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CHAPTER I

THE BUSINESS AND POLITICAL CAREER OF
WILLIAM A. ASHBROOK - 1867-1906

William Albert Ashbrook was born on July 1, 1867 in Johnstown, Ohio. After attending the Johnstown public schools, the future Congressman moved to Lansing, Michigan in 1882 and attended a business college for three months. Odd jobs occupied his time until his return to Johnstown in late 1883. In February, 1885, the Johnstown youth persuaded his older brother to buy the local weekly newspaper. Upon the death of his brother three months later, William A. Ashbrook became the editor and sole owner of The Johnstown Independent. The aggressive eighteen-year-old editor had three other occupations at this time: manager of the Johnstown opera house; agent for a Columbus, Ohio steam laundry; and manager of a local skating rink. In March, 1889, William A. Ashbrook expanded

1 William A. Ashbrook, A Line a Day (4 vols.; Johnstown, Ohio: By the author, 1931-1939), I, 70. Hereafter, this work will be cited as Ashbrook, Line a Day.
2 Ibid., p. 75.
his business interests by forming the Johnstown Savings and Loan Corporation with the aid of a few friends.  

In the decade following his marriage to Jennie Belle Willison in December, 1889, the energetic Johnstown native further expanded the business interests that generally dominated his life until 1906. The Johnstown Citizens Bank opened in March, 1898, under the direction of copartners William A. Ashbrook and H. B. Rusler. The copartners soon opened branch banks in Alexandria and Croton, Ohio. On December 31, 1901, William A. Ashbrook listed the following personal occupations in his diary: editor and proprietor of The Johnstown Independent; secretary of the Johnstown Savings and Loan Corporation; cashier of the Johnstown, Croton, and Alexandria banks; agent for eight fire and one life insurance companies; notary public; and real estate agent. The varied business interests of the Johnstown editor were all successful. By his own calculation, his economic assets increased in value from $185.00 in 1885 to $21,000.00 in 1898. By 1906, his assets totaled $57,000.00.  

Although his business interests generally dominated his life

4The Johnstown Independent, April 17, 1889, p. 1.  
6Ibid., p. 369.  
7Ibid., p. 461.  
8Ibid., p. 365.  
9Ibid., p. 589.
from 1885 to 1906, the energetic William A. Ashbrook was also actively interested in politics, travel, and local and national organizations. His interest in politics first appeared in his diary in March, 1887, when the newspaper editor wrote, "I have given serious thought to politics and the principles of the Democratic party appeal strongest to me."\(^{10}\) While continuing to publish a politically independent newspaper, the young editor became personally involved in the activities of the Democratic Party. In September, 1891, the Johnstown Democrats elected him secretary of their local group. The following year, these same Democrats selected the future Congressman to represent them at the annual Licking County Democratic May meeting in Newark, Ohio.\(^{11}\) The Johnstown editor received his first political appointment when President Grover Cleveland made him Postmaster of Johnstown in July, 1893.\(^{12}\) In September, 1893, William A. Ashbrook, now an avowed Democrat, made his newspaper strictly Democratic in policy.\(^{13}\)

The ascendancy of William A. Ashbrook to a position of some prominence in county politics continued in 1895. In May, 1895, the Johnstown Democrat was elected chairman of the Democratic Central Committee of Licking County.\(^{14}\) The Democratic Central Committee then

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\(^{10}\) Ibid., pp. 92-93.

\(^{11}\) Ibid., p. 216.

\(^{12}\) The Johnstown Independent, July 12, 1893, p. 1.

\(^{13}\) The Johnstown Independent, September 27, 1893, p. 2.

\(^{14}\) Ashbrook, Line a Day, I, 291.
made William A. Ashbrook a delegate to the Democratic State Convention in Springfield, Ohio. The Johnstown Democrat later wrote in his diary, "My Democracy is greatly enthused by attending the Convention at Springfield. I count myself a pretty good Democrat."15 This opinion reaffirmed an earlier assessment the Convention delegate had made of himself by stating in his diary, "I am a Democrat through and through and the more I understand the two parties the more I am convinced that the principles of the Democratic party are in the interest of the people and are right."16

Once William A. Ashbrook became acquainted with his fellow party members in Licking County, the possibility of becoming a candidate for political office was worthy of personal consideration. The future Congressman considered running for mayor of Johnstown or county auditor but abandoned both possibilities, since politics, while fascinating, seemed to him an unsatisfactory way of life.17 Nevertheless, some of his Democratic friends believed his chances for success in a political race very promising. In 1897, a group of Newark Democrats expressed a desire to have William A. Ashbrook become a candidate for state senator.18 The Johnstown Democrat again avoided entering a political race and wrote in his diary, "The people oversize me, I think. Believe I could have had the

15 Ibid., p. 300.
16 Ibid., p. 182.
17 Ibid., p. 291.
18 Newark American Tribune, July 10, 1897.
Licking County delegates if I had said the word. Am too young and not heavy enough. Perhaps when I am forty I will try for something good." However, Ashbrook changed his mind and entered the political ring in 1899 as a candidate for treasurer of Munroe Township. Beaten in a close race, he decided to try once more. In 1901, he contested for the same office and admitted in his diary, "The only reason I want the office is to get funds for our banks." He was successful. Two years later the people reelected him.

Along with his activity in local and county politics, he devoted a portion of his time to the Buckeye Press Association, the Hocking Valley Press Association, the National Editorial Association, the Knights of Pythias organization, and the Masonic Order, and became an officer in each. He was elected president of the Buckeye Press Association in 1897, and treasurer of the Hocking Valley Press Association in 1898. After the Buckeye Press Association became a member of the National Editorial Association at Galveston, Texas in 1897, the Johnstown editor participated annually in the affairs of

22 Ibid., p. 444.
24 The Johnstown Independent, April 9, 1903, p. 1.
the national organization. He attended the following National Editorial Association Conventions: Denver, Colorado, 1898; Portland, Oregon, 1899; New Orleans, Louisiana, 1900; Buffalo, New York, 1901; Hot Springs, Arkansas, 1902; and Omaha, Nebraska, 1903. At the 1904 Convention held in St. Louis, Missouri, he was elected secretary of the Association. The Knights of Pythias organization and the Masonic Order also made him an officer of their groups. In 1897, the Knights of Pythias appointed him Deputy for the 17th K. of P. Congressional District, composed of Wayne, Coshocton, Tuscarawas, Holmes, and Licking Counties. The Johnstown Lodge of the Masonic Order elected him their secretary in 1901.

Despite his personal aversion to county political races, his efforts in business, politics, and various organizations continued to bring him into contact with residents of Licking County who urged him to enter politics on that level. In November, 1904, angry because the Republicans had just won every county office, unable to further stifle his own personal infatuation with politics, and confident of the support of many voters, he sought the office of Licking County State Representative in 1905. He won the office

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27 Ibid., p. 519.
28 Ibid., p. 362.
29 Ibid., p. 461.
30 Newark American Tribune, January 7, 1908, p. 2.
by using the same strategy that had previously elected him Secretary of the National Editorial Association, namely, meeting personally as many people as possible, regardless of their party affiliations or personal opinions. Although he had helped form a Law and Order League to remove saloons from Johnstown in 1896 and personally disliked alcohol and drinkers, on February 28, 1905 the candidate wrote in his diary, "I think I met every saloon keeper, bartender, and gambler in Newark and was introduced as the next representative from Licking County."31

The Women's Christian Temperance Union, aware of his tour of the saloons, demanded a statement from him as to his temperance beliefs.32 Still seeking the support of all voters, he avoided a public statement on the temperance issue, quietly informed the Anti-Saloon League that temperance appealed to him, discouraged the public endorsement of the saloons without greatly offending them, and continued his personal campaign by attending such public functions as the Newark Fair and canvassing the towns of the county.33 The county Republican paper, the Newark American Tribune, claimed on November 4, 1905 the saloons had endorsed Ashbrook. At any rate, his personal campaign proved successful.34 He carried Licking County by 643 votes, and the county seat of Newark, Ohio by 47 votes.35

31Ashbrook, Line a Day, I, 538.
33Ashbrook, Line a Day, I, 555-556.
35Newark Advocate, November 9, 1905, p. 1.
He then had no way of knowing that this political victory would have two significant influences on his future career. First, the 1905 victory generated in him a desire to become a member of the national House of Representatives from Ohio's 17th Congressional District. In March, 1905, the Johnstown Democrat noted in his diary, after spending an evening at the Newark Elks Club, "The boys tell me if I am elected state representative this fall that I can be the next Congressman from this district." Then, in September, he confided to his diary that nomination to Congress in 1906 was his next goal. Secondly, throughout a twenty-year Congressional career, he would depend consistently on a personal campaign of meeting the voters to maintain his seat in Congress.

The emergence of his desire to enter national politics drew to an end the first phase of his life. A small town boy of limited education, he had used his boundless energy and common sense to create for himself a series of business investments that would grow in profit through the years. The friendships his various business activities and personal interests had created would continually be an asset in the political arena. The previously dominant business aspects of his life assumed a secondary role after 1905 as politics became the pivotal point of his existence.

36 Ashbrook, Line a Day, I, 538.
37 Ibid., p. 553.
CHAPTER II

THE NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF
WILLIAM A. ASH BROOK TO
CONGRESS - 1906

In the early months of 1906, Ashbrook's desire to become the Democratic nominee for Congress in Ohio's 17th Congressional District dominated his thoughts. Since Ohio did not yet have a direct primary law for United States Representatives, the Democratic candidate for the 17th District would be selected at a June convention of county delegations. Knowing opposition to his nomination at this district convention would be strong, the Johnstown Democrat proclaimed in his diary on April 17, 1906, "The big thing is to get a Licking County delegation that will not sell me out. The only way to avoid that danger is to select my own delegates which many leading Democrats, who are apparently friendly to me, bitterly oppose."\(^1\) The opposition within his own party stemmed from Ashbrook's desire to forego the usual process of selecting convention delegates by party vote or primary vote. The Republican

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\(^1\)Ashbrook, *Line a Day*, I, 572.
Newark American Tribune supported the Democratic opposition by accusing the Johnstown Democrat of trying to become the whole Democratic Party of Licking County.²

The opposition to his plan to name his own delegates made the annual Licking County Democratic May meeting to be held in Newark, Ohio, May 19, a critical test of his personal strength in the Democratic Party. If he was to obtain the avowed support of the county delegation, the members of the Democratic Party present at this meeting would have to grant him the power to name the members of the county delegation. To overcome the party opposition, he personally canvassed the prominent Democrats of Licking County prior to the May meeting.³ When the Democrats of Licking County met in Newark, Ohio on May 19, 1906, he had collected the personal support necessary to gain the power to name the convention delegates from Licking County.⁴

His victory at the county meeting assured him the complete support of Licking County's allotted 65 delegates.⁵ Yet, he believed a bitter fight at the district convention to be unavoidable since Wayne County's 53 delegates had already been named by candidate E. S. Wertz, and candidate J. E. Hurst controlled

²Newark American Tribune, April 17, 1906, p. 4.
³Ashbrook, Line a Day, I, 573-574.
Tuscarawas County's 64 delegate votes. With 124 votes required for nomination, none of the three large county candidates could win at once even if any one of them carried a majority of Coshocton County's 39 votes and Holmes County's 26 votes. Therefore, the convention would remain deadlocked until one of the three major candidates removed himself from the running and supported one of his opponents.

Seeking a clearer picture of the political situation, Ashbrook journeyed to New Philadelphia in Tuscarawas County prior to the convention. He found local opposition to J. E. Hurst strong, and J. E. Hurst adamantly opposed to E. S. Wertz of Wayne County. Such a situation naturally favored Ashbrook, who noted in his diary on May 22, "I believe when he finds he cannot be nominated he will come to me." The next day, he took a train to Coshocton, Ohio to visit Charles Cassingham and John Callahan, two Democratic friends, and Charles Lambertson, editor of the Coshocton Daily Times. These men introduced him to many of the Coshocton County delegates who expressed the belief that a majority of their group would favor him at the coming convention. The brief trip had located two possible sources of strength for him at the coming convention.

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7 Ashbrook, Line a Day, I, 576; Coshocton Age, May 24, 1906, p. 4.
9 Ibid.
Ashbrook returned to New Philadelphia on June 5, visited once more with J. E. Hurst, and wrote in his diary that both men agreed to stand pat. The next morning the District Convention began. After the three major candidates had been officially nominated and voting began, the expected deadlock was readily apparent. The Convention adjourned late Wednesday afternoon with none of the three candidates able to gain the necessary 124 votes. On Thursday, June 7, 1906, the deadlock persisted, and with 270 ballots recorded, the Convention adjourned for the day.

Thursday evening, William A. Ashbrook speculated on the situation and its eventual outcome in his diary. As expected, Wayne County stood solidly for Wertz, Tuscarawas County for Hurst, and Licking County for Ashbrook. Of the other two delegations, a majority of Coshocton's delegation favored Ashbrook, while the majority of Holmes County's voters supported E. S. Wertz. The Johnstown Democrat believed that Coshocton would only give him thirty of its thirty-nine votes the next morning, so the major question was to whom would Hurst eventually yield since neither he nor

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10 Ibid., p. 577.
Coshocton delegations would ever support Hurst.\textsuperscript{15} The importance Ashbrook attached to Hurst's decision emerged in his diary again on this evening, as he confided to having been in close contact with the New Philadelphia politician all day and then having him trailed Thursday evening after the Convention adjourned.\textsuperscript{16}

The next morning, Friday, June 8, Ed Crayton of Newark, Ohio, Ashbrook's political manager, and Charles Lambertson, editor of the Coshocton Daily Times, arranged a meeting with Hurst, his political manager, and Charles Cassingham, an influential Coshocton County politician, in an attempt to persuade the New Philadelphia politician to withdraw and support the Johnstown Democrat.\textsuperscript{17} Meanwhile, on the Convention floor, Wertz introduced a successful motion that each candidate make a short speech.\textsuperscript{18} The two opposing candidates rushed to the Convention floor. Ashbrook believed that Wertz, a fine speaker, hoped to stampede the Convention in his favor.\textsuperscript{19} However, following the three short speeches, the deadlock continued until the 276th ballot, after which Hurst released the Tuscarawas County delegation from all responsibility to him.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{15}Ashbrook, Line a Day, I, 577-578; Newark Advocate, June 8, 1906, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{16}Ashbrook, Line a Day, I, 578.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{18}New Philadelphia Ohio Democrat and Times, June 14, 1906, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{19}Ashbrook, Line a Day, I, 578.

\textsuperscript{20}Newark American Tribune, June 12, 1906, p. 7.
ballot, Licking County gave Ashbrook 65 votes, followed by 40 votes from Tuscarawas County, 30 from Coshocton County, and 26 from Holmes County.21 Thus, he won the nomination.

The withdrawal of Hurst and Ashbrook's subsequent victory produced bitter editorials in two Republican papers of the 17th District. The first paper, the Millersburg Republican, claimed that Ashbrook had promised the support of the Licking County delegation to Hurst in four years and would soon make the New Philadelphia politician's manager his private secretary. Furthermore, Ed Crayton, William Ashbrook's political manager, and a member of the state penitentiary board, would see that Charles Lambertson of the Coshocton Daily Times became Warden of the Ohio Penitentiary.22 The second paper, the Newark American Tribune, charged that delegates at the Convention had been lured by the Johnstown banker's money, that Ashbrook and Hurst had rigged the Convention before it got underway, and that, if elected, Ashbrook would give Hurst the political patronage of the 17th District.23 Yet, by July, the Newark American Tribune concluded that Licking County was happy Ashbrook had won, that Coshocton County was elated over Hurst's failure, and that Hurst personally was pleased with the decline in influence of Wertz and Wayne County.24 These Republican charges that a political

22 Millersburg Republican, June 14, 1906, p. 4.
23 Newark American Tribune, June 12, 1906, p. 4.
"deal" had determined the outcome of the Democratic Convention dissipated as other issues emerged to dominate the campaign prior to the November election.

The Congressional contest of 1906 pitted Ashbrook against incumbent Republican M. L. Smyser of Wayne County, a lawyer and graduate of Wittenberg College, who had been elected for his first term in the Republican landslide of 1904. In the campaign, the reputation of each candidate in reference to the temperance question became a subject of intense editorial debate. The Newark American Tribune, Coshocton Age, and Millersburg Republican charged that the Democratic candidate had become a favorite of the saloon crowd by voting against the Briggs Bill and other temperance measures in the Ohio Legislature. Furthermore, the W.C.T.U. of Licking County could not endorse him because of his voting record. When the Wooster Herald, a strong Wayne County Prohibition paper, endorsed Ashbrook, the Democratic Newark Advocate, New Philadelphia Ohio Democrat and Times, Holmes County Farmer, and Coshocton Daily Times gave the endorsement particular attention and raised the question as to the amount of liquor the Republican candidate consumed daily. Since

25Newark American Tribune, September 18, 1906, p. 3.

26Newark American Tribune, August 31, 1906, p. 1; Millersburg Republican, September 6, 1906, p. 4; Coshocton Age, September 7, 1906, p. 4.

27Newark Advocate, August 30, 1906, p. 1; New Philadelphia Ohio Democrat and Times, September 6, 1906, p. 4; Holmes County Farmer, October 25, 1906, p. 4.
Ohio politics revolved around reform issues in the early 1900's, such matters had some political impact. To Ashbrook the irony of the situation was that, "I seem to be wet in Licking County and dry in Wayne and Smyser is wet in Wayne and dry in Licking." 28

Ashbrook approached the political campaign once more on a personal basis. Returning from the National Editorial Association Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, he began to tour the district. C. J. Fishey, chairman of the recent Democratic Congressional Convention and L. G. Barton, editor of the Holmes County Farmer, introduced him to the voters of Holmes County. Ashbrook attached great importance to the votes of Holmes County, commenting "Holmes County is the salt of the district and without it I could not hope to win. There is not a Republican precinct in the county." 29

In Tuscarawas County, he campaigned with the aid of Vic Donahey, County Auditor, and A. J. McWilliams, the local organized labor leader. 30 In Coshocton County, Charles Lambertson of the Coshocton Daily Times and John Callahan, a local labor leader, served as his guides. 31 In Wayne County, the defeated E. S. Wertz handled the introductions. 32

In the fifth county of the district, Licking, Joe Newton, publisher

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28 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 593.
29 Ibid., p. 596.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid., p. 598.
32 Coshocton Age, July 5, 1906, p. 4.
of the Newark Advocate, devoted extensive editorial space and personal time to Ashbrook's campaign.33

With Ashbrook conducting a campaign based primarily on the technique of introducing himself to the voters, the Republican papers of the district demanded that he state specifically his position on various issues.34 These demands were strengthened by editorial statements that the Republican candidate supported the continuation of a protective tariff, no tariff revision, and no state or government ownership of the railroads.35 The Democratic papers, while devoting the bulk of their editorials to the broad-mindedness, liberal outlook, financial successes, and magnetic appeal of their candidate, claimed that Ashbrook supported the resolution of the recent Congressional Convention calling for a reduced tariff on those goods sold abroad by trusts at lower prices than they were offered to the American consumer. Moreover, the "stand-pat" attitude of Smyser made the Democratic candidate appear as an antitrust politician opposing grafters, political bosses, and opponents of labor's rights.36

33 Ashbrook, Line a Day, I, 583.

34 Newark American Tribune, September 25, 1906, pp. 3-4; Millersburg Republican, September 27, 1906, p. 4; Coshocton Age, September 28, 1906, p. 4.

35 Coshocton Age, September 21, 1906, p. 4; Newark American Tribune, October 10, 1906, p. 4; Millersburg Republican, October 11, 1906, p. 3.

In the final two months of the campaign, Ashbrook gained five important endorsements largely through the efforts of his supporters. A. J. McWilliams, the New Philadelphia labor leader, had informed the Johnstown Democrat on September 18, that the endorsement of Samuel S. Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, could be obtained. On September 20, the A.F. of L. President endorsed the Democratic candidate, since Smyser had never replied to Labor's Bill of Grievances and Ashbrook's voting record in the Ohio Legislature favored labor's interests.

The second endorsement, that of Coshocton Labor and Trades Council, was obtained by Coshocton supporter, John Callahan. Two more labor endorsements, those of the National Brotherhood of Trainmen and the Ohio Railroad Conductors, followed in late October. Ashbrook, happy over the endorsements, had 7,000 booklets containing his labor record in the Ohio Legislature and his endorsements printed for distribution across the district.

The final important endorsement also came in late October. On August 15, 1906, Harvey Garber, chairman of the Ohio Democratic Party, had promised the Democratic candidate that William Jennings

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37 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 595.
40 Newark Advocate, October 25, 1906, p. 1.
41 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 598.
Bryan would make some speeches in the 17th District.\textsuperscript{42} The silvertongued orator arrived in Ohio on October 25 for a three-day tour. Ashbrook, who met him in Wooster, Ohio late in the day and listened to two of his speeches, found both speeches stimulating, but stated in his diary, "My friends want me to feel Wayne County will not hurt me, but I am fearful."\textsuperscript{43} The next morning, the situation became brighter, as Bryan spoke in Holmes County at Millersburg to an estimated 5,000 people and endorsed Ashbrook as a reform candidate.\textsuperscript{44} The Johnstown Democrat believed the speech had enhanced his prospects in the county whose votes might well decide the outcome of the Congressional race.\textsuperscript{45}

Ashbrook accompanied Bryan to New Philadelphia, Newcomerstown, and Coshocton.\textsuperscript{46} Pleased with the number present and Bryan's personal endorsement, he wrote the following account of their parting in his diary: "We exchanged hats when I bade Bryan good-bye and thanked him for the speeches. I told him that if I were elected, I would give him the credit and would wear his hat in Washington."\textsuperscript{47}

With the election close at hand, the Republican papers

\begin{center}
\textsuperscript{42}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 592.\\
\textsuperscript{43}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 599.\\
\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Holmes County Farmer}, November 1, 1906, p. 1.\\
\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Ashbrook, Line a Day}, II, 599.\\
\textsuperscript{46}\textit{Newark Advocate}, October 26, 1906, p. 1.\\
\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Ashbrook, Line a Day}, II, 599.
\end{center}
launched a final assault by claiming that Ashbrook's friendship with the farmer and laborer was false since his personal wealth had been accumulated through the purchase of tax titles.\textsuperscript{48} Weary from campaigning and worrying over the outcome of the election, Ashbrook hoped the mud slingers would eventually exhaust themselves. He spent the last few days before the election organizing a campaign to insure a strong turnout in his home town.\textsuperscript{49}

On November 6, the voters went to the polls. Ashbrook spent the day in Johnstown until the polls closed at 5:30 P.M., then journeyed to Newark to get the results from the District at the \textit{Newark Advocate} office. By 3:00 A.M., after the early returns had been promising, he believed Smyser had won by about 400 votes. Having expected to win his home county by at least 500 votes, his majority there of a slim 40 votes gave the Johnstown Democrat little cause for hope.\textsuperscript{50} However, the next day the final count made him the winner by approximately 475 votes. Smyser carried Tuscarawas County by 384 votes and Wayne County by 153 votes, but Ashbrook had a plurality of 161 in Coshocton County, 40 in Licking County, and 808 in Holmes County.\textsuperscript{51} Later in the day, the victor issued the following statement:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{48}Coshocton Age, October 25, 1906, p. 3; \textit{Newark American Tribune}, October 30, 1906, p. 3; \textit{Millersburg Republican}, November 1, 1906, p. 7.
\item \textsuperscript{49}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 599.
\item \textsuperscript{50}Ibid., p. 600.
\item \textsuperscript{51}Newark American Tribune, November 12, 1906, p. 3.
\end{itemize}
Especially am I and the party indebted to the suffrages of the laboring men and common people. My purpose will be to aid in all reforms and measures that will insure to the best interests of the whole people, stay, and if possible, dethrone the rapacious greed of the trusts and bossism, and give the people their full equity and just due. I will be glad to serve one and all whether of my political faith or not, in a manner that will be satisfactory to my friends and disappointing to those who opposed.52

Ashbrook's nomination and election to Congress involved three strategic victories. His personal strength among the Democrats of Licking County enabled him to win the first battle at the Democratic May meeting. Without the full support of the Licking County delegation, his nomination at the District Convention would have been impossible. Arriving at the Convention with sixty-five assured votes and a majority of Coshocton County's votes, he had the power to prevent the nomination of either of his opponents and take advantage of the personal and local animosities permeating the Convention. These animosities created the circumstances that led to Ashbrook's second triumph. The accounts of various newspapers support his conclusions that Hurst would not have given his support to Wertz under any circumstances and Coshocton County would not have supported Hurst. With no hope of either of his opponents withdrawing, and no support from any delegation besides his own in sight, the New Philadelphia politician's decision as to who would eventually receive his support became the deciding factor in the outcome of the Convention. After Hurst

released his delegates and supported the Johnstown Democrat, the Republican charges that a political "deal" had been made between the two appeared in the newspapers in the district. However, no concrete evidence any "deal" was made appeared in Ashbrook's diary or any other documents in 1906. Whether or not any agreement existed between the two aspirants, Hurst's personal dislike of Wertz and his own lack of support were the primary factors in the nomination of William A. Ashbrook.

His third victory came on election day in 1906. In a year when concern over various reforms, "bossism," trusts, tariff revision, and prohibition permeated the political atmosphere of Ohio, the Johnstown Democrat, with the aid of at least one important newspaper and influential friend in every county, had conducted a personal campaign emphasizing his liberal attitude, broad-mindedness, and appeal to the voters. Except for his acceptance of the resolutions drawn at the District Convention, he did not take a rigid stand on any issue. The newspapers supporting him used the resolution on tariff revision made at the Convention to characterize him as an antitrust, antibossism candidate but the Johnstown Democrat stayed on relatively neutral ground throughout his personal campaign. Although pleased with the tour and endorsement of William Jennings Bryan, he did not make his position on any of the famed orator's ideas, such as government or state ownership of railroads, known at any time.

Along with his personal approach to the campaign, the support
of the various newspaper editors whom he had met through his membership in the National Editorial Association, and the labor endorsements secured by his personal supporters were undoubtedly important in the results of the election. In light of the final tabulations, Holmes County proved to be the source of victory. The appearance of Bryan in Holmes County and the enthusiastic response of the voters to his speech at Millersburg definitely aided the majority polled by the Johnstown Democrat in this decisive county.
CHAPTER III

THE 60TH CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION -
1907-1908, AND THE ELECTION
OF 1908

The year 1907 proved to be relatively inactive politically for Ashbrook. On March 1, he officially became a United States Representative but did not take his seat in the House until Congress convened in December. In preparation for spending a length of time in Washington, D.C., he resigned from the Ohio Legislature in March and from the National Editorial Association in June, after serving three one-year terms as secretary.¹ The new Congressman also revealed his goal for the future in June, 1907 by claiming in his diary, without yet having been actively involved in the workings of Congress, that a second term was highly desirable.²

As the 60th Congress convened, Ashbrook found some personal adjustments to his new office necessary. After hoping to become a member of the Public Buildings and Grounds Committee, he

¹Newark Advocate, June 15, 1907, p. 1.
²Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 616.
found himself assigned to the Coinage, Weights, and Measures and Militia Committees. He was soon convinced that Speaker Joe Cannon and a few others ruled the House. Along with the relatively small influence possessed by a new Member, the tempo of House proceedings also irritated him. Having always been a man in a hurry to get things done, the time given to debate persistently annoyed him.

On March 19, he noted in his diary, "Congress is too slow for me. I like to pull on the traces and not back in the breeching. Somehow I do not seem to be able to do much and I would like to be tearing things up." Determined to keep his vow to serve his constituents well, Ashbrook soon found himself hustling around the department offices looking after their wants to avoid the "home consumption" speeches of the House.

The quest of William A. Ashbrook for constant activity, along with his firm belief in providing for the needs of old soldiers, sparked his initial desire to pass the pension bills that would eventually earn him the nickname, "Pension Bill." On March 3, he wrote in his diary, "I am making a special drive on pensions.

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3 Congressional Record, 60th Cong., 1st Sess., 1908, XLII, Part 1, 426.
4 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 634.
5 Ibid., pp. 630, 633-634.
6 Ibid., p. 634.
7 Ibid.
It is about the only thing I can do here." During the first session of the 60th Congress, he introduced seventy-three bills to provide pensions for, or increase the pensions of, old soldiers. Once again, the lack of speed in Congressional proceedings antagonized him. In a March 17, 1908 speech, he stated, "It appears to me that the laws have been made to prevent, rather than give, pensions to that class of men who, by their heroism and bravery made it possible for this nation to become the greatest of all nations." To speed up the passage of pension laws, the Johnstown Democrat proclaimed:

Authority should be given the Commissioner of Pensions or a board of commissioners to pass upon claims according to the individual merit of each claim. This authority now rests in the hands of the Pension Committee. Likewise in the Invalid Pension Committee. But these committees have time to pass upon only a few of the worthy and deserving bills introduced by the Members of Congress and referred to them.

He continued his plea for more pensions:

To my notion the greatest curse of Congress is the code of rules, both in the House and in the committee. I recognize the necessity of rules for the transaction of business and the control of all bodies. But rules should not deprive a Member and his constituency of their inherent rights, nor should it serve to defeat the ends of justice.

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8 Ibid., p. 633.
9 Congressional Record, 60th Cong., 1st Sess., 1908, XLII, Index to Parts 1-8, 39-40.
10 Ibid., Part 4, p. 3492.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., p. 3494.
If necessary, to pay veterans, Congressman Ashbrook suggested Congress, "cut out the building of a battleship or two each year, a few public buildings, or even reduce the Army."\(^{13}\)

Besides pension bills, two other pieces of personal legislation greatly interested Ashbrook during his first year in Congress. President Theodore Roosevelt had removed the "In God We Trust" motto from American coins. On January 20, the Johnstown Democrat introduced H.R. 14400 to restore the motto to certain gold and silver coins.\(^{14}\) The House of Representatives passed the bill on March 16.\(^{15}\) The Senate passed it unanimously without amendment on May 13 and President Roosevelt later added his signature.\(^{16}\) The second legislative act of personal interest to Ashbrook was the Public Buildings Bill, which included appropriations for public buildings at Newark and Wooster, Ohio. The appropriation for a public building at Newark led to a political battle between Ashbrook and George Heisey, Newark Postmaster and political opponent. The Newark Postmaster came to Washington in May, 1908 to have the Newark building cut from the Omnibus Public Building Bill.\(^{17}\) Involved in a struggle for political prestige in Licking County, Ashbrook acquired the assistance

\(^{13}\)Ibid.

\(^{14}\)Ibid., Part I, p. 899.

\(^{15}\)Ibid., Part 7, p. 3391.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., p. 6189.

\(^{17}\)Newark Advocate, May 5, 1908, p. 1; Newark American Tribune, May 5, 1908, p. 1.
of Ohio Senator Joseph B. Foraker who agreed to introduce an amendment to the bill in the Senate calling for a $190,000.00 appropriation for Newark. 18

The battle for these public building appropriations did not end here. When the Omnibus Public Buildings Bill appeared on the floor of the House it included the Newark building but the Wooster appropriation had been removed. 19 Crediting the removal to the Republicans (who William A. Ashbrook believed would give a Northern Democrat nothing and a Southern Democrat anything), the Johnstown Democrat learned from the House Chairman of the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds that both appropriations would be acceptable if the Senate approved them. 20 Ohio Senator, Charles Dick, rescued him now by introducing an amendment in the Senate providing for a public building at Wooster, Ohio. 21 On May 30, 1908, the Senate passed the Omnibus Public Buildings Bill with both appropriations and Ashbrook had secured his public buildings and won a political skirmish. 22

18 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 638; Congressional Record, 60th Cong., 1st Sess., 1908, XLII, Part 6, 5846.
19 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 639.
20 Ibid.
21 Congressional Record, 60th Cong., 1st Sess., 1908, XLII, Part 7, 6383.
22 Ibid., pp. 6583, 6592.
Despite his dislike for the days during which the House conducted little business, Ashbrook missed very few roll calls during the first session of the 60th Congress. The YEA and NAY votes cast by the first term Representative during these roll calls followed a consistent course of decision at times. Prior to April 15, 1908 the Johnstown Democrat had voted in favor of the creation of a naval station at Pearl Harbor (H.R. 20308) and the Army Appropriations Bill (H.R. 17288). On April 15, the House voted for the building of two battleships instead of the four desired by President Theodore Roosevelt. Congressman Ashbrook wrote in his diary later in the day, "Teddy lost and evidently doesn't have Congress in the hollow of his hand. I consider it absurd that Japan will war with the U.S. or that any other country will tackle Uncle Sam." From the time of the death of William McKinley, Ashbrook had little enthusiasm for Theodore Roosevelt. Theodore Roosevelt had appeared to be unsafe to him even in 1901. After meeting President Roosevelt in 1902, Ashbrook wrote, "He is a great Teddy but hardly my ideal of the President of the United States." After April 15, the votes of Ashbrook on military appropriations and bills relating to foreign affairs were consistently negative.

