

**WILLIAM WINDOM, 1827-
1890: HIS PUBLIC SERVICES: A
THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS**

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William Windom, 1827-1890: His Public Services: A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Master of Arts by Grace Anne Wright

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GRACE ANNE WRIGHT

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DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS**

WILLIAM WINDOM
1827 - 1890
HIS PUBLIC SERVICES
BY
GRACE ANNE WRIGHT

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The years from the end of the Revolutionary War to the election of Washington are known as the "Critical Period," because our national life swung in the balance during that time. To one other period may this same name be applied, when for a second time the Union was threatened with dissolution and destruction. Surely the twenty years between 1860 and 1880 were fraught with many danger of many kinds.

In the first critical period it was the sane, sound common sense and the judgment and foresight of our national leaders, the makers of our constitution, that saved our bark from shipwreck on the rocks of State Sovereignty and commercial rivalry. In the second case the exceptional leadership of Lincoln was not alone responsible for our weathering the storm of Civil War--we owe much to the wisdom of our Congress especially in solving the problems that followed the war.

We are not proud of all the chapters in the Congressional History of that period, nor are we filled with pride when we look over the careers of some of our legislators. But any nation might recognize with pride and gratitude the

work of such men as Charles Francis Adams, John Sherman, William B. Allison, James G. Blaine, Charles Sumner, James A. Garfield, Matt Carpenter, Carl Schurz, George F. Hoar, and a score of others. In this list of our national leaders Minnesota is glad and proud to claim the name of William Windom, her distinguished adopted son who served ^{his} state continuously in the national legislature with the exception of one year from December 1859 to March 1863. Minnesota is glad that in the period when the standard of political morals was very low, when such blots were made on the legislative history as the Credit Mobilier, The Salary Grab, the Caldwell Election Case and Sanborn Claims, she could send to Washington a statesman of such pure morals that his rectitude was never questioned.

The problems of the time were not only those of Slavery, War and Reconstruction, tho the latter furnished for years a fertile field of labor; but the question of developing the resources of the country, of bringing the West into commercial contact with the East, of disposing of the public lands to our greatest advantage, of safe finance, of immigration, of our policy towards the savage race - our national wards - all these and more claimed the attention and services of our lawmakers and upon these William Windom spent his efforts.

The ancestors of William Windom were Quakers and came to Virginia from England, moving later to Ohio and be-