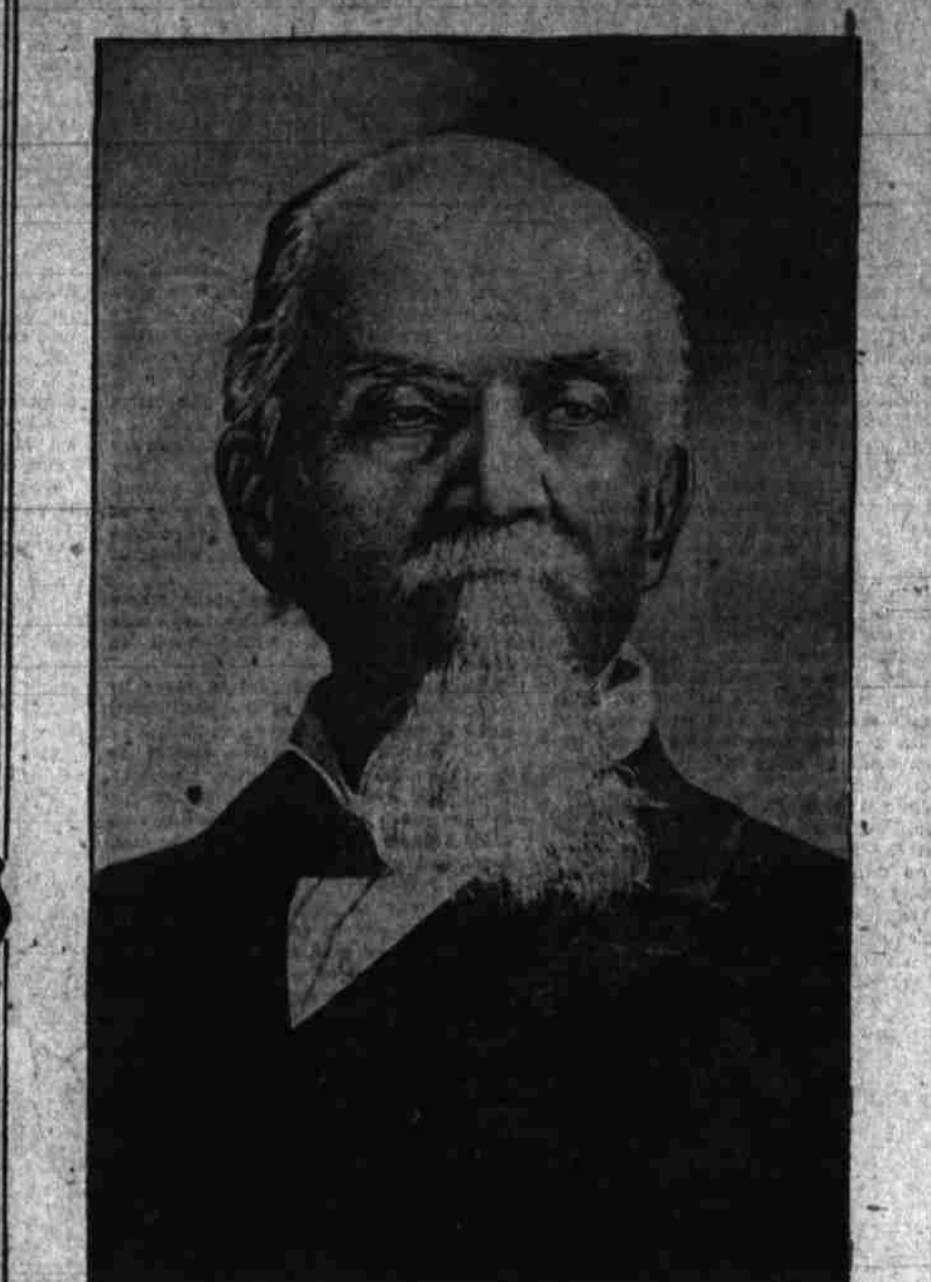


THEY TOOK AS PLEDGED. BEFORE THEY ARE DEAD. The Unique Action of Alabama Democrats in Nominating

Alternates to Senators Morgan and Pettus



John T. Morgan, 82 years of age, recognized for the Senate at 62 years of age.



Edmund W. Pettus, 85 years of age, the oldest member of the Senate.

