

## CHAPTER IV

### *Intellectual Improvements*

I had further agencies in the internal improvement of Tennessee—material moral and intellectual. In 1829 when General Richard G. Dunlap represented Knox County the system of common schools was inaugurated by the legislature. I became a school commissioner for Knox County. I set on foot also the formation of the East Tennessee Historical and Antiquarian Society. Chancellor William Brown Reese became its president—Professor Stephen A. Foster, vice president. I was elected Perpetual Corresponding Secretary (and am, of course, still in office unless an honorable [because a compulsory] exile since September 1863 disqualifies me for the position). Honorable J. H. Crozier was recording secretary and some one else treasurer. At the death of Mr. Foster, our vice president, Reverend T. W. Humes was elected his successor.

The most flattering compliment or literary civility I ever received was at the semicentennial celebration of the founding of Knoxville 1842. Our society was toasted by Honorable T. C. Lyon, following his sentiment with some remarks. Cheers followed. When silence was restored, I noticed the eyes of the company were directed alternately to me as secretary and to Chancellor Reese as president. I bowed to him at the other end of the table, intimating to him to respond. He bowed very gracefully to me—seeming to waive the question of precedence. These courtesies between the two officers of the E. T. H. & A. Society were reciprocated several times until I, determined not to disregard official propriety—much more the presumed preferences of the company—arose to my feet, exclaimed, clapping my hands at the same time, “My president, Chancellor Reese! A speech from President Reese. A speech!” “Reese! Reese! Reese!” resounded from every one in the hall. The president acquiesced in the unanimous demand of the guests. A speech followed and such a speech—from such a speaker and such a president! I may not here attempt to present to the readers of this autobiographical sketch. This writer can only here allude to the compliment paid by the speaker to his secretary for his official

zeal, industry, and devotion in collecting, preserving and perpetuating much of the early history of Tennessee and the West that otherwise would have been lost. In the conclusion of these prefatory remarks he said "Your speaker has the titular distinction of president of the E. T. H. & A. Society. Our able and faithful perpetual secretary has done and still does all the work. Doctor Ramsey constitutes himself the E. T. H. & A. Society. He is *the society* and as his modesty declines the response to Major Lyon's toast I shall attempt it." His speech was well received and clamorously applauded. It must be here omitted. But it is due to the memory of Judge Reese to add that when the first conception of the society entered my mind he was the first to whisper the words of encouragement in my ear and cooperated cordially in promoting the objects of our association.

Our friendship was early formed, 1820. It was never for a moment interrupted. It was life long. The great republic of letters knows nothing of the factions and estrangements and animosities of different states and political parties. I was *ab initio* a Democrat of the Jeffersonian school—a believer in that theory of government which makes the states really sovereigns—the creators of the union and not its subjects—and that in this sovereignty the states could at their option nullify unconstitutional acts of congress—or secede from the union whenever such usurpation of power by the central government should render such secession proper or necessary—that the states as states possessed as reserved rights, the power to judge of the infraction of these rights as well as the mode and measure of redress. These were my youthful political sentiments in 1820—They were my political creed in my manhood—in 1840—and the deliberate convictions of my old age in 1870. On the other hand I knew they were not the political views of my friend Judge Reese. I voted for him for congress in 1823? perhaps 1825. He never was a Federalist, much less an abolitionist or a consolidationist. He was a virtuous man and a patriot. I loved and admired him. We were bosom friends. Politics after our midlife were a forbidden subject. We travelled in company to the North in the same conveyances—the same cars—in the same ships—he as a Whig delegate to Philadelphia, I as a Democratic delegate to the Baltimore convention when Cass was nominated as the successor of Mr. Polk. Still I did not vote for the successful candidate (Cass) but stood up and threw three ballots for a better man and a real Democrat and statesman Levy Woodbury.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Ramsey's historical interests had already brought him in contact with Lyman Cope-land Draper, a young historian whose interests in Tennessee and the pioneers of the "old Border" coincided with Dr. Ramsey's antiquarian interests. Draper resided in Baltimore in

