A history of the third term tradition, 1789-1928: a thesis ...

Elmer Ellsworth Stevens

University of the Pacific

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A HISTORY
OF THE
THIRD TERM TRADITION
1789 - 1928

by
Elmer E. Stevens
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College of the Pacific

In partial fulfillment
of the
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APPROVED

Malcolm R. Eislen
Chairman of the Thesis Committee

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DATED:
To Dr. Malcolm R. Eiselen, teacher, guide and friend, for his patience and advice and to my wife, Margaret, I dedicate this thesis.
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For their help and encouragement,
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INTRODUCTION

In discussing the Third Term Tradition, I have tried to compile a history of the precedent rather than an argument for or against it. From Washington to Franklin Roosevelt many different viewpoints and arguments have been advanced. Out of the wealth of material which is available I have attempted so far as possible to select impartially representative utterances on both sides of the question.

In our national history there have been several presidential elections in which the third term question was a major issue. That is especially true of the campaign (1940) which is now being fought. However, this paper in no way touches on the present situation, but is a historical treatment of the precedent itself up to and including Calvin Coolidge.

The work abounds in quotations because the subject is not treated in a controversial manner, but rather strives to establish the historical background of the third term precedent from a variety of sources, including as many of the original sources as possible.
CHAPTER I

TENURE OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE IN THE FEDERAL CONVENTION

The framers of our Constitution carefully considered the proper length of the President's term of office and the question of his eligibility for reelection. But there had never been anywhere in the world such an office as that of President, nor a country in which the people could elect the chief executive. There were, therefore, few precedents to guide them in their deliberations.

Every phase of that question, from the expediency of a short term with reelection to a long term without reelection, seems to have been considered. It was first decided that the term should be seven years, and that a President should not be eligible for reelection. As the convention progressed, extreme opinions were advanced ranging from a term of less than seven years to one for life during good behavior.

Gunning Bedford, a Deputy from Delaware, was opposed to so long a term as seven years and argued for a three year term and ineligibility after a period of nine years. "If he behaves well, he will be continued," he maintained in arguing for the short term, "If otherwise, he will be displaced at a succeeding election." Said he on the proposed seven year term, "An impeachment would be no cure for a

1 Max Farrand, The Records of the Federal Convention, I, 78, 81
2 Ibid., III, 599
3 Ibid., I, 68-69
magistrate straddled on the country for seven years who did not have the qualifications ascribed to him or lost them after election; such an impeachment would reach malfeasance only, not incapacity."¹

Morris was an outstanding opponent of rotation of office in every case. "It formed a political school in which we would always be governed by scholars and not the masters," he maintained in a floor debate on the question of ineligibility, and added, "A change of men is ever followed by a change of measures. The self-sufficiency of a victorious party scorns to tread in the path of their predecessors. Rehoboam will not imitate Solomon."²

That the executive term was a most difficult issue for the convention to settle was brought out by Madison in his records of the proceedings. On July 26 he wrote:

In every state of the question, the difficulty of the subject and the diversity of the opinions concerning it have appeared.³

He pointed out that the proposals ranged from life to three years and on the subject of electing the executive, many suggestions were made.

Some of these were amusing. Dickinson wanted to exclude every man who happened not to be popular in his own state. Another was the introduction of a lottery about which Dickinson pointed out "Such tickets do not appear to

¹ Max Farrand, op. cit., I, 68-69
² Ibid., II, 113
³ Ibid., II, 118
be much in demand; and therefore nothing further need be said on that subject.\textsuperscript{1} Alexander Hamilton of New York proposed a plan, Article 4 of which recommended that the supreme authority be vested in a "Governour" to be elected to serve during good behaviour.\textsuperscript{2} In The Federalist, he urged his fellow citizens of New York and other colonies to ratify the Constitution but still maintained his stand for a strong executive and against the doctrine of rotation stating:

\textit{It is a general principle of human nature, that a man will be interested in whatever he possesses, in proportion to the firmness of the tenure by which he holds it; will be less attracted to what he holds by a momentary or uncertain title; and, of course, will be willing in whatever he possesses to risk more for the sake of the one, than for the sake of the other. This remark is not less applicable to a political privilege, nor honor, or trust, than any article of ordinary property.}\textsuperscript{3}

Madison wrote to Jefferson that there was considerable disagreement on not only length of the President's term but little or no agreement existed at times on the question of eligibility. However, all thought it was essential that the executive and the legislative departments of the government should be, as much as possible, independent of each other.\textsuperscript{4}

\begin{itemize}
\item Max Farrand, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 119-120
\item \textit{Ibid.}, 109
\item Galliard Hunt, \textit{Writings of James Madison}, I, 17-35
\end{itemize}
and reeligibility of the executive was a most difficult problem for the Convention.

To the original proposal that the President serve for seven years and be ineligible for a second time an amendment was submitted to strike out the provision "ineligible for a second time." It was adopted by a vote of seven to three. The three states that voted against the amendment expressed a preference for reeligibility, provided a satisfactory mode of electing a President could be devised in place of legislative appointment. They felt that if he were elected by Congress, he should not be eligible for reelection. The question of reeligibility, therefore, came to depend upon the development of some new and safe scheme for electing the President.

Ultimately a scheme was devised whereby the voters of each state were to choose a group of electors; and the body of electors thus secured was to elect the President and Vice President. This system of presidential electors when first introduced and adopted in the Convention paved the way for a general agreement on tenure. But it was not until this plan received approval that an agreement on tenure was reached.

In July it was proposed to reduce the term from seven

1 Farrand, op. cit., II, 118
2 Ibid., II, 108-112
to six years with a proviso that no person be eligible for
more than six years in any twelve. This proposal was de-
feated by the narrow margin of 6 to 5.¹

The six year term as presented by Pinckney had strong
support all through the convention for it seemed to have
all the advantages of providing for an experienced execu-
tive and at the same time it avoided in some degree the
inconvenience of an absolute ineligibility a second time.
Madison in his notes, observed that, "It had the sanction of
experience in the instance of Congress and some of the Ex-
cutives of the States. It rendered the Executive as
effectually independent; it prevented an ineligibility
after his first election which many objected to and it
opened the way at the same time for the advantage of hav-
ing his services."²

On July 26 the convention passed the amended resolu-
tion as presented in the original Randolph Plan or Vir-
ginia Plan providing for a seven year term:

That a National Executive be instituted - to
consist of a single person for the term of seven
years - to be ineligible for a second time.³

The vote by state delegations was: ayes, New Hampshire,
New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia,

¹ Farrand, op. cit., II, 107
² A. W. Young, The American Statesman, 65
³ Farrand, op. cit., II, 118
Connecticut; nays, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware; Massachusetts was not on the floor and Virginia was divided on the issue. This seemed to be the final decision; the convention referred its proceedings to the Committee of Detail, and adjourned until August 6.

However, when the Committee delegated to this phase of the Constitution reported, it recommended a four year term and omitted to say anything about elegibility.\(^1\)

Sherman said, "The object of this clause was to get rid of the ineligibility which many of the convention feared."\(^2\) It is very apparent that the whole discussion of tenure would have been settled had the mode of electing the President been decided earlier in the convention. Said James McHenry on September 5, "After choosing a four year term the greatest part of the day was spent in desultory conversation on the report respecting the method of choosing the President."\(^3\) Finally on September 15, the Electoral College plan was adopted with the four year term.

On this day Madison wrote, "The reasons of the committee in recommending this were two - the first was the danger of intrigue and faction in a legislative appointment and second, the conveniency of an elegibility under a four year term with a President elected by Presidential electors which would abolish the former evil."\(^4\)

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1 Farrand, op. cit., II, 520  
2 Ibid., II, 516  
3 Ibid., II, 116  
4 Ibid., II, 121
With the decision finally reached, the majority seemed well pleased and we find the provision for a four year term with no limit as to reeligibility as found in our Constitution today:

Art. II, Sec. 1, Par. 1 - The Executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold Office during the Term of four years; . . .

Thus we see the struggle in establishing the executive tenure in our Constitution as an "anarchy of opinions" finally settled by a growing confidence in the electoral college scheme as against legislative appointment with a four year term as a sudden compromise suggestion to overcome complete ineligibility.

In presenting the report, the committee explained that "the plan was, too, a concession to the feeling in favor of a popular election," and "we hope will furnish a balance between the large and small States." Here we find in the words of the founding fathers that the establishment of executive tenure was a part of one of the big compromises of the Constitutional Convention.

One historian observed that it was the intention of the framers that a President might be elected as many times as the electors saw fit to choose him. "This," said he, "is no carelessly formed decision, but it was the result

2 J. B. McMaster, With the Fathers, 59
of a long and bitter experience under the old Articles of Confederation they were about to overthrow.1 Under the articles "no delegate should hold office for more than three years in any term of six"2 and they were chosen annually. "Yet, the moment a delegate began to be fairly familiar with his duties," said Hamilton, "his term expires."3 It was the intention of the convention to prevent this loss of experienced and valuable men; so the fathers carefully abstained from placing any limit on the number of times a citizen could be elected President.4

Max Farrand, an outstanding student of the Constitution and compiler of The Records of the Federal Convention, stated in an article published in the Yale Review:

The four-year term of office and the eligibility to reelection were parts of one of the great compromises of the Constitution which set up the office of President as something new as was also the method of election. It was frankly an experiment. One thing of which the framers of the Constitution had apparently no conception and which was to upset all their calculations was the development of political parties and party machinery. An essential feature of their plan was the independent action of the electors; but party organization has provided a means by which votes can be centered on certain candidates and the function of the electors made that of a machine to re-register the wishes of their constituents.

1 J. B. McMaster, op. cit., 63
2 Ibid.
3 Hamilton, The Federalist, III, 110
4 Articles of Confederation, Article V
5 Max Farrand, "How Shall We Elect Our Presidents," Yale Review, II, 517, (July 1912)
The first party machinery came in Jefferson's day. This machinery played an important part in Jefferson's decision not to run for a third term.
CHAPTER II
THE ORIGIN OF THE TRADITION

"Had our first President been willing to accept a third term--and the people would gladly have given it--he would," wrote John B. McMaster, "have been followed by a long line of Presidents each serving for twelve instead of eight years."\(^1\) Washington was not partisan in the sense of partisanship today and the end of his second term found him still very popular. However, he was then an old man and a tired man who had had the satisfaction of serving his country well. He was weary of public life and longed to return to his Mount Vernon. This is, perhaps, best illustrated by one of his most excellent biographers, Henry Cabot Lodge:

Washington had entered upon the presidency with the utmost reluctance, and at the sacrifice of all he considered pleasant in life. He took it and held it for eight years from a sense of duty, and with no desire to retain it beyond that which every man feels who wishes to finish a great work that he has undertaken. He looked forward to the approaching end of his second term with a feeling of intense relief, and compared himself to the wearied traveler who sees the resting place where he is at length to have repose.\(^2\)

This feeling is clearly expressed in his famous "Farewell Address" in which Washington formally announces his intention to retire at the end of his second term:

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1 McMaster, op. cit., 60  
2 Henry Cabot Lodge, George Washington, II, 270
The acceptance and continuance hereto in office, to which your suffrages have twice called me, have been a uniform sacrifice of inclination to the opinion of duty, and to the deference to what appeared to be your desires. I constantly hoped that it would have been much earlier in my power, consistently with motives which I am not at liberty to disregard, to return to that retirement from which I reluctantly had been drawn. The strength of my inclination had even led to the preparation of an address to declare it to you, but mature reflection on the then perplexed and critical posture of our affairs with foreign nations, and the unanimous advice of persons entitled to my confidence, impelled me to abandon the idea...I rejoice that the state of your concerns, external as well as internal, no longer renders the pursuit of inclination incompatible with the pursuit of duty or propriety."

With this formal explanation of his motives, Washington bid adieu to the Presidency. He had taken a definite leave of political life and it was his fond dream to pass the remainder of his life in tranquil quietness in agricultural pursuits with his private family. He was sixty-five two days before he left the Presidency, and he did not consider himself to be from a long-lived family.2

It is clear from these and other writings of Washington that he went back to private life simply because he was tired of the Presidency, and because the state of the country did not demand a further sacrifice of his comfort.3 He seems to have felt no objection whatever to a third term as a matter of public policy. In fact, it seems likely that he would have opposed any rigid limit to the President's

1 Joseph Dillaway Sawyer, Washington, II, 252-253
2 Edward Everett, The Life of George Washington, 226
3 Sawyer, op. cit., 251
term of office. His views on this subject are set forth in a letter sent to Lafayette on April 23, 1788:

Guarded so effectively as the proposed Constitution is in respect to the promotion of bribery and undue influence in the choice of President, I confess I differ widely from Mr. Jefferson and you in the necessity of rotation in that department. The matter was fully discussed in the convention and to my full conviction...........Under an extended view of this part of the subject I can see no propriety in precluding in some great emergency the services of any man who shall be deemed universally most capable of serving the public.