"A CONTEST in advance for dead men's shoes." Such has been styled the recent remarkable political primary in Alabama, where, in addition to naming a State ticket, the Democrats indicated their choice of men to succeed United States Senators John T. Morgan and Edmund W. Pettus, should the chair of either become vacant.

Both Senators were accorded new terms by unanimous vote of their party constituents. But both are old—one is 82, the other 85 years of age. In all human probability one or both may die before the expiration of their new terms. Should they live through their terms Mr. Pettus will be 94 and Mr. Morgan 80.

So affectionately are these old public servants held by the people of Alabama that the voters insisted upon giving them virtually life terms of office. At the same time it is recognized that one, or both, may drop out of harness at any time.

It seems that the man who has been nominated for Governor is not in high favor with the Democratic State organization. In order to prevent him from selecting any one he might choose to fill a possible vacancy, two "alternate" Senators were voted for in the primaries—men who must appoint upon occasion. The naming of "alternate" Senators has never been known before in American politics.

These "alternate" Senators are Congress-

men John H. Bankhead, defeated for renomination by Captain Richmond P. Hobson, of Merrimac fame, and former Governor Joseph F. Johnston.

All Alabama, however, would be delighted, it is said, should the venerable Morgan and Pettus survive their newly bestowed terms and reach the great age which political prophets now deny them.

It was only after one of the most exciting and hotly contested battles ever known in Alabama that the "alternate" Senators were chosen.

Only when complete returns had been received was it known that Congressman Bankhead and former Governor Johnston had been selected for possible future appointment by the Governor.

This selection means simply that B. B. Comer, who has been nominated as the Democratic candidate for Governor—and nomination is equivalent to election—will have a free rein in appointing a Senator or the United States to fill vacancy that may occur during his term of office. He must appoint one of the "alternates" named at the primaries.

Never before has such a novel political condition been presented in any State.

The race for "alternate" Senator aroused great excitement in Alabama, and lively interest in neighboring States. It has been called the "pull bearers' race," and the "contest for dead men's shoes."

Bluntly put, the situation is that the men chosen as alternates are waiting for the death or resignation of either of Alabama's venerable Senators. It means that their only hope of entering the Senate is by the taking off of the men who now fill the chairs from Alabama.

The so-called office of "alternate" Senator was created by the State Democratic Executive Committee at a meeting last spring. The prospect of the selection as Governor of B. B. Comer, opposed by most of the men composing the committee, and the possibility—even probability—that he would have an opportunity of appointing a Senator, resulted in the decision that the people should vote for the men they wished to succeed Morgan or Pettus, taking the appointment from the hands of the Governor.

Announcement of this plan was met with general criticism by the State papers, which pointed out the grotesque features of the situation. In spite of a storm of protest, seven men announced themselves as candidates for "alternates." They were John H. Bankhead, of Jasper; R. H. Clarke and William C. Pitts, of Mobile; Joseph F. Johnston, of Birmingham; John B. Knox, of Aniston; William C. Oates, of Montgomery, and Jesse F. Stallings, of Birmingham.

Bankhead received the largest vote and will be given the first vacancy. Johnston led the third candidate by about 200, and will be accorded the second chance.

While both the present Senators are old men, they are in prime mental and physical condition and appear good for a considerably longer term of usefulness.

Advocates of the new primary scheme, however, gently pointed out that death might claim at least one of the venerable Senators, and have insisted that, in depriving the Governor of his appointive power, it was only giving the people their proper rights.

Both Bankhead and Johnston are hardly more than past middle age, but the speculation that Morgan and



Former Governor Joseph F. Johnston, named as Junior "Alternate Senator."



John H. Bankhead, Nominated as Senior "Alternate Senator."

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Pettus may outlive them has been the subject for biting criticism among papers unfriendly to their candidacy.

Cartoon has pictured Alabama's venerable Senators as pall-bearers at the funerals of their would-be successors, and other gruesome comment has been made.

"It is safe to say," states a recent dispatch from that State, "that all Alabama would be delighted if Morgan and Pettus should pull through another six years of office, after their present terms have expired, for if it were possible to find humor in such a situation, their success would prove the greatest joke in the history of Alabama politics."

Few men have acquired a stronger hold upon the affections of their constituents than Edmund W. Pettus and John T. Morgan.