23 Ibid., Part 5, pp. 4447, 4553.
25 Ibid., I, 456.
26 Ibid., p. 409.
Twice he voted against the Naval Appropriations Bill (H.R. 20471).\textsuperscript{27} When the Army Appropriations Bill came up a second time, his vote was negative.\textsuperscript{28} The bill to increase the size of the Philippine Commission (H.R. 17516) and the bill to revise the Philippine tariff laws (H.R. 21449) received a negative vote from him.\textsuperscript{29} The same situation occurred when the House voted on the bill to give the President control of leasing lands in the Panama Canal Zone.\textsuperscript{30} The only military appropriation that received a YE A vote from him was the Fortification Appropriation Bill (H.R. 19355).\textsuperscript{31}

As many legislative acts of a reform nature came before the first session of the 60th Congress, Ashbrook voted in favor of the following: a proposal to grant inquiry into the business practices of interstate corporations (H.R. 302); an employer's liability bill (H.R. 20310); the bill to create an Inland Waterways Commission (H.R. 21899); an act to establish a National Forest Commission (H.R. 21986); a bill to create a Bureau of Mines in the Department of the Interior (H.R. 20083); and a bill entailing the amendment of United States navigation laws (H.R. 21815).\textsuperscript{32} While supporting

\textsuperscript{27}\textit{Congressional Record}, 60th Cong., 1st Sess., 1908, XLII, Part 6, 5454; Part 7, 6163.
\textsuperscript{28}\textit{Ibid.}, Part 6, p. 5954.
\textsuperscript{29}\textit{Ibid.}, Part 6, p. 5610; Part 8, p. 7097.
\textsuperscript{30}\textit{Ibid.}, Part 7, p. 6563.
\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 6829.
\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Ibid.}, Part 4, p. 3651; Part 5, p. 4438; Part 7, pp. 6424, 6705, 6723, 6905.
these reform measures, the Johnstown Democrat voted against the following: a bill to regulate the employment of child labor in the District of Columbia (S. 4812); an act to regulate interstate transportation of explosives (H.R. 17228); a bill to fix naturalization fees (H.R. 21052); and the Aldrich-Vreeland Currency Bill designed to amend national banking laws (H.R. 21871). In his diary Ashbrook described this last bill as a makeshift currency act at best. On another reform issue, an act calling for publicity of political campaign contributions (H.R. 20112) the new Congressman did not vote.

The votes of Ashbrook in other areas were more consistent. Being a pension advocate, the Pension Appropriation Bill (H.R. 16268) and three other pension measures met with his approval. In contrast to his voting record on military appropriations, he supported the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Appropriation Bill (H.R. 21260); the Sundry Civil Appropriations Bill (H.R. 16882); the Agricultural Appropriation Bill (H.R. 19158); and the Public Buildings Bill (H.R. 21897).

33Ibid., Part 6, p. 6035; Part 7, p. 7009; Part 8, p. 7216; Part 7, p. 6375.
34Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 640.
35Congressional Record, 60th Cong., 1st Sess., 1908, XLII, Part 7, 6768.
36Ibid., Part 5, p. 4742; Part 7, pp. 6370, 6559, 6922.
37Ibid., Part 7, pp. 6545, 6635, 6725, 6679.
Regardless of the time which regular attendance in the House, constituent errands, and the passage of personal legislation required, Ashbrook continually devoted a portion of his time to preparing for the election of 1908. To improve his chances for reelection he kept in touch with his constituents by mail. He mailed 10,000 copies of his March 17 pension speech to his constituents along with all the books, publications, and flower and garden seed available to him.\textsuperscript{38} In answer to the daily mail that arrived at his office, which included letters from many old soldiers, Ashbrook penned personal replies before departing for the day.\textsuperscript{39}

The Johnstown Democrat kept a close personal watch on the political atmosphere in the 17th District from the Capitol. The newspaper publicity given his efforts proved to be very complimentary. Even the strong Republican newspaper, the \textit{Newark American Tribune}, carried the story of blind soldier, Herbert Kohr, and Ashbrook's attempt to win a pension for him; approved of the "In God We Trust" Bill; and mentioned the acquisition of an old cannon for Newark by the representative in Washington.\textsuperscript{40} The Democratic newspapers loyal to him devoted considerable space to his work, printed his pension speech, and praised his work for the old soldiers.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{38}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 635-637.

\textsuperscript{39}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 629-630, 632, 634, 636.

\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Newark American Tribune}, February 6, 1908, p. 5; March 26, 1908, p. 4; April 2, 1908, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{41}\textit{Coshocton Daily Times}, April 1, 1908, p. 1; \textit{New Philadelphia Ohio Democrat and Times}, April 9, 1908, p. 2; \textit{Newark Advocate}, June 4, 1908, p. 4.
The Holmes County Farmer, the Democratic voice of Holmes County, headlined Ashbrook's assault in his March 17 speech on the arbitrary handling of pension cases.42 The Newark Advocate devoted a front page column to his appointment to the Assay Commission by President Roosevelt and his selection as chairman of the Commission when it met in Philadelphia, February 13, 1908.43

A primary concern for him involved the speculation as to whom the Republicans would nominate to oppose him. On April 17, he recorded in his diary a letter from Wooster, informing him that M. L. Smyser planned to enter the race.44 Smyser, however, died suddenly on May 6, 1908.45 Ashbrook had considered Smyser an able man, a strong Republican, and a hard man to beat. Without this man, he believed the Republicans would have a difficult time finding a solid candidate to oppose him.46

After Congress adjourned late in May, Ashbrook began his personal campaign, making a one hour speech at the New Philadelphia Decoration Day celebration honoring old soldiers on May 30.47 On June 4, the Democratic Congressional Convention convened in Newark,

42Holmes County Farmer, March 26, 1908, p. 1.
43Newark Advocate, February 13, 1908, p. 1.
44Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 637.
45Newark American Tribune, May 14, 1908, p. 5.
46Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 639.
Ohio. The county delegations renominated Ashbrook by acclamation, endorsed William Jennings Bryan for President, and passed a resolution supporting tariff revision.\textsuperscript{48} Ashbrook was pleased with the results and the ovation given him by the delegates present.\textsuperscript{49}

With the necessary endorsement of his party secured, Ashbrook toured the 17th District, keeping one eye on the Republican Party. The Republican National Convention interested him, especially, the fate of Theodore Roosevelt. The day the Convention opened, Ashbrook speculated on Theodore Roosevelt's possible nomination in his diary and noted, "It gives me a cold chill for I fear that man."\textsuperscript{50} When William Howard Taft received the nod of the Republicans, Ashbrook believed his nomination had saved the Democrats at least 1,000 votes in the 17th District.\textsuperscript{51} The Republicans of the 17th District met in August at New Philadelphia, and selected General E. L. Lybarger as their Congressional candidate. Ashbrook considered General Lybarger the strongest man in the District but had not expected him to accept the nomination since the two men were warm friends.\textsuperscript{52} The next morning General Lybarger declined the nomination and pledged his support to the Johnstown Democrat.\textsuperscript{53} The withdrawal

\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Newark Advocate}, June 4, 1908, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{49}\textit{Ashbrook, Line a Day}, II, 641.

\textsuperscript{50}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 642.

\textsuperscript{51}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{52}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 645.

\textsuperscript{53}\textit{Milersburg Republican}, September 3, 1908, p. 1.
of Lybarger left the Republican Party without a candidate until the county delegations met again on September 22 at Coshocton and nominated John E. Harrison, a Wayne County Commissioner.\textsuperscript{54}

During 1908, William A. Ashbrook spent three weeks touring Canada and attended the National Editorial Association Convention at St. Paul, Minnesota. Returning to Ohio in early September, he canvassed the District once more, while the Democratic papers continued their editorial support, stressing his endorsement by the American Federation of Labor, the Spanish War Veterans, the Grand Army of the Republic, and the State and National Letter Carriers Associations.\textsuperscript{55} Throughout his campaign, the Democratic candidate found the old soldiers to be his best boosters.\textsuperscript{56} Support for the Democratic Party in Ohio also existed among the old soldiers and the general public. This support, Senator Foraker's open opposition to William Howard Taft, and the enthusiastic reception given William Jennings Bryan in Columbus and other Ohio cities caused William A. Ashbrook to conclude the Democrats would carry Ohio. However, Ashbrook believed that while William Jennings Bryan's scheduled speech at Newark would aid the Democratic cause in the 17th District, the

\textsuperscript{54}Millersburg Republican, September 24, 1908, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{55}New Philadelphia Ohio Democrat and Times, September 24, 1908, p. 2; Coshocton Daily Times, October 5, 1908, p. 6; Holmes County Farmer, October 22, 1908, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{56}Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 651.
silver-tongued orator had little hope of being elected to the White House.57

In the last two weeks of October Ashbrook put the finishing touches on his District campaign. On October 21, William Jennings Bryan spoke at Newark, Ohio before a tremendous crowd and Ashbrook journeyed with him from Newark to Mt. Vernon, Mansfield, and Ashland.58 On Saturday, October 24, the Democratic candidate made a last tour of Millersburg in Holmes County.59 His District campaign ended on October 26 as he sent out 30,000 pieces of mail and surmised in his diary, "My frank will be used to good advantage. A fellow in office has a big advantage over the fellow who wants to get in."60

On Tuesday, November 3, the voters went to the polls. Ashbrook had reason to be extremely pleased with the final tabulation. In the 17th District, the Johnstown Democrat had a plurality of 7,373; Democratic Governor-elect Judson Harmon, 5,249; and William Jennings Bryan, 4,258. Every county in the District favored Ashbrook. Coshocton County gave him a plurality of 1,164; Tuscarawas County, 822; Wayne County, 774; Holmes County, 1,826; and Licking County, 2,787. His majority in Licking County broke the record of

57 Ibid., pp. 649-650.
58 Newark Advocate, October 21, 1908, p. 1.
59 Holmes County Farmer, October 29, 1908, p. 6.
60 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 652.
Furthermore, except for Wayne County, where William Jennings Bryan had bested him, the Johnstown Democrat had a larger majority than either Harmon or Bryan in every county.

Although Ashbrook at times believed his efforts in the House of Representatives were not accomplishing enough to satisfy him personally, his first session in Congress was a decided success. In a Republican controlled House, he had secured two public building appropriations, the passage of his "In God We Trust" Bill, and a number of special pension bills. These accomplishments, plus his honest concern for the desires of his constituents, won him the support of many voters.

The YE A and NAY votes cast by Congressman Ashbrook during the first session of the 60th Congress revealed a basically liberal attitude, an anti-Theodore Roosevelt commitment, and a solid support for pension legislation. In voting for various measures of a reform nature, he gave a glimpse into his voting behavior of the future. Future years would establish him firmly as a man who approached legislation from the standpoint of benefitting and satisfying the masses who supported him at the polls. His negative votes on military appropriation bills in this session of Congress seemed to revolve

61 Newark Advocate, November 12, 1910, p. 4.
62 Newark Advocate, November 6, 1908, p. 4.
around his personal distrust of Theodore Roosevelt and a belief that no nation would want war with the United States. His solid support for pension legislation reflected the beginning of the lifelong dedication to the wants of old soldiers. The fact that the Aldrich-Vreeland Currency Bill did not meet with his approval stemmed primarily from his firm conclusion that the bill was make-shift in nature.

His reelection in 1908 was caused by several factors. First, the death of Smyser and the withdrawal of Lybarger removed two strong potential candidates from the Republican ranks and left the party without an authorized candidate until September 22, 1908. These circumstances left the Republican papers that had waged a heated campaign against Ashbrook in 1906 with very little time to promote the candidate selected, John Harrison. Secondly, Ashbrook's tenure in Washington removed him temporarily from the temperance issues of Ohio politics and made his record as a United States Representative the sole basis for evaluation of him. Thirdly, his constant support of the old soldiers won for him many new supporters and received wide attention in District newspapers. Fourthly, the appearance of William Jennings Bryan in the District and the support given him, along with new Governor Judson Harmon by the voters, indicated that the District favored Democrats in 1908. Fifthly, Ashbrook had the solid support of L. G. Barton, editor of the Holmes County Farmer; W. T. Albertson, editor of the New Philadelphia Ohio Democrat and Times; and Joe Newton, publisher of the Newark Advocate. Compared
to the heated battle of 1906, the election of 1908 proved to be rather mild. The growing strength of Ashbrook in the District and the failure of the Republicans to produce a candidate as strong as M. L. Smyser had been in 1906 made the whole affair very one-sided. Returned to the House of Representatives for a second term, Ashbrook now had the opportunity to build even a greater following. The Democratic Party in Ohio would also gain strength during 1909 and 1910.
CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 60TH CONGRESS
AND THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 61ST
CONGRESS - 1908-1909

During the second session of the 60th Congress, Ashbrook continued his efforts on behalf of the old soldiers of the 17th District, made his first appearance in the well of the House in charge of a bill, reaffirmed his distrust of Theodore Roosevelt, opposed certain appropriation bills on the grounds that the public's money was being wasted, and worked to gain more important committee assignments in the 61st Congress. The needs of the old soldiers received daily attention from Congressman Ashbrook. Besides introducing more bills to grant or increase pensions, the Johnstown Democrat made frequent trips to the Pension Office to check on the progress of those pension claims still unsettled.¹

On January 25, 1909, Congressman Ashbrook made his first appearance in the well of the House when his bill (H.R. 23707) to

¹Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 656-658; Congressional Record, 60th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1909, XLIII, Index to Parts 1-4, 23, 24.
grant a federal charter to the Imperial Palace, Dramatic Order, Knights of Klorassam (a national K. of P. organization), was reached on the House calendar.\(^2\) Despite an unfavorable report by the District of Columbia Committee on his bill, the House passed the measure.\(^3\) On February 19, the Senate delighted the always loyal K. of P. member, William A. Ashbrook, by also passing his bill.\(^4\)

Ashbrook's distrust of President Roosevelt again appeared in his diary during this session of Congress. After listening to several House speeches denouncing Roosevelt, he wrote, "There is little doubt but what President Roosevelt incited a revolution in Columbia to acquire the Panama Canal strip."\(^5\) When the House reached a vote on the bill to establish a government for the Panama Canal Zone (H.R. 27250), William A. Ashbrook voted against the bill because of his personal misgivings about the "big stick."\(^6\) Four days before Roosevelt's term in office ended, Ashbrook proclaimed in his diary, "Hail Columbia and the happy land. He [Theodore Roosevelt] has done many good things, but I believe he has created

\(^2\)Congressional Record, 60th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1909, XLIII, Part 1, 376.

\(^3\)Newark Advocate, February 4, 1909, p. 4.

\(^4\)Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 660; Congressional Record, 60th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1909, XLIII, Part 3, 2694.

\(^5\)Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 659.

\(^6\)Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 660; Congressional Record, 60th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1909, XLIII, Part 3, 2147.
more unrest and disaffection than any other President we have ever had. I hope his kind will never sit in the White House again."

Ashbrook's opposition in the second session of the 60th Congress to the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Appropriation Bill (H.R. 23464), the Sundry Civil Appropriation Bill (H.R. 28245), and the Ocean Mail Bill (S. 28) stemmed from his personal belief that these measures involved "wanton waste and reckless extravagance of public moneys." The Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Appropriation Bill was particularly offensive to him since it entailed an increase in the salaries and financial compensation of various government employees. The Johnstown Democrat believed these allotted increases were unnecessary and reflected poor economic thinking on the part of the Capitol's legislators.

Ashbrook devoted part of his time between December, 1908 and March, 1909 to efforts to secure his appointment to more important committees in the future 61st Congress. The Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds had been his goal since his first term in office and he sought support for his membership on this committee in the future during the 60th Congress. On January 22, Congressman Ashbrook noted in his diary that James M. Cox, a newly elected Member

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8 *Coshocton Daily Times*, August 10, 1909, p. 4.
9 Ibid.
from Ohio, had agreed to support him in his bid for this committee.\textsuperscript{11} Two men stood between the Johnstown Democrat and his coveted committee membership. The first man was Representative Timothy Ansberry of Ohio who also desired appointment to the committee. The two aspirants became involved in a personal struggle that gained the attention of the \textit{Washington Post}. Representative Ansberry agreed to withdraw and ask Minority Leader Champ Clark to nominate Ashbrook for the committee.\textsuperscript{12} The second opponent, Speaker Joe Cannon, however, continued in opposition. When Congress reconvened in March, 1909 for the first session of the 61st Congress, Ashbrook predicted in his diary that his bid would probably fail because "Speaker Cannon will not favor a northern Democrat."\textsuperscript{13} At the end of the Special Session of 1909, the new committee assignments were announced with Ashbrook still a member of the Militia and Coinage, Weights, and Measures Committees.\textsuperscript{14} His committee assignments would remain the same until after the election of 1910.

In March, 1909, Congress was reconvened by President Taft for the express purpose of revising the tariff. Ashbrook voted for Champ Clark of Missouri for Speaker of the House but Joe Cannon won the

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\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 659.
\textsuperscript{13}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 662.
\end{flushright}
position. When Clark tried to liberalize the rules of the House, Ashbrook voted in favor of his resolution but it too failed.\textsuperscript{15} In his diary, the Johnstown Democrat expressed his belief that had not Representative John Fitzgerald deserted the cause, the resolution would have passed.\textsuperscript{16}

The tariff issue dominated the first session of the 61st Congress. Ashbrook found the long sessions of general debate on the Payne Bill (H.R. 1438) tiring. On April 2, he noted in his diary, "I started to prepare a speech on the tariff bill, but got disgusted and threw it in the waste basket."\textsuperscript{17} However, the next morning, he changed his mind and prepared a speech which he delivered on the House floor. It began:

\begin{quote}
I am a Democrat, I am proud to say, and believe in the principles of Democracy, but I am here first to represent the people of my district, and propose, so far as I understand their will and wishes, to execute the same to the best of my ability. If I did not do this, I would, in my opinion, not be an honest Representative of an intelligent and confiding constituency.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

Since the wishes of his constituents were his prime concern, Ashbrook proceeded to introduce the views of some of his constituents rather than facts and figures on the tariff bill itself. After reading

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Congressional Record}, 61st Cong., 1st Sess., 1909, XLIV, Part 1, 18, 21.

\textsuperscript{16}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 662.

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 664.

constituents' letters calling for free lumber and free fertilizer in the final tariff provisions, the Johnstown Democrat said:

I have the honor to represent one of the greatest sheep districts in the great state of Ohio. While my sympathies are always with the consumer and I believe the necessities of the poor man should have our first and best consideration, yet, I justify myself and my convictions in the retention of the present duty on wool for the fact that the farmer is the least protected and smallest beneficiary under our protective-tariff system of any of the protected interests.

The wage earners of the great industrial enterprises are the beneficiaries of protection. We are told and believe, too, by it their wages are kept up. So far as protection protects the American workingman against cheap foreign labor I am in full accord. But protection to the trusts and monopolies that their millions may become billions I am irrevocably opposed. Therefore I say, Mr. Chairman, that since the wages of the daily breadwinner are kept up by protection, they should not, and I believe will not complain that the farmer, who in the end largely "pays the freight" should have remuneration in the way of protection to the wool industry. 19

To support his appeal for no reduction on wool, Ashbrook next read House Joint Resolution 29 passed by the Ohio Legislature demanding protection for farmers against the cheap wool of Australia and Argentina, and announced that his personal vote of approval would not be given to any reduction of wool duties until the American farmer at least received the same consideration given the farmers of the Philippines when the last Congress reduced the import duties on farm machinery entering the Islands. 20

Recognizing the tariff as truly a "local problem," the Johnstown Democrat expressed his concern that the tariff schedules to be

19 Ibid., p. 1008.

20 Ibid.
voted on could not be reconciled to the voters at home by the Members of the House.\textsuperscript{21} He concluded his speech by saying,

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I can only say that I certainly hope no rule will be adopted to prevent every member going on record on free lumber, free hides, free shoes, free oil, free iron ore and on all the schedules in this bill in which people are demanding a reduction. . . . The passage of this bill without radical amendment will surely break the backs of the American people and the future prospects of many Members across that aisle.\textsuperscript{22}

Having expressed the wishes of his constituents and his own concern for reconciling the bill to his constituents in this public speech, Congressman Ashbrook summarized his personal view of the tariff later in the day in his diary by writing, "I am not in harmony with most of the Democrats on the tariff. I do not believe in a high protective tariff, but it is an easy way to raise revenue and some lines really need protection, especially wool."\textsuperscript{23}

In an effort to reduce the tariff on certain commodities, on April 9, Ashbrook voted in favor of free unsawed lumber, free lumber from the Western Hemisphere, and against a 10\% ad valorem duty on hides.\textsuperscript{24} He also voted to remove the equal duty proviso on petroleum.\textsuperscript{25} When the House voted on the Payne Bill (H.R. 1438), Ashbrook voted to recommit the bill and against its passage but it passed and

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., Part 2, p. 1009.
\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., p. 1010.
\textsuperscript{23}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 664.
\textsuperscript{24}Congressional Record, 61st Cong., 1st Sess., 1909, XLIV, Part 2, 1293, 1294, 1298.
\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., p. 1299.
moved on to the Senate. In his diary, he concluded that the manufacturer had won over the consumer, the tariff bill would revise duties upward not downward, the Democrats had made the best fight possible for the consumer, and the "rotten bill" would surely be to the decided advantage of the Democrats.

With the Payne Bill now before the Senate, and the House waiting on its deliverance from that body, Ashbrook and his wife joined twenty-five other Members of Congress and seventeen wives making a trip to the Panama Canal to inspect the progress of its construction. Leaving New York by boat on April 14, the excursion reached Colon on April 20, 1909. Although the construction of the Canal had not yet reached a point that would allow Ashbrook a clear picture of what the finished project would look like, he believed that where France had failed, the United States, with Colonel Goethals in charge, would master the situation and complete the project. Leaving Colon on April 26, the party made a brief stop at Havana and arrived back in New York on May 2, 1909.

Returning to the Capitol, Congressman Ashbrook arranged his office work to allow for his absence, and spent the days between May 7 and June 2 at his home in Johnstown, Ohio. After attending a coin

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26 Ibid., p. 1301.
sale in Philadelphia, he returned to Washington on June 5 to find the Senate still debating the Payne Bill. On July 31, the House met to consider the conference report on the bill. Ashbrook once again voted to recommit the bill and against the acceptance of the bill, but it passed the House. He quipped in his diary, "The Payne bill will bring pain to those who voted for it and to the people. It means the next Congress will be Democratic."

Although the House would have a few more roll calls before adjournment, Ashbrook decided to start for home on August 2. At the Union Depot, five Representatives, including Ashbrook, were prevented from leaving Washington by House Sergeant-at-Arms until the Senate voted on the tariff bill. Compelled to remain in the Capitol, Ashbrook was present in the House when the Urgent Deficiency Appropriation Bill (H.R. 11570) was reached on the House calendar. He had earlier opposed this bill and continued to oppose it now. The provisions of this bill calling for $6,000.00 for cars for both the Vice-President and the Speaker of the House, an extra month's pay for House and Senate employees, and $25,000.00 for miscellaneous

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30 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 666-668.
32 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 672.
33 Coshocton Age, August 4, 1909, p. 1.
34 Congressional Record, 61st Cong., 1st Sess., 1909, XLIV, Part 5, 4583.
items were unnecessary and wasteful expenses in his opinion. He favored Champ Clark's amendment to remove these expenses and voted against accepting the conference report on the bill.

With the passage of the concurrent resolution on the Payne Bill by both the Senate and the House on August 5, Ashbrook started for home late the same day. On August 10, the Coshocton Daily Times interviewed him on the issues of the 60th Congress. When asked about the new Payne Bill, he predicted that the new tariff bill would bring little relief and if prices advanced, the prevalent dissatisfaction with trust-protected goods would continue to grow until some real tariff reform was accomplished. The failure of the Payne Bill to revise duties downward Ashbrook attributed to President Taft. Although sincere in his desire for reform, the President had allowed the "Aldrichized" Senate to determine the final form of the bill. Ashbrook believed that if a satisfactory tariff had been passed, "... the Democratic party would then have been put out of commission for the next fifteen years." However, the Republicans had not heeded the warnings of Senators Dolliver, Clapp, Cummins, and Bristow and would have to suffer the consequences. In explaining his own position on the question of a protective tariff, Ashbrook stated,

35Coshocton Daily Times, August 10, 1909, p. 4.
38Ibid.
I am not a free trader and there are not a half-dozen men in Congress who would vote for free trade. A tariff for revenue, so-called, comes nearer my notion. The protective policy is fundamentally wrong but we have lived so long under it that it would be unwise to do anything that would seriously disturb the growth, progress and prosperity of our country. Permit me to remark, however, that the trusts are absolutely an outgrowth of protection. A capitalist is pretty sure to protect himself. But there is a need now and likely always will be to protect American labor. I am in favor of enough protection on each and every article manufactured in this country to enable us to pay American wages except where production is slight and the use general. The weak not the strong need protection.39

When asked about the corporation tax, he believed that Senator Aldrich had wooed President Taft into using it as a replacement for the income tax passed by the House. He had supported Senate Joint Resolution 40 which provided for a constitutional amendment allowing an income tax and believed the corporation tax was a sorry substitute for an income tax. He elaborated,

The income tax, to my mind, is one of the best means ever proposed to raise revenues. The burdens of taxation fall too heavily on those who can least afford to pay. The income tax would apply only to those abundantly able to relieve the less fortunate. Just why a few citizens who organize and incorporate under the laws of their state to do business are any more subject to a special tax than the same citizen would be doing business as a private co-partnership, I am not able to say. I do say, however, that a man having an income of $5,000 or more per annum is better able to pay the expenses of our federal government than the shopman who gets $1.50 to $2.00 per day, with which to pay rent, feed, and clothe his little family. The rich will certainly continue to ride in their chaises, etc., under the Payne schedule of revenue.40

When asked in this August 10, 1909 interview about the increased salary and traveling expenses given the President and the

39Ibid.

40Ibid., p. 4.
automobile allowances made for the Speaker of the House and Vice-President during the recently concluded session of Congress, Ashbrook replied that the allowances constituted "wanton waste and reckless extravagance of public moneys."41 Noting the apparent recklessness of taxation generated by expenses such as these, he concluded that, "The burdens of taxation must be shifted to those who are best able to pay them, and the poor man enabled to buy food, clothes and material to build his little home at minimum prices."42

His position on certain issues in the concluding session of the 60th Congress and the opening session of the 61st Congress illustrated his acute concern for the wants of the voters in Ohio's 17th District. His opposition to salary increases and automobile allowances for high government officials stemmed from a concern that the public's money was being wasted. His opposition to the Payne Bill resulted from his desire to satisfy the farmers, laborers, and manufacturers of the 17th District. To him, the tariff was a "local problem" calling for independent judgment on each duty schedule created. The farmer's need for protection, especially where raw wool was concerned, could not be overlooked to satisfy labor's needs. To satisfy laborers, the Johnstown Democrat believed in enough protection to insure them an "American wage." The manufacturer, or

41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
capitalist, needed little protection, in Ashbrook's mind, since this man could take care of himself. Therefore Ashbrook favored a tariff that would collect valuable revenues, protect the farmer, insure the laborer a just wage, and prevent the trusts from compiling millions under the guise of a high protective tariff.

The support of an income tax by Ashbrook also resulted from his desire to further the interests of all his constituents. His concern for careful federal spending, moreover, would appear several times during his Congressional career. Being a man who watched his own finances with great diligence, he approached the spending of the public's money with a similar attitude.
CHAPTER V

THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 61ST CONGRESS

AND THE ELECTION OF 1910

Ashbrook's desire to see a general pension law passed for old soldiers, Congressional approval of his increased public building appropriation bill for Wooster, Ohio, his role in the demise of Speaker Joe Cannon's power, and his victory at the polls were the main events of his Congressional career in 1910. Despite his success in acquiring special pensions for old soldiers, Ashbrook believed Congress should create a different pension system. In a March 24, 1910 speech, he said, "I believe the special bills are unjust and unfair, yet I have tried to get just as many such bills passed as I could since I have been a Member of Congress, and I propose to continue to do so until some legislation is passed to wipe out this method."\(^1\) Since only one in ten bills passed by the existing method and the pension committees were overloaded with work, the Johnstown Democrat claimed, "Congress should pass a law that will

\(^1\)Congressional Record, 61st Cong., 2nd Sess., 1910, XLV, Part 4, 3701.
give all honorably discharged soldiers who are helpless and dependent $1.00 per day." Furthermore, the cost of this law was not important. Did not Congress give cars to high government officials and appropriate large sums of money for battleships? Was not the President urging the passage of a ship subsidy bill that would "let a greedy ship trust filch the Treasury"? If the Federal Government could afford these costs, Ashbrook demanded an answer to the simple question, "What about the old soldiers?" He continued his argument by noting that proposals such as the Sherwood Dollar-a-Day Bill, sponsored by Congressman Isaac Sherwood of Toledo, had been introduced to provide for a general pension law but had never been reported out by the Invalid Pension Committee. Ashbrook concluded his speech by promising to join the ranks of whatever party group showing the most desire to pass a general pension law.

Ashbrook's desire to see a general pension law approved by Congress was not fulfilled in 1910. He had better success with his bill (H.R. 1441) to increase the public building appropriation for Wooster, Ohio. With an election year at hand, Ashbrook met with the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds in December, 1909, and

\[2\text{Ibid.}\]
\[3\text{Ibid.}\]
\[4\text{Ibid.}\]
\[5\text{Ibid., p. 3702.}\]
again in April, 1910 to secure the appropriation increase.6 His efforts in this instance were rewarded. On June 30, he telegraphed the Newark Advocate that the appropriation increase had been approved by Congress.7

Although Ashbrook considered the approval of any public building appropriation in an election year important, his personal role in the events of March, 1910 which produced a curtailment of House Speaker Joe Cannon's power gave him much more satisfaction. On March 17, Representative George W. Norris, a Republican from Nebraska, introduced House Resolution 502. This resolution made the Committee on Rules elective and deprived the Speaker of membership on this powerful committee.8 Ashbrook, long resentful of Cannon's autocratic reign, found himself confronted with a chance to help reduce the Speaker's power. When a motion to recess until the next day was made, he voted "NAY."9 The "NAYS" prevailed and the House remained in session. Late in the evening of March 17, a motion to adjourn and a second motion to recess until the next morning were voted on by the Members. William A. Ashbrook opposed both motions.10

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6 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 681, 693.
7 Newark Weekly Advocate, June 30, 1910, p. 4.
8 Congressional Record, 61st Cong., 2nd Sess., 1910, XLV, Part 3, 3292.
9 Ibid., p. 3308.
10 Ibid., pp. 3323-3324.
At 12:30 A.M., Friday, March 18, a third motion to recess brought another roll call and Congressman Ashbrook once more voted "NAY."

