterson used personification to show how the visible surroundings were also eulogizing the dead:

The season brings its tribute to the scene; pays its homage to the dead; inspires the living. There are images of tranquillity all about us: in the calm sunshine upon the ridges; in the tender shadows that creep along the streams; in the waving grass and grain that mark God's love and bounty; in the flowers that bloom over many, many graves. There is peace everywhere in this land to-day.  

By giving the inanimate setting human characteristics, Watterson implied that even the flowers magnified the virtues of peace and reconciliation.

The final visible symbols with which all present could identify were the Union and Confederate veterans in attendance. The coming to—

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86 Compromises of Life, p. 284.

87 Ibid., p. 277.
gether of these former foes to commemorate the Union dead was, in itself, something to celebrate. Watterson was quick to note this unusual circumstance and point out its importance:

There is no one of us, wore he the one cloth or the other, come he from the granite hills of New England or the orange groves of the Sunny South, who has not an interest for himself and his children in the preservation and perpetuation of a Free America. ... The occasion which brings us here has this significance: it is illustrative; it tells us that we have come to understand that there could be no lasting peace, nor real republicanism, while any freeman's right was abridged, or any patriot's grave unhonored. ... 88

By alluding to the significance of blue and gray honoring the Union dead, Watterson amplified the meaning of the occasion. He linked this meaning to the virtues of patriotism, republicanism, peace, and freedom, and thus gave his audience the feeling that they were involved in much more than their ostensible purpose for assembling—a memorial for the Federal dead.

In addition to appeals to visible symbols with which the speaker and audience could identify, Watterson also magnified the occasion by arousing the sentiments of the audience. Gray and Braden point out that "homage, sympathy, gratitude, admiration, veneration, and attachment are the sentiments which most talks of this type attempt to arouse." 89 Although veneration for the dead was the obvious sentiment to be expressed, Watterson shifted the emphasis of the speech to attachment to the principles for which the dead had given their lives. He

88 Ibid., pp. 278-79.
explained this attachment to reconciliation and reunion by recounting his myth of American history.

Watterson's national history began with slavery, "an organic question left fatally open by the authors of our Constitution. . . . There was no tribunal having power to determine the issue." War was the inevitable tribunal so that "'the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth. . . ." This "perpetuation of Free America" was not only "paramount," it was also "a holy interest." With the war past, a new nationalism appeared, born of the continuing homogeneity of the American people. The New South was innocent of war responsibility. The post-bellum quarrels with the North "have no bottom to them."90 If the audience accepted this myth, which emphasized a predestination of history toward reconciliation, then they could not look to history to excuse continuing disharmony.

To emphasize the attachment of reconciliation in the New South, Watterson recited a litany of common religious symbols:

Those who worship the same God, who kneel at the same shrine, who breathe to Heaven the same prayers, who sing the same songs, in whose mouth the inspirations of holy writ and the precepts of Anglo-Saxon freedom are as familiar as household words, can afford no impassable gulfs, cannot seriously and permanently be estranged.91

By mythologizing the past and by using religious symbols to intensify the present feeling toward reunion, Watterson increased the

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90 *Compromises of Life*, pp. 278-79.

awareness of the audience toward his cause. Also prominent in his speech were appeals to arouse feelings of patriotism and nationalism and appeals to things magnanimous.

To both Northern and Southern listeners Watterson was blunt.

The day of the sectionalist is over. The day of the nationalist has come. . .

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
To sectionalism and partyism we owe our undoing. We shall owe our restoration to nationalism, and to nationalism alone. . . .92

He assured the Northern audience members that ". . . the young manhood of the South yearns for national fellowship." At the same time, he warned the North "not to build up a national spirit which shall in a word or thought proscribe it [Southern fellowship], or those who are to come after it."

For both sides to see full fruition of this spirit of nationalism, a spirit of magnanimity had to prevail. It was Watterson's strategy to show that instances of a generous spirit were abundant in war and peace:

It is necessary to remind no one of the conduct of Grant and Sherman in the moment of their triumph. The conflicts of this present hour cannot shut out from the hearts of grateful men the spectacle of that dismal day, when, rising above the passions of victory and the ruins of conquest, the chiefs of the armies of the North remembered not merely that they were soldiers and men of honor, but that they were Americans. It was our Lee who paid the honors of war to your Kearny. When the body of Morgan was borne to its last resting-place, soldiers of the Union, assembled by chance on the public square in Nashville, stood, soldier-like, uncovered as their fallen adversary passed. When McPherson fell a thrill of sorrow went along the whole Confederate line. I believe, to-day, that the assassination of Abraham Lincoln is lamented in the South hardly less than in the North.93

By reciting these instances of magnanimity, Watterson heightened the appreciation of the audience for a continuing charitable feeling between former foes. By likening the forgiving spirit of the audience to the magnanimous virtues of their heroes, Watterson aroused appreciation of that virtue.

Watterson's use of visible symbols to increase identification as well as his intensification of the sentiments of the audience were apparently successful. Reports from both his local audience⁹⁴ and the larger national audience which read the speech⁹⁵ indicate that his appeals for an end of sectionalism were well received. Through amplification, he used the veneration of the dead to glorify the reconciliation of the living.

In summary, Watterson's speech at the National Cemetery in Nashville was different from his Congressional speaking in several respects. It was a ceremonial situation requiring an epideictic speech. Watterson's goal was not persuasion, but was to increase identification and to intensify the feelings of the audience. He had shed his reputation of "fire-eater" and had himself become a symbol of reconciliation.

Watterson used visible symbols—his own presence, the flag, the dead, the physical setting, and the Union soldier—as visible points of identification for the spirit of reconciliation. He also

⁹⁴Nashville Daily American, May 31, 1877, p. 4.

magnified the occasion by arousing the sentiment of attachment to reconciliation, by arousing feelings of patriotism and nationalism, and by appeals to things magnanimous. His most forceful symbol was probably his own presence. Both the Nashville audience and the nation as a whole were moved by an ex-Confederate proclaiming that the Union dead were now comrades "in the everlasting peace of death."

"The New South"

The American Bankers' Association Convention - Louisville

Watterson was invited to give a speech of welcome to the American Bankers' Association convening in Louisville, Kentucky. Gray and Braden classify a speech of welcome as one form of a speech of courtesy. They list five characteristics for this form of epideictic speech:

1. It is short. 2. The organization is streamlined and non-traditional. 3. The speech goal is to entertain, to inform, or to stimulate. 4. Language is sincere and genuine in tone. 5. The mood is pleasant. Watterson's speech had all of these qualities, with the exception of his use of organizational techniques.

He met the first criterion in that his speech was brief—only about fifteen minutes. Though short, the speech showed improvement in organizational techniques. Watterson previewed his main ideas and included a conclusion which summarized the body of the speech. The speech followed an historical order, moving from past to present to

96Gray and Braden, Public Speaking: Principles and Practice, pp. 245-46.
future of the South's social and economic status. He used this his-
tory to refute issues developed by opponents to economic aid for the
South.

Watterson had two goals in speaking: to entertain and to in-
form. First, he wished to welcome the bankers to Louisville with an
entertaining speech. Second, he wanted to inform the Northerners
about investment possibilities in the South. As is customary in a
speech to entertain, Watterson made judicious use of humor. Gray and
Braden comment on the use of humor in a speech of courtesy:

... well chosen humor is often considered quite refreshing
and fitting, especially if it creates an atmosphere of good
cheer and good fellowship.97

Watterson followed this model in that he used humor both to increase
identification and to put his listeners in a cheerful mood. Unfortu-
nately he also had a prior reputation for ineptitude in financial
affairs.98 To overcome his reputed lack of knowledge in money matters,
Watterson used humor. After establishing that his "intercourse with
banks and bankers has ever been of a pleasing and satisfactory charac-
ter," he humorously indicated the extent of his feeling for banks:

A man may quarrel with his wife; he may sometimes venture a
suggestion to his mother-in-law; he must love, honor and obey
the banker.

According to the Convention minutes, the bankers received this show of
good will with "prolonged laughter and applause." This introduction

97 Ibid., p. 246.

assured Watterson an interested hearing. Then, to demonstrate intelligence, he assured the audience that he would not talk about bankers and banking but instead would speak on the South, his area of expertise. Watterson's initial tone of good humor lasted the entire speech, with at least sixteen outbursts of applause, laughter, or both, recorded in the Convention minutes.

In addition to putting his listeners at ease, Watterson used humor to increase identification. His jokes showed that the South could laugh at itself. An example was his anecdote comparing the Old South to the New:

Under the old system we paid our debts and walloped our niggers.
Under the new, we pay our niggers and wallop our debts.

By this comparison, he showed the audience that the South could join the Northern bankers in laughing at the South's treatment of the blacks. Other reconciliation speakers continued to treat slavery as a sacred topic. The audience was no doubt relieved to have this possible source of contention transformed into common ground through Watterson's wit. He proved that laughter could bridge sectional boundaries and unite an audience.