Last May Senator and Mrs. Pettus celebrated the sixty-third anniversary of their marriage. They were surrounded by their two daughters, thirteen grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. A few months later

Mr. Pettus died, and there was sincere regret throughout Alabama.

Mr. and Mrs. Pettus were born and raised in Selma, Ala. They were sweethearts in their childhood days. They always boasted of the fact that each was the first and only love of the other, and they never called each other anything but "sweetheart."

This devotion was well known in Washington official circles. It attracted the attention and aroused the admiration of President and Mrs. Roosevelt, and among the most welcome guests at the White House have been the venerable Alabama statesman and his silver-haired "sweetheart."

Theorists who wax eloquent over age limitation would do well to consider the career of Edmund Winston Pettus. According to Professor Osler, he should have been ready to retire from active life away back in 1863, when he was performing certain reckless deeds of daring in the defense of Vicksburg.

Mr. Pettus did not go to the United States Senate until 1897. He was then in his 76th year—so advanced, in fact, that others who were listening to the busking of the Senatorial bee did not regard him as a possible candidate; they considered him as already, virtually, laid on the shelf.

Certainly James L. Fugh, his predecessor in the United States Senate, had never regarded him as a possible opponent. While Fugh owed much of his success to the Pettus influence, it never occurred to him that

this elderly Selma lawyer, who had been quietly practicing his profession for half a century without showing inclination to enter the political arena, would ever disturb his own plans for continued preferment.

But suddenly, and without any preliminary symptoms, this veteran developed a desire to become a Federal Judge in his State. Immediately he packed his grip and started for Washington to enlist the aid of Senator Fugh.

The story is told that he reached the latter's house early in the morning, while Mr. Fugh was yet woefully slumbering. Despite the opposition of the maid, he insisted upon entering and going upstairs to Mr. Fugh's room.

"Hello, Fugh!" he cried, bursting into the apartment. "Wake up! I want to talk business to you."

"What about Pettus?" the Senator sleepily asked. "Nothing wrong down home? What's the matter?"

"Nothing wrong," responded the visitor. "There's a vacant Federal Judgeship down in Alabama, and I want it. I want you to help me."

"Nonsense, you're too old, Pettus," the Senator is said to have remarked, yawningly.

"Possibly," the visitor better be imagined than described. Mr. Pettus, so it is stated, sprang up as though touched by an electric wire.

"Too old!" he shouted, indignantly. "Too old, am I? I'll show you. Maybe I am too old to be Judge, but I am not too old to be United States Senator."

Straightway back to the railroad station Mr. Pettus hid himself, and in a short time was hurrying to Alabama as fast as steam could carry him. Soon the voters of the entire State knew that he was a candidate for Fugh's seat in the Federal Senate.

"Too old to be a Judge, but not too old to be Senator," was the slogan of his campaign. Mr. Pettus won an overwhelming victory, and has remained in the Senate ever since.

Mr. Pettus has been a respected and hard-working member of the upper house. His warm personal friends are numbered on both sides of the chamber. He is a keen, incisive questioner, a ready debater and a forceful speaker.

Possessing a strong sense of humor, the aged Alabama Senator has the reputation of being a wit. His dry remarks at times set the Senate chamber in a roar.

Upon one occasion a striking speech had been made by the eloquent young Senator from Indiana, Mr. Beveridge. At its close the venerable Pettus slowly arose and, taking the opposite side, imitated the mannerisms of Beveridge and made one of the most mirth-provoking addresses ever heard in the Senate.

Adventure and warfare have filled a large part of Mr. Pettus' busy life. During the Mexican War he was a lieutenant and participated in General Taylor's campaign against Santa Anna. Later he made the arduous journey overland to California with other Forty-niners. At the outbreak of the Civil War he joined the Confederate forces, and saw active service all through the conflict, retiring as a brigadier general.

It is related that, upon one occasion, not so long ago, a newspaper correspondent in Washington was interviewing Senator Pettus, and, touching the subject of his health, asked if he had always been a man of "brisk" habits. With a twinkle in his eye, the venerable statesman promptly responded:

"My habits, young man, have always been like the verb—regular, irregular, and even defective."

He regarded as a store at Burnside, this county, and engaged in the mercantile business. It occupied all my time, so that idleness cannot be charged as permitting the introduction of evil thoughts.