Exhausted by fourteen consecutive hours in his seat, the Johnstown Democrat left the House and went to his hotel. At 3:00 A.M. a House Sergeant-at-Arms rapped on his door and Ashbrook returned to the House. Except for a brief bite of breakfast, Ashbrook remained in his seat until 2:00 P.M., when a motion to recess until 4:00 P.M. passed despite his "NAY" vote. When the House convened again at the selected time, he continued to oppose any move to delay judgment on the resolution by voting against a motion to postpone the decision of the Chair until 12:00, Saturday, March 19. However, the motion carried.

The Representatives returned to their seats the next day, and Ashbrook jotted in his diary, "... over 350 members were in their seats, and the corridors were crowded to suffocation." Speaker Joe Cannon announced that Norris's resolution was out of order. The question as to whether or not this decision of the Chair was to stand as the judgment of the House caused a roll call of House Members. Ashbrook voted "NAY." The House Members

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11 Ibid., p. 3388.
15 *Congressional Record*, 61st Cong., 2nd Sess., 1910, XLV, Part 4, 3428.
overruled the Speaker. The House then proceeded to approve an amendment to the resolution and the amended resolution. Ashbrook voted in favor of both.\(^\text{16}\) When a resolution to elect a new Speaker brought about still another roll call, he voted "YEA" but the resolution lacked the necessary votes to pass.\(^\text{17}\) In his diary, Congressman Ashbrook stated, "... and so closed the most dramatic and sensational contest since the days of the Civil War. Uncle Joe Cannon is no longer on the Rules committee and will no longer name the committees. He is shorn of his power."\(^\text{18}\)

In 1909, despite his plurality of 1908, victory at the polls in 1910 did not appear easy to Ashbrook.\(^\text{19}\) Regardless of whom the Republicans nominated to oppose him, he first had to be nominated once more by his own party. No one had opposed his nomination in 1908 but in September, 1909 E. S. Wertz of Wayne County announced his candidacy.\(^\text{20}\) Congressman Ashbrook believed that his other opponent in 1906, J. E. Hurst of New Philadelphia, would also enter the race.\(^\text{21}\) Enhancing the possible opposition these two candidates would present at the Democratic Congressional Convention was the fact that no

\(^{16}\) Ibid., pp. 3435-3436.
\(^{17}\) Ibid., p. 3438.
\(^{18}\) Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 690.
\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 675.
\(^{20}\) Newark Weekly Advocate, September 9, 1909, p. 4.
\(^{21}\) Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 674.
Representative had ever been elected for more than two terms in Ohio's 17th District. 22

William A. Ashbrook's quest for an unprecedented third term and his daily functions in the nation's Capitol were interrupted by the death of his mother on February 13, 1910. 23 Deeply saddened, he collapsed shortly after the funeral. Many of his friends became concerned for his health but by March 1, he had recovered sufficiently to attend a political meeting in Coshocton, Ohio. He met several of his supporters at this meeting and helped organize a team for each county in the District to insure as much support as possible at the future District Convention. 24 However, the expected fight over the nomination did not take place. Late in March, 1910, Ashbrook learned that the Ohio Senate had passed the Hawkins Primary Law. 25 Congressional nominations in Ohio would now be determined by a primary election. On April 2, he arrived in Newark, Ohio to file the required nomination petitions and learned a few days later that both E. S. Wertz and J. E. Hurst had withdrawn, leaving him without an opponent for the May 17 primary election. 26

With his nomination assured, he temporarily detached himself

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23 *Ashbrook, Line a Day*, II, 685.


26 *Newark Weekly Advocate*, April 7, 1910, p. 4.
from any great concern over his reelection. Although he spent the
days between May 14 and May 30 in Licking County, the primary motive
for his presence in Ohio was his desire to escape the long debates
and slow pace of the daily proceedings in the House of Representa-
tives.27 His irritation with the slowness of this session of the
61st Congress did not diminish upon his return to Washington. On
June 4, he wrote in his diary, "After a month's debate the House
today passed the Sundry Civil Appropriation bill. Think of that, a
month's debate on one bill."28 On June 9, the House of Representa-
tives reached a vote on the Postal Savings Depositories Bill
(S. 5876). The Johnstown Democrat, one of a small number of Demo-
crats who believed the legislative act should be approved, voted
for the bill, left Washington a few days later and did not return
to the Capitol until the next session of Congress began.29

He did not begin his political campaign until late August.
The newspapers of the 17th District were almost as indifferent in
the attention they gave the coming Congressional election as was
Ashbrook. The Republican Party nominated A. B. Critchfield to
oppose him. Except to list him as the Republican candidate, the
Newark American Tribune, the Coshocton Age, and the Millersburg
Republican, all Republican newspapers, made no other mention of

27Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 693.
28Ibid., p. 696.
A. B. Critchfield. On the other hand, Democratic newspapers such as the Newark Weekly Advocate, the Holmes County Farmer, the New Philadelphia Ohio Democrat and Times, and the Coshocton Daily Times each printed a long editorial stressing Ashbrook's personal business career, his successful sponsoring of twenty special pension bills in the 60th Congress alone, his knowledge of all departments of the Federal Government, and his successful public building appropriation bills. If the newspapers of both political viewpoints presented any issue at all in the Congressional race, only the Payne Tariff Bill could qualify as one. The Republican newspapers supported the bill while the Democratic newspapers opposed it. None of the newspapers discussed either of the candidate's personal views on the Payne Tariff Bill. After campaigning throughout the 17th District for eight weeks, Ashbrook wrote in his diary, "The papers in the district have little to say about either Critchfield or myself. It is a queer campaign. I think, however, that I will profit by the indifference of the press and the people."33

30 Newark American Tribune, June 30, 1910, p. 4; Coshocton Age, July 14, 1910, p. 4; Millersburg Republican, August 18, 1910, p. 4.

31 Newark Weekly Advocate, October 19, 1910, p. 4; Holmes County Farmer, October 20, 1910, p. 7; New Philadelphia Ohio Democrat and Times, October 20, 1910, p. 6; Coshocton Daily Times, October 25, 1910, p. 2.

32 Millersburg Republican, March 10, 1910, p. 4; Coshocton Age, July 26, 1910, p. 6; Holmes County Farmer, September 15, 1910, p. 4; New Philadelphia Ohio Democrat and Times, October 20, 1910, p. 7.

33 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 704.
At the polls on November 8, 1910, in the 17th District, Ashbrook won an unprecedented third term with a plurality of 10,034 votes.\footnote{Newark Advocate, November 12, 1910, p. 4.} The voters also elected a Democratic Governor and State Assembly. In Licking County, only one Republican was elected to any political office.\footnote{Newark American Tribune, November 10, 1910, p. 1.} On the national scene, the Democrats had gained control of the House of Representatives in the next Congress. In his diary, William A. Ashbrook attributed the Democratic victories to "too much Teddy, Taft and tariff."\footnote{Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 708.}

The year 1910 had several high and low points for Ashbrook. Congress had not passed a general pension law but approved an increase in a public building appropriation for him, passed the Postal Savings Depositories Bill, and curtailed the power of the House Speaker. The death of his mother had been a severe blow to him. The passage of the Hawkins Primary Law had resulted in the end of the District Congressional Convention nominating system and removed all his opposition at the May primary election. The slow pace of the second session of the 61st Congress had irritated him and caused him to return home before Congress adjourned but the Democratic victory in November gave promise of greater activity in future Congressional sessions.
CHAPTER VI

THE THIRD SESSION OF THE 61ST CONGRESS

AND THE FIRST SESSION OF THE

62ND CONGRESS - 1911

The third session of the 61st Congress convened in December, 1910. Upon his arrival in Washington, Ashbrook noted in his diary, "The air is filled with politics. The Democrats will control the next House and the patronage, and every member is trying to further his own interests with preferential committee assignments."\(^1\) Vitally concerned about his own committee assignments in the 62nd Congress, the Johnstown Democrat became involved in a conflict among members of the Ohio delegation. The source of the friction Ashbrook attributed to the desires of Representative James M. Cox and Timothy Ansberry to become the state leaders of the Ohio delegation. Their ambitions provoked Ohio members with more seniority.\(^2\) On December 30, 1910, the Ohio delegation-elect met in caucus at the Great Southern Hotel in Columbus, Ohio. Representative Cox requested the

\(^1\) Ashbrook, *Line a Day*, II, 710.

delegation's endorsement of nominees for the House Ways and Means Committee. Twelve Ohio Representatives gave him their endorsement but Ashbrook, along with Representatives Isaac R. Sherwood, Matthew R. Denver, and Robert J. Bulkley refused. When an attempt was made to include an endorsement of a senatorial candidate, these four men refused to be bound by any caucus action. The Johnstown Democrat personally favored Atlee Pomerene over Timothy Ansberry for Ohio's next Senator. After returning to Washington on January 8, 1911, Ashbrook recorded in his diary the details of a call made on him by James M. Cox. The Johnstown Democrat again refused to endorse him for the House Ways and Means Committee. On January 11, Ashbrook stated in his diary the conflict had been settled since both Representatives Cox and Denver agreed to discontinue their battle for membership on the Ways and Means Committee. Although Cox was angered by this personal defeat, the Johnstown Democrat believed that no one-term Congressman should try to dominate his older colleagues. In contrast to Cox's now blighted desires, Ashbrook's committee prospects were bright. With three-term seniority,

3 *Newark American Tribune*, January 5, 1911, p. 1; *Newark Weekly Advocate*, January 5, 1911, p. 3.
he stood a good chance of finally becoming a member of the Public Buildings and Grounds Committee and ascending to the Chairmanship of the Militia Committee in the 62nd Congress.\(^9\)

During the final session of the 61st Congress, his concern for future committee assignments did not distract from the time he devoted to several proposed legislative bills. On January 10, the House of Representatives took into consideration the Sulloway General Pension Bill (H.R. 29346). Ashbrook, long an avowed supporter of a graduated general pension act, made a speech in support of it. In his speech, he claimed that the public favored the passage of a general pension bill, the Democratic platform in Ohio had endorsed liberal pensions, the bill would help defray some of its expense to the Federal Government by eliminating sixteen pension agencies and retiring three-fourths of the pension examiners then on the government payroll, and the Senate and the President would both approve this legislative act.\(^10\) Later events proved the final claim made in support of the bill by Congressman Ashbrook to be a poor prediction. The House passed the general pension act but the Senate did not.\(^11\)

The United States Senate also failed to pass three other legislative acts Ashbrook supported during this session of Congress.

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\(^9\) *Newark Weekly Advocate*, March 2, 1911, p. 3.


The first, a bill to create a tariff board (H.R. 32010), caused several roll calls in the House of Representatives on January 30, 1911. He voted in favor of an amendment to the bill providing for the election of two members of the tariff board and the appointment of three others by the President, and for one limiting the annual expenses of the tariff board to $50,000.00. Despite the defeat of both amendments, he voted "YEA" on the final passage of the bill. 

The bill passed the House but died in the Senate.

On February 9, 1911, the House of Representatives considered an apportionment bill (H.R. 30566). Ashbrook voted in favor of an amendment to allow state legislatures to redistrict the states and against a motion to recommit the bill to the appropriate committee and limit House membership to 391 instead of the proposed 431. Both the amendment and motion to recommit were defeated and the apportionment bill passed the House only to die in the Senate.

Ashbrook also supported a bill providing for reciprocity with Canada (H.R. 32216) which passed the House but did not pass the Senate. In a March 23 interview, he gave the following reasons for his vote: although farmers believed Canadian Reciprocity would effect their prices, prices were as high in Canada as in the United States; the trade agreement would strengthen relations between the

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14 Ibid., p. 2563.
United States and Canada; and Canadian Reciprocity would show the American farmer a high protective tariff was not beneficial to him. The failure of the tariff board bill and Canadian Reciprocity to pass in the Senate would cause President Taft to reconvene Congress in April, 1911, and give Ashbrook the opportunity to vote on these measures again.

While supporting the Sulloway General Pension Bill, the apportionment bill, the tariff board bill, and Canadian Reciprocity, Ashbrook opposed other legislative proposals including a bill to codify, revise, and amend laws relating to the courts of the United States (H.R. 23377) because the legislative proposal included raises in pay for Federal Judges. He also voted against a General Deficiency Bill (H.R. 32957). On other fiscal bills, such as the Naval Appropriations Bill (H.R. 32212), Sundry Civil Appropriation Bill (H.R. 32909), Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Appropriation Bill (H.R. 29360), and a bill providing pay for officers and enlisted men (H.R. 32212), he did not vote. He was on record in favor of a general pension law for old soldiers and a raise in pay for R.F.D. mail carriers; in opposition to increased salaries for

15Newark Weekly Advocate, March 23, 1911, p. 4.
17Congressional Record, 61st Cong., 3rd Sess., 1911, XLVI, Part 5, 4331.
18Ibid., Part 4, pp. 3125, 3482, 3592, 3801.
Federal Judges and a General Deficiency Appropriation Bill, and in a position of indecision on other financial proposals.¹⁹

On March 31, 1911 Ashbrook arrived in Washington for the opening day of the 62nd Congress and learned that the Ways and Means Committee had abolished six committees, including the Militia Committee. Scheduled to become chairman of this committee, Ashbrook contacted Representative Claude Kitchin of the Ways and Means Committee and expressed his anger over the loss. The next day, the Johnstown Democrat was elected secretary of the Democratic caucus for the 62nd Congress, appointed chairman of the Committee on Post Office Expenditures, placed on the Public Buildings and Grounds Committee, and continued on the Coinage, Weights, and Measures Committee.²⁰ In his diary, William A. Ashbrook concluded, "My kick yesterday bore fruit."²¹

Long displeased with the inactivity of the Militia and the Coinage, Weights, and Measures Committees, he earnestly desired to make the Committee on Post Office Expenditures an active body.²² To insure activity by this committee, he submitted for House consideration the Saunders Resolution (H.Res. 109) calling for an

¹⁹Ibid., Part 2, p. 1367.
²⁰Newark Weekly Advocate, April 6, 1911, p. 4.
²¹Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 719.
²²Ibid., p. 720.
investigation of the Post Office Department. This resolution granted the right to investigate; convene at any time, any where; take testimony under oath; subpoena witnesses; and make any recommendations relating to reforms and procedure in the department under investigation justified by the evidence collected.\textsuperscript{23} The House accepted the resolution and the Committee on Post Office Expenditures, composed of Democrats Ashbrook, Joshua W. Alexander of Missouri, William C. Redfield of Missouri, and Walter I. McCoy of New Jersey, in addition to Republicans Richard W. Austin of Tennessee, Bascom C. Slemp of Virginia, and Horace M. Towne of Iowa, launched an inquiry into the affairs of the Post Office Department.\textsuperscript{24} The committee invited Louis D. Brandeis to head the investigation but the Boston lawyer declined on the grounds that, since the inquiry would not be made by a joint committee appointed by both Houses, endowed with the power to recommend changes in the laws and methods of the Postal Service, it would be of no avail.\textsuperscript{25}

Undaunted by Brandeis' refusal and view of the situation, Ashbrook and his committee began to call witnesses and probe various facets of the Post Office Department headed by Postmaster General Frank Hitchcock.\textsuperscript{26} As the committee's hearings proceeded, Ashbrook

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\textsuperscript{23}Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 1st Sess., 1911, XLVII, Part 2, 1164.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., Part 1, p. 162.


\textsuperscript{26}Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 723.
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became concerned about certain Post Office Department expenses that, in his opinion, constituted a waste of public money. In a long letter to the Newark Weekly Advocate, he deemed extravagant such costs as the $25.00 waste paper basket, $265.00 wardrobe for coats, $195.00 bookcase, and $298.00 desk installed in Hitchcock's office. These expenses reaffirmed Congressman Ashbrook's personal conviction that public officials had little regard for the public treasury.27

Ashbrook devoted many mornings to the investigation of Post Office officials and affairs conducted by the Expenditures Committee. On days when the committee did not meet, he accompanied the fire inspection subcommittee of the Public Building and Grounds Committee on tours of government buildings in Washington.28 When the House met in the afternoon to debate and vote on legislative proposals, Congressman Ashbrook was in his seat. Happy with more activity, he concluded in his diary, "... my work has more than doubled."29

During the daily proceedings of the House, Ashbrook was vitally concerned about the trade and tariff proposals confronting him. Prior to his return to Washington, he had expressed his belief that Canadian Reciprocity would be enacted. At the same time, he

27 Newark Weekly Advocate, June 29, 1911, p. 4.
28 Newark Weekly Advocate, April 20, 1911, p. 7.
had pleaded for caution by Democrats on other proposals relating to
tariff duties and declared his personal choice of a gradual rather
than sharp reduction of tariff duties. On April 5, he noted in
his diary, "I fear the wool schedule will make trouble for the Ohio
Democrats. We have the responsibility of the House now and cannot
shift it to the Republicans." Letters from Ohio farmers were
pouring into his office opposing Canadian Reciprocity and any low-
ering of the wool schedule. When the Democratic caucus decided to
stand by Canadian Reciprocity and vote for the Farmer's Free List
Bill, he refused to agree to be bound by the action of the caucus.
However, when the House voted on the Canadian Reciprocity Bill
(H.R. 4412) and the Farmer's Free List Bill (H.R. 4413), the Johns-
town Democrat voted "YEA" on both proposals.

On June 1, the Democrats met in caucus on the bill to reduce
duties on wool (H.R. 11019). The day before the caucus, William A.
Ashbrook had written in his diary, "The proposed bill is 20% ad
valorem on raw wool which is only 3½c per lb., and the rate now is
1½c. I don't like to bolt the caucus and yet I cannot vote for such
a great reduction. Some of my friends tell me I am too much of a

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30 Newark Weekly Advocate, March 23, 1911, p. 4.
31 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 719.
32 Ibid., p. 720.
33 Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 1st Sess., 1911, XLVII,
Part 1, 559; Part 2, 1121.
protectionist to be a good Democrat."³⁴ In hopes of curtailing any great decrease in raw wool duties, the Johnstown Democrat offered an amendment to make the duty on raw wool 30% ad valorem but his amendment was rejected and the caucus agreed to a 20% duty.³⁵ Ashbrook abided by the action of the caucus. On June 20, he voted against recommitting the bill to the Ways and Means Committee and then voted to pass the bill.³⁶ For the duration of this session of Congress, he continued to vote in favor of tariff legislation. On August 3, he voted for a bill to reduce the duties on manufactures of cotton.³⁷ When the report on the wool bill, placing a duty of 29% ad valorem on raw wool, was reported to the House, he voted to accept the conference report. After President Taft vetoed both the Farmer's Free List Bill and the Wool Bill, Ashbrook voted on August 18 to pass them over his vetoes. However, both attempts to override President Taft's decisions failed.³⁸

Ashbrook also supported the following legislative proposals not related to trade or tariff duties: a bill providing for publicity of contributions to political campaigns (H.R. 2958); a bill providing for the apportionment of representatives (H.R. 2893); a House

³⁴Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 724.
³⁵Newark Weekly Advocate, June 8, 1911, p. 4.
³⁶Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 1st Sess., 1911, XLVII, Part 3, 2355-2356.
³⁷Ibid., Part 1, pp. 3584-3585.
³⁸Ibid., pp. 4170, 4174.
resolution to appoint a committee to investigate the American Sugar Refining Company (H.Res. 172); a joint resolution providing statehood for Arizona and New Mexico (H.J.Res. 14); and a House resolution to investigate the management of the Government Hospital for the Insane (H.Res. 105). On the joint resolution to amend the Constitution to provide for the direct election of U.S. Senators (H.J.Res. 39), William A. Ashbrook also voted "YEA." The only proposal Congressman Ashbrook flatly opposed was a Senate amendment to a House Resolution granting an extra month's pay to the employees of the House and Senate.

Although Congress adjourned in late August, Ashbrook still had work to do. He remained in Washington for a few days after adjournment to confer with the Supervising Architect relative to the plans for the Newark, Ohio post office. In November, the Committee on Post Office Expenditures met in St. Louis, Missouri. The committee's mission was to complete the investigation of a case started in July, 1911. After nine days of ten to twelve hour meetings, the committee terminated its inquiry. When writing of his many activities and duties, Ashbrook maintained that, "This session of Congress

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40Ibid., Part 1, p. 242.
41Ibid., Part 4, p. 3403.
has been interesting to me. I like the life and am more anxious than ever to hold a seat in Congress."\(^{44}\)

The first year of his third term in office turned out to be a satisfying twelve months for Ashbrook. Frustrated by the inactivity of the House of Representatives and his assigned committees in 1910, the assumption of majority control by the Democrats in 1911 resulted in greater House activity and more important committee memberships for the Johnstown Democrat. Frequent committee meetings and interesting debates on the House floor made the Johnstown Democrat a happy, satisfied man and increased his determination to maintain his seat in Congress.

The final duty placed on raw wool also satisfied him. As the representative of a wool growing district, he believed any great reduction of the duty on raw wool might terminate his political career. After voting according to the decisions of the Democratic caucus on tariff legislation and other proposals, the compromise wool bill gave him the chance to vote for a duty on raw wool close to his personal choice of a 30% ad valorem rate. Since many Ohio farmers had objected to Canadian Reciprocity in letters to him, and he had supported the trade agreement, the final wool schedule could hardly have displeased him.

In 1911, he exhibited an increasing concern for the manner in which the government spent the public's money. He believed the

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\(^{44}\) Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 732.
old soldiers and R.F.D. carriers deserved more money, but increased salaries for Federal Judges and an extra month's pay for government employees did not receive his support. When large appropriation measures were voted on by the House, he did not commit himself. The investigation of the Post Office Department conducted by his committee lent support to his convictions that too little concern was shown by public officials when they spent public funds.
CHAPTER VII

THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 62ND CONGRESS

AND THE ELECTION OF 1912

In December, 1911, the House took into consideration the Sherwood General Pension Bill (H.R. 1). In the previous session of Congress, Ashbrook had secured permission to place the first bill on the roll of the House but had relinquished the privilege in favor of Representative Isaac R. Sherwood's General Pension Bill. ¹ Both the Johnstown Democrat and his close personal friend, Representative Sherwood, had been disappointed when the bill was not reported back to the House for a vote. However, on December 12, 1911 the House voted on the bill and the two pension advocates were not disappointed a second time. By a vote of 229-93, the Sherwood General Pension Bill, providing pensions ranging from $15.00 per month to $30.00 per month for veterans of the Civil and Mexican Wars according to their length of service, passed the House. ² From the House, the pension bill moved to the Senate.

¹Newark Weekly Advocate, April 13, 1911, p. 3.

²Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1912, XLVIII, Part 1, 284.
After several conferences, a compromise bill passed both Houses of Congress, and President Taft signed it on May 13, 1912.3

Anticipating the passage of the compromise bill, Ashbrook had his staff prepare application blanks for the old soldiers in his district qualifying for the new pensions. Determined to see that the old soldiers of his district would get their application blanks first, he had a printing company compose three thousand for him as soon as his staff had used up all of the available application blanks.4 Within seven days after President Taft signed the pension bill, Ashbrook had 750 applications from veterans in the 17th District on file in the Pension Office. In his diary, he wrote, "Bryan [William Jennings] could not beat me now. The Ohio members know I put one over on them."5

Ashbrook's estimate as to how much his quick action after the signing of the pension bill would benefit him at the polls was not the only time the Johnstown Democrat evaluated the political impact of his decisions on the 17th District in 1912. His concern for the reaction of his constituents also permeated his approach to, and final decision on, many of the legislative proposals confronting him during this session of Congress. In early March, the Democratic caucus agreed to put sugar on the free list and to a tax of one per


5Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 753.
cent on incomes over $5,000.00. Ashbrook, who believed the repeal of the duties on sugar would benefit the poor of the country and that the income tax would derive a large revenue from the class of people who then largely escaped taxation and could afford to contribute more to the national resources, supported these two proposals. He voted favorably on each proposal in the House.

While supporting these two legislative proposals, Ashbrook wrote in his diary prior to voting in favor of them, "I will soon have to vote on some bills, which will make inroads on my big majority in the district. There are breakers ahead and there is no escape." Another of his "breakers" confronted him. On April 1, the House voted on a bill placing a duty of 20% ad valorem on raw wool (H.R. 22195), and the Johnstown Democrat noted in his diary, "I disliked to vote against it and could not vote for it, so I voted present."

By April 22, 1912, he had learned that no Republican or Democrat would oppose him at the polls in 1912. Despite the absence of any opposition in the coming election, Ashbrook's concern

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6 *Holmes County Farmer*, March 14, 1912, p. 4.
7 *Congressional Record*, 62nd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1912, XLVIII, Part 4, 3457, 3637.
for his political fortunes persisted. When the House passed the Henry Resolution (H.Res. 504) which called for an investigation of the money trust, he wrote,

I didn't like to vote for it, but like every other member I believe that self-preservation is the first law of nature and it is wise to save my own scalp. It seems odd to have no opposition, but I will have to work hard to hold up my big vote of two years ago as my Republican friends are likely to feel it is not worth while to bother about voting for me.\textsuperscript{11}

In late May and early June, he spent a few weeks resting in Johnstown, Ohio. On May 25, he did not attend the Licking County Democratic Convention so as to avoid becoming involved in any local political friction. After being appointed a delegate to the Democratic State Convention, he decided again not to attend. In his diary, he noted, "I could not vote for Jim Cox for Governor and I do not wish to get mixed up in district patronage."\textsuperscript{12}

Able to avoid becoming involved in any local or state political problems by absenting himself, he returned to Washington and found himself confronted with issues that required both involvement and decision. On July 30, the House voted on the Senate Amendment to the wool bill (H.R. 22195), proposing a 35% ad valorem duty on Class I raw wool and a 10% ad valorem duty on Class II raw wool. He voted in favor of the Senate Amendment but the measure was defeated.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., pp. 754-755.

\textsuperscript{13}Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1912, XLVIII, Part 10, 9914-9915.
The House next took into consideration two Senate amendments to the excise tax bill (H.R. 21214). Ashbrook voted for the Senate Amendment repealing Canadian Reciprocity and against the Senate Amendment sanctioning the creation of a tariff board.\(^{14}\) The reason for his positive and negative votes on this day appeared later in his diary. On August 3, after voting against a compromise wool bill making the duty on raw wool 29\% ad valorem, he wrote,

> I distinguished myself today by being the only Democrat who voted against the wool bill. I ought to be able now to look a sheep and flock master in the face. My vote on Canadian Reciprocity will be approved by my farmer friends. I feel it is my duty to vote in the best interest of those who sent me here.\(^{15}\)

In the closing days of the 1912 Congressional session, the wool bill once more came to a vote in the House. The measure was passed over President Taft's veto on August 13. In his diary, Congressman Ashbrook wrote, "I voted present. I voted against the bill and could not vote to pass it over the President's veto."\(^{16}\)

In contrast to his persistent opposition to any reduction of the duty on raw wool, he approved other measures proposing tariff duty reductions, such as the Cotton Bill (H.R. 25034) and the Iron and Steel Bill (H.R. 18642).\(^{17}\) He also voted to put sugar on the free

\(^{14}\)Ibid., pp. 9916, 9918.

\(^{15}\)Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 759.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., p. 760.

\(^{17}\)Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1912, XLVIII, Part 10, 10,117; Part 11, 10,942.
list (H.R. 21213). When the Senate offered an amendment simply to reduce the duties on sugar, Congressman Ashbrook opposed it.\textsuperscript{18}

In addition to his persistent opposition to any reduction of the duty on raw wool, Ashbrook opposed the Naval Appropriations Bill (H.R. 24565) and certain economic proposals in 1912. The battleship provisions of the Naval Appropriations Bill led to his personal disapproval of the whole bill. He did not vote on a motion to recommit the bill and provide for the building of one first-class $6,000,000.00 battleship per year.\textsuperscript{19} However, during the four Democratic caucuses held on battleships, he voted not to build any battleships,\textsuperscript{20} and on August 17, he refused to accept the conference report on the bill as amended by the Senate. Three days later, although the conference report passed the House, he still refused to vote in favor of it.\textsuperscript{21}

Three other of his votes were also determined by his conception of how the public's money should be spent. On August 1, he voted against a Senate Amendment to the Sundry Civil Appropriation Bill (H.R. 25069). This amendment gave the President and customs officers an additional $225,000.00 to aid them in discharging their duties. On the same day, he opposed Senate Amendment 183 to the

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., Part 10, p. 9921.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., Part 7, p. 7355.

\textsuperscript{20}Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 758.

\textsuperscript{21}Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1912, XLVIII, Part 11, ll,189, ll,390.
Civil Appropriation Bill to increase from $200,000.00 to $300,000.00 the appropriation for the enforcement of antitrust laws. While opposing these amendments, Ashbrook voted in favor of Senate Amendment 116 to the bill, which allowed the Pension Bureau $300,000.00 to hire extra clerks from outside civil service ranks to handle claims coming in as a result of the general pension bill signed by Taft in May, 1912.

When Congress adjourned in late August, Ashbrook journeyed to Rochester, New York for the annual meeting of the American Numismatic Association. An avid coin collector, he had secured a federal charter for this association (H.R. 12623) in the previous session of Congress. As a member of the Association's Board of Governors, he found the meetings and activities of the Association a valuable source of interesting companionship as well as of information on old coins. Following the completion of the Association meetings, he returned to Ohio for the coming campaign.

Ashbrook honestly believed that "satan would win on the Democratic ticket" after Theodore Roosevelt established his third party and did not campaign as extensively as in the past.

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22 Ibid., pp. 10,032, 10,039.
23 Ibid., p. 10,036.
24 Ibid., Part 2, p. 1544; Part 7, p. 6565.
26 Ibid.
Opposition appeared when the Bull Moose Party nominated A. R. Milner of Canal Dover, Ohio, but Ashbrook considered him a weak opponent. The newspapers of the district, confronted with a Democratic candidate running without serious opposition, said little about the Congressional race in the 17th District. The Holmes County Farmer, Newark Weekly Advocate, New Philadelphia Ohio Democrat and Times, and Coshocton Daily Times endorsed Ashbrook. No district newspaper endorsed or promoted A. R. Milner. All considered Ashbrook's reelection to a fourth term in office a certainty.

On November 5, the voters went to the polls and the Democrats carried the 17th District by a plurality of 19,452. The Newark Weekly Advocate claimed his plurality was the largest ever given a Democratic candidate in Ohio History. Other Democratic candidates also won comfortably in the 17th District and the State of Ohio. In Licking County, the voters elected the entire Democratic county ticket. In Tuscarawas County, all but one county office went to the Democrats. In the State of Ohio, the Democrats

27 Holmes County Farmer, November 14, 1912, p. 1.

28 Holmes County Farmer, March 14, 1912, p. 4; Newark Weekly Advocate, April 4, 1912, p. 4; Coshocton Daily Times, October 3, 1912, p. 1; New Philadelphia Ohio Democrat and Times, October 31, 1912, p. 4.

29 Newark Weekly Advocate, December 5, 1912, p. 3.

30 Newark Weekly Advocate, November 7, 1912, p. 5.

won nineteen of Ohio's seats in the National House of Representatives.\textsuperscript{32} This total contrasted sharply with the five seats carried by the Democratic Party in 1906.\textsuperscript{33}

In the second session of the 62nd Congress, Ashbrook continued to support all pension increases for old soldiers and oppose any reduction of the import duties on raw wool. Having gone on record in the past in favor of a 30\% ad valorem duty on raw wool, he refused to support any bill establishing a duty lower than this figure. The opposition of farmers in the 17th District to any reduction, his concern for their reaction to any reduction in an election year, and his personal belief in no further reduction, provided the impetus for his strong personal opposition. His votes in favor of repealing Canadian Reciprocity and his vote against the establishment of a Tariff Board also resulted from the opposition to them in his district. On other tariff reduction proposals the Johnstown Democrat consistently voted "YEA."

The concern of Ashbrook over the spending of the public's money also persisted in this session of Congress. While supporting any appropriation favoring old soldiers, he opposed appropriations for battleships, certain government officials, and enforcement of antitrust laws. As in the past, he simply could not take the possible waste of money lightly.

