



IDAHO STATE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
REFERENCE SERIES

S. D. COCHRAN'S CANDIDACY FOR OFFICE

Number 375

July 13, 1966

During the early months of 1864 there were few executive officers in Idaho Territory. Both Governor Caleb Lyon and Acting Governor W. B. Daniels were absent. In the interim, Idaho government was in the hands of Silas D. Cochran, private secretary originally to W. H. Wallace and then to Daniels. Cochran's position as chief executive was completely unofficial. He had been seeking official sanction for the secretary's job since December, 1863. Although he thought the members of Idaho's first legislative session were in favor of his appointment, there was at least some opposition. Milton Kelly, a member of the Boise delegation, described the assistant secretary's office-seeking desires in a letter to Wallace, January 4, 1864: "It is quite amusing to see the desire for place. The rotation in office recommended is very democratic. Your now Gov. Daniels private secretary comes in with a mule load of assurance. Strange things do happen. I think you cited me to a Judgeship that came off near Olympia when the appointment was by accidental recommendation. This would be a thousand times worse than that. Take it under advisement eighteen or twenty months and all will be right." Despite Kelly's reservations Cochran had strong support from former Governor Wallace, Oregon Congressman John R. McBride, and Oregon Senator James Mesmith. Former Idaho Secretary W. B. Daniels, who had resigned April 27, also gave tentative support. Nevertheless, Cochran lost out to Clinton DeWitt Smith, a former New York Lawyer who had influential friends in the United States Attorney General's Office.

References:

Cochran to Wallace May 5, 1864; Cochran to Wallace April 27, 1864; Cochran to Wallace March 3, 1864; Cochran to Wallace December 25, 1863; Wallace papers (University of Washington manuscript collection, Seattle), Box 1; Daniels to first Controller March 3, 1864, Territorial papers of Idaho, Lyon File, ISA; Cochran to Conness, April 27, 1864, Wallace to Lincoln June 20, 1864, State Department Applications and Recommendations for Office, National Archives, Record Group 59; C. D. Smith to father, April 20, 1865, Clinton DeWitt Smith Manuscript collection, Idaho Historical Society.

Publications--450 N. 4th Street, Boise, ID 83702--208-334-3428