It is an interesting but little known fact that if Washington had lived, he might have had another chance to serve a third term. In 1799 it was the conviction of many who were opposed to the reelection of John Adams that Washington be requested to run for a third term and Gouverneur Morris was commissioned to present him a formal request to that effect; but the letter containing it found Washington on his death bed, and consequently it was never delivered. 2

Regardless of Washington's viewpoint or purpose in turning down a third term, it was as Senator Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin said in 1928 "the action which was a precept which established the anti-third term in American history." 3 While this act set an example which for many years was followed implicitly by his successors, it was long before the people saw anything wrong in the suggestion of a third term.

1 Edward Everett, op. cit., 259
2 John S. Bassett, The Federalist System, 87
3 Cong. Digest, XVII, 37, (May 1938)
Jefferson was the first to make the third term question a matter of public policy rather than a matter of personal preference. More than two years before his second term ended, the legislature of Vermont, on November 5, 1806, formally invited him to become a candidate for a third term, and the great Republican strongholds made haste to follow Vermont. He delayed his answer until the Congressional caucus met on the 10th of December 1807 and then replied to the invitations of Vermont, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, giving his reasons for declining in a letter:

That I should lay down my charge at a proper period is as much duty as to have borne it faithfully. If some termination to the services of the Chief Magistrate be not fixed by the Constitution or supplied by practice, his office, nominally for years, will in fact become for life; and history shows how easily that degenerates into an inheritance. Believing that a representative government responsible for a short time of election is that which produces the greatest sum of happiness to mankind, I feel it is a duty to not do acts which shall essentially impair that principle; and I should unwillingly be the first person who, disregarding the sound precedent set by an illustrious predecessor, should furnish the first example of prolongation beyond the second term of office.

It is clear from the foregoing that Jefferson was strongly opposed to a third term for any President. Some of his fellow Republicans hailed his pronouncement with enthusiasm. For instance the Tammany Society of Philadelphia in May, 1808, drank to the toast, "President Jefferson--

1 John B. McMasters, With the Fathers, 61
2 Ibid., 61
rotation in office is the bulwark of freedom. His prece-
dent deserves our homage and our gratitude and traitors
would alone reuse him."¹

Others were critical of the President's decision.
From the Senate of Maryland came the following message to
Jefferson:

Whilst we daily appreciate the motives which induce
you to decline being considered among the number of
those out of whom the choice of our next President
is to be made, and whilst we revere the patriotism
which dictated your motives, permit us still to in-
dulge the pleasing hope that when the next period
of presidential election approximates (1812) should
the united voice of your countrymen require it,
those same motives and that same patriotism will
induce you to sacrifice your private wishes and con-
venience to your country's good.⁴

Jefferson, however, was unmoved by such protests. He
had always been an enemy of strong executive power and
particularly of long tenure of office. In a letter to
Washington dated May 2, 1788 he said:

I intended to have written a word to your Excellency
on the subject of the new Constitution, but I have al-
ready spun out my letter to an immoderate length. I
will just observe, therefore, that according to my
own ideas there is a good deal of good in it. There
are two things, however, which I dislike strongly.
First--the want of a Declaration of Rights. I am
hoping the opposition of Virginia will remedy this
and produce such a declaration.
Second--the perpetual reeligibility of the President.
This, I fear, will make an office for life. I was
much an enemy of monarchy before I went to Europe.
I am ten thousand times more so since I have seen
what they are . . . .³

¹ Gailliard Hunt, The Presidents of the United States, 89
³ Paul L. Ford, The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, VIII, 67
As a matter of fact, he had early decided to retire and long before the end of his second Administration, Jefferson informed his friends of this determination. He had been loaded down with honors, and he was tired. As early as January 1807, when he was at the crest of his popularity, when New England was sweeping into his column, he wrote to Comte de Diodato:

At the close of my present term, of which two years are yet to come, I propose to retire to private life and to close my days on the patrimony of Monticello, in the bosom of my family. I have hitherto enjoyed uniform health; but the weight of public business begins to be heavy with me, and I long for the enjoyments of rural life.... I am entitled to my discharge.

He wrote to his old friend, John Dickinson:

I have tired you, my friend, with a long letter. But your tedium will end in a few lines more. Mine has yet two years to endure. I am tired of an office where I can do no more good and many others would be glad to be employed in it. To myself, personally, it brings nothing but increasing drudgery and daily loss of friends.

"It is a keen disappointment to me if you persist in your unwillingness to be re-elected," wrote Pierre S. du Pont urging him to run again and added, "I think you are more useful to this country by remaining at the head of its government than you were as an instrument in its declaration of independence which may become more difficult to

1 Claude Bowers, Jefferson in Power, 475
2 Sarah N. Randolph, Domestic Life of Thomas Jefferson, 313
3 Andrew A. Liscomb, Writings of Thomas Jefferson, 230
maintain than it was to establish. How can you think of retiring?"\(^1\)

In reply to the above, Jefferson wrote:

If the principle of rotation is a sound one as I believe it is to be, no pretext should be permitted to dispense with it... You suppose I am in the prime of life for rule. I am sensible, I am not.

In his autobiography, written shortly before his death, Jefferson explained that his fears of perpetual reeligibility had been founded on the importance of the office, on the fierce contentions it might excite among the politicians if continual for life, and the dangers of interference either with money or arms by foreign nations to whom the choice of an American President might become interesting.\(^2\) In a message to Congress he said:

My wish, therefore, was that the President should be elected for seven years, and be ineligible afterward. This term I thought sufficient to enable him, with the concurrence of the Legislature, to carry through and establish any system of improvement he should propose for the general good. But the practice adopted I think is better, allowing his continuance for eight years, with a liability to be dropped in the half-way of the term, making that a period of probation.\(^3\)

These statements were expressions of Jefferson's political philosophy which emphasized the limitation of executive power. Jefferson feared autocracy. He was afraid

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1 Dumas Malone, Correspondence Between Pierre S. Du Pont and Thomas Jefferson, 87
2 Ford, op. cit., 11
3 James D. Richardson, Presidential Papers and Messages, I, 382
of too much power, too much government. "Jefferson's opposition to a third term was better fortified and more warranted than any opposition to a third term in this day would be," said James Truslow Adams in *The Living Jefferson.*

He added "Jefferson lived at a time when the Republic was young when we had no friends. He saw the Legislature of his own state, of which he was a part, dissolved by a royal governor appointed by the King of England. He had reason for fearing the dangers of executive usurpation, because Napoleon was in the saddle at that time."  

Said McMaster writing in the *Forum* November 1895, "That Jefferson's virtues had any influence on his direct successors is doubtful; but his bold assertion that two terms were all that it was safe to give any President had a deep and lasting influence on the people."  

Regarding the general election in which Madison succeeded Jefferson, Madison's success had been pointed out as an indication of Jefferson's chances for a third term had he run that year. Monroe and Madison were his field marshals and both loyal to him, but when Jefferson announced his intention to retire after his second term, a rift occurred between these two men which threatened the party's chance at the polls. Jefferson remained aloof from the struggle but it has been pointed out that Madison

1 James Truslow Adams, *The Living Jefferson,* 252
2 Ibid.
3 J. B. McMaster, "The Third Term Tradition," *Forum,* XX, 263, (November 1895)
was his candidate and Madison was elected by a big majority. It was Jefferson's party and Jefferson's principles that won. The election could be interpreted as an indication of Jefferson's strength. This point of view has been expressed by Claude Bowers in *Jefferson In Power*, in summing up the election:

Jefferson had passed through three years of unprecedented slander of the vilest sort while fighting to maintain the nation's rights without recourse to slaughter, and the Embargo had called for sacrifices that the public felt. Yet, Jefferson's candidate received every electoral vote of Georgia, Kentucky, South Carolina, Ohio, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Virginia. In every case where there was a split, the greater part of the vote went to Madison.

"Had Jefferson himself consented to a third term," said John T. Morse "he could not have done worse, and he might reasonably have done better." Madison had never been the popular figure that Jefferson had been. Most of the friends of Monroe and Clinton, who had resented the congressional caucus, and voted against Madison would have been loyal to Jefferson. Madison himself would have been in the front ranks battling for him.

In view of the above, Jefferson had a strong hold upon the public and it would have been an interesting test of the third term tradition had Jefferson been chosen to run instead of Madison.

1 Claude Bowers, *op. cit.*, 490
2 John T. Morse, Jr., *Thomas Jefferson*, 289
3 Ibid., 291
"His remarkable popularity" pointed out James Truslow Adams "walked with him through the flames of eight years of Administration and passed with him into private life."\(^1\)
"Jefferson was both contented and happy."\(^2\)

In reviewing the history of the Democratic Party and its leaders, Frank B. Kent, contemporary political observer, seems to give more credit to Jefferson than to any other man for bringing about a real democratic spirit in the country and suggests that a continuation in office for him would not have been out of question. "He would have been re-elected anyway," said he in presenting Jefferson's political mistakes and he continued, "the Louisiana Purchase alone removed all real opposition."\(^3\)

\(^{1}\) Adams, op. cit., 253
\(^{2}\) Ibid., 90
\(^{3}\) Frank B. Kent, The Democratic Party, 37-38
In 1809 Jefferson was followed by Madison who served for two terms and voluntarily retired. Monroe who succeeded Madison also served two terms and retired without a contest. No great interest was shown in getting either to run again, but at the end of Monroe's administration, we discover again the fear of strong executive power and long tenure of the office, for during his term of office the Senate passed a joint resolution by a vote of 36 to 3, providing that no man should be chosen President for more than two terms. This was the beginning of a long series of attempts on the part of the legislative branch to curb executive influence and limit the term of office to one or two terms. "It has been computed," wrote a newspaper columnist, "that between 1826 and 1846 new methods of electing the President or limiting his term of office were proposed not less than 45 times." Twenty-eight of these proposals had to do with the choice of Presidential electors. Ten were intended to limit the President to one term, some of four, some of six years. One of these, a Senate resolution, recommending a limit of two terms, was passed by the Senate by a vote of 32 to 7. Nothing was done in regard to this, however, in the House.

John Quincy Adams was elected by the House and served

1 Edward Stanton, A History of the Presidency, I, 43
2 Cong. Digest, XVII, 138 (May 1938)
3 George Rothwell Brown, "Opposition to Third Term," Denver Post, (March 31, 1940)
4 Ibid.
only one term and went on record for rotation of office.

In his Memoirs he wrote:

They are shown in the practice which the Virginia Presidents have taken so much pains to engrave on the Constitution, making it a principle that no President can be more than twice elected. This is not a principle of the Constitution, and I am satisfied it ought not to be. Its inevitable consequence is to make every administration a scene of continuous and furious electioneering for the succession of the Presidency.¹

Next to the Presidency came Andrew Jackson -- one of the few Presidents who could have successfully defied the third term tradition. He was the first President direct from the great mass of the people. "In his day," observes his recent biographer, Marquis James "democracy was indeed triumphant, and he was the ideal democrat and no one closed a second term more honored, more truly beloved by the people than on the day he began his first."² Speaking of the general confidence the people held for Jackson Mr. James gives us a typical characterization:

He was the majority pro tem. Unfailingly, at the next election, the people would return a vote of confidence, making his measures their own. This confidence was not misplaced. If not every day in the year providing a government of and by the people, Andrew Jackson did provide one for them. That the people did not destroy him bewildered the opposition. "Jackson's luck" became a Whig byword. Jackson's luck was the kind that gains respect for the proverb that fortune favors the brave.³

¹ John Quincy Adams, Memoirs, VI, 447
² Marquis James, Andrew Jackson, A Portrait of a President, 420
³ Ibid., 421
"He had but to say the word" wrote one historian, "and he would surely have been thrice President of the United States." 1

In spite of his popularity, Jackson did not seek a third term. He sought, on the other hand, to limit Presidential tenure. In his first message to Congress in 1829 he recommended that the electoral college be abolished, that the President be elected by direct vote, and that the President be limited to a single term of either four or six years. 2

In his Message to Congress, December 4, 1834 he said:

I trust that I may be also pardoned for reviewing the recommendations that I have so often submitted to your attention in regard to the mode of electing the President and Vice-President of the United States. All the reflection I have been able to bestow upon the subject increases my conviction that the best interests of the country could be attained by direct control of the right of sovereignty and...the terms of those officers be limited to a single period of either six or four years. I think our liberties would possess an additional safeguard. 3

In December 3, 1833 Jackson said to the Congress, "eligibility should be limited to one term of either four or six years, I cannot too earnestly invite your consideration of the subject." 4 And again December 5, 1835 "the people cannot too soon adopt some stronger safeguard for their right to elect the highest officers under the

1 William J. Sumner, Andrew Jackson, 441
2 Richardson, op. cit., III, 117
3 Ibid., III, 708
4 Ibid., III, 176
The Constitution provides," wrote Sumner in discussing Andrew Jackson's strong belief in the right of the people to elect directly and limit the Presidential tenure, "only specified ways for ascertaining the will of the people and that will does not rule unless it is constitutionally expressed."

