

THE TERRITORIAL GOVERNORS OF ARIZONA

RICHARD CUNNINGHAM McCORMICK

BY EUGENE E. WILLIAMS

Richard Cunningham McCormick, second governor of Arizona, was born in New York City, May 23, 1832. He attended the common schools and later received a classical education.

At the age of twenty he entered business in Wall Street, but soon afterward became a newspaper man and while serving as correspondent for the *New York Evening Post*, visited the scenes of the Crimean War, and other places in Europe. Out of this correspondence was made a book entitled *Saint Paul to Saint Sophia*. In 1861-62 he was with the Army of the Potomac as reporter for the same paper. From 1857-61 he was trustee of public schools in New York City and at one time was editor of *Young Men's Magazine*.

In the early sixties McCormick was an unsuccessful candidate for Congress from the Long Island district.

He was chief clerk of the Department of Agriculture at Washington in 1862.

When President Lincoln appointed the first territorial officials of Arizona he selected McCormick as secretary. He served in this capacity until April 10, 1866, when he succeeded Goodwin as governor.

While waiting before making the trip to Arizona, McCormick spent some time in designing a seal¹ for Arizona which was adopted and used until 1879. The design, that of a stalwart miner standing by his wheelbarrow, with pick and shovel in hand, upturned paying dirt at his feet, and the auriferous hills behind him, with the motto *Ditat Deus* (God enriches) forms an appropriate and striking combination.

¹ A copy of the original state seal may be found in the *Journal of the Second Legislature*.



Richard C. McCormick.

Objections have been made to the wheelbarrow and short-handled shovel, but both are used in our mines, and are thus properly introduced. The *Ditat Deus* on the present seal and on the floor of the rotunda at the capitol, were on the seal designed by McCormick.

Secretary McCormick was a member of the gubernatorial party which went overland to Arizona. On the journey he had ample opportunity to see at first hand some of the material out of which the new territory was to be made.

On December 29, 1863, the party arrived at Navajo Springs where, at the inauguration of the government, McCormick administered the oath to the territorial officials, read the Governor's Proclamation, and made the following speech:

Gentlemen: As the properly qualified official, it becomes my duty to inaugurate the proceedings of the day. After a long and trying journey, we have arrived within the limits of the Territory of Arizona. These broad plains and hills form a part of the district over which, as the representatives of the United States, we are to establish a civil government. Happily, although claimed by those now in hostility to the Federal arms, we take possession of the Territory without resort to military force. The flag, which I hoist in token of our authority, is no new and untried banner. For nearly a century it has been the recognized, the honored, the loved emblem of law and liberty. From Canada to Mexico, from the Atlantic to the Pacific millions of strong arms are raised in its defense, and above the efforts of all foreign or domestic foes, it is destined to live untarnished and transcendent.²

² Farish, *History of Arizona*, vol. 3, p. 69.

Then raising the American flag McCormick unfurled Old Glory to the breezes of Arizona's bracing atmosphere and the cheers of the loyal Americans present.

Following the inauguration of the government Secretary McCormick, Judge Joseph P. Allyn, and a squad of California Volunteers, left the main party, arriving at Fort Whipple then located in Chino Valley, January 17, 1864.

The territorial officials were soon attracted by the new mining operations on Granite Creek and removed the scanty supply of official equipment to that camp. This place was selected as the site of the first capital and was named Prescott by Secretary McCormick in honor of the famous historian, the reading of whose history had interested McCormick in Arizona. When lots in the new town were sold, McCormick paid \$245 for one of them, the highest price paid, and upon this lot he built the office of the *Arizona Miner*.

The *Arizona Miner* was issued from a small printing press which McCormick had brought with him when he came to Arizona. He set up the press while he was still at Fort Whipple in Chino Valley, and on March 9, 1864, issued the first copy. The paper was a single sheet, 12 by 20 inches, and the first issue was printed on colored mapping paper. It appeared monthly and was edited by T. E. Hand. Captain A. F. Banta assisted in getting out the first issue. On this press was printed the Howell Code,³ the first codification of Arizona's laws. Fred G. Hughes said that this paper was devoted principally to furthering the political ambitions of Secretary McCormick.⁴

McCormick also brought with him to Arizona a library consisting mostly of works on history and subjects of general interest. He afterward sold this library to the territory, for which he received the sum of \$1,000. These books became the nucleus of the present state library.

When Governor Goodwin became Arizona's delegate to Congress, March 4, 1865, McCormick, as secretary of the territory, became acting governor. He served in this ca-

³ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

capacity until April 10, 1866, when he was appointed governor by President Johnson.

On June 1, 1865, McCormick wrote an article⁵ to the *New York Tribune* in which he gave an account of Arizona's resources and possibilities. The article was afterward printed in pamphlet form and had a wide circulation, helping to make Arizona known to the people back East.