During this exciting period and that long journey Judge Reese never mentioned politics once to me nor I once to him. Yet we visited the departments—private families—and learned societies together—worshiped in the same churches—dined with the same friends. Politics, as before remarked, was a forbidden subject. We both agreed to disagree. This cordiality continued to his death. He had frequently been my guest at Mecklenburg. I heard of his declining health with apprehension. For I knew that the sword (an over worked intellect) must necessarily soon cut through the scabbard and put him among the Immortals in Heaven. I saw him often. Less frequently than I wished for his mental activity seemed only to be stimulated into greater action by his increasing bodily debility. Even the day before his death we conversed together on his favorite topics: Homer Longinus, Belles Lettres, Horace and Virgil etc., etc., and I had to admonish him that talking so much, and especially his evident intellectual exertions, would exhaust his diminished strength. He acquiesced in the propriety of my admonition and quit the subject of our conversation. On retiring from his chamber I said *Vale*. He promptly replied *Vale tu quoque*. I never saw him afterwards.

On my way home I told Colonel Sneed and others of the older members of the bar that the chancellor could not survive many hours. He died soon after. On this occasion the bar met and adopted the usual resolutions of respect and condolence. Strange to say, and unexpectedly to myself certainly, the bar requested me to draw up the biographical sketch which next day was published with their proceedings. This unusual compliment to me I endeavored to decline much as the duty was agreeable to my private inclinations and genial to my personal regard of this genuine Christian gentleman, accomplished scholar and erudite and profound jurist. I felt assured he would, had he survived me, have done a similar sad duty for me.

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1848, and was as ardent a Democrat as Dr. Ramsey. Just before leaving for the convention, Dr. Ramsey wrote to Draper, April 4, 1848, sending him a copy of a "Boon Inscription" and an account of the frontier battle of Point Pleasant. "I shall be in your place about the twenty-second," he added. "My being a delegate to the National Democratic Convention. There I hope to see you to assist me by your friendly suggestions about publishers, engravers, books, etc., etc. Will you be in Baltimore about that time? I go on after the convention rises to Philadelphia and the eastern cities. Inter nos, who are your candidates for president and vice-president?"

The meeting of the two historians marked the beginning of a life-long friendship between them. Dr. Ramsey's letters to Lyman Draper on historical and political and personal matters are preserved in the Draper and Wisconsin Historical Society Correspondence in the library of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. These manuscripts are hereafter referred to as "Draper Correspondence." Draper's collections on historical subjects, to which Dr. Ramsey contributed many informative notes, are cited as "Draper Manuscripts."

To resume the thread of this sketch of the agency the writer has had in the improvement of Tennessee. I have already mentioned my appointment as school commissioner. The system did not work well. The poor, for whose children principally the legislative assistance had been provided, refused to send their children for the reason that they could not dress them equal to the *quality*. So they called all those who could pay for the schooling of their children and wished and intended to educate them. Thus the kind intention of the Tennessee legislature proved abortive. I failed—all my colleagues failed—to overcome this prejudice. The gratuity of the state benefited only those who did not need it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In 1852 Lyman Draper migrated to Wisconsin where, in 1854 he reorganized the State Historical Society and became its corresponding secretary. In 1857 he was elected state superintendent of public instruction. Dr. Ramsey followed his career with interest, and was especially impressed by a voluminous and exhaustive school report which Draper issued late in 1858. "It should be in every school district in the United States . . ." he told Draper. "Here in Tennessee, we need it especially as our school system is an admitted failure, and it will do much to turn our further and future efforts in behalf of education into the proper channel." Draper Correspondence, April 16, 1859.

Inspired by Draper's example, and stimulated by a second report, Dr. Ramsey wrote again, January 17, 1860.

