



The Downfall of Senator George F. Edmunds: The Election of 1884

Rather than join the Mugwumps and leave his party, or endorse a candidate he could not respect, U.S. Senator George Edmunds took a stand that sent a strong message about his hopes for the country and the future direction of the party but had grave consequences for his own future.

By BENJAMIN WARD

George F. Edmunds of Vermont rose rapidly to national prominence as a young member of the United States Senate during the Gilded Age of politics. A principled, if at times stubborn man, Edmunds devoted himself to public service and the well-being of the American people. His abolitionist family, who had been Republicans since the days of Lincoln, helped shape Edmunds' beliefs.¹ As leader of the Half-Breed faction of the Republican Party, Edmunds first and foremost advocated strongly for government reform.² Early in his career, Republican Party leaders tapped him to be chairman of the Judiciary Committee,³ he served as president pro tempore of the United States Senate from 1883 to 1885,⁴ and was in charge of creating the electoral commission that settled the election of 1876.⁵ Party leaders twice put him forward as a presidential candidate,⁶ and

.....

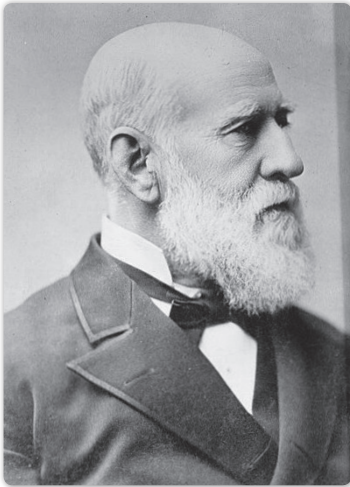
BENJAMIN WARD is a native Vermonter studying Art History and History at Williams College.

Vermont History Vol. 87, No. 2 (Summer/Fall 2019): 126-140

© 2019 by the Vermont Historical Society. ISSN: 0042-4161; on-line ISSN: 1544-3043

nominated him for the Supreme Court.⁷ He is responsible for the passage of the Tenure of Office Act through the Senate,⁸ and he was the principal author of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act.⁹ Above all, he remained deeply devoted to the ideals of the Republican Party and what he understood to be the goal and purpose of public service.

An exacting politician who set high standards for himself and those around him, Edmunds quickly established himself as a man who knew constitutional law as few others of his time did, and he rose through the senatorial ranks of power and influence with remarkable speed. Had he stayed the course, he might be remembered as one of the great



George F. Edmunds. Date unknown. Library of Congress Online Database.

senators of the Gilded Age. In 1891, however, after serving twenty-five years, he resigned from the Senate, choosing instead to retreat to the relative seclusion of a private law practice in Philadelphia before fully retiring to live out his days in Pasadena, California, where he died in 1919.

Most, if not all Vermont senators serve until they decide they are physically incapable of serving any longer. So why did a man who had done so much in such a short time resign from the Senate, when he could almost certainly have served for many more successful years? Throughout his eighteen years as a senator, Edmunds had been able to walk the often-necessary fine line between personal principles and political compromise. In the elec-

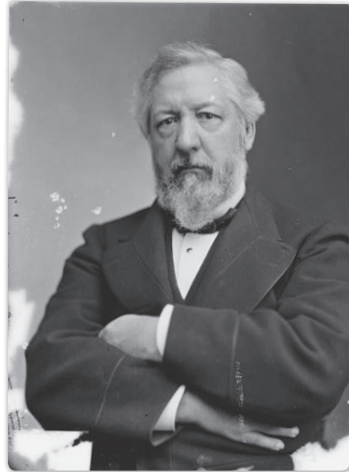
tion of 1884, however, Edmunds faced a situation that forced him to make a critical and strategic choice between supporting his party's presidential candidate, Senator James G. Blaine, and staying true to his personal beliefs. This article examines that dilemma and Edmunds' struggle to maintain his political balance during this time. The calculated decisions he made in 1884 led to a premature decline in power, eventually causing him to withdraw from public life, effectively ending a distinguished political career.

THE ELECTION OF 1884

The 1884 presidential election pitted the controversial James G. Blaine, a Republican from Maine, against Democrat Grover Cleveland. Blaine started his career in the U.S. House of Representative and served as speaker of the House for six years, becoming a U.S. senator in 1876. He was an ambitious politician who had set his sights on the White House as early as 1876. After failing again to gain the Republican nomination for president in the election of 1880 as a Stalwart, he served as secretary of state under President James A. Garfield and found it expedient to switch loyalties and become a Half-Breed.¹⁰

The Half-Breed faction of the Republican Party framed itself as a moderate, reform-minded branch of the party. Their rivals, the Stalwarts, were more conservative Republicans who benefited from the spoils system. The Stalwarts accused the Half-Breeds of being half-hearted Republicans and the name "Half-Breeds" stuck.¹¹ While both Vermont senators, Edmunds and Justin Smith Morrill, were considered Half-Breeds, newspapers in the state do not seem to have been particularly partial one way or another.¹² It seems the state was partial to reform but cared more about the Republican Party rather than the separate factions.

