

1866, and again in 1868, serving three terms as a member of the Thirty-ninth, Fortieth and Forty-first Congresses.

After the war Col. Benjamin, as he had come to be known, moved to Shelbina, which had by this time secured the railroad and was enjoying a boom. In company with William A. Reid, Daniel Taylor and several other gentlemen, he started Shelbina's first and only national bank. This institution grew and prospered and is yet one of the most substantial banking concerns of that section.

Missouri being a hot-bed of Democracy, Col. Benjamin found a great amount of prejudice existing against him on account of his brilliant union war record. He was prospering in Shelbina, however, and thinking the war feeling would soon die out, decided to make the place his permanent home.

Col. Benjamin had long desired to own the finest residence in the county, having built the best one Shelbyville afforded while he was a resident there. Early in the 70s he set about the erection of the finest home in all North Missouri. It was built of brick and iron and marble. It was roomy and elegant in every detail. Wide colonial verandas abounded on every side; the eaves and windows were adorned with cornices of every expensive and elaborate pattern; iron railings and ornamentations were added to enhance the general effect, and in the center of the roof an observatory was constructed, from which a splendid view of the prairies could be obtained for miles around. The house contained sixteen rooms, and cost \$22,000. An additional \$10,000 was expended for fixtures and furniture, and the five-acre tract of ground upon which it was located, together with the improvements, brought the actual cost up to \$35,000. Such was the prairie home John Benjamin built for Diana. Those who professed to know claimed that Benjamin was now worth \$150,000.

Until this time it had been all uphill for Benjamin. He had suffered no reverses. Then the tempter came and he went in pursuit of a false god.

It seems that while he was a Congressman in Washington he met a woman of the name of Minnie Welsh, with whom he became infatuated. He lent his influences to assist her in many ways and aided her financially. It is claimed she was a bold and scheming woman unscrupulous and of questionable character. His relations with her marked the beginning of the troubles that so swiftly led to his undoing.

His first reverse was the defeat for Congress by Col. John M. Glover, the Democratic nominee. Soon after he became involved in a church quarrel at Shelbina, which caused an unpleasant break in his relations with several members of the Christian Church, to which organization he belonged, and his influence in the church and town began to wane from that time.

Another unfortunate affair was that in which James Hanly was involved. Hanly worked about the place for Benjamin, keeping things in order and acting as general utility man. One day Benjamin missed some powder that had been placed in an old army chest in the stable. He inquired what had become of it, and was told by one of the servants, an old colored woman that Hanly had taken it. When asked about it Hanly denied any knowledge of it, and some words followed between him and his employer. Hanly gave up his situation, but brooded so over the stigma of the accusation of stealing that he determined to seek redress for his wrongs by shooting his enemy. He accordingly laid in wait for Benjamin, and one afternoon, as the