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A Political Rally of 1884: A letter of L. D. Huston

L. D. Huston



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A POLITICAL RALLY OF 1884 IN DAYTONA
(A LETTER OF DR. L. D. HUSTON TO HIS WIFE")

Daytona, Aug. 6, 1884

Dear Maria :

The morrow is set for Charlie's¹ debut. He speaks in Ormond in the morning. At about 3 p.m. Some 40 horse-men (I've joined the cavalry) will meet him at the Holly Hill bridge & escort him to town, where he will be met by the rest of the Democrats, who will join the procession afoot, and all together will march to the Mrs. Anderson lot, across the way from Wilders." The place has been smoothly & closely mown, and seats, stand & light-wood tables will be in readiness. Jimmy Misner³ has been all day lettering banners (with your gold paint by the way, & it does well) which were to be borne in the procession & then placed in the rear of the stand during the speaking. There are five of different shapes,—1 Blue, in centre: "Cleveland & Hendricks ;" 2 of White, (1) "Perry & Mabry" (Gov. & Lt. Gov.), (2) "Delano & Adams;" 3 Red (1) "For Congress, Charles Dougherty;" (2) "Our Charlie,"—"A born Victor"—"Five for Dougherty." How's that? We'll paint the little town red, won't we? I am to preside.

Now comes the unpleasant part of the thing; Day after tomorrow we all strike trail, Thursday at New Smyrna, Friday, Oak Hill ; Saturday, Titusville ; Monday, Rock Ledge; Tuesday, City Point. And so we go, I have not 'crammed,' as the phrase is, in campaign politics, & would not, in any case engage in that sort of thing; so I shall tell Charlie in the morning, that if he wants me to be of any use to him he must place me before faces

*The original of this letter is in the possession of Mrs. Maria D. Pope of Daytona Beach, to whom grateful acknowledgment is made for permission to publish it. The notes are by Mrs. Pope and Edward C. Williamson.

1. Charles Dougherty, elected to Congress from the Second. Florida Congressional District in 1884.
2. Corner Beach street and Live Oak avenue, Daytona Beach.
3. Misner lived on a farm up on the Tomolia, sold produce in early Daytona.

enough to spring me into a different style of thing. My voice will not last long in the open air, & I prefer to economize it as much as may be. I will speak at Barbersville, in this county, & no where else; and in five places out of the county.

But distressing as the trip will be, on account of the mosquitoes, I cannot afford to decline it; for if he & Mr. Cleveland should be elected, as seems likely, with the two gentlemen at opposite ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, my only trouble would be to name something that *I could* do, **which** would pay. I do not care a draught for positions of "trust or responsibility or honor," I want one of *proffit*. My idea is the Land office. I can appreciate *land*. Maybe I can do something with it.

There that pesky mail got off without this. It seems the schedule is changed about once a week.

Thursday, 7th

Well, the grand hoolabooloo is over, & I have slipped out of the dreaded trip down the coast, swapping that for other work. We really had an unhopd for success. Charlie & Judge Nolan (who kindly takes my place. at New Smyrna), went to Ormond yesterday; and, Wade Douglas & O'Connell took charge of the preparations at the Lot; Jack,⁴ of the procuring of banners, flags & transparencies, lunch, & the like; I, of the cavalry. There were over 50 horses in the procession! (When we came here there was, not a horse on this coast.) At 5 o'clock we started up to meet the party from Ormond, which we never met till we were nearly there. It was dark when we got to the Mill." (We rode down there for Dave Rodgers' benefit) and there we met the brass-band which had just arrived at that point from Jax. Meniffee⁶ & Jack met us there in a carriage; & they and the two hack-loads of music & Charlie & Judge Nolan, in another carriage, & the Ormond band (a new institution) in another; and a fife & two drums in another, headed the procession, while I brought the cavalry on. I rode Capt. Balcom's⁷ pretty Nellie, & she had been idle & pampered and

groomed till she was fine as silk & good for a hornpipe. "Just look at Dr. H. !" screamed a cracker, "When did he learn to ride that way! "Before you were born," growled Dr. Wallace.⁸ "That's Ky. " We marched as far as Volusia Avenue, when we met the transparencies., ranged from Wm. Berne's⁹ fence to Cousin Maria's¹⁰. They dropped in behind us. We went as far as the Palmetto House,¹¹ & there halted, cheered & dispersed for supper. At the cheering, in which the Bands joined, Nellie fairly took a quillwill & danced & cavortted at a rate which gave the children the wildest delight-as soon as they were satisfied that I would not be thrown. And speaking of that,-Poor Hurry,¹² who is a wool-dyed Republican, but who "jined the cavalry," borrowed Misner's mule for the occasion, and mounting at Jacks store, in the presence of 100 people, smote the critters flank with spurs. Lady Longears, violently disapproving, stooped up behind, almost perpendicular, & left Hurry & the saddle-in the air. As soon as it was ascertained that he was not hurt, mellifluous utterances rent the air.

After supper the footmen reformed & came down with banners & transparencies for Charley & Judge Nolan, of Sandford, & we marched up with three bands of music, to the lot. The place looked beautiful and there must have been three or four hundred people present—many of them ladies. The speakers were Mr. Call,¹³ nephew of our U. S. Senator; Mr. Miller-Lent's Gen'l Miller, the same who was knocked overboard when poor Hall

4. William Jackson, early Volusia political leader in the general merchandise business on Beach street. Wade Douglas, a civil engineer. Walter O'Connell was connected with the dry goods business.

5. Mill, north of Main street bridge.

6. Col. Meniffee Huston; Confederate veteran and resident of early Daytona.

7. Capt. Balcom, a tourist from Massachusetts.

8. Dr. Wallace, one of the earliest physicians to practice in Daytona.

9. Wm. Berne, from Cincinnati, owned citrus groves.

10. Cousin Maria. Mrs. Maria Babbington, a widow. Not related to Dr. Huston.

11. Palmetto House, first hotel in Daytona, originally the Colony House.

12. Genford Hurry, New York winter visitor at Palmetto House.

13. Rhodon M. Call, later Judge of the Federal Southern District of Florida.

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was : Judge Nolan, Charlie & Adams. The last named was sick & said but a few words; -but -he can't speak. Charlie made the speech. It was quite good. I presided.

There was no letter. from you to-day, but a-very sweet one from Nanny; which I shall answer by next mail. She has some charming composition about you, 'but the (Her) chief motive for writing was to know. if there were still Government lands hereabouts subject to entry.. Seth, 'who has worked hard all these years-not for himself, but for the family—sorely 'feels the need of a' little. recreation ; and thinks a little life in the' open air & near the sea would be the thing: .I suppose there is certainly no good Government land anywhere near here, but will, of course, do my best in the premises. The 'children are wild' with the hope held out by N. that Ethel shall visit them next winter..

As I carried the mail up on Wednesday morning, the right leg of my drawers' absolutely fell; from a-point a foot above the knee, & I entered the sparkling presence of Mrs. Clark with but a drawer on; and then rode Neilie Balcom in one drawer! I sought solitude, & loosening the ankle button, drew the drawer off, & folding it neatly, gave it to' Fan;, who the moment she comprehended the pathetic nature of the amputation, ran up to Mary with it, & such screeches as reached me had well nigh brought away the other 'drawer. I have, begged the dismemberment, that I may take it up to Mrs. Clark & get her to cohere it. I think Julie, puts pizen in the wash' water. Them drawers is good drawers.

Mary went to the speaking, & is not so' we&--Best love, you precious.

Lo,