SALMON P. CHASE

Did he, or did he not, scheme for the presidency in 1868?
Alexander Long, Salmon P. Chase, and The Election of 1868
by Edward S. Perzel

During the months preceding the presidential election of 1868, many efforts were made to draft Salmon P. Chase, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, for the Democratic presidential nomination. A Supreme Court Justice becoming involved in current politics was, as it still is, contrary to tradition. Nevertheless, Salmon P. Chase was not an innocent bystander in contemporary political affairs. He was ready and willing to accept the nomination, and he had even urged certain people to further his cause. One of the most prominent Chase supporters, second only to Chase’s ambitious daughter, Kate Sprague, was Alexander Long, a Cincinnati lawyer and politician.

Long was no stranger to Chase. When Chase had lived in Cincinnati, he maintained a law office near Long’s office on Third Street. More important is the fact that they had met in 1848 in the Ohio legislature. At this time, Long’s political maneuvering had greatly aided in Chase’s election as United States Senator from Ohio.¹

¹For the story of the 1848 Senatorial election in Ohio, see Norton S. Townsend, “Salmon P. Chase,” Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications, I (June 1887), 111-126; and Agert G. Riddle, “Recollections of the Forty-Seventh General Assembly of Ohio, 1847-48,” Magazine of Western History, VI (1887), 341-351.
Alexander Long’s political career was just beginning in 1848. At that time, he appeared to be a young man of much political promise. Subsequently, he became a dynamic figure in Ohio politics. Then came the Civil War, his election to Congress, and two inappropriate anti-war speeches on the floor of the House of Representatives. These speeches earned for him a reputation as one of the most controversial and leading “Copperheads” in the country. The basis for this opprobrium was Long’s rigid adherence to the principle of state sovereignty. He became a leader of the peace wing of the Democratic Party and was relied upon and trusted by such politicians as George Pendleton, Clement Vallandigham, and Samuel “Sunset” Cox, but these men accepted the results of the war and remained prominent on the political scene. Long tenaciously held to the states’ rights position like a drowning man clutching at a straw. He felt that he must go forth and protect the country and the Constitution from Republican aggressions. Unfortunately for him, most voters were beginning to accept the idea of a strong centralized government, and popular support of the states’ rights doctrine was weakening. In 1864, Long lead a bolt of the “Peace Democrats” who took a stand in favor of slavery and the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1789. This faction wanted to nominate Long for the presidency but he prudently refused and the movement collapsed.

During the summer and fall of 1867, he and his friends had tried hard to reorganize the Democratic Party on the “true Jeffersonian principles,” but the debate over possible nominees in the 1868 presidential race gradually weakened enthusiasm for a state sovereignty movement. Thus, after fighting for a long string of lost causes, Alexander Long was ready to try his hand as a political wire-puller at the national level. He noted that the political horizon for the Democrats looked rather bleak. Certain that his ideals provided the basis for solutions to the problems faced by the nation, Long scanned the horizon for a suitable figure to carry forth his program. In Washington stood the figure of Salmon P. Chase. Here was a man who had the desire to be president, and who possessed an outlook which could be twisted to conform to Long’s ideology. Under

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3Congressional Globe, 38 Cong., I sess., pp. 1499-1503; and Appendix, 38 Cong., 2 sess., pp. 55-61.

4Frazee Clark to A. Long, 3 July 1867; Henry Clay Dean to A. Long, 10 Sept. 1867, Long MSS. The Long Papers were deposited in The Cincinnati Historical Society in 1949. It was not until 1960, when J. Wesley Morris (a member of the Society) volunteered to work on cataloging the collection, that the manuscripts were made available for any serious research. The present collection is only a fraction of Long’s papers. He saved and recorded every little transaction but many of his letter books have been lost or destroyed. Many of the letters footnoted in this paper are copies made by Long or his secretary; particularly those sent to Chase.
these conditions, Long dropped his local state sovereignty movement and grasped the “Chase for President” banner. He saw the nomination of the Chief Justice as the Democrats’ best hope. It was not that Long liked Chase personally, or that Chase was the most eminently qualified man. Rather, it was purely an expedient course of action.
Long realized that he, himself, could not have a public career, thus he sought Chase to put forward his political principles.