A few weeks later he sent an article boosting Arizona to the *Journal of Commerce* in which he plead for assistance from Congress. Quotations from this article show one of McCormick's plans for populating Arizona. He wrote:

Just as California offered a safety valve for the superfluous fighting element of the country after the Mexican War, so the territories which have recently been proved to be equals of California in metallic wealth, offer the desired opportunity for working off the excess of pugnacity which survives the great Rebellion. We do not mean to say that the discharged soldiers who migrate to the territories will have much fighting to do. There will be a taste of it occasionally in scaring off the Sioux, Pah-Utes or Apaches. This, with hunting and other wild sports, will enable them to keep up their rifle practice. But the excitement of the territorial life will consist principally of prospecting for, and working mines, and contending with the natural difficulties of the new and almost unexplored land. As the chances for making a fortune will be great, so the obstacles to be overcome will be forbidding to all but strong arms and hearts such as American soldiers have carried through the four years war. There could have been no better school than this work to educate men to grapple with the problems of a miner's life.

At a cost of five million dollars, or less, I assume that one hundred thousand of the discharged volunteers may be sent back to the territories, even to the Pacific. In what way, I ask, can the general government expend \$5,000,000 in a more likely manner to bring quick and ample return to the national treasury than to make such a large and valuable addition to the population of the territories? Let this be done and there will no longer be a demand for troops to keep off hostile Indians or for money to build roads and to make other improvements. As a matter of reward for faithful service; for providing for the health and prosperity of those who merit every recognition and respect, and of political sagacity and economy, it commends itself to the attention of the government.

In this connection may I plead for the more intelligent and liberal consideration of the Territories in all their relations upon the part of our representatives in Congress, than has hitherto been given? . . . It was

⁵ Farish, "Arizona: Its Resources and Prospects," *History of Arizona*, vol. 4, p. 1.

more than a year after the organization of Arizona before there was a mail route or postoffice in the Territory, and at this writing but a small part of the Territory is in the enjoyment of a mail service. The men, who at the risk of their lives and with great labor, took the census early in 1864, have not yet been paid. No appropriation for a territorial library, especially needed at the beginning of the government, has yet been made, and the courts and the Legislature have met without a copy of the United States Statutes before them. The most inadequate provision has been made for protecting settlers against the Apache, ever active and barbarous in his hostility. Until within the present month there has not, from the hour of its recognition, been a regiment of troops stationed within the Territory, which is three times as large as the State of New York. A reasonable appropriation for the improvement of the navigation of the Colorado River, the great highway of communication from the Pacific, not alone with Arizona, but with Utah and the other northern Territories, and one of the most important rivers upon the continent, was denied by the late Congress. Such negligence and littleness ill becomes a great and successful government, and is not at all in accordance with the spirit and desire of the people.⁶

While Governor Goodwin was at Washington serving as delegate to Congress, Arizona's Second Legislature began its session at Prescott, December 6, 1865. Secretary McCormick, who was also acting governor, read the message to the Legislature, and performed the other duties of a governor.

Among other things the message encouraged the pursuit of agriculture, urged the subjugation of the Apaches, recommended the acquisition of a port on the Gulf of California, and suggested the practice of economy.

The legislature formed the new county of Pah-Ute, created a board of supervisors, passed a law regulating marriage, memorialized Congress for an appropriation to improve the navigation of the Colorado River, gave a land grant to a railroad company, and increased the military force in Arizona.

Having served as secretary of the territory from December 29, 1863, and as acting governor from March 4, 1865, McCormick was appointed governor by President Johnson, and on April 10, 1866, his appointment was confirmed by the United States Senate. He took the oath of office, July

⁶ Farish, vol. 4, p. 282.

9. James P. T. Carter, of Tennessee, succeeded McCormick as secretary of the territory.

During McCormick's official life in Arizona he was connected with four legislatures. At the time of the second he was acting governor, and during the third, fourth, and fifth he was governor.

The Third Territorial Legislature convened at Prescott, October 3, 1866, and lasted until November 6. In his message McCormick advised economy, was encouraged by the mining activities, showed the necessity for more and better equipped soldiers to fight the Apaches, expressed the need for better mail service, and urged the building of court houses and jails.

The legislature created the offices of district attorney and territorial auditor, provided for the location of mines, authorized county supervisors to levy a special tax for making highways, granted Yavapai County the right to build a jail and other public buildings, thanked the Arizona Volunteers for their service against the Apaches, and memorialized Congress for new mail routes.

The Fourth Legislature convened at Prescott from September 4 to October 7, 1867. In presenting his message the governor urged additional soldiers to conquer the Hualpais, Pah-Utes, and Yavapais, and also the necessity of a separate department for the army; stressed the value of Arizona land for agriculture; observed the improvement in mail service; advised liberal provision for public schools; was gratified by the enforcement of law in the territory.