\textsuperscript{32}Newark Weekly Advocate, December 5, 1912, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{33}Congressional Directory, 60th Cong., 1st Sess., 1908, p. 160.
The election of 1912 offered Ashbrook no challenge of any consequence, and his reelection was never in doubt. From a small plurality in 1906, the margins in his favor had increased each election year and culminated in the huge total of 1912 so that his popularity in the district appeared to be strong enough to keep him in office indefinitely.
CHAPTER VIII

THE THIRD SESSION OF THE 62ND CONGRESS

AND THE FIRST SESSION OF THE

63RD CONGRESS - 1913

The final session of the 62nd Congress began in December, 1912 and ended in March, 1913. The Omnibus Public Buildings Bill (H.R. 27148) consumed a great deal of Ashbrook's time during this Congressional session. As he served on a Public Buildings and Grounds subcommittee handling appropriations for eight states, he wrote in his diary, "I am pulled gee and haw every day by the Members who want one or more items in the Public Buildings bill. It is well called the Pork bill, as it is necessary to care for each member to make the passage of the bill sure."\(^1\) When the Public Buildings and Grounds Committee finished composing the Public Buildings Bill, he was happy that it included the following three provisions: $115,000.00 for a site and building at Coshocton, Ohio; $12,500.00 for a site at New Philadelphia, Ohio; and $10,000.00 for

\(^1\)Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 769.
a site at Millersburg, Ohio. However, other appropriations did not please him and he made up his mind to oppose those items in the bill that no one defended. He wrote in his diary, "It is really shameful the way the people's money is wasted." Although many voters in the district approved of his actions, he could not prevent the passage of the bill with the inclusion of the less desirable items and on February 27, the House concurred in the Senate amendments to the bill.

Other legislative proposals included one to regulate immigration into the United States (S. 3175). Ashbrook believed immigration laws were too lax and supported the bill. When President Taft vetoed the bill, Ashbrook voted to pass the bill over his veto. He also voted in favor of passing two other bills over the President's veto: the Employers Liability and Workmen's Compensation Bill (S. 5382), which provided relief for the injured employees of common carriers; and the Alcoholic Liquor Traffic Bill (S. 4043), which divested intoxicating liquors of their interstate-commerce character in certain cases. Ashbrook considered the Alcoholic

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2 *Newark Weekly Advocate*, February 20, 1913, p. 3.


4 *Newark Weekly Advocate*, February 27, 1913, p. 1.


6 *Congressional Record*, 62nd Cong., 3rd Sess., 1913, XLIX, Part 5, 4447, 4547.
Liquor Traffic Bill a vital question since his vote of approval would probably cause the "wets" to oppose him in the future.7

While favoring these three bills, Ashbrook opposed the Naval Appropriations Bill on which the House voted, February 26, 1913. He approved an amendment changing the number of battleships per year from two to one.8 When the Senate Amendment came to a vote a second time in the House, he again voted for one battleship, but the motion to recede from objection to the amendment was defeated by the House.9 With no opportunity to vote against battleships available, he supported the proposals for the building of only one per year to prevent the passage of the bill.

The first session of the 63rd Congress began on April 7, 1913. On this day, he wrote in his diary,

The chairmanship of the committee on Expenditures in the Post Office Department would mean nothing under a Democratic administration, and I have decided to ask for the appointment of chairman of the committee on Enrolled Bills, which has considerable patronage.10

The Ways and Means Committee met on April 9, made the appointment and the Democratic caucus, in addition to reelecting Ashbrook caucus

7Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 773.
8Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 3rd Sess., 1913, XLIX, Part 4, 4107.
9Ibid., Part 5, p. 4.
secretary, confirmed the appointment the same day. This gave him a $2,000.00 clerk, a messenger, a session clerk, and extra clerks when needed besides his regular secretary.\textsuperscript{11}

On April 9, his thoughts turned from committee appointments to the proposed tariff bill which put wool on the free list. He asserted in his diary, "I will never vote for it and fear such a bill will defeat the Democratic party."\textsuperscript{12} The next day, he met in Representative Isaac R. Sherwood's office to discuss free wool. There he found that some Ohio Democrats favored free wool, and the group failed to reach an agreement.\textsuperscript{13} Not discouraged, seven Ohio Democrats, led by Ashbrook, on Friday, April 11 issued a call for a meeting the following morning of all Democratic Members who favored the original Ways and Means Committee judgment of a 15% duty on raw wool and opposed putting sugar on the free list.\textsuperscript{14} The New York Times stated that these seven Representatives, who were initiating the first real break of any consequence in the Democratic ranks over the Underwood Bill, were aware their action might hurt them when standing committees for this session were made up and might cost them all patronage.\textsuperscript{15} In opposing free wool and the

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Newark Weekly Advocate}, April 10, 1913, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{12}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 778.

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{New York Times}, April 12, 1913, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}
removal of duties on sugar, the Ohio Democrats were defying President Wilson's endorsement of free wool and free sugar.

On Saturday, April 12, thirty-six Democrats from Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia, Michigan, Missouri, California, Arizona, and New Mexico met in the chambers of the House and endorsed the original Ways and Means Committee judgment of a 15% duty on raw wool. The following Monday the entire Ohio Democratic delegation and Senator Atlee Pomerene met with President Wilson. Ashbrook, who served as spokesman for the delegation, later wrote in his diary, "The President very graciously said he would carefully consider our objections, and that is all we got from Woodrow." Ashbrook, who contended that if raw wool was placed on the free list, woolen manufactures should be also, refused to accept defeat and issued a statement to the press Monday evening claiming seventy-five Democratic Members had assured him they would oppose free wool in the caucus.

The free wool issue came to a vote in the Democratic caucus on April 17. Representative Martin Dies of Texas proposed an amendment fixing the duty on raw wool at 15% ad valorem. The caucus rejected the amendment by a vote of 190 to 42. The opponents of

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18 *New York Times*, April 14, 1913, p. 15.

free wool had been routed but Ashbrook refused to accept the caucus decision and wrote in his diary, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. I will never vote for free wool." 20

His troubles quickly multiplied. On Friday, April 18, he received a telegram that the Ohio Legislature was about to pass a Gerrymander bill removing Holmes, Wayne, and Tuscarawas Counties from the 17th District and adding Knox, Delaware, Ashland, and Richland Counties. 21 After the Ohio House and Senate both passed the redistricting bill Ashbrook noted in his diary, "It makes me heartsick to give up my friends in the old counties and cast my lot with strangers." 22 Ashbrook immediately launched a political campaign by ordering all the newspapers in the new district and acquiring information about political leaders in his four new counties from their former Representative, William G. Sharp. 23

On Monday, April 21, he received another upsetting piece of news. His brother, Dr. Byron B. Ashbrook, had been killed in a train accident. 24 He spent the days from April 21 to May 2 at his home in Johnstown. Upon his return to Washington, he found the House working on the Underwood Tariff Bill daily from 11:00 A.M. to 11:00 P.M.

20 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 779.
21 Newark Weekly Advocate, April 24, 1913, p. 4.
23 Ibid.
24 Newark Weekly Advocate, April 24, 1913, p. 8.
The Underwood Tariff Bill (H.R. 3321) was passed by the House of Representatives on May 8, 1913. Ashbrook voted in favor of the bill.\textsuperscript{25} In a May 5 speech in the House, he stated his reasons for first opposing the bill and then his reasons for supporting it. His opposition to the bill, he claimed, had stemmed from his desire to see that all interests were treated fairly. The bill did not give equal consideration to the farmer since the farmer would take a serious economic blow from free wool while the manufacturer received only a light tap from the proposed reductions on wool products. He asserted that he favored tariff revision downward but only if it were done fairly by gradually reducing duties on raw products and manufactured articles a like per cent.\textsuperscript{26} Furthermore, gradual reduction of tariff duties would provide enough protection to enable, "the American laborer to live like an American, . . ." and collect the revenue needed to operate the Federal Government.\textsuperscript{27}

In explaining his decision to support the Underwood Tariff Bill, he first noted that the bill fulfilled a party pledge and was what the country demanded. Secondly, since the bill was an omnibus bill and would be voted on in its entirety, he announced,

\textsuperscript{25}Congressional Record, 63rd Cong., 1st Sess., 1913, L, Part 2, 1386.

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., Part 7, Appendix to Vol. L, pp. 156-157.

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., p. 157.
I am willing to surrender my convictions on all other items rather than vote against the income tax. I hope the day is not distant when all revenue will be raised by direct taxation. . . . The income tax, in my opinion, brings greater relief to the poor man than the lowering of the duties on a thousand items in this bill. 28

In addition to an income tax, he recommended an excise tax. Once both taxes were levied, Congressman Ashbrook believed, "... we will have two of the greatest and most meritorious revenue raisers that can be devised." 29 He gave a final reason for supporting the bill: "I am a Democrat and believe with all its faults the Underwood bill is better tariff legislation than the country has ever secured under Republican rule." 30

In the days following the vote on the tariff bill, Ashbrook and his staff mailed fifty thousand copies of his tariff speech to voters in his district. 31 The newspaper suggestion of possible losses of committee assignments by those opposing the tariff bill failed to materialize. In addition to his appointment as Chairman of the Committee on Enrolled Bills, Ashbrook was reappointed to the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds and the Committee on Coinage, Weights, and Measures. 32 Once all the copies of his tariff

28Ibid.
29Ibid.
30Ibid.
31Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 781.
speech had been mailed, William A. Ashbrook secured a leave of absence and returned to Johnstown to rest.

In August, 1913, the Democrats met in caucus on the Federal Reserve Bank Act (H.R. 7837), of which Ashbrook quickly became an avid supporter. Ashbrook wrote in his diary, "I am more interested in this bill than any other legislation since I came to Congress. . . . If this bill becomes a law, it will be the most beneficial legislation enacted in a half century." He believed this bill would establish dependable business conditions, help avoid any stringency of money, and reduce the chances of hard economic times in the future.

On September 18, the Federal Reserve Act came to a vote in the House and Ashbrook gave it his support. He remained in Washington to vote in favor of the final passage of the Underwood Tariff Bill on September 30. Once this bill had been passed and his Enrolled Bills Committee had completed its reading of the final draft of the bill, he went home to attend to district political matters and did not return to Washington until the second session of the 63rd Congress convened.

34Mt. Vernon Democratic Banner, January 9, 1914, p. 5.
35Congressional Record, 63rd Cong., 1st Sess., 1913, L, Part 5, 5129.
36Ibid., Part 6, p. 5274.
The battle by William A. Ashbrook against free wool in 1913 represented the strongest stand he had yet made in support of the farmer during his Congressional career. He had continually opposed any great reduction of raw wool duties and had supported a reduction of the duties on woolen manufacturers. His concern had been for the effect a revision of tariff duties would have on the farmer economically and the farmer's subsequent political reaction to them. His fight against free wool in 1913 had little chance to succeed from the beginning. The votes needed to pass the Ways and Means Committee's original choice of a 15% duty on raw wool in the Democratic caucus and reject President Wilson's endorsement of free wool did not exist among Democratic Members. After all possibilities of rejecting free wool had been exhausted, he had voted in favor of the Democratic Party's tariff bill.

As a representative of a wool growing district, he wanted equal consideration for the farmer as well as other groups. To him, gradual reduction would be the best method for all concerned, provide enough protection for American laborers and farmers, and raise the needed revenue for the Federal Government. Furthermore, gradual reduction of tariff duties would not endanger Democratic prospects in future elections.

The speech on the proposed tariff bill made by Ashbrook revealed that, in his opinion, the Underwood Tariff Bill did not have all the advantages of gradual reduction. However, sound reasons did exist for him to support the bill. It fulfilled a pledge
of the Democratic Party; it included the income tax which he had long believed would be to the decided advantage of the poor man and the Federal Government; and it was a needed piece of legislation.

In contrast to his approach to the Underwood Tariff Bill, Ashbrook had no qualms about either supporting or opposing other legislative acts in 1913. Of all the legislative bills considered in these two sessions of Congress, he considered the Federal Reserve Act the most important. A banker himself, he believed this bill would do more to help stabilize the economic conditions of the country than any legislative proposal enacted in half a century.
CHAPTER IX

THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 63RD CONGRESS

AND THE ELECTION OF 1914

The second session of the 63rd Congress began in December, 1913. Ashbrook wrote in his diary, "If we can pass a low tariff bill and a currency bill without a panic, the Democrats will have done more than ever before. I am of the opinion that the time is ripe for this legislation and there will be no serious business disturbance."

On December 22, the House agreed to a conference report on the Federal Reserve Act and both the tariff and currency bills had been passed by Congress. Congressman Ashbrook attributed most of the Democratic success to the leadership of President Wilson.

After the President read a message to Congress in January, 1914 urging trust legislation, Ashbrook noted in his diary, "I think the country will say 'Amen.' The trusts should be curbed. Wilson is a great man and the people are with him."

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1 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 797.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 800.
supported the request of the President by voting to pass the Clayton Anti-Trust Act (H.R. 15657), the Federal Trade Commission Act (H.R. 15613), and the Rayburn Securities Act (H.R. 16586) in the House.  

On other legislative proposals, such as the Panama Canal Tolls Bill (H.R. 14385), the House joint resolution justifying the employment of the Armed Forces of the United States in Mexico (H.J.Res. 251), and the War Tax Bill (H.R. 18891), he maintained his support of the President. Particularly pleased with the War Tax Bill, he stated in his diary,  

Wilson is the greatest, cleverest, most sincere and earnest man I ever knew. The war in Europe ought to work to the general prosperity of the U.S. and to the advantage of the Democratic party. There are no critics of the President now on his watchful waiting policy.  

However, on the Alaska Railway Act (S. 48), Wilson and Ashbrook possessed divergent opinions. In his diary, the latter wrote,  

"The President strongly favors the bill, but I will vote against it as I do not believe it will pay to build a railroad in Alaska and I would prefer to spend the money on highways in the U.S."  

Ashbrook's preference for spending federal money on internal transportation development had not developed in this session of Congress. In April, 1912, when the House of Representatives had  

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4*Congressional Record*, 63rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1914, LI, Part 10, 9911-9912.  


debated a bill introduced by Representative Dorsey Shackleford to provide federal aid for post roads, Ashbrook had written in his diary, "... I am proud to be called 'a dirt-roads statesman' as we fellows are by the city chaps who pulled strong for the bill. It is the entering wedge for federal aid for the public highways." The Shackleford Good Roads Bill (H.R. 11686) was scheduled to appear on the House floor again in 1914. Ashbrook made a speech in favor of the bill and voted for its passage. The bill passed in the House by a comfortable margin on February 10, 1914. The Alaska Railway Act was voted upon February 18. Ashbrook missed the vote on the bill, for he secured a leave of absence to attend a party for his father on his ninetieth birthday in Johnstown, Ohio.

Ashbrook's concerns for how the public's money should be spent were evident on other occasions in his diary and voting record in 1914. Shortly after the opening of Congress, he voted in favor of the Hensley Resolution (H.Res. 298) which called for a one year suspension of naval construction. In April, he voted to reduce the mileage allowed Representatives and to maintain the existing salaries of House and Senate clerks without increase. Explaining

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8 Ibid., p. 751.
9 Congressional Record, 63rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1914, LI, Part 4, 3177, 3291.
10 Ibid., p. 3468.
11 Ibid., Part 1, p. 480.
12 Ibid., Part 7, pp. 6843-6844.
these votes in his diary, he noted, "I know the temper of the people and will try to reflect their wishes in my votes here." In June, after blocking the approval of an appropriation at a meeting of the Public Buildings and Grounds Committee, he commented, "I presume I am too much of a Rube to serve on this committee and try to guard public funds as I would my own." Despite the note of personal futility in this statement, his opposition to certain expenditures persisted. In July, he refused to vote for an amendment to the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Appropriation Bill (H.R. 15279) providing automobiles for the Vice-President and Speaker of the House. The Senate amendment to the Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Bill (H.R. 13811) did not appeal to him either. Although the amendment reduced the appropriation $20,000,000.00, he voted against the amendment and proclaimed in his diary, "It is no time for pork when a war tax is necessary."

He, however, supported many legislative proposals in 1914, some of which involved increased expense to the Federal Government. Thus he voted favorably on the passing of the following proposals: an amendment to the Post Office Appropriation Bill (H.R. 11338) providing compensation for ailing or disabled employees; a bill to

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15 *Congressional Record*, 63rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1914, II, Part 12, 12,077.

regulate immigration into the United States (H.R. 6060); a bill limiting the effects of interstate commerce regulation on convict made goods (H.R. 1933); a $139,000.00 appropriation amendment for the Children's Bureau (H.R. 15279); a bill providing for publicity of contributions to, and expenditures of, political campaigns (H.R. 8428); a bill providing for the issuance of emergency currency (S. 6192); a bill to provide for the development of water power (H.R. 16673); and a bill establishing a Bureau of War Risk Insurance (S. 6357). After supporting these legislative proposals and others in the House, he concluded in his diary, "The Democrats have certainly made a fine record."18

The Congressional redistricting law had been under consideration in the Ohio Legislature for two years but the Johnstown Democrat had not believed the bill would be passed in 1913. With the passage of the bill in April, 1913, a new 17th District was created. Expecting opposition in the new district, Ashbrook began an active campaign for reelection in 1914, the same month the Ohio Legislature passed the bill. In both May and September, he toured the new district to meet newspapermen and influential politicians. 20

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17 Congressional Record, 63rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1914, II, Part 3, 2265, 2911; Part 5, 4302; Part 7, 6844; Part 12, 11,903; Part 14, 14,182, 14,449.


19 Ibid., p. 779.

20 Ibid., pp. 782, 790-791.
In September, 1913, he announced his candidacy almost a year before the primary and circulated nominating petitions in the district.\textsuperscript{21} His objective in announcing his candidacy at this point was "... to smoke out the opposition."\textsuperscript{22} His plan succeeded. In November, 1913, William Green of Coshocton, President Pro Tem of the Ohio Senate and author of the Ohio Workmen's Compensation Act; W. Duane Fulton of Newark, State Representative and author of the Ohio Congressional redistricting law creating the new 17th District; Curtis E. McBride of Mansfield, former State Representative; and Lewis Brucker of Mansfield, former Probate Judge of Richland County, announced they would oppose Congressman Ashbrook on the Democratic ticket in the 1914 primary election.\textsuperscript{23}

Although the \textit{Newark Weekly Advocate} claimed in November, 1913 that Ashbrook was not worried about winning in the next primary election, first, district patronage, then the possibility of a vote on a Prohibition Resolution in the House of Representatives did greatly worry him.\textsuperscript{24} With the election of Woodrow Wilson in 1912, the appointment of postmasters came within the power of the Democratic Party. In making postmaster appointments, Congressman Ashbrook personally decided, "... to stick close to my best

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21}\textit{Newark Weekly Advocate}, October 30, 1914, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{22}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 792.
\item \textsuperscript{23}\textit{Newark Weekly Advocate}, November 20, 1914, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{24}\textit{Tbid}.
\end{itemize}
friends and I think the people will commend me for not forgetting those who fought my political battles." However, two appointments made by Ashbrook provoked political discord in sections of the district. One was W. T. Alberson, former owner and editor of both the New Philadelphia Ohio Democrat and Times and the Coshocton Daily Times, as the new Postmaster for New Philadelphia, Ohio. The Republican Party charged that the appointment had been made solely in consideration of the political help W. T. Alberson would give Congressman Ashbrook in Ashland County in the next election, and the Coshocton Age predicted the appointment would cause his defeat.

The second appointment, that of Joe Newton, owner of the Newark Weekly Advocate as Postmaster of Newark, Ohio aroused further political controversy. Both the "drys" and the Licking County Democratic Executive Committee, who had endorsed another man, were extremely vocal in their protests. In his diary, Ashbrook wrote, "If I can survive all of my post office troubles I will be a redbird." In December, 1913, attempting to avoid creating further political turmoil, Ashbrook used the flip of a coin to decide who among three aspirants would become Postmaster of Utica, Ohio.

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26 Coshocton Age, July 23, 1913, p. 4; Newark Weekly Advocate, July 17, 1913, p. 4; Ashland Press, July 27, 1914, p. 3.
27 Newark Weekly Advocate, October 9, 1913, p. 4.
However, one completely satisfactory appointment did not end his troubles. Facing twenty-six more Post Office appointments, he proclaimed in March, 1914, "Patronage is a liability and not an asset."30

While deeply concerned over the effect of district patronage on his political future, the possibility of having to vote on the Hobson Resolution providing for a prohibition amendment to the Constitution (H.J.Res. 168) alarmed Ashbrook, who on April 15, 1914, noted in his diary,

It is reported today the Judiciary committee will report out the prohibition amendment. If they do and I had the money back that I have already spent in this campaign, I would keep it. A vote on this question means defeat, let it be wet or dry. Prohibition is coming but the time is not ripe. The rumor sends a chill up the spine of nearly every Member.31

The vote on prohibition did not materialize and the next month the withdrawal of Lewis Brucker of Mansfield, who Ashbrook had considered his strongest opponent, from the Congressional contest boosted his morale.32 The uplift provided by the withdrawal of Brucker was short in duration. On June 10, Ashbrook stated in his diary, "The Members are scared to death today because Representative Cantrill of Kentucky introduced a resolution to compel the Rules Committee to report out the prohibition resolution. It is a dangerous two-edged sword."33

In the hope of stalling a vote on prohibition, Ashbrook circulated

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30 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 804.
31 Ibid., p. 806.
33 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 811.
a petition asking the Rules Committee to hold up the Hobson Resolution. The prohibition resolution did not reach the House floor during this session of Congress but the Johnstown Democrat's work against it attracted the attention of two of his opponents, State Senator William Green of Coshocton and Curtis E. McBride of Mansfield. Besides claiming that four terms were enough for any candidate and charging that Ashbrook abused his franking privileges, the two Democrats accused him of being afraid to commit himself on prohibition. Contrasting with this accusation was a different sentiment among certain voters in Newark, Ohio, as Ashbrook learned that many "wets" opposed him because of his "YEA" vote on the Alcoholic Liquor Traffic Bill in 1913.

With his opponents basing their campaign primarily on the claim that he had served in the House long enough, Ashbrook campaigned on the opposite tack. He secured the personal support of William G. Sharp, former Ohio Representative, then Ambassador to France; General Isaac R. Sherwood, Ohio Representative and Chairman of the House Invalid Pension Committee; William C. Redfield, Secretary of Commerce; Champ Clark, Speaker of the House; and A. S. Burleson, Postmaster-General of the United States. In their letters of endorsement, all of these extolled the value of experience and

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34 Coshocton Tribune, June 25, 1914, p. 1; Mt. Vernon Democratic Banner, June 26, 1914, p. 2.

35 Coshocton Times-Age, July 14, 1914, p. 7.

36 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 814.
long service in Congress, the fine work of Ashbrook to date as the old 17th District's Representative, and the future value of Ashbrook's Congressional seniority to the new 17th District. In addition to promoting the value of his experience through these endorsements, Ashbrook based his campaign on two other strategies. First, he publicized his support of President Woodrow Wilson's legislative programs and invited the voters to inspect his record. Secondly, making use of his presence in Washington, he introduced a bill appropriating $100,000.00 for a site and public building at Mount Vernon, Ohio and secured an increased appropriation for the projected public building at Ashland, Ohio. Both actions received notable publicity in both the Republican and Democratic papers of Knox and Ashland Counties.

On August 11, 1914, the primary elections were held in the 17th District. Ashbrook won easily with 10,347 votes to William Green's 3,916 votes, Curtis E. McBride's 1,725 votes, and W. Duane Fulton's 1,031 votes. He carried every county of the district, winning 238 precincts to his opponents combined total of 28.

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38 *Mt. Vernon Democratic Banner*, April 14, 1914, p. 4; *Mansfield Shield*, July 11, 1914, p. 3; *Coshocton Times-Age*, August 5, 1914, p. 7.


40 *Newark Weekly Advocate*, August 20, 1914, p. 4.
With the primary contest won, Ashbrook opposed Republican Walter A. Irvine of Newark, Ohio and Progressive Dr. Louis A. Banks of Delaware, Ohio in the November general elections. He continued to publicize his committee powers in Washington and secured more endorsements by important government officials. President Wilson's endorsement asked for the reelection of Ashbrook since he stood for the cause of the people and supported "just, progressive legislation." Representative Oscar Underwood, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee; Atlee Pomerene, United States Senator from Ohio; and William Jennings Bryan, Secretary of State, also personally endorsed Ashbrook's candidacy.

Ashbrook won a fifth term in office in November with a total of 29,500 votes to Republican Walter A. Irvine's 21,394. He defeated his major opponent in every county of the district except Delaware County, where his opponent secured 163 more votes. Other Democratic Congressional candidates did not fare as well. The Republican Party gained ten seats in Ohio, making the Ohio Delegation nine Democrats and thirteen Republicans. The election of Frank B. Willis to succeed James M. Cox also returned the Republicans to power in the state capitol.

41 Newark Weekly Advocate, October 29, 1914, p. 2.
42 Mansfield Shield, October 30, 1914, p. 8; Delaware Semi-Weekly Journal Herald, October 30, 1914, p. 6.
43 Newark Weekly Advocate, November 12, 1914, p. 4.
44 Ibid.
In 1913 and 1914, Ashbrook had supported the tariff, trust and banking legislation of the Woodrow Wilson administration. His opinion in December, 1913 that the time was ripe for such legislation as the Underwood Tariff Bill and the Federal Reserve Act apparently persisted throughout the Congressional session of 1914. At the same time, his respect and admiration for the ability, leadership, and mental capabilities of President Wilson continued to grow. The pivotal point in Ashbrook's political philosophy had always primarily been to vote and carry on his duties in the best interests of the people who elected him, and Woodrow Wilson and his legislative programs seemed to visualize the embodiment of this principle.

Prior to the primary and general elections of 1914, Ashbrook had been greatly concerned about the influence his handling of district patronage and especially a possible vote on prohibition would have on the outcome of his first campaign in the new 17th District. This situation resulted from his awareness of the increasing prohibition sentiment in Ohio and the nation and the political damage, regardless of personal opinion, that might result from any outright vote on the issue. In 1914, the question of prohibition sentiment played a part in the controversy resulting from his selection of Joe Newton, as Postmaster of Newark, Ohio, and appeared in the political atmosphere of Newark, where the "wet element" still represented a 1913 vote by the Johnstown Democrat on a prohibition issue. The actions of William A. Ashbrook in attempting to handle the patronage and prohibition problems may have cost votes in 1914.
In the primary election of 1914, Congressman Ashbrook had used his support of Woodrow Wilson, the value of his experience in Washington, his membership on the Public Buildings and Grounds Committee, and his personal acquaintance with government officials to overcome his opponents' attacks on his four terms in office, the use of his political frank, and his petition designed to avoid a vote on prohibition. After his victory in the primary election, he obtained more endorsements. While other Democratic Congressional candidates did not fare well in a year when Ohio rejected Governor James M. Cox's bid for a second term, Ashbrook defeated his Republican and Progressive opponents in the general election by a plurality in excess of his margin of victory in the primary against his Democratic challengers. His margin of victory did not come close to that of 1912 but he had secured reelection in a Congressional District composed of four new counties that provided him with both Democratic and Republican opposition.
CHAPTER X

THE THIRD SESSION OF THE 63RD CONGRESS,
THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 64TH
CONGRESS, AND THE ELECTION
OF 1916

Ashbrook arrived in Washington in December, 1914 for the opening day of the final session of the 63rd Congress. With the election of Representative Thomas Hardwick to the United States Senate in the past election, Ashbrook became the Chairman of the Committee on Coinage, Weights, and Measures as well as the Committee on Enrolled Bills for this session of Congress.\(^1\) His delight over being chairman of two Congressional committees ebbed with the emergence of the prohibition issue once again. On December 10, 1914, he predicted in his diary, "It looks like we would have to vote on prohibition. I see my finish."\(^2\) Four days later, he wrote, "The Members are all shaking in their boots over the imminent vote on

\(^1\) Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 824.
\(^2\) Ibid.
prohibition, but I am sitting steady with my mind made up." He had decided in October, "Prohibition is not yet popular, but I expect to see the U.S. dry, and am convinced that it should be. Too many fine men pay the price and too many women bend their backs over the washtub as a result of strong drink." 

Despite his asserted readiness to face the prohibition issue, Ashbrook did not vote on the Hobson Resolution (H.J.Res. 168). On December 16, he noted in his diary, "Received a telegram this morning that Iva Neely was dead. Hated to leave on account of the prohibition vote, but Oscar Underwood said go, and I accepted his advice. I will likely be criticized, but felt it my duty to return home." The funeral of Neely, the father of one of his business partners, was held the next day but Ashbrook remained in Johnstown after the funeral. His presence in Ohio did not go unnoticed. The Cincinnati Enquirer on December 21 carried the headline, "All Eyes Are On Ashbrook." On the same day, Ashbrook recorded in his diary, "I hate to miss the vote but am paired and will not go back as the holiday recess will be taken on Wednesday."

The next day, the Hobson Resolution failed to pass the House

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3Ibid., p. 825.
4Ibid., p. 819.
5Ibid., p. 825.
of Representatives and the criticism Ashbrook expected soon appeared. Upon his return to Washington, the Johnstown Democrat found several letters in his accumulated mail condemning his failure to vote.\footnote{Ibid., p. 826.} In January, 1915, Tuscarawas County "dry workers" formulated resolutions of protest against his absence during Prohibition Day Ceremonies held in New Philadelphia, Ohio.\footnote{Wooster Daily Record, January 16, 1915, p. 1.} The criticism did not swell to the proportion which he expected but, having predicted in January that the United States would be "dry" within five years, he believed the issue would continue to create political problems for him.\footnote{Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 827.}

With the prohibition question out of the picture temporarily, he turned his attention to the Immigration Bill (H.R. 6060) and the Woman Suffrage Resolution (H.J.Res. 1). The United States Senate passed the Immigration Bill in early January, 1915. Ashbrook feared President Wilson would veto the bill and ruin himself by splitting the Democratic ranks.\footnote{Ibid.} Woodrow Wilson did veto the bill, and in February Ashbrook voted to pass the bill over his veto but the necessary votes were not obtained in the House of Representatives.\footnote{Congressional Record, 63rd Cong., 3rd Sess., 1915, LII, Part 3, 3077.} The Woman Suffrage Resolution came to a vote in the House in January. Ashbrook, after missing the vote on prohibition, was present and
voted against the resolution.\textsuperscript{13} Despite the defeat of the resolu-
tion, he predicted that woman suffrage, like prohibition, would 
eventually be approved.\textsuperscript{14}

In mid-February, 1915, his concern for a possible split in 
the Democratic ranks heightened. The enthusiasm of House Members 
for the vote to pass the Immigration Bill over the President's veto 
had been extensive and the veto had been maintained by only a small 
vote. Worry reappeared in his diary on February 15. After six roll 
calls, the bill preventing interstate commerce in products of child 
labor passed the House. Congressman Ashbrook voted for the bill.\textsuperscript{15} 
The Democratic Members immediately had a caucus on the Government 
Ship-Purchase Bill (S. 5259) and Ashbrook noted in his diary, 
"Wilson drives the Congress as no other President ever did and I am 
afraid has split the party."\textsuperscript{16} After a number of roll calls, the 
House passed the shipping bill the next day. Ashbrook, who sup-
ported the bill, did not desist in his worry despite the small number 
of Democrats who opposed the final passage of the bill.\textsuperscript{17} He firmly

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., Part 2, p. 1483.

\textsuperscript{14}Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 827.

\textsuperscript{15}Congressional Record, 63rd Cong., 3rd Sess., 1915, LII, 
Part 4, 3826.

\textsuperscript{16}Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 829.

