

THE CONTRIBUTION OF MILDRED BRASS TO THE
GROWTH OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

by

Mary Jane Hannahan

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in partial fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

February

1953

LIFE

Mary Jane Hannahan was born in Chicago, Illinois, October 6, 1925.

She was graduated from St. Scholastica Academy, Chicago, Illinois, June, 1943, and from Barat College of the Sacred Heart, Lake Forest, Illinois, June, 1947, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

Since September, 1947, the author has taught in the Chicago Public Schools. She began her graduate studies at Loyola University in February, 1949.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter | Page |
|---|------|
| I. WILLIAM CROSS, 1813-1848 | 1 |
| New Jersey, 1813--Early education--College--Ridgebury Academy --Marriage--A new home--Eleven years a city--Sea of mud--View for a visitor--Transportation--Housing. | |
| II. A CHICAGO BOOSTER, 1849-1854 | 16 |
| The Prairie Herald--Scraps and the Democratic press--The beginning of the Commercial Review--Chicago post-Office --Kansas-Nebraska Bill and Senator Douglas--A change in politics. | |
| III. CHICAGOAN, 1855-1871 | 41 |
| Commercial Review--City council--Election of 1856--Press and Tribune--Election and Douglas--Guard Chicago--The Tribune Company--Lincoln for President--Civil War--Cass Douglas Conspiracy--Lieutenant-Governor Cross--"Garden City"--Western Interests. | |
| IV. THE FIRE OF 1871 | 81 |
| Cross' account--New York Tribune story--Emergency measures --Chamber of Commerce speech--A plan for Chicago. | |
| V. WE FUCH THE AGES | 97 |
| Rebuilding Chicago--Three years' work--Faith in the future--Cross' later life. | |
| CRITICAL ESSAY ON ACTIVITIES | 104 |

CHAPTER I

WILLIAM BROSS, 1813-1848

The Constitution of the United States was only a few years old when William Bross, the subject of this paper, was born. In 1812, the young nation had become involved in a war with England. William Bross was born, midcourse in the conflict, in 1813 at Montague, Sussex County, New Jersey. His father, Deacon Moses Bross, had been born in 1792 and he remembered well when Washington died in 1799.¹ The family of Mrs. Jane Winfield Bross, William's mother, had been living in Sussex County, New Jersey since pre-Revolutionary days. William's maternal grandfather, Abraham Winfield, had been a lieutenant in the Revolutionary army. The family of his maternal grandmother, Margaret Quick Winfield, had come from Holland to the Delaware River country between 1730 and 1735. His most prominent forebear on the maternal side was Tom Quick, the great Indian fighter, later called the "Avenger of the Delaware." Tom Quick was also the subject of a historical sketch written by William Bross in 1887 and entitled "Legend of the Delaware." A monument has been erected for Quick near Fort Jarvis, New York.

It was in the Delaware River country, comprising parts of New Jersey,

1. Diary of William Bross, Lloyd Family Collection, Winnetka, Illinois, 1881, 34.

New York, and Pennsylvania, that William Cross spent his boyhood. The first nine years of his life were passed near Fort Jervis, New York. William Cross had a great attachment for his old home and spoke of it fondly. Revisiting it in 1878 he remarked: "attended Sabbath School in the Old Dutch Church in which I was baptized. Spoke to the children. Also attended the church--the first time for nearly 60 years. Was baptized in it in 1816."²

On still another visit in 1885 he wrote: "How interesting to me is the old home of my Father and Mother. How much of God's blessing they enjoyed there."³

When William Cross was nine years old, the family moved to Milford, Pennsylvania, still in the Delaware River country. Another ancestor on the maternal side had been the first white settler in Milford, Pennsylvania. Recalling the family move, in 1885 while visiting Milford, Cross says: "Father moved here from New Jersey in 1822. I left for Dominic Allen's School, fitting for College in 1834."⁴ Dominic Allen's school was located in Milford, where the Cross family took up residence. Dominic Allen was also referred to as the Rev. E. Allen. On a visit to the tract in 1876, William Cross met some old schoolmates. "Met many friends of my youth, Geo. Holden, Geo. Shaw, and L. D. Baldwin and sister of Newark, New Jersey. These all went to school with me to Rev. E. Allen at Milford."⁵

2 Ibid., 1878, 50.

3 Ibid., 1885, 42.

4 Ibid., 1885, 42.

5 Ibid., 1885, 24.

William Bross' education at the school was interrupted for a time, however, when Deacon Moses Bross engaged in the lumbering business and called upon the oldest of his nine children for assistance in the enterprise. Deacon Moses Bross furnished timber for the lock bottoms of the Delaware and Hudson Canal. William Bross always remembered this work. He visited the old ridges near Milford, Pennsylvania, in 1887. "These old ridges looked very familiar to me. They reminded me of the toils of boyhood's days. I used to cart supplies over them to my father's saw mill on Fankler Brook--not by this road, however, but by the Shockapee, built on Rock Van Gorder, etc."⁶ Perhaps it was this hard work which contributed not only to his healthy physique but also to his curiosity and interest in nature.

A boyhood trip to Philadelphia made quite an impression on Bross. While in Philadelphia, he and his father attended the First Presbyterian Church.

In this church, sitting beside my father some time in 1830-1, I heard Dr. Boyce preach a most powerful sermon in the presence of Gen. Jackson, then President of the U. S. We sat in the right gallery about opposite the pulpit. It was a great day for us. The crowd cheered as he left the church. I saw him in Independence Hall next day and in the streets on horseback. He was a tall splendid man.⁷

In August of the following year William Bross joined the Presbyterian church of Milford, Pennsylvania. A visitor to the church in 1878, he wrote: "In P. M. went to Milford with my cousin Judge Geo. S. Heller, and was his guest. Heard Rev. H. Hatler preach in the evening. This church I

⁶ Ibid., 1887, 37.

⁷ Ibid., 1876, 19.

joined in 1832. Have therefore had a very interesting day among the associations of my earliest years. Thank the Dear Lord for his abundant mercies."⁸

Broer's father, Moses Bross, held the title, Deacon, because he was one of the founders and first elders of the Presbyterian church of Milford. Mrs. Jane Winfield Bross was one of the eight original members of the church. Although William Bross later used the title, Deacon, he is not listed as ever holding such an office. He belonged to the Second Presbyterian church in Chicago, Illinois, from his arrival in that city in 1848 until his death in 1890. However, it is not recorded that he ever held the office of either elder or deacon.⁹ The title of Deacon, as applied to William Bross, is therefore a cognomen.

William Bross entered Williams College in Massachusetts in 1834 in order to prepare for the teaching profession. During his college days at Williams he helped to found the Delta Upsilon fraternal society. He graduated with honors in 1836. Even before he graduated, William Bross had ventured forth on his career. During the winter of 1837-38 he taught school at Pittsfield, Massachusetts. In 1886 Bross recalled his stay there: "At Milwaukee met Mrs. Adams and her sister, Mrs. Laffin--daughters of Dr. Brewster of Pittsfield, Mass., with whose parents I boarded while teaching in that town in the winter of 1837-8. I never expect to spend a more delightful winter."¹⁰

⁸ Ibid., 1678, 50.

⁹ The Second Presbyterian Church of Chicago, June 1st, 1842, to June 1st, 1892, Knight and Leonard, Chicago, 1892.

¹⁰ Diary of William Bross, 1886, 46.

William Bross described his position in these words: "I am teaching in the east part of town and am blest with only fifty scholars, high and low, rich and poor, black and white, great and small, good, bad, and indifferent, with a fair prospect of an increase in numbers."¹¹ Bross really enjoyed his profession and was well suited for it, having a good knowledge of and a great liking for the classics. A great interest in and an enjoyment of practically everything marked William Bross' life.

Two years later he was the principal of Ridgebury Academy, Orange County, New Jersey. Recalling his work there on a visit in 1876, Bross writes:

Had a most delightful view of Ridgebury in the distance. The valleys and hills among which I spent 9-1/2 years of my early manhood appeared most beautiful. Memories came thick and fast of early toils and pleasures and very moderate success in money matters, but I hope I did much good in teaching.¹²

During this time he married Mary Jane Jansen, daughter of Dr. John T. Jansen of Goshen, New York. In a letter to an old schoolmate, Mr. Bross tells of his happy marriage:

Without any embellishment . . . I'm a married man. It came over me last fall and all I have to say is 'so far so good.' Perhaps the poetry of matrimony, 'the honeymoon' or whatever other name it is called is not yet passed; but as yet I can say with the poet 'Domestic Happenings, then only bliss of Paradise.'¹³

¹¹ Bross to Daniel Day, November 30, 1837, Lloyd Family Collection, Minnetka, Illinois.

¹² Mary of William Bross, 1876, 25.

¹³ Bross to Daniel Day, February 19, 1840, Lloyd Family Collection, Minnetka, Illinois.

Though William Bross was happy in his teaching, the West held a great attraction for him. In October of 1846 he decided to embark upon a western trip visiting St. Louis, Chicago, and several other western towns. Perhaps he included Chicago in his itinerary because of a poem, published and distributed by a Chicago enthusiast, telling of the city:

This city late from nothing grew;
It's elegant and healthy.
There's Baltimore and Boston, too,
New York and Philadelphia.
The women, as in all states,
Will sometimes make the jaw go--
And would, if at Heaven's gates--
Oh beautiful Chicago!¹⁴

At any rate William Bross enjoyed traveling. In 1863, he remarked "I have been in every state in the Union and all the territories, save only the Indian, Idaho, Arizona and Alaska. Pretty considerable of a traveller, surely."¹⁵ Bross' trip in 1846 changed the course of his life.

In 1832, Chicago consisted of Fort Dearborn, agency houses, and five farm houses. An old settler, Charles Cleaver, describes Chicago as on the very confines of civilization.¹⁶ When Mr. Cleaver arrived in Chicago in 1833 he found a village of less than two hundred inhabitants. Cleaver describes the Chicago of that day in these words:

¹⁴ Abbott Lawrence Hardy, Early Chicago; being a record of the city's growth and development during its first forty years, compiled from files of old newspapers and documents, (clippings from Chicago Evening Post, 1917), Chicago, 1910, 19.

¹⁵ Mary of William Bross, 1883, 15.

¹⁶ Charles Cleaver, History of Chicago from 1833 to 1892, Published by the Author, Chicago, 1892, 19.

Upon entering Chicago from the south and rounding the point of the woods about Thirty-first street we could see but one building between us and the village, and that was a log barn, standing about Twentieth street. To the east of us was the beautiful lake, on the bosom of which we could now and then, between the hills of sand that lined the bank, catch sight of two schooners that lay at anchor half or three quarters of a mile from land.¹⁷

As they approached the village, Charles Cleaver says:

Wondering if the place would answer the glowing description we had heard of it and realize our expectations, we kept the beaten track to about Adams street, where we turned directly westward across the prairie in the direction of the bridge throug across the river between Randolph and Lake streets, but changed our course about Clark street, where we turned north and made for the center of the village, between Franklin and LaSalle streets near the river.¹⁸

Cleaver describes Chicago's only bridge as very crudely made from logs and expresses amazement that a team and horses ever crossed it safely.

What few buildings there were on the south side, were built on the prairie, about one hundred feet from the river, with an Indian trail deeply indented in the soil, running close to it along its bank. There was no road or street throug up, but the houses and stores were scattered here and there from about State street on the east, to the forks of the river westward. From Dearborn street west on the north side was one dense forest, with the exception of a couple of log buildings and a house and barn; situated on the point made by a north branch as it emptied into the main stream.¹⁹

.....
 There were several hotels in Chicago, when we arrived--the Knollon House, near State, on Lake street; the Sauganash, on Market, kept the winter by Mark Beambien; Ingersoll's on West Water street then known as Wolf Point, facing the main river,--a log building with a piazza in front of it; and the Green Tree Hotel.²⁰

17 Ibid., 42.

18 Ibid., 43.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., 46.

There were several stores, John Wright's between Dearborn and State streets, was the most easterly. Then there were two small stores near the corner of Dearborn--one used as a bakery and the other as a grocery or saloon. Between Dearborn and Clark streets were several buildings used as stores and dwelling houses.²¹

Upon crossing to the other side of the river

. . . at the corner of West Lake and West Water streets, Bob Kinzie as he was familiarly called, kept the largest store in town though chiefly filled with goods for the Indian trade.

On the north side east of Dearborn street, there were two or three small stores and groceries, and several houses on North Water street, a small brick house near North State street being then the only one in the village.²²

This was the Chicago of 1833. In 1837, when it was incorporated into a city, the population of Chicago had grown to 4,170. In 1838, however, an epidemic of cholera took its toll and the figures for the city's population showed only 4,000 for that year. By 1845 the city had begun to prosper and trade was becoming an important feature of Chicago business.

Following are some of the market quotations for January 27, 1845: Wheat, 66 cents; oats, 26 cents; shelled corn, 35 cents; ear corn, 30 cents; potatoes, 31 cents; turkeys, 38 cents each; chickens, 50 cents each; ducks, 12 cents each; butter, 15 cents a pound; eggs, 13 cents a dozen.²³

In the year 1846, when William Brooks visited the city, Chicago could boast of a population of 14,619 souls. Business was booming in Chicago. The editor of the Chicago Journal wrote:

The public houses in town, take them altogether, were never doing a better business than at the present time. Tables, beds and barns are all filled, and the change rattling like wheat in a hopper, but the way it rattles out

21 Ibid., 47.

22 Ibid.

23 Harvey, Early Chicago, 43.

on Water street in return for the wheat brought in is a caution to bankers with small capital.²⁴

The Chicago Daily Democrat remarked that "New and larger stores were being built every day, and that merchants were moving into them, trying to carry on business while changing locations."²⁵

William Cross' first view of the city of Chicago can best be pictured by his own description of what he saw. He told of his arrival in a speech in 1876.

We landed from the steamer Oregon, Capt. Cotton, near the foot of Wabash avenue, (landed at the wharves at Wabash avenue), and, with others, valise in hand, trodged through the sand to the American Temperance House, then situated on the northwest corner of Wabash avenue and Lake street. Soon after breakfast a tall young man, made apparently taller by a cloth cloak in which his gaunt figure seemed in danger of losing itself, and whose reserved modest manners were the very reverse of what we had expected to find at the West, called on the clergy of our party and invited one of them to preach and the rest of us to attend service in the Second Presbyterian Church. . . . Of course we all went to what by courtesy, as we thought, was called a church. It was a one-story balloon shanty-like structure that had been patched out at one end to meet the wants of the increasing congregation. It stood on Randolph street, south side, a little east of Clark.

The residence portion of it, (the city), was mainly between Randolph and Madison streets, and there were some scattered houses as far south as Van Buren, on the South Side, four or five blocks north of the river on the North Side, with scattering residences about as far on the West Side. There were perhaps half a dozen or more wooden warehouses along the river on Water street. The few stores that pretended to be wholesale were on Water street, and the retail trade was exclusively done on Lake street. Stores and dwellings were, with few exceptions, built in the balloon fashion. To some of my hearers this style of building may already be mysterious. Posts were placed in the ground at the corners, and at proper distances between them blocks were laid down singly or in cob-house

²⁴ Ibid., 12.

²⁵ Eric Ross Frueh, "Retail Merchandising in Chicago, 1833-1848," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, xxxii, 2, 1939, 169-70.

fashion. On these foundations timbers were laid, and to these were spiked, standing on end, and scantling. On these sheathboards were nailed, and weatherboards on the outside of them; and lath and plaster inside, with the roof, completed the dwelling or store. This cheap, but for a new town, excellent mode of building, it is claimed, was first introduced, or, if you please, invented, in Chicago, and I believe the claim to be true. . . . True, Chicago was ridiculed as a slab city; but, if not pleasant, to bear ridicule breaks no bones.²⁶

The city of Chicago definitely made an impression upon William Bross. Perhaps his travelling companions saw only a little town at the head of Lake Michigan, but Bross ". . . recognized it as the future focus of the commerce of the great Northwest, when the West should be settled and its resources developed. He had faith in Chicago . . ."²⁷ Undoubtedly, this faith was substantially bolstered by the great activity in commerce and trade that William Bross witnessed during his visit to Chicago. Looking back in 1876, on his first visit, he says that he felt that prosperity and substantial greatness were within her grasp.²⁸ William Bross believed that Chicago was destined to be ". . . the great commercial metropolis of the United States."²⁹

So it was that after his visit to Chicago Bross returned to New Jersey and made known to his wife and friends his plan to settle in Chicago. It was necessary to close the Ridgebury school where he had done so much fine

²⁶ William Bross, History of Chicago, Jansen, McClurg and Company, 1876, 115-116.

²⁷ Anonymous, Biographical Sketches of Leading Men of Chicago, Wilson and St. Clair, Chicago, 1868, 37.

²⁸ Bross, History, 116.

²⁹ Ibid., 60.

work. On an Eastern trip in 1876 William Bross visited one of his old Ridgobury pupils, Howard Elyer, Esq. "He is one of my Ridgobury pupils. Has been very successful. Is president of a bank, Railway director, Receiver, etc.--a leading gentleman in the community. Am proud of him. Has a fine family."³⁰

A new livelihood was essential to Bross' move and he decided to become a partner with S. C. Griggs in the book-selling firm of Griggs, Bross and Company. Thus the first steps were taken that would put his plan into action. It must be borne in mind that the Chicago of 1848, in spite of its commercial activity, was a shanty town, having a population of only 20,083. However, this was still the city which William Bross thought was ". . . destined to be the great central city of the continent."³¹

It took nearly a week to come from New York to Chicago in 1848.

Bross describes his journey in these words:

Our trip was made by steamer to Albany; railway cars at a slow pace to Buffalo; by the steamer Canada thence to Detroit; and by the Michigan Central Railway, most of the way on strap rail, (the rails were bolted to straps), to Kalamazoo; here the line ended, and, arriving about 5 o'clock in the evening, after a good supper, we started about 10 in a sort of a cross between a coach and a lumber-box wagon for St. Joseph. The road was exceedingly rough, and, with bangs and bruises all over our bodies, towards morning several of us left the coach and walked on, very easily keeping ahead.³²

After arriving in St. Joseph, the trip to Chicago was then concluded by steamer. In this manner, William Bross came to Chicago on the twelfth of May,

³⁰ Diary of William Bross, 1876, 21.

³¹ William Bross, Railroads, History and Commerce of Chicago, Democratic Press Job and Book Steam Printing Office, Chicago, 1855, 69.

³² Bross, History, 116.

1840. Looking back in 1886 upon his arrival at his new home, he remarked: "It is 30 years since I came to Chicago to stay. How wonderful has been the growth of the city and how merciful the Dear Father to spare my life so long."³³

Mr. Bross made the acquaintance of John Stephen Wright, another believer in Chicago's great future, during the course of this journey.

I made the acquaintance of John S. Wright, then, and for many years afterward, one of the most enterprising and valuable citizens Chicago ever had. He gave me a cordial welcome, and a great deal of valuable information. On Sabbath he called and took me to church, and embraced many opportunities to introduce me to Mayor Woodworth and other leading citizens, giving me a lesson in courtesy to strangers which I have never forgotten.³⁴

William Bross tried through his entire life always to display the utmost in hospitality to all Chicago visitors.³⁵

John Stephen Wright, to whom William Bross referred, had come to Chicago in 1832. He helped to build the third frame house to go up in the village, in that year. "He had built Chicago's first school building at his own expense and done more than other men to spread common schools across the frontier."³⁶ He also founded the Prairie Farmer, an important agricultural newspaper. Wright was a Chicago economist. He pleaded for both railroads and

³³ Diary of William Bross, 1886, 23.

³⁴ Bross, History, 116.

³⁵ In 1857, James Parton relates that William Bross usually did the honors of the city and that ". . . no one could do them more agreeably and more intelligently--to visitors of distinction." James Parton, "Chicago," The Atlantic Monthly, xix, March, 1867, 340.

³⁶ Lloyd Lewis, John S. Wright, Prophet of the Prairies, The Prairie Farmer Publishing Company, Chicago, 1911, v.

common schools for the city. He extolled Chicago's prairies and called her the "Garden of all creation." Lloyd Lewis is of the opinion that William Cross partially derived his enthusiasm for Chicago from John Stephen Wright and modeled his career and his subsequent prophecies for Chicago on those of Wright.

Mr. Cross' raw here had changed somewhat since he had seen it last in 1846. There had been an increase of about four thousand souls from 1846 to 1848 despite a smallpox epidemic in Chicago during 1847.³⁷ The Illinois-Michigan Canal had opened and not less than seventy-five boats were running on the various canal routes in 1848.³⁸ This canal had been begun in 1838. There was steamship navigation between Chicago and St. Louis in 1848. "The steamship and packet line operating between Chicago and St. Louis, advertised the following scale of fare in 1848: From Chicago to LaSalle, Ill.; through St. Louis, 35.; including meals. Time five days."³⁹

Three bridges had been built across the Chicago river: "At Madison street, cost \$2,300.; at Wells street, cost \$3,300.; and at Randolph street, cost \$4,500."⁴⁰

The Chicago Board of Trade was founded in 1848 and Chicago, according to Charles Cleaver, then began to assume some importance as a port. Even

³⁷ A. T. Andreas, History of Chicago From the Earliest Period to the Present Time, A. T. Andreas, Chicago, 1888, I, 270.

³⁸ Abbott Lawrence Hardy, Early Chicago, 31.