Chase originally had sought the Republican nomination, but the same forces which had brought about the impeachment of President Johnson had incidentally promoted General Grant’s popularity. The ambitious Chase was therefore obliged to turn to the Democrats. In Chase’s words:

I cannot approve in general of what the Republican party has done. . . . I hold my old faith in universal suffrage, in reconstruction upon that basis, in universal amnesty, and in inviolate public faith; but I do not believe in military government for American States, nor in military commissions for the trial of American citizens, nor in the subversion of the executive and judicial departments of the general government by Congress. . . .

Long was able to reconcile his principles with Chase’s on several issues because of their ambiguity. First, both Chase and he were against military governments in the South. Secondly, concerning the Negro suffrage issue, Long was able to support Chase because Chase’s policy on this issue tended to bridge the extremes of the North and the South. The principle of universal suffrage satisfied the North that the Negro would be given the vote, while the principle of state control of suffrage offered the South the right to restrict Negro voting rights by “legal” methods.

One might think that Long would have been more inclined to support his fellow Cincinnatian, George H. Pendleton. Long was, however, a hard money man and was opposed to Pendleton’s Ohio Plan of issuing more greenbacks. Long felt that no political efforts would succeed until the financial crisis had demonstrated the “utter worthlessness” of greenbacks. He was certain the crisis would come, for “God Almighty has never permitted man to create something out of nothing.”

In April 1868, Alexander Long began to bait his political hook. He wrote to Chase, referring to the aid he had given the Chief Justice in the 1848 Senatorial campaign and indicating his high esteem for him. In reply, Chase confided his deepest political sentiments to Long. He suggested that the Democrats, to be successful in 1868, must unite all its factions and turn away from past issues, adopting the motto, “suffrage for all, amnesty for all, and good money for

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5 Long to ———, 31 March 1867, Copy in Scrapbook, Long MSS.
6 Long to Chase, 6 April 1868, Long MSS.
all.” Chase hastened to deny that he was a candidate and said he wanted no more political distinction or promotion but only desired to do his immediate duty. This letter set down the only conditions on which Chase would run for the Presidency. While these conditions appeared to be contrary to Long’s views, they were broad enough to be all-encompassing.

Long replied to Chase that he was sorry to learn that the Chief Justice did not want more political distinction or promotion. Thousands of anxious hearts were looking to Chase, according to Long, to save them from anarchy and complete subversion of what remained of republican government. Then Long inquired: “With the Constitution for a platform and amnesty for all, good money for all, security for all citizens at home against military despotism and abroad against governmental invasion, as mottoes would you not [,] I ask it [in the] strictest confidence accept.”

Salmon P. Chase was well aware of Alexander Long’s political reputation and knew that he was playing with dynamite by even nibbling at this political bait. The slightest indication of an affirmative answer to such a loaded question asked even in the “strictest confidence” would be dangerous. Chase was, however, unable to contain his desires. He told Long that, if the Democratic Party accepted his doctrines as stated, “I should not be at liberty to refuse use of my name.” He cautiously, but ambiguously, added that he had no desire for the nomination and preferred to remain disconnected from all political responsibilities save that of casting his vote. The reservation did not matter: the “cat was out of the bag,” and the campaign for Chase was on.

Did such men as Jacob W. Schuckers, who was Chase’s personal secretary, and Alexander Long push Chase for the nomination against his consent? Chase was certainly an honorable man of great ability. However, he possessed an overwhelming ambition to become president. Although he realized the impropriety of his running for the office, this ambition led him into curious relationships with men such as Alexander Long.