\textsuperscript{17}Congressional Record, 63rd Cong., 3rd Sess., 1915, LII, 
Part 4, 3923.
believed Democratic Party unity and possible success at the polls in 1916 had been damaged by the persistence of Woodrow Wilson.\textsuperscript{18}

President Woodrow Wilson wanted a larger merchant fleet for the United States in 1915, and Ashbrook supported the shipping bill designed to satisfy this desire. In September, 1914, Ashbrook had stated his support of President Wilson's watchful waiting Mexican policy and his expectation that the war in Europe would benefit America commercially. Later the same month, he wrote in his diary, "The European war bids fair to set fire to all Europe and it is fortunate we are 3,000 miles away or the sparks might hit the U.S."\textsuperscript{19}

While supporting the shipping bill to aid the United States commercially, Ashbrook, who apparently was not greatly worried that America would be brought into, or enter, the war, voted on the military appropriation bills before the House with primarily economy in mind. He did vote for a bill to create a United States Coast Guard.\textsuperscript{20}

However, when the House voted to recommit the Army Appropriations Bill (H.R. 20347) and increase the sums allotted, Congressman Ashbrook voted "NAY."\textsuperscript{21} His concern for economy continued when the Naval Appropriations Bill (H.R. 20975) came to a vote, as again he

\textsuperscript{18} Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 830.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 817.

\textsuperscript{20} Congressional Record, 63rd Cong., 3rd Sess., 1915, LII, Part 2, 1996.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 2135.
favored building only one battleship instead of two. He also opposed an amendment to the Fortifications Appropriation Bill (H.R. 21491) increasing the appropriation for the purchase, manufacture, and testing of seacoast cannon from $200,000.00 to $1,000,000.00.

Except for the Fortifications Appropriation Bill, all the military appropriations were voted on prior to February 20, 1915, when Ashbrook noted in his diary, "I am very fearful that Germany will fire on our ships, and if she does, war will follow. Let us pray this will pass." For the first time, he had speculated in his diary on the distinct possibility of war with Germany. The war in Europe did not appear in his diary again until after the sinking of the Lusitania, when he wrote, "... I scarcely see how we can escape being dragged into the European war. Over 1200 Americans found a watery grave. We surely are not too proud to fight when such a crime is perpetrated." Once more, except for briefly mentioning Bryan's resignation as Secretary of State, the war did not receive any attention in his diary for several weeks. Then, in late August, while visiting Montreal, Canada, he noted, "Canada is greatly stirred over the European war, and many soldiers are in

22 Ibid., Part 3, p. 3152.
23 Ibid., Part 5, p. 4443.
25 Ibid., p. 835.
evidence on every hand. Canada has already made a costly contribution of her best young men to the World's war."26

Upon his return to Washington for the first session of the 64th Congress, Ashbrook found the war in Europe a topic of rampant discussion. In early January, 1916, Representative Isaac R. Sherwood and Ashbrook spent an evening together. The former opposed Woodrow Wilson's Preparedness Program and planned to make a speech against it on the House floor. Later in the evening, Ashbrook announced to the press his opposition to the Preparedness Program, claiming that the people of his district were, in his opinion, opposed to the program.27 Many of his constituents wrote to criticize his opposition but on January 7, he wrote in his diary, "It may be that I made a mistake, but I am surely opposed to a big standing army and trying to compete with England's navy."28

Letters of support for the Preparedness Program continued to pour into Ashbrook's office. The resignation of President Wilson's Secretary of War, Lindley M. Garrison, who had desired a continental army, pleased the Johnstown Democrat but on February 12, Ashbrook conceded, "I judge, due to the war in Europe, the majority of the people favor Preparedness, and I must yield to the majority."29

26 Ibid., p. 842.
29 Ibid., p. 855.
then issued a statement to the Press endorsing the strengthening of
the navy and coastal defenses and the utilization of the National
Guard of the states as opposed to the continental army plan.30 This
transition was not easy for Ashbrook. When President Wilson applied
pressure to the House Rules Committee to bring the McLemore Resolu-
tion (warning American citizens from traveling on belligerent ves-
sels) to a vote on the floor of the House, the Johnstown Democrat
noted in his diary, "Many Members feel he is willing to sacrifice
Congress to elect himself. It looks like we were face to face with
some knotty problems."31

The Senate voted as the President desired on the Gore Reso-
lution, a counterpart of the House resolution, but Ashbrook believed
this to be a dubious victory. Looking ahead to the vote in the
House, Ashbrook stated in his diary, "It looks as if I were in danger,
not because of the strength of my opponents, but because I must make
a record on so many vital questions."32 The House voted on the
McLemore Resolution on March 7. Ashbrook supported President Wilson
by favoring the motion to lay the resolution on the table.33 A few
days later, in another Press statement, Ashbrook reaffirmed his

31Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 856.
32Ibid., p. 857.
33Congressional Record, 64th Cong., 1st Sess., 1916, LIII, Part 4, 3720.
support of Woodrow Wilson's policy. In his diary, he noted,

I do not believe during my years in Washington that I ever had such a heavy mail. It is largely encouraging. I have not been able to switch as rapidly as the President and some others on the preparedness program, but of course am for my country first. I hate war, the loss of life sure to follow and its extravagant waste.

Ashbrook now equated the safety of the country with President Wilson's policies but also wrote, "I do not always agree with the President, but he is our leader, and I think a pretty safe one. It is folly to desert your party or your President, and I have made up my mind to sink or swim with Woodrow."36

The House began to vote on the military bills in March, 1916. The National Defense Bill (H.R. 12766) was voted on in the House on March 23. Ashbrook voted against the Kahn Amendment to the bill, which would have increased the size of the army from 140,000 to 220,000 men, but supported the passage of the bill along with 403 other Representatives.37 On March 28, he also voted to pass the Army Appropriations Bill (H.R. 13768).38 In May, when the conference report on the National Defense Bill reached the floor of the House Ashbrook continued to support President Wilson, opposing the Kahn

36Ibid., p. 858.
37Congressional Record, 64th Cong., 1st Sess., 1916, LIII, Part 4, 4729, 4731.
38Ibid., Part 5, p. 5022.
Amendment to Section Fifty-six of the bill authorizing the President to establish at any time a volunteer army not to exceed an average of 600 officers and men per Congressional district. However, Ashbrook voted to accept the conference report on the bill.

In his statement to the Press endorsing the Preparedness Program, Ashbrook had opposed a large standing army and favored an increase in the size of the United States Navy. His votes on amendments to the National Defense Act revealed his desire to carry out the first part of the endorsement. Instead of a large standing army, Ashbrook preferred to authorize the draft of National Guardsmen into the military service (H.J.Res. 242). In complying with the second part of the endorsement, Ashbrook gave his support to the United States Shipping Board Bill (H.R. 15455) and the Naval Appropriations Bill (H.R. 15497). Throughout the debates and votes on the entire Preparedness Program, Ashbrook continued to pray that war with Germany would not come.

In addition to supporting the various parts of the Preparedness Program, he continued to support the reform and social legislation of the Wilson Administration in 1916, such as the various bills:

39Ibid., Part 8, pp. 7599, 7600.
40Ibid., Part 9, p. 8406.
41Ibid., Part 10, p. 9892.
42Ibid., Part 9, pp. 8374, 9190.
supplementing state and local funds with federal funds for the construction of highways (H.R. 7617); preventing interstate commerce in the products of child labor (H.R. 8234); providing capital for agricultural development (S. 2986); establishing workmen's compensation for the federal civil service (H.R. 15316); and establishing an eight-hour day on all interstate railways (H.R. 1770). In contrast to his approval of all these legislative proposals, Ashbrook made a determined fight against the introduction of any public buildings appropriations in 1916. After voting in December, 1915 to extend the War Tax through 1916, he made a motion at a January meeting of the Public Buildings and Grounds Committee not to report an omnibus bill in 1916. He adamantly opposed "all pork barrel legislation." To stall the creation of a public buildings bill, he refused to call a meeting of his subcommittee having charge of appropriations for Ohio, Arizona, Arkansas, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin. In his diary, he noted, "The most popular thing I have done since I came to Congress was to take a stand against Public Buildings. The papers and people praise me much."

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44 Congressional Record, 64th Cong., 1st Sess., 1916, LIII, Part 2, 1536; Part 3, 2035; Part 10, 10,114; Part 11, 10,916; Part 13, 13,608.

45 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 853.


The other Public Buildings and Grounds subcommittees met to draw up a bill, and Ashbrook finally agreed to call a meeting of his subcommittee but reserved the right to oppose the bill.\textsuperscript{48} When the entire Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds met in May, he notified the committee members of his intention to stand firm against the bill. Through June and into July his opposition continued undaunted even though the projected public buildings bill contained a $70,000.00 appropriation for a public building at Mt. Vernon, Ohio. In a July 19 Press statement, Ashbrook based his refusal to support the bill on the fact that the amount of government business conducted in some locations did not warrant the establishment of a public building.\textsuperscript{49} Despite the objections of both Secretary of the Treasury, William McAdoo, and Ashbrook, the Public Buildings and Grounds Committee reported the bill to the House on July 17, with the Mt. Vernon, Ohio appropriation still provided for, but Ashbrook announced, "The bait will not catch me as I will oppose the bill just the same."\textsuperscript{50} The committee had written the bill and presented it to the House. However, victory went to Ashbrook. The Omnibus Public Buildings Bill did not pass before adjournment. In December, 1916, Ashbrook announced his plans again to oppose the passage of the bill in the next session of Congress.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 859.

\textsuperscript{49}\textit{Ashland Press}, July 19, 1916, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{50}\textit{Ashland Press}, July 26, 1916, p. 4.

Amidst his concern over the Preparedness Program and his fight against public buildings, Ashbrook sought the approval of a personal bill in 1916. When committee assignments had been made in December, 1915 for the 64th Congress, he had been made Chairman of the Committee on Coinage, Weights, and Measures and a member of both the Public Buildings and Grounds, and Invalid Pension Committees. Since his old friend, General Isaac R. Sherwood of Ohio, was Chairman of the Invalid Pension Committee, Ashbrook was in an ideal position to further pursue his incessant quest for pensions.52 In February, the Invalid Pension Committee took into consideration the Ashbrook Widow's Pension Bill (H.R. 11707). This legislative act proposed to increase the pensions of Civil War widows from $12.00 to $20.00 per month; give all widows on the pension roll $20.00 per month at the age of 70; restore to remarried widows their pensionable status; and extend the marriage limitation fifteen years to June 27, 1905.53 Of twenty widow's pension laws introduced during this Congressional session, the Invalid Pension Committee selected this bill to report out. Ashbrook wrote in his diary, "If I could get this bill passed, it would be the biggest thing I have ever done in Congress, and my heart is set to secure its passage."54

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From February until mid-June, Ashbrook worried about getting his bill recognized on the floor of the House.\textsuperscript{55} On Saturday, June 17, the Johnstown Democrat attempted to introduce his bill as an amendment to the Pension Appropriation Bill (H.R. 15775). Representative Robert Page of North Carolina objected and Ashbrook's motion was ruled out of order since it constituted the introduction of new business.\textsuperscript{56} Later in the day, however, Representative James Mann of Illinois secured the unanimous consent of the House to consider the Ashbrook Bill. The House resolved itself into the Committee on the Whole House on the State of the Union for consideration of the bill.\textsuperscript{57} Enough Members were present for a quorum and, after a reading of the bill, Ashbrook moved the Committee rise and favorably report the bill to the House and recommend its passage. Congressman Ashbrook then moved the previous question and the bill was read and engrossed a third time. Since a quorum was no longer present at 5:00 P.M. on Saturday afternoon, Ashbrook moved that the House adjourn, and this was done.\textsuperscript{58}

On Monday, June 19, the Ashbrook Bill came first on the House docket. In his diary, Ashbrook noted, "I persuaded Claude Kitchin and other obstreperous Democrats to remain in the cloak room on Saturday afternoon and not go home, so that this bill would come up on the House floor as the first item on the docket on Monday."

\textsuperscript{55}Ibid., p. 868.

\textsuperscript{56}Congressional Record, 64th Cong., 1st Sess., 1916, LIII, Part 10, 9565.

\textsuperscript{57}Ibid., pp. 9568-9569.

\textsuperscript{58}Ibid., p. 9570.
or absent themselves, and no demand for a roll call was made so my bill passed without a record or dissenting vote."\textsuperscript{59} With the passage of the bill in the House, he now turned to the task of securing its approval in the Senate, where he feared his bill would die. Accordingly, he visited the Senate cloakroom daily in hopes of getting his bill introduced. As Congress neared adjournment, he began to spend the entire day in the Senate cloakroom or gallery.\textsuperscript{60} After an all-day vigil on September 6, he wrote in his diary,

I gave notice unless the Senate passed my Widow's Pension bill that I will make a point of no quorum in the House, and prevent an adjournment of Congress. I hung about the Senate until it adjourned tonight and let it be known that I expected in the morning to make the point of no quorum. I have been hammered by the Members until I am sick because of my threat, but I will not budge. The Senate must pass my bill or the country will know why.\textsuperscript{61}

The next morning, Senator Thomas Taggart of Indiana introduced the bill. After minor amendments were introduced by Senators Hoke Smith of Georgia and Charles Thomas of Colorado, the Senate passed the Widow's Pension Bill.\textsuperscript{62} Later in the day, the House of Representatives concurred in the Senate amendments.\textsuperscript{63} On September 8

\textsuperscript{59}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 865; \textit{Newark Advocate}, June 20, 1916, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{60}\textit{Ashland Press}, September 13, 1916, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{61}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 873.

\textsuperscript{62}\textit{Congressional Record}, 64th Cong., 1st Sess., 1916, LIII, Part 13, 13,957-13,961.

\textsuperscript{63}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 14,095.
President Wilson signed the bill. 64 In his diary, the elated Congressman proclaimed,

It makes me proud of myself for I realize how much good I have done and how many homes I have made happy throughout the length and breadth of the land. The Ashbrook Pension Bill gives me a name that I can be proud of, and I am as happy as a big sunflower. 65

Early in 1916, Ashbrook became concerned about his chances of reelection. On January 21, he wrote in his diary, "I doubt very much if Wilson can be elected, and should he fail, my chances would be far from good." 66 District patronage problems and prohibition sentiment created additional worries for him. Patronage controversy caused two Democratic groups to abandon him. First, the Delaware County Democratic Executive Committee endorsed his Democratic opponent, John F. Kramer of Mansfield, because Ashbrook selected former State Senator W. A. Haas, a Catholic, for Postmaster of Delaware, Ohio. 67 The Richland County Democratic Committee also endorsed his opponent. Their action stemmed from Ashbrook's failure to secure the appointment of W. W. Sharp as Postmaster of Mansfield, Ohio. 68

While patronage problems worried Ashbrook, prohibition

64Ashland Press, September 13, 1916, p. 2.
65Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 873.
66Ibid., p. 853.
68Mansfield Shield, July 19, 1916, p. 4.
sentiment was a more important factor in the primary election. Ashbrook's opponent, John F. Kramer, a lawyer from Mansfield, had the endorsement of the Anti-Saloon League and worked actively in the 17th District to secure the votes of the "drys." In addition to his campaign in favor of prohibition, Kramer launched a personal campaign against Ashbrook. The Mansfield lawyer claimed that William A. Ashbrook had served too long in Washington, made overly liberal use of the free postage provided him by the government, and wasted the public's money by sending worthless garden seeds and bulletins and documents to his constituents.69

Ashbrook spent little time personally campaigning for the primary election. The Democratic newspapers carried the story of his endorsement of President Wilson's policies, his battle against public buildings, and the passage of his Widow's Pension Bill to provide him with good publicity. From Washington, Ashbrook supplemented this by mailing to voters 15,000 copies of two booklets composed by his staff, containing the endorsement of old soldiers, prominent Democrats in the 17th District, and the government officials who had supported him in 1914.70 Just prior to the primary election, he made a brief tour of the district. The day before the voters went to the polls, in an effort to counter the Anti-Saloon


70 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 869.
League endorsement of his opponent, he toured the City of Newark, Ohio, to discuss politics with the "wets."\textsuperscript{71}

On August 8 the voters went to the polls, with Ashbrook polling 10,347 votes to his opponent's 6,062. The final count of precincts won gave Ashbrook 216 and Kramer 54. In five precincts, the two candidates had the same number of votes.\textsuperscript{72} The race had been close only in Knox County, where Ashbrook led in precincts won, 22 to 15, and in Richland County, where he led in precincts won, 30 to 21.\textsuperscript{73} Ashbrook, who considered this contest his hardest battle ever, found his victory margin gratifying.\textsuperscript{74}

Republican E. Lee Porterfield of Delaware, Ohio, who had served two terms as Probate Judge of Delaware County, opposed Ashbrook in the general election. In his personal endorsement, incumbent Governor Frank B. Willis referred to him as "... one of the common people--a patriotic American."\textsuperscript{75} The Republican candidate campaigned with a theme similar to that employed by Kramer. Once again, Ashbrook was accused of having served too long in Washington and of misusing his government postage allowance.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{71}Ibid., p. 870.
\textsuperscript{72}Mt. Vernon Democratic Banner, August 15, 1916, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{73}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{74}Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 870.
\textsuperscript{75}Ashland Times, November 1, 1916, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{76}Ashland Times, October 25, 1916, p. 4; Coshocton Tribune, October 29, 1916, p. 4.
The voters again in November, 1916 returned Ashbrook to a sixth term in office with a total of 31,738 votes to his opponent's 23,700. Ashbrook carried five counties and lost the sixth, Delaware County, by the small margin of 215 votes. In a year when Ohio voters accepted the philosophy and programs of Woodrow Wilson, other Democratic candidates also fared well in the 17th District. President Wilson polled 31,661 votes; Senator Atlee Pomerene, 30,334 votes; and new Governor James M. Cox, 28,553 votes. The Democratic Congressional candidates as a group fared well enough to gain three seats in the House of Representatives.

In late 1914 and early 1915, Ashbrook had viewed the war in Europe as a calamity from which America would benefit economically without being involved militarily. With this view of the situation in mind, he had supported legislative bills designed to increase the commercial capacity of the United States and had continued to vote on military appropriations with economy in mind as in past Congressional sessions. Through the spring and summer of 1915 the possibility of war with Germany increased but Ashbrook had not appeared greatly concerned that America would enter the fight and did not write much about the conflict in his diary.

78 Ibid.
The situation had changed quickly upon his return to Washington for the first session of the 64th Congress as the Preparedness Program of Woodrow Wilson confronted him. Believing his constituents were against the program, and opposing the program personally because of his concern for economy, at first he had opposed the spending of large amounts of revenue to prepare for war. His opposition had dissipated when his mail revealed that a majority of his constituents favored preparing for war. Furthermore, support of the program meant patriotism to many people, and Ashbrook stood for his country first, although abhorring the loss of life and extravagant waste resulting from war.

In endorsing the Preparedness Program, Congressman Ashbrook had emphasized the construction of a larger navy and improved coastal defenses. His concern for economy had permeated his position on a large standing army. Consequently, he had voted to build a larger naval and merchant fleet and had voted to keep the size of the standing army as low as possible. Although Congressman Ashbrook had decided to support his President's approach to the war, his diary reveals his fervent prayers that America would never enter the war in Europe.

With the expense of preparing for war skyrocketing the budget of the Federal Government, Ashbrook had shown his continual concern for economy in opposing the creation of a public buildings appropriation bill. The press and public had supported his work against such a bill. After allowing his subcommittee to help create
a public buildings bill, Ashbrook had persisted in his opposition. The bill created was not passed before Congress adjourned and Ashbrook had announced in December, 1916 his plan to oppose it during the second session of the 64th Congress.

The high point of 1915 and 1916 for him had proved to be the passage of his Widow's Pension Bill. Throughout his political career in Congress, he had avidly supported pensions for old soldiers, their dependents, and widows but his achievements for them had previously consisted only of securing the passage of individual pension bills. To gain the passage of his bill, William A. Ashbrook had been willing to even block the adjournment of Congress.

The decisions and work of Ashbrook had stood before the voters for approval or disapproval in the elections of 1916. Elements of disapproval had appeared in the endorsement of his opponent by the controlling Democratic groups in two district counties and the Anti-Saloon League. The disapprovals had been offset in the primary election by the general approval of the voters as a whole of his work in Washington, as he had supported President Wilson's approach to the war, fought pork barrel legislation, and secured the passage of a Widow's Pension Bill. He also had not voted on the Hobson Resolution which made him more attractive to the "wet element" than in 1914 when the same group had resented his vote on the Alcoholic Liquor Traffic Bill.

In the general election, the issues were essentially the same. The question of patriotism appeared in the endorsement of
E. Lee Porterfield by Governor Frank B. Willis, but Ohio voters in 1916 preferred the patriotism and approach to the war in Europe of Woodrow Wilson. Although his margin in the 1916 primary election represented a decrease of almost one-half from that of 1914, Ashbrook was victorious in the general election by a margin comparable to that of 1914.
CHAPTER XI

THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 64TH CONGRESS,

THE FIRST AND SECOND SESSIONS OF THE 65TH CONGRESS - 1917-1918, AND

THE ELECTION OF 1918

The increasing threat of United States' involvement in the European war virtually dominated the daily life of Ashbrook during the second session of the 64th Congress. His personal aversion to war intensified when the expulsion of Germany's ambassador and President Wilson's subsequent message to Congress drew the nation one step closer to war. In his diary, he wrote, "I hate war. War, war, it rings in my ears. . . . It seems there is little to be gained and so much to lose by war that I am almost a pacifist."\(^1\)

Even the looming threat of a Congressional vote on prohibition did not dispel his concern over the possibility of war. On February 17, 1917, Ashbrook confided to his diary,

\(^1\)Ashbrook, *Line a Day*, II, 887-888.
Some of the Members are more concerned about their vote on prohibition than on war. The former is disastrous for the individual Member, while the latter is disastrous for all the people. I will cheerfully face bullets from a bar rather than from a cannon.\(^2\)

To this Congressman so adamantly opposed to war, the President and his desire for peace represented the last bastion of hope against the final plunge into the world conflict. The Johnstown Democrat, praying daily that Woodrow Wilson would continue to keep the country out of war, voted in the House to increase the powers of the President and prepare the United States for all eventualities.\(^3\)

On February 13, he supported an amendment (H.Res. 499) to the Naval Appropriations Bill (H.R. 20632) giving the President power to declare a national emergency by proclamation, purchase war supplies, and take control of munitions and arms factories.\(^4\) The next day, he voted to pass the Naval Appropriations Bill.\(^5\)

In late February, President Wilson desired even more power than House Resolution 499 had proposed to grant him. The following description of, and personal reaction to, the President's speech before a joint session of Congress appeared in Ashbrook's diary:

The President . . . asked that he be given the right to declare war, arm our merchant ships, and a liberal appropriation placed at his disposal. It is too much authority for any one

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 889.  
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 888.  
\(^4\)Congressional Record, 64th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1917, LIV, Part 4, 3133.  
\(^5\)Ibid., p. 3239.
man, and equal to the Czar of Russia, and I hope the Republi-
cans will filibuster against it. If it comes to a vote, I
presume I will have to stand by the President.6

On March 1, he supported the President by voting "YEA" on a bill
authorizing the President to furnish arms to merchant ships for
defensive purposes (H.R. 21052).7 Having personally decided to fol-
low his leader, Ashbrook now disliked the resistance of the Senate
to armed neutrality and other proposals. He considered it a disgrace,
"... to have such a willful gang control Congress."8

The increasing possibility of war and the turbulence it gen-
erated in both Houses of Congress did not disrupt Ashbrook's concern
for economy during this Congressional session. In addition to the
Naval Appropriations Bill, he supported bills to furnish arms to
merchant ships and to raise money by levying taxes on estates and
excess profits (H.R. 20573) but opposed other appropriation bills.9
In December, 1916, he voted against a bill to establish fish hatch-
eries and fish cultural stations in certain states (H.R. 15617).10
The next month, the Public Buildings Bill (H.R. 18994) reached the
House floor and he continued to oppose such a bill as he had in 1916.

6 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 889.
7 Congressional Record, 64th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1917, LIV,
Part 5, 4692.
8 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 890.
9 Congressional Record, 64th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1917, LIV,
Part 1, 510; Part 3, 2441.
In his diary, he noted that, "It is easier here, as it is in all walks of life, to follow the line of least resistance, but I have been dead set against this bill and will not be bluffed into submission."\textsuperscript{11} Although Ashbrook voted against the bill, the House passed the measure on January 29 by a large vote.\textsuperscript{12} His failure to stop the passage of the bill caused him to assert in his diary, "I know that I was on the right track and the country is tired of pork barrel bills."\textsuperscript{13} Voting with this assertion as to what the public wanted in mind, he later opposed both the Rivers and Harbors Appropriations Bill (H.R. 20079) and the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Appropriation Bill (H.R. 18542).\textsuperscript{14}

When not concerned with legislation relating to the war or that which he opposed because of the expense of the war, the prohibition issue occupied much of Ashbrook's thoughts. In February, the amendment to the Post Office Appropriation Bill (H.R. 19410) making an entire state dry when the majority of the people so voted, reached the House floor. Ashbrook voted for the amendment and reiterated his earlier prediction that national prohibition would eventually make

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 885.}

\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Congressional Record, 64th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1917, LIV, Part 2, 1723.}

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 885.}

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Congressional Record, 64th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1917, LIV, Part 3, 2086; Part 4, 4016, 4018.}
all the states dry.\textsuperscript{15} A week later, he voted for the bill prohibiting alcoholic liquor traffic in the District of Columbia (S. 1082).\textsuperscript{16}

The second session of the 64th Congress adjourned in early March. After bidding good-bye to the Members who had been defeated in 1916 and would not return and attending the second inauguration of Woodrow Wilson, he returned to Johnstown but would be back in Washington in late March for the Democratic caucus preceding the opening of the first session of the 65th Congress. In the meantime, he continued to pray that the United States would not go to war.\textsuperscript{17}

Ashbrook's fervent hope that the United States would somehow avoid the war died a quick death with the opening of the 65th Congress. Prior to President Wilson's request for a declaration of war against Germany, Ashbrook confided to his diary,

\begin{quote}
I never regretted that I was a Member of Congress before. I do hate to vote for war. It seems such a foolish thing to do to plunge this nation into war, but there seems to be no escape, and we must stand by the President. I fear when it is too late, we will see the folly.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

Heartsick after listening to the President's request, he lamented,

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{15}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 889; \textit{Congressional Record}, 64th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1917, LIV, Part 4, 3086.
\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Congressional Record}, 64th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1917, LIV, Part 5, 4558.
\textsuperscript{17}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 890-892.
\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 893.
\end{quote}
Billions of dollars will be spent, tens of thousands of lives will be lost, and all for what? I felt so depressed that I could not cheer a single utterance of the President and yet I know we can't back down. It is a terrible thing to take our boys from useful pursuits and shed their blood.19

Despite his personal hatred for the tolls of war, and his doubts about the advisability of entering the European conflict, on April 5, with a "heavy heart but a full sense of duty," he voted to declare war against Germany.20

In the days following April 5, Ashbrook's decision to support the declaration of war weighed heavily on his mind. Although he stated in his diary, "We must wage such a war that will make the world take notice," the billions of dollars and enormous number of men to be requisitioned by the government to initiate the war effort staggered him.21 On April 13, he noted, "The sums involved are so stupendous I can't even figure the interest. We are now nothing more than rubber stamps taking orders from the President. I wish I were back home quietly attending my own affairs."22 The next day, he reluctantly applied the "rubber stamp" to the emergency bond issue bill (H.R. 2762).23 His acceptance of conscription as the best method of increasing the size of the army proved equally difficult.

19 Ibid.
22 Ibid., p. 895.
but in the end, after receiving several constituent letters sup-
porting the plan, personally discussing the proposal with other Mem-
bers, and deciding conscription would treat the rich and poor alike, he again voted "YEA."\textsuperscript{24}

Following the vote on conscription, Ashbrook confided to
his diary that he had now accepted the situation and resolved to
firmly support his President and country.\textsuperscript{25} He proceeded to support
war-time legislation to punish acts of espionage (H.R. 291); to
raise revenue to defray the expenses of the war (H.R. 4280); to
encourage the production of foodstuffs while controlling their dis-
tribution (H.R. 4691); and to compensate those doing the fighting
with war risk insurance.\textsuperscript{26} However, he was unable to stifle his
concern over the possible impacts of the war on the nation. He was
worried that the war might allow "militarism" to get a firm grip on
the country, destroy the popularity of Woodrow Wilson, waste too
much of the public's money, cause financial unrest, and play havoc
with the future political prospects of the Democratic Party.\textsuperscript{27} By
September, 1917, the only good he believed the war had accomplished
was to bring about the prohibition of distilled liquors under the

\textsuperscript{24}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 897-898; \textit{Congressional Record},

\textsuperscript{25}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 896.

\textsuperscript{26}Congressional Record, 65th Cong., 1st Sess., 1917, LV,
Part 2, 1841; Part 3, 2818; Part 4, 4190; Part 7, 7104.

\textsuperscript{27}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 897-898, 909-910.
provisions of the Lever Act (H.R. 4691) but even this improvement had possible unfavorable repercussions. Ashbrook voted for the measure with the realization it might eventually help defeat him at the polls.\(^{28}\) The overall picture of the future appeared gloomy enough to cause him to consider withdrawing from politics. Private life had an attraction in these troubled times.\(^{29}\)

Prior to the opening of the second session of the 65th Congress in December Ashbrook toured the 17th District and his personal political outlook brightened considerably. Well-received by many people on his tour, he noted in his diary, "The only dark spot on my political horizon is my vote on national prohibition."\(^{30}\) When he arrived in the Capitol, he found war and prohibition the chief topics of conversation. Ashbrook knew shortly how he was going to vote. He confided to his diary on December 6, "Have made up my mind to vote dry, and if I must die politically, would rather die dry than wet."\(^{31}\) Eleven days later, he voted in favor of the Senate joint resolution (S.J.Res. 17) prohibiting traffic in alcoholic liquor.\(^{32}\) The

\(^{28}\) *Congressional Record*, 65th Cong., 1st Sess., 1917, LV, Part 6, 5767; Ashbrook, *Line a Day*, II, 905.

\(^{29}\) Ashbrook, *Line a Day*, II, 910.

\(^{30}\) Ibid., p. 914.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., p. 916.

\(^{32}\) *Congressional Record*, 65th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1918, LVI, Part 1, 469.
political implications of this vote did not escape him. In his
diary, he wrote,

Ever since John Kramer opposed me for Congress, the Anti-
Saloon League has fought me, which naturally threw the Wets to
me and placed me under obligations to the Wet element. . . .
No radical is more pleased than I am that booze must go. Pro-
hibition I hope is now out of Congress for good, but I expect
my vote today spells my defeat.33

The war and war legislation removed prohibition from his
mind temporarily. On December 4, Ashbrook had voted to declare war
on Austria-Hungary (S.J.Res. 111).34 The war situation became more
taxing and legislation to further aid America's war effort appeared
in the House of Representatives. In February, 1918, the bill calling
for government control of the nation's railroads (S. 3752) reached
the floor of the House. Ashbrook opposed the Esch amendment to the
bill, which provided for government control for one year after the
war ended, but voted for the bill.35 He believed that while this
bill was a drastic measure, the war made it necessary.36 In his diary,
he stated, "I am standing pat with the Administration, and whatever
Wilson wants, I will vote for. This is no time to play politics or
count the cost."37 In supporting the Wilson administration, he also

33Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 917.
34Congressional Record, 65th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1918, LVI, Part 1, 99.
36Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 924.
37Ibid., p. 928.
voted for bills: creating a War Finance Corporation (S. 3714); providing for national banks (H.R. 10205); coordinating the executive departments of the government (S. 3771); raising the draft age to forty-five and lowering it to eighteen (H.R. 12731); promoting the development of water power (S. 1419); providing for further revenue legislation (H.R. 12863); and a bill establishing a minimum wage (H.R. 152). On a resolution proposing the establishment of a commission to look into national insurance against unemployment, invalidism, and sickness (H.J.Res. 189), he opposed the removal of the activating clause from the resolution. Except for a woman suffrage resolution (H.J.Res. 200), which he opposed in January, 1918, Congressman Ashbrook solidly supported the Democratic administration headed by Woodrow Wilson during the second session of the 65th Congress.

