

N.D.

Biographical Sketch
(was at this time State Treas-
urer of the Democratic Party and
Pres. of the Council of Legis-
latures).
(ca 1927) (19)

JOHN HENRY KIRBY
Houston, Texas

The subject of this sketch was born in Tyler County, Texas, November 16, 1860, the son of a farmer.

He attended the neighborhood schools, the high school at Woodville and the Southwestern University at Georgetown, Texas.

Was admitted to the Bar at Woodville, in Tyler County, in 1885 and retired from the practice of the law in 1900.

In 1886 entered the lumber business, first dealing in timber and timbered lands, in which activity he was supported by capital from Boston, Mass. This business expanded rapidly into the construction of sawmills, the building of railroads and the opening of towns and villages in East Texas and culminating in 1901 in the organization of the Kirby Lumber Company with a capital of \$10,000,000.00, of which he became and still is President and principal owner.

Mr. Kirby is likewise President of the Southern Tariff Association, organized in 1920 to secure an equal opportunity for Southern producers, and especially the farmers, under the tariff laws from time to time enacted by the Congress.

He is President of the National Council of State Legislatures, organized in Washington, D. C. in 1927 to uphold the Constitution of the United States and to protect the sovereign States of the Union in their reserved rights against Congressional or other usurpations.

Mr. Kirby is a member of the Episcopal Church, is a Scottish Rite Mason 32°, a Shriner, Knight Templar, and a member of other orders.

He is a member of all the prominent Houston clubs and of the Southern Society and Manhattan Club in New York.

Mr. Kirby is a Democrat and at the present time is State Director of Finance for the National Democratic Committee.

EXCERPTS from a letter written about 1901 by
John Henry Kirby.

"I am fearful that the vast majority of the rich in America today are destined to burn in hell, if there is a hell. My idea about wealth is that those who possess it should use it as a private trust for the benefit of humanity. Those who pile it up and hoard it in selfishness are enemies to themselves and to the people. If we ever get rich we shall use our wealth not alone for selfish pleasure but in promoting the happiness of others, in building up schools, colleges and churches, in relieving the distress of the poor and in bettering the people and the communities among whom and in which we live."

"Will read my S&H - a thing I hav'nt done today because of the length of this epistle and my participation in several interesting discussions here in the smoking room. There are several very interesting characters aboard- men of large information and very clever conversationalists. What a source of pleasure a well stored mind is. It is a kaliedscope of pleasing topics, thoughts and subjects. Some men seem to have read everything and to have remembered all that they have read. Such men, if their exertions are for the Right are a great blessing to the world. According to my notion it ought to be every man's ambition to have it said that the world is better for his having lived. I wonder if the remainder of my life will be cast upon lines that will enable people to say and feel that way about me when I have passed out? With your help, yes. I am putting a rather fearful responsibility on you today, am I not? This is the second time this thought has been presented to you in this letter. I feel the need of your aid and I don't mind asking for it. I know it will be extended with all the earnestness you can command. I feel assisted from the mere act of asking, and before my message reaches you- unless it reaches you by the electricity of thought, that mysterious means of distant communication about which I know so little."

"Feel an invincible strength and irresistable power, and am anxious to exert them. It is not conceit, but the sense of power which a consciousness of duty faithfully preformed brings to all men, argummented by the blessings of God in the form of perfect health and physical strength. There is nothing in present results from my Western trip to make me conceited, in fact it is more of a failure than a triumph, but I can see behind it the breaking ~~and~~ dawn and I shall keep up the effort with the deep conviction that ere the sun's rays gild the hill tops and the valleys I shall see victory. The right will triumph, the meritorious will win, the deserving will prevail. My enterprise will help the poor, will give employment to labor, will add to the prosperity of my State, and will enlarge etc."

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The Spirit of Democracy.

When your invitation came to deliver an address at this meeting of your association it was coupled with the suggestion that I was free to select my own subject, but for the purpose of your program you would like to be advised in advance as to what that subject was. I answered at once that I would submit a few observations on the Spirit of Democracy. This happens to be a busy period with me but like all Americans I can talk on this subject without previous preparation.

The Spirit of Democracy is that spirit which has dominated the American people for two hundred years and which ~~had its~~ had its appropriate expression in that marvelous document given to the world at Philadelphia on the Fourth of July, 1776, when we said "all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed."

This was a new and astounding doctrine for most of the people of the earth at that hour adhered to the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings in which the ruler's sovereignty was ~~inherited~~ ^{in himself} centered and that marvelous attribute could be acquired only by inheritance.

Our forefathers took another view. They held that each individual was a unit in that great aggregate of that sovereign entity which we call a nation.

Thirteen sovereign states, "deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed," (the sovereigns in ^{each} such states) met and formulated the present Constitution which created the government of the United States of America. The thirteen stripes in that flag are typical of the original thirteen sovereignties and the stars on that blue field ~~are~~ ^{represent one of those states} each typical of a state added thereto, "with the consent of the governed."

There are units in our civilization and progress which are fun-