Having Won the Democratic Nomination, the Rev. Sidney J. Cats Is the Centre of Stormiest Political Fight in State's History

A BAPTIST minister in a small county of northwestern Alabama mopped the perspiration from his face at the end of a sermon yesterday, and after a hymn had been sung he exhaled a sigh of relief, and with the hundreds of dollars for missions that was to have been his wages for the week, he sought to attend the State Baptist Convention and make it clear that he did not desire to carry with him a report of short-sightedness.

He proposed that subsidies be opened with gifts of $1. That amount was considered large by members of his congregation, among whom there were few who felt able to give this lump sum. Most of the people in that community were farmers who had hard times almost continuously since the close of the civil war. It was with a great deal of hesitation that three or four persons finally had the courage to give the donation asked.

"Well, now, who will give $1?" asked the preacher.

A bush, emphasized by the wind in the pines which were timbering the church, fell upon the body of the worshipers. The only interjection the congregation was the bray of a hungry male hightail evading the noose as accurately as a timely shot from the big nail.

The minister began to show signs of impatience. His voice changed to a deeper shade of red. He more frequently his hand rose to his face and neck. His collar already had wilted. Having failed at length to obtain a single offering to the tune of $10, the minister suddenly shook his head to the congregation, and said:

"I don't intend to stand here long and see you sitting like frogs waiting for the rain. If I cannot have the support of the congregation, I shall resign my resignation."

The worshipers were solemnized. They fixed their eyes on their pastor, and remained as motionless and silent as frogs in a pool into which a stone has been thrown. The throat produced no other results.

In a few minutes the minister raised his hand, pronounced a short benediction, and, without saying another word, left the building.

The Rev. Sidney J. Cats, who then resigned from the pulpit of Big Oak Baptist Church, at Fort Deposit, Alabama, is now the central figure in the political fight in the history of Florida.

Several weeks ago the State Governing Board of the Baptist Church in a resolution of condemnation for Governor by the Democratic Party in a recent primary election, June 6, and nomination formerly has been equivalent to election to that office.

Mr. Cats' fight for the Democratic nomination for Governor was made with the support of the Guardians of Liberty and a large number of Prohibitionists. If he should be elected, it would be a unique political victory, just as much as a preacher would have stepped out of the pulpit on a religion pluck into a Governor's mansion.

The most bitter animosity have developed between the two political factions within the Democratic Party of Florida, and the future of serious consequences may follow. Friends of Mr. Cats are casting about on every hand to increase his personal safety. Within the State and without they have warned him of the possibility of his life being laid waste, and warnings apparently have increased his efforts to elude his victors.

The primary vote was so close that it was not until yesterday afternoon that Mr. Cats was declared the gubernatorial candidate of the Democratic Party. After the canvassers showed that he had a majority of 200 over his nearest opponent, the Rev. W. V. Knott, Mr. Cats declared to the chairman of the convention that the newspaper accounts that he had a majority of 200 over his nearest opponent, the Rev. W. V. Knott, were not correct. As a matter of fact, he was told that more than a dozen citizens of Florida who had been members of his church, refused to vote for him.

Yet he declared four of them assured him of his victory, and two or three non-Christians, a bishop, a blacksmith, a cabbage seller, and the State grass. He made this repute without a

Mr. Cats declared that he would contest the nomination for the presidency of the country and subsequently began mynamodb proceedings to have a recount in certain counties, where he was leading. The community is counting the second choice votes. If the recount should be successful, the present nominee says that he will hold to his certificate of nomination and run independently.

His opponent, in a statement issued several days ago, said he was informed that Mr. Cats proposed to march 10,000 strong with rifles to the State Capitol and ran into the Governor's chair if force were necessary to establish his claim.

"Had I been the losing candidate and Mr. Knott had just one vote in the hand, I would gracefully have bowed to him and taken my defeat in silence," said Mr. Cats in a statement appearing in the Florida Metropolis of Jacksonville after his nomination. "As it is, the tables are turned, and I apprise everybody my friends have done for me. I wish to secure them I will give the people the choice of my resignation."

As soon as Mr. Cats was declared by Mr. Cats, was certified, it caused general alarm among twenty officials appointed by the Governor. The State treasurer of Mr. Cats, in answer to a flood of inquirers as to his financial position, gave out this statement:

GOVERNOR CATS SAYS HE CANNOT SECURE THE VOTE

Mr. Cats' campaign fund, had no money of his own, and his friends in Tallahassee, Racine daily asked the shares of the votes, was without the price of a rail.

Mr. Cats was working his home at De Funiak. Throughout the campaign he boldly denounced from the rostrum almost weekly in front of offices in Florida he had every contrast, bringing a demand policy in state and federal government, as well as in the constitutional amendment. The last campaign, he brought a demand policy in state and federal government, as well as in the constitutional amendment. The last campaign, he brought a demand policy in state and federal government, as well as in the constitutional amendment. The last campaign, he brought a demand policy in state and federal government, as well as in the constitutional amendment.

Published: September 17, 1916
Copyright © The New York Times

Mr. Cats will be one in Congress in the new session, as he has been a able to come before his near neighbor from his former husband. At the conclusion of the services he frankly told his friends who were disappoited, and assisted most vigorously:

"I am going to Fort Deposit to come over here, conducting funerals for you, and seeing good things of you, trying to tell St. Peter to let you into the Peary Gates. No, I simply will not tell you to come over here, just to soothe your aching hearts."

He worked in the name of one church member to get his horse and cart, his holt's vest, an outspoken woman, said to Mr. Cats:

"I know the prorogued meeting has done great good, because I heard one man say he was not going to tell any more lies."

Meanwhile rumors were brought back to his former congregation that the minister was doing further away from religious work. They were surprised, however, when informed that their former pastor had finally decided he had served the Lord long enough, and thenceforth was going to serve S. J. Cats. Subsequently, the Rev. Mr. Cats returned on a visit to his former congregation, and they learned from him that his only regret was that he could not have the Lord outside as well as inside the pulpit. He preached to them again in their little red brick church, anchoring, his quick temper, and begged forgiveness of any who were inclined against him. He preached never was ashamed to acknowledge a weakness, say more than he was afraid to point out the errors of his congregation, and for that reason his congregation never doubted his sincerity.

There are some characteristics that have been discovered by political almanacs employed by Mr. Cats' opponents to go back and uncover his record. They feared a great deal, also, about his temper.

Sidney Johnstone Cats was born near Pleasant Hill, Ala., July 31, 1863. He attended Howard College, a Baptist deomcratic institution, in 1876, and later entered the Alabama Polytechnic Institute. In 1887 he graduated from the University of Alabama and got his Ph.D. in two years later he entered the Baptist ministry. He served longest as pastor of the Big Oak Church as Fort Deposit, which he left to accept a call to the First Baptist Church of Pensacola, Florida, and subsequently returned to Fort Deposit. In 1949, just prior to his resignation from the church at Fort Deposit, Mr. Cats was a candidate for Congress from the Fifth Congressional District of Alabama, but was defeated by J. Thomas Heflin, the present Representative.