³⁹ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 8.

the Mayor was a part of Chicago life in 1848. "The Journal of May 2, 1848 announced the first appearance of J. N. McVicker as Mr. Smith in 'My Neighbor's Wife.'⁴¹ However, the city of Chicago was still a city of dingy and weather-beaten halloon buildings. The city could only boast two stone buildings located on the Lake front. The so-called sidewalks, made of string pieces of scantling to which planks were spiked, sank down into the mud after a good rain and when one walked on them green and black slime oozed up between the cracks. There were no paved streets in Chicago in 1848. William Dress said:

The streets were simply thrown up as country roads. In the spring for weeks portions of them would be impassable. I have at different times seen empty wagons and drays stuck on Lake and Water streets on every block between Wabash avenue and the river. Of course there was little or no business doing for the people of the city could not get about much, and the people of the country could not get in to do it. As the clerks had nothing to do, they would exercise their wits by putting boards from dry goods boxes in the holes where the last dray was dug out, with significant signs as 'No Bottom Here,' 'The Shortest Road to China.' Sometimes one board would be nailed across another, and an old hat and coat fixed on it, with the notice 'On His Way to the Lower Regions.'⁴²

Chicago was called the mud-hole of the prairies. Herbert Asbury tells a classic story about Chicago mud. A citizen saw a man's head and shoulders sticking out of the mire of a Chicago street. He asked if he could be of assistance. "No, thanks," the man replied. "I have a horse under me."⁴³ Gas light and sewers were non-existent and the greater number of citizens

⁴¹ Abbott Lawrence Hardy, Early Chicago, 39.

⁴² Dress, History, 119.

⁴³ Herbert Asbury, Out of the Prairie, Alfred Knopf, New York, 1940,

purchased water from water-carts. The city that was to become a great railroad center had not so much as a single railroad entering it from any direction in May, 1848.

CHAPTER II

A CHICAGO BOOKSELLER, 1839-1854

William Bross engaged in bookselling at 121 Lake street. His neighbors were a drug store on one side and a clothing store on the other. After a few days' stay at the City Hotel, located on the corner of State and Lake streets, he took up lodgings with Mrs. Ira M. Weed. Mrs. Weed lived on the corner of Madison and State streets, which was then considered quite far south. Mrs. Weed visited the Bross family in 1862. William Bross says:

Mrs. Ira M. Weed with whom we boarded, when we came to Chicago 3 1/2 years ago, Daughter and Granddaughter, came to visit us today. As there are no better people in this world, it is delightful to have them with us.¹

Bross next affiliated himself with the Second Presbyterian Church of Chicago of which he was a devout and zealous member from 1838 to his death in 1890. William Bross greatly admired the pastor, Rev. Dr. Robert Patterson, whom he met on his first visit to Chicago in 1846. Speaking in 1873, upon the occasion of Rev. Patterson's resignation as pastor, Bross said:

Dr. Patterson, has been our pastor from the organization of this church. We have known no other shepherd. In prosperity and in adversity, in sickness and in health, he has been our friend, our counselor, and our guide. For years he was my nearest neighbor and almost daily companion. I have seen him in the privacy of the most intimate friendship. I never

1. Diary of William Bross, 1862, 35.

knew him to do a single act or say one word that was not in strict accordance with the truest type of a gentleman or derogatory in the least to my highest ideal of a minister of our holy religion.²

Frederick Francis Cook says that Rev. Patterson was later sometimes alluded to as 'Deacon Bross' preacher.³

In the autumn of 1848 William Bross was joined by his business partner, Mr. Griggs, who came on from the East. Even though his business venture consumed a great deal of his energies, William Bross found time to promote Chicago's interest. "The State Educational Society again held its session in Springfield, January 14-16, 1849, Judge Jesse B. Thomas acting as president and William Bross, secretary."⁴ This group adopted a policy which provided, among other things, for a superintendent of common schools and the building of a new public school in Chicago. Mr. Bross' association with such a society was certainly quite in keeping with his background of teaching.

Bross, according to the custom of the day, had come to the West with the intention of sending for his family after he had established himself in their new home. He happily welcomed his family to Chicago in August, 1848. They all lived with Mrs. Weed until March of the following year, when they moved to a little house on Wabash avenue between Adams and Jackson streets. In this same month there was a flood as well as a smallpox epidemic in Chicago. William Bross, recalling the event in 1875, said:

² Bross Scrapbook, Lloyd Family Collection, Winnetka, Illinois, 12.

³ Frederick Francis Cook, Bryana Days in Chicago, A. C. McClurg and Company, Chicago, 1910, 96.

⁴ Hon. John Moses and Maj. Joseph Kirkland, The History of Chicago, Illinois, Russell and Company, Chicago, 1882, II, 101.

Now, in the winter of 1848-9, we find that there was a heavy body of snow on the ground, overlaying a coating of ice that had been formed in the early part of the winter. In the beginning of March there came heavy rains that sunk into the snow as into a bank of sand. This was followed in a few days by unusually warm weather, with a rain fitted for the temperature of May, under which the body of snow went down like wax in the flame, and the atmosphere was steaming with evaporation. The waters poured in floods into all the natural outlets for a day or more.

The North Branch overflowed its banks, but no damage was done in that direction. Early on Monday morning, the 12th of March, this torrent broke into the South Branch, and the thick ice gave away under the pressure. The river had been made the supposed safe harborage for the winter of a large number of canal-boats that had been tied up by the shore, or run into the numerous sloughs or inlets that put into the river bank, and some were drawn up high and dry on the shore. In a number of the boats resided the families of those who had care of them for the winter. Schooners and sloops were laid up along the frail docks for the winter, stripped of their sails and rigging. The ice, breaking at the head of the current, was borne along, and piled up in masses as the tide behind impelled it on with irresistible force toward the main branch, damming up the water behind which overflowed into the streets. Breaking over the obstructions which its own force raised up, the tide rushed on, taking the canal-boats, crushing them or lifting them high upon the ice-cakes, dragging the schooners from their moorings, tearing up the piling and pushing the timbers of the docks to make room for its courses,—the torrent rushed on, taking Madison street bridge, then Randolph street, sweeping them all down in a compact mass with the schooners and canal-boats, crushing in the ice, until it encountered the adverse current from the North Branch, when it took a new and wilder rush down the main branch towards the lake. The bridges at Wells and Clark streets went at a blow and all swept into the lake.

All the bridges of the South and main branch were swept away, so that there was no passage from the South Side to other sections of the city. The shipping in the North Branch was not damaged, as there was no clearing out from that river, though the water was very high and the current strong; but fortunately the ice held, and the shipping remained to their moorings till the flood went down. The South Branch from the canal, and the main channel, above the great jaw at the head of the river, were swept nearly clean, taking the docks,—which were then generally of frail structure.²

The Chicago Daily Journal for March 13, 1849, reported that Chicago was entirely cut off from all quarters. Twenty-nine ships had been seriously

damaged. The same newspaper for March 11, 1849, announced that "We are not exactly an ocean bound city but are certainly the next thing to it."⁶ The total damages to vessels, bridges, and wharves were estimated to be one hundred and eight thousand dollars. Many lives were lost but the newspapers did not venture to number them. By March 26, communications were pretty well back to normal. The Chicago Daily Journal noted that parts of two of Chicago's lost bridges were found eight miles below the city on the lake shore.⁷ The city of Chicago, however, seems to have recovered from the disaster quite rapidly. Although there was no traffic through the Illinois-Michigan Canal, due to repairs after the flood, opening of business was anticipated by the middle of April, 1849. Plans were made for Chicago's new bridges. By the sixteenth of April, 1849, two boats had come through the Canal and docked at Chicago. Soon full commercial activity was resumed with the opening of spring navigation on the Great Lakes. Even the loss of Chicago's wharves was not quite as great a calamity as previously thought. The Chicago Daily Journal reported that

Messrs. James Peck and Company and Tho's Hale have finished building their wharves torn away by the late freshet. They are a decided improvement on the old ones and give a business look to that part of the river, not before apparent.⁸

In May, William Brees bought some property on Michigan avenue and moved a frame house, which he bought, from Wabash avenue to his newly acquired

⁶ Chicago Daily Journal, Chicago, March 11, 1849.

⁷ Ibid., March 22, 1849.

⁸ Ibid., April 2, 1849.

location. William Bross, recalling their property on Michigan avenue and life there, said:

We had an excellent cow--for we virtually lived in the country--that, contrary to all domestic propriety, would sometimes wander away, and I usually found her out on the prairie in the vicinity of Twelfth street. I saw a wolf run by my house as late as 1850. An incident in the purchase of the lot will illustrate the loneliness of our situation. The rule of speculators at the canal sales was to buy all the property on which the speculator could make the first payment, and then sell enough each year to make the others. Judge Thomas had followed this plan, and advertised a large list of property in the spring of 1849. He sold to myself and the Rev. Dr. Patterson adjoining lots at \$1,250 at private sale; but it was agreed that these should be sold with the rest, so as to attract customers, as Michigan avenue had become somewhat popular as a prospective place of residence. When my lot was struck off to me for some \$1,300, Harry Newhall came across the room and said, 'Bross, did you buy that lot to live on? Are you going to improve it?' 'Yes' was the reply. 'Well,' said he, 'I'm glad of it; I'm glad someone is going to live beyond me. It won't be so lonesome if we can see somebody going by night and morning.'⁹

The lot which Bross bought consisted of forty feet on Michigan avenue, commencing about eighty feet south of the corner of Van Buren street. Some of the neighboring lots were purchased by P. F. W. Peck, who had come to Chicago in 1831 and established himself as a merchant; Tuthill King, a lawyer, who was to make a great fortune with others in real estate; Judge Hugh L. Dickey, a judge of the Cook County Court and the first president of the Chicago Gas Light and Coke Company which was chartered in 1849;¹⁰ and Jonathan Young Scammon, a lawyer who came to Chicago in 1835. He became president of the Chicago Marine and Fire Insurance Company and with William Butler Ogden, the city's first elected mayor in 1837, succeeded in reviving an abandoned Indiana charter

⁹ Bross, History, 118.

¹⁰ Bessie Louise Pierce, A History of Chicago, Alfred Knopf, New York, 1940, II, 320.

which gave the exclusive right to construct a railroad from Michigan City to Chicago by the Michigan Central railroad in 1849.

In the little house on Michigan avenue the Bross family took up residence. Bross' father writing from the East said:

We are happy to learn that you have got into your Residence and are at last become settled. You will now feel at home and we hope contented are this. . .¹¹

William and Mary Jane Bross appear to have been a very happily married couple. Throughout his diaries, Bross speaks tenderly and affectionately of his wife. On October 7, 1880, he wrote:

This is my 41st wedding day. It is very much such a day as it was when my Dear Wife and I got married--a very beautiful day. The Dear Lord be praised for preserving us in health and happiness for so many long and laborious, but on the whole happy and prosperous years.¹²

His devotedness extended through the years, because on the occasion of Mrs. Bross' sixtieth birthday, William Bross wrote the following poem for his wife. It appeared in the Saturday Evening Herald.

Bright and blessed be the coming
Of thy sixtieth birthday morn,
Thankful that through joys and sorrows
By my side thou'st stood so long,
'Mid old Orange hills I found thee,
There our wedded love began;
'Mid Chicago's surging progress,
Scourgings oft have been our portion,
Toils and sorrows bitter, deep;
Seven sweet babes in mercy sent us,
Safe in Abraham's bosom sleep.
From our happy home the fire

¹¹ Bross Bross to son, William, January 3, 1850. Lloyd Family Collection, Winnetka, Illinois.

¹² Diary of William Bross, 1880, 36.

Drove us, life to start anew;
Worse than all the loss we've suffered,
Faithless friends have stung us, too.

But from sorrows look us, cheerful,
Down the rapid stream of time,
And what'er the Father sends us,
Bow'ing to His will divine;
Thankful that our darling Jessie
Lives to bless our waning years,
An angel to the poor and erring,
To soothe their cares and dry their tears.

Joy we then to hope and labor
On, while life and strength may last,
Striving ever to make better
Those with whom our lot is cast,
And when toils and cares are ended,
With our dear ones may we sleep
Side by side until th'Archangel
Wakes us never more to weep.¹³

As William Bross relates, he and his wife know sorrow. Although their marriage was blessed with eight children, only one, a girl named Jessie, lived to maturity. The other children, Clara, John, Emma, Kay, Willie, and one child referred to as Baby Bross, died before they reached the age of two years. Mattie, whom William Bross called "my last dear little boy," was four years old when he died in 1856.¹⁴ In 1873 Bross wrote:

My Dear Wife and self rode to Rose Hill Cemetery in P. M. to look after the graves of Our Dear seven children.¹⁵

At the end of a year and a half Messrs. Bross and Griggs felt that

¹³ The Saturday Evening Herald, Chicago, June 14, 1884, Bross Scrapbook.

¹⁴ Records of Rose Hill Cemetery, Chicago, Illinois.

¹⁵ Diary of William Bross, 1873, 16.

their book business was only a moderate success. "Finding the profits too small the partnership was dissolved."¹⁶ William Bross sold out his share to Griggs. Looking about for a useful and profitable occupation, he contacted a fellow church-member, J. Ambrose Wight, who was a journalistic associate of John Stephen Wright. Mr. Wight says:

In the summer of 1849, Hon. William Bross, who had been joined with S. C. Griggs in the book business, but had become separated from the firm, persuaded me to purchase with him the Herald of the Prairie, of Rev. J. B. Walker, and enter upon its publication; he to manage the business and I to do the chief editing.¹⁷

J. Ambrose Wight entered into the publication of the Herald of the Prairies with Bross. However, Wight continued with John Stephen Wright as a co-editor of the Prairie Farmer, the agricultural newspaper. Bross and Wight changed the name of the religious weekly, which had also been known as the Western Herald to the Prairie Herald. The newspaper was the organ of the western Presbyterians and Congregationalists and Bross and Wight continued it as such. The newspaper usually consisted of four pages. The title of the newspaper was in bold, black English script. In the center of the heading was a small print showing an angel flying over the setting sun and holding a banner on which was printed: "Repent--Believe." Below the title and centered between the volume number and date of each issue appeared these words: "In Essentials, Unity--In Non-essentials, Liberty--In All Things, Charity." William Bross, speaking in 1876 of the business of publishing the Prairie

¹⁶ Biographical Sketches, 37.

¹⁷ A. T. Andreas, History of Chicago, I, 396.

Herald in 1849, said:

It was then published on Wells street, on the corner of the alley between Lake and Randolph streets. We soon moved to 171 LaSalle street, next door to The Tribune, and in the rear building, on an old Adams press, the first power press ever brought to the city, we printed our own paper, and also The Tribune, for Messrs. Stewart, Wheeler & Scripps. The press was driven by Snowy's horse-power, on which traveled hour by hour, an old black Canadian pony.¹⁸

The Prairie Herald enjoyed little or no success financially. However, William Bross had begun his career in the field of journalism. Lloyd Lewis cites Mr. Bross' entrance into journalism as a proof that Bross wanted to model himself on John Stephen Wright.¹⁹ In any event, from 1849 until his death in 1870, William Bross was intimately associated with this profession.

Realizing in the autumn of 1851 that the Prairie Herald could not successfully support two families, William Bross sold his interest in the paper to Mr. Wright in return for some homestead lots on Harrison street.

Bross says:

That winter rather than have nothing to do I remained in his (Wright's) office with him for the large sum of \$1 per day.²⁰

Mr. Bross does not speak of any other income for this period. However, the sale and re-sale of canal lots, canal lands offered for sale after the opening of the Illinois-Michigan Canal, was quite a popular form of speculation for the citizens of Chicago. Homer Hoyt tells that the value of the land, within the 1833 limits of the city, increased from \$1,400,000 in 1842 to \$126,000,000

¹⁸ Bross, History, 123.

¹⁹ Lloyd Lewis, John S. Wright, Prophet of the Prairies, 164.

²⁰ Bross, History, 123.

in 1856.²¹ William Bross tells of a friend, who in the winter of 1851-52, bought fourteen acres of land in the city for five hundred dollars per acre. In seven months he sold the land for a thousand dollars an acre. By 1876, the same land was valued at forty thousand dollars per acre.²²

In the summer of 1852, William Bross entered into a new phase of the field of journalism. At this time he associated himself with John L. Scripps. Scripps was born in Missouri in 1818. His family moved to Illinois when he was quite young. He studied law and came to Chicago in 1847 to practice. The following year he bought a one-third interest in The Tribune, then a Chicago Free-Soil newspaper, published by John E. Wheeler and Thomas A. Stewart. In the winter of 1851-52, the Whigs got a controlling interest in the paper and John L. Scripps, a Free-Soiler with Democratic proclivities, sold out his interest in The Tribune. Scripps wrote the first published life of Abraham Lincoln, which was used as a campaign document in 1860. He was appointed Postmaster of Chicago by President Lincoln in 1861.

William Bross and John L. Scripps began to publish a newspaper called the Democratic Press. The first issue appeared on September 16, 1852. It was a weekly as well as a daily newspaper. That is, the Democratic Press published a daily edition and also an extra Saturday edition which contained a complete summary of the week's news. There were one hundred sixty-one

21 Homer Hoyt, One Hundred Years of Land Values in Chicago, The Relationship of the Growth of Chicago to the Rise of Its Land Values, 1830-1933, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1933, 9.

22 Bross, History, 119.

newspapers published in Illinois at this time. One hundred forty-seven were in English. The others included one in German and one in the French language.²³ There were eleven newspapers worthy of note published in the city of Chicago. These were: The Chicago Democrat, founded in 1833 by John Calhoun, taken over by John Wentworth in 1836, which supported the principles of the Democratic party; The Chicago Tribune, founded in 1847 and published by John E. Wheeler and Thomas A. Stewart; the Evening Journal, founded in 1844, a Whig newspaper, published by R. S. Wilson, J. W. Morris, and Charles J. Wilson; the Western Citizen, a temperance and anti-slavery paper founded in 1842; The Free, a Free-Soil paper (not to be confused with the Chicago Daily Times founded in 1854 by Isaac Cook, J. W. Sheehan, and Devill Cameron), founded in 1852 in connection with the Western Citizen; the Commercial Advertiser, founded in 1847 and edited by Alfred Dutch who urged the grant of lands for the Illinois Central railroad; the Prairie Farmer, an important influence in the field of agriculture published by John Stephen Wright and J. Ambrose Wight; the Prairie Herald, founded in 1846, enumerated the doctrines of the Presbyterians and Congregationalists, published by J. Ambrose Wight; the Watchman of the Prairies, founded in 1847 and the first Baptist newspaper printed in Chicago; the Western Farmer, founded in 1848, a weekly agricultural paper; and the Illinois Staats Zeitung, founded in 1846, which in 1851 became

²³ Fred Corhard, Illinois As It Is: Its History, Geography, Statistics, Constitution, Laws, Government, Finances, Climate, Soil, Plants, Animals, State of Health, Prairies, Agriculture, Cattle-Breeding, Orcharding, Cultivation of the Grapes, Timber-Growing, Market-Prices, Lands and Land Prices, Geology, Mining, Commerce, Banks, Railroads, Public Institutions, Newspapers, etc., etc., Keen and Lee, Chicago, 1857, 439.

a daily newspaper and eventually proved a factor in the creation of the Republican party.²⁴

Willia Gross had a high regard for the power of the press and believed that the journalist had a duty and responsibility to fulfill to the people. He felt that the

Press was essential to the success of all great enterprises. Without its aid it was impossible to succeed. Through its columns facts were spread before the public and the attention of the people was directed and their energies were concentrated, for the accomplishment of any great and laudable enterprise.

But in order to succeed the Press must speak no doubtful language. It must base its arguments upon truth, and support them by unquestionable facts. It must be free; it must acknowledge no allegiance to cliques and corrupt demagogues and then its power to influence and to bless our common humanity can scarcely be estimated. It was almost omnipotent. When it swerved from the path of rectitude and yielded to the schemes of corrupt and designing men, it would soon be shorn of its strength and an intelligent people would repudiate its efforts. In behalf of himself and his brethren of the Press who were present, Mr. Gross promised their best exertions to fulfill all the just expectations of their intelligent fellow citizens, the palladium of whose liberties was a free Press diffusing everywhere the principles of justice and truth.²⁵

The new Democratic Press was a political as well as a commercial newspaper. An important item to the income of the paper was, of course, advertising. Advertising made a paper pay. The Democratic Press espoused conservative Democratic party principles as its name revealed. The main objective of the newspaper, however, as stated by the editors, was to write up Chicago and the Northwest; to acquaint others with the climate, soil products, and

²⁴ James L. Regan, Story of Chicago in Connection with the Printing Business, Regan Printing House, Chicago, 1912.

