

JOHN ABNER MEAD - A Dramatic Life History

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JOHN ABNER A Dramatic Life

MEAD - History

Dr. Mead Announces His Candidacy and His Platform - Condensed Biography of a Remarkable Character - The Story of How a Penniless Boy Rose to Become a Great Business and Political Force - An Interesting and Dramatic History.



JOHN ABNER MEAD.

"YES, I am a candidate for promotion," said Dr. John Abner Mead of Rutland, lieutenant governor of Vermont. "I expect that my friends in Rutland city and Rutland county will present my name as a candidate for governor at the next Republican state convention."

The forgoing was in answer to a question asked by a reporter.

The hour was 7:30 a.m.

The scene was the office of the Howe Scale works in Rutland, and the singular combination of early hours and important political news is explained by the fact that ever since Dr. Mead came into the control of the scale works, twenty-two years ago, he has used a practice of being "on the job" as early as any employee of the company.

The extraordinary singleness of purpose, fertility of resource, courage concentration, ability, superb vitality and high personal character that have made it possible for a man of the humblest antecedents to rise from a condition of biting poverty to the control of a half dozen successful and important enterprises reads more like a storybook than a prosaic record of everyday life.

No person can read the biography of John Abner Mead without feeling the tremendously dramatic possibilities that inhere a life of fixed purpose and integrity, with an eye firmly fixed on success. From the time that Dr. Mead was left a virtual orphan he seems to have had but one object in mind, and that the fullest development of his own possibilities and powers in harmony with the welfare of those with whom he was associated and of the various enterprises with which he has been connected.

Going through college on \$425, painfully and scrupulously saved from the earnings of uncongenial toil, interrupting his college course to serve as a soldier in the civil war, studying medicine and assisting in commonplace tasks about a doctor's office and finally doing manual labor of the severest type in a Rutland quarry to procure the means to secure the best medical education possible - all these point to a character of consistent and singular force.



BAXTER NATIONAL BANK, RUTLAND.

The side lights on his college life demonstrated that he was able in those days to eliminate whatever may have stood in the way of his success, and the spectacle of this resolute, indefectible young Vermonter, braving alike the ridicule of his companions and the humiliation of wearing old and worn clothes in order that he might receive an education, indicates a Spartan fortitude that comes very near to explaining his life's success. It is a far cry from the luxurious medical students of today, with their expensive suits of apartments, their good clothes,

their sports, their relaxations and generally easy way in which their successes are secured, to the poor, almost mean, expeditors of Dr. Mead's college training and the little office in which he began to practice his profession.

Young Vermonters who are looking for an example of success by dim of willpower and applied ability will not do better than to read the story of those early days, explaining as they do the steady, uninterrupted march of prosperity which followed his ready acceptance and use of the first opportunities that fortune put in his way.

Grown men will be struck with admiration when they consider the extraordinary versatility which his professional and business life have disclosed. It is very seldom that a man, after making a measurable success in a learned profession like medicine, should be able to translate himself easily to business life and not only prove himself the peer of his associates, but demonstrate his ability to make a signal success in several diverging lines of business.

The resuscitation of the bankrupt Howe Scale company was a test for a trained executive and financier, and yet this young doctor made a success of the supposed forlorn hope.

The administration of a banking property is considered to be career enough for most men, and yet he has made it a mere detail of the day's work.

The operation of a large farm is one of the most intricate problems of the day, and yet it is one of his chief recreations to join his men in springtime, haying or harvesting and demonstrate his practical knowledge of agriculture as well as his love for the open.

The management and financing of a large business block is frequently a fair career for some men, and yet the doctor has been able to operate his large well tenanted block not only profitably, but as a mere annex to his other interests.



FIELD OF ENSILAGE CORN.

[These rows are nearly half a mile long.]

His entrance into the state political field was in its way no less remarkable, and experienced political generals say that his instinctive grasp of the principles of organization at the time when he was nominated by the Republican state convention as lieutenant governor indicated the political ability of a high order. His candidacy at this time has already required a considerable momentum and is being watched with the closest interest by all men who have made state politics a study.

The Doctor's Platform.

