

# Democratic Banner.

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## SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICES OF

### Gen. Lewis Cass.

Lewis Cass was born at Exeter, in New Hampshire, on the 9th day of October, 1782. His father, Major Jonathan Cass, was a soldier of the revolution, who enlisted as a private the day after the battle of Lexington. He served in the army till the close of the war, and was in all the important battles in the eastern and middle States, where he was distinguished for his valor and good conduct, and attained the rank of captain. He was afterwards a major in Wayne's army, and died at an advanced age, after a life of usefulness and honor, at his residence, near Dresden, in Muskingum county, Ohio. His son, Lewis Cass, the subject of this biography, emigrated, at the age of seventeen, to the then northwestern territory, and settled first at Marietta, in the county of Washington. He was thus, as he was recently called by the convention of Ohio, one of the "early pioneers" of that immense western region, which has already risen to such a magnitude in our own days, and is destined to attain one so much greater hereafter. The country north of the Ohio then contained one territory and about twenty thousand people.

Mr. Cass bore his full share in the toils, privations, and dangers to which the defence of a new country, and its conversion from a primitive forest to the happy abodes of civilized man, are necessarily exposed. He read law at Marietta, and was admitted to the bar before the close of the territorial government. He commenced the practice, and, as was the custom then, visited the courts in a large district of country, travelling on horseback, and encountering many difficulties unknown to the members of the bar at the present day.

In 1806, he was elected a member of the legislature of Ohio, and during the session he took his part in the business of the day. He draughted the law which arrested the traitorous designs of Burr, and introduced an address to Mr. Jefferson, which was unanimously adopted, expressing the attachment of the people of Ohio to the constitution of the United States, and their confidence in that illustrious man.

In March, 1807, he was appointed, by Mr. Jefferson, marshal of Ohio. In the execution of the duties of that office, in the business of his profession, and in the occupation of a farm in Muskingum county, where he resided, he passed his time until 1812. Then our difficulties with England assumed a portentous aspect. Her multiplied aggressions left us no recourse but war; and the statesmen of the day prepared for it with firmness. As one of the preparatory arrangements, it was determined to march a considerable force to the northwestern frontier, to be ready for offensive or defensive measures, as circumstances might render it necessary.

The command was given to Gen. Hull; and a regiment of regular troops, which had fought with credit at Tippecanoe, was assigned to him. To this were to be added two regiments of Ohio volunteers. As soon as this demand upon their patriotism was known, the citizens of that State hastened to the call of their country, and the force was raised without delay or difficulty. Mr. Cass was among the volunteers, and was elected to the command of the third regiment. He proceeded immediately with his regiment to Dayton, where the army was concentrated, and whence it commenced its march for Detroit. The country was a trackless forest, and much of it was low and wet. Great difficulties were interposed to the advance of the troops by the streams and marshes, and by the necessity of cutting a road. But these were overcome by the usual good will and perseverance of the American soldiers. The army reached Detroit on the 4th of July, 1812.

Official information that war would be declared, overtook them in the wilderness; but the declaration itself was not received until they reached Detroit. Col. Cass was perhaps more urgent for an invasion of Canada than any officer in Hull's army. He was decidedly in favor of making an early and decisive movement, before the British should be prepared for the invasion. We conceive it to be no disparagement to any one to say that he was the master-spirit of that army until the affair at the Canards; after which, it is known, he disapproved of every step taken by the commanding general. There can now be no doubt that Hull's army never would have entered Canada but for the persuasions of Col. Cass. So anxious was he to rush forward and do something to meet the just expectations of the administration and the country, that he commanded the advanced detachment, and was the first man to land in arms in the enemy's country.