In March, 1918, Ashbrook began to devote considerable attention to the forthcoming elections. By diligently tending to his correspondence and mailing documents, bulletins, garden seeds, and copies of his speeches to his constituents, he worked to let the people know he was once again a candidate. The people would soon

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38 Congressional Record, 65th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1918, LVI, Part 4, 3842; Part 5, 4551; Part 7, 6524; Part 9, 9506; Part 10, 9950, 10,548; Part 11, 10,732.

39 Ibid., Part 1, p. 906.

40 Ibid., p. 810.

41 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 925.
pass judgment on his decisions and he was not taking the situation lightly. In April, he jotted in his diary, "I have a feeling in my bones that seven terms is all I will get. War and prohibition will fix me."42 His Democratic opponent in the primary would be Colonel George D. Neal of Mt. Vernon, Ohio.43 Ashbrook dismissed him as a serious threat since even the old soldiers of the 17th District had little respect for him.44

A Republican candidate could not be dismissed so easily. William A. Morgan of Newark, Ohio, President of the Newark Trades and Labor Assembly and a Vice-President of the Ohio State Federation of Labor, had the support of the local newspaper, the Newark Leader, and opposed prohibition.45 Realizing the labor and "wet" vote would probably support Morgan, Ashbrook, still hopeful of winning, came home to campaign personally in July. After a two week tour of the district, he decided conditions were favorable for him, although the saloon owners and their patrons definitely opposed his candidacy.46

Both Ashbrook and Morgan won easily in the August primary. The Republican candidate, supported by the Mansfield News, Newark Leader, and Ashland Times, based his general election campaign on

42 Ibid., p. 928.
43 Newark Leader, June 28, 1918, p. 4.
44 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 932.
45 Newark Leader, June 21, 1918, pp. 1, 4.
his belief in a dominant merchant marine, a sound protective tariff policy after the war, and compensation for all soldiers doing duty in the World War. Ashbrook, supported by the Ashland Press, Newark Advocate, Delaware Semi-Weekly Journal Herald, and Coshocton Tribune and Times-Age, based his campaign on his support of "safe leader" Woodrow Wilson's "win the war policy," his contributions to the welfare of old soldiers, and his work for the 17th District throughout his years in office. To enhance the effectiveness of his campaign, Ashbrook had form letters for all the old soldiers and their dependents in the 17th District, as well as his personal friends, printed at his own expense. While addressing this campaign literature for the mail, he confided to his diary, "Morgan does not seem to be very active in the District and I think I can beat him, but realize my strength is waning." 

Prior to the general election in November, two events made inroads on Ashbrook's chance of being reelected. The first event took place prior to the adjournment of Congress. In mid-September, the House of Representatives passed a bill prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors after July 1, 1919 (H.R. 11945). After

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47 Mansfield News, August 9, 1918, p. 7; Newark Leader, September 20, 1918, p. 4; Ashland Times, October 23, 1918, p. 3; Delaware Semi-Weekly Journal Herald, August 9, 1918, p. 4.

48 Ashland Press, July 24, 1918, p. 2; Newark Advocate, October 27, 1918, p. 4; Delaware Semi-Weekly Journal Herald, October 29, 1918, p. 4; Coshocton Tribune and Times-Age, October 31, 1918, p. 7.

49 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 941.
supporting the bill, Ashbrook wrote in his diary, "It is the first time I have not been covered with goose pimples when I had to vote on a prohibition bill for it is the most dangerous of all legislation. Now Mr. Booze Seller, get ready to quit. Am glad to be rid of the saloon." His happiness was not shared by the "wets" in his district. When Ashbrook arrived in Newark, Ohio in October to resume his personal campaign, he found the saloonists hopping mad over his vote on the prohibition bill. A few days later, when he canvassed Richland, Knox, and Ashland Counties, Ashbrook noted that almost all saloon owners now had his opponent's picture displayed prominently in their establishments. As most labor people he encountered also were in favor of Morgan, Ashbrook had just cause to be concerned. However, his troubles were not over yet.

In late October, President Wilson made an appeal to the people for the return of a Democratic Congress. The Mansfield News and Ashland Times claimed that the President had impugned the loyalty of the Republican Party and launched a counter-attack on Ashbrook. Detailing his early opposition to a big navy and a large standing army, these two newspapers questioned his loyalty to his country and his own political party. In hopes of offsetting the effect of

50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., pp. 943-944.
52 Ibid.
53 Mansfield News, October 25, 1918, pp. 1, 4, 6; Ashland Times, October 30, 1918, p. 1.
Wilson's plea, Ashbrook issued a statement to the press reaffirming his loyal support of the President.54 To his diary, he confided, "I am afraid President Wilson did an unwise thing when he made an appeal to the country to elect a Democratic Congress. It made the Republicans very bitter and will cost more votes than it will make."55

On November 5, the voters went to the polls. Ashbrook defeated his opponent by a majority of 1,913 votes. He won in Ashland County by 980 votes, in Coshocton County by 767 votes, in Licking County by 694 votes, and in Richland County by 49 votes. His opponent won Delaware County by 481 votes and Knox County by 96 votes.56 Although happy to be one of the eight Democratic Congressmen in Ohio, the total outcome of the election did not please him. When the House had been organized for the 65th Congress, the Democrats had maintained control and he had retained his position as Chairman of the Committee on Coinage, Weights, and Measures, and membership on the Invalid Pension and Public Buildings and Grounds Committees.57 The Republicans would control the House and Senate in the next Congress and as one of the minority party he probably would lose his committee chairmanship.58

54Coshocton Tribune and Times-Age, October 31, 1918, p. 7; Newark Advocate, November 1, 1918, p. 4.
55Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 945.
58Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 946.
The entrance of the United States into the war in Europe had greatly disturbed Ashbrook. Strongly opposed to war and fearful of its tolls on society, he supported the declaration of war because he believed such a choice was the duty of a Congressman backing his leader and his country. The projected costs of the war in money, resources, and manpower distressed him but he had voted for war and, in 1917 and 1918, he had supported the war legislation of the Wilson administration. During this period of time, his concern for the possible future effects of the war on the country militarily, economically, and politically magnified. In the fall of 1917, he temporarily considered retiring from public life but, rejuvenated by a tour of the 17th District, he decided to seek reelection in 1918.

From the onset of his campaign for reelection, he had realized prohibition and the war might defeat him. In 1916, he had sought the votes of the "wets" to offset the support the Anti-Saloon League had given John Kramer. Since then, he had voted for prohibition and reversed the situation. The "wets," as well as labor men, now opposed him and supported the anti-prohibition candidate, labor leader William Morgan. In September, his vote for the wartime prohibition law intensified the support among the ranks of the "wets" for his opponent.

The war had also been a fundamental issue in the Congressional race. Ashbrook had little choice but to continue his support of President Wilson and the policies of the Democratic administration. When the President appealed for the election of a Democratic Congress in late October, the Republican newspapers of the 17th District had
decried the request as a blight on the loyalty of the Republican Party. Ashbrook found Republicans were extremely angry over the President's action.

Despite the opposition of the "wets," the challenge of a labor-oriented opponent, and Republican anger over President Wilson's appeal, in a year when Ohio voted dry, he had enough political strength to win another term in office. However, his victory margin was the smallest since his election to Congress in 1906. He had failed to carry Delaware and Knox Counties, and had won Richland County by a small number of votes. In the other counties—Ashland, Richland, and Licking—his vote total also had declined appreciably.
CHAPTER XII

THE THIRD SESSION OF THE 65TH CONGRESS,

THE FIRST AND SECOND SESSIONS OF THE

66TH CONGRESS - 1919-1920, AND

THE ELECTION OF 1920

Following the defeat of Germany and the end of the World War, Ashbrook returned to Washington for the final session of the 65th Congress. On December 2, 1918, President Wilson read a message to both Houses of Congress. In his diary, Ashbrook penned the following description of the occasion:

The Republicans and the Senate were silently sullen throughout the reading of the message by the President. The Senate is mad because he did not name anyone from that body on the Peace Commission, and the Republicans are ready, now that war is over, to hamstring Wilson in any way they can. It was a great message and I am strong for Wilson, but it would have been good diplomacy and politics too, in my humble opinion, to have selected Lodge or some other Republican Senator to accompany him.1

When the House began its daily sessions, Republican animosity was so persistent that he referred to it again in his diary, and added, "The country I fear, does not look with favor on Wilson's trip overseas."2

1Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 949.
2Ibid.
Ashbrook's diary descriptions of the mood of the political atmosphere in the Capitol ceased abruptly. On December 13, he received a message that his wife was desperately ill in Johnstown. In May, 1918, his wife, plagued by cancer, had undergone an operation. Now, after months of experiencing no further difficulty, she had suffered a relapse. Ashbrook spent five tortuous weeks by his wife's side, praying for her recovery. His vigil was hopeless, for on January 22, 1919, she passed away.

In early February, a saddened man, he returned to his duties in Washington. The House began debate on the Naval Appropriations Bill (H.R. 15539) and Republican opposition quickly convinced him the political situation had not changed. In this particular instance, he believed the Republican opposition stemmed from the fact that the President had, "... cabled to pass this big appropriation while he was in France trying to secure a League of Nations to enforce peace." Personally unruffled by the President's action, he decided to honor the request because of his own faith in Woodrow Wilson's judgment. On February 11, he voted in favor of consideration of new legislation providing for a larger navy (H.Res. 566). However, his

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5Ibid., p. 958.
6Ibid.
duties as a member of the Assay Commission scheduled to meet in Philadelphia the next day, caused him to leave the House before the final roll call on the bill.8

During this Congressional session, he supported other appropriation bills but not with wholehearted acceptance. On February 8, he voted to accept the conference report on a bill to raise revenue (H.R. 13308) and jotted in his diary, "Those who dance must pay the fiddler."9 On February 21, he supported another appropriation measure.10 This bill would collect $750,000,000.00 to pay the deficit resulting from government control of the nation's railroads during the war. Later in the day, Ashbrook confided to his diary, "All I can do is vote for these appropriations. If I didn't, I would be called disloyal. I am disgusted with the job."11 The next day, he voted for the bill appropriating money to carry out the price guarantees made to producers of wheat during the war (H.R. 12596).12

Late in February, disgusted with the filibustering tactics of the Republicans in the Senate, lacking any desire to return to

8Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 959.
the scene of his wife's death at this time, and desperately in need of a vacation, he began to consider a change of scenery. Some of his fellow Members were planning a tour of Europe. He decided to join them. Early in March, the possibility of an immediate extra session of Congress threatened to cancel his plans. However, President Wilson announced that there would be no extra session of Congress until after the Peace Conference completed its work and a delighted Ashbrook made the final arrangements for his trip.\textsuperscript{13}

On March 15, he joined eleven other Congressmen who sailed on the \textit{Leviathan} from New York City for Brest.\textsuperscript{14} Fascinated by the helplessness of the great ship in clearing the port until tug boats arrived, he constructed the following analogy in his diary, "This, I thought a good argument in favor of the League of Nations. We are all dependent upon each other. The strong and mighty need the weak and seemingly insignificant, just as did the \textit{Leviathan} the little tugs."\textsuperscript{15} The proposed League of Nations became a topic of discussion during the days at sea. On the eighth day at sea, Henry Morgenthau, former Ambassador to Turkey, invited Ashbrook and his companions to his stateroom to urge support of the League.\textsuperscript{16} Following the discussion, Ashbrook wrote in his diary, "He is a very strong advocate,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 961.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} \textit{Delaware Semi-Weekly Journal Herald}, April 8, 1919, p. 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 963.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} \textit{Newark Advocate}, April 3, 1919, p. 8.
\end{itemize}
but I fear his Hebrew instinct for the commercial side of it makes him so zealous." On March 23, the Leviathan docked at Brest and for a few days other events temporarily interrupted Ashbrook's consideration of the League in his diary.

During the trip from Brest to Paris by automobile, Ashbrook carefully inspected the passing countryside and wrote a description of what he saw in his diary. He quickly concluded, "The old world is a new world to me. All is time-stained and moss-covered, and the people cling to old ways and old customs." He found the relative newness of the general storage depots at Gievres a direct contrast to the scenery of the auto trip. Taken aback by their massive size, he jotted in his diary,

There were stored here today six hundred million dollars worth of supplies. Uncle Sam's money is spent like confederate bills, and it is now easy to understand why we are called upon to float six or eight billion of bonds every three months. A drunken sailor would be a piker compared to the way money goes these days. There is an ice plant here that cost many millions and it has never made a pound of ice.

In the few days he had thus far spent in France, the different style of living practiced by Europeans and the huge sums spent on the recent war by America had made distinct impressions on him, but he was really shocked by the sights of the battlefields of France.

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17 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 964.
18 Delaware Semi-Weekly Journal Herald, April 8, 1919, p. 3.
20 Ibid.
On March 31, he visited Belleau Woods and wrote in his diary,

I saw many German soldiers who had been hastily half-buried where they fell on the hillside with limbs protruding, and numerous skeletons lying in the ravines. It was a rather gruesome sight. Uniforms, boots, belts were thick as autumn leaves and machine gun shells covered the ground thicker than hickory-nuts in October. . . . All along the way, crosses thickly dot the blood-stained soil.\textsuperscript{21}

After visiting the Chateau Thierry, Rheims, the Argonne Forest, and Verdun, and viewing yet greater scenes of devastation, he confided to his diary, "Surely if a League of Nations will prevent war, I am for it."\textsuperscript{22} The rest of his tour of the devastated parts of France and Belgium enhanced his belief in the League and his personal aversion to war.\textsuperscript{23}

On April 13, he arrived back in Paris. Learning that Congress would probably not convene before May 15, he decided to take a trip through Italy and Switzerland. On this part of his tour, his first doubts about the League of Nations appeared in his diary. The splendor of Roman architecture excited him but the Italian people did not. The filth, squalor, and absence of sanitation in many Italian cities appalled him. He visited the American legation in Rome to talk to Ambassador Page, who informed him he had little faith in any of America's allies, except England. In his diary, Ashbrook wrote, "I feel less friendly to the League of Nations since coming overseas,

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid}, pp. 967-968.
\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{23}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 972.
and believe the U.S. should look well after our own people and interests and keep our hands off these Latin-tongued people.”

A later incident did little to erase the poor impression made on him by the Italian people. From Italy, Ashbrook journeyed to Switzerland, back to France, and then to Scotland, Ireland, and England. On May 1, he recrossed the English Channel and took a train to Paris. In his diary, he recorded the following details of his arrival in Paris:

This is Labor day, but it was more like riot day in Paris. Not a street-car, cab or taxi running, and when we arrived in Paris saw a real riot. Rocks, brickbats, iron missiles flew like hail and we did not venture out of the station for two hours. Saw one man killed and a score with heads cut and bleeding. Couldn't find out what it was about, but the men ran around like they were crazy.

The city of Paris was quiet the next day and he spent a few days shopping.

On May 7, he departed from Brest on the Noordan, a Dutch-Holland boat. Ten days later, he landed in New York and confided to his diary,

We met many fine folks, saw many splendid cities, beautiful country, and many historical points of interest, but return to the U.S. more firm than ever in the belief that in our country is found the best and most liberal government, the best citizenship, greatest resources and most favorable opportunity for all mankind in the pursuit of health, wealth, happiness and political freedom.

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24 Ibid., p. 974.
25 Ibid., p. 977.
26 Newark Advocate, May 29, 1919, p. 10.
27 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 979.
William Ashbrook arrived in Washington in time for the opening session of the 66th Congress on May 19, 1919. As a Member of the minority party, he lost his committee chairmanship and became simply the ranking Member of the Coinage, Weights, and Measures Committee, retained his membership on the Invalid Pension Committee, and lost his position on the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds. Although he disliked the loss of his chairmanship and one committee membership, he was more concerned about his political future. To his diary, he confided, "I am afraid Wilson is losing ground in popularity, and the League is doomed. I fear prospects are not good for Democrats next year and I hardly think I will run again." The probable failure of the League proposal did not greatly upset him. His trip abroad had convinced him that the United States had no business entering a partnership with Europe since any assimilation of interests by the two continents was impossible.

Despite the fact that on June 20, he predicted in his diary he was serving his last term in Congress, Ashbrook began spending long stretches of time in the 17th District mending his political fences. Consequently, he missed many roll calls in the House. He was, however, present to vote in favor of the following: the joint

29Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 981.
30ibid., p. 982.
31ibid., p. 983.
resolution providing for woman suffrage (H.J.Res. 1); the resolution appointing a committee to investigate war expenditures (H.Res. 78); a bill providing relief for the Near East (S. 180); a bill reviving the office of General of the Armies of the United States (H.R. 7594); a bill designed to prevent hoarding and deception with respect to food in cold storage (H.R. 9521); and a bill providing vocational rehabilitation for persons disabled in industry (H.R. 4438). Late in this session of Congress, he also voted to pass the bill prohibiting alcoholic liquor traffic (H.R. 6810) over the President's veto.

His frequent political junkets into areas of the 17th District revived his political spirits somewhat but not enough to cause him to believe his chances of winning in 1920 were good. Many old supporters still stood by him and few believed any Democrat would oppose him in the 1920 primary election. On the other hand, the general unrest permeating the ranks of labor, the resentment still present among "wets" over the death of the saloons, and the capitulation of the only Democratic paper in Richland County, the Mansfield Shield, gave him little encouragement. In mid-January, 1920, he confided to his diary, "It looks less every day like the Democrats had a chance this year. If Morgan [Wm. M.] is nominated, with the

32 Congressional Record, 66th Cong., 1st Sess., 1919, LVIII, Part 1, 93-94, 646-647; Part 3, 3154; Part 5, 4468; Part 6, 6163-6164; Part 7, 7079.

33 Ibid., Part 8, p. 7611.

labor and wet elements behind him, he will win, and my best judgment tells me to quit, but that is hard to do and I will likely quit when I get hit on the head."35

Determined not to lose without a fight, he began flooding the mails with campaign literature and resolved to avoid missing as many roll calls in the second session of the 66th Congress, now underway, as he had during the first session.36 He kept his resolution for the duration of the Congressional session. During January and February, 1920, he voted in favor of a bill to revise and equalize Civil War pensions (H.R. 9369); a Post Office Appropriation Bill (H.R. 11578); a bill to improve the efficiency of the Navy and Coast Guard (H.R. 11427); a bill appropriating funds for the Department of Agriculture (H.R. 12272); a bill terminating federal control of the nation's railroads (H.R. 10453); and a Deficiency Appropriations Bill (H.R. 12046).37 Of all these "YEA" votes, Ashbrook realized his support of the railroad bill would be most significant in the coming elections. Many labor groups supported government ownership of the nation's railroads. Ashbrook personally opposed government control of public utilities. Furthermore, he saw no reason for the government to guarantee the railroads a dividend.38

36Ibid., p. 1003.
38Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 1004.
In March, Ashbrook supported the following legislative proposals: to pension soldiers of the War with Spain, the Philippine Insurrection, and the China relief expedition (H.R. 2); to provide relief for the populations of Europe (H.R. 12954); to reorganize and increase the efficiency of the army (H.R. 12775); and to amend the Naval Appropriations Bill (H.R. 13108) restricting the navy from buying what it could produce itself.39 During this month, Ashbrook noted in his diary that he had been receiving good reports in answer to his correspondence with people in the 17th District. In light of these favorable statements, he concluded in his diary, 

... only a political landslide will get me, but I am very much afraid we will have the landslide. The Democrats seem to be in bad with the country, and why I do not know, for we have enacted more legislation in the interest of the people during the Wilson administration than in any twenty years during the history of our country.40

Ashbrook's concern for the interests of the people determined his vote on a legislative proposal in early April. The House debated a joint resolution declaring the end of the war with Germany (H.J.Res. 327). On April 9, he voted with the Republican Members of the House in favor of agreeing to the resolution.41 The day before the vote in the House, he had confided to his diary, "It may not be constitutional but the people want war to end and a vote for the

39 Congressional Record, 66th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1920, LIX, Part 4, 3722; Part 5, 4366-4367, 4560, 4770.

40 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 1007.

41 Congressional Record, 66th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1920, LIX, Part 6, 5480.
resolution will at least be a protest against war.\textsuperscript{42} In a speech on the House floor, he explained his vote:

Mr. Speaker, I fail to see why a peace treaty can not be adopted and should not have been adopted months ago, even though the League of Nations failed. I fail to see any umbilical connection between the peace treaty and the League of Nations. If there is, give the people a chance and I think they will perform the necessary surgery.\textsuperscript{43}

In the days immediately following the vote on this resolution, Ashbrook received a few letters commending his vote, but none criticizing it. Believing that he had made the right decision, he voted on May 28 to pass the resolution over President Wilson's veto,\textsuperscript{44} but not enough votes of support were forthcoming to override the executive veto.

In the remaining weeks of the second session of the 66th Congress, he voted for far more legislative proposals than he opposed. In April, he supported a bill creating a Woman's Bureau in the Department of Labor (H.R. 13229), and a bill providing retirement benefits for employees of the United States (S. 1966).\textsuperscript{45} In May, he voted "YEA" on bills to develop water power (H.R. 3184); to grant soldiers, sailors, and marines serving in the recent war a bonus (H.R. 14157); and to authorize an Association of Producers of

\textsuperscript{42}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, II, 1008.

\textsuperscript{43}\textit{Congressional Record}, 66th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1920, LIX, Appendix and Index to Parts 1-8, 8977.

\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Ibid.}, Part 8, p. 7808.

\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Ibid.}, Part 6, pp. 5878-5879, 6381.
Agricultural Products (H.R. 13931). Shortly before the adjournment of Congress in June, he voted to accept the conference report on a bill to promote and maintain the Merchant Marine (H.R. 10378). In this same span of time, he opposed only the passage of the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Appropriation Bill (H.R. 12610) over the President's veto and the final conference report on a bill to reorganize and promote the efficiency of the army (H.R. 12775).

When Ashbrook left Washington for home after Congress adjourned in early June, 1920, he still believed his chances of winning another term were very remote. He was unable to forsake his persistent nagging thought that a Republican landslide was imminent. Over the last four months he had mailed 30,000 political letters to the 17th District in hopes of maintaining his political strength and increasing it wherever possible. However, the presence of many more pessimistic notes in the mail he received than in past years fostered doubts within him as to how much his letter writing had actually helped his cause.

In the primary election, both Democrat Ashbrook and Republican William M. Morgan won again as easily as they had in 1918 and opposed each other in the November general election. The issues of

46 Ibid., Part 7, pp. 6538-6539; Part 8, pp. 7941, 8040-8041.
47 Ibid., Part 8, p. 8607.
48 Ibid., Part 7, p. 7071; Part 8, p. 7344.
49 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 1010-1011.
the Congressional contest emerged in the newspapers of the district. The Newark Leader supported Morgan, endorsed government ownership of the nation's railroads, attacked the League of Nations concept and claimed the Wilson administration could best be described as a tyranny. The Leader and the Mansfield News emphasized Morgan's belief in lower taxes and compensation for soldiers of the World War. These two newspapers also claimed a vote for Morgan would help elect a man who would support Senator Harding and bring order out of chaos by restoring the proper balance to the three branches of the government. The Newark Advocate, Delaware Semi-Weekly Journal Herald, and Coshocton Tribune and Times-Age promoted Ashbrook's candidacy by publicizing his widow's pension bill passed in 1916, his support of compensation for both old and new soldiers, and his faithful service to his constituents during his fourteen years in office. Both the Newark Advocate and the Delaware Semi-Weekly Journal Herald endorsed completely the League of Nations.

Prior to the general election, Ashbrook campaigned extensively. He found many people favored his candidacy. By late August, he began

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50 Newark Leader, June 4, 1920, p. 8.


52 Newark Advocate, October 26, 1920, p. 4; Delaware Semi-Weekly Journal Herald, October 29, 1920, p. 6; Coshocton Tribune and Times-Age, October 30, 1920, p. 4.

to feel that he could win if the old soldiers and women voters stood by him.\(^\text{54}\) However, his personal hopes of winning faded in the final weeks of the campaign. On October 13, he confided to his diary, "I find little personal opposition. It is the general unfavorable drift, not my weakness or Morgan's strength that concerns me. The wind just blows bad."\(^\text{55}\)

The voters of Ohio went to the polls on November 2, 1920. Ashbrook arrived at the office of the *Newark Advocate* late in the afternoon. From the first returns, the Republican landslide that he had feared began to emerge. Until noon of the next day, he believed he had escaped the onslaught of Republican votes but late in the afternoon further tabulations had him running behind his opponent by approximately 900 votes.\(^\text{56}\) He conceded the election and the *Mansfield News* announced that the "impossible had happened."\(^\text{57}\) The final tabulation of the votes cast gave his opponent a victory margin of 143 votes. Ashbrook carried Ashland, Coshocton, and Richland Counties but failed to win Knox, Delaware, and Licking Counties.\(^\text{58}\)

The Republican landslide in Ohio was unprecedented. The entire Republican state ticket was elected. Warren G. Harding overwhelmed James M. Cox in the Presidential race. All twenty-two

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55 Ibid., p. 1027.
Republican Congressional candidates were victorious. In his diary, Ashbrook wrote, "It would have been the greatest honor of my life to have survived this awful landslide. I would write my check for $10,000 as freely as buy a postage stamp to have won, and I don't make a practice of wasting money."  

After fourteen years in office, William Ashbrook tasted defeat in a Congressional race for the first time in 1920. Prior to the election of 1918 he had made the prediction that the war and prohibition would end his career after seven terms. His victory margin in 1918 indicated that his political strength as well as that of the Democratic Party was faltering. Over the next two years, issues stemming from the war, such as government or private ownership of the nation's railroads and the continuation of wartime prohibition over the President's veto made further inroads on his political popularity in Ohio's 17th District among the ranks of labor and the "wets." Without these strains of discord, Ashbrook would probably have survived the Republican landslide of 1920. However, when these discontented voters were joined by others rejecting the Democratic Party, the end result was just enough opposing votes to keep Ashbrook from escaping the Republican tidal wave.

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59 Delaware Semi-Weekly Journal Herald, November 9, 1920, p. 3.
60 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 1029-1030.
CHAPTER XIII

THE THIRD SESSION OF THE 66TH CONGRESS,

THE ELECTION OF 1922, THE LIFE OF

WILLIAM ASH BROOK - 1922-1934,

AND THE ELECTION OF 1934

The life of William Ashbrook took on a new dimension in late November, 1920. During the recent political campaign, he had met and courted Marie Swank of Bellville, Ohio. On November 25, they were married at Mansfield, Ohio. The newlyweds left the same day on a honeymoon trip to Chicago, Illinois. In early December, the couple arrived in Washington for the opening of the final session of the 66th Congress. This would also be the last session of Congress for Ashbrook unless he decided to seek another term in office.

Although recently married and soon to forfeit his political position, Ashbrook continued to work diligently for his constituents and attend the daily sessions of the House. On December 13, he voted favorably on a bill providing for the temporary suspension of

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1 Mansfield News, November 26, 1920, p. 4.
2 Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 1034.
immigration into the United States (H.R. 14461).\(^3\) Five days later, he approved a joint resolution directing the War Finance Corporation to help ease the existing agricultural depression (S.J.Res. 212). The President vetoed this measure and in early January, 1921, he voted to pass the resolution over the veto.\(^4\) When the House voted in mid-January on a joint resolution limiting the size of the army to 175,000 enlisted men (H.J.Res. 440), he extended his string of positive votes to four.\(^5\)

In early February, Ashbrook, badly in need of a rest, decided to take a vacation. On February 2, he and his wife departed from Norfolk, Virginia aboard the Cristobal for a cruise to Panama.\(^6\) The sixteen day cruise refreshed him. He returned to the Capitol on February 18 and began packing the contents of his office for shipment to Johnstown, Ohio. Roll calls in the House often interrupted his work. Before the adjournment of Congress, he walked to the House to support the following legislative proposals: the conference report on a bill limiting immigration into the United States (H.R. 14461); amendments to the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Appropriations Bill (H.R. 15543) increasing the finances allotted for the enforcement of prohibition and paying the employees of the

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\(^6\) Ashbrook, *Line a Day*, II, 1039.
United States a bonus; the conference report on the Army Appropriations Bill (H.R. 15943); and a bill imposing temporary import duties on certain agricultural products (H.R. 15275).\(^7\)

The official duties of Ashbrook ceased with the adjournment of Congress on March 4. Besides his own regret that his fourteen year reign in office was ending, two additional incidents helped make his departure from the Capitol a sad occasion. First, his close personal friend, Representative Champ Clark of Missouri, died on March 2.\(^8\) Then, on March 4, Warren G. Harding became President of the United States and Ashbrook noted in his diary,

Poor Woodrow Wilson rode to the Capitol with Harding but was not able to enter the Senate. Woodrow is a physical wreck, with much of his popularity gone, but the historian will record him as one of our greatest Presidents. . . . It was a trial for me to keep up my courage today but I did and am glad the day is done.\(^9\)

From Washington, he traveled to Bowling Green, Missouri, for the funeral of Champ Clark. On March 8, he arrived in Johnstown as a private citizen for the first time in fifteen years.\(^10\)

Private life did not particularly appeal to him. When Congress convened again in April, he concluded that it would be, "... pretty hard to forget and give up Washington life."\(^11\) The possibility

\(^7\)Congressional Record, 66th Cong., 3rd Sess., 1921, LX, Part 4, 3972, 3991, 3997, 4473, 4519.

\(^8\)Ashbrook, Line a Day, II, 1042.

\(^9\)Ibid., p. 1043.

\(^10\)Ibid., p. 1044.