Long immediately began to plot with Jacob W. Schuckers. In letters to Long, Schuckers discussed such matters as Pendleton’s...
opposition, impeachment, and Republican support of Chase. Schuckers and Long believed that Pendleton was the greatest threat to Chase’s nomination. They told Pendleton that his own future would be much sounder if Chase, rather than he, were nominated. These schemers also convinced themselves that many Republicans were willing to support Chase but would not commit themselves because, as yet, the probability of the Chief Justice’s nomination was not great enough for them to sacrifice their position in their own party. They sincerely felt that, as soon as Chase was nominated, Republicans would defect in droves. As far as the impeachment of Johnson was concerned, Long and Schuckers believed that the removal of Johnson would increase Chase’s prospects for the presidency. The Democrats could capitalize on the deep feeling that would result from such a conviction by claiming that the Republicans were trying to take control of the government and that they next would attempt to manipulate the Supreme Court.11

As the date of the National Democratic Convention approached, the vigor of the Chase movement increased. Long set out on a tour of the South to observe what support Chase might receive from that area. He visited Memphis, Jackson, New Orleans, Mobile, Montgomery and Macon.12 While in Macon, he received a letter from Schuckers informing him that his presence in New York was of the utmost importance and that the parties he expected to meet were more accessible in New York than elsewhere.13 About this same time, Long received an engraved announcement saying that he had been appointed at a meeting on June 10th to be a member of the Committee of One Hundred to visit New York and present the name of Chase to the delegates of the National Democratic Convention.14 Long was not to be an official delegate to the New York convention. He was to be only one of the many Chase backers who would go there to try to win the official delegates over to Chase. Kate Chase Sprague was to direct the campaign of unofficial delegates.15

While on his way to the convention, Long received a letter from his law partner, George Hoeffer, informing him of the situation in Cincinnati. He told Long that the masses, except for the Irish, would be satisfied with Chase. Money was already being raised for

11Schuckers to Long, 30 April 1868; 9 May 1868; 3 June 1868; and Long to Schuckers, 17 May 1868, Long MSS.
12Diary 1868, Long MSS.
13Schuckers to Long, 24 June 1868, Long MSS.
14Chase evidently knew nothing of this meeting. There is a note in the Chase MSS written on such an invitation in Chase’s own handwriting, stating “knew nothing of this before receiving it by mail.” See Robert B. Warden, An Account of the Private Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase (Cincinnati, 1874), pp. 703-704.
15Belden and Belden, So Fell the Angels, pp. 200-216.
a German newspaper to support Chase, so he would probably carry the "radical Germans." The Ohio delegation to the convention,

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**A WILD-GOOSE CHASE.**

**POLITICAL POSITION OF CHIEF-JUSTICE CHASE.**

"WASHINGTON, May 25, 1868.

"MY DEAR SIR,—You are right in believing that I 'shall never abandon the great principles for the success of which I have given my entire life.' I adhere to my 'old creed of equal rights,' without one jot or tittle of abatement. I shall be glad if the new professors of that creed adhere to it as faithfully, * * * It would, however, gratify me exceedingly, if the Democratic Party would take ground which would assure the party against all attempts to subvert the principle of universal suffrage established in eight, and to be established in all, of the Southern constitutions. Then, I think, the future of the great cause—for which I have labored so long—would be secure, and I should not regret my absence from political labors.

SALMON P. CHASE."

Harper's Weekly
July 4, 1868

Cartoon depicting Chase's political position on universal suffrage.
according to Hoeffer, had agreed to ignore Chase under all circumstances and to insist upon "Greenback Carpets" to carry the platform. He advised Long that, since the delegation would support Pendleton, he should wait until it was evident that Pendleton had no chance, and then either attempt to secure the delegation for Chase or break it up.\textsuperscript{16}

No sooner had the Committee of One Hundred gathered than Chase wrote Long a rather indiscreet letter. In this letter, Chase expressed amazement at the support given him as a possible nominee. He noted that it would still give him satisfaction to vote for any of the distinguished men mentioned for office.\textsuperscript{17} There does not seem to be anything indiscreet about a letter stating that a man will support the nominee of the party — except if the author of that letter had ambitions of being that nominee. This was evidently the case with Chase, for he became worried about his letter to Long and immediately wrote to John Van Buren of New York, the son of former President Martin Van Buren. Van Buren was a Chase supporter, so Chase asked him to see to it that Long did not publicly disclose any information. It was too late, for word already had been circulated that Chase would support the candidates of the convention.\textsuperscript{18}