²⁵ Notes on a speech, dated May 31, 1855, Lloyd Family Collection, Hinokta, Illinois.

other advantages of the city. The public was assured

that no effort shall be spared by the editors and proprietors of the Press to advance the interests and secure the commercial supremacy of The Empire City of the Mississippi.²⁶

Captain A. T. Andreas has called William Bross the father of commercial journalism in Chicago. The reason for this was that from its beginning an important feature of the Democratic Press was its financial article written by Bross. This included commodity quotations, observations on the Chicago, New York, and St. Louis markets, and a review of the status of bonds and money. The Chicago Board of Trade had opened in 1848. In 1852 prices were quoted in the Chicago market for hogs and pork, beef, lard, butter, flour, wheat, corn, oats, rye, barley, wool, and lumber. Subsequently, William Bross introduced the feature of publishing a review of Chicago's business at the beginning of each year.²⁷ The first effort of this kind was written in 1853. In the review he predicted a very bright future for the "Garden City," based on a comparison of Chicago's commercial statistics for the years 1836 and 1852. Mr. Bross pointed to Chicago's progress by relating that in 1836 articles of produce valued at \$1,000.64 were exported from the port of Chicago, while in 1850 the value of articles of produce exported from Chicago was \$328,635.74. Bross felt that such an advance had seldom been equalled in other cities. City improvements for 1852 included the extension of the Michigan Southern and Michigan Central railroads to the city of Chicago. The

26 Bross, Railroads, History and Commerce of Chicago, 71.

27 Delta Upsilon Quarterly, New York, VIII, No. 2, February, 1890,

Michigan Southern Railroad, with the completion of the Erie Railroad, gave Chicago a direct railroad line to New York. The opening of the Rock Island Railroad to La Salle, Illinois, and the Galena Railroad to Rockford, Illinois, was looked upon as a great boon to Chicago business. William Bross urged Chicago's citizens to greater industry, assuring them that the rich commerce of the prairies and lakes would certainly crown their efforts with success and make Chicago the great commercial emporium of the Mississippi Valley.²³

Here, then, are the words of an enthusiastic Chicago booster and civic patriot. By advertising the city's commercial possibilities, "Democrat" William Bross did more to attract solid wealth and enterprise to the city of Chicago than can possibly be estimated. An interesting description of the "Garden City," as to be found in a publication of the Chicago Historical Society. The description originally appeared in Larnshaw's Chicago City Directory for 1851 and was written by John A. Bross, one of William Bross' brothers who had also come to Chicago to make his home. John A. Bross describes the city as follows:

A visitor here two years since would scarcely know Chicago. Plank roads have been extended to the country in various directions--the Canal and Rail Road brings to our city an immensely increased amount of business and produce. These, with the magnificent Central Rail Road and the Rail Road connection with the East about to be completed after long years of hope deferred, will secure to our city wealth, population and a commanding influence in the affairs of the great West. The Common Council have done much by way of improvement, in laying down new and wider side walks, in plankng the main streets, and in commencing a system of drainage which will prove highly beneficial to the health of our city.

Individual citizens in connection with the Common Council have built

²³ Bross, Annual Review of the Business of Chicago for the Year, 1852, Democratic Press Job and Book Printing Office, Chicago, 1853, 14.

a secure protection against the further encroachments of the Lake in front of Michigan Avenue, and the United States Government has erected a commodious and most beautiful retreat for the aged and infirm mariner, besides providing for a new and better Light House of cast iron. Cabs and Greibusses were first introduced into the city this year, as also, the lighting of the streets and private residences with Gas. Hotels and Brick Blocks of all kinds of dwellings have started up as if by magic in every quarter of the city. They are substantial in their structure and calculated to last when their present occupants shall be forgotten. Our Manufactories are in a flourishing state, and will compete in any market with those of other cities.²⁹

It is evident that these two Dross brothers felt a great enthusiasm for the city of Chicago.

William Dross continued in 1853 to write glowingly of the advance of Chicago as the center of a great railroad system and of the commerce which such a system would foster.

As the growth of our city has hitherto outstripped the expectations of the most sanguine, so will the business of our wisely planned railroads be found to exceed the estimate of the most calculating.³⁰

He boasted that there was no idle arm or head in Chicago unless it be from choice. "If there is any one sign of actual prosperity which strikes a stranger when visiting Chicago, with greater force than another," he remarked, "it is the ACTIVITY observable on every hand."³¹ William Dross, however, could see the humor in an exception to the rule. He wrote about an incident in 1837 when the names, residence, and occupation of each citizen were listed in the first census of Chicago:

²⁹ "Chicago, 1850," ed. Paul H. Angle, Chicago History, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, XI, No. 10, 1950-51, III.

³⁰ Daily Democratic Press, Chicago, April 14, 1854, 2.

³¹ Ibid., April 6, 1854, 3.

In the record of the population of four thousand one hundred and seventy-two; the names of professors, mechanics, artisans and laborers, appears in memorable singularity, the entry, 'Richard Farmer, loafer,' the only representative of the class at that time in the city.³²

Editor Bross' commercial review for the year ending December, 1853, dealt with Chicago's history and its amazing growth in population and trade. In contrast to the 1852 figure of 38,733, Chicago's population for the year 1853 was 60,652. There was a marked increase in the prosperity of Chicago. It was already emerging as a railroad center. Bessie Louise Pierce is of the opinion that the great population increase was due to improved transportation.³³ Real estate prices were rising, building was increasing, and William Bross invited the industrious and enterprising to seek a home in the "Garden City."

Let us give them a warm-hearted, generous welcome. Along our broad streets, or upon our wide-spread, beautiful prairies, we have ample room for them all. Let them come and identify themselves with the great central commercial city of the Central States!³⁴

There were those who disagreed with Mr. Bross about Chicago's wide streets and beautiful prairies. Frederika Bremer, a Swedish writer, visiting Chicago in 1852, wrote:

Chicago is one of the most miserable and ugly cities which I have yet seen in America, and is very little deserving of its name, "Queen of the Lake." For sitting there on the shore of the Lake in wretched dash-hills, she resembles rather a huckstress than a queen. Certainly, the city seems for the most part to consist of shops. One sees scarcely any pretty country houses with their gardens either within or without the city--which is so generally the case in American towns--and in the

³² Bross, Railroads, History and Commerce of Chicago, 40.

³³ Bessie Louise Pierce, A History of Chicago, II, 16.

³⁴ Bross, Railroads, History and Commerce of Chicago, 19.

streets the houses are principally of wood, the streets paved with wood, or if without, broad and sandy. And it seems as if, on all hands, people came here merely to trade, to make money and not to live.³⁵

William Gross' commercial review for 1853 was entitled "The Railroads, History and Commerce of Chicago" and was offered for sale by the Democratic Press. The first thousand were placed on sale and were sold, as the author described it, like "hot cakes."³⁶ "The pamphlet above referred to was widely scattered over the East and Europe and was the first intimation to thousands of the fact that there was such a place as Chicago."³⁷ The pamphlet was a comprehensive review of the railroads, banks, real estate, manufacturers, labor, and utilities in Chicago. Mr. Gross pointed with pride to Chicago's population increase of fifty-seven per cent for 1853, which he stated was a ratio never before witnessed in the United States, except in California. He credited it largely to the opening of the Illinois-Michigan Canal and the extension of the Galena, Illinois Central, Michigan Southern, Michigan Central, and Rock Island railroads to the city. It was noted that:

Real Estate in Chicago now has a positive business value, below which it will never be likely to sink, unless some great calamity should befall the whole country.³⁸

Mr. Gross noted real estate values for the year 1837 through the year 1853. The value of real and personal property in Chicago advanced from \$1,829,420

³⁵ Frederika Bremer, The Homes of the New World; Impressions of America, Arthur Hall, Virtue and Company, London, 1853, II, 212-13.

³⁶ Daily Democratic Press, April 4, 1853, 3.

³⁷ Biographical Sketches, 40.

³⁸ Gross, Railroads, History and Commerce of Chicago, 43.

to 122,992,457 in 1855. Jones said:

Let any business man study carefully the facts contained in these articles; let him remember that within the lifetime of thousands who read these pages Chicago will contain her hundreds of thousands of people; and then let him calculate, if he has the courage, what real estate will then be worth in the commercial center of the Mississippi Valley.³⁹

H. H. Putney tells of a lot at the northeast corner of Adair and Cook streets, 77 x 109 and bounded by State and Madison streets, Lake Michigan, and the Chicago river, which sold in 1839 for \$24.57 and was valued in 1899 at \$20,000. Another lot at the corner of State and Water streets, 150.40 x 65, sold in 1839 for \$25.00 and was valued in 1899 at \$175,000. A lot on Lake street, bounded by Market and Franklin streets, was worth \$1.60 an average front foot in 1830; \$130 per front foot in 1836, and \$1,000 per front foot in 1856.⁴⁰ William Bruce' predictions concerning the stability of Chicago real estate values did hold true through the year 1852, in spite of the depression of 1857. However, in 1859 all but central property in the city of Chicago depreciated at least one half from the 1857 value.⁴¹

Also listed in the pamphlet were the churches, ministers, and schools of the city of Chicago. Capitalists were invited to invest their money in Chicago because

There is not in the wide world a city that furnishes opportunities for safer investments than Chicago--whether the money is employed in building

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴⁰ H. H. Putney, Real Estate Values and Historical Notes of Chicago, H. H. Putney, Chicago, 1900, 36.

⁴¹ Homer Hoyt, One Hundred Years of Land Values in Chicago, 12.

operations, or is loaned on real estate security.⁴²

Good mechanics and masters were urged to come to the city where they would find prosperity. Mr. Gross praised not only Chicago's nearly completed Water Works but the wonderful water of Lake Michigan. Notwithstanding Gross' enthusiasm, there had appeared in the Chicago Daily Journal on July 13, 1847, among the "Chicago Items" the following article concerning city water:

Besides having a body to it, made up of cast-off clothing and occasionally a kid or two, of animals that Noah did not inventory when he went into the ark, it is marvellously fragrant--altogether too highly scented for ordinary use among poor people. If this is owing to the tubes employed, a change should certainly be made forthwith, for drinking such water, cannot be conducive to health, unless perhaps, it possesses some medical qualities.⁴³

William Gross boasted about the efficient Gas Company, Chicago's plank roads, and the health of the citizens. In each case, to prove his points, he quoted past figures and those of 1853 which were in the latter year's favor. Seeking to find still more information about Chicago's services in 1853, the candidate consulted The Progress of the Republic, A Full and Comprehensive View of the Progress, Present Condition, Commercial, Railroad, Manufacturing and Industrial Resources of the American Confederacy, edited by the Hon. Joseph G. Kennedy.⁴⁴ This book, however, quotes William Gross' pamphlet as the source of information concerning Chicago's services for the

⁴² Gross, Railroads, History and Commerce of Chicago, 47.

⁴³ Chicago Daily Journal, July 13, 1847, 2.

⁴⁴ Hon. Joseph G. Kennedy, ed., The Progress of the Republic, A Full and Comprehensive View of the Progress, Present Condition, Commercial, Railroad, Manufacturing and Industrial Resources of the American Confederacy, William R. Thompson and Company, Washington, D. C., 1856, 315-21.

year 1853.

Contained in this pamphlet for 1853 was a brief sketch of Chicago's history from its earliest beginnings. William Bross substantiated his estimates of the city's population and progress with corresponding tables of statistics. Lloyd Lewis claims that Mr. Bross learned his adroit handling of statistics from John Stephen Wright.⁴⁵ In the 1853 review, William Bross commended Chicago's citizens for their inexhaustible energies and proclaimed to everyone the city's great progress since 1837. Mr. Bross said that the changes which had been wrought were truly amazing and he predicted that by 1871 the city would contain a half million people.⁴⁶ In conclusion he asked one and all to examine and consider Chicago's prospects.

No one who has studied her unrivaled commercial position, and the richness, beauty and extent of the country by which she is surrounded can doubt for a moment that Chicago, at no distant day, is destined to become the great central city of the continent.⁴⁷

William Bross believed that Chicago was unequalled in her circumstance. He wrote proudly:

She fears no rivals but is confident that the enterprise and energy which have marked her progress will secure for her a proud and pre-eminent position among her sister cities of the Union. She has to wait but a few short years the sure development of her UNLIMITED PROSPERITY.⁴⁸

The Democratic Press was considered conservative in tone with regard

⁴⁵ Lloyd Lewis, John Stephen Wright, Prophet of the Frontier, 164.

⁴⁶ Bross, Railroads, History and Commerce of Chicago, 10.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 69.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

to some political interest. In contrast to the intense abolitionist feelings advocated by John Wentworth in the Daily Democrat, and the denunciation of abolition by the Chicago Times, the Democratic Press, though in favor of an eventual abolition of slavery, adopted a quiesca non movens attitude. Editors Scripps and Dress advised the public that

Readers of the Press need no assurance that we are strongly and unreservedly opposed to the morbid and ill-formed philanthropy which seeks the immediate and unconditional abolition of slavery. Nor need we remind the public that we have quite as little sympathy for the wholesale denigration and obloquy which it is becoming fashionable to indulge in towards slaveholders as a class. There are undoubtedly bad men, and many of them, identified with the institution, but our observation of the Southern and Northern character has been most usefully defective if the former has anything to fear in a comparison with the latter. There are many slaveholders of our acquaintance whose chances for a happy hereafter we would infinitely prefer to those of the most rabid and zealous Godslainers against the iniquities of the system. There be few of the former, indeed, who in their daily intercourse with their slaves do not treat them with more uniform kindness and respect, than your loudest abolition ranters will treat such as have made the passage of the underground railroad, invited hither by promises of hospitality and of aid, that are never fulfilled.⁴⁹

However, when Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Bill into Congress, the editors of the Democratic Press strongly and bitterly opposed the Bill. "The Democratic Press, once indeed Democratic as its name implied, had turned with vindictive fierceness upon Douglas . . ."⁵⁰ It is considered by some authors to have probably done him more harm in the discussion of the Kansas-Nebraska question than any other influence in the United

⁴⁹ Daily Democratic Press, April 2, 1854, 2.

⁵⁰ Frank D. Stevens, "Life of Steven Arnold Douglas," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, LVII, October, 1974, 47.

States. Even in 1855 Kansas and Nebraska had posed a problem. The Chicago

Daily Journal for January 4, 1845, stated:

Stephen A. Douglas, member of Congress from this state, has introduced a bill to organize a new territory to be called 'Nebraska,' extending from Kansas to Mind River, of which he (it is reported) expects to be governor. He undoubtedly will take up his residence near the latter river.⁵¹

John D. Hicks feels that Senator Douglas' motive for the Kansas-Nebraska

Bill's passage in 1854 was the promotion of the building of "... a land-

grant railroad west from Chicago all the way to the Pacific."⁵² But there

were thousands who felt that the extension and perpetuation of slavery was

too high a price to pay for such a prize. Feeling against the Kansas-Nebraska

Act ran very high in Chicago. The Daily Democratic Press for Friday, March 17,

1854, reported:

The communication which we published on Saturday morning, from the pen of an influential German democrat, revealed the influences which led to the disreputable scene of burning Judge Douglas in effigy on Thursday evening last. We have yet to hear the first word in approval of that act. Every citizen from whom we have heard an expression of opinion at all in relation to the matter condemns it in unmeasured terms. In no city in the Union, is there a more firmly settled or stronger feeling of opposition to Judge Douglas' Nebraska bill, than in Chicago. But we do not believe that there are ten men among us who would openly sanction the indignity that has been offered to its author.⁵³

Backing or no, Douglas came to Chicago in August, 1854, to promote the Bill and justify his attitude to the people. A meeting was scheduled to

⁵¹ Abbott Lawrence Hardy, Early Chicago, 12.

⁵² John D. Hicks, A Short History of American Democracy, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1903, 341-42.

⁵³ Daily Democratic Press, March 17, 1854, 2.

be held at North Market Hall on September 1. William Bross called upon Senator Douglas at the Tremont House and asked him for a copy of his speech which he wished to publish. Douglas told Mr. Bross that he never wrote out his speeches but let the reporters write them and he corrected them afterwards. This accounted for Bross' presence at the assemblage. Since there was no shorthand reporter available, Mr. Bross went there himself to report the meeting, which was ultimately held in the open air due to the warm weather. The notice of the gathering had created much interest and William Bross describes it as perhaps the largest meeting ever held in the city up to that time.⁵⁴ Upon his arrival the "Deacon" was invited by Mayor Killiken to sit on the speakers' platform. Senator Douglas began his address by accusing the people and press of misunderstanding and discrediting him. Bross says that this statement was met with groans and hisses which lasted for about two or three minutes. This subsided for a few minutes and then hooting and laughing began. This thoroughly enraged the Senator and his language and manner became exceedingly offensive.⁵⁵ William Bross reports that he slipped down into the crowd several times to ascertain the mass feeling and found the people in a good yet disorderly humor. At length, Senator Douglas was unable to make himself heard above the din. "Deacon" Bross approached him and suggested that since it was impossible to make himself heard Douglas give him his speech to print and then retire. Bross says:

⁵⁴ Chicago Daily Tribune, August 26, 1877, Bross Scrapbook.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

With all the force and power he could command, he said: 'Mr. Storey, you see that your efforts in the Democratic Press to get up an armed mob to get no damn have been entirely successful.' In an instant I sprang to my feet, and, with very emphatic gestures, said: 'Judge Douglas, that's false--every word of it false, sir!' 'It will do very well, sir,' he replied, 'for you with your armed mob about you to make an assertion like that.' 'It's false, sir--not a word of truth in it,' I replied, and a little quiet being restored he turned to address the people.⁵⁶

After about a half hour of continued effort, Senator Douglas allowed himself to be persuaded by his friends to leave the meeting. Looking back on the event in 1877, Gross advised that in spite of a charge by Mr. Storey of the Chicago Times that Douglas was mobbed in Chicago, there was absolutely no mob action whatsoever on the night of the Douglas meeting. True, the crowd was a noisy one. But,

If you define a mob to be an angry crowd of men who use missiles, or destroy property, maim and injure their opponents, perhaps kill them, then I accept positively that there was no mob in Chicago on that evening and thousands of our citizens who were there will cordially indorse what I say on the subject. There was no a rotten egg, a rotten apple, or anything else whatever, thrown at any one on the stage during the entire meeting.⁵⁷

William Gross recounts that the only angry men at the meeting were Senator Douglas and a few of his friends. This meeting assuredly did not ameliorate Douglas' position. The introduction of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill greatly unsettled politics in Northern Illinois and irreparably split the Democratic party.

The Democratic Press made a change in its politics as well as in its editorship in the autumn of 1854. The change in the former came about after

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

the foundation of the new Republican party idea when what Gross claims to be the first meeting was held in Springfield, Illinois, in September, 1854. Thereafter the Press began zealously and steadfastly to expound Republican tenets. The Kansas-Nebraska and slavery questions caused the Republican ideas to spread. These encompassed the eventual abolition of slavery, a vast increase in public improvements, a clean-up in government offices and no government job hand-outs to incompetent people. John Wentworth, who was the Republican candidate for mayor of Chicago in 1857, expressed his thoughts on the last subject in local government.

'No man is qualified to attend to the business of the city who could not earn the amount of his salary in some of the other avocations of life.'⁵⁸

Speaking on the duty of the public servant, he said:

'I then have but one order to give to those whom the people are taxed to support as my subordinates, and that is: Remember your oath! Read the laws! Execute them!'⁵⁹

The change in the editorship of the Democratic Press was the addition of Barton W. Spears to the paper. He was a Michigan journalist who had recently come from the Columbus Ohio Statesman. He became the business manager of the Press and the firm title was changed to Scripps, Gross and Spears.

⁵⁸ Fremont O. Bennett, Politics and Politicians of Chicago, Cook County and Illinois, The Blockely Printing Company, Chicago, 1886, 105.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 114.

CHAPTER III

CHICAGOAN, 1855-1871

The Annual Review for the year 1854 was offered for sale by the editors of the Democratic Press on March 17, 1855. It was announced that the pamphlet could be obtained at the counting rooms of the newspaper located at 45 Clark street.

The pamphlet embraces seventy-two pages of reading matter, and it is safe to say that an equal amount of valuable information cannot be had for so small a price. Two thousand copies have already been ordered by three houses in this city, and those of our friends who want the balance of the edition will please leave their orders at once. Orders from the country accompanied with the cash will receive prompt attention. Price per hundred \$15; twenty-five copies \$4; twelve copies \$2.25; six copies \$1.25; single copies, twenty-five cents.¹

Despite a financial squeeze in 1854, there was an increase in Chicago's business. Mr. Brown felt that the city was situated in the center of one of the most fertile agricultural regions in the world, holding the key to commerce on each side for fifteen hundred miles. Seventeen railroads now entered and left Chicago with a record of 2,436 $\frac{1}{2}$ railroad miles completed.

Over these roads there arrive and depart nearly one hundred trains, fully loaded, either with passengers or freight, every twenty-four hours. The life and activity consequent upon such a movement, form by no means the least marked characteristic of our city. To a stranger familiar only with those cities which have not yet put themselves in railroad communi-

¹ Daily Democratic Press, March 17, 1855, 3.

cession with the country and with other centers of business, the contrast which our city presents in this respect is of the most striking character and a day's observation never fails to impress such a visitor with a profound sense of the extent of our business and the ultimate greatness which our city is destined to reach.²

He said that he believed with certainty that Chicago would be connected to the West by a National Railroad having a branch to San Francisco and that there would be railroads centering in the city from every principal community on the Continent.³ This is what William Bross dreamed of for Chicago. Though in 1855 this seemed incredible the prophecy, as events proved, was fulfilled. The Annual Review also advertised Chicago as the greatest Primary Grain Port in the world including the exact over-ready statistics to prove it. Chicago's total export shipments of flour and grain for the year 1854 amounted to 12,000,000 bushels, whereas New York's shipments of the same commodities equaled 9,430,325 bushels. St. Louis trailed with 5,001,465 bushels for the year.⁴ Bross also quoted figures from the great granaries of Europe to support his claim.