The legislature, among other things, accomplished the following: passed laws preventing the improper use of deadly weapons; transferred the capital from Prescott to Tucson; provided schools, and created school districts.

Because of misunderstanding between Governor McCormick and General Irvin McDowell it passed a concurrent resolution requesting that Arizona be removed from under the command of the department commander, General McDowell, and made into a separate department, with the

commanding officer residing within its limits. This was done in 1870.⁷

The Fifth Legislature met November 10 to December 16, 1868, at Tucson, the fourth having voted to remove the capital to "The Old Pueblo."

At this session Governor McCormick presented to the legislature his last official message, since he had been elected delegate to Congress at the recent election. He lamented the neglect of the general government with respect to the depredations of the Apaches; asked the legislature to pray Congress to aid in building a railroad and telegraph lines in Arizona; and encouraged enlarged activities in mining and agriculture.

The legislature created the office of attorney general and county surveyor, and memorialized Congress for funds to erect public buildings.

Among the events of Governor McCormick's administration, which was one of the best in territorial days, are the following:

In 1869 Judge Henry T. Backus rendered a decision declaring the third, fourth and fifth legislatures to be illegal because Governor McCormick, instead of the legislatures, made the apportionment. This decision caused considerable confusion in the territory. McCormick became delegate to Congress about this time and succeeded in having that body legalize these legislatures.

Regarding the removal of the capital to Tucson, and the feeling toward McCormick, Farish says:

An act was passed permanently locating the capital . . . in Tucson, which was to take effect after the first day of November, 1867. There was a great deal of scandal attending the removal of the capital. The Miner claimed that it was done through fraud, saying . . . "We are assured on good authority that improper proceedings to the extent of buying three or four members of the Fourth Legislature, and pledging to Governor McCormick to support him for Congress at that place (Tucson). If this does not come under the head of improper proceedings, we are at a loss to know what does. "While, of course, there is no direct evidence to show that fraud was used in moving the capital, the fact re-

⁷ Farish, vol. 5, pp. 261, 271, 298, 302.

mains that Pima County gave Governor McCormick a very large vote the next year when he was a candidate for Delegate to Congress . . . Yavapai members, who, no doubt, had no very kindly feeling toward the Governor on account of the part he had taken in removing the capital to Tucson, for at that time, in Arizona particularly, prosperity followed the flag that waved over the capital. Here contracts were made by the Government, and fat contracts handed around to the faithful.

Reflecting the feeling of Yavapai County in this matter is a report of the select committee to investigate the financial condition of the territory. James S. Giles of Yavapai County was chairman of this committee which reported that it believed Governor McCormick had illegally appointed Coles Bashford as attorney general, and had also appointed other officials illegally. It also believed that McCormick had illegally charged the territory for printing in connection with the First Legislature, and recommended that the matter be presented to the Treasurer of the United States. Nothing resulted from this report.

During Governor McCormick's term (1866-69) the Indians were the source of much trouble to the citizens of the young territory. All over Arizona there were numerous instances of thieving and killing which kept the settlers in a constant state of anxiety. Citizens and officials were impatient at the government for not supplying the territory with adequate military forces sufficient to subdue the hostiles. Finally the Arizona Volunteers⁸ were recruited and with the help of the regular forces relieved the situation. It was in connection with this Indian warfare that McCormick had his controversy with General McDowell.

It was during one of these Indian raids in the late sixties that Pete Kitchen's adopted son and his herder were killed, his pigs filled with arrows, and considerable produce destroyed or stolen. Speaking of the condition in southern Arizona, and of a trip to Sonora, Pete said, "To-son, To-bac, To-macacori, To-hell." Many of the settlers took a trip to all of these places.

⁸ First organization of Arizona Volunteers was in 1865 under Governor John N. Goodwin.

In 1868 McCormick announced himself as a candidate for the position of delegate to Congress. His former neighbors in Yavapai County were divided in their support, and on the part of his enemies, considerable mudslinging was indulged in. McCormick, however, was elected by a vote of 1,237 over John A. Rush who polled 836 votes, and Samuel Adams who had 32 followers. McCormick ran again in 1870 to succeed himself and triumphed over Peter R. Brady by a vote of 1,882 to 832. Two years later he was unopposed and received the total vote. In 1874 he declined renomination. As a Unionist he served in Congress from March 4, 1869, to March 3, 1875.

On October 15, 1870, McCormick, John Wasson, and perhaps others founded *The Arizona Citizen* at Tucson. Wasson's name appears as proprietor and the editorials advocated the re-election of McCormick to Congress.