In addition to his use of humor, Watterson increased unity by enumeration of national assets without sectional boundaries. Gray and

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100 *Compromises of Life*, p. 290.

Braden note that a question often answered in speeches of welcome and response is "What common bonds exist between you [the speaker] and the newcomer or newcomers?"102. In answering this question, Watterson found several points of identification:

My belief is that life and property are as secure in the South as they are in New England. I am certain that men are at least as safe in Kentucky and Tennessee as women seem to be in Connecticut. The truth is, the war is over and the country is whole again. The people always homogeneous, have a common, national interest. For my part, I have never believed in isothermal lines, air-lines, and water-lines separating distinct races. I no more believe that that river yonder, dividing Indiana and Kentucky, marks off two distinct species than I believe that the great Hudson, flowing through the State of New York, marks off distinct species. Such theories only live in the fancy of morbid minds. We are all one people. Commercially, financially, morally, we are one people. . . .103

In reciting these common bonds, he heightened the attractiveness of the South as a place for investment and strengthened the feelings for reconciliation among the bankers.

Watterson also used stylistic means to amplify the occasion. Braden and Gehring define "vividness," one of four qualities of good style, as a style "which is fresh and animated, one which evokes sharp and lifelike mental images."104 One way to achieve vividness is to use a metaphor or "a Trope, by which a word is removed from its proper signification into another meaning upon account of Comparison."105

102Gray and Braden, Public Speaking: Principles and Practice, p. 251.
103Compromises of Life, pp. 292-93.
At the core of Watterson's use of metaphor was the Christ myth, in which he recounted the history of the South from the time "God passed the rod across the land and smote the people" to the post-war period when God "waved the wand of enchantment, and, lo, like a flower, His blessing burst forth!" Watterson explained what happened between those two events with a series of extended metaphors. He first compared the isolationist economic policies of the South to a family protecting itself from wolves:

And the women of the South took their place by the side of the men of the South, and, with spinning-wheel and plough-share, together they made a stand against the wolf at the door. That was fifteen years ago, and to-day there is not a reward offered in a single Southern State for wolf-skins. The fact is, the very wolves have got ashamed of themselves and gone to work. . . .106

In this humorous fashion, Watterson emphasized the change in Southern attitudes.

In recounting the South's need for Northern capital, Watterson mixed several metaphors; at one time, giving capital the human quality of temerity, and, at another, comparing the South to a laughing woman:

We have given hostages to fortune, and our works are before you. I know that capital is proverbially timid. But what are you afraid of? Is it our cotton that alarms you? or our corn? or our sugar? Perhaps it is our coal and iron. Without you, in truth, many of these products must make slow progress, while others will continue to lie hid in the bowels of the earth. With you the South will bloom as a garden and sparkle as a gold-mine; for, whether you tickle her fertile plains with a straw or apply a more violent titillation to her mountain-sides, she is ready to laugh a harvest of untold riches!107

106 Compromises of Life, pp. 289-90.

107 Ibid., p. 292.
Again Watterson used metaphors "to evoke sharp and lifelike mental images" from his listeners. By achieving this vividness, he intensified the meaning of the occasion—a celebration of economic reconciliation.

Watterson concluded the body of his speech with an appeal to the acquisitiveness of the bankers:

I perfectly understand that business is business, and that capital is as unsectional as unsentimental. I am speaking from neither spirit. You have money to loan. We have a great country to develop.

We need the money. You can make a profit off the development. . . .

He followed with a visualization of possible areas of development.

C. Vann Woodward found that after 1879 Northern capital did indeed flow into Southern development. Although impressed by the influence of "outbursts from orators and editors," Woodward assigns importance to "forces that were impersonal and quite amoral," such as the end of the depression in 1879, in positing the cause of new capital infusions into the South. Whether or not Watterson's "outburst" was successful in informing his banking guests about investment possibilities, he was successful in his goal of welcoming the bank-

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108 Compromises of Life, p. 291.


ers with an entertaining speech. Several speakers who followed him
on the Convention program praised his wit and eloquence. 111

In summary, Watterson's speech of welcome to the American
Bankers' Association had two goals: to entertain and to inform. He
pursued his goal to entertain by the use of humor. He used humor
both to increase identification and to put his listeners in a cheer­
ful mood. The bankers responded with applause and laughter, and
probably felt greater kinship with the speaker as Watterson used wit
to prove that the South could laugh at a subject long sacred—slavery.
Watterson also increased identification by appeals to common bonds.
He used metaphors to add vividness to his speech and thus intensify
the emotions of the assembled bankers.

"The Puritan and the Cavalier"

* New England Society — New York

Between 1883 and 1894, Watterson's creed increased in recogni­
tion and acceptance. He had been asked on several occasions to address
the New England Society of New York and accepted in 1894. Watterson
knew that his audience would be more interested in being entertained
than chastised by a reconciliation creed.

Eight years before, another Southerner, Henry W. Grady, had
addressed the New England Society on "The New South." At the time

111 Proceedings of the Convention of the American Bankers' As­
association, 1883, pp. 73-74.
Grady made his speech, Watterson had criticized Grady as placing avarice above Southern loyalty. Now, eight years later, Grady, a hero to the New South movement, was generally revered by the New England Society members. Watterson chose to heighten his own reputation by associating himself with Grady.

In his introduction, Watterson sought to enhance his identification with his listeners by eulogizing Grady and his "Heaven-born mission." Watterson explained that Grady was "appointed by God to carry a message of peace on earth, good will to men, and this done, he vanished from sight of mortal eyes, even as the dove from the ark. . . . I mean to take up the word where Grady left it off. . . ." 112 Using this mixed Biblical metaphor, Watterson sought to associate himself with that which was noble and elevated.

Following this introduction, Watterson used a distributive order in enlarging upon the thesis that "Puritan and Cavalier" were no longer a viable distinction. He organized the speech by several lines of analysis: (1) There were no Puritans and Cavaliers left; (2) many leading Southerners were of New England ancestry; (3) many Northern heroes possessed characteristics normally ascribed to the Cavaliers; (4) the Scotch-Irish vanquished both Puritan and Cavalier; and (5) Lincoln was the martyred embodiment of the noblest characteristics of both groups. 113 Each of these assertions was backed by examples and specific instances. As previously noted, Grady used many of these

112 *Compromises of Life*, pp. 318-19.

same topics in addressing the New England Society eight years before. Although using the same topics, Watterson employed a different strategy with the Puritan-Cavalier myth. While rejecting the myth as divisive, he magnified the virtues associated with the Puritans and Cavaliers and thus played on natural sympathies his audience felt for these virtues. He transferred these embellished qualities to an Anglo-Saxon, Scotch-Irish heritage which had none of the taint of sectional animosity associated with Puritans and Cavaliers. In an about-face on the adage of "loving the sinner and hating the sin," Watterson professed love for the virtues of the Puritan-Cavalier myth while debunking the Puritans and Cavaliers themselves.

Since the ascribed virtues of the Puritans and Cavaliers were laudable, North and South, they were natural topics to transcend sectional division. Thus Watterson's particular version of the Puritan-Cavalier myth became one of the key points of identification in his speech. To intensify the feelings of the audience for this conciliatory version of the Puritan-Cavalier myth, Watterson related the myth to visible symbols and national heroes. He also used an extended metaphor, a stylistic device also used in his Louisville speech.

In his introduction, Watterson acknowledged the "Puritan trappings, traditions and associations" that surrounded him in the banquet hall. He emphasized the importance of these "visible illustrations of

the self-denying fortitude of the Puritan character and the sober simplicity of the Puritan taste and habit." By magnifying the virtues of his audience's ancestors, Watterson sought both to heighten the listeners' appreciation and also increase his identification with their shibboleths. He concluded that notwithstanding these trappings "... I never felt less out of place in all my life."115

In addition to the virtues of the ancestors, Watterson addressed himself to a catalogue of virtues cherished by the immediate audience.

Blessed be the eye to see, the light to reveal. Blessed be tolerance, sitting ever on the right hand of God to guide the way with loving word, as blessed be all that brings us nearer the goal of true religion, true Republicanism, and true patriotism, distrust of watchwords and labels, shams and heroes, belief in our country and ourselves. . . .116

These beatitudes helped intensify the feelings of the audience toward the magnanimous spirit Watterson desired.