Any practicing politician should realize that to circulate the above rumor would be the same thing as withdrawing his candidate from the running. While it cannot be proven, the rumor certainly appears to have been started by Long, the only man to whom Chase had confided this information. Perhaps, in his typically inept mode of reasoning, Long felt that the delegates would be more inclined to support Chase, the turncoat, if they had more reason to believe that he was now wholeheartedly a supporter of the Democratic Party. At any rate, the rumor no doubt ruined any chances which Chase might have had.

Chase and his supporters carefully scrutinized the platform adopted by the convention. In a conversation with one of Long's friends, Chase had said that, if he were to be nominated, it would be in order to unite all the opponents of centralization, military governments, and political disabilities for insurrection against the government. Therefore, no new declarations should be made that might repel those who desired to unite with the Democrats on these grounds. Chase hoped that the present platform united all the opponents of military despotism and political disfranchisement, and said if he were nominated he did not expect the votes of those who

\textsuperscript{16}Hoeffer to Long, 30 June 1868, Long MSS.
\textsuperscript{17}Chase to Long, 1 July 1868, Long MSS.
\textsuperscript{18}Cincinnati Daily Enquirer, 2 July 1868.
could not accept the platform and nominees with honor and good conscience. Chase felt that it would be improper and inconsistent with his public life to make any other pledges.\(^{19}\)

Having already suffered from Long's political ineptness, Chase for the second time hurriedly cautioned him not to make any use of the notes of the above interview without consulting John Van Buren. He continued: "I have much doubt the expediency of making any use of them. The remarkable public distrust which so unexpectedly developed itself in favor of my nomination does not spring from any consideration of my particular views but from a confidence that I can be elected & if elected, will give to the country an honest & useful administration."\(^{20}\) These were the words of a man who, conscious of his own great abilities, burned with desire to demonstrate his powers.

What happened at the Democratic convention of 1868 has been told many times. The Chase men purposely withheld his name so that he could be nominated as a compromise candidate.\(^{21}\) However, the convention, which did need a compromise candidate, had other plans in case of a deadlock. There were many candidates available when the climax to the convention came after twenty-one ballots. Instead of Chase being nominated, Horatio Seymour, Governor of New York and chairman of the convention, was hastily placed into nomination in order to halt the landslide of Thomas Hendricks of Indiana. Seymour, who protested his nomination, was rushed from the hall and the nomination went to him by acclamation before anyone could nominate Chase. Seymour had been nominated by Clement L. Vallandigham of the Ohio delegation.\(^{22}\) Whether Vallandigham wanted to stop the Hendricks' landslide before nominating Chase, in that case using Seymour's nomination as a tool that backfired, or whether he decided on the spot that Seymour should be nominated instead of Chase, is not known. Immediately, cries of treachery went up from the Chase men. They had been beaten by their own strategy, and all that the Chief Justice received was one-half vote and much applause. Long charged that Vallandigham had nominated Seymour because he was not in "good order" with the party, and wanted to get back into its good graces.\(^{23}\)

Many of the Chase supporters went along with the decision of the convention. Long did not accept it. Nor did he believe the dele-

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\(^{19}\) Chase to Long, 4 July 1868, Long MSS.
\(^{20}\) Cincinnati Daily Enquirer, 8 July 1868.
\(^{21}\) Coleman, Election of 1868, pp. 210-11 and pp. 236-245; and Belden and Belden, So Fell the Angels, pp. 210-213.
\(^{22}\) Cincinnati Daily Sun, 9 Aug. 1866.
The Bulletin