"Your report for 1858 you had previously sent me, and during the canvass of last summer (eschewing for the nonce all other topics) I and a few friends of educational reform here made it primary essential and paramount with the hope of effecting something salutary in the Tennessee system of common schools. We effected nothing of importance. I lent your report to several school teachers and others with the hope of securing their influence and cooperation in directing the attention of the *aspirants* for office to a remodeling our educational system and of improving, if not perfecting, it. It was all a vain and nugatory effort. Our present system is not only a failure but a positive injury. We had better schools, better teachers, more pupils fifty years ago when I was at school than now when money (sixty or eighty cents per pupil) is furnished by the state, and the teacher is appointed by functionaries here called school commissioners. Decidedly better in 1806-10 than 1860. *Self-reliance* then prompted the better men in every neighborhood to associate together, build a school house, employ a good teacher; while now, this association of the better class is nullified by the masses usurping the power of electing commissioners in each civil district for the reason that they will disburse the patronage to someone related or who will teach *cheaper* than someone else. I see no motion in our legislature to act on the subject. My advice has been given either to amend our school law or to throw the fund into that of internal improvement or the general treasury of the state. Still, I do not believe that the cause is absolutely and hopelessly dead. It needs your reforming head and hand and if you had not interdicted the use of your name in this behalf, I would have prepared a concise and forcible article for the "Nashville Union" setting forth your agency in the educational reform and system of Wisconsin and prompting by letters to my friends in the legislature to invite you to the seat of government to concoct and carry out every possible improvement in our very defective system. And, I reply to you this early to suggest to you to visit Nashville this winter—the Legislature may not adjourn before March or April—where, if I can, I will meet you and if I cannot do that, I can arrange a very cordial welcome for you. I think there is no difficulty in the way. Your elaborate and excellent Report of 1858 will introduce you at once most favorably, secure to you the architecture of a new system of which yourself shall be the designer and the architect. Do adopt the suggestion. I could urge it on account of the youth of my great state, your own fame and character beside other considerations scarcely less important—our milder climate, political condition, etc. Besides, although I harbour no revenge myself, nor cultivate or incite it in you or others, still you ought to shake the dust of Wisconsin off your shoes and leave them to their own fanaticism. I know it was no official delinquency of your own that beat you. It was nothing but that wanton spirit of free-soil-ism—alias anti-democratic prejudice—that elected your successor. (I had not heard it before and could have scarcely believed it

But in another way I tried to advance the cause of literature around me. I set on foot, and succeeded in organising near my residence, Mecklenburg Academy. We appointed seven leading men of our neighborhood its trustees. I gave the ground and more than half the money necessary for a frame building thirty-six by eighteen feet—a brick chimney at each end. It was plastered, glazed, and well finished. I gave also the privilege of fuel in perpetuity. I was appointed secretary to the board of trustees.

possible if I had not heard it from yourself.) Let them rip—if disunion follows, the North is the guilty cause of the unwelcome catastrophe. Answer this far of my letter early.

"I am greatly obliged by the report of your historical society. It will be a model for mine not far off, but on a smaller scale. We need you in Tennessee, too, to aid our historical efforts only scarcely begun. By the way, let me inquire what delays the publication of your life-long labours? Do let it come out before I go home. You need not like me be deterred by pecuniary considerations. If you would get Benson J. Lossing to illustrate it—(*alamos* his *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution*) and interest him in the publication (stereotyped) you will sell ten thousand a year for ten years. I mean what I say. I know your subject and the manner of treating them. In the whole West and Southwest you will find a substantial patronage and much elsewhere. Print. The public is eager for it and you can't live always (only through your works). I made no money, you will several fortunes. Why I would give the price of one volume to see even the sketch of General (Doctor) William Fleming of Virginia, my aunt's father. So of every other reader or student. Besides this, let us claim you as a Tennessee author and if you will bestow and leave your unpublished collection of manuscripts to any but your legatees let me plead with you for Tennessee—come and take charge of her educational interests and her historical associations. Write me early, also, on this subject too. (If I get an opportunity I will send copies of your school reports to Governor Harris and other friends at Nashville. This is not interdicted by your letter and if you come south will facilitate the views and intentions of your friends in Tennessee.