Having paid fealty to the virtues of the Puritans and their ancestors, he shifted his amplification to the virtues of national heroes, North and South. First, he listed Southern heroes who sprang from Northern roots:

During twenty years three statesmen of Puritan origin were the chosen party leaders of Cavalier Mississippi: Robert J. Walker, born and reared in Pennsylvania; John A. Quitman, born and reared in New York, and Sargent S. Prentiss, born and reared in the good old State of Maine. That sturdy Puritan, John Slidell, never saw Louisiana until he was old enough to vote and to fight; native here—an alumnus of Columbia College—but sprung from New England ancestors. Albert Sidney Johnston, the

115 Compromises of Life, p. 319.
116 Ibid., p. 324.
most resplendent of modern Cavaliers—from trig to toe a type of the species—the very rose and expectancy of the young Confederacy—did not have a drop of Southern blood in his veins; Yankee on both sides of the house, though born in Kentucky a little while after his father and mother arrived there from Connecticut. The ambassador who serves our Government near the French Republic was a gallant Confederate soldier and is a representative Southern statesman; but he owns the estate in Massachusetts where his father was born, and where his father's fathers lived through many generations.\textsuperscript{117}

This recitation heightened the feelings of the New Englanders for their section. They could feel pride even in Southern heroes now that Watterson had exposed their Northern ties.

Next, Watterson gave examples of Northern heroes who had the characteristics normally associated with the Cavalier:

\ldots If Custer was not a Cavalier, Rupert was a Puritan. And Sherwood and Wadsworth and Kearny, and McPherson, and their dashing companions and followers! The one typical Puritan soldier of the war—mark you!—was a Southern, and not a Northern, soldier; Stonewall Jackson of the Virginia line. And, if we should care to pursue the subject further back, what about Ethan Allen and John Stark and Mad Anthony Wayne, Cavaliers each and every one! Indeed, from Israel Putnam to Buffalo Bill, it seems to me the Puritans have had much the best of it in turning out Cavaliers.\textsuperscript{118}

He glorified the heroes of the audience by associating them with the Cavalier virtues. The Cavalier virtues were thus enhanced by their attachment to men already revered.

In the conclusion of the speech, Watterson again used the revered ancestors of his auditors to intensify their feelings:

\ldots I appeal from the patriarchs of New England to the poets of New England; from Endicott to Lowell; from Winthrop to Longfellow; from Norton to Holmes. \ldots \textsuperscript{119}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p. 321.
\item \textsuperscript{118} Ibid., pp. 321-22.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p. 324.
\end{itemize}
He ended the speech with a poem by that New England worthy, John Greenleaf Whittier.

Watterson also introduced one of his often used stylistic devices, the extended metaphor:

Grady told us, and told us truly, of that typical American, who, ... in Abraham Lincoln's actuality, had already come ... from that rugged trunk, drawing its sustenance from gnarled roots, interlocked with Cavalier sprays and Puritan branches deep beneath the soil, shall spring, is springing, a shapely tree—symmetric in all its parts—under whose sheltering boughs this nation shall have the new birth of freedom Lincoln promised it, and mankind the refuge which was sought by the forefathers when they fled from oppression.120

This imagery contributed to the vividness of his emotional appeal for reconciliation by introducing Lincoln as the tree nurtured by the dead branches of Cavalier and Puritan sectionalism.

Watterson's appeals to visible symbols, heroes of the North and South, and his use of metaphor aroused his audience to repeated "applause and cheers." If the praise of the speaker who followed him is a fair indication, Watterson had indeed taken "up the word where Grady left it off" and intensified the feelings of his audience toward a revised interpretation of the Puritan-Cavalier myth.121

In summary, Watterson was invited by the New England Society of New York "to take up the word where Grady left it off. . . ." By associating himself with Grady, he identified with a symbol of North-South friendship. Watterson used the same topics Grady had used but

120Ibid., p. 324.

he rejected the divisiveness of the Puritan-Cavalier myth while magnifying the virtues associated with the Puritan and Cavalier ancestors. He praised "Puritan trappings, traditions and associations" but asserted that many Southern heroes sprang from Puritan roots while many Northern heroes had the characteristics normally associated with the Cavaliers. He appealed to the revered ancestors of the New Englanders and even recited the words of a New England poet to intensify the pride of his listeners. He also added an extended metaphor to enhance the vividness of his language. The New York press joined the New England Society in praise of his re-interpretation of the Puritan-Cavalier myth.

"A Welcome to the Grand Army"

Louisville - 1895

In his speech to the Grand Army, Watterson achieved a personal triumph in many respects. He mounted the platform as the man responsible for the G.A.R.'s coming to Louisville. By 1895, his credentials as a reconciliation speaker were well established. Many elements of the Christ myth and Watterson's version of the Puritan and Cavalier myth were widely accepted, North and South. The sainthood of Lincoln, the affinity of the sections, and the Union, "a power and glory among men passing the dreams of the fathers of the Republic," had been


123 Donald Creyk; *Sparks from the Camp Fire* (Philadelphia: Keystone Publishing Co., 1895), pp. 597-98.

Watterson organized the speech around the theme of peace through reconciliation. Gray and Braden point out that speeches of courtesy, of which this is an example, "are streamlined in organization and do not fall into traditional patterns of organization. . . . In the development, subpoints are blended together and may be difficult to identify. . . . Every effort is made to fuse the speech into a unified whole, expressive of some deep and fitting sentiment."\textsuperscript{126}

Watterson divided his speech into six parts: (1) He explained the occasion of his welcome; (2) he asserted that "blue-gray" distinctions had been obliterated; (3) he praised the flag; (4) he used the Christ myth to explain away sectional conflict; (5) he paid tribute to memorable heroes and battles; (6) he ended with a poem to peace. He related each of these six areas to the sentiments of reconciliation and reunion.

Watterson sought to increase identification with his audience through (1) his presence, (2) visible symbols, (3) appeals to things memorable. He felt his presence before the Grand Army symbolic of all blue-gray reunion and was quick to point this out to the audience:

Excerpt that historic distinctions have long been obliterated here, it might be mentioned that I appear before you as the representative alike of those who wore the blue and of those who wore the gray in that great sectional combat, which, whatever else it did or did not, left no shadow upon American sol-

\textsuperscript{125} Compromises of Life, p. 315.

\textsuperscript{126} Gray and Braden, Public Speaking, p. 245.
... diership, no stain upon American manhood. ... 127

Just as he had done at the Union Cemetery in Nashville in 1877, Watter-son indulged in self-aggrandizement, offering himself as a symbol for trans-sectional unity.

He also sought to increase identification by appeals to the most conspicuous of visible symbols—the numerous American flags. 128

And the flag! God bless the flag! As the heart of McCallum More warmed to the tartan, do all hearts warm to the flag! Have you upon your round of sight-seeing missed it hereabout? Does it make itself on any hand conspicuous by its absence? Can you doubt the loyal sincerity of those who from house-top and roof-tree have thrown it to the breeze? Let some sacrilegious hand be raised to haul it down and see! ... These are honest flags, with honest hearts behind them. They are symbols of a nationality as precious to us as to you. ... 129

In other words, Watterson transferred the homage to the flag to a heightened appreciation of the Union loyalties of those who flew it.

Finally, Watterson sought to increase identification by appeals to things memorable and things magnanimous. He appealed to the memory of Civil War battles as he took his listeners on a Southern tour:

... across the Chaplin Hills, where Jackson fell, to Stone's River, where Rosy fought—and on to Chattanooga and Chickamauga and over Missionary Ridge, and down by Resaca and Kenesaw, and Allatoon, where Corse 'held the fort', as a second time you march to the sea—pausing awhile about Atlanta to look with wonder on a scene risen as by the hand of enchantment—thence returning by way of Franklin and Nashville—you will encounter, as you pass those mouldering heaps, which remind you of your valor and travail... 130

127 Compromises of Life, p. 315.


129 Compromises of Life, p. 314.

130 Ibid., p. 316.
These areas of past conflict were important to the Union veterans as well as to their former Confederate adversaries, and so made good points of identification. Watterson was quick to link memorable "mouldering heaps" with the virtues of magnanimity, which he intensified through association with "the magnanimous spirit of dead heroes, with Grant and Sherman, and Thomas and McPherson and Logan looking down from the happy stars as if repeating the words of the Master—'Charity for all—malice toward none.'" By linking appeals to things memorable with things magnanimous, he increased identification and intensified the feelings of the veterans for the reconciliation spirit.

According to Gray and Braden, "... amplification may be accomplished by three means: (1) recast the thought in different words, (2) give a quotation which restates it, and (3) use rhetorical questions." Watterson used all three means to intensify the veterans' feelings of magnanimity. Despite his denial, "... I am not here to recite the history of the United States," Watterson used parts of the Christ myth to recast history. First, there was the stability of the Revolutionary period, "when Hamilton and Madison agreed in supporting a Constitution wholly acceptable to neither of them. ..." Then, "... the institution of African slavery ... got between the North and the South. ..." A war was necessary to create a Union "...

\[131\] Ibid.

\[132\] Gray and Braden, Public Speaking: Principles and Practice, p. 305.
and with it a power and glory among men passing dreams of the fathers of the Republic." Watterson felt this was not planned by men but by a divine influence:

You and I may fold our arms and go to sleep, leaving to younger men to hold and defend a property tenfold greater than that received by us, its ownership unclouded and its title-deeds recorded in Heaven! . . . I bid you welcome in the name of the people whose voice is the voice of God. . . .