The people through the operation of the Electoral College can only indirectly elect the President and in the event of an election by the House of Representatives, the will of the mass cannot be expressed. Jackson was strongly against the method expressed in the Constitution for electing both the President and the Vice President, and he was a strong believer in limiting Presidential tenure. Whether he believed in limiting tenure for himself, that is another thing. "Perhaps, it was conceivable," added Sumner, "that an Indian fighter like Jackson could come within the range of choice of the 'popular will'--then the Presidency should be reserved for popular heroes."

In Jackson's Message of December 4, 1834 it will be recalled that he used the words "so often submitted to you" in referring to his proposed amendment. Jackson made this suggestion to the Congress and the people repeatedly. In his

1 Richardson, op. cit., III, 176
2 Sumner, op. cit., 97
3 Ibid., 103
first Annual Message to the Congress December 8, 1829, he said:

I would therefore recommend such an amendment of the Constitution as may remove all intermediate agency in the election of the President and Vice President. The mode may be so regulated as to preserve to each State its present relative weight in the election, and a failure in the first attempt may be provided for the confining the second to a choice between two highest candidates. In connection with the amendment it would seem advisable to limit the service of the Chief Magistrate to a single term of either four or six years.

There are, perhaps, few men who can for any great length of time enjoy office and power without being more or less under the feelings unfavorable to the faithful discharge of their public duties.... Office is considered as a species of property, and government rather as a means of promoting individual interests than as an instrument created solely for the people.... I submit, therefore, to your consideration whether the efficiency of the Government would not be promoted and integrity better secured by a general extension of the law which limits appointments to four years.1

In his second and again in his third Annual Messages he brought up the amendment for a direct election of the President and Vice President and in December 6, 1831 he called the attention of the Congress and repeated with:

So important do I consider these changes in our fundamental law that I cannot in accordance with my duty, omit to press them upon the consideration of a new Congress.2

1 Richardson, op. cit., II, 447
2 Ibid., 557
Before the election of 1836 strong attempts were made against Jackson and his possibility of serving a third term. The name "Whig" was first used in 1834 as a term denoting antagonism to the "high prerogative and Tory doctrines of Jackson."\(^1\) The anti-Masons, a group opposed to the Masonic fraternity and its influence in electing officials and directing policy in governmental affairs, had a similar fear of Jackson and a dislike for his Masonic affiliations and ultimately merged into the Whig Party with other Jackson enemies.\(^2\)

If, however, opposition to a Jackson third term became strong at this time, there is plenty of evidence to show the administration was perfectly organized for a fight for another term and much popular feeling was shown for Jackson. "The party was wonderfully held together," said Adams in discussing the Jacksonian period.\(^3\) "In 1830 there were only four anti-Jackson Legislatures in the Union, namely, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Delaware. In the six years from 1830 to 1835, both inclusive, twenty-seven States held 162 sessions. Of these, 116 had Jackson majorities, 40 anti-Jacksons, and 4 Calhoun."\(^4\)

Aside from Jackson's general popularity and his political strength in the party, not a great deal developed relative to his third term possibilities. There was some

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1 William G. Sumner, *Andrew Jackson*, 440
2 Ibid., 374
3 Adams, John Quincy, *op. cit.*, 312
talk of a third term, but it never grew strong. The precedents and his own statement regarding tenure were always cited against him. In addition to this Jackson's health was not good. In speaking of this Adams wrote, "Jackson's bad health and Van Buren's aspirations were strong objections."¹

It is very likely that Jackson could not have accepted a third term if he had been nominated. Marquis James, who has had access to more original writings, records and data on the life of Jackson than any other recent biographer gives an account of Jackson's physical condition in his description of the end of the "Reign." When Jackson was engaged in writing his final message: "The message was begun," said he, "the last to bear the name of Andrew Jackson. As he worked, the President was seized with coughing. Blood rushed from his mouth. Doctors cupped and blistered him.... For two days it was not known whether the President would live or die."² He was an old man, tired and worn out from his many responsibilities and duties rendered to his country, and he was content to return to the Hermitage.

During his administrations and following his recommendations twenty-one resolutions were introduced in Congress dealing with a limitation of the President's term. None of these were acted upon by Congress.³

¹ Adams, John Quincy, op. cit., 314
² Jackson was then 72 years of age
³ Richardson, James D., A Compilation of Messages and Papers of the Presidents, V, 1312
Van Buren's term of office saw ten such resolutions for one term with no action taken by Congress.\(^1\)

Harrison, elected in 1840, affirmed his stand for a single term in his Inaugural Address,\(^2\) saying, "Under no circumstances will I consent to serve a second term." He was succeeded when he died a month later by Vice-President Tyler. In the year 1841 seven state legislatures: Vermont, Indiana, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island sent one-term amendments to Congress.\(^3\)

From Jackson to Grant, Lincoln was the only President elected to a second term, and it was not until after the Civil War that the tradition received rather a serious test in Grant's attempt at a third term.

\(1\) Wilson, op. cit., III, 76
\(2\) Richardson, op. cit., IV, 19
\(3\) Ibid., V, 1288
CHAPTER III

PRESIDENT GRANT AND THE TRADITION

The Presidential election of 1872 had scarcely closed with the triumphant reelection of General Grant, when the New York Herald, a paper of wide circulation and pervading influence announced that republican institutions were in imminent peril from the probable election of the same individual to a third term. It was boldly affirmed that American liberty could not survive such an experiment.

The announcement startled the whole body of Democratic opposition which had bravely followed Seymour and Blair in defeat in 1868, and which had clutched at the skirts of Horace Greeley in 1872. "It startled a large body of Republicans who had believed that as no President had ever been elected for more than two terms, it would be unsafe to elect one for more than that number of years."¹ Other papers took up the cry of "Caesar" and the clamor culminated when on the 15th day of December 1875, the Honorable Mr. Springer, a Democrat from the State of Illinois, presented to the House of Representatives a resolution in the following words:

Resolved, That in the opinion of this House the precedent established by Washington and other Presidents of the United States, in retiring from Presidential office after their second term, has become, by universal concurrence, a part of our republican system of government, and any departure

from this time-honored custom would be unwise, unpatriotic, and fraught with peril to our free institutions.¹

The Springer Resolution drew hot rebuke from Grant's supporters who pointed out that the resolution enjoined retirement after a second term and that Grant retired at the end of his second term in strict accord with the precedent and the resolution.²

An ardent follower of the General scored the resolution in the following:

The resolution rests upon the bold assumption that patronage and not principle dominates the electors of the people; and that he who controls appointments for eight years will form a corps of officials who can easily subjugate six million who have never been appointed! But audacity itself has not yet ventured to suggest that a private citizen is likely to ride down people and postmasters both, merely because he once controlled appointments.

Since then, no one can now be hurt or helped by the Springer Resolution, this seems a fortunate time to discuss the merits of that fulmination. Since the reign of Jeroboam the world had not seen true believers seduced from the worship of God to that of mere metallic calves. It is much to be desired that the world may not again see true republicans scared by a senseless clamor into putting lighted candles in their caps, after the manner of miners, and going down into the subterranean depths to quarry out a President, while the foremost man of his age stands upon the mountain top, upon whom the eager world has set the seal of primacy.³

This was the attitude of the Grant men, but Congress

1 U. S. Congress, House of Representatives Journal, 66-67, (December 15, 1875)
2 Timothy Howe, "Efforts to Limit Tenure," Congressional Digest, XVIII, 156 (May 1938)
3 Ibid., 116
had taken a different one regarding the resolution when it came to a vote. The rules of the House were suspended, and the resolution was passed on the very day of its introduction.

No less than two hundred and thirty-five votes were recorded in its favor. Only eighteen voted against it.1

Angered by the action of the House then under control of the Republicans one writer was led to state: "A political party must be brave and conscientious before it will stake its hopes of the postoffices upon the reelection of a President who has been fired upon and lied at for eight years," and added, "but when the hostility is added to distrust born of popular panic, temerity itself would doubt the availability of the victim."2

This ended all hope for the time being of renominating Grant, who retired at the close of his term and began his famous journey around the world. But it was only for the time being, as that famous journey drew to a close, the masters of the Republican party, Mr. Conkling, Mr. Cameron and Mr. Logan, determined to renew the old effort to reelection.3

The time seemed opportune. Men were talking about a strong government or at least of a government administered by a strong man like Grant, who had just at this time landed on the Pacific Coast. "The reception given him there,"

1 John McMaster, "The Third Term Tradition," Forum, XX, 8, (November 1895)
2 Howe, op. cit., 118
3 McMaster, op. cit., 8
"Your man of snow is big today. Under summer's sun he'll melt away" jeered Puck (little boy with the big pencil), as the Grant campaign was begun in the winter.
wrote James Schouler, "was such as has never been ac-
corded to any other citizen." At San Francisco he was re-
ceived with wild acclaim. Thousands lined the streets and
cheered in true western style as his carriage drove up
Market Street and was driven in Palm Court of the Palace
Hotel.\footnote{Old Bonanza Inn, a radio lecture delivered from Palace
Hotel January 4, 1940. (K.G.O.)} Apparently the country had returned to Grant and
away from the pacific policy of Hayes.

If the San Francisco reception given Grant on his re-
turn from abroad was an indication of his popularity through-
out the whole country, much speculation could be made as to
his possibilities of a third term had he received the Re-
publican nomination in 1880. H. J. T. Headley gave a first
hand report of the tremendous celebration that city gave
in honor of the General, in a book \textit{Life and Travels of Grant}
with fully three chapters devoted to the popular acclaim
given him by people who came from all over the Pacific
Coast to see him. An excerpt from this work fairly repre-
sents the feeling that most people held for him:

Thousands of men, women and children on foot, horse-
back and in carriage began to pour in the direction
of the Presidio Heights, Point Lobo, and Telegraph
Hill as early as five in the morning to catch a
glimpse of the ship carrying Grant\ldots. Cheer after
cheer burst from the assembled thousands as the ship
was sighted escorted by a fleet of destroyers and
sailing vessels. The cheers were taken up by the
crowds on the wharves and rolled through the city.
This lasted all day long and when darkness came,
bonfires blazed on street corners, sky rockets burst
in the air. Under a continuous archway of flags, banners, festoons and draperies, the procession at last moved with hundreds of bands to the Palace Hotel. Thousands awaited him and at 10 o'clock the doors were thrown open and a barouche containing Grant was driven into the building. 1

As Grant moved east to his home at Galena he received reception after reception similar to the one he received in San Francisco. To him the country seemed unanimous for a third term. The real test would be in turning the people's adoration into votes.

Adam Badeau, a staff officer of Grant during the war and a close associate who corresponded with him until his death gives us this estimate of the situation after Grant's return from abroad:

In April (1880) I returned to the United States and found he had already arrived from Mexico and gone as he intended to his little home in Galena. The country was at this time in the full flood of excitement that precedes the Presidential nominations. Grant's stubborness in returning had exactly the results that his friends had foreseen. Time was given for the opposition to crystallize; his rivals recovered from their first shock of astonishment of his popularity and the dislike entertained in many quarters for a third term was worked up vigorously. 2

Whether the instinct of fight was aroused in him or whether he felt after a prolonged rest with new experiences that he was better fitted for high place is hard to say. Urged on by his political friends he finally appeared.

1 H. J. T. Headley, Life and Travels of Grant, 599
2 Adam Badeau, Grant In Peace, 320
extremely anxious to receive the nomination. "It was now only a few weeks from the convention," said Mr. Badeau in commenting on the nervous state of mind Grant seemed to be in, "and Grant manifested as much anxiety as I ever saw him display on his own account; he calculated his chances, he counted the delegates and considered every movement and how it would effect the result."¹

The Chicago Convention of the Republican Party that year was a spirited one and the dominating power of Conkling, Cameron, and Logan extorted from their states a demand for the nomination of Grant and in spite of the jeers of "Imperialists" "Restorationists" heaped upon them they controlled never less than 303 votes and once 313.