\(^11\)Ibid., III, 1050.
of becoming a Congressional candidate in 1922 never left his mind. After a long personal debate, he confided to his diary in August, "I have rather a faint heart over my political prospects, but will go ahead and try once more just like a sure winner. My name has been on the ballot for eighteen years and no doubt many have grown tired of voting for me."\(^{12}\) His decision resulted from his inability to give up his political career. He did not need the salary he would earn as a Congressman. In November, after reviewing his financial situation, he found his assets totaled $325,000.00.\(^{13}\)

During the fall and winter months, he kept in touch with his political supporters.\(^{14}\) In March of 1922, he officially launched his political campaign by sponsoring a four-hundred plate Democratic banquet at Newark, Ohio. A. Vic Donahey, Democratic candidate for Governor of Ohio, and Senator Tom Heflin of Alabama were the principal speakers.\(^{15}\) Satisfied with the impression his dinner had made on those present, he campaigned extensively throughout the district in the weeks prior to the primary election.\(^{16}\) On August 8, he polled 11,930 votes. His two Democratic opponents, J. Freer Bittenger of Ashland, and Col. George D. Neal of Mt. Vernon, tallied 5,692

\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 1059.
\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 1067.
\(^{14}\) Ibid., pp. 1061, 1063-1066.
\(^{15}\) Newark Advocate, March 13, 1922, p. 1.
\(^{16}\) Ashbrook, Line a Day, III, 1081-1088.
and 1,777 votes respectively.\textsuperscript{17} Incumbent Republican, William M. Morgan won easily on the opposite ticket.\textsuperscript{18}

Ashbrook immediately intensified his campaign. Determined to win in November, he resorted to his past political practice of going out to meet the voters.\textsuperscript{19} On September 9, three days before a scheduled Democratic Party rally at the Newark Fair, his wife gave birth to a boy. Delighted, he attended the Newark Fair with A. Vic Donahey and refused to let the relatively small attendance dampen his spirits.\textsuperscript{20} His hopeful outlook persisted. Late in September, he confided to his diary, "... think I will be elected, but will leave no stone unturned for I know if I am defeated this time I am dead politically for all time."\textsuperscript{21}

Ashbrook believed the situation had changed by mid-October. In his diary, he wrote, "Morgan is strong with the farmers, organized labor solid behind him, my soldier ranks broken, the radical wets and radical drys both versus me and all disgruntled would-be P.M.'s are opposing me, to the end that I am considerably worried about my election."\textsuperscript{22} Events of the last two weeks of the month

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Newark Advocate}, August 9, 1922, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Newark Leader}, August 10, 1922, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{19}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, III, 1093-1095.
\textsuperscript{20}\textit{Newark Advocate}, September 13, 1922, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{21}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, III, 1097.
\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 1099.
did little to enhance his personal estimation of his chances of winning. The "wets" of Licking County unexpectedly endorsed him. On October 22, he noted in his diary,

> I am trying in every way to repudiate the wet endorsement, but you can never counteract fully a falsehood in circulation. My enemies are using it against me and the women have me tagged a wet and will be largely influenced by the lie and vote against me. I know the wets are not friendly, so I get the worst of it going and coming. Looks like defeat staring me in the face.23

In an effort to firmly establish his position on prohibition, Ashbrook first publicly repudiated the "wet" endorsement in a speech at Newark, Ohio on October 23.24 Then, he prepared 15,000 personal letters stating his stand on prohibition and mailed them to both Republicans and Democrats throughout the district on October 30. A few days later, he noted in his diary, "My enemies are using the dry letter to prejudice the wets with good effect."25 However, the Newark Advocate predicted on the same day that he would win on November 7.26

On general election day, the results justified Ashbrook's pessimism. By the evening of November 7, Ashbrook's defeat in Licking County appeared to be by over 1,000 votes and he knew he could not win.27 In his diary, he wrote, "It was the hardest jolt

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24 *Newark Advocate*, October 24, 1922, p. 4; *Newark Leader*, October 26, 1922, p. 6.
25 *Ashbrook, Line a Day*, III, 1102.
26 *Newark Advocate*, November 4, 1922, p. 4.
of my life, as I had lived on hope for the past two years and knew now all hope was gone and I had reached my political finish." 28

When all the votes had been tabulated, Ashbrook had 41,752 votes and Morgan, 42,326. Morgan led in Licking County by 1,221 votes, in Delaware County by 876 votes, and in Knox County by 483 votes. Ashbrook carried Ashland County by 1,150 votes, Coshocton County by 331 votes, and Richland County by 425 votes. 29 In summarizing the cause of his 524 vote defeat, Ashbrook penned, "The wets kicked Ashbrook in the stern, the drys in the stomach, labor laid him out, and the W.C.T.U. placed forget-me-nots in his hands. For all these kindnesses, thanks." 30

Ashbrook, despite his second consecutive defeat, still found it impossible immediately to forsake his political career. In March, 1923 he confided to his diary, "I would like very much of course to have another term in Congress and be able to retire voluntarily. As it is, I feel both humiliated and repudiated." 31 The possibility of trying for one more term in office weighed on his mind the rest of the year. On election day in November, he noted, "This was election day but no getting up at 5 and standing at the polls all day, although I would gladly do so if it would bring about my most

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29 Newark Advocate, November 10, 1922, p. 1.
31 Ashbrook, Line a Day, III, 1114.
coveted desire.\textsuperscript{32} However, his political ambitions began to disappear in January, 1924. During his years in Washington, he had become President of both the Johnstown Citizens Bank and the Johnstown Building and Loan Corporation. The Johnstown Bank had competed locally with his bank for years. In late January, the two banks merged and Ashbrook was elected President of the new financial establishment.\textsuperscript{33} Prior to the completion of the merger, he had written in his diary, "Marie doesn't want me to run for Congress again and when this bank merger is a reality, I will banish politics forever and be content with my family and business interests."\textsuperscript{34} Three months later, he further expanded his business career by reviving the Ashbrook Insurance Agency in Johnstown. Satisfied with his new and old business responsibilities, he announced on May 12 that he would not enter the 1924 Congressional race.\textsuperscript{35} The political urge struck him again in 1926 but he had made his decision and announced once again that he would not be a candidate.\textsuperscript{36}

In the years from 1922 to 1934, Ashbrook's life revolved around his family and business career. After a childless first marriage, the growth of his family to a total of five children never

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., p. 1139.
\textsuperscript{33}The Johnstown Independent, January 30, 1924, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{34}Ashbrook, Line a Day, III, 1146.
\textsuperscript{35}Newark Advocate, May 12, 1924, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{36}Newark Advocate, May 5, 1924, p. 1.
ceased to please him. The second child, Lucy Marie, was born in December, 1923. The other three children, Leah Abbie, John Milan, and James Howard, entered the world in 1926, 1928, and 1930. 37 Although the proud father spent considerable time with his family, his business interests occupied the bulk of his waking hours. Besides the bank, loan corporation, and insurance agency, he continued to publish *The Johnstown Independent* and deal in real estate. 38 His ability to handle these various investments earned him a position of prominence in county financial circles and increased his assets. In March, 1929, he was elected permanent President of the newly formed Licking County Bankers' Association. 39 By this date, his property was valued at almost $450,000.00. 40

Until 1931, his economic endeavors continued to prosper. Since he had never been interested in buying stocks, the crash of 1929 had no immediate adverse effect on him. However, by April, 1931, he was concerned that the downward spiral of the nation's economy would eventually force him to close his bank. 41 The state of economic affairs also did not improve his health, which had been

37 *Coshocton Tribune*, August 9, 1934, p. 12.
38 *Newark Advocate*, June 15, 1934, p. 1.
39 *Newark Advocate*, March 16, 1929, p. 3.
deteriorating due to heart trouble and high blood pressure.\textsuperscript{42} To relieve the tight money situation gripping his bank like a vise, he obtained a loan in March, 1932 from the Cleveland branch of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. The loan helped improve the precarious position of his bank and gave him hope that his bank and loan company would survive.\textsuperscript{43}

His bank and loan company managed to stay in business. Then, in October, 1933, when the local financial situation again became desperate, to improve his bank's fiscal position he personally assumed responsibility for many outstanding loans it had made. He confided to his diary, "I expect to lose $100,000.00 and won't mind it if I can save my face and credit and prevent loss of those who have confidence in me."\textsuperscript{44} To further stabilize his bank's financial position, he decided to seek admittance to the government program guaranteeing bank deposits. After experiencing various examinations of his bank by the government, he received word on December 20 that his bank would be admitted to the government program.\textsuperscript{45}

Delighted with the news, Ashbrook attended a meeting of the Licking County Bankers' Association later in the day. When this organization refused to adopt the code of the N.R.A., he became

\textsuperscript{42}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 1440.
\textsuperscript{43}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 1459.
\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 1526.
\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 1535.
upset when he returned to Johnstown and suffered a heart attack. His personal physician warned him the next morning to slow down or run the risk of permanently disabling himself. The next day, the bankers of the county revived his spirits by rescinding their decision and he resolved to watch his health more closely in the future.

Despite his personal resolution, Ashbrook was unable to relax during the early months of 1934. He had improved the bank's financial situation but assured stability was not yet in sight for the institution. In January, another local economic problem confronted him. The losses endured by the Johnstown Building and Loan Corporation made its liquidation feasible. To forestall the dissolution of the company, Ashbrook took a $33,000.00 personal loss. His personal worries about certain aspects of the Federal Government's economic recovery programs compounded the strain which his local problems placed on his heart. To his diary, he confided, "The government is attempting to reduce production and help the farmers. Will avail myself of the offer but fear the government is wasting money trying to regulate prices. Times must get better or the government will be worse off than the people." A few weeks later, he wrote, "The government now has a debt of nearly 35 billion and is piling up a

46 *Newark Advocate*, December 21, 1933, p. 6.
47 *Newark Advocate*, December 23, 1933, p. 5.
49 Ibid., p. 1540.
half billion per month. I don't like to question the President but he surely is leading us somewhere, I know not where. One thing sure, someone must pay sometime." His personal concern for both the local and national economic situation kept his blood pressure too high for his own good. In late May and early June, his health finally improved when he deserted his bank office and spent several days overseeing the improvement of the various farms he owned. The hours outdoors, coupled with an increase in both bank and loan company business, helped to reduce his blood pressure to a safe level. His improved physical condition influenced an important decision he made on June 15.

On June 14, Charles West of Granville, Ohio, who had been elected to Congress in the 17th District in 1930 and 1932, announced that he was now a candidate for United States Senator. After reading the evening paper, Ashbrook noted in his diary,

Did not suppose I would ever think of getting in politics again but it looks like here was a good chance for me to redeem myself. The candidates mentioned do not seem to be very strong. My health is the big deterrent. Fear I could not stand the campaign. . . . My business interests need my whole attention, my health is precarious, and my family all tell me to forget it.

The next morning, Ashbrook was undecided whether to drive to Newark and check on the political situation there or to his farms. He

50 Ibid., p. 1542.
51 Ibid., pp. 1554-1555.
52 Coshocton Tribune, June 14, 1934, p. 1.
53 Ashbrook, Line a Day, III, 1557.
decided to talk to his political friends in Newark. After a brief conference in B. F. McDonald's law office, Ashbrook gave six of his old supporters who were present permission to secure nominating petitions for him. Since this was the last day for candidates to file, a hectic day followed as his friends drove to various cities in the district and hustled the filled petitions back to Newark by early afternoon. Ashbrook's wife drove him to Mansfield and he arrived there before the 6:30 P.M. deadline. At the end of the day, Ashbrook confided to his diary, "Now, if my health does not fail, honestly believe I have a chance to return to Washington, which would crown out my life and wash away the past disappointments. It would be wonderful for an old timer to come to life again."55

In the Democratic primary, Ashbrook opposed Charles M. Beer of Ashland, manager of the Ohio State Fair, Assistant Director of Agriculture for the State of Ohio, and Democratic State Central Committeeman for the 17th District, and Emmett R. Guthrie of Coshocton, former state representative.56 Of the two candidates, Ashbrook believed Beer was the more formidable opponent from the onset of the campaign. In Licking County, Herbert J. Murphy, head of the county branch of the Democratic Party, and Fred Vogelmeier, an influential politician, openly supported the candidate from Ashland.57

55Ashbrook, Line a Day, III, 1557.
57Coshocton Tribune, June 20, 1934, p. 2.
Furthermore, Beer had many friends in the state administration across the district who along with numerous agrarian and sportsman interests would support him.58

On June 21, Ashbrook opened his campaign by attending a Democratic rally at Mansfield.59 The next day, he toured Knox County and found that many old supporters still remembered him. Although well received on these two junkets, he was worried. His mail was not very heavy and the rumors of Beer's strength which he had heard did not appear to be exaggerated. Late in June his concern deepened after he spent a few days campaigning in Newark. Many old "wets" still opposed him and the Beer forces were extremely active in the city. He realized he did not have a supporting organization of like caliber in any county.60 In early July, he found the situation in Coshocton was not particularly bright for him either. Many of his old supporters had passed away. On July 7, after spending another day in Newark, he confided to his diary,

I am alone in the storm; have no dead-in-earnest supporters. Everywhere I go I learn of the activities of my enemies. I am sick and discouraged and feel that I do not have a chance to win. . . . What a serious mistake I made when I got into this mess. I have plenty of friends but they are just voters, not workers.61

Still determined to win despite the evidence of his own


60 Ashbrook, Line a Day, III, 1560.

61 Ibid., p. 1561.
weaknesses he had found, Ashbrook organized a club to support him in Licking County. James M. Schaller and George McDonald headed the new organization and began to round up support for Ashbrook in his home county.62 These two men also composed advertisements for the district newspapers emphasizing Ashbrook's successful business career, his position as President of the Licking County Bankers' Association, his wide recognition as "Pension Bill," the history of his Widow's Pension Bill, and his endeavors to diligently serve his constituents during his previous seven terms in office.63 In the meantime, Ashbrook, surprised that his heart was holding up so well, continued to attend political rallies and canvass the towns of the district. The encouragement he received bolstered his hopes. After speaking at a big Democratic rally in Mansfield on July 29, he wrote in his diary, "It does not look so bad. I know all the leaders and bosses are for Beer but I hope to have the people."64

To Ashbrook, A. Vic Donahey, Democratic candidate for U.S. Senator, Martin L. Davey, Democratic candidate for Governor, and himself, appeared to be the choice of those people wanting to oppose the state political machine.65 On August 2, these three candidates

63Newark Advocate, August 9, 1934, p. 3; Mansfield News Journal, August 9, 1934, p. 12; Coshocton Tribune, August 9, 1934, p. 12.
64Ashbrook, Line a Day, III, 1564.
65Ibid., pp. 1564-1565.
received an enthusiastic welcome at the Delaware County Fair. An inspired Ashbrook, closed his campaign with a rush. He spoke at Newark, Ohio on August 4, and at Mansfield on August 6, along with Donahey and Davey. In the remaining days prior to the August 14 primary, he made a final tour of the district, secured the written endorsement of several old soldiers, and mailed out 25,000 personal letters at his own expense.

On the eve of the election, Beer claimed that several old soldiers had not signed the letter of endorsement Ashbrook had circulated. However, Ashbrook did not believe this move would do him any great harm. The election results the next day proved him right. He won the primary with 14,277 votes to 10,687 for Beer, and 4,999 for Guthrie. He carried all the district counties except Ashland, Beer's home. In Licking County, he led the ticket by 1,617 votes. Martin L. Davey and A. Vic Donahey were also primary winners.

In his diary, Ashbrook wrote,

To come back after 14 years in the sticks and political obscurity shows that the people remember and appreciate good service. I did not have a half dozen real workers in the district out in the open. It was a quiet, friendly sentiment that put me over in such fine fashion.

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66 Newark Advocate, August 3, 1934, p. 4.
67 Newark Advocate, August 4, 1934, p. 2; Mansfield News Journal, August 5, 1934, p. 4.
68 Ashbrook, Line a Day, III, 1566-1567.
69 Mansfield News Journal, August 13, 1934, p. 3.
70 Newark Advocate, August 15, 1934, p. 1.
71 Ashbrook, Line a Day, III, 1567.
In the general election, Ashbrook's Republican opponent was James A. Glenn of Coshocton. A lawyer by profession, Glenn had been William M. Morgan's secretary during six of the ten years Morgan had represented the 17th District in Washington and had served two terms in the Ohio Legislature. In both his primary and general election campaigns, he vehemently attacked the New Deal. His personal platform called for a reduction of bureaucracy in the government, a reduction of the nation's debt, economy in the administration of government, exercise of all lawmaking powers by Congress, and protection of the interests of agriculture, labor, and business.\footnote{Coshocton Tribune, June 17, 1934, p. 10; Newark Advocate, July 17, 1934, p. 12; Mansfield News Journal, August 6, 1934, p. 10.}

In his general election campaign, Ashbrook campaigned on the opposite tack. He supported the principles of the New Deal, particularly the guarantee of bank deposits and the N.R.A. In a speech at Newark, Ohio on October 10, after being introduced by A. Vic Donahey, Ashbrook praised the New Deal by claiming it had restored the confidence of the people in bank deposits and looked to the forgotten, common man.\footnote{Newark Advocate, October 11, 1934, p. 1.}

In another Newark speech on October 29, shortly after Martin L. Davey had given him his personal endorsement, Ashbrook proclaimed, "The New Deal is here to stay. The Old Deal is Dead."\footnote{Newark Advocate, October 30, 1934, p. 2.} In the newspapers of the district, Ashbrook publicized his support of the principles of the New Deal, his belief in a national old-age pension,
his endorsement of A. Vic Donahey, his endorsement by Frank Morrison, Secretary of the American Federation of Labor, and his resolution to support all legislation beneficial to the people as a whole.75

The election was held on November 6. At the age of 67, Ashbrook won an eighth term in office with a 7,383 majority. He carried Licking, Ashland, and Richland Counties by big margins and lost Coshocton, Knox, and Delaware by very small margins.76 The two men he had campaigned with also won. A. Vic Donahey overwhelmed New Deal critic, Simeon D. Fess, and Martin L. Davey was elected Governor of Ohio with a majority of over 75,000 votes. The Democratic Party won eighteen of Ohio's 24 seats in the national House of Representatives.77

After an easy victory in the primary election of 1922, Ashbrook opposed William M. Morgan in a general election for the second time. The Republican candidate's cause was bolstered by the "wets" endorsement of Ashbrook in Licking County. The power of the Anti-Saloon League and the W.C.T.U. in Ohio politics at this time and his own dry sentiments caused Ashbrook to repudiate the endorsement. However, he later learned that his action had not won back many of

75Coshocton Tribune, October 30, 1934, p. 3; Newark Advocate, November 1, 1934, p. 9; Mansfield News Journal, November 1, 1934, p. 8.

76Newark Advocate, November 7, 1934, p. 5.

77Newark Advocate, November 8, 1934, p. 1.
the "drys" and had further alienated the "wets." This factor, in addition to the gain in political strength Morgan had made during his term in office, defeated Ashbrook by over 1,000 votes in Licking County. When Ashbrook did not defeat Morgan by enough votes in the rest of the 17th District to offset the loss in Licking County, he suffered the second defeat of his Congressional career.

In 1934, after a twelve year absence from the political arena, Ashbrook entered the Congressional race when Charles West, the Democratic incumbent, withdrew. In the primary election, Ashbrook's extensive personal campaign, past record and achievements, and appearances with candidates Donahey and Davey were the primary factors in his victory. In the general election, Ashbrook endorsed the principles of the New Deal and continued to campaign with both Donahey and Davey. A Democratic landslide swept all three men into office.
CHAPTER XIV

THE FIRST AND SECOND SESSIONS OF THE 74TH
CONGRESS AND THE ELECTION OF 1936

On January 3, 1935, Ashbrook entered the Capitol Building to begin his eighth term in office. In his diary, he wrote,

I have to pinch myself to be sure that I am again a sure enough Congressman. Fourteen years in, fourteen years out and then back in again is a unique record. The first session of the 74th Congress convened at 12 o'clock noon today. I took all five kiddies on to the floor of the House to see and hear their daddy sworn in. I hope they will never forget this day and event.¹

Upon the return to his family to Johnstown, Ashbrook turned his attention to the details of political life in Washington. On January 5, he introduced a bill to extend greater federal aid to rural post roads and school bus routes (H.R. 2731).² On the same day, he attempted to secure information as to what committee assignments had been made. Two days later, he learned that he would be appointed to

¹ Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1586.
the Committee on Post Office and Post Roads. His next action was to begin answering the mail that had accumulated in his office. He had never liked the presence of unanswered mail and within a few days he had worked out a daily schedule that permitted him to attend the sessions of the House and keep pace with most of his correspondence.

In early 1934, Ashbrook had been upset about the huge sums the Roosevelt administration was spending and the subsequent effect on the national debt. On January 22, 1935, he noted in his diary,

The Democrats had a caucus this afternoon on the four and half billion dollar bill the President has called for without an earmark. Hated to swallow it but we did. That is a tremendous sum to give to one man to expend as he will. Have faith in Roosevelt but it is a bad precedent.

This train of thought continued to bother him the next day and he wrote, "We can not continue this way much longer with inflation or the U.S. will be like Germany." On January 4, he honored the President's request by supporting the Emergency Relief Appropriation Bill (H.J.Res. 117). In contrast to his vote on this bill, he had no

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qualms about voting to pass a bill extending the functions of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (S. 1175) a few days later.\(^8\)

His thoughts on fiscal issues appeared in his diary again in mid-February. On February 18, he wrote,

The Supreme Court today rendered its decision, 5-4, that the recent devaluation of gold was constitutional, which makes the President's inflation legal. Glad they did, but don't know how they did it. Fine for Roosevelt and the Democratic party, but I hope no further attempts to inflate will be made.\(^9\)

The next day he attended a meeting of monetary expansionists in the House caucus room. A series of speakers discussed the ease with which the economy could be expanded to achieve prosperity, but Ashbrook came away unconvinced and leary of expansion.\(^10\) This concern for finances caused him to cast negative votes for purely economic reasons in the House for the first time since his return to Congress. On March 4, he voted against a bill increasing the clerical allowance of Representatives to $6,000.00 (H.R. 6028) and noted in his diary that the allowance had been only $1,200.00 when he first came to Congress.\(^11\) The bill proposing to allow any Supreme Court Justice qualified to retire to do so at his salary at that time and granting the President the power to appoint a successor (H.R. 5161) caused a

\(^8\)Ibid., Part 2, p. 1316.

\(^9\)Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1592.

\(^10\)Ibid.

roll call on March 6, and again he voted negatively. 12 The House voted a few days later on the Home Mortgage Relief Bill (H.R. 6021). Before voting to accept the conference report on the bill, Ashbrook opposed a motion to recommit the bill and provide for additional appropriations. 13

Following the passage of the Home Mortgage Relief Bill, Ashbrook drove home to see his family. His secretary wired him on March 21 that the House was close to a vote on the Soldiers Bill (H.R. 3896). Ashbrook knew he had to vote on this bill. In January, he had announced in the House that he would support the Bonus Bill and, if necessary, vote to pass it over a Presidential veto. 14 The Newark Moundbuilders Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars had subsequently made him an honorary member of their organization in recognition of his announcement. 15 He hurried back to Washington and arrived in time the next day to be present for the final vote on the bill. 16 To his diary, he confided, "It would have just about ruined me if I had missed the bonus bill vote." 17

13 Ibid., p. 3479.
14 Ibid., Part 1, p. 503.
16 Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 1st Sess., 1935, LXXIX, Part 4, 4313.
17 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1596.
The next morning, he considered returning to Johnstown but abandoned the idea when the Senate passed the President's big relief bill later in the day. Subsequent House debate on this measure caused him to write in his diary, "Roosevelt may get by next year but fear was it not for his relief program he would be doomed. He is creating too heavy a public debt. We can't long stand the strain." The final conference report on the bill came to a vote in the House on April 5. Ashbrook voted to accept the report and confided to his diary, ". . . I have voted for it each time although I still consider it a dangerous precedent to vest so vast a sum in the hands of one man." 

Ashbrook returned to the House the next day to listen to debate on the bill designed to prevent war profiteering (H.R. 5529). For him, it was almost ironic that this discussion should occur on April 6. In his diary, he wrote, "Eighteen years ago today Congress voted a declaration of war against the Imperial Government of Germany. Will never forget that day and hope I will never live to see it repeated." His actions on April 6, 1935 revealed that his aversion to war and its costs had not died during his absence from the House. Earlier in the Congressional session, he had included in his endorsement of the Soldiers Bonus Bill a statement to the effect

18 Ibid., pp. 1596-1597.
20 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1597.
that even if faced with political exile nothing short of an invasion of the United States would ever cause him to vote for war again. As the Capitol celebrated Army Day, Ashbrook now repeated this statement to reporters. Looking back on the actual war vote itself, he informed them, "It was a mistake but the pressure was so great then that anyone not so voting would not have been considered a good American." Three days after making these remarks, he voted in favor of the antiwar profiteering bill in the House and noted in his diary, "It may not mean much but it is a gesture in the right direction."

Ashbrook voted on a bill in mid-April that he considered far more important than the antiwar profiteering bill. Throughout his 1934 political campaign, he had supported the creation of a national old age pension. The opportunity to make his pledge good came on April 9 and he proceeded to vote in favor of the bill establishing a national Social Security Board (H.R. 7260). He soon learned that not everyone shared his satisfaction with the bill. On April 22, he confided to his diary, "Many of my constituents are sorely disappointed because the Townsend $200 per month old age pension bill was cast aside and I expect will vote against me but I can't bankrupt

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23Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 1st Sess., 1935, LXXIX, Part 6, 6068.
the government to insure my re-election." The discontent of some did not dissuade him. In August, on the day the President signed the bill, he wrote, "A few years ago this legislation would have been regarded as crazy, socialist, but we have learned we are 'our brother's keeper' and that law is here to stay." Following the passage of the bill in April, Ashbrook went home to see his family. Consequently, he was not present when the House voted on the Naval Appropriations Bill (H.R. 7672).

Shortly after his return to Washington, he learned that the President would probably veto the Soldiers Bonus Bill. In his diary, he quipped, "If he does, he will be vetoed next year. Think he is slipping in popularity." While waiting on the President to act, he supported a bill providing for the sound operation of the national banking system (H.R. 7617). Ashbrook learned on May 18 that the President planned to deliver his veto message to the House in person. In his diary, he wrote, "He would not change my vote if he came to my office to deliver it. The soldier boys are entitled to the bonus and

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24 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1600.
25 Ibid., p. 1615.
26 Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 1st Sess., 1935, LXXIX, Part 6, 6487.
27 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1602.
I will stay by them."²⁹ The President delivered his message in person on May 22. True to his word, Ashbrook voted to override the Presidential veto.³⁰ His worry now was the Senate. He feared that if the Senate sustained the President, many Democrats, including the President and himself, would be defeated in 1936.³¹ His disenchantment with President Roosevelt appeared in his diary again in late May when the Supreme Court declared the N.R.A. unconstitutional.

Ashbrook, who had made his support of the N.R.A. known in 1934, wrote, "... think it was a wise decision. F.D.R. undoubtedly means well but is rather too ambitious and zealous. There was much in the N.R.A. for good but there were too many codes. It puts a crimp at least temporarily in the President's popularity."³²

After the relatively slow legislative month of May, the pace of the House quickened in June. On June 5, Ashbrook supported an amendment removing the clause from a National Defense Bill (H.R. 5720) that would allow the President to call out certain officers of the National Guard in case of a national emergency. When the amendment was rejected, he voted against the passage of the bill.³³ Two days

²⁹ Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1604.

³⁰ Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 1st Sess., 1935, LXXIX, Part 7, 7996.

³¹ Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1604.

³² Ibid., p. 1605.

³³ Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 1st Sess., 1935, LXXIX Part 8, 8721, 8726.
later, he went on the opposite tack and supported the Wagner-Connery Labor Bill which established a permanent, independent National-Labor Relations Board (S.J.Res. 117). His concern for economy put him back in the negative column when the House voted on the bill to develop the American Merchant Marine by government subsidization (H.R. 8555). On the same day, he supported the Legislative Appropriation Bill (H.R. 8021).

In July, 1935, Ashbrook continued to support some legislative proposals and oppose others. The Wheeler-Rayburn Utility Bill (S. 2796), which the President supported, came to a vote on July 2. In his diary, Ashbrook wrote, "I voted against the 'death sentence' and for the House bill which provides for rigid regulation of holding companies and utilities but no annihilation. My conscience approves my vote and that is the big thing." A few days after this vote, he noted, "Roosevelt is slipping badly but the Republicans are disorganized and lack leadership so he may get by next year but looks none too good to me." When he received some letters from his constituents

34Ibid., p. 8899.


36Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1610; Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 1st Sess., 1935, LXXIX, Part 10, 10,289, 10,295; Columbus Evening Dispatch, July 3, 1935, p. 3.

37Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1611.
objecting to his vote, he confided to his diary, "No doubt some radicals think I should follow the President blindly." 38

After another brief trip home, Ashbrook supported a bill authorizing the exchange of coins and currencies and immediate payment of gold clause securities by the Federal Government (H.J.Res. 348) on July 18. 39 He also supported a bill to protect the revenue derived from distilled spirits, wine, and malt beverages (H.R. 8870), and a bill to further develop flood control along the Mississippi River (H.R. 7349). 40 In another attempt to avoid spending money, on July 22, he opposed the conference report on the bill containing the annual appropriations for the Department of the Interior (H.R. 6223). 41

After voting against President Roosevelt on the Soldiers Bonus Bill and the Wheeler-Rayburn Bill, Ashbrook supported him on three legislative proposals during August. On August 5, he voted favorably on the President's "tax the rich" bill (H.R. 8974). 42 A bill to stabilize the bituminous coal industry passed the House on August 19 with the help of his supporting vote. 43 The conference

38 Ibid.
40 Ibid., Part 11, pp. 11,799, 12,113.
41 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1612; Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 1st Sess., 1935, LXXIX, Part 11, 11,596.
42 Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 1st Sess., 1935, LXXIX, Part 11, 12,499.
43 Ibid., Part 13, p. 13,666.
report on the Tennessee Valley Authority Bill of 1935 (H.R. 8632) came to a vote in the House two days later. In July, Ashbrook had noted that he did not like the bill but thought he would, "... have to swallow it." He swallowed it on August 21.44

During this same span of time, Ashbrook also continued his attempts to reduce government spending. He first opposed the bill amending the Agricultural Adjustment Act to provide for the control of potato production (H.R. 8492) because it would cost the government $11,000,000.00 annually to administer such a program.45 He then voted against a bill authorizing construction of certain bridges (H.R. 9070).46 On August 20, he did not support the Omnibus Bill (H.R. 9100), but the bill passed the House.47 Angered, Ashbrook, who believed he had voted to save money whenever it had been feasible during this Congressional session, confided to his diary on this day, "It is almost criminal the way money is being squandered. It must stop or the nation will be bankrupt."48

The debate and vote on the Neutrality Act of 1935 (S.J.Res. 173) interrupted his worries about financial spending for a day on

44 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1611; Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 1st Sess., 1935, LXXIX, Part 13, 14,010.


48 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1616.
August 23. This measure prohibited the export of arms, ammunition, and implements of war to belligerent countries, prohibited the transportation of the same materials on ships of the United States and restricted travel by American citizens on the ships of belligerents during war. Ashbrook's prior experiences in Congress determined his position on the bill. In support of the bill, he stated on the House floor, "I should like to say that I served in Congress during the World War and there is not a vote that I then cast that I regret as I do the vote I cast against the McLemore resolution. I am happy to vote for this resolution."\(^49\) The House passed the resolution and Ashbrook believed the action was the only outstanding thing done during the twelve hours the House was in session.\(^50\)

The next day, while supporting conference reports on the bill to protect the revenue derived from liquors and the "tax the rich" bill, Ashbrook opposed the bill giving the President authority until March, 1936 to cancel fraudulent or illegal ocean mail contracts (S.J.Res. 175), and the final conference report on the Wheeler-Rayburn Utility Bill.\(^51\) After the utility bill vote, he confided to his diary, "I am fed up with White House 'must' stuff."\(^52\) When the

\(^49\) *Congressional Record*, 74th Cong., 1st Sess., 1935, LXXIX, Part 13, 14,357.

\(^50\) Ashbrook, *Line a Day*, IV, 1617.

\(^51\) *Congressional Record*, 74th Cong., 1st Sess., 1935, LXXIX, Part 13, 14,572, 14,644, 14,599, 14,626.

\(^52\) Ashbrook, *Line a Day*, IV, 1617.
Senate increased certain appropriations and caused the House to rescind its resolution to adjourn in the first hours of the next day, he vowed in his diary to oppose all increases and added, "Congress must quit spending or both the Democratic party and the country will be gone."\(^{53}\)

Ashbrook spent the last two days before adjournment of Congress completing various constituent errands, making numerous departmental calls and preparing his office for his absence. With these details out of the way, he spent the final few hours before adjournment of the House listening to Huey Long filibuster in the Senate. The first session of the 74th Congress ended on August 26 and he wrote in his diary, "Am well pleased with the record I have made. I have given my constituents good service and my conscience is clear on every vote cast."\(^{54}\)

When Ashbrook arrived in Johnstown on August 27, he had hopes of resting during the final months of 1935. However, his mail was so heavy and his personal callers so numerous his blood pressure soared to a dangerous level. To save his heart, he rested frequently during the day, avoided becoming involved in the affairs of his own business interests, and devoted his working hours solely to

\(^{53}\)Ibid.

\(^{54}\)Ibid.
Congressional matters. By late September, his blood pressure had dropped to a safe level.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 1618-1621.}

Ashbrook continued to watch his health closely throughout his stay in Ohio despite a series of events that upset him. On October 6, he noted in his diary, "Italy and Ethiopia are in war at last and it looks like a world war unless soon settled. Will resign and come home before I will vote for a declaration of war unless we are invaded."\footnote{Ibid., p. 1622.} Besides the turbulent state of international affairs, supporters of the Townsend pension plan annoyed him with letters and personal calls. In late October, he confided to his diary, "The Townsendites will likely make me much trouble in next campaign. They try to get me committed. It seems absurd and yet too many favor it to laugh it off."\footnote{Ibid., p. 1624.} Six weeks later, after learning that the Townsend supporters were searching for a candidate to oppose him in 1936, he wrote, "The Townsendites no longer request but demand. Congressmen pledge support for their crazy bill."\footnote{Ibid., p. 1630.} By the end of December, a tired Ashbrook was looking forward to the beginning of the second session of the 74th Congress in January, 1936.\footnote{Ibid., p. 1632.}

As he expected, the return to the routine of his Washington
office, plus a vegetable diet and plenty of rest, revitalized him and enabled him to discharge diligently his voting duties during this Congressional session. During January he made a speech in favor of the Soldiers Bonus Bill (H.R. 9870), then voted in favor of the original House version of the bill, the Senate compromise bill, and the motion to pass the bill over the President's veto.