Thus Watterson retold the history of the sectional conflict so that it ended with a victory for a conciliatory spirit. He magnified the spirit with a list of its visible symbols:

. . . Familiar intercommunication between those who fought in it upon opposing sides; marriage and giving in marriage; the rearing of a common progeny; the ministrations of private friendship; the all-subduing influence of home and church and school, of wife and child, have culminated in such a closely knit web of interests and affections that none of us care to disentangle the threads that compose it, and few of us could do so if we would.

A final example of Watterson's use of restatement deserves attention. As in his Nashville and Louisville speeches, he increased the vividness of his message by use of an extended metaphor. This time the metaphor was financial. Watterson likened his invitation to the Grand Army to

. . . That promissory note, drawn by me upon the City of Louisville, and discounted by you in the City of Pittsburg a year ago --it has matured--and I am come to pay it! . . . Its discharge leaves us poor only in the regret that we may not repeat the transaction every twelve months, and convert this central point of the universe into a permanent encampment for the Grand Army of the Republic.

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133 Compromises of Life, pp. 315-16.

134 Ibid., pp. 313-14.

135 Ibid., p. 313.
The metaphor expressed not only Watterson's good will toward his audi­
ence but also his wish that Louisville might be a focal point for re-
union in the future.

Watterson used two questions to achieve amplification. The
first was a short ode to the futility of armed conflict:

"You cannot chain the eagle,
And you dare not harm the dove;

But every gate
Hate bars to hate
Will open wide to love!"  

The second he dedicated to "... we who have lived to see fulfilled
the Psalmist's prophecy of peace":

"Peace on the whirring marts,
Peace where the scholar thinks, the hunter roams,
Peace, God of Peace, peace, peace in all our homes,
And all our hearts!"  

Through poetry he emphasized a pacific theme to former men of war.  

136 Ibid., p. 314.

137 Ibid., p. 317.

138 The Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier (Boston and
Poems of Henry Timrod (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mif­

Watterson identified neither of these poems (Footnotes 136
and 137). The first is a rough paraphrase of New England poet John
Greenleaf Whittier's "Brown of Ossawatomie." In assessing the rela­
tionship of John Brown to his native Virginia, Whittier warns:

She may strike the pouncing eagle, but
she dares not harm the dove;
And every gate she bars to Hate shall
open wide to Love!

Watterson excerpted the second piece of verse from "Christ­
mas" by Henry Timrod, "Poet Laureate of the Confederacy." Watterson
heightened the feelings of reunion by integrating the words of an abo­
lationist and a Southern apologist into a mosaic of peace.
Watterson used the rhetorical question to command the Grand Army's attention to points of emphasis. He punctuated Daniel Webster's message, "Union and liberty, now and forever, one and inseparable!" with the query: "And why not? What is left for you and me to cavil about, far less to fight about?" Again, when he wished to accentuate the many American flags, he asked:

Have you upon your round of sight-seeing missed it hereabout? Does it make itself on any hand conspicuous by its absence? Can you doubt the loyal sincerity of those who from house-top and roof-tree have thrown it to the breeze? . . . 139

Through this rhetorical device, he stressed the visibility of the flags and their association with the virtue of loyalty.

Judging by the "scene of wild enthusiasm" that followed his speech, 140 Watterson was successful in arousing in his audience the sentiments of reconciliation and reunion. The New York Times cited this speech as crucial when the encampment voted down a resolution that might have prolonged hostility between the veterans and their Southern counterparts. 141 Many of Watterson's biographers point to the G.A.R. speech as the "zenith" of his struggle for reconciliation. 142 One prominent veteran underscored both the immediate effects of Watterson's speech and the lasting importance of his reconciliation campaign:

... As he talked the spell of his eloquence possessed the great concourse, thrilling the vast audience like waves of magnetic im-

139 Compromises of Life, p. 314.

140 Springfield (Mass.) Republican, September 13, 1895.

141 New York Times, September 18, 1895, p. 5.

pulse. . . . His address throughout was punctuated with the most tremendous applause, and he closed amid such cheering as could have rarely greeted his ears. We regret that space will not permit us to quote more largely from the address of this eloquent Southerner, whose efforts and whose life have probably done as much as any other man toward healing the animosities engendered by the war. . . .

Having invited the G.A.R. to Louisville, Watterson amplified what the audience already believed, that a magnanimous spirit toward their former foe was indeed a noble sentiment.

In summary, Watterson was already a well known spokesman for reconciliation when he addressed the Grand Army of the Republic in 1895. His theme was peace through reconciliation. He sought to increase identity through (1) his presence, (2) visible symbols, and (3) things memorable. He intensified the veterans' feelings of magnanimity by (1) recasting ideas in different words, (2) using quotations to restate his ideas, and (3) using rhetorical questions. His amplification of existing sentiment received a favorable response from his auditors and marked a high point in his rhetorical career.

"Abraham Lincoln"

Carnegie Music Hall - New York

Henry Watterson, the Kentucky editor, went furthest of all Southerners in identifying the new American nationalism with the image of Lincoln. 143

In this excerpt from The Image of Lincoln in the South, Michael

143Donald Creyk, Sparks from the Camp Fire (Philadelphia: Keystone Publishing Co., 1895), p. 597

Davis singled out Watterson's campaign to ally Abraham Lincoln with the end of sectionalism. Two factors made such an identification possible. First, sectional animosity was waning. Watterson no longer spoke amid threats of renewed civil war, as he had done in 1877. The second enabling factor was the changing Lincoln myth. Had Watterson announced immediately after the war that Lincoln was a martyr to reconciliation and to the South, he would not have been believed by the majority in either section. In 1901, the same affirmation was greeted with applause.

Watterson's "Abraham Lincoln" was one of a class of epideictic speeches known as a eulogy. According to Gray and Braden, "the eulogy is a speech commending the character and action of a deceased person." They continue:

Aristotle says, 'The eulogist draws his materials from the noble deeds, actual or reputed, of the man he is praising.' The speaker must show that his subject by his character and actions demonstrated that he possessed the virtues esteemed by the society of which the audience is a part. Evidence is drawn from such sources as (1) traits of character, (2) aspirations and goals, (3) outstanding accomplishments, (4) influences on men and the times. Na-

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146 Haworth, The Hayes-Tilden Disputed Presidential Election of 1876, p. 208.

147 Michael Davis traces the Lincoln image with regard to the South and to the reconciliation theme. He found Lincoln's martyrdom widely accepted at the turn of the century by North and South alike. See The Image of Lincoln in the South.

turally, episodes, comparisons, and analogies are the most effective types of supporting material. Ordinarily appreciation may be aroused by showing the accomplishments of the subject as compared favorably with those of other great men.\textsuperscript{149}

Watterson followed this advice in his two-hour Lincoln lecture. To heighten the deeds of a man, Aristotle recommended that the epideictic speaker compare his subject "with men of note; this will tend to magnify the subject of the speech. . .\textsuperscript{150} Watterson magnified the deeds of Lincoln by comparing him to Christ.

As previously mentioned, Watterson's interpretation of the Christ myth began with the Revolutionary period—a sort of American Eden of national grandeur and innocence:

When we revert to that epoch the beauty of the scene which history unfolds is marred by little that is uncouth, by nothing that is grotesque. The long procession passes, and we see in each group, in every figure, something of heroic proportion. . . .

The first half of the Republic's first half-century of existence the public men of America, distinguished for many things, were chiefly and almost universally distinguished for repose of bearing and sobriety of behavior. . .\textsuperscript{151}

As Adam and Eve had been tempted by the serpent, Watterson told of Revolutionary America's temptation by slavery:

. . . It was not until the institution of African slavery had got into politics as a vital force that Congress became a bear-
garden, and that our law-makers, laying aside their manners with their small-clothes, fell into the loose-fitting habiliments of modern fashion and the slovenly jargon of partisan controversy. . .\textsuperscript{152}

Watterson decried the loss of America's "paradise" and the resulting fires of satanic slavery that spread across the nation:

\textsuperscript{149}Gray and Braden, \textit{Public Speaking}, pp. 257-58.

\textsuperscript{150}Aristotle, \textit{Rhetoric} ; trans. Lane Cooper, p. 54.

\textsuperscript{151}Compromises of Life, pp. 137-39. \textsuperscript{152}Ibid., p. 139.
... no sooner had the camp-fires of the Revolution died out, than there began to burn, at first fitfully, then to blaze alarmingly in every direction, a succession of forest fires, baffling the energies and resources of the good and brave men who sought to put them out. . . .