On the 15th of July, he was ordered to attack a British detachment stationed at the Aux Canards, about fifteen miles from Detroit, and five miles from Fort Malden, then the British headquarters. He crossed

ed the river some distance above the enemy's post, and bravely attacked them; when, after some loss, they fled. Here was spilt the first blood during the last war. Col. Cass took possession of the abandoned position, and immediately dispatched a messenger to Gen. Hull, informing him of his success, and advising him to march immediately to Fort Malden—the road to which was opened. Had this been done, success must have crowned the operation, and the war, in that quarter, would have been over. He was, however, sadly disappointed by the indecision of Hull, who ordered him to return and join the army. From this moment bad councils prevailed, the army lost all confidence in Hull, and he proceeded in his own course, regardless of the advice or remonstrance of his officers. About three weeks after the affair at the Canards, the whole army was ordered across the river to Detroit; in which time, had Col. Cass's advice been taken, Malden might have been reduced, and a secure judgment effected in Upper Canada. The order of Hull to return was not less unexpected to the army than was the disgraceful surrender at Detroit, without a shot being fired, over-whelming to the country.

On entering Canada, General Hull distributed a proclamation among the inhabitants, which, for the eloquence and high spirit that it contained, cannot be surpassed; but it was sadly in contrast with the fulfilment of its professions. Unfortunately for the country, the author of the proclamation, Col. Cass, was not the commander of the army. Had he been so, the country would have been saved the mortification of beholding the descent from the promise to the fulfilment. As it was, he used every exertion to arouse in the commanding general that spirit of patriotism which breathes in every line of the admirable paper, but in vain. A spirit of inflation, or something worse, seized Hull, and led him on from one false step to another, until, at the crowning act, the surrender of Detroit, without firing a gun, completed his own ruin, and brought disgrace upon the arms of his country. It is well known to the country that both Col. Cass and Col. McArthur were detached from Detroit previous to the surrender, ostensibly for provisions, but, in fact, because they were unwelcome counsellors at headquarters. Stung with mortification on hearing of the surrender, Col. Cass, when ordered to deliver up his sword, indignantly shivered it in pieces, and threw it to the earth, refusing to surrender it to the enemy.

After the surrender of Detroit, Colonel Cass repaired to Washington, to report to the government the whole circumstances attending the expedition. He was exchanged during the winter, and in the spring was appointed a brigadier general. Shortly after this, he joined General Harrison at Seneca, where the army was collecting, destined to recover the territory of Michigan, and to take possession of the western district of Upper Canada. The preparatory arrangements being completed, and the lake being open to the transportation of our troops by the victory of Perry, General Harrison commenced his movement in September, 1813, and embarked his troops at the mouth of Portage river, whence they moved, and were concentrated at Put in bay. From here they sailed to the Western Sister, a small island off the coast of Canada, where, being all collected, the final arrangements were made. The debarkation was superintended and directed by Gen. Cass, of the army, and Capt. Elliott, of the navy; and he transported in perfect order, expecting to meet a formidable resistance. But the enemy had fled, after destroying the public buildings at Amherstburg and Detroit, and were in full retreat for Lake Ontario. The American army immediately commenced the pursuit, and after capturing two small detachments, which offered some resistance in favorable positions, overtook the enemy at the Moravian towns on the river Thames, about eighty miles from Detroit. The British general (Proctor) proved himself unequal to his command. Having some days the start, if he designed to escape, he should have pushed his retreat as rapidly as possible. But he moved slowly, encumbered with much unnecessary baggage, and finding the American army closing upon him, he prepared for battle. The ground he chose was heavily covered with trees, and his left rested on the river Thames, while his right extended into the woods, terminating in a marsh. This flank was occupied by the Indians, who it was intended should turn the American left wing and attain the rear. The army moved so rapidly that many of the troops were left behind, and a small portion only of Gen. Cass' command was in the battle; they were stationed immediately in front of the enemy's artillery, which commanded the road, with directions to charge upon it as soon as the action commenced. Gen. Cass volunteered his services, together with commodore Perry, to assist Gen. Harrison; and at the moment of the charge of Col. Johnson's regiment, which decided the fate of the day, Gen. Cass took a position with the right wing of it, commanded by Lieutenant Col. Johnson, and accompanied it in its charge upon the British line. It was a dangerous experiment to charge a line of disciplined British soldiers by undisciplined mounted Americans; but valor

supplied the place of discipline; and, notwithstanding the resistance, that brave regiment broke through the line, and instantly the enemy was thrown into confusion, and threw down their arms, happy to escape with their lives. The British general, Proctor, fled almost at the commencement of the action, and was pursued by Gen. Cass, with a detachment, for some miles, but could not be overtaken.