Before the Convention met Conkling had looked over the list of delegates and checked them as they appeared to be on one side or the other. He saw that in most of the larger States, Grant had a majority of the delegates, and if the unit rule were adopted, Grant would be nominated on the first ballot.² The unit rule was interpreted to mean if a majority of any State delegation concurred the whole of that State vote should go to the candidate the majority favored.

An interesting account of the Convention is given by W. E. Woodward in Meet General Grant in which he tells us just what happened to Grant's chance for a third term:

¹ Badeau, op. cit., 330
² W. E. Woodward, Meet General Grant, 473-474
A "strong man" was what Grant supporters said the U.S. needed. *Puck* parodied Grant as a circus strong man, supporting notorious graters of his administrations.
The Convention met. It was an exciting affair. Amid wild cheering from the galleries and floor Conkling arose and under the banner of New York put Grant's name before the Convention.

And when asked what state he hails from,
Our sole reply shall be
He hails from Appomattox
And his famous apple tree.

It looked like an easy victory for Grant but the inscrutable Fates had decided that the victor of Appomattox had better let another man have a chance. First, the Convention voted down the unit rule. Second, Elihu B. Washburne got himself put in nomination and Grant never forgave him for it. Washburne was weak and what votes he had at the Convention came from delegates who would have voted for Grant. John Sherman of Ohio also was put up as a candidate; most of his votes were taken from the Grant column.1

On the first ballot Grant received 304 against 284 for Blaine, and 164 were scattered among the candidates of lesser degree.2 The necessary vote was 378. On the third ballot one delegate from Pennsylvania voted for James A. Garfield, and he hung on until joined by sixteen delegates on the thirty-fourth and 382 on the thirty-sixth to victory.
Grant's Old Guard held on to the last with 306 votes on the last ballot.3

Grant's mortification was profound. "My friends have not been honest with me," said he, "I can't afford to be defeated. They should not have placed my name in nomination unless they were sure of my success."4

1 Woodward, op. cit., 475
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., 338
4 Adam Badeau, op. cit., 474
"The modern wandering Jew" haunted by the "Curse of the Third Term" comes back from his tour, cowers in graveyard of great Presidents who refused third term.
Grant's experience as a military man and his dominating position after the Civil War in the opinion of many perhaps made him eager to continue in the executive department. "He would have gladly gone on being President forever," stated Frederic L. Paxson of the University of California. 

Supporting this school of thought James Schouler in an article in The Independent characteristically wrote:

The party of men who supported Grant grew arrogant; and largely from selfish ambition or a belief that the people could not be entrusted with their own institutions, made an effort to put him forward for a third term. Grant's own grim reticence and soldiery methods of compulsion gave many the idea he favored the idea and it was predicted that: "this smoky Caesar" would never leave the White House unless he were carried feet foremost. That bull dog grip which had won for the Union Army an entrance into Richmond kept still the citadel of national strength for the Republican party. Grant gained no third term. 

1 Frederic L. Paxson, Lecture on the Presidents, University of California, July 19, 1937
2 James Schouler, "The Third Term," Independent, CXXX, 1, (October 31, 1907)
CHAPTER IV

PRESIDENT CLEVELAND, AND THE TRADITION

Rutherford Hayes succeeded Grant in 1876, being chosen by the House of Representatives as a result of the famous contest with Tilden. After Hayes was chosen President, he recommended a single term of six years, as is shown in this excerpt from his Inaugural Address.

In furtherance of the reform we seek, and in other important respects a change of great importance, I recommend an amendment to the Constitution prescribing a term of six years for the presidential office and forbidding a reelection.

In 1877 Mr. Springer, author of the famous Springer Resolution during Grant's second administration again offered another embodying Hayes' recommendations and other reforms. No action was taken on this.

Garfield who was elected in 1880, was assassinated in 1881. He was succeeded by Vice-President Chester Arthur and no talk of third term came until Cleveland came to power in 1884.

In Cleveland's address accepting the Democratic nomination he pointed out the dangers in the eligibility of a President for reelection. While Cleveland did not run or attempt to run for a third term, there is much

1 David Muzzey, The American People, 442
2 Richardson, op. cit., VII, 442
3 George I. Parker, The Writings and Speeches of Grover Cleveland, II
speculation as to whether he could have been elected to a third term. He furnishes a very interesting study in that he was the only President, who after serving one term was defeated for a succeeding term but returned to the Presidency four years later to serve his second term. In 1888 he was renominated by the Democrats but defeated by Harrison, the Republican nominee. In 1892 he staged a comeback by defeating Harrison.

Cleveland was a strong President. He made many friends and many enemies. During his first administration the Silver question was foremost and President Cleveland not only condemned free coinage, but he declared that the country's financial safety demanded repeal of the Silver Coinage Act then in operation.1 "Thus at the outstart," said Charles Harvey writing for the Atlantic Monthly in January 1903 on Cleveland's popularity and the silver issue, "he placed himself in hostility to a powerful minority of his party, that was later to become the majority."2 Cleveland was also unfortunate politically in his tariff attitude. The Mills Bill, incited by his work, defeated him for re-election in that year.3

It was during his second term, however, that Cleveland's courage and independence were most strikingly displayed. His strong stand on Hawaiian annexation, the Venezuelan

1 David S. Muzzey, op. cit., 453
2 Charles M. Harvey, "Some Second Term Precedents," Atlantic Monthly, XCII, 737, (December 1903)
3 Ibid., 741
affair, and his attitude and work in defeating the Silverites gained him much support among the Gold Democrats and even the Republicans. His opposition to Free silver, however, made him persona non grata to the majority of the Democratic party; and there was no serious talk of a third term for him in 1896.

After the election of 1900, a majority of the people who had followed Cleveland turned to him again. The sober-minded and the enthusiastic alike entreated him to stand for a third term.

In 1901, while summering at Tyringham, Massachusetts, he had a dream. The next day he described this dream to Gilder, his poet friend. "Without any preliminaries" he found himself walking upstairs and through the halls and offices of the White House. His objective was his desk. He thought to himself, "Well, this is queer that I should be taking this thing up again." Gilder commented that he constantly went back in his dreams to his former labors. Cleveland responded that he never did this; and lest the poet surmise that he had determined on a third term he added "he never dreamed of what he was actually thinking."¹

Cleveland in 1902 journeyed to Brooklyn on March 8 to attend the memorial exercises of his friend, Henry Ward Beecher and in speaking of Beecher he quoted Wordsworth's "Character of the Happy Warrior." Overnight the term

¹ Lynch, op. cit., 513
"Happy Warrior" became a byword for the supporters of Cleveland and overnight the third term talk spread all over the country.\(^1\) The following day he broke his silence of months.

I am not in politics. I am out for good.... I am ready to act in any advisory capacity if so desired. As far as taking any active part in politics, that is not to be considered.\(^2\)

Again in 1903 the third term pressure was exerted on him. At the annual Jefferson banquet a letter was read from Bryan and received in a chilling silence, but Cleveland's message for the occasion was met with wild enthusiasm. He was acclaimed the leader of the party again and urged to be the candidate.\(^3\)

At this time the situation became desperate for both parties. Tammany wanted to stop Parker and many other Democrats wanted to stop Hearst.\(^4\) On the other hand, the Republicans presented a puzzling situation. Roosevelt to the progressive wing was the recognized leader but to the others he was "dynamite." "Many industrialists and financiers, ordinarily Republican," wrote Lynch, "were apprehensive of Roosevelt."\(^5\) When it finally appeared as if the lineup would be Hearst against Roosevelt, James Stillman, President of the National City Bank, the most influential

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1 Richard W. Gilder, Grover Cleveland, 222-223
2 New York Tribune, March 10, 1903
3 New York Herald, April 14, 1903
4 Dennis Tilden Lynch, Grover Cleveland, 521
5 Ibid., 522
in the country, told J. Sergeant Cram, a political advisor of the Tammany leader, that if Cleveland were nominated, he would personally see to the raising of a fund bigger than was raised for McKinley in 1900. Strauss in recounting the conversation in his letter to Cleveland wrote that Stillman, after making this promise said: "And you know when he (McKinley) ran they had more money than they could use."¹

Cleveland, however, favored Olney or Parker and refused to have his name submitted in the face of such strong temptation. At this time too, Olney tried to launch Cleveland's third term campaign for 1904 stating, "Cleveland's past record is a guarantee of wise and patriotic action in the future."²

Cleveland had the strong support of several influential papers such as the *New York Times*, the *Brooklyn Eagle*, *New York Post*, and the *New York World*.

An editorial appearing in the *New York World* at this time said:

"We adhere to our opinion expressed over a year ago, that Mr. Cleveland, considering the issues before the country, and his tried efficiency, and known executive force, is the strongest candidate for the Democratic party."³

From the *New York Times* came this argument:

1 Lynch, *op. cit.*, 522
2 *New York Times*, January 4, 1904
3 *New York World*, March 5, 1904
If the question, who would be the strongest candidate, were asked of the people, we think a majority of them would answer Grover Cleveland... The prevailing belief to which we refer is that if Mr. Cleveland were nominated, he would get a larger vote than any other candidate who would be named.

The Post suggested:

If the National Convention should meet and find itself unable to agree upon another man, should get deadlocked, it would turn to the man who is in everyone's mouth when the question is asked "Who can beat Roosevelt?"

It was Cleveland that the Post had in mind and this paper with the other big dailies of New York State urged Cleveland to run for a third term and poured ridicule on "the misguided creatures" who said Cleveland was ineligible. "The Third Term rule is manifestly a consecutive third term" the Post editorial continued.

Cleveland had sought to put an end to the third term talk by a letter written to St. Clair McKelway in response to a strong editorial that appeared in the Brooklyn Eagle for November 24, 1903. He wrote:

You can never know how grateful I am for the manifestation of kindly feeling toward me on the part of my countrymen your initiative has brought out. Your advocacy of me in the "The Eagle," of my nomination again, came to me as a surprise, and it has been seconded in a great manner of Democratic sentiment that conflicting thoughts of gratitude and duty have caused me to hesitate as to the time

1 New York Times, March 8, 1904
2 New York Post, March 5, 1904
3 Ibid.
and manner of a declaration on my part covering the subject—if such a declaration should seem necessary or proper.

In the midst of all, and in view of every consideration presented, I have not for a moment been able, nor am I now able to open my mind to the thought in any circumstance or upon any consideration that I would ever again become the nominee of my party for the Presidency. My determination not to do so is unalterable and conclusive....

Cleveland was approached again and again by his supporters. Tammany leader Charles F. Murphy hoped to use Cleveland to stop Parker. In speaking of Cleveland's chances of being elected he said, "Wherever I speak of it, and to whomever I speak of it, I get only one reply that you are the only man the Democrats can elect against Mr. Roosevelt."

While Cleveland was pleased by the mention of his name for the Presidency again, he knew it was preposterous in view of advanced age and the state of his health. He was approaching seventy and from his correspondence of the period we learn that he was forced to bed for weeks at a time.

Any discussion of Cleveland's chance for a third term leads to a consideration of his popularity with the people. Most observers state that after his first term he was popular but lost considerable political strength during his second term and that therefore he turned down any considera-

1 Brooklyn Eagle, November 27, 1903
2 New York Herald, February 2, 1904
3 Ibid.
4 Robert McElroy, Grover Cleveland, the Statesman, 755
tion of a third term because of this lack of popularity. However, a close study of the life and the conditions of his times shows that after 1900 he became a popular idol for many.