When questioned as to whether he was prepared to take a stand on matters of public import, the doctor said, "Yes, I have some decided opinions in regard to public questions. Briefly, I am in favor of progress in every avenue of the state, the best business methods in the administration of its affairs and equal opportunity to every citizen of the commonwealth."

Pressed to be more explicit, the lieutenant governor submitted the following as his idea of public issues before the state:

"I am in favor of -"

"First -- A business administration of state affairs on the lines of economy and efficiency that have made all business successful."

"Second -- Practical schools, with a view to developing more efficient workers - agriculture, industrial and commercial."

"Third -- The development of the farming interests of Vermont by means of an agricultural school and model farm for introducing the most modern methods."

"Fourth -- A system of taxation that will equalize the burden, minimize double taxation and develop rather than restrict opportunity."

"Fifth -- Better roads for Vermont by the introduction of improved methods, with state supervision and aid wherever and whenever practicable."

"Sixth -- The good offices of the executive in settling disputes between labor and capital by arbitration."

"Seventh -- Fewer and more uniform laws, with no special legislation that can be covered by general statutes."

"Eighth -- (a) A system of courts that will provide cheap and speedy justice to rich and poor."

"(b) A radical reduction of court expenses by business methods of administration."

"Ninth -- A continuation and extension of the state's forestry policy for the permanent improvement of Vermont woodlands."

"Tenth -- Laws that will encourage and foster Vermont industries with the view of providing a home market for agricultural products."

"Eleventh -- Measures that will give prominence to the natural beauty and attractions of our mountains, valleys, lakes and streams, interest the vacationists and summer visitors and attract permanent residents from abroad."



BIRTHPLACE OF JOHN A. MEAD.

[An Old Fashioned Vermont Farmhouse, Not Luxurious.]

Biography of John A. Mead.

John A. Mead was the only son of Rosewell Rowley Mead, grandson of James Mead, and Lydia Ann, daughter of Eli Gorham of Rutland. James Mead was the first white man to settle in Rutland township. He bought off Nathan Stone of Winsor 7,000 acres of land, paying for the same in horses valued at \$333.33. He was a distinguished pioneer and patriot and was colonel of the Third Vermont colonial regiment.

Rowley R. Mead was born in West Rutland in a hotel which his father Abner Mead conducted. On the maternal side John Abner Mead, subject of this sketch, inherited some of the finest blood in this country. One of Lydia Ann Gorham's ancestors, John Howland, was a brave and enterprising member of the Mayflower colony, and four of them were original Pilgrims. Rowley R. Mead moved to Fair Haven in 1830 and settled on a small farm there.

Left to Care of His Aunt.

John Abner Mead was born on April 20, 1841. His mother Lydia Ann Gorham Mead went into a decline soon afterward and died in August. The infant son was left with a family in Fair Haven to be cared for remaining with them for several years. Then Rowley Mead married again, and the boy was virtually given to an aunt, Mrs. Blanchard, who cared for him for a number of years and with whom he lived much of the time until he was sixteen years of age.

Immediately upon his return he began to study medicine with a professor Joseph Perkins of Castleton.

Finding nothing to do at home, he then tried to enlist in the army again going to Castleton, where it was reported two or three soldiers were required to complete their quota for that purpose. He found that the last man had just been enrolled and returned from Castleton in a gravel car. Thoroughly discouraged, this was low tide in his fortunes, however as he found a letter awaiting him from Champlain, N.Y. offering him a position as teacher in the high school for a term of four months. He started for Champlain that evening and finished the term teaching.

Immediately upon his return he began to study medicine with a professor Joseph Perkins of Castleton.

At having nearly every summer and taught school every winter, studying hard meanwhile to make up his arrearages. With his original savings of \$425 he fitted himself for college and completed his course without assistance from any one but his own willing hands and busy brain.

John A. Mead "cut it pretty tight." However, as at the time of his graduation he was so "hard up" that he was obliged to sell all his books, particularly the English books of the final year, that every graduate likes to keep, and so he graduates from Middlebury, square with the world financially, but nearly penniless.

Tries Unsuccessfully to Re-enlist.

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