"One word for me and mine if you are not already too much wearied to hear it. I and my good wife are yet well and active (—five children yet at home. Our eldest daughter, the widow of Colonel Breck once of St. Paul, Minnesota, two younger daughters and two sons). Our eldest son, General J. C. Ramsey, practices law in Knoxville, is U. S. District Attorney and was defeated for Congress last August. Our next is settled near us farming, our third on a tramp to Texas and two daughters married to two learned physicians in Knox and Boone—convenient to us. Our life, hereafter, is of course down-hill, and although much binds us to earth and time, we are looking out for a better country, even a heavenly. There, I hope to meet you. . . .

"P. S. Knoxville is now accessible to all the world by our railroads. If you come by Washington, twenty-eight hours will bring you here on your way to Nashville or Mississippi—Make our house your home at least a week or two."

On February 6, 1860, Dr. Ramsey wrote again to Draper. Draper had been defeated for reelection as school superintendent, and Dr. Ramsey had begun to take steps to induce him to migrate to Tennessee. "When I returned home from the bank Saturday afternoon," he wrote, "I found your esteemed favor of the 25th of January on my table. I then read over your first letter, and reflecting on both of them, determined to exercise the discretion you gave me on the matter and first wrote marked *private* to Governor Isham G. Harris—calling his attention to the defects and palpable failure of our common school system:—that it was unsatisfactory to those who administered the law, (I had been commissioner myself twenty or thirty years ago) and had disappointed public expectation; that I had studiously endeavoured to supply or correct those defects; had despaired of improving much less perfecting the system; had read your able and luminous reports as superintendent etc;—and had requested you to send him copies of them and expressed the hope that he had received and read them; that just such a man as you was now needed at Nashville to indoctrinate our legislature in effecting an educational reform in Tennessee; and that the chairman of the school committees in both branches of our legislature ought, by all means, to confer with you on the subject before attempting to inaugurate a new system—and that I believed if they or the governor, himself, would telegraph you at Madison, Wisconsin, you might be induced to pay a flying visit to

The Reverend A. Penland, pastor of the Presbyterian Church Lebanon, became the first principal of our academy. His school soon became so large that we had to appoint an assistant tutor. Several classical scholars were educated there—some of whom became instructors—and members of the learned professions. The academy continued in existence up to the time of Burnside's invasion of the country.

I became early in life one of the trustees of Hamden Sydney Academy in Knoxville. I was made chairman of its board of trustees. During the late war our buildings and grounds were used by the soldiery of both armies and much damaged. I do not know whether it has been resuscitated.

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Nashville; that you were not now in the school service of Wisconsin,—the avalanche of fanaticism there having superseded you in November in a vote of 123,000 by less than 3,000—showing by your heavy vote over your comrades on the Democratic ticket that your official services had been appreciated beyond the party question;—that tho I was not able to say that you would consent to come to Tennessee and take charge of educational matters here, yet I believed you could be induced to do so if prospects of permanent usefulness should be held out to you; that, if he did not himself know you, ex-Governor W. B. Campbell, General W. S. M. of Lebanon and Dr. Reese and Colonel A. W. Putnam of Nashville could endorse you—but that your Reports were sufficient endorsements—Jared Sparks, George Bancroft, Benson J. Lossing, Henry Barnard, Henry S. Randall and I had done so.

"This is a hasty outline of my letter to Governor Harris. I wrote, at the same time an article of the same purport for the Union and American—omitting any allusion to your race in that Black Republican state but taking the same view of the defects of our present educational system and suggesting the same course to be pursued in making it more perfect and effective, requesting the editor, Burck, to withhold my name and Post Office (as that identifies the writer).