Twenty years ago, Chicago, as well as most of the country from whom she now draws her immense supplies of breadstuffs, imported both flour and for home consumption--now, she is the largest primary grain depot in the world, and she leads all other parts of the world, also, in the quantity and quality of her beef exports!! We say the largest primary grain depot

² William Bross, Annual Review of the Business of Chicago for the Year 1854, with the Statistics of her Commerce, Manufacturing--in Relation to her Railroad System, Capacity for Grain, and Other Statistical Matters Recently Published in the Democratic Press, Democratic Press Job and Book Store Publishing Office, Chicago, 1855, 73.

³ Bross, Railroad History and Commerce of Chicago, 40.

⁴ Bross, Annual Review of the Business of Chicago for the Year 1854,

in the world, because it cannot be denied that New York, Liverpool, and some other great commercial centres, receive more breadstuffs than Chicago does in the course of the year, but none of them will compare with her, as we have shown above, in the amount collected from the hands of the producers.⁵

Mr. William Bross exulted in this development! He was convinced that the advance was one of the best practical illustrations of the rapid progress and industry of the West. "He rejoiced in seeing people prosperous and saw no limit to the prosperity of the United States if everyone kept busy."⁶ "How long," Bross proclaimed, "at this rate, will it be before the centre of population and of wealth will have arrived at the meridian line of our city, and Chicago will have vindicated her right to be recognized as the great commercial metropolis of the United States?"

Mr. Bross boasted of Chicago's great lake commerce and said:

In other commodities (excluding grain and flour), custom to Western commerce--whether in the general aggregate of her exports, the tonnage to which she gives employment, or the extent of business transacted by her wholesale dealers, she may proudly challenge comparison with other prosperous Western cities, some of which are nearly a half century her seniors.⁷

The Annual Review included the state of business of the Chicago Locomotive Works, Machinery and Iron Works, Stone Works, Agricultural Implements (including a Self-Raking Reaper and Mower put out by John Stephen Wright in 1853), Furniture Manufacturing, Mill Stones, Piano Fortes, Leather, Boots

5 Ibid.

6 Charles A. Yeant, William Bross, 1813-1890, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, Illinois, 1940, 27-28.

7 Bross, Annual Review of the Business of Chicago for the Year 1854, 27.

and Shoes, Book Binding, Soap and Candles, Hats, Trunks, Tobacco, Engraving, Lithographing, and Map Publishing. William Pross even reported on the horse market.

The horse market of Chicago is without a rival. It is a matter of common remark among strangers that horses in the streets of Chicago are not excelled in any city in the Union. Chicago is often familiarly spoken of as a fast place. However that may be, she tolerates very few slow horses, and the surrounding States of Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan and even Ohio from whence she draws largely, can bear witness to the great numbers of their choicest stock which are yearly sold in this market.⁸

William Pross had a suggestion to make to the merchants and the railroads of the city in the Review. He asked that they maintain a uniform system of statistics, so that there might be exact statistical information about Chicago's subsequent trade and commerce. This pamphlet was notable in that a good deal of space was consumed in explaining that Chicago was not a "slow" place.

We now wish to refer, in this connection, to a fact of vast importance in its bearings upon the question of health, and deeply interesting to the immigrant. It is that Chicago is elevated more than six hundred feet above any of the Atlantic cities. Situated upon the great central table-land of the American Continent, from which the great rivers of the country flow down thousands of miles to Hudson's Bay, the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Gulf of Mexico. Experience and observation have proved that in each of the three continents, the elevated plateaus in the interior far surpass in healthiness the low lands of the coast. The air of these elevated regions contains more oxygen and is more stimulating to the vital powers. That the remark will apply to Chicago and the whole upper lake country, is evident from our bills of mortality, which, aside from occasional epidemics, are considerably below the average of other cities of the same population.⁹

8 Ibid., 18.

9 Ibid., 72.

The reason for this very careful explanation that Chicago was indeed not a "low" place was due to the fact that the year 1854 had been a great cholera year in Chicago. It was generally assumed in those days that low, damp locations were "ideal" places for cholera and there had been small epidemics in the city during 1832, 1838, and 1852. But, one thousand four hundred twenty persons died of this dread disease in the year 1854. From the first day to the eighth of July alone, two hundred and fifty cholera victims were buried in the city. Captain A. T. Andreas tells that a number of people in Chicago began to move out to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. "Death-carts," he says, "were continually upon the streets."¹⁰ Chicago's growth in population during the year 1854 surely was not phenomenal. The city's population for 1853 was 60,652, while in 1854 it was 65,672. Certainly the great cholera epidemic was in some part responsible for such a small advance in the city's population.

The year 1855 found "Beacon" Bross experiencing his first term in public office. He was elected a member to the City Council. He distinguished himself by his especial attention to all works which promoted Chicago's commerce and trade. Philip Kinsley relates that William Bross secured a public printing job for the Democratic Press during this time. The Chicago Tribune, thinking this a juicy item, commented on it and started a feud between the two newspapers which lasted until 1858.¹¹ In addition to his Council office and his newspaper work in 1855, Bross assisted in the editing of a booklet, "The

¹⁰ A. T. Andreas, History of Chicago, II, 549-50.

¹¹ Philip Kinsley, The Chicago Tribune, Its First Hundred Years, Alfred Knopf, New York, 1943, I, 21.

Illinois Gazetteer and Emigrants' Guide." Although the booklet only enjoyed one issue it was undoubtedly published to benefit those new citizens whom Mr. Dress had urged to come to the "Garden City." In Chicago in 1850 54.3 of the total population was foreign-born. Actually Chicago was more cosmopolitan than New York, since only 46% of New York's total population was foreign-born. The largest group of foreign-born in Chicago were the Irish who made up about 20% of the total population. English, Welsh, and Scotch made up 9% of the total population, while 17% of the total population were German born. The next group, consisting of the Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes, made up about 12% of the total population. But, the French, Belgians, Italians, Spaniards, Poles, and Russians did not separately make up one per cent of the total population from 1850 to 1870.¹²

Colonization projects under the aegis of railroad companies, such as the Illinois Central, tempted the restless to leave established homes for new adventures connected with the great metropolis of the West. Well phrased descriptions by foreign capitalists interested in lands near railroad routes convinced many farmers and artisans of the British Isles and the continent that the American Garden of Eden lay in the State of Illinois.¹³

William Dress was also a member of the board of directors of the Mechanics Institute and labored untiringly in behalf of the Georgian Bay Canal project during 1855. Captain A. T. Andreas tells us that the Mechanics Institute was founded to diffuse knowledge among the mechanical classes. The plan of the Institute was to found a course of lectures, a museum and library and to

12 Bessie Louise Pierce, A History of Chicago, II, 22.

13 Ibid., 8.

sponsor annual fairs.¹⁴ The Georgian Bay Canal project had first interested Dr. Gross in 1853. The undertaking concerned a route for a ship-canal from the Georgian Bay to Toronto. Gross described it as follows:

Lying to the northeast of Lake Huron, and generally included in the same name, is in fact another lake called Manitouline (Georgian Bay) nearly as large as Lake Ontario. At the southeast end of this lake is Netawasaga Bay, into which a river of the same name enters. This river is navigable for some distance, and from the head of navigation to Kempenfeldt Bay, an arm of Lake Simcoe, is a distance of only twelve miles. Capt. McIntosh says this is one of the most beautiful lakes on the Western Continent, seventy miles long and twenty-eight broad. The country between the Netawasaga river and Lake Simcoe is free from hills and very favorable to the construction of such a canal.¹⁵

In an article in the Daily Democratic Press on July 12, 1855, William Gross wrote:

It (the Georgian Bay Canal) will save at least 500 miles of lake navigation, avoiding the St. Clair Flats, the Detroit River, Lake Erie, and the Welland canal.¹⁶

"Let the Canadian capitalists," he said, "build their canals as fast as possible, the West will crowd them with business as soon as they are finished."

At a meeting of the Chicago Board of Trade on July 30, 1855, he spoke about the Georgian Bay canal and the great advantages to lake commerce of such a canal. A committee was appointed. George Steele, Thomas Richmond, T. Jones, Hiram Wheeler, C. T. Wheeler, B. S. Richmond, Thomas Steers, H. S. King, and William Gross were on it. The purpose of this group was to raise funds with committees of other lake cities for the project. In September, 1855, the

¹⁴ A. T. Andreas, History of Chicago, I, 519.

¹⁵ Daily Democratic Press, February 10, 1853.

¹⁶ Ibid., July 12, 1855.

Toronto Board of Trade invited delegates from the lake cities committees to discuss the canal project. Mr. George Steele and Mr. Bross traveled to Toronto for the convention. Speaking before the delegates Bross said:

It is proposed to construct another great highway for the commerce of the Upper Lakes to Lake Ontario, and thence to the ocean. The West needs the Georgian Bay Canal and every other avenue to the ocean that can possibly be opened.¹⁷

The survey for the possible cost of the canal resulted in an estimate of \$22,170,750. Captain A. T. Andreas writes ". . . that the charter of incorporation was obtained but beyond the breaking of ground and presenting the president of the company with the usual gift nothing was done."¹⁸ This was in part due to the financial crash of 1857-58. William Bross, however, continued his efforts in behalf of the project. Speaking in 1876 at Des Moines, Iowa, at the Iowa Industrial Convention, he said that he still looked forward to the building of the Georgian Bay canal, the commercial value of which would be well worth the amount spent on its construction.¹⁹ Admittedly, William Bross was a man of so many and varied interests and works that his prodigious energies must constantly be regarded with admiration and respect.

The State of Illinois could boast of two thousand four hundred ten miles of railroad in actual operation when the Annual Review for 1855 was presented to the public. "The railroad rushes onward," said Bross, and pours

¹⁷ Bross, History, 69.

¹⁸ A. T. Andreas, History of Chicago, I, 584.

¹⁹ Bross Scrapbook, 2.

its commerce and its wealth into the lap of Chicago.²⁰ Chicago could claim 2,933 miles of completed road in operation leading from all directions into the city. In 1851, the city had had forty miles of road leading into it. During the year 1855, articles manufactured in Chicago were valued at eleven million dollars; three million seven hundred thirty-five thousand dollars had been invested in improvements and the city's population had grown from 65,872 to 80,028. Speaking of the Grain market and Lumber trade as representative businesses, Bross said:

Three years ago we ventured the prediction, that in five years from that time the annual grain trade of Chicago would reach 20,000,000 bushels. The tables which we publish today show that the prediction has been verified two years in advance. And yet, when we gave utterance to it, there were many who pronounced us visionary, and even our best informed citizens thought us entirely too sanguine. Four years ago the aggregate of the Lumber business was 325,000,000 feet; for the year just closed it is 326,000,000 feet!²¹

Some men, four or five years before, thought that this would certainly be the peak for the business.

Now, no one imagines that the acme has begun to be reached. And so we might go through with the leading articles of our commerce, with the amount of tonnage employed, with the growth of our manufactures, the progress of building and other substantial improvement, and show in every particular an increase quite as gratifying and as far in advance of prediction as has taken place in the articles of grain and lumber.²²

William Bross believed that such astonishing developments pointed with unerring

²⁰ William Bross, Fourth Annual Review of the Commerce, Railroads, and Manufactures of Chicago, for the Year 1855, Democratic Press Steam Printing House, Chicago, 1856, 76.

²¹ Ibid., 3.

²² Ibid.

significance to a bright and glorious future for the city of Chicago. The Review for 1855 included an interesting sketch of the Democratic Press establishment to 1856.

Commencing with a comparatively small capital, and without a single name upon our subscription list, the Democratic Press establishment has steadily gone forward, surmounting every obstacle which the envy and malice of opponents could thrust in its way, the paper growing in circulation, and our general business increasing in amount with every new day, until it has become the largest printing establishment west of New York and Boston, enjoying a reputation beyond the possibility of politicians to injure it in the public estimation, and with a circulation second only to the papers printed in the chief cities in the Union.²³

"The envy and malice of opponents," referred to by Mr. Bross, might well have meant the feud with the Tribune mentioned before. Bessie Louise Pierce gives the figures for 1854 concerning the Democratic Press circulation. She reports that in 1854 the Press had a circulation of 2,054 daily and 4,000 weekly.²⁴

Relating the advance of the Press, Bross wrote:

We have in use and under contract eleven power presses, combining all of the latest improvements, including one of Hoe's largest double-cylinder machines, and two of Gordon's patent five-fly card presses, one of which feeds itself, prints, cuts and counts 20,000 cards per hour, and the other 10,000 cards per hour. It is the perfection of machinery in this line. We have in our office, and running by steam also, such other improved machinery connected with the business of newspaper, book and job printing, among which we may mention paper folders, which take the papers from the press, and fold them ready for mailing almost in a twinkling. At present time we have 65 men and boys employed in the different departments of our establishment, and our current business is at the rate of \$200,000. per annum.

It has been our aim, as well as our pride, to make the Democratic Press establishment a fair exponent of our rapidly growing and prosperous city, and in this effort we flatter ourselves we have been entirely successful. This much we feel that we have a right to say respecting the

²³ Ibid., 79.

²⁴ Bessie Louise Pierce, A History of Chicago, II, 217.

measure of success that has crowned our endeavors and it contributes not a little to our gratification to know, that there are thousands of readers of the Democratic Press throughout the Northwest who will receive this assurance of its prosperity and prospects with almost as much genuine pleasure as though they were parties in interest themselves.

We shall at all times be pleased to see these friends and others at our office when they visit the city, and will take much pleasure in showing them through the establishment.²⁵

Looking back in 1876, Bross says that the editors of the Democratic Press did not draw a cent from the paper until after January 1, 1855.²⁶ This undoubtedly influenced the editors in presenting the sketch of the Press in the Review for 1855. They had started with a capital of \$6,000 and with monies borrowed and from the sale of some of the editors' real estate, there was capital amounting to 375,000 in the Democratic Press in 1856. Seeing the growth visible on all sides, William Bross wrote: "The progress for the last four years has indeed been wonderful."²⁷

John C. Fremont received the backing of the now "Republican-minded" Democratic Press when he was nominated in 1856 by the Republican Party in opposition to James Buchanan, the Democratic presidential candidate. Announcing the nomination of Fremont on June 18, 1856, the Democratic Press said:

The result (of the ballot) is in the highest degree gratifying but by no means surprising. It was a foregone conclusion with the rising masses of the Republican Democracy throughout the country, from Maine to California that Fremont was to be the man to lead them to victory over the desperate faction whose maladministration of government and its encouragement of

²⁵ Bross, Fourth Annual Review of Commerce of Chicago for the Year 1855, 79.

²⁶ Bross, History, 123.

²⁷ Bross, Fourth Annual Review of Commerce of Chicago for the Year 1855, 70.

treason, filibusterism and civil war, threaten to bring incalculable evils upon the country. He presents the rare example in these times of a Southern man with National principles of the largest and most generous character. He represents the spirit of justice and the integrity of compacts between North and South; law and order, as opposed to treason and mob rule; liberality and equality among all classes of citizens; and firmness and moderation in our intercourse with other countries.²⁸

On June 19, 1856, there were about five thousand people present at a Republican rally in Dearborn Park. Over the speaker's stand were hung signs that said: "Freedom--Free Kansas--Free Speech and Fremont;" "Free Harbors, Pacific Railroad, Fremont and Dayton." William Louis Dayton of New Jersey was the Republican vice-presidential nominee. William Bross made his first political speech endorsing Fremont at this gathering.

Fellow Citizens: It is an occasion of deep and absorbing interest which has drawn together this vast crowd this evening. We are met to rally the nomination of John C. Fremont for President. (Enthusiastic cheers.) Fremont--a Southern man with National principles--principles which embrace and guard alike the interests of the whole Union--the East and the West--the North and the South.

In John C. Fremont we have no representative of doubting lifeless old fogyism, but a man whose mind can grasp the spirit of the age, a man who has been identified with and has contributed largely to its progress. He has explored the continent and exhibited its vast resources, and with him in the Presidential chair we should soon have a railroad across the continent, binding together the States, the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and the commerce of the world would be within their grasp. With Fremont for President our harbors and rivers would be improved and we should no longer stand here when the tempest breaks over the lake, and see our noble ships dashing against yonder breakwater and our gallant seamen sinking beneath the angry surges to rise no more.²⁹

Thus began Bross' unceasing and earnest labors for the Republican cause. As the presidential campaign progressed he took the stump, going into Southern

²⁸ Daily Democratic Press, June 19, 1856, 2.

²⁹ Daily Democratic Press, June 20, 1856, 3.

Illinois, a strongly Democratic section, constantly stressing in his speeches the fact that Fremont favored internal improvements and a Pacific railroad.³⁰ William Bross said that such a railroad would insure the unity of the nation through all time.³¹ Of course, Bross cherished the hope that such a railroad would connect with the city of Chicago.

While on one of his political travels, Mr. Bross made the acquaintance of Abraham Lincoln.

'I first met Mr. Lincoln, to know him' says . . . Bross, 'at Vandalia, the old capital of the State in October, 1856. There was to be a political meeting in front of the old State House, in the center of the square at 2 o'clock. Soon after the hour the sonorous voice of Mr. Cardy rang through the town: 'O, yes! O, yes! All ye who want to hear public speaking, draw near!' The crowd at once began to gather from all sides of the square. The Doctor then introduced the first speaker, and he proceeded to make the best presentation he could of the principles of the newly formed Republican party, and the reasons why Fremont, 'the gallant pathfinder of the West,' should be elected President. About the time the first speaker closed his remarks, Hon. Ebenezer Fock and Abraham Lincoln arrived and took the stand; and both made able and effective speeches. After that Lincoln and I frequently met during the canvass, and often afterward I spoke with him from the same platform.'³²

Despite the earnest efforts of many energetic Republicans, John C. Fremont lost the election and James Buchanan, the Democratic presidential nominee, was elected. Fremont received 11½ electoral votes but Buchanan received a

³⁰ Mildred C. Stoler, "The Democratic Element in the New Republican Party in Illinois, 1856-60," Papers in Illinois History and Transactions for the Year 1942, Illinois Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, 1942, 45-49

³¹ Boston Advertiser, Boston, Massachusetts, February 2, (date missing), newspaper clipping, Lloyd Family Collection, Minnetka, Illinois.

³² Prepared and arranged by Francis P. Browne, The Everyday Life of Abraham Lincoln, Lincoln's Life and Character Portrayed by Those Who Knew Him, N. E. Thompson Publishing Company, New York, 1884, 264.

total of 174 electoral votes. There was no sorrow, however, when the Annual Review for 1856 was published. Every citizen of Chicago could be proud of the statements and statistics so ably presented by William Bross. The railroads were still growing. One hundred four trains now arrived at and departed daily from Chicago. Freight, passenger and mail, etc., brought the total earnings of the railroads centering in the city to \$17,343,242.84, for the year ending December, 1856. Passenger travel reached a new peak. "The total movement of the principal railway lines centering at Chicago would be about 3,350,000 passengers."³³ The total value of Chicago's manufactured articles reached the astonishing figure of \$15,515,063. "Every aspect of the horizon, east, west, north and south," declared Bross, "is full of promise and joyous hope--an offer to all the inspiring motto, Courage! Onward!"³⁴ Speaking of the agricultural advance of the region around Chicago, Bross said:

No better evidence need be required of the growth and prosperity of the country tributary of Chicago, than the rapidly increasing quantity of wheat which it pours into this market. In 1852 the total receipts were less than 1,000,000 bushels. In 1856 they are nearly 9,000,000 bushels. When it is remembered that this is the contribution not of an old and thoroughly tilled province, but of a comparatively new, and yet thinly settled country it may certainly be quite excusable to anticipate the most bountiful returns for the future. The receipts of the last year average over 23,000 bushels for each week day, and the shipments over 26,000 bushels per day, or an aggregate movement of 54,000 bushels per day. At an average price of say \$1.25 per bushel this movement involves \$67,500 per day for the year an aggregate of \$21,127,500.³⁵

³³ William Bross, Fifth Annual Review of the Commerce, Manufactures, and the Public and Private Improvements of Chicago, for the Year 1856: With a Full Statement of the System of Railroads, and a General Synopsis of the Business of the City, Democratic Press (Wm. Stearns Printing Establishment, Chicago, 1857), 63.

³⁴ Ibid., 64.

³⁵ Ibid., 20-21.

William Gross was extremely pleased to be able to offer such a report to the public. "It may be doubted whether the whole history of the civilized world," he said, "can furnish a parallel to the vigorous growth and rapid development of the country which has Chicago for its commercial metropolis."³⁶

Notwithstanding the press of his daily duties at the newspaper and political activities, William Gross found time to take an active part in the founding of a University at Lake Forest, Illinois, in 1857. He was deeply interested in the establishment and maintenance of the school.

Was who among our rich men will make an addition to Lake Forest University, thus doing something tangible for the educational interests of the Northwest? How much nobler and better to do that than to leave an overgrown fortune for heirs to squander.³⁷

In his diary for November 5, 1879, William Gross wrote:

Completed this P.M. an agreement with the Trustees of Lake Forest University, an agreement by which they assume the guardianship of some trust funds which for more than 20 years I have had in my mind and provided for in my wills for the benefit, I hope, of my fellow man on behalf of my Dear Departed son, Mattie. God grant that he may through this fund preach the gospel of our Blessed Savior to the end of time. The Lord be praised that I have been spared to do this thing for His glory and the good of my fellow men.³⁸

And again on September 24, 1885, Gross wrote:

My business today has been more than 'usual.' In the first place I purchased today--deeds and papers all passed A.M.--of J. N. Gillespie, his store No. 3436 Wabash Ave. for \$20,000. for a present to my Dear Wife on her 46th Wedding day. Second, I transferred also, before 12 N., a policy all paid up, for \$20,000. in the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Co. to

³⁶ Ibid., 63.