gates were in favor of Seymour. He immediately organized a movement to convince Horatio Seymour of this fact. He wrote to Seymour, pleading his case as if before a jury in a courtroom. He told Seymour that during the convention a delegate from Wisconsin had shown him a very “convincing paper” addressed to Seymour as chairman of the convention. This paper was to be sent to Seymour to be read by the secretary when Wisconsin would have seconded the nomination of the Chief Justice. Long felt that had not Washington McLean\textsuperscript{24} of the Ohio delegation, and some members of the New York delegation, requested that Chase’s name not be put before the convention until the next day, he would have been nominated. According to Long, Massachusetts, Michigan, Wisconsin, Tennessee and Rhode Island were each ready to nominate Chase but were told not to do so because Seymour had advised a delay in presenting Chase’s nomination until Pendleton was out of the way. Long showed very poor political sense when he told Seymour that “it was the expectation of at least two-thirds of those in attendance” that Chase would be nominated and that “millions . . . awaited the announcement of each ballot as the lightning flashed it over the country.” He then told Seymour that Chase was the only man who was certain to defeat General Grant and save the future of the country. Long concluded:

Four years more of radical rule with such a man as Grant, mere a man of wax in their hands will enable them [the Republicans] to put an end to free government and civil liberty on this continent. In that you will no doubt concur with me. If then your election would be doubtful as the standard bearer of the party and that of Mr. Chase would be certain triumphant beyond a doubt, does not duty to your country, yourself & your God alike call upon you to decline and allow the Chief Justice to be placed in your position.\textsuperscript{25}

Did Alexander Long really believe that there was a chance that Seymour would withdraw? His actions following the convention clearly indicated that his intentions were sincere. Without waiting for Seymour’s reply, Long quickly organized his forces to apply more pressure on Seymour to decline. He encouraged many people to write letters urging the candidate to withdraw in favor of Chase. The fact that Seymour waited almost a month before publicly announcing his acceptance of the nomination was evidence of the

\textsuperscript{24}Washington McLean was a prominent Cincinnati editor and politician.
\textsuperscript{25}Long to Seymour, 19 July 1868, Long MSS; Van Buren wrote Long deny-
pressures on him to decline in favor of Chase. There was some thought of a third party movement but it was decided that such a move would not accomplish anything. Besides, Chase would not consent to the use of his name in connection with any new political movements.26

On the brighter side for Chase, Schuckers reported to Long that Seymour had told John Van Buren that he did not expect to be elected. Schuckers feared that since Ohio placed Seymour's name before the convention, the substitution of Chase's name would cause a bolt of the Ohio Democrats. At the same time, Schuckers showed some hesitation because he felt that the letter of acceptance of Francis Blair for the vice presidential position lessened their chances for success.27 In other words, Schuckers showed reluctance to continue the Chase movement after the nomination was made, but not so with Alexander Long. He would continue singlehanded if necessary.

When Horatio Seymour issued his letter of acceptance, Long changed his tactics: he began issuing denunciations of Seymour. Long was quoted in a Cincinnati newspaper as stating that Seymour was in no position to accept the nomination because of the condition of his mental health. This charge was based on the fact that Seymour had a brother who was in an asylum.28

The appearance of this acceptance letter completely disheartened Jacob W. Schuckers. One of his last letters to Long stated that he had no hope of Seymour's withdrawal and that: "Some of the New York Democrats have gone crazy. They think Seymour will be elected, and Seymour himself imbibed the notion, and accepted accordingly. . . . After the present campaign is ended, we must lay the foundations for a new Democratic Party: This canvass will finish the old one."29

Alexander Long still did not feel the despair of his friend Schuckers. To Long, there would be hope until the day after the national elections; however, he only continued to alienate himself from the party. On September 10th, Long wrote Chase that Clement L. Vallandigham, then a candidate for Congress from the Third Congressional District of Ohio, would withdraw from the campaign if the majority against the Democrats in the Maine elections exceeded 18,000 votes. If this happened, Vallandigham would

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26Coleman, Election of 1868, p. 276.
27Schuckers to Long, 22 July 1868, Long MSS.
28West and South (Cincinnati), 29 Aug. 1868.
29Schuckers to Long, 17 Aug. 1868, Long MSS.
consider the defeat of Seymour a foregone conclusion, and he personally would appeal to Governor Seymour to resign as a candidate in favor of Chase. Long concluded: “Thousands of Republicans are fearful of Grant, they would desert him in a moment, if you were a candidate. . . . It may be impossible to make any impression upon Gov. Seymour at this time; but the October elections will open his eyes upon a scene in the distance . . . which he may be too glad to avoid.” What Long was saying was that, when Seymour saw the way the October Congressional elections went, he would be only too glad to turn the nomination over to Chase.