McCormick's interest in national politics and the confidence placed in him by his fellow politicians is shown by his election as delegate to the Republican National Convention at Philadelphia in 1872, at Cincinnati in 1876, and again at Chicago in 1880.

In 1876 he was commissioner of the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia, and two years later was commissioner general to the Paris Exposition.

From April to December, 1877, he served as first assistant secretary of the U. S. Treasury Department. During this year he declined an appointment as minister to Brazil, and two years later an offer to the same position in Mexico was refused.

For the third time McCormick desired a seat in Congress and became a candidate in the First District of New York in 1886, but was defeated by his Democrat opponent, Perry Belmont. But defeat did not deter the plucky Irishman from entering the contest again. In 1894 he ran against Joseph Fitch, Democrat, who received 14,961 votes; Henry Hofstadt, Labor party, who mustered 598 friends; and George Steinson, Populist, who had 223 followers. McCormick received 20,864 votes, more than all the others combined. He served from March 4, 1895, to March 3, 1897. He also

served some time on the board of managers of the State Normal School at Jamaica, New York.

Nor can we close this biography without paying tribute to Governor McCormick's wife. In 1865 McCormick took a trip East making the long journey by water. One of the passengers on the steamer was Miss Margaret G. Hunt of Rahway, New Jersey, with whom he formed a friendship which culminated in their marriage in September. She did not accompany her husband on his return trip, but later came to Arizona by boat via San Diego, California, then by stage to Yuma, again by boat up the Colorado River to Ehrenberg, and then overland to Prescott.

Mrs. McCormick was the first wife of a governor to live in Arizona, consequently considerable preparation was made for her coming. The unfinished Governor's Mansion was completed for the occasion. McCormick stopped at St. Louis and purchased sash and doors, and the citizens of Prescott ceiled, lined, and floored one of the rooms with planed lumber at a cost of \$1,100, the nails costing \$100 a keg.

The bride adjusted herself to her new environment as best she could. It meant a good deal for a woman of refinement and eastern training to live in Arizona in those days, even though her husband be governor. In order to know more of the territory McCormick and his wife, in the winter of 1866-67, made an extended trip through the western and southern portions of Arizona.

Not long after making this trip Mrs. McCormick died, April 30, 1867, at the age of thirty-four, in giving birth to a child, which also died. Both were interred in the same grave at Prescott and were later taken East. The chaplain at Fort Whipple, Rev. Charles M. Blake, officiated at the funeral.

When Mrs. McCormick made the long journey to Arizona she brought with her a root of red climbing rose which was planted under the window of the Governor's Mansion and was the first cultivated rosebush in northern Arizona. In February, 1907, a slip from this rose was planted on the capitol grounds at Phoenix, Governor Kibbey, Miss Sharlot M. Hall, and others participating in the ceremony.

McCormick died of apoplexy at his home in Jamaica, Long Island, New York, June 2, 1901. He was buried in the churchyard of Grace Episcopal Church, Jamaica; Rev. Mr. Lapmann of Newark delivering the eulogy. President McKinley sent senators Elkins and Jones with a personal message to Mrs. McCormick,⁹ a friend of the president. Others prominent in social and political life attended the funeral.

The following are some of the estimates of Governor McCormick and of his contributions to Arizona.

Resolved, by the House of Representatives, the Council concurring, that the fifth Legislative Assembly, cordially joins in the sentiment expressed by previous Legislatures, that his Excellency Governor Richard C. McCormick, has both in his official and personal relations, shown himself to be the true friend and intelligent advocate of the best interests of Arizona.

Resolved, that his long and zealous public service, in the face of many obstacles, and his thorough knowledge of the country and its resources, will entitle him to the confidence shown by the people in his selection as their representative in the Congress of the United States, and must ever honorably identify his name with the organization and history of the Territory.

McCormick has left a very creditable record, having done more for the Territory than any of the early officials. . . . He was the main organizer of the Territory, and always labored for its welfare.¹⁰

R. C. McCormick, the Secretary of the Territory, afterward Governor, and then Delegate to Congress, probably did more for the advancement of the Territory than any other one man. He was enthusiastic as to the possibilities of Arizona, as more than one of his letters to the eastern papers are evidence.¹¹

Secretary McCormick was of rich Irish blood and brim full of Celtic fire, of medium height and slim build, well formed and with dark complexion, nervous temperament, and of quick decisive action.¹²

⁹ For his second wife McCormick, in 1873, married Miss Rachel Thurman, daughter of Allen G. Thurman, senator from Ohio. She died in old age of pneumonia at Stanford, New York.

¹⁰ Fish manuscript.

¹¹ Farish, vol. 4, p. 282.

¹² E. D. Tuttle in *Arizona Historical Review*, vol. 1, p. 51.