³⁷ Chicago Tribune, January 16, 1888, newspaper clipping, Lloyd Family Collection, Winnetka, Illinois.

³⁸ Diary of William Gross, 1879, 51.

complete an endowment of \$40,000., the interest of which is to be used for a specific and definite purpose, to the Trustees of Lake Forest University--said University being the guardians and the distributors of the fund for the purposes specified in our article of agreement.³⁹

William Bross endowed a professorship at Lake Forest University and built a faculty residence there. The residence is called "Bross Cottage." The fund completed in 1865 by Mr. Bross, provides for the Bross Prize. This prize is awarded to authors of works dealing with the relationship of history, science or "facts in any department of knowledge" to the Christian religion. The last award was made in 1940 to Harris Franklin Hall of the Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Illinois, for his work, Christianity, An Inquiry into Its Nature and Truth.⁴⁰

William Bross' philanthropic work was important; however, his chief interest was in the growth of the city of Chicago. In his Review for the year 1857, he tells of still another increase to the Chicago system of railroads. The addition was small as a result of the depression and panic in that year. Homer Hoyt, speaking of the depression, says:

In the summer of 1857 a financial stringency had developed in New York which was blamed by eastern interests on the over-speculation in western lands and too rapid rail-road building.⁴¹

Railway earnings for the twelve trunk lines entering Chicago in 1857 were down at least ten per cent from those of the previous year which had been

³⁹ Ibid., 1885, 39.

⁴⁰ Harris Franklin Hall, Christianity, An Inquiry into Its Nature and Truth, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1940.

⁴¹ Homer Hoyt, One Hundred Years of Land Values in Chicago, 74.

\$1,558,550.23.⁴² Yet Mr. Bross believed that the panic and depression would prompt greater caution and therefore bring greater safety in the future. He wrote:

While old and wealthy cities on the Atlantic seaboard succumbed to the financial revulsion--while crash after crash occurred in the commercial world, and ruin left its traces on every hand--from all parts of the country, North, South, East and West, we heard the momentous query put --'How stands Chicago?' For years the assertion has been made that our city was but a bubble, to be exploded by the first breath of adverse fortune. How nobly she has weathered the storm and falsified the predictions of envious rivals, it devolves upon us in dry facts and figures that cannot be disputed, to demonstrate. We will show the people of the East that notwithstanding they have rolled desolation and panics from the Atlantic seaboard to the Mississippi, that there is in the commerce of our city a vigor and elasticity which are equal to every emergency. We will show that all things considered, the Trade and Commerce of Chicago throughout the past year, have been most fully maintained, and the falling off in some departments of business is due to the general stagnation throughout the whole country.⁴³

Although William Bross admitted that there had been a "falling off" of trade, he quoted the 1856-57 Grain Trade for Chicago as one example which would help to prove that there was only a small reduction in Chicago's business.

The Grain Trade--which is probably the most important branch of our commerce--has been active, and shows, contrary to general expectations, but a slight falling off in the business of 1856 and an increase over that of 1855. The receipts of all kinds of grain in 1855 were 20,487,953 bushels, while during the past year they foot up 21,856,206 bushels--a falling off on the receipts of 1856 of about three million bushels. The shipments of grain and flour reduced to its equivalent in wheat during the past year, amount to 18,032,768 bushels--which is but 2,818,618 bushels less than was shipped in 1856. It will be noticed, however, that

⁴² William Bross, Sixth Annual Review of the Commerce, Manufactures, and the Public and Private Improvements of Chicago, for the Year 1857; with a Full Statement of Her System of Railroads and a General Synopsis of the Business of the City, Democratic Press Kenneth Steam Printing Establishment, Chicago, 1858, 45.

⁴³ Ibid., 3.

while there is a slight reduction in the general footing up for the year, that in the great staples of the Grain Trade we show quite a large increase. Of wheat we exported 9,435,052 bushels, or 1,147,632 bushels more than in 1856, and 3,206,897 bushels more than in 1855. In flour, also, there is a large increase. We exported in 1857 259,643 barrels or forty thousand barrels more than shipments of 1856.⁴⁴

William Bross felt that the depression had shown that Chicago's prosperity had a solid basis. But, Elias Colbert thinks that Bross painted too rosy a picture in his Review for 1857. Colbert believes that Chicago was affected much more strongly than Mr. Bross relates. Actually it was not until 1858 and 1859 that the depression of 1857 really made itself felt in the city of Chicago. Chicago land values in 1857 and 1858 for example, held as Bross had once predicted. The railroad lines entering the city were not severely hit in 1857, but in the following two years the railroads felt the depression.

In any case, the panic and subsequent depression of 1857 has been cited by several authors as the principal reason for the consolidation of the Democratic Press and the Chicago Tribune which was effected on the first day of July, 1858. The new proprietors were: William Bross, John L. Scripps, Joseph Medill, Barton W. Spears, Jr., G. H. Ray and Alfred Cowles. John Hoos is of the belief "that this union brought together what was undoubtedly the ablest corps of editorial writers and managers, at that time, or since combined on any single paper in the country."⁴⁵ Despite the Chicago Times' reference to the "great Consolidated" the paper was known as the Chicago Press

⁴⁴ Ibid., 5-6.

⁴⁵ John Hoos, Illinois Historical and Statistical Comprising the Facts of Its Planting and Growth as a Province, County, Territory and State, Serpents Printing Company, Chicago, 1872, II, 947.

and Tribune. This title was retained for about three years when the word "Press" was dropped.⁴⁵

The year 1858 was surely an exciting one in the state of Illinois. The contest between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas for a seat in the United States Senate caused a great stir. The first Lincoln-Douglas debate was at Ottawa, Illinois, on Saturday afternoon, August 22. There were a great many Chicagoans present having been enticed by the special railroad rates. During the following week Lincoln traveled through western Illinois, speaking at Galesburg, Macomb and other places. He was accompanied by Joseph Medill and William Cross.⁴⁷ The second debate was scheduled at Freeport on August 27. This time the railroads offered a sixty per cent rate and again many people took advantage of it. William Cross and Joseph Medill were both present to hear Mr. Lincoln speak. "The editors of the Chicago Press and Tribune," says Mildred C. Stoler, "threw themselves wholeheartedly into the fray."⁴⁸

It was during this period that the Press and Tribune showed great enterprise in news collecting. It contained full reports of the Lincoln-Douglas debates which were printed with unusual promptness, the reporters being Henry Binmore and Robert E. Witt.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Franklin William Scott says that the name was retained until 1861. "Newspapers and Periodicals of Illinois 1814-1870," Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois, 1920, XVI, 63. Josiah Seymour Curray says that the word "Press" was dropped October 25, 1860. Chicago: Its History and Its Builders, S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, Chicago, 1914, I, 388.

⁴⁷ James C. Burns, "The Randolph House, Macomb, Illinois," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, 1917, January, II, 499.

⁴⁸ Mildred C. Stoler, "The Democratic Element in the New Republican Party in Illinois, 1856-60," 49.

⁴⁹ Josiah S. Curray, Chicago: Its History and Its Builders, I, 366.

Shortly after, Lincoln came up to Chicago to consult with Joseph Medill and William Bross and make out a list of appointments.⁵⁰ Ernest Poole claims that it was during this time that the Press and Tribune really felt the brunt of the depression of 1857. "Several partners dropped out," he reports, "and the paper was soon bankrupt, but Medill was not beaten yet. With Bross and other partners left, he got a three-year extension of debts and paid them all in twenty-one months."⁵¹

In spite of Abraham Lincoln's failure to win the senatorial election, his friends still had enormous faith in him. It is generally acknowledged that the Press and Tribune was the first newspaper to publicly announce Lincoln as the right man for the Republican presidential nomination. William Bross and his associates put forth every effort for the nomination of Lincoln. Mr. Bross bent all his energies of voice and pen to the cause, laboring night and day.⁵²

Notwithstanding, William Bross faithfully continued to write the Tribune's daily financial article so dear to his interest. He was unsurprisingly proud of the increase in Chicago's population when in 1859, the citizens were numbered at 95,000. Still, he was looking forward to the one hundred thousand mark. The depression had begun to set in when the Review for the

⁵⁰ Frank K. Stevens, "Life of Stephen Arnold Douglas," 557.

⁵¹ Ernest Poole, Giants Gone, Men Who Made Chicago, McGraw Hill, Athletico House, New York, 1943, 48.

⁵² James Grant Wilson and John Fiske, eds., Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography, D. Appleton and Company, 1887, 3, 611.

year 1858 was printed. There was a slight increase in the Grain Trade but the figure was still short over a million bushels of that of 1856. Yet, real estate values in Chicago remained fairly steady. Possibly, many land-owners were encouraged by Bross' optimism and refused to sell their property in a low market. In the Review for 1858, William Bross viewed with a scornful eye these critics who predicted a large drop in Chicago land values. He wrote:

The appreciation in Chicago real estate for the last five years has been enormous. Holders of any considerable parcels of property have in a comparatively short period found themselves rich. This among other things has formed a fruitful theme of alarm and ridicule to scribblers for Eastern papers, and all the tribe of small-dry tourists; and now that the whole country has been involved in commercial disaster, it is worth while to inquire how far the predictions of constitutional or interested croakers have been realized. After taking considerable pains to collect accurate information in regard to this subject we believe the condition of Chicago real estate to be as follows:

As a body, holders of real estate in this city have now, as ever, entire confidence in the substantial character of their investments. Those who are able to hold them will not sell below the figures ruling two years ago. Indeed in some parts of the city real estate is held at from ten to twenty per cent. advance upon those figures. Opportunities sometime occur, when parties are forced to sell, to make capital investments; but these instances are much more rare than might be expected. Strangers who expect to profit by such opportunities will find it necessary to put their funds in the hands of some friend for investment, or to wait patiently for days or weeks, till some 'lame duck' is obliged to come down. After passing through so fearful an ordeal, the shrewdest and most far-seeing capitalists, have not lost a particle of confidence in Chicago real property.⁵³

Howe Keyt refers to William Bross' Review for 1858 as the source of information concerning land values for that year. However, it was not long until

⁵³ William Bross, Seventh Annual Review of the Trade and Commerce and of the Public and Private Improvements of the City of Chicago, for the Year 1858; and a General Synopsis of the Business of the City, as published in the Chicago Daily Press and Tribune, Press and Tribune Steam Printing Establishment, Chicago, 1859, 38-39.

real estate prices took an enormous drop. John Stephen Wright speaking of his losses in 1859, says:

My real estate, worth in 1856 at least \$600,000., and net \$100,000. of the indebtedness chargeable to it, was completely swept.⁵⁴

Western railroads were really hard-put in 1858. The trunk lines entering Chicago showed a falling off in receipts of \$1,304,727.61 in 1857 from those of 1856 and \$3,236,491.92 in 1858 from those of 1857. The total decrease between the years 1856 and 1858 was \$4,621,219.53.⁵⁵ Gross wrote:

The railways of the West have suffered severely during the past year. They have had the worst year they will ever have; for the development of the West, it is believed, will receive no check for many years in the future, and when the next revulsion shall come, our rich prairies will be tenanted with an intelligent, energetic people, whose numbers will be told by millions, and their actual necessities will always force a large and lucrative traffic upon the railways of the West.⁵⁶

City transportation, however, made an advance during 1858. Chicago's State street streetcar line was begun on November 1, 1858. Josiah Seymour Currey relates that Henry Fuller broke the first ground and William Gross drove the first spike at the ceremony.⁵⁷

The proprietors of the Tribune applied to the Illinois State Legislature for a charter of incorporation in 1860. It was duly issued to them under the name of the Tribune Company with a capital of \$200,000. The

⁵⁴ Hower Hoyt, One Hundred Years of Land Values in Chicago, 12.

⁵⁵ Gross, Seventh Annual Review of the Trade and Commerce of Chicago, For the Year 1858, 52.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 43.

⁵⁷ Josiah Seymour Currey, Chicago: Its History and Its Builders, III, 346.

officers of the company were: John Locke Scripps, president; William Bross, vice-president; Alfred Cowles, secretary and treasurer, and Joseph Medill, editorial superintendent. The editors continued to work enthusiastically for Abraham Lincoln's nomination but even some of his closest friends were doubtful. William Bross tells of meeting Lincoln after the Decatur Convention in May, 1860. "He was sitting on a trunk," says Bross, "alone at the end of the hall, with his head down and leaning it on his hand."⁵⁸ Mr. Lincoln told Bross that he was not feeling well. Whereupon Bross told him that he hoped he'd be feeling better and that he really should be getting his acceptance speech ready as his friends were sure to nominate him for the President at the Chicago Convention. Lincoln replied that it looked a little that way, but that little reliance could be placed on such things.⁵⁹

Abraham Lincoln was nominated as the Republican presidential candidate. But even while the Chicago Tribune was laboring diligently for Abraham Lincoln's election, rumblings of secession were being heard from the South. Nevertheless, the editors were not deterred. Neither Mr. Bross or his associates believed in a temporizing policy. Tracy E. Strevoy says:

Located in the Northwest, in the midst of a new country endowed with vast resources and a rapidly growing population, the Chicago Tribune occupied a strategic position. Politically the states of the Northwest were exerting an increasing influence in national affairs. Such action was often doubtful in view of the diversity of population and the settlement of large numbers of pro-southerners just north of the Ohio River. The South well realized the importance of the Northwest in the national scene and made strenuous efforts to keep the East and West divided. Any agency which could unify the Northwest or succeed in breaking the ties binding it to the Lower South was thus in a position to render southern

⁵⁸ Bross, Everyday Life of Abraham Lincoln, 330.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

efforts valueless. It was in this field of action that the Chicago Tribune played an important part.⁶⁰

Abraham Lincoln was elected in 1860. His opponents for the presidential chair had been Stephen A. Douglas, nominated on the northern Democratic ticket; John C. Breckinridge, nominated by the southern Democrats, and John Bell, chosen by the Constitutional Union Party. Mr. Lincoln secured only forty per cent of the popular vote but he had one hundred and eighty votes in the electoral college. His combined opponents received one hundred and twenty-three.⁶¹ Lincoln took office on March 4, 1861. But with his success came the outbreak of the Civil War. "The Chicago Tribune had absorbed Mont-
worth's Chicago Democrat," says Ernest Poole, "and became the strongest paper in town."⁶² Now the Tribune called the nation to arms. William Brock had represented the paper on January 5, 1861, at a meeting held by the citizens of Chicago to avow their loyalty to the Union. In his speech that evening, Mr. Brock urged an all-out effort so that the war should be ". . . short, sharp and decisive, waged on the high ground of 'Liberty and Union.'⁶³

It is not deemed necessary for the purposes of this paper to relate the progress of the war. The interest of the writer lies principally in the

60 Tracy E. Streyer, "Joseph Medill and the Chicago Tribune in the Nomination and Election of Lincoln," Papers in Illinois History and Transactions for the Year 1938, The Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, 1939, 39.

61 John D. Hicks, A Short History of American Democracy, 362.

62 Ernest Poole, Chicago's Sons, 48.

63 Biographical Sketches, 43.

activities of William Bross during the period. Mr. Bross was energetic in recruiting, and aided in the organization of an all-colored regiment, Twenty-ninth Regiment Colored Volunteers, which was under the command of his brother, Colonel John A. Bross. William Bross' interest in the abolition of slavery is reflected in this enterprise.

There were quite a few war meetings held by Chicago's citizens.

Frederic Francis Cook tells us that

The list of presiding officers at various times included such well known citizens as the Hon. Thomas S. Bryan, John V. Farwell, the Hon. Julian S. Ramsay (Mayor at the outbreak of the war), the Hon. J. B. Rice and Hon. R. E. Mason (both subsequently Mayors), Judges John M. Wilson and Henry Drummond, the Hon. W. B. Raymond, and Deacon (subsequently Lieutenant-Governor) William Bross.⁶⁴

Bross, speaking of some of Chicago's contributions to the national struggle, says:

The Board of Trade, though purely a commercial organization, was accorded the leadership in raising regiments and batteries, and they, and our merchants and citizens generally, poured out their money without stint for this purpose and to send hospital stores to the front; and generally, from the beginning to the end of the war, all the energies, the wealth, and the power of the city were at the service of the government.⁶⁵

Through his speeches and writing, William Bross encouraged the people in the war effort and advocated freedom for the slaves, urging President Lincoln to issue a Manicaption Proclamation.⁶⁶ The Chicago Times, however, did not

⁶⁴ Frederic Francis Cook, Bygone Days in Chicago, 3.

⁶⁵ Habel McIlvaine, Reminiscences of Chicago During the Civil War, R. S. Donnelley and Sons Company, Chicago, 19th, 161.

⁶⁶ Franklin William Scott, "Newspapers and Periodicals of Illinois 1811-1872," 60.

share the enthusiasm of the Tribune. Bessie Louise Pierce says that editor Story of the Times thought that freedom for the slaves would result in economic ruin for the North and South.⁶⁷ The famous suppression of the Times in 1863 was indeed a test of the rights of free speech and a free press.

The Bross family suffered a personal loss when Colonel John A. Bross was killed at Petersburg, Virginia, July 30, 1864. William Bross, journeying to the front to recover the body of his brother, visited President Lincoln. Bross says that the losses of the war weighed heavily on Lincoln.

"I will tell you what the people want," said the President, "they want and must have, success. But whether that come or not, I shall stay right here, and do my duty. Here I shall be; and they may come and hang me on that tree (pointing out of the window to one), but, God helping me, I shall never desert my post."⁶⁸

"This was said in a way that assured me," said Bross, "that these were the sentiments of his inmost soul."⁶⁹

When the Republican State Convention met at Springfield in May, 1864, William Bross was nominated for Lieutenant-Governor of the state. John Neese says:

William Bross, the lieutenant governor elect, was selected as a representative of the loyal press, as a deserved recognition of its powerful influence in upholding the cause of the Union and sustaining the army in the field.⁷⁰

Mr. Bross and Richard J. Oglesby, the Republican candidate for governor, were

⁶⁷ Bessie Louise Pierce, A History of Chicago, II, 415.

⁶⁸ Francis P. Drome, The Everyday Life of Abraham Lincoln, 663.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ John Neese, Illinois, Historical and Statistical, II, 715.

opposed by Democrat James C. Robinson and S. Corning Judd. "This being the year of the Presidential election, the contest was therefore active and earnest on both sides, and was waged with much bitterness."⁷¹ Abraham Lincoln had been nominated for president on the Republican ticket. General George B. McClellan was his opponent as the Democratic nominee. The Republican platform dealt with the maintenance of the Union and the prosecution of the war. John D. Hicks relates that the Democrats presented a "peace at any price" program although this was disavowed by McClellan.⁷² The state campaign in Illinois, Fremont O. Bennett tells us, was enlivened by the rivalry between "Denton" Bross and S. Corning Judd.⁷³ The election results, however, were favorable to the Republican party on the national front as well as in the state of Illinois. Although the popular vote in the presidential race was close, Abraham Lincoln received two hundred and twelve electoral votes and McClellan got only twelve. In the state, Richard Oglesby defeated James C. Robinson, 200,376 to 150,701 and William Bross defeated S. Corning Judd, 103,842 to 100,244.⁷⁴

In August, 1864, "Denton" Bross played an important part in the discovery of a rebel conspiracy at Camp Douglas. Mr. Bross related the entire

⁷¹ B. W. Lusk, Eighty Years of Illinois, Politics and Politicians, Anecdotes and Incidents, A Succinct History of the State, 1800-1900, D. W. Shaw, Springfield, Illinois, 1909, 163.

⁷² John D. Hicks, A Short History of American Democracy, 407.

⁷³ Fremont O. Bennett, Politics and Politicians of Chicago, Cook County and Illinois, 127.

⁷⁴ B. W. Lusk, Eighty Years of Illinois, 164.

incident in a paper which he presented before the Chicago Historical Society, June 12, 1878. Camp Douglas was built during the summer of 1861. It was originally to be used for troops raised in Illinois. However in 1862, it was converted into a base for rebel prisoners. In that year the prisoners numbered eight or nine thousand. Cross, locating Camp Douglas for his audience, said

The boundaries of Camp Douglas were as follows: The southeast corner was at the intersection of Cottage Grove Avenue and Cottage Place, the northern boundary of the University grounds; thence the line ran west on Cottage Place to its intersection with Rhodes Avenue; thence diagonally in a northwesterly direction to the corner of South Park Avenue and Thirty-third Street; thence west on Thirty-third Street to its intersection with Forest Avenue to Thirty-first Street; thence east along Thirty-first Street to South Park Avenue about one hundred and sixty feet; thence east to Cottage Grove Avenue; thence along that avenue to the place of beginning . . .⁷⁵

A large number of prisoners in the camp died in 1862. The Copperheads attributed this to maltreatment although Mr. Cross says that a very inclement winter was responsible for the deaths. In any case it was the cause of some agitation in the camp. By 1864, there were approximately twelve thousand prisoners at Camp Douglas. The occasion of the conspiracy was the Democratic Convention which was to be held in Chicago beginning August 29, 1864. It came to William Cross' attention, from a number of sources, that the Copperheads were stirring unrest in the city and that there was a so-called plot about to free the prisoners at Camp Douglas and burn the city. It was even rumored that some rebel officers, who had escaped to Canada, had come to

⁷⁵ Mabel Hellvaine, Reminiscences of Chicago During the Civil War, 165.