In February, he supported the following legislative proposals: a bill repealing the Tobacco, Cotton, and Potato Acts (S. 3934); a bill extending the Neutrality Act of 1935 for one year (H.J.Res. 491); and a bill promoting soil conservation and utilization (S. 3780).

When the House considered the rejection of a bill that insured the taxable immunity of shares of stock, notes, and debentures owned by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, Ashbrook voted "NAY." The following month, he supported the continuation of the Electric Home and Farm Authority (S. 3424). Then, in April, while supporting the Revenue Act of 1936 (H.R. 12395), he voted against bills to provide for the control of tobacco production (H.R. 12037), and to aid corporations that had lost money during World War I.

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60 Ibid., p. 1634.
62 Ibid., Part 2, pp. 1500, 2253; Part 3, 2578.
63 Ibid., Part 3, p. 2794.
64 Ibid., Part 4, p. 4350.
65 Ibid., Part 6, p. 6367; Part 5, p. 5211; Part 6, p. 6452.
In mid-May, the bill to refinance and liquidate agricultural indebtedness (H.R. 2066) came to a vote in the House. Ashbrook had noted in his diary on May 4, "Attended a meeting of the Frazier-Lemke crowd tonight. It is rather too much inflation but the farmers need encouragement." Six days later, Ashbrook, who had returned to Ohio to visit his family, received a telegram from Congressman Lemke that the House was nearing a vote on the bill. An all night drive enabled Ashbrook to arrive in time the next day to support a motion discharging the Committee on Agriculture from further consideration of the bill. In his diary, he wrote, "You can never explain why you missed a vote." On May 13, he voted for the bill but it was defeated by a large margin.

In the final weeks of the second session of the 74th Congress, Ashbrook both supported and opposed many legislative proposals. Prior to adjournment, he voted in favor of the following: a motion to recommit the Navy Department Appropriations Bill and reduce the expenditures allotted for submarine construction; the Deficiency Appropriation Bill (H.R. 12624); the Federal Aid Highway Act (H.R. 11687); the

66 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1648.
67 Ibid., pp. 1649-1650.
68 Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1936, LXXX, Part 6, 7026.
69 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1650.
70 Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1936, LXXX, Part 6, 7229.
Omnibus Claims Bill (H.R. 11215); a bill to extend the civil service to all first, second, and third class postmasters (H.R. 3251); and the conference report on the Revenue Act of 1936 (H.R. 12395).\textsuperscript{71} In contrast to these positive votes, he voted negatively on the following: a bill to canalize the Rio Grande River (H.R. 11765); a bill to control floods on the Mississippi River (S. 3531); a bill to establish an Air Corps Technical School at Denver, Colorado (S. 3398); a bill to provide for flood control (H.R. 8455); a bill requiring the registration of lobbyists (H.R. 11663); a bill to acquire land for a naval air station at Alameda, California (S. 4020); and a bill to maintain and administer the Blue Ridge Parkway (H.R. 12455).\textsuperscript{72}

From the day he had returned to Washington until November, the elections of 1936 occupied a part of Ashbrook's time. In January, he mailed 4,000 copies of his speech endorsing the Soldiers Bonus Bill to his district. When the bill became a law, he forwarded applications to all eligible veterans and noted in his diary, "Know they will appreciate my promptness and thoughtfulness."\textsuperscript{73} Despite a favorable response to these actions, he confided to his diary on February 11,

\textsuperscript{71}Ibid., Part 6, p. 6543; Part 7, p. 7022; Part 8, p. 8704; Part 10, pp. 10,229, 10,270.

\textsuperscript{72}Ibid., Part 6, p. 6675; Part 7, pp. 7789, 7811; Part 8, p. 8862; Part 9, p. 9752; Part 10, pp. 10,249, 10,614.

\textsuperscript{73}Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1636.
"Heavy mail and some ugly Townsend letters. If I am defeated, the Townsendites will do it."74 His concern for the strength of the Townsend pension plan supporters soon heightened. Lloyd L. Kochenderfer, a Mansfield Democrat, announced in late February that he would oppose Ashbrook in the primary and demand the immediate enactment of the Townsend plan as a recovery measure and a national retirement annuity.75 On this event, Ashbrook wrote, "One thing sure, I would not pledge myself to support anything simply to get votes. The office does not mean that much to me."76

Ashbrook's worries over the May primary persisted when he realized in late March that his work in Washington would not permit him to campaign personally in his district.77 To counteract the Townsend candidate's platform, he launched a newspaper campaign stressing his belief that a good record was safer than a good promise.78 On the eve of the primary, he confided to his diary, "Well, I am 400 miles from the voters and will soon know what they think of me. Can't believe a majority will be fooled by the Townsend pot of gold."79 The results of the May 12 primary proved his forecast

74Ibid., p. 1637.
75Coshocton Tribune, May 7, 1936, p. 12.
76Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1639.
77Ibid., p. 1642.
79Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1650.
correct. Ashbrook polled 17,607 votes to his opponent's 4,750 votes. Satisfied with the size of his victory, he turned his attention to the November election and wrote in his diary,

James Glenn defeated his five opponents and we will cross bats again. . . . It is too bad I must quit but my age and health makes this my last campaign. . . . The way the wind is blowing now it looks like most anyone on the Democratic ticket would be elected in November. F. D. [Roosevelt] is as strong as horse radish.

Despite this hopeful view of Democratic prospects, he did not plan to take his campaign lightly. A few days later, he noted, "Don't see how Glenn can beat me but expect to work like I was scared to death until the polls close in what will be my last political campaign." 82

Prior to the adjournment of Congress and his return to Ohio, Ashbrook attended some of the committee meetings in which Dr. Francis E. Townsend, the creator of the Townsend pension plan, was subjected to questioning by an investigating body. Later, he confided to his diary, "He is an old faker, insincere and the head of a racket to milk the old people who believe he will get them an old age pension of $200 per month. It's silly to think about." 83 Desiring to make his own position on old age pensions a matter of record, Ashbrook stated in a June 2 House speech, "I believe sincerely and conscientiously in

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81 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1650.
82 Ibid., p. 1651.
83 Ibid.
reasonable old age pensions. A satisfied Ashbrook returned to Ohio on June 22 to campaign as much as his health would permit.

Ashbrook soon learned that his opponent was basing his campaign on a personal platform similar to the one he had employed in 1934. Glenn scored the New Deal administration for circumventing the Constitution, destroying livestock and agriculture produce, and wasting the public's money. To rectify this self-drawn picture of the New Deal, Glenn called for fewer laws and lower taxes. In contrast to Glenn's multi-faceted advertising campaign, Ashbrook simply publicized the fact that his record was his platform. In his personal campaign, he was primarily interested in meeting the people, not in discussing the Roosevelt administration and its policies. However, in an October speech at Mansfield, he did claim that President Roosevelt had saved the nation from anarchy and ruin, had expressed faith in the intelligence and gratitude of the American people to reelect him, and was the choice of the people to finish rebuilding America.

84 Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1936, LXXX, Part 8, 8696.

85 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1656.

86 Mansfield News Journal, September 28, 1936, p. 12; Centerburg Gazette, October 15, 1936, p. 2; Coshocton Tribune, October 19, 1936, p. 4; Delaware Gazette, October 21, 1936, p. 3; Newark Advocate, October 30, 1936, p. 17.

87 Delaware Gazette, October 23, 1936, p. 7; Newark Advocate, October 23, 1936, p. 8; Coshocton Tribune, October 27, 1936, p. 4; Mansfield News Journal, October 27, 1936, p. 11; Centerburg Gazette, October 29, 1936, p. 2.

88 Mansfield News Journal, October 19, 1936, p. 11.
Pleased with the reception given his simple campaign throughout the district, he went to bed the night before the election worried only about his health.89

The next day Ashbrook won a ninth term in office with 64,833 votes to Glenn's 46,557 votes. He carried Ashland, Coshocton, Licking, and Richland Counties by big margins, and lost in Knox and Delaware Counties by small ones.90 The entire Democratic state ticket was elected as President Roosevelt carried Ohio with a majority of 604,520.91 In his diary, Ashbrook wrote, "This will be a good time for me to retire when my record is so good."92

When Ashbrook returned to the House in 1935, he once again demonstrated the aversion to war and financial spending that had marked his earlier years in Congress. He did not believe that expansion of the economy would rectify the nation's fiscal problems. Consequently, while he supported the President's relief bill in 1935, he worried about allowing one man control of the spending of so large a sum. On some other financial proposals, such as government control of potato production and government subsidization of the American Merchant Marine, he voted negatively. Yet, in spite of his concern

89Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1674.

90Newark Advocate, November 7, 1936, p. 2.


92Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1675.
for economy, if he believed in the principle behind a particular spending bill, as in the case of the old age pension and soldiers bonus bills, he would give the bill his wholehearted support.

In 1936, in what would supposedly be his final campaign, Ashbrook easily won another term when the Democratic Party, spearheaded by President Roosevelt, carried Ohio in a landslide. Assured of two more years in the House, Ashbrook would be confronted in the future with situations that would further test his position on President Roosevelt's actions and decisions, government spending, government control of business and agriculture, possible United States involvement in another World War, and the Townsend pension plan.
CHAPTER XV

THE FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD SESSIONS
OF THE 75TH CONGRESS AND THE
ELECTION OF 1938

In January, 1937, Ashbrook arrived in Washington in time to hear President Roosevelt's message to the 75th Congress. In his diary, he noted, "It was a Roosevelt message. He told the Supreme Court to soften up a bit and get in tune with the times. . . . I will not get excited about any legislation and vote as my conscience dictates."\(^\text{1}\) He also resolved to allow economy to determine decisions for him whenever possible.\(^\text{2}\) No opportunity to be economical confronted him in January, but he did support both the Senate Joint Resolution that prohibited the exportation of war supplies to Spain and a bill that made Postmasters' appointments good for life (H.R. 1531).\(^\text{3}\)

\(^{1}\) Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1683.

\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 1684.

\(^{3}\) Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 1st Sess., 1937, LXXXI, Part 1, 98, 534-535.
During February, he gave a great deal of attention in his diary to President Roosevelt's Supreme Court proposal. On February 8, he noted that, in his opinion, the President's designs looked too much like an attempt to pack the court.⁴ A few days later, after mentioning that objections to expanding the court dominated his daily mail and that his own fears were that the House might blindly follow the President, he added, "It is too much power for a good man to want and too much power for a bad man to have."⁵ When some of the Democrats supporting the President criticized his position, he stated that he was determined to follow the dictates of his head not political expediency. The criticism also angered him since he doubted that the Senate would ever pass the proposal.⁶

Despite his preoccupation with the court issue, he weighed each vote in the House carefully. He supported a bill to extend the time during which direct obligations of the United States could be used as collateral for Federal Reserve notes (S. 417), voted against any reduction in the Naval Appropriations Bill (H.R. 5232), and refused to support a bill to develop a hydroelectric plant at Cabinet Gorge, Idaho (H.R. 114).⁷ On March 18, he voted favorably on the

⁴Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1687.
⁵Ibid., p. 1688.
⁶Ibid., p. 1689.
Compromise Cash and Carry Neutrality Act of 1937. When explaining this last vote in his diary, he wrote, "The bill is just a gesture to let the world know the United States is for peace but when war is ripe there will be one although I hope not in my time."9

In April, the possibility of another world war occupied his mind along with the President's court proposal. A Washington radio station asked him to make a speech for peace on the twentieth anniversary of America's declaration of war. He accepted the invitation. In his April 6 radio speech, after reviewing the circumstances leading up to the declaration of war by Congress and the war's subsequent effect on America's economy, he said,

There are three great preventatives of war. First, and foremost, is an amendment to our Constitution making it impossible to declare war except on actual invasion without a referendum vote of all legally qualified American citizens. The proposal of Congressman Ludlow of Indiana seems to meet this requirement and has my endorsement. Second, remove the profits of war by our government taking from private control and operation the manufacture of munitions, and third, the conscription of wealth above a nominal sum for every citizen. Put these three proposals into effect and the possibilities of our entering a world war will be remote.10

Furthermore, while the recently passed Neutrality Act proclaimed that America was for peace, he believed it to be an unsatisfactory solution to the problem of avoiding war. If subjected to strained conditions, he predicted that the act would prove to be, "... little

8Ibid., Part 3, p. 2410.
9Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1692.
10Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 1st Sess., 1937, LXXXI, Part 9, Appendix, 745.
more than a friendly buffer."\textsuperscript{11} Content that he had made his position on future wars very clear, he also found some relief a few days later from his worries over the President's Supreme Court proposal. He believed the Supreme Court decision making the Wagner Act constitutional represented a great victory for labor and a hard blow to the President's designs on the court.\textsuperscript{12} When the court later declared old age pensions and unemployment insurance were also constitutional, he asked his diary, "What more do you want Franklin D.?"\textsuperscript{13}

Tiring of the daily pressures of his office, Ashbrook began to consider a trip home to see his family in late May but hesitated since he did not want to miss roll calls in the House.\textsuperscript{14} In April, he had been present in the House to vote favorably on the National Housing Act (S. 1228), and the Anti-Lynching Law Bill (H.R. 1507).\textsuperscript{15} Then, during the first three weeks of May, while supporting the Civilian Conservation Corps Act (H.R. 6551), he had opposed a bill to authorize cooperation in the development of farm forestry (H.R. 4728), a motion to remove the enacting clause in a bill to provide relief for sundry aliens (H.R. 5897), and a bill to provide

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1696.}
\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 1702.
\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Congressional Record}, 75th Cong., 1st Sess., 1937, LXXXI, Part 3, 3352, 3562-3563.
appropriations for deficiencies (H.R. 6730).\textsuperscript{16} After studying his dilemma carefully, he decided to go home on May 29. Consequently, he missed roll calls on a relief bill for ex-service men (H.R. 5478), and a general relief bill (H.J.Res. 361).\textsuperscript{17} He returned in June in time to support bills: to extend excise taxes (H.J.Res. 375); to establish a retirement system for railroad employees (H.R. 7519); and to aid farm tenants (H.R. 7562).\textsuperscript{18}

As the first session of the 75th Congress approached adjournment, Ashbrook's concern for economy began to needle him. After voting for a bill establishing Federal land banks (H.R. 6763) over the President's veto, he opposed a $10,000,000.00 increase in the appropriations included in a Naval Auxiliary Vessel Bill (S. 2193).\textsuperscript{19} In early August, he supported a bill to reorganize agencies of the Federal Government in the hope of reducing expenses.\textsuperscript{20} He next faced the question as to how he should vote on a bill to provide low income families with low cost housing (S. 1685). To his diary, he confided, "I am not very strong for it, too paternalistic and no time to increase the public debt."\textsuperscript{21} When he ignored his misgivings and

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, Part 4, pp. 4430, 4208, 4730; Part 5, p. 5087.

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}, Part 5, pp. 5165, 5227-5233.

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}, Part 5, p. 5627; Part 6, pp. 6093, 6582.

\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}, Part 6, p. 7132; Part 7, p. 7513.

\textsuperscript{20}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, IV, 1715; \textit{Congressional Record}, 75th Cong., 1st Sess., 1937, LXXXI, Part 8, 8875.

\textsuperscript{21}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, IV, 1716.
supported the bill, he became disgusted with himself and left Washington two days before Congress adjourned. 22

In the weeks prior to the beginning of the special session of the 75th Congress, Ashbrook, still finding Congressional life fascinating, considered the possibility of seeking another term. Since his health was not good, his wife objected to another campaign, and the weeks away from his family were hard to bear, he did not reach a definite decision at this time. 23 To keep in touch with his constituents in case he would decide to stay in politics, he attended many political meetings during his stay in Ohio. 24

Shortly after his arrival in Washington, he introduced a House Joint Resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution to provide for a referendum vote on war and to limit conscription and undeclared warfare. 25 The newspapers of his district gave his resolution considerable publicity. 26 Pleased with the publicity and flood of complimentary letters he received, he turned his attention

22 Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 1st Sess., 1937, LXXXI, Part 8, 9293; Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1716.

23 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1728.

24 Newark Advocate, November 14, 1937, p. 8.


26 Newark Advocate, November 17, 1937, p. 4; Mansfield News Journal, November 18, 1937, p. 13; Coshocton Tribune, November 18, 1937, p. 4.
to the bills that would be presented in the House. In his diary, he claimed, "Doubt if I can vote for all of the President's 'must' legislation that he is determined to jam through Congress. Doubt if we ever had a President who was so determined to have his way. He is as near a dictator as I hope this nation ever has." 27

His outlook did not brighten when House debate began on the Farm Bill (H.R. 8505). The projected prices, especially those for cotton, were so high that they alarmed him. To his diary, he confided, "I fear too much fantastic stuff is being urged." 28 He was still undecided as to how he would vote on this bill when he learned the House would soon take up the Hours and Wages Bill (S. 2475). After studying his accumulated mail, he decided that the farmers opposed the Hours and Wages Bill while labor favored it. In his diary, he speculated, "Looks like best to give labor their bill and the farmers their bill and then many will not be satisfied." 29

On December 10, the Farm Bill came to a vote in the House. Since no farmer had written to him in support of the bill, he voted against it. 30 A decision on the Hours and Wages Bill was not as easy for him. To his diary, he confided, "It is a ticklish piece

27 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1729.
28 Ibid., p. 1730.
29 Ibid., p. 1731.
of legislation as the farmers are violently opposed and labor is now divided.  

William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor, solved his problem. On December 16, the labor leader informed Ashbrook that the A.F. of L. would not hold a negative vote against him.  

The next day, when the House recommitted the bill by a vote of 216 to 198, Ashbrook's name appeared in the "YEA" column. In his diary, he noted, "Several Ohio Members were whipped into line but no one ever attempts to change me."  

Another major bill, the Housing Program (H.R. 8730), came to a vote on December 18, and Ashbrook voted "NAY" along with twenty-two other Representatives. When explaining his vote in his diary, he wrote, "Bill too paternalistic for me. Uncle Sam will soon be guaranteeing everybody and everything. I fear I will soon be read out of the Democratic party. The special session has accomplished little."  

A satisfied Congressman drove home the next day for the Christmas holidays.  

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31Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1732.  
32Ibid.  
33Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1937, LXXXII, Part 2, 1835.  
34Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1733.  
36Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1733.  
37Ibid.
Upon his return to Washington for the third session of the 75th Congress in January, 1938, Ashbrook confided to his diary that he had decided to remain in politics and round out twenty years in office. With his immediate future settled, he quickly gave his attention to the upcoming House vote on the Ludlow Referendum (H.J.Res. 199). On January 10, James Farley asked him to vote against the referendum. Ashbrook refused to honor his request. Although the referendum was defeated despite his supporting vote, Ashbrook did not believe the battle was over and mailed 10,000 copies of his speech supporting the referendum to his district.

As the second week of the new session drew to a close, the assertiveness of President Roosevelt angered Ashbrook. To his diary, he confided, "I am fed up with Roosevelt's dictation. He will not bend his Dutch stubborn will and thinks he and his little brain trust possess all the wisdom at large. It may not be a cinch for me at the next election because I am out of the tracks most of the time." When the House voted on the Farm Bill (H.R. 8505) again in February, he again opposed its passage. However, his misgivings about the

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38 Ibid., p. 1736.
39 Ibid.
41 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1637.
President did not cause him to oppose all legislation. After opposing the Natchez Trace Parkway Bill (H.R. 6652), he supported: a relief and work relief bill (H.J.Res. 596); the Revenue Bill of 1938 (H.R. 9687); and the Naval Authorization Bill (H.R. 9218). Before the vote on the Naval Bill, he had written in his diary, "Had not expected to vote for it but since world conditions look so bad I have decided the only way to have peace is to be prepared. . . . Hitler boldly grabbed off Austria and is still ambitious." 

In March, his thoughts centered on the President again as he began to receive many letters opposing the Reorganization Bill (S. 331). After the Senate passed the bill, he confided to his diary, "He is almost as much a dictator as Hitler. He at least dictates Congress. He can't dictate me. If I bring the wrath of my party on my head, I will take it." He did not believe the bill could be defeated in the House but when the bill was recommitted to the Select Committee on Government Organization, he admitted in his diary, "I was never more elated than I was over this victory. The President already has too much power without giving him more. . . . I still admire Roosevelt for many things he has done but he is not omnipotent." Once again, his dislike for President Roosevelt's

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43Ibid., Part 2, p. 1435; Part 3, pp. 2631, 3269; Part 4, p. 3767. 
44Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1743. 
46Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 3rd Sess., 1938, LXXXIII, Part 5, 5123; Newark Advocate, April 9, 1938, p. 1; Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1747.
ideas and tactics did not influence his position on other bills. Before his return to Ohio in June to campaign, he supported House Joint Resolutions providing additional appropriations for rural electrification loans, work relief, and Civilian Conservation Corps, and the Wage and Hours Bill (S. 2475) establishing a minimum wage of 25¢ per hour and a maximum work week of forty-four hours.47

In the 1938 primary election, Ashbrook's opponents were Frank Cave of Mansfield, Parliamentarian of the Ohio Senate, and Lee H. Purdy.48 To Ashbrook, neither of the opponents appeared to be very strong but he did not expect to win easily. His opposition to the President's programs had eventually produced some critical letters from organization Democrats. Furthermore, he believed that he would have to conduct an active personal campaign to dispel any harmful rumors about his poor health. Regardless of the effect such a campaign would have on him, he was determined to win in what he knew would definitely be his last campaign.49

To win the primary, he ignored his heart condition and campaigned extensively. As in the past, he canvassed the towns of the district to meet and shake hands with voters of both parties.50

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47 Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 3rd Sess., 1938, LXXXIII, Part 6, pp. 6833, 6835, 7103; Part 7, 7449.

48 Newark Advocate, August 6, 1938, p. 6.

49 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1751-1755.

50 Ibid., pp. 1756-1763.
the district newspapers he advertised the fact that, as in 1936, his platform was his record.\textsuperscript{51} When speaking to groups of people, he avoided long discussions of political issues and tried to see that those present enjoyed themselves.\textsuperscript{52} On August 9, the election results showed how successful his campaign had been. He polled 23,661 votes to Cave's 6,455, and Purdy's 2,235.\textsuperscript{53}

Ashbrook's opponent in the general election was Walter B. Woodward of Mt. Vernon. The Republican candidate's personal platform called for the resurrection of the Constitution, avoidance of entangling alliances and foreign wars, and enactment of the Townsend pension plan.\textsuperscript{54} Since Ashbrook had encountered strong support for the Townsend plan across the district in his primary campaign, he believed that he would have to win many Republican votes to offset the loss of those Democrats who would desert him for the promise of a large pension. He also knew that with President Roosevelt urging the election of liberals, Republican voters might decide to oppose him solely for this reason.\textsuperscript{55}

As he continued his campaign, Ashbrook found that the

\textsuperscript{51}Newark Advocate, August 5, 1938, p. 2; Mt. Vernon Republican News-Daily Banner, August 5, 1938, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{52}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, IV, 1759.

\textsuperscript{53}Newark Advocate, August 10, 1938, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{54}Mt. Vernon Republican News-Daily Banner, August 6, 1938, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{55}Ashbrook, \textit{Line a Day}, IV, 1769-1770.
Townsendites had become more numerous. He confided to his diary, "The people are pension crazy. Everybody thinks Uncle Sam owes them a living."\(^{56}\) In October, he attacked the Townsend plan openly in speeches across the district, labeled it a "Utopian Dream," and urged all who believed in such a fantastic scheme to vote for his opponent.\(^{57}\) Every newspaper in the district supported his attack. Even Republican newspapers such as the Delaware Gazette, Mansfield News Journal, Mt. Vernon Republican News-Daily Banner, and Coshocton Tribune, claiming that the issue transcended party lines, urged the choice of Ashbrook since he favored reasonable old-age pensions and had demonstrated by his record in office that he was a man who determined his own position on national issues according to his own best judgment.\(^{58}\) Despite all his newspaper support, Ashbrook was still not sure of victory. A few days before the election he mailed letters to 6,000 Republicans, 6,000 Democrats, and 4,500 old soldiers.\(^{59}\)

On November 8, on a day when Ohio voters elected a Republican Governor and United States Senator in addition to fifteen Republican

\(^{56}\)Ibid., p. 1772.

\(^{57}\)Mt. Vernon Republican News-Daily Banner, October 3, 1938, p. 1; Ashland Times-Gazette, October 21, 1938, p. 1; Newark Advocate, November 1, 1938, p. 2; Delaware Gazette, November 1, 1938, p. 8.

\(^{58}\)Delaware Gazette, October 27, 1938, p. 4; Mansfield News Journal, November 2, 1938, p. 3; Mt. Vernon Republican News-Daily Banner, November 2, 1938, p. 5; Coshocton Tribune, November 6, 1938, p. 2.

\(^{59}\)Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1774.
Congressmen, Ashbrook won a tenth term in office with 51,747 votes to his opponent's 46,261. He carried Licking, Coshocton, and Rich­land Counties and ran behind his opponent in Ashland, Knox, and Delaware Counties. The Newark Advocate credited his victory to the fact that while loyal to Democratic principles, he was not regarded as a New Dealer and had voted for only those New Deal mea­sures he believed merited support.

In the 75th Congress, Ashbrook had supported many legisla­tive bills but, as in 1935 when he had opposed the annihilation of holding companies, he was too conservative to support the President's Supreme Court proposal, Reconstruction Bill, and Farm Bill. While he had retained an admiration for some of President Roosevelt's accomplishments, Ashbrook's personal dislike for some of his ideas and his attempts to force Congress to follow his lead continued to grow in 1935-1936. At the same time, he did not approve an increased role on the part of the Federal Government in areas such as housing as an adequate solution to the country's problems. His adverse reac­tion to some parts of the New Deal also put him in a position where voters supporting anti-New Deal candidates such as Robert A. Taft, could also support him. The negative reaction of the voters to the Roosevelt administration and the Townsend pension plan were the key factors in his 1938 election victory.

61Newark Advocate, November 9, 1938, p. 1.
CHAPTER XVI

THE FIRST AND SECOND SESSIONS OF THE

76TH CONGRESS AND THE DEATH OF

WILLIAM A. ASHBROOK

1939-1940

In January, 1939, when Ashbrook arrived in Washington for the opening of the 76th Congress, he was recovering from a severe cold, which left him weak and caused him to seriously consider his health. His vision and memory had been failing him at times during the previous few months. Fearful that he would not live much longer unless he slowed down, he resolved to avoid straining himself.¹

He found his resolution impossible to keep since he could not stifle his concern over the tension permeating international politics and the spending bills passed by Congress. Of the two sources of worry, the possibility of war bothered him most. On February 23, he opposed a bill to fortify Guam Island (H.R. 4278) because of his fear that such a move might someday help involve the

¹Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1782.
United States in a Pacific crisis.\(^2\) He also desired to avoid involvement in any European crisis. To his diary, he confided, "Hitler is doing the Napoleon stunt by grabbing off all the territory he can. He must be checked before it is too late but I do not want the U.S. involved."\(^3\) Sure that Germany would eventually provoke at least a European war, and fearful that President Roosevelt's role in diplomatic exchanges might prove damaging to any chance of avoiding the conflict, he prayed that the threat posed by Adolph Hitler to world peace would dissipate. Another consideration that helped to increase his worries appeared in his diary on April 28, when he wrote, "The thought that Billy [his son] might be made cannon fodder upsets me so I can hardly act rationally."\(^4\) The House debate on a new Neutrality Bill (H.J.Res. 306) did nothing to ease the tension for him. To his diary, he confided, "Have made up my mind to vote against it largely because I do not wish to give the President more power than he has now which is too great."\(^5\) However, he was in Ohio resting when the bill came to a vote in the House.\(^6\)


\(^3\) Ashbrook, *Line a Day*, IV, 1789.

\(^4\) Ibid., p. 1793.

\(^5\) Ibid., p. 1802.

\(^6\) *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 1st Sess., 1939, LXXXIV, Part 8, 8513.
the voting of increased expenditures by the House taxed his strength.

After supporting the bill to consolidate and codify internal revenue laws (H.R. 2762); the Public Salary Tax Law of 1939 (H.R. 3790); the Reorganization Bill of 1939 (H.R. 4425); the Works Progress Administra-
tion Appropriation Bill (H.J.Res. 246); the Deficiency Appropriation Bill (H.R. 5219); and the Navy Department Appropriation Bill (H.R. 6149), he became concerned that Congress was spending too much. 7

In an attempt to save money he opposed increased appropriations for flood control projects. 8 On May 22, after listening to a speech by President Roosevelt, he confided to his diary, "He is a magnetic speaker but I can't go along with his logic. He thinks we must spend ourselves into recovery and says our huge debt just means we pay interest to ourselves." 9

Determined to economize, Ashbrook opposed the annual bill to provide appropriations for the Department of Agriculture (H.R. 5264) in June, and noted, "It carried by five votes but not by mine. The bill carries over a billion dollars for agriculture. Too staggering to think about. 10

By the end of the first session of the 76th Congress Ashbrook was tired and discouraged. He had desired to see a reduction in

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7Ibid., Part 1, p. 789; Part 2, p. 1332; Part 3, p. 2504; Part 4, p. 3672; Part 5, pp. 4884, 5262.

8Ibid., Part 5, p. 5403.

9Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1797.

10Congressional Record, 76th Cong., 1st Sess., 1939, LXXXIV, Part 7, 7736; Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1801.
spending and this had not occurred. He had also missed several roll
calls in the House. Furthermore, the crisis in Europe would probably
cause a special session of Congress to draw up new Neutrality legis­
lation. On his drive home, although he would not be a candidate, he
looked ahead to the election of 1940, and decided that prospects for
a Democratic victory were mighty slim.\textsuperscript{11}

On September 21, he returned to the House for the opening of
the special session of the 76th Congress. After listening to the
President's message, he wrote in his diary, "The President wants to
lift the Embargo and adopt the Cash and Carry Plan. It has its good
points but I think it brings us nearer war than to remain 'as is'
and will so vote."\textsuperscript{12} The letters arriving in his office from the
district told him that this was what the overwhelming majority also
favored.\textsuperscript{13}

The next day, as he left the House, he felt a slight tingling
sensation in his left hand and foot. On September 23, his physician
placed him in the Naval Hospital for a period of absolute rest. He
remained in the hospital until October 10.\textsuperscript{14} Then, because he wanted
to go home, he refused to inform the doctor that his hand still tin­
gled. Once he arrived in Johnstown, he found that he had a sharp

\textsuperscript{11}Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1807.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 1814.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14}Newark Advocate, January 2, 1940, p. 1.
pain around his heart constantly. His personal physician informed him that unless he lived like a "hot house plant" he would not live very long. 15

Ashbrook heeded the advice until he learned on October 30 that the House was nearing a vote on the Neutrality Bill (H.J.Res. 306). Believing that he had to vote on this bill, he took a train to Washington the next day. 16 On November 2, he had a page push him in a wheelchair to the House and voted against the bill. 17 Later, in his diary, he confided, "The machine rode over all opposition. . . . The final vote gave the administration a majority of 66. The Embargo is repealed and F.D.R. is in high command." 18

He visited the Naval Hospital on November 3 for a checkup. His doctor informed him that his condition was improving but that he must continue to avoid straining his heart. 19 Ashbrook returned to Ohio the next day. Prior to the end of December, he felt good and even fleetingly considered staying in politics. However, his life came to an end on January 1, 1940. Shortly after returning from church, he suffered a stroke and died early in the evening. 20

15 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1818.
16 Ibid., p. 1819.
17 Congressional Record, 76th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1939, LXXXV, Part 2, 1389.
18 Ashbrook, Line a Day, IV, 1819.
19 Ibid.
20 Newark Advocate, January 2, 1940, p. 13.
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