EX-GON. ODELL DIES AT NEWBtlRGH HOME: Succumbs After a Six Months' illness at the A
Bpecia to Tke New York Times.
New York Times (1923-Current file); May 10, 1926;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2007)
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EX-GOV. ODELL DIES AT NEWBURGH HOME

Succumbs After a Six Months' Illness at the Age of 72 Years.

AIDED ROOSEVELT'S CAUSE

Challenged the Leadership of T. C. Platt — Funeral to Be on Wednesday.

Special to The New York Times.

NEWBURGH, N. Y., May 9.—Benjamin Barker Odell, former Governor of New York, died at his home here at 5:30 o'clock this afternoon.

Mr. Odell, who was in his seventy-third year, had been seriously ill for six or seven months. Within the last week he declined rapidly, and hope for his recovery was abandoned several days ago. The cause of death was cancer of the stomach.

All of Mr. Odell's immediate family were with him when the end came. These are his wife, his sons, Herbert Roe Odell, Superintendent of the Central Hudson Steamboat Company, and Benjamin Brian Odell, President of the Public Service Company of Newburgh; his daughter, Mrs. J. Townsend Cassidy, and his stepdaughter, Mrs. Helen Traphagen Kelly.

The funeral will be held Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock from the house in Liberty Street, near South Street. More detailed arrangements will be announced later.

Leaders Pay Tribute.

Regret over the death of former Governor Benjamin B. Odell was expressed last night by Charles E. Hughes and Nathan L. Miller, also former Governors of New York State.

"Governor Odell was a strong character of great resourcefulness," Judge Hughes said. "He was a man of definite principles and courage in applying them. His death is a great loss to the State."

"Governor Odell was a life-long friend of mine and a man whom I held in the highest esteem and had the greatest admiration for," said Judge Miller. "I regard his passing as a great personal loss. He was a man of very great ability."

Governor Smith said in Albany last night: "I have just learned with deep regret of the death of former Governor Odell. I always regarded him as one of New York State's leading citizens and one of our great Governors."

An Able Organizer.

Benjamin Barker Odell Jr., former Governor of New York and generally considered one of the ablest political organizers that ever came to leadership in the Republican Party, was born in Newburgh on Jan. 4, 1854. The Odell family had long been settled there and his father, a leading business man, was Mayor of that city for twelve years.

Mr. Odell was educated at Bethany College, West Virginia, and at Columbia College, where he would have graduated in 1877 if he had not decided at the end of his junior year to return home and help his father in business. The elder Odell had among his various enterprises an ice business, and the son, desiring to learn it from the bottom, started as driver of an ice wagon at $2 a day. In that capacity he came to know intimately a large part of the population of Newburgh and soon joined his father in the latter's political battles.

Subsequently Mr. Odell became the head of his father's ice company and was Ice Controller of the State by appointment during the World War. He also became President of the Consolidated Gas, Electric Light, Heat and Power Company of Newburgh and of the Central Hudson Steamboat Company. On his subsequent election as Governor Mr. Odell disposed of his interests in corporations that might be affected by legislation.

Well Grounded in Politics.

With the way made ready for him by his father's interest and influence in politics, Mr. Odell took an active part as a young man in campaigns in Newburgh, and it was largely by his efforts that Newburgh was changed from a politically doubtful to a Republican city. His first attempt to run for public office resulted in a reverse. He was nominated for Supervisor of New Windsor, near Newburgh, and the manner of his defeat is said to have taught him a lesson which he never forgot and served to bring Republican victory in the State years later.

Mr. Odell suffered only one other defeat at an election. That was in the early '80s, when he was drafted to run for State Senator in what was then a Democratic district. He was beaten, but the result was so close that it increased rather than impaired his political prestige.

Soon afterward Mr. Odell was elected a member of the Republican State Committee. His interest and activity in politics did not cause him to neglect business, in which he became very successful as he joined in the extension of his father's enterprises and engaged in others on his own account.

Elected to Congress.

In 1894 he was nominated for Representative in Congress in the district composed of Orange, Rockland and Sullivan Counties and was elected by a large majority. He was re-elected in 1896, but declined a renomination in 1898, and a short time later declined election as Clerk of the United States Senate, which was offered by the Republican caucus of that body. At the end of his term in Congress Mr. Odell was Chairman of the Committee on Accounts and a member of the Committee on the District of Columbia.

Mr. Odell had been elected Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Republican State Committee just before his election to Congress in 1894. Charles W. Hackett, Chairman of the State Committee, died in 1898, and Mr. Odell was chosen unanimously to fill the vacancy. His work as Chairman of the Executive Committee had been so thorough and satisfactory that no one else was considered for the place.

Even before his election as State Chairman Mr. Odell had become a power in the Republican State organization. At the State convention in 1896 he failed narrowly of getting the Republican nomination for Governor. A conference of leaders, called by the late Thomas C. Platt, then the undisputed Republican leader of the State, actually decided by a vote of 11 to 5 to make Mr. Odell the nominee. Overnight, the late Louis F. Payn of Columbia County convinced Senator Platt that Frank S. Black, the Temporary Chairman of the convention, who had come into public notice through prosecution of election day thugs in Troy, would make a stronger candidate. Mr. Black was nominated and elected.

Underwood & Underwood.
BENJAMIN B. ODELL JR.,
Former Governor of New York, Who Died Yesterday.

Worked for Roosevelt.

To Mr. Odell has been attributed a large share in the nomination of the late Theodore Roosevelt for the Governorship. It is certain that he suggested him to Senator Platt and persisted in his suggestions after the latter had declared that Roosevelt was not the kind of a man he wanted. Senator Platt is reported to have said that Roosevelt was a disturber of party harmony and that nobody could control him. Mr. Odell, according to current reports, insisted that it was his duty as State Chairman to bring about the nomination of a man who would win and informed Senator Platt that Governor Black in his judgment could not be re-elected.