Chicago and were ready to lead the prisoners. Mr. Cross also heard that there were ten thousand stands of arms secreted in cellars in the city. With this information at hand, he called upon General Sacket, the commander of Camp Douglas. Union soldiers were placed throughout the city. Cross said:

On Saturday, August 26th, the Democratic politicians, many of them very respectable gentlemen, with their blowers and strikers began to arrive. As day after day passed, the crowd increased till the whole city seemed alive with a motley crew of big shouldered, bear-eyed, bottle-nosed, whiskey-blotched vagabonds--the very excrescence and sweepings of the slums and sinks of all the cities in the nation. I sat often at my window on Michigan Avenue, and saw the filthy stream of degraded humanity swagger to the wigwag on the lake shore and wondered how the city could be saved from burning and plunder, and our wives and daughters from a far more dreadful fate.⁷⁶

Within the next few days there were several arrests made by General Sacket's men, not only in Chicago, but also in Joliet and Wilmington.

The plan, as derived from confessions of the rebel officers and other sources, was to attack Camp Douglas, to release the prisoners there, with them to seize the polls, allowing none but the Copperhead ticket to be voted, and to stuff the boxes sufficiently to secure the city, county and state for McClellan and Pendleton, then utterly to sack the city, burning and destroying every description of property except what they could appropriate to their own use and that of their Southern brethren--to lay the city waste and carry off its money and stores to Jeff Davis's dominions.⁷⁷

Cross says that whatever violence was contemplated was cut short by the vigilance of General Sacket's men, the arrests and the arrival of Democratic leaders from New York who warned that riots or other disturbances would surely ruin the Democratic party.⁷⁸ Philip Kinsley is of the belief that the un-

76 Ibid., 177.

77 Ibid., 188-189.

78 Ibid., 179.

covering of the Camp Douglas plot stirred the people to action. More guards were organized and more soldiers were sent to guard various prison camps.⁷⁹ Although there is some doubt concerning the seriousness and intent of the conspiracy, William Bross' aid in uncovering the plot can be numbered among his many services to the city of Chicago.

An event worthy of some note during Mr. Bross' term of office as Lieutenant-Governor of the state of Illinois, was the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States by the Illinois Legislature. William Bross, as presiding officer of the Senate, was the first to sign the resolution. Looking back in 1884 upon the occasion, he commented:

The Thirteenth Amendment became an integral part of the Constitution of the United States. The dry details of the official record . . . give no sign of the deep solemnity which accompanied the passage of the resolution. The whole history of the struggles of mankind for freedom through all the ages seemed pictured on the minds of the members. Especially did visions of the dear ones sleeping their last sleep that the Union might live, that by this sublime act this dark, foul blot might be wiped from her proud escutcheon, appeared to drive out every other thought. Men spoke in whispers, as if standing among the tombs of the past, and before them was the angel of light and liberty pointing to the glorious future of the Republic. The few who opposed seemed sacrificing no consistency, and in their inmost souls glad that this day would mark another forward and substantial movement in the progress of the race. At the distance of nearly nineteen years, none-doubtless all--of the men who voted for this great measure of freedom regard it as the most important act of their lives. I certainly do--signing it for the people of Illinois as presiding officer of the Senate. That in all the future it will stand out as a marked event in human progress there cannot be a particle of doubt.⁸⁰

79 Philip Hinsley, The Chicago Tribune, I, 350.

80 Chicago Tribune, January 16, 1884, Bross Scrapbook, 103.

Also in 1865, the problem of the Illinois "black laws" was revived. These laws had been on the Illinois statute books since 1819.⁸¹ Illinois did not have slavery in its exact form but the laws provided for the indenture of negroes and the sale or transfer of the certificate of indenture from one master to another. It was also ruled unlawful to bring slaves into the state for the purpose of mancipating them.⁸² Thus, "Illinois reaped the benefits of slavery by the system of indentures."⁸³ In 1848 there was contention over the "black laws." Such prominent Chicagoans as Isaac Arnold and George Denierre proposed that such laws were unconstitutional. The Common Council of the city of Chicago in 1850 voted on a resolution which stated that the Fugitive Slave law was an outrage to morality. Yet there was a reticence on the part of some to speak out strongly against the law. Senator Stephen A. Douglas warned that action against the law might cut off railroad grants or harbor appropriations for the state.⁸⁴ However, by 1854 Senator Douglas' ideas were opposed by the new Republican party. But the "black laws" still stayed on the books. In 1862 ". . . the people of Chicago had endorsed a constitutional provision to prevent Negro immigration."⁸⁵ The Chicago

81 Brass Scrapbook, 57.

82 J. H. Gridley and others, Historical Sketches, The Inquirer, Virginia, Illinois, 1907, I, 352.

83 Ibid., 352.

84 Present J. Bennett, Politics and Politicians of Chicago, Cook County and Illinois, 75.

85 Bessie Louise Pierce, A History of Chicago, II, 266.

Tribune spoke out against it. Three years later the Tribune advised that ". . . the safety of the white race lies in doing justice to the blacks, for God has declared against their oppressors."⁸⁶ The paper also urged that bills to allow the soldiers in the field to vote for the "black laws" repeal be presented in Springfield. Thus, it was during the first session of the State Legislature in 1865, (William Bross presiding over the Senate), that the famous or infamous "black laws" were finally repealed. Also in this session ". . . appropriations were made for the care of soldiers' orphans and for the purchase of the tract in which the remains of Stephen A. Douglas are interred."⁸⁷ John Moses says that

It was remarked, at the close of the session, upon the passage of the resolution thanking the lieutenant-governor for the 'highly impartial and prompt manner in which he had discharged his duties,' that this had been the first session in many years, during which no appeal had been taken from the decisions of the presiding officer.⁸⁸

Abraham Lincoln's death was a great blow to the nation as well as his friends. "In Illinois," says Dr. Thomas H. Eddy, "the grief was the deeper because Illinois best knew and loved the slain chieftain. He had grown with her growth, he was identified with her history, he had fought the battle of Freedom on her prairies, she had given him to the nation and had sent him with loving benedictions and earnest prayers to the post of responsibility, peril, death."⁸⁹ The city of Chicago was the scene of great mourn-

⁸⁶ Philip Kinsley, The Chicago Tribune, I, 358.

⁸⁷ Fremont O. Bennett, Politics and Politicians of Chicago, Cook County and Illinois, 127.

⁸⁸ John Moses, Illinois, Historical and Statistical, II, 716.

⁸⁹ Josiah S. Currey, Chicago, Its History and Its Builders, II, 152.

ing. William Gross acted as one of the pall-bearers from the state and his business associate, Joseph McGill was in the "Committee of One Hundred" that went to Springfield for the burial. The following letter addressed to Judge James E. Doolittle of Wisconsin was written only a few days after Lincoln's assassination. It would seem to express the concern that not a few felt when Andrew Johnson became the president of the United States.

Hon. J. E. Doolittle

My Dear Sir,

Your letter inclosing a copy of your address was rec'd this morning. We found it yesterday in the Racine Journal & published it in this morning's issue. It is capital & will tend to inspire confidence in our new president. God bless and guide him.

Your Ovt. Servt.,

Wm. Gross⁹⁰

It is important to note that Mr. Gross maintained a more than usual interest in the circumstances surrounding Abraham Lincoln's death. He continued his inquiries for a number of years. The succeeding letter is an answer to one of his investigations. It is dated July 12, 1881, and was written by William S. Greene of Tolpelt, Menard County, Illinois.

My dear sir:

The facts in regard to the matter about which you inquire are substantially correct. They are as follows:

I am a native of Tennessee. Early in June, 1865, I visited some friends in White County. At a dinner at W. H. Murray's I met Col. Fox

⁹⁰ Wm. Henry, "James Reed Doolittle of Wisconsin," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, IV, No. 2., July, 1911, Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, 1911, 169.

Murray, who had served during the war in the rebel army. At the table while we were discussing the assassination of my life-long friend President Lincoln, Col. Murray said that before the second inauguration he predicted that before the close of the first year of his second term, Lincoln would be assassinated, and that he had offered to bet a suit of clothes worth one hundred dollars that it would be done. No one dared to take the bet.

But I said 'on what was your opinion based? Did you know of any conspiracy to commit so terrible a crime?'

'No,' said Col. Murray, 'but I have known Andy Johnson long and well. I knew his consuming ambition to be President of these United States. There was but one life in the way of the consummation of his hopes and that life, I knew as well as I could anything in the future, must be taken. It has been; my prediction is fulfilled. I did not think then and I do not think now that Andy Johnson's hand will ever be seen in the crime. In fact, he may not even directly or indirectly have inspired it; but there are plenty of men in the country who know his ambitions and what kind of a president he will make, and hence I believed that the single life that was in the way must suffer.'

Of course at this distance of time, I cannot pretend that I give the exact language of Col. Murray; but what he did say was so remarkable that I am sure I give you the substance of it correctly. I often talked over the matter with Governor Yates and other friends, but as Andy Johnson was living and there was no direct proof that he had anything to do with the assassination of President Lincoln, we thought it best not to publish the facts as I have given them to you. Now that he too has gone to his account, let them pass into history for whatever they may be worth.

W. G. Greene⁹¹.

By the year 1865, the population of the city of Chicago had grown to 178,900. The Annual Commercial Review for 1865, published by the Chicago Tribune reported that

In its external growth the city shows a mighty improvement during the year, notwithstanding that the thunders of war have scarcely left us, to follow out the irresistible Western impulse to 'improve.' On all our principal thoroughfares the signs of progress are plainly visible;

⁹¹ William G. Greene to William Dress, July 22, 1861, Lloyd Family Collection, Winnetka, Illinois.

while the far off suburbs also exhibit the mighty controlling hand of progress. We have not during the year extended our municipal boundaries, but we have filled in, consolidated, beautified, utilized in a wonderful degree. The evidences of prosperity lie all around us, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that in many departments of external growth, the extent of our advancement has been limited not by lack of pecuniary means, but simply by paucity of workers, notwithstanding that the hosts of the Union have returned from the battlefield to resume the peaceful pursuits of civic life.⁹²

The Annual Commercial Review for 1865 is not attributed to William Bross although there is a possibility that parts of it might have been abstracts from some of his articles for the Tribune. The Chicago Tribune, however, did publish Commercial Reviews for the years 1859 to 1870, the last four of which seem to have been written by Miss Colbert, financial editor of the paper for those years. Apparently William Bross only wrote the daily financial articles for the Chicago Tribune during the first year after the consolidation of the Democratic Press and the Tribune. This conclusion is based on a diary entry for September 27, 1862. During the absence of his son-in-law, Henry Dewarst Lloyd, financial editor of the Tribune in 1862, Mr. Bross had been writing the daily article.

Henry came home this morning. I wrote his article today--The Financial. I wrote for perhaps nearly a year, the first and for that time the only money articles ever written for any paper in the city. I presume that of today will be my last.⁹³

In any event, it was William Bross who set the precedent for the Annual Commercial Reviews and the financial articles for the newspapers of the city of

⁹² Abstract of the Tribune's Annual Review of the Trade, Business and Growth of Chicago and the Northwest, Tribune Steam Printing Establishment, 1865, 1-2.

⁹³ Diary of William Bross, 1862, 37.

Chicago.

The next few years in office were exceedingly full ones for William Bross. In 1866, he had the pleasure of speaking at a Williams College reunion and was also asked to deliver an address to the New York Chamber of Commerce. In the latter speech he urged the citizens of the post-war republic to study how they could best develop its vast resources and promote its stability ". . . and closed with an exhortation to young men to set worthy of the grand and glorious inheritance which has fallen to them."⁹⁴ The same year found Bross' home in the throes of a cholera epidemic. Chicago's mortality caused by this disease was very sizeable. In the month of June, 197 people died; in July, 425; in August, 464; in September, 346; in October, 360; and in November, 299.⁹⁵ With the coming of the cold weather the disease finally abated.

The following year, 1867, William Bross made a trip to Europe accompanied by his daughter, Jessie Bross. Letters from this trip, containing not only travel but also political news, were enjoyed by the readers of the Chicago Tribune. Visiting in Ireland, Mr. Bross wrote of his regret on seeing the great poverty of the Irish peasants and the effects of the caste system which Great Britain had imposed upon them.⁹⁶ He was naturally interested, among other things, in financial matters in London and commented on

⁹⁴ Doston Advertiser, February 2, (date missing).

⁹⁵ Charles Farpel, Harper Scrapbook, Chicago, II, 103.

⁹⁶ Chicago Tribune, Chicago, Illinois, November 5, 1867, 2.

the state of the cotton trade.⁹⁷ Turning to European politics, William Gross wrote: "The fall of Garibaldi, the intentions of the Emperor Napoleon and the prospects of the Italian dynasty are subjects everywhere discussed."⁹⁸ Also included in the Gross itinerary were visits to Glasgow, Edinburgh, Paris, Berlin, and Amsterdam. Mr. Gross thoroughly enjoyed the trip and as it ended approached he wrote that "Our adjectives and our powers of description as well, are nearly exhausted. . . ."⁹⁹

By 1866 William Gross gave evidences of being a wealthy man. In that year, under the very modern income tax begun during the Civil War, he paid the enormous sum of \$35,710.¹⁰⁰ In addition to his newspaper and real estate holdings Mr. Gross had also become a director of the Manufacturers' National Bank and the Mutual Security Insurance Company.¹⁰¹ During the year, in the company of his dear friend Schuyler Colfax, the vice-president of the United States, William Gross made an overland stage trip to the Pacific coast. Mr. Gross' enthusiasm for the country which he now was boundless. Inspired, he returned home to again tell Tribune readers of the "Glorious Western Empire." On this and succeeding trips through the western United States, Gross became interested in the state of Colorado. He says:

⁹⁷ Ibid., November 6, 1867, 2.

⁹⁸ Ibid., November 11, 1867, 2.

⁹⁹ Ibid., December 27, 1867, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Philip Kinsley, The Chicago Tribune, XI, 32.

¹⁰¹ A. T. Andreas, History of Chicago, IV, 625.

in to recovery, let no man feel away his time and his money in Denver, before he has revealed for months in the deep sources and among the lofty snow-kissed crags of Colorado. Health, vigor, and abiding sunshine compensations for all his after life will be his sure reward.¹⁰²

A mountain near Alma, Colorado, is named for him (Mount Bross), and he helped to sponsor the settlement of the town of Longmont, Colorado, in 1870.¹⁰³

Although Longmont is a prosperous small community today, there must have been some doubt as to whether it and similar towns in Colorado, sponsored by outside interests, would be successful. In 1871, the editor of the New York Tribune printed the following letter:

To the Editor of the Tribune

Sir: Since arriving in this city the question is constantly asked me, are not your colony enterprises at Greeley and elsewhere in Colorado, failures? I unhesitatingly answer, they are not. The Union colony at Greeley, the Chicago colony at Longmont, the St. Louis colony at Drans, are doing not only as well, in all material elements of growth and prosperity, as any places of similar size in the United States, but better than the majority.¹⁰⁴

William Bross, visiting Longmont in 1878, wrote:

Came to Longmont where I stop at St. Vrain Hotel. Help build the town 8 years ago and gave it its name Longmont instead of Longmont as proposed by Dr. Gay.¹⁰⁵

Mr. S. White gave a fine ride about Longmont. The place is very pretty and prosperous and I am glad I have a hand in settling it.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Chicago Tribune, October 12, 1870, Bross Scrapbook, 35.

¹⁰³ Bross Scrapbook, 39.

¹⁰⁴ New York Tribune, New York, October 17, 1871, 3.

¹⁰⁵ Diary of William Bross, 1878, 34.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Mr. Gross was also interested in the mineral resources of Colorado and the Far West. He spoke of their great potential value in many lectures to the Chicago Academy of Sciences and other groups.

William Gross' term as lieutenant-governor of Illinois ended in 1869 and he returned to more active labors with the Chicago Tribune. Mr. Gross was commended for his work in public office:

With the out-going State Administration, on yesterday, Lieut. Gov. Gross took formal leave of the Senate, over whose deliberations he has for the last four years presided. His farewell address, full of kindly impulses and generous feelings, will be found in another place. We take leave of Gov. Gross with sincere regret. He has throughout performed the duties of President of the Senate in a prompt, courteous and able manner, and has always made his decisions or points of order with a uniform clarity and impartiality. He retires from office with the personal esteem and friendship of all Senators, without regard to politics; and no one will say that even in the most heated debates, and when party lines were drawn with rigid exactness, he ever forgot to protect the rights of the minority. The many personal friends whom he has made at the Capital will regret to lose his pleasant companionship, and extend to him their best wishes and kindest regards.¹⁰⁷

About this time the "Deacon" was honored by his admirers in having a Chicago street named for him.¹⁰⁸ His beloved city was still advancing by "leaps and bounds." The grain, meat, and lumber markets of Chicago had grown to the largest in the world. The city was the great railroad center he had foretold. Its population was 250,977. Some were even predicting a population of a million people for 1900. Industry was on every side. Chicago's growth

¹⁰⁷ Gross Scrapbook, 2.

¹⁰⁸ Gross Avenue runs northwest and northeast from 2100 West and 3150 South to 2650 West and 3350 South. Rand McNally Street Guide and Transportation Directory of Chicago, 1890, Rand McNally Company, Chicago, Illinois, 1900, 28.

according to an eastern newspaper, had been the world's wonder and its prosperity was unexampled.¹⁰⁹ It is not difficult to imagine then, the horror and anxiety of the entire country when the news began to reach them on October 9, 1871, that "Chicago is burning."¹¹⁰

109 Connecticut Courant, Hartford, Connecticut, October 14, 1871, 1.

110 The Sun, New York, October 10, 1871, 1.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRE OF 1871

The all-encompassing conflagration that is known to posterity as the "Chicago Fire" was the culmination of a series of fires in the fall of 1871. The city of Chicago had experienced a hot summer and fall almost devoid of rain. The prairies around Chicago were parched by high southwest winds.¹ Chicago's buildings, constructed mostly of wood, were like tinder. Several small fires had been put out in the city. Practically 4,000 square miles of forest had burned in Wisconsin and Michigan. On Saturday, October 7, over four blocks in the city of Chicago had been destroyed when a planing mill, lumber yards, a box factory, and several cottages went up in flames. This blaze had been extinguished with difficulty. There has been much speculation about the story of Mrs. O'Leary's cow; however, it remains that the fire did have its origin in a shed at the rear of Mrs. O'Leary's house on DeKoven street on Sunday evening, October 8, 1871. As attested to by all sources, the fire raged through the city all Sunday night, all day Monday, Monday night and into the early hours of Tuesday morning, when it burned itself out having no more in its path to feed upon.

¹ Mabel McIlvaine, Reminiscences of Chicago during the Great Fire, R. E. Donnelley and Sons Company, Chicago, Illinois, 1915, xix.

At the time of the fire William Bross resided in Terrace Row, a series of four story dwellings, located on Michigan avenue near Congress street.² His first knowledge of the fire was at 2:00 A.M. Monday morning when he and his family were aroused by a house guest. The fire had already assumed formidable proportions. Both the sky and lake were illumined by the glare. "Deacon" Bross says that he determined the fire to be far enough south and west of his house so that it was not in immediate danger.³ His family began to pack household goods but he persuaded them to stop. In about a half hour he decided to start for the Tribune office, fearing for the safety of the building. A southwest wind was blowing and fanning the flames. After assuring himself that the Tribune offices were all right, he proceeded to the Nevada Hotel, which he owned and which was located at the corner of Washington and Franklin streets. Bross was anxious to see what danger the hotel was in. Shortly after he arrived, the building caught fire and was soon enveloped in flames. Bross' next thought was to get to his own home. The streets were jammed with terrified people. All the building on LaSalle and Wells streets, which included the Court House, Farwell Hall, the Post Office, the Fremont House, and the Sherman House, were burning. William Bross remarks that it was a truly terrible, yet magnificent scene.⁴

After extreme difficulty, due to the fire's quick progress, Bross,

2 Bross Scrapbook, 146.

3 New York Tribune, October 14, 1871, 1.

4 Ibid.

"Hitching" a ride from a stranger, arrived at his home at about 5:00 A.M. He found his family all safe and again engaged in the process of packing. Thereupon the "Deacon" took his horse and rode back to the Tribune offices. The blocks to the north and west of the Tribune had been burned, yet the building was still unscathed. It was assumed that the danger was past and that the Tribune building was indeed fireproof. However, not long after, fire broke out in the basement. It was extinguished with hand extinguishers. The "Deacon" then set out again to observe the fire's current extent. He realized from what he saw the terrific proportions the fire had reached. He tried in vain to recruit aid in tearing down some building which were in the path of the fire. He felt that this might check the course of the blaze.