Chase’s reply to this letter indicated that he himself had not quite given up hope for obtaining the presidency in 1868. Although he was satisfied with the results of the convention, he expressed a desire to talk over the matter with Long. Long, who was so sure that the October Congressional elections would be the turning point, sent his law partner, George Hoeffer, to Washington to prepare Chase to accept the nomination. Hoeffer carried a letter of introduction to Chase from Long and special instructions to telegraph Long “settled the claim” or “cannot settle” according to whether or not Chase accepted. Hoeffer eagerly telegraphed Long “case can be settled upon the pointed terms which you have.” The telegram was followed by a letter narrating the details of the Chase interview. Hoeffer informed Long that Chase at first refused, but then he was gradually convinced that his success was not only possible but was beyond a doubt. Chase was convinced that the West was ready to accept him upon his own platform or without any platform whatever. Hoeffer then quoted Chase as stating: “Hoeffer, if Seymour & Blair decline & the Democratic National Committee will allow me to run upon what is contained in this paper I will accept. I don’t see how I could refuse under such circumstances.”

Is it coincidental that at this very moment the newspapers began printing articles on the movement to make a last-minute change of

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30It seemed that Vallandigham had done just the opposite of what he said he would do. Long later reported to Chase that Vallandigham’s ambition overcame his judgment and that “he ran to be defeated.” See Long to Chase (copy), 3 Oct. 1868, Long MSS.
31Long to Chase, 10 Sept. 1868, Long MSS; Long wrote to Schuckers the same day telling him to read this letter if Chase was not in Washington. Long to Schuckers, 10 Sept. 1868, Long MSS.
32Many politicians looked to the earlier Congressional elections for a hint of the future. General Rosecrans, a Chase supporter, felt that the October elections would change Seymour’s mind and that the people would adopt Chase “to be saved from anarchy.” Long to Chase (copy), 3 Oct. 1868, Long MSS.
33Chase to Long, 30 Sept. 1868, Long MSS.
34Telegram, Hoeffer to Long, 14 Oct. 1868, Long MSS.
35Telegram, Hoeffer to Long, 17 Oct. 1868, Long MSS.
36Hoeffer to Long, 17 Oct. 1868, Long MSS.
"WOULD YOU MARRY YOUR DAUGHTER TO A NIGGER?"

REV. DR. CHASE (to the Bride). "Do you promise to love, honor, and obey—?"

THE BRIDE. "Don't I?"

Cartoon showing Chase's position on Negro Question
Democratic party candidates? Considering that Long’s career had been spent divulging confidential information, it seems very likely that it was not coincidental. The newspapers declared that Blair, the vice presidential candidate, was willing to resign, and that if Seymour resigned, Chase would be willing to take over. There was even talk of using John Quincy Adams as a running mate with Chase.37

The climax to this wire-pulling came during the last week of October when the New York Times published a lengthy interview with Alexander Long. Long told the reporter that there was no longer hope of changing candidates because Seymour refused to listen to reason. Long assured the interviewer that Seymour’s obstinacy was the defeat of the party. When asked if he had any assurance that Chase would have accepted the nomination, Long produced a letter allegedly written by the Chief Justice agreeing to accept. It read:

Washington, D.C. Saturday Oc. 17, 1868.

Dear Mr. Long: Your friend, Mr. ———, called on me today. He has communicated by telegram with you.** Should our friends urge my acceptance, in the event of Mr. Seymour’s withdrawal, I should stand as the candidate for the Presidency in his stead, and trust-to the reverence which the people bear the Constitution, and their innate love of universal justice, for a triumphant election. My position is well known to the country, represented alike by my public record and by the views expressed in the resolutions agreed upon in July and published in all the journals.** National courage will bring this people through untold vassitudes to unity, prosperity and happiness.