Blaine was a highly influential member of the Republican Party, yet unlike Edmunds, whose reputation was synonymous with integrity, an 1876 scandal involving the Pacific Railroad and a collection of papers known as the Mulligan Letters tinged Blaine's reputation with corruption.¹³ A House of Representatives committee investigating the issue found evidence suggesting Blaine used political power to further personal interests, helping broker a deal to sell Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad bonds. However, before the committee could obtain the critical evidence, Blaine reportedly cornered James Mulligan, the man in possession of correspondence that could prove damning to him, and tried to bribe Mulligan with a consulship.¹⁴ When this failed, Blaine



James G. Blaine. Photo taken between 1870-1880. Library of Congress Online Database.

asked to read the letters and pledged on his honor to return them, which he did.¹⁵ However, when he asked to reread them and Mr. Mulligan obliged, Blaine refused to give up the letters. As a result, no allegations were proven in the trial.¹⁶ Public press surrounding this scandal, combined with Blaine's close relationship with Jay Gould, whose reputation as a ruthless railroad tycoon and unsavory character was widely disparaged,¹⁷ further tainted Blaine and lent additional credence to the allegations, convincing many of his guilt. Thomas Nast of *Harper's Weekly*, used the nickname "The Plumed Knight" as an ironic moniker highlighting Blaine's ability to float above his darker dealings.¹⁸

Despite the negative publicity surrounding the Mulligan Letters, Blaine's popularity grew. In the year that the incident occurred, Blaine won election to the Senate. His charisma and considerable public speaking skills kept him in the favor of his fellow politicians despite the taint of corruption.¹⁹ Blaine set his sights on the presidential election of 1884 after unsuccessfully seeking his party's nomination in 1876 and 1880.²⁰

The Republican Party faced great controversy and uncertainty during the election of 1884. While Chester Arthur conducted himself with dignity following President James Garfield's assassination, he did little to distinguish himself as a president. Some questionable cabinet selec-



"A Roaring Farce, The Plumed Knight in the Clean Shirt." Cartoon by Thomas Nast.

Published by Harper's Weekly, 28 June 1884. Nast shows Blaine putting on a shirt with his legs through the arm holes. The clean shirt represents Blaine trying to cover up his stained past, but the fact that the shirt is upside down shows that no matter how hard he tries, he will never be able to cover up his corruption. Courtesy of the New York State Library.

tions and lapses in judgment ultimately made him undesirable to a significant body of Republicans, and he garnered weak support for nomination at the 1884 convention.²¹ Blaine presented Arthur's most serious competition. Yet with the Mulligan Letters still hovering over Blaine's reputation, many Republicans who championed reform saw him as an unattractive candidate.²² Independents such as Theodore Roosevelt put forward the name of George F. Edmunds as a third nominee.²³ Edmunds, however, expressed many times he had no desire to be president. In a conversation with Senator Hoar of Massachusetts pertaining to his nomination, Edmunds said, "If I know myself I have no desire to be president . . . I would say so in a public letter but I suppose the chances of my nomination are so slight that it might seem ridiculous to decline."²⁴ This evidence leads to the speculation that Edmunds' nomination served primarily to draw votes away from Blaine.²⁵ The ballots showed Arthur and Blaine as the front-runners with Edmunds trailing behind. Because Blaine and Edmunds were both of the Half-Breed faction of the Republican Party, those supporting Edmunds most likely hoped to take votes from Blaine, allowing Arthur to prevail.

Blaine stood for much of what Edmunds found distasteful about the political climate in the Republican Party.²⁶ Edmunds passionately believed that a senator should work for the betterment of his state and countrymen.²⁷ He saw Blaine as an opportunist working only for personal gain, the antithesis of everything he believed a senator should be. In speaking about Blaine's corruption and relationship with Jay Gould, Edmunds wrote, "It is my deliberate opinion that Senator Blaine acts as the attorney of Jay Gould. Whenever Mr. Thurman and I have settled upon legislation to bring the Pacific Railroad to terms of equity with the government, up has jumped Mr. James G. Blaine musket in hand, from behind the breastworks of Jay Gould's lobby to fire in our faces."²⁸ Adding to Edmunds' grievances, Blaine did not support the Civil Service Reform Act, a bill championed by the Half-Breeds requiring positions within the federal government to be based on merit, not party affiliation.²⁹ While Arthur only came around to support civil service reform two years prior to the convention, he most likely would still have been the preferable candidate in the eyes of Edmunds and his supporters.