I proceeded to Church's hardware store, procured about a dozen heavy axes, and handing them to my friends, requested them to mount the buildings with me and literally chop them down. All but two or three seemed utterly paralyzed. . . .⁵

Then, seeing more building near the Tribune catch fire, he dashed back to the offices, realizing that the building would not be saved. Mr. Bross says that there was a certain hopelessness about the situation because of the knowledge that there was absolutely nothing more that could be done.

He returned home and began with a few friends to carry some pieces of furniture across Michigan avenue to a small park on the lake shore. William Bross relates an incident typical of the thievery which occurred during the fire:

Some that were not friends helped themselves to whatever struck their

⁵ Ibid.

fancy when opportunity offered.

My coachman filled my buggy with some harness, a bag of coffee, and other articles, and left it with his friends on the lake shore. Someone coming along and finding it was my 'plunder,' said he knew me; would put some more goods in it to take home, and return the buggy to me. That was the last I ever heard of the buggy or anything that was in it. My daughter supposed that I had hired an express wagon that stood at the door, and I supposed that she had. We filled it full of goods and furniture, among other things, a valuable picture--a farm and animal scene--by Herring, the great English painter. The driver slipped off in the crowd, and that was the last we heard of that picture or any part of the load.⁶

Mr. Bross sent his family to the south side of the city for safety. As the day progressed, Michigan avenue was packed with wagons, carts, and exhausted, frightened citizens fleeing the inferno. Dense, black clouds of smoke were billowing out over the entire city. Realizing that his home was in peril, Bross and some friends began to carry out pieces of heavy furniture to the shore. There, William Bross sat and watched his home consumed by the flames.

The city of Chicago on Tuesday, October 10, 1871, was a scene of confusion, devastation, and destruction. The entire business section of the city was in ruins. Every theater, public building, hotel, many of the churches and most of the fine residences of the city were gone. Such a dreadful and overwhelming calamity can only be realized if one has some knowledge of the extent of the loss. A total area of about two thousand one hundred twenty-four acres was burned. Seventeen thousand four hundred fifty buildings were destroyed and one hundred thousand homeless people wandered in the streets.⁷ A city that had taken over thirty years to build had been laid

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ A. T. Andreas, History of Chicago, III, 52.

waste in one direful night.

After seeing to his family's welfare that morning, William Bross set out to try to do something about finding his partners and resuming the Tribune's activities. After making inquiries he found that a jobprinting office on the west side might be purchased. He decided to take a look at it and started west on Madison street. After questioning a few people, Bross found that Joseph Medill, whose house had not been burned, had already set up the Tribune office at No. 15 Canal street. Everywhere Mr. Bross looked, ruin and desolation met his eye. Yet he was impressed by the people that he saw.

On all sides I saw evidences of true Chicago spirit, and men said to one another, 'Cheer up; we'll be all right before long,' and many other plucky things. Their courage was wonderful. Everyone was bright, cheerful, pleasant, and even inclined to be jolly, in spite of the destitution which surrounded them, and which they shared. One and all said, 'Chicago must and shall be rebuilt at once.'⁸

When Bross arrived at No. 15 Canal street he found himself before a jobprinter's office. Going in, he encountered Joseph Medill and some printers organizing type. William Bross started to work immediately and had the main floor and basement of the building cleared of debris. Then he went forth to purchase four stoves. When he found what he needed, the owner of the stoves was most dubious about the Tribune's credit for sixty-four dollars. Bross declares that this amused him greatly. It showed the rapid change the fire had wrought. "On Saturday," he said, "our note would have been good for \$100,000 and on Tuesday we could not buy four stoves and the fixtures on

⁸ New York Tribune, October 14, 1871, 1.

credit."⁹ That evening a council was held at the new Tribune offices and it was agreed that William Bross would journey to New York to obtain the materials so badly needed to carry on the Tribune.

New York, as well as the rest of the country, was stunned by the news of the Chicago conflagration. Its effect on the people as well as on the stock market and insurance companies was tremendous. "The scene in the Stock Exchange" in New York, the Missouri Democrat reported, "was one of the wildest ever witnessed there. Demoniac yells, such as one heard in the gold room on Black Friday in '69, announced the struggles of desperate men to save at least a little from their wrecked fortunes."¹⁰ Chicago's property loss was estimated to be \$200,000,000. The Connecticut Courant noted such excitement in insurance offices of the city.¹¹

The scenes in and around the Fire Insurance Companies' offices yesterday were unusually exciting. Policy holders rushed nervously in and out, asked if the companies had stopped, seemed half surprised that they had not, and departed hastily to reinsure themselves, often in companies of less stability.¹²

When "Deacon" Bross arrived in New York at the St. Nicholas Hotel, he was visited by a reporter from the New York Tribune eager for a first-hand account of the fire. Mr. Bross obliged him with the story which was the first eye-witness report to appear in any New York newspaper.¹³ The story of the

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Missouri Democrat, St. Louis, Missouri, October 10, 1871, 1.

¹¹ Connecticut Courant, October 12, 1871, 1.

¹² New York Tribune, October 11, 1871, 1.

¹³ The account of the fire given above is based on an article printed in the New York Tribune, October 11, 1871.

fire and the suffering of the citizens of Chicago evoked compassion and sympathy in every quarter. William Bross pleaded for help in his own practical way. His knowledge of finance aided him in his appeal to New York capitalists. He asked the investors of New York to provide capital for Chicago's leading businessmen in order that the laboring classes could be employed to rebuild the city. He requested those with first mortgages on city property to take second mortgages.

Furthermore, let those who know the leading business men of Chicago, honest, industrious, and determined to rebuild the city, lend them money to start again the business in which they were engaged, asking only pledges of honor, if they, in their affliction, have nothing else to give. These men understand the business of the North-West, and can of course transact it with profit. Aided by the capital of others they can rapidly regain their lost wealth, and amply repay those who may assist them. Let the banks and business-men of New York and other eastern cities who have been connected by business with Chicago merchants, furnish them with all the money and goods they may require with which to reestablish themselves.¹⁴

Comparing Chicago and New York to the junior and senior partners of a great firm managing the commercial interests of the nation he said, "Will the senior partner sit by and see the business of the firm crushed when he has the means to establish it on a scale more gigantic and more profitable than ever before? Let him contribute a small portion only of his vast accumulations to his unfortunate associate, and the influence and power of the concern will assure fresh life and vigor."¹⁵ Mr. Bross again entreated the investors to contribute to the needs of Chicago business and told them that their principal as

¹⁴ New York Tribune, October 14, 1871, 7.

¹⁵ Ibid.

well as their interest would be insured. He pointed out that it was the opportune time to establish businesses in the city because stranger and citizen of Chicago would start even in the race for the business of the great West. Urging Eastern capitalists to send their sons to be partners with established Chicago merchants, he guaranteed that

Men of the highest character and of the best business qualifications, thoroughly acquainted with the business of the West, would only be too glad to place their energy and business knowledge against the money furnished by the sons of Eastern capitalists. The men who in past have built up Chicago and walled her streets with blocks among the finest on the continent, have ever been distinguished for their far-seeing shrewdness, their energy and integrity, and now all they need is the capital.

"Deacon" Gross praised Chicago's natural advantages and boasted that she would soon be rebuilt with increased magnificence and power. He declared, "That indomitable perseverance and genuine 'grit' which made Chicago in the past will in a very few years raise up the Chicago of the future."¹⁷

While William Gross was in New York seeking the necessary operating materials and equipment for the Tribune and enlisting aid for Chicago, Joseph Medill and his partners were carrying on the publication of the Chicago Tribune. The Tribune had started its business the day after the fire. The first editions were printed on hand presses. The Chicago Daily Journal and the Chicago Post however, had been able to bring out editions of their papers during the fire. The New York Tribune reported that

The Tribune, Gov. Gross, Horace White, and Mr. Medill are heavy losers by

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

the fire, while Mr. Wilson of the Journal has lost positively nothing, except some paper he stored in The Tribune building because it was fire-proof.¹⁸

W. F. Storey of the Chicago Times placed this ad in the Tribune of October 11, 1871.

THE CHICAGO TIMES not being inclined to issue a mere hand-bill sheet, will suspend publication for the present and will bend all its energies to getting in complete running order, which it hopes to do in about a month.¹⁹

Jay Gould marveled at the courage of the Chicago editors.

The proprietors of these journals have lost enormous sums. Presses, type and paper, and perhaps their books, are entirely destroyed. Little or nothing is left of the capital invested in their business except the advertising custom of merchants who have no longer anything to advertise, and the good-will of subscribers, a majority of whom are homeless wanderers on the prairie. For the present there is nothing in the city to support a newspaper, and there is not a dollar's worth of material for making one to be bought. Yet the Chicago editors go to work with as much promptness and courage as if they were only the victims of a trifling everyday accident. We dare say some of them are already doing business, and turning an honest penny by the narrative of their own misfortunes. It is a bold, quick spirit like this which has made Chicago one of the wonders of the world--which raised a metropolis out of the marsh and sand in forty years and will raise a finer one out of the ashes in ten.²⁰

The Chicago newspapers were a great asset to the city and state governments as a means of communication with the citizenry of Chicago. The problem of maintaining law and order in the city was indeed an important one. Hardly before the fire was over, it was reported that criminals were already traveling to Chicago to participate in thieving and plundering. Moreover

¹⁸ Ibid., 1.

¹⁹ Chicago Tribune, October 11, 1871, 2.

²⁰ New York Tribune, October 11, 1871, 1.

certain citizens were not above similar acts. An article in the Tribune told

The damnably depraved character of some of the ruffians of the city was perfectly illustrated on Monday and the ensuing night, by attempts made to promote pillage by fires set by incendiaries in different parts of the city, be it said, the villains generally met with the fate they deserved. The following are some illustrations, rumored and authentic:

--A boy attempted to help on the conflagration by igniting a clothes line saturated with kerosene and throwing it into a building on Thirty-second street. He received his deserts at the hands of the firemen who saw the act, and 'now sleeps in the valley.'

--A man, name unknown, was shot by a negro at the corner of State and Thirty-second streets. His offense was that he set fire to a building to obtain better opportunities for pillage.

--Two men, who were caught trying to set fire to the Jesuit Church, on the West side, were disposed of without ceremony, and the onlookers were pleased to say, 'Served 'em right.'²¹

Lieutenant-General Philip Sheridan, stationed in Chicago in command of the Military Division of the Missouri, was the man entrusted with the duty of establishing and preserving law and order in the city after the fire. The Chicago Tribune reported that

The real headquarters of the order preserving force of the city is now at No. Wabash avenue, where General Phil Sheridan has established his headquarters, in the house formerly occupied by the Phoenix Club. Here the head of the city has planted a pine table and entertained his numerous visitors.

The force at the General's command, in addition to the city regular and special police, consists of seven companies of regulars and six of volunteers. The former are from Omaha and other western points, and are all camped upon the site of the Ball Park on Michigan avenue.²²

Six companies of militia had also been sent to Chicago from Champaign, Bloomington, and Springfield to help guard the city. The North section was so thoroughly burnt out that it needed little guarding. The South section how-

²¹ Chicago Tribune, October 11, 1871, 1.

²² Ibid., October 12, 1871, 1.

ever, still held the wealth of the city in safes, mostly buried in the debris.

William Bross said

Had it not been for General Sheridan's prompt, bold, and patriotic action, I verily believe what was left of the city would have been nearly, if not quite entirely, destroyed by the cut throats and vagabonds who flocked here like vultures from every point of the compass.²³

The city government under the guidance of Mayor Roswell B. Mason sought to carry on its offices and on the morning of the eleventh of October issued this proclamation:

1. All citizens are requested to exercise great caution in the use of fire in their dwellings and not to use kerosene lights at present, as the city will be without a water supply for probably two or three days.

2. The following bridges are passable, to wit: All bridges (except Van Buren and Adams streets) from Lake street south, and all bridges over the North Branch of the Chicago River.

3. All good citizens who are willing to serve are requested to report at the corner of Ann and Washington streets, to be sworn in as special policemen.

Citizens are requested to organize a police for each block in the city and to send reports of such organization to the police headquarters, corner of Union and West Madison streets.

All persons needing food will be relieved by applying at the following places:

At the corner of Ann and West Washington; Illinois Central Railroad round house.

M. S. R. R.--Twenty-second street station.

C. B. & Q. R. R.--Canal street depot.

St. L. & A. R. R.--Near Sixteenth street.

C. & N. W. R. R.--Corner of Kinzie and Canal streets.

All public schoolhouses, and at nearly all the churches.

4. Citizens are requested to avoid passing through burnt districts until the dangerous walls left standing can be levelled.

5. All saloons are ordered to be closed by 9 p.m. every day for one week, under a penalty of forfeiture of license.

6. The Common Council have this day by ordinance fixed the price of bread at eight (8) cents per loaf of 12 ounces, and at the same rate for loaves of a less or greater weight, and affixed a penalty of ten dollars for selling or attempting to sell, bread at a greater rate within the

²³ Mabel McIlvaine, Reminiscences of Chicago During the Great Fire,

next ten days.

7. Any hackman, expressman, drayman or teamster charging more than the regular fees will have his license revoked.

All citizens are requested to aid in preserving the peace, good order, and good name of our city.

R. B. MASON, Mayor²⁴

During the afternoon another proclamation was issued, again asking the co-operation of all citizens.

WHEREAS, In the providence of God, to whose will we humbly submit, a terrible calamity has befallen our city, which demands of us our best efforts for the preservation of order, and the relief of the suffering;

BE IT KNOWN, That the faith and credit of the city of Chicago is hereby pledged for the necessary expenses for the relief of the suffering. Public order will be preserved. The police and special police now being appointed, will be responsible for the maintenance of the peace and the protection of property.

All officers and men of the Fire Department and Health Department will act as special policemen without further notice. The Mayor and Comptroller will give vouchers for all supplies furnished by the different relief committees. The headquarters of the city government will be at the Congregational Church, corner of West Washington and Ann streets. All persons are warned against any acts tending to endanger property. All persons caught in any depredation will be immediately arrested.

With the help of God order and peace and private property shall be preserved. The City Government and committees of citizens pledge themselves to the community to protect them, prepare the way for a restoration of public and private welfare.

It is believed the fire has spent its force, and all will soon be well.²⁵

On the same day a meeting of Chicago's merchants, bankers, manufacturers and others was held in order that a request for State aid could be framed and sent to Governor John Palmer of Illinois. Governor Palmer lost no time in answering the request. In a telegram to Mayor Mason, he said

²⁴ Chicago Tribune, October 11, 1871, 2.

²⁵ Ibid.

The Legislature is called for Tuesday, 13th of October. Send down a committee to suggest measures for relief of your people. Everybody is disposed to aid you, and it is desirable that some of your Senators and Representatives come.²⁶

At the same time a group of merchants in Chicago appointed another committee to go to Springfield to confer with the governor. The committee consisted of Judge Beckwith, General John A. Logan, W. F. Coolbaugh, Marshall Field, C. G. Wicker, C. B. Farwell and Charles Hitchcock.²⁷ On October 12, Governor Palmer issued a proclamation announcing a special session of the Legislature on October 13, 1871. Its purpose was:

1. To appropriate such sum or sums of money, or adopt such other legislative measures as may be thought judicious, necessary, or proper, for the relief of the people of the city of Chicago.
2. To make provision, by amending the revenue laws or otherwise, for the proper and just assessment and collection of taxes within the city of Chicago.
3. To enact such other laws and to adopt such other measures as may be necessary for the relief of the city of Chicago and the people of said city, and for the execution and enforcement of the laws of the State.
4. To make appropriations for the expenses of the General Assembly, and such other appropriations as may be necessary to carry on the state government.²⁸

The Chicago Tribune was of course greatly interested in State aid for Chicago, as is witnessed by the following editorial, probably written by Joseph Medill:

The State Legislature has assembled at Springfield, for the purpose of taking into consideration the measures proper to be adopted for the relief of Chicago in her present emergency. It is due to the dignity of Chicago, as well as the welfare of the State, that we should say, while

²⁶ Ibid., October 12, 1871, 1. There is a mistake in the date. October thirteenth was Friday not a Tuesday as stated in the telegram.

²⁷ Ibid., October 14, 1871, 1.

²⁸ Ibid., October 13, 1871, 1.

earnestly requesting of the Legislature such relief as they may see fit to bestow, that we do not ask that body to do for us anything that is unconstitutional, or anything that is unreasonable, or anything that is incompatible with their duties to their constituents; that we do not ask them to establish any precedents which will be dangerous to the future welfare of the State. We merely ask them to do what they can toward rolling off the great stone which crushed us down; toward removing the debris of bricks and stone and mortar under which we are this moment buried.²⁹

The editorial then suggested that the Legislature assume the responsibility of the city's institutions, such as the boys' reform school and the asylum for the insane. It also asked for a postponement of the collection of the city's taxes and the assumption of Chicago's part of the canal debt of \$3,000,000. The State legislature did not fail Chicago. The city was relieved of the care of the insane asylum and reform school; the rebuilding of the Court House was begun by the State and a revision of tax assessments was approved. A bill providing for state assumption of the canal debt was also passed.

The bill relieving Chicago of the canal debt provides that the sum of \$2,955,340 with interest be paid to the city of Chicago for the purposes of relieving the canal from the lien on it held by the city.

Not less than one-fifth nor more than one-third of said sum is to be applied to the reconstruction of the bridges and public buildings and structures upon their original sites, the remainder to be applied to the payment of interest in the bonded debt of the city, and to maintain the fire and police departments.³⁰

Within a few days of his arrival in New York in October, 1871, William Dross was requested to address the New York Chamber of Commerce. In this speech he summarized Chicago's losses and her basic needs. Expressing appreciation for help already given to the city, he declared, "God will reward

²⁹ Ibid., October 11, 1871, 2.

³⁰ Ibid., October 23, 1871, 2.

you for it, and our children and children's children shall bless you."³¹

Again Bross' primary appeal was for financial assistance and co-operation not only from investors in the United States but from European capitalists. He reasserted that within a few years investments in the new Chicago would yield an amazing return. He invited all who would, to find their fortunes in the Chicago of the future. Bross also enumerated several ways by which the federal government might aid the city.

Of course the Government can do nothing directly for us; but as soon as Congress meets liberal appropriations should be made to build a large, substantial post-office. The old building had become too small to accommodate the immense business of the North-West. The Chicago office was, if I mistake not, the second distributing office in the United States, and it should have a building of corresponding dimensions. The importing business direct to Chicago has just fairly commenced, and a large Custom-House and several bonded warehouses are needed for that. Perhaps United States Court-rooms can be provided in those; but in any event large accommodations are at once of imperative necessity. The building of them as rapidly as possible would employ a large amount of labor, and distribute corresponding sums of money, thus affording a most important stimulus to the entire business of the city.³²

William Bross earnestly believed that what Chicago had been in the past she must become in the future and a hundred fold more.³³ Bross was convinced without a doubt that financial aid would not only enable the rebuilding of Chicago but would also reassure and restore confidence to its citizens.

. . . our honest, brave, plucky people are there, ready and willing to work. Their strong hands and iron wills yield to no disasters. The men who have turned the waters of Lake Michigan into the Mississippi--in common phrase 'made the Chicago River run up hill'--can turn back the

31 New York Tribune, October 17, 1871, Bross Scrapbook, 24.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

tide of misfortune, and in a few years make their city more prosperous, and populous, and powerful than ever before. True, they need your assistance, and you will give it. The capitalists, the mercantile and business interests of this country and of Europe cannot afford to withhold the means to rebuild Chicago. The vast teeming country west of her, her position at the head of the great lakes, with more miles of railway centering there than any other city upon the continent, have made her one of the vital forces that give life and vigor to the commercial energies of the nation.³⁴

"Help her with capital," he said, "and it can soon be done; but in any event she has to wait only a few short years for the sure development of her manifest destiny."³⁵ William Bross undoubtedly transmitted to some of his listeners his tremendous enthusiasm and belief in the wonderful future of the city of Chicago.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

CHAPTER V

UP FROM THE ASHES

The service which William Bross rendered to Chicago in 1871, by his constant and resolute faith in the city's future, can only be partially evaluated by the results it helped to produce. Donations in money and supplies from New York and Brooklyn amounted to about one million dollars a few days after the fire.¹ Within three months a total of four million two hundred thousand dollars had been contributed to the city and the new Chicago began to rise from the ashes. John Greenleaf Whittier was inspired to write a poem concerning the rebuilding.

Rise!--stricken city! from thee throw
The ashen sackcloth of thy woe;
And build, as Thebes to Amphion's strain,
To songs of cheer thy walls again.²

The money and materials sent to Chicago helped to supply temporary relief for the all too numerous fire victims. A Shelter Committee and Relief Society were set up to distribute funds. This article appeared in one of the city's newspapers:

1 New York Tribune, October 13, 1871, 3.

2 Liberal Christian, New York, November 18, 1871, 1.

The following is the report of the Shelter Committee to last night: Applications for houses, 220; applications for houses granted, 121; total applications for houses to date, 5,859; total houses given out to date, 4,299; applications rejected today, 14; applications held for investigation, 143.