It is well known that in this important battle Gen. Cass bore a prominent part, fully sharing in the exposure and dangers of the conflict. An eye-witness, writing some twelve years since, says:

"In the autumn of 1813, I well recollect Gen. Cass, of the Northwestern army, commanded by Harrison and Shelby. He was conspicuous at the landing of the troops upon the Canada shore below Malden on the 27th of September, and conspicuous at the battle of the Thames, as the volunteer aid of the commanding general. I saw him in the midst of the battle, in the deep woods upon the banks of the Thames, during the roar and clangor of fire arms, and savage yells of the enemy. Then I was a green youth of seventeen, and a volunteer from Kentucky."

General Harrison, in his report of the battle of the Thames, dated October 9, 1813, says:

"I have already stated, that General Cass and Commodore Perry assisted in forming the troops for the action. The former is an officer of the highest promise, and the appearance of the brave Commodore cheered and animated every breast."

The battle of the Thames terminated the Northwestern campaign, and put an end to the war in that quarter, but not to the difficulties or importance of the command. The United States being once more in the possession of the Territory of Michigan, and of the province of Upper Canada, General Cass was assigned, temporarily, the command of the district, and General Harrison withdrew his army. On the 9th of October, 1813, he was appointed by President Madison Governor of Michigan, at that time one of the most important civil offices within the gift of the Executive. He was the civil as well as military governor of a large territory, having many hundred miles of exposed frontier, filled and almost surrounded with numerous tribes of hostile Indians, in the pay of the British government, and constantly excited to acts of hostility by British agents.

As a proof of the defenceless state of the country, it may be mentioned, that incursions were made by the Indians, and some persons made prisoners, and others killed within sight of the town of Detroit, and three expeditions of mounted militia hastily collected, were led by Gov. Cass in pursuit of the Indians, and some of them were killed within hearing of the town.

A single incident will show the nature of these excursions in the forests in pursuit of the Indians. General Cass's rear, who rode immediately in his rear, had a personal rencontre with an Indian, who started from behind a tree, and having discharged his rifle, attacked him with the butt end, and was killed after a short conflict.

But peace came to put an end to this state of things. The executive power of the Territory was almost unlimited, and the legislative power was in the hands of the governor and judges until 1819. That Governor Cass performed his highly important and delicate duties, the whole body of the people of Michigan will bear us witness; and the fact of his having been seven times nominated by four successive Presidents, and seven times confirmed by the Senate, without a single vote against him in that body, or a single representation against him from the people over whom he presided—a state of things unexampled in the history of our territorial governments—is a sufficient proof of the wisdom of his administration.

In the discharge of his duties as Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Governor Cass was called upon to enter into many negotiations with the Indian tribes, and often under circumstances of great peril and responsibility. He formed twenty-one treaties with them, and extinguished their title to nearly one hundred millions of acres of land—a vast domain acquired for the United States, but upon terms so just and satisfactory to the Indians, that no complaint was ever made by them upon the subject.

There are two incidents connected with the formation of these treaties, which strongly illustrate Governor Cass's judgment and decision of character. In the expedition of 1820, it became his duty to inform the Indians at Sault de St. Marie of the intention of our government to establish a military post there, and to fix upon the site for the same. The chief of the tribe was openly opposed to the United States, and in the pay of the British government. In consequence of this, they heard the intention of Gov. Cass with apparent ill-will, and broke up the councils, with the most hostile feeling. On returning to their encampment, they removed their women and children into Canada; and having prepared themselves for battle, raised the British flag, as a token of defiance. Governor Cass had but a small detachment of soldiers with him, while the Indians numbered eight hundred warriors. Unaccompanied, except by his interpreter, he advanced directly into their midst, & with his own hands pulled down the flag, trampled it under his feet, and afterwards burned it, ordering the inter-

