

WHY I AM A PROHIBITIONIST.

I have never had reason to regret that my first vote was cast with the Republican party, and I believe my children will always be

The Oregon Searchlight, May 10, 1902 →
Salem, OR Vol. 6, No. 5 (.25¢ per yr.)

proud that their father, "the oldest white man born west of the Rocky Mountains," voted for Abraham Lincoln in 1860 and again in 1864. Up to 1870 I voted the straight Republican ticket, but that year I "stratched" my ticket, voting for temperance men only, regardless of party. Under the teachings of Good Templarism I grew to advocate non-partisan political action, and insisted upon the same at several sessions of the Grand Lodge I. O. G. T., along in the '70s, when our membership was at its highest tide, about 3000 in the Oregon jurisdiction. So great was their influence that the old parties took special pains to put in a temperance plank in their platforms; now the special pains is not to do so. After going to the Warm Springs Indian Agency in 1877, I was in a measure cut off from the political world, for, as an employe of the government, it was not always convenient to go to vote, even at Hay Creek, the nearest polling place, 25 miles distant. Some times I went to Prineville, 45 miles in order to cast my ballot. When I did vote it was always for the men, not the party, as in one election I voted for the Democratic candidate for Governor, considered a temperance man, because there was free whiskey at the polling place, that voters were told was supplied by the orders of the Republican opposing candidate. In 1892 I fully identified myself with the Prohibition party; and leaving the reservation that year I came to Linn county. In 1894 I was placed upon our ticket for the Legislature and again in 1896 and '98. In 1900 was on for county judge; this year for state senator. I have gloried all these later years in the fact that I have been brought out to be a target for ridicule; and also glory that Oregon's oldest white native son is a Prohibitionist. Although in my 64th year, I expect to see at least my own native state free from the licensed saloon, and to say as did Simeon of old, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." I am as much of a Lincoln Republican as ever, but in the present party by that name I can see no old landmarks. It favors license and bids for the whisky vote; the Democratic party favors free whiskey, and dare not oppose the liquor interests. I cannot support either of them. I cannot pray for their success, but I can for the Prohibition party. My Christian brother, as you enter the polling booth on election day, let it be to you "thy closet," and praying to "thy Father in secret," and with the eyes of your Lord and Master fixed upon you as you take the indelible pencil in your hand, may His spirit guide your fingers as you mark your choice, choosing those men who stand for a party that believes in "righteousness, temperance and a judgment to come," and shout "the saloon must go." Then your Lord will give you His blessing, angels will chant Halleluiahs mothers' hearts will sing for joy, and children crying Hosannas, will indelibly fix upon your heart and conscience the nobleness of your deed.

CYRUS H. WALKER.