Since the last report the committee has delivered articles as follows: Stoves to barracks, 58; stoves to houses, 49; mattresses to barracks, 92; mattresses to houses, 60; bedsteads to houses, 57; joints of pipe to barracks and houses, 1,411; chimneys to barracks and houses, 176.³

The article also stated that

The work of the Relief Society is enormous, extending over many miles in extent, and in all its departments embracing from 50,000 to 70,000 people, conducted to a large extent by persons whose conduct we cannot personally scrutinize. It is the people's work we are trying to do, and we ask all persons to give us information in writing of any abuses, either in distribution or deportment, committed by any officer or person connected with this society.⁴

Eventually, temporary housing was built to accommodate about forty thousand people. Workmen were supplied with tools for the task of rebuilding. The donations made by the many cities and individuals gave Chicagoans a tremendous lift and strengthened their resoluteness. Chicago businessmen, supplied with some of the Eastern capital for which William Bross and his fellow-citizens had so earnestly pleaded, began to make plans for rebuilding. Each one was encouraged by the others' plans to improve and enlarge his own establishment.

Mr. Potter Palmer informs us that he yesterday let the contracts for re-building the dry goods palace formerly occupied by Field and Leiter, corner of Washington and State streets--the building to be of the same proportions and general plan as the one destroyed, except that the fronts will be of iron instead of marble, and will be more imposing and ornate. It will be thoroughly fire-proof and is to be finished and ready for occupancy by the early part of next summer.⁵

3 Bross Scrapbook, 3.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

The encouragement and example offered to the people by such men as John V. Farwell, Potter Palmer, Isaac N. Arnold, William Bross and others, who lost a good deal in the fire and yet were beginning anew, was invaluable. According to one source, Mr. Bross lost approximately \$150,000 in the fire.⁶

However, an article in the Chicago Daily Journal says

Among the heavy losers by the Great Fire who are by no means cast down, is our old friend ex-Lieutenant Governor William Bross of the Tribune. He lost buildings and other property, including his fine residence in Terrace Row, to the amount of \$250,000—dead loss; but has enough left in his Tribune stock, real estate, etc., to go right ahead for the restoration of the burnt district. He is making his real estate available, and already has a small army of workmen engaged in putting up fine brick stores, three or four stories high, on the corner of Washington and Franklin streets, where the Nevada Hotel stood, and is also about to commence operations on the site of his late Michigan Avenue residence (Terrace Row), on which he will erect a brick store, 26 by 171 feet, four stories high. We honor the pluck and energy of our old friend.⁷

Mr. Bross, speaking of the loss of his personal belongings, says

I lost all my manuscripts and many of my most valuable books and pamphlets. Few of them can ever be replaced. But it was the will of Providence that I should thus suffer, and I submit. These and scores of relics, heirlooms and other valuables were all destroyed in the remorseless fire. . . . May the moral lessons taught by this great calamity be deeply impressed on my heart and improved by me and mine as they should be.⁸

The work of clearing away the wreckage was tremendous. A great deal of the city's debris was dumped between the outlying track and the breakwater of the Illinois Central Railroad. "At the same time," says Captain A. T. Andreas, "the deposit there of the vast amount of rubbish, absolutely worth-

⁶ Ibid., 38.

⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁸ Bross, Diary of William Bross, 1872, 49.

less in itself, made land for the city at the rate of \$1,000 a day."⁹

The winter of 1871-72 was a long and severe one. A soup kitchen was set up in the city to serve the needy. The relief committee toiled day and night. In the month of February, 1872, William Bross was appointed to a committee organized to urge the passage of the Chicago Relief Bill. He journeyed to Washington, D. C., to help secure the passage of the Bill which called for federal aid for the city of Chicago.

Called on the President with the Committee A.H. He spoke favorably of our bill. Then went to the Senate and did all I could with Senators. Trumbull made a great speech.

In the evening attended a party made for our Chicago Committee at Thos. S. Brisson's. Met many friends. Did all I could for our bill with Senator Morton, Cole, Sherman, Morrill and others. They seemed to listen kindly.¹⁰

The year 1872 was a year of activity in Chicago. During this year the building of some eighty edifices was commenced. Included among these were the new Chamber of Commerce, the Sherman House, the Passenger Depot of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern and Chicago and Rock Island Railways, the Grand Pacific Hotel, the Palmer House and the Francis House built at the total cost of approximately four million, seven hundred sixty-five thousand dollars.¹¹ A year later a visitor to the city said

Instead of ruin, I find such a grandeur of restoration and strength of enterprise, such an overwhelming result of indomitable will, unflinching industry and courage, that I almost doubted the evidence of my senses, and could scarcely believe that any such conflagration as we had heard of

9 A. T. Andreas, History of Chicago, III, 59.

10 Bross, Diary of William Bross, 1872, 7.

11 A. T. Andreas, History of Chicago, III, 63.

and read of had occurred at all! Colossal structures, miles upon miles of palatial business and domestic edifices, richly ornamented with statues and intaglios unequalled for beauty of design in any other of our great cities, are up already, and your eyes are bewildered by magnificence, instead of being blasted by deformity. Surely, this is the mastery of a tremendous situation; over which we, in common with our kin of the West, may well be exultant, and, for one, I rejoice that I belong to the same race with those stout-hearted sons and daughters of Chicago, who are now teaching a lesson of patient endurance and well-directed enterprise to the world such as was never witnessed before in the whole broad history of civilization.¹²

Some forecast that it would require fifteen to twenty years to restore the city in its entirety. With the energy, industry, and enthusiasm of such men as "Deacon" Bross, the city was rebuilt in three years.

. . . only here and there was left a vacant lot or stood a broken wall, and over the wide and long way where had swept the stream of fire, now were miles of streets and blocks. . . .¹³

By the year 1874 Chicago's population was 395,408. Notwithstanding such great progress, William Bross urged the people to build an even greater Chicago and predicted a population of three or four million for 1876. He declared that Chicago

with God's blessing would far outstrip in wealth and population and power all the anticipations of her most enthusiastic and sanguine citizens.¹⁴

After 1874, when Joseph Medill became editor-in-chief of the Tribune, "Deacon" Bross took a somewhat less active part in the newspaper, only continuing to write the Sunday science supplement, book reviews, and occasional reports and articles. He also delivered a number of lectures before

¹² Bross Scrapbook, 7.

¹³ A. T. Andreas, History of Chicago, III, 55.

¹⁴ Bross, History, 125.

the Chicago Academy of Sciences and the Chicago Historical Society. William Bross now had the time to do what he loved so much--to travel. In 1875, he returned to his old home in Pennsylvania; in 1878, he again visited the Rockies. In the succeeding years, he enjoyed many trips in the East and West. During these years, Mr. and Mrs. Bross had the pleasure of seeing their daughter, Jessie, married to Henry Demarest Lloyd and also the birth of three grandsons.

Though William Bross traveled widely, he was always interested in Chicago. His was a constantly active and industrious mind. As time passed he found himself one of the oldest living newspapermen in Chicago. He continued active in political affairs and, of course, remained a staunch Republican. In 1887, William O. Gould of the Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company of California wrote Bross:

. . . as you have outlived the Calfax party of '65, we trust and hope you may be spared to for many years, to continue the struggle for the great Republican party, and see it once more firmly established throughout our country.¹⁵

The following year Mr. Bross was stricken with diabetes and for the next two years was restricted in his travels and activities, although he held the office of President of the Tribune Company. He died in a diabetic coma on January 27, 1890, in Chicago. Thus passed one of the city's most ardent boosters. He most certainly was not the first or the last booster of Chicago. John Stephen Wright, Joseph Medill and others were equally enthusiastic about

¹⁵ William O. Gould to William Bross, June 18, 1887, Lloyd Family Collection, Winnetka, Illinois.

Chicago's future. William Bross, however, by his newspaper articles, Commercial Reviews, pamphlets and predictions about Chicago's future both before and after the fire, aided in attracting an inestimable amount of solid wealth and enterprise to the city of Chicago. There was a good deal of the visionary in Bross when his prognostications concerned Chicago. "He said as a prophet his weak point was that he could not prophesy fast enough to keep pace with the city."¹⁶ William Bross prophesied a future for the city of Chicago such as few could conceive and yet the phenomenal development of Chicago has surpassed even his most hopeful predictions.

¹⁶ Chicago Tribune, January 28, 1890, 1.

CRITICAL ESSAY ON AUTHORITIVALS

I. PRIMARY MATERIAL

A. UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

The candidate is exceedingly grateful to Mrs. William Bross Lloyd, Minnetka, Illinois, for her permission to examine the Bross materials in her possession. Included among these were: the Diary of William Bross, 1872 to 1888; two scrapbooks belonging to Bross; the newspaper clippings, pamphlets, speeches, notes, letters, and papers of William Bross. Not only did all of these prove to be invaluable but they were extremely interesting.

The Records of Rosehill Cemetery, Chicago, Illinois, also yielded pertinent information.

B. PUBLISHED SOURCES

Mrs. William B. Lloyd made it possible for the student to use several published works in her collection. These were: William Bross, Legend of the Delaware: An Historical Sketch of Tom Quick. To Which is Added The Huntley Family; Also, Miscellaneous Papers and Articles, Chicago, 1887; Tom Quick: or the Era of Frontier Settlement, Chicago, 1888; Ed. Francis P. Browne, The Everyday Life of Abraham Lincoln, Lincoln's Life and Character Portrayed by Those Who Knew Him, New York, 1886; Rev. Calvin Darfee, D. D., Williams Biographical Annals, Boston, 1871, this work contained short sketches of graduates of Williams College; Caro Lloyd, Henry Demarest Lloyd, 1847-1902, 2 vols., New York, 1912; Harris Franklin Hall, Christianity An Inquiry Into Its Nature and Truth, New York, 1940; Anonymous, The Second Presbyterian Church of Chicago, June 1st, 1842 to June 1st, 1892, Chicago, 1892; The United States Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery of Self-Made Men, Illinois Volume, Chicago, 1876; James Grant Wilson and John Fiske, Appleton's 'Cyclopaedia of American Biography, I, New York, 1887.

A. F. Andreas, History of Chicago From Earliest Period To the Present Time, 3 vols., Chicago, 1884, is indispensable to the student studying Chicago history. The Chicago Historical Society Library is the repository for a great deal of material concerning the history of the city. A work by William Bross entitled History of Chicago, Chicago, 1876, contained much worth-while material concerning Bross' predictions, reviews, and several

speeches. Elias Colbert, Chicago: Historical and Statistical Sketch of the Garden City: A Chronicle of Its Social, Municipal, Commercial and Manufacturing Progress, From the Beginning Until Now, Chicago, 1866, is Cross' successor in chronicling Chicago's commercial growth.

The accounts, scrapbooks, and reminiscences of old Chicago residents are extremely useful to the student studying the city's past. Some important works are: Frederika Bromer, The Homes of the New World; Impressions of America, II, London, 1853; Charles Cleaver, History of Chicago from 1833 to 1892, Chicago, 1892; Frederic Francis Cook, Bygone Days in Chicago, Chicago, 1910; Henry Hamilton, Incidents in the Life of Gordon Salstonstall Hubbard, Chicago, 1888; Abbott Lawrence Hardy, Early Chicago: Being a Record of the City's Growth and Development During Its First Forty Years, Compiled from Files of Old Newspapers and Documents, Chicago, 1910; Charles Harpel, Harpel Scrapbook 1880-1898, Vol. II, Chicago; Henry Harbutt, Chicago Antiquities: Comprising Original Items and Relations, Letters, Extracts, and Notes Pertaining to Early Chicago, Chicago, 1881; Caroline Kirkland, Chicago Yesterdays, Chicago, 1919; Mabel McIlvaine, Reminiscences of Chicago During the Civil War, Chicago, 1911; Mabel McIlvaine, Reminiscences of Chicago During the Forties and Fifties, Chicago, 1913; Mabel McIlvaine, Reminiscences of Chicago During the Great Fire, Chicago, 1915; M. H. Putney, Real Estate Values and Historical Notes of Chicago, Chicago, 1900; John Wentworth, Early Chicago, Chicago, 1879, and John Stephen Wright, Chicago, Past, Present and Future, Chicago, 1866.

Such works concerning the history of the state of Illinois and the history of Chicago as: M. L. Ahern, Political History of Chicago, Chicago, 1886; Fremont O. Bennett, Politics and Politicians of Chicago, Cook County and Illinois, Chicago, 1886; Anonymous, Biographical Sketches of Leading Men of Chicago, Chicago, 1868; Josiah Seymour Carray, Chicago: Its History and Its Builders, 3 vols., Chicago, 1912; Fred Gerhard, Illinois As It Is: Its History, Geography, Statistics, Constitution, Laws, Government, Finances, Climate, Soil, Plants, Animals, State of Health, Prairies, Agriculture, Cattle-breeding, Orchardng, Cultivation of the Grape, Timber-Growing, Market-Prices, Lands and Land-Prices, Geology, Mining, Commerce, Banks, Railroads, Public Institutions, Newspapers, Etc., Etc., Chicago, 1857; Ed. Hon. Joseph G. Kennedy, The Progress of the Republic, A Full and Comprehensive View of the Progress, Present Condition, Commercial, Railroad, Manufacturing and Industrial Resources of the American Confederacy, Washington, D. C., 1856; Joseph Kirkland, The Story of Chicago, Vol. I, Chicago, 1892; D. W. Lusk, Eighty Years of Illinois, Politics and Politicians, Anecdotes and Incidents, A Succinct History of the State, 1808-1889, Springfield, Illinois, 1889; John Moses, Illinois Historical and Statistical Comprising the Essential Facts of Its Planting and Growth As a Province, Territory and State, Vol. II, Chicago, 1892, and Hon. John Moses and Maj. Joseph Kirkland, The History of Chicago, Illinois, 2 vols., Chicago, 1895, yield good general information necessary for a background of Chicago.

C. PAMPHLETS

Some speeches of William Bross, printed in pamphlet form, proved important because they are expressions of his faith in Chicago as well as in the entire West. These are: Resources of the Far West, and the Pacific Railway, Before the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, January 25, 1836, New York, 1836; An Address Delivered before the Alumni of Williams College, 1866, and Illinois and the Thirteenth Amendment, Chicago, 1864. Bross' Commercial Reviews yielded much information; Annual Review of the Business of Chicago for the Year, 1852, Chicago, 1853; Railroads, History and Commerce of Chicago, Chicago, 1854; Annual Review of the Business of Chicago for the Year 1854, with the Statistics of Her Commerce, Manufactures--A Notice of the Railroad System, Capacity for Drainage, and Other Statistical Articles Recently Published in the Democratic Press, Chicago, 1855; Fourth Annual Review of the Commerce, Railroads, and Manufactures of Chicago, for the Year 1855, Chicago, 1856; Fifth Annual Review of the Commerce, Manufactures, and the Public and Private Improvements of Chicago, for the Year 1856; with a Full Statement of Her System of Railroads, and a General Synopsis of the Business of the City, Chicago, 1857; Sixth Annual Review of the Commerce, Manufactures, and the Public and Private Improvements of Chicago, for the Year 1857; with a Full Statement of Her System of Railroads and a General Synopsis of the Business of the City, Chicago, 1858; Seventh Annual Review of the Trade and Commerce and of the Public and Private Improvements of the City of Chicago, for the Year 1858; and a General Synopsis of the Business of the City, as Published in the Chicago Daily Press and Tribune, Chicago, 1859.

There is a possibility that parts of the following Commercial Reviews were based on William Bross' articles in the Chicago Tribune: Eighth Annual Review of the Trade and of the Condition and Traffic of the Railways Centering in the City of Chicago for the Year 1859, Chicago, 1860; Twelfth Annual Review of the Trade and Commerce and of the Condition and Traffic of the Railways Centering in the City of Chicago for the Year 1860, Chicago, 1861; Review entitled Fifteenth Annual Review of the Trade and Commerce of the City of Chicago for the Year 1863, Chicago, 1864; Chicago in 1864, Annual Review of the Trade, Business and Growth of Chicago and the Northwest, Chicago, 1865; Abstract of the Tribune's Annual Review of the Trade, Business and Growth of Chicago and the North West, Chicago, 1866;

Elias Colbert, as financial editor of the Chicago Tribune, was responsible for the compilation of the Chicago Tribune's Annual Review of the Trade and Commerce of Chicago, for the Year ending December 31, 1869, Chicago, 1870 and the Chicago Tribune's Annual Review of the Trade and Commerce of Chicago for the Year ending December 31, 1870, Chicago, 1871.

D. PERIODICALS

Important information can be gleaned from: Ed. Paul Angle, "Chicago

1890," Chicago History, Chicago, II, No. 10, 1950-51; J. N. Gridley and others, Historical Sketches, Virginia, Illinois, I, 1907; James Parton, "Chicago," The Atlantic Monthly, XIX, March, 1867, 325-45, and The Delta Upsilon Quarterly, New York, VIII, No. 2, February, 1890.

E. NEWSPAPERS

The Chicago Historical Society Library has an excellent file of Chicago newspapers, as well as a special file of newspapers concerning the fire of 1871. The following newspapers were consulted: Chicago Daily Journal, Chicago; Chicago Tribune, Chicago; The Cincinnati Commercial, Cincinnati, Ohio; Connecticut Courant, Hartford, Connecticut; Daily Democratic Press, Chicago; Evening News, Indianapolis, Indiana; Galignani's Messenger, Paris, France; The Index Extra, Chicago; The Liberal Christian, New York; The Missouri Democrat, St. Louis, Missouri; Morning News, Chicago; New York Tribune, New York; Philadelphia Inquirer, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; St. Louis Dispatch, St. Louis, Missouri; The Sun, New York. The unusual advertisements and illustrations in the newspapers most certainly keep the reading from becoming tiresome.

II. SECONDARY MATERIAL

A. PUBLISHED SOURCES

The secondary material concerning Chicago is extensive. Many authors have undertaken the work of relating the city's beginnings and progress. Among the more distinguished of such works are: Herbert Asbury, Gen of the Prairies, New York, 1940; Paul Gilbert and Charles Lee Bryson, Chicago and Its Makers, 1833 to 1929, Chicago, 1929; Dorsha B. Hayes, Chicago, Crossroads of American Enterprise, New York, 1944; Homer Hoyt, One Hundred Years of Land Values in Chicago, The Relationship of the Growth of Chicago to the Rise in Its Land Values, 1830, 1933, Chicago, 1933; Helen Rankin Jeter, Trends of Population in the Region of Chicago, Chicago, 1927; Lloyd Lewis, John L. Wright, Prophet of the Prairies, Chicago, 1941; Lloyd Lewis and Henry Justin Smith, Chicago, The History of Its Reputation, New York, 1929; Edgar Lee Masters, The Tale of Chicago, New York, 1933; Bessie Louise Pierce, A History of Chicago, 2 vols., New York, 1940; Bessie Louise Pierce, As Others See Chicago, Impressions of Visitors, Chicago, 1933; Ernest Poole, Giants Gone, Men who made Chicago, New York, 1943; Milo Milton Quaife, Chicagou--From Indian Village to Modern City, 1673-1835, Chicago, 1933; James L. Regan, Story of Chicago in Connection with the Printing Business, Chicago, 1912; Henry Justin Smith, Chicago's Great Century, 1833 to 1933, Chicago, 1933.

The comprehensive history of the Tribune which was consulted was: Philip Kinsley, The Chicago Tribune, Its First Hundred Years, New York, 1943.

A booklet was put out by Lake Forest University in 1940, when the Bross Prize for that year was awarded. The work was written by Charles A. Yount and entitled William Bross, 1813-1890, Lake Forest, Illinois, 1940.

An always useful general work is John D. Hicks, A Short History of American Democracy, New York, 1943.

Another work which was consulted was the Rand McNally Street Guide and Transportation Directory of Chicago, 1950, Chicago, 1950.

B. PERIODICALS

The Journals of the Illinois State Historical Society are of decided value. Thirty-two volumes of this work were consulted. Volumes 1 to 25 are indexed in one complete volume. Thereafter each volume has its own index. Articles, worthy of attention in these volumes are: James C. Burns, "The Old Randolph House, Macceh, Illinois," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, IX, January, 1917, 199; Grace Locke Scripps Lyche, "John Locke Scripps, Lincoln's Campaign Biographer," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, XVII, October, 1924, 302; Erne René Frush, "Retail Merchandising in Chicago, 1833-1848," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, XXII, June, 1939, 169; Blair Brooks German, "Chicago and Abraham Lincoln," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, XXVII, October, 1934, 273; James Martin Johns, "The Nomination of Abraham Lincoln to the Presidency, An Unsolved Psychological Problem," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, X, January, 1918, 566; George Manierre, "Reminiscences of Lake Forest Academy and Its Students From the Opening of the Academy, in the Fall of 1859 To the Year 1863," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, I, October, 1917, 400; Duane Kowry, "James Hood Doolittle of Wisconsin," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, IV, July, 1911, 105; Frank E. Stevens, "Life of Stephen Arnold Douglas," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, XVI, October, 1923, 471; Earl Wellington Wiley, "Lincoln and the Campaign of 1856," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, XXII, January, 1930, 590.

Franklin William Scott, "Newspapers and Periodicals of Illinois, 1814-1879," Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois, VI, 1910, 63; Mildred Stoler, "The Democratic Element in the New Republican Party in Illinois, 1856-1860," Papers in Illinois History and Transactions for the Year 1942, Springfield, Illinois, 1942, 48, and Tracy E. Streyer, "Joseph Medill and the Chicago Tribune in the Nomination and Election of Lincoln," Papers in Illinois History and Transactions For the Year 1938, Springfield, Illinois, 1939, 39, are noteworthy articles which should be consulted.

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Mary Jane Hannahan has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Dec 15, 1952
Date

Paul Schitz
Signature of Adviser