According to Watterson, the fires could not be put out because it was predestined that a great war would be fought before the "forest fires" could be extinguished: "There were moving to the foreground moral forces which would down at no man's bidding."\(^{153}\)

To Watterson, the emodiment of those moral forces was Abraham Lincoln: "The man bore a commission from God on high! . . ." Watterson believed that God would not let the nation perish in the fires of slavery. He visualized Lincoln as the Christ-symbol of redemption:

It was the will of God that there should be, as God's own prophet had promised, 'a new birth of freedom,' and this could only be reached by the obliteration of the very idea of slavery. God struck Lincoln down in the moment of his triumph, to attain it; He blighted the South to attain it. But He did attain it. And here we are this night to attest it. God's will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven. . . . and as that God, of whom it has been said that 'whom He loveth He chasteneth,' meant that the South should be chastened, Lincoln was put out of the way by the bullet of an assassin, having neither lot nor parcel, North or South, but a winged emissary of fate, flown from the shadows of the mystic world, which Aeschylus and Shakespeare created and consecrated to tragedy. . . .\(^{154}\)

Just as the gospels of the New Testament defended the divinity of Christ, so Watterson felt compelled to refute those who maintained that Lincoln was a beneficiary of luck or happenstance:

I ask you, how can any man refuse his homage to his memory? Surely, he was one of God's own; not in any sense a creature

\(^{153}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 140-41.}\)

\(^{154}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 142; pp. 166-67.}\)
of circumstance, or accident. Recurring to the doctrine of inspiration, I say, again and again, he was inspired of God, and I cannot see how anyone who believes in that doctrine can believe anything else... 155

It was Watterson's contention that, because Lincoln was a divine symbol, a bullet could end only his physical presence on earth. As one of the "inspired ones," Lincoln's spirit received immediate immortality:

... They came, God's word upon their lips; they did their office, God's mantle about them; and they vanished, God's holy light between the world and them. ...

He summed up Lincoln's career with unmistakable comparisons to the life of Christ:

Born as lowly as the Son of God, in a hovel; reared in penury, squalor, with no gleam of light or fair surrounding; without graces, actual or acquired; without name or fame or official training; it was reserved for this strange being, late in life, to be snatched from obscurity, raised to supreme command at a supreme moment, and intrusted with the destiny of a nation. ... 156

Thus Watterson magnified the virtues of Lincoln by likening the martyred President to the martyred Son of God. The effectiveness of his Lincoln-Christ comparison depended on (1) the audience's acceptance of the Christ myth and (2) the willingness of the audience to transfer Christ's virtues to Lincoln.

Also, as part of his strategy of magnification, Watterson compared Lincoln with other, more mortal figures. In praise of Lincoln's debating ability, he asserted that Lincoln bested the "Little

155 Ibid., p. 178.
156 Ibid., p. 179.
Giant" of oratory, Stephen A. Douglas.

Judge Douglas was himself unsurpassed as a stump-speaker and ready debater. But in that campaign, from first to last, Judge Douglas was at a serious disadvantage. His bark rode upon an ebbing tide; Lincoln's bark rode upon a flowing tide. . . .

In this oratorical battle, Watterson refused to take sides: "The philosophic and impartial critic will conclude which got the better of it, Lincoln or Douglas. . . ." Despite this avowal, Watterson implied several times that Lincoln was the master of the platform because of his superior moral position—his stand against slavery.157

Watterson concluded his speech with a final comparison of Lincoln with other great historical figures. He heightened the comparison by creating two historical groups, "men of destiny" and "men of the time." In the former category were "men whose careers had a beginning, a middle, and an end, rounding off lives with histories, full it may be of interesting and exciting event, but comprehensive and comprehensible; simple, clear, complete." He characterized this group as obeying "well understood laws of cause and effect. From Caesar to Bismarck and Gladstone the world has had its statesmen and its soldiers—men who rose from obscurity to eminence and power step by step. . . ." Greater than the "men of the time" were the "men of destiny." Watterson held Lincoln to be representative of this latter class who were "inspired of God," with "no explication to their lives."158 By comparing Lincoln with Christ, Douglas, and men of history such as Caesar, Bismarck, and

157Ibid., pp. 148-52.

158Ibid., p. 178.
Gladstone, Watterson heightened Lincoln's nobility.

Another way of magnifying deeds, suggested by Aristotle, is to point out when "these are the circumstances of time and occasion, when a man's performances exceed what we might naturally expect."\(^{159}\) Watterson retold many episodes from Lincoln's life to prove that his conduct did exceed what the audience might have expected. Two of these anecdotes concerned members of Lincoln's Cabinet, William H. Seward and Edwin M. Stanton. He related the circumstances surrounding Seward's memorandum entitled "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration." Lincoln had been in office only a month when Seward alleged that Lincoln was without a policy, "either foreign or domestic," and proposed a policy of his own. According to Watterson, Seward added insult by volunteering to "pursue and direct" his own policy in the absence of Presidential responsibility. Watterson prepared his audience for Lincoln's noble response:

Before hearing Mr. Lincoln's answer to all this, consider what it really implied. If Mr. Seward had simply said: 'Mr. Lincoln, you are a failure as President, but turn over the direction of affairs exclusively to me, and all shall be well and all be forgiven,' he could not have spoken more explicitly and hardly more offensively.

Now let us see how a great man carries himself at a critical moment under extreme provocation. . . .

After giving Lincoln's firm yet temperate answer, Watterson concluded that

Mr. Lincoln shows a grasp both upon the situation and the language which seems to have been wholly wanting in Mr. Seward,

\(^{159}\)Aristotle, \textit{Rhetoric} (Lane Cooper, translator), p. 53.
with all his experience and learning. . .\textsuperscript{160}

Again, in the case of Edwin M. Stanton, Watterson told of Lincoln's magnificence under extreme provocation. When Stanton, as Secretary of War, refused to execute Lincoln's order and called the President a fool, Lincoln greeted the bearer of this news with wit rather than anger:

Lincoln looked first good-humoredly at his friend and then furtively out of the window in the direction of the War Department, and carelessly observed: 'Well, if Stanton says I am a blank fool, it must be so, for Stanton is nearly always right and generally means what he says. I think I shall just have to step over and see Stanton. . . .'

Commented Watterson, "Complacent humor such as this simply denotes assured position." Watterson summed up the virtues Lincoln displayed in response to his rebellious Cabinet: "Always courteous, always tolerant, always making allowance, yet always explicit, his was the masterspirit. . . ." By showing that Lincoln displayed more of these virtues than one might expect, he magnified the nobility of Lincoln's tenure.\textsuperscript{161}

Watterson also used anecdotes to demonstrate Lincoln's magnanimity and sense of justice. He told of Lincoln's intercession on behalf of men sentenced to death by courts-martial, his advice to a stepmother seeking money, and his generous attitude toward the South.\textsuperscript{162}

As an example of benevolence to the South, Watterson told of Lincoln at the Hampton Roads Conference. His version of the conference was one

\begin{footnotes}
\item[160]\textit{Ibid.}, p. 158.
\item[161]\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 159-60; p. 162.
\end{footnotes}
of the most controversial episodes in his lecture. Watterson insisted that Lincoln went to the conference prepared to pay the South four hundred million dollars for its slaves, should the South agree to return to the Union. On this contention Watterson had been vehemently disputed. The day of his speech at Carnegie Hall, the *New-York Daily Tribune* printed his rebuttal. Instead of backing down on his stand, Watterson, in each speech, added more evidence for his version of the Hampton Roads incident. However, in his autobiography, Watterson did admit that while the possibility of such an offer by Lincoln existed "he was not given the opportunity to make it...".

Watterson, himself, served as a final symbol to intensify sentiment for Lincoln. His presence was a point of identification or a bridge between the audience and the men about whom he spoke. The *New York Times* reporter noted three instances of avid applause: (1) when Watterson discussed Douglas, (2) when he described personal meetings with Lincoln, and (3) when he claimed that Lincoln was the South's greatest friend. According to the *Times*, the audience believed that Watterson had first-hand or special knowledge about all three of these topics. He took advantage of this reputed expertise to intensify emotions.

Watterson's purpose in speaking was the veneration of Lincoln.

