

# Short Stories of Ohio

By J. H. GALBRAITH.

## THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN OF 1844 IN OHIO.

The dramatic spirit persisted in politics after the Harrison campaign in this state, and four years later when Henry Clay led the Whigs and James K. Polk, the Democrats, huge balls or globes drawn about the state featured both party campaigns. John M. Kerr, son of the John Kerr, who was one of the founders of Columbus, then quite a "blade" about town, caused to be built a brig which mounted on a cart and bearing the name of "Harry of the West" was wheeled all over central Ohio.

A Clay club was formed here and under its auspices a meeting in ratification of the nomination of Mr. Clay was held in Columbus. A singing organization,—probably the first campaign glee club in Columbus was organized under the direction of Mr. Kerr, to accompany his "brig" on its tours. At the Clay ratification meeting the principal speaker was Alfred Kelley, who later in the campaign took part in a joint debate on the issues of the campaign, taking the side of the Whigs and speaking against John Brough, who 20 years later was to become the auditor of state and governor of the state. Kelley was very active in Whig politics and had been the local delegate to the Whig national convention at Baltimore.

There was a big Whig meeting for the whole state held in Columbus in September, at which the speakers were Governors Bartley and Bebb, Columbus Delano, Thomas Ewing, and Tom Corwin. After the meeting there was a free dinner at Stewart's Grove, south of the city, — now the City park,—where 1400 pounds of hams, 5700 pounds of fresh pork, beef and mutton, 2100 loaves of bread, 500 pies, 300 pounds of cheese, 10 barrels of cider, four wagon loads of apples, not to speak of roast chickens, ducks, etc., were served on a table spread under the trees, 1700 feet —a third of a mile long. Food must have been cheap then, or the campaign treasury flush. Clay carried the state by 5000 votes, but was defeated in the nation. Mordecai Bartley was elected governor on the Whig ticket by a thousand votes.

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