"These two long papers I wrote Saturday night. This morning I wrote to A. W. Putnam, suggesting the need we had of your services in remodeling our system,—covering the same ground of the other papers, but asking him to confer with Campbell and M. at Lebanon and Dr. Reese and other friends in Tennessee to get the chairman or the Governor to try and get you to come and inaugurate a reform here. These letters and the communication for the Union and American were all sent by today's mail. Tomorrow I will write to our three members—to whom I had mentioned during their careers and showed your report first sent me. On them I will urge the necessity of having you present in Nashville to try and modify and improve our system. On this subject I know they (although of the opposition) will listen to me attentively.

"I do not know that all this will get the legislature to move a peg. The whole thing being a failure hitherto, the subject has become unpopular and distasteful to timid members. Still, I am not easily discouraged. In 1831, a member of Congress from this district said I was a mono-maniac on railroads but I persisted and my whole plan, then ideal and problematical, has been fully realized. Indeed, so anxious and solicitous am I of success, that if it becomes necessary, I will go to Nashville and try to do something. My bank duties may call me there before long. Let me hope to meet you there if the thing goes further. I want you in Tennessee for a scarcely less important purpose. You will see in the Union and American that I did not use any extra laudation of you as you admonished me I should not.

"P. S. No time was to be lost if this Legislature will do anything and as I am pressed with other duties, excuse this galloping epistle. I did better with my letters to Nashville. Write me again and I will omit nothing."

Two weeks later, on Washington's birthday, Dr. Ramsey wrote again. His personal misfortunes probably account for the failure of this last effort to do something for the improvement of the common schools of Tennessee.

"Since I wrote you last, Doctor Dickson, the husband of my second daughter, ceased to breathe. He died of tubercular consumption—lingered several months, but sank rapidly the

About 1822, or soon after my father's death, I was elected to fill the vacancy occasioned by his death, in the board of trustees of Blount College—since the University of East Tennessee. Not long after my election to this position I chose to resign it. Differing with the majority of my colleagues on the board on what I considered a vital question, the minority consisting of Major W. B. Lenoir, Major Arthur Crozier, myself, and perhaps others tendered our resignations. President David A. Sherman refused to accept mine and invited me to withdraw my resignation. Reminding him of the usage of the British ministry on such occasions, I replied that the majority must in future bear the whole responsibility for their own policy.

Several years after this I was elected trustee of Washington College near Jonesboro, Tennessee. I had received from its faculty previously my second degree of Master of Arts, and being an alumnus of that oldest literary institution west of the Alleghanies I could not decline the literary civility implied by my election as a trustee. It was nearly one hundred miles from Mecklenburg, my private residence, and I rarely attended the meetings of its board of trustees. Its grounds were classic and historical—I had graduated there. Its halls were venerable from their age, and illustrious from the character, and services, and patriotism, and worth, and public and private virtue of its founder and President, Reverend Samuel Doak, D.D. He had planted it in the wilderness during the Revolutionary War. He had watched over it during its infancy—its precocious manhood, and before his death had witnessed its expansion and maturity. Like the monks of the Middle Ages, he had kept alive and burning the fire of a genuine and profound literature. The germ of his own planting on the distant frontier of what is now Tennessee, had blossomed under his own culture—had matured and borne fruit. Longinus on the sublime Horace's Art of Poetry, The *Bucolics* of Virgil, the *Metamorphoses* of

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last few days; died calmly, easily, trusting in the merits of our Saviour and Redeemer, with the Christian's hope and the Christian's courage.

"I snatch a minute to say that I have not seen my communication in the *Weekly Union and American*, nor have I heard from Governor Harris nor any other correspondent at Nashville. I cannot account for it and deem it right to inform you. The whole subject, as I before told you, has become distasteful to our people and our legislators,—but this furnishes the stronger reason why you should have been invited.