"When he retired from the Presidency," stated Allan Nevins, "he believed himself to be the most unpopular man in America." He declined many invitations to speak believing that he would meet with abuse. In reply to a request from his friend Gilder to write a biography he wrote, "no one wants to read anything about me."2

"Little by little," said Gilder, "the tide of popularity turned to him."3 Invitations became pressing, letters came by the thousands. He corresponded with President Roosevelt in regard to free silver and the latter's Venezuelan message. 4

How he was received by the people on two memorable occasions displaces any doubts of his popularity in 1900. At a mass meeting in New York:

Cleveland stepped on the stage while Mayor Seth Low was in the midst of his speech. The hall was full of plain New Yorkers, including many poor and radical Jews; but the moment Cleveland's portly figure was seen a deafening roar of handclapping arose. When Cleveland finished his short speech, the applause was riotous and thousands stormed the stage to greet him. 5

1 Allen Nevins, Grover Cleveland, 751
2 Ibid., 752
3 Richard W. Gilder, Grover Cleveland - A Friendship, 83
4 Nevins, op. cit., 696
5 Ibid., 753
When Cleveland went West to help dedicate the St. Louis Exposition held in Bland's own state and in the heart of the free silver territory, he was greeted with wild acclaim. An excerpt from Allan Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, fairly shows the reception he received:

President Roosevelt was there. So was Mark Hanna. They marched together in the April sunshine toward the platform. The President was greeted with great applause. But when Cleveland rose he received an ovation which overshadowed all—a tumult that continued for several minutes.¹

In the same year John T. McCutcheon of the *Chicago Tribune* wrote Cleveland that he had been delivering lectures on his work as a newspaper cartoonist in Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin. During his talks he drew sketches of public men and he found that Cleveland's pictures drew tremendous applause from the crowds, greater than Roosevelt's.²

When the Democratic Convention assembled in 1904 it was from beginning to end animated by Cleveland ideas.³ John Sharp Williams the temporary chairman, declared that the gold standard established by the dogged persistency and indomitable will of Grover Cleveland in securing the repeal of the Republican silver-purchase law, was the money standard of the country. Wild cheering followed the statement and it would not have been hard for Cleveland to have

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¹ Nevins, op. cit., 752
² Ibid., 755
³ Gilder, op. cit., 87
been nominated in the Convention. However, he steadfastly refused to be considered as a candidate.

It is probably as one of his biographers said, "Quite apart from his fixed belief in no third terms, he did not have the strength for another term."2

It is true that he was popular among the people, and many party members wanted him to stand for a third term, but whether he would have defeated Roosevelt "another man of the people" would be a very debatable question.

1 Nevins, op. cit., II, 755
2 Ibid., 756
CHAPTER V

PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND THE TRADITION

Speaking on the night of his reelection in 1904, Theodore Roosevelt announced:

On the Fourth of March next, I shall have served three and a half years and these three and a half years constitute my first term. The wise custom which limits a President to two terms regards the substance and not the form; and under no circumstances will I be a candidate for or accept another nomination.  

Again in 1907, when talk of another term was popular, he reiterated his renunciation. "I have not changed," said he, "and shall not change the decision thus announced."  

"There is a tide, however, in the affairs of men and politicians," wrote M. R. Eiselen in a recent article in Social Science regarding Roosevelt's repudiation of the above statement, "that sometimes drives them to unpredicted shores."  

The tide which carried Theodore Roosevelt toward considering a third term started early and gathered momentum. As early as 1907 the public mind was prepared for the third term issue. In October of that year an editorial appeared in the Independent which was fairly typical of what people were thinking during the second Roosevelt administration:

1 Theodore Roosevelt, An Autobiography, 423-24  
2 Ibid.  
3 M. R. Eiselen, "The Roosevelts and the Third Term Tradition," Social Science, XV, 28 (Jan. 1940)
Whether we call it a third term or a second elected term, it would be in mind of the people were Mr. Roosevelt made the next Republican candidate for the Presidency. One cannot but notice a feeling of trepidation and suspicion on the part of other candidates, a suspicion that Mr. Roosevelt secretly wishes to be unwillingly forced to accept the nomination, and fear that he may be nominated. Mr. Roosevelt has said in the plainest way that he would not be a candidate, and he has distinctly declared that Mr. Taft, as the exponent of his ideas and policies, is his choice and desire for the succession. To be forced to accept the nomination under these conditions does not give a qualified assent. That is the way it would look to plain people.

Mr. Roosevelt is still a young man, not fifty years old. There is plenty of time for him to have the honor of being elected as Mr. Cleveland was, after four or eight or twelve or sixteen years have intervened, and no higher honor could the country give him. He is not the kind of a man to go stale and drop out of sight.1

Opposed to this type of thinking Roosevelt was determined to appear again in 1912 instead of 1916, 1920, or 1924. Aside from the gradual growth of public opinion in favor of Roosevelt from 1907 to 1912, the biggest factor that spurred him on to the third term was his definite parting with Taft who it has been said was indirectly managed by Roosevelt or Roosevelt policy.2

Toward the end of 1911 the friendship between the two crumbled and Roosevelt's influence was no longer felt in Washington.3

1 Editorial, Independent, LXIII, 1447 (October 17, 1907)
2 Henry F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt, 553
3 Ibid.
During that year Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin, a progressive of the Roosevelt school of politics, had announced he would be a candidate and on June 17 began to work for delegates to the Republican Convention. La Follette mistook Roosevelt's silence on the subject and the latter's cordiality toward him as endorsement of his candidacy.

Roosevelt frowned on La Follette's attempt to get the nomination. "He discouraged the idea," said Pringle, "but he did not forbid it." Regarding his own prospect, "I told them," he wrote Lodge on December 13, 1911, "that I certainly should not definitely state that if it did come in the form of a duty, I would refuse that duty." Thus, we see, by this time he was seriously considering the prospect of another nomination.

1 New York Times, June 16, 1911
2 Pringle, op. cit., 553
3 Ibid.
4 Henry Cabot Lodge, Selections from Correspondence Between Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, II, 417
Moreover, the popular sentiment was rapidly growing in favor of Roosevelt. Men like Gifford Pinchot of Pennsylvania, who had contributed to La Follette's campaign chest, now switched to Roosevelt. The La Follette boom burst and early in January 1912 it was obvious that Roosevelt would be a candidate.

Conferences were held; watchful politicians, wondering whether Taft or Roosevelt would win and being determined they would ride upon the safest band wagon, issued evasive statements. Roosevelt pondered the best means by which he could announce that he had once again bowed to the popular will. "It is important to remember" wrote J. B. Bishop "that Roosevelt still felt he was sacrificing himself and believed that he would be beaten." However, he realized that Taft was not his match before the people and La Follette had developed no real strength in the West. Yet, should he seek the nomination himself it would probably go to Taft.

As the weeks and the months of 1912 passed, the Progressive campaign became a religious crusade in Roosevelt's mind. Finally, on February 9, 1912, a messenger came from Chicago bearing a petition signed by Governors J. M. Carey, Wyoming; Wm. R. Stubbs, Kansas; Charles Osborne, Michigan; Herbert Hadley, Missouri; Chester Aldrich, Nebraska, Robert

1 Pringle, op. cit., 554
2 J. B. Bishop, Theodore Roosevelt and His times, 312
3 Ibid.
P. McBass, New Hampshire; and W. E. Glasscock of West Virginia. It recited the history of the progressive movement and urged Roosevelt to run.\(^1\)

Taft angered by this support offered Roosevelt, lashed out against the men whom he called, in an article appearing in the *New York Times* three days later, "those seeking to pull down the pillars of the temple of freedom and representative government."\(^2\)

During that same week Roosevelt appeared in Columbus, Ohio where he spoke. To a reporter there he said, "My hat is in the ring."\(^3\) Word was flashed about and the war for the Republican nomination was then an out and out struggle.

"I will accept the nomination for President if it is tendered me," said he in his formal reply to the Governors on February 24, "and I will adhere to this decision until the Convention has expressed its preference."\(^4\)

The breach already existing between Taft and Roosevelt developed into a fight. President Taft replied, "I am a man of peace. I don't want to fight. But when I do fight, I want to hit hard. Even a rat in a corner will fight."\(^5\)

Meanwhile the Chicago delegates were being chosen and Roosevelt's excitement seemed to increase. His speeches during this period termed the conflict "the most momentous

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1 *New York Times*, February 11, 1912
2 *Ibid.*, February 13, 1912
3 *Ibid.*, February 23, 1912
4 *Ibid.*, February 24, 1912
5 *Ibid.*, May 5, 1912
struggle since the Civil War."\textsuperscript{1}

In New York the machine declared for Taft. Indiana lined up for the President. North Dakota and Wisconsin adhered strongly to progressive principles and chose La Follette. Massachusetts declared for Taft. Roosevelt carried the primaries in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and California. Most astonishing of all, he carried Ohio. In the last part of May it looked like a compromise candidate at the Convention.\textsuperscript{2} "I'll name the compromise candidate," said Roosevelt in response to the discussion, "He'll be me. I'll name the compromise platform. It will be our platform."\textsuperscript{3} This clearly shows Roosevelt's strong determination for a third term.

It is Pringle's conclusion that "Unquestionably Roosevelt was the choice of the majority of the rank and file of the Republican party."\textsuperscript{4} His strength in the primaries justified this view but according to the Convention rules Taft had the edge. The rules of 1904 and 1908 applied in 1912 and Roosevelt was willing to work under them before. "As a matter of fact," wrote Holthusen on the Convention of 1912, "Roosevelt had in 1908 vetoed one change that would have assured his nomination in 1912."\textsuperscript{5} This was the matter respecting the Southern delegates. The President through the National Committee had absolute power

1 New York Times, May 7, 1912
2 Ibid., June 3, 1912
3 Ibid., May 29, 1912
4 Pringle, op. cit., 563
5 H. P. Holthusen, James W. Wadsworth, Jr., 94
over these delegates.

The ancient suggestion that representation from the Southern States was disproportionate was made again. This time it appears to have been done in a sincere attempt to remedy a situation that bred only corruption. Had it gone through, Taft's strength in 1912 would have been greatly reduced.

To present accurately all the facts of the Chicago Convention whereby Roosevelt probably lost his big chance at a third term, to tell how the Roosevelt delegates were disqualified would be material sufficient itself for a doctoral dissertation. Briefly, the rules of the Republican party specified the election of national committeemen and appointment of committees at the end of each Convention. The important Credentials Committee had been chosen in 1908 with Roosevelt's approval, but it was not to be seated until the Chicago Convention had terminated.¹

The Republican Convention met on June 6, 1912, and the work of deciding contests began and the result was in Taft's favor.² The outcome was obvious and Roosevelt denounced the action of the committee as being near treason.³ The following night he addressed a huge meeting of his followers and charged that Taft was a victim of machine politics and that the delegates supporting Taft had been

¹ *New York Times*, June 8, 1912
² Ibid., June 12, 1912
³ Ibid., June 16, 1912
seated dishonestly. Regardless of the question of how many delegates should have been seated, the facts show that Taft would have been nominated anyway. "It may be set forth as a matter of political wisdom" observed Pringle "that the Republican Convention of 1912 would have seated enough Taft men, whatever the facts, to insure Taft's nomination." On June 22 the first vote taken was as follows: Taft, 561; Roosevelt, 107; Cummins, 17; La Follette 41; and Hughes, 2. The significant thing about the first ballot was that 344 of the delegates cast no votes at all, and from this came Roosevelt's courage to carry on toward the third term without the Republican Party.

That Saturday night, June 22, the Roosevelt supporters assembled in old Orchestra Hall and pledged their support to Roosevelt. "If you wish me to make the fight, I will make it" promised Roosevelt, "even if only one State should support me."

This was the beginning of the Progressive or Bull Moose Party. Hiram Johnson of California was nominated as Roosevelt's running mate. The convention August 5 was marked by fiery speeches denouncing both of the old parties and the campaign was launched.

The 1912 campaign served as a test of the third party

1 New York Times, June 17, 1912
2 Pringle, op. cit., 562
3 Ibid., 563
4 Kirk H. Porter, National Party Platforms, 302
5 New York Times, June 22, 1912
6 H. L. Stoddard, As I Know Them, 404, 405
movement as well as a test of Roosevelt's popularity and the third term issue. Going up and down the country he made a vigorous attempt to defeat his opponents. On October 14 as he was leaving for a speech in Milwaukee he was shot in the breast by a fanatic, who shouted something about a third term. The would be assassin was saved from lynching by Roosevelt himself, who dramatically gave a short address in spite of his wound.

"From the day that Roosevelt's hat went into the ring," wrote M. R. Eiselen, "the third term was an inevitable issue of the contest." Papers referred to him as the "Perpetual Candidate," and his party as the "Third Term Party." An Anti-Third Term League was organized with headquarters in Washington. Many maintained that he had forever disqualified himself by his post-election pledge of 1904 and that he was too inconsistent in declaring himself again. In an endeavor to answer this charge the Outlook, a loyal supporter of Roosevelt, ran an editorial which represented the substance of the arguments of those who ignored the third-term issue:

The man who leaves the Presidency, and is re-elected after a lapse of four years or eight or twelve years, has no body of office holders behind him.... In Mr. Roosevelt's case, it is sometimes said that his statements made in 1904 and in 1907 that he would not accept another

1 Pringle, op. cit., 599
2 M. R. Eiselen, op. cit., 30
nomination would make his acceptance of a nomination this year inconsistent. What Mr. Roosevelt said in 1904 and in 1907, referred, of course, to a third consecutive term. The Outlook has a better appreciation of his intelligence than to suppose that he had in 1904 or has now the slightest idea of defining a third term except in the way we have defined it. The situation may perhaps be made clear by a homely illustration. When a man says at breakfast in the morning, "No thank you, I will not take any more coffee," it does not mean that he will not take any more coffee, to-morrow, or next week, or next month, or next year. 1

On the other side, George Harvey, editor of the North American Review was quick to answer this with, "The imperfection of the analogy of the coffee is apparent," 2 and added one of his own:

When a man says at breakfast in the morning, the wise custom which in consideration of the public health, forbids one in my position to set a harmful example by partaking of more coffee, regards the substance and not the form, and under no circumstances will I seek or accept another cup of coffee.