Roosevelt, who had just returned to Montauk Point from Cuba and was at the height of his fame as a Spanish war hero, declares in his autobiography that Mr. Odell was one of three leaders who were foremost in pressing him upon Senator Platt. Colonel Roosevelt was subsequently nominated for Governor and elected by about 18,000 plurality over Augustus Van Wyck.

Famed as a Political Prophet.

It was by his management of Roosevelt's gubernatorial campaign that Mr. Odell made his first great reputation as a skillful political organizer and an almost uncannily correct election prophet. It was said of him that he could estimate within a few votes the pluralities in every county of the State, and the story is told of a friend of his at Newburgh who had bet $200 on Van Wyck, hastily hedging to bet on Roosevelt when told by Odell that Roosevelt would surely win.

Mr. Odell's nomination and election to the Governorship came as a result of the movement, engineered by Senator Platt, which nominated Theodore Roosevelt for Vice President. Senator Platt was credited with having sought to rid himself of Roosevelt as Governor by having him named for Vice President and of Odell as State Chairman by naming him for Governor. Both Roosevelt and Odell at first refused to play the roles assigned them, Roosevelt accepting the nomination for Vice President reluctantly, and Odell at first refusing the nomination for Governor as out of his line.

Senator Platt failed signally to get any advantage from this arrangement. The assassination of President McKinley placed Roosevelt in the White House. Odell as Governor displayed unexpected independence, broke with Senator Platt on many matters and finally deposed him from the place of political power he had held for many years.

He Stressed Efficiency.

Under Mr. Odell's leadership as Governor the direct State tax was reduced to .13 of a mill and at the same time appropriations for roads and schools were increased. The apparent saving was largely at the expense of indirect taxpayers of New York City, but this and the businesslike conduct of his Administration strengthened Governor Odell up-State.

The administration of the State insane asylums was simplified by abolishing the boards of managers and centralizing the control in the Commission on Lunacy. Governor Odell stressed economy and efficiency. He appointed a Commissioner of Public Works without consulting Senator Platt. He opposed Senator Platt's recommendation for a State Police Commission for New York City and generally displayed independence of the man long regarded as "boss" of the Republican Party.

This was the situation in 1902, when Odell came up for renomination for Governor. He was assured of a renomination, although Senator Platt professed to doubt that he could be re-elected and some of the Senator's friends started a revolt. The real fight in the convention came on the selection of a candidate for Lieutenant Governor.

Senator Platt's candidate was George R. Sheldon, a New York City banker. Governor Odell refused to accept him and brought about the nomination of State Senator Frank W. Higgins of Cattaraugus County. By the nomination of Senator Higgins, Senator Platt's long power began to pass into eclipse.

Won Hard Fight for Re-election.

Governor Odell's political shrewdness was never shown to better advantage than in his campaign for re-election. Apparently a Democratic victory in the State was due and the Democrats under the leadership of David B. Hill nominated Bird S. Coler of Brooklyn against him. The campaign was a bitter one. Mr. Odell was attacked for having retained the chairmanship of the Republican State Committee while Governor and for the sale of groceries to the State by a company in which he was alleged to have an interest.

Governor Odell, as his own campaign manager, centred his efforts up-State. The intensive campaign was needed, as Coler, profiting by a reaction against the Low administration in New York City, received 122,000 plurality there, a record plurality in the city at that time.

Odell, however, rolled up a tremendous up-State vote and carried the State by 9,752.

Although Platt was re-elected to the Senate soon after Governor Odell took office for his second term, the former's power waned rapidly. Three of the leading Republican members of the State Senate, Elon R. Brown, Truman H. Brackett and Nathaniel A. Elsberg, voted for Elihu Root and during the rest of the session refused to accept the Platt orders, thus breaking his control of the Senate.

Rises to the Leadership.

Governor Odell became more and more the real Republican leader of the State. In the first year of his second Administration, a referendum vote authorized the enlargement of the Erie canal, which he had consistently urged. He opposed special legislation and vetoed a large number of special and personal bills. He favored an extension of home rule power for cities and gave aid to tenement house reform legislation.

At the close of his term he engaged in his final conflicts with Senator Platt in one of which he was successful. In his final conflicts with Senator Platt, in the nomination of Lieutenant Governor Higgins as his successor, in which Theodore Roosevelt, then President, is understood to have aided. Senator Platt, according to report, tried to get Elihu Root to run and then turned his support to Timothy Woodruff, former Lieutenant Governor. Senator Higgins was nominated and elected.

The matter in which Governor Odell failed to carry out his original intention against the wish of Senator Platt was in the election of a United States Senator to succeed Chauncey M. Depew. Senator Depew expected re-election, which was then by the Legislature, but it was learned just before Governor Odell was to leave office that he and his friends were pledged to Frank S. Black.

A canvass of the situation showed that Governor Odell had enough votes to elect Mr. Black, but the day before he left office he announced that he favored the re-election of Senator Depew. This change of front was attributed to the influence of the late E. H. Harriman and was generally believed to have had some connection with Mr. Harriman's contribution to the Republican campaign fund in the Presidential campaign of 1900.

Governor Odell's about-face weakened his prestige greatly and thenceforth his power gradually waned.

Mr. Odell was married in 1877 to Miss Estelle Crist of Newburgh, who was drowned in an accident on the Hudson River in 1888. Three years later he married Mrs. Linda C. Traphagen, a widowed sister of his first wife.

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