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He made it clear that this veneration was not an end in itself; to worship Lincoln was to venerate his unfulfilled ambitions. Just when Lincoln was about to realize "'a new birth of freedom'" he was struck down by God. Watterson wished the audience to participate in the occasion by continuing Lincoln's unfinished work--glorification of the new Union. The Lincoln virtues most often extolled by Watterson were conciliation and magnanimity. Because the audience accepted the Lincoln myth, Watterson could heighten their appreciation of these virtues. Biographer Joseph Frazier Wall attested to Watterson's success:

When he came to the final paragraph and read with great emotion these lines, 'inspired by God was Abraham Lincoln; and a thousand years hence, no drama, no tragedy, no epic poem will be filled with greater wonder, or be followed by mankind with deeper feeling than that which tells the story of his life and death,' there would be few dry eyes in the assembly and the ovation would be tremendous. Then Watterson could feel that the long struggle for personal reconciliation between the two sections had been won and his own contribution had been great. . . .167

In summary, Watterson was able to unite Abraham Lincoln with the theme of reconciliation because both the Lincoln myth and sectional reunion were already accepted by his Carnegie Music Hall audience. He aroused appreciation of Lincoln by comparing him to the martyred Christ. The effectiveness of this comparison depended upon the acceptance of the Christ myth and a willingness to transfer Christ's virtues to Lincoln. Watterson also compared Lincoln with Stephen A. Douglas and other famous men of history. By showing Lincoln to be greater than the great, he magnified Lincoln's character.

Watterson also increased Lincoln's stature by anecdotes which showed his conduct to exceed what the audience might have expected. He cited instances of Lincoln's magnanimity when provoked by members of his Cabinet. By emphasizing Lincoln's charity he heightened the enthusiasm of the audience for finishing Lincoln's uncomplete mission --reconciliation and reunion. The audience responded best to those Lincoln anecdotes about which Watterson had first-hand or special knowledge. The Lincoln lecture was to Watterson a symbol of the continuing victory of magnanimity over sectionalism.

"The Confederate Dead"

Nashville - 1904

Two thousand Tennessee Masons joined eight thousand Confederate veterans in Centennial Park in Nashville, Tennessee, to hear Watterson dedicate a monument to the Private Confederate Soldier. In his speech of commemoration, Watterson followed the pattern described by Gray and Braden:

1. The central theme ordinarily stresses the importance of the day or the event.

2. The speaker works to arouse feelings of loyalty, pride, and patriotism.

3. The supporting materials may be of a variety of

168 Nashville American, June 16, 1904, p. 10.
types, but the historical example and the analogy or comparison again find frequent use...

Stressing the importance of the event, Watterson listed the duties to be performed:

. . . Proclaiming to the world the integrity of the dead, signalizing the cause for which they died, renewing our allegiance to the sacred compact of brotherhood and soldiership, we are to reconcile this act of pious homage with perfect loyalty to the Union, to the flag, and to those of our countrymen who successfully fought against us.

In short, Watterson's central theme was the consecration of the dead to the reconciliation of the living. Whether he addressed Union or Southern partisans, he retained this same theme. His insistence that the dead gave their lives for reunion was not the usual subject heard at the United Confederate Veteran encampments. Although U.C.V. speakers such as Benjamin Morgan Palmer, Richard Henry Lee, and George Clark joined Watterson in proclaiming the Southern sacrifice an act of divine will, they disagreed with him on the purpose of the sacrifice. As Southern apologists, they interpreted divine intervention necessary for a new national appreciation of the Southern cause. Watterson asserted the sacrifice was for Union:

169Gray and Braden, Public Speaking, p. 261.


... these are the guarantees which the men of the South give to the men of the North; these the tokens by which we assure ourselves of our fidelity to the American Union. 172

His deviation from accepted U.C.V. themes may have alienated some of the old veterans. Such displeasure would account for the omission of his speech from the tradition-conscious Confederate Veteran. 173

Through veneration of things memorable, magnificent, and courageous, Watterson aroused feelings of pride, loyalty, and patriotism toward the new Union. As in previous speeches, he constructed a web of emotional attachment around the Christ myth. According to Watterson's retelling of history: for "seventy and one years that which was in the beginning built upon compromise was held together by compromise. . . . 174 This state of compromise was destroyed by the sin of slavery: "The sin of slavery, . . . belonged equally to both the North and the South. . . ." The battlefield was the court in which the issue of slavery was decided: "Into that dread tribunal each litigant brought the best that was in him." This "dread tribunal" represented divine will:

If it was the will of God that there should be a new birth of freedom; if it was the will of God that Government of the people, by the people and for the people, should not perish from the earth, then it was the will of God that there should be a mighty sacrifice; and let no man forget that the same God which struck down myriads of the best-beloved of the North struck down myriads of the best-beloved on the South; that the doctrine of secession was born at the North; that the sin of slavery, such as it may have been, belonged equally to both the

172 Compromises of Life, p. 455.
173 Confederate Veteran, XII, June, 1904, pp. 261-66.
174 Compromises of Life, p. 453.
As a concession to his audience, Watterson substituted Robert E. Lee for Abraham Lincoln as a Christ figure: "Lee gave himself as a hostage for the rest of us." Lee's suffering and the Confederate dead were "the guarantees . . . to the American Union." By revivifying parts of the Christ myth, Watterson heightened appreciation for the reunion.

Also using history, Watterson appealed to things magnificent.

He recalled the glories of Tennessee:

... Her dearest aspirations had been for half a century poured out as rich libations upon the altar of the Union; her fondest traditions, radiating from the Hermitage, inspired and sustained the thorough Conservatism of her people...

This magnificence of spirit extended into battle and after:

... The same Anglo-Saxon and Scotch-Irish blood which welled up in the North welled up in us; we fought, and we fought to a finish; there is no smell of treason on our garments, no taint of corruption in our blood... Two Confederate generals wear the blue again, and the gray worships at its shrines, even as we worship this day, without so much as the suspicion of disloyalty; yea, with the encouragement and sympathy of every true soldier of the North.

Watterson emphasized that the outcome of a magnificence of spirit was postwar conciliation.

Watterson celebrated the courage of Tennessee in separating from the beloved Union:

... Obliged at last to take sides, they sided with the South and against the North; a decision the more heroic since they clearly foresaw what was before them. They were under no illusion as to the forces about to be engaged. Not merely had they to stifle many convictions and sensibilities, but to meet the onset of immediate and incredible odds. They counted not the

\[175^\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 453-56.}\]  \[176^\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 453-56.}\]
cost; they consulted none of the text-books of expediency; they bared their breasts to the storm and went to the sacrifice, their eyes wide open.

Heightening the sense of heroism, he named famous Tennessee families who sacrificed for "this monument to valor." He flattered the bravery of the Tennessee gray by comparing their battlefields to those of ancient Greece: "Greece had her Marathon; let Shiloh, Murfreesboro, and Chickamauga tell the story of Tennessee." 177

In addition to these appeals to virtue, Watterson substituted the pronoun "we" for "I" to increase identification. Not only did this serve as a togetherness device but it also imparted a compelling stress on audience participation. When this speech is compared with Watterson's speech at the Union Cemetery in Nashville, twenty-seven years before, his switch in pronouns is striking. One way to account for this stylistic change is that he may have felt freer to use "we" with fellow Southern veterans than with former Federal soldiers.

Finally, Watterson's address had interesting parallels with Daniel Webster's Bunker Hill Monument address. Both speeches were organized around emotionalized sentiments rather than logical division. The solemn procession of notables to the platform, the old soldiers, the Masonic finery, and the foundation of a monument to greatness past, set the tenor of both occasions. Another similarity was Watterson's repeated appeal for Union. 178 Eight times in the short speech he used

177 Ibid., pp. 454-55.

the word in one context or another. However, the ears of the older veterans were probably more attuned to tales of fabled glory than to Watterson's appeals for Union. Howard Dorgan stated:

When old Confederates gathered for the reunions and memorial ceremonies at which this oratory was delivered, they did not wish to hear their war described as one which failed in all its objectives.179

Since secession was a Confederate objective, Watterson's appeals to things memorable, magnificent, and courageous were probably more successful than his overt appeals for national unity.

In summary, Watterson dedicated a monument to the private Confederate soldier by consecrating the dead to reconciliation of the living. Although he emphasized divine will, he differed from other United Confederate Veteran speakers in that he depicted God sacrificing the men of both sections to a new Union. Through veneration of things memorable, magnificent, and courageous, he aroused feelings of pride, patriotism, and loyalty to the new Union. In appealing to things memorable he transferred elements of the Christ myth to Southern history to heighten the sense of divine destiny in reconciliation. He recounted the magnificence and courage of Tennesseans to highlight their conduct in war and their conciliatory spirit in peace. His speech had parallels with Webster's Bunker Hill speech in organization, occasion, and appeals for Union. His appeals for Union, like his theme of divine will, were not what the veterans at Centennial Park had come

to hear and probably were not as well received as his veneration of Southern history.

Summary

Watterson's reconciliation creed was the embodiment of his strategy to influence and control the direction of thought, North and South, toward post-bellum reconciliation. The creed had two consistent themes, parts of which Watterson developed in each of his reconciliation speeches. These themes, the Puritan and Cavalier myth and the Christ myth, were also used by other orators.