What the good divine would say to a man convicted of adultery who should plead, "Truly, I pledged fidelity, but that did not mean that I should be faithful the next day, the next week or the next year..." we cannot imagine. 3

William Jennings Bryan ironically inquired how many cups of coffee in groups of two it would take to quench the thirst of Roosevelt. 4

1 Editorial, "The Presidential Campaign Third Term Realities" Outlook, C, 338 (February 10, 1912)
3 Ibid.
4 Eiselen, op. cit., 31
The most vicious assault on Roosevelt came from those who considered a third term for Roosevelt a stepping stone to life tenure, to dictatorship, even to hereditary monarchy.\(^1\) Colonel Henry Watterson published several burning editorials in the *Courier-Journal* which are typical of this attack. One of these had originally been published in 1908 as an attack on the third term idea and reappeared several times during the 1912 campaign.\(^2\)

Watterson's semifictional discussion purported to be the dream of a "crazed Southern woman that Martha Bulloch's son was to rescue us from the mud-sills of the North," by being President during his entire lifetime.\(^3\)

Harper's Weekly continuously sniped at him on the third term issue and charged him with trying to establish himself as King. There would be nothing "to prevent him, with the power of federal patronage at his disposal, and the command of the army in addition, and the courts deprived of their independence, from continuing to serve for a fourth and fifth term, and then only to retire to pass the succession over to his son or to a relative."\(^4\)

To these charges, Roosevelt replied that they did not know Kings as he did; that the modern constitutional king was somewhat like a life vice-president with the

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1 Eiselen, *op. cit.*, 31
2 Henry Watterson, "Strange Prophecy About Roosevelt" *Cosmopolitan*, XLIV, 302-308 (January 1908)
4 Eiselen, *op. cit.*, 31
Another third-term attempt came in 1912 when Roosevelt I, who had served only 1½ terms, bolted his party to run against Taft. This is how a cartoonist drew him.
leadership of the Four Hundred thrown in; and that there were other jobs preferable for a "full sized man."\(^1\)

"What, then, is the ultimate object of those who now give color to the claim that our most cherished tradition must be trampled underfoot," asked George Harvey in his biting editorial charging Roosevelt with being obsessed with a spectacular personality and "inciting warfare upon established institutions and urging upon the people a fancied need to tear away the foundations of representative government."\(^2\)

Throughout the campaign the Outlook and Harper's Weekly were extremely vocal on the third term question. Defending Roosevelt's stand the Outlook said:

> There is no reason why the people of the country should not continue a President in office as long as he serves them well. We said this thirty-three years ago during the Grant campaign. We repeat it now. Between two men, one who has had the experience and one who has not had the experience, the presumption is in favor of the experienced official. Certainly, the American people ought to be as free as the English people to help a servant in power as long as they please.\(^3\)

Harper's Weekly replied that the safeguard of Democracy must not be left down, that no emergency existed, and that there was nothing to justify Roosevelt's attempt at a third term other than his vain ambition "to be a king."

Typical of scores of editorials and feature articles is

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1 Eiselen, op. cit., 32
2 Harvey, op. cit., 449
3 Editorial, Outlook, CI, 152-153 (February 10, 1912)
It is to be expected that Mr. Roosevelt should glibly say that he does not aim at being king, that "the king business" has no attractions for him; that people who talk about kings do not know what a king is. Those are things easily enough said, and may perhaps fool a certain number of people who are led away by fair-sounding words. No common fakir who sells a bottle of water with a little coloring matter to yokels at a country fair is fool enough to tell them that he asks them to pay their dimes and their quarters for water; he is knave enough to try to persuade them by his "patter." Mr. Roosevelt's denials are idle because there is no sincerity behind them, they command no respect because they are destroyed by his past actions.... The American people will be blind if they substitute for the Constitution and the orderly process of law the unrestrained caprices of an irresponsible dictator.1

A. Maurice Low, Washington Correspondent for Harper's Weekly characterized the third term issue as "an issue overshadowing all others that the American people must once and for all time determine."2 In a full-page article he wrote:

The attempt on the part of Mr. Roosevelt to obtain the Republican nomination for the Presidency, thereby overturning the traditions on which this Republic rests and securing popular approval of the perpetuation of the Presidential office, is the most important question that the people are required to decide. Compared with it every other question that the people are required to settle is trivial.......It is an issue that vitally concerns every man, woman and child in the United States, and not only the men, women and children of this generation but those yet to come.

Inordinate ambition, a lust for power, a vanity

1 Editorial, Harper's Weekly, LVI, 19 (September 21, 1912)
so excessive that it touches the very verge of
madness, an utter contempt for the people, for
Roosevelt has always entertained a profound con­
tempt for the people, although with the craft of
the demagogue, he has ever posed as their friend
and champion--and a defiance of the wisdom of the
Fathers of the Republic and the teachings of
history have combined to make Mr. Roosevelt's
hunger to occupy the White House for a third term.
He is ambitious to be Caesar and to implant
Caesarism upon the United States. To reach the
cerule chair he has had to use the dagger of
treachery and to trample upon his solemn promises.
For these he cares nothing.¹

Commenting on Roosevelt's contention that he was not
running for a third consecutive term, Low later wrote,
"The third-term, consecutive or interrupted, the American
people have refused to sanction it."²

The press entered the campaign with vigor but only in
a few instances were there any direct attacks upon the
third term tradition. Roosevelt preferred to stay on safe
ground stating that as a precedent it applied ony to con­
secutive terms in office.³ The Sacramento Bee, an in­
dependent progressive newspaper of the Hiram Johnson school
maintained boldly:

There is no more sense in saying a republic should
not elect and re-elect, and re-elect again a good
strenuous, wide-awake, progressive reformatory
President than in declaring it should not keep for
years, and years, and years, in Congress a worthy
Senator or an industrious and honest Representative.⁴

¹ Low, op. cit., 10
² Ibid., 20 (September 14, 1912)
³ Elselen, op. cit., 30
⁴ Sacramento Bee, October 10, 1912
The Democratic papers were not slow in opposing the third term tradition. A typical opinion was expressed in the Knoxville Sentinel:¹

The greatest issue before the American people is the threatened Mexicanization of our government. We believe that the danger is passing, and that the people will reaffirm the third term tradition with requisite emphasis.

The Washington Star opposed Roosevelt on the following grounds:²

Federal judges are appointed for life, or during good behavior, and the arrangement has worked admirably. But the Presidency is on no such plane. The power of a judge or Senator or Representative is so small by comparison that it is not properly quotable in the premises.

¹ "The Third Term," A poll of the press in Outlook C, 617, (March 26, 1912)
² Ibid.
The Republican and Independent papers were divided.

Those which opposed the third term were:  

Portland Express
Boston Advertiser
Springfield Union
Hartford Courant
Waterbury American
New York Tribune
New York Times
New York Post
Albany Journal
Syracuse Post-Standard
Buffalo Commercial
Philadelphia Telegraph

Pittsburg Chronicle Telegraph
Pittsburg Gazette
Baltimore American
Cincinnati Times
Detroit Journal
Chicago Inter-Ocean
Milwaukee Free Press
St. Louis Globe Democrat
Kansas City Journal
San Francisco Call
Philadelphia Bulletin

The papers which either supported Roosevelt or failed to attack him on the third term issue were:

Lewiston (Me) Journal
Boston Journal
New York Globe
Newark News
Philadelphia North American
Pittsburgh Leader
Pittsburgh Press
Louisville Post
Indianapolis Star
Los Angeles Express

Chicago Tribune
Chicago News
St. Paul Despatch
Kansas City Star
Topeka Capital
Emporia Gazette
Denver Rocky Mountain News
Missoula Missoulian
Sacramento Bee

"The conclusion of the whole matter is" declared the Louisville Despatch 3 "that the Third Term Tradition" should be called "the Third Term Delusion."

1 Outlook, op. cit., 617
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
Teddy crowned himself in another cartoon. The issue grew so violent that, during the campaign, a fanatic, shouting about a third term, shot T. R. through the chest.
During the Campaign of 1912 scores of leading magazines carried articles on the third term issue. Even foreign periodicals came to Roosevelt's defence. Typical of this point of view is one by Mr. Grant Hervey, President of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Young Australian Movement in an article entitled, "The American Third Term Superstition--What Would Lincoln Do," in the Review of Reviews.

The United States is the only first-class civilized nation that provides a political Procrustean bed, limited to an eight-years' tenure, for its ablest statesmen. There may be--doubtless there are--many ridiculous features about the governmental systems of European countries like England and Germany; but even in a land of Bismarck, with all its Conservative traditions, the principle obtains that a statesman may hold office so long as his services seem useful to the nation. In the formative years of American history when the United States had only a relatively small part to play in the domain of Foreign Affairs, the rule that no American should hold Presidential office for more than two terms may have been for a salutary purpose.¹

Mr. Hervey considered it rather tiring to wade through numberless columns of dissertations upon the view of "this extinct Mount Vernon Oracle," and after charging Americans with being provincial, he pointed out that new conditions had risen that stood in the way of men capable of real statesmanship. He added:

The new men--the Theodore Roosevelt’s of America--are cognizant of the new needs of the new time;

¹ Grant Hervey, "An Australian View of our Third-Term Superstition," Review of Reviews, XLVI, 485, (July 1912)
but they are measured by the outworn standards of the eighteenth century.

George Washington is as dead as Queen Anne; and it is a great pity that the American people, who are so sensible in most things, will not permit George Washington and his doctrines to remain peacefully in the grave.

One hopes, therefore, to be pardoned for making the suggestion that, in place of the Washington third-term superstition, the American people should address themselves to this question: What would Lincoln do? The great President who held the United States together at the crucial epoch was assassinated shortly after the commencement of his second term. If Lincoln had lived, and if the necessities of the Reconstruction period had demanded a continuation of Lincoln's Presidential sway, would the Illinois rail splitter have allowed the Washington precedent to debar him from serving a third term.

The Commonwealths of the British Empire are vividly interested in Roosevelt's success. When Roosevelt sent the American fleet to Australia, he revolutionized this country's attitude towards the United States. We want to see Roosevelt President again, that the Stars and Stripes may float level with our Australian flag in the Pacific.

In striking contrast is the article entitled, "Is the Third Term Issue Negligible?" which appeared in the Forum, Charles Vale said:

The ex-president probably believed that he could reconcile his personal ambition with the welfare of his country; but a truer patriotism would have shown him that his services are not indispensable, while his candidacy contained elements of grave danger for the institutions that he pledged himself to safeguard.

1 Grant Hervey, op. cit., 486
2 Charles Vale, "Is the Third Term Issue Negligible," Forum, XLVII, 443, (June 1912)
Largely unmindful of this hue and cry Roosevelt carried on bravely until election day but without success. Wilson, the Democratic nominee was elected with 435 votes. Roosevelt received 88 and Taft only the 3 from Vermont and Utah. Roosevelt's popular vote was 4,126,020 against 6,286,214 for Wilson and 3,483,922 for Taft.

Roosevelt attributed his defeat not to a third term tradition but to the fact the party machine of the Republican Party was against him and third parties as a rule are hard to manage and lack organization. To a friend who talked about victory in the next campaign should Roosevelt run again in 1916 he said, "I thought you were a better politician.... There is only one thing to do and that is go back to the Republican party. You can't hold the Progressives together."

Roosevelt's reasons for having accepted the nomination in 1912 can be best presented from an excerpt taken from his Autobiography:

The Presidency is a great office, and the power of the President can be effectively used to secure a renomination, especially if the President has the support of certain great political and financial interests. It is for this reason, and this reason alone, that the wholesome principle of continuing in office, so long as he is willing to serve, an incumbent who is capable, is not applicable to the Presidency. Therefore, the American people have wisely established a custom against allowing any man to hold office for more than two consecutive terms.