To Edmunds, Blaine represented a threat to the future of the country and the Republican Party. Edmunds' correspondences with his personal friend and occasional confidant, George Perkins Marsh, expressed this concern.³⁰ Edmunds voiced fears about the unity and direction of the Republican Party in the years leading up to the 1884 presidential

election.³¹ He saw the party being consumed by politicians who were more concerned with advancing their own careers than with serving the American people.³² He held the petty squabbles between Republican politicians in contempt, believing such actions crippled the potential of the party. “The state of political affairs,” he wrote, “is not very encouraging . . . so that I am not in a very cheerful state of mind and I wish myself farming in California.”³³ In Edmunds’ view, Blaine’s corruption and blind ambition made him the symbol of everything wrong with American politics; the prospect of a Blaine presidency threatened the very core of all that Edmunds felt the Republican Party should represent.

EDMUNDS’ DILEMMA

Edmunds and the independents failed to take enough votes away from Blaine to keep him from securing the nomination,³⁴ putting Edmunds in a compromised situation. Upon Blaine’s nomination, the Republican Party fractured. A group of influential, predominantly Eastern elites labeled themselves the Mugwumps, and left the party. Prominent men such as Mark Twain, Carl Schurz, and Thomas Nast became standard bearers for the Mugwump dissidents.³⁵



“Death Before Dishonor. Virginus ‘On thee and on thy head be this blood!’” Cartoon by Thomas Nast. Published by Harpers Weekly, 21 June 1884. This cartoon refers to a story from ancient Rome where the corrupt leader demanded to have intercourse with Virginus’s daughter. Rather than let her be dishonored he chose to kill her. So like Virginus, Nast as a Mugwump is choosing to kill the Republican Party rather than let it be dishonored. Courtesy of the New York State Library.

In response, prominent Republican politicians were being called upon to condemn the actions of these Mugwump traitors and endorse Blaine's candidacy.³⁶ Few endorsements would carry more importance than that of Edmunds, the choice candidate of many of the same people now leaving the Republican Party.³⁷ Edmunds would not have been alone in endorsing Blaine had he succumbed to party pressures: Theodore Roosevelt, George Hoar, and Edmunds' Vermont senatorial partner, Justin Morrill, toed the party line.³⁸ Morrill, who declined to be an Edmunds delegate in the 1884 convention for fear that Edmunds could not win the party nomination, wrote with certainty about Edmunds' sway over the public, especially in the state of New York, which ultimately cast the deciding electoral votes: "It is doubtful with the democratic party united, as it appears to be now, whether any which could be presented by us can carry New York . . . Arthur, [William] Sherman, Blaine, [Robert] Lincoln and [John] Logan would be badly beaten. Edmunds I believe would win . . . It is nonsense to claim New York is not a necessity."³⁹ In fact, the New York delegates that were elected to the Republican convention in Chicago were all Edmunds men. While this was as much because of the dislike of Blaine as it was Edmunds' popularity, it shows that to many, Edmunds was the best choice and the voice of reason.⁴⁰ Both are proof that Edmunds was clearly influential with anti-Blaine Republicans in New York that were represented by Theodore Roosevelt at the convention. Surely Blaine and his Republicans, as well as the Mugwump dissidents, must have been eager to see where Edmunds would stand. Edmunds, however, would not abandon his principles to protect his career. Rather than join the Mugwumps and leave his party, or endorse a candidate he could not respect, Edmunds took a stand that sent a strong message about his hopes for the country and the future direction of the party.

Edmunds refused to endorse Blaine after the Republican convention in Chicago, dashing the party's hopes for Edmunds' support in securing the dissident and independent vote.⁴¹ One New York Newspaper wrote, "To the Blaine Republicans the silence of Edmunds. . . [was]. . . most exasperating... In order that the overwhelming tide of Independent Revolt might be stemmed, they had entertained the hope that the candidate who received the bulk of the independent votes would raise his voice in approval." The Republicans' last hope for an Edmunds endorsement came at a Republican convention in Burlington, Vermont. Much to the party regulars' disappointment, Edmunds did not mention Blaine or the Chicago convention once in the entire speech. In fact, Edmunds went so far as to express sympathy with the public's doubts

about the current standing of the Republican Party, affirming the “liberty of belief, of opinion, and of action, that belongs to citizenship.”⁴² Many viewed Edmunds encouraging people to vote their conscience as a tacit endorsement of the Mugwump actions.