"I am confined to my room by a bruised and sprained ankle from falling in a dark night a week ago, into a deep gully while walking up the inclined plain to the depot at Athens. It would have been more in consonance with my past pursuits and my earlier aspirations for distinction and usefulness in railroad enterprises, if I had been smashed up between or under the cars. But to have stumbled into a miserable ditch—an achievement which any Negro could have performed as gracefully as I did—cashiers me for life. Excuse me. I only wished to say that I cannot account for the silence of my correspondents."

Ovid, the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero were studied and read aloud under the ancient trees around Dr. Doak's Log College, as Martin Academy was first called. The primitive forest that had once resounded with the scream of the panther, the howling of the wolf, and the terrific war-whoop of the Cherokee were now vocal with classical literature and the young men in every cabin in which they boarded around what had become Washington College were engaged in the study of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages. Such was the transmutation accomplished by the energy and learning of President Doak. His trustees, the patrons of learning every where, appreciated his genius, his attainments and his worth. His students idolised him, and some few years after his resignation of the presidency and his removal to Bethel a number of them waited upon him at Tusculum and requested him to sit for his likeness before an eminent artist. He negatived the request at first, but an excellent picture of the now superannuated and venerable patriot divine and scholar was at length obtained. It was left by the artist in the office of Dr. Samuel Blair Cunningham in Jonesboro, a favorite alumnus of Washington College. There I first saw it. Attending next day a meeting of the trustees in the new college edifice just then erected, I proposed a resolution "That the secretary of this board apply for and receive from Dr. Cunningham the picture of Dr. Doak now in his possession and that as a token of our respect and in veneration of the memory of the first president and founder of this college, his picture be framed and removed to the library room of Washington College and be perpetually preserved as the most valuable of its archives." My resolution was carried by acclamation, and afterwards carried into effect. It is a very accurate likeness—less finished and artistic perhaps than was due to the subject of it. But Dr. Doak was remarkable for the primitive simplicity of his character, and it may not be inconsistent with true taste that the painting should be inartistic, inexpensive, and inartificial likewise. I had been Dr. Doak's favorite student and he was proud of my attainments under his instruction. My father had once been a worshiper under his pastorate at Salem. They had both been *revolters* and members of the Franklin government (from 1784 to 1788). They were co-pioneers on Holston and Nollichucky: both were Calvinists, both Presbyterians of the strictest sort. They were warm personal and political friends. It was thus peculiarly proper and becoming that I should be the one to introduce the resolution I offered before the board of trustees. I felt it to be an act of almost *filial* piety and veneration. During my exile

from Tennessee some unknown friend sent to my son, General J. Crozier Ramsey, at Knoxville a photograph of Dr. Doak taken from the picture of him in the college library with the request that it be presented to me. In March 1869, when I visited Knoxville the first time after my exile (September 1863), I found the photograph in my son's office. It would have graced my parlor or library at Mecklenburg, burned by the vandals under Burnside September 1863, but I was now houseless and homeless and an exile—a stranger in a strange land. My son, to whom the picture had been sent, was now in a soldier's grave in Gray Cemetery near Knoxville, and I left it in the hands of my wife's brother, Honorable J. H. Crozier, of that city.

When the news arrived at Knoxville in 1830 of the death of President Doak, I called together the alumni of Washington College within my reach. At that meeting I offered the customary resolutions of respect to the memory and veneration for the services and virtues of one so erudite and useful and illustrious as our deceased teacher, Dr. Doak. The names of members of the meeting which I can now call to mind were, beside myself, Hugh Brown, J. H. Cowan, S. D. Jacobs and my brother, W. B. A. Ramsey. On the motion of Hugh Brown I was appointed to prepare a suitable memoir of the deceased. This grateful duty I performed. It was afterwards published. The proceedings of our meeting will be found published in the Knoxville *Register* of that day<sup>3</sup>—of which Mr. Brown was co-editor with F. S. Heiskell, Esquire.