1 World Almanac, 1939, 813
2 Progressive Party Proceedings, 1912, 13
But every shred of power which a President exercises while in office vanishes absolutely when he has once left office. An ex-President stands precisely in the position of any other private citizen, and has not one particle more power to secure a nomination or an election than if he had never held the office at all. Therefore the reasoning on which the anti-third term custom is based has no application whatever to an ex-President, and no application whatever to anything but consecutive terms. Having this in mind, I regarded the custom as applying practically, if not just as much, to a President who had served seven and a half years in office as to one who had been eight years in office, and therefore in the teeth of a practically unanimous demand from my own party that I accept another nomination and the reasonable certainty that the nomination would be ratified at the polls, I felt the substance of the custom applied to me in 1908. On the other hand, it had no application whatever to any human being save where it was invoked in the case of a man desiring a third consecutive term.

I believe that it is well to have a custom of this kind, to be generally observed, but that it would be very unwise to have it definitely hardened into a Constitutional prohibition. It is not desirable ordinarily that a man should stay in office twelve consecutive years as President; but most certainly the American people are fit to take care of themselves; and stand in no need of an irrevocable self-denying ordinance.... It would be a benighted policy in such event to disqualify the highest office to a man who while holding it had actually shown the highest capacity to exercise its powers with the utmost effect for the public defense. If, for instance, a tremendous crisis occurred at the end of a second term of a man like Lincoln, as such a crisis occurred at the end of his first term, it would be a veritable calamity if the American people were forbidden to continue to use the services of the one man whom they knew, and did not merely guess could carry them through the crisis.

The third term tradition has no value whatever except as it applies to a third consecutive term.  

1 Theodore Roosevelt, An Autobiography, 423-424
Thus we see that Theodore Roosevelt clearly distinguished between running for three consecutive terms and running three times for the Presidency where a period of retirement intervened.

Turning from Roosevelt's interpretation of the campaign to that of his contemporaries we find a wide divergence of opinion. "The country has not taken seriously the outcry against the third term," said the Outlook, "in defending Roosevelt for running and advocating him again in 1916. Nor has any man of reputation taken it seriously—except Mr. Bryan."¹

Their old opponent was quick to reply sarcastically "Come back now to business—the business of talking sense." And in regard to the original statement on Roosevelt and the coffee added, "No more coffee Grandbrother Abbott!"

Continued emphasis was given by his opponents to the third term issue as the reason for Roosevelt's defeat. Harper's Weekly closed its commentary articles with:

The outcry has been against the third term for Theodore Roosevelt. On that issue mainly Mr. Roosevelt was beaten at Chicago...... In our opinion, the hardest obstacle Colonel Roosevelt was up against in the late campaign was this sentiment against a third term. It has been well to the fore in the campaign, and would have been much more strenuously put forward if at any time there had seemed to be danger that the Colonel would be elected. The disposition has been to indulge Colonel Roosevelt in discussion of the things he wished to discuss, and the third term has not been among them.²

¹ Editorial, Outlook CI, 120 (November 7, 1912)
² Editorial, Harper's Weekly, LVI, 4 (November 9, 1912)
After the election of Wilson, Roosevelt backed steadily away from another nomination at the hands of the Progressive Party, a nomination which he considered would again insure the election of Wilson whom he disliked very much due to the latter's war policy and attitude both toward preparedness and toward Roosevelt's desire to lead an army in France.\footnote{Lodge, op. cit., 461}

A Progressive convention was called in June 1916 which again nominated him, but he declined, reserving the right to change his mind should the Republican Convention be silent on the issues of the war.\footnote{Bishop, op. cit., II, 412}

Theodore Roosevelt never seriously rejected the idea of becoming President of the United States again as shown by his statement in 1918 in answer to the many demands that he run again:

\begin{quote}
If the Republicans want me......and I can advance the ideals for which I stand, I will be a candidate. But I will not lift a finger for the nomination.
\end{quote}

Many of the leaders wanted him to run for the third time and many were against him. "Plans were underway for the years of plenty," wrote Pringle in closing his biography of Roosevelt, "perhaps Theodore Roosevelt could not have been shunted aside."\footnote{J. J. Leary, Talks With T. R. from the Diaries of John L. Leary, 49-50} However Roosevelt died in 1919 and Warren Harding became President of the United States.

\footnotesize
\begin{enumerate}
\item Lodge, op. cit., 461
\item Bishop, op. cit., II, 412
\item J. J. Leary, Talks With T. R. from the Diaries of John L. Leary, 49-50
\item Pringle, op. cit., 604
\end{enumerate}
CHAPTER VI

THE TRADITION UNDER WILSON AND COOLIDGE

Woodrow Wilson, elected President in 1912, was re-nominated by his party without opposition in 1916 and won the election in that year by a very narrow margin. His high moral courage, statesmanship, and liberal administration made him a popular leader at the end of his first administration. Had he survived the rigors of the great World War and the humiliating defeat of his peace proposals in the United States Senate there is much speculation as to whether he would have run for the Presidency again.

A Republican Congress was elected during his second administration and partly due to their dislike of the peace proposals and partly due to a dislike for him personally his efforts to establish "an enduring peace" were defeated. It is not likely that this dislike was held by the people. The overwhelming victory of Warren Harding in 1920 has been interpreted as a desire to return to normalcy after the war.

All of these matters aside, it is probable that Wilson would not have accepted a third nomination, as shown by his very decided views regarding the Presidency and the term of office. Speaking on the joint resolution

1 William Allen White, Woodrow Wilson, 311
2 Josephus Daniels, The Life of Wilson, 275
passed by the Senate and known as the Work's resolution which provided for a constitutional amendment limiting the President to a single six year term, he said:

Put the present customary limitation of two terms into the Constitution, if you do not trust the people to take care of themselves, but make it two terms, not one, because four years is not enough, and give the President a chance to win the full service by proving himself fit for it.1

In several letters Wilson declared his opposition to this proposed six-year limitation of the Presidential tenure. Writing to the vice-chairman of the Democratic National Committee, A. Mitchell Palmer of Pennsylvania, in January of 1916, he declared his willingness to abide by the judgment of the party and public regarding his candidacy for a second term. Discussing the suggested amendment, he said:

To change the term to six years would be to increase the likelihood of its being too long, without any assurance that it would, in happy cases, be long enough. A fixed constitutional limitation to single term of office is highly arbitrary and unsatisfactory from every point of view....... We singularly belie our own principles by seeking to determine by fixed constitutional provision what the people shall determine for themselves. We cast a doubt upon the whole theory of popular government.

I believe that we should fatally embarrass ourselves if we made the constitutional change proposed. If we want our Presidents to fight our battles for us, we should give them the

1 Daniels, op. cit., 320
means, the legitimate means, the means their opponents will always have. Strip them of everything else but the right to appeal to the people, but leave them that; suffer them to be leaders; absolutely prevent them from being bosses.

As things stand now the people might more likely be cheated than served by further limitations of the President's eligibility. His fighting power in their behalf would be immensely weakened. No one will fear a President except those whom he can make fear the elections.¹

Wilson was a sick man by the time of the convention—and so no third term situation arose.

The death of Harding on August 2, 1923 made Vice-President Calvin Coolidge President.² The general condition of business in the country warranted his renomination in 1924 and he won easily over Davis and La Follette.³ His second administration was characterised by booming business and soon the byword was "Coolidge Prosperity." The Republican Party began early in his second term to talk about another term for this silent man. Reviving the arguments of Theodore Roosevelt, his supporters maintained that he had not served two terms but one term and a fraction of another.⁴ "That is the reason," argued Senator Fess of Ohio, "why I constantly refute the idea that if Calvin Coolidge were nominated there would be a violation of the third-term tradition."⁵

² Calvin Coolidge, The Autobiography of Calvin Coolidge, 223
³ Frederick Allen, Only Yesterday, 189
⁴ Ibid., 203
⁵ Simeon Fess, "Shall Mr. Coolidge have a Second Term?" Review of Reviews, LXXV, 601-8 (June 1927)
In 1928, election year rolled in with several resolutions in the 70th Congress attempting constitutional limitations on the President's term. Outstanding was the La Follette resolution introduced on January 27, 1928, amended and passed by the Senate by a vote of 56 to 26. It echoed the sentiment of the old Springer Resolution passed in Grant's day in the following:

Resolved, That it is in the sense of the Senate that the precedent established by Washington and other Presidents of the United States in retiring from the Presidential office after their second term has become by universal concurrence, a part of our republican system of government and that any departure from this time-honored custom would be unwise, unpatriotic and fraught with peril to our free institutions.1

Many arguments for and against the La Follette resolution were brought out on the floor of the Senate during the debate on this measure. Typical of these arguments against the measure is that of Senator Fess again in support of Coolidge.

I do not think that a vote in this Senate on the question of a third term would have as much effect as a fly on a dog's ear in fighting despotism. There are eight nations in Europe now that might be regarded as being under dictators, all the result of the World War. There is not any possibility of that sort of thing taking place here in America. We view the problems of government on an entirely different plane, and I think it is the result of 125 years of training.

1 Congressional Record, 70th Cong., 1st Sess., LXIX, pt 37:2357
If Washington would have permitted himself to run in 1796, he would have been elected without doubt. I think there is no doubt that if Andrew Jackson had given any intimation that he wanted to succeed himself in 1837 instead of really appointing Martin Van Buren, he could have elected himself more easily or as easily as to have elected his successor.

I would say frankly today that if the way opens for the nomination of Calvin Coolidge I do not hesitate to say that he will be elected by one of the largest majorities ever given in any election in spite of the tradition that friends of mine say would be broken on the third-term matter.¹

The La Follette resolution was discussed fully in newspapers and magazines most of whom interpreted it as a direct warning to Coolidge not to run in 1928. "It is a matter of regret," maintained the Dayton Journal,² "that the White House door has been shut upon a question [whether or not he would be a candidate to succeed himself] which any American has so clear a right to ask of any public man and most particularly of any President." Coolidge remained silent on the question and for this drew severe criticism. Coolidge's prolonged silence was defended by many of his friends on the grounds that as a candidate he would have to stand criticism of every move and its motives. Most of these supporters gleefully pointed out the remark by Coolidge to a friend, "I never heard of a candidate's being defeated by what he didn't

¹ Congressional Record, 70th Cong., 1st Sess., LXIX, pt 37:2932 (January 1928)
² Dayton Journal, July 2, 1927
say." In answer to the demand that he commit himself Carter Field, Washington correspondent, gave a typical argument in the Forum:

If the President had come out, announcing his candidacy, it would seriously interfere with non-partisan consideration of various measures the President has in contemplation for the next Congress. Imagine the criticisms, for example, should he advocate internal improvements with a view of preventing the Mississippi flood disaster! It would be said he was attempting to bolster up a fading prosperity by pouring out Government money. For him to say that he was not a candidate would interfere just as seriously with his influence on Congress. As a matter of fact, this is the private opinion of most Democratic as well as Republican leaders, not one of whom really expects a statement from the White House on this question for a long time to come.

There is no doubt among most of the leaders of both parties that Mr. Coolidge will be a candidate to succeed himself, and so far as one can feel now the political pulse of the country, the people are very well satisfied with the prospect.1

At last he broke the silence.