Edmunds’ decision to stand against the Republican majority by refusing to endorse Blaine was widely regarded as a significant factor contributing to Blaine’s exceedingly narrow loss.⁴³ Had Blaine claimed the presidency, the rift created within the Republican Party might have become permanent. By not endorsing Blaine, Edmunds believed he had helped to keep the party intact and prevent a corrupt politician from entering the White House. However, Edmunds’ actions had grave consequences for his own future.

THE RAMIFICATIONS

Edmunds’ decision not to support Blaine made him an outright enemy of Blaine and his supporters within the Republican Party.⁴⁴ When Edmunds’ senate term expired in 1886, Blaine and his supporters poured considerable amounts of money into a campaign to prevent his reelection.⁴⁵ At this time U.S. senators were still elected by the State legislature, and many within the Vermont Republican Party were undoubtedly upset with Edmunds’ decision. “Do you believe,” wrote Blaine supporter Daniel Tarbell, “he [Edmunds] sulked during the campaign of 1884, and refused to assist the party that gave him all the eminence he ever had as a statesman, and thereby on account of his personal dislike to James G. Blaine refused to contribute his support. . . There are honest, intelligent Republicans who believe he is guilty.”⁴⁶ This statement represents only part of the uprising against Edmunds in the 1886 election year.

As the election drew near, newspapers chose sides, attacking or defending Edmunds’ character and responding to articles written by other papers. The *Vermont Watchman*, which defended Edmunds in 1884 even after he chose not to support Blaine outright, accused him of drunkenness and moral ambiguity in 1886.⁴⁷ The *Burlington Free Press* continued staunch support of Edmunds, and many smaller newspapers took sides one way or the other. While the majority of the state and its newspapers stayed loyal to Edmunds, the backlash against him was fierce. The anti-Edmunds contingent pulled no punches in an effort to overthrow the longstanding senator. One writer speculated that Blaine’s close friends and supporters funded the movement against Edmunds.⁴⁸ The assault underscored the depth of Blaine and his supporters’ feelings of contempt. Blaine’s dislike of Edmunds took on a public

dimension when Edmunds extended a hand of reconciliation to Blaine at President Arthur's funeral in 1886, a hand Blaine denied.⁴⁹

Despite these efforts, Edmunds handily won the 1886 election, gaining 29 out of 30 votes in the senate and 199 out of 234 in the house. The other Republican candidate received only 8 votes in the house and no votes in the senate.⁵⁰

The depth of the Republican backlash against Edmunds was such that Justin Morrill wrote a letter, urging the Vermont Senate not to depose Edmunds despite what Morrill described as a "grave error" in denying Blaine support in the election of 1884.⁵¹ The significance of this letter should not be underestimated. Though the legislature had routinely returned all eligible senators to office, Morrill believed that Edmunds' actions in the election of 1884 so seriously affected his reputation that there was a risk the legislature might not reelect him. Clearly, Edmunds had fallen out of favor with the core of the Republican Party, both in Vermont and on the national stage, paying a high price for his decision.

For ten years Edmunds had been a giant in the Senate, respected even by many Democrats.⁵² However, during the seven years after the election of 1884, Edmunds saw his power decline rapidly.⁵³

TENURE OF OFFICE BATTLE

When he returned to the Senate in 1886, as Vermont's re-elected senator, Edmunds' standing, though diminished, still carried some of the luster of his past accomplishments. Edmunds used this legacy to attempt to gather the Republican Party and begin an attack on President Cleveland. He used The Tenure of Office Act to spearhead this effort.

The Tenure of Office Act restricted the president's ability to suspend or appoint federal officials without the consent of the Senate. The passage of this act in 1867 is recognized as one of Edmunds' first major accomplishments as a senator, and therefore held special significance to him. In this case, he believed it was the right tool for the job of regaining the Republican Party's power in 1886 to shape and influence the political agenda.

President Cleveland had suspended 643 officials during his first years in office, many of whom had written the Senate proclaiming they had done nothing to justify being removed from their positions.⁵⁴ Edmunds called for the Republican Party to rally around the Tenure of Office Act and attack Cleveland. He tempted his party with the possibility of shaming the president and his administration by showing America that their president had abandoned reform principles.⁵⁵

It is possible that the motives behind Edmunds' attack went deeper than just shaming the president and the Democratic Party. Edmunds would be accomplishing two important outcomes, were he to win this battle against Cleveland: he would diminish the president's power by showing Cleveland's corruption; and perhaps as important, he would be able to undermine Blaine, who adamantly opposed the bill and all it stood for.⁵⁶ If successful, Edmunds might again be in a position to influence the trajectory of reform efforts that the Half-Breeds stood for, while diminishing his political rival's voice. Edmunds must have been aware that his battle against Cleveland, if successful, would have vindicated him in the eyes of party regulars and possibly provide a path toward regaining his prestige and power within the party.

