

"Candidate Bryan Visits Carroll in 1900, Part II"

Carroll County Times Article for 29 October 2000

by Jay A. Graybeal

Last week's column carried the story of presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan's campaign stops in several Carroll County communities on October 23, 1900. The October 27 issue of the Democratic Advocate also printed his speech:

"Mr. Bryan's Speech – When silence was obtained, Mr. Bryan, with umbrella over him, for the wind was blowing the rain in the stand, said –

"My friends your presence in such large numbers in this disagreeable weather is evidence to me that you don't need to be talked to; and the Republican here who will stand in the rain to hear a Democrat speak is so nearly on our side he will come over anyhow before election day.

"In this contest you are to decide what you want this government to do. If you believe in Trusts vote for McKinley, and you will get all the Trusts you want. If you are opposed to Trusts vote our ticket, and I promise you to use every endeavor to stamp out the Trusts.

"If you believe in a large standing army, vote for McKinley. If am elected I shall endeavor to reduce it to its normal size of 25,000 men, which has been sufficient for all purposes of this people.

"If you believe in a colonial policy vote for McKinley. If our government is right in its course toward Porto Rico, then England was right in the effort to force colonial government upon us. If you believe our policy for one hundred years was wrong, then vote for McKinley and hurry the government back to the policy and brute force of imperial governments.

"The commandment 'Thou shalt not steal' has been changed by the Republicans 'Thou shalt not steal on a small scale.' If it is done on a large scale it is all right. The commandment thou shalt not kill, has been changed to thou shalt not kill unless the man you kill has something you want.

"The Republicans told the Cubans they would give them liberty. I want this government to tell the Filippinos that they shall have liberty. Don't kill them first and tell them afterwards.

"The Republicans say you must not haul down the Flag, where once it has been planted it must stay. McKinley has hauled it down in Alaska. If a Republican President can haul it down where it is cold, a Democratic President can haul it down where it is hot.

"I understand you have an independent candidate for Congress in this district. If you vote for an independent candidate who cannot be elected, you vote indirectly for a man you do not want elected. If the independent candidate has a personal grievance, I say to him preserve the Republic first and settle private matters afterward.

"On election day make your vote so large that neither money nor intimidation can prevail."

At New Windsor the station was decorated with bunting and a large picture of Mr. Bryan was displayed. Mr. Bryan was presented with a handsome bouquet in the form of a horseshoe, for good luck. In the brief stop Mr. Bryan made suggestions concerning the issues of the campaign. He said in part:

"I only have time to suggest that you think over some things before you vote. I want you first to ask yourselves whether you believe in the doctrine of Jefferson of equal rights to all and special privileges to none. If you say you don't believe in that doctrine then I want you to find out what doctrine you do believe in, for if you destroy that as a foundation of legislation I know not what foundation you can have; and if you do believe in that doctrine of Jefferson, then I want you to ask yourselves whether the Republicans are carrying out that doctrine and whether the Republican legislation is in accordance with that maxim. If it is not, then are you willing to help make it so, or would you prefer to have that maxim neglected rather than leave the Republican party?"

Despite Bryan's reception in Carroll, he lost the 1900 presidential election. Carroll County voters were nearly equally split with Bryan receiving 4,023 votes to McKinley's 4,104.

Photo caption: Bryan's opponent distributed this dollar bill that praised McKinley's monetary policy; a similar bill, shown in last week's column, derided the Democratic candidate's "Free Silver" policy. Historical Society of Carroll County Collection.