According to the Puritan and Cavalier myth, residents of the North and South had different ancestors. Watterson rejected the historical validity of the myth and substituted an "Anglo-Saxon, Scotch-Irish" ancestry for North and South alike. He used this common ancestry as a unifying symbol to gain emotional acceptance for reconciliation.

Watterson also saw the importance of religion as a unifying force for his audiences. In a complex allegory, he compared the concept of sin in the Old and New Testaments to slavery in the history of the United States. His comparison began with the "Eden" of pre-Revolutionary America, continued with the Civil War as God's judgment, Abraham Lincoln as the Christ-figure of redemption, and ended with the nation reborn in a spirit of conciliation. Watterson used this myth because its wide acceptance, North and South, made it an effective device to heighten emotional acceptance of reconciliation.
Watterson's two speeches on the Electoral Compromise were the only deliberative or legislative applications of the creed. In his first speech he replaced his image of a "fire-eater" with that of a conciliator and became one of the first of the prominent Southerners to favor the Electoral Commission bill. His most powerful appeals were to safety and security; his least effective were his logical appeals.

Watterson's second persuasive speech in Congress was very brief. He polarized his fellow representatives into those who agreed and those who disagreed with his decision to stand by the decision of the Electoral Commission. He attributed the highest motives to those who agreed, while he shamed those who would vote against him. The House voted Watterson's way. Whether he precipitated the vote or was merely the first Southerner to voice a favorable opinion cannot be determined. His second speech did much to reinforce his image as a spokesman for moderation. Although only the longer, printed versions of Watterson's Congressional speaking include the Puritan-Cavalier and Christ myths, these were the speech texts upon which he was adjudged a leader for compromise.

Watterson delivered the six remaining speeches in this study on ceremonial occasions. Unlike his Congressional speaking, his goal was not persuasion, but was to increase identification and to intensify the feelings of his audiences. He had had much in common with his audiences that made amplification possible. His four most used visible points of identification were (1) his presence, (2) the flag, (3) the audience,
and (4) the physical setting. He also held audiences together with the less tangible bonds: humor and common memories.

The chief virtue which Watterson magnified was a conciliatory or magnanimous spirit. He also aroused feelings and sentiments of attachment, veneration, patriotism, pride, loyalty, courage, and magnificence. He repeatedly used four stylistic devices to increase vividness and impressiveness: (1) metaphor, (2) quotations, (3) rhetorical questions, and (4) the plural pronoun "we." His frequent use of the Puritan-Cavalier and Christ myths both increased identification and intensified virtues already admitted by his audiences. He could enhance identification because the audience naturally felt drawn to a man who voiced their deeply believed mythology. He intensified virtues through their association with already accepted elements of the two myths. His speech organization ranged from the studied use of organizational techniques in his "New South" speech to the random attachment of ideas around the sentiment of reunion in "The Confederate Dead."

During the time period of the eight speeches in this study, Watterson rose from a reputation as a Southern "fire-eater" to recognition as first and foremost among reconciliation speakers. Between his first speech in this study, in 1877, and his last, in 1904, he witnessed reconciliation pass from a creed, or how things should be, to a myth, or how things were. His speaking was instrumental in the incorporation of reconciliation in the New South creed.
The chapter presents an analysis and synthesis of Henry Wat-terson as an orator for compromise and reconciliation. Included is an overview of Watterson's place in the reconciliation movement, his speech personality, and the audiences, occasions, and integrity of ideas for eight of his representative reconciliation speeches. Also included is an assessment of the long-range effects and importance of Watterson's post-bellum reconciliation oratory.

Watterson, the orator for compromise and reconciliation, was a marriage of man and movement. His speech personality began with the circumstances of his birth. Watterson believed that his alleged illustrious ancestors contributed to his success in life. Because his parents were prominent in Washington, young Watterson had access to many of the great orator-politicians of the day. He was denied a formal education because of ill health, poor vision, and constant travel with his parents between Washington and Tennessee. His informal education included being read to, reading, and association with his parents' friends. He was impressed at an early age by the oratory of Lewis Cass, Daniel Webster, and Henry Clay. Watterson's father taught his son to judge oratory by the degree to which it contributed to compromise.
In addition to oratory, Watterson had an early passion for music and later attributed his skill with the pen to his knack for musical expression. He intended to follow a literary career which would be subsidized by newspaper jobs. His newspaper work enhanced his abilities at self-expression but left no time for other writing. He finally gave up serious writing in favor of his dual passion, speaking and journalism.

Watterson was an avid reader. The books in his library on speech are either collections of speeches or elocutionary textbooks. While his speech collections demonstrate his favorite authors, his elocutionary texts suggest that his speaking may have been influenced by the elocutionary movement.

Watterson inherited from his father a theory of rhetoric that the orator who speaks best speaks for compromise. Watterson expressed a distaste for subjective, ad hominem style of rhetorical criticism. An examination of three examples of his speech criticism shows much subjectivity and ad hominem attack. This discrepancy between theory and application may be explained partly by Watterson's assumption that a speech is just another persuasive composition. If the speech sought to reconcile, as Lincoln's First Inaugural did, it was to be praised. If the speech sought disunion, as did Toombs's speeches, then it was to be damned.

Watterson took any attack against conciliation as an attack against himself. He reasoned that in the case of self-defense subjectivity was permissible. Whether he became defensive or not de-
pended upon the persuasive message. Other constituents of the rhe-
torical act were secondary.

Watterson's speech preparation began with careful reading
and research. He wrote out what he intended to say, corrected it
to his satisfaction, and had it printed. He memorized the printed
speech copy and distributed copies to newspapers and to the Associ-
ated Press.

After Watterson had given a speech he became highly sensi-
tive to criticism. He believed in the ideas expressed in his speech-
es and took any uncomplimentary criticism as an insult. The paradox
of his speech personality is his rigidity in facing criticism while
advocating the rhetorical ideal of compromise.

Had the Civil War never occurred, Watterson might never have
become a famous speaker. It was the unique circumstance of the war,
Kentucky's place as mediator, and Watterson's place in Kentucky that
transformed Watterson from oratorical critic to practitioner of per-
suasion. What began as an editorial position on post-bellum recon-
ciliation was enlarged to an oratorical creed palatable to North and
South alike.

It was in the period from 1865 to 1877 that the theme of
North-South reconciliation and Henry Watterson became inseparable.
Watterson's editorial, "The Guilty and the Innocent," in the Cincin-
nati Times in 1865, was both genesis and model for his reconcilia-
tion creed. The three most important elements in the editorial were
the Biblical injunctions against the "sins" of Southern leadership,
the expiation of all Southern "sin" through the sacrifice of that
leadership, and the attempt to interweave the myth of the guilt of Southern leaders with a plea for reconciliation. Sin, the expiation of sin, and the relation of New South myth to reconciliation creed would all become standard features of Watterson's later reconciliation appeals.

As editor of the Nashville Republican Banner in the fall of 1865, Watterson enlarged his fund of mythology and gained national acclaim for his efforts. He used alleged political blundering, North and South, to maintain the myth of the common man's lack of animosity before, during, and after the Civil War. By extending the war guilt to include Northern leadership, Watterson expanded his creed across sectional boundaries. By this means, Watterson, for the first time, gained national recognition.

In 1866, Watterson became editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal. As editor he used Kentucky's unique history as a mediator of sectional controversy to build a base for his further reconciliation efforts. By dealing effectively with post-bellum problems in Kentucky, he was able to solidify the State support he needed to expand his reconciliation efforts into national politics.

Watterson placed his hopes for reconciliation on the success of Horace Greeley and the Liberal Republican movement in 1872. With the failure of Greeley and the Liberal Republicans in the Presidential election of that year, he became convinced that the Democratic Party held the only hope for reuniting the sections. After a Democratic success in the Congressional election of 1874, Watterson did
more and more reconciliation speaking on behalf of his party.

After an apparent victory for the Democrats in the Presidential election of 1876, Watterson made an ill-advised speech which almost cost him his reputation as a sectional conciliator. His subsequent speeches before Congress in 1877, however, not only redeemed his reputation as a conciliator but also aided the adoption of a compromise plan which may have averted a second civil war.

Watterson's two speeches before the House of Representatives, in 1877, began his career as a national spokesman for reconciliation. His reconciliation creed, which had evolved from his training, newspaper work, and his incursions into national politics, was the embodiment of his strategy to influence and control the direction of thought, North and South, toward post-bellum reconciliation. The creed had two consistent themes, parts of which Watterson developed in each of his reconciliation speeches. These themes, the Puritan-Cavalier and Christ myths, were used by other Southern orators. Unlike other Puritan-Cavalier myth-makers, Watterson rejected the myth's validity. He substituted a myth of "Anglo-Saxon, Scotch-Irish" heritage for North and South alike. He used the common ancestry as a unifying symbol to gain emotional acceptance for reconciliation.