The Judiciary Committee, of which Edmunds was still a senior member,⁵⁷ led the proceedings. They called for Cleveland to hand over papers explaining his motives for suspending the officials. Attorney General Augustus H. Garland forwarded the papers pertaining only to pending nominations of officials, but failed to produce those pertaining to the suspensions.⁵⁸

Edmunds beseeched the Senate not to approve any officials who had been appointed by the president until he agreed to show the grounds on which he had suspended the 643 previous officials. This was a critical piece of Edmunds' plan for vindication. If the Senate approved any of the officials appointed by Cleveland, that might show the public that the Senate had conceded to the president and that Edmunds was on the losing side of an already uphill battle. Edmunds' request to the Senate went unfulfilled. When it became clear that public sentiment was on Cleveland's side, the Republican Party withdrew their support of Edmunds' position and began approving Cleveland's officials.⁵⁹ Edmunds' fight against Cleveland to regain standing was lost.

Before the election of 1884, a similar request by Edmunds to the Senate would have almost certainly carried more weight. After 1884, Edmunds found himself in an untenable position. He no longer commanded the same respect he once had, and the enticement of publicly shaming Cleveland was not sufficient to keep the party loyal to his cause throughout the controversy. The Senate began approving Cleveland's appointments as soon as it became clear that the prospects for the Tenure of Office battle were dim. Edmunds continued, almost alone, to fight his losing battle against Cleveland. However, he seems to have lost what was left of his influence and power within the Senate. The Tenure of Office Act would be repealed entirely in 1887.

Selig Adler, who wrote about the Tenure of Office Act, saw the ordeal

as a miscalculated error that caused the decline of Edmunds within the Senate. Adler contended that this overzealous blunder ended the career of the skilled politician. It seems more likely, however, that Edmunds knew he was dealing with the consequences of his actions from the election of 1884. Rather than the Tenure of Office battle being the cause of his decline, as Adler suggests, Edmunds' decision two years earlier in the election 1884 most likely predetermined the fate of that failed effort. The Tenure of Office battle was more likely his attempt to see if he could regain his previous standing within the Senate.⁶⁰

In his last year in office, Edmunds continued to serve as Republican Conference chairman⁶¹ and acted as the principal author of the Sherman Antitrust Act,⁶² without having his name associated with the bill. It seems that while the Republican senators wanted Edmunds' expertise and experience, they did not want his controversial name on the bill. Excluding his overlooked work on the Sherman Antitrust Act, Edmunds remained more or less inactive during his last five years as Vermont's senator. In the spring of 1891, he voluntarily resigned from office. He publicly ascribed his retirement to failing health and a desire to move to California and a warmer climate. Despite this claim, many believed there may have been other factors motivating his retirement. The *Vermont Tribune* called his retirement at such a young age "a little remarkable," and the *Phillipsburg* (Kansas) *Herald* published an article titled, "No Place for Edmunds" upon hearing about his retirement, saying the Senate was no longer a place that coincided with Edmunds' core principles and beliefs.⁶³

After his resignation (despite his claim that Washington and Vermont climates were bad for his health), Edmunds first moved to Philadelphia, where he continued his work as a lawyer.⁶⁴ There he argued several cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, including the case *Pollock vs. Farmers' Loan and Trust Co.*, which resulted in altering the income tax code.⁶⁵ Edmunds eventually left Philadelphia and lived out the remainder of his days in relative obscurity in southern California, before dying in 1919,⁶⁶ fulfilling the vision he had suggested to George Perkins Marsh years earlier.

Upon his retirement, *Harper's Weekly* and the *New York Times* both published articles praising Edmunds. The *Times* wrote, "The retirement of Edmunds is doubtless a public calamity; it is an illustration of the degeneracy of our politics in general and the Senate of the United States in particular. . . [Edmunds] has devoted his life to the service of the public."⁶⁷ *Harper's Weekly* stated, "Were all his colleagues whom he salutes in farewell of the same quality with himself, the Senate would still deserve Chatham's eulogy of the Continental Congress,"⁶⁸

The Vermont senator's actions may have angered and perplexed many, but Edmunds had a clear notion of how a politician should behave. In one of the few revealing pieces written by Edmunds, "Politics as a Career," he stressed that a politician must be unambitious and devoted to his patriotic duty to better the lives of the American people. "In the century of our political existence, there have been very few, indeed if any, instances of the pursuit of politics as a career otherwise than in the lowest forms to which we have alluded."⁶⁹ Edmunds' cherished principles could not allow him to abandon the Republican Party he had championed and believed in for so long; at the same time, he could not bring himself to endorse a man whose presidency he believed would be detrimental to the country as a whole.