"Two years ago a most remarkable and unaccountable feeling came over me, causing me much alarm. Standing on a hill near my store was the fine, large tobacco barn of Mr. Jacobs, my neighbor.

"While I looked at the barn on my impulse came that I must burn it. I knew it was wrong, and turned away from the whispered suggestion with horror.

"Finally I yielded to the temptation and set fire to the barn. There was much excitement in the neighborhood, and feeling toward the incendiary was high. I listened to the discussion and indulged in the speculation as to who was guilty of the foul deed. The barn was filled with tobacco, and the loss was heavy.

"This first plunge affected me so seriously that I became ill and was in bed for several weeks. After I got about again I was horrified by a prompting to burn my own store.

"My family lived over the store, and we had only a small amount of insurance. The idea of burning my place, continued to grow, however, and had it not been for the fact that by accident a purchaser came along and bought me out I would doubtless have done it, and probably have burned my family, also.

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CRAVES PRISON BARS TO AVOID COMMITTING CRIME

ONLY when he is safely guarded behind prison bars—in this case the restraint of an insane asylum—does James Spaulding, a well-to-do Kentucky farmer, feel at ease.

In no other way can he overcome the mysterious, overpowering demon of evil that inflames his brain and impels his hands to crime.

What strange influence is it that seizes the mind of an apparently hearty and contented man, that prods him irresistibly to wrongdoing, to arson, and even to the midnight murder of his loved ones?

Physicians have been puzzled by the singular case of James Spaulding. Respected, hardworking, with a character above reproach as far as the world's observation went, he acknowledged to attacks of uncontrollable criminal impulse.

Twice he burned the barns of neighbors against whom he had no shadow of ill will. The baneful impulse urged him to burn his own store, and then, becoming bolder and more diabolic, to slaughter his wife and children in their sleep.

Spaulding is now confined in the Lakeland Asylum, whether he was sent at his own urgent and tearful request. The possibility from which he shrinks with greatest dread is his restoration to liberty.

"Lock me up," he implored the authorities and the jury which sat in his case. "Put me where I can do no harm. If you release me I am certain that I will do some dreadful thing against my will."

About 28 years old, Spaulding has been living quietly on a small farm near Danville, in Boyle county, Ky. His family consisted of a wife and three children. One of the latter is a girl of 6 years, the second a girl 4 years old. The baby boy is now only a little over a year of age.

On Saturday, August 11, this strange victim of a stranger malady drove hurriedly to the county jail in Danville and asked Jailer Clark to place him behind the bars.

He had burned the barn of Moses Weissiger, he said, and was afraid that he would be led to commit other crimes.

The jail officials were nonplused, and said the man must be crazy. After talking with him while they conferred with the County Judge, and the proper papers were made out admitting him to jail. After investigating the actions of Spaulding the authorities placed him on trial before a jury, charged with being a lunatic.

Most dramatic was the story told by the unhappy farmer, who spoke calmly and with easy indication of

truthfulness.

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"My family lived over the store, and we had only a small amount of insurance. The idea of burning my place, continued to grow, however, and had it not been for the fact that by accident a purchaser came along and bought me out I would doubtless have done it, and probably have burned my family, also.

"With the money received from the sale of the store I bought a little farm four miles from Danville on the Lexington pike. My wife and I have been farming and we have got along pretty well.

"A few weeks ago, however, the same criminal impulse seized me, and I felt that I must burn the barn of Mr. Weissiger. The barn stood by the road, and I passed it going to and from Danville.

"Several nights since, upon returning from town late, I hitched my horse by the roadside, went over and applied a match to the barn.

"I felt that I ought to tell that I burned the barn, but I knew that I would be taken away from my family and sent to jail. It seemed to me that I ought to be able to resist such impulses, and I resolved to try again.

"But when the mysterious power began telling me to kill my wife and children I knew that I must have myself locked up.

"It came to me as I lay in bed one night, looking through the windows at the bright stars above. So strong was the impulse that I got up, and going to the yard, picked up an axe.

"As I returned to the room, determined upon the frightful deed, I struck my foot against something and made a noise. This waked my wife, who asked me, sleepily, what I was doing.

"Then, all at once, I realized what I was about to attempt. I threw the axe out the window and returned to bed, trembling like a man with an ague."