After the resignation of his presidency of Washington College, Dr. Doak removed to Bethel and there started Tusculum School which he intended as a preparatory department for the college he had left, and which was now under the presidency of his oldest son, Reverend S. W. Doak, M.D. Students flocked to his school. Here with his son Reverend S. W. Doak, who was vice president when I graduated at Washington, Dr. Doak continued to teach with great acceptance till his death. His son, S. W. D., continued the school. It was called at first Tusculum Academy. It progressed well and was finally incorporated by the legislature as Tusculum College. I was elected one of its trustees and sometimes I attended the meetings of its board, especially at commencements. Two of my sons, J. C. Ramsey and W. Wilberforce Ramsey, received their education there, and their brothers, R. M. and J. G. McKnitt, also attended there several

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<sup>3</sup> Knoxville *Register*, December 29, 1830. The news account attributes the resolutions adopted by the meeting to Colonel W. B. A. Ramsey.

sessions. This college was seventy-five miles from my residence and, therefore, I could not give much of my attention and care. Governor, afterwards President, Johnson was one of my associates in the board.

I received, at several periods of my life, honorary membership in many of the literary and scientific societies in America.<sup>4</sup> The one of which I was specially proud was from the Medical College of South Carolina—secured to me, as I believe, from my successful treatment of a case of dropsy in the chest in Charleston, South Carolina—which I had been invited to see and to treat while on a visit to that city for my health and professional improvement in the winter of 1829–1830.<sup>5</sup> Another literary distinction which I also valued high was honorary membership in the Ethnological Society of New York and still another from the historical society of the state of Georgia—*cum multis aliis* too numerous to mention here. These, with my diplomas, certificates of honorary membership, commissions, etc., etc. from the civil authorities, were, with my family, considered as my chief treasures, my idols. And when I was driven into exile, they—my wife and daughters—rescued them from the incendiaryism of the enemy, while much—nearly every thing else of intrinsically more value, were left to the vandalism of Burnside and his thieves, robbers, and house burners. The ladies of my house in my absence saved them from the fire. All fame to them for this regard to my preferences and taste!

I had the honor of a correspondence with the elite and distinguished every where whether in church or state—with A. Jackson, Calhoun, Polk, Mitchell King, Professor Dickson, Dr. and Judge Frost, Reverend H. S. Foote, D.D., President Davis, all railroad presidents,—the scientific generally—Democratic leaders and editors everywhere. Beside my private correspondence, copies of my addresses, essays, contributions to the literary, political, secular, and religious journals of my times. All my historical and antiquarian manuscripts—some of them containing the substance of my second volume of the *History of Tennessee*: viz. from 1800 to the end

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<sup>4</sup> Upon his election as an honorary member of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Dr. Ramsey wrote Corresponding Secretary Lyman Draper: "I beg . . . to assure the members that it will afford me great pleasure to contribute in some humble degree at least to the promotion of the objects and wishes of the association." He ordered his publishers to send his *Annals of Tennessee* to the Wisconsin society. "It will be a pleasure to me hereafter to contribute autographs and other historical matter to your collection." Draper Correspondence, March 23, 1854.

This was a reciprocal honor. A decade before, September 3, 1844, Dr. Ramsey had informed Draper that he had been elected an honorary member of the East Tennessee Historical and Antiquarian Society. *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> The Knoxville *Register*, April 13, 1831 reported that the Medical College of South Carolina had conferred an honorary M.D. degree on Dr. Ramsey on March 18.

of Polk's administration—unpublished biographies of the leading master spirits of their day in Tennessee and elsewhere, all these being in my office and study adjoining my dwelling house fell victims to the flames. These were themselves a pretty complete history of my own times and a perfect history of my participation in them. My library—medical, miscellaneous, (and especially that which I principally valued) historical and literary, I had for many years been collecting from Europe and America, and which was, I believe, the best in the western states—was stolen, destroyed, or burned. I saw some of my books in a book store on Gay Street, Knoxville, but did not care to claim them. I left them to bear evidence of some one's atrocious dishonesty. I hope not the booksellers.