CONCLUSION

What makes Edmunds' stand significant is that he acted independently in order to serve his country as his conscience dictated. He easily could have cashed in his chips on the side of Blaine and retained his power and authority within the Republican Party. He would have quite possibly continued to grow in prestige and power and have been remembered as one of the giants of the Gilded Age. Instead, Edmunds made a decision that ended his career and may well have handed the Democrats their first national election in twenty-eight years.⁷⁰

The wisdom of Edmunds' choice is debatable, but for him it seems there was no alternative. He was elected and valued by the people of Vermont, and indeed the nation, for the same reasons he eventually lost power: he was a man who chose principles over politics, a man who, in the words of the *New York Times*, "devoted his life to the service of the public."⁷¹

NOTES

¹ Selig Adler, *The Senatorial Career of George Franklin Edmunds: 1866-1891* (Ph.D. dissertation University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, 1934), 92-94. As a research topic, George F. Edmunds has been largely undiscovered by the academic world. In addition to there being very little common knowledge of Edmunds, despite his national prominence during his own time, there has also been a curious lack of scholarship. Very few original works have been written about him. Perhaps one reason is because, as a practicing lawyer, he requested that his personal papers be burned at his death as a way of protecting his clients' confidentiality. It also appears that Edmunds was not a prolific letter writer, with very little correspondence showing up in the files of his contemporaries. The author, however, found a number of sources that had not been referenced before by previous scholars. In addition to some political tracts Edmunds authored and others written by his detractors, numerous correspondences between Edmunds and the famed environmentalist George Perkins Marsh became an invaluable source.

² Richard E. Welch, "George Edmunds of Vermont: Republican Half Breed," *Vermont History* 36 (Spring 1968): 64-73. The Half-Breeds were the reform-oriented faction of the Republican Party that vied for control of the party with their counterparts, the Stalwarts.

³ Walter H. Crockett, "George Franklin Edmunds," *The Vermonter* (1919): 28-42.

⁴ Susan M. Edmunds, *Edmunds Newspaper Scrapbook*, n.d. Collection of newspaper articles regarding Senator George F. Edmunds. Vermont Historical Society Collections Barre, VT, 920 Ed59, 16.

⁵ Crockett, "George Franklin Edmunds," 24. It may come as a surprise that a man raised in an abolitionist family, who expressed strong antislavery sentiments, and helped pass the Klu Klux Klan Act (1871) is also associated with the Compromise of 1877, which is widely regarded as the catalyst for ending the post-Civil War period of Reconstruction. However, Edmunds was only responsible for the creation of the electoral commission that resolved the issue of counting the electoral votes. Norbert Kuntz, "Edmunds' Contrivance," *Vermont History* 38 (Autumn 1970): 305-315. This compromise was originally favored by Democrats more than Republicans as the committee consisted of seven Democrats, seven Republicans, and the independent Supreme Court Justice David Davis, who was a Democratic independent. The delicate balance was suddenly turned around when Davis received a nomination to the U.S. Senate from Democratic members of the Illinois legislature, most likely in an attempt to secure his vote. Instead Davis stepped down from the commission and the other four justices chose the moderate Republican Judge Joseph P. Bradley. This tipped the scales of the commission in favor of Republicans and, of course, the commission voted on party lines. James G. Blaine, *Twenty Years of Congress: From Lincoln to Garfield: With a Review of the Events Which Led to the Political Revolution of 1860* (Norwich, CT: Henry Bill, 1886), 584-586. This chain of events had little to do with Edmunds, who actually acted against dominant Republican sentiments when he introduced the Electoral Commission Bill. When the Electoral Commission announced its decision in favor of Hayes, the House threatened to filibuster; the famous compromises that ended Reconstruction ensued. Edmunds, however, can only be held responsible for creating and serving on the Electoral Commission, which originally seemed likely to result in a Democratic president. Edmunds played no significant role in the other compromises that were associated with the resolution of the election (Kuntz, "Edmunds' Contrivance"). While it would be easy to mix Edmunds into the controversial compromises that ended Reconstruction, it seems most likely that he only desired to find a reasonable plan that adhered to the principles of the Constitution.

⁶ "The Republican Party, What It Has Accomplished for Liberty and Union, the Grandeur of the Republic and the Prosperity of the People," *San Francisco Call*, 19 June 1896, 7-9.

⁷ William B. Parker, *The Life and Public Service of Justin Smith Morrill* (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924), 287-290. (See correspondence between Morrill and Edmunds about Edmunds' Supreme Court nominations cited in this book.)