Very truly, your friend, S. P. Chase38

The publication of this alleged letter of acceptance put an end to the movement because it caused a definite split between Chase and Long.

Salmon P. Chase hastened to deny the existence of such a letter. He hurriedly wrote to Long explaining that he wrote but one letter, concerning the change in the November ticket, and that in it he had said, “I not only regarded it as ‘among the impossibilities’ but that

37Cincinnati Daily Enquirer, 16-20 Oct. 1868. None of this last-minute attempt to nominate Chase in Seymour’s place is given in So Fell the Angels and it is only mentioned briefly in Coleman, Election of 1868. This John Quincy Adams was the son of Charles F. Adams and the grandson of President John Q. Adams.
I thought it as undesirable as it was impossible.” It is true that in the Long manuscripts there is only one letter from Chase concerning the change of candidates, but it is not as innocent as Chase partially quotes it to be. Chase continued his reprimand of Long stating: “I said nothing more than this to . . . Mr. Hoeffer when he was here, and if he telegraphed you anything else, he telegraphed only his own hope and expectation, but nothing authorized or sanctioned by me.” Chase also said in this letter that the same day he talked to Hoeffer, he had written a Democratic friend in New York authorizing this friend to show the proper people the following statement: “I think it my duty to say to you distinctly that under no circumstances would the substitution (that of my name for Governor Seymour) be agreeable to me & that under existing circumstances it is impossible for me to consent to it.”39 This letter to a friend in New York was dated October 17, 1868, the same day as the supposedly fabricated letter which appeared in the newspaper.

It is evident that someone was not telling the truth. Was it Long or Chase? It could even have been Hoeffer. Did Hoeffer in his report to Long twist Chase’s words to mean what he had wanted them to mean? Or did Long fabricate the letter and then have it published nationally in a final effort to swing the nomination and election to Chase? One should not be too hasty in declaring Chase’s innocence. His previous political dealings were certainly not free from suspicion. Chase could have written the letter assuring Long of his acceptance. The problem is, the letter does not exist in the Long manuscripts except in the printed form of a newspaper clipping. Add to that the fact that the reporter admitted in the article in which this letter was printed that he himself saw only a copy and not the original letter.40 The fact that Chase wrote a letter to a New York friend on the same day as the alleged letter does not clear him. It is possible that Chase postdated this letter to his friend in order to conceal the blunder of the Long publication and to keep himself respectable. Considering the former political records of both men, it would appear that all of these possibilities are conceivable. Whatever the answer, the Chase-Long friendship remained undaunted — neither man violently denounced the other. With this episode, the Chase fiasco came to an abrupt end. Alexander Long had not only added to his record of lost causes, but had proven himself to be an inept politician.

In the spring of 1872, to be assured of avoiding any repetition of the 1868 fiasco, Salmon P. Chase, a sickly, worn-out man, wrote

39Chase to Long, 27 Oct. 1868, Long MSS.
to Alexander Long that “it will cause me personally, no regrets, should the choice of the liberal Republicans and the Democrats fall upon somebody else. All I want is to see some one nominated who will unite them and who can be supported by both, without the sacrifice of cherished principles.” Thus ended the correspondence between Alexander Long and Salmon P. Chase. It ended, as it had not begun, on a strong note of outright refusal toward any personal political ambition.

"Chase to Long, 15 April 1872, Long MSS.

LEGEND OF DAVID CROCKETT

"David Crockett was raised somewhere, and grew up a few years. He was educated no where. He arrived to be a man, was celebrated for many things, and imitated the Indians. He wore odd clothes. He was a skillful man with the rifle. The squirrels stood on the top of the trees, and he hit their eyes, and they fell off. He could hit a musketoe's eyes. He shot many wild animals, always and he hit them. He was an eccentric man, and he spoke roughly. He was celebrated for grinning: he grinned many wild beasts to death."