preter to inform the Indians that "they were within the jurisdiction of the United States, and that no other flag than theirs could be permitted to wave over it." The moral influence of this bold act had the desired effect, the Indians returned the next day to the council, and the treaty was concluded, without any further threats or insults. On arriving at Green Bay, in 1827, for the purpose of forming a treaty, Governor Cass found that the Winnebago Indians had not yet come in; and as the object of the treaty was to settle difficulties among some of the tribes, the non-appearance of the Winnebagoes was an evidence of their desire for war rather than peace. He immediately re-embarked on board his birch canoe, for their camping ground, to prevent any hostilities and to bring them to the treaty ground. He rapidly pursued his voyage up the Fox river, across the portage, and down the Wisconsin, to the place of encampment. Taking with him only his interpreter, he went up to the encampment, where he found them in warlike mood, and determined not to treat. Threats and entreaties were alike unavailing with this exasperated tribe.—He left them, and returned to his canoe. As he turned to go to the river, a young warrior raised his gun, and taking deliberate aim at him, pulled the trigger; but, providentially, the gun missed fire. This is the only instance of violence ever offered to him during the long period of his intercourse with the Indians. He proceeded immediately to Prairie de Chien, where he organized the inhabitants, and placed them in a condition of defence, and returned to the treaty ground. By his prompt and energetic movements he prevented extensive hostilities, the end of which no man could know.

In 1831, Gen. Cass was called by Gen. Jackson to take charge of the War Department, and his removal from Michigan Territory was marked by a universal expression of regret. His colleagues in the cabinet were Mr. Livingston, Mr. Woodbury, Mr. McLane, and Mr. Taney—men who possessed the confidence of the President, and soon acquired that of the country. The characteristic traits of General Jackson's administration have now passed into history. It was bold, prompt, honest, and national. It sought no dangerous constructive powers, and it endeavored carefully to exercise those of which it was the trustee, for the American confederation. The great questions of the bank, of the removal of the deposits, of nullification, of the French indemnity, and of the Creek & Cherokee difficulties—three of which involved delicate points connected with State rights—occupied its attention, and were all happily disposed of.—Few, if any, now call in question the wisdom of General Jackson's course upon these important subjects, though it is difficult now to realize the intense anxiety they excited, and the momentous consequences which hung upon their decision. So far as the War Department necessarily took any immediate course in these questions, it was prompt and energetic, & met with the approbation of the country. At the portentous period of nullification, the military orders were firm, but discreet; and it appeared by a message from the President, in answer to a call upon that subject, that no order had been at any time given to "resist the constituted authorities of the State of South Carolina, within the chartered limits of said state."—The orders to Gen. Scott informed him that, "should, unfortunately, a crisis arise when the ordinary power in the hands of the civil officers should not be sufficient for the execution of the laws, the President would determine the course to be taken, and the measures to be adopted; till then he was prohibited from acting."

The same caution marked the order to the troops when there seemed to be danger of a collision with the authorities of Alabama, arising out of occurrences upon the lands of the U. States in that State. In proof of this, we quote the following extract of a letter from the War Department, written by Governor Cass to Major McIntosh, and dated October 20, 1833:

"Sir—Your letter of the 21st instant to Major General Macomb has been laid before me; and, in answer, I have to inform you that you will interpose no obstacle to the services of legal process upon any officer or soldier under your command, whether issued from the courts of the State of Alabama, or of the United States. On the contrary, you will give all necessary facilities to the execution of such process. It is not the intention of the President that any part of the military force of the United States should be brought into collision with the civil authority. In all questions of jurisdiction, it is the duty of the former to submit to the latter, and no considerations must interfere with that duty. If, therefore, an officer of the State, or of the United States, come with legal process against yourself, or an officer or soldier of your garrison, you will freely admit him within your post, and allow him to execute his writ undisturbed."

In 1836, Gen. Cass was appointed minister to France, and immediately resigned his post as Secretary of War. On retiring from the department, he received a letter from General Jackson expressing warm personal feelings towards him, and commending his whole official conduct. He sailed from New York in the month of October. As diplomatic relations had not been fully re-established with France, he was directed to proceed to England, and there ascertain the views of the French government. He found that a French minister had been appointed to this country,

and he immediately repaired to Paris and took up his residence there. After his recognition, his first official duty was to procure the interest due upon the twenty five millions of francs indemnity, which had been retained when the principal was paid. After some hesitation this was effected; & thus this great controversy, which at one time threatened such grave consequences, was happily closed.