⁸ Crockett, "George Franklin Edmunds," 17.

⁹ Adler, *Senatorial Career of George Franklin Edmunds*, 10-11.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Blaine's change from a Stalwart to a Half-Breed was never accepted by Edmunds and many saw it as an opportunistic power move.

¹¹ Welch, "George Edmunds of Vermont," 4.

¹² "The Elections," *Vermont Watchman* (Montpelier), 16 November 1881.

¹³ Welch, "George Edmunds of Vermont," 6.

¹⁴ "The Famous Mulligan Letters," *New York Times*, 30 July 1894, 4.

¹⁵ *Mr. Blaine and the "Mulligan" Letters, the Whole Story as Told by the House of Representatives*, (Boston: J. S. Cushing, 1884).

¹⁶ "The Famous Mulligan Letters," 4.

¹⁷ *Kansas Agitator*, 11 August 1891, 9.

¹⁸ Thomas Nast, "A Roaring Farce, the Plumed Knight in a Clean Shirt," *HarpWeek: Cartoon of the Day*, accessed March 15, 2017. <http://www.harpweek.com/09Cartoon/BrowseByDateCartoon.asp?Month=June&Date=5>. The name Plumed Knight was originally given to Blaine by one of his supporters during the 1876 presidential campaign, but when the Mulligan scandal surfaced Nast turned the once-endearing name against him.

¹⁹ Willis F. Johnson, *An American Statesman: James G. Blaine* (Charleston SC: Nabu Press, 2013).

²⁰ U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/blaine-james-gil-lespie>, accessed March 15, 2017.

²¹ George F. Hoar, *Autobiography of Seventy Years* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1906), 406.

²² There is contextual evidence pointing to this conclusion: Edmund Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: Random House, 2001), 241-242.

²³ C. W. Johnson, "Official Proceedings of the Republican National Convention," Google Books. Accessed March 04, 2017. This source shows Edmunds officially being put forth as a candidate for president. See also Morris, *ibid.*, 243; this source emphasizes Roosevelt's support of Edmunds.

²⁴ Hoar, *Autobiography of Seventy Years*, 388.

²⁵ Edmunds, *Edmunds Newspaper Scrapbook*, 25.

²⁶ "The Famous Mulligan Letters," 4.

²⁷ George F. Edmunds, "Politics as a Career" (March 1895). Article of unknown publication on the principles of politics, Bailey/Howe Library, University of Vermont, Burlington.

²⁸ "Edmunds and Blaine," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 27 August 1884. Allen G. Thurman, Democrat from Ohio (1813-1895), was a U.S. representative, 1845-1847, and a U.S. senator, 1869-1881. See Bio-

.....

graphical Directory of the United States Congress, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=T000251>.

²⁹ Welch, "George Edmunds of Vermont," 5.

³⁰ George F. Edmunds to George Perkins Marsh, January 5, 1868, MS. Bailey/Howe Library mss-985.

³¹ George F. Edmunds to George Perkins Marsh, December 4, 1877, MS. Bailey/Howe Library.

³² George F. Edmunds to George Perkins Marsh, January 17, 1879, MS. Bailey/Howe Library.

³³ George F. Edmunds to George Perkins Marsh, December 4, 1877, MS. Bailey/Howe Library.

³⁴ Johnson, "Official Proceedings of the Republican National Convention," 163.

³⁵ Thomas Nast, "Death Before Dishonor," Harp Week Explore History, <http://elections.harp-week.com/1884/cartoon-1884-Medium.asp?UniqueID=4&Year=->. The Half-Breeds jumped ship during the election of 1884. This popular cartoon by Nast shows the sentiment of many Republicans; they would rather depart from the Republican Party with their honor intact than support Blaine.

³⁶ Gerald F. McFarland, *Mugwumps, Morals, & Politics*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1975), 17.

³⁷ Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 241-242.

³⁸ Parker, *The Life and Public Service of Justin Smith Morrill*, 306-307. Morrill was exceedingly cautious about any stand that might impede his career. He even chose not to be an Edmunds delegate at the 1884 convention. Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 283. While he faced no consequences for his actions, Roosevelt's backing of Blaine would be remembered with great shame by many of his followers in later years.

³⁹ Parker, *ibid.*, 306.

⁴⁰ "Blaine Beaten in Utica," *The Sun* (New York), 11 April 1884, 24. This article gives a rather conservative view of Edmunds influence, saying that he won the votes in New York more because of the dislike of Blaine, and Authur men ended up backing Edmunds. "New York For Edmunds," *Vermont Phoenix* (Brattleboro), 25 April 1884, 1. In contrast to the preceding article, this article puts forth a view that this was proof Edmunds was the only candidate capable of carrying New York. Either way, the evidence suggests that Edmunds had the support of those Republicans who disliked Blaine, the key contingency in the upcoming national election.