Watterson took advantage of the deep religious convictions of his audience by comparing slave history in the United States to the concept of sin in the Old and New Testament. His comparison began with the "Eden" of pre-revolutionary America, continued with the Civil War as God's judgment, and Abraham Lincoln as the Christ-figure
of redemption, and ended with the nation reborn in a spirit of con-
ciliation. Watterson used the myth because its wide acceptance,
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that of a conciliator by becoming one of the first of the prominent
Southerners to favor the Electoral Commission bill. Although short,
with few thoughts on reconciliation, his speech enhanced his reputa-
tion as a conciliator. His second speech was shorter still. De-
spite its label by the New York Times as "sour grapes," this speech
was the first statement by a prominent Southerner favoring the Com-
mission decision. Watterson's stand on the Hayes-Tilden controversy
has caused some historians to doubt his loyalty to conviction. A
close examination of his speeches and editorials of the period show
that he remained loyal to Tilden and true to his creed of reconcili-
ation.

Watterson's six remaining speeches in this study were for
ceremonial occasions. Unlike his Congressional speaking, his goal
was not persuasion but was to increase identification and to inten-
sify the feelings of his audiences. His Memorial Day address at the
National Cemetery in Nashville, in 1877, was his first ceremonial
use of the reconciliation creed. He employed visible symbols, his
presence, the flag, the dead, the physical setting, and the Union
soldier as visible points of identification for the spirit of reconciliation. He also magnified the occasion by arousing the sentiment of attachment to reconciliation, by stimulating feelings of patriotism and nationalism, and by appeals to things magnanimous. His most forceful symbol was probably his own presence, an ex-Confederate soldier claiming comradeship with the Union dead. Hayes was President, and Grant had pulled the Federal troops out of the South. The time was opportune for a man with Watterson's conciliatory reputation to arouse a magnanimous spirit in honor of the Union dead—comrades "in the everlasting peace of death."

Speaking in Louisville before the American Bankers' Association, in 1883, Watterson had two goals: to entertain and to inform. Transcending his reputation as a poor businessman, he used humor to inform the bankers of Southern investment possibilities. He also used humor to increase identification by showing that the South could laugh at a subject long held sacred—slavery. He further enhanced feelings of kinship by appeals to common bonds. His use of metaphors added vividness to the speech. Watterson wanted Northern capital in the South rather than Northern industry, which he feared to be exploitative. Whether or not his speech was successful in increasing the southern flow of capital, he was successful in heightening the spirit of comradeship with an entertaining speech.

In 1894, at the New England Society of New York Annual Banquet, Watterson responded to the toast, "The Puritan and the Cavalier." He promised to "take up the word where Grady left it off. . . ." By asso-
ciating himself with Grady, he identified with a symbol of North-South friendship. Watterson used the same topics Grady had used but he rejected the divisiveness of the Puritan-Cavalier myth while magnifying the virtues associated with the Puritan and Cavalier ancestors. He praised "Puritan trappings, traditions and associations" but asserted that many Southern heroes sprang from Puritan roots while many Northern heroes had the characteristics normally associated with the Cavaliers. He appealed to the revered ancestors of the New Englanders and recited the words of a New England poet to intensify the pride of his listeners. He also added an extended metaphor to enhance the vividness of his language. The New York press joined the New England Society in praise of his re-interpretation of the Puritan-Cavalier myth.

Watterson's speech to the Grand Army of the Republic encamped in Louisville in 1895 was a zenith in his campaign for reconciliation. His was a personal victory in persuading the G.A.R. to come South for the first time since the War. This triumph was compounded by the veterans' acceptance of reconciliation as accomplished. The theme of reconciliation replaced the symbol of the bloody shirt at future Grand Army encampments. Watterson intensified the veterans' feelings of magnanimity by (1) recasting ideas in different words, (2) using quotations to restate his ideas, and (3) using rhetorical questions. He increased identification by emphasizing (1) his presence, (2) visible symbols, and (3) things memorable. He used these devices to help the veteran participate in this vindication of his campaign to end section-
al animosity.

After the G.A.R. speech, Watterson had hoped to retire to Switzerland to write a biography of his hero of compromise, Abraham Lincoln. Financial problems at the Courier-Journal forced him to return to Louisville. He sublimated his Lincoln biography ambitions by expanding his Lincoln lecture, the most popular lecture he ever gave.

In 1901, Watterson shared the platform at Carnegie Music Hall in New York City with his "blood-kin," Samuel L. Clemens. There, Watterson gave his Lincoln lecture to the elect of New York Society. He was able to associate Abraham Lincoln with the theme of reconciliation because both the Lincoln myth and sectional reunion were already accepted by the audience. He aroused appreciation of Lincoln by comparing him to the martyred Christ. The effectiveness of this comparison depended upon the acceptance of the Christ myth and a willingness to transfer Christ's virtues to Lincoln. Watterson also compared Lincoln with Stephen A. Douglas and other famous men of history. By showing Lincoln to be greater than the great, he magnified Lincoln's character.

Watterson increased Lincoln's stature by anecdotes which showed his conduct to exceed what the audience might have expected. He cited instances of Lincoln's magnanimity when provoked by members of his Cabinet. By emphasizing his charity he heightened the enthusiasm of the audience for finishing Lincoln's uncompleted mission—reconciliation and reunion. The audience responded best to those anecdotes about which Watterson had first-hand or special knowledge.
For the remainder of his speaking career, Watterson was continually asked to speak on Lincoln. To Watterson, the lecture served as an ongoing affirmation that the battle to inculcate the reconciliation creed had indeed been won. Lincoln became his undying symbol of the love of Union and reconciliation.

By 1904, reconciliation was a part of the New South myth. The Confederate veteran was more receptive to nostalgia for the "lost cause" than to New South mythology. In his Nashville speech at the dedication of a monument to the private Confederate soldier, Watterson combined a veneration of Southern glory with a consecration of the dead to the reconciliation of the living. Although he emphasized divine will, he differed from other United Confederate Veteran speakers in that he depicted God sacrificing the men of both sections to a new Union. Through veneration of things memorable, magnificent, and courageous, he aroused feelings of pride, patriotism, and loyalty to the new Union. In appealing to things memorable, he transferred elements of the Christ myth to Southern history to heighten the sense of divine destiny in reconciliation. He recounted the magnificence and courage of Tennesseans to highlight their conduct in war and their conciliatory spirit in peace. His speech had parallels with Webster's Bunker Hill speech in organization, occasion, and appeals for union. His appeals for union, like his theme of divine will, were not what the veterans at Centennial Park had come to hear and probably were not as well received as his veneration of Southern history.
In overview, from 1877 to 1904 Watterson rose from a reputation as a Southern "fire-eater" to recognition as first and foremost among reconciliation speakers. It is an irony of Watterson's reconciliation campaign that, as his personal reputation waxed, the importance of his reconciliation creed waned. His speech in 1904 to the Confederate veterans illustrated the final passing of the creed into the mythology of the New South. This irony is due in part to the nature of epideictic speaking. An epideictic speech depends for its success upon the mutual acceptance of basic premises by speaker and audience. Only when Watterson's audiences were fully committed to the spirit of reconciliation could he intensify this spirit to its highest level. When this level was reached in 1895, Watterson was most successful as a ceremonial speaker.

Long-Range Effect of Watterson's Speaking

Two ways in which to measure the long-range effectiveness of Watterson's speaking are by the acclaim of his peers and by the testament of recent Southern historians. Many of Watterson's contemporaries as well as later historians have agreed with Alben W. Barkley that Watterson was a "history maker" in effecting post-bellum reconciliation. Watterson should not be judged solely on the success of his reconciliation appeals. The evanescence of North-South reconciliation as a viable issue was both a tribute to the effectiveness of his epideictic campaign and a reminder that time was perhaps the ultimate bridge between the sections. There is, however, a quality about Watterson's struggle for reconciliation that transcends issue or era.
This transcendent quality was explicated by Isocrates when he admonished that the highest office of the orator was to speak on great and noble themes of practical value. Watterson consistently heeded the advice of Isocrates, even at great personal sacrifice. A premature grave saved the martyred Henry Grady from the fate of a hero who lives on after his cause has faded into the past. Watterson lived long after reconciliation was a living issue and championed his own New South vision in both light and shade of public opinion.

In the early stage of his reconciliation campaign in Kentucky, Watterson risked his life and the fortunes of the Courier-Journal for his great and noble cause. In 1895, at the finest hour of his cause, he was forced to give up a writing career to rescue his newspaper from a financial calamity occasioned by his devotion to principle. When the First World War made reconciliation a moot issue for most, Watterson was forced to accept the ingratitude that time pays to heroism. His crusade was remembered only by remnants of the Civil War generation. The nobility of Watterson's cause and his sacrifices in reconciliation's service transcend his effect upon an ephemeral issue and era.
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