In 1837, Gen. Cass made a tour to the east. He visited Italy, Sicily, Malta, Greece, the islands of the Archipelago, Constantinople, and the Black Sea, Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. He was at Florence, Rome, Palermo, Athens, Corinth, Elis, Salamis, and the battle fields of Plataea, Leuctra, Cheronæa, and Marathon—at the plains of Troy, at Alexandria, Cairo, and the Pyramids; at Jaffa, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the Dead Sea, Nazareth, the Sea of Tiberias, Tyre, Sidon, Baslebec, and Damascus. Memorable places these, and calculated to excite strong emotions, in the mind of an American who had passed a large portion of his life amid the toils and privations of a new country.

After his return to Paris, Gen. Cass resumed the duties of his mission, and continued in their regular execution till its termination. He was proverbial for his kindness and hospitality to his countrymen, none of whom were denied his attentions, and few of whom visited Paris without being invited to his house. His observations upon the government and people of France were given to the public in the pages of the Democratic Review, in an article entitled "France, its King, Court, and Government," which most of our readers will probably recollect. Among other literary papers he published in this country, was one upon the French tribunals of justice, which contained much information interesting to an American, and in which the author expressed his decided condemnation of the system of the English common law, looking upon it as a code originating in feudal and almost semi-barbarous times, and utterly unsuited to our condition and institutions. This opinion is fast gaining ground, and we trust the time is rapidly approaching when this relic of feudal tyranny—this perfection of sense as it is called, but this perfection of nonsense, as it in many cases is—will give way to reason and justice.

In 1841 arose the well known question of the quintuple treaty, in which General Cass acted a prominent & an efficient part. The British government, in its scheme of maritime superiority, which it never abandons any more than its plans of territorial aggrandizement, projected a plan, by which under the pretence of abolishing the slave trade, her ships of war would have been enabled to search and examine, and ultimately to seize, the vessels of other nations at their pleasure. This plan was to form a treaty, to which the five great powers of Europe should be parties, by which means a new principle in the law of nations would be established, and our flag, among others, prostrated at the feet of England. This treaty was negotiated and actually signed by the ministers of the five powers—England, France, Russia, Prussia, and Austria—before the nature of the transaction was fully understood by the world. It became disclosed before the ratifications were exchanged with the French government. General Cass published a pamphlet which entered deeply into the whole matter, and which was translated into French and German, and extensively circulated upon the continent. It awakened the public attention, and created a great sensation even in England. The London Times, in announcing it, said:

"It is a shrewd performance, written with some spirit, much bold assertion of facts, and a very audacious unfairness of argument, which is rather amusing, when contrasted with a certain tone of gentlemanly candor, which is occasionally adopted even in the very act of performing some of his most glaring perversions."

In addition, also, to the pamphlet, he presented a protest to the French government against the ratification of the treaty. In doing this, he stated that he had no instructions to pursue such a course, & added:

"I have presumed, in the views I have submitted to you, [M. Guizot, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs.] that I express the feelings of the American government and people. If in this I have deceived myself, the responsibility will be mine.—As soon as I can receive despatches from the United States, in answer to my communications, I shall be enabled to declare to you either that my conduct has been approved by the President, or that my mission is terminated."

But he did not deceive himself. His course was warmly applauded by the American people, who are ever alive to national interest and honor, and coldly approved by the government.

The following short extract will exhibit the spirit which pervaded that memorable paper:

"But the subject assumes another aspect, when they [the American people] are told by one of the parties that their vessels are to be forcibly entered and examined, in order to carry into effect these stipulations. Certainly the American Government does not believe that the high Powers, confiding parties to this treaty, have any wish to compel the United States, by force, to adopt their measures to its provisions, or to adopt its stipulations. They have too much confidence in their sense of justice to fear any such result; and they will see with pleasure the prompt disavowal made by yourself, in the name of your country, at the sitting of the Chamber of Deputies, of any intention of this nature. But were it otherwise, and were it possible they might be deceived in this confidence, you