⁴¹ "Edmunds and Blaine," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* wrote, "Mr. Edmunds resolutely held aloof, notwithstanding the urgent requests of the National Committee and the solicitation of the conspicuous friends of the Plumed Knight."

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ David Frum, "Bring Back the Mugwumps," *The Atlantic* (January/February 2010).

⁴⁴ Edmunds, *Edmunds Newspaper Scrapbook*, 19. Justin S. Morrill, to L. B. Herbard, May 15, 1886. MS. UVM Bailey Howe Library, Burlington, Vermont.

⁴⁵ Edmunds, *Edmunds Newspaper Scrapbook*, 19.

⁴⁶ Daniel Tarbell, *George F. Edmunds*, "The Wicked Flee When No Man Pursueth" (Burlington, 1886), 4. While there is no evidence to indicate that Tarbell was paid by Blaine, men like Daniel Tarbell were funded by Blaine in order to discredit Edmunds, with the hope of stopping him from being reelected to the Senate after his actions in 1884.

⁴⁷ "A Washington View," *Vermont Watchman*, 4 December 1884. This article shows staunch support of Edmunds' decision in the election of 1884. Another article shows a strong opinion that he is unfit for office: "The Best Party Policy," *Vermont Watchman*, 1 September 1886, 4.

⁴⁸ "Whose Money Is It?," *St. Johnsbury Caledonian*, 12 December 1886, 1.

⁴⁹ Fred P. Powers, "From Washington," *America: A Journal for America* 1 (4 October 1888): 10-11.

⁵⁰ *Orleans County Monitor* (Barton, Vermont), 25 October 1886.

⁵¹ Morrill to Herbard, 15 May 1886.

⁵² Edmunds, *Edmunds Newspaper Scrapbook*, 35. The *Mt. Sterling Advocate* (a Democratic-leaning paper based in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky) said Edmunds was "Bitter often, and sometimes narrow, but withal a great man."

⁵³ Adler, *The Senatorial Career of George Franklin Edmunds*, 10.

⁵⁴ Allan Nevins, *Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1962), 254.

⁵⁵ Adler, *The Senatorial Career of George Franklin Edmunds*, 9.

⁵⁶ Blaine, *Twenty Years of Congress*, 272-279.

⁵⁷ Crockett, *George Franklin Edmunds*, 20.

⁵⁸ Selig Adler, "Senator Edmunds' Part in the Tenure of Office Battle," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 32 (December 1945): 389-398.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 397.

⁶⁰ Edmunds' lack of personal commentary remains especially true for the Tenure of Office battle. We have no way of knowing exactly what he was thinking and why he chose to attack Cleveland, therefore we must resort to educated and scholarly guesses based on logic and facts.

.....

⁶¹ “Senate Historical Office,” U.S. Senate, https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Conference_Chairpersons.htm, accessed March 04, 2017.

⁶² Albert Shaw, “Ex-Senator George F. Edmunds, Author of the Anti-Trust Law,” *Review of Reviews and World’s Work* (January 1, 1912): 2.

⁶³ “No Place for Edmunds,” *Phillipsburg (Kansas) Herald*, 9 February 1905, 2.

⁶⁴ “George F. Edmunds Dead at 91 Years,” *New York Times* (28 February 1919), 13.

⁶⁵ *Pollock v. Farmers’ Loan and Trust Co.*, 1895, US Court Listener, (8 April 1895): 157, at 429. Another case Edmunds argued before the Supreme Court is mentioned in “Lottery Cases Argued,” *New York Times*, 18 October 1901.

⁶⁶ “George F. Edmunds Dead at 91 Years.”

⁶⁷ “George F. Edmunds,” *New York Times*, 10 April 1891.

⁶⁸ Crockett, *George Franklin Edmunds*, 40. The Earl of Chatham was William Pitt the Elder (1708-1778), 1st Earl of Chatham, who sat in the House of Lords during the American Revolution; he encouraged England to meet the demands of the colonists and when they did not, he supported the revolution. “Earl of Chatham (William Pitt) Speech to Parliament, June 1774—American Memory Timeline—Classroom Presentation | Teacher Resources,” Library of Congress, n.p., n.d. <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/amrev/rebelln/earl.html>.

⁶⁹ Edmunds, *Politics as a Career*, 7, 9.

⁷⁰ “The Republican Party, What It Has Accomplished for Liberty and Union, the Grandeur of the Republic and the Prosperity of the People,” *San Francisco Call*, 19 June 1896.

⁷¹ “George F. Edmunds.”