In July of 1927 President and Mrs. Coolidge went to the Black Hills of South Dakota where the executive offices were set up in the school house at Rapid City. It was here that Coolidge announced his decision not to run in 1928. No one knew what he had planned, not even his wife. Senator Capper, a friend of the President was waiting in his office when Coolidge called his private secretary, Everett Sanders and said, "Bring in those newspaper fellers

1 John Carter, "That Third Term," Forum, LXXVII, 139 (July 1927)
about noon, I have an announcement to make." After Sanders left, Coolidge called a stenographer and in Capper’s presence dictated these words, "I do not choose to run in 1928." He added, "Have twenty-five copies made."¹

The newspaper men received their copies and there was at once a tremendous buzzing—what did he mean? To the inquiry "Can't you give us something more on this," his only reply was, "There will be nothing more from this office today," and away went Capper and Coolidge on their fishing trip and from that date until the Convention in July 1928, no more statements were issued. Friends approached him, but he either changed the subject or remained absolutely silent. Much speculation arose as to just what he did mean. Did he mean he would accept the nomination if tendered, but he personally would not seek it or was he through with the Presidency forever? No one knew.²

The month of August opened a campaign of newspaper and magazine articles both attacking and defending the tradition; outstanding was a debate appearing in the Forum between William Munro and Walter Lippmann on "Shall We Break the Third Term Tradition." In regard to a third term for Coolidge, Munro argued:

"...Most of our fellow citizens are not very imaginative, and it requires an enterprising imagination to visualize Calvin I in the role of a Napoleon III.... He is the only one, who

¹ William Allen White, A Puritan in Babylon, 359-363
² Ibid.
during all that time, has been able to approach the end of his second term without any noticeable decline in popular confidence, or without having started a ruction in the ranks of his own party. The nomination of Coolidge would carry a reasonable certainty of reelection... The old adage about swapping horses would seem to apply to even a third crossing of the stream.\(^1\)

Mr. Lippmann refuted the idea that Coolidge or any other candidate could or should test the tradition. The crux of his argument was in the following:

\[
\begin{aligned}
&\text{........... One of the clear advantages of the third term tradition has been that it has prevented any man from capturing his own party permanently... This is the most compelling reason for preserving the tradition. Grant that the emergence of a Mussolini is improbable. Grant that the electorate is shrewd enough to defeat a too ambitious man. Still I would argue that in a republic which depends upon the recruiting of talent, it would be a very bad thing to allow any man to dominate.... I can see no emergency which demands the continuation of Mr. Coolidge in office. I have never heard it argued that there exists any real reason why we should abandon one of the fundamental principles of our political system.}\(^2\)
\end{aligned}
\]

As 1928 opened, Herbert Hoover was out ahead for the Republican nomination, and there was a good chance that he would be the next candidate of the party. Coolidge remained "Silent Cal" in spite of the pleadings of his friends. Ex-President Taft, who was frequently a guest at the White House, was never able to squeeze a word out of him regarding his cryptic message. Taft wrote to his son Robert that

1 William B. Munro, "A Useless Tradition," \textit{Forum}, LXXVIII, 162 (August 1927)
they were unable to say whether or not Coolidge could be driven into accepting another nomination. Hope was with the Coolidge supporters almost to the end. Again Taft wrote his son:

Hilles has come out for Hughes. It is only to keep his delegates together to plump them for Coolidge when the matter becomes so serious that they must resort to him.¹

There was a general feeling that a deadlock would occur and throw the nomination to Coolidge. "During these preliminary days," wrote White, "in discussing Coolidge's unbroken silence and his supporters' hope for a word from him; every hour the preconvention crowd felt that word from the White House would come."²

There were those who were willing to carry the fight in the Convention. Hoover had been placed in nomination, Lowden of Illinois was named but withdrew, many minor candidates including James Watson and George Norris were named but did not cause serious competition. Thereupon a strange thing happened: Ralph D. Cole, a delegate from Ohio, was recognized by the Chairman and gave a speech praising Coolidge but he did not nominate him. Mr. Cole spoke in eloquent terms of Coolidge after explaining his first choice had been the late Frank Welles of Ohio; and that Lowden was his second; he barely mentioned he had a third

¹ William Allen White, op. cit., 399
² Ibid., 401
choice when a delegate across the Hall cried "Coolidge."
A big cheer broke out and after the demonstration calmed Cole continued:

My candidate is a Republican. This is a Republican convention. We have today adopted a Republican platform. We must nominate a Republican for President of the United States. [Great applause]
My candidate cast his first vote in 1896 for Ohio's illustrious son, William McKinley, [Applause] the great champion of protection. He next followed the leadership of the greatest American of his day and generation, Theodore Roosevelt. [Great applause]. But he did not forget to vote. He did not forget his name when he came to vote. [Applause and shouts for Hoover]. My candidate was chosen Vice President in 1920, elected President in 1924—an exalted specimen of American manhood, better than wealth, better than all power, better than all position, to have the courage, character and conscience of Calvin Coolidge, my candidate!

But the clock had struck twelve—. As the applause swept the convention, seconding speeches of five minutes were allowed, the roll was called by the Chairman, and the words "Herbert Hoover, having received the majority of all the votes cast, I declare him to be a candidate of the Republican party for President of the United States," ended once and for all the third term question for Calvin Coolidge.

Irwin Hoover, White House steward for many years, strongly felt Coolidge was greatly disappointed in the outcome of the Convention's decision, as evidenced by his

1 National Republican Convention 1928--Official Proceedings, 202-203
2 Ibid.
gloomy attitude but Coolidge said nothing. The Sphinx of the White House never gave any one the satisfaction of knowing that he had held a hope of being nominated in 1928. All he gave was his "I do not choose to run in 1928" and a comment written in 1929.

Possibly Coolidge's real feelings about a third term can be found in what he wrote. In his Autobiography he concludes with the characteristic title, "Why I Did Not Choose To Run." After pointing out the great strain the Presidency brings he wrote frankly:

I had never wished to run in 1928 and I had determined to make a public announcement at a sufficiently early date so that the party would have ample time to choose some one else. An approximate occasion for that announcement seemed to be the fourth anniversary of my taking office. The reasons I can give may not appear very convincing, but I am confident my decision was correct.

My personal and official relations have all been peculiarly pleasant. The Congress has not always done what I wished, but it has done very little that I did not approve. So far as I can judge, I have been especially fortunate in having the approbation of the country.

But irrespective of the third-term policy, the Presidential office is of such a nature it is difficult to conceive how one man can successfully serve the country for a term of more than eight years.

While I am in favor of continuing the long-established custom of the country in relation to a third term for a President, yet I do not think that the practice applies to one who had succeeded to part of a term as Vice-President. Others might argue that it does, but I doubt if the country would so consider it.
In making my public statement I was careful in the use of the words. There were some who reported that they were mystified as to my meaning when I said, "I do not choose to run." Although I did not know it at the time, months later I found that Washington said practically the same thing. Certainly he said no more in his Farewell Address, where he announced that "choice and prudence" invited him to retire.

There were others who constantly demanded that I should state that if nominated I would refuse to accept. Such a statement would not be in accord with my conception of the requirements of the Presidential office. I never stated or formulated in my own mind what I should do under such circumstances, but I was determined not to have that contingency arise.

I therefore sent the Secretary to the President, Everett Sanders, a man of great ability and discretion to Kansas City with instructions to notify the delegates not to vote for me. Had I not done so, I am told, I should have been nominated.

The report that he had talked with me on the telephone after his arrival, and I had told him I would not accept if nominated, was pure fabrication. I had no communication with him of any kind after he left Washington and did not give him any such instruction or message at any time.

I thought if I could prevent being nominated, which I was able to do, it would never be necessary for me to decide the other question. But in order to be perfectly free, I sent this notice, so that if I declined no one could say I had misled him into supposing that I was willing to receive his vote.

I felt sure that the party and the country were in so strong a position that they could easily nominate and elect some other candidate. The events have confirmed my judgment.¹

In the 1928 convention several of Coolidge's followers

¹ Calvin Coolidge, The Autobiography of Calvin Coolidge, 239
opposed Hoover's nomination by submitting the names of local candidates none of which gained any support to impress the convention.

Said Coolidge, "A strong group of the party and outside of the Senate make the mistake of opposing Hoover," I had sent word to the heads of certain unpledged delegations not to vote for me, they very naturally turned to Mr. Hoover and he was nominated on the first ballot.¹

If Coolidge entertained any wish to run in 1928 his puzzling statement may have been actuated by impelling circumstance of his administration which forced him to make this decision. The breakdown of the Geneva Conference on the Limitation of Naval Armament was considered a rebuff to his Administration. Nicholas Butler, President of Columbia University, in a speech in New York emphatically declared his opposition to the renomination of Mr. Coolidge.² His attitude toward agriculture made him disliked in the west. Another obstacle it was pointed out was the sharp decline in the prices of a number of conspicuous securities on the New York Stock Market.

Coolidge was a cold unimpressive personality and while the prosperity of the period might have warranted his running again, it is difficult to believe he was strong enough to run for a third term in the face of the tradition and the combination of factors mentioned against

¹ Coolidge, op. cit., 244-245
² William MacDonald--"Coolidge Does not 'Choose' to Run in 1928," Current History, XXVI, 953 (Sept., 1927)
him. That Coolidge was not a popular leader is well established by his biographers. Hoover in commenting on his personality said, "He was without affection." This, perhaps, is stretching the point considerably, but it was no doubt the impression that he gave many by his calm, inscrutable, and cold manner.

Even if his death had not occurred when it did in January 1933, Coolidge according to his own statement to Henry L. Stoddard, New York politician, would never have challenged the third term question, as Roosevelt did after intervening presidents, for he said, "I am through with public life. You cannot state it too positively. Nothing would induce me to take office again." ¹

¹ William Allen White, op. cit., 440
In establishing the term of office for the President of the United States, the Constitutional Convention at long last arrived at the decision of a four year term without mentioning eligibility for another term. During the four months of the Convention the suggestions of Presidential tenure ranged from three years to life. Almost every delegate had a different view. There were not a few who feared the people were not prepared for self-government and could not be trusted to exercise proper wisdom in selecting a President. Some of these people wanted the Legislatures of the states to elect the executive officer. Still others thought the task must be entrusted to Congress. The delegates who wished direct suffrage forestalled moves for indirect elections by insisting that in such event the Presidency be limited to one term. Since the majority did not wish any such limitation, this parliamentary maneuvering killed the proposal to keep the Presidency out of the hands of the people. The electoral college was created before the compromise term of four years without any mention of the number of times a person can be elected to the President's office was accepted.

The first President of our country, George Washington, declined a third term simply because he was tired of being President and wanted to go home to Mt. Vernon. Quite
unconsciously he created in the minds of many the idea that since Washington served no third term, no other President should either. In his writings and speeches there is nothing to indicate that he had any thought of establishing a precedent.

Jefferson, too, restricted himself to two terms because he was tired and there was the possibility of his being rejected at the polls. However, in all fairness to Jefferson, it should be pointed out he was afraid a President who served too long might become a King. Any foundation for the establishment of a precedent is due to him. If the two-term practice thus begun by Washington was the outgrowth of personal and accidental considerations, Jefferson undertook to fix it as a matter of policy and governmental philosophy.

Jefferson's two successors, Madison and Monroe, protégés of his, each voluntarily retired after two terms. Their action was probably inspired by Jefferson.

Andrew Jackson, a popular hero, could have challenged the precedent, but because of personal feelings and advanced age refused to run again. He went so far as to repeat a recommendation that the Presidency be limited to one term of four or six years.

It was to be many years before the third-term question recurred, for during that time no President served a full two terms. In 1880 Grant was the first to express
a willingness to accept a third term. Almost one hundred
years after Washington's day, the third term tradition was
advanced for the first time to defeat a candidate. However,
it is not probably through any public resentment against a
third term that he was defeated in the convention and de-
nied the opportunity of going before the people, but
rather, he was thwarted in his ambition by political
maneuvering within his own party.

Grover Cleveland, a strong political figure, was urged
to run for a third term. Confronted with personal problems
and doubtful of his popularity, he made no effort to secure
the nomination.

It was not until Theodore Roosevelt appeared on the
national horizon that the third term issue reached the peo-
ple themselves. Although he stated that he would not run
again, his interest in progressive reform impelled him in
1912 to enter the three-cornered fight with the support of
a newly organized party. He argued he had served but one
term and part of another. This together with the fact Taft
served an intervening term placed him beyond the pale of
the precedent. It is not entirely idle to speculate what
the outcome might have been if there had been a clean-
cut fight, with Roosevelt enjoying his party's undivided
support. The surprising thing is not that Roosevelt was
defeated, but that he rolled up such an impressive vote
in the face of his strong opposition and the third term
tradition. It was the division of the Republican ranks which assured the election of Woodrow Wilson who was also a progressive. It is even more interesting to speculate what the outcome would have been if the progressive Roosevelt had run against a colorless or conservative Democratic candidate. The Roosevelt case then cannot be accepted as a real test of the third term question.

Woodrow Wilson might have run for a third term. At all events he never expressed any objection in principle to a continuation beyond the first eight years in office. His famous Palmer letter plainly shows he opposed any definite restriction. He was the only Chief Executive obliged to leave office after eight years with his entire program undefined, incomplete and at the mercy of his enemies.

As has frequently been the case with popular Presidents, or those whose administrations have been marked with prosperity, Coolidge was urged to run for a third term. His cryptic statement, "I do not choose to run in 1928," threw his supporters into confusion and rendered them helpless. The LaFollette Resolution, an attempt to stop any third term campaign, was passed by the Senate. It would be difficult to give a true interpretation of this resolution. However, it is significant in that it was directed at a man whose first term was less than four years, who had shown no itch for power, who had been restrained and reserved in his conduct of his office, whose Admin-
istration was then enjoying the prestige of exceptional national prosperity.

Has the cumulative record throughout the years erected a barrier against a third term? Are the hundreds of resolutions introduced into Congress an effort to limit Presidential tenure or are they the results of political strategy? Should a great man be precluded from the Presidency in the event of a great national emergency?

Third Term Tradition or Third Term Delusion? The answer lay with the people. Since the writing of this thesis, the American people in electing Franklin D. Roosevelt to a third term decided it was a delusion.
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